

ACTIVISM FOUNDATION FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH AND ACTION

ANNUAL REPORT 7TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

29TH September 2024, University Institute Hall, Kolkata

The 7th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Activism Foundation for Social Research and Action, being held on September 29, 2024, marks another significant milestone in our organization's journey. Over the past decade, Activism Foundation has remained committed to bridging the gap between academic research and societal challenges. This AGM serves as an occasion to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, review our ongoing efforts, and chart the way forward in our mission to apply social science to address real-world problems. The foundation's endeavors over the last year have been focused on empowering individuals, enhancing research, and promoting public awareness through innovative approaches and community engagement. We are gathered here today not only to celebrate these achievements but also to recommit ourselves to the cause of driving social change through research and action.

While it marks our seventh AGM, this year also signifies a decade of our relentless pursuit in making social sciences relevant in everyday life. The Foundation's journey is characterized by its unwavering commitment to address real-life issues through research-based solutions. Whether addressing functional or dysfunctional societal challenges tied to misconceptions, superstition, or emotional fallacies, Activism has consistently played a pivotal role. Our mission has been to empower individuals by freeing them from these stigmas and guiding them toward transcending limitations through knowledge-driven empowerment.

Foundation Day

The prestigious Foundation Day of Activism was celebrated on March 30, 2024, at ICMARD Auditorium in Kolkata. The event was conducted by Ms. Tias Roy, our esteemed Finance Officer. The highlight of the celebration was the 9th Foundation Day lecture by distinguished Political Science Professor Samir Kumar Das on "Sociology Between Theory and Practice." In his stimulating talk, Professor Das examined the relationship between theory, its application, and the idea of "between-ness," which he developed to describe the space between conceptual knowledge and practical application. The talk concentrated on three main concerns: i) Theory based on Common Sense; ii) Incapacity to apply predetermined goals; and iii) Improper applications of theory. The lecture was interesting because Prof. Das included a number of current examples based on anthropology during his presentation. He claimed that neither "Theory" nor "Application" was a really "new" concept. He also mentioned the term "Tattwayan" in this context.



This was followed by an address by our Honorable Chairman, Dr. Sourish Jha, who reiterated Activism's commitment to uniting theory and practice, further energizing the audience. He underlined that by examining the applicability of social sciences, ACTIVISM promotes the unity of theory and practice. 'Let Knowledge take the Life' is the motivating phrase of Activism, which finished the session. As anticipated, the program was a great success thanks to the valuable attendance and engaged participation of the audience, which included individuals from a variety of backgrounds, including professors, students, and scholars from numerous colleges and universities. Last but not least, the attendance and involvement of regular people was truly commendable. The prominent newspaper 'Duranta Barta' has published a story about the show. The event was widely appreciated, and its coverage was featured in the popular daily, *Duranta Barta*.

Units and Activities

Activism functions through two complementary wings: **Activism Social Science Club** and **Activism Scholars Forum**. These units collaboratively undertake research projects that bridge academic practices and real-life social issues. In this context it is noteworthy to mention that Activism Foundation for Social Research & Action started its journey from 2016 with the birth of Activism Social Science Club. The Social Science Club focuses on individual research, while the Scholars Forum, debuted in 2021, takes on broader, aggregate-level challenges. Together, these units contribute to a holistic understanding and application of social sciences in everyday life.



Individual Case Studies

In individual case studies, Activism has developed a unique process called 'Conversation.' This involves a structured approach, starting with phased interviews, followed by a three-step data analysis, formulating propositions, and finally addressing the individual facing the issue. The 'Conversation' process leverages various social science perspectives and methodologies making it a valuable component of our research efforts. Over time, the active involvement of the individual, along with their acceptance of the problems and solutions identified through Activism's research, has added considerable depth to this initiative.



Following the last annual general meeting, we undertook an individual case study, successfully completing all its stages. The case concerned a young woman seeking help with her younger brother's academic performance and behavioral issues. After conducting the interviews and thorough data analysis, the researchers diagnosed the core problems as Motivation Deficit and Goal Setting & Striving Dysfunction.

Research on Domestic Violence & Intolerance

The ongoing project on domestic violence and intolerance in Maniktala Slum Area has made substantial progress. This research, spearheaded by the Scholars Forum with active participation and support from the executives of Activism Social Science Club and Life Members, has completed its survey phase. The data analysis is currently underway, and the "Focus group" discussion has also been completed. Despite some challenges, the enthusiasm of the participants and dwellers of the Slum has invigorated our research, showing great promise for the study's outcomes.



Lecture & Seminar

During the last year some in-house lectures were arranged exclusively for the executives and the most significant one was on the article, namely 'The Naked King, Common Nonsense, And The Possibilities of Good Social Science', published in West Bengal Political Science Review, VOL XXIV, 2022-23 by the Honorable Chairman of Activism Foundation, Dr.Sourish Jha. The session was interactive and as well as it was quite beneficial for the executives to enhance their skill for research to understand, identify and discriminate Common Sense, Common Nonsense and Uncommon Sense by which most of the functions are wrapped with in everyday life.

The Activism Scholars' Forum successfully organized an Online National Seminar on "Democracy, Development and Discontent: Issues, Perspectives, and Challenges in Contemporary India" on the 21st and 22nd of September 2024. The esteemed Economist Professor Amit Bhaduri, Former Emeritus Professor of JNU, graced the event as the Keynote Speaker. The Valedictory speech was delivered by Professor Prasanta Ray, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Presidency University. Professor Rajarshi Dasgupta, a prominent Political Scientist from JNU,



presented a Distinguished Lecture on "The Discontent with Democracy". The Seminar featured a diverse range of topics, with a total of 26 scholarly papers being presented during the three Business sessions. Scholars presented their research and perspectives, enriching the discourse on the complex interplay of democracy, development, and discontent in the Indian context. Two awards were granted for the best presentation and active participation in the seminar, acknowledging the valuable contributions made by the participants.

Magazine & Journal

There are two colourful feathers in Activism's crown. One is the e-magazine 'Ekka-Dokka' for the teenagers and the e-magazine 'Criticality' for students-scholars-researchers. With the untiring efforts of the members of Activism the fourth & fifth issue of the magazine had been published in the month of March & September 2024. The response from the school going teenagers to the e-magazine is truly admirable and literally indicating a bright prospect for the future.

Response for the e-journal 'Criticality' is also inspiring too. We have got several articles based on different contemporary burning issues, written by many eminent persons-which is a treasure for our future. With the diligent efforts of the entire team of e-journal we able to publish the Volume 2, issue 1 and next issue is also under progress. The ISSN accreditation of *Criticality* further solidifies its academic value on a global scale.



Social media & Out-reach Program:

Our **Outreach Program** is a critical initiative to disseminate Activism's thoughts and research through social media. Using platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, we engage with the public by raising awareness on everyday issues rooted in commonsense misconceptions. This program teaches participants how to challenge any form of irrationality and how to better understand and use social science knowledge to their daily lives in order to deal with stressful situations. The program has received encouraging responses, with members contributing write-ups and scripts for video content, further driving our movement forward. We believe that in order to advance the cause in the future, the Out- Reach Program will be crucial in using Facebook Pages, YouTube Channels, X handles, and other platforms in a way that is more structured, engaging, and dynamic.



Life-Members Meeting

Life members are the backbone of Activism Foundation, serving as both an extended family and a driving force behind its mission. Their active involvement is key to sustaining the movement and successfully implementing various projects and programs throughout the year. To enhance communication and maintain momentum, several initiatives are undertaken annually. Over the past year, we organized at least eight lectures, where students, scholars, and professors—primarily Life Members of Activism— presented on various contemporary issues.

Following the sixth Annual General Meeting, the first Life-Members lecture was delivered on December 23, 2023, by Professor Manabendra Saha from the Department of Political Science, Raja Rammohan College, Kolkata. His topic focused on "The Contributions of Raja Rammohan Roy to Women's Rights and Their Current Relevance." The second lecture, on January 27 2024, was presented by Professor Pinaki Roy from the Department of Sociology, Singur Government General Degree College, discussing "The Intellectual Craftsmanship of C. Wright Mills." On February 25, 2024, the third lecture was delivered by Professor Sambuddha Ghatak from San Diego State University, USA, on the topic "Modi's BJP Government and Islamist Militancy in India." The fourth lecture, on April 27, 2024, was delivered by Literary Scholar, Theatre Practitioner, and Critic, Mr. Sayan Bhattacharjee, on "Theatre and Social Science: An Introduction to Socio-Theatrical Science." The fifth lecture, held on May 25, 2024, featured Eshanya Bala, a Political Science student from Rabindra Bharati University, speaking on "Lifestyle Diseases and the Politics of Fitness." The sixth lecture, delivered by Professor Subhranil Ghosh from the Department of Political Science, Rampurhat College, on June 29, 2024, covered "The Politics of Trust: Confidence Building and Institutional Morality in Contemporary Indian Society." On July 27, 2024, the seventh lecture was given by Professor Arnab Debnath from Domkol College on "The Concept of Violence: A General View." The eighth lecture, held on August 24, 2024, was delivered by Poulami Ghosh, a student of Rabindra Bharati University, on "The Relevance of E-Magazines in Society." The final lecture, delivered on September 14, 2024, was given by Soma Bhattacharya, CEO of Activism Foundation, on "Activism's Movement: The Role of Social Media." Beyond lectures, creative contributions from members in singing, dancing, and art have enriched our community, and we look forward to continued support in the years ahead.



In conclusion, as we look back at the past year, we take immense pride in our accomplishments and remain committed to our mission of uniting theory and practice in the social sciences. The unwavering dedication of our members and supporters continues to fuel our journey toward addressing societal challenges with informed, research-based solutions. Let us forge ahead together in our quest for knowledge and social justice.

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Published by the Trustee Board, Activism Foundation in the 7th AGM on 29th September, 2024