



Book Discussion – In Defence of the Ordinary

SEPTEMBER 2, 2021 / EVENT REPORTS

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#WebPolicyTalk

Center for Human Dignity and Development (CHDD)
IMPRI Impact and Policy Research Institute, New Delhi

invites you to

A Book Discussion on

In Defence of the Ordinary



Speaker and Author

Dr Dev Nath Pathak
Assistant Professor,
Department of Sociology,
South Asian University, New Delhi



zoom LIVE YouTube Spotify Google Podcasts

August 16, 2021 | 6:30 PM IST <https://www.impriindia.com/event/in-defence-of-the-ordinary/> IMPRI IMPACT AND POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

A book discussion on “In Defense of the Ordinary” by Dr. Dev Nath Pathak was organised on the 16th of August by Center of Human Dignity and Development (CHDD) at IMPRI Impact and Policy Research Institute, New Delhi. The deliberation was moderated by Dr. Simi Mehta, the CEO & Editorial Director of IMPRI.

Upcoming Events

#WebPolicyLearning

COHORT 3



An Online International Spring School Program

DATA ANALYTICS FOR POLICY RESEARCH

A One-Month Immersive Online Hands-On Certificate Training Course



APRIL 6-27, 2024 ZOOM 9:00 - 5:30 P.M. IST IMPRI IMPACT AND POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Four Consecutive Sundays

More Information: www.impriindia.com/event/data-analytics-policy-research-cohort-3/

Data Analytics for Policy Research –...

- 06/04/2024
- Online Event

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AN ONLINE INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM

BEYOND BINARIES

Cohort 2

Theme:
LGBTQIA+ NARRATIVES #WEARE!

A One month Immersive Online Certificate Training Course



June 2 - 30, 2024
Consecutive Sundays

Zoom 4:00 - 6:30 P.M. IST

IMPRI IMPACT AND POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

<https://www.impriindia.com/event/beyond-binaries-lgbtqia-narratives-weare/>

Beyond Binaries – Cohort 2.0:...

- 02/06/2024




#WebPolicyTalk

Center for Human Dignity and Development (CHDD),
IMPRI Impact and Policy Research Institute, New Delhi
invites you to
A Book Discussion on


In Defence of the Ordinary

Discussant




Prof Ashok Acharya
Professor in the Department of
Political Science, University of Delhi

Author and Speaker




Dr Dev Nath Pathak
Assistant Professor, Department of
Sociology, South Asian University, New
Delhi

Discussant



Prof Nivedita Menon
Professor at Centre for Comparative
Politics and Political Theory,
Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

Discussant



Prof Santosh K Singh
Chandigarh-based Academic and Commentator;
Formerly Founder Faculty with the Ambedkar
University Delhi

August 16, 2021 | 6:30 PM IST <https://www.impriindia.com/event/in-defence-of-the-ordinary/>

IMPRI IMPACT AND POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The distinguished panelist included the Author and Speaker – **Dr. Dev Nath Pathak**, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, South Asian University, New Delhi. The discussants were **Prof Nivedita Menon**, Professor at Centre for Comparative Politics and Political Theory, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, **Prof Ashok Acharya**, Professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi and **Prof Santosh K Singh**, Chandigarh-based Academic and Commentator; Formerly Founder Faculty with the Ambedkar University Delhi

Book: In Defence of the Ordinary


Building a case for the defence of the ordinary

Dr. Dev Nath Pathak

Dr. Dev Nath Pathak in his opening remarks stated the book is a result of the personal challenges that he experienced in the last 10 years of his academic practices – in resonance with public issues. It insinuates clues on what defines the word “ordinary”.

Online Event
#WebPolicyLearning

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Theme:
**Advancing Justice:
Bridging Gaps in
Public Policy
Enforcement**

An Online National Summer School Program

LPPYF Law and Public Policy Youth Fellowship- Cohort 3.0

A One-Month Immersive Online Law and Public Policy Awareness
Certificate Training Course and Internship Program

Chair: Prof Vibhuti Patel | Lead Advisor: Adv Dr Shalu Nigam

June 11 – July 16, 2024
Consecutive Tuesdays

Zoom & Research Essay Writing
6 – 8 PM

IMPRI IMPACT AND POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

www.impriindia.com/event/lppyf-3-advancing-justice


LPPYF Law and Public Policy Youth...

11/06/2024
 Online Event

#WebPolicyLearning

Cohort
2

IMPRI IMPACT AND POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE



URBAN POLICY & CITY PLANNING

July 5-27, 2024
Four Consecutive Fridays & Saturdays
6:30 – 8:30 pm

A One-Month Immersive Online
Introductory Certificate Training Course

www.impriindia.com/event/urban-policy-and-city-planning-cohort-2

Urban Policy and City Planning-...

05/07/2024



**There is no body if there is no spine.
There is no book if the central hinge
which binds the book together is
absent, ignored, dormant and hidden (**
some common words characterizing
the ordinary). The ordinary is the
hinge on which everything else
depends on from banality to
mundanity, from mundanity to
excellence, from success to triumph. It
all means nothing without the hinge
called the ordinary.

Dr. Dev Nath Pathak

The extraordinary breath of a yogi is nothing without the manifold ordinary breaths flowing day-in and day-out. Every yogi seems to know the three-fold passage of breaths, imagining these passages to be like veins, they were named Ida, Pingala, Sushumna by the ancient yoga teachers. However, what remains central in this whole game is that breathing is the ordinary breathing that we execute every day on a day-to-day basis.



It also looks very likely that one orbit of experience may clash with the other, and yet another one. One level of ordinariness may collide with another. More importantly the orbits of ordinariness may be at the mercy of the machinery that is working day and night to make everything glamorous, memorable, countable, and little more than merely ordinary. Yet the ordinariness remains intact for a return retrospection and revaluation.

To understand this, one need not spend long hours in libraries, or start pouring in the tombs of philosophy of phenomenology, or the philosophy of very ordinary everyday life. Phenomenologists help us to understand the details of ordinary everyday life. Hermeneutic philosophers, while dealing with the complexity of meanings and existential philosophers, showed us not only absurdity and banality, but also a possibility of humanism embedded in the details of everyday life. They do it obviously in the language of philosophy. There are limits and possibilities in the philosophical language.

It is not so easy as everyone says to follow the linguistic modes, styles, and articulation in these philosophical works. Hence, one seems to turn to ted talkers, gurus of all ranks and leaders of various orders. From the spiritual gurus to the management and love gurus, there are so many stakeholders. At times some of the teachers in universities also pose as secular gurus, some Marxists and some others with the level of liberals. Now there is a variety of rabid nationalist gurus. There is truly a demand for gurus who can tell things confidently and clearly. There is no ambiguity, all clear answers and hence, they are gurus. All such prescriptive answers with prophetic clarity are in demand. Seldom do such prescriptions leave adequate space for free will. Each of them will say I will show you the path and the followers of each seem to have started to walk on the shown path. With this is an extraordinary act of faith, of actions, of consequent reactions, of purchasing power and of expenditure and consumption. In this spectacular event in the biographies of ordinary people, there is a causality. The worst hit victim of this spectacle is the ordinary core of every human being.



Importance of reasoning including critical, philosophical, and pragmatic approaches

Prof. Ashok Acharya

Prof. Ashok Acharya remarked that the book in defense of the ordinary is an extraordinary book in many ways. It was an extremely riveting read that captivates the reader from start to finish. Prof. Acharya was enchanted by one of the claims made by Dr. Pathak, where he mentions at the beginning of the book that the pronouns 'I, You, We, They' are interchangeable. One can sense a certain kind of an autobiographical connect that delved into some of the author's past. In a way it brought back a sense of nostalgia for those who grew up in the 1970's and 80's. The book delves into many facets of life and in many cases underlines the distinction of the ordinary from the extra-ordinary. It also delves into various forms of social theories that illuminates the ordinary in many ways.

But in large parts the book invoked a feeling of nostalgia, as it took Prof. Acharya back into his adolescence and his early youth. It was an era where the society would have chastised anything that was not considered 'normal' in that sense. The best part of the book opens-up about the promise and the prospect of emotional reasoning that Dr. Pathak brings up. The work in this book opens our imagination in different ways, as it has a deep connection with normative political theory. The book does not claim to have a simple understanding of the word ordinary. In other words, ordinariness is a complex structure, an experience, and an idea. Prof. Acharya clearly distinguished between branches of critical, philosophical, and pragmatic reasoning in a relational context.

Alternate title and the building a case in favor of the professionalization of childcare for single mothers



Prof. Menon finds the read as a book of philosophy. Every one of the fascinating instances Dr. Pathak unfolded seemed to run a counter to the idea of a pure ordinariness, which he appears to be celebrating a pure notion of ordinariness. But every instance that he discusses seems to run counter to this idea. It seemed that while reading the book she thought that it was being read in an alternative title. Through various examples from the book, she discussed the importance of extraordinary in order to realize the ordinary and become illuminated. Prof. Menon also raised an important point in favor of the professionalization of child-care, making a case for the working women to continue with their work in an ordinary way.

Anthropological and Sociological take on the ordinary

Prof. Santosh K. Singh

Prof. Santosh Singh upon reading the book reflected on the idea of “What we have done to the ordinary in our practices of social sciences?” The reflections and the questions raised by Dr. Pathak seems to be close to many of us. The book also highlights some of the silent confessions on what we do wrong in our journey so far. The remarks shared by Prof. Singh is oriented from a sociological and an anthropological point of view, where it discussed how we neglected the ordinary and were more obsessed with the spectacular than the ordinary. This seems like a challenge to the field of sociology where we are captive to the idea of spectacular and extraordinary. It was emphasized on how the act of ordinary was disregarded and delinked from common sense in the field of sociology. Hence, we are now witnessing a backlash from the so-called ordinary. Over the years, there has been a lot of research focused on the topics of globalization and climate change. And on the contrary, there is a sense of ordinariness that is attached to the concept of rural. Therefore, it accrues less interest in the domain of sociological research



and finds itself neglected. Prof. Singh also poses the argument that if we don't nurture and connect with the ordinary in everyday life, we will not find the extraordinary moments.

Questions and answers and closing remarks

In this segment Dr. Pathak answered the questions and points raised by the panelists and the audience. The range of questions addressed includes topics such as professionalization of the child-care enabling the working class women to better raise their children; the ordinary being harmonized with the discourses surrounding mental health; considering treating the ordinary as a methodological category and if or not it can be kept in the larger dichotomy of methodological holism or methodological individualism, and whether it requires an extraordinary plane to comprehend the ordinary phenomenon. After answering these questions, the author and all the other panelists put forth their closing remarks, upon which the webinar was concluded.

YouTube Video: Book Discussion | Dr Dev Nath Pathak | In Defence of the Ordinary





Acknowledgement: Dhimaan Sarkaar, (MS. Business Analytics – Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA) is a Research Intern at IMPRI



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