



**O.P. JINDAL GLOBAL
UNIVERSITY**
INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE DEEMED TO BE
A Private University Promoting Public Service



I.D.E.A.S.
OFFICE of
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES



Reading Circle Initiative

Organised by the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies (IDEAS) at O.P. Jindal Global University, the Reading Circle offers students a space to read, reflect, and engage in meaningful discussions around a wide variety of texts. Aimed at encouraging open dialogue and diverse perspectives, the initiative helps deepen understanding across different themes and disciplines. Coordinated by Prof. Prachy Hooda, Lecturer at IDEAS, the Reading Circle hosted five sessions this semester, inviting leading scholars and academics to engage closely with texts, research, and ideas that shape contemporary debates in the social sciences.

This newsletter offers an overview of the sessions held between August and October 2025, along with the texts we explored and the discussions they sparked.



1. Caste and Occupation in Bombay (1870–2006)

Session with **Prof. Sumeet Mhaskar** Jindal School of Government and Public Policy

August 21 | 11:00 AM

Venue: Zenith, Ground Floor, T3

In this session, Prof. Sumeet Mhaskar discussed his long-term research on caste and occupation in Bombay, examining how caste hierarchies have shaped occupational choices within large-scale modern factories from the late nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century. The discussion challenged assumptions about industrial modernity erasing social divisions, showing instead how caste continues to structure labour markets, workplace mobility, and economic opportunity over time.

O.P. JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE DIEMED TO BE
A Private University Promoting Public Service

I.D.E.A.S.
OFFICE of
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

READING CIRCLE

Threads of Change: Interplay of Technological Transformation and Social Boundaries in Mumbai's Textile Mills (1870–2006)

Prof. (Dr.) Sumeet Mhaskar
Professor, Jindal School of Government and Public Policy

Date: 21st August, 2025 | Timing 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Venue : Zenith, Ground Floor, Ratan Jindal Academic Block (T3)

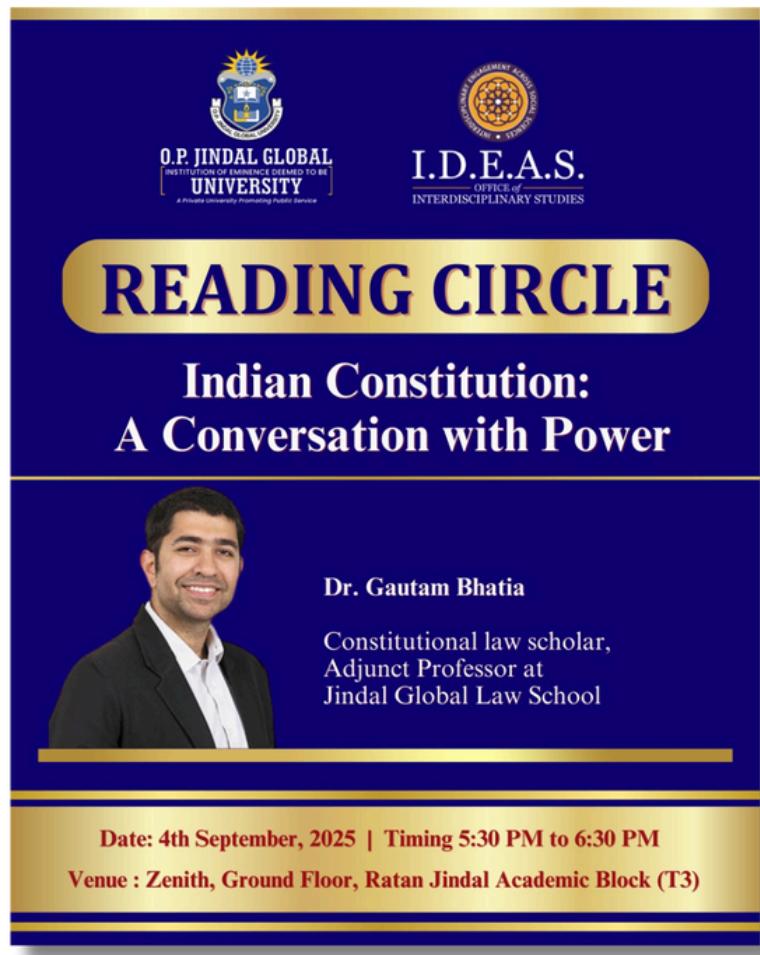
2. Indian Constitution: A Conversation with Power

Session with **Dr. Gautam Bhatia** Constitutional law scholars, Adjunct Professor at Jindal Global School

September 4 | 5:30 PM

Venue: Zenith, Ground Floor, T3

Renowned constitutional law scholar Dr. Gautam Bhatia joined the Reading Circle to discuss his book Indian Constitution: A Conversation with Power. The session explored how power flows through India's constitutional framework—from federalism and parliamentary authority to fundamental rights and popular sovereignty. Through close engagement with the text, participants reflected on how constitutional design shapes democratic practice and everyday political life in India.



3. & 4. Kashf Initiative x IDEAS Reading Circle

Reading Texts in the Social Sciences: Method and Meaning

Part I: How Do We Read Texts in the Social Sciences?

Keynote and Roundtable Discussion

Gurpreet Mahajan Former Professor, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Date: September 18, 2025

Mode: Online (Zoom)

The first session of this two-part series featured a keynote address by Prof. Gurpreet Mahajan on Reading Texts: Approaches, Contexts, and Critique. The keynote was followed by a roundtable discussion with Dr. Christian Gilliam, Dr. Gayatri Balu, and Monika, extending the conversation to questions of method, interpretation, and critique in social science reading practices. An open Q&A with the audience concluded the session, encouraging collective reflection on how meaning is produced in academic texts.



Reading Texts in the Social Sciences: Method and Meaning

Part II: Re-reading J. S. Mill's On Liberty: Context, Concepts, Contestations

Session with Prof. Mark Philip

October 24

Mode: Online

In the second part, Prof. Mark Philip, Professor Emeritus at the University of Warwick, led a close reading of J. S. Mill's *On Liberty*. Situating the text in its historical and intellectual context, the session revisited its central concepts and examined the contestations surrounding liberal freedom, authority, and individuality. The discussion highlighted how canonical texts continue to invite reinterpretation in changing political and social contexts.

The image is a promotional graphic for a session titled 'Reading texts in Social Science On Method & Meaning'. It features a photograph of Prof. Mark Philip speaking into a microphone. The background is a dark blue banner with white text. At the top, it says 'kashf initiative x I.D.E.A.S. OFFICE of INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES O.P. JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY'. Below that, it says 'Reading texts in Social Science On Method & Meaning'. A box in the center says 'PART 2 24th October 2025 | Online'. Below that, it says 'Keynote Address' and 'Re-reading J.S. Mill's *On Liberty* Context, Concepts, Contestations'. To the right, there is a QR code. The overall theme is the study of social science texts, specifically focusing on the methods and meanings of J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*, and its context, concepts, and contestations.

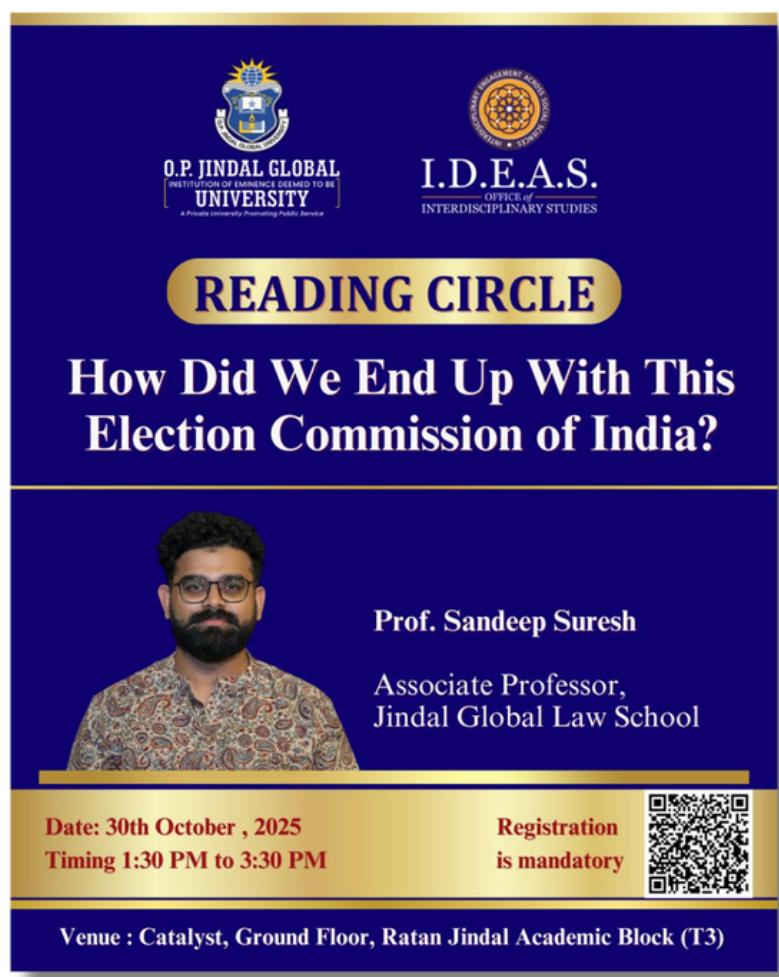
5. How Did We End Up With This Election Commission of India?

Session led by **Prof. Sandeep Suresh** Associate professor
Jindal Global Law school

October 30 | 1:30–3:30 PM

Venue: Catalyst, Ground Floor, T3

This Reading Circle session critically examined the constitutional origins and institutional design of the Election Commission of India. Planned and guided by Prof. Sandeep Suresh, the discussion engaged closely with selected excerpts from Constituent Assembly and committee debates to understand how the framers grappled with electoral independence—and where they fell short. The session offered historical insight into the roots of contemporary debates on the autonomy and effectiveness of India's electoral management body.



The banner features the logos of O.P. Jindal Global University and the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies (I.D.E.A.S.). The main title "READING CIRCLE" is in a large, bold, yellow font. Below it, the event title "How Did We End Up With This Election Commission of India?" is displayed in a white font. A portrait of Prof. Sandeep Suresh is shown, along with his title "Associate Professor, Jindal Global Law School". The date and time are listed as "Date: 30th October, 2025" and "Timing 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM". A QR code is in the bottom right corner, and the venue is noted as "Venue : Catalyst, Ground Floor, Ratan Jindal Academic Block (T3)".