

MA Sociology Programme, School of Liberal Studies
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi
MA Sociology 3rd semester Students' Visit to an exhibition on
The Sindhu Project: Enigma of Roots
Course: Economy, Polity and Society,
Date: 30th September 2026; Venue: Exhibit 320, Ladoo Sarai, Delhi

A visit to an exhibition *The Sindhu Project: Enigma of Roots*, that explored how belonging is envisioned and experienced by 20 artists from five countries of South Asia was organised by Dr. Rinju Rasaily, course coordinator and was attended by the students along with Dr. Swati Singh (Co-coordinator). The crux of the exhibition was "MOOL," a word used across several South Asian languages to signify root, origin, foundation, essence, or that which is fundamental. The exhibition was organised around four interconnected thematic strands: The Community, The Soil, The Body, and The Script. Ms. Somya, guided by walking through and explaining every facet of the exhibition and asked the students to consider what "home" meant to them. This question became central to understanding Mool, which demonstrated that belonging is not determined solely by a fixed geographical location, but is produced through memory, relationships, objects, language, culture, and lived experience. Drawing from a variety of objects, paintings, pottery, weaves and beautiful, imaginative yet painful expressions such as the partition, caste oppression by the artists across South Asia allowed the students to reflect on the meaning of MOOL or 'home' as it were. With students from diverse backgrounds, they could resonate with their own familial roots and with the texts studied in class, as one student, Aindri Dasgupta reflects,

"The Soil was particularly relevant when considered alongside our course material for Economy, Polity and Society. In previous classes, we discussed how Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge by Bernard Cohn (1991) demonstrates how colonial rule depended upon systems of classification, measurement, mapping, and documentation through which the colonial state sought to make Indian society and territory legible and governable. Similarly, Ranajit Guha (1996) shows how colonial interventions did not merely describe an already existing social and territorial reality, but actively reorganised relationships between land, property, and political authority.

This idea was especially clear in one of the exhibits representing the borders of Bangladesh through blades, turning an apparently objective territorial border into an image of violence and threat. Another display showed maps of the Indian subcontinent alongside the names of the individuals who had drawn or produced them, including the Radcliffe Line, rather than simply referring to it as the India–Pakistan border. This draws attention to how borders that have profoundly shaped people's lives could be imposed on paper by colonial administrators who did not experience the consequences of these divisions on the ground.

The exhibition showed me that the boundaries imposed upon people are not only geographical; they can also be social, gendered, and cultural. I was ultimately left with the idea that maps produced by states may establish political boundaries, but they cannot fully contain the histories and experiences of the people who live across, within, and beyond them. Mool makes this important shift from "where is home?" to "what makes a place home?"

The Course coordinators thanked Ms. Somya and sincerely appreciated the efforts given to curate such a thought-provoking exhibition in Delhi.

Report prepared by Dr. Rinju Rasaily, Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Studies