



Xavier University Bhubaneswar University Dialogue Series (UDS)

Date: 05 April 2019

Time: 11.00 am

Venue: Class Room 229

Why Public Compassion and Compassion Studies?

Speaker:

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In many senses, we are living in very troubled times. There is a human foot and handprint in all the bad that is happening around and to us. Sometimes, it does not seem to make much sense anymore. Sites of pain and suffering, of death and destruction -- involving both humans and other sentient beings -- are multiplying. Extreme self-centeredness, possessive individualism and 'what's in it for me' mindsets govern most of our social interaction, even the most intimate ones. We intensely suffer alienation and objectification in the marketplace. We have become 'free commodities' quite readily bought or sold. It is a time of deep moral crises though we often distract this by displaying or faking great achievements and progress. Or saying something like "Be Practical".

Society has a way to submerge or distract us from the uncomfortable realities that need to be brought to focused attention so that there is interrogation and deliberation on those areas that are normally not covered in the mainstream humanities and social sciences and that go beyond disciplinary silos. Given their seriousness, morality, public compassion and other-directedness must be brought into public learning spaces and into our everyday discourse and action. Can we therefore genuinely learn from the present ecological, social and moral crises or collapse? Can we respond to it as an educational institution?

Key Words: possessive individualism, objectification, market, educational institution.

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