Name of the Event: Migration and Human Rights in Contemporary Society.

Organizing Department: The Department of Sociology, Loreto College (Autonomous), Kolkata.

Date and Time: 3rd September 2026, 8:30 am.

Venue: Auditorium, Loreto College (Autonomous), Kolkata.

Resource Person: Rev. Fr. Dr. Arockiasamy Joseph, the Archpriest and Parish Priest of the historic Parish of Santa Maria Maggiore in Imperia, Italy.

EVENT DETAILS:

The Department of Sociology at Loreto College (Autonomous), Kolkata, successfully organized a one-day international lecture on “Migration and Human Rights in Contemporary Society” on the college campus, addressing one of the most pressing and contested issues of our time: global migration and the human rights of those who cross borders in search of safety, opportunity, or survival. The session began at 8:30 a.m. and lasted one hour. Rev. Fr. Dr. Arockiasamy Joseph served as the esteemed speaker of the day. The lecture drew enthusiastic participation from UG Semester 1 students of the Sociology Department, as well as from other departments. A total of 90 students attended the lecture.

The speaker opened the session by situating migration in its historical and contemporary context, noting that human movement across borders is not new but has intensified due to globalization, conflict, climate change, and widening economic disparities between nations. Drawing on data from international migration bodies, the speaker outlined how millions of people are displaced each year, whether by war, persecution, environmental disaster, or the simple pursuit of a better life. This framing established migration not as an aberration but as a structural feature of the modern world order.

Central to the lecture was a critical examination of the term "illegal immigrant" or "illegal alien." The speaker argued that while immigration status can be classified as legal or unauthorized under a given country's laws, the human being who migrates cannot themselves be "illegal." A person's existence, the speaker contended, is not a crime; rather, it is specific acts—such as crossing a border without documentation—that may violate administrative law. Conflating the person with the act, the speaker suggested, dehumanizes migrants and refugees, reducing complex human lives to a single legal infraction. This distinction between "illegal status" and "illegal personhood" became the conceptual anchor of the entire seminar. Building on this foundation, the speaker introduced the international human rights framework that applies to all individuals regardless of their immigration status. To ground the theoretical discussion, the speaker presented several contemporary case studies. These examples illustrated the gap between existing legal frameworks and the lived realities of displaced people. The speaker noted that climate migrants, in particular, represent an emerging category not adequately addressed by current international law, raising questions about how legal frameworks must evolve to meet new global realities. Following the main presentation, the floor was opened for questions and discussion. Audience members raised thoughtful points

regarding the practical challenges of balancing national security concerns with human rights obligations.

The lecture on "Migration and Human Rights in Contemporary Society" offered a compelling and thought-provoking exploration of one of today's most urgent global issues. By reframing the debate around the question "Are human beings illegal?", the speaker effectively challenged the audience to separate legal status from human worth, urging a shift in both language and policy toward a more rights-based approach to migration. The seminar underscored that while nations have legitimate interests in regulating borders, these interests must be balanced against the inalienable rights and dignity of every human being, regardless of where they were born or where they seek to live.

The seminar was highly relevant and timely, offering valuable insights for students, policymakers, and citizens alike. It served as a reminder that behind every statistic on migration lies a human story, and that the language and frameworks we use to discuss migration have real consequences for how migrants and refugees are treated in practice. The lecture succeeded in fostering critical reflection and left the audience with a deeper appreciation of the ethical dimensions underlying migration policy in the contemporary world.

The session ended at nearly 10:00 am after a group discussion with the students and faculty and a group photograph. The day concluded with a vote of thanks to the esteemed guest by Mr. Meghjit Sengupta, HOD and Faculty, Department of Sociology, Loreto College (Autonomous), Kolkata.

Geo-Tagged Photographs of the Event:



Image 1: Ms Kaushiki Banerjee, faculty, Department of Sociology, felicitating the guest of honour.



Image 2: Father delivering his lecture.



Image 3: The audience during the lecture.

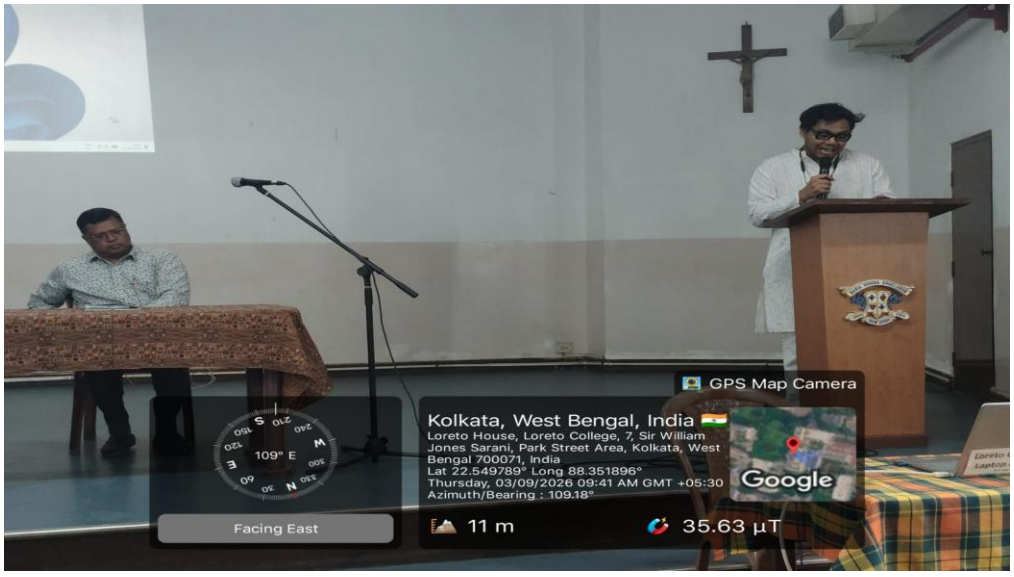


Image 4: Mr. Meghjit Sengupta, HOD, Department of Sociology, delivering the vote of thanks to the esteemed guest of honour.



Image 5: The departmental faculty with Rev. Fr. Dr. Arockiasamy Joseph