

Symbiosis School of International Studies
Name of Programme- MA (International Studies)
7.2.1_Best practice_2024-2025

Title of the best practice- A field trip to enable experiential learning

Objectives of the practice- The main objectives were to familiarize students with international trade practices, assess the implementation of fair trade principles by global brands, and understand sustainability commitments, pricing strategies, and consumer demographics. The activity also aimed to help students distinguish between fair trade and non-fair-trade products and to encourage critical engagement with ethical business practices.

Context of the workshop- The field trip was organized as part of the Global Political Economy coursework for M.A. (International Studies) students at the Symbiosis School of International Studies, Pune. The visit took place at Phoenix Market City Mall, Pune, on January 27, 2025.

The Practice- Students were divided into groups and assigned specific research questions. They visited various stores in the mall, covering sectors such as apparel, body care, jewelry, perfumes, electronics, beauty, wellness, and fashion. The students interacted with store employees and managers, reviewed products, and evaluated brand commitments to fair trade and sustainability. They compared brands like The Body Shop (noted for its sustainable practices) and Kama Ayurveda (eco-conscious and ayurvedic), and observed differences in marketing strategies and consumer priorities. The fieldwork culminated in classroom presentations where students shared their findings

Evidence of Success:

Snippets of the GPE:IT & D Field Research Activity

1. Student interviews with store managers



2. Product Comparison: Beauty and Wellness Companies

The Body Shop (Fair Trade Certified) and Miniso (Not Fair Trade certified)



3. Classroom presentations




Impact of the Workshop practice- The field trip enabled students to connect theoretical concepts from their coursework to real-world practices in the global political economy. It provided practical insights into fair trade certification, consumer behavior, and ethical business practices, and highlighted the gap between brand marketing and actual employee awareness. The experience fostered critical thinking and enhanced students' understanding of international trade and development.

Obstacles faced and strategies- Some challenges included limited awareness among store employees about fair trade and related certifications, as well as hesitancy to discuss brand policies in detail. To address these, students relied on structured research questions and direct product comparisons to gather information, even when detailed responses were not forthcoming.



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