

*London School of
Economics and Political
Science Sikh Society*

**Annual Report
2012-2013**

**The London School of Economics and
Political Science Sikh Society
promotes activities that appreciate the
culture, history and ideology
of the Sikh way of life.**

OUR VISION

- To raise awareness and provide education about the Sikh faith and way of life to the university and wider community in a fun and friendly way.

OUR VALUES

- Openness, acceptance and humility.

OUR AIMS

- To provide a platform for Sikhs at the LSE to discuss and practice Sikhi, as well as to meet other like minded individuals.
- Raise awareness about the religion amongst the university and wider community.

INTRODUCTION

[Report from University Sikh society President 2012-2013]

This has been another good year for LSE Sikh society, with the return of weekly Simran sessions/ workshops in the first term.

The society actively participated in all the interfaith events that took place during the year, such as the primary school visits and the 'What Is Interfaith' event, which was attended by the director of the university. The university Chaplain commended the society on its participation in interfaith events during the year.

LSE Sikh Society was also active in the Nishaan network this year. The Society hosted the Nishaan talk 'Bhrat, India or Hindustan'. The talk was given by Harinder Singh from SikhRI in the USA. Society members also attended a variety of other Nishaan events such as Collaborations and Seva Day.

Being a member of Nishaan gave the society members a chance to meet students from other London universities. Also, it gave members the opportunity to attend a wide variety of events that would not otherwise have been available to them.

This year saw the society design a new logo. This logo has not yet been implemented anywhere as it was completed very late in the year, but it will be passed to the coming committee to make any alterations as they wish before implementing it.

The new LSE Student Centre was due to open this year but the opening has been moved to next January. Hopefully this centre will provide the society space to host a wider variety of events.

Finally I would like to thank all the committee members for their effort during the year.

Jasdeep Singh

MEMBERSHIP & OFFICERS

SELECTION PROCESS

The current year's committee was elected in late March 2012. We would encourage new committees to take note of all candidates who are interested in a position for the following year and involve them in event organisation and planning, from January onwards, to provide a smoother transition. This will allow the following year's committee to gain experience and become familiar with the SU admin processes.

SOCIETY OFFICERS

President: Jasdeep Singh
Vice-President: Gurmaher Kooner
Vice-President: Thiren Phull
Treasurer: Manjot Sidhu
General Secretary: Angli Marway
Inter-faith Officer: Gurdeep Chinna

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

66 paid members, membership was £2 for the year

STUDENT SERVICES

ACADEMIC STUDIES/

There were no formal academic studies run by LSE Sikh Society. The Sikh studies classes run by Naujawani.com were not as well promoted at freshers fair at the beginning of the year as they should have been, this issue has been addressed by the coming year's committee and more of an effort will be made to promote these.

WORKSHOPS

Workshops took place after the weekly simran sessions and were run by a committee member, examples of topics touched upon were Mool Mantar, caste and the role of women in society. We also played games such as the Super Sant Quiz. I would encourage the coming year's committee to contact outside speakers to also run workshops, as they have a lot more experience.

In February LSE Sikh society hosted the Nishaan event Bhrat, India or Hindustan? This was a talk given by Harinder Singh from the Sikh Research Institute. This was very well received by all who attended, which was around 15 to 20 people from various universities across London.

ACTIVITIES

SPORT

None, an area which the coming year's committee may wish to look into.

ARTS

LSE Sikh society under the umbrella organisation Nishaan, helped organise Collaborations which showcased various arts. No specific arts events were hosted solely by the society in relation to arts; this is an area which the coming year's committee may wish to look into.

SOCIAL LIFE

FRESHERS WEEK

The society had a stall at the universities Fresher's Fair which was held at the end of September on campus as opposed to an external site as was the case the previous year. One of the committee members brought a box of jalebis to give to passers-by and to attract interest. We also distributed freshers packs to those who signed up, these were kindly provided by Naujawani. The 2 days went well and we received a good response from students and staff, some people also approached us in search of more information on Sikhi in general. A point for future committees to consider is that a plug socket is not provided to all stalls for laptop charging etc, however this year we were fortunate to be located next to one.

Our freshers welcome event took place in the first week of term, in which we did various icebreakers and activities for the new members to meet and get to know each other, and the committee.

CELEBRATIONS

The annual society dinner was held at Pizza Express in Holborn. This is only a few minutes walk from the university so is an ideal location to host such an event. They have a very spacious group dining area in the basement and they allow you to book in advance. The turnout to the event was the highest of any event during the year. There was an activity for everyone to get to know each other and talk to people who they had not met before. The event went well and those who came enjoyed it.

EXCURSIONS

Throughout the year there were events organised by Nishaan such as the paintballing at the beginning of the year, talks and Collaborations, attendance from LSE Sikh Society members varied.

CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS

MAJOR EVENT

There were no major events this year organised solely by the society, but it took part in fairly big events organised collaboratively with Nishaan such as collaborations and the talk given by Harinder Singh which was held at LSE. The university was due, to this year open a student building which housed an interfaith centre. The opening of this building has now been moved to January 2014, this is an area which could be used in future to host Kirtan Darbars and other big Sikh Society events currently no suitable location exists.

ACTIVISM

Being a member of Nishaan, students from the LSE took part in 'Seva Day' alongside other Sikh Societies across London. The event involved preparing sandwiches at Shepherds Bush Gurdwara and distributing them to the homeless across Central London. The turnout from LSE students was good and an improvement on the previous year, the feedback received from those who attended was very good.

COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS

MODES

The main mode of communication was by the Facebook group and page as well as email. The society used 2 email accounts as the official email account provided by the SU can only be used for emailing paid members. During freshers fair a contact list was created with the emails of all the people who were interested in the society. People on this contact list were emailed for the first few weeks using a Gmail account so those who had not yet signed up were still informed of events. All event details were put on Facebook throughout the year which informed second and third year students, some of which do not renew their membership so don't receive emails from the SU account.

PARTNERSHIPS

WITHIN LSE

The President and the Interfaith officer attended Inter-faith meetings organised by the chaplaincy throughout the year. One of the key issues discussed was the new Student Union building which was opening in 2014. The new Student Union building will have a large multifaith prayer room with storage cabinets so we will no longer have to carry items from our accommodation to university. We could also hopefully use the multifaith prayer room to host our own Kirtan Darbar or Guru Ka Langer in the future.

The LSE Interfaith body had organized for different faith societies to go into local primary schools and talk about an 'object of prayer' in assemblies. LSE Sikh society attended 2 of the 3 school visits which is an improvement on the previous year; hopefully we will be able to attend all of the schools arranged next year. Being located in Central London, all of the nearby schools had a Muslim majority and most children knew very little about Sikhs, some had a vague idea from previous RE lessons. The visit consisted of firstly talking to a number of small groups of children and then making a short presentation on Sikhi in a key stage 2 assembly. This is a very good way of raising awareness about Sikhs in the wider community.

As part of the annual Holocaust remembrance service held at LSE, different faiths were asked to read a short passage from their respective religious texts. The Sikh society also took part in this. At the beginning of the year there was an interfaith event held "What is Interfaith" in which the Sikh Society Interfaith Officer made a short presentation on "My faith as my spiritual story". This event was attended by the Director of the university and members of various faith societies.

The LSE Interfaith body is a great way to raise awareness and provide education about the Sikh faith to the university and wider community.

NATIONAL BODY

LSE Sikh Society was actively involved in Nishaan which is a network connecting Sikh Societies across London and the South East of England. It is created on the principle of 'for the students by the students'. Sikh societies in Nishaan retain their individual independence and work together to collaborate and make events bigger and better.

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

LSE Sikh society has received support from Naujawani.com in the form of freshers packs, also Sikh Research Institute held a talk at the LSE through the Sikh society.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

SUMMARY

The society's income came from membership fees and the Annual SU grant. To receive the grant an application has to be made to the SU with an outline of the events which will take place during the year and the costs of them. It is better to over rather than underestimate these costs as the SU rarely reconsider and it is better to avoid the hassle of going back to them.

ACCOUNTS

Income

Society membership fees £132

Annual SU grant £130

(Grant has to be used during the year cannot be carried over)

Outgoings

Pizza Express service charge 14.95

Social event catering costs £82.93

Refreshments £2.10

THE FUTURE

One of the main problems seen this year was attendance to events and weekly sessions. Some events had an unexpected turnout such as the Pizza Express annual dinner where 20 people attended and others had 2 committee members only where usually around 6 to 7 people would attend. This was one of the reasons only one outside speaker was contacted which was through Nishaan, as it looks really bad on the society to call an outside speaker and only 1 or 2 people attend as was the case last year. There was a general trend of, as the term went on attendance dropped. This can be explained by the workload increasing as the term goes on. The coming year's committee is a lot larger and so more people (the committee members) can be confirmed as attending. This should allow outside speakers to be arranged and the workshops and weekly sessions to improve. I advise the coming year's committee to hold more events early on in the first term as this may put people into a routine of attendance.

One of the problems encountered this year was room booking as the authorisation took very long to go through. I would advise the coming committee to, if possible, arrange this during the summer. Also to ensure the room is carpeted if it is a Simran event.

The society was very well represented at the interfaith events this year. I strongly encourage the coming year's committee to keep this up as it is a great way to spread awareness of the Sikh faith to the university and wider community.

Next year will see the opening of the LSE Student Centre with a dedicated multi-faith area. Hopefully the society will be able to make use of this and offer a wider array of events.

Hopefully next year will see the society grow and develop.

Vaheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Vaheguru Ji Ki Fateh