


by Sexuality&Disability 3 years ago

# "What is 'Gandi Baat'? More than friendship," Say VI Students at a Sex-Ed Workshop


We were at the ILS Law college for the first in a series of workshops we conducted in Pune. There, we met with a group of students, which consisted of both visually-impaired, and sighted girls and boys.

We had a total of 25 participants, who arrived from S.P. College, University of Pune, Pimple Gurav Hostel, and some other institutions.

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Good morning tweeps, today we are at ILS law college, Pune to conduct a workshop on sexuality & disability. Watch this space for more :)

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For today's workshop we are equipped with tactile models, B-wood songs and flowers. Exciting times ahead. Watch this space :) #sexdis

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The workshop started with a felicitation ceremony in the presence of Justice. Z M. Yakoob, who is a retired visually-impaired judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, his wife Annu Yakoob, Dr. Jain from ILS Law College, Nidhi Goyal, and Bishakha Datta.

Justice Yakoob spoke about the need to understand the relationship between one's body, one's space and one's environment. Focusing on sexuality, he spoke about his own experiences of exploring his body and sexuality, from when he was a little boy to at his current age. He emphasised that knowing one's body is very important, and finding out about sexual organs is just a very small part of the process.

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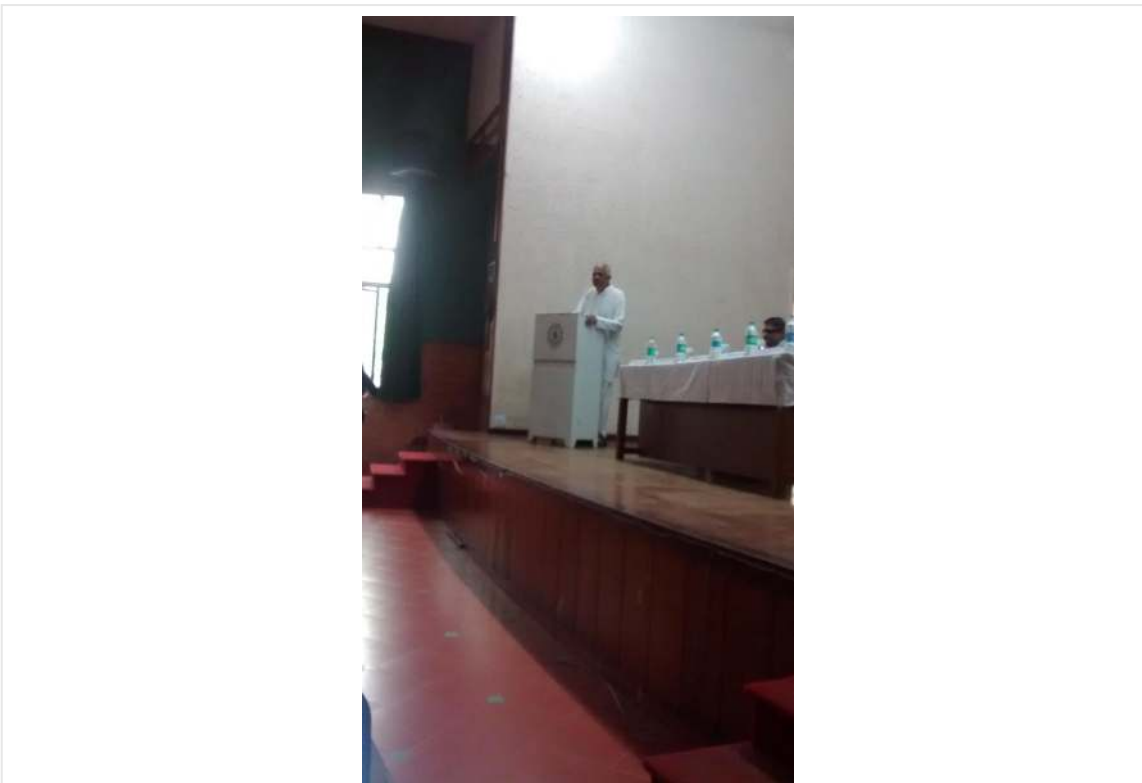
We also have a guest for today's workshop at ILS, Pune, Z.M. Yakoob, a retired V.I. judge from South Africa. We start shortly. #sexdis

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And we start! Our guests are being felicitated by the Principal of ILS law college. #sexdis [pic.twitter.com/SrtB5PdBBF](https://pic.twitter.com/SrtB5PdBBF)

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Justice Yakub opens up with a 3-min talk on sexuality and enjoying one's body. The tone has been set. #sexdis [pic.twitter.com/yhhRc5t896](https://pic.twitter.com/yhhRc5t896)

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We have started live-tweeting our workshop at ILS Law College, Pune. Watch this space and keep following [#Sexdis @genderlogindia](#)

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 **Feminism in India**  
 Feminis@Femindia


Follow them tweeps, they are live tweeting a workshop on sexuality and disability at ILS, Pune. [#sexdis twitter.com/dis\\_sexuality/...](#)

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 **Japleen Pasricha**  
 japna\_p@japna\_p

Awesome! Follow them peeps [#sexdis twitter.com/dis\\_sexuality/...](#)

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 **Parodevi Pictures**  
 @parodevipix

[#SexDis in Pune! twitter.com/dis\\_sexuality/...](#)

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The ice breaker seemed to strike a chord with the students, and some really fun conversations ensued. Tesjaswini, Anil, Shantanu, Swapnali, and Shubhangi were very active. Later, Nidhi joined in as well.



We start with our icebreaker 'Meet and Move' led by @rajuness. Exciting times ahead! #sexdis  
[pic.twitter.com/Ng7Z2VEMfT](https://pic.twitter.com/Ng7Z2VEMfT)

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Students have to meet each other and ask general questions like favorite film, food, hobby, etc. Awesome way to break some ice. #sexdis

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Then they move one step right, change partners and ask the same questions again. @rajuness rocking this activity. #sexdis

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Students are all talkative and giggly, trying to remember their partners favourites. Happiness is in the air :) #sexdis


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Nidhi starts her session, "What does the word sexuality mean?" In response to the total silence, Nidhi says "Itna sannata?" Everyone giggles.

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The students are all charged up now and [@saysnidhigoyal](#) takes over, walking them through the content of the workshop. [#sexdis](#)

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[.@saysnidhigoyal](#) asks what is sexuality, class quiet. she asks, what is romance and everyone giggles. [#sexdis](#)

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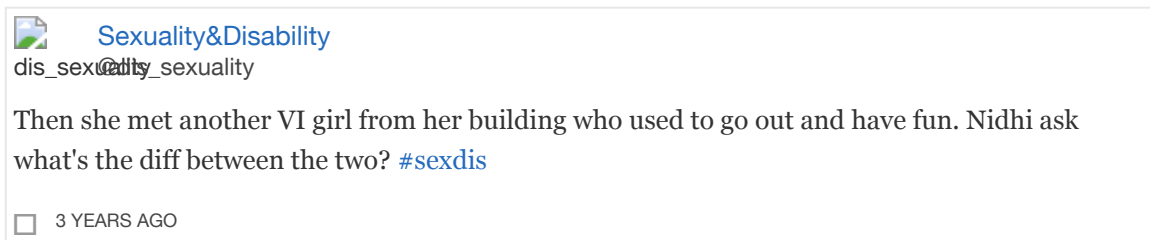
Nidhi narrates the story of Namrata, a 25-year old woman, who is visually impaired and goes into depression. Then she meets a girl named Prathana who stays in the same building as she does. Prathana goes out often, sometimes alone, sometimes with friends. She asks Namrata to accompany her. Namrata replies, "How will we do that? You also cannot see and it is the same with me." She also asks, "How do you have so many friends and always find some one or the other to meet or watch a movie with?"

Nidhi asks what the difference was between the two girls.



[.@saysnidhigoyal](#) narrates the story of 25-yr old VI girl who went into depression. [#sexdis](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/auuL1Bvbgq](https://pic.twitter.com/auuL1Bvbgq)

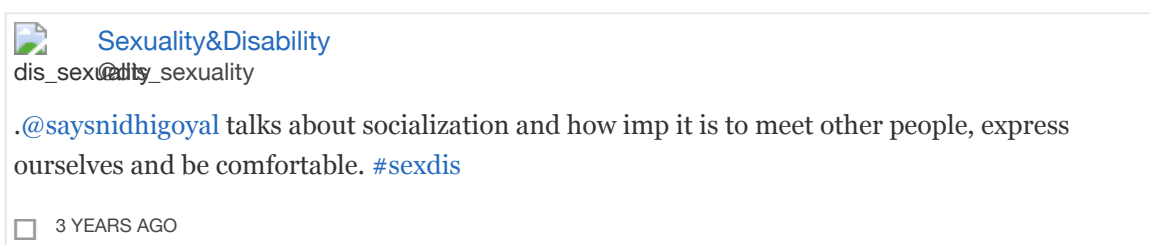
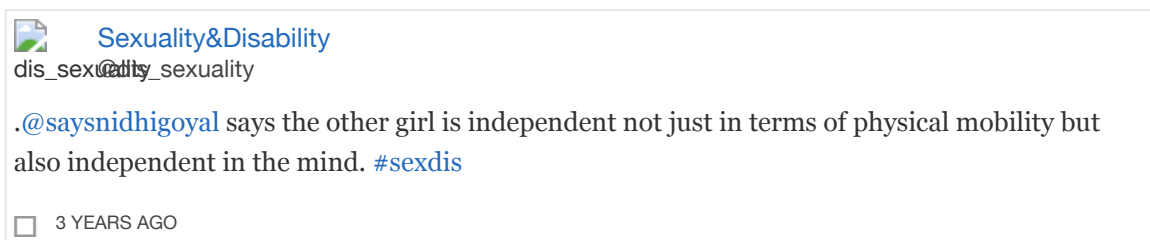
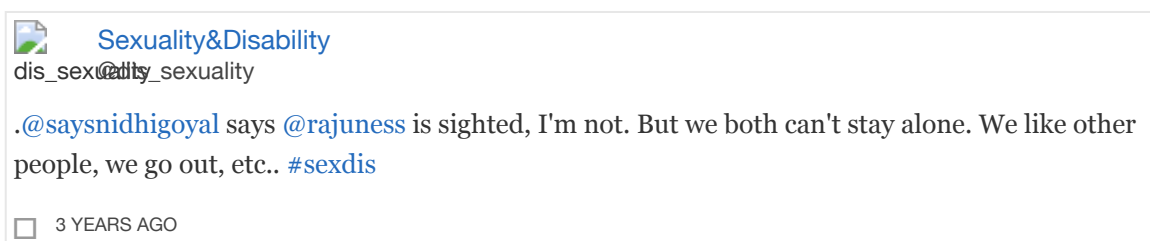
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Students respond with terms like confidence, positive perspective, self awareness. Nidhi explains, Prathana is independent, not just in terms of physical mobility but also independent in the mind. She then asks, "Why should we meet others and go outside?"

Students give reasons such as networking, effective public speaking, etc.

Nidhi asks, "What about friendship?" She says, "Raju is sighted, I am not, but we both can't stay alone, we like other people...You must be thinking, why am I going on and on about socializing when the workshop is on sexuality and romance? But are we going to be romantic just with ourselves? If you keep sitting on the sofa at home, nobody is going to come fall in your lap!" Everyone chuckles. "Even in Bollywood Shahrukh cannot sit at home waiting for Kajol."



When the music starts, everyone dances. Tejaswini dances passionately. Pratibha says, "She's dancing well because she was sighted until two years ago."

Next theme: "It is natural to feel conscious about oneself if a person we are interested in walks into the room. We shouldn't limit these natural things because of our blindness. If we keep getting worried, we will always be shy to do the things we like to do."



And now we are dancing to popular Bollywood numbers. :) #sexdis [pic.twitter.com/svFaRXal2E](https://pic.twitter.com/svFaRXal2E)

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Students respond with words like 'initiative', 'confidence', 'positive attitude', 'self-awareness' 'friends' 'independence'. sexdis

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Nidhi asks the boys and girls to describe “a good looking girl.” Answers vary from blue eyes to perfect figure and soft skin. “Good looking guy” is described as handsome and with good body language, perhaps even biceps and a 6 pack. The best part is when Nidhi asks, “From where did you learn all this?” Shantanu and others says, "We didn't learn this, we feel this". “Do you understand good looking girls and their figures since your birth?”, asks Nidhi.

All of them start thinking about the source of their thoughts. Pratibha says, "we have learnt all of this from outside, and our mothers have also taught us." Everyone giggles, but it is an important moment as we learn about construction of ideas of beauty through the song “Blue Eyes” (as Nidhi puts it hilariously, “Sant Honey Singh ji ke jo humein apne sureela satsang mein bataya hain.”) and also how people like our mothers or our friends shape our ideas, apart from obvious things like the media.




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After dancing to 'blue eyes' and 'char baj gaye', @saysnidhigoyal starts dissecting them, asking the boys & girls what is beautiful. #sexdis

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B'ful skin, hair, body language, respond the girls. "Not biceps?", asks @saysnidhigoyal . Girls giggle. #sexdis

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The idea that what is not b'ful is not acceptable, like biceps, six packs, short skirt, etc by media is not true, dissects Nidhi. #sexdis

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"There is no 'normal' or 'abnormal' in disability, says @saysnidhigoyal #sexdis


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"How is falling in love different for a person with impairment?"

Shantanu answers, "Falling in love for sighted people is so very fast!"


Nidhi discusses how romance starts with the eyes in most films and music videos. She tries to bust the myth that romance cannot happen without eyes, and says that there are other ways to engage someone.

Raju talks about scent.

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We play "tumse mili nazar' & ask, is this the only way to fall in love. Some say yes, some no. One student: love is fast when you're sighted

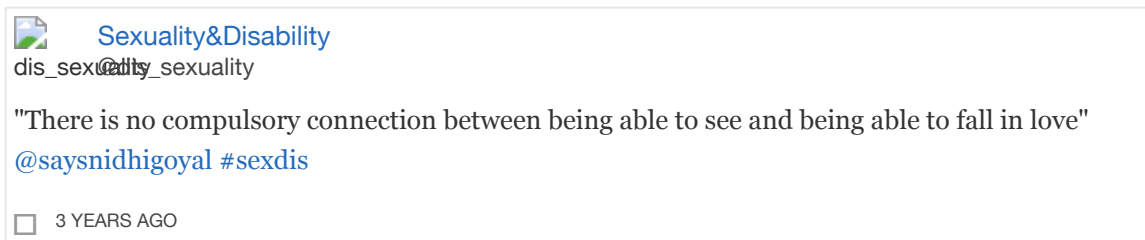
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.@saysnidhigoyal busts the 'love at first sight' myth. You don't only need to 'see' to love. We want 'first-instance love' #sexdis

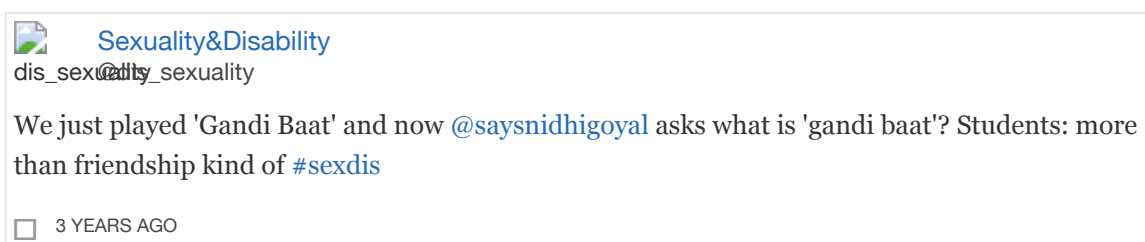
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The song 'Gandi Baat' is played and Nidhi asks everyone if they understand what 'Gandi Baat' means. Ankit says 'mischievous talks' and Aishwarya says 'more than friendship'. Everyone is trying to skip the answer, but some people also bring up that it is not really a 'Gandi Baat', whatever it is.

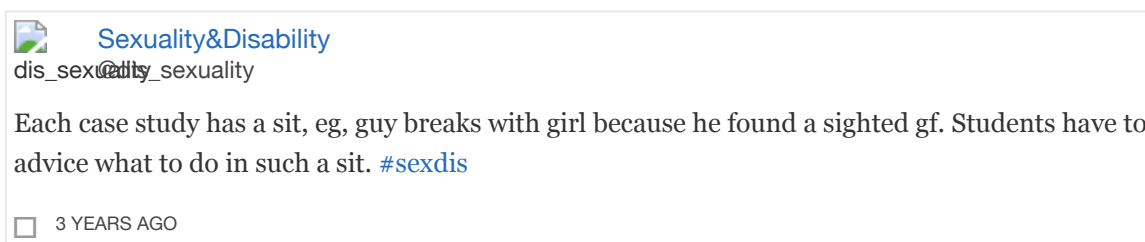
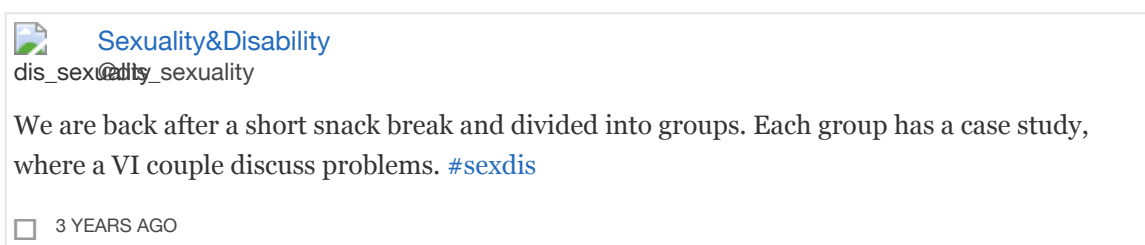
We break for lunch at around 3:30 pm. Anil Rajput, a participant who has completed a Diploma course on Special Education at Nasik under DU, suggests that we should have workshops with sighted people at a college as well, to ensure change in mindsets. We are glad he said that, as the exploratory research that we had planned also contains the same idea.



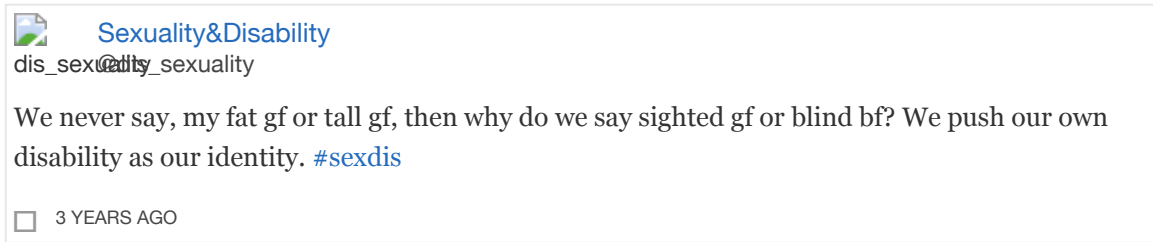
After the break, we split into four groups and discuss the case studies. Different themes such as choice, age, responsibility, right-wrong, duty, desirability etc emerge in their presentations.

An example: Anil Rajput's group has the case of a V.I. girl named Radhika who was being warned by her friends to leave her sighted boyfriend as it is difficult to trust him, saying that he might leave her any time. Anil states that though their doubts were natural and legitimate, Radhika's friends could not digest the idea of love between a V.I. person and a sighted one. He suggests that her friends should understand where Radhika and her boyfriend met, for how long have they been together, how he treats her in public, etc. Radhika and her boyfriend should win the trust of their friends, together.

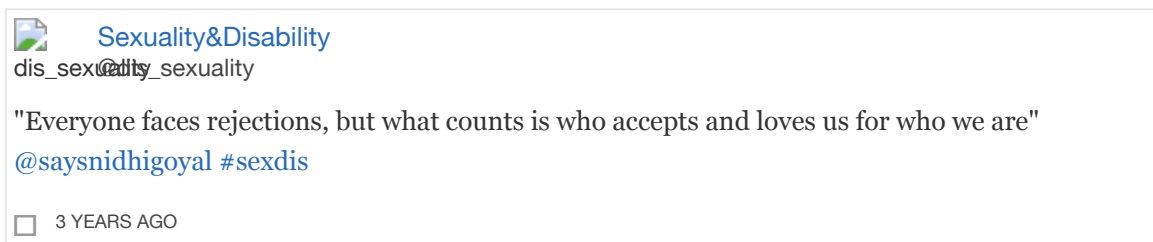
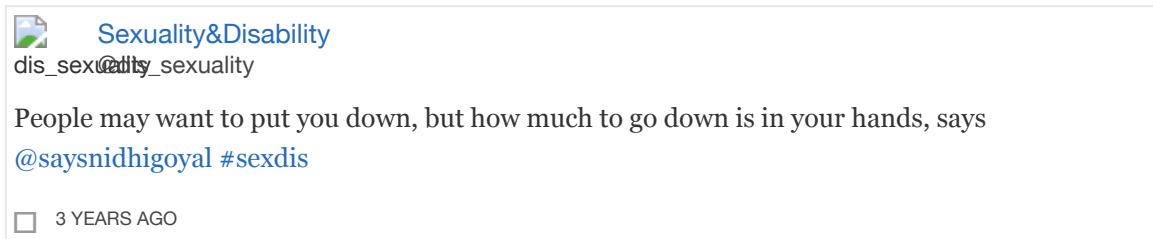
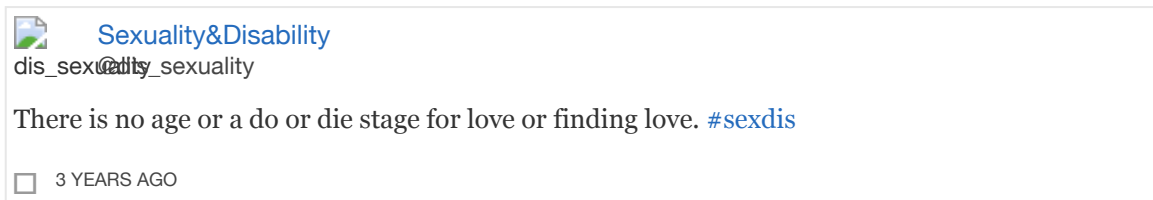
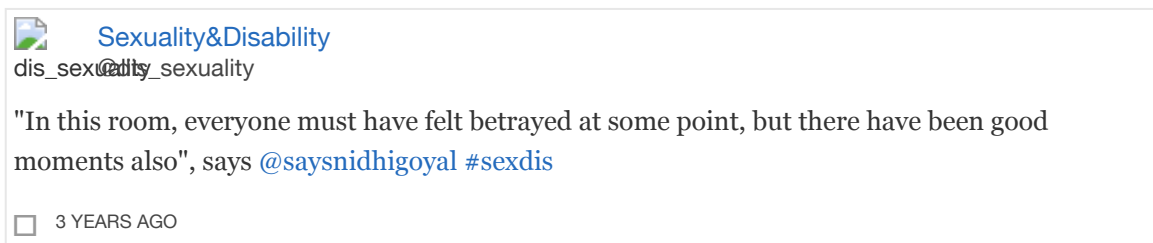
Nidhi concludes the presentations by breaking down the saying "Beggars cannot be choosers."



Nidhi asks if we will introduce our boyfriend or girlfriend as “my fat bf” or “my fat gf”? She asks, "Then why do we have to talk about disability or ability as if it is so crucial?"



We discuss the idea that the many trust issues or rejections that people with disabilities face are also faced by non-disabled people, We also talk about the idea of being single or alone. “There is no age or do-or-die stage when it comes to finding love”, says Nidhi. There is a bit of discussion about consent as well, which starts upon playing the song 'Jaane Do Na.'




Female models are shown to the male participants and male models to the female participants. Sighted volunteers support and participate in this session, and for many participants this is a new experience.



The models are out! Girls have the male organ and boys female. #sexdis [pic.twitter.com/8zBacgmKTe](https://pic.twitter.com/8zBacgmKTe)

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We end workshop by busting myths around sex & sexual relationships and ask for feedback. Students want more info on relationships. #sexdis

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Today's workshop comes to an end, participants receive certificates from Dr. Sanjay Jain. Follow us for more, Storify coming soon #sexdis

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You can check out the Storifys of our previous workshops here:

1. Andheri Industrial Home for Blind Women: [storify.com/dis\\_sexuality/w...](https://storify.com/dis_sexuality/w...) and [storify.com/dis\\_sexuality/w...](https://storify.com/dis_sexuality/w...)
2. National Association for the Blind: [storify.com/dis\\_sexuality/w...](https://storify.com/dis_sexuality/w...)
3. Kamla Mehta School for the Blind: [storify.com/dis\\_sexuality/w...](https://storify.com/dis_sexuality/w...)