



# PCMMM&A YEAR IN REVIEW 2024



Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis  
Memorial Museum and Archives  
Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata



**Dr. Kishor Chandra Satpathy**



It gives me great pride to present the annual review of activities at the Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum & Archives (PCMMM&A), where we continue to uphold the legacy of one of India's foremost statisticians and visionaries.

Rooted in Professor Mahalanobis's efforts in the 1950s to preserve his documents at ISI, the museum was formally established in 1993 to commemorate his birth centenary. It houses rare photographs, documents, and personal items from Amrapali, his former residence. While our gallery undergoes restoration—led by IDEATE, New Delhi—our collection is temporarily housed on the third floor of the Library Building.

### **Highlights of 2024**

#### **Digitization & Archives**

We digitized over 4,000 photographs and 4,500 archival documents, including Sambadadhvam, and are expanding access through a growing digital archive.

#### **Conservation**

Over 200,000 items have been treated. Documentation of materials related to Mahalanobis and ISI has enriched our research services.

#### **Exhibitions**

We hosted two major exhibitions: one during U.S. Consul General Melinda Pavek's visit on American scholars at ISI, and Verses and Variables, exploring Mahalanobis's connection with Rabindranath Tagore.

#### **Internships**

Students from Jadavpur University and Netaji Subhas Open University were mentored in conservation, digitization, and archival practices.

#### **Outreach**

Our exhibit on Mahalanobis's data science legacy won Second-Best Stall at Bijnan O Prajukti Mela. We also partnered with the Kolkata Centre for Creativity and participated in the AMI Arts Festival.

#### **Visitors**

We welcomed academic groups from Sikkim University, Royal Global University, Rabindra Bharati University, and dignitaries such as Shri Viraj Singh from the Ministry of External Affairs.

PCMMM&A remains dedicated to preserving and promoting the legacy of Professor Mahalanobis and the scientific contributions of ISI through conservation, digitization, research, and public engagement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Satpathy', written over a faint background watermark of a building.

In-Charge, PCMMM&A  
Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata

# Overview



The Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum & Archives (PCMMM&A) traces its origins to the early 1950s when Professor Mahalanobis initiated a dedicated section in the Institute's library as a 'Museum' to preserve letters and reports from eminent personalities, along with photographs of distinguished visitors. He envisioned establishing a permanent museum documenting the history and activities of the Institute and the growth of statistical science in India. However, this plan remained unfulfilled due to his critical illness and subsequent passing on June 28, 1972.

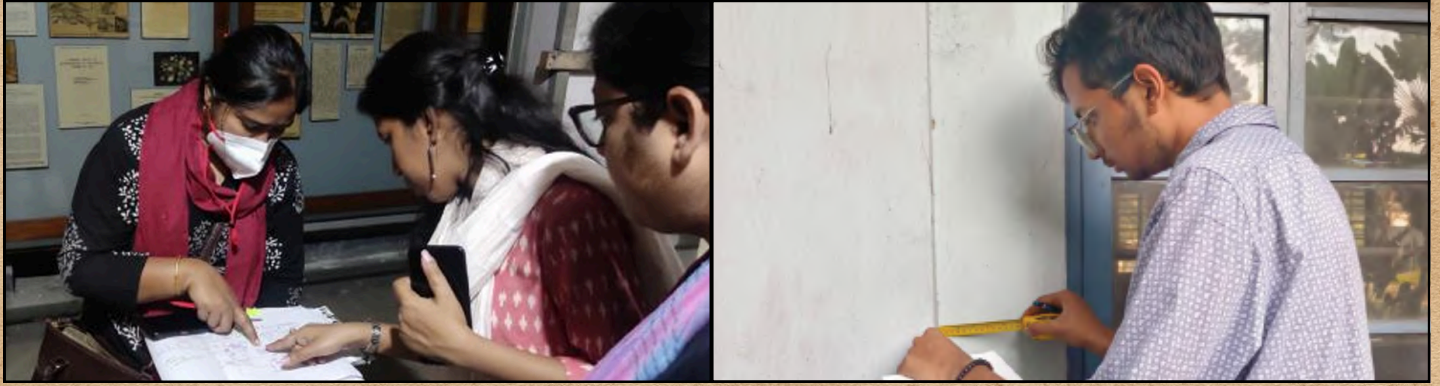
On the occasion of his birth centenary in 1993, the Institute decided to set up a museum and archives in his memory. Efforts were made to retrieve historical documents from Amrapali, his residence, originally named by Rabindranath Tagore. A significant collection of private and official documents belonging to Professor Mahalanobis had remained in the custody of Mrs. Nirmal Kumari Mahalanobis until her passing in 1981. In 1991, these materials were transferred to the Institute through the executor of her estate. This collection, along with archival files, records, and photographs from the Development Office, formed the foundation of the present museum. Amrapali was subsequently transformed into the museum and archives. The museum continues to acquire and preserve rare documents and artifacts, further enriching its collection. Scholars and researchers frequently visit the archives to explore these invaluable resources.

The museum houses a vast collection of artifacts, including his medals, academic degrees, honors, garments, and personal belongings.

Situated within the Indian Statistical Institute's campus at 203 Barrackpore Trunk Road, Kolkata 700108, Amrapali, originally an old garden house, was purchased and remodeled by Professor Mahalanobis in the style of Udayana at Santiniketan. The building was later donated to the Brahmo Samaj by Mahalanobis. During his birth centenary, the Institute reacquired it and established the museum and archives in his memory.

Due to the renovation of the Amrapali building, the museum has been temporarily relocated to the third floor of the Library (S.N. Bose Bhavan).

# Legacy Revival: Museum Restoration



## Project Overview

- **Consultant:** IDEATE, New Delhi (Consultation Firm)
- **Scope of Work:** Consultancy for the renovation, restoration, retrofitting, conceptual design, layout, and estimation for the Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum & Archives.

## Project Milestones

- **Start Date:** 6th February 2024
- **Latest Update:** Final DPR compilation underway. Site work, documentation, and spatial planning completed.

## Tests Conducted

- **Architectural Documentation:** Visual surveys, material identification, and condition mapping.
- **Material & Structural Analysis**
  - Mortar and concrete lab tests.
  - Structural tests (Rebound hammer, Ultrasonic pulse velocity, Corrosion risk assessment, etc.)
- **Scanning & Mapping**
  - Rebar scanning for metal sections.
  - Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey
  - Moisture and salt mapping
- **Environmental Control Assessment:** Museum environment conditions reviewed

## Current Status

The site work has been completed, and documentation with assessment drawings is finalized. Spatial planning discussions took place during the July meeting, and the final DPR is being compiled.



*A discussion on the future of our museum and archives was held during the recent Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, chaired by Professor Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay.*

# Digital Milestones



The Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum & Archives is actively engaged in digitization to preserve historical materials and enhance accessibility for researchers, historians, and the public. As part of this effort, we use the Bookeye Scanner, a state-of-the-art system designed for handling delicate archival materials with minimal physical contact, ensuring fragile documents and photographs are preserved without damage. By employing advanced imaging techniques, we produce high-resolution digital copies that retain the clarity and authenticity of the originals.

This year, we have successfully digitized over **4,000 photographs**, encompassing rare and historically significant images related to Professor Mahalanobis's life, his work in statistics, and the development of the Indian Statistical Institute. These include portraits, event photographs, and moments captured with eminent personalities, many of which were previously inaccessible due to the fragility of the originals. Additionally, under the digitization project, we have digitized approximately **4,500 archival documents**, covering personal letters, official reports, handwritten manuscripts, and research notes. Many of these documents provide insights into Mahalanobis's contributions to statistical science, planning, and institution-building, shedding light on his methodologies and interactions with global scholars.

A significant milestone in our digitization journey has been the digitization of Sambadadhvam, a house journal with historical and cultural significance. This initiative ensures rare literary and intellectual contributions from past decades remain accessible to present and future generations. Through digitization, we aim to create a comprehensive digital archive, enabling researchers worldwide to access materials remotely, reducing the risk of physical deterioration, and broadening the museum's outreach. The digitized content also paves the way for interactive exhibitions and digital storytelling, making history more engaging and immersive.

By continually expanding our digital repository, we reinforce our commitment to long-term preservation and knowledge dissemination. Our goal is to ensure that the legacy of Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis and the evolution of statistical science remain accessible to scholars, students, and enthusiasts worldwide, fostering deeper engagement with historical materials that might otherwise remain hidden. As technology advances, we plan to enhance our digitization infrastructure, incorporating metadata indexing, searchable archives, and AI-assisted document analysis to make our collections even more valuable and user-friendly.





### Preservation & Conservation

The museum and archives are actively engaged in a comprehensive conservation program to preserve its vast collection, ensuring availability for present researchers and future use. Of **300,000 documents**, approximately **2,03,814** have undergone conservation, while **96,186** are yet to be treated.

Books and documents, composed of organic materials, are susceptible to decay due to environmental factors, pollutants, and biological threats like fungi, insects, and rodents. Given the significant number of manuscripts, meticulous care is essential to protect them from climate-related damage and infestations. Preserving these invaluable records is crucial for maintaining the collection's integrity and longevity.



### Documentation

In 2024, the PCMMM&A has documented files on subjects related to Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis and the Indian Statistical Institute, preserving insights into their groundbreaking work and historical impact. This effort captures Mahalanobis's achievements and ISI's impact on statistics in India and beyond. These subjects include:

- **PCM's personal letters**
- **Correspondence on Research and training school**
- **Documents on C. R. Rao**
- **Conferences attended by Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis .**
- **ISI administration**
- **Statistical quality control**
- **Indian Calculating machine**

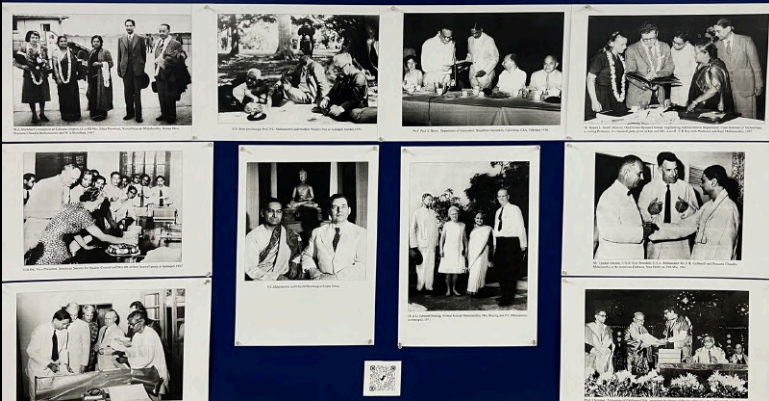


### Readers Service

The archives serve as a vital resource for researchers and scholars by providing access to rare documents, manuscripts and photographs of Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis. Materials are available in accordance with institutional guidelines, ensuring ethical use of the collections. Scholars from across India and abroad visit to conduct advanced research in diverse fields such as statistics, history of science, and the social sciences. Notable readers this year included **Pramit Bhattacharya** (Fellow, **The New India Foundation, Bengaluru**), **E.K. Burton** (**University of Toronto**), **Dr. Saarang Narayan** (**University of Leeds, U.K.**), and **Sutapa Malakar** (Assistant Professor, Economics, **East Calcutta Girls' College**). To enhance scholarly engagement, the archives offer dedicated research spaces, expert guidance, and digital access to select materials. With ongoing digitization and service expansion, the institution remains committed to preserving its holdings and supporting academic inquiry, ensuring that Mahalanobis's legacy and the evolution of Indian statistical science remain accessible to future generations.

# Exhibitions

## GUESTS & VISITORS FROM USA AT THE INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE



This year, the Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum & Archives (PCMMM&A) successfully curated two significant In-House Exhibitions, each highlighting an important facet of historical and academic excellence.

The first exhibition was organized on **17 January 2024** during the visit of **U.S. Consul General Melinda Pavak** from the **U.S. Consulate General, Kolkata**. This exhibition featured an extensive showcase of guest teachers and visitors from the USA who had made notable contributions to the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata. Through rare photographs and archival documents, the exhibition offered insights into the longstanding academic exchanges and collaborations between the ISI and American scholars.

The second exhibition, "**Verses and Variables: A Unique Relationship between Tagore and Mahalanobis**" was curated to commemorate the **131st Birth Anniversary of Professor P.C. Mahalanobis on 29 June 2024**. This exhibition highlighted the lifelong relationship of mutual admiration, love, and respect between Rabindranath Tagore and Professor Mahalanobis. The display included correspondences, photographs, and archival materials illustrating how their intellectual and personal bond influenced the intersections of literature, statistics, and nation-building. Tagore, a visionary poet, and Mahalanobis, a pioneering statistician, shared deep discussions on science, philosophy, and society, significantly shaping modern Indian thought. The exhibition provided a rare glimpse into their interactions, underscoring the unique synergy between art and science.

Both exhibitions played a crucial role in preserving and presenting history, allowing researchers, scholars, and visitors to engage with rare archival materials and untold stories. They reflected the museum's ongoing efforts in curation, conservation, and knowledge dissemination, ensuring that the legacy of Professor Mahalanobis and his intellectual associations remains accessible for future generations.



# Special Lectures



**Knowledge Worlds: Research Universities and Frontiers in the United States since 1945, 13 March, 2024**

**Reinhold Martin, Professor of Architecture at Columbia University**, gave a talk on Knowledge Worlds: Research Universities and Frontiers in the United States since 1945. His talk explored how physical resources and evolving knowledge structures shaped the post-WWII expansion of U.S. research universities, fostering the idea of an "endless frontier" for research amid global conflicts. Martin's notable works include *The Urban Apparatus: Mediapolitics and the City* (2016), and he has directed the Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, chaired the Society of Fellows / Heyman Center for the Humanities, and co-founded the journal *Grey Room*.



**Surveillance in Transit: An Abolitionist Chronology of AI, Power, Complicity and Eugenics in the Indian Ocean World C.1850–Present, 28 March, 2024**

**Nikhil Dharmaraj, an MPhil candidate in the Ethics of AI, Data, and Algorithms at the University of Cambridge and a Harvard alum in Computer Science** explored AI, power dynamics, and biometric surveillance in the Indian Ocean World, particularly between South Asia and East Africa. His dissertation traced the evolution of state-sponsored surveillance from analog fingerprinting to modern facial recognition in cities like Cape Town, Nairobi, and New Delhi, examining its links to brahminical, colonial, and racialized power.



**The Indian Expert: Statistics and Anticolonialism in Late Colonial India, 23 July, 2024.**

**Sayori Ghoshal, a postdoctoral fellow at the Moturi Satyanarayana Centre for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Krea University**, examined the rise of statistics as a modern Indian discipline. Despite colonial rule, Indian statisticians established themselves as global experts, emphasizing scientific rigor over untrained colonial administrators. At the intersection of nationalism and postcolonial vision, they framed statistics as both an exclusive domain of experts and a public good requiring democratic approval, shaping expertise in India. Her research on statistics and community identity in colonial and postcolonial India has been published in various notable Journals.

# Internship



The Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum & Archives offered an enriching internship program for students from Museology, History, and Library Science, providing them with a unique opportunity to gain practical experience in the field of museum and archival studies. This program has been designed to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and hands-on application, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding of the preservation, documentation, and exhibition of historical materials. The primary goal of the internship program was to equip students with the skills necessary to work in cultural heritage institutions. By engaging in diverse activities, interns learned how museums and archives function, including the curation of exhibitions, conservation of artifacts, archival documentation, and public engagement. They gained insight into how museum professionals and historians work to present history in ways that are accessible, educational, and engaging for diverse audiences.

Throughout the internship, the interns learned essential digitization techniques, they learned how to examine historical documents, manuscripts, and artifacts, they also understood methods of cataloging, sorting, and organizing museum and archival materials. Other than this, they acquired knowledge of techniques used to protect fragile historical materials from deterioration while also gaining experience in Exhibition planning and Museum Demonstration. In 2024, students from prestigious institutions such as the University of Calcutta, Jadavpur University, and Netaji Subhas Open University participated in the program. The internships were offered for three-month and six-month durations, providing ample time for students to immerse themselves in the museum's work. Each intern was assigned tasks based on their academic background and interests, ensuring they gained specialized experience aligned with their career aspirations. By the end of the program, they had not only developed practical skills but also gained a broader appreciation for the role of museums and archives in preserving history. They experienced the challenges and rewards of working in cultural heritage preservation, understanding how historical narratives are curated and presented to the public. This internship serves as a stepping stone for aspiring professionals in the fields of history, museum studies, and archival science, preparing them for future roles in heritage institutions. The knowledge and experience they acquired during the program will not only aid them in their academic pursuits but also equip them with real-world expertise in historical preservation and museum management.

# Outreach



The Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum & Archives (PCMMM&A), ISI Kolkata, participated in the **Bijnan 'O' Prajukti Mela (Science & Technology Fair)**, showcasing the legacy and contributions of Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis in the field of statistics and scientific research. The fair, held from **19 January to 23 January, 2024**, at Hedua Park, Kolkata, brought together institutions, researchers, and science enthusiasts to celebrate advancements in science and technology. PCMMM&A's stall featured engaging exhibits and interactive displays, offering visitors insights into the pioneering work of Prof. Mahalanobis and his impact on modern data science. The presentation was well received, earning Second-Best Stall Award in recognition of its informative and innovative approach.

The Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum & Archives and the Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC) proudly presented "**Verses and Variables**", an exhibition showcasing rare photographs and letters exchanged between Rabindranath Tagore and Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis held from **22 June to 24 June, 2024**. This exhibition offered a glimpse into their profound intellectual exchange, blending poetry, science, and philosophy.

As part of Celebrating Tagore, a three-day tribute to his legacy, this event brought together exhibitions, workshops, and performances that honored Tagore's multifaceted contributions to literature, education, and culture. Visitors had the opportunity to explore the deep-rooted friendship and collaboration between Tagore and Mahalanobis, shedding light on their shared vision for India's intellectual and cultural progress.



The Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum & Archives (PCMMM&A) participated in the exhibition-cum-seminar at the Indian Museum, Kolkata, during the AMI Arts Festival 2024 to celebrate World Heritage Week. Organized by Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC) in collaboration with the Indian Museum and the Museum Association of West Bengal, the event focused on the theme "From Fields to Folk: A Journey through Rural Heritage."

Held from **22 November to 29 November, 2024**, the exhibition highlighted India's rural heritage, traditional practices, and craftsmanship through archival displays, expert talks, and interactive sessions.



# Visitor Highlights



The Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Memorial Museum & Archives (PCMMM&A) has welcomed a diverse range of visitors, reflecting its appeal across various academic, professional, and cultural fields. A group of Library Science students from **Sikkim University** explored the role of archives in preserving India's scientific heritage. Students from **Royal Global University** deepened their understanding of Prof. Mahalanobis's influence on India's statistical framework, while a group from **Rabindra Bharati University** engaged with exhibits highlighting his contributions. Professors and research scholars from RBU contributed to discussions on India's statistical development and the museum's role in preserving this legacy.

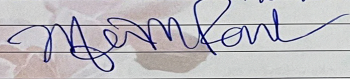
Students from the **International Statistical Education Centre (ISEC)** explored the intersections between statistical education and Prof. Mahalanobis's legacy. A group of students from **Baranagar Vidya Mandir** focused on how the museum introduces young minds to India's scientific achievements, and other students from Baranagar, facilitated by **Paschimbanga Vigyan Mancha**, visited to understand Prof. Mahalanobis's transformative role in shaping India's statistical landscape.

The museum also hosted visits from professionals and cultural leaders. **Viraj Singh, Additional Secretary from the Ministry of External Affairs**, paid a special visit to explore the museum's exhibits on the life and contributions of Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis, reflecting the growing interest in the cultural and historical significance of the institution. **Swami Uttmamananda** reflected on the spiritual and intellectual dimensions of Prof. Mahalanobis's work. Additionally, representatives from **Wipro Archives** toured the museum, highlighting the intersection of industry and academia in preserving historical knowledge.

## Comments From Distinguished Visitors

16/07/2024	VIRAJ SINGH Additional secretary MEA, New Delhi.	A very informative and inspiring insight into the life and work of a great son of India. Thank you!
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A very informative and inspiring insight into the life and work of a great son of India. Thank you!, Viraj Singh, Additional Secretary MEA, New Delhi.

17/01/2024	Melinda Pavek U.S. Consul General Kolkata 	The collection here is fascinating and connects ISI to so many important aspects of India's history and future. You should be proud to have this history preserved.
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10 <sup>th</sup> June 24	Umasankar Das Indrani Mukherjee Malabika Sanghvi	9748724185 Pirano Kolkata Golpo Society	Umasankar1953@gmail.com.	Amazing, the way all the documents preserved in the museum are very powerful efforts by the personnel in charge of the Archive at ISI. The rare objects we find and unforgettable experience of the day. Thanks.
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## Museum Committee



Prof. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay

Director



Prof. Dhurjati Prasad Sengupta

Chairperson



Dr. Shiladri Sekhar Das

Member



Dr. Paramita Das

Member



Dr. Kishor Chandra Satpathy

Convener

## Our Team



Dr. Kishor Chandra Satpathy

Incharge



Monali Mitra Paladhi

Dy. Librarian



Avik Kumar Das

Associate Scientist A



Keya Das

Repro Assistant A



Abhideep Mitra

Repro Assistant A



Naba Kumar Biswas

Conservation Staff



Rina Chatterjee

Record Attendant



Dr. Sangita Kar

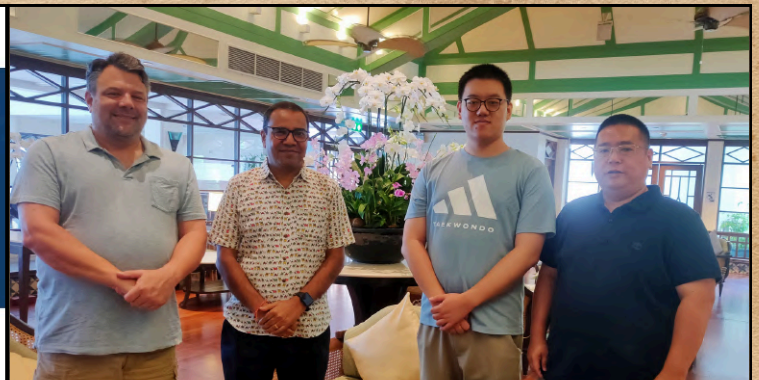
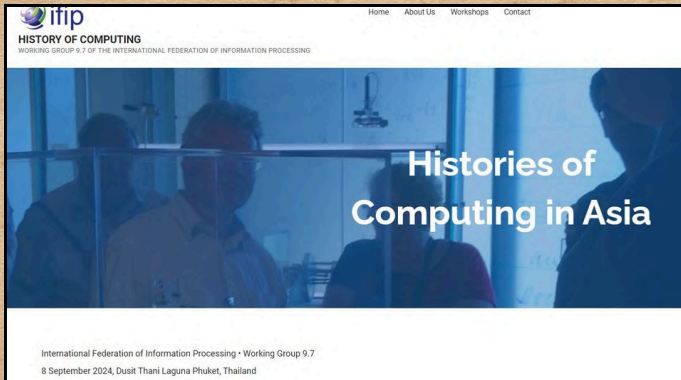
Trainee



Arijit Majumder

Project Linked Person

# Staff Achievements



At the IFIP WG 9.7 conference, Dr. Kishor Chandra Satpathy presented his paper, **“History of Computing in India: Role of Prof. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis and the Indian Statistical Institute.”** Dr. Satpathy highlighted the role of Prof. Mahalanobis and the Indian Statistical Institute in shaping India's computing landscape, showcasing how their innovations contributed to the country's technological evolution.



Later, at the ALPSP Conference 2024 in Manchester, Dr. Satpathy delivered a session titled **"India Rising: How Society Publishers Can Prepare for the Surge in Quality Submissions."** He discussed India's growing influence in academic publishing and offered strategies for publishers to engage with Indian researchers more effectively.



Dr. Kishor Chandra Satpathy also attended the 3-day conference at the Himachal State Museum, Shimla, from 10-12 December 2024, and presented his research paper in the conference entitled **“Role of Museums in the Development of Society and Preservation of Heritage.”** The conference brought together professionals, scholars, and researchers to discuss innovative methodologies, strategic approaches, and technological advancements in the field of museum studies.

*Thank you for reading!*



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