

"Future of Nudge Theory in the Smartphone Era" Highlighted at DU's Memorial Lecture for Cheistha Kochhar

Category: Business

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The University of Delhi, in collaboration with the Department of Psychology and the Cheistha Kochhar Nudge Centre, hosted the 1st Cheistha Kochhar Memorial Lecture 2025 on the theme **"The Future of Nudge Theory in the World of Smartphones"**. The event was held on Monday, 17th November 2025, at Shankar Lal Hall, bringing together academics, policymakers, behavioral scientists and students to honor the legacy of the late Cheistha Kochhar, a pioneering behavioural science scholar and the visionary behind India's first Behavioural Insights Unit

at NITI Aayog.



1st Cheistha Kochhar Memorial Lecture 2025

The event was graced by Prof. Rajni Abbi, Director of South Campus, University of Delhi, who attended as the Chief Guest, along with Prof. Urmi Nanda Biswas, Head of the Department of Psychology and Dr. Subhash Meena, Assistant Professor and Coordinator from the Department of Psychology. Their presence underscored the University's commitment to advancing behavioural science and honoring Cheistha Kochhar's enduring legacy.

Mr. Biju Dominic, Chief Evangelist at Fractal Analytics and Chairman of Final Mile Consulting, delivered the keynote address. Speaking about Cheistha's contribution to behavioural

science, he said, *“Cheistha showed us what it means to challenge convention with courage. She chose a path few explored, bringing behavioural science and nudge theory into real-world problem solving long before it was widely understood. Her work reminds us that meaningful change often begins with small, thoughtful nudges that can shift human behaviour in profound ways. As we honour her legacy, we must carry forward her conviction that knowledge, empathy and science can illuminate society’s deepest cracks and transform them into possibilities.”*

Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, Director General, COAI and father of Cheistha Kochhar, shared a deeply emotional tribute. He said, *“Speaking about Cheistha fills me with both sadness and pride – sadness that she is no longer with us and pride that her legacy continues to shine. From childhood she was compassionate, curious, fearless and deeply committed to serving others. Whether in Aadhaar, the Planning Commission, NITI Aayog or at the University of Chicago, she left a mark through her brilliance and humanity. We discovered the depth of her impact only after her passing. Our only wish now is that her legacy continues to inspire and be carried forward.”*

Born out of her pioneering vision, the Cheistha Kochhar Nudge Centre at the University of Delhi aims to advance research and innovation in behavioural science, with a particular focus on how nudge theory can be applied through modern technologies such as smartphones. Cheistha believed that policymaking must be rooted in how people actually think, behave and choose, and that empathetic, evidence-based nudges can enable individuals to make better decisions for themselves and the planet.

With the scholarships and annual lectures established in her memory, Cheistha’s legacy continues to inspire young researchers, policymakers and behavioural scientists across

the globe to carry forward and be recognised in her mission of creating more humane, compassionate and impactful public policy.

