

## **Report on Panel Discussion on the topic “Distracted by a Ping: The Danger of Cell Phones Behind the Wheel”**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025, the Counselling Cell in collaboration with the Department of Library and Information Science at Swami Vivekanand Vidyaprasarak Mandal’s College of Commerce, Borim, Ponda, organised a panel discussion for SYBCom students under the title “Distracted by a Ping: The Danger of Cell Phones Behind the Wheel.” 16 students took part, gathering an atmosphere charged with curiosity and concern.

The event commenced with Ms. Florencia Souza, the college counsellor, who greeted all those present with a warm welcome. She began by briefing the students about the importance of today’s discussion, setting the tone by emphasising that a single notification, a quick glance at a screen, or an impulsive reply can turn the driver’s focus away from the road and lead to serious consequences. Her opening remarks made clear that this was not merely a theoretical issue, but one with immediate relevance to everyone present.

Following, Mrs. Sonia Desai, the Librarian of the College, formally introduced the session. She provided context about the growing problem of distracted driving, citing national and local accident statistics, and underscoring how widespread mobile phone usage while driving has become. She explained the structure of the discussion that would follow: presentations on data, psychology, legal implications, followed by a panel discussion and interactive question-and-answer segment.

Over the course of the session the main discussion led, sharing alarming statistics demonstrating how many traffic accidents are linked to distractions from mobile devices. They explored why people are so prone to checking messages or notifications while driving — fear of missing out, social pressure, habitual checking — and discussed how even hands-free use or voice commands may carry risk if they distract attention. The legal framework was also laid out: traffic rules pertaining to mobile phone usage while driving, penalties for violations, and the level of enforcement locally in Goa. Practical preventive strategies were emphasized: activating “Do Not Disturb” modes, placing phones away from reach, using hands-free systems, and cultivating self-discipline.

Students were encouraged to participate, and many did — recounting personal experiences, asking about how the laws work in rural vs busy urban roads, and raising questions about what can be done at the college and community levels. For example, some asked whether awareness posters or campaigns could be run on campus; others wanted clarification on whether local law enforcement had the resources to monitor phone usage. One student pointed out seeing a near-miss caused by someone taking a selfie out of a moving vehicle. Such contributions deepened the discussion and made it very relevant. By the end, the speakers made a heartfelt appeal that all those present should take responsibility: to adopt safer habits themselves, to urge friends and family members to avoid

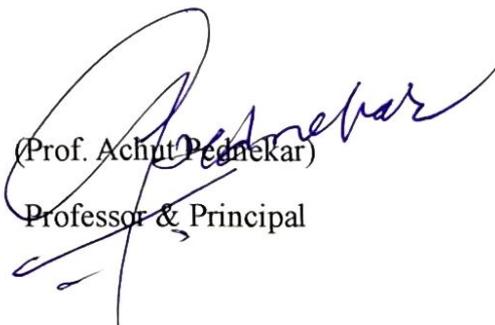
distractions, and to act as ambassadors of road safety. Even though only sixteen students attended, the engagement was high, with meaningful reflections and a genuine sense of both concern and resolve among participants.

In conclusion, the session succeeded in its aim of raising awareness and stirring reflection. It made clear that distracted driving is not only about statistics or rules, but about real lives and real consequences. The organisers suggested follow-up measures: workshops, distributing summary materials, involvement of local traffic authorities, and peer-led campaigns. The Librarian and Counselling Cell thanked all students for their active participation and closed the event with the hope that this discussion would spark ongoing change within the college and beyond.



  
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Convenor & Counsellor

  
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Co-Convenor & Librarian

  
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