A certain issue or phenomenon cannot usually be understood and explained if looked at solely from one of these viewpoints. There will always be another point of view that holds its own positives and sounds as convincing as the other.

Over the past two years or so, sociology and psychology have occupied a fairly large portion of my life. The journey began with me being an enthusiastic 16 year old who was excited about these two subjects, though. I did not have much of an idea of what studying these subjects involved. I felt each of us was conditioned into a certain way of thinking. Be it unconscious or conscious, in my experience, this conditioning has proved to be important- primarily to understand these subjects, and then to let my thoughts travel beyond this basic understanding, thus to form my own opinions and ideas about various topics. This process began on one of classes without being blatantly apparent to me. This kind of thinking that began in class was initially as though I had to peer through a peep hole to look at issues in different way; to think subtly, to look at matters through different lights, see things in different shades, and most importantly, to understand that there are always many perspectives and view points, and each of them have their strengths and weaknesses. A certain issue or phenomenon cannot usually be understood and explained if looked at solely from one of these viewpoints. There will always be another point of view that holds its own positives and sounds as convincing as the other.

Eventually, this framework leaked into other parts of my life. I began to see the world around me through this framework. The slums on the road side, the tall sky scrappers towering over us, the vegetable vendor pushing her cart with a baby on it, the fancy malls, even with all its contradictions, I was able to make some sense of it. Soon enough, I began to see things that are closer to my heart through this perspective some aspects of home that I had always taken for granted, like patriarchal forces, jump out at you. The patriarchal structure is one such example. The traditional role of a 'housewife' (and in my opinion, demanding) has always been taken up by my mother, and, my father, as convention holds, has been the financial pillar of the family- the man in charge of money matters. Even relationships and other issues in my personal life came alive as I looked at them through my own framework. It helped me see that there were multiple sides to any story. For example, the whirlwinds of teenage life, with all its conflicts and insecurities, are brought into perspective when you understand the story through the other person's point of view, and think to yourself that he/ she is also like you, and you would probably behave in the same way when put in a similar situation.

My experience in and outside class have been responsible for fostering this kind of an outlook.

My time in class has been valuable because that is where my knowledge bank lies. That is where the seeds of several ideas that could potentially flourish into so much more are sown. That has been the place where I have developed my roots in the soil of the social.
The social sciences have surely sculpted sensitivity in me. When I look around, there are people from all walks of life, and, on the surface of it, they seem to be worlds apart. And maybe they are. But social science has changed the way I now look at them and reinforced the fact that we are all human.

We went on a field trip from school to one of the slums in Bangalore, and had an interactive session with the domestic workers who lived there. It was very interesting for me to see that the walls between ‘us’ and ‘them’ were broken down just a few minutes into conversation over a cup of tea. Their lives, stories, problems were all of a sudden not out there, completely disconnected from our lives, but something that I could relate to and empathize with. Asking the flower vendor her name or how many children she has, or complimenting the rickshaw driver on his radio set did not require a relationship – it was amazing how little it took to strike up a conversation.

The social sciences help people open up in this way, it has surely sculpted sensitivity in me. When I look around, there are people from all walks of life, and, on the surface of it, they seem to be worlds apart. And maybe they are. But social science has changed the way I now look at them and reinforced the fact that we are all human. At the end of the day, we are the same. When you adopt this kind of an outlook, distinctions like poor-rich, Hindu-Muslim, Indian-Pakistani, fair-dark, fail to make much sense.

Closing in to the end of my A-level course in sociology and psychology, and reflecting on the past two odd years, it has been a delight to have studied these subjects. Their contribution to everyday life, their presence in the hustle and bustle of our cities, the life within each of these subjects, has made my experience truly colorful. My biggest take away from this subject is that it has made me innately sensitive, and helped me see subtleties of human nature. I look forward to studying the social sciences in college.