

REPORT

WEBINAR ON 'GANDHI AND INDIA'S PEASANTS - AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP'

A webinar was organized under the aegis of Gaatha: The History Society of Mata Sundri College for Women on Saturday, 25th September 2021 at 10.30 am. Eminent historian Prof Mridula Mukherjee delivered a lecture on the topic "Gandhi and India's Peasants: An Intimate Relationship."

The webinar commenced on time. Gaatha Vice-President Ms Mansi Malik welcomed the august speaker, Prof Mridula Mukherjee and the Principal, Dr Harpreet Kaur along with the participants. The Teacher-in-Charge, Dr Daljit Kaur welcomed Prof Mukherjee and also thanked her for giving her precious time to the third year History Honours students for an informal interaction on 22nd September 2021. She mentioned how Prof Mukherjee shared her life experiences with them and guided them to be better human beings. Prof Harpreet Kaur expressed her pleasure on the choice of the topic of lecture which she felt was a pertinent issue. She threw light on the importance of peasants in an economy and also elaborated on their role in the national movement. The Programme Coordinator, Dr Simmi Kapoor Mehta spoke about the multi-faceted personality of Gandhi and how he had influenced, inspired and touched the lives of so many people from various walks of life with Ahimsa and Satyagraha. Gaatha President, Ms Ananya read out the profile of Prof Mridula Mukherjee which also included excerpts from her interaction with students of Department of History, Mata Sundri College for Women.

Prof Mridula Mukherjee in a very lucid way began the lecture with a quote from "Discovery of India" in which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru described what Gandhi meant to Indians. She highlighted the lines where Nehru said that Gandhi did not come from the top but from amongst the millions of ordinary Indians. She discussed at length how Gandhi had reached out to the impoverished peasants and how they responded and related to this outreach so positively. Starting from Gandhi's role in regards to the indentured labour who worked at sugar plantations in South Africa as farm labourers, she elaborated about his first act of individual civil disobedience in Champaran. She very effectively kept the students engrossed in Gandhi's various movements and how farmers supported them whole-heartedly be it at Kheda, Bardoli, the Non- Cooperation Movement or the Civil Disobedience. She described how even at the Round Table Conference, he had raised the issue of Indian peasantry. She discussed at length about the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, positive role of Congress Ministries of 1937-39 in relation to peasants, followed by the Quit India Movement. She ended the discussion with the Zamindari Abolition Act after India became independent.

Ms Sakshi, Ms Shamaila Afroz, Ms Shreya Sharma and Ms Shubhanshi were the moderators for the question answer session. The webinar came to an end with the vote of thanks by Gaatha Secretary, Ms Anushree Bisht. This session was attended by 151 participants.