

### **Report of the workshop on “Historians’ Craft”**

The Department of History, Mata Sundri College for Women, conducted a workshop on 27th August 2021, in order to familiarize students with the newly introduced paper “Historians’ Craft” (skill Enhancement Course). The workshop was co-ordinated by Dr Navendu Shekhar and Ms. Panchali Devi. The speakers for the workshop were Prof Neerja Singh, Department of History, Satyawati College and Dr Srimanjari, Associate Professor, Department of History, Miranda House, University of Delhi. The workshop was divided into three segments. The first segment was an engaging discussion of the paper by Dr Srimanjari, the second segment was a very concise and focussed discussion on certain specificities of history writing by Prof. Neerja Singh and the third segment was the question answer session.

Ms Panchali Devi presented the introductory note and introduced speakers. Dr Daljit Kaur (teacher-in-charge) presented the concept note and conveyed the vision of the workshop. Dr Navendu Shekhar conducted the question answer session. He also presented the vote of thanks for the session.

Dr Srimanjari explained the importance of the paper for the students of history. She addressed the technical aspects of the paper as well. She contextualised the craft of a historian through a critical discussion of scholars like Marc Bloch, E H Carr. This helped the students develop a sense of understanding towards the vocation of a historian and also a sense of understanding the very pertinent question of what exactly is history and the writing of it. She explained how historical perception has a direct link with human behaviour. She threw light on the fact that historical facts are effectively selected and appropriated to weave a link with present through fables, stories, legends etc. She further added that widening of the resource base and incorporating marginal groups and their under-represented histories is also part of the craft of history writing to inculcate historical sensitivity.

Prof Neerja Singh, effectively spoke about the significance of the craft of history writing and explained why there’s a need to add this paper on undergraduate level. She focussed on how historians through their craft have revealed the elements of diversity in the human society. She also highlighted the use of some key issues like orthodoxy, bigotry, superstition, myth, faith etc in the process of history writing. She also highlighted how the domain of history has been used and manipulated by certain sections time and again in order to establish their dominance. These issues really opened a new space for the students to understand the importance of the discipline of history writing and the vital role historian’s play in the shaping of people’s understanding of societies. She also highlighted that a close understanding of this paper “Historians Craft” would enable students of history to interpret sources and assess their credibility in defining any historical event.

The lectures were followed by a very engaging question answer session. The speakers engaged with the students on a one-on-one basis. The students were shown certain pictures and were asked to interpret them as a source of history which gave the students a hands-on experience of how historians actually engage and approach their sources.

The workshop concluded with remarks of appreciation from the TIC, Dr Daljit Kaur. A vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Navendu Shekhar. A feedback form was also shared with the students and faculty members. Most of the students and faculty members appreciated the efforts of the team, which planned and organized the workshop.