

Loktantrashala: School for Democracy

Academic Report: January to April 2019

- Public lecture by Professor Zoya Hasan on ‘Challenges facing Indian Democracy on 12th March, 2019
- Orientation programme held from 9th February, 2019 to 13th February, 2019 by School for Democracy for its Summer Internship

Prof. Zoya Hasan on ‘Challenges facing Indian Democracy’

The lecture was held in the Conference Room on 12th March 2019. It began with Professor Hasan distinguishing between democracies in most European countries which was preceded by a revolution, and democracy in India, on which social revolution is in fact based. The right to vote has been seen as an impetus of the revolution. However, despite the achievements, the current political and economic structures, the Indian democracy has gone through tectonic shifts. This has been evident due to the changes in the ideological space of Indian society; a strong interface between religion and politics has affected Indian democracy.

Professor Hasan went on to mention 8 challenges/questions that the Indian democracy is today faced with. The first is the question on diversity and the attempts that have been made to subsume this diversity into an overarching culture. The second is the question on nationalism and the promotion of an exclusivist idea of nationalism. The third question is on democracy and its misuse to promote majoritarianism in the current political scenario. Moving on, we have the question on the right to dissent which remains the backbone of all democracies, yet the space for dissent has been shrinking. The fifth challenge is the deinstitutionalization of politics which has led to centralisation of power. The sixth question is on political equality which remains a goal of the future in the face of persistent economic/class inequality. The seventh challenge is the bond scheme which threatens democracy due to the corporate hold on politics and further affects political and economic equality. Lastly, is the question of censorship and free press, the space for which is also shrinking, and a new media-politics relationship has come into being.

The lecture was concluded with an emphasis on how there is nothing anti national in questioning the government, but is a part of political activism. The government should also not shy away from focusing on the importance of pluralism, secularism and social, economic and political equality. It is only when we focus on mass welfare can we question the limits of majoritarian narrative.

Indraprastha College for Women
in collaboration with
School for Democracy

Public lecture
Challenges facing indian democracy

By Prof. Zoya Hasan,
JNU



Date : 12th March 2019
Time : 12:30 to 2:00 PM
Venue-Conference Hall IP college
Contact : Avinash (8010833325)
www.schoolfordemocracy.org

Orientation programme by School for Democracy for Summer Internship

School for Democracy held an orientation programme in February 2019 for its summer internship to be held from 5th June, 2019 to 5th July, 2019 in Rajasthan. The orientation was also held in Rajasthan of which two students from IP College (Vrinda Sharma from B.A. Programme and Anjali Kumari from B.A. Honours Political Science) were a part. The orientation consisted of various workshops, discussions and dialogues to make the volunteers aware about the political and socio economic rights granted by the constitution to all citizens. Among the topics discussed were the Right to Information, capital punishment, accountability bill, caste and gender inequality, MNREGA, rural development, fundamental rights, etc.

The internship also aims to give volunteers the opportunity to analyse the grass-root level issues of the society. Through this an in-depth knowledge of policies like Right to Food, Right to Education, Right to Information, Old Pension Scheme, etc. will be provided in order to enable the volunteers to understand the functioning of these schemes. Through this, it aims to show how legislative policies and laws function practically in a democracy, and how different or similar they are from their theoretical perspective.