

# Loktantrashala: School for Democracy

## Academic Year Report : July to November 2018

- In September 2018, public lecture by Advocate Shomona Khanna on 'The Right to Equality and Forest Rights Act'
- In September 2018, public lecture by Professor Apoorvanand on 'Gandhi: Kaun or Kiska?'
- In October 2018, lecture-demonstration by Loknaad : Vinay Mahajan on 'Songs of Life'

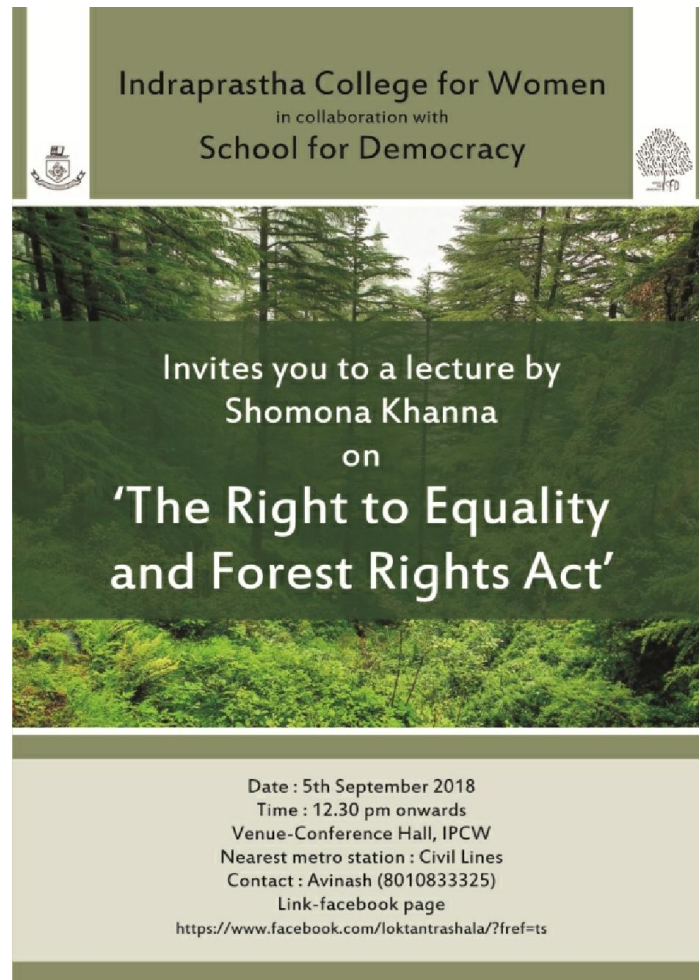
### **Shomona Khanna on 'The Right to Equality and Forest Rights Act'**

Indraprastha College for Women in collaboration with School for Democracy organised a lecture by Shomona Khanna, advocate and legal researcher, to create awareness on the topic – The Right to Equality and Forest Rights Act on 5<sup>th</sup> September in the Conference room from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Shomona Khanna, who has worked on Dalit rights and written books on the constitution, law and indigenous people started off by explaining about the equality charter in the constitution. Emphasising on what the constitution provides for the forest dwellers that faced historical discrimination, she recognised the importance of pastoral rights and conversion of tribal villages into revenue villages.

She stated that the Indian Forest Act of 1868 that laid down that all forests of India belonged to the Queen ended up making the forest dwellers as encroachers. Afterwards, the state wanted the minerals they were sitting on. The Forest Rights Act of 2006 was a game changer in her view as it laid down a list of forest rights, set a procedure for recognition of rights, and most importantly accepted the symbiotic relation between the forest and dwellers.

Further, the discussion lead to the Niyamgiri case, that she was a part of, where the court stated that land can't be diverted for use without the consent of the forest dwellers and forests have the best chance to survive, if guarded by forest dwellers. She concluded on the note that we need to recognise that forest dwellers are a part of the country's diversity and future.



Indraprastha College for Women  
in collaboration with  
School for Democracy

Invites you to a lecture by  
Shomona Khanna  
on  
'The Right to Equality  
and Forest Rights Act'

Date : 5th September 2018  
Time : 12.30 pm onwards  
Venue-Conference Hall, IPCW  
Nearest metro station : Civil Lines  
Contact : Avinash (8010833325)  
Link-facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/loktantrashala/?fref=ts>



## **Professor Apoorvanand on ‘Gandhi: Kaun or Kiska?’**

Indraprastha College for Women in collaboration with Gandhi Study Circle and School for Democracy organised a lecture by Professor Apoorvanand, a renowned faculty of the Department of Hindi, University of Delhi on the topic “Gandhi: kaun or kiska” on 28<sup>th</sup> September in the AV Lecture Theatre from 12:30 p.m. onwards.

Professor Apoorvanand who is quite vocal about matters concerning day-to-day politics, began the lecture with informing the importance of the very day, as it was Bhagat Singh’s Jayanti. He drew a comparison between MK Gandhi and Bhagat Singh, both of whom are seen as followers of two opposite ideologies.

He made the most important point, which was focused upon throughout the lecture was Gandhi’s death and the reasons as to why it was unnatural were traced along with seeing his life through the “light of his death”.

He explained the uniqueness of Gandhi’s personality as he practiced the path of “NON VIOLENCE” to fight against the oppressive forces. He stated that the question and debate on “Who is Gandhi” has continued since Gandhi’s lifetime itself. The question that “WHO IS GANDHI” and “Gandhi belongs to whom?” can’t be answered very simply as each minute of his life has been recorded and the work on him runs into 100 Volumes, which are also insufficient, as they don’t give the contextual understanding. Speaking on “Gandhi belongs to whom?” he mentioned that there are majorly 3 claimants – Indian state; people who term themselves “Gandhivadi”; people who are fighting against the State.

He further gave a description of the last phase of Gandhi’s life (September 1947- January 1948), concluding with saying that Gandhi’s life and answers to the two mentioned questions can be derived by studying his life through the torch of his death.



## **Vinay Mahajan on ‘Songs of Life’**

Indraprastha College for Women in collaboration with School for Democracy (Loktantrashala) held a lecture demonstration by Vinay Mahajan on ‘Songs of Life’ on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2018. The event was held in the New A.V. Lecture Theatre from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. It included stories of resistance and other social issues narrated by Vinay Mahajan followed by songs created on and during these resistant movements. The songs were therefore, a reflection of reality and how most of us don’t understand this reality and the consequences of our actions. Another issue of importance raised by the guest was how the gap between the educated in the urban areas and the non-educated in the rural areas has increased with each being unable to understand the life of the other. His emphasis was on the current system, which may equip individuals with professional skills, but does not teach them the skills of daily lives or does not create an understanding of varying lifestyles but renders one standard as desirable. The lecture demonstration ended with a song called ‘We the People’ which was a recollection of the diversity of the country and the importance of the diverse groups.



