

Report (2016-17)

The vibrant department of English, Kamala Nehru College hosted a series of talks, events and activities throughout the academic session 2017. An academic talk by Gagandeep Singh on 'Theatre: Performance, Pedagogy and Politics', on February 9, 2017 kick started the eventful session. The talk was followed by an active performance that encouraged students to link classroom teaching, theatre, and social development. Students expressed curiosity about bridging the gap between classroom idealism and everyday violence.

As part of a series of talks on media studies envisaged by the department, a talk on 'Time and Emotion in a Music Video' by Susan George (Department of English, Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi) was organised on February 17, 2017. The talk aimed to engage the students in a conversation about technology, communication, and ethical use of literature. The resource person gave a detailed account of her work, beneficial to students across departments and for courses like AECC, Performance Studies, and Popular Fiction. Students' queries ranging from the ethics of controlling technology versus controlling humans through technology to the demonstration of media theory were explicitly addressed by the speaker.

The department held a panel discussion and a Student Paper Presentation to mark the annual event, LitLuminous on February 20, 2017 on 'LGBTQ: Literature Beyond the Quotidian'. Experts including Vikramaditya Sahai, Rajorshi Das, Amalina Dave and Divya Dureja spoke of the pain of being excluded from mainstream society and their artistic, performative, and academic response to this exclusion. The student paper presentations discussed various media and texts in order to encourage reflections upon the representation of LGBTQ characters/relationships in fiction. The day ended with students engaging in a robust performance of slam poetry.

The much anticipated Department Newsletter White Noise was unveiled on the College Day February 21, 2017. The newsletter arrayed a range of creative and academic pieces on many thought provoking and relevant issues.

Himanshi Sharma spoke on 'Indian Theatre: Multiple Voices' on March 2, 2017 to a group of enthusiastic students about the fascinating history of Modern Indian Theatre. She explained the acutely political theatre of eminent Indian playwrights Girish Karnad, Badal Sircar, and Vijay Tendulkar. Taking cognizance of the fact that theatre is being taught to all students in Delhi University, the talk attempted to bring together various strands of Indian theatre to form a diverse, yet comprehensive whole.

Dr. Emma Dawson Varughese, cultural studies scholar and specialist on post- millennial, Indian literary and visual cultures read a paper on 'Indian Speculative Fiction' on March 7, 2017. The talk aimed to familiarize students with the tradition of popular Indian literature in print as a response to the Western marketplace. Students were able to

connect the paper with their knowledge of canon and genres, and asked searching questions about the identity of such fiction. The talk was followed by an interactive workshop on creative writing.

In association with the Regional English Language Office (RELO, American Embassy), the Department organised a two-day Faculty Development Programme based on the Delhi University syllabus under Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) 'English Speaking Skills: Methodology and Tools', May 2-3, 2017. Heather Mehtens (University of Maryland, USA), the visiting faculty with the department under the ELF programme for the 2016-17 academic session was the resource person. The FDP was attended by 39 participants from 15 colleges of Delhi University.

The English Literary Society and Book Club organized a Reading and Interactive Session with Geneva based Indian author Sumedha Verma Ojha on August 2, 2017. The author is an expert on Sanskrit and Classical Indian Culture. She spoke at length about the misunderstood status of women in Classical India and read from her recently published novel *Urnabhih*, which translates as 'spider web'. The students not only heard her with keen appreciation but articulated their own anxieties about the status of women, shudras, and nobility in Indian Classical Culture.

Dr. Debasree Basu (Department of English, Amity University, Noida) was invited to give a talk on 'Detective Fiction: Transatlantic Conventions and Connections' on August 4, 2017. The talk was well attended by teachers and students of the college. Dr. Basu discussed Raymond Chandler, the well-known progenitor of the 'hard boiled' genre and specifically spoke of Chandler's detective protagonist Marlowe as an unstable character. The talk was followed by an interactive and stimulating session of questions and queries on character development, linguistic style and political formation in Chandler's works.

Under the aegis of the English Literary Society, students from other disciplines who are musically and dramatically talented were invited to come together and engage in performances influenced by Western stage music and drama. They staged their first performance on September 7, 2017. They re-adapted L. Frank Baumm's Broadway musical style adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* titled as *Wicked*. *Wicked* takes forward story of the witches of Oz.

An initiative was undertaken at the departmental level in July 2017 to facilitate the English honors and B.A. Programme English Discipline students with an annual event to be named as Career Guidance and Counseling Forum. A core committee comprising 5 faculty members was formed. This forum intends to invite established professional alumni of the college as well as resource persons from recognized firms and organizations to interact with the students on the future prospects and career options. The department organized its first Career Guidance and Counseling Forum on September 14, 2017. Anubha Jain (filmmaker, NID) and Sreshti Verma (writer, Tripoto), both alumni of the KNC English Department, were invited to speak to the students regarding the future careers after an English Honors/B.A. Programme degree. Both

speakers discussed their professions, as writing and film making are still regarded as unconventional careers. They also shared their experiences and the potential prospects of such challenging and creative professions.

The Second Aarti Natarajan Career Guidance and Counseling Forum was conducted on September 21, 2018 with and Ina Kaul Sharma (Global Education Specialists) as the guest speakers. The speakers spoke at length to our students about higher education in USA, England and Australia. Comparative analyses of the ease of application in various countries and the cultural shock that might be expected when an Indian student arrives on foreign shores were addressed. Queries and questions pertaining to dates of application, expected style of Statement of Purpose, funding, and visa requirements were further clarified at the end of the session.

In collaboration with Sangeet Natak Akademi, the department screened a recording of the 1989 performance of *Andhayug* (a play, based on the Mahabharata, composed by Dharamvir Bharati) directed by Satyadev Dubey on October 27, 2017. The screening was followed by a discussion, led by Dhananjay R Kapse (Department of English, Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi) on general themes of translation and Indian Literatures. It is to be noted that the copy of the recording of the performance was obtained with great difficulty after two months of coordination with the Lalit Kala Akademi. It was a successful venture as the students could both visualize the play accurately after the film and understand the emendations that are made when a play is translated from the page to the stage to the screen.

The department concluded its busy yet enriching academic session with the Conceptual Art Exhibition showcased by the English Honors students at the New Seminar Room on October 30, 2017. The exhibition attempted to bring together images and texts on the philosophical and literary theme of 'Deconstruction'. It was titled 'Collective Rubbish' in order to emphasize the notions of leisure and value usually discussed alongside the exhibition of conceptual art.