

SHSS Distinguished Lecture by Prof. Indivar Kamtekar (JNU) on 17 May 2017



The School of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Mandi, organized a Distinguished Lecture on 17 May 2017. The lecture, titled 'Fear and Courage: Reflections on a Neglected Episode in Modern Indian History', was delivered by Prof. Indivar Kamtekar of the Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Prof. Kamtekar began his lecture with the premise that an interesting history can be written around an event which never happened, that is, a major Japanese invasion of India in 1942. In his words, his talk looked "closely at Indian reactions to this unprecedented situation. To do so, a variety of data are used: rumours from military intelligence reports, recollections of migrations from personal memoirs, statistics of bank deposits from the bulletins of the Reserve Bank of India, and so on. By solving a jigsaw puzzle of various kinds of data, the talk seeks to reconstruct a situation which was totally unexpected and quite unplanned. In the process, a picture is revealed of how the government of India was viewed by the people of India in 1942. This, in turn, raises the larger question of how people assess the strength of state power."

The lecture was well attended not only by SHSS faculty and research scholars, and by B.Tech. students enrolled for SHSS elective courses, but also by faculty and research scholars from all other Schools at IIT Mandi, and by the Director, Prof. T.A. Gonsalves. The variety of questions that followed the talk indicated the interest with which the audience had heard and reacted to the speaker's ideas.

