

REPORT ON “THE ART OF DEBATE” WORKSHOP

Organised by: Manthan–The Debating Society, Shyam Lal College (Evening)

Date: 6 October 2026

Venue: Reading Room, Shyam Lal College (Evening)

Duration: Approximately 3 hours

Purpose: Preparation and Orientation for the Intra-College Debate Competition

Introduction

Manthan–The Debating Society of Shyam Lal College (Evening) organised a workshop titled “The Art of Debate” on 6 October 2026 in the Reading Room of the College. The workshop was organised as a preparatory and orientation programme for the upcoming Intra-College Debate Competition scheduled to be held on 30 October 2026, where the Principal’s Trophy will be introduced and awarded to the department of the winning participant.

The workshop was designed to familiarise students with the fundamentals of debating and to equip prospective participants with the skills required for the forthcoming competition. It also formed part of the Society’s broader effort to cultivate a culture of informed discussion, critical thinking, respectful disagreement, and effective public speaking within the College.

Rather than approaching debate merely as a competitive activity, the workshop presented it as an important academic and civic practice. Students were encouraged to understand that a good debater must not only speak confidently but also listen carefully, construct logical arguments, engage with evidence, anticipate opposing viewpoints, and respond thoughtfully.

Objectives

The workshop aimed to:

- orient students to the format and expectations of the upcoming 30 October Intra-College Debate Competition;
- introduce students to the basic principles and structure of formal debate;
- develop skills of argument construction and effective communication;
- help students distinguish between an assertion and a well-supported argument;
- develop confidence in public speaking and spontaneous responses;
- familiarise students with techniques of rebuttal and interjection;
- encourage students to listen carefully and engage with opposing viewpoints; and
- provide students with an opportunity to practise debating in a supportive environment before the formal competition.

Resource Persons

The workshop featured three resource persons who brought diverse disciplinary perspectives and practical insights into the art of debating:

1. Dr. Rahul Raj Aryan, Department of Hindi, Lakshmibai College, University of Delhi;
2. Ms. Shibangi Dash, Department of English, Shyam Lal College (Evening); and
3. Dr. Pankaj Patwa, Department of Commerce, Shyam Lal College (Evening).

Their sessions collectively introduced students to different dimensions of effective debate, including argumentation, communication, presentation, critical engagement, and responding to opposing viewpoints.

Proceedings

The workshop brought together students interested in debating and public speaking and provided them with an opportunity to prepare for the forthcoming intra-college competition. The sessions were conducted in an interactive format, combining discussion, demonstrations, practical exercises, and group activities. The resource persons introduced students to the essential components of a good debate, including understanding the motion, constructing an argument, using evidence, anticipating counterarguments, rebutting opposing positions, and presenting ideas clearly and persuasively. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of listening as an integral part of debating. Students were encouraged not merely to prepare speeches but also to listen carefully to their opponents and respond directly to the arguments being presented. The workshop also addressed the importance of tone, body language, voice modulation, clarity, and confidence in effective public speaking. Students were encouraged to disagree with arguments without resorting to personal attacks and to focus instead on evidence and reasoning.

Felicitation of Resource Persons

The workshop also included a felicitation ceremony to acknowledge the valuable contribution of the resource persons.

Our Principal Sir, Professor Nachiketa Singh, felicitated the guest resource person, Dr. Rahul Raj Aryan, Department of Hindi, Lakshmibai College, in recognition of his participation and contribution to the workshop.

The other two resource persons, Ms. Shibangi Dash, Department of English, Shyam Lal College (Evening), and Dr. Pankaj Patwa, Department of Commerce, Shyam Lal College (Evening), were felicitated by the faculty members of the College.

The felicitation acknowledged the collective contribution of all three resource persons in making the workshop an enriching and engaging learning experience for the students.

Preparation for the Intra-College Debate Competition

A central purpose of the workshop was to prepare and orient students for the Intra-College Debate Competition scheduled for 30 October 2026. The workshop provided students with practical guidance that they could apply during the competition, including constructing arguments, presenting points within a limited time, responding to opposing arguments, and maintaining clarity and confidence while speaking. The programme also helped students understand that successful debating requires more than eloquence. Research, critical thinking, active listening, logical reasoning, quick thinking, and respectful disagreement are equally important. The upcoming competition will provide students with an opportunity to put these skills into practice and compete for the Principal's Trophy. The workshop therefore served as an important first step in the Society's preparation for the competition.

Student Participation

The workshop witnessed enthusiastic participation from the students. The interactive format allowed students to ask questions, share their experiences, and participate in practical exercises. The activities provided students with an opportunity to practise debating in a less formal environment before participating in the 30 October intra-college competition. The workshop also encouraged students who may have been hesitant about public speaking to participate and develop greater confidence.

Contribution of Student Office Bearers and Volunteers

The successful organisation of the workshop was made possible through the dedicated and sustained efforts of the student office bearers and volunteers of Manthan–The Debating Society. From the initial planning and coordination to the execution of the programme, the student team worked relentlessly behind the scenes to ensure that the event proceeded smoothly. The office bearers and volunteers took responsibility for a wide range of organisational tasks, including coordinating with the resource persons, communicating with students, managing registrations and attendance, arranging the venue, assisting with the technical requirements, coordinating the programme schedule, welcoming and guiding guests, facilitating the activities, and managing the event on the day. Their work extended beyond the visible proceedings of the workshop. They remained actively involved before, during, and after the event, responding to last-minute requirements and ensuring that both the resource persons and participating students were adequately supported. The workshop thus reflected not only the academic contribution of the resource persons and the participation of students but also the teamwork, initiative, responsibility, and commitment of the Society's student office bearers and volunteers. Their collective effort played an important role in creating a well-organised and welcoming environment for the workshop.

Conclusion

The "Art of Debate" workshop was an important preparatory and orientation initiative of the Manthan–The Debating Society. Organised ahead of the 30 October 2026 Intra-College Debate Competition, the programme provided students with both conceptual understanding and practical experience in debating. The workshop successfully created an encouraging

platform for students to develop and refine their debating skills before the formal competition. The forthcoming Intra-College Debate Competition and the awarding of the Principal's Trophy on 30 October will provide students with an opportunity to put the learning from the workshop into practice. Through initiatives such as these, the Manthan–The Debating Society hopes to contribute to a sustained culture of critical thinking, informed discussion, confident expression, student leadership, and constructive disagreement at Shyam Lal College (Evening).

Selected Pictures from the Event



Figure 1. Professor Nachiketa Singh, Principal, Shyam Lal College (Evening), with the Faculty Members and Student Office Bearers of Mathan-The Debating Society



Figure 2. Professor Nachiketa Singh, Principal, Shyam Lal College (Evening), University of Delhi, with the Convenor Dr. Anannya Bohidar and the Faculty Members of Mathan-The Debating Society



Figure 3. Professor Nachiketa Singh, Principal, Shyam Lal College (Evening), felicitating our guest Resource Person, Dr. Rahul Raj Aryan, Department of Hindi, Lakshmibai College, University of Delhi.



Figure 4. Professor Nachiketa Singh, Principal, Shyam Lal College (Evening), with the Student Office Bearers and volunteers of Mathan-The Debating Society



Figure 5 Resource Persons during one of the sessions.