



Seminar Hall

Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj

Debate & Discussion Club

Thursday, October 09, 2025

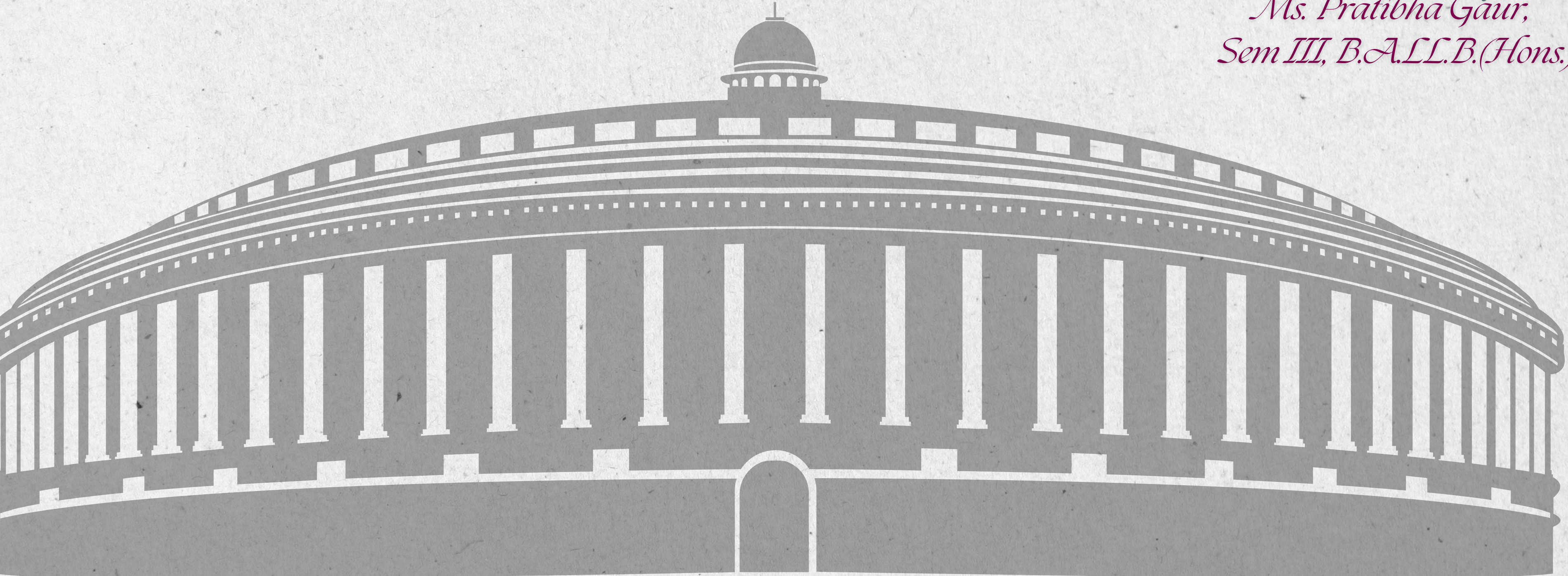


PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

WORKSHOP

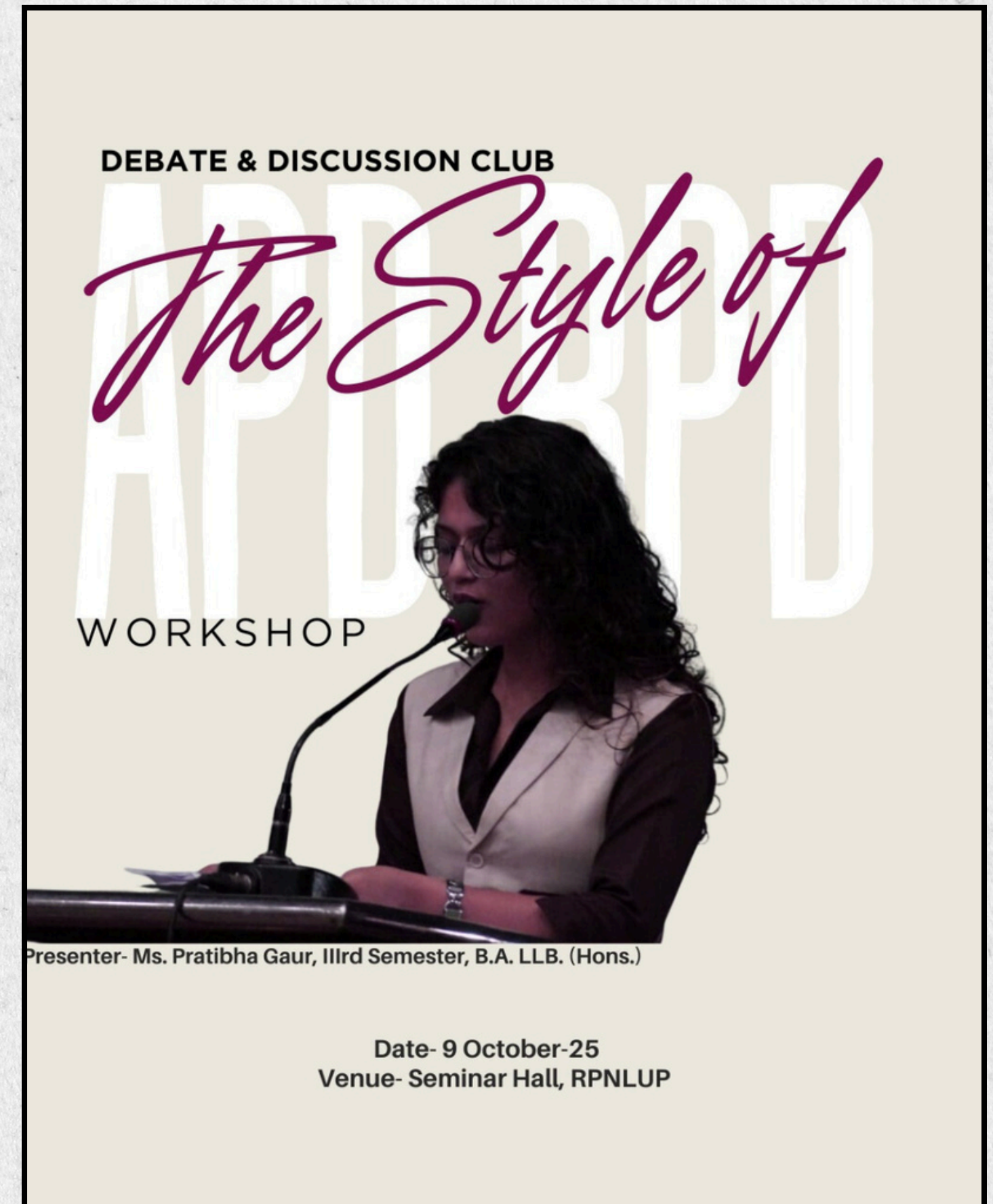
THE REPORT

Presented by :
Ms. Pratibha Gaur,
Sem III, B.A.LL.B.(Hons.)



Brief Introduction

A workshop on Parliamentary Style Debates was organized by the Debate and Discussion Club of Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj. The session was attended by students of Sem I and Sem II of B.A.LL.B.(Hons.) and was guided DDC's faculty convener, who shared her views and inputs during the session. The main aim of the workshop was to help the students understand what parliamentary debating is, its types, basic rules, and how it helps students improve their communication and thinking skills.



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Ms. Pratibha Gaur, Sem III, B.A.LL.B.(Hons.)

The workshop began with a short introduction about what a parliamentary debate actually means. It was explained that this is a formal and structured way of discussing a topic, just like how discussions take place in real parliaments. It helps students express their opinions logically and respectfully. **The Ms. Pratibha Gaur**, presenter of the workshop mentioned that there are many types of parliamentary debates used around the world, such as Asian Parliamentary, British Parliamentary, American Parliamentary, Canadian Parliamentary, and others. The focus of this workshop was mainly on the Asian and British formats.

Asian Parliamentary Debate (AP)

Prime Minister (PM) : defines the motion and gives the first few arguments.

Deputy Prime Minister (DPM): rebuts and adds new points.

Government Whip summarizes the case without adding new arguments.

On the Opposition side, the **Leader of Opposition (LOP)**, **Deputy Leader**, and **Opposition Whip** perform similar roles in response.

In the first part, participants learned about the Asian Parliamentary format, which has two teams of three members each – one side supporting the motion (the Government) and the other opposing it (the Opposition).

The process of motion selection was also explained. Both teams are given three topics and asked to rank them in order of preference. If both teams choose the same topic, it becomes the motion for debate. If they differ, a coin toss is used to decide. After this, teams get only 20 minutes to prepare, with no internet, digital, or external help allowed. This rule tests how quickly and smartly a team can think and plan together.

Debate flow

The flow of the debate was also shown clearly – the Prime Minister starts by defining and setting up the case, the Leader of Opposition responds and challenges it, the Deputy speakers strengthen their sides, and the Whips summarize without introducing new points. In British Parliamentary debate, there are eight speakers in total, and the opening teams define the framework while closing teams bring new extensions or angles to the same motion.

The time structure is very important in debates. In Asian Parliamentary format, each substantive speech lasts 6 minutes with a 1-minute grace, while reply speeches are 3 minutes with a 1-minute grace.

A single knock at 1 minute marks the start of POIs (Points of Information), another knock at 6 minutes signals that POIs must stop, and continuous knocking after 7 minutes means the speaker must end immediately.

In British Parliamentary format, speeches generally last 5 to 7 minutes. The first and last minutes are “protected,” meaning no interruptions are allowed. The middle part of the speech is open for POIs.

Timing rules



We learned that Points of Information (POIs) are short interruptions during an opponent's speech, lasting about 15 seconds. They make the debate more interactive and show how alert the speakers are.

A speaker can accept or reject a POI, but taking one or two shows confidence. They should be brief and are not allowed in the first or last minute of a speech.

Rejecting too many POIs can seem like avoiding questions, while using them smartly can impress judges and strengthen a team's case.

Points of information



Defining the motion and unreasonable definitions

The definition of the motion plays a very important role. It must be clear, logical, and related to the spirit of the topic. The Prime Minister is responsible for giving a fair definition that both sides can reasonably debate. We were also told about unreasonable definitions that should be avoided, such as:

Truism: something that is obviously true and leaves no room for debate.

Tautology: a circular definition that proves itself.

Place-set and Time-set: where the debate is unfairly limited to one place or time.

Squirreling: changing the topic to something unrelated to the motion.

The Leader of Opposition can challenge a bad definition, but it must be justified clearly and done only when really necessary.



British Parliamentary Debate (BP)

The British Parliamentary format is slightly more complex as it involves four teams – Opening Government, Opening Opposition, Closing Government, and Closing Opposition. Each team has two members.

Even though teams on the same side support each other's stance, they compete for a better rank. The Opening teams build the foundation of the debate, while the Closing teams add new ideas and perspectives, known as extensions.

At the end, the Whips was summarized and explain why their side's case is stronger. Instead of one winner, all four teams are ranked from first to fourth, which makes judging more balanced.



Faculty convener's role



The faculty convener played a very active and important role during the workshop. She added helpful points wherever needed and acted as a strong backbone of the session. Her valuable insights made the explanations clearer and helped everyone stay focused. The session was also highly interactive – students kept asking questions and discussing points, which showed their eagerness to learn.

The presenter patiently answered every question, and this made the workshop more lively and easy to follow.

Conclusion



Overall, the workshop was very informative and gave the participants clear understanding of how parliamentary debates are conducted, how speakers prepare and deliver their points, and how timing and structure make a big difference. It also helped them realize that debating is not just about arguing but about presenting logical and respectful reasoning.

The entire session created interest among all participants to explore debating further.



Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj

Debate & Discussion Club



Patron - Sr. Prof. (Dr.) Usha Tandon
(Hon'ble Vice- Chancellor, RPNLUP)

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