



**SPECIAL LECTURE  
WITH  
DR. RANJANA DAS  
31st May, 2023**

**CENTRE FOR HIMALAYAN  
STUDIES**

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

**Oral History as a Relevant Methodology to explore the  
Historical Past**

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For a long time, studying of the historical past was limited to acquisition of knowledge through formalised sources such as authoritative texts, archaeological evidences, archival records, and official documentary sources. This kind of history was accepted as the rational, scientific way in which the past can be understood. While it remains the dominant discourse, what it fails to capture as a methodology are the equally relevant interfaces of experiences in history. Sometimes, these valuable 'traces of the past' inhere in personal memoirs, autobiographies, folklores and sometimes, in more contemporary times, they may be found in the oral narratives of people that may be understood as oral history. The methodology of oral history stands as a comparatively much recent intervention in the spectrum of historiography. It attempts to fill in the gaps in archival history and is often believed to have made the discipline more inclusive and approachable. Nevertheless, rationalising history through excavation of memories is a complex process, for while it may represent a continuity, having an umbilical cord with the past, there is also the historical distance between the past and the present that can never be overcome. My lecture intends to explore and discuss the various dimensions of oral history as a methodology to understand the historical past.



Dr. Ranjana Das is a senior Assistant Professor in the Department of History in Ramjas College, University of Delhi. She specialises in Modern History and during her fourteen years of teaching experience, has taught various papers on Modern Indian History, European History in the early modern and Modern periods, Skill Enhancement Courses on Heritage Conservation and Understanding of Popular Cultures. She has a doctoral degree from the Centre for History Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and is the recipient of the prestigious Charles Wallace Fellowship in 2016. Her research and teaching interests pertain to relevance of historiography in understanding history, oral history, social inclusion, migration, caste, gender and politics.

**VENUE, SEMINAR HALL, CENTRE FOR HIMALAYAN STUDIES**

**At 12:30 pm**

**ALL ARE INVITED**