

***A Wikipedia-project conducted jointly by the
Department of History and the Library of the
South Asia Institute, Heidelberg***

During the summer semester 2014, Nicole Merkel from the SAI-library and Rafael Klöber from the Department of History launched a joint project to introduce and sensitize students to the well-known online encyclopedia Wikipedia, widely used even by academics. As part of Rafael Klöber's undergraduate seminar, entitled "British, Aryans and Dravidians: Colonial South India", the students were taught to engage critically with the history, content, copyright issues and the stipulations involved in contributing to Wikipedia. Nicole Merkel guided the students on how to use Wikipedia as an information resource, and taught them the skills required to produce new articles in line with the requirements of the online encyclopedia as well as on par with academic standards.

The project proved to be a fruitful exposure to the multidimensionality of everyday knowledge production in a globalized and online world. Furthermore, the task of writing new articles encouraged the students to elaborate on topics with which they were dealing in the seminar. For the students, the project successfully combined a productive writing exercise with gaining meaningful skills in information literacy as well as developing an awareness for critically using online media. Moreover, the German version of Wikipedia was enriched by new contributions on the caste-debate ("*Kastenstreit*") among Protestant missionaries in 19th century South India, on the Anti-Hindi movement ("*Anti-Hindi Bewegung*") in early 20th century Tamil Nadu, and on two influential Indian reformers of the Madras Presidency, namely "*Ramalinga Swamikal*" and "*Kandukuri Viresalingam*". This joint project conducted by Rafael Klöber and Nicole Merkel was an exemplary start to cooperation between different departments in the SAI, and hence will most probably have a follow-up. This initiative will hopefully stimulate similar collaborations in the future.

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