

FRIDAY

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi

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FRIDAY, 12TH MARCH 2021 AT 3:00 PM

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SURYAKANT
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FROM CASTES TO NATIONALIST HINDUS: THE MAKING OF HINDUISM AS A CIVIL RELIGION

Abstract:

Based on fieldwork in Bengaluru, this paper engages with the new Hindutva by revisiting Ashis Nandy's (1991) conflicting distinction between Hindutva and Hinduism, which hoped that the latter might end the former. However, Hindutva has not only survived but thrived, growing by leaps and bounds. A foundational problem with placing faith in Hinduism for fighting Hindutva is the overlooking of the caste question. This paper approaches new Hindutva by locating caste at the center of popular Hinduism, thereby distinguishing it from the former. New Hindutva consistently reinvents itself while competing with, learning from, and co-opting other kinds of civil solidarities through the social service of the RSS, thus transforming Hinduism into a civil religion.

The Speaker:

Suryakant Waghmore is Associate Professor of Sociology at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay. He has previously taught at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, and Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen. He is the author of *Civility Against Caste* (2013) and co-editor of *Civility in Crisis* (2020). He writes occasionally in *Scroll*, the *Indian Express*, the *Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu*, *Outlook*, *India Today*, *Seminar*, and *The Wire*.