

FRIDAY

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi
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FRIDAY, 8TH APRIL 2022 AT 3:00 PM
SRINIVAS SEMINAR ROOM, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**MAYA
JOHN**



LAW'S LABOUR LOST: A SHORT HISTORY OF LABOUR LAW IN INDIA

Abstract:

The post-colonial political economy has bred a labour movement which has fallen prey to low union density, bureaucratized trade unionism, and economism. Labour law has been a vital tool in this process, nurturing a hierarchy of legal status among workers, triggering the split between the leadership and the rank-and-file of unions, and (mis)directing collective action into narrow, institutionalized forms. Increasingly, the struggle of one segment of workers rarely connects with the struggles of others. Capital seeks to de-collectivize and de-institutionalize the public presence of labour – a development that some have identified as the 'end' of labour law. Indeed, regulation of labour relations seems to have returned workers to brutal, early-colonial precarity. This presentation traces the history of India's labour law regime, highlighting intense labour precarity through a case study of a rare uprising of domestic workers in a high-rise residential complex in Noida.

The Speaker:

Dr. Maya John teaches history at the Jesus & Mary College, University of Delhi. She is a labour historian and has been publishing on the politics of epidemiology; the relationship between caste, gender, and the labour market; the evolution of labour law in colonial and postcolonial India; and gender-specific laws at the workplace. She is also active in unions of domestic workers, teachers, and other sections of the urban workforce.