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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
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SRINIVAS SEMINAR ROOM, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

N. SUKUMAR



CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

Abstract:

In caste-ridden Indian society, Scheduled Caste students are excluded from the type and quality of social relations automatically available to upper caste students. This exclusion produces capability deprivation, which in turn reinforces their socio-cultural exclusion and ultimately limits their life opportunities. Deprived of cultural capital, students from these communities encounter prejudice from teachers and students who consider themselves socially superior. Theories of cultural reproduction through education tell us that institutions are the spaces which ensure the reproduction of social hierarchies in terms of its cultural, economic, and political systems. This presentation reports the results of a field study covering ten universities across the country. The study sought to interrogate the differential treatment meted out to Scheduled Caste students who get admission through affirmative action in institutions of higher learning. It examines the psycho-social consequences of the “casteplaining” that they are subjected to by their peer group, the administration and the larger academia.

The Speaker:

N. Sukumar is professor of Political Science at Delhi University. His areas of interest include Indian political thought; Ambedkar and Dalit-Bahujan studies; human rights; and social exclusion. He is currently engaged in research on caste discrimination in Indian universities, and on Dalit citizenship. He is the author of *Caste Discrimination and Exclusion in Indian Universities: A Critical Reflection*, and has published widely in academic journals and media blogs. He serves on professional bodies in many central universities, and is also actively involved in grassroots Dalit struggles.