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FRIDAY, 2ND DECEMBER 2022 AT 3:00 PM
SRINIVAS SEMINAR ROOM, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**ANUJA
AGRAWAL**



BEYOND AGENCY VS. VICTIMHOOD: MAKING SOCIOLOGICAL SENSE OF 'SEX WORK'

Abstract:

Both globally and in India, debates on 'sex work' have been caught between polarized perspectives that stress either the agency of 'sex workers' or the victimhood of 'women in prostitution'. Representing different and opposing strands of feminist politics, such approaches elide a sociological understanding of sex work, a topic which arouses a lot of interest despite its socially marginal location. In this presentation, I discuss anthropological and sociological frameworks which can usefully inform an understanding of the place of sex work in society. I attempt to situate the 'sex' as well as 'work' aspects of sex work within the structures of gender, family, marriage, caste and class, drawing upon my long-term engagement with the issue beginning with my doctoral research.

The Speaker:

Anuja Agrawal is Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. She has taught at the Lady Shri Ram College for Women, and has held visiting positions at the London School of Economics and Kyoto University. She is the author of *Chaste Wives and Prostitute Sisters: Patriarchy and Prostitution among the Bedias of North India* (2008) and editor of *Migrant Women and Work* (2006). Her research interests include gender, marriage and family studies; denotified tribes and sexually marginalised communities. She has published widely on these and related issues.