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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi
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FRIDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY 2023 AT 3:00 PM

SRINIVAS SEMINAR ROOM, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**IRFANULLAH
FAROOQI**



**WHEN A POET INSISTS HE IS NOT ONE:
REFLECTIONS IN THE LIGHT OF MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S LETTERS**

Abstract:

The iconic Urdu poet Muhammad Iqbal repeatedly distanced himself from being called a poet – he wanted to be recognized, first and foremost, as a Muslim. This presentation explores Iqbal's strange yet sociologically significant aversion to being called a poet through a critical reading of his personal letters. I situate his preferences within the socio-historical context of early 20th century colonial India, with special reference to the interplay between Urdu and Islam. Alongside, I also look into Iqbal's scathing indictment of territorial nationalism through a poetics that is markedly Islamic, an aspect that is a major reason for Iqbal's revered Muslimness in popular discourse.

The Speaker:

Irfanullah Farooqi teaches sociology at the South Asian University (SAU). He has earlier taught at the Aligarh Muslim University and at Jamia Millia Islamia. His M.Phil. was on the poetry of Faiz Ahmad Faiz, and his doctoral research was on the shift in Muhammad Iqbal's thought from universalism to Muslim separatism. His research interests include the Urdu literary imagination, South Asian social thought, academic freedom, secular-religious exchanges, and issues related to marginalised identities.