

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
DELHI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS  
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI  
DELHI – 110 007

20/02/2024

**FRIDAY RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM**

You are cordially invited to the  
Friday colloquium of the Department

By

**PROF. HARISH NARAINDAS**

(Professor, CSSS,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University)  
who will present a paper

on

**“Epigenetics, metabolic reversals, resurrections:  
toward an epistemic and ontological democracy?”**

on

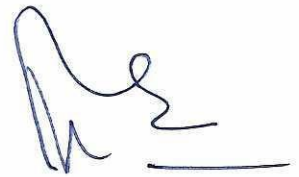
**Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2024 at 3:00 PM**

in

Room No: 10 (First Floor),

**Prof. M. N. Srinivas Seminar Room**

Department of Sociology



(Dr. Tila Kumar

&

**Prof. Janaki Abraham)**

Coordinators,

Friday Research Colloquium (2023-24)

**FRIDAY RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM**

23/02/2024

**PROF. HARISH NARAINDas**

(Professor, CSSS,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University)

**“Epigenetics, metabolic reversals, resurrections:  
toward an epistemic and ontological democracy?”**

**ABSTRACT**

Epigenetics, through DNA methylation and histone modification, promises to enfold the social into the biological. In doing so it appears to hold out a promise for a triple epistemic parity: of the sociological and the biological, of biomedicine and alternative medicine, and between biomedicine's present and its putative past through the re-invocation of Galenic medicine, whose six non-naturals could easily be glossed as “epigenetic triggers” that cause diseases. Against the backdrop of such a heady rapprochement between science and society, past and present, East and West – all proxies for each other and for mind and body – we will ethnographically tease out a similar rapprochement in a German Klinik (hospital) where not only are metabolic disorders such as diabetes reversed through fasting, but psychosomatic conditions are addressed by conversing with the dead. Thus, while epigenetics holds out a promise for an epistemic democracy if not parity, resurrecting one's dead siblings seems to cure affliction through an ontological parity between the dead and the living. This in turn raises the thorny question about the relationship between “magic, religion and science” in the anthropological canon, which we intend to broach.

Harish Naraindas is professor of sociology at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and honorary professor at Deakin University and Shiv Nadar University.