

FRIDAY

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**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
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**FRIDAY, 23<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 3:00 PM**  
SRINIVAS SEMINAR ROOM, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**SHASHI  
BHUSHAN  
SINGH**



## THE RIDDLES OF DEMOCRACY: ELECTIONS AND THE REPRODUCTION OF DOMINANCE IN A SOUTH BIHAR PANCHAYAT

### ***Abstract:***

The introduction of universal adult suffrage, operation of market forces, and measures taken by the state to include politically marginalized sections of population in the power structure have considerably loosened the grip of the dominant castes over the electoral system. However, election results from the local to the national level show that the electoral process continues to revolve around a few castes. This paper studies consensus formation in a panchayat election in Bihar in order to bring out the mechanism through which the dominant castes – forward as well as backward – retain their political dominance and hegemony even when they are a numerical minority. It suggests that, more than the numerical strength of a caste at the state or national level, it is the caste composition of the village and the electoral constituency that play a decisive role in who gets what where.

### ***The Speaker:***

Shashi Bhushan Singh teaches at the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi, with which he has been associated for the past twenty-eight years. He is the author of *Democracy and Social Movements: A Sociological Analysis of Bihar's Backward Class Movement* (2019), and of several journal articles. His research interests center on rural society, with special emphasis on local-level politics and issues related to social and symbolic representations.