

FRIDAY

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

Conversations on society since 1960

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi

<http://sociology.du.ac.in/sociological-research-colloquium/>

FRIDAY, 24TH MARCH 2023 AT 3:00 PM

Srinivas Seminar Room, Department of Sociology.

SUMBUL
FARAH



MEDIATION, MATERIALITY & MEANING: DEBATING THE AUTHENTICITY OF VISUAL AND SONIC REPRODUCTIONS OF THE DIVINE WORD.

Abstract:

As technology increasingly shapes the way we live, communicate, work, think and believe, there emerge concomitant possibilities and challenges of living ethically with it. I analyse some of the affordances and anxieties made available by technology for the purpose of religious mediation. To do so, I draw on the cognitive uncertainties wrought by new technologies on Barelwi thought and practice, using the theological debates that have emerged around the ontological status of the displayed word and amplified sound produced electronically. The question of the authenticity of the digital and electrical reproduction of the Word precipitates a deeper moral crisis when faith and the moral universe it is embedded in are at stake. An analysis of the creative engagement with such questions and the reflexive modes of reasoning that are employed show the many ways in which the technological and the social are mutually constitutive.

The Speaker:

Sumbul Farah is Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Her doctoral dissertation (2017) explored the Barelwi school of thought within Islam that defends veneration of saints and shrine-based practice on the basis of authoritative Islamic sources. Her work has appeared in *Modern Asian Studies* and in *Contributions to Indian Sociology*.