

Department of History and Culture

Faculty of Humanities and Languages

Jamia Millia Islamia

Invites you to a lecture

By

Dr. Surajbhan Bhardwaj

On

***MYTH AND REALITY OF THE KHAP PANCHAYATS : AN HISTORICAL
ANALYSIS OF THE PANCHAYAT AND KHAP PANCHAYAT***

26 September 2013 (Thursday)

12.15 PM

Venue: Seminar Room, Department of History and Culture, JMI

Abstract:

During the past few years, marriages within the same 'gotra' (clan) have come to limelight, particularly among the Jat community. Frequently, those who have eloped have been brutally murdered by the diktats of the elders of the community in the name of saving honour and culture. The main centres of these happenings are located in Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh and the rural belt of Delhi. From the social point of view, these areas are dominated by the caste of Jats. From the economic point of view, the people of these regions are prosperous. On account of their proximity to Delhi, these areas have reaped the fruits of modernization and access to facilities. In fact a majority of the educational institutions, health centres, modernized road systems and multinational business establishments are located in these areas which have witnessed considerable inflow of foreign capital. However, there is a difference between the quantum of change in the economic life and the modern value system of the people. These areas are still in the grip of Khap panchayats which bring back the married couples forcibly into brother-sister relationship. The Khap panchayats adopt various methods to torture the married couples by ostracising their families and forcing the couples to flee from the villages. A large number have lost their lives in the name of 'honour killings'. That is why boys and girls marrying within the same gotra are perceived to have committed a crime against the community and traditional culture. In support of their practices, the Khap panchayats try to legitimise their actions by citing historical antecedents. The leaders of the community are of the opinion that the Khap panchayat is an age old institution, having its foundation in the medieval period. This presentation seeks to re-examine the claims of the Khap panchayats regarding their lineage and antiquity.

About the Speaker:

Dr. Surajbhan Bhardwaj is Associate Professor in the Department of History, Motilal Nehru College, University of Delhi. He has written extensively on social, political and cultural history of the Mewat region. His doctoral thesis was on the theme of agrarian structure and forms of agrarian protest in Mewat during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Drawing upon the archival sources preserved at the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, Dr. Bhardwaj's research has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the history of late medieval and early modern peasant communities of northern India.