



## **Faculty Seminar: “Hindu Water”, “Muslim Water”: Syncretism, Commensality and Community in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Punjab**

Speaker:

Anil Sethi, Azim Premji University

Date / Time:

August 8, 2012 - 4:00pm - 5:30pm

Venue:

Room No. 103, First Floor, Pixel B, APU

Abstract:

This presentation will examine the public expression of sectarian beliefs and prejudices related to questions of purity and pollution, commensality and segregation in the Punjab for the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to see whether these contributed, especially through the discourses of pamphleteers and publicists, to any kind of boundary formation between Hindus and Muslims. Attitudes concerning pollution taboos, although integral to the life of the Punjabis, existed among them in an amorphous subconscious form and did not imply any constant solidarity around religious and cultural issues. Nonetheless, they contributed to the formation of stereotypes of the collective Self and the collective Other and often became an important ingredient of identities perceived in, and through, daily occurrences and relationships. Did these practices have any implications for the development of communal politics? The talk will seek to explore the possibilities of a social history of communalism.

A Note on the Speaker:

Before coming to the Azim Premji University, Bangalore, Anil was Professor of History at the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi. He has taught at various universities: Delhi University, Osaka University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, University of North London and at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi. He has researched the history of communalism, especially its linkages with everyday life. He has also helped develop a Tokyo-based oral archive on the Partition of India. His interests include the social and religious history of modern South Asia, the history of the Indian National Movement, and History Education.

Anil was a Commonwealth Scholar at St. Catharine’s College, University of Cambridge,

Cambridge, UK from where he got his Ph.D. for a dissertation that dealt with religious identities in nineteenth and early twentieth century Punjab