

13th Creative Theory Colloquium

(4th, 5th & 6th September 2026)

Venue: *India International Centre, New Delhi*

CONCEPT NOTE

The need for Indian Political Theory arises from the broader search for intellectual and political self-articulation in conditions shaped by colonialism, caste hierarchy, inequality, ecological crisis, and democratic struggle. Political theory becomes meaningful when it emerges from lived experiences, ethical life, social practices, and collective struggles for dignity, justice, and freedom. Indian Political Theory, in this sense, is not merely an academic exercise but part of an ongoing effort to think through the conditions of human liberation from within concrete histories and social realities.

At the same time, this effort cannot remain insular or civilisationally self-contained. The aim is not the rejection of other knowledge traditions, but the creation of a democratic space of negotiation and dialogue among diverse intellectual inheritances. Indian Political Theory must therefore remain open to critical engagement with global thought while contributing concepts and perspectives that emerge from its own histories and experiences. The search is ultimately for a more universal horizon — one that remains dialogical, evolving, and open-ended rather than fixed or closed.

Indian Political Theory today thus faces a crucial intellectual challenge: how to move beyond the derivative use of inherited theoretical frameworks and generate concepts rooted in the historical and social realities of India while remaining critically engaged with global thought. The task is not merely to apply theory to India, but to rethink political theory itself through categories emerging from lived experience, social struggle, and historical transformation.

The colloquium seeks to explore the conceptual foundations of Indian Political Theory and examine how ideas emerging from Indian intellectual traditions and political movements may contribute to contemporary debates on democracy, justice, ethics, ecology, coexistence, and human liberation. Indian political thinking has evolved through philosophical reflection, ethical traditions, anti-caste struggles, labour movements, ecological experiences, and collective practices shaped by Buddhist, Bhakti, Sufi, Gandhian, Marxist, feminist, Dalit, Adivasi, and other traditions.

Political concepts emerge through concrete histories of caste, labour, gender, religion, ecology, and resistance. Indian Political Theory is therefore approached not as a fixed

civilisational archive, but as a living and evolving field shaped through social struggles, ethical practices, and democratic aspirations. The Indian freedom movement itself was a major site of conceptual production, where ideas such as Swaraj, Samata, Ahimsa, Satyagraha, Sarvodaya, Seva, Shram, and Mukti were reinterpreted in response to colonialism, caste oppression, inequality, and exploitation.

The colloquium also foregrounds Dalit, Adivasi, feminist, peasant, workers', and ecological movements as sites of theory that generate alternative political imaginaries grounded in dignity, equality, justice, autonomy, and coexistence. These struggles challenge dominant models of development, democracy, and sovereignty while opening new possibilities for emancipatory politics.

The colloquium encourages conceptual engagement with categories such as Swaraj, Samata, Nyaya, Asmita, Karuna, Sangharsh, Dharma, Lokasangraha, Prakriti, Anubhav, Samvad, and Jal-Jangal-Zameen, among others. It invites scholars, researchers, activists, and students to rethink Indian Political Theory as a creative and critical field capable of contributing to wider debates on democracy, social transformation, and universal human liberation.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

DAY 1: 4th September

❖ **04.00 pm to 04.30 pm: Registration and High Tea**

❖ **4:30-5:30 pm: Welcome Address**

(*Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty, Prof. Manindra Nath Thakur, Dr Rityusha, Prof. Savita Singh, Shri. Ashok Vajpeyi, Prof. Andrew T. Lamas, Prof. Rainer Winter, Prof. Roberto Mordacci & Prof. Suman Aggarwal*)

Inaugural Session: Debating Indian Political Theory

5:30-7:30 pm

	Chair	Manoranjan Mohanty
	Speaker	Peter Desouza
	Speaker	Gopal Guru
	Comments	Gurpreet Mahajan & Savita Singh

❖ **7:30 pm Vote of Thanks**

Day 2: 5th September

❖ 9.00-09.30 a.m.: Registration

SESSION 1: What is 'Indian' in Indian Political Theory?

09.30 am to 11.00 am

	Chair	Yogendra Yadav
	Speaker	Manindra NathThakur
	Speaker	Hilal Ahmed
	Discussants	Dhananjay Rai & Smruti Ranjan Dhal

SESSION 2: Conceptual Universe of Indian Political Theory

11.00 am -12.30 pm

	Chair	Satish Jha
	Speaker	Ashish Ghosh
	Speaker	Rajeev Kadambi
	Discussants	Bishnu Pratap Mishra & Nupur Ray

SESSION 3: Concepts in Indian Feminism

01.30 pm - 03:00 pm

	Chair	Savita Singh
	Speaker	Nishat Zaidi
	Speaker	Monika Saxena
	Discussants	Firdaus Azmat & Tripta Sharma

SESSION 4: Idea of Space: Vatan, Desh and Rashtra

03.00 pm - 05.00 pm

	Chair	Anup Dhar
	Speaker	Mohinder Singh
	Speaker	Irfanullah Farooqui
	Discussants	Sanjana & Rityusha Tiwary

DAY 3: 6th September

❖ **9.00-09.30 a.m.: Registration**

SESSION 5: Prakriti

09.30 am to 11.00 am

	Chair	Akhil Ranjan Dutta
	Speaker	Ruchi Shree
	Speaker	Suranjita Ray
	Discussants	Varun Wighmal & Varsha Rani

SESSION 6: Ilm and Gyan

11.00 am - 12.30 pm

	Chair	Madhulika Bannerjee
	Speaker	Chetna Trivedi
	Speaker	Akhlaq Ahmad ‘Ahan’
	Discussants	Manisha Priyam & Parvez Alam

SESSION 7: Shram and Work

01.30 pm - 03.30 pm

	Chair	Bhagat Oinam
	Speaker	Shriddha Shah
	Speaker	Rajkumar
	Discussants	Indrajit Jha & Meenakshi Kumar

SESSION 8: Roundtable Discussion chaired by Manoranjan Mohanty

03.30-05.00 pm

(Jigyasa Sogarwal, Saurabh Todariya, and others)

❖ *Drawing Curtains on the 13th Edition of Creative Theory Colloquium*
Vote of Thanks

For queries: ✉ fcsr.act@gmail.com