

Department of History and Culture
Faculty of Humanities and Languages
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi

Invites you to a Panel Discussion

On

Archaeology, History and Heritage

Speakers:

1. Dr. Supriya Varma: *Archaeology and Heritage*

2. Dr. Najaf Haider: *Heritage and History*

Date: 14.2.13 (Thursday)

Time: 12.15 PM

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

Archaeology and Heritage

The presentation will raise certain questions centering on the relationship between the discipline of archaeology and issues of cultural heritage. As much of archaeological practice in India is still steeped within colonial frameworks it continues to be positivist in its orientation and aimed at discovering or rediscovering objects. Through a discussion of a document prepared by the Archaeological Survey of India for the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities as well as an ongoing exhibition titled 'Rediscovering India: 1961-2011' at the National Museum, an attempt will be made to explore how the endeavour of categorizing and classifying monuments and 'antiquities' as markers of cultural heritage often strips them of their historical and archaeological contexts. At another level, archaeological projects in their bid to raise substantial funds and public attention jostle to either secure the status of a world heritage site or seek funding from organizations such as the Global Heritage Fund. For a different set of reasons, archaeologists have felt the need to go beyond the academic and enter the public realm even in case of less ambitious projects. Archaeologists are also facing new concerns about heritage, tourism and development. Heritage tourism is being increasingly promoted to generate funds for the economic development of a locality or region, particularly in the face of waning state funding. A case that I will discuss will be the Neem Ka Thana Heritage Tourism Development Project in Neem Ka Thana town, Sikar District, Rajasthan. This project which lasted for nine months was initiated in 2003 by a team of archaeologists who were part of the Ganeshwar Jodhpura Cultural Complex Survey team. Elsewhere archaeology has been facing its own set of disciplinary challenges and has had to devise new methodological approaches. Given the challenges confronting archaeology, how well are its practitioners equipped to deal with them? What is the future of this discipline in India which on the one hand continues to be both controlled by and under state surveillance and on the other hand is completely marginalized within the academic space of the colleges and universities?

Heritage and History

Heritage and history are often seen as cognate expressions insofar as they both show abiding interest in the past. Heritage is essentially concerned with remnants of the past, physical and intangible, which become raw material for the writing of history. These commonalities mask deep differences. History that part of the past which historians reconstruct and bring to light carries a meaning different from heritage. Historians hardly use the term heritage and heritage interpreters

(modern term for guides) are not historians. Anything that comes under the purview of heritage poses a challenge to historians to write about it professionally. The purpose of the presentation is to bring out the aspects underlying the difference between history and heritage and to argue for a meaningful way of obliterating it.

- **Dr. Supriya Varma** teaches archaeology at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. She has in the recent past excavated the archaeological sites of Indor Khera and Rohana Khurd in western Uttar Pradesh and is currently preparing the reports for publication. Her research interests include settlement archaeology, social archaeology, ethno archaeology, historical archaeology and archaeological practices in India
- **Dr. Najaf Haider** teaches medieval history in the Centre for Historical Studies, JNU. He is an economic historian by training but has interest also in Islamic history and literary culture of medieval India. His publications can be located and accessed on <http://academia.edu/>