



Azim Premji  
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## Talk: Citizens in the Making: Schooling, Identity and Citizenship Education

Speaker:

Meenakshi Thapan, Professor of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics

Date / Time:

February 14, 2012 - 2:30pm

Venue:

Activity Room, First Floor, Pixel B, APU

Abstract:

This paper seeks to examine the relationship between schooling, citizenship and identity in the complex, multi-layered and pluri-vocal processes and settings that characterize schooling in contemporary, urban India. Meenakshi's work seeks to understand the 'idea' of citizenship that is sought to be inculcated through citizenship education in our schools, the manner in which classroom encounters take place, and processes of communication within them. She views citizenship not as a legal status but as a social process that leads to the production of values concerning freedom and autonomy, as well as those that construct students' perceptions of their relationship to society. In addition, preparing students to frame and understand questions of justice and morality are central to her understanding of citizenship education. It is not enough, she argues, for students to be concerned about their rights and duties in an environment that emphasizes loyalty, obedience and sacrifice as central to 'good' citizenship. It is quite clear however that the school environment is not constructed by the official discourse alone but is simultaneously constructed and subverted by students who seek to bring their meanings to the situation. In this sense, she is concerned with how citizenship ideals are formulated, evolve, are negotiated and expressed in the everyday lives of schools.

A Note on the Speaker:

Meenakshi Thapan, is Professor of Sociology at the Delhi School of Economics, and Co-ordinator of the D.S. Kothari Centre for Science, Ethics and Education, University of Delhi. She has also been Co-ordinator of the European Studies Programme (funded by the European Union, 2010-2011), University of Delhi. Her publications include *Life at School. An Ethnographic Study* (Oxford University Press, 1991, 2006); (edited) *Embodiment. Essays on Gender and Identity* (Oxford University Press, 1997); (edited) *Anthropological Journeys. Reflections on Fieldwork* (Orient Longman, 1998); (edited) *Transnational Migration and the Politics of Identity* (Sage, 2005); (co-edited with Roland Lardinois) *Reading Pierre Bourdieu in a Dual Context: Essays from India and France* (Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2006). Her most

recent publications are *Living the Body: Embodiment, Womanhood and Identity in Contemporary India*. (Sage, 2009) and (edited) *Contested Spaces. Citizenship and Belonging in Contemporary Times*. (Orient Blackswan, 2010). She is also Series Editor of a five volume series on *Women and Migration in Asia* (Sage, 2005-2008).