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## **Jindal School of Government and Public Policy**

*cordially invites you to an*

# *Open Lecture*

on

## **FROM SECULARISING TO LEGITIMATING SACRED COW: DEBATING COW-PROTECTION IN INDIA**

by



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Dr. Sambaiah Gundimeda has done his Ph.d from SOAS, University of London in the Department of Politics and International Studies. Currently, he is a faculty member in the school of policy and governance at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru. Prior to this position, he was a Fellow at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. He is interested in the questions of democracy, social justice and governance. He has been publishing both in English and Telugu on issues pertaining to Dalit. Last year Routledge India brought out his book: Dalit Politics in Contemporary India.

#### **Abstract**

Cow-protection, a potent tool in the hands of the cow vigilantes in their atrocities against the Muslims and Dalits, has been one of the highly debated political issues in contemporary India. The roots of the current debate on cow protection, which rest on the dual themes of religious sentiment and economic reasoning trace its origins to the late nineteenth century. In this article, we trace the contemporary debates on cow-protection to two significant events – the Arya Samaj's justification against cow-slaughter in the nineteenth century and the publication of a special issue titled Gau Ank by the Gita Press in the twentieth century. In doing so, we aim to show how the debate on cow-protection in the Constituent Assembly of India and in subsequent judicial verdicts in post-independence India are heavily influenced by the cow-protection discourse formulated by those two events. Thereafter, we critically analyze two landmark judicial verdicts on the issue of cow-slaughter and we argue that the judiciary's arguments in favour of cow protection have legitimized popular Hindu majoritarian sentiment in the law, depriving the minorities of their right to food and livelihood. In conclusion, we attempt to provide an amicable solution to the current impasse over the cow-slaughter issue.

**Wednesday, 4 October 2017, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm**

**Classroom No. 29**

**O.P. Jindal Global University**

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