ABSTRACT
Why have vigilante groups become active recently? My argument is that democratic constraints have forced a change in the mode of repression against minorities. Since independence, the Hindutva groups have been facing the dilemma between mobilizations of Hindu majority and retaining power at the center. Religious riots were effective in mobilizing Hindu majority to some extent at state level, however, it failed to retain central power as the result of 2004 Lok Sabha election showed. Vigilante activities provide the solution to overcome this dilemma. They engage in stimulating Hindu majoritarian identity extensively without killing as many minorities as would religious riots. In this sense, their activities involve low intensity oppression of minorities, which receives less criticism. At the same time, they claim to be autonomous from the state, although they are getting tacit governmental supports. In this way, the governments can evade the direct responsibility for their activities.

Current vigilantism requires a new analytical framework to understand the politics of the Hindutva forces. I will argue that vigilantism has successfully overcome the oscillation between a militant line and a moderate line.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

DATE Wednesday, 29 Aug 2018
TIME 3.00pm to 4.30pm
VENUE AS1 #04-01, Singapore 117573

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