



INDIA CANADA FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

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announces its lecture event

**Balancing Multiculturalism and Gender Equality:
Muslim Women's Rights and the Debate over the
Uniform Civil Code in India**

by Dr. Gopika Solanki

on Sunday, 21 October 2018, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

(registration at 2:45 p.m.)

**Venue: Rockcliffe Park Community Centre Hall, 380 Springfield Road,
Ottawa**



Synopsis: Debates rage in India and in other multicultural societies over the question of whether states should adopt uniform laws to govern the family or recognize religious family laws. These questions shape relations between majority and minority ethno-religious groups and impact gender equality. These contestations have been particularly sharp around the question of the recognition of Muslim personal law in India. Many feminists and liberals belonging to majority and minority religious groups in India have argued Muslim religious family laws violate Muslim women's right to freedom and equality within the family. In contrast, conservatives, minority religious bodies, and some liberal Muslims argue that religious freedom guaranteed under the Indian constitution legitimises the policy of recognition of religious family laws, and some feminists support this claim. The BJP and its affiliates support the enactment of the uniform civil

code, while the Congress Party, the Samajwadi Party, the BSP and the left parties oppose such a code. These issues have occupied the political centre stage since the Indian Supreme Court placed an injunction against triple talaq, a form of Islamic divorce, in India in 2017. This presentation traces the historical and contemporary aspects of the contentious debate over the governance of triple talaq.

About the Speaker: Gopika Solanki is Associate Professor of Political Science at Carleton University in Canada. Her research interests include multiculturalism and legal pluralism, indigeneity and the law, and feminist theory. She is the author of *Adjudication in Religious Family Laws: Cultural Accommodation, Legal Pluralism, and Gender Equality in India* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). Her co-authored book, *Journey from Violence to Crime: A Study of Domestic Violence in the City of Mumbai* (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, 2001), contributed to the drafting of the law criminalizing domestic violence in India, namely, The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, and has been widely used as a resource for legal literacy campaigns, police manuals and training, and in higher education materials in India. She has taught at universities in both India and Canada, and has been a visiting fellow at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies at the University of Oxford. Currently, she is working on a book project on indigenous politics, *The Split Personality of Law: Political Decentralization, Gender, and Adivasi Legal Mobilization in India*, which is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. She is part of an interdisciplinary research team studying the spatial dimension of urban religions, titled "Dwelling and Crossing: The Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Religious Spaces in Mumbai."

About India Canada Friendship Circle

India Canada Friendship Circle (ICFC), a non-profit Canadian organization, operating in Ottawa since 2004 and conducting lectures by prominent speakers, encourages dialogue on India in a non-religious, non-partisan and harmonious environment. The words "friendship" and "circle" in its name convey an explicit desire to forge and maintain close ties among Canadians with an interest in India. ICFC's mission is to promote awareness and dialogue between India and Canada in the areas of philosophy, history, literature, industry, the arts, science and technology through prominent speakers.

For further details and online registration, please visit our website: <http://icfc.us>