



KCHR WEBINAR

# PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SOUNDS


**GANDHI AND THE POLITICS OF AMPLIFICATION**

This webinar is organised as a part of KCHR's ongoing series commemorating the 75th year of Indian independence.

**PROFESSOR LAKSHMI SUBRAMANIAN**

**FRIDAY | 22 APRIL 2022 | 3.00 PM (IST)**

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## ABSTRACT

When does sound become public and how does it alter space and the ways we inhabit it? Is the distinction between private and public tenable when it comes to sonic expression and reception? How does sacral sound complicate the distinction? These are some of the questions that the paper will address in the specific context of Gandhi and his intervention in the 'Music before Mosques' controversy in the 1920s. It will explore the ways in which Gandhi viewed sonic practices as part of both satyagrahi practice, an avowedly political activity as well as a seraphic pursuit to cultivate the moral self. Admittedly for Gandhi, the personal was political and ethical and it was therefore, not always easy to iron out a coherent and consistent discursive position on the issue. However, a close reading of Gandhi's ideas on the subject of sound and sound management offers a useful lens to explore the complexity of the symbolic politics played around sound that was not simply about "the private and the public" but about the redefining of tradition and the constitution of its essential elements that could be safe-guarded by law.

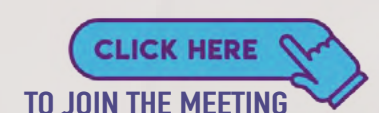
## ABOUT THE SPEAKER



**Professor Lakshmi Subramanian** is a retired professor of History at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta and holds the position of Associate Fellow in the Institute of Advanced Studies, Nantes. Currently, she is a visiting faculty at the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Goa. Her specialisation is in the fields of economic and maritime history and in India's cultural history, especially relating to music and performance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She has authored *Singing Gandhi's India: Music and Sonic Nationalism* (2020), *History of India, 1757-1857* (2010) and *New Mansions for Music: Performance, Pedagogy and Criticism* (2008) and has a number of other publications to her credit. Recently, she has been working on two projects on Gandhi and Sonic nationalism in India, and the three Godrej products and their relevance on configuring middle class consuming imagination, respectively.

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