

**Lecture at the Institute for Ethnology**

Stadtstraße 21, Raum STU 105 (2.10)

**19. Juni 2013, 16.00-18.00 Uhr**

Gurvinder S. Kalra, MD, DPM, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, M.G.M. Medical College & Hospital, M.G.M. University of Health Sciences Campus

**"Understanding the hijra identity through Bollywood Cinema"**

*Hindu culture has a third gender- the \*hijra\*, which plays a significant role in rituals and rites related to marriage and son-birth ceremonies. It should not be seen as the exact Indian equivalent of the Western transgender identity, though for the sake of ease it is often seen as such.*

*Because \*hijra\* plays such an important role, it is also portrayed extensively in scriptures and art including films. The film portrayal of \*hijras\* can vary from very sympathetic to a figure of fun. Over the years, such portrayals have not changed dramatically. This paper aims to discuss the portrayals of \*hijras\* in Bollywood cinema and what effect this may have on the viewers. We also describe some of the social and cultural context of films within which \*hijras\* are seen. We analyzed a total of 29 films that had references to hijras & took contemporaneous notes on how they have been portrayed in Bollywood films.*