

**The Center for Development Practice**  
cordially invites you to a **Lecture**  
**(in the 'Development Practice' Lecture series)**  
at 3.00 pm on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2014  
in CR No. 12  
on  
**'Beyond Protective Discoloration: Ambedkar on  
Conversion'**  
by  
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**Abstract:**

The thesis I want to argue in this paper is the following: The distinctive contribution that B. R. Ambedkar made to the question of conversion, which hitherto had been dominantly presented as a politico-theological question, was to clarify it with a new tool of thought. This tool was a complexly articulated theory of names found in the essay "Away from the Hindus".

Ambedkar wrote this essay in the wake of the resolution passed in the 1936 Mahar Conference in Bombay that the Mahar's henceforth were abandoning Hinduism and were open to converting to some other religion. I would like to argue that only upon a sufficient appreciation of this theory of names, in all its semiotic, paradigmatic and existential richness, will we be able to grasp the implications of this theory for the historical terrain upon which they worked their effects. Only then can we undertake the further more perilous, and surely more urgent, task of moving from Ambedkar on conversion to Ambedkar's conversion.

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