Dr Nicolas Jaoul
CNRS Researcher in Anthropology, IRIS-EHESS, Paris

will give a talk titled:

“Ethnographic Film Making and the Insurgent Politics of Images”

Abstract
The experience of filming during my PhD fieldwork on the Ambedkarite movement in UP, and later on editing it into a long feature documentary, provides the basis to reflect on the corrosive entanglements of cinema and ethnography. If we agree that anthropological knowledge production should be reflexive and attentive to situations created by the presence of the ethnographer, cinema offers a major tool. Besides its exceptional descriptive power, the camera also records its presence and its effects on the attitudes of those who are filmed. As a consequence, filmed persons can appropriate the setting and capture or divert the camera’s and the viewer’s attention, which becomes politically relevant, as enabling the passage from ‘objects of study’ to acting subjects of a film.

Taking my film as an example, I will thus highlight how the internal hierarchies of the Ambedkarite movement became upset by non-authorized characters who thanks to their performances in front of the camera, managed to snatch the leading roles of some sequences momentarily. These politics of images also have implications for the politics of knowledge. While our academic writings reach to a very limited and specialized audience and deprive the studied communities of accessing the knowledge they have passed on to us, films can fill this gap and create conditions for democratic discussions with virtually everyone.

Date: Friday, 08 November 2019; Time: 3 – 5 pm
Venue: CSSSC Seminar Room 2, Patuli Campus

Maidul Islam
(Convener, Seminar Committee)

All are welcome to attend.