

Invites you to a discussion with **Megha Wadhwa, Sophia University,**

“In the Age of COVID-19 – Indian restaurants and the Indian cooks in Japan”

Date: Wednesday, October 28

Time: 7pm-8pm (Tokyo time)

Presentation will be followed by Q and A

On Zoom. Open to all; language English

Please register [HERE](#)

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=p-YOaaVN3E-jFrtZnYKlopSDtnsMuJVAtzRnSitkskJUOTFCNoRPN01OWEcXWEXGVUtCukVQq0xNUI4u>



This article explores the impact of COVID-19 on restaurants owned by Indian migrants in Japan as they struggle with financial and occupational risks. The owners try to balance their business interests with their relationships and with the Indian community in Tokyo and their desire to be good citizens by complying with pandemic guidelines. The cooks, who were brought to Japan by the owners, are in a more precarious position, having lost work hours and income, but without the ability to look elsewhere for work. Through the voices of both owners and cooks, I try to document these different experiences within a single ethnic community, and even a single enterprise, that has been tested by the virus.

A 7-minute documentary would also be presented during the talk.

For trailer click on this link – <https://vimeo.com/470209603/da7aadffd5>

Megha Wadhwa is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Institute of Comparative Culture, Sophia University. Her research focuses since 2013 has focused on the Indian Diaspora in Japan. She has written several articles on the Indian Community for [The Japan Times](#) and is also the author of [Indian Migrants in Tokyo: A Study of Socio-Cultural, Religious and Working Worlds](#). She has been conducting research about Indian migrant restaurateurs and cooks since 2017 as part of the Sophia Research Project on Priority Areas ‘Refugees and new migrant support: the role of the Church, other religious groups, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the sustainable social integration of the displaced population into Japan’.

Megha will be discussing her recently published paper: [“In the Age of COVID-19 – Indian restaurants and the Indian cooks in Japan”](#) from our collection in the [Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus](#)

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Notes on the full series: This discussion is the first in a series we will hold over the autumn on the causes, effects and current status of vulnerable populations in Japan during the Covid-19 pandemic. Each discussion will be moderated by David Slater and will give listeners a chance to meet the authors and others associated with the articles (advocates, activists, supporters, and participants). The authors will provide insight into the articles, as well as background to the conditions of data collection in the age of Corona, an update on the situation and a look forward—asking if we are any better prepared for next time.

An introduction to the whole collection here: [Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm](#) by David H. Slater

Abstract for the full collection of papers: This is a collection of original articles on diverse vulnerable populations in Japan in the wake of the new coronavirus pandemic. The effects of COVID-19 are felt differently, with some among us at much greater risk of infection due to preexisting health and welfare conditions. For others, perhaps more than the risk of infection, it is the precautions taken to mitigate the risk for the whole population, such as lockdowns and business closures, that have pulled away the already fragile safety net of state and civil society organization (CSO) support, leading to increased marginalization and social exclusion. The goal of this set of papers is to document the conditions of those that have been most directly affected by the virus and to provide background on the conditions that made them vulnerable in the first place, notably chronic conditions that are brought into more obvious relief in light of emergency measures. Each of the authors had a pre-established relationship with those affected populations and employed various ethnographic approaches, some face to face, others digitally via Zoom interviews and SNS exchanges. In this moment of what appears to be relative calm, we hope that our collection, quickly compiled in an attempt to capture the ever-changing situation, will give some insight into how those most vulnerable are faring in this time of crisis and provide information that will allow us to prepare better before the next wave comes our way.