



Azim Premji University Colloquium Series presents a talk on “The Databased Citizen”

Event Sub Title:

Colloquium: "The Databased Citizen"

Speaker:

Usha Ramanathan, Research Fellow, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi.

Date / Time:

September 25, 2014 - 2:00pm - 3:30pm

Venue:

10th Floor Auditorium, Pixel A

Abstract:

UID, Natgrid, NPR, Netra, CCTVs, CCTNS, these are some acronyms. Databasing, convergence, tagging, tracking, profiling are emerging phenomena. The UID aspires to create an `identity platform' and wants all persons on its data base. This is to be an identity infrastructure and the operative words are - unique, universal, ubiquitous. Corruption and inefficiency are used to explain why we must so enrol ourselves with the state. The National Population Register, and the National Register of Citizens that is to follow from it, invokes illegal migrants, terror and militancy to explain away the insistence that every person must become transparent to the state, and to whoever else is able to build on these identity platforms. There are proposals for a Human DNA Profiling Bill 2012 and for DNA data banks. There is a draft Land Titling Bill 2011 which demands that every piece of land, and the distress and vulnerability of the land holders be recorded and open to view, every piece of land be uniquely identified, linked with the UID, and that the title is to be "considered as evidence of the marketable title of the titleholder". Corruption, terrorism, brutal rape, inefficiency are offered to explain the normalising of surveillance. ID numbers in repositories, biometrics, DNA in databases, camera capture of faces and persons. Fear, alarm, threat, risk. The Transparent Individual is to turn the RTI on its head. Does surveillance really make the citizen/resident secure? What does it mean to be databased?

A Note on the Speaker:

Dr. Usha Ramanathan is an internationally recognized expert on law and poverty. She studied law at Madras University, the University of Nagpur and Delhi University. She is research fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, teaches environmental law, labour law and consumer law at the Indian Law Institute and is a regular guest professor at many universities around the world. She is a frequent adviser to non-governmental organisations and international organizations. She is for instance a member of Amnesty International's Advisory Panel on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and has been called upon by the World Health Organisation as a expert on mental health on various occasions.

Dr Ramanathan is also the South Asia Editor of the Law, Environment and Development Journal (LEAD Journal), a peer-reviewed academic journal jointly published by IELRC and SOAS. Her research interests include human rights, displacement, torts and environment. She has published extensively in India and abroad. In particular, she has devoted her attention to a number of specific issues such as the Bhopal gas disaster, the Narmada valley dams or slum eviction in Delhi.