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You are invited to a talk by

Usha Ramanathan

on

***Aadhaar* project and implications in the context of
recent decisions by the Supreme Court of India**

Monday, 7th October 2013, 6 p.m.

at

St. Mark's Cathedral, M. G. Road, Bangalore 560001

(As the venue could be reassigned at the very last minute, you are requested to confirm your participation by mailing shashi@esgindia.org or calling 080-26713559 ~ 61 at least two hours before the talk. Do leave your cell no., in case you have one, so we can sms you the reassigned venue, if necessary.)

Background

Usha Ramanathan has been studying *Aadhaar*, the Unique ID project, since November 2009, when there was a discussion at the National Law School in Bengaluru and the Unique ID Authority of India (UIDAI) team presented the project. On the basis of her extensive research and analysis of this highly controversial initiative of the Indian Government, Usha has made submissions before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance when it was considering the National Identification Authority of India Bill 2010, introduced in Parliament on 3rd December 2010, and rejected in a report of the Standing Committee in December 2011. (No revised Bill has been introduced since then.)

Usha and her colleagues have also studied the National Population Register and the purpose of that data base; the notification that set up the UIDAI especially in the context that it says that the UIDAI shall 'own' the data base; analysed the implications of such ownership; the MoUs with various Registrars, which include State governments; studied the reports prepared by committees which have been chaired by Mr. Nandan Nilekani since he was appointed the Chairperson of the UIDAI, including the TAG-UP report which speaks of governmental data being given to companies which the report says are intended to be 'private companies with a public purpose', which will be 'profit making and not profit maximising'; studied the reports on banking correspondents and analysed the way that the UID project has begun to impact on the implications of 'financial inclusion'; studied the various reports on the demographic and biometric and marketing aspects of the project that have emerged since the project started; kept track of the cases being filed in various courts and RTI responses that have come from the UIDAI, including in the matter of the companies that are involved in the project and which, disturbingly, have close connection with the intelligence establishments of other countries.

Usha has recently tried to encapsulate these concerns for a newspaper readership in a continuing series published in the Statesman and they are accessible at: <http://aadhaararticles.blogspot.in/search/label/Usha>



[%20Ramanathan](#)

On 31 January 2013, members of the Union Cabinet admitted that they were not clear about the UID project; they were even unsure if it was a `card' or not. A Q&A about this in the Frontline may be found at <http://www.frontline.in/the-nation/dispelling-the-haze/article4465269.ece>. Also of interest could be an earlier cover story on the UID in the Frontline by Usha, which is at <http://www.frontline.in/navigation/?type=static&page=archive>

About the Speaker

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 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.