

# Centre for Culture, Media & Governance

Jamia Millia Islamia

New Delhi



## TECHNOLOGIES FOR PUBLIC DELIBERATION: DEBATING INDIA'S UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION SCHEME (AADHAR)

**Dr. Usha Ramanathan**

### Abstract

The UID has been promoted as identity project that will reduce corruption and leakage and revamp the public delivery system. The project, however, presents itself in different guises- as an experiment on the entire population; as a data base of the people of this country; as an identity platform; as a surveillance tool; as a convergence exercise; as a profiling instrument; as a Know Your Customer instrument; as a means of making the state a steady customer.

The individual is to become transparent. Data emerges as the new property. Government data is to be handed over to private companies which are to operate in the public interest, and which will be 'profit making, not profit maximizing'.

The government and the UIDAI proclaimed that enrolment was voluntary -- till the Supreme Court directed that, till the questions that have arisen about the project are not heard and decided, the UID shall not be mandatory for accessing services. Since then, the government, its Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the Planning Commission, the UIDAI have all gone scurrying to the court asking that it not be prevented from insisting that people must enroll for a UID to get subsidies and services: where, then, voluntariness? Dr. Ramanathan will discuss various strands of the UID project and its ramifications for public deliberation.

### About the Speaker

**Usha Ramanathan** works on the jurisprudence of law, poverty and rights. She writes and speaks on issues that include the Bhopal Gas Disaster, mass displacement, eminent domain, civil liberties, beggary, criminal law, custodial institutions, the environment, judicial process. She has been tracking, and engaging with, the UID project and has written, and debated extensively, on the subject. Her work draws heavily upon non-governmental experience in its encounters with the state, a 6 year stint with a law journal as reporter from the Supreme Court, and engaging with matters of public policy. Some of her writings can be found at <http://www.ielrc.org/>.

### Event Details

**Venue:** Network Governance Lab, CCMG

**Date:** Thursday, 7 November, 2013

**Time:** 11:30 am