



CENTRE FOR CULTURE, MEDIA & GOVERNANCE

Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi

CCMG INVITES YOU TO A LECTURE ON

RE-ORIENTALISM, THE MEDIA, AND THE ECLIPSE OF THE SACHAR REPORT

By

Dr. Irfan Ahmad

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About the Lecture

With the release in 2006 of Sachar Committee Report (SCR), instituted by the Government of India, social-economic backwardness of Muslims became a public issue. Discussing responses to the SCR, this talk sheds light on the interrelationships amongst democracy, media, minorities and “inclusive development.” My principal contention is that behind the reluctant, perhaps even insincere, implementation of the SCR under the Congress administration and its near dumping under the Modi administration was the successful mobilization of Re-Orientalism. This Re-Orientalism or what Mita Banerjee, Lisa Lau and Christina Mendes allude to as “Hindu Orientalism” stigmatized the relative deprivation of Muslims vis-à-vis other communities by deploying tropes of “Islamic terrorism”, “fanaticism”, “Muslim appeasement”, “separatism”, “disloyalty to the nation” and so on – tropes supplied by British colonialism. That this Re-Orientalism won was not inevitable. An anti-orientalist alternative notion of democracy – democracy as an ethos resonant with sufferings and mutual care – did exist but it was sacrificed to prolong the ceremonial, mediatized, arithmetic, corporate national democracy. I conclude with theoretical observations about the limits and possibilities of the term “Re-Orientalism.”

About the Speaker

Dr. Irfan Ahmad, An anthropologist and senior research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Studies in Gottingen, Germany, is the author, most recently, of *Religion as Critique: Islamic Critical Thinking from Mecca to the Marketplace* (University of North Carolina Press, 2017; Oxford University Press, 2018). With Pralay Kanungo, he is the Coeditor of the forthcoming *The Algebra of Warfare-Welfare: A Long View of the 2014 Indian Elections* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2018). He was the founding co-editor of *Journal of Religious and Political Practice* (Taylor & Francis).

Venue: CCMG Network Governance Lab

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Time: 2:00 pm

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