

Loktantrashala -School for Democracy Report 2017

The year began with a conversation with Anshu Gupta of the NGO GOONJ and Puppeteer Ramlal Bhatt on 'the idea of giving back to society'. Ramlalji also presented a short puppet show. A clothes collection drive was held for almost three weeks and finally donated to GOONJ after the event.





Anshu Gupta and Ramlal Bhatt in I.P. College

In April under the Ambedkar lecture series, Prof Sukhdeo Thorat, Former Chairperson of UGC and ICSSR delivered a thought provoking lecture on 'why caste discrimination persists despite laws'. In the same event Bhanwar Meghwanshi, activist based in Rajasthan also shared the lived realities of lower castes there.

In August a Public Lecture by Dr. Usha Ramanathan was held on "Aadhar and the Right to Privacy". The UID Project in 2004 arose and it interested a lot of researchers because it was hoped that Aadhaar would provide an identity to the poor, would allow them to assert themselves and would empower them. To give a logo and brand name to the UID Project, the Bangalore National Task Force, which is a partnership between the citizens, corporates and the administrative agencies, was asked to put up the Aadhar Trust. Hence we see that the UID Project no longer remains a solely government task but becomes a Public Private Partnership. It is therefore important to understand that this project is not creating a unique 'identity' for the people but a unique 'identification' for the state and is in this way

stepping on our civil rights which has serious sociological implications. It has been compulsory for the people to have the Aadhar in three phases. The first phase was about no subsidy without UID, the second about no services without UID and the third phase talks about taking away what one has if they don't get UID. Dr. Ramanathan also talked about the 3 U's, namely, Unique, Ubiquitous and Universal, as a part of the UID project. The Aadhar is unique to every individual by providing an unmatched number, it provides an omnipresent database to the State and is possessed by everyone.




AADHAR
AND
RIGHT TO PRIVACY
DR. USHA RAMESHWAR
19TH AUGUST, 2017
10.30 PM
CONFERENCE HALL, MDRAPASATHA COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
GRAND POND LANE, HYDRABAD 500016

Independent College for Women in collaboration with School for Democracy
COMSATS (Autonomous Institute)
<http://www.mdrapathacollege.ac.in/>

A lecture-demonstration was held by the Manganiar group from Western Rajasthan of Sufi folk music, by School for Democracy, on 5th September 2017. The musicians were Anwar Khan Manganiar who was the lead singer, along with vocalist, Roshan Khan, Rafik Khan with the Kamaicha, Latif Khan with the Dholak and Jaisa Khan with the Khartal. The first song was performed in collaboration with members of Alaap- the Indian Music Society of Indraprastha College

Along with the demonstration, the event also highlighted the work of Bulleh Shah, a Punjabi Muslim philosopher of Mughal era who, through his music, criticized the misuse of Islam and its ideologies by the Muslim clergy of that time. The programme talked about the socio economic problems faced by the Manganiar and the Langa community, and the threat of commercialization of musical heritage which has affected the artists and their traditions leading to a deep economic crisis. The instruments themselves are a part of their identity and intrinsic to their performances. These communities of folk musicians which consist of Muslims have been performing for Rajput patrons for decades but have nevertheless been recipients of the injustices of the prevailing caste system. The event thus sought to bring about a greater awareness which could contribute to the efforts of preserving this form of music.



Performance of Manganiar Singers at I. P. College