



RESEARCH COMMITTEE
BHARATI COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI
PRESENTS
A TALK ON
DECOLONIZING SECURITY ARCHIVES
BY



Dr. Ritu Mathur
Associate Professor
Dept. of Political Science & Geography
University of Texas, San Antonio

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6:30 PM OCTOBER 30, 2020

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A REPORT ON THE EVENT

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DR. RITU MATHUR

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Dept. of Political Science and Geography

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, SAN ANTONIO

On 30th of October 2020, Bharati College of University of Delhi had the privilege to have Dr. Ritu Mathur of University of Texas, San Antonio deliver a talk on *Decolonizing Security Archives*. Dr Ritu Mathur is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). Her research interests are in the field of post-colonialism, critical security studies, arms control and disarmament, humanitarianism, international law and medicine. She has recently published her book, *Red Cross Interventions in Weapons Control* (Lexington Press, 2017). She has published articles in peer reviewed academic journals, *Contemporary Security Policy*, *Critical Studies on Security*, *Strategic Analysis*, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*. She has twice been nominated for the Bernard Brodie Award by the journal *Contemporary Security Policy* for outstanding research contributions in the field of security studies.

Dr. Mathur, in her talk addressed the burgeoning need to decolonize knowledges surrounding the post-colonial world. And she very passionately believes that decolonizing security archives, which documents diverse discourses of the world, would be a grand project. This methodological initiative can lead towards dissemination of information and technologies across the globe. She begins her talk by attending to the existing global divide between west and the east. She views this division as also a propagated by the post-colonial assemblages of the world. Dr. Mathur emphasizes on the archeology of the knowledges of the world which needs to be excavated to realize the complexities of the modern world. She further suggests that this process of decolonization would ultimately assists scholars of the world to acknowledge the existence of a knowledge system which gets documented as “experiences of the suffering”. Such accounts embodied in experiences allows one to “make sense” of the surrounding world.

Moreover, Dr. Mathur talks about the mechanisms through which “world views” are constructed and framed. She gives reference to the “big American dream” which sells the notion of how great of a country “America” is. This idea is constantly being consumed by the third world and the rest of the countries through transactions that takes place in the global market, where the first world sells “world views” to the third world. The transactional space for the perpetuations of such “world views” are not only confined to the economic sphere. It also transgresses to the cyber world where technologies are widely used to influence “world views”. Such a process creates a hierarchy within the countries of the world, by limiting access to technologies and resources to the under-developed parts of the globe.

Through technological processes and mediums of the markets, the “west” extrapolates information about the “east” which can be viewed as a phenomenon of “data-colonization”. This assemblage further re-produces the concept of “white-supremacy” over ethnic nations.

Therefore, in order to dismantle the current trend, Prof. Mathur, through identifying with the post-colonial indigenous scholars, calls for a new way of thinking and comprehending. This way of thinking encourages and acknowledges the indigenous experiences and world views. She encourages indigenous and ethnic scholars of the under-developed world to engage with the history of the past as well as the present. Such engagements should seek to document the realities and knowledges which gets documented as experiences and accounts.

Lastly, Dr. Mathur ends her talk by suggesting that decolonizing archives is not being accompanied by a single debate, but rather decolonizing achieves could be employed as a mechanism which delivers agency to the marginalized and allowing them to have a voice of their own.

(Report prepared by Ms. Samhita Das, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Bharati College)