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COMMUNITIES SERIES

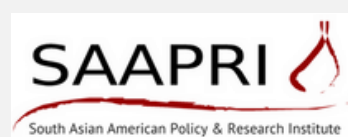


**UNPACKING HATE**

# Here's what you need to know

**From Hate to Hope: South Asian Resilience,  
Resistance, & Thriving Through History**

**May 8, 2025**



## Our Panelists

# UNPACKING HATE

## From Hate to Hope: South Asian Resilience, Resistance, & Thriving Through History



**Amandeep S. Sidhu**

*Co-Founder, the Sikh Coalition*



**Manjusha Kulkarni**

*Executive Director, AAPI Equity Alliance and  
Co-Founder, Stop AAPI Hate*



**Dr. Ann P. Kalayil**

*Co-founder, SAAPRI and Associate Vice  
President, Columbia College Chicago*



**Anirvan Chatterjee**

*Curator, Berkeley South Asian Radical  
History Walking Tour*

## Our Communities Have Always Been Here

### *A Forgotten Legacy of South Asian Immigration*

- South Asians began arriving in the U.S. in the 1800s.
- **1917 Immigration Act** targeted Asians, restricting their entry into the U.S.:
  - “It came out of hate against specifically our communities.” – Manjusha Kulkarni
- **1923 Bhagat Singh Thind v. U.S. :**
  - Indians ruled “not white” and ineligible for citizenship. Mass denaturalization followed.
  - Almost every single person of South Asian origin in the USA had their citizenship stripped of them. It was the first time in American history that an entire ethnic group had their citizenship pulled
- **1946 Luce–Celler Act** allowed a tiny quota of Indian immigrants to naturalize.
- **1965 Immigration Act** shifted focus from nationality to skills, leading to broader migration of South Asians.
- **2001:** Dr. Ann P. Kalayil founded SAAPRI with the intent of ensuring the U.S. is home for the South Asian community
- **2005–2009:** Oral history project involved interviewing 33 South Asian immigrants who came to Illinois between 1945–1964

***“They weren’t just quiet students... They were out there debating equal rights for women... They were the pioneers of our community.”***

— Dr. Ann P. Kalayil

## Our Panelists' Insight

# Collective Struggle Post-9/11

***“In the aftermath of 9/11... that was the moment where we came together and said, we have to do something.”***

— Amandeep S. Sidhu

## ***A Turning Point for South Asian Solidarity***

- No national Sikh presence before 9/11.
  - **September 12, 2001:** Sikh Coalition began cataloguing hate crimes, employment discrimination, and other instances of profiling by law enforcement
- **Intra-community unity** formed across generational and regional lines.

***“If we’re all going to be targeted together, then we have to stand up together.”***

— Anirvan Chatterjee

## Our Panelists' Insight

# Fighting Hate with Data

## *Documenting Harm, Building Power*

- **Stop AAPI Hate** launched in 2020 and received hundreds of reports within weeks without media coverage or promotion.
- Survey results six months later showed **anti-Asian hate** was a greater concern than COVID-19 itself, even prior to the release of a vaccination.
- The activism that emerged after the **Atlanta shooting** galvanized the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community in California.
  - Result: **\$200 million AAPI Equity Budget** passed in CA to fight racism across communities.

***“They actually said anti-Asian hate [was] the biggest threat... even before vaccines were available.”***

*— Manjusha Kulkarni*

## Challenging the Model Minority Myth

### *Disrupting Silence as a Strategy*

- Term “**model minority**” coined in 1965 by Professor William Petersen to contrast “silent” Asians with protesting Black Americans in terms of socioeconomic success and political activism
- Myth has been internalized by many as a **badge of honor**, discouraging activism and protest in Asian American communities.

***“We must be loud, we must be proud of who we are, and we have to fight for justice for all of our communities.”***

— Manjusha Kulkarni

“

***“The opposite of diversity is segregation... The opposite of equity is the monopoly of white males.”***

— Manjusha Kulkarni

”

## Building Back: South Asian Solidarity

### ***This Isn't New: It's in Our History***

- Black leaders supported South Asian struggles for independence and justice:
  - **Bayard Rustin** led protests at the British Embassy, demanding Indian freedom.
  - **Langston Hughes** wrote about Indian freedom fighters & U.S. police brutality.
- Time to **grapple with anti-Blackness** in our communities.

***"We know our community is racist... but really being able to grapple with it... is incredibly helpful."***

— Anirvan Chatterjee

***"If you don't know the past, how can you reclaim the present?"***

— Dr. Ann P. Kalayil

## Representation, Advocacy & Access

### *From the Margins to the Table*

- **Sikh legal visibility** was limited — Qualified lawyers and advocates but no access
  - Organizations like SAALT were instrumental in breaking into conversations with for ex. the DOJ
- **Amandeep S. Sidhu**: First turbaned Sikh partner at AmLaw 100 firm (2013).
- Co-founded **Sikh National Bar Association**.
- Pro bono legal advocacy with **Sikh Coalition** integrated with firm practice.

***“You could count the number of Sikh lawyers that you knew on one or two hands.”***

— Amandeep S. Sidhu

***“We’ve put people not just at the table, but in positions of leadership where their visibility is so important and powerful.”***

— Amandeep S. Sidhu

## Bridging Generations & Divides

### *Unity Within Our Diaspora*

- Our communities carry **religious, caste, and ethnic divides** from South Asia.
- These paradigms hinder collective power in the U.S.
- Intergenerational dialogue is essential.
- There is importance in **serving as a “first”** (e.g., first to lead a regional agency) and ensuring that **those positions are used to uplift others**

***“We bring paradigms from overseas... and end up separating ourselves instead of coming together.”***

— Dr. Ann P. Kalayil

***“I realized I needed to bridge the first generation with the younger generation to move forward the agenda of organizing our communities.”***

— Dr. Ann P. Kalayil

## Action Steps for the Next Generation

### *Reclaiming the Present, Rebuilding the Future*

- **Calls to Action:**

- Support policies like the **TEAACH Act (Illinois)**, mandating a unit of curriculum of Asian American studies in K-12, in all states.
- Stay engaged with local advocacy organizations (e.g., SAAPRI, SAALT, Sikh Coalition).
- Find your lane — legal, organizing, storytelling, voting.

***“Change doesn’t happen quickly... we’ll be doing this for a very long time.”***

— Amandeep S. Sidhu

***“Stay engaged with communities that are doing good work.”***

— Dr. Ann P. Kalayil

## Resource Page

<b>Sikh Coalition</b>	<a href="https://www.sikhcoalition.org">https://www.sikhcoalition.org</a>
<b>Stop AAPI Hate</b>	<a href="https://stopaapihate.org">https://stopaapihate.org</a>
<b>Berkeley South Asian Radical History Walking Tour</b>	<a href="https://www.berkeleysouthasian.org">https://www.berkeleysouthasian.org</a>
<b>SAAPRI's Oral History Project</b>	<a href="https://www.saapri.org/2116/saa-pri-sets-out-to-preserve-our-immigrant-stories/">https://www.saapri.org/2116/saa-pri-sets-out-to-preserve-our-immigrant-stories/</a>
<b>South Asians Americans Leading Together</b>	<a href="https://saalt.org">https://saalt.org</a>
<b>Sikh National Bar Association</b>	<a href="https://sikhnationalbar.org">https://sikhnationalbar.org</a>
<b>TEAACH Act</b>	<a href="https://www.saapri.org/our-work/current-projects/teaach-advocacy-project/">https://www.saapri.org/our-work/current-projects/teaach-advocacy-project/</a>

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SERIES!

# INTERSECTING IDENTITIES: CONFRONTING HATE AGAINST QUEER SOUTH ASIANS



UNPACKING HATE



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

In honor of Pride Month, join us for an essential conversation bridging our Know Your Rights and Unpacking Hate programs. This session will focus on the unique challenges faced by queer South Asians in confronting hate and discrimination, exploring the intersectionality of identity and the compounded effects of racism and homophobia within and outside the South Asian community.



Moderator  
Dr. Jordan Stalker



Panelist  
Aruna Rao  
Founder, Desi Rainbow  
Parents & Allies



Panelist  
Kareem Khubchandani  
Associate Professor,  
Tufts University

SCAN TO  
REGISTER



JUNE 12

3PM PT | 5PM CT | 6PM ET

Register here: [tinyurl.com/ecsintersectingidentities](https://tinyurl.com/ecsintersectingidentities)

**SAAPRI**  
South Asian American  
Policy & Research Institute

[www.saapri.org](http://www.saapri.org)

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