



Governance & Empowerment

A report from the 1st FDRI/Berkeley conference on
Indian Democracy

by

Sanchita Saxena, Ph.D
University of California at Berkeley



Contents

Foreword	3
About the Conference	5
Conference Themes	6
Conclusions	20
As we go Forward	22
Lokniti Survey	23
Bios of all Speakers	27
Next Conference	38
About the Organizers	39

foreword

I am delighted to be able to bring to you this report on last year's immensely successful conference on Governance and Empowerment in India at Berkeley. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners in this important venture, the Foundation for Democratic Rights in India, for recognizing that what makes India unique among new nations is the combination of democracy and economic strength. It is the knowledge that it is not enough to simply celebrate and analyze India's power as an emerging economy but that equal weight must be given to its democratic institutions and to issues of governance that motivates this series of conferences. It is our hope that the ideas we share with you in this report will evoke the same set of excitement in the readers that it did in us, the participants.

Raka Ray
Sarah Kailath Chair of India Studies
Chair, Center for South Asia Studies

about the conference

The first in a series of annual seminars on Indian democracy was held at the University of California at Berkeley on May 24-25, 2007, attended by a host of Indian dignitaries, including Union ministers Mani Shankar Aiyar and Jaipal Reddy; former Chief Minister of MP and the General Secretary of the Congress Party, Digvijay Singh; Kerala finance minister Thomas Isaac; Infosys CEO Kris Gopalakrishnan; well-known media personalities Chandan Mitra and Kalpana Sharma; NGO activists Arvind Kejriwal, Ramesh Ramanathan and Jayaprakash Narayan; constitutional lawyer Rajiv Dhavan; as well as prominent Berkeley academics. The seminar, titled "Indian Democracy: Local Governance and Empowerment" was hosted by the Center for South Asia Studies at UC Berkeley, along with the Foundation for Democratic Reform in India (FDRI), a Silicon Valley based non-profit organization dedicated to the study of the democratic and constitutional institutions of India.

In addition to noting the sheer magnitude of what India had managed to achieve and sustain regarding development of democratic institutions, local governance and empowerment, the conference highlighted the obstacles that stood in the way of achieving higher levels of accountability, lower levels of corruption and more effective governance, as well as broader challenges facing Indian democracy. In particular, the role of Center-state relations and fiscal constraints on devolution, as well as the strains brought about by increasing inequality were noted by participants.

The panel on rural governance raised the issue of the sheer numbers of elected officials in local government in India, compared the effectiveness of local governance structures across Indian states as well as the different experiences of male and female panchayat members, and members of scheduled castes and tribes.

The panel on urban governance discussed the limitations of the present structure of urban governance, the need for another tier of professional governance in cities, the relationship between the bureaucracy and local self-government institutions, and expressed a concern that new forms of urban politics based on consumer-citizens not exclude the poor.

The panel on empowerment catalysts debated the role of the rising importance of the vernacular press in ensuring local accountability. It also discussed the role of legal and cultural institutions in ensuring democratic and just outcomes for individuals and communities.

In closing, panelists debated the relationship between political participation and good governance, improvement of program design to ensure the best possible outcomes involving the largest possible numbers of people, the transfer of knowledge about best practices from other parts of the world and finally, how to rank the states on an index of good governance.

introduction

India has been touted as the world's greatest experiment with democracy, one that continues to sustain itself in a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious society. Many Indian citizens actively participate in this democracy by turning out to vote in large numbers. Voter turnout in national elections is consistently over 55 percent, and in some state elections, it can be over 80 percent. And it is, in fact, the disadvantaged in Indian society that are the most enthusiastic about exercising their voting rights. As Chhibber and Ahuja note, "They queue up for long hours at the polling booths, sometimes in very adverse weather conditions. In some

areas they wear clean or new clothes on election day, and forgo daily wages to go to vote, whereas those at the top end of the social spectrum stay away from the polls in larger numbers" (p.1). Thus, it seems that one of the greatest achievements of India's democracy is that it has given the poorest and most marginalized person in society a voice. This achievement cannot be underestimated.



"...she said first of all let me tell you I will vote and I have voted for every single election. And she showed me her voter ID and she says, 'This to me is

my most important document.' So I said, 'Why?' She said, 'Because without this, the government would not know I exist.' And you know, I think that this is the real story in India because that is the real explanation for the poor, the choice they make at every election is the choice that reaffirms their citizenship."

- Kalpana Sharma

"They are such energetic voters and yet their children are dying everyday because of policy neglect by those democratic politicians."

- Pranab Bardhan

"This is a country with such a long experience with democracy and also a country where the majority of the population still lives under the poverty line...there seems to be a disconnect between democracy and the empowerment of the main constituencies in the country."

- Beatriz Magaloni

Yet, India's social and human development indicators continue to be quite dismal. India is ranked at 128 out of 177 on the Human Development Index (HDI).^{*} Despite the recent economic boom, large numbers of Indians continue to live on less than \$1 a day, their children are malnourished, and they often do not have adequate access to clean water or health care. India continues to hold the designation as being the world's largest illiterate country. In addition, even those who enjoy a middle class existence routinely find that their roads are not fixed or their garbage not collected. Clearly, even in this democracy that has been vibrant for more than half a century, there seems to be a disconnect between democracy on the one hand and the ability of the common person to make significant changes on the other. The voices of the average citizens, though they seem to be active participants in political life, have not been translated into actionable policies that improve their livelihoods. A sustainable and well functioning democracy has to do more than ensure that citizens have the right to vote in every election. It must go beyond allowing the common person to simply voice his or her concerns; It has to be able to effectively address them. As Bardhan notes, "Elections are not the same thing as governance...In India, I think there is a disjuncture between the electoral aspects of democracy and the governance aspect of democracy." Good and effective governance is an essential component of a democratic system, and some of the cornerstones of good governance are empowerment, accountability, autonomy, and transparency. We need a mixture of all these elements to truly make democracy function

"Effective governance and democratic governance may be two different things."

- Irfan Nooruddin

"The growth of the middle class over the last 15 years from about 100 million to 300 million approximately is in some sense the result of the improvement which has happened after the liberalization in 1991, and how through a process of employment generation in a democratic environment, a quiet revolution, we have been able to transform the country. Of course, the flipside of this is still there are about 300 million, about 30%, who are below poverty and that is why this growth has to be sustained and this has to be supported in terms of making sure that the benefits reach a much larger percentage of the population."

- Kris Gopalakrishnan

During the discussions at the conference, three key questions emerged:

- Who needs to be empowered in this democracy?
- How can they be empowered?
- How do we link accountability with good governance?

“I would take the question to be the empowerment of whom, whether the empowerment of the elected representatives or the institution, the Panchayat, or the community or the stakeholders... we have empowered the establishment but we have not really empowered the people”
 - Digvijay Singh

“First, we have to talk in a regional context...Second, we must empower city governments before we can empower ourselves as citizens. The third is to enable them.”
 – Ramesh Ramanathan



Achievements of India's Democracy: Stability, Dignity & Opportunities

Participants in the conference all recognized the importance of India's democracy in contributing to the country's stability and unity. Voting rights over the last several decades have given the marginalized some measure of dignity. The 73rd and 74th Amendments have clearly been instrumental in devolving power and decision-making authority to local bodies. Women and others from disadvantaged castes are able to hold elected office at the local level, making them instrumental in the decision making process and in determining the allocation of local resources.



“...the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment was in the right direction. It's a very important landmark. The decentralized democratic institutions have become a part of a constitutional structure.”
 – Thomas Isaac

“...this diversity has not weakened India's unity, in fact, democracy has strengthened India to preserve its diversity.”
 – Jaipal Reddy

“[compared to China] it seems like India's doing much better on at least drawing women into these organizations and I'll be curious to see whether it is providing a means of social mobility. In China, from what I can see, it's not.”
 – Kevin O'Brien

Panchayati Raj: How it has empowered India's women*



The Panchayati Raj has put in place close to 250,000 institutions of local self-governance in rural and urban India. There are 3.2 million elected representatives, and of these, 1.2 million are women. This is greater than the total number of elected women representatives in the world put together. These elected women have been

empowered to make local level decisions, and they also provide gender sensitivity to the decisions that they make.

“The symbol of what is meant by empowerment through Panchayati Raj is a lady called Veena Devi whom I had the honor of presenting, as minister of Panchayati Raj, the Sarojini Naidu prize for the best woman Panchayat president given by the Hunger Project on Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, the 2nd of October, in 2004. Having handed over the prize to her, she was invited to say a few words. She went on stage and she made the following three statements. She said one, that she was a woman, that was very self-evident. Second, she said that she was a scheduled caste woman, and one wondered why she was pointing this out. Third, she said, she was completely illiterate. Her village had elected her as the Mukhiya of the Panchayat because she said the villagers knew that of all the possible candidates, male and female, because this was from a general seat, she was the one who was most dedicated to the welfare of the village, so they elected her... So anybody who said yesterday that nothing is happening is either not out there in the field or deliberately wishes to blind himself from the social revolution that is taking place in village India and in the slums of India... I don't think the answer to India's poverty lies in economic reforms, I think the answer to India's poverty lies in Panchayati Raj which will empower our people to secure their entitlements and thus ensure the enrichment not only of themselves, but the country as a whole.”

– Mani Shankar Aiyar



State/ UT*	No. of Panchayats	Total for Panchayats at all levels: Number of elected representatives							
		General (Non- SC/ ST categories)	SC ^		ST**		Total	Women^^	
			No.	%	No.	%		No.	%
Andhra Pradesh	22945	172136	34025	15.2	17842	8.0	224003	74019	33.0
Arunachal Pradesh	1789	0	0	0.0	8260	100.0	8260	3183	38.5
Assam	2431	23206	1344	5.3	886	3.5	25436	9903	38.9
Bihar	9040	109767	19440	14.9	884	.7	130091	70400	54.1
Chhattisgarh	9982	76013	17540	10.9	66833	41.7	160386	54102	33.7
Goa	192	1500	0	0.0	0	0.0	1500	453	30.2
Gujarat	14068	83982	7970	7.0	22235	19.5	114187	38068	33.3
Haryana	6325	54508	14965	21.5	0	0.0	69473	24994	36.0
Himachal Pradesh	3330	16793	8724	32.0	1753	6.4	27270	9128	33.5
Jharkhand	3979								
Karnataka	5856	67920	17859	18.6	10311	10.7	96090	41210	42.9
Kerala	1165	16246	2005	10.8	232	1.3	18483	6515	35.2
Madhya Pradesh	23412	222836	61103	15.4	112938	28.5	396877	134368	33.9
Maharashtra	28302	176877	25268	11.0	27565	12.0	229710	77118	33.6
Manipur	169	1684	43	2.4	41	2.3	1768	646	36.5
Orissa	6578	56576	16910	16.8	27376	27.1	100862	36086	35.8
Punjab	12605	62680	28376	31.2	0	0.0	91056	31838	35.0
Rajasthan	9457	73030	25364	21.2	21410	17.9	119804	42402	35.4
Sikkim	170	639	57	5.7	309	30.7	1005	384	38.2
Tamil Nadu	13031	91958	23653	20.3	877	.8	116488	39364	33.8
Tripura	540	3914	1509	26.3	310	5.4	5733	1986	34.6
Uttar Pradesh	52890	578984	191950	24.9	727	.1	771661	299025	38.8
Uttarkhand	7335	44450	11077	19.3	1973	3.4	57500	21517	37.4
West Bengal	3713	37277	17158	29.2	4314	7.3	58749	21428	36.5
A & N Islands	75	856	0	0.0	0	0.0	856	296	34.6
Chandigarh	19	153	34	18.2	0	0.0	187	62	33.2
D & N Haveli	12	7	3	2.4	115	92.0	125	49	39.2
Daman & Diu	15	71	4	4.1	22	22.7	97	37	38.1
Lakshadweep	11	1	0	0.0	100	99.0	101	38	37.6
Pondicherry	108	784	237	23.2	0	0.0	1021	370	36.2
TOTAL	239544	1974848	526618	18.6	327313	11.6	2828779	1038989	36.7

* For more details, see The State of the Panchayats: A Mid-Term Review and Appraisal (2006).

*Source: The State of the Panchayats: A Mid-term Review and Appraisal (2006), p. 26; ^Scheduled Caste Males and Females; ** Scheduled Tribe Males & Females; ^^Women: Combined SC, ST, and General categories

Kerala: Participation, Mass mobilization, and Accountability*

"...the kind of democratic form that I have in mind is not creating a miniature, central state government at the local level, a sort of cloning of the central government at the local level. It's a qualitatively new form of governance where people will be directly participating."
- Thomas Isaac

"Democratic decentralization cannot be purely administrative in form; it has to be a mass social mobilization. Because in mobilization, there is creativity which throws open new venues, new styles of non-hierarchical functioning...thereby generating a new system"
- Thomas Isaac

"...we find that Kerala panchayats are more effective and purpose-driven, but the reforms that Professor Isaac put into place so many years ago really do make a difference and that these Gram Sabhas actually get things done, they are action-oriented."
- Vijayendra Rao



The experiment in Kerala (The Kerala People's Campaign for Democratic Decentralization), which was launched in 1996, decentralized the functions of the government, while mobilizing thousands of volunteers and activists. The Campaign focused on reducing government corruption and promoting programs to engage women, scheduled caste, and scheduled tribe populations in political life. Under this experiment, thousands of local officials and activists were trained.

This experiment was started with the idea that economic development is an essential function of local government and local level planning ultimately utilizes resources better. If citizens participate actively in decision-making and if there is transparency, then local level projects will be more efficient and effective.

There are four factors, which make this experiment in Kerala both unique and self-sustaining:

1. The LDF ministry in 1996 earmarked funds to be used by the Local Self-Government Institutions (LSGIs). Because the government devolved the funds first, then created an administrative structure afterwards, they were compelled to carry out the necessary reforms to try to make this successful.
2. There was a strong focus on mass participation and transparency.
3. This newly created system was institutionalized in the existing legal and administrative system so it would live on long after the initial euphoria of the movement (and not fade away once the euphoria died down).
4. A civic culture that promoted grassroots democratic institutions was nurtured. The mindset of local elected legislatures was transformed: "The bureaucratic departmental approach to development is to give way to a democratic vision. The ivory tower attitude and cynicism deeply ingrained among the technical elite would be replaced by a culture of participation and engagement" (p. 20).

Mobilization and a political vision by the Left helped create this initial opportunity.

But Kerala also had a distinct advantage, as there was already a culture of civic organizations and civic involvement in the state. Kerala is also one of the highest-ranking states in terms of literacy rates and other social development indicators. Both these factors have made Kerala's experiment with decentralization a successful one.

Challenges to Good Governance in India

There is a clear consensus among academics, citizens, political observers, and even some politicians themselves that though there are the institutions in place that devolve power to local bodies, there is often times a lack of political will to initiate and follow through on any meaningful change. While, sometimes, the issue is a lack of resources, at other times, the issue is one of accountability – politicians have very little accountability to the voters and the system does not demand it from India's leaders. Without political will and accountability, citizens often vote out incumbent politicians in hope that significant changes might occur, only to be disappointed when the newly elected leader's philosophy is "business as usual."

Though there may be political and social empowerment through the Panchayati Raj, what is lacking is administrative and economic empowerment. The 73rd and 74th amendments have simultaneously over-structured and underpowered the Panchayati Raj institution.

"... India's federal states are unwilling to share sovereignty with Panchayati Raj institutions. Most of them won't share the revenue and authority needed to empower Panchayati Raj institutions. Their ministers and MLAs don't want to share benefits and patronage."
- Lloyd Rudolph

What about the empowerment of the political leaders?

We have discussed the importance of empowering certain groups in society, especially those that are disadvantaged and marginalized, but what about the empowerment of politicians? Even if political leaders are well-intentioned, do they have the authority, ability, and resources to make significant changes, improve services, and provide goods? In India, though there are elected leaders at several tiers of government, the complex monolithic government structure does not allow for fiscal or administrative autonomy at the lower tiers. This leads to the problem of elected officials who need to be accountable to citizens, but who are unable to carry out their mandates due to constraints imposed by the Center. As Kent Eaton notes, "...political decentralization has been emphasized in India in advance of administrative and fiscal forms of decentralization." In order to measure whether devolution has been successful, we must ask: 1) How much money do local governments have at their discretion? and 2) Do they have the capacity to implement policies at the local level? As we see in India, political decentralization alone is not enough to bridge the link between local needs and actionable improvements.

"The problem is not that there aren't any good politicians in the country; the problem is that they simply have a system that's malfunctioning...unless authority and accountability fuse and that can only happen as locally as possible, you're not going to get governance that the people and the country deserve"
- JP Narayan

How are the poor really empowered?



"Empowerment is defined...as 'the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives'; and it includes, as practical requirements, four key elements: access to information; inclusion and participation; accountability; and local organizational capacity, all of which have synergistic relations with each other."
- John Harriss

"...members of the middle class are 'empowered' while the urban poor continue to struggle against their disempowerment."
- John Harriss

"Is empowerment the same thing as power or are they two very different things that need to be thought about differently? What kinds of mechanisms exist to prevent the secession of the successful so that the fates of the middle income people and low income people actually remain connected?"
- Margaret Weir

Because "politics as usual" has not been able to respond to the needs of the people, civil society groups and social movements have tried to fill this chasm by empowering the poor and providing the missing link between action and results. In this era of 'new politics' - i.e. politics built around civil society, rather than political parties, politics is more participatory and addresses the needs of people better. 'New politics' of this kind is attractive to many because the system of 'old politics' has failed to deliver solutions to so many and appears corrupted by struggles either for personal or for group advantage.*

But are the poor really empowered through civil society? Not always. Harriss finds that the poor are less likely to take part in civic organizations, and most of the changes found in urban areas are made through the party structure. For example, Harriss writes that in Chennai, "...civil society is mainly a sphere of middle-class activism...Political parties are very often the only resource for poor people in the slums of North Madras. But the slums are also the garrisons of support for politicians...". The disadvantaged are not active agents in these civil society organizations, and the middle class that are involved are actively providing services for the poor, rather than in consultation with them to provide services that take into account their collective needs.

The question remains: how then can the poor be involved in social change if the existing political infrastructure does not adequately translate their needs into action and civic organizations do not take into account what their needs and desires are?

*Harriss, John. 2007. "Antinomies of Empowerment: Observations on Civil Society, Politics and Urban Governance in India."

In the urban areas, to get something done, a citizen must take affairs into his own hands

Rural vs. Urban - Variations in empowerment

“With all the focus on panchayati raj institutions in India, urban decentralization has received far less attention in the country, suffering for long from policies that saw urbanization as a trend that needed to be slowed down if not stopped altogether.”

– Ramesh Ramanathan

“...while the urban resident cares, and wants to take part, the state has not only denied her the formal spaces to engage, but often actively thwarts this desire.”

– Ramesh Ramanathan



While the 73rd and 74th amendments have created constitutional mandates for local self-government, this has been successful primarily in the rural areas. Unlike the gram sabhas in the countryside that encourage citizen involvement at the local level, India's cities do not have an equivalent structure. Though the problems may be different in India's cities, urban citizens still find many gaps in livelihood—ranging from access to uncontaminated water, poor garbage collection services, or local zoning laws. However, unlike their rural counterparts, urban dwellers do not have the opportunity to voice their concerns or collectively make decisions through a formal process. This leaves one completely disconnected from his or her government and with a feeling of helplessness at not being able to make any sort of significant change. As Ramanathan notes, “While the urban resident can see herself as a producer of urban goods and services, or as a consumer of urban comforts, she cannot so easily see herself as a citizen. In fact, her identity as a citizen in urban India is one that is minimally developed, if at all.”*



“...what are the expectations of an ordinary citizen and where do the institutions—existing institutions of local self governance fit into that? Basically, I live in a middle class colony, which is in Ghaziabad on the Delhi border. It is called Kaushambi. I came to this area two years back and at that time it had beautiful roads and a very clean environment. In the last 10 years, there is so much development that has taken place that now the entire area is in complete shambles, the roads are broken, the entire area is very dirty, sewers are overflowing. Last year, we calculated that collectively, this entire area pays house tax, property tax to the extent of 92 lakh rupees, that is 9.2 million rupees. What is this tax paid for? This tax is paid to the municipality for providing us roads, horticulture, sanitations, seawall, water, street lights. None of these things are in proper condition. So the issue arises why are we paying these taxes and where is this money going? In the last three years,

we have written 300 letters (we have copies of all those letters) to the mayor, to the local councilor, to the local MLA, to the district ministry and to the municipal commissioner. We have had several meetings with them and whenever they had these meetings they said there were no funds. But this seems to be wrong, there are funds because whenever we go out we see some foot path is being made, some drain being repaired but whenever we go with our set of demands they say that there are no funds. There is a shopping mall in our area and we find that the roads around that shopping mall are repaired three times a year. But the things that we demand from the government are never done. So what is basically happening is that the decisions are being taken by a set of people who have no stake in our area and who have no accountability to us. And the role—nay, plight—of the ordinary citizen in a democracy is reduced to just pleading and pleading and pleading and being a mute spectator.

Last year, I filed the Right to Information application in that area and asked them to give me a list of all the votes were carried out by the government in our area and the information that came out was shocking. The information said that the local government had spent 43 lac rupees (4.3 million rupees) to repair the road right in front of my house. Now, this is completely bogus because I live there, not a single penny has been spent. Another piece of information which came out was that the local municipality has received 3.3 crore rupees that is 33 million rupees to be spent on the infrastructure development of our area from Ghaziabad Development Authority and this money in the last three years, not a single penny has been spent out of it, this entire money has been put in a fix deposit by the municipality and they're enjoying the interest out of it. Now, this cleared one myth that there's a shortage of fund. Those funds are either being spent on things which we don't need or they are being siphoned off. Another piece of information which came out was that three years back, there were 27 sweepers for our area and this has been reduced to seven sweepers in our area now without consulting us. Now there's one important question that I want to ask the audience, what do we do now? We have written to everyone, we have met everyone. The 74th amendment to the constitution does not provide a solution to us and the existing municipality, the municipality which is said to be the institution of local self governance has completely failed... We need something on the lines of Gram Sabha where if I had been living in a rural area at least theoretically there would hve been a platform of Gram Sabha where I could go. There would have been a meeting of Gram Sabha every three months, I could have gone to the Gram Sabha and shouted and screamed and maybe there could have been a solution. But here, there is no formal institution available where an ordinary citizen can go...”

– Arvind Kejriwal

Variations among lower tiers of government

Decentralization, by its definition, devolves authority to local levels of government, thus prohibiting the Center from dictating policies. The negative side of this is that there is wide variation among regions, states, villages and panchayats in terms of effective service delivery and how adequately the common citizen will be represented in decision-making. In a decentralized system, within one country, we see gross inequalities between regions in terms of economic development and political participation. The regions that are “lucky” enough to have leaders who are accountable to their constituents or who have natural resources or who are politically well connected with the Center are the ones that will experience development, while many of the others will simply lag behind.



“...giving powers to the Gram Sabha is a ‘may’ provision. [If] the state legislation wants to give it power, it will give it power. If it doesn’t want to give it power, it will not give it power...This is a ‘may’ provision. It is left to the legislatures to decide...whatever the legislature may be to define what the powers and responsibilities of a Sabha should be...[we need to] say to the states that you need to translate these ‘may’ provisions into ‘shall’ provisions and that is where the politics of the 73rd and 74th amendment lie”

– Rajeev Dhavan

“Some state governments are willing to run ahead of us, other are willing to run with us, yet others unwillingly walked with us and some we have to...drag unwillingly...”

- Mani Shankar Aiyar

“...at the end of the day...financial political authority to local governments is a matter that states have to decide by themselves. In other words, it becomes a matter of political will at the state level notwithstanding the constitution, the actual devolution of powers.”

– Pradeep Chhibber

Service delivery: effective in a democracy?

“Today, when we are celebrating the very high rate of economic growth and many of us are carried away by the euphoria about economic growth in India, we often overlook that [with respect to] public services, we are among the worst in the world.”

– Pranab Bardhan

“The paradox is that effective decentralization may well require that government at the Center intervenes more actively, locally than before.”
(audience)

“...whenever we have given the authority to the people, authority to the stakeholders, the service delivery mechanism is the most efficient.”

– Digvijay Singh

How effective can service delivery really be in a democracy? Often times the issue is one of a lack of political will and incentive to provide the necessary services for the voters. Politics in many states are based on patronage and short-term rewards before elections, often at the expense of meaningful improvements in key service areas. Sometimes local governments are captured by vested interests, which prevent the most efficient methods of service delivery from being carried out.

The main challenge faced by panchayats is their lack of financial ability to meet their functional mandate. They receive funds from both the Center and the states, but often times the level of transfers do not take into account the actual activities of the panchayats, their revenue stream, or their local circumstances. A more efficient and effective system of financial management needed at Panchayat level. As Bardhan notes, “...when 95% of the funds come from above, of course there’s a lot of leakage when it comes from above, a lot of corruption, as a result.” There is also limited staff and capacity at the panchayat level making it difficult to implement programs and provide essential services.

“So, therefore, if we want to introduce change, we need to introduce political parties. In other words, political parties have to be key agents and key participants and key players in any local transformation that’s going to happen...it is political parties who are going to link elections and representation to the issue of devolution”
– Pradeep Chhibber

“So, how is this local knowledge aggregated into the national or into the state level? And it seems to me that there we really have to go back and think about what political parties are about.”
– Alberto Diaz-Cayeros

The conference makes evident that democracy and good governance are not two concepts that are necessarily linked. Thus, while India’s citizens continue to vote in every election, the democratic system, as it stands, does not translate these votes into concrete policy changes designed to improve livelihoods. This brings up a key point about the relationship between development and democracy. What do we expect our elected leaders to provide in terms of development (and why do we expect them to provide anything at all)? Can a democracy be successful without contributing to socio-economic development of the country? Perhaps we need to rely on civil society to spur development if and when politicians cannot. Some argue that we should simply just appreciate and celebrate India’s democracy for what it has accomplished thus far.

If, however, the linkages between democracy and governance and development are important and desirable, then at least three questions need to be raised and thought through:

1. The first is the role of political parties in India’s democracy. Parties are the key agents in translating votes into action and they are central to linking elections to effective governance. In states, like Kerala, where there has been a successful relationship between the two, it was the party that was instrumental in carrying out the process of devolution and decentralization.

“The 73rd amendment was decided by politicians and therefore in Kerala it has been successful largely because the political party has decided to have a campaign to actually introduce local government.”
– Pradeep Chhibber

2. The second issue is that we need to understand concrete ways by which local governments can work better. However, we cannot prescribe a standard set up for every state, especially in India where each state is so diverse. What has worked well in Kerala, for example, may not work well in Madhya Pradesh. What we need to do is understand the context in which each local government is placed and develop specific measures to make it function more efficiently.
3. Finally, we need to explore the effectiveness of the various institutions of democracy, such as the judicial system. Our next conference will address this issue in greater detail (please refer to Section V for more details).

Based on the discussions at this conference, the organizers and participants all saw a great need to develop an index of good governance across the Indian states (more details are provided in Section III). This is an important outcome of the conference, and the first of many ways in which we will work to improve and strengthen this remarkable experiment of India’s democracy.

as we go forward

The first conference on governance and empowerment generated considerable excitement both here at Berkeley and in India. This report is the first in a series of publications that will focus on each year's theme, and will be disseminated in India and the U.S. As a result of our first successful meeting, we are working with Union Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar to hold a counterpart conference in India every year. In addition, we have established a partnership with Lokniti (the research arm of the Centre for Developing Societies in New Delhi) to rank Indian states on a set of governance and empowerment indicators. Finally, we are developing a web portal on Indian democracy that will be linked to the CSAS website.

We encourage conference attendees to carry ideas back with them to incorporate into their scholarly and popular writings and talks, and into relevant policymaking forums. We believe that participants and attendees will benefit from this opportunity to engage in broad discussions with leaders from other sectors, and we hope they establish connections that will lead to important collaborations in the future.



“FDRI and CSAS have initiated the process of having seminars on democracy. I think you should now formulate a score card and on the basis of the score card, you should evaluate every state in India as to what should be the devolution index or empowerment index or good governance index which can be evaluated every year...”
– Digvijay Singh

lokniti survey

Introduction:

A major challenge that the governments in the Indian states face is their capacity to fulfil the needs and aspirations of its citizens. The level of trust reposed by the citizens in the capacity of the state has often been a subject of animated debate. Some state governments in India, however, are better at addressing people's needs than others. For instance, in Tamil Nadu the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is implemented with far fewer leakages than in Uttar Pradesh.

In collaboration with FDRI and other partners we propose to develop an index of democratic empowerment and governance for the Indian States. By democratic empowerment we mean the extent to which citizens have a say in how they are governed and by democratic governance we mean the capacity of the government to deliver its policies equitably and in an accountable manner. This index will have four aims: first, to showcase which states are doing better than others; second, to help develop best practices across the states; third, to assess whether different groups in the states – such as the middle classes; Dalits; Muslims; women etc. have varying perceptions of the working of state governments and fourth, to develop a globally bench-markable index of governance.

In this proposal we first provide a brief introduction to the methodology we will use to create the index of governance before presenting how we plan to publicize the findings and generate a definitive document on empowerment and governance in India and elsewhere.

Methodology:

Unlike other indices of empowerment this index will be unique in two ways. First, it will examine issues related to empowerment and governance from the perspective of the citizen. Second, where possible, it will use field experiments to ascertain more accurately the quality of governance across various demographic segments of citizens and in different policy arenas across the states.

A major shortcoming of contemporary studies of governance is that they do not measure governance indicators appropriately. For instance, a survey may show that law and order is perceived to be a larger problem in Kerala than in Bihar. While these citizen perceptions may indeed be accurate the extent of the law and order problem in Bihar may still be actually far higher than in Kerala – except that in Kerala there may have been a temporary uptick in crime. In other words, there is a dramatic variation in citizen perceptions as to what constitutes improvement or deterioration in governance and empowerment. An analogy may, perhaps, clarify the matter. A healthy person with a flu may respond to a survey saying that her health has not been good whereas another with chronic illness who has temporary respite may say that her health is far better. In other words, before we can assess whether citizen responses to a survey are measuring what we seek to measure it is important that we develop a baseline level of governance indicators for the various states and assess whether there are any salient inter-group differences in a state. Once we have developed a baseline we will then know for sure the level from which government performance is being judged.

To address this challenge we seek to approach the development of the governance index in two phases. In phase one we will establish baselines for how the various state governments are performing on a series of indicators. This will be composed of two elements: first, we will collect whatever data is available from published sources on the various elements of governance - data that has been collected by government agencies and other statutory bodies. Second, in collaboration with CNN/IBN we will carry out a large national survey (approximately 30,000 to 40,000 respondents in all 28 states) that will help us establish the baseline from which we will then develop the second phase of the study. The questionnaire for the survey will be developed with the help of citizen focus groups and in depth interviews with 'stake-holders' i.e. NGOs such as Janagraha, Parivartan, and MKSS. Findings from this survey will be released in January 2009.

The second phase of the study will involve three elements. The first will be to establish the baseline for the various elements of governance. This will be accomplished using the aforementioned survey and any aggregate data we have collected. Once we have established the baseline we will conduct a series of field experiments to assess

differences across states in the interaction of citizen and the state. For instance, we could seek to determine how long it takes to get a drivers license, a BPL card etc, in the various states and whether different social groups in a state have different experiences with the state government. This would be accomplished not by asking people how long it takes them to get such certificates but by actually sending people to get these certificates. The experimental data will be supplemented by a large national survey conducted in all states that will ask citizens their perceptions of how their governments are performing but – since we will already have a baseline established we will not be making any serious measurement errors that can undermine the legitimacy of the entire study. This survey will be a more conventional and representative survey of Indian citizens about empowerment and governance. The results of the two surveys and the aggregate data will be combined to generate an index of governance that will rank the states on the various elements related to empowerment and governance.

International Validity:

The index we develop will be a defining document for two reasons. First, before beginning the fieldwork in India we will consult widely with scholars concerned with issues of governance in other parts of the world and also with survey researchers and methodologists. Some of this consultation has already begun and the head of the Survey Research Center at UC Berkeley has agreed to help us design the experimental element in the study. A more formal meeting on the Berkeley campus will be held once the various elements of the survey have been decided. Second, we will consult widely with stakeholders – i.e. NGOs working in areas of governance – to ensure we are indeed measuring what needs to be measured and that any index we develop does have value for civil society activists as well.

Dissemination of Results:

We propose, with our media partners, to disseminate the results as broadly as possible. Ideally, a media partner would carry a lead story on the index that will be telecast nationally. We would propose holding a large public event in Delhi to recognize the state government that governs and empowers best. At some period after the large public event that will also, hopefully, be nationally telecast we will produce a detailed report on empowerment and governance in India. This report will also acknowledge the contribution of FDRI to the development of this index. The format of the report will be similar to the report on the State of Democracy in South Asia.



Mani Shankar Aiyar

Mani Shankar Aiyar is the current Union Minister of Panchayati Raj. He represents the Mayiladuturai district of Tamil Nadu in the 14th Lok Sabha for the Indian National Congress party. Shri Aiyar was educated at the Doon School, Dehradun, St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi (Delhi) and Trinity Hall, Cambridge University (U.K.). He has an MA in Economics. Shri Aiyar spent over 20 years in the Indian Foreign Service and has since then held key positions in the Congress Party as well as the Indian government. In 1991, Shri Aiyar was elected to the Lok Sabha, and in 1992 to the All India Congress Committee. He has served as Union Minister, Petroleum & Natural Gas and at present serves as Union Cabinet Minister of Panchayati Raj, Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Minister of Development of North Eastern Region. In addition, Shri Aiyar has published widely in scholarly journals and popular media.

Pranab Bardhan

Pranab Bardhan is Professor of Economics at the University of California, Berkeley, and co-chair of the MacArthur Foundation-funded Network on the Effects of Inequality on Economic Performance. He has done theoretical and field studies research on rural institutions in poor countries, on political economy of development policies, and on international trade. He was Chief Editor of the *Journal of Development Economics* for 1985-2003. Widely published and cited, Professor Bardhan's most recent publications include *International Trade, Growth and Development; Poverty, Agrarian Structure, and Political Economy in India; Scarcity, Conflicts and Cooperation; Essays in Political and Institutional Economics of Development; Globalization and Egalitarian Redistribution, Inequality, Cooperation, and Environmental Sustainability*, and (co-edited), *Decentralization and Local Governance in Developing Countries: A Comparative Perspective*.



Pradeep Chhibber

Pradeep Chhibber studies party systems, party aggregation, and the politics of India. His research examines the relationship between social divisions and party competition and conditions that lead to the emergence of national or regional parties in a nation-state. Pradeep received an M.A. and an M.Phil. from the University of Delhi and a Ph.D. from UCLA. He is currently the Indo-American Community Chair in India Studies and the Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley.



Rajeev Dhavan

Rajeev Dhavan is a senior advocate at the Supreme Court and other Courts in India, having fought many cases on affirmative action, human rights, secularism and constitutional governance. He is also the Director of a Public Interest law firm, Public Interest Legal Support and Research Centre (PILSARC). Rajeev is an Honorary Professor of the Indian Law Institute in New Delhi. He has taught at Queens University Belfast and the University of West London. He has also had teaching assignments at London and Delhi Universities and the Universities of Madison (Wisconsin) and of Austin (Texas). Rajeev was elected to the International Commission of Jurists in June 1998 and to the ICJ's Executive Committee in October 2003. He is a regular columnist in India's leading newspaper and has written and edited many publications including books on the judiciary, the media, human rights and public law.

Alberto Diaz-Cayeros

Alberto Diaz-Cayeros earned his Ph.D at Duke University in 1997. Before joining the faculty at Stanford in 2001, he served as an assistant professor of political science at the University of California, Los Angeles. Diaz has also served as a researcher at Centro de Investigacion Para el Desarrollo, A.C. from 1997-1999. His work has primarily focused on federalism and economic reform in Latin America, and Mexico in particular. He has published widely in Spanish and English. His forthcoming book is entitled *Overawing the States: Federalism, Fiscal Authority and Centralization in Latin America*.



Kent Eaton

Kent Eaton is Associate Professor of Politics at UC Santa Cruz. He studies comparative politics, the political economy of development, and the causes and consequences of institutional change. Currently, Eaton's research examines territorial politics in Latin America and seeks to understand why territorial interests appear to be displacing the functional interests that dominated political life in the region for most of the previous century. From different perspectives, his three ongoing projects focus on this underlying question of "territoriality" in the region. First, in the wake of economic liberalization and decentralization, Eaton is studying the conflicts that have developed between subnational governments and transnational corporations over the terms and benefits of direct foreign investment. Second, he is examining the sources of increased tension between subnational governments in numerous Latin American countries, focusing in particular on the rise of regional autonomy movements in some of the continent's most economically-advanced subnational regions. Third, Eaton is studying the consequences of decentralization in conflict-prone settings, investigating the conditions under which decentralizing reforms either ameliorate or worsen armed conflict.



S. Gopalakrishnan

S. Gopalakrishnan (called Kris by his colleagues) is one of the founders of Infosys Technologies Limited, a highly respected Consulting, IT services and Business Process Management company operating in the global market. He has played a key role at Infosys in defining the company strategy and in using technology and innovation continuously to maintain its leadership of the industry. Kris obtained M.Sc. (Physics) in 1977 and M. Tech. (Computer Science) in 1979, both from IIT, Madras. In 1981, Kris, along with N.R. Narayana Murthy and five others, founded Infosys Technologies Limited. Kris is currently the Chairman of the Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management (IIITM), Kerala, and Vice Chairman of the Information Technology Education Standards Board (BITES) set up by Karnataka Government. He is on the board of directors of National Internet Exchange of India. He is a member of ACM, IEEE, and IEEE Computer Society.



John Harriss

John Harriss is an anthropologist with long-standing interests in the political economy of development, especially in regard to South Asia where he has conducted a good deal of field research, both urban and rural. A former Dean of the School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia, and Director of the Development Studies Institute at the London School of Economics, he is now Director of the School for International Studies at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver.



T.M. Thomas Isaac

Dr. T.M. Thomas Isaac is the Finance Minister of Kerala. He has a Ph.D in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University and is the author of numerous scholarly books and articles in both English and Malayalam. Book titles include Political Economy of Poverty; Science and Revolution; Local Democracy and Development: People's Campaign for Decentralised Planning in Kerala (with Richard W. Franke) and Kerala and Man (winner of the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award). Articles include Kerala's People's Plan Campaign 1996-2001: A Critical Assessment and Planning for Empowerment: People's Campaign for Decentralized Planning in Kerala. Before assuming his current post as Finance Minister, Dr. Isaac served on the steering committee on Decentralized Planning and Planning for Rural Development. He has been a Member of the Kerala State Planning Board (1988-1990) and Member of Research Advisory Committee, Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad. Dr. Isaac has also served as Professor at the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram. Dr. Isaac joined the Student Federation of India in 1971 and has been an active and involved member of the CPI(M) since then. He represents the Mararikulam constituency in the Kerala Legislative Assembly.





Arvind Kejriwal

Arvind Kejriwal: A mechanical engineer from IIT Kharagpur, Arvind joined the Indian civil services as a member of Indian Revenue Service in 1992. As a tax officer with the Indian Revenue Service, Arvind Kejriwal became aware of the many powers that tax officials held over private citizens and how easily these powers could be abused. In 2000, he founded Parivartan. The first activity was to provide relief to the taxpayers from extortionist corruption in Income Tax Department. The taxpayers in Delhi were exhorted not to pay bribes but to approach Parivartan with their grievances. About 700 grievances received have been resolved so far. Together with Aruna Roy and others, he campaigned for the Right to Information Act, which was passed in 2005. In July 2006, he spearheaded an awareness campaign for RTI across India. In 2006, Arvind was awarded the 2006 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Emergent Leadership. In February 6, 2007, Arvind was named CNN IBN Indian of the Year in Public Service for 2006.

Anirudh Krishna

Anirudh Krishna (Ph.D. in Government, Cornell 2000; Masters in Economics, Delhi 1980) is Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Political Science at Duke University. His research investigates how poor communities and individuals in developing countries cope with the structural and personal constraints that result in poverty and powerlessness. He has been examining poverty dynamics at the household level, tracking movements into and out of poverty of over 25,000 households in a varied group of 225 communities of India, Kenya, Uganda, Peru and North Carolina, USA. (www.pubpol.duke.edu/krishna). One article from this research, published in *Journal of Development Studies*, won the Dudley Seers Memorial Prize in 2005. Krishna's work also examines how poor community groups interact with states and markets. Publications include *Active Social Capital: Tracing the Roots of Development and Democracy* (Columbia University Press, 2002); *Reasons for Success: Learning From Instructive Experiences in Rural Development* (Kumarian Press, 1998), *Changing Policy and Practice From Below: Community Experiences in Poverty Reduction* (United Nations Press, 2000); and *Reasons for Hope: Instructive Experiences in Rural Development* (Kumarian Press, 1997) His journal article on social capital and political participation published in *Comparative Political Studies* won a best article award of the American Political Science Association in 2003. New integrative methodologies were developed for these investigations, including a Social Capital Assessment Tool and the Stages-of-Progress Method for tracking household poverty dynamics. Before turning to academia, Krishna worked for 14 years in the Indian Administrative Service, where he managed diverse initiatives related to rural and urban development.



Beatriz Magaloni

Beatriz Magaloni joined the faculty at Stanford in 2001. She previously served as an Assistant Professor at UCLA where she taught in the Department of Political Science. She graduated with a PhD from Duke University in 1997. She won the American Political Science Association's Gabriel Almond Award for the Best Dissertation in Comparative Politics in 1998. She has been a visiting fellow at Harvard University.

Chandan Mitra

Chandan Mitra is editor and managing director of The Pioneer newspaper in Delhi and an independently elected (but BJP-supported) Member of the Rajya Sabha. Dr. Mitra did his schooling from La Martiniere for Boys in Kolkata and graduated in Economics from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University. Dr. Mitra did his MA and M.Phil in History also from Delhi University, and then obtained his Ph.D. from Magdalen College in Oxford University in Modern Indian history. He started his career in Indian journalism as an Assistant Editor with The Statesman in Kolkata before moving to the Times of India in Delhi. Following this he joined The Sunday Observer and eventually joined The Pioneer and now is its editor and managing director.



Jayaprakash Narayan

Dr Jayaprakash Narayan is a physician by training, a public servant by choice, and a democrat by conviction. He joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1980 in the aftermath of the 'Emergency' and the failure of the Janata Experiment. During his nearly 17 years of distinguished public service in various capacities, he acquired a formidable reputation in the State of Andhra Pradesh because of major policy initiatives such as the empowerment of parents in schools, speedy justice through rural courts, and economic reform of Andhra Pradesh. He also helped develop the Infocity in Hyderabad. Among other things, he served as Secretary to both Governor and Chief Minister.

In 1996, he resigned from the IAS in order to pursue more fundamental social change and formed Lok Satta with like-minded colleagues. Lok Satta emerged as India's leading civil society initiative and people's movement for wide-ranging governance and political reforms. Lok Satta launched a national platform called VOTEINDIA in partnership with several organizations to spearhead the campaign for political reforms. Dr Narayan was the National Coordinator of LOK SATTAA and VOTEINDIA movements. Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan, is today, the leader of the LOK SATTAA PARTY which was launched on October 2nd 2006.





Irfan Nooruddin

Irfan Nooruddin is presently Assistant Professor of Political Science at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. His research focuses on questions of economic development, and how political competition shapes government policy. He has published articles on these topics in *International Organization*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Politics & Gender*, and *International Interactions*. Born in Bombay, Irfan received his BA in Economics and International Studies from Ohio Wesleyan University and his PhD in Political Science from the University of Michigan.

Kevin J. O'Brien

Kevin J. O'Brien is the Bedford Professor of Political Science and Chair of the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. His research focuses on Chinese politics in the reform era. His most recent work centers on theories of popular contention, particularly the origins, dynamics, and outcomes of protest in the Chinese countryside. He is co-author, with Lianjiang Li, of *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (Cambridge, 2006) and co-editor, with Neil Diamant and Stanley Lubman, of *Engaging the Law in China: State, Society and Possibilities for Justice* (Stanford, 2005). He is currently working on a new book, *Popular Contention in China*, which will be published in 2008. Two of his earlier articles are relevant to the themes of this conference: "Villagers, Elections, and Citizenship in Contemporary China," *Modern China* (October 2001): 407-35 and "Accommodating 'Democracy' in a One-Party State: Introducing Village Elections in China," (with Lianjiang Li), *China Quarterly* (June 2000): 465-89. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, he also wrote articles on Chinese local people's congresses, which appeared in *Asian Survey*, *China Quarterly*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, and *Studies in Comparative Communism*.



Ramesh Ramanathan

Ramesh Ramanathan is the co-founder of Janaagraha, a civil society institution aimed at improving public governance by deepening democratic processes. He has a degree in Physics from BITS Pilani, an MBA from Yale University, and a Certified Financial Analyst (CFA) degree from the Association of Investment Management & Research (AIMR). He is Vice Chairman, Sanghamithra Rural Financial Services, promoted by Myrada, one of India's pioneers in microcredit, and Chairman, Janalakshi Financial Services. He is Advisor to the Government of Karnataka on Local Government Finances in its interaction with the 12th Finance Commission; Principal Advisor, Government of Rajasthan, State Urban Reforms; and Board Member, UTI Bank. Mr. Ramanathan was Nominated as one of 250 "Young Global Leaders, 2007" by the World Economic Forum.



Vijayendra Rao

Vijayendra Rao is a Lead Economist in the Development Research Group at the World Bank. Combining a PhD in economics with an interest in anthropology and social theory, he studies how human relationality affects economic and political choices in poor countries. His previous work spans the broad topics of gender inequality, the relationship between culture and economic development, and mixing qualitative and quantitative techniques. His current work is on village governance and local development in India and Indonesia, and on social and economic mobility in rural India.

Isha Ray

Isha Ray is an Assistant Professor at the Energy and Resources Group, UC Berkeley. Her research interests are water and development; technology and development; common property resources; and social science research methods. Her research projects in India, China and California focus on access to water for the rural and urban poor, and on the role of low-cost technologies in ensuring such access. She teaches courses on research methods in the social sciences, water and development, and environmental classics. In addition to research and teaching, she has extensive past and ongoing experience in the non-profit sector on sustainable rural development in India, and international development- and freshwater-related issues.



Raka Ray

Raka Ray is Associate Professor of Sociology and South and Southeast Asia Studies, Sarah Kailath Chair in India Studies, and Chair of the Center for South Asia Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She grew up in Calcutta, India, but has moved steadily west since then, receiving her AB from Bryn Mawr College, and her PhD from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She has been at Berkeley since 1993. Her areas of specialization are gender and feminist theory, domination and inequality, cultures of servitude and social movements. Publications on social movements include *Fields of Protest: Women's Movements in India* (University of Minnesota, 1999; and in India, *Kali for Women*, 2000), "*Women's Movements in the Third World: Identity, Mobilization and Autonomy*" with Anna Korteweg (*Annual Review of Sociology*, 1999) and *Social Movements in India: Poverty, Power, and Politics*, co-edited with Mary Katzenstein (Rowman and Littlefield, 2005). Her book titled *Cultures of Servitude: Modernity, Domesticity & Class in India* with co-author Seemin Qayum is forthcoming from Stanford University Press.



Jaipal Reddy

Jaipal Reddy Shri Jaipal Reddy is Union Minister of Urban Affairs. He completed an MA from Osmania University. He has had a long association with the Congress Party, serving as President of the A.P. Youth Congress, 1965-71 and General Secretary of Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee, 1969-72. Following his suspension from the Congress for opposition to Emergency, he joined the Janata Party and was its Leader in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly, Deputy Leader of Janata Party Parliamentary Group; General Secretary, Janata Dal; Spokesman, Janata Dal, 1988 to 1991.

Shri Reddy has been Member, (i) Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Finance, (ii) Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests, (iii) Business Advisory Committee, Rajya Sabha, (iv) General Purposes Committee, Rajya Sabha, (v) Committee on Defence, (vi) Joint Parliamentary Committee to suggest facilities and remuneration for Members of Parliament and (vii) National Integration Council; elected to the Rajya Sabha in April, 1990. After rejoining Congress, he was elected to the Lok Sabha. He served as the minister for Information and Broadcasting in the government on two occasions: in 1997–1998 under I. K. Gujral and from 2004 under Manmohan Singh with additional responsibility for Culture. Shri Reddy received Outstanding Parliamentarian Award in 1998.



Ananya Roy

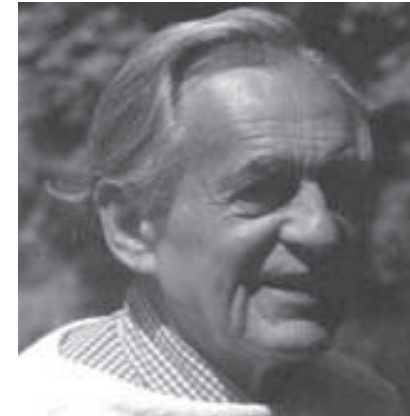
Ananya Roy is Associate Dean of International & Area Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. In this capacity, she co-chairs the Berkeley India Initiative (with Raka Ray) and oversees undergraduate and graduate teaching programs. Roy is also Associate Professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning where she teaches in the fields of comparative urban studies and international development. In 2006, Roy was awarded the Distinguished Teaching Award, the highest teaching honor UC Berkeley bestows on its faculty.

Roy holds a Ph.D. (1999) from the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California at Berkeley. She is the author of *City Requiem, Calcutta: Gender and the Politics of Poverty* (University of Minnesota Press, 2003) and co-editor of *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America* (Lexington Books, 2004). Her current research project is entitled *Poverty Experts: The New Global Order of Development*. Funded by the National Science Foundation, it examines how development policies are produced, funded, and implemented.



Lloyd Rudolph

Lloyd Rudolph is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Chicago. He received a BA from Harvard College, an MPA in 1950 from what later became Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and a Ph.D. in 1956 in Political Science, from Harvard University. A specialist in the study of India, he has co-authored eight books with Susanne Hoeber Rudolph: *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* [1967]; *Education and Politics in India* [1972]; *The Regional Imperative: The Administration of US Foreign Policy Towards South Asian States* [1980]; *Gandhi: The Traditional Roots of Charisma* [1983]; *Essays on Rajputana* [1984]; *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State* [1987]; *Reversing the Gaze: The Amar Singh Diary, a Colonial Subject's Narrative of Imperial India* [2000, 2005] and, most recently, *Postmodern Gandhi and Other Essays: Gandhi in the World and at Home*; as well as edited several others.



Susanne Rudolph

Susanne Rudolph is the William Benton Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science Emerita and took her Ph.D. from Harvard in 1955. She has served as president of the Association of Asian Studies and of the American Political Science Association (2003-2004). She studies comparative politics with special interest in the political economy and political sociology of South Asia, state formation, Max Weber, and the politics of category and culture. Her books (with Lloyd Rudolph) include *Transnational Religion and Fading States; Education and Politics in India; In Pursuit of Lakshmi: the Political Economy of the Indian State; and Essays on Rajputana*. Rudolph also edited *Agrarian Power and Agricultural Productivity in South Asia*.



Kalpana Sharma

Kalpana Sharma is an independent journalist, columnist and media consultant. She has been, until recently, Deputy Editor and Chief of Bureau of The Hindu in Mumbai. In over three decades as a full-time journalist, she has held senior positions in Himmatt Weekly, Indian Express and the Times of India. Her special areas of interest are environmental and developmental issues. She writes a fortnightly column in The Hindu's Sunday Magazine section, The Other Half, that comments on contemporary issues from a gender perspective. She has also followed and commented on urban issues, especially in the context of Mumbai's development. Kalpana Sharma is the author of *Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia's Largest Slum* (Penguin 2000) and has co-edited with Ammu Joseph *Whose News? The Media and Women's Issues* (Sage 1994, 2006) and *Terror Counter-Terror: Women Speak Out* (Kali for Women, 2003).



Digvijay Singh

Digvijay Singh is the former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, a position he held for two terms from 1993 to 2003. During this period, Singh initiated a series of reforms that sought to decentralize power from the state's capital, Bhopal, to its villages. He was made Member, Congress Working Committee in February, 2004 and continues as General Secretary, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi.

Shri Singh received his early education in Daly College, Indore. An engineering graduate from Govindram Saksesaria Technology Institute, Indore, Shri Digvijay Singh joined active politics in 1971. Shri Digvijay Singh was first elected to the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly on a Congress ticket from Raghogarh constituency in 1977. He was again returned to the Assembly in 1980 from the same constituency and inducted as a Minister of State in the Arjun Singh Ministry. Shri Singh held the portfolio of Agriculture. Later, he was elevated to the rank of Cabinet Minister and held the portfolio of Irrigation. Shri Digvijay Singh was elected to the Lok Sabha from Rajgarh constituency in 1984. He has held the post of MPCC (I) President twice. First, he was elected to this post in 1984 and again in 1992. He was again elected to the Lok Sabha in 1991 from Rajgarh constituency.



Nirvikar Singh

Nirvikar Singh is Professor of Economics, Director of the Business Management Economics Program and Co-Director of the Center for Global, International and Regional Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He was also a co-founder of the Santa Cruz Center for International Economics. In 1998, he organized one of the first major conferences held in the United States on Indian economic reform. He received his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley, and his BSc and MSc from the London School of Economics, where he was awarded the Allyn Young Prize, Gonner Prize and Ely Devons Prize. His current research topics include electronic commerce, business strategy, information technology and development, federalism and political economy, and economic reform in India. He has authored over 80 research papers and his book, *The Political Economy of Indian Federalism*, co-authored with M. Govinda Rao, has recently been published by Oxford University Press.



Margaret Weir

Margaret Weir is Professor of Political Science and Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley and a nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. Before coming to Berkeley in 1997, she was a Senior Fellow in Governmental Studies at the Brookings Institution (1992-1997) and was a member of the faculty of the Government Department at Harvard University (1985-1992). She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Weir has written widely on social policy and politics in the United States. She is the author of several books including, *Schooling for All: Race, Class and the Decline of the Democratic Ideal* (coauthored with Ira Katznelson, Basic Books 1985); and *Politics and Jobs: The Boundaries of Employment Policy in the United States* (Princeton University Press, 1992) and editor of several others. She is currently working a study of metropolitan inequalities in the United States, with a particular focus on the changing politics of poverty in metropolitan areas, and second study examining the politics of federalism and health care reform in the United States.



next conferences

The theme of the first FDRI/Berkeley seminar was local governance in India. The 2008 theme is Justice and the Law. Without mechanisms in place to ensure safety, justice and certainty, a democracy cannot survive. India has had an independent judiciary for decades, but how effectively does it function and is able to truly deliver impartial justice to its citizens? How do other state actors like the police and army function to uphold the law? What recourse is available when these instruments of the state themselves break the law? Civil society, like citizens groups and even the private sector, are often involved in promoting justice and just practices. How does civil society work with the average citizen when he or she does not feel that justice has been served? What alternate forms of dispute resolution mechanisms are available? What lessons can we learn from successful examples of effective and democratic legal environments? Luminaries from government, the judiciary, civil society, the media, academia, and the corporate world will be invited to address these and other vital questions through a series of panel presentations, breakout sessions, and keynote lectures.

In order to facilitate this conversation, we are inviting thought leaders to a two-day seminar. Other invitees include judges and advocates (Justice Srikrishna, Rajiv Dhavan); political leaders (Mani Shankar Aiyar, Abhishek Singhvi); journalists (P. Sainath, Tarun Tejpal, Somini Sengupta), legal scholars (Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Marc Galanter, Madhava Menon); and NGO activists (Colin Gonsalvez, Flavia Agnes).

The primary objective of these seminars is to provide direction and reflection on key issues that may challenge the democratic institutions of India in the 21st century. The aim is to generate ideas that will not only spur greater understanding of complex issues, but can also be implemented in terms of policy. The pace with which changes are taking place in India makes such a seminar series imperative. The ability to have conversations across disciplines and professions will, we expect, greatly enhance the ability to create innovative solutions and out-of-the-box thinking.

These seminars will address these vital questions with the goal of critically evaluating existing projects, generating new ideas, and analyzing the feasibility of alternative models of local governance. In addition to the panel sessions, several high-profile keynote speakers will share their insights, and the seminar will conclude with an extended closed session to enable all of the invited participants, including major Indian politicians, to freely exchange views and formulate innovative policy suggestions. We will also have smaller breakout sessions throughout the conference, which will allow smaller groups to discuss and reflect on the ideas that have been generated.

about the organizers

Center for South Asia Studies, University of California, Berkeley

The Center for South Asia Studies (CSAS) supports teaching, research, and outreach activities relating to South Asia at UC Berkeley. The only US Department of Education-funded National Resource Center for South Asia in California, CSAS is committed to enhancing knowledge of the region among students, academics, and the public at large. UC Berkeley has been a premier site for the study of South Asia in general, and India in particular, for the past century (Sanskrit courses date back to 1906). With close to 50 faculty members conducting research in the area of South Asia studies, Berkeley offers 85 to 120 courses with significant India content every semester, and instruction in over seven Indian languages. The University of California, Berkeley, is recognized as one of the top universities in the United States and was recently ranked as the second greatest university in the world by the Times Higher Education Supplement.

Foundation for Democratic Reforms in India

The Foundation for Democratic Reforms in India (FDRI) is a US based non-profit organization dedicated to the study of the democratic and constitutional institutions of India, and evaluation and promotion of reforms of these institutions. FDRI believes that key reforms in the Indian governance structure can afford all citizens the opportunity to reach their full potential and lead to a renaissance of the Indian Republic, making it a confident, prosperous leader in the global arena.

Until recently, FDRI was aligned with Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan's Lok Satta grassroots movement in India, which has done pioneering work in mobilizing grassroots support for political and democratic reforms, from listing candidates' assets and criminal records, to judicial reforms, to the newly enacted Right to Information Act. However, since Dr. Narayan has decided to take his campaign directly into the political arena by establishing a political party, the Board of FDRI has decided that the cause for reforms can best be served by providing thought leadership in critical areas through an informed interaction of academia with political and other leaders.

about the author

Sanchita Saxena is the Vice Chair of the Center for South Asia Studies (CSAS) at UC Berkeley. Prior to joining CSAS, Sanchita was the Assistant Director of Economic Programs at the Asia Foundation, where she co-authored *The Phase-Out of the Multi-Fiber Arrangement: Policy Options and Opportunities for Asia*.

Sanchita is currently the Lead Researcher on an Asia Foundation funded project titled "Competitiveness in the Garment and Textiles Industry: A Case Study of Bangladesh." This research extends her earlier work on the Multi-Fiber Arrangement, and focuses on the effects of trade liberalization in garments and textiles in the context of Bangladesh.

Sanchita received her Ph.D. in Political Science (focus on Comparative Political Economy) from UCLA in 2002. Her dissertation focused on the effects of decentralization on the enactment and implementation of economic reforms. Sanchita has taught courses in Comparative Politics, The Politics of Developing Countries, and the Politics of Economic Reform in Asia and Latin America at UCLA, UC Davis, and the University of San Francisco. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Center for the Pacific Rim at USF, and is a trustee of the American Institute of Indian Studies and the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies.

about the designer

Puneeta Kala is the Program Representative of the Center for South Asia Studies. She is an East Asianist who specialized in Japanese studies. She holds one M.Phil and three M.A. degrees with the most recent from Harvard University. She has taught at the University of Vermont and the University of San Francisco and has been involved in a number of programming and fundraising initiatives at Harvard and elsewhere.

Center for South Asia Studies

10 Stephens Hall

University of California at Berkeley

Berkeley, CA 94270

Tel: (510) 642-3608

Fax: (510) 643 5793

southasia.berkeley.edu