



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

**CR** CENTRE FOR  
POLICY  
RESEARCH



A leading public policy think tank

Conducting research in multiple disciplines

Contributing to a more robust public discourse

# Foreword

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As President, I have come to relish this annual ritual of writing the foreword to CPR's annual report. This is my moment to bask in the glory of the awe-inspiring public service and high standards of scholarship set by my colleagues. I list here but a few highlights of CPR's work through this year. I hope this will give you a glimpse of the depth and range of our intellectual and policy engagements and tempt you to go through the contents and publications in this report. In an increasingly chaotic and complex world, CPR scholars have valiantly sought to understand and interpret events through sober, evidence-based discourse. I am proud that through our work, we have stayed true to our fiercely independent spirit and commitment to democratic dialogue.

The reporting year 2020-21 will find its place in history. At every crucial moment, from the national lockdown in March 2020 to the deadly second COVID-19 wave in April 2021, the farmer protests, the significant developments on India's borders and the geopolitical shifts in our neighbourhood, to debates on net-zero targets and building a resilient climate-ready State, CPR scholars remained at the forefront, contributing actively to policy implementation, forging new partnerships with governments, civil society and academia and initiating new research to enrich the policy discourse and interpret the impact of this historical moment.

The health and economic consequences of the pandemic dominated much of CPR's policy work in this period. Within weeks of the first national lockdown being announced, CPR faculty reoriented their work to respond to COVID-19. Two notable engagements with State governments include appointments of CPR scholars to the COVID-19 Global Advisory Council of the Government of West Bengal and to the Government of Punjab Group of Experts, tasked with developing a post-COVID economic strategy for the state. In addition, CPR scholars were appointed as members of the *Lancet* COVID-19 Commission India Task Force and the *Lancet* Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System. Alongside with working at the state and national government level, our COVID-19 response involved active engagement at the grassroots. Accountability Initiative was instrumental in anchoring an alliance called PULSE (Platform to Understand, Learn, Share and Exchange), that includes over 100 members from government, civil society, academia and the donor community. The alliance focuses on ensuring that grassroots experience makes its way into the policy discourse. In addition, they launched a series called *Inside Districts*, documenting the trials and tribulations of frontline workers in responding to the pandemic. We also undertook several research projects, in partnership with government and academia, to build an evidence base on how to respond to COVID-19. Key research themes included internal migration, urban livelihoods, understanding transmission dynamics and the preparedness of the health system.

Beyond our COVID-19 response, the perils of work from home and tyranny of Zoom notwithstanding, 2020-21 remained a productive year for CPR. Our scholars continued the tradition of publishing path-breaking books, writing in the popular press and engaging in the everyday life of policymaking. We published two important books this year including, Shylashri Shankar's masterful book, *Turmeric Nation: A Passage Through India's Tastes* and Manju Menon and Kanchi Kohli's *Beyond the Coal Rush Rush: A Turning Point for Global Energy and Climate Policy?*. Our national level policy contributions ranged from engagements with the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the Finance Commission, the NITI Aayog, the National Commission of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, amongst others. We also launched new research and welcomed new faculty in areas such as the rural economy & agriculture, state capacity and regulation, health financing, Dalit politics, election studies, national security and foreign policy.

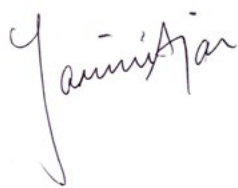
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In the last few years, we have broadened our approach to work more closely at the sub-national level. This year, we deepened our engagements by entering into long-term partnerships with the Government of Punjab and the Government of Odisha to work with the urban development departments on slum upgradation. We also signed two different Memoranda of Association with the Government of Meghalaya to support the planning and finance department and the State Capability Enhancement Project. In addition, new partnerships have been initiated with governments in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka.

This has been an important year for climate action across the globe, particularly with the release of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and preparations for the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in November 2021. CPR, through its Initiative on Climate, Energy and Environment (ICEE), as you doubtless know, is home to the country's leading voices on the issue. We have also played an important role on the global stage, shaping debates on climate change. Continuing this tradition, Navroz Dubash is the lead author for the IPCC chapter on national and subnational policies and institutions to address climate change. In addition, ICEE remained at the forefront of key debates, including on climate institutions, net-zero targets, energy transitions and air pollution. This formidable team is truly at the cutting edge of one of the most pressing issues of our time.

In 2020-21, we welcomed several new colleagues to the CPR family but also suffered difficult losses. In June 2020, we lost Ved Marwah, a long-term associate with CPR and just as I signed off this year's annual report, we had the devastating news of the sudden passing away of Keshav Desiraju, our governing board member. Both men were amongst India's finest public servants, whose integrity and commitment were unparalleled. We learnt from them the value of public purpose and CPR remains committed to fulfilling their legacy by remaining true to the values and principles they stood for.

As always, I am grateful for the unflinching support we receive from our governing board under the leadership of Dr Meenakshi Gopinath, whose guidance and commitment to our scholarship has been a consistent source of strength. Our fabulous finance & management team, led by Alaknanda Jain and Anup Roy, who have navigated the chaos of COVID-19 to ensure that our faculty have the space to do their best, even as we become more 21<sup>st</sup>-century in our day-to-day administration, and our communications team, led by Hemali Sodhi, who have ensured that we transitioned from the seminar room to the Zoom room with ease, while pushing us to reach out to newer audiences. Finally, to our funders, whose trust and support has enabled us to adapt to the new circumstances and new challenges that we confront today. I remain deeply grateful.



**Yamini Aiyar**  
President and Chief Executive



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# Research and Engagement on the **COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

CPR's policy response to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic has been wide ranging, focusing on public health as well as the pathways for economic relief and recovery, social protection particularly for informal, migrant workers; urbanisation, state capacity, governance and more. Our engagements ranged from direct policy support to governments, forging collaborations and alliances with the grassroots and initiating new research to build an evidence base to enrich the policy discourse.





## Engaging with Stakeholders at all levels: From Grassroots to Government

- In March 2020, CPR's Accountability Initiative co-anchored PULSE (Platform to Understand, Learn, Share and Exchange), a collaborative platform for key players working on combating the short, medium and long-term challenges posed by COVID-19. The platform aims to develop a deeper understanding of the policy response and implementation gaps and bring grassroots experience into the policy debate. Over 90 organisations and 100 individual members are part of the platform. They include funders, government officials, practitioners, researchers and grassroots organisations in the development sector.
- In May 2020, CPR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Punjab, working closely with the state on its testing and containment strategy. Between May 2020 and October 2020, CPR undertook research to better understand and tackle the spread of the virus. These research notes were released on the CPR website.
- Yamini Aiyar was appointed to the Government of Punjab Group of Experts, tasked with developing a post-COVID economic strategy for the state.
- In 2021, Partha Mukhopadhyay and Jishnu Das were appointed as members of the *Lancet* COVID-19 Commission India Task Force.
- Aiyar and Mekhala Krishnamurthy were appointed as Commissioner and Commission Fellow respectively for the *Lancet* Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System. CPR is contributing to both the critical Finance and Governance workstreams as part of the Commission's larger programmatic agenda.
- Das was appointed to the Global Advisory Council for West Bengal to advise the state on its COVID-19 strategy.



# Key Research Outputs



## Impact on the Global Order

- Shyam Saran, Gautam Mukhopadhaya, Nimmi Kurian and Sandeep Bhardwaj published a report titled, *India as the Engine of Recovery for South Asia: A Multi-Sectoral Plan for India's COVID-19 Diplomacy*. The report offers a multi-sectoral action plan for India's COVID-19 diplomacy in the region, covering critical areas of health, food security, ecology, trade and finance.
- Kurian published an article, *In Sickness and in Health: How Border Regions can be Central to Building a Post-Pandemic South Asia*, in *Himal Southasian*, as part of a special issue on *Unmasking South Asia: The Pandemic Issue* in December 2020. The article explored how COVID-19 can be a catalyst to undertake a fundamental reappraisal of South Asia's regional project.

## Public Health

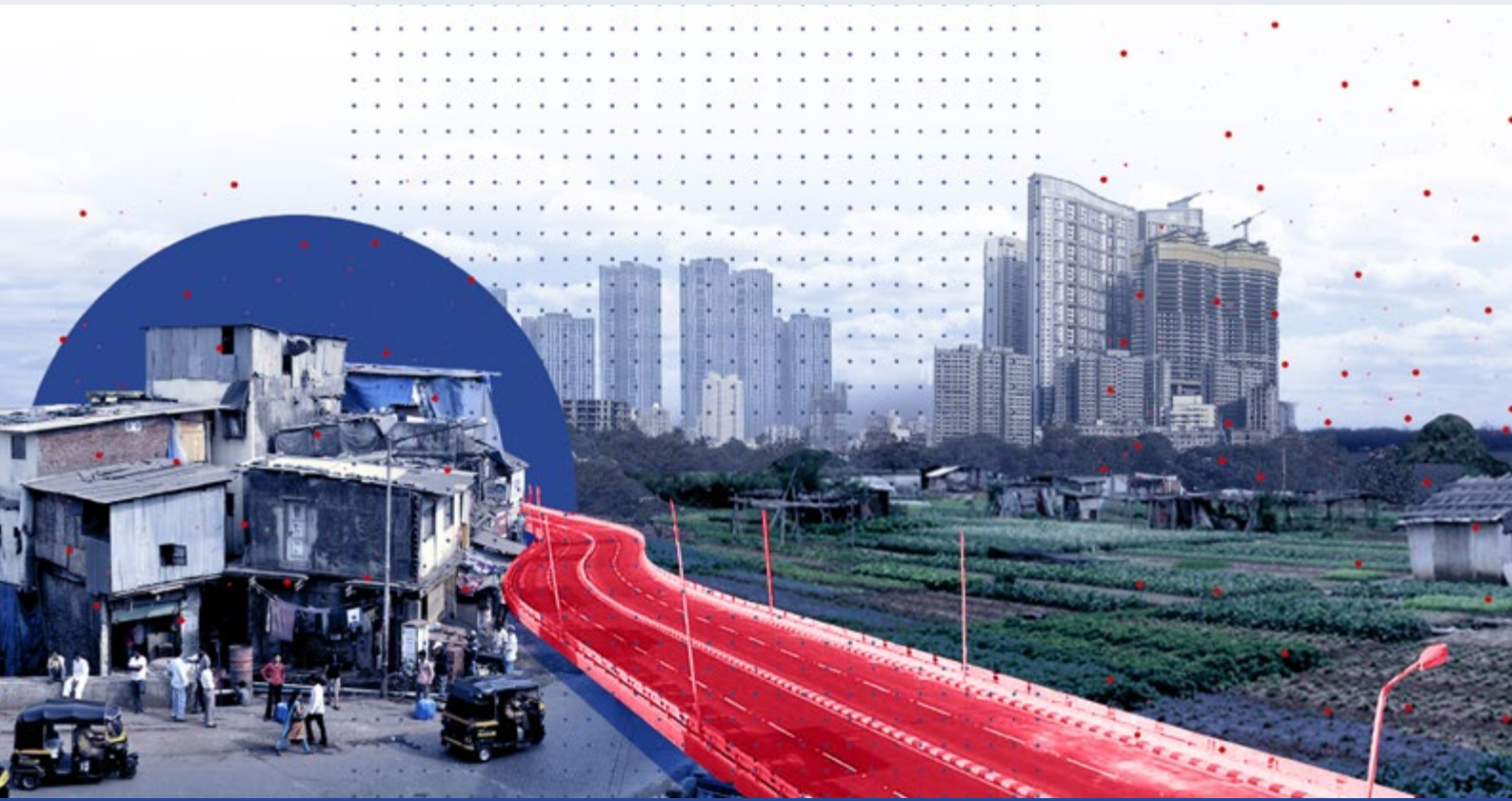
- As part of the *Lancet* COVID-19 Commission India Task Force, Partha Mukhopadhyay and Jishnu Das co-authored two reports along with other members. The first report titled, *Country-wide Containment Strategies for Reducing COVID-19 Cases in India*, outlined a checklist for reducing the caseload in the country. The second report titled, *Managing India's Second COVID-19 Wave: Urgent Steps*, described a roadmap to tackle the virulent second wave of the pandemic.
- In a working paper titled, *Quantifying heterogeneity in SARS-CoV-2 transmission during the lockdown in India*, Das, Mukhopadhyay, Neelanjan Sircar, Nimalan Arinaminpathy and Tyler H McCormick used data collected from contact tracing during the lockdown in Punjab, to quantify heterogeneity in COVID-19, and to examine implications for transmission dynamics.
- On behalf of the *Lancet* Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System, Yamini Aiyar and others published a paper titled, *India's resurgence of COVID-19: urgent actions needed*. The authors proposed eight recommendations for the central and state governments to tackle the resurgence of COVID-19 in India.
- Aiyar, Das, Mukhopadhyay and Shamindra Nath Roy published a policy note titled, *Responding to COVID: a Mobility Based Surge Capacity Framework*. The note proposed a mobility based framework for India to prepare for future waves of the pandemic.





## Environmental Impact

- Santosh Harish and Shibani Ghosh published a report on *Pursuing a Clean Air Agenda in India During the COVID-19 Crisis*. The report analysed the opportunities and challenges of achieving India's air quality goals during the pandemic.
- Ashwini K Swain authored a report titled, *Powering Through the Pandemic: Will COVID-19 reset India's approach to the future of electricity?*. The report finds that India's electricity sector is at a critical juncture and needs to envision a new and transformative configuration of technology, institutions and politics.
- Parth Bhatia co-authored a chapter titled, *Bridging the gap—implications of current COVID-19 fiscal rescue and recovery measures in the UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2020*. The chapter shed light on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 fiscal rescue and the implications for a low-carbon economic recovery.
- Manju Menon and Kanchi Kohli co-authored an article titled, *Environmental regulation and post-COVID-19 economic recovery for Heinrich Boll Stiftung*. The article shed light on changes to environment regulation laws during the pandemic.



## Challenges of Urbanisation

- Ashwin Parulkar, Manish and Mukta Naik contributed to the publication, *COVID-19 and the right to housing: Report on Delhi NCR*, which was the Delhi Housing Rights Taskforce's submission to the UN Special Rapporteur's call for submissions regarding the status of housing rights during the pandemic.
- The Scaling City Institutions For India (SCI-FI) initiative undertook a study titled, *Re form on Pandemics and Urban Planning: Analysis of Evidence and Policy*. The study aimed to explore the impact of COVID-19 on public spaces; housing and slums; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); public health; clinical health; livelihoods and social protection in urban areas in eleven cities with a specific focus on marginalised and vulnerable communities.
- Shubhagato Dasgupta, Tripti Singh and Anju Dwivedi co-authored a report titled, *Invisible Sanitation Workers @ COVID-19 Lockdown: Voices From 10 Cities*. The report highlighted the lived reality of sanitation workers during the pandemic by undertaking seventeen in-depth interviews of sanitation workers.
- SCI-FI researchers undertook a study titled, *Endured: Redress inequities to build back better*. The study assessed how pre-existing residential, occupational and social vulnerabilities affect the urban poor in accessing essential services in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Berhampur. Learnings from the study fed into the development of an emergency response plan for two slums in Bhubaneswar.



## COVID-19 at the Frontlines

### Impact on the Social Sector

- CPR scholars authored a brief titled, *Redesigning India's Social Protection Financing Architecture to meet the Challenge of COVID-19*, chalking out a reformed architecture, based on the principles of decentralisation, consolidation and convergence.
- A policy note on *The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Public School Education* by the Accountability Initiative provided an overview of the principal issues arising from the pandemic and the resulting school closures.
- As part of the *Lancet COVID-19 Commission India Task Force*, Partha Mukhopadhyay and Jishnu Das co-authored a report titled, *Reopening Schools After COVID-19 Closures*. The report put forth minimum guidelines to ensure that students return to schools safely.
- Researchers at the Accountability Initiative published a policy note entitled, *A Hidden Cost: The Pandemic's Impact on Nutrition*. The note focussed on the nutrition sector prior to the pandemic, the changes and impact due to the pandemic and briefly discussed what can be done to pull nutrition interventions back on track.

- In April 2020, an interview series called *Inside Districts* was launched by the Accountability Initiative as part of the group's strategic communications work to increase public understanding of administration. It documents the perspectives of government workers and officials working on the frontlines in rural India and captures their challenges and solutioneering in five Indian states.
- Researchers at the Accountability Initiative published a study titled, *Experiences of Frontline Workers in Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Through a series of interviews, the study documented the trials and tribulations of frontline workers as they responded to the pandemic.





## Challenges of State Capacity

- In the aftermath of the lockdown, Arkaja Singh published a working paper titled, *Hunger, COVID-19 and the Indian Administrative State*. The paper compared the state response to the COVID-induced hunger crisis in the states of Delhi, Kerala, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana from the perspective of the differential organisational capacities available to administrators.
- The State Capacity Initiative conducted a unique representative survey, the first of its kind, to engage members of the Indian Administrative Service in reflecting on the critical challenges, decisions and trade-offs that confronted public administrators charged with managing the state response at different levels. The findings of the survey were published in an important report, *The Pandemic and Public Administration: A Survey of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Officers* co-authored by Mekhala Krishnamurthy, Deepak Sanan, K Rahul Sharma and Aditya Unnikrishnan.

## Economic Challenges

- Mukta Naik authored a brief on *Research in the COVID-19 Context: Adaptive Methods and Ethical Considerations* as part of the Women, Work and the Gig Economy Research Consortium. The brief discussed conceptual and practical approaches researchers have taken to address ethical concerns as well as strategic and tactical shifts in research methods within the broader, geographically diverse and ever transforming context of COVID-19.
- COVID-19 made visible, long ignored realities of the Indian economy – its fragility, regional and spatial concentration and deep structural inequality. In an effort to reframe our debates and reimagining India's post-COVID economic recovery and growth, CPR launched the *Understanding the Rural Economy* series. As part of this, research notes were released by Harish Damodaran, Yamini Aiyar, Mekhala Krishnamurthy and Avani Kapur.

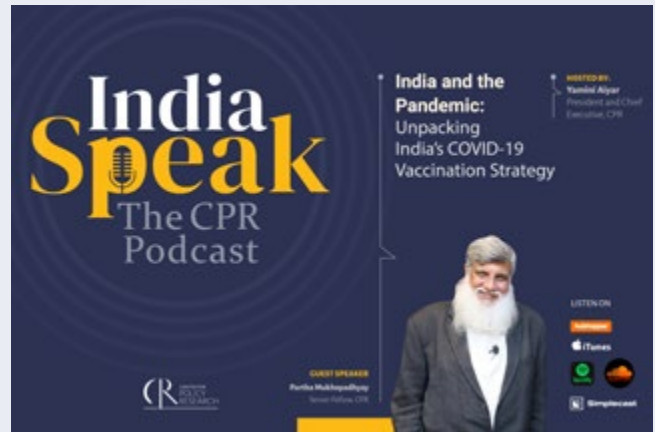


# Shaping the Public Debate

- CPR scholars continued to contribute to the discourse on COVID-19 through a variety of opinion pieces and interviews in national and international media, on platforms like *Hindustan Times*, *NDTV*, *ThePrint*, *Indian Express*, *Scroll*, *Business Standard*, *New York Times* etc.



- Post the second wave, CPR launched a series titled, *India and the Pandemic* as part of its new podcast, *India Speak*. The series brought together a range of experts to discuss the impact of the pandemic on India's economy, society and polity.



- As part of CPR's newsletter, *Notes from the Centre*, scholars were interviewed on several aspects of the pandemic. This included interviews on India's vaccination strategy, the state of India's economy, the challenges presented by the second wave and more.



- CPR continued to engage with Indian and global audiences on various facets of the pandemic by organising regular webinars. CPR faculty also continued to participate in webinars organised by several reputed organisations.

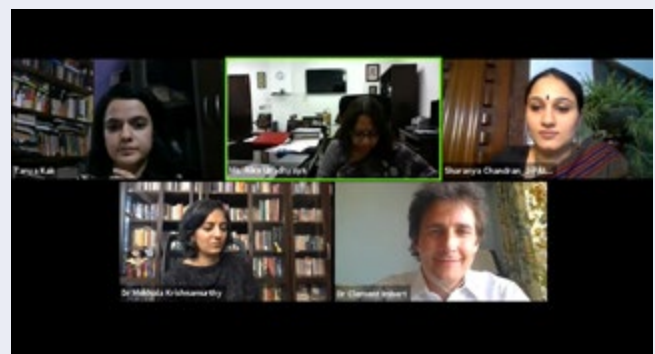




Image Source: [www.liberation.com](http://www.liberation.com)



# Environmental Law and Governance

CPR is committed to fostering an evidence-based conversation about how to ensure a clean and sustainable environment for a growing India. The Centre's experts research topics ranging from environmental jurisprudence to the construction industry, and they engage directly with domestic and international environmental institutions.





Image Source: www.india.com

# Climate, Energy and Environment

In 2020, the Initiative on Climate, Energy and Environment (ICEE) engaged with legal and regulatory trends shaping climate, energy, environment and development outcomes in India while also contributing to global discussions on climate governance. ICEE engaged with several areas of research, including global climate governance, India's climate and energy future, the political economy of electricity, air quality regulation and governance, energy demand patterns in urban areas and Indian environmental law. Moreover, in a year dominated by COVID-19 and its effects, ICEE also closely examined the disruptive effects of the pandemic on India's environmental policies.

In February 2021, CPR launched a new blog created and edited by ICEE researchers. The blog, entitled *Environmentality* (<https://environmentality.cprindia.org/>), explores the politics of creating a just and sustainable future, with a focus on climate, energy and environmental governance in India and hosts original writing by researchers on these issues.

## Global Climate Governance

- Navroz K Dubash and Parth Bhatia participated in the Fourth Lead Author Meeting for the upcoming *Sixth Assessment Report* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Dubash and Bhatia are Coordinating Lead Author and Chapter Scientist respectively for the chapter on national and sub-national policies and institutions to address climate change.
- In *Nature Climate Change*, Dubash reviewed new research quantifying the emissions impact of climate laws, and co-authored a journal article titled, *Climate laws help reduce emissions*, examining biases in prominent equity-based 'fair share' studies of global climate action. In a special issue of *Seminar*, Aditya Valiathan Pillai authored an article titled, *China and India in the Himalayan climate crisis*. The article explained why China and India needed to evolve a political relationship responsive to the shared threat of the Himalayan climate crisis.

- A board of current and past editors at *Climate Policy* journal selected *Developments in national climate change mitigation legislation and strategy* – a 2013 article co-authored by Dubash, Markus Hagemann, Niklas Höhne and Prabhat Upadhyaya – to appear in the journal's list of top twenty papers over the past twenty years of its publication.

## India's Climate and Energy Future

- ICEE contributed to strategic thinking around climate action in India. 2020-21 was a landmark year for global climate politics, with major emitters such as China and the United States announcing new long-term climate pledges. In tandem with these announcements, a public debate unfolded about whether India should declare a net-zero target. In a two-part series in the *Hindustan Times*, Navroz K Dubash argued that net-zero would be a hollow pledge given India's diplomatic, developmental and climate interests and emphasised the need for sectoral transition plans, strong institutions for climate governance, and economy-wide targets based on near-term actions. Dubash, Lavanya Rajamani and Ambuj Sagar also wrote in the *Indian Express* about the importance of honoring the hard-won equity clauses embedded in the Paris Agreement and the need for credible and just climate targets in industrialised countries.
- In an article titled, *New Imperatives for International and Domestic Climate Policy: Rethinking India's Approach*, published in the *IIC Quarterly* journal, Dubash and Rajamani examined the need for India to rethink its approach to international and domestic climate policy. Dubash was also frequently quoted on India's role in the climate regime, the need to protect the country's developmental future and the importance of a smooth and equitable energy transition in mainstream outlets such as *The Guardian*, *Climate Home News*, *Bloomberg*, *Economic Times*, *Live Mint*, *The Wire* and *Reuters*.
- Dubash and Radhika Khosla published new research on India's energy strategy. Their article titled, *Rethinking India's Energy Policy*, published in *Economic and Political*

*Weekly* called for a shift away from supply-centric thinking towards policies that could address the country's multiple development objectives, including equitable energy access, environmental protection and energy security. To mark the release of a special report by the International Energy Agency (IEA), ICEE also co-hosted a panel discussion with the IEA on *Unpacking the IEA's India Energy Outlook 2021: The sectoral transitions underpinning long-term scenarios*.

- Aditya Valiathan Pillai wrote comments about the fraught geopolitics of the regional electricity trade in South Asia, as well as India's plans for an ambitious new global renewable energy grid in the *Financial Express* and *The Hindu*. He also discussed whether regional electricity markets were essential to decarbonising India's energy system in *The Wire*.

## The Political Economy of Electricity in India

- In January 2021, ICEE co-hosted an agenda-setting roundtable on managing a fair transition away from coal with Prayas (Energy Group), which brought together a diverse and interdisciplinary community of energy scholars and practitioners.
- ICEE submitted comments to the Ministry of Power on the draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020, highlighting the urgent need to revisit India's electricity priorities, the laws governing the power sector and the country's approach to improving electricity distribution. ICEE also provided feedback to the Ministry of Power on the electricity reforms proposed in the Union Budget 2021.

## Air Quality Regulation and Governance in India

- Santosh Harish wrote in the *Hindustan Times* and *The Wire* about the need for financial investments in clean air grants and initiatives, focusing on the 15th Finance Commission's grants to municipal corporations and relevant allocations in the Union Budget 2021. He coordinated a collaborative note



Tim Gould (Head of Division of Energy Supply and Investment Outlooks, IEA), R.P Gupta (Secretary, MoEFCC), Ajay Shankar (Distinguished Fellow, TERI), Tejal Kanitkar (Associate Professor, National Institute of Advanced Sciences) and Navroz K. Dubash discussed the developmental implications of the energy and emissions pathways highlighted in the *India Energy Outlook 2021*.



↑ Santosh Harish reflected on the implications of the NCR's new air pollution ordinance on NDTV.



↑ Day 1 of the Third Annual Roundtable on Residential Electricity Consumption with Amita Baviskar, Ronita Bardhan, Radhika Khosla and Anna Agarwal.

on the design of the grants to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) with researchers from several groups including the World Bank, World Resources Institute, Centre for Science and Environment and TERI, with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

- Harish, Shibani Ghosh and Navroz K Dubash explained the significance of the government's ordinance to establish a Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) in an article in the *Hindustan Times*. Harish answered questions about the implications of the CAQM for air quality governance on NDTV, in the *Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, the *Indian Express*, the *Economic Times*, and *The Wire*. ICEE was also invited to share their recommendations on air quality governance with the Delhi Government in 2021.

## Energy Demand Patterns in Urban India

- In an article titled, *The what, why, and how of changing cooling energy consumption in India's urban households*, published in the journal, *Environmental Research Letters*, Radhika Khosla, Anna Agarwal, Neelanjan Sircar and Deepaboli Chatterjee highlighted new research answering fundamental questions about energy-efficient cooling usage in India and discussed household-level social and economic trends driving India's cooling transition. Key findings and analysis from the article were discussed in *Carbon Brief* and *IndiaSpend*, among other media outlets.
- In an article titled, *Impact of temperature on electricity demand: Evidence from Delhi and Indian states*, published in *Energy Policy* journal, Santosh Harish, Nishmeet Singh and Rahul Tongia presented a first-of-its-kind analysis that analysed household-level changes in electricity demand in response to heat shocks in Delhi. Their research suggested that as temperatures rose, richer households steadily

increased electricity consumption for cooling, while low-income consumers showed limited incremental response to temperature changes – with significant implications for heat and climate adaptation in India.

- ICEE co-hosted the third annual roundtable on residential electricity consumption in India with Prayas (Energy Group) and the University of Oxford. In this virtual two-day event, experts presented their latest research on social and behavioral patterns related to space cooling in Indian households and shared insights on the effectiveness of policies aimed at managing rising cooling demand.

## Indian Environmental Law

- In response to the draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) notification in 2020, Shibani Ghosh submitted comments to the MoEF&CC outlining several ways in which the proposed draft was legally untenable and diluted the already-weak processes of environmental impact assessment, expert scrutiny and public consultation. In subsequent articles in the *Indian Express* and in *The India Forum*, Ghosh explained why the draft EIA Notification would wrongly condone violations and exacerbate the weaknesses of the environmental clearance system in the country. She also discussed mechanisms to strengthen environmental regulation in interviews with NDTV, ETNOWLIVE, *Business Standard* and *HuffPost*.
- Ghosh published a chapter on *Climate Litigation in India in Comparative Climate Change Litigation: Beyond the Usual Suspects*, edited by Francesco Sindico and Makane Moïse Mbengue. Her review of the Indian legal and regulatory landscape reveals that the main environment and energy-related laws, policies and regulatory processes offer several hooks for climate litigation and that the jurisdiction of Indian courts is adequately broad to entertain climate claims.



Image Source: www.tifanexpress.com

# Infrastructures and Ecologies

This research theme advances multidisciplinary and applied research on the political ecology of large infrastructures. It houses a cluster of new and ongoing projects, at the intersection of infrastructure development, natural resource management and legal governance frameworks at trans-national, national and state levels.

## Urban Infrastructure Projects and Environmental Discourses

- This participatory research, done in collaboration with several urban planning and ecology experts and activists, analyses the socio-ecological aspects of urban infrastructures and construction projects in Indian cities. This year, the research team engaged in public discussions and published a series of socio-legal commentaries on the central government's Central Vista project in New Delhi. Manju Menon participated in a panel discussion on the governance challenges of the Central Vista project organised by Roli Books.

- Menon and Kanchi Kohli authored an essay titled, *Nature conservation, Social Development and Freedom* for the *Landscape Journal*. The article examined social and economic development in context of present day realities.
- Kohli spoke at *The Quotidian Realm: Contextualising the current times* seminar by the CEPT University. This seminar aimed to explore the intrinsic nature of society as a reflection of its temporal context. It also aimed to understand the role of various social, technological and environmental developments in shaping its cultural expressions

↓ Prem Chandavarkar (Managing Partner, CnT Architects) and Manju Menon in conversation with Alpna Kishore (Writer and Urban Activist) on Central Vista Redevelopment: Environment, Heritage and Accountability.



↓ Dr Luciano Cardellicchio, Kanchi Kohli, Amrita Shah, and moderator Dr Kaiwan Mehta discuss the intrinsic nature of society as a reflection of its temporal context at The Quotidian Realm.



## Environmental Justice

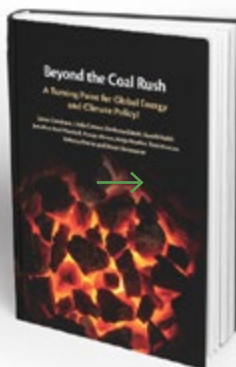
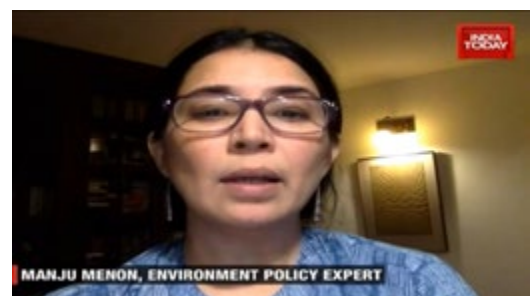
- Debayan Gupta, Sampada Nayak, Kush Tanvani and Vidya Viswanathan co-authored an exhaustive paper titled, *The Draft EIA Notification, 2020: Reduced Regulations and Increased Exemptions*, presenting a clause by clause comparison of the draft EIA Notification 2020 with the EIA Notification 2006 and the Zero Draft of 2019 respectively. Manju Menon and Kanchi Kohli participated in a discussion on *India Today* to discuss the issues with proposed draft EIA 2020 Notification. In an interview with *Hindustan Times*, they analysed what the draft Notification means for India's environment and the economy. They also wrote articles on the social impact of these regulatory changes in *The Times of India* and *The Wire*.
- The researchers of the environmental justice program, a collaborative community-based action research initiative, monitor, collect and present data on the experience of seeking remedies to environmental harms in rural areas. This data is used to understand the challenges faced by project affected communities and regulatory institutions in environmental governance. In 2020, researchers collected and presented information through various media articles and presentations.

- Viswanathan participated as a panelist and presented on *Remote Evidence Gathering Solutions in the Asia-Pacific Context* in the *Asia-Pacific Judicial Conference on Climate Change: Adjudication In The Time Of COVID-19*, organised by the Asian Development Bank, United Nations Environment Programme and Asian Judge Network on Environment.

## Research and Policy Engagements

- As part of a team of international scholars, Kanchi Kohli and Manju Menon co-authored a book, *Beyond the Coal Rush: A Turning Point for Global Energy and Climate Policy?*. Published by the Cambridge University Press, the book analyses how global climate discourses speak to national policy contexts in India, Germany and Australia.
- Menon and Kohli discussed the implications of the Uttarakhand flash floods in February 2021 in *Hindustan Times* and participated in a television discussion organised by Gaon Connection TV on the same.
- Menon participated in a panel discussion to initiate the second Government Law College National Moot Court Competition on wildlife protection. Kohli participated in the *HT Environment Conclave: Forest - wildlife and development*.

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Manju Menon and Kanchi Kohli participated in a discussion on *India Today* to discuss the issues with proposed draft EIA 2020 Notification.



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*Beyond the Coal Rush: A Turning Point for Global Energy and Climate Policy?* co-authored by Manju Menon, Kanchi Kohli and others.



↑ Anish Andheria (President, Wildlife Conservation Trust, Mumbai) and Kanchi Kohli discuss the path ahead for the Environment Industry in India at the *Hindustan Times Environment Conclave*.



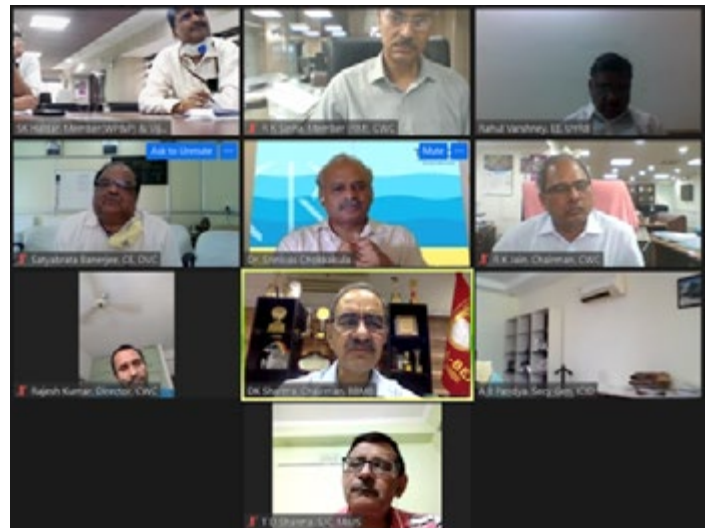
# National Water Policy and Transboundary River Water Governance

In line with the mandate of the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) Research Chair, the Transboundary Rivers, Ecologies, and Development Studies (TREADS) group at CPR embarked on a systematic study of India's track record of interstate river water cooperation and the experiences of interstate institutions in enabling cooperation.

- Srinivas Chokkakula contributed a chapter titled, *Whither India's federal governance for long-term water security?* with Prakriti Prajapati in the book, *Water Governance and Management in India, Volume 2*, edited by Girish Chadha and Ashwini B Pandya. The chapter finds that the federal water governance in India is weakly structured and poorly nurtured to pursue its national development and long-term sustainability goals. He authored an article titled, *Contours of Cooperation*, in a joint publication by CPR, the Central Water Commission (CWC), and the International Commission for Irrigation and Drainage (ICID). He also published articles on mainstream media platforms, including *The Hindu* and the *Indian Express*.
- Chokkakula has been invited to edit a book on *Water and Federalism* by the Hans Seidel Foundation and the Asian Confluence. This is under production and scheduled to be released soon. The book also carries chapters by him and Prajapati of the TREADS team.
- In collaboration with the CWC, the TREADS group updated the existing track record of interstate cooperation agreements, which have been converted into a digitally searchable database. This will be submitted to the CWC to review and finalise for publication. A synthesis of this database is also in its final stages and will be published eventually. This publication will be the first ever of its kind on India's track record of interstate river water cooperation.



↑ The Conflict and Cooperation Map of India highlights the disputes and agreements over India's twenty-five river basins.



↑ The TREADS team organised roundtable consultations with the existing eleven interstate river water coordination institutions in the country.

- The TREADS team developed a pilot knowledge portal on transboundary river sharing in South Asia. The pilot website ([treads.cprindia.org/homepage](https://treads.cprindia.org/homepage)) maps conflicts and cooperation over transboundary rivers within India. The goal is to develop it as a single-point reference on transboundary river water sharing and development to promote research and to shift the discourse to enabling cooperation as opposed to conflict resolution.
- A long-standing proposal to build on the interstate cooperation praxis to inform policy thinking received traction and materialised during the year. Under the *CPR-CWC Dialogue Forum*, in collaboration with ICID, the TREADS team organised roundtable consultations with the existing eleven interstate river water coordination institutions in the country. These consultations set the agenda for future work on the theme of *Roundtable of River Boards: Praxis Perspectives*. The interstate institutions have agreed to participate in several proposed future initiatives to study their everyday experiences towards useful knowledge products. A joint publication titled, *Contours of Cooperation*, has been produced, distilling the insights received from these interactions and articulating the future agenda for research and knowledge production activities.
- As part of systematic engagement with the track record of interstate river water cooperation, the TREADS team began a new initiative. This initiative aims to generate accessible narratives about how the interstate cooperation agreements materialised, simplifying complex technical issues and adding the layers of social and political narratives.

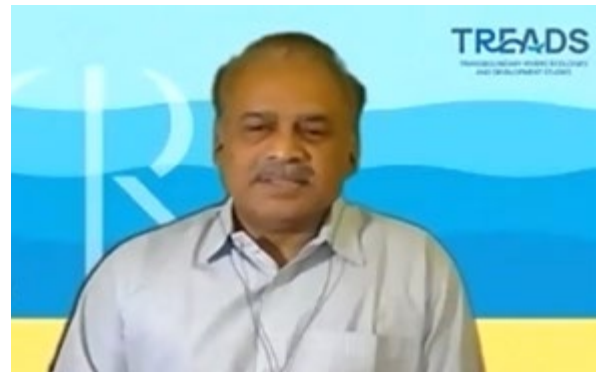
- The *CPR-CWC Dialogue Forum* continued to organise virtual *TREADTalks*. This year, the team deepened its engagement at the subnational level. Besides inviting talks from state-level practitioners, the team persuaded state governments to produce narratives about their own efforts of cooperation with neighbouring states. The governments of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Gujarat agreed to work with CPR on publications for this, as part of a series titled, *Do states conflict or cooperate?*
- Under the *Scale, Institutions and Networks* project, the TREADS team produced two draft research reports, *Institutional Models for Interstate Cooperation* and *Inside out: The Scularity of Transboundary Governance in South Asia*.

## Policy Engagements

- As a member, Srinivas Chokkakula actively contributed to the Drafting Committee for National Water Policy. The Committee submitted a draft of the policy in November 2020. Subsequently, he was invited to make an additional presentation to the MoJS based on an earlier note he submitted during the Committee's time.
- As the MoJS Research Chair, Chokkakula continues to engage closely with the MoJS and its ecosystem of institutions. He contributed to a series of initiatives under consideration by the MoJS and Government of India- notably, the Indo-Australian Centre for Excellence on Water Governance, a research program on dams and society interactions.

## Public Engagements

- Srinivas Chokkakula has been invited to be part of the Working Group on Water at the Shyam Prasad Mukerjee Research Foundation.
- Chokkakula spoke on the BBC World Service podcast about the tensions between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over water supply. He also participated in the *Fluid Mosaic: Various Shades of Interstate Water Conflicts in India* webinar hosted by the Observer Research Foundation in September 2020.
- Chokkakula presented a distinguished lecture on *Provision for Water in Union Budget of India 2021*, organised by Water Policy Center in Aurangabad. He also participated in *A Global Conclave on Water Management: The role of technology in uplifting Global Water Security*, supported by MoJS, Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India and organised by Water Digest.



↑ Srinivas Chokkakula presented a distinguished lecture on *Provision for Water in Union Budget of India 2021*, organised by Water Policy Center in Aurangabad.



## Right to Water

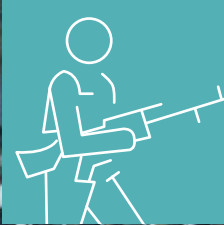
- Philippe Cullet was appointed Honorary Professor at the National Law University Odisha, Cuttack. He was invited to join as member of the Expert Committee of Human Right 2 Water (HR2W). He was also appointed as member of the Research and Advisory Committee of Symbiosis Law School, Hyderabad and as member of the Editorial Board of the *Christ University Law Journal*.
- Cullet was invited to speak in different academic settings, including to give a public lecture on *From Water Scarcity to Water as a Commons: Towards Realising the Right to Water and River Rights* at Symbiosis Law School Hyderabad and a public lecture on *Evolution of water law in India* at SAI University.
- Cullet authored the foreword in Chiradeep Basak's book, *In Pursuit of Climate Resilience*. He also served as resource person for the *Socio-legal Water and Sanitation Dialogue*, organised by the National Law School, Bangalore and the webinar on *Post-Pandemic Environmental Challenges*, organised by National Law University, Delhi.

Image Source: decanherald.com





Image Source: thewire.in



# International Relations and Security

CPR's experts analyse the past and present of India's role in the shifting global order through a range of disciplinary lenses.

From nuclear strategy and military history to trans-boundary water sharing and social narratives of India's borderlands, the Centre explores international relations from both traditional and alternative perspectives.



# India and the World

- CPR's scholars of international relations analysed geopolitical developments in leading media platforms including *Hindustan Times*, *ThePrint India*, *The Caravan*, *The Times of India*, *Scroll*, *Foreign Policy*, *Indian Express* and *Business Standard*. They commented on the India-China border standoff, the Myanmar coup, the COVID-19 pandemic, India-Pakistan ties and other issues.
- In an article titled, *Guns Fall Silent on the LoC*, published in *The India Forum*, Sushant Singh analysed the implications of the ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control between India and Pakistan. In another article titled, *Reading the Local Elections in Kashmir*, published on the same platform, he discussed the District Development Council (DDC) polls in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Sanjay Kathuria published an article titled, *India's North East Can Become the Connector*, in *Rising Asia Journal*. The article explored how India's North East region can fulfil the role of connector by accelerating the ongoing work on the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral corridor, as well as the Kaladan corridor (India-Myanmar) and negotiating the corresponding motor vehicles/transport agreements.
- Kathuria authored a chapter titled, *Benefits of Cooperating with Big Neighbors: The Case of Bangladesh and India*, in the book, *Trade and Regional Integration in South Asia*, edited by Selim Raihan and Prabir De as part of the South Asia Economic and Policy Studies book series. The chapter explored how bilateral cooperation between Bangladesh and India can be deepened.
- Gautam Mukhopadhaya authored a chapter titled, *Pakistan and the Afghan Peace Process*, in the Vivekananda International Foundation's flagship *Pakistan Insights, 2021* edited by Tilak Devasher. The chapter analysed Pakistan's role and motivation in peace efforts involving the Taliban post 2005 and particularly post the 2010 London Conference.
- Mukhopadhaya contributed substantively to a World Bank report on India-Myanmar trade and investment relations that may have been overtaken by recent political developments.
- Nimmi Kurian was invited to be the reviewer for the Fulbright-Nehru Doctoral, Post-Doctoral and Professional Excellence Fellowships from August to September 2020.
- Kurian was invited to be the external expert, vice chancellor's nominee for Senior Research Fellowship, University Grants Commission, Panjab University in October 2020.
- Kurian was chair and moderator of a webinar on *Collective Action: Reimagining the Public and the State*, organised by the Department of International Relations and Governance Studies, Shiv Nadar University in October 2020.
- Shyam Saran was a lead speaker at several national and international conferences, including those organised by the London School of Economics and Political Science, Chatham House, The New School, World Bank and more.
- Saran conducted a course on foreign policy at the Indian School of Business.
- Saran continued to serve as a Life Trustee at the India International Centre, an Advisor at the World Wildlife Fund (India) and a Member of the advisory council of the Confederation of Indian Industries. Additionally, he is also on the editorial advisory board of *Business Standard*.
- Saran also served on the board of the Welham's School in Dehradun and on the board of Sahapedia, a web based portal on India's cultural heritage.
- Kathuria was a speaker at the *TalentNomics India Conference on Leading with Grit and Grace*, in session on *Leading in Economic*

*Turmoil* in November 2020. He was also a panelist at the *Chao Track Policy Roundtable on Indo-Pak Trade Impasse and Implications for the Region*, organised by Council for Strategic and Defense Research in January 2021.

- Mukhopadhaya analysed the US-Taliban peace deal and the developments in Afghanistan through webinars and brainstorming sessions with the Vivekananda International Foundation, Indian Council of World Affairs, United Services Institute, the Center for Air Power Studies, the Aspen Institute, the Heart of Asia Society in Afghanistan, the Afghanistan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS), and the Hudson Institute, Washington, among other think tanks.
- Mukhopadhaya discussed Bangladesh, the North East of India and the Bay of Bengal in several webinars including those organised by the Calcutta University, the Centre of Bay of Bengal Studies in Dhaka, Asian Confluence in Shillong and the Observer Research Foundation in Kolkata amongst others. He also presented a talk at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Institute of Science, Bengaluru, on *The Indo-Pacific Amidst a Pandemic*.



## Understanding China

- Nimmi Kurian was a discussant for the *China India Scholar-Leaders Initiative* webinar on *Prosperity and Inequality in India and China* organised by the India China Institute, The New School, New York in March 2020.
- Kurian was a panelist on the international webinar on *The India-China Border: Past, Present, Future*, organised by the India China Institute, The New School, New York in September 2020.
- Kurian was a panelist at a webinar on *Water Sharing in the Himalayas: India-China Border Standoff and the Future of Transboundary Water Cooperation*, organised by the University of Toronto and the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy in November 2020.
- Kurian was invited to serve on the Fellowship Committee of the China Studies Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, Centre for China Studies, Ashoka University. She was also invited to serve on the External Advisory Board of the India China Institute, The New School.
- Shyam Saran served as a member of the Governing Board of the Institute of Chinese Studies, India's premier think tank for the study of China.
- Gautam Mukhopadhaya discussed India-China relations in the aftermath of the Ladakh crisis in a webinar organised by the Grandview Institute of China. He also spoke at the Institute of China Studies on issues related to Myanmar and China.



## South Asia

- Nimmi Kurian reviewed a book proposal in the *Routledge Asian Studies* series in March 2020. She also reviewed a manuscript for the international, peer-reviewed journal, *Asian Ethnicity* in May 2020.
- Kurian was consulted by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Geneva on a project titled, *Development, Environment and Peace Nexus: Peacemaking in Borderlands*, in September 2020.
- Sanjay Kathuria chaired two webinars as part of the *Rejuvenating South Asia* series on *Towards New Sources of Competitiveness* and *Bouncing Back Strong*, organised by Asian Confluence in October 2020.
- Kurian was invited as a panelist at a webinar on *Post-COVID South Asian Borders*, organised by the South Asian University, New Delhi in November 2020.
- Kurian presented a paper titled, *When Placemaking Meets Peacemaking: How Subnational Sovereigns are Remapping the South Asian Borderlands* at the international webinar on *Development, Environment and Peace Nexus: Peacemaking in the Borderlands*, organised by UNRISD, Cherwon, South Korea, in December 2020.
- Kurian was consulted by the National Security Council Secretariat, Government of India, on *Water Wars in South Asia* in December 2020.
- Shyam Saran served as a Member of the Advisory Council of the World Bank South Asia Champions' Group.
- Kathuria spoke at the Institute of South Asian Studies podcast, *South Asia Chat*, on trade prospects of South Asia.
- Kathuria delivered talks at the Centre for South Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, on *The Growing Promise of the India Bangladesh Relationship* and at the South Asia Economic Students Meet Network on *Contemporary Economic Issues in South Asia*.
- Gautam Mukhopadhyaya lectured at the Indian Foreign Service Training Institute on *North East, Act East, and India's relations with Myanmar and South East Asia*. He also lectured mid-level IAS officers on *Agriculture in the North East*.

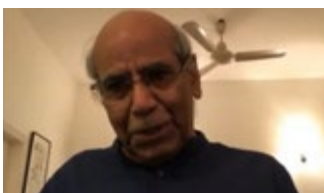
# Key Events

CPR scholars continued to analyse the geopolitical implications of critical developments in India and the world through timely discussions, lectures and workshops. Some of these include:

## Webinar on *India's economic engagement in Asia: how should it change after Ladakh?* | July 2020

This webinar assessed India's interests and options in regional economic engagement with other Asian powers in navigating a post-pandemic world.

**SPEAKERS:** Shyam Saran (Former Foreign Secretary & Senior Fellow, CPR); Dr C Raja Mohan (Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore); Mohan Kumar (Chairperson, Research and Information System for Developing Countries); Suman Bery (Former Director-General, National Council of Applied Economic Research) and moderated by Yamini Aiyar (President and Chief Executive, CPR).



## Panel discussion on *Topping the Glass Half Full: Opportunities for Regional Trade in South Asia* | August 2020

Centered around the book *A Glass Half Full: The Promise of Regional Trade in South Asia*, this event discussed various challenges to regional economic integration and lessons that can be learned from some success stories.

**SPEAKERS:** Sanjay Kathuria (Senior Visiting Fellow, CPR); Shyam Saran (Former Foreign Secretary & Senior Fellow, CPR); Nagesh Kumar (Director and Head, South and South-West Asia Office, UNESCAP); Selim Raihan (Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka) and moderated by Gautam Mukhopadhaya (Senior Visiting Fellow, CPR).

## Webinar on *Afghanistan at Crossroads: Inter-Afghan Peace Talks* | September 2020

This discussion focussed on the possible outcomes of the first ever peace talks since the beginning of the US-Afghanistan War nineteen years ago between the Afghan government and the Taliban as well as India's role in it.

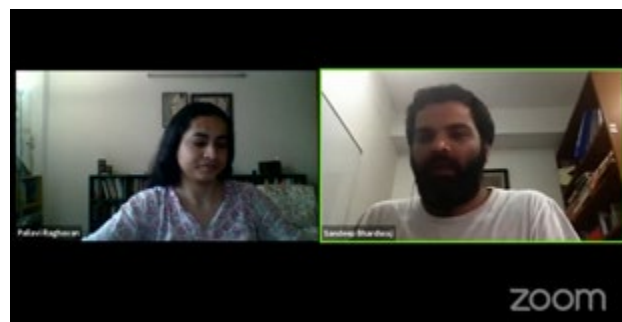
**SPEAKERS:** Mohammad Naim Tahir Qadiry (Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Afghanistan in New Delhi) in conversation with Gautam Mukhopadhyaya (Senior Visiting Fellow, CPR).



## Talk on *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India–Pakistan Relationship, 1947–1952* | October 2020

This talk discussed *Animosity at Bay* as it shows how amity and a spirit of cordiality governed relations between the states of India and Pakistan in the first five years after partition.

**SPEAKERS:** Pallavi Raghavan (Assistant Professor, Ashoka University), moderated by Sandeep Bhardwaj (Research Associate, CPR).



## Discussion on *How Will Indian Americans Vote? Results From the 2020 Indian American Attitudes Survey* | October 2020

This event, jointly organised by CPR and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP), shed light on the findings of the 2020 *Indian American Attitudes Survey* on the political attitudes and preferences of Indian Americans.

**SPEAKERS:** Sumitra Badrinathan (PhD Candidate in Political Science, University of Pennsylvania); Devesh Kapur (Director, Asia Programs & Starr Foundation Professor of South Asian Studies, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and Senior Visiting Fellow, CPR); Milan Vaishnav (Director and Senior Fellow, South Asia Program, CEIP) and moderated by Neelanjan Sircar (Assistant Professor, Ashoka University and Senior Visiting Fellow, CPR).



## Talk on *Japan after Abe: Will His Legacy Endure?* | October 2020

This talk aimed to reassess Shinzo Abe's legacy from the Indian perspective as well as asked what his departure means for regional geopolitics and India-Japan relations. The talk also examined what India can expect from the Suga administration going forward.

**SPEAKERS:** Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa (Former Indian Ambassador to Japan), moderated by Sandeep Bhardwaj (Research Associate, CPR).



## Conference on *Europe and India: Comparing Approaches to Global Economic Challenges* | December 2020

Hosted jointly by CPR and The Bruegel Institute, Brussels, this conference aimed to compare the approaches of Europe and India to some of the common challenges of the strategic environment, trade, climate change and digital transformation.

**SPEAKERS:** Gautam Mukhopadhyaya (Visiting Fellow, CPR); Alicia Garcia-Herrero (Senior Fellow, Bruegel); Ignacio Garcia-Bercero (Director, DG Trade, European Commission); Rajat Kathuria (Director and Chief Executive, ICRIER); Navroz Dubash (Professor, CPR); Simone Tagliapietra (Research Fellow, Bruegel); Georgios Petropoulos (Research Fellow, Bruegel); Ananth Padmanabhan (Visiting Fellow, CPR) and moderated by Shyam Saran (Former Foreign Secretary & Senior Fellow, CPR) and Andre Sapir (Senior Fellow, Bruegel).





# Law, Regulation, and the State

Image Source: unframe.com

CPR seeks to understand the deep drivers of India's democratic experience, engaging scholars and practitioners to explore fundamental questions about governance and social change.

The Centre's experts examine how laws, institutions, and the Constitution shape the lives of Indians, and what they mean for rights ranging from human and religious to intellectual property and land.





# Understanding Social Policy Implementation

In 2020, the Accountability Initiative (AI) focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on India's welfare architecture.

## Major Research Studies

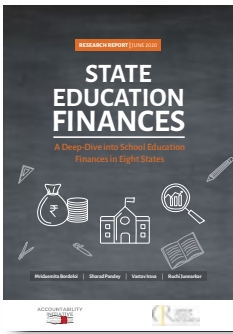
- To understand the impact of the pandemic on state finances, AI published a report titled, *Study of State Finances 2020-21*. The report delved into the revenue and expenditure performance of seventeen states prior to the pandemic and reflected on the potential consequences of the pandemic on state finances.
- The thirteenth volume of the flagship *Budget Briefs* series was released in the run up to the Union Budget. The briefs contained analyses of trends in allocations, expenditures and outcomes of ten major Centrally Sponsored Schemes, covering health and nutrition, education and rural development.
- A new report titled, *The State Education Finances: A Deep-Dive into School Education Finances in Eight States*, presented the trends in public expenditure on school education across eight Indian states from 2014-15 to 2017-18. Findings were shared with sector experts during a digital roundtable, under the larger conceptual umbrella of challenges of school education financing in the COVID-19 era.
- To better understand nutrition financial landscape for nutrition support, a paper entitled, *Public Finance Management (PFM) and Data Availability for Nutrition Financing in India*, was published in the *BMJ Global Health*. The paper, co-authored by

Avani Kapur and Ritwik Shukla, seeks to determine whether the current PFM system in India allows for capturing required nutrition data.

- Kapur also authored an analysis titled, *How to Design Nutrition Financing*, published in the *Seminar* magazine. The article explored ways in which the nutrition financing architecture can be made more decentralised, agile and equitable.

## Other Notable Publications

- A policy brief entitled, *Social Security for Informal Workers in India*, explored India's current labour market policies on the provisioning of social security to informal workers in the unorganised sector. The brief specifically focussed on the Code on Social Security, 2020.
- Avani Kapur co-authored a study titled, *Did India's Ecological Fiscal Transfers Incentivize State Governments to Increase their Forestry Budgets?*, published in the *Journal of Environmental Research Communications*. The study gathered state-by-state data on forestry budgets to assess whether India's ecological fiscal transfers incentivised states to protect and restore forests as evidenced by increases to their forestry budgets.



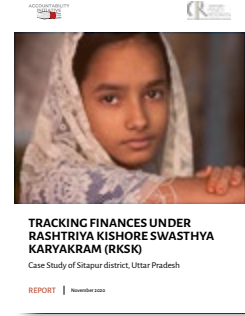
↑ *State Education Finances: A Deep-Dive into School Education Finances in Eight States* by Mridusmita Bordoloi, Sharad Pandey, Vastav Irava, and Ruchi Junnarkar.



↑ *Public Finance Management (PFM) and Data Availability for Nutrition Financing in India* by Avani Kapur and Ritwik Shukla.



↑ *Social Security for Informal Workers in India* by Mridusmita Bordoloi, Mohammad Hamza Farooqui, and Sharad Pandey.



↑ *Tracking Finances under Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK)* by Accountability Initiative.

- Using AI's flagship methodology - Planning, Allocations and Expenditures, Institutions Studies in Accountability (PAISA) - for tracking urban local body finances, a report titled, *PAISA for Municipalities: A Study of Fund Flows and Public Expenditure in the Geographic Jurisdiction of Tumakuru City Municipal Corporation, Tumakuru District, Karnataka*, was published in early 2021. The study aimed to understand the nature and size of urban local bodies in the Smart City of Tumakuru, Karnataka.
- A report titled, *Mapping State Interventions Towards Women and Child Protection in Maharashtra*, was published by AI. The report examined interventions on violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC) in the state. The study was commissioned by UNICEF Maharashtra as part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNICEF, UN Women and the Government of Maharashtra for tracking outlays to outcomes for women and children.

## Outreach

- The *Future of Governance* forum event was held from 7th-8th October 2020. The forum was an attempt to spark dialogue on the challenges and prospects of civil society-government collaboration in India. It featured over 27 speakers, many of whom are leaders in public policy, non-profit, philanthropy and politics. Co-hosted with Arthan, the forum saw more than 1,000 attendees.
- AI deepened collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) project titled, *Partnerships and Opportunities to Strengthen and Harmonize Actions for Nutrition in India (POSHAN)*. A co-published policy note titled, *Financing Nutrition in India: Considering the Cost Implications*, delved into the cost implications of the nutrition policy landscape in 2019-20. Findings were shared with the government, sector experts and scholars on multiple occasions. Additionally, AI co-hosted the third implementation research conference, *Delivering for Nutrition in*

*India: Insights from Implementation Research*, with them. A special panel was curated by AI on systems strengthening of human resources, infrastructure and financing for the occasion.

- A knowledge resource called *Ideation* was launched to offer leaders and policy shapers in the development space distilled insights from AI's work. In addition, commentary was published in several mainstream international, national and sub-national media throughout the year.

## Learning and Development

- AI's learning programs have gone virtual to suit the changed situation. The year saw the launch of two online courses. First, the *Understanding State Capabilities* course, which was previously offered offline, has been adapted to online learning needs. In this course, participants are equipped to understand the root causes of administrative failure on the ground. The course also takes participants on a journey through India's complex government system from the lens of decentralisation. In addition, an online version of the *Hum Aur Humaari Sarkaar* course was launched at the *Badhte Kadam* forum organised by AI in December 2020. The course aims to empower grassroots leaders to undertake critical analysis of how the government functions and delivers key public services.
- Launched as a knowledge resource in 2019, the [Humaarisarkaar.in](https://www.humaarisarkaar.in) website has grown. A special feature called *Humse Sawaal Puchho* was introduced in 2020, which invites questions from readers on government functioning. Responses to queries from Bihar and Rajasthan have led to on-ground impact.
- An online session on *Understanding Public Policy Design and Evaluation* was conducted with probationers at the National Academy of Audits and Accounts, Shimla. Through different activities during the sessions, the training pushed participants to undertake a critical analysis of policy design and evaluation in India.

- AI conducted sessions on the *Modalities of Government Finance and Budgeting in the Social Sector* at the Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates (CMCGA) induction program as well as the District Development Fellowship (DDF) induction program. Both fellowships are run by the Ashoka University in collaboration with the Haryana and Punjab governments respectively.
- The AI team trained students of the Indian School of Development Management for the fourth consecutive year, this time, virtually. A similar session was also held with LAMP Fellows. About 100 young people were trained on: basics of finance and budget in governance; analysis of fiscal systems within the government machinery; and gaps in implementation.



## Education

- Kiran Bhatta began work on a study of education and citizenship at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris. This involves a study of school education as part of the project of citizenship and its intersection with private provisioning.
- CPR also began work on the 2021 *Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report*, focused on non-state actors in education with a focus on regulation and financial accountability. The work is a partnership between Bhatta and the Accountability Initiative.
- Bhatta joined a three-year study being conducted with Columbia University, Princeton University, Sciences Po and other experts, on the status of Muslims in India. She will be working on the section on education of Muslims in the country.
- Bhatta was appointed as a member of a T20 Task Force that is preparing a policy brief on education and inclusion for the T20 Summit to be held in Milan in September–October 2021. India will be the chair of T20 in 2022.
- Bhatta is part of a group that is preparing the modalities for conducting social audits in education, for the Ministry of Education (MoE), as part of the program on implementation for the new National Education Policy. Guidelines prepared by her formed the basis for draft guidelines and were used by the MoE for the purpose.
- Bhatta was also invited to give inputs to the Rajasthan Chief Minister's Advisory Council on transforming education in the state. She continues her engagement with the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) as a member of the advisory committee to formulate research policy strategy for NIEPA.
- Jishnu Das co-authored a paper titled, *Upping the Ante: The Equilibrium Impact of Unconditional Grants to Private Schools* published in the *American Economic Review*. The paper tests for financial constraints as a market failure in education in a low-income country. He also co-authored a working paper titled, *Test Scores and Educational Opportunities: Panel Evidence from Five Developing Countries*, as part of the RISE program. The paper finds that an exclusive focus on test score improvements in primary schools or earlier will not equalise access to post-secondary education for the poor in the five countries studied.
- Yamini Aiyar participated in a global conference organised by the Delhi Government on education, presenting findings from a three year study on school reforms in the state at the concluding session.



Image source: constitutionality.org

# Land Rights in India

This year, CPR's Land Rights Initiative (LRI) worked on important research outputs and focused on extensive policy engagements, stakeholder consultations, and the development of national and international research collaborations.

## Constitutional Right to Property

- Namita Wahi published a working paper on *Property and Sovereignty: Creating, Destroying and Resurrecting Property Rights in British India (1600-1800)*. This paper constitutes the first systematic legal attempt since the late nineteenth century to describe the changing configuration of property rights of *zamindars* (landlords) and *ryots* (peasants) relative to the English East India Company over a period of two hundred years from 1600 to 1800.
- Wahi lectured on *The History of Right to Property in Independent India* at a webinar organised by the Department of Political Science, Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi.

has developed an algorithm to capture data created by LRI researchers for LRI's report on land acquisition with a view to accurately replicate all or part of the work.

- **Conflict and Contestation in Plural Land Regimes:** LRI launched a new research project in collaboration with the Centre on Law and Social Transformation (LawTransform), University of Bergen, along with researchers from six countries - South Africa, Ethiopia, India, Brazil, Guatemala and Colombia, at the *Bergen Exchanges*, 2020. The project aims to develop a theory of land rights claiming in plural legal regimes through a cross-regional investigation of conflicts over land affecting the land rights of vulnerable communities. Wahi spoke about plans for the Indian case study of the project at a webinar of the same name organised by LawTransform.

## New Areas of Research

- **Deciphering Decisions through Data Analytics (DALTON):** Kaustav DeBiswas and Namita Wahi presented preliminary findings from their pilot project on using machine learning to analyse legal texts in order to speed up legal analysis and to enable comprehensive, cross cutting studies on legal databases, at a Property Rights Research Consortium (PRRC) webinar. Given the vast volume of unperused judicial data, in a hitherto unprecedented effort, this pilot project

## Land Rights of Scheduled Tribes in Scheduled Areas of India

- Recommendations from LRI's report on *The Legal Regime and Political Economy of Land Rights of Scheduled Tribes in Scheduled Areas of India*, the National Seminar on *Understanding Landlessness and Displacement of, and Atrocities against Scheduled Tribes* co-organised by LRI and the National Commission for

Scheduled Tribes (NCST) in 2018, and the 2020 NCST report on *Tribal Land Alienation in India*, for which Namita WahI served as an expert advisor, were incorporated as part of NCST's annual report, 2019-2020 under Article 338A (5) (e) of the Constitution. NCST's annual report was sent to the President of India in early 2021. Once approved by the President, the report will be tabled in Parliament after an action taken report is compiled by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

- WahI participated in a consultative workshop on the *Draft Tribal Human Development Report* prepared by the Institute of Human Development. She also spoke about research on Adivasi land rights at the *Samvaad Tribal Conclave* organised by Tata Steel for the third year in a row.
- Aakansha Jain spoke at a webinar on *The Role of Adivasis in Environmental Regulation: Experiences from the field at Cockatoo: Green Chats* organised by Shaheed Bhagat Singh College, University of Delhi.

## Mapping Indian Land Laws

- The LRI team led by Namita WahI and composed of research associates Aakansha Jain, Sanjana Sethi, Vrinda Bhardwaj and Kriti Sharma, presented a detailed analysis of over a thousand land laws for a geographically representative sample of eight states, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Punjab and Telangana, and all central laws at a Property Rights Research Consortium a PRRC webinar. Ramesh Sharma (National Coordinator, Ekta Parishad) and Pranab Choudhury (Coordinator and Founder, NRMCC Centre for Land Governance) commented on the research findings. WahI also lectured on the research findings at the Trivedi Centre for Political Data, Ashoka University.
- WahI and Kaustuv DeBiswas presented a first look at the *Mapping Indian Land Laws* website, which is a unique and interactive web portal housing the most comprehensive repository of land laws in India, to the NITI Aayog.

## Land Acquisition

- Namita WahI spoke at a seminar on *Land Acquisition: A Critical Analysis* organised by the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana, highlighting research from the LRI report on *Land Acquisition in India: A Review of Supreme Court cases from 1950 to 2016*, for which she was the lead author.

## Policy Engagements

- Namita WahI advised the NCST on various issues pertaining to human rights of Scheduled Tribes (ST), namely, land

rights and protection against displacement, prevention of atrocities including sexual trafficking of minor ST girls and disproportionate numbers of ST convicts and undertrials relative to their percentage in the population.

- WahI advised the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on the *Svavitva* scheme that seeks to provide property records in rural areas for *abadi* land to enable landowners to use their land as a financial asset.
- WahI advised the Ministry of Rural Development and the NITI Aayog on potential land reforms.
- WahI worked as an expert advisor to the Online (Alternative) Dispute Resolution Committee at the NITI Aayog.
- WahI engaged extensively with the World Bank office in New Delhi on the impact of modernisation of land records on vulnerable communities in the state of Kerala. She also participated in a meeting with the World Bank Washington DC office on researching land legislation and its links to affordable housing in India.

## National Research Collaborations

- **Property Rights Research Consortium (PRRC):** LRI is part of a four institution research consortium supported by the Omidyar Network, which also includes the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), the National Institute for Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) and the National Council for Applied Economic Research's (NCAER) Land Policy Initiative.
  - o WahI has served on the Advisory Committee of NCAER's Land Policy Initiative since 2018. She advised the NCAER research team on the second phase of the *National Land Records and Services Index, 2020*. WahI also participated as a discussant for a session on *Land as Collateral for Access to Credit in India* at NCAER's India Land Forum 2020.
  - o WahI was discussant for a PRRC webinar featuring an NIPFP paper by Leah Verghese on *Land Acquisition Litigation in the Subordinate Judiciary*. She was also a panelist for PRRC's webinar featuring a discussion of CSEP's paper on *When land comes in the way: India's connectivity infrastructure in Nepal* authored by Constantino Xavier and Riya Sinha. She served as a peer reviewer for this paper.
  - o WahI participated in a consultation on the Forest Rights Act, organised by Omidyar Network, along with other organisations and researchers, including FES, PRADAN, and Waatavaran.

- **Ashoka University:** WahI is a member of the Institutional Review Board of Ashoka University.



←  
The LRI team at CPR



↑ Namita Wahi spoke at an international webinar on academic freedom featuring academics from Brazil, Hungary, Turkey and the US.

## International Research Collaborations

- **International Partnerships for Excellence in Research and Education (INTPART):** INTPART is a multi-country collaboration to facilitate scholarly exchange between the University of Bergen and institutions in India, Africa, North and South America. LRI is one of two collaborating institutions in India. As part of LRI's INTPART collaboration with LawTransform, Chr. Michelsen Institute and the University of Bergen, the following activities were undertaken:

- o Namita Wahi taught in the online PhD course on *Effects of Lawfare: Courts and Law as Battlegrounds for Social Change*. Vrinda Bhardwaj, current, and Shubham Jain and Jonathan Coutinho, former LRI researchers, attended the PhD course. They also participated in the *Bergen Exchanges*, a week-long scholarly exchange organised by Professors Siri Gloppen and Malcolm Langford, Co-Directors of LawTransform. Bhardwaj and Jain respectively wrote research papers titled, *Epistolary Jurisdiction: Justice from behind bars of prisons and shelter homes*, and *Conceptualising Meritocratic Discrimination in Sports: On the Myth of Meritocracy and the Gentleman's Game*, in fulfilment of course requirements.

- o Aakansha Jain attended the online PhD course on *Global Climate Governance Regime* as part of the Bergen Summer Research School organised by the University of Bergen. She wrote a paper on *Exploring the intersection of land litigation and climate litigation in India* in fulfilment of course requirements.

- o Wahi spoke at an international webinar on *Academic Freedom and Democratic Backsliding in Comparative Perspective*, organised by LawTransform, University of Bergen, also featuring academics from Brazil, Hungary, Turkey and the US.

- **Stanford University:** Wahi developed a research collaboration with the Rule of Law program at Stanford Law School led by Professor Erik Jensen, pursuant to which she and Dinsha Mistree, Research Fellow and Lecturer in the program, will write collaborative research papers.

- **Uppsala University:** Wahi lectured on *International Law in the Context of India* at Uppsala University, Sweden.

## Honours and Recognition

- LRI was one of the fifteen organisations shortlisted for the inaugural Shamnad Basheer Citizenship Prize, out of two hundred and fifty organisations, as part of the second edition of the Agami Prize that seeks to celebrate ideas transforming the fields of law and justice.
- Several research outputs by LRI including Namita Wahi's article titled, *Human Rights Accountability of the IMF and the World Bank: A Critique of Existing Mechanisms and a Theory of Horizontal Accountability*; working paper titled, *Property and Sovereignty: Creating, Destroying and Resurrecting Property Rights in British India (1600-1800)*; and report titled, *The Legal Regime and Political Economy of Land Rights of Scheduled Tribes in Scheduled Areas of India*; were recognised by the *Social Science Research Network* in several categories.



Image Source: india.times.com

# Realising the Human Right to Water

- Namita WahI spoke about her research on *Judicial Enforcement of the Right to Water in India* at a webinar on *Elevating water rights to human rights* organised by LawTransform, University of Bergen. Arkaja Singh moderated the webinar.
- WahI and Singh participated in a book workshop as part of this project, where Singh presented her paper on *The Right to Water in Indian Cities: Negotiation, Tactics and Law*, and WahI presented her paper on *Development, Dignity, and the Right to Water in India*. Vrinda Bhardwaj, Aakansha Jain and Raghunandan Sriram assisted with research for this project.
- WahI is the Institution Development Specialist for Quality Council of India, which is undertaking six rounds of verification of performance of the *Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal Jal)* by the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, MoJS and the World Bank. The goal is to support the MoJS in encouraging sustainable groundwater management in the states of Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, that account for thirty seven percent of water stressed (over exploited, critical and semi critical blocks) in India.



Namita WahI spoke about her research at the *Elevating Water Rights to Human Rights* webinar, organised by LawTransform and moderated by Arkaja Singh.



Image Source: medium.com

# State Capacity

In 2020, the State Capacity Initiative at CPR initiated new research, deepened the public dialogue, built diverse partnerships and engaged in design support on some of the most important aspects of strengthening state capacity in India. The initiative is engaged in long-term, comparative and interdisciplinary research on India's frontline functionaries and their lived realities as public workers across states and sectors.

- The initiative launched a major program of work on *Regulatory Design and Capacity*. Part of a partnership with Milan Vaishnav at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), this program focuses on building state capacity for the Indian economy and especially on making markets work for the poor. The joint program of work also focuses critical attention on the institutional arrangements that enable and support co-operative federalism in India. A workshop with leading academics, policymakers and public administrators was held to develop a new policy research agenda on this critical theme.
- This year, the initiative also deepened and extended its engagement with the Government of Meghalaya and in particular its State Capability Enhancement Project (SCEP) and the Meghalaya Administrative Training Institute (MATI). In March 2021, it collaborated on holding a workshop on state capability in Meghalaya with SCEP and MATI, focused on adaptive leadership and approaches and problem-solving capabilities at all levels of government.
- economy and rural safety nets including the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- Yamini Aiyar and Mekhala Krishnamurthy were panelists at a session at *India Global Week* in July 2020 on *State Capacity and the Indian Economy: The Way Forward*. They shed light on how the Indian state can rebuild its capacities, to negotiate the new challenges the economy will confront.
- In July 2020, the initiative hosted a closed-door workshop with experts to discuss a new working paper by Shoumitro Chatterjee and Arvind Subramanian, *From Torrid to Tepid: India's Exports in the 21st Century*. The paper presents a series of facts about India's export performance in this century.
- In September 2020, the initiative hosted a webinar titled, *A New Economic Imagination?* featuring Ashok Kotwal, Bharat Ramaswami and Maitreesh Ghatak. The webinar shed light on what it will take to place India back on a sustainable, long term growth pathway.

## Economy and State Capacity

- In May 2020, the State Capacity Initiative hosted a webinar on *Rebuilding the Rural Economy* to discuss the implications of COVID-19 and the nationwide lockdown on the rural economy. The webinar examined the impact of large-scale reverse migration on the labour market, the role of the agriculture

## Education, Health and State Capacity

- The Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) program is undertaking a study on the political economy of elementary education reform across seven low-income countries (Nigeria, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Tanzania). Priyadarshini Singh is leading the India component of the study which will trace the evolution of





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↑ The State Capacity Initiative hosted a webinar to discuss how India can build a new economic imagination.



↑ Mekhala Krishnamurthy at the DVARA-India Spend webinar.

key ideas and strategies for reforming elementary education from the 1990s to 2020. Tracing the path back to the years after the National Policy on Education, 1986, the project will focus on how learning achievements and outcomes were conceptualised and prioritised by reform leaders.

- Mekhala Krishnamurthy was an invited panelist on a DVARA-India Spend webinar on *PMJAY: Getting it to punch above its (fiscal) weight* in February 2021. She shed light on the capacity of the Indian state to deliver on PMJAY's promises and potential pathways for reform.



## Sensitising Policymakers

- The Governance and Public Policy Initiative (GPPI) focussed on activities in alignment with post-COVID-19 governance and health policy issues. As part of this, Ramesh Chandran, Director of the initiative, has been engaging constituency-wise with Indian parliamentarians.
- GPPI has been in touch with several national and international level organisations and foundations including the TATA Trusts, Piramal Foundation, ITC Limited to work on areas of mutual interest.
- GPPI also organised several roundtable discussions on healthcare for parliamentarians in partnership with international organisations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Global Health Strategies and the UNICEF India Parliamentarians' Group for Children.



Image Source: financialexpress.com



Image Source: financialexpress.com

# India's Political Economy

This year, the Politics Team at CPR engaged with current political developments in the country through high-quality research and academic events which involved participatory discussions.

- The team is working on four major research projects:
  - o *Muslim Representation at the Grassroots* produces rich data-backed research on the question of Muslim representation at the local level.
  - o *The India Manifestos Project* is an ambitious research project which seeks to analyse the electoral manifestos of major political parties of India since independence.
  - o *Student Politics in India* aims to undertake a comprehensive study of student union elections across major Indian universities.
  - o *Decline of the Congress* aims to understand the reasons for the downfall of India's biggest political party in a comprehensive manner.
- Rohit Chandra and Rahul Verma co-edited the October 2020 issue of *Seminar* Magazine on the theme, *A Delicate Balance: Untangling Business-State Relations in India*. The issue gathered a range of experts from business, journalism, policy research and academia to diagnose discrete problems of the business-state relationship, establish the background for why things have deteriorated, and suggest some possible directions to repair this fraying trust.
- CPR and the Policy Research and Management Network (PRAMAN) organised a three-day workshop from December 9-12, 2020 on the theme of *Dalits in the New Millennium*. 25 leading academics presented their research on various aspects of Dalit politics, which have been compiled into a manuscript. This edited volume has been sent to the publisher for review and will come out by the end of the year.
- Two closed-door roundtable discussions were organised on emerging political themes of concern such as the farmers protests, the Citizenship Amendment Act, the Ayodhya temple issue. Attended by reputed scholars, activists and journalists, these discussions allowed experts to come together in a space where ideas and thoughts can flow openly and lead to better discourse.
- CPR and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace organised a discussion on the theme, *How Will Indian Americans Vote?* with respect to the 2020 US Presidential Elections. Milan Vaishnav, Devesh Kapur and Sumitra Badrinathan participated as panelists.





25 leading academics presented their research on various aspects of Dalit politics at the CPR-PRAMAN workshop on the theme of Dalits in the New Millennium.



Sumitra Badrinathan (PhD Candidate in Political Science, University of Pennsylvania), Devesh Kapur (Director, Asia Programs & Starr Foundation Professor of South Asian Studies, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and Senior Visiting Fellow, CPR), and Milan Vaishnav (Director and Senior Fellow, South Asia Program, CEIP) discuss results from the 2020 Indian American Attitudes Survey; moderated by Neelanjan Sircar (Assistant Professor, Ashoka University and Senior Visiting Fellow, CPR)

# Key Events

The CPR-Trivedi Centre for Political Data (TCPD), Ashoka University *Dialogues on Indian Politics* series continued this year, bringing analysis of elections and book discussions.



2021 assembly elections of Assam, Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu were actively discussed with pre-poll, mid-poll and post-election analyses in the **CPR Election Adda series**.



CPR and Lokniti-CSDS co-organised a series called **Conversations on Indian Democracy**, which aims to make academic research more accessible. Under this series, discussions were organised on Abhay Dubey's book, *Hindu Ekta Banaam Gyan ki Rajniti* and Yogendra Yadav's book, *Making Sense of Indian Democracy*.

The team organised several book discussions in the year in which notable academics, journalists and commentators participated. These included *India Tomorrow: Conversations with the Next Generation of Political Leaders* by Pradeep Chhibber and Harsh J Shah; *Jugalbandi: The BJP Before Modi* by Vinay Sitapati; and *By Many a Happy Accident* by Hamid Ansari.





Image Source: bbc.com

# India's Democracy and Political Legacy

- Rajshree Chandra signed a book contract with Penguin Random House, India, for her manuscript titled, *Competing Nationalisms: Jagat Narain Lal and the Quest for an Indian Nation*. The book, a political biography of Sri Jagat Narain Lal—one of India's founding fathers, is due for publication later in 2021.
- Chandra wrote a research article titled, *The Moral Economy of the Cosmopolitan Commons* for *TWAIL Review*. The article explores how the discourses of innovationism and environmentalism reconstitute the idea of what is good for societies globally, toppling the idea that conventionally formed the global ethic for a moral economy. She also reviewed *The Deoliwallahs* by Dilip D' Souza and Joy Ma for *Open, the Magazine*.
- Shylashri Shankar wrote a chapter entitled, *Claiming Agency by Telling A Counter-Story in Court Adivasis v. 'Encounter' Killings in India* in the book, *Political Values and Narratives of Resistance: Social Justice and the Fractured Promises of Post-colonial States*, edited by Fiona Anciano and Joanna Wheeler and published by Routledge. The chapter analyses the counter-story told by two Adivasi women in court.
- Shankar wrote a book chapter entitled, *Bring Back the Curbs on Political Incorrectness* for an edited volume by Stephen Hartman, engaging with the essays of psychologist, Muriel Dimen.



Image Source: freepik.com

# Identity and Cuisine

- Shylashri Shankar's book, *Turmeric Nation: A Passage Through India's Tastes*, was published by Speaking Tiger. The book examines questions such as – how do we talk about 'Indian' identity in connection with food? Do we, Indians, have a sense of collective self when it comes to cuisine? Or did the hierarchy of the caste structure and the social control exercised by the higher castes create barriers to culinary exchanges? It explores the annals of history, archaeology, anthropology, science and literature to discover how and why what we eat influences and shapes who we are. Shankar received the AutHer Award for best author in the non-fiction category in March 2021 for the book.
- Shankar wrote a chapter on *Hinduism and Covenantal Pluralism* for a book edited by Chris Seiple and Denis Hoover entitled, *The Routledge Handbook of Religious Literacy, Pluralism, and Engagement*. The volume will be published by Routledge in December 2021.
- Leipzig University Fellows at the Kolleg-Forschungsgruppe *Multiple Secularities - Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities* research unit discussed the book, *A Secular Age Beyond the West: Religion, Law and the State in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa*, co-edited by Shankar.

## Reviews of Turmeric Nation

'Shylashri Shankar's *Turmeric Nation* brings flavours of a nation, and its politics of nationalism.'  
-The Tribune

'Filled with a lot of facts and some personal anecdotes, the book is a fascinating look at the significance of food.'  
-Times of India

'A book of this intellectual breadth & inter-disciplinary depth could've come only from an inveterate scholar such as Shylashri Shankar. She has created a new genre of food writing in India.'  
-The Daily Guardian

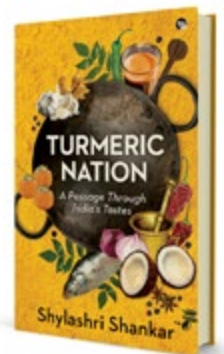




Image Source: thewire.in



# Urbanisation

Rapid urbanisation presents new and substantial challenges, ranging from governance and citizenship to infrastructure, housing, and the environment.

CPR engages with the process of urban transition in India from many perspectives, working to understand how urbanisation is evolving, how it is managed, and how it affects people's engagement with the state.



# Urban Governance

CPR works on governance issues at various scales, viz. metropolitan, small towns and urban neighbourhoods.

- This year, the work on subaltern urbanisation was substantively advanced by the publication of a theoretical paper titled, *Subaltern Urbanisation: Indian Insights for Urban Theory* by Partha Mukhopadhyay, Marie-Hélène Zérah and Eric Denis in the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. The paper proposes a theoretical framework which draws on an empirical research collective using both large statistical and land-use data sets and detailed case studies in non-metropolitan Indian geographies.
- A project on *Boundary Spanning and Intermediation for Urban Regeneration*, in collaboration with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai and the Madras Institute of Development Studies, culminated this year. Mukta Naik co-edited a special issue in the *Urbanisation* journal, which examined state-society relations in urban regeneration processes, from the theoretical viewpoints of boundaries and assemblages.
- Zérah authored a chapter titled, *The incomplete and paradoxical 'neoliberal' turn in Mumbai*, in *Handbook of Megacities and Megacity-Regions*, edited by Danielle Labbé and André Sorensen. The chapter focuses on the translation of international models with regard to urban services and real estate in Mumbai.
- Researchers of CPR's Scaling City Institutions for India (SCI-FI) initiative undertook a study titled, *Urban Distress: an emerging framework for understanding urban vulnerabilities in India*. Forthcoming in November 2021, the study analyses the pattern of India's economic transformation and urbanisation to formulate a framework for state and city-level governments to measure urban distress in their jurisdictions and identify specific areas of policy interventions.
- As part of its close engagement with the *Main Bhi Dilli* campaign, a civil society initiative to increase public participation in the process of preparing the Master Plan for Delhi 2041, CPR researchers continued to help prepare technical reports that were submitted to the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) as contributions to the plan. They also attended online consultations organised by the NIUA.





Image Source: Scaling City Institutions for India (SCI-FI)

# Land Planning and Housing

- Under the Land, Housing, and Planning (LHP) vertical of the SCI-FI initiative, a stakeholder engagement plan was prepared in May 2020 for the proposed Tamil Nadu Housing and Habitat Development Project. The plan supports implementing entities to identify key stakeholders and delve deeper into issues of affordability, community engagement, feedback mechanism and grievance management.
- The SCI-FI initiative provided inputs to the Poverty and Social Impact Assessment for the proposed Tamil Nadu Housing Sector Strengthening Project in May 2020. Researchers shed light on ways to make improvements in tenurial status, create disaster-resilient housing stock and promote new livelihood opportunities in the construction sector.
- In June 2020, CPR launched the *India Housing Report* (<https://indiahousingreport.in/>), an online archive and periodic report that brings together the rich but disparate analytical work on housing in India. The website weaves together key debates on housing affordability, adequacy, technology, finance and tenure with ongoing urban transformations in India that impact livelihood, infrastructure, services, liveability and governance. This year, the website published several opinion pieces and data-driven blogs on a range of issues including rental discrimination, housing policy, homelessness, services and real estate.
- In continuation of previous work on Delhi's informal settlements, Mukta Naik and Eesha Kunduri published an article titled, *The Role of Housing Finance Actors in Regenerating Delhi's Unauthorised Colonies: An Examination of State–Citizen–Market Boundaries* in the *Urbanisation* journal. The article investigates the role of finance and networks of credit in auto-construction, with a focus on the work of market actors in navigating market–citizen and market–state boundaries.
- Shubhagato Dasgupta, Aparna Das, Anindita Mukherjee and Baisakhi Sarkar Dhar authored a synthesis report titled, *Homes - Beneficiary-Led Individual House Construction- An Analysis from Odisha, Kerala, And Tamil Nadu*, in November 2020. The report shed light on the current state of beneficiary-led individual house construction in the three states and proposes recommendations to streamline the process.
- To inform policy interventions for housing for nearly 200 million migrant workers, SCI-FI researchers undertook a study titled, *Addressing residential vulnerabilities of poor migrant workers in India through enabling rental housing*. The study highlights the importance and the estimated requirement of rental housing for migrant workers.
- The SCI-FI initiative launched a project to further debates related to land planning and housing. This project includes a) development of a course module on *Understanding Economic Growth for Urban Planning*; b) a study on understanding the rental housing condition of the urban poor in Bhubaneswar, Kochi and Coimbatore; c) a study to develop a strategy for public private partnership for affordable housing in Bhubaneswar; and d) using product diversification to redress residential vulnerabilities.
- CPR continued to work on issues of homelessness, housing rights and informal settlements. Ashwin Parulkar wrote and spoke about his work on homelessness in Delhi at various forums. Asaf Ali Lone's writing drew attention to the issue of religion-based discrimination in rental housing markets.
- Parulkar, Manish and Naik wrote about legal and policy issues surrounding forced evictions and housing rehabilitation and resettlement in the wake of a September 2020 Supreme Court order to demolish a large number of houses along railway land in Delhi.



Image Source: Scaling City Institutions for India (Sci-Fi)

# Water and Sanitation

- Tripti Singh and Anju Dwivedi co-authored a report titled, *Unlocking Barriers to Inclusive WASH: Learnings from Slums in Bhubaneswar*. The report sheds light on how inequalities in accessing water and sanitation impact marginalised groups – women, adolescent girls, transgender persons and persons with disabilities, and how these can be addressed.
- In a paper titled, *Moving up the On-Site Sanitation ladder in urban India through better systems and standards*, published in the *Journal of Environmental Management*, Shubhagato Dasgupta, Neha Agarwal and Anindita Mukherjee explored how urban India can move up the On-Site Sanitation (OSS) ladder through better systems and standards. The paper is based on SCI-Fi's report, *Unearthed-Facts of On-Site Sanitation in India*, a novel attempt to systematically study OSS in urban India.
- Agarwal, Ambarish Karunanithi, and Dwivedi prepared a guidance note on *Reuse and Recycling of Faecal Sludge-derived Biosolids in Agriculture* in May 2020. The note reviews international biosolids regulations to enable the development of a standard for biosolids utilization in agriculture.
- An analysis of non-sewered sanitation in Odisha, based on the experiences of four cities (Bhubaneswar, Sambalpur, Berhampur and Dhenkanal) was concluded and was presented to the Principal Secretary, Government of Odisha; the Odisha Water Supply and Sewerage Board (OWSSB); and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). This study is a comparative analysis of the cities that have adopted Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) by constructing faecal sludge treatment plants.
- SCI-Fi researchers undertook a study titled, *At the Margin*, based on National Sample Survey data analysis to explore vul-



nerabilities with respect to water, sanitation and hygiene services and housing in informal urban settlements. The report compares slum settlements in million-plus cities with those located in non-million plus ones.

- Researchers of the SCI-Fi initiative published a series of learning notes on different aspects of FSM. *India Water Portal* disseminated these notes through a series of articles demonstrating learnings and outcomes of *Project Nirmal*.
- Marie-Hélène Zerach authored a paper titled, *The Street-Level Bureaucracy at the Intersection of Formal and Informal Water Provision*, published in the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Environmental Science*. The paper analyses the role of street-level bureaucrats in providing services to users.
- A study is being carried out by the SCI-Fi initiative to investigate the most polluted river stretches based on violations of the Central Pollution Control Boards's sewage treatment plant effluent standards and other environmental norms. The key objective of this study is to understand the correlations between urbanisation, sanitation and pollution in major rivers of India.
- The SCI-Fi team undertook the *Dhenkanal Pilot Project* for Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM). Under this project, a series of documents were produced to strengthen information, education and communication; stakeholder engagement and capacity building. A data brief titled, *Rural Sanitation Factsheet: Dhenkanal, Odisha* was prepared based on a primary survey of 1,000 households in the district to better understand the prevailing SLWM landscape. A *Situation Assessment Report* on SLWM in Dhenkanal District was also prepared.



Image Source: outlookindia.com

# Policy Engagements

- Partha Mukhopadhyay and Mukta Naik served on the advisory and selection committees to design and execute a survey on migrant women workers, commissioned by the National Commission for Women in June 2020.
- Mukhopadhyay is a lead author of *Visioning Urbanisation*, commissioned by the NITI Aayog to formulate ideas for managing urbanisation in the future.
- The SCI-FI team presented findings of the report, *Unearthed - Facts of On-Site Sanitation in Urban India* to the Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in June 2020. CPHEEO requested the initiative's inputs on aspects of non-networked sanitation. The required materials were prepared and submitted by the researchers.
- CPR's SCI-FI initiative and the eGovernments Foundation (eGov) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in July 2020 to work together on the design, testing and scaling of a digital solution to manage and monitor non-networked sanitation service delivery. The platform has currently completed its first phase of development and will be rolled out in the Balasore, Berhampur and Dhenkanal municipalities of Odisha. Over the next two years, the team will work to set up a national-level platform.
- Findings and recommendations from Ashwin Parulkar's report, *Crammed In Or Shut Out? Implications of Delhi's Homeless Shelter System's Floor Space Constraints*, were part of a presentation made by a Supreme Court appointed shelter monitoring committee to the Delhi Government which influenced their four-fold increase in allotment of winter-time shelters.
- Deepening its engagements at the sub-national level, the SCI-FI initiative actively engaged with states. In 2020, the initiative signed an MoU with the Housing and Urban



Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Slum Upgrading and Delisting in Odisha



The Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik, launching the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Slum Upgrading and Delisting in Odisha document during the MoU signing ceremony in September, 2020.

MoU signed by CPR with the Government of Punjab to support the implementation of the Punjab Slum Dwellers (Proprietary Rights) Act, 2020.



Development Department, Government of Odisha as a knowledge partner to support the next phase of the *Jaga Mission* to enable slum upgradation and achieve a slum-free Odisha. The initiative supported the state in preparing a detailed *Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Slum Upgrading and Delisting in Odisha*, with an intent to integrate the urban poor settlements into the mainstream city fabric.

*Habitat* in partnership with CPR's SCI-FI initiative, as part of the *JAGA Mission*. Researchers from the initiative have been instrumental in providing technical support to urban local bodies in designing plot and housing layouts. The initiative also provided technical support to the Government of Odisha to further update, add, standardise and analyse the *JAGA Mission* data sets for spatial analysis of various kinds.

- CPR's SCI-FI initiative and UNICEF supported the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department of the Government of Odisha in drafting the *Odisha Rural Sanitation Policy, 2020* to provide a holistic framework for structured sanitation interventions in rural areas, as part of the *Swachha Odisha, Sustha Odisha* campaign. The policy was notified in September 2020.
- The Government of Odisha facilitated the development of a *Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for creating New Liveable*
- The SCI-FI initiative supported the design of the *Mukhyamantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan (MUKTA)* scheme by the Government of Odisha. This is an urban wage employment scheme and is an extension of the Urban Wage Employment Initiative (UWEI) launched by the government during the lockdown.
- The SCI-FI initiative also signed an MoU with the Government of Punjab to support the state in the implementation of the Punjab Slum Dwellers (Proprietary Rights) Act, 2020, aimed to empower slum dwellers through proprietary rights and

→  
District-level launch  
of solid and liquid  
waste management in  
Dhenkanal.



- provision of basic services. The initiative, as a knowledge partner, is supporting the government in its efforts towards conferring the urban poor with secure tenure and access to upgraded basic civic services, making cities and towns in Punjab slum-free. As part of this partnership, the initiative supported the drafting of the *Punjab Slum Dwellers (Proprietary Rights) Rules, 2020* and the *BASERA guidelines*. Trainings were also conducted for master trainers in the Municipal Corporation, Patiala.
- The Dhenkanal Administration, Government of Odisha, in partnership with UNICEF and CPR's SCI-FI initiative, initiated a pilot project on solid and liquid waste management in rural areas of the district. This is the first on-ground initiative by any district in the country to converge the urban facilities of the faecal sludge treatment plant created under urban FSM with rural gram panchayats in line with Swachh Bharat Mission-II rural guidelines. A novel district sanitation plan, covering all aspects of successful solid and liquid waste management interventions was developed as part of this project.
  - SCI-FI initiative's *Project Nirmal* case on Dhenkanal O&M model featured in the NITI Aayog and the National Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (NFSSM) Alliance document titled, *Faecal Sludge and Septage Management in Urban Areas: Services and Business Models*. SCI-FI presented the O&M business model in a webinar organised by the NITI Aayog in February 2021.
  - SCI-FI researchers contributed to the new *Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) guidelines* on prefabricated septic tanks. Following the BIS, vide Fourteenth Meeting of the Public Health Engineering Sectional Committee, CED24, has constituted the Working Group, CED24:WG4, to prepare a draft standard for prefabricated septic tanks. The SCI-FI initiative is a member of this working group.
  - Anju Dwivedi has been appointed as the co-chair of the Inclusive Taskforce, earlier called the Gender Taskforce as part of the NFSSM Alliance. For this, the SCI-FI initiative played a lead role in developing an inclusive checklist and framework for cities on urban sanitation, which were included in the MoHUA guidelines. The initiative is currently leading the task of developing a gender framework and toolkit for the water and sanitation program on behalf of the NFSSM Alliance for the NITI Aayog.
  - CPR leads the Strengthening Urban Local Bodies Sub-group under the NFSSM Alliance. Researchers undertook a review of the existing disaster risk reduction framework and suggested ways of integrating water, sanitation and hygiene as a mitigation strategy in the existing framework.
  - The SCI-FI initiative supported the Government of Odisha in estimating asset and financial requirements for participating in the *Safaimitra Challenge* in 2020.



Image Source: thewire.in

# Public Engagements

- Shubhagato Dasgupta presented at a roundtable dialogue on *Sanitation Workers in India During COVID-19 Pandemic: Another Corona Warrior*, organised by PRIA International Academy, Water Aid India and India Sanitation Coalition in May 2020.
- Mukta Naik spoke at the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow's Online Festival on *Everybody is a migrant here: What COVID reveals about citizenship and belonging in Delhi* in June 2020.
- Partha Mukhopadhyay was a panelist at a webinar on *Making Cities Belong to Those Who Build Them: Towards a More Inclusive Urbanisation*, organised by the Baha'i Chair for Studies in Development, DAVV in July 2020.
- Naik was a panelist at UNDP's consultation on *Local Action for Global Commitments Inclusive, Resilient and Green COVID-19 Response and Recovery at the Local Level* in July 2020. She was also panelist at a webinar titled, *Towards New Social Welfare Architecture of Gurugram*, organised by the Management Development Institute, Gurugram.
- Dasgupta was invited to a *Swachh Bharat* panel to discuss cutting edge water solutions and on-ground learnings as part of the *Tiffin Talks* in July 2020. He also participated in a session titled, *Improving Affordable Urban Housing: Community Needs & State Response*, organised by the Omidyar Network India.
- Anindita Mukherjee presented findings from *CONNECT - The New Entertainment Paradigm for Urban Poor* to the senior leadership of BBC Media Action. She was also a panelist at the *Equal Cities Forum* organised by N/Core - The/Nudge Centre for Social Innovation.
- Mukherjee participated in an online training program on *Affordable Rental Housing* organised by the Human Settlement Management Institute. She also joined a focused group discussion on *COVID-19 learnings for Master Plan Delhi (MPD) 2041* organised by the NIUA.
- Dasgupta talked about how water can be better managed, treated and re-used to ensure access to enough water, reduce pollution and create recreational and beautification opportunities in a session co-organised by Arthan and BORDA in July 2020.
- Ashwin Parulkar was invited to join the editorial board of the *International Journal of Homelessness (IJOH)*, a new journal founded by scholars at Western University (Canada) and Cardiff University (Wales, UK) in August 2020.
- Dasgupta joined a presentation as a discussant for the paper on *Vacant Housing in India* by the Centre for Social and Economic Progress. He was also a discussant for a webinar on *Insights Series: Changing Audience Psyche and Media Trends* organised by BBC Media Action.
- Naik was a panelist for a webinar titled, *Resilience and Well-being through the Lens of the Pandemic* organised by University of North Carolina in August 2020. She also participated in a transnational web chat on *How do we fix the global housing crisis?* organised by The Correspondent.
- Naik presented her work on migration at a workshop titled, *Migration and the Pandemic Problematique*, organised by the Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi and Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group.

- Naik was a facilitator at a workshop and a panelist on *Affordable Rental Housing for the Urban Poor: Demand, Supply and Management Dynamics* organised by the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS), the All India Institute of Local Self Governance (AIILSG) and the Foundation EMDA South Asia in September 2020.
- Parulkar presented on *Homelessness in Delhi: Vulnerabilities and Governance of Urban Destitution* at the RAND Corporation in November 2020. He also presented his work on homelessness in Delhi at a webinar titled, *Intersecting Vulnerabilities*, organised by the University of Birmingham, Clean Air Asia and the Population Council.
- Naik taught as part of the Professional Development Programme (PDP) on the theme of *Marginalised Communities and Resilience* at the School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal in November 2020.
- A study titled *Land Title vis-à-vis Land Tenure for the Urban Poor in India: Are We Missing the Woods for the Trees?* was presented by Mukherjee along with her co-author in NCAER's *India Land Forum 2020: Data-driven Research and Evidence for Land Policy in India* in November 2020.
- Véronique Dupont participated in a round table on *We must flee the big cities* at the *Festival des idées* organised by the University of Paris in November 2020. He also spoke at a round table on *Remote fieldwork: Pursuing survey in times of Covid among the inhabitants of a demolished slum in Delhi*, organised by the Global Research Institute of Paris.
- Dupont and Shankare Gowda presented a paper on *COVID-19 responses of displaced slum dwellers in Delhi*, at an international workshop titled, *COVID-19 Responses of Local Communities – exploring issues of trust in the context of risk and fear*, organised by the University of Paris and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore in December 2020.
- Naik participated in an experts panel discussion on *Integrated Planning of Urban Villages in NCT Delhi* organised by the World Resources Institute in December 2020.
- Oliver Telle spoke on *Mobile densities in space and time* at an international conference on *Being a citizen in the metropolis* organised by CEDEJ, Egypt. He also spoke on human mobility and virus diffusion at a conference organised by ESOPP in Paris. Further, he spoke on *Mobility in the time of COVID: what impact on the spread of disease*, at an event organised by Maison Franco Japonaise.
- Pushpa Pathak taught a course on *Resettlement and Rehabilitation of Development Induced Displaced Persons* and offered lectures in a course on *Infrastructure Planning and Visioning Future* at the School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi from September to December 2020.
- Manish was a panelist in a discussion on *Kanoon Ke Haath*, as part of the *Do Din 2021 Conference* organised by the Hyderabad Urban Lab in December 2020.
- Parulkar, along with co-author Anhad Imaan, presented a paper titled, *All Is Not Well on the Yamuna Front: Understanding the Skills and Livelihood Aspirations of the Working Homeless Men of Yamuna Pushta, Delhi*, in a panel entitled, *Fair Work: Employment in the City*, at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements in January 2021.
- Mukhopadhyay chaired a panel at the *13th All India Conference Of China Studies* organised by the Institute of Chinese Studies and IIT Madras China Studies Centre in January 2021.
- Naik was a participant in a closed door policy-oriented dialogue series on migrant workers within the theme of *Resilient & Inclusive Cities* organised by the Asian Century Foundation in January 2021.
- Naik taught a course on *Migrants, informal work and the city* to masters students at CEPT University, Ahmedabad in February 2021. She also Naik taught a graduate class on *Migration and urban services in India*, at the London School of Economics and Political Science in March 2021.
- Naik spoke at the *Sussex Development Lectures on COVID-19 and Development: Invisible, othered and exploited – circular migrants in India's cities*. She also presented at a panel on *From the Margins: Dialogue on Precarity and Social Protection of low-income migrants in India*, organised by the University of Edinburgh, University of Essex, University of Delhi and North East Network in February 2021.
- Researchers of the SCI-FI initiative organised a meeting with representatives from BIS, Daiki Axis India and Japan and IIT-Roorkee to discuss Johkasou and BIS Standard for small-scale packaged advanced treatment systems in February 2021.
- Mukherjee was invited as a panelist for the *Indian Housing Forum – The Andhra Pradesh Chapter* by Habitat for Humanity India in March 2021.
- Baisakhi Sarkar Dhar presented the experiences of existing state legislations of Punjab and Odisha on land and informal settlement at the *Round Table on Land, Climate and Informal Settlements in India*, organised by the Indo-Global Social Service Society in March 2021.
- Neha Agarwal presented at the *Asia China Foundation Dialogues* session on *Resilient and Inclusive Cities - Urban Sanitation* in March 2021.

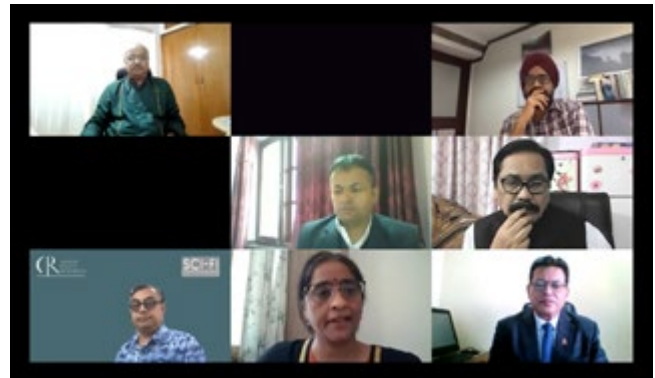
# Key Events

## Masterclass on *Monitoring FSM Systems* | September 2020

This session featured an interactive introduction to FSM operational performance indicators and the template for FSM monitoring.

## Policy Labs on *Urban Poor Communities and COVID-19 - New Urban WASH Priorities for South Asian Governments* | August – December 2020

CPR, WaterAid, Lumanti Support Group for Shelter and UNICEF came together to launch a series of dialogues on WASH priorities for South Asian governments during COVID-19 and present international models of good practices to key stakeholders.



## Rental Housing Policy Lab Series | August – December 2020

This series was jointly organised by CPR, GIZ, Cities Alliance, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Habitat for Humanity International, HSMI and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. The sessions aimed to deepen the rental housing policy dialogue and restructure and operationalise the policy, legislation and regulation at the national and state levels.

Through the Policy Labs, the SCI-FI initiative disseminated international models of good practices to key stakeholders in India on issues of WASH and rental housing. The sessions had a combined engagement of over 5,000 registered participants, online viewership of 70,000 and over 1,50,000 social media engagements.



## Workshop on *Re-Form: Lessons for Urban Governance Futures from the Pandemic* | March 2021

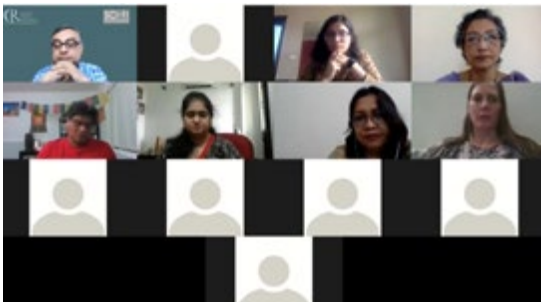
The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the SCI-FI Initiative organised a virtual dissemination workshop on the study titled, *Re-Form: Lessons for Urban Governance Futures from the Pandemic*. The event included a presentation of the findings, discussions on how the study can contribute to an understanding of urban governance, service delivery, urban planning issues and the potential for reform.





## Ongoing Workshop and Seminar Series

- The *Community of Research and Practices (CORP)* seminars continued to disseminate research on various topics related to access to safe sanitation and issues around sanitation work.



- The *CPR-Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH) Urban Workshop* series ran uninterrupted despite the disruption of COVID-19. The virtual format offered opportunities to feature international speakers from countries like South Africa, Kenya and the USA. Several workshops examined issues of housing, health, livelihoods, natural resources and digital governance from the perspective of the pandemic.





Image Source: [www.bbc.com/hindi](http://www.bbc.com/hindi)



# Economic Policy

A modern nation's economy must ensure growth and productivity and maintain equity and participation for its citizens.

CPR's faculty approach India's economic policy with this balance in mind, working on topics ranging from macroeconomic dynamics and trade policy to the intellectual foundations of service delivery and the design of welfare schemes.



# Agriculture

In 2020, with the passage of three central laws on the regulation of agricultural markets and with the largescale farmers' protests that followed, the vital and volatile subject of reforming India's agricultural markets came into the national spotlight. CPR scholars and collaborators were actively engaged in deepening the public debate and deliberation on this complex issue.

- In December 2020, a major report co-authored by Mekhala Krishnamurthy, Shoumitro Chatterjee, Devesh Kapur and Marshall Bouton, *A Study of the Agricultural Markets of Bihar, Odisha and Punjab* was released. The study was based on extensive interdisciplinary field-based research by the team, anchored by the Centre for the Advanced Study of India at the University of Pennsylvania. Findings from the study were reported in the *Hindustan Times*, *ThePrint* and *Business Standard*, and Chatterjee and Krishnamurthy were featured in a detailed interview by *Bloomberg Quint*. The research was presented in numerous policy forums including the World Bank's India Agricultural Policy Advisory Group.
- Krishnamurthy authored a chapter, *Mandi Acts and Market Lore: Regulatory Life in India's Agricultural Markets*, published in a new book titled, *Rethinking Markets in Modern India: Embedded Exchange and Contested Jurisdiction*, edited by Ajay Gandhi, Barbara Harriss-White, Douglas Haynes and Sebastian Schweppe, published by Cambridge University Press (2020). Drawing on long-term archival and ethnographic research in a mandi and market town in Madhya Pradesh, the chapter sketched out the regulatory biography of an agricultural market.
- Chatterjee and Krishnamurthy wrote on the first principles and political economy of agricultural market regulation as the concluding article in an *Ideas for India* symposium on the farm laws.



Mekhala Krishnamurthy and Shoumitro Chatterjee speak to Menaka Doshi on what India's new farm laws mean for the agriculture markets in Bihar, Odisha, and Punjab.

- Yamini Aiyar and Krishnamurthy discussed the deep faultlines and new possibilities in the politics of representation, reform and Centre-state relations and cooperative federalism exposed by the farm laws and farmers' protests in mainstream media.
- Two of CPR's podcasts were dedicated to unpacking the historical evolution and regional political economy of the farm laws and the protests. The first episode, on the history and diversity of the mandi system, featured Krishnamurthy. The second episode, on understanding the particular context and demands that animated the gathering farmers protests, featured Ajay Vir Jakhur of the Bharat Krishak Samaj and Krishnamurthy in conversation with Aiyar.
- Krishnamurthy also published analysis on the farm laws in *Indian Express* and *ThePrint*. She participated in public discussions with leading experts at the India International Centre, Chennai International Centre, *ThePrint's Off the Cuff*, at the Kisan Sansad, Nation for Farmers, Journal of Peasant Study's Forum, on *Enquiry* with Shoma Chaudhury, on a number of television and media panels, and was quoted in the *BBC*, *Economist*, *Financial Times* and *Time Magazine*. Knowledge and expert sessions were also held with Members

of Parliament organised by PRS Legislative Research and for development partners.

- In August 2020, Krishnamurthy was invited to give a special lecture at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore's Centre for Public Policy as part of the XV *International Conference on Public Policy and Management*. The session was a conversation between Professor Barbara Harriss-White and Krishnamurthy on *Global Agro-Food Systems: Research, Policy and Implications for India* and was published in a set of special papers from the conference.
- Krishnamurthy provided analysis on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on agriculture, including articles in *ThePrint* and *NDTV*, as well as a podcast conducted by Aiyar with Pravesh Sharma (former IAS officer) and her on COVID-19 and India's food supply chain beginning early in the crisis in April 2020.
- Krishnamurthy was invited in December 2020 to moderate a session of The/Nudge Forum's *Agri Charcha* in partnership with the Ministry of Rural Development on understanding the needs of rural households.

Shekhar Gupta (Editor-in-Chief, *ThePrint*), Siraj Hussain (Former Union Secretary Agriculture), Ashok Gulati (Infosys chair professor at ICRIER), and Mekhala Krishnamurthy (Senior Fellow, CPR & Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, Ashoka University) discuss the three new farm laws.



Mekhala Krishnamurthy moderated a session on understanding the needs of rural households organised by The/Nudge Forum and the Ministry of Rural Development.



Mekhala Krishnamurthy discusses the new farm laws, agricultural reforms, and the farmers protests with Shoma Chaudhury.



Mekhala Krishnamurthy analysed the farmers protest on a panel hosted by Barkha Dutt.



Image Source: hindi.newslyrsapp.com

# Economy and Jobs

- As a part of a collaborative project led by the Jobs Initiative, entitled, *Ecosystems of Engagement: Digital Platforms and Women's Work in India and Sri Lanka*, researchers mapped the digital platform ecosystem in both countries to examine where and in what capacity women interact with the platform gig economy. The team conducted in-depth interviews with over twenty platform executives across India and Sri Lanka to understand how platform business models, design and algorithmic decisions impact women's participation. This project brings together four partner organisations – CPR, Indian Institute of Human Settlements, World Resources Institute in India and LIRNEasia in Sri Lanka. Insights from the project will help build a shared understanding of the ecosystem across business, policy, and civil society; increase the inclusiveness of the ecosystem vis-à-vis women; and encourage platforms and policymakers to respond to critical needs in a more effective manner.
- Sabina Dewan contributed a chapter titled, *Harnessing the Potential of ASEAN's Digital Transformation Through Regional Cooperation* in a publication released by the KDI School of Public Policy and Management and The Asia Foundation. The chapter examines how major digital trends across the ten member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) impact employment, labour markets and livelihood opportunities.
- Dewan co-wrote a report on *Policy options for regulating platform work*. The report aims to identify material challenges pertaining to conditions of work and labour relations that gig workers face in emerging and developing countries.
- Dewan was invited by the NITI Aayog to be a part of the Advisory Committee for the *Vision Document 2035* that elucidates a 15-year vision for India starting from 2020. She was invited to be a part of the committee writing the chapter on innovation for the document.

## Public Engagements

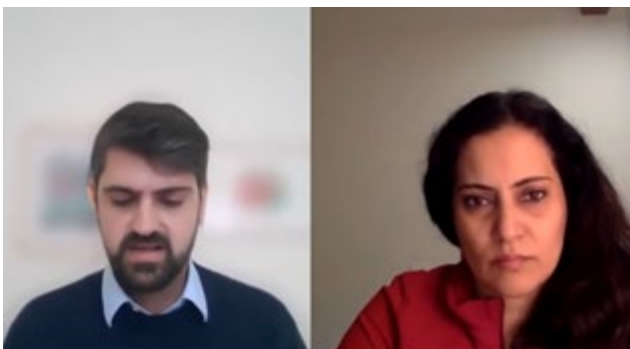
- Sabina Dewan was a panelist at the IWWAGE-The Asia Foundation webinar on *COVID-19 and the Indian Platform Economy. Is There Room for Women?* to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on gig platforms; how the industry is reacting to the shock and; potential investments and policy interventions necessary to ensure that female gig workers, particularly low and middle rung service providers, are protected.
- Dewan moderated a webinar organised by the JustJobs Network (JJN) and International Development Research



Sabina Dewan was a panelist at the IWWAGE-The Asia Foundation webinar to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on female gig workers.



Sabina Dewan moderated the JustJobs Network-International Development Research Centre webinar where women gig-workers & experts assessed the current and future impact of the pandemic.



↑ Sabina Dewan participated in a webinar to shed light on employment, working conditions, labour, and policy regimes for platform workers in Asia and Africa.



↑ Sabina Dewan participated in the Arthan Future of Work conference on rebuilding with resilience after the pandemic to better withstand future shocks.

Centre (IDRC) titled, *Conversations with Women in the Gig Economy*. The webinar brought the voices of some women entrepreneurs that have leveraged platforms to build their livelihoods to the forefront.

- Dewan was a panelist on The Global Deal webinar on *Social Dialogue and the Future of Work*, highlighting the importance of social dialogue to manage the future of work transitions, improve the quality of work and contribute to achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all.

- Dewan participated in a webinar titled, *Are labour regimes keeping up with the gig economy?* to shed light on employment, working conditions and labour and policy regimes for platform workers in Asia and Africa.

- Dewan participated in the webinar on *Rebuilding the World of Work: Visionary Voices on the Post-Pandemic Economy* as a part of the *Arthan Future of Work* conference, co-organised by JJN. She discussed the role of the private sector in rebuilding a fairer, more resilient economy.



Image Source: thewire.in

# Social Change and Enterprise Development

- D Shyam Babu contributed a paper titled, *Reimagining Merit in India: Cognition and Affirmative Action*, along with Chandra Bhan Prasad and Devesh Kapur, in *Making Meritocracy: Lessons from China and India, from Antiquity to the Present*, edited by Tarun Khanna and Michael Szonyi, forthcoming in 2021.
- Babu contributed a paper, *A Journey Without A Destination: The Cultural-Economy of a Great Power, to a Festschrift* for Bharat Karnad to be edited by Kanti Bajpai.
- Babu undertook a comprehensive review of changes to the reservations policies. The review titled, *Recent Damages to India's Social Justice Architecture*, is forthcoming in *The National Law School of India Review*.
- Babu presented a paper, *Ambedkar's Conception of Fraternity as the Sole Basis for Nationhood*, at a symposium organised by the Centre for Development Policy and Practice (CDPP). The paper will be published later this year.
- Babu continued to advise Tata Sons Private Limited on refashioning their affirmative action policies to promote the interests of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) individuals in ways that have not been tried by the company and the government. He advised the Tata Affirmative Action Program on including more social groups for affirmative action interventions.
- Continuing his involvement in promoting entrepreneurship among SC/ST communities, Babu served as a member of the Governing Board the Centre for the Study of Caste and Capitalism (CSCC), whose twin mandates are to study how an open society (both as a prerequisite and a consequence of capitalism) helps bring down the walls that separate one group from another within a society, and to encourage SC/ST communities to take up entrepreneurship.
- Babu continued to serve on the editorial board of *Dalit Enterprise*, a monthly magazine that seeks to provide a forum for news, views and policy debates on entrepreneurship among SC/STs.
- Babu continued his research work on social change and social justice. His commentaries appeared in *The Hindu*, *The Times of India*, and *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*. He commented on a range of issues including the cultural economy of India's strategic predicament; identity and meritocracy; fraternity and nationhood; and the government's move to expand the ambit of all quotas beyond the 50% ceiling.



Image Source: news.harvard.edu

# Healthcare

- Jishnu Das published a paper titled, *Two Indias: The structure of health care markets in rural Indian villages with implications for policy*, along with Benjamin Daniels, Monisha Ashok, Euy-Young Shim and Karthik Muralidharan, in *Social Science and Medicine* in June 2020. The study is a first of its kind nation-wide survey about the state of rural healthcare in India and received wide media coverage.
- Das published a study titled, *Antibiotic overuse in the primary health care setting: a secondary data analysis of standardised patient studies from India, China and Kenya*, along with

Giorgia Sulis, Benjamin Daniels, Ada Kwan, Sumanth Gandra, Amrita Daftary and Madhukar Pai, in *BMJ Global Health* in September 2020. Using standardised patient data, the study finds alarmingly high levels of antibiotic over-prescription for key conditions across primary care settings in India, China and Kenya, with broad-spectrum agents being excessively used in India and China.

- Olivier Telle's collaborative work with the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) and international researchers explored the importance of inclusive urban planning for poor populations to fight vector-borne diseases like dengue.



## CPR Governing Board

(As on 31st March 2021)

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1. **Dr Meenakshi Gopinath** – Chairperson  
Director, Women in Security Conflict Management & Peace (WISCOMP)
2. **Subodh Bhargava** – Member  
Former Chairman, Tata Telecommunications Ltd.
3. **Shyam Saran** – Member  
Former Foreign Secretary and Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research
4. **Rama Bijapurkar** – Member  
Independent Management Consultant and Professor of Management Practice, IIM Ahmedabad
5. **Vinita Bali** – Member  
Independent Director and Strategy Adviser
6. **Chandrashekhhar Dasgupta** – Member  
Former Ambassador and well-known Historian
7. **Keshav N. Desiraju** – Member  
Former Secretary, Government of India
8. **Shyam Divan** – Member  
Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India
9. **Member-Secretary** – Member  
Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)
10. **Rakesh Bharti Mittal** – Member  
Vice Chairman, Bharti Enterprises
11. **Rohit Bhasin** – Member  
Former Partner, PwC and Independent Director
12. **Yamini Aiyar** – Member-Secretary  
President and Chief Executive, Centre for Policy Research

## CPR Executive Committee

(As on 31st March 2021)

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1. **Dr Meenakshi Gopinath** – Chairperson  
Director, Women in Security Conflict Management & Peace (WISCOMP)
2. **Shyam Saran** – Member  
Former Foreign Secretary and Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research
3. **Subodh Bhargava** – Member  
Former Chairman, Tata Telecommunications Ltd.
4. **Vinita Bali** – Member  
Independent Director & Strategy Adviser
5. **Yamini Aiyar** – Member  
President & Chief Executive, Centre for Policy Research

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### Head, Finance and Administration

Alaknanda Jain

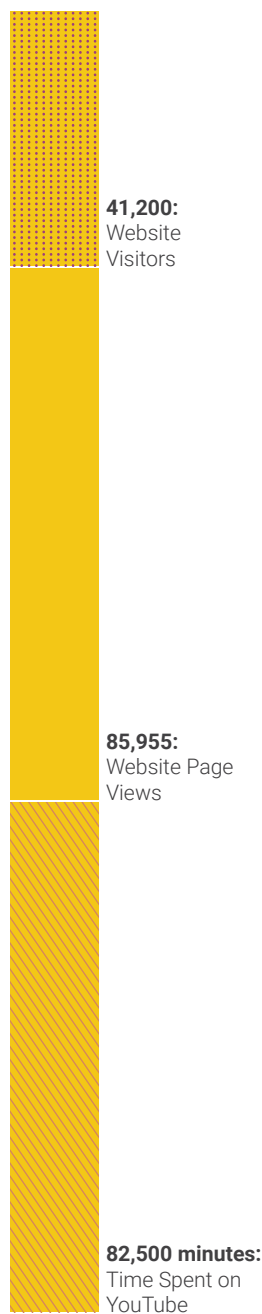
### Operations Head

Anup Roy



## CPR@2021

## Digital Reach Monthly Average



## Funding \*1 lakh = 1,00,000



# List of Major Granting Organisations

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Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, USA

William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, USA

Mac Arthur Foundation, USA

Namati Inc, USA

Foreign Common Wealth Development Office

Omidyar Network Foundation, USA

Children Investment Fund Foundation, USA

Lirnesia, Sri Lanka

Oak Foundation

Ministry of Water Resources, Delhi

UNICEF

Government of Meghalaya

Sir Dorabji Tata Trust

World Bank

Nxtra Data Ltd.

