

CALL FOR PAPERS

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON "THE GLOBAL EXPERIENCE ON DECENTRALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA: PERSPECTIVES FROM ACADEMICS AND POLICY MAKERS

Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi

New Date: 22nd & 23rd March 2018

Old Date: 14th & 15th December 2017

Venue: Conference Hall, IIPA

Abstract:

Decentralization is at the center of the policy reform agenda all over the world. Developing countries like India, Ghana, Mexico, and Egypt have active decentralization programs in place, citing the need to make their public administrations more efficient, flexible and responsive. And under the guises of subsidiarity, devolution and federalism, reform is firmly in the foreground of policy discourse in rich countries too. In 2000 the World Bank estimated that between 80-100% of the world's countries were experimenting with one or another form of decentralization, and its 2004 World Development Report examined decentralization as an instrument for improving public service delivery. Since then, new or deepening reforms have been announced in countries as disparate as Japan, Cambodia, France, Turkey, and Ethiopia, amongst many others.

Widespread policy enthusiasm has been accompanied by a large literature studying the effects of reform. The decentralization studies of 30 and 40 years ago are now often criticized for a lack of academic rigor, and for relying too much on case study and "anecdote". But increasing technical rigor has come at the expense of increasing distance from the concerns and constraints of the policymakers who drive decentralization forward, or fail to. At the simplest level, much of this new literature is now beyond the grasp of practitioners. Furthermore; the laudable quest for rigor leads technical studies to abstract away from the "details" of how policy reform actually works. Even when methodologically necessary, this has the effect of leaving potentially important aspects of real decentralization reforms outside the purview of academic analysis.

Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi (in collaboration with ICSSR) is organizing a National Symposium on "**The Global Experience On Decentralization And Development And Its Implications For India: Perspectives From Academics And Policy Makers**" to be held on 22nd and 23rd March, 2018 at Conference Hall , IIPA , New Delhi.

The symposium intends to bring together practitioners, policy advisors, academics, professionals, activists and media, to discuss their significant experiences and practices in addressing the issues related to On Decentralization and Development and Its Implications for India.

Aim and Objective

This Seminar reunites academics studying decentralization with the policymakers who implement it. The two-day workshop will bring together academics working at the empirical and theoretical frontier of research on decentralization and local government, with policy

practitioners who have implemented or supported reform at the highest levels of government and international organizations.

The purpose of the Seminar is not only to exchange ideas, but to marry policymakers' detailed knowledge and insights about real reform processes with academics' conceptual clarity and analytical rigor. The workshop is explicitly structured to facilitate this integration

The synthesis of academic with policymaker perspectives naturally shifts the analysis towards questions that the literature has had trouble addressing empirically, but that are of great interest to policymakers and politicians contemplating reform. These are reflected in the structure of the technical sessions.

The proposed seminar hopes to address this underlying premise by deliberating on the following thematic concerns:

Themes:

I. Our first Theme focuses on Decentralization, Stability and the Strength of the State. The first session asks the question: Why do policymakers decentralize? Why do national politicians decide to devolve some of their power and resources to others who are beyond their control? Considerations of efficiency or effectiveness are surely insufficient to explain the number and extent of announced decentralizations. This will examine how and why decentralization came in India, and its effects on state capacity and political stability there. It will seek to answer the question 'Does decentralization strengthen or weaken the state?' All of these are classic examples of questions that are crucially important to policymakers, but are difficult to address with quantitative evidence. Difficult as they are, they do yield before a multipronged attack of quantitative and qualitative evidence combined with deep practitioner insight.

II. Second Theme will be on , Designing Decentralization: Taxes, Transfers and Expenditures, examines these issues through a combination of logical argumentation and evidence that focuses The Paper presenters will be senior academics, some of whom have been instrumental in developing the underlying theory, and practitioners with extensive real-world experience.

III. Third Theme will be on Decentralization and Local Service Provision turns to the area on which the most decentralization research has been done – decentralization's effects on the provision of health, education, anti-poverty programs, etc. We present original research by academics working on the frontier of their respective fields. The idea is to present their empirical findings in a form that is accessible to policymakers, development practitioners, and a wide audience of students from different disciplines.

Broad themes for discussion may have following dimensions:

- 1) Decentralization, Stability and the Strengthening of the State
- 2) Does decentralization strengthen or weaken the state? Authority and social learning in a supple state
- 3) Fiscal Decentralization: Taxes, Transfers and Expenditures
- 4) Why do Countries Decentralize Partially? Political Capture through Local Grants
- 5) Generating equitable and sustainable growth: Multilevel governance
- 6) Decentralization and Local Service Provision
- 7) Political participation, clientelism and targeting of local government programs

However, these dimensions are indicative and non exhaustive. Adding relevant dimensions and themes to enrich the debates are most welcome

The Seminar will be an opportunity for us to share findings and learn from your immense experience in working with these issues. About 30 participants including experts, development practitioners, administrators, policy makers, social activists will be with us for the Consultation. The seminar will bring together practitioners, policy advisors, academics, professionals, activists and media, to present and discuss their studies, research, significant experiences and practices in addressing the complex issue.

Dates to remember

Please send an extended abstract of one page with title and keywords of the paper/ case by email to nupur.tiwary@iipa.org.in by 15th September, 2017. Decisions on the abstract will be announced by 20th September, 2017, and participants would require sending final paper by 15 October, 2017.

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