

## Events and Interactions

### CCS Baithak - Discourse on Federalism and Accountable Administration



Dr Jayaprakash Narayan had an interactive session with students and members of civil society at 'Baithak', organised by Centre for Civil Society at GP Birla Auditorium on 18th May. He addressed issues related to fiscal responsibility, federalism and disaster management.

Dr JP noted that successful policy comprises of a clear definition of goals and a design of instruments

and incentives that are appropriate to the context. Moreover, the policy should empower the relevant authorities to deliver on the goals, while also making them accountable and open to continuous monitoring.

### “How Liberal is India?”

Dr Jayaprakash Narayan shared his perspectives on liberalism at the launch of the book, 'How Liberal is India?', written by some of the foremost liberal thinkers, who discuss themes in India's history, politics, society, and economy in an effort to answer the question "how liberal is the biggest democracy on earth?". This was also the farewell of Ronald Meinardus, the Regional Director for South Asia of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF), and the man responsible for

bringing together the authors of this remarkable book.

### Interaction on law matters



The research team at FDR had an interactive session with Mr Kalanidhi Satyanarayana, former Legal Secretary along with Dr JP on 21st May. Mr. Kalanidhi Satyanarayana provided historical insight into the Anti-Defection law, his vision of independent institutions and the role of Governor, Speaker and Election Commission in controlling the menace of anti-defection.

### Round Table on local governments



At the Round Table on local governments at the Public Library, Visakhapatnam on 11 May, 2019, Dr. Jayaprakash spoke about how empowering local governments is essential to strengthening democracy. Dr. JP also emphasised that a direct transfer of funds to local bodies would drastically improve the process of devolution.

### Conversation on Quality and Standard of Education



Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan and the research team of FDR participated in the EduConnect Meet at Aham Learning Hub on 30th May and brainstormed on the various issues in the education sector and possible solutions for the same. Specifically, the discussion addressed poor standards of education at both the primary and high school level, malpractices in the existing system of examination, evaluation processes, accountability of teachers and monitoring systems, and community participation in schools.

Other participants include members of Padala Charitable trust, KRIYA, LVV, Abhyasa, Pratham, Ekalavya Foundation, Teach for India, Aham Learning, ASWA. An independent assessment mechanism was proposed along the lines of ASER and PISA, which sets a basic benchmark for skills expected to be acquired by students at their respective levels of education.

## Interaction with Prof. KC Suri



In an interaction with the research team at FDR's Begumpet office, Prof. KC Suri said, "Just as a General can create an army but an army cannot create a general, a leader can create a party but a party cannot create a leader". A professor of political science from the University of Hyderabad, Prof. Suri was of the opinion that political leaders are very important in the formation of policy and pushing of certain agendas.

Research Scholars also discussed issues pertaining to Indian politics, including political parties and their ideologies, a two party political system, NOTA, and the state of political discourse in India and the world. Of particular significance was the discussion on the global trend of demonising and

worshipping historical figures. Dr. JP suggested that when looking at the past, one should consider the context and practice intellectual generosity and modesty. Prof. Suri added that since history is nothing but a narrative account of the past, it will change with who is telling the story. Therefore, we should take historical narratives with a pinch of salt, and understand the context fully before drawing conclusions. •