Year in Review
April 2016 - March 2017

CENTRE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY
Social Change Through Public Policy

20 YEARS OF ADVANCING CHOICE & ACCOUNTABILITY
Mission

Centre for Civil Society advances social change through public policy. Our work in education, livelihood, and policy training promotes choice and accountability across private and public sectors. To translate policy into practice, we engage with policy and opinion leaders through research, pilot projects and advocacy.

Vision

Centre for Civil Society envisions a world where each individual leads a life of choice in personal, economic and political spheres and every institution is accountable.

Our Work

Your financial support helps us advance our mission of social change through public policy. By giving to CCS today, you are ensuring that each individual in India leads a life of choice in personal, economic and political spheres and every institution is accountable.

All donations to CCS are tax exempt under Section 80G of Income Tax Act, India

SUPPORT CCS IN OUR MISSION

- Promote SCHOOL CHOICE to ensure that all children in India receive quality education of their choice.
- Advocate for greater LIVELIHOOD FREEDOM for the rural and urban poor by eradicating market entry and exit barriers.
- Engage students & influencers to DEVELOP NEW LEADERS WITH NEW IDEAS through training in public policy.
A nation’s politics remains indisputably delimited by its prevailing climate of opinion – popular perceptions, values and worldviews that determine both, political will and choices, and the electing to power of representatives who direct its mandate. The prevailing ideas in a nation then constitute the political and define its trends. It is the idea that determines the contemporary and defines its possibilities, that wields the power that will steer, and change the course of a society.

Think Tanks thus play a critical role in influencing policy-making, given their role in brokering ideas and opinions, and the nature of the Indian State. In a markedly deliberative democracy such as ours, policy-making and reform continues to be a substantively consultative process. The scope of consultations that inform policy-making has historically transcended the state, and continues to remain perfunctorily, if not wholly deliberately, both formal and informal. The civil society as such, continues to be a significant determinant of its trends, limits and possibilities.

To advance its mission of reclaiming choice and accountability, CCS makes fundamental a radical reformation of thought. Given that it is ideas and mindsets that delimit political practice for affirmative transformations, the Centre continues to cultivate minds and worldviews that nurture freedoms and make possible choice and accountability. This pursuit of mindset change – the purveying of transformative ideas for social change, is supplemented by a robust strategy of short-term policy change. CCS continues to work towards translating ideas into practice by sustaining targeted advocacy and dissemination amongst policy influencers and makers, state officials and thought leaders. CCS’ mandate remains marked for its continuing engagement with the citizenry – through campaigns and mobilization, providing platforms to communities for both, advocating their rights and seeking redressal of their violation.

In the following pages of our Annual Report 2016-17, you will see the strong progress we’ve made in advancing social change through public policy, made possible by my young and passionate team at CCS. We hope you are as proud of our achievements as we are—they have been made possible only with your continued support.

This year CCS turns 20! We have planned several celebrations during the course of the year to share with you key highlights of our journey thus far and the several people who’ve made them possible. As we tread towards a new year, we look forward to your continued support.

I hope you will enjoy reading this report.

Luis Miranda
Chairman
Two Decades of Liberty

This year we celebrate 20 years of advancing choice and accountability in India. Here’s a retrospective on our remarkable journey:

1997
- Founding of CENTRE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

1998
- Organised - First Liberty & Society Seminar
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

1999
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2000
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2001
- Launched - Researching Reality Internship Program
- Awarded - Templeton Freedom Award for Student Outreach

2002
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2003
- Organised - First JEEVAK Livelihood Documentary Festival
- Published - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2004
- Launched - School Choice Campaign
- Awarded - First Liberty & Society Seminar

2005
- Published - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2006
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2007
- Launched - School Voucher for Girls Project
- Published - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2008
- Awarded - CCS Ranks 8 in the Top 25 Think Tanks in Asia

2009
- Launched - School Voucher for Girls Project

2010
- Organised - First Colloquium
- Awarded - First JEEVAK Livelihood Documentary Festival

2011
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2012
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2013
- Published - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2014
- Published - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2015
- Published - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2016
- Published - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook
- Offered - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

2017
- Published - First edition of the Delhi Citizen’s Handbook

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Policy Wins

Our Footprints on the Education, Livelihoods and Judicial Policy Landscape

Championing Livelihood Freedom for Street Vendors

Through Jeevika, our campaign for the livelihood freedom of rural and urban poor, we have been successfully campaigning for the legitimisation and protection of street vendors through the effective implementation of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 since 2012.

We had filed a petition to the Hon’ble High Court of Rajasthan urging the court to stay the harassment and arbitrary eviction of street vendors being undertaken in violation of the Act of 2014. Following our petition in the Rajasthan High Court, the court ruled in favor of the street vendors, putting a stay on eviction and asked the state government to prepare a comprehensive plan regarding street vending in the state. However, the judgment had one technical flaw as it noted that the Central Act was not notified specifically for the state of Rajasthan and although the state law does not allow it, they continued eviction. We stepped up the campaign and continued to strive for effective legal reform.

In what may be heralded as a remarkable win for street vendors in Rajasthan and for CCS, in July 2016, the Hon’ble Supreme Court upheld that the Street Vendors Act, 2014 would be applicable to the state of Rajasthan. The ruling legalizes street vending, demarcates vending zones and makes decentralised Town Vending Committees central to arbitration on vending zones and the eviction of street vendors.

Read more about the ruling, here.
Making the RTE Right

- The 64th annual CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education) meeting held on 25 October 2016 proposed commendable reforms in the policy framework governing education in the country, including vital amendments to the much debated Right to Education Act (RTE). The decisions at the CABE meeting herald a significant policy win for us at CCS!

Taking into account the deteriorating learning outcomes among students across the country, the highest advisory body on education – CABE, proposed that the ‘No Detention Policy’ (NDP) be reviewed and its implementation be made contingent on the discretion of the states. Another key decision made at the meeting was the unambiguous definition of grade-specific learning outcomes, and their inclusion in the RTE norms.

- In a big win for our on-going work for the rights and recognition of Budget Private Schools (BPS) across the country, the Karnataka government hiked the reimbursement amount paid to private schools for admitting students under the Right to Education Act (25% reservations). NISA (National Independent School’s Alliance) has consistently campaigned for redressing the non-payment of reimbursement fees and for reviewing their computation. Incubated by CCS, and formally launched in 2011, NISA has grown to become a pan-India alliance of over 55,000 schools across 18 states. The alliance remains the fundamental voice of BPS in the country, enabling them to voice their concerns, seek redressal of grievances and to mobilize for effective action.

The breakthrough in Karnataka comes in response to a plea by KAMS (The Karnataka Associated Management of English-medium Schools), a NISA member association in the Karnataka High Court. KAMS had challenged the quantum of reimbursement mandated under the RTE.

Maharashtra Adopts Two of Our Policy Recommendations for Reforming School Education

- The Maharashtra Prathamik Shikshan Parishad (MPSP) has decided to stop the practice of distributing free textbooks among students of primary classes. Instead, the money required to buy the textbooks will be transferred directly into the students’ bank accounts. This decision marks a significant shift towards introducing Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs) in education financing, a central recommendation in our policy ideas for reforming school education in the country.

- The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) launched an online registration portal for private primary schools affiliated to the Maharashtra State Board. The online registration service comes as a major breakthrough and a significant departure from the school registration process that involved an arduous procedure across state government offices involving 17 documents. The online service significantly reduces the registration time—from 6 months to 35 days.

We have consistently campaigned for the Ease of Opening Schools and the online registration system has been a core component of our proposal for facilitating the setting up of private educational institutions. Earlier in 2016, we had submitted a comprehensive proposal on key policy reforms for easing the opening of private schools to Shri S C Khuntia, the then School Education Secretary. The proposal was duly forwarded to the states for corresponding action.

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Promoting Judicial Efficiency and Accountability

- Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Law Minister, has sought the intervention of the Chief Justice of India to promote the ease of doing business in the country by shifting to electronic service of summons and filing of cases.

We have proactively advocated judicial reforms for expediting the judicial process. The electronic service of summons is an important component of the enforcing contract index and has been one of CCS’s core recommendations for reforms. This recommendation was also a part of our presentation to the Law Commission of India earlier in November and December. Read our recommendations here.

- The Law Commission of India accepted a crucial recommendation with regard to the composition of Bar Councils, now mandating that the bar council include non-elected members along with elected ones. CCS had been campaigning for this reform as a critical check on frivolous strikes by Bar Associations leading to delays and interruptions in legal process. This recommendation was a part of our presentation to the Law Commission of India, following a research study on the Advocates Act of 1961.

- In another win for our campaign, the Supreme Court ordered installation of CCTV cameras (albeit, without audio recording) in at least two districts in all states and union territories to record court proceedings. This comes as an important step in fostering judicial efficiency and accountability.
IDEA WINS

YEAR IN REVIEW 2016-17

Following the release of the draft of the New Education Policy (NEP) by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in June 2016, we undertook a critical analysis of the policy document through a rigorous internal and external review. We published a substantive summary of the policy document, along with a critical commentary on the TSR Subramanian Committee Report, and developed a comparison of the two documents with core CCS values and principles that inform the Centre’s policy recommendations on education. The analyses were duly disseminated amongst prominent policy experts, state officials, scholars, investors, philanthropists and industry leaders.

In October 2016, the CCS team released a comprehensive document of educational policy reform recommendations across the domains of school, vocational and higher education in the context of the imminent NEP. Emerging from the series of roundtables and consultations, internal research, and feedback from the targeted survey, the reforms address education delivery, governance, financing, and monitoring in schools and institutions of higher and vocational education.

The full document can be accessed here.

The NEP Wiki

Launched in July 2016, the NEP wiki has been conceptualised as a public platform to democratize the discourse on New Education Policy (draft) issued by the MHRD. It is a transparent and collaborative space that invites citizens to dialogue and make recommendations for educational reforms in the country. The wiki revolutionizes policy-making, enabling citizens to directly engage with a policy document to edit, expand or alter the existing draft policy—to speak up for education! Since its launch on 10 July, the NEP has drawn significant participation from educationists, students, researchers, prominent thinkers and representatives of civil society organization with over 2,34,442 visitors.

Recommendations for a New Education Policy

Sandhi: Empowering Communities, Empowering Schools

Initiated in October 2016, Sandhi is a two year research pilot that seeks to study the effect of introducing information on learning outcomes and school excellence on parental choice and school competition. Conceptualised against a backdrop of increasing parental preference for private schooling in low-income communities, the program seeks to realign parental choice to community-driven school information and to deflect competition from non-core domains that have little bearing on student learning.

The research is being piloted in Hastal in north west Delhi and proposes a sample study of 51 schools. We propose to build a community-lead schema of school choice parameters through targeted and sustained community engagement in the form of public meetings, knowledge-sharing, and consensus building amongst key influencers and parents. The impact of intervention is to be assessed through parental and school surveys, and through student assessments in the participating schools.

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In partnership with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, we launched the fourth edition of the Delhi Citizens’ Handbook on 16 August 2016. The handbook featuring research papers on the impact and relevance of policies in urban governance in the national capital was launched by Shri Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi at an event held at the India International Centre.


The Delhi Citizens’ Handbook: Towards Effective and Accountable Governance

You can access the handbook [here](http://example.com).

Based on careful fieldwork, interviews and analysis this handbook offers penetrating insights into problems plaguing the governance of the nation’s capital and practical steps to address them. It is essential reading for anyone interested in a better Delhi be it politicians, policymakers, planners or the aam aadmi. "

SHREEKANT GUPTA
Professor, Delhi School of Economics

The Delhi Citizens’ handbook 2016 marks the 19th year of Researching Reality, one of the premier research-intensive internship program of CCS. The Handbook illustrates how to make policies that affect countless citizens, successful and effective. A must-read for anyone who aspires to hold informed views on where policies on urban public utilities stand, and how they can be improved."

SHANTANU GUPTA
Founder, YUVA Foundation

Crowd-sourcing Experiences on Doing Business in India

We have initiated an online campaign for crowd-sourcing business stories through our website dedicated to tracking and reporting India’s progress on the World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) index - www.easeofdoingbusiness.org. The campaign seeks to document human interest stories of everyday bottlenecks and logjams that entrepreneurs grapple with in establishing and running small businesses in the country. We have collected over 70 stories thus far, with a target of 100 such stories to evidence the urgent need for reforms to promote and protect entrepreneurship and small enterprises.

Economic Freedom of the World Report

CCS partnered with the Fraser Institute, Canada to release the 2016 Economic Freedom of the World Report. The report uses 42 distinct sets of data to analyse the economic freedom rankings of 159 countries and territories. The 2016 report demonstrates India’s dwindling performance on the economic freedom index, with the country having slipped by 10 positions to 112 out of 159 countries. The report brings to light India’s dismal achievements in categories relating to the legal system and property rights, along with sound money, international trade freedom and regulation. The report shows promising achievements on the size of the government, a crucial win for CCS in the context of its ongoing campaign on maximum governance, minimum government.
 Liberalism in India: Past, Present and Future

The passing of SV Raju in 2015 was a colossal loss to the liberty movement in India. A prominent liberal voice in the country, Raju was the former editor of Freedom First, India’s only liberal magazine. To commemorate his legacy and to celebrate India’s liberty movement, we published a festschrift with contributions from some of the most eminent liberal minds in the country. The festschrift, Liberalism in India: Past, Present and Future, remains an outcome of a conference that we convened last year, to mark Raju’s passing. The conference had brought together a diverse group of liberals: libertarians and conservatives, organisations (think tanks and do tanks) and individuals (politicians, public intellectuals, authors, columnists and activists).


Read an excerpt from the book here. Order a copy of the book by writing to publication@ccs.

Indiabefore91.in: Stories from the License Raj

July 2016 marked the 25th anniversary of the 1991 economic reforms that heralded India’s turn to liberalization and a radical shift from what has since come to be known as the license-quota-permit-raj of the pre-1991 years. To mark this watershed in India’s economic and political history, CCS launched indiabefore91.in, a portal to document human interest stories from the days of the license raj.

With the month of July marking the 25th anniversary of the reforms, the history and politics of liberalization in India drew tremendous public attention. CCS continued to reach out to prominent scholars, industry leaders, artists, media professionals, philanthropists and opinion-leaders to document their experiences of the pre-liberalization era. We have thus far over 65 stories that highlight the intersections of biographies and institutional structures of state monopoly, rationing and licenses, and document everyday life narratives from India before 91.

Watch the videos here or read our essay stories here.

In a series of newspaper articles...right-of-center congressman Vasant Sathe had pointed out that the public-sector steel industry in India employed ten times as many people to produce half as much steel as the South Koreans (according to 1986 figures not yet available to Sathe, the facts were even worse: the Steel Authority of India paid 247,000 people to produce some 6 million tons of finished steel, whereas 10,000 South Korean workers employed by the Pohan Steel Company produced 14 million tons that same year)... - Shashi Tharoor

Economic self-sufficiency—The only guarantee of political independence

- Shashi Tharoor

In a series of newspaper articles, right-of-center congressman Vasant Sathe had pointed out that the public-sector steel industry in India employed ten times as many people to produce half as much steel as the South Koreans (according to 1986 figures not yet available to Sathe, the facts were even worse: the Steel Authority of India paid 247,000 people to produce some 6 million tons of finished steel, whereas 10,000 South Korean workers employed by the Pohan Steel Company produced 14 million tons that same year)...

Stories from the License Raj

The best graphic way I can describe it is, it was a black and white world. I don’t think we had coloured.

- Shashi Tharoor
The report on Budget Private Schools (BPS) in India is our pioneering initiative for furthering a research and evidence-driven dialogue on the role and contributions of BPS in the country. We released the first edition of the report at the Asia Liberty Forum 2017 amidst prominent educationists, practitioners and investors in education from India and abroad. It addresses four core aspects of BPS: demand, supply, ecosystem and regulation through the lens of research, policy and practice. The chapters of the report are authored by domain experts representing a variety of backgrounds and organisations. Access the report here. Read more about the report authors here.

In 2013, we launched Patang, a research pilot aimed at ensuring academic and social inclusion of children from socially and economically disadvantaged communities enrolled in unaided private schools under Section 12 (1) (c) of the Right to Education Act (RTE). Implemented in two private schools in Delhi, Patang impacted 125 students through interventions in the form of community engagement, after-school learning centres, teacher-training and student assessments. The pilot demonstrated a visible change in its intervention schools in terms of teacher attitudes, parental involvement, support from school management and student learning outcomes.

We have published the Patang Guidebook, consolidating our learnings from the pilot. The guidebook highlights its successes and challenges and delineates concrete action points for schools to ensure the effective inclusion of students under the mandate of the RTE. Find the guidebook here.
Taking Judicial Reforms to the Law Commission

We presented our reform recommendations before the Law Commission of India. The meeting, held in November 2016, was chaired by Justice B S Chauhan, Hon'ble Chairman, Law Commission of India and was attended by senior members and staff of the Commission.

Among the reforms proposed was our blueprint of the ‘Offer of Judgement’. We also presented a ‘Time and Motion Study’ of Additional District Judges (Civil ADJs) across eight courtrooms to initiate a dialogue on judicial efficiency, along with a proposal of 100 laws, identified as obsolete and inconsistent, to be repealed.

On the request of the Commission, we also conducted a research study on the Advocates Act, 1961. The study was duly presented to the Law Commission in December. The Commission accepted a crucial recommendation with regard to the composition of Bar Councils, now mandating that the bar council include non-elected members along with elected ones.

Find the article here.

Feasibility study on the “Offer of Judgement” Rule (or Rule 68)

CCS conducted a study on the feasibility of introducing the “Offer of Judgement” rule an incentive-based intervention that seeks to improve contract enforcement by expediting the litigation process. This rule provides for imposing a penalty on a plaintiff who refuses a reasonable settlement offer and creates incentives for reducing litigation in the system.

We conducted a survey-based study of 50 litigants in a District Court in Delhi to assess the prevalence of contingent fee otherwise prohibited as per the Bar Council rules. The study indicates that at least 90% of the petitioners prefer contingent fee arrangements. The research paper has been accepted for publication by Daksh, a leading organisation promoting accountability and better governance in India through measuring political and juridical process.

Good Laws for Good Governance: For a National Repeal Law Day

While the rule of law remains central to the promotion and protection of individual freedom, obsolete and inconsistent laws continue to thwart both liberty and growth. To ensure that such laws are repealed, we campaigned for a National Annual Repeal of Laws Day.

26 November is currently observed as Constitution Day, and we demanded that the day also be recognized as the National Annual Repeal of Laws Day to mark a commitment by the government to repeal laws that promote red tapism and corruption, that encumber personal, economic and social freedoms. As a part of our campaign, we appealed to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Union Minister of Law and Justice Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Chief Justice of India Justice Shri T. S. Thakur, Chairman of Law Commission Justice B S Chauhan and Vice Chairman of Niti Aayog, Shri Arvind Panagariya. An opinion piece on our demand authored by Prashant Narang, Advocate, iJustice and D V L Raghavendar Rao, Policy Associate, CCS was featured in Swarajyamag.

Access to Justice through Contingent Fee

T. S. Thakur, Chairman of Law Commission Justice B S. Chauhan and Vice Chairman of Niti Aayog, Shri Arvind Panagariya. An opinion piece on our demand authored by Prashant Narang, Advocate, iJustice and D V L Raghavendar Rao, Policy Associate, CCS was featured in Swarajyamag.
Street Vendors Act Compliance Index Report 2017

We published the Street Vendors Act Compliance Index Report following a six month long research study that involved 31 applications and 18 first appeals under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. Authored by Prashant Narang, Advocate, Justice and Yugank Goyal, Associate Professor, Jindal School of Liberal Arts & Humanities, the report assesses the status of compliance with the Street Vendors Act of 2014 across 23 states on the basis of the stages up to which they have implemented the clauses and rules enshrined in the Street Vendor Act.

The report can be accessed here.

NO STATE IN INDIA IS FULLY COMPLIANT WITH THE STREET VENDORS’ ACT 2014.

MOST COMPLIANT STATES
- ANDHRA PRADESH
- CHHATTISGARH
- DELHI
- JHARKHAND
- TRIPURA

LEAST COMPLIANT STATES
- GUJARAT
- HARYANA
- MEGHALAYA
- NAGALAND
- TAMIL NADU

Presenting NEP Reform Ideas to NITI Aayog

We were invited to present our New Education Policy reform ideas to NITI Aayog on November 2016. Parth J Shah, President, CCS presented the recommendations addressing school, vocational and higher education to a six-member audience including senior officials from NITI Aayog and the MHRD. The meeting was chaired by Shri Arvind Panagariya, Hon’ble Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog. It concluded with a substantive discussion on key reforms in schools education, particularly through per-student funding (DBTs) and the inclusion of learning outcomes in school recognition norms.

Suggestions on Draft National Medical Commission Bill, 2016

Recognising NITI Aayog’s radical shift in regulatory philosophy towards market-liberal policy solutions from input based norms to an outcome driven regulatory design, we put forth a review highlighting key issues in the National Medical Commission Bill, 2016. The document makes critical recommendations relating to the establishment of medical colleges, entrance examinations for medical training and licenses, the constitution of the National Medical Commission and state medical councils, and for ensuring accountability, transparency and efficiency in the governance of medical education.

Read the full document here.
Umang: Budget Private Schools Quality Improvement Program

In September 2016, we formally launched Umang, a two-year research pilot for building an effective model for research and intervention to impact the quality and efficacy of education delivery in budget private schools. The program seeks to provide these schools the support required for micro-innovations for overall school quality improvement through a two-pronged intervention including blended learning (including teacher training), and school leadership training that would:

• build capacities of three key stakeholders—students, teachers and principals,

• bridge the extant gaps between school owners/leaders and service providers to demonstrate and assess innovative interventions that may be replicated to scale impact

The impact of the intervention is proposed to be evaluated through a two-year longitudinal study enabling us to understand the processes that effect and condition the demonstrated outcomes. We partnered with Zaya Learning Labs, Chrysalis and the Centre for Science of Student Learning for the first phase of the program. The pilot was initiated in the cities of Lucknow and Ambala, with 98 schools participating in the program. 120 teachers and 40 principals were trained, and assessments were conducted for over 5000 students in the two cities.

School Vouchers: A Monograph

We have continued to argue for the introduction of Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) as a crucial policy solution to reinstate choice, and address the persisting challenges of accountability, autonomy and quality in education. DBTs may radically improve education quality in the country by empowering parents with school choice, fostering greater accountability from schools and by furthering effective competition that urges schools to deliver on quality education.

Released in February 2017, our monograph on school vouchers details the concept of DBTs and its applicability to the Indian education system. It presents a comparative study of global experiments through case studies from five countries, along with the Indian experiments with the voucher model thus far. It also makes key recommendations for transitioning education policy towards the DBT model.
Engaging Change-makers through Events, Outreach and Trainings

We hosted a three day colloquium on ‘Maximum Governance, Minimum Government’ in Udaipur, Rajasthan from 18-20 August 2016. The colloquium brought together 19 eminent business leaders, investors, scholars, bureaucrats, policy experts and academicians to dialogue and deliberate on how best to limit the size and scope of the government while maximizing governance in India. Discussions on five core thematic domains relating to tax administration reforms, leveraging expertise, capacity building and other aspects of the role of the government resulted in ideas for substantive, actionable measures to foster citizen-centric, accountable, and effective governance. 30+ ideas for concerted action emerged from the discussions.

Our next colloquium sought to initiate a rigorous dialogue on public choice theory and its implications on Indian political institutions. Titled ‘Liberty, Democracy and Public Choice’, the dialogue was held in Goa from 4-5 November. 14 participants deliberated on democratic processes and alternative political arrangements that foster individual liberty thereby improving social outcomes. Thematic sessions in the colloquium related to critical aspects of political practice in India: constitutionalism, federalism, electoral politics, and democratic deficiencies, amongst others.

Given that 67 years after its independence, India continues to grapple with ill-informed public policies and weak political mechanisms, the dialogue sought to imagine alternatives that foster individual freedoms, promote innovations and redress the deficiencies of the nation’s political apparatus.

The Colloquium was intellectually enriching and refreshing. The diverse range of views, ideas and inputs that came up have a great potential to transform the development trajectory of the nation. I thought the sessions were rich and stood out because of the practical nature of issues discussed during those discussions.”

YASH RAJIV GANDHI
PMO
School Choice National Conference 2016

We hosted the 8th edition of the School Choice National Conference (SCNC), our flagship annual conference on education policy, on 3 December in New Delhi. Over 200 prominent educationists, policy-influencers, edupreneurs, students, and civil society leaders participated in the day-long event. The keynote address at the event was delivered by Shri Baijayant ‘Jay’ Panda, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, who was categorical in his affirmation of the key role of budget private schools in improving educational access and delivery:

“Our government should act as contributors and should work in tandem with private players to deliver optimal results. Budget private schools are filling the space and government should work in tandem with the private sector to provide access of quality education to all.”

BAIJAYANT ‘JAY’ PANDA
MP, Lok Sabha

The conference included a series of thematic sessions addressing regulatory challenges, evidence building and research, as well as classroom and pedagogical innovations steered by 18 prominent speakers. We launched a microsite on the Report on Budget Private Schools in India, our initiative for furthering a research and evidence-driven dialogue on the role and contributions of BPS in the country. The 2nd edition of NISA Namaskar – the quarterly bulletin of the National Independent Schools Alliance was also released at the conference. In addition, the event showcased student imaginations of their dream school through a nationwide drawing competition.

The conference received 50 media citations and the event live-streaming drew a viewership of 524. See select media reports here. See snapshots of the event here. You can view the conference videos here.

Edudoc 2016

Edudoc 2016 is our international short film competition that brings alive the stories of education—its challenges, achievements and celebrations, through the medium of cinema every year. Held in partnership with the EdelGive Foundation, Edudoc 2016 drew over 2000 entries from all over the world! Our jury comprising of educationists, journalists and policy practitioners selected the top five entries which were screened as part of the 8th School Choice National Conference. The event also occasioned a vibrant dialogue between the audience and the film-makers bringing to light not only the personal journeys of the filmmakers and their films, but also the challenges of and innovative experiments in education across the country.

The winners were felicitated by our Guest of Honour, Shri Udit Raj, MP, Loksabha and received awards, certificates and cash prizes. ‘Fall in Line’, a film by Gautam Joshi was declared the best film at Edudoc 2016.

Read the film synopses and watch the winning entries here.
#RememberingRaju:
Celebrating Liberalism in India

To commemorate the legacy of S V Raju, and to celebrate India's liberty movement, we hosted a day-long conference on 20 November in New Delhi. The conference had three dedicated sessions on the history, policy relevance and execution, and the way forward for the liberal movement in India. 90 participants including intellectuals, academicians, students and young scholars, media professionals, authors and business leaders committed to the cause of liberty attended the conference. Amongst the thought leaders steering the sessions were Deepak Lal, Eminent Economist; Shubhashis Gangopadhyay, Research Director, India Development Foundation; and Ashish Dhawan, Founder and Chairman, Central Square Foundation. The event was live-streamed drawing a viewership of 11,605.

You can watch the sessions here. Find the complete list of speakers here. The paper abstracts are available here.

Swaminomics on 25 Years of Economic Liberalisation: Book Launch and Panel Discussion

We hosted the launch of Swaminathan Aiyar’s latest book, From Narasimha Rao to Narendra Modi on 24 March, in partnership with FICCI. The book was launched by Dr Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister of India, and one of the key architects of post-independent India’s liberal economic policy. The launch drew an audience of over 150, and was followed a panel discussion on ‘25 years of Economic Reforms: From Liberalisation to Demonetisation’. Panelists included distinguished thought leaders like Swaminathan Aiyar, Journalist and Columnist, Swaminomics; Swapna Dasgupta, Journalist and Rajya Sabha MP; Praveen Chakravarty, Senior Fellow, IDFC Institute; Bimal Jalan, Rajya Sabha MP and Former RBI Governor; and Sidharth K. Birla, Former President, FICCI and current Chairman, Xpro India Limited. The panelists discussed the achievements of and persisting challenges in India’s continuing journey on the path of economic liberalisation—particularly, the failures of public service delivery, a ubiquitous government and erosion of public institutions.
Asia Liberty Forum 2017: Celebrating the Movement for Liberty in Asia

We hosted the 5th edition of the Asia Liberty Forum 2017 in Mumbai on 10-11 February with over 200 freedom champions from across 22 countries coming together to brace the call of liberty. Hosted in partnership with the Atlas Network and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, the forum brought together the best of the liberal minds in Asia to dialogue and deliberate, build friendships and networks, share ideas and best practices, and to learn and engage with the movement’s most distinguished guardians.

The two day event kickstarted with an impressive opening panel on ‘Winning the Battle of Ideas’ in a world that continues to witness sweeping violations of fundamental freedoms. Other highlights included a keynote address by renowned Dalit scholar, Chandrabhan Prasad, with critical reflections on markets and human rights in the context of India’s continuing dalit marginalization; breakout sessions on strategies for advancing economic liberties; effective think tank management; the compatibility of Islam and freedom; Atlas Network’s ‘Think Tank Shark Tank-Asia’ competition; and speed-networking. The event came to a close with an address by the Bastiat award-winning journalist, blogger and author Amit Varma on ‘The Landscape of Freedom in India’.

For the first time, #AsiaF17 was also broadcasted to an online audience through a livestream on Facebook and Twitter drawing 3,983 unique viewers on Facebook and reaching over 10,700 twitter users.

See snapshots from the event here. See videos of the panel discussions here.
Researching Reality Internship 2016

Another summer of learning and unlearning came to an end with the closing of the Researching Reality Internship 2016. We received an overwhelming 300+ applications this year for the 6-week internship programme from 4 June to 15 July. 24 interns in 8 working groups researched, deliberated, debated critical concerns relating to governance in Delhi under the able mentorship of Somnath Bandopadhyay (Associate Professor, Nalanda University). Their research analysed the institutional structures and mechanisms in place to govern key policy domains and challenges in implementations, and made recommendations for reforms in the domains of health, education, power, environment, water, urban planning, governance and commerce.

The research papers were consolidated into the ‘Delhi Citizens’ Handbook 2016’. You can download a copy here.

Shri Manish Sisodia Launches the Delhi Citizens’ Handbook 2016

The 4th edition of the Delhi Citizens’ Handbook was released in August 2017 at a launch ceremony that drew over 120 participants. The handbook featuring research papers on the impact and relevance of policies in urban governance in the national capital was launched by Shri Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi at an event held at the India International Centre. The launch was preceded by a panel discussion titled ‘Jann ki Baat: A Citizens’ Perspective’. The discussion was moderated by Premila Nazareth, policy expert on FDI and independent columnist, and included eminent scholars and state representatives as key panelists. Amongst the panelists were, Economist Geeta Gauri, Supreme Court Counsel Vikramjit Banerjee, National Treasurer and Spokesperson for the Aam Aadmi Party Raghav Chadha, and Advisor to the State Minister for Health Dr. Nimmi Rastogi.

Shri Sisodia further commissioned three interns from our cohort of the Researching Reality Internship 2016 to undertake an audit of over 260 Delhi state government websites for their compliance with the Right to Information Act.

I am grateful for this initiative of writing a Citizens’ Handbook, for the people of Delhi. When we, in the government, are trying to implement policies at a speed which has not been seen before, such research is very useful. All the issues that have been raised in the Handbook, such as, Swachh Bharat, Education, Governance, Power, I have read... and many are actually important for me as a Minister, and for my officers.”

MANISH SISODIA
Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi
Building Consensus on the New Education Policy

Since the New Education Policy (NEP) was first announced in 2015, we have been proactively engaged in research, consultations and targeted advocacy for furthering choice and accountability in education.

▪ Engaging Industry Leaders and Parliamentarians: In July, we hosted a roundtable for investors in Mumbai, bringing together prominent industry leaders and philanthropists to think together on the NEP. We hosted a roundtable in Bangalore in December to enable a robust exchange of ideas between key policy influencers on the proposed NEP. Organised in partnership with Nishith Desai Associates, the roundtable was attended by 17 academicians, edupreneurs, civil society leaders and lawyers. The discussion saw an enthusiastic exchange of views and perspectives on educational reforms and brought a great deal of new insights for us at CCS. We also brought together 12 prominent parliamentarians for a roundtable in Delhi that further consolidated reform recommendations for facilitating greater investment in education, shifting the policy focus to learning outcomes, and incorporating vocational training in school education.

▪ Consultations with State Officials: We have had consultations with key state officials in Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Telangana, Maharashtra and Delhi. Through the meetings, we urged the state functionaries to reinforce their commitment to educational reforms that foster better governance, teacher accountability and the institution of per-child funding in the form of Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT).

▪ Meeting the Hon’ble Minister of HRD: Parth Shah, President, CCS met with Shri Prakash Javadekar along with Gurcharan Das, Author & Public Intellectual, and Trustee, CCS and Ashish Dhawan, Founder and CEO, Central Square Foundation and Trustee, CCS. An exhaustive letter with key policy recommendations asserting the need for participation in standardised student assessments, linking student and teacher profiles with UID and DBTs for the 25% reservation under the RTE was subsequently submitted to the Hon’ble Minister.

▪ Online Survey on Reform Ideas: We also disseminated an online survey to understand the policy priorities of a target audience of educationists, business leaders, scholars and thought-leaders. We have thus far received 37 responses on the online survey – the respondents include key business leaders and educational experts.

You can access the survey and vote for your top 5 reforms here. You can access the NEP Wiki here.
Speaking up for Budget Private Schools

- Roundtable on School Education with Shri Anil Swarup: We hosted a roundtable on school education chaired by Shri Anil Swarup, Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, MHRD. The roundtable aimed at reorienting policy focus to address the key challenges in enhancing education delivery in India. It brought together 25 prominent educationists, practitioners, investors and policy experts to dialogue on the need for and nature of reforms in school education. Amongst the participants were Amit Chandra, Managing Director, Bain Capital; Ashish Dhawan, Founder & Chairman, Central Square Foundation; Parth J Shah, President, Centre for Civil Society; Geeta Gandhi Kingdon, Professor, University College London; Anu Aga, Rajyasabha MP; Luis Miranda, Chairman, Centre for Civil Society; and Amit Kaushik, CEO, Australian Council for Research (India). Three key recommendations were presented at the roundtable:
  1. A clear separation of the government’s role as regulator, financier and provider of education by Luis Miranda
  2. Per-student funding through vouchers, direct cash transfers or reimbursements by Parth J Shah
  3. Learning outcomes-based recognition and regulation of schools by Geeta Gandhi Kingdon

- Meeting with Shri Manish Sisodia: NISA, in collaboration with Delhi Independent Schools Alliance (DISA) and the Coordination Committee of Public Schools (CCPS) hosted the ‘State Conference for Budget Private Schools’ in Delhi, bringing together over 500 BPS owners and NISA state representatives from Punjab, Goa, Haryana, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and other states. The conference was attended by Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister and Education Minister, Delhi. Shri Sisodia, in solidarity with the BPS owners agreed that existing land norms under the RTE remain a serious problem for the recognition of BPS and alluded to policy reforms that make the number of classrooms the basis for recognition instead of the existing land measure. The minister also spoke of the increased role of BPS in early childhood care and education in the proposed education scheme of the Delhi Government.

- Influencing the Influencers: We had consultations with key Members of Parliament, including Jay Panda, Udit Raj, Upendra Kushwaha, Prakash Javadekar, Bandaru Dattatreya, Kumari Selja, Anu Aga, and the research team of Derek O’ Brien. Through the consultations, we urged the state functionaries to reinforce their commitment to educational reforms and address the concerns of BPS for improving educational access and quality.

- Press Conference on BPS: We called for a press conference bringing together prominent journalists, media professionals and BPS owners to build consensus on the necessary reforms and draw effective media attention to the need for action. The meeting resulted in a robust dialogue, particularly on the extant land-norms that remain a serious problem for the recognition of these schools operating often in low-income neighborhoods, with little access to adequate land or capital. Other concerns raised included the need for a single window clearance system, subsidized commercial charges levied on power and water and taxation on land.

The conference and the concerns raised were covered in over 20 media reports in prominent Hindi and English news platforms.
Reconnecting with our Alumni

As we entered our 20th year of engaging young leaders on liberal perspectives in public policy, we decided to reconnect with our alumni through a series of dedicated events and initiatives. Over a 100 alumni participated in our events through the year!

We hosted two alumni meets as a part of our ‘Liberty Connect’ initiative with Hindol Sengupta, Award-winning Author & Journalist, and Vrinda Bhandari, Rhodes Scholar & Advocate. We hosted an alumni brunch in January, attended by 45 CCS graduates from 1998-2016 batches of our ‘policy, Liberty and Society Seminars, the I, Society and Public Policy, and Researching Reality Internships. We had faculty members and sector experts present at the event, including Amir Ullah Khan, eminent Economist; Mohit Satyanand, Entrepreneur and Policy Wonk; Hindol Sengupta, prominent Author; Geeta Gouri, Former Member, CCI; Shaun Star, Executive Director, Centre for India-Australia Studies and Swati Chawla, Doctoral Candidate, University of Virginia. 46 alumni were a part of our alumni retreat held in February, joined by 11 prominent speakers—policy experts, development professionals, intellectuals and opinion leaders including Gurcharan Das, Author & Public Intellectual Gaurav Dalmia, Chairman, Landmark Holdings; Rajesh Jain, Founder & MD, Netcore Solutions; Shubhashis Gangopadhyay, Research Director, India Development Foundation and Ila Patnaik, Professor, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, among others.

Building New Leaders with New Ideas: Campus Talks, Policy Trainings and Credit Courses

iPOLICY

iPolicy is our flagship program that brings the principles of sound public policy to young leaders. The three-day intensive course seeks to equip students with a critical understanding of contemporary socio-political and economic concerns and introduce them to market-liberal solutions to enduring policy challenges.

We also took iPolicy to Myanmar in partnership with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation South Asia. Our program in Myanmar drew 43 participants, including two high-ranking government officials. The training in Yangon will serve as a model for replication in Myanmar.

CREDIT COURSES

Started in 2015, our credit courses offer distinct 30-40 hours modules in policy training as a part of the formal curriculum of leading universities in the country. To prepare scholars to apply methods of critical enquiry to social issues, identify ill-performing or flawed policies and propose institutionally robust and evidence-driven policy solutions, we bring together a diverse faculty of academicians and practitioners.

CCS ON CAMPUS

CCS on Campus reaches out to leading colleges across the country to engage young learners in a critical dialogue on pressing socio-economic and political concerns. Through 2-3 hour ‘Campus Talks’ and ‘Policy Dialogues’, we encourage students to contest and debate learned presumptions and to explore the foundations of a free, prosperous and just society.
Institutional Wins
Building Networks to Amplify the Call for Choice and Accountability

National Independent Schools Alliance (NISA)

In incubated by the Centre for Civil Society (CCS) and formally launched in 2011, the National Independent Schools Alliance (NISA) remains the fundamental platform for BPS in the country, enabling them to voice their concerns, seek redressal of grievances and to mobilize for effective action. NISA works towards achieving micro school-level changes, and macro systemic transformations for improving the quality of education imparted in budget private schools across the country.

The alliance today includes over 55,000 schools catering to 22 million children across 18 states in India.

NISA Member States

18 States
26 State Associations
55,000 Schools
22 million Children
Organisational Wins
Making our Mark in the Movement for Liberty

Self-financing Credit Course in Public Policy

We successfully concluded a 30 hours credit course on Economics and Public Policy with the Vedica Scholars Program for Women, a unique MBA program that seeks to create a cadre of successful women professionals. The module marks the launch of our self-financing credit courses for colleges and universities in India, with 31 young professionals graduating from the course. The course received an overall rating of 3.5 on a scale of 4, and we received some great feedback from our participants!

“BRILLIANT. Theory made a lot of sense and use of case-studies was amazing! Really learned a lot.”

PARTICIPANT
Session on Transaction Costs and Coase Theorem

“Learnt how to draw conclusions from a set of graphs and the importance of trade and competition. The gender angle was great and isn’t looked at mostly.”

PARTICIPANT
Session on International Trade
Social Media Outreach

**Facebook**
- 25,699 Net increase in Likes
- 47,532 Video Views 2016-17

**Twitter**
- 1,780 Net Increase in Followers
- 9,57,000 Twitter Impressions

**YouTube**
- 30,894 Views
- 82,669 Minutes Total Watch Time

Media Outreach

- 78 PR Stories
- 363 Media Coverage of Events
- 6+ Radio Talks
- 07 TV Debates
- 26 Editorials

Media reports are available [here](#).
We Made it to the World’s Top 100, Again!

The new year began on an encouraging note for us at CCS with the release of the 2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report. We continue to be ranked among the top 100 think tanks in the world, standing at the 80th position this year, and 15th in the category of top think tanks in China, India, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Nine other Indian think tanks have figured amongst the top 175 for 2016.

The Global GoTo Think Tank Index Report is published annually by the University of Pennsylvania, as a part of its Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program. CCS has consistently ranked amongst the top 100 in the world, from among over 6500 think tanks.

This comes as a remarkable inspiration for us, as we continue to bring about social change through public policy—to transform ideas and mindsets, and enable effective policy reforms to foster choice and accountability across public and private sectors.

Accolades & Recognition

CCS Wins the Asia Liberty Award 2017

We are proud to be the recipient of the prestigious Asia Liberty Award 2017! An initiative of the Atlas Network, the award recognises our work in promoting and protecting livelihood freedom, through Jeevika, our Law, Liberty & Livelihood Campaign.

Conceived against a backdrop of continuing debilitating statist regulations that blight the lives of the nation’s poor, Jeevika strives to de-regulate and open markets, and promote livelihood opportunities for them. Through research and documentation, stakeholder engagement, effective advocacy, and litigation and legal action, Jeevika seeks to further India’s movement for economic liberalisation, promoting effective reforms for transforming the lives of small entrepreneurs—hawkers, cycle rickshaw pullers, small shop owners and other marginal and small entrepreneurs that continue to drive the country’s economic growth.

Amit Chandra, Associate Director, CCS received the award on behalf of the Centre at an award ceremony held as a part of the Asia Liberty Forum 2017 in Mumbai.
TRUSTEES | ADVISORS | SCHOLARS

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ICRER

Jeana Heldman
ICRER

Shreekant Gupta
National University of Singapore

Urjit Patel
The Reserve Bank of India
All partners are crucial to CCS’ success. We are grateful for your continued support to help advance our mission of social change through public policy.