

BROWNINDIA **INITIATIVE**



Annual Report 2014-2015

Research Themes

The research themes of the initiative are explored through public lectures, seminars, conferences, films, research projects, and outreach. ■

The Initiative currently conducts research on the following themes:

- 1** Urban India: Governance, Politics and Political Economy
- 2** Economic Inequalities
- 3** Pluralism and Diversities
- 4** Democracy

Message from the Director



This year, three new colleagues—Leela Gandhi (English), Bhriupati Singh (Anthropology), and Prerna Singh (Political Science)—brought remarkable energy and new intellectual perspectives to the Brown-India Initiative. The first two, in particular, inspired interdisciplinary engagements with the humanities, adding a new and important dimension to our social science existence, while enriching our intellectual experience and expanding our reach on campus.

Our Jindal Distinguished Lectures were delivered by William Dalrymple, a leading historian and public intellectual, and Jairam Ramesh, Cabinet Minister in Delhi until May 2014. Other prominent visitors included Nirupama Rao as the Meera and Vikram Gandhi Fellow in the fall of 2014 and Rana Dasgupta, a British novelist residing in India, in spring 2015. These visits often result in collaborative opportunities to expand India related course offerings. Nirupama Rao has been invited to Brown to teach an undergraduate seminar, "India in the World," this fall.

We added a new series to our programmatic focus: the Book Adda. This series features panel discussions of important new books, written by our colleagues, or those significantly involved with us as intellectual interlocutors. Three such events, all heavily attended, were held, profiling new books of Pradeep Chhibber (Berkeley), Leela Gandhi (Brown) and Bhriupati Singh (Brown).

The Brown-India Seminar Series continued to meet, as did the Joint Brown-Harvard-MIT Seminar on South Asian Politics. The "Gilded Ages" Group, a collaboration of Professors, Edward Steinfeld (China), James Morone (USA) and me (India) completed its fourth semester.

The Heller-Varshney project on urbanization and public service delivery in India completed the Bangalore segment of the research and presented its first findings at a conference in Bangalore. On the basis of the knowledge gained, the survey instrument is being finalized for a launch in several other cities for the next stage of research. Publications are planned.

This year's group of competitively selected fellows, including faculty (3), graduate students (4) and undergraduates (6) went away from campus, mostly to India, to conduct research on urban design, air pollution, art as activism and many more topics.

We welcome three new colleagues on the faculty. Sarah Besky, who has worked on the tea plantations of India, joins the anthropology department as an assistant professor. Rajesh Veeraraghaven, who has researched India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Program, and Christopher Clary, who specializes in South Asian Security, join us as postdoctoral fellows at the Watson Institute. The Jindal lectures this fall will be given by Montek Singh Ahluwalia, India's leading economic policy maker for more than two decades till 2014.

We wrote books and articles, gave lectures, and intellectually engaged members of the Brown community and beyond. We look forward to another year of intellectual creativity, imagination, and stimulation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashutosh Varshney', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ashutosh Varshney
Director, Brown-India Initiative
Sol Goldman Professor of International
Studies and the Social Sciences
Professor of Political Science

OP Jindal Distinguished Lecture Series

To promote a serious discussion of politics, economics, social and cultural change in modern India, Sajjan and Sangita Jindal have endowed, in perpetuity, the OP Jindal Distinguished Lectures by major scholars and public figures. ■

FALL 2014

JAIRAM RAMESH

In November 2014, Jairam Ramesh, member of parliament from Andhra Pradesh and, until May 2014, a cabinet minister in the Government of India, spent a week in residence at Brown to deliver the OP Jindal lectures, visit classrooms and engage with faculty. Ramesh's lectures offered insights gained from years of experience serving the government, including as India's Union Minister for Rural Development and Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests. He also worked as an advisor to the Finance Minister during 1996-98, to the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission during 1992-94, and the Prime Minister in 1991. He has authored a number of works and reports in areas as diverse as energy, technology, capital goods, industrial policy, and telecom.

Ramesh has been a leading figure in international climate diplomacy for years and was chief negotiator for India at the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen, Denmark. Ramesh also played a key leadership role at the Climate Change Summit in Cancun (2010) and at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (2009-2010). Ramesh continues this work as a member of the International Advisory Board that gives strategic policy advice to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Ramesh has also been a columnist for the *Business Standard*, *Business Today*, *The Telegraph*, *Times of India* and *India Today*, sometimes under the pen-name "Kautilya".

1 NOVEMBER 17

Lecture 1: The Rights-based Legislation Era in India 2004-14

Commentator:
Perna Singh, Brown University

2 NOVEMBER 19

India's Growth-Ecology-Democracy Relationship

Commentator:
J. Timmons Roberts, Brown University



Jairam Ramesh, Ashutosh Varshney, and Perna Singh



Students pose with Ramesh following lecture



OP Jindal Distinguished Lecture Series

SPRING 2015

WILLIAM DALRYMPLE

In April 2015, William Dalrymple, a leading historian and public intellectual, gave the OP Jindal Distinguished Lectures. With new materials, Dalrymple revisited two of the most important events of modern South Asian history: the first decades of the capture of India by the British East India Company, and the British failure to conquer Afghanistan. He also reflected on current-day implications of these historic events.

Based in New Delhi since 1989, Dalrymple has written several award-winning books, including, *In Xanadu: A Quest* (Flamingo, 1989), *City of Djinn*s (Flamingo, 1993), *From the Holy Mountain* (Flamingo, 1997), *The Age of Kali* (Flamingo, 1998),

White Mughals (Penguin Books, 2002), *The Last Mughal* (Bloomsbury, 2006), *Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India* (Bloomsbury, 2009), and, most recently, *The Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan* (Bloomsbury, 2013).

Dalrymple is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the Royal Geographical Society and of the Royal Asiatic Society, and is a founder and co-director of the Jaipur Literature Festival, which is now widely recognized as the largest literary event in the world. He is a regular contributor to the *New Yorker*, the *Guardian*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, and the *New York Review of Books*, and is the India correspondent of the *New Statesman*.



Full house during Dalrymple lecture



Leela Gandhi, Olivia Fraiser, William Dalrymple, and Ashutosh Varshney



William Dalrymple



1 **APRIL 28**
*Lecture I: The East India Company:
The Original Corporate Raiders*
Commentator:
Maya Jasanoff, Harvard University

2 **MAY 1**
*Lecture II:
Afghanistan: Return to the King, Redux
The Lessons of a 19th Century Catastrophe*
Commentator:
Faiz Ahmed, Brown University

Meera and Vikram Gandhi Fellowships

Meera and Vikram Gandhi Fellowships enable major journalists, public figures and scholars working on India to undertake substantial projects while in residence at Brown. The fellowships are funded by a gift from Meera and Vikram Gandhi. ■

Nirupama Rao, former Ambassador of India, served as the Meera and Vikram Gandhi Fellow in 2014. While at Brown, Rao made progress on her book manuscript, parts of which she shared with the community on September 19th in a lecture titled, “The Politics of History: India and China, 1949-1962”. Rao is currently continuing to work on this project as a Jawarharlal Nehru Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. An active member of the community during her tenure at Brown, we look forward to welcoming Ambassador Rao back in the fall of 2015, when she will teach a seminar on “India in the World.”



Rao joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1973. In a diplomatic career spanning four decades, she served, inter alia, as India’s foreign secretary, ambassador to China, high commissioner to Sri Lanka and ambassador to the United States.



Former Indian
Ambassador to
the United States

Meera and Vikram
Gandhi Fellow

**Nirupama
Rao**

**The
Politics
of
History:
India
and
China,
1949
–1962**

**September
19
2014
2p.m.**

Reception to follow

Joukowsky Forum
Watson Institute
111 Thayer Street



**BROWNNINDIA
INITIATIVE**

Brown-India Initiative Seminars

The Brown-India Seminar series is a central interdisciplinary offering of the Initiative. This series of public lectures facilitates a convergence of figures from across the lines of academia, civil society, literature, public policy, and journalism to contribute to the discourse on contemporary India. ■



Ann Grodzins Gold



Rahul Pandita



Student posing question



Ruth Vanita

FALL 2014

1 **SEPTEMBER 19**
Nirupama Rao, Former Indian Ambassador
to the U.S.
*The Politics of History: India and China,
1949-1962*

2 **SEPTEMBER 26**
Ann Grodzins Gold, Syracuse University
*Negotiated pluralism and public religion:
Keeping the peace in Jahazpur*

3 **OCTOBER 6**
Lata Mani & Nicholas Grandi
*De Sidere 7, An ensemble
videocontemplation*

4 **OCTOBER 17**
Rahul Pandita, *The Hindu*
*The 2014 Elections and India's New
Government*

5 **OCTOBER 31**
Patrick Heller & Ashutosh Varshney,
Brown University
*Citizenship and Public Service Delivery:
Evidence from Bangalore*

6 **DECEMBER 5**
Hilary Silver, Brown University
The Penalty for Being Muslim
Jo Guldi, Brown University
Participatory Maps, A Global History


SPRING 2015

1 **FEBRUARY 24**
Ruth Vanita, University of Montana
*Syncretic Erotics: Poetry, Sex and the City
in Pre-Colonial Lucknow*

2 **MARCH 6**
Sarah Pinto, Tufts University
*Beyond Translation:
The Story of Hysteria in India*

3 **APRIL 10**
**Rose McDermott & Michael
Dickerson**, Brown University
*Attitudes toward gender: embed-
ded survey experiments in India*
Sriniketh Nagavarapu, Economics
*Who Benefits from a Better Public
Distribution System? Evidence from
Urban Punjab*

4 **APRIL 10**
Amit Chaudhuri, University of East Anglia
*Odysseus, Bedsits, and Lamb Curry:
A Conversation with Amit Chaudhuri*



Brown-Harvard-MIT Joint Seminar on South Asian Politics

The Brown-Harvard-MIT joint seminar on South Asian politics approaches some of the big questions of politics, political economy and security, on which the South Asian region in general, and India in particular, offer engaging perspectives. The series is co-sponsored by the Watson Institute at Brown University, the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University and the MIT Center for International Studies ■

- 1 **SEPTEMBER 12**
Shivaji Mukherjee, University of Toronto
Colonial Origins of Maoist Insurgency in India: Historical Legacies of British Indirect Rule
- 2 **OCTOBER 6**
Akshay Mangla, Harvard University
Bureaucratic Politics and Democratic Rights: Forging a Right to Education in India
- 3 **NOVEMBER 7**
Sunila Kale, University of Washington
Electrifying India: Regional Political Economies of Development
- 4 **NOVEMBER 21**
Jairam Ramesh, Member of Parliament; Former Minister of Environment and Rural Development
India's Maoist Insurgency Challenge
- 5 **MARCH 13**
Milan Vaishnav, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Understanding the Changing Indian Voter
- 6 **APRIL 17**
Chandan Gowda, Azim Premji University
The Origins of the Developmental State: Colonialism and the Politics of Knowledge in India
- 7 **APRIL 24**
Ambassador Shivshankar Menon, Fisher Family Fellow, Harvard Kennedy School; Former National Security Adviser to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh
India's National Security Calculus

www.southasianpolitics.net



ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

CHAIR

- 1 Ashutosh Varshney**
Sol Goldman Professor of International Studies
and the Social Sciences, Brown University

CO-DIRECTORS

- 2 Vipin Narang**
Associate Professor of Political Science,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- 4 Prerna Singh**
Mahatma Gandhi Assistant Professor of
Political Science and International Studies,
Brown University
- 3 Patrick Heller**
Professor of Sociology and International
Studies, Brown University
- 5 Akshay Mangla**
Assistant Professor of Business
Administration, Harvard Business School

Book Adda and Art Show

In 2014-2015 we added a new series, the Book Adda, to our programs. Adda means a site for collective deliberation in South Asia. ■

This series, featuring panel discussions of important new books written by our colleagues, or those significantly involved with us as intellectual interlocutors, has been a tremendous success. Both on-campus participation and online viewership have been high. The third adda, based on Bhrigupati Singh's award-winning book, also inspired the Initiative's first art show. The art show featured responses of eleven of India's prominent contemporary artists to the themes of Singh's book.

1 FEBRUARY 6

Pradeep Chhibber's *Religious Practice and Democracy in India* (Cambridge University Press 2014). *Opening Concert and Reception*

Commentators:

Anna Grzymala-Busse, University of Michigan
Jeremy Menchik, Boston University
Rachel Beatty Riedl, Northwestern University
Bhrigupati Singh, Brown University
Prena Singh, Brown University

3 APRIL 3

Bhrigupati Singh's *Poverty and the Quest for Life: Spiritual and Material Striving in Rural India* (University of Chicago Press, 2015)

Commentators:

Amanda Anderson, Brown University
Lina Fruzzetti, Brown University
Leela Gandhi, Brown University
Sudipta Kaviraj, Columbia University
Michael T. Taussig, Columbia University

2 MARCH 16

Leela Gandhi's *The Common Cause: Post-colonial Ethics and Democracy, 1900-1955* (University of Chicago Press, 2014)

Commentators:

Toral Gajarawala, New York University
Forrest Gander, Brown University
Jo Guldi, Brown University
Kevin McLaughlin, Brown University
Akhil Sharma, Rutgers University
Bhrigupati Singh, Brown University



Bhrigupati Singh and Michael T. Taussig



Panel discusses Leela Gandhi's *The Common Cause*



Pradeep Chibber, University of California Berkeley



Participants "read" artist response to Singh's *Poverty and the Quest for Life*

Co-Sponsored Programs

In its third year the Initiative co-sponsored events with many departments across campus including Hillel, Ivy Film Festival, Literary Arts, the South Asian Students Association, and South Asian Studies. ■

1

OCTOBER 31

Rohini Mohan, Journalist
Seasons of Trouble

5

APRIL 11

Amrit Singh, Director
Dosa Hunt (2012)

2

DECEMBER 2

Anna Matthews, Artist
Bollywood Satirized Art Show & Reception

6

MAY 1

Nissim Reuben, Assistant Director
of the Asia Pacific Institute
Shabbat Dinner and Conversation

3

MARCH 24-28

Ashwini Bhat & Sharbani Dasgupta, Artists
TERRA FIRMA Gallery Show at **AS220**

4

APRIL 3-APRIL 4

In Dialogue with Borders: Critical Conversations on Violence, Citizenship, and Sovereignty in Modern 'South Asia'
A two-day conference hosted by South Asian Studies graduate students

India Exclusion Report Workshop

On April 29, 2015, the Initiative held a workshop to discuss the first "India Exclusion Report," which was compiled by nonprofit and education institutions in India and abroad. The report was spearheaded by the Centre for Equity Studies, New Delhi and its director, Harsh Mander. The overall goal of the report is to build collective understanding about the extent to which the state at all its levels—local, district, state and union—is fulfilling its legal, constitutional, and programmatic duties and responsibilities towards the socially excluded groups in the country.

The document is envisioned as a widely collaborative annual effort involving numerous institutions and individuals working with disadvantaged and marginalized communities in India. The workshop at Brown brought together UN officials and academic experts on social inclusion to examine the first report and provide suggestions for its improvement in future years.

On behalf of the Brown-India Initiative, this collaborative effort was headed by Patrick Heller.



Urban India Reading Group

Launched in fall 2013, the reading group meets occasionally during the academic year with the goal of bringing together people at Brown with an interest in urban India, including both those with a specific India focus, and those interested in developing a comparative understanding of Indian cities. The group has two primary activities 1) small, informal workshops at which ongoing research work on urban India, both at Brown and by visitors, is presented to the group for discussion; 2) key publications and research on urban India are read and discussed. The group includes graduate and undergraduate students, as well as faculty from the Watson Institute, Anthropology, Political Science, and Sociology.

The Gilded Ages Research Group

A collaboration initiated by Brown political science faculty members James Morone, Edward Steinfeld, and Ashutosh Varshney, in the spring of 2014, the Gilded Ages Research Group aims to study rapid urbanization and industrialization across three comparative cases: contemporary India, contemporary China, and late nineteenth century America. The group particularly seeks to understand a series of phenomena generally associated with “gilded age” periods—rapid urban infrastructural build-out, extensive inbound migration to cities, machine politics, corruption, labor unrest, and blurred public-private boundaries. The group will consider the extent to which rapid urbanization and industrialization can be described as a singular phenomenon across time and place, and whether the nature of political institutions and regime type at the national level actually affects the nature of politics and state-society relations within the city.

PRESENTATIONS 2014–2015

1

OCTOBER 23

Anirudh Krishna, Duke University
Urban Poverty in a Rapidly Developing India: Can Slums Facilitate a Better Life?

2

OCTOBER 30

Tariq Thachil, Yale University
Which Identities Matter for Poor Urban Migrants? Evidence from India

3

NOVEMBER 20

Evan Osnos, The New Yorker
Age of Ambition

4

MARCH 12

Michael Walton, World Bank
Private wealth, the state and popular reaction: Parallels and contrasts between contemporary India and the US gilded age

5

APRIL 16

Greg Distelhorst, University of Toronto
The Power of Empty Promises: Popular Activism and the Muckracking Media in Contemporary China

6

FEBRUARY 26

Jo Guldi, Brown University
Sewage, water pollution, and clean air: Some stories about reforming cities in 19th Century Europe and North America



Delhi Metro

Visiting Scholars



APRIL 17

*The Origins of the Developmental State:
Colonialism and the Politics of Knowledge
in India*

Spring 2015

Chandan Gowda

Chandan Gowda is a Professor of Sociology at Azim Premji University in Karnataka, India. Gowda worked as an Associate Professor of Sociology at the Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion, National Law School of India, Bangalore, after earning his Ph.D. degree at the Department of Sociology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in 2007. He obtained an M.A. degree in sociology from the University of Hyderabad in 1996 and a Ph.D. Certificate in Cultural Studies from the University of Pittsburgh in 1998.

Gowda's research interests include social theory, Indian normative traditions, caste, and Kannada literature and cinema. In addition to his academic publications, he has written for newspapers and published translations of Kannada fiction and non-fiction in English. He is presently completing a book on the cultural politics of development in old Mysore state.

Rana Dasgupta

For the last two years, in collaboration with the Dean of Faculty, the India Initiative has teamed up with the Department of Modern Culture and Media (MCM) to offer new courses with an Indian focus, taught or co-taught by Rana Dasgupta. Award-winning novelist Rana Dasgupta was born in the UK in 1971 and grew up in Cambridge. As an adult he lived in France, Malaysia and the US before moving to Delhi in 2000. In the spring of 2015 Dasgupta co-taught a class titled, "Intellectual Life and Culture in the Post-Western World," as the Distinguished Visiting Lecturer and Writer-in-Residence with MCM.



Siddharth Swaminathan

Siddharth Swaminathan is a Professor of Political Science at Azim Premji University in Karnataka, India. Swaminathan teaches courses on Politics in India, Welfare Rights, and Empirical Policy Analysis. He received an MA and PhD in political science from the Claremont Graduate University. His research focuses on political demography, voter behavior, citizenship, and urban governance in India. Prior to joining Azim Premji University, he held faculty positions at the Institute for Social and Economic Change, La Sierra University and California State University.

His most recent publications include: *Statistical Methods and Political Analysis: Examining the 'Economic Vote' in Indian Parliamentary Elections* (Knowing the Social World: Challenges and Responses, 2015) and *Politics, Development, and Deaths: Comparing China and India* (Konark Publishers Private Ltd, 2015)

Jaanagraha Research Partnership

The Janaagraha-Brown Citizenship Index (JB-CI) Report was released in December 2014 at a conference in Bangalore. The report seeks to measure the quality of citizenship in urban India by evaluating citizen engagement and public service provision. Co-authored by Ebony Bertorelli (Janaagraha), Siddarth Swaminathan (Azim Premji University) and Ashutosh Varshney and Patrick Heller (Brown-India Initiative), the report is the result of a collaborative project between Brown University and Janaagraha, a Bangalore based not-for-profit organization working on the quality of life in urban India. The project has two aims: (i) construction of various measures of citizenship, including a citizenship index - a measurable statistical index assessing the quality of citizenship across individuals within a city; and (ii) examination of the determinants of basic service delivery in urban centres. The report asks how citizenship is distributed across the various categories of class, caste and religion. Who shows higher levels of citizenship? The report also asks how basic services - education, health, power, sanitation, water, etc. - are provided to the city and how citizens experience the bureaucracies and organizations associated with such services. How does citizenship matter relative to caste, class and religion?



Brown-India Initiative Fellows 2015

The Initiative awarded funds for research projects and summer internships to six undergraduate students, four graduate students, and three faculty. The projects selected for funding represent a variety of research topics related to social, political, cultural, and economic change in India. In the fall, student fellows from the previous year presented their work in two workshops. ■

FACULTY FELLOWS



1

Rose McDermott
Professor of Political Science
Attitudes Toward Gender Equality



Prerna Singh
Assistant Professor of Political Science and
International Studies



2

Gregory Wellenius
Associate Professor of Epidemiology
*Household Air Pollution and Cardiovascular
Health in Rural India*



GRADUATE FELLOWS

1 Chao Bian
Theater Directing | Various
Indian Theatre for Social Change

3 Poulomi Chakrabarti
Political Science | New Delhi
*One Nation, Many Worlds: Varieties
of Developmental Regimes in India*

2 Elizabeth Cecil
Classics | Rajasthan
*Gods Imprisoned: Theft, Memory, and
Heritage Making in Modern Rajasthan*

4 Lakshmi Padmanabhan
Modern Culture & Media | New Delhi
*India's Daughter: Sexual Violence,
Sovereign Power, and Neoliberal Critique*



UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS

1 **Rebecca Barron '16**
Chennai
*Contemporary Implications of
Indian Colonial Architecture*

4 **Dokee Lee '16**
New Delhi
*Comparative Studies on Human Rights
in India*

2 **Pia Brar '16**
Various
"Artivism" in India
"Artivism" and India
"Artivism" and India

5 **Ferdinand Mayer '16**
Chennai
YRG Care Internship

3 **Sebastian Clark '16**
Chandigarh
*Contesting Space/Occupying Place:
Chandigarh, its Capitol and the
Capacity to Aspire*

6 **Ximena Carranza Risco '17**
New Delhi
*Mainstreaming climate change concerns in
subnational governance and development
planning in India*

Steering Committee



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