



**Asia**  
Society

India Centre

# Asia Society India Centre Monsoon 2009

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#### Asia 21

## Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of what will be a quarterly newsletter from the Asia Society India Centre. Our aim through this newsletter is to keep you up to date with activities at our Centre and make you part of the worldwide Asia Society community.

In this quarterly newsletter you will receive a variety of information. We will highlight upcoming events with exclusive interviews from participants, special media presentations, and insight into topics being addressed. We will introduce you to a new Asia 21 ([www.asiasociety.org/asia21](http://www.asiasociety.org/asia21)) fellow each season, shedding light on significant projects happening in India. You'll also see information on our past programs, in an attempt to give you a flavor of what the India Centre has to offer you. Among these are Asia Buzz, an opportunity for young professionals to network; Asia in Writing, a showcase of Asia's best current writers; and Urban Asia, an exploration of the challenges of burgeoning metropolises in Asia.

Our colleagues in New York have put together interesting and thoughtful programs. They hosted US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for her first policy briefing on Asia ([http://www.asiasociety.org/resources/090213\\_hillaryclinton.html](http://www.asiasociety.org/resources/090213_hillaryclinton.html)), shortly before her inaugural

## Quick Link

[www.asiasociety.org/visit/mumbai](http://www.asiasociety.org/visit/mumbai)

## Upcoming Events

[www.asiasociety.org/events](http://www.asiasociety.org/events)

8 June  
Breaking the Cycle: Getting Out and Staying Out of Poverty Panel Discussion with Dr. Deepa Narayan  
@ The American Center, Mumbai

15 June  
From Post-colonialism to Globalization: A Mapping of South Asian Diaspora Art Over the Past Decade  
Evening presentation by Sharmistha Ray, Painter and Art Writer  
@ Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai

## Founding Members

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## Board of Directors

Purnendu Chatterjee  
Vishakha Desai

trip to the region. And India is looking in anticipation to Secretary Clinton's visit in her new official capacity. Asia Society in New York, in collaboration with New York University and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, will host the Muslim Voices Festival (<http://muslimvoicesfestival.org>) that has been designed to share and celebrate the arts and culture of Muslim societies. One of the highlights of this festival is a theatre production from Mumbai featuring Naseeruddin Shah. The group will perform a traditional *dastangoi* retelling of the Amir Hamza tales. If you happen to be in New York, I encourage you to attend one of the events in Asia Society, New York.

I hope you have enjoyed hearing about the various programs conducted by Asia Society India Centre this spring. We have done programs in the last few months that range from issues of alternative energy to contemporary art; from business networking to monetary policy.

Our Spring Membership Drive was well received and we are happy to see that so many of you find value in our programming. For those of you who are not yet members we encourage you to join now. Asia Society is, after all, a membership based organization and your patronage helps sustain the quality and frequency of our programming. Please see our membership form for more information (<http://www.asiasociety.org/visit/mumbai/#membership>), and feel free to contact us with any questions.

Our next newsletter will reach you in September 2009. We welcome your inputs and suggestions about the newsletter and our programs. And look forward to welcoming you at one of our upcoming events!

Bunty Chand  
Executive Director  
Asia Society India Centre

## Breaking the Cycle: Sustainable Solutions to Getting Out and Staying Out of Poverty – An Interview with Dr. Deepa Narayan

*Dr. Deepa Narayan speaks to Asia Society India Centre about poverty in Asia, social constructs that effect it, and what makes it so difficult to stay out of poverty.*

### What have you learned from poor people's ratings of poverty?

Poor people have no problems discussing poverty and developing ratings of poverty and wellbeing for all households in their community. The advantage of asking poor people to rate poverty is that they own their ratings and these ratings can be used for tracking poverty over time and for community targeting. We found that people's ratings are closer to \$2/ day poverty indicator rather than \$1/day.

### What role do consumption patterns, particularly social expenditure like weddings, play in poor people falling back into poverty?

This varies across contexts. In Asia, particularly speaking about India, we find that social expenditure is an important factor in the downward fall and this has to do mostly with marriages and dowries. These rituals and festivals are important in not only maintaining status, but there is reciprocity involved. But the level of expenditure in India has gone beyond what is reasonable and contributes to poverty.

### How do the causes of falling into poverty differ between India and other countries in Asia particularly in other South Asian countries and why?

Pheroza Godrej  
Dheeraj G. Hinduja  
Sajjan Jindal  
Sunil Mehta  
Falguni Nayar  
Rashmi Poddar  
Jaidev Shroff  
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## About Asia Society

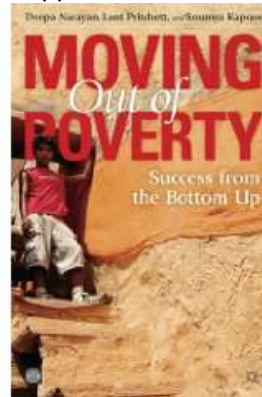
The Asia Society is an international, nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening relationships and deepening understanding among the peoples of Asia and the United States. The Asia Society presents a wide range of public programs, including major art exhibitions, performances, lectures, international conferences, and K-12 educational initiatives about Asia. Headquartered in New York City, the organization has centers in Washington, DC, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Hona Kona, Manila.

There are two of the main reasons why people fall into poverty. They are: (i) health shocks, such illness coupled with a lack of access to quality and affordable health care, and (ii) economic opportunity at the local level. The opportunity for prosperity is directly related to the access to economic opportunity.

In India, financial shocks can also be related to social expenditure, but in other countries, major causes are often failed businesses or a failed crop.

**How important a factor is government responsiveness in poverty reduction and how do the various state governments in your study fare in the help that they have extended to their constituents?**

When we started the study in 2004, we took the political science approach and asked what the relationship was between local government and moving out of poverty. We measure responsiveness of government by the extent to which local governments responds to its citizen's needs and demands, the extent to which people feel local government is something they can trust, and how much the people feel they are being listened to. We found that government responsiveness has a direct impact on people's ability to move out of poverty. However this does not hold true everywhere and one has to look at it in a nuanced way.



Dr. Deepa Narayan will participate in a panel discussion on Moving out of Poverty on June 8<sup>th</sup> at The American Center, Mumbai. Speakers include:

**Shobhaa De**

Columnist and Author

**Naina Lal Kidwai**

Group General Manager and Country Head, HSBC Group Companies, India

**Dr. Deepa Narayan**

Former Senior Advisor, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network, World Bank

**Moderated by: Anand Giridharadas**

Columnist, International Herald Tribune and Contributor, New York Times

Monday, June 8, 2009 at 6:30 pm

American Center Auditorium  
4 New Marine Lines, Churchgate, Mumbai  
(Opposite Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work)

Co-hosted with The American Center and Dasra.

**RSVP: [programs@asiasociety.org.in](mailto:programs@asiasociety.org.in)**

## SOAK

MUMBAI IN AN ESTUARY

A public exhibition and book in response to the flood of 2005

SOAK is an unprecedented way of looking at Mumbai's terrain and the history of its making. It images the sea and the monsoon not as enemies and agents of flood, but as inevitable

Melbourne, Mumbai, and Shanghai.

Charles R. Kaye, Chairman,  
Board of Trustees

Vishakha N. Desai, President

### Mailing List, Membership, and More

For more information on the following, please email [admin@asiasociety.org.in](mailto:admin@asiasociety.org.in).

- Upcoming events
- Join the mailing list
- Individual membership
- Corporate Membership

If you would like to react, offer suggestions, or comment on any of the content you've read in this newsletter, we would be happy to hear from you. Please write to [programs@asiasociety.org.in](mailto:programs@asiasociety.org.in). We look forward to your active participation in the Asia Society India Centre community.

Thank you!

partners in the shaping of the ground of settlement. These are identities that Mumbai lives with, wonders at and delights in.

Mumbai is accustomed to being soaked by the monsoon. The rains of July 26, 2005, however, flooded the city. Hundreds died and property wasted as parts of Mumbai went under several feet of water for days on end.

Soak to flood is a profound shift. It makes an enemy of a friend even if it is a friend who is not always welcome. People are now advised to carry hammers to break the windows of their cars in case their automatic systems fail in high water; administrators and engineers work over-time to drain the monsoon off the land as fast as possible. Waiting for the monsoon is increasingly understood as readying for battle.

As much as the events of July 26, 2005 played an important role in the shift to flood, the war against the monsoon has been long coming. SOAK investigates the origins of this war and traces its history through colonial representations. Displays include the tentative if artful drawings of the coastline in early European maps rooted in the belief that a hard line separates land from sea and that view the monsoon as a spoiler of 'fair-weather landscape'.

SOAK, on the other hand, situates Mumbai in a fluid threshold between land and sea, a shifting saline and fresh water gradient of creeks, and a monsoon surface of holdings. The ground between land and sea is understood to be a filter in section drawings, photo-works and models that present this alternative representation of Mumbai's terrain. And twelve fresh proposals provoke us to rethink the larger terrain of the Mithi that reaches down from the Sanjay Gandhi National Park to historic forts along what used to be the Mahim creek.



*(Detail of a sectional view of Mumbai)*

SOAK is an invitation to dialogue with plans for a resilient Mumbai. It showcases design interventions that holds waters rather than channel it out to sea; that work with the gradient of an estuary. It calls for visualizing the city as a fluid field of rain-soaked surfaces, monsoon holdings and overflows, of public-private negotiations. The Exhibition also includes a 'collective memory' installation, approximately 72 historic maps and illustrations and 90 new drawings and photographic works done by Mathur and da Cunha.

This project offers a new vocabulary for living with the monsoon and the sea. It endeavors to transform the increasingly shrill language of fear, anxiety and dread that marks our reception of the rains in Mumbai today. Rather than fighting the monsoon, this exhibition encourages us, once again, to design with and enjoy the soak.

## **Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha**

Authors / Artists

## **Kavita Khanna**

Director

## **Trapeze**

Exhibition & Book Design

## **Rajivan Ayyappan**

Sound Design

[www.soak.in](http://www.soak.in)

Website

The exhibition opens on Tuesday, June 23, 2009 in the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai. On view till Sunday, August 23, 2009.

As Education and Outreach Partner for this Exhibition, Asia Society India Centre will organize a book launch, gallery walks, panel discussions, a conference and workshops. Stay tuned for more information on these exciting events in the coming weeks.

## **Look East: Contemporary Films from Asia**

The Asia Society India Centre, in collaboration with National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA), Mumbai, and India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi is happy to present "Look East—Contemporary Films from Asia", a screening of nine films from The Global Film Initiative's collection ([www.globalfilm.org](http://www.globalfilm.org)). This series will offer acclaimed international films from China, Indonesia, Vietnam and Iran, among others.

### **Mumbai**

- July 10, Friday, 6.30 PM. The Little Theatre, NCPA. *Opera Jawa*. Dir.: Garin Nagruho/ 2006 / 120 minutes /Indonesia
- July 11, Saturday, 4 PM. The Little Theatre, NCPA. *Dam Street*. Dir.: Li Yu / 2005 / 93 minutes/ China
- July 11, Saturday, 6.30 PM. The Little Theatre, NCPA. *Buffalo Boy*. Dir.: Nguyen-Vô Nghiem-Minh / 2004 / 102 minutes /Vietnam

*(These screenings are open to members of Asia Society India Centre and NCPA on a First-come-first-served basis).*

### **New Delhi**

The following month we will inaugurate the Series in New Delhi in collaboration with the India International Centre (IIC) on 12th August 2009 at 6.30 pm.

*(These screenings are open to members of Asia Society India Centre and IIC's Film Club on a First-come-first-served basis)*

Look forward to further information regarding future installments of this wonderful film series.

## **Asia's Next Challenge: Securing the Region's Water Future**

This April, Asia Society released a report called *Asia's Next Challenge: Securing the Region's Water Future*, compiled by the Asia Society Leadership Group on Water Security in Asia. The report highlighted the fact that Asia is home to half of the world's population but does not have a substantial enough supply of freshwater. As a result of population growth, increased



urbanization, and climate change, there is concern that national security and development challenges will emerge in the face of water scarcity.

The report went on to state that solutions are indeed possible, but they require greater participation from and partnership with the private sector. There is also a significant need for greater financial support to combat the issue of water security. The report encourages Asia countries to create local approaches to dealing with water scarcity by collaborating with non governmental organization, business, civil society, and the government.



The leadership group concludes with a series of suggestions for addressing water security. Amongst them are stronger public-private partnerships, adherence to the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals, and great policy planning around water.

Read the full report at <http://www.asiasociety.org/taskforces/water/>. Asia Society India Centre will soon present a panel discussion around the findings of the water report. Look forward to more information regarding the panel soon.

## Fulbright Scholarships



### United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF)

#### **Fellowships for Indian citizens' study, research, teaching and professional development in the United States of America**

**Fulbright-Nehru Doctoral and Professional Research Fellowships:** These pre-doctoral level research fellowships, for a maximum period of nine months, are designed for scholars who are registered for a Ph.D. at an Indian institution and also for professionals with significant work experience and accomplishments. Age: 45 years or under preferred.

**Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Fellowships:** For faculty and professionals from all disciplines who have a Ph.D. or equivalent published work. These fellowships, for a duration of up to eight months, aim to provide opportunity to do research on contemporary issues and concerns to contribute to the creation of knowledge. Age: 50 years or under preferred.

**Fulbright-Nehru Visiting Lecturer Fellowships:** For faculty and professionals from all disciplines who have a Ph.D. or equivalent published work. These fellowships, four months, contribute to internationalization of the curriculum at the US host institutions and understanding of recent developments in India. Age: 50 years or under preferred.

**Fulbright-Nehru Environmental Leadership Program:** For mid-level Indian environment professionals in public/private sector or non-governmental organizations for up to four months in the fields of Environmental Information/Systems Reporting; Environmental Education;

environmental Policy, Regulations and Law; Environmental Sciences and Toxicology; and environmental Management. The program will combine short-term practical training/internship with opportunities for networking with American counterpart organizations. Age: 50 years or under preferred.

**Fulbright-Nehru-CII Fellowships for Leadership in Management:** For Indian business managers, whose employers would be willing to bear 80% (approximately USD 25,280 – could go up for 2010) of the total cost (USD 31,600 – could go up for 2010), may compete to attend a specially designed 10-week management program at the Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper School of Business, located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. Age: 45 years or under preferred.

**Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program:** For Indian secondary school teachers (9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades) of English, Mathematics, or Science to participate in direct exchange of positions with U.S. teachers for a semester.

**Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program (FLTA):** For young (between 21 and 29 years of age) college teachers of English or those training to be teachers of English with a Master's degree in English. Selected FLTAs from India will teach Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, or Urdu at select U.S. campuses during their nine month non-degree grant.

**Fulbright-Nehru Master's Fellowships for Leadership Development:** For outstanding individuals who demonstrate leadership qualities; have completed the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree; and have at least three years of professional or work experience; to pursue a master's degree program at select U.S. colleges and universities in the areas of Business Administration, Communication Studies, Economics, Environment, and Public Administration. Age: Between 25 and 30 preferred.

**International Fulbright Science and Technology Award:** For outstanding individuals who have completed an equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree from a recognized Indian university to pursue Ph.D. in Aeronautics and Astronautics/Aeronautical Engineering, Agriculture (theoretical or research-based focus only), Astronomy/Planetary Sciences, Biology, Biomedical Engineering, Chemistry, Computer Sciences/Engineering, Energy, Engineering (electrical, chemical, civil, mechanical, ocean, and petroleum), Environmental Science/Engineering, Geology/Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Information Sciences and Systems (engineering focus only), Materials Science/Engineering, Mathematics, Neuroscience/Brain and Cognitive Sciences, Oceanography, Public Health (theoretical research focus only) and Physics at a top U.S. institution. Application deadline: May 1, 2009.

**Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowships:** For mid-level policy planners and administrators in the government, public and private sectors, and NGOs for professional development in the fields of Agricultural Development/Agricultural Economics; Communications/ Journalism; Substance Abuse Education, Treatment and Prevention; Economic Development/Finance and Banking; Educational Administration, Planning and Policy; HIV/AIDS Policy and Prevention; Human Resource Management; Law and Human Rights; Natural Resources and Environmental Management; Public Health Policy and Management; Public Policy Analysis and Public Administration; Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (Teacher Training or Curriculum Development); Technology Policy and Management; Trafficking in Persons, Policy and Prevention; Urban and Regional Planning.

**Complete details about Fellowships for the 2010-2011 academic year** and downloadable application materials are available at USIEF's website [www.usief.org.in](http://www.usief.org.in). For any queries, e-mail to: [ip@fulbright-india.org](mailto:ip@fulbright-india.org) or contact USIEF office in your region.

**Head office:** USIEF, 12 Hailey Road, New Delhi 110001, Phone: 011 42090909

**Western Region:** USIEF Regional Office, American Centre, 4 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400020, Phone: 022 2262460

[www.usief.org.in](http://www.usief.org.in)

## The Future of Alternative Energy: What, How, Where, & When

with **Tulsi Tanti**, Chairman and Managing Director, Suzlon Energy

MUMBAI, April 1, 2009 – Countries around the world are driven by a number of reasons for rapidly expanding their renewable energy capacity, including energy security, the need to counteract climate change and demand for energy to fuel rapid economic growth. As a consequence, renewable energy is one of the few sectors that has continued to grow and remain profitable during the economic downturn – and one that is expected to carry on growing fast.

At an event hosted by Credit Suisse and the Asia Society India Centre as part of the Credit Suisse - Asia Society Sustainability Series, **Mr. Tulsi Tanti**, Chairman and Managing Director, Suzlon Energy, spoke about the world's increasing energy requirements. After Mr. Tanti's speech, he discussed the issues raised with Ms. Naazneen Karmali, India Editor, Forbes.

Over the last 15 years, energy demand has increased by 6.8%, said Mr. Tanti. Despite the economic slowdown, the world's energy needs will increase by at least 10% in the next 15 years, he argued, adding that the challenge is to meet this increasing energy requirement and achieve energy security while mitigating the environmental impact of greater energy production and consumption.

A range of factors encourage the exploration of alternative energy sources around the world, said Mr. Tanti. For the US, for example, energy security and a reduced reliance on imported oil are policy objectives for the government. In many other countries, recent spikes in oil prices and the resultant adverse impact on the current account balance has served as a warning for the future, when oil prices are expected to recover as the global economy does.

Some governments have also realized that the renewable energy sector holds huge job creation potential as it generates demand for highly skilled labor. The development of renewable energy will also have positive ripple effects throughout the supply chain, all the way from manufacturing to project finance. As a result, countries like the US have made huge investments in the renewable energy sector in order to reap these benefits. However, to fully realize these benefits, the right long term policy framework and grid infrastructure has to be in place, said Mr. Tanti.



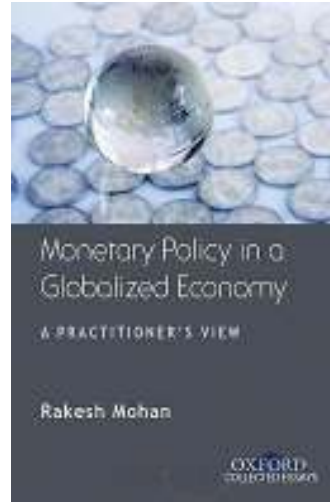
From an environmental point of view, there is an urgent need for a rapid expansion of renewable energy capacity, he argued. Carbon levels in the environment in excess of 600 PPM (parts per million) are expected to trigger extreme weather patterns. Current energy consumption patterns have brought forward to 2050 from previous estimates of 2100 the date when that trigger point is expected to be reached. Switching from burning fossil fuels to harnessing renewable energy will slow down this trend greatly, said Mr. Tanti.



## Monetary Policy in a Globalized Economy: A Practitioner's View

with **Dr. Rakesh Mohan**, Depute Governor, Reserve Bank of India

MUMBAI, May 25, 2009 - Dr. Rakesh Mohan, Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India talked about the unique economic situation in India that has controlled the behavior of the Reserve Bank of India. Dr. Mohan explained that the central bankers in India have a different responsibility than in other nations. This is because of the importance of stability and low risk for the majority of the population, a group which cannot afford volatility. Dr. Mohan also noted that another aspect that set the Indian banking system apart is the use of a multiple indicator approach rather than the inflation targeting approach. This approach as Dr. Mohan pointed out, though it has garnered criticism, has been key in the effectiveness of the central bank as an economic facilitator.



At a panel discussion hosted by Asia Society India Centre, Dr. Rakesh Mohan spoke about his recently released book, *Monetary Policy in a Globalized Economy: A Practitioner's View*. The panel comprised Dr. Y Venugopal Reddy, Former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India and R Gopalkrishnan, Executive Director of Tata Sons Ltd.

T. N. Ninan, Editor and Publisher of the Business Standard moderated the session.

The panel discussion highlighted the criticisms of Indian economic policy, emphasizing that the control of the economy has, in reality, been excellent and that the continued growth and more importantly the stability of the economy through the global recession has shown this.

Dr. Reddy opined that Dr. Mohan's book clearly illustrates the way in which the Indian banking system functions. It also effectively dispels many of the misconceptions about the banking system and helps identify what has protected it from the global recession and stimulated continued growth.

## Asia 21

The Asia Society's Asia 21 Young Leaders Initiative is considered the preeminent gathering of a multi-sectoral network of dynamic young leaders from the Asia-Pacific region and the US, brought together for the purpose of developing collaborative approaches to shared challenges, building networks of trust across geographic boundaries, and educating each other in the highest ideals of values-based leadership.



At the dawn of an Asia-Pacific century, a new generation of leaders will be called on to foster a peaceful, prosperous, and secure global environment. To facilitate this process, the Asia 21 Young Leaders Initiative was established, with the goal of building a cross-cultural, cross-sectoral community of emerging leaders in the region today.

The Asia 21 Young Leaders Initiative seeks to prepare tomorrow's leaders for the challenges and responsibilities of global citizenship by bringing together fellows from across the Asia-Pacific region and the US and providing them with a platform to generate creative, shared approaches to leadership and problem solving.

The Asia Society India Centre supports 65 Asia 21 Fellows with varied backgrounds in areas such as environment, film, business, health, and education. This space will feature a different Asia 21 India Fellow in each edition and highlight their organizations, initiatives, and projects.

To learn more about Asia 21 visit [www.asiasociety.org/asia21](http://www.asiasociety.org/asia21).