COMMON CAUSE EVENTS

Launch of India Justice Report 2019: November 7, 2019

Radhika Jha*



Representatives from partner organisations and the Common Cause team with Justice (Retd.) Madan B Lokur (fourth from left), during the launch of the India Justice Report 2019 at IHC, New Delhi.

As part of its Police Reforms programme, Common Cause, in collaboration with other leading organisations in the field of law and justice, brought out the India Justice Report 2019.

The report was released on November 7, 2019 at the India Habitat Centre, and is a first of its kind initiative ranking individual Indian states in relation to their capacity to deliver access to justice.

The launch event was divided in two parts. While the media release took place in the first half of the day, the report was unveiled to a larger audience later. Vipul Mudgal, Director of Common Cause, along with representatives of other partner organisations, were part of a panel discussion marking the media release session.

At the launch event, former Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B Lokur gave the inaugural address, followed by a presentation on the India Justice Report. Commenting on the report, Justice Lokur said, "This is a pioneering study, the findings of which establish beyond doubt very serious lacunae in our justice delivery system."

He acknowledged that the report is an effort towards mainstreaming certain issues of the justice system, which in fact affect every aspect of society, governance and the economy.

The presentation of the report findings was followed by the panel discussion 'Justice: The Business of Us All,' featuring Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, former Supreme Court judge, Justice B N Srikrishna, Maja Daruwala, chief editor, India



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Vijay Raghavan, TISS – Prayas (speaking), flanked by Gagan Sethi, co-founder and vice-chairperson, Centre for Social Justice (left) and Harish Narasappa, co-founder, DAKSH.

Justice Report, Vijay Raghavan, professor at the Centre for Criminology and Justice in Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Kanwaljit Deol, former DG (I) National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Yamini Aiyar, president and chief executive, Centre for Policy Research. The discussion was moderated by Arghya Sengupta, founder and research director, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy.

The report studies the capacity of states to deliver justice across the four pillars of the justice system — police, prisons, judiciary and legal aid. It also examines five-year trends to demonstrate a state's intention to improve access and delivery of justice by increasing resources, repairing shortfalls and clearing blockages. The four pillars of the justice system are measured against common thematic parameters of capacity to deliver justice— budget, infrastructure, workload, diversity, human resources and trends, or the intention to improve.



(From left) Amitabh Kant, CEO, Niti Aayog, Justice (Retd.) BN Srikrishna, Shireen Vakil, head of policy and advocacy, Tata Trusts and Justice (Retd.) Madan B Lokur at the launch event.

The India Justice Report 2019 is the collaborative effort of a group of sectoral experts – Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), Centre for Social Justice, DAKSH, Tata Institute of Social Sciences-Prayas and Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy. All the stakeholders have been brought together on a common research platform by the philanthropic organisation, Tata Trusts. The Common Cause team was instrumental in shaping the section on police and has made significant contribution



Vipul Mudgal, Director, Common Cause, addressing the press conference

towards data analysis, along with drafting an essay on police along with CHRI.

Common Cause also played a crucial role in defining the research objectives of the study and has been a part of the project since its inception. The team was also actively involved in the compilation of recommendations and defining a media outreach and dissemination strategy for the research study.

(PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY: Tata Trusts)

Fourth All India Media Conference, 2019: September 27 to September 29, 2019



PHOTO CREDIT: AIMEC

Shambhu Ghatak of Inclusive Media for Change and Common Cause, discussing data journalism in rural reporting during the 4th All India Media Conference, 2019 in Udaipur

Common Cause and Inclusive Media for Change partnered with several organisations, including Lok Samvad Sansthan, Jaipur, Department of Journalism, Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur and UNICEF-Rajasthan to organise the 4th All India Media Conference, 2019. Based on the theme 'Digital Communication and Empowerment: Emerging Opportunities and Key Challenges,' the conference took place in Udaipur from September 27 to September 29, 2019. Over 300 media educators and practitioners from several Indian states and six foreign countries presented more than 150 research papers on the evolving nature, impact and challenges of the digital media. Shambhu Ghatak, Senior Associate Fellow, Inclusive Media for Change, gave a presentation on 'Understanding Data Journalism for Rural Reporting' and underscored how Inclusive Media for Change (www.im4change.org) works as an exhaustive resource centre for journalists, media educators, policy makers and researchers, focussing on issues concerning rural India as well as the vulnerable and marginalised.

General Elections 2019: Issues and Challenges: October 10, 2019

Common Cause participated in the forum 'General Elections 2019: Issues and Challenges,' organised by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and National Election Watch (NEW) on October 10, 2019. Held at the India International Centre Annexe, the forum was a platform to discuss the experiences and learnings from the world's biggest electoral exercise and suggest possible ways to address the multiple challenges in India's electoral politics.



PHOTO CREDIT: ADR

Vipul Mudgal, Director, Common Cause, (third from left), addressing the session on social media, election expenditure and voter influence at the forum organised by the Association for Democratic Reforms

The first session addressed the growing role of crime and money in electoral politics and was chaired by Jagdeep Chhokar, founder member and trustee of ADR. The second session, 'Social Media, Election Expenditure and Voter Influence: Changing face of electoral politics in India?' was chaired by Vipul Mudgal, Director, Common Cause while the keynote speaker was former Chief Election Commissioner Nasim Zaidi.