

## **Centre for Civil Society**

The Centre for Civil Society is an independent, nonprofit, research and educational organisation devoted to improving the quality of life for all people of India by reviving and reinvigorating civil society. The motivation behind the Centre is the poignant paradox of intelligent and industrious people of India living in the state of destitution and despondency. But we don't run primary schools, or health clinics, or garbage collection programs. We do it differently: we try to change people's ideas, opinions, mode of thinking, the mindset by research, seminars, and publications.

We champion limited government, rule of law, free trade, and competitive markets. These principles promote civil society—peace, harmony, and prosperity.

The Centre was inaugurated on August 15, 1997, signifying the necessity for achieving economic, social, and cultural independence from the Indian state after attaining political independence from an alien state.

### **What is Civil Society**

Civil society is an evolving network of associations and institutions of family and community, of production and trade, and of piety and compassion. Individuals enter into these relationships as much by consent as by obligation but never under coercion. Civil society is premised on individual freedom and responsibility, and on limited and accountable government. It protects the individual from the intrusive state, and connects the individual to the larger social and economic order. Civil society is what keeps individualism from becoming atomistic and communitarianism from becoming collectivist. Political society, on the other hand, is distinguished by its legalised power of coercion. Its primary purpose should be to protect, and not to undermine, civil society by upholding individual rights and the rule of law.

### **Relationship Between Civil & Political Society**

The “principle of subsidiarity” demarcates the proper arenas for civil and political society, and for local, state, and central government within the political

society. The principle suggests that the state should undertake those tasks that people cannot undertake for themselves through voluntary associations of civil society. The functions thus assigned to the state must be entrusted first to local governments. The functions that local governments cannot perform should be given to state governments and only those that state governments are unable to undertake should be delegated to the central government. The rampant growth of the political society—the institutions of government—since independence has hindered the flourishing of civil society in India. It is only by rethinking and reconfiguring the political society that India will be able to achieve economic prosperity, social peace and cohesion, and genuine political democracy. The focus on civil society enables one to work from both directions; it provides a ‘mortar’ program of building or rebuilding the institutions of civil society and a ‘hammer’ program of readjusting the size and scope of the political society. Both programs are equally critical and must be pursued simultaneously. Weeds of the political society must be uprooted and seeds of a civil society must be sown.

#### **Support**

In accordance with its purpose, the Centre accepts support only from individuals and institutions of civil society.

#### **Research Agenda**

- Law, Liberty, and Livelihood
- Provision of Social Services: The Role of Civil Society
- Assuring Quality and Safety: Self Regulation or State Regulation?
- Birth to Death Certification
- Radio Privatisation
- Market-based Initiatives for Environmental Concerns
- Role of the Private Sector in Provision of Infrastructure
- Farmers and Consumers: Is the State or the Market a Better Intermediary?
- Protecting and Creating Jobs: De-regulation of Labour Markets
- Government as Manager or Supervisor of Financial Markets?
- India in the Global Market: Liberalisation of Trade
- Corporatisation and Privatisation of Public Sector Units

#### **Publications**

- *Free Your Mind: A Beginners Guide to Political Economy* by Sauvik Chakraverti. Rs. 100
- *Profiles in Courage: Dissent on Indian Socialism* edited by Parth J Shah. Rs. 350
- *Money, Market, and Marketwallahs* by R K Amin. Rs 125
- *Research Internship Papers 2001* edited by H B Soumya. Rs 150
- *Friedman on India* edited by Parth J Shah. Rs 75

- *Kissan Bole Chhe* (Gujarati) by R K Amin. Rs 200
- *How Markets Work: Disequilibrium, Entrepreneurship and Discovery* by Israel Kirzner. Rs 50
- *Agenda for Change* edited by Bibek Debroy & Parth J Shah. (out of print)
- *Self-Regulation in the Civil Society* edited by Ashok V Desai. (out of print)

**ViewPoint Series:**

- *Peter Bauer: A True Friend of the World's Poor* by Sauvik Chakraverti. Rs. 30
- *Do Corporates Have Social Responsibility?* edited by Parth J Shah. Rs. 30
- *Population Causes Prosperity* by Sauvik Chakraverti. Rs. 30
- *Indian Financial Sector after a Decade of Reforms* by Jayanth R Varma. Rs. 50

**Forthcoming Publications:**

- *Swaminomics* by Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar
- *Terracotta Reader* edited by Parth J Shah
- *New Public Management: A Primer* by Sauvik Chakraverti and Parth J Shah

**Education Programs**

- Liberty & Society Seminar
- Economics in One Lesson Seminar
- Annual B R Shenoy Memorial Essay Competition
- Summer Research Internship Program
- School Lecture Series
- Business Journalism Workshop
- Workshops for IAS Officers

**Dialogues & Panel Discussions**

- The Centre holds regular Dialogues to provide a discussion forum for topical issues. Some Dialogues held:
- Fighting Poverty Diseases
- Indian Financial Sector After a Decade of Reforms
- Corporate Social Responsibility?
- Should We Ban Quacks?
- Liberalisation and Livelihood
- Economics Curriculum in Schools
- Education Policy: Choice and Competition

**Friends of Freedom**

To provide a platform for self-development and deeper understanding of the principles and policies of liberalism, Liberty & Society Seminar graduates come together to form Friends of Freedom (FoF). Young professionals and others

interested in liberal values also become members.

**Public Interest Litigations**

- BALCO: With the help of advocates Parag Tripathi and Suranya Aiyar, the Centre filed an intervention PIL in the Bharat Aluminium Company (BALCO) privatisation case to support that the privatisation of public sector companies is in the public interest; its opposition serves only parochial interests.
- VIP Security: To stop the harassment and inconvenience under the guise of VIP Security to ordinary citizens of Delhi in using roads.

**Legislative Alert**

A bill pending in the Parliament is analysed, clause by clause and an alternate bill is drafted. The changes are then discussed with interested Members of Parliament, formally and informally.

**Swaminomics**

The Centre has created [www.swaminomics.org](http://www.swaminomics.org) and [www.swaminomics.com](http://www.swaminomics.com) to house the popular Sunday column "Swaminomics" in *Times of India* by Swaminathan S Anklesaria Aiyar.

**Resource Centre**

The Centre maintains a library of several thousand books, publications of a large number of public policy research institutes and computers with internet access. It is open to the public for use but borrowing privileges require membership. The Centre plans to open similar resource centres throughout India.