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2017 India Think Tank Forum

Abstract

The Second India Think Tank Forum, with a focus on The potential and Power of National, Regional and Global Partnerships, was organized in New Delhi by Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, University of Pennsylvania (TTCSP) and the McKinsey Global Institute, McKinsey & Company on 19 June.

Keywords

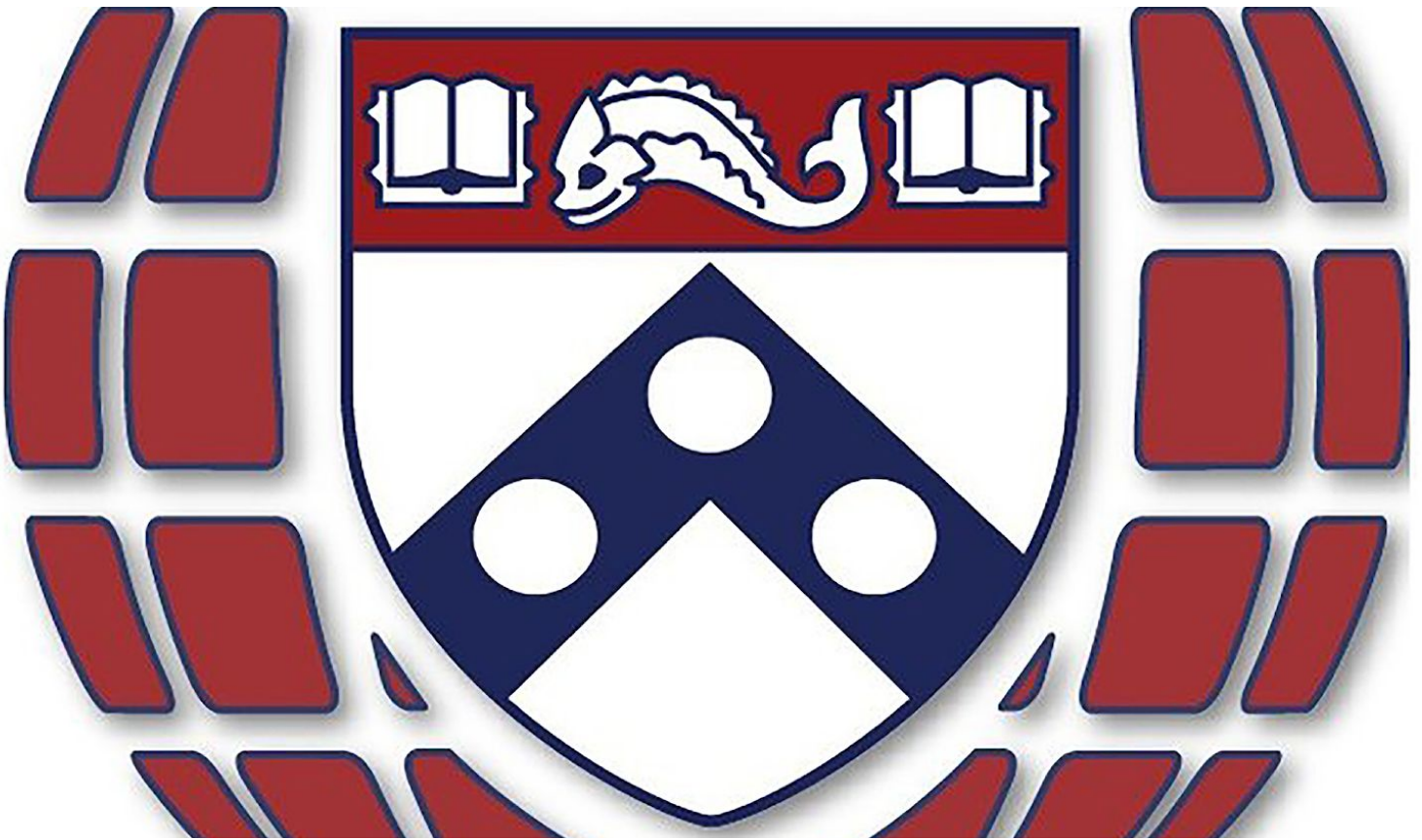
Think Tank, Civil Society, NGO, India Think Tank Summit, Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania

Disciplines

International Relations

Comments

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The Potential and Power of National, Regional and Global Partnerships

India Think Tank Forum, 2017

National Capital Territory of Delhi, Republic of India

James G McGann
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

June 2017





ABOUT THE THINK TANKS AND CIVIL SOCIETIES PROGRAM (TTCSP)

The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania conducts research on the role policy institutes play in governments and civil societies around the world. Often referred to as the “think tanks’ think tank,” TTCSP examines the evolving role and character of public policy research organizations. Over the last 30 years, the TTCSP has developed and led a series of global initiatives that have helped bridge the gap between knowledge and policy in critical policy areas such as international peace and security, globalization and governance, international economics, environmental issues, information and society, poverty alleviation, and healthcare and global health. These international collaborative efforts are designed to establish regional and international networks of policy institutes and communities that improve policy making while strengthening democratic institutions and civil societies around the world.

ABOUT THE LAUDER INSTITUTE

The Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies offers an M.A. in international studies and conducts fundamental and policy-oriented research on current economic, political, and business issues. It organizes an annual conference that brings academics, practitioners, and policy makers together to examine global challenges such as financial risks, sustainability, inequality, and the future of the state.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) is an Ivy League school with highly selective admissions and a history of innovation in interdisciplinary education and scholarship. A world-class research institution, Penn boasts a picturesque campus in the middle of Philadelphia, a dynamic city that is conveniently located between Washington, D.C. and New York, New York the University of Pennsylvania was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1740 to push the frontiers of knowledge and benefit society by integrating study in the liberal arts and sciences with opportunities for research and practical, pre-professional training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Penn is committed to meeting the full demonstrated need of all undergraduates with grant-based financial aid, making this intellectually compelling integration of liberal and professional education accessible to talented students of all backgrounds and empowering them to make an impact on the world.

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The views expressed are those of James G McGann and should not be attributed to the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania, or its funders. Funders do not determine research findings or the insights and recommendations of Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program.

Summit Concept Note

The Second India Think Tank Forum, with a focus on *The potential and Power of National, Regional and Global Partnerships*, was organised in New Delhi by Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, University of Pennsylvania (TTCSP) and the McKinsey Global Institute, McKinsey & Company on 19 June.

ORF Director Sunjoy Joshi welcomed the participants of the three-day conference, attended by scholars and experts from most of the country's prominent think tanks. He said there is an opportunity for many of us in India and other developing countries to be co-creators of the new knowledge systems and indeed the new software as well as hardware that will fashion much of the 21st century that lies ahead of us.

“Are we ready for that? Are we gearing up for that? And what are the key ingredients for us to be significant contributors to the new frameworks that will define the 21st century,” he asked.

A lot of that, Mr. Joshi said, will need to come from think tanks and many of them are sitting in this room. “Can we fashion a new global integration project which has elements of plural trade ethic, migration of people, movement of knowledge, pricing of intellectual property, distribution of global public goods that will allow us to respond to the key challenges of poverty, human security, the lack of health, education and gender equality that still afflict over half the global population.”

Mr. Joshi said this is our imperative. But we have three challenges.

1. To create knowledge systems you need human resources with the capacity to produce knowledge. And traditionally the countries which need to discover these solutions are also constrained by having less invested human capital. Our challenge is to produce enough knowledge creators in a world that only values knowledge. To be beneficiaries of the knowledge age, we need knowledge evangelists, knowledge entrepreneurs and a knowledge supply chain, which begins at minimal skills and peaks at maximum innovation. Investing in human resources is time consuming, sometimes the length of achieving a PhD at other times a secondary school education through skill enhancement programmes.
2. Most knowledge systems around the western world are well integrated systems with national budgets, national laboratories, defence organisations, foreign policy establishments. Countries in the global south find that their governments do not have the wherewithal to invest in these. So we will have to create, raise money and find funds outside the governmental systems. So raising resources to fund the knowledge industry is a second challenge. Traditionally it has been government and national and international organisations, with some minimal private sector support occasionally thrown in. Perhaps we need to be smarter and look at crowdsourcing to

mobilise millions of small contributions.

3. The marketplace of ideas has become quite a manic place — the age of information also suffers from chronic Attention Deficit Hyperactive ADHD as well as OCD (Obsessive Compulsive) at the same time. How does one find even elbow room in the petabytes and zettabytes of text masquerading as thought. And in that crowd make sure that your ideas find legs to run? How do you communicate those ideas? The new media provides both the threat and the opportunity. How do we locate and place our staple well researched long form pieces that are still our bread and butter. How do we link them to op-eds that mobilise political thought or a cascade of tweets that create mass movements. Where do we locate think tanks in this cross section of communication, platforms and communication styles?

Mr. Joshi said, “These are all questions. What will the new trade regimes look like? Who will shape them? What will be the knowledge architecture behind those regimes?”

He expressed the hope that the conference over the next two days will discuss these issues, trying to bring together key questions around the themes on trade, security, cyber, climate change and international relations besides conversations on think tanks itself.

After Mr. Joshi’s welcome remarks, there was a panel discussion on ‘Big Politics: OBOR, India and the Liberal International Order.’ While it was moderated by Dr. Sanjaya Baru, Distinguished Fellow, USI, the speakers included Indrani Bagchi, Diplomatic Editor, Times of India, Nitin Pai, co-founder, Takshashila Institute, Lt. Gen. Aditya Singh, Senior Fellow, Delhi Policy Group and Seshadri Vasan, Chennai Centre for China Studies.

It was followed by “Three Years of the Modi Government: Looking Back, Looking Forward,” a conversation with Smt. Smriti Irani, Union Textiles Minister. It was moderated by Ashok Malik, Distinguished Fellow, ORF. The minister explained the work and major schemes being done by the government for the welfare of the poor. She said the poor quality of raw materials in the silk, jute, handloom and cotton industries were standing in the way of the government’s efforts to diversify products and improve the quality of the final product for better imports.

The second day of the conference began with opening remarks from Dr. Jim McGann, Director, TTCSP, Dr. Samir Saran, Vice President, ORF, and Anu Madgavkar, Partner, McKinsey Global Institute. This was followed by a discussion on “Globalisation 2.0: Managing the Transition and the Tensions,” chaired by Mr. Alok Bansal, Director, India Foundation. This panel of Dr. Harsh Pant, Distinguished Fellow, ORF, Francoise Nicolas, Director AFRI, Anu Madgavkar of the McKinsey Global Institute and Sybil Delaine Rhodes, Vice President, Centre for Openness and Development in Latin America, explored the emerging trends in international politics and how these would shape the 21st century. It explored the space for India in a world where multiple hegemonies exist, each with its own vision of world order.

There were also discussions on ‘India’s Urbanisation Challenges’, ‘Big Ideas, Big Data and Small Tweets: Think Tanks, Technology and Policy Advice’ and ‘Disruptive Technologies and the Future of Work in India.’ The urbanisation panel of Dr. Shaleen Singhal (Teri University), Dr. Rumi Aijaz (ORF), Renu Khosla, Director, Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence, Bharat Palavalli (Co-Founder, Fields of View) and D. Dhanuraj (Centre for Public Policy Research, Kochi) explored the urbanisation challenges facing India. The panel on ‘Big Ideas, Big Data and Small Tweets’ included shruti Pandalai, Associate Fellow, IDSA, Shivnath Thukral, Managing Director, Carnegie India, Maya Mirchandani, Senior Fellow, ORF, Ananth Padmanabhan, Fellow Carnegie India, Neeraj Kumar, Managing Editor, Asian Development Research Institute and V.S. Sambandan, Chief Administrative Officer, The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy.

The panel on disruptive technologies — Rajath Kathuria, Director, ICRIER, Vandana Bhatnagar, Chief Programme Officer, National Skill Development Corporation, Indira Hirway, Director, Centre for Development Alternatives, Marc Saxer of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Reuben Abraham, CEO, IDFC Institute — explored the impact of disruptive technologies on labour markets and the societies as a whole.

There was an interesting discussion on “The Fifth Estate: Think Tanks, Public Policy and Governance in the US and India” by panelists James McGann (ITCSP), Manjeet Kriplani, Executive Director, Gateway House and Harsha Vardhana Singh, Executive Director, Brookings India. It was moderated by Suvojoy Sengupta, Partner, McKinsey Global Institute.

The session on “The New Cold War: Information and Cyber Wars” examined how digital networks that transcend communities, ideas and languages, have affected the traditional role of the state in securing its borders even as the social contract between the state and the citizen is being mediated by the ‘intermediary’ usually a technology giant—whose role has come under the political scanner. This panel included Suhasini Haidar, Deputy Resident Editor, The Hindu, Udbhav Tiwari, Policy Officer, Centre for Internet and Society, Nalin Surie, Director General, ICWA, Subramaniam Chandrasekhar, Group Director, Government Affairs, Microsoft India and Arun Sukumar, Head Cyber Policy Initiative, ORF.

The session on “Health Futures 2030: Leaving No One Behind” explored how India can provide an umbrella of health services and infrastructure that supports the delivery of these services, which are critical for its greater ambitions. The panel comprised Shaktivel Selvaraj, PHFI, Sonalde Desai, Senior Fellow, NCAER, Oommen C Kurian, Fellow, ORF and Sushma Kapoor, Vice President, Global Health Services. It was chaired by Rama V. Baru, Professor, Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The second day ended with “Discussing the Indian Economy and Policy Making — In Conversation: Sanjeev Sanyal,” Principal Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance, Government of India. It was moderated by Gautam Chikermane, Vice President, ORF.

Summit Partner

Observer Research Foundation



ORF began its journey in 1990 at the juncture of ideation tempered by pragmatism. During the period of India's transition to a new engagement with the international economic order, several challenges emerged, evoking a need for an independent forum that could critically examine the problems facing the country and help develop coherent policy responses. ORF was thus formed, and brought together, for the first time, leading Indian economists and policymakers to present the agenda for India's economic reforms.

Propelled by the process of reforms initiated in the 1990s, ORF, over the past 30 years of its existence, has effectively narrated and participated in India's story as the country has acquired an unmistakable global footprint. From primarily looking inward and engaging with domestic reforms, to gradually forging global partnerships, ORF today plays a seminal role in building political and policy consensus that enables India to interact with the world.

ORF seeks to lead and aid policy thinking towards building a strong and prosperous India in a fair and equitable world. It sees India as a country poised to play a leading role in the knowledge age — a role in which it shall be increasingly called upon to proactively ideate in order to shape global conversations, even as it sets course along its own trajectory of long-term sustainable growth.

ORF helps discover and inform India's choices. It carries Indian voices and ideas to forums shaping global debates. It provides non-partisan, independent, well-researched analyses and inputs to diverse decision-makers in governments, business communities, and academia and to civil society around the world.

ORF's mandate is to conduct in-depth research, provide inclusive platforms and invest in tomorrow's thought leaders today.

2019-2020 TTCSP Think Tank Summit and Fora Schedule*

September 23-25 2019

Latin America Think Tank Summit, Bogota, Colombia TTCSP Partner: Fedesarrollo & Fundación Ideas de La Paz

October 29-30, 2019

MENA Think Tank Summit, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates TTCSP Partner: Emirates Policy Center

November 10-12, 2019

Asia Think Tank Summit, Bangkok, Thailand, Partner: Trade, Investment and Innovation Division UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

December 5, 2019

Euro-Med Think Tank Forum, Rome, Italy TTCSP Partner: Institute for International Political Studies ISPI

December 12-13, 2019

Global Think Tank Summit, Rio de Janeiro, TTCSP Partner: Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV)

January 30, 2020

Think Tank and Civil Societies: Catalyst for Ideas, Innovation and Action 2020 Why Think Tanks Matter in Washington, DC and 150 cities around the world.

February 2020

AI Think Tank Forum, Palo Alto, California or another venue

February 2020

Africa Think Tank Summit, Cape town, South Africa

March 2020

North America Think Tank Summit, Washington, DC

April 2020

Europe Think Tank Summit, Marseilles, France

Date and location to be determined

Global Food and Water Security Summit

Date to be determined

Bahrain Think Tank Regional/Global Summit

* Summits and fora dates are subject to change but are confirmed unless otherwise indicated

About TTCSP

Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program

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The TTCSP works with leading scholars and practitioners from think tanks and universities in a variety of collaborative efforts and programs and produces the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index that ranks the world’s leading think tanks in a variety of categories. This is achieved with the help of a panel of over 1,900 peer institutions and experts from the print and electronic media, academia, public and private donor institutions, and governments around the world. We have strong relationships with leading think tanks around the world, and our annual Think Tank Index is used by academics, journalists, donors and the public to locate and connect with the leading centers of public policy research around the world. Our goal is to increase the profile and performance of think tanks and raise the public awareness of the important role think tanks play in governments and civil societies around the globe.

Since its inception in 1989, the TTCSP has focused on collecting data and conducting research on think tank trends and the role think tanks play as civil society actors in the policy-making process. To date TTCSP has provided technical assistance and capacity building programs in 81 countries. We are now working to create regional and global networks of think tanks in an effort to facilitate collaboration and the production of a modest yet achievable set of global public goods. Our goal is to create lasting institutional and state-level partnerships by engaging and mobilizing think tanks that have demonstrated their ability to produce high quality policy research and shape popular and elite opinion and actions for public good.

The Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies

The Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies offers an M.A. in international studies and conducts fundamental and policy-oriented research on current economic, political, and business issues. It organizes an annual conference that brings academics, practitioners, and policy

makers together to examine global challenges such as financial risks, sustainability, inequality, and the future of the state.

University of Pennsylvania

The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) is an Ivy League school with highly selective admissions and a history of innovation in interdisciplinary education and scholarship. Its peer institutions are Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, Brown, Dartmouth, and the University of Chicago in the US and Oxford and Cambridge in the UK. A world-class research institution, Penn boasts a picturesque campus in the middle of Philadelphia, a dynamic city that is conveniently located between Washington, D.C. and New York, New York the University of Pennsylvania was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1740 to push the frontiers of knowledge and benefit society by integrating study in the liberal arts and sciences with opportunities for research and practical, pre-professional training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Penn is committed to meeting the full demonstrated need of all undergraduates with grant-based financial aid, making this intellectually compelling integration of liberal and professional education accessible to talented students of all backgrounds and empowering them to make an impact on the world.

TTCSP Recent and Forthcoming Publications:

Think Tanks: The New Knowledge and Policy Brokers in Asia (Brookings Press and Asian Development Bank Institute, 2019) <https://www.brookings.edu/book/think-tanks/>

Trends and Transitions in Security Expertise from Deterrence to Climate Change and Back Again (Routledge, 2017)
<https://www.routledge.com/Global-Trends-and-Transitions-in-Security-Expertise-From-Nuclear-Deterrence/McGann/p/book/9781138304000>

Think Tanks, Foreign Policy and the Emerging Power Policy Networks (MacMillan, 2017)
<https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9783319603117>

Think Tanks and Emerging Power Policy Networks (MacMillan, 2017)
<https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9783319719542>

The Fifth Estate: Think Tanks Public Policy and Governance (Brookings, 2016)
https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/chapter-one_the-fifth-estate.pdf

Think Tanks and SDGs: Catalysts for Analysis, Innovation and Implementation (TTCSP 2015)
<http://www.lulu.com/shop/james-mcgann/think-tanks-and-sdgs-catalysts-foranalysis-innovation-and-implementation/paperback/product-22563604.html>

How Think Tanks Shape Development Policies (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014)
<http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/15244.html>

Security Expertise Practice, Power, Responsibility (Chapter 6) (2014 Routledge)
<https://www.routledge.com/Security-Expertise-Practice-Power-Responsibility/Berling-Bueger/p/book/9781138819115>

Think Tanks and Global Policy Networks, Chapter in an edited volume (Routledge, 2013)
<https://www.routledge.com/International-Organization-and-Global-Governance/Weiss-Wilkinson/p/book/9781138236585>

Global Think Tanks, Policy Networks and Governance (Routledge, 2010)
<https://www.routledge.com/Global-Think-Tanks-Policy-Networks-and-Governance/McGann-Sabatini/p/book/9780415779791>