

SK Dey Chair Lecture

**The Roots of Citizen Welfare in India:
Reflections on Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal
Dr. Rahul Mukherji**

The Centre for Multilevel Federalism, Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) organized the SK Dey Chair for Local Government lecture on **‘The Roots of Citizen Welfare in India: Reflections on Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal’** at the Seminar Hall, ISS on August 12, 2015. Dr Rahul Mukherji, Associate Professor in the South Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore (NUS) and concurrently Head of Research at the Institute of South Asian Studies (NUS), delivered the lecture.

Dr George Mathew, Chairman, ISS presided over the lecture. Dr Balveer Arora, SK Dey Chair Professor, ISS, welcomed Dr. Mukherji and spoke about the SK Dey Chair at the Institute.



Dr. Rahul Mukherji delivering the SK Dey Lecture

Dr. Rahul Mukherji made a case for interrogating the state in India for understanding the politics of welfare. The sub-national state, the evolution of ideas within its technocratic elite and political commitment are quintessential for understanding the governance architecture favoring the poor. He also highlighted the importance of the relationship between the political executive and the bureaucracy by examining successful land reforms under Operation Barga in West Bengal, and the varied implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

As Dr. Mukherji argued, the centrality of the sub-national state does not render grassroots politics irrelevant in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. One needs to understand the relationship between the lower local bureaucracy and local governments (panchayats) to explain variation in implementation in more and less successful re-distributive schemes in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal.

There was a lively interactive session following the lecture.