

## Yamini Aiyar

G 43 Jungpura Extension, New Delhi – 110014 | yaiyar@gmail.com | +919818182946

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| <b>Statement</b>               | <p>My work sits at the intersection of research and policy. Through much of my career, I have worked in leadership roles to nurture institutional spaces for knowledge production that can catalyze imaginative policy solutions for India. My research spans the fields of governance and accountability, social policy (education and social protection) and state capacity, federalism and democracy. The effort is to build an empirically grounded body of knowledge on the everyday functioning of the Indian State and locate this within technocratic policy debates, the real world of policy administration, civil society and academia. Underlying my work is a commitment to the pursuit of an equitable and genuinely inclusive policy ecosystem. Toward this end, I have conceptualized and lead long-term collaborative efforts that innovate with social science research methods in ways that directly engages the wider citizenry and seeks to build public consensus on vital policy matters.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |           |
| <b>Professional Experience</b> | <b>Saxena Center for Contemporary South Asia &amp; Watson Institute, Brown University</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 2024-2025 |
|                                | Senior Visiting Fellow                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |           |
|                                | <b>Centre for Policy Research</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2017-2024 |
|                                | President and Chief Executive                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |           |
|                                | <b>Centre for Policy Research</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2008-2017 |
|                                | Senior Fellow and Director, Accountability Initiative                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |
|                                | <b>Government of Andhra Pradesh</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2007-2008 |
|                                | Consultant, Rural Development Department                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |           |
|                                | <b>World Bank</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2005-2007 |
|                                | Consultant, Water and Sanitation Program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |           |
|                                | Consultant, Rural Development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |           |
|                                | <b>Ford Foundation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 2003-2005 |
|                                | Program Associate, Governance and Civil Society                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |           |
| <b>Education</b>               | <b>M.Sc. Development Studies</b> , London School of Economics, U.K.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2002      |
|                                | <b>M.A. Social and Political Sciences</b> , St. Edmund's College, Cambridge University, U.K.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1999      |
|                                | <b>B.A. Philosophy</b> , St. Stephen's College, Delhi University, India.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1997      |
| <b>Leadership Roles</b>        | <p><b>Centre for Policy Research</b></p> <p>As President and Chief Executive of CPR, one of India's leading think tanks, I was responsible for providing leadership to the intellectual and policy agenda of the institution, fund raising, building government partnerships and overseeing the institutions governance and administration. Key responsibilities include identifying, recruiting and mentoring talent; building new areas of policy relevant research; managing strategic partnerships with government, academia and civil society; and fund raising. Select highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Research:</b> Built new research clusters including the State Capacity Initiative, Politics Initiative, Jobs and Rural Economy, Technology, and Regulation and Governance. Led CPR's cross-sectoral policy response to COVID-19.</li><li>• <b>Strategic Partnerships:</b> Spearheaded CPR's policy engagement with State governments. Supported the development of key policy partnerships in Meghalaya, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Punjab.</li><li>• <b>Major Conferences and Policy Seminars:</b> Curated the "CPR Dialogues" CPR's annual public policy conference that brings policy stakeholders in conversation with students, academia, media and civil society. Launched flagship seminars and lecture series including a dialogue on Indian politics, India and the World – a platform for diplomats and statesmen to reflect on India's foreign policy and role in the global order, lecture series celebrating CPR's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and "India Speak", CPR's policy podcast with the goal of building a public dialogue on key policy issues.</li></ul> |           |

### Accountability Initiative, Centre for Policy Research

In 2008, I founded Accountability Initiative (AI) at CPR. AI is recognized for its innovative research methodology to track social sector expenditure, particularly in elementary education. The initiative works to bridge the gap between research and policy implementation to engage with frontline administrators, civil society and the wider citizenry through a variety of tools including participation in data collection, research dissemination and structured training courses. In addition, AI has produced significant collaborative research studying the shifting dynamics of citizen-state relations specifically in the context of India's experiment with rights-based welfare legislation in the 2000s. Select highlights:

- **Research:** Curated a working paper series on social accountability, conceptualized and produced "Budget Briefs" an annual policy document analyzing expenditure trends in key social sector schemes, designed and produced PAISA -a series of district level expenditure tracking studies in elementary education and rural local governments.
- **Strategic partnerships:** Built long-term research partnerships with NGOs including PRATHAM and ASER center, think tanks like the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy and multilateral agencies including the UNICEF.
- **Training:** Designed and piloted structured courses in public finance and administration for social policy for frontline administrators and grassroots community workers. This was launched as a full-fledged training course titled "Hum aur Humaari Sarkar" in 2019.

### Publications

#### Books

December, 2024, "Lessons in State Capacity from Delhi's Schools", **Oxford University Press**.

#### Articles and Book Chapters

2024, with Neelanjan Sircar, "Technology for Votes: Techno Patrimonialism and the Rise of Competitive Welfarism in India, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. LIX No.48.

2024, "Bureaucracy", in *The Troubling State of India's Democracy*, edited by S. Ganguly, D. Mistree, L. Diamond, University of Michigan Press.

2022, "Building the foundations for growth and resilience: Understanding the contours of India's learning crisis", in *A New Reform Paradigm*, edited by R. Kapoor, New Delhi: Rupa Publications.

2021, "India's resurgence of COVID 19: Urgent actions needed", *The Lancet*, 397(10291), pp. 2232–2234 (with Lancet Commission on Reimagining India's Health System).

2020, with Louise Tillin, "One nation BJP and the future of India federalism," *India Review*, 19(2).

2020, with Neelanjan Sircar, "Understanding the decline of regional party power in the 2019 election and beyond," *Contemporary South Asia*, 28(2).

2019, "Modi consolidates power: Leveraging welfare politics", *Journal of Democracy*, 30(4).

2018, with Avani Kapur, "The centralization vs decentralization tug of war and the emerging narrative of fiscal federalism for social policy in India," *Regional and Federal Studies*, 29(2).

2016, with S. Bhattacharya, "The post-office paradox: A case study of the education block level bureaucracy" *Economic and Political Weekly*, accepted for publication.

2015, with S.K. Mehta, "Spectators or participants: Effects of social audits in Andhra Pradesh", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol L, No. 7.

2015, with M. Walton, "Rights, accountability and citizenship: Examining India's emerging welfare state", in *Governance in Developing Asia: Public Service Delivery and Empowerment*, edited by: A.B. Deolalikar, S. Jha and P.F. Quising.

2013, with S.K. Mehta and S. Samji, "India: Implementing social audits" in *Public Works as a Safety Net: Design, Evidence and Implementation*, K. Subbarao et al (2013), Washington DC: The World Bank, Chapter 11, pp. 249-68.

2010, "Invited spaces, invited participation: Can invited spaces foster greater participation and accountability in service delivery?" *India Review*, Vol. 9 Issue 2.

2007, with J. Hammer and S. Samji, "Understanding governance failure in public health facilities", *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. 42 No. 40.

2006, "Decentralization and democracy", Book Review, *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. 41 No. 47.

2006, "Local governance and service delivery in India", *Development Policy Review*, World Bank

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| Other Significant Publications     | <p>2023, with Milan Vaishnav and Mekhala Krishnamurthy (eds), “Cooperative federalism- from theory to practice”, <b>CPR Working Paper Series</b>.</p> <p>2021, with Vincy Davis, Taanya Kapoor and Gokulnath Govindan, “Rewriting the grammar of the education system: Delhi’s education reform”, <b>Research on Improving Systems of Education</b>, Working Paper Series</p> <p>2019, “Policy challenges 2019-2024: Key policy questions for the new government”, <b>CPR Working Paper Series</b> (eds).</p> <p>2019, with Louise Tillin (eds), “Union and the States”, <b>Seminar</b>, 717.</p> <p>2015, with V. Davis and A. Dongre, “Education reforms, bureaucracy and the puzzles of implementation: A case study from Bihar”, Working Paper, <b>International Growth Centre</b>, London School of Economics.</p> <p>2015, with L. Pritchett, “Taxes: Price of civilization or tribute to leviathan?”, Working Paper #412, <b>Centre for Global Development</b>.</p> <p>2015, with A. Kapur, A. Dongre, A. Mukherjee and T.R. Raghunandan, “Rule Versus Responsiveness: Towards building an outcomes focused approach to governing elementary education finances in India”, Working Paper Series, <b>Accountability Initiative</b>, Centre for Policy Research.</p> <p>2014, with L. Pritchett, “Value subtraction in public sector production: accounting versus economic cost of schooling in India”, Working Paper #391, <b>Centre for Global Development</b>.</p> <p>2006, with J. Hammer and S. Samji, “Bottoms up: To the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in health and health services”, <b>Social Development Papers</b>, World Bank No. 98.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Policy Briefs & Reports            | <p>2021, with Shiv Shankar Menon, Shyam Saran, Prakash Menon, Srinath Raghavan, Nitin Pai and Ajith Ranade, “India’s path to power: Strategy in a world adrift” <b>Centre for Policy Research and Takshashila Institute</b></p> <p>2021, with Partha Mukhopadhyay, Jishnu Das, Neelanjan Sircar et al, “Responding to COVID a mobility based surge capacity framework”, <b>CPR Policy Brief</b>.</p> <p>2021, with Harish Damodaran, Samridhi Aggarwal and Ragini R. Munjuluri, “Employment U-turn: Rural India is India’s main employer”, <b>CPR Policy Brief</b>.</p> <p>2019, “Opportunities and challenges confronting India’s welfare architecture”, in Policy Challenges 2019-2024, <b>CPR Working Paper Series</b>.</p> <p>2015, with Avani Kapur and Anit Mukherjee, “Power to the States: Making Fiscal Transfers work for Better Health”, <b>Centre for Policy Research and Centre for Global Development</b>.</p> <p>2009-2017, various years’ “Budget Briefs”, <b>Accountability Initiative</b>, Centre for Policy Research.</p> <p>2010, PAISA reports, <b>Accountability Initiative</b>, Centre for Policy Research.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Select Opinion and Popular Writing | <p><i>I contribute regularly to mainstream Indian and international newspapers, journals and magazines in English and Hindi. At present I am a regular columnist with two national dailies in India the Hindustan Times and Deccan Herald. Selected recent articles:</i></p> <p>2025, “How to Resolve the Federal Deadlock”, <b>Hindustan Times</b>, March 12</p> <p>2025, “The Niti Aayog has Failed, India Needs a New Federal Compact”, <b>India Forum</b>, February 5</p> <p>2025, “Costs of Welfare”, <b>India Today</b>, January 7</p> <p>2024, “The Crisis of Indian Capitalism”, <b>Foreign Affairs</b>, August 13</p> <p>2024, “The Elusive Quest for Jobs in Viksit Bharath”, <b>Hindustan Times</b>, June 23</p> <p>2024, “The Mirror has Cracked”, <b>Hindustan Times</b>, June 4</p> <p>2023, “Grassroots Democracy Needs Urgent Attention” <b>Hindustan Times</b>, April 24</p> <p>2023, “The Structural Constraints that Hinder Reform” <b>Hindustan Times</b>, March 10</p> <p>2023, “Paper Power: State Rules by Files, Notices and Circulars” <b>Deccan Herald</b>, March 6</p> <p>2023, “Citizen vs Labharthi: Interrogating the Welfare State” <b>Seminar</b>, 761</p> <p>2022, “Celebrate Civic Political Action for its Own Sake” <b>Hindustan Times</b>, December 27</p> <p>2022, “Government by Consultant can Hollow Out the State” <b>Deccan Herald</b>, December 12</p> <p>2022, “Reframing Rural Policymaking to Tackle Inflation” <b>Hindustan Times</b>, November 3</p> <p>2022, “Freebie, Subsidy, Compensation: Lets reset the terms of the debate” <b>Indian Express</b>, August 9</p> <p>2022, “The Education Pandemic” <b>Finance and Development</b>, International Monetary Fund</p> <p>2022, “Budget and Politics in Pandemic Times” <b>Ideas for India</b>, February 16</p> <p>2022, “Federalism and Bureaucracy: The Original Design vs a Culture of Centralisation” <b>India in Transition</b>, CASI, University of Pennsylvania</p> <p>2022, “Of bureaucracy, the Public and the Politics of Vishwas” <b>Seminar</b>, 749</p> <p>2021, “Education is key to Battling India’s Poverty Challenge” <b>Outlook Magazine</b>, December 2021</p> |

2021, “The Farm Laws: Why this is not a 1991 moment” **Hindustan Times**, November 30 (with Mekhala Krishnamurthy)  
 2021, “In India a Diminished Economic Future” **Hindustan Times**, August 13  
 2021, “Reforms and Indian Capitalism” **Hindustan Times**, June 29

#### **Recent Policy Commitments**

2022, General Body Member, Delhi Board of School Education, Government of Delhi  
 2022, Member, Chief Ministers’ Rajasthan Economic Transformation Advisory Council, Government of Rajasthan  
 2021, Member, Expert Group to Recommend Medium - Long Term Post Covid Strategy for Punjab, Government of Punjab  
 2020, Member and Governance Working Group Co-Chair, Lancet Commission on Reimagining India’s Health System, The Lancet  
 2020, Member, Punjab State Advisory Council, Government of Rajasthan  
 2019, Member, Technical Advisory Group, National Data and Analytics Platform, NITI Aayog, Government of India  
 2018, Research lead 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission on Rural Local Governments, Government of India

#### **Select Board and Advisory Panel Services**

2023 – Present International Advisory Board, Journal of Indian Politics and Policy  
 2022 – Present Advisory Committee, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University  
 2022 – Present Council Member, United Nations University  
 2022 – Present Member Committee of Experts on Public Administration, United Nations  
 2021 – Present Advisory Board Aashank Desai Center for Policy Studies, IIT Mumbai  
 2021 – Present Advisory Board, Children’s First Journal, Delhi Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, Government of Delhi  
 2017 – Present Governing Board Member, National Institute of Public Finance Policy  
 2018 – 2022 Advisory Board Member, Central Square Foundation  
 2017 – 2020 Governing Board Member, Institute of Economic Growth  
 2013 – 2016 Founding Member, International Experts Panel, Open Government Partnership

#### **Select Teaching**

2023, Nagaland Administrative Training Institute  
 “Introducing the Welfare State”  
 “India’s Education Crisis”  
 2022, Himachal Pradesh Administrative Training Institute  
 “Introducing the Welfare State”  
 2021, Meghalaya Administrative Training Institute  
 “Rights Accountability and Citizenship”  
 2020-2022, Indian School of Development Management, Delhi  
 “Understanding the Welfare State: An Introduction”  
 2020, Brown International Advanced Research Institute and CPR Certificate Course, New Delhi  
 “The Surface Area of State Capacity”  
 2020, National Law School of India University, Bangalore  
 “Debates on Accountability: Unpacking the Relationship between Accountability, Democracy and Citizenship” part of module on Social Accountability  
 2018, Brown International Advanced Research Institute, Watson Institute, Brown University  
 “Rules Vs Responsiveness: Unpacking the Challenge of State Capacity in India”

#### **Recent Lectures**

2024, “Mirror has Cracked, on Democracy, Welfare Politics and the India’s General Election”, Harvard Kennedy School.  
 2023, “Redefining Federalism in Contemporary India”, National Defence College, Ministry of Defence, Government of India.  
 2022, “Rewriting the Grammar of the Education System”, Lecture at Brown, Harvard, M.I.T, South Asian Politics, Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute, Harvard University.  
 2022, “The Curious Case of the Powerful yet Powerless Bureaucrat”, Lecture at Building State Capability, Centre for International Development, Harvard University.  
 2022, “The Profession and Practice of Public Policy”, Induction Lecture, Public Policy, Design and Management, Indian School of Public Policy.  
 2020, “Accounts and Accountability in India”, Professor Rajani Kothari Lecture Series, School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai.  
 2020, Inaugural Lecture, Master’s in Public Policy, National Law School of India University, Bangalore.

