



Talk: India's Consumer Forums: Access and Justice for a Reasonable Price?

Speaker:

Prof Robert Moorg, North Carolina State University

Date / Time:

June 6, 2013 - 3:00pm - 4:30pm

Venue:

Activity Room, First Floor, Pixel B, APU

Abstract:

India differs little with much of the rest of the world in its fascination with Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986 (CPA), a new addition to the list, consumer forums, was added. The particulars differ from other forms of ADR, in terms of jurisdiction and structure, but the immediate goal for all of them is relatively simple and straightforward – to shortcut the often dysfunctional formal court system and processes and its concomitant delays and expenses. In other words, facilitate access to authoritative dispute resolution while improving the quality of justice dispensed. This research, which is still underway, represents a first look at how well these forums are responding to this challenge.

A second objective of this study, beyond any conclusions that may be reached regarding the efficacy of these institutions, is to add to the very thin empirical body of work available on dispute resolution in India. By using original source material (i.e., the actual decisions of the forums) a database can be structured that provides a much more in-depth look at the product these institutions turn out, rather than operating on stereotypes, anecdotes, the occasional news story, and the drips of gross data that flow from the state or national levels.

A Note on the Speaker:

Professor Robert Moog is Associate Professor at the School of Public and International Affairs, North Carolina State University. Professor Moog has had a long engagement with the Indian legal system, starting with his study of District Courts in Uttar Pradesh in the mid-80s, with further work on the lower judiciary and Lok Adalats since that time. His current research focuses on the Consumer Courts in India, asking the question of whether forums of that nature represent a viable departure from a formal legal system plagued by delays in process.