



## **Talk: Priorities for Primary Education Policy in India's 12th Five-year Plan**

Speaker:

Prof. Karthik Muralidharan, Faculty, Department of Economics, University of California, San Diego

Date / Time:

November 26, 2012 - 3:30pm - 5:30pm

Venue:

10th Floor, Auditorium, APU

Abstract:

India has demonstrated considerable progress in the past decade on improving primary school access, infrastructure, pupil-teacher ratios, teacher salaries, and student enrollment. Nevertheless, student learning levels and trajectories are disturbingly low. The past decade has also seen a number of high-quality empirical studies on the causes and correlates of better learning outcomes based on large samples of data and careful attention paid to identification of causal relationships. The findings from this research are however, not being reflected in the current policy priorities of the Government of India. This paper seeks to bridge the gap by summarizing the research, making policy recommendations based on this research, and suggesting an implementation roadmap for the 12th Plan. The main findings reported in this paper are that there is very little evidence to support the notion that improving school inputs in a 'business as usual' manner will improve learning outcomes. On the other hand, innovations in pedagogy (especially supplemental remedial instruction targeted to the level of learning of children) and governance (focused on teacher performance measurement and management) have shown large positive impacts on student learning. The research over the past decade suggests that increasing inputs to primary education in a 'business as usual' way are unlikely to improve student learning in a meaningful way unless accompanied by significant changes in pedagogy and/or improvements in school governance.

A Note on the Speaker:

Karthik Muralidharan is known for his research interests in development, public and labor economics. He completed his undergraduate studies in economics at Harvard, received an M.Phil in economics from Cambridge (UK), and his Ph.D. in economics from Harvard. He was a faculty at the Harvard Graduate School of Education before moving on to University of California. Prof. Muralidharan is also Faculty Research Fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) and a faculty affiliate of the Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL),

an affiliate of the Bureau for Research and Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD), and of the Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA).