



# INSTITUTE OF CHINESE STUDIES

## **Governance of Government Middle Schools in Beijing and Delhi: Supportive Accountability, Incentives and Capacity**

**Speaker:** Yan Yifei

**Chair:** Sreemati Chakrabarti

**Date:** 07 February 2019

**Venue:** Seminar Room, ICS

The seminar began with a brief introduction of the speaker by the chair. The speaker has recently submitted her PhD thesis on the topic of seminar. She provided an overview of the research by highlighting three core research areas i.e. governance and accountability; development; and education in China and India.

The speaker began the presentation by familiarizing the audience with the motive of her research on how education, governance and accountability can be better understood in theory and practice. The research questions focused on how is supportive accountability being practiced in government middle schools in Beijing and Delhi and what leads to their success or hinders their performance from the perspective of teachers, who are the recipients of the support? The speaker mentioned that in order to understand the concept of accountability a comprehensive framework involving ground level interactions is needed. The existing works ignore the central role of the government and the importance of the local contexts.

There are several forms of accountability mechanisms like School-Based Management, education decentralization, vouchers, information disclosure, contract teacher, teacher performance bonus, in-service training, sanctions and penalties which are expected to work in such a way that they induce competition, give financial and decision-making autonomy to schools and local government, enhance parental participation, incentivize performance, instil and upgrade knowledge of teachers principals and school councils to facilitate better teaching

and improved school management. The speaker then addressed that accountability is important but there exists a lack of clarity in its concept. Accountability is crucial as the role of government is more visualised in terms of stewardship and the level of institutionalization is directly proportional to the level of scrutinization.

The speaker justified the choice of Delhi and Beijing for research by stating the adequate availability of resources and similar governance structures in both the cases. She mentioned that Delhi is relatively more complicated than Beijing with an exception of financial constraints which prevail to a greater extent in Beijing. Teacher surveys and follow up interviews in form of detailed questions on in-service training, promotion and awards, satisfaction and perception were the primary research tools in the study.

The cross-case comparisons of 150 teachers in 33 schools in North Delhi with 80 teachers in 22 schools in Fengtai, Beijing in terms of sample characteristics show that 80% teachers hold master's degree in Delhi and 77.5% hold bachelor's degree in Beijing as their highest degree. The teaching mode in Delhi is multi-subject, multi-grade and multi-sections, whereas in Beijing it is single-subject, single-grade and less than two sections. Average weekly teaching hours are 23.1 in Delhi and 6.5 in Beijing. In case of training providers State education authorities play a prominent role in Delhi as compared to the school, NGOs, and district and below levels. In Beijing the school and district play relatively significant role than State education authorities and NGOs as training providers. Along with this career advancement is a crucial factor in cross-case analysis. In Delhi promotion is single-type following a vertical career path on the other hand in Beijing it is multi-type following a horizontal career path. An additional feature in Delhi schools is the availability of guest teachers along with the regular teachers. This has facilitated the teaching but has been uncertain in determining the job security for the teachers.

The speaker concluded the presentation by presenting summarised point of comparison stating, supportive accountability matters, matching needs and incentives matters as well as advancing professional capacity matters.

### **About the Speaker**

**Yan Yifei (Bria)** is currently a PhD candidate at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. Her main research interests lie in the intersections among “governance and accountability”, “education and development” and “China and India”, which get all combined in her dissertation project. She has also been a visiting scholar with the Center for Policy Research

(CPR) in Delhi, India, and has conducted researches about urban-rural disparity in China's health care, governance and interest-alignment of the Brahmaputra, and anti-corruption facilitators in India and China. She holds Masters' degrees (with distinction) from Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research and Bachelors' degrees from Fudan University in Shanghai, China.

*This report was prepared by Srijana Karnatak, Research Intern, Institute of Chinese Studies.*