

INDIA'S FEDERAL REPUBLIC

Regional Parties and the Future of Democracy

16-17 OCTOBER 2026

Conference Room I
Main Building
India International Centre
Delhi

Regional parties are key vehicles through which India's social heterogeneity enters its democratic contract, giving political form to caste, language, tribe, agrarian distress, minority claims, statehood demands, and welfare expectations. The 2024 general election revealed both their vulnerability and indispensability. Examining their ongoing re-composition across states, this workshop explores how they mediate linguistic federalism, social justice, minority protection, democratic opposition, bargaining, and accommodation.

10:00-10:15

Opening Remarks

Mujibur Rehman (*Jamia Millia Islamia*)

10:15-11:30

Panel 1: Nationalising Power, Regional Survival

Uday Chandra (*Ashoka University*)

Satyaki Barua (*University of Hyderabad*)

Yamini Aiyar (*Brown University*)

Shruti Kapila (*University of Cambridge*)

11:45-1:00

Panel 2: Southern Regionalisms

Ajay Gudavarthy (*Jawaharlal Nehru University*) & **Vijay G.** (*University of Hyderabad*)

Nissim Mannathukkaren (*Dalhousie University*)

Vignesh Karthik (*King's College London*)

2:00-3:15

Panel 3: Eastern India: Regionalism and Party Competition

Dhriti Sonowal (*Dibrugarh University*)

Dwaipayan Bhattacharyya (*Jawaharlal Nehru University*)

Maidul Islam (*Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta*)

3:30-5:00

Journalists' Roundtable

Radhika Bordia (*Independent journalist*)

Varghese K. George (*The Hindu*)

Hartosh Singh Bal (*The Caravan*)

Shekhar Gupta (*ThePrint*) (TBC)

10:00-11:15

Panel 4: Agrarian Politics, Caste, and Regional Power

Surinder S. Jodhka (*Jawaharlal Nehru University*)

Narendra Kumar (*Jawaharlal Nehru University*) & **Anand Mehra** (*University of Delhi*)

Indrajit Roy (*University of York*)

11:30-12:45

Panel 5: Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha

Uday Chandra (*Ashoka University*)

Kunal Shahdeo (*Azim Premji University*)

Mujibur Rehman (*Jamia Millia Islamia*)

1:45-3:00

Panel 6: Regional Politics across the Deccan and West Coast

Sugata Srinivasaraju (*Journalist and author*)

Sumeet Mhaskar (*Bennett University*)

Dale Menezes (*Global Studies University*) (online)

3:15-5:00

Closing Roundtable: Regional Parties and Indian Democracy

K. C. Tyagi (*Rashtriya Lok Dal*)

Iqra Hasan (*Samajwadi Party*)

Kanimozhi Karunanidhi (*Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam*)

Manoj Jha (*University of Delhi; Rashtriya Janata Dal*)