

Lecture Series on Governance and Politics in South Asia Department of Political Science

The Ministry of Home Affairs and Political Order in India

by

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The significance of India's turbulent 1970s for the country's vaunted democratic governance and stable institutional arrangement has remained beyond the ken of scholarly analysis. Popular memory of the Emergency (1975-77) – fitful and amnesiac - remains transfixed on the authoritarian personality of Indira Gandhi as causal to the political turmoil of the decade. Structural issues relating to the economy, authority, legitimacy, emergency and conflict of cleavages underpinning the state and the nation are left out of the political discourse altogether. The effect of the emergency on India's institutional arrangement remains a moot point. The genre of emergency-dissection that has grown over the past years skirts around two unresolved issues. The first concerns the complex relationship of emergency and constitutionalism. Why has the Indian constitution, an essentially liberal democratic document, provided for an emergency that permits dictatorial rule? Is there a theory of emergency on which one can draw to analyse what happened empirically? Secondly, what held India's institutional arrangement in equilibrium in the face of serious onslaughts on it during the disorderly 1970s?



Professor Mitra is former Director, Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), and Visiting Research Professor, NUS, Singapore, and, Emeritus Professor Heidelberg University, in Germany. The dynamic interaction of culture and rationality has deeply influenced his research profile, which focuses on governance and administration, citizenship, hybridity and re-use, the evolution of the Indian state from classical to modern times, the transition to democracy and its consolidation, and security and foreign affairs of South Asia. His publications include *Culture and Rationality* (Sage 1999), *The Puzzle of India's Governance* (Routledge 2005), *Re-use: the Art and Politics of Integration and Anxiety* (Sage 2008), *Politics in India* (Routledge 2011), *Kautilya's Arthashastra: Classical Roots of Modern Politics in India* (jointly authored with Michael Liebig, published by Nomos 2016, and Rupa, 2017) represent different facets of his oeuvre.

Date: Monday, 19 November 2018

Time: 16:00-18:00

Venue: SAI 317

All are cordially invited!