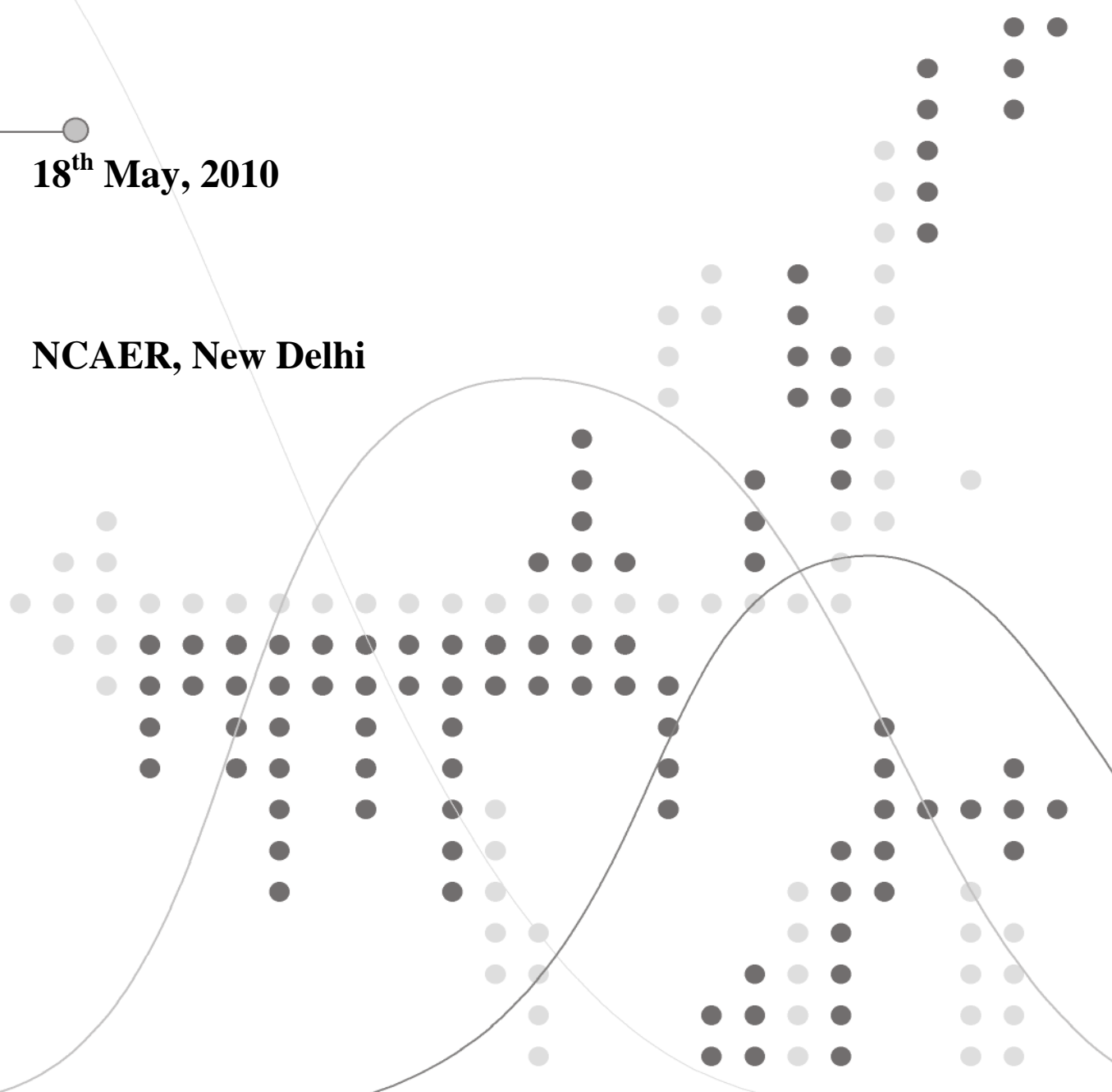


*A Press Release on*

**Launch of the project website and first  
Project Brief “Gramasurajya”**

**18<sup>th</sup> May, 2010**

**NCAER, New Delhi**



## Press Release

The Indian economy has experienced exponential growth in the last decade, but the rural poor still remain an issue of national concern. Additionally, it is a widely shared view that fast-paced economic growth could easily exacerbate existing iniquities in a stratified society like India's if the growth is not inclusive. Apart from income inequality, persistent differences in access to public infrastructure and social services like education and health are also significant concerns for India. Without accountable institutions that deliver public goods and services to the whole community it may be difficult to create conditions for the rural poor to escape the clutches of poverty by taking advantage of the economic opportunities opened up by globalised markets. Committed to the cause of inclusive growth, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Indian Constitution sought to decentralise rural governance, and subsequently service delivery, in order to enhance effectiveness.

NCAER, under IDRC's programme initiative on 'Decentralisation, Rural Governance and Inclusive Growth', seeks to discern whether the present level of decentralisation and the creation of appropriate institutions are effective for achieving pro-poor growth. The belief that a 'bottom-up' approach to public goods provision is more likely to be inclusive is the key motivation. With greater decentralisation, the satisfaction level of the target population with respect to delivery of public goods has certainly improved. In addition, when public goods are provided in a decentralised setting, the inefficiencies of continuous transfers from higher to lower levels of governments could be greatly reduced, if not eliminated.

In order to make the research work on the issues relating to the broad theme of decentralisation, rural development and inclusive growth, available to wider audience, NCAER has launched a website, [www.ruralgov-ncaer.org](http://www.ruralgov-ncaer.org). The website provides details of the research program currently under way at NCAER and also links to other related works. It has interactive features such as blog and discussion forum which are expected to be actively pursued in the coming days.

The website was launched by Mr.A.N.P.Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, New Delhi. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Sinha highlighted the need for research studies in this area and hoped that NCAER's work will make a contribution in this regard. Panchayats have to assume a major role in bringing about good governance and they also need to play an effective role as agents of economic development so that inclusive growth is possible.

Dr. Evan Due, Senior Program Specialist, IDRC, Singapore, released the Newsletter "Gramasurajya" launched by NCAER. He outlined the support by IDRC to research on global and regional development concerns and brought to attention the importance of learning from a variety of experiences at the international level. He mentioned that local governance is a major area of interest for IDRC. Dr. Stephen McGurk, Director, Regional Office for South Asia and China, IDRC in New Delhi highlighted the need for active engagement of researchers with other stakeholders to maximize the impact of research work. He pointed to the presence of many large networks on community practices and said that we need to draw attention to the mismatch between hypotheses relating to the governance and evidence from research studies.

This was followed by a discussion about the need for effective research dissemination. Mr. Sinha cited the need for a strong and dynamic relationship between his department and NCAER in the long run. Mr. Suman Bery, Director General, responding to the various suggestions, hoped that the attempts made in this project through the website, newsletter and policy roundtables will provide an opportunity for NCAER to disseminate research carried out not only by NCAER but also others on the issues of rural development.