

PSC 3262 - Current Issues of Local Governance

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a new emphasis among political and social theorists as well as policy makers and practitioners on local governance. Changes brought about by globalization have also highlighted the 'local' in a new context. The resurgence of the interest in local governance has also been inspired by the new developments in the theories and practices of democracy that emphasize popular participation, community empowerment and taking the state back to the people.

This course seeks to introduce students to some of the current issues and debates on local governance and local democracy. It is designed around issues relating to contemporary Sri Lanka and current theoretical perspectives that figure in democracy debates.

Objectives

This course has the following two objectives:

- i. To enable students to critically look at issues of local governance from the perspectives of local democracy and democratic participation.
- ii. To relate theoretical concerns on local governance to issues of local governance in their own environment.

Outcomes

At the end of this course, students are expected to:

- i. Appreciate the value of the approach of local democracy to critically understand the issues of local governance in Sri Lanka.
- ii. To think about practical proposals to improve the conditions of local governance in their own environment.

Course Content

1. Governance, Democracy and Local Governance: New Approaches.
2. Local governance and participatory democracy: Tocquevillean democracy and its relevance today.
3. Civil society, non-state actors, and local governance.
4. Local autonomy and development – Theory of Social Capital and its application.

5. Local autonomy, local minorities and the Subsidiarity Principle.
6. Democratic Local Governance: Innovations in India, focusing on the Panchayathi Raj System.
7. Sri Lanka: Proposals for local governance reform.

Assessment

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| Assignments | 30% |
| Final Examination | 60% |
| Class Attendance and Participation | 10% |
| Total | 100 |

Recommended Reading

Devaraj, PP. (ed). *Rights and Power-Sharing Mechanisms for Non-Territorial Minorities*, Colombo: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Harris, John, Kristian Stokke and Olle Tornquist, (eds.), 2004, *Politicizing Democracy, New local Politics of Decentralization*, London: Palgrave.

Hill, David, 1974, *Democratic Theory and Local Government*, London: Allen and Unwin.

King, D and Stoker, G, (Eds.), 1996, *Rethinking Local Democracy*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Putnam, Robert, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press.

Putnam, Robert, 1995, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy*, No. 6, pp. 65-78.

Rao, N, 2000, *Reviving Local Democracy: New Labour, New Politics*, Bristol: Polity Press.

Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Local Government Reforms, 1999, Colombo: Government Printer.

Tocqueville, Alexis de 1968 (1835), *Democracy in America*, London: Fontana.