

**University of Mary Washington**  
**Faculty Research Grant, 2009-2010**  
**Final report**  
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**Title:** *Civil society participation and trade policy making in India: consensus and legitimacy through stakeholder participation*

### **1. Project description**

This project's aim is to understand the interaction between the government and civil society organizations in the trade policy-making process in India. The government of India sought this interaction in response to the bitter criticism it faced in the aftermath of the Uruguay Round of negotiations that ended in 1994. There was a general consensus that Indian negotiators had left the negotiating table with a deal that did not adequately protect the interests of the country. Negotiators themselves felt that interaction with the broader civil society would be beneficial as it could potentially add to their own technical and negotiating capacity which has been limited by a small bureaucracy and the lack of resources for research.

### **2. Goals and specific objectives**

My goal was to expand my research focus and write a paper. One of the specific objectives with respect to the first goal was to improve our understanding of the trade policy process in India within a comparative perspective. A second related objective was to improve our understanding of the role of civil society organizations in economic policy formulation and the nature of interaction between these organizations and the government. All of these were accomplished. The funds helped me travel to India in order to conduct interviews with various participants both in and outside the government.

### **3. Potential impact and significance**

The research I conducted with the help of this Faculty Research Grant has provided me with material for all three courses I teach at UMW: International Political Economy, the Politics of South Asia and the introductory course in International Relations. I incorporated my findings into lectures on the challenges of globalization, the role of civil society organizations in South Asian development and the role of non-state actors and non-governmental organizations in the conduct of international relations. Lectures about abstract processes such as globalization become more lively, accessible and meaningful to our undergraduates when the instructor is able to bring into the lectures quotes from interviews conducted during field research. I am grateful that the grant has given me the opportunity to do this.

This research contributes to a better understanding of the trade policy making process in developing countries. My paper on India not only sheds light on the trade policy making process in that country but it raises comparative and broad questions about the challenges and opportunities of globalization for emerging economies in general. Substantial trade liberalization in India and in most developing countries is a recent phenomenon. The

scholarly focus on this topic is therefore fairly recent and the existing literature is not very extensive. My paper will add to this growing body of literature. My paper will also contribute to a better understanding of the processes through which civil society plays a role in the process of globalization, particularly in addressing the problem of democratic deficit of globalization.

#### **4. Methods**

For this project, I conducted a thorough review of the literature on the role of civil society in the process of globalization. The funds from the Faculty Research Grant allowed me to conduct 25 interviews with stakeholders from the government, international organizations, civil society organizations and political analysts and observers in New Delhi and Kolkata, India. I also conducted extensive archival research based on newspapers, newsletters, pamphlets and other publications.

#### **5. Results**

I was invited to present my findings at a lecture series organized by the Globalization and Society in India working group at the George Mason University in March 2010. I completed a first draft before that presentation. I am currently working on revisions and plan on sending the revised article to a peer-reviewed journal.