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## Welcome

On behalf of the directors, research affiliates and staff of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), it is my pleasure to welcome you to “Research and Policy Design: The First J-PAL Bihar Development Conference” jointly organized by J-PAL and the Government of Bihar.

We are very appreciative of the many initiatives in the development field introduced by the Government of Bihar under the leadership of the Honorable Chief Minister, and very encouraged by the state’s willingness to make further improvements in social programs based on scientific evidence. This openness to new ideas and enthusiasm for change is what has brought all of us to Bihar today for this conference. We are very grateful to the Government and especially to the Honorable Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary for their help and support in organizing this conference.

Today’s conference brings together leading development researchers, senior policy makers from the government, and representatives from international development organizations, foundations and NGOs to discuss the importance of using scientific evidence from field evaluations to guide policy; share the results of some of J-PAL’s evaluations of innovative development programs that have proven to be highly effective in improving development outcomes in health, education, and governance; explore the possibility of partnerships between the various attending organizations; and provide these organizations an opportunity to influence future research agenda.

I am confident that this conference will result in successful collaborations between the various attending organizations that will result in the scale-up of many highly effective social programs that will improve development outcomes in Bihar.

Sincerely,

Abhijit Banerjee

**CHIEF MINISTER**  
BIHAR



PATNA

**MESSAGE**

Eliminating poverty and enabling even the poorest to live with dignity is one of the principal challenges for developing societies like ours. Bihar with its huge development deficit and constrained resources has even more ground to cover. The goal has to be achieved by raising the incomes of the poor and by improving the delivery of various services, which in turn depends crucially on the governance environment. The State Government has initiated all-round measures towards that end.

It is in this context that the Government of Bihar has joined J-Pal (Abdul Latif Jameel POVERTY ACTION LAB), MIT, U.S.A. in organising an International Development Conference on the theme 'Crossing Paths: Researchers and Policy Makers Evaluating Development Policies' with particular focus on the crucial areas of health, education and governance.

I hope the deliberations of the conference will help us in our search for solutions with appropriate policies, programmes and implementation mechanisms. I wish the conference all success.

  
(Nitish Kumar)