

# Throwing light on the 'India of darkness'

## Francine Frankel says official apathy encouraging Maoists

Staff Reporter

**BANGALORE:** Focussing on increasing the rate of economic growth, in the absence of macro-economic reforms in the area of education, health and employment, can undo India's success story as a democracy, said Francine R. Frankel, renowned academic and professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania.

Delivering a lecture at the Indian Institute of Management -Bangalore here on Wednesday, Prof. Frankel spoke about India's economic success, and the political and socio-economic implications of its upward trajectory. She placed this debate in the context of recent developments such as the Maoist upsurge, the creation of Telangana and the alienation of Muslims.

Asking her young audience to view these issues in the larger context of the State's failure to deliver on its promise of inclusive growth, Prof. Frankel exhorted the soon-to-be-management executives to utilise their potential to participate and expand the discourse on development.

Borrowing a metaphor from Aravind Adiga's *'The White Tiger'*, Prof Frankel said: "Here we are in the India



### A NEW PERSPECTIVE:

*Francine R. Frankel, Founding Director of Center for the Advanced Study of India, delivering a talk at IIMB on Wednesday.*

— PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

of light, discussing the India of darkness... The existential reality is that 60 per cent of the (agricultural) workforce accounts for just 17.8 per cent

of the GDP." Prof. Frankel is an India scholar of long standing and is the co-founder of the Centre for the Advanced Study of India. She has authored several books on India's politics, economics and foreign policies.

"It is not a good idea to approach the naxalite problem as a law and order issue or the alienation felt by the Indian Muslims as part of a global problem," she said. The professor emphasised that the Maoist upsurge in this decade - areas reporting naxal activity has increased from 9 per cent in 2002 to 30 per cent in 2008 - came after efforts to obtain their rights to basic amenities through peaceful means were consistently ignored.

"I've been told that the younger generation has no memory of Prime Minister Nehru, and if they do, it is of someone who held India back with his socialist concerns. What is forgotten is that Nehru stood for balanced growth, and redistribution of gains," Prof. Frankel said and added that it was unfortunate that this notion had receded in history.

"Our problems today have arisen because recent growth does away with this dual approach," she added.