

Federalism and Local Government

ANANT, ARPITA. "Identity and Conflict: Perspectives from the Kashmir Valley." *Strategic Analysis*. 33.5. September 2009:760-773.

Based on interviews with a cross-section of people from the Kashmir Valley including aspirants of self-determination, academics, media persons, members of the civil society, and security forces this article argues that perceptions about identity are central to the conflict in Kashmir Valley. Having successfully stemmed the tide of armed conflict militarily, it is now crucial for the government to take cognizance of and address these issues in an appropriate manner as management of these perceptions will be critical to bringing enduring peace to the Kashmir Valley

BAKKE, KRISTIN M. "State, Society and Separatism in Punjab." *Regional and Federal Studies*. 19.2. May 2009:291-308.

Why do decentralized states differ in their capacity to preserve peace within their borders? This is the question motivating this study, which maintains that an understanding of decentralization's divergent effect on intrastate conflicts calls for a consideration of how these institutions are embedded in the societies they govern. In particular, this article suggests that the impacts of policy and fiscal decentralization are conditioned by any given region's ethnic make-up and wealth. The argument is anchored in a case study of separatism in Punjab in India.

BARUAH, SANJIB. "Separatist Militants and Contentious Politics in Assam, India: The Limits of Counterinsurgency." *Asian Survey*. 49.6. November-December 2009:951-974.

Insurgency-related violence continues in the northeast Indian state of Assam. Even though the fortunes of the United Liberation Front of Assam have declined significantly, a political settlement remains elusive. Unresolved tensions between regional patriotism and pan-Indianism explain the insurgent organization's resilience and the continuing appeal of its political ideology.

BEG, MIRZA ASMER and SUHIR KUMAR. "Uttar Pradesh: Signs of a Congress Revival?" *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV.39. 26 September 2009:190-193.

The story of the Lok Sabha election in Uttar Pradesh was the comeback of the Congress, which won 21 seats and substantially increased its vote share. The Bahujan Samaj Party did not rise up to the expectations its triumph in the 2007 assembly election had aroused. The Samajwadi Party won the highest number of seats but lost the backing of the Muslims, who had consistently supported it in earlier elections. Though the BSP led in terms of vote share and public opinion, the Congress was aided by the popularity of the central government.

BOSE, PRASENJIT. "Verdict 2009: An Appraisal of Critiques of the Left." *Economic and Political Weekly* XLIV.40. 3 October 2009:32-38.

Critiques of the mainstream left in India have questioned its political strategies and priorities, in the light of the left parties' defeat in the 15th Lok Sabha elections, following which the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has conducted a review – identifying its weaknesses and errors. The argument that the left should not have withdrawn support to the ruling alliance in 2008 over the nuclear deal and should have privileged its struggle for livelihood issues ignores the impact of imperialism on national sovereignty. That there were organisational shortcomings and mistakes by the Left Front-led West Bengal government is undeniable, but a rejection of the "democratic centralism" model of functioning by the CPI (M) does not automatically follow. Also the notion that a "left sans the CPI (M)" is viable flows from a flawed argumentative basis.

CHATTERJEE, JYOTIPRASAD and SUPRIO BASU. "West Bengal: Mandate for Change." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV.39. 26 September 2009:152-156.

The same issues – security in land rights and livelihood concerns – that have driven voter preferences in rural West Bengal since 1977 were present in 2009 as well. The difference this time was that the rural electorate, historically the base of the Left Front in the state,

shifted its support from the LF to the All India Trinamool Congress. This explains the devastating defeat of the LF in the Lok Sabha elections.

DEBBARMA, SUKHENDU and MOUSAMI DEBBARMA. “Fifth Victory in a Row for CPI (M) in Tripura.” *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV.39. 26 September 2009:172-173.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) won both the Lok Sabha seats in Tripura by handsome margins for the fifth consecutive time. The party has a distinct social character and support among all sections of the state’s population unlike its nearest rival, the Congress, which has not been able to project itself as a viable alternative. Yet, there are clouds on the CPI (M)’s horizon with the issues of Bengali migration and alienation of tribal lands becoming important, and the emergence of insurgent groups highlighting the welfare of the indigenous people.

DESHPANDE, RAJESHWARI and NITIN BIRMAL. “Maharashtra: Congress-NCP Manages Victory.” *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV.39. 26 September 2009:136-140.

A changing party system, fragmentation of social blocs, arrival of caste-based identity politics and material frustrations leading to the formation of several rebel groups within the various political parties – all these helped the Congress – Nationalist Congress Party combine record a default win in the Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra. This was achieved despite a mixed opinion on the state government’s track record. The alliance has its task cut out for the upcoming assembly elections in the state and no longer can traditional bases of support be counted upon, especially by the Congress Party.

GOSWAMI, SANDHYA. “Assam: A Fractured Verdict.” *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV.39. 26 September 2009:159-163.

This article attempts to look at the social pattern of voting in Assam by analysing the verdict of the 2009 Lok Sabha elections in the state. The social pattern reflects a significant transformation in the alignment of social groups displaying a deep-rooted fractured politics with almost every community asserting its identity. Ideology

seemed to have taken a back seat as political parties opted for state level alliances with the intent of bolstering individual seat tallies.

JAMIR, AMONGLA. "Nagaland: Behind the Curtain." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV.39. 26 September 2009:170-172.

The Nagaland People's Front won the lone Lok Sabha seat in the state, defeating prominent Congress and Trinamool Congress rivals. It was, in a sense, an endorsement for Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio's Eastern Nagaland policy that the electorate gave weight to the performance of the regional party when voting for its representative from the state. However, all is not well with the democratic process in Nagaland, where village councils and other local bodies flex their muscles to ensure votes go to candidates of their choice.

JANI, MAHASHWETA. "Gujarat: BJP Scrapes Through." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV.39. 26 September 2009:133-136.

The repeated re-election of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the state assembly election and the repeated refusal of the voters to reject the Congress in the Lok Sabha election indicate the split voting pattern in Gujarat and the regional character of BJP. However, during the Lok Sabha elections 2009, in the absence of any strong wave or emotional mobilisation, "normal politics" came into play. Caste equations and their support to political parties became the key factors deciding the fate of parties.

KUMAR, SANJAY and RAKESH RANJAN. "Bihar: Development Matters." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV. 39. 26 September 2009: 141-144.

The robust victory of the ruling Janata Dal (United)-Bharatiya Janata Party combine in Bihar owes much to the developmental policies adopted by the Nitish Kumar-led government. That said, the victory was also made possible because of the shrewd use of community and caste-based support by the alliance, which the divided opposition could not achieve.

LACINA, BETHANY. "The Problem of Political Stability in Northeast India: Local Ethnic Autocracy and the Rule of Law." *Asian Survey*. 49.6. November-December 2009: 998-1020.

Inter-communal and insurgent violence has been entrenched in Northeast India for decades. At present, however, attacks against central government forces are in abeyance. This downturn reflects the consolidation of local regimes of corruption and repression. New Delhi tolerates and even supports such localized autocracy as a means to manage security threats.

MATTOO, AMITABH. "Kashmir after Shopian." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV. 28. 11 July 2009:39-43.

New Delhi's triumphalism over last year's assembly elections in Kashmir and subsequent inaction run the risk of damaging the triumph of democracy in Kashmir. The large-scale protests over the recent incidents in Shopian and Baramullah should serve as a wake-up call for the political establishment to creatively and imaginatively build on proposals for autonomy, as well as political and administrative reforms which were incubated by this very dispensation during its previous term in office. These proposals, enjoying a fair degree of consensus, will address the more pressing demands of peace, dignity and security while also providing a model of federalisation for the Indian union. Will the government of India show some initiative at last, or will it allow conditions to drift as usual?

NAUTIYAL, ANNPURNA. "Uttarakhand: Congress Outperforms Its Opponents." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV. 39. 26 September 2009:194-195.

The easy win for the Congress in the 15th Lok Sabha elections in Uttarakhand was made possible by the voters' positive opinion of the Congress-led coalition in the centre. This, combined with the fact that voters rated the previous Congress government in the state better than the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party regime, helped the former achieve a clean sweep at the polls.

SATPATHY, R.K. "Meghalaya: Verdict on Expected Lines." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV. 39. 26 September 2009:166-168.

The results of the 15th Lok Sabha elections in the two parliamentary constituencies of Meghalaya were on expected lines – with the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party retaining their zones of influence. The margins of victory however threw a few surprises – with the NCP candidate in Tura winning by a small margin, compared to the emphatic win scored by the Congress candidate in Shillong.

SHASTRI, SANDEEP, VEENA DEV and B.S. PADMAVATHI. "Karnataka: A Default Win for the BJP." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV. 39. 26 September 2009:114-117.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's rise in Karnataka politics is a clear reflection of the inability of the Congress to present a credible alternative and the incapacity of the Janata Dal (Secular) to garner state-wide support. The BJP's win, despite bucking a national trend, masks the relative disapproval of its governance in the state.

SINGH, MANGI S. "Manipur: Congress Triumphant." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV. 39. 26 September 2009:163-165.

The Congress pulled off victories in both the Lok Sabha seats in Manipur, a feat it had last accomplished in 1996. Territorial integrity of the state, insurgency, human rights and repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 were the major campaign issues. A pro-Congress sentiment is widespread in the state as is the opinion that the Naga-dominated areas should not be separated from it. The election was also notable for a higher turnout because of non-interference by insurgency groups.

SINHA, B.K. and HARISHWAR DAYAL. "Jharkhand: Politics of Performance." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV. 39. 26 September 2009:145-147.

While the BJP was victorious in terms of the seats won in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections in Jharkhand, its vote share was less than in

2004. The Congress and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, separately or together, however, seem incapable of winning the state and the entry of Babulal Marandi's Jan Vikash Morcha has further fragmented the political scene. With a Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies survey revealing that respondents find the BJP best placed to handle the state's issues but rate Marandi, who has split from the BJP, as the best choice for the chief minister, the forthcoming assembly elections promise to be interesting.

SUD, NIKITA. "Cracks in the Facade: The Gujarat BJP and Elections 2009." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV. 28. 11 July 2009:15-19.

The Bharatiya Janata Party appears to have had a stranglehold over power in Gujarat from the 1990s. There have, however, been electoral ups and downs faced by the party over the years, highlighted by its below par performance in Elections 2009. That the BJP has been shaken but may be far from being dislodged is made clear by the state of the opposition Congress. Gujarat's electorate seems open to political alternatives. These will have to emerge either from nascent third party options or from a significant reworking of the pattern of politics offered by the big two.

SURI, K.C., P. NARASIMHA RAO and V. ANJI REDDY. "Andhra Pradesh: A Vote for Status Quo?." *Economic and Political Weekly*. XLIV. 39. 26 September 2009:39-43.

The second consecutive victory of the Congress Party in the 2009 parliamentary and assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh does not mean that the political situation in the state is stable or that the status quo will continue undisturbed. Voters did not hand out a big victory to the Congress government, but gave it a second term with a reduced vote and slender majority in the assembly. The fragmentation of the two-party system into a truer multiparty system and the entry of new players were the primary reasons for the outcome. The victory for the Congress can even be interpreted as an opportunity for introspection by the defeated parties with the election results turning out to be an occasion not for dejection, but one of hope.

TREMBLEY, CHOWDHARI REETA. "Kashmir's Secessionist Movement Resurfaces: Ethnic Identity, Community Competition, and the State." *Asian Survey*. 49.6 November-December 2009:924-950.

The May 2008 Jammu and Kashmir government's decision to transfer 99 acres of land to a Hindu shrine reignited the Kashmiri nationalist movement. This essay argues that Kashmiri ethnonationalist aspirations remain entrenched among the Valley's Muslim population and that electoral participation is no guarantee of attenuated ethnonationalist demands.

YUSUF, MOEED and ADIL NAJAM. "Kashmir: Ripe for Resolution?." *Third World Quarterly*. 30.8 (2009): 1503-1528.

This paper documents and analyses 46 proposals made between 1947 and 2008 for resolving the India-Pakistan dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. Both of the Authors conduct a content analysis to recognise the patterns that emerge from these formulations and identify the key elements that recur over time. Their analysis suggests that the dispute may be more 'ripe' for resolution today than it has ever been in the past. For the first time in the dispute's history, there is growing convergence over a core element of the solution, i.e. Granting autonomy to Kashmiris. This is matched by a virtual consensus on the 'catalysts', namely soft borders to allow relatively free human and economic exchange within Jammu and Kashmir, the notion of Kashmiri involvement in any negotiations on the issue and demilitarisation of the state. Ripeness alone, however, does not lead to resolution. Over the years various dynamic proposals have been made, which means that this particular convergence could also dissipate, as some of the prior ones have. There is a potential window of opportunity today, but it will not last indefinitely.