

## **Democracy, Elections, Etc.**

**BANERJEE, JHUMPA, 'The Dynamics of Diversity and Democracy in India', *South Asia Politics*, 7 (7), November 2008, pp. 33-36.**

In the wake of the recent social and political transformations manifested in national splitting coupled with increasing waves of democratization around the world, the article seeks to review as to how far the democratic framework adopted by India has facilitated the fulfillment of the needs and aspirations of the multicultural identities inhabiting the land of a 'million mutinies'. Through the examples of various ethnic, religious and linguistic conflicts in the country, the article concludes that India's approach to managing diversities has been somewhat unique. In this approach, assimilation has certainly not been on the agenda and while integration has been pursued, homogeneity has been eschewed.

**BETEILLE, ANDRE, 'Constitutional Morality', *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLIII (40), Oct 4, 2008, pp. 35-42.**

The article examines the question of strength and weakness of constitutional morality in contemporary India in the light of a cycle of escalating demands from the people and the callous response of the successive governments to those demands. The author tries to explore the issue of constitutional morality by referring to the observations made by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on this issue at the time of making of the Constitution before tracing the evolution of constitutional democracy in India over the past 60 years of independence. It is argued that in a parliamentary democracy, the obligations of constitutional morality are expected to be equally binding on the government and the opposition. However in India, the same political party treats these obligations very differently when it is in office and when it is out of it. This has contributed greatly to the popular perceptions of our political system as being amoral.

**BHADRAKUMAR, M.K., 'India Blows up a Monsoon', *Mainstream*, XLVI (30), July 12, 2008, pp. 17-20.**

In the backdrop of Indo - US civil nuclear agreement or the "deal", the article examines the likely impact of the agreement on the

impending General Elections of 2009. It also discusses the Congress strategy to counter those who thought the deal would alienate India's 130 million strong Muslim population which would cost the party dear in the 2009 elections. It explains how the government has taken in hand a conscious effort to project that Muslim countries regard India as an important partner, for instance through strengthening Indo-Iran ties, and that the deal does not jeopardize India's stand.

**BHANU, VINOD, 'Right to Recall Legislators: The Chhatisgarh Experiment', *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLIII (40), October 4, 2008, pp. 13-14.**

The electorate's right to recall legislators is one means of ensuring the latter's accountability towards the people. Though there were some earlier attempts at recall in the local bodies, the recall election in June 2008 in three municipal bodies in Chhatisgarh marked a national first in the call to accountability of non-performing representatives of the people. While highlighting the merits of the recall option for a democratic system, the author cautions that there is a possibility of misusing this provision to settle political scores as has been alleged in the Chhatisgarh case. Loopholes for such abuse need to be removed to make the right to recall a democratic tool that will ensure accountability.

**CHANDHOKE, NEERA, 'Quest for Justice: The Gandhian Perspective', *Economic and Political Weekly*, XIII (15,) May 3, 2008, pp. 37-46.**

Dialogue appears particularly appropriate for plural societies, which are marked by a variety of perspectives, beliefs, commitments and values. But plural societies tend to be stamped by deep disagreements on the basic norms that should govern the polity. For this reason alone, the societies can prove deeply divided and fractious. This raises some pertinent questions like how do defenders of dialogue establish the preconditions for dialogue among participants. How can communications among agents be enabled at all insofar as these agents can be persuaded to modify their original position in and through the process of dialogue? The author tries to locate the answers to these vexing questions within the Gandhian philosophy of Satyagraha.

**CHATTERJEE, PARTHA, 'Democracy and Economic Transformation in India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLIII(13), April 19, 2008, pp. 53-62.**

In the insightful article, the author examines how with the changes in India over the past 25 years, there is now a new dynamic logic that ties the operations of "political society" (comprising peasantry, artisans and petty producers in the informal sector) with the hegemonic role of the bourgeoisie in "civil society". This logic is provided by the requirement of reversing the effects of primitive accumulation of capital with activities like anti poverty programmes. The state, with its mechanisms of electoral democracy, becomes the field for the political negotiation of demands for transfer of resources from accumulative economy to programmes aimed at providing livelihood to the poor. The central argument is that electoral democracy makes it unacceptable for the government to leave the marginalized groups without the means of labour and let them fend for themselves since this carries the risk of turning them into "dangerous classes."

**CHOWDHARY, REKHA, 'Electioneering in Kashmir: Overlap between Separatist and Mainstream Political Space', *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLIII(28), July 12, 2008, pp. 22-24.**

The assembly elections in 2008 in Jammu and Kashmir mark a break in electioneering in the state in recent times, particularly in the Kashmir valley where the mainstream politics was eroded and the political space was overtaken by militancy and separatism till 2002 elections. Heightened political activity by the mainstream political parties and internalization of the separatist demands has characterized this break. It is in the context of this changed political scenario in Kashmir that the article examines how the 2008 assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir would have great consequences for the state.

**HANKLA, CHARLES R., 'Parties and Patronage: An Analysis of Trade and Industrial Policy in India', *Comparative Politics*, 41 (1), October 2008, pp. 41- 60.**

The article examines various political factors influencing the allocation of economic patronage and support in democracies.

Highlighting the role of political parties in the distribution of government benefits, the article argues that the changing levels of party centralization can drive important changes in the allocation of state largesse. When national parties are centralized, national party leaders control patronage and target benefits to particularly influential regions and industries. By contrast, when governing parties are decentralized, the influential sub-national party leaders advocate for their constituents and allocate patronage evenly through a national logroll. Evidence for these relationships is found by comparing India's distribution process for industrial licenses and government finance under a decentralized Congress party (1954-61) and a centralized Congress party (1969-75).

**JOSEPH, T. M., 'Language and Politics in South India: An Exercise in Nation Building', *Man and Development*, 30(2), June 2008, pp. 29-42.**

The article tries to explore the various means of identity formation in India with a special focus on primordial ties based on language are mobilized in South India and impacts on the nation building process in the country. As linguistic groups are geographically discrete ethnic groups, their concentration in a particular region enables them to unite politically and develop political strategies for sharing the scarce resources in that region. Such mobilizations have led to the movements emphasizing the rights of the 'sons of the soil' and breed animosities to migrants from outside the region. The main thrust of these movements is that local people should be given preference over outsiders in jobs within that region. The focus of the article is further restricted to the nativist movement in Bangalore city which has witnessed massive immigration from other cities in the post independence period.

**JOSEPH, T.M., 'Mixed Member Proportional System as an alternative to the Indian Electoral System', *Indian Journal of Political Science*, LXIX(1), 2008, pp. 183- 190.**

The article looks into the unrepresentative character of the existing 'first-past-the-post' (FPTP) system in India and suggests an alternative model so that our democracy can be made more representative and meaningful. The FPTP system of elections results

in the victory of a candidate with a minority of votes which enables the candidate who gets the most votes (need not be a majority of the votes polled) to win an election in a multi cornered contest. The voters who voted for the defeated candidates go unrepresented. At the national level, this phenomenon leads to disproportionality between the percentages of votes polled by political parties. In order to correct this drawback in the present Indian system, Mixed Member Proportional System is suggested in the article.

**KAUR, SUMANDEEP, 'Electoral Reforms in India: Proactive Role of Election Commission,' *Mainstream*, XLVI (49), November 22, 2008, pp. 9-12.**

Free and fair elections are indispensable for the success of a democracy. In light of this fact, the article argues that our electoral system was largely free from any major flaw till the Fourth General Elections after which distortions started appearing and got multiplied in the coming years. In this context, the article lays out in detail some of the important initiatives taken and suggestions made by the Election Commission to cleanse the electoral process in India. These include among other things, implementation of the Moral Code of Conduct, disclosure of antecedents by the candidates, registration of the political parties, limits on poll expenses, multimember Election Commission and use of scientific and technological advancements. The article concludes that the problem of our electoral system is not a lack of laws but lack of their strict implementation and to rectify this, there is a need to strengthen the hands of the Election Commission and give it more legal and institutional powers.

**KUMAR, NARENDRA, 'Formulation of Inclusive Policies in Parliament', *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLIII(29), July 19, 2008, pp. 80-85.**

Recognizing the discriminating character of Indian society, the role played by legislators in influencing the policies for scheduled castes and tribes constitute the subject matter of this article. The initiative to get recommendations implemented, the participation in debates and discussions and intervention of members of Parliament during question hour in the Lok Sabha (1985-1995) have been analyzed in

the light of the fact that many of the legislators are representatives of Dalit masses. The findings of the article indicate that though the Parliament deliberates upon social exclusion and inclusion policies for SCs/STs, it does so both poorly and inadequately.

**MEHRA, AJAY K., 'Maya' in Indian Politics', *Mainstream*, XLVI(51), December 19, 2008, pp. 78-79.**

Making a comparison with the gracious manner in which electoral politics is conducted in United States, the article laments the 'maya' or delusion that has come to characterize the Indian politics today. The author refers to the brazen actions of political figures like Mayawati and others which have shorn Indian politics of its grace. The article argues that the post-Congress party fragmentation in India since the 1980s has caused gradual erosion of values, in functional and operative rather than the moral sense, in the way parties and leaders connect to each other. In the light of such a sad state of affairs, the author questions as to whether the Indian politics can continue to be under the political 'maya' and still take care of people's needs.

**MISHRA, VANDANA, 'Need to Redefine "Party" in Democracy', *Mainstream*, XLVI(8), February 2008, pp. 13-15.**

Political parties are the agents of representation in a democracy. But of late, public perceptions about parties in India have undergone a sea change, raising the need for the parties to reinvent and redefine themselves. The article examines the factors behind this crisis of parties which has widespread manifestations. It also suggests measures for the parties to respond to the crisis, address the shortcomings and streamline the decision making process to curb the increasing cynicism about political parties in one of the most vibrant democracies of the world.

**PALSHIKAR, SUHAS, 'Of Democracy and Diversity', *Seminar*, 581, January 2008, pp. 83-87.**

The article questions the Indian government's policy approach to the minority questions since Independence which has led to a mishandling of the 'diversity' in a democratic nation. It is argued

that the term 'minority' has become a euphemism for discussing the Muslim question. However, there is a need to broaden the issue of minority concerns and turn to a more robust and fruitful frame of diversity. In the last six decades, India has witnessed many policy initiatives that did not take into account the comprehensiveness of diversity. To rectify this distortion of democracy, the article looks into six areas of concern that need to be addressed to institutionalize a policy framework squarely based on the idea of diversity. It is argued that if societies adopt consciously pro-diversity perspective, the global discourse on questions of diversity, multiculturalism and democracy would be significantly enriched.

**ROY, ANUPAMA, 'Between Encompassment and Closure: The "migrant" and the "citizen" in India', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, May- Aug. 2008, pp. 219-248.**

The legal-constitutional language of citizenship in India and the manner in which it has unfolded in practice shows that citizenship oscillates ambivalently between the encompassment and closure, creating a differential layering of citizenship. It is this oscillation and ambivalence which creates the 'disturbed zones of citizenship' that propel the category of the citizen out of a legal trapping into a concept whose realization has its own logic and momentum. In order to demonstrate this, the article maps the amendments that have taken place in citizenship laws in India, sieving out in particular the category of the 'migrant', to identify the moments of encompassment and closure. It shows how the migrant has been integral to the amendments and traces its different figurations within them to demonstrate shifts in the ideological basis and institutional practices of citizenship in India.

**SAKTHIVEL, P., 'Indian Parliamentary Democracy in Turmoil', *Indian Journal of Political Science*, LXIX (3), 2008, pp. 519-529.**

The founding fathers of Indian Constitution adopted Parliamentary system of government by considering the fact that it will be more suitable to India's pluralism and heterogeneity. However, the healthy debate and discussions, which are the hallmark of Parliamentary democracy, have been overshadowed by disruption, confrontation, forced adjournment of houses resulting in massive

wastage of public money and confidence. The article touches upon the level of functioning of Parliamentary Democracy in India in the light of these unhealthy trends. It is suggested that in order to restore the values of parliamentary democracy, it is essential to concentrate on important measures of ensuring impartiality and accountability along with strict enforcement of code of conduct for people's representatives.

**SAMMADAR, RANABIR, 'Jayprakash Narayan and the Problem of Representative Democracy', *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLIII (31), 2 August 2008, pp. 49-58.**

Enquiring into the history of democracy in India, the article examines Jayprakash Narayan's perspective on the problem of representative democracy. JP's enduring contribution to political praxis has been his articulation of politicizing political democracy and his efforts to overcome the formalism and temporality of the representational format to make the practice of democracy direct, immediate and popular. JP's politics was all about establishing institutions of democracy that represented the "general will" of the people, going beyond the mere representative, corporatist state. His ideas and work for the institution of a "civil-political" society through associational politics opens up strategic sites for researches to conduct inquiries into the history of democracy in India.

**SARADAMONI, K., 'Nuclear Deal, Left Parties and Priorities for People', *Mainstream*, XLVI (31), July 19, 2008, pp. 13-15.**

The article highlights some of the major issues and challenges facing the Indian society, which have been overlooked by the politicians, and media who seem to be too occupied with the nuclear deal between India and United States. The article briefly touches upon problems like poverty, inequality, unemployment, migration, land grabbing, non-implementation of government schemes and policies, spread of use of GM crops and the growing violence at all levels. The article concludes by opposing the deal, which would make India dependent on other nations and suggests that we should rather search for alternative sources of energy.

**SINGH, JASVIR, 'Under Enfranchisement of the Urban Poor', *Seminar*, 586, June 2008, pp. 35-38.**

In the light of the new delimitation exercise, the article draws upon various data and figures to argue that the voter population increases at a much faster rate in those city constituencies where there is a scope for the poor and vulnerable migrants to acquire shelter. If the constituencies are not delimited regularly (after every census), it is likely that the voter population in constituencies which provide shelter to the poor and vulnerable groups, may further outstrip those constituencies which deny shelter to the poor and vulnerable groups, thus entrenching the problem of over and under enfranchisement.

**SINGH, RAJKUMAR, 'Democracy in Kashmir: The First Experience', *South Asia Politics*, 7 (2), June 2008, pp. 18-22.**

The article traces the historical roots of the Kashmir problem from the pre-independence to post-independence years and argues that it was not so much a failure of secularism in India or in the state as that of federalism and democracy at both the levels due to which Kashmiri aspirations could not be fulfilled. The article explores the politics that unfolded in Kashmir after its accession to Indian Union, granting of special status under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution and during the rule of Sheikh Abdullah. The article concludes that the main defect of India's Kashmir policy has been that it totally ignored the state people and their human and democratic rights and laid stress on the role of individuals and groups who only feathered their own nests.

**TRIPATHI, VIKAS, 'The Decline of Indian Parliament: Confidence and No Confidence Motions amid Fragmentation', *South Asia Politics*, 7 (7), November 2008, pp. 40-45.**

The Parliament in India is at a critical political and institutional juncture in which a number of interlinked emerging issues are questioning parliament's utility and relevance as the relationship between the parliament and the executive stands altered. Recent developments in Indian politics have called attention to the decline of India's parliament in both quantitative and qualitative terms and have challenged the assumptions behind the adoption of the practice

of collective responsibility in India. The article uses data on Lok Sabha proceedings since the first Lok Sabha including the number of confidence and no confidence motions discussed in Lok Sabha and their outcomes, to question the efficacy of the motions as mechanisms to ensure the accountability of government to the popular House. Based on the data, the article concludes that in terms of invoking responsibility from government to the popular House, the confidence and no confidence motions have remained ineffective.

**TYAGI, KARAN, 'The Doctrine of Separation of Powers and Its Relevance in time of Coalition Politics', *Indian Journal of Political Science*, LXIX (3), 2008, pp. 619-625.**

The article explores the new momentum acquired by the issue of separation of powers in the context of coalition politics in the recent past. When a coalition government of parties with varying agenda is in power or when the political survival of the majority party is threatened, political survival becomes more important than the legal merits and demerits of a case. It is suggested that when the legislature is more concerned with the immediate electoral interest of the parties in power rather than the interests of the people as a whole, it does not seem prudent for the ordinary citizen of India to confer supremacy to the legislature without the accountability provided by judicial scrutiny.

**XAVIER, JOE, *Changing Contours of Civil Society*, *Social Action*, 58 (4), 2008, pp. 353-366.**

The term civil society which was in vogue in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries has assumed greater political and intellectual interest in recent years generating new and complex discourses of democracy and development. Earlier social scientists theorized the two sector world with market on one hand and state on the other. The article argues that the resurgence of interest in Civil Society has contributed to a paradigmatic shift in thinking away from a dualistic fixation with the State versus the Market towards a new triadic paradigm embracing civil society, state and the market. In this broader discourse of democracy and development, the article explores the emergence and changing nature of civil society and the interface between state, market and civil society in the Indian context.

**YADAV, YOGENDRA and PALSHIKAR, SUHAS, Ten Theses on State Politics in India, *Seminar*, 591, November 2008, pp. 14-22.**

The article reflects on the rise of state politics as an autonomous domain in the last two decades while breaking free from the logic of national politics. The various manifestations of this new development include the emergence of states as effective arena of political choice, varying nature of political choice and outcomes from one state to another and increasing salience of regional parties with national politics now being dictated by them. In this context, the article uses state level studies to develop a comparative perspective on state politics in India. The authors present ten interesting thesis based on this comparative analysis of state politics in India in the past two decades and also raises some insightful questions about the likely impacts of these developments in terms of deepening democracy in India.

**YADAV, YOGENDRA, 'The Paradox of Political Representation', *Seminar*, 586, June 2008, pp. 52-59.**

The article views the latest delimitation of Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies in the light of the larger understanding of the paradox of representation in contemporary India. This paradox manifests itself at various levels - from representation in the Lok Sabha to Panchayats. The article suggests that we should judge the latest delimitation exercise within the constraints imposed by this paradox. The article also examines certain flaws of the delimitation exercise in terms of opportunities missed by it; for instance, to reapportion the share of seats for different states in keeping with their current share of country's population; to address the under enfranchisement of urban voter; the under-representation of some communities and finally the refusal to align the map of the first and the third second tier of democracy to the third tier. The article concludes by suggesting that some of the most serious flaws in the recent delimitation exercise flow from a paradigm that has come to dominate our thinking about designing and reforming politics in general and representation in particular.