



NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

School of Social Sciences

DD 26, Sector I, Salt Lake, Kolkata – 700064

Website: www.wbnsou.ac.in

Call for Paper

The School of Social Sciences, NSOU shall be organizing a One Day UGC-DEB Sponsored National Seminar on *The Indian Democracy and the rise of the Marginal: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach*

The narration of the Indian Democracy becomes invigorating and striking especially with an attempt for unclogging all roads taken by the marginals towards greater visibility and freedom. We are organizing this seminar on the Occasion of the Amrit Mahotsav that commemorates the metamorphosis since the very last decade of the 20th century that witnessed galvanizing changes. It had redefined the Indian polity through an interesting yet intensifying interface between caste, class, gender and ethnic identities. The liberalization and the concomitant economic reforms championed a new phase of development which made India embark on a new journey since the 1990s with its own promises and challenges. The period remained entrenched with many strains, some of which were manipulated by the political system itself for extra electoral leverages. The era saw an unprecedented rise of diverse minority categories and backward classes which had lost voices for decades.

The society was myopic of such groups and so was the polity which refused to accommodate such plural but undermined groups. Their voices went unheard and drowned in the cacophony of political rhetoric and shrill meta-narratives. It was only in this era that the unvoiced were represented and patted with concern, at least the polity seemed to hear their murmurs. The muffled voices were beginning to marshal some identity though smeared by the accoutrements of crafty politics. Hence was born the dispensations of identity politics that was soon to radicalize the socio-political



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landscape of the Indian society. However, whether the new regime could bring any solace to the emaciated is doubtful and that is what we shall be debating in this seminar. We shan't begin with any presumption but only present the timeline of the reorganization of the state and the polity to record the morphed picture of the backward and the minority categories.

It is only after presenting a gross picture of this metamorphosis, shall we be dialoguing. We will debate whether at all the excluded groups have carved out some niche for themselves or is it only a cosmetic change pretending welfare. Is new Indian polity and society facilitating social inclusion or is a farce after all? Is the very process of politicizing the identity formations help bring some solace to those teetering on the margin? Or is it all illusion for the masses and optimisation for the handful?

These are some of the basic questions we shall be asking in this one-day national seminar. We will surely note that several communal eruptions followed to necessitate a distinctive kind of mobilization that wreathed the state and the polity. This was coupled with a new spree of economic reforms and military conquests that made the Indian society more resilient to enduring changes. As the country stepped in the threshold of the twentieth century, the triad forces of globalization, authoritarianism and communalism had built up gradually to the final and the brassy tune of crescendo from where there was no stepping back. The decision made by the V.P Singh in August 1990 to initiate the Mandal Commission came as a bolt from the blue which reserved twenty-seven percent of seats in all public services for the backward classes. This of course was a water-shed moment in the panorama of the post-independent India that was about to charter a journey for the electoral history with dynamic caste illustrations, an articulation and re-affirmation by the lower castes, a kind unknown to us. In the similar note, riding on the tide of exclusive reservation, women's movement scaled new heights. The 73rd amendment of the Indian constitution offered one third



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reservation to women across the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj and the same was followed in the urban bodies as well in the subsequent 74th amendment.

However, there was a growing demand for giving extra boosts to those from the backward castes and classes within the category of women itself. Though this could not be put into practise yet the caste-gender interface clasped with class and minority status became increasingly prominent since a substantive slice of the women came from the lower or the middle-class strata. The period witnessed yet another chequered event of increasing voices for autonomy and ethnic identity. The conquests in North-East and Jammu in 1980s presents sinuous lines of inter-connections between gender, caste, class and ethnicity. The interface became even more fascinating in the light of the ongoing phases of economic reforms, liberalization and globalization which added a zing to it. The interface has not subsided but has only become more hooked up with time. The interlinkages between caste, gender and minority have taken up new dimensions within the broader framework of the Indian democracy: it requires deep sociological penetration and engagement which the current seminar will take up.

Themes:

Papers are invited for the Seminar on the following themes:

- Identity Politics in India
- Indian polity and rights of women
- Gender, caste, religion and minority
- Coalition politics and electoral mileage
- Indian Democracy and the marginals
- Any other related themes



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The applicants are required to send an abstract of 300 words following the stated style sheet to csrabanti91@gmail.com

The authors of the selected abstracts will be asked to develop full length paper of 4000 to 5000 words within the given dead-line. The selected papers will be asked for presentation. An edited volume will be proposed containing the selected papers to be published shortly.

Publication of the Edited Volume

It will be a collection of the Selected Papers with an ISBN. The copy right of the edited volume will remain with the NSOU.

Registration fees: Rs. 800/- (Rupees Eight Hundred Only)

The Registration Fee will be deposited in the bank account of the NSOU Centre for Social Studies by the participants/presenters. Registration fees to be submitted by authors whose abstracts will be selected. They will be given an opportunity to present their paper and certificates will be awarded to them.

Last Date for submission of abstract: 20th March, 2023.

Tentative Date of Seminar: Fourth Week of the March 2023

Srabanti Choudhuri

07.03.2023

Dr. Srabanti Choudhuri

Organizing Secretary, Seminar Organizing Committee

Assistant Professor of Sociology, School of Social Sciences,

NSOU