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Economic liberalisation, social transformation and the party system in India

Prakash Sarangi

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to take a fresh look at the changes in the Indian parties and party system during the last couple of decades. There has been a qualitative transformation in the manner in which each party perceives its role in politics and in its interaction with other political parties. Political parties today are coalitional rather than consensual, segmental rather than holistic and pragmatic rather than ideological. The party system is characterised as segmental pluralism. The explanation for these changes can be traced to the radical transformations taking place in the civil society, in the way individuals and groups perceive their roles as constitutive elements of a political community. The policy of economic liberalisation has acted as a catalyst in accelerating these changes in perceptions. While the economy has become globalised, politics, and therefore parties, have become localised. The state's gradual retreat from welfare activities has made the parties shift their political agenda from economic issues to those of caste, religion, ethnicity or language. The latter have become rallying points to create new political spaces for organising people. Arousing these segmental identities are used as substitutes of empowerment. Such a process of fragmentation in the civil society has resulted in a fractured party system.

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The dynamics of social mobility in pre-colonial South India: some reflections

Kanakalatha Mukund

Abstract

Historical research on caste, especially in a regional context, throws up many questions which challenge the broad generalisations which constitute our understanding of the nature of the caste system. Static theories, and particularly Louis Dumont's model of a horizontally stratified social structure based on ritual pure/impure status - *homo hierarchicus* - has evoked strong criticisms, inspired by historical research on Indian villages. But this also raises related questions as to the degree of flexibility and mobility in pre-colonial society, and whether class and power structure were the dimensions which defined social ranking. This paper explores these issues in the specific regional context of south India in the pre-colonial period. It finds that a significant degree of mobility was to be seen in this society, and neither at the individual nor at the corporate level was there an acceptance of an immutable caste system and social ranking. The caste system was highly complex, with many intricate strands which linked the social groups with their economic base. The interaction of these factors allowed for a degree of intra- and inter-caste mobility which the static understanding of caste does not accommodate.

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Industrialisation and urbanisation pattern in Gujarat: a regional level analysis

Darshini Mahadevia and Lalit Kishor Bhati

Abstract

Development theory states that industrial development leads to urbanisation and development. However, that is not always true as exemplified by the case of Gujarat using two time point data, for regional level analysis for the state. Gujarat gained second position from the fourth in industrial development over the decade of the eighties due to accelerated growth of the manufacturing sector. Consequently, Gujarat became the second most urbanised state in India. This relationship, however, is not observed at the regional level in the state. During the eighties, significant investment has gone to the Coastal belt of the state, which is one of the four regions identified. However, the urbanisation remains confined to the Corridor and Industrialised coast, the two other regions of the state. Such investments also did not result in overall development represented by female literacy rate. Urbanisation and consequent development depends on the nature of industrialization and not on industrial investments alone.

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Dynamics of share tenancy Institution

Mamata Swain

Abstract

This paper attempts to provide a systematic exposition of the dynamics of the share tenancy institution by bringing together divergent views and categorising them broadly into two schools of thought: neoclassical and Marxist. While neoclassicals stress that tenancy institutions evolve efficiently as a transaction cost minimising device, Marxists propound that enhanced surplus appropriation by the dominant class is the motive force to bring about changes in the land tenure system. However, both the schools predicted the death knell of share tenancy with advancement in agriculture. But share tenancy persists by adapting itself to changing circumstances. Therefore, the author puts forth the view that a holistic political economy approach is necessary to study the institution of share tenancy and its dynamics. Internal conditions of the household, class relations, macro features of the economy like adverse land-labour ratio, rapid population growth, large scale unemployment, slow pace of industrialisation, regional disparity in development, migration of landowners to urban areas, role of the state, historical antecedents and social ideology should be taken into account in studying the institution of share tenancy.

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Tribal land alienation in Madras Presidency during the colonial period: 1792-1947

Velayutham Saravanan

Abstract

This article attempts to analyse tribal land alienation in Madras Presidency during the colonial period in a historical perspective (1792-1947). A comprehensive account is attempted both from the point of external factors, which were directly responsible for the land alienation, and its consequences on the tribals' internal economy. It concludes that the introduction of coffee plantations in the early nineteenth century, subsequent settlement of non-tribals, and introduction of reserve forests at the close of the nineteenth century had led to disintegration of their subsistence economy ultimately depriving them of their lands resulting in the deterioration of their economic conditions. Further it claims that the present tribal land alienation problem was basically created by the colonial administration.

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