

**National Level Seminar on
Inclusive Democracy and Marginal Voices**

Organised by

**Department of Political Science and Dr B.R. Ambedkar Studies Centre
Rabindra Bharati University**

Concept Note

The concept of the marginal have produced a lot scholarly interactions, debates and literatures in the field of social sciences. In fact a look at the definition of the word marginal would give one the option of understanding the various ways in which the concept of marginal have been treated across disciplines. But two things are perhaps common. First is the fact that the marginal entities belong to the relatively less significant, border line spaces in the socio economic fabric. Second, the idea of marginality is contextualised in relation to the more prominent entities central to society, economics and politics. Moreover the peripheral existence of the marginal entities and communities as against the prominent mainstream groups in the core of political, economic and social realms pleads guilty of a relationship of domination and subjugation in terms of power dynamics. The reference to Antonio Gramsci becomes critical here for he had coined the term subaltern in order to focus on the dynamics of power relationship between the mainstream and marginal in his works.

The concept of Inclusive Democracy as a political project is a form that threads together the economic social and even ecological and political domains of democracy. In addition Inclusive democracy synthesises the two traditions of classical democracy and socialism. This is combined with the new social movements – feminist, indigenous movements, green, and human rights movements. This is the perspective that has helped conceptualise the idea of Inclusive Democracy. In the works of political philosopher, Takis Fotopoulos, *Towards Inclusive Democracy*, he argues for the expansion of the public realm beyond the political to include the social, the economic and even the ecological realms. Thus the idea is to understand and analyse each of the components of democracy separately yet in harmony with the aim of elimination of dominance and subjugation symptomatic of power relationships.

India has a diverse socio cultural fabric. The country's demographic composition is extremely diverse and complicated. India has about two thousand ethnic groups and four major religious groups. Dialects spoken go beyond 20,000. Now the idea is to locate the marginal communities within this larger demographic composition. Yet the challenge is that the parameters of understanding and defining marginality are not determined unanimously. Moreover, marginalisation is related to either the state of socio cultural developments or the level of economic developments. Thus the question of religious minorities, castes and class all becomes relevant to the discourse on inclusive democracy. In addition, in the contemporary discourse on the marginals, women, elderly dependent persons, people with physical disabilities, deprived children even sexual minorities have factored in the element of vulnerability as a criterion for explaining marginality.

Now the question of inclusive democracy in India has been an issue of certain discomfort. Taking the discourse on democracy simply beyond institutional successes in terms of additions, modifications and reformation, and economic achievements in the post liberalisation period reflected through growth indexes and Gross Domestic Product, (GDP) inclusive democracy puts to task the capacity of the state to provide easy access to welfare by the most peripheral sections of India. Thus the idea of inclusive democracy as an instrument of human welfare makes it a critical component of human security. Yet in reality India has witnessed some of the worst forms of violation of human rights and dignity. A plethora of state funded welfare policies and projects aimed at integrating the peripheral communities with the mainstream socio political and socio economic processes (whether they belonged to the backward castes or religious minorities or economically weak or women or children or physically disabled), have been offset by reports of sale of newborns, sexual crimes against women and children, violence against people of certain religious affiliation, large scale unemployment, lack of primary healthcare and education facilities for the rural poor and especially in the tribal belts of the country. 73rd and the 74th Amendments institutionalising grassroots democracy have not ensured quality participation of backward classes or castes or for that matter women in decision making. In addition women's safety and empowerment have been put under the critical scanner by activists of this country questioning the ability of the state to protect and provide them their due. Over and above with the setting in of the globalisation dynamics and the promotion of the neo liberal agenda by the state, the ability of

the welfare state to reach to the far flung marginal sections of the Indian social fabric has been put to test.

In the context of the emerging neo liberal state with a shrinking social welfare commitment, a dialectical situation has evolved wherein on the one hand osmosis of global anti neoliberal agenda with local forces have expanded the scope of new social movements that bring to limelight the marginal voices. On the other hand the market forces getting quite a freehand have created scope for widening of the gap between haves and have nots. Thus irrespective of the rising growth graph and positive economic indicators, the development miracle in India has not yielded positive results in terms of distributive justice especially towards the marginal communities.

In light of the growing concern about the ability of the contemporary Indian political system to deliver political goods to the marginal communities there is an increasing need to enquire the capacity of inclusive democracy to promote inclusive growth that would benefit the marginal communities. Moreover there is a need to ensure quality participation and involvement of these marginal voices within the echelons of the decision making process.

CALL FOR PAPER

The Department of Political Science and Dr B.R.Ambedkar Studies Centre, Rabindra Bharati University would jointly organize a daylong National seminar on “ Inclusive Democracy and Marginal Voices in India” on 12th March, 2018. Interested teachers and research scholars are requested to submit an abstract of their original research/conceptual papers and empirical studies .The abstract must not exceed 500 words. Decision of selection of the speakers in the Conference by the organising Committee of the Seminar will be final.

Registration fee : Nil

T.A.and Accommodation will not be available

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

1. All abstracts will be peer reviewed and evaluated before final acceptance.

2. Authors of accepted abstracts will be invited to submit and present their paper at the seminar.
3. The length of the final submission should not exceed 5000 words, excluding footnotes or endnotes.
4. The abstract and the final submission must be typed in Times New Roman, with font size 12 and 1.5 line spacing.
5. The MLA style of citation (latest edition) must be strictly adhered to while submitting the abstract and the final submission.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

The abstract and the complete research paper bearing the following details shall be sent as an attachment to rbu.polse@gmail.com

1. Name
2. Affiliation
3. Address for correspondence
4. Contact Details: Phone no. and e-mail ID.
6. Title of the paper

Last Date for Submission of Abstracts (Soft-copy): 25th February, 2018

Intimation on Selection of the Abstract: 28rd February, 2018

Last Date for Submission of Full Paper: 11 March, 2018

Date of Seminar: 12th March , 2018 , Time 11.00 am

CONTACT

In case any queries/clarification arise, the same can be conveyed to the committee by sending an e-mail to rbu.polsc@gmail.com

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