

Concept Note

Rethinking Indian State and Society in the Global Order

National Seminar March 6, 2019

Department of Political Science

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Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Studies Centre,

Rabindra Bharati University

The Indian State with all its democratic paraphernalia seemed to have never got off academic scrutiny mainstream or otherwise. Historians, political analysts, economists and sociologists have all been trying to understand the nature and dynamics of the Indian state and the political system as such. Gunnar Myrdal has described the Indian State as a Soft State because its inability to eradicate poverty. Hamza Alavi brings out the concept of an Over Developed State in South Asia with a strong defence component but whether that applies for India is debated. Marxist thesis on the nature of the Indian state is in terms of explaining the dominant class character of the coalitions that underline the state policies; Pranab Bardhan's path breaking analysis of dominant propertied privilege class coalitions reflected on the state system is representative of this Marxist politico-economic analysis of the Indian state. Atul Kohli describes the role of fraction-ridden elites in destabilising the Indian political system. The discussion can go at length given the multiplicity of analysis of the Indian State and the political system. Perhaps the volume of the work can be accounted for, for the sheer largeness and complexity of the Indian State and the society. However what is important is whether to treat India as a mono-political entity whereas the reality is that the Indian State is comprised of a variety of institutions. The political institutions operate in a complex socio-cultural matrix at three levels – national, state and local level. To locate and understand the institutions in the social matrixes in which they are embedded justifies the need for a historical understanding of the inception and historicity of these

institutions as they have evolved over the period of time. In short it has become necessary to not treat India as a political monolith but a compendium of myriad institutions functions operating in an equally diverse socio economic environment; it requires a multidisciplinary approach so that each institution can be understood in relation to their social contexts. It also requires the academic treatment of institutions ranging from the Central Government and State Government institutions to institutions at the local levels – village and city. Moreover, one need also consider both the political economic frameworks and the ideological and discursive processes that inform and influence them. Contemporary discourses on the Indian politics also contend that the functioning of the Indian state cannot be comprehended simply by looking at the changes at the political centre, because they are definitely influenced by developments in the wider civil society too.

Now, India is recognised as one of the power houses of the emerging Asian Century. With an impressive growth rate of average 6% - 7%, India is expected to emerge as one of the key players in global economy. Alongside, India's geostrategic location has given her leverage in international politics that can be converted into geopolitical dividends albeit with its share of challenges and complexities. India's new-found role that commensurate her economic rise. It also underlines her need to play a more active role in the community of nations. Thus India aspires to become an active global player and as much as a responsible regional power. She has been active in global negotiations and has taken independent position on serious issues like nuclearisation, trade negotiations, and environment. Her regional role has been rejuvenated by her engagement drives towards her respective neighbouring areas – West Asia, Connect Central Asia and Act East. In addition the maritime sphere has emerged as the most happening component of Indian geopolitics – concepts like Oceania, Indian Ocean Region, Asia Pacific and the Indo Pacific have become critical to India's policy and action-based forays in the neighbourhood. Whether it is 'Extended Neighbourhood' or "Neighbourhood First' it determines India's geopolitical interests expressed through the various foreign policy initiative.

In context of the above observations, the Department of Political Science, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata is organizing a Seminar to locate and rediscover the dynamics of the Indian State and society vis a vis her engagement with the emerging international order. The sub themes of this Seminar are:

1. **Re analyzing the Indian State**
2. **The complexity of the Indian socio-cultural matrix and political economy**
3. **The geopolitical dynamics of Indian Foreign Policy**
4. **India's responses to global challenges.**

In this context, the Department of Political Science and Dr B.R.Ambedkar Studies Centre, Rabindra Bharati University jointly **calls for papers** on the above mentioned sub-themes. Interested faculty and research scholars are requested to submit an abstract of not more than 400 words and a suitable title on any of the themes **within February 25, 2019**. Submission email-id and submission guidelines are provided below.

Registration Fees Rs. 500/-

No T.A and accommodation will be available to participants.

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.polsc@gmail.com

1. Name
2. Affiliation
3. Address for correspondence
4. Contact Details
5. Title of the paper

Last Date for Submission of Abstracts (Soft-copy): February 25, 2019

Intimation on Selection of the Abstract (provided in the website): February 28, 2019

Last Date for Submission of Full Paper: March 03, 2019

Date of Seminar: March 06, 2019.

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

Contact No. 9903945236