

educators in the fields of Taiwan studies and cinema studies. By delving into the representative films studied in this anthology, readers should gain a profound understanding of the trajectory of Taiwan's sociopolitical transition over the past 70 years and its corresponding impact on the development of its cinema.

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Electoral Practice and the Election Commission of India: Politics, Institutions and Democracy

By Manjari Katju. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023, 266 pages. Hardback, GBP £92.00, ISBN: 9781009346863. Ebook, £85.00, ISBN: 9781009369756.

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There are several ways to study democracy, such as direct or indirect democracy; procedural or substantial democracy and so on. However, a very important issue with an immense normative dimension is the representation of people, so that their voices are heard in the corridors of power. In case of direct democracy, they represent themselves. However, given the size and complexities in modern states, we can expect direct democracy to work only at very minor and local levels. Hence we need representative

democracy, where people govern themselves indirectly – through their representatives. The normative ideal of representation is actualised through elections, which is certainly the key feature and fundamental condition of democratic politics.

Particularly at popular levels of learned societies, India is often mentioned as the world's largest democracy. The formation of the Indian government is endorsed and legitimised by the singularly largest electorate in a sovereign territory in the world. Despite this fact and notwithstanding a tradition of social science scholarship over many decades, we do not have many systematic works studying elections in India; rather they have mostly been treated as subsidiaries to larger studies on Indian politics, society, and democracy. In recent times however, a few scholars have been specifically taking elections as a substantive subject. Katju has been working on India's electoral politics for nearly the last two decades. This book is the fruition of her many years of research on the subject.

The book is divided into ten chapters, including the introduction and conclusion. With a survey of government reports and scholarly works, the introductory chapter succinctly sets the tone of the book. It outlines the framework, where an ambitious endeavour is made to apply the theories of institutionalism for understanding the electoral administration in India. The focus of the book encompasses “formal state institutions, inter-institutional linkage and interactions between institutions and political actors over streamlining the election process as well as interpreting and enforcing rules of electoral competition” (p. 12).

With such a broad institutional approach, suggesting that institutions shape the conduct of a polity, Katju introduces us to the rich literature on institutionalism and reflects upon its various dimensions in the second chapter. At the end of the chapter, she identifies the Election Commission (EC) of India as a formal institution that deepens democratic practices in the country; and seeks to argue that “the EC through its distinct agency has institutionalised certain practices that have made political behaviour in India more participatory and choice-based besides systematising and streamlining electoral conduct” (p. 34). Although the factor of “institutions” is discussed rather implicitly in subsequent chapters, Katju is quite justified to sum up at the end that the “EC gained recognition for regulating party competition and political behaviour that helped minimise disruptions during elections” (p. 201). This takes us to the main body of the book.

The third chapter, “A Transforming India and the Role of the Election Commission,” is built upon references from various reports of the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Parliamentary Committees since the 1990s, which have advocated for initiating the reformation process of elections. Katju studies the role of EC between 1990 and 2019 – a fascinating time-period because Indian politics witnessed massive socio-political transformation during this period. The single-dominant multi-party system that characterised Indian politics since independence in 1947 was disintegrating and India was successively ruled by coalition governments for nearly two decades. Again since 2014, the political balance gravitated towards the single-dominant party system over other parties. Many social forces, clearly including caste and religious orientation, were mobilised during this period, having visibly influenced the electoral process. At the same time, the period was accompanied by rising literacy rate; massive participation of young people in the political process; and also a tremendous growth of mass media during this time, from print to electronic media, and the subsequent mushrooming of social media. This increased the participation of a large number of citizenry, but also allowed problems like misinformation to become acute.

In the chapter, Katju presents a detailed and painstaking compilation of the names of various Committees on electoral reforms between 1975 and 2015, which will serve as a treasure-trove for future administrators and researchers on Indian government and politics. From a personal interview with a former Deputy Election Commissioner, Katju informs us about the psychology of voters: their enthusiastic participation reflects the feeling that they contribute to the victory of their preferred candidate. The urban middle class, particularly in the run up to the 2014 elections, launched massive protest movements against corruption, which became a sensitive political issue during this period. However, it is not clear that in spite of the declining presence of the middle class in the Lok Sabha – the lower house of Indian parliament, how this class was able to wield significant political

influence in the policy-making process. Moreover, despite being rich with information and references, the author could have reduced the number of cumbersome quotations, and instead have paraphrased the points.

The fourth chapter gives a thorough account of the historical, sociological, and political contexts of organising elections in India. While outlining the evolution of the EC, she identifies some key moments: instituting the three-member Election Commissioners, publishing the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), issuing photo identity cards for voters, as well as the several tussles with other government functionaries and politicians, which at times have come down to the personal level. Katju also mentions many significant changes introduced by various Chief Elections Commissioners since the 1990s. Despite their failing to contain various partisan excesses and to counter locally dominant social forces, by and large the EC has nonetheless been able to implement rule-based conduct in recent times. Overall, the chapter is an exhaustive documentation of the moments of transition in the nature of Indian democracy – it recognises that, given the constraints of severe administrative and financial mobilisation, organising elections, particularly in developing countries, is a costly exercise. Yet it also enlightens us on the role of constitutional machinery – the EC, chief among other institutions in the Indian case – in consolidating a nascent democracy.

The fifth chapter starts with an overview of Indian elections. With quantitative data presented in tabular formats, Katju explains the administrative ecosystem of the EC: the nature of its' various activities; required time-period and facilities; as well as the external environment. All of these constraints must be coordinated to conduct an election. For example, while organising elections, the EC must take into account the schedules of school activities, as it has to requisition school teachers, employees, and buildings, which are necessary for conducting elections. With numerous examples, we get detailed information on the various procedures of EC functioning: recognising/derecognising political parties; assigning them with party-symbols as well as arbitrating disputes when claims arise over their ownership; and enforcing the norms of election campaigns upon the parties. Another contribution of this chapter is compiling the figures of central government expenditure on elections from 1952 to 2014, which again will serve as a vital resource for the researchers and journalists. The next chapter provides a detailed account of various landmark decisions and proposals on empowering the voters, initiated either by the EC, or CSOs. Two of them – disclosing the wealth, income, and prosecution status of the prospective candidates; and inserting the “None of the Above” (NOTA) option in the ballot, has been successful. On the other hand, the painstaking efforts to require political parties to meaningfully respond to right to information provisions for achieving transparency have not been successful; and another proposal to institute the right to recall has remained a virtual non-starter.

The next chapter deals with a very pertinent, but under-researched topic: electoral violence, starting with an extensive survey of literature in the developing world. Then, in the Indian context, Katju informs us about the various initiatives taken by the EC on the matter. One of them is extended and phased polls that enable the EC to mobilise and concentrate the resources and provisions to handle the problem. While elaborating her argument, the author presents the exact date-ranges of Lok Sabha elections from 1952 to 2019 in a Table, where the gap between the beginning and end of elections has widened gradually. Katju makes splendid use of the available data on this issue of serious concern, but the overall availability of data on the various dimensions of the problem remains inadequate. The eighth chapter deals with another important topic: electoral expenditure, which covers a broad area of activity and provisions, such as physical, mediated, and online campaigns; as well as the capacity to distribute gifts, many of which are clearly unethical and socially harmful, such as supplying narcotic drugs. The electoral expenditure is an example on how structural inequalities lead to injustice, because larger and better-resourced parties have inescapably greater leverages on electoral competition. Whereas the candidate must maintain the poll-expenditure ceiling, his/her party is under no such proscription. The last part of the chapter discusses the issue of poll finance limits in India, with reference to comparative accounts of various democracies like United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Japan. However, though quite useful a discussion, the method of selection of countries is not clear – the other established democracies in

Europe, for example, are not brought into comparison. In addition, this discussion would have been more effective early in the book, for example in or immediately after the introduction. That would have further sharpened the authors' theoretical reflections on all issues raised.

The ninth chapter gives us a chronology various initiatives taken by the government and EC since 1989 for increasing electoral participation, such as reducing the voting age to 18 years, educating voters with customised programmes, and efforts of outreach to the youth, women, and areas where electoral turnout has been lower. The EC has also proposed the government extend the provisions of postal ballot to the aged and people with disabilities. Another issue is preparing the electoral rolls, whose painstaking compilation since the early 1950s has contributed to democratic consolidation in India. They are regularly updated and a former EC has expressed desire to take the challenge of preparing a flawless electoral roll.

There remain areas in which the book needed further sophistication – for example, the references section in general, and in-text references in particular, are inconsistent at times: in some cases, the author, as standard practice, mentions the surname of the cited author; yet in some other places, she mentions both the surnames as well as the initials. Also, given the exhaustive and thickly informative nature of the book, a separate conclusion for each chapter would have enabled the author to streamline the discussion further. Still, the merits of the work are manifold. Social science scholars and advanced students interested on sociology, development studies, law, administrative sciences and above all, Indian politics will find the book useful. Particularly for Comparative Politics, this book provides a detailed case of country study. As its content is both information-rich and immensely broad, the book shall also appeal to people engaged in various professions, like the aspiring and established civil servants and journalists, as well as the general readers interested on India's recent political history – since it covers one of the most exciting transition periods of Indian democracy.

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Uzbek Migration and Japanese Society (ウズベク移民と日本社会)

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This book is a compilation of multiple research projects related to people who migrated to Japan to work or study from Uzbekistan, a Central Asian country that gained independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991. In Uzbekistan, a multi-ethnic country, there are not only Uzbeks who are Muslims and whose mother tongue is Uzbek (a Turkic language) but also Tajiks who speak Tajik (a Persian language). Furthermore, the population of the Tatars and Russians has rapidly increased since the era of Imperial Russia, and Koreans (Koryo people) are descendants of people who were forced to immigrate from the Maritime Provinces by Stalin. This book mainly focuses on students from the former two groups studying Japanese in the Kanto area of Japan. It also includes official statistics and opinion poll results and covers the influx of Japanese language school students coming to Japan from Uzbekistan since 2016. The study analyses their motivations for migrating to Japan, the