



Rise of the Plebeians?: The Changing Face of the Indian Legislative Assemblies (Exploring the Political in South Asia)

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For decades, India has been a conservative democracy governed by the upper caste notables coming from the urban bourgeoisie, the landowning aristocracy and the intelligentsia. The democratisation of the 'world's largest democracy' started with the rise of peasants' parties and the politicisation of the lower castes who voted their own representatives to power as soon as they emancipated themselves from the elite's domination. In Indian state politics, caste plays a major role and this book successfully studies how this caste-based social diversity gets translated into politics.

This is the first comprehensive study of the sociological profile of Indian political personnel at the state level. It examines the individual trajectory of 16 states, from the 1950s to 2000s, according to one dominant parameter—the evolution of the caste background of their elected representatives known as Members of the Legislative Assembly, or MLAs. The study also takes into account other variables like occupation, gender, age and education.

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