

Democracy and Democratization in India: Practice and Implications

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Abstract

Through an historical analysis based on a critical examination of the existing literature on India's development, this essay aims to explore India's democratic practice and trajectory of democratization, focusing on two peculiarities of India's developmental experience. It further discusses the implications of democracy and democratization in India for other developing countries, such as its neighbor, China. The Indian case posts a serious challenge to the explanation of mainstream modernization theory, which associates the emergence of democracy with social and economic development. India's democracy had developed in a context where immense poverty and frequent communal and border conflicts existed. These problems, unequal social opportunities, immense poverty, and prevailing corruption, remain major challenges to the quality of the country's democratic governance. It is argued in this essay that one main implication of India's democratic experience for other developing countries is that good governance, which greatly affects the quality of democracy, does not necessarily come along with democracy nonetheless.

Keywords: India, democracy and democratization, development, political culture, good governance