

NARRATIVISING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

BIDYUT CHAKRABARTY

Gender equality and women empowerment are two critical pillars of inclusive development. Despite being half of the population, women never seem to have obtained what they deserve from society presumably because of well-entrenched patriarchal bias. Needless to say, there are innumerable progressive legislations addressing this socio-economic imbalance; nonetheless, they continue to remain at the receiving end given the prevalence of the mindset upholding well-entrenched prejudices. How to combat such a mindset? Drawn on empirical data, the article argues that education is a great leveler. By focusing on various schemes relating to women empowerment, the article further shows that the well entrenched prejudiced mindset can be effectively combated by making women aware of their rights and also by raising their voice in case they are infringed. It is easier said than done. Nonetheless, specific legal stipulations to challenge patriarchal prejudices in the socio-economic system need also to be complemented by parallel movements involving the masses regardless of gender; otherwise, the entire exercise, the article underlines, shall become futile. In that sense, movements for women empowerment and gender equality do not seem to be exclusive, but inclusive both in aims and agenda-setting.

ANTI-TERROR MEASURES AND FEDERAL BALANCE IN INDIA

RAJENDRA KUMAR PANDEY

In the federal framework of Indian polity, countering terrorism has been complicated by an unsavoury spat between Centre and States over their respective competencies and roles in the matter. Centre seeks to play a proactive and commanding role on the plea of protecting the unity and integrity of the nation. However, states perceive such a central role as an encroachment in their eminent constitutional domains of public order and police. Amidst these contending positions, the course of anti-terror measures has tended to disturb the precarious federal balance in the field of Centre-State administrative relations. By asserting its domineering role in anti-terror activities, Centre seems to be claiming a prominent role in the domains constitutionally and conventionally vested with the States. But such tendencies on the part of the Centre may neither augur well for tackling terrorism nor the endurance of federal balance. The article, therefore, argues that Indian federalism may be placed in a perilous position in the course of anti-terror measures unless States are taken as the constitutionally empowered stakeholders in coping with the menace of terrorism.

A SAFE CITY APPROACH TO URBAN SUSTAINABILITY: DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

CHANDRANI BANDYOPADHYAY AND P. J. PHILIP

Rapid urbanisation has been the hallmark of demographic growth in the 20th Century. In 2008, the urban population equaled the rural and is expected to grow rapidly in future, led primarily by Africa and Asia. The inevitable trend of urbanisation has concentrated economic activity and pushed economic growth and also promoted inequality and social disruption along with environmental damage. The authors argue that urban development should incorporate an approach towards building safer cities by building resilience of systems. Enhancing urban resilience should therefore follow a people-centred and multifaceted approach, to integrate and highlight the physical, social, economic, governance and community characteristics. In the complex risk landscape of cities, planning for future can be successful only if an integrated approach for longterm planning within the socio-technical-built-environmental systems is adopted, rather than focusing on separate sectors. Safe development thus denotes enhancing the capacity of the communities and systems supporting them to withstand and cope with disasters. Therefore, increasing resilience of vulnerable communities and systems is required as priority action.

RAPID CHANGE IN FINANCIAL MARKETS AND FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGIES: ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS IN GOVERNANCE AND REGULATION

S. SUDHAKAR BABU AND N.A. FRANCIS XAVIER

The changing nature of financial transactions and financial markets, triggered significant new risks and new risk combinations, created by globalisation and intensive use of technology. As the traditional risks have not disappeared, the overall risk level of financial system has increased. The article traces this transformation in the financial markets at the global level and attempts to look at the challenges that new financial technologies pose for regulators, governance and investors. It also attempts to trace the impact of new technologies on India and its implications for regulators in India.

HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN: AN OVERVIEW

NAJMUL ABEDIN

Emergence of new nations since the end of World War II, and also the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s enormously contributed to the increasing awareness of the importance and significance of democracy and human rights both of which are, in fact, intertwined and complimentary or supplementary to each other. Even in some developed democracies certain issues, for example, civil rights movement in the USA had stressed or raised the human rights issue especially in the 1950s and 60s. In both developed and developing countries there are also increasing concerns about legitimate rights of vulnerable people such as minorities, children, handicapped, elderly, underdogs and the like. A number of international organisations, e.g., the UN, have also forcefully pursued the cause of human rights. Increasing concern and demand for advancement and protection of human rights have emerged as a vigorous socio-political movement almost all over the world. As a result, various steps

have been taken and a number of agencies or institutions have been established to promote and protect human rights one of which has been the establishment of the office of Human Rights Ombudsman. The purpose of this article is to examine analytically the emergence, salient features, modus operandi, problems, issues and types of Human Rights Ombudsman in various parts of the world. In a nutshell, it looks at the role that this institution plays in managing human rights issues.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY BASED REFORMS IN OFFICE PROCEDURES WITH REFERENCE TO THE GRAM PANCHAYATS OF KERALA

ALEX. K. THOTTUNKEL AND SIBI VARGHESE KUPPATHANATH

The beneficial impact of computerisation is felt in all the tasks that contribute to the process of decision making in the panchayats. Computerisation is not only benefiting the administration and the citizens but is also improving the democratisation of the decision making process. Panchayats, the grassroots democratic institutions, provide a range of services varying from public works to welfare and development programmes. In the operational perspective behind every service deliverable exists a process of decision making. For the analysis and synthesis of information suitable enough to make a valid decision, information has to flow through a sequence of steps for its verification, validation and authorisation.

INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (ICDS) PROGRAMME IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN POOR AND SLUM DWELLERS IN INDIA: EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SANJEEV KUMAR AND SAINATH BANERJEE

The article examines the challenges and issues related to Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme in urban settings with specific reference to urban poor and slum population in India. For example, Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) in slums or in urban areas are confronted with multiple issues ranging from infrastructural constraints (buildings, space, water and sanitation facilities); inadequate rental provision to run the AWC properly; unmapped and unrecognised slums and squatters; left out and drop out; increasing migrant and mobile population; difficulty in identifying and reaching out to migrant and working population; lack of convergence with health and allied departments and local bodies, and inadequate access and poor quality of services; lack of knowledge and capacity among service providers; absence of an effective primary health care system in urban areas; lack of awareness and community participation, issues of gender and self-identity, etc. Further, the article attempts to explore opportunities and next steps to be taken as suggestive recommendations for ICDS programme that may strengthen the actual implementation of ICDS programme in urban areas.

DYNAMICS OF RURAL POVERTY: ROLE OF WOMEN'S SELF-HELP GROUPS IN KALAHANDI DISTRICT (ODISHA)

GADADHARA MOHAPATRA

The article critically analyses the role of women self-help groups (WSHGs) in alleviating poverty and empowering the tribal women in Kalahandi district of Odisha based on the field findings, ground realities and observations. It also documents the best practices of the NGOs and other self-help promoting institutions (SHPIs) in social mobilisation and poverty alleviation. The study shows that intensity of social capital (in the form of trust relating to credit and savings activities) is more among the SHGs which are homogeneous in nature (i.e. SHGs comprising of all Kondh/ST women members); whereas social capital is on the decline among the mixed and/or diverse groups in the sample villages (for example SHGs consisting of both ST and SC and male and female members). The empirical findings of the study show that the group savings of the various WSHGs promoted by the NGOs and SHPIs (namely, Parivartan, Gram Vikas, Antodaya and Sahabhagi Vikas Abhiyan, ICDS and Watershed Department, Government of Odisha) in Thuamul Rampur block of Kalahandi have increased gradually; and also shows that after SHG intervention, dependency of the tribal villagers on the local money lenders for loan have declined significantly.

CONCEPT OF RAJDHARMA IN ADI-KAVYA: RAMAYANA AND MAHABHARATA

SHRI PRAKASH SINGH

Rajdharmā as a concept constitutes the judicious duties of the King towards his subjects. The basic concern of the rajdharmā is welfare of the people. The King and Kingship is associated with the concept and concern of the prajapalanah. In ancient Indian classics the spirit of rajdharmā was to ensure peace, justice and prosperity to the people. Rajdharmā is described as an essential element of state even in saptanga theory but it was expected from the King to perform his duties in such a righteous manner so that the state should be called as dharmarajya and King as the dharmrajah. Practice of Dharma and maintaining impartiality are the only means through which rajdharmā may be practiced and dharmarajya or Ramrajya is achieved. The concept of rajdharmā as enunciated in the past still holds value as orderly, peaceful and prosperous life for society and good ethical conduct in polity. Society has changed much even then the tenor or norms of political life require the basic principle of rajdharmā for better governance of the society. Unethical, unprincipled politics is reality of the political life to regulate the affairs of the governance and justice. It is essential to observe the rajdharmā.

DECISION-MAKING AS A FACTOR IN POLITICOADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE

ASHOK RANJAN BASU

Sociologists have long debated whether nature or nurture is the key to what people are and how they act. Administrative culture, in its broadest sense is understood as the modal pattern of values, beliefs, attitudes, and predispositions that characterise and identify any given administrative system. The administrative culture of any part of the globe reflects the distinctiveness and complexity of various regional, national, and local realities; their unique historical experiences, their forms of insertion. Such cultures are historical products, where past experiences, myths, and traditions have shaped modal psychological orientations. Any administrative culture is also conditioned by existing structural and conjunctural circumstances and challenges. Decision making is one of the most important aspects of administration and is greatly influenced by the prevailing politico-administrative culture of the organisation. The interdisciplinary framework of decisionmaking is one of the important aspects for any administrator for arriving at a decision. Though efforts are made to nurture the personnel system to form a homogeneous group, still the internalised behaviour pattern and the nature do continue. Besides these, the psychological factors also play a great role on the individual behaviour which affects the decision making process. The article examines the decision making process as a factor of politico-administrative culture.

DELIVERING HEALTH SERVICES UNDER NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT: IS IT A GOOD MODEL FOR EMERGING ECONOMIES?

SIGAMANI P.

This article examines evidence-based practice of New Public Management (NPM) in healthcare organisations. This review is drawn on the basis of NPM practice in different countries, especially in emerging economies. This article examines broad public policy arrangements, origin and theoretical basis of NPM, including public sector reform, key actors and promoters of NPM in health sector, key elements and characteristics of NPM and its relevance to health care services.

SITUATING SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY WITH A FOCUS ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

LAVANYA SURESH

This article contextualises and locates social sciences in the wider debate of research methodology. It goes on to narrow down its focus to the discipline of Public Administration by tracing its evolution and reaches the conclusion that a Kuhnian historiography of a scientific discipline has characterised the growth of theory in this discipline since its inception.

DEVOLUTION OF POWER AND PARTICIPATION AT PANCHAYAT RAJ INSTITUTIONS: A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR COMMITTEE REPORT

RAJNI KUMARI

Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India have been given the Constitutional status under the 73rd amendment to the Constitution in 1992. Since then better functioning of this institution is one of the most important consequences for this mechanism of democratic devolution of the powers which this institution was made for. Under this imperative, the Government of India has established number of specialised committees to submit recommendations for proper functioning of PRIs in the country. One of such efforts is the formation of the Mani Shankar Aiyar Committee. This article reviews the recommendations made by the Committee for better functioning of the PRIs in India. Since the article has been written with special reference to the committee, it does not carry much wider survey of the literature. The Committee has done an intensive study containing four volumes, about various aspects of the PRIs. This article, however, analyses only one aspect, i.e., the section on devolution of powers in PRIs.