DEMOCRACY IN INDIA – HOW FAR?

Professor: Christophe Jaffrelot
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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Christophe JAFFRELOT joined the CNRS in 1991; was awarded the CNRS Bronze Medal in 1993; became senior research fellow of second class in 2002 and senior research fellow of first class in 2008.

He has served as deputy director of CERI from 1997 to 2000 and as director from 2000 to 2008.

Has founded four book series published by Fayard, Autrement, Hurst and Palgrave.


Member of the editorial boards of Critique Internationale, Anatolia, Cultures et Conflits, Nations and nationalism, International Political Sociology, Third Frame and India Review.

Professor of Indian Politics and Sociology in the King’s India Institute (King’s College, London) since 2011.

Permanent Consultant at the Direction de la Prospective of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

President of the research group on emerging countries at Institut Montaigne.

Member of the scientific councils of the Südasien Institut of Heidelberg University, of the Zentrum Moderner Orient / Centre for Modern Oriental Studies, Berlin, of the Jindal University (Sonepat - India), of the Center for the Study of Multi level Federalism (New Delhi), of the South Asia Center of Göttingen University, of the Encyclopaedia of Mass Violence and of Sciences Po Master of Public Affairs.

Christophe Jaffrelot chairs the Scientific council of the six research centers of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CNRS in Asia since 2007.

He is president of the Political Science section of the French National Committee for Scientific Research (CoNRS) since 2012.

Christophe Jaffrelot is Senior Research Fellow at CERI-Sciences Po/CNRS in Paris. He teaches South Asian politics at Sciences Po, Yale and King's College (London).


**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Introduction**

**Session 1: The « world's largest democracy » and political theory – India as the exception?**

**Readings:**


**Part one: Why and how democracy in India**

**Session 2: Why democracy in India? (1) The British graft**

**Readings:**

- David Washbrook, “The rhetoric of democracy and development in late colonial India”, in S. Bose and A. Jalal (eds), Nationalism, development and democracy: state and politics in India, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 36-49.
Session 3: Why democracy in India? (2) The long-term political and societal factors

Readings:

Part two: Elitism and authoritarianism

Session 4: The « Congress system » or conservative democracy

Readings:

Session 5: The Emergency: the black face of Indian politics

Readings:
Part three: the democratisation of Indian democracy

Session 6: Democracy by caste: the rise to power of the lower castes

Readings:

Session 7: Federalism, from the era of coalitions to BJP’s hegemony

Readings:
- Katharine Adeney and Lawrence Sàez (eds), Coalition Politics and Hindu Nationalism, New-York, Routledge, 2005

Part Four: The ethnicisation of Indian democracy

Session 8: Hindu nationalism takes over

Readings:
Session 9: The marginalisation of Muslims

Readings:

Part Five: What « shining India »?

Session 10: Corruption cum criminalisation of politics and the resilience of the rule of law

Readings:
- Arun Kumar, The black economy in India, New Delhi, Viking, 1999, pp. 17-54.

Session 11: The agricultural crisis and the spreading of Maoism

Readings:
- Deaton and J. Drèze, “Poverty and Inequality in India. A Re-examination”, Economic and political weekly, 7 septembre 2002, pp. 3734-3735.
Session 12: The economic reform and the new middle class

Readings:

- Zoya Hasan, “Changing political orientations of the middle classes in India”, in Middle class values in India and Western Europe, New Delhi, Social Science Press, 2002, pp. 152-170.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Indian Emergency in 1975 was more than the product of an ambitious prime minister. Yes, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s zeal played a decisive role in spurring the crisis, but this democratic hiccup had deeper-seated causes. In 1975, unpredictable political tension and a paralyzing economic crisis proved deadly for Indian democracy, and this failure, as we will see through Alexis de Tocqueville’s applicable work, Democracy in America, was, to an extent, a product of the Indian idea and system of democracy. Though the form seemed intact, this democracy was far from liberal: the article continues, “political debate in India has been effectively silenced. Newspapers have become dull and predictable, and people seem reticent about discussing controversial matters in public. So far, Indian democracy has endured rather well in a multi-ethnic, linguistically diverse and rather large country with a billion people. People’s faith and moral approval of democracy continues despite distaste with corruption and criminalisation of politics. So far it has been largely agreed that procedural democracy in India functions quite well. Elections are held regularly and India has never faced a military coup. The three constitutionally mandated institutions, the Supreme and the high courts, the President and the Election Commission are autonomous. Several examples in the past have proved this. Far-right, far-left. We keep applying them to India, where they’re not applicable. We cannot apply to India labels we use in the West. To say that the BJP is far-right is completely wrong. The election was over. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had won a resounding victory, seizing power once again, with a seat-count in India’s Lok Sabha that surpassed even its decisive showing in the 2014 elections. Moments after Gautier spoke, WION’s political editor Kartikeya Sharma shed some light on how the BJP may have defeated the opposition: it has infrastructural strength. It is backed by hordes of apparatchiks. People who are not married, who don’t have families, who have dedicated their lives completely to the party, said Sharma.