

Book Review 2

Giving voice to the voiceless? : The Sociology of Identity Politics in Contemporary India

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Editors: Dr. Srabanti Choudhuri & Professor Chandan Basu: Giving voice to the voiceless? : The Sociology of Identity Politics in Contemporary India. (Kolkata, The Registrar, Netaji Subhas Open University, 2024), pp 328, Hard Bound, Price: 799

“Giving voice to the voiceless? : The Sociology of Identity Politics in Contemporary India” is a seminal edited volume that delves into the complexities of social and political transformation through a multidisciplinary lens. Edited by renowned professors in history and sociology, this book brings together a collection of insightful essays that explore diverse perspectives on contemporary societal challenges and opportunities.

With contributions from leading scholars in social sciences, “Giving Voice to the Voiceless?: The Sociology of Identity Politics in Contemporary India” offers a comprehensive examination of key issues shaping modern society. The book itself is a collection of twenty-two articles divided into three thematic sections, first, Murmurs across the Polity; hearing the Soft Whispers, second, Strangled Voice of the Gender; Cross-sectional members followed by the last section, Eclectic Voices: Mutterings from the dim fringes. Each section addresses critical aspects of the social and political transformation of the backward sections of the country. From the dynamics of globalization to the challenges of inequality and governance, the essays provide nuanced analyses that shed light on the complexities of our rapidly changing world.

One of the standout features of “Giving Voice to the Voiceless? The Sociology of Identity Politics in Contemporary India” is its interdisciplinary approach, which allows readers to gain a comprehensive understanding of social and political issues from multiple perspectives. The essays are meticulously researched and thoughtfully written, demonstrating the depth of expertise of the contributing scholars. The editors have done an excellent job of curating diverse perspectives and ensuring coherence across the chapters, making the book accessible to both academic and general readers.

The book’s exploration of pressing multi-disciplinary topics such as religious fundamentalism, Muslim women in politics, social identity and panchayat elections, the percolation of naive women’s voices, property rights of Hindu and Muslim women, empowering sex workers, identity of trans genders, social identity of the Anglo-Indian community, gender inequality, the Gulab Gang movement, infanticide and foeticide, democracy, human rights, and social justice is timely and relevant in today’s global context. The contributors offer incisive insights into the underlying causes and consequences of social and political change, challenging readers to critically

engage with complex issues and consider alternative pathways forward.

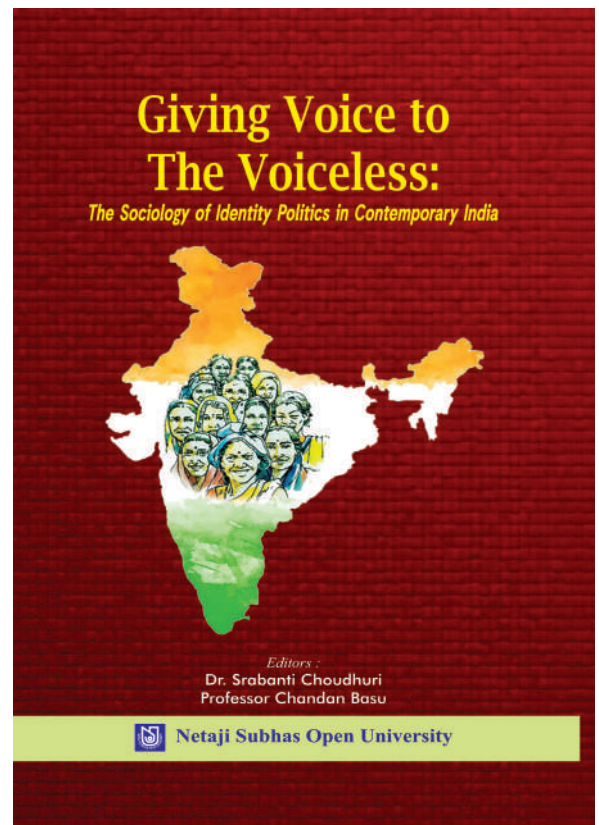
The book makes a significant contribution to the fields of social sciences by advancing our understanding of the dynamics of social and political transformation, mainly the transformation of voiceless. The book fills a crucial gap in existing literature by providing a nuanced analysis of contemporary issues and offering fresh perspectives on enduring challenges. Scholars, students, and policymakers alike will find valuable insights and inspiration in the pages of this insightful volume.

A key aspect emphasized throughout the book is the notion of voicelessness and the struggle for representation across various societal categories, including caste, class, gender, religion, and ethnicity. The authors advocate for the elimination of caste hierarchies, greater attention to marginalized sections of society, and empowerment of women, the transgender. They underscore the importance of accommodating diverse voices within the socio-political panorama of Indian civilization.

Overall, this volume offers a nice analysis of the complexities of Indian democracy, urging scholars and policymakers to grapple with the challenges of representation and social inclusion in a rapidly evolving socio-political landscape. It serves as a valuable resource for understanding the dynamics of democracy in India and raises pertinent questions for future research and discourse.

The edited volume “Giving voice to the voiceless? : The Sociology of Identity Politics in Contemporary India” meticulously unpacks the emergence of fissiparous tendencies in Indian society and polity, delving into the complexities surrounding caste, region, ethnicity, and religion. One of the strengths of the volume lies in its detailed analysis of the rise of identity politics, recognition of ethnic diversity within the Indian socio-political sphere. By highlighting the significance of the inevitability of ethnic and gender empowerment, the volume contributes to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of Indian democracy. Moreover, the volume effectively underscores the importance of addressing voicelessness across various societal categories, including caste, class, gender, and religion. Through insightful discussions on the struggles faced by marginalized groups such as Dalits, peasants, transgender, and women, the volume sheds light on the urgent need for social inclusion and representation. Additionally, the volume critically examines the limitations and challenges faced in achieving diverse social identity and their recognition in society.

However, while the volume offers valuable insights into the dynamics of the socio-economic condition of Indian society, it could benefit from a more nuanced analysis of certain issues. For instance, a deeper examination of the intersectional-



ity of caste, class, and gender dynamics could enrich the understanding of marginalized identities within Indian society.

Furthermore, the volume could engage more explicitly with policy implications and recommendations for addressing the challenges identified. By offering concrete suggestions for promoting social inclusion and accommodating diverse voices, the volume could enhance its relevance for policymakers and practitioners.

The book tends to present a somewhat simplified narrative of Indian democracy, particularly regarding the complexities of gender and identity formations. It could benefit from a more nuanced analysis that acknowledges the multifaceted nature of socio-political dynamics in India, including the intersectionality of caste, class, gender, and religion.

Articles of the book predominantly present one perspective on the Indian complex society without sufficiently engaging with potential counterarguments or alternative viewpoints. This lack of dialectical engagement reduces the richness of the analysis and may overlook important nuances or critiques of the presented narrative.

While the article rightly highlights the significance of identity politics in shaping Indian society, it may overemphasize the role of identity-based conciseness at the expense of other important factors such as economic disparities, governance issues, and institutional challenges. A more balanced approach could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing Indian society.

While the book identifies key challenges and trends, it offers limited discussion on potential policy implications or recommendations for addressing these challenges. A more explicit engagement with policy solutions could enhance the practical relevance of the analysis and provide actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners.

In conclusion, "Giving Voice to the Voiceless? The Sociology of Identity Politics in Contemporary India" stands as a thought-provoking contribution to the scholarly discourse on Indian democracy. Through its exploration of fissiparous tendencies, identity politics, and social inclusion, the volume offers valuable insights into the complexities of Indian society and polity. While there are areas for further refinement, the volume serves as a significant resource for understanding the evolving dynamics of democracy in India.
