

# **Transforming India**

By Sumantra Bose



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A nation of 1.25 billion, India is the world's most diverse democracy. Drawing on his extensive fieldwork and experience of Indian politics, Sumantra Bose tells the story of democracy's evolution in India since the 1950s and describes the challenges it faces today: from poverty and inequality to Maoist revolutionaries and Kashmir secessionists.



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#### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

*Transforming India* is a fast-paced and absorbing account by a first-rate author. **Bose** is a superb guide through the intricacies of India's democracy and a sober witness to the extraordinary challenges it faces. It is essential reading for anyone interested in the future for political liberty in one of Asia's great civilizations. A terrific book. (Nur Yalman, Harvard University)

**Bose** surveys the trajectory of India's democracy in the nearly seven decades since the country won its independence from the British. He does a masterly job of showing the political transformation from a powerful central government exercising a 'top-down authority' over the states and with the dominance of a single party (the Congress Party) to the emergence of several regional parties. Today these mass-based regional parties and their leaders are significant players; they decide who governs at the center. Bose argues that this change in the political scene is evidence of 'a robust democracy.' Other subjects explored are the political odyssey in West Bengal from partition to the present and the rise and fall of three generations of Maoist insurgencies in India. The section on Kashmir provides sound historical context for the events in this troubled area...Bose's work fills in the connections needed to understand the political complexities of India's democracy.

(Ravi Shenoy Library Journal 2013-08-15)

**Bose** lucidly analyzes India's 'decentered democracy,' in which power lies increasingly with the state governments...The willingness of most Indians to commit to multiple social identities has produced a distinctive form of democratic politics. In revealing both the violence and the vitality of India's democracy, Bose sees the country's future prosperity and stability as anything but assured. (Andrew J. Nathan *Foreign Affairs* 2013-11-01)

The book tells the story of democracy's evolution in India from the 1950s and makes the excellent point that, over the past two decades, India has changed from a country dominated by a single nationwide party into a robust multiparty, federal union. The regionalization of the nation's political landscape has decentralized power, given communities a distinct voice and deepened India's democracy. (Gurcharan Das *Wall Street Journal* 2013-12-14)

**Bose** offers a crisp and sweeping discussion of the political history of India from its independence in 1947 to the dilemmas and challenges it faces today...The author's discussion of the scattered but persistent Maoist movement(s) in India, and the alienation and subnationalist stirrings evident in some provinces (particularly Kashmir), is rich and evocative...The discussion is always nuanced, the judgments sound, and the language elegant. (A. Ahmad *Choice* 2014-05-01)

#### About the Author

Sumantra Bose is Professor of International and Comparative Politics at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

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