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# Deliberative Democracy

UNDERSTANDING THE  
INDIAN EXPERIENCE

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9. 'Mediated' Public Sphere and Deliberative Democracy in India: A Critical Reflection J. PRABHASH	165
10. Development, State and Mobilization: Reflections from the Margins SHEEBA K.M.	183
11. Dalit Counterpublics: Reading the New Political Language of Dalit Rights Organizations ELIZABETH ABRAHAM	197
12. Ecological Movements and People's Power GEORGE K. ALEX	221
<i>List of Contributors</i>	239
<i>Index</i>	241

## Development, State and Mobilization: Reflections from the Margins

SHEEBA K.M.

European enlightenment that posited the ideas of democracy and liberty as ideals was the backdrop for the emergence of modern disciplines. Knowledge construction through these disciplines implied the simultaneous establishment of colonial power as well as the logic of capitalism over the non-Western world. This Janus-faced relationship of knowledge and power had implications for the ways in which the colonized Asian and African countries situated their development agenda.

Liberal neo-classical economics, as a product of Western modernity, with emphasis on rational and scientific objective thinking largely set the agenda for development. Economic growth epitomized the primary goal and meaning of development (Kabeer 1994: 13). These market oriented models, based on assumptions of rational behaviour, assumed the ability of human beings to allocate scarce resources between competing ends to maximize utility/satisfaction. This led to economic growth being equated to individual rational choices supported by the institutions of private property and free markets where private property posed as the critical institutional support for ensuring rational competitive behaviour. The magic of the market supposedly lay in its potential for promoting choice with efficiency (ibid.: 14-15).

Modernization theories on development depicted it as an evolutionary, unilinear process taking societies from pre-modern status to modernity; pushing the 'barbarians' to 'civilised' avenues of social living. Claimed to be a value-free social process, modernization