



A Time of Coalitions: Divided We Stand

By Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and Shankar Raghuraman

Sage Publications, New Delhi, India, 2004. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. First Edition. This topical and absorbing book, written by two eminent journalists, convincingly argues against two commonly held beliefs concerning Indian politics. Their basic premise is that India has come a long way from the time when a single party, the Congress, dominated our polity. Instead, it has given way to multi-party configurations or coalitions which, they demonstrate, are neither temporary nor an aberration. Coalitions are here to stay, they say, at least in the foreseeable future. Second, they expertly dismiss the view that India's polity is essentially bipolar, led by either of the two largest parties—the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress Party—and that other political parties have no option but to choose which of these two they will align themselves with. The authors take the view that coalition governments are in fact better equipped to deal with the tensions of a divided society while single-party governments tend to both centralise and homogenise. Among the numerous issues and trends cogently discussed are: - the rise of the BJP from the time it was virtually wiped out of Parliament in 1984, and its current faction-ridden character -...

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