

How India Became Democratic

How India Became Democratic explores the greatest experiment in democratic human history. It tells the untold story of the preparation of the electoral roll on the basis of universal adult franchise in the world's largest democracy. Ornit Shani offers a new view of the institutionalisation of democracy in India, and of the way democracy captured the political imagination of its diverse peoples. Turning all adult Indians into voters against the backdrop of the partition of India and Pakistan, and in anticipation of the drawing up of a constitution, was a staggering task. Indians became voters before they were citizens – by the time the constitution came into force in 1950, the abstract notion of universal franchise and electoral democracy were already grounded. Drawing on rich archival materials, Shani shows how the Indian people were a driving force in the making of democratic citizenship as they struggled for their voting rights.

Ornit Shani is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Asian Studies, University of Haifa.

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*Citizenship and the Making of
the Universal Franchise*

Ornit Shani

University of Haifa, Israel



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For Fredrik

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