

The 1950s: Journeys into Postcolonial South Asia

Friday, May 27th 2022 - 2:15 pm (CEST) Hybrid session - CATS Room 010.01.05
Registration <https://bit.ly/37L4zuQ>

The Indian First Elections, 1951-52. Women in a Republic of Minorities

Prof. Ornit Shani - University of Haifa



Mock election, Delhi, 1951

The first elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage formed a critical moment in India's endeavour to establish itself, against many odds, as a democratic state. This was the first trial of the idea that power is derived from the people. Taking women, who formed about half of the electorate, as a lens to gauge how the popular authorisation of the government was acted upon, the paper explores women's registration, representation and participation in the run-up to, and during India's first elections. It sheds light on the role of women in democratic state building during the early days of the republic.