DR BALU SUNILRAJ

Assistant Professor of Political Science, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad
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EDUCATION

2014–2019 PhD in Political Science, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Dissertation: "Political Behaviour in Tamil Nadu and Kerala: A Study of Partisanship". Supervisor: Prof. Pralay Kanungo. Awarded October 2020.

2012–2014 MPhil in Political Science, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Dissertation: "Political Stability in Kerala: An Analysis of the Nature and Role of Political Cleavages". Supervisor: Prof. Pralay Kanungo. Awarded January 2015.

2010–2012 MA in Political Science, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Awarded December 2012.

2007–2010 BA (Honours), Hindu College, University of Delhi. Awarded February 2011.

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

2026 Sunilraj, B., & Borah, P. (2026). "Between assertion and victimhood." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 61(16), Perspectives. https://doi.org/10.71279/epw.v61i16.48969

2025 Sunilraj, B., & Salman, A. (2025). "Regional dynamics and political praxis: A case study of the CPI(M) in Kerala." *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 53(3), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajss.2025.100205

2025 Sunilraj, B. (2025). "Exploring the political alignment of a community: The Indian National Congress and Syrian Christians in Kerala." *Asian Ethnicity* (Taylor and Francis), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2025.2507666

2024 Sasikumar, S., & Sunilraj, B. (2024). "Declining bipolarity and disintegrating social fabric: Cues from the Lok Sabha election results in Kerala." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 59(41), 12–16. https://www.epw.in/journal/2024/41/general-elections-2024/declining-bipolarity-and-disintegrating-social.html

2024 Sunilraj, B., & Rahul, N. (2024). "Critical analysis of debates on Tamil populism." *Contemporary South Asia* (Taylor and Francis), 32(3), 418–437. https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2024.2371810

2024 Sasikumar, S., & Sunilraj, B. (2024). "Beyond the 'liberal vs faithful' binary: Exploring non-Brahmin contestations at Sabarimala." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 59(29), 45–53. https://www.epw.in/journal/2024/29/special-articles/beyond-liberal-vs-faithful-binary.html

2023 Sunilraj, B. (2023). "The local roots of communist support in Kerala." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* (Taylor and Francis), 61(1), 65–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/14662043.2023.2177038

2022 Sasikumar, S., & Sunilraj, B. (2022). "Interrogating populist tendencies within the Left rhetoric in Kerala." Economic and Political Weekly, 57(16), 14–18. https://www.epw.in/journal/2022/16/commentary/interrogating-populist-tendencies-within-left.html

2021 Sasikumar, S., & Sunilraj, B. (2021). "Kerala elections 2021: Mandate for social egalitarianism and Left-democratic alternative." Economic and Political Weekly, 56(22), 22–27. https://www.epw.in/journal/2021/22/commentary/kerala-elections-2021.html

2021 Sasikumar, S., & Sunilraj, B. (2021). "Countering the Left by moving rightwards: Political positioning of the Congress in Kerala." Economic and Political Weekly, 56(8), 16–21. https://www.epw.in/journal/2021/8/commentary/countering-left-moving-rightwards.html

2017 Sunilraj, B., & Heath, O. (2017). "The historical legacy of party system stability in Kerala." *Studies in Indian Politics* (Sage), 5(2), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1177/2321023017727959

Book Chapters

2022 "COVID-19 crisis exposes India's neglect of informal workers" (co-authored with Jenny Sulfath), in Bharat Bhushan (ed.), Media, Migrants, and the Pandemic in India. Routledge India, pp. 40–44. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003291527

2021 "A City Turned into Wasteland for Its Workers" (co-authored with Suresh Garimella), in Natasha Badhwar et al. (eds.), Lockdown 2020: A People's History of Cruelty and Compassion. Delhi: Yoda Press, pp. 155–163.

2021 "Everything in the City Comes at a Price" (co-authored with Suresh Garimella), in Natasha Badhwar et

al. (eds.), Lockdown 2020: A People's History of Cruelty and Compassion. Delhi: Yoda Press, pp. 195–205.

2019 "2014 Lok Sabha Mandate in Kerala: Signs of Deviation", in Ashutosh Kumar and Yatindra Singh Sisodia (eds.), How India Votes: A State-by-State Look. Delhi: Orient Blackswan, pp. 352–368.

"Eclectic Nature of Populism—A Comparative Study of European Populism and Dravidian Populism" (co-authored with Aashti Salman), in Jose C. C., Madhumathi Deshpande and Paul C. Hing (eds.), Encyclopedia of New Populism and Responses in the Twenty-First Century. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9859-0_107-1

Working Papers

2021 "Covid-19 Crisis: An Indictment of India's Informal Economy" (co-authored with Jenny Sulfath), Working Paper No. 39, Centre for Sustainable Employment, Azim Premji University, February 2021. https://cse.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/publications/covid-19-crisis-an-indictment-of-indias-informal-economy/

Book Reviews

2024 "Unveiling the New Republic." Economic and Political Weekly, 59(3), January 2024, pp. 39–41. https://www.epw.in/journal/2024/3/book-reviews/unveiling-new-republic.html

Academic Notes

2022 "Socio-political Reading of a Tragedy in Kerala" (co-authored with Sarath Sasikumar). Economic and Political Weekly, 57, October 2022, p. 8. https://www.epw.in/journal/2022/43/comment/sociopolitical-reading-tragedy-kerala.html

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

03/2024–present Assistant Professor of Political Science, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad

01/2023–02/2024 Assistant Professor of Political Science, GITAM School of Humanities and Social Sciences, GITAM (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru.

07/2021–12/2022 Assistant Professor of Political Science, Department of International Studies, History and Political Science, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

01–04/2021 Research Consultant, Centre for Development Practice (CDP), Dr B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi.

07/2019–12/2020 Senior Researcher, Sankaran Research Unit, Centre for Equity Studies (CES).

FELLOWSHIPS

10–12/2015 Visiting Fellow, Royal Holloway, University of London. Supported by an ESRC-funded India–UK networking grant; received training in quantitative methods for studying electoral behaviour.

06/2016–04/2019 Senior Research Fellow (SRF), University Grants Commission (UGC).

04/2014–06/2016 Junior Research Fellow (JRF), University Grants Commission (UGC).

RESEARCH PROJECTS

2024–2025 Co-Investigator, "Social Mobility in India: Education and Employment Practices of Middle-Class Families in Bengaluru". Small-grant project funded by Azim Premji University.

INVITED LECTURES AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENTS

27/08/2026 "Between Assertion and Victimhood: Upper-caste Discontent and the Protests against UGC Equity Regulations." Invited lecture at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus.

10–15/03/2025 Resource Person, Five-Day Employee Development Programme (EDP), "Fostering Diversity and Crisis Management in Higher Education Institutions", organised by VIT-AP School of Social Sciences and Humanities (VISH).

18/08/2022 "Understanding Informal Economy in the Context of the COVID Pandemic." Lecture organised by the Centre for Social and Policy Research, Christ University.

17/07/2021	“2021 Kerala Assembly Election Results: An Analysis.” Lecture organised by the Department of Political Science, Central University of Assam.

CONFERENCE

16/10/2026	“Recentralization and its Impact on Keralam’s Relations with the Centre, 2014–2026” (co-presented with Nissim Mannathukkaren). Presented at “India’s Federal Republic: Regional Parties and the Future of Democracy”, India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi.
05–06/02/2026	Resource Person, “Researching Contemporary Kerala: A Collective Dialogue”, jointly organised by the Kerala Council for Historical Research (KCHR) and Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, Thiruvananthapuram.
20–22/07/2026	“Negotiating Class, Religion and Residential Segregation: Aspirations of Muslim Women in Delhi.” Paper presented at Inequalities and the City: Old Issues, New Challenges (RC21 2026), University of Vienna, Austria (co-presented with Aashti Salman).
22–23/02/2024	Convener, ICSSR-sponsored International Conference, “Modernities Redefined: Perspectives from South Asia”, organised by GITAM School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Bengaluru.
24/01/2024	“Theorising Left Rhetoric in Kerala via Populist Prism.” Paper presented at the conference on Democracy, Ideology, and Political Dynamics in Kerala, organised by the Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster, and the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), under the British Academy Knowledge Frontiers Award, NIAS.
24–25/09/2021	“Interrogating Populist Tendencies Within Left Rhetoric in Kerala.” Paper presented at New Populism and Responses of the 21st Century, organised by Christ University and the University of Toledo, Christ University.
18–19/01/2016	“Local Body Polls in Kerala: An Analysis.” Paper presented at the EECURI Network Conference, “National, State and Local Elections in India (2014–15): Analysis and Reflections”, Sariska, Rajasthan.
19–20/08/2014	“Kerala Lok Sabha Elections 2014: Some Observations.” Paper presented at the EECURI Network Conference, “2014 Lok Sabha Elections in Rural and Urban India”, ICSSR, New Delhi.

ARTICLES IN POPULAR MEDIA

10/09/2023	“Udhayanidhi Stalin’s Scrutiny of Sanatana Dharma: An Examination.” TimelineDaily. https://timelinedaily.com/india/opinion-udhayanidhi-stalins-scrutiny-of-sanatana-dharma-an-examination
27/06/2020	“The Shadow of Karma upon Us.” Vikalp. https://vikalp.ind.in/2020/06/the-shadow-of-karma-upon-us/
16/04/2020	“As India’s Poor Demand Relief, Why Are Middle Classes Silent?” Newsclick. https://www.newsclick.in/India-Poor-Demand-Relief-Middle-Classes-Silent
08/2018	“Different Shades of Karunanidhi.” Indian Cultural Forum. https://indianculturalforum.in/2018/08/14/different-shades-of-karunanidhi/

PARTICIPATION IN WORKSHOPS AND FIELD RESEARCH

06/2008	Field survey evaluating the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in Araria district, Bihar, under Jean Drèze.
06/2011	Field survey evaluating the implementation of the Public Distribution System in Warangal and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh, under Jean Drèze.
05/2013	Workshop on quantitative methodology conducted by the Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Bangalore.

MEDIA INTERFACE

Discussant in several programmes organised by NDTV on themes related to politics.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ROLES

04/2023–02/2024	Admissions Coordinator, GITAM School of Humanities and Social Sciences.
2014–2015	Elected Councillor, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
2014–2016	Member, Examining Electoral Changes in Urban and Rural India (EECURI) Network.

Referee for academic journals	: Economic and Political Weekly; Commonwealth & Comparative Politics (Taylor & Francis); Social Inclusion.