



# **Dynasties of India and beyond: Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh**

*Inder Malhotra*

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# Dynasties of India and beyond: Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh

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## **Dynasties of India and beyond: Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh** Inder Malhotra

A perceptive study of the remarkable phenomenon of dynastic rule, and a fascinating account of the Indian subcontinent's social and political history during the second half of the twentieth century. The durability and unrivalled dominance of India's Nehru-Gandhi dynasty mean that it has long commanded the world's attention, and guaranteed its place in history. However, it is not the only dynasty within India, let alone the neighbouring countries of South Asia and beyond. Indeed, there is a large number of clans striding the political stage in the region -- the Senanayakes and the Bandarnaikes were entrenched in Sri Lanka well before Indira Gandhi first became India's prime minister in 1966, and the Bhuttos of Pakistan have left their imprint on the country, now once again under military rule with a civilian facade. In Bangladesh, politics revolve round two competing dynasties, one led by Sheikh Hasina, the orphaned daughter of the new nation's founder-president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and the other by Khaleda Zia, the widow of General Ziaur Rahman, its first military ruler. The many books on the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty have concentrated almost exclusively on the life stories of Jawaharlal Nehru, his daughter Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi who, between them, ruled the country for thirty-seven of the first forty-two years since independence. But none has tried to explain why the dynastic dispensation has taken such firm root in this part of the world or why people vote for dynastic leaders time and again. The question of whether the dynastic phenomenon is a passing phase or whether the dynasties are here to stay also remains unanswered. Inder Malhotra's book fills this gap and does so with objectivity and sensitivity. He puts the rise of dynasties in the newly independent countries of South Asia in historical perspective, and analyses why, in the Asian milieu, democratically-elected dynasties are likely to last much longer than they did in the West.

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