



Community Warriors

State, Peasants and Caste Armies in Bihar

Ashwani Kumar

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Description

A thorough and cogent analysis of society, politics and violence in the Indian state of Bihar.

'A brilliant theoretical construct and iconoclastic exposition of contemporary reality in Bihar. The reason for emergence of Caste Senas and their diabolic ramification has not been researched so thoroughly earlier.' —*Shaibal Gupta, Member Secretary, Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI), Patna, India*

This book dissects the politicization of caste massacres and provides a provocative portrayal of the private caste armies operating in so-called 'barbaric Bihar'. Mediating between predatory politicians and radical Maoists, Kumar argues that these caste armies act as both a surrogate arm of the state and a violent defender of their community's self-perceived purity. His focus on vicious agrarian conflicts and the increasing powerlessness to deal with these conflicts challenges transcendental notions of the state's autonomy and the legitimacy.

Community Warriors is anchored in historically and politically constructed notions of identity, power and ethnic allegiance. The book's lucid narrative style facilitates a seamless passage through the sociocultural history of post-independence Bihar and unravels the disturbing aspects of the march of democracy in this much feared and also promising 'heart of India'. Kumar addresses the issues of the process of democratization, ethnic conflict, state power, social movements, Dalit politics and peasant unrest, providing a key to understanding contemporary India.

Readership: Scholars and research students in the field of Indian history and politics.

Contents

Acknowledgements; Introduction; The Emergence of Private Caste Armies in the State of Bihar: Divergent Approaches; (Un)Civil Society of Land, Caste and Social Violence; Political Power Struggles and Fractured State Power; A Tale of Caste Senas: Surrogate Arms of the State; The Ranvir Sena: Political Entrepreneurs or Community Warriors?; Conclusion; Appendix; Notes; Glossary; Index

About the Author

Ashwani Kumar is Associate Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai and is also associated with Global Governance Research Network at German Development Institute (DIE) in Bonn.

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