Description

Argues that no understanding of Indian politics is possible without a thorough understanding of the complexities of the caste system.

The Indian constitution seeks to prevent the perpetuation of caste and build a casteless social system. But in over half a century since Indian independence, this has not been achieved and does not seem likely in the near future. Therefore, no understanding of Indian politics is possible without a thorough understanding of the complexities of the caste system. The aim of this four-part book is to bring about such an understanding. It begins by examining the various meanings attached to the notion of caste. The essay and book extracts in this first section include classic writings on caste such as those by G S Ghurye, Louis Dumont, Mahatma Gandhi and B R Ambedkar. The second part consists of essays that demonstrate the relationship between caste and power. The third part comprises material that investigates caste and various Indian political practices on the ground. The fourth, on caste and social transformation, includes discussion on one of the most salient topics in contemporary Indian politics, namely, the issue of reservations for socially backward castes.

Readership: A key text for students of sociology and politics in South Asia.

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About the Editor

Ghanshyam Shah is Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He has edited and written numerous books and essays on the subject of class, caste and politics in India.