# Community & Identities

Contemporary
Discourses
on
Culture
and
Politics
in
India

图书馆

16

edited by SURINDER S. JODHKA

## Community and Identities

## Contemporary Discourses on Culture and Politics in India

Edited by **Surinder S Jodhka** 

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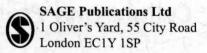
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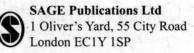
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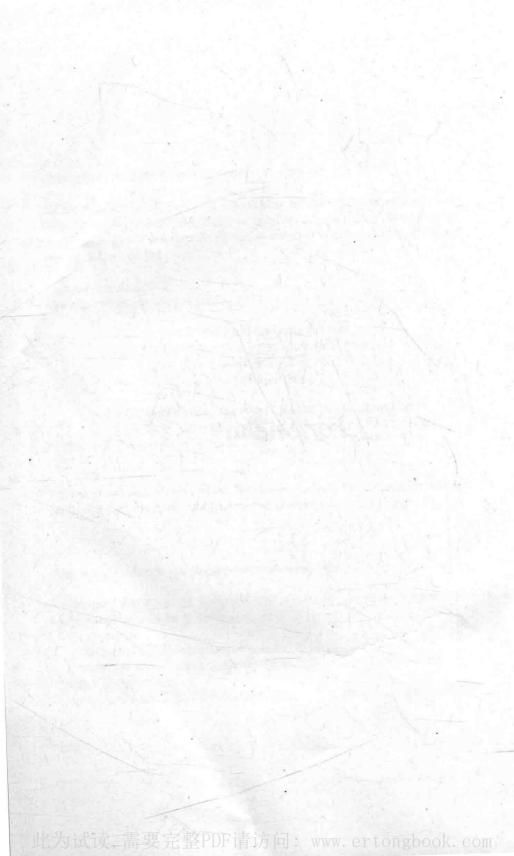
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#### Preface and Acknowledgements

The eighties were important in the contemporary history of India. Apart from many other changes and shifts, it was in the eighties that the 'new social movements' made their presence felt in India. The 'new' mobilisations by women, farmers, Dalits, tribals and ethnicities raised issues and demands that could not be easily understood or dealt with in the theoretical and political paradigm dominant at the time, that of development. Coupled with other changes, the eighties saw the erosion of the 'Nehruvian agenda', a framework of modernisation that aspired to combine the achievements of the scientific revolutions of western Europe and its 'secular' outlook with those of the planned economies of the socialist regime of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

This 'paradigmatic crisis' also provided a context for new debates on subjects such as secularism, development and modernity, eventually leading to important shifts in the social scientific enterprise and research. Prominent among these was an increasing preoccupation with the study of social identities. Questions of culture and identity had perhaps never been so important for the social science disciplines of sociology, anthropology, history or even geography as they are today. Along with this new interest in the question of identities, there has also been a renewed interest in the processes of dissolution and formation of communities. Issues such as environment, displacement, ethnicity, human rights, caste politics and or even globalisation are being increasingly articulated and discussed in the framework of community. The new discourse of community is not confined to

academics alone. It has permeated the ideologies and practice of political parties of diverse shades and is freely used to consolidate support for struggles against a variety of 'enemies', be they the multinational corporations, consumer culture or the authoritarian state.

This volume attempts to interrogate these new trends in the Indian social sciences and the social and political scene. Most of the chapters presented here were first discussed in a national workshop on the theme organised at the Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India in March 1998, under the auspices of the Special Assistance Programme awarded to the department by the University Grants Commission. I am grateful to the sociology faculty at the University of Hyderabad for giving me the opportunity to organise the workshop. Professor C.S. Bhat, Professor E. Haribabu, Dr. Vinod Jairath and Dr. K. Laxminarayana were extremely helpful and supportive. I am also grateful to Professors Ratna Naidu, T.R. Sharma, Rajen Harshe, Aloka Prasher Sen, Probal Das Gupta, G. Haragopal, Dr. Vinod Pavarala and Dr. Sanjay Palshikar of the University of Hyderabad for the help and support I received from them.

The papers presented in this volume have been revised and rewritten keeping in mind the requirements of a book. I am extremely grateful to all the contributors for making the revisions and taking interest in the publication of the volume. The chapters by Javeed Alam, Aparna Rayaprol and Anupama Roy were not presented in the workshop and were written for the volume at my request. I am grateful to them for that.

The comments received from the Sage Publications referee were quite useful in the final revisions. The keen interest that Ms. Omita Goyal of Sage Publications showed in the volume was very encouraging. I am indeed grateful to them all.

Surinder S. Jodhka Chandigarh Part I

#### COMMUNITY AND IDENTITIES: CONCEPTUAL QUESTIONS