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RELIGION, VIOLENCE AND POLITICAL MOBILISATION IN SOUTH ASIA

edited by RAVINDER KAUR, Roskilde University, Denmark

An oft-neglected theme in studies on communal violence is the role of the state, particularly of its institutions of law enforcement and policing. Recent experience with religion-based violence in South Asia—particularly, the 2002 riots in Gujarat—has brought into sharp focus this relationship between communal violence and partisan state institutions.

The seven essays in this anthology—written by eminent scholars from diverse traditions of anthropology, history, politics and sociology—critically re-examine the symbolism, scale and nature of communal violence in South Asia in view of the state's changing image. Moving beyond clichéd explanations of riots, the contributors:

- Map the contemporary discourse on Hindu-Muslim violence and focus on the causes of communal violence as well as its long-term consequences
- Situate the nation-state within the incidents of violence—variously termed ethnic, communal and everyday violence—that simultaneously frame and challenge the authority of the state
- Locate the current discussion on violence and the state in Pakistan, and provide a general thematic overview of religion and state institutions in Pakistan
- Expand various categories of violence to present a South Asian perspective vis-a-vis the current western discourse on 'global terrorism'



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