

This book studies the interface of religious, social and political identities in modern Tamil Nadu. Based on interviews with non-Brahmin Śrīvaisnavas of many caste clusters, it analyses their oral histories of discrimination, negotiation of lived realities and hopes for the future. The interviews are contextualised with reference to the history of Śrīvaisnavism, an historically important Hindu sect in the region, the religion's theology of caste inclusiveness, and history of Brahmin leadership exclusiveness. In addition, it addresses colonial changes, Telugu connections, the non-Brahmin movement, Dalit mobilisation, post-Independence caste hierarchies, government policies, party politics, Brahmin reactions, court cases, and inter-religious competition.

Turbulent Transformations breaks new ground by recovering from the dustbin of history radical non-Brahmin leaders in the colonial period. It probes the Śrīvaisnava connections of prominent political figures such as Periyar and Jayalalithaa. And it explores the relation of the temples, the state, and the Supreme Court over questions such as 'who is allowed to be a priest'.

Besides highlighting the variety of perspectives that underlie the general labels non-Brahmin and Brahmin, this

book provides insights into new configurations and faultlines of democracy, caste and modern lived Hinduism. It fills the lacunae created by Brahmin narratives, scholarly studies focused on Tamil Śaivism or Christianity, and political and sociological analyses removed from the dynamic pulse of religion in interaction with the non-Brahmin movement over the past century.

Turbulent Transformations will be of interest to students and scholars of Hinduism, the anthropology of religion, sociology, colonial and post-colonial studies, and those interested in the relation of politics and religion.

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