

‘While Hindu metaphysics centralises the feminine as the source of cosmic power, Hindu society has traditionally authorised the subjection of women ... Hindu women have nevertheless consistently found in their faith resources for claiming selfhood both as religious and social subjects’.

Tracing the shifting understanding and symbolism of femininity in Hinduism from antiquity to the present, Sanskrit scholar Mandakranta Bose lucidly explores the role of womanhood in Hindu religious culture and how the faith has deeply shaped women’s spiritual and social life experiences.

From its inception, Hindu religious thought has been deeply concerned with the idea of femininity. In *Women in the Hindu World*, Mandakranta Bose encourages readers to develop and nurture their own understanding of the life of a woman as a Hindu.

The chapters of the book proceed both historically and thematically, exploring abstract Hindu philosophical concepts about women as well as the concrete worldly conditions of the lives they lead, from the earliest stages of Hindu society to the present, marking through time the evolving religious roles and social status of Hindu women.

Hindu women have consistently found resources in their faith for claiming selfhood, both within their religion and in society. Within the home, women are the keepers of the family's religious rites. Outside the home, they worship through poetry, painting, dance, and music. Like their peers around the world, modern Hindu women have fought and worked together to claim decisive roles in shaping their own lives, while maintaining their faith and culture.

Examining the place of women in Hindu religion, culture, and society, *Women in the Hindu World* charts the profound impact of Hinduism on the life experiences of women.



MANDAKRANTA BOSE, Professor Emerita at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, is a former director of the University's Centre for India and South Asia Research, a Senior Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain. A Sanskrit scholar, Professor Bose is an alumnus of Calcutta University, the University of British Columbia, and Oxford University, with a D. Phil. degree in Sanskrit from Oxford. Among her many books and articles on the Hindu religion, Sanskrit literature, the epics of India, classical dance and drama, and gender issues are: *The Goddess* (Oxford, 2018), *The Rāmāyana in Bengali Folk Paintings* (New Delhi, 2017), and *Women in the Hindu Tradition: Rules, Roles and Exceptions* (Abingdon, 2010).

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