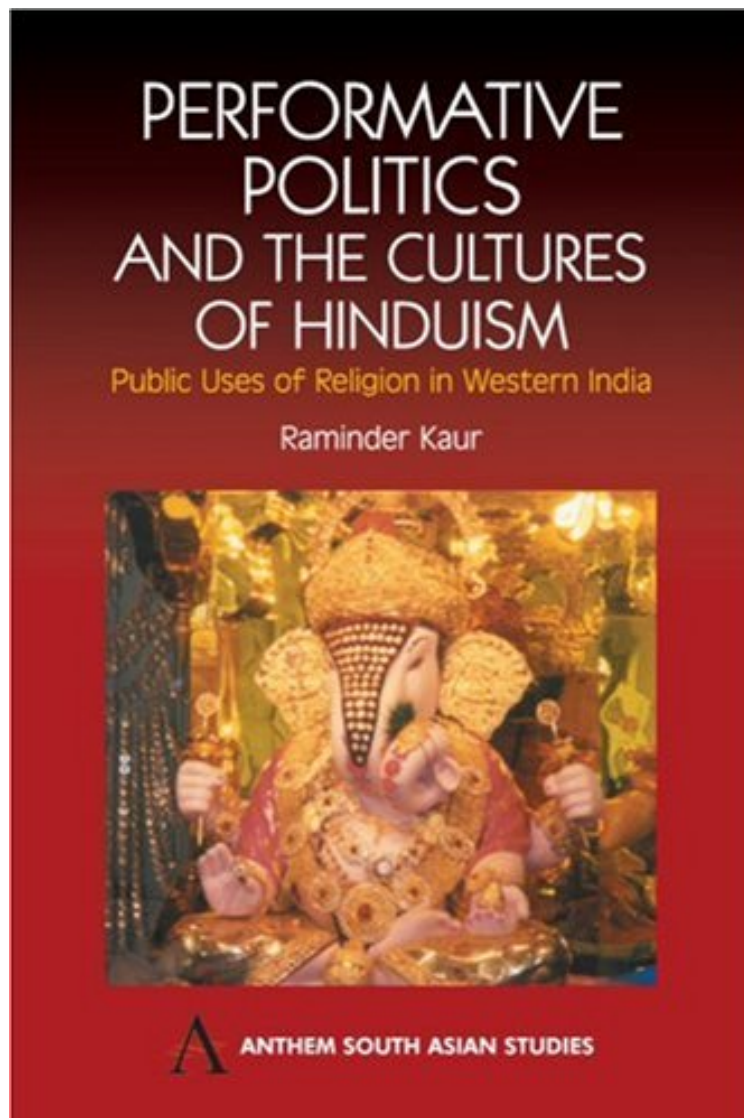


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## **Performative Politics and the Cultures of Hinduism: Public Uses of Religion in Western India (Anthem South Asian Studies)**

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From the Back Cover "Performative Politics and the Cultures of Hinduism" focuses on one of the major festivals of western India, the Ganapati Utsava, dedicated to the elephant-headed god. Raminder Kaur uses this occasion as the central anthropological and historiographical site within which to examine the dynamic relationship between spectacle, religion and nationalist politics. In contemporary India, this kaleidoscopic event is of interest to various bodies, including political parties such as the Shiv Sena, the BJP and the Congress, media conglomerates which sponsor competitions associated with religious rituals and the police and regulating organizations of the state which strive to keep religious festivity 'clean' of criminality and excessive political manipulation. At the level of community life and everyday "bhakti" (religious devotion), Kaur shows that the audiovisual aspects of the festival are today crucial to its enduring appeal among large sectors of urban India's populace. Deploying a single major cultural and religious event to study the variety and cultures of contemporary Hinduism and their complex histories, this book is an outstanding work that will interest every serious student of Indian politics, cultural history and anthropology.  
About the Author Raminder Kaur is a Lecturer at the University of Manchester. She completed her PhD at SOAS, University of London, in 1998. She is also co-editor of 'Travel Worlds: Journeys in Contemporary Cultural Politics' (Zed Books, 1999), and co-author of 'Liquid Notions: Critical Reflections on Diaspora and Hybridity' (Sage, forthcoming).