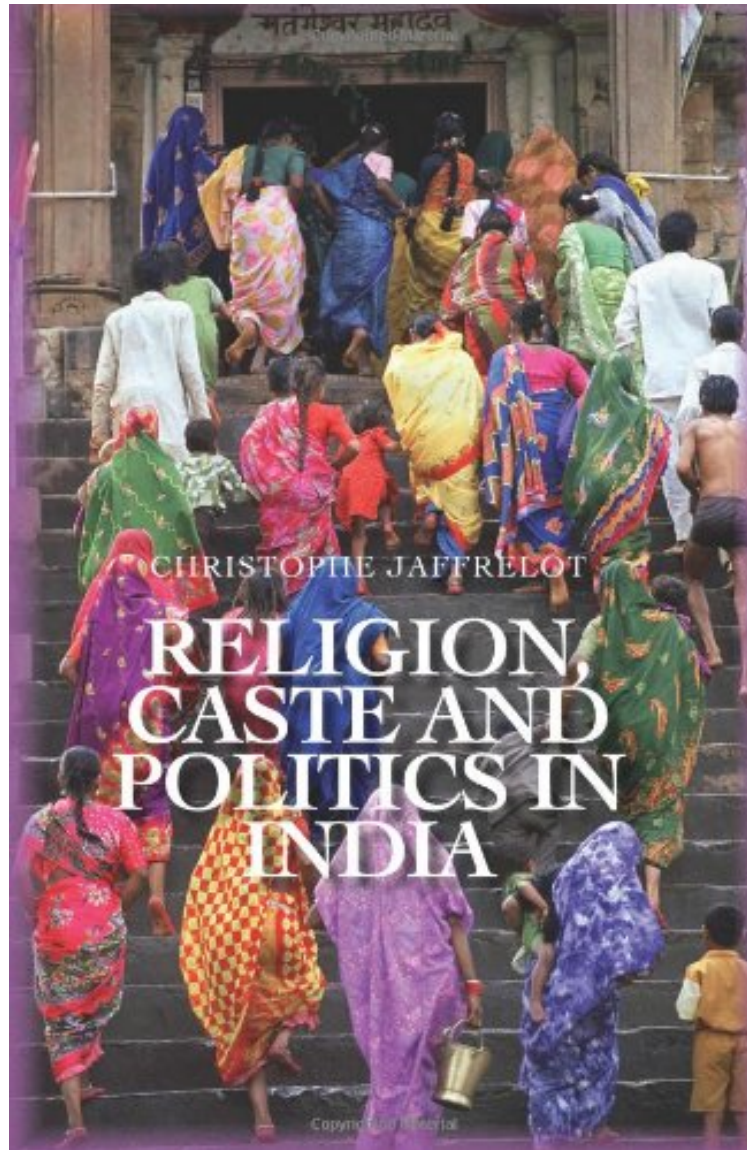


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Religion, Caste, and Politics in India (Columbia/Hurst)

Christophe Jaffrelot

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Christophe Jaffrelot : Religion, Caste, and Politics in India (Columbia/Hurst) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Religion, Caste, and Politics in India (Columbia/Hurst):

Following independence, the Nehruvian approach to socialism in India rested on three pillars: secularism and

democracy in the political domain, state intervention in the economy, and diplomatic non-alignment mitigated by pro-Soviet leanings after the 1960s. These features defined a distinct "Indian model," if not the country's political identity. From this starting point, Christophe Jaffrelot traces the transformation of India throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, particularly the 1980s and 90s. The world's largest democracy has sustained itself by embracing not only the vernacular politicians of linguistic states, but also Dalits and "Other Backward Classes," or OBCs. The simultaneous and related rise of Hindu nationalism has put minorities and secularism on the defensive. In many ways the rule of law has been placed on trial as well. The liberalization of the economy has resulted in growth, yet not necessarily development, and India has acquired a new global status, becoming an emerging power intent on political and economic partnerships with Asia and the West. The traditional Nehruvian system is giving way to a less cohesive though more active India, a country that has become what it is against all odds. Jaffrelot maps this tumultuous journey, exploring the role of religion, caste, and politics in determining the fabric of a modern democratic state.

Christophe Jaffrelot is one of the world's leading scholars of the profound transformations shaping India's extraordinary democracy. For two decades and more, Jaffrelot has displayed a shrewd ability to sense trends before they fully manifest themselves and to analyze their bases—he was one of the very first to produce empirically grounded studies on the rise of Hindu nationalism and on the upsurge of lower caste politics which remain touchstones in the field. The essays and articles collected here confirm him as the leading authority on these subjects and show also his broad range of interests, extending to India's distinctive political culture and the country's growing global role. A fascinating and illuminating collection to be welcomed by all scholars and students of contemporary India. (Sunil Khilnani, Starr Foundation Professor and director, South Asia Studies, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University) Christophe Jaffrelot has over the past decades established himself as one of the most prolific, insightful, and deeply informed analysts of Indian politics and society. *Religion, Caste and Politics in India* brings together some of Jaffrelot's key writings on the upheavals of the 1990s that paved the way for the momentous changes now taking place in contemporary India: Hindu nationalism, lower caste politics, violence, and the dynamics of electoral politics. With its wealth of information, meticulous scholarship, and deep sense of history, this impressive volume will be invaluable to anyone interested in South Asia. (Thomas Blom Hansen, author of *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay*) Well written and wonderfully informative, this is a major book on Indian politics.... Highly recommended. (Choice) About the Author Christophe Jaffrelot is research director at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris and teaches South Asian politics and history at Sciences Po (Paris), where he served as director from 2000 to 2008. Arguably one of the world's most respected writers on Indian society and politics, he has published many works, including *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics, 1925 to the 1990s*; *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Castes in North India*; and *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Fighting the Indian Caste System*.