



Make Me a Man!: Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationalism in India (SUNY Series in Religious Studies)

Sikata Banerjee

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Looks at the ideals of masculine Hinduism—and the corresponding feminine ideals—that have built the Indian nation, and explores their consequences.

Make Me a Man! argues that ideas about manhood play a key role in building and sustaining the modern nation. It examines a particular expression of nation and manliness: masculine Hinduism. This ideal, which emerged from India's experience of British imperialism, is characterized by martial prowess, muscular strength, moral fortitude, and a readiness to go to battle. Embodied in the images of the Hindu soldier and the warrior monk, masculine Hinduism is rooted in a rigid "us versus them" view of nation that becomes implicated in violence and intolerance. Masculine Hinduism also has important connotations for women, whose roles in this environment consist of the heroic mother, chaste wife, and celibate, masculinized warrior. All of these roles shore up the "us versus them" dichotomy and constrict women's lives by imposing particular norms and encouraging limits on women's freedom.

Sikata Banerjee notes that the nationalism defined by masculine Hinduism draws on a more general narrative of nation found in many cultures. If the outcomes of this narrative are to be resisted, the logic of masculinity, armed manhood, and nation need to be examined in diverse contexts.

"...*Make Me a Man!* is very useful reading for any student or teacher who is interested in the cultural, political, religious, and gender economies of modern India and is indispensable for those who are interested in the Hindutva movement." — *International Journal of Hindu Studies*

"Sikata Banerjee's [book] provides a welcome addition to the discourse on gender identity, masculinity, and femininity among Hindu men and women ... The [book] is a great comment on the interconnections among gender and political climate that is not often discussed." — *Sex Roles*

"...Banerjee ... includes data from fieldwork interviews that offer a contemporary human angle."
—*Religious Studies Review*

"Banerjee's work addresses the need to bring together aspects of colonial rule, religious nationalism, and gender that have often been dealt with separately. Her work also, by examining the role of gender in imaginings of citizenship and nation, highlights the importance of historicizing modern-day tension within India." — *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*

"Banerjee uses relevant theory, multicultural studies, and her own fieldwork to produce a fascinating analysis of the construction of the concept of masculinity in the contemporary Hindu nationalist movement in India."
— Robert N. Minor, author of *The Religious, the Spiritual, and the Secular: Auroville and Secular India*

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