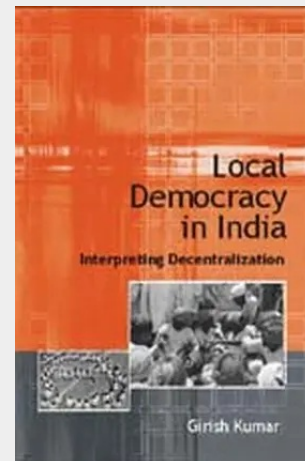


Local Democracy in India

The fundamental objective of this large-scale study is to reconstruct the contemporary historical value of panchayats (a traditional rural Indian political system) in the decentralization of the country. Using interviews and discussions with all the central players in the field, the author presents a comparative and detailed account of panchayat-centric democratic decentralization in the states of West Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. The author covers the key issues of whether: - the policy of reservations has created spaces for the weaker sections, including women; - panchayats empower people and strengthen democracy at the local level; - the people are satisfied with the performance of panchayats. Additionally, the book assesses the impact of decentralization on the functional efficacy of social sector institutions such as primary schools and health centers.


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