Dalit Women's Education in Modern India
Double Discrimination

By Shailaja Paik

Dalit Women's Education in Modern India is a social and cultural history that challenges the triumphant narrative of modern secular education to analyse the constellation of social, economic, political and historical circumstances that both opened and closed opportunities to many Dalits. By focusing on marginalised Dalit women in modern Maharashtra, who have rarely been at the centre of systematic historical enquiry, Paik breathes life into their ideas, expectations, potentials, fears and frustrations. Addressing two major blind spots in the historiography of India and of the women’s movement, she historicises Dalit women’s experiences and constructs them as historical agents. The book combines archival research with historical fieldwork, and centres on themes including slum life, urban middle classes, social and sexual labour, and family, marriage and children to provide a penetrating portrait of the actions and lives of Dalit women.

Elegantly conceived and convincingly argued, Dalit Women's Education in Modern India will be invaluable to students of History, Caste Politics, Women and Gender Studies, Education Studies, Urban Studies and Asian studies.

Dr. Paik is an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati and specializes in the social and cultural history of Modern India. Her first book examines the nexus between caste, class, gender, and state pedagogical practices among Dalit ("Untouchable") women in urban India. In this work, she tracks Dalit women's emancipation through education and raises wider questions about the ways that the subordinated create spaces and sites for their own self-assertion and betterment, and how they engage with modernity in other ways.