



Nation, Diaspora, Trans-nation: Reflections from India

Ravindra K. Jain

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A premier debate in the present conjuncture of globalization has been the prospect of ‘post nation’ and the obsolescence of patriotism at the horizon of transnationalism. In an ethnographically rich and discursively sharp intervention R. K. Jain articulates the contribution that diaspora studies can make to this debate.

In this anthropological narrative both nation and trans-nation are ‘moving targets’; their positionality shifts and changes according to the geo-political location of the analyst and the frame of comparison brought to bear on the objects/subjects of study. In Jain’s case the locus happens to be India but the discussion in this book does not foreclose perspectives from ‘other’ nations. Indeed as his own examples from countries of the Indian Ocean zone, the Asia Pacific region and the Caribbean amply demonstrate the methodology of ethno-cultural relativism built in these diasporic comparisons is the surest guarantee for tracing the juxtaposed dialectic of nation and trans-nation from whichever existential location one begins.

The rootedness of this particular discourse in India provides coherence in the nature of a case-study of globalization from a prominent diaspora node of our times. At the same time it unravels dimensions of Indian social institutions viewed from the vantage point of diaspora. The book, therefore, is an invitation to further multi-disciplinary and multi-sited collaboration in the exploration of globalization, diaspora, nationalism and patriotism as well as transnationalism from diverse perspectives.



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