

NEW BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT



ETHNIC CONFLICT IN INDIA

A Case-Study of Punjab

GURHARPAL SINGH

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This important new book critically evaluates the conventional reading of ethnicity and ethnic conflict in contemporary Indian politics. By focusing on India's nation and state-building in the peripheral regions since 1947, in particular Punjab, it argues that there is a case for considering India as an ethnic democracy. The long-term development of ethno-nationalist separatist movements and the future character of Indian democracy is assessed in light of the challenge posed by the rise of *Hindutva* forces, the demise of the Nehruvian state, and the internal political and economic pressures towards regionalization.

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GURHARPAL SINGH is Professor in Politics at the University of Hull. He has previously worked at Birkbeck College and De Montfort University. He is the author of *Communism in Punjab* and the co-editor of *Punjabi Identity and Region and Partition: Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent*.

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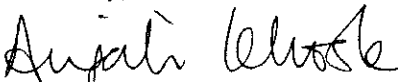
Dear Sir or Madam,

Enclosed is an announcement for the film *Pastoral Politics: A film on the Gaddi herders of Himachal Pradesh*. Also attached are comments on the film from various academics with expertise on environmental issues in South and Southeast Asia.

The film is produced by Moving Images, an independent organization based in New Delhi. The film was directed by Sanjay Barnela, a filmmaker with over ten years of experience and Vasant Saberwal, recent Ph.D. from Yale University, whose research among the Gaddi forms the basis for the film.

We would be happy to deal with any queries regarding the availability, format and costing of the film.

Sincerely,



Anjali Khosla

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Comments on Pastoral Politics

Pastoral Politics is a pioneering effort to transcend the usual cinematic portrayals of the "other", of people who live by systems of resource-use that are no longer familiar to the industrialized West. It accomplishes this, first, by demythologizing pastoralists, in particular their image as removed from everyday society: one Gaddi pastoralist in the film spent twenty years in the Indian military and police service before retiring to pastoralism. After debunking this and other myths, the film-makers courageously refrain from replacing them with equally essentializing myths of their own making. In Whitehead's words, they boldly "leave ... unobscured ... the vast darkness of the subject." The film is an almost Rashomon-like portrayal of the way that the Gaddi are differently perceived by different parties, including academics, activists, forest service officers, and the Gaddi themselves. The film-makers eloquently demonstrate that one of the most central questions for the Gaddi is not simply who they are and how they use natural resources, but who we think they are and how we think they should use those resources, and, ultimately, what the difference between these visions tells us not just about the Gaddi but about ourselves.

Professor Michael R. Dove and Dr. Carol Carpenter
School of Forestry and Environmental Studies
Yale University

The video Pastoral Politics examines the politics of herding and grazing in Himachal Pradesh, India. It is a thoughtful and carefully crafted story of migrant herders. Its main focus is on the interactions of pastoralists with government agencies and farmers, and inter-generational conflicts within the pastoralist society. The film demonstrates the flaw inherent in trying to settle migrant herders, and in believing that pastoralist livelihoods and migrations are necessarily harmful to the environment. Instead, the film points to how herders lead a finely balanced existence between competing demands of politics, economics, and ecology.

Arun Agrawal
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Yale University

Pastoral Politics focuses on the long standing conflict between herders and the state and masterfully captures the complex interplay between social groups and government policies. This sensitive account of changing Gaddi practices and perceptions argues eloquently in support of their rights to the environment. This thought provoking film is a valuable resource for stimulating discussion and action on issues of environment & development.

Amita Baviskar
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology
Delhi School of Economics

Pastoral Politics is a subtle and suggestive study of the Gaddi shepherds of Himalaya. It addresses some classic dilemmas of the contemporary world-- the community versus the state, science versus folk knowledge, environment versus development -- and does so with understanding and insight. An absorbing film.'

Ramachandra Guha
Environmental Historian
Bangalore

Pastoral Politics provides an informed and nuanced view of contemporary resource politics around grazing and transhumance in the Indian Himalayas. Set in the state of Himachal Pradesh, the film-makers introduce us to Gaddi herders, mountain agriculturists, urban-based government resource managers, and activist-scholars who tell often conflicting stories about grazing lifeways and their impacts on the environments of these legendary mountains. The film's great strength lies in its conveyance of a sympathetic but unromanticized view of the plight of the Gaddi. Though some of their herding practices have their origins in centuries past, the obstacles they face are inscribed in the thoroughly modern dilemmas of small-scale resource managers. Most poignant in the film is the quandary a mobile community faces in establishing and maintaining its claims on lands scattered throughout the mountain regions

The filming of this story on location in the alpine meadows and snow-covered passes makes for breath-taking viewing. The film-makers skillfully juxtapose the voices and faces and working landscapes of the herders and farmers with those of activists, social historians, and venerable Forest Department officials. The narration is straight-forward in its presentation and tone; neither the Gaddi nor those who would eliminate their occupations are presented with irony or paternalism: the story thus unfolds for the viewer through the extensive and informed comments of numerous actors. At the same time, the screen is not constantly filled with "talking heads"; the steep hills form the backdrop for many conversations, and we are treated to glimpses of the daily activities of the men, women, and animals for whom the hills and trails represent home.

Overall, this film sets an excellent example for aspiring documentary makers in the field of resource politics. It makes an excellent teaching tool for undergraduate students in terms of its content and the policy issues it raises. For graduate students and activists, it provides an example of sensitive documentation of a conflict and the power of pictures and people's own words to convey the problems they are facing today and in the future.

Nancy Lee Peluso
Associate Professor
Political Ecology and Resource Policy
Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management
University of California, Berkeley

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P R O D U C T I O N S

PASTORAL POLITICS

'Pastoral Politics' documents the conflict between government conservation policies and the traditional lifestyle of Gaddi-herders in the Indian Himalayas.

It highlights the critical components of Gaddi knowledge and practice that has sustained their pastoral existence.

The film suggests that Forest Department policies may be ineffective in achieving conservation goals while resulting in the displacement of the Gaddi.

Produced by Moving Images and CENDIT

Directed by Sanjay Barnela and Vasant Saberwal

Duration : 29 minutes

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