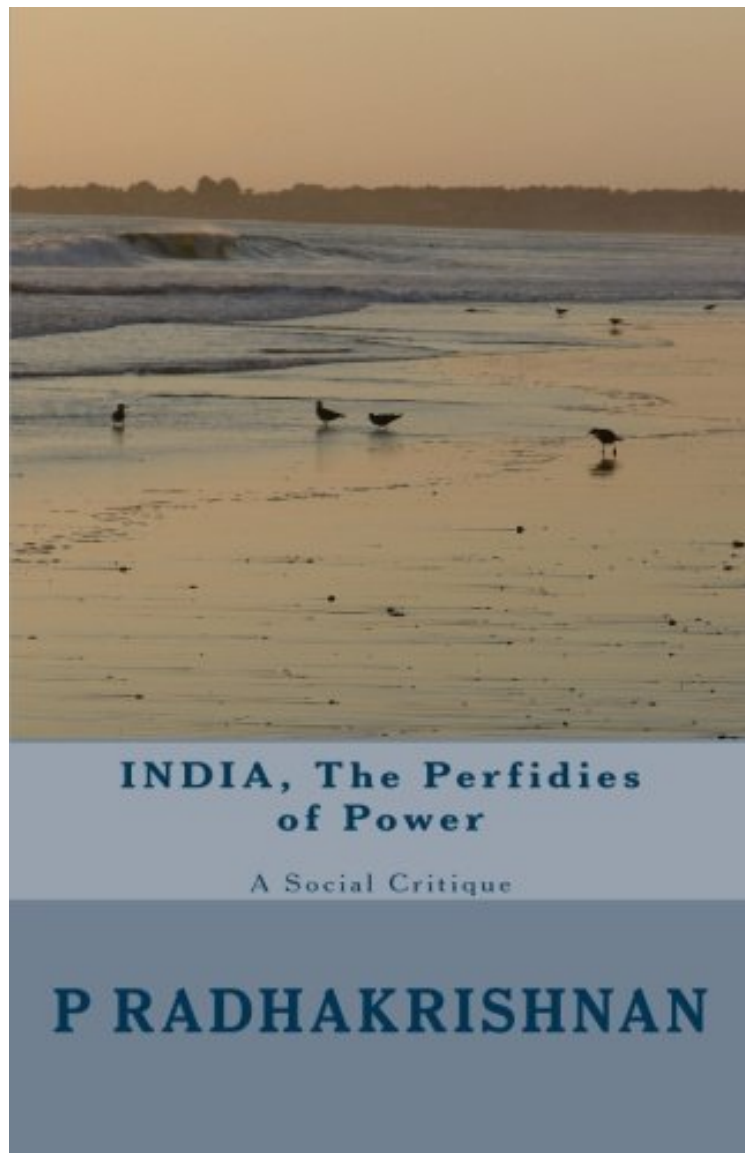


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INDIA, The Perfidies of Power: A Social Critique

Radhakrishnan P

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India should have entered the 21st century as the world's largest robust democracy. If the events of the last decade are any indication India has entered the new Millennium without the aura of the much-touted millennium. If India has to strengthen its democratic structures and institutions and develop into a full-blown democracy, instead of merely

gloating over sustaining democracy for the last half a century as its greatest achievement, India ought to work to offer, among other things, clean, efficient, secular and transparent governance; rapid expansion of civil space for rapid secularisation and democratisation of state and society with secular public institutions mediating between both; expeditious justice delivery systems, especially for the masses who cannot afford to spend and cannot afford to wait; protect the weaker sections from their tormentors; and evolve self-cleansing mechanisms for governance, electoral and other democratic processes. As the need for action is immediate and imperative, India's related tasks should include concerted constructive democratic action for, among other things, ridding the nation of corruption, criminality and related evils; widening the scope and sweep, grasp and reach of the judiciary for broad-based "fast-track" justice, thereby ensuring that the masses repose enough faith in it; and redefining the contents and contours of Indian democracy for ushering in a more inclusive secular and pluralistic polity and society. For these, understanding the perception of the reality is as important as understanding the elusive reality itself. That is best done by identifying the fault lines in governance, the perfidies of the governors, and the pitfalls of the governed, through critiquing the system at the regions and at the Centre, seeing it through the common man's "looking glass". This book is aimed at that.

About the Author Dr. P. RADHAKRISHNAN is a Professor at the Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai, INDIA. His research experience spans nearly three decades. He has published widely. His books and monographs include Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms, and Social Change: Malabar 1836-1982; Progress towards Education for All: the Case of Tamil Nadu; and The Perfidies of Power: India in the New Millennium. He has to his credit several other publications, which include articles in edited books and leading journals, research notes, working papers, and reviews.