The Roots of the Periphery
A History of the Gonds of Deccan India
by Bhangya Bhukya

About the book

Is primitivism a consequence of the natural evolution of some human societies? Or is it a conscious choice by such societies to evade state power? In The Roots of the Periphery, Bhangya Bhukya sets out to answer these questions by taking as his focal point the case of the Gond dynasty of the erstwhile Chanda region of Deccan India. Arguing that the ‘periphery’—the adivasis (or the indigenous peoples)—have their roots in the ‘centre’, he demonstrates how the British colonial government in India created an administrative divide between the plains and the hills, thus stereotyping hill and forest communities as isolated, primitive, barbaric, and uncivilized.

This book examines the evolution of Gond society over a prolonged period—from Mughal rule to the colonial era—with an interdisciplinary approach that uses both oral narratives and folklore along with archival sources. In so doing, it challenges the isolationist and assimilationist perceptions about adivasi society and asserts that the ‘difference’ imagined and articulated by the Gonds was deeply rooted in self-rule and self-determinism.

About the author

Bhangya Bhukya is Associate Professor of History at the University of Hyderabad, India. Previously he has served as Associate Professor at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, and as Assistant Professor at Osmania University, Hyderabad.

Key features

- The author belongs to the Adivasi community which makes this work a significant contribution by an insider
- The first full length monograph on the Gond community in past two decades
- While most studies argue for tribal isolation, co-existence, or assimilation with the mainstream, in the present work the author argues for tribal difference