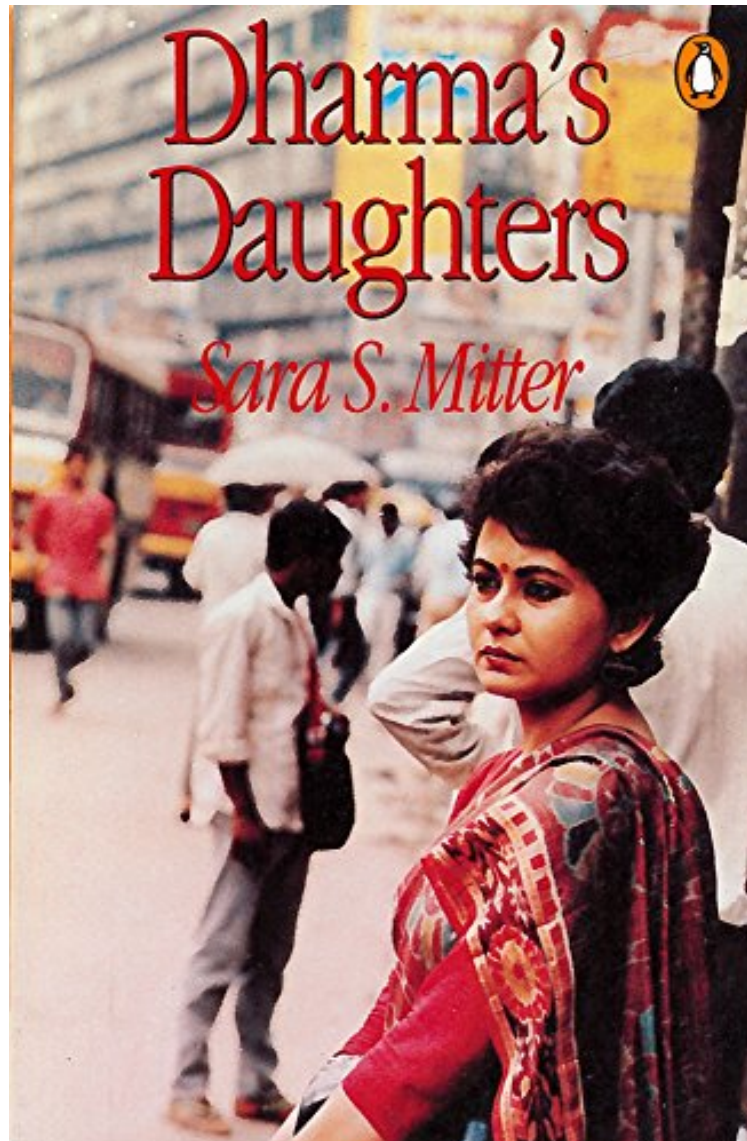


(Ebook free) Dharma's Daughters: Contemporary Indian Women and Hindu Culture

Dharma's Daughters: Contemporary Indian Women and Hindu Culture

Sara S Mitter

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Sara S Mitter : Dharma's Daughters: Contemporary Indian Women and Hindu Culture before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dharma's Daughters: Contemporary Indian Women and Hindu Culture:

Women in India today are faced with a major conflict: how to adjust to rapid modernization and industrialization without abandoning traditional roles and customs. One of the assets of Hinduism has been its ability to incorporate seemingly unorthodox ideas, not fight against them. Contemporary Indian women today are trying to reconcile innovation with tradition as they assert that women are significant participants in the economy, that crimes against women should be investigated and prosecuted, and that a woman can divorce her husband. This is no easy task in light of the highly structured nature of Indian society. It is both hierarchical and patriarchal. Regardless of a family's economic position, women in the family are considered inferior. It is the woman's job, first and foremost, to be loyal to her husband and to be a good mother to her children. *Dharma's Daughters* is divided into three sections. The first introduces us to women who live and work in Bombay, where the population is dense and the housing is inadequate. We meet manual laborers, members of construction crews, and illiterate domestic workers who live in shanties. Mitter paints a vivid picture of the harried lives of these women. In the second section Mitter describes Hindu mythology and the traditions that form the basis for women's lives. In the final section, Mitter tells of the increasing mobilization and resistance of Indian women since the 1970s.

From *Library Journal* This idiosyncratic treatment of the life of women in India's hierarchical and patriarchal society is divided into three distinct segments with little to unify them. Part 1 is a vivid collage of the daily lives of the women of Bombay, from maids to construction workers to students. The second section focuses on celebrated Hindu myths and epics. Mitter maintains that the virtues portrayed by the heroines of these legends still affect the attitudes of both genders toward contemporary Indian women. These are interesting concepts that perhaps deserve to be expanded in a separate book. The third section depicts the efforts of some Indian women to organize for the purpose of gaining specific economic and social rights for themselves and their countrywomen. Mitter also touches upon arranged marriages, female infanticide, dowry deaths, and even the now-rare sati, the practice of a widow throwing herself onto her husband's funeral pyre. The same territory is covered much more extensively by Elisabeth Bumiller's excellent *May You Be the Mother of a Hundred Sons* (LJ 5/1/90). - Ruth M. Mara, Agency for International Development, Washington, Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. About the Author Sara S. Mitter is a journalist. Married to an Indian physicist, she has made many visits to India.