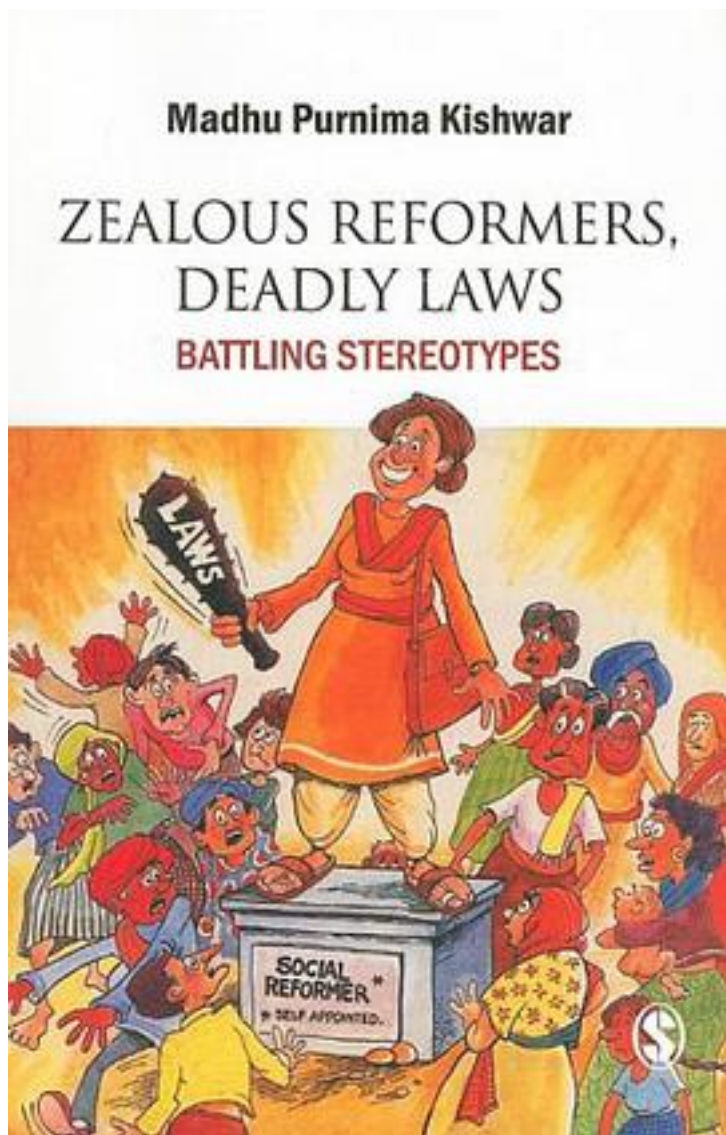


Zealous Reformers, Deadly Laws



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This book by one of the pioneers of the contemporary women's rights movement in India combines insights gathered from deep engagement with the lives and coping strategies of ordinary women. With first hand knowledge of the workings of legislation and the law enforcement machinery in India, the author attempts to explain why laws enacted for the ostensible purpose of strengthening women's rights end up producing such dismal results. These essays exemplify a tenacious, logical and sincere effort to understand what measures of reform work or don't work in the real world and the author's willingness to revise and refine her own assumptions and interventions in order to synchronise with the requirements and aspirations of India's diverse women. This is an honest attempt at stock taking of the author's own role in the women's movement and a critical evaluation of feminist interventions for legal reform. However, it is not a book written with hindsight. Most of the essays were written at the time when there was great enthusiasm for enacting certain laws claiming to be pro women and the author stood virtually alone and received a lot of criticism for pointing out the inherent flaws in those laws. The prescient nature of her analysis is borne out by the fact that all the misgivings she expressed at the time have come true. The book could well be described as the beginnings of a political autobiography. While various essays offer a sharp critique of some of the strategies adopted by leading sections of the women's movements in India, Kishwar is as forthright in admitting to mistakes she herself committed and how she has had to rethink and rework her own strategies over the years. Even though the reflections in this book are confined to women's rights struggles, the insights she offers on the need for activists to undertake constant self-monitoring are likely to be useful for people engaged in diverse struggles.

作者介绍:

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