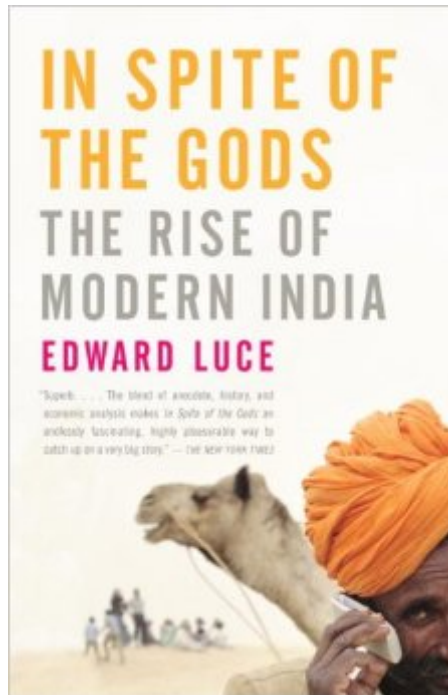


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In Spite Of The Gods: The Rise Of Modern India



Synopsis

As the world's largest democracy and a rising international economic power, India has long been heralded for its great strides in technology and trade. Yet it is also plagued by poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and a vast array of other social and economic issues. Here, noted journalist and former Financial Times South Asia bureau chief Edward Luce travels throughout India's many regions, cultures, and religious circles, investigating its fragile balance between tradition and modernity. From meetings with key political figures to fascinating encounters with religious pundits, economic gurus, and village laborers, *In Spite of the Gods* is a fascinating blend of analysis and reportage that comprehensively depicts the nuances of India's complex situation and its place in the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Edward Luce is a British journalist and former Financial Times New Delhi Bureau Chief. His main interests in this book are the social, political and economic arenas in India. Luce writes about several "patterns" that he has noticed in collective Indian behaviour: sycophancy, criminalization of politics, Hindu fundamentalism, the State unintentionally oppressing the poor, and so on. He weaves these patterns into small scale themes such as the fallacy (in his opinion) of the Indian nationalist perception that progress lies in developing the villages and decentralizing political power. His grand theme is the condition of the poor in India. To shore up the argument for each of the patterns, Luce relies on interviews (with a surprising number of very prominent people), events (historical and current), anecdotes, and other cultural observations. He does all of this a trifle

haphazardly, but manages to make it all very interesting. His anecdotes and event summaries are piquant and entertaining. Luce seems to have benefited from advice from people like Ramachandra Guha, a very prominent Indian historian. The bigger picture that emerges from this book is reasonably accurate. For people unfamiliar with India, the book would be great: a concise yet fairly comprehensive introduction. On the negative side, the book is journalistic rather than scholarly. The result is that nearly everything in the book expresses opinion rather than the result of any kind of study. Some topics are the author's pet peeves rather than anything important. Others are important, but rather than report all angles, Luce often picks a side and provides a very zealous argument in its favour. This bias sometimes results in inaccuracies.

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