

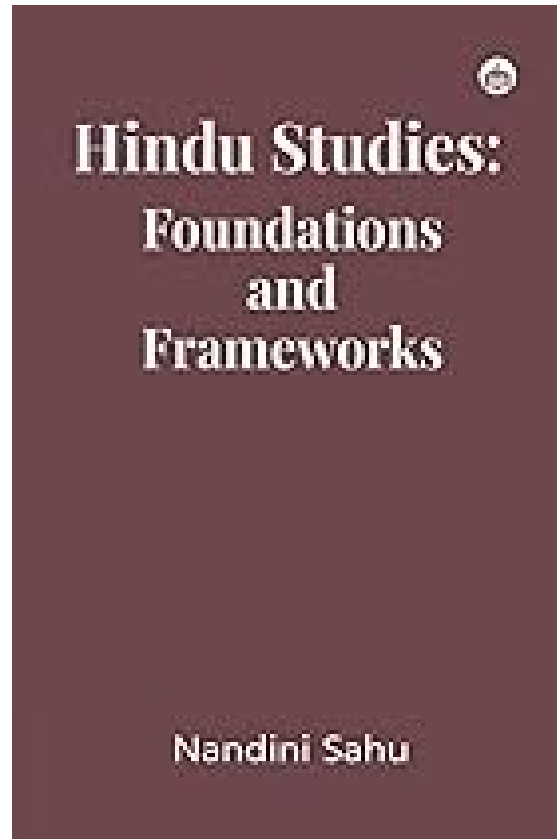
***Hindu Studies: Foundations and Frameworks* by Prof. Nandini Sahu, New Delhi:
Authorspress, ISBN: 978-93-6095-358-4, 2024, Price- 1200/- Pages-243.**

Reviewed By
Dr. Karunanithi Gopalakrishnan
Former Professor of Sociology
Tamil Nadu, India.
Email: karunanithg@gmail.com

Prof. Nandini Sahu's book on *Hindu Studies: Foundations and Frameworks* serves as a valuable guide for Indians and foreigners as well to know in detail about the foundations of Hindu Studies and Hinduism. At the outset, she points out that the Hindu Studies has become an academic discipline in the recent past. She conceives that it primarily deals with religious, philosophical, historical and socio-cultural aspects of Hinduism as well as Indian society. According to her, there is a large scope to explore the Hindu Studies through a multidisciplinary approach involving theology, philosophy, history, sociology, anthropology, literature and art history. She also emphasizes the significance of Indological approach based on the Hindu

sacred texts such as Vedas, Upanishads, Epics and Puranas to explore, expand and enrich the subject matter of Hindu Studies to enable the readers to understand more about the traditional Indian society and the flexibility and inclusivity of Hinduism. She rightly points out that the roots of Hinduism are deep sited in Sanatana Dharma, which means 'living order' or 'eternal duty'.

She has also followed the multidisciplinary approach to explain caste, class, gender and social dynamics besides dealing with contemporary issues such as the impact of colonialism, post-colonialism, modernization and globalization on Indian society and Hinduism. She addresses the traditional social system in terms of Varna and Jati (caste), Ashramas along with gender, family and sexuality from socio-cultural point of view. She also reflects on the ethical knowledge system with reference to the concepts of dharma, karma, moksha as shown in the



smritis, epics and philosophical schools and uses a comparative analysis to presents the interconnection among these concepts.

She attempts to interpret the Hindu religious scriptures through the method of textual analysis to bring out the relationship between individual self and ultimate reality. Likewise, she elucidates the different dimensions of Indian society through historical method besides highlighting the similarities in the doctrines of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism by making use of comparative method.

Her attempt to present the Hindu Studies from those perspectives will indeed help Indians and outsiders to understand the antiquity and glory of Indian society in terms of its culture, sectarianism in Hinduism, regionalism, lingualism, caste system and the like. She also deals with different dimensions of Hinduism including rituals and practices as presented in Upanishads and in the works of ancient scholars. She contemplates different elements of the Hindu artistic expressions including symbols and motifs in visual and performing arts besides presenting temple architecture with reference to its styles, development and variations in different regions. She also explains the role of dance, music and drama in Hindu religion along with aesthetic dimensions of Hinduism through Rasa theory and its application.

Finally, she explores the emerging paradigms in response to global, technological and interdisciplinary challenges. She highlights the impact of global diaspora and transnationalism on the emerging research paradigms in the Hindu Studies, particularly with respect to identity formation and religious practice. She attempts to explain future challenges in addressing caste, class, and gender disparities in the Hindu Studies.

Importantly she raises some potential questions related to the Hindu Studies and Hinduism. How can scholars develop more inclusive research framework to study the Hindu Studies? What role do indigenous knowledge systems and non-Western epistemologists play in shaping new directions for the Hindu Studies, particularly in deconstructing Oriental frameworks? How do the intersections of Hindu Studies with contemporary global issues such as climate change, human rights, and social justice create new opportunities for critical scholarship? How can feminist, Dalit and subaltern perspectives further shape the future of Hindu Studies, and what gaps remain in these critical areas of inquiry? What are the potential risks of politicization and religious nationalism influencing future academic work on Hinduism, and how can scholars navigate these challenges to maintain intellectual rigor and objectivity? The emerging scholars in contemporary time have to address these questions to find out ways and means to overcome those risk factors confronting the Hindu Studies and Hinduism.

The overall discussions and explanations of the author in the book clearly show her acquisition of sound knowledge in several aspects of the Hindu Studies and Hinduism from various Hindu religious texts. Her presentation of subject matters throughout is clear, sequential, logical and simple within a well devised framework. Undoubtedly, she has made a unique and valuable contribution to the existing knowledge of the Hindu Studies and Hinduism. In conclusion, her book is a very useful aid for academics, students, social workers and policy makers besides providing key insights into critical thinking of intellectuals in India and abroad.