Everyday Communalism
Riots in Contemporary Uttar Pradesh

by Sudha Pai and Sajjan Kumar

About the book
Examining the resurgence of communalism in Uttar Pradesh in the 2000s after a long interval, Everyday Communalism studies the Hindu–Muslim riots in Mau in 2005, Gorakhpur in 2007, and Muzaffarnagar in 2013. It pursues a much-needed analysis of new ways and means with which communalism is being manufactured by the Hindu right today. Using a model of institutionalized everyday communalism, it argues, based on extensive fieldwork, that rather than initiating major, state-wide riots as in the Ayodhya movement, the new-generation BJP leadership aims at creating and sustaining low-key communal tension. This everyday communalism, argue Pai and Kumar, is backed by frequent, small, low-intensity incidents out of petty everyday issues to establish a permanent anti-Muslim prejudice as the platform of contemporary Hindutva and thereby legitimize it in the eyes of the people.

Using this lens, the new ‘avatar’ of the BJP, its ideology, strategies, and impact on democracy in the current round of communalism in UP is critically assessed. The new communal strategy is examined against the backdrop of a fusion of rising cultural aspirations and deep economic anxieties in UP, where a deepening agrarian crisis, unemployment, poverty, and inequalities are creating fertile ground for a new kind of communal mobilization.