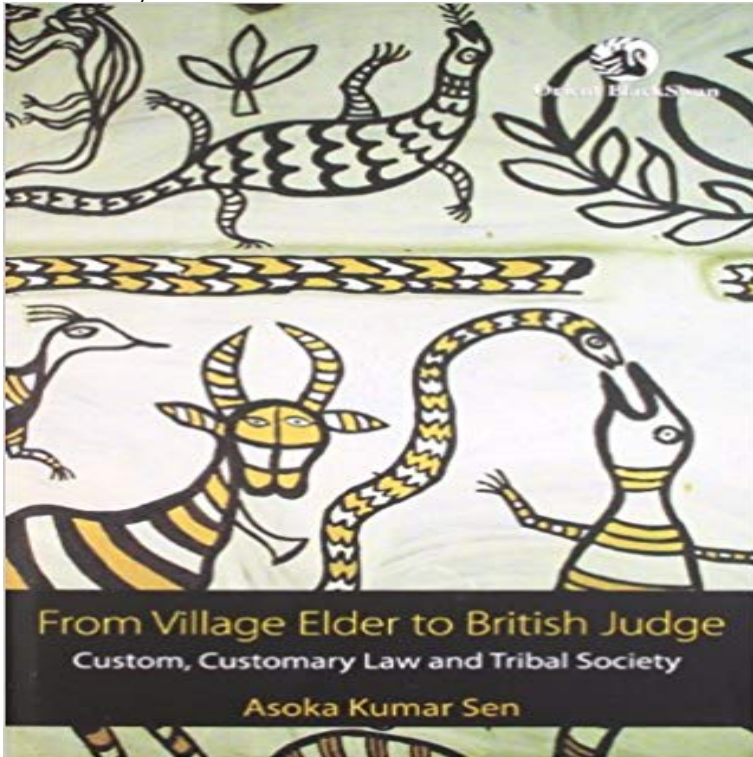


From Village Elder to British Judge: Custom, Customary Law and Tribal Society



From Village Elder to British Judge examines the definition and redefinition of custom/ law in the context of the adivasis of Jharkhand during pre-colonial and colonial times. As a significant historical account, this book engages with the contemporary assertion of indigenous identity that draws boundaries between the adivasi as a custom-governed and law-governed people. The work draws on previously untapped oral historical evidence from Village Papers, conventional archives and published sources, including details of court cases vividly depicting the adivasi ways of life in the past. Deploying jurisprudential, sociological and anthropological approaches, it offers a holistic account of social dynamics, contradictory colonial legal viewpoints, continuity and change in indigenous customs, the role of law and the court system in bringing about social change. The book presents its key arguments vis-a-vis recent advances in India as well as other Asian and African territories. While it contests the general notion that customary law, rather, the very concept of tribe, is a colonial creation, it also describes the nature of adivasi customs and their self-representation. This detailed yet critical study will be of interest to students and researchers of adivasi studies, colonial history, political science, law, sociology and anthropology as well as those engaged in social activism and developmental programmes.

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