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# Playing With Fire: Feminist Thought And Activism Through Seven Lives In India



## Synopsis

Seven voices contribute to this rare glimpse of the work being done on the front lines of the fight for social change in India. *Playing with Fire* is written in the collective voice of women employed by a large NGO as activists in their communities and is based on diaries, interviews, and conversations among them. Together their personal stories reveal larger themes and questions of sexism, casteism, and communalism, and a startling picture emerges of how NGOs both nourish and stifle local struggles for solidarity. The Hindi edition of the book, *Sangtin Yatra*, published in 2004, created controversy that resulted in backlash against the authors by their employer. The publication also drew support for the women and instigated a public conversation about the issues exposed in the book. Here, Richa Nagar addresses the dispute in the context of the politics of NGOs and feminist theory, articulating how development ideology employed by aid organizations serves to reinforce the domination of those it claims to help. The *Sangtin* Writers, Anupamlata, Ramsheela, Reshma Ansari, Richa Singh, Shashibala, Shashi Vaish, Surbala, and Vibha Bajpayee, are grassroots activists and members of a small organization called *Sangtin* in Uttar Pradesh, India. Richa Nagar teaches women's studies at the University of Minnesota.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read this book for a graduate school class and thought it was really amazing. First it is interesting to read about the differences between women living in India, a group of people that a western gaze tends to homogenize. It also shows the struggles that NGO's face, and the conflicts between the

bureaucrats of those who run the NGO's and the real women who work for them. I would highly recommend this book if you are interested in third world feminism, NGO's, and reading about real women's lives.

Anyone who is working or has the intent to work in international NGO and international development area should really read the book carefully and challenge themselves with the hard questions posed in this book.

This book offers a revealing look into the lives of women as they share their stories of tragedy and resilience. A must read for those applying critical race feminism to international settings.

If you like "Half the Sky," read this collection of ethnographies from Indian women working in villages. Very informative and thought-provoking.

I hate feminist theory, I am burning this book and all the others

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