



Moving with the Times: Gender, Status and Migration of Nurses in India

Sreelekha Nair

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This book is an attempt to penetrate the silence that surrounds the lives of nurses as migrant women. It offers a perceptive understanding of the trials faced specifically by women from the state of Kerala, in their personal and professional spheres, in the challenges posed to single women migrants as such, and the lower status ascribed to the job. In highlighting aspects of their lived experiences, it reveals how the identities of gender, class and ethnicity unmask the realities behind claims of egalitarianism and equal citizenship.

Nurses from Kerala form one of the largest groups of migrant women workers in the international service sector along with Filipinos and Sri Lankans. Comparatively better salaries, work opportunities and financial independence, along with a desire to travel across the world, are often the reasons behind these migrations. For many of these women, the professional choice of nursing is usually the first step towards migration, while finding employment in Delhi, the urban capital of India, is intended as a transition point before they migrate abroad, a trajectory which may remain unrealised.

In focusing on nurses who choose to work in Delhi, the author recounts how the patriarchy of the original place is recreated and relived in destination cities. In as much as traditional stigmatisation of nursing (as a 'dirty' profession), deeply entrenched gender prejudices, and status and role anxieties act as deterrents, these women remain undaunted in the face of adversities and treat their exposure to, and experience of, technology and nursing care in the bigger hospitals in Delhi as part of the training that is required to apply abroad.

Through extensive empirical research, case studies and personal interviews, *Moving with the Times* illustrates nurses' lives in Delhi, providing an account of the dynamics ? between traditional patriarchy, norms and associated identities, low professional status and marginality coupled at once with the sense of personal freedom, a new career and space ? that migration compels these women to negotiate.

This book will appeal to scholars of sociology, gender and women's studies, nursing and healthcare, and those interested in migration and identities.

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