

# **GLOBALISING MIGRANTS: A CASE STUDY OF INDIANS IN CAMBODIA**

by

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# CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**GLOBALISING MIGRANTS: A CASE STUDY OF INDIANS IN CAMBODIA**” is being submitted by **ISHITA SHRUTI** to the **Department of Humanities and Social Science, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi** for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**. This thesis is a record of bona-fide work carried out by her under my guidance and supervision. In my opinion the thesis has reached the standards fulfilling the requirements for submission relating to the degree.

The results contained in this thesis have not been submitted to any other University/Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis is a sociological study of processes, practices and experiences of migration of Indians to Cambodia through the analytical prisms of class, family/household, gender and agency. This ethnographic study explores various aspects of migrants' lives in Cambodia such as their decision to migrate and return, social and status mobility, temporariness, relationship with the host society, reproduction of homeland practices, and social networks. The thesis is a "destination" based study for which Indian migrants were studied in Cambodia during 2008 and 2009. Indian migrants to Cambodia can be divided into two distinct groups on the basis of their place of origin in India: rural migrants from Gorakhpur in Eastern Uttar Pradesh who come through a process of chain migration and urban professional migrants who reach Cambodia through job networks. The distinctiveness of the two groups is largely due to their social location prior to migration but it is shown that this distinction remains intact through the processes of migration and mobility. The thesis demonstrates the contextuality of migration experiences and practices— prior location, socio-demographic regularities, success of migration and access to various forms of capital are factors that contribute to multiple experiences of migration. As migration is a 'gendered reality', the thesis also examines the migration experiences of women – both those left behind and those who accompany families or migrate on their own.

The thesis demonstrates that it is the desire for upward social mobility that motivates the migration of both groups; however, the meaning of such mobility is starkly different for each group. While the Professionals represent a 'modern' globalizing face of migration as they pursue individual career goals and accommodate families split across continents with each member pursuing his/her goals, the group designated as the MNS (mosquito net sellers) perceive their mobility in the context of their village and local society and remain tied to

kinship, caste and family. They too have split families as their wives or children do not accompany them to Cambodia but the implications in their case are very different. The lived experiences and practices of the two groups of migrants are seen as being shaped by the desire to return home (the MNS) or to move to more favoured locations (The Professionals). The thesis presents a comparative analysis of migration trajectories and experiences of these two groups with the goal of adding to a more nuanced understanding of contemporary international migration.

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