



Globalization and Transnational Surrogacy in India: Outsourcing Life

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From computer support and hotel reservations to laboratory results and radiographic interpretations, it seems everything can be 'outsourced' in our globalized world. One would not think so with parenthood, however, especially motherhood, as it is a fundamental activity humans have historically preserved as personal and private. In our modern age, however, the advent and accessibility of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) and the ease with which they have traversed global borders, has fundamentally altered the meaning of childbearing and parenting.

In the twenty-first century, parenthood is no longer achieved only through gestation, adoption, or traditional surrogacy, but also via assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs), where science and technology play lead roles. Furthermore, in a globalized world economy, where the movement and transfer of people and commodities are increasing to serve the interests of capitalism, gamete donation and surrogate birth can traverse innumerable geographic, socio-economic, racialized, and political borderlands. Thus, reproduction itself can be outsourced.

This edited volume explores one specific aspect of the new assisted reproductive technologies: gestational surrogacy and how its practice is changing the traditional concept of parenthood across the globe. The phenomenon of transnational surrogacy has given rise to a thriving international industry where money is being 'legally' exchanged for babies and 'reproductive labor' has taken on a lucrative commercial tone. Yet, law, research, and activism are barely aware of this experience and are still playing catch-up with rapidly changing on-the-ground realities. This interdisciplinary collection of essays assuages the dearth of knowledge and addresses significant issues in transnational commercial gestational surrogacy as it takes shape in a peculiar relation between the West (primarily the United States) and India.

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Editorial Review

Review

While the number of scholarly works on surrogacy in India [has] increased in recent years, the profound complexities and contradictions embedded in transnational surrogacy remain largely understudied. *Globalization and Transnational Surrogacy in India* fills this lacuna by illuminating the lives of Indian surrogates, their foreign clients, and other stakeholders. Editors Sayantani Das Gupta and Shamita Das Dasgupta bring together authors from wide-ranging fields to examine the socio-cultural, ethical, and legal implications of commercial gestational surrogacy in India. In so doing, this volume expertly deals with the intricacies of the phenomenon, engaging with critical questions of class, power, agency, violence, and work . . . [T]his book represents critical reading for scholars interested not only in transnational surrogacy, but also in broader questions related to labour and gender in transnational contexts. The volume is accessible and effective for people seeking a starting point for research on transnational surrogacy, while still providing the nuance and complexity specialists require. *Globalization and Transnational Surrogacy in India* should be essential reading for activists and policy-makers interested in the contemporary realities of, and future possibilities for, women who work as surrogates in India. (*South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*)

This edited collection is an important effort by the authors to address the complex issues that surround transnational, commercial surrogacy, with particular focus on the relationship between India and the West. . . . The value of *Globalization and Transnational Surrogacy in India* lies in the depth of those 11 case studies. . . . [This book] would make a great contribution to courses in sociology, anthropology, gender studies, international policy, reproductive health, and more. (*Gender & Society*)

There are so many disturbing aspects to transnational surrogacy in India. In addition to reprising some of the better-known concerns, such as inequities; the commodification of women, babies, and body bits; and the limits of nation-state governance in a globalized world, this volume also gives voice to the different players' understandings glimpsed through ethnographies and analyses of cyber-chat, and gives shape to less-familiar aspects of each of the participant's situations. *Globalization and Transnational Surrogacy in India: Outsourcing Life* helps us traverse this tough terrain. -Wendy Chavkin, Columbia University (Wendy Chavkin, Columbia University)

About the Author

Syantani DasGupta is assistant clinical professor of pediatrics and a core faculty member of the Program in Narrative Medicine at Columbia University.

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