



Street Corner Secrets: Sex, Work, and Migration in the City of Mumbai (Next Wave: New Directions in Women's Studies)

Svati P. Shah

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Street Corner Secrets challenges widespread notions of sex work in India by examining solicitation in three spaces within the city of Mumbai that are seldom placed within the same analytic frame—brothels, streets, and public day-wage labor markets (*nakas*), where sexual commerce may be solicited discretely alongside other income-generating activities. Focusing on women who migrated to Mumbai from rural, economically underdeveloped areas within India, Svati P. Shah argues that selling sexual services is one of a number of ways women working as laborers may earn a living, demonstrating that sex work, like day labor, is a part of India's vast informal economy. Here, various means of earning—legitimized or stigmatized, legal or illegal—overlap or exist in close proximity to one another, shaping a narrow field of livelihood options that women navigate daily. In the course of this rich ethnography, Shah discusses policing practices, migrants' access to housing and water, the idea of public space, critiques of states and citizenship, and the discursive location of violence within debates on sexual commerce. Throughout, the book analyzes the epistemology of prostitution, and the silences and secrets that constitute the discourse of sexual commerce on Mumbai's streets.

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