



In Pursuit of the Good Life: Aspiration and Suicide in Globalizing South India

Jocelyn Lim Chua

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Once celebrated as a model development for its progressive social indicators, the southern Indian state of Kerala has earned the new distinction as the nation's suicide capital, with suicide rates soaring to triple the national average since 1990. Rather than an aberration on the path to development and modernity, Keralites understand this crisis to be the bitter fruit borne of these historical struggles and the aspirational dilemmas they have produced in everyday life. Suicide, therefore, offers a powerful lens onto the experiential and affective dimensions of development and global change in the postcolonial world.

In the long shadow of fear and uncertainty that suicide casts in Kerala, living acquires new meaning and contours. In this powerful ethnography, Jocelyn Chua draws on years of fieldwork to broaden the field of vision beyond suicide as the termination of life, considering how suicide generates new ways of living in these anxious times.

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