



Birth in the Age of AIDS: Women, Reproduction, and HIV/AIDS in India

Cecilia Van Hollen

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Birth in the Age of AIDS is a vivid and poignant portrayal of the experiences of HIV-positive women in India during pregnancy, birth, and motherhood at the beginning of the 21st century. The government of India, together with global health organizations, established an important public health initiative to prevent HIV transmission from mother to child. While this program, which targets poor women attending public maternity hospitals, has improved health outcomes for infants, it has resulted in sometimes devastatingly negative consequences for poor, young mothers because these women are being tested for HIV in far greater numbers than their male spouses and are often blamed for bringing this highly stigmatized disease into the family.

Based on research conducted by the author in India, this book chronicles the experiences of women from the point of their decisions about whether to accept HIV testing, through their decisions about whether or not to continue with the birth if they test HIV-positive, their birthing experiences in hospitals, decisions and practices surrounding breast-feeding vs. bottle-feeding, and their hopes and fears for the future of their children.

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