

Abstract

This thesis examines the stages of the migratory process and types of migration to Portuguese territory involving the Gujarati Indian population and stresses the emergence of a diasporic consciousness. The latter was combined with the establishment of transnational networks that create a dense structure of instrumental contacts among the members of this population.

Over time, the migrating Indians developed a form of social integration in the host society, while, nevertheless, maintaining a cultural self-centredness and borders on their identity, like ethnic niches, which nowadays interconnect the various Indian *communities* throughout the world in extensive networks.

This work focus the hindu women in both structural and agency based perspectives, as they are agents of cultural integration, and their exercise of power could be examined in a inter-generational and inter community aspect . In Portugal the feminine hindu agency becomes a strategic construction of the popular Hinduism assumed by the oldest women. These women, the Guardians of the Tradition, act in several social areas and contexts, participating in the decision maker process, involving social cohesion of the community, reshaping the ethnic border. They also take part in patrilinear kinship affairs, marriage contract, family business, throughout informal exercise of power. Younger women, especially luso-indian promote manifold sociability's and rise conscience their multiple identities. In both cases emerge deviance processes to normative rules witch marginalize some women, but these phenomenon endows them with a counter-power that transforms them in disruptive and innovative actors of feminism behaviours.

Key Words: Migration, Hinduism, Gender, Power, Integration