

Book Review-3

Madhuri Sharma: *Indigenous and Western Medicine in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2012) XIV+174 pp

The authors especially examine in this book are the social history of medicine, reflecting the multiplicity and complexity of social interaction and encounter between indigenous and western medicine by the analysis of Indian allopathic and indigenous medicine practitioners struggle with demarcations. This book has depicted the history of medicine in the colonial period through the study of Banaras. Doctor Madhuri Sharma is an outstanding scholar of changing perceptions of health and medicine. In *Indigenous and Western Medicine in Colonial India*, she has highlighted the social history of medicine and reflects the complexity of social interaction between indigenous and western medicine in colonial India. This book also generated interest in modern medical equipment such as the stethoscope and the thermometer, and how these were used to reinforce the norms of social hierarchy and the purdah system. Many social aspects such as gender, class and racial discrimination have been in her research. The book's introduction is followed by four well-organized interconnected chapters and a remarkable conclusion.

In her first Chapter, Dr. Sharma has tried to assess the development of the health and healing practice of the Banaras and the system of patronization which influenced their developments. She has highlighted the medical knowledge of Banaras and its prominent traditions was Ayurveda i.e father of Indian medical science, and various classical skills and knowledge, she has mentioned. Banaras evolved was the centre point of Unani system of medicine with the rise of Muslim power and find out the nineteenth centuries' scenario as well as the history of Allopathic medicine by the introduction of colonial rule along with the Christian missionaries, she has illustrated. Dr. Sharma has analyzed the various institution of medicinal practices of the British era of Banaras was marginalizing by western medicine (allopathic). She has also examined the different reasons for the particular kind of medical practices patronized by the people. She has mentioned the historical significance of Banaras pilgrim, which was the major reason for the spread of diseases among the peoples. She has illustrated the influences of municipalities, social and professional patrons since 1830. However, Dr. Sharma did not keep attention to the herbal uses.

Dr. Sharma in her second chapter of *Indigenous and Western Medicine in Colonial India* has mentioned the education's impact on the changing perception

of health and medicine, as a point of entry knowledge to understand through education. She has highlighted the social discrimination in the society, poverty and rich could treat differently. In her survey find out the individual opinion, she has mentioned in this chapter. Contribution of the health officers i.e. doctor in the Indian allopathic sanitation, she has illustrated. The social work of Shri Pandit Gurumukh Rai and Raisahab Vyas Tansukh and more Vaidya of the Banaras on cause and casualty of smallpox, she has mentioned. Dr. Sharma has pointed to the Intervention in civic and municipal life, new medical technologies to improvement in sanitation, body as a site of pleasure and perception like brahmacharya, marriage and sexual pleasure. Medicine and social welfare's many warnings poetry against the drug-addicted people, she has written.

The third chapter of the '*Indigenous and Western Medicine in Colonial India*' is more interesting. Here, Dr. Sharma has discussed the professionalization of medicine: aspiration and conflict. An elaborate description on the Vaidya, Kabiraj, both reluctant admission of the current pre-eminence enjoyed by western medicine for all its devilish association, and an assertion that the source of all its inspiration laid in the healing tradition of India is a unique one in terms of its coverage. This chapter has nicely presented the Ayurveda refurbishing status and credentials of indigenous practitioners in Banaras. Moreover, Dr. Sharma has highlighted the process of discussion of the medical God (Dhanvantari), modernization of Ayurveda, mediation with the government of the Banaras.

On the other hand, the fourth chapter of the '*Indigenous and Western Medicine in Colonial India*' has critically examined the entrepreneurship in medicine and drug manufacturing in Banaras, and print media's concerning the information of health, hygiene and medicine. According to Dr. Sharma: this chapter is distinct into two halves, the first half deals with the complexity and multiplicity of medical entrepreneurship and the second half show the competitive edge among the Indians and Europeans to capture the market. Here, she has highlighted the medical consumer: use of advertisement is capitalism and social communication.

In my personal opinion, '*Indigenous and Western Medicine in Colonial India*' is a brave attempt of Dr. Madhuri Sharma to present a dimension on traditional and modern medicines in the Banaras area. Its approach is free from biases of any particular discipline. It can be accepted as a good work of anthropology, sociology, history, politics, cultural studies, geography and religious studies. Upcoming researchers will be highly benefited by reading this book as well as the sources it has used. I hope, the readers would enjoy *Indigenous and Western Medicine in Colonial India*.

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