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'Trans-Local and Trans-National Medical Practices in Colonial South Asia'

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Abstract: Healing and health care remain one of the essential structural aspects of welfare in the human societies. The practices of healing and psycho-physiological health care and cure are part of the social upbringing in the family and community practices in the wider pretexts. The community health care on various instances is marked by what is preached and practiced under the religious-cultural environment of a society. Similarly, what nature endows to the society through its territorial networks become the foundational and fundamental knowledge systems of health and wellness. The pre-colonial South Asian society largely constituted of similar kind of the religious-cultural plurality of healing and health care. These practices traversed in their healing knowledge through Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and native practices which were imparted through medication and faith healing. These practices served their own localities and eventually broadened themselves with the formation of various political entities and their cultural spread. At the outset of the 19th century colonial era, another important structural development in the health care system was that of the inclusion of organised 'Public Health' system both in the British Empire in India and those of the other princely and political entities which were working in accordance to the changing socio-political orders globally. With the coming of the concept of organised public health care systems in the colonial era co-existence of these localised socio-behavioural patterns of health care and organised public health systems brought both friction and exchange in the medical practices. Healing and health care were now exchangeable terms in the societies of the colonial South Asia.

Keywords: Healing, Medicine, South Asia, Trans-local, Trans-national
