

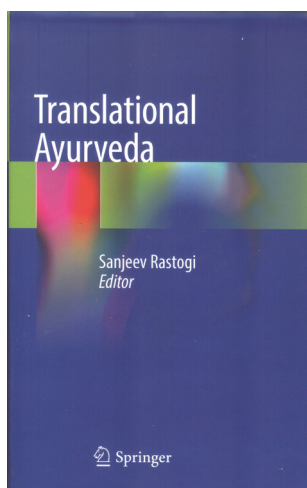
BOOK REVIEWS

competing objective of ‘sustainable recovery’? What are the kinds of local capacities that will be required before a disaster, in order to effectively implement the subsidiarity principle in the delivery of post-disaster relief and recovery programmes?

These are big questions. Perhaps the editor and her colleagues could grapple with these issues in a follow-up volume to this insightful book.

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Translational Ayurveda. Sanjeev Rastogi (ed.). Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore. 2019. xv + 212 pages. Price: 111,99€.

Ayurveda, the traditional Indian system of healthcare, has seen many ups and downs with respect to its education, practice and research in history. Several studies have shown a generally declining quality of Ayurveda education concerning clinical competencies among its graduates. This is primarily because the theories and principles documented in classical textbooks of Ayurveda have not yet been properly rendered into a directly applicable format. Physicians produced out of such a system often tend not to practice Ayurveda the way it should be practiced, for, they do not see practical

applicability in these theories taught to them in colleges. Similar is the case with research: there have been multiple approaches of investigating Ayurveda. While initial efforts were to identify, isolate and look at pharmacological activities of various molecules present in the medicinal plants under various laboratory settings, early clinical studies aimed at evaluating the effects of one formulation in a given clinical condition. However, of late, these approaches are being seen as reductionist and newer approaches that aim at evaluating the effects of polyherbal formulations on the biological systems have seen an upward trend. Similarly, evaluating the complex clinical interventions through ‘whole system’ approach are also being tried.

In this context, the book ‘Translational Ayurveda’ assumes importance as it keenly observes, records and analyses these trends. The book is not prescriptive in its nature, but as stated by the editor, seeks to show ‘the existing gaps between classical and contemporary Ayurvedic health-care wisdom and the realistic health-care needs of the people’. Authored by sixteen established authors and edited by Prof. Sanjeev Rastogi, the book tries to look at the contributions of different approaches to decrease human suffering and suggests ways forward.

The book consists of twelve chapters authored by various experts in the fields of Ayurveda education, integrative practice, clinical research, laboratory research and even administration. The book is divided into two parts: ‘Fundamentals and Modalities’ and ‘Clinical Practice’.

The first chapter, authored by Sanjeev Rastogi and Francesco Chiappelli, explores the translational potentials of Ayurveda and summarizes the past and the current trends of research in this direction – both fundamental and applied. It argues that the research so far has generally not been of much help to the suffering humanity as it has not been patient-centric. A clearly focused outcome-based research is the need of the hour – is the core argument the authors put forth.

The second chapter authored by R. H. Singh explores the translational studies specific to fundamental research. The basic Ayurveda principles such as *Tridosha*, *Agni*, *Prakriti*, *Kriya-kala* and others have been explained along with their relevance in current practice. He argues

that the current methods of pure science may not be ideal to explore Ayurveda. A few examples of model translational studies have also been given to show how certain basic principles of Ayurveda have been validated through scientific methods.

While the third chapter places the concept of *Prakriti* (Ayurveda constitution) in the context of personalized medicine and explains the approach of Ayurgenomics with the help of recent studies, the fourth chapter, authored by Chandra Kant Katiyar, addresses the traditional pharmaceutical processes and their uniqueness in the sphere of drug delivery systems. The exclusivity and scientific basis of different classical dosage forms are explained with simple examples that anyone can understand. Interestingly, he argues that commercialization of Ayurvedic medicines has added value to the pharmaceutical products by adopting modern dosage forms, manufacturing technologies, quality control and safety and efficacy evaluation.

The fifth chapter gives a comprehensive description of classical methods and parameters of understanding a drug and its clinical effect. While describing the concepts such as *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya* and *Vipaka*, the author cites some recent intriguing validation studies in relation to collection practices of different herbs, practices of co-prescription (*Anupana*), effects of diurnal variations and lunar cycles.

In the sixth chapter, authors explore the question of *Rasayana* therapy and its clinical applicability and insist on rational understanding of this therapy for the benefit of masses. While recounting recent studies on *Amalaki Rasayana* and *Rasa Sindura* in different experimental models, the authors do not forget to record the gaps existing in the current understandings of *Rasayana* therapy and its effects. The rational protocols for its use including the dose and duration determination, standardization, indications for use in healthy and sick population – all need clear evidences – is what the authors argue.

The second part of the book begins with a chapter on cancer. Authors try reinterpreting cancer biology in terms of Ayurveda theories and pose some important questions pertaining to what should be the next steps in understanding this disease. The eighth chapter is on diabetes. The chapter presents a brief review of

major research activities that have gone into this area. The author proposes some biomarkers and tools for early diagnosis of the disease based on the Ayurveda explanations.

The ninth chapter happens to be one of the most insightful and well written chapters of the book, authored by a group of experts led by S. R. Narahari, a biomedical dermatologist. It is important to recognize the fact that his group has accumulated vast experiences of managing certain skin conditions through integrative Ayurveda interventions over the past decade. The strategy that has been reported in this chapter is of using 'full treatment protocols'. The experiences of a team of multisystem medical doctors, shared in this chapter by the authors, in developing a patient-centric module for integrative treatment protocol can certainly guide future efforts in this area. Treatment protocol developed by this team for lymphedema has been explained in detail in this chapter. The tenth chapter looks at sleep medicine and explores the possibility of integrating Ayurveda interventions with contemporary clinical practice in the domain of sleep disorders.

The eleventh chapter authored by Christian Sumith Kessler happens to be an exciting narration of Ayurveda experiences from a western point of view and describes the emerging needs of translating Ayurveda into western settings. He makes some very interesting observations on two kinds of approaches that the practitioners have opted for, in India and in the West, towards the practice of Ayurveda. He says, Ayurveda therapy in the West is characterized by a multimodality whole systems approach of practice which is in striking contrast to mainstream Ayurveda approaches in India, which predominantly focus on polyherbal treatments. This necessitates, he argues, to adopt 'whole systems research' approach along with 'mixed methods' approach to evaluate clinical Ayurveda practice in western countries.

'Dreaming of Health for All in an Unequal World: Finding a Fit for Traditional Health Care Exemplified Through Ayurveda' is how the last chapter of the book is titled. Authored by Sanjeev Rastogi and Arindam Bhattacharya, it suggests the areas of Ayurveda that may be worth incorporating into public health policies. This suggestion is based on the argument that healthcare needs are different in different perspectives, and a

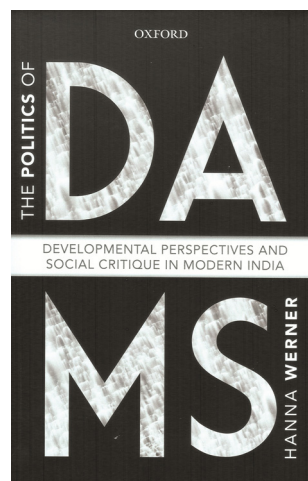
strategy to address these varied needs is to be derived contextual to the regional culture, beliefs, and resources.

Neat drawings, tables and flow charts coupled with a foreword written by Prof. M. S. Valiathan add value to the volume. It is quite natural to expect some minor incongruencies and repetitions in a book of this nature, where chapters are written by different groups of authors. This has also led to a difference in tones of different chapters. For instance, the bold and critical statements that appear in the preface, somehow are not seen in most of the other chapters.

To conclude, the biggest hurdle in proposing Ayurveda as a dependable health care providing system is a gap between the knowledge which is expounded in its classical texts and an ability of its stakeholders to translate this into a real-time situation. This book looks at this gap seriously and tries to seek answers to fill it with newer approaches.

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The Politics of Dams: Developmental Perspectives and Social Critique in Modern India. Hanna Werner, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 110 001. 2015. xvii + 256 pages. Price: Rs 895.

Big dams implemented in India for irrigation, power, water supply, etc. were

often considered as effective symbols of economic development during the twentieth century. However, this endeavour is often associated with the scant regard for environmental and social consequences – especially for the populations that are displaced due to their homelands being flooded. Implementing large-scale river valley projects through the construction of dams is still high on the State's agenda and constitutes a symbol of certain kind of development that seems to have lost much of the appeal compared to the boom in large projects in the early days after independence.

Dams and other structures built recently are part of the policies that determine how water bodies are managed or mismanaged. The well-being and health of Indians depend upon the management of physical, chemical and biological integrity of aquatic ecosystems. Excellent accounts have been written on the history of dams as 'symbols of modernity'; several others analyse the social and ecological impacts of specific projects that construct dams. In this context, the publication '*The Politics of Dams: Development Perspectives and Social Critique in Modern India*' attempts to bring both lines of the argument together and contribute to the theory of social critique, with three objectives. The first objective is to show continuities and discontinuities between the colonial and the post-colonial state with regard to its developmental aims and strategies, exemplified in the construction of large-scale projects. The second objective is based on the assumption that the continuity of the post-colonial developmental imperatives have not experienced a major paradigm shift yet. The third objective is to analyse the ambivalent role critique of large dams has played historically. Resistance is determined by the limits of a normative discursive framework that derives its legitimacy from positivist developmental politics.

The publication under review is concerned with the construction of large dams in the context of post-independence developmental politics in India. It deals with the 'ideological designs' that have shaped the implementation of dams in India and juxtaposes with alternative visions and their political opposition. Efforts by global policymakers in recent times are towards the alternate sustainable management approaches, including the removal of dams to the simulation of