

ABSTRACT

Diffusion and adjustment of Homeopathy in India: Comparative anthropology of the Belgian and Indian situations

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Among the wide range of alternative medicines practised in the West, homeopathy has a special place: it is the oldest and the most consumed. The success of homeopathic medicine can be explained by its ability to respond to the aspirations of the Western population. This is shown by some historians of science and medicine, who have studied the interpenetration of homeopathy with critical intellectual movements that wanted to change the scientific vision of the world, while at the same time making peace between science and society. But this success also indicates the emergence of a particular model of health that appears in very different cultural contexts. Today, in fact, different forms of homeopathic medicines lead a social life: they are present in Africa, in America and in some parts of Asia, such as India. It is advisable to consider these adaptations of homeopathy as different “responses” to the therapeutic, clinical and politico-cultural contexts.

My research focuses on the social and cultural processes of the diffusion of homeopathic medicine in non-Western societies, especially in India. The objectives of the research are twofold: first, to comparatively explore the ways of this spread in the Belgian and Indian situations and, second, to evaluate the impact of the presence of homeopathic medicine on the local healing activities, with special attention to the relationships between patients and therapists (healers and physicians).