

ABSTRACT

Domestic healing among the women of Tamil Nadu

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In the South Indian State of Tamil Nadu, increasing attention is being given to the problem of rural health, particularly for the women (and children) who are generally considered as “backward” and who suffer great social inequalities in many aspects of their life. However, these women have specific position and skills with respect to health and healing (herbal medications, specific food, etc.) in their household. If a health policy meant for the woman is to be formulated, it is thus important to study domestic healing because it is generally the first healing resource people would use.

Unfortunately, limited work has been done on domestic healing, and even less on the interaction between domestic healing. Data on health, the concept of disease and the nature of treatment are rather scanty in this field. Specific studies are practically non-existent. In this context, such issues need to be documented and studied critically. This research will therefore explore the representation of disease and treatment practices among women, the status and social role of the woman as a healer in the community and the interaction between domestic healing and traditional systems of medicine in the region.