

1. "The Business of Drugs", by Mary H. Cooper, Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd. (Bombay), Rs. 50/- (1993).
2. "No Ugly Scars: An Autobiography of a Surgeon", by Dr. B. Dayananda Rao, Booklinks Corporation (Hyderabad), Rs. 100/- (1993).
3. "People's Health in People's Hands", by Dr. N.H. Antia and Kavita Bhatia, The Foundation for Research in Community Health (Bombay), price not mentioned, (1993).
4. "The Ills and Pills", by Clementeswar, Lily Publications (Pondicherry), Rs.30/- (1993).
5. "A Textbook of Parasitology", by S.S.Kelkar and Rohini S. Kelkar, Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd. (Bombay), Rs. 65/- (1993).
6. "Elementary Pharmacology and Toxicology", by R.D. Budhiraja, Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd. (Bombay), Rs. 65/- (1993).
7. "Manual of Practical Pharmacy", by R.D. Budhiraja, Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd. (Bombay), Rs.45/- (1993).
8. "Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali", by B.K.S. Iyengar, Indus, Rs. 100/- (1993).

"The Business of Drugs", Mary H. Cooper.

One of the most intractable problems faced by the world is the alarming increase in the incidence of drug abuse. What was previously considered a problem only for the industrialized West, has now assumed frightening proportions in many Third World countries including India. This book is a comprehensive documentation of the international economics of drugs. Starting with the forces involved in the cultivation of drugs in the various regions of the globe (from Andean highlands to Afghanistan), it traces the route that is taken till they are sold in the United States.

The book is fairly thorough in its discussion of the various aspects of the drug economy. Interestingly, there is also a discussion of the demand-side of the economic equation. The effects of this menace on the American society and various policy options are also discussed. However, one would have liked more discussion on the growth of this phenomenon in the various developing countries, their options, the connection with the rise in AIDS incidence etc. Nevertheless, it is an interesting and useful book to understand this modern day scourge.

©"No Ugly Scars: An Autobiography of a Surgeon", Dr. B. Dayananda Rao.©

This book is the life story of an eminent neuro-surgeon from Hyderabad, Dr. B.D. Rao. It details his career from a Public Health Administrator in a mofussil town to his principalship of Osmania Medical College. Written in a very personal style, it offers many insights into the evolution of our health system from Independence to date. The author undoubtedly comes across as a dedicated medical professional who at all stages of his career, battled not only the abysmally low level of funding allocated for public health but also managed successfully to work his way through the tortuous red tape involved.©

His observations and analysis of what is wrong with our public health system, our medical education and the medical profession in general are very sensitive and reflect his long experience. Though autobiographies are meant to be personal reflections, the style of the book is somewhat annoying, with too many personal incidents thrown in which detract from its flavor. ©

"People's Health in People's Hands: A model for Panchayati Raj", Ed. by Dr. N.H. Antia and Kavita Bhatia.©

In our country, with one of the highest morbidity rates, it seems absurd that most of the resources for health are spent not on improving and expanding the public health system and providing trained health workers for the majority of our population, but rather on developing super specialty hospitals and churning out more doctors than nurses. The problem is clearly one of over centralization of political and economic power in the cities which is responsible for these skewed decisions. "People's health in people's hands" is an edited collection of some twenty articles on this theme. Written by a variety of authors from many fields like medicine, sociology and political science, the book is very comprehensive in its discussion of the various aspects of managing a more decentralized and hence responsive health care system. ©

The articles cover a whole range from being theoretical like Rajni Kothari's 'Perspectives on decentralization', to ones which relate the concrete experiences of NGO's working in the field of community health, like the article by the SEWA rural team on 'Voluntary effort in Community health'. On the whole, this is a very timely and useful volume which will be a welcome addition to the small, but growing literature on both decentralization and community health. ©

"The Ills and Pills", by Clementeswar.

Contrary to what the title of the book suggests, this book is not about medicines and diseases. It is rather a collection of 9 essays on the various maladies plaguing society. These ailments range from illiteracy to immorality, from ill habits to intolerance (yes, curiously, all the ills begin with the letter I!).©

The author writes about these problems faced by our society in a somewhat moralistic way which at times is annoying. He laments the loss of traditional morality without critically examining the role it can play in the globalized MTV environment. The style is reminiscent of school essays, full of quotations and anecdotes.

"A Textbook of Parasitology", by S.S.Kelkar and Rohini S. Kelkar.

The study of parasitology is an integral part of the medical curriculum. This is especially so in a country like ours, where despite many years of public health programs, parasitic diseases still are widely prevalent and are a major cause of morbidity. This book, as the name suggests is a textbook for medical students. The book covers most of the major parasitic diseases, from amoebiasis to Kala Azar. The symptoms and the epidemiology of the diseases, the life cycles of the organisms responsible for them and their treatment is discussed at great length. While the book may be of great use to medical students, for the lay reader, it has a limited appeal.

'Elementary Pharmacology and Toxicology', by R.D. Budhiraja.

This is a text book of pharmacology for pharmacy and nursing students. After a brief introduction to the general principles of pharmacology, it goes on to consider the various types of drugs in detail. The drugs are divided according to their effect on the various systems of the human body. The action of these drugs, their method of preparation, side effects and dosages are discussed at length. Once again, being a text book for students, it is not very accessible to the general reader, though there is a wealth of information here.

'Manual of Practical Pharmacy', by R.D. Budhiraja.

This manual is meant for medical students for them to gain information regarding the method of preparation of various formulations, dispensing and storage of drugs. It is written in an extremely pedagogical style with several exercises and may be of use for medical students.

'Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali', by B.K.S. Iyengar.

Sometime, between 500 and 200 B.C., Patanjali wrote his magnum opus, 'Yoga Sutras'. This collection of 196 aphorisms, touch upon all aspects of human existence; the physical, the mental and the spiritual.

B.K.S. Iyengar, the renowned teacher of Yoga, has translated and interpreted this great work which is a fascinating description of Yoga philosophy. A very well written and comprehensive introduction is followed by the main text which is divided into four parts or padas covering the philosophy of life. Contrary to common perception, Yoga is not merely a set of asanas but a holistic system which aims at mastering the mind and body, leading to the liberation of the soul. Lucidly written, with detailed comments, a comprehensive glossary and several appendices, this is a very useful volume for anyone interested in Indian philosophy.

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