

Medical Anthropological/Sociological Studies in Nepal

A Bibliography

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The trend of anthropological/sociological studies of health related issues in Nepal so far depicts that shamanism, medical pluralism, cultural model and schema, development discourse and health politics are some of the areas that have relatively been studied. At the same time there are some other areas such as, herbal medicine (Gartoula 1999), ayurvedic medicine (Maureen 1988, Cameron 1996), mental health (Kohort et al. 2005), pharmaceutical (Harper et al. 2011) and disabilities (Khanal 2007 and Dahal 2011) which have not been covered or studied adequately or only very few researches have been conducted.

Medical anthropological/sociological¹ studies have emerged in Nepal since 1960s (Hitchcock 1967). Inception of such work in the country is found not vary late, if we compare it to the development of medical anthropology in the global context. Western anthropologists have contributed in this field since mid 1960s. At that point, studies were carried out primarily by focusing on the shamanism, on health and culture of the society in general and on the socio-cultural and spiritual dimensions of health in particular. In those days, efforts were put to understand and analyze the shamanic practices among various castes and ethnic groups of Nepal (see Hitchcock et al. 1976; Hitchcock 1967; Hofer 1974; Paul 1974; Desjerlais 1989; Maskarinec 1995, 1998; Dietrich 1998; Miller 1997 and Ellen 1999).

Along with the studies on shamanism, some anthropologists have taken initiatives to study on the multiple therapeutic practices among the Nepali communities (see Maureen 1984; Ellen 1989; Acharya 1994; and Subedi 2003). Similarly anthropologists like Beine (2003) and Pigg (2001, 2002) have focused their studies on the peoples' perceptions on modern medicine and illness interpretations in pluralistic cultural settings. Following the shamanism and healing behaviors, HIV/AIDS have also become a trendy subject matter for the study in Nepal. Scholars like Beine and Pigg explore further on cultural model of HIV/AIDS and knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding HIV/AIDS. Likewise development discourse and health, health politics are the other areas where many foreign and native scholars have made significant contributions (see Justice 1986; Adams 1998; Subedi 2010 and Dahal 2012).

While developing a bibliography of medical anthropology/sociology in Nepal, we have employed several techniques to collect required information. We made personal request to the authors in order to send their contributions they have made so far in the related field. In addition to that personal contacts, we have searched in Google by using key words such as "Culture?" "Health?" "Illness?" "Nepal?" besides that, the references of the related contributions has also been taken into account. We have also taken the references/information form the digital archival sites like JSTOR and PROJECT MUSE for the study purpose.

¹ Medical anthropology/sociology was not developed as fully-fledged discipline until 1950s even in the world context. It was only towards 1970s the discipline was named (for more details see Saillant and Genest 2007).

All the collected contributions in this bibliography are organized under separate thematic headings such as shamanism, medical pluralism and others. The purposes of the categorizations are of simply two folds. The first purpose is to present the trend and coverage of medical anthropological/sociological works in Nepal from inception to the recent days, while the second is to facilitate the readers to find the list of references in precise themes at a quick glance. The categorized contributions include the study of the texts, abstracts; preface of the book, introduction chapter of books, book reviews and in most of the cases the title of the articles and chapter of edited volumes.

Although, there are a number of studies conducted by different scholars locating themselves in the wider dimensions with a focus on various aspects of culture, health, and society at different levels, a number of aspects of the health care system to be studied. Although it is noteworthy to mention here that the studies within this domain have been dominated by anthropological perspective as the studies within sociological perspective are scant.

This bibliography attempts to include available medical anthropological/sociological studies conducted by both foreign and native scholars in Nepal. Hence, it gives a general overview of the contributions that have been made on diverse themes such as health care practices, healing rites/rituals and broadly cultures/societies of Nepal. It also shows the development trend of Nepali medical anthropological/sociological research. Therefore, this bibliography not only provides references on the existing medical anthropological/sociological literature but also throws light on existing research gaps in this field.

The bibliography may be useful for the students of medical science, public health, medical anthropology/sociology, health researchers and others who are interested in this particular realm in general. However, it cannot be claimed to be a comprehensive or a complete inventory of medical anthropological/sociological literature. There could be some works left or missed in this study although, they are not intentionally excluded.

Finally we appreciate your comments, feedbacks and suggestions. If you have any suggestion you can reach us at: ashwinchand103@yahoo.com or upretydevendra@gmail.com.

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