

Medicalization of Pregnancy and Childbirth in Sri Lanka

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Whether the pregnancy and childbirth is a normal event or only a biomedical condition, is yet to be resolved with clear-cut definitions. In the context of Sri Lanka, it had been totally managed by the lay people till the ultra modern science and technology assumed control. Till the gradual shifting of the deal to the hands of experts took place, the event of pregnancy and childbirth was engulfed by a whole network of relations, values, local beliefs and knowledge system. The magnanimity of the expert is such that by now it has become a medicalized issue even in the remote areas.

The transfiguration of pregnancy and childbirth is not simply a metaphor for shifting from one institutional site (family and traditional birth attendant) to another (hospital), but also symbolized as a transition of knowledge system regarding the body in general and women's reproductive body in particular. The objectives of this paper are to explore as to how the event of pregnancy and childbirth has become a medicalized issue even within the village space; how has the transition took place from a totally lay knowledge management to a medicalized issue and what will be the position of already existing and the heretofore knowledge of this subject as against the ensuing medicalize process.

Empirical evidence of this study clearly reflects the lack of attention to the social and cultural factors which has not only led to the virtual extinction of the traditional knowledge system, but also to the modern system being deprived of an opportunity for a grand success by incorporating certain constructive traditional aspects.

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