



Contraception, Colonialism and Commerce

Birth Control in South India, 1920-1940

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Birth control holds an unusual place in the history of medicine. Largely devoid of doctors or hospitals, only relatively recently have birth control histories included tales of laboratory-based therapeutic innovation. Instead, these histories elucidate the peculiar slippages between individual bodies and a body politic occasioned by the promotion of techniques to manipulate human reproduction. The history of birth control in India brings these as well as additional complications to the field.

Contrary to popular belief, India has one of the most long-lasting, institutionalized, far-reaching, state sponsored family planning programs in the world. During the inter-war period the country witnessed the formation of groups dedicated to promoting the cause of birth control.

This book outlines the early history of birth control in India, particularly the Tamil south. In so doing, it illuminates India's role in a global network of birth control advocacy. The book also argues how Indians' contraceptive advocacy and associationalism became an increasingly significant realm of action in which they staked claims not just about the utility of contraception but simultaneously over their ability and right to self-rule.

Contents

Introduction: late colonial biopolitics; Anxiety without action: contraception and the late colonial state; The Madras Neo-Malthusian League and global networks of contraceptive evangelism; An apocalyptic body politics of modernity: contraception and the self respect movement; Contraceptive commercialism; Epilogue: the state of the population: history and fertility in 20th-century Tamil Nadu; Bibliography; Index.

About the Author

Sarah Hodges is Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University of Warwick, UK. She has also edited *Reproductive Health in India: History, Politics, Controversies* (2006).

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