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**TOPIC: GENDER SUBTEXTS OF COLONIAL MEDICINE IN THE SELECT
WORKS OF BANAPHOOL**

FINDINGS

The dissertation redefines the scope of colonial medicine as a repository of archival materials, researches, and commentaries on the public health system of the regions under colonial regimes. Colonial medicine has received considerable intellectual investment in the last four decades and continues as a potential domain for academic contribution. The context of public health and the administration of vaccines or medicines, from the start it was beset by class, gender, and caste concerns. A hierarchy was palpable within the ranks of colonial healthcare where the foremost positions were occupied by the white physicians with the natives acting as their subordinates.

The primary objective of the research is to investigate the status of women within the discourses of colonial medicine in 18th century Bengal to early decades of the 20th century (1830 - 1930) through the works of renowned Bengali author and practicing physician, Balai Chand Mukhopadhyay, also known in literary circles as Banaphool. The research seeks to study the gendered establishment entailed in the practice of colonial medicine and the extent of concern for women as active beneficiaries. The primary texts consist of those novels of Banaphool which either deal with medical practice or have medical practitioners as protagonists like *Agniswar*, *Haate Bajare*, etc. To support the findings, contemporary archival materials have been taken into account.

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters including the Introduction and Conclusion. The Introduction offers a detailed discussion of the primary objectives,

methodology, and expected outcomes of the research. The first chapter takes into account the essays and articles published by women in the leading contemporary periodicals, expressing their views on the major events and issues that redefined womanhood. The writings of women will be juxtaposed against the writings of men to study the relationship between the patriarchal imaginaire and the actual conception of women. The second chapter comparatively examines the experiences of men and women during medical studies. The third chapter discusses the manner in which women's bodies were constructed as docile reproductive systems both in British and native narratives. Critically questioning both colonial stand and Postcolonial arguments against colonial obstetrical medicine, the chapter suggests an alternate method to understand women's preference of western medical care to be located in the biopsychosocial approach to pain. The chapter is a continuation of the preceding chapter and explores the consequences on women deviating from the course of normal childbirth. The chapter will also include an evaluation of colonial hysteria as a collection of disparate idiopathic symptoms to indicate aversion to procreation in married women and expression of sexuality among the widows. The fifth chapter explores the concept of colonial masculinity and effeminacy or physical degeneracy of the native Bengali men. It further displays the manner in which internalising the said effeminacy they regulated women's reproductive faculty for the replenishment of the Bengali race. The Conclusion chapter ties the findings and discussions of the aforesaid chapters together to form a cohesive structure besides directing future course of scholarship in the domain.