

presenting before the viewers imaginary situations where such issues are encountered. The authors give a list of movies, but do not discuss them in detail.

This book reminds us that the domain of bioethics keeps constantly offering patients and healthcare professionals several such insoluble moral dilemmas, as it is impossible to approach them with a set of norms that are globally fixed. Each context offers a range of ethical challenges, which have to be negotiated, taking into account several social, cultural, religious, economic, and legal factors.

The book addresses some vital issues of tremendous

contemporary value, but the reader may reasonably expect a little more discussion on some of the problems presented. The authors take for granted that the readers are familiar with certain moral concepts and issues, identity, meaning of body, etc, which have different connotations in different cultures. The section on cases is arguably the most interesting part of the book and leaves room for a lot of discussion. This makes the book a valuable classroom resource for bioethics instructors.

The book reminds us that, despite its strength in contributing to substantial human welfare and happiness, technology often becomes an agent of human alienation.

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## A model for holistic rural health

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### **Ulhas Jajoo: *Towards holistic rural health: Sarvodaya way. Sevagram, Wardha: Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences; 2012. 205pp. INR 300.***

Gandhiji penned *Hind Swaraj* on board a ship in 1909, and its continuing and universal relevance has been reaffirmed even today. Dr. Ulhas Jajoo's book is an encore of *Hind Swaraj*. The book is charged with core truths, applicable anywhere, for anybody, *with no need for any financial largesse*. The widespread applicability of Prof. Ulhas Jajoo's pioneering work requires only the will to act, with results assured in many ways. Dr. Jajoo's thesis, his vision, is beyond the caprices of space, time, and statistics.

The title term "holistic" conjures up the vision of a human body pepped up by the right food/exercise/medicines/meditation, a self-centred view of health. Dr. Ulhas Jajoo encompasses in his vision just a little of the foregoing and a lot of socio-economic factors ranging from the absence of motorable roads, even make-shift toilets, medicines or medical care; coupled with joblessness and loss of spirit, unwillingness to cooperate, the dangers of small but unexpected earnings against a background of farming and dairy farming. The chapter *Eureka!* is immediately followed by the realisation of *The shattered dreams*, a climactic comedown that speaks volumes of the down-to-earth realities that the author and his large team are conscious of.

*The Bhagwad Gita* on the one hand, and Gandhiji and Vinoba on the other have reiterated, time and again, the irrelevance of material gains in the absence of a backdrop of spirituality, decency, societal consciousness, and the appreciation of one's duties to society and humanity. Alexis Carrel, the Nobel laureate, who penned the classic *Man the Unknown* had pointed out, in the 1930's, that medical science pays too much attention to "so much protein and much vitamin," forgetting all the while that frequent doses of spirituality and meaningful

prayers are even more vital. The Sicilian literary Nobel Prize winner, Quasimodo Salvatore, summed up the modern man, *Homo modernus et scientificus* as "Heartless, Loveless, and Christless". Be it the crumbling West, the struggling Far East, or the so-called emergent economies of the BRIC group— Brazil, Russia, India, China – the GNP runs parallel to Gross National Perversion in terms of crime, drug addiction, alcoholism, rapes and murders. On a tiny nuclear scale, Ulhas Jajoo illustrates how economic gains get rapidly matched by social decay. Given the clout of money and the media, and of crass commercialism, this may be the most difficult nut to crack. Gandhiji tried and failed. The Gujarati poet-educationist Karsandas Manek sized up India and its Indianness in a haiku, circa 1948.

Oh! Independence

Thou petal of freedom

We dunces

Chewed you up!

That Dr Jajoo has succeeded in rendering as many as 15 villages healthy, and that too in a sustained holistic fashion, augurs well for his welcome crusade.

Another title term "rural" needs elaboration. The inevitable assumption is that things are alright with the urban areas, a presumption belied by Indian urbania's fouled up air, gutterised water, filth all around, food scarce and costly, and social unrest and crime that seem to be chronically on the upswing. That the investors and the political powers gleefully collaborated in describing medical services as the "health care industry" automatically gave the profession the right to seek dollars-in-disease and see patients-as-profit. The kickbacks and commissions have seen to it that whereas all other commodities symbolising sophistication: mobiles, laptops, I-pads, computers and TV screens, DVD players, all progressively come down in

price, the medical spiral is shamelessly and uncontrollably directed skywards. The modern medical curriculum could be summarised, in the words of a British educationist, as “putting false pearls before real swine.” Medical colleges give degrees but no character. The exceptional qualities of Dr Ulhas Jajoo and his team are a credit to them and to the institution they represent.

I would like to conclude that whatever Dr Jajoo preaches is highly doable, completely worthwhile, and contains the promise of restoring *Gram Swaraj* to much of India. The book is a must-read for all the “pathies,” their students, teachers, researchers and planners, as also the powers, locally and at the state and central levels. The book merits being part of all the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, backed by frequent seminars, workshops, and the like. It could travel well beyond the borders of India, in all directions, for the betterment of all the nations and humanity.

The book is admirably produced. The simple colourful cover offers an inspiring depth. The publication is sleek with clear fonts, faultless editing, a highly readable text, and excellent drawings by Gajanan Ambulkar. Many of the photos appear faded, and the small drawings are too crowded to convey the message. The next reprint of the book should take care of these minor flaws. The no-nonsense approach of the book to the so-called “science and modernity” is very telling. Dr. Jajoo has prescribed distilled wisdom, gleaned after ceaseless personal involvement from 1976 onward. He is a modern-day Schweitzer, imbued with Gandhian spirit, Vivekananda’s vision, and Vinoba’s clarity. His march may seem a lone one, a solitary crusade, but is endowed with veracity, applicability, fruitfulness, and above all, is imbued with the well being of mankind, physically, mentally and spiritually.

## **Indian Journal of Medical Ethics: *selected readings 1993-2003***

Editorial collective: Neha Madhiwalla, Bashir Mamdani, Meenal Mamdani, Sanjay A Pai, Nobhojit Roy, Sandhya Srinivasan

Published by: the Forum for Medical Ethics Society and the Centre for Studies in Ethics and Rights, Mumbai. November 2005. 248 pages. Rs 150.

This selection of essays previously published in the *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics* can serve as a short education on health care ethics in the Indian context. The articles are divided into five sections: personal integrity, communication, technology and social justice, research ethics, and law, policy and public health. The preface gives an overview on the emergence of medical ethics as a topic of interest in India. Introductions to each section and article give the reader a background to the discussions and their relevance today.

The topics covered include: the Hippocratic oath; ancient and modern medical ethics in India; problems in medical education; the relationship between physicians; the role of the pharmaceutical industry, informed consent, debates on medical technology, ethics committees, whistle blowing; how to interact with patients intending to try another system of medicine; AIDS vaccine trials; sexuality research; authorship; and violence and the ethical responsibilities of the medical profession.

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