

Public health and private wealth: stem cells, surrogates, and other strategic bodies

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Abstrak

Poverty was the predominant paradigm within which science policy was constructed in the late colonial, nationalist, and post-independence eras of India. Whether as critics of its poverty or as architects of measures for its poverty eradication, Indias commentators called on a broad framework of science to both diagnose and treat poverty. Yet, when we think of science in India today, this earlier priority of poverty eradication is hard to find. Poverty eradication as a goal in itself seems to have fallen off Indias scientific agenda. What accounts for this? Has the problem of poverty in India been solved? Or has it become an inconvenient subject alongside the new narratives that frame India as a site of remarkable economic growth? Seeking answers to these questions, the essays in this volume take a distinctive approach to the politics of health in modern India. Insisting that the commodification of health and medicine is fundamentally about economies of bodies, yet irreducible to conventional economic frameworks, the essays pursue the questions of who wins and who loses in Indias health economies. As this problematic transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries, the essays cut across studies of development and demography, research laboratories, and the rural and urban poor, combining the methodologies of anthropologists, sociologists, health economists, science studies and public health scholars, and historians.