

## **Abstract**

Domesticity, Childcare, family health and Writings of Women in Magazines—Some decades of 19th and 20th century

Bengali Society was led by a new fervour of domesticity in the 19th century. The concept of ideal home influenced the Bengali literati and women too. Health of the members of a family became an important issue with which the role of women as caregiver got attached. Since the later half of the 19th century the Bengali literati took advantage of print technology to express their opinion through writings regarding home, family, childcare, general health etc. Women also came forward and expressed their opinion on those issues. They showed their concerns for the health of the family members and gradually of their own. Women wrote in several magazines about maternity and childcare. They pointed out the bad effect of child marriage on the health of women. They discussed about the domestic duty of women. At the same time they became critical of certain issues. Sometimes women writers followed the footsteps of the male writers and criticised their own folk with the same tone. In the 20th century, political changes took place in Bengal. Cultural changes also happened during this time. Women became more conscious of their health issues. They wanted to see the world outside the boundary of their kitchens. They wrote that to maintain the health of the family women should gather knowledge about health. Women felt that health was priceless. Some of them had the opinion that their home was like a state. Indigenous male society and the colonial rulers both perceived women's health as reproductive health. Women also put stress on motherhood and used it as a tool to establish their rights in society. Women talked of the bad condition of labour room, problem of motherhood, birth control etc. There is no doubt that they created a narrative for themselves.

**Keywords:** *Nineteenth century, women's writings, child care, hygiene, public space.*