

Utilization of indigenous knowledge on health and illness among the Baiga and Kol Tribe in Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh, India: A comparative study

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ABSTRACT: According to the World Health Organization (WHO), «traditional medicine as the health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs comprising plant, animal and mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises, applied singularly or in combination to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well-being». The objective of the study is to find out the Indigenous Knowledge of health and illness among the Baiga (PVTG) and Kol tribes of Sidhi District of Madhya Pradesh, India. The cross sectional study is carried out in Sidhi District of Madhya Pradesh, India. A total of 200 (Age below 35 and 50 years above, 100 young and 100 Old) individuals (100 each from both tribal communities) were selected by using of purposive sampling for this research. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The present study showed their perception on health and illness. The most of the People are highly believe on traditional as well as supernatural things. They are firstly preferred to traditional and spiritual healers as compare to allopathic doctors. The traditional medicines and spirituals believes which are playing a major role among the Baiga and Kol community seeks immediate attention since the practitioners are mostly the older generation and not many youngsters are ready to carry forward the tradition.

KEYWORDS: Indigenous knowledge, Health, Illness, Baiga & Kol Tribes, Madhya Pradesh.

INTRODUCTION

Health is fundamentally not limited to illness and healing, rather extends to a dynamic circumstance combine persons, culture and an adaptation to the atmosphere. Every society has its different values and perceptive regarding health, illness and disease. Consequently, they developed their pharmacopoeia and sustain the indigenous system of healing and curing. In India, the practice of traditional medicine has been well thought-out as an impressive healing over the year by the aboriginal people. The knowledge of ethno-medicinal plants and their crop and cure of disease has been transfer throughout verbal communication within the community and increasingly it transmits from one generation to other. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), traditional medicine as the health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs comprising plant, animal and mineral based medicines, spiritual therapeutics, physical techniques and movements, applied singularly or in combination to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well-being.

Disease is a pathological procedure, difference from a biological custom. Illness is the patient's occurrence of ill health, every so often when no disease can be found. On the other hand, the perception of health and illness different cultural societies (Sonowal and Ponch, 2011) Understand the Ethno-medical practices of Indian scheduled tribes (Joshi, 2019). Moreover, Indian schedule tribal are very concern about their own practices of health and mode of treatment. (Debnath, 2014) explained the health status and their problems among varies cultural Particular Vulnerable tribal groups of Madhya Pradesh, India. (Jain, 2015) show the burden & pattern of illnesses among the various tribal communities in central India. Perception on health care system about various tribal communities of India (Negi and Singh, 2018)

Now-a-days, the knowing of the tribal ecosystem is very easy when traditional indigenous knowledge of the tribal societies is embattled to study and experienced. Indigenous knowledge is also known by local knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), farmer's knowledge and aboriginal knowledge etc.

India is a very rich habitat to scheduled tribe that constitutes about 8.6 percent of the total population of the country. Madhya Pradesh has the highest tribal population of India (Census of India, 2011). However, Sidhi is one of the tribal districts of the Madhya Pradesh, India. Tribal enrich their own habitat, culture, customs, values and different geographical isolation. Baiga is one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) having a total population of 414,526 in Madhya Pradesh state of India (Census of India, 2011). Total population of Baiga is 26,392 in Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh (SC and ST Cell of Sidhi district, Government of Madhya Pradesh, India, 2019). Kol, tribe is reckoning among the oldest tribes of India. Total population of Kol is 11.67 Lakhs in Madhya Pradesh state of India (Census of India, 2011). Total population of Kol is 132,126 in Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh (SC and ST Cell of Sidhi district, Government of Madhya Pradesh, India, 2019). They both are semi-nomadic and (*Bagheli*) Hindi speaking groups. They are living in the small house. They are entirely depending upon the agriculture and forest for their livelihood. Their Seasonal collections (Honey, Sal resin (*gond*), Mahua,) along with agricultural laborer in agricultural season.

Therefore, the objective of the present study is to find out the Indigenous Knowledge of health and illness among the Baiga and Kol tribes of Sidhi District of Madhya Pradesh, India.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The cross sectional study is carried out in Sidhi District of Madhya Pradesh, India. A total of 200 (100 young and 100 Old) age group between below 35 and 50 years above individuals (One Hundred each from both tribal communities) were selected by using of purposive sampling for this research. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected by applying a semi-structured, pre-tested schedule and focus group discussion (FGD). At the same time, participant observation method was also used. Data were analyzed by using SPSS-20 and Microsoft Excel software tools.

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

The Inclusion criteria were:

- i. Young and Old people of Baiga tribe- A PVTG of Sidhi district, Madhya Pradesh, India.
- ii. Young and Old people of Kol tribe of Sidhi district, Madhya Pradesh, India.
- iii. Aged below 35 and 50 years above young and old people from both tribes.
- iv. The informant has given consent to participate in the study.
- v. The participants should be physically and mentally normal. They should not have any symptoms of mental disorder.

The exclusion criteria are:

- i. Who were not belonging to the tribes of Baiga and Kol.
- ii. Participants who were have any symptoms of mental disorder.

STUDY PROTOCOL

All the participants were conversant and interpret properly about the aim of the study. All the data were collected with the proper consent of the individuals. All procedures, resources, and data collection to this work fulfill with the ethical principles as per the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2008 (World Medical Association, 2013).

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

PERCEPTION OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS AMONG THE BAIGA & KOL

The perception of health and illness is highly depending upon gender and age of the informant. The Baiga and Kol tribes believed that proper physical hard work, maintaining hygiene, healthy food and proper sanitation defined as a good health. Healthy life refers to ability to physical work (i. e. wood cutting, food gathering and wage labor) and on the basis of food intake.

Simultaneously, they both are majorly believed on behavior of person. Among the Baiga and Kol communities they highly belief on supernatural power, which is plays a critical role in their health perspective. They are having their own gods (*Kuldevta*) and ethos for health, illness and diseases.

SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS AMONG THE BAIGA AND KOL

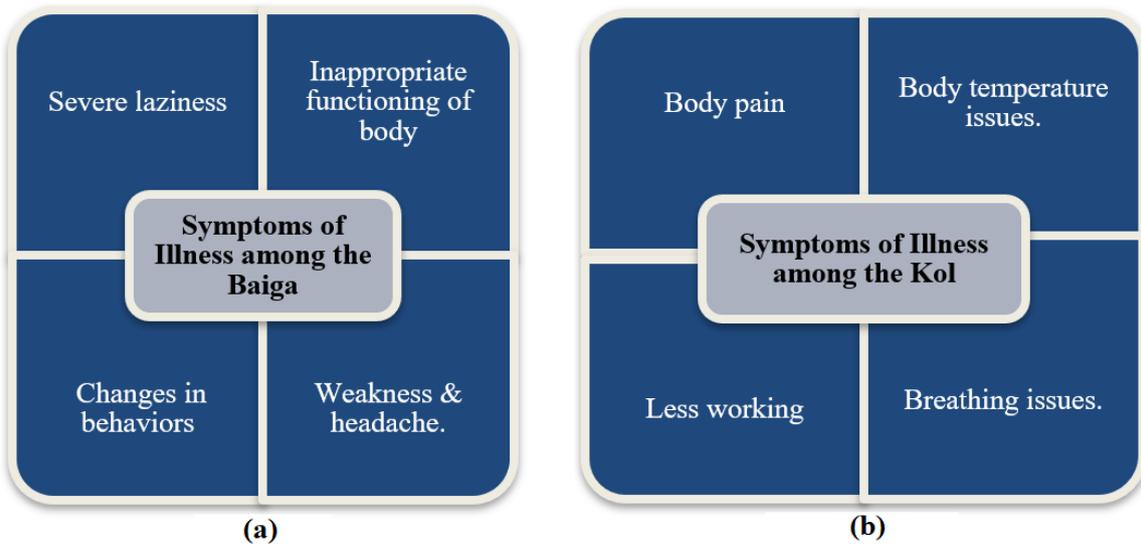


Fig. 1. (a) Symptoms of Illness among the Baiga tribe of Sidhi District of Madhya Pradesh (b) Symptoms of Illness among the Kol tribe of Sidhi District of Madhya Pradesh

Figure 1 (a) and (b) shows the categorization of symptoms of illness among the Baiga and Kol respectively. Major symptoms of illness among the Baiga are: inappropriate functioning of body, severe laziness, and changes in behaviors, weakness & headache. Major symptoms of illness among the Kol are: body pain, breathing issues, less working and body temperature issues.

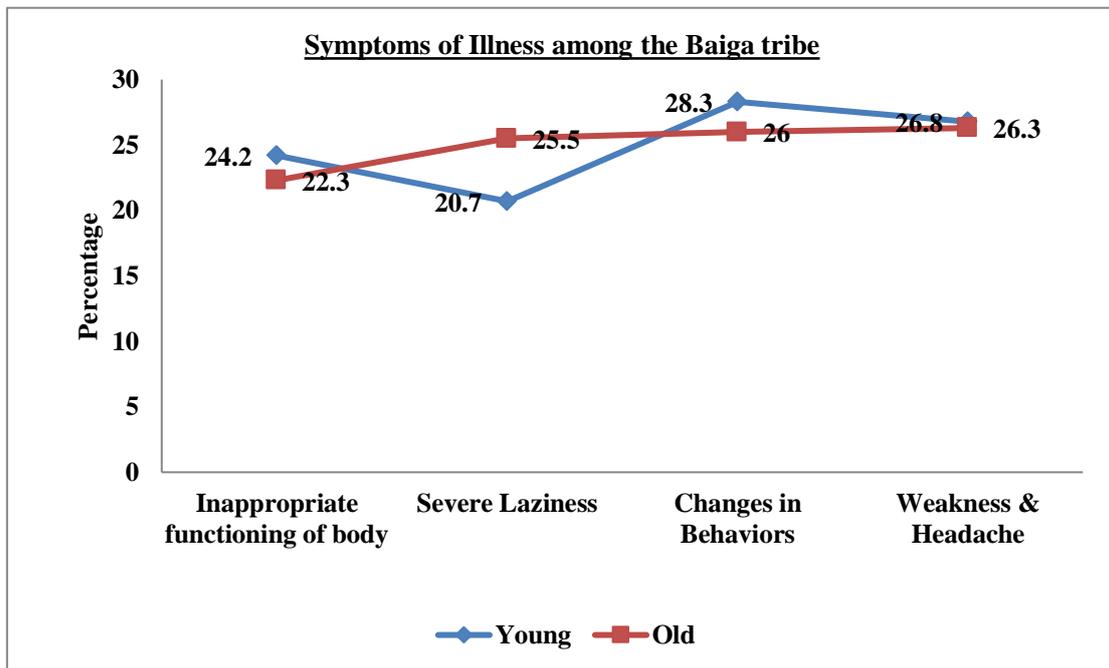


Fig. 2. Percentage of symptoms of illness among the young and old Baiga tribe of Sidhi District of Madhya Pradesh

Figure 2 present the percentage of symptoms of illness among the young and old Baiga tribe. The figure indicates that 26.8 % young Baiga believe the symptoms of illness is Weakness & Headache, 28.3 % Young believe changes in Behavior and 20.7% Young believe Severe Laziness While, 24.2 % believe the symptoms of illness is Inappropriate functioning of body.

Simultaneously, 26.3 % old Baiga believe the symptoms of illness is Weakness & Headache, 26 % old believe changes in Behavior and 25.5% old believe Severe Laziness While, 22.3 % believe the symptom of illness is Inappropriate functioning of body.

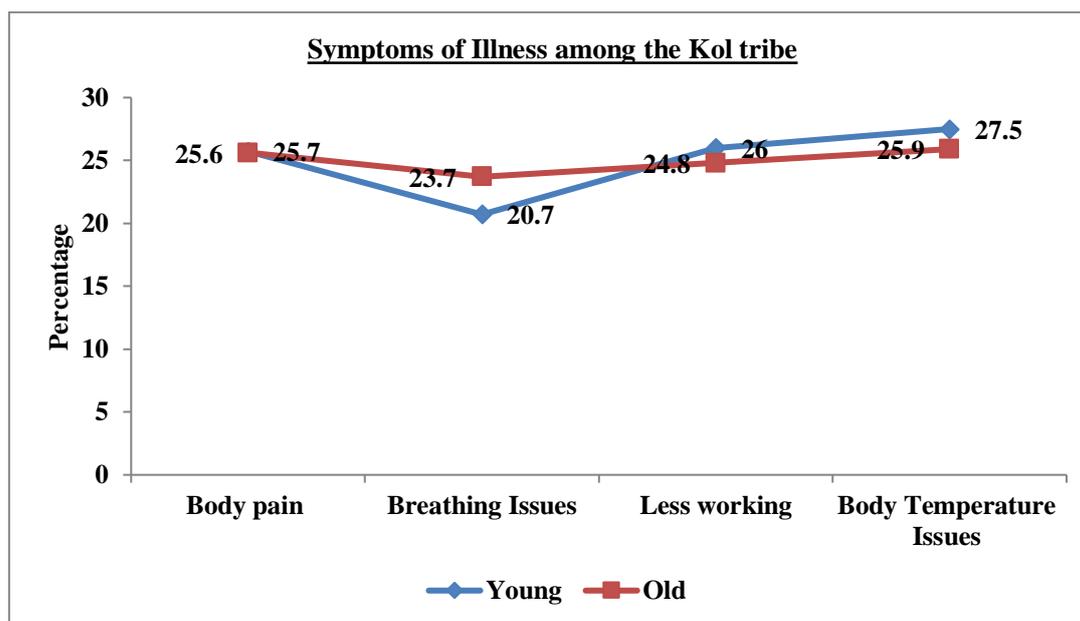


Fig. 3. Percentage of symptoms of illness among the young and old Kol tribe of Sidhi District of Madhya Pradesh

Figure 3 present the percentage of symptoms of illness among the young and old Kol tribe. The figure indicates that 27.5 % young Kol believe the symptoms of illness is body Temperature Issues, 26 % Young choose less working and 20.7% Young choose breathing issues. While, 25.7 % believe the symptoms of illness is body pain.

At the same time, 25.9 % old Kol believe the symptoms of illness is body Temperature Issues, 24.8 % old choose less working and 23.7% Young choose Breathing issues. While, 25.6 % believe the symptoms of illness is body pain.

CAUSES OF ILLNESS AMONG THE BAIGA AND KOL

The causes of illness among them are both Natural and Cultural. The Baiga's natural causes of illness or disease are mostly related with body function such as severely laziness, body pain, headache and digestion issues etc.

At the same time, natural causes of illness in Kol's are majorly related with body functioning i.e. less working capacity, less food intake and irregular work capacity.

In the same way the cultural causes of Baiga's are unhappy of ancestors, their clan, devil or spirit in the body, evil eyes of any person, break of taboos etc. Simultaneously, cultural causes of Kol's are Spirit of ancestor (*kul devta*), intrusion of devil and break of taboos. Sometime they are suffered a lot in some particular illness and those illness controlled in that specific situate or people because of their diet routine. But any manners of changes which influence their environment also influence their health and diet routine. Such as desertification, commodify of small forest goods, substitute of yield in money and etc.

DIAGNOSIS OF DISEASES AND MODE OF TREATMENT

Every society has own method of diagnosing and treatments of human body. The Baiga people are highly believe on traditional and spiritual methods of treatment. Some of the common health issues are cured by themselves with home remedies. The spiritual and traditional healers have well built cultural faith on traditional treatment process. Spiritual healers (*Baiga*) hold the wrist of right hand of the patient; close his eyes and chants holy mantras (Mantras therapy in their local dialects; Bagehli) in a whispering method. After the process he reports the causes behind the problem to affected person. Sometimes the traditional health practices of treatment is devolved the cultural sentimental values among tribal communities. Among them if somebody is affected from any kind of illness and health problems then the whole family unit of that affected person and the community also suffered with that.

On the other hand, the traditional healers (*Baiga*) cured by the medicinal plants. On the other hand, majorly old Kol people are believe on traditional and spiritual healing process. At the same time, mostly younger generation of Kol is not believed on these processes. Due to acculturation and awareness, young people are preferred allopathic doctors as compare to traditional and spiritual method of treatment.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

Traditional health care practices among them generally relate to concern ecology, forest, nature and has deep-rooted linkages with their own culture, beliefs, superstitions and religious faith. Their unique traditional system of health care, which has passed down from generation to generation, is still the prevalent system. Observation from the field shows that even in the case of modern medicinal facilities, the Baiga people would prefer to choose traditional health care facilities. And the old Kol people also prefer to traditional health facilities but the younger generation's faith is very low.

The present study concluded that the major symptoms of illness among the Baiga and Kol tribes are inappropriate functioning of body, severe laziness, and changes in behaviors, weakness & headache, body pain, breathing issues, less working and body temperature issues respectively.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are thankful to the Administration authorities, Baiga and Kol tribal informants of the studied area for giving their valuable time to conduct the present study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The present study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee, Dr. H.S.Gour Vishwavidyalaya (A Central University), Sagar, (M.P.) vide letter No. DHSGV/IEC/2021/14.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT

The Authors declared that there is no conflict of interest.

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