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CONTEMPORARY STATUS OF FOLK MEDICINE IN RURAL EVERYDAY LIFE. A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY SPECIAL REFERENCE OF DUBRAKHALI VILLAGE IN MURSHIDABAD (W.B).

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ABSTRACT

Traditional wisdom and knowledge taken restores the cultural heritage and established the identity of a group in a specific society. Traditional medicinal system such as Unani, Ayurveda and Siddha played a significant role for various ailments of rural or marginalised people in India. A large part of the total population in India still use traditional folk medicine obtained from plant resources. Drugs obtained from plant are believed much safer and exhibit a important efficacy in the treatment of various ailments. The state West Bengal show rich diversity in medicinal plants in which the rural Murshidabad district is an important source of traditional folk medicine. The present study was undertaken at Dubra Khali village in Murshidabad district and data were collected from tribal people, Vaidyas, Ojhas, local herbal drug sellers and some people who were used some folk plants for their different types of diseases. There are 20 species of medical plants belong to 50 families. To cure various diseases local traditional healers were using leaves most commonly followed by roots, bark, whole plants, latex, fruits and seeds. The plants were used for skin diseases, wound healing, eye infection, migraine, cold and cough, throat infection, fever, digestive problem, dysentery, piles, hypertension, heart weakness, diabetes, sexual diseases, jaundice, intestinal worms, tooth ache, hair fall and dandruff, muscular-joint pain, bone fracture and notably one for kidney and gall bladder stone.



KEY WORDS: Folk Medicine, Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Health System.

INTRODUCTION

A traditional health system practice by folk people is termed as folk medicine or folk treatment or folk. It is used of the folk people, by the folk people and for the folk people. Folk medicine refer to the traditional medical wisdom or knowledge or folk education, this is known as ethno-medicine, community medicine, household medicine and any other forms of local medicine. According to World Health Organization (W.H.O), "the traditional medicine is described in the following ways the sum total of the knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to many cultures, whether explicable or not, used in maintenance of health as well as in prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical or mental illness". Generally the knowledge of folk medicines is transmitted from one generation to another through oral communication or oral traditional culture and it is the outcome of bold experimentation through trial and error method over hundreds years. Folk medicine is the base of all other system of medicine such as Ayurveda and modern medicine. It is also observed that more than thirty five thousands plants species belong and used around the world for medicinal purposes. The Indian subcontinent has a very rich diversity of plant species in a wide range of ecosystems. Indian subcontinent

approximately eight thousands species are considered medicinal and used for human and veterinary care across the country by village community, particularly tribal communities or in traditional medicinal systems, such as the generation to generation and played important role in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. A major part of the population in developing countries still uses traditional folk medicine obtained from plant resources.

According to (W.H.O) 80% of population in developing countries depends directly on plants for medicine. In India, drugs of herbal origin have been used in traditional system of medicine such as Unani, Ayurveda, and Siddha. The state West Bengal shows important diversity of medicinal plants. Bhakat and Pandit recorded from the Chilkigarh Sacred grove in Midnapore district (W.B) 105 medicinal plant species of which 12 are threatened elsewhere in the in the district. Basu documented 36 ethno-medicinal plants which are used by tribal communities of the district of Purulia in (W.B) for treatment of various intestinal disorders, malarial infections and sexual diseases. Sinhababu and Banerjee documented 43 ethno-medicinal plants of Bankura district of (W.B) and 24 families used by the local health healers for the treatment of different diseases. Mondal and Rahaman recorded 28 ethno-medicinal plants and their formulation pattern for curing ten types of different diseases in Birhum district in (W.B) and Dumka district of Jharkhand in India by tribal people. Saha surveyed 48 ethno-medicinal plants species of which 12 are monocotyledons and rest dicotyledon in Asansol Burdwan district. Chowdhury investigated 132 ethno-medicinal plant species belonging to 65 families used by different tribal and non-tribal communities in DaskinDinajpur district. Chatterjee and Mukherjee documented 31 ethno-medicinal plants belonging to the 29 genera of 23 families in different tribal dominated parts of Hoghly district. The ethno-medicinal traditions play a reflecting and prominent role in human and environment interaction. The present study was carried out to finding the contemporary status of folk medicine in Dubra Khali village at murshidabad district in West Bengal.

Folk medicine and treatment contribution to primary health care:

Folk medicine plays an important role in rural areas. Rural poor and marginalized people in India depend on herbal remedies and folk treatment. In fact in remote areas this is the only source of health care available. At first they try their traditional knowledge to cure their health problems in their home background. When they do not get any positive response about regarding this health problem, then they go to "Ojha or Gunin or Kobiraj" only when they feel their health problems they go to primary health care.

Specialized fields of traditional practice:

A) Kobiraj or Bidya (Herbalist): They have some important traditional and pharmacological knowledge about plant and fauna. Their practice can be highly influenced in remedies for common disease of human beings.

B) Gunin or Munshi (Diagnosis specialist): They involve communication with spirits, the supernatural and the physical entities that assist in the diagnosis. They identify the ailments, remedies or ceremonies that are required to restore good spiritual, emotional, and physical health and well-being.

C) Medicine Men/Women: They usually engage in ritual, ceremonial activity and prayer. They are also conductors of community ceremonies. It is normative for these individuals to sacrifice their daily lives to ritual, prayer and healing.

D) Ojha (Healer): They have deep connection with healing culture they are known as the god gifted individuals for snake bites as well as common disease in a different ways like touch and stroke method. Naturally they ritualistic approach. They have a great power to use a variety of the raps to snake bite infection.

E) Peer (Spiritualist): This type of practice mainly focuses on the spiritual health of an individual. Generally spiritualist applies different kinds of benevolent spirits that have good ends. They solve various health problems with help of supernatural force. They are totally different from sorcery. They belong to the Muslim community.

F) Shaman (Witch doctor): Shamanistic medicine is a spiritual form of medicine where a person's illness is believed to be caused by the spirit possession. They use sacred songs or charms to cure the diseases. It is good exercised of supernatural power.

RATIONAL OF THE STUDY:

Folk medicine and folk treatment is based on the folk beliefs and traditional knowledge. In rural areas poor or marginalised people their daily life depends on the folk medicine or folk treatment for various type of diseases. In the other way is very important for the folk medicine because folk medicine is the mother of modern medicine. The modern period is highly educated, globalised and many other factors like industrialisation, modernization, modern communication and modern sentiment is deeply influenced on the major sector in folk medicine basically rural or marginalised sector. So modern period is very rational for investigate the contemporary status of folk medicine and their traditional uses.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY: Objective is the very important of every investigation. The main objective of the present study is:

- Find out the present beliefs and traditional knowledge about the folk medicine and treatment.
- Find out the modern condition of various types of folk plants and their efficiency.
- Find out the contemporary image of folk doctor and their knowledge about the folk medicine.
- Find out the government and non-government step for sustainable use of folk medicine.

Methods and Procedures of the study:

- In the primary stage in this study researcher completed the pilot study at the selected area.
- The study was based on the survey research.
- Data was collected from face to face conversation and through the questionnaires.
- The sample was selected by the purposively at the dubrakhali village. Total sample is 50.
- Data was analysed depends on the selected respondents view.

SOURCE USED IN THE STUDY:

Primary and secondary sources used in this study. Primary data collected from those people who are already practice folk treatment and they have some knowledge about the folk plants. Secondary data collected from many newspaper, article, journal and website.

AREA OF THE STUDY:

An ethno-medicinal study was undertaken at Dubra Khali village in Murshidabad district. Murshidabad district is a large agriculture based district having 26 blocks with 1937villages where most of the rural people still use the medicinal plant as their remedies for different ailment. Dubrakhali village in this district is very backward and communication system was very poor. This village under maintain the kapasdanga gram panchayat and murshidabad subdivision. The majority of people occupation was agricultural labour and their everyday life was very simple and most of the people their health treatment depends on the folk medicine and treatment.

Analysis and interpretation of data:

- Collected 50 (100%) respondents for this study 30 (60%) was Hindu and their view about the folk medicine and treatment was very important for primary diseases or infection because they try to solved their problem by the folk medicine or treatment. Otherwise not solved so they go to modern health care. 20 (40%) respondents were Muslim and their view about the folk medicine and treatment was same.
- Collected 50 (100%) respondents for this study 35 (70%) was male and 15 (30%) was female. In the male respondents their view about the process of folk treatment is very positive for their any primary disease or infection. Female respondents said urgent needs some modification in the process of folk treatment.
- Collected 50 (100%) respondents for this study 40 (80%) respondents, their educational qualification is primary and their view of folk plants have a big medicine value and they uses various types of folk

plants in their everyday life for various types of diseases or infection. 10 (20%) respondents, their educational qualification is class viii and their view about the folk plants is the important sources of rural medicine, and their view conservation policy for folk plants is very important for future uses.

- Collected 50 (100%) respondents from the 50 family out of 34 (68%) family at their house some small area is very conservative for the small garden of folk plants and garden have various type of folk plants like Gritakumari, Brahmi, Neem, Pan, Bel, Tulsi, Sarpagandha, Kalmegh, Thankuni, Basak, Kulekhara etc. Out of 16 (32%) respondents try to achieve some rear folk plants for her folk garden.
- In the 50 (100%) respondents out of 10 (20%) respondents was folk doctor like Kobiraj, Gunin, Ojha, Shaman etc. The folk doctor practice by the traditional process on the basis of folk medicine and they have enjoyed some money and respect to the local people for her profession. Out of 40 (80%) respondents generally not a folk doctor but they have some folk knowledge and belief on the folk medicine or treatment.
- In the total respondents out of 9 (18%) is tribal people and their total life cycle depends on the folk medicine or treatment for various types of diseases. They are very conservative for many types of folk plants.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

- In this study 50 family have 20 different types of folk plants like Arshwagondha, Nayantara, Brahmishak, Shatamuli, Thankuni, NataKaranja, Kalmegh, Ada, Muktajhuri, Basak, Neem, Sarpagondha, Bel, Arjun, Holud, Amla, Rosun, Am, Arhardaletcconserved by the self and very well planned and use roots, leaf, flower, seed, stem, fruit for their many types of diseases or infection like headache, diabetes, skin diseases, liver diseases, fever & lung diseases, high blood pressure, ulcer, eye diseases etc.
- In this village majority of the people depends on the folk medicine or treatment basically primary health diseases. Ten folk doctor play an important role for primary treatment and they are follow traditional process of treatment like Jalpara, telpara, mantra or some folk plant use for the drug making process to solved the particular diseases or infection.
- In this village have a small folk garden and it's have been different types of folk plants like Tulsi, Kalmegh, Thankuni, Bel, Asogandha, Arjun etc. This garden is the community source of uses folk plant. Local villagers maintain the garden and the popular name this garden is Nirmala.
- Self-help group in this village take a step for awareness campaigns about folk medicine or traditional health treatment.
- Local government not take any type of step for sustainable use of folk medicine or plants.
- Local villagers try to conservation some rear type folk plant.
- Socialization process and good thinking about the folk plant by the elder person in this village is the important way for transmitted generation to generation about the knowledge of folk plant or traditional treatment.

CONCLUSION:

From this study, it is clear that the folk medicine play a vital role against various common diseases. Folk medicine builds an extremely close relationship with the rural or marginalized society and socio-economic environment. Various herbal plants have significant potentiality cure primary health problems. In this study shows that above-mentioned folk medicines and folk treatment process could prevent from common diseases like small injuries, skin diseases, fever, dehydration, ulcer, diabetes, high blood pressure, liver diseases, neurotic disorder etc. hence the review study is conducted with the view that the folk medicines and treatment have an important social values in the folk or tribal society in our country. So in this circumstance it should be preserved and developed for the future generation. Our ex-prime ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Indra Gandhi advocated the integration of the best of indigenous medicine with modern medicine. The government established a central council of India medicine, a statutory body with a

mandate to ensure conformation of standards of education and regulation of practice in respect to the traditional system.

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