

Health Conditions Of Indian Tribal Women – A Sociological Analysis

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Abstract

Good health status is a needed thing to all gender. The power, position, social status, social recognition, respect in family as well as society all determine the efficient health status of an individual. Health condition encompasses the full freedom which an individual decides about their own body. If a woman is having the holistic liberty to control her own biological processes, it is being considered as successful autonomy of health. But in reality the hands of cultural and religious webs are indirectly controlling the women activities like domestic, social, political as well as their body too. Since the ancient period the woman did not have any rights over their health. The family system or the male members of the family were acted as the deciding authority over the health condition of women. The child marriages, early hood pregnancy, maternal death, passion of having male child, lack of malnutrition and attitude of patriarchal were the common things which were affected the health of the women in the past periods.

The present study aims at exploring the health condition of Tribal women in India.

Objectives

- ✓ To study the status of health condition of tribal women in India
- ✓ To analyse the factors that related with the tribal women health condition

- ✓ To suggest the suitable measures to enhance the better Health of Tribal Women

Materials and Methods

Descriptive method is being used to explain the exposure of the health condition of tribal women. With the support of secondary information, the factors responsible for health of tribal women and its impacts have been analyzed.

Results

It is observed that cultural beliefs and practices very closely influenced in the health among the tribal women. The research studies are reveals that there are some cultural and orthodox interventions still exist and also the role of poor socio-economic backwardness determines the health condition of the tribal women in India. The social alienation and lack of health infrastructure facilities in the areas have marked its effects on the health condition of tribal women.

Conclusion

The traditional beliefs and practices of tribal communities are influence the health condition of the tribal women. The supporting mechanisms of enhancing literacy level, uplift the economic status and social assistance mechanism are to be needed to bring the better health condition of the tribal women.

Key Words: Health, culture, Illiteracy, ANC, PNC, Malnutrition.

Introduction

In the past days the women in Indian society, they had been considered as a less valuable human being on par with opposite gender. This type of orthodox attitudes and ideologies had been spread over in all aspects of the society. Before pre-independence era, the social and political participation of the women were limited, their role in education was restricted and they only meant for the domestic purpose and its allied activities. These types of restricted activities were linked along with the cultural norms, values, mores and ways. The practices of child marriage, sati, refusal of social participation, non-entry of political field, powerless position in reproductive rights and lower position in social

hierarchy were the outcomes of the slavery life of the women in any community.

Despite of being having freedom through constitution after post-independence era, the same above said conditions are still being observed in many cultural settings of our country, whether developed or underdeveloped society. In contemporary era, the plights of the women have revealed that in their domestic settings they are enjoyed less autonomy as well as there is no freedom of their own physical conditions. Not only socially, also physically they have faced enormous issues like lack of nutrition, high level of maternal death, premature baby born, earlier conception and maintaining unhealthy life with more vulnerabilities. In our society, breadwinner of the family always used to treat in a great manner where as the homemaker of the family been considered as a dependent without any voice. The decision making power, distribution of resources, involving future life career of children, purchasing of properties are being done by the male counterparts in our society. In most of the Indian communities the situation may be same, at the same time we cannot refuse refuse that in some families the decision making power is to be shared with the female members too.

Plight of Indian Tribes

The vulnerable conditions of women are existing not only in the rural, urban settings as well as in the tribal part too. Tribes usually they are in the position of socially excluded from the mainstream of the society. The practices and cultural beliefs of the tribes are totally differed from the plain people and they used to follow their rigid ideologies and norms till today. The social deviation and social isolation makes them very vulnerable with the backwardness of literacy, economy and social relations.

Tribes in India

As per 2011 Census the concentration of the Scheduled Tribes in India was 10.45 crores and it had the per cent of 8.6 in the total population of our country (Census 2011). The literacy level of our country was 73 per cent, at the same time it was only 49 per cent in the part of the tribal women. Nearly 80 per cent of the tribal people they have involved the agricultural and its allied practices. Especially from the part of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group they have faced many livelihood issues than any other tribal group in our country. Some of the tribal groups are in the verge of extinct.

When we talk about the health condition of tribes, the women may have the chance to get affected than the male tribes in the aspects of reproductive health. Malnutrition, lack of healthy diet, poverty, poor income are the main things that affects the healthy life of the tribes in our country. But in reality the nature and conditions of the reproductive health life of the women are linked with the above said factors. Eventually it has some negative impacts among the tribal women in the aspects of health than opposite gender.

Factors related with the poor health condition of tribal women in India

The issue of illiteracy is one among the prime factor that leads all the health vulnerability of the tribal women in our country. Being a member of the underdeveloped groups, they are normally having reluctance to move to other stages due to their ignorance. In this matter the position of illiterate are linked with the other factors such as cultural beliefs and practices, poor economy, orthodox methods of healing and eventually social alienation. The above said factors altogether have created the condition of suppressed especially in the part of the tribal women health.

The matter of interior livelihood in forests, place of unreachable, lack of health assistance from the government mechanisms and non-support of other communities are the correlated factors that determines the vulnerabilities of the tribal women health. Clash between aboriginal people and migrated people, the issue of displacement, the attitude of dominance among other communities towards the tribal people are the causes also enhancing the gap between the tribes and others.

The influence of traditional healing methods and its affiliation with the tribes also found that promoting the health vulnerabilities among the tribes. The deity and cultural practices are only meant for the social control of any group. But in tribes society it also has dominated the health seeking behaviour. Child marriages, rigid health practices, less knowledge about family planning, continuous pregnancy and less connection with modern health approaches are the factors that deteriorating the health condition of the tribal women in India.

The attitude of patriarchal society and its implications has made the health of the tribal women as a vulnerable one. It emerges the chances for the development of the chronic diseases, serious outcome of the ailments as well as disturbing the reproductive rights of the tribal women too. The reproductive

health is one among the important health of any women, more than three or four decades have been covered by the reproductive health. It may be followed in a proper manner. but in tribal cases, it is mislead by cultural and social values of their own.

Studies related with Tribal women health conditions

Basu (1990) has stated that the issues of tribal women maternal health and child health should be taken care of by the policy makers. He emphasized that the above said two things are mainly neglected among the tribes due to their backwardness of socio-economic conditions. The orthodox practices of cultural beliefs, lifestyle and norms of tribes shall be considered before taking any developmental policy makings. The medical services among the tribes were found at very poor level. There are fewer studies only focusing the realities of the tribal women.

Rao (2005) in his study noted that the unhygienic poor habits and rigid of cultural practices relating to the reproductive health, child rearing, maternal health are the leads behind worst health condition among the tribal women and children. The issues of under-nutrition are directly linked with the anaemia and Vitamin A deficiency. The matter of health hygienic practices, awareness programmes about taking proper diet, problems related with malnutrition and promotive measures needs are to be addressed through the participative community methods by the administrators. The researcher also added that the role of community participation methods are to be needed to execute the better accomplishments of the existing or upgrading programmes for the welfare of the tribal women and children.

Sinha's (2006) study on the reproductive health of Santal women among 150 respondents between 20 and 30 years living in around three villages of Santiniketan shows the overall poor reproductive health awareness and child-rearing practices. He found that socio-economic factors such as low literacy levels, poor economic conditions and lack of knowledge on general health are mainly responsible for it.

Laxmaiah (2007) conducted a study relating with the tribal women health in the district of Khammam, Andrapradesh, it revealed that the health issue of chronic energy deficiency found among most of the tribal women than the tribal men. The health

ailments of body pain, dizziness and weakness had been observed among tribal women irrespective of all age groups. It shows that the practices of food culture and intake of nutrition food items of the particular tribal group shall be reviewed and analyzed to bring the better change in the coming tribal generation.

Sarkar (2019) conducted a study among Santals tribes in the state of West-Bengal, it shows that the health condition of the tribes is linked with the socio-economic conditions such as poor occupational status and less income. Poor educational attainment among sandals has led to involve less paid employment. The less income did not allow any chance for taking health issues in a proper way. The cultural practices of santals, drinking rice beer was found one among the reasons of the health issues. Regular usage of drinking rice beer may have the chance to increase the multiple diseases among the santals tribes.

Chandana (2020) in her study entitled "Health Status of Tribal Women of Bhadradi Kothagudem District in Telangana State, reveals that the health issues of hypertension, diabetes, arthritis and also psychiatric are existing among tribal women. The role of primary health centres and ASHA's is very much important to disseminate the health oriented information in the recent days. Also the effective contribution of health centres have created lot of awareness about the diseases of Dengue, Malaria and Chikngunya and it has paved a new independent role in the decision of family planning too as stated by the researcher. The study exposed that the effective part of the health mechanism may have the chance to reduce the level of diseases as well as creae the level of health awareness in the part of the tribal areas.

Choudhary (2021) in his study entitled "Tribal women health care in Jharkhand State Of India: Emerging Issue And Challenge", he stated that the tribal women health are in the state of developing. Due to the efforts taken by the state government with the direct assistance of health workers have created a new era of health among the Jharkhand tribal women. There are fewer women only has suffered from the chronic diseases and others they did not have any remarkable diseases apart from cold and fever. The health scheme of National Rural Health Mission of the government has effectively functioning for the health development of the suppressed group of people as stated by the

researcher through their findings. The researcher also added the role of the NGO workers in the tribal areas along with the government health workers. The combination of non-governmental and governmental health mechanisms has developed a new impact among the tribal women in the aspects of health. Though there are some remarkable developments, the issues of assuring proper water facilities, sanitation facilities, enact of health oriented policies and offering economical support may have the chance to enhance the healthy life of the tribal women in the study areas noted by the researcher.

Conclusion

The social condition of tribes in India is has been changed with the continuous efforts of government mechanisms. The various research findings show that the aspects of health knowledge have been enhanced with the support of developmental mechanisms. At the same time the concentration shall be given to the aspects of increasing literacy level, creating awareness about health hygiene practices, reducing the social alienation. The economic development, social relationship with other communities, utilizing the common health practices than the cultural beliefs and enhancement of health infrastructure by the administrators are the needed things to empower the health status of the tribal women.

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