

INDIAN MEDICINE IN RURAL COMMUNITY

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HEALTH is man's most precious possession. Health is now accepted a fundamental right of every human being, it has to be earned by intelligent and individual effort. The responsibility for health does not end with individual effort. In all civilized societies, the State assumes responsibility for the health and welfare of its citizens. Health is often taken for granted and not fully appreciated until it is lost.

The health of a nation depends on the inward satisfaction of the individuals who compose it. The three essential components which contribute to that satisfaction are complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease (WHO). Man has set up his health programmes to meet the challenge of diseases and injury that disable him. This is no new idea. The concept of preventive medicines is changing gradually from the practices of therapy to the practice of comprehensive medicine. The scope of medicines has broadened considerably during recent years. Public Health workers and Social Scientists began to work together for the solution of Public Health Problems.

The present study has been conducted to:—

- i) study the Community's programmes with regard to the utilisation of Indian medicines during their ailments.

METHODOLOGY

The instrument of data collection is a schedule method. A schedule was designed and pretested before administering to 20 respondents. The selection of respondents was based on incidental sampling. The data was collected from five villages viz., Goyla, Rewla Khan Pur, Malikpur, Kapashera and Mundela Kalan covered by the Rural Health Training Centre, Najafgarh. The villages were selected at random considering logistics of transport facilities. The interviews were conducted in the field.

The Data

The field data was collected by administering questionnaires schedules to 200 individuals of both sexes. The basis of investigation was 8 questions and identification data. The results are tabulated in IX tables which are as follows:—

Table I
(INTRODUCTORY)

(A) Age structure (in years)	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
15 - 20	14	7%
21 - 25	47	23.5%
26 - 30	44	22%
31 - 35	22	11%
36 - 40	27	13.5%
Above 40	46	23%
	200	100%

i) Officer Incharge, Rural Health Training Centre, Najafgarh, New Delhi-43.

ii) Health Education Officer, Rural Health Training Centre, Najafgarh, New Delhi-110 043.

(B) Educational Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Education		
Nil	125	62.5%
Primary	22	11%
Middle	21	10.5%
Matric & above	32	16%
	200	100%

(C) Caste Structure	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Ahirs	27	43.5%
Brahmins	95	47.5%
Jains	6	3%
Backward	12	6%
	200	100%

(D) Family Structure	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Family		
Jointly/	91	45.5%
Singal	109	54.5%
	200	100%

(Questions and Responses)

state reasons

Table II

(Systems of Medical Treatment)

Question

The following systems of medical treatments are prevalent for various illnesses. Are you aware of it?

i) Modern allopathic Yes/No.
97% 3%

ii) Indigenous

iii) Homoeopathy

83.6% of the respondents were observed aware of modern allopathy and indigenous system and the remaining percentage were only in the know of all the three systems listed above. Thus it is observed that the community is quite conscious of indigenous system of medical treatment.

86.2% 9.5% 4.3%

Table III

(Consult Doctors)

Question

If someone falls sick in your family—does he/she consult medical practitioners, if no please

- auto recovery
- home remedy
- expensive
- lack of time
- any other

Yes No.
95.7% 4.3%

Comments

As is evident, 96.7% of the respondents appear to be in favour of consulting medical practitioners practising modern allopathic medicines. The non-acceptors of the services of neither practitioners were observed more inclined to home remedy without prejudice. In their opinion Medical Consultation is costly as well produces complications afterwards.

Table IV

(Normally Consult)

Question

Whom do you normally consult in case someone falls sick in your family?—Allopathy/Ayurved/Homoeopathy/Please state reasons:—

- family influence
- availability
- belief
- efficacy
- tradition recognition
- anyother

Allopath	Ayurved	Homoeopath
8.2%	9.5%	4.3%

Comments

Acceptors of modern allopathic medicines were more or less influenced by factors viz., availability, and efficacy. These (9.5%) who were actually consulting Ayurveds had belief in this system because of that family influence and traditional recognition, 4.3% of the respondents were determined to avail of homoeopathic services for the reasons that homoeopathic medicines are harmless.

Table V

(Preference for indigenous medicine)

Question:—

Do you know that friends and relations in your village prefer indigenous medicine when someone falls sick? Yes/No—Why.

- Reasons:—
- i) effective and ensure prompt treatment.
 - ii) medicines are readily and easily available.
 - iii) free from danger.
 - iv) expensive.
 - v) anyother.

Yes	No.	Does not know.
35%	48%	21%

Comments:—

Those who did not prefer indigenous medicines to other system were prone to other system because of its efficacy and availability and it seems therefore that 46% outrightly rejected indigenous system, as is evident from the data shown above, 21% have no opinion. It is emphasised here that more efforts are needed to popularise indigenous medicine in the rural community so that it becomes acceptable by them. Health education is as such inevitable.

Table VI

(Effects of indigenous medicine in ensuring quicker relief)

Question

Indigenous medicines usually ensure quicker relief?

Yes	No.	Does not know
43.5%	54.2%	2.3%

Comments

54.2% of the respondents did not exactly believe in indigenous medicine as these medicines do not ensure quicker relief. This requires modification in their attitude towards these drugs. 43.5% were of the opinion that indigenous medicine do ensure quicker relief. Hence this percentage of population are self motivated, to accept Indian system of medicines.

Table VII

(Acceptance of Indigenous Medicines)

Question

When someone is dissatisfied with allopathic medicine he/she accepts other medicines prescribed in Indian system. Do you agree?

Agree	Disagree	Does not know
63%	26.5%	10.5%

Comments

63% of the respondents were of the opinion that Indian medicines are acceptable only when someone is dissatisfied with allopathy medicines. It is thus very clear that the initial stage allopathic system is tried. This involves a change in their existing attitude. 26.5%, however, indirectly appeared to be in favour of indigenous medicine.

Table VIII

(Indian medicines suitable for the children community)

Question

Indian medicines are more suitable to children community as compared to modern medicines. Do you agree?

Agree	Disagree	Does not know
52.5%	45%	2.5%

Comments

52.5% of the respondents were in favour of using indigenous medicines for their children community. It shows that the indigenous medicines should be tried in case of sickness among the children population because of the fact that these are harmless. 45% appeared to be non-coinciding with the above observation. However, it is very clear that a majority is in favour of Indian medicines and they have no contention to their suitability for the children.

TABLE IX

(Prepared now to accept indigenous medical practitioners)

Question

If the services of indigenous medical practitioners are more freely made available in your village, would you prefer it to other system?

Yes	No.
63%	37%

Comments

It is evident from the data shown about that 63% of the respondents were prepared to accept the services of either Government Institution or Private Medical Practitioners provided these are more freely available. The remaining percentage have shown lack of faith in it. Moreover, with the launch of Community Health Workers' Scheme

and a support from Health Education, the Community can be motivated to adopt this mode of treatment.

Conclusion

Community on the whole is less resistant to indigenous medicines. The services have to be delivered and the supply line has to be maintained. The community considers indigenous medicine free from complication for the children community as is observed from the findings of the study. The indigenous medicines have to compete with the modern medicines which is more popular among the rural community due to large scale patronage by the existing practitioners including the government institutions and Community Health Workers. Health Education has an important role to play in eliciting a behaviour change in health guardians and the consumers leading to adoption of indigenous medicines.

In the circumstance, it seems justifiable that every efforts should be made to remove the shortcomings in Indian Medicine and make it as effective as possible so that the people who have faith in it can get the maximum benefit out of it.

Western medicines does not fit in with the traditional beliefs of the villagers. Effectiveness of a system of medicine, however, does not necessarily make it acceptable to a patient or a population, unless it fits in with their social and cultural believes.

APPLICATION FORM FOR

INTEREST SECTIONS' MEMBERSHIP FOR TNAI MEMBERS ONLY

Nursing Education Section/Public Health Nursing Section/Nursing Service Section.

Life Membership fee Rupees 50/- Per Section.

Send this form to The Secretary TNAI, L-17, Green Park, New Delhi-110016.

1. Name (in full) Miss/Mrs/Mr/Sr.....
TNAI No.....
2. Designation.....
3. Present Address.....
.....
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4. Home Address.....
.....
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Date.....

Signature.....