

Indigenous Medical Practices of Hill Korwas of Madhya Pradesh

Harsha Rani Bajpai and Mitashree Mitra

School of Studies in Anthropology, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur 492 010, Madhya Pradesh, India

KEY WORDS Hill Korwa. Primitive Tribe. Indigenous Medical Practices.

ABSTRACT The data regarding the indigenous medical practices of Hill Korwa have been collected by interviewing fifteen old members and three medicinemen (Baiga) from three villages of Raigarh district, Madhya Pradesh.

INTRODUCTION

The Hill Korwa is one of the seven identified primitive tribes of Madhya Pradesh, predominantly distributed in Sarguja, Raigarh and Bilaspur districts. Their population is 27,109 according to 1993-94 survey conducted by Hill Korwa Development Agency. The Hill Korwas are categorised primitive tribe due to their low/stagnant growth rate, low technological level and low level of literacy. Ethnically, Hill Korwas are considered a branch of Munda tribe, thus they belong to the Austric family and particularly to its part designated as Austro-Asiatic family. The objective of this study is to gather information about the indig-

enous medicine used by Hill Korwas.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Fifteen old members of the family and three Baigas (medicine men) were interviewed for collecting information related to indigenous medicines, from Kadopani, Harrapath and Guptakiya villages of Jashpur Nagar, Raigarh district.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the study it was found that the pain threshold of Hill Korwas is high e.g. they do not worry for a person having fever for 2-3 days. If the fever persists after that then only they attend to it and threat the person. Though they practice ethnomedicine to treat the ill person, now-a-days, they are willing to avail the modern medical facilities. The unavailability of medicines at Primary Health Centre and apathy of doctors force them to practice indigenous medical system which is only alternative left to them.

Table 1 : List of indigenous medicines used by Hill Korwas

S.No.	Name of the disease	Prescription
1.	Itching of the skin allergy	Leaves of "Dudhiya" (<i>Euphorbi hirta</i>) crushed and mixed with jaggery given to the patient.
2.	Asthama, Jaundice, Strength giving	"Kali Musli" (<i>Curculigo orchoides</i>)
3.	Sterility of men	Tuber of "Kali Musli" (<i>Curculigo crehiciades</i>) is empty stomach.
4.	Bite of poisonous Snake	Wild Tulsi (<i>Ocimum sanctum</i>)
5.	Khaj (Skin Allergy)	Gum sarai (<i>Terminalia tomentosa</i>) is put into an earthen pot with a hole and put over coal fire. Gum collects at the bottom which is applied on the affected part.
6.	Sore/aching eyes	Fruits of Annola (<i>Embelica officinalis</i>) are crushed and poultice of this is applied over eyes.
7.	Cough	Fruit of Harra (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>)
8.	Headache	Paste of tamarind (<i>Tamarindus indica</i>) leaves applied over forehead.
9.	Broken bones (of human and animal)	Harsingari (a creeper) (<i>Nyctanthes arbortristis</i>) is tied on that part tightly.
10.	Fever	Tuber of Tikhur (<i>Curcuma aromatica</i>) is made into a paste and applied over forehead.
11.	Scorpion bite	Flowers of mahua (<i>Bassia latifolia</i>) crushed and applied over the affected part and Madua liquor is given to drink.