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Ethnomedicine and Traditional Health Care Practices among Bakarwals and Gujjars in the Baramulla District, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Durga Rao Pedada

Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Science, University of Delhi, Delhi 110 007

E-mail: draopedada@anthro.du.ac.in

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ABSTRACT Anthropologists studying socio-cultural factors have argued that beliefs and practices relating to ill-health in all human societies are a central feature of the culture. The values and customs related to ill-health are part of the wider culture and cannot be studied in isolation from it. One cannot understand how people react to illness, death, or other misfortunes without understanding the culture they have grown up in or acquired. This paper aims to understand the use of herbal medicine and traditional health practices among Bakarwals and Gujjars in the Baramulla district, Jammu and Kashmir, India. Data were collected from 46 key informants selected through purposive sampling. It was observed that traditional healthcare practices persisted among these tribal groups to address their health problems. It is recommended that the health professionals need to understand the belief systems and taboos of these societies to provide more effective services.