

A Critique on health and illness behaviour among Toda Tribes, Ooty

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ABSTRACT: *The main aim of the study was to extrapolate the various aspects of health and illness behavior of toda tribes. Qualitative research with ethnographic research design was adopted. The study samples comprised of 20 toda tribes.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Health and illness behaviors are associated with level of disability, quality of life, patterns of illness, and risk of death. It is tempting to view such health-related outcomes solely through the lenses provided by the biomedical sciences; however, the behaviors that importantly shape individuals' experiences of sickness or wellness, and life or death, are more completely understood from a sociological perspective. The confluence of individuals' life histories, their personality characteristics and social experiences, and their social positions influences health and illness behaviors and tells us much about how to enhance health and well-being, and mitigate disability and sickness. An examination of health and illness behaviors, therefore, has important public health implications.

Gaikwad John S conducted a study to analyze the health and illness behaviour of a forest-dwelling Pawra tribal community. It is based on empirical data 22 obtained from the Pawra tribal community. Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in seven villages from Akrani, Mahal, Tahsil in District Nandurbar, in the state of Maharashtra. These villages were selected because they are predominantly inhabited by the Pawra tribal community. Abrupt changes in an individual's health condition/onset of an ailment/sudden weakness are usually attributed to external forces. Depending on the symptoms of the ailments and the knowledge regarding capabilities of the known/available „budwa“ (traditional healer), the patient/relatives decide as to which „budwu“ (traditional healer) is to be consulted. Ailments attributed to certain aetiological factors evoke a specific response. It also affects the mental state of the patient. A few members of the Pawra community, who resort to modern medicine, generally prefer to consult a private physician. The reluctance for availing services from a primary health centre/cottage hospital is deep rooted in their undesirable experiences at these institutions. However, the people have mixed reactions about their comparison between government and private physicians. Some physicians at Dhadgaon indicated that the Pawra are negligent about health.

Conkling B A conducted a study on Images of health, illness and death among the Wari' (PakaasNovos) of Rondônia, Brazil said that data on Wari' ethnomedicine, cultural traditions and health status were collected during two years' field research in 1985-87. Demographic, genealogical and ethnographic data derived from semi-structured interviews with the heads of all households in five communities, participant observation, and interviews with elders, shamans and other Wari' informants. Blood and its analogs play important roles in Wari' notions of kinship, marriage, illness physiology and transformations of women's bodies and identities after childbirth and of male warriors' bodies and status after killing enemies. Incorporation of spirit elements is a mechanism of shamanic initiation and of the reversals of human and animal identities that are central to Wari' religion and ethnomedical explanations of illness etiology. Social, ecological and epidemiological concerns unite in Wari' myths and rituals affirming alliances with spirit forces of death that transform themselves into game and fish. These concepts help explain the traditional Wari' practices. [6] From the personal experience, the investigator has observed different health and illness behaviour among tribes which motivated the investigator to explore the health and illness behavior of toda tribes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM “A critique on the health and illness behaviour among toda tribes, Ooty”.

OBJECTIVE

To extrapolate the various aspects of health and illness behavior.

PURPOSE

To develop a module on promotion of health among toda tribes

II. MEDHODS AND MATERIALS

Qualitative approach was adopted for the study. Ethnographic research design was adopted for the study. The tool used for data collection consisted of 2 parts: Part A: Tool to assess the demographic variables and Part B: Semi structured interview schedule with open ended questions. The main study was conducted, in toda mundooty on twenty samples that fulfilled the inclusion criteria. Prior to data collection permission was obtained from concerned authorities. The informed consent was obtained from the toda tribes to use audio tape to record their shared experience during the interviews that was conducted..Audio taped interview was listened and transcribed into verbatim as soon as possible the collected data was analyzed using COLLAIZA"s Six step methodological interpretation approach.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Table1: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables of toda tribes

N=20			
S. No	Demographic Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	AGE IN YEARS		
	a) 35 – 50	10	50
	b) 51 – 65	7	35
	c) 66 – 80	3	15
2.	SEX		
	a) Male	6	30
	b) Female	14	70
3.	OCCUPATION		
	a) Government	1	5
	b) Private	6	30
	c) Un employed	10	50
	d) Own Business	3	15
4.	EDUCATIONAL STATUS		
	a) Graduate	1	5
	b) Higher secondary education	5	25
	c) Secondary education	5	25
	d) Middle school	7	35
	e) No formal education	2	10
5.	FAMILY		
	a) Nuclear family	20	100
6.	INCOME		
	a) <5000	9	45
	b) 5001 – 10000	8	40
	c) 10001 – 20000	2	10
	d) 20001 – 25000	1	5
7.	HOUSING		
	a) Pucca	20	100
8.	SEWAGE DISPOSAL		
	a) Closed	20	100
9.	DIETARY PATTERN		
	a) Vegetarian	20	100

- With regard to age 10(50%) toda tribes were in the age group of 35-50, 7(35%) toda tribes were between 51-65 and 3(15%) toda tribes were at 66-80.
- With respect to sex 14(70%) toda tribes were females and 6(30%) toda tribes were male.
- Considering occupation 10(50%) of toda tribes were unemployed 6(30%) were working in private sector, 3(15%) were doing their own business and 1(5%) were working in government.

- With respect to education 7(35%) toda tribes had middle school education, 5(25%) toda tribes had higher secondary school education, 5(25%) toda tribes had secondary school education, 2(10%) toda tribes had no formal and 1(5%) toda tribes were graduate.
- With regard to family 20(100%) toda tribes were living in nuclear family.
- With respect to income 9(45%) toda tribes were earning below 5000rs,8(40%) toda tribes were earning 5001-10000, 2(10%) were earning 10001-20000 and 1(5%) toda tribes were earning about 20001-25000.
- Considering the housing all 20(100%) toda tribes were living in pucca house.
- With regard to sewage disposal all 20(100%) toda tribes had closed drainage system.
- With respect to dietary pattern all 20(100%) toda tribes were vegetarian

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of health behaviour of Toda tribes

N=20

S. No	Themes	Sub themes	Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1	How do you perceive health	Being strong and out of illness	6	30
		Being healthy physically and mentally without any disturbance	4	20
		Being happy, without any illness	8	40
		Living good ,strong with god's grace	2	10
2.	How do you feel when you are healthy	Happy	7	35
		Happy and good	2	10
		Happy and strong	7	35
		Happy and energetic	4	20
3	What are the dietary practices followed for being healthy	We used to have vegetables, greens, buffalo milk and its products ,honey	18	90
		We used to have rice porridge, Vegetables, greens, buffalo milk and its products and honey.	2	10
4.	What are the measures taken for healthy life	Having healthy food and boiled water ,used to walk for an extent, Sleeping well and Spending time with my children	6	30%
		Having healthy food , taking regular bath ,used to wear clean clothes ,keeping home tidy	14	70
5	Do you think exercise is needed for healthy life	Not required because we practice walking and doing cultivation work and consuming healthy food so it is equal for exercise	4	20
		Yes it is required because it keeps body energetic	16	80
6	What do you do when you are psychologically disturbe	I used to sit alone and hear songs	7	35
		I used to cry and share my worries with my husband	2	10
		Will be doing knitting work	1	5
		Will be going to temple	2	10

S. No	Themes	Sub themes	Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
7	What are the factors makes you stressed	Family problems are the major factors which makes me stressed	5	25
		Stressed due to wedding of the child and his future	5	25
		Grandchildren's life	3	15
		Office work	4	20
		Bad climatic condition makes me stressed	3	15
8	How will you cope up when you are emotionally disturbed	I used to do embroidery, knitting and interact with the people around me	3	15
		Interact with my family and going to temple, used to do Knitting and embroidery and doing cultivation and household works.	9	45
		Used to spend time with my husband /wife	8	40
9	Do you think health is influenced by any external forces	No we don't believe that but still olden days our great grant fathers believed so.	20	100
10	What are the unhealthy practices you feel that you follow in your life	I feel that not wearing slippers in our tradition is the unhealthy practices	20	100

- The data indicates that out of 20 tribes 6(30%) toda tribes perceived health as being strong and out of illness 8(40%) as being happy, without any illness 4(20%) as being healthy physically , mentally , without any disturbance and 2(10%) as living good ,strong with god's grace
- The data indicates that 7(35%) participants felt happy when they were healthy and 7(35%) were happy and strong, 4(20%) were happy and energetic ,2(10%)were happy and good.
- The data indicates that 18 (90%) participants used to have vegetables, greens, buffalo milk and its products ,honey for healthy and 2(10%)Will have rice porridge, Vegetables, greens, buffalo milk and its products ,honey for being healthy .
- The data indicates that 6(30%) participants used to have healthy food and boiling water, walking for an extent ,sleeping well ,spending time with my children and 14(70%) used to have healthy food ,taking regular bath ,wearing clean clothes ,keeping home tidy these were some of the measures taken for being healthy .
- The data indicates that 16(80) participants reported that exercise is required for healthy life and rest 4(20%) participants said exercise is not required
- The data indicates that 7(35%) participants used to sit alone and listen to songs, 2(10%) participants used to cry and share their worries with husband , 2(10%) participants used to go to temple ,1(15%) used to do knitting work.
- The data indicates that 5(25%) participants were stressed out due to family problem. 5(25%) participants stressed due to wedding of their child and their future, 3(15%) participants stressed due to grand children's life, 4(20%) participants were stressed due to office work,3(15%) participants were stressed due to bad climate .
- The data indicates that 9(45%) participants used to interact with family, go to temple, used to do knitting and embroidery and used to do cultivation and household works to cope up when they were emotionally disturbed,8 (40%) participants used to spend time with their husband and wife to cope up

when they were emotionally disturbed, 3(15%) participants used to do embroidery ,knitting and interact with people around them to cope up when they were emotionally disturbed.

- The data indicated that 20(100%) participants don't believe that health is influenced by external forces
- The data indicates that 20(%) participants felt that not wearing slippers is unhealthy practices they follow.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of illness behavior among toda tribes

N=20

S.No	Themes	Sub themes	Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1	What do you say illness in your culture?	Illness is caused due to climatic conditions	4	20
		Caused due to health condition	6	30
		Illness is change in normal health	8	40
		Due to consuming unhealthy foods and doing activities	2	10
2	What are the common illness you have experienced in your family	Fever ,cold	16	80
		Fever, cold, running nose ,indigestion	4	20
3	What measures you have taken for minor ailments	Used to provide home remedy's and if it is severe will go to hospital	10	50
		Used to apply balm and will give some kashayam and will go to doctor	5	25
		Used to make rice porridge, health drink, get some tablets from the pharmacy	5	25
4	How do you feel emotionally when you are sick	I will be depressed	6	30
		I will be sad	5	25
		I will be worried	9	45
5	Do you approach health centers for treating illness ,why	Yes I will approach because we are being provided with free treatment in the government and also treated in separate wards.	20	100
6	What home remedy you follow for minor ailments	-For fever we mix the mud of buffalo's foot prints +green grass +water and will drink -For dysentery or any stomach abnormalities we will have hill gova +tender leaves+ water For cold we will drink milk added with turmeric powder	20	100
7	How do you feel when your family members are sick	Feel very sad and worried	8	40%
		Feel like he /she should get well soon.	12	60%

S.No	Themes	Sub themes	Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
8	What do you do when your family members fall sick	Used to provide some healthy food	6	30%
		Provide porridge, bread and if severe will take to hospital	14	70%

- The data indicates that 8(40%) participants said that illness is change s in normal health ,6 (30%) participants said that illness is caused due to health condition , 4(20%) participants said that illness is caused due to changing climatic conditions and 2(10%) participants said that illness is due to consuming unhealthy foods and doing activities .
- The data indicates that 16(80%) participants said that fever and cold are the common illness experienced in their family and 4(20%) participants said that fever, cold, running nose and indigestion are the common illness experienced in their family.
- 10(50%) participants used to provide home remedies and used to go to hospital if severe for treating minor ailments, 5(25%) participants used to apply balm, used to give some kashayam and go to doctor and 5(25%) of toda tribes used to provide rice porridge ,health drink and get some tablets from nearby pharmacy for treating minor ailments.
- 9(45%) participants will be worried emotionally when they fall sick, 6(30%) participants will be depressed and 5(25%) participants will be sad when they fall sick.
- 20(100%) participants will approach health centers because they are being provided with free treatment in the government hospital and also they are treated with separate wards.
- 20(100%) participants said that For treating fever they used to mix the mud of buffalo's foot prints +green grass +water and drink and for treating dysentery or any stomach abnormalities they used to have hill gova +tender leaves+ water ,For treating cold they used to drink milk added with turmeric powder .
- 12(60%) participants feel like he or she should get well soon when their family members fall sick and 8(40%) feel very sad and worried when their family members fall sick.
- 14(70%) participants used to provide porridge and 6(30%) participants used to provide healthy food when their family members fall sick..
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III. CONCLUSION

The present study was done to explore the health and illness behaviour of toda tribes at ooty. The audio taped interview schedule explored the health and illness behaviour under various dimensions in which the various themes were identified the interesting facts explored among the toda tribes were vegetarians, they have their own traditional way to treat minor ailments like mixing the footprints of the buffalos with the green grass and water for fever and for stomach abnormalities used to have hill gova with tender leaves adding with water and for cold used to add turmeric power with milk and drink and toda tribes do approach health care centers when there is any illness. At the end of the study pamphlets on health promotion were given to the toda tribes to promote and restore good health.

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