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ETHNOLOGICAL MODEL OF BAIGA, PVTG TRIBE OF CHHATTISGARH

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ABSTRACT

The present research paper highlights several research results that confirm the association of health and illness with witchcraft and divine powers among the Baiga tribe. The tribe's traditional healer is considered a divine gift and trained healer, and they use many traditional knowledge-based herbs to treat various ailments. The evidence also suggests that the Baiga tribe has some superstitions, such as considering a particular color as auspicious or inauspicious for disease. The study of ethnology is necessary in all types of societies, simple and complex, to understand how they are affected by health, disease, and medical systems. It is essential to promote positivity and eliminate negativity through in-depth research of such folk medicine. The present research paper aims to contribute to this effort. The present research paper confirms that the Baiga tribe associate's health and illness with witchcraft and divine powers and considers their traditional healer as a gifted and trained healer. The use of various traditional herbs to treat ailments is also prevalent in the tribe. However, some superstitions are also present, such as specific colors being considered auspicious or inauspicious for disease. The study of ethnology is necessary in all societies to understand the impact of health, disease, and medical systems. It is crucial to study folk medicine in-depth to increase positivity and eliminate negativity. This research paper is one such effort towards achieving this goal.

Keyword- Ethnotherapy, Traditional Medicinal, Traditional Healing

Introduction- Ethnology concerns itself with the understanding of health and disease, including their causes, and the methods and processes used for treating them based on generational knowledge in the context of a particular human or ethnic group. In Ethnology, medicine is not just a treatment method but also encompasses the ways in which an ethnic group perceives and understands health and disease, and the treatment methods adapted to their traditional knowledge, environmental and socio-cultural differences. It also considers how diseases are treated by both physical and non-material means present in their circumstances. All such dimensions are part of Ethnotherapy.

Each society has its own unique cultural forms, health practices, and related ideas. For instance, the Thonga tribe of Kentucky is highly affected by intestinal worms, but they do not consider it necessary for the digestive system to cause disease or illness. Instead of defining disease and illness based on nature, it is considered on its socio-cultural basis.

Many health concepts related to ethnology are related to socio-cultural aspects. Clemente (1932) considered traditional medicine an important aspect of culture. Traditional medicine is especially important in tribal societies, where health, disease, and healing are not limited to biological aspects but are closely related to aspects of deities, occultism, and rituals.

The spread of disease is also often attributed to the violation of prohibitions, deviation from social rules, signs, etc. Leban (1973) conducted a study on the Ojivan tribe of North America and found that adultery and illness play an important role in controlling social behavior in this society.

Ethnotherapy, also known as Ethnomedicine, is divided into two parts: the supernatural healing system and the individual and naturopathic system. It involves considering deities, occultism, rituals, and all forms of environmental or natural basis in relation to health, disease, and healing. Similar concepts are also found among the Baiga tribe of Chhattisgarh, which is the main tribal group in the state. The highest concentration of Baiga tribe in Chhattisgarh is in Kawardha (Kabirdham) town and Bilaspur Districts, with some population in Rajnandgaon and Surguja districts. The people of Baiga tribe use physical and non-material aspects of deities, tantra-mantras, as well as herbs from the forest, various parts of animals, and soil for traditional medicine. However, it is also noticeable that there is variability in the ethnography of this tribe and its various dimensions.

Objectives-

The present study has the following objectives: -

1. To reveal the general concept of health and disease prevalent among Baiga tribe of the state.
2. Knowing the ethnographic model of Baiga tribe, to underline the importance

of recording in the context of its conservation.

Methods-

This study was conducted among the Baiga tribes residing in six villages namely Dhanikhunta, Raniguda, Bachrukona, Parsahi, Jamuniya, and Karmanda, which are included in the Gram Panchayat Boda under Bodla block of Kawardha (Kabirdham) district in Chhattisgarh. The research involved 138 individuals from the Baiga tribe and five traditional Baiga doctors, who were chosen through a purposeful sampling method. The study utilized structured interview schedules for quantitative data collection, interview guides and semi-participatory observation for qualitative data collection, and personal study.

Results and Discussion-

The Baiga tribe has a slightly different concept of disease compared to the current medicinal structure and concept. Understanding one of these concepts is incomplete without understanding the other. In addition, health, disease and medical practices in various societies, especially in simple societies, are closely related to socio-cultural, economic and psychological aspects.

One of the causes of illness according to the Baiga tribe is supernatural agents such as deities of the house. These agents are believed to cause illness due to improper worship or other reasons. For example, domestic animals falling sick or an unwell body can be attributed to these supernatural agents.

1. Magical Agents (witch karma related):

People are harmed by witches or magicians sending ghosts, witches, or evil forces, which can include bad touch, bad tongue, and ill-treatment.

2. Natural Agents (related to environmental factors):

Many Baiga physicians and tribesmen believe that environmental changes, weather, and climate cause numerous diseases. This principle is similar to modern medicine.

According to Clement's interpretation of disease in simple societies, the results obtained seem to be nearly accurate. In addition, in simple societies, when an individual becomes sick, their social role and daily activities alter, and they are temporarily exempted from the rights and responsibilities of the society.

Traditional medicine in Baiga Tribe

To understand the treatment methods used in any medical system, it is important to understand the causes of the diseases. In the Baiga tribe, their traditional healers, known as "Baiga," are given priority for treating any kind of disease. The Baiga tribe typically has two methods for individuals to become a Baiga. The first method is through divine selection, where the deities of the tribe grant mantras, thoughts, and power to a particular person through their dreams. The second method involves training, where individuals learn the skills of a physician through knowledge passed down by their elders, teachers, and nature. Apart from Baigas, there are also other types of traditional healers in the tribe such as Vaidyas and midwives. Therefore, there are three types of

traditional healers found in the Baiga tribe, namely Baigas, Vaidyas, and Dais.

The following tables elaborate on symptoms, identification, and treatment

of various diseases prevalent among the Baiga tribe in the studied area, along with a critical analysis of findings.:

Table-1. Symptom wise diagnosis of disease/Illness among Biaga

Sr.No.	Disease/Illness	Symptom
1	Tuberculosis	Tuberculosis disease patient must cough and then keep coughing continuously for a long time. The phlegm constantly comes out of the mouth. The patient gets physical weakness, the complexion of the face starts turning black. People of Baiga tribe T.B. Is sympathetic to the patient and carefully treats it with herbs.
2	UTI	The patient experiences intermittent urination, with changes in urine color and dilution of semen. This condition can be treated with herbs, and engaging in religious activities with such women is not considered appropriate.
3	Madness or Ghosts	There are some abnormal behaviors that a person may exhibit while sleeping, such as walking in their sleep, verbally abusing others, suddenly sitting up, or swaying. Only a Baiga healer can cure a person suffering from this disease. Baiga healers use a combination of herbs, tantra-mantras, worship-recitations, witchcraft, and organic substances derived from animals to treat this ailment.
4	Breathing problem & Dizziness	Individuals in the Baiga tribe commonly experience shortness of breath, gasping, dizziness in dusty places, and difficulty breathing in enclosed spaces. Treatment involves exercise and the use of herbs.
5	Smallpox	Smallpox is a viral disease that causes a rash to appear on the face and eventually spread to the rest of the body. Blisters will form and release pus. In certain cultures, it is believed that the disease is a result of displeasing the Mother Goddess and therefore, worship of the Goddess is an integral part of the

		treatment. The treatment of smallpox is often a combination of religious practices and traditional medicine.
6	Snake or Scorpion Bite	The body turns black or blue in color when bitten by poisonous animals like snakes or scorpions. When a person consumes bitter substances, they may experience a sweet taste. Additional symptoms include foaming from the mouth, fainting, and fever. In such cases, people gather together to help the affected person. Baiga provides mantras, treatment, and medicine to save the person's life. Due to the life-threatening nature of these situations, mantras hold special significance.
7	Jaundice	Yellowing of body, yellowing of urine and yellowing of eyes.
8	Paralysis	When a body part such as hands or feet is not used, it can become weak. This condition is treated with care and herbs. In some cases, patients are fed pigeon and massaged with its blood.
9	Fainting & vomiting	A patient with epilepsy is experiencing frequent fainting, trembling of extremities, and vomiting, which is a dangerous condition. Herbs have not been effective in treating this disease. When an episode of epilepsy occurs, more people come to help the patient.
10	Cold & Cough	It is a common ailment, and few people receive proper treatment. Often, people make a decoction by boiling ginger, dry ginger, and basil leaves.
11	Haemorrhoids	Infection or wound in the anus of people, unbearable pain while passing stool, bleeding. The patient is well looked after and both natural herbal and allopathic remedies are administered.
12	Cerebral Malaria	This disease is considered slightly fatal. If it reaches the brain, it is also considered fatal. It keeps the patient's place clean and is treated with both allopathic and traditional medicine.
13	Itching	Itching in the skin and the release and spread of matter by itching. This is due to the impurities and uncleanness of the blood. It is treated with herbs.

14	Diarrhoea	Disturbances in the digestive system, diarrhoea, weakness and thinness of the body. This is due to the impurities and uncleanliness of the blood. It is treated with herbs.
15	Leprosy	Leprosy results primarily from damage to the peripheral nerves (nerves outside the brain and spinal cord), skin, testicles, eyes, and mucus membranes of the nose and throat. This disease mainly affects a person's hands, feet, skin, eyes and lining of the nose. It is believed that this disease is the result of man's sins, and its patient is not looked upon well in the society and its treatment is left to the divine powers.

Table-02 Traditional Medicine used in treatment of prevalent disease among Baiga

S.No.	Local Name	Botanical Name	Part	Disease
1	Chitavar	<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>	Root	Haemorrhoid
2	Babool	<i>Aacacia nilotica</i>	Root	Blood Pressure in Female
3	Aak	<i>Calotropis procera</i>	Root	Insect bite
4	Van haldi	<i>Curcuma aromatica</i>	Tuber	Jaundice
5	Arjuna	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>	Bark	Menstruation, Diabetes
7	Neem	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Leaves, Bark	Fever
8	Tinsa	<i>Ougeinia dalbergiodes</i>	Bark	Diarrhoea
9	Bargad	<i>Ficus benghalensis</i>	Fruit	Stomach disease
10	Til	<i>Sesamum indicum</i>	Fruit, Oil	Paralysis
11	Ganna	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>	Juice	Jaundice
12	Belladona	<i>Atropa belladonna</i>	Leaves, stem, Root	Blood circulation
13	Tulsi	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i>	Leaves	Cough
14	Adusa	<i>Justicia angustifolia</i>	Leaves	Asthma
15	Bhursukhri	<i>Grewia hirsuta</i>	Root	Fever

16	Kutaj	<i>Holarrhena antidy senterica</i>	Root, Bark	Diarrhoea, Headache
17	Bel	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	Fruit, Leaves	Digestion
18	Ajwain	<i>Trachyspermum ammi</i>	Leaves	Fever
19	Palas	<i>Butea monosperma</i>	Root, Bark, Flower	Blood Pressure
20	Amaltas	<i>Cassia Fistula</i>	Fruit, Leaves	Constipation
21	Keu	<i>Costus Specious</i>	Tuber	Cold, Cough, Fever
22	Dathura	<i>Datura Stramonium</i>	Fruit, Leaves, Seed	Asthma
23	Amla	<i>Emblica officinalis</i>	Fruit	Dysentery, Digestion, Hair fall
24	Hing	<i>Ferula assafoetida</i>	Fruit	Digestion
25	Mulethi	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>	Root, Stem	Sore throat, Cough
26	Gokharu	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>	Fruit	Sexual dysfunction, kidney
27	Ashwagandha	<i>Withania somnifera</i>	Root	Sexual dysfunction,
28	Mahuwa	<i>Madhuca longifolia</i>	Fruit	Itching
			Bark	Swollen gums
			Flower	Cough
			Seed	Lack of breast milk
29	Lahsun	<i>Allium sativum</i>	Rhizome	Joint knee pain
30	Kela	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>	Fruit	Haemorrhoid
31	Palak	<i>Spinacia oleracea</i>	Leaves	Dysentery
32	Laung	<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i>	Fruit	Tooth ache
33	Sarpgandha	<i>Rauwolfia serpentina</i>	Root	High blood pressure, Insomnia
34	Jamun	<i>Syzygium cumini</i>	Fruit	Diabetes
35	Imli	<i>Tamarindus indica</i>	Fruit	Menstruation

Table-03 Traditional treatment methods of prevalent disease among Baiga

Sr. No.	Disease	Treatment Methods
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1	Tuberculosis	According to the traditional healers of Baiga tribes, for the treatment of this disease, taking a decoction of neem bark (<i>Azadirachta indica</i>) gives relief. Pinch of 1 to 2 grams of Gokhru (<i>Echinops echinatus</i>) and Ashwagandha (<i>Withania somnifera</i>), mixing the powder with honey for 30 days, licking it and drinking milk is beneficial.
2	Jaundice	According to Baiga doctors, two types of treatment method are used for this. In the first treatment, turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) flowers are mixed with cow's milk and given. Due to which the disease of the patient starts getting cured. Apart from this, sugarcane juice (<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>) and other fruit juices are also given to the patient. In the second type of treatment, Gooseberry (<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>), dry ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>), black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>), Haldi (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) and good loha bhasma are mixed in equal quantity and 1.5 grams of powder is mixed with honey thrice a day. The full dosage of this treatment is about 7 days.
3	Smallpox (Mata)	This disease is called mother in Baiga tribe. Many types of treatment methods are used in this tribe for this also. Under one method, Neem bark (<i>Azadirachta indica</i>) is crushed and fed. Water is offered to Sheetla Mata and that water is sprayed from head to toe with Neem (<i>Azadirachta indica</i>) leaves in the patient's body and Sheetla Mata is worshipped. In the second method, the ashes of the trunk of the forest are applied on the patient's body. Along with this, the patient is instructed to fast on this day. In another method, take 500 mg of Imli (<i>Tamarindus indica</i>) seeds and Haldi (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) with equal quantity of powder. The patient never gets chickenpox by giving it with cold water. Under another method, mixing the juice of bitter gourd leaves and Haldi (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) and giving it to the patient ends smallpox
4	Leprosy	For the diagnosis of this disease, 20 to 50 ml in 1 tola of (<i>Adhatoda zeylanica</i>), Guduch (Giloy) (<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>) and castor oil. A decoction or bud of Amaltas (<i>Cassia fistula</i>) and 20-50 ml of Giloy. Mixing 1 to 5 grams of castor oil (<i>Ricinus communis</i>) in the decoction gives relief in leprosy.
5	Paralysis	Three types of methods are used in the treatment of this disease.

		In the first method, the people of Baiga tribe massage the pigeon's (Columbidae) blood on the part of the body which is suffering from paralysis, apart from this, pigeon meat is also fed to the patient. In the second method, Hathajori is washed in water and fed. In case of paralytic attack, 50 to 100 grams same oil mixed with water is given to the patient and garlic (Allium sativum) is fed along with it. Along with this, the affected part is massaged with garlic oil. Starting from the first 1 bud, the number of Garlic (Allium sativum) is increased and decreased in the same sequence for 21 days. By which the paralysis disappears.
6	Haemorrhoids	Three types of treatment methods are used in the treatment of this disease. In the first method, ripe Banana peels (Musa paradisiaca) are separated, and the fruit is dried overnight and fed with camphor. In the second method, drying the root of Indraphal (Citrullus colocynthis) in the shade or rubbing the root of Kaner (Thevetia peruviana) in water and applying it in piles is beneficial. In another method, taking dry ginger powder (Zingiber officinale), rock salt (NaCl₂), Ground cumin (Cuminum cyminum) and Asafetida (Ferula assa-foetida) in buttermilk provides relief in piles.

Conclusions and Suggestions-

The Baiga tribe has been dependent on forests for their livelihood since ancient times. They are divided into three main ethnological groups known as Baiga, Vaidya, and Dai. The tribe is concentrated in the Ghanikhunta region and has a unique ethnotherapy influenced by their geographical location. Baiga living in inaccessible areas of the forest rely on traditional healers for treatment of various diseases. However, Baiga residing in areas outside the forest give priority to locally available doctors, nurses, and midwives. Traditional medicine in the Baiga tribe is based on a belief in herbs and supernatural powers

such as tonahi, witchcraft, and related concepts like bad touch and evil eye. The knowledge of herbs found in the forests is an important heritage of this tribe. Some of the knowledge can be scientifically analysed and used in modern medical practices. However, certain beliefs and practices related to superstition need to be rectified through systematic consultation to bring the tribe into the mainstream of development in the fields of health, economics, and socio-culture.

Legal side- The Baiga tribe residing in the areas mentioned in the research article would like to offer a fair share of the profits to any institution or medical

approach mentioned in the paper that produces medicine or provides treatment. In return, the tribe should be granted patent benefits.

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