



Study the Transmission of Ethnomedicinal Knowledge across Generations: A Case Study of Bhil India

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ABSTRACT

The Ethnomedicinal system plays a crucial role in the lives of the Bhil tribes of India. It refers to the practices of traditional medical system. This system is deeply intertwined with their culture, traditions, and daily life, forming an essential part of their healthcare practices. Ethnomedicine acts as the primary healthcare system for the Bhil people, especially in remote areas where modern medical facilities are scarce or inaccessible. Bhil tribes possess a vast body of indigenous knowledge about medicinal plants, herbs, and natural remedies, passes down through generations. This paper is Emphasizes the preservation of their traditional practices and culture. In this research paper I used case study as a method because case study played a pivotal role in gaining in-depth insights into the lives, challenges and strengths of tribal communities. They contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of these communities. Which is essential for informed policymaking and sustainable development efforts. For the data collection I used secondary sources like Government reports, Research paper to related my topic, book, online, sites etc.

Introduccion:

The Bhil is the largest tribal community in tribal and is primarily a native of the Mewar region in the state of Rajasthan. The word 'Bhil' is derived from 'Bhil', meaning bow and arrow. They live in 5,617 villages and have a high concentration of population in some districts of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra,



and the state of Rajasthan. The term Adivasi was coined after the country's independence and has been used in reference to tribes since then. Bhil essentially refers to themselves as the Bhoj at the village level. This is similar to what ancient or medieval documents mention. The Bhil like all Adivasis live close to nature and also, they use large number of plants species as herbal remedies in various disease and ailment. Bhil are one of the major Tribe and they are inhabited in Dhar, Jabua Khargone and Ratlam district of Madhya Pradesh. The Tribals have developed their own ethnomedicine of their traditional knowledge about the medicinal uses of plants by Trial and error methods. The Bhil medicine man keep secrecy about medicinal uses of herbs but by developing closer contacts they reveal the information about the indigenous system of medicine. Ethnomedicinal Knowledge is the result of hundreds of years of trial and error and casual observations. This does not mean that traditional practitioners are not in position to have a scientific approach. Intellectual property is a concern not only for modern finished products of research but also for these traditional practitioners whose medical practices have an empirical and community – based nature. Central India is rich in such practices, with practitioners able to use plants for more than 500 diseases. This rich store of knowledge, which is generally passed on from on generation to the next, is being transmitted to the present generation in a very partial form, as it is severely eroded, despite its potential for being used as a substitute for investment in other forms of health care. Data for the present study have been collected from tribal Bhil India. Every culture has a unique belief system that contributes to the path followed by the members living in that culture. Natural resources like plants, herbs, and other traditional material sources play a critical role in maintaining a positive health index in society. This traditional health practices is maintained with the help of ethnomedicinal knowledge, which is transmitted from one generation to another. Unfortunately, in recent times, this tradition is getting diluted and slowly disappearing. In this context, the main objective is to assess how and how much ethnomedicinal knowledge is transferred to the present generation, if at all, and whether it is at least partially effective.

India, with its varying heterogeneous nature, is one of the richest lands in the world in terms of both biodiversity and ethnomedicinal knowledge. The diverse cultures and differing knowledge systems are evident from the diverse tribal population existing in India. The foundation of these knowledge systems is women's knowledge. To a major extent, the intricate details of healing practices are retained by women and transmitted via their kin relationships, which lead to a strong link and regulation of the healing knowledge, ecological knowledge, and human cultural heritage. The main object of this study was to understand how ethnomedicinal knowledge is transmitted among Bhil women, observed through their bonding with kin relatives and a general practice of communal life. It has been seen that Bhil women are



entrusted with the task that encompasses a total knowledge of herbs. Ethnomedicinal knowledge is transferred to kin and kith women relatives most of the time. There is a norm that teachers not to disclose this knowledge to men or individuals outside the tribal community. This type of transference of knowledge prevents the obliteration of this valuable knowledge. This analysis attempts to contribute to existing literature by examining how ethnobotanical knowledge is transmitted. Is there an inherited wealth of cultural knowledge that young would-be practitioners inherit, or is such inheritance of that particular medical knowledge a culmination of mutually reinforcing exchanges and interactions with peers, parents, and mothers? What is the relationship between the inheritability of knowledge and the potential loss of knowledge at the local level? This study has been designed to explain and delineate the mechanism of knowledge transfer related to traditional healing or learned healing. In the traditional knowledge system, Bhil women are considered to have acquired leadership mainly in ethnomedicinal plant extract. The health care system, practiced as a sporadic profession, is communal in nature, and remedies for primary health care are being approved as safe, with the healing power residing in the harmony between humans, nature, and culture. With modern feminist thinking, expertise is being sought by women who inform and shape birthing, prenatal care, and the delivery process. They are being heeded, and women are being made available as 'culture expert'.

METHOD AND MATERIALS:

The study design for qualitative research on traditional tribal healers and their healing practices was carefully crafted the richness and complexity of their knowledge and practice. The core objective of the study is to in depth exploration of socio-cultural status of traditional healers, numerous elements for which community seek their assistance, diverse techniques and processes employed in healing of diseases and the scope of integration of these traditional healers with public healthcare. The research is based on case study of different tribal communities to gaining in dept knowledge about traditional healers who play a central role in community well -being and continue to practice their healing arts and knowledge about for their strong connection to nature, Ancestral worship and profound healing knowledge passed done through generation. Access to the tribal communities and healers was facilitated through extensive engagement with community leaders and youth Clube. The study employed various aspects of traditional healing practice. community perspective, and social norms associated with such Practice.

OBJECTIVE:

1. To know the socio-economic structure of Bhil tribe



2. To know the traditional methods of treating diseases and how it affects in their life.
3. To know how future generation will utilize the traditional knowledge for their livelihood.

SOCIO ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF BHEEL TRIBE:

The Bhil tribe, predominantly found in India, has a diverse socioeconomic structure. Traditionally, they were primarily agrarian, relying on subsistence farming for their livelihood. However, economic shifts and modernization have led to changes in their lifestyle.

- **Occupation:** Many Bhil community members engage in agriculture, cultivating crops like millet, maize, and pulses. Some have transitioned to other occupations, including labor work in nearby towns or cities.
- **Livelihood:** Livestock rearing is another integral part of their economy. Cattle, goats, and buffaloes are commonly raised for milk, meat, and as a source of additional income.
- **Forest-based Livelihood:** Given their historical connection to forested regions, some Bhil people still rely on forest resources for their livelihood. They might collect minor forest produce like fruits, nuts, and herbs.
- **Artisanal Activities:** In certain areas, the Bhil community is known for traditional artisanal skills, including pottery, basket weaving, and making handicrafts. These skills contribute to their economic sustenance.
- **Social Structure:** The Bhil society often has a decentralized social structure with a village-based community system. Decision-making is typically communal, and elders play a significant role in resolving disputes and guiding the community.
- **Education and Health:** Access to education and healthcare varies within the Bhil tribe, and efforts have been made to improve these aspects. Government and non-governmental organizations work towards providing education and healthcare facilities to Bhil communities.
- **Challenges:** Despite their rich cultural heritage, many Bhil communities face socio-economic challenges, including poverty, lack of infrastructure, and limited access to resources. Efforts are ongoing to address these issues through various developmental programs. It's important to note that the socio-economic structure of the Bhil tribe can vary across regions, and ongoing changes in the socio-economic landscape may impact their traditional way of life.

Bhil tribe and their indigenous knowledge about traditional medicine.



The Bhil tribe, like many indigenous communities, has its traditional medicine methods that are often rooted in nature and their deep understanding of local flora. Here are some aspects of traditional medicine practices within the Bhil tribe:

- **Herbal Remedies:** The Bhil people traditionally rely on various plants and herbs for medicinal purposes. Knowledge about the healing properties of local plants is passed down through generations, and certain individuals within the community may specialize in herbal medicine.
- **Spiritual Healing:** Traditional Bhil medicine often includes a spiritual dimension. Shamans or traditional healers may perform rituals and ceremonies to address not only physical but also spiritual and mental health issues. They believe that a balance of spiritual and physical wellbeing is crucial.
- **Use of Forest Resources:** Given their historical connection to forested regions, Bhil communities often use forest resources for medicinal purposes. They might collect herbs, roots, and other plant parts to prepare remedies for various ailments.
- **Healing Practices:** Traditional healing practices may involve a combination of herbal concoctions, rituals, chants, and specific dietary guidelines. The focus is often on holistic well-being, addressing the root cause of ailments rather than just symptoms.
- **Role of Traditional Healers:** Within the community, there are individuals recognized for their knowledge and skills in traditional medicine. These healers play a crucial role in diagnosing and treating illnesses, often employing a combination of empirical knowledge and spiritual insights.
- **Community Knowledge Sharing:** The transmission of traditional medical knowledge occurs within the community through oral traditions. Elders and experienced practitioners pass on their expertise to the younger generation, ensuring the continuity of these practices. While traditional medicine remains significant within the Bhil tribe, it's essential to recognize that access to modern healthcare services may coexist with these traditional practices. In some cases, there is a blending of traditional and modern medical approaches for a more comprehensive healthcare strategy. As with many indigenous communities, efforts are ongoing to preserve and respect traditional knowledge while addressing health challenges in a changing world.

Affection of ethnomedicine to Bhil livelihood:



Promoting the integration of ethnomedicine into the Bhil community's life involves a collaborative and culturally sensitive approach. Here are some strategies to effectively integrate ethnomedicine into the Bhil tribe's lifestyle:

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Approach the integration of ethnomedicine with cultural sensitivity, respecting the Bhil community's traditions, beliefs, and practices. Engage with community

leaders, elders, and traditional healers to understand their perspectives and ensure a respectful collaboration. • **Community Involvement:** Involve the Bhil community actively in the process. Seek their input, listen to their experiences, and involve them in decision-making regarding the incorporation of ethnomedicine into healthcare practices.

- **Education and Awareness:** Conduct educational programs to raise awareness about the value and benefits of ethnomedicine. This includes workshops, seminars, and informational materials that highlight the significance of traditional healing methods within the community. • **Documentation of Traditional Knowledge:** Work with the Bhil community to document their traditional knowledge related to ethnomedicine. This involves creating a repository of information about medicinal plants, healing practices, and traditional remedies. Ensure that this documentation is done collaboratively and ethically, respecting intellectual property rights • **Training Programs:** Provide training programs for healthcare professionals and community members to bridge the gap between traditional and modern medicine. This can include capacity-building initiatives for traditional healers and healthcare practitioners to enhance their skills and knowledge.

- **Research and Validation:** Collaborate with researchers to scientifically validate the effectiveness of ethnomedicine practices. This can contribute to integrating traditional knowledge into mainstream healthcare systems and gaining wider acceptance. • **Holistic Healthcare Approach:** Encourage a holistic approach to healthcare that integrates both traditional and modern medicine. Recognize the strengths of each system and promote a complementary approach that addresses the diverse healthcare needs of the Bhil community.

- **Healthcare Infrastructure Improvement:** Advocate for improved healthcare infrastructure within Bhil communities. This includes ensuring access to clean water, sanitation, and basic healthcare facilities, complementing traditional practices with modern healthcare when needed.



- **Policy Support:** Work with policymakers to incorporate ethnomedicine into broader healthcare policies. Advocate for the recognition and inclusion of traditional healing methods within national and regional healthcare frameworks.
- **Preservation of Bheel Culture:** Emphasize the preservation of Bhil culture alongside the integration of ethnomedicine. Recognize the interconnectedness of cultural identity and health, and support initiatives that contribute to the overall well-being of the community. By approaching the integration of ethnomedicine with cultural sensitivity, collaboration, and respect for the Bhil community's values, it is possible to create a healthcare model that combines the strengths of traditional and modern medicine for the benefit of the community.

Tribal traditional medicine in contemporary world.

Modern social changes can significantly impact tribal traditional medicine methods, including those practiced by tribes like the Bhil. Here are some ways in which these changes may influence traditional medicine:

- **Loss of Traditional Knowledge:** As modernization progresses, there is a risk of losing traditional knowledge related to medicinal plants and healing practices. Younger generations may be less inclined to learn and practice traditional medicine, leading to a decline in this valuable knowledge.
- **Cultural Shifts:** Modern social changes often bring about cultural shifts, and some traditional practices may be viewed as outdated or incompatible with contemporary lifestyles. This can result in a decreased reliance on traditional medicine in favor of modern healthcare solutions.
- **Environmental Impact:** Changes in land use, deforestation, and environmental degradation can affect the availability of medicinal plants used in traditional medicine. Loss of biodiversity and habitat changes may impact the accessibility of key ingredients for traditional remedies.
- **Accessor Modern Healthcare:** Improved accessor modern healthcare facilities can influence the reliance on traditional medicine. In some cases, tribal communities may increasingly turn to modern healthcare for immediate and specific medical needs.
- **Integration of Traditional and Modern Approaches:** Positive changes can occur through the integration of traditional and modern healthcare. Some tribal communities may adopt a more balanced approach, incorporating traditional medicine alongside modern treatments for a comprehensive healthcare strategy.



- **Healthcare Policies and Regulations:** Changes in healthcare policies and regulations can either support or hinder the practice of traditional medicine. Recognition and inclusion of traditional healing methods within official healthcare frameworks can contribute to their preservation.
- **Education and Awareness:** Modern education and awareness programs can play a role in preserving and revitalizing traditional medicine. By educating both community members and the broader society about the value of traditional healing practices, there can be increased appreciation and support for these methods .
- **Research and Validation:** Scientific research and validation of traditional medicine practices can enhance their credibility. Collaboration between traditional healers and researchers can lead to better understanding of the efficacy of traditional remedies, fostering greater acceptance.
- **Globalization Impact:** Increased connectivity and globalization can introduce external influences that may impact traditional practices. This could include the adoption of alternative healing methods or changes in lifestyle that affect health and well-being.
- **Community Empowerment:** Modern social changes can empower tribal communities to actively participate in decision-making about their healthcare practices. Inclusion and empowerment of community members in healthcare planning can contribute to the preservation adaptation of traditional medicine. In navigating these changes, it is essential to strike a balance that respects the cultural heritage of tribal communities while recognizing the benefits of modern healthcare. Collaborative efforts that involve the community, policymakers, healthcare professionals, and researchers can contribute to a sustainable and culturally sensitive approach to healthcare.

In conclusion, the intersection of the Bhil tribe, ethnomedicine, and modern changes presents both challenges and opportunities. As the Bhil community navigates the impacts of modernization, preserving their rich traditional ethnomedicine practices becomes crucial. Efforts should be directed towards documenting and passing down traditional knowledge, bridging generational gaps, and fostering a balanced integration with modern healthcare systems. Recognizing the cultural significance of traditional healing, empowering the community, and promoting environmental conservation are key aspects of ensuring the sustainability and resilience of Bhil ethnomedicine in the face of evolving social, cultural, and environmental dynamics. Through collaborative efforts, respect for cultural diversity, and thoughtful adaptation, it is possible to create a healthcare landscape that values and incorporates the strengths of both traditional and modern approaches for the holistic well-being of the Bhil tribe.



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