

HEALTH, CULTURE AND BEHAVIOUR: A BIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: This paper theoretically examines the Bio-Cultural approach to health that integrates perspectives of culture and behaviour. The genesis of Bio-Culturalism is based on different values and norms of society. Health is a Bio-Cultural aspect of human society. Health is an individual experience. Health is a key value which helps to holistic development of an individual. World Health Organization (WHO, 1948) defines “Health is a state of complex physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. The Bio-Cultural perspectives are the relationships between man, nature, health, culture and behaviour. Health is a biological and cultural construct of well-being. Bio-Cultural approach towards human health and behaviour that integrates perspectives from anthropological insights for critically examined to bring health equity among peoples in the world.

IndexTerms- Health, Culture, Behaviour, Well-being, Equity & Bio-Cultural.

1.INTRODUCTION

Human are the product of biology and culture that have shaped our evolutionary history over the last several million years. It is the changing interaction between biology and culture. Bio-cultural evolution is associated with biological and cultural dimensions of human evolution. Human evolution has two significant dimensions simultaneously. Man is a biological animal and on the other hand man is a socio-cultural animal. Therefore human development has biological and cultural dimensions. Bio-cultural studies are now recognized as a major concern for anthropologists. The bio-cultural perspective of “Tribal Health Behaviour” is one of the significant affairs of contemporary anthropological research. In this regard the emphases have been given by anthropologists to set forward holistic account of the concepts like health, disease, illness, sickness and behaviour. The health behaviour during illness and after getting relief from the illness is an individual’s experience. The health behaviour is controlled by the belief system and the perception regarding the disease experience by an individual. Health issues in the arena of 21st century are an important challenge for the world. Health development indicators highlight the index of health status. The index of health well-being is less compare to the national health well-being index. Health is one of the key indexes that determine the human development of a nation or state. Tribal health in the context of India with special reference to a particular topic of tribal health behaviour integrated the elements of society. Tribal health behavioural perspectives are based on their social belief and ethno-cultural practices which still prevalent among tribes of India. To understand health seeking behaviour which will be helpful to make plan interventions to improve tribal health status. Tribal health researcher should address the issues of inaccessible health equity among indigenous people in contemporary digital arena. The theory and practice of holistic health promotion is based on the behavioural interventions.

Since the nineteenth century bio-cultural approach has acted as an integrative intellectual approach within anthropology to achieve the core anthropological objectives of explaining human behaviour across time and space. Bio-cultural phenomena interaction between humans and cultural environments. Bio-cultural approach towards human health and behaviour that integrates perspectives from anthropological insights for critically examined to bring health equity among indigenous peoples. Bringing perspectives from anthropological insights into bio-cultural approaches to frame local situation in global context and examine human actions in ethno-ecological environment. Theory of bio-cultural diversity concept is based on the human experience in social and material context of that particular area. Bio-cultural concept concerned with the biological and socio-cultural aspects of

human behaviour which is one of the key elements of an individual and community. Health behaviour includes perception, knowledge, belief, attitude and practice of the people. Health behaviour has become an important component of health care practices which plays a key role to control epidemic and endemic diseases. Health seeking behaviour is an important aspect in health care management among individual and community people of a particular area. Health status of a community based on different socio-cultural beliefs, dimensions of treatment patterns and knowledge of behavioural aspects of health. The culture of community determined the health behaviour of the community in general and individual members in particular. The holistic concept of health culture and behaviour provides a framework for analyzing the work of anthropologists in the context of the tribal health. Hence the study of Bio-Cultural theory contributes to the understanding of contributions of anthropological knowledge on the etiology, theory of diseases, diagnosis, treatment of diseases and the behavioural practices among tribal people.

II. METHODOLOGY

Anthropology is well known for its holistic approach where a large number of key anthropological tools and techniques are used to collect and analyse the empirical data. The importance of anthropological review articles in health is increasing day by day to achieve equity and well-being. In this paper systematic review method used to synthesizes the content of the study.

III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

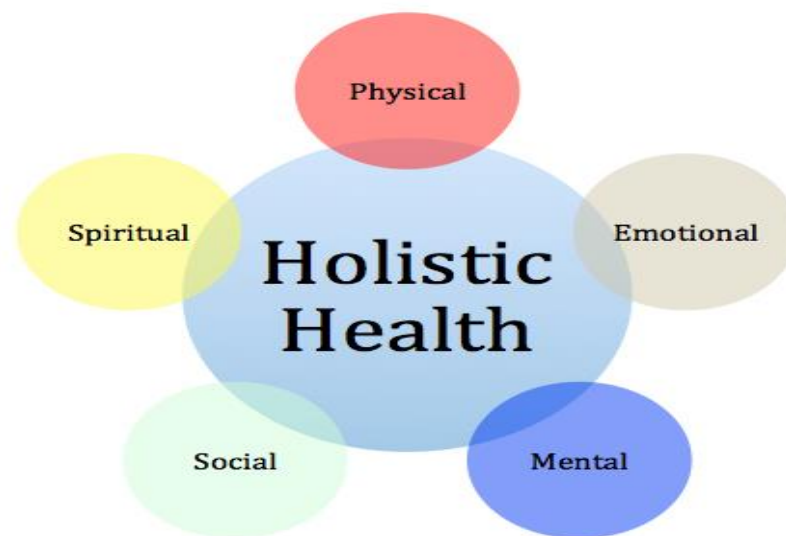
The paper highlights the Bio-Cultural theoretical discourse which based on ethno-ecological beliefs and practices in relation with various dimensions of health care behaviour among tribal peoples. (Thomas, 1998) explains the evolution paradigms of bio-cultural approaches in connections with demographic, environmental and epidemiological landscapes towards understanding of health, behaviour and population dynamics. Bio-cultural approach towards human health and behaviour that integrates perspectives from anthropological insights for critically examined to bring health equity among indigenous peoples in the world. (Thomas, 2016) discussed that bio-cultural anthropology has evolved over the past several decades in investigations of social and environmental transformation. Bio-culturalism explores how human biological characteristics influence through social behaviour and cultural traditions. (McLroy, & Townsend, 2015) pointed out the human bio-cultural diversity theory evolution as a part of ecological systems. Biological and behavioural approach is concerned with the interrelationships between populations and bio-environment. (Kumar, 2012) explained about the bio-cultural anthropology which is the scientific exploration of the relationships between human biology and culture. Bio-cultural anthropologists view culture as having several key roles in human biological variation. Culture shapes the peoples think about the world, altering their biology by influencing their behaviour. (Gandhi, Verma, & Dash, 2017) exploring the patterns and determinants of health care among three PVTGs viz; Paniyas, Kattaunayackans and Bettakurumbas in Nilgiri district of Tamilnadu. Kattunayackans health behaviour practices depend on magico-religious beliefs and indigenous medicines and Bettakurumbas and depend on institutional care. (Sridharan, & Kalpana, 2017) study was conducted among Muthuvan tribe and Malapulan hill tribe in the border of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Authors found that culture and tribal health are interlinked through bio-cultural approach. Tribal health is determined by their culture and behaviour pattern. (Rahman, Kielmann, Mcpake, & Normand, 2012) study was conducted among nine ethnic groups living in six districts of Bangladesh. Tribal people uses traditional practices seems to have an influence on their health care seeking behaviour and treatment of illness. Tribal communities have numerous rituals influenced the people in their choice of location for the process of healing and treatment. (Badami, 2011) study was conducted among the Paniya tribe of Wayanad, Kerala. They have biomedical treatments and ritual practices in their pursuit of health and well-being. The dynamic nature of Paniya attitudes towards health and well-being generates a complex set of behavioural aspects. (Das, & Ravindran, 2010) a cross-sectional community based study was conducted during the high malaria transmission season in Boudh district, Odisha. Nine respondents (six women and three men) did not take any action and ten (six women and four men) adopted self medication. About (37%) went to a government health centre for treatment and about (24.3%) sought treatment from a community health volunteer. However, those with fever and cold (32.3%) went to a less qualified provider (LQP) for treatment despite the presence of community health volunteers (CHV) appointed by the

NVBDCP. The community has more faith on the less qualified providers despite their irrational treatment and less trust on the community volunteers even though they provide drugs as per the national guidelines. (Acharya, 2012) discussed about the health dynamics condition which combining individuals, society and adaptation behaviour to the environment. Health is an index of adaptation. Kondh prefer to practice traditional methods for the treatment of diseases under their traditional health care system. Their cultural tradition has bound them to use ethno-medicines and follow the instruction of medicine man.

Dimensions of Health: According to Personal Development Health and Physical Education (PDHPE, 2013) defined holistic health has five dimensions; physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social.

- I. **Physical Health:** The physical dimension of health refers to the bodily aspect of health. Physical health can impact the different dimensions of health.
- II. **Mental Health:** Mental health to the cognitive aspect of health. It refers to the person's ability to use their brain towards well-being.
- III. **Emotional Health:** Emotional health is about the person's mood or general emotional state. It is our ability to recognized and express feelings adequately.
- IV. **Spiritual Health:** Spiritual health relates to our sense of overall purpose in life.
- V. **Social Health:** The social health dimension of health refers to our ability to make and maintain meaningful relationships with others. Positive social health contains better relationships and holding social and cultural bonds.

Figure I: Dimensions of Health



Determinants of Health: Scientist defined five determinants of health of an individual and population i.e. physical, biology, behavioural, social and cultural factors.

- I. **Physical Factor:** The physical factor is the radiant energy of the sun, which is ultimately essential for all life on earth.
- II. **Biological Factor:** Biological determinants of health are inherent or acquired. Immunity or resistance to pathogens is an identical important determinant of good health.
- III. **Behavioural Factor:** Behavioural determinants are associated with certain diseases with particular personality types have been observed empirically for centuries. The mode of people behaves affects their health in many ways.
- IV. **Social Factor:** Social factors that influence or determine health are also complex. Epidemiologic facts that good health is determined at least in part by social linkup.

- V. **Cultural Factor:** Culture is defined as the set of norms and values of society. Culture influence behaviour through custom. People's value may be the most significant component of culture that affects behaviour and through behaviour health.

Divisions of Health Behaviour: According to (Alonzo, 1993) pointed out four different types of Health Behaviour i.e. Preventive health behaviour, Detective health behaviour, Promotion health behaviour and Protective health behaviour.

- I. **Preventive Health Behaviour:** Preventive health behaviour that is to keep oneself away from health hazards and prevent from possible ailment.
- II. **Detective Health Behaviour:** Detective health behaviour is manifested when individuals engage in active medical screening to detect or identify the real or potential risk of getting caught by any disease.
- III. **Promotion Health Behaviour:** Health promotion behaviour is to undertake certain healthy activities and adopt healthy life styles to maintain and promote existing health conditions.
- IV. **Protective Health Behaviour:** Health protective behaviour that the health protection occurs at macro has to be accounted for protecting people any suspected health problems.

The present paper attempts to assess the bio-cultural domain of health knowledge in respective of tribal health seeking behaviour. Health is a biological and cultural concept which is varying from individual to individual. Health is the individual experiences of well-being, which is based on the state of mind. Health-seeking behaviour is a complex phenomena which is a subject matter of different disciplines like health sciences, social sciences, behaviour sciences and cultural epidemiology etc.

IV. CONCLUSION

In the contemporary period tribal health issues is crucial for the anthropologists whose focused area is to highlights and put forward the best remedies suitable for the community and helps in policy formations and assessment etc. Anthropologist interested in the study of tribal health seeking behaviour which is a part of tribal culture. The holistic concept of bio-cultural genesis of health care gives an idea for examining the piece of research work of anthropologist in the domain of tribal health care practices. It also traces the degree for future research in the area identified with bio-cultural well-being of tribal health. Health behaviour of tribal people is associated with their own ethno-cultural system.

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