Chapter III

Health to Ill-health

As often pointed out by anthropologists, any society’s medical system cannot be studied in isolation from other aspects of that society, especially its cultural, religious, political and economic organization. It is interwoven with these, and is based on the same assumptions, values and view of their world. Understanding ethnomedical approach of a people involves, viewing medical problems as socio-cultural phenomena. It is evident from the various studies conducted that ethnomedical research provides useful insight into health needs assessment of the people particularly in cross-cultural setting (Young 1976). The ethnomedical approach itself, is to study how a particular group of people recognize health and ill-health and to understand how they deal with ill-health conditions and what they do to prevent ill-health.

Pokarna (1994) denotes that culture defines health, disease, illness, and the belief systems regarding the causes and practices associated with it and also the ‘sick role’. Understanding health and illness among Kumbri Marathi almost amounts to the understanding of not only the beliefs about disease causation but also, a great deal about their worldview. For them, dealing with ill-health is a continuum; from a point which could be a condition of ill-health leading to a point where one actually calls it as ‘ill-health’ condition and resorts to various measures to restore health. In the process of understanding this continuum, one also comes to learn about preventive measures, in the form of rituals, taboos, food habits, and religious practices.

For Kumbri Marathi a healthy person, is one who is not suffering from problems 
tondar like, economic problems, quarrels with siblings or others in the settlement; nor suffering from 
sik which is supernaturally caused that is not affected by spirit 
maru or evil-eye 
chāk, or psychological disturbance kitkiti, and 
roga which is physiological in nature caused due to natural reasons.
This reveals that, it is not only physiological well-being that determines health but also economic, supernatural and psychological well-being. Economic well-being is involved because if a person is suffering from financial problems, it is going to create anxiety мансик and worries чinta which will again lead to kitikiti and further, if a person is suffering economically, then the person will not be able to afford health care which in turn aggravates the ill-health condition. When a person is affected by spirit мaru or evil eye чак, not only will it create physiological problems but also the symptoms present may not respond to treatment provided at home or by the doctor. The presence of the effect itself shows that there is imbalance in the relationship with the 'supernatural world'. This imbalance may be, because of the non-observance of taboos or the effect of evil eye. Мaru also affects because it is its nature to cause trouble to the people. The natural environment is also a crucial factor according to Kumbri Marathi in influencing health as well as ill-health.

Choudhury (1986) says most of the studies made on tribal communities in India have indicated the importance of understanding the socio-cultural dimensions of health and disease. A number of deities are often associated with disease or disease is often connected with the interference of supernatural causes and the nature of treatment in such cases is also made accordingly. In fact, there is a great need to understand and identify the cause of illness as the nature of
treatment is intimately connected with the cause identified. Some of the studies on
tribal health have also indicated the importance of understanding socio-cultural
dimensions. Among most of the tribal communities, a number of specialists are
present from whom services are taken at the time of illness. Sometimes, the priest,
diviner, and the medicine man are different persons; sometimes the same person
performs duties in both the fields. This perhaps indicates the close relationship
between cultural aspects and disease and treatment.

For Kumbri Marathi, the healthy working of the body on the natural level is
believed to be dependent on the equilibrium between elements like hot garmi and
cold thandi. To a great extent, this equilibrium is believed to be dependent on
external and internal forces. The external forces are ecological factors, and diet.
The internal forces are roga prakriti (body constitution prone to diseases), raggat
dosh (impurity of blood), hot and cold nature of the body and age.

The departure from healthy condition can be categorized according to
Kumbri Marathi as follows:

Health → Bejār
       / \                     / \                      / \  
       Sik             Bejār  Roga  Sik

This categorization is dependent on the causative factors, and symptoms,
which in turn guide the treatment of the health problem. The label attached to the
condition therefore, is crucial in order to understand why a particular line of
treatment is sought for a particular ill-health condition.

Bejār, sik and roga are states of being, which are regarded as away from a
healthy condition. It is essential to first understand the meaning of bejār, sik and
roga as understood and used by Kumbri Marathi. In this direction, an
understanding of the socio-cultural approach to illness in ethnomedicine is
essential. It may be gained by contrasting the concepts of ‘illness’ and ‘disease’ in
ethnomedical perspective.
Fabrega’s eminent distinction between the two emphasizes that, whereas the criteria used by nonprofessionals in identifying illness are social and psychological, disease in biomedicine is an abnormality in the structure and/or function of any system of the body, and evidences of biological system malfunction serve as indicators of disease (cited in Lieban 1973).

According to Kumbri Marāthi, a health problem before it is diagnosed as either illness sik or disease roga is referred to as bejār. They make a differentiation of ill-health conditions caused due to natural and supernatural reasons. Thus, using the people’s categories we can attribute health problems caused due to supernatural reasons as ‘sik’ and those due to natural reasons as ‘roga’. In the discussions therefore, the term illness will be used to refer to supernaturally caused conditions and disease to naturally caused conditions. Etiology has been the guiding factor in differentiating and use of the concepts of illness and disease. Therefore, minor ailments, whether supernaturally or naturally caused, are referred to as bejār. It is neither a healthy state nor an ill-health condition. Bejār may not necessarily result in either sik or roga. Or it may also result in sik or roga, in spite of seeking treatment. Bejār can be said to be an initial stage of any ill-health condition.

When a person is in a state of bejār, he resorts to home remedies gharvakārt since the person is feeling ill-at-ease. As a result of which, he may be cured. Bejār can be managed at the level of home remedy itself. But if he is not cured within the expected time period for the particular ill-health condition, then there is a speculation as to what must be wrong with him. Therefore if bejār continues it may result in sik or roga in spite of treatment taken. There are often suggestions and advices from neighbors, kin, elders, and peers as to what must be wrong.
Then, a person suffering from the ill-health condition tries to know whether the condition is the result of spirits mârava (when more than one spirit). Hence, he seeks the diviner gâdiga. Diviner through the supernatural process, is able to tell him whether or not his condition is due to malevolent spirits. If it is due to the affliction of spirits, then the label of the condition shifts from bejâr to sik. In case, diviner finds out that the condition is not due to spirits, then the person is directed to indigenous medicine man vaktaffi or the modern doctor dactar. In this case, the label of the condition shifts from bejâr to roga. Based on the symptoms of roga people seek indigenous medicine man vaktaffi or modern doctor for diagnosis and treatment. If not recovered at this stage, they shift from natural to supernatural treatment.

Whereas roga ‘disease’, is believed to be physiological in nature. It is believed to be caused due to natural causes like seasonal changes, changes in body temperature (hot-cold), heavy work, irregularity in food consumption, impurity of blood ragâtdosh and rogâprakruti, a body constitution that is susceptible to disease.

Conditions, which are considered as minor diseases bejâr are cold, cough, and fever, different kinds of aches and pains, wounds, and boils, vomiting, dysentery, weakness, worms, indigestion. Diseases, which are considered as major roga are, severe respiratory problems, fever, epilepsy, skin diseases and piles. The minor diseases bejâr can also become roga if they are not cured within the expected period of time. Or they are thought to be the initial symptoms, which could develop into a major disease.

Apart from the minor diseases mentioned above, bejâr also refers to conditions when a person experiences the following symptoms and are generally identified as symptoms leading to sik. The person does not feel well enough to do any work in the house or in the field, is not interested in talking to others, always feels like sleeping, has an aversion to food, experiences vomiting sensation and emotionally mânśik the person does not feel well. If the person is exhibiting such symptoms, people generally remark saying ‘ekka mâru jhâla kây’ meaning ‘has he been affected by mâru?’. Apart from the symptoms that are believed to be
typical effects of māru, the effect of māru can also produce symptoms, which appear to be caused due to natural reasons.

When a person is not feeling well, that is in the stage of bejār, home remedy is employed as the first resort depending on symptoms that he exhibits, such as the nature of pain, or hotness, or appearance of ailing part. These home remedies may be given by laypersons like elderly family members such as parents and grandparents. Generally when it comes to home remedies, and when it is a question of warding-off of evil eye, it is the elderly female members of the family who provide treatment. Also when the indigenous medicine vakāt has to be prepared with the herbs available in the house, or in the vicinity of the house, women of the household provide the remedies. However, when herbs have to be brought from the forest, men bring the medicines and women prepare them. The experiences of all members of the family come into play in providing remedies.

In case, this home remedy does not bring the desired effect, the treatment may involve indigenous medicine gāvantivakāt from medicine man or modern medicine kampanyvakāt purchased in the pharmacy or going to the modern doctor in addition to home remedy gharvakāt.

In spite of these measures, if the person does not recover, then, people seek supernatural diagnosis nota to find the cause for bejār. If a person is affected by spirit, then the state of being is considered as sik. If the person is not affected by spirit, then it is considered as roga. The label given to the condition not only identifies the departure from health as a particular ill-health condition that is either as sik or roga, but also indicates the kind of treatment to be resorted to.

It is however always possible to know whether bejār will turn into roga or sik. Only after the condition has progressed, one can label it as either sik or roga and seek the appropriate treatment. There is uncertainty about the condition, and about what is to be expected subsequently during the state of bejār. However, bejār related to seasonal changes or, work, can be identified in the initial stage itself by symptoms they exhibit.

For bejār caused by seasonal changes and work, treatment involves taking home remedy or going to the modern doctor. If the person does not recover by
taking the indigenous medicine or by going to the doctor, then nota is sought for. If the person is suffering from symptoms like becoming unconscious, talking in sleep; scolding others without any reason; not responding to others when he is spoken to; such symptoms are considered as symptoms of sik in the stage of bejār itself. For this, they seek the diagnosis and treatment through nota. If the person does not recover by the performance of nota, then they seek medicine from the medicine man or from modern doctor. Therefore, the label for a condition can shift with the kind of treatment sought. It is not always fixed through the entire period of treatment.

Honigmann (1967) points out that there is ample evidence that people, who utilize both modern and indigenous medical systems tend to place illnesses in two broad categories that is, those that are likely to be cured by a physician and those more likely to respond to the ministrations of a healer. But considerable allowance must be made for flexibility in such perceptions. The course of an illness, the outcome of previous treatment for the same condition, and a variety of other factors may cause the patient to redefine it, and shift from one medical system to another.

Within the indigenous system also, one shifts from natural to supernatural treatment back to natural in case of lack of remission from the symptoms. As a result, there is shift in the label of the condition.
Leiban (1973) indicating to such behavior among different cultures, points out that, considerable allowance must be made for flexibility of perception of the ill-health condition. In the course of an illness, the outcome of the previous treatment for the same condition, and a variety of other factors may cause a person to redefine and shift from one medical system to another. While it is true that, a label guides the sort of practitioner to consult, it is not necessarily fixed for the entire duration of the illness.

It is of importance to note that two people suffering from the same ill-health condition can be given different labels for the condition they are suffering from. For one, the cause may be natural and for the other, supernatural. Therefore, labels are indicators of what sort of ill-health condition a person is suffering from. This is crucial, because it indicates the perceptions about the cause and the next course of action people are likely to take. But in modern medicine there is uniform labeling irrespective of the cause of the condition. As a result, an outsider observing the treatment seeking behavior of the people may find it difficult to find a pattern.

3.1. Etiology of disease

It is etiology that guides the labeling of the condition, kind of healer and medication to be sought, and thus the whole range of people’s treatment seeking behavior. In case of conditions suspected to be supernatural in origin, it is the specialist, that is the diviner, who is able to diagnose the cause of the condition. In case of naturally caused conditions, the etiology is generally a common knowledge. Only if the disease is not cured after taking different home remedies that, one goes either to an indigenous medicine man or to a modern doctor for diagnosis and treatment.

Thus, based on the severity of the condition, and also depending on whether a condition responds to or not to the treatments given, people categorize conditions as minor bejār and major roga/sik. The diviner gādiga can diagnose the condition as sik if it is supernatural in origin. The other circumstances under which a condition can be labeled as ‘supernatural’ are, when they exhaust all possible
resorts, or when the condition does not respond to any kind of natural treatment, and also when the person is experiencing repeated ill-health condition.

People believe that symptoms appearing to be naturally caused can also have supernatural origin. Therefore, seasonal or work related ill-health conditions for instance, can be also due to the effect of supernatural forces. There are also symptoms, which are purely indicative of supernatural origin. It indicates that up to a point in the treatment seeking, one may consider a condition to be naturally caused (that is when the treatment being given is natural), but when one has tried out all resorts, the explanation is sought in the supernatural domain. Beyond a certain limit, which can vary from disease to disease, the cause ‘becomes’ supernatural in origin. It is essential for the people to give an explanation for the way in which the condition is caused and responds to the treatment not only to reduce the level of anxiety but also to resort to alternative measures. This explanation is derived from the explanatory model of diseases of the people.

In the process, if the diviner or indigenous medicine man is not able to cure the condition, the blame is not on the healer, but on the supernatural powers. It is so because the spirits afflicting may be so strong that, the medication given by the medicine man may have no effect on the afflicted individual. Further, the spirits may also be powerful beyond the power of the diviner. Therefore, diviner is not able to find whether or not spirit has on one hand, affected and on the other, the spirit is powerful in nature to ward-off. As a result, the person suffering does not recover from the condition.

Foster and Anderson (1978) have distinguished two major systems of disease causality beliefs- ‘personalistic and naturalistic’. Although this division oversimplifies the matters somewhat, broadly speaking, these two systems are similar to the causality beliefs of Kumbri Marathi. In a personalistic system, illness is thought to be purposely caused by a supernatural being (such as a evil spirit, or ghost) or a human being (such as a sorcerer or a witch). According to Foster and Anderson, ‘the sick person literally is a victim, the object of aggression or punishment directed specifically against him alone’ (1978:53). Personalistic belief systems predominate among non-western people living in small-scale
societies throughout much of Africa, south of the Sahara, in the pacific region, and among the tribal people in Asia. By contrast belief systems based on naturalistic causes explain illness in impersonal, systematic terms. Such systems commonly posit that good health depends on maintaining equilibrium within the body. When natural forces such as heat or cold or internal forces upset this equilibrium, it results in illness (Foster and Anderson 1978).

Among the Kumbri Marathi the personalistic system consists of spirits, deities, evil eye. However, the diseases are not caused solely due to personalistic reasons. Natural causes are also a part of the beliefs regarding disease causation. While the personalistic causes attribute the ill-health condition to spirit affliction or evil eye, the naturalistic causes owe them to different natural causes like hot-cold climate, food. Thus, it is not a cut and dry classification of only personalistic or naturalistic system as in case of Kumbri Marathi and other tribes both naturalistic and personalistic systems exist together. Kumbri Marathi classify the etiology of the minor and major diseases as follows:

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Disease roga

Work and Season related diseases

Gender related diseases

Food related diseases

Diseases related to aging
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Sometimes work related, food related and season related problems overlap because economic activities, food habits are related to seasonal changes thus causing specific health problems. The imbalance in the hot and cold equilibrium is the major factor leading health problems in case of many diseases caused due to work, season, and food.
3.1.1. Work and season related diseases

Katarley

*Katarley* means a cut. While working with sickle *koyto* during the agricultural work, and while collecting forest produce or while doing any other work involving sickle, there are chances of one getting hurt. It is believed to be a common occupational hazard. Cuts are also believed to occur while scraping the betel-nut in large quantities in the betel-nut season, while chopping fuel wood.

Sickle is sharp and can cause a cut very easily. If one gets cut by a sickle, first they try to stop the bleeding. If there is heavy blood loss, it is believed to lead to weakness *asakta*.

Kasu

*Kasu* (body pain/joint pain) is a common ill-health condition *bejár*. *Kasu* is generally found among people engaged in economic activities which involve physical exertion. The economic activities of the people require them to carry heavy weights on their head for long distances in forest in order to bring home the forest produce. They fetch from the forest, materials like cane *betta*, soap nut *shimble*, wild fruits called *watehuli*, *uppangi* and firewood. Traveling to and fro, for fetching these forest produce involves a walk up and down the hill in forest area. This is believed to result in *kasu*.

Carrying heavy loads on the head is believed to result in the blood *raggat* becoming clotted in the neck joints, leading to *kasu* in the neck region. *Kasu* also refers to a condition wherein there is pain in the joints, it is also caused when a person falls. Because of the fall, blood clots in the body part where the fall has made an impact. Pain all over the body is caused due to physical exertion is also called *kasu*.

Gyas

Another common ill-health condition is *gyas*, which is a corrupt form of the word ‘gas’. The cause is heavy work without rest in forest and in field and not taking food regularly. People categorize *gyas* as work related health problem as well as food related problem. The person suffering from *gyas* experiences gurgling sounds *guchugud* in the stomach.
When people go to the forest for collecting forest produce or for hunting, they travel long distances in the forest and spend a great deal of time in the forest before returning home. During such periods, there is an irregularity in the food consumption. The irregularity in food consumption is believed to cause gyas. It is also believed that symptoms similar to gyas may also be caused due to rench (evil eye). It is believed that gyas can also lead to body pain kasu.

Dolāṭ pol padata

Dolāṭ phol padata can be literally translated as 'flower in the eyes'. In the beginning of this condition, there is a pricking sensation and, eyes become reddish. According to the medicine man, this may continue for a long duration. Kumbri Marathi believe that this is caused after the harvesting because, the husk of the paddy enters in the eyes and may lead to dolāṭ phol padata. Gradually, a thin layer is said to develop on the eyeball and the person slowly looses eyesight.

Mulavadi

Mulavadi (piles) is another ill-health condition, which is associated with work and it is considered as roga (major disease) because, it causes a great deal of physical problems. It is believed to be caused by the increased heat garmi in the body, due to sitting in one place for work for a long duration of time. People sit in a place for long durations of time when they are making baskets, weaving mats. This sitting for long time leads to garmi in the body and causing garmi is pushed to the anus. If a person has a hot body constitution garmi he is supposed to consume cold producing food to maintain the equilibrium. In case this care is not taken, it results in piles.

Jar

Jar (fever) is a common ill-health condition in rainy pāvasāl and winter seasons nivāl. It can be minor or major depending on the nature of the cause. It is generally said to be accompanied by head ache and body ache. Fever is caused both by the effect of māru, that is supernaturally, and also naturally, mainly through changes in climatic condition fever is also caused due to change in drinking water and changes in food. It is believed that fever is caused more often between the months of September and January because, it is the period when this
climatic conditions change swiftly. Unlike other seasons the changes are so sudden that it affects the body. That is, it becomes cloudy and clears up and this goes on continuously. As a result, of the fluctuations in the temperature caused due to clouds, body is said to experience hot-cold imbalance. It is believed that when a person is in the sun’s heat, then the person’s body becomes hot and when there are clouds shadowing the sun, the body becomes cold. Due to these continuous changes in body, fever is caused. During this season, people are busy with harvesting and the changes in climate causes people to suffer from fever.

During the same time, that is through September to January fish and crabs become affected by diseases. As a result, eating the affected fish and crabs, can also cause fever. People believe that the pesticides tutte used for betel-nut and for other crops, get mixed with water which flows down the field terraces and enters into streams and river (pesticides are used so that crops and betel-nuts do not get affected by pest infestation). This affects the fish and crab and they get a certain kind of disease. During this season, Aghanashini River slowly dries up. Crabs and fish enter in whatever water that remains in the river. When people of Angane and Alave settlements which are situated on the banks of Aghanashini catch these fish and crabs and eat them, they get affected by fever and stomach ache.

The supernatural cause for fever during this season is that with the beginning of the festival of mahānāvami (which lasts for a duration of nine days celebrated in the month of October where in pantheon of Kumbri Marāṭhi deities are worshipped), the spirits which are in the process of being exorcised become free from the control of deities. The deities are said to let free all the spirits, which are in the process of being exorcised. For these nine days, the spirits as Kumbri Marāṭhi say, do not come under the control of the diviner. Kumbri Marathi say that there are more health problems during this period due to the affliction of theses wandering spirits. One of the most common health problems caused due to affliction during this period is said to be fever.

Thandi

Thandi (common cold) is said to be a common as well as minor disease. When body temperature does not change according to the changes in the seasonal
temperature, then one is likely to be affected by thandi. It is also believed that drinking water from different places can also cause thandi. Water at different places is believed to be of different nature. Since a person is adapted to the drinking water from one place, change in the drinking water is said to cause cold. People believe that thandi is not a major health problem, and hence generally, a person affected by thandi recovers within a week. It is believed that people get thandi during rainy season because water which flows through the forest area gets mixed with the stream water which people generally drink. The water flowing from the forest is said to be not as clear and clean as the stream water. It is said that whenever a person is affected by thandi, generally it is accompanied by fever also.

**Päykusale**

Päykusale is a kind of nanj. Nanj is a term used to refer to condition wherein, the wounds do not heal as quickly as they are expected to heal. It is believed to intensify during the rainy season. ‘Päykusale’ refers to ‘decay of feet’ because of wounds. Due to päykusale, the skin of feet and skin in between the toes get affected by the nanj.

Since the rainy season is a busy agricultural season, people work in the field for a longer duration. Working in the fields logged with water is believed to result in the skin peeling off and feet becoming affected by wounds.

The skin of feet and skin in between the toes are affected. The reason for the cause of päykusale is believed to be the manure säre which people put in the fields. Säre, which they use, is a mixture of cattle dung, cattle urine and leaves. They cut stems of trees and put the leaves on the floor of the cattle shed. The cattle step and lie down on them. The leaves also get mixed with dung and urine and small microorganism kirami are also believed to be present in it. It is this mixture which is used as manure affects the feet.

Further, during winter and summer season, leaves fall in the forest and in rainy season when they decay, it is believed that kirami grow. The rainwater flows from the forest to the fields carrying water mixed with these decayed leaves. When they work in the fields, the feet are in constant contact with the water. The kirami
in the water affect the skin of the feet and the skin in-between the toes. It is believed that kirami eat the upper layer of the skin and as a result, the skin becomes affected and turns reddish in color.

**Kurvai**

*Kurvai* is a common skin disease during the rainy season. During the rainy season, the feet are in contact with muddy water. As a result, soil enters the toenails and this soil is believed to have *kirami* in it. And when it collects in the nails it causes *kurvai*. *Kurvai* are small wounds with pus found on both sides of the big toe *pāyachenākha*. When affected by *kurvai*, the toenail has to be cut or entirely removed.

As a preventive measure, people generally clean the toenail after work at night, or whenever they are sitting and talking. They remove whatever soil has entered into the nail with the help of needle *soyi*.

**Dās**

*Dās* (cough) is said to be seasonal as well as caused due to consuming foods fried in oil during the festivals and due to consuming food or fruits sour in nature. It is believed that if the person's body temperature does not adapt to the seasonal changes in the external heat and cold, the effect is formation of *darkāl* phlegm, which can lead to cough. If the person is affected by cough he generally has phlegm *darakāl* and if the person is also experiencing wheezing, the person is advised to spit phlegm *darakāl* because, if it is swallowed, cough does not get cured quickly. It is believed that if person swallows the phlegm it may lead to the chest ache.

If cough is left untreated then it can lead to *sukkedās*. Also it caused due to failure of the body to adapt itself to the changing climatic conditions. In *sukkedās* which is dry cough along with cough, there is wheezing but there is no *darakāl*. In *sukkedās*, *sukke* means dry and *dās* means cough. Sukkedās persists for a longer duration when compared to *dās*. If the person is not cured quickly and wheezing persists, the person may experience pain in the chest and stomachache because of coughing. *Sukkedās* is said to be found often among breast feeding children. It is believed that the excessive breast milk leads to *sukkedās*. 
Teebee

It is through modern doctor that Kumbri Marathi come to know about tuberculosis. They consider it as sukkedas and in the process of treating sukkedas, after exhausting all resorts at the level of home remedy, indigenous medicine and supernatural healing, when the condition is not cured, they go to modern doctor. It is at this level that it is diagnosed as teebee (tuberculosis). When a person works for long duration of time without sufficient food in the day and suffers from a long period of cough, it is believed to result in teebee. It is not initially diagnosed as teebee because, it is believed to be sukkedas. When one seeks modern doctor after indigenous medicines, doctor suspects the condition to be tuberculosis. Then the modern doctor prescribes phlegm and urine tests and depending on the results, diagnoses that the person is suffering from tuberculosis teebee. It is from the doctor that they come to know that a person is suffering from teebee. The name also suggests that it is not a native word but an acronym of T.B.

Kapate

Kapate is mainly found among children. This is believed to be a seasonal disease. It is found at the end of winter and beginning of the summer seasons. It is said to be caused due to increased heat garmi in the body caused due to change in the season. When a child is affected by kapate, the region around and below the cheek becomes swollen beeg. The person affected experiences pain in the affected region. The swollen part becomes hard and this will be known by touching the region. Hardness confirms whether or not the person is suffering from kapate.

Poṭṭān dukta

Poṭṭān dukta (stomachache) is found more during the months of October, November, and December because of eating crab and fish. It is believed that, during this period crabs and fish become diseased. They become diseased because pesticides used for crops and betel-nut, gets mixed with water in the stream. By eating these affected fish and crab, people suffer from stomachache.

Kurli

Kurli is a disease occurring at the end of the winter season. Kurli in Kumbri Marathi means a crab. Since the palm of the person affected by kurli looks like a
crab, it is called *kurli*. The palm swells on both sides and it fills up with puss and blood. *Kurli* is believed to be caused due to increase of heat *garmi* in the body. Around the end of winter it is believed to become hotter day-by-day and as a result of which heat also increases in the body resulting in *kurli*.

*Bāvu*

*Bāvu* is found mainly among the children. The region under arm becomes swollen due to *bāvu* and gradually becomes like a boil. The boil is said to be very hard initially and within four days or so it gets filled with puss. It is caused due to heat producing food. It is believed that infants before six months that is the breast feeding infants are not affected by *bāvu* because the breast milk does not cause heat in the body. The chances of *bāvu* increases once the infant is started supplementary feeding.

*Jar, takliputata and angdukta*

*Jar* fever, *takliputata* headache and *angdukta* body pain may also occur together. The *angdukta* caused when a person has fever is different from *kasu*. Body pain present as a result of *kasu* is due to physical exertion. Where as changes in climatic condition lead to increase of heat in the body and the increased heat in the body is believed to cause *takliputata* and *angdokat* accompanied by fever. Or, if a person eats more of fruits sour in nature causes *jar, takliputata* and *angdokata* are believed to be caused.

*Dhātu*

*Dhātu* is associated with strength in both men and women. The loss of *dhātu* is said to be experienced through excessive sweating and among boys through ejaculation (wet dream) during dream, and among women through the menstrual blood. This is said to be caused due to increased heat *garmi* in the body.

Excessive loss of *dāthu* may lead to infertility among men and women. It is said that it can lead to death also. The condition is said to be difficult to diagnose among women, because *dhātu* is expelled through the menstrual blood. Excessive heat in the body of the menstruating woman may cause the loss of *dhātu*. 
Hagvan and Vänti

Hagvan (diarrhea) and vänti (vomiting) are said to be caused due to increased heat in the body, drinking water which is not clean and also due to indigestion. Diarrhea and vomiting are said to be more at the end of summer and also at the beginning of rainy season. At the beginning of rainy season the stream water gets mixed with water flowing through the forest which is muddy, and considered unclean.

3.1.2. Gender related disease

Chavi

Chavi is a condition found among pregnant women. As a result of chavi the woman may experience miscarriage holan or the infant born to her may die within two years. Chavi is considered as disease roga and, if miscarriage is believed to be the effect of māru then it is called holan. In case a woman experiences three miscarriages due to chavi, it is considered that she has chavi prakruti a body constitution prone to chavi.

Chavi is categorized into two types; they are, gandchavi and hennchavi. In case of gandchavi, if the pregnant woman has not undergone chavi treatment after she became pregnant, then when a male baby is born to her, it dies within two years. In case of hennchavi it is believed that if female baby is born it also dies within two years. The effect of chavi is identified on the basis of the color of dead fetus (in case of miscarriage). The color of the fetus will be blackish, especially the palms. In case of a newborn baby, the body, especially palms become blackish in color. If the fetus has not turned blackish in color, then it is considered as miscarriage holan, which is caused due to the māru.

The treatment for chavi is sought in the second or third pregnancy, because it is confirmed by then that a woman has chavi prakruti. The treatment is sought in the fifth month of pregnancy because chavi affected woman gets severe abdominal pain along with fever jar. If the woman has experienced miscarriage without these symptoms then they seek nota to know the cause for the miscarriage. It is believed that spirit of a dead woman hennugole, who had experienced chavi or miscarriage, or a strong malevolent spirit called devati can cause holan. If diviner gādiga finds
out that a spirit has afflicted, then he wards-off the spirit, so that it does not afflict her again.

If the woman experiences miscarriage before fifth month of her pregnancy then it is not possible to identify whether it is chavi or not. It is so because the fetus is still in the shape of a mango ambait and the formation of the limbs has not yet taken place. It is believed that the formation of hand and leg takes place in the fetus in the fifth month. And since the effect of chavi is identified on the basis of color of the palms, it is not possible to detect it if the miscarriage takes place within the fifth month. It is believed that if the mother of the woman who, has miscarried had suffered from this disease then, it is possible to diagnose the condition as chavi after the first miscarriage itself. It is believed to pass on from mother to daughter. Therefore, in such cases irrespective of the month in which miscarriage takes place, it is diagnosed as chavi. In the first pregnancy itself, it is possible to identify chavi, if the woman experiences miscarriage during the third trimester on the basis of color of the fetus.

3.1.3. Food related problems

Beliefs about, what has to be consumed when, and the nature of food, guides the food consumption pattern. Nature of foods can be broadly classified under hot, cold, and nanj. Further the quantity and quality of food consumption is also believed to have a bearing on health and disease. Food is also considered as a crucial promotive factor for health maintenance. When it comes to home remedies, food plays an important role as a curative, and also as a preventive measure. Food, when not consumed as required, is also seen as a cause of disease. Further, food is also an important constituent in the course of treatment that is as ‘sickness diet’. In case this diet is not followed as instructed, the treatment is not believed to be effective. Food is classified as food giving strength (meat, fish and home pound paddy ukađe ţindul, nāsani), those which are hot or cold or nanj in nature (meat of wild animal called meru, potato, papaya, brinjal, ukađe ţindul, crab, drum stick), those that are heavy for digestion (meat, spicy food), and food for delivered woman and for sick ukađe tāndul.
Heat producing foods during the summer season and cold producing foods during the rainy season and winter season are avoided. It is believed that when a person consumes heat producing food during summer, or cold producing food in rainy or winter season, there is an imbalance in the hot and cold equilibrium in the body leading to fever, cold, cough, loose motion, indigestion, and stomachache. It is believed that nanj food are brinjal vângi, potato batate, drumstick shengo, meat of wild animal called meru. These foods are to be avoided by delivered woman, persons with nanj prakriti and when one has cuts or boils which are not healing in specified period of time. It is believed that the nanj food leads to the enhancing of nanj. As a result wounds do not heal quickly, even when the medicine is sought.

_Pottândukta_

Eating cold food during winter is believed to cause pottandukta (stomachache). Because it is believed to cause cold inside the body. When one suffers from stomachache due to cold, heat-producing food and medicine are given as cure. Eating food considered to be difficult for digestion also leads to stomachache since they do not digest once they are in the stomach.

_Jant_

_Jant_ (worms) are found to be more among children because they consume more sweet foods compared to adults. The remedy for worms is believed to be substances, which are bitter in taste. Consumption of bitter herbal medicines is believed to remove worms from the stomach. It is said that worms are repelled by the bitterness and thus expelled from the stomach. Another reason associated with worms among children is that, children do not wash their hands before taking the food. As a result, along with the soil and mud in the hands and nails, which contain worms enter into the abdomen, when one consumes food. Once the worms are removed, one recovers from stomach pain.

_Gyasa_

Consumption of chili, meat of porcupine, the pulp of bamboo, crabs, which are heat producing foods, further, working for long duration without food, is also said to have an adverse effect on health. They are believed to cause gyasa (gas).
For diseases believed to be caused due to food, diet control along with medicine, are important aspects of treatment. The medicines generally consist of herbs, which have curative powers. The indigenous treatment will be dealt in detail later.

Under certain circumstances, foodstuffs are also be said to be harmful. One such harm is because of the way they are grown. People believe that the chemical fertilizer *sāvkari gobbar* used to grow vegetables causes ill-health. Since the fertilizers used are chemicals, they are believed to harm the body when they enter into one's body. Therefore, they rarely use vegetables sold in the market. It is believed that polished rice *surai tāndul* does not provide strength *tākat* to the body. Due to polishing all the strength *tākat* of the rice is said to be reduced.

Health researchers have increasingly recognized that the typical diet found among small-scale foragers and farmers, which is low in fat, salt and refined sugars and high in fiber and vitamin C, is actually the most ideal human diet. Significant epidemiological evidence suggests that many forms of cancer are associated with relatively recent dietary changes related to food marketing, processing and storage and dramatic increases in consumption of fat and simple carbohydrates, or refined sugars (Cohen 1987). The foods eaten by people with self supporting, subsistence economy are also free of the contaminants, and additives that are introduced into industrially produced foods by the chemicals used in agriculture and processing (Bodley 1994).

It is believed that diseases caused due to food can be prevented to some extent by taking care, and not consuming very spicy food, consuming food at regular intervals, balancing hot and cold foods according to the seasons.

Helman (1994) while speaking of food classification says, because of the central role of food in daily life, especially in social relationships, dietary beliefs and practices are notoriously difficult to change, even if they interfere with adequate nutrition. Many well-meaning nutritionists, nurses, and doctors have discovered this fact in dealing with cultures other than their own. In all human societies, food plays many roles and is deeply embedded in social, religious and
economic aspects of everyday life. Therefore food is more than just a source of nutrition.

3.1. 4. Age related diseases

Kanidosh

Kanidosh (failure of joining of the fontanel sutures). Kanidosh is a disease found among infants bål. The period in which an infant can be affected by kanidosh is from birth to the age of one and half months. Generally it is believed that children are affected within seven days after the birth. It is believed that infant will die, if it does not undergo indigenous treatment within seven days after symptoms appear.

Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) says that Kumbri Marathi bathe the new born infant with very hot water immediately after birth. This hot water is said to cause kanidosh. Infants delivered in the hospital do not experience kanidosh. People also accept that hospital delivered children do not suffer from kanidosh, but they do not agree with the reason that ANM suggests. Because their ancestors also practiced giving hot water bath and presently also, in case of home delivery the same practice is followed. But all those infants do not suffer from kanidosh. The private doctor (Dr. Hegade) believes that earlier Kumbri Marathi did not take Tetanus Toxoid (TT) injection and that is the reason for kanidosh. Presently pregnant women do take TT injection as a result, infants no longer suffer from kanidosh. People believe that this may be the reason why presently infants do not get kanidosh.

Ammāche kāyale

Ammāche kāyale (measles) is an ill-health condition occurring only among the children. Here ‘Amma’ refers to ‘female deity’ and ‘kāyale’ refers to illness. It is a condition said to be caused due to the wrath of a female deity called Amma. The child is said to experience boils ravan, fever and itching sensation during Ammāche kāyale.

Kumbri Marathi believe that the health problems generally faced by the aged are as follows; loss of clarity of vision disunchā na, inability to hear aiykucha na, asthma damm, joint pain kasu. The problems related to aged are
believed to be primarily related to the aging process. These health problems are also related to food habits in the early life of the aged person. When the topic of health problems of aged comes, old people generally comment saying that people of their and their father’s generation consumed nutritious food available in the forest such as palm tale tree powder and the pulp of tree called madal, flesh of wild animals. As a result, they faced lesser problems related to the aged.

Kumbri Marathi say that, now a days people do not eat hunted animals as much as earlier because they do not hunt as much as they did earlier. Hunting has decreased due to the fear of forest guards and also due to thinning of forest animals. It is also believed that earlier Kumbri Marathi consumed nāsane and unpolished rice.ukade tāndul which are both believed to be highly nutritious but now they no longer grow nāsane. Growing nāsane is said to be less profitable and harvesting takes longer. Further, rice is sent to the mill for pounding as result it is no longer unpolished. However, since both these grains have medicinal value, people grow them in small quantities and store them for using as part of sickness diet.

Venkatesan points out that ‘the different Forest Acts restricting their use and rapacious exploitation of forest resources are largely affecting the health and treatment in many rural areas particularly the tribal regions. On the other hand the deforestation, no doubt, is likely to affect the nutritional status of the people who mainly depend on forest for food resources’ (1990:228).

Other diseases, which do not fall under any of the above mentioned categories are as follows:

Lothi/rothi

Lothi/rothi is a skin disease, which is categorized into three types and they are sarplothi, bāriklothi and godelothi. Here sarp means cobra, barik means small and gode refers to horse and lothi can be translated as a skin disease. It is believed that, generally early in the morning urine of a lothi affected person stinks. As the day grows and humidity increases, the urine no longer stinks. It is believed that whoever crosses over the urine of a person affected by lothi gets affected by lothi.
Sarplothi is believed to be caused due to wearing the wet clothes especially undergarments. Wearing of wet underwear among males and wet petticoat underneath the sari sādi among females, causes sarplothi as these undergarments do not dry quickly. This is generally found during the winter and rainy seasons. During the rainy season, agricultural work is done in the field while it is raining. As a result they get drenched and do not change wet clothes till they finish their work, the wearing of wet clothes thus leads to sarplothi. Kumbri Marathi believe that it starts from one end of the backbone and spreads till navel bombi. It is believed that the sarplothi spreads around the waist pekāt. If no medicine is taken, the person is believed to die.

Bariklothi means ‘small boils’ in Kumbri Marathi language. Bariklothi is found more among children especially during summer. During the summer season, children play most of the time in the soil and as a result kirami in the soil enter into the child’s body and cause bariklothi. It is also believed that due to excessive sweating during the summer season, both children and adults are affected by bariklothi.

Godelothi, is believed to spread all over the body. It is identified on the basis of large size of the wounds filled with watery fluid.

Medicine man Vaktalli says kirami of lothi spreads through air from one person to another. As a preventive measure against lothi one has to chew kavāl early in the morning. Because kavāl is said to produce heat garmi in the body and due to this garmi in the body, lothi can be prevented.

Nanj

Nanj is a term used to refer to a condition, when a person’s health gets repeatedly affected. It is believed that if the person has physiological condition prone to nanj then, boils, wounds do not heal quickly. Nanj is a term used to refer to conditions wherein, the wounds do not heal as quickly as they are expected to heal. Wounds caused during delivery and after the cutting of umbilical cord do not heal quickly if affected by nanj. It can lead to the death of the parturient woman bālanth and infant if it is not treated. It is diagnosed on the basis of drying up of umbilical cord bombe of infant in case of parturient woman and infant. After
expulsion of placenta \textit{wāra} the body of the parturient woman is believed to become wet \textit{wallē} and she becomes weak \textit{asakat}. As a result of which, she is susceptible to \textit{nanj}.

People believe that it is after the cutting of the umbilical cord \textit{bombe} that \textit{bālanth} is likely to get \textit{nanj}. It is believed that \textit{nanj} begins from the toes and ends at head of the parturient woman. Here toe to head means that \textit{nanj} spreads all over the body.

In case of an infant \textit{bāl} being affected by \textit{nanj}, the cut umbilical cord of the child does not heal quickly, it starts to bleed continuously which can even lead to death of the infant. So they take care to prevent \textit{nanj} by giving \textit{nanj} preventing concoctions to the mother.

ANM believes that if pregnant woman does not take Tetanus Toxoid (TT) injection then a woman or infant are affected by \textit{nanj}, which they translate as septic. People believe that after delivery they give the indigenous medicine, to the parturient woman so that she does not get affected by \textit{nanj}. Therefore they do not find it necessary to take TT injections.

To prevent \textit{nanj} certain food taboos are followed after delivery up to five days. They food taboos are: only unpolished cooked rice and a little bit of pickle \textit{ambāt} are given to \textit{bālanth} as her diet. To prevent \textit{nanj}, \textit{nanj} enhancing foods like brinjal, potatoes, and drumstick are prohibited till the drying of the cut umbilical cord of infant \textit{bāl}. And for the same reason, consumption of \textit{kavāl} is prohibited for five days. After the cutting of umbilical cord, there is wound and the chances of \textit{nanj} to the infant increase. With the drying up of cut umbilical cord it is believed that the parturient woman and infant are no longer susceptible to \textit{nanj}.

The condition wherein wounds \textit{gāya}, which are caused by sickle, by falls, scrapes, bruises, and any other injury, which does not heal as quickly as they are expected to heal, are also considered as \textit{nanj}. To prevent the \textit{nanj} one should wrap a cloth on the wound to prevent the dust entering in the wound. It is believed that if dust enters into the wound it prevents quick healing.
A person suspected of physiological condition susceptible to $nany$, does not consume the foods like brinjal, potato, flesh of a wild animal called $meru$, a fish called $bangade$.

**Dānt soranke**

*Dānt* means tooth and *soranke* means ache. *Dānt soranke* (toothache) may be caused due to *kapāte* a disease affecting lower jaw region, or if the person’s tooth/teeth have become slackened. When a person drinks cold water, he gets toothache, and decay of the teeth is also said to cause toothache.

**Galen dukta**

*Galen dukta* (throat ache), here *galen* refers to throat and *dukta* means ache. It is believed that when there is pain in throat, *galen dukta*, knot *gānt* like structure is formed between the forefinger and the thumb of both hands. The veins *shiro* from throat and the area between thumb and forefinger are believed to be connected. As a result of the swelling, veins *shiro* will have become tightened. When there is pain in the throat, a person experiences discomfort and pain while swallowing, spitting, and also difficulty in breathing. There is also swelling of throat.

**Haduk sarakāle**

*Haduk* refers to bone and *sarakāle* refers to dislocation. When there is dislocation *haduk sarakāle* the blood circulation is believed to be hindered, which in turn leads to pain. *Haduk sarakāle* is recognized by the pain and the swelling of the affected area. *Haduk sarakāle* can be caused due to falls.

**Kān dukta**

*Kān dukta* (earache) is said to be caused due to boils in the ear, or due to *thanidi* and throat ache. If insects enter into the ear also earache is believed to be caused. Here *kān* refers to ear and *dukta* means ache.

**Jalale**

While cooking, warming oneself in front of the fire, burning the cashew nut *kajubeyon* on the fire, there are chances of a person getting burnt jalale.

Thus people categorize diseases, as related to various conditions. Underlying these conditions is the concept of hot and cold equilibrium operating
and even treatments. These diseases can be minor or major. On the basis of severity of the disease, as well as its response to the treatment, diseases also are categorized as minor and major. A crucial factor here is that a bejär can become roga. That is, it is recognized that a minor disease bejär can go on to become a major disease roga.

Paul (1964) points out that, all cultures anticipate such contingencies by furnishing criteria for weighing the severity of the crisis and specifying the steps to be taken when the event is identified as a crisis. Whether or not to seek a specialist, which type of specialist to summon, how to behave in his presence, how to utilize his advice, all depend on how illness itself is classified and labeled. The category itself is determined as much by cultural definition as by the intrinsic nature of the ill-health condition. Within any culture, the methods and assumptions of the specialist tend to be attuned to the beliefs of those who use his services, since both parties are subject to the same system of expectation and the same cultural environment.

3.2. Etiology of illness

Illness 'sik' means a health problem, which is supernatural in cause and biological in manifestation. A supernaturally caused condition may be due to effect of spirit or wrath of deity or evil eye. The treatment for sik involves warding-off spirit through supernatural process nota by the gādīga or warding-off the evil eye or placating the deity.

![Diagram of Illness Sik Etiology](image)
The supernatural world affecting the health consists of spirits, deities and effect of evil eye, and taboos concerning worship, purity and pollution jambaa. The term ‘supernatural’ is used therefore, with reference to etiology, as well as diagnosis and treatment. The spirits are benevolent as well as malevolent. The benevolent spirits protect the individual and also help in the process of warding-off malevolent spirits mārava, which create health problems but these māru cause when person breach the taboo. It is the malevolent spirits that cause illness.

The deities are basically benevolent. Some of the deities like Tulasi and lineage deities mirāshethal are involved in the process of curing. That is, in the process of indigenous treatment, along with the indigenous medicine, the blessings of these deities are required. Unless these deities bless, the condition will not be cured. The only deity who is believed to cause health problem, that is in the form of measles is Amma, a female deity. Her wrath is believed to result in measles.

In the causation of health problems, spirits are also the major causative factors and hence, while providing treatment for afflictions, it is the spirits that are primarily tackled in order to cure the condition. Other resorts like, indigenous or modern medicines serve as supplementary measures. And for naturally caused conditions, supernatural powers of deities are invoked to help the process of natural treatment that is being provided. This is so because, ultimately it is the deities who are all too powerful and can help in curing the ill-health condition.

Further supernatural powers play a predominant role in treatment seeking process, when ‘supernatural diagnosis and treatment’ nota are performed, then also deities are involved as ‘controlling powers’. The deities also are involved in helping the diviner in the performance of nota to ward-off the spirits. Removal of evil eye and taking vows are also crucial aspects of treatment seeking in the supernatural realm.

The illness caused by spirits can also be major or minor in their severity. The spirits, which cause major illness, are those considered as strong malevolent spirit balishtmāru strong spirits. The spirits that cause minor illness are malevolent spirits padosomārava. For warding-off balishtmāru, more than one diviner are required because they are strong in nature. Further one may have to seek a
Brahmin priest bhatta in case of affliction of strong spirits and multiple spirits. The spirits and their effects will be explained in the subsequent chapter.

3.3. Preventive measures

Apart from the indigenous remedies people also take certain preventive measures, to promote health and also prevent ill-health. Preventive measures are employed in both natural and supernatural illnesses, but the kind of elaboration found in supernatural realm are not found in natural realm. The preventive measures for the naturally caused diseases are more specific to the disease themselves. The preventive measures at supernatural level are meant for the well-being of not only individuals but also for the community as a whole.

Preventive measures are associated more commonly with illnesses caused due to supernatural reasons. Since supernatural powers like spirits, evil eye can affect an individual and cause physiological as well as psychological symptoms. Performance of rituals and festivals, performance of life cycle rituals are all believed to be the preventive measures for ensuring the well being of the individual.

To prevent the possible effect of spirit, amulet aiteer is tied around the neck. Those who are affected by spirit, wear charms (threads given by bhatta) to ward-off the effect of the spirit. Amulets are also given by a Brahmin priest bhatta. To prevent the effect of evil eye for children below two to three years, they are tied with chākāche haval. Chākache haval can be translated as ‘beads for evil eye’. It is a kind of bead necklace with black and light orange color beads. It is purchased in the market. These beads are believed to check the effect of evil eye reaching the child by diverting the attention of the onlooker.

Kimball (1973) points out that in all societies we find theories and practices concerning the cause and cure of the illness. Culture provides readymade patterns of illness coping behavior Therefore, the areas of religion, rites of passage, rituals are intricately related to illness.

Among Kumbri Marāthi, during the performance of different festivals, the deities are prayed for blessing all the people in the settlement with good health. Also certain rituals like taking the purification water during the festival of sigme
for treating illness, offering sacrifice to the deity who controls spirits, performing ancestral worship, all have a direct and indirect bearing on health. Certain life cycle rituals performed in the lifetime and at death of an individual, are believed to have direct as well as indirect influence on the well-being during the lifetime of an individual. Such life cycle rituals include sotave, kānchonche, cholāngi, and eklānāvache vāduvanche.

Sotave

_Sotave_ is a ritual performed after the purification ritual called _pantora_ is performed on the eighth day after the birth. On the day of performance of _sotave_, the Goddess of fate _sotave_ who is believed to write the fate of child is worshipped. Hence, it is considered to be a very important ritual in the life of a child. After the worshipping of _sotave_ one coconut is broken in the name of _sotave_ and another coconut is broken in the name of cradle _palane_ when the child is put in cradle.

On the day of _sotave_, late in the night an old woman keeps all worshipping materials on a bush as an offering to the ancestor. It is believed that during delivery if the mother and new born baby had any health problems they will transfer to the old woman.

On the same day, a kind of ritual thread called _munj_ (waist string) is tied to the waist. Tying of _munj_ to the child makes it belong to the religion _dharma_ and from then onwards it is considered as a _mantan_ member so that lineage _māru_ protects it. If the child dies, before the tying of _munj_, they do not perform any death rituals. It is also believed that the tying of _munj_ prevents worms _janta_.

Cholāngi and Kānchonchoche

_Cholāngi_ (tonsure) is performed after one year and before the eleventh year. Kumbri Marāthi say that performance of this ritual incorporates the individual into their lineage and community. It is important to be included in the lineage because, _mārīrav_ a benevolent spirit protects only those individuals from the malevolent spirits who belong to its lineage. _Kānchonchoche_ (ear piercing) is performed after three years of childbirth. If a child dies before the _cholāngi_ (tonsure) and _kānchonchoche_ it becomes a _chāli_, a spirit that gives trouble to
people. The spirit can cause health problems to the person it afflicts. Only after these two rituals are performed does the obtain individual pātulāchemāru.

Death rituals

Expect wood of kajure tree all types of wood are used for cremation. Kajure wood is believed to be kil inferior. If kajure is used, the dead person’s spirit becomes kil inferior. Such spirits do not come under the control of diviner. As a result it creates a great deal of health problems to the person it has afflicted.

When a pregnant woman gurvārin dies her med is kept on the wood in the burial ground and its stomach is cut and fetus is removed. And cremation of the woman and of the dead child is performed separately. If they do not separate the dead child from the dead mother, the become strong spirits since the affect together and cause serious health problems.

Even though preventive measures are taken it is not possible to prevent ill-health. Therefore, when a person is suffering from an ill-health condition, he has to take curative measures. In societies with pluralistic health care systems people have a number of ways of seeking relief. The understanding of these systems indicates the hierarchy of resorts of the people.

3. 4. Hierarchy of resorts

The person suffering from ill-health may decide to take home remedy, or take rest, or ask the advice of a kin or neighbor or may attempt all these at the same time. He may decide to consult the gādiga or vaktalli or bhatta or modern doctor depending on what he suspect to be the cause of his discomfort. Medical pluralism therefore, offers a range of resorts.

The hierarchy of resorts depends on the beliefs about the cause of condition, severity of the condition, the economic affordability, availability of the service and the way the patient responds to the treatment. The efficacy of the treatment is at times more important than the other reasons for seeking a particular specialist – indigenous or modern. Illnesses such as cold are treated by home remedy; illnesses supernatural in nature are treated by the diviner and illnesses like fever are treated by modern medicines at home or sought treatment by modern doctor. The pluralistic treatment seeking behavior of the people enables one to
understand – the range of therapeutic options available and how and why choices are made between the various options.

Table shows medical functions of indigenous specialists:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialists</th>
<th>Medical function</th>
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| Vaktailsi   | - Collection, preparation and administration of herbal medicine  
|             | - Advices appropriate diet |
| Gadiga      | - Supernatural diagnosis  
|             | - Supernatural treatment (warding of spirits)  
|             | - Providing Herbal medicine  
|             | - Inviting spirit after the death of a person  
|             | - Exorcising spirits |
| Bhatta      | - Supernatural diagnosis  
|             | - Supernatural preventive measures  
|             | - Supernatural treatment (warding of spirit) |
| Sovin sohen | - Attends delivery  
|             | - Treats nanj in bâlanth |

In those settlements where, there is no diviner, treatment does begin with home remedies. Next, people go to the modern doctors or to the indigenous medicine man. When modern doctor diagnoses and suggests the person the treatment then, the condition is recognized as disease. People take the medicine for period specified by the doctor, and if the person has not recovered by the end of specified medication period, then they go to diviner in the nearest settlement to find out what the cause is. According to the diviner, the further course of action is taken. His diagnosis again may shift the label of the condition as well as treatment. Therefore diviner does play a crucial role. The only difference in the settlements with and without diviner is that, in settlements where diviner is present he is sought first and then other options are resorted to. In case diviner is not present, he is resorted to if the condition does not respond to either indigenous or modern medicine.
Howard (1989) says, in trying to find remedy for their afflictions people are often willing to try anything, even things that they might scoff at other times. All healing systems seem to work at least part of the time. Treatments used vary considerably, and at times it is hard to prove just what has brought about the cure. It is rarely a simple matter to ‘prove’ that something specific has cured an illness.

The diagrams 1 and 2 (in the next page) reveal the differences in the pathways of treatment seeking in case of presence and absence of diviner.

Thus in the process from health to ill-health, there are various natural (internal external factors), and supernatural forces, playing roles. These forces influence the decision making of the people. Natural and supernatural forces sometimes act in isolation and at times there is action of combined interplay of these two factors. The ultimate end of the resorts is to comeback from ill-health to health. In this whole process, indigenous medical practices play a predominant role. Modern medicine is, in most cases, a secondary resort or a complementary resort. This is due to their faith in the healing powers of the indigenous medical system—natural as well as supernatural. This is reflected in their expectations that modern treatment has to heal quickly. That one injection or a couple of tablets should cure the person of his ill-health condition.

Carstairs (1955) says referring to the people of the village in rural Rajasthan, that people were willing to try modern medicine, but they expected immediate results. This did not mean that they always demanded immediate results from their own forms of cure— but that was the different matter because they already had faith in these, and so once a condition was diagnosed and the prescription given they felt assured that correct steps had been taken and recovery was bound to the follow. Modern medicine carried no such aura of conviction, and therefore it was required to justify itself dramatically and without delay.

Thus in this chapter, it was seen as to how the process from health to ill-health is viewed by the people. And also how they view the condition of ill-health, what are preventive measures in the form of rituals, and what are the different minor and major diseases and their etiology. After understanding etiology, the next stage in understanding treatment seeking behavior is to understand diagnosis.
Diagram 1. Treatment seeking pattern in the absence of gadiga in a settlement

Diagram:

- **Home Remedy**
  - When ill-health condition is not cured by home remedy
  - When ill-health condition is not treated by modern treatment

- **Indigenous Treatment**
  - When not treated by modern treatment
  - When ill-health condition is not treated by indigenous medicine

- **Modern Treatment**
  - When illness is not cured
  - When illness is serious

- **Nota**
  - Affliction of strong malevolent spirit or more than one malevolent spirits
  - When illness is not cured

- **Harake**
  - When ill-health condition is not cured

- **Bhatta**
Diagram 2. Treatment seeking pattern when gadiga is present in the settlement

When ill-health condition is diagnosed as roga

Modern Treatment

When ill-health condition is serious

When modern treatment is not effective

Affliction of strong malevolent spirit or more than one malevolent spirit

Indigenous Treatment

When sik is not cured

Home Remedy

When ill-health condition is not cured
(for diagnosing the ill-health condition)

Bhattach

When sik is not cured

Harake

When roga sik is serious

For particular disease

Nota

When ill-health condition is diagnosed as roga
Among Kumbri Marathi the beliefs regarding supernatural causation of illness is very significant in determining treatment seeking. Further diagnosis is also, to a great extent, influenced and centered around on supernatural diagnosis. The following chapter therefore focuses on natural and supernatural diagnosis and supernatural healing.