CONCEPT AND ASPECTS RELATED TO HEALTH AND HYGIENES

Tharus believe that a person who is physically fit and active is called a healthy person.

There are many aspects of life and culture, which cannot be ignored in the study of health and sickness, these aspects are.

I. Sanitation

The people of Tharus are very conscious about health and hygiene. The general habits regarding sanitations are as follows:

(a) In every village of Tharus there are two or three latrines and bathrooms which are made by the Government, but the Tharu people have dumped all the waste products in them. They are not in use. They go out into the open fields to ease themselves but not very far from the habitation. They generally sit anywhere on the way side and particularly near the pool filled with the water. The village paths are very often dirty, showing utter lack of sanitation and cleanliness which is the sharp contrast to the condition inside the house. This brings to the practice of open field defecation. Women generally go in groups, men go severally. At night time when no one is around or near the village lanes are used for this purpose leaving
them dirty. Women go to the fields early in the morning generally before the sunrise, small children defecate just outside or even inside the house. On the ground the faces are generally eaten by dogs and pigs.

As there are no urinal facilities people are quite free to urinate anywhere, use the backyard. No check can be imposed on children, they are totally free to urinate even in the courtyard.

(b) The Tharus keep attractive cleanliness inside their houses. Utensils and pots appear like mirror in which one can visualize his reflection. The Katharia and Dangora Tharus keep kitchen outside the house while the Rana Tharus keep it inside their house and call their kitchen as Bharsaghar. Utensils are rubbed with ash and cleaned with water. Houses and cattleshed and cleaned broom sticks like Bashi, Bannasoor & Chouranga. Waste material is thrown out through a system of all rains which lead to a pond known as Khalla.

(c) Among Tharus there are no cobblers, when an animal dies some Non-Tharus come they take the skin and some flesh of the dead animal and depart from that area. Tharus do not allow cobblers to enter into the village, they themselves drag out of the village. After draging out the dead animal,
bathing is customary. Dead dogs and cats are thrown out of the village in the open field by the Tharu themselves.

(d) When a man breathes his last, he is put down from the cot to which they say is their custom. Dead body is taken to the graveyard to which they say in their own dialect MARKONDO, the garments of the dead body are buried with him. Sometimes they burn deads but it depends on their custom.

In rainy season or just after it government health officers visit the village and spray DDT powder.

II. **Housing Pattern and health**

The form and structure of rooms and houses is related with sanitation. Good arrangement of houses symbolizes good health. So in the study of the health and sanitary condition of the people of Tharus it is necessary to study the arrangement of houses.

When we study the housing pattern of the Tharus, I found that their houses are of both type i.e. Kachha houses and pucca houses. The Tharus love their surroundings to be clean and therefore both the exterior and interior of the Tharu houses present a neat and tidy appearance. The houses are swept twice or thrice a day and the walls and floors are regularly plastered with mud
and cowdung mixed with water. The entire aangan and saar too are similarly cleaned daily. There is no common garbage pit to throw garbage and household refuge. Thus these are thrown near the cattle shed or in the fields adjacent to the house.

Bathing, washing of clothes and utensils are all done at the handpumps. In some places water from the hand pump gets collected in the surroundings areas which make it very dirty and promotes the breeding of unhygienic atmosphere in the village. There is generally no drains for the outlet of dirty water. Another defect in the Tharu houses is that they are not properly ventilated or lighted. As a result of lack of proper ventilation, smoke from the kitchen filters slowly through the roof.

III. **Food Habits and Nutrition**

When we study about health we cannot ignore about the aspect of food and nutrition because balanced diet symbolized good health and malnutrition and scarcity symbolizes bad health which invites the diseases.

The chief food of Tharus is rice, vegetable, fish, meat. The fish is frequently consumed. Usually they take three meals a day. One is in a day morning at Noon and at a Night are known as the Knocoras Kaluva, Nizini and Beri. In between they take tea or jar.
Jar is a very popular drink among Tharus, the Chakhana (Vegetable) is more common. Eggs, pumpkins, potatoes are generally utilized for vegetables. The vegetables are cleaned and washed with water before cooking them. The utensils are finally cleaned before the use.

Menstruating women cook food, they are not considered unclean.

Men and children take their food outside the kitchen and their plates are littered with flies. Milk is very often used by Tharus. It is boiled before use. The leftover food is covered. And in it JAT is put which is a powder of KATHAL or BATTA is put. Tharus keep these two materials when the food is left in large quantity.

If a cat comes and drinks the milk, they do not throw it, rather they drop a few droplets of MANGNI (which is made from jungle jadi Booty) and brings in use.

IV. **Drinks and Drugs**

Some experts say that Tharu is derived from the word DARU. Actually they drink liquor in almost every occasion, also as a daily routine too. Even in the BIRADARI PANCHAYAT during arguments also people or judge are seen taking liquor made from MAHUA, GUR, RICE and SUGAR. They consume
Jaad made up of rice. It is not harmful but is taken as apetizer and laxative. Mahua is not easily available and liquor of gur is banned yet it is produced illegally.

The women folk is usually enjoyed in the production of drinks. This kind of earning is a part time work of a family.

Tharu people use tobacco, bhang and ganja in their Bidi, Chilam, Hukkas etc. Tharu people know ill effect of drinks yet it is in their daily routine which they say that it is a must for them without which they can not live.

V. **Birth**

Pregnant woman is left in a secluded room which is perfectly dark when the delivery is expected. Usually there are three women who help in this task. Main is the mid wife who is trained.

Perhaps to avoid the difficulty of cleaning the costumes they put of all the clothes which she usually wears. As soon as the child is born the Dai Budiya immediately presses the stomach of the mother to allow the placenta and impure blood pass out. Then the dai cuts the unblical cordex with the sickle and gives the child a hot water bath after cleaning its eyes, mouth, ear, nose and practically every part of its limbs and applies warm mustard oil over its body. After a couple of minutes she digs a
pit with the "Gadehla" in the ground of the same room, burries carefully the cord after cutting it. The turmeric is applied to the umbilical cord. Two days the mother is not given any food except a sweet decoctain harera consisting of dried ginger and jaggery but on the third day rice and pulse are given to eat.

VI. Weaning

Among the Tharus the children are breast for more than two years. There is no fixed duration for sucking the baby. When the women does not have sufficient breast milk after the delivery the baby is given cow's milk or powder milk.

During the lactation period the infants is always bathed with warm water. After a bath the baby is massaged with oil.

The mother has to take care of herself. She has to drink warm water. She has to warm has abdomen by applying coconut oil. At times warm water is filled in a bottle so that she can warm her abdomen for time to time.

VII. Cleaning their body and surroundings

The Tharu men and women don't bath daily due to busy schedule. They take bath thrice in a week.

They wash their clothes once in a week with the detergent powder surf.
There is no saloon near by the village. The village people cut their hairs by cutting each others hair. The hairs of men are short. Womens do not cut their hair. Ladies use Khali and Clay for washing their hairs. But now a days Tharu men and women use soaps and shampoos for cleaning hair.

They also oil their hair, once a week with the help of Thakla. Ladies decorate their skin with Gudna known as LEELA (tatoo).

They daily clean their teeth. The old people use thick stick of Neem (Datoon) or coal powder to clean their teeth. They also make a powder known as SETHA Powder (made up of Eucylpths leaves + BENDHI + SERKI Jadi Booty Powder) whereas young people use tooth paste and tooth Brush.

The material which Tharu people use for bathing is BATRI (which is a home product) and soap.

As there is no bathrooms therefore there are hand pumps made by government, women wake up early in the morning and go to these handpumps to take bath.