CHAPTER V

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE
TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

According to B.S. Reddy (1986), there are a number of attempts to define traditional medicine by taking into account the concept and practices, analysis and evolution by several scientific disciplines, but a satisfactory or comprehensive type of definition is yet to emerge. The traditional medicine centres on two traditional systems i.e little traditional-folk system of medicine and great traditional- Ayurveda, Unani, Sidna, Yoga etc. In this chapter only the folk system of medicine has been discussed having a Ayurvedic touch also.

According to Choudhuri and Choudhuri (1990), the tribals are so traditional oriented that they do not use the modern facilities. The Tiwa people have traditional medicine man called ‘kabiraj’, who often takes the responsibility for curing diseases. The traditional medicine man and the village people share common cultural tradition and have more faith in them.

Many studies have indicated that tribal communities have strong faith in traditional methods of treatment, but the Tiwa people are interested in both the traditional and the modern system of medicine side by side. In Morigaon district, very often health fairs are organized by the District Health Authorities in the remote areas. The Tiwas frequently enjoy such fairs where facilities of free treatment and free medicines are available.
Many experienced pediatricians, dermatologists, ENT specialists, medicine specialists, dentist and such other specialist doctors participate in the festivals. It was found that the medicines that were given by the doctors after examining the patients were not taken properly. They just took the medicines like vitamin syrup, cough syrup and antacid regularly. The iron tablets were also not taken properly by the pregnant women. They took iron tablets for a few days and discontinued it.

It was found that traditional medicines were prepared mainly from different herbs. The medicine men or ‘kabirajs’ has prolific knowledge about different medicinal plants. The traditional medicine men could identify some common illnesses like fever (Jwar), stomach pain (pet-bish), diarrhoea and dysentery (amosha), cold and cough (kah), pox (aii), mumps (gal-phula), etc and treated them with herbal medicines. Following are some of the herbal medicines used by the Tiwas for curing their diseased children.

HONEY:

Honey is mixed with a number of herbal medicines

(i) Juice of Tulsi mixed with honey is used for cough
(ii) Lemon juice with honey is used for acidity.
(iii) Betal leaf juice, honey and pepper are used together for throat infection.
(iv) White layer of the tongue of an infant is cleared by applying honey.

(v) Cold milk with honey is used for conjunctivitis.

(vi) Honey is given to the children suffering from anemia for getting strong.

(vii) One drop of honey is given to the mouth of a new born baby as a ritual.

(viii) Honey is used as a tonic.

(ix) The nose of a baby is cleared with a drop of honey.

(x) The Tiwa people believe that scar marks caused by burn injury can be cleared with honey.

Local Name: MANIMUNI

English Name: Centella

Botanical Name: *Centella asiatica*

I. A paste of manimuni leaves and sugar is mixed with a little water and is given for curing diarrhoea and dysentery.

Local Name: BAHAKA

English Name: Bashaka

Botanical Name: *Adhatoda vasica*
I. Extract of leaves of bahaka mixed with a little salt is taken for curing cough. Sometimes it is mixed with honey for taste.

II. Bahaka flowers’ curry is used to cure malaria.

III. Powder of dry bahaka leaves mixed with black cumin seed is taken for curing fever.

Local Name: TULSI

English Name: Sacred basil

Botanical Name: *Ocimum sanctum*

I. Extract of Tulsi leaves mixed with honey is taken to get relief from cough.

II. A paste of tulsi leaves mixed with milk is applied in the body of the patient after suffering from pox for making the skin smooth.

III. One drop of tulsi juice is mixed with water and is used for conjunctivitis.

Local Name: NILKANT

English Name: Nilkant

Botanical Name: *Ecbolium linneanuin*
I. Juice of nilkant root mixed with powder of black cumin seed is used for getting relief from fever.

II. A paste of nilkant root mixed with a paste of ginger is heated for sometime and when it is coold it is consumed by patients suffering from stomach pain.

III. Viscous water of nilkant root is used for treatment of worm infestation.

IV. Extract of nilkant root is used for curing malaria.

Local Name : NEEM

English Name : Neem

Botanical Name: *Azadirachta indica*

I. Juice of neem leaves mixed with a paste of ginger and black pepper is used for curing fever.

II. Juice of neem leaves and juice of turmeric are mixed with a pinch of salt and consumed to get relief from worm infestation.

III. Tender neem leaves fry is taken with rice for curing malaria.

IV. In skin disease, juice of neem leaves and fry neem leaves are used.

V. Neem bath i.e boiled neem leaves in water is used for skin diseases like prickly heat, scabies, fungal infection, etc.
VI. Neem bath is given to the patients suffering from pox and measles.

VII. In dry season, the villagers put neem leaves under the mattress and in the room to purify the air of the house.

VIII. Smoke of neem leaves is used as mosquito repellent.

Local Name: CHIRATA

English Name: Indian wormwood

Botanical Name: *Swertia chirata*

I. A paste of chirata and ginger with a little salt is used to get relief from stomach pain.

II. An extract of leaves of chirata is consumed as a medicine of worm.

Local Name: HALDHI

English Name: Turmeric

Botanical Name: *Curcuma longa*

I. Haldhi juice is used in stomach pain.

II. A haldhi paste is applied to cuts and burn injuries.

III. Haldi and bahaka juice is taken to get relief from cough.
IV. Juice of haldi is consumed every morning in empty stomach for curing jaundice.

V. A raw haldhi paste is applied in prickly heat infection.

Local Name: BEL

English Name: Wood apple

Botanical Name: *Aegle marmelos*

I. A paste of leaves of bel is consumed as medicine for pneumonia.

Local Name: DORON

Botanical Name: *Leucas linifolia*

I. A paste of doron leaves is used in pneumonia

II. A paste of leaves of doron is used to stop bleeding from cut injury.

III. One drop of juice of doron leaf is used as a nasal drop in flu and running nose.

IV. A paste of doron leaves, neem leaves and tobacco leaves is applied to snakebite as a first aid treatment.

Local Name: VENDA

Botanical Name: *Jatropha gossypifolia*
I. Extracts of venda leaves are taken in empty stomach as a medicine of jaundice.

Local Name: KUNHIAR
English Name: Sugar Cane
Botanical Name: *Saccharum officinarum*

I. Sugar cane juice is taken by patients suffering from jaundice and anemia.

Local Name: ANARASH
English Name: Pineapple
Botanical Name: *Ananus comosus*

I. Extract of tender leaves of pineapple mixed with sugar is taken in empty stomach for treatment of worm infestation.

Local Name: KALMEGH
English Name: King of Bitter
Botanical Name: *Andrographis paniculata*

I. Juice of raw turmeric and kalmegh is consumed for worm treatment.

II. The paste of turmeric leaves is used to get relief from toothache.
Local Name : JOBA

English Name : China Rose

Botanical Name: *Hibiscus rosasinensis*

I. Leaves of hibiscus are soaked in water, for sometime and it is smashed with clean hand till it is viscous. The viscous water is orally taken with sugar for diarrhea and dysentery.

II. For treatment of gallbladder stone a paste of tender leaves of hibiscus is consumed.

Local Name : CHARAI TITA

English Name : Iron weed

Botanical Name: *Veronia anthelmentica*

I. Juice of leaves of Charaitita is used for treatment of asthma.

II. A paste of tender leaves of charaitita mixed with ginger is taken for cure of stomach pain.

Local Name : MORAPAT

English Name : Jute

Botanical Name: *Corchorus capsularis*
I. Tender leaves of jute fried in mustard oil are taken to get relief from worm.

II. Tender leaves of jute is smashed and mixed with hot ghee and applied over the affected area of strain and muscular pain.

Local Name: PUDINA

English Name: Mint

Botanical Name: Mentha spearmint

I. An extract of mint leaves is consumed for relief of stomach pain.

II. To get rid of acidity and indigestion a paste of mint leaves is taken with soft rice.

Local Name: NARZI

English Name: Marigold

Botanical Name: Tagetes patula

I. The Paste of marigold leaves is used to stop bleeding from cut injury.

II. It is used as antiseptic for healing skin injury.

Local Name: GONDHOWA BON

English Name: Goat’s weed
Botanical Name: *Ageratum onyoides*

I. The paste of the leaves of goat’s weed is used to cure cut injury and it is considered as an antiseptic.

Local Name: KOLIBON

English Name: Common Weed

Botanical Name: *Eupatorium odoratum*

I. The paste of leaves of common weed is used to stop bleeding in cut injury.

Local Name: BISHALYA KORONI

Botanical Name: *Polygonum alatum*

I. The paste of bishalayakarani mixed with the paste of tobacco leaves is applied in snakebite as a first aid treatment.

II. The paste of leaves of bishalayakarani is used in poisonous insect bite.

Local Name: BHIMKOL

English Name: Giant banana

Botanical Name: *Musa gigantea*

I. This type of banana is used in diarrhoea and dysentery
II. The pulp of ripe banana is soaked in cold water for a while and the water is consumed to get relief from acidity or stomach pain.

III. The curry of banana flower is consumed as an iron supplement.

Local Name: NARSHING

English Name: Curry leaf plant

Botanical Name: *Murraya koeningii*

I. The curry of narshing leaves is useful for persons suffering from cold and cough.

II. The curry of narshing leaves is used for curing body pain.

III. After child birth, the lactating mother uses to take leaves of narshing curry with rice for stamina and vigor.

IV. A paste of narshing leaves is applied in bone fracture area.

V. The raw paste of tender narshing leaves with salt is taken to get relief from fever.

Local Name: BON AMLOKHI

English Name: Ground ambelic

Botanical Name: *Phylanthus niruri*

I. The juice of tender leaves and root of bon amlokhi is consumed as a medicine for jaundice.
Local Name: BHADELI LATA
English Name: Slender Shrub
Botanical Name: *Pacderia foetida*

I. Juice as well as curry of tender leaves and stem is given to the child suffering from diarrhea and dysentery.

Local Name: KHORIKAJAI
English Name: Downy Jasmine
Botanical Name: *Jasminum pubescens*

I. Extracts of the khorikajai's root are applied in snakebite and insect bite.

Local Name: LAJUKI LATA
English Name: Touch me not
Botanical Name: *Mimosapudica*

I. The extract of roots of lajukilota is orally taken when a snake bites a person.

Local Name: KAYA BON
English Name: Greater kyllinga
Botanical Name: *Pandanus fascicularis*

I. The juice of the root of kaya bon is given for oral consumption when a snake bites a person.

Local Name: SIJU

English Name: Milk Bush

Botanical Name: *Euphorbia splendens*

I. An extract of roasted siju leaves is mixed with a little salt or honey and it is taken to get relief from cough.

II. The juice of roasted leaves of siju is taken by the persons suffering from asthma.

Local Name: JESTHAMADHU

Botanical Name: *Glycyrrhiza glabra*

I. The small pieces of bark of Jesthamadhu is used for getting relief from cough.

II. It is used in asthma also.

Local Name: ADA

English Name: Ginger

Botanical Name: *Zingiber officinale*
I. Ginger is used in common cough.

II. Ginger with a little salt is used to get relief from stomach pain

III. In pneumonia, a mixture of ginger with black pepper, black salt and cardamom is given to the patient.

Local Name: HARJORA LATA

English Name: Common Climber

Botanical Name: *Cissus quadrangularis*

I. The roots of harjora lata is crushed and a paste is prepared without water and it is applied over the fractured part of the bone.

Local Name: KORDOI

English Name: Carambula

Botanical Name: *Averrhoa carambula.*

I. The juice of sweet kordoi is taken in jaundice.

II. The roasted kordoi is consumed in flue.

Local Name: AKON

English Name: Akonda

Botanical Name: *Calotropis gigantea*
I. A paste of root of Akon is used for curing diarrhea and dysentery.

II. The paste of leaf is applied to burn injury.

III. In back pain or muscles pain, the akon leaf is heated on fire and hot fomentation is given in the affected area.

Local Name: PANI KHUTURA

English Name: Primrose willow

Botanical Name: Jussiaea repens

I. The paste of tender stem and leaves is mixed with milk and is taken for curing jaundice.

Local Name: SAJEENA

English Name: Drum stick

Botanical Name: Moringa oleifera

I. The leaves and fruits are given to the patients suffering from rheumatic pain.
List of Medicinal plants used by the Tiwas.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Botanical name</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Local Name</th>
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<td>Acanthacea</td>
<td>Bahakatita (H)*</td>
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<td>Rhamnaceae</td>
<td>Bogori (T)</td>
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*H= herb, SH= super herb, S= shrub, US =under shrub, C= climber, Cr = creeper, T= tree, Fn = fern

**REASONS FOR USING TRADITIONAL MEDICINE**

The Tiwas of Morigaon district mainly depend on traditional medicine for health care. They extensively use traditional system of medical practices for curing diseases and illnesses. Sometimes wrong treatment even causes the death of the patient, but still they prefer going to the village medicine men than going to the medical personnel. Most of the villagers recognize various medicinal plants and use them for different ailments such as diarrhoea and dysentery, wounds, stomach pain, fever, cold, cough etc.

Some medicinal herbs are grown in the courtyard and kitchen garden and some are collected from nearby hills and bushes. They collect some of these through barter system from their hill counterparts in famous ‘Jonbeel-Mela’, which is held in the month of January on the bank of
“Jonbeel” (a lake) near Jagiroad. The roots of “Nilkant” (Ecbolium linneanum) is mainly procured by the villagers from hill Karbis in exchange of some goods. The bark of ‘Jesthamadhu’ (Gileyrrhiza glabra), roots of ‘Bihlangani’ (polygonumalatum) etc are also exchanged in the great “Jonbeel” Mela. They are habituated to depend on worship, sacrifices, talisman, divination etc. even in this era of modern medicine.

The Tiwas have strong faith on the deities, supernatural powers, divination etc. To get rid of the rage of deities, they follow divination to find out the cause of illness. They sacrifice animals or birds to satisfy the evil spirits. They use ‘maduli’ or ‘tabis’ (Talismam) provided by ‘oja’ or ‘bej’.

People are not much interested in hospital while ill. Some of the villages of the present study have primary Health Centres (PHC) but not a single doctor stay there during night. The Civil Hospital is also not having full-fledged modern technically developed departments.

Table V: 1 Hospital facilities of Morigaon district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Civil Hospitals</th>
<th>01</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of PHCs</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Doctors</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Nursing Homes</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table V:2 Medical facilities of the study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of villages</th>
<th>Type of Hospital facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bonpara HSC (Sub Center)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ghuligaon Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Buragaon Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dandua HSC (Sub Center)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Golchepa HSC (Sub Center)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Banthaigaon PHC (Under Jagibhakatgaon Sub Center)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sukhanagong HSC (Under Baghara PHC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: District Joint Director office of health, Morigaon)

From the tables V:1 and V:2 it is clear that the people have faced tremendous health inadequacies. The non-availability of sufficient health centers and doctors, compels them to go for ethno-medicine. Some of the people are not aware of the modern medicine.

Another cause for not taking modern medicine is that the Tiwa people have firm belief in herbal medicine, which is abundantly available around them and believed them to have no side effects.

It is found that 100% of the Tiwa people use ethno-medicine in common diseases, like diarrhoea and dysentery, fever, common cough,
worm, skin disease etc as first line of treatment only. When the herbal medicine does not work they prefer to go for the modern medical system i.e. haemopathic or allopathic. The delay in using the modern system sometimes leads to very critical condition even death.

Table V:3 Reasons for taking traditional medicine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of disease</th>
<th>Faith on traditional medicine</th>
<th>Communication problem</th>
<th>Poor economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicated</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table V:3 it is seen that 48.75% of people are not able to attend modern medical facilities due to the poor communication and 25% of the people are poverty stricken. Because of their poor economic condition they use traditional-medicine at the first stage. Due to deplorable condition of the road and non-availability of proper transportation system also deprives them from getting timely attention from modern health facilities. The deplorable condition of the roads leads to fewer vehicles, higher cost of transportation and overcrowding in the vehicles.
Table V:4  Transport and communication facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>No. of villages</th>
<th>No. of buses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morigaon-Jagiroad</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morigaon-Barapujia</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morigaon-Mayang</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morigaon-Bhurbandha</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Transport station, Morigaon

Table V:4 indicates that the transport facilities are also very poor. According to villagers the distribution of the buses in different routes are negligible. Therefore overcrowding of passengers in the buses is a common place phenomenon in the entire district of Morigaon.