The interplay between culture and health is truly complex and invites consideration of a kaleidoscope of causes, experiences, expressions and treatments for a plethora of human ailments. However, while cultural variations are intuitively intriguing and inviting to focus on, especially in relation to health, they can also veil equally fundamental economic, political and social differences between peoples.

Concerns with illness and health are universal in human life and present in all societies. Each group organises itself collectively - through material means, thought and cultural elements to comprehend and develop techniques in response to experiences or episodes of illness and misfortune, whether individual or collective. As a consequence, each and all societies develop knowledge, practices and specific institutions that may be called the health care system.

The health care system comprises all components present in a society related to health, including knowledge about the origins, causes and treatments of disease, therapeutic techniques, its practitioners, and the roles, standards and agents in interaction in this "scenario". Added to these are power relationships and institutions dedicated to the maintenance or restoration of "the state of health". This system is supported by schemes of symbols that are expressed through the practices, interactions and institutions; all are consistent with the general culture of the group, which in turn, serves to define, classify and explain the phenomena perceived classified as "illness".

The present study was conducted among the Broq-pa tribe of Leh District, Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir. According to 2011 Census, the total population of Ladakh is 147,104. The total population of Broq-pa is 1,567. The Broq-pa community comes under Block Khaltse, District Leh. For the present study 250 respondents were interviewed from two villages. The
research was carried out among the Broq-pa of Hanu and Dah-Baima of Leh District, Leh. These Broq-pa villages are 20 kilometers apart. The village is connected with metallic road and the villages have medical facilities.

The Broq-pa tribe is unique in Ladakh, their culture, dress, language, beliefs, and vegetation. The Broq-pa settlement is quite warmer than other areas of Ladakh region. The physical features of the Broq-pa were different from other non-Broq-pa. They have sharp features, fair skin, well built bocy and blonde hair.

The houses in Dah-Baima village have no proper arrangement for lights and water. In many houses they do not have electricity so they use their own hand made kerosene lamp called bamba. Electricity is available in Hanu but is provided for restricted hours of 5-6 hours, from 7.00 p.m.-11.00 p.m. In Hanu they do not have telephone and mobile facilities. There are only two satellite phones at the distance of 6-7 kilometers. In Dah-Baima, telephone and mobile facilities are available. In both the villages drinking water facilities were available from hand pump, tap water, natural spring and stream water. They used traditional hearth in kitchen to keep room warm and also use it for cooking. At Dah-Baima every household starts preparing chapattis for dinner around 5:30 pm outside their house; every household had temporary chulla outside room to make chapattis, to roast barley for flour making, cook barley to prepare local chaang etc.

The religion practiced by Broq-pa is Buddhism but Muslim men married with Buddhist women converted into Buddhism, except few Muslims who remained as Muslim, but children were given free choice to adopt religion. The Broq-pa tribe worship Lha and have faith in supernatural forces and also believed in spirits of different agents. They celebrate festivals like Saka, snyo-Lha, srub-Lha, (agricultural festival) rituals, customs, believed in totem and taboos observed during rituals and ceremonies of social function.

Health-culture of Broq-pa

Based on the findings and observation of the research, the following final conclusions could be reached for the formulated aims and objectives.
On the concept of health, four distinct broad themes emerged in the conceptualization of health among the respondents. These included health as good *karma*, health as ability to perform daily activities and absence of illness, health as mental peace, and health as a holistic attribute.

Illness and suffering are universal human experiences which come to be endowed with a plethora of cultural meanings. Cultural understandings are resources which may be variably drawn upon to help make sense of one's own or another's experiences. It was found that respondents conceptualize illness and what meanings they relate to them as illness as a result of past *karma*, illness as inability to perform daily activities and illness as result of stress.

It is evident from the analysis on the concept of health and illness, that there are certain overlaps in the conceptualisation of health and illness among the respondents. The concept of *karma* and performance of daily activities appeared both in conceptualisation of health and illness. In the description of health, the view of health as mental peace and as a holistic attribute emerged.

Broq-pas divides illness causation into three categories, such as naturalistic medical system, personalistic medical system and emotionalistic medical system. From the discussion on naturalistic medical system it was found that respondents categorised the cause of illness into four types viz., as excessive physical work, exposure to cold environment, lack of nutrition/consumption of stale food and old age. The respondents believed that the joint pain, backache, knee pain, ankle pain etc, were caused due to performing excessive physical work in field and carrying heavy loads. The respondents of the age groups, 65-76, 76-85 and 86-95, believed that they suffered from ailments due to physical work load that they indulged in their youth. Many respondents felt that the environmental condition and social or livelihood activities like prolonged sitting on wet lands in the field, performance of heavy work after child birth, and indulgence in physical work at young age, were the main causes of different ailments. The extremely cold climate of the region was found to affect people’s health very badly.
The respondents believed that they suffered due to consumption of different food stuffs which lacked nutrition and were inorganic. They believed that the local foods were organic and good for health. Many respondents suffered from gastric due to consumption of tea, oily and spicy food which had no nutritive value. Children suffered from cough, cold, fever and stomachache, other minor ailments due to lack of nutrition and consumption of unfit food. In order to cure these ailments they either they procured medicines from the health centre or used home remedies such as rice soup and boiled water, etc. If the illness continued for more days, they thought that they were suffering due to wrath of evil eye and evil spirits.

Respondents also believed that prolonged illness were due to the wrath of Lha and Lhu as they were always working with soil and water. Therefore their activities may have indirectly affected the lives of Lha and Lhu. In such cases people sought Lhaba/Lhamo therapy to know the cause of ailments, the Lhaba/Lhamo then advised them to follow different therapies like ritual performances, seeking local medicine, undergoing heat therapy and seeking doctor’s treatment etc. The respondents did as per the instruction of Lhaba/Lhamo.

The respondents felt unsatisfactory when they received medicine from health workers, as the health workers did not examine well as the doctors did. They preferred professionally qualified doctors for curing ailments. In some cases, some respondents sought both the medical systems at the same time to cure illnesses with every possible therapy.

Many elder respondents felt that the Amchi medicine was more effective and comfortable as it was culturally acceptable without any hesitation. Some respondents did not feel any relieved from pain after having medicines, though they procured medicines for psychological satisfaction. Many respondents were totally dependent on the local Amchi and his therapy. They wait for Amchi to return and continue with the treatment.

It was also observed that respondents related their ailments to the wrath of supernatural causes, and sought Lhamo’s advice to cure ailments. In such
case, they performed the rituals as per the advice given by Lhamo. Sometimes due to excessive domestic work and non-availability of monks in the community, they could not perform the said rituals on time. In most of the cases, it was found that ritual performance gave mental satisfaction, to the respondents.

As far as illness due to old age is concerned, it was observed that illness was due to body's natural process of getting old. The pain could be cured by keeping the body warm with woollen clothes, consume only local food to keep their body system in good state and avoidance of physical work to gains relief from pain to some extent. In this case they also procured medicine from the local health centre, but at this age they were not able to go for better and costlier treatment due to their physical immobility, involvement of long distance and lack of money. In the worse or later stages of ailments elder respondents believed it hopeless to be cured. They then thought that seeking better and costlier treatment, at this stage was a waste of time and money. Most of them felt that by reciting mantras, they felt more relieved from pain rather than by having different medicines.

From the studies on the personalistic medical system, it was found that the respondents categorised the causes of illnesses into four categories such as, karma, supernatural (Lha and Lhu), evil spirit (tsan, timo, shindey) and magico-religious (evil eye and zas-nyan). The concept of karma is given the prime concern. The respondents believed that the present health condition and life was all a result of one’s own karma. It was found that many elder respondents believed that their ailments were due to their lanchaks (bad karma) of their previous deeds. They all were suffered from serious illnesses. The examples of the chronic or incurable illness in the village encounter during fieldwork included paralysis, leprosy, joints pain and arthritis, goiter and blindness. Believing on karma, some respondents did not seek therapy, as they believed that it was their karma, and nothing could change it.

They sought different medical systems as they thought that any one system was ineffective in itself due to the prolonged illness. In such cases people performed rituals after consulting Lhaba/Lhamo, and they took every possible therapy to seek health.
It was found from the discussion on supernatural cause of illness, respondents believed that the causes of their illness were due to wrath of Lha and Lhu. They believed that their activities, and sometimes they could not pay proper attention to fulfill the duties to their Lha and Lhu unintentionally. In this case they sought prediction from Lhaba/Lhamo then performed ritual to cure illness.

It was concluded from the evil spirit cause of illness; they believed that there were three types of evil spirits such as tsan (wandering spirit); timo (envy and hated spirit of living person) and shindey (spirit of dead person). One may become victim of these spirits intentionally or unintentionally. Respondents believed that if they meet tsan (wandering spirit) on their way they may suffered from illness. To eliminate the efficacy of evil spirits curse, they sought Lhaba/Lhamo therapy, so they were advice to conduct ritual at home. In case, if child suffer from illness, they believed that the cause of illness was due to evil spirit or evil eye. In this case they preferred ritual performance to cure illness. They consulted Lhaba/Lhamo as well as Lama to seek the therapy and know about the cause of illness so they perform rituals like storma (effigy of evil), put zyur (kala tika) and burnt zduk zas (incense) to ward off any effect of evil eyes.

From the discussion on emotionalistic medical system, it was observed that the respondents perceived causes of illness due to mental stress. Within the society, they face inter-personal problems, inter-family problems and mental stress due to all the misfortunes that they have been encounter in their family. Due to stress of day to day life they suffered from, heart troubles, restlessness, headache, gastric and body pain.

They believed in concept of pure and impure regarding Lha (Protector) and Lhu (God of soil/water) of the community as well as of their house. Broq-pa paid great attention to keep their Lha pure and clean in any case. They believed that keeping pure and paying great attention to Lhal/Lhu plays an important role in ensuring good health, prosperity and protection to family as well as community. Broq-pa strongly believed in karma. They believed that
even if they do not suffered from serious illness but have tense or low income or any misfortune situation they believed that all were their \textit{karma}.

Broq-pa believed illness and suffering is caused only due to their own \textit{karma}, the result of the deeds done in their previous life. They believed in prevalent of illness causation by evil eye and evil spirit and intentionally intruded disease causing substance to victim.

**Form of therapies and pattern of treatment**

Among the Broq-pa there were multiple medical systems and people have ample choice according to their belief and satisfaction on the medical system. The treatment of illness started from home remedies to many other therapies till health was totally gained. The components of medical pluralism are \textit{Amchi} system, \textit{Lhabanism}, \textit{Lamanism}, \textit{Onpo}, allopathic system. The pluralistic medical situation provided flexibility and filled different needs of the people. Acceptance and rejection of any systems is dependent on variety of factors. When they believe in illness causation as due to magico-religious, people seek \textit{Lhaba/Lhamo} therapy and later duties were performed by monk, in such case \textit{storma} (rituals) performance is advised to cure evil eye and evil spirit as causes of illness. For protection from magico-religious cause people seek amulet from \textit{Onpo} (astrologer) and Holiness \textit{Lama} (monk). Broq-pas believed that use of urinary bladder of goat, sheep, made like a balloon and put in the roof, helps to ward off evil spirit and evil eye. The children are kept in basket and to protect form evil eye they put a knife or \textit{tha-nya} (malal holy beads) at one corner of basket and child forehead is marked \textit{Zyurr} (tikka) with black smoke from traditional hearth.

The \textit{Lhaba/Lhamo} and \textit{Lama} provides psychological encouragement to the people as they share the same ideas, value and culture, and people feel more comfortable to share their problem traditional healers. \textit{Amchi} cure illness with herbal medicine, they do not use bio-medicine and provide emotional support and satisfied treatment; some people among the elder have more faith and satisfaction in traditional healer. Majority of Broq-pa avail bio-medicine in case of illness, some Broq-pa are not satisfied with the facilities
available in the health centres as these facilities do not meet the needs of people. Elder people believed that medicines would not work on them, so they kept themselves warm and used only home food and home remedies, and recites mantras by themselves.

The allopathic centre as well as Army organises health camp every year in Hanu and Baima. Many people are aware of infectious diseases, AIDS, Tuberculosis, hypertension, UTI (Urinary Tract Infection) and family planning vaccination etc.,

In present context 50.0 per cent respondents reported that traditional healer (local Amchi) is not working as compare to modern medical system. 21.6 per cent of respondents reported that the Amchi system is working well, but it depends on seeker. Only few respondents seek Amchi medicine, as they feels that it was quite ineffective, made body numb and in such case, people found Amchi medication is more effective and have more faith and satisfaction in traditional medicine to cure ailments.

Another reason behind not working Amchi system found that Amchi system was much less preferred as compared to modern medical system as modern medical system provides free medicines and medical facilities to the natives. On the other hand local Amchi have no source of income with Amchi profession. Among younger generation the faith in traditional medicine was very less.

Attitudes of Broq-pas towards modern medical system

1. 46.0 per cent of the respondents reported that the medicines available in health centre were not adequate in case of major disease.
2. 5.6 per cent of the respondents were not satisfied with the medicine received from health centre.
3. Performance of rituals in case of illness is occurring maximum among respondents from farming and rearing occupation.
4. Least ritual performance occurred among labourers and Government employees.
5. Majority of illiterate respondents reported that illness was caused by evil eye/evil spirit. Similarly, among primary 80.0 per cent of the respondents believed that illness could be caused due to evil eye/evil spirit.

6. Among literate respondents maximum respondents believed that illness causation was not due to evil eye/evil spirit.

7. Among joint families performance of ritual occurred more than the nuclear families. It showed that roles of elders members in families was supreme. The custom and tradition were followed well and due importance was given to native culture, tradition, custom, beliefs and rituals.

8. A report from village health centre mentioned that people suffered from various diseases like Chronic Obstruct Pulmonary Disease (COPD), chronic bronchitis, joint pains, eye problem, acid peptic ulcer, high blood pressure, skin diseases. The reasoning being that these people drink lot of butter tea which is salty that causes hypertension.

9. It was observed that majority (53.0 per cent) of the respondents seek medical practitioner’s advice when they fall ill.

About general cleanliness of house and personal hygiene, they believed that keeping their house especially the hearth area and Lha and Lhu possessed area should be very clean or pure. These areas should not be polluted by any means, as they believed, polluting of these area (Lha and Lhu) would cause misfortune to individual as well as to family or even to the community. For the purification rites, every morning they burned juniper incense to purify the room and surrounding area. Consumption of cow’s meat and milk is taboo. Broq-pas believed using cow’s milk and spilling of milk on hearth will cause pollution of thaab Lha (God of Hearth) but majority of the Broq-pa now use cow’s milk but not a single individual consume cow’s meat as cow is considered to be polluted or impure.

Regarding personal hygiene, the younger generations kept themselves clean and quite hygienic. Among the elderly they believed that
bathing and washing clothes by themselves gives them more pain in joint and nerve due to expose to cold environment. The elderly bathe rarely due to health reasons, but wash hand and face every day. About the brushing teeth and cutting nails, elder people did not use brush paste as due to old age many people do not have teeth, few has but they use twig to clean it, some did not use any thing, they just washed with water only. As majority of the people were cultivators so they have to work with grass and soil so they mentioned that they did not have to cut nail, as it naturally withers away. The area was very cold in winter; native use woollen clothes and locally handmade woollen shoes as people found it is comfortable and warm for feet, knees and legs. Among Broq-pas few elders still did not use soap to wash hands face and for bathing. They used sometimes soda with ashes. They believed that using smelly soap and detergent caused pollution of Broq-Lha (protector of community) and Lhu (God of water/soil) which ultimately caused health problem/misfortunes to them.