



HAR DIN HAR GHAR AYURVEDA

ALEKH is a quarterly newsletter of the Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Knowledge Management in Health and Nutrition. The CoE has been established by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in collaboration with Piramal Swasthya Management and Research Institute.

This special edition of ALEKH is dedicated to marking World Ayurveda Day. Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India observes Ayurveda Day every year, on Dhanawantari Jayanti (Dhanteras) since 2016, to commemorate Ayurveda, an ancient medical science as a way of life.

The eighth volume of the newsletter is curated around Ayurveda and tribal health, understanding innovations and interventions that integrate both traditional tribal medicine and the tribal healers with the mainstream healthcare systems. We appreciate the support from various experts, civil society organizations, and development partners who have contributed to the making of this newsletter.

FEATURING

Ayurveda and its Confluence with Traditional Tribal Medicine

Har Din Har Ghar Ayurveda Campaign: An Overview

Interview Byte

Integrating Tribal Healers and their Traditional Medicines into India's Present Health System: A Case Study of Four Villages in Odisha

Exploration of Tribal Medicinal Wisdom of Uttarakhand Tribes and its Scientific Validation

Community Talks: Voices of the Tribal Healers

Engaging Tribal Healers to Strengthen the Community-Based Traditional Healthcare System in Tribal Areas of South Gujarat

Engaging Tribal Healers to Strengthen Community Based Traditional Healthcare System in Tribal Areas of South Gujarat

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Background:

Access to health services and lack of awareness of health and hygiene are the primary reasons for increased morbidity among the tribal poor. In tribal areas, inadequate primary health care facilities, hygiene and sanitation, and awareness have resulted in the poor health status of the community. In view of this, there is a need to devise mechanisms to bring low-cost, affordable, and accessible healthcare systems to rural and tribal areas to ensure health for all.

The traditional systems of medicine, as led by Vaidus / tribal healers and their plant-based treatment practices are well accepted by the community since the ancient period and this knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation. Their knowledge needs to be systematically documented, promoting the cultivation and propagation of medicinal herbs for future sustainability. We need to harness this traditional healthcare system to supplement the mainstream healthcare mechanism in the country.

BAIF (www.baif.org.in), a reputed civil society organization and a recognized center of excellence under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has conceptualized and developed a unique approach to empower existing tribal traditional healers in tribal parts of Gujarat and Maharashtra. BAIF is committed to preserving the traditional health practices prevailing in the tribal areas. Rop- ing them into the mainstream health delivery system to take care of the primary health needs in villages at low cost.

BAIF has devised a program called the Herbo technique to work with and upgrade the cadre of Vaidus or Traditional healers. Currently ongoing in Dang, Valsad, and Navsari districts of South Gujarat the program entails documentation of existing traditional healthcare practices in tribal hamlets, Grading and rating for Vaidus based on their plant-based treatment knowledge and skills and Capacity building and upgradation of skills.

For capacity building and improvement of skills, these health practitioners have to undergo a 10-day training at Nature cure ashram of BAIF at Urali Kanchan, Pune. Here Vaidus get trained on nature cure, massage, mud therapy, yoga, community health, human physiology and standard operational practices for collecting plants, etc. Practical sessions on massage, mud therapy, steam therapy, and yoga help gain additional treatment skills and boost to the confidence of Vaidus.

BAIF also follows system of assessment, grading & certifica-



tion for Vaidus. Field visits for observation of healer's work is done for safety and efficacy, jointly with IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University), QCI (Quality Council Of India) & FRLHT (Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions, Bangalore). A formal certificate is also jointly provided. Events are organized for recording, cross-referencing, and validation of use of plants for medicinal purposes.

Trained Vaidus families are encouraged to start a CHARAK Kendra (Charak vanoushadhi yevam kudarati prathmopchar Kendra). The information to the community about the availability of nature cure and plant-based therapy is given in gram Sabha and village-level meetings and through patient-to-patient publicity. Decent livelihoods by providing primary treatment through these Charak Kendra ensuring the health & wellbeing of the needy tribal communities.

THPs are providing the following services through Charak Centre:

Herbal treatment and therapy

- Herbal treatment (Herbs collected from forest)
- Nature cure therapy (Nisargopchar) –
- Linkages and Referral services with SC, PHC, CHC, Pvt clinics, Aanganwadi, Asha workers, health camps, Mental health program

Education and Awareness

- Health education
- Participation in School health program – Vanoushodhi information, herbarium,
- Participation in Aarogya samittee – Village cleanliness (Gram swacchata), water purification, Hygiene, sanitation, nutrition

Other Allied services

- Herbal/ Kitchen Garden
- Participation in Vriksha samittee – Collection of seeds, Nursery raising
- Participation in village level programs / events, meetings, Gram sabha, mahila din, vaidu din (Annual gathering of THPs)



CASE STORY (JAMALAPADA VILLAGE, DANG DISTRICT)

Sri Sukarbhair Bhangubhai Pawar

Shukarbhair, of Jamalapada village, is a tribal healer certified under QCI-FRLHT-BAIF led efforts for managing jaundice and common ailments. Even though he had the knowledge and skills to provide healthcare services, he wasn't recognized, prior to his certification. He primarily worked as a labourer on farms. Other than that, he provided healthcare services as his secondary occupation and would earn Rs. 30/- per day. But after the certification, people in his and his neighbouring villages started recognizing him for his skills. Now he is exclusively a healthcare provider and no longer works as a labourer. His monthly income has risen from Rs.25000/- to Rs.30,000/-.

With his increased earnings, he has even bought a plot of land where he has set up the facility for his own healthcare services and named it Charak Vanoushodhi Evam Kudarati Prathama Upchar Kendra. Besides setting up the Kendra, the certificate has allowed him to access raw materials easily as the Forest Officials now recognize him as a genuine, certified folk healer.

Integration with other programs of BAIF:

Once built, this cadre of tribal healers is playing role in many BAIF-led programs like, entry point activities of water resource development, school health program, training for SHG school students, Information about yoga and health-giving in school for teachers and students, - new SHG formation, sensitisation, Health awareness programs, cluster /village level meetings and events. These gain identity and respect to vaidu.

Herbo technique program has resulted in to following outcomes:

At the individual level, an increased self-confidence amongst the tribal healers was seen, documentation of Traditional, useful knowledge was done and there was an improvement in family, children's education, agriculture, house, and personality of healers.

Whereas at the community level formation of a platform was seen which led to improved communication with other traditional healers, and participation by Vaidus in community health and development activities in the village. Also, there was an increase in health awareness among the community by Vaidus. Herbo technique program also resulted in the availability of affordable primary medical services in the tribal village, upgradation of knowledge and skills on nature cure, medicinal herbs and preventive and promotive health care measures. Community health services were also provided to needy people (Jan seva).

The program encountered several challenges like THPs being reluctant to share traditional knowledge, long training duration of ten days for illiterate/semi-literate and old age THPs, adoption of new knowledge/skills and difficulty in local language – communication and training.

The key achievements of the program include extending health services in tribal villages of South Gujarat to more than 120 tribal healers, documentation of traditional practices on indigenous herbs and their effective use, conservation of medicinal plants and plant-based treatment knowledge, the community can avail of primary health services in the village itself, creating Vaidu's cadre as a complimentary healthcare system, and by showcasing a unique Health Delivery model for further scaling up in other tribal parts of India.

Such efforts need to be upscaled and replicated in other tribal parts of the country considering that there are an estimated 1 million folk healers across the country and that they form an integral part of rural and tribal life, there is no formal recognition for them.





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