

Pathways to Health Care among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Telangana State, India

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Abstract

The present paper is based on a study commissioned by the Department of Tribal Welfare, Government of Telangana, to examine the need for innovative health programs/policies to elevate the health status of the PVTGs in the state. The study explores possible program initiatives for improving the health status of tribals in general and tribals of Telangana specifically. The paper focuses on the specific pathways for treatment among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Telangana in the event of certain chronic/major illnesses and some minor morbid conditions. The study highlights that the explanatory models of illness significantly influence the choice of healthcare system. Explanations of illness aetiologies are important in making choices in the initial stages of illness. However, the considerations of suitable response to instrumental causes of illness and physical distress do result in some forced choices. The study also demonstrates that the Traditional Medical Practitioners are mostly part of the therapy management groups for tribal Tuberculosis patients, and they have an important role in the healthcare decisions of tribal patients.

Keywords: Health Care, Health Seeking Behaviour, Illnesses, Pathways, PVTGs

Introduction

The knowledge of health-seeking and illness behaviours of the community members, though of immense value in any initiative for improving the health status of the community members, is often ignored by health administrators and

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