

Cultural Influences on Maternal and Child Health Practices Insights from Juang Tribal Community of Odisha

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Abstract

Inside the Juang tribal group, complex interaction exists between cultural influences and the methods that are used to preserve mother and child health. Because of its location in a distant and culturally diverse region, the Juang community has developed its own distinctive customs, beliefs, and practices, all of which have a substantial influence on the health and happiness of mothers and children. This study provides light on the cultural determinants that influence mother and child health outcomes by conducting an in-depth investigation with the community. An investigation of the traditional birth customs, nutritional habits, and indigenous beliefs toward healthcare, and superstitions that are widespread in the Juang tribal group is presented in this research. The availability of contemporary medical services and their usage, and the part that extended families and community support networks play in the provision of maternal and child care assistance. The usage of traditional medications and herbal cures is also investigated, which offers vital insights into the dynamic relationship that exists between traditional and modern approaches to healthcare.

Keywords: Cultural, Maternal, Child Health, Tribal Community, Juang.

Introduction

In the realm of global public health, maternal and child health is among the most important concerns. This is due to the fact that the health and happiness of mothers and children serves as the basis for the general health of a society. Despite the fact that there has been progress achieved with regard to improving mother and child health all around the world, discrepancies continue to exist, particularly among indigenous and tribal people. This study article digs into the intriguing and intricate relationship that exists between culture and healthcare within the Juang tribal society. It provides useful insights into the elements that determine maternal and child health practises within this particular cultural setting. The Juang tribal tribe, which is located in the isolated and mountainous terrain of India's eastern regions, is a distinct cultural group that is characterised by its traditions, beliefs, and rituals. The complex tapestry that is formed by these traditions extends to many other parts of life, including as pregnancy, delivery, and childrearing. These traditions have an impact on the health and well-being of both women and children. Understanding the cultural influences that have an effect on maternal and child health practises in the Juang community is not only a matter of academic interest, but it is also an essential step toward addressing healthcare disparities and improving health outcomes in cultural settings that are similar to those found in other tribal communities around the world.

Review of literature:

The book "Juang" by Ota & Sahu (2008) provides the challenges faced by Juang tribe of Odisha in education, health, and economy, but government efforts prioritize forest, land, agriculture, and education. The Juang Development Agency aims for sustainable development despite the growing population.

The book "Health Practices and Health-Care Systems Among Cultural Groups" discusses health issues for various tribal communities including Juangs. According to the Commission on Behavioural and Social Sciences and Education (CBASSE), lethal dangers account for fifty percent of all fatalities. The report suggests identifying and addressing behavioural health risks, examining knowledge base methods, and providing practical suggestions for change.

Sahoo & Naidu's 2013 stated, the health of the Juang Tribe in Odisha State is examined in this research, along with the effects of traditional variables and contemporary medical techniques. The tribe has a strong magico-religious healthcare system and a homogeneous culturally firm system. Despite living harmoniously in the natural forest environment, the Juang have lower health status compared to the general population, with high infant mortality, fertility rates, and malnourishments. Their ecological, geographical, and climate barriers hinder their health quality of life.

Sahoo's 2017 study highlights the vulnerability of tribal communities to illness in neo-liberal development, highlighting resource depletion, inaccessibility, and affordability, leading to higher mortality rates and malnutrition.

The "Compendium On Traditional Tribal Medicine" by Jadhav & Kar (2019) explores tribal medicine in Odisha, focusing on disease perception, indigenous typology, and causes of sickness. It recommends comprehensive documentation, resource groups, and promoting indigenous plantations and herbal gardens.

Sarkar et al.'s 2019 study "The Juangas – A Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group of Odisha: A Review" provides a brief overview of research on the Juangas of Odisha, covering themes such as family, kinship, marriage, livelihood, education, political organization, religion, food habits, and sports. The review is based on reports, books, and unpublished research studies from postgraduate and M. Phil. students at Utkal University, Odisha.

Researchers Kanrar and Goswami looked at the Juangs, a marginalised tribal tribe in Odisha, India, to see how they fared in terms of nutrition, reproductive health, and economic position. Fifteen villages in the Keonjhar district provided the participants, 435 men and 515 women, all of whom were 18 and over. When looking at factors like age, education, and employment position, the findings revealed clear gender inequalities. Only 23.1% of women have had a tetanus toxoid vaccination, and 29.9% have taken iron and folic acid pills, according to the report. A need for quick nutritional intervention programmes is highlighted by the study's finding of significant rates of undernutrition among both boys (57.5 percent) and girls (62.9 percent).

Nutritional condition of Juang children and adolescents in Odisha, India was examined in a research conducted by Kuiti et al. (2022). The study indicated that there was a general frequency of thinness at 15.61%, with age-specific educational groups showing some variation. The results of the research indicate that the children's nutritional health has improved, and that ongoing intervention programmes and government health policies might help stabilise their position.

According to research by Mud and Pradhan (2023), the Juang people of Odisha, India, have the worst rates of contraceptive usage and other health indicators. The research relied on qualitative interviews and

data collected from 360 married women ranging in age from 15 to 49. The findings revealed that 34% of Juang women were using some kind of contraception, and that 61% had negative or neutral opinions towards such techniques. Non-use of contraception was substantially correlated with socio-cultural variables, such as gender norms.

The health and hygiene of menstruation among Juang women in Odisha, India is investigated in the research conducted by Mud et al. (2023). The research, which is a cross-sectional study, discovered that 85% of Juang women use old garments as absorbents during menstruation. Reasons for this low utilisation of sanitary napkins include things like distance from the market, lack of knowledge, and expensive cost. Additionally, 71% of Juang women have menstruation issues, but only 33% get treatment, according to the report. The research emphasises the need of educating this marginalised tribal community on menstrual hygiene, the negative consequences of menstruation issues, and the availability of affordable sanitary napkins.

Sahoo et al. (2023) investigates how the Juang Tribe of Odisha, India, seek medical attention. A person's ethos, worldview, socioeconomic position, surroundings, and access to healthcare are important determinants of health-seeking behaviour, according to the study. The majority of respondents (70%) chose traditional healthcare owing to cultural and geographical factors, while almost all (95%) favoured contemporary treatments due to accessibility and modern professionals. A mixed strategy is being used by the Juang tribe as they shift into a new phase of health-seeking.

Higher utilisation of ANC services (with the exception of early pregnancy registration) and lower institutional delivery rates were found in a 2024 study on maternal, newborn, and child health services in 13 vulnerable tribal groups in Odisha, India, conducted by Ghosal et al. The study attributed these lower rates to accessibility issues and cultural barriers.

Traditional Birth Practices among the Juang Tribe

The Juang Tribe has a long history of traditional birth practises that are strongly ingrained in their cultural heritage. These traditions have a key role in influencing the experiences of mother and child health within the community. A network of traditional birth attendants, known as "dais," takes on the role of ensuring that a woman from the Juang Tribe has a delivery experience that is both safe and culturally significant when she is expecting a child. These dais are often older ladies who have a wealth of knowledge and expertise in aiding with childbirth and are known as "dais." One of the most noticeable aspects of traditional birth practises is the integration of rituals and ceremonies that are associated with the process of giving birth. The new life is welcomed into the society through the performance of these rituals, which are deep in cultural meaning and serve as a mechanism to do so. They may entail the recitation of ancient melodies, the lighting of particular herbs, and the performing of particular motions, all of which are thought to protect the mother and the infant from any adverse forces that may be present.

In these traditions, the dais make use of their knowledge to help the labouring woman through the process of giving birth, emphasising the importance of the concept that delivery should be both safe and harmonious. In addition to addressing the physiological elements of labour, these traditional birth practises are also concerned with preserving cultural identity and ensuring continuity and continuity. However, it is essential to keep in mind that the incorporation of contemporary medical practises and facilities is gradually influencing these traditional practises. Because of this, we need to think about ways to increase mother and child health while yet honouring cultural customs.

Cultural Influences on Maternal Health Practices:

In the context of the Juang tribe in Odisha, India, the exploration of pregnancy and childbirth rituals exhibits a wealthy tapestry of traditional practices. It is deeply rooted in their cultural heritage. These rituals extend beyond past ceremonies and play a vital position in structuring maternal health selections inside the community.

Pregnancy among the Juang tribe is marked with the help of a series of tricky rituals and this generally concerns the energetic participation of a circle of relatives and the community. These rituals serve as cultural expressions and also great determinants of maternal health choices. Traditional birthing practices, guided by the help of rituals passed down through generations, are also influencing the choice of birthplaces, the involvement of traditional birth attendants, and adherence to specific dietary and postpartum practices. The effect of those rituals on maternal health decisions is profound as they make contributions to the establishment of a supportive and culturally resonant environment for expectant mothers. The communal nature of these rituals promotes a sense of belonging and security. It undoubtedly impacts maternal mental health. Additionally, the cultural importance attached to particular practices instills a sense of trust in conventional methods (Nyaloko et al. 2023). It helps to shape the selection-making procedure around maternal healthcare alternatives. Understanding these rituals is vital for healthcare practitioners to offer culturally equipped care that respects and integrates the Juang communities' conventional practices into maternal health interventions. Conventional healing practices for maternal health shape a critical part of the healthcare system within the Juang tribe in Odisha. These practices reflect a holistic technique that blends indigenous understanding with cultural ideals to deal with maternal health issues.

Juang women regularly resort to traditional healing methods and encompass the use of locally available medical plants, rituals, and the expertise of community healers. Herbal medicines are recognized for perceived efficiency (Huang 2021). This is employed to manipulate conditions related to being pregnant and postpartum care. Traditional doctors are also said to heal the mother's health as a whole through the rites and practices they do. The Juang village is a great example of how to use both old and new health together in a way that works. Many people still put a lot of value on traditional ways of healing, but everyone knows that current medical methods can also help. Not only do pregnant women use both modern doctors and traditional therapists, but they may also be practical and see the benefits of both. The flexible Juang community is born from this merger. Here, modern medicine and traditional healing methods live together happily. It also shows how important it is to understand and value the network's two types of healthcare settings. That the Juang people can adapt is clear from how well modern medicine and old-fashioned ways of healing work together. Also, the story shows how important it is to understand and value the community's two types of healthcare settings.

For women in the Odisha Juang tribe group who are pregnant, having social networks in their neighborhoods is very important for their health. A strong group, made up of older people and extended family, can help pregnant women with their mental health, physical health, and education. The society actively backs the trip of women who are pregnant. The book tells the mother what to eat and how to keep her mind healthy. It makes a big difference when extended families share tasks, make sure the pregnant woman is comfy, and take part in traditional ceremonies (Bhatia et al. 2020). People in the community honor elders for what they know and have been through. People who work with them keep records of traditional knowledge and can offer advice and help that isn't religious at different times during pregnancy and birth. Pregnant women can improve their physical and mental health with this

community-based method. It makes them feel more connected to and a part of the Juang community. The impact of an extended circle of relatives and a community of elders contributes to supportive surroundings that are necessary for the holistic well-being of expectant moms. It is emphasizing the collaborative nature of maternal care inside the cultural fabric of the Juang tribe.

Cultural Influences on Child Health Practices

Child Rearing Practices: The Juang tribe intricately weaves cultural values into their children's practices, developing a unique tapestry of the circle of relatives and network members of the family (Wilson et al. 2021). Childrearing practices utilized in ritual stand as evidence of the duty of care of the network as a whole to its younger members. In Juang's individual, childcare extends past the spot on family barriers, with grandparents gambling a critical function in transmitting generational knowledge and actively collaborating in child-rearing. Juang's parenting style is underpinned by cultural beliefs, which made the exercise specific. Basic values inclusive of admiration for elders and network cohesion have a profound impact on child-rearing practices. Discipline is often cultivated through the oral lifestyle of storytelling, where ethical lessons are loosely integrated into the narrative. This method not only provides critical values but also serves as a method of transmitting cultural identity among penetrations, contributing to the holistic development of the child (Brega et al. 2021). The choice of co-sleeping options is common, no longer physical proximity but a tradition that emphasizes emotional security inside the family unit.

Nutrition and Feeding Practices: Analysis of little ones' and young children's nutrition reveals the cultural richness of the dietary practices of the Juang network. Breastfeeding, a long way extra than a nutritional necessity, appears as an exceedingly symbolic one that reinforces the emotional bond between mother and children. Complementary feeding practices are culturally certain in conventional fabric, with particular meal alternatives guided with the aid of seasonal and cultural issues. Cultural values strongly affect nutritional alternatives in the Juang network. The dietary practices are linked to spiritual beliefs and conventional medication, resulting in a holistic approach to vitamins. Some foods are considered healthy, marked with ritual significance as symbols of cultural norms however; in the Juang network indigenous ecosystems have also been considered, encouraging sustainable practices.

Rituals and Ceremonies: Customs and rituals stand as pillars inside the Juang ethnic group's method to ensure the proper well-being of their children. Birth ceremonies, which include naming ceremonies, are held in compliance with conservative cultural norms, which might be vital social milestones and mark the combination of the child into the non-secular realm of the community (Mshayisa et al. 2024). The courting between cultural practices and child health results in rituals committed to protecting children from disorder and malevolent forces. Amulet practices often related to conventional healing are used to save children from predicted risks throughout children's welfare. Deeply embedded inside the perception gadget of the Juang community, those rituals go through mere symbolism, influencing health care, looking for practices, and designing interpretations of child health indicators.

Understanding the complex interplay between cultural practices and infant health is not just about gaining knowledge of devices but is a prerequisite for powerful culturally sensitive health interventions. Traditional child rearing and conservation of nutritional practices display the resilience of the Juang subculture. It is a testament to the community's determination to hold its identification and values within the mindset of a converting world (Soman et al. 2023). Integrating those cultural nuances into health care is handiest guarantees relevance additionally, community involvement and recognition, contributing

to the overall well-being of children within the Juang ethnic institution . The cultural impacts of the Juang community on infant health practices are sturdy traditions, ideas, and customs that determine the sturdy well-being of their children. If these cultural challenges are recounted and revered, they must get admission to health services consistent with the community to expand a holistic technique.

Role of Extended Families and Community Support Networks

When it comes to matters of maternal and infant health, the Juang Tribe puts a premium on the influence of extended families and community support networks. In the distant and tightly knit village of Juang, the notion of family encompasses a far wider range of relationships than just the nuclear family. When it comes to giving emotional, practical, and frequently financial assistance to families with small children and expecting moms, extended relatives play a key role.

It is the responsibility of the extended family system to guarantee that pregnant women receive the necessary care and attention throughout their pregnancies. Grandmothers, aunts, and other female relatives frequently take on the task of providing care for the expectant mother. They do this by providing advice on eating well, getting enough rest, and participating in traditional rituals that are designed to ensure a good pregnancy. This network of familial support not only reduces the physical load that pregnant women have to bear, but it also helps them feel like they belong and improves their mental well-being, both of which can have a favourable influence on the health of the mother.

Even after giving birth, the woman and child are still heavily reliant on their extended family for support. The provision of aid to new moms in the areas of newborn care, nursing, and recuperating following childbirth is provided. New moms are provided with a sense of comfort and confidence by the cumulative wisdom that has been passed down through generations within the extended family. This information acts as a significant resource.

Conclusion

Within the Juang Tribal Community, we have discovered a complex and complicated interplay between tradition, beliefs, and modernity as a result of our investigation into the cultural factors that have an effect on the behaviours that pertaining to mother and child health. This research has provided light on the distinctive behaviours, rituals, and customs that create the landscape of mother and child health in this distant community that is rich in cultural traditions. The deep-rooted traditions and cultural significance that are assigned to delivery within the Juang community are demonstrated by the traditional birth procedures that are guided by dais who are educated in the subject. Rituals provide a cultural framework for maternal health decisions, even as traditional recovery practices. It is deeply rooted in indigenous information and coexists harmoniously with modern healthcare interventions. The extended family and community elders play pivotal roles in presenting holistic support to pregnant women and newborns fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility. The practice of incorporating rituals and ceremonies into the process of birthing not only provides an additional depth of cultural complexity, but it also serves as a symbol of the significance of community and tradition in this significant life journey.

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