



Ethnographic account of traditional healing beliefs and practices among *Korku* tribes in Maharashtra through emic approach

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Abstract

Indigenous culture and practices have evolved largely around nature and natural systems of their surroundings. This holds true even for their traditional medicines and healing practices, which, for several reasons, have been a life support system for tribal communities such as that remain excluded from modern healthcare systems. However among *Korkus*, not much have been studied about this traditional system of medicine. The current study aims to present an ethnographic account of the processes of traditional healing beliefs and practices used to treat several diseases by the *Korku* tribes in this context. The study highlights how in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases, a combination of various natural elements such as plants and animal parts and several supernatural elements such as charms, sacrifices and magic are used to cure pneumonia, migraine, fever, jaundice, infertility, weakness and malnutrition, leucorrhoea, diarrhoea, skin infections, dog bites and snake bites. This study recommends that the scope, limits and growth of traditional healing practices in tribal health be taken into account.

Keywords: Ethnic healing, Indigenous communities, Tribal health

1. Introduction

Colonialists have caused numerous epidemics in various tribal populations all over the world (UNDESA, 2020). The most vulnerable population like tribal faces several hurdles that present a significant danger to them (Tiwari, 2001; FRA, 2020; UNDESA, 2020). Additionally, the strategies for combating the virus as well as for preventing its spread go far beyond medical care. All other things being equal, the nation-wide lockdown has caused job losses and food insecurity for the native tribes (Chakma and Chakma, 2020; FRA, 2020).

Tribes in India now rely on their traditional and ethnic healing practices (Misra, 2004; Dalal,

2011; Panging and Sharma, 2017). Tribal culture is defined by several distinct approaches to indigenous knowledge. Indigenous medicine, on the other hand, has received minimal attention. As a result, we must recognize and respect the long-term value of this indigenous peoples' traditional way of life for many generations to come.

1.1. Traditional medicine, ethnic healing and indigenous communities

Humanity and the environment have for centuries impacted the community, faith, livelihoods, and daily life (Lye, 2000; Abdullah *et al.*, 2014; Panging and Sharma, 2017). Specifically, the

indigenous information is structured around their natural environment (Aryal *et al.*, 2016). Numerous indigenous tribes rely on the environment to participate in their rituals and practices. Nonetheless, ethnic healing is a notable aspect of their medical system, even though it has parallels in modern medicine.

Ethnomedicine is prevalent in every culture. It can be referred to as conventional and complementary therapies, traditional healing methods, or ethnobotany (Aryal *et al.*, 2016; Karua, 2015; Panging and Sharma, 2017; Haque *et al.*, 2018). Tribal cultures around the globe practice ethnomedicine and healing practices and these traditional approaches are increasingly gaining acceptance among modern health care systems (Gurumurthy, 1990). Roughly 60% of the global population uses orthodox and ethnic medicines (WHO, 2002). 80% of the Indian population is reliant on this scheme (Dalal 2011; WHO, 2013). Developed countries do not intend to use alternative medicines less. 70% of the population in countries like Canada, France, Belgium and the US benefit from traditional medicine and practices (WHO, 2002).

The only issue left to address is why people choose to use these medicines, in spite of newer alternatives mainly due to the natural-cultural linkages that permeate tribal life (Abdullah *et al.*, 2014; Valdez and Canapi, 2015; Soni and Pradhan, 2016). It is because of the folklores, customs, taboos and religious values which are closely related to the environment (Hynniewta and Kumar, 2008; Panging and Sharma, 2017). Also, deviance from these laws unleashes the wrath of god upon them and therefore only natural remedies may aid (Abdullah *et al.*, 2014; Valdez and Canapi, 2015; Karua, 2015). There are also other reasons why tribal members have not embraced modern healthcare systems because of the immediate effect of traditional healers, the patient's gender, previous interactions with various health care systems, etc. (Uddin *et al.*, 2010; Aryal *et al.*, 2016; Haque *et al.*, 2018).

1.2. Different forms of ethnic healing practices

Many researchers have examined tribal cultures medical systems and related healing practices. Aryal *et al.* (2016) classified ethnic healing practices based on the method of treatment. Valdez and Canapi (2015) broke practices into

three categories: magic, tradition and fact. Abdullah (2014) describes conventional medical systems as based on both religious and non-religious communities. More than half of all ethnic healing practices can be divided into two main groups: one for causes of illness and the other for the type of treatment.

1.2.1. Natural methods: The natural approaches incorporate medicinal plants, animal products, and minerals. Several indigenous groups use different natural elements as part of their diagnostic and healing routines. Many plant species, animals and insects are widely used by indigenous groups in Malaysia to treat sickness (Ong, 2007; Abdullah *et al.*, 2014). In a similar way, the *Mishing* tribe in Assam uses 33 different plant parts to treat diseases such as common cold, cough, inflammations, white discharge, dysentery, diabetes, pneumonia, malaria, pox and jaundice (Panging and Sharma, 2017). In two villages of Bangladesh that is, Bhabanipur and Jobra, around 1000 plant species are considered to have medicinal properties and thus form an integral part of a system of ethnic healing, called *Kabiraji* (Haque *et al.*, 2018).

In Nepal, Aryal *et al.* (2016) researched the indigenous communities' use of natural elements as traditional medicine. *Tulsi* (*Ocimum tenuiflorum* L.), *Lwang* (*Syzygium aromaticum* (L.) Merr. & L. M. Perry), *Aduwa* (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe), and *Amla* (*Phyllanthus emblica* L.) are mixed with minerals such as black salt, iron, copper, *shilajeet* and alum. Animal sections are used in traditional healing too. Tiger bone, bear bile, rhino umbilical, crab intestine, peacock feathers and deer meat are also used medicinally. The studies conducted by Valdez and Canapi (2015) illustrate how the *Subanen* and *Mansaka* cultures have developed a comprehensive system of herbal remedies for treating tuberculosis, infertility, fungal infections, cough, cholera, diarrhoea and bone displacement.

Among the *Santals* of India, *Panchamahabhuta* represents the most direct type of nature based healing systems. Group ethnomedical practices are based on these elements: earth, water, sun, fire, air and ether. Water from snails can be used to cure eye problems, while water from the *sal* tree can treat bladder infections. Similarly, diabetics are advised to walk on dew in the morning. Soil

and fire, two other essential ingredients have been found to treat excessive thirst and painful inflammations respectively (Karua, 2015). The *Santals* advocate using lobster, hen egg, cow urine, bat meat and ants for treating various ailments (Adivasi, 2006). Significant to note is that, amid the diversity of socio-economic and cultural environments, people all over the world still use natural elements to practice traditional healing.

1.2.2. Supernatural methods: Although plants and animals form an integral part of ethnic medicine and healing systems, it is necessary to understand that these traditions often contain supernatural elements. The indigenous belief is that the spirit world affects the wellbeing of the group members. Hence, breach of taboos and wrath of gods, ancestral spirits, ghosts and evil energies cause diseases (Adivasi, 2006; Abdullah *et al.*, 2014; Karua, 2015) in combination with mysticism, charms, singing, divination, sorcery, exorcism, magic, witchcraft and sacrifice (Bodding, 1986; Fatima, 2010; Soni and Pradhan, 2016).

Each tribal culture has devised intricate protocols for diagnosing and treating illnesses, which are frequently thought to be caused by the supernatural. When the paranormal happens, the general public will combat the illness. It is common practice in some tribes to refer to them by different names like it is named as *Gunia* among the *Dhurwa* tribe (Soni and Pradhan, 2016), *Devra* in the *Munda* tribe (Fatima, 2010), and *Ojha* among the *Santals* (Karua, 2015), *Hala* in *Batek* community (Endicott, 1979), *Hujurs* among followers of *kalami* practice in Bangladesh (Haque *et al.*, 2018). These people claim to have been blessed with divine powers by Gods and their ancestors.

Although there is a strong demarcation between natural and spiritual approaches to ethnic healing, the methods often incorporate both. For instance, water, soil, rice, salt and mustard seeds are used together with charms and magic to diagnose and treat diseases. The accounts of the *Munda* and *Dhurwa* tribes (Karua, 2015; Soni and Pradhan, 2016) tell how leaders detected sickness causing spirits through observation of various natural elements including rice charms. Worshippers of Bangladesh's *kalami* tradition frequently use the *pani-pora* or charm, that soothes people having evil spirits. People also resort to sorcery to

enchant others (Haque *et al.*, 2018). Conducting blood sacrifice while chanting with the *Batek* tribe is popular in that culture (Abdullah *et al.*, 2014).

From the above review, it is evident that the indigenous healing systems incorporate both natural and spiritual influences. This agrees with their long-standing cultural values. Although some researches have been done in this regard, most have only been done to catalogue both natural and supernatural elements. Few studies were there on methods of traditional healing there were used by the tribes because, the divine leaders sometimes cloak their practices in mysticism and secrecy, never making their techniques accessible to the public. Present study is aimed at discovering traditional healing beliefs and practices among the *Korku* tribe. The main objective is to achieve a deeper understanding of the principles of health and sickness from an emic viewpoint.

2. Materials and methods

For the past seven years, the third author of this paper has been living with communities. An emic approach (insider perspective) has therefore been used to record ethnographic observations related to traditional healing practices and beliefs among the tribe. During April 2017 to February 2020, frequent visits were made to 'who are traditional healing practitioners among the tribe. Because of knowledge of language to the third author, no mediators were taken to meet. Interviews, discussion and field visits were also used as instruments to record qualitative aspects of ethnic healing practices. Six from *Tehsil* of Chikaldhara and Achalpur of Amravati district of Maharashtra were interviewed in depth. In order to confirm the authenticity of information provided by informants, the collected data and ethnographic observations were compiled and cross-checked with older members of the tribe between the ages of 65-75 years. This research is the result of a long-lasting stay and a prolonged conversation between informants, elders and leaders of tribe.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Traditional medicine and healing practices

The current study tries to understand the ethnic healing practices among the *Korku* tribe. The

focus has been on throwing light on the processes and practices followed by the community in this regard. The initial observations about the variety of traditional healing practices among the *Korkus* could put many at consternation. These practices defy mainstream logic based on modern-day treatments and science. Nonetheless, the *Korku* community still reposes great reliance on them. This system of medical care and healing had a strong element of aboriginality and mysticism, to the extent that it is difficult for any outsider to gain an in-depth knowledge of all the elements utilized and practices followed. Therefore, this study relies on the narratives of community members to unfold the traditional healing methods and processes of the *Korku* community.

It is important to note that, unlike the modern system involving sophisticated diagnostic tests and treatments, the whole system approach of *Korku* healing is based on their understanding of the probable reason and observable symptoms. This elaborate system of medical care among the *Korku* has evolved over a long period, through their long stint with great epidemics and natural calamities, especially during the end of the nineteenth century and prolonging to the beginning of the twentieth century. Faced with a threat to their existence, the *Korku* gradually explored various natural treatments. Given, their belief systems, the diseases and associated treatments also have a strong linkage to deities. The *Korku* herbal medicinal system covers major illnesses like pneumonia, migraine, fevers, jaundice, infertility, debility, malnutrition, leucorrhoea, diarrhoea, skin infections, dog bites and snakebites.

Over generations, *Korkus* have developed an elaborate system of medicine and healing, which despite the advent of modern medical systems, forms an integral part of their culture. The healing practices of *Korku* have an admixture of wild herbs, elements from their habitat along with processes for appeasing deities by the *Padiyar*. A *Padiyar*, who is akin to a priest among the *Korkus*, is believed to be the repository of the traditional knowledge of herbs and healing, passed down from their ancestors. This body of knowledge remains restricted to the *Padiyars* and the general masses have little understanding

of it, thereby placing the *Padiyars* at a position of honour and influence in the *Korku* community.

Padiyar usually holds healing sessions on certain days (Wednesday and Sunday) considered appropriate for this practice (Fig.1). A range of herbs and elements, mostly, collected from the forests and riverbeds in very remote hill and mountains are made use of. The most common herbs and elements include roots and tubers, tree skin, berries, leaves, creepers, live frogs, lizard tails and even parts of dwarf bears. It is interesting to note that all elements are procured from nature. Today, with the influence of mainstream society, acculturation has brought in newer elements like turmeric, jaggery, edible oil, chilli powder and so on.



Fig. 1. Healing session of *Padiyar* with tribes

The entire process of identifying herbs for specific diseases, collecting them and preparing medicinal doses has a very systematic procedure with very intricate details related to spiritual aspects. For instance, no herb or plant is collected by *Padiyar* without first reciting chants and offering rice grains coloured yellow with turmeric. The use of turmeric coloured rice is significant in the *Korku* culture, especially for invitation during marriages. However, it also forms an integral part of the healing practices of the *Korku* and is often used to extend an invitation (*Nyota*) to deities to heal a diseased person. Various herbs and elements are collected by the *Padiyar* painstakingly throughout the year as this grows during various seasons and at different places. Many of these species are nearly extinct due to denudation and pollution. Some herbs are not easily recognizable and considered rare. They have names that make it even more difficult to recognize (Fig. 2). For example, one of the herbs is called *Bhumka ki Jadi* (*Bhumka's*

herb). Similarly, a bunch of guava flowers are a rare sight.

The collection of herbs is followed by the process



Fig. 2. *Padiyar* explaining how to recognize rare wild herbs and their uses

of preparing doses, which includes drying, pounding, merging and encasing herbal mixes in talismans. *Padiyar* prepares medicine through an elaborate process with chanting alongside. Quite often, this forms a largely secretive process, with special caution that no obstruction occurs during treatment. He may order the patient to abstain from eating certain things during the treatment.

Even *Bhumka*, another religious head of the *Korkus*, has an important role in appeasing the deities through offerings and oblation to protect the *Korku* families from various sicknesses (Fig. 3). He would gift each *Korku* family with some grains from the offering to keep on top of their grain containers as a blessing. *Bhumka* also utters chant over the drinking water vessels. On a certain day every year, he offers special worship at the village boundary, where every *Korku* family is expected to dispose of the dirt and wastage after cleaning their house. This place is called *Kakad Siward*, where one can find heaps of old and broken bamboo baskets.

As has been mentioned, the *Korku* traditional



Fig. 3. *Bhumka* appeasing the deities through offerings and oblation outside the village

medicine and healing system has devised cure for several diseases. However, many *Korku*, especially the elderly, still dread cholera and for very valid reasons. It was one of the major endemics that not only killed scores of their members but also forced them to leave their habitats. In their perception, it is like a wind that comes without warning and kills people at large. No one has been able to treat it. Nonetheless, *Korku* community has been able to devise ways to circumvent it. The person afflicted by cholera would be required to rub the *Mahua* wine (*Madhuca indica* J. F. Gmel.) over the whole body and eat plenty of onions.

Another prevalent curative method that has remained with the *Korkus* from their primordial life is known as *Chacha*. It is usually practised at home by *Korkus* as a reliable recourse in an emergency when they cannot access other medical facilities. *Chacha* is essentially an acupuncture method, wherein the points of pain on the body are located and marked by ash. Thereafter, a red-hot sickle is used to apply pressure on the point of pain. While this may appear extremely agonizing to an outsider but *Korku* claim not to experience any pain in this process. Even children are administered *Chacha*. Usually, a designated place such as the meeting point of two rivers and a couple of trees are considered suitable to perform such rituals for healing.

While herbal medicines and traditional techniques are quite prevalent among the *Korkus*, there exists an integral component of mysticism and supernaturalism in these practices. In this regard, *Padiyar*'s role is both of a clairvoyant and of one that casts off a demon. The aboriginal culture of *Korku* links every sickness or errant behaviour to some evil spirit or curse of deities. Therefore, *Padiyar* is summoned to discover the underlying supernatural causes and appease deities or demons that have been afflicting the sick person. *Korku* believe in both male and female spirits. The male evil spirit is called *bhoot* (ghost) while the female evil spirits are called *chudail* (witch).

Padiyar's method of treatment of such diseases begins with the process of detecting the demon and the reason for afflicting person. For this purpose, *Padiyar* asks the afflicted person to bring a handful of grains from the stock at home. It is usually lentils and sorghum but due to scarcity

in recent days, wheat is used as well. The ritual begins with the sick person spilling the grains on the floor. The *Padiyar* observes the patterns formed by the spilt grains attentively and enters a trance, uttering unintelligibly and shaking vigorously. He tries to establish contact with the spirits through chants to understand the reasons for inflicting harm on the diseased. At times, the diseased person may also get possessed, demonstrating unusual physical prowess. It is also believed that the ghosts and demon may sometimes make the grinding mill as their abode. During this, the stone of the grinding mill gets glued such that even two or three able-bodied *Korku* men fail to lift it. This is a sure sign that the person is afflicted by ghosts or witches.

It is also believed by the *Korkus* that often the spirits of departed elders visit and possess a person, commonly known as *pitara aana*. During this phase, the possessed person will demand what the elder liked. The afflicting evil spirit will be recognized by name at which the lamp in strings stops dangling. Then the *Padiyar* will instruct the afflicted person to arrange for items that will be required for the appeasement. He will also inform whether the person is afflicted by a witch, *bhut* (ghost) or unsatisfied souls of the departed elders. The offerings will differ accordingly. They include pregnant goat, egg-laying black hen, a hen with distorted wings, swine, chicken and sweet meat of seven colours. According to the *Padiyar*, the colours are often decided by what the ghosts or witches prefer. Additionally, *Padiyar* also carries a set of seven iron nails, made by a blacksmith in one sway. A lock of hair from the afflicted person's head is cut and wrapped on the nail. The afflicted person is provided this hair wrapped nail and asked to run. At times, the afflicted person goes berserk. The person runs to reach a tree and hammers the hair covered nail to the tree. This is believed to fix the afflicting spirit and the person begins to recover.

Padiyar is also summoned in the case of a snake or scorpion bite. *Padiyar* utters chants (*mantras*) in both the ears of the afflicted person for about half an hour. Then the neem leaves amounting nearly a quarter of a kilogram is finely mixed and its juice is extracted by squeezing and sieving. The afflicted, vomit after being fed this extract and begin to feel relieved. Specifically, in case of a scorpion bite, the *Padiyar* utters chants, circles

the slippers of his right foot a couple of times and then hits it to the ground. The afflicted begins feeling relieved immediately. There are varieties of herbs and methods used for healing snake or scorpion bites. The whole healing system of *Korku* is based on the belief that some evil spirit or wandering souls of departed elders are the reason for the ailments and bodily sufferings. They need to be pacified. Hence, the treatment protocol relies heavily on chants, communication with the spirits and oblations to be offered. This has remained a part of their culture even to date.

3.2. Ethnic healing for women and children

The narratives of the *Korku* community reveal the importance that traditional healing practices given for diseases concerning women and children. For instance, a fever is quite common and dreaded among *Korku* women. It is explained as aching of half portion of one's head. A special herbal plant *dhawa* (*Anogeissus latifolia* (Roxb. ex DC.) Wall. ex Guill. & Perr.) is extracted and dried for its treatment. There is another method wherein the *Padiyar* performs rituals only on Wednesday or Sunday. The person afflicted with this fever is asked to tie a black thread on his arm and is supposed to reach a nearby *ber* (*Ziziphus*) tree before dawn. Caution is to exercise that no one sees or intercepts the person. On reaching the designated point, the person circles around the tree seven times and ties the black thread on the trunk of the tree. It is believed that if all goes well the fever subsides.

In the case of infertility among women, the couple is taken to a *gullar* (*Ficus glomerata* Roxb.) at the meeting point of river or stream. The woman is required to be dressed in white and made to offer two white chickens. The couple is warned not to venture again to the *gullar* tree. They can do so after the child is born to offer thanks giving sacrifice. *Maharukh* (*Ailanthus excelsa* Roxb.) is another tree that has great utility in treating several illnesses, including ones occurring in the cattle.

Special attention has also been given to diseases concerning children among the *Korku* community. Historically, children population has seen a downward trend among them due to epidemics

and malnutrition. Malnutrition is a major health concern among *Korkus* across Satpura and Vindhyaachal regions. However, *Korku* have not been able to comprehend nutritional deficiency as the driving cause. The focus has been on the visible symptoms that appear quite later that is when the child loses muscles and looks skinny or falls prey to infections quite easily. For instance, in one type of nutritional deficiency, commonly called *Lal Meli*, observed symptoms include the habit of a child to eat more spicy food such that it burns the tongue. However, the root cause that is an ulcer which develops due to malnutrition is not known to them.

Quite often, it is strangely concluded that pregnant and lactating woman or an evil eye are the major sources of malnutrition among children. According to folklore, it is believed that if a pregnant woman happens to pass from under a rope swing of the child in the courtyard, the child will be hit with malnutrition. Similarly, if a lactating mother gives a helping hand to a pregnant woman trying to put a water pot on her head, then the child in the womb will be adversely affected. Another belief is that during breastfeeding if the nipple happens to touch the head of the child, the child will shrivel up. Some *Korku* also believes that since mothers go out to work and can breastfeed the child in the afternoon or evening, the milk in the breast gets heated and harms the child. Colostrum (*Chiko Didom*) feeding was also a taboo among them and persists to a large extent. They would squeeze the colostrum in ash, carried in the hem of their sari and dispose of it quietly.

Given the prevalence of malnourishment among children, they have coined various terms for malnutrition that show different symptoms. Local names for malnutrition are termed with names like *Sukhi Meli* (a shrivelling disease), *Shiti Meli* (skinny hand and feet), *Hagraya Meli* (severe diarrhoea), *Ukti Meli* (oedema with fever), *Lal Meli* (reddish tongue and mouth) and *Jali Meli* (rib cage visible due to excessive loss of muscles). One of the main treatment processes is carried out on the early hours of a Sunday. *Padiyar* prepares a talisman with certain herbs. He ties a black thread to the talisman and blesses it with chants. The mother with a malnourished child and his uncle is required to wait at the home entrance. They are advised in advance by the

Padiyar to keep the whole occasion undisclosed and watch in silence. *Padiyar* is believed to appear like a lightning, hands over the talisman to the child's uncle and disappears in darkness. The talisman is tied on the child's arm, neck, or waist. The child is quietly taken inside the home and lulled to sleep. In another treatment, the *Padiyar* prepares a talisman by stitching a living frog. This talisman is tied to the child's neck by the *Padiyar*, who simultaneously chants and beseech the deities to cure the child. The other variants of this are using glow worm instead of a frog. Some *Padiyars* have been heard of using the dung of sheep collected and dried and the parents are advised to rub the dung for a certain number of times on the child.

The *Korku* is entire indigenous treatment is founded on a belief that various ailments are due to a curse or displeasure of deities. In one more method of treatment, the father secretly ventures to a *ber* (*Ziziphus*) tree and ties a black thread around it in dark hours just before the dawn, without being noticed by anyone. When he returns home, the mother balances the child on an inverted grain measuring vessel (*paayli*). The father kicks the vessel and the mother picks up the child. It is supposed that this process drives away all bad omens. Interestingly, in another method, a lamp is made of cow dung, which is circled over the mother and child seven times by an elderly woman at home. Alongside, the wet and watery cow dung is put in a plate and covered by an urn (*lota*) for some time. If the urn sticks to the dung paste, it is believed that instances of frequent diarrhoea would subside.

It is also supposed that if the hem of mother's garment gets entangled in a *ber* (*Ziziphus*) tree, the child gets vulnerable, leading to weakness and shriveling. If such misfortune happens, the mother makes seven tablets of ash and secretly buries it under the *ber* (*Ziziphus*) tree. If she is not seen by anyone in this process, her child will be succored from weakness and shriveling. However, if she fails, it is believed that child will have greenish and watery stools and weaken rapidly. In case of pneumonia, especially among children, often demonstrated by rapid breathing, the yolk of local hen's egg is mixed with honey and the paste is applied over the child's chest and ribs and covered with linen. Thereafter, the child's chest is rubbed with a smoking cow

dung cake. This treatment is believed to be quite effective.

Korku traditional medicine and ethnic healing present a parallel system of healthcare, covering all types of diseases. Over generations, through the accumulation of first-hand experience, this community, like most tribes, has developed an elaborate system of diagnosis and treatment of diseases. A variety of elements from the natural surroundings are utilized for this purpose. Also, charms, chants and totem form an integral part of their belief system and therefore heavily influence the procedures in indigenous healthcare.

4. Conclusion

Traditional medicines and healing systems have for generations played a vital role in the Indian society, particularly, for the indigenous communities, who occupy the remotest regions of the country and have remained on the margins of the modern healthcare system. The current study focused on bringing to light the important elements of the traditional healing practices and beliefs among the *Korku* tribe. Presenting an emic perspective of the community, this study details the elaborate procedures laid down in the *Korku* for treating innumerable diseases through use of natural and supernatural methods, including plants, animals, minerals, charms, magic and sacrifice which helps in the cure of pneumonia, migraine, fevers, jaundice, infertility, debility and malnutrition, leucorrhea, diarrhea, skin infections, dog bites and snakebites. Ethnomedicinal knowledge of *Korku* tribes needs to bring in medicine with adequate research and development on it. The world is gripped with newer forms of diseases like COVID-19. The *Korku* ethnic healing practices provide a platform to understand and strengthen the traditional medicines and practices, which focus on disease cure as well as control.

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