

Mental Health Of Indian Tribe – A Nationalized View

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to extensively explore the mental health problems and coping abilities among the Indian Tribes. The objectives of the study are to explore the nationalised view of Mental Health among the Indian Tribes and to understand the Mental health problems faced by the Tribes of India. Further this study attempts to discuss the relationship between mental health and coping abilities of the Indian Tribes. This study adopted qualitative research approach as its data relies on the literature reviews. This study makes use of secondary data. Mental health problems among the Tribal communities in India need to be addressed as its been neglected inspite of its various programmes initiated by Government of India.

Keywords:

Mental Health, Tribe, Indian Tribe, Coping Abilities.

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health stays as an important aspect of an individual's health status. It involves balance of emotional-wellbeing providing the individual with effective living, which enhances everyday life of the individual. The basic factors of one's mental health involves heredity, physical health and healthy environment (Dr K. Jayashankar Reddy 2012).¹ Mental health comprises our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing, influencing an individual's thinking, feeling and behaviour. It is also related to handling day to day activities in a balanced way. Mental health plays a vital role in individual through every stage of life being an important aspect of health. (World Health Organisation). Mental Health incorporates subjective well-being, self-efficacy which is perceived, self-autonomy, competence with own self and others, dependence and self-awareness of one's intellectual and emotional capabilities in a group.²

TRIBES OF INDIA:

Tribal population in India are known to be the most underprivileged population.³ Tribe belong to

various cultural groups as well as different ethnic population and it is very difficult to usually differentiate tribe from common villager of India in specific ecological and economical settings.⁴

Jawaharlal Nehru described that development of tribal communities should be according to the line of the tribe's own thinking and values.⁵

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To explore the nationalised view of Mental Health among the Indian Tribes.
2. To understand the Mental health problems faced by the Tribes of India.
3. To discuss the relationship between mental health and coping abilities of the Indian Tribes.

METHODOLOGY:

This study adopted qualitative research approach as its data relies on the literature reviews. This study makes use of secondary data.

CHALLENGES FACED BY TRIBE IN INDIA:

Some of the common problems faced by Indian Tribe include the following:

1. Identification Problems: Most of the problems lack identity or categorisation due to various reasons. This leads to lack of accessibility to welfare schemes.
2. Outdated list: The tribes are not covered exactly by survey literatures and lack statistical details according to Anthropological Survey of India list.
3. Lack of baseline surveys: Tribe and tribal communities lack baseline survey details which leads to lack of origin and sources data.
4. Lack of equal benefits from welfare schemes and most of the time the schemes don't reach them or lack quality.
5. Denial of land rights: Land rights stay as a common problem and most of the tribes are denied with land for living and cultivation.
6. Common Livelihood issues.
7. Illiteracy.
8. *Physical and mental health problems: Tribe are most vulnerable to both poor physical and mental health problems and lack accessibility to health care services.*

MENTAL HEALTH OF TRIBES IN INDIA:

Mental health is one of the leading causes of death worldwide, according to WHO. One in ten Indians suffer from some form of mental health problems (National Institute of Mental Health 2016). India being home to around 8.6% of tribes adding to total population of 705 tribal communities residing across India have a greater vulnerability to mental health issues. Factors causing greater vulnerability being lifestyle changes, culture, beliefs and stigma. Tribes moving to urban places for employment and displacement reasons make them more vulnerable to substance abusers adding to mental health issues. (The George Institute for global Health, August 2017).

COPING ABILITIES:

Coping relates to investing in an individual's own effort to solve his/her personal and interpersonal problems continuously by minimising or tolerating stress and conflict.⁶ Psychological way of coping is termed as coping strategies or coping skills. Effectiveness of coping skills or abilities depends on the type of stress the individual is going through. Coping is controlled by a combination of both personality and societal/environmental traits.

DEFINITION:

MENTAL HEALTH:

According to WHO, Mental Health "is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community.

"The condition of being mentally and emotionally sound, is characterised by absence of mental illness and having adequate adjustments in feeling comfortable as oneself, having positive feelings about others and the ability to meet the demands of daily life is defined to be mental health" by **Merriam-Webster since 1828).**

Mental Health is defined as "a state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual uses his/her own cognitive and emotional abilities, function effectively in the society and meet the basic demands of day-to-day life."

TRIBE:

According to Merriam-Webster, "A Tribe is a social group comprising numerous families, clans or generations along with slaves, dependents or adopted strangers".

"Tribe are a group of people often relate to families, living in the same area, sharing the same language, culture and history."

COPING ABILITIES:

Coping skills refers to “any characteristics or behavioural pattern which enhances a person’s adaptation skill is generally termed as coping skill. It also includes stable values or religious belief system, solving problems, social skills, health and energy and commitment to social networking.

Coping refers to “an individual’s behavioural process for dealing with demands of life both external and internal needs in situations that are perceived as threats.”

MENTAL HEALTH OF TRIBE- A NATIONAL VIEW:

A study on Mental Health of Karnataka tribes (Meghana, Sunil, Praveen 2019), highlighting the status of mental health of elderly tribes describes that 13.6% of 60 years and older tribal citizens suffer from depression. The study suggests the need for mental health clinic in order to create awareness and treatment as it plays a vital role in the later days of lives of tribal citizens adding to improve their quality of life.

A comparative study on Tribals and non-Tribals in Bangladesh (Md. Mobarak, Nur E (2017) in terms of marital adjustment, life satisfaction and mental health reveals that non-tribal people are comparatively more adjusted and satisfied in marital life with increased level of mental health, where tribal people show less mental health and increased problems in marital and adjustment related problems.

Mental Health status of tribal school going adolescents (Arif Ali, Shahid Eqbal 2016), reveals that mental health of tribal adolescents are often neglected and are misunderstood and found having emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity and lack awareness on the symptoms associated with mental health.⁷

Forced displacement on Mental health status of tribes in India is addressed to be significant and multifaceted and government response has been missing inspite of various government responses

in India. Some of the key mental health problems of Indian Tribes are observed as lack of/poor diagnostic facilities, lack of psychiatric data of the tribe and lack of culturally sensitive instruments (Devika Gupta, Prasanth 2018).⁸

Stress, Marital status and ethnicity was found to be mental health influencers among the tribal school teachers in Jharkhand reveals a study conducted by Dr Renu Dewan 2012. Among the factors, ethnicity was found to be one among the main effects on mental health. Studies also evaluate that married tribal women lag behind in terms of better mental health compared to unmarried tribal women.⁹

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS FACED BY INDIAN TRIBES:

Prevalence of anxiety was high among tribal adolescents between the age of 14 to 16 years which resulted in 23.7% when compared to rural adolescents according to a study conducted by Pradeep (2017).¹⁰

Prof. R.S Murthy (Retd), NIMHANS (2018), highlighted the key mental health challenges faced by Tribals as loss, trauma and alienation. Alcohol, substance use, increased suicide rates, depression and partner violence are higher among the tribal communities.

There is a lack of information on mental health status of tribal communities in India in both area of research and service deliveries. (Dr Pallab Maulik.)

Tribal Population is isolated in general and they lack basic medical facilities and lack health infrastructure, stating that overall health status of tribes are poor extremely, especially mental Health (Dr P Subramaniam 2018).

DISCUSSION:

NATIONAL VIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH AMONG INDIAN TRIBES:

Extensive literature review on Mental Health of Tribe reveals that Mental health of Tribal

communities in India is neglected even today inspite of having a number of initiatives taken to reach in terms of mental health services and quality infrastructure. Tribal communities are more vulnerable to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, stress, marital and adjust mental problems. Tribal communities are vulnerable with all age groups from adolescents to elderly. Though the mental health needs of Tribals are trying to be addressed through District Mental health programmes, still lack of accessibility stays as an increasing issue.

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS OF INDIAN TRIBE:

Mental health problems among Indian Tribes has not been explored much and needs research intervention to increase the accessibility. Mental health problems include isolation, depression among older tribes. Anxiety is one among observed mental health problems. It is also estimated that most of the times mental health is neglected due to reasons like stigma and lack of awareness.

MENTAL HEALTH AND COPING ABILITIES:

Coping abilities or coping skills among the Indian Tribe has been very much less explored and no evidences or studies highlight the need to know about the coping skills adopted by Tribal communities to overcome the challenges and problems faced by Tribe in India. It is highlighted that American Mental health reveals that mental health and coping skills go hand-in-hand and it is estimated that positive coping skills are enhanced by Mental health and its effective functioning.

CONCLUSION:

8.6% of the total population in India is constituted of Tribal communities with 705 tribal groups. Mental health of tribal communities in India is needed to be addressed with strategies enabling the group to enhance WHO's variables of ability to cope with one's own problems, work

productively and contribute to his community. The programmes need to address the various underlying challenges triggering the mental health issues making the tribes vulnerable. Coping skills to cope the mental health issues need to be made aware with accessibility and affordability to strength the mental health abilities. Coping skills can be strengthened through community programme with culture sensitivity to avoid stigma and discrimination.

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