

## Traditional Medicine Practice Among Savara Tribe Gajapati District- A Study

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**Abstract:** India has long history of traditional medicine. The tradition of medicine might be evolve since the inception of the human civilization. It has no clear evidence that when and where the practice of medicine be start. India has vast sources to know the Indian medicinal practice, such as Atharva Veda which is earliest text give ample source of health and medicine. After that the continuous practice on medicine has found throughout the country. The Ayurveda, is the most widely used system in traditional Indian medicine. The traditional medicine practices play a vital role in the healthcare systems of indigenous communities worldwide. Among such communities, the savara tribe of Gajapati district in Inida has preserved a rich tradition of healing methods passed down through generation. The savara tribe, residing in the hilly tract of the Gajapati relies heavily on traditional medicine for addressing various ailments. Their healing practices are deeply rooted in nature, with intricate understanding of local flora and fauna. Herbal concoctions, prepared from indigenous plants and herbs, constitute a significant part of their medicinal arsenal.

In the current days the savara tribe face challenges in modern era, including environmental degradation, loss of bio-diversity and limited access of health care infrastructure. Documenting and preserve this indigenous knowledge ae crucial for safeguarding the cultural heritage and healthcare autonomy of the savara community.

**Keywords:** Ethnomedicine, traditions, culture, superstitious, plants

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In this day of modernization and the healthcare system, traditional medicine is often debated. Modern scientific medicine reaches a relatively small number of people, even though it may not be available to more than one-third of the world's population. According to the principles of traditional Indian medical systems like Ayurvedic, Siddha, Unani, or Greco-Arabic medicine, the majority of people are still treated by indigenous medical practitioners. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also recognized the importance of traditional medicine in developing countries. WHO recognizes that traditional methods will remain essential in providing services to a large population, particularly in rural areas. India is well known for its traditional Siddha, Unani, and Ayurvedic medicinal systems. The nation's medical system is specifically mentioned in the Vedas and other ancient Indian writings. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 65–80% of people globally in developing nations rely mostly on plants for their medicinal requirements due to poverty and limited access to modern medical treatment [Ayannar, M., 2013 ]. As scientists' understanding of ethno medicine in medicinal plant research has grown, it has attracted a lot of attention recently. Because medicinal plants have historically been used to make all types of medication, whether they are simple plant parts or more complicated forms like crude extracts, mixes, etc., the majority of people on the planet still rely on traditional medicine for their everyday medical requirements. The primary benefits of using drugs derived from plants are that they are more affordable, have substantial therapeutic effects, and are generally safer than synthetic alternatives [Heinrich M, 2000]. Because of this, using traditional medicine is essential. WHO is implementing its second Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014–2023 to support member states in providing safe, competent, and effective traditional and complementary medicine services and ensuring their appropriate integration into health systems. Developing norms, standards, and technical papers based on reliable facts and information is the main goal of this approach.

This knowledge hub prioritizes cooperation, evidence, data, biodiversity, and innovation while respecting local heritages, resources, and rights in order to optimize the role of traditional medicine in global health, universal health care, and sustainable development [Pradeep, T, 2016].

Over 50% of the tribal population resides in the Gajapati district, with the bulk of these tribes being Savara. The Savara tribe has a significant influence on the sociocultural tradition of the area. In terms of socioeconomic status, they are less advanced and impoverished than the average person. Thus, they are superstitious actions and blind beliefs. At the village level, the Savara tribe's health was mostly reliant on some superstitious and herbal healing practices. Their main methods of treatment rely on traditional, superstitious, and spiritual practices, such as Black magic. The savaras still rely on the use of magic for healing, which is more spiritual than therapeutic. They rely on traditional medicine instead of contemporary treatment because of their superstitious beliefs, a lack of medical facilities, and ignorance of modern medical services. Depending on the availability of natural resources and the utilization of ecologically supported plants in the area, traditional medicine varied greatly from one place to another. As a result, different locations have varied equipment and plant uses.

Furthermore, since the dawn of time, the history of medicine has been deeply embedded in human consciousness. Early people tried to heal their bodies. Healers realized they could not do much to help the ill recover in a period when neither medicine nor the human body's anatomy were understood. The mysterious causes of the illnesses were often ascribed to magic or otherworldly forces. For more serious ailments, healers sought help by drawing upon supernatural force; only the symptoms of common diseases were treated. [Ferngren, G. B. (2012).].

Geographical location of Gajapati: The entire city is located in the Eastern Ghat region. In terms of ecology, it had a wide elevation gradient between 17 and 1505 meters, with tropical semi-evergreen forest at higher elevations and tropical dry deciduous forest at lower elevations. Along with different ecological gradients, a number of quantitative research on phytodiversity have been carried out in the Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu, Adhra Pradesh, and Odisha [Panigrahi. A, 2008].

According to the 2011 government census, there are frequently insufficient resources for adequate healthcare and education because of extreme poverty and economic backwardness. Native medicinal herbs were the primary source of sustenance for the tribal people. "Folk" or "indigenous" medicine are other terms for their understanding of tribal medicine. The custom is typically passed down orally from one generation to the next. Without such a written script, documentation would be nearly hard to maintain. It was proposed that around 8000 plant species and roughly 25,000 formulations based on folk medicine were employed by India's tribal and ethnic populations as part of their healthcare systems. [Pradeep T., 2016]

## 2. ETHNO MEDICINE PRACTICE OF THE SAVARA TRIBE

The traditional foundation of ethno medicine was established by cultural development in many global locations. The roots of all indigenous treatments can be found in ethno medico-botany. Studies on the identification of medicinal plants, as well as their quality, applications, and cures for particular illnesses, have been conducted in tandem with the three thousand-year-old evolution of Ayurveda as a science of life and health [Panigrahi, A, 2008]. Ethno medicine is less scientific, more ethnic, and more magical. It is the study of cultural groups' methods of healing as well as people's experiences with illness and disease. It permits the use of magical methods and medicinal plant and animal products to treat illness. The Savara people often reside in the Eastern Ghat regions' forested areas.

They are used to making sustainable use of a variety of plant and animal species for food and medicine. The tribals like savaras are supernatural beliefs and healing rituals occupy prominent place in the treatment of disease like epilepsy, chest pain, measles, successive abortions, insanity etc...which supposed to have originated from supernatural causes. The savara tribes still have significant hesitation to accept contemporary medicine for the treatment of such supernatural disorders as they believe that no material therapy is efficacious in checking them [Jose Boban. K., 1998]. Savaras tribe are inhabited in Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput, Ganjam and boarder of Kandhamal. Traditional medicine is used by 65 percent of Indians. The Indian government and several state governments work to safeguard the rights of rural and tribal/ethnic people, who are important stakeholders in traditional medical knowledge.

The majority of the Savara people were poor, uneducated, and unable to attend medical appointments. So in every disease they are particularly depended on the practitioner of traditional medicine in the village or nearby village. Most of the savara village there are one or two traditional medicine practitioner are discovered. Besides it the culture of medical practices has transfer to every new generation through their act. For example, in traditional societies, the critical period of pregnancy care starts as soon as the pregnancy is confirmed. Every elder family member and villager begins to watch the expectant mother, who is instructed to follow a set of customary behaviors. The new mother-to-be discovers the abundance of indigenous knowledge on the subject. Every savara knowledge comprises what to do, how to do it, when not to do it, and so on. [Tripathi, S., 2019]

Gynaecological and female health difficulties, including as menstrual pain, menopause, leucorrhoea, infertility, childbirth, and abortion, are among the topics the tribe is knowledgeable with. [Lawl 2013] The savara have used a range of plant and herb blooms, branches, roots, leaves, pulp, and bark. These herbs are used differently and uniquely by each tribal tribe.

### 3. SPIRITUAL HEALING

The savara believes that all type of illness and death comes because of cosmological concepts. When people feel unhealthy their prior belief is because of some active consciousness around them particularly due to the unhappiness of Sonum (ancestor), the underworld (life after death) [bhuyan, 2024]. To overcome the illness they are prepared to call the sonum through various forms, particularly by the *Beju* (Kudamboi), who called to the underworld. Different names for gods and spirits have given the tribal religion a varied aspect, but at its core, it is the same everywhere. According to Savara beliefs, illness is almost always caused by the creation of a new spirit in the invisible realm, which the gods, ghosts, and ancestors can impart to mortals. In these situations, the shaman is called upon; he determines the reason behind the catastrophe and suggests a cure, which is typically an animal sacrifice combined with grain and alcohol offerings. [Elwin, 1919] Besides the various nature gods, the savara has an ancestor Sonums which is worshipped from time to time. Shamans in the Sora tribe also contain Sonums in seal pots hanging on the sacred place of the house and paintings and their bodies during trances; and they conduct them across 'formless' space along threads and ladders used to link the Sun, earth and underworld. The traditional savara who are still live in the hilly terrains mostly are believed with the spiritual healings. The first and foremost beliefs of the savara's for any diseases are check to any spiritual attack to concerned patients or not it is conducted by the village spiritual healer Kudamboi. For the conduct of the disease, he/she (Kudamboi) is called the various spirits through chanting with various mantras. One after another spirit come and talk with the member of the family and the disease person. If disease has been caused due to any spirit than he (Kudamboi) ordained to give some sacrifice. Accordingly, the arrangement will made by the disease members. Besides the diseases, the common beliefs of the tribal are to worship their ancestor in every season on the year during the festive season.

### 4. TRADITIONAL DIAGNOSTIC METHODS

The Savara people had a traditional diagnostic system of their own. Consulting with magico-religious healers before seeing a herbalist is the primary diagnostic technique. Experts in both illness prevention and treatment are among the tribe's herbalists. The professionals treat a broad spectrum of patients, from minor surgeries and mishaps to more severe conditions including numerous fractures and snakebites, as well as more straightforward illnesses like fever and the common cold. The practitioner claims to have a thorough understanding of diseases and a variety of diagnostic tools for disease control (Sudhanarao, 2017). Ethno medicinal methods are used by the tribal people to cure conditions such as cough, cold, fever, skin disease, stomach problems, and wound healing by employing various components of different plant species. This supports the village's traditional medical practices and aids in the preservation of their indigenous knowledge [Tripathi, S., 2019].

The Savara also have ethno-medical knowledge (ethno-gynaecology) regarding female health and gynaecological issues, such as menstrual pain, menopause, leucorrhoea, infertility, childbirth, and abortions, among others. The Savaras employed traditional diagnostic methods such as pulse diagnosis and dream interpretation. The healers basically keep an eye on the patient's pulse without the use of any scientific instruments. To check their patients, they take their body temperature and hand pulse.

### 5. PREVENTIVE AND WELLNESS PRACTICES

Tribal health in India is in extremely bad condition due to a number of factors, including "widespread poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, absence of safe drinking water and sanitary living conditions, poor maternal and child health services." All of these issues have a negative impact on tribal health. The great majority of tribal people live in remote, undeveloped areas like forests and hilly terrain, particularly the Savara. Their sociocultural conduct is one of the primary causes of the undisturbed growing process around them.

Tribal health is tightly linked to culture, environment, and social structure, as seen by the way diseases and their causation are classified in the cultural and medical system. Thus, "health, disease, and medicine" are inseparable from their "social relationship and magico-religious world." Faith healing has long been a part of the traditional treatment in the indigenous health care system. In the contemporary therapeutic process, that has been linked to the development of rapport or confidence. The doctor priests of the Soura tribe in Odisha use a variety of herbs and roots in their magico-religious rituals. The common beliefs, customs, traditions, attitudes, and behaviors surrounding health and illness have been intimately associated with the treatment of disease.

In most tribal groups, there is a wealth of folklore around health concepts. It could be helpful to comprehend the folklore of different sociocultural systems of tribes since it could operate as a model for appropriate health and hygiene practices within a certain ecosystem. Changes in access to diverse providers do not easily impact the health culture of a community [Philip, 2002]. Therefore, health services must be adjusted to meet the health culture of tribal people in order to be used as effectively as possible. Tribal communities in Odisha are at risk for serious health issues like TB, hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), malaria, fileriah, diarrhoea and dysentery, jaundice, parasitic infections, viral and fungal infections, conjunctivitis, yaws, scabies, measles, leprosy, cough, and cold, among others, according to the findings of several researchers.

### 6. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENTS

The community involvement is one of the significant role to develop any field. It is most difficult task the community participation. Due to the uneducated it is quite difficult to make it popularize and enhancing in this field. particularly the savara medicine practitioner are uneducated which are learned from the practitioner on their above. There is no such written document through which the community can prosper in this field. The tribal practitioner should widely acknowledge the knowledge of medicine among the fellow community. Day by day the traditional medicine practitioner became decreasing. The practitioner should giving the knowledge to next generation to keep survive the traditions. According to the researchers belief on community-based participatory research can engage rural and underserved communities in precision medicine [woodahl, E.L, 2014]. A researchers ensure that tribal interests were prioritized and to provide guidance on community interactions [Morales, C.T, 2016]. From the researchers, it is seen that particular healthcare infrastructures and communities may encourage caregiver and care receivers to adopt and persistently use the precision medicine tools developed in those settings. Like treatments, implementation strategies are not one size fits all. Through the community involvement, the tribe's who are still live in the remote part of the jungle can survive their live with their traditional medicine in fewer expenses. The involvement of the community arise the more techniques and skill in the field and widespread of the knowledge also up brings the various perspective of the treatment or else.

### 7. CONCLUSION

The traditional medicine practice is among the tribal are common/primitive practices. The savaras of Gajapati has represented a rich and intricate knowledge system deeply rooted in their cultural beliefs, spiritual worldview, and close relationship with nature. The modernity and the un-interest of educated mass of the community is one of the causes to decline of the traditional treatment. The tribe relies extensively on herbal remedies and ritualistic healing for the treatment of various ailments, demonstrating a profound understanding of local biodiversity and natural resources. In the paper it deals with only various type of ailment and healing practices. Various issues and challenges of the traditional medicine practices among the tribe are seen in the present days. The practice of the indigenous medicine will give some better ideas to use in the modern medicine. The cost effective in the traditional medicine also helpful to the tribe like savara who are still live in the economical backward.

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