

Ecology and Health: A Study Among Tribals of Ladakh

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ABSTRACT In most parts of India, Multiple therapy systems and a diversity of health behaviour patterns co-exist and Ladakh is no exception. The status, growth and evaluation of co-existing therapy systems have been influenced by cultural ideology, ecology, political patronage, changing social institutions, disenchantment with and romanticization of values represented by therapy systems (or their supporters). In the present paper an attempt has been made to describe the ways in which a common Ladakhi thinks about medicine and how these perceptions effect the utilization of alternative therapy systems. This paper examines the alternative resources and treatments utilized by various population groups in Ladakh. The study reveals a multiple therapy systems. The multiple dimensions of health care are described in terms of medical behaviour of health sector and the practioners, and health care strategies employed by the patient. Medical pluralism may be defined as the synchronic existence in a society of more than one medicine sytem grounded in different principles or based on different world views. In the Indian context the important components of medical pluralism are allopathy, ayurvada, homeopathy, and unani. In the Ladakhi context components of medical pluralism are allopathy or bio-medicine, shamanism (Locally known as Lhawaism), lamaism, and scholarly amchi medicine. Among Ladakhis, choice of therapy depends on illness specific patterns of resort.