

## **Indigenous Medicinal Substances and Health Care: A Study among Paite Tribe of Manipur, India**

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**ABSTRACT** People living in tribal areas often faced obstacles in accessing basic health care services due to remoteness and backwardness of the areas in which they live. Understanding the health care needs of tribal people in these difficult circumstances with special focus on utilization of tribal indigenous medicinal substances is significant for devising comprehensive programs. Data on socio-economic status, knowledge on indigenous medicine, beliefs, practices, and health seeking behaviors were collected from traditional healers and service providers in the primary health centres in two villages- Mualnuam and Thuangtam in Manipur, India. The methods of data collection include survey, group discussions and social mapping. The health care services as part of the larger public health domain, is in a very poor state both in terms of infrastructure and service providers. Nearly all the women respondents indicated their preference towards indigenous medicine or home made remedies and traditional healers at the primary stage of their illness. Thus, scope of indigenous medicine becomes important. Peoples' belief in indigenous medicine can play a vital role in implementing Government programmes on improving and promoting Indian system of medicine in rural areas and at the same time recognizing the local tribal medicine.