

CHAPTER-7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The chapter has been devoted to recapitulate and summarize the discussion of the preceding chapters, and also to arrive at some conclusion. This study explores the Health Care System of Monpa people, their health practices, indigenous and modern health systems. Within this framework, the present study was conducted in 5 villages of West Kameng and Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

It is evident from the study that the practice of traditional medicines is deeply entrenched among the studied people. There is not a single household who has not consulted *lamas* or *Bonpu* one time or the other for treatment during sickness.

There is a plurality of Medicare system. The Monpas of the sample villages accept the Modern Medical System. But the people very rarely do depend exclusively on modern medical system. People generally take up the Modern Medical System as the last resort only when they fail with the traditional medicines. Usually people first consult *Lama* or *Bonpu* for remedy. When they fail or take more time for curing the disease the doctors are contacted. The Doctors of Dirang CHC viewed that they ask the patients whether they have consulted the traditional practitioners. This is not because they themselves believe in Traditional Medical System, but so as to continue an uninterrupted treatment. There are also some cases when patients return back to traditional medicine even after consulting the doctors. This is more so with the cases of chronic and serious patients. Few cases are also found where traditional and modern medicine men both were consulted. For minor illness

the people very rarely go to the allopathic doctors. Though the modern health institutions are increasing but traditional medicinal practices have not lost their hold.

The herbal medicine appears to be quite popular. The people were aware of several herbs which have medicinal properties and they use it without consulting the medicinal practitioners. But there is no doubt that the potency of the medicines are considered greater when they are given by medicinal men. The Central government, state Government, development agencies etc are encouraging the practice of herbal medicine. Some traditional healers were being imparted training so as to synthesize the 'modern medicine' with the traditional system. Both the district – Tawang and West Kameng is known for the rich flora and fauna including medicinal plants.

Though PHC or Sub-Centres are available and norms are fulfilled but most of these institutions lack essential medicines, equipments, poor or absence of repair, improper functioning and so on. Emergency and Hospitalization services are not very good in the Government run Health Institutions.

Lack of infrastructure like roads, transportation and communication facilities have also created lot of problems for the people of the villages in availing health care services. The distance to the hospital and poor condition of the roads and communication links, hilly terrain also stands as obstacles in receiving health care services for the people. Because of such difficulty, the people are reluctant to go to the hospital.

The Monpas, as revealed from the study seem to have their own concepts of health, disease causation, as well as preventive, curative and promotive measures of different types of illness. The people have their own criteria of good health- the person who can consume normal food, and do his normal work is regarded as healthy. In case of women, who have the capacity to work in the household as well as in the fields and can bear children are usually considered as possessing good health. The Monpas also have some attributes of diseases. They view that some diseases are caused due to some supernatural power and some are due to natural factors. According to the Monpas when a person suffers from any irregularities relevant to his body, feels weak, and is unable to eat normal food is considered as ill. Etiology or causes of illness are broadly classified into two categories-

Natural cause and Supernatural cause. It has already been pointed out that the Monpas of the sample villages generally opt for ritual remedies for diseases caused by the supernatural agents. The observance of torma ritual reflects their believe in magico-religious practices. On the other hand, for diseases believed to be caused by environment and behaviour, traditional medicines are considered to be appropriate.

With regard to the traditional health care measures taken by the people, the data reveal that there are some taboos, to which they subscribe for keeping themselves away from different kinds of ailments. The frequent diseases in the sample villages include Acute respiratory infection, cold, fever, gastric, Urinary tract infection, Dysentery, Diarrhea , scabies etc. The living condition of the Monpas as discussed in earlier chapters is mainly responsible for such diseases. With regard to personal cleanliness and hygiene, the data reveal that the people are not very aware in this regard. Incidences of a number of diseases may be explained in terms of lack of proper personal hygiene and environmental sanitation.

It is evident from the study area that there are traces of continuity of traditional practices of health and medicine. The people have still faith in traditional medicine which is existence in their culture. Though they are Buddhist still some practice of old religion of Bon is there. The popularity of Tibetan medicine is also on rise. The Amchis (Tibetian doctors) are running private practice in Dirang and Tawang.

With this perspective, the following points may be suggested for the establishment of universal access to quality health care system:

- (1) There is a considerably necessity for strengthening, the Modern health care system. The system of Health Planning and decision are generally centralized where the needs of grassroots problems are not always discussed . There is lack of community based planning. There should be changes at the levels of Policy, structure, programs related to health. Such changes will ensure adequate infrastructure, human power, services and supplies at various levels. For providing good health services, the involvement of the community will ensure better people oriented services. For strengthening public health care syatem, a planning of Comprehensive Primary health care including placement of trained local Health Workers in every

habitation, more functional PHC and Sub-Centres, availability of facilities of preventive and promotive activities should be taken.

- (2) Population norms for establishing public health infrastructure need to be urgently revised. It should take into account the distance, geographical terrain and time taken to travel from village to the nearest health institution.
- (3) One of the reason for ill development of health institution is the implementation of various national programs (programs for Leprosy, Tuberculosis, blindness, malaria, small pox, filaria and now HIV/AIDS) funded by central Government . It has to be implemented as per guidelines received from Central government without taking into account the state situation. Though the states may not be in urgent need of it, but they have to implement. Due to these programs , the other more important health matters like curative services, hospital care, maternity services etc do not get due importance. These programs ignore the local determinants. The vast amount of resources spends to these Programs lead to the drainage of resources for the overall development of Public Health Services.
- (4) From the study it is evident that for effective Public Health the support to Indigenous Medicinal system is required. A new strategy should be developed by combining the modern system of medicines with Indigeneous System of Medicine so as to reach the health care to interior tribal areas. The traditional practioners should be included in the referral network of the health care delivery system. The tribal youths can be imparted training as Village Health Guide and they can create health awareness among the people.
- (5) Further the traditional medicine can be used in the areas of preventive and promotive health care. Indigenous Tribal medicines are extracted from natural medicinal plants and animals which necessitate a regular supply of local flora, fauna. The tribal people are also dependent on natural sources for other needs such as food and nutrition and livelihood. Thus it is very necessary to prevent destruction and ensure availability of medicinal and nutritional herbs in the surroundings of tribal habitats.

- (6) States need to take initiatives towards its local and regional health problems. The health policy should focus on the tribal areas. The extension of primary health infrastructure should cover both remote and inaccessible areas. Mobile units with health workers may be provided for better services for sparsely distributed population.
- (7) From the study it is seen that the tribal health related matters are diverse. Thus a better understanding of the health components , the community based health care delivery system may be the real solution to cater the specific needs and eradicate the health problems of the tribal communities.