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Analyzing Health Issues among Tea Tribes of Assam

Perception of health and treatment seeking behaviour among the members of a society is invariably influenced by their belief system, their immediate physical as well as non-physical environment. Such influence is more prominently seen among the traditional societies. Despite the availability of, and accessibility to, bio-medical health care provisions, these factors play important roles in health and treatment seeking behaviours among these people. In the absence of a system to address these factors, even a very well planned and well equipped bio-medical disease control programme may experience with failure or at least lack of success to attain its desired goal. The concrete example of such situation is the unmet target of the nationwide TB control programme in India.

The tea garden worker populations have been experiencing diverse nature and extent of exploitations, suppression and poverty since colonial period leading to health issues and many others such issues. The book deals with the various aspects of health and treatment seeking behaviour of the Tea garden worker communities in the state of Assam, India, with special reference to the high TB burden environment present in tea gardens. It also tries to explain why there has been continued incidence of TB despite the presence of an on campus health care facility and easy access to health care measures both in terms of physical and financial terms in almost every tea garden.

The book is based on a recently conducted research study in Dibrugarh. It shows how a systematic anthropological study can unearth important inherent factors which influence the extent of success of any public health programme among communities. The importance of understanding such factors and addressing them in public health programme like National TB Control programme has been recognised now and possible initiatives have been tried to adapt them. In this light, the book has its merit to social scientists, public health researchers and educators and policy planners in health sector as well.

Dr. C.J. Sonowal is an anthropologist by profession and has been attached to Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, for last 26 years as a faculty member. He obtained his Master Degree and Doctoral degree in Anthropology from Dibrugarh University, Assam. The Author has conducted host of research studies concerning various issues of tribal people, especially in North east India. He has five books to his credit and has published a host of articles in various journals and books.



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