

ABSTRACT

Indigenous knowledge has been used since ages by indigenous and local communities in Sikkim and has been the foundation of their existence specially in the key sectors of health. Western science has lately begun looking at Indigenous Knowledge as a basis of new drugs specially since the expenditure of putting new drugs on the market is sky-scraping. The budding phenomenon of bio-piracy makes it evident the somewhat hypocritical outlook of western science to Indigenous Knowledge. Scavenging it on the one hand and claiming patents on all kinds of goods derived from Indigenous Knowledge (neem, turmeric, etc) yet refusing to acknowledge its economic significance and ownership.

Despite the growing recognition of Indigenous Knowledge as a valuable source of knowledge, Medico-spiritual healing practice in Sikkim is an acronym in terms of health care service that hardly needs to be expanded nowadays. Sikkim doctrines the indigenous spiritual practice, indigenous traditions related with religion and belief based healing treatment and is a natural centre of traditional healing practice. Medico-spiritual healers and occupational traditional healing therapy acts as alchemists. In this pristine virgin and scenic land of blooming orchids, the majority of the State population are directly dependent upon the traditional medications prescribed by the Medico-spiritual healers for their basic health services and facilities. The understanding of medicinal herbs or floras among the healers is part of their indigenous knowledge which has been snowballed from generation since time immemorial. However, lack of legal knowledge and awareness among the Medico-spiritual healers, due to lack of legal frame within the State is creating problems in the implementation of the Medico-spiritual healing practice. The healing practice has not found a place under Traditional Knowledge Digital Library, despite it being on the verge of extinction as the next generation of healers do not want to follow it and the availability of the medicinal flora is on decline.

With a cooperative and positive attitude the concerned authorities of the Government should discharge their respective functions properly in order to curb the problems faced by the Medico-spiritual healers of Sikkim. Much paper work has been done but effective implementation of the same is still at sea. A legal framework for the protection and promotion of Medico-spiritual healing practice is the need of the hour.