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Indigenous Environmental Knowledge and Holistic Development: A Study

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Abstract

The pandemic has taught us how important it is to protect our environment and lead a responsible life in the society. The pandemic overhauled the health care systems and forced many nations to look for alternatives to strengthen the nation. The rich indigenous environmental knowledge of our country helped us to protect ourselves from the pandemic and also help the world. Many indigenous practices like use of turmeric, amla etc., steam inhalation, yoga, preparations like kadha etc., have all made India strong and added to this the development of indigenous vaccines helped India to fight the battle successfully. Indigenous knowledge systems facilitate holistic development and empower people in their struggle for survival and achieve self- efficiency. The present paper highlights the indigenous environmental knowledge for holistic development especially in the field of Education.

Keywords: Indigenous Environmental Knowledge, Holistic Development, Yoga, Self- efficiency

Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic is an eye opener to realise the importance of environment and the need to train our next generation to develop pro environmental behaviour and equip themselves with Indigenous Environmental Knowledge to protect themselves and boost their immunity. In the light of covid-19 situation it become hard to teach people the importance of sanitization, health and hygiene. It became very hard even to spread awareness about wearing make masks to stop the spread. In all these odds our indigenous environmental knowledge helped to save ourselves and prevent major loss of life and recover with minor symptoms. Indigenous Environmental Knowledge:

Tiu (2007) defined Indigenous Environmental Knowledge as “the accumulated knowledge and skills of indigenous people and their relationships with the environment.” It is the knowledge of local flora and fauna. Warren (1991) opines that indigenous knowledge provide solutions to the problems at grassroot level. Indigenous Knowledge empowers local communities and contributes to development and increase self- efficiency. (Thrupp L.A. ,1989)

Indigenous Knowledge is the experience of generations and the outcomes of our country’s rich cultural, heritage and ancient wisdom. Today indigenous environmental knowledge is a growing field of enquiry to provide solutions to the problem of the pandemic. Some of them are listed below.

Anandaiah Corona Medicine for Covid Treatment

An ayurvedic herbal an Ayurvedic herbal connection prepared by Bonigi Anandaiah at Krishanapatnam village in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh cured covid-19. The Andhra Pradesh government officially granted permission for administration of supplements in paste form.(Times of India). The Medicine became very popular and huge crowds of people came to Nellore to get the medicine. The report was also submitted to Aayush for further experimentation and confirmation. Anandaiah’s herbal concoction is a significant milestone of our country’s indigenous environmental knowledge.

2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG) developed by DRDO

This drug is in powder form and should be dissolved in water. This drug helped covid patients to recover faster and reduce dependence on supplementary oxygen. (Times of India)

Ayur Raksha Clinics initiative by The Government of Kerala

Ayur Raksha Clinics were started in April 2020 across Kerala to improve the reach and penetration of Ayurvedic therapeutic and convalescent strategies for pandemic. Apart from this, treatment programs like swasthyam, sukhavushyam, Amritham, Bheshajam. Punarjani etc. were run by the State Government of Kerala itself.

Aayush protocol

National clinical management protocol based on Ayurveda and yoga for management of Covid -19 did special work on the immunity of the patients, on the basis of which every infected person was advised to take special quantity of Ashwagandha, Guduchi Ghanavati (Giloyvati) and Chamanprash twice a day.

Indigenous Knowledge to Boost Immunity

Turmeric: Turmeric has special importance among indigenous spices, it is used raw, dried and used in both ways. The elements found in turmeric are helpful in reducing bad cholesterol. Regular use of turmeric is beneficial in protecting and strengthening your brain. Turmeric is used as both antiseptic and antifungal. A glass of turmeric milk is believed to boost immunity.

Khada: It is made from different types of leaves like tulasi etc., the bark of trees and boil herbs in water; it gives us the ability to fight diseases. It is very helpful in increasing immunity to fight diseases in Covid-19. It is an anti-oxidant, it builds immunity in the body, it reduced sugar level, it improves liver health, it prevents ulcers from occurring, and it helps in digestion related problems.

Black Tea/ Mashala Tea: Black tea or Mashala Tea is made from different types of spices like black pepper, black cardamom, mace, clove, nutmeg and bay leaf etc.

Neem: Neem is a boon given to mankind by nature, it can be used in different ways, we can drink its leaves after boiling it, boil the bark of its tree in water and drink. Neem has anti- fungal and anti-viral qualities. All types of nutrients and minerals are found in Neem, such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sulfate, zinc, copper etc.

The list continues with a rich reservoir of Indian nutritious foods and herbs like leaves of papaya, sesame seeds, jaggery, black pepper, honey, lemon, use of medicinal plants like neem, tulasi, lemon grass etc.

***Dinacharya* (daily regimes) and *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimes)**

The rich indigenous knowledge of Indian traditions and customs advices for a healthy life style and daily and seasonal regimes like starting the day with drinking warm water/water, yoga, meditation etc. Seasonal regimes are also suggested to develop immunity and survive in different seasons and protect ourselves from common cold, heat stroke etc.

Holistic Development

In spite of the vast and rich reservoir of indigenous knowledge like herbal medicines, remedies and preparations and healthy life style practices like dinacharya and ritucharya the people are unable to make full use of the benefits. Lack of awareness is one the main reasons for people unable to make use of the rich indigenous knowledge. If all these healthy habits have been adapted in the life style, then it leads to the holistic development of the person and thus the holistic development of the nation.

Suggestions

- Indigenous knowledge awareness should be spread among the people by organizing lectures and conferences on the importance of traditional knowledge practices for healthy life style.
- School curriculum should incorporate the indigenous environmental knowledge concepts
- Free booklets should be prepared and distributed to the students to spread awareness about traditional healthy food and refrain themselves from eating junk food.
- In schools a at least one period per week should be assigned for training and practice in traditional knowledge system
- Special syllabus should be designed and incorporated as a separate paper in school curriculum especially in secondary school students to spread awareness about what is healthy and good food and how to survive in the world with healthy and traditional 41 medicines, boosting their immunity and a sound mind.

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