

HERBAL HEALTH PROJECT REPORT 1992 - 93

Our objective for the first year of our Herbal Health Project was:

- 1) involving local recognised and accepted elderly vaidus (tribal medicine men) together with qualified medicinal persons and institutions in the project.

Achievements

We have managed to involve local vaidus. Many of them have had training in the family tradition or guru (teacher) to disciple. Some of them have also been sent to Kashale - 200 kms from Talasari - and to Nadiad in the neighbouring State of Gujarat for training. All tribals have a natural understanding of herbal plants and hence it has been easier to develop their natural skills through workshops.

Objective 2 and 3

To promote the ongoing education and training of local vaidus; animators and village health workers in the use and propagation of locally available medicinal herbs and home remedies; for the prevention and cure of the most common diseases, so that they may in turn train and encourage and help in the building of this more relevant health system.

Achievements

In June 1992 we had our first training workshop at Talasari to which we invited Dr. Parlekar from the Herbal Health Centre, Kashale to teach and hold demonstrations in herbal medicines. The ingredients, i.e. medicinal plants, barks of trees etc. were brought by the participants from their areas to prepare the medicines.

Dr. Parlekar watches a Participant



Mixing
Medicines
in the
Correct
Proportions



Participants from Different Villages of Talasari Mission

In September a smaller workshop was held in Uplat. One of the medicine men brought the ingredients from the forest and showed the local workers how to identify plants, barks and roots and how to use them in medicines. The medicines were then prepared by the health workers and taken home to put to use.

In January 1993 - our local medicine men and health workers went to the neighbouring village of Zaroli, in Gujarat State to interact with the health workers and medicine men in that area and share their knowledge.

In February '93 - a three day workshop was held for animators among the health workers at Shirpur (predominantly a tribal area) in Maharashtra.

The purpose was to network all tribal health animators of the villages of this area. The chief aim of this workshop was to decide on a common terminology and to draw up a stronger syllabus to ensure that a systematic training is given to the local health workers.

The syllabus included a training in :

- 1) Anatomy;
- 2) Etiology of diseases;
- 3) Preventions;
- 4) Diagnosis;
- 5) Therapy systems (curative);
- 6) Communication of Health Education;
- 7) Religious beliefs and Superstitions;
- 8) First Aid;
- 9) Practical demonstrations of indigenous medicines;
- 10) Improved methods of keeping health records;
- 11) Organising the field level health worker;
- 12) Holding of common training programmes.

On April 24, Father Brian D'Silva S.J. was invited to Uplat to prepare slides that would be helpful to health workers in the work of health education.

This was a 1½ days programme where six health workers were present and 100 photographs were taken. The 10 photographs given below are part of this series.

Objective No. 4 - Setting up a Herbal Garden

We first set up the herbal garden in Uplat at a spot close to the school. During the holidays just before the monsoons the school children helped to dig up the ground and plant the trees, hoping that they would take root during the rains. Unfortunately the more delicate plants did not thrive because the garden was along the cow path and it was difficult to channel water to it. Those vaidus who were regular participants of the seminars suggested that we start another herbal garden in Talasari which is the centre for meetings and seminars. This would make it easier for them to add their contributions to the garden.

Altogether there are 50 herbs at present in the garden. Among them the common ones are:

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| ADULSA : | used as cough syrup; for respiratory tract infections and for asthma. |
| KORKET : | as good as iodine; used for ulcers; swellings; wounds; diarrhoea; cough; sore eyes; its oil is used to stop falling hair. |
| KIRITA : | a bitter herb - useful for curing malaria and other fevers and for purifying the blood. |
| NIMBARA : | used in external applications for any type of scabies and rash; bark juice cures patients suffering from worms. |
| NIRGONDI : | its oil alleviates arthritic and muscular pains. |

These remedies might seem to apply to a narrow range of

ailments. But in this region, these ailments can become killer sicknesses.

The audited accounts accompany this report. You will notice that we have spent far less than what we had budgetted for the first year. This is because our financial year begins in April and ends in March. Hence we began payments from the project money only in the month of July.

Moreover we developed our project along simpler lines in keeping with the traditions of this area. It also took time for us to make contacts and collect documentation. We had to find our way so as not to be wasteful with the resources.

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1.



Raoji Vaidu Examines a Patient

2.



Diagnosing Jaundice

3.



Herbes are Collected

4.



Crushing the Herbes

5.



Measuring Water

6.



Extracting Juice — Medicine

7.



Extracting
Juice —
Medicine

8.



Straining the Medicinal Juice

9.



Pouring Medicine into a Cup

10.



Medicine Given to the Patient