Chapter 7
Health and Well-Being Among the Jats of Western Uttar Pradesh: An Anthropological Life Cycle Approach

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ABSTRACT

The chapter interrogates the explicit and implicit perception of health and well-being among the Jats of Western Uttar Pradesh by using anthropological life cycle approach. The research combined village ethnography and empirical field work to discuss their behavioural choices that they make to maintain good spiritual, mental and physical well-being. For the purpose of the study, both primary and secondary data have been used. Taking a village as a unit is a generally accepted way of the doing research in the social anthropology, and the author has used this approach to gain the overview of health, well-being, wellness, and belief pattern as perceived by the villagers.

INTRODUCTION

In general, health and well-being are typically viewed in only biomedical context, so that the life cycle are often considered only in terms of body biology hence narrowed defined. This ethnocentric view disregards the intricate interrelationship of biology, psychology, social interaction and cultural dimensions. Thus modes of maintaining

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health and well-being are framed in terms of regimens imposed on body only. However, this chapter take a cultural view of Jats to view of the human life cycle to evaluate factors that appear to contribute to health and well-being as well as those that appear to cause illness. To find an answer, this chapter presents a novel approach to see health, well-being and wellness from an anthropological life-cycle perspective. Based on these questions, the chapter has been organized in two sections. The first section deals with an extensive conceptual and methodological conversation on the existing literature on health and well-being. It provides the theoretical dimension that make some suggestions on understanding about the use of the terms ‘health’, ‘well-being’ and ‘wellness’ in terms of this holistic paradigm. It also studies how life-cycle approach is well placed to give a crucial insights understanding of health and belief pattern of particular community. The second section vividly provide an ethnographic account of how Jats overview health through systematic life-cycle or stages of human life.

**METHODOLOGY**

The chapter is based on an empirical research conducted while carrying out author’s fieldwork among the Jats of Meerut district of western Uttar Pradesh during 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 as part of his PhD thesis. For the purpose of the study both primary and secondary data have been used. Primary data were gathered through ethnographic field work from one village, in Mawana block of Meerut. By taking a village as a unit is generally accepted way of the doing research in the social anthropology, and author has used this approach to gain the overview of health, well-being, wellness, and belief pattern as perceived the by the villagers. To generate primary data a primary census conducted in the village. Followed by this, in-depth interviews conducted using interview guidelines. Interview schedule, interview guidelines, focused group discussion and observation research technique were used in the field. The structured and open ended questionnaire are prepared and used for the study. The data related to life cycle ritual and practices were conducted generally elderly persons. Few case studies aimed to present in people actual behaviour at the different phases. These data were supported by the various secondary literature collected during and after field work.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The chapter examines the health, well-being and belief perception among the Jats from the life-cycle approach. Obviously time is important component in any society.
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