

The Impact of Climate Change on Traditional Health Care Practices among the Karbi Tribes of Assam, India

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Abstract:

Climate change poses a significant threat to the human health especially the tribal population by disrupting ecosystems, traditional food sources and ethno-medicinal practices, leading to water borne diseases, and malnutrition. Tribal populations depend on wide variety of plants and animal species for food, medicine, ceremonies and community health for many generations. Over the past few decades, changes in the ecosystems and decrease in the indigenous food sources threatened the cultural practices and rituals and traditional knowledge systems of the Karbi tribal communities living in the forest areas of Karbi Anglong in Assam. Further, non-availability of certain ethno-medicinal plants disrupted the traditional healing practices among the Karbis.

This paper examines the impact of climate change on traditional health care practices among the Karbi tribe of Assam in the northeastern region of India. Participation of the local communities at the climate change adaptation strategies, focusing forest-based resources, can strengthen the ability to address and adapt to climate change impacts as well as promote the culturally relevant healthcare practices.

Keywords:

Climate, ecosystem, community health, ethnomedicine, healthcare, Karbi.