

Beyond Roads and Clinics: Exploring Health-Seeking Behavior and a Holistic Approach to Enhanced Healthcare Access in Majhgaon's Indigenous Community

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This paper explores health-seeking behavior and healthcare access within Majhgaon's Indigenous Community, situated in the Gumla district of Jharkhand, India. Despite global progress in public health, resource-constrained environments pose persistent challenges, especially concerning human behavior toward healthcare. This study investigates the factors influencing HSB, with a particular focus on decision-making processes and barriers to healthcare access. The study adopts a holistic framework, considering social, economic, and geographical determinants of health behavior. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, data were collected and analyzed using a conceptual model based on the "three delays" theory. Findings reveal multifaceted challenges, including inadequate healthcare infrastructure, geographical remoteness, socio-economic constraints, and cultural beliefs, significantly affecting HSB. Notably, the provision of adequate care emerged as a critical bottleneck, exacerbated by non-functional healthcare facilities and resource shortages. The study underscores the need for community-centric interventions, integrating local stakeholders such as ASHAs, ANMs, and traditional healers. Additionally, it calls for policy reforms tailored to local contexts, moving beyond a standardized approach to healthcare delivery. While offering valuable insights into healthcare disparities among indigenous populations, Ultimately, the study contributes to the discourse on equitable healthcare access and underscores the importance of contextually relevant interventions in addressing healthcare disparities.

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