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Qualitative appraisal of people and village level health workers perceptions and constrains in malaria control at Gadchiroli, Maharashtra

K.B.Saha, Scientist 'E'

Introduction:
Gadchiroli is the most malarious district of Maharashtra contributing 46% malaria (NVBDCP 2014) while its population is only 1% of the state (Census 2011). So it was essentially felt to design a need based malaria control strategy to cope up with the situation. The main objective of this survey is to understand the people's knowledge attitude behavior and practices related to malaria and utilization of services for fever at Gadchiroli under the guideline of national programme.

Study Area:
The Tribal Community population that resides in the district Gadchiroli is 38.7%. (Census 2011). The major tribes in the district are Gond, Madia, Pardhan and Kolam. They have their own languages as "Gondi, Madiya". The district is categorized as Tribal and undeveloped district and most of the land is covered with forest and hills (76%). Villages are located very far from each other. Water scarcity was highly visible.

During 6th March to 11th March 2016 NIRTH team along with the team from Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health (SEARCH), Gadchiroli, visited the tribal villages located in four blocks of the district to have first hand observation on the difficult terrains, existence of predominant vectors, and the perception and practices related to malaria among the health providers and the villagers. During the visit the team had conducted few preliminary focus group discussions and personal interviews with local people and village/ community health workers to understand provider's perception and common people's awareness and behavior related to malaria and utilization of services.

Observations:
The team, during the visit, discussed with doctors at some PHCs and also at private hospital Lok Biradari Prakalp, Hemal Kasa run by Dr. Prakash Amte at Bhamragarh block and looked into the record on malaria and confirmed the increase in malaria cases in the recent past. Interaction with the villagers revealed that most of the malaria occurred in post monsoon season with a peak in the months of October-November.

Views of health workers (ASHA/ANM):
Health workers felt that malaria is a serious health problem in the area. They are aware of malaria diagnosis through blood test and are trained to prepare blood slides and use of RDTs but they are not aware of the brand name of RDT. They expressed concern regarding delay in receiving the payments. In case of shortage of medicines particularly of ACT they refer the patients to multipurpose workers (MPWs). For serious cases they even refer patients to nearest PHCs. Further they don't have clear knowledge regarding the dosage of anti-malarial drugs. They reported that mosquito breed in accumulated water. They are aware of insecticide treated nets (ITNs). They had no knowledge of LLINs. They mentioned that malaria is more prevalent among the adult male compared to females and children in the area. It is also reported that pregnant women are also vulnerable to malarial infections. Health workers felt that if accumulation of water is prevented in and around the houses and do IRS at regular interval can reduce the burden of malaria. They know that use of nets can act as barrier between men and mosquito and can prevent malaria. Health workers mentioned that malaria is due to infection of malaria parasites, though they are unable to name it. They said that in this area due to illiteracy, poverty and predominance of tribals, the knowledge on malaria is nullified by misinformation. As first line of treatment they prefer to go to traditional healer (locally known as “Pujari”) and as second choice they visit Govt health posts for treatment. Even those who visit Govt health posts as 1st choice, but visiting traditional healers at the same time was must. Health workers felt that IEC activities is required and using ‘Mahila Mandal’ existing in the villages can be of utmost importance in generating awareness on malaria.

Views of common people in the villages:
Whatever is the disease, the sufferings were correlated to annoyance of the god and goddess as perceived by the villagers. They reported that malaria spreads through mosquitoes, but they were unable to mention the name of the mosquitoes. They also consult ASHA/ MPWs available in their village and also visit PHC during sickness. Now-a-days villagers allow the health workers to prepare the blood slide which was not possible earlier due to their fear of perceived health hazards.

They also consume medicines but not in complete dosage. As soon as fever subsides, they stop the medicines with the anticipation that they were cured. Fever with chill was known to most of them. However, only few could mention other symptoms of malaria.Some said that mosquito breed in forest adjoining their villages. To prevent men- mosquito contact villagers produce smoke in the evening by burning dry leaves. Use of net to prevent men-mosquito contact was also reported by few, but its use by the villagers was very poor. Only those who sleep outside the home use net. Further the usage of nets improves during four months from June to September. It was reported that during last 2 years they had received nets once from Govt agencies. However, they believe that nets were insufficiently provided and not all houses had received the same. To generate awareness is the need of the hour and the villagers felt that sensitization can be done through "Village Mahila Mandal" meetings held regularly. Some of the villagers felt that it is only the use of nets through which malaria can be prevented and for that sufficient nets in all the houses has to be distributed. Few respondents also pointed out that drains were constructed in most of the villages, but its maintenance were poor, leading to accumulation of water, particularly during rainy season leading to mosquito breeding.

Suggestions:

There exists high unmet need for Govt health facilities. Mass sensitization on preventive and treatment aspects of malaria is the need of the hour. ASHA and other frontline health workers need sensitization and strengthening. Procurement of the anti-malaria drugs/ RDTs in time will prevent expansion of the problem. Use of temporary Radical Treatment Workers (RT workers) is a good move by the district health authorities to screen the malaria patients and providing anti-malarial drugs. Robust surveillance is necessary.





Publications

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- Kumar D, Goel A. K. Obstetric complications during pregnancy & delivery: Cross-sectional study among Baiga tribe in Madhya Pradesh. Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, November.2016; 4(12): 1-6.
- Verma A, Saha KB. Infant mortality among the Scheduled Tribes in Central India: A concern, Indian Pediatrics, December 2016; 53, p.1117.
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- Kori BK, Singh KN, Sharma RK, Sharma BS., Badkur P. and Barde PV. Susceptibility of Rubella among pregnant women attending the antenatal clinic in a tertiary care hospital, Jabalpur, Central India. Viral Immunol. 2016 Dec 7.

Workshops/Trainings/Meetings attended

Dr. Neeru Singh, Director

- A meeting was held at Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Jabalpur Division on 5th October, 2016, regarding the Malaria Elimination Demonstration Project under Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model. Shri Gulshan Bamra I.A.S., Divisional Commissioner, Jabalpur Division, Dr. Neeru Singh, Director, NIRTH, Dr. Ranjana Gupta, Joint Director, Health Services, Govt. of M.P., Shri Anil Raghavan, CEO, Sun Pharma Advanced Research Company Ltd, Dr. Altaf Lal, Senior Advisor, Global Health and Innovation, Sun Pharma were the main participants. The team also visited the study site located at Mandla district on 6th October, 2016 and also apprised the situation.



- Invited as special invitee in inauguration of one year course in Diploma in Renewable Energy (Solar energy) 6th October, 2016 at RDVV Jabalpur.

- Second Bi-regional meeting of Asia-Pacific Malaria Drug Resistance Monitoring Networks, held from 24th to 26th October, 2016 at Bangkok, Thailand.

- A workshop on Planning to Control Malaria in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra on 28th and 29th November 2016 at Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health (SEARCH), Gadchiroli with four stakeholders - National Institute for Research in Tribal Health (NIRTH), Jabalpur; SEARCH, Gadchiroli; Directorate of Health (Maharashtra) and Tata Trusts. The workshop was organized by SEARCH. Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Secretary, DHR & DG, ICMR addressed the delegates through teleconferencing. Besides, Dr. Gyan Chand, Scientist 'E', Dr. Kalyan B. Saha, Scientist 'E' and Dr. Ravendra K. Sharma, Scientist 'D' from NIRTH attended the same and also made presentations of the preliminary studies conducted at Gadchiroli for the purpose along with presentations from SEARCH team by Dr. Priyamadhava Behra and Dr. Hrishikesh Munshi. Dr. Abhay Bang, Director SEARCH, was the organizer and coordinated the entire workshop. Other eminent partners attended the meeting were Jt Director, Directorate of Health services, Govt. of Maharashtra; Chief Executive Officer, Jilla Parisad Gadchiroli, District Medical Officer and District Malaria Officer of Gadchiroli, Dr. Anand Bang and other Maharashtra State Government officials.



- Attended the XI - Malaria Elimination Group meeting (MEG XI) held from 6th to 9th December, 2016 at Chennai, India and chaired the session outline “State-level elimination efforts in Tamil Nadu: Goals, Priorities, Progress and Challenges”. The stakeholders across the globe involved in Malaria Elimination participated in the meeting includes Sir Richard Feachem, MEG Chair and Director, UCSF Global Health Group, Dr. K. Kolandaswamy, Director, Public Health & Preventative Medicine, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Tamil Nadu, Dr. Patrick Kachur, CDC, USA, Dr. A.C. Dhariwal, Director, NVBDCP, New

Delhi, Dr. Altaf Lal, Senior Advisor, Global Health and Innovation, Sun Pharma, India,Dr. Anand Bang, Tata Trust, India and others.

Dr. V. G. Rao, Scientist G

- Attended India-Africa Health Sciences Meet organized by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India from 1st to 3rd September 2016 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.
- Attended workshop for development of National Strategic Plan for TB control in India (2017-2023) in the context of Sustainable Development Goals for India. Organized by the Central TB Division, Govt. of India and World Health Organization on 18th -19th October 2016 at New Delhi.
- Attended 71st National Conference of Tuberculosis and Chest Diseases (NATCON 2016) at PGIMER Chandigarh during 16th - 18th December 2016.

Dr. Tapas Chakma, Scientist G

- Attended meeting of common review mission (CRM) as expert of the team of Govt. of India, MOHFW for evaluation of National Health Mission, Gujarat on 4th to 11th November 2016.

Dr. A.K.Mishra, Scientist E

- Attended meeting with F-DEC and Sun Pharmaceuticals Pvt. Ltd. for designing vector control programme for malaria elimination demonstration project, held at NIRTH, Jabalpur on 16th November 2016.

Dr. Jyoti Bhatt, Scientist E

- Participated in 1st workshop for India Health fund organized by Tata Trusts on 15th and 16th November at Mumbai.
- Attended meeting on 'Evidence for Cholera in India" on 22nd November at THSTI, Faridabad.
- Presented a paper titled 'Efficacy of Gene XPert MTB/RIF in detection of tuberculosis in children; an experience from Central India' in 71st National Conference of Tuberculosis and Chest Diseases held from 16th to 18th December 2016 at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh.



Dr. K.B. Saha, Scientist E

- Attended meeting with F-DEC and Sun Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd for designing BCC programme for malaria elimination demonstration project held at NIRTH, Jabalpur on 16th and 17th September 2016.
- Coordinated the Pre-congress session of 40th Indian Social Science Congress held at NIRTH, Jabalpur on 1st November 2016.
- Provided technical support to NGO SEARCH, Gadchiroli and state govt. of Maharashtra with qualitative assessment of KAP an essential requirement for designing strategy for malaria control at Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra and presented the findings in a workshop conducted by SEARCH from 28th to 30th November 2016.
- Delivered lecture on tools of data collection & quality of data among the scholars of Pre-PhD course at Dept of Economics, Rani Durgawati Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur on 6th December 2016.
- Conducted National Seminar on Tribal Health & Quality of Life, 40th Indian Social Science Congress at Mysore University, Mysuru as Convener on 20th December 2016.
- Presented a paper at National Seminar on Holistic Anthropological Approach for Tribal Health, Sagar University, Madhya Pradesh and also chaired a session on 2nd-3rd February 2017.

Dr. Gyanchand, Scientist E

- Attended workshop on Planning to Control Malaria in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra on 28th and 29th November 2016 at Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health (SEARCH), Gadchiroli and presented "Control of malaria in Gadchiroli', the need of entomological studies for designing malaria control strategy.
- Attended a brain storming meeting on 'Medical entomology, the future prospects' at

CRME, Madurai on 26th-27th October 2016 and presented the entomological activities of NIRTH Jabalpur.

- Attended meeting of State Vector Borne disease Control programme on 'MDA and Task in filaria endemic districts of Madhya Pradesh' at Bhopal on 4th November 2016.

Dr. S. Rajasubramaniam, Scientist E

- Attended National Seminar on Tribal Health & Quality of Life, 40th Indian Social Science Congress at Mysore University, Mysuru on 20th December 2016. Presented paper on"Hemoglobin Disorders: A Disease of Diverse Ethnic Populations".

Dr. Praveen K Bharti, Scientist D

- A collaborative meeting of project Molecular Epidemiology of Malaria in India and Qatar with an Emphasis on Parasite Diversity, Drug Resistance and Immune Response (NPRP No.: 5 - 098 - 3 021) from 6th - 9th November 2016 held at NIRTH Jabalpur.

Dr. Pradip V. Barde, Scientist D

- Attended meeting regarding Hepatitis project at ICMR headquarter on 19th December 2016 and presented a project proposal "Studies on Prevalence and Risk factors of Hepatitis B Infection in Lahaul and Spiti, Himachal Pradesh".

- Mr. Piyush Joshi TA (R) & Mr. Rameshwar Khedekar (Tech C) of Virology lab NIRTH Jabalpur, attended training of Trioplex qRTPCR for detection of dengue chikungunya and Zika viruses in September 2016 at NIV Pune.

Dr. R.K.Sharma, Scientist D

- Attended National Seminar on Tribal Health and Quality of Life under 40th Indian Social Science Congress, held at University of Mysore, Mysuru on 20th December 2016. He presented paper on 'Common morbidity among tribal population in India'.

Dr. Arvind Verma, Technical Assistant (R)

- Attended National Seminar on Tribal Health and Quality of Life under 40th Indian Social Science Congress, held at University of Mysore, Mysuru on 20th December 2016. He presented paper on Child Mortality and Life Expectancy among tribes of Central India: A census analysis.

Workshops/Trainings/Meetings conducted

- The review meeting of the Multidisciplinary Research Units (MRUs) established in Medical Colleges of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh was held at National Institute for Research in Tribal Health, Jabalpur on 23rd September, 2016 under the Chairmanship of Shri Manoj Pant, [IFS], Joint Secretary, Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India. The other participants on the occasion includes Dr. Pankaj Lakhtakiya, Professor Orthopedics, Rewa Medical College, Rewa, Dr. Shankhapani Mahapatra, Assistant Professor, Rewa Medical College, Rewa, Dr. Kishore Arora, Professor & Head, Anesthesia, Indore Medical College, Indore, Dr. Muktesh Khandare, Asst. Prof. Pathology, NSCB Medical College, Jabalpur, Dr. P. K. Patra, Professor, Pt. J.N.M. Medical College. Raipur, Dr. V.G. Rao, Scientist 'G', NIRTH, Jabalpur and Dr. Tapas Chakma, Scientist 'G', NIRTH, Jabalpur. Issues were discussed to expedite the progress of MRUs.



- Activity Review meeting was organized at NIRTH Jabalpur on 27th-28th September 2016. Lt Gen D Raghunath chaired the meeting. Scientists of NIRTH presented their new and ongoing projects.

- 6th Annual meeting of Tribal Health Research Forum was held on 1st -2nd November 2016 at NIRTH. Lt. Gen. Raghunath chaired the session.



- 5th Collaborative meeting on Molecular Epidemiology of Malaria in India and Qatar with emphasis on parasite diversity and drug resistance and immune on 6th -9th November 2016 at NIRTH Jabalpur. Dr. Neeru Singh, Director NIRTH chaired the session.



- National Institute for Research in Tribal Health (NIRTH), ICMR, Jabalpur, University of Mysore, Mysuru and Indian Academy of Social Sciences, Allahabad jointly organized the National Seminar on Tribal Health and Quality of Life under 40th Indian Social Science Congress, held at University of Mysore, Mysuru on 20th December 2016. The seminar was chaired by Dr. Neeru Singh, Director, NIRTH, Jabalpur. The seminar began with the welcome address by the convener Dr. K.B. Saha, Scientist 'E' of NIRTH, Jabalpur.The inaugural address was made by Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Secretary DHR & DG ICMR through video message. There were nine presentations made by academicians - Dr. Minakethan Behara from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Prof. Sanjay Kumar Mohanty from International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai; Dr. Mahantu and Dr. Sushmita from ASHWINI Adibasi Hospital, Gudulur, Tamil Nadu; Dr. Priyamadhaba Behara from SEARCH, Gadchiroli, Maharashtra; Dr. A. Lakshmaiah, Scientist 'F' from National Institute for Nutrition, Hyderabad; and Dr. Rajasubramaniam, Scientist 'E', Dr. R.K. Sharma, Scientist 'D' Dr. Arvind Verma, Technical Assistant (R) from NIRTH Jabalpur made their presentation on various aspects of tribal demography and health issues.



Events

- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), State Government of Madhya Pradesh, and the Foundation for Disease Elimination and Control of India (FDEC-India) entered into an agreement and signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 15th Nov, 2016 at the Collectorate, district Mandla, Madhya Pradesh to establish a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) to undertake Mandla Malaria Elimination Demonstration Project. The goal of the project to eliminate malaria from 1233 villages of Mandla district and to prevent re-introduction of malaria by using field tested and proven tools of integrated vector control and case management strategies. Dr. Pallavi Jain Govil, I.A.S., Commissioner Health, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh, Dr. Neeru Singh, Director, National Institute for Research in Tribal Health, Jabalpur, Shri Azadar Khan, Project Director and Vice President, Sun Pharma, Dr. Ranjana Gupta, Joint Director, Health Services, Govt. of M.P., Dr. Altaf Lal, Senior Advisor, Global Health and Innovation, Sun Pharma, Shri R.S. Baghel, Additonal Collector, Mandla, Dr. K.C. Meshram, CMHO, Mandla, and other representative were present.



- 'Hindi Pakhwada' was celebrated from 14th to 28th Sept 2016 at NIRTH Jabalpur in which various competitions viz. Hindi typing, noting, essay writing, hindi poem and debate were organized separately for officers and employees. All winners were given prizes by Dr. Neeru Singh Director NIRTH Jabalpur. She congratulated all the winners and advised all the staff to work more and more in Hindi.



Visits

- Dr. S. Patrick Kachur, Chief, Malaria Branch, Division of Parasitic Diseases and Malaria, Center for Global Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, USA and Dr. Altaf Lal, Senior Advisor, Global Health and Innovation, Sun Pharma visited the National Institute for Research in Tribal Health (NIRTH), Jabalpur on 10th-12th December, 2016. Dr. S. Patrick Kachur, along with Dr. Altaf Lal, Dr. Neeru Singh, Director, Dr. A.K. Mishra, Scientist E and Dr. Praveen Bharti, Scientist D, of NIRTH, Jabalpur visited the field site of Bizadandi villages, Mandla district on 11th December 2016. They also had a meeting on 12th with the Scientists of NIRTH. They also visited the laboratories of the NIRTH.

