SELF-CARE ORIENTED INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE
OF SHAN NATIONAL, KYAUK-ME TOWNSHIP,
SHAN STATE (NORTH)

PhD DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the self-care practices of the Shan national, highlighting the beliefs and practices of health relating to indigenous knowledge from the medical anthropological point of view. Taking care of oneself regarding health matters is noted to be the most important and fundamental in the well-being of a person. Self-care is not limited to the individual but also includes members of one’s own household. Indigenous knowledge (IK) is the local knowledge- knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. The objectives of this research are to identify self-care practices among Shan Nationals, to elicit how indigenous knowledge influences on self-care and to describe these self-care practices within the local social and cultural context. The selected area is thirty one miles far away from Kyauk-me Township. These villages are Munnaun village, Konsant village, Autzay village, Munwein village, and Munpint village. Study design is the descriptive study design. In this study, the qualitative research method is applied. Observation (direct and indirect), in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and informal group discussions were carried out for data collection. Their beliefs and practices relating to folk illnesses as well as malaria, childbirth, childcare, belief in supernatural occurrences, concepts on diets, and utilization of traditional medicine, Chinese medicine, and western medicine are observed. Most of the folk illness, the initial fever and aches are treated by the skin scratching therapy, the popular treatment. In this study medical pluralism is apparent. Most of the findings show that their self-care practices in the popular sectors are due to; they do not know the gravity of illness, faith in their popular care, do not cost a lot of money and convenience. In study area, it is found that majority of Shan national do the self-care practices not only for acute but also for chronic illness. As in recommendation, to find out the conflicts between health care systems and indigenous knowledge of ethnic groups in rural areas, further researches and case studies should be done in medical anthropological point of view to justify the gaps between traditional practices and modern healing practices.

Key words; Self-care, Indigenous knowledge, Medical pluralism