

Socio-Economic Covariates of Access to Traditional Medicines in India

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Abstract

Pluralistic health practices have been prevalent in most part of the world. However, the Indian pattern of health practices is very unique since India is poised with many challenges in addressing the health issues. The out of pocket expenditure (OOPE) on healthcare is 64.7 percent, the institutional facilities are very scanty and the health expenditure from private institutions is very expensive. These have strong bearing on traditional health care practices besides socio-cultural and other gradients in India. The paper addresses the dynamics and the determinants of the access to traditional medicines in India using the representative data of National Sample Survey (71st and 75th round) conducted in 2014 and 2017-2018. The analysis is on ailment persons of the sample size 37282 that comprises 18825 rural and 18457 urban households in 71st round and 43240 household in the 75th round consisting of 22373 from rural and 20867 from urban areas. The analysis is made using the descriptive statistics, most suitable regression models (logit and tobit regressions). The paper finds that there has been much improvements in the access to traditional medicines and even in case of major ailments and has help in reducing the OOPE. The budgetary provisions over last three years in India have also increased to facilitate the Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH).

Key words: medical pluralism, traditional medicines, dynamics, determinants, India

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