How is the family care organised for old people in Santal tribe?
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Context

- India: 2nd largest elderly (60+) population in the world
- The Santals: largest tribe in India
- Definition of an old person for Santals is not the age but plural (strength, work, physical aspect).
- Importance of the family in the care of the elderly

Methodology

- Qualitative and anthropologic method
- Pluridisciplinary and pluricultural research: doctors, nurse, anthropologist and social worker from three countries (Switzerland, France, India)
- Fieldwork: observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups
- Purposing sampling: villagers (all ages), doctors, nurses.
- Daily debriefings

Results

1. The elder person adapts herself to a new role in the family
   - Transmitting knowledge
     - Preserving rituals
     - Advising youngsters
     - Transmitting techniques
   - Taking part in the children care
   - Working
     Most of the old people work until they die. If they can not work anymore, they become householders

2. The family members interact together
   - Living with the old person
     « I live with my elderly son, his wife and their kids »
     A woman, 77 years old
   - Taking care of every aspect
     - Produce and split the food inside the family
     - If hospitalized, 24/7 presence of a family member
   - Being a family in the community
     Take part of the community life (rituals)
   - Giving and receiving
     « - What is the most important thing for you? - My son’s care. »
     A woman, 80 years old

3. The society eases the family care
   - Using the medical resources
     - Traditional medicine
     - Ayurvedic medicine
     - Allopathic medicine
   - (Not) being trained to care
   - (Not) getting equipped

Discussion

Limits
- Translation
- Transculturality
- Social desirability
- Short time
- Limited sampling: low amount of villages visited and villages close to the road (access), restricted amount of person interviewed
- Difficulty to have access to hospitals

Opening
- Strong implication of the family in the elderly care
- Nearly no political program for the elderly health compare to the children
- Is there a political tendency of ageism?

References


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