



Ethnographical Analysis of Indigenous Botanical Knowledge Based on Julien Steward's Theory

Fatemeh Shabani Asl¹, Mohammad Sadeq Farbod^{2*},
Ali Baseri³, Mohammad Hadi Mansour Lecoorge⁴

1. PhD student, Department of Anthropology, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

3. Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

4 - Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

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Corresponding Author:

Mohammad Sadiq Farbad

Email:

Msfarbod141@gmail.com

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Abstract

The aim of the current research was an ethnographical study of the indigenous knowledge of Sarbandan women regarding herbal products with an emphasis on Julien Steward's theory. The studied population was all the resident women of Sarbandan region in the years 1387-1400. 15 subjects were selected among the studied population using the purposive sampling method. The research method was qualitative field research and the study was conducted in an ethnographic procedure. Data were collected through in-depth and semi-structured interviews and participative observation. The results showed that: according to Julien Steward's theory, cultural development is based on the adaptation of the ecological environment and culture, and such an adaptation that leads to cultural growth and transformation in humans. The women of Sarbandan village had established this method in their mutual and two-way relationship with the environment. To name the natural environment and the type of plants that grow in that area, they inquire to know the natural environment. The women of the village found out that in this mountain and plain environment what kind of plants grow and after that they knew and sang songs and recited proverbs accordingly. They were able to improve their health, for example, by removing the infection or elimination of pain from their body, by utilizing the plant that was its habitat. As a result, according to Julien Steward, the indigenous knowledge of Sarbandan women is influenced by the geographical environment of this region, which led to ecological sustainability.



Extended abstract

Introduction: : Indigenous knowledge with the names of traditional knowledge, ethno science or traditional ecological knowledge is folk science, ethnic science, local science, traditional science, rural science and is a fundamental factor for sustainable development. Discovering and recording the knowledge of plants and genetic reserves and the ever-increasing need for medicinal plants, clarify the importance of preserving and developing the existing plants in each region. This knowledge of women in the field of agricultural technical issues is the result of centuries of their interaction with nature and the use of plants by them is even older than the modern history of man itself. As a precious treasure of this knowledge, rural women play an important role in this regard. Geography forms this article, with the high speed of entry of factors and elements of urban life and modern knowledge through various media to the rural areas of lifestyle change, indigenous knowledge in the field of different plant species is under threat and deterioration. This shows the necessity of recognizing, recording and preserving local knowledge about Sarbandan plants as a national capital. Meanwhile, the knowledge and information of women who have information about the use of plants and local methods cannot be ignored. Therefore, the aim of the current research was an ethnographical study of the indigenous knowledge of Sarbandan women regarding herbal products with an emphasis on Julien Steward's theory.

Method: The studied population was all the resident women of Sarbandan region in the years 1387-1400. 15 subjects were selected among the studied population using the purposive sampling method. The research method was qualitative field research and the study was conducted in an ethnographic procedure. Data were collected through in-depth and semi-structured interviews and participative observation.

Results: After analyzing the findings of ethnography, the following results were obtained in the field of native botanical knowledge of Sarabandan women based on Julien Steward's theory of cultural evolution and behavioral patterns in the exploitation of the natural environment. The results showed that: according to Julien Steward's theory, cultural development is based on the adaptation of the ecological environment and culture, and such an adaptation that leads to cultural growth and transformation in humans. The women of Sarbandan village had established this method in their mutual and two-way relationship with the environment. To name the natural environment and the type of plants that grow in that area, they inquire to know the natural environment. The women of the village found out that in this mountain and plain environment what kind of plants grow and after that they knew and sang songs and recited proverbs accordingly. They were able to improve their health, for example, by removing the infection or elimination of pain from their body, by utilizing the plant that was its habitat. As a result, according to Julien Steward, the indigenous knowledge of Sarbandan women is influenced by the geographical environment of this region, which led to ecological sustainability.

Conclusions: Based on Julien Steward's theory of cultural evolution and with the help of women, the present research discovered and investigated 31 species of plants in Sarbandan village and described their medicinal uses. This study showed that: 1- The diverse geographical conditions of the mountains and the knowledge of women have



caused the naming of the environment. 2- Songs and proverbs and the appearance of plants in those experiences that they had obtained from the nature around them according to trial and error. 3- Paying attention to plants from the point of view of medicinal uses was another example that the women of this village pointed out the importance of knowing it in the past. Ecological sustainability could be defined in the continuation and promotion of health and the main functions of the environment.

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