Reviewer's report

Title: What works in meeting the health needs of Scheduled Tribes in India? A systematic review of the literature

Version: 2 Date: 1 February 2010

Reviewer: KR Nayar

Reviewer's report:

Major revisions
1. The review style is inconsistent. For some sources, the reviewers have given names but for others the names are omitted.
2. It could be useful to give the data from all the NFHS surveys to present a longitudinal view (Table 1)
3. The article does not fit very well into the 'systematic review' framework. Yes, the review is extremely useful although it does not satisfactorily answer the question "what works in meeting the health needs of the Scheduled tribes in India?". May be the article should be published as an analytical review paper.
4. The quality of the review could be considerably enhanced if the authors concentrate on a specific disease, say malaria on which there are considerable number of studies.
5. The conclusions are too broad as it suggests future research strategies than on addressing the health needs. The conclusions need to be reworked to answer the question posed in the title.
6. The increase in TB due to co-morbidity referred in page 13 may not be relevant for tribal communities in India.
7. In my view the problem with some of the studies included in the review is the lack of a public health vision and an instrumentalist approach. The inter phase between health services system and the people is the one missing in most of the studies on tribal health.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests