

Indigenous Knowledge of Miracle Healing Case of a Village in Eastern Odisha

*Geetanjali Panda*¹

How to cite this article:

Panda, Geetanjali. 2024. 'Indigenous Knowledge of Miracle Healing: Case of a Village in Eastern Odisha'. *Sampratyaya*, 1(Spl. Issue, No-3): 59-69. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.21276/smprt.202409.1s3.a7>

Abstract

During a field study in 2018 in Chhima Village of Khruda district, Odisha, several cases of miracle healing were observed. A curiosity arose in mind: why do people believe in miracle healing when medical health care facilities are available at easy reach. Why do people prefer to miracle and supernatural healings over scientific treatment? The present paper is the result of attempts to find answer to these questions. The paper records few cases of healing practices on the basis of interview and attempts to understand the continuity of the practices in our time with reference to secondary works on the topic.

Keywords: Indigenous Knowledge and Healing, Scientific Knowledge, Miracle Healing, Supernatural Power, Secular and Religious Healing, Lord Banka Nidhi

1.0 Introduction

During a field study, I observed a few cases of miracle healing practices. The phenomena aroused my academic interest. Why is this practice when we live in a scientific age and talk of rational thinking? In contrast, the practices are based on indigenous knowledge in terms of faiths and practices in supernaturalism which is termed 'unscientific' or 'superstitious' at different quarters.

To understand this question I have taken up this study to present the ethnography of miracle healing practices observed at the Banka Nidhi temple in Chhima village of Khordha District, Odisha. The study aims to document the practices and IKS evident in curing system with reference to Lord Banka Nidhi temple.

¹ Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, B.J.B (Auto) College, P.O.: BJB Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751014, Odisha, Email:geetanjali.panda1981@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-7267-8855

The field study was conducted in Chhima village of Begunia Gram Panchayat in Sagabhangra Block of Khurda district from 02.02.2018 to 27.02.2018. The Banka Nidhi temple is situated in Chhima village and devotees from far and near villages visit the temple. From among them, there are patients, practitioners, relatives, and people wishing fulfilment of their mundane desires who were interviewed. Respondents were selected randomly from among them for the interview to understand the nuance of miracle healing and wish fulfilling by the divine power of the god through *kalishi*¹, his medium and other blessed ones. Only seven case studies from the interviews have been listed for the purpose of discussion. The study is based on observation and interview of two priests, five elderly people in the village, ten educated youths, five previously cured patients and five attendants of the patients who came for cure. The study is empirical in nature, descriptive in presentation and primarily an exploratory study. It is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Secondary sources are used to understand the nuance of the miracle healing existing in cross-section of cultures.

The scope of the study has two dimensions, the miracle healing practice and its prevalence. In my paper I have selected the observed practices to understand people's perception about the causes of ailment and faith healing methods adopted. Faith healing is an indigenous understanding of the *theory of the disease and cure* in contrast to modern scientific knowledge and treatment. In both the traditions there are cause and effect relationships. In the former, as Elwin maintains, the cause is spiritual and the cure has to be spiritual (Elwin 1988:178). This belief in disease and cure has no recognition in medical science and cannot be explained in natural laws. What was observed in the field is faith or miracle healing based on indigenous knowledge, for it stands in contrast to scientific laws. The practices observed from the subject matter of discussion with an attempt to understand why they exist in scientific era.

1.1 Delineating the frame of analysis

Miracle healing and indigenous knowledge broadly delineate the scope of present study. Understanding of 'miracle' in miracle healing has different approaches. In our case we will focus on epistemological and ontological approach which relates to common understanding of the term. Miracle, epistemologically, 'is an event that causes wonder and is in some way unusual or contrary to our expectations'; ontologically, it is 'beyond (above, contrary to) nature. A subjective conviction of a divine intervention also seems to be very common for the miracle (miraculous phenomena)' (Pawlikowski et al. 2015:1114). Miracle healing is conceptualised in a broader sense beyond the domain of divine and as a component of indigenous knowledge.

It is, therefore, in fairness of the logical spirit to construct the analytical frame of discussion to understand miracle healing as a component of indigenous knowledge. The concept of healing in its wider meaning is inclusive of the theory of disease, system of medicine, and cure. Therefore, it is cognitive understanding, interpretation, and curative practice with regard to the causes of diseases and treatment pertaining to modern medical science and indigenous knowledge. Modern medical science represents secular or natural dimension of the cognition of disease and its cure, while healing in indigenous or traditional knowledge system (Darko 2009) is inclusive of both natural and supernatural understanding, interpretation and practice (*see* Jelik 1994). In communities like tribes and rural or folk communities healing exists in the domain of knowledge, both secular and supernatural. Aurved, unani system, a family's knowledge in the

use of plant parts at home are secular dimension of indigenous healing. It includes Naturopathy, Chiropractic, Traditional Chinese medicine, Unani, Ayurveda, Meditation, Yoga, Biofeedback, Hypnosis, Homeopathy and Acupuncture (Bratman 1997).

Supernatural dimension of healing (Cozma & Cozma 2021 and O'Neill 2015) and has global and historical contexts; it exists in all communities and religions and existed in the known past (*see* Jelik 1994). The practice is independent in terms of the belief in the role of supernatural power causing and curing disease and connected with secular domain when natural objects are believed to gain efficacy and potency due to spiritual power (Elwin 1988). But plant parts are believed to contain essential ingredients of natural and spiritual potency as in Ghana (Darko 2009), or gain efficacy, as it is believed, due to medicine men's supernatural revelations or ritualistic practices. 'The use of herbs links the living and the dead, the spirit and physical, the seen and the unseen and the natural and the supernatural' (Darko 2009:41).

Supernatural power is a crucial component in indigenous knowledge of healing and it includes both divine (spiritual) and other types of supernatural power². Magico-religious practices belong to supernatural realm, (*see* Evans-Pritchard 1976 and Behera & Kri 2003) but they are not sanctified by the divine power. Supernatural healing in indigenous discourse is conceptualised in holistic relational context- the relationship that exists among nature, human and supernatural realms³. Supernaturality reveals in the connection with God; communication with deities who live with the humans in trees, hills, etc. and guide their everyday living; and belief in ancestral world (Portman & Garrett 2006) and magico-religious healing practices like sorcery or by the power of *mana* (Marshall 2011) which along with its diverse meanings is 'magical, religious, and spiritual force' (Mauss 2002:13). The healing power is not quantifiable and refers to 'a quality of efficacy' (Keesing 1984:149).

Evidently, indigenous healing knowledge has two components- visible and invisible. Medium like a herbal ingredient having healing power is visible, while the medium believed to be the supernatural power is invisible. Invisibility raises the question of rationality behind the practice and gives tag of superstition, unscientific method, etc. 'The fact that spirituality cannot be scientifically proven does not justify any effort to discredit its efficacy and potential' (Darko 2009:26). The world is not a visible manifestation in all aspects of knowledge. Belief in the existence of God is not a visible reality, but the world believes in it within an ontological reasoning (Hallowell 1976 & 1976a). The faith healing in Christianity and its consolidation in early part of twentieth century (Crowder 2006 and Harrel 1978) justify the relevance⁴ of the practice in human society. In Christianity, as Elwin (1988:176) maintains, healing prayer is not based on scientific rationality. 'Even when a Christian patient goes to the physician, he also takes the priest's blessings through prayer. The theory is that God answers the priest's prayer by making the pill more efficacious; the physician is the instrument through which the divine compassion works' (*ibid.*).

In the treatment of drug addicts Jelik (1994) reports the use of both spiritual and herbal healing practices based on Buddhist, Taoist, Hindu, Islamic and shamanic traditions as well as on syncretistic Christianised folk beliefs, often in collaboration with, in his language, 'official health care system'. Miracle healing in collaboration with traditional herbal cure operates 'outside official health care systems' and 'often validated by experience' (*ibid.*:221).

That the practice exists from historical time in all cultures and even today along with scientific healing system justifies its relevance for the people who believe in it. In this sense, 'the ontological foundation of indigenous knowledge asserts that the nature of reality goes beyond what can be proven in the Cartesian or Behaviourist classroom. For local people the ontology of knowledge production includes what is not known and cannot be proven to exist' (Darko 2009: 26-27).

The invisible medium of healing in the indigenous knowledge system is 'miracle healing'. The practice is seen as an anti-thesis and 'primitive' as compared to the western system of healing. In fact Western world through the faith healing as is practised in Christianity believes in miracle healing. What is comparable is that the miracle healing is an anti-thesis of Western scientific knowledge⁵, not the Western knowledge per se, and even to the herbal healing system in indigenous knowledge system⁶ itself due to its invisible characteristic. In this paper the thematic frame of discussion is formulated by conceptualising miracle healing as indigenous knowledge corresponding to invisible supernatural practices in contrast to western scientific system of healing.

1.2 Findings

From interview and observations it was found that the healing system prevalent in Chhima village comprises a wide range of ailments and their cure based on supernatural power of Lord Banka Nidhi and other divine entities. However, the people also visit the government hospital at Siko, two kms away from Chhima when they are not cured by miracle healing or in such cases as delivery. The ailments treated with the help of supernatural power can be seen as a practice of indigenous knowledge in India as McKim Marriott (1990) had reported on it in Kishan Garhi, a North Indian village in early 1950s. Dr. Carstairs (1990) also reported indigenous healing practice prevalent in two Rajasthani villages, Sujarpur and Delwara during the same period. In this traditional system of healing supernatural and secular aspects were focused. Bina Saklani and Atul Saklani (2016) had studied supernatural folk healings in Uttarakhand villages of tribal and non-tribal communities after 65 years of Marriott's study. In all these studies about diseases, their causes, and healing practices primacy of supernaturality is unambiguously recorded.

The diseases commonly treated in Chhima of Odisha and in Rajasthan of Uttar Pradesh with the help of supernatural power are jaundice, dysentery, piles, fever, gonorrhoea, boils, skin diseases stomach pain, possession by evil spirit, impact of evil-eye, general fatigue, lack of appetite, and eye ailments. Interestingly, villagers also come to the temple for supernatural intervention in order to find a missing object, prosper in business, and win in judicial disputes. People also take shelter in the power of Lord Banka Nidhi for the delay in marriage of daughters, curing barrenness of women or for blessing of male child. It was reported by the villagers and the priests during interview that failure in business or problem of judicial dispute happen due to bad time which is an indication of supernatural dissatisfaction. Failure leads to depression, anxiety, etc. These are diseases of the mind. Missing our something is believed to be the result of bad time.

Barrenness or not having a male child is believed to be supernatural punishment, may be due to bad *karma* in past life. A family may fall in bad days due to supernatural anger or visit by

evil spirits. For all the problems in the village, the grace of Lord Banka Nidhi is invoked. The priest Siddeheswar Behera is a *kalishi* and he is possessed by the Lord Banka Nidhi and advises the rituals. He also gives *bibhuti* or *paaduka* to drink. Almost all the rituals are associated with some restrictions.

There were several stories of miracle healing. Snake bite, cure of tooth ache, marriage of a girl, etc. are attributed to the blessing of Lord Banka Nidhi or the power of other divine entity. A few case studies have been presented below to understand the nuance of miracle healing prevailing in Chhima village.

1.2.1 Case Studies

1.2.1.1 The Case of Snake Bite Cure

Respondent: Pradeep Mohanty **Age:** 38 (male)

Village: Kanika, about 30 kms far from Chhima

Qualification: Under matriculation **Date of Interview:** 18.02.2018

Pradeep Mohanty, the informant was bitten by a cobra five years ago on his leg just above the ankle. His family members were frightened as they could not decide on what to do. However, they tied a rope above the snake bitten spot. The villagers came to know about it and right away cautioned the female members not to touch Pradeep as it was a taboo in the healing practice at the Banka Nidhi temple. He was brought to Chhima on a bike by a few villagers. He was laid down in front of the Lord. The priest was informed. The priest with the chanting of mantras bathed him with the water drawn in the sacred *gara* (pitcher) from the temple's well. He repeated the process 21 times. But it seemed that Pradeep could not be de-poisoned as the poison had spread in the body probably due to loosening of the rope during journey. So the priest resumed bathing him till it counted 108 times. After 108 times bath, the priest declared him cured of the poison. Pradeep felt comfortable. He and the villagers returned to Kanika.

To the question why women do not touch the snake-bitten person, he told that touching of women makes the healing ineffective. There were a crowd of people at the time of interview in the compound of the temple. They attested to what Pradeep had to say.

1.2.1.2 The Case of Benevolent Tantra Saadhak (Spiritual Practitioner)

Respondent: Nalini Behera **Age:** 60 (female) **Village:** Siko, 4.5 kms far from Chhima

Qualification: Primary **Date of Interview:** 18.02.2018

Nalini Behera's husband (she did not take the name of her husband as per custom) was *Masaani Saadhaka*, a spiritual practitioner by worshipping Goddess Kali of the cremation ground. He used to converse with the Goddess and pray to her in the cremation ground after midnight. He did not misuse his power but helped the villagers and his own family at the time of any crisis. Through exotericism he cured several patients suffering from different diseases. As long as he was alive his own family members did not visit any doctor on health issues. He helped people through his power to win the court case.

She also told that her dead husband appears in dreams and offer solutions to health, social or any financial problems arising in the family. She also told that in her dream the spirit of her dead husband visited the newborn grandson when he had fever. He blessed the grandson and the latter was cured instantly.

1.2.1.3 The Case of Healing Fever

Respondent: Kabir Behera **Age:** 28 (male) **Village:** Pindamul, 2 kms far from Chhima
Qualification: Matriculation **Date of Interview:** 22.02.2018

The respondent was suffering from fever. He went to *Vaid* (village medicine men) who gave his Ayurvedic medicines. But his fever did subside. On the third day, on the advice of elders of his village, he came to the refuge of Lord Banka Nidhi. The temple priest performed *jalasayi*. In this ritual the priest brought water in pot and poured on the idol. This process is repeated 21 or 108 times in order to satisfy the God. In case of Kabir Behera he performed the ritual 21 times. Then the priest gave him *bibhuti* (sacred ash) of Lord Banka Nidhi. For the ritual performance he paid ₹ 250 to the priest. As he consumed *bibhuti* mixing in water his fever subsided and within three days he was completely recovered.

1.2.1.4 The Case of Jhada Phoonka practitioner⁷

Respondent: Chaitnya Swain **Age:** 34 (male)
Village: Balugaon about 40 kms far from Chhima
Qualification: Middle standard **Date of Interview:** 22.02.2018

Chaitnya Swain is a *Jhada Phoonka* practitioner by invoking the power of Lord Banka Nidhi. As he informed, he cures tooth ailments. Patients with tooth ailments come to him from neighbouring villages also. The patient has to inform him earlier to schedule the treatment session. The patient is also required to bring offerings for the Lord Banka Nidhi and any amount of *dakshina* (gift) that one can afford. He instructs the patient to sit in front of the Lord (the idol of Lord Bana Nidhi which he worships at home) holding the offerings and pray with devotion. He also prays the Lord with chanting to energise roots which he puts in the mouth of the patient near the affected tooth. That relieves the patient of the pain and ultimately cures him/her.

He has been doing this since the last three years and claims to have cured hundreds of people. Mr. Swain refused to name the roots used, and also the name of his teacher. He believes that these things are pious in nature and not for everyone to know.

1.2.1.5 The Case of Stomach Pain Healer

Respondent: Balabhadra Mohanty **Age:** 53 (male) **Village:** Chhima
Qualification: Illiterate **Date of Interview:** 23.02.2018

Balabhadra Mohanty practises healing of stomach pain with salt which he claims is energised by the blessings of Lord Banka Nidhi. During interview, one audience later came to be known as the mother of Rinku who was cured by Mohanty, narrated the case of Rinku.

Rinku was 10 years old. She suffered from severe stomach pain. Her mother brought Rinku to Mohanty who gave her salt with some water in the name of Lord Banka Nidhi. After five minutes Rinku was relieved of stomach pain. Rinku's mother stated that the cure happened because of the belief on the power of the specialist and faith in the power Lord Banka Nidhi. Otherwise, the salt has no curative power for stomach pain.

1.2.1.6 The Case of Healing Power

Respondent: Chandrakala Parida **Age:** 43(female) **Village:** Chhima
Qualification: Class VIII **Date of Interview:** -23.02.2018

Chandrakala Parida is working at the Anganwadi of the village. She is born and married in the same village. She is a healer and her healing power is her family's legacy. She told that she does not get possessed by any God, but the power stored in *beta* (a cane wand) which she received from her Kalishi uncle has the healing power. She beats the patient with the *beta* to cure diseases like vomiting, stomach pain, loose motions, cough, cold etc., caused by the possession of evil spirits and evil eye. She also gives *paaduk* to the patient (the holy water prepared washing the feet of Lord Banka Nidhi) to drink. She told that her teacher gets possessed by Goddess Jogamaya (a female village deity) and he often blesses her when she asks for during any healing session.

1.2.1.7 The case of possession and cure

Respondent: Seshadev Swain **Age-**45 (male)
Village: Sagabhanga, 1.5 km from Chhima
Qualification: Under matriculation **Date of Interview:** 26.02.18

The respondent told that he was possessed by an evil spirit. He did not remember that he was behaving abnormally and trying to harm family members. He learned about his abnormal behaviour after cure. His relatives of Chhima village suggested his family members to bring him to the Banka Nidhi temple. He and his wife came to Chhima village. They met the kalishi for help. But kalishi did not get any communication from the Lord for 21 days. After 21 days the Lord through the medium of the kalishi narrated to the wife of the victim that an evil spirit possessed her husband. For driving the evil spirit form the body he instructed his wife to perform *parikrama* (circumambulation) of Lord Banka Nidhi temple seven times by chanting the name of the Lord with devotion. When the *parikrama* was complete Seshadev was given the *paaduka* of the Lord. Gradually, he felt comfortable and normal. The evil spirit had left his body due to the power of his wife's devotional ritual and the *paaduka* of the Lord. Though the Kalishi did not ask anything he paid a small amount as a token of respect.

1.3 Analysis

The question is why miracle healing is prevalent in scientific era and when medical facilities are available. Perhaps the answer lies on people's unwavering belief in spirituality based on the logic that the efficacy and potential of miracle healing cannot be discredited or denounced simply because they cannot be scientifically proven (Dakro 26-27). They are validated through experience as is argued by Marshall (2011). There are successes and failures both in indigenous and scientific systems and people have their indigenous healing knowledge millions of years before the advent of scientific alternative. So, one cannot expect people to change their whole cosmology (Carstairs 1990:133) in favour of another. Traditional knowledge, as Elwin (1988:215) writes about traditional tribal religion, is 'developed and reformed from within, is thus not bound to be destroyed by science'. Indigenous knowledge belongs to the people, whereas scientific knowledge has come from outside the indigenous communities. Though scientific treatment is not discarded, but caution is maintained; and the treatment is accepted through the lens of indigenous belief. That is why Rinku's mother attributes the efficacy of salt to the belief in divine power.

The villagers interviewed in Chhima village believe in miracle healing through supernatural agency. The practice is an integral component of their indigenous healing system consisting of secular and religious⁸ treatments. But the efficacy of secular items in healing like the 'salt or bibhuti' is derived from supernatural power. In indigenous healing system, supernatural power is all pervading and is universal acceptance across religious traditions, because 'the supernatural is everywhere immanent, and events can be influenced only by enlisting supernatural aid' (Carstairs 1990:117).

In indigenous worldview, disease is frequently seen as a warning sign, a visitation from punishing agents for a broken taboo, a hostile impulse, or an act of socially disrupting behaviour (Hallowell 1976, also *see* Elwin 1988:177-178).

The secular component of healing is not confined to indigenous knowledge system; the people visit the hospital in such cases as delivery, seriousness of patient or when an ailment is not cured by miracle healing. People visit hospital, and at the same time, as it was reported, perform worship for divine blessing (cf. Elwin 1988:176). 'In the lives of most villagers, clinics serve as momentary stopping places on the sick man's pilgrimage from one indigenous practitioner to another, and hospitals serve all too frequently as last resorts of the dying' (Marriott 1990:241).

The miracle healing in rural India, whether it is Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, U.P, or Uttarakhand, including tribes and non-tribes⁹, is the part of a total healing system and belief in supernaturality pervades the worldview on the cause and cure of diseases. It reflects patient's expectations in the general cultural setting being influenced by psycho-cultural factors (Carstairs 1990). When a patient goes to a spiritual healer, as Behera & Kri (2003) have studied in the context of Kaman Mishmi of Arunachal Pradesh, he gets something more beyond physical health. He gets socio-psychological reinforcement (ibid.:129). The belief in traditional healer 'satisfies both heart and mind' (Elwin 1988: 216).

In Chhima village, a patient is guided by relatives or elders to visit the temple of Lord Banka Nidhi for spiritual healing. There is a general trust on the system and this system survives in social network. Social network in terms of relatives, neighbours, and co-villagers influence the decision of a patient to go for the faith healing¹⁰. It reinforces faith and trust. McKim Marriott (1990:244-245) located this trust in the social structure of Kisha Garhi consisting of interpersonal relations.

A few points were not explicitly asked during interview. But belonging to rural culture of Odisha it will not be preposterous to refer to these points for a broader understanding. Snake bite for example, has supernatural connection, for snakes are believed to be the embodiment of gods and goddesses like Vashuki, Manasa, Shesha Naga, etc. Besides, Lord Vishun and Lord Shiva have connection with snakes. There are regional deities like Gogaji who is worshipped as Nag devata in several Hindi speaking states. Divine connection of snakes, for which supernatural healing is sought, has been reported by Carstais (1990:126) from Rajasthan. Danaji and Kagol Davaji cure snake bites by descending on their priests. The similar tradition was reported in Chhima village also.

1.4 Conclusion

The study began with the observation of miracle healings at the temple of Lord Banka Nidhi in Chhima village in the district of Khurda, Odisha. Interview and case studies were conducted to understand the reasons of their prevalence in scientific era. The simple conclusion arrived at in this regard is that the miracle healing continues because of the continuity of people's belief in this indigenous practice of healing. The scientific temper has not been able to replace the traditional knowledge based on belief. Importantly, the indigenous healing practice co-exists with scientific healing and the latter is accommodated in the totality of people's perception of healing system in the line of pluralistic thinking of India's tradition. India's tradition does not believe in exclusiveness, either this or that, but all components together forming into an organic whole. The belief in supernaturality is extended to understand the efficacy of modern scientific healing.

The Supreme God is all powerful, but manifests in different forms such as Smasan Kali, Jogamaya, Banka Nidhi as was reported during field study. The divine power is revealed and transmitted through a medium like a kalishi, sadhak, salt, paaduka, bibhuti, beta (cane stick); and ritualistic performances like jalasayi, parikrama, etc. People have faith in Supreme God's power of benevolence; but they also believe that what the God does is for the good of the humanity. He takes time to cure a patient so as to test his/her devotion and patience. He prescribes a different way, which the respondents indicated was treatment in the hospital. This belief exists as an integral part of culture in general and in the domain of beliefs and faith in particular.

Prevalence of faith healing has its own logic, a sense of belonging to the people who practise it from time immemorial and who are familiar with it. This is the belief handed down from the ancestors and exists in the society; the practice of faith healing is intergenerational. It answers to the cause-effect relationship in the healing system that the supernatural cause of disease must be cured supernaturally. Besides, such a healing practice exists across the religious traditions that add strength to its continuity in a particular setting like rural Odisha.

Notes

1. The person who is possessed by a deity is called *kalishi*, deity's chosen medium.
2. Belief in faith healing is normally related to religious belief. A detailed discussion on its dimensions is engaged in Andrew Village (2005). But studies on witchcraft take it beyond the domain of the divine (*see* Odisha State Commission for Women & Action Aid 2021)
3. Such a relation is conceptualised in terms of *nature-man-spirit complex* (Vidyarthi 1963) or *resource-tribe-power complex* as is conceptualized to understand the tribal context. (Behera 2019).
4. The relevance of traditional and faith healings get reassurance with their use in treating drug addicts in recent time (*see* Grim & Grim 2019 and Heggenhougen 1984).
5. Indigenous healing knowledge is not only an alternative to western healing system; it is also seen in decolonisation context. Some scholars perceive it in terms of decolonisation of knowledge as it adopts healing 'methods and ways of ... health and disease that derived from ancestral knowledge'. (Marshall 2011:2).
6. Behura (1991) conceptualises indigenous medicine system as ethno-medicine that includes both visible and invisible components.
7. The exorcist who uses methods of air blowing, chanting, and cleansing (moving hands upside down over the body of the patient) to remove evil powers or elements from the body of a patient
8. Carstairs (1990:120) uses the phrase *secular and sacred* in place of *secular and religious* and Mandelbaum (1974) uses *natural and supernatural*.
9. *See* the works of Behera & Kri (2003) for Arunachal Pradesh, this paper for Odisha, Carstairs (1990) for Rajasthan, Marriott (1990) for U.P. and Saklani and Saklani (2016) for Uttarakhand.
10. Singleton (2001), drawing on Christian practices, argues that stories on past successful healing experiences create faith in a patient on the efficacy of faith healing. It creates a sense of acceptance, trust in the practice, and therefore influences its continuity. Recommendation of relatives of a patient to visit Lord Banka Nidhi temple for cure is undoubtedly based on the stories of past experience, even may be personal experience also.

References

- Behera, M. C. 2019. 'Transformation of Tribal Economy: Understanding Non-Economic Dynamics'. In Nilakantha Panigrahi (ed) *Tribal Economy, Culture and Society in India*, 336-355. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- Behera, M.C. and Sokhep Kri. 2003. 'Ethnomedicine in Socio-cultural Perspective: A Study of Miju Mishmis (Kamans) of Arunachal Pradesh'. In Tamo Mibang and S. K. Chaudhury (ed), *Ethno Medicines of the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh*, 129-145. Delhi/Itanagar: Himalayan Publishers.
- Behura, N.K. 1991. 'Anthropology of Disease, Treatment and Cure'. In *Man and Life*, 17:29-39.
- Bratman, Steven.1997. *The Alternative Medicine Source Book: A Realistic Evaluation of Alternative Healing Methods*. Los Angeles: Lowell House.
- Carstairs, G.Morris. 1990 (repr.). 'Medicine and Faith in Rural Rajasthan'. In Benjamin D. Paul (ed) *Health, Culture, & Community: Case Studies of Public Reactions to Health Programs*, 107-134. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

- Cozma, C.D and Sebastian Cozma. 2021. 'Religion or medicine or the spiritual dimension of healing'. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 11(31):31+ Gale Academic OneFile, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A350577129/AONE?u=anon~af05bbfa&sid= google Scholar&xid=4fef40a4. Accessed 20 May 2024.
- Crowder, John. 2006. *Miracle Workers, Reformers, and the New Mystics*. Shippensburg:Destiny Image Publishers.
- Darko, Isaac Northey.2009. 'Ghanaian Indigenous Health Practices: The Use of Herbs'. *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis* submitted to the Graduate Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Toronto: University of Toronto.
- Elwin,V.1988 (repr.). *A Philosophy for North East Frontier Agency*. Itanagar: Director of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1976. *Witchcraft, oracles, and magic among the Azande*. Oxford Clarendon Press.
- Grim, Brian J. and Melissa E.Grim. 2019. 'Belief, Behavior, and Belonging: How faith is Indispensable in preventing and Recovering from Substance Abuse'. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 58(5):1713-1752.
- Heggenhougen, H.K. 1984. 'Traditional Medicine and the Treatment of Drug Addicts: Three Examples from Southeast Asia'. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 16(1):3-7.
- Hallowell, A.Irving.1976. 'Ojibwa Worldview and Disease'. In A. Irving Hallowell (ed) *Contributions to Anthropology: Selected Papers of A. Irving Hallowell*, 391-448. Chicago:Chicago Univeristy Press.
- Hallowell, A.Irving.1976a. 'Ojibwa Ontology, Behaviour & Worldview'. In A. Irving Hallowell (ed) *Contributions to Anthropology: Selected Papers of A. Irving Hallowell*, 3578-390. Chicago:Chicago University Press.
- Harrel, David. 1978. *All Things are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Jilek G. Wlofgang. 1994. 'Traditional Healing in the Prevention and Treatment of Alcohol and Drug Abuse'. *Transcultural Psychiatric Research Review*, 31(3): 219-258.
- Keesing, Roger M. 1984. 'Rethinking 'Mana''. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 40(1): 137-156.
- Mandelbaum, D.G. 1974. *Human fertility in India: Social Components and Policy Perspectives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Marriott, McKim. 1990 (repr.). 'Western Medicine in a Village of Northern India'. In Benjamin D. Paul (ed) *Health, Culture, & Community: Case Studies of Public Reactions to Health Programs*, 239-268. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Marshall. W. Elizabeth. 2011. *Potent Mana: Lessons in Power and Healing*. Albaney, NY:State University of New York (SUNY).
- Mauss, Marcel (trans. W. D. Halls). 2002 (repr.). *The Gift*. London: Routledge.
- Odisha State Commission for Women & Action Aid. 2021. *Witch-Hunting in Odisha*. Bhubaneswar/New Delhi: Odisha State Commission for Women & Action Aid.
- O'Neill Daniel W. 2015. 'Spiritual Dimensions of Illness and Healing: The 4th Annual Medicine and Religion Conference'. *Christian Journal for Global Health*, 2(1). DOI:[10.15566/cjgh.v2i1.70](https://doi.org/10.15566/cjgh.v2i1.70)
- Pawlikowski, Jakub, Michał Wiechetek, Jarosław Sak & Marek Jarosz. 2015. 'Beliefs in Miraculous Healings, Religiosity and Meaning in Life'. *Religions*, 6: 1113–1124.doi:10.3390/rel6031113
- Portman, T. A. A. & Garrett, M.T. 2006. Native American Healing Traditions. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 53(4):453- 469.
- Saklani, Bina and Atul Saklani. 2016. 'Health and Spirits: Pragmatic Complex of Supernatural Folk Healing in Uttarakhad Himalayas'. In M. C. Behera (ed) *Interventions, Familiarity and Continuity: Dynamics in Tribal Communities*, 345-367. New Delhi:Commonwealth.
- Singleton, Andrew. 2001. "'Your Faith Has Made You Well': The Role of Storytelling in the Experience of Miraculous Healing". *Review of Religious Research*, 43(2):121-138 URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3512058>
- Vidyarthi, L.P.1963. *The Maler: A Study in Nature-Man-Spirit Complex of a hill Tribe*. Calcutta: Bookland.
- Village, Andrew. 2005. 'Dimensions of belief about miraculous healing'. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 8(2): 97-107.