

HEALING PRACTICE OF THE PEOPLE OF RURAL ODISHA: A CASE STUDY OF KHUNTAPALI VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

One area where we see a close relationship between rural people and the environment is knowledge about healing methods. Khuntapali village residents have their own traditional understanding on how to handle all aspects of health, including mental, physical, and spiritual aspects pertaining to the body, mind, or soul. Folk medicinal practices are rather well-known and significant among the Khuntapali village in the Bolangir District of Odisha, even in the age of popular medicine (Allopathic, Homoeopathy, or Ayurveda). In the study area, it was found that traditional medicine was widely used and more common than contemporary treatment. The study of Khuntapali village residents' healing customs is the subject of this essay. Naturalistic and personalistic aetiology will be the two areas of focus in this context. While the personalistic realm will concentrate on supernatural causes of illness and disease and various conventional methods of treating them, the naturalistic domain will concentrate on therapeutic plants, roots, and herbs.

Keyword: Knowledge, Health care, Healing practise and Khuntapali village

1. INTRODUCTION

Mass displacement is unavoidable and essential to the irrigation dam project process. Many people have been evicted and displaced from their original places of residence as a result of the majority of these projects' significant changes to land use patterns, water supplies, and natural resources (Panday, 1998). The most valuable natural resources, including land, forests, indigenous knowledge, flora and fauna, and social capital, cannot be replaced by whatever amount of money paid for land and other natural resources (Agnihotri, 2008). Immersion in the local culture is, in this regard, one of the study's main problems. People who have been relocated have been protesting the dam on a large scale (Parasuraman, 1996). This project is not without controversy, mostly surrounding compensation, resettlement, the displaced people's future means of subsistence, and, last but not least, cultural customs (Tandi, 2018). More than 100 individuals were arrested during the protest, including women. Of those who were still fasting inside the jail, 14 were deemed seriously ill and taken to the hospital by the police (Tandi, 2019).

The socio-economic impacts have always been very hard on local people affected in the form of

landlessness, Homeless, loss of livelihood, loss of economic, social network, loss of culture, and family became defunct, unfitness, suspiciousness, etc and so on (Cernea, (2009), Gogoi & Lahon, 2014). Further, Dams has negative impact of environment (Bottero, 2013). This paper highlights the local culture of Khuntapali village which already submerged in the water.

Animatism, which is the belief in divine force, and animism, which is the worship of nature. Hinduism is one of the various religions practiced by the residents of Khuntapali hamlet. There are many different kinds of plants and animals in Khuntapali village. Thus, people rely on the forest for a variety of small forest products, such as bamboo, Gangu leaves, wild vegetables, and herbal remedies. Like many other traditional cultures, society has been deeply concerned with achieving freedom from pain and suffering since ancient times. The residents of Khuntapali village have created their own therapeutic institutions and methods based on a common knowledge of human nature and the reasons behind pain.

There are many different types of healing methods used today, including both modern and traditional methods that have developed over time. The popularity of the conventional method has not

been significantly impacted by the quick advancements in contemporary medicine. Despite being widely regarded and thriving on common wisdom, many ancient therapeutic practices continue to baffle health specialists. After witnessing the negative consequences of contemporary medical methods, interest in indigenous healing techniques is growing. A change of focus is necessary, nevertheless, in order to foster an appreciation and knowledge of the importance of conventional treatment methods. This paper's primary goal is to examine traditional healing methods and emphasise the importance of sociocultural belief systems in igniting a healing mechanism in the afflicted person among the residents of Khuntapali village in the Bolangir district of Odisha.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research aims to identify healing practice in relation to Khuntapali village's displaced population.

3. METHODS

Participant observation, group discussions, and individual unstructured in-depth interviews were among the qualitative techniques employed in the study. A traditional healer's biography was obtained along with many case studies. The researcher went to places such Maa Kandhen Budhi Gudi, Siva temple, and Chandi temple, which

are places of worship and private residences where patients are healed by traditional healers and those with supernatural abilities. The researcher also travels to Khuntapali in order to learn more about the various therapeutic methods that the locals employ.

4. PROFILE OF KHUNTAPALI VILLAGE

The Lower Suktel Irrigation Project will completely submerge the revenue village of Khuntapali. The village itself is the Gram Panchayat headquarters village belonging to Bolangir block, Bolangir Tahasil of Bolangir district. A total of 268 households (HHs) comprising 531 displaced families (DFs) and 28 landless households consisting of 51 displaced landless families are going to be displaced from the village Khuntapali due to acquisition of land and houses for the project. In addition, 41 households consisting of 80 affected families (AFs) (Above 75%) are being affected by the project due to acquisition of their agriculture land in the village Khuntapali before declaration of 4(1) notification. The table gives the brief scenario of distribution of total displaced, affected and displaced landless households along with displaced, affected, and displaced landless families according to the sex and caste categories.

Table No.1 Identification of Displaced HHs in Gender and Caste Wise

Total HHs	Male Headed HHs				Female HHs			
	SC	ST	OC	Total	SC	ST	OC	Total
268	27	28	153	208	3	10	47	60

(Source: the primary survey 2009 by the office of lower suketel irrigation project)

An examination of displaced households (HHs) by caste and gender is shown in Table 1. There are 268 households that have been relocated in all. Of these, 60 (22.4%) have female heads while 208 (77.6%) have male heads. Of the households headed by men, 27 are members of the Scheduled Castes (SC), 28 are members of the Scheduled Tribes (ST), and 153 are members of Other Castes (OC). This demonstrates that OC households make up the bulk of displaced male-headed households

(73.6%), with SC and ST households making up lower shares. Three are from SC, ten are from ST, and forty-seven are from OC for households headed by women. According to the distribution, OC accounts for 78.3% of relocated households headed by women, with SC and ST sharing the remaining 21.7%. Males mainly lead houses across all caste groups, according to the statistics, which shows a gendered tendency in family leadership.

The total population of the village Khuntapali is 1471 that include displaced population 1346 and

landless population 125 who also are going to be displaced from the village. Of the displaced population 691 are male and 655 are female while the distribution of displaced population are male 59 and female 66. Similarly, 201 persons are affected of which 105 are male and 96 female.

5. PATTERNS OF HEALTH CARE IN KHUNTAPALI VILLAGE

Three overlapping sectors comprise Khuntapali village's therapeutic practices: the biomedical sector, which includes contemporary western medicine, the folk sector, which includes traditional healing methods. It is the well-known sector where health issues are initially identified, health care initiatives are started, and attitudes regarding maintaining one's health are established and implemented. In the modern era, Khuntapali village residents who were previously self-sufficient began to rely on several health sectors. Khuntapali hamlet residents frequently practise medical pluralism. Several clinics and pharmacies offering both homoeopathic and allopathic medicine are located approximately three and a half kilometres from Khuntapali hamlet. The peasants even use the Ayurvedic treatments. The local market carries these medications. Only when traditional treatment is unable to heal a patient are these medications employed. When modern medicine is unable to heal them, people turn to their traditional healing methods. To put it simply, the residents of Khuntapali village practise two different forms of healing: traditional medicine and contemporary, professional medicine (Allopathic, Homoeopathic, or Ayurvedic).

6. TRADITIONAL HEALING PRACTICES

The treatment management group links natural and supernatural influences and forces to the causes of illness, in contrast to biomedicine, which places a greater emphasis on germs or microorganisms. The inhabitants of Khuntapali village believe that maintaining human health involves a ceremonial balancing act between these natural and supernatural powers. Two categories of aetiologies (causative theory) can be distinguished in this context: naturalistic and personalistic.

7. NATURALISTIC

Disease theory, which is based on cause-and-effect correlations observed in nature, attributes an

impersonal and recognised supernatural cause. It is more empirical and is predicated on parameters that are typically observable and testable. The theory in this model is predicated on conditions that have been observed empirically. When someone has a stomach ache or their body turns yellow with yellow eyes, it's called jaundice, and they are given the right medication, which may include herbs, along with careful dietary practices. Many indigenous herbs are used by the residents of Khuntapali hamlet to treat various ailments that they are aware of. For instance, they employ trees like Ka, Anar, Ghee Kuanri, Pudina, and others to help toddlers with their fluid movements.

Poisonous bites are a concern for both children playing in the thick foliage around homes and those working in the fields in Khuntapali's villages and forests. According to a traditional healer, applying a newly made traditional remedy to the wound within two hours of the bite could save the patient's life and prevent the resulting damage to the skin and muscles. Additionally, their treatments were said to be able to address chronic skin conditions that modern medicine was unable to adequately treat.

8. PERSONALISTIC

In personalistic system of thought illness is believed to be caused by an active, purposeful intervention of a sensate agent which may be a spirit or an idea of malevolent force. It includes a believer in agents such as (i) supernatural being – a God or a deity, (ii) non-human being or entity – for instance ghost, ancestors, evil eye and astrological entity and (iii) a human being – a witch or a sorcerer. In this model the belief is that illness is caused due to divine anger or punishment, forceful interaction or simply magical manipulation. In this context the treatment is carried out in forms of acts of appeasement for sins and revival rituals. The people of Khuntapali village have a belief that even if you are medicated by modern medical system then also patient is supposed to take help of the traditional medical system which is sacred. They believe that only taking help from modern medical system will not help till the time it will be blessed by their sacred entity. The sacred may be evoked in many forms, such as the ancestral spirit, Kandhen Budhi maa, supreme God, deities and bad spirits. Different healing practices use different forms of the sacred but for most of them the physical and metaphysical world overlaps. Demons, spirits and

deities are part of both the world from physical to metaphysical.

This society has healers who use altered states of consciousness in community rituals to interact with the spirit world. These spiritual healing typically occurs in a community context. Community participation facilitates therapeutic effect derived from psycho-social influences which is positive expectation and social support. These collective rituals strengthen group identity and commitment enhancing community cohesion by reintegrating patients in to the group. In the outskirts of Khuntapali village there is a Ashsta Stal where people from different places use to visit to worship God and Goddess. Here many healers use to come and worship Goddess for enhancing their power. Patients along with their family member use to visit this. They seek help of these traditional healers for knowing the actual cause of the suffering and ask them to cure them from their problem and diseases. They use to charge Rs 50 to every patient and in some special case they charge Rs 100. For serious disease or problem they ask for mustard oil and turmeric which is powered by enchanting Mantras and given back to the patient. Use of this oil for massage and turmeric in daily food helps in curing the disease. They don't only use to treat problem and disease but they also provide precaution from any type of disease, problem and evil eye by empowering rice by enchanting Mantras which could be mixed with other rice used for cooking.

9. CASE STUDY OF A TREATMENT BY TRADITIONAL HEALER

People visited to Late Sukru Tandi with a problem of body swelling and different problems related to body. Once upon a time, a women told that she already consulted many doctors in Boalngir but her problem was not resolved. At last she was advised by her mother to seek help of Late Sukru Tandi as he is able to identify the evil eye. So the woman met him. Late Sukru Tandi asked her to bring some mustard oil and few red colour flowers with her. He chanted some Mantras and offered the mustard oil and flowers to any unknown spirit and asked him/her to cure the woman and then took the oil and gave it back to the woman and told her to put the oil on her body every night before sleeping. In this way the traditional healer, Late Sukru Tandi treated the woman problem. According to western medical system Late Sukru Tandi is a fake person who use to cheat people on

the name of God and spirit but for the people who got treated by him and also got cured, Magal Deva is a saint who came on earth for the well-being of society and for the whole humanity.

10. CONCLUSION

The above study of Brambe village shows the strength of traditional healing practices. But the young generation are moving towards the modern medical system due to modernization of the society, leaving their Indigenous knowledge of healing practises due to which it is on the verge of extinction. It is observed that the system of traditional healing is not neither organized nor streamlined and still it is practised as an assortment of medicine collected from nature, superstition and religion belief. Therefore, the exploration of this traditional knowledge system, recognition in the system of medicine and its popularization is urgently required for upholding this highly potential knowledge system of Oraon tribe. Recognition is necessary along with the copyright of the particular herbs on the name of community so that its popularity benefits the community.

11. DELIMITATIONS AND SCOPE

This paper's aim is restricted to identifying and analysing the primary concerns regarding the submersion of Khuntapali village's local culture, specifically out of 29 submerged villages.

Citation Method

The citation style is consistent throughout the paper.

Conflict of Interest

None

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