

Indigenous Health and Healing System:
Potentiality and Prospects for Education

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Abstract

With this cross-cultural qualitative indigenous study, I sought to understand the constituents of Tamang health and healing system and their potentialities intending to draw health and educational implication from it. For this, my primary research question was ‘What were the constituents and potentialities of Tamang health and healing system?’ To ease my study, I formulated three subsidiary questions focusing on constituents, potentialities and their implication to health and education system. The review of literature made on four areas, namely, identity of indigeniety in Nepal; Tamang as indigenous people; disease, illness and treatment systems and global indigenous health and healing literature, revealed that Tamang health system was studied with focus on their shamanic healing and also that there were globally diverse and interesting indigenous health and healing systems some of which were trying to be developed as alternative health systems and modern technology was being injected on them. For my field study I purposively selected twenty Tamang research participants from Deurali in Nuwakot and Chapali Bhadrakali in Kathmandu. I was engaged in conversational interviews, sharing experiences, studying history and tradition, observing performances, observing ecology and locale of the villages and residences. I cautiously adopted ethnography, phenomenology, archaeology, interpretive practice and social action to enhance my understanding of the field. I used, diary keeping, recorder and video camera for the collection of data. After my field, I employed frameworks of indigenized research with Kaupapa Maori theory, habitus, embodiedness and cultural capital, critical postmodernism and grounded approach for the analysis and interpretation of my study field. My study came up with a new perception of the meaning of health and healing. Health was associated with satisfaction and healing was sought in accordance with the habitus and cosmovision of the patient. If the system satisfied the patient, it was valid. Multiple components of their health and wellbeing constituted their health and healing system, which I termed as ‘holistic approach’, in which cultural, social, religious, ecological, behavioural and structural components played dominant role. They were found more preventive than curative in which spiritual healing was only one component among many. The findings showed a number of potential health elements including

psychotherapeutic and music therapy healing, adopting life in tune with nature, ecology and environment and the role of moral and cultural life for the wellbeing. Their healing systems showed scientific components and procedures applied pragmatically. The indigenous healers went through preventive, diagnostic and curative stages during treatment. The findings gave potential implication to restructure our health and education systems from indigenous and post modern perspectives and I offered implications to rectify injustice to indigenous people on one hand and to benefit from the rich and humanistic indigenous mine of knowledge in the cultivation of humankind on the other. Comparative study of global indigenous health literature could bring more ways of applying Tamang health and healing methods using science and research. What was needed was the deeper study of them and blending technology with them. I realized need of further research and exploration in this field by more researchers. From the perspective of implication to education, this study showed that Tamang health system, could contribute a lot. Our existing education system did not support indigenous students' learning in our schools as school pedagogy was normative, alien and indifferent to local and indigenous knowledge. It was essential to introduce Tamang cultural capital in the mainstream school capital in their regions. I saw it essential to deconstruct and reconstruct the education system from indigenous perspective. At the same time, I felt the need of indigenous health institutions from basic to research level to promote indigenous health and healing system of Tamangs. In fact, I had a great insight on Tamang health and healing system and its importance on health and education systems.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted for the candidature for any other degree.

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Acceptance and Recommendation

The undersigned certify that we have read, approved and recommended to the Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University for acceptance, a thesis entitled INDIGENOUS HEALTH AND HEALING SYSTEM: POTENTIALITY AND PROSPECTUS FOR EDUCATION by Hemanta Raj Siwakoti in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION WITH SPECIALIZATION IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES.

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Glossary of Terms

Amchi:	Traditional Tibetan herbal healer.
Ani:	Female Buddhist authority.

Ayurveda:	Healing system using herbal and natural cure.
Bahun:	Superior Hindu caste
Bhakti:	Full faith and devotion.
Bhote:	Caste name given to Tamangs disregarding them.
Bhoto, bakkhu, patuki, surke, sahama:	Tamang dresses.
Biotronic healing, bioenergo therapy:	Russian systems of healing.
Bla:	Soul.
Bombo, lambu, syangtan, Sangdung, Labteba :	Tamang shamans.
Buddha Jayanti:	Birth day of Buddha.
Bulo-bulo:	Philippine indigenous healing technique
Can kwaba:	Rice feeding ceremony.
Chapo, dhungrijhar, kure/furke jhar, bhimsenpati, chupchupe, kathar gaitehare:	Names of plants used in making marcha (yeast).
Chhang:	Homemade beer.
Chiem doan/nghiem doan, phu thuy, thanh dong, dong cot, co hon, thuoc nam, thuoc Bac:	Vietnamise indigenous healing techniques.
Chywar:	Hair cutting ceremony.
Conocurvone:	HIV curing medicine made from Australian plant Conospermum.
Dashain, Teehar:	Hindu festivals
Dhami-Jhakri, Puimbo, Ngiami, Pajyau, Khepra, Phedangma, Samba, Yeba, Yema, Nokcha, Nokchhoe, Mangba ,Bhusal, Gurau, Guruva, Pandey, Urau:	Names of shamans in different Nepalese communities.

Dikshya:	Final declaration of success by guru.
Ghewa/gral:	Death rite.
Gufa basne, guptabas:	Stay at secret and lonely place for insight as part of learning.
Gumba, chorten:	Buddhist sacred places, residences of Lord Buddha.
Guru:	Teacher
Guthi:	Land or property in the name of religious or social institutions.
Janajati:	Nepalese term used for indigenous people.
Jharpuk Baidya:	Indigenous healer who cures with magical and sacred utterances.
Jokhana herne:	Finding cause of illness with the help of spirits and gods and insight.
Kala Salgen:	Ceremonial annual function of shamans for their inspirer.
Khukuri:	Special Nepali knife.
Kirat, Mangol:	Races of people.
Kirlian:	Russian photography that can reveal cosmic energy.
Kurim:	Tamang Buddhist ritual text.
Lama:	Buddhist religious authority.
Lamapathi:	About 4 k. g. of crop grain given to lama by the villagers.
Lhosar, Nhara, Dhakpa, Chheju, Yullha, Torpa:	Tamang festivals.
Lha, Syi: bdda-ne:da, kulgi-la, Tsen, Saplu/Lu, Mamos:	Tamang gods.
Lopan:	Lama teacher (guru).
Madarsha, Maktab:	Muslim schooling systems.
Mahadev(Shibdda) Satidevi.:	Powerful god and goddess in Hinduism and Shamanism.
Mangs, Lanai, Banjhakri, Boksi, Chhauda, Bayus, Bir/Masan:	Tamang bad spirits.
Marcha:	Yeast for fermentation.
Moxibustion:	Tibetan indigenous healing technique.

Nirbana:	Salvation.
Namjung/Thapsang/Nochungi:	Naming ceremony.
Nastik:	Who has no faith on God
Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche):	Forms of Lord Buddha.
Pap (dikpa):	Sin, sinful act.
Pathsala:	Hindu schooling system.
Pipas:	Post carrier.
Puja:	Hindu worship system
Qi, Mana, Prana:	Spirit or soul
Samundra Matthan:	Hindu mythological story connected to Lord Shiva's power.
Samsara:	The world full of sorrow and sufferings
Santeria:	African spiritual healing method
Sarot, rudrachhe, phurba, nga, trisul, khung:	Symbolic tools of Tamang Shamans
So mendo:	Life-force flower to call back lost soul.
Sorga:	Heaven
Syalgar:	special gift of drink by dispel to Guru
Tamsaling:	Tamang Territory
Tantric:	Art of healing using magical and textual power.
Thuoc Bac:	Indigenous Chinese healing principle.
Tikka Lama:	Lama in Gosaikunda offering Tika
Torma:	Healing tool of Tamang shaman
Tridoshas:	Three elements in ayurveda (Vata, Pitta and Kapha)
Unani Tibb:	A Greek healing system
Vajrayana:	A Buddhist sect
Yin and Yang:	Two forces in the body in acupuncture treatment theory
Wang:	Initiation ceremony of Lama
Wonde:	Tamang ceremony as part of marriage ceremony.