

Interplay of Spirituality, Religious Belief and Ethno-medicines with Health and Healing Practices among Hindus of Northern India

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Abstract: In all traditional societies the system of medicine was based on spirituality, religion or plants which were used for curing a sick either separately or in combination with each other. Medicine has been practiced one way or the other since man became a cultured animal. The 37th World Health Assembly adopted the historic resolution that the definition of health includes four domains of well-being: physical, mental, social and spiritual (WHO, 1998). The World Health Organization (WHO) has accepted spirituality as an important aspect of quality of life. Spirituality/religion is a part of one's cultural milieu and informs meaning, value and direction to human life. A number of studies point towards a positive association between religious involvement and better health. Religion played an important role in the scholarly writings of early sociologists. Durkheim (1951) argued that religion served both a social and a mental health function. In traditional societies and in various other communities, large majority of the population made use of a system of medicine combined with the use of herbs and Plants. People had knowledge of the plants available in their surroundings and they ascribed their socio-cultural beliefs and practices with these plants. Plants have profoundly influenced the culture and civilization of man in many countries. In India, The renewed interest in the interaction of spirituality, religion and plants with health and medicine has significant implications in the Hindu Religion. This present Study provides an understanding about the interplay of spirituality, religious belief and ethno-medicines with health and Healing practices among Hindus of Northern India.