

2nd International Conference on Alternative Medicine

October 25, 2021 | Webinar

Exploring indigenous mental health practices: lessons from Kerala

Ayshu Biju

University of Edinburgh, UK

A study conducted by Claudia Laung in 2014 in Kerala on indigenous healing practices quotes that "If a psychologist gives advice, the people will take only 70% of it. If a traditional healer says, the people will take 90%". As cited by different authors, supportive, non-threatening, engaging, and reassuring setting (R. Raguram, A. Venkateswaran, Jayashree Ramakrishna and Mitchell G. Weiss, 2002), stigma and fear attached with mental illness, lack of access to a medical care facility, and socioeconomic factors like education, income and religion affect psychiatric careseeking. (Kristine, Hartog; Kathryn, Gow M, 2007). This paper explores various indigenous healing practices in Kerala and how users and healers perceive mental illness. The research is also designed to comprehend the healing practices from both healers and users' point of view and finally an attempt to understand how indigenous healing contributes to community mental health and individual healing. The research was carried out in four districts of Kerala, the southernmost state in India, which possess the country's highest human development index (HDI). The research is primarily a case study method that explores various indigenous healing practices in Kerala, how users and healers articulate mental illness, and the contribution

of indigenous healing to individual and community mental health. A qualitative research design was used for collecting in-depth information on the topic. Data was collected from two different sources of participants. First was the users' who accessed the indigenous health facilities, and the second was the healers of the center. The theoretical perspective employed here is Klein man's explanatory model of illness and explains the plurality of alternative healing practices. This paper design a typology of the existing healing practices for indigenous healing practices in Kerala, India.

Biography

Ayshu Biju has completed her Masters in Social Work (Mental Health) from Tata Institute of Social Sciences. She worked as a research associate at Indian Institute of Management, Bengaluru and worked as a mental health practitioner at various NGOs in India. Ayshu is currently pursuing her MSc in Counselling Studies from University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom. Her research interests are interventions for people from vulnerable background, arts Based Therapy for Children with Special Needs, Indigenous Healing Practices for Mental Illness. Inclusive spaces for people with disability and relevance of mental health in workplace.

e: ayshubiju@gmail.com