

## A socio psychological study on the psychotherapy mental therapy underlined in low country shanthikarmas

H.S.N Silva

*Assistant lecture Department of sociology University of kelaniya*

**ABSTRACT:** There are many types of different shanthikarmas (rituals) in the low country or ruhunu dancing tradition. Those shanthikarmas were spread in hambanthota, Matara, Weligama, Galle, Kadawatha in the southern province and Colombo & Gampaha districts in the western province in Sri Lanka. All the shanthikarmas in Sri Lanka consist of non-buddhist rites and rituals. Low country shanthikarmas are scattered across 03 main areas. They are shanthikarmas which are based on devils, she-devils, devatas (gods) and graha (stars). Although the term "shanthikarma" is used in other traditions, the low country ones are called "Thovils". In certain areas, this term is also used to introduce simple magic forms. The rituals performed to get rid of the evils caused by devils are called "yak thovil" the ones done to obtain the refuge of gods are called "Deva thovil" and "Bali thovil" are the shanthikarmas done to get rid of ill luck. (Kottegoda, 1995). Naturally, humans encounter troubles. Yet, only dwellers in Asian countries use exorcist methods to get rid of these troubles (badluks). Although people strived to live in a noxious life, they believed that they get illness due to an imbalance in the body's air, acidity and phlegm & infections as well as due to the invisible activity of hidden forces. Most of these low country shanthikarmas are conducted to recover from types of illness. In addition, low country shanthikarmas were done privately or commonly with the intention of increasing the paddy harvest there are many devils and gods in this purpose. Paththini, Natha, Vishnu, Katharagama, Saman are the gods worshipped in low country areas. In addition, the devils like Mahasona, Suniyam devil, Kalu kumaraya are worshipped in low country tradition.

**KEYWORDS:** *Elimination of diseases, illness, psychotherapy, shanthikarma, The chief of shanthikarma*

### I. INTRODUCTION

In low country areas, these shanthikarmas were conducted on behalf of gods, devils or stars in order to attain common or private objectives. The shanthikarmas which are done with the field of agriculture and for the productivity of harvest or prosperity are popular. "Sanniyakuma" or "Dahaata Sanniya, Suniyama Yagaya, Rata Yakuma or Riddi Yagaya. devol maduwa is a Major Shanthikarma which belongs to the low country tradition. In low country tradition, the Shanthikarmas which are conducted to overcome the illnesses caused by "sanni yaka" is called "Sananni Samayama". This exorcism is also known as "Dahaata Sanniya". The ulceration in the throat, quinsy, joint pain, redness in eyes, crippled hands & legs, fever, shivering, cold, stomach pains, light-headedness, cancers, weakness, in sight & hearing. (Kottegoda, 2009). There are different meanings of the term "Suniyama or Huniyama" some believe that the suniyam has come to the usage on the basis of four behests called "niyama" (Silva, 1970). However, it is appropriate to identify suniyama as a chasing away evil. The rituals performed to get rid of "Suniyam Dosh" are varied. When intended "Vina Dosh" are occurred, they are removed confidentially. When one is affected with illness caused by huniyams, the village tend to achieve protection through chanting charms. If not treated well, this will lead to death. The basis of creating huniyama as a Shanthikarma, was to provide people with blessing. "Ratayakuma" or "Riddi Yagaya" is one of the major shanthikarmas conducted in low country areas. On behalf of devils. Two factors are there for the specialty of this shanthikarma.

- 1) This is the only shanthikarmaya related to devils which is conducted for the sake of women.
- 2) This is the only shanthikarmaya with full of expressions in dramatic demonstrations.

The main objective of this exorcism are to make childless women fertile, to protect pregnant mothers & to have a healthy and smooth delivery. Therefore this shanthikarma is an exorcism which is completely based on the preservation of pregnancy. Accordingly, above mentioned are the methods and objectives of conducting low country shanthikarmas. Therefore, hereafter our main focus will be on the mental therapy in shanthikarmas like "ratayakuma" and "Sanniyakuma"

### II. PSYCHOTHERAPY

The medicinal or non-medical process related to main is known as a process of mental therapy. At present, this is a very famous method. The opportunities to identify the reality is limited to the busy man in the present complex & dynamic world. This busy lifestyle creates mental stress. Due to this mental imbalance, various deviant mental traits &

mental illness are caused. The first attempts to identify what is “mind” were made by the philosophers. Afterwards, Later on with the birth of psychology, the attention of psychologists was focuses on finding what is “mind”. Generally, people identify “mind” as the heart, memory, thoughts and feelings etc. The philosopher describes the mind as “vignanaya”(consciousness).some say that mind is located within the heart ,but according to the opinion of doctors, mind is related to the “brain”. Today it is accepted that mind” is one of the strengths in the mind and it contains innumerable other powers. thus, it is clear that mind is a controversial field the man reason for this controversial nature is the inability to see the mind as physical organ.

Accordingly, with these beliefs it is known that due to several reasons, the mind becomes ill. For this , many reasons can affect. Therefore, when the mind becomes ill due to various confusions within it, the healing process which is needed to restore the condition is known as the process of mental therapy.

Therefore ,with the modern technological & scientific development ,the medicine (western)is undergoing a rapid development .Throughout the world in various universities ,different medical tests are begin to conducted using modern implements & through examinations & observations among them. The mental therapy is also tests. the origin of western mental therapy tests goes back to the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century prior to that, there was not a systematic “mental therapy” in western. Therapy was mostly traditional beliefs & faith.In ancient tribal societies after that in family unit, then in the modern societies, people had to adapt to the basic necessities of social institute. Here, the social culture has affected the attitudes, thoughts, customs, food, clothes, and professions. Accordingly , the question areas as whether the characters which act against the cultural structure & social conventions can be considered as general behaviors? However , there are multiple reasons for the normal & abnormal nature of human behavior. Among them, the factors are significant.

1) Imaginary factor 2) socio environmental and cultural factor 3) factors related to inborn instinct 4) biological and other cognitive factors.

(Perera,2000)

“Abnormal psychology is a psychological branch which studies the behaviors & mental process of abnormal people”(james,D,1976) Labeling of individuals process of “abnormal behavior” is a common factor in every society .There the instances where such people with abnormal behaviors has attempted to commit suicide shows the gravity of this condition. The beliefs that mental diseases are cause due to the entering of devils ,ghosts and other evil spirits continued till the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This idea was rejected by the smis nationalist, astrologist, paraslis. Instead of that ,he suggested that human mind & behavior is affected by the moon & the stars. this tradition has continued till today. specially, some people among the ones in the religious groups in the developing countries and the ones belonging to the religious groups in developed countries believed that human behavior is affected by the super – natural powers. In western educational institutes, biological & psychological traditions are substituted instead of super –natural tradition. The psychologists have pointed out that the mutual & complex relationship between the human & the environment affects the cause of mental diseases. These interpersonal and environmental factors can be analyzed by dividing in to various categories .A summary of those categories can be seen in the following chart.

### III. CAUSES OF MENTAL ILLNESSES

#### *Personal Factors Environmental Factors*

#### *Genetically Factors Natural Reasons*

- *Special position of jeans*
- *Anomalies in*
- *Bio chemical*

#### *Physical factors Physiological factors*

(Rev sumanajothi,2003) The stress created in the mind of an individual due to the external oppressive pressures are known as simple ,it can create restlessness in a person. continue suffering from these distresses can lead to mental illnesses. Therefore, simple mental stress should be cured .daily ,people face many problems & confusions .Most of them face & surpass them successfully .Yet ,few of them mentally collapse due to the inability to overcome them successfully. They get defeated They are the ones who become mentally ill & the ones who require mental treatments. Western psychiatrists have presented various definition on “Mental Therapy”. psychiatrist ,Linford rees define mental therapy as the medical field which identified mental abnormalities & disorders & which take steps to cure & assist them ,to prevent .The main role of the mental therapy is to study & understand the behavior & issue related to the patient .for this the medical history of the patient is examined & there are many treatments used in this process.

1) Psychological treatments 2) Physical treatments 3) social treatments There are only few physical treatments for mental diseases & they are done by only experienced psychiatrists. There are many psychological treatments & social treatments, These treatments are used for simple mental diseases & illnesses related to personality .A medical background I is not compulsory to do these two types of treatments & they are mostly used by psychologists & counselors. Not only today there are evidences to prove how an ancient man paid his attention on mental diseases. the way how mental diseases were recognized & how they were treated were continuing since the stone age during those

days, people imagined that their mental health problems arise due to invisible forces like yaksha dosha, pretha dosha etc. In ancient times various shanthikarmas & offerings were used to treat these diseases. In the eastern world, ayurvedic medicines & related "strotha", magic & charms were used to get rid of these diseases. In Sri Lanka also, ancestral moony therapy methods can be seen. Shanthikarma is also one of the such therapies. There in addition to medical treatments, mental therapy methods are used to treat the patient.

- Offerings
- Oblation
- White magic
- Charms

The best group of people to obtain information & to know whether there's real influence of low country shanthikarma as a mental therapy treatment on rural life are exorcists. Because they have broad experiences that they have obtained through many years through engaging in shanthikarmas. As well, the patients who attempted to heal their physical & mental distress through shanthikarmas are also special. The fact that more mental satisfaction obtained through low country shanthikarmas by the patient is believed by them. This is well depicted through both "ratayakuma" & "dahatasanniya" shanthikarmas.

Accordingly, they point that mental therapy is closely attached with philosophy (phonology). That is three methods as "yanthra", "manthra" & "thanthra" belongs to this process of mental therapy. Moreover, he shows that the "manthra" that they use in shanthikarmas help them to create a mental stimulant. Therefore, it is emphasized that these "manthras" of reality or science is inherited by these "manthra" when they are correctly spelled & when they are pronounced with a high pitch. Moreover, it is known as the phonology and it has a capability to stimulate the mind. In "ratayakuma" shanthikarma, "nanumura" & "darunalavilla" are two instances which depict the process of mental therapy.

Ex: A woman gets ready for the event the way how she combs her hair and how she dresses for the event are presented through this verse

Here, the patient is mentally enlivened. Here the exorcist uses his dramatic performance to but also in her husband's secret an impression in the mind of the patient that she is a woman with such a beauty, I am capable of attracting others this way & by being clean & beautiful, we can have a happy & successful marriage life. This creates a mental stimulation not only within woman, but also in her husband's spectators' minds.

According to exorcists, features of mental therapy can be seen in the "sanniyakuma" for different diseases & sannid devils arrive to chant charms and verses with the intention of healing the patient. (Skipped a line here its bit confusing). Here, exorcist mumbles parts of charms verses to bless the patient in clear voice. Thus, a mental relief can be obtained.

By chanting above verses, the patient understands that suffering being taken away by the masked "sanni" devils who come to bless them. Through this, the patient receives a mental relief & Pleasure.

In various situations persons undergo different fears and mental excitements. There in "dahaata sanniya" the devil who scared the patient (ex - mahason yaka, maru sanni yaka) is being summoned to the stage. The patient is scared of the devil that he dislikes even to see the devil but step by step, the devil continues to dance in front of the patient for a long time. Gradually, the fear in the patient goes away & he gains the normal condition. Later, the exorcist demands the blessings of the devil to heal the patient & the devil after seeing contented with offered oblation, leaves the shanthikarma ground. "The illnesses which are caused by the imbalance of air, acidity & phlegm hinder the daily life"

- sore throat
- Crippled hands & legs
- Occurrence of various pains
- Inability to continue the daily routine
- Symptoms of lunacy
- Unmanageable behavior

If the head of the household is infected with such an illness, then the family faces a helpless situation. Accordingly, it was said that in order to get these illnesses, the patients would allure to get the assistance of charmers (exorcists). They further said that if they receive some relief through it, would be a support for them to achieve a mental satisfaction and to continue with their daily routine.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Low country shanthikarmas are built on based on various faiths ,rituals & beliefs of Sinhala rural culture through this study the mental therapy features included in “ratayakuma”& “dahaatasanniya” (sanni yakuma)will be studied.ratayakuma is a shanthikarma conducted for the sake of women & it is also known as “preservation of pregnancy” This shanthikarma is done to speed up consumption infertile women,& to have a smooth delivery for pregnant women. the ratayakuma shanthkarma consists of chants, recitals, dancing , dialogues which provide mental relief to the patient. Therefore, the rituals used n this shanthikarma depicts features of mental therapy.

Dahaata sanni or sanniyakuma is also a shanthikarma which has a greater effect on the rural life.it would be a mental relief to conducted a shanthikarmaya patients who were unsuccessful in healing their illnesses. for a long period.

Matara area was selected to gather details about the “Nawagraha concept”(concept related to nine plants) which is related to exorcism, as there are traditional scholastic generations in the area there are talented teachers in the Matara tradition who have special skill in dancing, singing, recitals charms .oblation like sanniyakuma which were frequent in past are way rare now. people from rural areas follow slight methods like charming times, charming branches or trees etc for any discus .if the discus has grown seriously ,it will be decided to have a shanthikarma by considering it as an anger of god ;or a luck of devils & goblins. people were inclined to these things without any persuasion or external force. it is because of their own trust. people had the attitude whether shanthikarmas can help them to mental relief through dispensing with troubles & they believe that they would affect favorably.

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