Chapter IV

Diagnosis of Ill-health

In the preceding chapter it was analyzed as to how Kumbri Marathi understand the process from health to ill-health. It was seen that etiology, diagnosis and treatment cannot be understood independently of each other in the indigenous medical system of Kumbri Marathi. Etiology diagnosis and treatment overlap to a great extent especially, with regard to supernaturally caused illnesses because, the beliefs about supernatural powers in causing ill-health dominates the Kumbri Marathi medical system.

This present discussion focuses on the processes of diagnoses on natural and supernatural level. In this context, the people involved in diagnosis, the role of spirits and their impact on health of the people have been discussed. The focus on supernatural powers predominates in this chapter because the ‘supernatural forces’ are dominant in the indigenous medical system of Kumbri Marathi etiology, diagnosis, and treatment.

This chapter also enables to understand how supernatural aspects influence the treatment seeking behavior of the people. The role of diviner gadiga is also brought out in this process of understanding of treatment seeking behavior. In order to understand why medical beliefs and practices persist, it is necessary to discover their practical and social meanings. The meanings can be uncovered if sickness episodes are understood in terms of the expectations of the actors.

It is not only physiological well-being that determines health but also economic, social, supernatural and psychological well-being. As already seen in the preceding chapter, a healthy person among Kumbri Marathi, is one who is free from ailments caused due to natural as well as supernatural reasons but also, from the day-to-day socio-economic problems. Howard with reference to body-mind dualism says, “western medical traditions have posited distinction between illnesses originating in the mind and those originating in the body, between
'psychological' and 'physiological' illnesses. Other traditions have taken a more holistic approach, viewing health and illness as manifestations of totality of a person's life. Mental illness and physiological illness in such systems are placed in the same category. To the Azande of southern Sudan, mental illnesses are viewed as illnesses not unlike such diseases as malaria, small pox, and dysentery, and all are seen as ultimately caused by sorcery" (1994:405).

Health among Kumbri Marathi thus, is not only affected adversely by the conditions within the person's physiology but also by external factors like climate, food, on a natural level and by other people, on a social level (that is in the form of evil eye), and deity and spirits on a supernatural level. Further, when a person is affected by supernatural powers such as malevolent spirits maru, deity or evil eye, not only will it create physiological problems but also, the symptoms may not respond to treatment provided at home, indigenous medicine or by the modern doctor on the natural level. It also shows that there is some kind of imbalance in the relationship with the supernatural world. Supernatural powers are at the core of ill-health causation and many a time, conditions caused by natural reasons spill over and overlap with the ill-health, caused due to supernatural affliction.

The diagnosis on the natural level, takes place at two levels: individual, and social (natural) level. On an individual level, the process of defining oneself as being ill can be based on one's own perceptions, on the perceptions of others, or on both. Defining oneself as being ill usually follows a number of experiences such as:

- Unpleasant physical symptoms, such as headache, aches, and pains, fever.
- Skin eruptions, cuts, and bruises.
- Changes in bodily functions like food consumption, hot and cold, and sleeping pattern.
- Inability to work and change in disposition.

On the individual level there is self-diagnosis and even corresponding self-treatment. The person takes note of symptoms he is experiencing also their
severity and whether they are bearable or not. On the basis of these he takes the medication. But in case of children it is the parents and other elders who make the diagnosis and decisions regarding the kind of treatment to be sought. Thus in case of children, self diagnosis and treatment is not applicable.

At the level of social environment, the individual seeks advice and diagnosis if he is not able to decide on the individual level or if the self-treatment has not brought about the desired result. The people involved at this level are parents, siblings, peers, neighbors, kin, indigenous specialists and modern doctor. People involved in this level may advice the person on the basis of their knowledge about the disease or on the basis of their past experiences. They may also suggest the specialist to be sought.

Apart from diagnosis on the individual, social level, it also takes place on supernatural level. If there is no cure on all three individual, social and supernatural levels ultimately, every thing is left to the deities. This is done in two ways one is taking vow with deity and other is the last resort of leaving everything to the design of the deity. Even when ultimately things are left to the deities, when symptoms become severe, or unbearable, to deal with symptoms present, one resorts to indigenous or modern medicine.

The diagnosis on these levels is not necessarily always in the same order. For instance, for ammāchekāyale one directly goes to the supernatural level and make vow for cure of the condition. In case there is increase in severity of the symptoms one takes the help on the social level by seeking a diviner. In certain cases where the person becomes unconscious or does not respond when spoken to or is not performing his day-to-day activities the people in the social level directly take the decision with regard to the treatment by going to indigenous specialists or supernatural healers or modern doctors.
Therefore, when it is a supernatural power that has caused a particular health problem this power has to be sought to seek the relief. The term 'supernatural' refers to the spiritual beings like spirits, deity and evil eye. The supernaturally caused illnesses are often referred to as 'supernatural illnesses' in anthropological literature, expressing the involvement of a supernatural being (Tiereny 1981).

Therefore, supernatural powers are very crucial in the understanding of not only etiology, but also, diagnosis and treatment of Kumbri Marāthi because of the belief that most of the health problems are caused due to supernatural powers. Beliefs about the supernatural powers is thus a major theme in the indigenous medical system of Kumbri Marāthi. The conditions that can be labeled as 'supernatural' are:

- When the diviner gādgā diagnoses the condition as affliction of spirits,
- When people exhaust all possible resorts,
> When the condition does not respond to any kind of indigenous treatments as well as modern treatment, and
> When the person is experiencing repeated ill-health condition.

As seen earlier, Kumbri Marathi description of ill-health involves categorization of an individual’s state of being as bejār, sik and roga. Each category entails its own treatment seeking behavior and at times they overlap and at times they follow an exclusive line of treatment that is either only natural (indigenous or modern medicine) or supernatural (nōta, warding off evil-eye, and tying amulets). The conditions caused by natural reasons are few compared to those caused by supernatural reason. Apart from purely supernaturally caused symptoms naturally caused symptoms can also be the effect of supernatural powers. For instance, fever not only is caused due to natural reasons but also can be caused due to supernatural reasons. In the same way, all naturally occurring diseases can be caused by the supernatural powers.

Therefore, for understanding the etiology, diagnosis and treatment among Kumbri Marathi it is essential to understand spirits māraṇā which are most crucial in illness causation in the supernatural realm. Generally, when a condition is believed to be caused due to spirits, the ill-health conditions are referred to as either bejār (minor) or sik (major).

In order to understand the diagnosis and treatment of sik it is necessary to understand the origin and existence, the kinds of spirits and the way of affliction of spirits. This understanding is crucial because the world of spirits forms an integral part of the belief system of Kumbri Marathi. A myth among Kumbri Marathi as to how spirits māraṇa came into existence is related thus. As the myth goes, once dev Shiva and spirit māru were deeply involved in a conversation and Parvati (Shiva’s consort) was waiting for Shiva so that she could perform her rituals of worshipping him. Angered by the delay of Shiva’s arrival she went in search of Shiva. She found that Shiva was delayed because of māru. So she cursed māru to go away and remain on earth, and affect people on earth. Shiva requested her not to be so unkind. So she said that māru will affect those who
have ill-fate girachär and cause ill-health. Thus mārava came into being on earth and are affecting people.

Mārava are also created as Kumbri Marāthi believe when individuals die. They become māru, if they are not invited to stay in the kuldev by the family members. Since the spirit of the dead persons have no place to stay, they trouble people. If the spirit of the dead person is not kept in the kuldev it becomes a malevolent spirit māru like chāli, chaṭṭi, nirvans, hennugole and gandugole (malevolent spirits) depending on when they have died. If the family members want to keep the dead person’s māru in the house the diviner gādiga requests the dead person’s spirit to stay in the house and protect the family members from the other spirits, which are harmful. Malevolent spirits are more than benevolent spirits in the world of spirits. Kumbri Marāthi have a pantheon of deities. The supreme supernatural deity is referred to as dev. When it comes to other lesser deities the term dev is suffixed.

The diviner calls the dead person’s māru and offers food on the eleventh day after death eklānāvche vāduvanche; once a dead person’s māru is kept in the house it is considered as an ancestral spirit kutumbāche māru. Once considered as ancestral spirits, the family members worship them every year during the mahāl parāb, gadiņaja, and on shivaratri. It is believed that if there is breach of any taboos, the ancestral spirits harm them by affecting the health or by affecting the cattle or by affecting their crops. The kutumabāche māru help only the members of its family in patriline, even when the joint family has divided into many nuclear families.

The spirits are classified into four categories namely,

- Baroche mārava benevolent spirits,
- Devachār benevolent spirits,
- Pādosomārava malevolent spirits and
- Balishatmārava strong malevolent spirits.
4.1. Barochemārava

The first category of mārava is barochemārava, which are benevolent in nature. They are believed to be helpful to people. The different kinds of barochemārava are as follows:

- Mārirāv,
- Kutumbāche māru
- Pātulāchemāru,
- Yakshi,
- Tantri and
- Rangole.

Mārirāv

If a person, after the performance of tonsure cholāngi or ear piercing kānchonche dies of measles ammachekayale (which is believed to be an illness, sent by Amma), the person is believed to become mārirāv. Mārirāv helps diviner, whenever diviner performs warding-off the malevolent spirit through the process of noja to a person, belonging to its lineage mantan. Another important function of mārirāv is to protect the pātulāchemāru spirit of an individual belonging to its lineage manatan during his/her lifetime. It is further regarded that if the child has undergone ear piercing or tonsure the child has been incorporated in lineage manatan and community and only then the mārirāv protects the individual.

Mārirāv protects the pātulāchemāru of the girl of the lineage to which she belongs till her marriage horādkī. And it also protects the pātulāchemāru of the girl coming into the lineage after her marriage. Because, when a girl is married, she becomes a member of her husband’s lineage.

Kutumbāchemārū

Kutumb refers to the lineage segment groups of families and māru refers spirits since it is refers as ancestral spirits. In every lineage, there are segment that is group of families referred to as kutumb and every kutumb has a deity kuldev and kutumbāchemāru and when a joint family is divided, the kuldev and kutumbāchemārū is retained by the eldest son. The deity is borrowed by eldest son to other brothers when there are rituals like marriage and devkārya in their
family. If the eldest brother refuses to give the deity, the family can perform the worship of an unhusked coconut and thereby the family gets a kuldev.

When a person dies his spirit is invited to rest in the kuldev, there after this spirit is called kutumbāchemāru. The functions of kutumbāchemāru are to protect the pātuḷāchemāru and also help the diviner during the warding-off process. All families have their own kutumbāchemāru. Kutumbāchemāru can cause trouble if they come under the influence of other malevolent spirits or when a family members fail to worship the ancestral spirits kutumbāchemāru or breach taboos. The affliction is not particular.

Pātuḷāchemāru

Pātuḷāchemāru is a spirit that every individual has to possess. pātuḷāchemāru is precious for the well being of an individual. It is believed by Kumbri Marathi to come from their deity dev and a person acquires pātuḷāchemāru when an he/she is, around the age of eleven or twelve years. By eleven or twelve years of age, the life-cycle rituals, which mark the phase of transition in life childhood to adulthood are complete. That is, by this period an individual will have undergone tying of waist string ritual, tonsure, and ear piercing. As a result he is considered as a member of lineage and community. It is believed that these are the rituals every person has to undergo. Once these ritual performances are completed, the individual is considered as an adult. This qualifies the individual to acquire the pātuḷāchemāru and get the protection of kutumbāchemāru and kuldev.

Pātuḷāchemāru is believed to stay in the unhusked coconut worshipped as kuldev. It is said to be under the protection of kuldev and ancestral spirits kutumbāchemāru so that it is not captured by any malevolent spirits. It is believed that when malevolent spirits take away an individual’s pātuḷāchemāru, he suffers from the shivering, fever, cold, and experiences severe sweating, becomes lean, and is fearful whenever he hears any sound.

When pātuḷāchemāru of an individual is captured by pādosamārava, then, it has to be called back and to make it return to the kuldev, it is called to rest on a bronze plate kānshe vāte. Since bronze is considered as a superior metal for
Kumbri Marāthi. If the pātuḷāchemāru is not called back to return to kuldev, the person becomes ill and may even die.

*Yakshi*

*Yakshi,* is a benevolent spirit that helps diviner to identify which spirit māru has affected a person.

People relate a myth as to how yakshi came into being. It is related that once upon time a person was severely ill sik. He underwent indigenous treatment gāvantivakāt but did not recover. At that time, he went to dev and complained about the health problems and asked for a solution. Dev replied that the problem is due to malevolent spirit pādosomāru. And dev hence activated a benevolent spirit called yakshi, and told the person to start the performance of noṭa with the help of yakshi. Thus yakshi came into existence in the world of Kumbri Marāthi. Since then noṭa is performed and yakshi is an indispensable component of noṭa and the person who performs it is referred to as diviner. After the death of the diviner, yakshi is transferred from the diviner to his son or his grand son in the patriline who acquires the power of performing noṭa.

*Tantri*

When a person who has not been affected by any malevolent spirit during his entire lifetime dies, then it results in a benevolent spirit called tantri. It is believed that very rarely tantri comes into existence because, it is rare that any person is unaffected by māru during his lifetime. Tantri helps the diviner during calling and warding-off māru at the time of noṭa, and noṭāchekambal (which is a process where more than one diviner are involved in warding-off of the malevolent spirit).

Like yakshi, tantri is also transferred from the diviner to his son or his grand son in the patriline (who acquires the power of performing noṭa) after the death of the diviner.

*Rangole*

When a person dies in old age that is, having seen three or four generations, his spirit is said to result in a spirit called rangole. Since they have had greater experience about the forest and wild animals and interest in
consuming the non-vegetarian food. This *rangole* is present in all lineages *mantan*. *Ran* means forest, *gole* means spirit and *rangole* literally means ‘spirit of forest’. *Rangole* helps during hunting by giving direction to gunman *pirangi* and hunting dog *kutri*.

Kumbri Marathi believe that if they do not hunt wild animals, their hunting spirit *rangole*, hunts their cattle.

**Devchār**

*Devchār* are spirits that are under the control of *dev*. It is believed that *devchār* are benevolent but only when people do not observe taboos they punish them by afflicting with illnesses (the affliction is not of any particular illness). It is through *devchār* that *dev* afflicts people when taboos are not observed. There are three types of *devchār*, and they are as follows:

- Rāv,
- Devati and
- Ākashmurchi

The three types of *devchār* that is rāv, devati and ākashmurchi are believed to come into existence in the following manner: in a single moment of time *galagi*, if seven tigers die it results in a kind of *devchār* called rāv; when three cats die in a *galagi* it results in a devati; when seven she-buffaloes die in a *galagi* it results in a ākashmurchi.

Taboos, which people are supposed to observe in order to prevent affliction of *devchār* are as follows:

- A woman, during her menstrual period, should not go near the temple and should not participate in ‘worshipping of the deity’ *devakārya*. A menstruating woman is considered to be in a state of pollution. If she participates in activities considered as sacred, her pollution gets transferred thereby polluting the sacred rituals and it is considered as a sin.
- During the period of delivery pollution *jambra* in one lineage, persons belonging to other lineages should not take food in the house of the lineage in which delivery has taken place. Further, the persons belonging
to the lineage in which delivery has taken place, should not consume food in the houses of other lineages. In this case also, the result is the transference of pollution.

- Period of death pollution is regarded to be the period of mourning and during this period the lineage members are to abstain from consuming meat *goul* and alcohol *soro*. They are to be abstained because they are said to be associated with pleasures of life. Therefore, until pollution period is over, members of the lineage in which death has occurred should abstain from consumption of *goul* and *soro* and failure is said to be violation of taboo.

- During the rituals performed for *Tirupati* and *Manjnatha* deities called *devakārya* in a lineage *manatan*, the members belonging to that particular lineage should not consume meat *goul* and alcohol *soro*. These foods are profane and not sacred enough to be consumed on the day of worshipping.

- Those who have participated in the festival of *sigmē*, should not take bath or enter into the house till the *sigmē* rituals of purification are complete because, they are believed to be in a state of pollution.

If these taboos are not observed, it is believed that *devachār* affects the person in the family. The taboos are connected to the concepts of purity and pollution. Certain acts and certain states are regarded as polluting and as a result one has to refrain from acts considered as pure. In case they are not observed, the violation of taboo results in the affliction of spirit.

Both *pātulachemaru*, and *devchār* are called on the bronze plate *vāte*. Because the *devchār* are under the control of *dev* and they are said to deserve as much reverence as that is given to *dev*.

### 4.2. Pādosomāravā

Pādosomāravā are malevolent spirits. The powers of diviner and Brahmin priest *bhaṭṭa* can ward-off the affliction of *pādosomāravā* by invoking the help of *dev*. The affliction of the *pādosomāravā* can cause various illnesses to the person affected. The *pādosomāravā* are said to be of five types, namely:
Chāli/chalī, Nirvansh, Hennugole, Gandugole, Kil

Chāli/chalī

If a male or female child dies after munj and before cholāngi or kānchochonche it is believed that it results in chāli or chalī.

Affliction of chāli or chalī causes a person to suffer from body pain kasu, headache takalipotā, burning sensation in the eyes dole jalāta and fever jār. Whenever gādīga wards-off chāli or chalī, the person is relieved for a period of time but it recurs subsequently. For instance, if diviner wards-off the spirit in the morning, the symptoms subside till evening and again symptoms recur by night. Repeated warding-offs for five or six days is required to remove the affliction.

Nirvansh, Gandugole and Hennugole

When a male or female child dies after cholāngi or kānchochonche but before marriage it is said to result in a spirit called nirvansh. Gandugole is believed to come into existence after the death of a man who has been married. A woman dying after marriage is believed to result in hennugole. The affliction of Nirvansh, gandugole and hennugole, are believed to cause fever and body pain in a person.

Kil

The spirits of all people of Mukari/Harijan caste is said to become spirits called kil. Kil means inferior. The people of Mukari caste are considered to be inferior to Kumbri Marāthi. Persons afflicted by kil are believed to suffer from scabies kājo. Because, a lower caste person’s spirit is seen as inferior kil and it causes scabies, which is also considered to be an inferior sik. Kājo is considered to be inferior because person affected by kājo has boils over his body and is always scratching his body. Since the lower caste people are considered as inferior their affliction also results in an illness that is considered to be inferior.
Apart from the spirits of lower castes, the spirits of all other castes are referred to as maru.

4.3. Balishtamārvā

Balishtamārvā are strong malevolent spirits. They are strong in the sense that their effect is continuous and stays for a longer duration of time compared to the effect of other spirits. And further, more than one diviner is required to ward-off the effect of balishtamāru (and this warding-off process is known as notachekambal). Balishtamāru are of seven types. They are as follows:

- Devati,
- Nāgadevati,
- Murchi,
- Rāv,
- Ākashmurchi,
- Hemmalati and
- Holtandmāru.

Devati

It is believed that when three cats die in a single moment of time gaļige, it results in one a spirit called devati. Affliction of devati results in a person suffering from fever, weakness asakata, cough dās, cold thandi and vomiting vānti.

Nāgadevati

It is said that when a Mongoose mungoos kills a cobra sarpa and cuts it into seven parts, the head of the sarpa acquires wings and flies in the sky. If the shadow of this flying sarpa falls on a person, the person suffers from paralysis parshi. Noṭa has to be performed to this person by the gadiga as treatment. Immediate supernatural treatment is required since parshi is a serious sik and affliction has to be warded-off immediately. The affected person experiences relief from symptoms for the time being only, owing to the treatment of gadiga.

Rāv

When seven tigers whāgh die in a single moment of time, the result is said to be formation of a spirit called rāv. A person affected by rāv starts vomiting.
blood because rdv is believed to be bloodthirsty, because tigers are believed to be bloodthirsty. Before the blood vomiting starts, the affected person suffers from fever. The affected person is believed to die anywhere between three to twelve days after affliction. In this period when the person is afflicted, he should undergo nota.

If affected person undergoes nota after the blood vomiting, it is believed that gāḍīga can only possibly give hope, and if the patient has ill fate girāchār then nobody can help him to recover because it is beyond the powers of gāḍīga.

**Hemmalati**

When seven pregnant she-buffaloes masi and seven pregnant women guravrin die in a single moment of time it is believed to result in hemmalati. Hemmalati is said to dwell in thick forests. It is believed that hemmalati looks like a woman. Kumbri Marāthi say that hemmalati asks for betel-nut and betel leaves kavāla from any person she comes across. If the person gives kavāla in the hand of hemmalati she drops the kavāla from her hand. When kavāla falls on the ground she asks the person to retrieve it. When the person bends to lift the kavāla from the ground, hemmalati touches her breast to the person’s head. This touch is believed to affect the person. After this, the person starts feeling fright behatā, and then gets fever, experiences nightmares and vomits blood and it is believed that the person dies within three years after being affected.

**Åkashamurchi**

When seven she-buffaloes die in a single moment of time, this is said to result in forming of åkashamurchi. The affliction of åkashamurchi causes the person to vomit blood and it can also result in death.

**Murchi**

When seven pregnant she-buffaloes die in a single moment of time, it is believed to result in murchi. When murchi affects a person, the person feels as if a leaf has fallen on the body or else feels as if someone has beaten him on his back. The person affected by murchi suffers from fever and body pain. Fever starts increasing continuously during the night. If gāḍīga performs nota within a
day, the person recovers from fever but the person is still believed to die within twelve years from the same illness.

_Hollandmāru_

_Hollandmāru_ are a group of _māru_. They are strong malevolent spirits. _Hollandmāru_ hunt wild animals, cattle and people. _Hollandmāru_ are regarded to be bloodthirsty. If the _hollandmāru_ craves for blood, or when they do not find any wild animal it is believed that they begin to hunt people and cattle. The places where _hollandmāru_ are present are believed to be near Angane settlement. Another group of _hollandmāru_ is near Mastimane, a temple and Ishwar temple and another group of _hollandmāru_ are spread from balli, Bail settlements to a village called Orshe.

In the places where they are believed to be present, it is said that shouts of _hollandmāru_ can be heard. It is also said that if one _māru_ shouts then another _māru_ shouts back. Like wise, all _māru_ shout in the groups in the above mentioned areas. Thus by these shouts they become aware of the presence of _hollandmāru_.

_Hollandmāru_ are believed to hunt people in a particular manner. They are believed to spread a net in some part of the forest. Only those with good fate _naseeb_ can come out from the nets spread by _hollandmāru_. Those who do not have good fate are not able to get out of the net and are believed to die there itself. However, even those who are able to come out from such a net, are believed to suffer from fever, fright and nightmares.

Person affected by _hollandmāru_ is said to become mad _malla_. He may try to run away or become violent. Therefore he is kept bound. During the period of affliction of _hollandmāru_, the person’s hands are tied with a rope and legs are held in a wooden log with holes. This log is made of wood called _khājure_ (b.n. Strychnos- Nux-vomica. L.).

It is believed that when a person is afflicted by _hollandmāru_, he is also vulnerable to the affliction of other spirits. Therefore, wood of _khājure_ is used to bind the afflicted person because, it is believed that other _māru_ do not come near
this wood. Khājure is considered as an inferior kil kind of wood which neither, used for cremation nor any kind of come near it.

As a preventive measure against the effect of holtandmāru, people perform a ritual hunting called baundi. When an animal is hunted during baundi, the blood that falls on the ground is believed to serve as sacrifice for the holtandmāru. Kumbri Marāthi say that it has been nearly twenty years since holtandmāru have not been heard.

The balishtamāru (Devati, Nāgadevati, Murchi, Rāv, Ākasmurchi, Hemmalati and Holtandmāru) apart from affecting individually, can also affect along with padasomāru, (Chāli / Chalī, Nirvansh, Hennugole, Gandugole, Māru and Kīl) which are malevolent spirits. When both these categories of spirits combine and affect together, person suffering from an ill-health condition becomes severe and this condition will not respond to treatment - indigenous or modern.

Thus, the spirits can be seen on four levels- individual level that is pātuḷachemāru, lineage segment level kutumbachemāru and rangole, lineage level that is marirav and community level devchar, balishtamāru, padasomāru. On all levels it is the individual on whom the effect is found.

For Kumbri Marāthi, pātuḷachemāru is very significant for the well-being of the individual. If the pātuḷachemāru is captured by other māru, the individual is believed to become ill. Clements, in his worldwide classification of illness, says soul loss is the one of the most commonly found source of disease causation (cited in Hughes 1968)

Govind of Angane settlement says that his grand father’s spirit was kept in the kuldev to help all his family members. He says, that his father had nine brothers all living in Angane settlement. After the death of Govind’s grandfather, his father’s brothers divided to form ten nuclear families. Govind says as to how the kutumbache māru, helps all his family members. When anyone belonging to any of the ten families fall ill, Govind’s family’s kutambache māru helps the gādīga in warding-off the spirit.
Benevolent and Malevolent spirits

Community level

Devchar (protects and harms) and Barochemarava (helpful)
Padosomarava and Balishmarava (harms)

Lineage level

Marirav (helpful)

Lineage segment level consisting of groups of families

Kutumbache maru (protects and harms)

Individual level

Patulache maru (protects)
Rami who is said to be a good hunter and hunts frequently, explains about rangole. He says after the death of his grand mother, her spirit was kept in the kuldev. He believes it is this rangole that helps him during hunting. Since the rangole, helps him, he says, he gets animals when he goes hunting in the forest.

The lineage spirit mārirāv stays in the lineage deity mirdṣṭal. mārirāv helps the whole lineage, wherever the members stay. Mārirāv also protects pāṭulachemāru of all its lineage members from the other malevolent spirits. It also helps the lineage members during noṭa by guiding the diviner. It is also believed that mārirāv harms the lineage members when there is breach of taboo or when they do not worship their ancestral spirits.

Omu a diviner gāḍīga narrates the following incidence. He says, that he suffered from severe fever, and was not able to talk, and had an aversion to food. Noṭa was performed to find out the reason for his illness. All his family members gathered for Noṭa. It was found during noṭa that taboos regarding Tirupati devkārya were not observed by someone. Tirupati devkārya was performed one of his lineage members. Therefore, all family members made a vow to the deity saying that they will offer two coconuts to Tirupati as retribution. He says, later they came to know that his son had consumed soro during devkārya which is a taboo. As a result, of he breach of taboo, Omu had been affected.

The spirits act as a means of directing and controlling social behavior. They either help the people directly as in the case of pāṭulachemāru, tantri, mārirāv or rangole or indirectly control the behavior through afflictions of various kinds. Some of the malevolent spirits that affect frequently are chālí, challi, hennugole gandugole devati, and murchi. But the other malevolent spirits mārava. diviner says very rarely affects people. Most frequent illnesses occurring as a result of affliction of malevolent spirits is fever and body pain.

The person who helps and heals Kumbri Marāthi when afflicted by a spirit is called diviner.

4. Gāḍīga the diviner

In societies with personalistic view of disease causality, there is a need for someone, who is able to determine who caused the affliction and why - usually
someone who has ties with the supernatural. In such societies, the curer is usually a shaman, a sorcerer, or a witch doctor or a diviner. Further, in many societies, curing is not a full time vocation. There is simply not enough work, and the curer will generally engage in the same primary economic activities as other members of the society like hunting, or farming. Analysis of curers requires attention not only to their role(s) but also to other career related factors, such as recruitment, training and reputation. It may be by personal dream or physical affliction. Or it may be linked to the would-be curer’s personal inclination, ability, or social status. In some cases only the children of curers can become curers. In certain cases it may be limited to members of certain class. Often all of these factors are necessary (Howard 1994:411).

Among Kumbri Marathi, a specialist who performs supernatural diagnosis and treatment is called gādīga. He is a person, who has the power to establish contact and communicate with the spirits, gods, and deities through the performance of noṭa. The powers of diagnosis and healing of diviner transmitted through the patriline and it can only be acquired by the male members of the family. After the death of a diviner, yakshi (a benevolent spirit) appears in the dream of his son or son’s son (agnatic grandson) with a wooden plank mahane and rice grains tandula, and tells the person to start the performance of noṭa. The dream appears continuously for two to three days. After this dream, the person may start performing the noṭa or he may ask other gādīga or bhatta about his dream. The other gādīga performs sotaki, (which is a means of establishing contact with the deity) in order to confirm, if the person can perform noṭaand also if confirms yakshi and tantrī (another benevolent spirit) and devchār of the prospective gādīga are strong enough to help him in the performance of noṭa. If his benevolent spirits are not strong enough, then spirits which arrive during the performance of noṭa may affect him and his family adversely. People believe that yakshi will not go to a person with bad character. Under such a circumstance, yakshi stays with family deity kuldev.

Gādīga has to observe certain taboos like not consuming alcohol, he should not lie to anybody. He should also follow certain observances. If he is
performing *nota* outside his settlement, then he should first prostrate to and take the permission of the nearest deity to the house in which he is performing the *nota*.

*Nota* should be performed by the *gāḍīga* only, because he has *yakshi*, *tantri* and *devachār* with him. These benevolent spirits give him power to ward-off malevolent spirits. It is believed that when *gāḍīga* becomes old, and is not able to chant the utterances of *nota* accurately, (during the *odambaḍike*- calling of *māru* or not- warding-off *māru*) then, *yakshi*, *tantri* and *devchār* leave him and stay with the *dev*. If the utterances are not done properly, he will not be able to establish contact and the *nota* will not be effective. Therefore, the *yakshi* *tantri* and *devchār* leave. It is believed that after the guiding spirits leave, a *gāḍīga* will not survive for more than three years. It is also said that if others who is not a *gāḍīga* perform *nota* it may affect them adversely.

Naru a 40 year old man now (whose father was a *gāḍīga* in the Angane settlement) narrates a story about how performing of *nota* by a person who is not a *gāḍīga* can be harmful. He says, when he was in his 20’s, he and his friends had gone for work to a field in the forest far away from his settlement. They thought of pretending the way *gāḍīga* performs the *nota*. Naru started calling *māru* (*odambaḍike*- calling of *māru*), and one of his friends acted as a patient. When Naru started *odambaḍike*, he fell unconscious on the ground, which was said to be due to the effect of *māru*. After regaining consciousness, he started getting fever. His friends treated the fever at that moment by giving him indigenous medicine. On the next day, when they were still in the field, one of his friends came to Naru’s house and told his father about what had happened in the field. Naru’s father performed *nota*, and asked his friend to bring Naru back to his house (in Angane settlement). The performance of *nota* cured him of the fever but by the next day morning, again Naru started suffering from fever.

His friends brought him to his house from the field. On the way to his house Naru took rest in a nearby house. While Naru was taking rest, a healthy cow, belonging to Naru’s household died suddenly. Naru attributes the death of the cow to the *māru* because, he neglected to acquiesce what *māru* had asked in
his dream to give two coconuts. He neglected what māru asked from him, because first of all he did not believe in māru and further he felt even if it did affect him, his father would protect him by warding-off the spirit since he was a gāḍīga. But this incident changed his perspective and he began to believe in māru.

Naru goes to the extent of saying that even if gāḍīga’s son performs nota, before the power is transferred to him, then the spirit affects the person or his family. It is believed that, person performing the nota should have yakshi, tantri and devachār with him, to control the spirit which he is calling. Naru says that it is wrong to utter the chants of gāḍīga by a person who is not a gāḍīga because it dangerous. In the process, without knowing spirits can become activated and affect adversely.

Diviner plays a very crucial role in the diagnosis of an ill-health condition. His decision influences people’s treatment seeking behavior. When he performs nota, he comes to know whether or not the condition is due to the effect of spirits. When he diagnoses a condition as the effect of spirits, the condition gets the label sik. The treatment seeking behavior for sik involves the gāḍīga again. He wards-off the spirit, as a result of which the person is said to be cured of the condition. Even if modern medicines are taken, when the condition becomes severe, it is believed that ultimately the condition can be cured only by warding-off the afflicting spirit by gāḍīga. In settlements where there is no gāḍīga, when indigenous or modern medicines do not provide a cure, it is gāḍīga who is seen as the ultimate resort. Other people cohabiting in the region like Nayak, Halakki vakkalu also seek gāḍīga of Kumbri Marāthi for supernatural treatment.

In the supernatural process called notachekambal, gāḍīga is accompanied by another diviner called horegāḍīga. Horegāḍīga holds a small cane stick with coconut fiber sodan tied to its one end called hore during the performance of notachekambal. Coconut fiber is considered to be inferior, it is not considered to be of any sacred value. Even though coconut has ritual value, its fiber is removed and thrown away. During the notachekambal, the māru which is called comes
and lodges on the hore. A horegādīga acquires his power of divination in the way similar to the gādīga. That is, the power of divination is passed on in the patriline and he gets it in his dream. Unlike gādīga who has yakshi, tantri, and devchār horegādīga has only yakshi and devchār.

Another kind of diviner is called moṭṭagādīga. Moṭṭagādīga is a gādīga who has the experience of having exorcised many māru. During the process of noṭachekambal his decision is considered as the final decision. It is believed that moṭṭagādīga is more powerful and experienced than gādīga. As age advances, gādīga acquires experience and becomes moṭṭagādīga. One such moṭṭagādīga is present in Angane.

Diagram representing the relationship between the deity, diviner and spirits

Gādīga, moṭṭagādīga and horegādīga say that they do not take any payment for their healing services because, the power is considered as a blessing and should not be exchanged for any payment. They are usually given tea or a meal depending on the time of the day when noṭa is performed.

The significance and the faith in the power of gādīga and noṭa held by the Kumbri Marāthi people are reflected in the narrations of diviners about their power and also about noṭa.

Alu is 60 year old horegādīga, when he was around 25 years old, he was not yet a horegādīga. His grandfather was a horegādīga. Once, he went to see the performance of noṭa which was performed by another gādīga in his
settlement. He was watching how they were warding-off the māru. Alu suddenly went near the woman who was afflicted by the spirit; he pulled her hair and said to the māru ‘go away from her’. At the same time, one of his friends laughed at his behavior. Alu told the māru that had affected the woman, to affect his friend. Māru left the woman and affected the person who had laughed at him.

Alu says, he was impelled to act on the spur of the moment as he did, and it was his grandfather’s devchār that helped him to ward-off the spirit. Alu says he did what he did without even being conscious of his actions. Therefore, he says it was the supernatural power that compelled him into action.

Omu a diviner, relates the following incident: Five years back in Angane settlement a person called Ramu was suffering from fever and stomach pain. He underwent both indigenous and modern treatment but did not recover. At this stage any Kumbri Marāṭhi would have gone for nota. He did not undergo nota because he had been made an outcaste since his family had not participated in community work dhālogache kām and was hesitant to seek gādīga in the fear of refusal. Hence he had to depend on modern doctor who suggested him to show to a bigger hospital motta aspatra for operation.

One person suggested to Ramu that, what he was suffering from was not a roga but effect of māru because it was not cured by the modern treatment also. Finally, Ramu’s father approached the gādīga in his own settlement to perform nota to his son. Gādīga accepted his invitation for the performance of nota because one should not refuse to perform nota, it is a blessing from the deity to be used for the benefit of people in trouble. Irrespective of whether one belongs to another community or is an outcaste, gādīga accepts to perform nota. When gādīga performed the sotaki (process of finding which spirit has affected) he found that māru had affected him. He told Ramu to sacrifice a fowl to the māru. They agreed to sacrifice once he recovered from the sik.

Ramu recovered from sik. But they did not sacrifice the fowl to māru, even after eight days of Ramu’s recovery from his sik. After Ramu recovered, his whole family fell ill. Again they went to the gādīga and told him that all the family members were suffering from sik. Gādīga went to their house and
performed the sotaki and found that their sik was due to not sacrificing the fowl to māru. They requested gāḍīga to sacrifice the fowl in their name requesting the māru to leave them. The whole family recovered from the sik after the fowl was sacrificed.

Shivu is a horegāḍīga. Shivu says, one should not joke about spirits and if they do so they will get affected by the spirits. He relates an experience he had undergone. Shivu and two other gāḍīga had once gone to perform noṭa for a person in the house of Nayak jāṭī. They started the calling the māru on hore, but people who had gathered there were talking amongst themselves saying that, they were acting and not calling the māru. So the family members of Nayak jāṭī told the gāḍīga to bring the effect of māru on the body of the people who were being suspicious of the noṭa. Shivu told the people not to make fun or joke about noṭa. But the people started joking again saying that they were acting. Finally, Shivu sent the effect of māru to affect the person who was laughing at them; as a result, the person fell on the ground. Then gāḍīga and horegāḍīga returned to their houses. After two days, one person came to Shivu’s house and told that the person who had made fun of noṭa was severely ill with fever and asked him to remove the effect of māru. Again Shivu and other gāḍīga went and removed the effect of māru and cured the person.

Thus making fun at noṭa, underestimating the power of gāḍīga or noṭa can bring disaster to such people. It is this belief which reinforces the faith of the Kumbri Marāṭhi in the process of noṭa.
4.5. *Nota* the process of divination

In order to understand the process of diagnosis among Kumbri Marathi one has to understand the process of *nota*. *Nota*, is a process of supernatural diagnosis and treatment performed by *gādiga*. Depending on the perceived cause of the ill-health of a person, the course of action is decided upon by the people. If the source of the problem is believed to be spirits, then people seek diviner for treatment. Otherwise, an indigenous medical specialist or a modern doctor is sought.

Affliction of malevolent spirit occurs when there is a touch of the spirit to the body of a person. In most of the cases the person affected does not become aware of the touch and when it happened. But in case of the strong malevolent spirits like, *hemmati, holtandmāru, murchi*, the touch is felt.

In order to diagnose the condition the *gādiga* performs the process of *nota*. *Nota* involves the following processes for curing the illness:

- Diagnosing the health problem (*sotaki*)
- Warding-off spirit māru (*not* and/or *odambadike*)

*Yakshi, tantri*, and *devchār* help *gādiga* in the process of *nota*. After finding through *yaksi, tantri* and *devchār* which spirit has afflicted (diagnosis),
warding-off can be done through either his own powers or through dev. When the 
diviner performs the nota for warding-off the malevolent spirits, by the power 
vested in him, it is called not (without the help of dev) and when he does it by 
invoking the help of dev, then it is called odambadike (with the help of dev). This 
whole process is called nota. Both not or odambadike are performed through the 
means of a song for calling and warding-off maru. Unlike not, in odambadike, 
the diviner seeks the help of dev in the song to ward-off the effect of spirit.

Nota (whether not or odambadike) begins with a process called sotaki. 
Sotaki is the first process in the performance of nota. During sotaki gādīga 
communicates with yakshi and dev. Gādīga communicates through calculation of 
rice grains tändula on a wooden plank mahane. The purpose of sotaki is to find 
out whether, the health problem is caused due to malevolent spirits mārava or 
not. If he finds out through sotaki that malevolent spirit has not affected, then 
treatment seeking process diverts to natural forms of remedial measures. If 
gādīga finds out that malevolent spirit mārava has affected, then he proceeds to the 
next step, that is performance of either not or odambadike. When a balishmārava 
afflicts an individual, and it is beyond gādīga’s power to ward it off, in such 
cases odambadike is performed by gādīga that is, he seeks the help of dev, in the 
warding-off spirit.

When a person approaches gādīga for supernatural diagnosis, gādīga first 
performs sotaki, to find out whether mārava has affected. Gādīga requests dev to 
help him to find out, as to which mārava has affected. In the song, gādīga seeks the 
help from dev in calling as well as warding-off the mārava. Then through either 
odambadike or not (depending on the nature or strength of mārava), the effect of 
the spirit is warded-off. If a strong malevolent spirit balishmārava has afflicted 
then, odambadike has to be performed and not is performed when a 
pādosomārava (which are not as strong as balishiamārava) has affected.
The process of divination nofa

In sotaki fistful of rice grains tandula is put on a wooden platform mahane. The mahane and tandula have divine significance because they are given by the yakshi in gadiga’s dream and it is through this dream that the gādīga acquires the power of performing the nofa as seen earlier. Gādīga separates the broken tandula from the unbroken ones. Broken tandula is not included in the sotaki, because it obstructs the process of finding out accurately which māru has affected. To find out accurately which māru has affected it is believed that only unbroken rice grains have to be taken.

Sotaki is performed by gādīga for different purposes at different stages of nofa that is, to find out the following:

➢ To find out what kind of health problem a person has. That is whether, the person has either roga disease or sik illness. Based on this diagnosis, further course of action is taken.

➢ First it is necessary to find out whether māru has affected. Then, if it has affected, it is necessary to know, which māru has affected. Because different māru have different powers and all cannot be warded off by the same process. Therefore in order to find out, the nature of māru, whether it is balishmāru or pādosomārava, sotaki has to be performed.

➢ To find out which māru has affected during the processes of nofa and nojachekambal. That is, based on the understanding of which māru has affected, the next process in nofa that is, performance of odambadike or nof is decided.

➢ To find out whether the māru will come or not during the nojachekambal. nojachekambal is a process, wherein more than one gadiga are required to
ward-off the adverse effects, because more than one *padosomāru* or one *balishtmāru* would have affected.

- *Sotaki* is also performed after the *notachekambaľ*, to find out, whether *māru* which was called on the *hore* has gone or not. It is again performed in order to find whether, the process of *notachekambaľ* has been successful in warding-off the spirits.
- Also to find out where the *māru* of a dead person, is located. This is performed on eleventh day ceremony *eklānāvche vāduvanchi* after death.

**Different purposes for the performance of sotaki**

![Diagram](image)

In the process of *sotaki*, gadiga takes a fistful of rice grains and separates the broken and unbroken *tāndula*, on a wooden plank *mahane*. Then gadiga offers salutations to the *dev*, to the deity of spirits *māru*, and to the deity of the temple near the house, where gadiga is performing the *nota* and also to the *mahane*, seeking their help during *sotaki*. Then gadiga begins praying and mixing the unbroken *tāndula*. Then, gadiga takes *tāndula* in his fingers and touches the hand to his forehead as a part of the process of seeking help in the performance of *nota*. While doing this, gadiga offers salutations to devachār. He puts the *tāndula* on one side and then, takes some rice grains in his hand and starts keeping them on another side in either even numbers *sari* or odd number
bes. Then gadiga moves his little finger kirangāli over the tāndula and tells yakshi that if maru has affected the person, the number of tāndula should occur repeatedly either in even or odd.

After putting this tāndula, on one side of the mahane, the remaining tāndula is mixed with tāndula on the other side of the mahane. Again gadiga takes some tāndula in his finger and he touches the little finger to the earth and he swears on the mother earth bōtayānā and on his yakshi to guide him accurately in performing the process. Gadiga does so because, yakshi should not come under the influence of any māru. If yakshi comes under the influence of any māru, it will not help the gadiga to find out accurately which māru has affected.

As the next step, gadiga takes some tāndula in his fingers and spreads them on the mahane. Then he arranges tāndula in group of twos and remaining tāndula, he puts in group of singles or twos. This procedure is performed three times. These calculations enable him to find out whether or not māru (or mārava) has affected. If yakshi, the guiding spirit which is likely to be confused by balishtamāru, the results of the calculations would not be clear, so the procedure has to be performed again five times. If out of the five performances, if four trails occur even sari, then gadiga comes to know that māru has affected the person. In such a case, again sotaki is performed by him to find out from the yakshi, which māru has affected. If out of five trails, two comes even sari and three odd bes, it is considered that the person is suffering from rogā as well as sik. Out of five trails, if one comes sari and four bes, it is considered that the person has rogā and has not been affected by māru.
Findings from the *sotaki*

| Five performances |  
|-------------------|---
| Even              | Odd  |
| 4 or 3 Trials     | 1 or 2 Trials |
| 2 Trials          | 3 Trials |
| 1 Trial           | 4 Trials |

When *gādīga* performs *sotaki*, he comes to know if only one *padosamāru* (that is either a *chālī* or *chattī* or *nirvansh* or *hennugole* or *gandugole* or *kil*) has affected a person. Then, *gādīga* performs the process of *not* wherein, the *māru* is warded of by his own power, without taking the help from *dev*. If *gādīga* comes to know through *sotaki* that more than one *padosamāru* and or a *balishtamāru* has affected then, *gādīga* performs *odambadīke* wherein he takes the help of *dev*.

Through the performance of *sotaki*, if *gādīga* comes to know that the person is not affected by any *māru*, then he suggests the person affected or his family members to seek the indigenous medicine man *vakatalli* or go to hospital *aspatra* depending on the kind of ill-health condition. Even in case if he does not suggest, people know the pathways to treatment since both share the context and beliefs regarding etiology.

People usually insist the *gādīga* for further performance. Therefore, for their satisfaction *mānasik*, *gādīga* performs the *odambadīke*, which is different from the *odambadīke* performed when one is afflicted. This *odambadīke* involves *gādīga* praying the *dev* to cure the person quickly. This is done in good will since, people consider *gādīga* as having direct contact with the supernatural powers, as a result of which he will be able to help in the process of cure even though there has been no spirit affliction. Therefore, people wish to take advantage of his powers since they have sought him.

When people gather for *nota* before and after the performance of *sotaki* they generally speak about the affairs of the settlement and those outside the
Gādiga performing the sotaki

Gādiga performing odambadike for treating Omi
settlement, about hunting *shikāri* that is, what was hunted by whom, what the experience was like. Except, for the busy agricultural seasons, all family members, kin and neighbors gather for *nota*. During busy seasons, either parents or any elderly in the family seek the *gāḍiga*. They also discuss about *mārava*, which had affected someone in their family or someone they know, about *roga* and causes of *roga*. They narrate their experiences or exchange information with others gathered about the possible remedies *vakāt* for a *roga* or *sik*. The *gāḍiga* also tells them about different *māru* and their effects. Children *dhākte* sit with their parents or an elderly family member or sit alongside the person, who is sitting near the *gāḍiga*. The children afterwards imitate the *gāḍiga*’s performances and their parents’ watch and laugh. After the performance of *sotaki*, *gāḍiga* informs the people which *māru* has affected. Then *gāḍiga* performs the *odambadike* or *not*.

The performance of *nota* is believed to provide relief from the afflictions of spirits whether it is temporary or long lasting or permanent. It also provides a chance to the affected person to know whether his suspicion about his condition (diagnosis) is proper or not. Through *nota*, *gāḍiga* can decide about the further course of action that is to decide as to whether *not* or *odambadike* has to be performed. *Gāḍiga* comes to know which spirit has affected and whether it has exorcised to get rid of the effect.

Further, when the people gather for the performance of *nota*, it provides the person and the family members a kind of moral support to deal with the problem. It also provides an opportunity to know from others as to what recourse has to be taken under what kind of illness. Thus it provides an occasion for commenting, reflecting analyzing becoming socialized about health, illnesses, diagnosis, treatment, and beliefs. These participations in *nota/ nota chekambal* help in transmitting beliefs. It is an important occasion that provides opportunities to learn and reinforce beliefs regarding the worldview of the people.
4.5.1. Notachekambal

Unlike nota, notachekambal involves more than one gādiga for warding-off the effect of malevolent spirit and/or spirits. The term notachekambal, means the process of performing the ‘warding-off spirit(s) collectively’ by diviners. Kambal here refers to ‘working collectively’. notachekambal has to be performed when a gādiga comes to know that more than one padosomāru or a balishtamāru has affected. It is also performed when nota has failed in warding-off the effect of māru earlier. nota can fail in warding the effect, if multiple māru have affected. In the process of notachekambal, generally more than one gādiga and one or two horegādiga are involved. In case if the settlement does not have a hore gādiga, or has only one gādiga, they are invited from other settlements. They are also paid traveling expenses in case if they have to go to a distant settlement.

In case gādiga finds out that balishtmāru has affected, he advises notachekambal to be performed. This provides an opportunity for the people to take a second opinion from another diviner. But in case if mottagādiga is sought, his decision is taken as final owing to his expertise.

The process of notachekambal

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Noțachekambal

Sotaki

Odambađike

Sotaki (Confirming) whether māru has come or not on the hore

Not : Warding-off māru

Sotaki (Confirming) whether māru has been warded
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In the beginning of notachekambañ, sotaki is performed by one of the gadiga to know how many marava and/or balishtamâru have afflicted the person. Then sotaki is again performed by both gadiga and horegâdiga (horegâdiga can perform only sotaki, and does not perform odambaðike and not, because he does not possess tantri, the guiding spirit, which helps during odambaðike and not) to confirm the finding of the first gadiga as to how many mâru have affected.

While gadiga performs odambaðike (which is the next procedure after the sotaki) wherein through the song the mâru are called. odambaðike is performed so that with the help of dev the diviner is successful in calling the spirit however strong it may be. On the other side, horegâdiga holds the hore for the spirits to come and lodge on the hore. During the performance of odambaðike (or not), gadiga starts scolding the mâru, and the members of family of the affected person also scold the mâru. It is believed that if one scolds the mâru it comes quickly on the hore. The family members of the afflicted person promise through the diviner to perform hanekoṭtu which is offering of food to all afflicted mâru.

One of the diviners performs sotaki to confirm whether the mâru he had found when he had performed the sotaki has come on the hore or not. Through this sotaki performed again after odambaðike, gadiga comes to know whether the same mâru which they have called have appeared. Because there are chances that different mâru may appear. Other mâru may appear on the hore because hanekoṭtu (which is food for mâru) is promised by the people to the spirits that have afflicted.

When the mâru lodges on the hore, the hore starts shaking and this will confirm that the mâru has come on the hore. In case there are two horegâdiga before calling one mâru (in case of multiple spirits) another mâru is shifted. The horegâdiga throws rice grains towards the shaking hore in order to shift the mâru from one hore to another. When the other hore starts shaking, it indicates that the mâru has shifted to the other hore. Then, they call the remaining spirits marava on the hore one by one.
Gādiga, motṭagādiga and horegādiga involved in the process of notāchekambal

Shifting of the māru by horegādiga from one hore to another
After all the marava are lodged on the hore, the next procedure is performance of not or ođambahike which involves the warding-off māru. All those māru that they have been called on the hore have to be sent out of the settlement sime so that they do not afflict again. After this not or ođambahike once again sotaki is performed in order to confirm whether all the māru, which had afflicted have been warded-off.

4. 6. Hānekottu

When promises are made to spirits for leaving the afflicted person, hānekottu has to be performed. It is a process performed to satisfy the spirits which have afflicted. In case it is not performed as promised affliction recurs. It is performed when the gadiga diagnoses and also family members suspect that a person is affected by pādōsomāru and/or balishtamāru. Therefore people can promise on their own also. They do it on their own when they suspect spirit depending on the symptoms (symptoms of affliction among children are fainting/becoming unconscious dole padre karata, crying radata, fearfulness behata and aversion to food and among adults, becoming unconscious, feeling weakness asaktha, body pain kasu, fear, talking in sleep and restless sleep). Quite often it is the last stage in notac hekambal and very rarely after nota. Promises are not always made. They are made when the affliction is not being warded-off.

For performing hānekottu, a sheath of betel-nut tree hāne is taken. It is tied on each ends and made into a boat like form, (hane means sheath of areca nut tree kottu means a bag). Three divisions are made in the hānekottu with cowdung. And, red tāmbe, yellow halad and black kāle colored water are put, also nine types of flowers, two handfuls of rice and one lemon limbu are kept in the hānekottu. On each end of the hānekottu candle mobati and incense sticks udabati are lighted and it is left in the stream nahi. This is believed to be the food to satisfy the afflicted spirit. When hānekottu is left in the stream, it is believed that the stream deity jaladevati takes away any remaining effect.

This is performed for three days that is, on two new moon days amasi and one full moon day pomima or two pomima and one amasi. hānekottu has to be
performed beginning from either Tuesday or Friday, so that Amma female deity protects the person from the effect of the same māru. Unlike for padosamarava, they sacrifice one fowl on the last day of performance of hānekoṭṭu in case of affliction of balishtamāru since they are bloodthirsty.

Helman says, “in situations of ill health, ritual provides a standardized way of explaining and controlling the unknown. The sudden onset of illness causes feelings of uncertainty and anxiety in the victim, and his family. Part of the function of the healing ritual (as well as treating the condition) is to provide explanations for the illness in terms of the cultural out look of the patient. This is to convert the chaos of symptoms and signs in to a recognizable, culturally validated condition. In this way, the uncertainty and anxiety of the patient are reduced by converting the unknown into the known” (1994: 206).

4. 7. Case of Vipa

To understand the treatment seeking behavior and beliefs, regarding the powers of supernatural world and, illness sik a close look into cases is helpful.

Vipa is an eight month old infant chiduvu in Angane settlement. She was suffering from fever jar, cold thandi and cough dās. She was given home remedies but, she did not recover. Further, she was neither feeding nor taking supplementary food pitti. Her eyeballs had become reddish and she persistently cried and she was becoming weaker bārik. Generally, when an infant or child is suffering from health problem and if it is not taking any supplementary food or aversion to food, then it is considered as a serious symptom and is taken to the modern doctor.

Due to increase in fever, Vipa was taken to a child specialist in Kumta for treatment. After the treatment, there was remission in symptoms for the next two days. Again after a couple of days, the symptoms increased in their severity. The parents thought that since, the modern treatment had not cured her, gāḍīga should be sought. Gāḍīga performed nota for Vipa. He found through sotaki that, Vipa was affected by a strong malevolent spirit devati. Devati is stronger than tantri and yakshi, which help gāḍīga in the process of nota, so the Gāḍīga performed odambadike as a result, she recovered.
Again after a week, she became ill and due to the seriousness of the health condition, Vipa was hospitalized for two days. Though she recovered in fifteen days same health problems recurred again for Vipa. During this period, her parents were busy in the agricultural activities and they could not take her to the doctor. Taking her to the modern doctor would mean that they would have to miss a day’s worth of labor and also they would be incurring expenses in going to the doctor. As a result, for the second time nota was sought for treatment. *Nota* does not involve much of an expenditure or spending time away from work. Therefore, Vipa did not undergo modern medical treatment, except for the continuation of medicines earlier prescribed by the doctor.

*Mottagadiga*, an experienced diviner was consulted for the problems of Vipa. Earlier *gadiga* was already sought, but still there was no cure. Therefore this time around *mottagadiga* was sought and he found through *sotaki* that, Vipa was affected by two *huennugole* and one *chāli*. *Mottagadiga* gave *odambādike* for treating her health problem for the time being. He also fixed the time and day for *notachekambal*. *Notachekambal* had to be performed in order to free Vipa from the effect of spirits. In the meanwhile, before the *notachekambal* was to be performed, Vipa again became severely ill and, underwent modern treatment for the third time because of the seriousness of her *sik*.

As it was decided earlier *mottagadiga*, *gadiga* and *horegadiga* were invited to Vipa’s house for *notachekambal*. Three *gadiga* and two *horegadiga* were invited. Out of the three diviners, one was a *motta gadiga*, and two were *gadiga*.

To begin with, one of the *gadiga* performed *sotaki* and found that three *māru* had affected Vipa. *Horegadiga* also performed *sotaki* and found that Vipa’s family spirit *kutumbachemāru* had affected Vipa. Once the *marava* were found out, the *mottagadiga* performed *sotaki* and he also came to conclude that three spirits had affected Vipa. The spirits that were believed to have affected Vipa were - *kutumbāchemāru* from Vipa’s paternal grandmother’s *ajji* family (*huennugole*), another *māru* being a maternal kin *sohere*, that is Vipa’s great grandmother (*huennugole*) and *chāli*. 
One gadiga started the odambadike and on the other side horegadiga held the hore. Gadiga performed the sotaki to see whether the spirit that the first gadiga was calling had come or not. First kutumbachemāru (hennugole) was called. However, in the first odambadike it did not come on the hore. Then it was time for dinner, so meal was served for all gadiga and noṭachekambaḷ was continued after the meal. During second odambadike, they again called the kutumbachemāru. During this odambadike, family members of Vipa began to scold the kutumbachemāru because, it is believed that scolding the māru makes it to come quickly and it came on the hore. It was found through the sotaki that it had come on the hore.

Before calling the other hennugole (that is, māru from sohere), the earlier hennugole was shifted from one hore to another. The horegadiga threw rice grains towards the shaking hore to shift the māru from one hore to another. When the hore started shaking, it indicated that the māru had shifted from the hore. After this, they called the remaining spirits on the hore that is, the hennugole (sohere) and chāḷī. For calling two spirits two gadiga performed the odambadike.

The moṭṭagadiga performed the sotaki and told the people gathered that all three mārava had come on the hore. The moṭṭagadiga started sending mārava from the hore. He began the odambadike to request his tantri to take the mārava out of the boundary sime of the settlement. The mārava were warded-off and this was indicated when the hore stopped shaking. For kutumbache māru two diviners gave the odambadike simultaneously. Because, first they had to send it from the house, and then from the sime. They had to first send it out of the house because, it was kutumbache māru and hence was staying in the house.

One of the spirits that had affected Vipa was Vipa’s ajji (hennugole). After the death of Vipa’s ajji, her māru was kept in the house to protect the lineage from other māru and hence she was a kutumbache māru. It was supposed to protect the members of its family. But she started giving trouble in the house coming under the influence of another hennugole and chāḷī. Therefore, it was
sent away from the house. It was also driven away from the *sime* because of the fear that it may again start creating trouble for the family members.

When Vipa’s mother had gone to her natal house *māher*, then Vipa’s maternal great grandmother’s *māru* and *chāli* were believed to have affected Vipa. They were also sent away from the *sime*. *Māru* from *sohare* and *chāli* were not belonging to Vipa’s family. Hence they were not staying in her house. Therefore, they had to be sent only out of the *sime*.

This case reflects the pattern of treatment seeking when a *sik* is considered as serious. There occurs a shift in the home remedy to modern treatment and modern treatment to supernatural and at times modern treatment and supernatural go together. The intended aim is relief from the health problem. Kin and other people in the settlement are also a part of the process of seeking cure in the sense that, they offer alternatives, participate in the process of *notachekambal* and thus, provide support in times of crisis. It also reflects the priorities given to different kinds of treatment like home remedy, modern and supernatural treatment, when it comes to decisions involving expenditure. The modern medicine is given priority when the ailment is severe. Where as supernatural treatment receives priority when the ailment does not respond to modern treatment.

The importance of social relationships after the death of a person and the expectations from a dead person are also reflected in this case study. The paternal grandmother *ajji* has to protect all the family members. Since the child belongs to her family *kutumb*, she had to protect it. She was not supposed to come under the influence of any other *māru* and start creating trouble for her own *kutumb*. It also therefore, shows what kind of behavior is not tolerated from *māru*. They do not want her *māru* to stay in the house or even in the settlement, lest she starts creating trouble again.

4.8. Case of Kavu

Kavu is an eighteen year old girl, suffering from head ache, body pain and stomachache *pota dokātā, fear behta*, not being able to sleep well *nijayavunche nahi*, and not feeling like talking to people. Her father Amba took her to the
modern doctor in Kumta, a town nearby. The doctor treated her for fifteen to twenty days but she did not recover. Only when she did not respond to the medication and when symptoms persisted, that the doctor asked Amba about her case history.

Amba told the doctor as to why he thought she was suffering from the symptoms. Things were worsening for Kavu and that is why his doubts came out and he revealed everything becoming panicky. Since he had his own doubts he had brought her directly to the doctor instead of taking her to the diviner as it would be a normal pattern. He related that she was in love with a Muslim boy from a nearby settlement and she ran away with him for eight days to Goa. After returning from Goa, the Muslim boy went away to Mumbai following which, she started suffering from sik. So he thought that her problems were due to her broken relationship with the Muslim boy. Then, the doctor suggested Amba to take her to mental hospital at Shimoga. There, she was admitted for eight days, she recovered and returned to her settlement.

After fifteen days or so, she again suffered from the same symptoms. This time around, Amba took her to Karnataka Institute of Mental Health in Dharwad because inspite of staying in the mental hospital at Shimoga for eight days, the problem had again recurred and she was not cured. At the Karnataka Institute of Mental Health in Dharwad, she was not admitted because, the doctor said that she did not require hospitalization. He advised that she did not require hospitalization, but prescribed her medication.

Kavu, in the meanwhile, taking help from her friend tried to contact the boy with whom she had eloped through a letter. But he did not respond to her letter. At the same time, Amba started to force her to marry his sister’s son Keva. When she refused to marry him, Amba started to beat her. She started suffering from the same symptoms like fever, body pain, being afraid when she was alone, not doing any work in the house and not talking to the family members, friends and kin. She also started crying and shouting. Amba took her to seek nota as treatment from a mottagādīga which would cure the symptoms. The mottagādīga found out that she was afflicted by devati and māru. So mottagādīga performed
nota and she became well. Thereafter, Amba who is also himself a gadiga would perform nota and ward-off affliction whenever she was suffering from sik.

Ultimately Kavu married her father’s sister’s son bavu Keva who lived in the same settlement. She had to marry him because marriage with the boy she was in love with was out of question since both of them were from two different endogamous groups where intermarriage cannot take place. Further, the boy also did not respond and she had no other escape but to concede to marry Keva. After her marriage her sik recurred. Her husband believed that it was due to the effect of devati. Kavu became serious day-by-day therefore, her husband took her to bhatta for treatment since all the other possible resorts were exhausted. Bhatta also found that devati had affected Kavu.

For warding-off devati one has to sacrifice a goat. Keva believed that Amba had made a vow to devati earlier (before Keva’s marriage to Kavu) and he told Amba to sacrifice the goat. Amba refused to sacrifice the goat because Kavu belonged to her husband’s lineage.

For the past five years before marriage, Keva was living in a different settlement for work. So Keva did not know about Kavu being in love with someone else. She has a constant fear that her husband may come to know about the things that had happened to her before marriage. So she is afraid that her husband may divorce her if he comes to know about her past. Her friends oya believe that her husband may not know since he was not living in their settlement. Among Kumbri Marathi marriage of a divorced woman is not allowed. Once a woman is divorced she has to permanently stay in her father’s house. Kavu is afraid that her husband may divorce her if he comes to know about her past and she will have to go back to her father’s house.

Amba’s younger brother Ram says that he lived with Amba earlier. Due to the conflict among the brothers, the property was divided among all the five brothers. Ram says that Amba did not want to share the property with Ram who was still living with Amba, so Amba tried to kill him and his wife by poisoning them, but they survived. Ram believes that because Amba tried to poison him
and his wife, dev is cursing him, by affecting his daughter Kavu through affliction of devchar.

Amba's elder brother's wife Devi believes that Amba killed her husband by poisoning, because Amba owed Rs. 15,000/- to his elder brother. When his elder brother asked him to return the money, Amba did not return the amount. When he kept asking him to return the money then, Amba poisoned and killed his brother. Therefore, his elder brother's wife believes that his brother's spirit and dev have started troubling Kavu in order to punish Amba. Devi also believes that Amba had made a vow harake to dev that after his brother's death, he would sacrifice a goat. But after his brother died, Amba did not sacrifice the goat. For this reason also dev is affecting Kavu.

Kumbri Marathi believe that a gādiga should not drink alcohol. The people in the settlement say that Amba performs nota when he has drunk alcohol soro. Also it is believed that he performs nota better for those who give him soro. All such breach of taboos is believed to be affecting his daughter.

Now a days gādiga in her settlement treats her when she is not feeling well. Neither her husband nor her father is prepared to make the sacrifice of a goat, which would provide a permanent solution for her problem. Therefore, whatever temporary relief is provided by nota is the treatment for Kavu.

The case depicts the world-view of the people regarding the moral conduct. Kavu is believed to be affected because of her father's wrong doings. Poisoning, killing is considered to be bad and Amba is believed to have committed both these mistakes. Further, he has also cheated his elder brother of his money. He has not fulfilled the vow, which he had made to Dev. This is certain to arouse the wrath of Dev according to the people. Further, Amba is not prepared to bear the expenses involved in warding-off devati even before Kavu was married, and he was in a hurry to get her married so that she will be the responsibility of the lineage into which she is married and whatever has to be done for treating her would be done by her husband's family. Also, since he himself is a gādiga he feels whenever the problem arises he can deal with it.
Amba, according to people, is a person who is prepared to breach taboos for his own gains. He did not want to let go of the property that he jointly held with his younger brother Ram. He also did not wish to repay his elder brother's money, he did not wish to make sacrifice he had promised dev, nor was prepared to sacrifice for the treatment of his daughter. Further, since he is a gādiga he has to observe certain taboos strictly and he is not doing that. The consequences of his behavior have affected his daughter. This implies that supernatural powers (devchār and dev) can affect a person who errs, but also trouble him by affecting his family members. Therefore, mistakes of one person can lead affliction of another related to him.

Kavu's fears are heightened, because of the fear that her husband might come to know about her relationship with the Muslim boy. And if Keva wants to divorce her, she will not be able marry again as per the traditions. Her treatment and permanent cure therefore depends on the decision of her husband and she has no role to play in this decision.

4.9. Māru radd karunche

When a particular māru is often troubling people, or a person's lineage spirit mantan māru gives trouble to members of the lineage to which it belongs, then such māru are exorcised this process is called māru radd karunche. Unlike nota the process of māru radd karunche provides a permanent solution by exorcising the māru permanently. When a māru is warded-off in the process of nota there are chances that it may afflict again. But when exorcised, it never afflicts anyone again.

Gādiga performs the exorcism of the spirit. The exorcism of māru called māru radd karunche involves the handing over of māru to rāv present in happangundi (a pit in the stream). Rāv is believed to keep spirits under its control once they are exorcised and does not let it trouble anyone. Once exorcised, the māru is permanently warded-off, and does not affect people any more.

The process of exorcism of māru takes three years. For exorcism of the māru three fowl have to be sacrificed in the first year. Through the performance of this first sacrifice, the māru is transferred to the māru of Mastimane temple.
The second year, five fowl are given to māru present at the Ishwar temple near the Angane settlement. In the third year, sacrifice of three fowl, and one goat to rāv of the happangundi is required. It is believed that by sacrificing the fowl and goat, the respective spirits, take the spirit being exorcised into their control and concede to the request of the people. The person, who is suffering from the effect of spirit takes care of the expenses for the fowl and goat and the process of sacrificing is performed by the gādiga. After three years of sacrifices, happangundi captures the exorcised spirit and it never allows the māru to leave the happangundi. Once it is exorcised the spirit no longer troubles people.

Spirits of persons who have died from long-term disease rogā and misfortune deaths are exorcised by giving the māru to the lineage deity mirāshethal. Māru of such persons are exorcised because they are believed to cause trouble because of the nature of their death. On 11th day ceremony after the death ekalānāvonche vādavunche, the exorcising of such manatan māru is performed. For exorcism of such person’s spirit, sacrifice of a fowl in the name lineage deity mirāshethal is required. Gādiga calls the dead person’s māru and the māru is offered food. After food is offered the māru of the dead person is exorcised by the gādiga. Ekalānāvonche vādavunche itself means offering food in a person’s name.

Thus māru radd karunche provides a permanent solution for affliction of spirits. It is done less commonly than nota or notachekambal because it involves more expenses when compared to other two process which do not involve any expenses. Therefore, even though it can provide a permanent solution, it is nota that is sought more frequently.

At times, performance of nota is also accompanied by other healing procedures like use of herbal medicines. In case of scabies kajo, along with performance of nota, kajo is believed to be cured only when the medicine man gives treatment because the deity of the medicine man’s lineage is believed to bless the person and help in curing the condition. Therefore, when affected by kil the treatment consists of both nota and indigenous medicines from indigenous
medicine man. However for sik caused by other māru, not and home remedies are sought.

In case of the affect of murchi, as a temporary cure, sandalwood paste and seeds called vanvu mixed with lemon are given to the affected person to be consumed. The same remedy is given by a Brahmin priest bhatta. This treatment is said to be more powerful because it is given along with the performance of mantra to the murchi. Bhatta can perform mantra to ward off the effect of murchi. An amulet ateer is also given to the affected person to protect him from the effect of murchi.

In certain cases gādīga is not able to find out about the effect of māru decisively. This is said to happen when pādosomāru and balishtamāru have together affected. It is believed that pādosomāru and balishtamāru confuse the gādīga’s yakshi, (the benevolent spirit which helps gādīga) in recognizing which māru have affected. When gādīga is under confusion, he refers the person to bhatta, who is regarded to have more power in warding-off spirits.

Bhatta finds out which balishtamāru and pādosomāru has affected. Then he chants mantra to ward-off balishtamāru and pādosomāru from the affected person. An amulet ateer is given to the affected person, so that the māru should not affect the person again. If bhatta also fails to cure the affected person, again the person seeks the gādīga for the performance of not, which is believed to provide temporary relief from the affliction. Lastly, notachekambal is performed on and off whenever the symptoms are severe or they become unbearable. Affected person also undergoes modern medical treatment when the illness sik becomes serious in all cases of spirit affliction.

It is not only spirits that can cause health problems but human beings through sight or speech. When it is caused by human beings it is called evil eye chāk. Different warding processes are performed at the family level in order to treat the condition. In case of failure, more than one measure is tried. The objective is to remove the effect of evil eye. As Kowlgi points out evil eye is probably one of the oldest and most widely spread beliefs. The rationale behind it
is that certain human beings have the power of casting a spell or producing a malignant effect on things they look at (2002).

4.10. Chāk

Chāk evil eye is believed to affect a person’s health adversely. It is believed that chāk affects through people’s sight and speech. It is believed that when some people see a child, or a person eating, or a well-grown coconut tree, the person, or tree which was seen gets affected. And at times, when something is verbally appreciated, it gets affected. It is also believed that when certain people appreciate even without seeing, the thing that is appreciated is believed to get affected. Chāk can also affect through food. Chāk, which affects through food is called rēnch. When a person is consuming food if another person stares at it or without looking at the person stares/shakes his legs, through this action the person who is eating is said to become affected by rēnch. The symptoms of rēnch are rumbling sounds in the stomach gudgudu and stomachache pottan dukta.

The symptoms of a person being affected by chāk are, the affected person suffers from boils rovā which are small, and red in color on face and body, headache takalipotā, experiences weakness ashakta, and in case of children crying radatā, loose motion haggune and an aversion towards food.

Chak kadunche for warding of chāk, three gondo small stones are taken from a place where four roads meet from four directions. It is believed that chāk can’t affect from the direction in which one’s house is situated. Since they are not able to identify from which other three directions the effect of chāk has come. Therefore, three stones are picked leaving the direction in which the house is situated. Along with three stones, chili mirchi and salt mith are kept on a plantain leaf kolo. The plantain leaf is moved around the head of the person affected by chāk. After doing this, it is put in front of the affected person. Then the head of the affected person is touched with the right hand and of the person warding the evil eye and then touches the plantain leaf three times. Through touching the head to the plantain leaf, the effect of chāk is said to transfer to the plantain leaf. Then, the plantain leaf is put in the fire so that effect is burnt away.
Another way of warding chāk is, groundnut oil is applied on a betel leaf pān and then the leaf is moved from head to foot three times. It is then put in the burning coal kolase. If boils appear on the betel leaf it is believed that chāk is removed.

Chāk is also removed in the following manner, turmeric powder halad, chili and water are put in a plate vāte. In another plate kolase is put. First, the plate consisting of chili and water is moved around the chāk affected person. It is believed that chāk will be taken away through this. The person affected has to spit in the plate. It is regarded that spitting in the plate removes chāk remaining in the abdomen. Then kolase is put in the turmeric mixed water. After putting the kolase into turmeric mixed water, if it becomes red it is believed that chāk has been removed. If the water does not become red and remains yellow in colour, then it is regarded that the symptoms are not due to evil eye.

For warding-off rérch, rérch kadunche, a copper pot is taken and small pebbles are put in it. A bamboo stick is taken and on it a small piece of cloth dipped in coconut oil is tied. On the mouth of the pot, a stick is fixed in a semi circular way. Then it is lit with fire. The pot is moved around the head of the affected person. Then this pot is put upside down in a plate vāte filled with water. The pot sucks water from the plate with a gurgling sound. When the gurgling sound stops (in three to four hours), it is believed that rérch has been warded off.

If the person does not feel well after removing chāk it is performed again, on the next day. It is performed three days and even after three performances, if it is not cured, then one goes to diviner. It is believed that if the person is affected by chāk, then the performance of warding-off rituals is bound to provide relief from the symptoms and cure the effects of evil eye. Howard points out that, “all healing systems seem to work at least part of the time. Methods and rationales used however vary considerably and it is hard to prove just what creates the cure” (1994:407).

Apart from the effect caused by spirits and human beings, deities also affect health adversely. Deities affect when there are breach of taboos and non-performance of rituals and festivals. Ammāchekayle is the most common
affliction caused by a female deity Ammā. Deities are considered to be benevolent. They are a crucial part of the healing measures. Whether a condition is labeled sik or roga, when the resorts sought offer no relief deities are sought by taking vow harake. Further, they are also a part of the remedial measures when medicine men vaktalli are sought. Medicine men’s medicine is believed to be effective because of the blessing of deity.

Vows are a crucial part of the treatment seeking. Vows are taken when the ill-health condition is not responding to any sort of remedial measures sought or when a health condition is severe. It is believed that deities can help even when everything has failed to provide relief. Vow is taken with lineage deities, local deities and also with deities for whom devkārya are performed like Manjunath and Tirupati.

Payu, is a 5 year old child. His father says, he frequently suffered from fever, cold, boils on the body, and would cry persistently, and was becoming lean. The child underwent indigenous treatment as well as modern treatment. But for no avail. nota was also sought but the child again suffered from same problems after some time. The child’s grandfather wrote a letter to priest of Manjunath temple (at a place called Dharmasthala). He wrote saying that his grandchild was not well (two years back) and earlier and he was cured only after a vow was taken with Manjunath. But now again illness had recurred. Therefore, the family has taken a vow that they will beg for money in four houses and with the money collected they will visit the temple. He also requested the temple priest to send the thread nool blessed by Manjunath to be tied to the child. He also requested the priest to write and tell him what else could be done to cure the child and asked for advice.

When vow is taken with lineage deity or local deities, they pray that if the ill-health is cured, they will offer two coconuts to the deity. Thus vow involves leaving everything in the hands of deities.

The ambiguity that exists in all curing systems creates both difficulties and opportunities for healer and person affected. For someone earnestly trying to cure a person, diagnosis and an appropriate cure are rarely automatic, and there is
always a possibility of error. Failure to arrive at a successful cure may be attributed to the nature of the affliction and very rarely to the effectiveness of the curing system. Thus, as more than one curing system is in operation, people resort to an alternative system if the first fails (Howard 1994).

As Foster and Anderson point out, "in the small-scale societies illnesses are often interpreted as reflecting stress or tears in the social fabric. The purpose of curing therefore goes well beyond the limited goal of restoring the sick person to the health; it constitutes social therapy for the entire group, reassuring all onlookers that the interpersonal stresses that have lead to illness are being healed. The 'rituals of misfortune' come into play at times of unexpected crisis or misfortune such as accidents or severe ill-health. Loudon sees two functions of this type of ritual: a manifest (the solution of specific problems) and a latent function (the re-establishment of disturbed relationship between human beings). In non-industrialized societies they also function to restore disturbed relationship with the social and supernatural worlds" (cited in Helman 1994:204).

Thus the 'healing rituals' apart from treating the condition also provide explanations for the illness in terms of the cultural worldview of the person suffering and those who are concerned about him. They transform the confusion and suspicion of symptoms and signs into a recognizable, culturally identifiable condition. Once, the condition is recognized and labeled the pathway to treatment becomes defined.

Thus in situations of ill-health, 'rituals of healing' provide a standardized way of explaining and controlling the unknown. The supernatural diagnosis among Kumbri Marathi, is not only a process of understanding what has caused the ill-health but also a process of treating it. Once the condition is given a label by diagnosing it on the supernatural level, it acts as a guiding factor to seek further treatment if need be. Thus it was significant to note that supernatural powers play a very crucial role in not only etiology but also diagnosis and treatment. In the subsequent chapter therefore, treatment along with pharmacopoeia will be described and analyzed.