CHAPTER-III

‘KAREVAKKALU’ WORLDVIEW AND SHAMANISM IN THE CONTEXT OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS

This chapter is traced on the basic concepts of the ‘Karevakkalu’ towards the wellbeing of each ‘Karevakkalu’ family. It gives a picture of ‘Karevakkalu’ concept of world (‘bhoomi’), in which both natural beings (human beings ‘jana’, animals ‘dana-kara’ and plants ‘gida-mara’) and supernatural beings (spirits ‘dhaiva’, deities ‘dhevru’, ghosts ‘bhootha’ and souls ‘kole’) are included. The supernatural beings have the power of controlling the natural beings as they could bless and curse natural beings depending on the natural beings' conduct. The people believe that, each person has to live through proper religious conduct (‘nema’) which enables the person to lead a happy life with the blessings benevolent supernatural beings viz. ‘dhaiva’ and ‘dhevru’. Most of the times, illness (‘hushar thappoodhu’) and other problems such as economic crises (‘dhuddina thondre’) are considered as a consequence occurred due to wrath of supernatural beings exist around the ‘Karevakkalu’ settlements. In those situations, the system of ‘Karevakkalu’ shamanism (‘nota’ or ‘helike’) helps the people to find solution to the illness and other problems. Therefore, the current chapter is a discussion of the ‘Karevakkalu’ concept of world, their beliefs on the concept of health and illness and their shamanism marking to get the total picture of ethnopsychiatry among the ‘Karevakkalu’.
In their day-to-day life, the 'Karevakkalu' live with a sense of harmony ('hondhanike'). This harmony could be understood in two layers. First one is external harmony ('horagina hondhanike') and second is internal harmony ('olagina hondhanike'). External harmony is much visible as it functions among the people of different age in their day-to-day life. The 'Karevakkalu' achieve external harmony with their family members, settlement-members, kinsmen, and friends from other settlements and other co-habitant people living in the same region. The qualities leading to harmony at this level are mutual care and co-operation among the family-members and Kinsmen. Mutual help, respecting and following the elders, sharing the information and knowledge of both traditional way of living and modern skills among the fellow beings. Where as, the internal harmony among the Karevakkalu’ is maintained through a network of beliefs that constitute the Karevakkalu’ concept of ‘world’
and therefore internal harmony is considered as the guiding-spirit to the external harmony in their day-to-day life. But internal harmony is contextual as it operates at ideal level in most of the situations. It enables the ‘Karevakkalu’ to understand and operate with in the culturally prescribed manner i.e. a sense of ‘oneness’ (‘koodiradhu’ or ‘wattagiradhu’) with both natural and supernatural components of world (‘bhoomi’). The ‘Karevakkalu’ think natural as well as supernatural components and beings exist together in this world and they can influence one another. They perceive the existence of world (‘bhoomi’) as an active network of supernatural and natural beings. The ‘Karevakkalu’ concept of ‘supernatural’ includes those beings such as spirits (‘dhaiva’), deities (‘dhevru’), ghosts (‘bhootha’/ ‘pishathi’), evil souls (‘heenakole’) that have more power than natural beings, and they can control, use, bless or curse the natural beings such as human beings, animals (‘dhankara’), plants (‘gida-mara’) and other objects viz. water (‘neeru’), stone (‘kallu’), sunlight (‘bislu’) and air (‘gaali’). The supernatural beings are of both benevolent (‘kaayadhu’; means protect) and malevolent (‘peede’; means troublesome) characters. Therefore, the ‘Karevakkalu’ consider benevolent supernatural beings (‘dhaiva’ and ‘dhevru’) as sacred beings whereas, they fear of harmful-supernatural beings (‘keelu’) and always try to avoid them in all possible ways such as by taking the blessings of benevolent spirits. The people also follow these shamanic healing practices (‘nota’), and vaidhik tradition- healing practices (‘sastra’), when they are troubled by supernatural beings ‘dhaiva-keelu’. The supernatural beings that positively influence the ‘Karevakkalu’ life are as fallows:
A shaman's wife and daughter praying in front of family deity 'mane dhevru'

A 'Karevakkalu' woman worshiping to her family deity called Ishwara (a pair of coconuts)
a) Benevolent spirits: benevolent spirits are 'dhaiva', 'Gama' ('Gama' includes a cluster of spirits such as 'amnoru', 'beerlu', 'Jataka', 'Maasthi' and 'Ishwara').

b) Border-spirits 'gadi dhevathe' ('gadi' means boarder; 'devathe' means deity or spirit) of the 'Karevakkalu' settlements (protecting the area of the settlement) such as 'beerlu', 'jataga', 'amnoru',

c) Deities 'devru' such as 'Ganapathi', 'Ishwara', 'Venkataramana', 'Laxmi', 'Gouri', 'Gange', 'Saraswathi',

d) Ancestors 'thalegaledhavru' or 'halevru'

e) Sacred animals such as Cow 'govu', image of Snake 'naagaru', Tiger 'hulidevru' and

f) Sacred objects such as water 'gange' and soil 'bhoomi'.

A view of 'gama' spirit.
The ‘Karevakkalu’ understand the world is lead by several sacred and benevolent supernatural beings (‘dhevru’ and ‘dhaiva’ respectively) which protect the natural beings. The blessings of ‘dhaiva’ and ‘dhevru’ are believed to be essential for the well being of all living creatures. But there are some wicked, selfish and cruel supernatural beings called ‘keelu’ that are malevolent by nature, which do harm to the people and their cattle in order to satisfy their desires; The malevolent beings ‘keelu’ (means ‘low’) as described by the ‘Karevakkalu’ are,

a. evil-soul ‘heena kole’, ‘pretha’,

b. evil-spirits ‘Keelu’, ‘raavu’ and

c. ghosts ‘pishathi’, ‘devva’

The ‘Karevakkalu’ place benevolent spirits (‘dhaiva’) and sacred deities (‘dhevru’) at the supreme position and they believe that the malevolent spirits(‘keelu’), evil souls (‘heenakole’) and ‘ghosts’ (‘pishathi’) are at second place. Natural beings and objects i.e. human beings, animals and plants come at the third place i.e. at the bottom. Therefore, it is the natural beings who suffer the trouble caused by supernatural beings. The human-sufferings (including illness as a major risk) that are caused by super natural beings are as follows:

a. any physical illness (‘sheeku-sankta’) and mental illness (‘mallu’or maanasika’) could grow to that extent in which all naturalistic treatment becomes fruitless.

b. Children often dying due to sudden sickness or minor sickness (‘padhe padhe maklu saayadhu’).
c. Adults die outside the home when they are moving lonely (obne horagodhaga saayadhu').

d. Infertility suffered by women ('makkalagadhilla').

e. Economic crises occur often in the family ('dhuddina thondre').

f. Failure in new ventures - suffered by an individual or jointly by the family ('entha madidhroo kai hatthadhilla').

g. Illness and or death in case of cattle ('dhana-kara sheekige beeladhu', saayadhu'); missing of cattle ('kaladhogadhu'), less milk produced by cow and buffalos ('haalu kammiyaagadhu').

The sufferings are caused in these situations:

a. Wrath of spirits ('dhaiva') and deities ('dhevru'): When the people break the ritual obligations ('nema') and taboos ('kattu' or 'nishedha'), the respective 'dhaiva' or 'dhevru' will cause illness or other sufferings to the people.

b. When the person crosses the invisible area or path ('suli' or 'nede') of any evil spirits ('keelu', 'raavu'), evil souls ('heenakole') or ghosts ('bhootha', 'pretha'), the person will be caught by or attacked by the respective malevolent supernatural being. When a malevolent being attack or enters into the human body, the person may die on the spot or within targeted day called 'gadu' marked by the respective 'keelu' or the person's behavior changes and becomes unpredictable to the fellow beings. Later the person may ( 'mallu') become mad due to the possession of 'keelu'.

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c. When evil spirits 'keelu', evil souls 'heenakole' or ghosts ('bhootha', 'pretha') are hungry (desire to eat human beings or animals) or having any unfinished desires (such as to trouble or kill any human beings and their family members or animals or an individual or whole household) they trouble them continuously by creating a series of problems ('thondre') one by one till they gets satisfied by the suffered. But, these desires ('aashe') could known to the common people only by asking 'nota' with 'notagara'.

d. When enemies of an individual or of a whole family conduct witchcraft 'maati' or mask the face of family -deity 'maka kattisuvadhu' (in order to make the deity's power of protecting their disciples ineffective) and thereby create several problems to the individual and or his/her family.

e. Evil-eye 'drasti' could badly affect any healthy person to become weak and ill. When 'drasti' affects healthy tree or plant that is full of fruits, nuts and flowers, they will soon become dry and barren. Cattle also could become ill, and not being able becomes unable to give sufficient milk due to 'drasti' effect.

Having their own conceptualization of secured way of living, the 'Karevakkalu' express say it in the form of a proverb 'sariyaagi nadkandre soodidh hoovu baadoodhilla' means if one is properly conducting 'nema'(ritual procedures) and 'kattu' (taboo), even the flower applied on his head won't ; the person will be perfectly alright and could live without any fear and trouble of any supernatural being. Therefore, the 'Karevakkalu' believe that if the
supernatural beings are kept happy, through the regular offerings, proper ritual procedures by the human beings, the natural beings (including human beings) who are dependent on the supernatural beings also could live happily, without any tension or trouble. In this way, the ‘Karevakkalu’ perceive their community’s existence as a small part of the bigger world. They believe that, if all factors (such as contented state of supernatural beings, proper ritual conduct of the people) are well-balanced, then the whole ‘Karevakkalu’ community could lead a peaceful life. This ideology of the ‘Karevakkalu’ make them to understand and respect other co-habitant peoples’ beliefs, rituals and deities and also to follow their beliefs and their healing system that seem to be effective in solving the complications found in their day-to-day life. At the same time, other co-habitant people are also impressed by the ‘Karevakkalu’ peoples’ religious discipline, beliefs and flexibility in solving the problem of other people. Therefore, there are several clients from other communities (such as ‘shetru’, ‘naaykaru’, ‘haslaru’) found to be regularly consulting the ‘Karevakkalu’ shamans (‘notagara’) in order to find solutions to their problems including behavioral disorders and mental illnesses.

Concept of Health and Illness:

The ‘Karevakkalu’ call a healthy status as ‘aaramiroodhu’ or ‘hushaar iroodhu’. The term indicates a complete fit status of any person both physically and mentally. When a person is completely all right in performing one’s day-to-day activities and interaction with the fellow beings, he is considered as a healthy person. Whereas, a condition of ill health is termed as ‘aaram
illdhidhre' or 'hushaar-thappoodhu' or 'sheeku-sankta' ('aaram' refers to well-being and healthy condition; 'hushaar' refers to being conscious, 'iroodhu' refers to being; 'illdhidhre' refers to absence; 'thappoodhu' means break or disconnect; 'sheeku' means disease 'sankta' means pain). As described earlier, the condition of 'aaram' of 'Karevakkalu' person is dependent on a state of balance between natural and supernatural beings of the earth. So, whenever the status of 'aaram' of a 'Karevakkalu' person is disturbed due to sickness or other problems, the close relatives of the person living with the patient/affected person in order to find out the causes of the disease, due to the natural or supernatural factors. In case of illness, when a disease is found to have been marked due to physical reasons, people inter the disease as naturalistic disease caused naturally due to such factors as rain, winter, and indigestion. The treatment in such cases started by using traditional herbal medicine ('halli oushdhi'). If the sickness symptoms ('thraasu') are found to be related to behavioral change and or mental disturbance (such as change in ones' usual interaction with fellow beings), the elder family members of the patient infer the sickness as personalistic i.e. the disease caused due to supernatural intervention. In this case, the patient is taken for faith healing or shamanic healing ('nota'), to a 'Karevakkalu' shaman called 'gaadiga' or 'notagara', cure ('parihaara'). The conditions when shamanic healing is practiced are as follows:

1. When people are in confusion about the cause of the illnesses of a person, they consult the 'Karevakkalu' shaman ('notagara'), in order to
know whether the sickness (‘hushaar thappoodhu’) is naturalistic (‘sheeku-sankta’) or personalistic (‘keelu’ or ‘dhaivadha thondreya sheeku’). The people face this confusion when the sickness combines symptoms of both physical and mental sickness. For instance, ‘Jwara’ (fever) is always identified by a common physical symptom viz. raise in body – temperature (‘mai bisiyagadhu’) with body pain and weakness (‘mai kai odtha’ and kai-kaalu soladhu’). When the behavioral changes such as fear, sudden gloominess (‘thand hodyadhu’), are seen with the common symptoms of ‘jwara’ or physical-pain or with symptoms such as cold, cough. Such a ‘jwara’ is considered as naturalistic disease, for which people seek treatment through naturalistic home remedies (‘mane oushdhi’) followed by bio-medicine - (‘dactara oushdhi’). But there are incidents in which both behavioral changes as well as physical pain symptoms are exhibited simultaneously. In such situations, people consult a ‘notagara’ in order to clarify the real cause of illness and to seek treatment. This will help in deciding to go for one medicinal system (either ‘dactara oushadhi’ or ‘nota’) or to follow both traditional healing (‘nota’) and modern biomedicine (‘dactara oushadhi’).

2. When a physical illness (‘sheeku-sankta’) is not responding to the treatment of either herbalists’ or bio-medical doctors’, the ‘Karevakkalu’ consult the shaman (‘notagara’) because they believe that, it is a major personalistic illness such as ‘adda thondre’ (trouble by supernatural beings) ‘heenakole thondre’ (trouble by evil soul). The
shamanic consultation resourced to when the well known medicines are not working in case of a patient suffering any physical illness.

The ‘Karevakkalu’ have been described as people having strong belief in ghosts, sooth-saying and witchcraft by Enthoven (1922). In order to understand the significance, relevance and risk factors that are associated with the ‘Karevakkalu’ shamanism, in the context of ‘Karevakkalu’ ethno psychiatry in particular and ‘Karevakkalu’ ethno-medicine in general, it is necessary to know in detail the ‘Karevakkalu’ shamanism ‘nota’.

**Normality and Abnormality according to the ‘Karevakkalu’**

The term ‘hushaariradhu’ or ‘aaraamiradhu’ indicates the ‘normal’ or healthy status of a person. But ‘abnormality’ is identified through a close observation and interaction with the affected person. In order to describe an ‘abnormal’ person, the ‘Karevakkalu’ use these terms: ‘mabbu’ (gloomy), ‘mandha buddhi’ (less active mind) ‘sama illa’ (incorrect), ‘Thalege hachchi kolladhu’ (over-worrying) and ‘mallu’ (mad). The first four terms are used in case of behavioral disorders observed at the initial phase of abnormality (in which the patient could manage his primary needs and day-to-day functions such as taking food, bath, wearing cloth, working in the field for at least 4-5 hours in a day) and the fifth term is used in case of mental illness i.e. at the second phase in which the person is ill (when patient is helpless to fulfill his basic needs).

When a person’s behavior is found to be strange to his/ her family members or close relatives or friends or neighbors, they observe the person for
few days (2 to 6 days). If the condition is stable, (more than 7 days) they consider the person as turning 'abnormal' ('mabbu-mandha') depending on the intensity of symptoms he/she exhibits. If the condition continues for a months, the person is labeled as abnormal such as 'mabbu', 'mandha' or 'sama illa'.

a. 'Mabbu' (gloomy): The first term 'mabbu' refers to a person when the person's interaction with fellow beings suddenly stops and the person becomes dull and prefers to be lonely. The people views that, the 'mabbu' condition is caused by spirits ('dhaiva') or evil-souls ('heenakole'); the people also think that, the person must have seen an evil supernatural being and therefore he is in a state of 'hedharadhu' ('fear'), and this has caused 'mabbu'.

b. 'Mandha buddhi' (less active mind or mental retarded ness): The second term 'mandha buddhi' is used in case of mental retarded ness. Poor memory, failure to do the day-to-day activities properly (such as low performance at school, home work in case of school going children, taking food, bath, helping the elders in household work, collection of forest products, and agricultural activities, taking care of younger members of the family) are identified as 'mandha buddhi'. The problem of mental retard ness is believed to be caused by the wrath or disturbed relationship with of the patient's family deity.

c. 'Sama illa' (incorrect): A person is considered as 'sama illa', when his responses, day-to-day activities, and interactions seem to be irrelevant. Talking without logic ('halubadhu'), laughing (negyadadhu'), showing
too much of anger (shikkapatte shittu') on the small issues, quarreling ('jagaladadhu') without reason, violent behavior towards others such as beating ('hodiyalogadhu') without reason are observed for about a week or two, then he/she is labeled as 'sama illa'.

d. 'Thalege hachchi Kolluvadhu' (over-worrying) Another term 'thalege hachchi Kolluvadhu' is associated with he/she when the person is worrying too much about a single issue and not able to think or act any other happenings of day- to- day life.

e. 'Mallu' (mad)

It is the primary phase of behavioral disorder could be traced when a person is exhibiting the features of 'abnormality' ('sama illa') in the first month. At this phase, home remedial measures such as 'drasti' (evil-eye) removing and 'nota' are taken up. Special care and close observation is done by the family members of the 'abnormal' person. They try to restore his/her confidence by sharing the person's worry, tension. They also try to find out the real cause (natural or supernatural) of 'abnormality' through spending more time with the 'abnormal' person. At this stage, the 'abnormal' aren't totally out of day to day social interaction -manners or behavioral control and somehow they manage their basic necessities (food, sleep, communication) with or without the help of others. At this stage, people hope for the improvement in the person's condition i.e. returning to 'normal' state. But, when the person develops multiple symptoms of 'abnormality', it becomes difficult to
manage or take care of the person. This condition is identified as ‘mallu’ i.e. the extreme ‘abnormal’ situation. The person’s behavior becomes totally irrelevant or clumsy (‘mal hariyadhu’, violent and miserable (‘enthadhoo theliyadhilla’). This condition includes the symptoms such as attempt to suicide (‘jeeva thekkalal odadhu’), shouting (‘koogadhu’), crying (‘aladhu’), scolding (‘baiyadhu’) or beating any body (‘hodiyalogadhu’), becoming totally inactive doing harmful activities to the family, kinsmen (stealing things from one’s own house), becoming isolated suddenly by sitting in a corner of house whole day are considered to be the main symptoms of ‘mallu’. Another significant fact is that, is possession by ‘keelu’ (evil supernatural beings) which leads to total uncontrolled behavior of the patient, considered as an illness that includes the same symptoms of ‘mallu’. The people think that, the person is acting according to the wish of possessed ‘keelu’. The condition is described as ‘mallu’ due to possession by ‘keelu’ (‘keelu mai mele baradhu’). ‘Mallu’ is the extreme stage of abnormality and people give the credit of cure to the curing power of ‘dhaiva’ (spirits), ‘dhevru’ (deities) and also to the healing skill of the ‘gaadiga’ or to the patient’s fate ( ‘hane bara’) rather than the family members effort. Because, ‘mallu’ is considered as that stage of treatment in which the treatment is beyond human effort. There are some ‘Karevakkalu’ people who think that there is no medicine to ‘maanasika’ ( means sickness related to mind) or ‘mallu’ ( means ‘madness’) because it occurs due to over worry.
The ‘Karevakkalu’ think that, ‘mallu’ could cause by both naturalistic and personalistic reasons. In most instances, people start with the personalistic reasons such as trouble by supernatural beings, wrath of family deity (‘kuladevra thondre’; ‘kuladevra’ means family deity’s, ‘thondre’ means trouble), ritual misconduct (‘nema thappidre’; ‘nema’ means ritual-rules; ‘thappidre’ means misconduct) or breaking of taboo (‘kattu muridre’ ‘kattu’ taboo ‘muridre’ means break). In these cases, the people go for curative options such as ‘Karevakkalu nota’ healing, neighboring communities ‘nota’ healing, self-curative efforts such as ‘taking vows, prayers and rituals. Proper ritual conduct (‘nema-nishte’) is believed to be the fundamental pre requisite to the wellbeing of the ‘Karevakkalu’ people. The naturalistic reasons of ‘mallu’ are as fallows: a) problem in patient’s nerves, b) misunderstanding or non cooperation of the family members/relatives, c) Non-fulfillment of social obligation like late marriage or person not getting a suitable marriage proposal. In these conditions it is clearly observed by the people that the symptoms of ‘mallu’ aren’t positively responding to the ‘nota’ healing which is found to be the best curative option for the personalistic illnesses. In such cases, the patients are taken to the treatment of modern doctor (‘daactar oushadhi’/ ‘aaspatre oushadhi’), as this treatment is believed to be effective.

Social Status of the person identified as ‘Mabbu’ or ‘Mandha’.

Social status of a sick person has to be understood in order to know about the possible stigma towards each sickness. The social status individuals who are mentally sick and ill are discussed in order to have a better
understanding of the cultural construction of ethno psychiatry of the ‘Karevakkalu’

When a person is suffering a single abnormality-symptom like ‘mabbu’ or ‘mandha’ and the person could manage his day-to-day activities and could work for his livelihood, he/she is encouraged by the fellow beings to manage his routine life. The person is accepted to be a fit person to take part in several activities such as participating in community level progressive activities that contributes especially towards improvements in economic conditions. They are ‘swasahaya sangha’ and ‘pragathi bandhu thanda’ (self-help groups at settlement level), to get married and establish his/her family. But it is said that, a ‘mabbu’ or ‘mandha’ individual should marry the individual who is in the same health status. The people believe that, one’s married life remains peaceful when the couple are equal (‘sama’) in their mental nature. Therefore, if an abnormal (‘mabbu’ or ‘mandha’) person marries a normal (‘hushaarirdhdhava’) person, their married life becomes problematic as the normal person thinks oneself as superior (‘hechchu’) and one’s partner as inferior (‘kadme’); this gap leads to lack of mutual understanding and adjustment (‘hondhaanike’) between the couple. But the abnormal individual’s participation is slightly different compared to that of a ‘hushaaridhdhava’ (normal person) in the sense that, the ‘mabbu’/‘mandha’ person isn’t discouraged to take part in local level social – political activities. The people prefer to arrange marriage between those who are in the same condition of abnormality. Because this marriage between those who are almost same in their mental activities, leads to peaceful married life as
there is no question of a partner is being superior (‘hechchu’) and another as inferior (‘kadme’). Whereas, in case of those who are ‘mallu’ (mad) there is no possibility of taking part in social, political activities and hence they are not encouraged to marry. If the affected person is violent, he/she is kept alone in a corner or in a room. Family members of the patient take much care and monitor his/her condition. Because, the ‘mallu’ patients are helpless, and they aren’t in a position to take care of themselves, or their family members. But when the condition of ‘mallu’ patient is improved more than 50% after traditional healing or bio-medicine, the patient is encouraged by his/her fellow beings to take care of his day-to-day life just like a person labeled as ‘mabbu’ or ‘mandha’. Condition of the mental patient is received by the ‘Karevakkalu’ society in such a way that, the person is supported to become better and lead normal life till the last day of one’s life. When a married person is found to be ‘mabbu’ ‘mandha’ or ‘mallu’, the family members of the patient take care in the same way as in case of patients affected by long-term illnesses. Marriage is believed to be a life-time bond among the ‘Karevakkalu’, they don’t think of breaking a marriage relationship when a married person becomes ‘mabbu’/‘mandha’ or ‘mallu’. But it is a significant factor that, the status of an abnormal or mentally disturbed (‘mabbu’/‘mandha’) or mentally ill (‘mallu’) is accepted when the patient is already a part of one’s family (before or after marriage). And, it is not accepted when a person is becoming a member of a new family in case of marriage of a ‘Karevakkalu’ girl and continuation of own family in case of marriage of a ‘Karevakkalu’ boy. This indicates the sensitivity of people
towards understanding of routine-responsibilities of their fellow being. They consider that, unlike normal days, the incident of marriage brings a set of responsibilities that needs really fit individuals to handle. Whereas, once the individual is learnt about handling the responsibilities of running one’s family, he/she could maintain them, in spite of his/her partner being affected by psychic illnesses. It is in this sense, the ‘Karevakkalu’ helps, takes care of the people with mental disturbances, in all possible ways, in a moderate manner. Though a person’s mother or father is found to be ‘mabbu’/ ‘mandha’ or ‘mallu’, the person’s marriage is not affected so much as to breaking of marriage-negotiations. Because, the ‘Karevakkalu’ believes that the causes of ‘mabbu’/ ‘mandha’ and ‘mallu’ are mostly related to trouble by supernatural beings rather than the hereditary factors. The people consider the second cause of these illnesses as social stress. Therefore, the patients of ‘mabbu’/ ‘mandha’ and ‘mallu’ are considered as the victims of unexpected circumstances, that are invisible viz. trouble by supernatural beings. The relatives of the affected persons treat them kindly by encouraging the patients to become better and also help their children to manage their day-to-day tasks. During this condition, the role of ‘nota nodaṣadhu’ or ‘helike aagodhu’ (‘Karevakkalu’ shamanism) play a decisive role. The family members of the patient of ‘mabbu’/ ‘mandha’ or ‘mallu’ take the patient to a ‘notagara’/ ‘gaadiga’ (shamanic healing) first and then to the ‘daṭṭar oUSHadhi’ (biomedical treatment). The close relatives and neighbors of the patient act as a channel of information regarding the availability of ‘nota’ healing at different settlements.
The ‘Karevakkalu’ Shamanism (‘Nota’ or ‘Helike’)

Shamanism is much discussed topic in Anthropology as well as other social sciences such as Psychology, Sociology, Social work and folklore (Balzer 1996). By very nature, shamanism includes several fundamental sectors of human society viz. religion, psychology, health and sickness. In other words, shamanism of a community reveals a broad picture of the unique features of a culture. Balzer summarized the meaning and scope of shamanism in this way: “Shamanism is a widespread complex of religious and medical beliefs, centered on a community or family shaman, who is usually perceived to be a mediator between spiritual and human worlds for specific purposes. The mediation is often chaotic and painful, for the mystical forces shamans describe themselves as negotiating in ritual are fraught with danger and easily misused. The process requires moral, psychological, and physical strength, as well as exquisite knowledge and dramatization of diverse cultural symbols and histories of one’s people. Shamans are controversial figures in communities where they reside and the anthropological literature expands debates about their practice” (1996; 1182). Balzer (1996) further discuss the debates and theories, concerning the identity and function of shamans in this way: ‘Historian Mircea Eliade (1972), generalizing across continents defined the shaman as a “psychopomp” and “technician of ecstasy”, emphasizing self-induced shamanic communication with sacred celestial spirits. Social anthropologist Lewis (1971) relates shamanism to spirit possession and sociopolitical protest. Siberian ethnographers Sergei Shirokogoroff (1935) saw shamans as part of a “psycho
mental Complex” helping small communities cope with sickness, change and stress. Ake Hultkranz (1992), with North American field experience and Vladimir Nikolaevich Basilov (1992), with Central Asian data, outline diverse purposes and kinds of shamanic mediation between supernatural and human worlds. Scholars differ over whether this mediation extends to state-level religious functionaries, as with the Chinese *wu*. Soviet-trained propagandists and some western missionaries have focused on the shaman as sorcerer or witch, more ready to curse than cure. Competition between shamans in various communities gives fuel for their fires” (1996:1182).

There is a wide range of discussion and analysis on function, role and relevance of shamanism as it reveals several faces of a given culture.

The ‘Karevakkalu’ shamanism (‘nota’ or ‘helike’) is a body of beliefs and practices that directs a common person from ‘Karevakkalu’ community (and sometimes people of other communities also) towards solution to the problems they are facing in their day-to-day life. The problems vary from illness to economic crises; troubles in cattle-shed to failure in new ventures in one’s family. Any issue, that reaches the level in which the people get confused and finds that the issue is negatively growing beyond their efforts to solve it, the ‘Karevakkalu’ visit the shaman (‘notagara’ or ‘gaadiga’).

The terms ‘nota’ and ‘helike’ are used for shamanism of the ‘Karevakkalu’. The meaning of ‘Nota’ is ‘see’. When the problem seems to be caused by the intervention of supernatural beings which are invisible to the common people’s sight, there is a need to ‘see’ the supernatural beings and
communicate with them to seek solutions. Thus, the term ‘nota’ is used for ‘Karevakkalu’ shamanism. The process of shaman (‘notagara’) conducting the shamanic activities on behalf of clients is called as ‘nota noudsadhu’. Another term for shamanism among the ‘Karevakkalu’ is ‘helike’, which means statement. The term ‘helike’ refers to the holy statement given by concerned supernatural being (such as ‘dhaiva’, ‘devru’, ‘heena koler’) through the ‘notagara’ or ‘gaadiga’, at the time of ‘nota’ consultation. But both ‘nota’ and ‘helike’ are used to refer to the whole system of shamanism among the ‘Karevakkalu’.

The ‘Karevakkalu’ use two terms to refer to shaman viz. ‘Notagara’ and ‘Gaadiga’. The first term ‘Notagara’ is derived from ‘nota’ and the person who performs ‘nota’ is called as ‘notagara’. The word ‘gaadiga’ is used to refer shaman of both ‘Karevakkalu’ community and shaman of other communities such as ‘Siddhi’, ‘Kunabi’.

Role and Functions of ‘notagara’

Even though the process if a ‘Karevakkalu’ turning towards shamanism ‘nota’ starts at the early age of 5 to 19 years, one acquires the dignified position of ‘notagara’ only after having sufficient life-experiences. It takes at least twenty years to an individual to become an adult. The ‘Karevakkalu’ “notagara” is a male who is above the age group of twenty years, having in-depth knowledge and faith both in the system of ‘nota’ and ‘Karevakkalu’ worldview. The females of the community is considered to be unfit to conduct the role of ‘notagara’; because the people believe that, women becomes impure...
due to menstrual cycle. The ‘notagara’ is considered as a blessed person, equipped specially with religious power of ‘Sodhki’ (the process of shamanic healing) that could be used for one’s own benefit and other people’s well-being. In depth interviews conducted with seven ‘notagara’ and information about several ‘notagaras’ are also collected through the narration by common people. All the ‘notagaras’ was in the age group of 40-70 years. Two ‘notagara’ among the total seven are retired from their ‘nota’ service due to their old age. The people say that, it needs both physical and mental strength to conduct ‘nota’. When the person becomes old and weak (above 60 years), his ‘nota’ skills would have faded. Therefore the ‘notagara’ does not practice ‘nota’ in his old age.

In the day-to-day life of the ‘Karevakkalu’, ‘notagara’ is consulted for the following services.

a. To find out or to confirm the root-cause of any illness or other problems i.e. to know whether it is natural or supernatural cause creating the problem.

b. Instruct the client and or relatives of the client like a priest, healer, advisor and counselor. Above all he is a well-wisher of the whole community who could analyze the human behavior and life consequences through the perspective of ‘Karevakkalu’ worldview.

The ‘Karevakkalu notagara’ is believed as blessed person with supernatural features. He has powers that are benevolent to the whole ‘Karevakkalu’ community and also to the people of other communities in case
they believe in ‘Karevakkalu – nota’. The people say that, only that person who
is honest (‘sathya’) having a strong faith in religion and religious practices
(‘dhaiva bhakti’) of the ‘Karevakkalu’, could become ‘notagara’.

The people identify the ‘notagara’ as holy man (‘punyavantha’). ‘Dhaiva’ and or dhevru’ possesses the ‘notagaras’ because these people were believed to be born in a special moment (‘aa ghalige’). There are two different arguments regarding the origins of ‘nota’ viz a) ‘nota’ by heredity and b) ‘nota’ by own experience.

a. One group of people say that the real ‘nota’ flows from the elders of a family to the youngsters; there are few useless people who think that they are possessed by ‘dhaiva’ or ‘devaru’ when they are intoxicated by drinking liquor. In that state, they murmur irrelevant things and this is fake ‘nota’. Many people believe this fake ‘nota’ as real at the initial stage. But they will come to know the reality when the fake ‘notagara’ instructs some healing practices and they become fruitless. Therefore, only ‘nota’ by heredity is the original kind of ‘nota’ among the ‘Karevakalu’.

The other group consisting of both common people and some shamans says that, hereditary factors are not universal rule in the system of ‘nota’. They explain that, instances of ‘nota’ transferring from father to son or grandfather to grandson are just co-incidence rather than pattern. A person becomes ‘notagara’ when he is having a strong faith (‘dhaiva bhakthi’) and love (‘Prema’) towards a ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’, and the respective ‘dhaiva’ or
‘dhevru’ is also having special concern and love (‘chittha oldhu, prema iddhu’) towards the person. It is a unique incidence of a person getting the rare and powerful blessings of a ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’ and become a ‘notagara’. Therefore, an elderly ‘notagara’ in the family can’t teach or transfer his healing power (‘nota’) to a youngster of his family. The status of ‘notagara’ is provided by the benevolent supernatural beings to the human being and not transferred between the human beings. Both the notions are found among the people; but usually ‘nota’ by heredity is considered as effective. Whereas ‘nota’ acquired by learning it sometimes becomes efficient and at those situations, people defend ‘nota’ without heredity. Where as ‘nota’ by own experience stands only on efficiency.

Here is a list of problems for which the ‘Karevakalu’ visit the ‘notagara’. The problems are listed according to the priority of the people.

a. General ill health condition called ‘hushaarildhidre’ or ‘sheeku-sankata’.

And the sudden or severe illness is called as ‘Joru sheeku’ or ‘yelalaagadhastu sheeku’. This condition of the patient includes sudden high fever (‘joru jwara’) added with raise in body temperature (‘mai bisi’), body pain (‘mai kai odtha’) and shivering (‘naduka’). They also seek treatment by ‘nota’ healing incase of long term head ache (‘thale shalatha’) and stomach ache (‘hotte shoole’) when the pain is not cured by the home remedies (‘mane maddhu’) or biomedicine (‘dactor aushodhi’).
b. The second problem is related to behavioral change viz. fear ('hedharadhu'). 'Hedharadhu' is caused by malevolent supernatural beings ('keelu'). Occurrence of bad dreams, ('ketta kanasu') feeling of shock and tension ('bechchi beludhu') sudden gloomy ness ('thand hodiyodhu') fallowed by 'jwara' and talking irrelevant ('halubadhu') like a mad ('mallu') when condition becomes severe are the symptoms of 'hedaradhu'.

c. The third problem for which the people visit 'notagara' for healing is general illness of children ('makkalige hushaarildhidre'). If a child is not eating properly ('thinnodhilla') and suffering from weakness ('thindhiddhu maige hatthadhilla') often crying ('kiri kiri') crying continuously ('sikkapatte athre'), and fever ('jwara'), it will be taken to a ‘notagara’ for diagnosis. According to the advice of ‘notagara’, parents of the sick child provide treatment to the child viz. shamanic healing ('nota’) and bio-medicine ('aaspatre/dactor aushadhi’) simultaneously or to depend on only one system of medicine for cure.

d. The fourth problem that requires ‘nota’ healing when one is possessed and trouble by the malevolent supernatural beings called ‘keelu’. When ‘keelu’ possess an ‘individual or inflicts on the whole family, the individual and his/her family members suffers by several physical and or mental illnesses, such as fever ('jwara'), blood vomitting ('rakta kaaradhu') stomach pain ('hotte shoole'), chest pain ('edhe novu'), loss of interest to eat ('oota seradhilla'), loss of sleep ('nidre illa'), shouting
(‘koogadhu’), talking irrelevantly (‘halubadhu’), attempt to suicide (‘kere haaralikke odadhu’- means running towards tank in order to jump). The trouble by ‘keelu’ is described in this way;

i. ‘raavu hodiyadu’ or ‘raavu hidiyadhu’ (possession or attack by ‘raavu’-spirit).

ii. ‘pishathi kaata’ or ‘pishathi thagidre’ (trouble by ghost or possession by ghost).

iii. ‘heena kole kaata’ or ‘heenakole thondre’ (trouble by evil soul).

e. ‘Kottige thondre’ (trouble in cattle shed) is another problem that needs curative rituals of ‘notagara’. When cattle suffer from disease such as suffering from insects bite (‘unugu’); cows and she-buffalo give milk in lesser quantity or trouble to give milk (‘haalu kadme aadhaga’ or ‘haalu kodadhidhre’), when cattle grazing are missing in the forest while wandering in search of grass (‘dhana-kara kaledhre’); the ‘notagara’ gives incarnated turmeric powder called ‘bandara’ or ‘kumkuma’ or sacred ash ‘bhasma’ in order to apply on the forehead of sick cattle. If there are several problems simultaneously, the ‘notagara’ instruct, the people to tie some incantated things (‘cheetu’ or ‘bandara’ or ‘bhasma’) given by him, to the upper part of the front door of the cattle-shed. The people believe that the incantated material tied to the cattle shed will protect the cattle in the cattle-shed from all problems caused by supernatural beings.
f. Sixth problem which is cured by ‘notagara’ is called ‘adda thondre’ (trouble by supernatural beings). ‘Adda thondre’ refers to a wide range of problems including illness which could be caused by wrath of benevolent (‘dhaiva’) or malevolent supernatural being (‘keelu’). It also could be caused due to witchcraft directed towards a person or a family (‘mati’ or ‘devra maka kattisadhu’). When an illness befalls to a person and when it is becoming intense even when the person is under treatment by a herbalist (‘halli aushadhi kodavru’) or biomedical doctor (‘dactaru’) or when initial measures such as applying ‘kumkuma’ or by a ‘bandara’ by a local shaman (‘notagara’) is futile, such a condition is also identified as ‘adda thondre’. ‘Adda thondre’ also includes problems arising in the family such as failure in a new venture, loss in existing financial transactions, sudden break in marriage negotiations without any sound reason. ‘Adda thondre’ could be described as a condition wherein the happenings are negative and unpredictable and therefore out of control to the common ‘Karevakkalu’ people. The ‘notagara’ is the person who comes to the rescue of helpless people who are depressed due to the unpredictable situation and find it difficult to manage and find solution.

‘Sodhki’

The process of shamanic healing among the ‘Karevakkalu’ is called as ‘sodhki’. ‘Sodhki’ is discussed focusing on the relevance of ‘sodhki’ in the context of different spheres of ‘Karevakkalu life’. ‘Sodhki’ acts as an
instrument of healing various illnesses including psychological disorders found among the ‘Karevakkalu’. The ‘notagara’ has the power of getting controlled/voluntary possession by ‘dhaiva’ (spirit) or ‘dhevru’ (deity), which is the most significant source of ‘sodhki’. The state of possession is called as ‘bhaara baroodhu’ or ‘mai mele baroodhu’ (‘bhaara’ means weight; ‘mai mele’ means on the body; ‘baroodhu’ means to come). A person is possessed by a ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’ which are benevolent supernatural beings. Such a possession is considered as favorable to the well-being of the whole ‘Karevakkalu’ community. Constant blessing of a particular ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’ is assured through its possession on a person, who is honest and religious. Also, such a person’s status changes from a common individual to a religiously powerful person called ‘notagara’. People give more respect and appreciate the ‘notagara’ as he is assigned to do the sacred service of ‘sodhki’ according to the dictates of a ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’. The ‘notagara’ acquires importance in the religious ceremonies (such as ‘Samaradhne’ and other festivals) and life cycle rituals, including day-to-day activities of the settlement only after he provides several successful healings and advises to solve problems of the clients who visit him.

The ‘Karevakkalu nota’ (shamanism) could be understood as a system operating at three phases viz. 1. Initiation of ‘nota’ 2. Growth and process of ‘nota’ and 3. Decline of ‘nota’. A lay person becoming ‘notagara’ in the ‘Karevakalu’ society is recognized as an essential, progressive phase for the people of a settlement (‘keri’). This phase could be called as initiation of ‘nota’.
1. Initiation of 'nota'

A common person gets possessed by a 'dhaiva' or 'dhevru' on whom he has a strong faith. The first possession occurs to an individual who is in the age group of 20-30. In this age group, the 'Karevakkalu' male is considered as a grown-up, responsible person, capable of working and earning for his livelihood, and also eligible for marriage. The first incident of possession ('bhaara baroodhu') occurs when the people gather on the occasion of festivals such as 'samaradhne', 'dhod habba' and life-cycle rituals such as marriage ('madhve'). At the time of 'bhaara baroodhu', the 'notagara' goes into a semi-conscious state. His body starts shivering, and his way of speaking changes suddenly from casual conversation to a style similar to an elderly 'notagara' living in the same locality ('grama') or outside.

The people say that, in the state of 'bhaara baroodhu' or 'maimele baroodhu' the 'notagara' starts speaking the words of the 'dhaiva' or 'devru' who posses him. At that time, the people collect around the 'notagara' and recognize the name of 'dhaiva' or 'dhevru'. If the words uttered by the possessed person (who is possessed for the first time) is not clear, the elderly members of his family or any 'gunuga' ('Karevakalu' priest) or 'gaadiga' ('Karevakalu' shaman) present on the occasion requests the possessed supernatural being to tell his name so that they could serve the 'dhaiva' (spirit) or 'dhevru' (deity) better.

Once the person is known to be possessed by a benevolent supernatural being, the family members recognize the appropriate days for 'nota' to be
conducted in the name of the ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’. The people believe that, these appropriate days lead to successful healing as they are supposed to be the blessed days by particular ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’. Tuesdays and Fridays are considered to be favorable days to the female spirits such as ‘amnoru’, ‘thulashi’, ‘chaudi’, ‘maasthi’. Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays are believed to be the favorable days for the male deities such as ‘Ishwara’, ‘Sani’. When the person gets possessed by ‘Gama’ or any other ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’ for which the people does not have any idea of favorable days, the custom differs. Because, ‘Gama’ refers to a cluster of spirits that includes both male and female spirits. When a person gets possessed by ‘Gama’ or any other unknown ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’, any one of the close relative of ‘notagara’ asks ‘helike’ with the ‘notagara’ in order to know about the appropriate day for conducting ‘nota’ and instructions (‘soochane’) received here are followed accordingly.

The family members of ‘notagara’ initiate the process of ‘nota’ by asking questions to solve the confusions and problems they face in their day-to-day life. The family members spread the instances of successful ‘sodhki’ to their neighbors and relatives as essential information. After giving several successful ‘sodhki’ solutions, (which may take few years) the person is recognized as ‘notagara’. It is a significant factor that even though some of the ‘nota’ solution becomes fruitless, the people encourage him towards ‘nota’ with a hope that he will become expert after some years. It is also found that a person is initiated into the role of ‘notagara’ in a settlement, when there is need of a ‘notagara’. There is at least one ‘notagara’ in each settlement or for a
cluster of 3 to 5 settlements having around twenty households in each settlement. The 'need' for a new 'notagara' arises in the following circumstances:

a) When the existing powerful 'notagara' is becoming old and is at the stage of giving up the role of 'notagara'

b) Another situation favorable for the emergence of a new 'notagara' is when the previous 'notagara' is not performing well or when he solves only specific issues such as financial issues or only minor diseases.

c) When a 'notagara' of a settlement ('keri') or locality ('graama') is found to be inefficient due to his bad habits (such as liquor addiction 'kudiyadhu' gambling 'ispeetu', 'voshi' or lacks of religious discipline in his lifestyle ('nema'), there arises a need of a younger 'notagara'.

2. Growth and Process of 'nota'

The ability of a 'notagara' depends upon the success of 'Sodhki' he conducts for his clients. People of a locality assess the effectiveness of 'nota' of a 'notagara' on the basis of their experience and also that of the neighbors and relatives. The people make three categories of 'notagara' on the basis of effectiveness of their 'sodhki' viz. a) 'notagara' of less severe problems, b) 'notagara' of severe problems and c) 'notagara' of more severe problems.

a. The 'notagara' who could cure simple and minor ('sanna-putta') problem such as fever ('jwara'), fear ('hedharadhu') over crying of children ('kiri kiri'), frightened children ('mai bechchi beeladhu') while sleeping. Curative period of this sickness is for three days.
a. The ‘notagara’ of severe problems who could cure the issues in some cases in which he is found to be specialized. The specialized illnesses/issues are such as treatment of possession, solution to economic crises. The people describe quality of ‘sodhki’ of such a ‘notagara’ as ‘guna adre aathu; ildidhrilla’ (of certainty of cure).

b. The ‘notagara’ who is very efficient. (‘helidhdhu aagthadhé’ means his ‘nota’ becomes true)

It is significant to note that, the people recognize a ‘notagara’ as efficient ‘notagara’ (‘chalo-notagara’) keeping two points in mind: 1. When the instructions given by the ‘notagara’ are cures/solves the problem properly; and when the statements he makes among the future of a problem become true. 2. The second factor is how efficient the ‘notagara’ is in knowing about his own limitation especially when he is capable of recognizing the effectiveness of the ‘nota’ towards healing or finding solution for an illness or other problem and whether the case which he has taken is beyond the capabilities of his ‘nota’. Depending on these calculations, he advises the clients at appropriate time that he has done whatever he can and it is better to take the patient to the doctor or another ‘notgara’ or ‘bhatru’ (in case of illness) for consultation of treatment. A ‘notagara’ is said to be very strong and able in his ‘nota’, when he proves that he could successfully handle all kinds of illnesses and problems a person suffers in day-to-day life. A ‘notagara’ who solves simple/minor issues or a ‘notagara’ of average performance is available in their own settlement, the people visit him first and when the problem persists in spite of the ‘nota’ they
visit the higher level ‘notagara’. There is one more difference between an efficient ‘notagara’ and average performing ‘notagara’. The efficient ‘notagara’ deals with all kinds of illnesses and problems arising in one’s family whereas the average performance ‘notagara’ is found to be having limited capabilities and solves only a few illnesses and problems related to financial crises. When an efficient and popular ‘notagara’ is a close relative to the affected family, the kinship plays significant role in these processes. When the ‘notagara’ and clients are living within available distance of 3 to 5 kilometers, and or when he has telephone facility, the people consult the efficient ‘notagara’ immediately even though there is an average ‘notagara’ in their settlement.

The ‘Karevakkalu’ shamans (‘notagara’) have different identities, status along with different duties depending on their healing capacity. The healing capacity of the ‘notagara’ is assessed on the basis of effectiveness of healing. People believe that should have certain qualities such as honesty (‘satya’), faith in spirits and deities (‘dhaiva bhakti’). And he should follow certain ritualistic disciplines called ‘nema’. The particulars of ‘nema’ may differ from one ‘notagara’ to the other depending on the beliefs of each ‘notagara’. But ‘nema’ is believed to be the essential component that ensures a successful ‘nota’. The ‘nema’ includes the following obligations:

1) The ‘notagara’ observes restricted food intake habit in order to maintain his efficiency of his healing powers. He is supposed to avoiding non-vegetation food (‘gaulu gashi’), avoid drinking liquor (‘Kudiyodhu’) if the liquor is not liked by the specific ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’ specially on sacred days,
festivals, fairs, specific days in a week such as full-moon days, new-moon day. (if the liquor is not liked by the specific ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’ from whom the ‘notagara’ receives the power and status of ‘notagara’). Another restriction is that, the ‘notagara’ has to take his dinner only in the presence of light. If the lights suddenly go off, while he is taking his dinner, the ‘notagara’ leaves from that day’s dinner, as it is believed to be inauspicious. All these obligations are followed by the ‘notagara’ to remain pure and fit to work as a ‘notagara’.

2) The ‘Notagara’ avoids conducting ‘nota’ on certain sacred days (for instance, a ‘notagara’ avoids performing ‘nota’ on mondays, when his ‘nota’ power is blessed by monday’s deity called ‘ishwara’), in order to please the specific ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’. The people believe that, it is an act of showing gratitude to the deity which enables the person to become ‘notagara’.

d) The capabilities of a ‘notagara’ are influenced more by the power, fame and functions of the particular spirit (‘dhaiva’) or deity (‘dhevru’) which makes a common person to become a ‘notagara’ through its special blessings. When a ‘notagara’ becomes famous due to his successful ‘nota’, the people believe that his ‘dhaiva’ (spirit) or ‘dhevru’ is very strong. Therefore he receives clients from his own locality as well as from other locality or taluk, and from other districts also. In most cases, a ‘notagara’ gets blessed (through possession) to perform ‘nota’ or ‘helike’ by any ‘dhaiva’ or ‘dhevru’ of local level, viz. settlement or family level, (like ‘mane devru’ (family deity), ‘tholashi’ or ocimum sanctum plant (female spirit) ‘hulidevru’ (Tiger god) ‘ammoru’ (settlement’s female
spirit), 'gama' (cluster of spirits and also one of the family deities). the
'notagara' could deal with the simple problems (thereby he becomes a
'notagara' of average performance). Therefore, the 'notagara' of average
performance receives the clients mainly from the same locality as he is
know only within his own locality. However, when a 'notagara' receives
'nota' or 'helike' blessings from a regional deity, comparatively the
'nota' will get a wide coverage of clients and long term problems. The
instances of local 'dhaiva' are 'mane devru' (family deity), 'tholashi' or
ocimum sanctum plant (female spirit) 'hulidevru' (Tiger god) 'ammoru'
(settlement's female spirit), 'gama' (cluster of spirits and also one of the
family deities). The regional deities are such as Lord 'Ganapathi' (male
deity), 'Dharmasthala Manjunatha' (male deity), 'arasu gama' (the
'gama' of kings family), 'Ishwara' (male deity), 'bhandara devathe' or
'ammnoru' (male deity), 'Ganapthi' (male deity). 'Venkateshwara' or
'Thimmappa' (male deity). The regional deities are believed to be
stronger compared to local deities. These levels constitute a circle of
hierarchy of different religious deities and shamanic centers
simultaneously that is shown in diagram G. Here, G1 shows the details
of hierarchy of religious deities and G2 is about the hierarchy of
shamanic healing power. The hierarchical network of religious centers
(G1) is the main source that forms the hierarchical network of shamanic
healing ('nota') power (G2). Because, the 'Karevakkalu nota' is derived
from 'Karevakkalu' religious believes. Therefore, the hierarchy among
‘notagara’ could be understood better after understanding the structure of religious centers surrounded in and around the ‘Karevakkalu’ settlements. Here, it is shown that, the flow of beliefs and ritualistic functions moves (in case of both religious deities (G.1) and shamanic healing power (G.2)) from geographically closer and comparatively simpler centers to distant and complex centers, when any illness or other problem is not cured/solved by the existing healing power. This is evident in the process of health seeking and solution seeking activities of the ‘Karevakkalu’.

Diagram G. Hierarchy of religious deities, spirits and Healing powers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State /National Level deities</th>
<th>District and regional level astrologer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taluka /district level spirits and deities</td>
<td>Taluka /District level ‘Karevakkalu’ shaman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local spirits and deities</td>
<td>Local shaman and astrologer of other communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement spirits</td>
<td>Local ‘Karevakkalu’ shaman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family deity</td>
<td>Home Remedies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is believed by the ‘Karevakkalu’ that, the human kind and other natural beings could live happily only when the supernatural beings are kind
towards natural beings. Hence the ‘Karevakkalu’ always live in harmony with the supernatural beings located in and around their settlement. In order to please the benevolent supernatural beings and also to avoid malevolent effect of supernatural beings, The religious activities such as regular weekly worship (‘somwaradha pooje’), annual worships on different festivals (‘habbadha pooje’), maintaining ‘nema’ (ritual obligations performed towards specific benevolent supernatural beings, according to the liking of each ‘dhaiva’ (spirit) and ‘dhevru’ (deity), are conducted by the ‘Karevakkalu’. The people say that these acts are aimed to achieve the wellbeing of one’s family and settlement. In spite of performing all these religious activities, the people face several problems (‘thondre’) such as illness, economic crises, failure in new ventures. In such situations, the ‘Karevakkalu’ conduct specific set of activities aimed at seeking solutions to particular problems that arise in their day-to-day life. The people start help seeking (through prayers, vows) from their family deity (‘mane dhevru’). If their problem persists, pray to the spirits (‘dhaiva’) and deities (‘dhevru’) of higher level. These higher level ‘dhaiva’, and ‘dhevru’ are known for effective healing. Healing cover a wide range of clients from distant places that are about forty to seventy kilometers the place of a settlement ‘notagara’. And the different levels of these spirits (‘dhaiva’) and deities (‘dhevru’) is shown in diagram G. particularly at G.1. When the illness and other problems are getting intense, the people start praying with vows and shamanic consultation simultaneously. The ‘Karevakkalu’ person start the process of solution seeking with the home remedies such as ‘haana suliyadhu’,

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‘drasti thegiyadhu’ (removal of evil eye). When the illness does not respond, they move from home remedies to next level of cure viz. shamanic consultation with the ‘Karevakkalu nota’ by a local shaman, local shaman and or astrologer of other communities, Taluka level ‘Karevakkalu’ shaman, followed by district and regional level shaman and or astrologer. When the illness/problem is not seems to be solving at the local levels. G.1 and G.2 in diagram G shows a network of layers that includes specific healing centers. (these layers are named as a, b, c, d, e and f in the section G.1 and g, h, i, j, k and l in the section G.2). The ‘Karevakkalu’ move from closer (local levels) to far places (Taluka, district, state, national level deities that are at the distance of around hundred kilometers) with a hope that far levels are superior to local levels. Thus the spirits, deities and shamans of higher levels are believed to be possessing more curative powers compared to the lower level functionaries.

The ‘Karevakkalu’ shamanism (‘nota’) functions at multiple-phases of ‘Karevakkalu’ life. The people receive guidance, clarity and suggestions to the various problems through the curative instructions (‘Soochane’ or ‘Parihaara’) by ‘notagara’ (Shaman). Diagram H shows the various categories of problems for which ‘nota’ is found to be effective. In case, the ‘Karevakkalu-nota’ becomes ineffective, the people are found to be resorting to the healing practices of other communities. Nonetheless, it is the ‘Karevakkalu-nota’, which forms the ultimate resort for center of consultation and decision making, when the illness/problem becomes worst to be handled even by other systems of healing.
Diagram H: Functions of the ‘Karevakkalu nota’

- Guidance to come out of the fear of supernatural beings and effect of witchcraft
- Guidance to overcome economic crises
- Guidance to overcome incidents of continuous failure in new ventures
- Guidance to decide on any issue when the person is in dilemma
- Guidance to choose suitable medical system in case of long term illness
- Defining the natural or supernatural causes of an illness
- Acknowledge the people towards their religious misconduct and negligence
- Treating the illnesses and behavioral disorders caused by supernatural beings
Understanding of the functions of ‘Karevakkalu nota’, throws light on their health seeking behavior in particular and on the whole ‘Karevakkalu’ way of living in general. The ‘Karevakkalu nota’ functions towards curing the illnesses and solving the problems, people experience that fall mainly in three spheres of the day-to-day life of the ‘Karevakkalu’ viz. a. At the level of thinking and decision making; This is one sphere wherein the individual is not sure of the etiology of his/her illness. b. The second sphere is about applying the decision taken through ‘nota’. The ‘Nota’ helps the individuals to go ahead with their action plans formulated earlier even when they face failures. This is very much evident in the healing process of the illness caused by supernatural being. c. ‘Nota’ also functions as a mechanism to bring about an awareness of social values and cultural norms. The process of ‘nota’ alerts people about their religious misconducts and negligence in day-to-day life. In other words, the ‘Karevakkalu-nota’ acts an institution of social-control directed at the total wellbeing of the ‘Karevakkalu’ people. The ‘notagara’ provides a constant encouragement to the affected person and to his/her family members towards solving any problem and illness by taking various steps. The process of ‘nota’ healing takes place in the following way:

Process of ‘Nota’ takes place when client goes to ‘Notagara’ People visits to the ‘notagara’ with any illness and other problems. The intention is to know whether a illness /other problems aroused due to interruption of supernatural beings or not. ‘Notagara’ conducts various rituals such as incantation of ‘bandara’/ ‘basma’ by using specific powerful materials and he
gives those incantated materials emerged out of these rituals to his clients. The ‘nota’ rituals conducted by ‘notagara’ are as follows: Though curative practices are flexible depending on the patient’s condition and the decision of ‘notagara’ or ‘gaadiga’, the pattern of treatment moves from simple to complex. Applying ‘bandara’ or ‘bhasma’ is found to be simple and preliminary curative practices. ‘Anthra’ or ‘cheetu’, ‘dhara’ or ‘thaaytha’ are moderately complex curative practices. Whereas, conducting rituals such as ‘bali’, ‘ede’, ‘homa’, ‘japa’, ‘saanthi’ are considered to be the complex and most effective curative practices advised by ‘notagara’ or ‘bhatru’, when all other measures have been ineffective. If the illness or other problem is positively responding to the ‘nota’ conducted by a ‘notagara’, the client and his family members or relatives decide to continue with the process of ‘nota’. But, when the illness and other problem isn’t responding to the ‘nota’, positively, the client or his/her care takers think of changing the present ‘notagara’ by visiting ‘notagara’ of other communities or priest and or astrologer of ‘Brahmanru’ caste called ‘bhatru’. At this phase, there is also possibility of a patient taken to the treatment of bio-medicine (‘dactar aushadhi’ or ‘aaspatre aushadhi’), if the illness is becoming intense with the symptoms of any physical pain.

A ‘notagara’ is believed to be most effective when he solves the problems and illnesses of his clients successfully and also identifies the reasons and alternative healing practices when they are not responding to his ‘nota’ healing.
The ‘Notagaras’ among the ‘Karevakkalu’ are usually between the age group of 20 to 60 years. Because, people say that, a ‘notagara’ could conduct ‘nota’ effectively when he is fit both physically and mentally. Because, it needs strength (‘thaakaththu’) in order to call, catch and make a ‘dhaiva’ (spirit) or ‘’dhevru’ (deity) to stand in front of him and to take help from the respective supernatural being towards the solution.

Decline of the power of ‘nota’

The people attribute mainly three reasons as the causes for decline in the power of ‘nota’). The first factors are a) Old age (‘vayassagadhu’) of ‘notagara’, 2) Loss of moral values and religious practices (‘nema’) in the routine of ‘notagara’ and 3) When the ‘notagara’ or his family deities are bewitched (‘maati’ and ‘maka kattisuvadhu’) by the enemies. when a ‘notagara’ becomes inefficient to solve the problems of his clients as he is becoming old (about 60 years and more). This status of a ‘notagara’ is accepted by the people as a natural phenomenon because a person becoming old is taken as a natural process. The ‘Karevakkalu’ people believe that performing ‘nota’ successfully is not possible to a person who has become weak (mentally or physically or both) due to old age, due to disease or wrath of any supernatural being. Therefore the old self-retired ‘notagara’ receives peoples’ respect and kind response as a reward to his ‘nota’ service he had provided to his fellow beings. Whereas the second consequence (decline of ‘nota’ due to loss of moral values and religious practices) is considered by the people as an unhealthy situation that negatively affects the whole community as it indicates the fall of
'Karevakkalu' cultural values, especially the ethics of 'nota' (The ethics of 'nota' are such as maintainance of the purity of 'nota' by practicing 'nema', avoiding the desire to make money out of 'nota' service). At this condition, the people blame the particular 'notagara' for his immoral behavior that corrupted the sacred power of 'nota' which was with him. The people identify two main reasons that corrupt 'nota' viz.:

1. When the 'notagara' is addicted to liquor, even when liquor is prohibited even though liquor is prohibited to the particular 'dhaiva' (spirit) or 'dhevru' (deity) that provided the power of 'nota' to the 'notagara'.

The people of a settlement called Arajagi described about an efficient, well known 'notagara' called Puttu Gowda, is becoming inefficient because he started drinking in recent yeas. They add that, earlier, his habit was under control and he was an efficient 'notagara'. But his clients spoiled him by often giving liquor as a reward to 'nota'-service. Later he turned to heavily addicted liquor. As a result both his health and his role as 'notagara' were started spoiling.

2. The second reason that corrupts the power of 'nota' is 'notagara' breaking the ritual discipline called 'nema' (means 'rules'), which are essential requirements of an ideal 'notagara'. The 'nema' refers to ritualistic obligations that are followed by 'notagara'. Every 'notagara' follows several 'nema' in order to maintain the strength, and quality of his 'nota' viz. a. the rules on food habit; The 'notagara' supposed to avoid non-
vegetarian food on festival days. The people believe that, avoiding non-vegetarian food would keep the ‘notagara’ in pure state.

b. the rules on conducting worships: The ‘notagara’ need to conduct routine worships in order to please his favorite deity/spirit (‘ishtadhaiva’). If the ‘istadhaiva’ is female the worships are conducted on Tuesdays and Fridays. Because these days are considered as sacred days that are suitable to the worshiping of female deities and spirits (such as Goddess ‘chaudi’, ‘amnoru’). Otherwise, the ‘notagara’ conducts worships on Mondays and Saturdays as they are said to be the suitable days for worshiping the male deities (such as Lord Eshwara, beerlu’).

c. claiming a weekly off to ‘nota’-service The ‘notagara’ has to keep a day in a week in the name of his ‘ishtadhaiva’ (favorite spirit/deity) in order to maintain the blessings of ‘ishtadhaiva’.

Apart from these general ‘nema’, there are specific ‘nema’, that are followed by ‘notagara’ according to the beliefs of each ‘notagara’. The instances are as follows: 1). Bomma Gowda is a ‘notagara’ of 58 years, from a settlement called ‘Malligejaddi’ (at Yallapur Taluk) is born on Monday, he leaves every Monday as a weekly off. 2.) If ‘Amnoru’ is the family deity of a ‘notagara’ (‘manedevru’) or favorite deity (‘ishta dhaiva’) and it asks the ‘notagara’ (the instruction comes in his dreams or in possessed status) to declare every Tuesday or Friday as a weekly leave because it is believed by the ‘Karevakkalu’ that these two days are favorite Days for female spirits.
(‘dhaiva’) and female deities (‘dhevathe’). Therefore the ‘notagara’ maintains these instructions as ‘nema’.

When a ‘notagara’ becomes inefficient in giving ‘nota’ service to the clients, the people observe his behavior and thereby guess the reason. They describe that, in case a ‘notagara’ is becoming addicted to liquor, most of the clients take advantage of the situation; they give liquor (instead of giving coconut or money) as a reward to ‘notagara’. The intention is to please him and thereby to get better ‘nota’ service. The addiction to liquor is seen as a general feature in case of male folk ‘Karevakkalu’ who are not in favor of liquor addiction, the close relatives and family members of ‘notagara’ blame those people (especially the people of ‘naykaru’ caste among whom much people are addicted to liquor) and make them responsible for the corrupted status of ‘notagara’. But, people blame the ‘notagara’ when he is addicted to liquor on his own interest or when he is breaking any ‘nema’ and thereby becoming inefficient. 3. The third reason that corrupts the power of ‘notagara’ is due to witchcraft made on ‘notagara’ or his ‘mane dhevru’ (family deity) or ‘ishta dhaiva’ (favorite spirit or deity that makes a person ‘notagara’). When ‘nota’ service of a ‘notagara’ becomes inefficient continuously, even though the ‘notagara’ is following all necessary ‘nema’ and being totally fit the ‘notagara’ and his family members think about the two reasons viz. 1) either their enemies (people who always do harm to the ‘notagara’ or his family) or rivals (people who are jealous of ‘notagara’ or his family and therefore they try to trouble them) made witchcraft (‘maati’) towards the ‘notagara’ or on his ‘household or
2) the enemies or rivals made another kind of witchcraft called ‘maka kattisuvadhu’ on his family deity (mane dhevru’) or the favorite deity (‘ishta dhaiva’). ‘Maka’ means face ‘kattisuvadhu’ means tying. It is believed by the people that, the act of ‘maka kattisuvadhu’ makes the deity (‘dhevru’) or spirit (‘dhaiva’) to become weak by loosing the sacred power of protecting the disciples. In this situation the ‘notagara’ and his family suffers from several problems such as the loss of power of ‘nota’, continuous illnesses, frequent economic crises, failure in new-ventures. Therefore, the ‘notagara’ or his family members consult ‘bhatru’ (priest and astrologer from ‘brahmanru’ caste as they are believed to be stronger than ‘notagara’) or another stronger ‘notagara’ in order to remove the of ‘maati’ or ‘maka kattisuvadhu’. Curative rituals such as ‘bali’, ‘Gadi dhatisuvadhu’ takes place along with special worships conducted to the concerned spirits (‘dhiva’) or deities (‘dhevru’) according to the instruction of ‘bhatru’ or ‘notagara’. If the problem is solved the ‘notagara’ and his family members think that, the ‘bhatru’ or ‘notagara’ successfully removed the act of ‘maati’ or ‘maka kattisuvadhu’. Otherwise they come to the conclusion that, even though curative rituals are conducted successfully, the enemies or rivals must have conducted again the act of ‘maati’ or ‘maka kattisuvadhu’. And therefore the problem is persisting.

‘Karevakkalu-nota’ under changing social circumstances:

The ‘Karevakkalu’ ‘nota’ is a body of beliefs, and practices are maintaining its usability by adapting itself to the changing social circumstances. But this adaptation is taking place in such a way that could
contribute to the strengthening of ‘Karevakkalu nota’. The instances of impact of social changes on ‘Karevakkalu nota’ throw light on the following decisive factors of ‘Karevakkalu-nota’ viz.: a) Impact of mass media on ‘Karevakkalu-nota’, b) Application of new technologies to the process of ‘nota’ healing and c) Alternatives to the ‘Karevakkalu’ ‘nota’.

**a. Impact of mass media on ‘Karevakkalu-nota’:**

The ‘Karevakkalu’ believe that the system of ‘nota’ has the power of making decision over each and every issue that arise in the day-to-day life of the people; ‘nota’ is placed above the worldly happenings. Therefore, the ‘Karevakkalu’ are conscious about the social changes that are affecting traditional beliefs and practices. They says that, people who are familiar and influenced by recent social sanctions such as media, education, social work are failed to understand or judge about ‘nota’. Because, they lack complete faith (‘nambge’) in the system of ‘nota’. Most of the ‘Karevakkalu’ people are aware of the discussions often take place in media such as television, news paper regarding the ‘real’ effects of ‘nota’. These discussions often sensationalize the incidents of possession, process of ‘nota’ healing. They also describe the belief in ‘nota’ as a kind of blind belief. Therefore, the ‘Karevakkalu’ respond in there own way, when they are encouraged to express about the ‘Karevakkalu-nota’:
1) To become angry towards the factors (such as programmes played in television, projecting possession and beliefs in supernatural beings as blind beliefs) that label the belief in ‘nota’ as a blind belief.

2) Trying to hide their beliefs on ‘nota’; giving statements such as ‘nobody is depended on ‘nota’ nowadays. They says, ‘we take ‘dactar aushadhi’ (bio-medicine) in case of ill health and ask ‘saastra’ with the ‘bhatru’ (priest and astrologer of ‘brahamanru’ caste) in case of super naturalistic problems’, with a notion that, bio-medicine (‘dactar aushadhi’) and ‘vaidhik’ tradition faith healing (‘saastra’) are superior than that of ‘Karevakkalu’ healing.

3) Agreeing their belief in ‘nota’ at first response; explaining and justifying the power of ‘nota’.

The first two responses were often found when the researcher interacted with the ‘Karevakkalu’ people. Here is an instance that revealed the people’s unwillingness to expose their religious events (such as ‘gama’-worship) to the outsider. On the day of ‘Samaradhne’ (Annual festival of ‘Gaama’ spirit), the researcher asked permission with the people to take the photographs of the images of ‘gaama’ spirit placed at the ‘gaamadha mane’ (residence of ‘gaama’). But the people did not permit the researcher to take those photographs; they said that it is prohibited. The researcher discussed in detail and the people were convinced to some extent and suggested to get permission from ‘gunaga’ (‘Karevakkalu’ priest) in this regard. The researcher discussed with the ‘gunuga’, tried to convince and get the permission But, the ‘gunaga’
also did not permit the researcher to take photographs. The intention of the people was to avoid any misinterpretation of the event and religious belief of the people in media (as they doubted the researcher as a journalist or a television reporter. The people say that if the 'gaama' or any other 'dhaiva' (spirit) is powerful and contributes towards the wellbeing of the people as well as in the conduct of successful 'nota', those who are in need of 'nota' healing come to know about it by their relatives and neighbours. Therefore, there is no need of media in getting information regarding 'nota' healing or any other religious beliefs of the people because media such as television, newspapers often misinterpret the issues (that are related to faith in supernatural beings) to project themselves as modern-intellectuals and sensationalize to attract their viewers and readers without taking proper insights of the concerned people. These activities adversely affect the true disciples of a spirit ('dhaiva') or deity ('dhevru'). The researcher had to explain to them about the purpose of current research as different from that of media. The 'gunaga' after hearing the details, decided to refer the issue to the 'nota' and thereby receiving the consent of 'amnoru'. 'Amnoru' is the spirit that possess the 'agunaga' (who is also a strong 'notagara') and gives instructions ('soochne') towards solution of a problem asked by the people. Therefore, the researcher weighed till the completion of main worship ('pooje') which takes place from morning (9.00 am) to the lunch hour (2.00 pm) in order to take permission by 'amnoru' through the process of asking 'nota'. Then, the people observed the researcher's interest in the whole event of 'samaradhne' and patience in
understanding the attitudes and beliefs of the people; this helped the researcher to gain the confidence of people. The researcher called by the people to join ‘nota’ process along with other three clients, when major portion of the worship was completed; the ‘notagara’ was ready to conduct ‘nota’ at that time. The clients asked to sit beside the ‘notagara’ at the second front hall (‘jaguli’) of the household of ‘notagara’. The researcher explained the purpose of studying the ‘Karevakkalu’ culture and also how confidentiality is maintained throughout the research. The ‘notagara’ asked as to why the photos of ‘Gaama’ are needed. The researcher answered that, it is a part of the current study to collect some photos regarding various aspects of ‘Karevakkalu’ life and add those photos in the study report in order to make the report better. The researcher convinced that, her study isn’t going to harm anybody and she is not from any media. After this conversation, the ‘notagara’ became silent for a minute and then spoke to his assistant (who always stands near to ‘notagara’ in order to make the communication between ‘notagara’ and clients easy) that, the researcher’s study was fare and that would be helpful to the ‘Karevakkalu’ also. Thus, the researcher was allowed to take the photos. The decision announced by the ‘notagara’ was believed to be the words of ‘amnoru’. This incident supports the perceptions and efforts put by the ‘Karevakkalu’ people in order to protect their cultural traits (such as religious beliefs, materials and celebrations) from the others as they think that there is possibility of misunderstanding and misinterpretation by the people of other culture.
b.) Application of new technologies to the process of ‘nota’ healing:

The people say that, road-transportation (‘rasthe-bassu’), communication by telephone (‘ponu’) and modern health care facilities (‘daactar oushadhi’) are quite recent facilities (that are introduced about last thirty years) to the ‘Karevakkalu keri’ (Settlements of the ‘Karevakkalu’). Even though there is difference from one ‘Keri’ to another depending on such factors as nearness of the ‘Keri’ to a Taluka head quarters, people’s effort towards availing the public facilities by the village panchayath members and help given by the local elected representatives.

Several ‘Keri’ of the ‘Karevakkalu’ have telephone but in few households, and this they said is of last 5-10 years. The people are also comfortable in using the telephone. Both public and private telephones are found in the ‘Karevakkalu-Keri’; even private telephones are also used by the people of the settlement, like a public telephone. The person who uses the neighbor’s telephone pays an estimated price to the owner for the service he gets. And the owner gives message (free of cost) to the neighbor in case he/she receives a call for them.

The telephone facility made the day-to-day life of the ‘Karevakkalu’ much easier including the task of ‘nota’ healing in the following way: The ‘Karevakkalu’ people who could avail the telephone facility, (in their household or that of a neighborhood) are asking ‘nota’ through telephone also. The people say that it is a quick and effective way to start ‘nota’ healing process in case an efficient ‘notagara’ is placed at a distance. Because, the
'notagara' starts curative practices (such as preparing incantated 'bandara') as soon he receives a request by a client's phone call. Then he keeps the concerned curative material aside in the name of concerned clients. They believe that the curative effect starts from this phase. The people feel relieved to a certain extent due to this belief otherwise it would have taken another half or full day to visit the particular 'keri' (settlement) of 'notagara' who is living in a different place and by that the healing process also would have delayed. The instances given here reveal how the 'Karevakkalu' are responding to the social changes that are affecting the system of 'Karevakkalu nota': a) The people rejected modern development such as media-exposure, taking the photographs of religious events to avoid the misinterpretation of 'Karevakkalu-nota'. b) And they are using some other modern gadgets such as telephone in order to make the 'nota' healing process quick and efficient.

The 'other-views' on Spirit possession:

It is significant to understand the 'other-views' views on spirit-possession because they help us to understand the subject in total. Because, these 'other-views' are taken by the people who born and brought up in different cultural settings but living in and around the 'Karevakkalu keri' (settlements of the 'Karevakkalu'). As they trained in formal education system and their cultural values also supported to those values of formal education, they are having different views on spirit possession among the 'Karevakkalu'. The 'other views' are taken from the social workers, journalists, teachers and doctors who are familiar with the 'Karevakkalu' way of living. Among these four categories
of ‘other views’, the doctors’ views are comparatively intense and analytical; where as the views of other three category viz. social workers, journalists and teachers are more or less the same. They say that incidents of spirit possession are a result of their blind-belief. And they suggest that the ‘problem’ of spirit-possession (bhaara baroodhu’) could be solved by the promotion of complete literacy through formal education. However, the doctors practicing in the same locality and psychiatrists who have treated the patients with spirit-possession symptoms have different analysis than that of the ‘Karevakkalu’ people. They opine that there are several aspects of human life contributing to the spirit possession. They are, food habits, psychological disturbance, lack of knowledge of biomedicine, socio-economic setting and crises arising due to lower economic condition and over dependency on traditional practices such as ‘nota’. These aspects are discussed below:

a) Food habit of the ‘Karevakkalu’: The ‘Karevakkalu’ are identified by the local doctors as the people who don’t have discipline in eating. They eat beyond their capacity when they get more food and therefore often patients upset their stomach and come to take treatment with the local doctors. Bourguignon E opines that, insufficient or excessive food intake is one of the reasons to altered states of consciousness. The author also discussed about the usage of drugs, plant substances, that leaves hallucinogenic effect on the consumer, which is prevalent among people who have possession tendency (1996). It is found that liquor addition is widespread among the ‘Karevakkalu’ male folk, including shamans (‘notagara’).
b) Lack of knowledge about biomedicine: There is a kind of malevolent spirit—possession called ‘raavu hidiyadhu’ (possession by ‘raavu’) among the ‘Karevakkalu’. People explain this possession as dangerous because the victim will die with in targeted period (‘gadu’) fixed by ‘raavu’ (such as three days, seven days). But, the symptoms of ‘raavu hidiyadhu’ (loss of consciousness, blood fond found while omitting, bleeding from nose and fever) are considered by the doctor as the problem of high blood pressure in the victim’s body. The doctor also say that the ‘Karevakkalu’ don’t come to the doctor even though doctors are available near by. Because these people don’t know that doctors could understand the problem and treat the condition of ‘raavu hidiyadhu’.

c) Social stress, lower economic conditions and psychological aspects: The doctors who focus their treatment towards psychological aspects of spirit—possession are found to be concerned about the severity of the symptoms, which turns to an illness that requires psychiatrist’s help or that of a general physician. According to psychiatrists’ observation, the cases of spirit-possession are hysterical. They also adds that hysterical patients behave in strange ways such as possessed by spirits in order to gain two benefits, viz., material or monitory benefits or to get sympathy from the fellow beings. The ‘Karevakkalu’ people under lower economic and social condition that creates stress, weak will and more dependency on traditional healers. They also opine that the state of spirit-possession could be treated by counseling (with or without medicine) depending on the person’s condition.
The ‘other’ views on ‘Karevakkalu ‘nota’.

The ‘Karevakkalu nota’ is believed by the people as a unique system of healing. Because, it is found to be successful in healing the various kinds of illnesses and solving the problems faced by the people. There are several instances of illnesses for which the treatment by biomedical doctor became fruitless but ‘nota’ healing successfully treated the patient. The significance of ‘Karevakkalu nota’ lies especially in the following aspects: a) it works as primary source of power in reducing the fear, anxiety and stress attached to any illness or other problem from which a person is suffering in day-to-day life. It is found that, the ‘Karevakkalu’ seek advice by ‘notagara’ at first stage of fever (jwara’). Also they take shamanic consultation when they are frustrated due to continuous failure in completing their day-to-day activities. b) the ‘Karevakkalu nota’ provided place for other systems of healing (‘sastra’) and also to biomedicine (‘daactara oushadhi’), especially when the particular set of curative activities becomes fruitless. c) it provides an in depth counseling to the client; The people find it very comfortable to spell out their worries and problems with ‘notagara’. There are problems including long-term illness, which do not responding to the ‘Karevakkalu-nota’ and this makes them to search alternatives to the ‘Karevakkalu’ ‘nota’. It is found that, most of the times, the people go for an alternative healing system at the second or third stage of illness. Because it is an experimental stage in which the existing ‘nota’ healing measures seems to be inefficient. At this phase, people go for either traditional healing measure of other communities or towards biomedicine. The reasons are as follows:
1. Scarcity of efficient ‘notagara’ in the ‘Karevakkalu-keri’ (settlement of the ‘Karevakkalu’)

2. Presence of strong ‘notagara’ of another community in the same locality.

3. Presence of higher caste priest/astrologer ‘bhatru’ in the same locality

Along with these reasons, the ‘Karevakkalu’ who maintain closer interaction with higher caste ‘brahmanru’ (most of the agricultural labors from ‘Karevakkalu’ tribe are working in the lands of ‘brahmanru’.) carry some perceptions regarding the alternatives to the ‘nota’. They say that nowadays, they are much depending on faith healing given by ‘bhatru’ which is called as ‘Sastra’. Because, the ‘bhatru’ are following superior and more logical method called astrological knowledge. They also add that, unlike ‘notagara’, the ‘bhatru’ study the holy books of ‘Vaidhik’ tradition and refer to them before giving ‘parihaara’ (solution). Another factor that impresses the ‘Karevakkalu’ people is ‘bhatru’ living a disciplinary life and they do not take liquor. Where as most of the ‘Karevakkalu-notagara’ are found to be addicted to liquor. Whenever ‘nota’ by a ‘notagara fail to solve their problems, the people think of this factor of liquor addiction as the main cause. Where as, if a ‘notagara’ is conducting ‘nota’ efficiently, his bad habits (such as liquor addiction) become religiously acceptable. For instance, when a successful ‘notagara’ is heavily addicted to liquor, it is believed that as the ‘favorite deity or spirit (‘ishta dhaiva’) of ‘notagara’ or the ‘dhavia’ (spirit) or ‘dhevru’ (deity) as asked the ‘notagara’ to take liquor and hence he consumed liquor. Therefore,
it is significant to note that the main reason for seeking alternatives to ‘Karevakkalu-nota’ is, inefficiency of the available ‘notagara’ and ‘nota’ healing.

‘Karevakkalu nota’ and altered states of Consciousness

Most of these features of altered states of consciousness that are summarized by Bosguignon E. are found in the ‘Karevakkalu’ shamanism (‘nota’) also viz.: a) The ‘Karevakkalu nota’ is also an outcome of ‘Karevakkalu’ culture; it is learned behavior. It possesses the highest place in the social life of the ‘Karevakkalu’ individual in the sense; it plays a decisive role in directing the person in solving any problem that is out of one’s ability to tackle. b) Meaning, experience concerned to ‘Karevakkalu nota’ are culture bounded. For instance, it is found that the people from other culture (such as biomedical doctors, neighbors from upper castes) often fail to understand the language, rituals, and beliefs involved in ‘Karevakkalu nota’. c) Another feature of shamanism discussed by Bourguignon E. (1996) is traditional method of induction and termination of specialists viz. shamans. This feature is also similar in case of ‘Karevakkalu nota’. Here, the ‘Karevakkalu’ shaman ‘notagara’ starts his service as ‘notagara’ through an incident of possession by benevolent spirit (dhaiva) or deity (‘dhevru’). And he takes voluntary retirement when he realizes that he is not getting proper possession and messages (‘soochane’ from his favorite spirit or deity (‘ishta dhaiva’) and therefore his ‘nota’ is becoming fruitless. d) Other aspects associated with shamanism in general and ‘Karevakkalu nota’ in particular are as fallows: d.1

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The possessed status ('bhaara baroodhu') among the ‘Karevakkalu’ is contrasted with normal state of waking consciousness; d.2) The experience of several forms of sleep and dreaming are described as an essential element of religious life of the ‘Karevakkalu’. The people who gets possession by malevolent spirits ('keelu') talk of experiencing the horror dreams, drowsiness, extreme boredom and sleep deprivation which ultimately leads to psychosomatic illnesses whereas the ‘notagara’ (shaman) who often gets possession by benevolent spirits ('dhaiva') and deities ('dhevru') experiences symptoms such as daydreaming, inspiration such as being blessed by a ‘dhaiva’ to conduct as the mediator between that dhaiva and disciples. d.3) The doctors including psychiatrists who receive patients from the ‘Karevakkalu’ community quoted the hormonal disturbances and psychoactive substances (such as liquor) as influencing factors to the cases of altered states of consciousness.

The altered state of consciousness is exhibited through spirit-possession among the ‘Karevakkalu’. There are two kinds of spirit-possession, which have different social recognition in the ‘Karevakkalu’ community viz.

(a) Possession by benevolent spirit ('dhaiva')s and

(b) Possession by malevolent spirit ('Keelu').

(a) Possession by benevolent spirit ('dhaiva'):

Possession by benevolent spirit ('dhaiva') is called as ‘Bhaara baroodhu’ or ‘helike aagadhu’. It is considered as a benefit to the whole community, as it
leads to the shamanic healing in the ‘Karevakkalu’ society. The shaman ('notagara') among the ‘Karevakkalu’ is always a male who acquires a dignified status. Because he is blessed and selected by a benevolent spirit ('dhaiva') in order to conduct ‘nota’ and to communicate between spirit ('dhaiva') and its disciples. And this leads to the wellbeing of ‘Karevakkalu’ community. And the second category of spirit possession found among the ‘Karevakkalu’ is,

(b) Possession by malevolent spirits ('Keelu' hidiyadhu'):

'Keelu hidiyadhu' is found both among the men and women of the ‘Karevakkalu’. It is a state in which the person behaves according to the wishes of a particular ‘Keelu’ which always troubles the human beings and animals in order to fulfill its desires. The desires of ‘Keelu’ are such as satisfying one’s hunger by killing the person immediately or troubling the person till death. The ‘Karevakkalu’ people that, one’s ‘Keelu’ possess a person it creates lots of troubles such as an illness becoming intense in spite of several treatment practices, the person behaves in strange manner that seams absurd or fearful to the fellow beings. In these situations, possession by benevolent spirit ('dhaiva') or ('bhaara baroodhu') becomes a curative practice to the condition of possession by malevolent spirit ('Keelu hidiyadhu').

The consequences that lead to the altered states of consciousness are as follows:

a) In case of possession by benevolent spirit ('dhaiva') ('bhaara baroodhu'): The ‘Karevakkalu’ believe that only blessed people get
possession by benevolent spirit (‘dhaiva’). The first incidence of possession of benevolent spirit (‘dhaiva’) takes place when there is a group of people gathered around the person and while celebrating. It is significant to note that a person is identified as shaman (‘notagara’) only after several successful encounters take place with spirits that result in solving the problem of people. A ‘notagara’, apart from his status as ‘notagara’ is found to be a common person who also face several super naturalistic problems such as loss of ‘nota’ power due to the effect of witchcraft (‘maati’), long term economic crises and illnesses such as ‘hedharadhu’ (fear), ‘smrithi thappadhu’ (loss of consciousness) before becoming a ‘notagara’. There are instances of a ‘Keelu’ (evil spirit) troubling even very efficient ‘notagara’. In these conditions, the ‘notagara’ follows the practice of beating oneself. The common person living around the ‘notagara’ takes these incidents as natural. Because, the ‘Karevakkalu’ notagara’ is emerged in the ‘Karevakkalu’ culture in order to manage and solve the super naturalistic problems of the people of the ‘Karevakkalu’ community as whole rather than oneself. Here, ‘notagara’ works as a mediator between the client and spirit only when he is in altered states of consciousness, concerned to a particular case. Apart from this moment, the ‘notagara’ leads a common man’s life in ‘Karevakkalu-keri’ (settlement of the ‘Karevakkalu’) and therefore, the problems faced by a ‘notagara’ are seen by his fellow beings with kindness. There are two basic factors found in any ‘notagara’ viz.
1) A strong belief in supernatural beings and their power and

2) A strong faith in shamanic healing (‘nota nodsadhu’) towards finding solution to any supernatural problem.

The ‘notagara’ is found facing several supernatural problems targeted to himself and his family in his day-to-day life and he always seem to trying to analyze each problem, find solutions as well as that of clients through his power of shamanic healing (‘nota nodsadhu’). Therefore, the ‘Karevakkalu’ notagara’ is a special person who encounters the culturally defined constraints (such as fear of supernatural beings) positively by using a cultural provision called i.e. ‘bhaara baroodhu’ (benevolent spirit possession).

b) In case of possession by malevolent spirit (‘Keelu hidiyadhu’): The ‘Karevakkalu’ experience the state of encounter with or possession by any malevolent spirit (‘keelu’), especially when they are ‘lonely’. There are several situations that makes the ‘Karevakkalu’ individual to act in ‘lonely’ hours. The consequences of this ‘loneliness’ and thereby to possession of malevolent spirits (‘keelu hidiyadhu’) described by the people are as follows:

- When a person is going to paddy field or plantation-work or to forest in order to hunting and gathering. The people often take 2-3 hours walk (lonely) towards other ‘Karevakkalu Keri’ in order to meet their relatives or friends. And also they visit other villages, towns on their business such as to meet their land owners (in case the person is a tenant), biomedical doctors, and government officers when they need some assistance and to
purchase grocery The single ‘Karevakkalu’ person, who is walking in those places in which people aren’t found.

- The second consequence is about specific, timings and days such as after noon hours, night hours, full moon days and new moon days which are considered to be favorite to the spirits as they become stronger in these timings and days.

- The third consequence is regarding invisible path (‘suli’) of spirits. There are malevolent spirits who become angry if anybody crosses their ‘suli’ and they possess, trouble and later kills that person or animal that interferes the ‘suli’ even though unknowingly.

- The forth consequence is the personality structure of victim. Because, the people say that, evil-spirits often possess those who ‘fear’ about evil-spirits. If the person is courageous, he could walk lonely in night or afternoon very safely.

- The fifth consequence is lack of worship – rituals to the benevolent spirits (‘dhaiva’) and deities (‘dhevru’) and lack of a complete death ceremony. The people say that they commit several mistakes by negligence or loss of memory while conducting worships to the spirits (‘dhaiva’) and deities (‘dhevru’). They also adds that, when a person meets bad death (ketta saavu’) such as death in young age, death due to murder, sudden illness. They also carry some notions of inferiority regarding performing the death ceremony; the ‘Karevakkalu’ say that they don’t perform sufficient death rituals such as ‘maashika’ (monthly death ceremony that is performed in
the first year of a died person) and ‘thithi’ (annual death ceremony) and the incidents of possession and trouble by malevolent spirits are comparatively more among the ‘Karevakkalu’. Whereas, higher caste ‘brahmanru’ people have very less cases of malevolent spirit possession as they conduct much elaborative death ceremony compared to ‘Karevakkalu’ and also other lower caste people.

The ‘Karevakkalu’ world view and shamanism is a core part of ‘Karevakkalu’ life. The religious beliefs play the decisive role in the world view of the ‘Karevakkalu’. The socio-economic life of the ‘Ke arevakkalu’ is guided by these religious beliefs. The peoples’ perceptions on health and illness are also guided by religious beliefs and practices of the ‘Karevakkalu’. The ‘Karrevakkalu’ always try to be ‘religiously correct’ (‘sariyaagi nadkaladhu’) in order to maintain their good-health in particular and total wellbeing in general. The incident of illness is perceived as a risk, a problem that could lead to helplessness, inability and death of the person. Hence, illness is taken as a serious issue that can’t be ignored. In most of the instances, the case of illness is doubted as a supernatural risk rather than a biological issue at the first phase of the illness itself; the people rush to traditional healers to confirm the causality and get first healing measure. And therefore, traditional healers have most significant role in the social life of the ‘Karevakkalu’. Where as local biomedical doctors have least knowledge regarding the behavioral disorders of the ‘Karevakkalu’ as they are unfamiliar with the health seeking behavior, beliefs and practices of ‘Karevakkalu’. The concept of Health and illness,
Normality and abnormality are a part of ‘Karevakkalu’ world view and shamanism, which are dependent on the ‘Karevakkalu’ perception on supernatural world and values.