

'Tribal treatment thru rituals not a superstition'

By SHYAMHARI CHAKRA

Bhubaneswar, Jan. 1: While the modern medicare system is contemplating on trying alternate healing therapies like yoga and meditation, the age-old tribal tradition of treating ailments through rituals appears to have a scientific basis.

This has been the finding of a study by the Ahmedabad-based expert on Zen meditation system of the Buddhists Murali Menon who claims to have evolved ZeNLP, a combination of Zen meditation and Neuro Linguistic Programme to promote the art of drug-free healing.

In an exclusive interview to this newspaper, Menon, who spent nearly a month in the inaccessible interiors of Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district recently to study rituals of tribals, told that the tribals in different parts of the globe practise a mysterious meditation that helps them strengthen the healing mechanism in the body.

Citing case studies, he said, in Khejuri village in the STR core area he came across the hill Khadias, one of the most primitive tribal communities, who cure themselves of malaria through collective chanting.

"Every village here has its secret groove deep inside the forest where there would be a deity. When someone



A tribal woman practising meditation with a silver coin on her forehead in Jenabil village.

would be ill, the village priest would summon a number of villagers to the groove through beating of drums where all would start chanting in unison. Though they are not aware, it is their way of meditation that connects to the cosmic consciousness which we call "Kundalini". At times, in some other regions, they also put a copper coin on their foreheads to meditate. It enhances their mind power to an extent to get a grip over the sick spirit. The Zen meditation system exactly works this way", he observed.

Menon further revealed that he discovered another interesting system of meditation among the "Kohls" in Jamanagarh, Barakhamba and Jenabil villages in the STR area. "Here the ailing

person has to plant a Sal sapling which they consider as their deity. The person has to give water to the plant, close the eyes for some moments and then look at the Sun following which the sickness disappears. This ritual is the way to ask for positive energy in a meditative mood", he felt.

Menon's study of some tribal communities in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka have revealed similar findings who also adopt scientific methods of arousing their mind power. "So far the lone study conducted on the Mexican tribe Yakul Indians has shown that the community has a practice of mysterious meditation through which they get cured of different ailments, he said.

Menon said modern medicos often reject such ancient tribal rituals as superstitions. However, they need to study the scientific base of the rituals on which the communities have total trust and dependence down the ages.

"Without any access to the modern medical service system these communities have protected themselves from several ailments through such time-tested systems", he observed and suggested that the tribals should be encouraged to practice their own way of healing.

Menon would study some tribes of southern Orissa during his next visit to the State, he said.