



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY OF SOCIETY'S PERCEPTION ON DIVINE HEALING MIRACLES

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ARTICLE INFO

**Article History:**

Received 07<sup>th</sup> December, 2011

Received in revised form

17<sup>th</sup> January, 2011

Accepted 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2011

Published online 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2012

**Key words:**

Supernatural,  
Priest,  
Religion,  
Perception and Belief.

ABSTRACT

The religion and priests play vital role in the formation of a community and to society. Religious activity plays more roles in formation of character, faith and heritage so on. In the part of religious activity sometimes the priests or clergy performs the miracles or supernatural thing to attract and to draw the attention of society the perception on it may vary person to person and one religion to another. This article finds which religion is leading in this aspect. The comparative study is carried out with reference to Hindus and Christians. The samples of 50 in each religion with different age groups are taken from Dharmapuri, Salem and Thanjavur districts of Tamilnadu, India. The questionnaire is consisting of 20 questions with 4 sections. The collected information is converted to table form in order to analyze the perception. The software SPSS used for analysis and to draw the results. The recommendations were given to according to the results were drawn from the study to preserve the heritage, culture, religious faith and to make societies harmony without panic.

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INTRODUCTION

People have different belief, faith and custom or tradition, but all these are not same everywhere. In the same it differs among the religions too. The religion and priests play vital role in the formation of a community and to society. Religious activity plays more role in formation of character, faith, heritage and so on. In the part of religious activity sometimes the priests or clergy performs the miracles or supernatural thing to attract and to draw the attention of society. The miracles or supernatural things are not believed by some people. Hence the perception on it may vary person to person and one religion to another. This article finds which religion is leading in this aspect. The comparative study is carried out with reference to three religions i.e. Hindu and Christian.

**Objectives of the study**

1. To study the intensity of people's faith on religion.
2. To study the Awareness of healing miracles done by the priests.
3. To study the role of priest on social awareness.
4. To study the need and importance of miracles in the society.
5. To study the social impact of healing miracles performed by the priest.
6. To study the Hindus and Christians perception on healing miracle.

**Statement of the problem**

The researcher's observations and the stories from the common people the researcher found in certain group of people believes and having faith too much in healing miracles; even to cure the diseases or sick person approach to those who performs is common. As the result the sick person suffers severe and leads to death. The disease curing miracle or healing miracle is a kind of social evil, as science says every disease can be cured only by appropriate medicine and not by healing another person or only by praying god. African and developing countries are facing stiff contrast in this aspect. The priest should be a modulator between the culture and social change- trend by inculcating the scientific values and not to appreciate the social evils. Hence keeping all these things in the mind, the researcher decided take up the study on "A study of society's perception on divine miracles"

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

On the other hand, if we follow Roland Robertson in conceiving of globalisation as a modern process through which the world is increasingly becoming a single place, religious leaders often play key roles in resisting globalising processes and their cultural and material effects. An important study by Fred Sicher, Elisabeth Targ, and associates describing healing research done at California Pacific Medical Center was published in the December 1998 issue of the *Western Medical Journal*.<sup>19</sup> The article describes the positive therapeutic effects of distant healing or intentionality on men with advanced AIDS. Joseph Campbell is famous for teaching

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that our lives are fulfilled only when we “follow our bliss.” For Thomas Aquinas, this passion was pursued through conscious reasoning. He wrote that “The ultimate human felicity is found in the operation of the intellect, since no desire carries us to such heights as the desire to understand the truth. Indeed all our desires for pleasure or for other things can be satisfied, but the desire to understand does not rest until it reaches God.” In his 1939 essay “Science and Religion,” Albert Einstein suggested that we each have the potential for a greater awareness of truth than analysis alone can offer: “Objective knowledge provides us with powerful instruments for the achievements of certain ends. But, the ultimate goal itself, and the longing to reach it, must come from another source.” As is the case with scientific rationality and technology, the apparently exogenous nature of these religious symbols and values make them volatile: they are mysterious to those who welcome newness, foreign and dangerous to less open-minded critics (Richard weiss,2005)

Wisdom teachers throughout history have shown that the experience of God is possible without belonging to a church or following a religion, as long as one’s basic motive is to discover truth. Herbert Benson recently proposed that we—our bodies and our brains—are “hard-wired for God.” By this he means that throughout the past 2500 years—from Buddha, Jesus, and the Ba’al Shem Tov (Israel ben Eliezer, the founder of Hasidic Judaism), to such poets as Rumi, Blake, and Emerson—mystics have shared a common experience that is actually available to us all. In the mystic paths, the experience of God is celebrated rather than the belief in God or the religious ritual (Barks C,1997). The Sufi poet Rumi shared his thoughts that arose after experiencing his own divinity:

*All day I think about it, then at night I say it.  
Where did I come from, and what am I supposed to be doing?  
I have no idea.  
My soul is from elsewhere, I’m sure of that,  
And I intend to end up there.*

Mind-to-mind connections that transcend our ordinary understanding of space and time give us expanded awareness, which is entirely consistent with life in a nonlocal world. This connection is what physicists mean by non locality. To the healer, it gives rise to what Larry Dossey refers to in his book Reinventing Medicine as Era III healing of a distant patient through the intentionality of the healer. Our knowledge of these remarkable abilities allows us to awaken each morning in wonder at the fact that our expanded awareness is not limited by either time or space. And it should have become clear to us by now that although we reside in bodies, there is more to us than skin and bones. Our quiet moments of self-inquiry can reveal what that “more” is ( Dossey L,1999).

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### Methodology

Normative survey with stratified random sampling method was adopted in this study. The present study area covers Tamilnadu, India. There are numbers of tribe and different religious groups are found in the world, but for the convenient of the researcher and co-authors it limited to Salem, Dharmapuri and Thanjavur districts of Tamilnadu.

The following tool was used in this study:

1. The questionnaire consist of 20 questions in 4 sections in each section 5 questions which was constructed and validated by the investigator. The data sheet was used to collect personal information about sex, age, qualification, locality, income and marital status.
2. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the samples with reference to the variables taken for the study. Statements were converted in to simple statistical tables. In differential analysis the significance of difference between groups was studied using ‘t’ test.

## ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

**Table 1. Hindus perception on divine miracle with reference to Gender, Age, Locality, Qualification, Income and Marital status**

Variables	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Value	P
Gender	Male	25	29.24	2.77	2.8428	0.0065**
	Female	25	31.80	3.55		
Age	Below 40 years	30	30.03	2.83	0.9433	0.3502 NS
	Above 40 years	20	30.95	4.05		
Locality	Urban	31	32.84	3.07	2.6935	0.0097**
	Rural	19	29.74	5.10		
Qualifications	Up to 10 <sup>th</sup> Std	27	33.22	2.87	2.9556	0.0050**
	Above 10 <sup>th</sup> Std	23	29.74	5.10		
Income	Below Rs.5000	22	33.64	2.90	1.6552	0.1044 NS
	Above Rs.5000	28	32.39	2.41		
Marital status	Married	24	33.25	2.66	2.2835	0.0269*
	Unmarried	26	35.04	2.86		

\*\*significant at 0.01 level, \*significant at 0.05 level

- 1) The ‘t’ value is significant at 0.01 level for Male and females perception. It is concluded that the male and female differ towards their perception on divine miracles.
- 2) The calculated ‘t’ value is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. It is concluded that the perception of the people who have below 40 years and above 40 years are do not differ towards their perception on divine miracles.
- 3) The ‘t’ value is significant at 0.01 level for urban and rural people’s perception. It is concluded that the urban and rural people differ towards their perception on divine miracles.
- 4) The calculated ‘t’ value is significant at 0.01 level of significance. It is concluded that the people whose qualification is up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard and above 10<sup>th</sup> standard are differ towards their perception on divine miracles
- 5) The ‘t’ value is not significant at 0.05 level for Rs 5000 and above Rs 5000. It is concluded that the people whose income is up to Rs 5000 and above Rs 5000 are do not differ towards their perception on divine miracles
- 6) The ‘t’ value is significant at 0.05 level for the married and unmarried. It is concluded that people who have married and

unmarried differ towards their perception on divine miracle performed by the priests.

**Table 2. Christians perception on divine miracle with reference to Gender, Age, Locality, Qualification, Income and Marital status.**

Variables	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Value	P
Gender	Male	26	29.08	3.01	0.9963	0.3241 NS
	Female	24	29.96	3.25		
Age	Below 40 years	21	29.33	3.02	3.3162	0.0017**
	Above 40 years	29	32.45	3.45		
Locality	Urban	28	30.36	3.51	1.7086	0.0940 NS
	Rural	22	32.05	3.42		
Qualifications	Up to 10 <sup>th</sup> Std	24	29.58	2.96	3.0164	0.0041**
	Above 10 <sup>th</sup> Std	26	32.27	3.31		
Income	Below Rs.5000	25	29.88	3.36	2.2424	0.0296*
	Above Rs.5000	25	31.88	2.93		
Marital status	Married	23	30.22	3.16	1.5717	0.1226 NS
	Unmarried	27	31.59	3.02		

\*\*significant at 0.01 level, \*significant at 0.05 level

1. The 't' value is not significant at 0.05 level for Male and females perception. It is concluded that the male and female do not differ towards their perception on divine miracles.
2. The calculated 't' value is significant at 0.05 level of significance. It is concluded that the perception of the people who have below 40 years and above 40 years are differ towards their perception on divine miracles.
3. The 't' value is not significant at 0.05 level for urban and rural people's perception. It is concluded that the urban and rural people do not differ towards their perception on divine miracles.
4. The calculated 't' value is significant at 0.01 level of significance. It is concluded that the people whose qualification is up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard and above 10<sup>th</sup> standard are differ towards their perception on divine miracles
5. The 't' value is significant at 0.05 level for Rs 5000 and above Rs 5000. It is concluded that the people whose income is up to Rs 5000 and above Rs 5000 are differ towards their perception on divine miracles
6. The 't' value is not significant at 0.05 level for the married and unmarried. It is concluded that people who have married and unmarried people do not differ towards their perception on divine miracle performed by the priests. The Pearson correlation is not significant at 0.05 level, for the Hindus and Christians perceptions. Hence there is no significant relationship between the Hindus and Christians perception on divine miracles.

## FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

### Common findings

*The major findings from the study as follows:*

- 1) Directly or indirectly the religious leaders are involving and encouraging the belief of healing/ miracles and supernatural things among the people to sustain or expansion/conversion of the religion.

**Table 3. The Pearson correlation between the Hindus and Christians perception on Divine healing miracle**

Variable	N	r	p
Hindus Vs Christians	50	0.083	0.2831 NS

\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level.

- 2) According to samples of study reported that people believe lot in those things even to cure their disease and avoid medicine taking too which generally leads to death.
- 3) The report also says that it necessary in certain level to maintain the unity, integrity and faith on the god to avoid the undesirable change among the people.
- 4) Highly educated and economically high standard of people do not believe or do not involve much in these kinds of activities.
- 5) The aged people (40 years and above) show much interest on these kind of activities.
- 6) Married people are more than unmarried while showing much interest divine healing miracle.
- 7) The same low economic group people easily pray for that.
- 8) There is no significant relationship between the Hindus and Christians perception on divine miracles performed by the priests.

### Recommendations

- 1) The religious leaders must go along with science and discoveries so as to find the truth of knowledge which will be more appropriate to the modern society for the development.
- 2) The priest/religious leaders must be updated with the latest development of science and technology so that they can give proper guidance and counseling.
- 3) The duty of religious leaders/priest for "the sick people is only prayers will not be sufficient and along with prayers medical treatment is must" which will be inculcated among the lay people.
- 4) People must see the formation of the priest/Leader which they suppose to acquire to become such a position. Besides these, Government should form proper regulation when they address to mass population in regards to age, academic qualification and philosophical studies.
- 5) Each Parish/Church or Mandir/Kovil should have trained medical practitioner to be appointed by the respective authorities for counseling of disease related issues.
- 6) The awareness programs and displays related to diseases prevention, prevalence of particular disease and necessary steps for cure to save our community's health.

### Conclusion

The Mysterious, miracles and spirituality these all happens since human existence. One or other way when man loses his control over the object he turns to blame the fate and unfortunate. The same as far as the science developed the same faith on the God too developing. Human beings created the objects on the earth, but the earth and universe is created by whom? So our belief is on miracles and healings can and

do happen today. At the same time, if miracles and healings do not happen today in line with our prayers, then we rest on the character of an all-wise, all-loving heavenly Father (James Richards *et al.*, 2007). The scientific and spiritual implications of psychic abilities are evident in the continually unfolding mystery of the space-time in which we live. And a quiet mind has the opportunity for experiencing itself as love that is timeless, eternal, and un separated by our bodies (Russell Targ and Jane Katra, 2001). So, the authors of the article also conclude with the traditional, religion and spirituality cannot be removed, in the same healing miracles, Mandra and sadhu also will co-exist. This kind of belief too developing along with the science, so this could not be removed completely from human mind. Besides these this also gives a social harmony, culture and heritage from the past generation to till future generation.

#### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Dr.V.Padmini, Dr. J. Punithavathi and Rev. Fr. Sweeten of India and Mrs. Sonia Calvarese of Italy who have shown the support for this research and to bring up this title. I thank my scholarly daughter Ms. T. Preethi who has provided information and literature relevant to this topic which was stimulated for this research work.

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