

**FAITH AND HEALING PRACTICES AMONG THE HINDUS:**  
**A STUDY IN PASCHIM MEDINIPUR**

ACTION TAKEN REPORT

BY

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UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF

PROF. (DR.) RUBY SAIN

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To  
Prof. Ruby Sain,  
Former Professor of Sociology  
Department of Sociology,  
Jadavpur University,  
Kolkata—7000032

Dated: 18/05/2025

Sub: Submission of Addendum

Dear Madam,

I would like to inform you that I have completed my works as stated in the Addendum sent by you. This is for your kind information and necessary action.  
Thanking You,

Yours Sincerely,

*Smita Chakraborty*

Smita Chakraborty  
Research Scholar  
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*Forwarded to Mr. Dean, P.A.  
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## Addendum

**Name of the Candidate:** Smita Chakraborty

**Title of Dissertation:** Faith and Healing Practices among the Hindus: A Study in Paschim Medinipur

### Clarifications as suggested in the amendment:

1. The difference between the 95% recognition of the term "karma" and the 99% belief in its theory highlights an important distinction. This difference is between **knowing a term and holding a belief**, which I aimed to explain.

In the first section, when I asked if people knew the term "karma," the question was simple: *"Do you know what the term 'karma' means?"* About 95% of participants answered yes, showing a high level of recognition. In the second part—about belief in the theory of karma—my approach was more conversational. Some respondents did not know the term "karma," but during the interview, they described ideas like good actions leading to good results and evil actions causing suffering. The researcher explained it to the informants—*"This belief—that our actions come back to us in this life or the next—is often called the theory of karma in Hindu tradition. Do you believe in this idea?"* After this explanation, nearly 99% of respondents said they believed in this idea. This shows that belief was not strictly based on knowing the term "karma" but on a deeper understanding of the principle, often expressed in local terms or stories.

I appreciate the examiner for pointing out this lack of clarity. In the future, I will make sure to clearly outline the difference between *knowing a term* and *believing in a concept*.

Forwarded  
R. Sain  
18/05/2025

2. The data shows clear differences in preference based on education. For example, none of the graduate or postgraduate respondents prefer faith healers, while about two-thirds of illiterate respondents do.

My original point was that education does not always lead to less frequent religious practices or beliefs. Formal education may change how people engage with their faith, but it does not necessarily reduce the presence or strength of their beliefs. In interviews, many educated respondents shared their strong faith in religious rituals, temple visits, and beliefs in karma or divine intervention, even though they sought medical help when sick. This shows that educated individuals often balance rational (scientific) and spiritual views. In contrast, illiterate respondents generally prefer healers over doctors, reflecting their reliance on familiar and culturally rooted systems, particularly in places with limited medical services.

The main distinction here is between:

- Religious beliefs or practices (which remain strong across education levels).
- Treatment-seeking behavior (trust in care providers), which is more influenced by access, exposure, and perceived effectiveness—factors related to education and social class.

3. The researcher understands that these works are not typical peer-reviewed academic literature. However, I chose to include them in my thesis because my research focuses on faith and healing practices among Hindus in Paschim Medinipur. These authors, especially the monks of the Ramakrishna Order, are essential figures in modern Hinduism. Their writings offer insights into Hindu theology and ethics. These texts



shape not only personal beliefs but also group practices, especially in how people talk about karma, dharma, suffering, and healing.

From a sociological viewpoint, particularly from Max Weber's approach to understanding social behaviour, it is important to engage with the sources that individuals find meaningful. These texts are primary cultural materials, reflecting the perspectives of the community I studied. I found them to be valuable for my research, even if they do not fit the usual academic categories.

Nevertheless, I recognize the need to differentiate between academic references and community-based commentaries. In future revisions or publications, I will clarify that these texts serve as cultural-theological references, not as academic scholarship, while still acknowledging their influence on my participants' views.

4. The missing sources of the works cited in the thesis are as follows:

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Reviewed  
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- Rao, PV. (2007) The Place of Science in the Hindu Worldview. In Eisen, A., & Laderman, G. (2015). *Science, Religion and society: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Controversy*. Routledge.