



HOT SPRINGS OF SIKKIM (*TATOPANI*): A SOCIO MEDICAL CONJUNCTURE WHICH AMALGAMATES RELIGION, FAITH, TRADITIONAL BELIEF AND TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Sikkim has many Hot Sulfur springs which have become pilgrimage centers of social medicine and hot spots for medical tourism. Hot springs are known as Tatopani. It is considered as a natural elixir to cure major diseases like Arthritis, Joint pains, Paralysis, Gastric Bowel Disorders and Skin diseases which are predominant in the neighboring and adjoining areas. Interdependence of religion, faith and traditional customs on Tatopani has become a backbone aiding medical beneficiary to the society and mankind. For the first time, this type of study was done at Sikkim, to show and prove the interdependence of society, social science, religion and medical tourism in this area of Tatopani. QAFS methodology was implemented to study both the domestic and international tourists and regular spring goers at hot spring. ICPMS was used to detect the chemical constituents of these Tatopani bath ponds. Rationale was to find out the linkage between the society and the medical importance of Tatopani. It was observed that the following percentages of patients utilizing the Tatopani get cured. Arthritis = 36.98%; Joint Pain = 30.14%; Gastric/Metabolic Disorder = 19.18%; Skin Diseases (Majorly Scabies) = 9.59%; Paralysis = 4.11%.

KEYWORDS: *Tatopani, Polok, Borong, Reshi, Khar, Cardamom.*
