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## Superstitions in society and steps to eradicate

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#### Abstract

In this area the word superstition means falsehood and nonsense talks, in the second meaning the word truth, the first word is reality, the word truth means the original being true and antiauthority. But the term is defined as the perception of reality and also it defines on fear of the unknown and faith in magic. It focuses on the most important aspects of the causes of superstition are ignorance, fighting religion, opportunists abuse and ignorant caring with some scientific weaknesses. In the society the number of superstitions are going on with the different issues in the community in the meanwhile we have to take some precaution to eradicate and to give with the suggested remedies like thinking positively, parental guidelines, teacher guidelines, enlightening the campaigns, role of media and developing the scientific attitude, scientific thinking and inculcations of the scientific methods in day to day life, in this way we can overcome from the superstitions in the society to change the life styles of the modern era.

**Keywords:** Superstition, Ignorance, Dharmasindhu, solar eclipse, scripture, reassurance.

#### Introduction

No matter which part of world you will find the people believe certain beliefs and superstitions and India is no exception in this case. Though the Indian society is fast progressing, there are many people who are still superstitions and have a strong faith in the local beliefs; most of the beliefs have originated from Indian religious texts and scriptures, dharmasindhu, a Sanskrit scripture. Prescribes the day-to-day behaviors patterns for the followers of Hindu religion without assigning any reasonable logic for its directives. The standard view point is that most of Indian beliefs have sprung with an objective to protect from evil spirits, but some gods marked by the evil eye, stars that affect earthly actions these are just some superstitious phenomenon that inspires fear. We can see the superstition. Therefore as constancy a kind of reassurance against fluctuation as though we are part of an in penetrable mystery with incomprehensible rules. All superstitions remain as outward expressions of the tensions and anxieties that hold way over humanity as it struggles down the corridor of life from birth to death, irrespective of education status and richness.

#### Meaning of the Word Superstition

The meaning and literary term of the superstition. The word superstition means “falsehood, vain and nonsense talk” and but it is necessary to clarify the meaning of two words reality and truth to get to know the meaning of the phrase superstition. Whatever is in the world or universe means reality. For example, a tree is a reality and that the vine leaves are green in summer is a reality too. And when we say angles, fairer, heaven and hell are truth, it means that there are and they have existence, we are at the level of the second meaning of the word “truth”. Truth means “the original being true and antiauthority “but the term is defined as “the perception of reality” superstitions are its plural”. It means that if we have the concept of something or understand something and it is our understanding which is out of mind, it understands the truth. The term superstition means the speaking, belief or understanding and your belief is superstition.

#### Definitions of Superstition

A belief or way of behaving that is based on fear of the unknown and faith in magic or lack: a belief that certain events or thing will bring good or bad luck. A belief or practice, resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, trust or in magic or chance or a false conception of caution.

An irrational object attitude of mind toward the super natural. Nature or god resulting from superstition.

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### **Origin of Superstition**

Once upon a time life was extremely hazardous and the central feature of day-to-day existence was pre occupation with the explanation for the relief of human misfortune, vagaries of climatic and geographical conditions. Hostile neighborhood, fear of predators etc., were constant concern of the human society during those days. These things might have influenced for the superstitious behavior which are being carried till date, with craft women wedded to the perhaps there is an unshaken belief in miraculous cures. Magical remedies and supernatural phenomena which might have persuaded to remain superstitious even in this age of reason and scientific progress.

As such there is a section of the society which manipulators the mind of the people to their advantage and a mass wealth and power exhibiting so called miracles and supernatural feats under the grab of divine blessings. These god men, babas, buvas, matajis and maharajas are main transporters of superstitions and have got their stronghold on maharashtrian society. Educated and elite class also supports these god men to protect their wasted interests. This class has completely twisted the meaning of superstition under the name of faith.

### **The Most Important Aspects of the Causes of Superstition**

#### **1. Ignorance**

The most important factor which creates superstition in societies is ignorance. In the past some people considered elliptical events as being the wrath of god. While, if the cause of eclipse was clear for people, such beliefs have no place among people or some people call sneezing waiting signal while in medical science it is clear that sneezing with a foreign object especially a soft object is to remove foreign material from the nose. Similarly, ignorance made numerous superstitions in religions. For example, some groups such Halt (literally means whole grains) because of generosity, occult knowledge and other wonderful things that they observed from imam, could not properly explained and analyze such problems and knew them as pretext of superstition and heresy and anti-Islamic movements. So, certainly, ignorance is one of the most important causes of superstitions in societies.

#### **2. Fighting Religion**

Ruthless and arrogant men who saw the spirit of religion contrary to their behaviours. Directly or indirectly, struggled with the religion. One of the indirect ways of struggle with the religion is creating superstitions in religious communities. The entrance of superstitions in religious teachings collapse religion and detract its validity and prevalent superstitions in the society not only make society collapsed but also traditional teachings will change their place with the teachings of the superstitious in the beliefs "(and)" of behaviours of believers. The Jews had more relationship with Muslims than any other scripture and in this case, it means that the maximum effort in forgiving the traditional sayings was from them. So, one of the main sources of society in which is becoming familiar with the religion such as traditional sayings is mixed with thousands of superstitions and it is very difficult to detect correct from incorrect historical, interpretational as well as other sources are not exceptions.

### **3. Opportunists Abuse**

Some of deception and opportunistic people have used superstition as a way to gain wealth or their evil thoughts in issues such as lust. Many people gain much financial revenue in prayer writing, daily horoscope predictions. Especially women are being subjected to sexual and moral abuse. This issue is so prevalent and obvious in the society that does not need more explanation. It seems that these factors are the main causes of superstitions in a given society. There are factor which are effective in creating superstition but are not essential like the three mentioned such as:

- 1) The human tendency to myth-making which causes exaggeration in explaining some abilities of religious figures.
- 2) Ignorant caring: some people with falsifying sayings want to create love in people regarding to religious issues particularly among some Sufis.
- 3) Some scholar scientific weakness and errors in providing religious education.

### **Superstitions and Religion**

Superstition is child of ignorance and mother of misery. Miracles are not only impossible but they are unthinkable by any man capable of thinking. Ignorance is the soil in which belief and miracles grow. The man who cannot think isles than man, the man who fears to think is a traitor himself, the man who fears to think is superstitions slave. Reason is the light, the sun, of the brain: it is the compass of mind. Priestly community produces nothing. They are parasite. They say: "Believe and give". The man who bows before an idol of wood or stone is just a fool as he prays to an imagined god. Religion cannot reform mankind because religion is slavery. Religion does not teach self reliance, independence, manliness, courage, self-defence. Religion makes god a master and man the serf. Religion has always been the enemy of science of investigation and thought. Religion has never made man moral, temperate, industrious, honest and free. That man has never received any help from heaven, that all sacrifices have been in vain and all prayers have died unanswered in the heedless air.

### **Some of the Common Superstitions in Society**

1. Divination, astrology, prediction
2. Caught ghosts
3. Being unlucky of number thirteen
4. The consecration of Jumada and plants.
5. Prayer writing by some jobber
6. Prayer writing
7. Opening book
8. Knowing sneezing as a sight of waiting.
9. Considering some animals unlucky (for example, it is said that the crow is a crossed bird).
10. Considering some animals lucky (for example, it is said that snake is a lucky animal).
11. Not cutting nail in someday.
12. Not moving in someday
13. Pouring boiling water on the ground burn the jinn.
14. Putting the blood of the victim's on the door of the house or cat etc.,
15. Writing from some particular topic
16. Rubbing the black expand on forehead of a baby.
17. Many superstitions about rainbow.
18. Breaking eggs to relive some eyes.

19. Lighting candles in certain places for the need to be valid
20. Bounding to do some normal people had a dream and thousands of other superstitions that are not represented here.

### Superstitions in Solar eclipse

Solar eclipse is a natural phenomenon that occurs when the moon comes in between the sun and the earth, blocking light from the sun. This cast a huge shadow on the earth. During this time the sun's corona becomes clearly visible. Other planets like the mercury and Venus too come between the sun and the earth but they are too far away to cause an impact. The moon on the other hand is 400 times closer to the earth and during the solar eclipse they look equal sized.

### Superstitions

Solar eclipse has been traditionally observed as an ominous sigh and therefore superstitions abound in association with this natural phenomenon.

- 1) Depending on the culture, it is believed that during the eclipse the sun is swallowed by demons, dragons or devilish dogs.
- 2) Pregnant women have traditionally been waxed to stay indoors and do not to cut vegetables if they wanted healthy babies without congenital anomalies.
- 3) Pregnant woman are also prevented from sewing so that they do not have deformed children.
- 4) People lock themselves indoors to avoid the bad rays of the eclipsed sun.
- 5) Some people clean themselves in holy rivers during an eclipse.
- 6) There are many who do not look eclipse days because they believe that germs abound during this time.

Already the Indian astrologers are predicting doom and disaster as a consequence of the solar eclipse not only in India but in china and the south east. They have predicted communal tensions and political assassinations.

### The Rational changes challenge

The rational and the scientifically inclined have all along challenged the superstitions that exist and are willing to predict otherwise.

They plan to further educate the general public and have already persuaded them do to away with false beliefs and treat. The eclipse as natural phenomenon.

Having allayed their fears. People have been coming out in large numbers in the recent years to view the eclipse so much so that the scientific forum's Tamilnadu chapter soon ran out of supply of solar filters.

People are even travelling long distance to view this once in a lifetime spectacle. A Delhi based organisation. SPACE which is striving to make science and astronomy popular among young people is taking interested folks to Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and to samara near Patna in the state of Bihar to view the solar eclipse.

Boeing 737-700 has been chartered by Cox and kings to enable people to view the eclipse from a 'sun side' seat at 41,000 feet on a three hour flight from Delhi. To the privileged few, who have paid 1,600 dollars to drink in this spectacle, experts will explain the goings on there is a 90% chance of viewing the eclipse on this flight while there is only a 40% chance on the ground.

### Precautions

1. Watch the eclipse through specially made viewing glasses or through solar filters designed to view the sun. The pin-hole projection method is the safest way.
2. Remember that the sun's rays can impair or cause permanent eye damage when viewed through the naked eye.
3. Avoid watching the solar eclipse through binoculars or telescope.
4. Avoid watching the eclipse using sunglasses, smoked glass. Black-and-white film, colour film or negatives.
5. Always watch the solar eclipse under the guidance of experts.

### Proposed Remedies

1. **Thinking positive:** one should think positive and try to develop attitude towards challenges and or duos tasks. This can be achieved through reading, listening and watching positive material in form of books. Biography, audio video means etc., in order to get rid of the failure syndrome.
2. **Parental guidance:** parents play an important part in removing all the fears and beliefs in superstitions through personal guidance and real life examples.
3. **Teacher's guidance:** teacher should encourage healthy discussions in the classroom to get a clear picture of what's the true and what's a lie. This can dispel student's belief in superstitions.
4. **Campaigns and other events:** government and other non-governmental organisations can enlighten the clouded minds with various events and campaigns which can be effective tools in eliminating myths.
5. **Role of media:** various means of media can contribute to a large extent in bringing a change in attitude towards these beliefs. The media should acts more responsibility towards the young generation rather than carrying about their TRP's.

### Programs to Eradicate Superstitions in Community

1. Programs for spreading and inculcating scientific outlook
  - a) Public meetings and lectures on various topics-pseudo sciences like Vastushastra, Phalajyotish (astrology).
  - b) Vidyavahini programs like Grantham yatra (books exhibition) Vishay yatra (science exhibition). Akshadarshanc mobile planetarium), conservation of environment etc.
2. Developing inquisitive and critical activity/attitude: Activities are trained in awaking people and inculcating this attitude in workshops and camps, university and colleges professors participate in these programmes.
3. Constructive criticism of religion:
  - Demonstration to oppose animal sacrifice: jata mukti (cutting) the mattered tresses of girls and saving them from being dedicated to goddess Yellamma). Exposing fraudulent Babs-Buvas-Mata's Fakirs and missionaries claiming supernatural powers.

### Objectives of Eradication of Superstition

1. To popularise the science knowledge.
2. To develop scientific thinking.
3. To cater the individual mind towards science.
4. To uplift the scientific thinking.
5. To tap the community people.
6. To strengthen the scientific concepts.

7. To avoid the blind beliefs.
8. To develop the scientific temper in an individual.
9. To disprove the blind beliefs.
10. To develop scientific attitude, scientific method, scientific application, scientific interest etc., among the individuals.

### Importance of Eradication of Superstitions

1. To know the real knowledge.
2. To think in a systematic way.
3. To get a science knowledge update.
4. To think critically in a systematic manner.
5. To develop the prosperity towards science.
6. To disperse the blind belief.
7. To eradicate superstition in the community.
8. To localise the scientific thinking and scientific reasoning.

### 9. Steps to Eradicate Superstition

Have you become a slave to superstitions? Do you run to the other side of the street when you see a black cat? Do you cringe any time you accidentally step on a crack, or feel convinced that your day will be ruined because of it? Have you ever cracked a mirror, and felt devastated that your life was going to be horrible for the next seven years? If this sounds like you, then it's time to break those superstitions habits and to learn that you have the power to make your own luck.

1. Learn the origins of the superstitions you believe in one way to overcome your superstitious beliefs is to learn where they come from the idea that it's bad luck to walk under a ladder came from to begin with. For example, did you know that the belief that it's bad luck to walk under a ladder came from the idea that it was dangerous to walk in an area where work tools are likely to fall? The more you debunk these superstitions, the more you'll see that while they may be fun to believe in, they have no foundation in reality. Here are some other surprising origins of common superstitions:
  - In 18<sup>th</sup> century London, umbrellas with metal spokes became popular, and opening them indoors became a hazard. Therefore, it became common knowledge that opening an umbrella indoors was considered "bad luck" though this was really.
  - The superstition that spilling salt was considered bad luck began in 3,500 B.C. with the ancient Sumerians. However, this came about because salt was such a prized commodity back then, not because spilling salt has any inherent power to influence your luck.
2. Realize that there's no rational proof that these superstitions can affect your life.
 

Is there any real reason that the number 13 should be unlucky? Why should black cats be more unlucky than any other cat? Can finding a four-leaf clover really cause good fortune to rain down upon your head? If a rabbit's foot were really lucky, wouldn't the original owner (that is, the rabbit) still own it? Though you may believe that thinking rationally is beside the point when it comes to superstitions, if you want to beat your obsession with them, then you have to use critical thinking to get there.

  - Superstitions lie in age-old traditions. Like many traditions, they continue to be enacted, but they don't really serve a purpose.

3. Consider which superstitions cause regular inconvenience to you.

Are you constantly starting at the ground to avoid stepping on cracks to the point of bumping into people on the street? Do you take winding detours in order to avoid stepping on cracks to the point of bumping into people on the street? Do you take winding detours in order to avoid crossing the path of a black cat? The superstitions which cause trouble for you on a regular basis are the ones you should focus on first, may be you spent ten extra minutes walking to work because you think that you're taking the "lucky" path. May be you run back home and are late for a diner date to put on your "lucky" earrings. If you [put on] really think about it, you may find that your superstitions beliefs are actually causing you harm instead of bringing you luck.

- Ask yourself if the anxiety you associate with following different superstitions is really bringing you any good energy.
4. Avoid superstitions beliefs when making decisions.
 

When making decisions, rely on common sense and a sound pattern of reasoning as opposed to weird feelings and supported supernatural signs. if your friend asks you to meet her at a certain place, take the path that makes the most sense instead of the "lucky one", when you walk to work, wear the clothing that is most appropriate for the weather instead of your "lucky" coat when it's 80 degrees outside. Let reason govern your choices, not superstition.

    - Start small first if you spill some salt don't throw it over your shoulder and see what happens. Then you can build toward avoiding superstitions that scare you more. Such as petting a black cat or walking under a ladder.
  5. Realize that you have the power to make your own luck.
 

You can't control all the circumstances in your life; you can control how you react to them and what you do about it. This is far more important than being lucky or unlucky. Everyone deals with bad luck from time to time some people more than others unfortunately and while you can't control the less than ideal circumstances you may face you do have power over trying to face them with a positive attitude and of making a plan to improve your circumstances instead of thinking superstitions or rituals can affects the outcome of your life.

    - It can be comfortable to believe in superstitions because this makes it harder for you to take control over your own life. If you accept that you have the power to make yourself succeed or fail, you'll naturally be scared or hesitant to move forward.
  6. Expect the best instead of the worst
 

Another thing you can do to get into the mindset that superstitious beliefs are irrelevant is to expect the best things to happen for you instead of only imagining the worst possible outcomes in any given situation. if you're convinced that everything is going to go wrong for you, then you'll be much more likely to experience a conflict or a setback. If you think that you're going to have a great day, then it's much more likely that it will happen for you and you won't need to follow any superstitions to get there.

    - Many people believe in superstitions because they think their lives are filled with bad luck everywhere they turn,

and that they need to follow certain superstitions like not whistling indoors, to ward off the bad luck. If you believe that there is goodness and love everywhere you turn, then you would not need superstitions to give your life meaning.

### **Conclusion**

Superstitions are the types of beliefs practices or rite irrationally maintained by ignorance of the laws of nature or by faith in magic or chance.

Superstitions plays important role to develop positive attitudes in some situations and in some situations it become a bad practice.

Superstitions and blind faith are two of the weakest mental quantity of any human being on earth not only with Indian society.

It is impossible to change society on whole but yes as an individual one can adopt changes in life style and beliefs.

Today science and technology growing fast, so we must develop scientific attitude among the people to eradicate superstitions.

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