



Role of Education and Awareness in Combating Black Magic Beliefs

Jaswant Singh, Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Apex University, Jaipur
Email: Jas.singhsatwal@gmail.com

Dr. Poonam Joshi, Professor, Department of Sociology, Apex University, Jaipur
Email: poonamjoshi27780@gmail.com

Abstract

The following study has looked into understanding the influence of education in fighting against the misconceptions and disbeliefs of superstition and black magic. Through ages, occult practices and black magic have stained a large part of people's mind and have cause havoc among the masses. Black magic has blocked their analytical thinking and has made them find rescue in superstitious activities in difficult moments of their life. The following study has thus looked into how the level of education and its relation can subdue the negative impacts of black magic and its theories among the masses. The study has a secondary and qualitative research approach and discusses the role of educative policies on cultural, social, and psychological spectrums.

Keywords: Black Magic, Education, Awareness Programs, Psychological aspects, Witchcraft, Superstitions

1. Introduction

Background

The first instances of black magic can be found through the ancient walls of Egypt in 2700 BC when the use of supernatural powers began to be used for fulfilling malevolent purposes (Auffrère et al. 2022). However, written history has acknowledged its presence in the seventeenth century of England. It was in 1612 that the fear of witchcraft persuaded the people to begin hunting for witches and lead to the era's hysteria of executing women in 'Pendle witch trials' (Yildirim 2022). The history of witchcraft is not restricted to historic England. Rather, cultural heritages like India, Africa and Southern America also carry interpretations of black magic activities. India has a unfortunate tale of sorcery where black magic beliefs are intertwined with local superstitions and rituals (Gnanaolivu et al. 2022). Africa has a mixed belief for black magic. Here, 'witch doctors' are known for using black magic for traditional healing while some are accused of misuse of the ancient knowledge and are expelled from the society. Nevertheless, the modern society believes that black magic beliefs can lead to harmful consequences with no important positive contribution to the society.

Rationale

As more faith in black magic would only push the society on the verge of fear and terror, it is important to address such beliefs and restrain it from increasing. The black magic tales have often been used against for marginalising women and poor strata of the society (Nwanze 2024). Hence, it is important to promote healthy and critical thinking. Education and awareness can act as powerful tools that can provide people with a scientific explanation of myth and magic. Through awareness programs, people can get rid of their fear and understand the psychological and sociological factors that contribute to such beliefs. This would help in nurturing empathy and understanding for one another.

Objective

The objective of this study are:

- To understand the historical and cultural foundations of black magic beliefs.
- To investigate the relationship shared between education levels and belief in black magic.
- To explore how awareness programs can reduce the terror and impact of these beliefs.
- To understand the role of misinformation in perpetuating black magic beliefs and promoting education to address this.

Hence, the following study has looked into understanding the role of education and awareness in fighting against black magic beliefs and their harmful consequences to the society. In doing so, the study has analysed the academic and historical information available on black magic tales. This has given the study a point on view on how historical tales and unawareness have giganticised the terror of black magic. The study has adopted a qualitative and secondary research approach to collect information from the academic and historic databases. A discussion section has shed light on the findings of the study followed by an overall conclusion and policy-based recommendations.

2. Literature Review

Historical Perspective

From the ancient civilization, the concept of "artes magicae" or "artes prohibitaee" emerged and also referred to a wide range of divination and ritual practices, which can be deemed forbidden and dangerous as well (Howstuffworks 2024). These also involved some practices such as geomancy, necromancy, and the invocation of demic entities. These mentioned practices were also associated with pursuing the personal enhancement or infliction of harm upon others. Warikandwa and the fellow researcher mentioned about Anti-progress proponents, whose egocentric behaviour and thoughts seemed connected to "black magic" tactics and no longer regard academic excellence (Warikandwa and Chitimira 2023). In this contemporary era, it seems easy to believe that black magic in Britain is dead. But conversely, at the time of Georgian Britain, the British Empire the multicultural present and drawing on various sources of range that are unprecedented. It includes diaries, oral interviews, and folklore. Panin mentioned in his study about the book "Cursed Britain: A History of Witchcraft and Black Magic in Modern Times", written by Thomas Water, highlighted the witchcraft and Black magic in Britain in the nineteenth century. It mentioned about witches, who worked as mental health workers and also compares their fair-adapted practices with maintaining cognitive behavioral therapy (Panin 2022). From the aspect of researcher Nag, the present area named Assam was known to for famed in Hindi traditions and the land of magic with witchcraft. That place is well known for black magic activity like Tantra, Tantrik Buddhism, Yogini Tantra, and Tantrik Hinduism (Nag 2023). The usage of Indian Wildlife rituals has been suggested to have negative conservation impact. Gnanaolivu mentioned that Tamil Nadu, one state of India, has the belief regarding loris eyes or loris parts that are used to treat a variety of illness and make love potions. In the southern

India, since 300 BCE slender lories have been held cultural importance and being present in tales or stories of Pachchai and Parmbu regions (Gnaanolivu et al. 2022). CSWR represents a brief discussion on American traditions such as Conjure, Hoodoo, and Rootworking procedures. Yvonne Chireau, professor in the Department of Religion at Swarthmore College, talked about the African American religions with black women and religions (CSWR 2024). Jacob mentioned in his study about the belief in black magic, punishment, sin, karma, supernatural; influences, evil spirits, religious theories, and dietary conventions that resulted in complex rules and behavior with ritualistic practice.

Psychological and Sociological Factors

Social and psychological interventions have been given a supportive role. As per the report of The National Medical Journal of India, the universalization of psychiatric diagnoses using symptoms checklist meant that cultural issues. At the same time, it is acknowledged as significant and has always been on the back burner (Jacob 2019). As per the report from UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Save the Children and Human Rights Watch have highlighted the violence and abuse towards children and accused of witchcraft in Africa. On the other hand, in Europe Catholic Church encouraged hunting witches which resulted in no harm or punishment. As per the report of IJCRT, In Kolkata, Nimtala Ghat is known for the last rites activities of the deceased Hindus and has been in the news for several dark magic activities which are suspicious as well (Bhattacharjya et al. 2021). To write about the psychological factors, child victims of witchcraft accusations seem more vulnerable than any adult victims. The reason behind this is that children are not able to defend themselves and also they can confront psychological and physical abuse from the community and family.

Education as a Tool for Social Change

Several educational initiatives are taken to combat harmful superstitions that include the belief in black magic. Educational initiatives that promote scientific literacy and help to dispel myths that surround health issues and also often attributed to black magic. Through the introductory seminar that is based on anthropology highlights through the different light on cultural as well as social approaches to mental health (Jacob 2019).

Awareness Programs

As per the data from the National Library of Medicine, the general population exhibited good and general awareness that is about to depression and its symptoms and also have the provide knowledge of risk factors and treatments. ALJadani and fellow researchers mentioned that public awareness data could be used for the purpose of identifying risk factors which are associated with the probability of mental health (ALJadani et al. 2021). The anti-Black Magic Act is invoked when black magic-related activities are found from WhatsApp chats. As per the High Court of Karnataka, the provisions and eradication of Inhuman Evil Practices with Black Magic Act in the year 2017 (The Hindu 2024). Not only that, Satyameva Jayate is one of the other Indian schemes that was launched by the district administration of Kannur for the purpose of raising awareness about superstition.

Research gap

The literature review is about the black magic that reveals a wealth of historical as well as cultural insights but after all these, significant gaps remain. There is need to understand the longitudinal studies that describe about the belief in black magic, which has evolved over time. There are some insufficient research based on the effectiveness of educational programs that are aimed at dispelling myths, which are surrounding black magic.

3. Research Methodology

Research Design

This study examines the importance of awareness and education in countering black magic ideas using a qualitative methodology and secondary examination of published works, reports, and case studies. Because it enables a thorough examination of societal elements and subjective experiences, qualitative research is ideal for comprehending the environmental and cultural foundations of belief systems like black magic. Through the secondary analysis, this study focuses on in-depth research, NGO reports, awareness campaigns, and government publications that could be helpful to understand the relationship between belief in black magic and awareness (Crapa et al. 2024). Through this approach, the study could avoid any logistical challenges of primary data collections, along with that, it also enables the utilization of data sources that are reliable and diverse as well.

Sampling

The study represents a wide range of geographic regions, educational backgrounds, and cultural contexts by analysing reports and literature. The inclusion criteria of the study include publications that are from reputed journals and reports from international organizations (Uribe et al. 2021). Several international organizations from which case studies would be taken from the aspect of both rural and urban. this study highlights the countries or areas, which areas hold the belief in black magic and give priority to it. This approach ensures a versatile perspective while focusing on relevant and credible sources that align with the study's objectives.

Data Collection Methods

Depending on the systematic review, data collection holds a review of the existing literature that has the usage of online databases (Hiebl 2023). For example, Scopus, Google Scholar, and PubMed. "Awareness programs and superstition," "black magic beliefs," "cultural factors in belief systems," and "education and superstition," are some keywords that could be beneficial to guide the research. Outcomes from the reports like government and NGOs can be helpful for detailing the awareness initiatives. A structured process is followed by the data collection to identify, review relevant studies, and screen, which is beneficial for ensuring the inclusion of diverse viewpoints and to avoid duplication as well.

Data Analysis

Through the thematic analysis within the collected information, one can identify particular patterns and themes (Lochmiller 2021). The connection between education and belief in black magic seems as the major themes that have the effectiveness of awareness campaigns, and also has cultural and psychological factors. These mentioned factors like psychological and cultural factors are generally influencing these beliefs. Through the comparative analysis and highlighting differences in the belief system that is across

all educational levels and geographic regions as well. A comprehensive evaluation could be allowed by synthesizing findings by analyzing the secondary data and awareness of mitigating the harmful superstitions

4. Discussion of Findings

The academic overview of black magic beliefs has shown that it is due to lack of awareness and education that people have often fell prey to superstitious beliefs. It can be stated that misconceptions and misinterpretations of traditions and folklore have led to rise and spread of stigmatization of individuals and communities. Societies like Southern America and Africa which have tales of unexplained events and supernatural influences through Voodoo practices have also contributed to fear and social ostracism (Geisler 2022). Hence, social and cultural misconceptions should be attributed the most for oppression of lower stratum of society, motioning the cycles of discrimination and hindering social cohesion.

Correlation Between Education and Belief in Black Magic

Studies and academic evidence have shown that it is the lack of critical thinking and open mindedness that people that has increased beliefs in black magic practices. If people get more education and are provided the scientific explanation of most earthly happenings, they would stop believing in superstition. However, a case study in Dhaka, Bangladesh has shown how people choose to believe in entities like 'Jinn', 'black magic', and the 'evil eye' despite their educational backgrounds (Ayub 2021). Be it a person from high economic background or from lower educational profile, the faith in black magic is fueled in spite of the education levels. Academic studies have only indicated a strong possibility that education can eradicate paranormal beliefs. It has been seen how individuals who are engaged in natural sciences, medicine, and psychology are not as much inclined towards such beliefs as compared to those in other disciplines (Dean et al., 2022). Thus, it shows that education has to be critical and scientific to address superstitions like black magic.

Role of Awareness Campaigns

In fighting the roots of black magic and superstition, awareness campaigns can play huge role. Providing information to the masses does not imply that they would believe the scientific evidences and discard their deep-rooted beliefs. However, a research on mental health awareness campaigns that was done in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has shown that strategic and well-developed awareness campaigns can dwindle misconceptions. People often relate mental illness of a person as an act of witchcraft (Alomair et al. 2024). Many developed countries have shown persistence of these beliefs despite the informational efforts. Thus, awareness campaigns has to be so designed that they can validate their statements and address the fears of the community people. Awareness campaigns must try to engage communities through portrayal of scientific visuals and balanced narratives. This way, they can demystify the beliefs of black magic and promote rational thinking in them.

Cultural Influence

The belief in black magic has often led to subjugating women. The word witchcraft is a combination of 'witch' and 'craft' that can be an outcome of ancient perceptions of power and authority. Women who rebelled against the kings were often declared as witches and executed on the basis of 'doubt' (Nwanze 2024). These actions have created a deep-running fear among people that they do not question witchcraft and black magic anymore. Thus, in countries like Africa, India and Southern America it is important to understand the cultural nuances of black magic and intervene in them through understanding the social structure and tackling misconceptions with relevant narratives. A culturally sensitive approach would ensure that efforts made to dispel superstitions are respected among the masses and work as intended.

Psychological Aspects

Science has covered and explained most of the phenomena that occur in the world. However, there are some thresholds that have not been passed by scientific discoveries and explanations. This is where the human tendency to seek explanations for unexplained phenomena contribute to fuel the black magic beliefs (Lightner and Hagner 2022). Many times, humans tends to resort to supernatural explanations as coping mechanisms. As such, they as well contribute to the anecdotal experiences and societal narratives of black magic. Hence, the beliefs of black magic are a loss of analytical thinking. Education can however promote it and encourage scepticism and inquiry among individuals. This would help them to question superstitions and seek evidence based explanations for the events that are happening around them. As people would analyse, think and rely on practical things, their inclination towards supernatural beliefs would fall and so would their fear of black magic practices. Thus, it can be said that, education and awareness campaigns can play a major role in reducing beliefs in black magic and their consequent threats and terror. However, it lies solely in the hands of the educator on how to develop the awareness campaigns and develop policies so that the cultural nuances can be removed from people's mind without disrespecting their beliefs, ideas and coping mechanisms of life.

5. Conclusion

The present undertaking accentuates the importance of education and awareness in the fight against belief in black magic, which is one of the goals stated in the paper. First, and regarding black magic practices, a relationship between education and magic belief level was explored which proved that more educated people tend not to believe in such practices. This trend is attributed to better exposure to critical thinking, scientific thinking, and evidence-based learning, which education is supposed to offer. However, their persistence among even educated individuals happens due to culture and tradition factors, which calls for special purpose programs to raise the level of awareness. Second, the research examined the effectiveness of awareness programs, including seminars, workshops, and mass media, in changing people's attitudes towards black magic. There is evidence that these initiatives can positively impact communities as long as there is particular attention paid to the context and the underlying psychological problems fear, uncertainty, or trauma are tackled. However, the achievement of these goals greatly depends on the rehabilitation of these factors and the participation of prominent scholars, educators, and community members who can link formal education and informal education. Lastly, incorporating with the critical thinking and scientific inquiry are becoming important in this perspective that is into the education curricula. Public awareness campaigns seem informal education that can play a vital role for reaching traditional systems.

6. Policy Implications

In order to combat with the beliefs of black magic with educational mediums, the Government and NGOs must take an active step. They should be promoting critical thinking and scientific literacy within educational systems. Through primary education they should develop the minds of the young people so that they question the existence of supernatural powers and dispel unfounded beliefs. Moreover, the wrong accusations on women and poor people have often led to oppression and inhuman punishments (Razina Ahmed 2023). Hence, governments should enforce laws that can be used to protect individuals from accusations and violence that are related to black magic practices. Philippines and Papua New Guinea have seen a deteriorating system in healthcare and community cohesion due to accusations of black magic and sorcery (Forsyth et al. 2024). Thus, Government and NGOs must make sure that their impositions and actions are in favour for the welfare of the community and is creating a supportive environment for debunking myths that are associated with black magic. Moreover, as seen in Papua New Guinea beliefs in black magic have disrupted the system of advanced medical care. In some other places like Ghana, people are relying more on traditional healers or supernatural explanations for ailments (Baldwin 2024). This has led to delayed treatment, misdiagnosis, and the spread of communicable diseases. Hence, policies must be made to promote evidence-based medical practices so that people do not relate mental illness with sorcery or death of a person with the result of an 'evil eye'. The promotion of scientific health principles would make communities aware and encourage them to make informed decisions regarding their health.

7. References

- Alomair, N., Alkhalidi, G., Alsadhan, N.M., Alkasabi, R. and Alageel, S., 2024. Public perceptions of digital mental health awareness campaign in the Arab Gulf states: a qualitative thematic analysis. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 12, p.1477315.
- Aufrère, S.H., Johnson, C., Martelli, M. and Beretta, M., 2022. Culture and Science: Gods, Myths, and Religions. *A CULTURAL HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY*, p.113.
- Ayub, A., 2021. Jinn possession, black magic, or mental illness the impact of demographic factors & religion on people's perceptions. Unpublished undergraduate project]. Institute of Business Administration, Pakistan. <https://ir.iba.edu.pk/sslace/76>.
- Baldwin, J. (2024) Media in Ghana. Available at: <https://ghana.uoregon.edu/2024/08/14/stigma-in-ghana-the-influence-of-black-magic-and-christianity-on-health-care/>
- Bhattacharjya, A, Borah, N.K, Sarma, A. 2021. A REVIEW OF BLACK MAGIC – A HINDRANCE FOR SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Available at: <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2105670.pdf>
- Crapa, G., Roma, P. and Bruccoleri, M., 2024. The influence of NGO-corporate relationship on environmental disclosure: Evidence from the fashion industry. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*.
- CSWR. 2024. Black Magic Matters: Hoodoo as Ancestral Religion. <https://cswr.hds.harvard.edu/news/magic-matters/2021/11/10>
- Dean, C.E., Akhtar, S., Gale, T.M., Irvine, K., Grohmann, D. and Laws, K.R., 2022. Paranormal beliefs and cognitive function: A systematic review and assessment of study quality across four decades of research. *Plos one*, 17(5), p.e0267360.
- Forsyth, M., Taylor, J., Housen, T., Marsh, C., Gibbs, P. and Kipongi, W., 2024. Sorcery and witchcraft beliefs on the front line of public health response in Papua New Guinea and beyond. *Western Pacific Surveillance and Response Journal: WPSAR*, 15(3), p.1.
- Geisler, S.S., 2022. Supernatural Evil as Evidence for the Existence of God.
- Gnanaolivu, S. D., Campera, M., Anne-Isola Nekaris, K., Nijman, V., Satish, R., Babu, S., & Singh, M. (2022). Medicine, black magic and supernatural beings: Cultural rituals as a significant threat to slender lorises in India. *People and Nature*, 4(4), 1007-1019. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.10336>
- Hiebl, M.R., 2023. Sample selection in systematic literature reviews of management research. *Organizational research methods*, 26(2), pp.229-261.
- Howstuffworks. 2024. Unveiling the Mysteries of Black Magic: A Comprehensive Exploration. Available at: <https://science.howstuffworks.com/science-vs-myth/extrasensory-perceptions/black-magic.htm#pt1>
- Jacob K S. Understanding black magic and other systems of belief. *Natl Med J India* 2019;32:167-170
- Lightner, A.D. and Hagen, E.H., 2022. All models are wrong, and some are religious: Supernatural explanations as abstract and useful falsehoods about complex realities. *Human Nature*, 33(4), pp.425-462.
- Lochmiller, C.R., 2021. Conducting thematic analysis with qualitative data. *The Qualitative Report*, 26(6), pp.2029-2044.
- Nag, S. ed., 2023. *Black Magic, Witchcraft and Occultism: Secret Cultural Practices in India*. Taylor & Francis.
- Nwanze, L.N., 2024. Un-silencing the silenced: Using Black Migrant Women's experiences of racism to propose a critical anti-racist pedagogy for Irish Adult Education (Doctoral dissertation, National University of Ireland Maynooth).
- Panin, S. Cursed Britain: A History of Witchcraft and Black Magic in Modern Times by Thomas Waters (review). *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 17(1), 161-164. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mrw.2022.0017>
- Razina Ahmed, S.S., 2023. A Psychological Analysis of the Structural, Socio-Cultural, And Legal Aspects of Women's Rights, their Societal Development & Superstition-Gender-Based Violence and their Eradication Alarming Practice. *Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities*, 6(8s), pp.140-155.
- Thehindu. 2024. Anti-black magic law can be invoked when such acts are actually performed or an attempt is made to perform: HC. Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/anti-black-magic-law-can-be-invoked-when-such-acts-are-actually-performed-or-an-attempt-is-made-to-perform-hc/article68559006.ece>
- Uribe, S.E., Innes, N. and Maldupa, I., 2021. The global prevalence of early childhood caries: a systematic review with meta-analysis using the WHO diagnostic criteria. *International journal of paediatric dentistry*, 31(6), pp.817-830.
- Warikandwa, T.V. and Chitimira, H., 2023. " Black Magic" Practices in African Academies: A 21st Century Socio-Legal Perspective. *Perspectives of Law and Public Administration*, 12(1), pp.111-123.
- Yıldırım, O.Ç., 2022. Etched on the body: Fear of the female in Ainsworth's *The Lancashire Witches* (Master's thesis).