Superstitions & Irrational Beliefs Arise Due to Ignorance

Superstitions due to Ignorance

Superstitions are based on the belief that future events are influenced by specific behaviors, without having a causal relationship. Many superstitions deal with important events in a person’s life such as birth, entering adulthood, marriage, pregnancy and death. Most superstitions involve ensuring good luck, avoiding bad luck or making good things happen. Some superstitions are blatantly obvious to us while some are subtler, more deeply ingrained in our everyday way of life.

Either way, one thing is for certain, superstitions do have quite a significant power over us. One doesn’t need to believe in magic or negative karma in order to fall prey to superstitions. Even though we students live in an age of advanced technology and science and have an endless supply of scientific information at our fingertips, many of us still believe in some or the other superstitions as a way of explaining and dealing with the unknown. Many students think that some superstitions are unscientific. On the other hand, millions of students still believe in astrology and base important decisions on the position of the sun, moon, planets and stars. Even the one’s who don’t believe tend to get caught up in the complex web of superstitions, one way or the other.

Nitin Mondal, Suri, Birbhum

Blame Ignorance for Ills

Actually, ignorance is the root cause of several ills and a fertile ground for propagation of superstitions and irrational beliefs. If a person is knowledgeable then there are greater chances that he or she will steer clear of such vices. However, it is seen in our country that well-educated persons and even scientists, for whatever reasons, subscribe to irrational beliefs. This is essentially due to the fact that right from infancy they have been seeing their parents, neighbours and others participating in senseless rituals, when they grow up as adults these practices linger at sub conscious levels and to shake them off entirely becomes very difficult. For example, even sensible persons pause when somebody sneezes or a cat crosses their path.

Dr Shiv Kumar, Jaipur

Illusion of Knowledge

Perhaps we have tablets, 4G connections, but somewhere we have a leaning towards supernatural things, and normally we go to a priest for an amulet. Traditional beliefs and illusion of knowledge with ignorance is the factor. We are responsible for not using common sense, logic and conscience. Of course education is a must but it is very difficult to change the thoughts of one’s mind with normal education. We need to apply our common sense.

Sanjan Banerjee, Haldia Institute of Technology

Blindly and Foolishly

Superstitions are, by and large, the result of ignorance and outdated, unwarranted beliefs that are a tragic reflection on the state of society. India is a realm of superstitions. Under the influence of our ancestral traditions, we follow their beliefs which they harboured according to their need and conditions prevailing at that time. Some people wear lockets, some wear amulet on their arms, some visit sages on a regular basis. Some people consult astrologers before fixing date and time for certain functions, for travelling and starting a new venture etc. They are still stuck in the arena of old beliefs.

Debasis Sahoo, Pur (Odisha)

Educate to Remove Ignorance

Superstitions are major obstacles for science to overcome. Today science has reached the moon, deep into the ocean, but not at the doorstep of the common people thanks to widespread unfounded beliefs. In Odisha, which is the most majestic yet the poorest state in India, illiteracy is the chief hurdle for science. Here, only 66% people are educated. There are very stupid customs e.g. if a cat crosses the road, one has to return and go later. Hence, if we educate people, especially the tribals, we can triumph over these obstacles.

CMR Institute of Tech. Hyderabad

Mohammad Zainuddin

Hindrance to Progress

Growth of scientific knowledge and intellect has certainly diminished the belief in superstitions, but it hasn’t eradicated it completely. Scientific knowledge is based on reason, but superstitions are based on ignorance and prove a great hindrance to progress. Even my own brother takes only his lucky pen while writing exams due to the fear that he may not write well if he takes any other pen with him. Huge masses of people even today believe in Astrology. I truly think that Science Reporter has removed superstitious notions from many people till now and hope it will surely continue its great impact on youngsters.

Rajapa, Allahabad

Ashu Arora, Ewing Christian College, Allahabad

Reckoning

In the past people were very superstitious because they were very ignorant. They did not want to know the real fact and did not believe in rationality. Nowadays also, many people believe in superstition but science and technology is now slowly creating a rational streak in people and developing their sense of reasoning.

Dwika Mohapatra, Cuttack, Odisha

Author Image
Scientific Reason Behind Superstitions

Many times we hear about blind faith in spirits and other things. All these things are a manifestation of ignorance, which we see in the villages and sometimes in cities also. Sometimes people don't even try to rationally analyse a superstition because of laziness or because they are scared of losing their illusions. There is a scientific reason for each irrational belief.

Prashant Raj Bajray
St. Karen’s Secondary School, Patna

Train Children in the Right Beliefs

No doubt, superstitions and irrational beliefs arise due to ignorance but it is also a fact that ignorance arises due to carelessness of the parents regarding their child. Children are like wet cement; whatever falls on them makes an impression.

Only knowledge can remove the darkness of ignorance and according to the Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Vol.4, page 347) “Knowledge is justifed true belief”. It means only true knowledge has the power to change conception into conviction. So, if children are fed with such knowledge, it will lead them to compatible faiths. Such nourished minds can self differentiate between rational and irrational beliefs.

Shayan Ghan,
B.N. College, Patna

Funny Beliefs

William Shakespeare, the world’s most celebrated poet said, “Ignorance is the curse of God; knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven.” It is a matter of grave pain that having broken the shackles of slavery sixty-five years ago, we have still not been able to unfetter ourselves from the clutches of superstitions and irrational beliefs. Nearly every household adheres to some myth like black cat crossing ones path, sneezing as ill-omen, hiccups as being remembered by dear ones, and many more.

These irrational thoughts are funny but sometimes they may prove to be fatal. In rural areas, due to lack of sound knowledge and scientific temperament, adults are killed in the name of witch-hunt. Innocent infants are sacrificed to please God, unwell patients are placed in the dungeon of tantriks. Aren’t these myths baseless? If that were the case, the entire traffic would have been brought to a standstill if a cat were to cross the road. Besides, Anna Hazare, being the talk of the country and loved by millions would have complained of perpetual hiccups!

These irrational beliefs do not find space anywhere in this scientific world. We have to prevent the clouds of superstition from harming our people by educating them and encouraging study of science in the schools, from the rudimentary level.

Puja Rani, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand

Ignorance Primary Cause

Generations have either believed or lived with ‘superstitious beliefs’. The “Elizabethan era” is one that is marked by plenty of such unbelievable and awful beliefs. Since then, people have evolved through the sands of time. In India like every other country there a lot of followers of irrational beliefs and there ignorance to reality is the primary cause; and the fear of getting a bad or rather undesired result is the other.

Not buying iron products on Saturdays or not shaving on Mondays etc. are very common, regardless the family being educated or uneducated. Recently watching a television episode broadcasted on National Geographic Channel, I was taken aback to see a person was being almost beaten to death, so that the common masses surrounding him may attain some good luck by passing over the bad luck to him.

In some way or the other everyone is surrounded by these beliefs and to be honest I am no exception.

Akshat Tandon
City Montessori School, Lucknow

Today’s Contradictions

In today’s competitive world, the terms superstitions and irrational beliefs are likely far away from people’s mind. Most people in ancient times were ignorant making them believe in superstitions and irrational beliefs. In today’s most people are scientific, so they ignore these.

Abujam Amarjit Singh
Bhubaneswar

Fatal Superstitions

Superstitions are mostly found in tribal areas remote from society. In some cases, irrational beliefs are followed because ancestors followed them. Some are so dangerous that they may lead to death of human. So awareness should be generated.

S. Aloka Patro, Ganjam (Odisha)

Prisoner of Irrational Beliefs

Man’s choice to deny certain truths leads him to ignorance and he remains subjected to tradition, fate and desires. His ignorance never allows him to live fully. It is beneficial to be open to observations and facts so that he is no more a prisoner of faiths, rituals, superstitions and irrational beliefs.

Vibino Chasie
Govt. Ayurvedic College & Hospital Guwahati

Sign of Weakness

Superstitions and irrational beliefs mislead and are a sign of weakness. People are not aware of these things due to lack of education.

Apurva Kishan
D.A.V Public School, Darbhanga

Illiteracy, Ignorance & Superstitions

A majority of population in our country are illiterates. When illiteracy is combined with poverty, it leads to firm belief in superstitions. Children are considered as the gift of god; some gullible people know nothing about birth control measures. All these account for a higher birth rate in India. Many superstitions deal with important events in a person’s life, such as birth, entering adulthood, marriage, pregnancy and death. Most of the superstitions involve ensuring good luck, avoiding bad luck and making good things happen. Some superstitions
are blatantly obvious to us while some are subtler, more deeply entrenched in our everyday life. Just like a communicable disease, superstition can propagate itself through word-of-mouth.

**Forefathers cannot be Wrong?**
A minority of the population that believe in superstitions may do so because of ignorance that arises out of lack of scientific education. But a majority of the superstition believers do so because of their firm belief that “our forefathers cannot be wrong!” These people are brought up in a more traditional way, and even if convinced of the heliocentric theory, will outwardly proclaim that the geocentric theory is correct, because it is an accepted “fact” by the astrologers. I have seen many people with a degree in science, who refuse to take food during an eclipse, because they believe that the food gets contaminated during an eclipse!

Prof. K. Smiles Mascarenhas
Dean (Academic Affairs)
C.I.E.T., Coimbatore

**Educated also Superstitious**
Superstitions are passed down through generations and deeply imprinted on the hearts of the people. Often, no one knows about the origin or reason behind them. Ignorance about certain facts leads to developing of a mystery and human, by their nature, tend to avoid such facts. Ignorance accumulating for generations becomes superstition. But why blame only ignorance? Indian society is ridden with superstitions. Though many of us are highly educated and are people of science, we still can’t erase superstitions from our hearts. People know about the reason behind certain superstitions but fail to incorporate them in their lives. It’s the will of a person to accept a change that matters.

**Role of Media**
Superstitions and irrational beliefs have essentially been handed over to us by successive generations of ancestors. They may have been intelligent but their interpretation of things around them should not be regarded as a gospel/truth. Superstitions and orthodox notions can breed and prosper only in ignorant minds whereas education encourages open-mindedness and rational thoughts. The audio-visual media, press and more significantly Science Reporter can play a significant role in curbing irrational practices.

Shashi, Indore (M.P.)

**Prevents Clarity of Thought**
Despite launching of several government schemes to educate the masses, a large chunk of our populace is still languishing in illiteracy. Their minds are fertile grounds for superstitious thoughts and irrational beliefs; they fall an easy prey to the age-old myths and hoaxes. They are also easily hoodwinked by unscrupulous babas and hakims. An ignorant mind cannot think rationally and always clings to the lackeyed traditions and beliefs much to the detriment of the progress of the society. A scientifically inclined mind will definitely cut through the webs of superstitions and irrational beliefs.

Jyotirajan Biswal, Angul (Odisha)

**Superstitions at all Levels**
People of every class are superstitious. Actors think releasing their movie on a specific date or festival will make their film a super hit, cricketers think wearing the left or right pad first will help them to perform better. Well-educated persons change their name to become popular and richer. Today the business of Babas is only because of superstitions.

**Superstitions Destroying Nation**
Even in this 21st century many people live their lives following superstitions. Superstitions grab a person when he or she lacks knowledge and education. When a person is unable to justify scientifically irrational belief takes over. In the past, man used to worship nature because he was unable to know about it. But today, despite being in the lap of science, people are following those customs. So education must be spread among those illiterate people otherwise superstitions will destroy our nation.

Shahina Ahmed, West Bengal

**Eradicate Wrong Beliefs**
Although we proclaim ourselves to be citizens of a modern technological era, many of us are victims of various dreadful superstitions beliefs. Snakebite patients should be taken to hospitals for antivenin injection. Instead, some ignorant people rush to Ojha, a man who claims to cure such patients by means of supernatural power. Superstitions beliefs often lead to a dire consequence. Some people think that polio-vaccine may endanger a child’s life. This irrational belief has actually hindered the polio-eradication programme. To eradicate superstition, we have to develop logical and scientific attitude both in educated middle class and illiterate masses.

**Hindrance to Progress**
Superstitions and irrational beliefs are abnormal facets of human mind in which people believe something without knowledge and which has no scientific base. These are a hindrance in the progress and development of a country. We are living in a scientific era and cannot progress with this ideology.

Nidhi Anand, J&K

**Understanding Underlying Logic**
Scientific temperament is very important to understand the logic behind every superstition. All superstitious beliefs are
based on some reason that has got manipulated and distorted over the years. We should not believe in something blindly. Faiths and beliefs are valid only when they have a reason and explanation. For example, it is believed that we should not trim our nails in the house. The reason behind it is that the trimmed nail parts might contaminate the food articles.

Rituparna Dubey, Haryana

**Blot on our Glory**

Both superstition and irrational beliefs derive from inferiority complex and false fear of God and religion. Due to superstitions and irrational thinking, we face a lot of inconvenience in our life. Unless they are eliminated there will be havoc in our society.

Laxmikanta Mallick, Odisha

**Wicked Notes**

We often news of burning of witches or slaughtering of babies. We believe in the dexterity of the babas and cannot understand their subterfuge. So, we use the gems and jewels to please the stars and planets. The highly educated and established people of our society even believe the solar and lunar eclipses are caused by Rahu and Ketu. So, ignorance and superstitions and irrationality should be eradicated.

Dyuti Bhattacharyya, West Bengal

**Lack of Scientific View**

Ignorance is the root cause of all miseries in our life, said Swami Vivekananda. It is true that lack of scientific viewpoint leads us to superstitions and irrational beliefs.

Nageswara Rao Parvatam

Andhra Pradesh

**“Superstition makes a man fool and skepticism makes him mad”**

Ignorance is a state of being uninformed (lack of knowledge). In our country, there exists a curious mixture of superstition and faith mostly arising out of ignorance. Superstition involves beliefs, practices and procedures based upon assumptions usually concerned with nature of cause and effects and mysteriously connects unrelated incidents and coincidence with each other. Superstition destroys one’s peace of mind creating insecurity.

The breaking of mirror is supposed to bring bad luck for the family. The Chinese believe that, blue and white colours are sign of bad luck. Some believe that red is a colour of danger and violence. In European countries number 13 is considered to bring misfortune. In many hotels, hostels, houses, offices one may not find number 13. Even in some big cities like Chandigarh the sector number 13 is missing.

The superstition for counting crows is: One’s bad, Two’s luck, and Three’s health, Four’s wealth, Five’s sickness, Six is death.

Similarly there are many superstitions for sneezes: One for sorrow, Two for joy, Three for a letter, Four for a boy, Five for silver, Six for Gold, Seven for a secret never to be told.

One who is educated believes in logic and does not believe in superstitions. With the advent of knowledge today’s superstition could well become tomorrow’s science if we follow the right theoretical developments. Modern men know that advancement of knowledge has explained the mysteries of the past by analyzing the happenings logically, scientifically and technically. Tackling an age-old superstition is a strenuous process and demands a lot of dedication and dogged patience. What is needed to end such practices is a multi-pronged campaign by the media and also by teachers, doctors and scientists.

Dr. S.K. Aggarwal

Dean, Amritsar College of Engineering and Technology

**Now write in your thoughts on this topic:**

“Children’s behaviour can be negatively influenced by computer games.”

Be short, crisp and logical. Send in your photo, if you like.