

Topic of the week for discussion: 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2014

Topic: Anti Superstition Law & Godmen In India

*“India has an anti-superstition law to combat fraud by godmen, but their popularity continues.”*

**The latest news:**

Controversial guru Rampal was arrested from his Satlok Ashram at Hisar, Haryana on 19<sup>th</sup> Nov 14. The 63-year-old, who was facing charges of sedition or waging war against the nation, did not surrender. The self-styled Godman had been hiding in the ashram for nearly two weeks using women and children as shields. Devotees who call themselves 'Baba's Commandos' were armed with guns, acid pouches and petrol bombs.

**The question arises: Why so many godmen and so many controversies?**

India, armed with all its resources, manpower and knowledge has remained a developing nation for the past three decades. The graduation to a developed nation seems years away. **Our problem lies in the black holes, which persist in the age of reason.** Even education has not been able to liberate the people, the masses who comprise the greater chunk of India. That is why these self proclaimed 'Godmen' have so many followers in flesh and blood?

Growing long beards and covering themselves in sadhu wraps just to project an austere image of themselves, they are a paradox in themselves. Just take a look at their 'ashrams,' which are nowhere close to the thatched, kutcha huts of ancient sages or hermits. Many times a Godman has not one but many national and international ashrams, which are generally sprawling campuses.

How could a sage who is ideally believed to renounce worldly pleasures acquire huge properties? The trouble is, it's not only the weak, illiterate or the less educated who follow these Godmen, but the wealthy industrialists, powerful politicians, celebrity filmstars and sportsmen and many educated executives also pay obeisance to them. They are media heroes with channels telecasting their sermons in full splendor.

- Maybe religion has been stretched too far in the minds of common man, and they cannot differentiate the thin line between our mythology, culture on one side and superstitions, witchcraft and distorted beliefs on the other.
- It can be due to the fact that even the most logical Indian people leave their logic aside when anything in the name of religion and gods is mentioned and these godmen take advantage of this fact.
- It can be because of the fact that religion in India is followed more out of “fear” rather than love-devotion and these god men exploit this factor.
- May be? But the real answers and need a good research & insight.



Topic  
Introduction

In 21st century India, many people in rural as well as urban areas would still rather consult a tantrik or an astrologer to cure their illnesses instead of approaching a doctor qualified for the job. In spite of the wide prevalence of superstition and irrational religious practices, including black magic, only few states have laws intended to deal with the social problem.

Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh have enacted laws to restrict witchcraft. But these pieces of legislation have in no way helped to curb irrational beliefs and practices.

Maharashtra also introduced the Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic bill 2013 in the State legislative assembly, commonly called the “Anti Superstition Bill”

But still, the recent controversies of Godmen every other day doing the round suggest that the enactment of these laws & Acts isn't enough.

Firstly, a common law should be enacted for Pan India keeping in mind all states and local rituals.

And then, the enforcement of the act should be strictly dealt with.

And finally, it is the common man who should be enlightened and freed from the clutches of the fear worship of these faux saints.

*“Religion, Devotion and Love for God is great and should be followed as a personal belief, but Superstition is the black market practice in the field of devotion and should be strongly deterred.”*

**Read further:**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Superstition\\_and\\_Black\\_Magic\\_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Superstition_and_Black_Magic_Act)

<http://www.oneindia.com/india/godman-sant-rampal-arrest-hisar-haryana-police-murder-women-children-1566113.html>

<http://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india/india-top-10-controversial-godmen--26652.html>

[http://www.prem-rawat-bio.org/library/wogs/ggandgp\\_intro.html](http://www.prem-rawat-bio.org/library/wogs/ggandgp_intro.html)