

PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL ASPECTS OF WITCH HUNTING

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Introduction

A discussion on the psycho-analytical aspect of witch hunting leads one to the early stage of human existence. So far as knowledge is concerned, there is always limitation of knowledge. Due to that limitation there are innumerable events and happenings around us since time immemorial which remain unexplained for common people. Due to limitation of knowledge events which are still non understandable, develop the concept of super natural power. Because knowledge gives power and ignorance develops fear and insecurity etc. in human mind. So human being develops the feeling that as certain things are beyond the understandable capacity of human mind-as they feel them something like unusual, so there must be some super natural power which actually regulates these unnatural happenings. Thus the concepts of some extreme powers have evolved. This concept of power has got two dimensions – GOOD ASPECT AND BAD ASPECT. Good aspect leads to

the development of religion, philosophy and concept of God. Philosophy is considered as the mother of all inventions. Philosophy develops the concept and to prove that concept science has emerged. Thereby human civilizations started their journey from none to fun. On the other hand evil aspect develops the concept of evil power, devil power and term like witch etc. All these lead to the belief of superstitions and rituals. At the same time feeling of insecurity, helplessness of human mind strengthen the above concept of superstition and rituals. Unexplained events help in sustaining the concept of superstition, blind beliefs and rituals.

The concept of soul functions like a breeze in between the two aspects that is good and bad of super natural power. The concept of soul is a matter of primary query from the beginning of human existence which also has two divisions-good and bad. The good aspect develops the concept of salvation of soul which means the merge of soul with the eternal power after death and bad aspect leads to the idea of non salvation of soul that means the inability of soul to merge with eternal power. As a result, the idea of ghost, devil, demon etc have developed. These things mean the evil spirit of soul which is considered as harmful for living being. Keeping in relation to the above concept of salvation and non salvation of soul, the concept of totem and taboo have developed in our society. The concept of totem and taboo are related to the appeasement of departed soul which may cast evil spell on individual or group of individual. It is believed that after death, the departed soul can come through the media of totem. Totem means the particular animal through which the departed soul is believed to come back to the earth. The particular animal which is considered to be the media of departed soul is different from community to community. The total idea of rituals associated with the departed soul is known as taboo. Now

again it is believed that as the departed soul can come back through the media of animal, so it is also possible that the departed soul can again come back through the media of human being. Now the person with some behavioral abnormality is usually considered as a media for that unsatisfied soul to come back to the earth. Due to limitation of knowledge the society is easily prone to accept that particular person as witch and starts to think him or her as harmful for society. As the society cannot understand the causes for unusual behavior, so they start to think that it is because of influence of certain evil spirit, the particular person is behaving like that. Under the influence of culprits, the society tags them as witch.

This is the initial idea but that idea is often molded and utilized by people with vested interest to get their personal score. Camouflaging of personal enmity, jealousy are often done by dominant people in village area over underprivileged, weaker section of the society in the name of witch hunting.

Recommendation

After through explanation of psycho centric causes of witch prevalent society we have found that to eradicate the problem, some steps must be initiated in every society. Social bondage is a critical factor for dissemination of information among rural people where other modes of communication are not still strong except oral communication and which is a key element to spread rumour. In the study we have discussed how a society is prone to exercise witchcraft, black magic etc .Whatever are the causes, removal of these kind of social menace are utmost necessary for society to continue their upward growth. For that we have forwarded some suggestions to eradicate the problem.

1. Existence of spirit is an age-old belief of a society, which, is deprived of education and health facilities since years. So

providing quality education and health support are very important for the society which has strong belief base for superstition. However, providing education and health facilities alone may not be a quick solution to stop the menace. Changing of mind set as well as traditional rituals is also important for the cause. This can be done by infusing modern outlook, scientific temperament into the society.

2. In our society, though much attention has been given to education sector, our school curriculums are quite silent about exercise of witch hunting in some remote areas. Instead of giving bookish knowledge, if curriculum allows our student to analyze real-life situation or to do case studies, the desired result could have been achieved. If a child or a student, at the initial period of their studies is exposed to discuss topic like witchcraft, superstition, black magic, evil spirit etc and informed about the scientific explanation of these things, then it may work as deterrent for new generation to fall prey against bad elements of the society. This generation equipped with scientific knowledge definitely would have inner strength to cope up with the adversaries of life in their adulthood and would guide them to tackle such unforeseen cases with modern outlook.
3. Apart from physical health, mental health is also very important to shape a personality of a person. A bit of mental disorder or illness are very common among people. Diseases like schizophrenia, social anxiety, social phobia, personality disorder, primary insomnia, impulse control disorder, pyromania, retrograde amnesia, kleptomania, hallucinogen can be treated and a person having these symptoms are very much natural. Unfortunately ignorance of these kinds of mental disorder often leads to mental

torture, lynching, murder etc in the name of witch. It is often seen that those people which are being tagged as witches are sometime may have mild degree of mental disorder or abnormality. And these abnormalities can be fatal in a society who still believes on witch. But with the help of modern medical science these kind of abnormality can be treated properly. So creating awareness about mental abnormality is very much important in the society particularly in the rural, remote society. The Government should take necessary steps to popularize the knowledge of psychiatry through local agency among the people and health worker of those areas where witch hunting is still very rampant.

4. It is quite shocking that in India, witch hunting cases are also recorded in some places which are no longer remote and habitant have got access to formal education, modern life style etc. Though it is often considered that the belief of existence of bad spirit is a characteristic of uncivilized society, the recent incidence of lynching and torturing in the name of witch hunting in some areas of Assam are comparatively developed. Though the reason for these incidences may vary case to case, one fact is clear that the schemes of socio-economic transformation of Indian government have failed to serve in right direction. In this regard, much is yet to be done. In the post liberalized era, the govt. has tried a lot to offer health facilities to the remote areas through National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). Under this mission various health workers like Asha, MPW(Multi Purpose Worker), GNM(General Nurse and Midwifery), ANM(Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife) have been introduced in addition to doctor and nurse in rural area. If these workers are trained properly about the

symptoms of mental abnormality and how it is to be treated, village people will get proper information easily. It may indirectly stop the mass hysteria formed against a particular person.

5. The need of awareness camp, science camp in remote village area where people still believe in traditional method of treatment is well understandable. Government has done various programmes with the help of NGO, SHG etc to curb the social nuisance in our state. However it is noticed that govt. officials, local administration, media unit often make beeline to the witch hunting reported area. But as an effective measure, Govt. should appoint some people to inform about the possible cases of witch hunting. If informers are rewarded properly they will come forward to inform beforehand. So it will be easy for everyone to work in the right direction once such cases are reported beforehand. However utmost cares need to be taken in handling such cases. Particularly the identity of informer must be kept confidential otherwise the situation may go against the informer at grass root level.
6. The Govt. may make it mandatory for local head of a village like Gaon Burha, Mukhiyal etc to give a declaration that no incidence of witch hunting are reported in their area. Such declaration should be taken into account in providing socio-economic benefit into the region. Sacking off from the leadership if the declaration is wrong, may work as catalyst to give proper report from village head. Increasing the intensity of developmental work and providing better facilities to the people as a reward for “witch free case area” would compel people to think positively. Thus the society would get benefit in the long run.

Suggestions are given to curb the menace in areas where people are either deprived off or ignorant about modern formal education and health facilities. In fact the social structure is also conducive to disseminate wrong, fabricated information among members. Proper guidance, removing information bottleneck, infusion of scientific temperament, development of logical thinking in addition to education and medical facilities are some core issues which need urgent attention to solve the witch hunting problem. However it is to be noted that though social problem like this cannot be curbed over night, stringent action against the guilty will minimize the intensity of the issue. We are hopeful that Govt. would take necessary step in this regard immediately.

References

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