

# Assessment of Superstitious Behaviour among Tribal Students of Chhattisgarh

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## ABSTRACT

About one third of population of Chhattisgarh comprise of tribes. The tribes of Chhattisgarh have their distinct culture, traditions, rituals and superstition. This paper examines superstitious behaviour among tribal varsity students of Chhattisgarh. To conduct the study, 100 tribal varsity students enrolled in various educational courses offered by Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur C.G. were selected as sample. The average age of the selected subjects was 24.11 years. A scale prepared by Dubey and Dixit (2011) was used to evaluate superstitious behaviour of selected subjects. Frequency distribution indicate that majority of tribal varsity students were highly superstitious. The results are discussed in the light of tribal culture and its effect on superstition.

## 1. Introduction

Chhattisgarh is a tribal dominated state. The lifestyle of tribals of Chhattisgarh is unique and contains many traditional rituals and superstitions. Witch hunts, black magic and other form of superstition are common in tribal people. This is not uncommon and superstitious rituals are part of tribal lifestyle since ages. Due to poverty, lack of education and other issues tribal people often believe in supernatural phenomena with supreme belief that it will cure their problems. It is believed that educating tribals will reduce irrational beliefs but even this theory is contradictory because educated also follow some irrational beliefs. Superstitious is based on belief system. Superstitious beliefs are varied according to demography, cultural, personal belief etc. Superstition is based on circumstance or events that have uncertain outcomes and it is closely related to insecurity, anxiety and hope. This is where superstitions regarding certain rituals to please earth, water, air and arise in a hope that these religious rituals will bring about the favourable outcomes. Human sacrifice and witchcraft etc. superstitions that are associated with illiteracy but even educated people have superstitions. It is a known fact that superstitions exist in every culture and community. According to Vyse (2013) superstition arises in situation where outcome of that situation is uncertain. To reduce anxiety in these situation people practice some or other kind of superstition while not only eases anxiety but give them hope that by following certain rituals or doing certain acts, the problem from a given situation will solve automatically. Superstition is followed sincerely in traditional society and indigenous people are no exception to it. Due to lack of education tribals are still in awe of environment. They still believe in super natural powers. According to Brevers, Dan, Noel and Nils (2011) illusion regarding successfully achieving a goal or solving problems related to environmental and situational factor leads us towards superstitious behaviour. According to framework of Frazer (1922) superstition is a behavioural act to ease of tension and anxiety where outcome is doubtful. Womack (1992) also stated that superstitious act is carried out in hope that certain things will fall in place but actually these behaviours have no significant bearing on happening of an event or outcome. Some psychologist namely Schippers and

Van Lange (2006) associated superstitious behaviour with coping mechanism to reduce stress and tension.

Literary review on superstitious beliefs provides few studies. Simmons and Schindeler (2003) in a study found that local people in China believe that number 8 brings prosperity that is why they end their prices with the number 8. Torgler (2003) in a study found a significant correlation between socio-demographic as well as socio economic factors with superstition. Burke et al. (2006) in their study found a positive relationship between wearing particular coloured cloths with internal locus of control. Rao et al. (2014) in their study found that causative factor towards superstitious behaviour is neurological activation. A study conducted by Tanu Shri Vijay (2017) reported that male teachers were highly superstitious as compared to female teachers. Despite extensive research, no study yet has been conducted to assess superstition in varsity students of tribal dominated Chhattisgarh. Hence to fill this research gap, the present study was planned.

## 2. Objective

The single objective of the present study was to assess superstitious behaviour among tribal varsity students of Chhattisgarh.

## 3. Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that tribal varsity students of Chhattisgarh will be highly superstitious.

## 4. Methodology

The following methodological steps were taken in order to conduct the present study.

### Sample :

To conduct the study, 100 tribal varsity students enrolled in various educational courses offered by Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur C.G. were selected as sample. The average age of the selected subjects was 24.11 years. The sample was selected purposively.

### Tools:

**Superstition Scale:**

Superstition scale prepared by Dubey and Dixit (2011) was used to assess superstitious behaviour in tribal varsity students. This scale consists of 40 statement with three alternatives for each statement. This scale is reliable and valid with Spearman Brown coefficient being 0.82.

**Procedure:**

100 tribal varsity students enrolled in different educational courses offered by Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur Chhattisgarh were selected as sample. After written consent for voluntary participation in this study, Superstition Scale standardized by Dubey and Dixit was administered to each subject as per their convenience and comfort.

The classification of superstitious behaviour was carried out in accordance with author's guidelines. Subjects with score of more than 100 were placed in highly superstitious group, subjects with scores between 84-100 were placed in moderately superstitious group while subjects with score of less than 84 were placed in low superstitious or negligible superstitious group.

To compare distribution of subjects in various categories of superstition,  $\chi^2$  test is used. Results depicted in table 1.

**5. Result and Discussion**

**Table 1**  
**Distribution of Tribal Varsity Students on the Basis of Various Categories of Superstition**

Categories of Superstition	Frequency	Percentage (%)	$\chi^2$
Highly Superstitious (More than 100)	82	82%	$\chi^2 = 107.12$ ( $p < .01$ )
Moderately Superstitious	06	6%	

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(Between 84-100)			
No Superstition (Less than 84)	12	12%	
Total	100	100.0	

$\chi^2$  (df=2) = 5.99 at .05 level and 9.21 at .01 level

A perusal of statistical entries shown in table 1 revealed that 82% tribal varsity students were highly superstitious, 6% were moderately superstitious while 12% were not superstitious or superstitious behaviour was negligible in them. The calculated  $\chi^2 = 107.12$  which is statistically significant at .01 level confirms that majority of the tribal varsity students were highly superstitious. Results once again revealed the deep rooted impact of cultural beliefs and traditions in formation of superstitious behaviour. Modern world is governed by scientific inventions and it is believed that superstitious is decreasing but result clearly indicate that superstitious behaviour is still part of tribal society. Since superstitious behaviour are formed due to fear of unseen event even educational status may not reduce it. It is believed that modern society is science dominated and people think more rationally. But this is not true. The modern world is highly competitive and to achieve success people tend to practice some or other kind of superstition. In case of tribal students their cultural and religious practices along with their own superstitious rituals to control uncertain circumstances make them highly superstitious.

**6. Conclusion**

On the basis of results it may be concluded that tribal varsity students of Chhattisgarh are highly superstitious. Hence tribal varsity students of Chhattisgarh needs to be counselled about the ill effects of superstition so that they can think more rationally and shun away from irrational beliefs. This will be beneficial for tribal society to come out of ill effects of superstitious beliefs.

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