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## "UNVEILING INDIA'S LEGAL LANDSCAPE: NAVIGATING THE LAWS SURROUNDING WITCH HUNTING "

### INTRODUCTION –

In India, witch hunting is practices from ancient times. “Witch hunting” and “witch doctor” are considered as illegal. In our country, mostly in the rural areas this practice is continued till today. we have cases on people following superstitions and witch craft. These problem needs a legal and educational resolutions, which helps people to understand the reality. In our country, mostly in the rural areas, this practice is continued till today.

We have many state laws like “THE PREVENTION OF WITCH (DAAIN) PRACTICES ACT 1999” in Bihar, “THE PREVENTION OF WITCH (DAAIN) PRACTICES ACT 1999” In Chhattisgarh, “ODISHA PREVENTION OF WITCH-HUNTING ACT, 2013” in Odisha, “MAHARASHTRA PREVENTION AND ERADICATION OF HUMAN SACRIFICES AND OTHER INHUMAN, EVIL AND AGHORI PRACTICES AND BLACK MAGIC ACT, 2013” in Maharashtra, “ASSAM HEALING (PREVENTION OF HEALING) PRACTICES BILL,2024” in Assam, “KERALA PREVENTITION OF ERADICATION OF UNHUMAN EVIL PRACTICES, SORCERY AND BLACK MAGIC BILL, 2019” in Kerala. The imprisonment should not ne less than 1 year and shall not exceeds the 5 year and fine imposed 5000/- to 50,000/-

### What is Witch Hunting?

Witch hunting is a practice which started from the ancient times which effects the society. This word witch hunting is somewhere related the witch craft, the ultimate meaning of this is the skill or ability of a witch or Dayan.

According to **Oxford learner’s dictionaries**, “witch hunting Is defined as an attempt to find and punish people who hold opinions that are thought to be unacceptable or dangerous to society”.

According to the **Collins dictionary**, “witch hunting is an attempt to find and punish a particular group of people who are being blamed for something, often simply because of its opinions and not because they have actually done anything wrong.

Witch hunting is also be refer as an practicing of witch craft which Is destroying the mental or physical heath of the people. Mainly the women are the target for these practices.

In modern times, the witch hunting has forms new ways in this era where the individuals are targeting in the social media platforms for harassment. This witch craft is manifested in various types witch includes the political or religious belief as well as its also can be done in a legal persecution which is based on ethnic or in a economic factors.

### **What is superstition?**

Superstition is a kind of practice which is a narrow belief because it cannot be explained with reasoning or in a scientific way. superstition can be found anywhere and everywhere in the world. There are always two types of superstition, positive or negative.

According to the **Collins dictionary**, “superstition is a belief in the thing which is not real or possible like magic”. We all believe in the thing which is a magic to us or we expected to happens a magic in our life. As we understand the nature of human, we see that superstition is now a part of our life.

Some common examples of belief which are follows till today: -

1. The women who open her hair in night, then they can come to contact with witch (Dayan).
2. Broken mirrors are considered as a bad luck.

According to **National crime record bureau** in **2019**, Chhattisgarh have 22 cases and Jharkhand gave 15 murder cases on the ground of witch hunting. From 2001 to 2021 the state of Jharkhand has more than 593 women murder cases on the ground of witch crafting.

In 2020 there are 88 deaths due to witch crafting practices and in which 6 is found as a human sacrifices. From 2021 report, there are 68 killing out of which 6 are found as a human scarifies and also 2300 murders of witches from the year 1999 – 2013 in all over the county.

According to the **Odisha state commission for women and action aid** in 2021, there are 83% cases on witch hunting and witch crating in the district of Mayurbhanj, keonjha, Sundargarh, Ganjam, Rayagada and in many districts of Odisha.

**Cases: -**

### **`West Bengal vs KALI SINGH AND OTHERS.**

**Fact: -** In this case around 50 men come to the victim's home and asked for 60,000 rupees as they are carrying out witch hunting activity, but the three women are not ready to pay and they were dragged in the river, killed and buried.

Calcutta High Court observed that, judicial execution cannot help in this evil practices. This belief and practices are in the psyche of a men. It gave the death penalty of 7 person who convicted to kill 3 women rumoured that they are witches.

There is a recent case in **Thane district** in 2024, March 4 where an old man name **Laksman Bhavarthe** is being given the punishment that he had to dance on burning coal for practicing black magic. The family of the old man filed a First information report (FIR), Which includes the charges under Indian Penal Code such as assault, rioting and also have the provisions of the Maharashtra Prevention and Education of Human Sacrifice's other Inhuman and *A Ghori* Practices and Black Magic Act, 2013.

### **CONCLUSION –**

As to our conclusion, witch hunting is violating the fundamental rights of the people according to the Article 14, 15 and 21 of Indian Constitution. There are several superstition bills in India, which wants to criminalize the evil practices, but it cannot become an act. So, can we consider this black magic as a black obedience? This type of blind faith is illegal but still there are many cases on the ground of witch crafting. In my research I found more than 150 cases on the ground of human scarifies. We need a solution of this problem, for this the awareness should be created among peoples. At last government should ban, the advertisement which is related to superstition or black magic.

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