

The Belief Beyond Science! The Role of Mass Media in Fueling Mysticism: A Sociological Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Mystic practices have been in existence from the time immemorial in different parts of the world. These practices are based on the firm belief that there are forces beyond our understanding that can be harnessed for our benefit or to sustain harm to others. In the era of science, however, these practices are often ridiculed and considered as superstitious and are subjected to scrutiny, with many people questioning their efficacy and validity. While some of these practices claim to have basis in science but most of them are not supported by modern science and are considered irrational. Social media and advertisement play a significant role in promoting these practices as they can reach a wide audience and can often be persuasive. Thus, keeping in mind, the present paper has been designed which examines the existence of mystic practices like exorcism, *tona-totka*, *tantra-mantra*, *jhad-funk* (sorcery) etc. in modern society and how social media and advertisement play a role in popularizing these practices and how they can be used to benefit the people who practice them. The paper is empirical in nature in which 125 respondents of Jind district in Haryana have been sampled based on their availability. The paper reveals that lack of medical facility and poor education are the fundamental reasons for the continuation of these practices and print or social media plays a very vital role to promote them.

Keywords: Mystic practices, Science, Superstitious, Social media, Advertisement, Exorcism, Sorcery

INTRODUCTION

There is no denying that we live in a scientific society. Today, we are constantly inundated with messages about the importance of science. We are told that science is the key to solving all the world's problems and that we should put our faith in its findings. Every day, we rely on science to help us understand and make sense of the world around us. We use science to cure diseases, create new technologies, and understand the universe. And yet, despite all of this, mysticism still exist. There are several reasons why mystic practices persist in our scientific society. For one, science cannot explain everything. There will always be things that remain a mystery, no matter how much research we do. This leaves room for people to believe in things that science cannot explain, like the supernatural or the afterlife. Another reason why mystic practices exist is that they offer comfort. In a world that

is often chaotic and unpredictable, it can be soothing to believe in something that is stable and unchanging. Mysticism can provide a sense of order and meaning in a world that often feels confusing and meaningless. Lastly, mysticism appeals to our sense of wonder. We are naturally curious creatures, and there is something intriguing about the idea of hidden knowledge or unseen forces at work in the world. Mysticism offers a way to explore these things and satisfy our curiosity about the unknown.

Mystic practice is a type of spiritual practice that is focused on achieving a direct, personal experience of the divine or the absolute. This type of practice often involves the use of rituals, meditation, and other techniques to induce a state of altered consciousness in which the practitioner can commune with the divine. There are both positive and negative sides to mysticism. On the positive side, mysticism can be used to help improve one's health

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and well-being. It can also be used to attract wealth and abundance. On the negative side, it can also be used for harm. It can be used to curse someone or to bring bad luck. Mystic practices are found in many different religious and spiritual traditions, and they can be adapted to suit the needs and beliefs of individual practitioners. Despite the scepticism of the scientific community, there are still many people who believe in and practice mysticism. Mystics believe that we can access this hidden reality through our own consciousness, which is not limited by our physical or mental limitations. Mysticism is not a new belief system; it has been around for thousands of years. The scientific community generally believes that our physical world is all there is and that anything beyond that is either imaginary or unknowable. They see no evidence for the existence of a hidden reality, and they believe that any attempt to access it is doomed to failure.

Today the society is dominated by print and social media for advertisement because due to commercialization everyone wants to sell their goods and methods through advertisement or on social media. There is no doubt that advertisement and social media can be very effective in promoting everything. This is because they can reach many people very quickly and easily by social media and advertisement. They can also be very persuasive. Social media and advertising also have an important role in making the mystic practice reach to more and more people. Advertisement and social media can be used to create an image of these practices that is very positive and appealing. This can make people more likely to try these practices.

It will be argued that advertisement plays a significant role in both legitimizing and popularizing these practices. On the one hand, advertisement provides a platform for practitioners to reach a wider audience and to legitimize their services. On the other hand, it also fuels demand for these services by creating a sense of need or desire among the public. In doing so, advertisement plays a key role in the perpetuation of mystic practices in society.

Literary Review:

Over the past years, a lot of research have looked at how effective advertising works. Ad memory, ad recognition, brand awareness, clicks or click-through rate, attitude toward the ad and the brand, and purchase consideration are frequent indicators of advertising effectiveness. Exorcism, sorcery, and witchcraft etc. are

all mystic practices that have been around for centuries. While some of this can be attributed to a general increase in spiritual seeking, it is also clear that advertisement and social media play a role in promoting these practices.

Baba (2012) describe advertisement as a unique kind of communication that needs to be successful not just for a single client but also for a large group of potential customers. This means that distinct goals should be established for each unique marketing campaign. Like promotions, which are a type of advertising, the goals of advertising should be clear. For this, it is necessary to carefully identify the target audience and to make it obvious what impact the advertising is meant to have on the consumer. As advertisers look for more cheap alternatives to traditional media, out-of-home advertising is increasing more quickly than most other forms of advertising. The increase in brand recognition of products has been made possible by outdoor advertising.

Kumar and Raju (2013) define Advertising is a type of communication used to persuade viewers, readers, or listeners to buy something or do something about goods, information, services, etc. Customers take a risk with every transaction they make or don't make since they must make decisions based on insufficient information. The significance of the specific purchase, the amount of pertinent information available about the product category, and the number of competing brands all influence how much risk consumers perceive. A purchasing decision can be seen as an optimization process in which consumers look for the brand or product that would provide the highest level of satisfaction. When consumers are looking for knowledge about a brand, they are typically more receptive to marketing for that brand.

According to Svetlana (2014) research, companies need not only provide high-quality goods but also educate customers about their advantages and establish a distinct position for those goods in the market. A new product needs to meet the requirements of consumers, be distinctive, and provide consumers with information about its features. To do this, companies must employ various forms of promotion that are an integral component of several marketing activities, a type of information output to the consumer. So, advertising is the primary method of product promotion.

Objective:

- How and where these practices are advertised.
- How advertisement and social media play a role

in promoting mystic practices.

- To analyse the continuation and effectiveness of these practices.

Sampling:

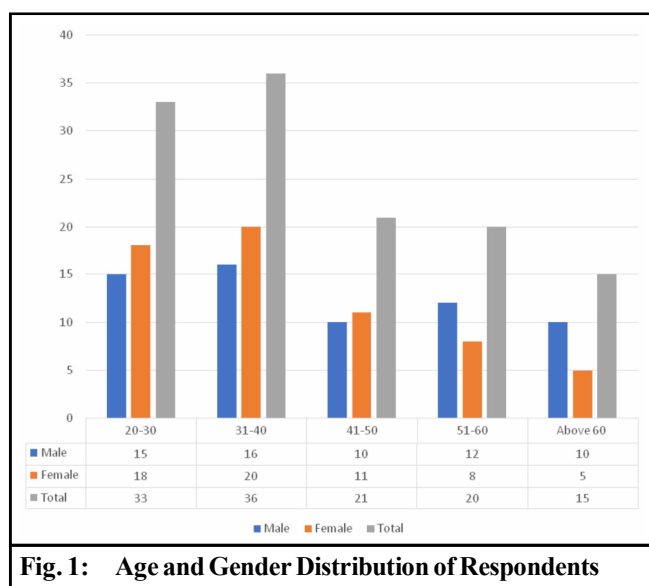
For the current study, a suitable sample (purposive sampling method) of respondents was selected randomly, and each respondent was asked to complete the questionnaire voluntarily. For this study, respondents are selected randomly from the Jind district of Haryana. The sample size for this study is 125.

METHODOLOGY

In this paper, we use primary data to understand how advertisements or social media play a role in knowing about mystic practices. We filled the questionnaire with 125 respondents randomly from the Jind district of Haryana. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews in which the participants were asked about their experiences and how they came across about these practices. In addition, the paper also relies on secondary sources to supplement the primary data. This could include research articles, books, or other materials that discuss these practices in detail. By doing so, we hope to gain a better understanding of how these practices are being disseminated and how effective these channels are in doing so.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fig. 1 represent the age and gender distribution of



the respondents. The gender ratio of the respondents is nearly half for the each *i.e.*, male and female. Most of the respondents are from the age group of 20-30 years (26.4%) and 31-40 years (28.8%).

Fig. 2 pie-chart shows that nearly one third of the respondents are acclaimed higher education and 16 percent are graduate. While rest of the respondents are either illiterate or have education up to senior secondary.

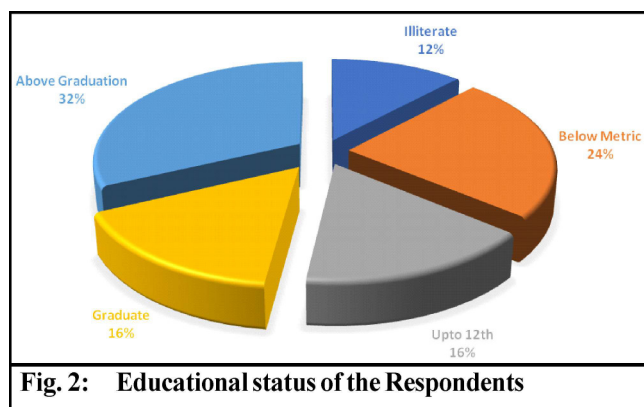
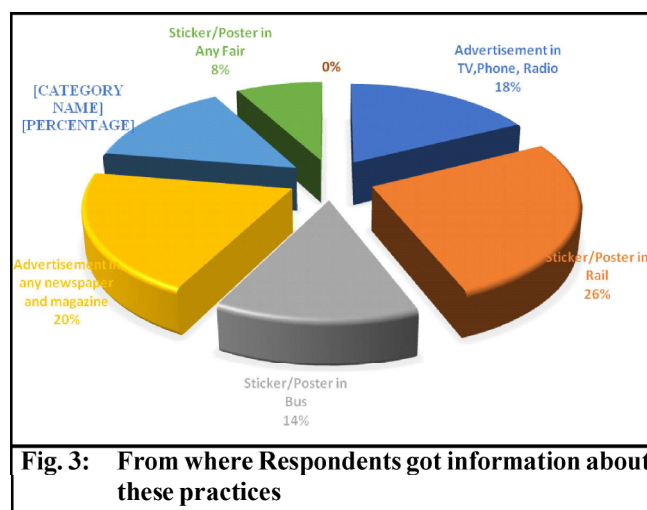


Fig. 3 pie chart represents that nearly one fourth of the respondents came across with these types of advertisement from sticker/poster in railway, 14 per cent of the respondents saw this advertisement either in any bus, or in washroom of any hospital, railway station, and bus stand. While one fifth of the respondents saw in any newspaper and magazine, 18 percent in phone, radio, and tv, and only 8 percent saw these types of advertisements in any fair.



The Table 1 represent that sooner or later most of the respondents came across with advertisements of all

type of ailments method which includes General ailments, Bone related ailments, Poisoning treatment, *Jhada lgana* (sorcery) to get rid from a specific disease or evil spirit, *Jhada lgana* (sorcery) to get rid from all type of diseases or evil spirit, *Vashikaran*, Totemism (to give *tabiz*, *bbhuti*, *prshad* etc.) to get rid from a specific disease or evil spirit, Totemism (to give *tabiz*, *bbhuti*, *prshad*, etc.) to get rid from all type of diseases or evil spirit, Pulse Diagnosis (*nadi dekhna*) and telling and treating all kinds of problems (diseases or evil spirit) by looking at the person's face, and Method/process of ailment (to feed black dog, cow or any other on a specific day) to get rid from disease or evil spirit.

According to Table 2 most of the respondents use the social media. Periodically all the respondents confronted an advertisement or social media post related to mystic practices, and they are also familiar with the concept of exorcism, sorcery, and mysticism. Nearly two-thirds of the respondent's accord that they meet with a sorcerer or practitioner of the mystic practices and witnessed or participated in an exorcism, *tona-totka*, or *jhad-funk*, and even half of the respondents ever tried any of these practices' own self.

The Table 3 is based upon a scale. This scale is a Likert-type scale used to measure attitudes or opinions. The scale is named after its inventor, Rensis Likert, who developed it in 1932. It is typically a 5- or 7-point scale, with anchors at each end (e.g., "strongly agree" "agree," "neutral opinion," "disagree" "strongly disagree").

The Table 3 represent that most of the respondents are interested and have trust in these type of advertisement in all forms *i.e.*, from social media, TV, phone, or from print media. They found that these ads are visually attractive and appealing and have impact on audience from which they are convinced to follow these practices. Most of the respondents found these practises effective and they want that these practices need to be continue. Most of the respondents said that mysticism, sorcery, and witchcraft are real, and these are effective ways to get rid of evil spirits or disease. The scale shows that followers of these practices are from each stratum of the society and advertisements, or social media play a significant role in promoting mystic practices and influence people's decisions to try out these practices. Most of the respondents said that poor education system and lack in medical facility are the main reasons for the prevalence

Table 1: Which types of treatment advertisement you came across?

Type of Practice	Frequency
General ailments	87
Bone related ailments	23
Poisoning treatment	29
<i>Jhada lgana</i> (sorcery)to get rid from a specific disease or evil spirit	97
<i>Jhada lgana</i> (sorcery) to get rid from all type of diseases or evil spirit	102
<i>Vashikaran</i> etc.	112
Totemism (to give <i>tabiz</i> , <i>bbhuti</i> , <i>prshad</i> etc.) to get rid from a specific disease or evil spirit	97
Totemism (to give <i>tabiz</i> , <i>bbhuti</i> , <i>prshad</i> , etc.) to get rid from all type of diseases or evil spirit	103
Pulse Diagnosis (<i>nadi dekhna</i>) and telling and treating all kinds of problems (diseases or evil spirit) by looking at the person's face	83
Method/process of ailment (to feed black dog, cow or any other on a specific day) to get rid from disease or evil spirit	79
All the above	114

Table 2 :

Parameter	Yes	No	Total
Do you use social media?	110	15	125
Have you ever encountered an advertisement or social media post related to mystic practices?	125	00	125
Are you familiar with the concept of exorcism, sorcery, and mysticism?	125	00	125
Have you ever encountered someone who claims to be a sorcerer or practitioner of the mystic practices?	84	41	125
Have you ever tried any of these practices yourself?	62	63	125
Have you ever witnessed or participated in an exorcism, <i>tona-totka</i> , or <i>jhad-funk</i> ?	88	37	125

Table 3:

Parameter	SA	A	NO	DA	SDA
Are you interested in watching these types of ads?	12	41	38	19	15
Do you trust advertisements or social media?	10	42	28	21	24
Is ads have some relevant message?	12	48	18	35	12
Are ads visually attractive and appealing?	24	46	25	15	15
Do ads have some impact upon you?	28	49	12	26	10
Do you think ads convince you to follow the mystic practice?	21	55	14	21	14
Do you think advertisement of these type of mystic practice is good?	09	48	23	25	20
Do you think that Mystic Practices are effective?	32	42	21	16	14
Do you think that Mystic Practices should be permitted to continue?	29	46	11	24	15
Do you think that these practices should be banned?	14	25	11	44	31
Do you think that Mystic Practices are beneficial?	23	46	21	17	18
Do you think that Mystic Practices are dangerous?	14	33	18	45	15
Do you think that Mystic Practices are misused for personal gain?	16	34	14	43	18
Do you think exorcism is an effective way to get rid of evil spirits?	19	49	07	42	08
Do you think <i>jhad-funk</i> (sorcery), witchcraft is real?	19	49	12	38	07
Do you think these practices can help people in some way?	10	47	18	32	18
Do you feel that these practices are effective in achieving their acclaimed goals?	16	49	12	25	23
Do you think that people from lower economic status have more faith in these practices?	18	39	10	45	13
Do you think that lack of education and low medical facility play a role in the existence of these mystic practices?	25	55	15	18	12
Do you think advertisements or social media play a role in promoting mystic practices and influence people's decisions to try out these practices.	24	52	08	25	16



Source: https://image.isu.pub/120414042028-99cafd53a7384df0a5d8245f0311d05c/jpg/page_1.jpg

Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/31/b7/7a/31b77ab2773eca56c18ff61229f51f38.jpg>

Plate 1 : Some Stickers/Posters of these type of mystic practice

of mysticism in the today's scientific temperament society and that's why people are still rely on mystic practices for their ailments of disease.

Conclusion:

It is crucial to understand that social media and advertising frequently fuel mystic practices in today's logical society. Social media and advertising have a major impact on promoting these practices. Through social media, individuals can easily share their experiences with these practices, while advertising offers a broader reach

for promoting them. Consequently, there has been a growing appeal among individuals for these practices, leading to a rise in their popularity. While social media and advertising may promote mystic practices, it is ultimately up to individuals to critically evaluate and choose whether or not to engage in them. Personal beliefs, experiences, and cultural influences also heavily influence the appeal of these practices. The study also reckons that the role of the poor education system and lack of medical facilities in the existence of mystic practices is very significant. It is because of these factors that people

are not able to get rid of their superstitions and are instead forced to rely on these practices for solving their problems. Lack of awareness about science and technology among the masses is also a major reason for the pervasiveness and popularity of these practices.

Glossary of important term used

- *Tona-Totka*: A practice that involves using supernatural powers to bring about a desired outcome.
- *Tantra-Mantra*: Tantra Mantras are phrases or sounds that are repeated while meditating to aid in focus.
- *Jhad-Funk*: A procedure of expelling ghosts or other spirit entities from a person or location.
- *Vashikaran*: A ritual or kind of incantation used to employ influence over someone, someone's soul, or even an animal.
- *Jhada Lgana*: A mystic practice that is used to treat any type of disease of a person.
- *Tabiz*: A form of protection worn on various body parts, such as the neck, arms, waist, etc., that protected from evils, magic, and the negative

impacts of wicked planets.

- *Bbhuti*: The pure ash after burning usually dry *peepal* tree wood and cow manure.
- *Prashad*: During and after worship religious/pious food offering in Hinduism.
- *Nadi Dekhna*: Pulse diagnosis for detecting disease.

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