



WHEN FAITH BECOMES FATAL: UNMASKING THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS CRIMES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

“Religion or superstition used as a tool for crime.” India, a secular nation,¹ is facing a turning point in its history where religion is increasingly being used for exploitation, violence, and division. Manipulators have turned religion² into a weapon, using blind faith to carry out illegal activities such as money scams, emotional blackmail, and the ceremonial slaughter of defenceless people and animals. Fake godmen and spiritual gurus trick people with strong religious beliefs into giving up their money, time, and free will in the name of obeying God. Religious crimes in India include black magic, human and animal sacrifices, and exploitation by false religious lecturers and self-styled godmen. This article highlights the flaws in a culture that cannot distinguish between faith and mindless obedience, revealing how religious belief can result in crimes against society's spirit and body when corrupted by ignorance and greed.

Keywords: Religious Exploitation, Blind Faith and Crime, Fake Godmen in India.

INTRODUCTION: THE UNSAFE CONFLUENCE OF FRAUD AND FAITH

India has long taken pleasure in being the birthplace of some of the biggest religions in the world, including Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Hinduism. It is a country known for its spiritual variety. Chants, festivals, and rituals abound in the streets, establishing faith as a normal aspect of daily life. In addition to being places of worship, temples, mosques, churches, and gurudwaras serve as the emotional, social, and cultural pillars of millions of people's lives. For many Indians, religion encompasses more than just beliefs; it also represents identity,

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¹ Supreme Court of India ruled that India was already a secular state from the time it adopted its constitution, what actually was done through this amendment is to state explicitly what was earlier contained implicitly under article 25 to 28. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion_in_India

² The 267th Law Commission Report on Hate Speech, recently submitted to the Law Ministry, is a mixed bag. <https://www.latestlaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Law-Commission-Report-No.-267-Hate-Speech.pdf>

tradition, morality, and hope. Millions of individuals with strong religious beliefs live in India, which is frequently referred to as the land of faith. Not only are temples, mosques, churches, and gurudwaras places of worship, but they are also vital hubs for the community. However, a terrifying reality lurks beneath this devotion. False gurus, self-styled babas, tantriks, and molvis utilise faith to perpetrate horrible crimes, including organised violence, financial fraud, sexual assault, black magic, and human sacrifice. Even worse, their adherents' unshakable faith protects and encourages their atrocities. Beneath this colourful spiritual exterior, however, is a disturbing truth: faith is being exploited—made into a weapon of fear, criminality, and exploitation. Horrible crimes like as black magic, sexual exploitation, fraud, murder, and the sacrifice of humans and animals are being committed in the name of religion. The manipulative strategies of self-styled godmen, phoney babas, tantriks, and extreme preachers are using blind belief as a weapon to get money, power, and control over innocent people, particularly women, children, the poor, and the illiterate.

The issue has serious origins and dire repercussions, ranging from instances of child sacrifice to "please gods" to widespread religious frauds that embezzle crores from families hoping for favours. Predators now use religion as a cover, protected by the heedless devotion of their adherents and frequently guarded by political and judicial structures that are afraid of public criticism. This article explores the murky underbelly of religious criminality in India, where religion turns into a battleground and trust into a trap. It reveals how religious belief may result in crimes against society's spirit as well as against the body when it is tainted by ignorance and greed.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: RELIGIOUS CRIMES ARE NOT NEW

The abuse of religion to excuse exploitation or violence is not a recent development; it has long been a part of cultural customs and superstitions that have been passed down through the ages. India has long been known for its deep philosophical understanding and spiritual knowledge, but history also documents horrifying cases in which rituals were transformed into crimes and devotion into terror. The Dark Shadow of Sacrifice – “Bali Pratha” One of the most ancient yet horrifying practices rooted in blind belief was Bali Pratha—the ritualistic offering of animals, and in extreme cases, humans, to appease deities or spirits. While some religious texts symbolised sacrifice as a metaphor, many regions interpreted it literally. In tribal areas of Odisha, Assam, and Jharkhand, human sacrifices were practised even into the 20th century. Children or women were sometimes buried alive or beheaded in the belief that their blood

would bring rain, fertility, or protection from evil.³ The 2015 case of a seven-year-old boy in Odisha, who was kidnapped and sacrificed by a man trying to "please the gods" for wealth, shocked the nation and showed how ancient beliefs still manifest in modern times.

Sati: Crime or Ritual: Once hailed as the "highest expression of devotion," the notorious Sati ritual involved a widow being forced or expected to burn herself on her husband's funeral pyre. In actuality, however, it was a fatal outcome of societal pressure, spiritual manipulation, and patriarchal control. The practice persisted even after Governor General Lord William Bentinck banned it in 1829. A national outcry and tougher legislation resulted from the 1987 Roop Kanwar case in Rajasthan, where an 18-year-old was burned alive while posing as Sati. Sati was a crime concealed under the guise of custom, not merely a religious practice.⁴

Witch hunts and black magic:⁵ Women, particularly widows or the elderly, were labelled as "dayan" (witches) and subjected to torture, exile, or even death in many rural areas of India. Horrible crimes resulted from the assumption that witchcraft was to blame for calamities like crop failure, sickness, or infertility. Even now, hundreds of women are attacked or killed every year in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Assam on suspicion of being witches.⁶ These deadly rites, which were frequently conducted by local shamans or ojhas who possessed spiritual authority without any accountability, have involved entire communities.

Abuse in Ancient Courts by "Spiritual Masters": So-called gurus, astrologers, and mystics were common in royal courts even in ancient nations, where they used predictions and omens to sway kings. Some manipulated kings for favour, land, or power, while others were true scholars. Under the pretence of divine will, several royal maulvis and astrologers during the Mughal era made erroneous war predictions or gave deadly advice. Tantrics were used for political rites or "black magic protection" during the Maratha and Rajput times, which

³ News Summary: NCRB 2022 report on crime in India What does the 2022 NCRB report say?... Read more at: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/ncrb-report/>

⁴ Roopkuvarba Kanwar (c. 1969 – 4 September 1987) was a teenaged Hindu **Rajput** widow in India who was burned on her husband's funeral pyre in an act of **sati**^{[1][2][3]} at **Deorala** village of **Sikar district** in **Rajasthan**, India. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roop_Kanwar

⁵ <https://www.pradan.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Blinded-by-Superstition-A-Case-Study-on-Witch-Hunting.pdf> Encouraging critical thinking through open discussion in public forums, thereby challenging traditional beliefs about witches being the cause of all the misfortunes that tribal communities face is perhaps the only way that the bane of witch-hunting can be eradicated from society

⁶ Jharkhand tops in witch-hunt murders, 523 women lynched between 2001-16: NCRB <https://www.hindustantimes.com/ranchi/jharkhand-tops-in-witch-hunt-murders-523-women-lynched-between-2001-16-ncrb/story-oNIPZYiPrnzOrwGS6EKvEP.html>

frequently resulted in the persecution of defenceless citizens who were thought to be possessed or cursed.

The Significance of This History: These actual and recorded instances are not merely anecdotes from the past; they are echoed in crimes committed today. Though in different forms, the same mindset of blind faith, dread of the unknown, and unquestioned authority of religious figures persists in modern India. These days, there are godmen with private planes and enormous ashrams in place of fire altars and jungle ceremonies, or viral videos that promise miraculous healings. One important lesson from India's history of religious atrocities is that faith is readily corrupted when it is not challenged.

RELIGIOUS CRIMES IN THE PRESENT: FROM COURTROOMS TO TEMPLES

Witch hunts and human sacrifices may seem like old customs, but they haven't vanished; they have only taken on new forms. In modern India, the abuse of religion has spread to other fields, including commerce, politics, real estate, journalism, and technology. Self-styled godmen, phoney maulvis, spiritual influencers, and religious cult leaders who take advantage of the populace in the name of divine authority are at the core of many such contemporary atrocities.

The Cult of Blind Obedience: Are They Criminals or Godmen: Several so-called "spiritual leaders" have emerged in India, gaining vast wealth, influence, and political connections in the process of perpetrating crimes ranging from mass deceit to rape and murder. The chief of Dera Sacha Sauda, Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh.⁷ He portrayed himself as the Saviour, the Singer, and the Saint. Behind the scenes, however, he castrated hundreds of men under the guise of spiritual advancement, raped female disciples, and ordered the murder of a journalist. The extent of his deception was revealed in 2017 when violent riots broke out following his conviction, killing over 30 people and wounding hundreds more. Asaram Bapu was found guilty in 2013 of raping a young girl at his ashram.⁸ He was a well-known Hindu preacher with a following in the lakhs. A whole network of unlawful land acquisition, undisclosed wealth,

⁷ India guru rape: Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh jailed for 20 years 28 August 2017

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-41070764>

⁸ The 81-year-old self-styled godman Asaram is serving a life sentence in a Jodhpur jail for raping a minor girl at his ashram in Rajasthan in 2013. Updated - February 01, 2023 12:21 am IST – AHMEDABAD

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/gujarat-court-awards-life-imprisonment-to-godman-asaram-bapu-imposes-fine-of-50000-for-repeated-rape-and-sexual-exploitation/article66453821.ece>

and sexual exploitation of followers under spiritual pressure was exposed by his case. After being accused of rape, kidnapping, and fraud on several occasions, Nithyananda fled India.⁹

Unbelievably, he proceeded to establish his own "Hindu nation" named Kailasa, recruiting followers all over the world with the use of distorted media and digital propaganda. These incidents are not unique; rather, they reflect a systemic abuse of blind trust in which law enforcement frequently fears social backlash and spiritual leaders are seldom questioned.

Superstition and Black Magic in the Scientific Age: Under the pretence of "spiritual healing," black magic and exorcisms are still common in India in the twenty-first century, particularly in the rural areas, but even among the metropolitan elite. Only after the murder of Dr. Narendra Dabholkar, an activist who opposed false spiritual practices, did Maharashtra pass the Anti-Superstition and Black Magic Act in 2013.¹⁰ Numerous "tantriks" in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar have been apprehended engaging in sexual rites, offering fictitious treatments for illnesses like cancer or infertility, or committing child sacrifices. Fake astrologers and tantriks are also using social media to promote fear-based services, defrauding individuals out of thousands of rupees by making promises of "quick money," "husband-wife solutions," or "black magic elimination."

Taking advantage of religious differences and minorities: Crimes committed in the name of religion also include targeted discrimination, forced conversions, and acts of community violence in which religious leaders stir hostility for their own or their political advantage. Fake preachers or religious organisations have been found to use money or threats to coerce vulnerable people—particularly those from tribal and Dalit communities—to convert in several incidents. Communal riots, like the ones in Delhi in 2020 and Muzaffarnagar in 2013, frequently start with religiously motivated rumours and culminate in the mass murder of innocent people, the destruction of property, and the widening of social divisions.

Why Crime Is More Dangerous Today? Today's religious atrocities are shielded by political connections, large fan bases, and internet disinformation, unlike in the past. In addition to being

⁹ Self-styled godman Nithyananda fled India in 2019, leaving behind a sprawling religious empire, after being accused of child abduction, sexual assault and abuse, and claimed to have founded the nation of 'Kailasa', calling it a "safe haven for practising, aspiring or persecuted Hindus" <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/nithyananda-republic-of-kailasa-united-states-of-kailasa-godman-he-founded-hindu-nation-then-attempted-to-take-over-land-in-bolivia-8078337>

¹⁰ Narendra Dabholkar's book is a beacon of reason and rationality against the darkness of superstition <https://scroll.in/article/899710/narendra-dabholkars-book-is-a-beacon-of-reason-and-rationality-against-the-darkness-of-superstition>

personal, these crimes are institutionalised, with whole networks supporting online religious fraud, spiritual land mafias, and bogus gurus. For fear of embarrassment, the majority of victims never report. Some people are too indoctrinated to recognise the reality.

TYPES OF RELIGIOUS CRIME IN INDIA

The religious landscape of India is not only extensive but also intensely sentimental. Because of this, there are many ways in which faith can be abused. These religious offences affect people psychologically, emotionally, economically, and even politically, in addition to physically. Here's how: Ritual Killings and Human Sacrifice. In many regions of India, sacrifices in the name of gods and spirits continue to take place even though they are prohibited. Victims include women, children, old people, and animals. Motive: Fertility, wealth, or election or test-related success. As an illustration, consider the Kerala case of 2022, in which two women were mutilated and beheaded as part of a black magic rite.

Occult Practices and Black Magic: Black magic is still used in urban tantriks and tribal rituals, used to treat infertility, curse foes, dominate others, or drive out "evil spirits." Victims frequently suffer from psychological agony, sexual assault, and financial devastation. For instance, hundreds of women in Maharashtra are tortured annually after being labelled "witches."

Financial Fraud by Impostor Pastors, Maulvis, and Babas: In the name of divine marvels, fake godmen and godwomen take advantage of weaker people: They guarantee money, health, marriage, having children, and even getting a visa! Millions of rupees, gold, and property are donated by victims. For instance, Asaram Bapu, Gurmeet Ram Rahim, and other "healing pastors" in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Cult-Based Sexual and Psychological Exploitation: Many impostor spiritual leaders create cults and manipulate their followers' minds. The name of heavenly surrender is exploited to sexually abuse women. Followers are forced to give up wealth, are estranged from their families, or are even made to commit suicide. For instance, the foundation of Asaram Bapu's empire was such a profound psychological manipulation.

Violence by Mobs and Witch Hunting: Still prevalent in backwards and tribal areas- Women, often elderly or widowed, are accused of witchcraft by the villagers. They are burned alive,

beaten, or paraded nude. For instance, within the last ten years, more than 2,000 women have been slaughtered in this manner in Assam and Jharkhand.

Protests in Communities Caused by Religious Feelings: Mass violence is caused by religious agitation and misleading news. For instance, the 2020 Delhi Riots, the 2013 Muzaffarnagar Riots, and the 1989 Bhagalpur Riots. Religious identity is used by leaders to further their political objectives and incite enmity.

RELIGIOUS CRIMES' EFFECT ON INDIAN SOCIETY

These acts undermine the foundation of our society; they are not isolated incidents. Here's how:

Danger to Social Harmony and Secularism: India has a secular constitution. However, religious crimes damage unity, incite enmity, and polarise communities. Communities become ghettoised, people lose faith in one another, and society splits.

Abuse of the Vulnerable and Poor: Most impacted are those who are socially isolated, mentally sick, ignorant, and impoverished. They are more prone to engage in destructive rituals, give up wealth, or believe fraudulent promises.

Obstacle to Development and Reasonable Thought: Blind faith slows down critical thinking, education, and scientific temperament. Instead of being directed to schools and jobs, young people are deceived into joining hate groups or cults. Additionally, fake treatments discourage people from seeking legitimate medical care.

The Judicial and Legal Burden: Because victims rarely report abuse because they are afraid of God, ashamed, or threatened, many instances are challenging to prosecute. Fake godmen utilise religious and political influence to evade justice, even after they are caught.

Decrease in Belief in True Religion: People start to lose trust in spirituality itself when they witness it being used for fraud, rape, and murder. Particularly among young people, this causes an identity crisis that may lead to radicalisation or complete rejection of religion.

International Reputation in Danger: India's religious intolerance and superstitious violence are frequently highlighted on a global scale. Diplomacy, investment, and tourism are all impacted by this.

Final Takeaway: Religious crimes are crimes against faith itself, not merely against the law. Not only do people die when faith is abused, but society also loses morality, reason, and trust.

LEGAL INSIGHT ON CRIMES

The Human Sacrifice Case of Kerala (2022): In search of a better life, two women entered. They never left. In a horrific instance from Kerala's Elanthoor village, two ladies were enticed and brutally killed as part of a couple's black magic rituals and a fictitious tantric. The women were street sellers who were offered money to take part in a religious ceremony. As part of the notion that human sacrifice would bring prosperity and spiritual power, they were drugged, decapitated, and had bits of their bodies dismembered and buried. The defendants, a traditional healer named Bhagaval Singh, his wife, and a tantric named Shafi, thought that these "offerings" would appease the gods and alleviate their financial difficulties.

Impact: The case demonstrated that black magic still exists in our society and horrified contemporary India. To stop crimes like these that stem from delusions based on faith, it sparked new calls for a central anti-superstition law similar to Maharashtra's. It revealed how, even in the name of God, the weak and impoverished are still taken advantage of.

Maulana Ghulam Rasool, Delhi (2019). Fake Maulvis and Spiritual Exploitation in Islam:

In Jamia Nagar, Delhi, a self-styled Maulvi was arrested for sexually abusing women and children while claiming to be practising "halal therapy" and "jinn exorcism" (ruqyah). He asserted that he could use amulets, "secret rituals," and physical contact to rid individuals of black magic and jinn possession. Women in precarious mental conditions, some of whom were pregnant, were typically the victims.

Impact: Fearing social disgrace, many victims were reluctant to file FIRs. It spurred a wider discussion about unlicensed "spiritual healers" in Islamic communities who mislead and take advantage of holy scriptures.

Pastor Paul Dinakaran and Others (Tamil Nadu): Christian Pastors and Miracle Frauds:¹¹ Several pastors, notably the contentious Paul Dinakaran, have come under fire for

¹¹ How are fraud pastors in India benefited by converting people into Christianity? If they are not doing it for money, then what is the hidden agenda for them on a global scale? <https://www.quora.com/How-are-fraud-pastors-in-India-benefited-by-converting-people-into-Christianity-If-they-are-not-doing-it-for-money-then-what-is-the-hidden-agenda-for-them-on-a-global-scale> NCPCR issued notices to @DgpPradesh & CS @ArunachalCMO for officially promoting fraudster pastor Paul Dinakaran's magic healing of Tribals in Itanagar #ArunachalPradesh in which juveniles were exposed to unscientific magic healing by the infamous

allegedly offering "miracle healing" and accepting substantial sums of money in exchange for curing terminal illnesses like cancer, infertility, and paralysis. Many impoverished and rural families in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu stopped receiving medical care once they believed in these purported cures. Impact: These "healing ministries" were frequently used as a cover for money laundering and religious conversion. Because Christian faith-based institutions are not regulated, judicial action has been restricted despite public uproar.

India's Black Magic Crimes: "When a mantra turns into a tool for killing." Black magic and witchcraft still take lives in places like West Bengal, Assam, and Maharashtra.¹² Mobs motivated by regional superstitions kill, torture, or banish women who are labelled "witches." Children, animals, and even human body parts are utilised in rituals performed by fake godmen and tantriks in an attempt to promote fertility, riches, or health. People with mental illnesses or disabilities have been slaughtered in rituals in some tragic circumstances because they were thought to be "possessed." For instance, whole villages have taken part in the public execution of women in Jharkhand and Odisha because they utilised black magic to bring illness or death.

Impact: Superstition is still very prevalent in rural India despite advancements. Due to the lack of national legislation expressly making black magic illegal, there are legal loopholes and underreporting. The assassination of activists like Narendra Dabholkar for opposing such activities demonstrates the peril of opposing mindless faith.

Kidnapping of Orphans for Rituals in West Bengal and Odisha: "For the gods, adopt me." In states like West Bengal and Odisha, dishonest people and false godmen have committed heinous crimes under the pretence of religious rites or spiritual adoption: Modus Operandi: Promises that their "adopted" kid will bring riches, protection, or heavenly favours are made to families. The groomers' operations take place in places of worship, such as temples and pilgrimage towns, giving their plan theological justification.

Christian Evangelist under @dir_ed @IncomeTaxIndiascanner. At the time when PM @narendramodi Ji is making scientific healthcare accessible to all; @ArunachalCMO CM @PemaKhanduBJP is outrageously promoting unethical, illogical FAKE medical practices of quackery & miracles! Healing crusade by #RiceBag groups is a tool to destroy indigenous faith. Fraud healing promoted by CM Khandu has come as a shocker to the the educated, sensible people of Arunachal Pradesh! <https://x.com/LegalLro/status/1720437654544900367>

¹² The Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice, other Inhuman and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Act, 2013 is a [criminal law](#) act for the state of [Maharashtra, India](#), originally drafted by anti superstition activist and the founder of [Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti](#) (MANS), [Narendra Dabholkar](#) (1945-2013) in 2003. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Superstition_and_Black_Magic_Act

Impact on Real Life: There have been multiple documented instances in Odisha (2020–21) where strangers abducted toddlers under the pretence of conducting a "blessing ceremony" and never returned. Numerous of these children were found to have been sold into trafficking networks, used as manual labourers in ashrams, or even sacrificed in distant superstitious cults, according to investigations.

Why is it important?

Because they frequently come from underprivileged backgrounds, victims are prime candidates for religious exploitation. It demonstrates how lax oversight can be used as a cover for abuse at places of worship, both rural and urban, where many trust-based religious practices are practised.

It also serves as an example of the overarching topic of crime disguised as religious authority.

SOCIAL REACTION AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK: ARE WE DOING ENOUGH?

Even though India is a constitutional democracy with protections for life and liberty under Article 21 and freedom of religion under Article 25, crimes committed in the name of religion are still on the rise, primarily as a result of lax enforcement, political meddling, and public silence. Although laws exist, many of them are out of date or not properly implemented.

Sections like 295A (hurting religious sentiments), 298 (uttering words with deliberate purpose to harm religious sentiments), and 153A (promoting enmity between various groups) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) are in place; however, they are frequently abused rather than applied to real offenders.¹³

Laws Opposed to Superstition: Only a few states, such as Karnataka (2017) and Maharashtra (2013),¹⁴ have put specific legislation against human sacrifice and black magic into effect. These offences are not specifically addressed by any national legislation.

¹³ Details of IPC Sections 153A, 295 & 295A

<https://adrindia.org/sites/default/files/Details%20of%20IPC%20Sections%20153A,%20295%20&%20295A.pdf>

¹⁴ The Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice, other Inhuman and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Act, 2013 is a [criminal law](#) act for the state of [Maharashtra, India](#), originally drafted by anti superstition activist and the founder of [Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti \(MANS\)](#), [Narendra Dabholkar](#) (1945-2013) in 2003 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Superstition_and_Black_Magic_Act KARNATAKA ACT NO. 46 OF 2017 THE KARNATAKA PREVENTION AND ERADICATION OF INHUMAN EVIL PRACTICES AND BLACK MAGIC ACT, 2017 [https://dpal.karnataka.gov.in/storage/pdf-files/ao2017/46%20of%202017%20\(E\).pdf](https://dpal.karnataka.gov.in/storage/pdf-files/ao2017/46%20of%202017%20(E).pdf)

Act of 1954 Concerning Drugs and Magic Remedies:¹⁵ A regulation intended to stop the promotion of miracle cures or bogus remedies is rarely used in TV or internet ads for tantriks and phoney babas.

The POCSO Act and the Juvenile Justice Act:¹⁶ These may be relevant in situations involving child sacrifice or the sexual abuse of children in ashrams, but they are frequently put on hold because of a lack of proof, a delay in reporting, or threats from cult groups.

IMPLEMENTATION DIFFICULTIES

Political Patronage: A lot of godmen have the backing of political figures who use their power to stifle inquiries, collect votes, or keep them from being arrested. *Public Blindness:* Out of fear of social rejection or divine retribution, victims frequently decline to testify. Some have been brainwashed to the point where they are unaware that they are being mistreated.

Media Glorification: Without challenging their behaviour, certain TV networks and influencers portray these individuals as "wonder men."

Police Inaction: Local officials refrain from getting involved in "religious affairs" because of concern for the reaction of the community or for the possibility of losing their reputation, particularly in rural areas.

THE REQUIREMENT FOR REFORM

National Anti-Superstition Law: All states in India urgently need a unified law that forbids financial fraud, black magic, and human sacrifice in the name of religion.

Regulation of Religious Institutions: Just like any other public institution, ashrams and religious trusts are subject to registration, audits, and routine oversight.

Digital Crackdown: IT and consumer protection laws should prohibit or regulate online advertising of spiritual scams and miracle cures.

¹⁵ THE DRUGS AND MAGIC REMEDIES (OBJECTIONABLE ADVERTISEMENTS) ACT,
<https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1412/1/195421.pdf>

¹⁶ The POCSO Act and the Juvenile Justice Act
https://nhrc.nic.in/sites/default/files/10_PROTECTION%20OF%20CHILDREN%20-%20SEXUAL%20OFFENCES.pdf

Mass Awareness Campaigns: While blind belief must be questioned, faith must be safeguarded. Schools, universities, and the media must encourage people to think critically about religion and spirituality. Fast-track courts and witness protection are essential for victims and whistleblowers to feel secure enough to report crimes without fear. Cases against influential religious leaders should be handled by fast-track courts to ensure swift justice.

CONCLUSION: A NATION AT A CROSSROADS: BETWEEN FAITH AND FRAUD

One of India's greatest assets is its spiritual legacy; nonetheless, it turns into a national vulnerability when religion is used as a pretext for deception, terror, and exploitation. We are living through a crisis where blind faith is turning into a crime scene, from rape in opulent ashrams to human sacrifices in isolated villages, from witch-hunting in tribal belts to online tantriks promising love and good fortune. This is a request to safeguard religion from exploitation, not an attack on it. Faith must be liberating, personal, and voluntary; it cannot be coerced, mistreated, or bought. India needs to get past fear-based devotion and adopt a more responsible, inquisitive, and thoughtful spirituality. Because blind faith can lead to not only an unlawful but also a cruel outcome.

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