



A Study of Beliefs towards Social Myths in context of Gender

Abstract

Social myths is a universal social feature of society that means there is no myth-less society and these myths vary from region to region, generation to generation and always remains present in every society even after the development of science and technology. Some social myths are strong enough to influence the decision of an individual. The present study has been undertaken by the investigator among gender to identify their beliefs towards social myths. To find out the existence of beliefs over social myths, 40 students were selected and assess different aspects among male and female students. Investigator made a checklist for Data collection which had components like menstruation, transgender, disability, solar eclipse, and other common beliefs, it contains 20 statements. After statistical analysis, data reveal that female students had more beliefs as compared to male students.

Keywords: Beliefs, Social Myths, Gender, society

Introduction

Myths are important elements of every society. This statement may look unconvincing at first sight. Nowadays the development of the role of science and technology in society gives people the possibility to think rational and critical. But on the other hand, the influence of myths remains very strong, especially in such fields as politics, ideology, mass media and science. Myths always exist in every social environment. In the context of the active social transformations the investigation of social myth becomes a question of great importance for adequate and deep understanding of many social and political processes of modernity such as globalization or democratization, and for making social prognosis for the future.(Lustin,2016). Social myths are a specific type of collective representations (beneficial or harmful) that convey values, beliefs, and aspirations. One characteristic of myths is to be highly hybrid collective representations. A social myth is always an unevenly calibrated mixture of reality and fiction (myths are both factual and fictional), of reason and emotion, of consciousness and unconsciousness, of truth and falseness. Social myths should not be confused with ideologies i.e. rational, coherent (ideally), and elaborate discursive constructions designed to justify a political orientation or a social course of action. (Bouchard, 2016).

A large part of folklore beliefs are devoted to believes that some of them are regional and some national or international ones. For example, luck, eye sore, ominous of number thirteen etc. are so widely present in most human societies. Social myths are actually formed perception that have been passed on from one generation to other, changed in the passage of time and place, and added or removed. People usually do not believe them in the same value. These believes are changeable and vary from total dependency to lack of believe. Some consider them superstition or myths and some believe them firmly (Sadeghi, 1994).

The problem of social myths has been investigated by many scholars. But the majority of works are devoted to the general analysis of myths in the cultural or political context. Various kinds of social myths exist in our society that may be related to other issue like menstruation, women, transgender, natural phenomena, disability, superstition and many more. In the survey conducted on 'Menstruation, Religion and Society' and found that 46% girls under the age of 20-25 abide the rule which is made in the past before the sanitary pads but respect the beliefs of other. Only 4% felt that we are impure during our menstruation and should feel guilty while praying (Bhartiya, 2013). A large number of witch hunting cases were reported from different parts of Assam during the last few years. A number of superstitious beliefs such as eating food at the time of solar eclipse is harmful, a number

of diseases are caused by witches, rhino's horn have many medicinal values, etc. are also very much prevalent in this region. (M Kalita, 2016).

Some of the beliefs regarding luck have been seen in different part of country as the beliefs and practices vary from region to region, with many regions having their own specific beliefs. The promotion of bamboo growing in Nepal can help generate income and can be one of the means for reducing poverty in Nepal. However, there are considerable beliefs, superstition, and taboos associated with bamboos in Nepal, many of which have influenced decision making of households towards bamboo growing in Nepal. (Das, 2005). Some of these beliefs and practices are centuries old and are considered part of the tradition and religion, as a result introduction of new prohibitory laws often face opposition. Myths may change over time, particularly after contact with other cultures, but they do not change and adapt to new periods and technological developments in the same way science does.

In India educated people have also been observed following beliefs that may be considered superstitious. The literacy rate of India, according to the 2011 census is at 74%. In most of the study it was found that women's tendency to social myths is much more than the men's. Segura, S.N. (2013) conducted a study on 'Myths and the perception of gender in culture and society'. The field of gender is changing rapidly, a patriarchal system is still present in most advanced capitalist democracies. Myths and misconceptions associated with custom practices were significantly among uneducated and more seasoned population. The social convictions are because of lack of education and absence of information (Pandya, 2016). Hence the study of beliefs towards social myths is a topic of prime importance. It helps to find out the effect of present education system on social development of people and the impact on gender and thereby provide a basis to improve upcoming education policies.

Objective: The purpose of the study to select the group was to ascertain whether the social myths still hold a value in belief system of male and female students in current scenario with following objectives-

1. To examine beliefs of male and female students of Teacher's University, Gandhinagar.
2. To compare the beliefs towards social myths among male and female students of Teachers University, Gandhinagar.

Research Methodology: Methodology is the study of description, explanation and justification of methods employed in conducting a research. Here survey method used in descriptive research method. Descriptive research describes, clarifies, analyses and interprets present situation.

Hypothesis formulated for the study: Hypothesis is, "tentative generalization of the validity which remains to be tested". The null hypothesis applied to study the beliefs towards social myths in context of gender.

H₀: There is no significant difference between mean scores of beliefs towards social myths of male and female students. The steps followed for the present study were

- a) **Type of research:** As the research is related to practical problems, it is applied research.
- b) **Sample-** The total 40 students were taken for the present study by random sampling which consists of 20 male students and 20 female students from Gandhinagar.
- c) **Method and tool used-** Investigator used survey method for the study and prepared a checklist consist of total 20 items. The items included menstruation, transgender, disability and some common beliefs. Higher the score, more the beliefs and lower the score, less the beliefs towards social myths.
- d) **Collection and analysis of data-** The students from Teacher University, Gandhinagar were selected to collect the data. For the analysis and interpret the data, t-test and percentage have been applied.

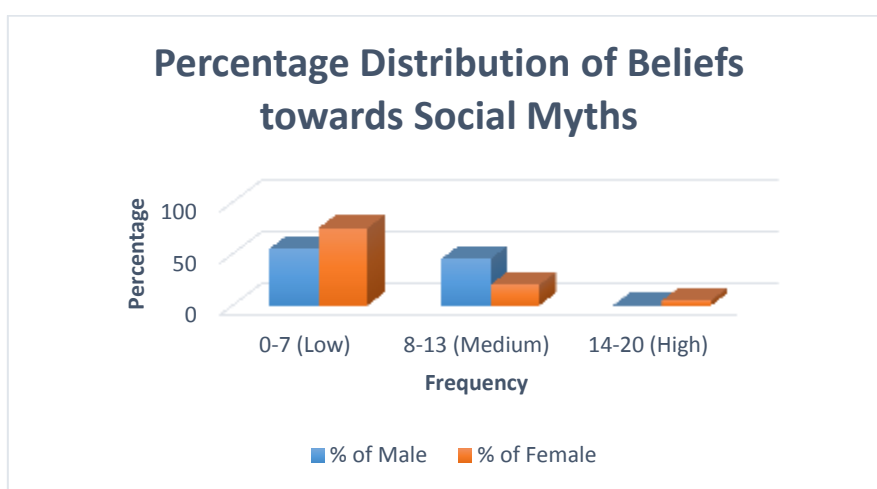
Result and discussion

To investigate the beliefs towards social myths among male and female students, the study were undertaken. Analysis and data interpretation in form of mean, standard deviation and t-test was done on the basis of score obtained by the students.

Table 1: Frequency of male and female students under different level towards social myths

Frequency (Level)	% of Male	% of Female
0-7 (Low)	55	75
8-13 (Medium)	45	20
14-20 (High)	0	5

The above data shows that majority of male and female respondents were fall under low beliefs. Only 45% male students and 20% female students were having beliefs of medium level followed by 5 % of female students having high beliefs where male having 0, reflecting the maximum number of students have less beliefs.

**Fig 1:** Percentage distribution of beliefs towards social myths

The histogram shown above depict the percentage distribution of beliefs towards social myths of male and female students.

Table 2: t-ratio and level of significance to compare beliefs towards social myths of male and female students

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Level of significance
Male	20	7.3	2.81	2.094	**
Female	20	5.3	3.21		

** Significant at 0.05 level

The table shows that the mean score of male students was 7.3 and standard deviation was 2.81 and the mean score of female students was 5.3 and standard deviation was 3.21. The value of t-Ratio is 2.094753 which is more than the table value of t-Ratio (1.98 at 0.05). It is significant at 0.05 level of significance. So the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion: Social myths still exists in every culture and society. A person believing in social myths is always haunted by unknown fears and anxieties and loses self-confidence. It is usually seen in individual of irrational minds and hinder the process of social progress. The main finding of the study:

- 1) Maximum response obtained had low beliefs towards social myths.
- 2) 55% male respondents and 75% female respondents were under the category of low beliefs as low score obtained, 45% male and 20% female have medium beliefs, and on high beliefs male have 0 and female have 20 % beliefs.

- 3) There is a significant difference between the mean score of beliefs towards social myths of male and female students.

In the present study, female respondents have more believe towards social myths as compare to male respondent.

Recommendations and suggestions

- 1) The study can be conducted on large samples of a particular state.
- 2) A comparative study can be conducted between graduate and postgraduate, college and school students, urban and rural people.
- 3) This study can be conducted using different tools.
- 4) Social myths which is not so common such as ageing, leadership, technology myths etc. can also be included.

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