THE GROWING SUPERNATURAL FACTOR: GENDER WISE PERCEPTION OF MAGIC AND EVIL EYE IN PAKISTANI SOCIETY
Iqra Saudagar, Zubaria Khalid
Department of Anthropology, PMAS Arid-Agriculture University, Rawalpindi

Corresponding Author:
Iqra Saudagar
PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi
iqrasaudagar93@gmail.com

Abstract: The supernatural is extraordinary or it is something associated with the forces that cannot be apprehended or cannot be proven by science. Supernaturalism includes existence of ghosts and any other power that is invisible to human eye. The paper explores the perception of magic and evil eye that are prevalent in our society. Further it focuses on how gender, education and socioeconomic status are associated with the keeping the existence of supernatural beliefs alive. This study was conducted qualitatively by collecting a sample of 70 respondents randomly from Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The results showed that, gender, socio economic status and level of education were important factors defining the prevalence of superstitious beliefs. People belonging to lower socio-economic class and less educated respondents were found to be more superstitious.

Key Words: Supernatural, Magic, Evil eye, Science, Superstitions, Magic, Psychology.

INTRODUCTION
Supernaturalism has always been a subject of interest across the world. We all have a profound curiosity in the occult. Human mind has always been provoked by magic and evil eye. Anthropologically it is interesting to know how different culture perceives and react to the idea of magic and evil eye. It is important to know how magic and the occult have been understood by the various cultures.
Religion is characterized by a belief on supernatural beings and forces, which can be turned to for aid through prayer, sacrifice and other rituals. Supernatural beings may be grouped into three categories, major deities (god and goddess) ancestral spirits and other sorts of spirit beings (Haviland, et al. 2013).
The evil eye belief is a widespread superstition according to which people can cause harm by a mere envious glance at coveted objects or their owners. In other words, it is a belief in the supernatural destructive force of envy projected through the eyes of the envier. Deeply ingrained in certain societies and transmitted through centuries, the evil eye belief is still actively present around the world (Gershman 2014).
The evil eye is an Indo-European and Semitic belief complex. It is not found among native North or South Americans or in Oceania. Evil eye concept is based on the idea that an individual, either male or female, has the power to cause harm to another individual or to that individual's property by simply looking at or praising that person's property. Evil eye can be so strong that it is said that it has power to even kill someone.
“Magic is the science of the art of causing changes to occur in conformity with the will. White magic if the will is righteous and Black magic if the will is perverse” (Summers 2000). The word magic was derived from ancient Persia –the Magi were a class of priests and the Greek turned the word to Mageia, which later became Mageia in Latin (Greenwood 2009). Black magic is common almost all over the world and it is done for bad purposes like to harm someone physically or mentally. “Black magic is the selfish perversion of magical arts to destroy other, or for personal gain. The conscious use of black magic rituals is for the exercise of evil. The black magician is a person who wants power for himself. A magician may summon the devil or one of his demons and remain a white magician, as long as the purpose for the summoning is benevolent. Black magicians are usually those who made a part with the devil. They invoke diabolic and infernal power by black magic rituals and spells” (Winstanley2008).
Magic is done due to jealousy mostly among the relatives. Pakistan cities, villages are littered with suchaamile’s who claim to be perfect in casting and breaking the magic and relieving the people. Supernatural practices that are intended to bring good fortune, health, increased status, and honor
are power also bound. Magical beliefs are not only relegated to rural or poverty-stricken, areas they are also observable in every segment of society regardless of the socioeconomic status of people.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
The research locale was Shamsabad Rawalpindi and few area of Islamabad (Pakistan). To assemble the views from the targeted population a sample of 70 respondents were selected through convenient sampling method. The qualitative study was conducted by using questionnaire to conduct in depth interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Psychological and physical effect of evil eye
H1: Evil eye can affect people physically and psychologically.
Ho: Evil eye cannot affect people both psychologically and physically.

Calculation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think evil eye can harm you physically and psychologically?</th>
<th>Gender of respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square Df Asymp. Sig.</td>
<td>30.229a 1 .000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 30.229

Critical Region: χ² ≥ χ² (0.05, 1) =3.84
As Chi-square calculated does not fall in the critical region. So we accept H1.
If we talk about supernatural beliefs psychological effects cannot be over looked. Evil eye can harm us physically and psychologically. Belief in the power of evil eye to injure or kill still survives today. A person who believes in the evil eye is in a strong belief that someone can harm someone else physically by merely looking at them. The research findings also show that belief in evil eye among Pakistani society is so strong that majority of the respondents mostly women believed that evil eye has harmed them many times and have faced many difficulties because of it. They were also in the view that evil eye has strong influence on their nerves.

Evil eye and difficulties in daily routine
H1: Evil eye can cause difficulties in our work. Ho: Evil eye cannot put any obstacles in our work.
Calculation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think evil eye cause difficulties in your work?</th>
<th>Gender of respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square Df Asymp. Sig.</td>
<td>5.714a 1 .017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 5.714

Critical Region: χ² ≥ χ² (0.05, 1) =3.84
As Chi-square calculated does not fall in the critical region. So we accept H1. Evil eye can cause difficulties in our work. According to the interviews many people still believe that evil eye can cause difficulties in their daily work. “People can cause misfortune or illness directly by evil eye or indirectly by means of intermediary objects of magic” (Al-Isa and Tousignant 1997). Mostly women were in a strong belief that just a mere look of someone can cause evil eye, it can destroy their whole business or it can cause loss in their work. Overall result findings were that people mostly blame evil eye for any loss in their business.

Education and Beliefs in Magic
H1: Uneducated people believe in magic more than educated people
Ho: Belief in magic has nothing to do with the educational status of people.
Calculation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of respondent</th>
<th>Do you think uneducated people believe in magic more than educated people?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square Df Asymp. Sig.</td>
<td>9.14a 1 .339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 9.14
Critical Region: $\chi^2 \geq \chi^2 (0.05, 1) = 3.84$

As Chi-square calculated does not fall in the critical region. So we accept $H_0$. Uneducated people are believed in magic more than educated people. Education is important in molding someone’s beliefs and perception about certain things. As this survey proved that uneducated people have little information about these things so they have a strong belief that magic can help them eliminate problems from their lives. The main reason is the low literacy rate that promotes such behavior.

**Misinterpretation of Magic as Physiological Disorder**

**$H_1$:** Mental/psychological disorders are often misperceived as magic.

**$H_0$:** Mental/psychological disorders are conceptualized the way they exist.

**Calculation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>Gender of respondent</th>
<th>Do you think mental illness is misinterpreted as magic?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>9.657a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D_f$</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig.</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = .914$

Critical Region: $\chi^2 \geq \chi^2 (0.05, 1) = 3.84$

As Chi-square calculated fall in the critical region. So we reject $H_1$. Mental illness is not misinterpreted as magic. As the results shows in our society many people don’t take magic and mental illness as interrelated processes. They are of the view that magic and mental diseases are two totally different phenomenon. But still in many countries people are of the view that supernatural powers have something to do with mental illness. In non-Western cultures, there is a tendency to attribute a supernatural force, such as black magic and possession by evil spirits as the underlying cause for mental illness (Jorm2000). But our research findings show that in Pakistan mostly people do not find them correlated.

**CONCLUSION**

The people of our society still strictly believe on back magic and evil eye and blame it if their lives unexpectedly turn upside down irrespective of their gender, class and age. The beliefs and perceptions in our society are dependent upon certain variables like gender, education and socioeconomic status. Women, lower socio-economic class and less educated respondents were found to be more superstitious. They were of the view that all their problems that include love issues, property issues and the general conflicts between their relatives can be solved by magic.

**REFERENCES**

Al-Issa, Ihsan, and Michel Tousignant

Gershman, Boris

Greenwood, Susan

Haviland, William, Harald Prins, Bunny McBride, and Dana Walrath

Jorm, Anthony F.
2000 Mental Health Literacy Public Knowledge and Beliefs about Mental Disorders. The British Journal of Psychiatry 177(5):396-401.

Summers, Montague

Winstanley, David

© 2015 “The Explorer Islamabad” Journal of Social Sciences-Pakistan