



Superstitious Attitude in Relation To Attitude Towards Social Change : A Study Among Students At Degree Level

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ABSTRACT

Human life is characterized by extreme happiness on one end and extreme miseries on the other end. In between these two, there are innumerable different feelings, emotions, interests, beliefs, attitudes. Each man has his own beliefs and some beliefs are religious or it is irrational. Irrational and superstitious belief pattern will only act as a hindrance to the positive effect of social change. This study was an attempt to assess the superstitious attitude of degree students in relation to their attitude towards social change. Attitudes and belief may be changed through education. The sample of the study consisted of 311 degree students from Thrissur District. Normative survey method was used for the study. Analysis of the data revealed that there is a high negative correlation between superstitious attitude and attitude towards social change for the students at degree level. The study highlights the need for eradicating irrational and superstitious belief patterns from the society.

KEYWORDS

Superstitious Attitude, Social Change.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamic nature of society brings about changes in social organizations like schools, in the behaviour of the people and in the culture of the people. These changes in the society are reflected in the laws, customs, mores and beliefs of the people. It implies change in the lifestyle of a group or society. Society is a web of social relationships. Social relationships are understood in terms of social processes, social interactions and social organization. It includes alternations in the structure and function of the society.

All social changes are cultural changes, but all cultural changes need not necessarily be the social changes. Cultural changes can be called social changes only when they affect human relations and the social organization, and cause some variations in them. The rise of organized labour in the capitalistic society and the introduction of communism represent social change. These two changes may cause a series of changes in human relations and social organization. They represent a basic alteration in the relation of employer and employee, rulers and ruled. They may contribute to the changes in the economic organization, methods of administration, and so on. These may, in course of time, affect the way of life of people. Hence, they can also be called cultural change.

The most important function of education is modernization. Modernization is a comprehensive concept aimed at capturing, describing and evaluating profound qualitative and quantitative changes in society. It describes the transition of a society from medieval top to modern culture. It stands for progress beyond tradition. Modernization helps to reduce the irrational beliefs. Another factor of social change is the appearance of new opinions and thoughts. For example, changes in the attitudes toward dowry, caste system, female education, etc., have resulted in widespread social variations and modifications.

Superstitious attitude are more common among certain groups of people than others, and vary from culture to culture. The literal meaning of the word "superstitious" indicates irrational fear or unreasonable beliefs. It means we believe in superstitions without considering whether they are reasonable or not. The irrational beliefs are to be discarded from our belief system because human beings - especially their thought

process - plays a significant role in the prevalence of social change. Irrational and superstitious belief pattern will only act as a hindrance to the positive effect of social change. If people are not prepared to think beyond their irrational belief patterns, then the concept of social change would be a herculean task. The effect of modernization has brought about changes in the belief pattern of youth, particularly in their superstitious attitude. There are some people in the society who refuse to come into contact with persons of other cultures. They try their best to remain in isolation and insulated from other influences. Education is a means to sublimate self interest and enable them to welcome any social change.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE

Education is a powerful and influential force in contemporary societies. "As a social institution, education imparts values, beliefs, mores, customs, traditions, and knowledge considered essential to the social reproduction of individual personalities and entire cultures." (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990). Social life is being continually transformed due to the effect of the factors which cause social change. The form of family, marriage, religion, culture, educational system and economic and social structures is continually changing and transforming, as a result of which a change occurs in the life of the individual and subsequently in his relations with others.

There are still some factors which resist social change. Cultural inertia refers to those blind beliefs, customs and traditions which come down to us from our forefathers, in fact, some minds are always very apprehensive and doubtful about any change. Generally, it has been observed that there are some old traditions and beliefs which satisfy the vested interests of a few privileged section of society. In other words, people having vested interested vehemently resist social change. Superstitious fear not only snags our reasoning power but also decreases the efficiency of work. It would be very significant to provide the individual the ability to distinguish the right from the wrong. In this context, investigators felt a need to study the relationship between superstitious attitude and attitude towards social change. Thus the study is relevant and significant.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the level of superstitious attitude among stu-

dents at degree level.

2. To compare the mean scores of superstitious attitude based on different levels of attitude towards social change.
3. To assess the relation between superstitious attitude and attitude towards social change among students at degree level.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is significant difference in the superstitious attitude of students at degree level based on different levels of attitude towards social change.
2. There is significant relation between superstitious attitude and attitude towards social change for the students at degree level.

METHODOLOGY

Normative survey method was used for the study. The sample consisted of 311 students selected from eight different colleges of Thrissur District. The sample was drawn by stratified random sampling technique giving due representation to factors like gender, locale and religion. The investigators used Superstitious attitude scale constructed and standardized by Dr. Shailaja Bhagwat and the Modernization scale developed by the investigators to measure the attitude toward social change. The scale contains four components of social change viz., socio-religious factors, marriage, position of women and education. The data was collected and statistically analysed using mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, Scheffe's Test and Pearson's Product moment coefficient of correlation.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND FINDINGS

The major findings are presented as follows:-

1. The Level of Superstitious Attitude among students at degree level. The data is as shown in Table 1.

Table :1
Percentage distribution of sample students according to different levels of superstitious attitude

Superstitious attitude	Count	Percentage
Very Low	169	54.3
Low	38	12.2
Moderate	83	26.7
High	21	6.8
Total	311	100.0

Table 1 shows that 54.3% students found to be very low in superstitious attitude, while 12.2% thirty eight students out of three hundred and eleven- found to have low superstitious attitude. Eighty three (26.7%) students found to be with moderate superstitious attitude. Only twenty one (6.8%) students found to be high superstitious attitude.

2. Comparison of mean scores of superstitious attitude based on different levels of attitude towards social change.

Different levels of attitude towards social change is as shows in Table 2.1

Table : 2.1
Percentage distribution of sample according to different levels of attitude towards social change

Attitude towards social change	Count	Percentage
Low	93	29.9
Medium	178	57.2
High	40	12.9
Total	311	100.0

Based on the above different level of attitude towards social change comparison is made on their superstitious attitude. The table below indicates the results.

Table : 2.2
Data and Result of Test of significant difference in superstitious attitude based on different levels of attitude towards social change

Attitude towards social change	Mean	SD	N	F	Scheffe's Multiple comparison	
					Pair	F*
Low(A)	76.7	5.9	93	602.94**	A-B	547**
Medium(B)	37.3	11.4	178		A-C	292.2**
High (C)	34.1	4.1	40		B-C	1.9

**** Significant at .01 level**

Table 2.2 indicates that among the three levels of attitude towards social change compared significant difference exists at .01 level (F=602.94). Hence the hypothesis is accepted. Among them difference is high in the case of low and medium group.

3. Correlation between superstitious attitude and attitude towards social change for the whole sample and sub samples based on gender locale and religion

Table : 3
Relation between superstitious attitude and attitude towards social change for the whole sample and subsamples

Superstitious attitude and attitude towards social change	r
Whole sample	-.895**
Gender	
Male	-.186*
Female	-.891**
Locale	
Urban	-.898**
Rural	-.878**
Religion	
Hindu	-.912**
Christian	-.775**
Muslim	-.878**

**** Significant at .01 level**

*** Significant at .05 level**

The obtained value of 'r' for the whole sample was -.895, which is negative and showed that any increase in the scores of superstitious attitude correspondingly followed by decrease in the attitude towards social change of degree students. The value also showed a high negative relationship between these variables. This interpretation was also relevant in the case of sub samples based on gender, locale and religion. In these cases also the relationships were negative and very high. The coefficient of correlation for the whole sample and sub samples were higher than the value set for significance at .01 level except male sample. The correlation is significant at .05 level in the case of male students. Thus it can be interpreted that there is significant relationship between superstitious attitude and attitude towards social change of degree students. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study was found to be more relevant in understanding a negative and high relation between superstitious attitude and attitude towards social change for the whole sample and subsamples. This shows that any increase or decrease in the scores of superstitious attitude is correspondingly followed by the decrease or increase in the score of the attitude towards social change.

Rudski (2001) in their paper clearly mentioned that superstitious attitude and anti-semitism are generally based on irrational beliefs. Irrational beliefs depends in terms of cultural difference. Shanker & Lalitha (1994) stressed the importance of education as an agent of social change. This findings is in harmony with the findings of Ruhela (1990). The present study revealed that still in the modern world people believe in superstitions and that affect modernization adversely. This showed the importance of giving awareness to them for bringing development in the society.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study revealed that there is a high negative relation between superstitious attitude of people and their attitude towards social change. Hence careful steps are to be adopted to develop a positive attitude towards social change and thereby will essentially bring development to the society. The problem of youth facing today are more strenuous and complicated than they used to be in the past as they are more exposed to the positive as well as negative hands of modernization. Degree students face situations of inductiveness and malaise where they are not getting technical classes and social skills and competencies they need for leading a proper life. During the developmental stage the family should provide love, affection, care, attention and instruction at the proper time. Educational broadcasts and group discussions may be organized to stimulate interest in the study of rational thinking and problem solving capacities. Moreover, government should give proper guidance to them and use all the usable and valuable resources for the development of quality ensuring instruction.

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11. Certified that the problem entitled, **Superstitious Attitude In Relation To Attitude Towards Social Change : A Study Among Students At Degree Level** has not been previously published and it is not being considered for publication elsewhere.