

## Impact of Academic Level and Gender on Superstitious Attitude among Graduate and Post-Graduate Students

Kashfi Naaz<sup>1\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Superstition beliefs are irrational beliefs and notions held by human beings, which are based on fear, magical thinking, Ignorance and blind faith. Superstitious beliefs are social phenomena (Roghayyeh Ebrahimi Zad, 2014). The research reported in this paper examines the impact of academic level and gender on superstitious attitude among graduate and post-graduate students of Ranchi town in Jharkhand. The data obtained by stratified random sampling was based on two sub-group of academic level (graduate and post-graduate) and gender (male and female). The sample of 80 students was drawn from different P.G department of Ranchi University and colleges in Ranchi town. Superstitious attitude scaled by Doctor. (S.M.T.) Shailaja Bhagwat was used to measure level of superstitious attitude. The findings obtained revealed that level of superstitious attitude was varying among graduate and post-graduate students, male and female students and overall sample of the students. No significant impact of academic level and gender was found on superstitious attitude of the students. Overall there is a need of further research on larger sample size and different population.

**Keywords:** *Superstitious Attitude, Academic Level, Gender*

Superstition in India is considered a widespread social problem. Superstitions are usually attributed to a lack of education. But, 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%. The superstitious attitude and belief vary from region to region, with many regions having their own specific beliefs. (Peter Jarvis 2012). The word superstitious is defined in psychology dictionary as “belief of changing the course of natural events with such supernatural or magical powers as pray, magic, black magic, carrying objects believed to bring luck, having an amulet and necromancy”. Superstitious beliefs or behaviors recall generally negative concepts like religious ones or superstitions. Actually, superstitious beliefs and behaviors are the concepts that make the world more livable for us, which we attribute the things not explained with logic to supernatural powers and we put the responsibility on divine control mechanisms a bit. As in reality, the behaviors considered as nonsense and odd. For example-

<sup>1</sup> UGC Research Fellow, University Department of Psychology, Ranchi University, Ranchi (Jharkhand), India.

\*[Responding Author](#)

Received: March 24, 2019; Revision Received: May 3, 2019; Accepted: May 8, 2019

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- Belief in unspecific bad consequences; like for example - spilling salt or opening an umbrella indoors.
- Belief in unspecific good consequences; like for example - catching falling leaves, or finding a horseshoe.
- Engaging in protective rituals; like for example - crossing fingers, or touching wood.
- Belief in specific consequences; like for example - right-handed itch foretells money is coming in, itchy left palm means that money is going out.

Earlier superstitions were created as a way to deal with the ignorance and fear of the unknown things. Often, superstitions are born from casual coincidences. For example, if an athlete wears a particular pair of shoes on a day he performs particularly well, he may continue to wear the same pair of shoes in the belief that the shoes were responsible for the success. B.F. Skinner in his writing on Superstition in the Pigeon revealed that superstitions are not only human in nature rather available in other organisms as well (Skinner, 1948). Theories of modern superstition produce by Colin Campbell (1996) define the fact that continuing problem of humans and their culture superstition persists in modern industrial societies. This aspect shows disagreement about fading out of superstition in the face of rationalism and empiricisms. An individual can sometimes exhibit superstitious behaviors unconsciously and routinely without having a certain superstitious thought. When we evaluate superstitious beliefs and behaviors as a whole, we see that they are a mix of emotional, cognitive and behavioral factors (Saenko, 2005).

Emotional dimension contains emotional states and processes experienced in connection with such states as fear, worry, anger, excitement, joy, surprise and curiosity. Cognitive dimension is represented with such processes as perception, thinking, dreaming, memory and attention. Behavioral dimension is related to rituals and symbolic behaviors. When we consider these definitions, we see that superstitious beliefs and behaviors have such attributes as being unfounded and irrational, changing by time and place and providing benefits to individuals. In this framework, we can define superstitious beliefs and behaviors as follows: superstitious beliefs and behaviors are the beliefs and practices not complying with sanity and sense of religion, seeming meaningless, providing psychological benefit to individuals and continuing from generations to generations (Rudski, 2003). So, in this paper an attempt is undertaken to study the superstitious attitude of graduate and post-graduate students in Ranchi town so that they can aware of the issue of superstitious attitude and take necessary steps in near future to stop superstitious beliefs harmful to society which are also called as social evils.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are various researches related to superstitious attitude, the review of related studies done within a very short period of time is presented below-

**Gupta (1999)** found that law students were more prone to superstitions in comparison to other professional students. There was no significant difference in the superstitious behaviour of medical and engineering students; male and female professional graduates in. Hostellers were found to be more superstitious than day scholars.

**Saenko (2014)** discovered the superstitions of today's college students. The study shows that student superstitious beliefs frequently connected with their final exams and they feel these beliefs protect those negative feelings. That shows superstitions beliefs play an important role of student's life.

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**Dayal, J.K.** (2015) “A Study of Superstitious Attitude among Women” This study was conducted to compare the superstitious attitude of working and non working women. The sample consisted of 200 women from Ludhiana district of Punjab state. Superstitious attitude scale was used to collect data. The statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard-Deviation, and t-test were employed. The results revealed that there exists a significant difference in superstitious attitude of working and non working women but married and unmarried women possess same attitude towards superstitions.

**TerKeurst (2015)** investigates that to what extent is the home a source of belief and disbeliefs in superstitions. The result shows that the individual sources of superstitious beliefs, the social and educational factors that contribute towards the learning and unlearning of unfounded ideas.

**Chakraborty, S. And Gogoi, M. (2016)** carried out “A Study on Superstitious Beliefs of the Secondary School Students of Dibrugarh District of Assam”. The study revealed that many superstitious beliefs still exists among the people of Dibrugarh District. The study also revealed that the rural students are more superstitious than urban students. Moreover, the students studying in English medium schools are less superstitious than the students studying in Bengali medium schools and Assamese medium schools.

**Kalita (2016)** studied different types of superstitious behavior taking 80 students. No significant differences between male and female students towards superstitious beliefs were found and also no significant differences between graduate and post-graduate students towards superstitious beliefs were observed.

**Vijay, et. al. (2017)** in his study revealed that, the superstitious beliefs are higher among woman, people with lower intellectual level, lower socio-economic status and rural community.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Objective of the study*

- To examine the level of superstitious attitude among total sample of students
- To examine the level of superstitious attitude among graduate and Post Graduate students
- To examine the level of superstitious attitude among male and female students
- To study the significant impact of academic level (graduate and post graduate students) on superstitious attitude
- To study the significant impact of gender (male and female) on superstitious attitude

#### *Hypotheses*

- The level of superstitious attitude will vary among total sample
- The level of superstitious attitude will vary among graduate and postgraduate students
- The level of superstitious attitude will vary among male and female students
- There will be significant mean difference among graduate and post graduate students on superstitious attitude
- There will be significant mean difference among male and female students on superstitious attitude

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### *Sample*

The sample for the present research consisted of 80 students from different P.G department of Ranchi University and colleges in Ranchi town, Jharkhand. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the sample selection. The stratification was based on two groups of academic level (graduate and post graduate) and gender (male and female). Thus the research design was based on 2 x 2 factorial design. In each of the 4 strata- 20 cases were selected randomly. The total no of cases were 80. The sample Units is presented below:

### *Sample design*

Sub-groups	Male	Female
Graduate	20	20
Post Graduate	20	20

### *Tools*

The following tools were used to achieve the goal of present study.

- **Personal data questionnaire:** This questionnaire was prepared by the investigator for collecting information about the respondents name, age, sex, academic level, school/college name etc.
- **Superstitious attitude scaled** Superstitious attitude scaled by Doctor. (S.M.T.) Shailaja Bhagwat, will be used in the studies this scale has 24 items (12 favorable and 12 unfavorable to the issue) items –Statements were finalized and presented on 5 point Likert scale each items is checked as strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree. For scoring 5 categories (Strongly Agree: SA., Agree: A, decided: U, Disagree: D, Strongly Disagree: SD) weights 5,4,3,2,1 respectively is to be given for favorable items and revering the weight score like: Woights: 1,2,3,4,5 for the 5 categories (S.A., A, U, D, SD) for unfavorable items. The total score for each individual should be determined by summing his responses to all items. Higher the score higher will be determined by summing his responses to all items. Higher the score higher will be the degree of superstitious attitude. Reliability and Validity of this test are respectively 0.91 and -0.86

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results are representing in following points:

- Level of superstitious attitude among total sample
- Level of superstitious attitude among graduate and postgraduate students
- Level of superstitious attitude among male and female students
- Mean difference among graduate and post graduate students on superstitious attitude
- Mean difference among male and female students on superstitious attitude

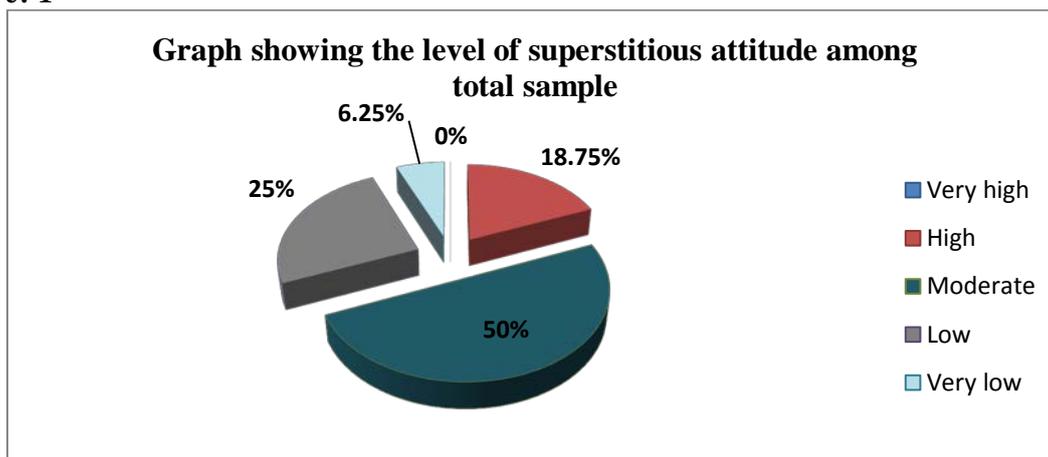
### **Level of superstitious attitude among total sample**

*Table: 1 Level of superstitious attitude among total sample*

Group	Very high		High		Moderate		Low		Very low	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	0	0	15	18.75	40	50	20	25	5	6.25
80										

## Impact of Academic Level and Gender on Superstitious Attitude among Graduate and Post-Graduate Students

**Figure: 1**



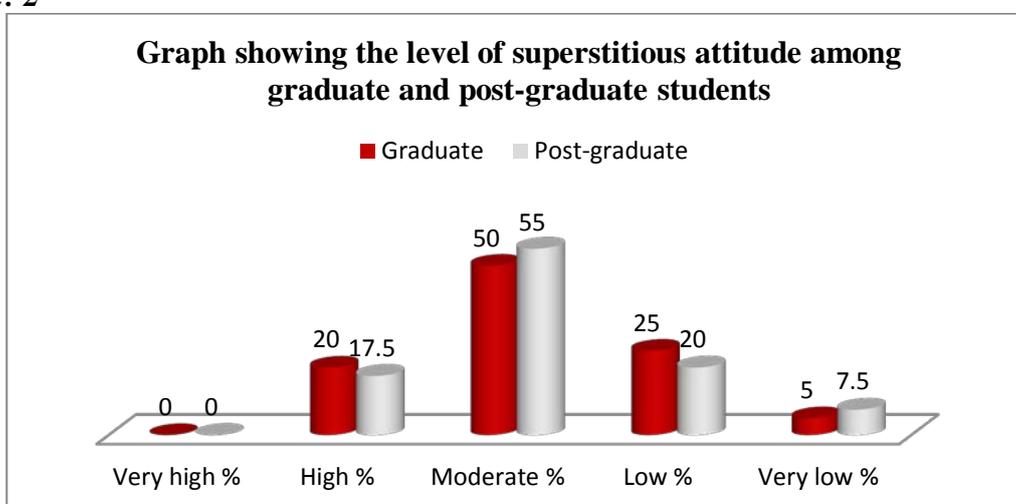
From the data presented in above table and figure-1 reveals that most of the students (40 or 50%) have moderate superstitious attitude, 20 or 25% students have equally showing the low level of superstitious attitude, 15 or 18.75% students have equally shows high level of superstitious attitude. However only 5 or 6.25% student have very low level of superstitious attitude and no any students have very high level of superstitious attitude. Above results prove the hypotheses-1 ‘The level of superstitious attitude will vary among total sample’.

### *Level of superstitious attitude among graduate and postgraduate students*

**Table: 2 Level of superstitious attitude among graduate & postgraduate students**

Group	Very-high		High		Moderate		Low		Very low	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Graduate	0	0	8	20	20	50	10	25	2	5
Post-graduate	0	0	7	17.5	22	55	8	20	3	7.5
Total	80									

**Figure: 2**



From the data presented in above table and figure-2 reveals that 0% graduate and post-graduate students have very high superstitious attitude, 8 or 20% graduate and 7 or 17.5% post-graduate students have high level of superstitious attitude, 20 or 50% graduate and 22 or 55% post-graduate students have moderate level of superstitious attitude, 10 or 25% graduate and 8 or 20% post-graduate students have low level of superstitious attitude, 2 or 5% graduate and 3 or 7.5% post-graduate students have very low level of superstitious attitude.

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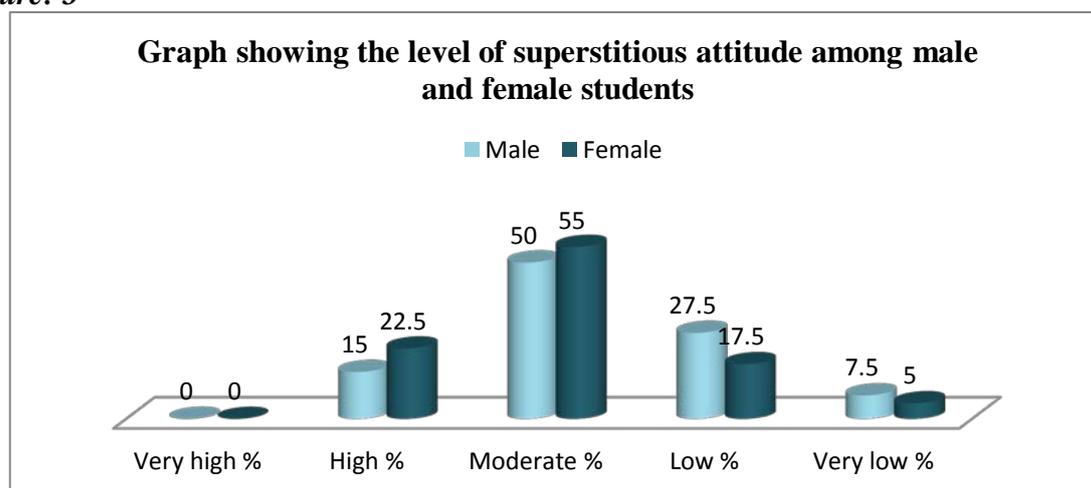
55% post graduate students have equally showing the moderate level of superstitious attitude, 10 or 25% graduate and 8 or 20% post graduate students have low level of superstitious attitude. However 2 or 5% graduate and 3 or 7.5% post-graduate students have very low level of superstitious attitude. Above results prove the hypotheses-2 'The level of superstitious attitude will vary among graduate & postgraduate students'.

### *Level of superstitious attitude among male and female students*

**Table: 3**

Group	Very-high		High		Moderate		Low		Very low	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	0	0	6	15	20	50	11	27.5	3	7.5
Female	0	0	9	22.5	22	55	7	17.5	2	5
Total	80									

**Figure: 3**



From the data presented in above table and figure-3 reveals that 0% male and female students have very high superstitious attitude, 6 or 15% male and 9 or 22.5% female students have high level of superstitious attitude, 20 or 50% male and 22 or 55% female students have equally showing the moderate level of superstitious attitude, 11 or 27.5% male and 7 or 17.5% female students have low level of superstitious attitude. However 3 or 7.5% male and 2 or 5% female students have very low level of superstitious attitude. Above results prove the hypotheses-3 'The level of superstitious attitude will vary among male and female students'.

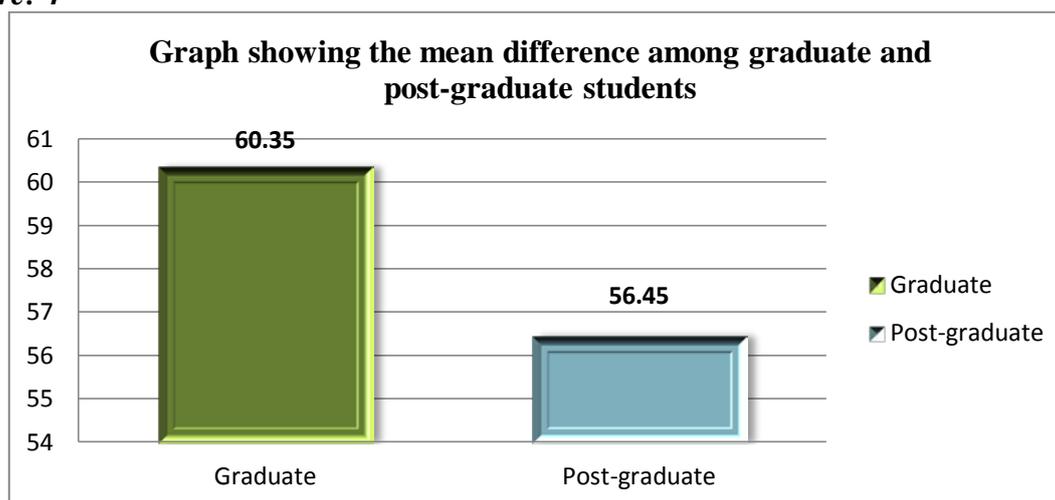
### *Impact of academic level on superstitious attitude*

**Table: 4 Mean differences among graduate and post-graduate students on superstitious attitude**

Groups	N	Mean score	SD	t-value	Level of significance
Graduate	40	60.35	10.04	1.54	NS
Post-graduate	40	56.45	12.53		

## Impact of Academic Level and Gender on Superstitious Attitude among Graduate and Post-Graduate Students

**Figure: 4**



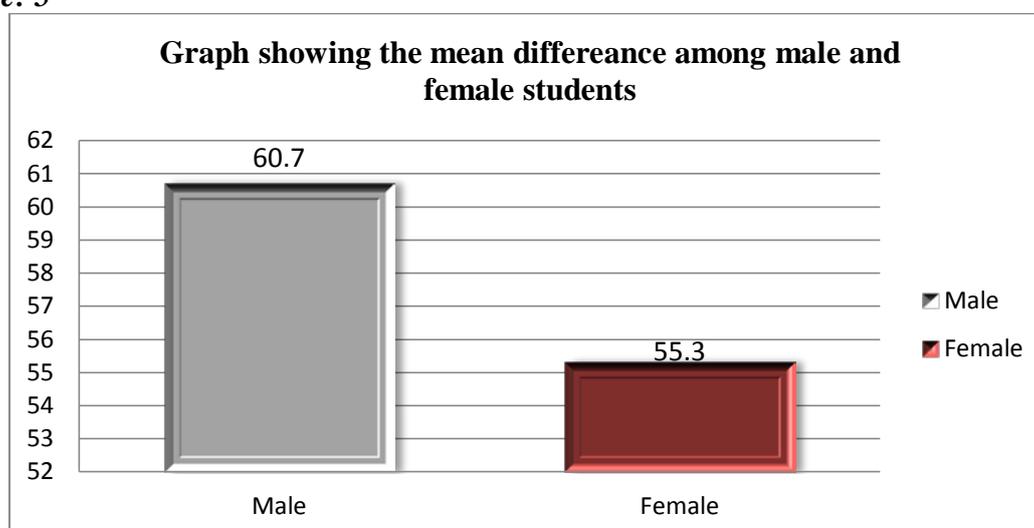
Above table and figure- 4 showing the mean scores of graduate and post-graduate students, where the mean score of graduate students are higher than post-graduate students on superstitious attitude. The t-ratio is 1.54, which is statistically not significant at any levels. Which means both groups didn't differ on level of superstitious attitude. So our hypotheses: "There may be significant mean difference among graduate and post-graduate students on superstitious attitude" has been rejected.

### *Impact of gender on superstitious attitude*

**Table: 5 Mean difference among male and female students on superstitious attitude**

Groups	N	Mean score	SD	t-value	Level of significance
Male	40	60.7	9.65	1.44	NS
Female	40	55.3	13.11		

**Figure: 5**



Above table and figure- 4 showing the mean scores of male and female students, where mean score of male are higher than female on superstitious attitude. The t-ratio is 1.44, which is statistically not significant at any levels. Which means both groups didn't differ on level of superstitious attitude. So our hypotheses: "There may be significant mean difference among male and female students on superstitious attitude" has been rejected.

## CONCLUSION

It was concluded from above analysis that there has been no significant impact of academic level and gender on superstitious attitude of students.

### *Implications for Future Research*

This is well known fact that research is a continuous process. One research solves some current queries but raises many other future queries. Superstitious beliefs can be studied for their influence on behavior from different aspects. A larger sample can be studied to find out the more relevant findings on the superstitious beliefs of individuals.

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### *Acknowledgements*

The authors profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed in ensuring this paper in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be mentioned.

### *Conflict of Interest*

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

**How to cite this article:** K Naaz (2019). Impact of Academic Level and Gender on Superstitious Attitude among Graduate and Post-Graduate Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(2), 206-213. DIP:18.01.025/20190702, DOI:10.25215/0702.025