Socio-Cultural And Religious Perceptions And Superstitions About Lunar Eclipse Among The Individuals In Shikarpur Village, Southern Punjab

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Abstract
The lunar eclipse is a natural phenomenon, but in different societies there are different perceptions prevalent regarding lunar eclipse among the people. To understand the social, cultural, medical science and religious implication of lunar eclipse and its consequence on children, women, and men, this study was undertaken to analyze the existing perceptions, believes, superstitions and indigenous healing practices of society about lunar eclipse in Shikarpur village. The study used purposive sampling, key informant, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion tools to collect the information from society, effected cases of lunar eclipse and medical doctors. In results, it was found that people perceptions about lunar eclipse are influenced by religious superstitions and they attribute its occurrence to the anger of God due to human sins and immorality. The socio-economic condition of the affected cases was also confusing. Such persons were not given proper rights and care as compared to a normal child. Poverty, illiteracy, and the larger family size were the main hurdles in their rehabilitation and quick recovery. And all unfortunate things were attributed to God’s will and eclipse, instead of adopting any scientific attitude.

Keywords: Lunar Eclipse, Religious Believes, Cultural Perceptions, Superstitions, Scientific Interpretation, Indigenous Treatment
Introduction
Lunar eclipse can happen when the sun, the earth, and the moon come in a perfect line of alignment as a result of which lunar eclipse happens (Battros, 2014). But cultural understanding is different to understand this event. It varies from society to society. Consistency and regularity of human imagination would have been firstly exhibited in the beliefs connected with eclipses. It very known that such phenomena, to us now crucial instances of the exactness of natural laws, are, commonly existed throughout the lower stages of civilization, the very embodiment of miraculous disaster (Taylor, 1871).

Among most of the aboriginal societies, the sun is considered female and the moon as male (Hamacher & Norris, 2011) although this is not universal. Many cultural stories explain the reasons why the moon gets gradually “fatter” as it waxes to full moon from a new moon, and later gets fade away to nothing as it decreases back to the new moon. As an example, full moon is associated with fat, lazy man culturally called Ngalindi to Yolngu of Arnhem Land. His laziness is punished by his wives (or, in some forms, his breaking of taboos) by chopping off bits of him with their axes, causing the waning moon. He succeeds to escape by climbing on a heightened tree to catch the Sun, but is mortally wounded, and dies (new moon). Besides remaining dead for three days, he rises again, grows fat and round (waxing moon), and until his wives punish him again in a cycle which repeats to this day (Middlehurst, 1967).

The effect of lunar eclipse is very harmful as per cultural perspective. The community people think that whenever lunar eclipse occurs, it is an ill omen and it causes some bad effect on the society. This study focuses on the socio-cultural and traditional perceptions of lunar eclipse in the Pakistani society and related native customary stereotypes prevailing in village Shikar Pur located in rural Punjab. The locale of the study is an indigenous area of rural Punjab. This study is unique in terms of its indigenous and native narrations about effects of lunar eclipse. Current study is significant as it adds to limited particular native perspective regarding the effects of lunar eclipse in the existing body of knowledge in the domain of medical anthropology from Pakistan.

Moreover, as the lunar month is approximately of the similar length as the menstrual cycle, the moon is occasionally associated with childbearing, sexual intercourse and fertility. Among some of the cultures, owing to the fear of getting pregnant the young women were warned to not to gaze at the moon (Hamacher & Norris, 2011). There is a gravitational influence of the moon and the sun on the ocean that causes tides. Higher tides than normal (spring tides) occur when the sun and moon are aligned or opposed while lower tides than normal (neap tides) occur when the sun and moon are at 90° to the earth, damping each other’s gravitational influence. Numerous coastal societies understand the connection between lunar phases and ocean tides, that includes the correlation between the spring tide and full moon (Battros, 2014).

After going through the available researches, literature and scholarly work in Pakistan, it was found that very limited work has been done in the domain of medical anthropology to explore indigenous understanding about the effects of lunar eclipse in Pakistan. This study is unique because it fills this existing gap in the literature. This study aims to highlight the customary
practices, traditional and native stereotypes regarding the effects lunar eclipse on health in Pakistan.

**Methodology**

Qualitative data collection tools and techniques were used for information gathering in this anthropological study\(^1\). The trust and confidence of the community were gained through rapport building, for which key informants were very supportive. For this study, there were selected three key informants through purposive sampling. To identify relevant respondents, purposive sampling is used, so for this study this sampling technique was more appropriate identifying the targeted population. The selection criteria of key informants were their consent, availability, and deep information about the subject matter of this study. Key informants introduced the researcher to the community for in-depth interviews from various respondents and also explained particular local terminologies in the village Shikarpur. To know the understanding of the natives regarding lunar eclipse, there were selected 27 male respondents through purposive sampling. The sample size was comprised of 17 male respondents having aged above 40 years. There were 10 respondents from 20 to 39 years. A consent form was signed by each of the respondents to get their willingness to share pictures and their information regarding the cultural understanding of the lunar eclipse and its effects on physical health. There were conducted 27 in-depth interviews with selected respondents of Shikarpur village by using a semi-structured interview guide. There were held 2 FGDs and in each of them, there were 8 respondents including researcher and notes taker. The ethical issues of this research were discussed with the Research Committee of the Department of Anthropology Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad and the research topic was approved by using the aforementioned data collection tools and techniques. Due to gender sensitivity in the study area, the respondents were not willing to report the cases of women affected by lunar rays, in most of the places.

**Literature Review**

**Lunar Eclipse in the Context of Pakistan**

Farooqui in his article published in DAWN in 1999 (Farooqui, 1999) said that in Pakistan there are social, cultural, and traditional concepts in the minds of the people about the solar eclipses that are the cause of certain superstitious beliefs among Pakistani society. Similarly, in this study, it was observed that there were many narrations about the lunar eclipse in village Shikarpur. After two decades of the above-referred citation, the people of the study area are still stuck to their superstitious beliefs and traditions. Moreover, in the study area, most of the people are Muslims. Highlighting the religious practices and beliefs of Muslims Kamal (Kamal, 2018) said that Muslim traditions ought to offer long prayers during the tenure of the eclipse. It was advised to the Muslims to stay inside of the room or mosques by offering specific prayers (Nafal Namaz). In his study, Kamal also focused on the cultural perception and superstitious beliefs about the effects of the

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solar and lunar eclipse on pregnant women. Such superstitious perceptions were also observed in the village of Shikarpur, where pregnant women were advised by their elder generation to be careful during the lunar eclipse. They were asked to stay in bed still and not to cut anything during the eclipse to prevent any birth defects to the fetus.

A qualitative exploration to understand the knowledge and perception about clubfoot in Karachi conducted by Burfat (Burfat et al., 2013) sheds light on the health status and behavior of the parents during the eclipse. As mentioned above this cited study also focused on the overall socio-cultural and superstitious perceptions and traditional practices during the eclipse. In the research article, the authors have focused on the particular case studies related to the clubfoot in Karachi. During this study in village Shikarpur, there was no documented case of clubfoot. The indigenous superstitious perceptions were that their children remained protected from this disease as they followed the traditional practices to bury their children in sand up to the neck during the solar eclipse. Among the natives of Shikar Pur, such kind of superstitious beliefs are transmitted from one generation to the next. Whereas, during the lunar eclipse, they asked their children to stay in bed and not to walk. A study on the title ‘Assessment of Knowledge, Beliefs, and Practices of our Population Regarding Effects of Viewing Solar Eclipse’ was conducted in Karachi (Ali et al., 2002). In this study, the traditional perceptions about the effects of the solar eclipse were highlighted excluding that of the lunar eclipse. The socio-cultural and superstitious understanding about both types of the eclipse were common in village Shikarpur and as highlighted in the study of Karachi. The non-availability of literature on the socio-cultural perception and superstitious beliefs about lunar eclipse has been challenge for this in the context of Pakistan. Keep in view the limitation of the literature review the available literature has been sighted in this paper.

**Lunar eclipse: Religious Interpretations and Concepts**

Culturally religious people believed that during the eclipse night, special prayer should be performed and request the Almighty for forgive of their sins. As per another respondent, malevolent spirits would come from the above/moon and cause bad effect on them like illness and disability. Moreover, charity (kharyat) should be offered to avoid the malevolent spirits. As per Islamic instructions:

> The sun and the moon are two signs amongst the signs of Allah; they do not eclipse on the death or life of anyone. So when you see the eclipse remembers Allah and says Takbir, pray and give Sadaqa (charity)."

Best known by the Almighty, the Creator of the universe because it has been explained in the Holy Qur’an which has been accepted as excellent literature by the Muslims and non-Muslims being the Book of God which says about celestial bodies and lunar eclipse:

> It is He who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. All (the celestial bodies) swim along, each in its orbit. (Al-Qur’an 21:33). Allah is He, who created the sun, the moon, and the stars—(all) governed by laws under His commandment. (Al-Qur’an 7:54)
Allah causes eclipses to happen to these two mighty signs, the sun, and the moon, to teach His worshippers and show them that these things are created and are subject to imperfections and changes just like any other created entities. Thus He shows them His perfect ability and that He alone is deserving of worship, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning) (Al-Qur’an 41:11).

And from among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Prostrate yourselves neither to the sun nor to the moon, but prostrate yourselves (Al-Qur’an 29:25).

Eclipses happen naturally for different reasons best known to Him but for human beings, they are the sign of His power and existence. The Muslims all around the globe do seek help from God, especially at the times of solar and lunar eclipse for the safety of the human beings and the planet because according to their belief on the sayings of Qur’an reminding them for the Day of Judgment and appearance before the God. The Holy Quran says:

He asks: “When will be this Day of Resurrection?” So, when the sight shall be dazed. And the moon will be eclipsed. In addition, the sun and moon will be joined together (by going one into the other or folded up or deprived of their light). (Al-Qur’an 7:54)

During the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), there happened a solar eclipse on the day of death of His son Ibrahim. Some of the people believed that The Prophet (P.B.H.U) was sad owing to the effects of eclipse, but later The Prophet denied this belief of the people and said,

The sun and the moon do not eclipse because of the death of someone from the people but they are two signs amongst the signs of Allah. When you see them, stand up and pray. (Bukhari: 151)

Moreover, it was narrated by Hazrat Aisha: In the life-time of Allah's Apostle, during the sun eclipsed, he led the people to prayer, and stood up and performed a long Qiyam, then bowed for a long while. He stood up again and performed a long Qiyam but this time the period of standing was shorter than the first one (As-Suyuti, 1999). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), did the same in the second Raka as he did in the first and then finished the prayer; by the time the sun (eclipse) had cleared(Kennedy, 1957; Shah, 2013).

On the other hand, the Hindu religion has its point of view about the phenomenon that was different from Muslims' astronomy. According to them it dates back to the Mauryan period known as Jyotisa and is divided into 3 branches, namely Siddhanta, Hora, and Samhita. Traditional Indian astronomy is referred to as Siddhanta, while Hora is predictive astrology based on the analysis of natal horoscopes. The predictions of important events such as the occurrence of natural calamities or events in the fields of the nation's finance and politics are classified under Samhita. The natural phenomenon of eclipse frightened the primitive people for a long time as they did not comprehend
the scientific facts behind it. There were numerous myths prevalent about the eclipses (Abdur-Rahman, 1994; Naik, 2010).

**Modern science and Medical**

Modern Science has its inclination to understanding every phenomenon because it believes on a practical base, not the theoretical base, therefore, lunar eclipse and their effects on the human body are different. It cannot believe that lunar eclipse can affect human beings but it is just a psychological and sociological problem not related to the eclipses, while physical science has cleared that there are no harmful rays of the lunar eclipse that can affect pregnant women (Battros, 2014; Brown, 2000; Hamacher & Norris, 2011). It has for some reason restricted the looking at the solar eclipse with the naked eye probably for the safety of the eyesight. Similarly, in medical science, there are different perceptions about lunar eclipse and its effect. The disease and birth disability are due to genetic and other problems not by the lunar eclipse effects (Abdur-Rahman, 1994; Harrison, 2000; Rogers & Hogan, 2004).

**Superstitions about disability**

In societies, there is a superstition that any handicapped condition can spread to all, an abnormal child cannot mess-up with the normal ones. The birth of a disabled child is looked upon as an error and is agreeable because almost all the villagers during the interviews showed sympathy with the disabled children as a courtesy but none of them was serious. In the streets, the disabled children were mocked and made fun of them by other children as well as adults (Abdur-Rahman, 1994; Hamacher & Norris, 2011; Kennedy, 1957; Labergere, 1990; Mishkat Al-Masabih, 1997). As Labreger argued:

> The primitive attitude is quite callous and may include the killing of sickly babies. Next, the wealthier members of the society, who no longer have to worry about their next meal and therefore can afford to have a longer view, may take pity on some handicapped people and give them alms. Later comes the institutionalization of charity. Public funds are allocated. So, society assumes the burden of feeding and clothing the handicapped (Labergere, 1990, p. 304).

Some Muslim tribes of North Africa believe that a family is especially favored if divine providence places a handicapped need more love, care, and attention they believe that God selects exceptionally loving families to receive a handicapped baby. Whether or not it is true, it certainly makes a different attitude in that society (Harrison, 2000; Middlehurst, 1967). One problem is that negative attitudes are usually hidden. Publically most people express support for the disabled and applaud attempts to permit them to enter the larger society. When you get to specifics, the issue becomes clearer. One here statements such as I’m not prejudiced against disabled, but they should go to special schools where their need can be fully taken care of (Harrison, 2000; Yom Tov & Qatan, 2005). According to As-Suyuti:

> Many Muslims believe that illnesses, diseases, and disabilities are God sent or due to Allah’s (God’s) will. Furthermore, Islamic literature consistently refers to illnesses
and disorders as compensation for sins and this reason. Traditional healers and family members often suggest that, if a person acquires any illness or disorder, he or she should acknowledge or “receive” it. With patience and gratitude, to earn the favor of God, as disorders are one of the strongest incentives to make believers turn to Allah in repentance and to truthfully and sincerely make amends for their wrongful actions, thereby guiding their pathway to the Garden of Paradise (As-Suyuti, 1999, P. 103).

According to (Disability Statistics, 2021) there are almost 650 million disabled persons around the world because of physical, mental or sensory impairment and are being entitled to the similar rights and privileges as others have but owing to various forms of disabilities they are unable to participate in the development of the society. So is why, there are millions of adults and children all over the globe who often face a life that is segregated and debased. According to the report of (WHO, 2011) there was an estimation that one out of every ten person was disabled by mental, physical, or sensory impairment, and at least 25% of the population is adversely affected by disability. Around 350 million disabled persons were living in areas where they had no access to services that were required to enable them to overcome their limitations. The disabled persons residing in the developing world often faced more acute barriers as compared to those in developed nations. It is estimated that up to 80% of disabled populations generally live in isolated rural areas of the developing world. In some countries, 20% of the population was disabled. Thus, it can be projected that, when disabled people's relatives are included, 50% of the population is affected by disability. Moreover, disabled persons are poorest of the poor (Disability Statistics, 2021; WHO, 2011).

The situation in Pakistan is entirely different where poverty affects disabled people who are poorest of the poor, who have inadequate education facilities, internalized oppression (a kind of psychological warfare), lack of employment opportunities, and stereotypes that are borrowed from medieval English literature. Besides this, the reasons to keep the disabled persons at the bottom of the barrel included the charity model, the lack of a cohesive movement for the welfare of disabled persons and absence of united voice for the rights of disabled populations. Poverty is the fate of developing countries that cannot be ignored. As the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, while in this situation disabled are the biggest sufferers for reasons not difficult to understand. Some of the schools simply refuse to accept disabled children on the plea that they will have a bad influence on the healthy students (Ahmed, M., 1981; Qazilbash, 1988).

Effects of Lunar Eclipse
Modern science cannot believe on the effect of the lunar eclipse, but community people culturally believe that lunar eclipse can affect in different ways, some of its effects are given below.

Effect on the child: It is culturally believed that lunar eclipse can affect the newborn baby, therefore in the lunar eclipse night child’s mother does not perform any activity to avoid any disability to her child. Another common belief that during lunar eclipse night pregnant women should avoid the use of a sharp object such as a knife, scissor, or needle and also avoid drinking any kind of
liquid or eating food and should stay in-door, and do not walk in the open air. They are advised to wear new clothes, use henna to cast-off an evil eye, and observe fasting. If she performs any activity that night, that can affect her newborn child (Hamacher & Norris, 2011; Kennedy, 1957; Labergere, 1990; Nauman, 1993; Yom Tov & Qatan, 2005).

Effects on life: Astronomers believe that lunar eclipse is not only affecting the newborn child but can affect differently on life, health, economy, relationship, and living pattern. In health-related issues it may cause heart-related diseases, breathing trouble, coughs, colds, insomnia, stress, impatience, insecurity, indecisiveness, fear, and mood swings, etc. Sometimes it has effects to deteriorate the relation with family, relatives, and friends, while marriages arranged on that night are not considered successful. Astronomers also believe that it also causes damages in business deals made on that specific night. Astronomers also believe that the lunar eclipse does not cause disability on normal human beings or after birth (Ahmed, M., 1981; Månsson & Merlo, 2001; Mozaffari, 2013; Nauman, 1993; Yom Tov & Qatan, 2005).

Psychological effects: The lunar eclipse can also cause a psychological effect on the community as per perception of the people of Shikarpur. They solidly believe that the disability was caused by a lunar eclipse; the belief has been transferred from generation to generation that the eclipse could penetrate their minds and cause many mental and psychological problems. Such concepts were not only present in illiterate people but the educated people also believed these effects of the phenomenon. A male told the researcher that he was not having any faith in the lunar eclipse and its effect but he was wrong. One eclipse night he was eating mango in a sucking style, while his wife was pregnant. His mother forbade him but he could not stop eating and sucking the mangos and ignored his mother’s advice. After few months, when his son was born, his physical structure was as if he was sucking mangos at that night.

**Results and Discussion**

The findings of this study on the socio-cultural perception and the superstitions about the lunar eclipse show that children born with cleft lip, cleft plate problems, limb shrinking problem by birth, and hyperactive pigmentation problems since birth. The native superstitious beliefs have developed the perception of people that such physical problems are the effects of lunar eclipse. A respondent shared the physical disability of his 1-year-old son and superstitious beliefs as,

“"This physical disability of my son is because of lunar eclipse. My wife was pregnant and it was the night of lunar eclipse. My mother told my wife to stay on bed and not to do any activity. But my wife ate an apple against the normal practice of avoiding to drink or eat. This was the negligence of my wife in this regard. I am worried about the future of my son that how he will be living a miserable life. This is my first child and the hear and sayings about the effects of lunar eclipse can be seen in practical at my home. I will be taking care for next pregnancies of my wife to avoid any such bad happening.”"
This case shows a strong belief about the superstitions regarding lunar eclipse passed on from one generation to next. If such an event occurs in a society then it is widely quoted. The sympathies of relatives and dear ones make the parents feel guilty on having a son with by birth disability. The women are the marginalized segment of the society. The women face taunting behavior of their in-laws. The women are considered prime culprit in such cases. During an interview a respondent said that it is the responsibility of the women to take care during lunar eclipse by following cultural and traditional practice.

There is a superstition among the natives of Shikarpur that during the lunar eclipse if any of the parent do some physical activity then it effects on the physical health of the baby in the womb of mother. Masoom had two children including a daughter and a son. His son was physically disabled by birth. Narrating the cause of disability of his son and his superstitious belief Masoom said,

“My son has limb shrinking problem by birth as his right arm was short from elbow to hand. It is a common saying in our village that if mother or father do some physical activity during the time of lunar eclipse then the baby is born with some physical disability. For example, if the mother is cutting any fruit or vegetable then probably the newborn baby might get disability of hand. On the night of that lunar eclipse, I was unfortunate that I did not belief on saying regarding the effects of lunar eclipse. I cut illegal wood from government jungle on that night and my wife asked me not to do that, but I realized this on the time of birth of my son.”

It is a common stereotype in the village that people bear the fruits of their evil doings in their life. There was belief that Masoom was cutting illegal wood and this was the reason that his son was physical disable. It was a superstitious belief that same part of body of baby will be affected that was used during physical activity during the time of lunar eclipse. The natives of Shikar Pur wanted both mother and father of baby to stay on bed and not to do any physical activity to protect their child in the womb of mother from any type of physical disability. During focus group discussion a respondent said that the responsibility for the protection of child from the effects of lunar eclipse is part and parcel for both parents.

Here it is important to understand that how these children carry their disability during their remaining life. The case study of Kareem, a thirty-eight-year man of Chandio caste, can be helpful to explore the social behavior towards cleft lip children. Kareem said that during his childhood he had to face social discrimination owing to his physical disability. Narrating the story of his marriage he said that no girl in his village was willing to marry him because of his disfigured upper lip that was torn into two pieces. He was father of three children and during the time of three pregnancies of his wife he was very concerned about the effects of lunar eclipse. He managed to follow the socio-cultural and traditional practices of staying calm on bed during lunar eclipse.
found that the persons with by birth disability owing to the effects of lunar eclipse were more victim of superstitious beliefs. During an in-depth interview one of the respondents said,

“Suppose I do not have superstitious belief on the effects of lunar eclipse and God for bid it happens to my baby in the womb of mother then what will I do? So, I it is better, if you have belief on such superstitions or not, to follow the traditional customs for being protected from the effects of lunar eclipse. Are we going to gift a lifelong disability to our new child? For me this is not acceptable”

According to respondents, the treatment of such physical disability was costly and it was financially not manageable for them to spend money for the treatment of their children having by birth disability. As it is widely quoted that prevention is better than cure. The superstitious beliefs regarding effects of lunar eclipse were every deep rooted which had created a fear among the natives of Shikar Pur that socio-cultural and traditional perception had turned into their belief. Although science has given reasons about this natural phenomenon, but socio-cultural and superstitious beliefs had rejected scientific justification of lunar eclipse.

Ismail’s disfigured upper lip was cut into three pieces and shaped like a tumor under his nose and showing his teeth on both sides of this tumor. This physical disability, according to him, was the effect of lunar eclipse. This is what his grandmother told him during his early childhood. His mother passed away when he was three years old. Narrating the story of social discrimination Ismail said,

“I could not attend school like other children. My face is very frightening. My father sent me to school but the other children were scared of my disability and their parents wanted our village school teacher to discontinue my education. Even this happened in the Madrisa as well. In this village and near by city there is not any school for disabled persons [special children]. Owing to this disability, I cannot speak properly, and this is the reasons jokes are cracked upon me and people mock me. This is miserable life, but I have to manage.”

The persons with disability owing to the effects of lunar eclipse spend an isolated life. They face social discrimination and rejection not only in the society but also in their homes. The society and state disown such disabled persons. As Ismail expected the government to provide medical facility to him. He believed that healthcare has improved many folds and the medical facility for his treatment can be provided but being far from the centers of health facility and poverty he cannot attain it. The social analysis of life of the affecters of lunar eclipse shows that they are not merely physically disabled, but they are also socially handicapped. A study is needed to explore the social sufferings of this segment of the society.
Information technology plays a key role for dissemination of information about the date and duration of lunar eclipse in any society. The respondents reported that they never knew the date and time duration of lunar eclipse as they do not have access to technology and television. Generally, whoever, among the family members, observes the happening of lunar eclipse tells the pregnant women to practice socio-cultural and traditional preventive measures. But if someone is missed from this information than it can harm the baby in the womb. The case study of Kareem can be a good example to understand the importance of sharing of information regarding lunar eclipse. Kareem’s mother had narrated the story about her unfortunate fate. According to Kareem his mother was pregnant with seven months and was cutting the meat on the third night of Eid-ul-Azha. It was winter and she was in the traditional kitchen of her home and busy in preserving meat in traditional way. She was unaware that the light of moon was no more outside, and it was lunar eclipse. Kareem’s five siblings were normal. His mother told him that the problem with Kareem was outcome of using sharp-edged knife at that sensitive night that has caused a problem to Kareem.

The modern medical science revolves around the scientific reasons for the happening of lunar eclipse and negates any socio-cultural, religious, traditional superstitious and perceptions about the effects of lunar eclipse on the physical disability of newborn child. Modern medical science arrogates that there are multiple factors involved on such kind of effect on newborn child. Those multiple factors include daily routine activities of the pregnant women, following of medical protocols for antenatal care and scientific medication process practiced by a pregnant woman. During in-depth interviews, two medical doctors responded the critical questions regarding the effect of lunar eclipse on the physical disability of new born child. Both of the respondents had their own perspective. As one of those medical doctors said,

“There are many scientific factors that can be considered about the by birth disability of new born child. As a doctor I cannot measure the knowledge, attitude and practices of women during the time span of their pregnancy. Moreover, I cannot observe their work responsibility during the pregnancy. Besides this, the growth of baby cannot be continuously monitored among the pregnant women. This is the complex phenomenon that cannot be addressed by the medical doctors. As, doctors of this area do not have resources and interest to approach pregnant women in this regard.”

The other doctor, who had a clinic in the village Shikar Pur, was very confused between the version of modern medical science and the superstitious beliefs of the villagers. Narrating his views about the knowledge of modern medical science and his personal belief on effect of lunar eclipse regarding disability of new born child he said,

“Although modern medical sciences have not been accepting the traditional perceptions related to the effects of lunar eclipse on the physical health of new born
child. But we have been observing such happenings in our life since generations. In this village there are good number of cases of such disability, but in my opinion medical science might be true to some extent but there are some secrets of Almighty Allah. People name these secrets of Allah in various ways. Sometime as punishment by Allah on the sins that we commit and sometimes test of Allah either we follow his rules or not. As a doctor I do not find myself to be part of either medical science or superstitions about the effects of lunar eclipse. In my opinion both traditional and modern perceptions are on their own right path.”

Despite the fact that there were a few medical doctors working in village Shikarpur but their knowledge about modern medical science remained unable to change knowledge, attitude and practices of natives during the lunar eclipse. Because, since centuries the traditional and superstitious beliefs have been constructed and transmitted from one generation to the next throughout the process of socialization. The doctors were also part of this society, owing to which their views were influenced by native perception about lunar eclipse.

Conclusion

The objective of the study was to observe the social, cultural, medical science and religious implication of lunar eclipse and its consequence on children, women, and men, this study was undertaken to investigate social, cultural, medical science and religious existing perceptions, believes, superstitions and indigenous healing practices of society about lunar eclipse in Shikarpur village. In the existing scientific literature, it has proved that no harmful rays are coming during a lunar eclipse to affect the newborn child. The community people of Shikarpur have their perceptions quite conflicting. They strongly believed that it could affect in different ways. Moreover, the astrologists also believed in its effects on the people in different ways. People dominated by religious perception have their perspective; they relate every natural tragedy with God and their sins, so they look at disasters, earthquakes, thunderstorm and floods, and the effects of the lunar eclipse as all a punishment and wrath of God. According to them Allah the Almighty shows his strength through such phenomena so that the people should forgo their sins and bow their head before him.

The social status of affected people was also similar, all poor, and deprived of basic rights, as compared to normal children. In early childhood, the parents took care of the child but gradually they were ignored by the family members and were called different awful names, while in the schools the fellow students also made fun of them. Poverty was the main hurdle in their rehabilitation though the parents were wishing to treat them properly, but poverty did allow them to do so, while in some of the cases the large family size was also an obstacle for rehabilitation. The literacy rate was very low among the affected families, who were not aware of certain disabilities and their remedies; they simply knew that problems are caused by the will of God and He is the greatest healer, but their trust in God was based on a mis-perception. They did not go for
cure, while it has been commanded by God. They simply kept waiting for a miracle to happen from God. The ignorance level of the community people was the very high. They were steeped in superstitions and being deprived of modern scientific knowledge and education; they were unable to recognize and realize the basic social rights of such disfigured children.

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