



## Social Myths as a Roadblock in the path of Nation Building

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### Abstract

*Our ancestors were brilliant enough to link social myths and reasoning together so that people would follow them strictly. But, as we passed through centuries, we formulated theories and practices leaving science behind and these practices were mere "Social myths" without any logic backing. We detached the scientific reality behind formulating myths and pushed people into believing certain theories blindly. Now, these blind beliefs are creating roadblocks in the path of nation building. To build a strong and powerful nation, dedication and hard work of its citizen and some amount of smart planning on the part of the government is required but social myths creating hindrance or misunderstandings in various areas. As a result, introduction of new prohibitory laws often face opposition and many more. This paper is focused on understanding of social myths, their origin and influence on Nation Building.*

**Keywords** – National Building, Social Myth, Culture, Ignorance, Roadblock

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### Introduction

**Nation building** is a multidimensional concept and it involves the active participation of its citizen in various walks of life. A strong and powerful nation is built on dedication and hard work of its citizen and some amount of smart planning on the part of the government. There are various facets of nation building such as tapping the potential of its human resource, reducing the social and economic disparity that exists in the society and creating an enabling environment, wherein individuals can live freely and attain their best in life. Among all these, restructuring of the education sector is most important one.

**Myth** comes from the Greek word 'mythos' which means 'story'. The stories that deal with several aspects of nature, human life and environment such as creation, natural phenomena and the heroic deeds of gods as well as of human beings. These stories go back to a time before history and often explain happenings in the world for which people can find no explanation other than a supernatural one. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* defines myths thus: "Myths are specific accounts concerning Gods or superhuman beings and extraordinary events or circumstances in a time that is altogether different from that of ordinary human experience".

Nowadays the rapid growth of science and technology in society gives people the possibility to have the rational and critical worldview. But on the other hand, the influence of myths remains very strong, especially in such fields as politics, ideology, mass media and science. 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, for making social prognosis for the nation building.

Educated people have also been observed following beliefs that may be considered superstitious including India. The literacy rate of India, according to the 2011 census is at 74%. The beliefs and practices vary from region to region, with many regions having their own specific beliefs. 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.

### Review of Related Literature:

1. **Davis, Cindy L.** in his Book Review "Social Myths and Collective Imaginaries by Gérard Bouchard," reveals that Bouchard reiterates that the study of myth should not be relegated to past and/or primitive societies and explains that myth can be used in different ways and for different purposes. Examination of myth can help in understanding culture and thought, not only in the past but in current time as well.
2. **Undie J.U. et.al.** concluded in his study that early childhood science pupils in Ogoja Educational Zone still hold strongly to beliefs in 'bad luck', 'impending danger' and 'perceived effects', and these have serious consequences on their academic performance. Early childhood pupils in Ogoja Educational Zone should, first of all, be made to discard their traditional and superstitious misconceptions about certain phenomena in order to free their minds to perform well. So, he suggested Social study curriculum in early childhood schools was recommended to be broadened to teach concepts in superstitions which may reduce pupils' beliefs and enhance the teaching of science.
3. **Shrivastav M. (2017)** in her research concluded that people usually believe or follow superstitious behavior when they are in high stress situations, because in these situations they face uncertainty in their life. In this condition they try to control the situation, by following superstitious behaviour. This behavior leads to hinder the national growth by influence the rational thinking of people.
4. **Harish R. (2016)** in his paper 'superstitions in society and steps to eradicate' studied the number of superstitions are going on with the different issues in the community in the meanwhile we have to take some precaution to eradicate and to give with the suggested remedies like thinking positively, parental guidelines, teacher guidelines, enlightening the campaigns, role of media and developing the scientific attitude,

scientific thinking and inculcations of the scientific methods in day to day life, in this way we can overcome from the superstitions in the society to change the life styles of the modern era.

### Factors affecting societal beliefs or myths:

There are various factors which affect the social beliefs or myths of people, some of them are discussed below:

- **Culture:** People are not born with a "culture", they learn "culture" through the process of enculturation. People develop and maintain cultures to deal with basic problems like survival and other issues (geographical, social, economic, philosophical etc.) that concern them. Typically, the dominant group's interests are most influential and better served by a culture's worldview and life ways than are the interests of other subordinated groups within a culture.
- **Religion:** All cultures have religions, which are powerful and dynamic forces in human society. To overcome limitations, people often turn to social myths that are related to anything that help them out from the problem. Religion presupposes the existence of social myths and supernatural beings and powers with interest in human affairs so humans can direct appeals for aid. Religion reduces human anxieties by explaining the unknown or making it understandable, providing comfort in times of crisis, sanctioning a range of human conduct with notions of right and wrong, setting precedents for acceptable behavior, and/or transferring the burden of making decisions from human to social myths.
- **Ignorance:** The most important factor which creates myths in societies is ignorance. In the past some people considered events related to eclipse, as being the wrath of god. While, if the cause of eclipse was clear for people such beliefs have no place among people. Similarly, ignorance made numerous superstitions in religions. For example, some religious groups because of generosity, occult knowledge and other wonderful things that they observed from their godman, could not properly explained and analyze such problems and knew them as pretext of superstition. So, certainly, ignorance is one of the most important causes of superstitions or social myths in societies.

### Social Myth as Roadblock in Nation Building

Nation building includes various aspects like socioeconomic development, education, infrastructure, equality and many more. But the influence of social myths is creating roadblock

in every field. The problem of social myths has been investigated by many scholars and most of investigations concluded that social myths are creating roadblocks in the path of nation building. Let's discuss some of them:

- **Roadblock in Socioeconomic Development:** Socioeconomic development plays a very important role in nation building but social myths are creating hindrance. Dissa and Adjouro et al. (2017) studied the effects of superstitions and beliefs on Mali's socioeconomic development and concluded that despite the 21st century development, civilization and globalization, one aspect of the lives of many Malians continues to live in the archaic world. Blinded by fears, lack of education and inability to fully embrace science or question things, superstition remains a robust and unchallenged force controlling the lives, minds and beliefs of many Malians.
- **Roadblocks in Child Development:** In a great nation, every child should have equal rights for education but social myths interfere even in the classroom. Sanjay Kumar (2014) conducted a research on 'Inclusive classroom and social diversity in India: Myths and challenges' and found prevalent myths among the educators about the children's individual and collective identities and their abilities. These are often deeply rooted and shaped by varied socio-cultural contexts which have remained largely unspoken but understood by those who believe in diverse societal norms. Therefore, inclusive education has variety of challenges in the contemporary set up.
- **Roadblock in Women Empowerment:** Empowerment of women is a necessity for the very development of a nation. But the existences of social myths even in natural phenomena like menstruation are creating problems. Bhartiya, Aru (2013) conducted a survey on 'Menstruation, Religion and Society' and found 46% of girls in the age bracket of 20-25 years said that they enter the temple while menstruating, 18% said they are allowed after a few days. This just shows that girls nowadays don't follow this rule earnestly and have realized that this rule was relevant before sanitary products came into existence. It was imposed to maintain the cleanliness in the temple. But now it's just a redundant rule.
- **Roadblock in Gender Equality:** As of 2017, gender equality is the fifth of seventeen sustainable development goals of the United Nations. Hence, it is an important aspect of nation building but social myths related to gender are present even in developed societies. Segura, S.N. (2013) conducted a study on 'Myths and the perception of gender in culture and society' and concluded that the patriarchal system

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is still present in most advanced capitalist democracies. This system establishes that men are dominant and powerful over women, who are subjected to them. The issue of sexuality and gender should be highlighted since through this aspect, the patriarchal system is clearly portrayed.

### Conclusion:

Nation building includes various aspects like socioeconomic development, education, infrastructure, equality and many more. But the influence of social myths is creating roadblock in every field. The rapid growth of science and technology in society gives people the possibility to have the rational and critical worldview. But on the other hand, the influence of myths remains very strong, especially in such fields as politics, ideology and science. Social Myths plays important role to develop positive attitudes in some situations but in most of the cases it become a bad practice. Social myth is among the weakest mental quantity of any human being on earth not only with Indian society.

It is impossible to change society on whole but yes as an individual one can adopt changes in life style and beliefs. Today science and technology growing fast, so we must develop scientific attitude to eradicate social myths or roadblocks in the path of nation building.

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