



Cognitive Representations of the Supernatural Agents in Rural Population

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Abstract- India has a traditional rich culture and the people of Dev Bhoomi Himachal Pradesh are very well known for their customary beliefs in supernatural elements and their agents. The people of this rural state are very religious, exhibit immutable beliefs in their local deities and their agents like Gur or Chelas because of their socio-psychological reconciliation, mitigation of social conflicts and diseases, and promotion of wellbeing and better quality of life there are cognitively attached to them. In the present study a pioneer attempt has been made to appraise the cognitive representation of the two rural populations i.e. Mandi District, prominently known as Chhoti Kashi and his neighbouring rural district Bilaspur of Himachal Hill State. The study has been conducted on a sample of N = 240 rural population (120 of Mandi and 120 of Bilaspur) subdivided into two comparable halves based on their Gender that comprises of N = 60 subjects in each group those were tested in terms of attachment to the local deities in terms of latency. The results based on 4 x 2 x 2 ANOVA revealed that the main effect of Attachment Related Scripts on the measure of Latency was found $F(3,224) = 1.51, p > .05$ as statistically non-significant. Similarly, the main effect of Locality on the measure of Latency was also found $F(1,224) = .22, p > .05$ as statistically non-significant. The main effect of Gender on the measure of Latency was found $F(1,224) = .36, p > .05$ as statistically non-significant. Only the two-way interaction between Attachment Related Scripts x Locality on the measure of Latency was found $F(3,224) = 5.33, p < .01$ as highly significant whereas other two or three way interactions emerged as non-significant. Although the quantitative findings revealed no difference in local deities, the qualitative analyses however reported immutable and firm beliefs in the aforesaid two rural population of Himachal Pradesh.

Keywords- Culture, Himachal Pradesh, Rural populations, Gender, Mandi.

1. INTRODUCTION

The social and religious life in the hills is very much different from the plains. The hill people are neither exclusively Shiva nor Vaishnava. They are, essentially all in one. The same person has as much regard for Shiva as he has for Vishnu or Shakti. The hill people rather worship a large number of village Gods and goddess, and, in their polytheistic belief, they observe a large number of rituals in their daily life. The people living in hilly areas still believe in their traditional local institution of deities in general and Guru is, in particular, promoting the health of the community (Ashwani, 2012). Be it a traditional ritual observance like deities possession, psychological accounts and expectation of outcomes, it has proved effective for promoting “*La Dolce Vita*” philosophy of saccharine life (Zinta & Negi, 2016).

The subject of myths and rituals has, recently, attained special significance in the hand of anthropologist, folklorists and sociolinguists. Myths and rituals play a very important role in the social, cultural and religious life of a community. Broadly speaking myths are the beliefs around which overall activities of the people revolve and the rituals are the way and procedure through these myths are translated into action. Also,

the well-being of the rural communities has been found to be associated with religious beliefs (Myers & Diener 1995; Pargament 1997), beliefs about justice (Dalbert 2001; Furnham 2003), and world benevolence beliefs (Poulin & Silver, 2008). They are no more looked down upon as a medley of the meaningless practice of superstitious communities. They, rather, contain certain elements of truth of a community life. Consequently, they form a part of our living tradition and constitute a significant phenomenon which keeps their interest alive in many ways.

The galaxy of God in this part of India is infinite. They are worshipped in towns and cities, in villages and localities, in temples and shrines. They dwell in rivers and ravines in springs and streams, in brooks and lakes, in valleys and dales, in stones and rocks, in trees and plants, in fields and high peaks over mountain and hills, in woods and forests. In fact, they live everywhere because they are gods who are homeless and wandering. By far the most important are the village gods and goddess. They are so closely connected with the metaphysical and religious life of the hill people that there is hardly any activity, which is beyond their sphere of influence.



Under the aforesaid social, religious and cultural conditions, the people form attachment to their local deities as they appear to have adopted the role of real-life caregivers (Bartholomew, Cobb, & Poole, 1997; Davila, & Levy, 2006; Maunder, & Hunter, 2001). They are numerous and their deification highly diversified. The significance of localization of gods lies in the fact that whether the local deity is a Vedic Deva, a Puranic trinity, a classical God or a Rishi or a hero, he has his own local convention of adoration and emergence. The deity comes into worship, not because of their Vedic or Puranic greatness, but because of their miraculous appearance and ostentatious display of unusual power to dispel the evil spirits and oppressive forces, which had hitherto been cruelly devastating the hill people.

The village devtas in Himachal Pradesh are not simply objects of worship. They, rather, constitute an institution, which governs all social, cultural, moral, economic, religious, and political life of the village folk. In the faith of the people of which this devtas are held and the manner in which this faith is expressed, they have a large number of traditions and conventions governing their day today life. These traditions superstitions and the conventions, which, at present, prevail in this area, go a long way to show that the area might have been, once infested with supernatural forces and what people could not understand they began to worship. Anyone who could propitiate the supernatural spirits or exorcize evil spirits began to acquire commanding importance and unique influence and was looked upon with awe and reverence and all bowed to his authority. The sorcerer, thus, became the leader and subsequently, his spirit or the spirit propitiated by him becomes sine-qua-none of the social life of these valleys.

Research done by Myers (1992), as mentioned by Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2008), on the psychological outcomes associated with "attachment to God" (such as religious faith giving believers a sense of optimism and hope for the future). The local god and goddesses seem to promote the health, wealth, employment, granary, reduced dominance, and discrimination (Negi & Zinta, 2016; Kataik, 2012; Kataik & Zinta, 2013). Therefore, attachment towards local god is visible in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh. They are very familiar with their local god as they have immutable beliefs in them. The current study banks on the attachment theory developed by Bowlby (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1977). In this study, a pioneer attempt has been made to study the effect of attachment-related scripts, (proximity maintenance, separation distress, safe haven and secure base); familiarity to the god (deity image) and deities as safe heaven (deity cues) on the cognitive representations (latency).

Attachment relations are characterized by four features or functions. These are: *proximity maintenance, separation distress, safe haven, and secure base* (Tancredy & Fraley, 2006). With use of script method, the researcher has attempted to support existing studies that suggest the memories are stored in scripts, which comprise of smaller units called schema. In other words script are structures with in which we store seems (SARs), they are set of rules for the ordering (Retrieving/recalling) of information about SARs (Nathanson, 1996). More appropriately, script is a schematic organization that represents an event structure based on experience in the real world. It is organized in terms of temporal and causal relations between its components acts. Each script has a central or goal act and specifies which acts and items are required and which are optional or variable over contexts (Nelson, Fivush, Hudson & Lucariello, 1983). According to Smith and Houston, (1985) scripts are one type of the broad classification of memory structures generally known as schemata. A schema contains an individual's general knowledge about some stimulus domain, represented in generic rather than episodic form. This concept lies behind the current study where the researcher has used scripts to stimulate generation of cognitive representations (latency), which were then observed and recorded for further assessment.

2. PRESENT STUDY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

It is therefore imperative to understand the elements of cognition or mind that have origins in family, village, community and region. It is not surprising that in India, many of these cognitive elements have their origin in the beliefs of people in supernatural agents (Singh, 2002). India is facing a peculiar situation in the provision of mental health care. Our mental health facilities and policies are largely for the urban population whereas more than 70 percent rural population has no access to mental health facilities (Srinivasa Murthy, 1998; 2004; 2007), and is dependent for its well-being on the institution of the temple. For example, in Himachal Pradesh, this institution is very strong and almost every villager is a member of one or more such institutions. Furthermore, the institution of deity has linkages with educational, social, political, and spiritual systems (Pirta, 2007).

For this, the investigator would require two approaches currently emphasized in cognitive science—the folk psychology and the cognitive psychology. The former is appropriate in exploring the diversity of supernatural elements whereas the latter would help in the analysis of their representations in the mind. The holistic model of mental health incorporates native cognition (Pirta, 2004), the resiliency-vulnerability dimension of clinical psychology and the wear and tear of body and



mind—the allostatic load. After stressors are perceived, there occur behavioural and physiological changes to cope up with it. Our helplessness to deal with stressful events has a cumulative effect called in modern terms allostatic load (Mauder & Hunter, 2001). It is hypothesized here that the responses of these allostatic systems, which are biological in nature, are mediated by the cultural and divine systems (Bagiella, Hong, & Sloan, 2005). In last few years, this study has been explored (Pirta, 2005; 2006; 2007) as an alternative model of mental health in India. The investigator has used this theorization in a previous study (Thakur & Pirta, 2009), where it was found that the possession group had lower general well-being the normal group and showed a tendency towards neuroticism. Furthermore, the possession group recalled a greater number of attachment-related memories than the comparison group. Attachment to the God, goddesses, and local deities seems to be embedded in one mind or cognitive processes.

In Himachal Pradesh, paranormal beliefs are found at gargantuan level (Kaur & Zinta, 2017) and the rural deities and devta play important role in their life (Kataik & Zinta, 2017, Thakur, 2009). They are remembered till morning to evening. Be the people belong to an enriched class or impoverished with the high and low level of literacy in both rural and urban area, they pay great devotion to their local deities. They seem to flourish their life by alleviating distresses, bad luck, diseases, and deformities. The local god and goddesses seem to promote the health, wealth, employment, granary, reduced dominance, and discrimination (Negi & Zinta, 2016; Kataik, 2012; Kataik & Zinta, 2013). Therefore, attachment towards local god is visible in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh. They are very familiar with their local god as they have immutable beliefs in them. In the present study, a pioneer attempt has been made to study the effect of attachment-related scripts, (proximity seeking, separation anxiety, safe haven and secure base); familiarity to the god (deity image) and deities as safe heaven (deity cues) on the cognitive representations (latency) in the people of two rural populations i.e Mandi and Bilaspur districts of Himachal Pradesh where these beliefs are quite prevalent. Therefore objective of the present study is to see the effect of attachment-related scripts (proximity seeking, separation anxiety, safe haven and secure base) on the cognitive representations (latency) of two rural population i.e Mandi and District Bilspur of Himachal Pradesh. It was hypothesized that the attachment related scripts (proximity seeking, separation anxiety, safe haven and secure base) would exert no influence on the cognitive representations (latency) of the people in two rural populations.

3. METHOD

3.1 Study area and Sample

The study was conducted on 240 participants of Bilaspur and Mandi districts of Himachal Pradesh. The participants included 120 participants from Mandi and 120 participants from Bilaspur with equal number of males and females with age group of 20-70 years from similar cultural, socioeconomic, educational, and caste background. The area of the study was selected considering the familiarity of the researcher with the area, their culture, dialect, wide prevalence of beliefs in and strong attachment to local deities in the two rural populations. The design of the study is as follows:-

Stimulus Conditions	Mandi		Bilaspur		Number of subject from two Districts
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Group 1 (Script 1: proximity to deity)	15	15	15	15	60
Group 1 (Script 2: separation from deity)	15	15	15	15	60
Group 1 (Script 3: deity as safe haven)	15	15	15	15	60
Group 1 (Script 4: deity as secure base)	15	15	15	15	60
Total Number of subjects	60	60	60	60	240

4. MEASURES

In the present study both quantitative and qualitative measures have been used. The description of quantitative measures are as follows:-

The quantitative method was used to assess the effect of attachment related scripts, on cognitive representations of normal people. In the present study script method was used followed with appraisal of latency.

4.1 Script Method: According to Hue and Erickson (1991) a script has been defined as a “predetermined, stereotyped sequence of actions that define a well-known situation”. Script method (Pitman, Orr, Fargue, de Jong & Claiborn, 1987) was used to stimulate the subject in order to study their cognitive representation of related to God. Four scripts depicted the four attachment relationships those characterize the bond between an individual and the object of attachment (God) (Bowlby, 1977; Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Tancredy & Fraley, 2006) were selected. These attachment relationships were: proximity seeking (script 1), Separation anxiety (script 2); safe haven (script 3); and secure base (script 4).



i) First Script

Proximity Maintenance: When infants and adults enjoy being in the presence of their attachment figures and actively seek those figures when they accomplish something or when they feel threatened. Then attachment figure is used as a target for proximity maintenance.

Proximity seeking to local deities: It is aimed at studying cognitive representation related proximity seeking to local deities. The characteristics given in the table have been extracted from various studies of different researchers. The researcher has selected specific words from these characteristics that identify with the proximity seeking behavior. After collecting these words, the researchers prepared a script that was intended to stimulate proximity seeking related memories in the subjects.

ii) Second script

Separation Distress: Separations from attachment figures generally do distress. When the relationship is disrupted then infants and adults both experience separation distress.

Separation from God: A script was prepared in accordance with characteristic of cognitive representation related distress aroused by separation from God. The characteristics given in the table have been extracted from various studies of different researchers. The researcher has selected specific words from these characteristics that identify with the distress that the subjects experience on separation from the attachment figure. After collecting these words, the researchers prepared a script that was intended to stimulate memories related to separation anxiety in the subjects.

iii) Third Script

Safe Haven: When a person is distressed, he or she often seeks the attachment figure for contact, assurance, and safety. For them attachment figure that time serves as a safe haven.

God as safe haven: It was prepared by making use of characteristics of cognitive representation related to God as safe haven. The characteristics given in the table have been extracted from various studies of different researchers. The researcher has selected specific words from these characteristics that identify most with the behavior related to the safe haven. After collecting these words, the researchers prepared a script that was intended to stimulate memories related to the safe haven in the subjects.

iv) Fourth Script

Secure Base: Young children are comfortable with the exploration to strange new environments only to the extent to which they know that the attachment figure is nearby and accessible if needed. They use their attachment figures as a secure base from which to explore the world

God as secure base: It was prepared in order to study the cognitive representation related to God as secure base. The fourth script was prepared after studying the

characteristics extracted from various studies of different researchers. The researcher has selected specific words from these characteristics that identify with the secure base related behavior. After collecting these words, the researchers prepared a script that was intended to stimulate memories related to secure base in the subjects.

4.2 Latency is the time required retrieving the first memory. For experimental psychologist, e.g. Woodworth and Scholberg, the time interval between stimulus and response is known as reaction time or latency). However Davis defined latency as the time required retrieving the first memory was followed in the present study.

5. PROCEDURE

Researcher personally visited each individual's house and the following procedure was followed for study.

"I will read a small paragraph. You have to speak out in a series of single words, whatever comes in your mind after listening to the paragraph. You have to speak out single word for example name of any place, God, Goddess, customs and rituals, name of any relative, river, streams etc., one by one as quickly as possible. So therefore I request you to listen to the paragraph carefully and reply in single word as soon as possible".

After he/she understood all the instructions and answering all the queries, researcher gave him/her an example that how he/she will proceed further. Then researcher requested him/her to pay attention to researcher and listen carefully the small paragraph researcher will read. As researcher told him/her before that he/she has to give response in as many as single word one by one, after listening to the paragraph. When researcher finished reading then he/she started responding. The responses were recorded for 5 minutes. There were four dependent variables, two were recorded directly and remaining two were derived later. Researcher noted down the first variable the latency (time in sec.) from when researcher said *ab aap bolain* and the participant spoke first word (item). As soon as the participant started giving his/her responses researcher noted down them on note book for five minutes. Stop watch was being used to note down the latency. The same procedure was followed for all four scripts and for each participant.

The data was analyzed by using 4 x 2 x 2 ANOVA where an attempt has been made to see the impact of *Stimulus Conditions; Locality and Gender on the cognitive representation of deities especially on the measure of latency amongst the people of Mandi and Bilaspur district at Himachal Pradesh in India. Description of latency is as follows:-*



6. RESULTS

The results based on 4 x 2 x 2 ANOVA is as follows:

Table 1.1: A 4 x 2 x 2 ANOVA performed to see the Impact of Attachment Related Scripts, Locality and Gender on the Measure of Latency among Different Group of Mandi and Bilaspur District

Source	Ss	Df	Ms	F	P
Total	95.98	240			
AS	.79	3	.26	1.51	n.s.
L	.04	1	.04	.22	n.s.
G	.06	1	.06	.36	n.s.
AS x L	2.79	3	.93	5.33	<.01
AS x G	.53	3	.18	1.00	n.s.
L x G	.14	1	.14	.78	n.s.
AS x L x G	.23	3	.08	.44	n.s.
Error	39.15	224	.18		

Notations: AS=Attachment Scripts; L= Locality; G=Gender

From the table 1.1 it is clear that the main effect of Attachment Related Scripts on the measure of Latency was found $F(3,224) = 1.51$, $p > .05$ as statistically non-significant. More appropriately, average score for proximity seeking was .50, separation anxiety as .50; safe haven as .51 and for secure base was .37. It shows that there was no difference between the four Attachment Related Scripts i.e. Proximity to deity; Separation from deity; deity as safe haven and the deity as secure base in Latency. Therefore, hypothesis No.1 which states that "The attachment related scripts (proximity seeking, separation anxiety, safe haven and secure base) would exert no influence on the cognitive representations (latency, number of memories, number of category generated and number of items in each category) of the people in two rural populations" got accepted.

Similarly, the main effect of Locality on the measure of Latency was found $F(1,224) = .22$, $p > .05$ as statistically non-significant. More appropriately, average score of Mandi district people was .48 and for Bilaspur district as .45. There was a meager difference between the two set of score. Therefore, hypothesis No.5 which states that "The locality would exert no influence on cognitive representations (latency, number of memories, number of category generated, and number of items in each category of the people in two rural populations" got accepted.

The main effect of Gender on the measure of Latency was found $F(1,224) = .36$, $p > .05$ as statistically non-significant. More appropriately, average score for

Male was .45 and for Female as .48. Again there was a meager difference between two set of score. Therefore, hypothesis No.6 which states that "The gender would exert no influence on the measure of cognitive representations (latency, number of memories, number of category generated, and number of items in each category) of the people in two rural populations" got accepted.

The two-way interaction between Attachment Related Scripts x Locality on the measure of Latency was found $F(3,224) = 5.33$, $p < .01$ as highly significant. But the two way interaction between Attachment Related Scripts x Gender on the measure of Latency was found $F(3,224) = 1.00$, $p > .05$ as statistically non-significant. Similarly the two way interaction between Locality x Gender on the measure of Latency was found $F(1,224) = .78$, $p > .05$ as statistically non-significant. Finally the three way interaction between Attachment Related Scripts x Locality x Gender on the measure of Latency was found $F(3,224) = .44$, $p > .05$ as statistically non-significant.

An attempt has been made to compare Mandi and Bilaspur people and male and females with each other on latencydependent variables used by computing their mean score. In the first table an attempt has been made to compare male and females with each other and Mandi and Bilaspur of four stimulus conditions i.e. Proximity to deity; Separation from deity; deity as safe haven and the deity as secure base on Latency parameter. The average scores have been shown in table 1.1, description is as follows:

Assessment of Latency: For experimental psychologist, the time interval between stimulus and response is known as reaction time or latency (Woodworth & Scholoberg, 1971).

Reaction time measurement is a promising method to gain data about behavioural and cognitive processes of respondent's behaviour in survey research. Since the end of the 19th century, reaction time measurement has been a common method in (social) psychology to operationalize latent mental processes (see Bassili, 2000; Faust, Balota, Spieler, & Ferraro, 1999).

Table 1.2 : Average Score of Mandi and Bilaspur District People Believing in Local Deities on the Measure of Latency

	Mandi			Bilaspur		
	Female	Male	AV	Female	Male	AV
PS	.43	.36	.39	.76	.46	.61
SA	.69	.65	.67	.31	.29	.30
SH	.46	.49	.47	.51	.58	.55
SB	.31	.45	.38	.39	.33	.36
AV	.47	.49	.48	.49	.41	.45



The average score of first Attachment related script i.e. Proximity seeking of Mandi people on latency was found .39 as compared to Bilaspur people the average score was found.61. It clearly shows that Mandi people took less time to retrieve first memory related to Proximity to deity scripts.

Further average score of female on latency was found $(.43+.76/2)=.60$ whereas the average score of male on latency was found $(.36+.46/2)=.41$. It clearly shows that the male took less time to recall first memory script.

Average score of Proximity seeking script on latency of Mandi female was found.43 whereas the average score of Mandi male was found .36. It shows that the Mandi male took less time to recall first memory as compared to their female counterpart. Similarly the average score of Proximity seeking script on latency of Bilaspur female was found .76 whereas the average score of Bilaspur male was found .46. It shows Bilaspur male also took lesser time to recall their first memory as compared to their female counterpart. Average score of Mandi male on latency was found .36 whereas the average score of Bilaspur male was found .46. It shows that the Mandi male took less time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Mandi female on latency was found .43 whereas the average score of Bilaspur female was found .76. It also shows that the Mandi female took less time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Mandi male on latency was .36 whereas the average score of Bilaspur female was .76. It shows that Mandi male took less time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Bilaspur male was .46 whereas the average score of Mandi female was found .43. It shows that the Mandi female took less time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart.

The average score of Second Attachment related script i.e. Separation Anxiety of Mandi people on latency was found .67as compared to Bilaspur people the average score was found.30. It clearly shows that Mandi people took more time to retrieve first memory related to Separation Anxiety scripts. Further average score of female on latency was found $(.69+.31/2)=.50$ whereas the average score of male on latency was found $(.65+.29/2)=.47$. It clearly shows that the male took less time to recall first memory. Average score of Separation Anxiety script on latency of Mandi female was found.69 whereas the average score of Mandi male was found .65. It shows that the Mandi male took less time to recall first memory as compared to their female counterpart. Similarly the average score of Separation Anxiety script on latency of Bilaspur female was found .31 whereas the average score of Bilaspur male was found .29. It shows Bilaspur male also took lesser time to recall their first memory as compared to their female counterpart. Average score of Mandi male on latency was found .65 whereas the

average score of Bilaspur male was found .29. It shows that the Mandi male took more time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Mandi female on latency was found .69 whereas the average score of Bilaspur female was found .31. It also shows that the Mandi female took more time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Mandi male on latency was .65 whereas the average score of Bilaspur female was .31. It shows that Mandi male took more time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Bilaspur male was .29 whereas the average score of Mandi female was found .69. It shows that the Mandi female took more time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart.

The average score of third Attachment related script i.e. Safe Haven of Mandi people on latency was found .47as compared to Bilaspur people the average score was found.55. It clearly shows that Mandi people took less time to retrieve first memory related to Safe Haven scripts. Further average score of female on latency was found $(.46+.51/2)=.48$ whereas the average score of male on latency was found $(.49+.58/2)=.53$. It clearly shows that the female took less time to recall first memory. Average score of Safe Haven script on latency of Mandi female was found.46 whereas the average score of Mandi male was found .49. It shows that the Mandi female took less time to recall first memory as compared to their male counterpart. Similarly the average score of Safe Haven script on latency of Bilaspur female was found .51 whereas the average score of Bilaspur male was found .58. It shows Bilaspur female also took lesser time to recall their first memory as compared to their male counterpart. Average score of Mandi male on latency was found .49 whereas the average score of Bilaspur male was found .58. It shows that the Mandi male took less time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Mandi female on latency was found .46 whereas the average score of Bilaspur female was found .51. It also shows that the Mandi female took less time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Mandi male on latency was .49 whereas the average score of Bilaspur female was .51. It shows that Mandi male took less time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Bilaspur male was .58 whereas the average score of Mandi female was found .46. It shows that the Mandi female took less time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart.

The average score of Fourth Attachment related script i.e. Secure Base of Mandi people on latency was found .38 as compared to Bilaspur people the average score was found.36. It clearly shows that Mandi people took more time to retrieve first memory related to Secure Base scripts. Further average score of female on latency was found $(.31+.39/2)=.35$ whereas the average score of male on latency was found

$(.45+.33/2)=.39$. It clearly shows that the female took less time to recall first memory. Average score of Secure Base script on latency of Mandi female was found .31 whereas the average score of Mandi male was found .45. It shows that the Mandi female took less time to recall first memory as compared to their male counterpart. Similarly the average score of Secure Base script on latency of Bilaspur female was found .39 whereas the average score of Bilaspur male was found .33. It shows Bilaspur male took lesser time to recall their first memory as compared to their female counterpart. Average score of Mandi male on latency was found .45 whereas the average score of Bilaspur male was found .33. It shows that the Mandi male took more time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Mandi female on latency was found .31 whereas the average score of Bilaspur female was found .39. It also shows that the Mandi female took less time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Mandi male on latency was .45 whereas the average score of Bilaspur female was .39. It shows that Mandi male took more time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart. Average score of Bilaspur male was .33 whereas the average score of Mandi female was found .31. It shows that the Mandi female took less time to recall first memory as compared to their counterpart.

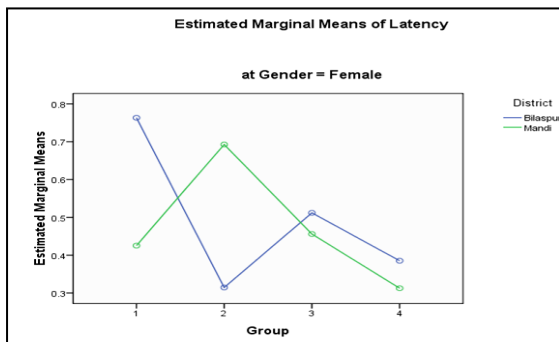


Figure 1.2a: Graphical representation of female of Bilaspur and Mandi districts people believing in local deities on the measure of latency

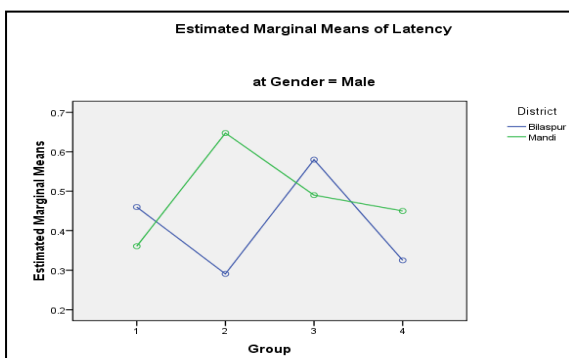


Figure 1.2b: Graphical representation of male of Bilaspur and Mandi district people believing in local deities on the measure of latency

For making qualitative analyses more interesting, researcher conducted a survey on N = 100 people i.e. 50 from Mandi and N = 50 from Bilaspur districts of Himachal Pradesh. Here objective was to know the cognition and belief system of two rural populations about the local rural village's deities. A questionnaire of N = 25 item was given to the people randomly in order to the staunch belief about the deities and their control on the people. The description of the people of Mandi district (N = 50) for Bilaspur district (N=50) is as follows:-

Table 1.3: Local Deities Beliefs of the People of Mandi and Bilaspur District in Percentage

	Percentage of Mandi	Percentage of Bilaspur
१ क्या आप देवी -देवता में विश्वास करते हैं ?	100	100
२ क्या देवी -देवता मुसीबत में आपका साथ देते हैं ?	86	78
३ क्या देवी -देवता आपके मानसिक स्वास्थ्य पर प्रभाव डालते हैं?	72	56
४ क्या देवी -देवता आपके शारीरिक स्वास्थ्य पर प्रभाव डालते हैं?	30	20
५ क्या देवी -देवता आपके जीवन में खुशहाली लाते हैं?	92	82
६ क्या देवी -देवता आपकी समस्याओं का समाधान करते हैं ?	38	28
७ क्या देवी -देवता के कारण जातिवाद को बढ़ावा मिलता है ?	76	30
८ क्या देवी -देवता को नहीं मानने से हमें किसी तरह का नुकसान होता है ?	74	64
९ क्या देवी -देवताकी पूजा करने से हमको धन की प्राप्ति होती है ?	48	52
१० क्या देवी -देवता का साथ हमें चिंता मुक्त करता है ?	92	90
११ रीती -रिवाजों को बदलने से देवी -देवता	64	36



नाराज़ हो जाते हैं ?			२५ क्या लोग डॉक्टर/अस्पताल से ज़्यादा गुरु/चेलों में विश्वास करते हैं ?	42	18
१२ क्या देवी -देवता के धार्मिक कार्यों में धन की बर्बादी होती है ?	24	34			
१३ क्या देवी -देवता का आशीर्वाद हमें मुश्किल कार्य करने की हिम्मत देता है ?	52	60			
१४ क्या भूत - प्रेत या बुरी आत्माओं से हमें देवी - देवता बचाते हैं ?	50	36			
१५ क्या देवी -देवता हमेशा हमारा भला ही करते हैं ?	94	78			
१६ क्या गाँव में ग्राम देवता या स्थान देवता का होना आवश्यक है ?	100	100			
१७ क्या आपके गाँव में लोग तांत्रिक विद्या का प्रयोग करते हैं ?	46	64			
१८ क्या तांत्रिक शक्ति का निवारण देवी -देवता द्वारा ही किया जा सकता है ?	74	64			
१९ क्या आप "खेल " में विश्वास करते हैं ?	84	58			
२० क्या आप "खेल " को एक मानसिक बिमारी मानते हैं ?	24	54			
२१ क्या देवी -देवता को किसी गुरु या चले की आवश्यकता रहती है ?	86	76			
२२ क्या गुरु या चेलों का हमारे समाज में होना अनिवार्य है ?	72	46			
२३ क्या देवी -देवता की प्रथा पिछड़ेपन को बढ़ावा देती है ?	38	22			
२४ क्या देवी -देवता की प्रथा क्षेत्रवाद को बढ़ावा देती है ?	24	12			

From the above table it is quite clear that the people of Mandi and Bilaspur have staunch belief in local deities. In the first question, all subjects were asked whether they actually believe in the institution of deities/gods/goddesses, to which all 100 subjects'50 from Mandi and 50 from Bilaspur respondents responded affirmatively. It implies that 100% subjects do believe in the deities/gods/goddesses.

When asked whether the deities stand by them in times of despair or need, out of total 50 respondents in Mandi district, 86% said yes and 78% from Bilaspur said yes. In Mandi 72% said they do believe that the deities affect their mental health while 56% from Bilaspur believe so. 30% from Mandi said they do believe that the deities affect their physical health while 20% from Bilaspur agreed on it. Most of the people i.e. 92% from Mandi believed that deities bring joy in their lives, in Bilaspur it is 82%. In Mandi, 38% said the deities do help them resolve their problems while in Bilaspur it was 28%. In Mandi 76% believed that the institutions of local deities encourage casteism while in Bilaspur 30% believe so. In Mandi 74% believed that not showing faith in the local deities did invite troubles while in Bilaspur 64% believed it to be true. In Mandi, 48% believed in that worshipping local deities bring financial prosperity while in Bilaspur 52% responds said they did believe so.

In Mandi 92% said that the deities help them repel stress/anxiety in their lives and in Bilaspur 90% agreed with this belief. Further, 64% believed the deities do feel offended on not being following in them or making changes the traditional rituals performed to worship them and in Bilaspur 36% believe so. 24% subjects from Mandi said the performance of various rituals associated with the deities do lead to wastage of money while in Bilaspur 34% did believe so. When asked if the blessings of their deities give them courage to deal with difficult situations/tasks, 52% from Mandi said yes and 60% said yes from Bilaspur. In Mandi 50% subjects believed the deities protect them from evil spirits or ghosts and in Bilaspur 36% did believe so. 94% subjects from Mandi did agree that the intentions of the deities always stand in favor of people while in Bilaspur 78% believed like that way. However 100% subjects from Mandi and Bilaspur believed that the establishment of their local or dynastic deities is must in their village. 46% from Mandi did believe that people in their villages did use black magic and 64% from Bilaspur believe that it's true. In Mandi 74% had a belief that only deities could cast away the black magic or spells casted by 'tantriks' and 64% from

Bilaspur did believe so. 84% admitted that they did believe in the concept of 'Kehl' (trance/possession) while 58% from Bilaspur did agree on it. When asked whether they consider possession as a kind of mental disorder, 24% subjects from Mandi said yes while 54% from Bilaspur said yes. 86% subjects from Mandi supported the belief that the local deities do require gur or chella (priests or the agents of deities) and 76% from Bilaspur said they did believe so. In Mandi 72% subjects believed our society must have 'gur or chella' while 46% from Bilaspur had such belief. But 38% in Mandi believed that the institutions of the local deities fuels backwardness while 22% subjects from Bilaspur did agree to it. Similarly 24% from Mandi believed the culture of local deities and traditional beliefs encourage regionalism and 12% from Bilaspur said they did believe so. In Mandi, 42% subjects said the local people believe in gur or chella (local priests) more than they did in their deities and 18% from Bilaspur did have such belief.

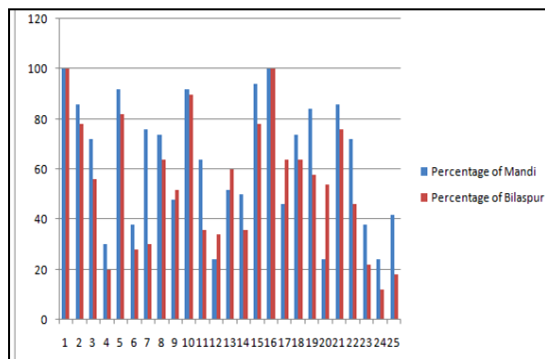


Figure 1.3: Percentage of beliefs of Mandi and Bilaspur people in local deities.

The figure 1.3 shows that 100 percent of people from both districts believed in the deities and also agreed that their native villages must have local deities. However, as compared to Mandi, more people of Bilaspur believed that worshipping deities bring financial prosperity. At the same time, the Bilaspur group also believed that the religious rituals associated with local deities caused wastage of money. Bilaspur group showed comparatively greater relevance to the blessings of deities in helping them to deal with difficult times or tasks. Greater number of participants in the Bilaspur group believed the concept of possession as a form of mental illness and showed stronger belief about the prevalence of black magic and 'tantrik' practices.

7. CONCLUSION

Study was aimed at recording the effect of attachment related scripts (proximity seeking, separation anxiety, safe haven and secure base), locality and gender on the cognitive representations (latency).

The findings indicated no significance difference of scripts, gender, and locality on the latency measures of two populations, which indicated that the two rural

populations in two neighboring districts share a lot of common cultural aspects and religious beliefs.

As participants of both populations took equal amount of time to retrieve first memory, which indicated that scripts were equally effective across two populations and genders in generating cognitive representations.

The findings support studies arguing that it is possible to apply the attachment theory to understand the mental personality and psychopathology. Moreover, the evolutionary psychologists have realized that the attachment to God can be explored in terms of attachment theory developed by Bowlby (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby; 1977).

In the current study, this attachment is facilitated by the fact that the local deities do acquire functional characteristic, which bear close resemblance to human caregivers of the individual in physical world (Bartholomew, Cobb, & Poole, 1997; Davila, & Levy, 2006; Maunder, & Hunter, 2001).

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