

Socio-Cultural and Religious Narratives and Practices Regarding Lunar Eclipse in Village Communities: A Study of Central Punjab, Pakistan

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In the history of humankind, lunar eclipse has always captured attention and imagination of human beings. This study is an anthropological attempt to describe prevailing perceptions and myths about lunar eclipse and resultant religious and cultural practices in some of the rural areas of Central Punjab, Pakistan. For this purpose, qualitative research techniques of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions have been used to understand and untangle the strings of indigenous perpetuations about a celestial phenomenon. The research findings showed multiple sets of socio-cultural and religious beliefs and practices which have been followed through generations that demonstrate the richness of culture and mythological value of local verbal tales. Perceptions include fear of God, remembering the day of judgment, good or bad luck, and occurrence of disease. Practices include praying, charity, taking certain precautions to avoid the disease, and doing some religious and cultural rituals. Some unique folktales are also narrated by the respondents of the locale which have specific socio-cultural meanings for them. The paper describes all these perceptions and practices in two main parts: socio-cultural perceptions and practices and religious perceptions and practices.

Keywords: lunar eclipse, socio-cultural, religion, perceptions, myth, Pakistan

Lunar eclipse, a celestial event that captivates human imagination and cultural belief, has long been a significant phenomenon shaping perceptions and actions across various societies (Rasheed et al., 2022). From ancient times to present day, the lunar eclipse has always been a noticeable chronological marker influencing religious festivals, horoscopes and the development of calendars (Wendling, 2019; Brown, 2000). From a scientific perspective, a lunar eclipse has also been a vivid celestial happening that has contributed significantly to human knowledge and logical reasoning (Sánchez-Giraldo & Quintero-Salazar, 2023). This celestial phenomenon, an alignment of the sun, moon and the earth, cannot go unnoticed by human beings (Burgdorf et al., 2023). Lunar eclipses have often sparked mixed emotions of fear, anxiety and amusement among people leading to diverse interpretations based on local knowledge and cultural traditions (Beinorious, 2016; Lee, 2014). Therefore, different cultures emerged with many mysterious myths and folktales to interpret the lunar eclipse. These interpretations often involve supernatural powers, demons, vampires and monsters (Reis, 2008), with people taking precautions to prevent harm, such as beating cooking utensils or drums to expel the demons of the moon (Kim, 2007; Izzuddin et al., 2022).

Similar patterns are also observed in Pakistani culture where people interpret the lunar eclipse in several ways. Although, some of the literature is available covering sociocultural aspects of the lunar eclipse in Pakistani Culture (Rasheed et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2002; Burfat, et al., 2013). However, very little is explored about

sociocultural and religious narratives surrounding lunar eclipse in village communities specifically of Central Punjab, Pakistan. Therefore, the present study is important as it unfolds the phenomenon from both socio-cultural and religious perspectives. Specifically, the study anthropologically examines the beliefs, customs, rituals, and folktales associated with lunar eclipse among village communities in Central Punjab. Basic research questions include how lunar eclipse is perceived in the study locale, what socio-cultural and religious practices are performed in response to it, what meanings are attached to these perceptions and practices, and what impact it casts on the daily lives of the people of the community. In trying to explain this, Carl Gustav Jung's theory of archetypes is utilized which is appropriate to explain the socio-cultural and religious aspects regarding lunar eclipse. Although, some already published studies about lunar eclipse are somehow in line with the findings of the present research. However, folktales presented in this study, meanings those are attached to the perceptions and practices and gendered aspect of the findings are unique to this research. So, it would be a valuable addition to the existing literature of socio-cultural and religious perspectives of lunar eclipse.

The legends surrounding the lunar eclipse vary widely from linking it to plagues, earthquakes, deaths and other disasters (Baig et al., 2016; Vahia et al., 2016) to some societies considering it beneficial or lucky for people, crops or animals (Beinorious, 2016). Whether the eclipse brings good or bad luck, it prompts precautions and local practices reflecting how local people interpret eclipses (Legare et al., 2020). Many of the previous studies shed light on diverse interpretations of the lunar eclipse such as Javanese villagers and Mexicans interpret the lunar eclipse as trouble for pregnant females and their livestock (Izzuddin et al., 2022; Maldonado-Duran, et al., 2002; Maestas & Erickson, 1992). Likewise, in Pakistani culture expectant women are advised not to stare at the Moon and lie flat on their bellies to avoid deformities (Burfat et al., 2011). It can be observed from studies that many factors affect the practices and perceptions about the lunar eclipse such as locality, religion, education level, family, or age group (Ezzi, 2017).

For some people, it is not more than just news or a mere celestial event. However, for some societies and individuals, a lunar eclipse is of utmost importance that affects their lives. Nevertheless, these beliefs are part of the overall culture of human societies and if we compare these narrations, we can say that despite many commonalities, there is an element of uniqueness in each culture's beliefs and practices regarding lunar eclipse. From all these traditional beliefs and narratives, we usually see that the absence of proper astronomical knowledge led people to establish different stories and resultant practices. However, it does not mean that the change has not happened. It is observed that some of those conceptions have already evolved, and people have abandoned many of the practices and beliefs (Musharraf & Dars, 2021). Thanks to the social media that disseminates the information in seconds worldwide (Habib et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the narratives about lunar eclipse in the form of myths are still prevalent (Rana, 1995). As the present study is an attempt to find out perceptions and practices about the lunar eclipse in village settings, the collected data is culturally rich and interesting because village communities in Pakistan hold a mixture of religious and local beliefs to a substantial extent.

Theoretical Framework

Carl Gustav Jung's theory of archetypes for mythology is most suitable to apply for this study as it probes myths holistically. We also have adopted Walker (2014) critique on Jung's theory of archetypes where he differentiates between archetypes and archetype images. We have discussed and applied Jung's theory of archetypes in two aspects: archetype and archetype images; collective unconsciousness and its manifestations in the form of beliefs (narratives) and practices, and mythology as meanings of the world around us.

Archetypes can be defined as instinctual forms of mental functioning (Walker, 2014). Instincts are biological urges which are felt by the senses but at the same time these urges produce manifestations in the form of fantasies and symbolic images which are actually called archetypes (Jung & Von, 1968). According to Walker (2014), from the treasure of archetype images, archetypal motifs: mythology, is drawn. Whether represented verbally, visually, musically or dramatically, these motifs are usually linked in a sequence which we call a myth. Myths are culturally elaborated narratives and mythology as a whole represents collective unconsciousness. Every myth is peculiar and exotic which has the potential for indirectly revealing some unforeseen or neglected aspects of human psychology (Walker, 2014). The collective unconsciousness creates certain archetypes as images of the world such as ruling powers, the gods, events in the soul's cycle of experience, and images of the dominant laws and principles (Jung, 1953). Jung (1968), calls mythology as the textbook of the archetypes and as a narrative it can be considered superior to conceptual modes of thought because lively stories narrated through myths reflect a more faithful image of the

archetype realm. Myths are culturally elaborated representations of different situations which enables us to re-experience consciously the unconscious instinctual processes of the psyche (Walker, 2014). It is human imagination that creates myths out of archetypal images.

According to Walker (2014), Archetype and archetype image are two different concepts which Jung has used interchangeably. The categorization of Walker seems logical. Archetype is inherited and part of the collective unconsciousness. However, archetype image is a content that is a response of the conscious mind which results into some particular belief and practice. That is why, collective unconsciousness results into variations in beliefs and practices about a certain phenomenon in different cultures. Image is the symbolic representation of the instinct itself which is conscious. However, archetype is a pattern of human mind about which the mind is not aware of. So, in order to describe the belief and practices regarding lunar eclipse in this study, we would apply the term archetype images rather mere archetypes. Walker (2014), further elaborates that there is a single archetype for a particular human situation but there are infinite manifestations or empirical expressions of each archetype which can be called an archetype image. Thus, each archetype can create unlimited number of archetypal images in the form of visualizations or personifications. In this way, socio-cultural and religious aspects regarding lunar eclipse can be considered as archetypes while its perceptions and resultant practices can be categorized as archetypal images which are varied in extent and number. Apart from archetype aspect, another interesting aspect of Jung's theory is the compensation aspect. Mythical world is a potential means of compensation for the sense of meaninglessness that has cursed the modern culture which is proud of its rationality but at the same time is full of doubts (Walker, 2014). It means that myths provide meaning to the world around us and those meanings compensate the thought patterns of the people in different forms.

Review of Literature

We would mention a few of the available studies regarding lunar eclipse to support and explain the topic more appropriately. Many studies of lunar eclipse demonstrate religious, mythical, exorcism, and disease-related aspects of it. Duane and Ray (2011) reported the beliefs of Aboriginals about the lunar eclipse. Aboriginals view the moon as a self-oriented and greedy man who steals food. For them, stealing food is a taboo, so the moon is punished during the lunar eclipse while cutting it into pieces, eventually its death. Lee (2014) mentioned a few practices and perceptions of Mesopotamians and the Luiseno tribe concerning the lunar eclipse. For the Luiseno tribe of southern California, the Lunar eclipse makes the moon ill. Therefore, their chants or prayers are the remedies to bring back the moon to health. However, Mesopotamians see the lunar eclipse as an assault on their king and the moon by seven demons. Thus, they make a lot of noise by beating drums and making their dogs howl and bark to threaten those assailants on the moon. Litina (2020) narrated another interesting myth from the *Batammaliba* community of Togo and Benin in Africa that the lunar eclipse happens because of the quarrel between the sun and the moon. Thus, people come together to resolve their issues and tend to reconcile and plead with them not to fight.

Vahia et al., (2016) stated that Indians consider an eclipse as an event when the gods are in trouble. Therefore, for them, donations and gifts are the best way to lessen the gods' problems. These donation practices are a prominent feature of their belief system. That's why they are still carrying those practices of donations to temples on stone or copper plates with inscriptions. Stephenson and Said (1997) explained the records of lunar eclipses in Medieval Arabic chronicles in which specific terminologies coincide with lunar eclipse: *Khusuf-al-Qamar*; means Sinking of the moon or failing of the moonlight. Besides, they described various beliefs of Medieval Arabic people related to the lunar eclipse as omens.

Literature about the lunar eclipse also demonstrates its relationship with diseases. Loh and Ascoli (2011) explained multiple attitudes of local people towards a birth defect of Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate among Indians, Chinese and Africans. Indians believe that deformity in a newborn baby is caused by staring at the moon during an eclipse in pregnancy. A similar myth is prevalent in Africans that going out during an eclipse causes damage to the baby's organs in the womb of the mother. Hamachar and Norris (2011) described various stories and beliefs of Australian aborigines that lunar eclipse makes them afraid. They think that the moon is hiding from the Sun or is covered with fur resembling a solar eclipse. In short, the lunar eclipse is a symbol of anxiety, so they hide under fig trees to keep themselves safe from diseases caused by the lunar eclipse.

Some scholars have also come up with a scientific interpretation of the lunar eclipse. Baig et al., (2016) related lunar eclipses with superstitions and stated that in the age of science, people of different cultures still believe

in superstitious perceptions and perform various practices accordingly. People join the lunar eclipse with the demons and other supernatural creatures that capture the moon. Consequently, they face fear, anxiety and depression because of those mythical beings. Haristiani et al., (2017) revealed that with time it was noted that teachers were more concerned with getting the mythical perceptions changed from the minds of young students by relating scientific realities like eclipses with cosmological happenings. However, irrespective of technological advancements, different socio-cultural and religious narratives are built in a society on the basis of enculturation as Boulter et al., (1998) reported that narratives are the fundamental elements to construct perspectives about different things.

Method

Qualitative data collection tools are used for this study to investigate the perceptions and beliefs concerning lunar eclipse and how these perceptions shape the actions and practices.

Data Collection

For this study, we utilized a semi-structured interview guide as a primary instrument to collect the data from the participants. Based on the research topic, the interview guide covered all the possible questions. Semi-structure interviews were designed to accommodate multiple new perspectives and insights during the interview and discussion. This flexible approach ensured holistic coverage of the topic. Besides, this approach also helped in adding novel viewpoints and findings during the discussion.

In-Depth Interviews

24 in-depth interviews were conducted with the respondents of Muhammad Pur, and Chak No: 111/9-L of Sahiwal District, Punjab, Pakistan. Each interview was of 50 minutes on average. Interviews were then transcribed, and labels (codes) were assigned to extract themes.

Focus Group Discussion

Apart from interviews, focus group discussions (FDG) were also conducted to gain more fruitful insights. Three FGDs were conducted, having 4 to 5 respondents each and it took almost 90-115 minutes (about 2 hours) for each FGD.

Field Notes

Field notes were prepared during fieldwork to write down every point of the collected data for analysis and to overcome the fear of loss of information. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to find the respondents. As per the topic of the study, rich information was available with the elderly people having indigenous knowledge along with the people who have some supposed experience of disease, deformity or any other calamity caused by the lunar eclipse. That is why these sampling techniques are justified.

Participants

The participants in the research were local people from above mentioned villages of Sahiwal District, Punjab. Out of 24 respondents, 15 were females while 09 were males. The age of the respondents was between 25 and 77 years.

Table 1
Characteristics of respondents

List	Count
Total Respondents	24
Age group	25-77
Male	09
Females	15
Education Level	
Uneducated	08
01-05	07
06-08	04
08-10	02
10-14	03

Process of Analysis

The present study employed thematic analysis to uncover recurring themes and patterns within the data, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural and religious significance attributed to the lunar eclipse. Through a meticulous analysis of the data, distinct themes emerged shedding light on multiple unique rituals, attached meanings and community responses. The process of analysis involved a systematic categorization of the data into themes and sub themes by labelling (coding) re-occurring aspects in the data in form of qualitative narratives.

Trustworthiness

Due to the qualitative nature of the research topic, qualitative content analysis is crucial. The trustworthiness of qualitative content analysis is often presented in terms of credibility, conformability, dependability, authenticity and transferability (Elo, et al., 2014) . This study focuses on trustworthiness based on participant observation, interviews, and rapport building. For the study, it was crucial to maintain a respectful and unprejudiced approach towards participants' perceptions and beliefs. By allowing them to freely share their cultural myths and folktales, researchers gained the trust of the participants. Therefore, researchers can ensure that their findings accurately reflect the complex nature of socio-cultural and religious interpretations and practices of people about objectives of the study. Additionally, researchers triangulated the data by cross-referencing information from different people of both villages. Furthermore, transparency and accountability throughout the research process also ensured trustworthiness of the data.

Results

Perceptions and Practices

The findings of the study have informed us about the intricate web of socio-cultural and religious archetypes that translates into perceptions and practices (archetype images) surrounding lunar eclipse in the community. These archetype images (perceptions and practices) are deeply intertwined, necessitating a deep holistic discussion of these aspects.

First, we would discuss the socio-cultural archetype images (narrative interpretations and practices) of the local community in relation to the lunar eclipse. The data showed that the respondents expressed a wide range of archetype images including fear, panic, omen and sometimes luck about lunar eclipse. The villagers interpreted lunar eclipse as a sign of violence, murder, attack on moon, demonic possession, revenge and aggression. These interpretations underscore the complex and multifaceted nature of community's archetypes which are perceptions and beliefs surrounding lunar eclipse. These perceptions are rooted in unique socio-cultural patterns of the locale and are reflected in resultant practices. As walker (2014) believe that archetype images have no limits because they spring from a variety of cultural contexts.

Next, we would debate about religious archetype images (interpretations and practices) associated with lunar eclipse in the community. These religious beliefs and rituals are integral part of the community members' worldview and shape their behavior and responses. The resultant practices are unique, keeping in view the socio-cultural and religious patterns of the study's locale. The practices to avoid 'negative impact' of lunar eclipse are even more interesting to note. By exploring the interplay between socio-cultural and religious perspective, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of meaning and actions that are linked with the lunar eclipse. As Walker (2014) says that mythology compensates the meaninglessness. It means that it provides meanings to the archetype images to societies around which cultural narratives are interwoven.

Socio-Cultural Perceptions and Practices

Socio-Cultural Interpretations of the lunar eclipse (folktales)

The study presented a broad spectrum of socio-cultural interpretations. These narratives show a diverse nature of archetype images in the form of folk tales. Many respondents narrated folktales which are fascinating to be noted. A respondent, namely Khizer, aged 40 narrated that: A lunar eclipse occurs when there happens some massive violence or injustice somewhere in the world which is hated by the God and it turns the moon black in response to God's resentment. Similar stories relating bloodshed and violence to the lunar eclipse were also common among the respondents. Another respondent, Khan, aged 63, quoted a unique story that:

Once the moon and sun's mother asked for water from the sun, and the sun gave his mother hot water. The mother got furious and cursed the sun to live ablaze always as he had burnt her. Then the mother demanded water from the moon. The moon gave icy water to his mother, so the mother prayed for the

moon. Since then, the sun has a grudge over the moon that why did the mother curse the sun and pray for the moon. Now, the sun comes for revenge and tends to show its power turning the moon black.

A similar myth was narrated by a respondent, Bibi, aged 56, that:

The moon took salt as a loan from the Sun. The moon could not make to pay back the loan of the sun. That is why the Sun shows its aggression to the moon. The moon comes in its original bright color when the sun stops threatening the moon and gives the moon another chance with a promise of coming back to get its salt after some time. And when it returns, it turns the moon black again.

Socio-Cultural Practices

Lunar eclipse is considered an extraordinary event that can be disastrous mostly for pregnant females and farm animals and to avoid that disaster they must perform some rituals and ceremonies. If they do not practice those traditional rituals the fetus might be deformed. The people have a tradition to make their pregnant women awake during this celestial phenomenon of lunar eclipse. This ritual is performed by advising women to take a bath, apply some makeup, and fragrance and walk all night until the eclipse is over or lying straight on their bellies and stay inside in some traditions. Pregnant females and their husbands are also advised not to use any sharp or metal objects otherwise their baby could be born with any deformity. Farah, a 26-year-old housewife, narrated that:

My grandmother used to say that a woman must bear labor pain until the eclipse is over because a newborn in the eclipse night might encounter demons of the moon. Apart from this, pregnant women are advised to lose their trousers' string, not work with metal or sharp objects, not to chew anything, keep walking unless the eclipse ends, not to sleep, take a bath, and apply some makeup. If they do not follow these instructions, it might deform the fetus. Elders in the households make sure the application of these traditions.

Bushra, a 45-year-old housewife and a tailor, shared her experience about the lunar eclipse's outcome. Her son was born with a difference in eye size (one of his eyes is smaller in size) because of her apathetic behavior as she was unaware of the eclipse. Although, the boy's eyesight is good like that of normal children. Naseema, aged 32, also shared similar birth deformity experience. She said that she was four months pregnant when the lunar eclipse happened. She did not notice and could not walk as instructed. Therefore, her baby had an Anorectal malformation. She believes that it was all because of her negligence that she made her baby suffer. An 18-year-old Shahid's mother explained that he had a cleft cut lip because she was cutting vegetables when she was pregnant with Shahid. Therefore, he was born with this deformity and was unable to pronounce things clearly. A 22 years old, Sarah's grandmother explained:

I could not tell my daughter to keep moving as she was unaware of the lunar eclipse because we did not have television from where we could get the news of it. Eventually, Sarah was a club foot baby, and now with my daughter's later pregnancies, I was overly concerned about the eclipse not to repeat the same mistake again. I took a lot of care in case of another daughter and her baby was born normal with the grace of God.

The research findings showed that in several birth deformity cases, mothers attributed the deformities in their children to their own carelessness and unawareness. As per locals' views, absence of media or any other information source was a key reason that kept them unaware of eclipse. Had they known about it, they would have performed relevant practices to keep their newborn children safe.

Besides this, a few people were also conscious about their young girls and children. For them, the eclipse is a demonic possession of the moon, so protecting beautiful young girls and children from demons is as much crucial as for pregnant females and farm animals. People believed that the lunar eclipse is because of supernatural powers like demons, or monsters, who possess teenage girls and newborns. Additionally, they believed that pregnant women and children must stay inside, girls should not wear black color and should not comb their hair when an eclipse is there to keep themselves safe from demons of moon. Ayesha, aged 22, a student, said:

My grandmother scolds me if I wear black clothes on the eclipse night. She advises to stay inside and not to comb in the open spaces such as the courtyard because monsters are all around the moon looking for young girls who fascinate them. Therefore, I must stay in the room. Additionally, Ayesha said that we

spin thread for years, but we avoid spinning on the eclipse night. Because spinning yarn during the lunar eclipse brings hard luck to human beings.

Likewise, local people also believe that eclipse rays are not good for their health. According to their tradition, they try to cover their water pots and tanks, do not consume food, and try not to travel during the eclipse night. For some villagers who are agriculturalists, the eclipse could be disastrous for their crops, so they tend not to sow a new crop or harvest during the eclipse night. If they do not perform any one of the rituals mentioned, the eclipse could harm their newborns, young girls, crops, and animals. A newly married girl, aged 23, explained that: My mother-in-law advised me not to eat anything throughout the time lunar eclipse happened and to lay straight but to avoid sleep. If I would eat something by chewing it, it would cause my fetus to develop deformity.

However, bad luck and birth deformities are not the only mythological archetype images, admirers of the lunar eclipse also exist. They consider the lunar eclipse to be a harbinger of good luck for their unborn child. These individuals perform specific practices such as loosening their trouser strings and uncovering their belly, especially when the eclipse is about to end, to allow the eclipse rays cast on their belly because this has striking effects on the baby. A 33 years old, Bibi explained:

In my pregnancy, my mother rang me to talk about the coming eclipse. She advised me to take a bath, wear new clothes, apply makeup on my face and lay down on my back with an overt belly. As I am supposed to let the eclipse rays cast on my overt belly for a beautiful baby like the moon. I did the same and had a beautiful, healthy, and fair complexion boy after three consecutive daughters.

Above mentioned viewpoints of respondents reflect a deep-rooted relationship between the lunar eclipse and daily life of the community. Besides, it also shows that these narratives are meaningful for the indigenous people and this constellation of archetypes make up the overall fabric of the society.

Religious Perceptions and Practices:

Religious Interpretations of the lunar eclipse

The study's finding revealed that the local community's engagement with the lunar eclipse extended beyond just socio-cultural archetype images. Many respondents related celestial phenomenon of lunar eclipse with the religious archetype images. Their religious interpretations and practices were diverse in scope and extent. Some respondents believed that the lunar eclipse symbolizes the Day of Resurrection, viewing it as a time for spiritual introspection and repentance. These people would perform specific Islamic rituals, such as offering *Salat-ul-Khasuf* (a specific pray dedicated to the lunar eclipse), doing charity, and seeking forgiveness from God. For them, the lunar eclipse is a divine sign that prompts them to strengthen their connection with Allah. Others interpreted the lunar eclipse as manifestation of God's power and a reminder of the transient nature of the physical world. A farmer, namely khan, aged 47, shared his perception about the lunar eclipse as:

Allah shows his creations that he has control over the moon, so humans should realize His omnipresence. It is a period of the moon's curse as the God counts on its actions too. Despite being a celestial body and of course sinless, the moon must pass through divine accountability. So, humans should learn a lesson that one day they will be held accountable for their wrongdoings. This is God's signal to humans to kneel and ask for forgiveness.

Another respondent, namely Nisa, aged 77, narrated similar thoughts to symbolize lunar eclipse with the day of judgment. Many such beliefs and perceptions were narrated by the respondents who find answers of this celestial happening in theology.

Religious Practices

In the locale of study, respondents relate the lunar eclipse with some archetype images based on theology passed to them generation over generation from their ancestors. These myths translate their functional aspect into religious sphere. Therefore, practicing Islamic rituals was common in local narratives. These religious rituals may include praying, asking forgiveness and giving charity. These practices during lunar eclipse of course depend on the religiosity of the people that the more they are religious, the more they tend to pray. Musa, aged 67, an imam in a mosque narrated:

I perform *Nafl* (supererogatory prayer) and *Salat-ul-Khasuf* (a prayer specific for lunar eclipse). Being Muslims, we are told to pray for the forgiveness of our wrongdoings on such occasions, so we must follow it. Many people in our locality do not know much about specific eclipse prayers, so they perform *Nafl* and recite the holy verses of the Quran.

Another respondent, namely Haji, aged 53, stated that:

In the mosque of our locality, many times when the lunar eclipse happens, we pray *Salat-ul-Khasuf* in congregation. Especially, when the lunar eclipse happens around the time of any *Farz Namaz* (Obligatory Prayer), we must pray *Salat-ul-Khasuf* in congregation because people are already there in the mosque for obligatory prayer. However, even if lunar eclipse happens at some odd time, we try to get people together for congregational prayer as it is proved from the *Hadith* (Sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW).

Similarly, Khatoon, aged 71, responded that: Their whole family would ask forgiveness from the God whenever eclipse happened because the eclipse is not understood as a good omen rather it shows the wrath of Allah when we are beset with sins. Another respondent, Bibi, aged 50, described another kind of religious practice namely, *Pun Daan*, (Charity). According to Bibi:

We distribute *Shakar Paray* (Sweets) to the children of the street or the whole locality as charity because distributing something to eat as a charity to children brings good luck and nullifies the bad effects of the lunar eclipse. Children pray to God and the God listens to the children more as they are innocent and free from sins. Many other similar religious practices were found which allowed the people to cope with the anxiety and stress originated from the event of lunar eclipse.

Another respondent, Mirza, aged 46, stated that:

Whenever an event such as lunar eclipse happens, my father prays to God in loud voice. May be in this way, he is able to satisfy himself that he might be saved from the wrath of God which is supposedly evident in the form of lunar eclipse. He goes on further to say that we normally attribute any action of nature such as excessive rain, earth quacks, windflaws to the wrath of God and try to seek forgiveness from Him. He says that surely all these catastrophes are because of our own sins.

The detailed picture of religious archetype images (perceptions and practices) of natives showed that for them, an eclipse was an opportunity to reaffirm their faith in Allah and engage in supplicatory prayers. The study's exploration of religious interpretations and actions also provided an understanding of the local community's belief system which shaped their engagement with a celestial event.

Discussion

Data shows that people maintain beliefs and practices regarding lunar eclipse because of stress, panic, or omen which is caused by the archetype images held by the them. This fear could be any loss in their economy, bad luck for their babies, any deformity in newborns, bad luck for business and agriculture, fear of being sinful, fear of God's wrath and to avoid supposed negativity from supernatural beings. Nevertheless, supposed negativity is not the only outcome of mythical belief on lunar eclipse. Respondents also showed positive perceptions such as good luck and health seeking beliefs. As described in the above sections, in the case of pregnancy, many elderly women advised the young girls with pregnancy to uncover the belly, so that the rays of the eclipsed moon may cast on it, specifically when the eclipse is about to end, which could result in a healthy and beautiful baby in the womb of the mother. This variation in archetype images of same locality could be due to ethnicity, impact of different folktales, or personal experiences of the past which is a research gap to be filled by someone.

The study has showed somehow gendered results as mostly females were more active members in harboring these archetype images and practicing proper measures while the male members were not that particularly interested in it. However, it does not mean that men are totally uninterested regarding implications of lunar eclipse but we can say that comparatively women are more abiding to hold socio-cultural and religious archetypes regarding it. There might be a reason that more archetype images of harm are related to women in case of lunar eclipse that is why it seems logical that women are more concerned about it. The role of elderly women in households is also important in

harboring the perceptions and making the females of the family act accordingly. This study coincides in development of related archetype images with the previous studies done by other researchers such as Vahia et al., (2016), Loh and Ascoli (2011), or Hamacher and Norris (2011). However, this study is unique in terms of its folktales that are perpetuated over the generations in the communities of the locale.

The people of the study area maintain those long-inherited traditions and abandoning them could be disastrous according to their beliefs. Theory of archetypes regarding myth helped a lot to explain the phenomenon that how and what functions this mythical belief plays to sustain mythical patterns and what meanings people attach to these myths which in turn make the narratives meaningful for them. Although, now people somehow know scientific reasonings of the phenomenon of lunar eclipse due to rapid flow of information in today's world, but they still tend to believe and act according to their traditional thoughts because of cultural learnings. This rigid belief in the eclipse mythology plays a significant role in maintaining their identity as a community or social group. However, the sustainability of local culture and local identity is at stake because of the rapid development of the internet and technology. In some way, these religio-cultural traditions and rituals might also imply a sense of belonging among local people. Being a qualitative study, this research is limited to the locale and variety of perceptions and practices specifically folktales derived from the study are also location bound. It is an addition to the previous knowledge of mythology regarding lunar eclipse but its findings cannot be applied to the whole of Punjab Province of Pakistan as this province has multi-ethnic composition.

Conclusion

The patterns of socio-cultural and religious mythical beliefs about lunar eclipse enjoy popularity in the study area in Punjab, Pakistan and influence the decisions and attitudes of people in different spheres of their daily life. We have tried to elaborate socio-cultural and religious aspects of perceptions and practices regarding lunar eclipse with help of the theory of archetypes and have come out with the deep understandings of the phenomenon. The theory has helped us particularly in two ways: to know that what type of socio-cultural and religious archetype images are associated with the lunar eclipse in the study locale and what meanings are attached to these archetype images in socio-cultural and religious spheres in the community. The myths which were found to be mostly talked about and cared for were regarding pregnancy of women and animals. All other aspects of these myths can be categorized in second tier. Role of elder women of household is an important aspect to consider here as the perpetuation of such beliefs depends upon them.

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