

ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS BLACK AS A DRESS CODE AMONG MUSLIM FEMALE STUDENTS OF SEUSL

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ABSTRACT: South Eastern University of Sri Lanka is the university with the highest percentage of Muslim students among the state universities in Sri Lanka. Among them female students being the majority play a vital role influencing the culture of the university? Accordingly the black dress code can be widely witnessed among the Muslim female students of SEUSL. Being in the hot zone and in a multi-ethnic society the tradition of black dress code paves way to social, psychological and health effects. Since there is a need to analyze this prevailing condition and this study analyses the attitude towards black as a dress code among the Muslim female students. The objective of this research is to analyse the attitude of the target group regarding this tradition and to recommend appropriate solutions to resolve this issue. This research is based on descriptive analysis using quantitative and qualitative approach. Data were collected primarily through questionnaires, interview and discussions. Information and statistics of students' population in the university had been used as secondary data. Sample of 45 Muslim female students were selected from the population in this research. Further the blind tradition of following the senior students, reluctant to get highlighted among the large crowd of students wearing black and certain misconceptions towards the Islamic perspective on clothing for women are deemed to be the reasons for the prevailing condition. Meantime creating an awareness regarding the effects and motivating the target group towards a healthier and pleasant change can be recommended as the solution for this particular issue.

Keywords: Tradition, Attitude, Black, Dress Code.

1. INTRODUCTION

Among the fifteen state universities in Sri-Lanka South Eastern University Of Sri-Lanka is regarded as the university with highest amount of Muslim students. As per the academic year 2014/2015 total of students are 3816. (Males - 1257 Females- 2559) 2268 are Muslims and among them 1742 are girls (*figure 1*). Muslim girls are 68% out of the total girls in the University and there for it creates the necessity to throw special consideration over their influence towards university culture. Accordingly black dress code can be widely witnessed among the Muslim girls of South Eastern University of Sri -Lanka in the university premise. The study found that the prevailing tradition has Social, Cultural, Psychological and health impacts influencing the overall culture of the university. The study, there for has analysis the attitudes towards black dress code among girls in SEUSL through questionnaires and interviews. A random selection of girls is adopted for this study. Necessary data was elicited from Faculty of Islamic Studies and Arabic Language, Faculty of Management and Commerce. To analyse the collection data qualitative approaches been used.

On the basis analysis of data, the study found the misleading attitude of Muslim girls in South Eastern University Of Sri-Lanka towards this tradition of black dress code. It is clear that the misconception over Islamic Perception on clothing for women has influenced immensely towards this tradition. In Islam there is no evidence from Quran or Sunnah (prophet's guidance) which limits the colour of the clothing of women.

"and not to show off their adornmentand let them wear their head covering over their bosoms.....(al-Noor 24:31)

Abu Dawood (565) narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah upon him) said "Do not prevent the female slaves of Allah, but let them go out unadorned" classed as saheeh by Al-baani in Irwa al- ghaleel, 515.

There for as it says Fatawa al- Lajnah al-Daaimah (17/108), the dress of the Muslim women need not to be black. It is permissible for her to wear any colour of clothing as it covers "her awrat-does not resemble men clothing and is not so tight as to show the shape of their limbs or so thin as to show what is beneath it and does not provoke temptation". Further it says in (17/100) it is not permissible for women to go out in a decorated garment that attracts people's gaze because this is something that tempts men. Therefore wearing black not because of it obligators, but because it is a farthest removed from being an adornment.

So the objective of this study is to create awareness among the students regarding this misleading tradition through clarifying the Social, Psychological and health effects it yields to. So to overcome the above issues, it is recommended to conduct awareness programs and workshops by the experts in the field and motivate the target group towards a healthier change.

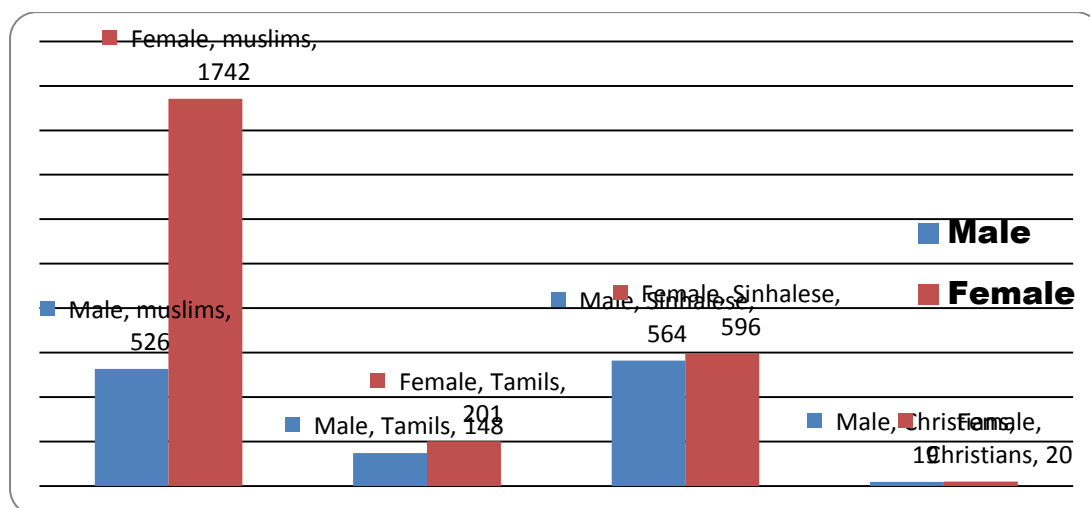


Figure 1:Details of Students inSouth Eastern University of Sri- Lanka-Academic Year 2014/2015

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Population and sample

The population of this study was 1742 Muslim Female students wearing black at South Eastern University of Sri- Lanka. South Eastern University Of Sri-Lanka of the second semester of academic year 2016. The sample was 45 Muslim Female students wearing black colour which were 15 students from Islamic Studies and Arabic Language, 15 students from Arts and culture and 15 students from Management and Commerce. The ratio between the population and the sample was 38:1. Random sampling was adopted for this purpose.

Through this approach we could collect genuine information in accordance with the true perception and plight of the target group.

.2.2. Research Instruments

The main research instrument was the questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first section is about the general information like the student' name, faculty and year of study. Part B consists of 3 yes/no questions such as (i) Do you wear black outside the university premises, (ii)Do you wear black within the university premises, (iii)Do you feel comfortable in black? Meanwhile there were questions about the attitude towards wearing black as a dress code among Muslim female students of SEUSL. Example: What do you think about this tradition? Interview from the Medical officer, SEUSL too were conducted for this study. Informal interviews from the Medical officer and the Lecturers of SEUSL too were conducted for this study. Further discussions were made among certain groups in finding the attitudes of target group

2.3. Procedures

1. Review the literature and theories including Expectation Theory, Reference and the diffusion of Innovation. The related studies were also discussed in order to determine the issue of the study. Then the questionnaire was drafted following the research objectives. Its correctness, inclusion and completion and language used were considered.
2. Propose the draft questionnaire according to the literature survey.
3. Examine the improved questionnaire with the 45 Muslim female students wearing black in SEUSL, In order to analyse the reliability.
4. Collect the data from the target sample at SEUSL. The length of the survey was during the 15th-30th of October 2016.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since the study was aimed to analyse the attitude towards black dress code among Muslim female students of SEUSL, it had been considered in to two contexts, FIA the faculty with 100 % Muslim students and FAC and FMC, the faculties with multi-ethnic groups. After scrutinizing the correctness of the data, the research analyzed the data. The attitude towards black as a dress code among Muslim female students was interpreted in several ways.

When questionnaires were analysed the study found that the majority 69% do not wear black outside the university premises, and declares that it is more like a tradition in this university to wear in black. 60% of the respondents have expressed that though they feel uncomfortable in wearing black, however they have accustomed to this tradition. They reason out,

"our seniors are wearing black, so I am too wearing black" -2nd year, FMC.

"Although I know it is a misconception and personally develops problematic health condition, we wear it as we don't want to get highlighted among the large crowd wearing black" -3rd year, FIA

Though they have accustomed to this tradition 45% of the participants have reported that they experience health problems. Especially due to the exposure to hot sun throughout the day as the university is located in Oluvil which is in the hot zone. The Medical officer, SEUSL reported that as black absorbs much heat and most of the Muslim female students in this university suffer from severe headache and more sweating eventually leads to stress, a condition which disturbs their concentration on lectures. The extreme heat conditions results in swelling of the keratin protein in the sweat ducts with rupture of the ducts and develops miliaria rubra commonly known as *prickly heat* and *heat rash*. It is the first sign of heat stress.

Meanwhile the 31% who wear black as a dress code do not bother much.

"I used to wear black in my hometown. Because it is farthest removed from adornment so I don't find it uncomfortable"-1st year, FMC

Further when the personal view regarding this continuous tradition was scrutinized among the female students wearing black in the university premises 90% expressed their preference towards a change.

"This should be changed. In Islam it is not compulsory to wear in black and it doesn't provide a pleasant environment among youth."-1st year, FAC

The students from FAC and FMC have pinpointed a need to change this tradition as it creates a negative impression on their colleagues of other ethnic groups.

" This need to be changed. It creates an unfavourable attitude among other ethnicity as black symbolizes absence of innocence and melancholy." 2nd year, FMC

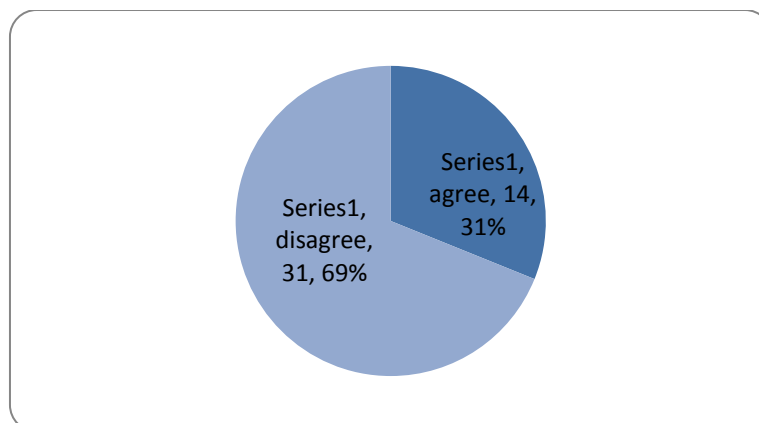


Figure 2: Percentage of students towards the suggestion for a change in this tradition

4. CONCLUSION

This study on analysis of attitude towards black as a dress code among Muslim female students in SEUSL showed the level of sample attitudes. 69% of the respondents showed a dislike towards this tradition on the basis of:

1. It is not obligatory to wear black in Islam
2. Black absorbs much heat and is not suitable in hot region like Oluvil.
3. 66% among the total female students of SEUSL wearing black doesn't create a pleasant atmosphere.

The study further proved there is no specific force or acceptable reason behind this tradition. Though they disagree with black dress code, the samples still had a very strong and positive attitude towards wearing a dress which does not break the principles of clothing for women in Islam. As noted by Ahlulbait Academy (Thailand) 2012 that wearing the hijab is a source of great good in following reason: the god praised the enhancement of women's dignity through the Hijab, when a strange man looking at her .He will honour her because he saw her honoured to them, demonstrated the equivalence of her as a Muslim women wearing a hijab.

As the study has found the students' expectation towards a need to create a healthier change within the university, recommendation have been suggested and drawn from the conclusion in such a way to make awareness among the Muslim female students of SEUSL regarding the health, social and psychological effects lead by this tradition. This can be implemented by organizing awareness workshops and motivating programs. As Muslim Majlis acts as the connecting and guiding committee of Muslim students of SEUSL, it can work towards it.

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