COMPARISON OF SOCIAL-PREJUDICES AND THEIR CORRELATES FOR MALE AND FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS

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SUMMARY : Here, the authors made an investigation of social-prejudices and some of their correlates among male and female college students on the basis of empirical data. The data were obtained from 160 Hindu male and 160 Hindu female college students enrolled in different colleges of Ranchi. The findings are : (1) Male students had significantly higher score in religious, caste and sex prejudices than the female students. Consideration of caste, urbanisation and their interactions of the respondents led to the same conclusion. (2) The female group had more religious information than the male group. Consideration of respondents' caste and urbanisation supported the same. (3) The female students had stronger belief in the caste system than the male group. The same is true for females living in rural areas, upper caste females and upper caste females with rural background.

Prejudice is generally involved when we arrive at judgement without adequate facts. A man who has prejudices has beliefs which are established without proper substantiation through pertinent objective facts. So prejudice is a kind of belief. Among different prejudices, social prejudices are of considerable importance, as inter-personal relations and the social environment are influenced by them. Social prejudices often manifest themselves through various aspects of social life, for example, caste prejudices in the form of inter-caste tension etc., sex prejudices and religious prejudices in the form of bigotry, intolerance to members of other groups or confinement of one's social interactions within a restricted social group. All these lead to enlarge social evils, generate tension, mistrust and thereby hamper the progress and cooperation among the members. It is obvious that knowledge regarding the nature of these prejudices, the intensity with which they are present in different groups and other aspects of individual life which are associated either positively or negatively with such prejudices, would help a great deal in channelizing and controlling them. Hence a scientific investigation of this aspect of social life was considered worthwhile and was studied.

In addition to the three types of prejudices discussed above; certain other variables which were thought to have some relation with prejudices were considered and these were as follows: (a) religiosity, (b) belief in caste-system and (c) amount of religious information possessed by the respondents.

Before proceeding further, a brief review of the relevant findings, conducted particularly in India, is presented below. Caste system is deeply rooted in this country and in this connection Srinivas (13) has rightly stated "only a small minority sees caste as a menace to our national life, ... the vast majority of people do not consider caste as evil." Some are of the opinion that caste-system is undergoing a satisfactory change, but on the other hand, there are people who hold that "the changes are more apparent than real. They have no important effect on the system as a whole" (4). According to Ghurye (7), "the vitality of the system in social life is as strong today as it ever was." Joshi (10) adds that "caste has not undergone any significant change in Northern India ...nor it seems likely to undergo drastic change in any immediate future." Mukherjee (11) feels that the dynamics of caste has both economic and social aspects. The changes in these two aspects provide the background of possible changes in the caste system.

Regarding religiosity, it is true that among the institutions which effect our social behaviour, religion is very important. However, individuals differ widely in their religiosity or religious faith. Several investigations were made regarding religiosity and they attempted to study how far groups based on sex, urbanisation, age, education etc. are comparable on the basis of religiosity. For example, Dutta (5) says that females are more religious than males. Chowdhury (3) remarks that Hindu females are less religious than Muslim females. Edward (6) finds that tribal and low caste people are more religious than high caste people. Paul (12) shows that persons living in rural areas are more religious compared to urban people. Glantz (8), Hites (9), Paul (12) find that older people are more religious than the younger people.

Against this background, attempt was made to find whether different groups formed on the basis of caste, urbanisation, and sex differ or not on the variables considered here.

Instruments used : The instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire developed for such a similar study. Some of the items of this questionnaire were of Likert scale type where the responses were to be marked on a five point scale viz., strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. Such items covered different prejudices and also religiosity and belief in caste system The items used for measuring religious information possessed by the respondents had the following categories of responses :

1. No answer or do not know
2. Incorrect information
3. Partially correct information
4. Correct information.

The weights allotted to these responses at the time of scoring were 0, 1, 2, and 3 respectively and the total score was the sum of the obtained scores on those items.

Sample studied: The samples were drawn from the population of Hindu students enrolled in different colleges at Ranchi. Total sample size was 320, which was divided into groups namely, (I) male and (II) female, each group being represented by 160 subjects. Those 160 subjects in each group was so selected that there were equal number of students in each of the following four categories (i.e. 40 students in each category) :

1. High caste rural origin
2. High caste urban origin
3. Low caste rural origin
4. Low caste urban origin.

With these four subgroups, four other groups (each of size 80) were also formed by combining these subgroups castewise and regionwise. Thus we had

5. High caste
6. Low caste
7. Urban origin
8. Rural origin

The same grouping was done for the male as well as for the female respondents.

Analysis of the data; For each group, the means and standard doviations of six scores (corresponding to the six variables mentioned) were calculated. The differences in the mean values between corresponding groups were also considered and the corresponding t-values were calculated. All these calculations were done with the help of electronic computer HONEY-WELL 400. The comparison of the mean values between the following pairs of groups was made ;

1. Male and female
2. Upper caste male and upper caste female
3. Urban male and urban female
4. Rural male and rural female
5. Lower caste male and lower cast female
6. Upper caste urban male and upper caste urban female
7. Upper caste rural male and upper caste rural female
8. Lower caste urban male and lower caste urban female
9. Lower caste rural male and lower caste rural female

Table I shows the mean and standard deviation of each variable for each group, along with the t-ratios calculated for testing the significance of diffnreaces in the mean values for different groups.

Results : A close look at the figures presented in Table I reveals the following facts. For religious information, it can be seen that the female respondents obtained significantly higher score indicating that they had more religious information than the male respondents. It can also be seen that the female group was significantly low on religious prejudices indicating that religious prejudice was inversely related to religious information at least with respect to the female group. However, the female group had lower mean values not only in religious prejudice, but in all types of prejudices considered. With respect to belief in caste system, the female group had slightly higher mean score than the other group. As far as religiosity is concerned, the female group had slightly high mean score.

However, most of the differences were found to be significant i.e., there did exist significant differences between the two groups. This difference could be taken as due to sex and it can be summarised that :

1. Male students had significantly higher score in religious, caste and sex prejudices than the female students. Consideration of respondents caste, urbanisation and their interactions led to the same conclusion.

2. Regarding religiosity, no significant difference was obtained between the male and female groups.

The female group had more religious information than the male group. When these two groups were compared with respect to caste, urbanisation, the same trend was observed.

4. The female group had stronger belief in the caste-system than the male group. The same is true for females living in rural areas, upper caste females and those females belonging to upper caste category with rural background.

Table I showing mean, standard deviation of each variable for each group, along with t-ratios for testing difference in mean values

Variables Groups	Religious prejudice Mean	S.D.	Religiosity Mean	S.D.	Caste prejudice Mean	S.D.	Belief in caste system Mean	S.D.	Sex prejudice Mean	S.D.	Religious information Mean	S.D.
Fale Male	60.72	9.76	29.86	7.61	49.46	9.99	18.81	4.94	59.44	11.42	20.20	6.85
Mamale	46.02	8.61	31.24	7.49	44.91	9.60	20.30	6.52	41.39	7.97	26.94	8.89
t-ratio	14.27**		1.64		4.15**		2.31*		16.40**		7.59**	
Upper caste Male	61.54	10.06	29.40	7.75	50.26	10.96	19.60	5.11	60.07	10.92	20.89	6.67
Upper caste Female	45.85	8.92	30.22	7.77	45.02	10.50	21.64	6.85	40.12	8.02	27.35	8.90
t-ratio	10.43**		0.67		3.08**		2.13*		13.17**		5.19**	
Urban Male	62.59	10.50	31.94	6.57	50.30	10.48	19.50	5.01	60.49	11.99	19.74	6.72
Urban Female	47.85	9.29	32.71	6.61	46.00	10.56	20.40	6.53	43.36	7.48	25.36	9.23
t-ratio	9.38**		0.74		2.58**		0.98		10.83**		4.40**	
Rural Male	58.85	8.52	27.77	7.99	48.61	9.40	18.11	4.78	58.40	10.70	20.66	6.96
Rural Female	44.20	7.44	29.76	8.02	43.82	8.39	20.20	6.51	39.41	7.95	28.51	8.23
t-ratio	11.58**		1.57		3.39**		2.31*		12.73**		6.51**	
Lower caste Male	59.90	9.38	30.31	7.42	48.65	8.85	18.01	4.64	58.81	11.85	19.51	6.97
Lower caste Female	46.20	8.28	32.25	7.07	44.80	8.60	18.96	5.88	42.65	7.72	26.52	8.58
t-ratio	9.79**		1.69		2.79**		1.13		10.21**		5.56**	

Upper caste Urban Male	62.77	11.20	31.42	7.40	50.62	11.99	20.02	5.28	60.25	12.21	19.90	6.52
Upper caste Urban Female	47.37	9.52	31.75	7.91	45.27	12.21	20.55	7.40	43.50	7.41	26.87	9·93
t-ratio	6.62**		0.19		1.98*		0.36		7.41**		3.71**	
Upper caste Rural Male	60.30	8.60	27.37	7.57	49.90	9.79	19.17	4.89	59.90	9.44	21.87	6.67
Upper caste Rural Female	44.32	8.01	28.70	7.30	44.77	8.47	22.72	6.07	36.75	7.13	27.82	7.71
t-ratio	8.59**		0.79		2.50*		2.87**		12.37**		3.69**	
Lower caste Urban Male	62.40	9.82	32.45	5.58	49.97	8.70	18.97	4.67	60.72	11.77	19.57	6.91
Lower caste Urban Female	48.32	9.03	33.67	4.78	46.72	8.55	20.25	5.54	33.22	7.56	23.85	8.20
t-ratio	6.67**		1.05		1.68		1.11		7.91**		2.52*	
Lower caste Rural Male	57.40	8.19	28.17	8.36	47.32	8.79	17.05	4.40	56.90	11.63	19.45	7.03
Lower caste Rural Female	44.07	6.82	30.82	8.55	42.87	8.21	17.67	5.95	42.07	7.85	29.20	8,67
t-ratio	7.90**		1.40		2.34*		0.53		6.68**		5.52**	

* Significant at 5% level.   ** Significant at 1% level.

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