

**Intergenerational strife in attitudes with special
reference to age and education**

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Intergenerational strife in the form of gap or difference between successive generations is rather an universal phenomenon. It results from wide communication gap between the two generational ranks and ultimately leads to various social conflict, unrest, frustration, dissatisfaction etc. In a seminar on "Intergenerational Conflict in India" organized by the Delhi School of Social work, several participants discussed the different aspects of generation gap and the seminar arrived towards a consensus that this phenomenon although existed in all the ages is far and wide in the present society and is primarily responsible for many social and institutional conflicts (Sinha and Gangrade, 1971). According to Gangrade (1969), "Intergenerational conflict is understood as difference, gap, distance or conflict of values between the adult and the adolescent generations". Shah (1969) on the other hand, contends that the most important feature of the contemporary conflict of generation is the disharmony between human attitudes.

Several studies have revealed some difference in values and attitudes between parents and their adolescent words. Bhattacharya and

Basu (1975) found generation gap with respect to parental concept. Anant (1976), however, did not find remarkable generation gap in values. His study was designed to test whether the young and adults from the same family have similar values. Both the generations in his study were found to be quite similar in values. Students were slightly lower in economic social and religious values but higher in aesthetic and political values. He also noted slight sex difference. Sinha (1972) tried to study the intergenerational gap on a wider perspective. The main dependent variables under his investigation were (i) Outlook and motivations, (ii) Attitudes and opinions, (iii) values, (iv) moral and social code, (v) hero-image (vi) family space or psychological proximity, (vii) perception of contemporary events and people, (viii) national and personal hopes and fears, (ix) idea of progress and level of striving and reactions to frustration. Summing up the results of his study Sinha proclaimed that "The general conclusion that emerges out of the present study is not one of clear cut demarcation on intergenerational lines". He, however, found difference between successive generation with respect to attitudes and values in a few areas like religion, dress and fashion, family structure, traditionalism, conservatism-progressivism etc.

Although majority of the psychologists and sociologists support the common view of the existence of generational strife, the controversy is not still over. The question still remains, therefore, whether there is really anything like generation gap in attitudes and values and if so, what is the extent and nature of this gap. How is this gap related to the other social and personal variables ?

Keeping these questions in view, the present investigation intends to study generational strife, if there is any, with respect to attitude towards liberalism-conservatism and also towards litereriness. It also aims at the identification of a few specific areas of liberalism-conservatism or litereriness so as to determine the exact point of the conflict between the two generations. Lastly, the investigation takes into consideration the question, how is the education and age of the older generation is related to the generational strife.

Method

Two attitude scales one on Liberalism-conservatism having 26 items and another on Litereriness having 20 items (Shaw and Wright-1967) were administered on 47 girl students (age-range 20 to 25 years) of the Post graduate classes of the Calcutta University. The same scales were also administered on their fathers (age-range 47 to 66 years). Total scores for the fathers (F) and the daughters (D) in both scales were compared by Fishers t-test (Guilford 1956). Item means and item standard deviations were determined in both the scales and for both the F and D groups. For each item, mean of the F group was compared with the mean of the D group by t-test. Those items which did not show any significant difference were screened out.

Since the educational standard of the subjects in the D group was uniform and the age-range was very small, the F group was subdivided into 4 FE groups according to the educational standard of the fathers and 3 FA groups according to the age levels of the fathers. The following are the accounts of these subdivision: Item means and standard

Table 1

DIFFERENT SUB-CLASSIFICATIONS IN THE F GROUP OF SAMPLE

Group	Age		Education		
	Specification	N	Group	Specification	N
FA-1	Below 50 years	6	FE-1	Matriculate and below	8
FA-2	50-60 years	26	FE-2	I.A., I.Sc., Graduate	21
FA-3	Above 60 years	15	FE-3	Postgraduates	10
			FE-4	Professionals (Engineers, Doctors etc)	8
Total		15	Total		47

deviations for all these FE and FA groups and also for the respective daughters from the D group in both the scales were determined. In doing so, however, the screened out items were not taken into consideration. Item means of each of the FE and FA groups were compared

by t-test. From the obtained significant differences, the content areas of the items were classified for generalized conclusions.

Results and discussion

Results of the t-test, to indicate the difference between the mean scores of the F and D groups, have been shown in table 2 below.

Table-2

RESULTS OF THE T-TEST BETWEEN MEAN F AND D SCORES IN THE TWO SCALES

	Liberal-Conservatism Scale		Analytical-Literary Scale	
	Father	Daughter	Father	Daughter
Mean	60.76	62.70	46.14	50.19
S.D.	10.04	6.62	11.68	7.19
t	1.09		2.00*	

* $p < .05$

It appears from the table that so far as liberalism-conservatism is concerned, the two groups did not differ significantly. But in case of Litereriness the D group appears to be less literery (i.e. more analytical) than the F group ($t=2.00$, $p < .05$). Distribution in both the cases are slightly skewed towards higher score showing both the groups to be more or less liberal and analytical.

Results of item-wise t-test for the comparison of item-wise position of the groups (F and D) have been presented in table 3. Here,

Table-3

RESULTS OF THE ITEM-WISE T-TEST IN THE TWO SCALES

Liberal-Conservatism Scale				Leterary-Analytical	
Item No.	t-value	Item No.	t-value	Item No.	t-value
1	6.47 **	10	3.58 *	38	14.85 **
4	5.28 **	16	4.45 **	41	3.19 **
7	2.84 **	18	5.53 **	42	4.54 **
9	2.63 **	25	2.24 *	45	5.80 **
				46	4.26

* $p < .05$

* $p < .01$

only the items showing significant difference in response were shown (i.e. the item nos. 1, 4, 7, 9, 10, 16, 18, and 25 in case of the Liberalism-conservatism scale and in the item nos. 31, 41, 42, 45 and 46 in case of Literary-analytical scale).

An examination into the content areas of these items reveals that in the Liberalism-conservatism scale, three types of contents have elicited intergenerational difference viz., (1) Religion, (2) Government policy on trades and business and (3) participation of scientists in politics. Daughters of present generation have been found to have less favourable attitude towards religion than the fathers. This is in contradiction with the common view that girls are in generation, more religious minded by their nature and therefore, may be considered as a true generational strife. In other two areas also daughters have been found to be more liberal than their fathers. In case of the literary-analytical scale no such content bias could be noticed.

Results of the analysis of data according to the age and educational standard of the fathers have been presented in the tables 4 and 5.

Table 4

AGE-WISE (FA) T-TEST OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS IN THE TWO SCALES

	Liberal-Conservatism			Literay-Analytical		
	FA-1	FA-2	FA-3	FA-1	FA-2	FA-3
Mean F	60.83	59.15	62.93	48.33	42.96	50.00
S.D.	6.59	9.02	11.93	12.84	8.95	10.48
Mean D	65.16	61.38	63.73	55.5	50.42	50.13
S.D.	3.84	5.87	8.22	9.10	4.20	7.07
	1.26	1.27	.20	1.01	3.78 **	.03

** $p < .01$

Table-5**EDUCATION WISE (FE) T-TEST OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS
IN THE TWO SCALES**

	Literal-Conservatism				Literary-Analytical			
	FE-1	FE-2	FE-3	FE-4	FE-1	FE-2	FE-3	FE-4
Mean F	58.25	62.77	60.00	58.50	40.87	43.42	50.40	52.75
S.D.	6.90	8.53	13.94	6.34	8.59	9.93	10.28	8.34
Mean D	60.12	63.38	61.90	63.37	45.75	53.52	50.50	49.62
S.D.	4.95	5.32	9.81	4.99	7.10	4.36	7.59	6.68
t	.58	.27	.33	1.59	1.85	2.85	.02	.77

** $p < .01$

It is evident from table 4 that only the group FA-2 (i.e., age group 5-60 years) has shown generational gap with respect to the attitude towards analytical-literariness ($t=3.78$, $p < .01$). Again the results presented in table 5 reveals that the group FE-2 (i.e., education group I.A./I.Sc. to graduation) has shown similar difference in the same scale.

Study of the itemwise mean scores reveal that the difference of mean scores of father and daughter in the FE-3 (Post graduates) and FE-4 (Professionals) are negligible. But such differences are more marked in the FE-2 group.

The rationale behind this finding may be explained as follows : Attitude towards analytical-Literariness is more an integrated part of the stable personality pattern while the attitude towards liberalism may change. Moreover, people like to pretend to be liberal even if they do not have liberalism in their nature. For this very reason, Mean scores in the second scale have shown more marked variation.

Conclusions

The general conclusion that can be drawn from the above discussions and the results presented above, that intergenerational strife exists in certain age and educational groups with respect to the attitudes and values. Although the results are not yet decisive but it may also be safely concluded that certain socio-cultural areas can be isolated through proper research investigation where the intergenerational strife is maximum.

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