



Comparative Study of inter-caste tensions among rural & urban children

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that
Km. Geeta Devi has worked satisfactorily
for the requisite number of terms under
my supervision and the Ph.D. thesis enti-
tled, ' COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INTER-CASTE
TENSIONS AMONG RURAL AND URBAN CHILDREN'
embodies the results of her own investi-
gations.



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Only the emergence of the solemnity of knowledge takes a man to the level of humanity and the steps there beyond. When I contemplate on the basis of emergence, the solemn figures seem to be guiding from all the four directions as per the providential scheme. The knowledge of Psychology in life is quite strange and my respected father and mother are most credited for preparing my intellectual base so as to make me capable of receiving this knowledge. Nothing is possible for me without their guidance and support. I shall ever remain grateful to them.

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' Fame, talent, progress, wisdom, wealth-whatever
has someone attained;
All that is, by mercy of Guru, made available
in the world".

I wish all to be privileged with the mercy and inspiration of Guru.

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Geeta Devi
(GEETA DEVI)

÷जिनकी अब स्मृति ही शेष है ÷

शोध कार्य प्रेरक स्नेहमयी

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समर्पित

समर्पण

बन्धनों से दूर रहकर, प्रेरणा की स्रोत हो तुम।

स्नेह की साकार स्मृति, ज्ञान में अवमुक्त हो तुम ॥

दूर भव से किन्तु उर में, गीत गुंजित हैं तुम्हारे ।

आश्रय तो उन्हीं का है, रही हूँ जिनके सहारे ॥

आज श्रद्धा सुमन लेकर, द्वार पर तैरे खड़ी हूँ ।

शोध-शोधित पुष्प यह, स्वीकार हो बरबस अड़ी हूँ ॥

ध्यान रखना तुम हमारा, भाव भावित विषय अर्पण।

'गीता' जीवन का सहारा, यही अंतस्तल समर्पण ॥

गीता देवी

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ABSTRACT

Caste system influences individual member in a variety of ways. In the first place, the caste group satisfied a member of the individual's needs and creates in him a sense of loyalty to or identification with the group. Second, caste operates in many areas of social life including education occupation, economy and politics. Each individual participating in any of these spheres is bound to be influenced by his caste to a greater or lesser extent. Individual members of caste may internalize the belief, norms and values provided by the distinct subcultures of the caste groups. The influence of caste on the behaviour of its members may be very deep, particularly in the case of lower castes.

In the present study caste has been studied more as a principle of social stratification than as a social problem. It creates a problem, first because it imposes disabilities of various kinds on certain sections of the society, and second, since it appears to reinforce rather narrow loyalties in the minds of a majority of its members. These loyalties create a tension in the minds of individual members.

Discrimination and hostility between social groups is a problem that has plagued the whole of humanity. It manifests itself in Indian society in various forms and inter-caste tensions is but one of them. There are common laws that govern the universal phenomena of love and hate, friend-

ship and enmity, harmony and tension in all sections of humanity.

A review of empirical investigation related to inter-caste tension shows that little work has been done on inter-caste tensions in Indian context minority in north India. In the light of previous theories and empirical evidences it was contended that inter caste tensions are socially learned, though a complex set of processes involving identification, discrimination and evaluation having many consequences leading to different preferences and interaction in a variety of social situations. Keeping the above view in mind the present empirical investigation was formulated to study inter caste tensions among rural and urban children. It was hypothesized that-

1. INTER-CASTE TENSIONS WOULD INCREASE WITH INCREASING AGE, HOWEVER THE COGNITIVE AFFECTIVE AND BEHAVIOURAL DIMENSIONS OF TENSIONS WOULD EVINCE DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT.
2. RESIDENTIAL BACKGROUND OF CHILDREN WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE THE NATURE OF CASTE TENSIONS IN CHILDREN, SPECIALLY, THE RURAL CHILDREN WOULD DISPLAY EARLIER AND MORE INTENSE TENSIONS THAN URBAN CHILDREN.
3. THERE WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCASTE TENSIONS. THE BOYS WOULD EXHIBIT EARLIER AND INTENSE DEVELOPMENT OF TENSIONS THAN GIRLS.

4. THE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN INTERCASTE TENSIONS WOULD BE MORE PRONOUNCED IN THE CHILDREN HAILING FROM RURAL THAN URBAN AREA.
5. THE POSITION OF CHILDREN IN CASTE HIERARCHY WOULD YIELD SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON INTER-CASTE TENSIONS WITH GREATER TENSIONS IN CHILDREN BELONGING TO HIGH CASTE GROUP THAN MIDDLE AND LOWER CASTE GROUPS.

The present study was conducted to compare inter-caste tensions among rural and urban children of Ayodhya, Faizabad (U.P.) district. A sample of six hundred children—three hundred boys and three hundred girls was taken from urban as well as from rural areas. Mainly Primary School children of age group 9 to 11 years were used as subjects. For each age group two hundred children were selected and for each age group hundred children of rural area and hundred children of urban area were selected. There were fifty boys and fifty girls in each of these sub-groups. Thus, four groups were formed according to two level residential background (Rural and Urban) two gender group (Male & Female) at each of the three age levels.

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed in Hindi language to measure the existence of inter-caste tensions in children. Pictorial measure and parental attitude measure were also prepared. These schedule were individually administered to the children and their parents. The interview took

place in peaceful place, away from the child's classmates so as to minimize distractions. The interview schedule contained twelve (12) questions, each question comprising of nine caste alternatives.

The results indicated the existance of inter-caste tensions among children. Each caste has been found to despise all other castes falling below, it in social hierarchy, over all percentage are preference for high caste, middle caste and low caste was found in a hierarchical order. The high caste was preferred most frequently than the other caste by the children of every age group. The lowest preferred caste was Mehatar and Chamar. The responses of those castes are being 30% for 9 years children and 12% for 10years children and 26% for 11 year children where as the most preferred percentage of Brahmin caste was 86% for 9 years children and 84% for 10 years children and 94% for 11 years children. This is true for boys and girls both and for rural and urban background.

As with inter-dining, so with regard to acceptance of food, there are marked gradations in preferences. The percentage of urban children (both boys and girls) were higher with regard to acceptance of food from own caste groups. The lower caste children preferred every caste it shows that the low caste children can accept food cooked by members of other caste but this is not true to high caste children. The percentage of this item are not much different from were obtained

in the previous questions. The responses of girls & boys and also of rural & urban children are more or less in a similar manner, i.e., order of preference moves from upper to lower in social hierarchy.

Percentage for acceptance of water from the hand of lower caste children has increased in a proper proportion, but not in a large proportion. Urban boys and girls of 10 years have no restrictions of taking water with other caste groups. The percentage was found 100% for Brahmin caste. It means that every children can prefer to accept water from Brahmin caste. The percentage for rural boys and girls was not similar to urban children. The percentage was 84% for 9 years, 80% for 10 years and 90% for 11 years children for Brahmin caste. The percentage of boys in both residential background for each age level was higher than the percentage of girls. These percentage decreased as the caste hierarchy decreases.

As regards living together with a neighbour in the same house, the percentage of responses are less in comparison to what were obtained in other respects. This indicate that children are more liberal in matters of accepting water from other castes than in matters of living in the same house with the children of those caste.

Urban boys and girls at different age level have preferred their playmate from their own castes. The upper caste

children preferred their playmate from upper caste. The percentage for Brahmin caste at 10 years in urban children was 100% and at 11 years 90% and 9 years it was 92%. The percentage for girls at 9 and 11 years was 90% for each and at 10 years of a it was 100%. This percentage decreased as the caste hierarchy decreases, for low caste children at different age level it was 80% at 9 year, 40% at 10 year, 60% at 11 year and for girls it was 2% at 9 years, 4% at 10 years and 11 years at 2%, for rural boys this percentage was higher for lower castes. It was 38% at 9 years, 44% at 10 years and 34% for 11 years. For girls it was 50% at 9 year, 50% at 10 years and 42% at 11 years. It seems that at each age level children were preferred with higher and lower frequency according to their caste hierarchy.

Children have shown little objection in studying together with children of other caste groups. When further questioned many children showed that they are willing to sit besides sweepers boy or girl, if he or she was clean enough. The same is the caste when urban and rural responses of children are compared, rural children being more liberal.

In matters of the choice of friends, children were not so liberal as with the acceptance of classmate and playmate. The responses of urban girls are quite different for lower caste children.

It was found that belongingness to specific caste was unrelated to incidence of disliking. The quarrel in children involved different caste group including children of their own caste. The percentage of negative interaction with every caste children was very much low.

The status of teacher is the highest from the point of view of his acceptability. To what so ever caste a teacher may belong a child has no objection in being taught him. A teacher belonging to high caste is acceptable to all. There is no marked difference in the attitude of boys and girls in matter of acceptance of teacher from different castes. But while comparing rural and urban children it would appear that rural children have a more favourable attitude towards different caste groups.

A caste acceptance scale has been drawn. Social acceptance has been found to be less manifested in matters of inter-dining, acceptance of food & acceptance of a neighbour rather than in case of choice friend and acceptance of water and is most clearly manifested in case of acceptance of classmate, playmate are teacher.

The perception of caste and their works with the help of drawing pictures. So, that at every age level children has recognized the name of castes and their work with greater percentage. The percentage for low caste was higher the percentage of high caste. Low caste and their works has been

perceived very frequently and their percentage was higher.

A detailed analysis of qualities attributed to different castes groups indicated that Brahmin and Chhatriya caste represented a high frequency of positive qualities. The Baniya caste represented a mixed pattern of positive as well as negative qualities. A perception of Mehatar and Chamar caste constituted only negative qualities.

The status of Mehatar or a Sweeper in caste hierarchy was the lowest. Much difference in the extent of caste tensions as between urban & rural areas or between boys & girls has not been observed significantly.

Analysis of the pattern of inter-personal interaction revealed greater amount of interaction with own caste children. The low caste children showed maximum in group feeling and little interaction with children of other castes.

Parental attitude regarding caste tension showed that a majority of the parents in each caste group believed in the existance of caste tension. The high percentage was 52.2% for high caste, 48.7% for low caste, 46% for middle caste. 8.5% parents of low caste in both the residential background did not gave any responses.

Since, the present investigation was confined only to Ayodhya Faizabad district, it has been suggested that an exten-

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