

A Critical Study of Caste Status and Human Motives



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Hindu society has a unique social structure, namely the caste systems. The caste system has the dominating influence in Indian's social life. Caste status is wholly predetermined, so that men are born to their lot in life without hope of changing it. Caste is a complete barrier to the mobility of class. In principles it involves an absolute and permanent stratification of the community. The main characteristics of a caste are the belief in a common origin held by all the members and the possession of the traditional occupation. It may be defined as an endogamous group or collection of such groups bearing a common name, having the same traditional occupation, claiming descent from the same source, and commonly regarded as forming a single homogenous community. Caste system a four-fold hierarchy of Vernas-(i) Brahman, (2) Kshtriya, (3) Vaina ind (4) Sudra, Brahman at he top and Sudras at the bottom. This is a highly winshfied nodel of social divisions which in reality were and are enormously morc elabo- FRte Caste in the operative sense are not four, but many. There are so many that it is vortually impossible to determine heir exact number.

There exist three conventional caste status in our society. These are Forward caste, Backward caste and Scheduled caste. The principle basis of Indiana caste system is occupation. The forward and the backward caste are not much different in respect of education and occupation. The two caste classes have many similarities with respect to these variables. But the forward caste is differentiated from the backward caste in respect of the possession of wealth and lineage. The scheduled caste differ remarkably from forward and backward caste people in respect of education and income. They have a lower level of educational attainment and are economically hard pressed. As a result of difference in conditions of life, values, attitude and norms which in turn create differences in their motivational dispositions.

Fortain (1985) in a study of young Portuguese adolescents reported that subjects from middle and upper classes generally were more motivated than subjects from lower classes. Yang and Liang (1973) found that among Chinese high school boys n Ach was inverted U function of father's socio-economic status i.e children from middle SES possessed higher n Ach level than those from upper and lower SES. Srivastav and Tiwari (1967) in an Indian study on 17-23 year old students of Sagar University noted that highest n Ach was present in the middle class, second higher in upper class and the lowest in the lower class.

Mittal and Bhargave (1989) found the self concept and scholastic achievement of 40 scheduled and non-scheduled caste male adolescents. Significant between group differences were found in feelings of inferiority, emotional inability and scholastic achievement with scheduled caste Ss showing worse adjustment and scholastic performance.

Ojha (1991) found the interactional effects of 3 factors of deprivation (caste, residential area, and economic condition) on achievement motivation of women. Using 2 x 2 x 3 factorial design, 120 post graduate females (aged 19-22 yrs) completed D R Bhatia's (1974). Achievement Motivation Test Residential area and economic condition contributed significant variances for achievement motivation scores. The only significant 2-way interaction effect was residence income. The interaction variance of the three factors taken together was significant. Findings reveal that the most Favourable condition for the growth of achievement motivation is upper caste membership, urban residence and high income. The most unfavourable condition is lower caste membership, rural residence, and low income.

Chitra Thiagarajan and Krishnan (1994) tested 6 Psycho- social factors that could argument the educational achievement, prestige and socio economic status (SES) among scheduled caste (SC) communities. The factors studied were Personality, intelligence, occupational aspiration, SES, social distance, and awareness of facilities. The personality traits of 104 scheduled caste girls students and 100 non- scheduled caste girls students pursuing a higher secondary course were assessed. SC Ss differed from the NSC group only in their SES, and all 6 psycho-social factors were equally responsible for the academic achievement in both the groups. It was concluded that education causes a positive change in personality, intelligence, and occupational Aspiration by narrowing down the gap between 2 groups.

Suri and Husain (1990) compared the strength of ethnic identity and its contribution factors among 320 youths (aged 14-17 yrs) from 3 minority groups (Muslim, Sikhs, and Scheduled caste) and controls from the majority caste Hindu. Ss completed scale measuring levels of deprivation and different dimensions of identity (eg religious, linguistic, cultural, national). Ethnic group status, environmental setting (advantaged or disadvantaged), and minority group had higher religious, cultural, and linguistic identity than did the majority

group had higher religious, cultural, and linguistic identity than did the majority group. National identity was a salient dimension for Hindu and scheduled caste. Halle, Kurtz-costes and Mahoney (1997) found the achievement related belief and behaviours of parents of economically disadvantaged African-American youth and the relations among parental factors and children's academic self-concept and achievement. Forty one children and their primary caregivers were interviewed. Parents reported on their academic related beliefs and behaviors. Children completed measures of academic self concept and 2 standardized achievement tests; (1) during the summer and (2) at the end of the following school year. Significant and positive relations were found between parental belief and behavior measures within the domains of reading and math. However, parents' achievements oriented behaviors. His relation between parental beliefs and child outcomes was not mediated by children's academic self concepts.

Power motive has been found to be the characteristic of lower class people in a recent study by Alka Jha (1992). Wikstrom (1991) investigated whether housing in childhood has an independent effect on offending in childhood and youth, controlling for social class. The data were taken from a study of 51,117 males and females living in Stockholm, Sweden, Residence were classified as owned occupied or rented. Three measures of social class were used: (1) income (2) Education, and (3) Occupational Social marginalism were measured by a family's having received social welfare assistance at any time from a S's birth until he/she was 6yrs of age. Crimes of theft dominated. Within every type of housing, the aggregate crime rate (Crimes per 1,000 cohort members in a group) were higher for the lower social classes than the higher ones. For families receiving social welfare, those living in rented housing had the highest offending rates. The length of time a family had received welfare had the strongest influence on offending followed by class.

Therefore, lack of affiliation should constitute were deprivation and cause a variety of ill effects. Gibson, Westwood, Lshiyama, Borgen et al (1991) examined data from 3,820 adolescents (47% male, 53% female) in different socio- economic environments (advantaged/ disadvantaged) in nations to determine what type perceived to be their most pressing problems and what they did to cope. Family, schooling, and personal identity/ self-concept were the most frequently cited problem classes for all groups of Ss, accounting for 69.1% of the responses. Individual problem solving was the most frequently reported class of coping strategy, regardless of socio-economic status(SES) grouping, cited in 46.1% of the responses. Trying harder and planning a solution ranked 1st or 2nd in all groups. Females reported school problems less than did males. Reported problem related to identify/self concept, interpersonal/socialization, courtship/doing and emotions/ feeling decreases with socio-economic status (SES) grouping. Ahsan and Khursheed (1990) assessed 480 adult Hindus

Tribal, Christians, Tribal Hindus and Muslims as samples for the purpose of studying extent of modernity with respect to socio-economic stratification. The study indicates that there were differences between ethnicities with respect to socio-cultural modernity, these variations are also related to socio-economic components, such as education, occupation and income, Religion was an ally of modernity. Socio cultural modernity was strongly influenced by socio-economic status (SES). Age did not influence modernity.

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