



Feeling of Security-Insecurity and Prejudice: A Comparative Study between Secure and Insecure School Students

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The present study was conducted to find out the relationship between feeling of security-insecurity and prejudice. Eighty students (40 boys and 40 girls) were selected from Hindi medium schools of Ranchi town, belonging to the age between 13 to 16 years. Security-Insecurity Test and Prejudice Scale were administered. The results were tested for significance of difference using t test. The results revealed that secure group is less prejudiced than insecure group. Gender has no effect on prejudice.

Key Words : Prejudice, School Students.

Introduction

Prejudice is a key concept to inter-group relations. Inter-group relations are characterized more often than not, by discrimination, mutual distrust, hatred, tension, conflict and violence in the name of religion, race, caste, ethnicity, language, region and creed. The entire world is confronted with the problems of inter-group rivalry, tension and conflict increased by prejudices. Indian society is beset with the different varieties of group tensions and conflicts like religious conflict, regional conflict, political conflict, economic conflict, social conflict and cultural conflict. Undoubtedly, prejudice is one of the most important socio-political and cultural problems of the Indian society and civilization. It is a negative attitude towards persons based on their membership in certain groups. Just as pollution poisons the physical atmosphere the hatred of one group for another poisons the social atmosphere.

Prejudice has both cognitive and affective components. Cognitive component contains stereotype and affective component is the positive or negative attitudes as feeling. Prejudice is a composite of prejudgement, stereotypes and hasty judgement. It involves feelings of hostility, discrimination and conflict. Prejudice is defined as an unfavourable attitude (Dictionary of Social Sciences, 1964). Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey (1962) defined prejudice as an unfavourable attitude towards an object which tends to be highly stereotyped, emotionally charged and not easily changed by contrary information. Prejudices are those negative attitudes which serve irrational, personality needs and weaknesses like insecurity, anxiety, hidden hostility and weak ego of prejudiced person. Jahoda (1958) observed that highly prejudiced people are not mentally ill but do not possess positive mental health. According to Farley (2000) prejudice refers to a positive or a negative attitude or belief directed toward certain people based on their membership in a particular group. Social psychologists have evidences to assert that prejudice is socio-psychological. It means it is neither purely sociological nor wholly psychological. It is due to the interaction of psychological characteristics of an individual and his socio-cultural conditions (Pettigrew; 1956, Weller; 1964). Prejudice has four dimensions namely-religion, caste, sex and class prejudice, which are positively correlated (Enayatullah 1980; Rai 1980, and Khan 1980). It

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was concluded that prejudice is a generalized predisposition which manifests itself in relation to various target.

Feeling of insecurity is a personality variable. It is a feeling of unprotectedness and helplessness against manifold anxieties arising from a sort of all encompassing uncertainty about oneself. Uncertainty regarding one's goals and ideals, one's abilities, one's relations to others and the attitude one should take toward them. A person with feelings of insecurity tries to find out a person upon whom the blame of his insecurity can be put. The insecure person does not have friendly feelings. He has no confidence today in yesterday's belief, no faith tomorrow in today's truth. Miller and Bugelski (1948) have reported that persons with high levels of insecurity are likely to show higher level of prejudice. Studies of Morse and Allport (1952). Gough (1951 a, 1951 b, and 1951 c) confirmed the association of prejudice with personal insecurity. Consequently persons with higher feelings of insecurity tend to develop prejudice more than those who have lesser degrees of feelings of insecurity. Adorno (1950) said that people are prejudiced because their prejudice meet certain needs associated with their personality. He said that many prejudiced people have a distinct set of personality traits centered around conformity, intolerance and insecurity. The research findings on the relationship between gender and prejudices are often contradictory. Dutta (1965) conducted a study to measure attitudes of university students towards religion. He found that females were more religious than males. Sinha & Sinha (1960) conducted a study to ascertain prejudices of 1000 students of Patna University towards Harijans, and observed that the male students seem to have more favourable attitudes towards the Harijans than females. Singh, Singh & Singh (1960) observed caste consciousness develops faster in boys than in girls. Kuppuswamy (1956) had found more favourable attitudes to the caste system in the females than males. But Chatterjee et.al. (1972) reported higher religious caste and sex prejudices in the male college students. A majority of the studies had found no gender difference (Ballard and Keller, 1976, Fox and Jordan, 1973, Lerner and Schroeder, 1975). Contradictory and inconsistent findings have been reported by different research studies. Khalique (1985, 1986) and Hassan and Khalique (1981), Sharma and Sud (1989) and Zeba (1992) found no significant difference between the two sexes. As the review of literature reveals, very few studies have been conducted in India specially in Jharkhand. The present study, therefore attempts to explore how the feeling of Security-Insecurity are related to prejudice in Indian Society.

Objectives

The objectives are as follows.

- i. To explore how feeling of security-insecurity are related to prejudice.
- ii. To study the gender difference and prejudice.

Hypotheses

Following are the main hypotheses formulated in the present study.

- i. Highly secure subjects are less prejudiced than low secure subjects.
- ii. There will be no significant difference between boys and girls on prejudice.

Sample

Eighty students were taken from Hindi medium high schools of Ranchi town between 13 to 16 years of age. Out of which students 40 students were boys and 40 students were girls.

Tools

The tools, used for the collection of data are as follows :

- i. **Security-Insecurity Test:-** The test developed by Dr.Mohsin was used to determine the feeling of security-insecurity of the subjects.
- ii. **Prejudice Scale:-** The scale developed by the department of Psychology, Ranchi University, was used to measure prejudice. It is a Likert type scale consists of four sub-scales measuring religion, caste, sex and class prejudice. There are 15 items in each sub-scale and each item has five alternatives. The four sub scales were positively interrelated and their aggregate constituted the Total prejudice Scale with 60 items having a range of 60 to 300. Higher scores indicated greater prejudice.

Procedure

Security-Insecurity Scale was administered on the sample. On the basis of their scores on Security-Insecurity Scale two groups, namely secure and insecure, were formed. Prejudice Scale was administered on these two groups. The data obtained were tabulised group wise and analyzed statistically with the help of 't' test to draw necessary inferences.

Result and Discussion

The mean scores, SDs and t values of secure and insecure groups related to religious prejudice, caste prejudice, sex prejudice, class prejudice and total prejudice were presented in Table 1. It revealed the following facts.

Table : 1
Mean scores, SDs and t values of Secure and Insecure groups on prejudice Scale.

	N	RP		CP		SP		CLP		TPS	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Secure group	40	7.25	2.99	6.88	2.90	7.4	2.74	7.45	2.73	28.98	5.41
Insecure group	40	9.15	2.55	8.78	2.0	8.22	3.00	7.45	2.69	33.6	5.19
t		4.04**		4.03**		1.41 NS		0NS		5.37**	

** Significant at .01 level.

NS = Not Significant.

RP = Religious prejudice

CP = Caste prejudice

SP = Sex prejudice

CLP = Class prejudice

TPS = Total prejudice scale

- i. In religious prejudice the mean score of insecure group was 9.15; where as the mean score of secure group was 7.25. The t ratio was 4.04, statistically significant at .01 level. It means secure and insecure groups were significantly differed in religious prejudice. Insecure groups have higher religious prejudice than secure subjects.
- ii. Mean scores of insecure group in caste prejudice was 8.78. It was 1.90 more than the means of secure group (6.88). Insecure group had higher mean scores on caste prejudice (8.78) which indicated that insecure subjects had more caste prejudice than secure group. The difference between their mean scores ($t = 4.03$) was statistically significant at .01 level.
- iii. The mean scores of insecure group was 8.22 and of secure group was 7.40 on sex prejudice. The t value was 1.41, which was insignificant. It indicated that the difference

between the secure and insecure group in the dimension of sex prejudice was not statistically significant.

- iv. There was no difference between secure and insecure groups on class prejudice. It means that both groups had same level of class prejudice.
- v. In total prejudice the mean scores of secure and insecure groups were respectively 28.98 and 33.60. The obtained t value was 5.37, statistically significant at .01 level. It indicated the significant difference between secure and insecure group on total prejudice.

The above result retained the first hypothesis that secure group is less prejudiced than insecure group.

Table : 2

Mean scores, SDs and t values of Secure and Insecure Boys and Girls on Prejudice Scale.

		Secure Group					Insecure Group				
		RP	CP	SP	CLP	TPS	RP	CP	SP	CLP	TPS
Boys N = 40	M	6.75	7.00	7.40	7.95	29.10	9.60	9.55	8.30	7.45	34.40
	SD	3.38	3.20	2.92	2.96	5.57	2.60	1.88	3.06	3.32	4.86
Girls N = 40	M	7.75	6.75	7.40	6.95	28.85	8.70	8.00	8.15	7.45	32.30
	SD	2.44	2.64	2.29	2.30	5.25	2.55	1.82	2.94	2.16	5.23
t		1.04NS	0.26NS	0 NS	1.16 NS	0.14 NS	1.07NS	2.58*	0.15NS	0 NS	1.29 NS

* Significant at .05 level.

NS = Not significant.

Table 2 demonstrated the mean scores, SDs and t values of boys and girls of secure and insecure groups related to four dimensions of prejudice namely, religious prejudice, caste prejudice, sex prejudice and class prejudice as well as the total prejudice. The result revealed that mean scores of both the sexes did not indicate any clearcut and consistent result. Both groups differed significantly only on Caste Prejudice Scale (t = 2.58).

Table : 3

Mean scores, SDs and t values of Boys and Girls on Prejudice Scale.

	RP			CP			SP			CLP			TPS		
	M	SD	t	M	SD	t	M	SD	t	M	SD	t	M	SD	t
Boys N=40	8.18	3.33	.08	8.28	3.05	1.48	7.85	3.02	.11	7.70	3.15	0.82	31.75	5.86	0.92
Girls N=40	8.23	2.54	NS	7.38	2.35	NS	7.78	2.66	NS	7.20	2.24	NS	30.58	5.51	NS

NS=Not Significant

The mean scores, SDs and t values of boys and girls on religious prejudice, caste prejudice, sex prejudice, class prejudice and total prejudice was presented in table 3. The results revealed that not a single t value was statistically significant out of five t values. It indicated that the level of prejudice was same in both boys and girls. Gender has no effect on prejudice.

The above result retained the second hypothesis that there was no significant difference between male and female students in prejudice scale.

Discussion

A person who feels secure about his position and status takes an objective view of any situation that he comes across. On the other hand a person with feelings of insecurity, tries to find out a person upon whom the blame of his insecurity can be put. Consequently person with higher feelings of insecurity tend to develop prejudice more than those who have lesser degrees of feelings of insecurity. Researches confirming the association of prejudice with personal insecurity are those of Morse and Allport (1952) and Gough (1951). Miller and Bugelski (1948) have reported persons with high levels of insecurity are likely to show higher levels of prejudice. Other researches indicating the association of the feelings of insecurity with prejudice are (Lindzey 1950). Fishback and Singer (1957), Cowen, Landes and Schacht (1959) reported that subjective feelings of deprivation were more indicative of intense level of prejudice than the actual experience of objective deprivation.

Sharma and Zafar (1989) describe numerous specific characteristics of insecure individuals. Insecure persons perceive the world as threatening jungle and most human beings as dangerous and selfish. They feel rejected and isolated. They are generally anxious, hostile, pessimistic and unhappy. They show signs of tension and conflicts, and troubled by guilt feelings. They have one or other disturbance of self esteem. They tend to be or actually are neurotic and are generally ego centric or selfish. In the light of these characteristics of insecure individuals, it is not surprising to find that they are more prejudiced than secure individuals.

Conclusions

- i. Secure subjects are less prejudiced than insecure subjects.
- ii. Insecure subjects had more religious and caste prejudices than secure subjects.
- iii. Gender has no effect on prejudice.

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