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PSYCHOLOGY OF INEQUALITY

by

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PSYCHOLOGY OF INEQUALITY

Somnath Chattopadhyay

Psychology of individual differences has attracted the attention of the psychologists through decades. Human differences exist; these are natural. But all these so called natural differences are not natural; many of them are artefacts of social power, economic disparity and social status with differential respect which singly or jointly create an illusion as if these differences were natural. These differences emerge as structured social inequality. The process of structuring of these inequalities and its antecedents and consequences as they operate in India, from the point of view of psychologists, have not received its due attention. This section attempts to review the relevant researches to understand the psychodynamics of inequality. Since economic inequality, specially poverty, has been dealt by Moulik (1977) in an earlier section of this chapter, the scope of this section will be restricted mainly to the issues in the domain of social inequality. The Indian constitution guarantees equality of status and opportunity to all the citizens and prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. The major focus of discussion in this paper will be reviewing the studies on these specific areas namely, (a) Physical setting, (b) Religion, race and caste (c) ~~Disability~~ and (d) Sex.

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The central theme of this paper is that social inequality is structured on the basis of structuring of the society itself. Class differentiation followed by stratification causes the inequality and more the hierarchy more the inequality. Most often the studies are directed to understand the nature and types of inequality and its relationship with important social factors like status or power, and to describe the association between the distribution and utilisation of opportunities that existed in the environment and the different types of discrimination that are practised in the country. What has not been emphasized, with any amount of concerted action, is the studying of consequential psychology of inequality.

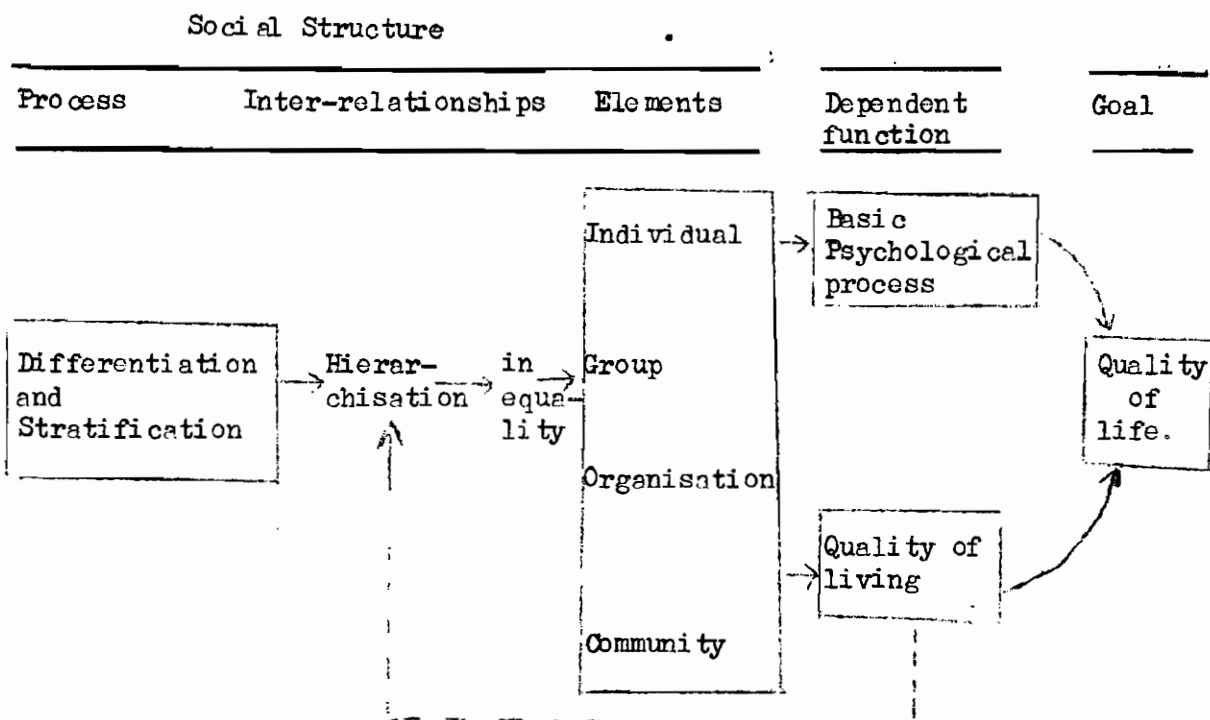
Psychology of inequality is likely to comprise a vast field. Given the hierarchies of a particular society with its concomittant inequality, it may try to understand the processes of linkage in the same class whose members are bound by class consciousness; of the arousal of class consciousness; or of generating the feeling of class antagonisms of identification of interest and the development of bonds on the basis of these class antagonisms.

Apart from intraclass and interclass relational dynamics, the domain of psychology of inequality should encompass other systemic components, namely, individual, group, organisation and community. On the one hand it should study the basic psychological processes like perception, cognition, memory, learning, emotions etc., and

on the other hand it should find out the differential nature of what Max Weber termed as life chances and styles of life, as consequences of inequality amongst the systemic components, in psychological dimensions. Extensive studies have been done on the basic or elementary psychological processes. But as a consequence of inequality do these processes change? Do two individuals or groups of individuals separated by social inequality differ in their modes of inner experience of perception, feelings, values and underlying motivations and, above all, in their own self-concept?

Life chances and styles of life have generally been interpreted more in socio-economic than in psychological parameters. Studies are made on association between inequality and life expectancy, morbidity and mortality with special reference to infant mortality, family life, marital life etc., on the one hand and the opportunity for work and employment, income and wages and facilities etc. on the other hand. What needs to be studied thoroughly is the relationship between inequality and quality of life. Does inequality affect the abilities of the individuals, including brain development and intelligence? If inequality affects an individual's health, it affects his mental health also. How does it affect his coping behaviour and his ability to adjust to and influence the environment he lives in? How does it influence the process to be, his self actualisation, his relation to other individuals, his life and living, and his life in the family, class and community?

In brief, the scope of the studies in the psychology of inequality can be portrayed in the following model:



In the structural model the elements are individuals, groups, organisations and communities. So long the society is governed by the process of differentiation and stratification, it evolves a network of hierarchy inter-linking the elements. This hierarchy gives rise to inequality. This inequality governs the elements. For the study of psychology of inequality the dependent functions can be viewed as psychological process and quality of living. Basic psychological processes and quality of living together determine the quality of life. Quality of life includes life chances and styles of life where the sense of direction is freedom and emancipation from all sorts of deprivation, discrimination and exploitation, where the head is held high in the fulness of life. Quality of life

is conceptualised as idealised, state of human existence and is therefore governed by the normative values preferred by the individual provided he is absolutely free to exercise his choices. Quality of living denotes, not the idealised state, but the existential level in which an individual finds himself at a given point of time. Quality of living has also a tendency in a cyclic manner to perpetuate the inequality in the absence of fundamental changes in the social structure. This tendency exerts a secondary influence and therefore has been depicted in the model by dotted lines. The specific issues of inequalities in the perspective of this model, will be discussed.

A. INEQUALITY AND PHYSICAL SETTING

The Indian constitution guarantees against any discrimination on the grounds of place of birth. But the place of one's birth, with all its attendant conditions, perhaps is the most critical factor that determines one's life opportunities. In a society which is by and large closed, where mobility is extremely limited, where class and caste, status and power, opportunities and liabilities are ascribed as birth marks than acquired, the home where one is born and the place of birth continue to play a very significant role in the life chances of an individual. Even when one takes the place of birth in its geographical sense, as a physical setting, its relationship with inequality is obvious though the nature and extent of the correlation and the impact of one on the other have not been empirically established. To illustrate the point, an example may

be cited. Do the people in the lower level of the society create the slums or the slums foster them? Or do the people and the slum have a stable, mutually reinforcing, symbiotic relationship between them characterised by a micro-culture complete with its own hierarchy, so that any attempt of social intervention is likely to be futile, if the intervention does not aim at drastic restructuring of the total existence?

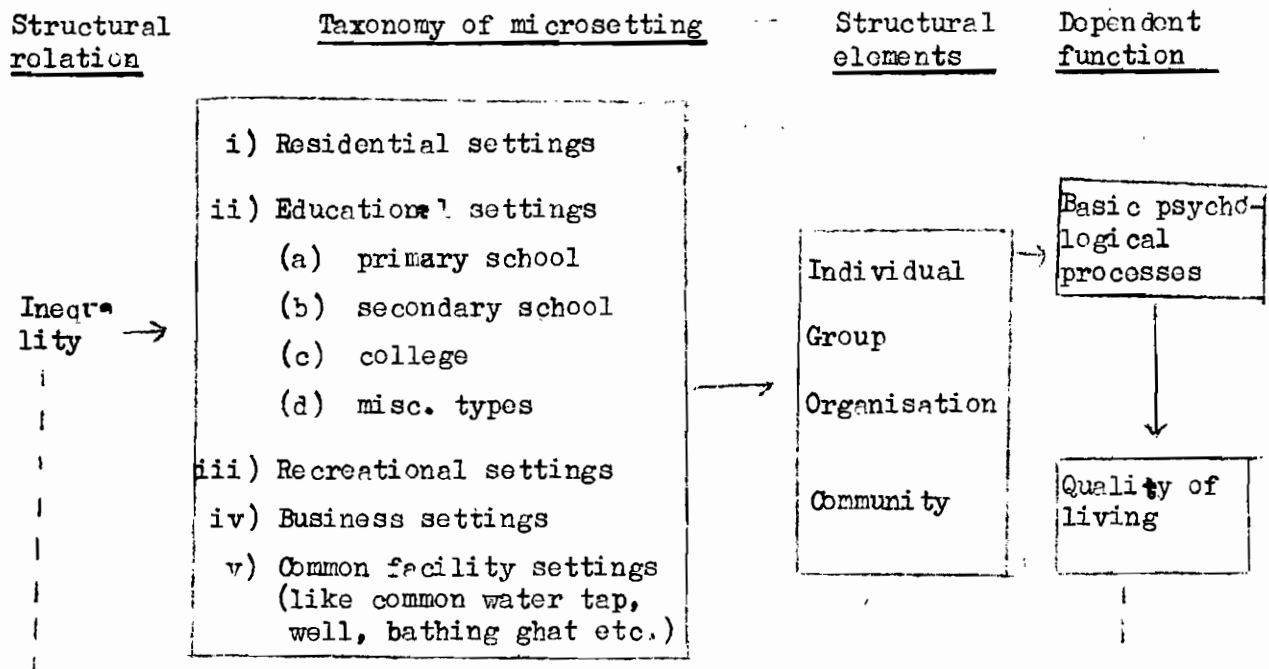
When one speaks of physical setting, one is of course talking about environment. Two new disciplines, ecological psychology (Barker, 1963, 1968) in the sixties and environmental psychology (Proshansky et. al., 1970; Ittelson, 1973; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) in the seventies have emerged. To trace the history of environmental psychology one may even go back to Koffka or Murray or Lewin in the thirties. One can hardly differentiate clearly between ecological psychology and environmental psychology. The discipline is just emerging now; in India it has not even been initiated.

Environmental psychology is of immense significance in the study of psychology of inequality. Though scientists are obliged to do good in minute particulars, the psychologists in India would be justified if they take up macro issues of larger social significance. To cite an example, since independence millions of people have been uprooted and attempts are still on to rehabilitate them. They have been uprooted by a variety of events, ranging from partition, wars, calamities, construction of dams etc. to the clearance of slums.

What happens to the people while they are being rehabilitated or later?
The psychological processes in rehabilitation and quality of living could have been studied as two dependent variables.

Every year natural calamities like floods and droughts disrupt the habitat of the people in some part of the country. These events affects the lives of individuals, groups and the communities. Economic costs of these are computed. One hopes social scientists will compute the psychological costs some day.

Apart from these dynamic settings, one can visualise systematic studies of the so called stable and static physical settings. In the background of the model presented earlier, a further paradigm of study can be developed. The physical settings can be broadly classified into two groups, urban settings and rural settings. The urban and rural settings connote only differentiation and not hierarchisation. Each one of these can be further sub-divided into micro-settings. This is elaborated as follows:



In the above paradigm, the three variables have been linked together namely, the physical settings, the elements and the consequent dependent functions. The physical settings have been sub-divided into a number of micro-settings on the basis of bivariate combination of space and activities. Here the attention is being drawn to treat the physical settings itself as a subject matter of study. Proshansky et. al. (1970) commented: "...the physical environment has been conceived as a given rather than as a source of parameters for understanding human behaviour. The scientific literature abounds in descriptions of ghettos as a prelude to examining them as socio-cultural systems generating given sets of values and relevant behaviors. But systematic studies of the behavioural consequences of ghettos as physical settings are indeed" (p.173). This model emphasises the study of physical settings themselves as the impact generating, influencing, intervening and sometimes immediately causative variable. The same model of studying physical setting can be applied mutatis mutandis both in urban and rural settings. The few examples in operationalising the model may be in order.

In Delhi, Defence Colony, Sevanagar and the village Kotla Mubarakpur are three adjacent residential settings in the same geographical area. How do three children, one from each micro setting, grow up? How do they perceive and experience the environment and how do the different psychological processes affect each one of them? What would be the quality of their lives at the various point of time in their life? The same questions can be asked about the groups and the communities

in the areas. Similarly, to study the impact of another micro setting, viz., school setting, one may take up two children from the same parents and the same home, keeping every other variable in control as far as possible. Suppose one studies in a public school with selected limited students, with vast playgrounds, imposing buildings, clean class-rooms with imaginative wall decorations, with windows open to fresh air and light; while the other studies in a government aided school which may not have any playground or open space, with crowded classrooms having windows with broken panes and dirty floors. What impact the two settings create in the development of two children may deserve critical attention of the scientists.

Another illustration which may arouse some concern is the new trend in construction - high rise residential buildings. These may be feats in civil engineering. But one wonders what happens to the psychology of individuals living in such buildings. Would some scientists think of the children on say, the eighth floor, and their social, psychological environment? Will it help in making them better individuals? Who knows? Even for the adults living in a multi-storeyed building, if one adds another associated variable, the locale, and thinks of multi-storeyed buildings in Thana, Dadar and Malabar Hills in Bombay, will the experience and the life styles of the three occupants be the similar? Most possibly not.

One may cite another illustration. A person may migrate from a village and take up an unskilled job, say as a sweeper in a hospital, which he is capable of doing, while another individual equal to him in all vital respects remains in the village. If one compares the quality of life between the two, the physical setting itself may produce devastating difference. The man in the village, it may still be hypothesised, will have an identity, recognition and importance of his own, while the other in the city will be a non-entity.

Crowding, particularly in the residential setting and more particularly in the domestic setting, where a number of persons of all age groups - old and young, male and female - concentrate in a single room year after year, is an every-day reality in an urban setting. Crowding is everywhere - at home and neighbourhood, parks and playground, theatres and cinema halls, temples and mosques, markets and streets, on the bus and the train and both at the bathing and burning ghats. How does this crowding affect life? It is a common place belief that slums inhibit the mental development of the children living there. A detailed study to bring out empirically the extent of the damage that is being done to these children and raise it from the notional to the factual level is needed. Are there specific factors in slum dwelling that inhibit the mental growth and condition of the socialising process or is it the total experience that is responsible? Answers to some of these questions may help tremendously in changing the situation.

Similar issues can be raised regarding rural setting. For example, several studies have been done on the socialisation process, but one does not get a clear picture of the variations in that process. There is hardly any literature on the impact of rural environment on the mental development. What are the factors in the Indian rural setting that contribute to the quality of life, positively and negatively. The few studies that have been conducted in rural environment, put emphasis by and large, on the elitist group. It is high time that studies are undertaken to help understand the rural environment comprehensively and to facilitate planning out strategies for action intervention.

If any worthwhile study on environmental psychology has been initiated in India, it is around organisations. The organisational climate or environment has been the subject matter of a few social scientists. This has been reported in a chapter by Sinha (1977) in this volume. But here again one finds studies only on industrial and commercial organisations. The variety of human organizations being affected by environment has not yet been studied. However, a beginning has been made.

One may present numerous illustrations of the types of studies that may be undertaken to pursue the research model suggested. But it may be worthwhile to examine some of the studies that have already been made in this context.

Singhal (1969) studied environmental variants and intellectual performance of young children. He studied 276 students from high, middle and low education and SES group of their parents. The differences were not significant. But these scores differed significantly when children of parents from middle and low and high and low levels were compared.

Home environment and child development have been studied by Muralidharan (1970). She studied children from low stimulation group and children from high stimulation group which were the two categories made on the basis of leisure time activities of parents, quality of food, availability of toys, availability of picture books, and availability of space. Two observers rated the children on activity level, socio-emotional, intellectual, motor and language development. The children from higher economic status homes scored higher than the other group. Attendance was related to intellectual development in higher status groups and with language and social development in lower socio-economic status group.

The effects of noise in the environment on the task performance in a class-room situation were studied by Kumar and Mathur (1969 a). The results were not conclusive though they found that for working on a mental task noise stress was more disturbing. They also studied neuroticism as a factor in noise distractibility (Kumar and Mathur, 1969 b). A significant study was made to determine factors in social environment as related to emotional security-insecurity syndrome (Bhan, 1971). The study was conducted amongst the post-graduate students.

A time has come when researchers need to move out from the classrooms to the open life in the society. Because by drawing samples from school, college and university classes, they are studying, by definition, the elitist class who can afford to send their boys and girls to these institutions. Is it too difficult for them to cut across the whole range of social inequalities? The paucity of researches on environment on social life may indicate that the Indian psychologists are not in touch with the contemporary social realities.

B. INEQUALITY AND RELIGION, RACE, CASTE

A number of studies have been conducted in the area which fit into the general model proposed earlier. The studies are on differentiation, stratification, hierarchisation and on the consequent inequality on the one hand and the quality of life, life chances and styles of life of individuals, groups, caste-groups and the community on the other hand. Some of the major studies are, for example, of Miller (1975), Dwivedi (1974), Lakshmana (1973). True, these are excellent studies, but their major focus of attention was on the sociological perspectives. They have not studied from psychological parameters, the impact of inequality on psychological processes and the quality of living.

Before reviewing the studies on religion and caste with reference to inequality, studies on stereotypes, and prejudices followed by those on caste, are presented below.

Stereotypes

Shambhoopriya (1971) studied the stereotypes of Munda boys and girls towards the three non-tribal caste people. The scale was prepared on the basis of Gapper test. The stereotypes towards the Rajput Brahmin and Kayastah communities were ambivalent.

Anant studied the stereotypes of Hindus about different religious groups (1971 a) and educated North Indians about different ethnic groups (1971 b) and also later on the provincial and regional stereotypes in India (1973). In his study of the religious groups he found that the favourableness of the trait attribute to different groups depended upon the level of acceptability of the group to the respondents. Continuing his study on the stereotypes he found that more positive traits were attributed by the respondents to the residents of neighbouring states and more negative traits were assigned to economically backward states. Farmers assessed more favourably the neighbouring provincial groups than the distant ones.

Sharma (1971) employed the questionnaire by Arnhoff et.al. to study the attitudes towards old people and a cross cultural comparison revealed that the respondents in Indian states had more negative stereotypes towards the older people than in the U.S. It also revealed that the stereotypes of studies samples from India, United States, Japan, Puertorico, Sweden, Greece and England were negative towards older people in the areas of conservatism, personality and interference.

Rath and Mohanty (1972) studied occupational stereotypes and preferences. 320 students of Utkal University were asked to indicate the preference for different occupations on the basis of 60 selected traits. The subjects were asked to add adjectives of their own and also to rank order their preference for the 10 occupations listed — school teachers, college teachers, engineers, doctors, magistrates, lawyers, clerks, police officers, businessmen and politicians. The data revealed considerable agreement in ascribing traits to different occupational groups. School teachers were assigned 2 unfavourable traits, engineers 4, magistrates 7, doctors 1, businessmen 10, clerks 6, lawyers 4, politicians 18, college teachers 0 and police officers 12. The rank correlation between the sections of the sex group was not significant. A highly significant correlation between the trait ratios and scale values for different occupations showed that the nature of stereotypes can be an important factor in determining the occupational ranking. Sinha and Krishna (1972) found that no significant differences existed between the caste prejudices of high and low levels of interest amongst the graduate students. Sarma (1973) in his study of 52 Madras College students demonstrated that intolerance of ambiguity was a correlate of prejudice.

Prejudice

Singh and Krishna (1971) in a study of 120 post-graduate students pertaining to six different castes using Maslow SI Inventory found that the main prejudice for the high security group was

higher than the main prejudice for the low security group. The caste prejudice and the extent of insecurity were found to be significantly associated. Differences in perception of caste distance were also significant. Kayasthas disliked Kurmis most but felt nearer to Brahmins, but disliked Yadavs but were nearer to Rajputs. Bhumihars disliked Kurmis most but were little nearer to the Brahmins.

Ganguli (1972) commenting on prejudice and its social consequences observed that to provide more adequate explanation for a given inter-group situation, it may be necessary to have more than one theory. A good remedial programme should aim at changing the social structure through changes in discriminatory practices and influencing the personality structure of the people. It is desirable to make a beginning in changing intergroup behaviour by removing discriminatory loss, customs, conventions etc., and control the expression of the feelings between groups.

Sinha and Hassan (1975) studied some personality correlates of social prejudice. Prejudice, it was observed, was a generalised form of attitude characterised by a tendency to reject the other outgroups. Prejudiced personality was characterised by authoritarianism, anxiety and intolerance of ambiguity.

Hassan (1975) also found in his study of religious prejudice among college students that a greater number of high prejudiced students came from the Muslim group. High and low prejudiced students did not differ significantly with respect to their high or low caste status. High prejudiced group scored higher on authoritarianism and anxiety scales.

Religion and Caste

Intelligence is a subject matter of special interest to psychologists and the issue of intelligence is very significant in caste differences. Kundu (1970) in his study compared the intelligence test scores of Bhil and high caste Hindu delinquents and non-delinquents and found that Bhil delinquents differed significantly in intelligence scores from Bhil non-delinquents on Bhatias test. Similarly, high caste Hindu delinquents and non-delinquents differed significantly in the test scores.

Concept formulation is another significant psychological process. Misra (1970) in a comparative study of religio-caste differences in concept formation ability of young adults found that Muslim students scored higher than Hindu students in both the tests. There were not significant differences between the different caste groups except that the scheduled caste students had the lowest concept formation ability.

Aggarwal (1971) examines the tensions generated by the changing inter-caste relationship, new religious affiliations, vacillating political assignments and increased tempo of economic activity from the perspective of a village community.

Mutuality of perception is a necessary facet in social relationship. Deshpande (1972) evaluated the perception of Caste Hindus towards Harijans by using Bogardus social distance scale

and found that Caste Hindu families were more reluctant to accept Harijans. Literacy seemed to be an important factor in bridging the gap between Harijans and Caste Hindus.

By far the most significant study on social psychological processes was conducted by Banerjee and Pareek (1973). In a sample of pre-adolescent subjects in Hindu, Bohra, Bhil and Meena communities they studied the adjustment, dependency and trust behaviour and found that the Hindu students scored significantly high in trusting behaviour than Bohra students and in school adjustment, peer adjustment, and total adjustment than tribal students. Bohra students also showed greater adjustment in peer adjustment and total adjustment in comparison to tribal students.

Scheduled Castes

Since thirties, provisions for scheduled caste and tribes have been considered in different forums. After independence in 1947 a number of provisions in the constitution have been made and the objectives of public policies have been stated. Dubey and Mathur (1972) discussed the public policy provisions responsible for the creation of ameliorative programme for the scheduled caste and the anomalies in the administrative structure responsible for the implementation of the programme. To improve the educational opportunities for scheduled castes, Chitnis (1972) felt that the effort to educate the scheduled castes had led to the perpetuation of old inequalities

and the creation of some new ones. The author portrayed this backwardness in terms of four features, viz. poor enrolment, poor retention, enrolment in inferior institutions and poor performance. The educational opportunity created, according to the author, an entirely new problem in the form of inequalities among the scheduled castes. Ganesh Chander and Dubey (1973) studied the administration of backward class hostels in Andhra Pradesh. Pandit (1974) studied the literacy among the scheduled castes of Maharashtra. Sharma (1974) studied the educational inequalities among the Rajasthan scheduled castes. He analysed three factors - enrolment, hostels and scholarships. He pointed out the disparities between the scheduled caste and general population; between the various scheduled castes; and amongst scheduled castes in a particular district or area. In the administration of facilities generally the children of scheduled caste elite families were benefited; and this led to increasing intra-scheduled caste inequalities.

Some of the policy issues and the aspects of social change involving the scheduled castes have been discussed by Shakir (1974), Ramaswamy (1974), Kulkarni (1974), Premi (1974), D'Souza (1975 a) and Saradamoni (1976). Premi (1974) was of the opinion that educational progress of the scheduled castes was possible (specially at post-school stage) due to the special facilities and preferences provided by law on their behalf. Yet, the success was partial as known by the parity ratios at all levels, specially at higher levels.

Ironically, certain new inequalities were creeping up among the scheduled castes themselves. Mere existence of facilities did not ensure their optimum use. Awareness and acceptance were essential for utilisation. To maximise the use it was necessary to generate better awareness.

In a study of self-identity amongst scheduled castes in Andhra it was observed that in terms of social and economic status there were clear differences among the scheduled castes. There was a well recognized hierarchy among them. Not all of them were untouchables: even among those who were, there were degrees of pollution. There were, also religious cleavages among the scheduled castes.

Mathur (1975) examined some of the resources of the forms of discrimination amongst scheduled castes in Uttar Pradesh and found that the implementation of the existing policy for scheduled caste people had not been satisfactory. Khan (1975) critically reviewed Gandhi on castes and untouchability and observed that the approach to the problem of untouchability was basically wrong. Dang (1976) observed on the issue of job reservation for scheduled caste that there must be economic policies which would break the power of the vested interests. The scheduled caste should have greater participation in implementing progressive policies. The policy of the reservation of jobs ~~must~~ continue and should be extended to the private sector.

Aggarwal P.C. and Ashraf M.S. (1976) studied 500 household heads, covering the state of Haryana, to examine the special privileges programme for scheduled castes. They tried to find out the degree how much of awareness in them about their special privileges, number of people benefited, their identity, and the future direction of the programme.

Scheduled Tribes

Most of the researches on the scheduled tribes have been done by anthropologists. A few significant psychological studies have been done by Banerjee and Pareek (1973), on the psychological processes of adjustment, dependency and trust, and collaboration and competition as well as on their motivation particularly on achievement and by Gokulnathan and Mehta (1972). Gokulnathan and Mehta studied the achievement motive in tribal and non-tribal Assamese secondary schools and found that tribal pupils obtained significantly higher n Ach than non-tribals. Girls showed higher achievement tendencies than boys. Tribals, girls, rural children who showed greater n Ach than their respective counterparts came mostly from middle and low SES families. However, SES did not show any definite relationship for achievement. These observations are striking in many respects and deserve special attention of intellectuals and planners of action.

As with the scheduled castes, so with the scheduled tribes, some policy issues have been discussed by Kulkarni (1975), Naidu

(1975), Banerjee (1975), and Biswas (1975). Banerjee (1975) pointed out that the experiments with the placatory measure had proved to be a dismal failure. He observed that the hard-headed tribals were developing a cynical attitude to all the bureaucratic exercises, having given up their hope of getting a plot of land.

C. INEQUALITY AND DISABILITY

Serious mental or physical disability arising out of war, accidents or by birth, though commonly arouses sympathy or pity has never commanded enough influence in the society to improve the social or economic status or to improve substantially the quality of living. No thorough study has been noticed to map the extent and character of economic and material deprivation of the disabled persons. But even before doing that, it is necessary to study the nature and extent of serious disability in the population.

Following the paradigm presented earlier it may be considered that the individuals affected by disability do not form a class by themselves. Rather, the consequential impact of disability on the person is to a great extent determined by the class to which he belongs and the economic resources he has access to. From the point of view of study of psychology of inequality, it may be of tremendous interest to compare the psychological processes and quality of living concomittant to the disability of the persons from different social strata as well as comparative analysis between the "normal" and the disabled.

Another significant area of study may be the attitudes of "the normals" in the community towards the disabled and the emotional deprivation felt by the disabled. The disabled may elicit responses from others which are stereotyped, inhibited and over-controlled. As a consequence he may have difficulty in sensitivity and human relationship, increased social distance and negative self evaluation. He may be hyper-sensitive, and in some cases he may be under-sensitive. He may be lonely and alienated and exhibit defensive reactions.

Banerjee, Dutta, Chatterjee and Mukherjee in 1970 investigated the interest pattern of deaf children. They found that the averages of the scales for a group of deaf children were significantly higher than the corresponding averages for normal school children on scales on interest areas like fine arts, agriculture, outdoor sports and household work. The averages for the normal children were higher than those for the deaf children on the scales of interest areas like scientific, medical and technical. Almost similar preferences were expressed towards literary work. Regarding their intelligence, Abrol, Vagrecha and Saxena (1973) studied the intelligence of 200 subjects having impairment of hearing and found that they were intellectually subnormal because of arrested development to cerebral functions.

The personality of the blind through Maudsley Personality Inventory was evaluated by Jain, Gupta and Singh (1972) who found that the blind were less extrovert in comparison to the sighted ones.

Critical deprivation of sight, they concluded, did not produce any personality changes.

D. INEQUALITY AND SEX

Differentiation on the basis of sex does not imply stratification and does not necessarily lead to inequality. Domestic work by women at home and wage earning work by their male spouses outside can obviously be differentiated ~~but~~ cannot necessarily be hierarchised. The crucial problem, however, is when women are treated not as persons but as objects of property whose labour is ~~cont~~rolled by the male. Then they become victims of exploitation. Being objects of exploitation and thus of inequality how do women perceive it? The psychodynamics of ~~women~~ from this point of view would be of special interest. In a predominantly patriarchal society, the life chances and quality of living the women experience deserve attention. From this point of view the studies undertaken will be reviewed here.

A significant dimension in the study of inequality and sex is the status of women. Mukherjee (1974, 1975 a, 1975 b) has made very significant contribution in this area. Mukherjee (1974), on the basis of the findings of a sample survey conducted in Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya, reached a number of conclusions regarding the status of women.

Despite improvements in the legal status of women over the last century, equal rights and responsibilities were still denied to them. Status in the home was found to be positively related to

educational level of the respondent. Substantial proportions of women in the survey were found to be unaware of some of their basic rights. It called for a familiarisation programme. There was no significant relationship between gainful employment status and self-perceived status at home. The final conclusion emerging out of the survey was that although a substantial portion of married women were gainfully employed, the traditional definition of the female role had not changed much.

Mukherjee (1975 a) on the basis of a survey on the status of women, sponsored by United Nations, stated that women were not aware of their right for equal wages for equal work. In rural areas of Tamil Nadu, Haryana, and Meghalaya only three per cent of the married women were aware of this right. The right for legal abortion was the next least known law in the rural areas. However, the right for inheritance was known to a large percentage of respondents both in Haryana and Tamil Nadu. An overall findings of the study revealed a marked ignorance on the part of women about their own rights. This has an important implication for social change. It is no wonder that social change in India where about 80 per cent of the total population still live in villages comes so slowly. To make it speedy, people must be aware of their own rights and duties. If on the other hand, people do not care to know even about the basic human rights, legislation cannot function as tool for social change; something else is necessary.

Mukherjee (1975 b) attempted to conceptualise status of women as a multidimensional construct. He interviewed 1,872 married women in the reproductive age for an extensive study. In four out of six samples, the first factor which emerged clearly was 'self-perceived status'. The second factor was 'decision making power' of the wife. Another common factor which appeared in quite a few study areas was defined generally by the respondent education, her employment status and the number of utility items possessed by the respondent. One specific factor was ownership of house.

The changing socio-economic status and self-image of women have been studied by Muricken (1975). In an analysis of several studies conducted in three metropolitan centres in Kerala, he concluded that most women in Kerala live under male dominance and were hampered by traditional, cultural and religious taboos. Education by itself was not enough to liberate women. Only a strong mass based movement organised by an enlightened female leadership, he felt, would be able to provide women the freedom and equality to work in partnership with men for their mutual development. The emphasis here implied that the men and women were class enemies. Confusion in basic premises in analysis diffuses the conclusion.

The image and status of women in some major religious traditions have been studied by King (1975). Minattur (1975) was of the opinion that radical change in the attitudes of women induced by an awareness of their constitutional rights will be the first

step in the complex process of transforming the social structure so that women may enjoy full equality with men in every sphere of life. Nischal (1976) studied the images of women and girls in school text-books on English language and observed that women in these textbooks are "invisible" having names only and are assigned a few roles most of which are confined to the family. Girls are shown as passive without intellectual interests, helpless and usually playing and working segregated from boys. But, for whom and by whom these English textbooks have been created?

Women and Marital Status

In a study of the preferred characteristics and occupations involved in marital choice of males and females, Singh N.P. (1972) found that boys and girls differ a great deal in respect of their preferences. Whereas 73 percent boys showed preference for chastity in girls, 53 per cent girls showed preference for men of character. Lalithambal (1973) conducted a study of widows in comparison with married and unmarried women and found that the widows did not differ significantly from other women in self or role concept.

Women and Work

Jauhari (1970) studied the status of working women in Lucknow. She found that in spite of social progress and increased education, working women perceived that the society was highly critical of them. Financial difficulties was the most dominant reason for taking up a job. Earning and level of education were **not** found to be

correlated. About 50 per cent of the women did not show satisfaction with their jobs; 48 per cent perceived their bosses as accommodating; 70 per cent thought that they get along well with their co-workers. Unmarried girls indicated a strong desire for marriage. In another study of career and family women, in the two roles, K.P. Singh (1972) viewed that a majority of women were working purely due to economic reasons and 9 per cent were working to use their knowledge. Only 25 per cent expressed full satisfaction with the time they devote to their children whereas 75 per cent felt that they really could not devote proper attention to their children and home as the major part of the day was spent outside the house.

A comparative study of the attitudes of working and non-working women towards women's education and employment was conducted by Singh (1974). He observed that women were capable of taking up all types of jobs, hence there should be no restrictions. But teaching and medicine were the most desirable jobs for them. In a study to assess the pattern of family behaviour and attitude among urban middle class women in Ahmedabad, Wood (1975) observed that characteristics of women who were most likely to assume roles outside the home and manifest ~~no~~ traditional attitudes within the home, were that they are the youngest or the only daughters, or they were raised in "fatherless family" and those who have experience in significant economic loss. Employment seeking women were most likely to make marriages of their own choice, to have small

families and follow the principles of their households in an egalitarian manner. Rituals pertaining to daily and life cycle events became abbreviated or omitted for the homes of the employed women.

D'Souza (1975 b) postulated two hypotheses in the family work participation. One hypothesis was that the women worked because of the low income of their menfolk, secondly that in the socio-economic growth of the society proportions of occupations of higher prestige which was on the whole increasing was at the cost of occupations of lower prestige.

Gulati found that the inter-state differences in family work participation could not be explained in terms of income group pattern, literacy, male participation, scheduled caste and tribe population or differing sex ratios.

Sex and Teaching Roles

The sex differences in the impact of training on the values and attitudes of student teachers have been studied by Verma (1971) and he found that the male teachers gained more than the women teachers on theoretical, aesthetic and social values.

Buch and Santhanam (1971) found that the female teachers talked less and allowed the students to talk more. Teacher question ratio was found to be more in the class where the teacher is a female. In the case of content-cross ratio the males were found to bear a heavier brunt than the females.

Students and Sex Difference

Pathak (1970) found that the difference between boys and girls were significant on health, social and emotional adjustments but not significant on home and school adjustments. Pathak (1972) made a comparative study in the areas of adjustment among popular, isolated and rejected boys and girls and found that the popular and rejected girls showed a significant difference in all areas of adjustment. Kohli (1972) found no significant sex differences in his study on learning.

In his study on sex and caste evaluation as source of variation in significant achievement of adolescence, Sharma (1972) found that adolescent boys fared better than the adolescent girls.

Shitra (1970) enquired into the social background of some undergraduate women students in Mysore city and found that opportunities of getting higher education was mostly for the students from upper income group, higher educational and occupational strata and dominant castes. Their attitude towards caste system, inter-caste marriage, divorce, were very liberal, but they were very traditional in regard to their own marriage outside caste.

In a survey of attitudes, Chatterjee and Mukherjee (1972) found that the girls had more positive attitude in science, mathematics and mechanical work than the boys, studying in different streams of class 7-9. In a study involving four thousand boys and girls in Delhi, Chandigarh, Faridabad and Ambala, Mattoo (1972)

studied the adjustment difference at different levels of general intelligence and socio-economic studies among urban, adolescent boys and girls and found that two sexes did not differ from one another in any area of adjustment, except in the sphere of emotional adjustment. De and Jaiswal (1972) in a study on the sex difference in values preferences of adolescent students found that girls were significantly superior than the boys on the aesthetic values whereas boys were superior to the girls on social values. Kathuria and Sinha (1972) studied the relationship between vocational maturity aspirations and prestige among female graduate students and found no correlation in the three variables.

Sex Differences and Other Personality Variables

A number of studies have been done where sex difference has been taken as a variable of study. Gokulanathan (1970) studied the sex differences in the level of achievement motivation among secondary school students of two upper Assam plains district. Pandey and Singh (1971) studied the effect of sex and culture on achievement motivation. Prakash and Shyam (1974) made a TAT study of the orphan boys and girls.

Tiwari and Sharma (1970) studied interest modality as a function of aggression. Sharma and Tiwari studied the values as a function of regression and sex. Singh (1970) studied the sex and age difference in perceptibility. Doshpande (1971) studied the

sex difference on Raven's matrices test. Sex differences in children's preference for colours were studied by Sinha, Krishna and Sinha (1971).

In one study Muthayya and Reddy (1973) found that females maintained less favourable attitudes to change in agriculture than males. Therefore, any innovation in agriculture should not only take into account that attitudes of males but also of the females in the households so that it will be possible to orient the information on new agricultural practice and methods to both males and females as that would create the necessary attitude and help the process of agricultural development.

A number of papers, essays, and articles have been written by different authors during the international women year on the status of women. But hardly any empirical study has been reported except the ICSSR venture on studies on status of women.

Sharadamoni (1975) (a, b, c, d) repeatedly ventured to state that life cannot be meaningful, rich and full so long as women were confined to the hearth. Joint participation of men and women in directing and accelerating the socio-economic process in the country would enable a woman to establish something of her inherent inhibitions and weaknesses. To alter the status women should feel and act like a fully developed independent human being, confident of herself and of her future. Banerjee (1975 b)

reported about liberation of Indian women. Patel (1975) brought out a world profile of women using selected economic and social indicators: women constitute one half of the world population; one-third of the world labour force; perform nearly two-thirds of all work hours and according to some estimates receive only one-tenth of the world income. Chitnis (1975) discussed the significant objectives of international women's year in terms of equality, development and differences in Indian situation where she urged for participation of women in different spheres of activities, redefinition of sex roles and consequences for the family assertion of equal rights. Haksar (1976) thought that equal rights for women cannot be had without a fight. It should mean the beginning of an intensive struggle at international, national and personal levels. Jain (1975) edited a number of essays on the various aspects of Indian women's life in which the papers were presented by Romila Thapar, Andre Beteille, Ashok Rudra and Shamala Pappu. According to Thapar, ".... through a variety of protests, has sensitised..... the role of women in society at various levels, from the most banal to the most esoteric and has illumined areas of human and social relationships". To Andre Beteille it is easy to be beguiled by lists of eminent women, but the major changes in the position of the women of India cannot be brought about unless the conditions of work in agriculture and industry are changed radically. In the view of Ashok Rudra, the women of

modern India is an enigma. According to Shamala Pappu the equality clause in the constitution has made little or no impact on the social and economic life of women in India. A woman continues to be a dependent - economically, socially and even psychologically. She demands drastic alteration in the legal provisions relating to her.

During 1974-75 a number of publications were brought out by the efforts of the government and other institutions. Government of India (1974) appointed a Committee on the status of women which published a very comprehensive report released in February 1975. ICSSR (1975) offered a short summary of the report. Devaki Jain (1975) from the Publications Division brought out the revised version of the earlier book published by the government of India in 1958. The present collection has been compiled around the issues in seventies. Labour Bureau (1975) of the Government of India brought a publication based on the U.N. declaration and its emphasis on the equality of women in all socio-economic spheres. Department of Social Welfare brought out a compendium of programmes for women in India. Ministry of Education and Social Welfare (1975), Government of India brought out a statistical profile of Indian women and the Central Institute of Research and Training in Public Cooperation (1975) also released a publication on women in India. All these publications taken together provide a very rich resources material for any researcher on the status of women in India.

There are a number of others who have dealt with the issues around women in India during the last few years. They are Alfred (1975), Asthana (1974), Beg (1976), Bhasin (1971), Billington (1973), Devaki Jain (1975), Kapur (1974), Kapur (1970), Mukherjee (1972) Rao (1970), Sengupta (1970), and Young Women's Christian Association of India (1971).

The traditional and modern roles of women in society was empirically stated by Alfred (1975). Asthana (1974) traced the women's movement in India from vedic times to the present day. She pointed out the role played by the leading men and women of the nation in this movement. The role of women in politics was also dealt with. She concluded that since independences women's movement had slowed down. Beg (1976) discussed the role of Indian women as 'Shakti' and 'Sati' symbolising power and self-destruction. She has the power to dominate as well as is the victim of the male dominance in which society also joins in the process of victimisation. The various roles of women were surveyed by Bhasin (1971). Billington (1973) tried to understand the inner life of Indian women in matters of crucial importance like religion, education, marriage, divorce etc. An excellent empirical study has been done by Pramila Kapur in two parts at two different points of time. Kapur's first study (1970), was based on a field investigation of 300 working women of Delhi to find out various

factors affecting the marital adjustment of educated working women. The second study of her (1974) dealt with changing attitude and status of working women in India. Mukherjee (1972) studied the social status of North Indian women during the Moghul period. Rao (1970) provided a sanskritised version of the roles and rights of Indian women from the scriptures which is a logical extension of her earlier work on the status of women in Vedas. Sankar Sen Gupta (1970) who studied Indian folklore in great depth brought out the study of women of Bengal based on literary and other evidences. Y.W.C.A. (1971) brought out a study of educated women in Indian Society.

Having surveyed, the studies on the four areas, viz., physical setting, religion; race and caste; disability and sex, an interesting experimental social psychological study on some psychological process generated by inequality by Sinha (1975) is worth mentioning. He tried to study the reaction of the rich people if the poor around them demand half of the property. Sixty pairs of boys and 56 pairs of girls participated in it in the first phase. One of the pair members was made rich and the other poor by manipulating the payoff matrix of a modified Prisoners' Dilemma Game. Thereafter, the poor partner (as instructed) asked his adversary to transfer half of his scores or face a role-reversal which was sure to make him poorer. Majority agreed to yield; but not due to sense of equity or compassion. The cut-throat-competition and retaliation were the most frequently and trust and forgiveness the least

frequently used strategies. The overall picture of the sequence of strategies showed a general drift towards non-cooperative and mutually detrimental strategies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion one or two words need to be stated. The problem of inequality has been of crucial concern to the philosophers, economists, political scientists and anthropologists and particularly to the sociologists through centuries. Sociological literature is full with the theme of social equality and its concomittant issues like its philosophy, stratification, hierarchy, class and caste and so on. Aristotle in his politics stated that "It is thus clear that there are by nature free men and slaves, and that servitude is agreeable and just for the latter..... Equally, the relation of the male to the female is by nature such that one is superior and the other inferior, one dominates and the other is dominated..... the barbarian and the slave are by nature the same." Aristotle was concerned to examine the nature of inequality. This was followed by numerous thinkers, from Rousseau to Marx and Engels. The central point in their thoughts was the original equality of man with man. Many of them held property as the sole cause of inequality; some brought in other factors. Subsequent to Marx and Max Weber, most of the students of social issues became involved with the phenomenon of inequality, and the search for its meaning and implication and the strategy for action intervention became

intensified. Seen from this perspective it is distressing to observe that in the domain of psychological enquiry, it has not yet become a major preoccupation of the psychologists. It is perhaps high time that psychologists pay attention to this critical area of human existence.

The survey also shows that psychology of inequality per se, has escaped the attention of Indian psychologists. In their studies variables like age, sex, rural-urban living, socio-economic status, education and income and similar other indices denoting differentiation and inequality are invariably included. But it seems that this is done almost without any purpose, any meaning, and only as a routinised ritual. If it was done with a purpose, one would have seen attempts to consolidate some of the findings in an integrative effort.

Thirdly, the individual pieces of researches are quite often so disjointed and discrete that any attempt to put them together in a meaningful construct may justifiably seem to be a hopeless task. As a result one does not obtain a theoretical proposition of the psychology of inequality. On the other hand in India a great deal has been thought and said on the issue of inequality through centuries that it is quite possible to propound theoretical constructs for better understanding of the Indian society. Ganguli (1976) has done an excellent job in compiling the nineteenth century Indian thoughts on equality. About a

hundred years ago, the famous Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1876) wrote a sociological essay on 'Sanya' (equality) which still maintains its richness and relevance in the contemporary society. This may be the first serious writing on equality in India. If it can be written then, why not now? One may suspect that in the name of scientific enquiry and empiricism, one is so much constrained by the methodological considerations of research that he becomes its prisoner and cannot rise above it. After all creative ideas and concepts may not be replaced by research protocols.

Lastly, the research on inequality perhaps requires not only the intense social awareness but strong moral commitment on the part of the researcher. Although Andre Beteille (1969) has raised doubts about the decline of social inequality, one has to examine it from one's own point of view and arrive at his own conclusion. Today one can ill afford to be an innocent bystander or a neutral observer. Even with a stand of the so-called value free objectivity of scientism, one is expected to have concern for this grim reality of social life. The number of ways in which psychologists can contribute in this area has been already indicated. In conclusion it can be reiterated that they can at least show the psychological and social costs of inequality. They can not only help understand the phenomenon of inequality in a descriptive manner but also find out the psychological consequences of inequality and contribute to the planning of strategies for social intervention.

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