

# Differences in Dominance, Social Boldness and Privateness: A Comparative Study of Castes

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## **Abstract**

The culture of any country is multi-dimensional in nature. The cultural differences exist everywhere. Caste differences is an intrinsic part of the Indian society. The personality differences may occur due to differences and discrimination among different castes. The present research is an attempt to measure the caste differences in the personality factors like dominance, social boldness and privateness. For this study the two broad categories of caste that is SC and Non-SC was studied. A sample of 600 college students from the age range between 18 and 25 was selected. The SC and Non-SC ratio was 1:1. The 16 PF Questionnaire developed by R. B. Cattell-5<sup>th</sup> Edition was used to measure dominance, social boldness and privateness. Independent t-test was carried out to analyze the data. The result of the study revealed that there were significant differences between SC and Non-SC on dominance, social boldness and privateness. Non-SC subjects were found to be higher on these three factors.

**Keywords:** Dominance, Social Boldness, Privateness

## **Caste:**

The word "Caste" owes its origin to the Spanish word 'Casta' which means 'breed, race, strain or a complex of hereditary qualities'. According to Ghurye (1969), the first mention of the concept of caste is found in the literary records of the Indo-Aryan culture of the Gangetic plain. A caste is a form of social stratification in which an individual's social position is fixed at birth and cannot be changed (Giddens, 2004, p. 684). M. N. Srinivas (1962) defined caste as a 'hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group, having an association with a hereditary occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes'.

Historically, Indian society was divided into four major occupational classes known as *varnas*: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras based on the principle of division of labour. Among them, Brahmins (teachers, scholars, and priests) comprised the educated and respectable class, which was at the top of the hierarchy. Kshatriyas (kings and warriors) had the responsibility of protecting society from external threats. Vaishyas (traders and producers of wealth), who ranked third, would take care of the economy and supply of food. Shudras (service providers) had the responsibility of serving the upper three classes and was placed at the lowest position of the hierarchy (Singh & Chauhan, 2008). Each caste has a specific place in the hierarchy of social status (Shah et al., 2006) which cannot be changed. These four varnas are known as Chaturvarnya. According to Dr. Ambedkar, Chaturvarnya got degenerated into the caste system. Dr. Ambedkar (1916, p. 4) mentioned the definition of caste given by Mr. Nesfield, in his paper caste in India. He defines a caste as "a class of the community which disowns

any connection with any other class and can neither intermarry nor eat nor drink with any but persons of their own community”. According to Dr. Ambedkar (1916, p. 7), “caste in India means an artificial chopping off the population into fixed and definite units, each one prevented from fusing into another through the custom of endogamy”. Due to the caste separation with hierarchic manner, lower castes people remained deprived for almost all basic necessities for hundreds of years.

### **The Scheduled Caste (SC) and Non-Scheduled Caste (Non-SC)**

The term scheduled caste (SC) was used by the British government to designate all castes and classes previously included under the term “depressed classes”. The expression “Scheduled Castes”, now standardized in the Constitution, was first used by the Simon Commission (Ghurye, 1969). People, who are now known as scheduled caste in the Indian constitution, were initially known as Dalits and untouchables. Because of the nature of their work and bottom rank in the *varna* hierarchy, they were denied equality of opportunities in all socioeconomic fields, including education (Singh & Chauhan, 2008). Dr. Ambedkar used the term “broken men” for the community identified as untouchables (Majid & Zahid, 2014). Chandra (2004) explains that the term Dalit is derived from the Sanskrit, *dal*, to crack, to open and to split. It is also a Marathi word for those who have been broken, ground down by those above high caste people in a deliberate and active way (Chandra, 2004). According to Jotieerao Phoole (1873), the untouchables were not Shudra. In his book *Gulamgiri* (1873), he used the term *Sudratishudra* to describe untouchables; the word means lower than Shudra. According to Singh & Chauhan (2008) in Hindu mythology, it is believed that Brahmins were born from the mouth, Kshatriyas from the arms, Vaishyas from the stomach and Shudras from the feet of Brahma, the creator. However, this mythology of chaturvarya does not provide any ideology about the emergence of the Untouchables or Sudratishudra. All these castes were previously known as Dalits, Untouchables or Shudratishudra have now been identified, enumerated and officially listed in the schedule of the Indian Constitution as the Scheduled Castes (Constitution of India, Article-341, 2007). All other castes from Hindu religion; have been included in the category of the Non-SCs except for the Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Nomadic Tribes (NT).

The roots of caste and gender discrimination are found in the structure of Hindu society based on its holy religious book called Manusmriti. This book stresses the importance of *varnas* rather than an individual. It provides guidelines about the way people from different *varnas* should be treated. This book also restricts the right to have property only to some *varnas*. Thus, it caused the emergence of caste, gender and class differences. Manusmriti had a great impact on Hindu society and is still visible in the form of these differences in India. The discrimination based on caste, gender and class differences left the large segment of the society as disadvantaged. This affected segment is still facing the negative consequences of the biased structure of society.

However, the subsequent years witnessed some social reformers like Mahatma Phoole, Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. They sensed the evil purposes behind this biased structure of the society. They fought against these evil powers with their modern thoughts and the weapon of education. They suggested the same path of education to the affected segment of society. In line with their struggle to bring changes in the society, education has made a huge difference. It has brought up the desired changes among people from disadvantaged groups, including women. They are gradually becoming aware of their rights as an individual and citizen of the nation. However, discriminatory practices against them still prevail in various forms in society. This proves that society is not yet ready to change its

attitude towards them. This further suggests having some negative impact on behaviour and overall personality of people from disadvantaged groups.

### **Relevance for Observing Caste as Influential Factor in Personality Development**

Psychology represented a culturally grounded enterprise that took into account the constitutive role of cultural meanings and practices in human development (Fromm, 1941). Many believe that through education and economic development the caste system can be eradicated. However, the grass-root reality is that no one forgets his or her own caste. In the psychological studies, unfortunately, researchers working in the field of personality, intentionally or unintentionally fail to study caste-related factors. Most of the psychological researches have been done in western countries, where individuals are discriminated based on race and not caste. Hence, race differences have been explored extensively in earlier psychological studies. However, recently the scholars have studied the psychological constructs that are determined by the adverse impact of caste (Misra & Tripathi, 1978; Sinha, 1977; Sen, 1982; Sinha, 1980).

Studying the impact of caste is essential as the caste system in India may lead to a global crisis. The Indians, who migrate to other countries, still follow the caste system in other countries. Lower caste people migrating to other countries are still subjected to various kinds of caste discriminations (Siddaramu, 2013). The National Secular Society's (2013) report states that "The increase in the population of those who have arrived in the UK from the Indian Sub-continent means the communities that have settled here have also brought with them their own social habits, norms and religious customs – such as the institution of caste. Despite leaving the Indian subcontinent, many UK citizens from the South Asian Diasporas continue to experience the effects of the caste system in their daily lives".

Considering its important role in the development of personality, caste has been comparatively studied at two levels in the present study: Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Non-Scheduled Castes (Non- SCs) from the Hindu Religion.

### **Personality**

The personality is one of the determinants of one's lifestyle. The term 'personality' is derived from the Latin word '*persona*' which refers to a mask used by actors in a play. The persona stands for the outward appearance, the public face that one displays to people around (Schultz and Schultz, 2005). The term personality involves many attributes within the individual. It refers to a totality or collection of various characteristics beyond superficial physical qualities and it encompasses a host of subjective social and emotional qualities as well (Schultz and Schultz, 2005). Dadu (2002) in her book *A Study of Personality, Values and Religious Attitude*; stated that in words of a psychologist, "personality can be defined as the most characteristics which appear in the integration of physical structure, mode of behaviour, interest, attitude, capacities, abilities and aptitude".

The present research is concerned with the view of the trait approach to personality given by Allport (1973). He defined personality as a dynamic organization within the individual of those psychological systems that determine his or her unique adjustments to the environment (Allport, 1973). Scientifically, the field of trait approach to personality was started by Gordon Allport (1897–1967) and Raymond Cattell (1905–1998). Allport, through his book *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* published in 1937; brought personality into the mainstream and formulated a theory of personality wherein traits play a prominent role. He stated that one reflects both his or her heredity and the environment (Allport,

1961). Traits are measured on a continuum and are subject to social, environmental and cultural influences (Schultz and Schultz, 2005).

### **Dominance**

It is characterized as being dominant versus deferential. It involves the tendency to exert one's will over others. This factor is more about dominance than about simple assertiveness. Assertiveness serves to protect one's rights, wishes and personal boundaries; whereas, dominance serves to subjugate others' wishes to one's own (Cattell, 1989). People who score high on this factor are dominant. They tend to be forceful, vocal in expressing their wishes and opinions, even when not invited to do so. They are pushy about obtaining what they want. They feel free to criticize others and try to control others behaviour. People who score low on this factor are deferential. They tend to avoid conflict by acquiescing to the wishes of others. They are self-effacing and willing to set aside their wishes and feelings

### **Social Boldness**

It is characterized as being socially bold versus shy. People who score high on this factor consider themselves to be bold and adventurous in a social group. They show little fear of social situations. They tend to initiate social contacts and aren't shy in the face of new social settings. People who score low; tend to be socially timid, cautious and shy. They find speaking in front of a group to be a difficult experience

### **Privateness**

It is characterized as being private versus forthright. People who score low on this factor are forthright. They tend to talk about themselves readily. They are genuine, self-revealing and forthright. People who score high on this factor show characteristics of privateness. They tend to be personally guarded. They maintain their privacy at the expense of developing close relationships with others

### **Objectives**

- To study the differences between SC and Non-SC in personality factors dominance, social boldness and privateness.

### **Hypotheses**

- SC Ss will exhibit significantly less **dominance** than Non-SC Ss.
- Non-SC Ss will be significantly more **social boldness** than SC Ss.
- Non-SC Ss will exhibit significantly more **privateness** than SC Ss.

### **Method**

#### **Operational variables**

#### **Independent Variable**

**Caste:** SC and Non-SC

#### **Dependent Variables**

1. Dominance
2. Social boldness
3. Privateness

**Sample**

A sample of 600 college students was selected from the age range between 18 and 25. The SC and Non-SC ratio was 1:1.

**Tool**

The recent, updated, and revised version of Sixteen Personality Factors Questionnaire (16 PF Questionnaire-5<sup>th</sup> Edition) was utilized to assess the personality. It was developed by R. B. Cattell, A. Karen S. Cattell and Heather E. P. Cattell in 2002.

**Procedure**

The data was collected from five colleges in Mumbai and suburbs. The students from the required age group were approached during their lecture hours. They were explained that the data obtained from them will be used only for research purpose. The informed consent was obtained from the subjects. Before the tests administration they were requested to provide their demographic details in the response sheets. The appropriate administration procedures framed by the authors of the respective measure were precisely followed. At the end, the Ss were debriefed about the study and its plausible achievement. They were thanked for their participation.

**Result and Discussion**

Keeping in mind the objectives of this study means and standard deviation were calculated. The present research further employed balanced factorial designs where IV Caste was manipulated at two levels, that is SC and Non-SC . For statistical analysis t-test was used.

*Mean and SD table for SC and Non-SC*

Dominance				Social boldness				Privateness			
SC		Non-SC		SC		Non-SC		SC		Non-SC	
Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
12.39	3.27	13.17	3.39	9.04,	3.50	9.77,	3.69	10.79,	3.76	11.57,	3.56

**Dominance**

There was significant main effects of caste on Dominance,  $t(1, 596) = .836, p < .01$ . Non-SC Ss ( $M=13.17, SD=3.39$ ) were more dominant than SC Ss ( $M=12.39, SD=3.27$ ). Hence, the hypotheses ‘SC Ss will exhibit significantly less dominance than Non-SC Ss’ was accepted.

The caste had significant effect on personality Factor Dominance ( $p < .01$ ). The non-SC Ss were significantly higher than SC Ss on dominance. That is, the non-SC Ss were more dominant than SC Ss. It suggests that Non-SC Ss tend to be more forceful, vocal in expressing their wishes and opinions, and pushy about obtaining what they want. They feel free to criticize others and try to control others behaviour (Manual 16 PF, 2002). On the other hand, SC Ss tend to be polite, avoid conflict with others. They are self-effacing and set aside their wishes and feelings. The results of the present study refute the findings by Ojha (1995) and Jha (1993) who found SC people to be more hostile. The possible reason for these findings could be the education. A number of SC people entering the higher education is increasing in order to move forward in life. They have become sensitized through education about the discrimination and its negative consequences. Also the earlier experiences of rejections through



discrimination might have led them to become more polite and conflict avoidant. Subsequently it might have led them to avoid conflicts and give fair treatment to others. On the other hand, the non-SC people still seem to follow the caste based discrimination and practice domination. Though the Atrocity Act is formed by the Government of India, the violence against Dalits and rapes on Dalit women are still taking place in India (Puniyani, R. 2013, p. 12). So-called high caste people need to change their approach towards so-called low caste people to constitute a healthy society.

### **Social boldness**

Two outlier were found in the data for the Personality Factor social boldness. It was eliminated with random elimination of other cases to maintain cell frequency equal. Thus, total number of cases under this factor was 596. There was significant main effect of caste on social boldness,  $t(1, 592) = 6.06, p < .05$ . The Non-SC Ss ( $M = 9.77, SD = 3.69$ ) were found significantly higher than SC Ss ( $M = 9.04, SD = 3.50$ ) on social boldness. Hence, the hypothesis, 'Non-SC Ss will be significantly more social boldness than SC Ss' was accepted.

The caste had significant effect on personality Factor Social boldness ( $p < .05$ ) Non-SC Ss were significantly higher than SC Ss on social boldness. That is, non-SC Ss were more socially bold and adventurous, have little fear of social situations. This suggests that they tend to initiate social contacts and are not shy to face new social settings. The high social boldness is correlated with high self-esteem. Thus, Ss belong to non-SC group seems to be higher on self-esteem (Settles, 2006). In contrast, SC Ss were found to be socially timid, cautious, and shy. This suggests that they may find difficult to speak in front of people. Low social boldness is associated with social anxiety and low self-esteem. Thus, the SC Ss were found to be more socially anxious (Xie et al, (2008) and having low self-esteem (Settles, 2006). The model of Rejection Sensitivity (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Feldman & Downey, 1994) has been mentioned in literature review. According to this model, prior experiences of rejection lead people to develop anxious expectations of rejection. Thus, this view of rejection sensitivity (RS) model supports the findings of the present research.

### **Privateness**

Data indicated significant main effects of caste on the personality Factor Privateness,  $t(1, 596) = 6.89, p < .01$ . Non-SC Ss ( $M = 11.57, SD = 3.56$ ) were significantly higher than SC Ss ( $M = 10.79, SD = 3.76$ ) on Privateness. Hence, the hypothesis 'Non-SC Ss will exhibit significantly more privateness than SC Ss' was accepted.

As per the finding, the caste also had the significant effect on personality factor Privateness ( $p < .01$ ). The non-SC Ss were significantly higher than SC Ss on privateness. As stated in the manual of 16 PF (2002), the Ss belonging to the non-SC group exhibited the tendency to be personally guarded, maintain their privacy. On the other hand, the SC Ss were found to be forthright. That is, they tend to talk about them readily, genuine, self-revealing. It suggests that though the Ss from non-SC were higher on social boldness and self-esteem (Settles, 2006), they do not disclose themselves. The possible reason behind this finding could be that as compare to non-SC people, the SC people may not have property, prosperity, political power as to hide from others. Hence, SC people may not have fear to lose anything as they are not property owner. Thus, they may feel free with people to talk about themselves, not remaining private.

## Conclusion

In the caste based society, Non-SC subjects are found to be higher on dominance, social boldness and pravitaness than SC subjects. Perhaps, due to cultural influence SC people in the society fail to develop this change in their personality. This shows that there is still need affirmative action to bring positive change in society.

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