Socialisation Pattern in Indian Children-A Study of Kolkata

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Abstract: The main objective of the study is to consider the similarity, differences, of outlooks and expressions of children in different age group. Its other objective is to explore the area and to investigate certain cognitive and affective aspects of these attitudes held by children of different age levels. The objective of the investigation is to study the development of prejudice in children studying in class 4th to 6th standard. The salient dimensions of prejudice considered are awareness, preference and no preference for class, religion and caste. Another objective of the study is to investigate the parental role and the influence of socio-cultural variables on the development of prejudice in children.

Keywords: Children, Socialisation, Development, India

Introduction

Socialisation is the process by which the new born child is moulded into the culture of his group and there by becomes an accepted member of the society. In any particular culture, it is through the process of socialisation that the child acquires the attitudes and values of that culture and develops into an individual with culturally appropriate behaviours patterns. The life style that the individual adopts and his personality are largely a matter of the socialisation practices prevalent in a culture. As such, socialisation is a mechanism of culture transmission. But at the same time, it is also an aspect of the culture. The kind of child-rearing practices which are adopted by the parents are along the norms prevalent in the culture in which the child is born, and the roles that the child is expected to adopt and the pattern of his interactions with the adults and peers are also prescribed by the culture. There are four important agencies of socialisation of the children: the family, the peer group, the school and the community. Socialisation takes place not only at the early age of the child but also during the subsequent growth into youth and adulthood. In a sense it is continuous process.

Of these four agencies, the family should be regarded as the most important. It is in the family that the early development of personality takes place. Children learn the socially approved means of satisfying their needs. Human stimulation which is a basic requirement of the development of healthy children takes place in the family. Likewise, group prejudices are learnt by the children in the family environment. Parental attitudes have a strong impact not only on family relationship but also on the attitudes and behaviour of children.

The peer group consists of many groups made up of children in which the child participates. The influence of age mates on the child's behaviour, attitudes, values is next only to family in importance. Children soon learn to value the companionship of age mates, and, as they grow, become more and more capable of maintaining sustained periods of interaction.

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School represents an environment which is a little less personal than the family and the home. As children are socialised by their teachers and classmates, they become less dependent on their families and their emotional knots are loosened. Values and norms vital for community development are taught to the children at school.

The kind of atmosphere established in the classroom, the teacher's means of controlling the class, his/her verbal behaviour, his/ her preparedness to adjust to the needs of certain groups of children, especially those coming from the underprivileged families, and other factors have a tremendous influence on the socialising of the children. Similarly, children of different and conflicting classes and groups attend schools and quite often sit together and interact among themselves. What is perhaps not allowed at home is Possible in the classroom so far as contact among children of various caste and class groups is concerned. For example, some parents urge on the children the need to avoid mixing with children of certain groups on the basis of certain notion of social status, social distance and so on, but this advice is hardly followed, even when not liked by their parents, in the classroom. Thus, classroom environment has the force of moderating the rigid view of the parents imposed on the children.

Community is another larger area of social interaction that the children have not only among themselves but also with the adults outside the family. Community has rich potentialities in shaping the behaviour of the children very much. In fact, the effects of early socialisation at home and school become strong, penetrative and far- reaching when the children are exposed to the wider spectrum of the community.

Social distance is the degree of closeness or acceptance felt by a member of one group for members of other particular groups. Social distance is possible both on the grounds of social class inequalities and caste inequalities. Observation of social distance by children in schools, neighbourhoods and in the other areas of interaction is an immediate and important reflection on the early socialisation. As the children grow in age, it is likely that these notions based on social distance get deeply rooted in the minds of the children and finally result in discrimination and prejudices.

Therefore, any understanding of the socialisation process requires perceiving it in particular socio-cultural context. Socialisation prepares the child for the future and moulds him to acquire certain skills for earning his livelihood. Every society has certain values and practices relating to the growing child. They prepare him for the competent discharge of adult roles and responsibilities. Individual and situational factors and specific life experiences within the eco-cultural environment of the community are the salient features of the socialisation process.

Methodology

The study depended on contributions towards social learning i.e. social behavioral theories, while carrying out my research individual with his culture, particularly   the process by which the individuals learn formally or informally from their cultural set ups. This is the process of enculturation, analysis of the relation between individuals and the attributes of the group in to which they are being socialized has been done through the following means…..

Empirical Study: It looked at the existing information available from primary sources like government publications , ministerial speeches, reports etc, and secondary sources like books, journals, news clipping, internet etc.

The interview was a technique   particularl**y s**ome of techniques were very useful and relevant for investigating the relationship between well adapted for understanding subjective definitions of   experience of an individual child. It helped to understand   a child's perception of the significance of people and events in his/her environment and to study how he/she conceptualizes his/her life experiences.

Interview schedules formed the major source of information so far as the respondents were concerned. An open ended schedule was prepared and pre-tested. Based on the actual experiences, the tentative schedule was revised and finalised. The schedule was in English and pre-coded. Question was put to the respondents in their own language. Care was taken to put simple questions to the child respondents in a manner which would make them understand the question and furnish the answers.

Questions to the parents related to the family particulars like educational background of all the members of the family, employment status, activities of children, opinion about children's education, and so on.

Group discussions were held with the children separately to assess their opinion on several issues either not answered well through the interview or not covered there in. Such group discussions were held separately with the members of various social groups like caste, religion, occupation, sex, etc.

Group discussions were also held with teachers, knowledgeable persons and officials separately to understand the general situation prevailing in the schools and the cities, so far as the interest of the children was concerned.

Field work was done in the several stages. In the first round visits, rapprochement was established with the local city youths, officials and teachers, besides collecting the preliminary information about the cities.

During the second-round visits, interview schedules were administrated to the parent respondents and then to the child respondents. The third round visits enabled to obtained additional information, and revise the schedules wherever needed.
During the fourth and final-round visits, discussions with the children, parents and others were held so as to obtain further information that was absolutely essential to make the final report complete.

Interpretation of the data was done by using the statistical tools and also by verbal description. Information obtained through the group discussions and observation was interpreted by verbal Description only. Since the number of tables became unwieldy, nearly 50 percent of them were and the matter was described in words only. In the process of analysis of data, six important variables are used in the chapter on education.   Each of these variables is expected to influence

the socialisation of the children in one way or the other are: religion, caste, occupation, income, literacy and region.

Presentation of Data Analysis

Table 4.1 deals with the distribution of child respondents by schools. The three schools were taken for study on child respondents from the selected area. These were: Hindi medium, Bengali medium and English medium. There were 84 means 34 per cent respondents from Hindi medium, 83 means 33 per cent from Bengali medium and 83(33%) respondents from English medium School. Total numbers of respondents were 250.

Table 4.1
Distribution of child respondents by schools

Schools	no of children.	%.	No.	Total%
(Hindi Medium)	84	34	84	100
(Bengali Medium)	83	33	83	100
(English Medium)	83	33	83	100
Total	250	100	250	100

Table 4.2 deals with distribution of child respondents by sex. There were 18 per cent male and 16 per cent female child respondents from Hindi medium school, 33 per cent male child responds from Bengali medium, there were not any female child because it is a boys school, and 16 per cent male and 17 per cent female respondents were from English school, total number of male respondents were 168 and they were 67 in percentage, total number of female respondents in both co-ed schools were 82 and these were 33 in percentage.

Table 4.2
Distribution of child respondent by sex

Sex	Children.No	Male	%	female	%	Total%
Hindi (medium)	45	18	39	16	84	34
Bangla(medium)	83	33	-		83	33
English (medium)	40	16	43	17	83	33
Total	168	67	82	33	250	100

Religion groups: Table 4.3 deals with the distribution of child respondents by religion. It is seen that the majority of the children were Hindu, acconting for 57 per cent. The Muslims acconted for a small percentage of 28 and Chiristian were lowest in percentage (15%).

Table 4.3
Distribution of Child Respondent by Religion

Religious Groups	No.	%	Total %
Hindus	142	57	100
Muslims	70	28	100
Christians	38	15	100
Total	250	100	100

Table 4.4 deals with prayers offered by parents at home. Prayers have the force of influencing the development of the children, more thanb any thing else, in the right direction. If parents are more religious minded and offers prayers regularly, children are likely to be influenced. The position of prayers offered by the parents at home is presented in table 4.4.

Table 4.4
Prayers offer by parents at home

Categories	Daily no.	%.	Periodically	%.	None	%	no.	Total
Hindus Gen	60	24	30	12	-	-	90	100
Sc	20	0.8	10	0.4	14	6	44	100
St	4	0.2	6	0.3	20	7	30	100
Others	6	0.3	4	0.2	0.2	0.8	12	100
Muslims	60	24	10	0.4	-	-	70	100
Christian	-	-	4	0.2	-	-	4	100
Total	150	61	64	27	36	14	100	100

While all the Hindus, Muslims, and Christians offered prayers at home, but there were some members of these religions who did not offer prayers at home, according to the children. The percentage varies between 6 in the case of the SC, 7 in the case of the ST and 8 in the case of the others people. Among those who offered prayers at home, the performance in term of frequency varied. Some offered daily and some occasionally. Among the Hindus General castes, 24 per cent daily and 12 per cent occasionally, but the percentage among the Sc is 8% daily and 4 % periodically number, and among St 2% daily and 3 % occasionally and between others 3% daily and 2% occasionally prayers offered by the parents at home. While Muslims accounted 24 per cent daily and 4 per cent occasionally prayers, Christian had only 2 per cent occasionally prayers at home.

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Table 4.5
Distribution of child respondents by caste

Caste groups	Children No.	%.	Total
General	160	64	100
SC	44	18	100
ST	34	14	100
OBC	12	0.5	100
Total	250	100	100

Caste groups: Children belonged to several caste groups, including the Scheduled Tribes, and Schedule Castes. Since all the castes could not be listed for analytical purpose, only major caste groups are included. The remaining castes are clubbed under "others".

Table 4.5 has metarial on the castes of the child respondents. The single largest group is the General caste (64%), Sc was 18%, St was 14% and others were 5%.

Occupational Groups: The various occupational groups to which the child respondent's beloged are labour, service and business. Table 4.6 relates to the occupational background of the child respondents. This was followed by the labour (Mazdoor) 20 per cent, service 39 per cent, and business accounted for 41 per cent. The table shows that labours children are the largest number.

Table 4.6
Distribution of child respondents by occupations of parents

Parents occupation	children no.	%.	Total
Mazdoor (labour)	50	20	100
Service	97	39	100
Business	103	41	100
Total	250	100	100

Income: the income background of the children is provided in table 4.7. the majority of the children accounting for more than 31 per cent come from families whose average monthly income exceed Rs 50,000 per month. The number of children having more than Rs 5o,ooo 18 per cent, and the lowest number of the children having not exceed Rs 3000 is 20 per cent.

Table 4.7
Distribution of child respondents by income of parents

Income groups (Rs.)	children no.	%.	No.	Total%
2001-3000	50	20	50	100
3001-20,000	77	30	77	100
20,001-50,000	78	31	78	100
50,001- or more	45	18	45	100
Total	250	100	250	100

Literacy of Parents: The distribution of child respondents by literacy levels of the parents is finished in the table 4.8. 24 per cent children belong to the illiterate parents. Nearly 18 per cent children come from families where the parents had education not beyond the upper primary level, 24 per cent from high school level and 18 per cent from college level.

Table 4.8
Distribution of child respondents by literacy of parents

parents Literacy Levels	Children no.	*%.*	No.	*Total %*
Illiteracy	60	24	60	100
Lower primary	40	16	40	100
Upper primary	45	18	45	100
High school	60	24	60	100
College	45	18	45	100
Total	250	100	250	100

Awareness about caste system: An attempt was made to asses the awareness of the caste system among the children of various social groups (table 4.9).

General accounted for 15 % awareness, St accounted for 2 % and Sc accounted for 4 % among the Hindus. Where as 50% of Muslims and 28 % of Christians were not aware of caste system.

Among generals not aware percentage is 20 and partially awareness is 4%. Among Sc not aware percentage is 4, and partially awareness is 25%, and between St, not aware system is 8% and partially aware system is 10 %.

Meaning of the caste system: among the three religious groups, none of the Muslim and Christian knew the caste system well. Even among the Hindu children, only 23 per cent knew it well.

Table 4.9
Awareness about caste system

Groups	fully no.	aware%	partially no.	aware%	not aware%		Total%
Gen	38	15	10	4	20	8	68
Sc	10	4	25	10	9	4	44
St	4	2	10	4	20	8	34
Muslims	-	-	16	6	50	20	66
Christian	-	-	10	4	28	12	38
Total	74	30	71	28	131	52	250

Opinion about the caste system: the child respondents expressed three types of opinions about caste system, good, bad, and neutral. Table 4.10 contains information on this, it will be seen that a majority of the children among all the religion groups it as bad. Among Hindus it was accounted for good 24 per cent, for bad 41 per cent and for neutral 3 per cent. Among Muslims it was none for good, 24 per cent for bad and 4 per cent was neutral. Between Christians it was accounted as none for good, 4 per cent for bad and 1 per cent for neutral.

Those children who said that the caste system was good could furnish only for one reason, that is, the lower castes were dirty in habits and appearance.

Table 4.10
Opinion about caste system

Groups	good no.	%	Bad no.	%	Neutral no.	%	Total no.	%
Hindu	60	24	101	41	7	3	167	100
Muslims	-	-	60	24	10	4	70	100
Christians	-	-	10	4	3	1	13	100
Total	60	24	171	68	20	8	250	100

Conclusion

The data presented in earlier chapters make it feasible to draw a few major conclusions and offer some recommendations for the benefit of the policy makers. An exhaustive account of the conclusions is not attempted here. But what is presented should be helpful.
Problems of Education
The national policy for children, as adopted by the Government of India, and the principals of the U.N. Declaration for developing children promised a good beginning. But the performance has been dismal. This would only again indicate that even the best blue-prints for child development do not succeed in our country because of bureaucracy's failure to act in the right direction.

The fact that despite the Constitutional provision for free and compulsory education, later on supported by the various other policies of the state, we have not attained a hundred per cent enrolment of children would speak of something wrong with our social as well as educational system.

Further, the fact that illiteracy is still a significant feature of our educational system would imply that there are many factors and people responsible for this position. Parents, teachers, local leaders and officials are all jointly responsible.

What is still more important is the fact that reverted or relapsed illiteracy is also quite significant and it appears that no attempts has been made not only to identify this problem but also to contemplate measures wherever this is brought to surface. This leads to waste of human and financial resources.

Drop- outs have become a national phenomena and our study also confirms this .This is known to many, yet no concrete measures have been undertaken to put an end to this evil. It is true that poverty is the most important reason. But removal of poverty and drop-outs cannot be allowed to be inter-related since removal of the former takes a long time, and removal of the latter is an immediate need. Hence, attempts should be made to make every child attend school regularly until the fourteenth year of his life. Alternative economic schemes should be provided for working-mothers in particular to enable them to send their children to school regularly.

Child labour and working mothers prevent regular attendance of children in schools. Until general economic conditions improve, arrangements should be made to impart informal

instructions to the non- school going children. Also, evening schools may be started for the benefit of such children.

Classroom performance depends upon many factors, both environmental and hereditary. Children coming from disadvantaged families suffer in the process. It is also observed that equal attention and treatment by the teachers to unequal students would harm the interest of the latter. Therefore, extra interest should be shown in their cases. This may be in the form of private tuition the expenses to be borne by the state.

Further, the services of the educated employed as well as unemployed local youths could be utilized to provide additional teaching facilities to the disadvantaged children.
Religious Instruction: the findings of the study indicate that religion instruction has been totally given up in schools, and not much importance is given to it at home also. Since the state cannot enforce religious instruction at home, it may conveniently enforce this in schools, through books, prayers, discussions and so on. However, care should be taken to avoid emphasis on any particular religious philosophy. It should be a common, integrated approach, taking a few major teachings from all the religions. Swamijis, Moulvies and Fathers could instruct and guide children in religious and social values which would ultimately strengthen the nation.

Teacher as a model: Teacher who are the builders of the character of children have not performed well in many interior places in particular as reported by the students. Irregularity, negligence and certain questionable habits of the teachers have created a poor image of them. Hence, strict measures should be undertaken to make the teachers accept social responsibility, and conduct themselves as models. Involvement of the teachers in co and extra curricular activities is also not encouraging. The department of the Education should insist upon this.

Social Distance: though children are innocent of our caste system and the consequent social distance, they learn this in the process of socialization at home and develop it later out side the home environment. Measures should be undertaken to allow free mixing of children of different caste groups, to have inter-caste dinners among the children and so on. Even parents should be persuaded to allow the children develop a broader outlook, devoid of caste considerations, in the best interest of the nation.

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