

Research Paper

A Psychological Study on The Differences in Attitude Toward Oppression Among Different Generations of Adult Women in West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

The issues of oppression are very paramount in our societies. However, a lot of research has been done in order to understand oppression. This paper derives an attitude towards oppression among young and older adult women. Attitude is basically a frame of mind of different aspects in our environment. According to Olson and Kendrick (2008) and Petty, Wheeler & Tormala (2003) attitudes refers to people's evaluation of almost any aspect of the world. Attitude may have either positive or negative outlook or perception or evaluation or reaction towards any issues, things, specific person, groups, etc. Oppression is the social act of placing restrictions on any individual or group of individuals. It is mainly imposed by the authority figure, which creates mental pressure and stress upon an individual or group. Now in this paper the patriarchal form of the society has mostly curbed the rights of women since ages which resulted into oppression but as the times are changing and women are being educated the attitude of women towards oppression seems to differ than earlier. Attitude towards Women Scale (AWS) was used in order to find out the attitude towards oppression (Spence and Helmreich, 1978) in order to record the responses of the adult women. Thus, the aim of the present psychological study is to understand the difference towards attitude of adult women (aged range =50-55) and young adults (aged range= 18-23) towards oppression. A t-test has been used to determine the significant differences adult women (aged range= 50-55) and young adults (aged range 18-23) towards oppression. There is a significant difference of attitude towards oppression along with the sub domains were found between the two generations of women in West Bengal.

Keywords: Attitude, Adult Women, Oppression

Oppression occurs in a hierarchical relationship in which a dominant group unjustly holds power and resources and withholds them from another group (Prilleltensky, 2008; Tatum, 1997; Watts, Williams & Jagers, 2003). The powerful group is termed the dominant or privileged group; the less powerful is the oppressed or subordinate group. Oppressive hierarchies are often based on ascribed characteristics fixed at birth or otherwise

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outside personal control (e.g., gender or race). Resources controlled by a dominant or privileged group may include economic resources, status and influence, sociopolitical power, interpersonal connections among elites, the power to frame discussion of conflicts (often exerted through media and educational systems), representations in political and corporate offices and even inequalities in marriages and personal relationship. Perhaps most insidious are ideologies and myths to convince members of subordinated groups that they actually are inferior (McDonald, Keys & Balcazar, 2007). This sense of inferiority is termed as internalized oppression.

Now during this oppressive system individual want liberation that is securing human rights and the remarking of the society without roles of oppressor and oppressed (Watts, Williams & Jagers, 2003. p.187). The liberation perspective is not just an intellectual analysis; it is a call to action. It explains injustices and names an opponent: the opponent system. It also provides an orientation for something positive to deal with. The aim is to change the system, to emancipate both the privileged group and the oppressed (Friere, 1970). First – order change in this context would mean the currently oppressed group simply replaces the currently privileged group in power – a reshuffling within the oppressive system. Second – order change dismantles the oppressive system and its inequalities. This is the aim of liberation. So, individuals' of the subordinate groups usually understand the system of oppression better than those who are privileged by it.

Emergence of this oppressive behavior might be stereotyped where the cognitive aspect of attitude towards a particular social group is observed. Sometimes oppression is a belief that the particular group or groups share a different component or some kind of unique traits which may or may not be true. It does influence the processing of social information. Gender stereotypes are the belief system concerning the traits or characteristics of a particular gender (generally men and women) which may either be positive or negative or might be either true or false. Gender stereotypes views men as competent, stable, tough, self-confident, leader, strong, accomplished, non-conformist, aggressive etc. Whereas it views women as warm, emotional, kind, polite, sensitive, follower, weak, friendly, shy, fashionable, gentle etc. Gender role, also known as sex role is a social role encompassing arrange of behavior and attitudes that are generally considered acceptable, appropriate or desirable for a person based on that person's biological or perceived sex. Although these characteristics vary between individuals yet these are considered to be the stereotypical belief or characteristic traits. The aim of the present study is to compare between the attitude towards oppression among female adults (aged between 50-55) and young adults (aged between 18-23). To identify the belief system that they hold for themselves in the present community at large.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Earlier literature showed a relationship between the societal attitude of women's mental health due to oppression (Skuse, D. 2005). Researches has been done on how gender norms are reinforced through violence (Somero et.al. 2018), lesbians of Greece showed positive attitude towards motherhood and negative attitude towards oppression (Voultos et.al. 2019). Women who are victims of battering often learn to interpret the nuances of their partners' mood (Tatum, 1997). Persons with disabilities may remove themselves from oppressive environment. They may also create new narratives discounting their capabilities and potentials (Mc Donald, Keys & Balcazar, 2007).

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Objectives

The aim of the current study is

- To find out whether there is any significant difference among young and older adult women in terms of their attitude towards oppression.

Considering the subscales:

- To find out whether there is any significant difference among young and older adult women in terms of their attitude towards educational oppression.
- To find out whether there is any significant difference among young and older adult women in terms of their attitude towards relational oppression.
- To find out whether there is any significant difference among young and older adult women in terms of their attitude towards occupational oppression.

Hypothesis

There is a significant difference in attitude among young and older adult women in terms of their attitude towards oppression also considering the three sub-scales- Educational, Relational and Occupational.

METHODOLOGY

Tools

The Attitude towards Women Scale (AWS) which was developed by Jenet T. Spencer and Helmreich It is a measure of attitude towards women. There is a 55- item version scale (Spence, Helmreich 1972) a 25-item scale (Spence, Helmreich, Stapp 1993) and a 15-item version scale (Spence, Helmreich 1978). In the present study the 15-item scale version (Spence and Helmreich 1978) questionnaire was given to the subjects and their responses were recorded. This scale has been used which is highly considered with the original version in both males and females. This scale intended to assess people's belief about the responsibilities, privilege and behaviors in a variety of sphere. AWS measures attitudes about the rights and roles of women - relative to men - in occupational, educational and relational domains. As an attitude measure focusing on gender roles the Attitude towards Women Scale (AWS) assessed opinion about the behavior patterns seemed appropriate for men and women in society. A belief about men is that they are more responsible for supporting their failure whereas women should be more responsible for nursing their children. In case of reliability the result of Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = .81$, indicating adequate internal consistency. Criterion-related validity of the scale was calculated based on the correlation between the Turkish versions of the 12-item short version of AWS and BSRI-Short. Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a significant negative correlation between AWS and masculinity subscale of BSRI scores ($r = -0.37$, $p < .01$), suggesting that participants with a high AWS score were more likely to score lower on the masculinity subscale of BSRI. There were six response categories ranging from totally in agreement, mildly in agreement to mildly in disagreement to totally in disagreement. There were even other responses categories which was not considered during calculation of the data- Do not know and refused.

Sample

30 adult women aged between the age group of 50-55 years and 30 young adult women aged between 18-23years have been chosen through random sampling residing in India.

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Procedure

- Step 1: Research problem was selected as the study to find out the difference between the attitude towards oppression among young (aged = 18-23) and older (aged =50-55) adult women
- Step 2: Suitable research scale was found. The AWS (Attitude towards Women Scale, Spence and Helmreich, 1978) scale, the 15-item version of the scale was used as the tool for questionnaire to record the responses of the subjects.
- Step 3:10 to 12 literatures were reviewed to get new insights on the research problem whether the research has already been done on or not was checked.
- Step 4: Along with English the AWS scale 15-item version was translated into Hindi and Bengali for the convenience of the subjects.
- Step 5: The questionnaire was prepared in Google forms and proper instructions were given on how to respond and most importantly it was informed that there is no correct or wrong answer.
- Step 6: The responses were recorded and proper calculations were done that is t-test and the data were graphically represented for the convenience.
- Step 7: The results were interpreted from the data and proper conclusion was drawn.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Shows the significant difference in terms of the oppression among two groups of adults women in West Bengal.

Variable	Women	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	Significance
Oppression	Young women	30	38.9333	4.46390	0.022	3.836**
	Older women	30	33.2333	6.80610		
SUB DOMAIN						
Domains	Women	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	Significance
Relational Domain	Young women	30	12.7667	2.19220	0.322	2.549**
	Older women	30	11.2333	2.45909		
Occupational Domain	Young women	30	13.5000	1.67641	0.007	3.038**
	Older women	30	11.5000	3.19212		
Educational Domain	Young women	30	12.6667	2.10637	0.232	3.114**
	Older women	30	10.7000	2.74364		

***Significant at 0.01 level*

Interpretation

From the above calculation table, it might be observed that in case of relational domain of the oppression scale the mean, standard deviation course of the younger women are 12.7667

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and 2.19220 respectively. Whereas the mean and standard deviation scores of older women are 11.2333 and 2.45909. The t- score shows a significant difference of 0.322 between the mean scores of both the groups of women in the present study taken into consideration. The obtained value at 0.01 level is 2.549 which indicates that the alternative hypothesis is accepted stated that there is a significant difference among young and older adult women in terms of their attitude towards relational oppression. The basic reason of the difference between the two groups might be the advent of education and exposure to the outside world which was not very common during the past years even in the urban areas. Older women might internalize themselves as negative and as not deserving more resources or increased participation in societal affairs, resulting from the use of affective, behavioral, cognitive, material, linguistic, and cultural mechanisms by agents of domination to affirm their own political superiority (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). During the practice of "Purdah" system for older women even in front of the family members, which is now abolished from most part of the society and also the concept of equal say in the family of the younger women might had helped in determining the significant differences in the present study. From earlier studies we can assume the younger women have also developed an empathetic nature towards themselves and the people belonging to their own gender which is why they are voicing out against oppression like never before. Familial teachings and taboos like "one should not wear short clothes" or "one should not sit like that" are still prevalent but the acceptance of the urge for freedom by the older generation has helped the younger generation to progress, which sometimes results into conflict, yet this has also improved women's assumption on their self-esteem in social relationships like marriage.

From the calculation table it can be observed that in case of Occupational domain the mean, standard deviation scores of the younger women are 13.5000 and 1.67641 respectively. Whereas the mean and standard deviation scores of older women are 11.5000 and 3.19212 respectively. The t- score shows a slightly significant difference of 0.007 between the scores of both the groups. The significant difference at 0.01 level is 3.038, which indicates that the alternative hypothesis is accepted stated that there is a significant difference among young and older adult women in terms of their attitude towards occupational oppression. The concept of equal pay for equal work has played a major role in the negative attitude towards oppression by the younger women. The data collected from most of the older women in the study are housewives and most of them didn't get an opportunity to even visit the workplace environment. But in the current economic scenario even housewives understand the need of work and money. Though Indian women are working for several years at home without any recognition but in this biased society both the group of adults belonging to different generations do show difference in oppression towards occupational areas but results seemed to justify the fact. Older adult women might have a mindset that nowadays girls are getting a lot of opportunity and support in workplace can be a prime condition for the differences in terms of this domain.

From the calculation table it can be observed that in case of educational domain the mean, standard deviation scores of the younger women are 12.6667 and 2.10637 respectively. Whereas the mean and standard deviation scores of older women are 10.7000 and 2.74364 respectively. The t- score shows a slightly significant difference of 0.232 between the scores of both the groups. The significant difference at 0.01 level is 3.114, which indicates that the alternative hypothesis is accepted stated that there is a significant difference among young and older adult women in terms of their attitude towards educational oppression. The change in education and training over the few years might create a maximum pivotal function in

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growing the difference in attitude among the two groups of women in the direction of oppression. Analyzing the history of the reputation of women inside the society might have also stimulated the more youthful women to influence them academically. During the earlier periods there might be cultural and structural barriers which could inhibit effective coaching, stifle pupil fulfillment, and maintain inequalities on several fronts.

From the calculation table it can be observed that the overall means for of young woman is 38.9333 and their standard deviations code is 4.46390. Whereas the mean score of older woman is 33.2333 and their standard deviation is 6.80610. The t-scores show slightly significant difference of 0.022 between the scores of both the groups. The significant difference at 0.01 level is 3.836, which indicates that the alternative hypothesis is accepted stated that there is a significant difference among young and older adult women in terms of their attitude towards oppression. The present study revealed some important findings where it can be assumed that the younger women were liberal in their attitudes towards oppression. And, on the other hand the older women were slightly conservative in their attitudes toward the same. There AWS scores reflected that educational and opportunity exposure is positively related to liberal attitude in the statements " women should assume their rightful place in business and profession along with men"(item-7) and " women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming Good wives and mothers" (Item-5) the scores of young women and older women show notable Difference. These results depict different temporal trends within women.

From the responses of both the groups: young women and older women have equal score in the statement "a woman should be as free as man to propose" (Item-4). This shows that their beliefs and enthusiasm for proposing marriage is same and they are willing to take initiative with men to whom they are attracted to or romantically involved with. In summary, as reflected in their overall scores the young and old women show significant difference in their attitudes towards oppression and yet there are some similarities in their opinions.

CONCLUSION

We can conclude that a significant difference between the attitudes of two generations of women towards oppression has been found out. More progressive and liberal views have been found out in the young women than older women. And with the element of social media, development in IT industries and overall exposures and opportunities for women it would not be wrong to say that there has been abolition of beliefs, stereotypes and prejudices in traditional attitudes of women towards oppression. And, also, we can assume that because of this gap in generation or trends we have seen the present study might not visible in the upcoming decade and the women would be more empowered and be aware.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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