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Conservatism and Radicalism among Females as Related to Traditional Family Ideology

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ABSTRACT

The present study has been undertaken to study the social problem as child rearing practices, general male-female relationships and general values and aims. The study was undertaken on 147 conservative and 146 radical female subjects selected or the basis of Mohsin c-scale. According to the age sample consisted of 16 to 22 years old as well as 30 to 36 years old females. The subjects for the first age group were the students mainly from the different colleges of Agra city and for another age group *i.e.* 30 to 36 year old, lady lecturers of various colleges, housewives, lawyers doctors etc. who confirm to the conditions from Agra city, were included. The Hindi version of the Traditional family ideology scale (Levinson and Huffman, 1955) was adopted for data collection. Research finding showed significant differences between radical and conservative females for TFI.

Key Words : Social problems, Aims, Hindi vrsion. TFI

INTRODUCTION

The amount of social change one must deal with in the daily lives has increasing geometrically. Toffler (1970) believes that futures shock is a result of having to cope with too much change in too short a period of time.

The rapid changes of society are obviously related to and somehow dependent upon the development of new techniques, new inventions, new modes of production, new standards of living. The novel and pervasive phenomenon of this age is mechanization. We can realize that this mechanization has profoundly altered the modes of life and also of thoughts. It is are well known fact that there is an intimate connection between one's beliefs and institutions, one's valuations and social relationships certainly all cultural change involves social change.

Any change in social set-up brings with it the change in values, customs, and traditions. It may be said that this is the age of rapid changes.

The changes are taking place with such rapidity that the father and son appear to be the products of two different eras. It is to express these facts that the terms like "cultural leg and generation gap" have come into vogue. As a result this has become source of disorganization of the society.

In a research work done by Ansuya (1980) results showed that inspite of rapid changes in the mode of behaviour and values of Indians the old traditional values, systems, and thinking are still very strong. In the behavioral aspect, they have changed in terms of fashion and needs, but psychologically the traditional values are firmly rooted in their minds.

Most of the parents like their children to be sent to convents and English Medium Public School but at home these very parents emphasize the strict parental demands-like unquestioned obedience and subordination in the child. They think these qualities among their children to be desirable. The children developed by strict disciplinary methods become themselves very strict when they grow up. Adorno and his associates (1950) found that an authoritarian person emphasizes difference to his superior and demands obedience from his subordinates. He has a

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strong concern for his status and wants his children to be 'ladies' and 'gentlemen' to this end he uses strict discipline, if the child resent it, he is not allowed to express his resentment. As a result the child tends to find other outlets for his frustrated aggressive impulses.

For the understanding of personality it is more helpful to study the broad attitudes, sometimes described as ideologies. When the attitude refers to political and social matters, such an attitude is conservatism and it's opposite liberalism; or at a further point in the direction of oppositions radicalism.

Eysenck (1975) categorized conservatism into three heads *i.e.* political, economic and social. Political conservatism relates to the conservative or right –wing parties whereas the economic conservatism relates to issues such as private property and distribution of wealth and the social issues such as sexual freedom etc. Come under the heading of social conservatism. The cross cultural generality of attitude and ideology research concentrates on general conservatism as distinct from economic and political.

Much of the work on personality correlates to conservatism has been done under the heading of the authoritarian personality. The most widely studied measure of authoritarianism is the "F" scale (Facism scale developed by Adorno *et al.,* 1950) . It seems to have been generally assumed that the F scale measures something closely similar to Eysenck's Conservatism measure. The F scale has repeatedly been found positively correlated with "E" scale, a measure of ethnocentrism, which is a generalized attitude of rejection toward those who are culturally different from oneself (Christie and Cook, 1958).

In a broad way it may be said that the home sets the patterns for the child's attitudes towards people, things and institutions. Since the child loves his parents and other members of the family he identifies himself with them, imitates their behavior and learns to adjust to life as they do, though the later influences modify the child's behavior and attitudes, they do not completely eradicate those early influences. As it has been pointed out earlier, that now-a-days condition are changing rapidly the traditional family system and rituals are not being observed as in earlier days. The professional mobility and economic strains are tempting the individuals to strip over and leave these customs and traditions.

Modern Indian society is no exception and is undergoing rapid and tremendous changes in this respect, the society is subjected to great pressure for changes the values and traditions of the medieval and pre-independence era. The reason for these changes is the change in home and social set-up of the society, industrial , technological and educational development have changed the value of society. Result of this change is that the cooperative value of the society has become comparative, the family structure is broken, joint family system, professional mobility and the family values of child rear practices, methods of discipline etc. all have change. The effects of these changes are being felt in every sphere of social set-up right from homes through education of professional life.

These changes have also a great influence on the status and position of the Indian Women. They are getting education, are free to choose jobs, life partners and child rearing practices. But the research findings and general observational reports indicate that we are living in independent country but we have not yet attained the independence of thoughts completely and therefore, are wavering still between traditionalism and radicalism. Indian society is still traditional and values its traditions more than any other nation. Thus people behave with their children as subordinates in a strict manner. They however, are educated and profess to become democratic and have to behave in a democratic manner because of the changed social economic and political conditions. This ambivalence has created and uncertainty in their behavior. This might be one of the cause of discontentment of masses with everything in their surroundings. However some serious results are being felt in the family and its structure. Previously the joint family system was an acknowledge system and only one member the "karta" was responsible for the whole family. But now almost each and every member of the family has to work. The economic stress is so much that even the women have to work to add to the family income. It has brought a great change in women's status and position that's women are getting education and carrier. The popular view about women in general is they are more conservative and orthodox but it may be possible that changing conditions of the society have influenced the modern females and they are becoming more and more radicalists. It would be advantageous to know their attitudes on social issue as TFI. Keeping these views in consideration the following hypotheses were formulated –

(1) There is no significant difference in the attitudes of conservative and radical females towards traditional

family ideology (TFI).

(2) There is no significant difference in the attitudes of conservative and radical females towards parent child relationship.

(3) There is no significant difference in the attitudes of conservative and radical female as towards husband and wife roles and relationship.

(4) There is no significant difference in the attitudes of conservative and radical females towards general male-female relationship and concept of masculinity and femininity.

(5) There is no significant difference in the attitudes of conservative and radical females towards general values and aims.

METHODOLOGY

Sample :

The present investigation was related to the social problem like parent child relationship, marital problems and general values and aims etc. The study was undertaken or 600 female subjects and for the final analysis a sub sample comprised of 147. Conservative and the other group consisting as 146 radicals selected on their scores on Mohsin C-scale. The sample included only the female subjects of educated and economically middle class families so that the economical and, socio-cultural conditions may not affect the findings of the study.

Thus the final sample had to be limited to specific type of subjects namely radicals and conservative between the age groups of 16-22 years and 30 to 36 years old females. Purposive sampling technique was implied. The subjects for the first age group were the students mainly from the colleges of Agra *i.e.* B.D.K M.V. B.D. Jain College, St. Johnes College, Agra. The subjects for the second group lady lecturers of various colleges, housewives, lowers, doctors, etc. From Agra city were included.

Tools:

Mohsin c-scale was used to measure conservatism and radicalism in a composite fashion and the basis of these scores subjects were to be classified as radicals and conservatives. It measures conservatism on eight terms, some of them are traditionalism, revivalism, resistance to change, 2. Faith in social hierarchy and social stratification, 3. Belief in the inferior role of women, denial of the equal status of women etc. The scale consisted 40 item twenty two statements supporting and eighteen opposing these issues.

Traditional Family Ideology Scale:

Hindi version of TFI scale by Levinson and Huffman (1955) was used in the present investigation. In the construction of this scale Likert method was used. The reliability of this Hindi version was calculated by split half technique and was found to be .987. It is multidimensional scale which measures attitudes towards parent- child relationships, husband and wife roles and relationships, general wale female relationships and general values and aims.

Procedure:

Mohsin c-scale and Traditional family ideology scale was administered to 600 subjects with the help of scoring manuals the scoring was done. Radicals and Conservatives were selected on the basis of scores an Mohin c-scale. To see the significance of the difference the mean, SD and t values are computed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis was that there is no significant difference in the attitude of conservative and radical females towards TFI. On TFI scale higher scores indicate the more democratic attitude towards family relations and low scores indicate the reverse trend. The mean scores of conservative females were lower than that of radicals (177.18 and 194.70, respectively), t ratio was found to be 6.92, $P < .01$ (Table 1). Thus the first null hypothesis was rejected. The reason may be that the subjects who were regarded as conservative have primitive tendencies for family ideology. They like old fashioned family structured. But the subjects regarded as radicals have changed their views and opinions due to the changing social structure. They need not to cling upon these old traditions. They want and accept the social, educational, psychological, economic changes etc. They

Table 1 : Mean, S.D. and t value of TFI scores

Groups	No. of females	Mean	S.D	df	t	P
Conservative females	147	177.18	21.30	291	6.92	P<.01
Radical Females	146	194.70	22.10			

have set up a new ideology for family as nuclear family where the husband and wife and their children may live according to their social and personal demands, where they feel more comfort and freedom. Thus conservatives have autocratic attitudes for family relations while the radicals have democratic attitude.

TFI is a multidimensional scale. It measures the attitudes on four different dimensions. The first dimension belongs to parent child relationship. Thus the hypothesis was that there is no significant difference in the attitude of conservative and radical females towards parent-child relationship. The t ratio was 5.96, p<.01, for the obtained mean difference of 5.67 (*i.e.* between mean scores 66.43, 72.10, respectively for conservatives and radicals, Table 2). Here also the null hypothesis was rejected. It is concluded that conservative females are orthodox relationship. They want that the child enough for parent-child should be treated as subordinates and demand unquestioned obedience while radicals consider this fact that loving care and acceptance is very necessary for the development of adequate personality of the child.

Table 2 : S.D. and t value for parent-child relationship dimension of TFI

Groups	Mean	SD	t	P
Conservative females	66.43	8.24	5.96	P<.01
Radical Females	72.10	8.15		

The second area of TFI scale belongs to husband and wife roles and relationship . The significant difference in the attitudes of conservative and radical females is obvious as the obtained t ratio was 6.07, significant even at .01 level of significance (Table 3). The conservative subjects emphasize on old type of marital relations and demand that wife should be devoted to her husband even if he is not sincere to her. On the other hand radical female is aware of her right. She wants equality in every sphere of life with her husband, she does not think marriage as a romantic thing but a responsibility for which both should work together.

Table 3: Mean, S.D. and t value for husband wife relationship dimension of TFI

Groups	Mean	SD	t	P
Conservative females	32.65	6.70	6.07	P<.01
Radical Females	37.15	6.85		

The next area consists of the items which determines the general male- female relationship and concept of masculinity and femininity. The hypothesis was that there is no significant difference between the attitudes of conservative and radical females towards general male-female relationship and concept of masculinity and femininity. This hypothesis was also rejected as the mean score of conservative females was 61.91 and the radical female was 66.10. The t value was 3.74, p<.01 (Table 4). The reason for this may be that the structure of our society is still traditional. Most of the females are influenced by the old customs. They think that man is superb and has great powers to command them but due to the extension of education and social change a large proportion of women have become aware of their needs and rights. Another thing is that the radical females like the co-educational system and free-mixing with males. They do not think man as an external of awful being but have a friendly attitude towards them.

Table 4 : S.D. and t value for general male-female relationship and concept of masculinity and femininity by dimension of TFI

Groups	Mean	S.D	T	P
Conservative females	61.91	8.35	3.74	P<.01
Radical Females	66.01	10.80		

The last area of TFI scale is general value and aims. It may be concluded on the basis of mean scores and t ratio that the conservative and radical females had significantly different attitude towards general values and aims as the t ratio was 6.14, p<.01 (Table 5). The hypothesis for this dimension that there is no significant difference in the attitude of conservative and radical females towards general values and aims was rejected. The reason might be that conservative are against the abolishment of old traditions, customs and rituals etc.

Table 5 : Mean S.D. and t value for general values and aims dimension of TFI

Groups	Mean	S.D	T	P
Conservative females	16.90	4.85	6.14	P<.01
Radical Females	20.34	4.80		

They honor them and they deeply believe in them. But the radical females think these old customs, traditions and beliefs as social pathos. They think these old traditions, beliefs etc. are the obstacles in the progress of society. They realize that this is time for new technological inventions and social changes therefore they discard them.

Conclusion:

From these results it was concluded that conservative females have an autocratic attitude towards family discipline. They are more orthodox in family relationships. On the other hand radical females are quite against of these traditional family ideologies. They want and reach new ideologies for family so that they can face new challenges, new demands of modern society and thus enjoy peacefully their family life.

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