

## **Perceptions and Experiences of Discrimination Among Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the experiences of discrimination among students in higher education in Tamil Nadu. It focuses on the experiences of Dalit and OBC students in higher education institutions, particularly in the management discipline. It tries to identify the impact of age and gender on caste-based prejudice and discrimination in the campus. A total of nine variables has taken for this study. It studies whether Caste-based discrimination, humiliation, and exclusion were experienced by students at the level of fellow students, faculty, and administration.

**KEYWORDS:** Caste, Discrimination, Inequalities & Society

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is widely accepted that caste inequalities continue to exist in India. After Independence, the Government of India moved toward creating a casteless society. Quotas or reservations are created for the upliftment of untouchable caste groups in university admissions, government jobs, and political posts. Despite affirmative action, the gap in socio-economic and education status between high and low caste groups remains large. Most of the research has examined inequality in income, gender and education, it has not explored much about whether such inequality is solely due to the denial of social and economic rights and opportunities in the past, or whether there are channels of social exclusion and psychological impact of discrimination that persist. Discussion of implementing appropriate policy to reduce caste inequality, we need to understand better how caste affects individuals in their economic and social lives, how caste values affect perceptions and the social and individual behaviours based on such perceptions that perpetuate inequality and deprivation for certain caste groups. In this context, there is a need to further study caste discrimination with reference to their gender and age groups.

### **REVIEWS**

Deshpande (2011) shows that discrimination is common in the workplace, in part because employers value family background. Madheswaran and Attewell (2007) examined discrimination in the labour market using National Sample Survey (NSS) data. It was found that in urban salaried jobs, employees belonging to SC/STs received 30% lower wages on average compared to those from other caste groups. Fifteen percent of the wage differential was unexplained by education attainment and work experience. Thorat and Attewell (2007) designed a field experiment and found that companies discriminated by caste and religion in

how often they contacted job applicants who had submitted identical resumes. Banerjee et al (2007) conducted similar experiments and found lower discrimination in the call-centre industry and none in the software industry.

Despite the constitutional safeguards, the lower caste students have been facing discrimination (Patwardhan and Palshikar, 1992; Desai and Kulkarni, 2008) and harassment, even in the most prestigious educational institutions. With regard to high dropout, stagnation and suicide cases in elite institutions, IIT campuses are notorious for discriminatory practices, behaviour and attitude towards the lower caste students and particularly against Dalit and Tribal students. To highlight systemic exclusion, (Nambissan and Rao, 2013, pp. 199–223) emphasised that due to lack of institutional social justice awareness in IIT, the lower caste students experience covert and overt discrimination in academic and social relationships.

He further added that caste-based discrimination is institutionalised<sup>14</sup> in these institutions and further, the institutions consistently denied such discrimination. Despite the constitutional safeguards, the lower caste students have been facing discrimination (Patwardhan and Palshikar, 1992; Desai and Kulkarni, 2008) and harassment, even in the most prestigious educational institutions. With regard to high dropout, stagnation and suicide cases in elite institutions, IIT campuses are notorious for discriminatory practices, behaviour and attitude towards the lower caste students and particularly against Dalit and Tribal students. To highlight systemic exclusion, (Nambissan and Rao, 2013, pp. 199–223) emphasised that due to lack of institutional social justice awareness in IIT, the lower caste students experience covert and overt discrimination in academic and social relationships.

He further added that caste-based discrimination is institutionalised<sup>14</sup> in these institutions and further, the institutions consistently denied such discrimination. In spite of the constitutional safeguards given the lower caste students have faced discrimination (Patwardhan and Palshikar, 1992; Desai and Kulkarni, 2008) and harassment, even in the most prestigious educational institutions. Dropout, stagnation and suicide cases in elite institutions are notorious for discriminatory practices, behaviour and attitude towards the lower caste students and particularly against Dalit and Tribal students. Nambissan and Rao (2013) emphasised that due to lack of institutional social justice awareness in elite institutions the lower caste students experience covert and overt discrimination in academic and social relationships.

## **OBJECTIVES**

To study the causes of discrimination in higher education

To study the discrimination among students pursuing a management degree

To study the impact of discrimination on age-wise and gender-wise

## METHODOLOGY

The population of the study is students from the management discipline in Chennai. This study is descriptive in nature. This study covers only the students from the second-year management stream. The sample size for the study is 51. A convenient sampling technique is applied to collect the desired sample size. Discrimination among the selected students is studied by liker scale techniques ranging from Strongly disagree to Agree on a five-point scale from 5 to 1.

**TABLE. 1**

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

FACTORS	MEAN	STANDAR DEVIATION
Discrimination with administration	13.41	3.716
Discrimination from Faculty members	10.16	4.123
Discrimination from Fellow students	9.91	4.707
Social life in campus	11.36	4.637
Redress Mechanism	15.24	4.138
Student perception on quota	14.64	5.129
Learned Self Devaluation	13.12	5.806
Self Esteem	20.55	5.630
Academic Performance	14.86	6.830

It is inferred from the analysis that mean score is higher for self-esteem with 20.55, which shows that students' self-esteem is higher in the desired sample, second comes the redress mechanism with a mean score of 15.24. It shows that the redress mechanism followed in the institution is higher and up to the satisfactory mark. Then comes student perception in quota with a mean score of 14.64. It shows that there is a perception among people that quota plays a major role in the upliftment of their standards. Last comes discrimination from fellow students, the means score shows that the discrimination from the classmates is very minimum.

**TABLE 2**

### NULL HYPOTHESIS: OPINION REGARDING STATEMENTS ON DISCRIMINATION ARE EQUAL TO AVERAGE LEVEL

FACTORS	T VALUE	P VALUE
Discrimination with administration	20.206	<.001**
Discrimination from Faculty members	12.530	<.001**
Discrimination from Fellow students	10.592	<.001**
Social life in campus	12.994	<.001**
Redress Mechanism	21.331	<.001**

Student perception on quota	16.202	<.001**
Learned Self Devaluation	12.574	<.001**
Self Esteem	22.476	<.001**
Academic Performance	12.517	<.001**

Note : \*\* denotes significant at 1% level

Since P-value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance with regard to the discrimination of students. Hence the opinion regard to all the Statements on discrimination are not equal to an average level.

**Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between Male and Female with respect to Factors of discrimination**

**TABLE 3**

**T TEST FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE WITH RESPECT TO FACTORS OF DISCRIMINATION**

Discrimination	Gender	N	Mean	FValue	P Value
with administration	Male	36	13.42	0.118	0.733
	Female	15	13.53		
From Faculty members	Male	36	9.67	0.124	0.726
	Female	15	10.93		
From Fellow students	Male	36	9.36	2.431	0.125
	Female	15	10.47		
Social life in campus	Male	36	10.75	0.545	0.464
	Female	15	11.80		
Redress Mechanism	Male	36	15.47	0.238	0.628
	Female	15	13.60		
Student perception on quota	Male	35	13.80	5.470	0.024*
	Female	15	15.13		
Learned Self Devaluation	Male	36	12.06	1.979	0.166
	Female	15	13.80		
Self Esteem	Male	36	19.72	0.778	0.382
	Female	15	20.80		
Academic Performance	Male	36	13.92	2.006	0.163
	Female	15	14.67		
Overall discrimination	Male	35	117.94	0.656	0.422
	Female	15	124.73		

Note : 1. \*\* denotes significant at 1% level

2. \* denotes significant at 5% level

Since P-value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level with regard to students' perception on quotas. Hence there is a significant difference between males and females with regard to the student's perception of quotas. Based on the mean score, the above table also shows that female students have better mean score on all the factors of discrimination,

There is no significant difference between males and female with regard to academic performance, self-esteem, learned self-evaluation. Redressmechanism, social life in campus, from fellow students, faculty members and administration. Since P-value is greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level with regard to discrimination

**Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference among Age Group with respect to Factors of discrimination**

**TABLE 4**

**ANOVA FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE AMONG AGE GROUP WITH RESPECT TO FACTORS OF DISCRIMINATION**

FACTORS LEVELS	AGE	N	MEAN	F VALUE	P VALUE
Discrimination with administration	18-20	12	12.83	0.303	0.823
	21-23	30	13.53		
	24-26	7	13.57		
	27 and others	2	15.50		
	Total	51	13.45		
Discrimination from Faculty members	18-20	12	9.33	0,533	0.662
	21-23	30	9.90		
	24-26	7	11.14		
	27 and others	2	12.50		
	Total	51	10.04		
Discrimination from Fellow students	18-20	12	9.33	0.554	0.648
	21-23	30	9.37		
	24-26	7	10.71		
	27 and others	2	13.00		
	Total	51	9.69		
Social life in campus	18-20	12	10.75	0.306	0.821
	21-23	30	11.40		
	24-26	7	9.86		
	27 and others	2	12.00		
	Total	51	11.06		
Redress Mechanisam	18-20	12	13.67	0.916	0.440
	21-23	30	15.30		
	24-26	7	15.86		
	27 and others	2	13.50		

	Total	51	14.92		
Student perception on quota	18-20	12	15.25	3.296	0.029*
	21-23	29	13.24		
	24-26	7	14.29		
	27 and others	2	21.50		
	Total	50	14.20		
Learned Self Devaluation	18-20	12	12.83	2.337	0.086
	21-23	30	11.57		
	24-26	7	15.14		
	27 and others	2	17.00		
	Total	51	12.57		
Self Esteem	18-20	12	19.83	.718	0.546
	21-23	30	19.67		
	24-26	7	20.86		
	27 and others	2	24.00		
	Total	51	20.04		
Academic Performance	18-20	12	13.42	2.301	0.089
	21-23	30	14.27		
	24-26	7	12.71		
	27 and others	2	21.50		
	Total	51	14.14		
Overall discrimination	18-20	12	117.25	1.590	0.205
	21-23	29	118.00		
	24-26	7	124.14		
	27 and others	2	150.50		
	Total	50	119.98		

Note : 1. \*\* denotes significant at 1% level

2. \* denotes significant at 5% level

Since P-value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level with regard to student perception on quota. There is no significant difference between levels of age groups with regard to academic performance, self-esteem, learned self-evaluation. Redress mechanism, social life in campus, from fellow students, faculty members and administration. Since P-value is greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level with regard to discrimination. Even though in some of the factors of discrimination mean score varies across age levels but the t-test shows that there is no significant difference among factors of discrimination across age levels.

**TABLE 5 STUDENT PERCEPTION ON QUOTA**

Duncan<sup>a,b</sup>

Agegroup	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
21-23	29	13.24	
24-26	7	14.29	
18-20	12	15.25	
27 and others	2		21.50
Sig.		.431	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 5.258.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

The above table shows that the age group 27 years above differs significantly from all the other age groups. Age groups 21-22,24,-26, and 18-20 years that not have any significant relationships because they come in the same group.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that caste-based discrimination is very minimum among the students from management discipline. Students' perception on quota is not having any significant relationship between gender and age groups. Other discrimination factors taken for the study do not as any significant relationship among the students. Proper policy-making and proper implementation with appropriate supervision for students in educational institutions will surely help to bring an end to caste-based discrimination.

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