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Study the gender and socio-economic status differences on the variable of religiosity (way of life, belief in rebirth, karma and destiny, existence of power, importance of prayer and purposeful life)

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Abstract

The present study aims to explore the gender and socio-economic status differences among young adults on the variable of Religiosity (existence of power, way of life, importance of prayer, beliefs in rebirth, karma and destiny and purposeful life). For this study, a sample of 400 young adults of the age group between 20-30 years from different districts of Haryana. Indic religiosity scale is administered to the subjects. Data was analysed by using ANOVA by SPSS. The results reveal that gender differences and socio-economic status differences are found among young adults on the variables of the way of life and existence of power. There is no gender and socio-economic status differences were found on the variables of purposeful life and Importance of prayer. On the variable of belief in rebirth, karma and destiny only socio-economic status differences were found.

Keywords: Existence of power, way of life, beliefs in rebirth, karma and destiny, importance of prayer and purposeful life, gender, socio-economic status, society, discrimination

Introduction

Everyday actions in India and other countries across the world provide witness to the influence of religion. Studies show that religion has a significant impact on our personalities and behaviours. Religion as a social practice is based on a belief system that encompasses morals, laws, and conduct. Social relationships determine how it is organised. This is predicated on Clarke and Jennings' (2008) definition of religion, which was the most pertinent at the time. A person's religion greatly influences and directs their social and private lives. Religious motivations frequently have an impact on a person's inner experiences, moral principles, and interpretation of life's purpose. A deeply religious person should see the world from a religious perspective and make religion a part of much of their everyday life. However, there is a significant gender gap in religious belief, and our cultural practices and beliefs are the cause of this. Despite the disparities in religiosity across genders, religion is still very important today since it shapes a person's thinking, personality, and worldview. These days, a lot of research has been done on the influence of religion on individuals' lives.

Religiosity

Religiosity encompasses various dimensions, including beliefs, behaviors, and experiences related to religion. Smith (2020) ^[12] defines it as the degree to which an individual identifies with, practices, and finds meaning in religious traditions. Stark and Glock (1968) ^[14] delineate three dimensions: cognitive (beliefs), affective (emotional attachment), and conative (behavioral involvement). Religion has been put into practice via measurement of "Religiosity", it indicates to a more in-depth knowledge of how individuals are active inside their faith, the way they incorporate religion into their everyday lives, or how they mention transcendence in their day-to-day conversations. (Meston & Ahrold, 2010; Saroglou, 2009) ^[1, 10].

Determinants of Religiosity

Numerous factors influence religiosity, including socio-cultural, psychological, and demographic variables. Stark and Finke (2000) ^[13] argue that religious competition fosters higher levels of religiosity, as individuals seek affiliation and adherence to maintain social identity. Psychological studies highlight personality traits, such as openness to experience and conscientiousness, as predictors of religiosity (Saroglou, 2010) ^[10]. Additionally, demographic factors like age, gender, and education play roles in shaping religiosity levels (Pew Research Center, 2021) ^[9].

Religion and Gender

Research consistently indicates that women are typically more devout than males across various measures of religiosity. Studies have demonstrated that women are more prone to participate in religious services, engage in prayer and meditation, and hold stronger religious beliefs compared to men (e.g., Argue, Johnson, & White, 1999; Miller & Stark, 2002) ^[7]. Women have more religious practices (Gobind *et al.*, 2023). Additionally, women often report higher levels of religious commitment and involvement in religious communities (Pew Research Center, 2016) ^[8].

Factors Influencing Gender Differences in Religiosity

Several factors contribute to the observed gender differences in religiosity. Socialization processes play a crucial role, as girls are often socialized into religious practices from a young age and may receive more encouragement to participate in religious activities compared to boys (Collett & Lizardo, 2009) ^[3]. Moreover, scholars have suggested that the patriarchal nature of many religious institutions may contribute to women's greater involvement, as religion can provide social support and a sense of empowerment in contexts where women may experience marginalization (Lehrer & Chiswick, 1993) ^[6].

Religiosity and Socio- Economic Status

Although SES refers to a person's or group's financial and social status within a community, religiosity is defined as having ideas, practices, and affiliations with a particular religion. Understanding the interplay between religiosity and SES is crucial for comprehending various social phenomena, ranging from health outcomes to political behaviors. This paper aims to explore this relationship, considering how religiosity may influence SES and vice versa. Research has shown that religiosity and SES often exhibit complex relationships. While some studies suggest a positive correlation between religiosity and SES, indicating that individuals with higher socioeconomic status may be more religious, others propose a negative correlation, implying that socioeconomic disadvantage might lead to higher levels of religiosity (Smith, 2018) ^[11]. Additionally, religious beliefs and values can influence economic behaviors and attitudes towards work, wealth, and material success, thereby impacting socioeconomic outcomes (Iannaccone, 1998) ^[5].

Objective of Study

To study the differences across gender and socioeconomic status among young adults on the variable of Religiosity

(existence of power, beliefs in rebirth, karma and destiny, importance of prayer, purposeful life and way of life).

Hypothesis of Study

1. There will be significant differences across gender and SES among young adults on the variable of Religiosity (way of life).
2. There will be significant differences across gender and SES among young adults on the variable of Religiosity (beliefs in rebirth, karma and destiny).
3. There will be significant differences across gender and SES among young adults on the variable of Religiosity (existence of power).
4. There will be significant differences across gender and SES among young adults on the variable of Religiosity (importance of prayer).
5. There will be significant differences across gender and SES among young adults on the variable of Religiosity (purposeful life).

Method

Sample: A total of four hundred young adults (ages 21 to 25) from Hisar and the surrounding areas in western Haryana would make up the research sample. There would be 200 males and 200 females among these 400 young adults. One hundred males from the APL family and one hundred from the BPL family would make up the 200 total. Similarly, 100 of the 200 females would come from the APL family and 100 from the BPL family.

Instrument / Tools

Indic religiosity scale, developed by Tulsi Jayakumar and Anshul Verma, (2020) was used to measure religiosity in young adults. This is a multi-dimensional questionnaire, This construct, which consists of 15 items and five components, has been shown to be a viable and reliable indicator of religiosity. The five dimensions include the Existence of Supreme Power, Belief in Rebirth, Karma and Destiny, Importance of Prayer, Purposeful Life and way of Life. All 15 items of the questionnaire are scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1= SD, 2=D, 3=U, 4= A, 5=SA), based on five dimensions of scale.

Procedure

To build a proper rapport, the goal of the study was first presented to the subjects. The confidentiality of the information was guaranteed, and each participant received a different communication. Once a relationship had been established with each participant, questions about demographic data were posed to them. Each tool's instructions were given separately.

Results

The objective of the study is to explore differences across gender and socioeconomic status among young adults on the variables of the existence of power, beliefs in rebirth, karma and destiny, way of life, importance of prayer and purposeful life.

Table 1: Two-way ANOVA (2 X 2) results on the way of life (Religiosity)

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean	F	Sig.
Gender	237.160	1	237.160	11.653**	.001
SES	542.890	1	542.890	26.676**	.000
Gender * SES	.360	1	.360	.018	.894
Error	8059.100	396	22.184		
Total	219796.000	400			

**Significant at $p < .01$ level, *Significant at $p < .05$ level

Table 1 shows F value for gender [$F = 11.653$, $p < .01$] and socio-economic status (SES) [$F = 26.676$, $p < .01$] is highly significant. Males and females from above the poverty line

(APL) and below the poverty line (BPL) differ in their way of life (Religiosity). APL young adults have more scores on the way of life compared to BPL young adults.

Table 2: Two-way ANOVA (2 X 2) results on beliefs in rebirth, karma and destiny (Religiosity)

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean	F	Sig.
Gender	3.423	1	3.423	.976	.324
SES	29.702	1	29.702	8.472**	.004
Gender * SES	.003	1	.003	.001	.979
Error	1388.310	396	3.828		
Total	19579.000	400			

**Significant at $p < .01$ level, *Significant at $p < .05$ level

Table 2 shows F value for socio-economic status (SES) [$F = 8.472$, $p < .01$] is significant. Young adults from above the poverty line (APL) and below the poverty line (BPL) differ

in belief in rebirth, karma and destiny (Religiosity). APL young adults have higher scores on beliefs in rebirth, karma and destiny (Religiosity) compared to BPL young adults.

Table 3: Two-way ANOVA (2 X 2) results on the existence of power (Religiosity)

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean	F	Sig.
Gender	27.040	1	27.040	4.037*	.045
SES	73.960	1	73.960	11.041**	.001
Gender * SES	.250	1	.250	.037	.847
Error	2652.740	396	6.699		
Total	51198.000	400			

**Significant at $p < .01$ level, *Significant at $p < .05$ level

Table 3 shows F value for gender [$F = 4.037$, $p < .05$] and socio-economic status (SES) [$F = 11.041$, $p < .01$] is highly significant. Males and females from above the poverty line (APL) and below the poverty line (BPL) differ in existence

(Religiosity). APL young adults have higher scores on the existence of the power of power (Religiosity) compared to BPL young adults.

Table 4: Two-way ANOVA (2 X 2) results on the importance of prayer (Religiosity)

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean	F	Sig.
Gender	11.560	1	11.560	3.372	.067
SES	.360	1	.360	.105	.746
Gender * SES	2.560	1	2.560	.747	.388
Error	1357.680	396	3.428		
Total	23040.000	400			

**Significant at $p < .01$ level, *Significant at $p < .05$ level

Table 4 shows no significant results on the variable of importance of prayer (Religiosity).

Table 5: Two-way ANOVA (2 X 2) results on purposeful life (Religiosity)

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean	F	Sig.
Gender	1.563	1	1.563	.497	.497
SES	16.402	1	16.402	4.857	.028
Gender * SES	4.622	1	4.622	1.369	.243
Error	1337.390	396	3.377		
Total	23905.000	400			

**Significant at $p < .01$ level, *Significant at $p < .05$ level

Table 5 shows no significant results on the variable of purposeful life (Religiosity).

Discussions

In the results, significant gender and socio-economic differences were found among young adults on the variable

of Religiosity (way of life and existence of power), so hypothesis no.1 and hypothesis no.3 is accepted but hypothesis 2 is partially accepted because only socio-economic differences were found on the variable of beliefs in rebirth, karma and destiny. On the variables of the purposeful life and importance of prayer, no significant

gender and socio-economic status differences were found, so hypotheses 4 and 5 are rejected.

Limitations and Future Implications

It is vital to take into account certain significant limitations of the current study. First, the study's age and background range was restricted to a particular population. It might also be researched with different age groups and backgrounds. Second, we can evaluate the variation in religiosity according to gender and socioeconomic position using self-reported parameters. Third, examining the relationship between religion and socioeconomic status differences in a single study was not feasible. By examining the effects of gender and socioeconomic class on the religiosity variable among the people of Haryana, this study has advanced the field of social psychology. Studies examining the effects of socioeconomic position and gender on the religious variable within the Indian context are scarce. People who work in the social sciences, psychology, and other relevant fields that focus on gender and religion can benefit from this study. NGOs that collaborate with Haryana's religious institutions might also benefit from it. Religious practices are extremely inadequate and done incorrectly as a result of a lack of scientific understanding, awareness, and explanation regarding religion.

Future Directions

1. It is recommended that future research examine gender variations in the religious variable. It would be beneficial in comprehending the essence of religion. There aren't many studies on gender disparities in religion that have been done in India.
2. For a more accurate assessment of the Indian population, the religion scale ought to be developed within the Indian context.
3. Religiosity should be studied throughout all age groups and in combination with other variables to obtain more comprehensive insights.
4. Educating people about religious traditions and how they affect an individual's perception, thought process, attitude, attribution, and personality in India

Conclusions

Finally, it might be argued that belief is a set of formalised rituals, beliefs, and ideologies that are usually associated with respect and adoration for a higher power, which could be a personal deity or a higher authority. Prayers, talks, rituals, meditation, pilgrimages to sacred sites, symbols, trances, feasts - a wide range of activities can be incorporated into it. Religion can have a big impact on a person's life and experiences. According to modern psychology, religion can also improve health and happiness. Studies have shown that religion may help with behaviour control, habit formation, and emotional understanding - all areas of life that have an impact on your physical and mental well-being. Nonetheless, several studies have shown a correlation between the religious variable and gender disparities.

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