

A Study on the Attitude toward the Role of Women in our Society

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Abstract

Women and men are two specific rational living beings, who constitute the social whole, that is, the society. If any of them is fully educated and not fully prepared for baneful living, he or, she will remain uneducated, uninculcated, ungainful, unhealthy and underdeveloped. In such a situation, baneful functioning of the society will be hampered and, will lead to the dysfunction of the society. So, both man and woman should be treated on equal footings regarding their upbringing, nourishment, character building, enculturation and education. But it is seen that still women are considered inferior to men and, are put on lower social footing.

Over the past few decades, there has been developed some questions such as “What work roles are appropriate for women and men?” And how do cultural factors interact with work related attitudes to influence gender roles?

Attitude towards the role of women was studied in respect of middle and lower class people of our society The study revealed significant difference between

1. The Middle and Lower Classes,
2. Middle class Men and Women,
3. Lower Class Men and Women,
4. Middle Class and Lower Class Men and
5. Middle Class and Lower Class Women in our society regarding their attitudes toward the role of women. The study also revealed three different types of attitudes, namely, Traditional, Moderately Traditional and Non-traditional, toward the role of women possessed in our society.

Keywords: Attitude, Society, Middle Class, Lower Class

Introduction

It is customary everywhere to classify the human community on the basis of sex into groups of men and women. The biological fact of sex created much difference between them. The aims and objectives, desires and aspirations, duties and responsibilities, dress styles and behavioural patterns, roles and statuses of men and women are different. Nowhere in the history of humanity were men and women treated alike and assigned statuses alike. Women have not been able to lead a life exactly at par with men in spite of their urge for equality. This does not mean that men and women represent two cultures as such. They represent one way of life, one culture and one heritage. This is also true of India and Indian women.

The type of the status assigned to women in any society reflects the nature of its cultural richness and the level of its civilisation standards. The degree of freedom and respectability given to women to move about and take part in public activities gives a good idea of the nature of the society to which they belong. The status accorded to women in society symbolizes its level of progress. The spirit of a civilization can be assessed by the way which women are treated by the members of that civilization.

Study of the history of human society reveals that in no society of the world have women enjoyed absolute equality at par with men. Everywhere they were subjected to inequality, discrimination and exploitation.

Inequality is a common feature in all the societies. Inequalities and discrimination is more or, less present in capitalist as well as socialist and mixed economic systems. This is particularly relevant for third world countries like us where widow remarriage took more than 100 years after its enactment to become acceptable to the society.

Today the attitudes concerning appropriate behaviours and roles for women and men have changed greatly too, mirroring and perhaps contributes to realities of the modern world. The pace of such change has not been uniform throughout the current state of affairs.

In many countries, major change has occurred, while in many others traditional patterns of behaviour and attitude remain largely unaltered. There is a great deal of conflict as to whether women should by purely traditional need not necessarily mean western style of dress or, fashion. To be non-traditional, means to be educated efficient and working outside the home if they so desire.

There has been considerable interest in recent years on studies related to women especially in the context of social change and economic development. Most studies discuss the status of women in general. A good deal of material has been published during the last decade touching various aspects of woman's life and activities. But there are not many studies in our country as well as society, society, however, concerning the attitudes toward the role of women in our society and kind of changes taken place in these areas.

Considering all these aspects, in the present study an attempt has been made to find out the Attitudes toward the Role of Women in our Society.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are as follows

1. To measure the Attitudes toward Women in the middle and lower class peoples of our society with the help of the Attitudes toward Women Scale developed and standardized by Spence & Helmreich, 1972.
2. To measure to what extent the middle class differ in their attitudes toward the role of women in our society from those of lower class.
3. To find out the differences if any, between the men and women belonging to the middle class regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.
4. To find out the differences if any, between the men and women belonging to the lower class regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.
5. To examine to what extent the middle class men differ in their attitudes toward the role of women in society form of lower class men.
6. To examine to what extent the middle class women differ in their attitudes toward the role of women in our society from those of lower class women.
7. To investigate how much traditional and non-traditional pattern of attitudes toward the role of women possessed in our society.

Statement of the Hypotheses

H₁

There would be a significant difference between the middle and lower classes of our society regarding the attitudes toward the role of women.

H₂

There would be a significant difference between the men and women belonging to the middle class regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

H₃

There would be a significant difference between the men and women belonging to the lower class regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

H₄

There would be a significant difference between the middle class men and lower class men regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

H₅

There would be a significant difference between the middle class women and lower class women regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

Null Hypotheses**OH₁**

There would be no significant difference between the middle and lower classes of our society regarding their attitudes toward the role of women.

OH₂

There would be no significant difference between the men and women belonging to the middle class regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

OH₃

There would be no significant difference between the men and women belonging to the lower class regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

OH₄

There would be no significant difference between the middle class men and lower class men regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

OH₅

There would be no significant difference between the middle class women and lower class women regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

Procedure**Selection of Sample**

A sample of 200 persons (100 from middle class and 100 from lower class) comprising of equal number of men and women for both the classes were selected from different areas of Burdwan city.

Sex-wise distribution for both the classes, namely, middle and lower are given in table 2.

Table 2**Sex-Wise Distribution of Middle and lower Classes**

Class	Midle	Lower	Total
Men	50	50	100
Women	50	50	100
Total	100	100	200

Collection of Data

The questionnaire of the Attitudes toward Women Scale (ATWS) (Appendix-A) standardized by Spence and Helmreich (1972) were used to find out the Attitudes toward the Role of Women in our Society. Scoring for evaluation of ATWS Questionnaire were done with the help of respective scoring keys (Appendix-B).

Determination of the Statistics of the Data obtained from the ATWS Questionnaire

The scores obtained by both the sexes of middle and lower class in ATWS Questionnaire were grouped into frequency distribution. The score were employed to determine the statistical measures namely Mean (M), Median (Mdn), Mode, Quartile (Q), Standard Deviation (SD), Skewness (Sk) and kurtosis (Ku), Further the distribution of the scores in ATWS Questionnaire were graphically represented and compared with Ogives drawn on the same axis.

Determination of the Significance of Difference between the Mean Scores of Total Middle Class and lower class, Middle Class Men and Women, Lower Class Men and Women, Middle Class men and Lower Class Men, Middle class Women and Lower Class women in ATWS Questionnaire

T-Test was performed in order to find out the significance between the Total Middle Class and Lower Class, Middle Class Men and Women, Lower Class Men and Women, Middle Class Men and Lower Class Men, Middle Class Women and Lower Class Women in ATWS Questionnaire.

Determination of the Difference in Attitudes toward the Role of Women in our Society.

The last phase of the procedural aspect was to find out the Traditional, Moderately Traditional and Non-traditional outlook of the middle and lower class of people. For this the cutting point was determined by Median \pm Q. Those who scored above Median +Q had Non-traditional outlook, and those who scored below Median $-$ Q Traditional outlook. Those who scored in between the said two had Moderately Traditional outlook.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The scores of the entire sample as well as sex - wise breakdowns in ATWS Questionnaire were grouped into frequency distribution (Table-4)

Statements of Statistics of the Scores in ATWS Questionnaire

The Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Q, Sk and Ku of the scores in ATWS Questionnaire were found out with regard to Middle Class Men, Middle Class Women, Total Middle Class, Lower Class Men, Lower Class Women, Total Lower Class, Total Men, Total Women and Entire Sample. The various statistical measures were given in Table-4.

Table 4

Frequency Distribution of Scores in ATWS Questionnaire of Middle Class (Men & Women), Lower Class (Men & Women), Total Middle Class, Total Lower Class, Total Men, Total Women, Entire Sample with their Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Q, Sk and Ku Measures

Scores	Middle Class		Total Middle Class	Lower Class		Total Lower Class	Total Men	Total Women	Entire Sample
	Men	Women		Men	Women				
15-24	0	0	0	11	5	16	11	5	16
25-34	1	1	2	17	10	27	18	11	29
35-44	17	12	29	7	11	18	24	23	47
45-54	18	15	33	12	14	26	30	29	59
55-64	9	16	25	3	10	13	12	26	38
65-74	5	6	11	0	0	0	5	6	11
Total	50	50	100	50	50	100	100	100	200
Mean	59.50	52.30	50.90	35.30	42.30	38.80	42.40	47.30	44.85
Median	48.39	52.50	50.26	32.74	43.59	38.39	43.25	48.29	45.86
Mode	45.50	55.41	47.83	28.25	48.79	30.00	47.00	51.17	48.14
SD	10.00	10.21	10.20	12.35	12.66	13.00	13.30	12.54	13.15
Q	7.45	8.18	8.24	10.60	10.36	11.03	9.78	9.39	9.06
Sk	2.29	-0.50	1.08	3.20	-1.59	0.39	-1.29	-2.29	-1.29
Ku	0.269	0.288	0.292	0.313	0.296	0.305	0.266	0.276	0.257

Significance of Difference between the Mean Scores in ATWS Questionnaire as obtained by both the Sexes & Classes

Table 5 shows the Significance of Difference between the Mean Scores of Middle & Lower Class, Middle class Men and Women, Lower Class Men and Women, Middle class Men and Lower Class Men, and Middle Class Women & Lower Class Women.

Table 5

Mean ATWS Questionnaire Scores and Other Relevant Measures of Middle and Lower Class, Middle Class Men & Women, Lower Class Men & Women, Middle Class Men & Lower Class Men, and Middle Class Women & Lower Class Women.

Measures	Class		Middle Class		Lower Class		Men		Women	
	Middle	Lower	Men	Women	Men	Women	Middle Class	Lower Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
N	100	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Mean	50.90	38.80	59.50	52.30	35.30	42.30	59.50	35.30	52.30	42.30
SD	10.20	13.00	10.00	10.21	12.35	12.66	10.00	12.35	10.21	12.66
SE_D	1.65		2.02		2.50		2.25		2.30	
t	7.33*		3.56*		2.80*		10.76*		4.35*	

* Significant at .01 level

Difference in attitude of entire Sample

The data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Percentage of Traditional, Moderately Traditional and Non-Traditional Attitudes of the Entire Sample Towards the Role of Women in our Society.

Attitudes	Percentage
Traditional	23.5%
Moderately Traditional	62.0%
Non-traditional	24.5%

Summary of the Study

The study was on the Attitudes toward the Role of Women in our Society.

The main objectives of the study were

1. To measure the Attitudes toward Women in the middle and lower class people of our society with the help of the Attitudes toward Women Scale developed and standardized by Spence & Helmreich, 1972.
2. To measure to what extent the middle class differ in their attitudes toward the role of women in our society from those of lower class.
3. To find out the differences if any, between the men and women belonging to the middle class regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.
4. To find out the differences if any, between the men and women belonging to the lower class regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.
5. To examine to what extent the middle class men differ in their attitudes toward the role of women in our society from those of lower class men.
6. To examine to what extent the middle class women differ in their attitudes toward the role of women in our society from those of lower class women.
7. To investigate how much traditional or, non-traditional pattern of attitudes toward the role of women possessed by our society.

The significance of the study was discussed.

The delimitations of the study were identified.

The next part of Chapter-1 was concerned with the review of related literatures.

The investigator made some assumptions. This was followed by formulation of Hypotheses. The framed Hypotheses were expressed in terms of Null Hypotheses for testing.

In the Chapter-2, the investigator narrated the procedure adopted by her for the study. This chapter dealt with determining the various statistical measures of the scores of ATWS Questionnaire, namely, Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Q, Sk & Ku were found in respect of sexes and classes i.e. Middle Class Men, Middle Class Women, Lower Class Men, Lower Class Women, Total Middle Class, Total Lower Class, Total Men, Total Women, and the Entire Sample. The distributions of the scores were represented graphically with a view to have a comparative study between the sexes and classes respectively.

In Chapter-3, the investigator presented the various raw scores in frequency distribution. This was followed by the statement of statistics of the scores in ATWS Questionnaire. The significance of difference between the Mean Scores of Middle Class Men & Women, Lower Class Men & Women, Middle Class Men & Lower Class Men, Middle Class Women & Lower Class Women, Middle and Lower Class respectively in ATWS Questionnaire was done by adopting t-test. The results were presented in appropriate tables. t-values for Middle Class & Lower Class, Middle Class Men & Middle Class Women, Lower Class Men & Lower Class Women are 7.33, 3.56, 2.80, 10.76 & 4.35 respectively which were significant at .01 level.

The last part of this chapter was concerned with finding out the differences in Attitudes toward the role of Women possessed by our society with their respective percentages (based on the scores of ATWS Questionnaire).

Interpretation of the Data and Conclusion of the Study

Analysis of the various data laid to the following conclusion-

1. From the distribution of the scores in ATWS Questionnaire of the middle and lower class (N=200), The Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Q, Sk and Ku, were found to be 44.85, 45.86, 48.14, 13.15, 9.06,-1.29, 0.257 respectively. From these measures, it was evident that the distribution of the scores in ATWS Questionnaire was not normal. It possessed negative skewness. The distribution was leptokurtic.
2. All the t-values for testing the significance of difference between the Mean scores in ATWS Questionnaire were significant.

t-values for middle-lower Class was 7.33 being significant at .01 level. So, the Null Hypothesis H1 is rejected. Consequently the hypothesis H1 is retained i.e. there would be a significant difference between the Middle and lower Classes of our society regarding their attitudes toward the role of women.

T-Values For Middle Class Men – Women was 3.56 being significant at .01 level. So, the Null Hypothesis H2 is rejected. Consequently, the Hypothesis H2 is retained i.e. there would be a significant difference between the Men and Women belonging to the Middle Class regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

T-Values for Lower Class Men-Women was 2.80 being significant at .01 level. So, the Null Hypothesis H3 is rejected. Consequently, the Hypothesis H3 is retained i.e. there would be a significant difference the Men and Women belonging to the Lower Class regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

T-Values for Middle Class Men-Lower Class Men was 10.76 being significant at .01 level. So, the Null Hypothesis H4 is rejected. Consequently, the Hypothesis H4 is retained i.e. there would be a significant difference between the Middle Class Men & Lower Class Men regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

t-values for Middle Class Women-Lower Women was 4.35 being significant at .01 level. So, the Null Hypothesis H5 is rejected. Consequently, the Hypothesis H5 is retained i.e. there would be a significant difference between the Middle Class Women & Lower Class Women regarding their attitudes toward the role of women in our society.

There are three different types of attitudes toward the role of women possessed by our society based on the scores of ATWS Questionnaire, namely, traditional, moderately traditional and no-traditional. Among the entire sample, 23.50% possessed traditional outlook, 62.00% moderately traditional and 24.50% non-traditional outlook which show that the purely traditional outlook is changing.

Limitation of the Study

1. The sample represented both the sexes and two social classes, namely, middle and lower, Upper class could have been taken for this study.
2. Because of shortage of time, the investigator could not develop ATWS Questionnaire on her own.
3. The investigator considered only Burdwan Municipal Area. It could have been carried out in other Municipal Areas, Panchayats and Districts also.

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