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ASSESSMENT OF ANXIETY AND PERSONALITY TRAITS AMONG INDIAN STUDENTS IN DIFFERENT CASTE GROUPS

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Objective. Caste system is widely prevalent in the Indian society and has been one of the key reasons for inequality in this community. Four main castes are identified as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishya and the Shudras. The ones outside this grouping are considered as 'Dalits' or the 'Untouchables'. Despite the equality laws, discrimination and inequality is still a bane within the country and beyond the subcontinent.

According to one of the theoretical models, personality is based on three dimensions; extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism whilst the fourth trait, sincerity or lie scale is about social desirability. Another character feature that we chose to assess is anxiety. Anxiety is one of the most widespread negative emotions felt by a student in his common life. Hence, the groups of students were assessed based on two of the most fundamental characters present in students to determine its association with caste.

Aim: estimation of any significant difference of anxiety and personality traits between indian students belonging to different casts.

Materials and methods. 50 Indian students studying in the International Faculty of General Medicine, BSMU was provided with a self-administered questionnaire. Students were categorized under three main castes as Upper, Middle and Lower for the study. To assess anxiety, we used State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) Hindi version which consisted of 40 questions. To evaluate the personality traits, the short form of the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, Hindi edition (EPQRS-H) which consisted of 48 questions was used. The responses for STAI were obtained according to a predetermined key. EPQRS-H was based on a dichotomous response (yes/no) for twelve questions each representing a personality trait; and scored according to the scoring manual. Statistical processing was carried out in STATISTICA 10.

Results and discussion. To describe the groups, we used nonparametric statistics. The median of the upper caste for the STAI Y-1 test was 36.0, upper and lower quartiles, 47.0 and 28.5 respectively. Likewise, the median for STAI Y-2 was 45.0 (50.0/42.0.). The median of the middle caste for STAI Y 1 was 46 (49.0/45.0), for STAI Y-2 it was 46 (53.0/45.0). Median of lower caste for STAI Y-1 was 46.50 (51.0/33.0), for the STAI Y-2 it was 45.5(33.0/55.0).

The median for the EPQRS parameters for upper caste were as follows: extraversion (E) 7.5 (10.0/6.0) neuroticism (N) 8.00 (9.0/6.0), psychotism (P) 3.5 (6.0/2.0) and lie scale (L) 4.50 (6.0/4.0). The median for middle caste for E was 4.0 (10.0/3.0), N 7.0 (8.0/5.0), P 4.0 (5/3) and L 5.0 (7.0/4.0). The median for the lower caste for E was 9.00 (10.0/6.0), N 7.00 (9.0/5.0) P 3.0 (5.0 /3.0) and L 5.00 (7.0/5.0).

To estimate the significant difference between results in student groups of different cast, we used Mann- Whitney test. No significant differences were found.

Conclusion. This study revealed that there is no association between caste, anxiety and personality traits of the students. However, the students, particularly of the lower caste, were hesitant to mention their caste