

A study of Social Liberalization among students in three universities of India

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Introduction

- ❖ The socio-political ideology dimension of liberalism-conservatism among students has been discussed in empirical social research
- ❖ It has been suggested that higher education leads to liberalization in students' socio-political orientation
- ❖ Another important factor which may influence the socio-political orientations of students is the socio-political environment of the college/university
- ❖ This study attempts to ascertain the current levels of liberal/conservative socio-political attitudes of research scholars studying in three central universities characterized by different social and political environments
- ❖ Also, we tried to explore the academic, socio-economic and demographic correlates of liberalism among research scholars

Material and Methods

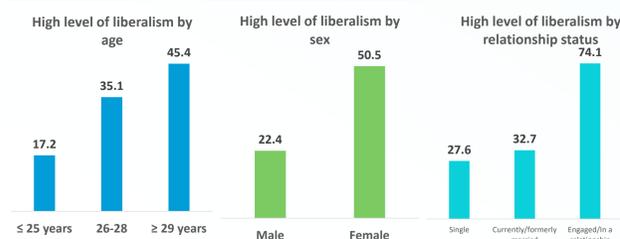
Data

- ❖ Quantitative data was collected from 530 research scholars from three universities (AMU, BHU and JNU)
- ❖ 12 in-depth interviews were carried out to understand students' attitudes, beliefs and behaviors

Methods

- ❖ Social Liberalism Index (18 item scale)
- ❖ Bartlett's test for sphericity
- ❖ Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy
- ❖ Exploratory factor analysis
- ❖ Cross tabulations and Chi-square test
- ❖ Ordered logistic regression
- ❖ Thematic analysis of in-depth interviews

Results



Results



Table 4.5: Adjusted percentages of levels of social liberalism by socio economic, demographic and academic correlates for scholars of three selected universities, 2018-19

Explanatory variables	Low	Medium	High
Sex			
Male*	37.0(33.3 - 40.7)	33.2(29.5 - 37.0)	29.8(26.3 - 33.3)
Female	24.8*** (19.5 - 30.1)	35.8*** (31.7 - 39.9)	39.4*** (35.1 - 43.7)
Caste			
General*	39.5(35.1 - 43.9)	31.1(27.3 - 35.0)	29.4(25.9 - 32.9)
Other Backward caste	28.0*** (23.5 - 32.5)	34.4*** (30.6 - 38.1)	37.7*** (34.0 - 41.4)
SC/ST/Others	23.8*** (14.8 - 32.8)	35.2*** (31.1 - 39.2)	41.0*** (33.5 - 48.5)
Place of residence			
Rural*	40.7(36.5 - 45.0)	31.8(27.9 - 35.6)	27.5(24.1 - 30.9)
Urban	23.7*** (19.2 - 28.2)	36.7*** (32.7 - 40.8)	39.6*** (36.0 - 43.2)
Whether father is alive			
Yes*	34.1(31.1 - 37.1)	32.7(29.1 - 36.3)	33.2(30.6 - 35.9)
No	22.2** (13.1 - 31.3)	34.9*** (31.1 - 38.7)	42.9** (34.5 - 51.3)
Monthly income from all sources			
Below 10000*	32.7(27.9 - 37.6)	32.8(29.0 - 36.5)	34.5(30.4 - 38.6)
10000-20000	35.0(28.8 - 41.2)	32.2(28.4 - 36.0)	32.8(27.7 - 37.9)
Between 20000-30000	29.8(24.7 - 34.9)	33.5(29.6 - 37.3)	36.7(32.8 - 40.7)
Above 30000	44.0** (35.0 - 53.0)	29.7** (25.3 - 34.1)	26.3** (19.8 - 32.8)

Explanatory variables	Low	Medium	High
University affiliated with			
Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)*	30.1(20.3 - 39.9)	43.5(37.9 - 49.2)	26.4(15.3 - 37.5)
Banaras Hindu University (BHU)	46.3** (37.1 - 55.5)	38.7** (31.9 - 45.6)	15.0* (9.0 - 21.0)
Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)	9.5*** (4.1 - 14.9)	37.2** (32.1 - 42.3)	53.3*** (44.6 - 61.9)
Year of PhD			
First*	20.8*** (12.6 - 29.0)	36.5(32.4 - 40.6)	42.7(35.8 - 49.5)
Second	37.7*** (31.8 - 43.7)	32.1*** (28.1 - 36.2)	30.1*** (25.9 - 34.4)
Third	35.9*** (30.3 - 41.5)	32.8*** (28.8 - 36.8)	31.3*** (27.2 - 35.4)
Fourth	31.4** (25.3 - 37.6)	34.2** (30.1 - 38.4)	34.3** (29.9 - 38.8)
Fifth & Above	31.2(19.8 - 42.7)	34.3(29.2 - 39.4)	34.5(26.4 - 42.5)
Importance of religion			
Extremely important*	42.8*** (37.6 - 48.1)	35.2(30.7 - 39.8)	22(15.8 - 28.1)
Very important	27.2*** (21.6 - 32.9)	38.3*** (33.6 - 43.1)	34.4*** (28.5 - 40.4)
Somewhat important	24.3*** (17.6 - 30.9)	38.5*** (33.8 - 43.3)	37.2*** (31.3 - 43.1)
Not very important	16.2*** (5.5 - 26.9)	37.8(33.3 - 42.3)	46.0*** (33.8 - 58.3)
Not important at all	17.4*** (6.3 - 28.5)	38.1(33.6 - 42.6)	44.5*** (32.1 - 57.0)

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01; * Reference category; () Confidence interval in Parenthesis

Results

Qualitative Results

- ❖ The qualitative analysis shows that there are differences in the opinions of the scholars across universities for the secular or liberal elements
- ❖ We observe consistent support for components of liberalism among JNU scholars, but scholars from AMU and BHU supported some of the elements and opposed others
- ❖ They although support the idea of greater rights for women in terms of working status and decision making but disagree on giving freedom to choose the clothes she wears
- ❖ Similarly, they support romantic relationships and friendships beyond the boundaries of caste and religion but oppose the idea of pre-marital sex and live-in relationships

Conclusion

- ❖ The study highlights that there is major a proportion of research scholars who are having a low-medium level of liberalism
- ❖ Social liberalism levels are found to be increasing with age, for females, scholars belonging to urban areas, for those from nuclear families
- ❖ Among other covariates, university affiliation was found to be a significant predictor for social liberalism levels
- ❖ Results are consistent with the findings of Guimond's (1999) study which revealed the existence of attitude change during the young adult years and concluded that "If students in a liberal college become more liberal, those in a more conservative institution, such as a military academy, are likely to change in a conservative direction"
- ❖ Importance of religion and closeness to god were other significant predictors for liberalism levels among scholars
- ❖ We observe the contextual secularism among scholars affiliated with AMU and BHU, as denoted by Singh, (2018) and there is no "one for all" concept of liberalism for scholars

References

Guimond, S. (1999). Attitude change during college: Normative or informational social influence? *Social Psychology of Education*, 2(3-4), 237-261. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009662807702>

Singh, A. (2018). Conflict between freedom of expression and religion in India-A case study. *Social Sciences*, 7(7). <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci7070108>