



A STUDY OF ATTITUDE OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS TOWARDS SECULARISM

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to measure secularism attitude of prospective teachers belonging to Kachchh University living in Gujarat. The researcher employed gender, religion, area of residence, area of college, level of education, stream, and caste category can influence the secularism attitude of prospective teachers. The study was carried out on the sample of B.Ed. college students belonging to different places and studying in Kachchh University. To measure the secularism attitude the researcher self-constructed and standardized the scale and used to collect data. The scale consisting of 55 items, the maximum possible score is 275 and the minimum possible score is 55. The findings of the study revealed that there is significant difference in the secularism attitude of prospective teachers belonging level of education and caste category. Secularism attitude of prospective teachers do not significant difference depends upon certain demographic variables like gender, religion, residential area, locality of institution and streams.

Keywords: Secularism Attitude, Prospective teachers, Demographic Variables.

Introduction

For centuries, India has been home to a diverse range of religious traditions. Although the coexistence of several religions was normally peaceful, the post-independence era saw serious clashes and riots among them. We live in a period when coexistence is essential for the nation. There is no scope for social conflict or religious intolerance. Increasing community challenges pose a threat to the nation's growth. A slew of

controversial and fissiparous situations are making their way to the courtroom. Some historical and ideological disagreements that have created problems in the past still exist today. However, the country cannot enable them to remain in the country in the future. Because to political interference, the definition of nationalism has shifted.

Religion takes precedence over national goals, resulting in frequent clashes among community members. These disagreements have undermined Indians' attachment to the Indian state. These clashes and riots continue to impede the country's growth and have resulted in the loss of countless lives and property. These variables also instil feelings of inadequacy and hatred in people. The present study aims to determine the level of secularism attitude among prospective teachers so that training institutes and professors may intervene in a timely manner and instil a healthy attitude in them.

Secularism Attitude

India is a Socialist, Secular Democratic Republic dedicated to ensuring justice, liberty, and equality for all of its citizens, as well as encouraging national unity. It is dedicated to protecting and sustaining the unity of the country as well as the dignity of the individual. This is directly stated in the Preamble to the Constitution. In fact, the 42nd Amendment originated the word "secularism" in 1976.

The Education Commission (1964) recommended that a syllabus containing carefully selected information about each religion be included as part of a citizenship course or as part of general education to highlight the fundamental similarities in the country's great religions while emphasizing the cultivation of certain broadly comparable manual and spiritual values. It also emphasized leadership development at all levels by expanding secondary, higher, and university education and providing equal opportunity for all children of ability and promise, regardless of economic status, caste, religion, gender, or place of residence. It was explicitly stated that the development of fundamental, social, moral, and spiritual values should be emphasized in the educational system. In this regard, the Central and State Governments should take steps to implement moral, social, and spiritual values education in all institutions under their (or local government's) control, in accordance with the recommendations of the University Education Commission and the Committees on Religious and Moral Instruction.

The essence of education, according to the National Policy of Education (1986), should be a peaceful society in which people of diverse religious beliefs may live. All educational programmes should be based on secular concepts, and the national curriculum framework should be designed to support a secular viewpoint. Similar concerns were expressed by the National Knowledge Commission (2009). It was suggested that prospective teachers get civic education in order to develop a positive attitude toward caste, religion, gender equality, and secularism.

Need of the Study

Indian society has a unique sense of unity in diversity. Several religions have flourished here for a long time, each with their own set of rituals and beliefs. There was no hostility between these numerous groups for a long time, despite religious, cultural, and linguistic differences. However, a new threat known as communalism evolved later in Indian culture. Though the British rulers planted the seeds of communalism in India (Das, 1991), communal forces are still active and posing problems to both the government and

society. This collective mentality usually results in communal violence and rioting (Chandra, 2008). As a solution, researchers such as Agarwal (1984) revealed that education level impacts attitude.

Following community events on a global scale, the world has recognized that the peaceful existence of all societies is only viable in a secular society. Because true development can occur only in a secular environment, by secular citizens, and the development of such citizens is a primary task of education, developing secular characters in our citizens is one of the major responsibilities of the educational system, and this can only be accomplished by teachers with a secular attitude.

Statement of the Problem

The problem chosen for the study may be stated as “A study of attitude of prospective teachers towards secularism.”

Objective of the Study

1. To study the attitude of prospective teachers towards secularism
2. To study the attitude of prospective teachers towards secularism with respect to gender, religion, residential area and locality of the college
3. To study the attitude of prospective teachers towards secularism with respect to level of education, stream of education and caste category

Method of the Study

The researcher determined that the survey method is suitable for the present study since it provides a response to the question. As a result, the researcher used the survey method.

Variables

Variables of the study enable the researcher to meet the proposed objectives of the study. The researcher took ‘attitude towards secularism’ as the main variable and the following demographic variables as sub variables, they are; Gender (Male/Female), Religion (Hindu and Non-Hindu), Area of Residence (Urban and Rural), Locality of College (Urban and Rural), Levels of education (PG and UG), Streams (Faculty) of education (Arts, Commerce and Science), Category (General/OBC/ST/SC).

Sample

The study was conducted on the sample of 300 prospective teachers studying at Kachchh district in Gujarat. Out of 300, 70 were male and 270 were female.

Description of Secularism Attitude Scale

The Comprehensive Secularism Attitude scale was constructed and planned with the objective of measuring the attitudes of prospective teachers in eight areas in Indian conditions. The eight areas covered namely are; religious freedom, separation of religion from state, secularism protects both believers and non-believers, secularism is about democracy and fairness, equal access to public services, secularism is not atheism, secularism protects free speech and expression and involvement in a multi-faith society. Secularism scale includes both positive as well as negative items. The maximum score for a positive item is to be awarded 5 and least is 1. In case of negative items the scoring procedure is to be reversed. Sum of the total score on eight dimensions gives the total secularism attitude score. The scale consists of 55 items and the maximum score for this scale is 275 and the minimum score is 55. An average time required for completing the scale is around 45 minutes. Each item in this scale set against five alternative responses they are; ‘Strongly Agree’,

'Agree', 'Undecided', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree'. Scoring was done according to the scoring procedure mentioned by the researcher of the tool in manual. Reliability is one of the highly required characters of a good research instrument. So, to ensure the reliability of the tool the researcher has done reliability analysis such as Split-half reliability (Odd-even method) was calculated and after Spearman-Brown's correction was found to be $r = 0.84$ for the total scale, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. To ensure the validity of the attitude scale, the investigator was given the instrument to the experts in order to find out its content validity. The experts agreed that the items in the scale provided adequate coverage of the secularism concept. While validity of secularism attitude scale was found out through operational validity, face validity and content validity.

Statistical Techniques

For data analysis, the following statistical techniques have been used.

- a. Descriptive analysis (Mean & S.D) and
- b. Differential analysis ('t' test)

Administration of the Tool

To collect data for the study, the researcher administered the study's tools individually with prior permission from the heads of Kachchh University's B.Ed. colleges. The researchers provided proper instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire and gathered all of the data from the sample.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

One of the important objectives of the study is to study the attitude of prospective teachers towards secularism. For this, the researcher analyzed the data collected from the sample and presented it in the Table 1.

Table 1 Prospective Teachers' Secularism Attitude Level

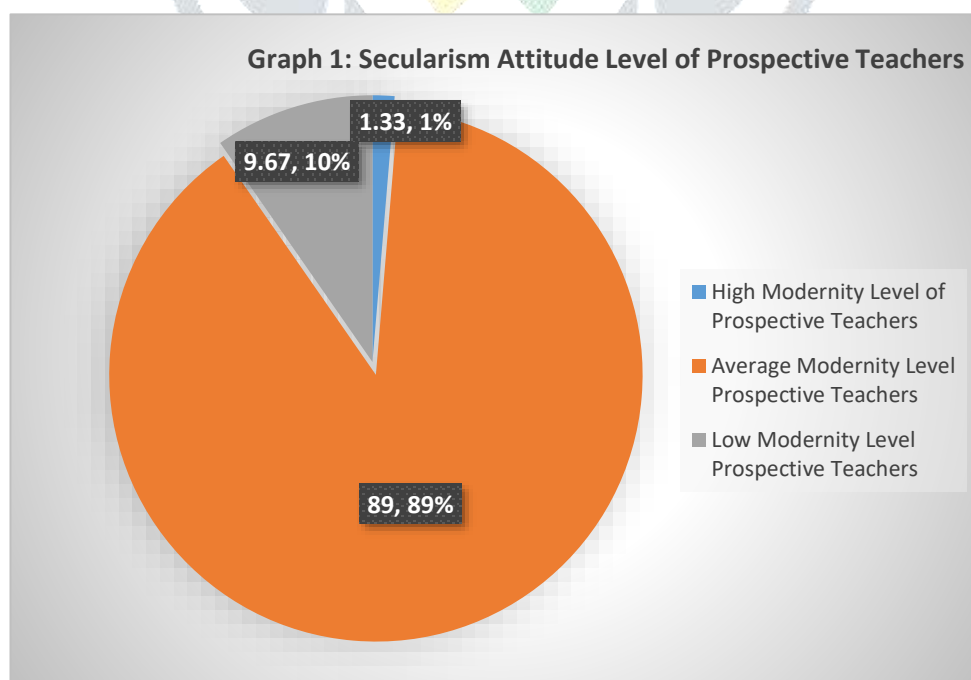
	High	Average	Poor	Total
Group	229-275	171-228	55-170	
Number	4	267	29	300
Percentage	1.33	89.00	9.67	100

According to the secularism attitude scale's collected data, 1.33 percent of prospective teachers fall into the high category, 9.67 percent fall into the poor category, and the majority, 89 percent, fall into the average area. As a result, it may be concluded that prospective teachers are having average attitude towards secularism.

TABLE – 2 THE MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION AND 't' RATIO VALUES OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS IN ATTITUDE TOWARDS SECULARISM

Sr. No.	Variable	Sample	N	Mean	SD	't' Ratio Value	LS
1	Gender	Male	70	195.01	18.85	1.34	

		Female	230	191.70	15.58		Not Significant
2	Religion	Hindu	269	192.18	16.53	0.96	Not Significant
		Non-Hindu	31	195.03	15.58		
3	Area of Residence	Urban	183	193.01	16.29	0.70	Not Significant
		Rural	117	191.65	16.68		
4	Area of College	Urban	250	193	16.73	1.34	Not Significant
		Rural	50	189.86	14.76		
5	Level of Education	PG	162	194.45	17.32	2.29	Significant
		UG	138	190.16	15.06		
6	Streams	Arts	96	190.13	15.83	1.59	Not Significant
		Commerce	101	192.94	14.12		
		Science	103	194.21	18.75		
7	Caste Category	General	166	192.84	16.69	4.78	Significant
		OBC	85	188.33	15.78		
		SC	43	199.67	14.71		
		ST	6	189.67	11.40		
	Entire Sample		300	192.48	16.48		



The calculated critical ratio values are found to be 1.34, 0.96, 0.70, 1.34, 2.29, 1.59 and 4.78 respectively for gender, religion, area of residence, area of college, level of education, streams and caste category. The calculated critical ratio values of level of education and caste category are found to be significant and the

remaining values are not significant. Hence, it is inferred that the sub samples of level of education and caste category differ significantly in their attitude towards secularism but the sub samples of other variables do not differ significantly in their attitude level.

Major Findings of the Study

1. Secularism attitude score shows that 1.33 % prospective teachers fall in the high level of secularism attitudes category, 9.67% of prospective teachers' lies in poor category and a majority 89 % prospective teachers' fall under average secularism attitude group.
2. Male & Female prospective teachers do not differ significantly on the secularism attitude.
3. Hindu and Non-Hindu religious group of prospective teachers do not differ significantly on the secularism attitude.
4. Prospective teachers of urban and rural areas do not differ significantly on the secularism attitude.
5. Prospective teachers of colleges located in rural and urban areas do not differ significantly on the secularism attitude.
6. Prospective teachers having post graduate degree have significantly higher secularism attitude than under graduate degree holder prospective teachers.
7. Prospective teachers of arts, commerce & science streams do not differ significantly on the secularism attitude.
8. Prospective teachers belonging to General, OBC, SC & ST Category differ significantly on the secularism attitude.

Suggestions from the Study

1. The prospective teachers have a moderately positive opinion regarding secularism. Nothing could be changed in India's education system today or in the future without secularism. Policymakers and educators should work to change their attitudes toward secularism.
2. Prospective teachers from the SC caste are more secular than those from other castes. Level of education and caste reveal a substantial difference in their attitude toward secularism, but the remaining factors of the research showed no significant difference. As a result, policymakers and curriculum experts should consider this fact while developing curriculum in order to develop a positive attitude toward secularism among prospective teachers.

Conclusion

Prospective teachers belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC) have significantly higher secularism attitude than those belonging to General, OBC & ST category. It shows the awareness towards education increases in SC category students and it is possible because of the positive effect of schemes provided by the governments. The level of education has independent influence in the cultivation of secular qualities in the prospective teachers. The results obtained categorically reveal that level of education is a significant influence in fostering the dispositions of secularism attitude among the prospective teachers.

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