

Caste Discrimination among College Students in Southern Districts of Tamil Nadu, India

Sai Krishna A

MGR Research Fellow (22114012041013), Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. Email:

saikrishna06031998@gmail.com

Lt. Dr. R. Sivakumar

Assistant Professor, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. Email: sivakumarmsu@gmail.com

Vijeta Sahadev Alavani

Assistant Professor, Thulasi College of Arts and Science for Women, Vallanadu, Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: vijetaalavani32@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores caste discrimination among college students in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu, India, focusing on socio-demographic variables, the prevalence of caste-based discrimination, its impacts, and the engagement of students in caste perpetration. Employing a quantitative research approach, the study gathered data from a diverse sample of college students across various institutions. Findings reveal significant correlations between socio-demographic factors and the experiences of caste discrimination, highlighting its widespread presence within the educational environment. The impacts of such discrimination are profound, affecting the academic performance, mental health, and social interactions of the affected students. Also, the study identifies a concerning trend of students actively participating in caste-based discriminatory behaviors, perpetuating a cycle of social exclusion and prejudice. These insights underscore the urgent need for institutional reforms and targeted interventions to foster an inclusive and equitable educational landscape. Through addressing the root causes and manifestations of caste discrimination, stakeholders can work towards dismantling entrenched caste barriers and promoting a culture of diversity and respect within college campuses.

Keywords: *caste discrimination, socio-demographic variables, college students, quantitative research, Tamil Nadu.*

1.1 Caste Discrimination

Caste discrimination refers to the unjust treatment and social exclusion of individuals based on their caste or social hierarchy. This deeply rooted social issue persists in many parts of India, including Tamil Nadu, despite legal provisions and efforts to promote social equality.

Caste discrimination affects various aspects of life, such as education, employment, housing, and social interactions, leading to the marginalization and oppression of individuals from lower castes. It is a violation of human rights explicitly prohibited by the Constitution of India. Article 15(2) of the Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of caste, among other factors, and Article 17 specifically abolishes untouchability, closely associated with caste discrimination. Additionally, laws like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, aim to prevent and punish offenses against individuals belonging to lower castes. Despite these legal safeguards, caste discrimination remains prevalent in Tamil Nadu and other parts of India. Discrimination in education is one prominent manifestation, with Dalit students often facing derogatory remarks, exclusion, and unequal treatment in schools and colleges (The Hindu, 2018). In employment, lower-caste individuals may encounter barriers and bias in accessing quality jobs, lower wages, limited career advancement opportunities, and unequal treatment in the workplace (Choudhary & Sharma, 2020). Housing discrimination is another significant issue, where lower-caste individuals are sometimes denied access to housing in certain areas or face hostility and social exclusion from higher-caste neighbors. Social interactions and relationships are also affected; inter-caste marriages, though becoming more common, still face resistance and social stigma in many communities (Rajan, 2019), with individuals who marry outside their caste often encountering opposition, ostracism, and even violence (The New Indian Express, 2021). Addressing caste discrimination requires collective efforts from society, government, and civil society organizations. Awareness campaigns, sensitization programs, and the enforcement of existing laws are essential in combating caste discrimination and promoting social equality. Empowering marginalized communities, providing equal educational and employment opportunities, and challenging social norms that perpetuate caste-based discrimination are crucial for creating a more inclusive and just society. Caste discrimination manifests in various forms, including social, economic, educational, and political discrimination, affecting all aspects of an individual's life, such as access to education, employment, housing, healthcare, social status, and basic human rights. This often leads to social exclusion, marginalization, and unequal treatment based on caste identity. In certain societies, individuals from lower castes are considered "untouchable" and subjected to social exclusion, humiliation, and segregation from higher-caste individuals, denied access to public spaces, temples, wells, and community resources, and restricted in social interactions and marriage alliances. Economically, lower-caste individuals may face limited access to land, resources, credit, and job opportunities, often relegated to low-paying and menial jobs, while higher-caste individuals have better economic opportunities and

privileges. Educational discrimination includes limited access to quality education, lower enrollment rates, and discrimination from teachers and peers, perpetuating poverty and marginalization. Politically, lower-caste individuals may face limited representation in political bodies, discrimination in candidate selection, and exclusion from decision-making processes, perpetuating inequalities. Socially, higher-caste individuals may refuse to socialize, dine, or intermarry with lower-caste individuals, leading to social segregation and exclusion.

1.2 Caste Discrimination among College Students

Caste discrimination among college students is a serious social issue prevalent in certain regions, particularly in South Asia, rooted in the Hindu caste system that categorizes people into hierarchical social groups based on their birth (Deshpande, 2020). This system leads to the marginalization and mistreatment of students from minority castes, who often face harassment, exclusion, and unequal treatment within educational institutions, including colleges and universities. Such discrimination manifests in various forms. Social exclusion is one common form where students from lower castes are ostracized by their peers from higher castes, leading to their exclusion from social gatherings, events, and activities, thereby fostering a sense of isolation and marginalization (Deshpande, 2020). Academic discrimination is another form, where lower-caste students might experience biased treatment from teachers, unfair grading, and denial of opportunities such as scholarships, internships, and leadership positions solely based on their caste identity (Thorat & Newman, 2007). Verbal and physical abuse also occur, with lower-caste students subjected to derogatory remarks, insults, bullying, and even violence from classmates or other members of the college community (Deshpande, 2020). Unequal access to resources is a significant issue, as these students may find themselves deprived of essential educational materials, library access, computer labs, and other facilities, hindering their academic progress and opportunities (Thorat & Newman, 2007). Discrimination in hostel accommodation is another area of concern, where students from lower castes may face denial of entry or mistreatment by other students due to their caste status (Kumar & Kumar, 2021). The psychological impact of caste discrimination is profound, often leading to low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and stress, which adversely affect the mental health and overall well-being of these students (Deshpande, 2020). Addressing caste discrimination among college students necessitates a multi-faceted approach. It is essential to create awareness about the issue and promote inclusivity and diversity within educational institutions. Implementing stringent anti-discrimination policies and providing robust support and resources for affected students are crucial steps. Moreover, fostering a culture of respect and inclusivity among students, faculty, and staff is imperative (Thorat & Newman, 2007).

Beyond institutional measures, it is vital to challenge and change the deep-rooted societal beliefs and attitudes that perpetuate caste discrimination. Promoting social justice and equality within educational settings not only benefits those directly affected but also contributes to the broader goal of creating a more equitable and inclusive society. In precipitate, while caste discrimination in educational institutions, particularly among college students, remains a critical issue, a concerted effort involving awareness, policy implementation, support systems, and cultural change is necessary to combat and eventually eradicate this deep-seated social problem.

1.3 Impact of Caste Discrimination

Caste discrimination profoundly impacts individuals, communities, and society at large, with significant negative consequences across multiple dimensions (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Firstly, individuals who face caste discrimination often endure social exclusion and marginalization from mainstream society. This exclusion can restrict social interactions, marriage, and access to public spaces, leading to isolation from various aspects of social and community life (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Such exclusion not only hinders personal development but also perpetuates systemic inequalities and reinforces social stratification. Additionally, the psychological and emotional distress caused by caste discrimination is considerable. Those subjected to discrimination may experience low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and chronic stress, with these experiences inflicting long-term emotional trauma and severely impacting an individual's mental health and overall well-being (Kishore, 2016). This distress manifests in diminished motivation, reduced productivity, and even suicidal tendencies, illustrating the deeply personal toll of caste-based discrimination.

In education and economic opportunities, caste discrimination can be particularly detrimental. Individuals from marginalized castes often face barriers to accessing quality education, which limits their career prospects and economic mobility. This educational disadvantage perpetuates cycles of poverty and socio-economic disparities within affected communities (Deshpande, 2015). The lack of educational and economic opportunities traps individuals in deprivation, making it challenging for future generations to break free from systemic poverty. Furthermore, health disparities are another significant consequence of caste discrimination. Discriminatory practices in access to healthcare, nutrition, and sanitation result in poorer health outcomes for individuals from marginalized castes, leading to increased vulnerability to diseases, higher mortality rates, and reduced overall well-being (Dutta, 2019). These health disparities compound existing socio-economic disadvantages, creating a vicious cycle of poverty and poor health.

Interpersonal conflict and violence are also prevalent in caste-discriminated societies. Discrimination and mistreatment based on caste can fuel tensions and conflicts between different caste groups, sometimes escalating into violence. This disrupts social harmony and fosters an environment of fear and mistrust, further entrenching social divisions (Human Rights Watch, 2019). These conflicts destabilize communities, hindering collective social and economic progress. In addition to physical violence, caste discrimination leads to widespread human rights violations. Individuals from marginalized castes often experience denial of basic human rights such as equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination. Such violations contravene various international conventions and declarations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 2019). The systemic nature of these violations underscores the pervasive impact of caste discrimination on human rights.

Moreover, caste discrimination can erode an individual's sense of dignity and identity. Systemic discrimination and mistreatment based on caste can lead to a loss of pride in one's cultural and social identity, perpetuating a sense of inferiority among individuals from marginalized castes. This loss of identity can have long-lasting effects on personal and community morale, stifling cultural expression and leading to a diminished sense of self-worth. Addressing the multifaceted impacts of caste discrimination requires comprehensive strategies encompassing social, educational, economic, and legal reforms. Efforts must be made to create inclusive environments that promote equality and respect for all individuals, regardless of caste. This includes implementing anti-discrimination policies, fostering awareness and education about the harms of caste discrimination, and providing support and resources to those affected. Challenging deep-rooted societal attitudes and beliefs that sustain caste discrimination is crucial for achieving long-term social change. By promoting social justice and equality, societies can work towards eradicating caste discrimination and building a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

The far-reaching consequences of caste discrimination necessitate urgent and sustained efforts to combat this deeply entrenched issue. Social exclusion, psychological distress, educational and economic disadvantages, health disparities, interpersonal conflicts, human rights violations, and the erosion of dignity and identity collectively illustrate the profound impact of caste discrimination. Addressing these issues through comprehensive and multi-faceted approaches is essential for fostering a just and equitable society.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- To study the socio-demographic variables of the respondents

- To examine the prevalence of caste-based discrimination experienced by college students
- To describe the impacts faced by respondents
- To determine whether college students engage in caste perpetration.

1.5 Methodology

The research design for this study quantitative approach, beginning with a quantitative phase where a structured questionnaire was administered to 620 college students across four districts of South Tamil Nadu: Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Tenkasi, and Virudunagar. These districts were chosen to capture diverse socio-cultural contexts, enhancing the richness of the data. The quantitative phase aimed to quantify and assess students' discrimination and perpetration. The sample included both male and female students to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, with the area divided into four geographic zones—North, South, East, and West—to ensure regional diversity. The Simple Random Sampling method was used to select colleges, ensuring each had an equal chance of inclusion, while Convenient Sampling was employed to gather data from willing respondents. Data collection involved Personal Distribution Questionnaires, tailored to the vernacular language and specifically designed for college students, enhancing comprehension and engagement. The questionnaire, developed in collaboration with experts, included both open-ended and close-ended questions, addressing the research objectives comprehensively. Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study with 40 participants assessed the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, yielding a strong reliability coefficient of 0.867, confirming the tool's dependability. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software, involving techniques such as frequency analysis, cross-tabulation, chi-square tests, and visual representations like bar graphs and pie charts, ensuring clear and accessible presentation of the findings. This methodological rigor provided a robust framework for investigating caste-based attitudes and behaviors among college students in the specified regions.

1.6 Data Analysis & Interpretation

1.6.1 Victimization

Table 1.1 Faced Humiliation because of Caste

Responses	Frequency	Percent
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Always	8	1.3
Sometimes	119	19.2
Often	31	5.0
Rarely	110	17.7
Never	352	56.8
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.1 data shows that 1.3% of respondents always face humiliation due to their caste, while 19.2% sometimes do, totaling 20.5% who experience it intermittently. Additionally, 5.0% often face humiliation, and 17.7% rarely do, making up 22.7% who face it occasionally. A significant majority, 56.8%, never experience caste-based humiliation.

Table 1.2 Scolded by Caste Name

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	1	.2
Sometimes	209	33.7
Often	104	16.8
Rarely	88	14.2
Never	218	35.2
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.2 data indicates that a small percentage, 0.2%, are always scolded by caste name, while 33.7% are sometimes scolded, totaling 34.1% who experience it occasionally. Furthermore, 16.8% often face scolding by caste name, and 14.2% rarely do, making up 31.0% who experience it intermittently. A significant portion, 35.2%, never face scolding based on their caste name.

Table 1.3 Taken Away of Rights

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	4	.6
Sometimes	32	5.2

Often	60	9.7
Rarely	32	5.2
Never	492	79.4
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.3 data shows that 0.6% of respondents always have their rights taken away because of their caste, while 5.2% sometimes experience this, totaling 5.8% who face it occasionally. Additionally, 9.7% often have their rights taken away, and 5.2% rarely do, making up 15.0% who experience it intermittently. A significant majority, 79.4%, never have their rights taken because of their caste.

Table 1.4 Faced Discrimination

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	17	2.7
Sometimes	198	31.9
Often	173	27.9
Rarely	107	17.3
Never	125	20.2
Total	620	100.0

The data 1.4 reveals that 2.7% of respondents always face discrimination, while 31.9% sometimes experience it, totaling 34.6% who face it occasionally. Additionally, 27.9% often experience discrimination, and 17.3% rarely do, making up 45.2% who experience it intermittently. A minority, 20.2%, never face discrimination based on their caste.

Table 1.5 Beaten because of Caste

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	1	.2
Sometimes	62	10.0

Often	39	6.3
Rarely	128	20.6
Never	390	62.9
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.5 data shows that 0.2% of respondents are always beaten because of their caste, while 10.0% sometimes experience this, totaling 10.2% who face it occasionally. Additionally, 6.3% often experience being beaten because of caste, and 20.6% rarely do, making up 26.9% who experience it intermittently. A significant majority, 62.9%, never experience being beaten because of their caste.

Table 1.6 Threatening

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	25	4.0
Sometimes	99	16.0
Often	67	10.8
Rarely	73	11.8
Never	356	57.4
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.6 data indicates that 4.0% of respondents always feel threatened because of their caste, while 16.0% sometimes feel threatened, totaling 20.0% who experience it occasionally. Additionally, 10.8% often feel threatened, and 11.8% rarely do, making up 22.6% who experience it intermittently. A significant majority, 57.4%, never feel threatened based on their caste.

Table 1.7 Respondents Faced Harassment

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	10	1.6
Sometimes	141	22.7

Often	209	33.7
Rarely	130	21.0
Never	130	21.0
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.7 data shows that 1.6% of respondents always face harassment due to their caste, while 22.7% sometimes experience this, totaling 24.4% who face it occasionally. Additionally, 33.7% often experience harassment, and 21.0% rarely do, making up 54.7% who experience it intermittently. A significant portion, 21.0%, never experience caste-based harassment.

Table 1.8 Humiliated by Parents Occupation

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	32	5.2
Sometimes	58	9.4
Often	1	.2
Rarely	57	9.2
Never	472	76.1
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.8 data indicates that 5.2% of respondents always feel humiliated by their parents' occupation, while 9.4% sometimes feel this way, totaling 14.5% who experience it occasionally. Additionally, a very small percentage (0.2%) often feel humiliated, and 9.2% rarely do, making up 9.4% who experience it intermittently. A significant majority, 76.1%, never feel humiliated by their parents' occupation.

1.6.2 Impacts of the Respondents

Table 1.9 Trouble in Sleep

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	227	36.6

Sometimes	153	24.7
Often	82	13.2
Rarely	54	8.7
Never	104	16.8
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.9 data shows that 36.6% of respondents always have trouble sleeping, while 24.7% sometimes experience this issue, totaling 61.3% who face it occasionally. Additionally, 13.2% often have trouble sleeping, and 8.7% rarely do, making up 21.9% who experience it intermittently. A minority, 16.8%, never have trouble sleeping.

Table 1.10 Worried about the Victimization

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	151	24.4
Sometimes	196	31.6
Often	88	14.2
Rarely	83	13.4
Never	102	16.5
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.10 data indicates that 24.4% of respondents always feel worried about the issue, while 31.6% sometimes feel this way, totaling 56.0% who experience it occasionally. Additionally, 14.2% often feel worried about it, and 13.4% rarely do, making up 27.6% who experience it intermittently. A minority, 16.5%, never feel worried about the issue.

Table 1.11 Feel Angry about the Victimization

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	184	29.7
Sometimes	107	17.3

Often	83	13.4
Rarely	123	19.8
Never	123	19.8
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.11 data shows that 29.7% of respondents always get angry, while 17.3% sometimes experience this, totaling 46.9% who face it occasionally. Additionally, 13.4% often get angry, and 19.8% rarely do, making up 33.2% who experience it intermittently. A minority, 19.8%, never get angry.

Table 1.12 Revenge Thoughts

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	44	7.1
Sometimes	94	15.2
Often	87	14.0
Rarely	124	20.0
Never	271	43.7
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.12 data indicates that 7.1% of respondents always have thoughts of revenge, while 15.2% sometimes experience this, totaling 22.3% who face it occasionally. Additionally, 14.0% often have thoughts of revenge, and 20.0% rarely do, making up 34.0% who experience it intermittently. A significant majority, 43.7%, never have thoughts of revenge.

Table 1.13 Suicidal Thoughts

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	1	.2
Sometimes	17	2.7

Rarely	36	5.8
Never	566	91.3
Total	620	100.0

The data 1.13 shows that 0.2% of respondents always have suicidal thoughts, while 2.7% sometimes experience this, totaling 2.9% who face it occasionally. Additionally, 5.8% rarely have suicidal thoughts, making up 8.7% who experience it intermittently. A significant majority, 91.3%, never have suicidal thoughts.

1.6.3 Perpetrating Behaviour

Table 1.14 Showing Differentiation

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	105	16.9
Sometimes	188	30.3
Often	85	13.7
Rarely	36	5.8
Never	206	33.2
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.14 data indicates that 16.9% of respondents always show caste differentiation to students of other castes, while 30.3% sometimes do so, totaling 47.3% who show it occasionally. Additionally, 13.7% often show caste differentiation, and 5.8% rarely do, making up 19.5% who show it intermittently. A significant majority, 33.2%, never show caste differentiation to students of other castes.

Table 1.15 Degraded Other Caste Names

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	203	32.7
Sometimes	79	12.7

Often	62	10.0
Rarely	57	9.2
Never	219	35.3
Total	620	100.0

The data 1.15 shows that 32.7% of respondents always degrade names of other castes, while 12.7% sometimes do so, totaling 45.5% who degrade them occasionally. Additionally, 10.0% often degrade other caste names, and 9.2% rarely do, making up 19.2% who degrade them intermittently. A minority, 35.3%, never degrade names of other castes.

Table 1.16 Involving in Caste Fights

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	3	.5
Sometimes	35	5.6
Often	47	7.6
Rarely	201	32.4
Never	334	53.9
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.16 data indicates that 0.5% of respondents always involve in caste fights, while 5.6% sometimes do so, totaling 6.1% who are involved occasionally. Additionally, 7.6% often involve in caste fights, and 32.4% rarely do, making up 40.0% who are involved intermittently. A significant majority, 53.9%, never involve in caste fights.

Table 1.17 Involving in Caste Arguments

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	274	44.2
Sometimes	54	8.7

Often	31	5.0
Rarely	49	7.9
Never	212	34.2
Total	620	100.0

The table 1.17 data shows that 44.2% of respondents always involve in caste arguments, while 8.7% sometimes do so, totaling 52.9% who are involved occasionally. Additionally, 5.0% often involve in caste arguments, and 7.9% rarely do, making up 12.9% who are involved intermittently. A minority, 34.2%, never involve in caste arguments.

Table 1.18 Engaging in Caste Discrimination

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	147	23.7
Sometimes	163	26.3
Often	61	9.8
Rarely	42	6.8
Never	207	33.4
Total	620	100.0

The data 1.18 shows that 23.7% of respondents always engage in caste discrimination towards other students, while 26.3% sometimes do so, totaling 50.0% who engage in it occasionally. Additionally, 9.8% often engage in caste discrimination, and 6.8% rarely do, making up 16.6% who engage in it intermittently. A significant majority, 33.4%, never engage in caste discrimination towards other students.

Table 1.19 Degraded Others Students by their Caste Name

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	66	10.6
Sometimes	80	12.9

Often	173	27.9
Rarely	80	12.9
Never	221	35.6
Total	620	100.0

The data 1.19 indicates that 10.6% of respondents always degrade others by their caste name, while 12.9% sometimes do so, totaling 23.5% who degrade others occasionally. Additionally, 27.9% often degrade others by their caste name, and 12.9% rarely do, making up 40.8% who degrade others intermittently. A majority, 35.6%, never degrade others by their caste name.

Table 1.20 Involve in Harassment

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	133	21.5
Sometimes	104	16.8
Often	133	21.5
Rarely	34	5.5
Never	216	34.8
Total	620	100.0

The data 1.20 indicates that 21.5% of respondents always harass someone because of caste, while 16.8% sometimes do so, totaling 38.2% who engage in it occasionally. Additionally, 21.5% often harass someone because of caste, and 5.5% rarely do, making up 27.0% who engage in it intermittently. A significant majority, 34.8%, never harass anyone because of caste.

Table 1.21 Involve in Ragging

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Sometimes	4	.6
Often	24	3.9

Rarely	25	4.0
Never	567	91.5
Total	620	100.0

The data 1.21 shows that 0.6% of respondents sometimes engage in ragging, while 3.9% often do so, totaling 4.5% who engage in it occasionally. Additionally, 4.0% rarely engage in ragging, making up 8.5% who engage in it intermittently. A significant majority, 91.5%, never engage in ragging.

1.6.4 Chi – Square Analysis

Table 1.22 Region Wise Chi – Square Analysis

Dimension	Category	df	Calculated ' χ^2 ' value	Sig	Remarks at 5% level
Discrimination	Region	6	18.620	0.005	S
Impacts		6	25.849	0.000	S
Perpetrating		6	6.300	0.390	NS

The chi-square test results for regional variations in discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors show significant differences in the first two dimensions but not in the third. Specifically, for discrimination, with 6 degrees of freedom, the calculated chi-square value is 18.620 and the significance level is 0.005, indicating a significant difference across regions at the 5% level. Similarly, for impacts, the calculated chi-square value is 25.849 with a significance level of 0.000, also showing significant regional differences. However, for perpetrating behaviors, the chi-square value is 6.300 with a significance level of 0.390, indicating no significant regional differences at the 5% level. Therefore, it can be concluded that regional differences significantly influence discrimination and impacts, but not perpetrating behaviors.

Table 1.23 Age Wise Chi – Square Analysis

Dimension	Category	df	Calculated ' χ^2 ' value	Sig	Remarks at 5% level
Discrimination	Age	4	12.665	0.013	S
Impacts		4	6.702	0.152	NS
Perpetrating		4	16.674	0.002	S

The chi-square test results for age-wise variations in discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors show significant differences in the discrimination and perpetrating dimensions, but not in impacts. Specifically, for discrimination, with 4 degrees of freedom, the calculated chi-square value is 12.665 and the significance level is 0.013, indicating a significant difference across age groups at the 5% level. For perpetrating behaviors, the calculated chi-square value is 16.674 with a significance level of 0.002, also showing significant age-wise differences. However, for impacts, the chi-square value is 6.702 with a significance level of 0.152, indicating no significant age-wise differences at the 5% level. Therefore, it can be concluded that age differences significantly influence discrimination and perpetrating behaviors, but not impacts.

Table 1.24 Gender Wised Chi – Square Test

Dimension	Category	df	Calculated ' χ^2 ' value	Sig	Remarks at 5% level
Discrimination	Gender	2	21.754	0.000	S
Impacts		2	39.869	0.000	S
Perpetrating		2	19.543	0.000	S

The chi-square test results for gender-wise variations in discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors show significant differences in all three dimensions. Specifically, for discrimination, with 2 degrees of freedom, the calculated chi-square value is 21.754 and the significance level is 0.000, indicating a significant difference between genders at the 5% level. For impacts, the calculated chi-square value is 39.869 with a significance level of 0.000, also showing significant gender-wise differences. Similarly, for perpetrating behaviors, the chi-square value is 19.543 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating significant differences between genders. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender differences significantly influence discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors.

Table 1.25 Group Wise Chi Square Test

Dimension	Category	df	Calculated ' χ^2 ' value	Sig	Remarks at 5% level
Discrimination	Group	2	0.838	0.658	NS
Impacts		2	7.419	0.024	S
Perpetrating		2	0.628	0.731	NS

The chi-square test results for group-wise variations in discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors show significant differences only in the impacts dimension. Specifically, for impacts, with 2 degrees of freedom, the calculated chi-square value is 7.419 and the significance level is 0.024, indicating a significant difference across groups at the 5% level. However, for discrimination, the calculated chi-square value is 0.838 with a significance level of 0.658, and for perpetrating behaviors, the calculated chi-square value is 0.628 with a significance level of 0.731, both indicating no significant group-wise differences at the 5% level. Therefore, it can be concluded that group differences significantly influence impacts but do not significantly influence discrimination or perpetrating behaviors.

Table 1.26 College Wise Chi – Square Analysis

Dimension	Category	df	Calculated ' χ^2 ' value	Sig	Remarks at 5% level
Discrimination	College Wise	4	20.561	0.000	S
Impacts		4	18.413	0.001	S
Perpetrating		4	35.992	0.000	S

The chi-square test results for college-wise variations in discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors show significant differences in all three dimensions. Specifically, for discrimination, with 4 degrees of freedom, the calculated chi-square value is 20.561 and the significance level is 0.000, indicating a significant difference across colleges at the 5% level. For impacts, the calculated chi-square value is 18.413 with a significance level of 0.001, also showing significant college-wise differences. Similarly, for perpetrating behaviors, the calculated chi-square value is 35.992 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating significant differences across colleges. Therefore, it can be concluded that college-wise differences significantly influence discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors.

Table 1.27 Family Type Wise Chi – Square Analysis

Dimension	Category	df	Calculated ' χ^2 ' value	Sig	Remarks at 5% level
Discrimination	Family Type	2	20.181	0.000	S
Impacts		2	20.214	0.000	S
Perpetrating		2	2.201	0.333	NS

The chi-square test results for family type variations in discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors show significant differences in the first two dimensions but not in the third. Specifically, for discrimination, with 2 degrees of freedom, the calculated chi-square value is 20.181 and the significance level is 0.000, indicating a significant difference across family types at the 5% level. For impacts, the calculated chi-square value is 20.214 with a significance level of 0.000, also showing significant family type differences. However, for perpetrating behaviors, the chi-square value is 2.201 with a significance level of 0.333, indicating no significant family type differences at the 5% level. Therefore, it can be concluded that family type significantly influences discrimination and impacts, but not perpetrating behaviors.

Table 1.28 Fathers Occupation Wise Chi – Square Analysis

Dimension	Category	df	Calculated ' χ^2 ' value	Sig	Remarks at 5% level
Discrimination	Fathers Occupation	8	60.924	0.000	S
Impacts		8	78.250	0.000	S
Perpetrating		8	56.198	0.000	S

The chi-square test results for variations based on fathers' occupation in discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors show significant differences in all three dimensions. Specifically, for discrimination, with 8 degrees of freedom, the calculated chi-square value is 60.924 and the significance level is 0.000, indicating a significant difference across different occupations at the 5% level. For impacts, the calculated chi-square value is 78.250 with a significance level of 0.000, also showing significant differences. Similarly, for perpetrating behaviors, the chi-square value is 56.198 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating

significant differences based on fathers' occupation. Therefore, it can be concluded that fathers' occupation significantly influences discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors.

Table 1.29 Residential Area Wise Chi – Square Analysis

Dimension	Category	df	Calculated ' χ^2 ' value	Sig	Remarks at 5% level
Discrimination	Residential Area	2	14.063	0.001	S
Impacts		2	10.141	0.006	S
Perpetrating		2	7.454	0.024	S

The chi-square test results for variations based on residential area in discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors show significant differences in all three dimensions. Specifically, for discrimination, with 2 degrees of freedom, the calculated chi-square value is 14.063 and the significance level is 0.001, indicating a significant difference across different residential areas at the 5% level. For impacts, the calculated chi-square value is 10.141 with a significance level of 0.006, also showing significant differences. Similarly, for perpetrating behaviors, the chi-square value is 7.454 with a significance level of 0.024, indicating significant differences based on residential area. Therefore, it can be concluded that residential area significantly influences discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors.

Table 1.30 Caste Category Wise Chi – Square Analysis

Dimension	Category	df	Calculated ' χ^2 ' value	Sig	Remarks at 5% level
Discrimination	Caste Category	14	36.353	0.001	S
Impacts		14	40.073	0.000	S
Perpetrating		14	59.480	0.000	S

The chi-square test results for variations based on caste category in discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors show significant differences in all three dimensions. Specifically, for discrimination, with 14 degrees of freedom, the calculated chi-square value is 36.353 and the significance level is 0.001, indicating a significant difference across different caste categories at the 5% level. For impacts, the calculated chi-square value is 40.073 with a

significance level of 0.000, also showing significant differences. Similarly, for perpetrating behaviors, the chi-square value is 59.480 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating significant differences based on caste category. Therefore, it can be concluded that caste category significantly influences discrimination, impacts, and perpetrating behaviors.

Conclusion

Caste discrimination among college students in southern Tamil Nadu perpetuates social divisions and undermines educational equity. The visible display of caste identities through flags, colors, and public symbols fosters an environment of fear and marginalization for those unwilling to assert their caste affiliation. Family and educational institutions, often bearing caste-based names, can unintentionally perpetuate caste sentiments, making students from other communities feel alienated. Peer group dynamics play a significant role in shaping students' attitudes towards caste, often reinforcing discriminatory behaviors and beliefs. Addressing caste discrimination requires a multifaceted approach that involves re-educating families, reforming institutional policies, and promoting inclusive practices that transcend caste identities.

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