



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DEATH ANXIETY AMONG HARIJANS AND NON-HARIJANS OF MIDDLE ADULTHOOD IN GUWAHATI CITY

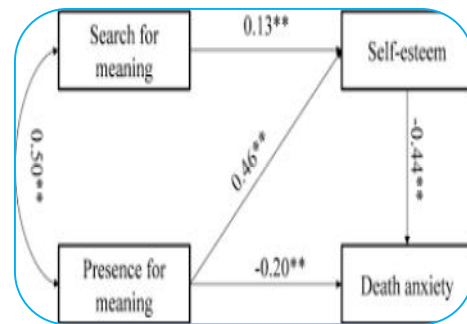
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ABSTRACTS

This study is about the Death Anxiety between Harijans and Non-Harijans of Middle Adulthood in Guwahati city. The purpose of this study is to compare the mean scores of Harijans and Non-Harijans' Men and Women respectively. This study adopted Survey Method of research with Convenient Sampling Method. For the investigation of this study, a standardised tool "Death Anxiety Scale (DAS)" by Upinder Dhar, Savita Mehta And Santosh Dhar(1998) was used. The results showed that the Death Anxiety of Harijan Women was more than Harijan Men. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significance difference between the mean scores of Harijan Men and Harijan Women is rejected. Furthermore, the findings showed that the Death Anxiety of Non-Harijan Men is slightly higher than Non-Harijan Women of Middle Adulthood because of multiple factors like financial stability, materialism, health problems etc. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significance difference between the mean scores of Non-Harijan Men and Non-Harijan Women is not rejected. Moreover, our results showed that the Death Anxiety of Harijans were more than Death Anxiety of Non-Harijans. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significance difference between the mean scores of Harijans and Non-Harijans is rejected.



KEY WORDS : Death Anxiety , financial stability, materialism, health problems.

INTRODUCTION

Death Anxiety refers to the fear and apprehension of one's own death. It is the neurotic fear of loss of the self which in intense state parallels feelings of helplessness and depression. Gandhi said it was wrong to call people "untouchable", and called them Harijans, which means children of God. Members of the Harijan community are poorly paid by their employers be it the government or private sector. It is seen that most of the Harijans of Guwahati city are engaged in the manual work of cleaning from several generations and consider it to be a part of their life.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Death has always raised curiosity in the minds of men since the down of consciousness. The Death Anxiety among the two communities would throw light on how anxious people of lower society are by being deprived of their needs and how anxious are the upper society even after getting the basic needs required. The importance of Death Anxiety among Harijans points out at the struggles and

stresses a person from the lower financial strata has to go through with different factors like education, employment, superstitions etc affects their mental health and increasing their anxiety level.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present problem was to study the **Death Anxiety among Men and Women of Harijan and Non-Harijan Basti of Middle Adulthood of GMC and Lastgate area.**

OBJECTIVE

- a. To compare mean scores of Death Anxiety of Men and Women of Harijan Basti of Middle Adulthood.
- b. To compare mean scores of Death Anxiety of Men and Women of Non-Harijan Basti of Middle Adulthood.
- c. To compare mean scores of Death Anxiety of Harijans and Non-Harijans of Middle Adulthood.

HYPOTHESIS

- a. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Death Anxiety of Men and Women of Harijan Basti of Middle Adulthood.
- b. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Death Anxiety of Men and Women of Non-Harijan Basti of Middle Adulthood.
- c. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Death Anxiety of Harijans and Non-Harijans of Middle Adulthood.

DELIMITATION

1. The participants of the study were from 25-55 years of age.
2. The participants of the study were residing in Guwahati City.
3. Both men and women of Harijan and Non-Harijan Basti of Middle Adulthood were taken for the study.
4. They needed to understand English or Hindi language.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cole, Michael A. (1978-79) investigated the effect of marital roles by comparing sex differences in death anxiety scores of married persons with and without children, and of single persons. Marital status was not significantly related to death anxiety. In addition, twenty demographic covariates were investigated to observe their possible effect on death anxiety. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicated that marital status was not significantly related to death anxiety. However, single males were found to have significantly higher death anxiety than single females. Whether a family member or friend had died in the last year, education, race, age, and religious preference were also significantly related.

Madnawat and kachhawa (2007) tried to find out the impact of age, gender and living circumstances on elderly person death anxiety. 299 persons attending public parks (average age 70 years) were questioned using the death anxiety survey schedule, which is a set of 10 questions related to death anxiety from an Indian perspective. Women those relatively older and those living with family were significantly more nervous or so the word death. The gender and age results in this Indian sample are similar to that in some western samples. The results a reveal that those living with family have significantly higher death anxiety are not in accord with past western studies and may reflect cultural differences in anxiety about dying.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

POPULATION OF THE STUDY.

In the study, the population was men and women of middle adulthood whose chronological age range from 25-55 years. Hence, all the Harijans and Non-Harijans of GMC and Lastgate area were taken as a target population.

SAMPLE

For this study, a Convenient sampling technique is used. Convenience sampling is defined as a method adopted by researchers where they collect market research data from a conveniently available pool of respondents

Table1: Showing Sample Distribution

Sample	No. of Participants
Men of Harijan Basti	20
Women of Harijan Basti	20
Men of Non-Harijan Basti	20
Women of Non-Harijan Basti	20
Total	80

AGE GROUP

Harijans and Non-Harijans of Middle Adulthood belonging to the age group of 25-55 years residing in Guwahati city.

PLACE OF CONDUCTION

The present study was conducted in Guwahati city of Assam.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING SAMPLE

The sample size was based on the given criteria:

1. The participants of the study were from the age group ranging from 25-55 years.
2. The participants of the study were residing in Guwahati City.
3. Both men and women of Harijan and Non-Harijan Basti of Middle Adulthood were taken for the study.
4. They needed to understand English or Hindi language.

VARIABLES UNDER STUDY

Sr. No.	Name of The Variables	Types of Variables	No. of Dimensions	Name of Levels
1.	Death Anxiety Scale	Continuous Variable		-----
2.	Men Of Harijan Basti Women Of Harijan Basti Men Of Non-Harijan Basti Women Of Non-Harijan Basti	Discontinuous Variables	2 2	Men And Women Harijans And Non-Harijans

TOOLS USED

A standardized tool was used in the present study on Death Anxiety Scale (DAS). It was developed by Upinder Dhar, Savita Mehta and Santosh Dhar (1998).

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

For taking the hypothesis, t-test should be used and the data can be analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The outputs of SPSS are given in the table 4.4.

The result should be interpreted as given below:

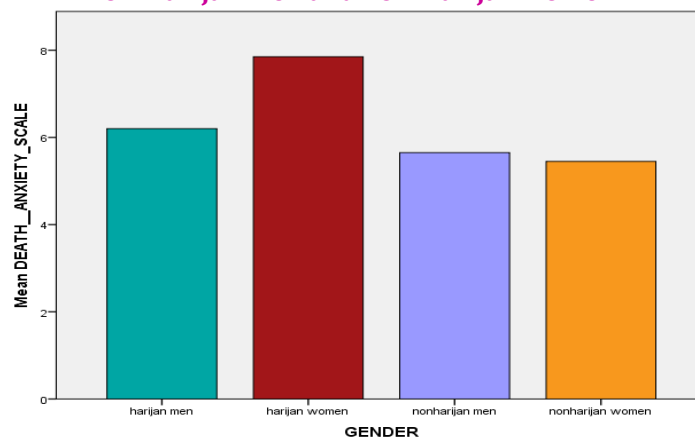
Table 4.4 Showing Mean, SD, N and t-value.

	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION (SD)	N	t-value
HARIJAN MEN	6.20	2.913	20	-2.170*
HARIJAN WOMEN	7.85	1.755	20	
NON-HARIJAN MEN	5.65	2.254	20	0.285
NON-HARIJAN WOMEN	5.45	2.188	20	
HARIJANS	7.03	2.516	40	2.794*
NON-HARIJANS	5.55	2.195	40	

The first objective was to compare mean scores of Death Anxiety of Men and Women of Harijan Basti. The data was analyzed with the help of t-test and the results are given in table 4.4. From table 4.4, it is evident that mean scores of t-value is 2.170 which is significant at 0.05 level with df=38. It shows that the mean scores of Death Anxiety of Harijan Men and Harijan Women differ significantly. Thus, the null hypothesis that there was no significance difference between the mean scores of Harijan Men and Harijan Women was rejected. Furthermore, the mean score of Death Anxiety of Harijan Women were 7.85 which were higher than mean score of Harijan Men whose mean score was 6.20. Harijan Women tend to face more Death Anxiety as they're mostly house wives who spend immense amount of time in the household activities and very less to no connection with the outside world. Also, Harijan Women were mostly uneducated which likely posses Death Anxiety to a great extent. Moreover, multiple socio-cultural factors like inequality, lack of proper sanitation, exposure to health hazardous environment etc.

The second objective was to compare mean scores of Death Anxiety of Men and Women of Non-Harijan Basti. The data was analyzed with the help of t-test and the results are given in table 4.4. From table 4.4, it was evident that mean scores of t-value is 0.285 which was insignificant at 0.05 levels. It shows that the mean scores of Death Anxiety of Non-Harijan Men and Non-Harijan Women differ insignificantly. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significance difference between the mean scores of Non-Harijan Men and Non-Harijan Women was not rejected. Furthermore, Mean score of Death Anxiety of Non-Harijan Men had a marginal difference than mean score of Non-Harijan Women. Non-Harijan men are keen to be seen as the head of the family with various responsibilities.

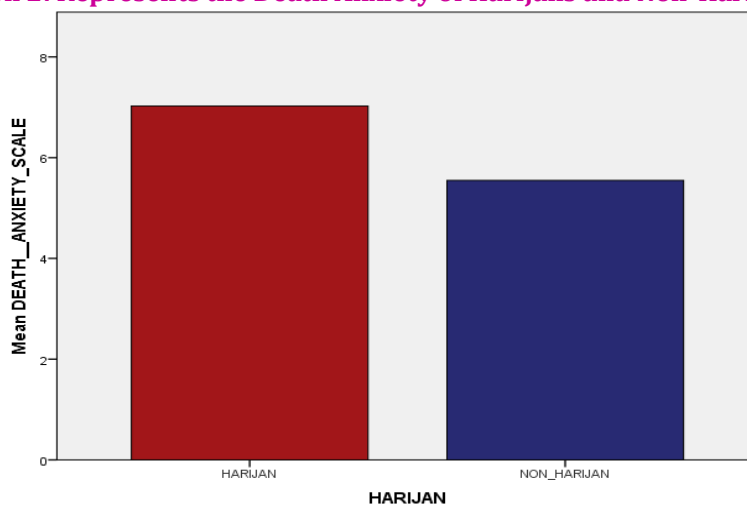
Graph 1: Represents the Death Anxiety of Harijan men and Harijan women and non-Harijan men and non-Harijan women



In the above graph 1, it is evident that the mean scores of Harijan women are higher than Harijan men and the mean score of non-Harijan men is slightly higher than non-Harijan women.

The third objective was to compare mean scores of Death Anxiety of Harijans and Non-Harijans. The data was analyzed with the help of t-test and the results are given in table 4.4. From table 4.4, it is evident that mean scores of t-value is 2.794 which is significant at 0.05 level with $df=78$. It shows that the mean scores of Death Anxiety of Harijans and Non-Harijan differ significantly. Thus, the null hypothesis that there was no significance difference between the mean scores of Harijans and Non-Harijans was rejected. Furthermore, the mean score of Death Anxiety of Harijans is 6.20 which are higher than mean score of non-Harijans whose mean score was 7.85. It may therefore be said that Harijans are found to be more anxious and stressed about life and death than non-Harijan because of lack of education and employment, poverty, poor environmental factors, unfair situations, no access to basic needs in an everyday basis, poor health facilities, social factors like untouchability, economic backwardness, financial instability, caste, religion, poverty etc.

Graph 2: Represents the Death Anxiety of Harijans and Non-Harijans.



In the above graph 2, it is evident that the mean scores of Harijans are higher than non-Harijans.

CONCLUSION

Death Anxiety is a conscious or unconscious psychological state resulting from a defense mechanism that can be triggered when people feel threatened by death. The goal of symbolic immortality describes what these people attempt to achieve, where they are motivated to make a mark in the world, leaving their family and friends, values, and art to outlive them.

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