

Self-esteem among different social group undergraduate students.

Dr. Rajiv Ranjan¹, Dr. Akansha Agarwal²

¹Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychology, J.J. College, Gaya.

²Assistant Professor, Dept. of Home Science, IIMT,
University, Meerut (UP)

Abstract

Self-esteem is a vital psychological construct that influences students' academic performance, emotional adjustment, and social relationships. The undergraduate stage is a critical period marked by significant academic, social, and emotional challenges that can shape students' self-perception and sense of self-worth. In the Indian context, social stratification based on categories such as General, OBC, and SC continues to affect students' educational experiences and psychological development. The present study aims to examine the level of self-esteem among undergraduate students and to investigate differences based on gender and social category. The study adopted a descriptive research design with purposive sampling. A total sample of 300 undergraduate students (150 boys and 150 girls) belonging to General, OBC, and SC categories was selected from J.J. College, Gaya, Bihar. Self-esteem was measured using the Self-Esteem Inventory developed by Tiwari and Kumar (2017). The collected data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and t-test. The results revealed significant gender differences in self-esteem, with girls scoring higher than boys overall. Category-wise analysis indicated that girls in General and OBC categories exhibited higher self-esteem than boys, whereas in the SC category, boys scored significantly higher than girls. Furthermore, significant differences were observed among social categories, with OBC students showing the highest level of self-esteem, followed by General category students, and SC students exhibiting comparatively lower self-esteem. The findings clearly indicate that social category and gender significantly influence self-esteem among undergraduate students.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Undergraduate Students, Social Category, Gender Differences, Psychological Well-being

1. Introduction

Self-esteem refers to your sense of self-worth, value, and positive attitude towards yourself. It depends on how much you like yourself and how much confidence you have in your abilities and capabilities, and it profoundly affects your confidence, relationships, and mental health.

Self-esteem is an important psychological construct that refers to an individual's overall evaluation of their own worth and abilities. It plays a crucial role in shaping personality, academic achievement, social

relationships, and emotional adjustment. During the undergraduate stage, students face several academic, social, and emotional challenges which can significantly influence their level of self-esteem.

In Indian society, students belonging to different social categories such as General, OBC, SC, and ST experience diverse socio-economic conditions, cultural expectations, and educational opportunities. These differences may affect their self-perception, confidence, and sense of self-worth. Therefore, studying self-esteem among undergraduate students belonging to different categories is essential to understand disparities and to promote inclusive educational practices.

Despite constitutional provisions for equality, social stratification still impacts students' psychological development. Research indicates that social background can influence self-confidence, motivation, and academic self-concept. However, limited empirical studies focus on self-esteem differences among undergraduate students across social categories, particularly in the Indian context.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining whether significant differences exist in self-esteem among undergraduate students belonging to different categories. The findings may help educators, counsellors, and policymakers design interventions to enhance students' psychological well-being.

Self-esteem refers to the degree to which an undergraduate student values, respects, and accepts oneself, as measured by a standardized self-esteem scale.

2. Review of literature:

Lowery et al. (2005) is significant for the present research as it establishes a strong link between self-esteem and psychosocial factors among undergraduate students. It supports the need to examine self-esteem in relation to social and demographic variables, thereby providing a theoretical and empirical base for studying self-esteem among undergraduate students belonging to different categories.

Durmus Ummit (2015) Studied on Self Esteem among College Students: A Study of Satisfaction of Basic Psychological Needs and Some Variables. The findings revealed that the satisfaction of autonomy and relatedness needs significantly predicted students' self-esteem, whereas the satisfaction of the competence need did not emerge as a significant predictor. Further analysis showed that students' self-esteem differed significantly based on the mother's educational level, family income, and students perceived parental attitudes. However, father's educational level and gender were found to have no significant effect on self-esteem.

Ms.R. Maheswari & Dr. K. Maheswari (2016) studied on self-esteem among the college students. Here findings are more than half of the respondents (52.5%) had low self-esteem. whereas 47.5 per cent of them have high self-esteem.

Berlin Sachu et al. (2023) examined the effect of social comparison on self-esteem and academic performance among college students, with particular emphasis on intrapersonal communication. The study focused on both upward and downward social comparison and their relationship with students' self-esteem levels. The findings revealed that students who engaged in low levels of upward comparison exhibited lower self-esteem, whereas those who reported higher levels of upward comparison demonstrated higher self-esteem. Statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between upward

social comparison and self-esteem at the 5% significance level, indicating that upward comparison plays an important role in shaping students' self-evaluations.

Jenisha Justin Abraham (2023) The findings revealed a difference of 0.141 between undergraduate and postgraduate students, indicating a variation in self-esteem based on the level of education. Additionally, a highly significant difference of 1.093 was observed between male and female students, leading to the rejection of the null hypotheses formulated for the study. The results further suggested that postgraduate students exhibited higher levels of self-esteem compared to undergraduate students. This is relevant to the present research as it provides empirical evidence on self-esteem differences among college students based on educational level and gender. It supports the need for further investigation into self-esteem among undergraduate students, especially in relation to social categories and contextual factors, thereby strengthening the theoretical foundation of the present study.

Elena De Prada et al. (2024) conducted a study on self-esteem among university students, focusing on how it can be enhanced through teamwork skills, which are considered essential soft skills in both academic and professional contexts. The study emphasized that teamwork skills contribute not only to academic success but also to students' psychological balance and self-esteem. The results of the regression analysis revealed that specific teamwork skills—namely decision-making, leadership, and communication—were significant predictors of self-esteem. Additionally, the findings indicated significant differences in self-esteem based on individual variables, with female students and older students reporting comparatively lower levels of self-esteem.

S. Sneka and Dr. R. Ramasamy (2024) conducted a study titled "A Study of Self-Esteem and Dreams among College Students" with the objective of understanding the relationship between self-esteem and dreams among college students. The study also examined whether age, gender, and type of family had a significant influence on self-esteem and dreams. The results revealed a significant relationship between self-esteem and dreams among college students. Furthermore, significant differences were observed based on demographic variables, indicating that age, gender, and type of family influence both self-esteem and dream patterns.

Arushan Ismailova et al. (2025) investigated self-esteem, social comparison, and interpersonal communication competence as key predictors of students' psychological well-being. The study emphasized that self-esteem occupies a central role in psychological well-being, particularly among young individuals. The authors identified self-esteem as a critical determinant of youth well-being, shaped by social environments, early life experiences, and reinforced through positive social interactions. High levels of self-esteem were found to be closely associated with better psychological adjustment and overall well-being.

Significance of the Study:

- Helps in understanding psychological differences among students from various social backgrounds.
- Provides data for educational planners to implement inclusive mental health programs.
- Assists teachers and counsellors in identifying students with low self-esteem.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the level of self-esteem among undergraduate students.
2. To compare the self-esteem of undergraduate students belonging to different categories (General, OBC, SC, ST).
3. To identify whether social category has a significant influence on self-esteem.
4. To suggest educational and psychological measures for improving self-esteem among students

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in self-esteem among undergraduate students belonging to different categories.
2. Social category does not significantly influence the self-esteem of undergraduate students.

3. Methodology

Research design: Descriptive Research Design and Purposive Sampling Method Was Adopted to Select 150 Boy Students and 150 girls' students.

Sample: Undergraduate students selected from Department of Psychology J.J. Colleges Gaya. Bihar. Here total sample taken 300 from different social category of SC, OBC, and GEN. under each social category level boys and girls. Those students Regular studying in J.J. College Gaya.

Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling methods used for collection of data from J.J. College Gaya Bihar.

Tool: Self-esteem inventory, developed by Tiwari, S.K. and Kumar D. (2017).

Variables of the Study

Independent Variable: Social Category (General, OBC, SC, ST Undergraduate students)

Dependent Variable: Self-Esteem

Statistical Techniques: Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION-

Here study of self-esteem among different social group undergraduate students' statistical analysis and discussion given as per tables.

Data Analysis of Self Esteem among Girls and Boys undergraduate students.

Table -01

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	significance
Girls	150	89.121	8.142		Significant at 0.05
Boys	150	75.254	6.245	16.52	level

--	--	--	--	--	--

From table -01 here find mean score of girls is 89.121 and Standard deviation is 8.142 and in boys means score is 75.254 and standard deviation is 6245. The obtained t-ratio is 16.52 is Significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the difference self-esteem between girls and boys is significant, it indicating that girls scored significantly higher than boys on self-esteem.

Data Analysis of Self Esteem among GEN Girls and boys' undergraduate students.**Table -02**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	significance
Girls	50	65.241	7.142	7.27	Significant at 0.01 level
Boys	50	55.652	5.96		

From table -02 here find mean score of girls is 65.241 and Standard deviation is 7.142 and in boys means score is 55.652 and standard deviation is 5.96. The obtained t-ratio is 7.27 is Significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the difference of self-esteem between GEN boys and Girls is significant, it results that girls scored significantly higher than boys on self-esteem.

Data Analysis of Self Esteem among OBC Girls and Boys undergraduate students.**Table -03**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	significance
Girls	50	55.547	5.142	2.45	Significant at 0.05 level
Boys	50	53.023	5.124		

From table -03 here find mean score of OBC girls is 55.547 and Standard deviation is 5.142 and in OBC boys means score is 53.023 and standard deviation is 5.124. The obtained t-ratio is 2.45 is Significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the difference of self-esteem between OBC Boys and Girls is significant, it results that girls scored significantly higher than boys on self-esteem.

Descriptive data Analysis of Self Esteem among SC Girls and Boys undergraduate students.**Table -04**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	significance
Girls	50	44.251	6.541	6.79	Significant at 0.05 level
Boys	50	52.124	4.987		

From table -04 here find mean score of SC Girls is 44.251 and Standard deviation is 6.541 and in boys means score is 52.124 and standard deviation is 4.987. The obtained t-ratio is 6.79 is Significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the difference of self-esteem between SC Girls and Boys is significant. It results that girls scored significantly higher than boys on self-esteem.

Descriptive data Analysis of Self Esteem among General and OBC undergraduate students.**Table -05**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	significance
Gen	100	77.421	6.214	14.01	Significant at 0.05 level
OBC	100	89.471	5.987		

From table -05 here find mean score of GEN is 77.421 and Standard deviation is 6.214 and in OBC means score is 89.471 and standard deviation is 5.987. Here t-ratio is 14.01 is Significant at 0.05 level. Hence the difference of self-esteem between GEN and OBC is significant. It results that OBC scored significantly higher than GEN on self-esteem.

Descriptive data Analysis of Self Esteem among OBC and SC undergraduate students.**Table -06**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	significance
OBC	100	89.471	5.987	36.63	Significant at 0.05 level
SC	100	56.871	6.574		

From table -06 here find mean score of OBC is 89.471 and Standard deviation is 5.987 and in SC means score is 56.871 and standard deviation is 6.574. Here t-ratio is 36.63 is Significant at 0.05 level. Hence the difference of self-esteem between OBC and SC is significant. It results that OBC scored significantly higher than SC on self-esteem.

Descriptive data Analysis of Self Esteem among SC and GEN undergraduate students.**Table -07**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	Significance
SC	100	56.871	6.574	22.58	Significant at 0.05 level
Gen	100	77.421	6.214		

From table -07 here find mean score of SC is 56.871 and Standard deviation is 6.574 and in GEN means score is 77.421 and standard deviation is 6.214. Here t-ratio is 22.58 is Significant at 0.05 level. Hence the difference of self-esteem between SC and GEN is significant. It results that SC scored significantly higher than GEN on self-esteem.

5. CONCLUSION:-

The present study aimed to examine the level of self-esteem among undergraduate students and to analyse differences based on gender and social category. The findings of the study lead to the following conclusions:

- Undergraduate students show significant variation in self-esteem, indicating that self-esteem is influenced by both individual and social factors during this critical developmental period.

- A significant gender difference was observed in overall self-esteem, with girls scoring higher than boys. This suggests that female undergraduate students in the present sample possess a more positive self-concept and self-worth.
- In the General and OBC categories, girls exhibited significantly higher self-esteem than boys.
- In the SC category, boys showed significantly higher self-esteem than girls, indicating the influence of socio-cultural and contextual factors on gender differences.
- Significant differences were found among students belonging to different social categories. OBC students demonstrated the highest level of self-esteem, followed by General category students, while SC students showed comparatively lower levels of self-esteem.
- The statistical results clearly indicate that social category significantly influences self-esteem, leading to the rejection of both null hypotheses framed for the study.
- The findings highlight the continuing psychological impact of social stratification despite constitutional provisions for equality. Students from socially disadvantaged categories may experience challenges that affect their confidence and self-worth.

The study establishes that self-esteem among undergraduate students is significantly influenced by both gender and social category. The results emphasize the need for inclusive educational practices, psychological counselling, and supportive academic environments to enhance self-esteem, particularly among students from marginalized social groups. Addressing self-esteem issues at the undergraduate level can contribute positively to students' mental health, academic success, and overall personality development.

REFERENCES :-

1. Abraham, J. J. (2023). *Self-esteem among college students in India*. Unpublished master's dissertation, Bengaluru, India.
2. De Prada, E., González-Gómez, D., & Sánchez, M. (2024). Self-esteem among university students: The role of teamwork skills as predictors of psychological well-being. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, 13(1), 45–60.
3. Lowery, B. S., Hardin, C. D., & Sinclair, S. (2005). Social influence effects on automatic racial prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89(1), 1–15.
4. Maheswari, R., & Maheswari, K. (2016). A study on self-esteem among college students. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 2(6), 512–515.
5. Sneka, S., & Ramasamy, R. (2024). A study of self-esteem and dreams among college students. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 14(2), 98–105.
6. Tiwari, S. K., & Kumar, D. (2017). *Self-esteem inventory*. National Psychological Corporation, Agra.
7. Ummet, D. (2015). Self-esteem among college students: A study of satisfaction of basic psychological needs and some variables. *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 174, 1623–1629.
8. Yilmaz S. (2000) The relationship between the level of assertiveness and self-esteem of the school of nursing students. *Master Thesis, Ataturk University, Institute of Health Sciences*, Department of Psychiatry Nursing, Erzurum; 2000.



Acknowledgment :-

We extend our sincere gratitude to Dr. Pradeep Kumar, Assistant Professor and Head of Department of Hindi in J.J. College for her invaluable assistance with sample collection. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all undergraduate students of J.J. College Gaya, Bihar those Participated as subject in this research work. Thanks, are also due to the anonymous reviewers Dr. Shadab Nawaz, Assistant professor S.B.A.N College Darheta-Lari for their insightful comments, which significantly improved the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest-: I have sole conflict of interest because in class room and out of class room I observed the self-esteem of Backwards caste students was higher in all social category. I also belong this social category so more interest to identify this issue.