

Chapter - III
Problem and
Hypotheses

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(A) Statement of the problem :

The onjective of this investigation is to make socio-psychological study of the youths. The young men of any society are the backbone of the continuation and establishment of a particular type of social order. There is a growing tendency in the youth to defy the authority. In home, the parents serve as authority, in the colleges and the universities the teachers and officials work as authority and in job the immediate executive or boss is taken as authority. Broadly speaking, the youth has to face the authority figure in his everyday life till he attains the age to adore the authoritative figure in himself. One witnesses a lack of adjustment in between the two-tier relationship of the youth and the authority. The younger generation is often found exhibiting negativism, disrespect, neglect and disobedience against the authority.

The study aims at exploring some of socio-psychological factors which are accountable for growing the defiance towards the authority in the youth. His defiance has been taken as an attitude against the authoritative figures projected through negation, avoidances, aversion, disregard and rejection characterised by unfavourable valence towards such figure.

(B) Conceptual Clarifications :

In the following lines some concepts related to the present problem of investigation are explained.

(1) Youth :

It will be proper to clarify the meaning of the term “Youth”. Youth refers to the collectivity belonging to the age-group of 18-30 years, which marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. In Indian curricula a student after passing high school takes five years to become a graduate. Additional two years are required to have a specialised post-graduate degree. The education of youth during the crucial years between 16 to 24 must, then, be such that arouses in him a great desire and strong motivation to learn about his heritage, his immediate environment and the appreciation of traditions.

In a purely physical sense, college students belong to the stage which begins with the late adolescence and ends with the attainment of full physical maturity at the early years of adulthood. This period has been termed as the years of youth. It is characteristics of all human beings. These years (16 to 24 years) are by far the most important and crucial period from the point of view of college education. These years have their eyes on growing adulthood. Consistent ethnic orientation beings to take place only during adolescence.

During this stage maturity of social behaviour is attained and youths are drawn away from the exclusive domination of parental values. Naturally they turn to their peer groups. The role of defusion and confusion about identity are main issues. But, there is a progression towards intimacy, where the young people emerge from their identity struggles. Thus youth is a complex of social and psychological correlates with its own role pattern, styles of thinking and modes of behaviour. It is a social force characterised by innovation, initiative and dynamism. A better and clear understanding of this stage of human development can be obtained by exploring its nature and characteristics.

The behaviour characteristics of youth is largely a result of cultural impositions and social situations acting upon him and bringing for reaching and starting changes in emotional, intellectual and social aspects of their personality, Postponment of immediate satisfaction of their desire, strong peer-group loyalties, diversities of cultural patterns and standards of conduct and social class adversaries inflict a peculiar stress upon the young people. They have many other special stresses with which they must contend. Examinations, grades, sex, the draft and pressure from parents create high level of stress. Following outstanding manifest characteristics of youth are described :-

(i) A time for establishing self as an independent person :

The youth craves to be weaned away from parental restriction and become a self-directing person. In every area he tries to make own decisions and act in his own way.

As society imposes certain obstacles to their complete independence from the family, the youth experience severe anxiety and conflicts. The adolescent is often forced, therefore, to remain financially dependent upon his parents for a long period of time. Furthermore, since marriage does not usually occur in early adolescence, the individual generally continues to live with his parents. This situation by definition, is a dependent one since food and shelter are usually provided by the family.

But the youth who fails to emancipate himself from his parents is likely to remain immature all his life. He becomes the adult who cannot make up his mind independently, he constantly seeks his superior's approval. Lack of independence may then result in dependent relationship on parents, employer or marriage partner.

(ii) Concern for status :

The youth is searching for an identity, self realization, status and recognition. He finds himself standing at the portals of a world in which he is beginning to perceive social relationship. He has discovered appropriate ways to behave in a variety of

situations. He has a dependable psychological map in which he can refer when decisions have to be made about the conduct of his life. Such an adolescent will look to himself for support rather than to others. He should have achieved a mature ego-identity. Thus, the youth who fails to achieve sense of ego-identity tension and anxiety.

(iii) A period of hetro-sexual relationship :

During this period, hetro-sexual adjustment of youths completes. They encounter a wide range of sex experiences which carry with them the threat of personality distortions. The nature of these problems differ according to the customs of the social groups. In Indian socio-cultural matrix, most youths complete this adjustment with arranged marriages by their parents. Thus hetro-sexual relationship influences the socioal perception of the youths.

(iv) A time for vocation choice :

Every youth is pressurised by the society to choose a vocation for his own. Parents, teacher and peers help the youngsters to make this decision during this period. These young people also try to maintan identification with adult role through taking decision about some vocations. Their wishes are more often in terms of personal improvement, ambition security and professional aspirations. Choice of vocation goes a long way in satisfying their motives of social recognition, deminance over others, aggression, nurturance and sexual curiosity.

(v) A period of social life :

Enlarging mental powers expand youth sensitivity to his surrounding. Young people are very particular about their social activities. Such youths who find social interaction easy and gratifying become outgoing and extrovert and enjoy meeting new people and making fresh acquaintances. On the contrary, those who keep themselves socially withdrawn or tense during college years remain shy and anxious when they grow to be adults.

(vi) A period of political liberalism and rebellion :

The most often stressed and outstanding characteristic of youth is a tendency to be against the status quo. Youths are less habituated by practice to accept inconsistencies and expediences. Their new zeal and fresher vision may help them to find challenge in possible changes. These youths protest against the existing dominance and political stagnation. These young people have the potentiality and may change the society and a new pattern of intergroup relation may be established.

(2) Authority :

The peculiar structure of "authority" is significant for the social life in the most varied ways. It seems to come about in two different ways. A person of superior significance or strength may acquire, in his more immediate or remote milieu, an overwhelming weight of his opinions, a faith or confidence which have the charac-

ter of objectivity. He, thus, enjoys a prerogative and an axiomatic trust, worthiness in his decisions which excel at least by a fraction the value of more subjective personality, which is always variable, relative and subject to criticism. By acting "authoritatively", the quantity of his significance is transformed into a new quality, it assumes for his environment the physical status — metaphorically speaking — of objectivity. However, the authority may be attained in the opposite direction. A super individual power — state, church, school, family or military organizations — clothes a person with a reputation, a dignity, a power of ultimate decision, which would never flow from his individuality. It is the nature of an authoritative person to make decision with a certainty and automatic recognition which logically pertain only to impersonal, objective axioms and deduction. In the case under discussion, authority descends upon a person from above, as it were, whereas in the case treated before it arises from the qualities of the person himself through a generation *acquiescentia*. But evidently, at this point of transition and change over (from the personal to the authoritative situation), the more or less voluntary faith of the party subject to authority comes into play. This transformation of value of personality into a super-personal value gives the personality, something which is beyond its demonstrable and rational share, however slight this addition may be. The believer in authority himself achieves the transformation. He (the subordinate element) participates in a sociological event which requires his spontaneous cooperation. As a matter of fact, the very

feeling of the “oppressiveness” of authority suggests that the autonomy of the subordinate party is actually presupposed and never wholly eliminated.

(3) Parental Rearing Attitudes :

Every moment a child spends in contact with his parents has some effect on his present behaviour and future potentialities. He gives up modes of behaviour that are no longer suitable and acquires new habits and attitudes which are appropriate for this life conditions (Sears et al, 1957). The culture and personality schools (Kardiner, 1945; McClelland, 1951; Whiting, 1961) have agreed that the basic personality structure of the individual is really formed in early childhood. Psychoanalysis has also emphasized that roots of our character and personality traits lie in the early parent-child relationship. The child-rearing, thus, becomes a very important factor in the development of the personality of the individual.

There are three aspects of child-rearing which can be clearly distinguished. They are child care (e.g., feeding, weaning, toilet and habit training etc.), child discipline, and general attitudes and behaviours displayed by parents towards their children. A number of researches (Benedict, 1949; Blair, 1950; Goldman, 1948; Havighurst et al, 1947; Mead, 1935; Orlansky, 1949; Purcell, 1952; Whiting and Child 1953) have emphasized that child training methods role during the early years of life. In love-withdrawal par-

ents simply give direct but non-physical expression to their anger or disapproval of the child for being engaged in undesirable behaviour. But in the technique called induction parents simply point out how painful and harmful the act of the child is for them and for society in general.

Child-rearing attitudes are not different from disciplines. Actually both are interrelated. Attitudes are the cognitive aspect while discipline is especially those related to breastfeeding, weaning and toilet training have a marked influence on the personality development of the baby and to carry this influence into adolescence and even into adult years. However, some studies have revealed that there is no permanent effect of type of feeding, early and late weaning, and severity of toilet training on the personality development of the individual (Beloff, 1957; Davis and Ruiz, 1965; Erikson, 1945; Miller and Swanson, 1958; Sears et al, 1957). Thus the child care methods do not have constant relationship with development of personality. What is important is not the child. Child care becomes important as a factor in the development of personality if it is viewed in that context. Attitudes that pervades the total relationship between a parent and child are more important than the practical management of this or that details of feeding, weaning or toilet training (Newton, 1951; Taylor, 1969).

Discipline refers to the control of undesirable and

antisocial behaviours of children. Whiting and Child (1953) had conceptualized “love-oriented” and non-love-oriented techniques of child discipline. Hoffman (1960) proposed two types of discipline viz . power assertive and non-power assertive. The former involves physical punishment and material deprivation for undesirable behaviours, whereas the latter involves withdrawal of parental love for the same. In non-power assertive techniques the amount of love withdrawal-real or threatened, varies considerably. In some cases the love withdrawal seems to be predominant, in others it seems totally absent and still in others it seems to be primarily focused on pointing out the harmful consequences of the child’s act for the parents and for others. Hoffman and Saltzstein (1967), therefore, made distinction between two kinds of non-power assertive techniques-love withdrawal and induction, the conative aspect of child-rearing. In fact parents attitudes and subsequently their resulting behaviours towards their children have been found to be of much importance in the development of personality. Parents display a variety of attitudes and behaviours towards their children. Piklinas and Albrecht (1961,p.115) write “To each infant a particular combination of the following ranges of attitudes of his parents will apply, genuine affectionate acceptance to hostile rejection, extreme indulgence to care-free neglect, pampered infantilization to extreme lack of mothering, complete autonomy to licensed permissiveness, multiple pressures for acceleration to distinct nonchalance”. Each kind of these attitudes experienced and received from parents during childhood

has its distinct effect on the personality characteristics.

(C) Objectives of the Study :

The broad objective of the research is to investigate and find out whether disobedience to authority in youth is linked up with family environment factors which include parental rearing attitudes, socio-economic status of the family, occupational status of the family, family type, family size and birth-order.

In order to attain the above objectives the scope of the research has been outlined as follows :

(a) The dependent variable in this research is disobedience to authority which includes disrespect to elderly people, disrespect to authoritative figure, disrespect to parents and teachers, lack of ethical, conviction for defiance and feeling for revolt.

(b) The following independent variables will be categorized and manipulated in such a way that their influence on disobedience may be apparent. The variables are explained in the succeeding paragraphs. The variables are explained in the succeeding paragraphs.

(i) Parental Attitudes :

In the preceding pages we have already given the conceptual clarification of parental rearing attitudes. It will include three dimensions viz. restrictive-permissive, rejecting-loving and neglect

ing-protecting. The relationship of youth disobedience with each of the three dimensions will be determined by product moment correlation method and extreme group comparison.

(ii) Socio-Economic Status :

Social class has proved to be a very useful concept as account for the differences in the personality and behaviour of individuals to a very great extent. It represents a subculture within a larger cultural framework of a particular society. Social classes may be defined as aggregates of individuals who occupy broadly similar positions in the scale of prestige. Social classes are distinguished by the socio-economic status which is the position that an individual or family occupies with reference to the prevailing average standard of cultural possessions, effective income, material possessions, and the participation of the group activities of the community. A large number of variables are associated with the socio-economic status but three principal variables viz, education occupation and income form the most serviceable index for distinguishing social classes.

The subjects will be divided into three conventional classes- upper, middle and lower on the basis of scores on a SES scale and it will be determined which class of subjects are more disobedient.

(iii) Occupation Type :

In identifying social classes, occupations have been generally considered in terms of their prestige value. But Millar and Swanson(1958) have proposed an alternative way of classifying occupations where the motivational requirements have been taken into consideration. They distinguish occupations into two types- entrepreneurial occupations and bureaucratic occupations . In entrepreneurial occupations persons are self- employed or work for commission in big or small business. In bureaucratic occupations persons predominantly work on monthly salaries in corporations and government, institutions and offices.

After classifying subjects into two groups it will be examined which of the groups tend more towards disobedience.

(iv) Family System :

There are two prevalent family systems- the nuclear and the extended or joint. It is useful to distinguish the two family systems. The nuclear family consists of husband, wife and children, whereas the joint family includes parents and siblings of the married couple or even more distant kin.

The subjects will be categorized into the two systems or types and it will be examined what effect the type of family has on disobedience of youth.

(v) Family Size :

sociologists have shown continued concern with group size as an independent variable in influencing many of personality and behaviour traits. As such family size may also be considered as an important variable in the development of attitudes behaviour towards authority.

On the basis of the number of children parents have family size will be categorized into small, medium and large families and it will be seen which family size is prone towards disobedience. Two children family will be treated as small family; family having three or four children will be considered as medium size family and family having 5 or more children will be termed as large family.

(vi) Birth-order :

Freud observed that child position in the sequence of brothers and sisters is of very great significance for the course of his later life. Adler suggested the importance of an individual's position in the family in the development of his personality. This is because children of different birth-orders get different kind of experiences from their parents. Subjects will be categorized as first-born, middle- born and last- born and it will be examined which birth- order has greater susceptibility towards disobedience.

(vii) Mother's Education :

Mother's education is more important than father's education or the education of other members of the family. 'This is because childrearing is the chief responsibility of mother. It is said that if you educate a boy you educate an individual but if you educate the whole a girl you educate the whole family. 'The girl later on takes the responsibility of mother and trains and educates her children. Therefore, in the development of disobedience mother's education is bound to play a significant role.

The mother's education will be classified into three groups- high, middle and low and the effect of the level of mother's education will be determined.

Beside investigation of the association of the above mentioned variables with disobedience to authority, the effect of some personal variable like sex, age and caste will also be investigated. These variables will be categorized on the basis of obtained information and data will be analysed accordingly.

(D) Hypotheses :

Earlier it has been said that this investigation envisages to examine the impact of some family- environment factors on the formation and development of beliefs in the youth. Every individual react in his unique way in a given system or situation depend-

ing on his differential personality characteristics, his situational need hierarchy as well as social parents. It is also well accepted that neither all people have similar orientations in all or similar situations, nor is the magnitude or intensity the same for all. It is an established fact that persons possessing similar personality and social characteristics are likely to perceive and react generally in similar ways. In short, it can be said that social stimulants and personality traits appear to have significant co-variability with different types of social patterns and social behaviour. In this context, it has become necessary to consider the nature of the data obtained and to formulate relationships to be discovered more specifically in relation to them. On the basis of the questions raised by the review of the previous researchers as well as common sense and theoretical considerations concerning the nature of social patterns in general and human behaviour in particular, it is desirable to formulate tentative probable hypothesis. The following hypotheses are formulated for verification in the light of the present investigations :

1. Subjects receiving restrictive , rejecting and neglecting treatments from parents during childhood will be more disobedient to authority than the subjects receiving permissive, loving and protective treatments from parents.
2. Subjects from low socio-economic status will be more disobedient than the subjects from middle and upper socio-economic status.

3. Subjects from joint families will be more disobedient than the subjects from nuclear families.
4. Subjects from large families will be more disobedient than the subject from small families.
5. First-born-subjects will be less disobedient than the later-born subjects.
6. Subjects from the families with entrepreneurial occupations will be more disobedient than subjects from families with bureaucratic occupations.
7. Subject from educated mothers will be less disobedient than Ss from uneducated mothers.

Besides the above stated hypotheses regarding family environment factors some additional hypotheses were also formulated in the context of the nature of sample. They are as follows :

8. Disobedience will decrease with increasing age.
9. Disobedience will decrease with increasing education.

10. Subjects from lower castes will be more disobedient than subjects from upper castes.

11. Girls will be less disobedient than boys.
