P R E F A C E

The phenomenon of social distance among clean and scheduled castes occupies an important place in empirical investigations into the nature of social stratification and the changes taking place in it in recent times. Starting with the speculative studies of some classical writers like Tonnies, Tarde, Ross, Cooley, Sumner, Simmel, Richard, Sarvognam, Neprash, EllefSEN, Delevsky, Park and Burgess and von Wiese we find an increasing spate of social distance studies in modern times. Bogardus may be credited as being a pioneer in quantifying the phenomenon of social distance. He has developed an "Ethnic Distance Scale" which has been used either in its original or adapted forms by various scholars for collecting social distance data from various countries in the world. From primary interest in ethnic distances, various dimensions of social distance phenomenon between various classes and groups have been subjected to empirical investigations. The enormous number of such social distance studies among ethnic class and caste-groups have been conducted in India and other countries over the past seven decades, which clearly go to point out the pertinent attention paid by scholars, administrators and policy-makers to ameliorate this situation.

However, as compared to other countries, particularly America, relatively a lesser number of such studies have been conducted in India, despite the fact that Indian society
is characterized by greater plurality, diversity and complexity than the American. Like the racial conflicts in America, Indian is characterized by class and caste wars. But lamentably very few empirical studies have been conducted of such class and caste wars. In fact, caste distance constitute a peculiar feature of the Indian social system, yet the plethora of caste studies conducted by Indian and foreign scholars throw light more on changes in the Indian social structure than on changes in attitudes of specific social groups toward other groups, may be within higher clean castes or among lower unclean castes.

Various such studies conducted in India, mostly on student and small samples, do not present a coherent picture of the phenomenon. Moreover, different techniques of measurements of such distance attitudes have been used, yet the need of standardized methods is there.

The present study, then, has been designed to answer some of the questions raised. While limiting this study to a consideration of seven scheduled caste groups, viz., Balmikis, Khatiks, Chamaras, Pasis, Dhobis, Koris and Dhanuks, our main objective has been to examine the nature of social distance relationships in terms of its four important dimensions: social, personal, economic and political. Social distance relationship has been operationally defined as the degree of willingness and rejection of persons in group relationships.
Sharma and Hallen's (1974) Social Distance Scale has been used in this study. Of all other measuring devices, this Scale has appeared to us as the most useful one, being free from such defects as with which other scales suffer and being perfectly reliable and valid.

The present work is reported in six chapters. Chapter I deals with the historical development of the concept of social distance, from classical to modern times. Chapter II deals with a review of empirical, analytical, speculative and methodological studies of social distance and related phenomena in countries other than India. Chapter III deals exclusively with such studies as conducted in India. Chapter IV deals with the evolution of measuring devices as applied to social distance phenomenon. Chapter V deals with the research design of the present study. Chapter VI reports the results of the study, organized into four sections. The last Chapter VII reports the findings and implications.

The main findings of the study suggest the persistence of social distance in contemporary Indian society in all of its four dimensions of Social, Personal, Economic and Political. While it is suggested that changes have no doubt occurred in all the four dimensions of social distance, it is in the direction of linear to curvilinear type of distance relationships among various social groups. Also, the tendency is to move from a more politic, symbolic and interdependent relationship to a more secular and dependent one.
The primary data for the study has been collected from April 1992 to September 1993.

Data forming the basis of the present research work have been collected from Sitapur City with the help of several individuals and groups. In all 300 samples from scheduled caste groups, have been finally included in this study.

The results of the study though based on a cross-section of the general population in Sitapur city are applicable to the whole country. Efforts have been made to draw inferences from particular to general. Thus the conclusions presented in the final chapter are in the form of broad generalizations. It is hoped that these generalizations will go a long way in understanding the phenomenon of social distance in India in a wider perspective and in promoting further research work into this area of interest.

The secondary data forming the basis of this research work have been collected from N.C.E.R.T. Library, New Delhi, Central Library of Delhi University, I.I.T. Library, New Delhi, Meerut University Library, B.H.U. Library, I.A.R.I. Library, New Delhi, personal library of Professor Dr. (Smt.) Kuntesh Gupta, among others.

This work would not have been completed without the help of so many individuals and institutions. I owe my heartfelt thanks to all of them who, directly or indirectly
who have helped in the fulfilment of this task. Professor Emory S. Bogardus of Southern California University have greatly helped me by sending reprints of various research papers on social distance as also by sending valuable comments. I am deeply indebted to all of them. To Professor Emory S. Bogardus, who is now no more, I owe my special thanks for inspiring me to undertake an important research work.

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If this work goes a little way to arouse the interest of concerned scholars in the field I shall consider my efforts as greatly rewarded.

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