



## INFLUENCE OF CERTAIN DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON PROSOCIAL ATTITUDE OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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**Abstract-** The attitude behind the sharing, caring, donating, comforting, cooperating, and helping behaviours of individuals is termed prosocial attitude. Such dispositions enable a secondary school teacher to disentangle adolescent student problems in a fruitful manner. Prospective teachers are students undergoing teacher training with an ambition to become competent and committed teachers. Hence the prosocial attitude of such teacher trainees is of great importance; the present study discusses the prosocial attitude of prospective teachers in relation to their gender, locale, and socioeconomic status. A self made Prosocial Attitude Scale was utilized by the investigator to assess the prosocial attitude of 800 prospective teachers randomly selected from four districts of Kerala. Analysis of data employing independent sample t test and ANOVA reveal no gender difference in prosocial attitude of prospective teachers. However prosocial attitude of prospective teachers differ with respect to locale and socioeconomic status.

**Key Words:** Demographic variables, prosocial attitude, prospective teachers

### I. INTRODUCTION

Prosocial attitude of a person can be understood as the underlying predisposition for behaving prosocially. It is manifested through various behaviours collectively called prosocial behaviour. Prosocial behaviour is defined as an individual's tendency and inclination to assume voluntary actions for the benefit and advantage of others, such as sharing, caring, donating, comforting, cooperating, and helping (Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005). The term prosocial behavior originated during the 1970s and was introduced by social scientists as an antonym for the term antisocial behavior (Cherry, 2020).

Prosocial attitude manifests through a wide range of activities intended to benefit others. These include cooperation, sharing, assistance, philanthropy, and volunteering, but are not limited to these. Similarly, prosocial behavior usually costs the actor some resources, time, effort or involves sometimes physical pain (small or large). The manifestation of prosocial attitude can improve the quality of social interactions in different ways. On one hand, individuals who are the beneficiaries of prosocial actions clearly benefit from being taken care of and facilitated by others. On the other hand, demonstration of prosocial attitude can be self-rewarding and may have valuable effects like social approval.

Prosocial tendencies are relatively consistent throughout a person's life time. Studies have revealed that there is long term consistency in temperament and personality in general and in prosocial dispositions in particular (Caspi et al., 2003). According to Sharma and Tomer (2018) prosocial attitudes and behaviours are distinct from empathy and sympathy, which constitute emotional states or reactions that may, but do not necessarily, give rise to prosocial gestures.

Why do people behave in a way that is beneficial to others even when it is not directly in their own interest? Despite the abundance of everyday examples, prosocial behavior is still an important puzzle in many subjects analyzed at various levels. Undeniably prosocial attitude may represent a protective factor that cultivates self-enhancement, self-acceptance, and successful psychological adaptation, as it promotes one's own integration in the community, positive mood, staying healthy and life satisfaction (Willigen, 2000).

While prosocial behavior is often presented as a single, uniform dimension, some research suggests that there are different types (Cherry, 2020). These types are:

1. Proactive: These are prosocial actions that serve self-benefitting purposes.
2. Reactive: These are actions that are performed in response to individual needs.
3. Altruistic: These include actions that are meant to help others without any expectations of personal gain.

Researchers also suggest that these different types of prosocial behaviors are often likely to be motivated by differing forces. For example, proactive prosocial actions were found to often be motivated

by status-linked goals and popularity within a group. Altruistic prosocial behaviors, on the other hand, were more closely linked to being liked by peers and achieving shared goals.

Gupta and Thapliyal (2015) found that there is significant difference in the prosocial attitude of male and female adolescents. Similarly, Sati (2017) reported gender differences in prosocial behavior. Males were found to be more helpful in broader public sphere, toward strangers and in emergencies. They help women more than men. Women are more likely to help in the family sphere in close relationship, and in situations that require repetitive contact. Cultural differences and individual's current mood also influences prosocial behavior. Fagbenro, Olagundoye, and Kenku (2018) reported that female undergraduates had significantly higher prosocial behaviour than their male counterparts.

According to Schoeps, Mónaco, Cotoí, and Montoya-Castilla (2020) students who establish peer relationships based on mutual trust and high communication quality, tend to be more empathic (cognitive and emotionally) and show more prosocial behavior. In contrast, adolescents who feel detached and isolated from their peer group, although they have a stronger emotional empathic capacity, seem to struggle more with behavioral and emotional problems. Robinson and Piff (2017) found that individuals of lower socioeconomic status display increased attentiveness to others and greater prosocial behavior compared to individuals of higher socioeconomic status.

### **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The educational scenario in India is undergoing a multi-dimensional paradigm shift. In quantitative dimension, more and more attempts are made to disseminate schooling and education to the weaker and marginalized sections of the society. Emphasis is given for providing education of women and tribal population for their empowerment and progress. In qualitative aspects various measures are taken to improve the quality of education at various levels. Realizing the role of teachers in the national reconstruction, for moulding teachers of high quality and competence, the length of teacher preparation course has increased recently to two years all over the country. This indicates the greater responsibility of teachers in the present educational system and in the society.

Today we hear about a number of incidents in which man behaves so cruel to his fellow beings in various needy situations. The lack of prosociality is one of the major reasons for such atrocities and violence in society. If people develops helping attitudes it can do a lot in mitigating such dreadful situations and events. Thus prosocial attitude becomes a necessity of the time. Teachers can influence their students to a great extent; students usually model their teachers. Every action of teacher makes lasting impressions in students and influences their personality development. If the teacher behaves prosocially consequently the students will benefit from it. As teachers are highly responsible for the socialization of youngsters, the development of prosocial attitude among them is of prime importance. The present study is an enquiry of the prosocial attitude of future teachers in relation to their select demographic variables.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To compare the prosocial attitude of prospective teachers based on gender
2. To compare the prosocial attitude of prospective teachers based on locale
3. To compare the prosocial attitude of prospective teachers based on socioeconomic status

### **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

1. There is no significant difference between the prosocial attitude of male prospective teachers and that of female prospective teachers
2. There is no significant difference between the prosocial attitude of rural prospective teachers and that of urban prospective teachers
3. There is no significant difference in the prosocial attitude of prospective teachers of different socioeconomic status.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

In order to realise the objectives of the study, the investigator conducted a survey among a sample of 800 prospective teachers. Multistage random sampling technique was utilized to select the respondents. Sixteen secondary teacher education institutions from four revenue districts in Kerala, namely - Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Kottayam, and Ernakulam were included in the study. A Prosocial Attitude Scale was prepared by the investigator and administered among the sample to quantify their prosocial attitude. The obtained data were consolidated and subjected to t test and ANOVA in order to verify the hypotheses formulated.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 1. Comparison of prosocial attitude of prospective teachers based on gender

To find out whether there exist any significant difference between the prosocial attitude of male prospective teachers and that of female prospective teachers the mean scores were subjected to the test of significance of difference (*t* test). The details regarding the result of the test of significance of the difference are presented in table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Data and result of the test of significance of the difference between mean score of prosocial attitude of male prospective teachers and that of female prospective teachers**

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Critical Ratio
Male	130	122.64	16.98	0.099 ( <i>p</i> > .05)
Female	670	122.80	15.36	

When the difference between the mean prosocial attitude scores of male respondents and that of female respondents was subjected to the test of significance, the obtained critical ratio (0.099) does not reach the table value, 1.96; it indicates that there is no significant difference between prosocial attitude of male prospective teachers and that of female prospective teachers. The result substantiates the first hypothesis of the study. Hence it can be assumed that the male prospective teachers and female prospective teachers possess equivalent levels of prosocial attitude; the gender influence on prosocial attitude of prospective teachers is negligible.

#### 2. Comparison of prosocial attitude of prospective teachers based on locale

To find out whether there exist any significant difference between the prosocial attitude of rural prospective teachers and that of urban prospective teachers the mean scores were subjected to the test of significance of difference (*t* test). The details are presented in table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Data and result of the test of significance of the difference between mean score of prosocial attitude of rural prospective teachers and that of urban prospective teachers**

Locale	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Critical Ratio
Rural	420	124.09	13.78	2.787 ( <i>p</i> < .01)
Urban	380	121.32	14.26	

When the difference between the mean prosocial attitude scores of rural respondents and that of urban respondents was subjected to the test of significance, the critical ratio obtained (2.787), exceeds the table value, 2.58 at .01 level of significance. Since the rural respondents' prosocial attitude score (124.09) is greater than that of urban respondents (121.32) and the difference is statistically significant, it can be inferred that the rural prospective teachers possess more prosocial attitude when compared to their urban counterparts. The second hypothesis formulated is not verified by the findings of the study.

#### 3. Comparison of prosocial attitude of prospective teachers based on socioeconomic status

To find out whether there exists significant difference among prospective teachers from different socioeconomic status with regard to their prosocial attitude, the scores of these categories obtained for the prosocial attitude inventory were subjected to one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). There were 78 prospective teachers belonging to upper class, 189 belonging to upper middle class, 266 belonging to lower middle class, 210 belonging to upper lower class, and 57 prospective teachers belonging to lower class in the sample selected for the study. The data and the results of the comparison of prosocial attitude scores of prospective teachers based on socioeconomic status are presented in table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Summary of analysis of variance for the prosocial attitude scores of**  
**prospective teachers based on socioeconomic status**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Ratio
Between Groups	4209.0455	4	1052.2614	4.0277 ( $p < .01$ )
Within groups	207694.79	795	261.2513	
Total	211903.84	799		

From ANOVA, the  $F$  ratio obtained is 4.0277 and is greater than 3.34, the  $F$  critical value (for 4/799 degrees of freedom) at .01 level of significance (Garrett, 1966). So it can be inferred that the prosocial attitude among prospective teachers differs significantly with respect to their socioeconomic status. As the  $F$  value shows significant differences in prosocial attitude among the compared groups, in order to ascertain which groups differs each other with respect to prosocial attitude the data were subjected to Tukey's HSD test (Minium, King, & Bear, 1993). The HSD value calculated at .05 level is 5.86. The differences between the means of the groups were compared with this value. The details are presented in table 4.

**Table 4**  
**Differences between the pairs of sample means (prosocial attitude)**  
**with regard to socioeconomic status**

Category	Upper M = 119.41	Upper Middle M = 122.29	Lower Middle M = 122.15	Upper Lower M = 126.21	Lower M = 119.26
<b>Upper</b> M = 119.41	--	2.88	2.74	6.80*	0.15
<b>Upper Middle</b> M = 122.29	--	--	0.14	3.92	3.03
<b>Lower Middle</b> M = 122.15	--	--	--	4.06	2.89
<b>Upper Lower</b> M = 126.21	--	--	--	--	7.00*
<b>Lower</b> M = 119.26	--	--	--	--	--

Among the compared groups, significant difference in mean scores was observed between the pairs - upper lower and upper, and upper lower and lower as the differences in means (6.80 and 7.00 respectively) exceed the HSD value 5.86 at .05 level. Upper lower class possesses high prosocial attitude than that of upper class and lower class. All other categories have similar prosocial attitude. The third hypothesis in the present study stated that there is no significant difference in the prosocial attitude among prospective teachers with respect to socioeconomic status. The results of the statistical comparison do not support this hypothesis.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

One of the important qualities required for a teacher is prosocial attitude; which should manifests in teacher behaviour in a multitude of ways. A teacher possessing prosocial attitude can deal student/adolescent problems in a healthy and constructive manner which in turn results in students the

development of confidence and positive attitudes towards learning and life. Present study analysed the prosocial attitude of prospective teachers in Kerala in relation to their gender, locale, and socioeconomic status. The findings show no gender difference in prosocial attitude. But contradictory results were reported in previous studies (Gupta & Thapliyal, 2015; Sati, 2017; Fagbenro, Olagundoye, & Kenku, 2018). In the present study it is noticed that rural prospective teachers possess more prosocial attitude when compared to urban prospective teachers. Also socioeconomic status has an influence on prosocial attitude. These findings are partly in conformity with that reported in Robinson and Piff (2017). The findings of the study point to the need of developing prosocial tendencies among future teachers, particularly from urban areas and from upper socioeconomic status groups.

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