

Various Aspects of Maternal Consciousness in a Developing Country – Comparisons among Castes in Nepal –

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INTRODUCTION

Nepal is located between China and India, and it is a multiethnic nation with over 50 different ethnic groups. Among these people are Newars who became established in the Kathmandu Valley. Among the total population of Nepal, there are Hindus (86.51%), Buddhists (7.78%), and Muslims (3.53%). The age distribution is as follows: 16.2% are ages 0-4 years, 26.2% are 5-14 years, 19.5% are 15-24 years, 5.4% are over 60 years, 3.41% are over 65 years, and 46.8% are women 15-19 years. Due to numerous taboos and prohibitions in the caste system policies, there are limited job opportunities and job mobility. In this study, we investigated the primary factors of maternal consciousness in Nepal.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The hypotheses of this study are: maternal consciousness is not affected by the environment and maternal consciousness increases with the experience of giving birth and providing childcare.

For the protection of human rights, we submitted the research plan and obtained the approval of the board following the regulations of the university ethics board. Then the subjects were given explanations that they would not be disadvantaged regardless of whether or not they participated in the study.

For the measurement method of maternal consciousness, a questionnaire was prepared based on “International Comparison of Home Education.” Hanazawa’s “Maternal Consciousness Scale” was used to prepare the questionnaire on maternal consciousness

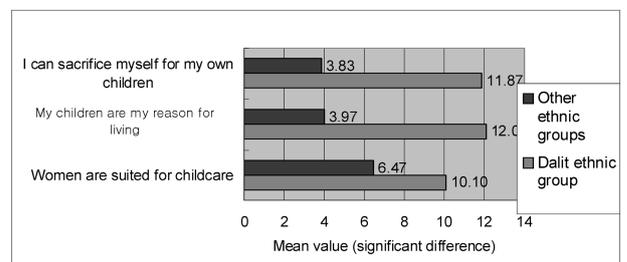
and his “Maternal Psychology” was used as reference.

The subjects of the interviews were 360 mothers who were raising children ages 6-7 years old. The collection rate was 100%. Data analysis was performed using SPSS 17.0J. The comparison was performed between the Dalit ethnic group and other ethnic groups (Lama, Terai, Rai/Limbu, Newar, and Brahmin) using the t-test, and the mean values were compared. There were no statistically significant differences in attributes and maternal consciousness when comparisons were performed between the other ethnic groups.

RESULTS

Thoughts on One’s Own Children

The Dalit ethnic group had relatively high mean values of t-test when compared with other ethnic groups ($p < 0.0001$) for “I can sacrifice myself for my own children,” “if a woman does not bear a child, it wasn’t worthwhile for her to be born as a woman,” and “childcare is a job suited for woman, and thus, she should obviously perform it” (Fig. 1).



Mean value (significant difference)

I can sacrifice myself for my own children $P < 0.0001$
My children are my reason for living $P < 0.0001$
Women are suited for childcare $P < 0.05$

Fig. 1. Thoughts on One’s Own Children

Expectations for One's Own Children

Fig. 2 shows the results of comparisons of expectations for “has good sense of humor,” “listens to his/her parents,” and “is attractive to opposite sex” for one’s child.

Fig. 3 shows the results of comparisons of expectations for “has something other than studies to devote himself/herself,” “clearly expresses his/her opinion,” and “does not give up easily and perseveres” for one’s own child.

Fig. 4 shows the results of comparisons of expectations for “acts boyish (if boy) or girlish (if girl),” “has a goal in his/her life,” and “can compromise and work with others” for one’s child.

The Dalit ethnic group scored highly relative to other ethnic groups ($p < 0.001$) for all of the above items.

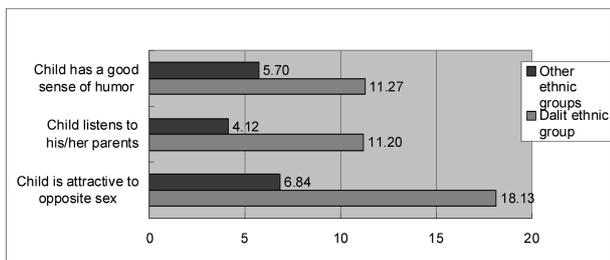
For the response “abortion may be unavoidable if the pregnancy was unplanned,” the Dalit ethnic group was

9.9. This value was higher than other ethnic groups which was 4.9 (Fig. 5).

DISCUSSION

The following were in common among 6 ethnic groups. For expectations of the parent for her child, people (238 people, 66.1%) more often answered “I want the child to support me financially” while an overwhelming majority (344 people, 95.5%) answered “I want the child to support me psychologically.” There were a large number of people (349 people, 97.0%) who answered “children should succeed to a house.” When the academic background was examined, only a small number of people (26 people, 7.2%) graduated from college and 45 people (12.5%) dropped out of elementary school. When these people were questioned about the maternal consciousness, there were significant differences between questioned items using the χ^2 test.

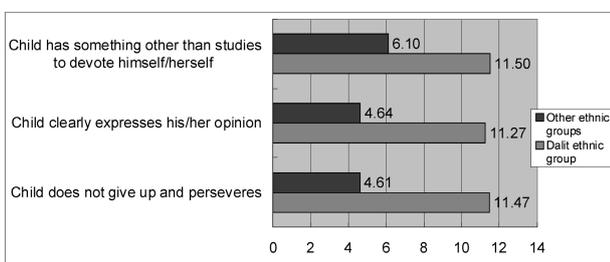
Therefore, to further examine the differences in the mean values among the 6 ethnic groups above, we used one-way ANOVA and performed multiple comparisons



Mean value (significant difference)

Child has a good sense of humor $P < 0.0001$
 Child listens to his/her parents $P < 0.0001$
 Child is attractive to opposite sex $P < 0.0001$

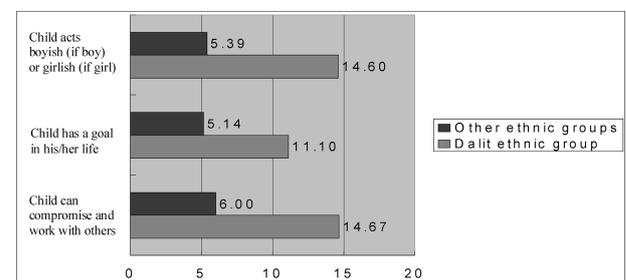
Fig. 2. Expectations for One's Own Children - 1



Mean value (significant difference)

Child has something other than studies to devote himself/herself $P < 0.0001$
 Child clearly expresses his/her opinion $P < 0.0001$
 Child does not give up and perseveres $P < 0.0001$

Fig. 3. Expectations for One's Own Children - 2



Mean value (significant difference)

Child acts boyish (if boy) or girlish (if girl) $P < 0.0001$
 Child has a goal in his/her life $P < 0.001$
 Child can compromise and work with others $P < 0.0001$

Fig. 4. Expectations for One's Own Children - 3



Mean value (significant difference)

Unplanned pregnancy $P < 0.0001$

Fig. 5. Thoughts on Abortion

by the Tukey tests. As a result, the “negative feelings about unplanned pregnancy” for the Dalit ethnic group was $F(5,354)=459.808$ ($P<0.05$), indicating a significantly high value compared with those of other ethnic groups.

Dalits literally means broken or oppressed people and these descriptions still describe their present conditions. However, they enjoy caring for and have high expectations for their children. The comparisons among different castes in Nepal indicated that poverty might not affect the loving affection of a mother toward her children.

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