

**ATTITUDES OF RURAL STUDENTS IN HIGHER
EDUCATION
(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE BANGALORE
CITY)**

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ABSTRACT

Attitudes of rural students toward their society in which they live in. Apart from these, their attitudes toward various components of the social milieu are focused upon. Subsequently, these attitudes of the rural students are viewed in the light of other background variables to ascertain whether the attitudes. To investigate into the role activities of the university rural students and to ascertain the level of attitudes among the rural students. The area of the study has been confined to Bangalore City. The sample size of 250 rural students was drawn on the basis of simple random technique. Majority (56.8 percent) of them have reported that marriage is essential. However, it is fascinating to observe that nearly one-fourth (21.2 percent) of the sample, think that it is not essential. However, significant proportion (18.8 percent) of the sample reported being friendly with teachers. Being friendly should not mean confining the relationship to mundane affairs. Majority (66.8 percent) of the sample does not belong to any political party and only one-fifth of them reported they belong to some political party. Thus, students would like to go with the state of existing social situations. Students' attitude towards dowry is another aspect examined in this study.

Key words: Attitudes; rural students; higher education; polity; media;

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1. INTRODUCTION

The present study entitled “Attitudes of Rural Students in Higher Education (with Special Reference to the Bangalore City)” is an empirical research into the social portrait of students in higher education, focusing specifically on attitudes, academic performance and aspirations among rural students in Bangalore city of Karnataka State. It intends to analyze the extent, determinants and implications of academic achievement among these students. In the light of its scope, it could be taken as a treatise in the field of sociology of higher education which has emerged as a leading branch of sociological specialization. The sociology of education is the study of educational institutions and individual experiences and its outcomes. It is most concerned with the schooling processes of modern and industrial societies, including the expansion of educational centers.

2.1 ATTITUDES TOWARD SOCIETY

Attitudes of rural students toward their society in which they live in. Apart from these, their attitudes toward various components of the social milieu are focused upon. Subsequently, these attitudes of the rural students are viewed in the light of other background variables to ascertain whether the attitudes and orientations are in any way conditioned by these variables. In short, this chapter on attitudes serves as a backdrop against which other academic traits of the rural students are analyzed.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

To investigate into the career patterns and role activities of the university rural students and to ascertain the level of attitudes among the rural students.

2.3 METHODOLOGY

The present study seeks to probe into the intricate realities pertaining to the rural students of a state university in an Indian setting. Universe of the present study consists of rural students studying in post-graduate courses of Arts, Science, Commerce, Education, Law, Engineering, Medical, Agriculture and Veterinary. The area of the study has been confined to Bangalore City. The sample size of 250 rural students was drawn on the basis of simple random technique. The sample size was fixed in view of time and the availability of other resources. The major tool of

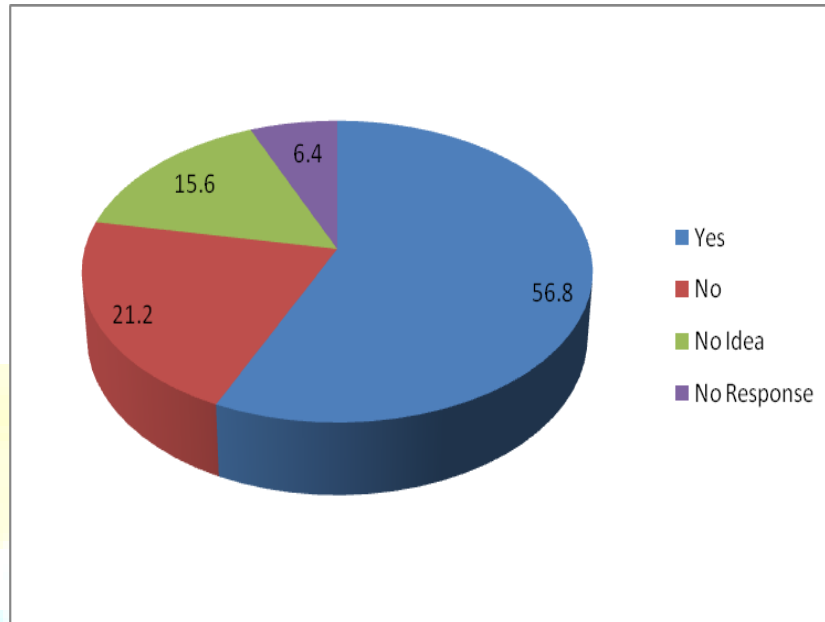
collection of primary data has been the Questionnaire.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Attitudes, generally, constitute some important social realities in the analysis of the role of rural students and these could be determining the approaches and perspectives of the rural students toward their academic activities. An attempt, therefore, is made in this chapter to focus on the attitudes of the university rural students studied. To be effective, a post-graduate student must make an impact on the society and must be capable of impressing by adding to or subtracting from an existing cultural situation of which he or she is a member. The idiom of this culture must be one's own; motive to one is that sub-conscious way in which one does not constantly have to come to terms with. An empirical analysis of student's attitudes includes the opinions of rural students with regard to marriage, family, higher education-teacher student relations, politics, mass media and social change

Table: 1. Necessity of Marriage

| Is Marriage Essential? | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Yes | 142 | 56.8 |
| No | 53 | 21.2 |
| No Idea | 39 | 15.6 |
| No Response | 16 | 6.4 |
| Total | 250 | 100.0 |



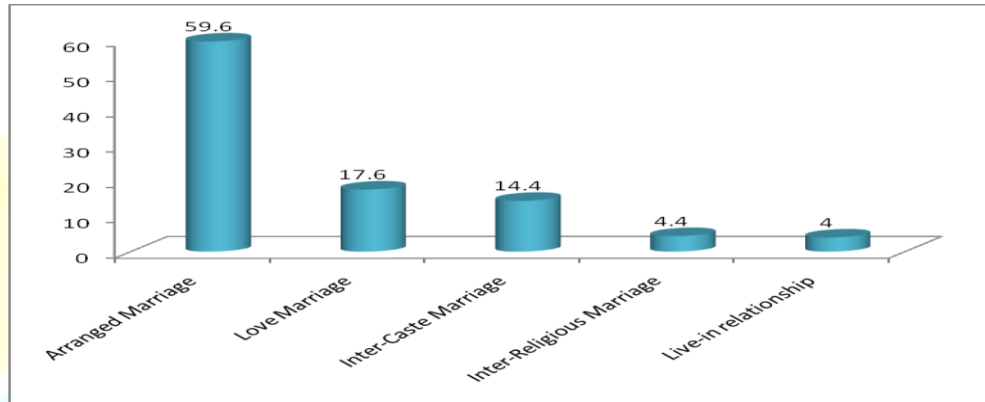
It can be found from the table-1, majority (56.8 percent) of them have reported that marriage is essential. However, it is fascinating to observe that nearly one-fourth (21.2 percent) of the sample, think that it is not essential. And small proportions (15.6 percent) of them have said that they don't have any idea pertaining to it. Lastly, negligible proportion (6.4 percent) of them refused to give any response. It can be inferred that marriage continues to occupy a very important place, though it must be added that a considerable size of rural students telling that it is not necessarily essential. One can see a perceptible change in students' attitudes even though the change is very slow. Attitudes do not change as fast as other economic and cultural aspects of life. This reflects the changing social reality.

Given the various ways of performing marriages and variety of marriages, we have attempted to elicit the opinion of students regarding the type of marriage.

Table: 2. Type of Preferred Marriage

| Type of Marriage | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Arranged Marriage | 149 | 59.6 |
| Love Marriage | 44 | 17.6 |
| Inter-Caste Marriage | 36 | 14.4 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Inter-Religious Marriage | 11 | 4.4 |
| Live-in relationship | 10 | 4.0 |
| Total | 250 | 100.0 |



It can be found from the table-2 that majority, 60 (59.6) percent of the post-graduate students, prefer arranged marriages. However, it is interesting to observe that significant proportion (17.6 percent) of them prefer love marriages and 14.4 percent prefer inter caste marriages and only 4.4 percent prefer inter religious marriages as well. Further, the most talked about issue of live-in- relationship was preferred only by ten out of 250 respondents. This analysis shows that students continued to have conservative attitudes. If at all arranged marriage is taken as a criterion, the percentage of students preferring love marriage is not significant, though one would expect higher education to affect changes in students' preference. In that a considerable percentage would have preferred love marriages but it is not the case. So is the case with inter caste, inter religious marriages and live-in-relationships. This simple analysis would make us to infer certain observations, though they might appear far fetching. Idealism which characterizes students' behavior at one point of time is giving way to practical and aversion to take risk as far as marriage is concerned. Thus, students would like to go with the state of existing social situations. Social institutions like marriage and students' attitude towards it hardly change. Change requires an ability and willingness on the part of the students to experiment with new things which might appear difficult given the kind of students coming from rural areas seeking admission to post-graduate courses. Even the media including electronic media like TV relays programmes which portray this state of affairs.

Table: 3. Qualities Looking for in the Selection of Life Partners

| Qualities | Yes | No | Total |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Income | 20 (8.0) | 230 (92.0) | 250 (100.0) |
| Education | 93 (37.2) | 157 (62.8) | 250 (100.0) |
| Physical Appearance | 32 (12.8) | 218 (87.2) | 250 (100.0) |
| Status | 16 (6.4) | 234 (93.6) | 250 (100.0) |
| Caste | 16 (6.4) | 234 (93.6) | 250 (100.0) |
| Religion | 17 (6.8) | 233 (93.2) | 250 (100.0) |
| Character | 151 (60.4) | 99 (39.6) | 250 (100.0) |
| Identical Interests | 20 (8.0) | 230 (92.0) | 250 (100.0) |
| Intelligence | 53 (21.2) | 197 (78.8) | 250 (100.0) |
| Liberal Attitudes | 38 (15.2) | 212 (84.8) | 250 (100.0) |

Choosing a life partner is another aspect of some interest in the study of post-graduate students. In choosing a life partner what qualities of a life partner are taken into consideration, is a matter of concern indeed. It can be observed from the table-3 that of the given qualities, majority of the sample given more weight age to character while other qualities like education, physical appearance, status, caste, religion, liberal attitudes have been given less importance. The above analysis shows that character of the person outsmarts all other qualities, because 60.4 percent of them give more importance to character of a life partner.

Further, marriage being an important institution it was thought as relevant to ascertain the attitudes of rural students toward practices related to marriage. The respondents were found to be positively predisposed toward marriage at a relatively higher age than the statutory minimum age for marriage that is 18 years.

Table: 4. Suitable Age at Marriage for Male and Female

| Age at Marriage | Suitable age at Marriage for Male | Suitable age at Marriage for Female |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 18-23 years | 30 (12.0) | 152 (60.8) |
| 24-27 years | 124 (49.6) | 92 (36.8) |
| 28-30 years | 86 (34.4) | 06 (2.4) |
| 31 years & above | 10 (4.0) | 00 (00) |
| Total | 250 (100.0) | 250 (100.0) |

Age at marriage has been a subject of lot of theoretical and empirical research in the filed of population research. It has argued low age at marriage has been single most important factor for higher fertility. In order to check high birth rate, steps are been taken to discourage people, not to marry at low age. Giving education to girls lead to rise in age to marriage. An attempt is made here to find from the samples, regarding their preferred age at marriage. Majority (60 percent) of the sample prefers low age at marriage for females between 18 to 23 years. Whereas, small proportion (12 percent) reported, age between 18-23 years as a preferred age at marriage for males. However, one-half (49.6 percent) of the respondents preferred 24-27 years as ideal age at marriage for males, correspondingly significant proportion (36.8 percent) of the respondents preferred the same age group suitable for females. The age between 28-30 years and 31 years and above age groups were not preferred at all for males and females by post- graduate boys and girls of the sample. Thus, age between 24-27 years was the most preferred age for both boys and girls. It can also be observed that higher education has not significantly altered students' attitude towards age at marriage, as majority of the sample mentioned low age that is, 18-23 years as the preferred age for girls. This may be viewed as a welcome change in the attitudes of rural students toward age at marriage. In view of the above finding, it may be stated that rural students of the university are progressive and individualistic in their notions regarding marriage.

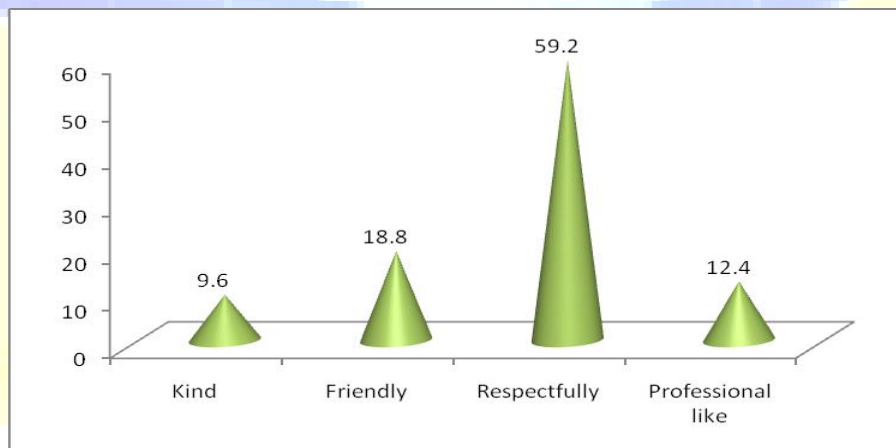
3.1 Attitudes toward Higher Education

Students' attitude towards higher education is a matter of lot of debate and discourse. There is a feeling that students seeking admission to post-graduate courses seem to think that it is an extension of under graduate course. Rarely do they seem to apply their mind in choosing a

course. As a result, the course in which they land has least thing to do with their interest, objectives and aspirations. If this is the state of affairs in Government founded institutions, private education institutions including the deemed to be universities have been conducting entrance tests meant to asses the merit of students before allotting admission to a particular course of study. Higher education in private institution is definitely expensive, yet parents and the students alike would prefer to go for those institutions. Be the controversy as it may, an attempt is made in the profile of post graduate students to assess their attitude towards higher education.

Table: 5. Nature of Relationship with Teachers

| Relationship | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Kind | 24 | 9.6 |
| Friendly | 47 | 18.8 |
| Respectfully | 148 | 59.2 |
| Professional like | 31 | 12.4 |
| Total | 250 | 100 |



Student teacher relationship is a serious crisis, as evident from wide spread student unrest. A study like this concerning on rural students in higher education legitimately includes teacher student relationship for serious analysis. It may be found from the table-5 that nearly 60 percent of the total sample reported to respect the teachers. Being respectful could also mean maintaining distance from the teachers as students are seen hardly interacting with teachers both

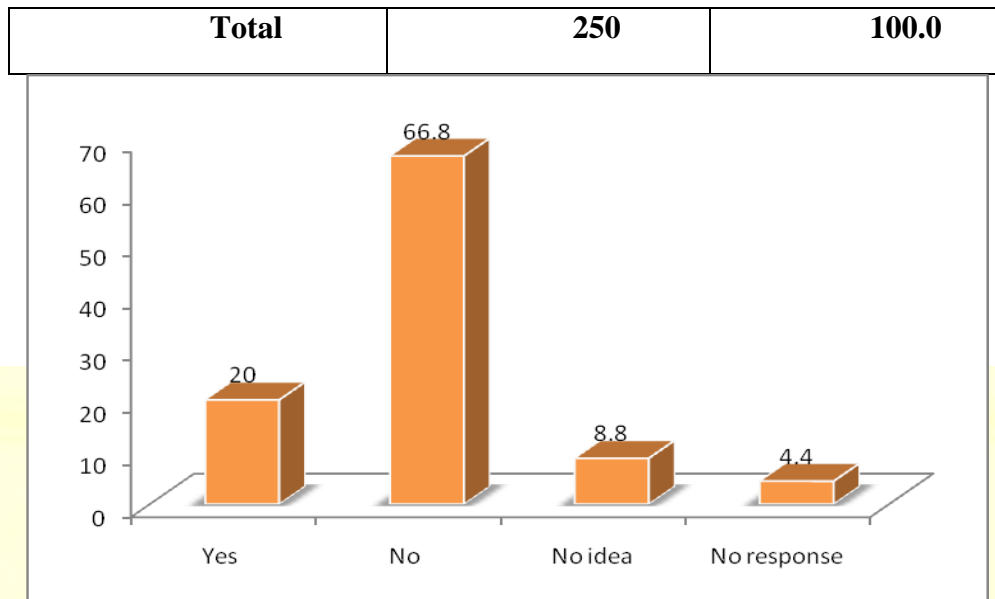
in the class and outside as well. Being respectful is one thing and taking the help of the teachers is another thing. Students are encouraged and provided with opportunities to take advantage of teacher knowledge, scholarship and wisdom in the field of higher education. However, significant proportion (18.8 percent) of the sample reported being friendly with teachers. Being friendly should not mean confining the relationship to mundane affairs. Friendliness is meaningful if they are no barriers particularly cultural and psychological between teachers and students. And only 12.4percent of the sample reported their professional-like relationships whatever that means in actual learning situations and finally another small proportion (9.6percent) of them reported that the relationships what they maintain with teachers are very kind. The above analysis shows that majority of the students are yet to overcome stereotype like that student should always give respect to the teachers. At the university level this type of attitude will not really help to improve the situation and standards of higher education. Learning and sharing of knowledge and experience can take place meaningfully in a free atmosphere.

3.2 Attitudes towards Politics

The role of students in politics has been a subject of extensive and intensive social research. One of the things that needs to be examined is how students are connected with political parties. In a multiparty system there is cutthroat competition among political parties to create vote banks. Students in particular and youth in general, very often, hold the key in deciding the fortunes of political parties during elections. Each and every political party consistently seeks to woo the students into their fold. Membership drive has become an important part of political propaganda that parties carry out. An attempt is made here to find from the sample regarding their attitude towards becoming a member of political party.

Table: 6. Affinity to Politics

| Affinity to Politics | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes | 50 | 20.0 |
| No | 167 | 66.8 |
| No idea | 22 | 8.8 |
| No response | 11 | 4.4 |



It appears from the table-6 that majority (66.8 percent) of the sample does not belong to any political party and only one-fifth of them reported they belong to some political party. However, small proportion (8.8 percent) of them said they don't have any idea and negligible proportion (4.4 percent) of them refused to respond. The data show a picture contrary to what is widely believed, that is students are members of some party or the other. But this is not borne out by the data of the sample. However, one-fifth of them being members of political party also go to show that students have become indifferent to politics. Thus, political apathy seems to rule the students mind.

Being post graduate students they are all eligible to vote. Voting behavior is another aspect which has been analyzed with respect to various social groups. These is also a feeling that very often the percentage of voting in urban areas rarely of beyond 50 percent whereas in rural areas there is high percent of voting partly because the voters are mobilized by political parties and partly because of various other considerations. There is a huge turn out of voters at polling booths.

Table: 7. Voting in different Elections

| Voted in elections | Lok Sabha | | Vidhan Sabha | Gram Panchyat | Zilla Panchayat | Urban Local Bodies | Not Applicable |
|--------------------|-----------|--------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | Yes | F | 63 | 63 | 100 | 42 | 37 |
| | % | (25.2) | (25.2) | (40.0) | (16.2) | (14.8) | (11.6) |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| No | F | 187 | 187 | 150 | 208 | 213 | 221 |
| | % | (74.8) | (74.8) | (60.0) | (83.2) | (85.2) | (88.4) |
| Total | F | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 |
| | % | (100.0) | (100.0) | (100.0) | (100.0) | (100.0) | (100.0) |

F=Frequency, %= Percentage.

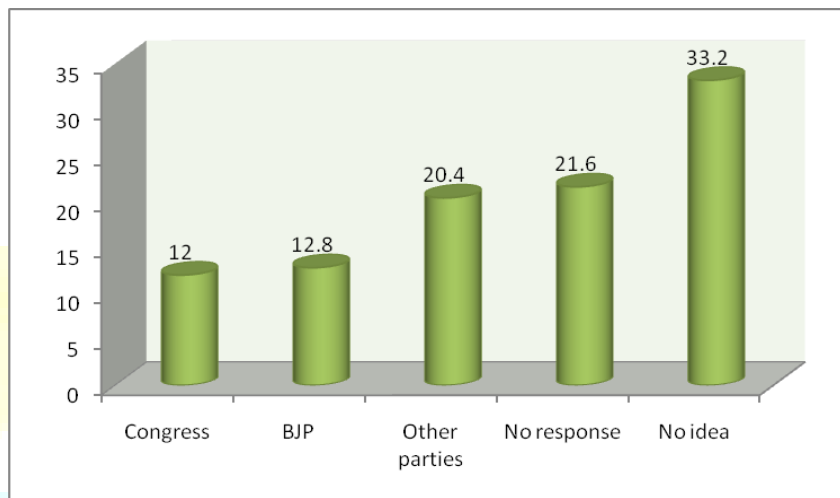
The table-7 shows the distribution of sample population of students in terms of voting and not voting in different types of elections. During Lok Sabha elections almost three-fourths (74.8 percent) of them do not vote as only one-fourth have reported to have voted. Similar is the situation in case of election to State Legislature. Whereas, majority (60 percent) of the sample reported to have not voted in Gram Panchayat elections, as significant proportion (40 percent) of them reported positively. Zilla Panchayat elections more or less show the same trend. The situation is still worse in the case of urban local bodies as overwhelming majority (85.2 percent) of them reported to have not voted. Overall it can be inferred that student participation in voting is very significant because lesser percentage of students reported to have voted in all the elections from Parliament to Gram Panchayat. Like the previous table analysis student participation in political processes remains marginal.

Another aspect analyzed in this chapter is with regard to students preference to political parties as which party is best suited to rule the Nation. The picture that emerges from the table confirms to emerging political scenario. Unlike in the past, coalition Governments have come to rule at the Centre if not at the State level. Even at the State level regional political parties have become force to reckon with.

Table: 8. Preferred Political Party

| Political Party | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| Congress | 30 | 12.0 |
| BJP | 32 | 12.8 |
| Other parties | 51 | 20.4 |
| No response | 54 | 21.6 |
| No idea | 83 | 33.2 |

| | | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Total | 250 | 100.0 |
|--------------|------------|--------------|



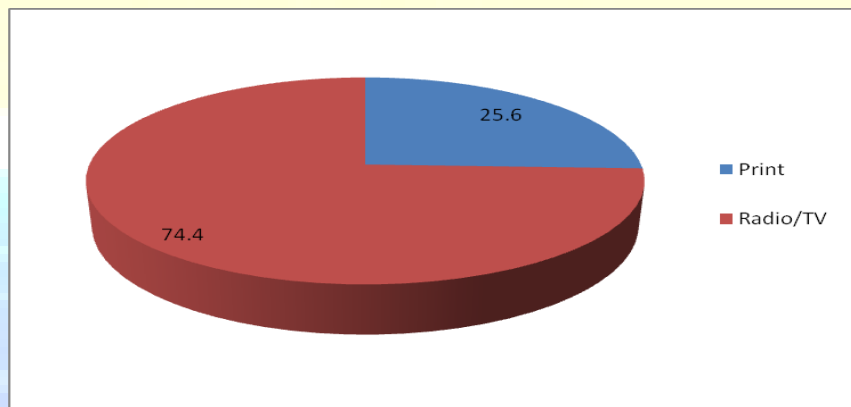
The data presented in the above table-8 show that one-fifth (20.4 percent) of them prefer other political parties than the national level parties like Congress and BJP. However, significant proportion (21.6 percent) of them refused to respond. While, 33.2 percent reported to have no idea. And 12 percent of them prefer Congress and the same proportion prefers BJP. Political party leadership has been in a crisis, is something widely known and very often it is a source of lot of conflicts, confusion and political instability. The debate around old leaders versus young leaders has become an eternal. Given this situation an attempt is made in the study to find what rural students actually think about this issue.

3.3 Attitudes toward Media

Mass media regarded as one of the pillars of democracy has come to occupy a prominent place in the existing scheme of things in contemporary India. Attitudes and perceptions of rural students towards media is one important determinant of the way they look at themselves and the things around them. Good exposure to media enables the students to improve their knowledge and understanding of not only current affairs but also latest advances that may happen in their subject concerned and field of research. Exposure to media also enables students to revise and to rethink of what they have learnt, because learning involves unlearning as well. Given the importance of media, an attempt is made to assess students' perception of various instruments of mass media like new papers, magazines, radio and T.V.

Table: 9. Attitude toward Powerful type of Media

| Type of Media | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Print | 64 | 25.6 |
| Radio/TV | 186 | 74.4 |
| Total | 250 | 100.0 |



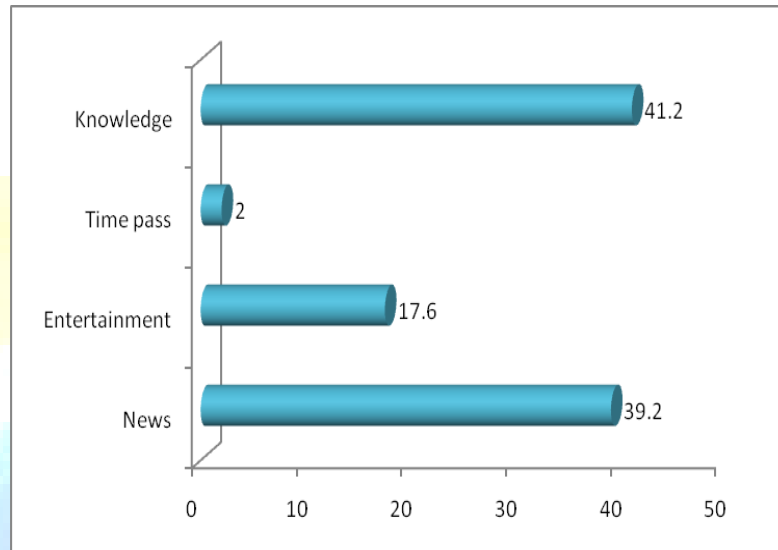
It may be found from the above table that three-fourth (74 percent) of the sample reported radio and T.V as the most powerful instruments and only one-fourth of the sample regard print media as the powerful means of mass media. This response is hardly surprising because students like other sections are influenced by audio and visual instruments of media, and print media are given least importance. Thus, reading habit is steadily declining not only among students even in general public.

Another aspect examined in the chapter is how actually the sample of rural students look at the mass media and what benefits they seek to draw from the media.

Table: 10. Advantages of Media

| Advantages | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------|------------|
| News | 98 | 39.2 |
| Entertainment | 44 | 17.6 |
| Time pass | 05 | 2.0 |

| | | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Knowledge | 103 | 41.2 |
| Total | 250 | 100.0 |



It may be seen in the table-10 that single large majority (41.2 percent) of the rural students look at media as a source of knowledge and significant proportion (40 percent) of them reported that they get news from the media. News and information if considered part and parcel of knowledge sizeable proportion (80 percent) of the sample seem to think that media is a source of information and knowledge and only 17.6 percent reported to look at media as a means of entertainment. If time pass is taken as a part of entertainment, one-fifth of the sample looked at mass media as entertainment. The quality and reliability of information and information based products reported and relayed by T.V channels have been a matter of serious controversy. More often they are not very sure of the reliability of the information unless otherwise ascertained. But people have no time to know the latter part.

4. CONCLUSION

Attitudes of rural students toward various components like society, higher education, politics, media and social change constitute an important thrust of the present study. Attitudes toward society comprise of marriage, dowry, selection of mate and age at marriage as such. With regard to essence of marriage, majority of them have reported that marriage is essential. However, it is fascinating to observe that nearly one-fourth of the sample, think that it is not

essential. It can be inferred that marriage continues to occupy a very important place. Regarding the type of marriage, it can be found from the data that majority of the rural students prefer arranged marriages. Thus, students would like to go with the state of existing social situations. Students' attitude towards dowry is another aspect examined in this study. It can be noticed from the data presented that an overwhelming majority (89.2 percent) of the sample reported against dowry and only 10.8 percent reported to favor dowry. In choosing a life partner what qualities of a life partner are taken into consideration, is a matter of concern indeed. It can be observed that of the given qualities majority of the sample given more weight age to character rather than education, physical appearance, status, caste, religion and liberal attitudes. The above analysis shows that character of the person outsmarts all other qualities, because 60.4 percent of them have given more importance to character of a life partner. Regarding their preferred age at marriage, majority (60 percent) of the sample prefers low age at marriage for females between 18 to 23 years. However, one-half (49.6 percent) of the respondents preferred 24-27 years as ideal age at marriage for males, correspondingly significant proportion (36.8 percent) of the respondents preferred the same age group suitable for females.

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