



**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**LEVEL OF RELIGIOSITY AMONG ADOLESCENTS: A STUDY ON GUJJARS OF JAMMU DISTRICT**

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**ARTICLE INFO**

**Article History:**

Received 14<sup>th</sup>, May, 2014

Received in revised form 25<sup>th</sup>, May, 2014

Accepted 13<sup>th</sup>, June, 2014

Published online 28<sup>th</sup>, June, 2014

**Key word:**

Religiosity, Gujjar, Adolescents

**ABSTRACT**

Adolescence is a very important phase in the development process as it is during this phase that the adolescent is virtually launched into the outside world. Adolescents have to manage biological, psychological and social role changes all at the same time. In late adolescence the roles of adulthood must be addressed every area of life. Adolescence is often seen as the physical transition from child to adult. The influence of the physical development and especially hormonal changes can lead to moodiness, bouts of depression and lower or more uneven energy levels. Adolescents also begin to experience strong emotions and rapid mood swings. It is a period in which immense development occurs and many developmental tasks have to be completed to ensure a positive sense of general well being. Religiosity plays a very important role in the lives of adolescents. The present study was conducted with an aim to study the level of religiosity among Gujjar adolescents. The sample comprised of 600 Gujjar adolescent girls of Jammu district. Multistage sampling technique was used for data collection. The tools used for the present study were Religiosity scale and self devised interview schedule. Data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The results of the present study revealed that majority of the sample had higher scores on the religiosity. Results revealed that males have higher scores on religiosity than female adolescents and there exist a highly significant difference between male and female adolescents. There was no association between religiosity levels of adolescents with regard to their age. Negative but highly significant differences were found between education and religiosity and thus indicated that high religiosity is associated with low education attainment.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Adolescence is a transitional period of development between youth and maturity. It is a process of achieving the desirable growth, attitude beliefs and methods for affective participation in society as an adult. It is today defined as a distinct period of adjustment or as a journey to adulthood, where a teenager has to face rapid physical, cognitive and social change. It is commonly divided into three periods: early adolescents (12-14 years old), middle adolescence (15-17 years old) and late adolescence (18-22 years old). Adolescence as developmental period is filled with many challenges. This phase is important in the life of both boys and girls. It has been considered as a difficult stage in the process of development into adulthood. They have got exuberant energy with which to pursue their needs but perhaps not the logical rationale with which to estimate the balance between degrees of freedom and threshold of danger. Thus adolescents engage in activities that pose real threat to their well being, however several theorists have recently agreed that the course of adolescent development also depends on biological, socio-cultural and emotional factors. Religiosity plays a keen role in the life of adolescents. It is defined as the extent to which an individual is committed to the religion he or she professes and its teachings, such that his or her attitudes and behaviours reflect this commitment. It can also be defined as faith in a power beyond himself whereby he seeks to satisfy emotional need and gain stability of life and

which he expresses in acts of worship and service. The term religiosity refers to religious faith. The practical aspect of religiosity constitutes of individual's faith in observance of ethical and moral duties and rituals as divine commands. Adolescence is a relevant and important time to study religiosity for several key reasons. First, cognitive advancement allow adolescents to engage in abstract thinking about religion and culture, facilitating greater understanding of religious and cultural concepts. Second, youth frequently, endorse religious beliefs and engage in religious activities, suggesting that religion is an important part of making adolescents' lives. Finally, peer relationships become increasingly important in adolescence (Geckova *et al*, 2000). Religious institutions may facilitate the development of which is associated with lower rates of negative affect by bringing together youth who hold similar values and beliefs.

**The following objectives were formulated, to study the**

level of religiosity among Gujjar adolescents of Jammu District.

level of religiosity among tribal adolescents in relation to  
a) Gender b) Age c) Education

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The sample for the present study comprised of 600 Gujjar adolescents in the age group of 12-18 years selected from

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Gujjar dominated areas of Jammu district. Multi-stage sampling technique was used. For identifying the Gujjar dominated areas, purposive sampling was used because sample selected for the present study is a tribe which is not found in every part of the Jammu District. With the help of which six blocks were selected. After identifying the areas, a sample of 100 Gujjar adolescents were selected from each block. The Sample was stratified on the basis of gender i.e. 50 boys and 50 girls. The tools used for the data collection were Interview Schedule and Religiosity scale. Religiosity scale was devised by Dr. Bhushan in 1990 and used to study the extent of religiosity and. It consists of 36 items, out of which 25 were positive and 11 were negative and it is verified that it covered all important dimensions of religiosity.

**RESULTS**

The results indicated that majority of the boys (60.33%) as compared to girls (48.33%) visited the mosque (figure. 1). Results showed that the girls performed more religious activities as compared to boys i.e. Namaaz, Zakat and Roza. The only religious activity that was less practiced by girls was reciting Quran which was 37.33% as compared to 41% in case of boys (figure 2

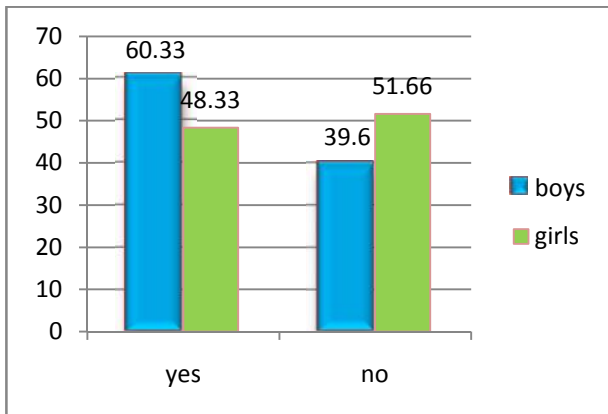


Figure 1 Responses of adolescents regarding visiting mosque

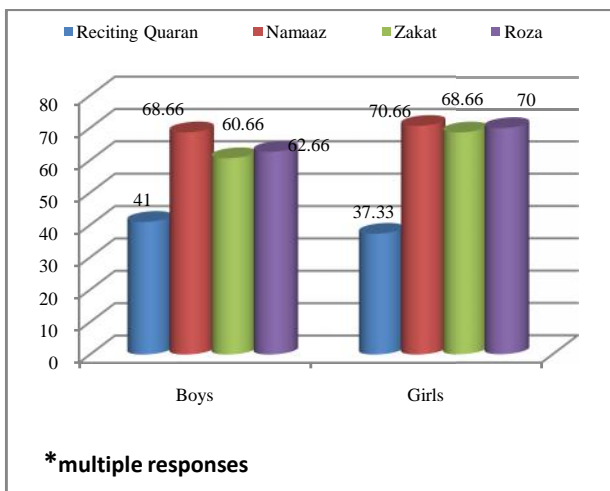


Figure 2 Religious activities performed by respondents

The overall analysis of Religiosity scale revealed that majority (43.4%) of the Gujjar adolescents had higher scores on religiosity scale i.e. falling above 154 followed by adolescents scoring average on levels of religiosity whereas 27.3% of the

adolescents were found to obtain low scores in the said scale (Figure 3).

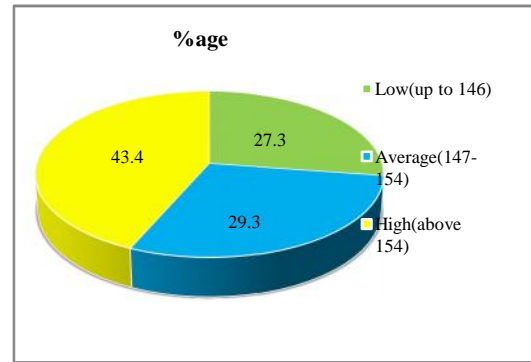


Figure 3 Overall analysis of religiosity scale

Most of the male adolescents (46.7%) and 40% of the female adolescents had higher scores on religiosity scale i.e. above 154. On the other hand 21.3% of male and 33.3% of female adolescents had low scores on the level of religiosity. In other words 78.7% of male respondents were having average to high religiosity levels. Therefore, males were reported to be highly religious as compared to female. The computation of chi square results ( $\chi^2=10.898^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) reveal that there exists a highly significant differences between male and female adolescents with regard to levels of religiosity scale (Table 1).

Table 1 Level of religiosity in relation to Gender

level of Religiosity	Gender		$\chi^2$
	Male(n=300)	Female(n=300)	
Low(up to 146)	64(21.3)	100(33.3)	10.898**
Average(147-154)	96(32)	80(26.7)	p-value=
High(above 154)	140(46.7)	120(40)	value=0.004

\*\* indicates level of significance at 0.01 ;df=2

Table 2 Level of religiosity in relation to Age

level of Religiosity	Age		$\chi^2$
	Younger(12-15) n=403	Older(15-18) n=197	
Low(up to 146)	118(29.3)	46(23.4)	2.524
Average(147-154)	113(28)	63(32)	p-value=
High(above 154)	172(42.7)	88(44.7)	0.283

Insignificant at 0.05

The level of religiosity in relation to age of Gujjar adolescents were found to be higher among older adolescent i.e. 44.7% than 42.7% of Younger adolescents and 46% of older adolescents were found to obtain low scores on the religiosity scale. The computation of chi square value ( $\chi^2= 2.524$ ,  $p >0.05$ ) shows that there exist insignificant difference between younger and older adolescents with regard to levels of religiosity. There is no association between religiosity levels of adolescents with regard to their age (Table 2)

Table 3 Level of Religiosity in relation to Education

level of Religiosity	Education		$\chi^2$
	Literate adolescents	Illiterate adolescents	
Low(up to 146)	61(40.7)	103(22.9)	17.901**
Average(147-154)	36(24)	140(31.1)	p-value
High(above 154)	53(35.3)	207(46)	=0.000

\*\*significant at 0.01; df=2

Table 3 depicts that 46% of illiterate Gujjar adolescents and 35.3% of literate adolescents had highest scores i.e. above 154 on levels of religiosity scale. On the contrary 40.7% of literate respondents and 22.9% of illiterate respondents had got lowest scores. Rest 34.1% of illiterate and 24 % of literate were average on levels of religiosity. Therefore, results reveal that most (77.1%) of illiterate respondents were having average to high religiosity levels. The computation value of chi square ( $\chi^2 = 17.901$ ,  $**p < 0.01$ ) shows a highly significant difference between illiterate and literate with regard to levels of religiosity.

## DISCUSSION

The present study indicated that Gujjars are very deep rooted to their religion which preserves their distinct racial traits and ethnic behaviour. Pathania and Pathania (2008) also indicated that all the tribal adolescents in age group of 15-20 years still had faith in supernatural powers. Gender differences were found with regard to religiosity in the present research and similar findings were seen in the study of Abdel-Khalek (2009), which indicated that males obtained significantly higher mean scores than their female counterparts on religiosity and well being self rating scale. Whereas another study by AbdelKhalek (2006) reflected that females had a significantly higher religiosity mean scores than male counterparts. With regard to the various religious activities, performance of girls was more than boys as indicated in responses to interview schedule. Older adolescents were more busy in household chores and cattle rearing. Therefore, they did not have enough time to participate in religious activities whereas the younger adolescents were not mature enough to visit mosque, fasting and they also were not aware about the ways to offer namaaz. It shows that age is not associated with levels of religiosity. Gujjar community is conservative like most of the tribes due to ancestral and traditional occupation of cattle rearing and other agricultural practices, they are generally illiterate and do not send their children to school.

They believe to teach their ward about the religion and culture on their own and prefer to send them to Madrassas and other religious affiliation of the same kind. Mukhoupadhay (2009) revealed similar results with regard to religiosity indicating high religiosity associating with lower education attainment, especially for females.

Deaton (2009) also found an overall negative relationship between education and religion. Overall it was revealed that less the literacy more the religiosity levels because the statistical results also show a negative but highly significant difference between education and religiosity. It has been concluded that majority of Gujjar adolescents were very religious. It was found that Gujjar adolescents have less exposure to the outer world and was very deeply rooted to their culture and religion and of the same time conservative.

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