

THREAT TO WOMEN'S SOCIAL IDENTITY IN CASTE-STEREOTYPING USED IN PUNJABI LANGUAGE: ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact of caste stereotyping in the Punjabi language on women's social identity in Punjabi society. The study examines how caste-based stereotypes, inter-caste prejudice and bias, socio-economic status, social experiences, and culturally transmitted beliefs embedded in the Punjabi language influence and potentially threaten women's social identity. In Punjabi society, women use different Punjabi dialects in which caste stereotypes have historically been embedded and reproduced through everyday communication, social interactions, collective wisdom, and culturally established attitudes and beliefs. To explore these relationships, the researcher interviewed 18 Punjabi women aged 50–70 years to gain insight into locally prevalent caste stereotypes. Based on the findings from the interviews and relevant literature, a questionnaire was developed and administered to a sample of 48 women from the same age group. The findings indicate that strong beliefs in the truth and validity of caste stereotypes contribute to negative social relations, restricted inter-caste communication, and the categorization of individuals according to perceived characteristics of higher- and lower-professional castes. The study further reveals that the persistence and use of caste stereotypes in the Punjabi language have a significant adverse impact on women's social identity by shaping their social status, interpersonal relationships, social recognition, and sense of belonging. Thus, caste stereotyping functions as an important social and linguistic factor that threatens the construction and maintenance of women's social identity. The study recommends incorporating awareness of caste-based linguistic stereotypes and their social consequences into social studies curricula to challenge discriminatory attitudes and promote more inclusive social relations in Punjabi society.

Key words: social identity, attitude, caste stereotypes, Construction. Punjabi society.

1. INTRODUCTION

Referring to the Indian situation, Sinha (1967) described that the belief in and practice of caste are very common not only among the Hindus, but also among the Muslims. Pakistani society, an ex-part of India, has vivid stratifications of economic classes, regions, the rural and urban domains, tribal, feudal, and capitalist social formations. Raza (1969) considers that Muslims in Pakistan specially those who are the residents of rural areas, have adapted the Hindu Caste system in which some castes are the subordination of many other castes and particularly Punjabi people inherited this system centuries ago and it is still the dominant feature of Punjabi society. He also says that Social stratification is a universal characteristic because some division of functions is inevitable in all human societies and these differentiations are mostly socially determined which Lipman (1922) codifies as stereotypes that mean “the pictures in our heads”

Caste stereotypes not only play a vital role in the identification of any social groups in a society but also play crucial role in creating social discrimination, affecting the social relations and mutual interaction of the people. Pakistan, being an ex-part of India, has not remained intact from caste system. **Caste** stereotypes in Punjabi society are also a very common social phenomenon. The women in Punjabi society, like men display **Caste** stereotypes in their communication despite the fact that the women's situation vis-à-vis men is of systemic gender subordination, although there have been some efforts by the government and enlightened groups to elevate the status of women in Pakistani society. Be it stratification or systemic

gender subordination, in both the cases it gives way to the concept of otherness. This concept of otherness among women in Punjabi society is the production of Indian caste mechanism.

Ethnicity and caste mechanisms are the dimensions traced by earlier European researchers in sociolinguistics. These dimensions have been traced out by famous linguist Trique Rehman and a number of other sociolinguists in Pakistan. But few researchers have worked on Stereotypes in Punjabi language. Punjabi language certainly has various caste stereotypes. These stereotypes demark the social boundaries among the people belonging to different social groups in the society. Women are a potent faction of Punjabi society and the present research attempts to identify women's attitude towards caste stereotypes in Punjabi language.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A stereotype is a mental picture which a social group has for another group in the community or outside the community. This mental picture disparages the out groups i.e., Professors are absent minded, students are lazy and athletes are stupid. This disparagement of the out groups seems to be a serious matter in the area of racial and ethnic conflicts. The great thing about ethnic and national characteristics is that people in various cultures are different from one another to some extent and any society that successfully assimilates such diversity benefits itself from a kind of hybrid vigor. Unfortunately, these real differences are also at the bottom of much bias and prejudice in groups, (Rajecki, 1990 p, 265). These social differences make a picture in the heads of people of one kind for another group which may be classed as stereotypes. Perseverance in the face of group-based stereotypes about ones' limitations poses a daunting challenge. Beyond enduring negative expectations and discouragement from others, members of the stereotyped group may respond to inevitable disappointments and difficulties by questioning their own fitness and acceptance in the social environment" (Pronin et al, 2003). Stereotypes are the instrumental part of a society.

Men are divided into castes, tribes, sects and religions due to which they can be easily recognized. People having geographically different background are seen as possessing different cultures, languages, customs, traditions, color, and dress according to their territory or a country where they reside. These geographical and territorial heterogeneous perspectives give way to social distinctions by creating a concept of otherness. Pakistan is replete with number of ethnic groups such as Sindhi, Muhajir, Balochi, Pushto, Seraiki, and Punjabi etc. All of these major ethnic groups have some concepts about one another which exhibit the idea of distinctions between them. Rahman(1997) states that Pakistan consists of four major ethnic groups which are divided according to four provinces of Pakistan e.g.in Balochistan major communicative language of the people is Balochi and in Sindh majority of local population speak Sindhi and in Khyber P.K, people speak Pushto for local communication purpose and in Punjab, majority of the locals speak Punjabi. Punjabi society has also ethnic groups based on castes which are bifurcated into higher and lower professional castes. Some of the most prevalent expressions of these social groups are the caste stereotypes and Caste stereotypes in Punjabi language are very important socially constructed phenomenon to be found in Punjabi society which is specifically associated to many social groups. Various linguists have conducted their researches on language, ethnicity and stereotypes.

Talbot (2003) conducted research on the stereotypes representation of women and came out with results that Women possess more complaining behavior by representing themselves as either bitching or nagging while males behave wisely and give natural explanation to the events.

Rahman (1997) conducted research on the problems caused by major ethnic groups in Pakistan with reference to Urdu language when it was being declared as official language after the establishment of Pakistan. He narrated provincial hatred and prejudices of major ethnic groups

and ethnic movements in four provinces who favored their languages to be taken up as official language. He also described about the people of Punjab and their caste system bifurcated into higher and lowers professional castes with their local names for their languages such as Majhi, Dogri, Jangali, Pahari and others.

Mullick and Hraba (2001) tested Punjabi students in Pakistan sharing as a group, an ethnic hierarchy, showing the same types of prejudice found in the West. 192 students responded to a questionnaire in English, with questions nearly identical to those previously used by American and Dutch researchers. Principal component analysis revealed that respondents shared an ethnic hierarchy of out-groups in social distance, with Pathans at the least and Muhajirs at the most social distance. Factor analysis showed that these students distinguished among aversive, symbolic, and biological prejudice parallel to American and Dutch results. There were two subtypes of symbolic prejudice, one in reference to the Pakistani quota system (affirmative action) and another to its uneven regional and ethnic development. Discussion centers on reasons that a shared ethnic hierarchy and types of prejudice found in Western countries appear in this Islamic country as well.

Titus (1998) quotes the approach; the British took to govern the parts of the empire that now, constituted Pakistan. Their formula which says that rule over the Punjabis, intimidate the Sindhis, buy the Pushtun, and honor the Baloch. While doing fieldwork in Quetta, he found that current stereotypes about Baloch and Pushtun held by members of both groups about themselves and each other reflect essentially the same attitudes as those expressed in the aphorism.

Zhang (2009) conducted research on the two aspects of stereotypes. He narrated accurate stereotypes and inaccurate stereotypes. He found out that accurate stereotypes assist to give cultural-level predictions about the behavior of strangers and inaccurate stereotypes lead to misconceptions about others. He also threw light on the problems of the stereotypes and their solutions.

Present research is about women's attitude towards caste stereotypes in Punjabi language which the society has inherited, over centuries. Earlier researches have been made on major ethnic groups and stereotypes but through different perspectives in Pakistan. Caste stereotypes, although a very common social phenomenon, is very crucial in the identification of many social groups.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out women's beliefs about the caste stereotypes in Punjabi language.
2. To explore women's attitude towards stereotypes in Punjabi language about major castes.
3. To investigate women's attitude towards stereotypes in Punjabi language about lower professional Castes.

4. METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed Mixed Methods that include qualitative and quantitative approaches. Interviews were conducted prior to the administration of the questionnaire which was developed in the light of the information got from the interviews. The questionnaire was got validated properly. The sample comprised of 48 women who were purposively selected from 12 castes in the Punjabi society, including eight higher castes and four lower professional

castes, 04 persons from each caste, available at District Vehari where the majority of the people are agrarian with two big factions: the land lords and the peasants. The data were collected through personal visits. Later on, the data were transferred on a data sheet in the form of rows and columns for their further analysis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze data and to calculate frequencies and percentages.

5. RESULTS

Table 1. showing Women's belief in Caste stereotypes.

Statements	Response					χ ²	Significance	Mean	Remarks
	Totally wrong (1)	Wrong (2)	Don't know (3)	To some extent right	Quite right (5)				
	%	%	%	%	%				
Caste stereotypes creating hatred between upper and lower professional castes	2.1	8.3	0	20.8	68.8	161.969	Significant	4.46	Quite right
Women of upper castes have assertive behaviour while talking to women of lower castes?	4.2	4.2	0	25.0	66.7	155.2585	Significant	4.46	To some extent right
You are more polite while meeting stranger women of your own caste	8.30	0	0	22.9	68.8	166.337	Significant	4.44	To some extent right
People believe in caste stereotypes	0	2.1	6.3	47.9	43.8	112.6475	Significant	4.33	To some extent right
Women of the upper castes show moderate behaviour among themselves	4.2	6.3	4.2	31.3	54.2	99.215	Significant	4.25	To some extent right
Caste stereotypes are due									To

to illiteracy, Indian caste system & socio economic status	4.2	6.3	8.3	22.9	58.3	102.476	Significant	4.25	some extent right
Caste stereotypes are the representative of Punjabi castes	6.3	6.3	8.3	20.8	58.3	98.99	Significant	4.19	To some extent right
General belief of the people about caste stereotypes based on facts	2.1	6.30	4.2	50.0	37.5	98.1995	Significant	4.15	To some extent right
Castes stereotypes are reducing due to modernity and scientific development	4.2	4.2	6.3	50.0	35.4	91.2065	Significant	4.08	To some extent right
People are using caste stereotypes in present age	0	16.7	0	45.8	37.5	89.139	Significant	4.04	To some extent right
Stereotypes produce negative effects on mutual relations among different castes	8.3	10.4	2.1	33.3	45.8	69.5995	Significant	3.98	To some extent right
Caste stereotypes are production of collective wisdom	4.2	8.3	12.5	52.1	22.9)	74.08	Significant	3.81	To some extent right
Caste stereotypes causing social boundaries	8.3	10.4	4.2	35.0	43.8	63.5065	Significant	3.81	To some extent right

Table 1 includes 13 statements which show the respondents' belief in Caste stereotypes that women in the Punjabi society have strong belief in caste stereotypes in Punjabi language. The respondents strongly believe that caste stereotypes create hatred between higher and lower professional castes while the language of the women of the higher castes is assertive when they speak with the women belonging to lower castes and their language is polite while talking to the stranger women belonging to their own caste and they show moderate behaviour while talking to the women of the same caste. Caste stereotypes are due to illiteracy, Indian caste system & socio economic status. These stereotypes are the representative of castes in Punjabi society and based on facts but they are getting reduced due to modernity and globalisation. They are currently in use in Punjabi language and producing negative impacts on mutual relations on different castes in Punjab. These are the production of collective wisdom and causing social boundaries among different social groups.

Table 2. Women's attitude towards Stereotypes associated with higher Castes

statements	Response					X ²	Significance	Mean	Remarks
	Totally wrong(1)	Wrong (2)	Don't know (3)	To some extent right(4)	Quite right (5)				
	%	%	%	%	%				
People of Sheikh caste are stereotyped as extremely close fisted in society	2.1	4.2	2.1	120.8	70.8	681.587	Significant	4.54	Quite right
People of Baloch caste are stereotyped as disloyal, robbers or thieves	-	10.4	8.3	35.4	45.8	76.5925	Significant	4.17	To some extent right
People of Arain caste are stereotyped as fair weather and untrustworthy	14.7	8.3	4.2	18.8	54.2	79.285	Significant	3.90	To some extent right
People of Jutt caste									

are stereotyped as having derogatory language with no wisdom	6.3	10.4	10.4	41.7	31.3	48.5295	Significant	3.81	To some extent right
People of Dogar caste are stereotyped as useless and non co operative	8.3	10.4	20.8	27.2	33.3	22.921	Significant	3.67	To some extent right
People of Kamboh caste are stereotyped as loving to their family but classed as worse caste	6.3	10.4	33.3	31.3	18.8	29.2935	Significant	3.46	Don't know
People of Rajput caste are stereotyped as arrogant and worse than non believers	14.7	16.7	20.8	18.8	29.2	6.285	Non-significant	3.31	Don't know
People of Gujjar castes are stereotyped as uncultured and uncivilized.	20.8	16.7	10.4	25.0	27.1	8.955	Non-significant	3.21	Don't know

Table 2 includes four statements about which show the attitude of the respondents towards stereotypes in Punjabi language about higher castes. The respondents give significant response that Sheikhs are extremely close fistied in the society, Baloch are disloyal, robbers or thieves, Arain are fair weather and untrustworthy, Jutts have derogatory language and no intellect and Dogars are useless and non co operative. But the respondents do not know about the stereotypes characteristics of Kamboh and Rajput castes.

Table 3. Women's attitude towards Stereotypes associated with lower professional castes

Statements	Response					x ²	Significance	Mean	Remarks
	Totally wrong (1)	Wrong (2)	Don't know	To some extent right	Quite right				

			(3)	right(4)	(5)				
	%	%	%	%	%				
People of Telli(Oil presser) caste are stereotyped as bad friend and unreliable	6.3	4.2	10.4	22.9	56.3	92.7795	Significant	4.19	To some extent right
People of Nai (Barber) caste stereotyped as to be impatient and snake in the grass.	4.2	8.3	6.3	18.8	62.5	119.0955	Significant	4.27	To some extent right
MOCHI (Shoe makers) are stereotyped as greedy & Saints are not born in this caste.	6.3	14.7	25.0	18.8	35.4	23.969	Significant	3.63	To some extent right
People of JULAHA (weaver) caste are stereotyped as ill-mannered and no sense of good behaviour?	8.3	14.7	25.0	25.0	27.1	13.2695	Significant	3.48	Don't know

Table 3 includes four statements which show the attitude of the respondents towards lower professional castes. The respondents give the significant response that Tellies(Oil pressers) are bad friends and unreliable people, Nai(Barbars) are impatient and a snake in the grass and Mochis (Shoe makers) are greedy & Saints are not born in this caste and Julahas (weavers) are ill mannered and have no sense of good behaviour.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 First Phase

The first phase of the study provides evidence that women in Punjabi society are well aware of the caste stereotypes commonly used and reproduced in the Punjabi language. The findings indicate that caste stereotypes are not merely linguistic expressions; rather, they are embedded in social beliefs, attitudes, interpersonal relations, and culturally transmitted understandings of different caste groups. In this phase, the study particularly examines women's beliefs regarding caste stereotypes and their perceptions of stereotypes associated with major and lower professional castes.

The findings demonstrate that Punjabi women recognize the role of caste stereotypes in differentiating between social groups and in constructing perceptions of "in-groups" and "out-groups." Caste stereotypes therefore function as socially meaningful categories through which individuals are classified, evaluated, and positioned within the social structure. Although women's participation in some areas of Pakistani social life remains constrained in comparison with women in many Western societies, the findings show that women are nevertheless active participants in the reproduction, interpretation, and negotiation of caste-based linguistic beliefs. A significant finding of the study is that women perceive caste stereotypes as having negative consequences for language behaviour, social relations, communication, and social discrimination. These consequences are particularly important from the perspective of

women's social identity because social identity is partly constructed through recognition, acceptance, social status, and membership in valued social groups. When individuals are repeatedly associated with stereotypical characteristics on the basis of caste, their social identity can become restricted to socially imposed categories rather than being recognized on the basis of individual abilities, personality, education, or achievement. Thus, caste stereotyping in Punjabi language may constitute a threat to women's social identity by assigning social value according to caste membership.

During the interviews, some respondents expressed their opposition to caste-based discrimination and argued that such discrimination is inconsistent with Islamic teachings concerning equality. The respondents also referred to the Sikh religious tradition, particularly the Sikh Rahit Maryada, which discourages caste distinctions and untouchability. Nevertheless, the persistence of caste considerations, particularly in matrimonial relationships, demonstrates a gap between religious or egalitarian ideals and actual social practices. The continuation of caste preferences in marriage and other social institutions contributes to the maintenance of caste boundaries and consequently influences women's social positioning and social identity.

Political activities during elections in Punjab also provide an important indication of the continuing influence of caste identity. Local-body elections in particular may reinforce caste consciousness when voters support candidates primarily because they belong to their own caste rather than on the basis of merit or competence. Such practices may reflect a sense of caste superiority, pride, solidarity, or collective belonging. From the perspective of women's social identity, these practices demonstrate that caste remains an influential social category through which individuals are identified and evaluated. Consequently, caste identity may become more socially significant than individual identity, thereby limiting the possibility of developing an identity based on personal achievement and social contribution.

One respondent associated the rejection of caste discrimination with changing democratic values and the limited availability of socially acceptable male partners. Elder (2011) explains that castes consist of intra-marrying lineages and can function as important sources of social support. Caste may therefore provide individuals with a social network and a marriage pool while simultaneously determining social status. However, the same mechanism may encourage favouritism and nepotism and reinforce boundaries between social groups. Such practices are particularly significant for women because marriage, family affiliation, and social acceptance can strongly influence their position within the social structure.

The majority of respondents nevertheless believed that caste stereotypes exist in Punjabi language and that many of these stereotypes are based on perceived social realities, collective wisdom, personal experiences, literature, and folk traditions. This finding is significant because beliefs about the "truth" of stereotypes facilitate their continued reproduction. Once a stereotype is accepted as collective knowledge, it can become normalized and transmitted from one generation to another. The changing economic status of Punjabis has not necessarily eliminated inter-caste prejudice. Instead, economic change may interact with existing caste beliefs and contribute to the continued maintenance of caste stereotypes. These findings suggest that belief in caste stereotypes is an important factor contributing to the social construction and potential undermining of women's social identity.

6.2 Second Phase

The second phase identifies inter-caste bias in women's responses concerning stereotypes associated with major and socially influential castes. The respondents expressed negative attitudes towards several castes, including Sheikh, Baloch, Arain, Jutt, Kamboh, and Dogar, while they remained silent or did not provide responses concerning Rajput and Gujar castes. These responses demonstrate that caste stereotypes are not uniform but vary according to the social position and perceived characteristics associated with particular caste groups.

The Sheikh caste, for example, was associated by respondents with being close-fisted and excessively concerned with money. The respondents explained this perception through the association of the caste with business and commercial activities. Similarly, Baloch people were stereotyped as disloyal, robbers, or thieves. Respondents attributed these beliefs partly to

Punjabi literature, folk narratives, and stories through which such images have been transmitted. These findings demonstrate that linguistic and cultural narratives can operate as mechanisms through which stereotypical representations become socially established.

The Arain caste was described by respondents as fair-weather and untrustworthy. Interestingly, the women who expressed this belief frequently justified it through personal social experiences. This illustrates how individual experience can reinforce socially available stereotypes. Similarly, Jutts were characterized as strong but notorious for derogatory language, rash behaviour, and limited ability to think before acting. Dogars were described as useless and non-cooperative and were perceived as having behavioural similarities with Jutts. Kambohs, meanwhile, were perceived as having strong affection and loyalty primarily towards members of their own caste.

These findings demonstrate that attitudes towards caste groups constitute an important independent factor in the construction of social identities. Stereotypical attitudes attach particular social meanings to caste membership and consequently influence how women perceive themselves and others. When a woman is evaluated primarily through the characteristics assigned to her caste, her individual identity may be overshadowed by a socially constructed caste identity. Therefore, caste stereotypes can restrict women's opportunities for social recognition and reinforce hierarchical distinctions among women belonging to different castes.

The findings further indicate that the reproduction of stereotypes is supported by several sources, including personal experience, oral traditions, literature, folk stories, social interaction, and collective beliefs. The combination of these sources gives stereotypes an appearance of legitimacy and permanence. As a result, negative attitudes can become normalized in everyday language and communication. This normalization represents a significant threat to women's social identity because it may affect their social acceptance, interpersonal relationships, status, and sense of belonging.

6.3 Third Phase

The third phase focuses on stereotypes associated with lower professional castes and their implications for social status and communication. Elder (2011) discusses legal measures against caste discrimination in India and compares caste-based discrimination with forms of racial, religious, ethnic, and economic discrimination in other societies. Despite legal and social efforts to reduce discrimination, caste-based distinctions continue to exist in South Asian societies.

In Punjabi society, members of lower professional castes have historically occupied subordinate positions in the social hierarchy. The findings indicate that castes such as Teli, Nai, Mochi, and Julaha have frequently been subjected to social discrimination and stereotypical categorization. Their social position is reflected not only in social practices but also in patterns of linguistic interaction. Thus, language becomes a means through which social hierarchy is communicated, reproduced, and maintained.

The study identifies differences between the discourse used by members of socially subordinate groups when communicating with higher-status groups and their intra-group communication. In interactions with higher-status individuals, members of lower professional castes may use highly respectful or elaborate language, whereas their intra-group discourse may express different attitudes and feelings towards socially dominant groups. This distinction indicates the existence of different caste-based discourses that reflect unequal social relationships.

From the perspective of women's social identity, this linguistic differentiation is particularly significant. When women belonging to lower-status castes are expected to adopt deferential linguistic behaviour in interactions with higher-status groups, their social identity is positioned within a hierarchical framework. Their identity is consequently not determined solely by their individual qualities but is mediated through caste status. Such linguistic practices may reproduce feelings of inferiority, social exclusion, and unequal recognition.

The findings therefore suggest that caste-based linguistic practices, negative attitudes, and socially inherited beliefs interact to threaten women's social identity. The problem is not

limited to the existence of particular stereotypical words or expressions; rather, it lies in the broader social meanings attached to those expressions. Punjabi language can become a medium through which caste distinctions are normalized and transmitted, thereby sustaining unequal perceptions of women belonging to different social groups.

Overall, the three phases demonstrate that caste stereotyping operates at several interconnected levels: beliefs about caste characteristics, attitudes towards particular caste groups, and linguistic practices that reproduce social hierarchy. These factors collectively influence women's social positioning and recognition. The findings consequently support the argument that caste stereotyping in Punjabi language is not simply a linguistic phenomenon but a social process that can undermine women's social identity.

7. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that caste stereotypes are deeply embedded in the Punjabi language and continue to influence social attitudes, beliefs, communication, and interpersonal relationships in Punjabi society. The findings demonstrate that Punjabi women are aware of caste stereotypes and, to varying degrees, reproduce, negotiate, accept, or reject them in their everyday social interactions. The study further establishes that caste stereotyping is associated with beliefs about the supposed characteristics of major and lower professional castes and contributes to the maintenance of social distinctions between higher- and lower-status groups.

The findings indicate that caste stereotypes, caste-based attitudes, and beliefs constitute important factors affecting women's social identity. When caste-based characteristics are treated as fixed or inherent qualities of individuals, women may be socially evaluated according to their caste membership rather than their individual abilities, achievements, education, or personal characteristics. Such categorization can influence women's social status, social recognition, interpersonal relationships, communication, and sense of belonging.

The study particularly highlights the threat posed by caste stereotyping to women belonging to socially subordinate or lower professional castes. The linguistic practices associated with caste hierarchy can reinforce perceptions of inferiority and social distance, while stereotypes concerning higher castes may simultaneously reinforce notions of superiority and privilege. Consequently, caste stereotyping contributes to a hierarchical social environment in which women's identities are partly determined by socially constructed caste categories.

The study also concludes that caste stereotypes are sustained through multiple sources, including personal experience, collective wisdom, folk narratives, literature, social interaction, and culturally transmitted beliefs. Their continued use in Punjabi language gives them social visibility and contributes to their normalization. Therefore, addressing caste discrimination requires attention not only to social practices but also to the linguistic forms and beliefs through which caste distinctions are reproduced.

In conclusion, the findings support the central argument of the study that caste stereotyping in Punjabi language poses a threat to women's social identity by reinforcing caste-based attitudes, beliefs, social hierarchies, and discriminatory patterns of interaction. The study recommends that awareness of caste-based linguistic stereotypes and their effects on social identity should be incorporated into social studies, language, and gender-related curricula. Educational interventions should encourage critical reflection on inherited stereotypes, challenge caste-based discrimination, and promote social recognition based on individual dignity, ability, and equality rather than caste affiliation.

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