

ATTITUDE CHANGE: IMPACT OF TRAINING FOR DEMOCRACY

P. K. MUTTAGI*

A. INTRODUCTION

In the course of social living, each individual in his own way, tries to change the attitudes and behaviour of the people around him. At the group and national levels several media of mass communication are pressed into service to bring about change in the attitudes of the people. Propaganda, publicity, advertising, training in different fields and other control techniques are employed by government bodies and private organisations mainly to change the attitudes of the people in the direction in which they want them to be changed. The process of attitude change, therefore, is an important area in social psychology where much research is needed.

The present investigation was undertaken with a view to obtaining factual data concerning the change in direction, degree and intensity of the anti-democratic and fascist potentiality of the respondents who were exposed to intensive training in democracy. The issue has a serious bearing on the social life of people living in a democratic set up. The subject matter is significant as no attempt of this kind seems to have been made in this country and it will shed light on the vital issues which are frequently debated in open societies.

Since the publication of "The Authoritarian Personality" in 1950, by T. W. Adorno and other California researchers, many investigations have been conducted in this area. The techniques and scales of the California study have been used by subsequent researchers to explore further the concept of authoritarian personality, attitudes and values. Studies reported by Bass (55), Mogar (60), Anisfied *et al.*, (63). Byrne (65) and Epstein (65), and evalua-

tion of the authoritarian personality by R. Brown (65) may be cited as examples. The instrument used in the present investigation to study attitude change, is mainly based on the scales used in the California study.

B. METHOD

The technique employed in this study was the one which is frequently used in studying specific group attitudes. In this investigation, an attempt, has been made to investigate change in a more general pattern of attitudes known as anti-democratic and fascist.

1. THE CONCEPT AND ASSUMPTIONS

The term authoritarian is presumed to be roughly equivalent to autocratic, fascist or anti-democratic and its opposite is democratic. The anti-democratic and fascist tendencies are characteristics of relations among people who regard themselves and one another as basically unequal in values whereas democratic attitudes imply equal-value relationships. The term anti-democratic does not refer to inequality in wealth, skill or physical strength, but rather to the way in which people regard one another. The more the people regard themselves and each other as worthy of equal consideration merely by virtue of their existence as human beings, the more their relationships will take place on democratic basis. The more the mutually perceived personal value departs from equality, the more the relationship is likely to be characterised as anti-democratic behaviour.

Social scientists presume that there is a scale of behaviour that ranges from extremely democratic to extremely anti-democratic. Individuals can be rated on

* Dr. P. K. Muttagi is Professor of Psychology, D. G. Ruparel College, Bombay-16.

such a scale in terms of behaviour—vocal or otherwise—they usually or most characteristically display, keeping in mind that behaviour may vary somewhat from one social situation to another, but also recognising that there tends to be a mode or norm that both democratic and anti-democratic which are socially desirable and undesirable attitudinal patterns respectively, represent extreme polar position and that most people would be grouped around the middle of such a scale.

It is also presumed that both anti-democratic and fascist ideologies differ from each other only in degree as both are socially undesirable attitudinal systems. They are expressed in behaviour variously described as dogmatic, rigid, strongly supportive of traditional and conventional middle-class values, and highly status oriented. Individuals with such mentality are highly submissive towards people possessing higher status and are domineering where lower status individuals are concerned. They possess tendencies to endorse the use of power tactics, toughness in dealing with failure and uncooperativeness and arbitrariness in decision making and willingness to use drastic methods in dealing with deviant behaviour. Further, such values appear to be specially suited to forming prejudice toward out-groups. The activities of Nazis and other fascist groups are often cited as prime examples of fascism or authoritarianism. Therefore, an individual who uses or endorses harsh, punitive or violent methods can be said to be motivated by anti-democratic and fascist attitudes.

Further, the anti-democratic and fascist value systems are learned modes of adjustments and their development follows standard principles of learning. Changing these values means changing the minds of the people. This is a difficult problem. A

complicating fact is that personality patterns are not as easily modified or replaced as they are learned. Once these potentialities are developed they become integral aspects of an individual's personality affecting the whole style of behaviour.

2. HYPOTHESIS

The major hypothesis was that intensive training in democracy will contribute to the reduction of degree and intensity of anti-democratic and fascist value systems.

3. THE SUBJECTS

The training camp was organised by a non-political voluntary body* which aims at preparing Indian youths for a democratic way life. It was organised at Ranchi, Bihar State, India. The selected male and female volunteers from different parts of India, came to the camp site for a nine days training camp. They were accommodated in the same Hostel, irrespective of caste, creed, language or social-economic conditions. Separate Hostel arrangements were made for female participants. Nevertheless, they spent most of the day in the camp from 7.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. i.e. from the time of physical training till the end of the last session. The participants had their meals in the common dining hall. The actual contact provided an opportunity to understand each other. This was necessary in view of the fact that many trainees came from the neighbouring states. Out of 42 trainees who attend the camp, 25 participants who were present on the day before the commencement of the camp were chosen for study. Most of them had University education of varying lengths of time and were in the age group of 20—30 years.

* The author gratefully acknowledges the help and cooperation extended by Leslie Sawhny Programme of Training for Democracy, Bombay.

4. TRAINING

The following were the major topics discussed:

India: The Land and the People. Democratic values, Fundamental Rights, Equality, Freedom, Justice, Civil Liberties, Democracy and Minority Rights, Problems of Defence, India's International Relations, Gandhian Philosophy, Citizens and Their Duties, Secularism and Secular Attitudes, Social Work and Voluntary Organizations, Democracy and Democratic Way of Life, Democratic and Authoritarian Leadership, Role of Leaders in Democracy, Role of Political Parties etc.

5. SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE TRAINING

Each lecture was followed by a discussion. Time allotted for discussion was much more than the actual time earmarked for the lecture. This provided an opportunity for each trainee to take active part in the deliberations. The Director of Training made every effort to encourage each participant to express himself or herself freely.

6. GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Before the commencement of training, on the day of arrival, two group discussions, with 10 students were held. One group was made up of males and the other of females. Problems like student discipline, democracy and social justice were discussed. The purpose of the discussions was to probe into the motivating forces which tempted the participants to undergo the training.

Many of the female participants were

Catholic nuns from aboriginal tribes. They showed more concern for upliftment of down trodden, social justice -and importance of womens' participation in the affairs of this country.

Male participants, particularly those from West Bengal Expressed greater concern for bringing about harmony in educational campuses and in certain parts of Bengal where social unrest is created by Naxalites. Some of them bitterly criticised the fascist method used by Naxalities and suggested fascist solutions to end fascism. In general, the participants were aware of social problems, and appeared earnest about the training.

7. THE INSTRUMENT

The test used is a modified scale, constructed in Bombay* and based on the Anti-semitism scale, Ethnocentrism Scale and Politico-economic conservatism scale of the California studies. Suitable modifications in the scale had to be introduced in view of the prevailing Indian conditions. The scale thus prepared is known as "Ad and F" scale (Anti-democratic and Fascist Scale). The reliability and validity of this scale had already been established in Bombay when it was administered to 10 religious and linguistic sample groups *viz.*, Buddhist (nav-Buddhas), Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Parsee—Religious groups, and to Gujarati, Hindi-speaking (North India), Maharashtrian, Sindhi and Tamilian—Linguistic groups.

The scale consisted of 60 items. It was presumed to reveal the following attitudes:

1. Submissive Attitudes, Militancy,
2. Cynicism, Conservatism and Reactionary Tendencies,

* Details of this study have been incorporated in my Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation "An Investigation into the Cross-Community Attitudes of Students of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Classes in the University of Bombay", University of Bombay, 1970.

3. Criminality, Physical Attack and Fascist Solution,
 4. Segregation and Suppression,
 5. Aggression toward Religious Minorities,
 6. Aggression toward Linguistic Minorities.
8. ANTI-DEMOCRATIC AND FASCIST SCALE ITEMS AND SOURCES

Sub-Scale I.—Authoritarian Submission/Militancy.

- 1.(2.1)** People must have deep faith in supernatural forces.
2. (2.2) Religious preachings are to be obeyed uncritically and without questioning.
3. (2.4) Parents and religious authorities should be looked upon as infallible.
4. (2.5) India needs more autocratic leadership
5. (2.6) Military training must be compulsory for all able bodied citizens.
6. (2.12) People belonging to martial races alone can fight and defend our nation.
7. (2.60) Military should take over the administration of India.

Sub-Scale II.—Cynicism / Conservatism / Reactionary Tendencies.

1. (2.13) Caste system is created by God on the basis of virtues and past deeds. We have no control over them.
2. (2.14) Untouchables are born inferior.
3. (2.15) Only a few communities are capable of producing the best in civilization.
4. (2.16) Certain communities are fit for

only manual labour and unskilled jobs.

5. (2.17) There always will be inferior and superior communities. In the interest of all, superior community alone should rule.
6. (2.18) The tribal people and Adivasis have not progressed because they are incapable of mental development.
7. (2.19) People born in higher castes deserve preferential treatment by virtue of their birth.
8. (2.20) Only sons of the rich deserve higher education.
9. (2.21) Since Indians are unfit for self-rule, foreigners should take over the administration.
10. (2.22) War and conflict are inevitable for the progress of mankind.
11. (2.23) Persons belonging to higher castes alone should learn the religious scriptures.
12. (2.30) Some people should be forced to do manual labour even if it is against their will.
13. (2.49) Reports of linguistic communalism or fanaticism in India are only exaggerations by the newspapers.

Sub-Scale III.—Criminality/Physical Attack / Violence / Fascist Solutions.

1. (2.7) No step taken is bad to wipe out socially useless people like the insane, the crippled etc.
2. (2.8) Anti-social elements like criminals should be persecuted.
3. (2.9) If necessary, sacrifice of a few individuals' lives for the benefit of society should be encouraged.
4. (2.10) There is no use wasting money on treating the very old people and

** Numbers on the left side in parentheses indicate the original scale number and those on the right side stand for the serial number in that scale.

those suffering from incurable diseases.

- 5.(2.11) Compulsory sterilization of criminals and mentally inferior people will prove good for the country.
6. (2.28) There is nothing wrong in forced religious conversion.
7. (2.43) There is nothing wrong in creating chaotic conditions or disturbances leading to violence if it can establish justice and peace permanently.
- 8.(2.51) If members from other states do not learn the local language, they should be sent back to their respective states.
9. (2.54) Public harassment of some linguistic minorities is sometimes good as it teaches a lesson to them.
10. (2.54) Beggars should be persecuted.

Sub-Scale IV.—Anti-democratic scale (AD) Segregation/Suppression.

1. (2.2) India should be a theocratic state.
2. (2.24) Citizens should take permission of the government for the sale and purchase of their private properties.
3. (2.26) Celebrations of religious festivals must be banned.
4. (2.26) Intercommunity marriages should be declared illegal.
5. (2.29) There should be separate restaurants and cafe's for the people of different religious communities.
- 6.(2.31) Government being the supreme and final authority, an individual has no right to appeal against its decision.
7. (2.32) All properties should belong to the state and no individual has any right to own anything.
8. (2.33) Newspapers and magazines criticising the government should be

banned.

9. (2.34) Freedom of political parties must be completely suppressed for all times.
10. (2.35) Not all persons should be allowed to vote particularly when a large percentage of population is uneducated.
- 11.(2.36) Morchas, agitations, gheraos and strikes should be crushed at any cost.
- 12.(2.37) Trade Union movement in India should be banned.
13. (2.38) The government must be kept informed by all the citizens about their political activities.
14. (2.39) Laws of the state should be exclusively in favour of the poor people.
15. (2.40) Women should take up feminine positions. They should not be allowed to compete with men.
16. (2.41) There is nothing wrong in employing children and minors in factories, mines, hotels etc.
17. (2.42) Government has every right to detain individuals in custody indefinitely without trial.

Sub-Scale V.—Authoritarian aggression toward religious minorities.

1. (2.44) Certain religious communities should be given favourable treatment due to their numerical superiority.
2. (2.46) Certain highly technical and skilled jobs should be reserved only for some religious communities to prevent the inefficient communities from entry.
3. (2.48) For the sake of unity of India, there should be only one religion followed by all.
4. (2.50) To prevent subversive activities, religious minorities should not be employed in the establishments

like atomic energy and aircraft factories.

5. (2.53) High Government Offices should be reserved for a few selected religious communities.

Sub-Scale VI.—Authoritarian aggression toward linguistic minorities.

1. (2.27) High Court Judges should always be selected from among the natives of the particular state.
2. (2.45) Persons not belonging to a particular linguistic state, even though Indians, should not be given the same rights and privileges as those belonging to that state.
3. (2.47) For the sake of the Unity of India there should be only one language spoken by all.
4. (2.52) A linguistic minority community should not be allowed to have a cultural organization of its own.
5. (2.55) Place of birth should be an important factor in giving jobs and promotions.
6. (2.56) It is a mistake to give the same educational facilities to all the linguistic communities in the state.
7. (2.58) Employment exchanges should be exclusively manned by people of linguistic majority community.
8. (2.59) People of linguistic majority community should be given preference in all government and private employment.

The following are the major sources from which the items and ideas were taken. These items or statements were adapted to suit the prevailing social conditions in India: -

Item Nos. 1, 2, 4, 6, 10, 11, 17, 18, 22, 29, 31, 32, 35, 37, 38, 40, 46, 49, 50, 51, 53 and 54 were taken

from the Anti-semitism scale, the Ethnocentrism Scale, the Politico-economic Conservatism Scale and the 'F' Scale used by Adorno *et al.*

Item Nos. 16, 26, 30, 39, 44 and 53 were collected from the scale prepared by Rath and Sircar to study the attitudes and opinions of six Hindu Caste groups. Other items were collected by the investigator from literature and newspapers.

C. ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION

The test administered provided for a five point scale.—

Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

By increasing the distance between two extreme alternatives the scores were taken as 7, 6, 4, 2, and 1 respectively. Therefore, theoretical maximum score for 60 items could be 420, while minimum remained 60. 120 was the theoretical limit of democratic attitude.

Results — (*Vide* Table 1 and 2 on the following page.)

From the data presented in Table 1, it can be seen that the mean score of the group on the first occasion before training was 193.2. Comparison of this average with theoretical scores shows that the average is less than 50% of the maximum, but significantly higher than 120 which is the limit of democratic attitude.

This clearly indicates that the participants possessed anti-democratic and fascist inclinations although with rather low intensities.

Comparison of this average with the

TABLE 1
SCORES OF SUBJECTS ON 'AD AND F' SCALE
SCORE

Subjects	Before Training	After Training	Difference
1.	292	154	138
2.	228	119	109
3.	181	246	65*
4.	129	101	28
5.	120	99	21
6.	217	168	49
7.	242	174	68
8.	149	134	15
9.	163	170	7*
10.	203	117	86
11.	166	174	8*
12.	132	181	49*
13.	152	177	25*
14.	230	143	87
15.	239	132	107
16.	275	129	146
17.	147	122	25
18.	250	111	139
19.	165	129	36
20.	227	133	94
21.	185	171	14
22.	138	229	91*
23.	149	152	3*
24.	308	166	142
25.	143	164	21*
Max. Score	308	246	
Min Score	120	99	
Mean	193.2	151.8	41.4
S.D.	53.25	35.22	66.57
S.E.	10.65	7.44	8.28
t=1.4119, .10 > p > .05 (one-tail test)			d.f. 48
* tendencies have been reinforced in the undesirable direction.			

TABLE 2
MEAN SCORES OF THE SUBJECTS ON SIX SUB-SCALES

Sub-Scale	No. of Items of	Theoretical Score	Mean Score before Ad and F training	Percentage of scores	Mean Score after training	Percentage reduction
Submissive attitudes, militancy	7	49	28.04	57.22	20.68	26.25
Cynicism, conservatism and reactionary tendencies	13	91	37.66	41.38	28.04	25.65
Criminality, physical attack and fascist solution	10	70	40.44	57.78	33.32	17.61
Segregation and suppression	17	119	51.61	43.37	41.56	19.47
Aggression toward religious minorities	5	35	11.50	30.29	9.76	15.40
Aggression toward linguistic minorities	8	56	23.68	42.29	20.08	15.20

averages obtained in Bombay in the first study cited previously, shows that the present mean is slightly higher than that of the Hindu Ss in Bombay (188.55), a religious group, but lower than that of Hindi Ss (198.72), a linguistic group. However, the fact that the participants had some degrees of anti-democratic and fascist mentality cannot be denied.

The average score of the subjects after training was 151.8. This average is closer to, but still higher than by 31 points of theoretical democratic limit of 120. The potentialities were reduced by 41.4 points. The net gain is almost 20%. It is apparent that the significantly lower average score is due to "training".

Incidentally the mean score on the second occasion is lower than the moderately low score found in Bombay *viz.*, of Parsees 159.48, but higher than the lowest score of Christians (147), the two least anti-democratic scores of samples tested in Bombay. In other words as a result of training the scores could be brought down to the middle level of two groups which exhibited more pronounced pro-democratic attitudes. This is an important finding and throws some light on the effect of 9 days training in democracy.

Analysis of the scores of individual subjects reveals that the training had proved very effective in reducing the intensities of undesirable tendencies of 17 participants. In some cases gain is not perceptible and in some other cases gain is considerable (*vide* scores of Sr. No. 1, 16, 18 and 24). In the case of the remaining 8 participants the training did not help to change mentality. In 4 cases (Sr. Nos., 3, 12, 13 and 22) the previous anti-democratic mentality is further reinforced; that is, the training has backfired. This is bound to happen in all such studies where we cannot control the previous environmental influences on the trainees. Whereas the highest individual

score in the first test was 308, on the second occasion the highest score found was 246, and the lowest was 99 as against 120 in first test. In general, there is a net gain of 20 per cent.

Further analysis of the mean reactions of Ss in the six areas chosen (*vide* Table 2) reveals that the highest reduction was found in the two areas *viz.*, (I) Authoritarian submission and militancy, (II) Cynicism, Conservatism and reactionary tendencies. Moderate gain was in the case of (III) Criminality, Physical attack, Violence and fascist solution, and (IV) Segregation and Suppression of democratic rights. The lowest gain was in the areas pertaining to aggressive attitudes toward religious and linguistic minorities (V and VI).

It is interesting to note that although there was no direct discussion on treatment to be given to minorities, the results show that even such tendencies are reduced to some extent. Perhaps the value systems under investigation are generalised tendencies and reduction in one area of operation inevitably leads to the reduction of intensities of aggressive attitudes in other areas. These results support the contemporary thinking on generality of attitudes. Of course, all these have got to be further verified by testing similar and dissimilar samples.

D. DISCUSSION

Several questions remain unanswered. For instance, it is not known as to how long the effect of training persists and to what extent the changed attitude has contributed to expected behaviour. Similarly, it is not known as to why in the case of some subjects the training has actually strengthened the previous mentality—whether it is due to personality factors, the way the training is perceived or is it due to personality and socio-economic back-

ground of the people who imparted training and so on.

Although it might be interesting to examine the reasons as to why some of the subjects changed in the wrong direction or hardly at all and compare the characteristics of strong democratic changers vs non-changers, it is not possible to make such an analysis with the present data.

It is known that even well-planned attempts to modify the attitudes often succeed only in altering the thought-belief component without affecting feelings and reaction tendencies. There is a necessity of evolving a method which will throw light on the changes brought about in each component of attitudes.

It is important to measure the role of set tendencies and response biases in such investigations.

With regard to attitude change Zimbardo and Ebbesen (69) have posed several questions. If, further research is to become fruitful it is necessary to direct research strategy to solve these and other relevant questions.

The results of this study throw some light on our system of education. Efforts need to be made to provide knowledge, and guidance in leading a democratic way of life to our youths so that they grow up with healthy ideas. In fact, it is the younger people who need such training. As young minds are receptive, this training plays an important role in changing such minds. Youths so trained will act as deterrents for unhealthy and anti-social trends prevailing in contemporary Indian Society. Analyses of contents of newspapers and periodicals have revealed that they contain material which contributes to the development of unhealthy and anti-democratic tendencies. Similarly, it has been alleged that even school text-books indirectly contribute to unhealthy tendencies. Something has got to be done in this field.

Maintaining democratic relationships within and between communities means that problems must be resolved on the basis of a desire to understand and consider the interests of all concerned. Such an approach is time consuming and at time leads to lengthy negotiations. Therefore, patience, restraint and self-control are needed to keep matters from regressing to drastic and arbitrary actions. The authoritarian mode of behaviour has got to be prevented to make democracy successful and no effort, no matter how difficult it is, is too much.

Since the findings clearly indicate that training in democracy has varied effect on different individuals, it is necessary to know why in some cases training is not effective. Further probing should be made into the personality patterns of individuals who have developed more anti-democratic tendencies as a result of training.

E. SUMMARY

The purpose of this investigation was to measure the impact of nine days training in democracy on anti-democratic and fascist tendencies. A scale to measure anti-democratic and fascist tendencies was designed on the pattern of California scales of anti-semitism, ethnocentrism and political economic conservatism and was administered to 25 randomly selected trainees at the Ranchi Camp for training in democracy before and after training. The following are the major findings:

1. Before the training the participants showed some degrees of anti-democratic and fascist tendencies.
2. After training these tendencies were reduced. In general, the gain was about 20 per cent.
3. Out of 25 subjects tested as many as 17 participants showed change in mentality in the desirable direction.

In some cases the change was not perceptible. Gain in many cases was considerable.

4. In case of 4 subjects the training was not very effective, but in 4 cases there was a marked tendency of reinforcement in the opposite direction.
5. The impact of training was found to

be highest in reducing militancy, cynicism, conservatism and reactionary tendencies, moderate in reducing criminality, violence, fascist solution and desire to suppress democratic rights, and lowest in changing unfavourable attitudes toward religious and linguistic minorities.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, T. W.,
Frenkel-Brunswik, Else,
Levinson, D. H.
and
Sanford R. N.
1950 : *The Authoritarian Personality*, N. Y.: Harper.
- Anisfield, M.,
Munoz, R. and
Lambert, W. E.
1965 : "The Structure and Dynamics of the Ethnic Attitudes of Jewish Adolescents," *Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology*, Vol. 66, No. 1: 31-36.
- Bass, B.
1955 : "Authoritarianism or Acquiescence" *Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology*, Vol. 51 : 616-623.
- Brown, Roger
1965 : "The Authoritarian Personality and the Organization of Attitudes". Chapter 10: 477-546. *In Social Psychology* N. Y. The Fress Press.
- Byrne, D.
1965 "Parental Antecedents of Authoritarianism". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. No. 1: 369-373.
- Epstein, R.
1965 "Authoritarianism, Displaced Aggression and Social Status of the Target". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. No. 2: 585-589.
- Mogar, R. E.
1960 "Three versions of the F Scale and Performance on the Semantic Differential". *Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology*, Vol. 60,, No. 2, pp. 262-65.
- Rath, R. and
Sircar, N.C.
1960 "Intercaste Relationship as Reflectetd in the Study of the Attitudes and Opinions of Six Hindu Caste Groups". *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 51: pp. 3-25.
- Zimbardo, P.,
and Ebbesen, E. B.
1969 *Influencing Attitudes and Changing Behaviour*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Reading, Mass.