

# A comparative study of personal values profile of rural and urban adolescents

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■ **ABSTRACT :** The present research study was conducted to assess the personal values profile of rural and urban adolescents randomly selected (18-20 yrs.) from four Colleges of Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. The socio-economic status scale was used to study the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Personal values profile of the respondents was assessed by employing personal values questionnaire by Sherry and Verma (2010). The results revealed that significantly higher proportion of urban adolescents were found on the dimensions of 'Religious', 'Democratic' and 'Hedonistic' values whereas rural adolescents were observed significantly higher on the dimensions of 'Family prestige'. Urban adolescents were found to have more faith in God. The results further depicted that urban adolescents believed in individuality and were against any kind of discrimination on the basis of sex, race, caste and family status. They did not believe in social inequality, however, rural adolescents gave more value to family prestige than urban adolescents. Rural adolescents believed in maintenance of purity of family blood by avoiding intercaste marriages. Urban boys gave more value to power and desired to rule or lead others and preferred a job where they could get opportunity to exercise authority over others.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Adolescents, Democratic, Family prestige, Rural, Urban

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Value is a belief, a mission or a philosophy that is meaningful. Whether we are consciously aware of them or not, every individual has a core set of personal values. Values can range from the common place, such as the belief in hard work and punctuality, to the more psychological, such as self – reliance, concern for others and harmony of purpose. Personal values are implicitly related to choice; they guide decisions by allowing for an individual's choices to be compared to each choice's associated values. Personal values developed early in life may be resistant to change. They may be derived from those of particular groups or systems, such as culture, religion, and political party. However, personal values are not universal; one's genes, family, nation and historical environments help to determine one's personal values.

Values are significant in one's personality development. Values develop by direct learning through parents and the

teachers at school and later on the person acquires the values of his society through the different media of communications. Values are significant in evaluating the attitude towards objects and activities having social significance. Along with the parents, another significant people that affect the values of an individual are the peer group. Peer group is a stable group of two or more people who interact, share norms and goals and where adolescents evaluate their values, norms and goals which they internalized from parents. Peer group helps them to strengthen their moral judgment and values. Peer relationship is a significant contributor in understanding adolescent's development and one of the strongest predictors of adolescent's problem behaviours (Garnier and Stein, 2002). Adolescence is also a stage when young people extend relationships beyond their parents and family. It is a time of intense influence of peers and the outside world in the society. A desire to experiment

and explore can manifest in a range of behaviours-exploring sexual relationships, alcohol, tobacco and other substances abuse. The anxiety and stress associated with achievement failure, lack of confidence etc. are likely to lead to depression, anger, violence and other mental health problems. Adolescents as they mature cognitively, the mental functioning process becomes analytic, capable of abstract thinking leading to articulation and independent ideology. These are truly the years of creativity, empathy, idealism and with bountiful spirit of adventure. Thus, if nurtured properly youth can be mobilized to contribute significantly to national development.

The rapidly changing social, political and economical scenario in the world has not left Indian family untouched. It is going through structural and functional modifications that have a bearing on adolescent's socialization and parent child relations. Weakening of social support from kinship, movement of women empowerment, exposure to media, increasing competitive demands of the market economy and higher standards of achievement are a few aspects that have changed the family dynamics in the recent past. The need for differential values, competencies and coping styles between parents and adolescents are a source of anxiety and stress both for adolescents and parents (Verma and Saraswathi, 2002). The ambiguity of values that adolescents observe in the adult world, the absence of powerful role models, increasing gaps between aspirations and possible achievements, not surprisingly, lead to alienation and identity diffusion. Parents themselves appear ill prepared to cope with social change, having grown up in hierarchically structured and interlinked social and caste groups that provided stability (Misra, 2005). All these factors create confusion in the minds of the young ones and value conflict arises.

Lifestyle of urban adolescents is quite different from that of rural adolescents. Former have access to private, good quality education and are influenced by western ways of life style through travel and exposure; their preferences for music, clothes and interaction with opposite sex are very closed to the western counter parts. On the surface there does not appear to be any gender discrimination in the families of these adolescents but covertly they do exist. The picture of rural adolescents is different; the disparity between boys and girls is even greater among them. Less emphasis on formal education makes boys and girls participate in adult activities at home and outside at an early age. The boys are expected to join men in work to earn their living, may it be on a farm or a factory or a traditional craft at home. The routine of a pre-adolescent/adolescent rural girl is demanding-cleaning the house, cooking, washing, fetching water, bathing younger siblings. Rural girls rarely pursue education beyond primary school level. Early marriage as a trend is common even now, both for boys and girls in rural

India. Therefore, the overall value system of rural and urban adolescents differs markedly. Natasha (2013) reported that adolescents from urban and rural areas gave first preference to social values because both are resourceful and can translate virtues like love, sympathy and kindness into their behaviour. They gave second preference to political values. It may be due to the influence of politicians from these areas at centre and state levels. Moreover, it is an established fact that more social persons are always more political. At the third place they prefer the theoretical values. That means both are very conservative. They are not ready to accept any change in their traditional outlook. Both also preferred economic values at third place. The reason may be that the people of these areas are economically very sound. Aesthetic and religious values are found to be at fourth and fifth place. It may be due to the fact that these people don't find time to devote themselves for aesthetic and religious matters.

Nidhi and Jyoti (2011) revealed that the college students showed very high preferences for economic, and power values, and high preferences for aesthetic, and hedonistic values. Average inclination was noticed towards religious, and family prestige values, lower were seen for democratic, knowledge and health values and lowest for social value.

Considering the above facts in the foreground, the present investigation was conducted with the following specific objectives:

- To assess the personal value profile of the rural and urban adolescents.
- To find out differences in personal value system of rural and urban adolescents.

## ■ RESEARCH METHODS

### Sample selection:

The present research study was conducted on rural and urban adolescents, which were randomly selected from four Colleges of Punjab Agricultural University located in Ludhiana city. The colleges selected were- College of Agriculture, College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology, College of Basic Sciences and Humanities and College of Home Science. The sample consisted of 160 adolescents (80 boys and 80 girls) in the age range of 18-20 years from middle and high socio-economic strata, belonging to rural and urban families. From each college, forty respondents were taken to constitute the final sample.

### Research tools:

Socio- economic status scale developed by Sharma (2010) was used to assess the socio-economic status of the respondents. The scale consists of 7 main areas: Education, Profession, Monthly income, Total wealth, Property, Surrounding locality and social status. Each item is scaled

from very high, high, ordinary, and low to very low. Interpretation of socio-economic status was made with the help of T-scores.

Personal values questionnaire scale developed by Sherry and Verma (2010) was used to assess the personal values of adolescents in the age range of 18-20 years. The scale had 40 items distributed across ten different types of values. The types of values studied were: Religious, Social, Democratic, Aesthetic, Economic, Knowledge, Hedonistic, Power, Family prestige and Health. Each question had three options and subjects were asked to respond to each item. Total raw score were calculated and the interpretation was done by converting the raw scores to sten score as per the instructions given in the manual.

#### Data collection:

For the purpose of data collection, the subjects were approached through the concerned class teachers in the respective colleges. The purpose of the study was clarified to the concerned class teachers. After the permission was granted, the respondents were approached in their respective classes and data were collected during their free classes. The students were asked orally about their background areas and were made into two groups belonging to rural and urban settings. The purpose of the study was made clear to the respondents. Socio-economic status scale was administered on these students and equal numbers of students with rural and urban background belonging to either middle or high socio-economic status were selected. The selected students were given Personal Values Questionnaire. They were requested to give correct responses and were assured that their identity would be kept confidential and information provided by them would be used exclusively for the purpose of research work. Each student was given the questionnaires individually in the class itself and was asked to fill the questionnaires on the spot. The respondents filled the questionnaires in approximately 45 minutes. Statistical analysis was done by using mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentages, t- test and z-test.

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The frequency and percentage distribution of rural and urban adolescents on personal values profile are presented in Table 1. From Table 1 it is clear that in 'Religious', 'Democratic', 'Hedonistic' and 'Family prestige' values, the proportion of rural and urban adolescents differed significantly with more number of urban adolescents found at the medium level of these values except in case of 'Family prestige' value. In contrast to this, Bhutia (2013) reported that rural adolescents were found to have more value on religious and hedonistic dimension. 41.25 per cent of urban adolescents were found significantly ( $z=2.04$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) higher in comparison to 36.25 per cent of rural adolescents who

were found medium on religious dimension.

Similarly, 45 per cent of the urban adolescents were found significantly ( $z=1.98$ ,  $p\leq 0.05$ ) higher on 'Democratic' value in comparison to 37.5 per cent of rural adolescents who were found medium in this dimension. Again, similar result was found on hedonistic value where 38.75 per cent of urban adolescents were found at the medium level as compared to 32.5 per cent of rural adolescents. In contrast, on the dimension of 'Family prestige', 57.5 per cent of rural adolescents were found at medium level of this value as compared to 52.5 per cent of urban adolescents. On rest of the dimensions, no significant differences were found as the number at low and high levels were found comparable. The overall picture depicts that as compared to rural adolescents, urban adolescents were found to have more faith in God. It also signified that urban adolescents also believed in individuality and were against any kind of discrimination on the basis of sex, race, caste and family status. They did not believe in social inequality. Further, the table also depicted that rural adolescents valued more family prestige than urban adolescents. Rural adolescents believed in maintenance of purity of family blood by avoiding intercaste marriages. The results are inline with the study of Bhutia (2013) who reported that rural adolescent had significantly more family prestige value than urban adolescents.

Table 2 shows the differences in mean scores of rural and urban adolescents across different dimensions of personal values. The data revealed that in case of dimensions of 'Democratic' and 'Power', significant differences were found in the mean scores of rural and urban adolescents. The mean scores of urban adolescents ( $16.04\pm 3.02$ ) were found significantly ( $t=2.98$ ,  $p\leq 0.01$ ) higher than rural adolescents ( $14.44\pm 3.74$ ) in democratic dimension.

Urban adolescents as compared to rural adolescents were found to have more respect for individuality and absence of discrimination among persons on the basis of sex, language, religion, caste, colour, race and family status ensuring equal social, political and religious rights to all, impartiality and social justice and respect for the democratic institutions. In contrast, the mean scores of rural adolescents ( $8.46\pm 2.60$ ) were found significantly ( $t=2.68$ ,  $p\leq 0.01$ ) higher than urban adolescents ( $7.40\pm 2.40$ ) on power dimension. Rural adolescents gave more value to power and had greater desire for ruling or leading others and would prefer a job where they could get opportunity to exercise authority over others. Moreover, they were deeply status-conscious and they reported that they can even tell a lie for maintaining the prestige of their position.

Across rest of the dimensions, the mean scores of rural and urban adolescents were found comparable, therefore, no significant differences were found.

Table 3 shows differences in mean scores of rural and urban adolescent girls across different dimensions of

Sr. No.	Dimensions of personal values	Level	Rural (n=80)		Urban (n=80)		Z-value
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
1.	Religious	Low	33	41.25	30	37.5	0.94
		Medium	29	36.25	33	41.25	2.04*
		High	18	22.50	17	21.25	1.06
2.	Social	Low	64	80.00	63	78.75	0.37
		Medium	16	20.00	15	18.75	1.19
		High	0	0.00	2	2.50	
3.	Democratic	Low	30	37.50	14	17.50	0.86
		Medium	30	37.50	36	45.00	1.98*
		High	20	25.00	30	37.50	0.85
4.	Aesthetic	Low	14	17.50	18	22.50	1.02
		Medium	33	41.25	35	43.75	1.26
		High	33	41.25	27	33.75	0.30
5.	Economic	Low	8	10.00	3	3.75	0.01
		Medium	29	36.25	23	28.75	0.19
		High	43	53.75	54	67.50	0.27
6.	Knowledge	Low	46	57.50	45	56.25	1.35
		Medium	26	32.50	30	37.50	0.07
		High	8	10.00	5	6.25	0.80
7.	Hedonistic	Low	3	3.75	1	1.25	
		Medium	26	32.50	31	38.75	2.02*
		High	51	63.75	48	60.00	1.10
8.	Power	Low	17	21.25	33	41.25	0.61
		Medium	37	46.25	32	40.00	0.19
		High	26	32.5	15	18.75	0.87
9.	Family prestige	Low	8	10.00	15	18.75	0.53
		Medium	46	57.50	42	52.50	3.01**
		High	26	32.50	23	28.75	0.71
10.	Health	Low	51	63.75	41	51.25	1.16
		Medium	27	33.75	38	47.5	1.79
		High	2	2.50	1	1.25	

Sr. No.	Dimensions of personal values	Rural (n=80)		Urban (n=80)		t-value
		Mean±S.D.	Mean±S.D.	Mean±S.D.	Mean±S.D.	
1.	Religious	12.09±3.39	12.13±3.45			0.07
2.	Social	12.15±2.79	12.10±2.91			0.11
3.	Democratic	14.44±3.74	16.04±3.02			2.98**
4.	Aesthetic	12.56±3.12	11.86±3.08			1.43
5.	Economic	10.00±3.17	11.58±3.42			1.70
6.	Knowledge	12.21±2.89	12.41±2.62			0.46
7.	Hedonistic	11.86±2.78	11.34±2.82			1.19
8.	Power	8.46±2.60	7.40±2.40			2.68**
9.	Family prestige	12.70±3.04	11.79±2.96			1.92
10.	Health	9.64±2.31	10.00±2.50			0.95
11.	Total	116.79±3.10	116.76±3.87			0.04

\*\* indicate significance of value at P=0.01

personal values. Across all the dimensions, the mean scores of rural and urban adolescent girls were found comparable. Therefore, no significant differences were found in any dimension. Although the differences were non-significant, the mean scores on the dimensions of 'Religious', 'Social', 'Democratic' and 'Economic' were found higher in the dimensions of 'Aesthetic', 'Knowledge', 'Hedonistic', 'Power', 'Family prestige' and 'Health'.

Overall, there were no significant differences between the rural and urban girls as the total mean scores of the rural and urban girls were found comparable across all the dimensions.

Table 4 represents the differences in mean scores of rural and urban adolescent boys across different dimensions of personal values. The data revealed that in case of dimensions of 'Democratic', 'Power' and 'Family prestige', significant differences were found in the mean scores of rural and urban boys. On the 'Democratic' dimension, the mean scores of rural boys (15.68±3.17) were found significantly ( $t=2.10$ ,  $p\leq 0.05$ ) higher than urban boys (14.02±3.83). Rural

boys as compared to urban boys were found to have more respect for individuality and were against discrimination among persons on the basis of sex, language, religion, caste, colour, race and family status ensuring equal social, political and religious rights to all. In contrast, on the 'Power' dimension, the mean scores of urban boys (8.92±2.52) were found to be significantly ( $t=2.61$ ,  $p\leq 0.01$ ) higher than rural boys (7.42±2.50). Urban boys as compared to rural boys gave more value to power and desire to rule or lead others and preferred a job where they could get opportunity to exercise authority over others. Moreover, they were deeply status-conscious and they could even tell a lie for maintaining the prestige of their position. Also, on the 'Family prestige' dimension, the mean scores of urban (12.55±2.56) boys were found significantly ( $t=3.26$ ,  $p\leq 0.01$ ) higher than rural boys (10.61±2.62). Urban boys as compared to rural boys were found to have more conception of the desirability of such items of behaviour, roles, functions and relationships as made one's family status and maintenance of the purity of family blood by avoiding inter- caste marriages.

**Table 3: Differences in mean scores of rural and urban adolescent girls across different dimensions of personal values**

Sr. No.	Dimensions of personal values	Rural girls (n=31)	Urban girl (n=49)	t-value
		Mean±S.D.	Mean±S.D.	
1.	Religious	12.08±3.04	11.97±3.37	0.15
2.	Social	11.49±3.08	11.23±3.14	0.37
3.	Democratic	16.27±2.94	15.10±3.54	1.53
4.	Aesthetic	11.57±2.94	12.10±2.74	0.81
5.	Economic	12.02±3.26	11.71±3.12	0.43
6.	Knowledge	12.43±2.61	12.48±3.15	0.08
7.	Hedonistic	11.37±2.77	11.84±3.18	0.68
8.	Power	7.39±2.36	7.74±2.62	0.61
9.	Family prestige	12.53±2.95	12.94±3.71	0.51
10.	Health	9.71±2.29	9.77±2.43	0.11
11.	Total	117.06±3.88	116.87±2.86	0.25

**Table 4: Differences in mean scores of rural and urban adolescent boys across different dimensions of personal values**

Sr. No.	Dimension of personal values	Rural boys (n=49)	Urban boys (n=31)	t-value
		Mean ± S.D.	Mean ± S.D.	
1.	Religious	12.19±4.07	12.16±3.44	0.03
2.	Social	13.06±2.35	12.73±2.40	0.61
3.	Democratic	15.68±3.17	14.02±3.83	2.10*
4.	Aesthetic	12.32±3.27	12.86±3.34	0.71
5.	Economic	10.87±3.58	10.04±3.06	1.07
6.	Knowledge	12.39±2.69	12.04±2.73	0.56
7.	Hedonistic	11.29±2.93	11.88±2.52	0.92
8.	Power	7.42±2.50	8.92±2.52	2.61**
9.	Family prestige	10.61±2.62	12.55±2.56	3.26**
10.	Health	10.45±2.78	9.55±2.26	1.52
11.	Total	116.29±3.87	116.73±2.97	0.53

\* and \*\* indicate significance of values at  $P=0.05$  and  $0.01$ , respectively

Across all other dimensions, the mean scores of rural and urban boys were found to be comparable, therefore, no significant differences were found.

### Conclusion:

The study revealed that urban adolescents were found to have more faith in God. The results further depicted that urban adolescents believed in individuality and were against any kind of discrimination on the basis of sex, race, caste and family status. They did not believe in social inequality. Further, it was found that rural adolescents had more family prestige than urban adolescents. Rural adolescents believed in maintenance of purity of family blood by avoiding intercaste marriages. Rural boys were found to have more respect for individuality and were against discrimination among persons on the basis of sex, language, religion, caste, colour, race and family status. Urban boys gave more value to power and desire to rule or lead others and preferred a job where they could get opportunity to exercise authority over others. Urban boys were found to have more conception of the desirability of such items of behaviour, roles, functions and relationships as made one's family status and maintenance of the purity of family blood by avoiding inter- caste marriages.

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