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## **Double jeopardy?**

Caste, affirmative action, and stigma

Ashwini Deshpande\*

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**Abstract:** This paper presents the results of an attitude survey administered to university students in India that attempts to delineate the social–psychological mechanisms of ‘externalization’ and ‘internalization’ to understand the possible consequences of stigma associated with caste-based affirmative action (AA). Despite a significant gap in entry scores at admission to a higher educational institution, no significant differences are found in the effort and academic attitudes between students from beneficiary groups and those who get admission through non-reserved/open seats. On a range of questions that evaluate externalization and attitudes towards AA, there are clear and significant differences between caste groups that reveal the presence of stigma through the externalization mechanism; that is, the tendency of peers to evaluate beneficiary performance prejudicially, indicating the prevalence of discriminatory attitudes towards students from target groups. However, there is no evidence of internalization; that is, students from beneficiary groups internalizing their peers’ low evaluation, resulting in low self-esteem and lower performance. These findings suggest the need for establishing an anti-discriminatory apparatus inside higher educational institutions to counter stigmatizing attitudes and micro-aggressions against those admitted on the basis of AA.

**Keywords:** affirmative action, caste, India, stigma, discrimination

**JEL classification:** J71, J78, Z13

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\* Department of Economics, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, Delhi, India; [ashwini@econ.dse.org](mailto:ashwini@econ.dse.org).

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Katajanokanlaituri 6 B, 00160 Helsinki, Finland

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## 1 Introduction

Affirmative action (AA) in India, conceptualized as a scheme of compensatory discrimination, is quota-based, was primarily targeted towards caste groups that have historically suffered the stigma of untouchability, as well as marginalized tribal communities, and has been extended towards castes and communities identified as ‘backward’ on a range of socio-economic criteria. The former set of castes (*jatis*) is clubbed under the administrative category ‘Scheduled Castes’ (SCs), with a corresponding list for marginalized tribal groups (‘Scheduled Tribes’, or STs), and the latter under the category ‘Other Backward Classes’ (OBCs). By providing access to seats in publicly funded higher educational institutions (HEIs) and government jobs, AA seeks to redress, in certain key dimensions, contemporary discrimination and exclusion continually faced by members of these groups. As the primary instrument of AA is reservation of seats/positions (22.5 per cent for SCSTs, collectively, and 27 per cent for OBCs), the AA policy is more generally referred to as the ‘reservation’ or quota policy in India.<sup>1</sup>

Although AA increases access to preferred jobs or seats in educational institutions, an unintended consequence of AA might be that it harms beneficiaries by further stigmatizing them as incompetent.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, SCs in India are derogatorily referred to as *schaddus* (Guru 2009: 18), or more broadly as *sarkari damaad* (sons-in-law of the government). In the American context, AA is meant to counter under-representation of racial minorities and women that are differentially stigmatized in the absence of AA; thus, it is conceivable that AA might introduce an additional layer or dimension of stigma towards beneficiaries that might not be salient in the absence of AA. The Indian context is somewhat different in that SCs or Dalits<sup>3</sup> battle with a ‘stigmatized ethnic identity’ regardless of whether they are recipients of AA (Thorat 1979). Dalit caste names are routinely used as slurs in several Indian languages. In fact, AA is meant to counter discrimination stemming from deep and all-pervasive stigmatization.

The consequence of additional stigmatization could be serious and could undermine the very purpose of AA, as peers and colleagues might discount achievements of beneficiaries (the ‘externalization’ mechanism) increasing the academic burden on them, with possible adverse consequences for their performance and/or the performance of beneficiaries might be affected (lowered) as a result of self-doubt due to stereotype threat (the ‘internalization’ mechanism). In addition to gauging the presence of stigma, it is important to delineate these two mechanisms. The presence of externalization suggests that the stigma is less due to actual underperformance or lower motivation of beneficiaries and more due to a negative evaluation by peers. This could be due to either a reflection of broader discriminatory societal attitudes that prevail regardless of AA or an additional layer of stigmatization generated specifically because of AA. The presence of internalization suggests that actual underperformance or lower motivation on part of the beneficiaries might perpetuate the stigma. Additionally, externalization could increase the academic performance burden on beneficiaries, which might result in lower performance with the same level of effort. Of course, these mechanisms are not mutually exclusive and could be operating in tandem.

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<sup>1</sup> The terms reservation and affirmative action (AA) are used interchangeably in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> For a meta-analysis of studies on the stigma of AA, see Leslie et al. (2014).

<sup>3</sup> Whereas SC is an administrative category, Dalit (originally Sanskrit, now Marathi, word meaning ‘oppressed’) is widely used as a term of pride and as a self-description of identity.

For the Indian ‘quota students’, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine the marginal stigma of AA, over and above the basic stigma generated from underlying casteism in society as a whole. This would need one of these two comparisons: (i) A comparison of the beneficiaries’ current position (quota admissions) with a counterfactual, which is what they would have done had they not been admitted on quota; the Indian quota system is designed in a way that those who get in through quotas would not get access to those same positions otherwise. (ii) Or, more realistically, one would have to compare attitudes among upper-caste (UC) and Dalit students in institutions with AA with similar groups inside institutions without AA. There are private HEIs without AA, but whether these have a comparable student body with a sizeable Dalit population is not clear. Thus, the estimation of the marginal or the added stigma of AA in the Indian context is challenging. Willig et al (2008) report the results of a survey on internal stigma (feelings of inadequacy, dependency, or guilt) and external stigma (the burden of others’ resentment or doubt about one’s qualifications) for the Class of 2009 at seven public law schools in the United States, four of which employed race-based affirmative action when the Class of 2009 was admitted and three of which did not use such policies at that time. They find minimal, if any, internal stigma felt by minority students in any of the schools, no statistically significant difference in internal stigma between AA-based schools and non-AA based schools, and no significant impact from external stigma.

This paper investigates the presence of stigmatizing attitudes among students in the University of Delhi, one of India’s leading universities, using an attitude survey designed to test for the existence of externalization and internalization mechanisms. This investigation has been done on the heels of another recent study on the theme of stigma and AA, which examines whether, and to what extent, the possibility of additional stigmatization affects the use of reservations (Deshpande 2015); thus, the two studies are complementary. The main findings of this study are as follows. Despite a significant difference in entry scores at admission to a higher educational institution (scores of SC students were lower than those of the so-called UC students), no significant difference is found in the effort and academic attitudes between students from beneficiary groups and those who get admission through non-reserved/open seats. On a range of questions evaluating externalization and attitudes towards AA, there are clear and significant differences between caste groups that reveal the presence of stigma through externalization, indicating the prevalence of discriminatory attitudes towards students from target groups. However, there is no evidence of beneficiary students internalizing the low evaluation that their peers place on them. These findings suggest the need for establishing an anti-discriminatory apparatus inside higher educational institutions to counter stigmatizing attitudes, micro-aggressions, and passive harm against those admitted on the basis of AA. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first such study in the Indian context.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature. Section 3 summarizes certain key results from the companion paper (Deshpande 2015) in order to set the backdrop for this study. Section 4 describes the research design, data, and methodology. Section 5 outlines the results. Section 6 contains a discussion of the results and their implications for policy and Section 7 offers concluding comments.

## **2 Social cognition and stigma**

### **2.1 Social cognition and negative stereotypes**

Deshpande (2015) contains a detailed review of literature on the stigma of AA. This section focuses on a subset of the literature, directly relevant to the present paper, which explores the social–psychological concepts that underlie stigmatizing attitudes, given that the latter are built

on group stereotypes as well as first impressions from actual interactions. The research on social perception and interpersonal liking predominantly uses the concepts of psychological warmth and competence. The use of these dimensions underlies several group stereotypes from dozens of countries. It is estimated that ~82 per cent of the variance in people's evaluation of social behaviour is accounted for by these dimensions (Williams and Bargh 2008). Cuddy et al. argue that these dimensions are universal 'because they assess questions about others that are both basic and adaptive', and present substantial evidence attesting to the use of these concepts in classic and contemporary literature (2008: 63–4). People everywhere seem to differentiate each other by liking (captured through concepts such as warmth and trustworthiness) and by respecting (captured by concepts such as competence and efficiency).

The warmth dimension captures traits that are related to perceived intent, which includes traits such as friendliness, helpfulness, sincerity, trustworthiness, and morality. The competence dimension captures traits that are related to capacity, such as efficacy, skill, creativity, confidence, and intelligence. Recent theory and research in social cognition indicate that

the warm–cold assessment is the social perceiver's immediate 'first-pass' as to whether the target individual (or social group) can be trusted as a friend, or at least a non-foe (i.e. warm), or is a potential foe who might attempt to interfere with one's on-going goal pursuits (i.e.. cold). [The competence assessment is then a 'second-pass' evaluation of whether the newly encountered individual (or group) has the capacity to act on those perceived intentions.] This assessment appears to be automatic and obligatory evaluation that does not require the perceiver's intent to make it. (Williams and Bargh 2008: 606)

A combination of warmth and competence generate distinct emotions of admiration, contempt, envy, or pity. These two dimensions are essential ingredients that constitute the stigma of AA.

As Leslie et al. (2014) point out, early work exploring this dimension in the stereotyping literature focuses primarily on discounting and self-doubt that result from the stigma of incompetence. The focus in this work was to explore mechanisms that drive discounting, negative state, and lowered perceptions of self-worth. These are called internalization factors. However, the social–psychological literature points towards additional mechanisms that might be at work.

The Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (Fiske et al. 2002) offers an alternative set of mechanisms that focus on the centrality of warmth and competence as dimensions of group stereotypes. Using this model to understand negative stereotypes against AA recipients, it is plausible to assume that AA recipients score low on competence as well as warmth. Thus, colleagues or peers might discount genuine achievements of AA beneficiaries, and/or different standards might be used to judge the work of beneficiaries who are stigmatized as incompetent in contrast to those who get in through open positions. This set of attitudes of peers constitutes externalization.

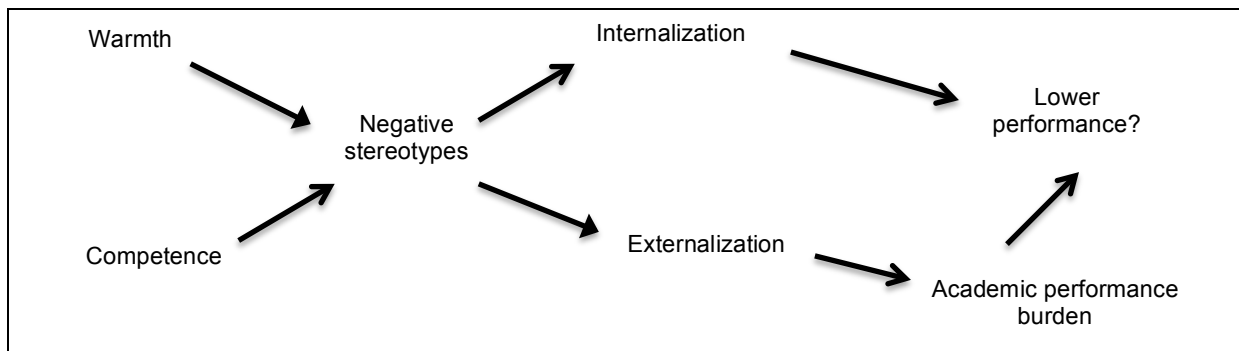
According to the SCM, status is the key originator of competence-based stereotypes: 'high-status others are judged to be competent, whereas low-status others are not' (Cuddy et al. 2008: 69). Interestingly, this resonates strongly with a sociological explanation of prejudice. Blumer argued that race prejudice 'exists basically in a sense of group positions, rather than in a set of feelings that members of one racial group have towards . . . another' (1958: 3). In India, SCs belong to *jatis* that were so low on the ritual purity scale that their presence was considered polluting (which is why they were regarded as 'untouchables' in the first place). Despite the legal abolition of untouchability, various stigmatizing practices as well as horrific instances of violence continue to be perpetrated against Dalits, reinforcing their low status in contemporary socio-economic life.

Further, AA increases the ability of the beneficiary groups to compete for resources by allowing them access to elite positions hitherto monopolized by the UCs. Entry into HEIs increases the qualifications of members of beneficiary groups such that they are able to compete for coveted jobs. India also has job quotas in the public sector, which implies more direct competition in access to well-paid public sector jobs. The SCM postulates that the lack of competition is the key antecedent of warmth-based stereotypes; that is, a group’s ability to compete for resources negatively affects the perceived warmth of group members and heightens attitudes that view them as ‘cold and unlikable’ (Leslie et al. 2014: 965; Cuddy et al. 2008: 69).

## 2.2 Negative stereotypes: internalization versus externalization

This paper focuses on one of the two channels offered by SCM, namely, competence-based stereotypes. The theory of stereotype threat, which underlies the internalization mechanism, suggests that members of a disparaged group are prone to underperform academically because of the fear of living up to negative group stereotypes about intellectual ability (Steele 1988). This theory has been used to account for persistent underachievement by minorities in the United States. Massey and Fischer (2005) show evidence of how stereotype threat may not be limited to African Americans in the United States, but can undermine the performance of any group identified as ‘low status’. Massey and Fischer (2005) also suggest that stereotype threat works through multiple mechanisms, going beyond the original mechanism suggested by Steele (1988). Combining their conceptual apparatus with the SCM, we get the following model (Figure 1):

Figure 1: Social cognition, negative stereotypes, and academic performance



Source: Author’s illustration.

Starting with competence-based negative stereotype as the source of stigma, this paper attempts to delineate the internalization mechanism from the externalization mechanism, and the associated performance burden. It does not explore the relationship between negative stereotypes and academic performance, as several studies reported by Leslie et al. (2014) do in the US context, and by Hoff and Pandey (2006) do in the Indian context.

The presence of the second warmth-based SCM channel underlying negative stereotypes (not investigated in this paper), namely, increased competition from Dalits in education and in jobs, is extremely important. It constitutes the central theme of the anti-reservation agitations and protests; lack of warmth is too mild a description for the open hostility towards Dalits, who are seen as unfair recipients of precious state resources. In addition to specific antipathy towards AA beneficiaries, there is clear evidence that violence and atrocities (hate crimes) against Dalits increase when economic or standard-of-living gaps between Dalits and UCs begin to close (Sharma 2015).

The additional stigma of reservations is a relatively new question in the Indian scholarly discourse on reservations, and there are only a handful of works on this subject: Gudavarthy

(2012) and Gille (2013) examine this explicitly, and various papers in Guru (2009) discuss stigma related to reservations as parts of larger arguments. Gudavarthy focuses on the OBC ‘politics of recognition’, related to their demand for reservations, and how this might alter the terms of the discussion around ‘democracy, equality and dignity’ which is dominated by ‘received . . . dominant . . . upper caste discourse’ (2012: 55, 62). The argument is that the recent demand for quotas by higher-ranked OBCs might help de-stigmatize reservations, as it would no longer be the preserve of the traditionally stigmatized castes, who are low-ranked and considered incompetent. Gille (2013) investigates the use of quotas and finds that OBCs with greater land ownership (richer, higher status) tend not to use reservations, but that the use of reservations by SCs is not related to their economic status.

### **3 Stigma and the use of quotas**

This section presents key results of another paper (Deshpande 2015) on whether the use of quotas is affected by the perception of further stigmatization on part of the beneficiaries, and, if yes, to what extent. The idea is to understand whether there are any differences in the use of quotas between SCSTs (already highly stigmatized) and OBCs (lower ranked, but not necessarily stigmatized) that could be associated with the perception of stigma.

No dataset in the public domain explores this issue. Gille (2013) uses the Additional Rural Income Survey and Rural Economic and Demographic Survey data, which asks respondents the following question: ‘Have you or any member of your family taken advantage of provisions under reservations to seek admission in educational institution in 2005–06?’, but does not have information on whether any individual actually went to an HEI where they might have needed to use reservations. Thus, the data are highly inadequate to investigate the issue of stigma, which could potentially arise when eligible individuals, who could have used reservations, chose not to do so. Gille (2013) interprets the entire non-use of quotas as arising because of stigma, thus not distinguishing between those who did not use it out of choice and those who did not pursue higher education, and, therefore, the question of using or not using quotas never arose for them. Also, for those who could have used reservations but did not, there could be other reasons for not using reservations, and this data does not allow the investigation of any of those reasons.

The research in Deshpande (2015) is based on another primary survey conducted in 2013–14.<sup>4</sup> As a part of the research design, 1049 young men who finished high school in 2003 from government schools in the city of Delhi were sampled. The sample consisted of one gender and was drawn from the same academic cohort, from state-run high schools of relatively similar quality. Thus, the starting position of these men as they embarked on their post-high-school lives was expected to be relatively homogeneous. Basic descriptive statistics from this data show that by the time students enter university, even within this relatively homogeneous group, there are large gaps between caste groups in most socio-economic characteristics, such that lower-caste students are disadvantaged compared with UC students, thus underscoring the need for compensatory discrimination in HEIs.

#### **3.1 Use of reservations**

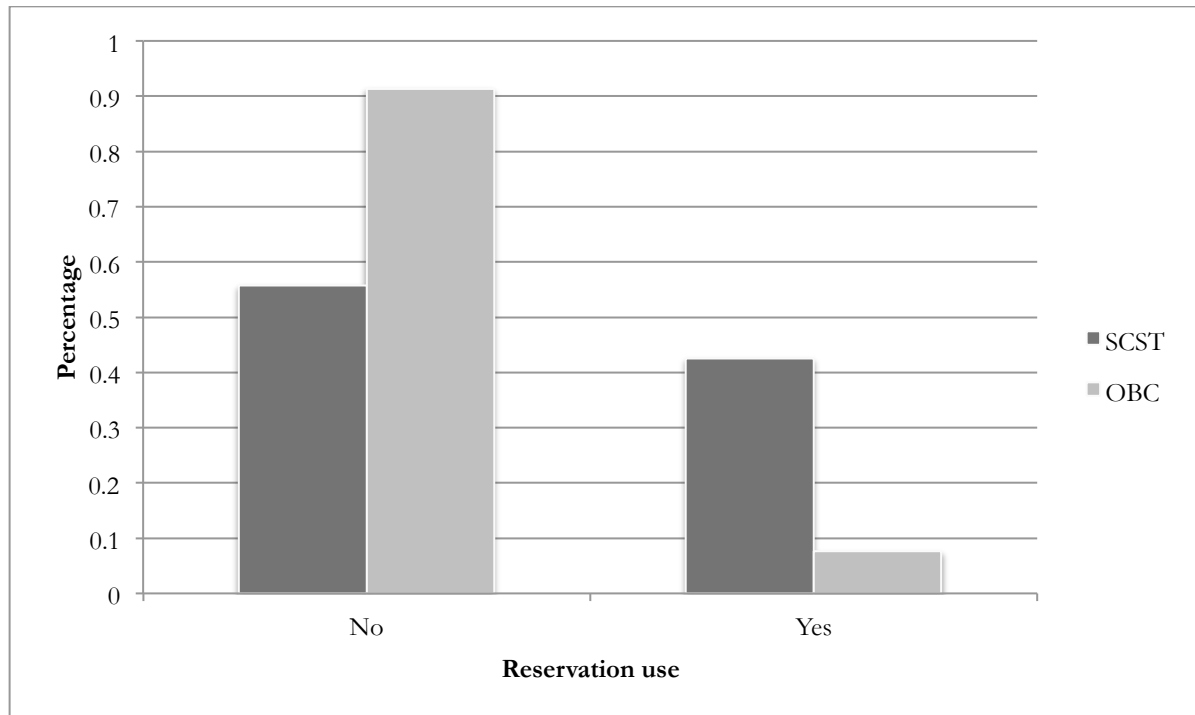
In the dataset of this study, 430 individuals (41 per cent) were eligible for AA; that is, they belonged to beneficiary groups and had the minimum qualifications needed to take advantage of

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<sup>4</sup> It uses data from one module of a primary survey conducted for another project on ‘Education and Social Mobility’.

job or education quotas, or both (class X for jobs, class XII for higher education). Of these, 115 (27 per cent) used reservations in education or jobs, or both. Overall, 72 per cent users (with roughly the same proportion across both groups, SCSTs and OBCs) were first-generation beneficiaries; that is, no one in their families from earlier generations had used quotas. Thus, the majority of those eligible did not use quotas. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the use of reservations among SCSTs and OBCs.

Figure 2: Use of reservations by eligible caste groups



Note: OBC, Other Backward Classes; SC, Scheduled Caste; ST, Scheduled Tribe.

Source: Author's calculations (Deshpande 2015).

Figure 2 shows that a greater proportion of SCSTs (43 per cent), compared with OBCs (9 per cent), used reservations at least once in their lives. The data reveal that of those who used reservations in education, the overwhelming proportion (92 per cent) consists of SCSTs. The lower use of educational quotas by OBCs needs to be understood in the specific context of these respondents. These respondents were in undergraduate programmes during years when education quotas had not been extended to OBCs. In their verbal responses, several OBC respondents said that they would have used reservations if they had the opportunity to do so.

### 3.2 Users versus non-users

Let us call those who have used AA at least once 'users' and those who have never used AA 'non-users'. Testing for differences in various socio-economic characteristics of users and non-users, father's education (as measured by average years of education), father's occupation, and asset index are not significantly different between the two groups. Differences in class XII scores are significant (at 10 per cent), as users have a higher score than non-users. This is to be expected because those with higher scores are more likely to study further and/or apply for government



jobs where they might need to use reservations.<sup>5</sup> Logistic regressions on the probability of using reservations confirm this: SCSTs are almost 11 times more likely to use reservations than OBCs, and increase in class XII score increases the probability of use of quotas.

### 3.3 Reasons for not using AA

Those who did not use reservations even once were asked about the reasons behind their decision and were given six options to choose from: (1) not eligible (those who did not have the minimum marks for applying, even with the lower eligibility for reserved category candidates, or OBCs who were not eligible at the time as they were students at a time when there were no quotas for OBCs; quotas were extended to OBCs in HEIs in 2006); (2) to show one could do without government help; (3) did not want added stigma of reservation (i.e. of being in the ‘reserved category’); (4) did not know about the scheme (information constraints); (5) no occasion to use it (e.g. if the respondent went to a private institution after class XII, or were in private employment); and (6) bureaucratic difficulties. Of these, reasons (2) and (3) can be interpreted as ‘additional stigma of reservations’. Table 1 shows responses from non-users.

Table 1: Reasons for not using quotas

	SC (%)	ST (%)	OBC (%)	All
Not eligible	20.62	33.33	18.82	19.63
To show one could do without government help	10.31	0.00	5.88	7.41
Did not want added stigma of reservation	6.19	0.00	12.35	10.00
Did not know about the scheme	32.99	0.00	22.94	26.30
No occasion to use it (e.g. private job)	16.49	33.33	12.94	14.44
Bureaucratic difficulties	13.40	33.33	27.06	22.22
Total	100	100	100	100

Note: SC, Scheduled Caste; ST, Scheduled Tribe; OBC, Other Backward Classes.

Source: Author’s calculations (Deshpande 2015).

About 17 per cent of non-users cite stigma as the reason for them not using reservations. For OBCs, the single largest reason is bureaucratic difficulties. The proportion of non-users claiming they did not know about it is consistent with the figures on first-time use of reservations, and surprising given the long history of reservations. Logistic regressions on the likelihood of citing stigma as a reason (compared with other reasons for non-use) do not reveal significant differences between any of the background characteristics of non-users. Thus, it is not clear whether there are any systematic socio-economic reasons that increase the probability of feeling stigmatized.

Those who chose option (6) were further asked to verbalize the kinds of difficulties they faced. The reasons given were illuminating and offer insights into the administrative difficulties into accessing reservations. These include factors such as ‘the process is complicated’ and/or ‘the documentation required is tough’; caste certificates from the village/district centre were not accepted in Delhi, and individuals were asked to make fresh certificates in the city; corruption (several reported that they were asked to give bribes); and explanations such as ‘tried to use reservations on an earlier occasion, did not make it, hence did not try to use them again’.

Thus, there are other important reasons that contribute to non-use, and focusing on stigma would not only be a misreading of the causes but would also take attention away from important

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<sup>5</sup> Government jobs that are considered to be ‘low level’ posts, such as that of cleaners, see an over-representation of SCSTs; their proportion is much higher than the mandated quotas. This is because, in India, cleaning is the traditional occupation of certain castes. See Deshpande and Weisskopf (2014) for a discussion of this issue.

administrative/bureaucratic reasons that hamper eligible candidates from using AA. The basic result from the present study is that stigma is not the primary reason for the non-use of quotas. With this context, we now turn to those who are currently enrolled in HEIs.

#### **4 Stigma of incompetence: an attitude survey**

As stated in Section 1, internalization of stigma could affect performance of AA beneficiaries adversely and could potentially undermine the very purpose of AA. Of the two dimensions outlined in the SCM, this section tests for the presence of incompetence. The ideal research design would be to compare perceptions across different institutional contexts, those with AA and those without. However, the implementation of quotas in India is uniform and standard; that is, the magnitude of quotas is invariant across institutions. Thus, the next best strategy, followed in this study, is to administer the survey to students with sufficient diversity in background characteristics, and analyse whether attitudes might be related to socio-economic characteristics, especially caste background.

With this objective, a primary survey<sup>6</sup> was conducted in early October 2015 among undergraduate and postgraduate students currently studying at the University of Delhi. The questions were aimed at gauging attitudes towards AA beneficiaries by focusing specifically on common stereotypes attached to AA recipients. The two broad areas covered by the questions were externalization and internalization, as explained in Section 2. There were also questions attempting to probe ability and effort directly.

##### **4.1 Modified Likert scale to minimize respondent bias**

Respondents were administered a series of questions on their attitudes to particular statements. Their answers were collected on a Likert scale. However, in order to avoid the well-known ‘central tendency bias’ that could arise with the five-point Likert scale, namely, the tendency of respondents to opt for the middle or neutral category, the middle category was eliminated and a four-point scale (‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘disagree’, ‘strongly disagree’) was used which made respondents reveal their position one way or another. Likert scales are also subject to ‘acquiescence bias’, namely, the tendency of respondents to agree with statements as presented. To test for this, the questionnaire contains statements that are opposite of each other (not in sequential order). Acquiescence bias would result in inconsistent responses, with respondents agreeing with both, a statement and its opposite. In this study, testing responses across opposing statements, no presence of acquiescence bias was noted; proportions in the four categories of responses to a statement (say, ‘A’) were reversed in the opposite statement (not ‘A’). All attitude surveys are also subject to a ‘social desirability bias’, namely, the attempt to portray oneself in a more favourable light by giving responses that are politically correct or that are regarded as what the interviewer wishes to hear. This bias was minimized by declaring at the start of the survey that nowhere is the respondent obliged to state his/her full name, to give assurance that the attitude expressed in the survey would remain anonymous. Whether for this or any other reasons, respondents did not shy from giving their opinions on controversial topics, and the responses were not always politically correct. It is likely that some of this bias remains; however,

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<sup>6</sup> The questionnaire (presented here in Appendix A) was adapted from similar studies conducted elsewhere, discussed in Leslie et al. (2014). The content and the language of the questions were modified to suit the higher education context in India. Note that the questions are not directly based on any single questionnaire used elsewhere; they have been created from insights gained from other comparable surveys, and the author’s understanding of the University of Delhi context.

the remaining bias, if any, would result in estimated attitude gaps being understatements of actual gaps in attitudes.

Attitude surveys are also subject to being affected by ‘priming’, through the information about the survey on the consent form or by being asked demographic information that might make certain aspects of a respondent’s identity salient. To avoid this, the consent form contained neutral words and did not include words such as ‘stigma’ or ‘affirmative action’ or ‘quotas/reservations’ that are likely to arouse a passionate or an emotional response. Demographic information was collected at the end of the survey, on a separate page to avoid any aspect of a respondent’s identity from becoming evident at the start of the survey.

## 4.2 Data and methodology

### *Descriptive statistics*

The survey was administered to a total of 471 students. An exclusion criterion was used on age by focusing on students aged between 17 and 25 years, divided into two categories: 17–20 years (late teenagers on the verge of adulthood) and 21–25 years (early adulthood). One of the aims of the survey was also to test for differences in attitudes between these two age groups, as the older group is more likely to be influenced by the social desirability bias. Based on this exclusion criterion, six respondents older than 25 were removed from the sample, leaving a final sample of 465. Table 2 contains the descriptive statistics of the sample by the major social/caste groups: SC, ST, OBC, and ‘General’ (i.e. everyone else). In addition to the variables in the table, data were collected on all respondents’ religion (83 per cent were Hindu, 5 per cent Christian, 3 per cent Muslim, 3 per cent Sikhs, 2 per cent each Buddhist and atheist); mother tongue (a total of 36 languages were reported, of which Hindi was spoken by 77 per cent, Punjabi and Bengali by 3 per cent each, and Malayalam by 2 per cent); and number of siblings (mean 1.53, with OBCs and General having fewer siblings than SCs, who had between 2 and 3 siblings). The General group can be treated as a proxy for UC Hindus as 86 per cent of this group were Hindu. The sample was drawn from six institutions, four course subjects,<sup>7</sup> and five levels of study—the three undergraduate years (Bachelor’s degree students) and two postgraduate years (Master’s degree students).

The difference in the socio-economic characteristics of SCs and UCs are significant in several categories: SC parents have lower educational qualifications than UC parents. This is reflected in the occupational category ‘professionals’. A greater proportion of UCs reported their father to be engaged in ‘business’ or being a ‘businessman’. In the absence of any other detail, they have been clubbed in the category ‘service, shops, business’ based on the 2004 National Classification of Occupations. Approximately 15 per cent of SC mothers are illiterate, whereas <1 per cent of UC mothers are illiterate. A greater proportion of SC and OBC mothers have education above primary level but up to secondary stage (class VIII). A significantly lower proportion of SC mothers have undergraduate and postgraduate education, compared with UC mothers. Overall, 70 per cent students report their mothers to be ‘not working’, with the highest proportion among OBCs (90 per cent of OBC mothers). Survey responses reveal that the differences in the ‘professionals’ category under mother’s occupation are significant across caste groups.

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<sup>7</sup> The institutions were Delhi School of Economics, Hindu College, Ramjas College, Hansraj College, Kirori Mal College, and Department of History at the University of Delhi; and the courses were economics, sociology, commerce, and history.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics from the attitude survey (%)

	SC	ST	OBC	General	All
	10.24	5.35	16.04	68.37	100
Male	57.78	50	52.78	40.2	44.52
Female	42.22	50	47.22	59.8	55.48
Year of study					
UG1	19.57	12.5	55.07	29.7	31.67
UG2	28.26	16.67	23.19	35.97	32.13
UG3	4.35	4.17	5.8	7.92	7.01
PG1	36.96	45.83	13.04	20.79	22.62
PG2	10.87	20.83	2.9	5.61	6.56
Age					
17–20 years	58.7	29.17	84.72	75.9	73.05
21–25 years	41.3	70.83	15.28	24.1	26.95
Father's education					
Illiterate	7.14	0	1.56	0.35	1.21
Literate, up to primary level	0	0	1.56	0.35	0.48
Primary to secondary stage	19.05	15	6.25	2.79	5.57
Secondary school to class XII	19.05	5	18.75	4.53	8.23
UG	23.81	45	51.56	53.66	49.88
PG	30.95	35	20.31	38.33	34.62
Mother's education					
Illiterate	15.38	0	4.62	0.7	2.72
Literate, up to primary level	2.56	5.88	1.54	0.7	1.23
Primary to secondary stage	28.21	29.41	18.46	4.58	10.12
Secondary school to class XII	15.38	11.76	18.46	5.63	8.89
UG	28.21	29.41	47.69	46.83	44.44
PG	10.26	23.53	9.23	41.55	32.59
Father's occupation					
Legislators, senior officials, and managers	39.53	30.43	16.18	19.52	21.6
Professionals	6.98	13.04	10.29	25.34	20.42
Technicians and associate professionals	4.65	8.7	1.47	0.34	1.41
Clerks	16.28	13.04	10.29	14.04	13.62
Service, shops, business	18.6	17.39	54.41	38.36	37.79
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	2.33	8.7	2.94	0.34	1.41
Craft and related trade workers	6.98	0	1.47	0	0.94
Plant and machine operators and assemblies	0	0	1.47	0.34	0.47
Elementary occupations	4.65	8.7	1.47	1.71	2.35
Mother's occupation					
Legislators, senior officials, and managers	4.55	4.76	1.49	5.74	4.91
Professionals	6.82	9.52	2.99	20.61	15.89
Clerks	6.82	9.52	1.49	2.04	3.5
Service, shops, business	6.82	9.52	4.48	4.73	5.14
Elementary occupations	0	0	0	0.34	0.23
Not working	75	66.67	89.55	65.54	70.33

Note: UG, undergraduate; PG, postgraduate.  $N=465$ .

Source: Author's calculations, based on survey data.

### Methodology

The survey instrument collected disaggregated data on a four-point scale, as explained earlier, with respondent information collected both by the four administrative categories (SC, ST, OBC, and General), as well as by the actual caste (*jati*). The decision to name the fourth category General, and not 'Others', as is the default in most datasets, was deliberate. General suggests admission in a non-reserved or open seat, thus the categories are better suited to AA. In principle, this allows students who might belong to beneficiary groups but may have been admitted through merit or without AA to declare themselves as belonging to the General category. Whether this actually happened or not cannot be ascertained.

The data were first analysed at the disaggregated level (four responses and four groups). This analysis revealed two results: (i) the responses of SCs and STs were not significantly different;

and (ii) collapsing the four response categories into two broad ones (agree and disagree) would be more efficient in terms of gauging broad group differences. Thus, the rest of the analysis was conducted in terms of three groups (SCSTs, OBC, and General) and two response categories (agree, as the sum of strongly agree and agree, and disagree as the sum of strongly disagree and disagree). For all attitude questions, comparisons were made between whether there are significant differences in cell proportions in this 3×2 matrix. Additionally, the logistic regression was estimated to identify the key determinants of attitudes.

Let the binary response variable  $Y=1$  if the response is ‘agree’, and  $Y=0$  if the response is ‘disagree’. Let  $X=X_1+X_2+ \dots +X_k$  be the set of explanatory variables. The probability of  $Y$  being 1 can be expressed as:

$$\pi_i = P(Y_i = 1 | X_i = x_i) = \frac{\exp(x_i'\beta)}{1 + \exp(x_i'\beta)},$$

and the logistic transformation yields

$$\text{logit}(\pi_i) = \log\left(\frac{\pi_i}{1 - \pi_i}\right),$$

where  $\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \dots + \beta_k x_{ik}$ .

The explanatory variables (constituting the  $\mathbf{X}$  matrix) were caste group, score in the previous examination, age, gender, father’s education, mother’s education, course of study, and institution. Starting with the most parsimonious model (model A), with caste as the only explanatory variable, additional variables were sequentially added (in the order listed) to each model till the fifth model E (the full specification with all explanatory variables).

## 5 Results

### 5.1 Ability and effort (internalization)

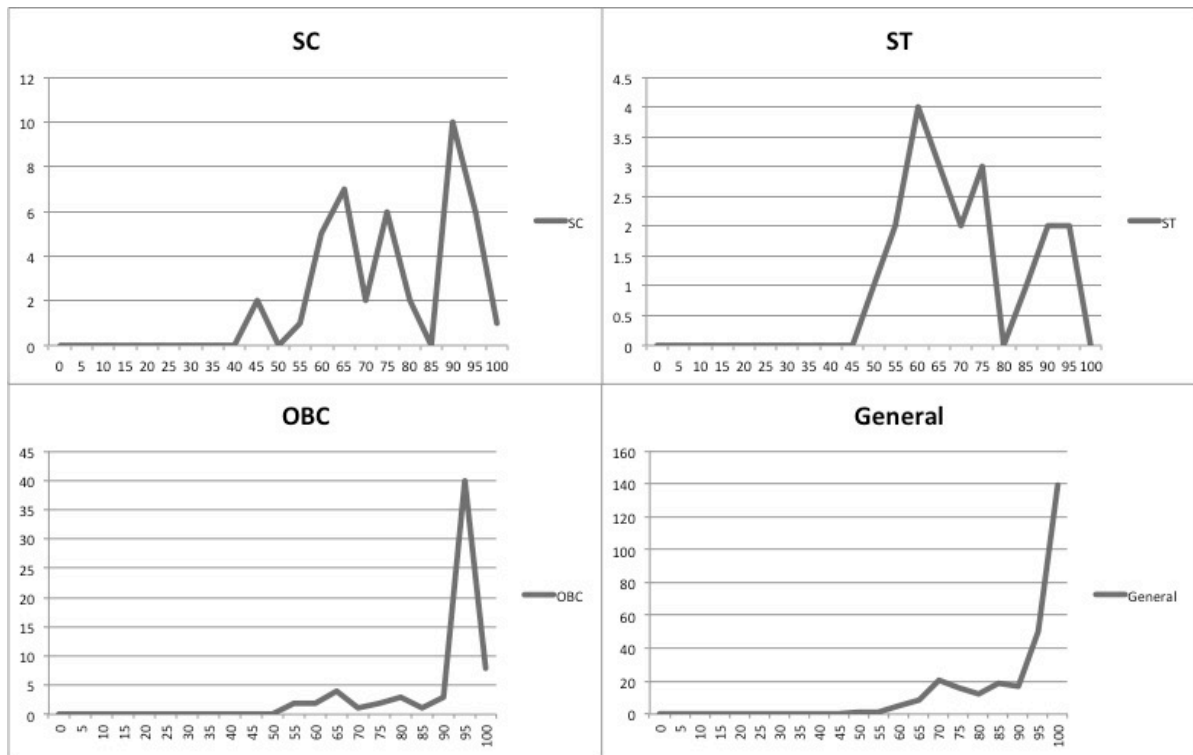
The differences in the average scores in the final examination of students’ previous course of study between caste groups are significant. Note that we have information on students’ current courses, but they have entered their current courses after having studied different courses (subjects and/or programmes) prior to the one they are currently enrolled in. Their previous courses are heterogeneous with respect to scoring potential: some have inherently higher scoring potential than others. The average score for SCSTs (mean=73, SD=14.51) is significantly lower than that for OBCs (mean=88, SD=11.98) and UCs (mean=89, SD=11.39). Figure 3 shows the frequency distribution of exam scores for the four social groups separately.

The distribution of scores suggests that SCs and STs are more likely to have been admitted through use of AA. The difference in mean scores of OBCs and General category is not significant; thus, it is not clear in this sample what proportion of OBCs might have been admitted through use of AA.

Despite this difference in entry scores, which might be seen as a loose proxy for ability, there is no significant difference between caste groups in terms of academic effort with respect to their current study programme. When asked how many hours per day they spend on course-related study in a typical week, the average responses for the groups were not significantly different

(SCST 2.16; OBC 1.88 and General 2.07). When asked whether they take private tuition in addition to their classes, 79 per cent responded ‘no’, with no significant difference between caste groups.

Figure 3: Frequency distribution of exam scores (%) by caste in the previous course of study



Source: Author’s calculations, based on survey data.

In the University of Delhi (and possibly other universities in India), there is a tendency on the part of students to take shortcuts and to minimize the reading of original material (prescribed books or journal articles). Instead, several students rely on second-rate unofficial guidebooks or anonymous photocopied notes of dubious quality with fairly wide circulation, circumventing the official material prescribed by teachers. The more serious students shun this material and focus on original material. Thus, attitudes about the importance of original material indicate a student’s willingness to put in greater effort. When asked their views about whether ‘it is very important to read the original course material/readings to do well in examinations’, most (92 per cent) agreed with the view, with no significant difference between caste groups. Although this high percentage could include social desirability bias, the point to note is that there is no difference in responses between caste groups. As a consistency check, they were asked whether ‘it is sufficient to read guidebooks/photocopied notes to do well in examinations’. Here, a larger proportion disagreed (59 per cent), with a small difference among caste groups, largely on account of the lower proportion of OBC students who disagreed (47 per cent) (Pearson  $\chi^2(2)=5.2158$ ,  $P=0.074$ ). Thus, lower entry scores, necessary for operationalizing AA, do not necessarily result in lower effort on part of the beneficiaries, which is one of the myths feeding into the stigma of AA. This particular stigmatizing attitude is examined in Section 5.3.

## 5.2 Academic performance burden due to externalization

There is some evidence of increased academic performance burden due to externalization. When asked about their view on the statement ‘if I let my teachers know that I am having difficulty in understanding the course material in class, they will have a negative opinion of me’, 83 per cent students disagreed, with a smaller percentage of SCSTs (80 per cent) and OBCs (74 per cent) than UCs (86 per cent) (Pearson  $\chi^2(2)=6.9164$ ,  $P=0.031$ ). However, when asked about their view on the statement ‘I don’t ask questions in class because I don’t want to look foolish or stupid in front of everyone’, most respondents disagreed (71 per cent), with no significant difference between caste groups.

Responses to being asked whether they do well were analysed by group (state, religion, caste, income, gender, none of the groups), revealing a significant difference between caste groups (Pearson  $\chi^2(10)=45.2194$ ,  $P=0.000$ ), with a greater proportion of SCSTs than UCs claiming that it reflected positively on their state and caste than ‘just on me’. This is true of OBCs vis-à-vis the UCs, with an additional difference in the gender dimension: a greater proportion of OBCs than UCs respond that it reflects on their gender. For consistency checks, this question was asked with an opposite statement: ‘if I don’t do well, it reflects negatively on my state, religion, caste, income, gender or just on me’. The answers were consistent with the earlier question, with significant differences between caste groups. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this weak evidence of increased academic performance burden contributes to lower academic performance by beneficiaries.

Prima facie, this suggests that UCs are more individualistic and less oriented around social identities/categories. However, during anti-reservation agitations, UCs have shown a remarkable capacity for collective action. One way to reconcile these two tendencies would be to suggest that UCs have the luxury of not always thinking of themselves in collective terms, but when they encounter a common threat to their dominant position (e.g. because of reservations), they unite around their common UC identity.

## 5.3 Perceptions on stigma and AA (externalization)

This section contains a discussion of the main variables of interest, namely, those related to stigma and AA. The logistic regression results on the key variables are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Odds ratios from selected logistic regressions

	Model A	Model B	Model C	Model D	Model E
<b>Hardworking</b>					
OBC	-1.211***	-0.676*	-0.461	-0.462	-0.481
General	-2.013***	-1.564***	-1.514***	-1.529***	-1.543***
Marks	No	-0.0295***	-0.0284**	-0.0280**	-0.0393**
Age	No	No	-0.0672	-0.0664	-0.267
Gender	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Father's education	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mother's education	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Subject	No	No	No	No	Yes
Institution	No	No	No	No	Yes
Constant	0.987***	3.081***	3.072**	3.041**	4.658***
N	449	418	385	375	369
<b>Incompetent</b>					
OBC	-0.548	-1.011	-0.623	-0.838	-0.63
General	1.320***	1.022**	1.664***	1.386**	1.600**
Marks	No	0.0233**	0.0231	0.0235	0.205
Constant	-2.048***	-3.797***	-1.704	-1.544	-1.019
N	449	418	385	375	342
<b>Deserve better</b>					
OBC	0.863*	0.124	0.341	0.123	0.0712
General	1.321***	0.584	0.867**	0.782*	0.722
Marks	No	0.0595***	0.0114	0.0151	0.00225
Age	No	No	-2.170***	-2.163***	-1.398*
Constant	-1.792***	-6.351***	1.59	1.782	0.621
N	449	418	385	375	357
<b>Don't deserve</b>					
OBC	-0.555	-0.476	-0.486	-0.234	-0.421
General	-1.303***	-1.267***	-1.290***	-0.984**	-1.015**
Marks	No	-0.00529	-0.026	-0.0267*	-0.0334*
Age	No	No	-0.975**	-0.947*	-1.194**
Constant	-0.780***	-0.285	2.484	2.294	3.133*
N	449	418	385	375	369
<b>Not good enough</b>					
OBC	0.766*	0.476	0.415	0.36	0.567
General	1.968***	1.737***	1.780***	1.882***	2.105***
Marks	No	0.00786	0.00707	0.00766	-0.00165
Constant	-1.792***	-2.225***	-2.857*	-2.762*	-1.783
N	449	418	385	375	369
<b>Benefits</b>					
OBC	-0.569*	-0.198	-0.044	-0.229	-0.23
General	-1.015***	-0.678**	-0.628*	-0.765**	-0.829**
Marks	No	-0.0309***	-0.0369***	-0.0361***	-0.0384**
Constant	0.346	2.657***	3.548**	3.583**	3.486**
N	449	418	385	375	369
<b>Reserve discrimination</b>					
OBC	-0.0238	0.463	0.918**	0.761	0.671
General	-1.307***	-0.941***	-0.803**	-0.861**	-0.861**
Marks	No	-0.0256***	-0.0398***	-0.0386***	-0.0597***
Constant	0.780***	2.703***	4.958***	5.045***	5.452***
N	449	418	385	375	369

Source: Author's calculations, based on study data.

*'Students who get admission on quota tend to be hardworking'*

Figure 4a shows the proportions by caste groups of those who agree that students admitted through AA tend to be hardworking. We see that the responses of SCST and General category students are almost exactly opposite. Had SCST students internalized the stigma, it would imply the students internalizing low self-worth, and would not produce this stark difference in responses across caste groups. Model A (Table 3) shows that General category students are twice less likely to agree with this statement and OBCs are 1.2 times less likely to agree compared to

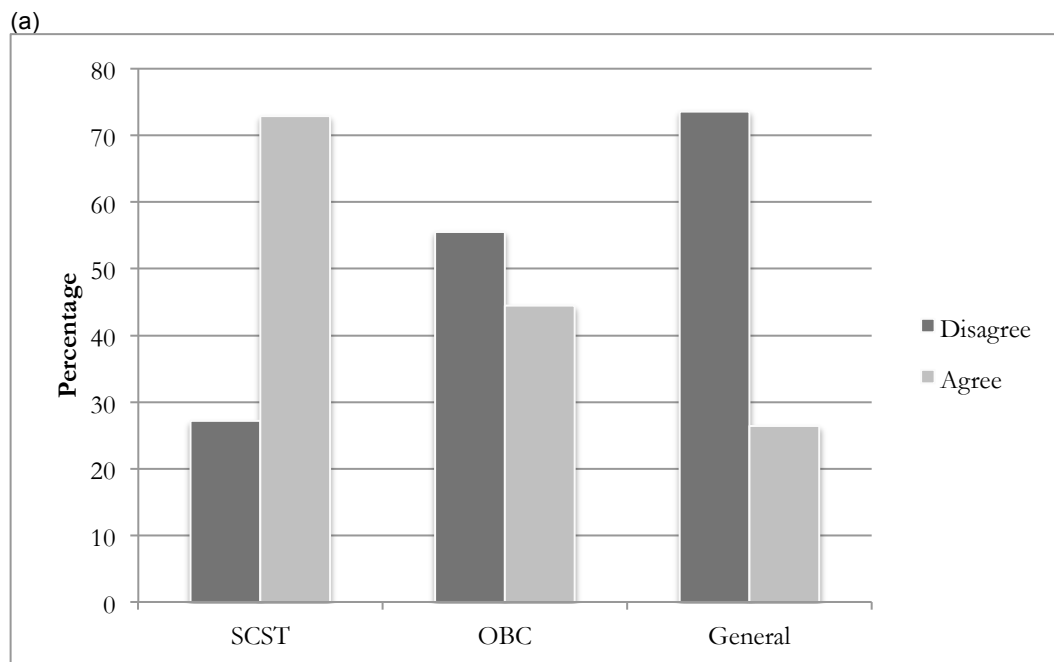


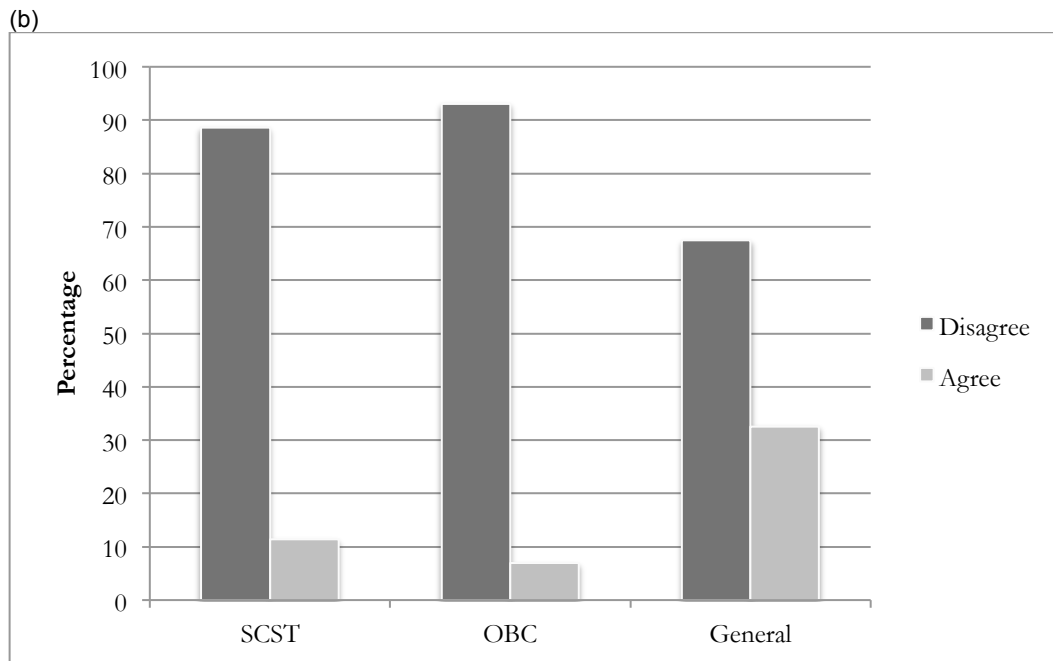
SCSTs, and the caste effect is statistically significant. Model B adds ‘marks in the previous examination’, which has a small in magnitude, but statistically significant and negative effect on the probability of agreeing (i.e. higher scoring students would agree less), but reduces the magnitude of the odds ratio associated with General category to 1.6. Additional explanatory variables do not reduce the magnitude and significance of the UC odds ratio. The significance level of the OBC odds ratio drops in model B, and it becomes insignificant in models C–E. Caste and marks scored are the only two significant variables affecting probability of agreement. The significant impact of caste confirms the presence of ‘externalization’.

*‘Students who get admission on quota tend to be incompetent’*

Figure 4b shows the proportion of those who agree that students admitted through AA tend to be incompetent. UCs are more likely to agree with this statement compared with SCs. There is no significant difference between OBC and SC attitudes. Table 3 shows that marks increase the odds ratio only in model B, but as other variables are added, the effect of marks becomes insignificant. Interestingly, as father’s education increases by one year, the children are half as likely to agree with this statement. Again, the difference in response by caste groups confirms the presence of externalization.

Figure 4: Distribution of responses agreeing that students on quota are: (a) hardworking; (b) incompetent





Source: Author's calculations, based on study data.

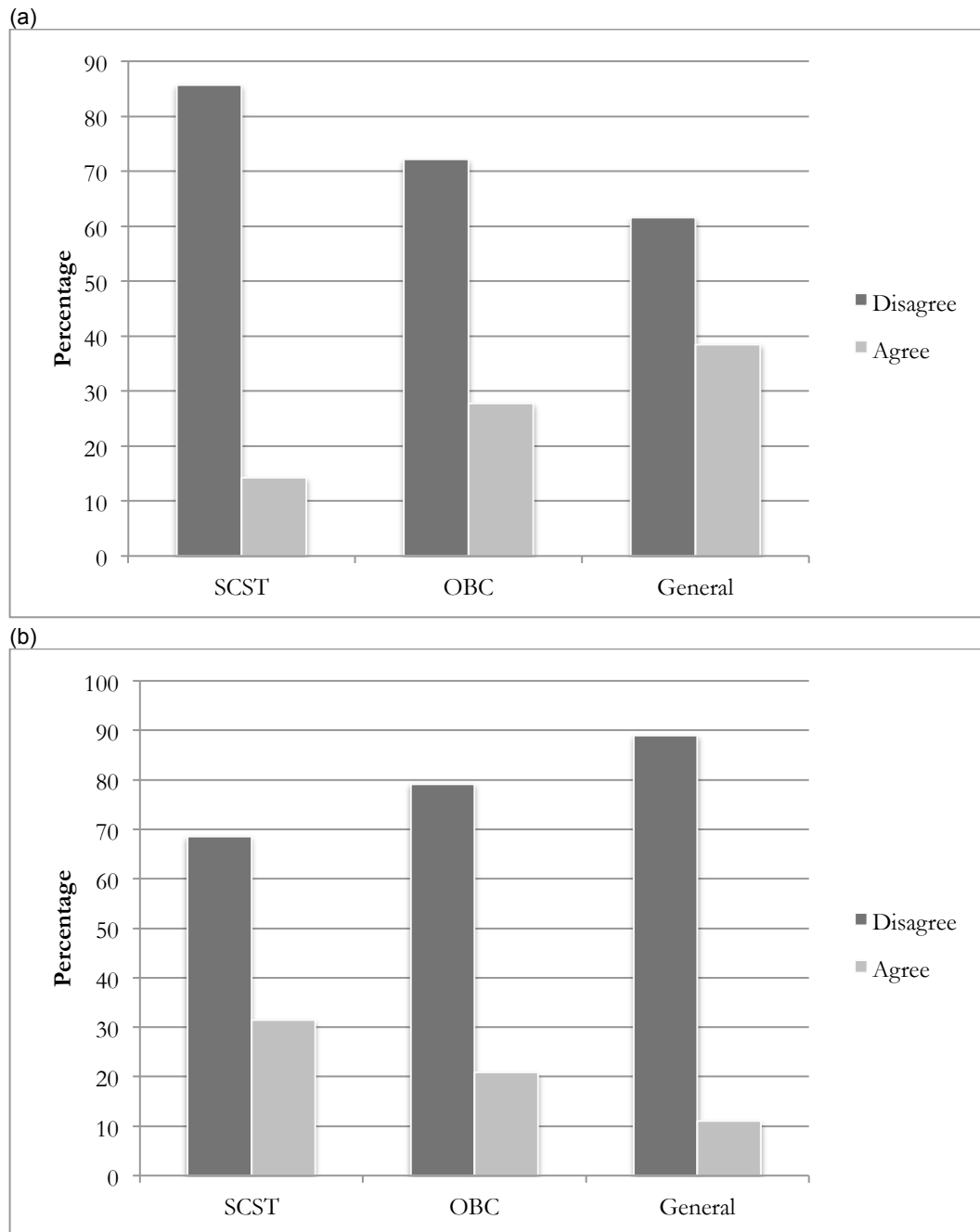
*'I deserve to be in a better college/institution than this one: I didn't get what I deserved'*

Figure 5a shows the proportions by caste groups of those who agree/disagree with this statement. Table 3 shows that age has the strongest effect in that older students are less likely to agree with this statement under all specifications (odds ratios between  $-2.2$  and  $-1.4$ ). Caste is significant under model A (with no additional explanatory variables), but the effect of caste becomes insignificant in the full model. Gender plays a role as girls are less likely to agree than boys in models C and D, but gender becomes insignificant in the full specification.

*'I don't really deserve to be at this institution: this is better than what I was hoping to get into'*

The distribution of responses shown in Figure 5b is for the opposite question analysed in Figure 5a. We should note that within all caste groups, the larger proportion disagree with this statement, even within SCSTs. Thus, there appears to be no evidence of internalization of low self-worth. UCs are significantly less likely to agree with this, compared to SCSTs, and the effect of caste remains strong even under the full specification. Table 3 shows that age lowers the odds ratios, which is an anomaly compared with results in the context of the previous statement.

Figure 5: Distribution of responses agreeing that respondents' college/institution is (a) worse or (b) better than deserved/expected

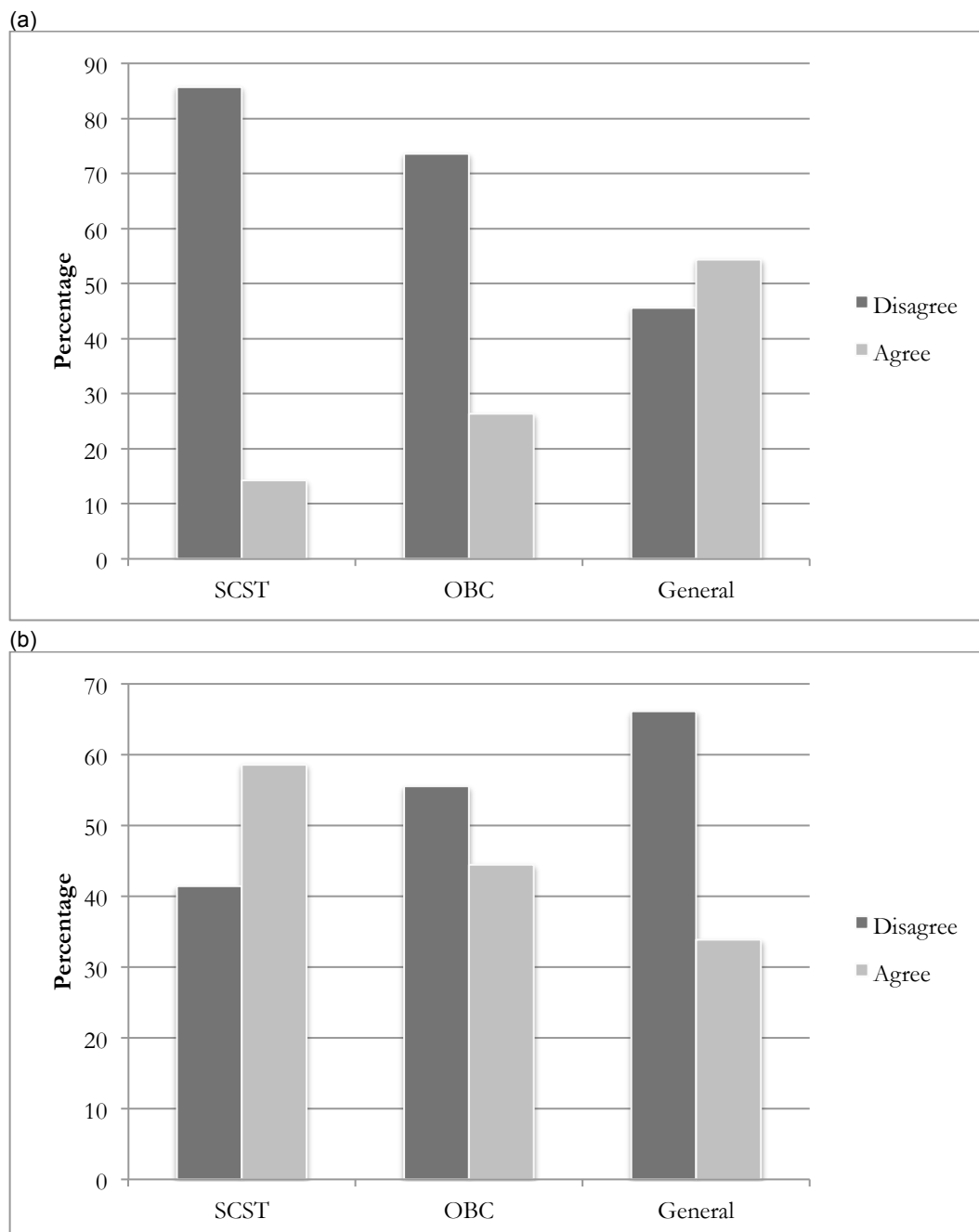


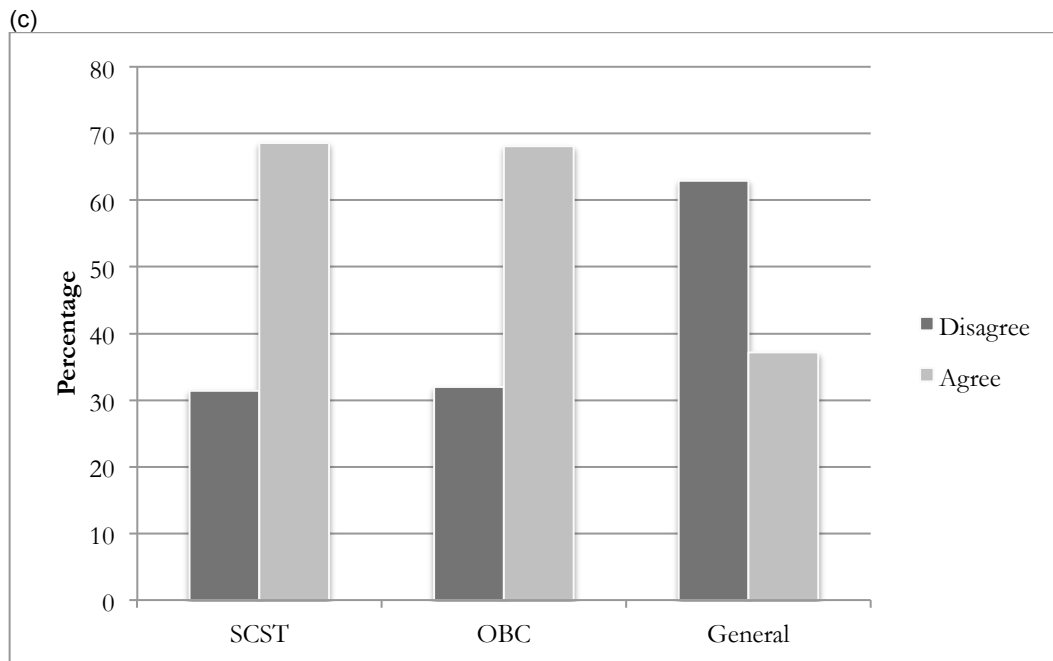
Source: Author's calculations, based on study data.

*Quotas send the message that lower caste/tribal students are not good enough'*

Figure 6 shows the distribution of responses to views on whether quotas send the message that lower caste/tribal students are not good enough. Table 3 shows that the effect of caste is significant under all specifications, which again confirms the externalization mechanism: internalization would not produce significant differences in caste attitudes. UC students are twice as likely to agree with this statement as SCSTs. In models D and E, a one-year increase in father's education increases the odds ratio by 0.4. This is the rare regression in this study, where increase in mother's education has an independent effect after controlling for father's education; however, interestingly, the direction of the effect is negative: an increase in mother's education by one year lowers the likelihood of agreeing with this statement by between 0.3 and 0.4.

Figure 6: Distribution of responses agreeing that (a) students on quota are not good, (b) benefits of quota outweigh disadvantages, and (c) quotas reverse discrimination





Source: Author's calculations, based on study data.

*'The benefits of quotas outweigh the negatives'*

As we see in Table 3, both caste and marks (and no other factor) have a significant and negative effect on the probability of agreement. Compared with SC students, UC students and those with higher marks have a lower probability of agreeing with the statement that benefits of quotas outweigh the negatives compared to SCs.

*'Quotas help in reversing discrimination that Dalits face in society'*

Similar to the previous question, as seen in Table 3, caste and marks have a significant and negative effect on the probability of agreement in the same direction as for the previous question. Gender is negative and significant in models C and D, but not in the full specification.

## 6 Discussion

The reservation system in India, like elsewhere in the world, is attacked for a variety of reasons. Critiques of AA have been assessed in the literature (Deshpande 2013) to show how standard criticisms do not stand up to rigorous evidence-based scrutiny (e.g. Bertrand et al. 2010; Deshpande and Weisskopf 2014). The prevalence of stigmatizing attitudes by peers towards beneficiaries inside educational institutions should not be used as yet another stick to beat the AA policy, even though externalization could lead to an increase in the academic performance burden such that beneficiaries might have to work twice as hard to prove they are just as good. However, as results of Deshpande (2015) show, the uptake of AA is not affected by the fear of stigmatization. Also, beneficiaries view access to preferred positions through AA as a life-altering event, and would not forego that opportunity on account of possible stigma inside HEIs, to which they probably would not be admitted without AA. The presence of greater number of qualified individuals owing to AA provides role models to other members of the community, and weakens the stigmatizing association between group membership and incompetence. More importantly, AA recipients face stigmatization or battle with a stigmatized ethnic identity already regardless of whether they actually use AA. This underlying context of stigmatization is precisely

the context that justifies AA in the first place. As discussed in Section 2, this paper addresses the issue of stigma arising from one dimension, that of competence. Additional rigorous research would be needed to assess the presence of stigma along the warmth dimension as well as to determine the link between stigma of AA and beneficiary performance.

If externalization is the key mechanism through which stigma is being expressed (as the evidence in this paper indicates),<sup>8</sup> this has implications for practice. To begin with, publicizing achievements of AA beneficiaries and highlighting success stories instead of focusing on dropouts could, over time, weaken the stigma of incompetence. (However, this is unlikely to weaken the stigma of warmth, and it is possible that it might even increase hostility due to increased competition.) Also, institutions should take steps to increase self-confidence of beneficiaries with a view to eliminate self-driven processes that propel the academic performance burden.

More importantly and urgently, establishing a climate of mutual respect where bullying, derogatory remarks, and instances of open ostracism are discouraged and met with clear disapproval would be the key policy lessons for HEIs. Establishment of norms about what kinds of behaviours are tolerated might be difficult and contentious, but not impossible. Indeed, within the domain of gender and sexual harassment, following the Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of 2013, it is now mandatory for all HEIs and workplaces to constitute a sexual harassment committee at the institutional level, which not only publicizes norms of acceptable behaviour and offers a legitimate institutional mechanism for redressing grievances and complaints but also promotes gender sensitization at the institutional level (Ministry of Women and Child Development 2015). Indeed, following the tragic suicide of a Dalit Ph.D. student at the University of Hyderabad in January 2016, the University Grants Commission, under the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India, has sent a circular [D.O.F. No. 1-7/2011(SCT), dated 1 March 2016] to all HEIs to initiate steps to prevent caste-based discrimination inside HEIs.

The anti-discriminatory legal provisions in India are patchy. The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act (1989), a modified version of the first anti-untouchability Act,<sup>9</sup> recently amended in December 2015 to include new categories of actions to be treated as offences, including barring entry into an educational institution on account of caste, mainly targets caste-based hate crimes. Offences under this Act are treated as a criminal liability, which means that the burden of proof required is much larger than that for a civil liability, as, indeed, is the punishment, if guilt can be established. However, the conviction rate under this Act is low (the three years from 2012 to 2015 have seen a conviction rate of 30 per cent). This low rate, in addition to reflecting possibly inherent pro-elite and pro-UC biases in the system, reflects a critical difficulty in the use of this law: the aggrieved party has to be able to prove that the crime was committed because of their caste status and not because of any other motive. This is often impossible unless the offence was accompanied by open slurs that establish caste as the key reason for the perpetration of the crime. Also, conviction is only possible if a complaint has been filed under this act. Descriptive accounts suggest that even the filing of a complaint—the

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<sup>8</sup> Leslie et al. (2014) find evidence of both internalization as well as externalization, which is unrelated to the relative strength of the AA programme, as well as to which groups are being targeted. Thus, they find clear evidence of the stigma of AA in the United States. They also find clear evidence of this stigma lowering beneficiary performance.

<sup>9</sup> Article 17 of the Indian constitution abolished ‘untouchability’ and forbade its practice in any form. To enforce this, in 1955, the Indian parliament passed the Untouchability (Offences) Act. In 1976, this was made more stringent and renamed as the Protection of Civil Rights Act. This was made even more stringent in 1989, taking shape as the current Prevention of Atrocities Act (Verma 2016: 26)

first step towards redressal and justice—is extremely daunting, especially for those already humiliated by atrocities. Upper-caste policemen are unwilling to file cases against fellow caste members because of the severity of possible punishment. Those who actually manage to file a complaint face even greater hurdles afterwards in terms of inordinate judicial delays, threats, and harassments, as the decks are stacked against them at all levels (Verma 2016: 32–3).

Although this Act is extremely important, as it has the potential to deter violent hate crimes, there is need for a broader anti-discriminatory legal provision. At the time of writing, there are discussions for a Delhi Equality Bill (2016), which, if operationalized, would seek to create a civil liability for acts of discrimination along various dimensions, including but going beyond caste.

Focusing specifically on educational institutions, evidence suggests that the more challenging issue might be ‘micro-aggressions’ (Lukes and Bangs 2014). Micro-aggressions refer to everyday verbal, non-verbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely on their marginalized group membership. Also, Leslie et al. point out how low perceptions of competence and warmth can result in ‘passive harm’, including rating AA beneficiary performance lower than deserved, inside work places (2014: 981).

These are difficult to tackle legally, as micro-aggressions often constitute acts that are, strictly speaking, not illegal. Also, as academic institutions are meant to uphold and accommodate discord, dissent, and a diversity of views, it is difficult and indeed undesirable to muffle freedom of expression, even of those views that are derogatory towards marginalized groups. This constitutes a huge challenge in terms of creating an atmosphere inside academic institutions that is based on mutual respect and does not stigmatize individuals on account of their group membership.

## **7 Concluding comments**

In the context of a companion study (Deshpande 2015) that demonstrates that the non-use of AA is attributable more to bureaucratic obstacles and lack of information than to the possible added stigmatization, this study was designed to delineate the externalization mechanism from the internalization mechanism. The results of this attitude survey, conducted among undergraduate and postgraduate students currently studying in the University of Delhi, show that despite being admitted with significant difference in entry scores (SC scores lower than those of the so-called UC students), there are no significant differences in the effort and academic attitudes between students from beneficiary groups and those who get into open seats. On a range of questions that evaluate externalization and attitudes towards AA, clear and significant differences are found between caste groups, revealing the presence of stigma through externalization (i.e. the tendency of peers to judge the performance and efforts of students prejudicially) and indicating the prevalence of discriminatory attitudes towards students from target groups. However, although expressed in the context of AA, these attitudes can be seen as reflections of broader underlying social attitudes rather than distinct or new attitudes that are born because of AA. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that eliminating or weakening AA would reduce stigma towards target groups.

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## Appendix A Attitude survey questionnaire

The actual survey instrument administered to the students had four categories of response for each of the questions listed under Q3. For brevity, only the main questions are reproduced here as is from the original, without listing the four options under each of the questions. Study participants provided written informed consent, obtained through the consent form reproduced here as is from the original.

### Consent form

This survey intends to study certain social attitudes of students enrolled in higher educational institutions in metropolitan cities. This is being conducted by Prof. Ashwini Deshpande, of the Economics Department, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University for her research. We would like you to fill out a short attitude survey which is likely to take at most 10 minutes. All personal information that you provide will be kept confidential. Your name will not be used at any stage. Participation in this survey is voluntary. You can choose not to answer questions if you do not want to. At any time during the survey, if you wish to discontinue, please let us know.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questionnaire

1. How many hours per day (between 0 to 6 hours per day), in an average week, do you study for college-related work? (Range is also allowed, e.g. you can write, say 2 hours, OR between 1 and 2 hours) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you joined private tuition or coaching classes outside college? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
3. "It is very important to read the original course material/ readings to do well in examinations". (Tick one of the options below)
  - (a) Strongly agree
  - (b) Agree
  - (c) Disagree
  - (d) Strongly disagree
4. "If I let my teachers know that I am having difficulty in understanding the course material in class, they will have a negative opinion of me".
5. "I don't ask questions in class because I don't want to look foolish or stupid in front of everyone."
6. "It is sufficient to read guide books/photocopied notes to do well in examinations".
7. "If I do well, it reflects positively on a) other students from my state (e.g. if there is a Bengali student who does well, it reflects positively on *all* Bengali students)/ b) other students from my religion/ c) other students from my caste group / d) other students from my income bracket./ e) other students of my gender/ f) doesn't reflect on anyone else other than me. "
8. "Students who get admission on quota tend to be hardworking".
9. "Students who get admission on quota tend to be incompetent."
10. "In my class, general category and quota students mix easily."
11. "If I don't do well, it reflects negatively on a) other students from my state/ b) other students from my religion/ c) other students from my caste / d) other students from my income bracket/ e) other students of my gender/ f) doesn't reflect on anyone else other than me. "

12. "If teachers hold negative stereotypes against certain groups, it will affect their evaluations of students from that group."
13. "General category students tend to discriminate against quota students".
14. What percentage did you get in the last examination you took for this course?
15. What was your percentage in the final examination of your previous course of study?
16. "I deserve to be in a better college/ institution than this one. I didn't get what I deserved".
17. "I don't really deserve to be at this institution: this is better than what I was hoping to get into."
18. "My classmates act as if I don't deserve to be here."
19. "My teachers act as if I don't deserve to be here".
20. "Quotas send the message that lower caste/tribal students are not good enough."
21. "General category and quota students don't mix much."
22. "It is important for people from different backgrounds to mix with each other, as it increases my understanding of the world."
23. "The benefits of quotas outweigh the negatives."
24. "Diversity in institutions is not good, it lowers quality."
25. "Quotas help in reversing discrimination that Dalits face in society."
26. "My classmates are always ready to help me when I face difficulties related to course material"
27. "SCs and STs face stigmatisation and discrimination in society."

Think of your top 5 closest friends (those that often visit your place of residence and whose place of residence you would visit).

28. How many are from religions other than your own? (e.g. If you are Hindu, how many are Muslims, Christians or other religions?)
29. How many are from states other than your own? (i.e. if you are from Tamil Nadu, how many are non-Tamils)?
30. How many are from caste groups other than your own? (i.e. if you are from the general category, how many are SCs or STs or OBCs)?

**Basic information about yourself:**

1. Age (in years):
2. Course and year:
3. College/Department:
4. Gender:
5. Religion:
6. Jati:
7. Mother Tongue:
8. Caste group (SC/ST/OBC/General):
9. Number of siblings:
10. Father's Occupation:
11. Mother's Occupation:
12. Father's Education:
13. Mother's Education