Political Correctness: Exploration within the Indian Context

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Research Article

ABSTRACT

Political Correctness (PC) is a particular type of anti-bias norm that sets expectations for people to censor words, thoughts, and actions that might be offensive to various identity groups. Hence, the words that may be considered politically correct in India may not be considered as politically correct in the western context. The primary objective of the study was to understand the prevalence of usage of politically correct words among the youth of India. The study also aimed to understand the relation between the usage of politically correct language and the personality traits of the participants and their attitude toward politically correct language. For the same, an open-ended questionnaire was developed and data was collected from 50 participants across three domains, namely 'Attitude Towards Political Correctness', 'Politically Correct Language', and 'Ten Item Personality Inventory'. The study found that 21 people fall in the bracket of 'very frequent', 26 in 'frequently', and 3 in 'not frequently' use politically correct language. Politically correct words referencing caste and region saw a higher frequency as compared to person-first language and gender. Attitudes scores of the participants were positively related to the politically correct language scores. Participants who scored high on agreeableness and low on conscientiousness, openness to experience, and extraversion traits showed more frequent use of politically correct language. There is a marginal difference between the politically correct language scores of participants high and low on emotional stability.

INTRODUCTION

There is a shifting narrative that exists around political correctness, where it constantly evolves with the cultural and social context. The word 'political correctness' is quite ambiguous and comes with ethical controversy.

Political correctness is a particular type of anti-bias norm that sets expectations for people to censor words, thoughts, and actions that might be offensive to various identity groups and instead promote words, thoughts, and actions that include, or will not offend, the broadest array of relevant identity groups. Examples based on the idea

of political correctness include replacing the terms "husband" or "wife" with "partner" to show sensitivity to same-sex couples.

Some people have described political correctness as the opposite of free expression. Feared the focus on the language creating an environment that consistently oppressed varied opinions and puts the focus on the words as compared to the larger idea behind them. Over time, the term has had a consequential effect on various sections of society like comedy, business and education. People who oppose the use of PC fundamentally believe that it curbs expression and labels it as a radical idea that essentially neglects the narratives of oppositional ideas.

On the other hand, the idea of political correctness has also created a culture of accountability, especially in professional areas where building PC norms can promote idea generation. A key mechanism is that minority members are increasingly willing to share ideas in a group in which different members' behaviour is more predictable. More recently, researchers have defined PC as the use of inclusive language although the words that are considered acceptable or unacceptable change over time and are different across cultures. Describes the core features of PC as a focus on offensive language, prejudiced attitudes, and insulting behavior directed towards those in marginalized groups; however, the author admits that those are not adequate to fully define PC, as it is too broad and ambiguous. Social scientists should be especially interested in measuring PC because of how it may relate to many other topics in psychology such as racism, sexism, and prejudice [1-5].

History of political correctness

Political correctness, originally born in the USA, lacks an Indian perspective and hence is often exploited or neglected in personal and professional dialogue. Primarily, it originated on college campuses in the early 1990's, where their narrative was polarized by the political left, creating a stiff idea of what was to be considered politically correct and true within American history.

Today, the presence of PC has moved beyond academia and integrated itself into everyday language, creating a need to be mindful of the language that can be seen as offensive and isolating to communities. For example in the Indian context, in 2015 in the name of curbing racial discrimination a legal framework was created that would make using the term, 'chinki' a jailable offense. Even in 2020, a significant controversy emerged against the use of the word 'committed suicide' and instead 'saying died by suicide.

There is an ever-changing and evolving definition of political correctness; newer social developments need to be kept in mind. Political correctness through history has presented a dilemma of exploitation. The question that comes is whether political correctness promotes ideas or does it adversely affects and further isolates marginalized sections of society by the majority in fear of offending them.

Attitude

ABC model of attitudes defines its three components. Affective is the emotive part of attitude describing our feelings towards an object, and the behavioral component defines how we intend to act upon it. The behavior component is often influenced by the cognitive aspect or our thoughts about the object. While this theory has been widely criticized, it forms the basis of understanding attitude functionality. These three components can also be understood as the foundations of attitudes.

Emotional foundations of attitudes consist of different processes including object evaluation through the transmission of sensory information (sensory reactions), pre-existing moral values, and repeated exposure. We are also prone to get conditioned into forming a positive or negative attitude. This happens when there exists a reward or punishment, leading to operant or classical conditioning. Evaluative conditioning happens as a consequence of the emotions coinciding with exposure to an attitude object. Cognitive foundations of attitude result from our

thoughts, or belief systems, about something. Attitudes may be a result of the self-perception of the behavior towards an object.

Language bias

Group behaviors, and even individuals to a large extent, are influenced by prejudice and discrimination. These are born from negative generalizations that are associated with certain social groups. Such negative connotations are passed down through generations and among communities through communication. The most frequently used form of communication, verbal, thus, gets influenced by stereotyping. Through subtle or overtly used sentences and phrases, these prejudices become known and communicated and are called politically incorrect words.

Define linguistic bias as a systematic asymmetry in word choice as a function of the social category to which the target belongs. The Linguistic Intergroup Bias (LIB) model describes a systematic bias in language use, which can contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes. Linguistic biases result from and facilitate the transmission of essentialist beliefs about social categories. Suggested that conscious control over inconspicuous differences in language abstraction is more difficult to control than out-group discrimination. Distinguish between biased labels used to refer to social groups and their members, and those used to explain behaviors. An example cited for category labels includes those for men and women. The author further suggests that labels are more likely to be formed for behaviors or persons that do not confine to social expectations. Linguistic Expectancy Bias, a term coined by refers to the greater likelihood of using ideation to describe behaviour in line with the social expectations than those opposing the expectations. Their study provided evidence for this hypothesis and concluded that the former category of behaviors was attributed to dispositional factors and not situational ones [6-8].

The present study

Today, within the Indian context, political correctness has become a new and engaging idea, especially among the youth. The need to be aware of intersectional identities has been amplified to ensure that there is sensitivity among the population while referring to people belonging to other communities.

India with its extensive diverse identities needs to be especially sensitive to different narratives and the emotional and social impact of language. Labeling or name-calling a group can suppress voices and isolate an already marginalized group. Political correctness is subjective to a cultural and social context, keeping this in mind it may be assumed that the words that may be considered PC in India will align with Indian values and experiences and may not be considered as PC in western countries.

For example, queer has a turbulent history in the west and can be considered a slur from their perspective, however, in India; its usage has never been associated with an insult as it is widely accepted as the correct way of referring to the community. While referring to someone is still a matter of personal choice, for academic studies and political spaces, queer is very acceptable.

Our study also aims to include the PC language, particularly in a few Indian regional communities that include people belonging to the cities of Bengal or from the region of southern India. The study was conceptualized keeping in mind the social developments and the newer integration of the 'woke' language. The objective is to evaluate the prevalence of political correctness within the youth and their attitude towards the same. The purpose is to understand the social awareness of the population and their experiences using PC language.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objectives

The primary objective of the study was to understand the prevalence of usage of politically correct words among the youth of India. The study also aimed to understand the relation between the usage of politically correct language and personality traits of the participants, and their attitude towards politically correct language.

Sample

A total of 50 participants between the age ranges of 18-35 were selected through convenient and snowball sampling for the study. The selection criteria included Indian citizens who had access to the internet and were familiar with the English language.

Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI)

The TIPI was a 10-item measure of the Big Five (or Five-Factor Model) measuring personality across the 5 dimensions of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experiences. Psychometric properties of the TIPI were studied and the self-report measure was found to be reliable and valid.

Politically correct language frequency questionnaire

The politically correct language frequency questionnaire consists of 31 questions assessing PC word usage which was inspired. Questions specific to the Indian cultural context were added, including those of caste and religion, while those referring to solely Western ideologies were removed.

Attitude questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions reflecting ABC model of attitude and was inspired by the 'Politically Correct Language Opinions and Attitudes Survey'. Out of these 16, 11 questions were assessed on the 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agrees to strongly disagree. The remaining 5 questions were open-ended and choice-based questions that were qualitatively assessed.

Administration

The questionnaire was circulated through online platforms to known contacts who met the inclusion criteria. Consent was taken to participate in the study and instructions regarding the same were given. The participants were informed that the information shared will remain confidential and they were thanked for their participation. After the data was collected from 50 participants, the form was closed for further responses.

Scoring

The Ten Item personality Inventory was scored by adding the scores of each personality type; certain questions were reversed and scored based on the question formation.

The politically correct language frequency test was calculated by marking each answer option as politically correct or politically incorrect. Participants who chose the politically correct option were allocated a point and the same pattern was followed for all questions. Individual scores were then calculated to analyze the frequency of usage of politically correct language. The highest score possible was hence 30 with the lowest being 0.

The attitude scale questionnaire consisted of two sets of questions; the initial part of the questionnaire was assessed on a 5-point Likert scale while the latter asked open ended and opinion-based questions that were qualitatively analysed [9,10].

RESULTS

The results as attached in the appendix show the totality of 50 participants. To understand Number of participants showing usage of PC as per the PC language Questionnaire the responses have been categorized as very frequent usage of PC language, frequent and not frequent at all with 21, 25 and 3 people falling in each category respectively. In terms of Attitude towards usage of PC on the PC language Questionnaire the responses have been divided into high, moderate and low support for PC with 24, 24 and 2 people falling in each category respectively (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of participants showing usage of PC as per the PC language Questionnaire.

PC score interpretation	No. of people
Very frequently	21
Frequently	26
Not frequently	3
Mean score	18.9
Standard deviation	5.13

Figure 1 indicates different personality traits across PC scores, while Figure 2 shows average scores of politically correct language scores in relation to participants' attitude scores on the questionnaire, which shows that people with low support fall majorly in frequent usage while moderate and high support are primarily within very frequent usage.
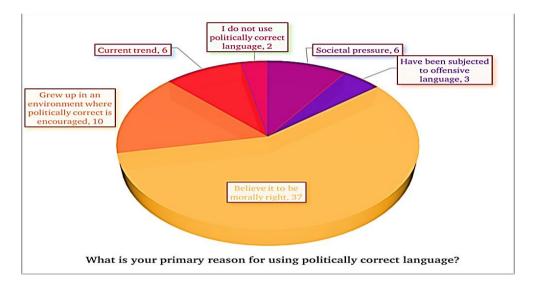
Figure 1. Average scores of politically correct language scores in relation to participants' personality traits.

The above graph represents personality traits on the x-axis, where 'C' stands for conscientiousness, 'ES' for emotional stability, 'OE' for openness to experience, 'E' stands for extraversion and 'A' stands for agreeableness. The average scores of all the participants falling within each of these personality traits are shown on the y-axis.

Figure 1 shows that participants who were low on conscientiousness, extraversion and openness to experiences, and high on agreeableness had higher scores on the PC language questionnaire, with scores averaging above 19.

There was a marginal difference between the average scores of those high (18.93) and low (19) on emotional stability. Participants having highly and moderately supportive attitudes towards PC language averaged to 24.3 and 22 respectively in the 'very frequently' use PC language category. However, the average scores on the 'frequently' and 'not frequently' use PC language were higher with those who moderately support PC than those who highly support it (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Participant's responses on the primary reason for using politically correct language. **Note:** (🟧) Believe it to be morally right, 37; (🟧) Grew up in an environment where politically correct is encouraged, 10; (🟥) Current trend, 6; (🟪) I do not use politically correct language, 2; (🟪) Societal pressure, 6; (🟪) Have been subjected to offensive language, 3.

What is your primary reason for using politically correct language?
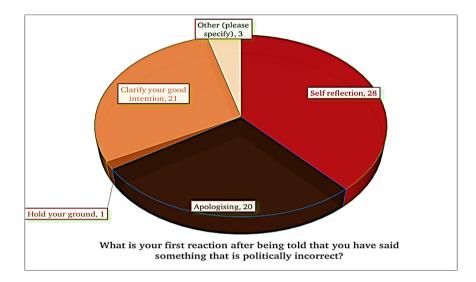
DISCUSSION

Political correctness (PC) is defined as a particular type of anti-bias norm that we define as a norm that sets expectations for people to censor words, thoughts, and actions that might be offensive to various identity groups and instead promote words, thoughts, and actions that include, or will not offend, the broadest array of relevant identity groups. In India, politically correct language is difficult to define due to the ambiguous cultural interpretation and the diverse number of languages being spoken by the population. Regardless, for the educated English-speaking population, politically correct language is growing in relevance. There is a growing need to be aware of the various groups and their interpretation of politically correct language as there is a deep-rooted stigma attached to language that can perpetuate violence and prejudice among different populations. How one reacts to such 'labels' and interprets language is also at times, dependent on personality (Figure 3).

Keeping this in mind, the study was conducted to understand the relationship between personality traits and the prevalence of the usage of politically correct words among the youth of India. Through the study, we also tried to assess the attitudes held by people towards politically correct language.

The initial aim of the present study was to understand the frequency of occurrence of politically correct language within the population of Indian youth using a qualitative analysis. Table 1, displays the frequency of the PC language scores. The table shows that 21 people come under the bracket of using Politically correct language 'very frequently', 23 in 'frequent', and 3 in 'less frequently'. This indicates a relatively high usage of PC language among the participants. The results also showed (as seen in Table 1) that the mean of the total scores of the participants was 18. 98 which indicate overall frequent usage of PC language by the sample population.

While evaluating the nature of the PC scores, we can interpret that the highest number of correct responses were recorded in 3 questions, First, asking 'what the participants associate the word terrorism with, ideology, religion or use of arms and ammunition', and second asking 'which words the participants used the most from- transgender, Other genders, 'which of the following do you most commonly use when referring to someone belonging to Bihar- Bihari, khotta, and bhangi'. For all these questions, 47 participants chose the correct option of 'ideology', 'transgender', and 'Bihari', respectively.

Figure 3. Participant responses on being called out as politically incorrect. **Note:** (■) Self reflection, 28; (■) Clarify your good intention, 21; (■) Apologizing, 20; (■) Other (please specify), 3; (■) Hold your ground, 1.

The lowest score was recorded by the term 'A person with an alcohol use disorder', where people chose 'alcoholic' as their most frequently used term (Table 2).

Table 2. Attitude towards usage of PC on the PC language Questionnaire.

Attitude score interpretation	No. of people
Highly support PC	24
Moderately support PC	24
Low support PC	2
Mean score	39.04
Standard deviation	5.79

The data for the politically correct words were divided into 6 broad categories, 'Gender and sexuality, 'mental health and disability, 'religion, region, caste', 'economic ideologies', 'political ideologies', and 'other'.

Under mental health and disability, the person first language (putting person before diagnosis) emerged as an integral differentiation.

While talking about a person's first language, especially in mental health, scores were relatively low across questions with only 14 people choosing 'Person with a drug abuse disorder' and 19 people choosing "person with a hearing impairment", with the highest no of people choosing "person with mental illness, (N=34), this may be because the person the first language is still a relatively novel initiation in the world of ethical language, for example in a study conducted it was concluded that even among highly trained mental health professionals,

exposure to these two commonly used terms evokes systematically different judgments. The commonly used "substance abuser" term may perpetuate stigmatizing attitudes [11-14].

While evaluating the most commonly used politically incorrect words, the term 'alcoholic' and 'drug addict' saw the highest prevalence in usage with 36 and 39 people using the term most commonly insinuating that there is a probable lack of cultural sensitivity and awareness around the terminology within mental health in India. 'Committed suicide' also saw a high occurrence with 29 people admitting to its frequent use, this may be attributed to unethical reporting of the mental illness within the media and a general lack of awareness around the subject due to the cultural stigma attached to it. Analysis of scholarly writings shows that person-first language had been increasingly used over the last two decades for referencing children, while in the case of adult's identity-first language is used as commonly as person-first. Further, an argument can be made that if persons without disabilities are not referred to using person-first and those with disabilities are, the use of politically correct linguistic structures can deepen stigmas. This is because the foundation and purpose of using person-first are to create a lack of distinction between those with and without disabilities. Under other gender-based questions, the frequency of the politically correct word 'server' was 11, which may be because in India, most restaurant staff is inclined towards the male population and hence our prerequisite perception is to characterize them as waiters, instead of waitresses or a gender-neutral term like server. Similarly, domestic workers were chosen by 14 people, with the majority choosing 'maid' and characterizing the profession to the female gender. Additionally, the term 'maid' was chosen by 47 participants as particularly in India, domestic work is a very female-centric occupation where according to a study gender roles play a continued role in a way that men may be employed for better-paying government jobs with women getting no alternate better opportunities moreover, studies show that most women are depicted doing domestic work within Media and hence perpetuating the gender disparity between men and women in performing domestic work. Similarly, 31 participants chose 'waiter' showcasing it to be a male-centric occupation. Additionally, 31 people chose homemaker, while the rest chose housewife, a pattern of social influence can be seen in terms of the job categorization among genders. The first three are indicative of socio-cultural norms which suggest the two professions of housework as predominantly female-driven. Such norms are often fortified through media, fiction, and non-fiction, a portrayal of women in domestic spheres and education. For example, in 2021, a passage of class 10 English question paper designed by an Indian education board, reinforced the idea of the husband as the 'master' and that self-liberation (from patriarchal enforced slavery) of women led to the downsizing of parental authority over children. For the term 'gay', 25 people chose the term creating a narrative where there is a severe lack of knowledge among the Indian population when it comes to various sexual orientations. For example, in India, there is still relatively low awareness and/or acceptance of the LGBTQI community, and even though the term is frequently used in academia and is still relatively PC, there is a subjective debate about its inherent meaning as 'odd'. In western societies, people have preferred other terms like 'as belonging to the LGBTQI community. Keeping the context surrounding religion and caste within India in mind, a high no. of participants chose the politically correct words, i.e., 46 for 'Sikh', 46 for 'Bihari', 46 for 'Bengali', 41 for 'Muslim', and 39 for 'scheduled caste'. In a diverse country like India, religion-specific slurs are common but people understand their negative significance and may be less likely to admit their use while answering surveys. Caste is an example of a domain in which political correctness has blurred distinctions. The Kerala government has banned the usage of the terms 'Dalit', 'Harijan', and 'Keezhalan' from all official publications. However, activists like Sunny M Kapikad and Rekha Raj reflected in a "The News Minute' article that the use of the word 'Dalit' leads to empowerment and the creation of community spaces. The use of politically correct language thus, ventures beyond

the dictates of the state or central government. When speaking of identities, caste, religion, or gender-based, personal preference prevails the social and cultural norms. The subjectivity of personal language highlights the importance of intention behind using identity words since what is majoritarian accepted may be offensive to someone within the very community [15-16]. Keeping in mind the impact of language on body image, a significantly low number of people chose the politically correct word healthy, (N=15) while an equal number of people chose fat and overweight (N=16), this is particularly disconcerting as the judgment of others, particularly on one's appearance can have a catastrophic impact on one's mental health. Especially within today's technological context, the media consumed by the majority of the youth tends to promote a singular body type, that of 'thin' women. Studies have actively tried to understand the extent of the damage caused by such media, in a study conducted by found body image to be positively correlated with media usage, where it became more negative post viewing images of a thin body type when compared to average size models, plus size models, or inanimate objects. This effect was stronger for between-subjects designs, participants less than 19 years of age.

Personality

A graph was plotted with personality traits on the x-axis and average politically correct language scores on the y-axis. In interpreting the relation, we saw people having low scores on conscientiousness had higher scores on PC (19.41) as compared to the ones scoring high on conscientiousness. In terms of emotional stability, there wasn't a stark contrast between the PC scores of people high or low on ES with a score of 18.93 and 19 respectively. People low on openness to experience have a higher PC score as compared to the contrary, while people low on extraversion had higher PC scores as compared to people low on extraversion. This can be understood as research shows that introverts take more time and perform more accurately and excel in tasks-requiring focus, vigilance, and reflection. Such differences in cognitive processing are likely to be reflected in language use and hence such a personality type would be more receptive to the politically correct language. In sum, extroverts appear to both verbally and cognitively exhibit a more imprecise style with reduced concreteness, whereas introverts exhibit a more analytic, careful, and focused style. Similarly, people high on agreeableness also scored better in terms of political correctness. This is consistent with most literature as it suggests that PC is positively correlated to agreeableness.

In understanding political correctness through an ideological perspective, old research saw that individuals who were seen as "creative, imaginative, curious" (characteristics associated with Openness to Experience) were more likely to be attracted to a liberal ideology, whereas those who are "orderly and organized" (characteristics associated with Conscientiousness) were more likely to be attracted to a conservative ideology, this shows that Conscientiousness may at times promote a more need to hold on to more traditional language and belief. Similarly, In a study, by they stated that racially prejudiced attitudes were primarily predicted by low Openness-Intellect and Agreeableness, but high Conscientiousness, which aligns with our findings for both agreeableness and conscientiousness, however, our data elucidate/introduces the finding that people high on openness to experiences (Openness-Intellect) are low on PC (Figure 4).

The below graph shows the frequency (on y-axis) of politically correct words (on x-axis) chosen by the 50 participants. The data was divided into six categories namely; gender and sexuality; mental health and disability; religion, region and caste; economic ideologies; political ideologies; and miscellaneous.
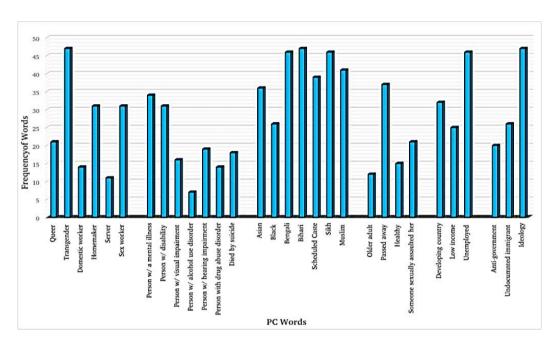
Figure 4. Frequency of politically correct answers chosen by the participants (N=50).

Attitude scores

The questionnaire was designed to understand the participants' attitudes about politically correct language. Thus, it primarily covers behavioral and cognitive components and includes affective-based questions, as suggested by ABC model of attitudes.

Participants were asked to state if they were aware of political correctness or politically correct language, and the majority (N=44) replied affirmatively while the remaining 6 denied having ever heard of the two aforementioned.

A total of 24 participants displayed a positive attitude towards political correctness, with their scores ranging between 41 and 55. This was followed by participants whose score range is 26-40, and who are neutral in their support for the politically correct language. 2 participants had lower scores of 12 and 17 suggesting negative attitudes toward politically correct language [17].

Participants were asked to select their primary reason for using politically correct language from the options given or to state their reasons. For 37 (74%) participants out of a total of 50, the primary reason was that they believed political correctness to be morally right. 10 participants suggested that they grew up in an environment which encouraged politically correct language. Found that family members within the home had the foremost impact on younger children concerning their lingual biases, suggesting that familial factors influence politically correct experiences. Each of the options of current trends and societal pressure was selected by 6 participants respectively. This suggests the role of behavior reinforcement, either through social environments or through fear of social exclusion.

When asked the immediate reaction to using politically incorrect language and subsequently being corrected the majority (N=28) suggested that they self-reflect, followed by apologizing (N=21). 20 participants stated that they would clear their intentions of using certain terminology while one participant said they would hold their ground. Immediate reactions of participants can be linked to avoiding and reducing humiliation. Found that out of anger, happiness, and humiliation, the last invocation is more intense than happiness and more negative than anger. The reactions may also be linked to genuine regret or concern, fear of social exclusion, or the need to salvage the relationship.

Reflecting on the open-ended question asking about the influence of politically correct language on society, over 30 participants believed that politically correct language reduced discrimination, led to inter-group sensitivity, and promoted inclusivity and 2 participant's implied increased effectiveness in communication. These suggestions are corroborated by research by which showed that groups have been dehumanized by the use of biased language supported by a subsequent behavior change. A few participants also highlighted the negative impacts of using politically correct language, including reasons like lack of a diverse discourse and restriction of language/free expression. Further, there is the implication of cancelling culture due to the imposition of political correctness.
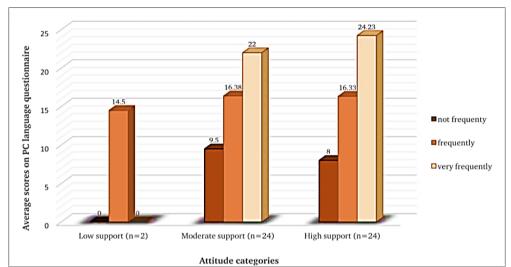
When asked what would help the participants gain awareness about political correctness, the majority of the participants suggested incorporating credible content in their educational curriculum and making classrooms spaces that actively encourage the use of politically correct language. Approximately 5 participants also suggested the need for the historical context of political correctness, and the availability of online courses about the same. The importance of media, in the form of articles and conversions with credited academicians, was highlighted in many of the answers. There is an overall lack of literature concerning political correctness and evidence regarding its usage. Mass media platforms and educational curriculums often shy away from the topic. The need for a systemic change in the education curriculum from the grassroots level is highlighted by a participant who said that 'political correctness is something that can only be actively and easily undertaken by those with high socio-economic and cultural capital. Marginalized communities do not comprise the most advanced societies, to begin with, due to years of prejudice. Political correctness seems to be a tool that further alienates those it aims to help.'

An important concern to tackle is teaching the differentiation between political correctness, the dismissal of harsh criticism, and unnecessary language policing. The rapid growth of social media has also given rise to 'cancel culture', which brings the conundrum of social activism and disregard for opposing viewpoints. Different communities experience PC differently and have a relatively subjective relationship with it, in an Indian cultural context, while people belonging to the lGBTQI+ community might be more receptive to political correctness; such trends are not consistent across communities. The service industry is immune to imposing PC on customers. Additionally, environment matters, due to deep-rooted cultural gender biases, people are slow to point out politically incorrect terms within a familial space [18,19].

A graph (refer to Figure 5) plotting the attitude categories on the x-axis and average scores of the PC language questionnaire on the y-axis shows that the average scores of participants on 'high support' are 24.23 in the category of very frequently used politically correct language as opposed to those on 'moderate support' whose score was 22 on the same frequency category. The average score on the not frequently used politically correct language is greater on the 'moderate support' than the 'high support' category. This shows a positive relationship between politically correct language scores and attitudes towards political correctness. However, those falling within the low support category on the attitude questionnaire had an average politically correct language score of 14.5 or fell in the frequently used politically correct language, corroborating the theories of Skinner and Bruner. Language acquisition theories, both by Skinner and Bruner, reflect on the relations and interactions with family and caregivers as important sources of language acquisition and development. Thus, the lack of a relationship between personality traits and biased (or unbiased) language usage lends to the importance of social factors in language learning. In other words, despite the affirmative attitudes towards political correctness, participants use words largely regarded as politically incorrect or offensive, having been conditioned to do so by their environment. Thus, the broader domain of politically correct words used by the participants is likely to be subjective to their

experiences, and people belonging to patriarchal families are more likely to show biases toward gender-neutral terms (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Average scores of politically correct language scores in relation to participants' attitude scores. **Note:** (■) Frequently; (■) Not frequently; (■) Very frequently.

The above graph is a pictorial representation showing the three attitude categories of 'low support', 'moderate support', and 'high support' on x-axis. The average scores of all the participants falling within each of these attitude categories is shown on the y-axis.

In the end, politically correct language is difficult to define and restrict within a singular interpretation, but due to the bias and prejudice attached to language, there is a need to move from individual interpretation to collective and communal respect. Following the study, we can conclude that there are no overarching personality traits that can predict the usage of politically correct language but attitude is important in understanding how people interpret the social, emotional, and cultural relevance of politically correct language and its usage.

Political correctness is a relatively novel consideration within our social strata. There is a significant lack of literature on political correctness across the world and especially within the Indian context due to which the study lacks a literature background the study also has a significantly small sample size with no gender differentiation.

CONCLUSION

Out of a total of 50 participants, 21 (42%) scored high on the political correctness questionnaire, 26 (52%) scored moderately, and 2 (4%) participants had low scores. Attitude scores suggest that 24 participants show high support towards political correctness, and an equal number of participants support political correctness moderately. 2 (4%) participants' scores are indicative of low support of political correctness. Participants who scored high on agreeableness and low on conscientiousness, openness to experience, and extraversion traits showed more frequent use of politically correct language. There is a marginal difference between the politically correct language scores of participants high and low on emotional stability.

There was an alignment of scores found between the attitudes towards political correctness and politically correct language scores. This meant that people who a positive attitude towards political correctness had also tended to use more politically correct language.

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