A Comparative Study of Academic Achievements of High School Students of Urban and Rural Areas on the basis of their Economic and Social Status

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the academic performance disparities between urban and rural high school students, focusing on how economic and social status (SES) influence these outcomes. Using a sample of 100 students from ten schools in Chhattisgarh, India split evenly between urban and rural settings data were collected using a standardized SES scale and academic records. Quantitative analysis revealed a weak but statistically significant positive correlation between SES and academic achievement, with rural students showing a stronger SES-achievement link than urban students. The findings underline the need for targeted, location-sensitive educational interventions to promote equity.

KEY WORDS

INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a transformative force in society, shaping individuals' intellectual, economic, and social potential. It plays a critical role not only in personal development but also in national growth and social progress. However, the accessibility and outcomes of education are not uniformly distributed. Numerous studies across the globe have shown that academic achievement is significantly influenced by socio-economic and geographic factors, particularly among school-aged children.

In a developing country like India, the urban-rural divide remains a major concern in the education sector. Urban students often benefit from better

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infrastructure, access to qualified teachers, educational technologies, and a stimulating academic environment. In contrast, rural students frequently face challenges such as poorly equipped schools, lack of educational resources, limited parental support due to lower literacy levels, and economic hardships. These disparities can severely affect the academic performance and future opportunities of students from rural backgrounds.

Economic status defined by income, assets, and access to resources—determines the capacity of families to support their children's education, including the ability to pay for school fees, books, private tuition, and extracurricular learning tools. Social status, shaped by parents' education levels, occupation, and societal standing, influences students' academic aspirations, confidence, peer networks, and motivation. These two elements economic and social collectively form the socio-economic status (SES) of a student, which is a key predictor of educational achievement.

In this context, the present research seeks to explore how SES affects the academic outcomes of high school students across urban and rural settings in the Dhamtari district of Chhattisgarh. It aims to examine whether differences in SES contribute to academic disparities and whether these disparities manifest differently in urban and rural areas. The goal is to understand the root causes of achievement gaps and suggest actionable solutions that can inform educational policies and practices.

This research is timely and important, especially in light of India's ongoing efforts to achieve equitable and inclusive education under the National Education Policy (NEP 2020). Bridging the academic achievement gap is essential not only for social justice but also for harnessing the full potential of the nation's youth population.

By conducting a comparative study using standardized tools and statistical analysis, this research will contribute to the growing body of evidence on educational inequality, offering insights that can shape effective interventions at both grassroots and policy levels.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were intended to:

1. To assess the academic achievements of high school students based on their economic and social status.

2. To compare these effects in urban and rural settings.

3. To suggest ways to minimize achievement disparities rooted in SES differences.

Hypothesis

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement.

H_{02} : There is a difference between Academic achievements of urban and rural students of High School.

Methodology

Research Design: Descriptive, comparative.

Sample: 100 high school students (50 urban, 50 rural) from Dhamtari district, selected via random sampling.

Tools: SES Measurement: Dr. Sunil Kumar Upadhyay's Socio-Economic Status Scale (SESS-UKS).

Academic Achievement: 9th-grade annual examination scores.

Analysis Tools: Mean, Median, Standard Deviation, T-test, Correlation Coefficient.

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Data Analysis

S.No.	Name of School	Boys	Girls	Total
	Urban			
01.	Nutan HSS, Dhamtari	2	8	10
02.	N.J.J. HSS, Dhamtari	5	5	10
03.	ShobhaRam Dewangan HSS, Dhamtari	4	6	10
04.	Sarvoday HSS, Dhamtari	7	3	10
05.	Govt. HSS, Hatkeshar, Dhamtari	00	10	10
	Rural			
06.	Govt. HS, Khairbharri, Nagari	6	4	10
07.	Govt HS, SiyariNala, Nagari	2	8	10
08.	Govt HS, Belar, Nagari	7	3	10
09.	Govt HS, Bagrumnala, Nagari	5	5	10
10.	Govt HS, Bhodhapara, Nagari	5	5	10

Variables

Dependent Variable: Academic Achievements

Independent Variables: Location (Urban/Rural), Economic Status, Social Status

Table No.1: For T- test

AA	SES	AA	SES	AA	SES	AA	SES	AA	SES
35	42	49	40	49	39	55.53	43	34.16	40
54	41	62	36	61.1	40	98	56	65.3	42
58.1	43	53	51	66.3	34	81.33	42	60.16	45
74.1	46	60	44	60.5	42	52.66	45	79	43
56.8	44	55	41	53	40	99.16	47	83.3	35
44.1	31	50	41	57	46	50.83	45	88.16	39
64.1	35	55	45	69.1	34	94.83	50	75.33	43
55.6	42	53	44	45	36	78.66	47	85.5	35
48.8	35	65	37	58.2	38	55.66	46	83.3	35
58	45	49	33	71.2	36	71.16	46	41.16	58
59.16	43	68	53	44	44	87	47	98	54
58.66	42	59	52	47.83	61	85.83	35	95.3	55
79.33	44	93.2	38	42	55	86.83	40	92.5	59
56.16	37	96.4	36	67.83	57	87.5	50	83.6	47
91.66	64	45	40	29.33	32	64.66	53	81.6	43
73	43	45	39	18.5	36	64.83	46	80.3	46
57.33	41	45	48	48.8	55	65.83	48	80.1	54
78.5	35	69	38	87.5	45	76.15	40	76	50
94.16	45	47.1	37	88.83	54	75	41	75.16	52
61.5	42	44.5	38	64.33	40	67.16	39	75	50

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H$_{01}$:   There is no significant relationship between the Economical-Social status and Academic achievements of students.

T-Statistic: 11.7812

Degrees of Freedom: 198

Two-Tailed P-Value: 1.267e-24

The T-statistic is 11.7812, with 198 degrees of freedom, and the two-tailed P-value is extremely small (1.267e-24), indicating a highly statistically significant difference between the two groups.

There is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.The above result shows that there should be a significant relationship between SES and AA. so our null hypothesis is disproved . As null hypothesis is disproved our alternative Hypothesis is meant to be proven.

Overall Correlation: SES and Academic Achievement had a weak positive correlation (r = 0.25).

Urban Area: r = 0.14; Mean SES = 45.46; Mean AA = 67.06

Rural Area: r = 0.28; Mean SES = 42.96; Mean AA = 65.34

T-test Results: Statistically significant difference (t = 11.78, p < 0.0001), rejecting the null hypothesis.

H$_{02}$: There is a difference between Academic achievements of urban and rural students of High School.

The study has revealed that academic achievement is higher among high SEScategory students. Further studies should be stimulated and planned to probe into the interaction of various SES variables on the academic achievement of children at high school level.

Table No.2

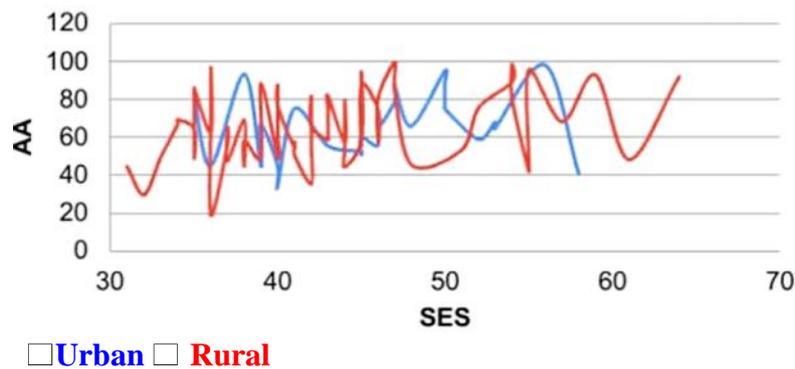| Area	Rural 71		Urban 29	
Particulars	SES	AA	SES	AA
Ranges	31 to 64	18.5 to 99.16	35 to 58	34.16 to 98
Mean	42.96	65.34	45.46	67.06
Standard Deviation	07.12	17.61	6.24	17.41
Correlation Coefficient	0.28		0.14	

Graph 1

Comparative Analysis by Area and Particulars
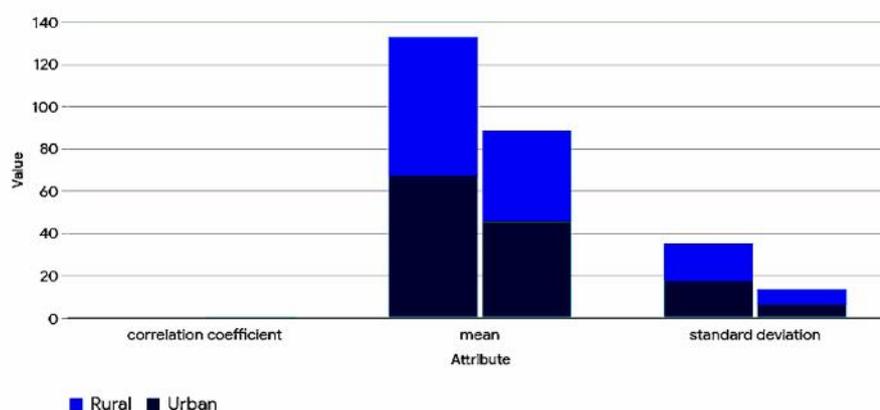
The graph compares 'mean', 'standard deviation', and 'correlation coefficient' across 'Rural' and 'Urban' areas for both 'SES' and 'AA' particulars.

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Graph 2: Comparative Line Chart

☐**Urban** ☐ **Rural**

Based on the data ,a possible conclusion regarding the alternate hypothesis H3"There is a difference between Academic achievements of urban and rural students of High School.''

The data shows that while the mean academic achievement (AA) is higher for urban students (67.06) compared to rural students (65.34), there is also a considerable overlap in the ranges of academic achievement for both groups (Rural: 18.5 to 99.16; Urban: 34.16 to 98).

Furthermore, the correlation coefficient between Socio-Economic Status (SES) and Academic Achievement (AA) is positive but weak for both rural (0.28) and urban (0.14) students. This suggests a slight tendency for higher SES to be associated with higher academic achievement, but it's not a strong relationship.

Therefore, based solely on this data, we can tentatively conclude that there might be a slight difference in the mean academic achievement between urban and rural students, with urban students showing a slightly higher average. However, the overlapping ranges and weak correlations suggest that this difference might not be substantial or solely attributable to the urban/rural divide.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings and the discussion thereupon, it is possible to arrive at the following conclusions:

i. Socio-economic status is positively and significantly related with academic achievement at the High school level.

ii. There is no rural-urban difference in the academic achievement of High school children.

iii. Family income also has a small effect on the academic achievement of High school children.

iv. At class 9 level the positive impact of large family size has been completely nullified. There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of children belonging to large, average and small family size categories at class 9 level. However, there is a tendency of achieving academically better among the children belonging to the small family size category.

v. The structure of family, whether Joint or Unitary has no significant differential impact on the academic achievement of High school children;

vi. Irrespective of the family structure the number of children below 14 within the family has no differential impact on the academic achievement of High school children.

vii. "The educational status of Class 9 students' parents' education significantly influences the students' academic achievement. Children of well-educated parents tend to have better academic achievement.''

Recommendations

Based on the observations, findings and subsequent conclusions of this study, the investigator submits the followings suggestions for further research:

i. The present investigation was conducted on a sample of High school children studying in Basic High schools directly administered by the State Government. As such the results of this study can be

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generalised for these schools and the students studying in them. For further verification of the results it is necessary to replicate the present study on samples of students studying in different types of schools managed by various educational agencies.

ii. This study has given conclusions for High school children of average intelligence only. This study in its present design may be fruit- fully replicated on children having superior and inferior levels of intelligence.

iii. The present investigation has probed into the impact of non-cognitive variables on academic achievement related to family back- ground of the children at High school level. Further studies may be taken to find out the influence of non-cognitive correlates of academic achievement related to institutions.

iv. The study has revealed that academic achievement is better among high SES category students. Further studies should be stimulated and planned to probe into the interaction of various SES variables on the academic achievement of children at High school level.

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