

IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS IN TRIVANDRUM

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Abstract

Social and economic inequalities have a long-lasting effect on children's cognitive and socio-emotional development and educational outcomes. Educational achievement, and its relationship with socio-economic background, is one of the enduring issues in educational research. An individual's SES can have a major impact on their access to education. Higher SES students tend to have better options available. Education is prioritized in the upper middle and high-class since the basic needs of students (food, shelter, and safety) are easily obtainable and the focus is on education. However, in lower SES, education might not be prioritized, especially in situations where students' basic needs are not met easily. Students of lower SES also tend to have lesser access to different types of education since neighbourhood schools are limited and the opportunity for education outside their home is not accessible. Students from lower SES might have less parental support and therefore earn lower grades in school than their high SES counterparts. The result is cyclical: lower SES students tend to remain at a lower SES due to limited educational opportunities, while their higher SES peers tend to remain at a higher SES because of more educational opportunities. Leveraging education toward career success can help an individual from a lower SES become part of a higher SES.

Key words:- Impact, academic achievement, socio-economic status, educational achievement, socioeconomic status, cognitive, gender, Socio-economic assessments, SES.

Socio-economic factors and education are two critical components that significantly influence an individual's life outcomes and opportunities. These factors play a pivotal role in shaping an individual's access to resources, social mobility, and overall quality of life. The intricate interplay between socio-economic status and

education has far-reaching implications for both individuals and society as a whole. Socio-economic factors encompass a range of elements such as income, occupation, wealth, and social class.

These factors determine an individual's or a family's economic standing within a society. Socio-economic status often dictates the availability of

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essential resources, including access to quality healthcare, housing, nutrition, and education. Individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds generally have more access to these resources, which can positively impact their well-being and educational opportunities. Education, on the other hand, is a fundamental pathway to personal development and societal progress. It equips individuals with knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities that are essential for navigating the complexities of the modern world. A quality education can open doors to better job prospects, higher income levels, and improved overall quality of life. Education also plays a crucial role in promoting social mobility, allowing individuals to move up the socio-economic ladder regardless of their initial background.

The relationship between socio-economic factors and education is dynamic and bidirectional. Higher socio-economic status often leads to greater educational opportunities, including access to prestigious schools, extracurricular activities, and educational resources. At the same time, a quality education can serve as a means of breaking the cycle of poverty by providing individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to improve their socio-economic status.

Conversely, individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds often face barriers that hinder their educational attainment. These barriers can include limited access to quality schools, inadequate resources, lack of parental involvement, and the need to work at an early age to contribute to family income. Such challenges can result in educational

disparities, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage across generations.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of socio-economic factors and education revolves around the persistent disparities in educational outcomes and opportunities based on individuals' socio-economic backgrounds. This issue highlights the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and access to quality education, leading to a cycle of disadvantage for those from lower socio-economic statuses. This problem has profound implications for social mobility, economic growth, and overall societal equity. Factors such as income, parental education levels, and neighbourhood conditions play a pivotal role in shaping students' educational experiences and outcomes. Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds often have access to better-funded schools, experienced teachers, advanced coursework, and enriching extracurricular activities. In contrast, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds face barriers such as under-resourced schools, lack of educational support at home, and limited access to educational technology. This disparity in access to quality education perpetuates a cycle of inequality. Students who start with fewer resources are at a disadvantage from the beginning, making it challenging for them to excel academically and pursue higher education. As a result, they are more likely to have limited employment prospects, lower earning potential, and reduced opportunities for upward mobility. This cycle reinforces intergenerational poverty and social stratification. Furthermore, the problem extends beyond the individual

level and has broader societal implications. Inequitable access to education can lead to a less skilled workforce, hindering a country's economic growth and global competitiveness. It can also contribute to social tensions, as segments of the population feel marginalized and excluded from opportunities for personal and professional development.

Scope of Study

The study was designed to determine whether there is a causal relationship between socio-economic factors (such as income, parental education, and family background) and educational outcomes (academic performance, dropout rates, etc.) and explore the effectiveness of socio-economic status on the student's achievement. Students from secondary school, both male and female students, from Trivandrum city are the population of this study.

Objectives of the Study

The basic objective of the study is to analyse the effect of socio-economic status, parental education and occupation on quality of students' academic performance, explore the effect of socio-economic status on student's achievements in the subjects of Mathematics and Science and to find the difference in quality of students' achievement in relation to their gender.

Methodology of the Study

This descriptive study was conducted by using a survey method. The population was the secondary school male and female students from a metropolitan city of Trivandrum. At the first stage fourteen male and female public sector secondary

schools (seven each) were selected conveniently. Secondly, only fifty volunteer students (25 male and 25 female) out of all volunteers from one section of the 10th grade were selected randomly from each of the 12 schools. Thus, the sample size for the study was 600 students (300 male and 300 female). The study was delimited to demographic factors only, such as students' gender, parents' education, parents' occupation and socio-economic status. The quality of academic performance was measured by their achievement scores of the 9th grade annual examination. Data regarding the variables such as parents' education, parents' occupation, SES, urban/ rural belongingness, and students' gender were collected by using a structured questionnaire.

Hypotheses

Ho1 - There is no significant effect of socio-economic status, parental education and occupation on quality of students' academic performance.

Ho2 - There is no significant effect of socio-economic status on student's achievements in the subjects of Mathematics and Science.

Ho3 - There is no significant difference in quality of students' achievement in relation to their gender.

Review of Literature

The studies reviewed emphasized that socio-economic factor has a strong impact on a student's academic performance. The socio-economic condition explores the mechanisms of student's academic performance which are possible means for the identification of

the socio-economic and cultural factors (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman, 1988a, 1990b). However, differences in the availability of facilities and investment level in education of a household can eventually lead to inequalities in students' academic achievements (Buchmann, 2002). Some empirical studies have found that academic performance of students with lower socio-economic status is slower than that of students with higher socio-economic status. As a result, a student's low socio-economic status is associated with poor cognitive and academic development and language problems (Morgan et. al., 2009). Illiterate parents, their professional backwardness, their poor income and poor health condition, lack of educational access which is negatively influenced the students' academic performance (Aikens and Barbarin, 2008). Islam and Khan, (2017) study found no significant differences between male and female students in their academic achievements. This study on socio-economic factor and the academic achievement of higher secondary school students indicates that there are significant differences in their academic achievement within a group with varying socio-economic and demographic factors. The study by Rather and Sharma (2015) emphasised the strong relationship between the socio-economic status of high school students and their academic performance.

Schemes for Education by the Government of Kerala

The Education Department of Kerala is running various educational schemes, programmes, grants, financial awards, loans scholarships, fellowships of School

Education & Mass Literacy, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Higher Education, Adult Education, Tribal Education, Technical and Medical Education and Vocational Studies, skill development etc. The special assistance is given to the students belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Socially, Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC), Minority Category and below poverty line (BPL), rural areas, and Disabled/Physically Handicapped (PH) students. The various ministries such as Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Ministry of Minority Affairs, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Ministry of Home Affairs and Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities are being involved in assisting and helping. The following list shows the schemes, scholarships and programmes implemented by Government of Kerala in order to uplift the quality of education system in Kerala.

Schemes Implemented In Kerala

1. Post Matric Scholarship for SC Students
2. Pre-Matric Scholarship for SC Students
3. Post Matric Scholarship for OBC students
4. Free School Uniform Scheme for All girls and ST/SC students
5. Merit cum Means Scholarship for Minorities
6. Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for Minorities

7. Up gradation of merit of SC students
8. Scholarship to the children of Beedi workers
9. Interest Subsidy (CSIS) on Education Loan
10. Pratibha Scholarship for higher education
11. Boarding School Facilities for rural students
12. Shri. Ayana talent search scholarship
13. Temple Entry Proclamation Memorial Scholarship
14. Book bank scheme
15. Free Laptop for girl students

Here are some key education statistics for Kerala as of 2021

Literacy Rate: Kerala boasts one of the highest literacy rates in India. The literacy rate is typically above 90 per cent, with substantial gender parity.

School Education: Kerala has a well-developed school education system. It follows a 10+2 system of education, which consists of 10 years of primary and secondary education followed by two years of higher secondary education.

Higher Education: Kerala is the home to several prestigious universities and educational institutions. The state has a relatively high Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education compared to the national average.

Gender Parity: Kerala has made significant strides in achieving gender parity in education. Both male and female literacy rates are high, and girls' enrolment

in schools is generally on par with or higher than boys.

Quality of Education: Kerala has been known for its emphasis on quality education. The state places importance on both formal education and skill development.

Technical and Vocational Education: Kerala has been actively promoting technical and vocational education through various institutions and programs.

Government Initiatives: The government of Kerala has implemented various schemes and initiatives to improve the education sector, including the distribution of free textbooks to students, midday meal programs, and efforts to enhance the quality of education.

Digital Initiatives: Kerala has been a pioneer in integrating technology into education. The state has implemented digital classrooms and e-learning initiatives in many schools.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

The collected data were analysed by applying descriptive and inferential statistical measure. The *t*-test was used to compare the achievements of male and female students. The significant effect of different factors on students' achievement was explored through multiple comparisons by applying ANOVA using SPSS 16.

Table 1 show that socio-economic status (SES), fathers' education, and mothers' education, had a significant effect on students' overall academic achievement as well as on Mathematics and Science

Table 1
Effect of SES, Fathers' and Mothers' education & occupation on students' achievement

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SES & Marks in 9 th Grade	110977.403	2	55488.701	15.270	.000*
SES & Marks in Maths	7254.485	2	3627.243	9.086	.000*
SES & Marks in Science	9154.629	2	4577.314	14.896	.000*
Father education & Marks in 9 th Grade	191918.849	7	27416.978	7.576	.000*
Mother education & Marks in 9 th Grade	191049.052	7	27292.722	7.831	.000*
Father occupation & Marks in 9 th Grade	23541.570	3	7847.190	2.072	.103
Mother occupation & Marks in 9 th Grade	9088.016	3	3029.339	.795	.497

**Significant at the .05 level.*

Source: Primary Data

scores in 9th grade at the .05 level of significance. Further it is obvious that parental occupation had no significant effect on academic achievement. Hence the hypotheses that there are no significant effects of SES level and parental education level on students' academic achievement have been rejected. Also, the hypothesis that there is no significant effect in achievement on the basis of parental occupation was accepted. It is therefore concluded that SES level and parental education affect the achievement of their children, but the parents' occupation had no effect.

As shown in Table 2, comparison of effect of SES levels (Low, Average & High) on students' achievement scores in the subjects of Mathematics, Science & Cumulative achievement indicated that students belonging to high SES level

overall perform better in the subjects of Mathematics and Science as well as show better performance in cumulative achievement scores. Average and high SES levels have more effect than low SES level in all types of achievement quality. The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in academic performance of students due to their socio-economic status is therefore rejected. The students with high and average SES exhibit better quality of performance than the students with low level of SES.

The multiple comparisons in Table 3 show that fathers with Bachelor degree and Master degree education have more effects on students' achievement than any other level of education (e.g., illiterate, secondary, intermediary).

Table 2
Multiple comparison of effect of SES on Mathematics, Science, and cumulative achievements

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
	(I)	(J)			
Marks obtained in 9 th Grade	Low SES	Average SES	-20.666(*)	6.869	.008*
		High SES	-47.615(*)	8.679	.000*
	Average SES	High SES	-26.949(*)	6.783	.000*
Marks in Mathematics	Low SES	Average SES	-4.589	2.277	.133
		High SES	-12.009(*)	2.877	.000*
	Average SES	High SES	-7.420(*)	2.248	.003*
Marks in Science	Low SES	Average SES	-5.277(*)	1.997	.025*
		High SES	-13.524(*)	2.524	.000*
	Average SES	High SES	-8.248(*)	1.972	.000*

**Significant at the .05 level.*

Source: Primary Data

Table 3
Analysis of Fathers' education and cumulative achievement

Dependent Variable	(I) Father's Education.	(J) Father's Education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Marks obtained in 9 th Grade	Illiterate	Primary	-1.311	13.558	1.000
		Elementary	-.993	13.161	1.000
		Secondary	-12.399	10.049	1.000
		Intermediary	-37.222(*)	10.905	.019*
		Bachelor	-48.311(*)	11.494	.001*
		Master	-37.897(*)	1.068	.019*
	Primary	Elementary	.318	14.006	1.000
		Secondary	-11.087	11.133	1.000
		Intermediary	-35.911	11.912	.075
		Bachelor	-47.000(*)	12.453	.005*
		Master	-36.586	12.061	.07
	Elementary	Secondary	-11.405	10.646	1.000
		Intermediary	-36.229(*)	11.458	.046*
		Bachelor	-47.318(*)	12.020	.003*
		Master	-36.904(*)	11.613	.044*
	Secondary	Intermediary	-24.823(*)	7.685	.037*
		Bachelor	-35.913(*)	8.500	.001*
		Master	-25.499(*)	7.914	.038*
	Intermediary	Bachelor	-11.089	9.497	1.000
		Master	-.675	8.976	1.000
	Bachelor	Master	10.414	9.684	1.000

**Significant at the .05 level. (Bachelor= Bachelor degree/ Graduation, Master= Master degree/ Post graduation) Source: Primary Data*

It is evident from Table 4 that mothers with Secondary, Intermediary, and Bachelor degree-education levels have significant effects on the achievement of their children as compared to other education levels.

As shown in Table 5, *t*-values (*t* = -5.405, -2.745, -2.034) indicate that there is a significant difference in the marks of male and female students. The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the quality of academic performance of students in relation to

their gender is therefore rejected. It is concluded from the results that female students perform better than the male (mean values = 295.03; 38.71; 38.47) in the subjects of Mathematics and Science as well as in the overall achievements scores.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, the impact of socio-economic factors on educational achievement among students in Trivandrum is a multifaceted issue with

Table 4
Analysis of Mothers' education and quality of academic performance
(Overall marks obtained)

Dependent Variable	(I) Mothers' Education	(J) Mothers' Education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Marks obtained in 9th Grade	Illiterate	Primary	-16.271	9.394	13.22
		Elementary	9.542	9.221	38.48
		Secondary	-24.558(*)	7.807	-.05*
		Intermediary	-30.025(*)	8.583	-3.08*
		Bachelor	-57.799(*)	10.880	-23.65*
		Master	-44.375	15.258	3.52
	Primary	Elementary	25.813	9.744	56.40
		Secondary	-8.287	8.419	18.14
		Intermediary	-13.753	9.143	14.95
		Bachelor	-41.528(*)	11.327	-5.97*
		Master	-28.103	15.580	20.80
	Elementary	Secondary	-34.100(*)	8.225	-8.28*
		Intermediary	-39.567(*)	8.965	-1.43*
		Bachelor	-67.341(*)	11.184	-2.24*
		Master	-53.917(*)	15.476	-5.34*
	Secondary	Intermediary	-5.467	7.503	18.08
		Bachelor	-33.241(*)	10.050	-1.70*
		Master	-19.817	14.677	26.25
	Intermediary	Bachelor	-27.774	10.664	5.70
		Master	-14.350	15.104	33.06
	Bachelor	Master	13.424	16.518	65.27

*Significant at the .05 level. (Bachelor= Bachelor degree/ Graduation, Master= Master degree/ Post-graduation)

Source: Primary Data

Table 5
Comparison of achievement for Male and Female students

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Marks obtained in 9 th Grade	Male	300	268.42	66.252	-5.405*
	Female	300	295.03	53.686	
Marks in Mathematics	Male	300	34.20	19.009	-2.745*
	Female	300	38.71	21.209	
Marks in Science	Male	300	35.50	17.045	-2.034*
	Female	300	38.47	18.687	

**P<.05 level of significance, d.f. =598.*

Source: Primary Data

significant implications for both individuals and society as a whole. Throughout this study, we have observed several key findings that shed light on these complex relationship’s-economic factors, such as family income and parental education, play a pivotal role in determining the availability of educational resources. Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds often have better access to quality schools, educational materials, and additional learning opportunities. This unequal distribution of resources can contribute to varying levels of educational achievement.

There are various factors inside and outside school that contribute for the quality of academic performance of students. This study only focused on some of the factors outside school that influence the student’s achievement scores. The key aspect for the educators is to educate their students effectively so that they may be able to show quality performance in their academics. To achieve this objective, it is necessary for the educators to understand better about the factors that may contribute in the academic success of students.

Findings and Suggestions

To determine all the influencing factors in a single attempt is a complex and difficult task. It requires a lot of resources and time for an educator to identify all these factors first and then plan the classroom activities and strategies of teaching and learning. It also requires proper training, organizational planning and skills to conduct such studies for determining the contributing factors inside and outside school. This process of identification of variables must be given full attention and priority so that the teachers may be able to develop instructional strategies for making sure that all the children be provided with the opportunities to arrive at their fullest potential in learning and performance. Further research is needed to explore the problem on a large sample from more scattered geographical regions including other student factors, family factors, school factors and peer factors. In order to address the disparities in educational achievement stemming from socio-economic factors in Trivandrum, a multi-pronged approach is necessary:

Equitable Resource Allocation:

Efforts should be made to ensure that all schools, regardless of their location or socio-economic context, have access to adequate resources, qualified teachers, and modern teaching methodologies.

Financial Support: Scholarships, grants, and financial aid programs can help alleviate the financial burden on students from disadvantaged backgrounds, making higher education more accessible.

Community Engagement: Local communities, NGOs, and educational institutions can collaborate to create after-school programs, mentorship initiatives, and skill development workshops that cater specifically to students who need additional support.

Teacher Training: Training educators to be sensitive to the diverse socio-economic backgrounds of their students can help them tailor their teaching methods and provide appropriate support.

Counselling Services: Schools can provide counselling services to help students cope with psychosocial challenges arising from their socio-economic circumstances.

Awareness Campaigns: Initiatives aimed at raising awareness about the importance of education and dispelling societal stereotypes can encourage students from all backgrounds to pursue their educational goals.

In conclusion, the impact of socio-economic factors on educational achievement in Trivandrum is a deeply entrenched issue that requires a concerted effort from educational institutions, policymakers, communities, and families. By addressing these disparities, we can create a more inclusive and equitable educational system that empowers all students to reach their full potential, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds.

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