ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor (RJIF): 8.69
IJAR 2025; 11(9): 40-44
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 15-07-2025
Accepted: 16-08-2025

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Socio-economic and cultural predictors of academic success among senior secondary students

Shyam Krishna TP and Manish Bhatnagar

Abstract
The study investigates the academic achievement of higher secondary students in the Bharatpur Division and the effect of socio-cultural and socio-economic factors. Specifically, the study examined parental literacy, language, and communication skills, and family income as predictors of students' academic achievements. An explanatory mixed-method design is utilized in the study. The data is collected from 500 students in government and private schools of Bharatpur with the help of structured questionnaires and instruments such as the Cultural Adaptability Rating Scale, Academic Performance Rating Scale (APRS), and Socio-Economic Status Scale (SES). Test scores were indicators of academic achievement. Using statistical analyses such as correlation and t-tests through SPSS and Excel, it was revealed that substantial relationships existed between parental education, language competency, income levels, and student performance. The study found that students from families with higher incomes and literacy levels performed better on academic achievement scales. The study showed that the social, economic, and cultural factors that determine academic performance because the urban students also higher score potential than for their rural area students.

Keywords: Academic achievement, cultural influences, language and communication, parental literacy, socio-economic status

1. Introduction
A pattern of interaction between socioeconomic and cultural factors is progressively influencing the academic achievements of senior secondary students, especially in cosmopolitan regions like Bharatpur Division. As quality education becomes more widely accepted, it becomes necessary to comprehend the elements influencing students' performance to develop appropriate educational policies and action plans. The goal of this regional study is to investigate how student accomplishments are impacted by the salaries of earners, parent education and occupation, social status, and cultural orientation [1].
Exploring these predictor variables within the particular sociocultural setting of Bharatpur, the study goes on to identify the resultant challenges and clarify the factors influencing learning achievement. It further specifies the critical needs for inclusive development strategies and major socio-cultural aspects of learners. Teaching support infrastructure should be aligned according to these insights to promote learning equity and the development of regional resiliency in learning and sustainable human capital development. Emphasizing these predictors can help teachers, decision-makers, and other stakeholders to develop a more assistive and adaptive learning context appropriate for local needs [2].

1.1 Overview of educational inequality in regional India
Education generates new assets and enhances social welfare through the spill over effect, without disadvantaging any individuals. However, regional inequality in Indian education reflects embedded patterns shaped by socio-economic status, caste, gender, and geography. Rural areas, including the Bharatpur Division, are typically lacking good facilities, trained personnel, and scholarly content, and thus place learners at a disadvantage compared to urban learners [3]. Socio-cultural barriers, including gender roles and illiteracy among the parents, impose an additional limit on education. Inequalities become further intensified at the senior secondary level where competition is more and back-up structures are less. Inequality.

This inequality requires the development of policies that strategically target both system-level and local-level challenges, so that learning opportunities remain equitably available for all students [4].

1.2 Socio-economic disparities and schooling infrastructure

Socioeconomic disparity plays a significant role in shaping both the availability and quality of school infrastructures, mostly in non-metropolitan areas and rural areas like the Bharatpur Division. Students from low-income families are primarily enrolled in government schools, which often suffer from inadequate infrastructure, low-standard sanitation, and limited electricity or computer facilities [5]. Government schools also lack trained instructors and teaching materials, and therefore find it difficult to establish the right learning environment. In contrast, affluent families enroll their children in private schools equipped with modern infrastructure, qualified educators, and superior learning resources. The great inequality in the infrastructure gives rise to unequal learning and learning outcomes [6].

A high-quality educational infrastructure affects students' attendance and perseverance in addition to learning outcomes. Inadequate facilities most often lead to the highest rates of school dropout, most predominantly among vulnerable populations, including the girl child, who is further disadvantaged regarding issues of safety and sanitation. Moreover, schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged populations often lack access to extracurricular and remedial programs that are essential for holistic student development [7]. Hence, learners coming from poorer families are less competitive at critical junctures like senior secondary school. Filling these gaps is made possible with targeted investment by the government, more prudent use of resources, and more intensive monitoring so that all learners, regardless of background, get the benefit of using quality education infrastructure [8].

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study aims to examine the socio-economic and cultural predictors of academic success among senior secondary students in the Bharatpur Division of India. It investigates how factors such as parents' literacy rate, language, and communication influence student academic performance. The study examines discrepancies in educational outcomes between rural and urban environments, emphasizing the identification of critical variables that influence student achievement. Additionally, school infrastructure is evaluated to comprehend its impact on academic success. Adopting a quantitative research design, the study uses statistical tools to assess the strength of relationships between the identified variables and academic outcomes. The purpose is to generate evidence-based insights that can guide educational policy, improve school support systems, and promote equity. Additionally, the research contributes to the broader understanding of how regional social and cultural contexts affect learning. It serves as a foundation for future studies and policy planning in similar underserved regions.

1.4 Prior Studies

Mandal (2023) [9] investigated the causes of attrition and its societal and economic impacts. Through a set of analytical procedures, it examined such key factors as financial difficulties, abandonment by parents, geographical barriers, lack of resources, bad school buildings, schools with overcrowded rooms, wrongful language of instruction, and an indifferent teacher. The outcomes were clear that dropouts hurt economic growth and left the offspring of the workforce weaker. The study gave great emphasis to education being important for human and economic development, and the stability of society. As corrective measures to keep people from dropping out, the study suggested improving the facilities, getting parents involved, and enforcing teacher accountability.

Wagadre, (2023) [10] highlighted the critical role of education as a lifelong process influencing social, emotional, and physical development and as a transformative force in nation-building. Through conceptual analysis of philosophical and scholarly perspectives, the study examined how education is universally regarded as a fundamental social function. The findings revealed a shared consensus on education's power to unlock individual potential and drive community progress. While interpretations varied, all perspectives affirmed education as the most effective means to complement experience and foster societal advancement.

Yevuyibor, (2021) [2] identified the factors that influence mathematical performance among junior high school pupils in the Municipality have already been considered. Using a diagnostic and evaluative approach, this study looked into school, student, teacher, and home factors through observation and data collection techniques. It was found that poor learning resources, overcrowding, low student motivation, poor methods of teaching, and lack of parental support were the main factors contributing to poor performance. Therefore, it was recommended that this situation be addressed by providing more teaching resources, better school facilities, and training and development for teachers.

Gray, *et al*., (2019) [11] reviewed existing data on school-level variables associated with obesity outcomes in long-term research. A systematic literature search was conducted across PsycINFO, CINHAL, EMBASE, and PubMed for peer-reviewed, English-language longitudinal studies published between 1991 and 2018. Twelve studies met the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the final review. The findings indicated limited and varied evidence due to differences in study designs, measurements, and variables used, highlighting the need for more comprehensive and empirically valid research. The study emphasized the importance of exploring additional school-related factors that may influence obesity risk later in life.

Ahmed *et al*., (2020) [12] examined how well rural and urban children in the Dhubri District of Assam, India, performed academically in mathematics at the secondary and upper secondary levels. Students from secondary and upper secondary schools, junior colleges, and colleges were chosen as a sample using the random sampling technique. 2405 tenth-grade and 888 twelfth-grade students, both rural and urban areas, made up the sample. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean, S.D., and an independent samples t-test were used to compare locales. The study's sample consisted of tenth-grade and twelfth-grade achievement for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 academic years, respectively. According to the results, there was a significant difference between students attending rural and urban schools, rural and urban schoolboys, rural and urban

schoolgirls, and urban and rural schoolgirls in the tenth grade. However, these differences did not hold for students in the twelfth grade.

Cheng, *et al*., (2019) [13] identified factors affecting the academic achievement of 883 students in a Taiwanese rural elementary school with a focus on differences between normal and disadvantaged groups. Using feature selection methods and statistical analyses intertwined, it was determined that these groups had significant differences in performance, and there were also differences in performance among the five disadvantaged subgroups. Interview data further showed personal, familial, and academic factors that obstruct learning. The implications point to the need for more targeted educational policies, appropriate resource allocations, and enhanced engagement among teachers and parents, especially for Indigenous students who are faced with dual hardships.

2. Research Objectives

- To study the influence of socio-cultural factors like parents' literacy rate, language, and communication, learning outcomes in the "academic achievement of higher secondary students of rural and urban areas" of Bharatpur division.
- To evaluate whether the high and low economic background of parents has a strong impact on the performance of secondary school pupils in Bharatpur division's rural and urban districts.
- To make suggestions on how to reduce the impact of socio-cultural factors on higher secondary students' academic achievements in Bharatpur division.

3. Research Methodology

The study titled "Academic Achievement of Higher Secondary Students in Bharatpur Division" employs a quantitative approach. The study examines independent variables like socio-cultural (parents' literacy, language, and communication) and socio-economic factors, and a dependent variable, which is the academic achievement of higher secondary students. Structured questionnaires gathered data on students' socio-economic and cultural backgrounds to uncover patterns affecting academic performance. Test scores function as an indicator of achievement, evaluated in conjunction with factors such as parental education and income.

The study focuses on a population of 500 higher secondary school students from government and private institutions within the Bharatpur Division, predominantly consisting of rural regions characterized by low literacy rates and conservative perspectives, particularly in Dholpur, Karauli, and Sawai Madhopur. The study utilises purposive sampling techniques. Purposive sampling is employed to ensure representative inclusion of participants from each of the four districts. The study collects survey data using structured tools and questionnaires. The instruments used in the study include the Cultural Adaptability Rating Scale, Academic Performance Rating Scale (APRS), Socio-Economic Status Scale (SES), and questionnaires to collect quantitative data. The study employs SPSS and Excel as analytical tools, utilizing statistical techniques including correlation and t-test to provide precise and thorough data interpretation.

4. Results

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Profile

Sr. No.	Demographic Characteristics	Category	N	%
1	Gender	Boys	250	50.0
		Girls	250	50.0
2	Family Type	Joint Family	235	47.0
		Nuclear Family	265	53.0
3	Monthly Family Income	Less than ₹5,000	5	1.0
		₹5,000-10,000	81	16.2
		₹10,000-30,000	170	34.0
		₹30,000-50,000	77	15.4
		₹50,000-1,00,000	107	21.4
		More than ₹1,00,000	60	12.0
4	Location	Rural	250	50.0
		Urban	250	50.0

The demographic characteristics of respondents in the Bharatpur Division are shown in Table 1. Out of 500 respondents, the gender was equally distributed: 250 boys and 250 girls. Most belonged to nuclear families 53%, while 37% had 3-5 members. Most of the respondents were earning between ₹10,000 and 30,000. While most respondents (74.4%) owned houses, respondents were equally divided between rural and urban areas.

Objective 1: To study the influence of socio-cultural factors like parents' literacy rate, language, and communication, learning outcomes in the "academic achievement of higher secondary students of rural and urban areas" of Bharatpur division.

Table 2: Comparison of socio-cultural factors

Dimensions	Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	SED	'T' Value	Level of Significance
Parents Literacy Rate	Urban	250	8.6080	3.79049	.35794	5.766	Significant at the level 0.01
	Rural	250	6.5440	4.20270			
Language and Communication	Urban	250	25.4680	3.51374	.33816	4.164	Significant at the level 0.01
	Rural	250	24.0600	4.03006			
Learning Outcome	Urban	250	25.5760	3.22207	.32387	4.002	Significant at the level 0.01
	Rural	250	24.2800	3.98007			

Table 3: Correlation Table

Correlation Between Variables	Urban		Rural	
	R	Sig.	R	Sig.
Academic Performance ↔ Parents' Literacy Rate	0.342**	0.000	0.330**,	0.000
Academic Performance ↔ Language & Communication	0.438**,	0.000	0.379**,	0.000
Academic Performance ↔ Learning Outcome	0.536**,	0.000	0.481**,	0.000

Tables 2 and 3 showed the socio-cultural factors' influence on the academic performances of students in higher secondary schools in rural and urban Bharatpur Division. Urban children showed significantly higher scores in parents' literacy rate (M=8.61, SD=3.79) than in rural areas (M=6.54, SD=4.20) (t=5.766, p<0.01). The urban areas also had higher values of language and communication skills and learning outcomes. Correlation results show that a significant positive relationship exists between academic performance and the three socio-cultural factors, for both urban and rural students. The literacy rate of the parents of the urban students (r=0.342, p<0.01) had a significant positive correlation with academic achievement, language and communication (r=0.438, p<0.01) and learning outcomes (r=0.536, p<0.01) correlate with academic achievement. For rural students, similar results were also shown. (r=0.330, r=0.379, r=0.481; p<0.01). All three socio-cultural factors, parents' literacy rate, language and communication, and learning outcome, are positively correlated with academic achievement.

Objective 2: To evaluate whether the high and low economic background of parents has a strong impact on the performance of secondary school pupils in Bharatpur division's rural and urban districts.

Table 4: Comparison of economic condition by location

Dimensions	Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	SED	'T' Value	Level of Significance
Economic Condition	Urban	250	114.8800	28.11382	2.74067	3.955	Significant at the level 0.01
	Rural	250	104.0400	32.97630			

Table 5: Correlation Table

Correlations between variables	Urban		Rural	
	R	Sig.	R	Sig.
Academic Performance ↔ Economic Condition	0.241**	0.000	0.203**	0.001

Tables 4 and 5 show the statistical analysis of the impact of parental economic background on students' academic performance in the rural and urban districts of the Bharatpur Division. There has been a clear comparison of students' economic conditions in the urban (M=114.88, SD=28.11) and rural (M=104.04, SD=32.98) districts, and it has been found that urban students with better socioeconomic conditions have a significantly higher mean score, where the mean difference the difference is statistically significant (t=3.955, p<0.01). Further, from the correlation results, an increase in the economic condition was seen with an increase in academic performance for both the urban group (r=0.241, p<0.01) and rural group (r=0.203, p<0.01), showing that a stronger economic background in either area would imply better academic performance of students.

5. Discussion

The findings revealed that socio-cultural factors had an important influence on parental literacy, language, and communication, and learning outcomes affecting the academic achievement of higher secondary students in Bharatpur Division. The students limited to urban areas have a better chance to benefit from higher parental literacy, as parents residing in urban areas are mostly literate compared to those in rural areas. Yevuyibor (2021) [2] made a similar observation, highlighting how resources, overcrowding, and parental support inhibit performance. Similar to this, Ahmed *et al*., (2020) [12] reported significant rural-urban disparities in academic achievement, especially at the secondary level, which seems to agree with the difference observed. The study found that language and communication skills were highly correlated with academic achievement, thereby confirming the results of Akhir (2024) [14], who showed that communication proficiency is very much related to student success and that gender-differentiated linguistic support may affect academic performance. Moreover, the positive relationship existing between learning outcomes and academic achievement was recognised. Cheng *et al*., (2019) [15] mentioned that the family and academic factors, especially in the disadvantaged groups, significantly contribute to the variations in performance. The findings of the study confirm that socio-cultural situations greatly influence the education of students; however, disparities based on gender and location stress the need for intervention.

The study established that the economic status of parents has a significant impact on the students' academic outcomes in Bharatpur Division, where children of higher-income families tend to do well while lower-income children perform poorly. Chari (2024) [5] remarked that disparities in income have a strong bearing on accessing digital learning, private coaching, and quality infrastructure. Agrawal (2014) [4] further mentioned the systemic rural-urban inequalities prevailing in India's educational system. This sets the premise for economic advantages favoring urban students over rural ones. All these findings essentially stress how economic constraints remain core barriers to equitable educational achievement, and therefore, there is a need for policy interventions to extend financial, infrastructural, and supplementary support to low-income families based in rural and semi-urban Bharatpur.

Apart from financial constraints, socio-cultural elements have a significant role in shaping students' academic performance in the Bharatpur division. A comprehensive strategy should be made to reduce the effect of socio-cultural factors on the academic achievements of higher

secondary students in the Bharatpur division. By encouraging active parental involvement and community engagement, the importance of education becomes more evident, and initiatives on parental literacy allow families to better support their students. Teachers should be trained to engage in culturally responsive teaching, embodying respect for local traditions and languages as aspects of their lesson plans. Schools should create opportunities for inclusive activities that celebrate diversity, and peer mentoring can invigorate students with role models [16]. Addressing gender and ethnic biases necessitates workshops at regular intervals and ongoing counseling to foster mutual respect and acceptance within a school environment. Fair access to educational resources, scholarships, and tools for e-learning in such areas may minimize disparities through social and economic factors [17].

6. Conclusion

The study investigates the impact that socio-cultural and economic factors have on the academic achievements of higher secondary students in the Bharatpur Division. The results of the study indicated that factors such as parental literacy, language and communication skills, and learning outcomes act as strong predictors of academic success, and urban students are more successful than rural. The economic background of parents stood out as an important factor, as students from wealthy families performed significantly better than students from poor-income families. These results indicate the many ways in which family background and socio-cultural environment intersect to affect students' educational outcomes in both rural and urban settings.

Although the study provides insightful conclusions, many limitations were acknowledged. The study was geographically restricted to Bharatpur Division, limiting the generalizability of the findings across other regions of India with varying socio-economic and cultural dynamics, while the data focused primarily on quantitative variables; these may not truly represent the nuanced experiences of the learners and their families. External variables, such as school infrastructure, teacher quality, and peer effects, were not sufficiently explored; however, these could be key influences in academic achievements.

Future research should aim to extend this study into other regions of India to compare socio-cultural and economic influences across varied contexts. Cross-regional study can provide a more comprehensive perspective on the issues and possibilities encountered by students nationwide. Moreover, qualitative insights can be integrated through interviews, focus groups, or an ethnographic study that adds depth to the findings by capturing lived experiences, cultural practices, and perceptions that quantitative data cannot engender. In this respect, this would enrich policy recommendations to adapt interventions towards structural or cultural realities affecting student academic performance.

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