

Effect of Socio-Economic Status on the Educational Aspirations of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Class X Students

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1.1 Abstract:

The present study aimed to assess the effect of socio-economic status on the educational aspirations of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) students. A total of 600 SC and ST students studying in Class 10 were selected from the Janjgir-Champa district. The students were chosen from both government and non-government schools to ensure proper representation of SC and ST students belonging to different socio-economic backgrounds. The sample was included in the study using a purposive sampling method. To measure educational aspiration, the Educational Aspiration Inventory developed by Pradeep Kumar (2012) was used. The results revealed that socio-economic status has a significant effect on the educational aspirations of SC and ST students. Students belonging to a high socio-economic status exhibited higher educational aspirations compared to those from middle and low socio-economic backgrounds, while students from low socio-economic status showed the lowest level of educational aspiration. The calculated F value of 44.22 further confirmed this finding at the 0.05 level of significance. In conclusion, the socio-economic status of SC and ST students influences their future educational aspirations.

Keywords: Socio-economic status, Scheduled Caste and Tribe, Class X

INTRODUCTION

Indian society is stratified, and education is an important means that plays a significant role in reducing socio-economic inequalities. Among these communities are Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students, who face challenges in accessing quality education, social opportunities, and adequate economic resources. In this context, it is essential to understand how socio-economic status influences the educational aspirations of these students.

Educational aspiration refers to the level of education that a student aspires to achieve in the future. It reflects the student's plans for the future and what they wish to attain in life through education. For example, if a student wants to become a scientist, teacher, or engineer, it indicates their educational aspiration. Educational aspiration represents the desire and effort a student makes to reach their educational goals. Aspiration is a goal that is personally very important to an individual; when this aspiration is related to the field of education, it is termed educational aspiration. According to one

definition, a student's educational aspiration indicates the goal that the student has set for themselves. Educational aspiration serves as a source of motivation for students to achieve their academic goals. In the dominant model of educational aspiration, aspiration is presented as a cognitive state that motivates students toward better academic performance. According to this model, the development of aspiration is influenced by personal factors, such as self-perceptions, as well as social factors, particularly the socio-economic status of parents. Parents are considered the most important link in this context.

In contrast, the economic model of educational aspiration offers a different perspective. According to the economic model, educational aspiration is related to a rational evaluation of socio-economic conditions by students, taking into account the resources available to them and their prospects.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Senthil Kumar and Selvakumar (2018) conducted a study on 1,066 Class IX students from various schools using a normative survey method and stratified random sampling. The researchers developed a 22-item Educational Aspiration Questionnaire to assess levels and differences in educational aspiration. The findings showed that gender had no significant effect on educational aspiration. Rural students exhibited higher educational aspirations than urban students. The medium of instruction played a crucial role in learning, and students from private schools demonstrated significantly higher educational aspirations compared to those in government and government-aided schools. **Senthil (2018)** examined the educational aspiration levels of 819 high school students from Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu, using a normative survey method and simple random sampling. Data were analyzed in SPSS using descriptive statistics, differential analysis, and ANOVA. The study found no significant differences in educational aspiration between rural and urban students, nor across categories of parents' educational status (illiterate, school education, or higher education). **Alam (2018)** studied 250 Class 10 students from rural and urban government and private schools in Sambhal district to examine the link between socio-economic status (SES) and educational aspiration. Using standardized SES and educational aspiration scales, the study found a significant positive relationship between SES and educational aspiration. Differences in educational aspiration were observed across gender and type of school, while SES varied by locality and school type. No significant differences were found for SES across gender or educational aspiration across locality. The study emphasized the need to address socio-economic inequalities to improve students' educational aspirations. **Kaur and Gupta (2020)** examined the relationship between educational aspiration and intelligence among 200 secondary school students in Sangrur district, considering gender differences. The study found no significant gender differences in either educational aspiration or intelligence. However, a significant positive relationship was observed between students' educational aspiration and their intelligence levels. **Pindar and Singh (2021)** studied 240 high school students from Hisar and Fatehabad, Haryana, using standardized scales to measure educational aspiration and parental encouragement. Most students showed moderate levels on both measures. The study found a significant positive relationship between students' educational aspirations and the level of parental encouragement they perceived. **Krishan et al. (2024)** studied 760 Scheduled Caste students from Classes 9 and 10 in government schools to assess educational aspiration levels. Using Khan's (2019) scale and t-tests, results showed that most students had average realistic aspirations, with no significant differences between male and female students.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the effect of socioeconomic status on the educational aspiration of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students enrolled in class X.

HYPOTHESIS

H₀₁ Socio-economic status will have no significant impact on the educational aspiration of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students enrolled in class X.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A total of 600 Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students studying in Class 10 were selected from the Janjgir-Champa district. The students were chosen from both government and non-government schools to ensure proper representation of SC and ST students from different socio-economic backgrounds. The sample was included in the study using a purposive sampling method.

Tools:

Socio-Economic Status Scale:

Students’ socio-economic status was assessed using the SES Scale validated by Upadhyay (2019). The scale contains 31 items grouped into five sections: personal information (2 items), family details (4 items), educational information (10 items), income status (4 items), and miscellaneous socio-cultural and household indicators (11 items). The tool is reported to be highly reliable and valid. Based on raw scores, SES is categorized as: 77 and above (high), 54–76 (middle), and below 53 (low).

Educational Aspiration Inventory

To measure educational aspiration, the Educational Aspiration Inventory developed by Pradeep Kumar (2012) was used. The inventory consists of 20 statements, with four response options for each item. Scores are assigned as follows: option “A” = 1 mark, “B” = 2 marks, “C” = 3 marks, and “D” = 4 marks. The total score on this inventory can range from 20 to 80. The test–retest reliability coefficient of the inventory is 0.96, indicating high reliability. According to the norms of the inventory, the categories are: above 60 marks – high educational aspiration, 47–59 marks – moderate educational aspiration, and below 47 marks – low educational aspiration.

Procedure:

The educational aspiration inventory was administered to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students enrolled in class X with varying degrees of socioeconomic status. After scoring, one-way ANOVA was used, and the results are given in Table 1.

RESULTS

Table 1

Effect of Socio-Economic Status on Educational Aspiration of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Students Enrolled in Class X

Level of SES↓	Educational Aspiration			
	N	Mean	S.D.	SE of Mean
High SES	42	57.92	13.23	2.04
Middle SES	203	44.84	10.73	0.75
Low SES	355	38.92	14.55	0.77

ANOVA Summary

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
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Between Groups	02	15627.630	7813.815	44.22, p<.05
Within Group	597	105470.843	176.668	
Total	599	121098.473		

According to Tables 1 and 1(a), socio-economic status has a significant effect on the educational aspirations of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students. The calculated F value of 44.22 confirms this finding at the 0.05 level of significance. Since the computed F value is significant, the statistical difference in mean educational aspiration scores among SC and ST students across different socio-economic levels was further verified, as presented in Table 1(b).

Table 1 (b) Post-hoc Test

Educational Aspiration		
Mean I	Mean J	Mean (I-J)
High SES	Middle SES	13.08*
	Low SES	19.00*
Middle SES	Low SES	5.92*

* p<0.05

According to Table 1(b), Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students from a high socio-economic status showed significantly higher educational aspiration (Mean = 57.92) than those from a middle socio-economic status (Mean = 44.84). The mean difference of 13.08 further confirms this difference at the 0.05 level of significance.

According to Table 1(b), Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students from a middle socio-economic status showed significantly higher educational aspiration (Mean = 44.84) than those from a low socio-economic status (Mean = 38.92). The mean difference of 5.92 further confirms this difference at the 0.05 level of significance.

The table also indicates that SC and ST students from a high socio-economic status had significantly higher educational aspiration (Mean = 57.92) compared to those from a low socio-economic status (Mean = 38.92). The mean difference of 19.00 also supports this finding at the 0.05 level of significance.

According to the findings of the study, students from a high socio-economic background had higher educational aspirations than those from middle and low socio-economic backgrounds, while the lowest educational aspirations were found among students from low socio-economic backgrounds. All three groups consisted of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students.

These results can also be understood in the context of various educational theories. From the perspective of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, students belonging to high and, to some extent, middle socio-economic status have already satisfied their basic needs, which enables them to focus on achieving more challenging educational goals.

CONCLUSION

1. A significant effect of socio-economic status was found on the educational aspirations of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students. Students from a high socio-economic status showed the highest educational aspirations, while those from a low socio-economic status showed the lowest.

2. The socio-economic status of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students influences their future educational aspirations.

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