

Achievement Motivation and Adjustment of Secondary School Students in Relation to Socio-economic Status and Social Categories

Rabindra Nath Roy Majumdar

Research Scholar, School of Educational Research and Training, A.K.U., Patna, Bihar

Prof. Preeti Sinha

Former Dean, School of Educational Research and Training, A.K.U., Patna

ABSTRACT

This quantitative study explores the relationship between achievement motivation and adjustment among senior secondary school students in Patna district, with respect to socio-economic status and social categories. Using purposive sampling, 480 students from Class 11 and 12 were assessed through Rao Achievement Motivation Test (RAMT) constructed by Dr. D. Gopal Rao (1974) and Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) developed by Sinha and Singh (1971). The findings reveal significant differences in motivation and adjustment based on sex and socio-economic status, offering insights for inclusive educational practices.

Keywords: *Achievement Motivation, Adjustment, Socio-Economic Status, Gender, Secondary Education.*

Received : 28/7/2025

Acceptance : 20/8/2025

Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of Indian education, achievement motivation and adjustment are pivotal psychological constructs influencing student success. Achievement motivation is a psychological construct that reflects an individual's internal drive to succeed, persist, and excel in academic and personal goals. In the context of secondary education, it plays a pivotal role in shaping students' learning behaviours, aspirations, and overall academic performance. Adolescents at this stage are particularly sensitive to external influences such as family background, peer dynamics, and school environment. Adjustment is a dynamic psychological process through which individuals strive to maintain harmony with their internal needs and external environment. In the context of secondary education, adjustment encompasses academic, emotional, and social domains, all of which are crucial for students navigating adolescence—a phase marked by identity formation, peer pressure, and increased academic expectations.

Socio-economic status (SES) and social categories such as gender, caste, and school type

(government vs. private) play a significant role in shaping students' academic motivation and adjustment patterns. SES influences access to resources, parental involvement, and exposure to enriching experiences, while social categories often determine students' lived realities, expectations, and opportunities. Understanding how these factors affect the achievement motivation and adjustment are essential for creating inclusive and supportive educational environments.

Statement of the Problem

Despite numerous educational reforms, disparities in achievement motivation and adjustment persist among secondary school students. This study investigates how socio-economic status and social categories (specifically sex) influence these psychological variables among senior secondary students in Patna district.

Significance of the Study

This research holds significance for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers. It highlights

psychological barriers to academic success and informs inclusive pedagogical strategies. It contributes to data-driven interventions for marginalized groups and aligns with NCF-SE and NEP 2020 goals of equity and holistic development.

Research Objectives

1. To find out the significant difference in the scores of achievement motivation of senior secondary school students on the basis of sex.
2. To find out the significant difference in the scores of achievement motivation of senior secondary school students on the basis of socio-economic status.
3. To find out whether there is any significant difference in the scores of adjustment of senior secondary school students on the basis of sex.
4. To find out whether there is any significant difference in the scores of adjustment of senior secondary school students on the basis of socio-economic status.

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the scores of achievement motivation of senior secondary school students on the basis of sex.
2. There is no significant difference in the scores of achievement motivation of senior secondary school students on the basis of socio-economic status.
3. There is no significant difference in the scores of adjustment of senior secondary school students on the basis of sex.
4. There is no significant difference in the scores of adjustment of senior secondary school students on the basis of socio-economic status.

Review of Related Literature

Indian Literature

Kumar & Kumar (2025) explored the link between mental health and adjustment in secondary students, finding that better adjustment correlates with higher academic achievement. Bhagat & Baliya (2023) found gender-based differences in adjustment, with male students showing higher emotional stability than females. Sharma (2022) examined achievement motivation across SES groups, revealing that students from higher SES backgrounds exhibited stronger goal orientation. Rani & Singh (2021) studied caste-based disparities in motivation, noting that SC/ST students

often face systemic barriers affecting their drive to succeed. Verma (2020) emphasized the role of parental expectations and peer influence in shaping achievement motivation among urban adolescents.

Foreign Literature

Pathak (2022) found that school adjustment significantly affects achievement motivation across disciplines, suggesting targeted support programs. OECD (2019) reported that socio-economic disparities significantly impact students' psychological well-being and academic engagement globally. Eccles & Wigfield (2002) highlighted gender differences in motivation, with girls often undervaluing their academic competence despite equal performance.

Ryan & Deci (2000) emphasized the role of autonomy and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation and adjustment.

McClelland (1987) theorized achievement motivation as a learned behavior influenced by cultural and familial factors.

Research Methodology

Research Design: For the sample of the present study purposive sampling technique was adopted and one districts namely Patna was selected. Out of which, four blocks were selected. From each block four schools were selected randomly for data collection. From each school, 40 secondary school students were selected through random sampling technique.

Population: Class 11th and 12th students from senior secondary schools in Patna district.

Sample: 480 students (260 males and 220 females) from various socio-economic backgrounds.

Tools Used: The researcher used Rao Achievement Motivation Test (RAMT) constructed by Dr. D. Gopal Rao (1974) and Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) developed by Sinha and Singh (1971)

Statistical Techniques used: Mean, Standard Deviation and the 't' test and 'f' test compare the differences between the groups.

Data Analysis:

Null Hypothesis 1– There is no significant difference in the scores of achievement motivation of senior secondary school students on the basis of gender.

Table -1**Achievement motivation of the senior secondary school students on the basis of gender**

Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Remarks
Boys	260	32.47	6.43	4.997	S*
Girls	220	29.32	7.24		

(S* means significant, at 1 % level of significance the table value is 2.58)

It is inferred from the table 1 that the t-value is 4.997, which is more than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means there is a significant difference in mean scores of achievement motivation between boys and girls in senior secondary schools. Male students exhibit higher achievement motivation (32.47) than females (29.32).

Null Hypothesis 2– There is no significant difference in the scores of achievement motivation of senior secondary school students on the basis of economic status.

Table - 2**Achievement motivation of senior secondary school students on the basis of economic status**

Economic Status	N	Mean	S.D.	f-ratio	Remarks
LIG	110	28.69	9.48	13.89	S*
MIG	234	30.64	8.46		
HIG	136	34.21	7.63		

(S means significant, at 1 % level of significance the table value is 4.61)*

It is inferred from the table 2 that the f-value 13.89 is less than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means there is a significant difference in mean scores of achievement motivation between low-income group, middle-income group and high-income group senior secondary school students. Further analysis found that there is no significant difference between the low- and middle-income group, but significant difference is found between low-income group and high-income and middle-income group and high-income group senior secondary school students.

Null Hypothesis 3 – There is no significant difference in the scores of adjustment of senior secondary school students on the basis of gender.

Table - 3**Adjustment of the senior secondary school students on the basis of gender**

Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Remarks
Boys	260	36.93	6.74	6.16	S*
Girls	220	41.28	8.44		

(S means significant, at 1% level of significance the table value is 2.58)*

It is inferred from the table 3 that the t-value 6.16 is more than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means there is a significant difference in the mean scores of adjustment of senior secondary school students on the basis of gender. The female students (41.28) demonstrate better adjustment skill than the boys (36.93).

Null Hypothesis 4 – There is no significant difference in the scores of adjustment of senior secondary school students on the basis of economic status.

Table- 4**Adjustment of senior secondary school students on the basis of economic status**

Economic Status	N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Remarks
LIG	110	40.48	7.38	1.09	NS*
MIG	234	39.59	6.29		
HIG	136	38.92	8.21		

It is inferred from the table 4 that the f-value 1.456 is less than the table value 3 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means there no significant difference in mean scores of adjustment between low-income group, middle-income group and high-income group senior secondary school students.

Conclusion:

The present study clearly indicates that gender and socio-economic status play a crucial role in shaping achievement motivation and adjustment among senior secondary school students. The study findings revealed that boys and girls significantly differ in both achievement motivation and adjustment, suggesting inherent variations in their psychological and social orientations toward academic life. Similarly, students belonging to different socio-economic groups (low, middle, and high income) differ significantly in their achievement motivation, highlighting the influence of economic background on aspirations, goals, and competitiveness. However, adjustment levels across economic groups do not show significant variation, which indicates that students, irrespective of income level, develop comparable coping strategies and adaptability in their school environment.

Suggestions

1. **Gender-sensitive approaches** should be adopted by teachers to foster both boys' and girls' achievement motivation by addressing their distinct learning needs and aspirations.
2. Schools should organize workshops and counseling sessions focused on adjustment skills such as stress management, emotional regulation, and peer interaction.
4. Inclusive classroom practices like cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and group projects can provide equal opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to achieve and adjust better.
5. Policymakers and administrators should strengthen scholarship schemes, remedial classes, and career guidance programs to uplift the motivation levels of economically disadvantaged students.

Educational Implications:

1. Curriculum design should integrate activities that build self-confidence, resilience, and achievement orientation among all students, with particular

attention to gender equity.

2. Teacher education programs must prepare teachers to identify differences in achievement motivation and adjustment among students and address them through differentiated instruction.
3. Findings emphasize the need to implement life skills education and psychological support systems in schools to balance motivational and adjustment differences among students.
4. Educational planners should consider socio-economic disparities and gender differences while framing policies to ensure equitable opportunities for academic success and personal growth.

References:

1. Bhagat, P., & Baliya, J.N. (2023). Self-Efficacy and Adjustment of Secondary School Students. IJAPRR
2. Eccles, J.S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational Beliefs, Values, and Goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*.
3. Kumar, A., & Kumar, A. (2025). Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students. IJIP
4. McClelland, D.C. (1987). *Human Motivation*. Cambridge University Press.
5. OECD (2019). *Education at a Glance*. OECD Publishing.
6. Paschal, S. (2018). Relationship between achievement motivation and teacher effectiveness of secondary school teachers. *New Frontiers in Education*, Vol.51(2). p. 24-29.
7. Pathak, A. (2022). *School Adjustment and Achievement Motivation*. RHIMRJ
8. Rani, S., & Singh, M. (2021). Caste and Motivation in Secondary Education. *Journal of Inclusive Pedagogy*.
9. Ryan, R.M., & Deci, E.L. (2000). Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation. *American Psychologist*.
10. Sharma, R. (2022). Achievement Motivation and SES in Adolescents. *Indian Journal of Educational Psychology*.
11. Verma, N. (2020). Parental Expectations and Peer Influence. *Indian Educational Review*.

