

# **Academic Achievement and Socio-Economic Status of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Students: A Case Study of Lakhimpur District, Assam**

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## **Abstract**

Different policy and measures has been adopted by the Government of India as a Constitutional safeguard to develop the marginalized and disadvantaged social groups in all spheres of life. The scheduled tribes groups in India share a major portion of the marginalized section in India. The literacy rates of these groups also not encouraging. But, in the age of knowledge explosion and instant global communications, education emerges as the key factor and essential passport for individual and social development. In the same background, a good record of academic achievement also important for these socially excluded peoples. Academic achievement is an important index of learning extent. Academic achievement plays a very significant and vital role in the fulfillment of the aims of life of an individual. But, in spite of uniform pedagogical, infrastructural and environmental facilities in the educational institutions students differ in their academic performance. In fact, academic achievement is the product variable which gets toned up or down by the positive or negative impact of number of variables which are known as correlates or associated variables of academic achievement. It is observed in different research works that among these factors or variables, socio economic status is an important correlate of academic achievement. Socio-Economic Status is the combination of two terms namely social status and economic status of an individual. In the present study, an attempt was made to find out the relationship between academic achievements of class X students of Lakhimpur District of Assam with their Socio-economic status.

**Keywords-** *Socio-Economic Status, Academic Achievement, ST Student.*

## **Introduction:**

The Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) groups in India share a major portion of the marginalized section in India. According to 2011 census, the population of SC is 16.6% and ST is 8.6%, together constituting a quarter of the total population. Again, the majority of SC population is concentrated in states like Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra

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Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and in many other states of India. The smallest concentration of the SC population belongs to the North-Eastern States. About 7% of the population of Assam belongs to SC. More than half of the ST population is concentrated in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Jharkhand and Gujarat. ST communities live in about 15% of the country's areas, in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains and forests to hills and inaccessible areas.

Different policy and measures has been adopted by the Government of India as a Constitutional safeguard to develop the marginalized social groups in all spheres of life. The Constitution of India has taken special care to uplift certain Marginalized social groups in India, those who were exploited for a long period of time. Various government policies focusing on the development of these marginalized social groups and efforts are being made to reduce the socio-economic and political Inequalities amongst the SC, ST and the Other Backward Classes (OBC). But, in spite of different measures and policy of the government to develop these marginalized social groups, the Conditions of the majority of the SC and ST people have by and large remained the same. It signifies the importance of education for better development of the socially excluded groups. In order to uplift the socio-economic-political status of the socially excluded groups especially SC and ST people, education is vital.

### **Significance of Academic Achievement at class X Level:**

Academic achievement is an important index of learning extent. Academic achievement refers to the extent to which a student is able to acquire the content, acquire knowledge and skills, develop abilities, thinking capacity, understanding and judgment power in different subjects imparted to them in the educational institutions.

Academic achievement plays a very significant and vital role in the fulfillment of the aims of life of an individual. At the time of admission, for entrance to any kind of job, for scholarships, for further studies and so on, the scholastic record is the main base. It portrays the individual. Therefore, it is more imperative for the individuals/students to have high scholastic achievement.

Academic achievement at class-X level assumes special significance from the perspective of the following points-

- a. To select, identify and differentiate the students on the basis of their academic attainment and point out strategies for their further improvement.

- b. To ensure that students are able to acquire adequate knowledge, skill, ability and competence so as to gain more benefit from secondary education.
- c. To acquaint with the problems and difficulty of the students in the content area.
- d. To evaluate the adequacy of the educational system by the extent to which the pupils involved in the system achieve.
- e. To maximize the quantitative and qualitative development in secondary education.

### **Correlates of Academic Achievement:**

In spite of uniform pedagogical, infrastructural and environmental facilities in the educational institutions, students differ in their academic performance. In fact, academic achievement is the product variable which gets toned up or down by the positive or negative impact of number of variables which are known as correlates or associated variables of academic achievement. After studying research works of other scholars, the investigator decided to study the Socio-economic status as correlates of academic achievement of the SC and ST class X students of Lakhimpur District of Assam.

### **Significance of the Study:**

Secondary education has a significant place in the life of every student. The objectives of secondary education are so framed that it may suit the needs of the students and fulfill the aspirations with which they are sent to receive the secondary education. Significance of academic achievement at the secondary level of education is multifarious. In this context, it is noteworthy that the first pillar which would help to build the gateway to a bright future for any student is the matriculation. It is then, after which, students decide and work to reach their aim in terms of profession. The result of their matriculation helps them to decide their choice of streams of study, widens the scope of higher education and vocational preference. In the same way, the performance in class-IX will act as a motivator to improve the academic achievement in the near future. The students get to check themselves on all aspects which may foster or hinder their academic achievement. They can work on improving themselves for a year and prepare for the matriculation, accordingly. In this process of checking, re-checking and improving one's academic field and aspects related to it, the students can develop an insight about themselves, as to what their potentials, weaknesses, aptitudes, attitudes and interests, hard-working strategies are. Thus, in accordance to that insight, they can plan for the educational streams that they should take at the next

level, field of higher education that they should pursue and career options that go with it.

But, as discussed earlier, varieties of factors act upon academic achievement so study on that factor which consistently influences the high and low level academic performance is a relevant and useful field of educational research. A sufficient number of factors of academic achievement have been identified, hypothesized and researched upon. Research results are different, at times they praise and in some cases they challenge each other. A comprehensive picture of academic achievement is not yet clear. While Indian researchers have attempted to study such variables in relation to academic achievement, limited studies are found to be on secondary students especially in Assam.

Again, study on ST and SC students is scant and hardly any systematic attempt is found on correlates of academic achievement of ST and SC students. In order to maximize the quality and quantity of secondary education as well as to upgrade the educational status of ST and SC students, educational research has to explore the correlates of academic achievement of ST and SC students belong to secondary level of education. In view of all these facts, an attempt was made in the direction to find out the relationship between academic achievement of SC and ST class X students of Lakhimpur District of Assam and socio-economic status in the present study.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

Explicitly, the objectives of the study were as follows:

- a. To study the levels of academic achievement and socio-economic status of the Class X SC and ST students of Lakhimpur District, Assam.
- b. To study the relationships between academic achievement and socio-economic status of the Class X SC and ST students of the district.

On the basis of the review of different related literature and keeping in view the objectives of the study, following research questions and hypotheses have been formulated for testing:

- i. What are the levels of academic achievement and socio-economic status of the Class X SC students of Lakhimpur District, Assam?
- ii. What are the levels of academic achievement and socio-economic status of the Class X ST students of the district?

### **Research Methodology:**

Method: Descriptive Method was used in the present study.

Population: The population of the present study covers all the SC and ST students of Class X studying in five (5) secondary schools of Lakhimpur District.

Sample: All the available SC and ST students of Class X at the time of data collection of these 5 sampled secondary schools constitute the sample of students. In this context, convenient sampling technique was used.

Data Collection: The investigators have gone through different tools of measuring socio-economic status of the students and finally decided to use the Socio-Economic Status Scale developed by R. L. Bharadwaj in the present study. The investigators had personally visited the five selected schools located in different areas under Boginadi block of Lakhimpur District, Assam. While visiting the school the investigators informed the purpose of this study to the head of the institution. The investigators had personally met the respondents and instructions were read out before administration of the test. When the respondents were found comfortable then the questionnaires were distributed. After completion of the task filled in questionnaires were collected. Again, percentages and marks of the sampled students in class IX examination were collected from head of the institution.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics like Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis was used to study the levels of academic achievement and socio-economic status. Product moment co-efficient of correlation was used to find out the relationship between academic achievement and socio-economic status.

### **Findings of the Study:**

Objectives-wise findings of the study are as follows-

#### **1. Level of academic achievement of the SC students:**

Table 1: Level of Academic Achievement of the SC students

Variable	Mean	Median	Skewness (SK)	Kurtosis (KU)
Academic achievement	47.42	54.00	.33	-.42

The table 1 shows the computed value of Mean and Median were found to be 47.42 and 54 respectively. The computed value of skewness was .33 which was positively skewed. It indicated that the scores were massed at the lower end of the scale. The negative value of kurtosis (-0.42) means the distribution of

academic achievement scores was leptokurtic and the scores were mostly concentrated in same place than the normal distribution.

**2. Level of academic achievement of the ST students**

Table 2: Level of Academic Achievement of ST students

Variable	Mean	Median	Skewness (SK)	Kurtosis (KU)
Academic achievement	40.49	37.83	1.23	.70

The table 2 shows the computed value of Mean and Median were found to be 40.49 and 37.83 respectively. The computed value of skewness was 1.23 which was positively skewed. It indicated that the scores were massed at the lower end of the scale. The value of kurtosis (.70) indicated that the distribution of socio-economic status scores was platykurtic. Hence, the scores were scattered more evenly than the normal distribution.

**3. The level of socio-economic status of SC students:**

Table 3: Level of Socio-Economic Status

Variable	Mean	Median	Skewness (SK)	Kurtosis (KU)
Socio-economic status	538.11	518	.73	1.26

The table 3 shows the computed value of Mean and Median were found to be 538.11 and 518 respectively. The computed value of skewness was .73 which was positively skewed. It indicated that the scores were massed at the lower end of the scale. The value of kurtosis (1.26) indicated that the distribution of socio-economic status scores was platykurtic. Hence, the scores were scattered more evenly than the normal distribution.

**4. The level of socio-economic status of ST students:**

Table 4: Level of Socio-Economic Status

Variable	Mean	Median	Skewness (SK)	Kurtosis (KU)
Socio-economic status	574.94	555	.79	.50

The table 4 shows the computed value of Mean and Median were found to be 574.94 and 555 respectively. The computed value of skewness was .79 which was positively skewed. It indicated that the scores were massed at the lower end of

the scale. The value of kurtosis (.50) indicated that the distribution of socio-economic status scores was platykurtic. Hence, the scores were scattered more evenly than the normal distribution.

**5. Relationships between academic achievement and socio-economic status of SC students:**

Table 5: Academic Achievement and Socio-Economic Status of SC Students.

Variable	Product -moment coefficient of correlation (r)	Significance
Academic Achievement and Socio-Economic Status	0.43	Significant at .01 level

The table 5 reflects the product-moment coefficient of correlation (r) between academic achievement and socio-economic status of the class X SC students of Lakhimpur District, Assam was 0.43. The 'r' was significant at .01 level. It indicated a positive correlation between academic achievement and socio-economic status. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis that "There was a significant positive correlation between academic achievement and socio-economic status of the class X SC students of Lakhimpur District, Assam" was accepted.

**6. Relationships between academic achievement and socio-economic status of ST students:**

Table 6: Academic Achievement and Socio-Economic Status of ST Students.

Variable	Product -moment coefficient of correlation (r)	Significance
Academic Achievement and Socio-Economic Status	0.75	Significant at .01 level

The table 6 portrays the Product-moment coefficient of correlation (r) between academic achievement and socio-economic status of the class X ST students was 0.75. The 'r' was significant at .01 level. It indicated a positive correlation between academic achievement and socio-economic status of the class X ST students of the district. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis that "There was a significant positive correlation between academic achievement and socio-economic status of the class X ST students of Lakhimpur District, Assam" was accepted.

**Discussion:**

The present study was carried out mainly to find out the relationship between academic achievement and socio-economic status of the class X SC and ST students of Lakhimpur District, Assam. The study revealed that there was positive relationship between academic achievement and socio-economic status of the class X ST students.

Thus, it was evident from the above discussion and finding of the present study that the socio-economic status of the parents played a significant role in contributing to the academic achievement of the students. It indicated that the parent's socio-economic status was a dominant factor for the academic achievement of their children. Socio-economic status had an influence in making a student high, average or low achiever. It was generally felt that better socio-economic status of the parents acted as an incentive for the students and the effect of low socio-economic status of the parents seemed to have a deteriorating influence on them. In addition, parental attitude towards schooling or education and parental interactions with children were high in case of parents with high socio-economic status.

**Suggestions and Conclusion:**

The following suggestions can be derived on the basis of the findings of the study.

- a. To enhance the academic achievement of the SC and ST students of class X of Lakhimpur District of Assam, more provision for Special coaching class, remedial class, adequate learning materials, extra books, good library facilities and special attention should be provided.
- b. More educational facilities, intellectual stimulation, better learning environment, availability of minimum basic facilities, scope for more exposure, proper career guidance, special classes, remedial teaching, learning materials, hostel facilities, scholarships should be provided to the poor socio-economic background SC and ST students to boost-up their academic achievement.

The fact that parent's socio-economic status tend to act as a cause of poor academic performance indicate that parents with poor educational background have a deteriorating influence on the academic performance of their child. To sum up it can be said that the study revealed a clear picture of relationship between academic achievement and socio-economic status of the SC and ST students of Lakhimpur District of Assam. With the help of the above mentioned suggestions attempts can be made to strengthen this positively correlated



variable of academic achievement which would be help to improve academic achievement of the students in different courses.

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