



Research Article

A Study on the Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Female Students in Secondary Education

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ABSTRACT

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Secondary education for a girl is particularly critical as it serve as a gateway to higher education and greater employment opportunities. Proper education fosters critical thinking, problem-solving skill, develop self-confidence, empowering women and participate more actively in their communities. The main purpose of the present study is to investigate different factors that affects in female students academic Performance in secondary education, utilizing secondary data sources. By analysing data from different sources, the research identifies key determinants such as socio-economic status, parental education significantly influences academic achievement. School infrastructure and societal and parent's attitudes towards female education also play a crucial role in academic achievement of female students. The study concludes that addressing these multifaceted factors is essential for improving educational outcomes for female students in India.

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Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right for everyone, regardless of their sex, race or economic status as it is essential for sustainable social, economic and political development. To achieve development and growth of any country education is a fundamental requirement either it is in culturally, politically, socially or economically. In a general context, the term “education” is often used to refer to the formal process of learning and teaching and it takes place in primary and secondary schools, as well as higher education institutions such as colleges and universities. When discussing society or a country's educational system, these different levels of learning and their associated institutions are commonly included under the umbrella term “education”. Secondary education in India is divided into two stages that lower secondary which includes class 9th and 10th standard and higher secondary includes 11th and 12th standard, cover the age group 14years to 18 years. Generally, students go for higher education after completing higher secondary stages in a higher institution include college and universities. Secondary education is the stage of education that follows primary education and it is an essential part of students' academic journey. According to the Babylon's dictionary, “Secondary education is the final stage of compulsory education, preceded by primary education and followed by higher education”

Academic achievement refers to a successful accomplishment or performance in particular subject area. Academic Achievement plays a significant role in learning process. It describes academic outcomes that indicate the extent to which a student has achieved their learning or educational goals. Performance outcome that reflects how well a person has achieved specific goals that were the

focus of activities in instructional environment like school, college or university, is called academic achievement. It is related to cognitive outcome or academic performance of a learner which he has learned in a particular session.

Academic achievement refers to a student or learner successfully reaching their educational goal, which was taught during a specific session. Academic achievement occupies a central position in education and is regarded as the primary incentive for individual progress. It is the distinct responsibility of educational institutions to foster comprehensive scholastic development in students. This enables students to comprehend the hierarchy rooted in academic achievement, which is most desirable outcome of school life. All school activities centre on students' scholastic achievement. Administrators, educators, curriculum planners, teachers and students collaborate to facilitate a teaching-learning process aimed at academic excellence. Academic achievement serves as indicators of students' performance, teachers' efforts, and the relevance of the curriculum and educational objectives. (Devi) Dictionary of Psychology of Chaplin (1959) defines educational or academic achievement as specified level of attainment or proficiency in academic work as evaluated by the teachers, by standardized test or by a combination of both. Wolman's Dictionary of Behavioral Science defines that “Academic achievement is the level of proficiency attained in scholastic or academic work.” According to Aggarwal and Bhusan (1967), “Scholastic achievement is the achievement of the individual student in the subject in which he is interested and possesses the capacity of making his best performance to the best of his potentialities.”

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These definitions define that academic achievement is proficiency of a student in a particular subject or curriculum which was taught to him in an academic session. Academic achievement is predominantly assessed through exam or ongoing evaluation, while various test are arranged for measuring achievement in other domain. Academic success and academic achievement are two different concepts.

Academic achievement refers to the extent of student's learning within a specific time frame; while academic success denotes the individual instances of accomplishment that cumulatively contribute to their overall academic achievement. Academic achievement reflects a student's mastery of knowledge, skills, and competencies within their chosen field of study. Attaining a high level of academic success will provide the child with a feeling of accomplishment. It can aid the child in cultivating crucial life skills, fostering a strong work ethic, motivating them to established goal, and creating a constructive learning atmosphere, all of which contribute to their personal growth and development.

Methodology of the Study:

The methodology of this present study had been done in a descriptive manner. This study utilizes secondary data sources like books, e-journals articles etc to explore the different factors that effect on academic achievement in secondary education of female students in India.

Objectives of the study:

To find out the different factors that affect on Academic Performance in Secondary Education of female students.

Factors that affects on Academic Achievement in Secondary Education of Female students: Besides some common factors like Student motivation, I.Q level of the students etc, there are some specific factors which affect academic performance of a female students, which are associated with combination of many factors including social, cultural, economical, demographic, and so on. The following are some important factors which could be attributed for the present problem.

Child Marriage: Child marriage is a significantly disrupts girls' academic achievement in secondary education by forcing them to drop out of school to assume domestic responsibilities, cope with early pregnancies, and face psychological problem. Among state-level distribution, the highest rate of child marriage is observed in Bihar (42.5%), followed by West Bengal (41.6%), Jharkhand (37.9%) and Rajasthan(35.4%), Tripura (33.1%), Andhra Pradesh(33%)and

in Assam it is 30.8%. The incidence of child marriage in these states is more than national average. (Paul,2020). The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reports that India is home to a staggering one-third of globe's child brides. Around 27% of Indian girls marry before turning 18, a trend more pronounced in rural locals, where traditional beliefs and economic constraints reinforce this custom. When a girl get married, she is often expected to drop out of school, ending her formal education, as a wife or mother, she is often expected to take care of the home, children and extended family.

Inadequate menstrual Hygiene management: Mismanagement of menstrual hygiene is often a factor that prevents girls from attending school. Due to poverty and limited access, some girls find it challenging to obtain the necessary supplies for their periods. Every year more than 23 million girls in India drop out of school due to the lack of necessary products and hygiene education. In a study of girls' school attendance in rural India, one out of five girls said that they missed school during their period. In many rural parts of India, women and girls are restricted during menstruation because of their "impurity,"

according to custom. Some time the anxiety about menstrual blood leaking through their clothes and causing visible stain can be a major source of embarrassment for girls. Because it is seen that the cost of menstrual products can place a financial burden on families, particularly those with multiple daughters. This fear often leads them to stay home from school to avoid potential humiliation. 45% of the girls who attended school reported difficulty concentrating due to their periods, while 36% expressed fear of staining or losing their cloths or pad at school. Additionally, over 80% of the surveyed girls were using cloths and lacked access to sanitary pads.

For many girls' menstrual cycles can be accompanied by health issues such as sever cramps, heavy bleeding, and conditions like endometriosis or polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). Without proper medical attention and support, these issues can cause significant physical discomfort and further discourage school attendance. A study in rural India found that approximately 28% of school girls missed schools due to menstrual pain.

Child Labor: A large segment of child population in India is engaged in child labor practices. It plays a major role in girls in their irregularity in their school. Child labor robs children of chances for success and negatively impacts their emotional, social and physical growth. Child labor particularly hinders a child's ability to enroll in and fully attend school. There are usually two kinds of child labor: labor that involves children in specific businesses for financial gain and domestic child labor which employs the child at home. India has one of the highest numbers of child laborers in the world, with 10.1 million child laborers reported in India indulged in carpet making, construction, mining, domestic work etc. Domestic labor is commonly accepted even when girls are paid little and work long hours. If they are not employed elsewhere, they often work long hours at home tending to younger siblings while parents are working. In many families girls children are play the role of second mother by shouldering the responsibilities of household work such as looking after younger siblings and handling household work like cleaning, cooking, fetching water etc. in rural India specially. One in every eight children, aged 5-14 years, work for their own household or someone else.

The Indian government established a Child Labor Act in 1986 which prohibited children under the age of 14 from working in certain locations or industries. While this act made it illegal for children to labor in larger work areas, there are still millions of children, primarily girls, involved in domestic and or agricultural work that usually involves long hours and little pay. While the government can oversee factories and business but monitoring household is much more challenging. This leads to a large number of domestic workers, primarily young girls. When girls students engaged in domestic works at the expenses of studding, their academic performance become decreasing, these girls often miss school or struggle to keep up with their studies, sometimes leading them to drop out. If they do manage to attend school and complete their work, they are often deprived of extracurricular and other beneficial opportunities.

Parents attitude towards girls' education: One of the biggest obstacles to girls' secondary education, mostly in the rural region is the conventional mindset of parents, who still do not support in girls' education. Parents often protest about insecurity of girls attending schools.

Instances of abduction, rape and molestation of girls dampen the enthusiasm of parents and girls

students in perusing education beyond a certain age, they remain bound to their homes. Parents have an attitude that sending girls to school will lead them to be harassed by boys,

teachers and other outsiders. Concerns about the safety of girls travelling to and from school, especially in rural or conflict-affected areas, can impact parents' willingness to send their daughters to school.

Though education should be free, there are a lot of costs associated with sending children to school. The cost of uniforms, textbooks, shoes or bus fare can be too much to bear for a family living in poverty. They believed that educating girls as a wastage as compared to their son. Parents often choose to keep their girls at home while sending the boys to school instead.

Besides these above mention factors, there are lots of other factors which greatly influenced on academic achievement in secondary education of girls' student like economic condition of family, health issue of family members, parents' educational level, School related problem like lack of infrastructural facility in school. Annul Status of Education Report (2014) agreed that due to lack girl's toilet facilities, drinking water and waiting halls dropout rate at secondary levels have been increased than the past decades. Other problems like lack of female teacher, lack of suitable curriculum for female students, lack of hostel arrangement for female students etc.

The Right to Education Act (RTE) was implemented by the Parliament of India in 2009, making education compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 14. In 2000, enrollment rates were just above 73% for girls in India; as a result of the RTE, enrollment rates are now recorded at 93% for girls. Although enrollment rates have increased in primary school, dropout rates going into secondary education are still considerably high for girls. As of 2013, enrollment rates for girls only just over 64% in secondary schools.

Recommendations and Suggestions:

1. At the ground level, local government or the civil society must play an active role to aware parents to the benefits of educating their daughters through various awareness programmes in distance and rural area. They encourage parents to send their daughter to educational institutions.
2. There is a requirement for the establishment of separate educational institutions for girls at secondary level and there will be separate security arrangement for females in these institutions. Parents who prefer not to enroll their daughters in co- educational institutions or have security concerns can choose to send their daughters to these institutions.
3. Girls should be provided professional, technical and vocational education in secondary school for their skill development.
4. Sanitary pad vending machine with sanitary pad disposal machine should be installed in all secondary school girls toilet.
5. Scholarship should be given to those students who genuinely deserve and who genuinely need them which will help girls to pay their tuition fees, transportation fair, to buy school uniform and other necessary accessories.
6. School management should conduct continuous discussion with students themselves, school teachers, parents and other community members on girls' education.

Conclusion:

Assessing factors affecting female students' academic achievement was the main purpose of the study. The findings of the study revealed that lots of specific problems affect in academic performance of a female students. As we all know that the level of classroom participation and participation in extra co- curricular activities of female students is low as compared to male students because of some specific problem like child marriage, child labor, and menstrual related problem, parental and societal attitude towards girls' education etc. And this low level of classroom participation and in other school related programme directly affect in girls' academic achievement. We all know that problem exit not only in everyone's life but also in society; it is a part and parcels our life. In some circumstances Government is not directly responsible; we as a responsible citizen of a society, different NGO's and govt. organization if collectively move forward together step by step, we can solve this problem easily. B.R Ambedkar, father of the Indian constitution said, "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved."

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