

Socioeconomic status and Parental Involvement: a Comparison among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim majority Secondary Schools of Kerala

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Abstract: *The positive effects that Socio Economic Status and Parental Involvement have on students' academic achievement appear to be undeniable. The present paper compares Socio Economic Status as well as Parental Involvement in Education of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools of Kerala. The sample constituted a representative sample of standard IX students from select Tribal Majority Secondary Schools from Palakkad and Wayanad Districts, Fisherfolk Majority Secondary Schools from Thrissur, Malappuram and Kozhikkode and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools from Malappuram District. The Percentage analysis was used for data analysis. Comparisons of the Socio Economic status of parents reveal that, number of illiterate parents in Tribal Majority Secondary Schools is relatively high. Most of the mothers are unemployed. Majority of fathers are both unskilled or skilled labourers and their monthly income ranges between Rs. 5,001 and Rs. 12,500/-. No parent earns more than Rs.27,500/-. Comparison of parental involvement shows that the mean scores of Parental Involvement in secondary school students' education in Tribal Majority Secondary Schools is relatively low. The proportion of students who rate moderate involvement in students' education is high. Percentage of students who rate high Parental Involvement in Tribal Majority Secondary Schools is relatively low. The findings of the study may provide an evidence for educators, administrators and policy makers in their efforts to make improve the Socio Economic status of parents and thereby their involvement in students' education.*

Key Words: *Socio-Economic Status, Parental Involvement, Tribal, Fisherfolk, Muslim, Secondary school*

I. Introduction

Students are pioneers of every nation. To facilitate students with proper education has been a major problem for decades. Parental education and Socio-Economic factors are of vital importance in effecting students' educational achievements. They are like backbone in providing financial and mental confidence to students.

Researchers continue to find evidence that higher levels of involvement by parents are related to academic success for students (Epstein, 2001). (1) Educated parents can better understand the educational needs and their children's aptitude. They can help their children in their early education which affects their proficiency in their relative area of knowledge. Belonging to strong financial background, parents can provide latest technologies and facilities in a best possible way to enhance educational capability of their children.

Fantuzzo, Tighe, and Childs (2000) (2) found that better educated parents were more involved in their children's education at home, which includes initiating and participating in learning activities, and creating better learning experiences for the child. Besides parents' education level, parents' occupational status and income are also important in fostering parental involvement in their children's education.

A substantial body of evidence confirms that parents' socioeconomic status imposes a great impact on parental involvement and how it is translated into their child's educational success. For instance, Katsilis and Rubinson (1990) (3) in their study reported that the parents' socioeconomic status influences the educational success of their children at school to a great extent. Ho Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) (4) indicated that parents' socioeconomic status has significant and positive relationship on parental involvement in their children's education even though the relationship found was not strong. McNeal Jr. (2001) (5) in his study found that parents from higher socioeconomic status have better parental involvement which has greater effects on their children.

A number of studies (Shuang Ji and Koblinsky, (2009) (6) ; Sohail, et al., 2012) (7) have demonstrated that parents from a higher socioeconomic level show higher involvement in their children's education than parents from a lower socioeconomic level. These studies point out that those parents from higher socioeconomic status have a stronger economic background and this helps the parents to provide their children with more educational opportunities and educational resources.

II. Need And Significance Of The Study

The spread of education among the weaker sections of our society is vital as education is a prime requisite for socio-economic development. The policy to promote educational interests of the weaker sections of the people, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, has been enshrined in our constitution as a Directive Principles of State Policy.

The government of Kerala had undertaken several educational programmes for the upliftment of the students from these communities. In spite of all these facilities their level of educational attainment is still considerably far below than that of non-scheduled caste and non-scheduled tribe students. Investigations have revealed that most of the students of these families come from a far poorer socio-economic background when comparing with students from other communities.

Studies on educational deprivation of weaker sections of the society have inevitably linked it to their poor economic condition and poverty. Education has not yet been the priority of tribal communities, not yet been an integral part of tribal culture. In their perception of life, education has failed to emerge as a part of their survival strategy. The lack of educational atmosphere and infrastructure at home as well as dependence on subsistence economy force their children out of schools at the primary and early secondary stages that time the boys are ready for odd jobs, and the girls for domestic chores for helping their working mothers.

Some economic factors too are responsible for lack of interest shown by the tribal people in getting education. Since most of the tribal people are living in poverty, it is not easy for most of them to send their children to schools.

Reasons for low school enrolment among Scheduled Tribe children include the reluctance of Scheduled Tribe families to educate their children – in addition to the high illiteracy among Scheduled Tribe parents; they may not value the education available, particularly in relation to its opportunity costs. (Panda, 2011) (7) Though Kerala society fulfills parameters of social development, fishing community stands out lowest in the ladder not only within the state but in the national averages also. Many parents in this sector do have an attitude that school education is non-productive and continuing with the traditional occupation is the better option. Often parents, pursue their children for gainful employment in order to make additional income to the family.

Literature reviewed emphasizes the role of improved socio economic status and parental involvement in students' academic success. In this paper, the researcher attempts to compare the socio economic status as well as Parental Involvement of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools in Kerala.

III. Statement Of The Problem

“Socioeconomic status and Parental Involvement : A Comparison among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim majority Secondary Schools of Kerala “

IV. Objectives Of The Study

1. To compare the Socio-Economic Status of parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools of Kerala
2. To compare the parental Involvement in Education of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools of Kerala

V. Methodology

The study followed survey method Sample The present study was conducted on a representative sample of students of Standard IX randomly selected from five Tribal Majority Secondary Schools from Palakkad and Wayanad Districts, three Fisherfolk Majority Secondary Schools from Thrissur, Malappuram and Kozhikkode and three Muslim Majority Secondary Schools from Malappuram District of Kerala State.

Tools used for the Study

Socio-Economic Status Scale (Nair, 1976)

Scale of Parental Involvement in Education (Rajeswari & Usha, 2011)

Socio Economic Status Scale

This scale measures the socio-economic status of the parents of pupils selected as sample for the study. For calculating the Socio Economic Status of the family, Kerala Socio Economic Status Scale (Nair, 1976) has been referred. Modifications in the income levels has been made and used for the present study. The first part of the tool elicits the general information about the respondent. The second part covers the details related to the educational, occupational and income level of the parents or other earning members of the family.

Scale of Parental Involvement in Education

This is a 3 point scale for measuring the aspects of Parental Involvement in Education viz., Home Learning Environment, Parental Expectations, Valuing Children's opinions, Parental Attention, Parental Encouragement, Parental Help in Learning, Monitoring Progress in Studies, and Parents' Participation in School

Activities. The scores for each item were computed and the total scores were used for the analysis. Reliability of the scale was ensured through the Test Retest method. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.77. Validity of the scale was estimated with the standardized scale – ‘Parental Involvement Inventory’ (Usha. & Kuruvilla, 2001). The coefficient obtained was 0.69.

Statistical Techniques Used

Percentage Analysis was used for Data Analysis

VI. Analysis And Interpretations

6.1 To compare the Socio Economic Status of parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools of Kerala

6.1.1 Comparison of Educational Levels of Parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary schools of Kerala

6.1.2 Comparison of Occupational Levels of Parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary schools of Kerala

6.1.3 Comparison of Income Levels of Parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary schools of Kerala

6.1.1 Comparison of Educational Levels of Parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary schools of Kerala

The levels of education of parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Schools had been compared and is produced in TABLE 1

Table 1 Details of the comparison of Educational Levels of Parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary schools

Levels of Education	Parent	Tribal Majority Schools (%)	Fisherfolk Majority Schools (%)	Muslim Majority Schools (%)
Illiterate	Mother	29.69	15.83	4.91
	Father	34.66	25.86	5.17
I – IV	Mother	21.83	13.51	9.83
	Father	29.77	21.23	22.41
V – VI	Mother	13.10	13.51	16.39
	Father	8.44	10.81	15.51
VII – X	Mother	33.18	49.42	57.37
	Father	25.33	38.61	43.10
PDC/TTC	Mother	1.31	5.01	4.91
	Father	1.33	2.70	8.62
BA/B.Sc/B.Com/Engineering Diploma	Mother	0.87	1.93	6.55
	Father	0.44	0.77	5.17
MA/M.Sc/M.Com/M.Ed/M.B.B.S./Ph.D	Mother	0	0.77	0
	Father	0	0	0

It is clear from the TABLE that, 15.83 % of students’ Mothers in Fisherfolk and 4.91 % of students’ Mothers in Muslim Majority Secondary Schools were illiterate, whereas, 29.69 % of Mothers in Tribal Majority Secondary Schools were found to be illiterate. Thus, the number of illiterate mothers of students is found relatively more in Tribal Majority Secondary Schools. The percentage of Mothers of students (57.37%) who attained education between VII and X is relatively more in Muslim Majority Secondary Schools. It is observed that, 6.55% of students’ Mothers in Muslim Majority Secondary Schools have completed graduation.

It was also found that, 5.17 % of students’ Fathers in select Muslim Majority Secondary Schools are illiterate, whereas, 34.66 % of students’ Fathers in Tribal and 25.86 % of students’ Fathers in Fisherfolk Majority Secondary Schools were illiterate. Hence, illiterate Fathers of students were also found more in Tribal Majority Secondary Schools. The percentage of Fathers who attained education between VII and X is 38.61% in Fisherfolk and 43.10% in Muslim Majority Secondary Schools. Negligible percentages of Fathers of students in Tribal and Fisherfolk Secondary Schools have completed graduation courses. None of the Fathers of students in Tribal and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools has qualified any Post Graduate or Professional Courses.

6.1.2 Comparison of Occupational Levels of Parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Students

Data regarding different levels of Occupation of parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools were analyzed and compared and is given in TABLE 2

Table 2 Details of the Comparison of Occupational level of Parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools

Levels of Occupation	Parent	Tribal Majority Schools (%)	Fisherfolk Majority Schools (%)	Muslim Majority Schools (%)
Unemployed	Mother	62.00	85.32	81.96
	Father	1.33	1.15	5.17
Unskilled	Mother	36.68	11.58	11.47
	Father	75.55	31.66	41.37
Semi Skilled	Mother	0	2.31	1.63
	Father	20.00	57.14	39.65
Skilled	Mother	0	0.38	4.91
	Father	3.11	9.65	13.79
Semi Professional	Mother	1.31	0.38	0
	Father	0	0.38	0
High Professional	Mother	0	0	0
	Father	0	0	0

Table 2 reveals that, majority of Mothers of the select students are either housewives or unskilled workers. Percentage of students' Mothers (36.68%) going for unskilled jobs is relatively more. Negligible percentages of Mothers are engaged in semi skilled jobs. 4.91% of Mothers of students in Muslim Majority Secondary Schools are going for skilled works. Negligible percentages of students' Mothers in select Secondary Schools are engaged in semi professional and highly professional works.

It can also be observed that, the proportions of Fathers of students are engaged more in unskilled jobs in Tribal (75.55%) and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools (41.37%). In Fisherfolk Majority Secondary Schools, more percentages (57.14%) of Fathers of students are engaged in semi skilled jobs. 13.79% of students' Fathers in Muslim Majority Secondary Schools are engaged in skilled jobs which is relatively high. And negligible percentages of Fathers are engaged in semi professional and highly professional jobs.

6.1.3 Comparison of Income Levels of Parents of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools

Different levels of Income of parents of students in Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools were compared and are given in TABLE 3.

Table 3 Details Of The Comparison Of Income Level Of Parents Of Students Among Tribal, Fisherfolk And Muslim Majority Secondary Schools

Levels of Income (in Rupees)	Parent	Tribal Majority Schools (%)	Fisherfolk Majority Schools (%)	Muslim Majority Schools (%)
Below 5000/-	Mother	33.18	11.58	11.47
	Father	1.33	0.77	1.72
5001/- to 12,500/-	Mother	4.80	3.08	6.55
	Father	84.00	84.16	70.68
12,501/- to 20,000/-	Mother	0	0	0
	Father	11.11	7.72	13.79
20,001/- to 27,500/-	Mother	0	0	0
	Father	2.22	6.17	8.62
27,501/- to 35,000/-	Mother	0	0	0
	Father	0	0	0
Above 35,000/-	Mother	0	0	0
	Father	0	0	0

It is revealed from the TABLE that, majority of students' Mothers in select secondary schools have monthly income of below Rs.5000. 4.80 % of Mothers of students in Tribal, 3.08 % of Mothers in Fisherfolk, and 6.55 % of Mothers in Muslim Majority Schools have monthly income ranges from Rs. 5000 to Rs. 12,500. Not any single mother earns monthly income of more than Rs. 12,500.

It is also observed that, majority of Fathers of students in Muslim Majority Secondary Schools have monthly income ranging from Rs.5001 to Rs. 12,500. 13.79 % of Fathers of students in Muslim Majority Secondary Schools earn monthly income between Rs. 12,501 and Rs. 20,000 which is relatively high. Similarly, 8.62% of Fathers of students in Muslim Majority Secondary Schools earn monthly income ranges from Rs.20,001 to Rs. 27,500 which is relatively high. The number of parents who earn more than Rs. 27, 500 per month is nil.

6.2 To compare Parental Involvement in Education of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools of Kerala

6.2.1 The nature and extent of Parental Involvement in Education of students in the select Tribal, Fisherfolk and Majority Secondary Schools were compared.

6.2.2 Comparison of the nature of Parental Involvement in Education of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools of Kerala

The important statistical constants for the distribution of Parental Involvement in Education of students were computed to study its nature.

Important statistical constants for the distribution of Parental Involvement in Education in the select Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary schools in Kerala were given in TABLE 4.

Table 4 Comparison Of Statistical Constants For The Distribution Of Parental Involvement In Education Of Students Among Tribal, Fisherfolk And Muslim Majority Secondary Schools

Parental Involvement in Education	N=312	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Tribal Majority Schools	Total	36.86	37	37	5.26	0.39	0.08
Fisherfolk Majority Schools	Total	38.84	39	41	4.48	-0.31	-0.52
Muslim Majority Schools	Total	38.58	39	40	5.33	-0.76	0.69

While comparing the mean scores of Parental Involvement among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools, it is found that, the mean scores of Parental Involvement of students in the select secondary schools do not much differ. The variable ‘Parental Involvement in Education’ tested for its normality distribution.

6.2.2 Comparison of the extent of Parental Involvement in Education of Students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools of Kerala

In order to examine the extent of parental involvement in the education on the basis of students’ ratings, the total sample of students were grouped into groups of students who rated High, Moderate and Low Parental Involvement in Education separately in Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools. The classificatory technique was employed for grouping the students who rate Parental involvement in Education by taking Mean and Standard Deviation as the determinants.

Table 5 Comparison Of Distribution Of Total Sample Of Students Into Different Groups Who Rate Parental Involvement In Education Among Tribal, Fisherfolk And Muslim Majority Secondary Schools

Extent of Parental Involvement	Tribal Majority Schools (%)	Fisherfolk Majority Schools (%)	Muslim Majority Schools (%)
High Parental Involvement	9.29	15.41	18.06
Moderate Parental Involvement	72.11	69.54	70.96
Low Parental Involvement	18.58	15.03	10.96

While comparing the extent of parental involvement in students’ education, it is observed that, proportion of students who rate moderate involvement in students’ education is high in all the select secondary schools. Percentage of students who rate high Parental Involvement in Tribal Majority Secondary Schools is relatively low (9.29%) than 15.41% of students in Fisherflk and 18.06% of students in Muslim Majority Secondary Schools who rate high parental involvement in education.

VII. Findings Of The Study

Analysis on the Educational levels of parents of students reveals that, number of illiterate parents in Tribal Majority Secondary Schools is relatively high. Percentage of parents who attained education more than S.S.L.C. is negligible in Tribal Majority Secondary Schools. Proportion of parents who continued education upto graduation is comparatively higher in Muslim Majority Secondary Schools.

Most of the Mothers in the select regions are unemployed. Relatively more percentage of fathers of students in Tribal and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools are engaged in unskilled jobs. 57.14 % of Fathers of students go for semi skilled jobs in Fisherfolk Majority Secondary Schools.

Most of the earning mothers of students in all the select schools are unskilled labourers and their monthly income is below Rs. 5,000/-. Majority of Fathers are unskilled or skilled labourers and their monthly income ranges between Rs. 5,001 and Rs. 12,500/-. No parent earns more than Rs.27,500/- in the select areas.

The mean scores of Parental Involvement in Education of students in the select secondary schools do not much differ. The mean scores of Parental Involvement in secondary school students’ education in Tribal Majority Secondary Schools is relatively low. Comparison of the extent of parental involvement in students’ education reveals that, proportion of students who rate moderate involvement in students’ education is high in

all the select secondary schools. Percentage of students who rate high Parental Involvement in Tribal Majority Secondary Schools is relatively low (9.29%).

VIII. Conclusion

The major objectives of the study were to compare the Socio Economic Status of parents and Parental Involvement in Education of students among Tribal, Fisherfolk and Muslim Majority Secondary Schools of Kerala. Results of the study direct to implement strategies that improve the socio economic conditions of the families especially of the Tribal people. Desimone (1999) found that the higher the family income, the greater would be the parental involvement. Programmes must be chalked out to improve the awareness of parents belonging to the weaker sections of the society regarding the importance of education of their students and regarding their roles in their children's education.

IX. Educational Implications

Major findings of the study led the researcher to figure out the following educational implications:

- To improve education among the weaker sections of our society, the primary efforts should be on eradication of poverty
- The parents of the tribal children have to be provided with regular employment and thereby can earn income to meet their day-to-day requirements, which will help to send their children to school
- Proper awareness campaign should be organized to create the awareness among parents regarding the importance of education
- Establish regular communication to build relationships with parents based on mutual respect and trust
- Hold PTA & MPTA meetings at convenient times for parents to attend
- Assign homework in such a way that parents are encouraged to be actively involved with their child's homework.

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