



## **COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTE AND NON-SCHEDULED CASTE ADOLESCENTS**

**Monika Sethi**

B.C.M. College of Education,  
Ludhiana, Punjab. (India).

**Gurmit Singh**

Malwa Central College of Education, for Women,  
Ludhiana, Punjab. (India).  
Phone No. 9417731114

**M.L. Jaidka**

D.M. College of Education,  
Moga, Punjab (India)

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### **Abstract**

*The Study was intended to investigate the significance of difference in the Academic Achievement of Scheduled Caste and Non-scheduled Caste Adolescents. Sample of the study consisted of 754 (377 Scheduled Caste and 377 Non-scheduled Caste) of 10+1 students of Rural Government Schools of Punjab. Marks obtained in Science by the Adolescents in the Matriculation Examination of Punjab School Education were used as the data. The results of the study showed that Academic Achievement of Non-scheduled Caste Adolescents was significantly higher as compared to Scheduled Caste Adolescents.*

**Key Words:** *Comparative Study, Academic Achievement, Scheduled Caste, Non-Scheduled Caste Adolescents*

In 1986, the central government of India formulated the *National Policy on Education (NPE)* and also reinforced the *Programme of Action (POA)* in 1986. The government initiated several measures the launching of *District Primary Education Programme (1994)* with the following objectives: (i) to reduce differences in enrolment, dropout and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5 per cent; (ii) to reduce overall primary dropout

rates for all students to less than 10 per cent; (iii) to raise average achievement levels by at least 25 per cent over measures of baseline levels and ensuring achievement of basic literacy and numerical competencies and a minimum of 40 per cent achievement levels in other competencies, by all primary school children; and (iv) to provide, according to national norms, access for all children, to primary schooling wherever possible, or its equivalent non-formal education. Government also launched *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2000)* with the following objectives:

- All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, 'to School' camp by 2003;
- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007;
- All children complete eight years of schooling by 2010;
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life;
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010;
- Universal retention by 2010.

To realize these objectives the Government moved on with setting up of Navodaya Vidyalaya and other selective schools in every district, advances in female education, interdisciplinary research and establishment of open universities. There is a revolutionary change in the country's education sector after passage of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill by the Lok Sabha on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009. No doubt, various reforms are taking place in education sector even then; India is striving for self dependence and progress.

India is a welfare State, committed to the welfare and development of its people and of vulnerable sections in particular. The preamble, Directive Principles of State Policy, Fundamental Rights and specific sections, viz., Articles 15, 16, 17, 25, 38, 39 and 46 in the Constitution of India, stand testimony to the commitment of the State to its people. Socially disadvantaged groups of Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes have received special focus over the years for their social and economic advancement. Government has taken several steps for framing appropriate policies needed to design and implement various welfare programmes for achieving the objective of creating favourable environment to ensure speedy socio economic development of SCs/ STs (Articles 46, 330, 332, 334, 335, 338, 341). For the well being of these communities, special target-oriented programmes are being implemented by earmarking funds, providing subsidies, offering reservations in employment and educational institutions etc.

According to Constitution of India, "Scheduled Castes" means such castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within such castes, races or tribes as are deemed under article 341 to be Scheduled Castes for the purposes of this Constitution." (*Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment*)

Any country can make progress only if its members are contributing in its growth whether they are children, adolescents or adults. Adolescents being more energetic have great responsibility to build their nation. Thus Investigator attempts to study about the Achievement of Scheduled Caste and Non-Scheduled Caste Adolescents from Government Schools of Punjab, who are expected to play a responsible and participating role in the society.

According to *Piaget (1955)*, Adolescence is the age of great ideals and the beginning of theories as well as time of simple adaptation to reality. *Arati and Prabha (2004)* defined Adolescence as a period of heightened emotionality when they feel the emotion in a strong and more persistent manner. *Myhilli (2004)* defined Adolescence as a period of great stress and strain and storm. It has been called as 'terrible teens'. During this stage –the individual has to

face many behavioural problems with one's own self, family and society besides being exposed to new social interaction skills other than those required in earlier childhood interaction. This stage is very sensitive and due to several problems one gets influenced by even slight variations in Adjustment.

Psychologists have tried to delimit the age of adolescents, and they give the following age ranges:

	Girls	Boys
Pre-adolescence or late childhood	11-13 years	13-15 years
Early adolescence	13-15 years	15-17 years
Middle adolescence	15-18 years	19-20 years

The Competitive world of today imposes stress factors such as interpersonal competitions, peers group pressure, undue emphasis on marks, setting up of unrealistic goals by parents, inadequate time and resources, condemnation as dullards etc. which in turn may develop feelings of worthlessness and lack of confidence in Adolescents. Such feelings during most turbulent years get reflected as lack of concentration, disturbed sleep, memory loss, headaches etc. As a result, all these factors affect the Academic Achievement of the students.

*Trow (1960)* defined that Academic achievement is the attained ability or degree of competence in school tests and expressed in grades or units based on norms from a wide sampling of pupil's performance. *Megargee (2000)* Achievement tests reveal how well students have mastered the subject matter in a course of instruction. *Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary (2000)* defined that Achievement is thing that somebody has done successfully especially using his/her own efforts or skills. *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2001)* defined that Achievement is an art of achieving a result gained by efforts, the quality and quantity of students work.

Academic achievement is thus the blue print of a degree of proficiency and quality of his efficiency in the school or college work. It is the competency actually shown by the pupil in which they received instructions. The knowledge attained is usually reflected in the marks on the standardized or teacher made tests in the examination. In broader sense academic achievement means all these behavior changes which take place in the individual as a result of learning experiences of various kinds.

Significant difference was found in the academic achievement of Scheduled Caste and Non-Scheduled Caste students *Rajni (1990)* and *Vyas (1992)*. On the other hand *Gupta (1988)* found that Non-Scheduled Caste students had performed better than Scheduled Caste students. *Bhan and Gupta (2010)* examined study habits and academic achievement among the students belonging to scheduled caste and non-scheduled caste group. The results revealed that Non-scheduled caste students have significantly better study habits and academic achievement than their counterparts.

#### **SAMPLE**

Multi-staged randomization technique of sampling was used in the present study. The sample was drawn from the Rural Government High\Senior Secondary Schools of seven districts of the four administrative divisions of the state of Punjab. In this way, 754 students (377 Scheduled Caste and 377 Non-scheduled Caste) adolescents formed the sample of the study.

#### **TOOL USED**

Investigators used the following tool:

Marks obtained in Science by the adolescents in the matriculation examination of Punjab School Education.

## STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE USED

Mean, standard deviation and t-ratio were used to check the significance of difference between Academic Achievement of Scheduled Caste and Non-Scheduled Caste Adolescents.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To check the significance of difference between the Academic achievement of Scheduled Caste and Non-Scheduled Caste Adolescents, t-ratio was worked out and the values of Mean, S.D. and t-ratio are given in the table below:

**Table 1**  
**Significance of difference in Academic Achievement of Scheduled Caste and Non-Scheduled Caste Adolescents.**

	Mean	S.D.	N	t-ratio
Scheduled Caste Adolescents	49.75	9.26	377	8.032*
Non- Scheduled Caste Adolescents	56.21	13.15	377	

\*Significant at 0.01 level (2.58)

Table 1 reveals that the values of Mean of Scheduled Caste and Non-Scheduled Caste Adolescents are 49.75 and 56.21 respectively. The value of t-ratio is 8.032 which is significant at 0.01 level. The Academic Achievement of Non-Scheduled Caste Adolescents is significantly more as compared to that Scheduled Caste Adolescents. This leads to the rejection of hypothesis 1 which states that "There will be no significant difference between the Academic Achievement of Scheduled Caste and Non-Scheduled Caste Adolescents."

**Discussion:** The result shows that Academic Achievement of Non-Scheduled Caste Adolescents is significantly more than that of Scheduled Caste Adolescents. This finding is well supported by the studies conducted by *Gupta (1988)*; and *Bhan and Gupta (2010)*. This may be due to the fact that the data of the study was collected from the Government Schools of Rural areas of Punjab. The majority of the rural Scheduled Caste is predominantly landless and impoverished agricultural labour. Studies have pointed out to growing incidence of poverty, rising levels of rural unemployment, wage squeeze, rising levels of mortality and illness as well as declining levels of consumption shares, real wages and consumer monthly per capita expenditure among the Scheduled Caste (*Teltumbde, 1996, 2000, 2004; Thorat, 2001, 2002; Nancharaiah, 2002*). According to *Mehta et al (2008)* "The SC's are scattered and isolated, particularly in rural areas. Their condition has not improved much even after 55 years of constitutional benefits. It is presumed that constitutional safeguards like abolition of untouchability, provisions of reservation, scholarships etc have not permeated to the rural areas vis-à-vis the urban areas."

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