



## Socio-psychological problems and their impact on academic achievement of higher secondary girls in West Bengal

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### Abstract

Education is one of the most important elements for the development of individuals and societies. Higher secondary education is a very important and critical stage in the educational life of every student, as it plays a significant role in shaping their future educational and career opportunities. Girls at this level may face additional socio-psychological challenges during adolescence due to social expectations, family responsibilities, and emotional changes. Such issues can hinder their academic progress and overall development.

This study investigated the social-psychological problems of higher secondary girl students in West Bengal and their impact on their academic achievement. Social-psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, peer pressure, family conflict and adjustment difficulties can significantly affect students' learning and academic performance. The study used a descriptive survey method. The sample consisted of two hundred female higher secondary school students selected from both government and private schools in rural and urban areas of West Bengal. Data were collected using a "socio- psychological problems questionnaire", while academic achievement was measured by the students' most recent test scores obtained from school records. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t-tests to examine socio- psychological problems and determine the differences and relationships between variables. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers in developing support strategies to mitigate the socioeconomic challenges faced by female higher secondary school students and to improve their academic performance and well-being.

**Keywords:** Socio-psychological problems, academic achievement, higher secondary education and West Bengal

### Introduction

Academic achievement of students is considered an important indicator of educational success. However, the success of female students is not only influenced by intellectual abilities but also by various social and psychological factors. In the current educational environment, girls at the higher secondary level often face several social and psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, emotional instability, peer pressure, family conflicts and social adjustment problems. These problems can affect their attention, motivation, and ability to learn, which in turn affects their academic success. Higher secondary education is an important stage in students' educational lives, as it plays an important role in shaping their future educational and career opportunities.

Girls' students at this stage may face more psychosocial challenges due to societal expectations, family responsibilities, and emotional changes which may hinder their academic progress and overall development. Education not only broadens the mental horizons of individuals but also promotes the socio-economic well-being of the family, community, and nation. The role of education is extremely important because it plays a vital role in human resource development and economic processes.

Though government efforts to develop girls' education remain a significant gap, especially in the Indian Muslim community. Not all social teams have equal access to the resources and opportunities offered, especially in the education sector. Women, in general, represent the poorest and most disenfranchised sections of Indian society, facing two or more persistent barriers to accessing educational opportunities.

### Statement of the problem

This study therefore sought to find out "Socio-Psychological Problems and their Impact on Academic Achievement of Higher Secondary Girls in West Bengal".

### Need and Significance of the study

Education plays a vital role in the development of students. Academic achievement depends not only on cognitive ability but also on various social and psychological factors. During this time, students often face many social and psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, peer pressure, family problems, lack of social support, and psychological distress, these may negatively affect their academic performance and overall development.

Higher secondary education is an important period in a student's life, as it shapes their future educational and career opportunities. During this time, girls' students may face additional social and psychological challenges related to family expectations, social norms, emotional development, and academic stress. These issues can hinder the learning process and reduce their academic achievement.

In the context of West Bengal, it is important to understand the socio-psychological problems faced by higher secondary school students, especially girls and how these problems affect their academic performance. Understanding and identifying these problems can help teachers, parents, and school administrators provide better support and guidance to students. The findings of the study may help teachers, school administrators, counselors, and parents to develop effective strategies and support systems to reduce socio-psychological problems among girl students. It will also help improve the academic achievement and well-being of higher secondary girl students.

Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the socio-psychological problems of higher secondary girl students and their impact on academic achievement.

### Operational Definitions of Key Terms

#### Socio-Psychological Problems

Socio-psychological problems refer to the difficulties arising from the interaction between social environment and psychological processes of an individual. These problems may include anxiety, peer pressure, low self-esteem, family conflict, social isolation, and emotional stress, which influence a girl student's behavior, mental well-being, and learning capacity.

For the purposes of this study, socio-psychological barriers are defined as the emotional, social, and psychological difficulties experienced by girls that may affect their educational attainment and academic performance.

#### Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is the sum of information collected after completing classes (partial or complete) with a certain grade obtained on an achievement test.

In this study, academic achievement refers to the grades or points that girls obtained by their school examinations at higher secondary level.

#### Higher Secondary Education

Higher Secondary school students are those studying in higher secondary classes (11th and 12th) of different board of education in west Bengal. In the present study girls who are enrolled or attend classes at 11<sup>th</sup> in school were considered as Higher Secondary students.

#### West Bengal

West Bengal is a state in the eastern region of India, bordering the Bay of Bengal. With a population of ninety-one million (as of 2011), it is the fourth-most populous state of India. West Bengal is also the thirteenth-largest state in India, with an area of 88,752 km<sup>2</sup> (34,267 sq. meters). Muslims are the second-largest community and the largest minority group, constituting 27.01% of the total population. In this research, it refers to the educational context and geographical area from which the girl's student at higher secondary level was selected.

#### Research Questions of the Study

The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. What is the effect of socio-psychological problems on the academic achievement of higher secondary girl students?
2. Is there a significant difference in socio-psychological problems between rural and urban higher secondary girl students?
3. Is there a significant difference in socio-psychological problems between higher secondary girl students studying in government and private schools?
4. Is there a significant difference in socio-psychological problems among higher secondary girl students based on their parents' educational level?
5. What is the relationship between socio-psychological problems and academic achievement among higher secondary girl students?

#### Objective of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the effect of socio-psychological problems on the academic achievement of higher secondary girl students.
2. To find out whether there is any significant difference in socio-psychological problems among higher secondary girl students with respect to locale (rural and urban).
3. To find out whether there is any significant difference in socio-psychological problems among higher secondary girl students with respect to type of school (government and private).
4. To find out whether there is any significant difference in socio-psychological problems among higher secondary girl students with respect to parents' educational level.
5. To determine the relationship between socio-psychological problems and academic achievement among higher secondary girl students.

#### Delimitation of the study

The present study is delimited in the following ways:

1. The study is confined only to higher secondary girl students.
2. The study is limited to selected higher secondary schools in West Bengal.
3. The study focuses only on socio-psychological problems and their impact on academic achievement.
4. The study considers only a few background variables such as locality (rural and urban), type of school (government and private), and parents' educational level.
5. The study is restricted to a limited sample of higher secondary girl students selected for the investigation.

#### Method

The present study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate the socio-psychological problems experienced by higher secondary girls and their impact on academic achievement.

This method was deemed to be the right method because it explores and systematically describes the interrelationship of Socio-Psychological Problems and Their Impact on Academic Achievement of Higher Secondary Girls in West Bengal.

#### Population of the Study

All girl students in class XI and XII of government and government-aided secondary schools in West Bengal formed the population of the study.

#### Sampling of the Study and Sampling Technique

For this study, a sample of schools and students was selected from their population at different stages using appropriate sampling techniques. In the first stage, twenty state-aided government secondary schools in West Bengal were selected using purposive sampling. The selection was made to include schools offering higher secondary education for girls and to represent both urban and rural educational contexts.

In Phase II, a total of 200 higher secondary girl students were selected from the identified schools. Of these, 100 girls came from urban areas and 100 girls from rural areas,

ensuring balanced representation of both areas. The students were selected using a random sampling technique, which gave each student an equal chance of being included in the study and helped reduce sampling bias.

The combination of purposive sampling to select schools and random sampling to select students was deemed appropriate for the study as it ensured the inclusion of relevant institutions, while maintaining objectivity and representativeness in the selection of respondents.

**Demographic/ Background Variables**

These variables are used for comparison within the sample.

**1. Locale of the Students**

- Rural
- Urban

**2. Type of school**

- Government
- Private

**3. Parents' Educational Level**

**Research Tool**

In present research following tools were used for data collection:

**1. Socio-Psychological Problems Questionnaire (SPPQ)**

The Social and Psychological Problems Questionnaire was used to assess the socio-psychological problems experienced by higher secondary girl students.

**2. Academic achievement:** Academic achievement was measured based on the cumulative grades obtained by students in their last annual examination, as recorded in official school records. The grades obtained were used to investigate the relationship between socio-psychological problems and academic performance among secondary school students.

**Description of the tool**

**Reliability of the tool**

In this study, the reliability of the Socio-Psychological Problems Questionnaire was established using Cronbach's Alpha on a test sample of 40 higher secondary girl students. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.83, indicating good internal consistency of the instrument.

**Validity of the tool**

The content validity of the questionnaire was censored by consultant experts in the field of education and educational psychology. Their suggestions were incorporated to refine the items and ensure that the questionnaire adequately covered the various dimensions of socio-psychological problems.

**Statistical technique used**

In this study, descriptive type statistical methods were used to investigate the socio-psychological problems and their impact on the academic achievement of higher secondary girl students.

**The following descriptive statistics were applied:**

1. Mean (M) to determine the average level of socio-psychological problems and academic achievement.
2. Standard Deviation (SD) to measure the variability of the scores among the students.

3. Percentage to describe the distribution of responses where necessary.
4. t-test: Used to compare the socio-psychological problems of students from urban and rural localities.
5. Correlation (Pearson's r): Used to examine the relationship between socio-psychological problems and academic achievement.

**Data analysis and Interpretation**

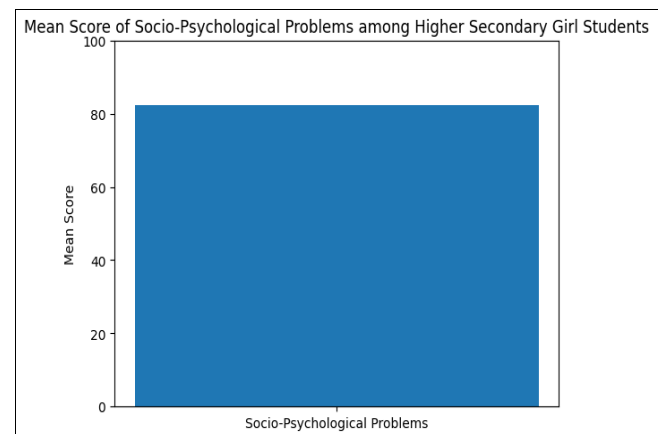
This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 200 girls at higher secondary level. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, percentage) and inferential statistics (t-test and Pearson correlation) to examine socio-psychological problems and their relationship with academic performance.

**1. Descriptive Analysis of Socio-Psychological Problems**

**Table 1:** Mean and Standard Deviation of Socio-Psychological Problems

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Socio-Psychological Problems	200	82.45	12.63

**Interpretation:** The mean score of Socio-Psychological Problems among higher secondary girl students is 82.45 with a SD of 12.63, which is indicating the average level of Socio-Psychological Problems among the responded.



**Fig 1:** Bar Diagram Showing the Mean Score of Socio-Psychological Problems among Higher Secondary Girl Students

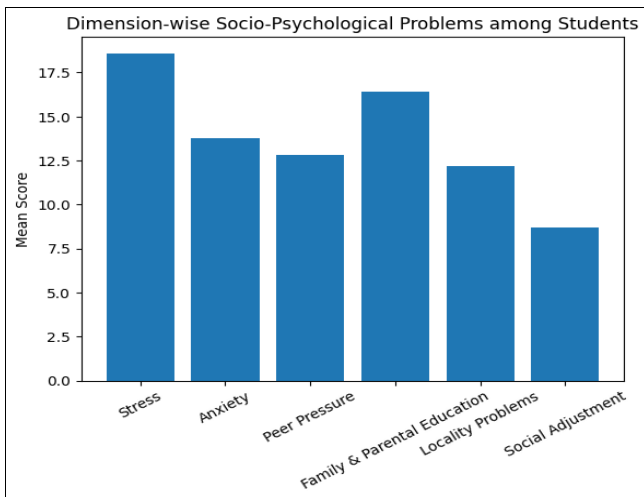
The bar graph shows the mean score (82.45) of socio-psychological problems among higher secondary girl students. Results indicated that respondents are experiencing moderate level of socio-psychological problems.

**2. Dimension-wise Analysis of Socio-Psychological Problems**

**Table 2:** Mean Scores of Different Dimensions of SPPQ

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation
Stress	18.60	3.82
Anxiety	13.75	3.10
Peer Pressure	12.80	2.95
Family & Parental Education	16.40	3.50
Locality Problems	12.20	2.60
Social Adjustment Problems	8.70	2.10

**Interpretation:** The table shows that stress and family expectations are comparatively higher socio-psychological problems experienced by the students.



**Fig 2:** Bar diagram showing dimension-wise socio-psychological problems among higher secondary girl students

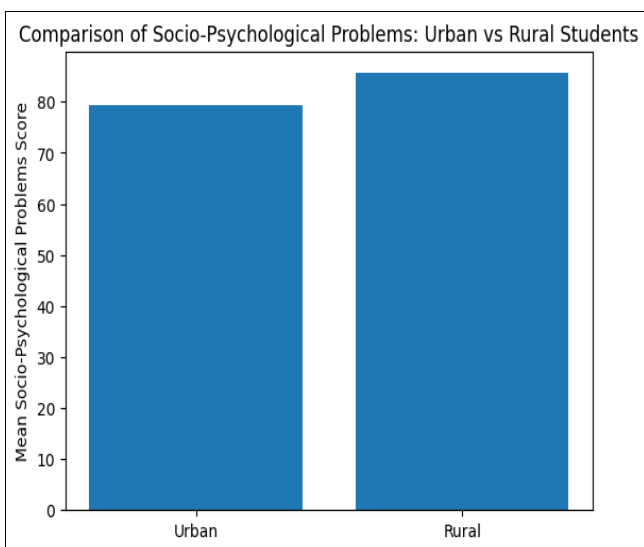
The bar diagram shows that stress (18.60) and family expectations (16.40) are the most prominent socio-psychological problems experienced by higher secondary girl students, whereas social adjustment problems are comparatively lower (8.70).

**3. Comparison of Socio-Psychological Problems between Urban and Rural Students**

**Table 3:** T-test for Socio-Psychological Problems by Locality

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Significance
Urban	100	79.30	11.82		
Rural	100	85.60	13.12	3.21	Significant

**Interpretation:** The calculated t-value (3.21) indicates a significant difference between girls living in urban and rural areas. Girls in rural areas experience slightly more socio-psychological problems compared to girls in urban areas at higher secondary stage.



**Fig 3:** Bar diagram showing comparison of socio-psychological problems between urban and rural students

The bar graph indicates that rural students (Mean = 85.60) experience slightly higher socio-psychological problems than urban students (Mean = 79.30).

**1. Academic Achievement of Students**

**Table 4:** Mean and Standard Deviation of Academic Achievement

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Academic Achievement	200	68.50	10.42

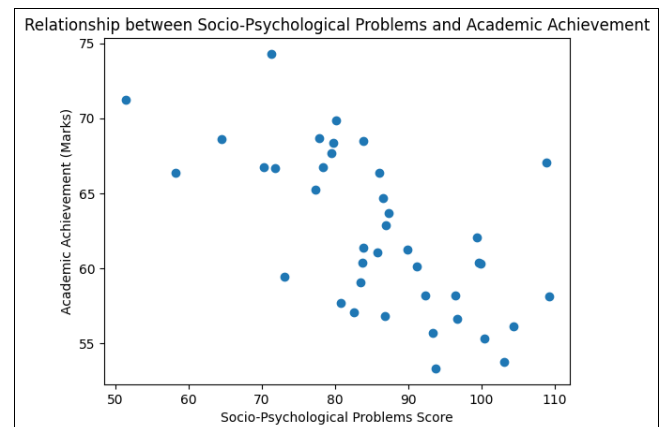
**Interpretation:** The mean academic achievement score of the students is 68.50, indicating an average level of academic performance among the respondents.

**2. Relationship between Socio-Psychological Problems and Academic Achievement**

**Table 4:** Correlation between Socio-Psychological Problems and Academic Achievement

Variables	Correlation (r)	Significance
Socio-Psychological Problems & Academic Achievement	-0.46	Significant

**Interpretation:** The correlation coefficient (-0.46) showed a negative relationship between socio-psychological problems and academic achievement. This suggests that higher levels of social problems are associated with poorer academic outcomes.



**Fig 4:** Scatter plot showing the relationship between socio-psychological problems and academic achievement

Scatter plots shows a negative relationship between socio-psychological problems and academic achievement, indicating that as social problems increased, academic achievement decreased.

**The major findings of the study**

The major findings of the study are:

1. Higher secondary girl students experience a moderate level of socio-psychological problems.
2. Stress and family expectations are the most prominent issues among students.
3. Rural students experience higher socio-psychological problems compared to urban students.
4. Academic achievement of the students is at an average level.
5. There is a notable negative relationship between socio-psychological problems and academic achievement.

### Discussion of the Results

The present study aimed to examine socio-psychological problems and their impact on the academic achievement of higher education level girl students in West Bengal. The main findings of the study reveal several important patterns regarding the socio-psychological conditions experienced by the students and how they affect their academic performance.

One of the major findings of the study shows that girl students in higher secondary schools experience moderate levels of socio-psychological problems. Factors such as school stress, test anxiety, peer pressure, family expectations, and environmental factors seem to contribute to these problems. The higher secondary stage is an important transitional period in a student's life, where academic demands and future career concerns increase.

The study also revealed significant differences in socio-psychological problems between urban and rural students. Rural girls have been found to experience higher levels of socio-psychological problems than urban girls. This difference can be explained by factors such as limited educational resources, fewer academic support systems, and socioeconomic constraints in rural areas. These conditions can create additional stress and difficulties for students in managing their academic and social lives.

Another important finding of the study shows that school type (public vs. private) has a significant effect on students' socio-psychological problems. Public school students have been found to have more social and emotional problems than private school students. This difference may be due to differences in school practices, such as teacher-student interactions, school support, and overall school environment, which can affect students' mental health and school adjustment.

The study also revealed that parents' level of education plays a significant role in affecting girls' social problems. Girls with less parental education may receive less academic guidance and emotional support at home, leading to increased stress and academic problems. In contrast, girls with highly educated parents may benefit from better school support and encouragement, enabling them to better adapt to social and psychological challenges.

Finally, this study found a significant negative relationship between socio-psychological problems and academic achievement among girls at higher secondary level. These findings suggest that girl students who experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and social problems have lower academic performance. Socio-psychological problems can affect the concentration, motivation, confidence, and overall ability of students, thereby affecting their academic outcomes.

### Educational Implications of the Study

The research findings have several important implications for the field of education. Given that girl students in higher secondary schools are likely to experience moderate social and psychological problems, schools should take appropriate measures to support and create a safe learning environment for their girl students. Teachers need to be aware of students' emotions and feelings to help them overcome stress, anxiety and academic difficulties. Counseling services, life skills classes, and stress management programs in schools can help students feel better about them and improve their overall well-being.

The study also highlights the importance of parental involvement and knowledge in supporting girl students' academic and cognitive development. Schools should encourage regular parent-teacher communication so that parents are more informed about the challenge's girls face. Special attention should also be paid to girl students in rural areas and low-income parents, as they may need additional educational support and guidance. By strengthening collaboration between schools, teachers, and parents, it is possible to reduce socio-psychological problems and enhance the academic achievement of higher secondary girl students.

### Conclusion

The present study examined socio-psychological problems and their impact on the academic performance of girl students in higher secondary level. Findings revealed that girls experienced moderate levels of socio-psychological problems, such as stress, anxiety, peer pressure, and family-related problems. The study also found significant differences in social and psychological problems with respect to environment, type of school and education level of parents, indicating that environmental and family factors play a significant role in shaping their psychological well-being.

Furthermore, the study has identified a negative relationship between social problems and academic performance, suggesting that high levels of psychosocial problems may negatively impact girl students' academic performance. Therefore, it is essential that schools, teachers, and parents work together to provide emotional support, guidance, and academic success.

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