ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS IN NORMAL AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The study is aimed to investigate and compare the academic achievement in the subjects with and without disabilities. The cluster sampling method was used to select 300 higher secondary students from 12 normal schools and 300 higher secondary students from 8 special schools (schools for vision and hearing impaired). Marks scored in the half yearly examination were used as measures of academic achievement. The results demonstrated that the academic achievement of higher secondary students of normal schools was always better than that of their counterparts in special schools. Moreover, the female higher secondary students of normal schools have more academic achievement than their male counterparts. However, no significance difference was found in anxiety of higher secondary students in special schools in terms of age, gender and locality of residence. The results suggested that inclusive education will enhance academic achievement of special students.

INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement is the outcome of education – the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. That is, the level of actual accomplishment or proficiency one has achieved in an academic area, as opposed to one's potential is called academic achievement. Today the world is becoming more and more competitive. Parents desire that their children climb the ladder of performance as high as possible. Educators too stress on the importance of academic achievement, stating that it is the most crucial way of establishing a student firmly on his path to a successful career. This desire for a high level of achievement puts a lot of pressure on students, teachers, schools, and in general the education system itself. In fact, it appears as if the whole system of education revolves round the academic achievement of students, though various other outcomes are also expected from the system. In our society, academic achievement is

considered as a key criterion to judge one's total potentialities and capacities, especially at higher secondary level.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much ; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little"- Roosevelt(1937)

Tamil Nadu is one of the most literate states in India. The state's literacy rate is 80.33% in 2011, which is above the national average of 74.04%. A survey conducted by the Industry body Assocham ranks Tamil Nadu top among Indian states with about 100% Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in primary and upper primary education. There are more than 4500 higher secondary schools to cater to the need of normal students. But the number of special schools providing higher secondary education is less and the accessibility to higher secondary education is denied to them.

Access to education lies at the heart of development. Lack of educational access and securely acquired knowledge and skill, is both the part of definition of poverty and a means for its diminution. Disability is both a cause and consequence of poverty (DFID,2000). The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 10% of any population is disabled. According to the National Sample Survey (2002) only 45% of the disabled population is literate and 9% has secondary level education or higher (Thomas, 2005). Access to education is only the first stage in overcoming the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the schools, Booth (2000). They should also be facilitated to get through the higher secondary examination so that they enter higher education and fetch a job using Government's reservations and concessions. This study endeavoured to provide information for educators, counselors and teachers about the state of academic achievement of higher secondary students of the normal and special schools and feasibility for the successful implementation of Inclusive Education.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the level of Academic Achievement of higher secondary students in normal and special schools in terms of age, gender and locality of residence.

2. To find out significant difference in Academic Achievement of higher secondary students in normal and special schools in terms of age, gender and locality of residence.

3. To find out significant difference between higher secondary students of normal and special schools in Academic Achievement.

HYPOTHESES

1) The level of Academic Achievement of higher secondary students in normal and special schools in terms of age, gender and locality of residence is low.

2) There is no significant difference in Academic Achievement of higher secondary students in normal and special schools in terms of age, gender and locality of residence.

3) There is no significant difference between higher secondary students of normal and special schools in Academic Achievement.

METHODOLOGY

As the problem selected for the present study is concerned with one of the current problems, after reviewing the characteristics of the different methods of educational research, the investigator has employed descriptive method using survey as a technique for the present study. By keeping the various objectives in mind, i) Marks scored in the half yearly examination were used as measures of academic achievement and ii) Personal datasheet was used by the investigator for collecting data on background variables.

SAMPLE

The higher secondary students of normal and special schools in Tamil Nadu are the population of the study. The investigator used cluster sampling technique to select samples from the population. 12 normal schools and 8 special schools (higher secondary schools for Blind and Deaf and Dumb only) were selected and from each school, the students studying in XI and XII standard were selected randomly. Totally the sample consists of 600 higher secondary students in Tamil Nadu. An analysis of sample reveals that i) majority (72.83%) of the sample are in the age group of 16 & below, ii) 49%(294) were male and 51%(306) were female and iii) 55.1% of the samples are coming from rural areas.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

Percentage Analysis, 't'-test and F-test were the statistical techniques used for analyzing and interpreting the data.

DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE -1

LEVEL OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS IN NORMAL AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Type of School	N	Low		Average		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Normal	300	88	29.3	117	39	95	31.7
Special	300	67	22.3	148	49.3	85	28.3

It is inferred from the table 1 that 29.3% of higher secondary students in normal schools and 22.3% of higher secondary students in special schools have low level of academic achievement, 39% of higher secondary students in normal schools and 49.3% of higher secondary students in special schools have average level of academic achievement and 31.7% of higher secondary students in normal schools and 28.3% of higher secondary students in special schools have high level of academic achievement.

TABLE-2

LEVEL OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS IN NORMAL AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS WITH REGARD TO THEIR PERSONAL VARIABLES

School	Variable	Attribute	N	Low		Average		High	
				N	%	N	%	N	%
NORMAL	Age	16&Below	245	59	24.1	115	46.9	71	29.0
		17 & Above	55	15	27.3	23	41.8	17	30.9
	Gender	Male	143	35	23.8	73	49.7	39	26.5
		Female	157	37	23.6	79	50.3	41	26.1
	Locality	Rural	76	23	30.3	31	40.8	22	28.9
		Urban	224	42	18.8	112	50.0	70	31.3
E C I	Age	16&Below	192	47	24.5	87	45.3	58	30.2

	17 & Above	108	32	29.6	49	45.4	27	25.0
Gender	Male	151	39	25.8	72	47.7	40	26.5
	Female	149	35	23.5	74	49.7	40	26.8
Locality	Rural	255	63	24.7	119	46.7	73	28.6
	Urban	45	15	33.3	19	42.2	11	24.4

FOR THE STUDENTS OF NORMAL SCHOOLS

It is inferred from the table 2 that, 24.1% of the students at the age of 16&below and 27.3% of the students at the age of 17& above have low level of academic achievement, 46.9% of the students at the age of 16&below and 41.8% of the students at the age of 17& above have average level of academic achievement and 29 % of the students at the age of 16&below and 30.9% of the students at the age of 17& above have high level of academic achievement.

It is also inferred from the table that, 23.8% of the male students and 23.6% of female students have low level of academic achievement, 49.7% of the male students and 50.3% of female students have average level of academic achievement and 26.5% of the male students and 26.1% of female students have high level of academic achievement   .

With regard to locality of residence, 30.3% of the students residing in rural areas and 18.8% of the students residing in urban areas have low level of academic achievement, 40.8% of the students residing in rural areas and 50% of the students of residing in urban areas have average level of academic achievement and 28.9% of the students residing in rural areas and 31.3% of the students residing in urban areas have high level of academic achievement.

FOR THE STUDENTS OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS

It is inferred from the table that, 24.5% of the students at the age of 16&below and 29.6% of the students at the age of 17& above have low level of academic achievement, 45.3% of the students at the age of 16&below and 45.4% of the students at the age of 17& above have average level of academic achievement and 30.2 % of the students at the age of 16&below and 25% of the students at the age of 17& above have high level of academic achievement.

It is also inferred from the table that, 25.8% of the male students and 23.5% of female students have low level of academic achievement, 47.7% of the male students and 49.7% of female students have average level of academic achievement   and 26.5% of the male students and 26.8% of female students have high level of academic   achievement .

With respect to locality of residence, 24.7% of the students residing in rural areas and 33.3% of the students residing in urban areas have low level of academic achievement, 46.7% of the students residing in rural areas and 42.2% of the students of residing in urban areas have average level of academic achievement and 28.6% of the students residing in rural areas and 24.4% of the students residing in urban areas have high level of academic achievement.

TABLE-3

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS OF NORMAL AND SPECIALSCHOOLS IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT WITH REGARD TO THEIR AGE, GENDER AND LOCALITY OF RESIDENCE.

School	Variables	Sub variables	N	Mean	S.D	Calculated 't' Value	Remark
NORMAL	Age	16&Below	245	940.92	114.272	1.70	NS
		17 & Above	55	911.98	110.795		
	Gender	Male	143	914.51	117.667	3.10	S
		Female	157	954.84	107.384		
	Locality of Residence	Rural	76	891.28	97.175	4.02	S
		Urban	224	950.66	115.567		
SPECIAL	Age	16&Below	192	695.44	59.546	1.64	NS
		17 &Above	108	707.86	68.077		
	Gender	Male	151	695.66	62.369	1.18	NS
		Female	149	704.22	63.396		
	Locality of Residence	Rural	255	699.67	63.954	0.15	NS
		Urban	45	701.29	57.369		

S – Significant (At 5% level of significance, the 't' value is 1.96) *NS – Not Significant*

Since the calculated values of 't' are greater than the table value, there is significant difference between higher secondary students of normal schools in the Academic Achievement with regard to their gender and location of residence. Comparing the mean

scores, the female students have more Academic Achievement than the male students and the students residing in urban areas have more Academic Achievement than the students residing in rural areas. It is also inferred from the above table that, there is no significant difference between higher secondary students of normal schools in Academic Achievement with regard to their age.

With respect of special schools, since the calculated values of 't' are less than the table value, there is no significant difference between higher secondary students of special schools in the Academic Achievement with regard to their age, gender and location of residence. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

TABLE-4

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS IN NORMAL AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT WITH REGARD TO THEIR BACKGROUND VARIABLES

Background variables	Age	Normal			Special			Calculated t value	Result
		N	Mean	S.D	N	Mean	S.D		
Age	16&Below	245	940.92	114.272	192	695.44	59.546	27.02	S
	17&Above	55	911.98	110.795	108	707.86	68.077	14.52	S
Gender	Male	143	914.51	117.667	151	695.66	62.369	20.07	S
	Female	157	954.84	107.384	149	704.22	63.396	24.69	S
Locality	Rural	76	891.28	97.175	255	699.67	63.954	20.12	S
	Urban	224	950.66	115.567	45	701.29	57.369	14.11	S

S – Significant (At 5% level of significance, the 't' value is 1.96)

Since the calculated values of 't' are greater than the table value, there are significant differences between higher secondary students of normal and special schools in their academic achievement with regard to their age, gender and locality of residence. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected**.** Comparing the mean scores, the students of normal schools have better academic achievement than the students of special schools irrespective of their age, gender and locality of residence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This work has the following aims:

1. To find out the level of Academic Achievement of higher secondary students in normal and special schools in terms of age, gender and locality of residence.

2. To find out significant difference in Academic Achievement of higher secondary students in normal and special schools in terms of age, gender and locality of residence.

3. To find out significant difference between higher secondary students of normal and special schools in Academic Achievement in terms of age, gender and locality of residence.

Firstly, the percentage analysis reveals that students in the age group of 16&below are better in their level of academic achievement as more than 75% of students fall in the categories of average and high level of academic achievement and less % of students in low level of academic achievement than the students in the age group of 17& above. As far as gender is concerned, the female students are better than male students in their level of academic achievement. Because more % of females fall in the categories of average and high level of academic achievement and less % of students in low level of academic achievement than the male students. As far as locality of residence is concerned, in case of normal schools, students from urban areas outdo students from rural areas and it is the opposite in case of students of special schools.

Secondly, Both normal and special students do not significantly differ in their academic achievement with reference to age**.** The result shows that age wise there is not much difference in the student's academic achievement for both normal and special students. Being higher secondary students, irrespective of their age they concentrate in their studies. Their academic achievement is influenced by many other variables. As far as gender is concerned, the female higher secondary students of normal schools have more academic achievement than the male students. The academic achievement differs across gender is a question under study. The result shows girls outdo boys. There is lesser distraction for girls than boys. There are many evidences that show that there lie prominent differences in academic achievement with regard to gender as academic achievement is a product of many interrelated factors which originate from within and outside of the individual. A study **Borbora, Rupa Das (2001)** in support of this result revealed that academic achievement of girls was comparatively better than that of the boys. But there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of higher secondary students of special schools with regard to their gender. In the competitive world both boys and girls aspire to fair in their studies. This naturally enhances the level of aspiration, which ultimately increases the competitive spirit. This result is on line with the study of **Joshi (2000) and Anita Sharma et.al (2011)** which revealed that male and female students do not differ in their academic achievement. With

regard to locality of residence, the higher secondary students of normal schools residing in urban areas have more academic achievement than their counterparts residing in rural areas. This finding is on line with the study of **MohanaSundaram and Kannan (2001)** which revealed that urban students show better academic achievement than the rural students. The students of the normal schools in urban areas show better academic achievement may be due to the fact that they remain goal oriented and they have wide opportunity to develop their knowledge and skill than their counterparts. But the higher secondary students of special schools do not differ in their Academic Achievement with regard to locality of residence. As most of the special higher secondary schools are in urban areas and most of the special students stay in the hostel, the influence of their locality of residence may not be significant.

Thirdly, the students of normal schools have better academic achievement than the special students with regard to their age. With proper enhancement of self-esteem and parental involvement, students of normal schools perform better than the special students**.** The normal school students have better academic achievement than the special students irrespective of their gender. Both male and female students of normal schools perform better than their counterparts in special schools. Because higher secondary students of normal schools work very hard day and night to fetch high marks so that they can get the course of their interest in a renowned institution. But the higher secondary students of special schools find very difficult to work hard as that of normal students due to their physical disability.The students of normal schools have better academic achievement than the special students with regard to their locality. The normal students residing in both rural and urban areas perform academically better than their counterparts in special schools due to the fact that expectation from the normal students is always higher than the special students.

IMPLICATIONS

1. The NCFSE(2000) was critical of the present valuation system. Singhal (2004) who studied the existing practices at the school level has stated that teachers regard the mainstream as curriculum oriented and examination driven with pressures of "high achievement". She noted "teaching in India stands subordinated to examination and not examination to teaching". Therefore qualitative and competency based evaluation system should be followed so that even special students will excel in academic performance.

2. The result shows that the higher secondary students of normal schools located in urban areas have more academic achievement than their counterparts residing in rural
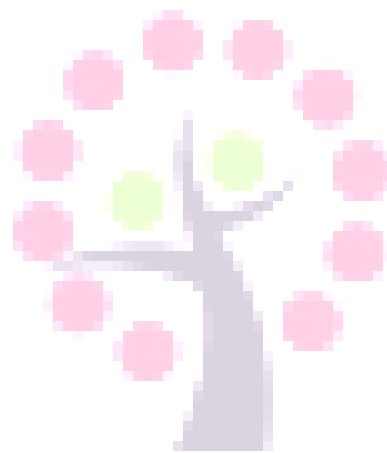
areas. Interactive workshops where the teachers of rural areas may be facilitated to interact with the teachers of urban schools which produce excellent results must be organized regularly.

3. The result shows that academic achievement of higher secondary students of normal schools is always better than that of their counterparts in special schools. So if they are put together in inclusive schools, the special students get motivated by observing the normal students. And the normal students also develop moral values like accepting and respecting every human being irrespective of their disability.

4. The expectation and aspiration of parents and teachers have an influence on the academic achievement of special students. So parents and teachers must be trained to have realistic aspirations and expectations based on the abilities of children with special needs. The teachers of the special children need to be given in service training regularly to handle the special children effectively.

5. Further in their learning when the students find their inability to achieve remarkably, even after thorough preparation, they feel diffident. Certain time these hopelessness may lead them to develop inferiority complex. Generally who suffer from inferiority complex may not be competent in their learning process. To avoid these situations proper guidance is to be given at proper time by their parents.

6. Teacher should breakup tasks into smaller more attainable chunks, which allow more opportunity for success to even slow learners and special students. Teachers must be motivated for setting challenges that children can handle, praising good results but honestly telling children when they haven't done well, and helping children not generalize from temporary failures.

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