



## A comparative study of the achievement in English of the students of class x in rural and urban govt-aided schools of murshidabad (West Bengal)

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### Abstract

Given the utilitarian aspect of English, the subject has assumed a position of privilege in the educational scenario. Great efforts are employed towards the teaching and learning of English in schools. But the achievement level of the students greatly varies depending on the various factors. The objective of the present study is to compare the achievement level of English of the students belonging to the urban and rural areas of Murshidabad and explore the factors behind. To identify these factors, data was collected from 300 students belonging 10 schools both from urban and rural areas by means of a questionnaire. Secondary data was collected by reviewing closely linked existing literatures as well as websites and other written documents. The major findings of the study indicated that: in the case of English achievement, students in rural schools are weaker than the students in urban schools. Gender too affects the students' performance in English. The parents of the urban children are better qualified and conscious about the academic achievement of their wards than those of the rural schools. Again the parents of the rural students are financially weaker and not able to spend enough on the educational expenses.

**Keywords:** english achievement, qualitative data, lack of trained teachers, large student size

### Introduction

In this era of globalization and technological revolution, education is considered as a first step for every human activity. It plays a vital role in the development of human capital and is linked with an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living (Battle and Lewis).

Of the many subjects taught in school, English occupies a unique position. It is because of its importance in the present day scenario. In the words of Timothy J Scrase "English is not only important in getting a better job, it is everywhere in social interaction". Besides, it is the major language of trade and commerce, news and information in this world of globalization. It is the language of higher education and research, national and international communication. Thus, it has attained the status of a global language in the ever changing economic context.

It is quite interesting to note that India, a multilingual nation, is the third largest English-speaking country after the US and UK. In India, it is increasingly being perceived as a "must know" language. It has now become a ladder for upward social mobility and 'a window to the world'.

It is, therefore, of utmost importance to study the status of achievements of the students in English. But unfortunately, in spite of the government's sincere efforts to improve the proficiency of the students in English, the progress is far from being satisfactory. Considerable improvements have been noticed in the urban areas but in the rural areas the situation is very poor. A widening gap is very much discernable between the achievement levels of the urban and rural students in English. This needs to be studied and addressed so as to identify and rectify the various factors that have been behind the gulf. This would help the stake holders to frame policies and take appropriate measures to improve the proficiency in English of the rural population that otherwise have all the

potential to become human resource contributing in a great way to the development of the country and of course of themselves.

### Significance of the study

The knowledge of English is more critical as well as important in the context of the global marketplace, the knowledge of society and in the age of digital information technology. This research is aimed at making contributions towards the quality improvements of English education in secondary schools in West Bengal in general and Murshidabad in particular. By clarifying the factors that influence students' English achievement, this study attempts to suggest a way of how to improve achievement and effective policy input.

The results of this study can be used for a variety of purposes. Principally, it will help teacher-trainers, educational administrators, policy makers, researchers and teachers in West Bengal to identify the factors likely to increase students' English achievement. Here, this study has tried to point out some areas where steps may be taken to promote English teaching and learning conditions in West Bengal.

### Objectives of the study

1. To find out the achievement level of the students of class X in English belonging to different socio-economic background.
2. To find out the factors that influences the achievement of the students in English.
3. To find out the awareness of the parents towards the academic achievement of their children.
4. To find out the influence of parental qualification on the achievement of the students in English.
5. To find out the scope available for improvement of skills in English.

6. To find the influence of gender difference of the students on their achievement in English.

**Hypotheses**

- H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no significant difference between the achievement of the students in English belonging to urban and rural background.
- H<sub>0</sub>2:** There exists no significant gender difference in academic achievement in English.
- H<sub>0</sub>3:** There exists no significant difference in academic achievement in English between the rural and urban 10<sup>th</sup> class male students.
- H<sub>0</sub>4:** There exists no significant difference in academic achievement in English between the rural and urban 10<sup>th</sup> class female students.
- H<sub>0</sub>5:** There is no significant relationship between the financial condition of the parents and the achievement in English of the students of class X.
- H<sub>0</sub>6:** There is no significant relationship between parental awareness towards the children’s studies and the achievement of the students of class X in English.
- H<sub>0</sub>7:** There is no significant relationship between parental qualification and the achievement of the students of class X in English.

**Methodology**

The study adopts a differential descriptive survey since it aims to study the relationship between the achievement in English of the students of class X in rural and urban schools of Murshidabad. The variables studied are the performance of the

students in English in the Board Examination, gender, the income level of the parents, the qualification of the parents, and parents’ awareness to their children’s studies.

**Sampling**

The target group is the students of class X of all the govt-aided secondary schools in Murshidabad. From the five sub-divisions in Murshidabad, one subdivision has been selected through random sampling. From the schools of the selected sub-division, 10 schools have been randomly selected, 5 each from the panchayat and municipality areas to represent the rural and urban schools respectively. A total of 300 students, 30 each from the 10 schools have been selected through random sampling.

**Tools and Techniques**

- The marks obtained by the students in English in the Board Examination as collocated from the school records have been taken as the measure of the achievement in English of students.
- The researcher has also prepared questionnaire to collect information from the students about their parental income, parental qualification and parental awareness to their children’s studies.

**Data analysis and Discussion**

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no significant difference between the achievement of the students in English belonging to urban and rural background.

**Table 1:** Sample number, mean, SD, mean difference, degree of freedom and t-value of the urban and rural 10<sup>th</sup> class students.

Category	Number	Mean	SD	Mean Dif	SE	df	t-value
Rural	150	48.9	16.8	16.2	1.84	298	8.80
Urban	150	65.1	15.1				

The observation of above table reveals that the calculated t-ratio is 8.80 which is greater than the t-values at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. That means a significant difference exists between the rural and urban 10<sup>th</sup> class students in their achievement in

English and the urban 10<sup>th</sup> class students have higher achievement level in English than the rural 10<sup>th</sup> students.

**H<sub>0</sub>2:** There exists no significant gender difference in academic achievement in English.

**Table 2:** Sample number, mean, SD, mean difference, degree of freedom and t-value of the male and female 10<sup>th</sup> class students.

Category	Number	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	SE	df	t-value
Females	133	54.30	18.30	7.12	2.13	298	3.34
Males	167	61.42	18.43				

The observation of the table reveals that the calculated t-value is found 3.34 which is greater than the t-value for both 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. So, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the achievement of English between the 10<sup>th</sup> class female and male students. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. That means gender significantly influences the

achievement of the 10<sup>th</sup> class students in English. The male students tend to do better in English than the female students.

**H<sub>0</sub>3:** There exists no significant difference in academic achievement in English between the rural and urban 10<sup>th</sup> class male students.

**Table 3:** Sample number, mean, SD, mean difference, degree of freedom and t-value of the urban and rural male 10<sup>th</sup> class students.

Category	Number	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	SE	df	t-value
Rural male	77	49.90	15.87	17.04	2.37	165	7.18
Urban males	90	66.94	14.62				

The observation of the table reveals that the calculated t-value is 7.18 which is greater than the t-values for both 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. So, it is concluded that there is a

significant difference in the achievement of English between the 10<sup>th</sup> class rural male and urban male students. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. That means locale significantly

influences the achievement of the 10<sup>th</sup> class male students in English. The urban male students tend to do better in English than the rural male students.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There exists no significant difference in academic achievement in English between the rural and urban 10<sup>th</sup> class female students.

**Table 4:** Sample number, mean, SD, mean difference, degree of freedom and t-value of the urban and rural 10<sup>th</sup> class female students.

Category	Number	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	SE	df	t-value
Rural female	73	45.50	15.8	16.83	2.96	131	5.68
Urban females	60	62.33	18.0				

In the table it is found that the calculated t-value is 5.68 which is greater than the t-value for both 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. So, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the achievement of English between the 10<sup>th</sup> class rural female and urban female students. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. That means locale significantly influences the achievement of the 10<sup>th</sup> class female students in English. The

urban female students tend to do better in English than the rural female students.

**H<sub>05</sub>.** There is no significant relationship between the financial condition of the parents and the achievement in English of the students of class X.

**Table 5:** Sample number, mean, SD, mean difference, degree of freedom and t-value of the 10<sup>th</sup> class students with annual family income below 2.4 lac and above 2.4 lac.

Category	Number	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	SE	df	t-value
Below 2.4 Lac	145	49.63	16.00	14.2	1.91	298	7.43
Above 2.4 Lac	155	63.83	17.20				

In the table the calculated t-value is found 7.43 which is greater than the t-values for both 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. So, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the achievement of English between the 10<sup>th</sup> class students with annual family income below Rs. 2.4 Lac and above Rs. 2.4 Lac. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. That means parental income significantly influences the

achievement of the 10<sup>th</sup> class students in English. The students belonging to the families with higher income tend to do better in English than the students belonging to the lower income.

**H<sub>06</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between parental awareness towards the children’s studies and the achievement of the students of class X in English.

**Table 6:** Sample number, mean, SD, mean difference, degree of freedom and t-value of the 10<sup>th</sup> class students with high and low parental awareness.

Category	Number	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	SE	df	t-value
Low parental awareness	158	47.13	17.10	17.22	1.93	298	8.92
High parental awareness	142	64.35	16.40				

In the table it is found the calculated t-value is 8.92 which is greater than the t-values for both 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. So, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the achievement of English between the 10<sup>th</sup> class students with low and high parental awareness. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. That means parental awareness significantly influences the achievement of the 10<sup>th</sup> class students in English. The students belonging to the families

with higher parental awareness towards their wards studies tend to do better in English than the students belonging to the families with lower parental awareness.

**H<sub>07</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between parental qualification and the achievement of the students of class X in English.

**Table 7:** Sample number, mean, SD, mean difference, degree of freedom and t-value of the 10<sup>th</sup> class students with graduate and non-graduate father.

Category	Number	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	SE	df	t-value
Below H.S (Both)	155	48.80	16.40	16.97	1.82	298	9.32
H.S or above (Both)	145	65.77	15.30				

In the table it is found that the calculated t-value is 9.32 which is greater than the t-values for both 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. So, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the achievement of English between the 10<sup>th</sup> class students with low and high parental qualification. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. That means parental qualification significantly influences the achievement of the 10<sup>th</sup> class students in English. The students with higher parental

qualification tend to do better in English than the students with lower parental qualification.

The research findings certainly show that the tenth class students in urban schools have greater achievement level in English than those of the rural schools. Let us make an analysis of the deciding factors. The following table makes a comparison between the rural and urban students in terms of determinant factors.

**Table 8:** Comparative data regarding the determinant factors

Factor	Categories	Urban percentage	Rural percentage
Paternal Qualification	H.S or above (Both)	66	30
	Below H.S (Both)	34	70
Parental Income	Above 2.4Lac	62.6	44.6
	Below 2.4Lac	37.4	55.4
Parental Awareness	High	63.3	38
	Low	36.7	62

A careful analysis of the data clearly reveals that parental qualification, income and awareness level towards the study of the wards positively influence the achievement in English. The table above shows that the urban class X students is way ahead in terms of these factors than the rural counterparts. 66% parents of the urban students have qualification H.S or more but this percentage comes down to just 30% in the case of the rural students. Again, in terms of the gross family income also the urban students are ahead of the rural ones. 62.4% parents earn more than 2.4 lac per annum whereas in rural areas the percentage is considerably low, only 44.6. Naturally, the urban parents are able to fulfill all the academic needs of the wards like buying reference books, engaging private tuition etc. which translates in better performance. With reference to parental awareness also, the urban students are far ahead. About 63.3 % parents take good care of their wards' academic affairs. They ask the wards about the class work, help in the homework, attend parent teacher meetings etc. but in the village areas the parental awareness is very low. All these factors contribute significantly towards better achievement of the urban students in English than the rural students.

### Conclusion

The present study reveals that achievement level of 10<sup>th</sup> class students in English is greatly influenced by the locale, gender, parental income, parental qualification and parental awareness towards their wards' studies. Students with high parental income, parental qualification and parental awareness have shown greater achievement level. Since the students in the urban schools are better placed in terms of parental qualification, parental income and parental awareness, it is but natural that they do better in English than their counterparts in rural schools.

### Suggestions for Further Research

- 1) In the present study the sample size (300) is small. If the sample size is taken bigger, the scope of the research may extend.
- 2) If the students of the primary and higher secondary sections are included the scope of the research may extend.
- 3) In the present study Murshidabad district has been considered as the population of this research. Instead of confining the study to a single district only, if the state of West Bengal is taken for the study, the scope of the research may vary.

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