



SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG SCHEDULED CASTE STUDENTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF SIKKIM

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Abstract

This research study addresses an important area within educational psychology, focusing on the self-esteem and academic achievement of scheduled caste students in secondary schools of Sikkim. The study has examined these critical variables in relation to demographic factors, including gender and management, and explores the relationships between self-esteem and academic achievement within this population. In the context of educational research, the complex threads of self-esteem and academic achievement weave a narrative that goes beyond mere examination of cognitive abilities. As we explore into the diverse landscapes of educational psychology, it becomes essential to explore the multifaceted relationship between psychological well-being and academic success, particularly within the context of marginalized communities.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Academic Achievement, Scheduled caste students.

Introduction

Sikkim is having an impressive union of diverse cultures and breathtaking scenery. In the middle of this beautiful scenery, Education plays a vital role in promoting both personal development and societal progress. This study examines the self-esteem and academic achievement of Scheduled Caste (SC) students enrolled in secondary schools across Sikkim, with the aim of understanding their educational status and the factors influencing their performance. Through an analysis of self-esteem and academic achievement patterns and school-related variables, the study provides a clearer picture of the academic realities faced by SC students in the region. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of existing disparities and highlight the need for targeted interventions to support equitable educational outcomes for marginalized communities in Sikkim.

Comprehending the educational dynamics in this particular context requires a detailed investigation of the ways in which self-esteem and academic accomplishment interrelate, influencing the educational paths and goals of SC students in secondary school environments.

There is a deficiency of studies explicitly looking at the connection between self-esteem and academic achievement in varied learning environments, with an emphasis on Scheduled Caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim. The importance of contextualized research that considers the self-esteem and academic achievement of Scheduled Caste students in Sikkim is emphasized.

Concept of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem includes feelings like success, despair, pride and humiliation as well as beliefs like “I am competent” or “I am incompetent”. A person’s self-esteem may be reflected in their behaviour, such as in assertiveness, shyness, confidence or caution. Self-esteem can be relevant especially to a particular measurement for example ‘I believe I am a good teacher and feel proud of that in particular’ or have worldwide amount. For example, “I believe I am a very good person and feel superior of myself in all-purpose. Khan further stated self-esteem include self-regard, self-worth, self-love, self-respect and self-integrity. Self-efficacy and self-confidence, which deal with views about one’s own abilities and potential for success, are not the same as self-esteem. Leak & Leak (2003) have discovered an additional cost associated with our attempts to boost our self-esteem: we might devote so much time trying to improve our self-worth in the view of others by concentrating on our appearance, making an impression on people and so on that there is very little time left over to truly better ourselves in more significant ways. Leak & Leak went on to say that in certain extreme



situations, people's needs to raise their social standing and sense of self-worth are so great that they will use aggressive or domineering actions to fulfil them. Therefore, high self-worth is a desirable thing, as it is in many other areas, but we must be mindful to balance it with a healthy sense of realism and empathy for others. The true contradiction here is that those who exhibit more selflessness those who act more prosaically even at their own expense, for example also frequently exhibit higher levels of self-esteem.

The development of self-esteem is a complex interplay of various factors, including personal experiences, social interactions and cultural influences. Early childhood experiences, such as parental nurturing, feedback and validation, play a important role in shaping one's self-esteem. Positive reinforcement and encouragement can foster an intellect of competence and worthiness, instilling a foundation of healthy self-esteem. Conversely, negative experiences, such as criticism, rejection, or neglect, can erode self-esteem and contribute to feelings of insecurity and self-doubt.

Concept of Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is defined as a person's accomplishment or level of expertise in a certain body of information. "Knowledge acquired and skill acquired throughout the school subjects typically determined by examination results or by teacher marks, or by both" is what academic achievement is defined as. In numerous aspects of life, academic achievement is a prerequisite for acceptance, advancement, or acknowledgment; thus, it is crucial and should not be disregarded. The teaching of academic skills is the school's main purpose. Cognitive and ability factors constituted the main focus of all research on academic achievement predictions. There is strong evidence that not all of the variation in academic achievement can be explained by intellect alone (Lavin, 1967; Cattell Butcher 1968; Vernon, 1950).

The academic achievement levels that help people to get respect and recognition from others, it contributes deeply to one's own self-esteem and also in gaining the esteem of others not only for academic years but also throughout one's entire life. In India the educational system judge students on the basis of their presentation in the annual examination held at the conclusion of every term like most other Asian and American countries (Kanika, 2015).

The Significance of Self-Esteem in Academic Achievement

Self-esteem is pivotal components of an individual's psychological makeup, shaping perceptions, motivations and aspirations. Gecas, (1982) for students navigating the complexities of secondary education, these psychological factors play a crucial role in determining not only their academic performance but also their overall well-being. Marsh & Craven (2006) stated that the academic accomplishment is significantly influenced by self-esteem, a multidimensional construct that encompasses a person's view of themselves in multiple domains. It describes how a person views, assesses and thinks about themselves in relation to a variety of factors, including their physical attractiveness, social abilities and intellectual proficiency. Because it has such a strong impact on students' motivation, learning styles and general academic performance, self-esteem is important for academic attainment.

Additionally, Marsh & Craven (2006) stated that the students' adoption of successful learning practices is influenced by their self-concept and Self-esteem, which in turn affects academic progress. Positivity about oneself increases the likelihood of using adaptive learning techniques including goal-setting, self-monitoring and asking for assistance when necessary. Because they are confident in their capacity to succeed academically, they employ more productive study strategies and engage in more in-depth information processing. On the other hand, students who have a poor opinion of themselves can engage in avoidance behaviours, put off tasks, or depend too much on inefficient study techniques, which would obstruct their academic development.

Objectives of the study



- 1) To study the difference in self-esteem among scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim based on the following demographic variables: Gender and Management.
- 2) To study the difference in academic achievement among scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim based on the following demographic variables: Gender and Management.
- 3) To study the relationship among self-esteem and academic achievement of scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim.

Hypotheses

- H0₁** There is no significant difference between male and female scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim with regard to self-esteem.
- H0₂** There is no significant difference between private and government scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim with regard to self-esteem.
- H0₃** There is no significant difference between male and female scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim with regard to academic achievement.
- H0₄** There is no significant difference between private and government scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim with regard to academic achievement.
- H0₅** There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim.

Research Design

In the present study, researcher have used descriptive survey research design to study the scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim with regard to their Self-esteem & academic achievement to find out the relationships between these two variables.

Sample and Sampling Method of the Study

The sample of the present study was 274 scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim from various demographic variables such as gender (male/female) & management (types of school). In order to choose a representative sample of the scheduled caste students the study used cluster sampling techniques.

Tools used for data collection

The data collection for the current study was conducted using the following tools:

- 1) Self-esteem Inventory developed by Sudha K. Sharma & Md. Sarwar Hossain (2015).
- 2) The final academic performance scores obtained by scheduled caste students have been considered as the academic achievement of scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim. The Students from class IX their final scores or grade obtained by them in class VIII has been taken likewise for the students of class X their final scores or grade obtained by them in class IX has been taken as their academic achievement.

Data Analysis Techniques Used

In the current study the Pearson's product moment correlation test and the t-test has been used to determine the significant difference among demographic variables such as gender and management with respect to their self-esteem and academic achievement.

Objective wise Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Inferential statistics t-test with analysis

Objective 1: To study the difference in self-esteem among scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim based on the following demographic variables: Gender and Management.

- H0₁** There is no significant difference between male and female scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim with regard to self-esteem.
- H0₂** There is no significant difference between private and government scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim with regard to self-esteem.

To test the above hypotheses, an independent sample two-tailed t-test has been conducted and the result of the t-test has been given below:

Table 1

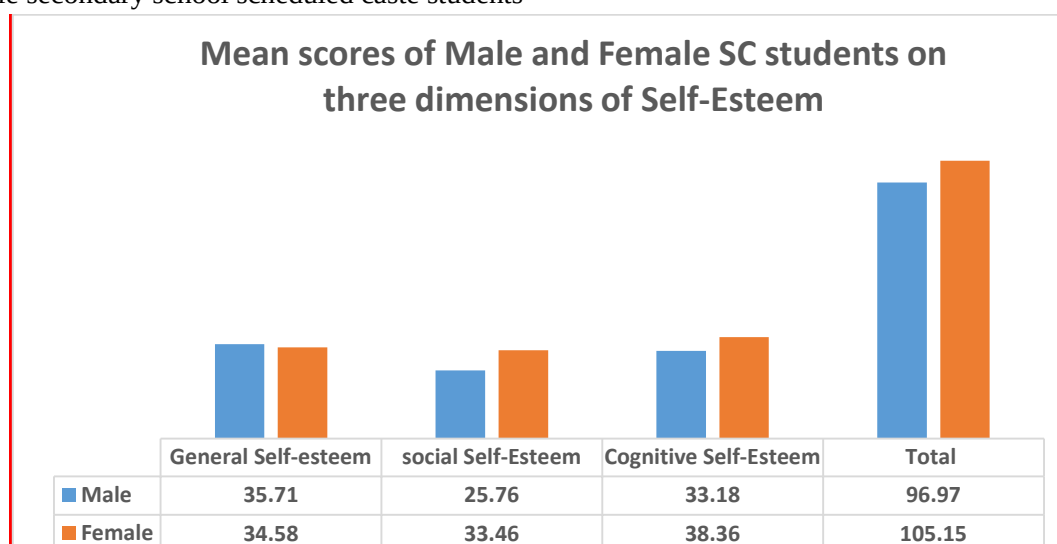
Results of t-test examining the difference among male & female scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim in relation self-esteem and its three dimensions

Dimensions of self-esteem		Male (138)		Female (136)		t(272)	
		M	SD	M	SD		p
General self-esteem	self-	35.71	8.60	34.58	6.51	1.233	.21
Social self-esteem	self-	25.76	7.07	33.46	6.89	9.122	.00*
Cognitive self-esteem	self-	33.18	9.56	38.36	6.56	5.223	.00*
Total		96.97	17.57	105.15	14.00	4.252	.00*

p<0.05*, p>0.05

Figure 1

Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on Self-Esteem along with its three dimensions among male and female secondary school scheduled caste students



It is revealed from the Table 1 and figure 1 that the mean scores of male and female secondary school scheduled caste students on three dimensions of self-esteem, i.e. general self-esteem, social self-esteem and cognitive self-esteem.

In general self-esteem dimension of self-esteem inventory it is revealed from Table 1 and figure 1 that the mean score of male and female secondary school scheduled caste students are 35.71 and 34.58 respectively. Further when both the mean values were subjected to the testing of their significance of difference, the finding shows that there is no significant difference between male and female scheduled caste students with $t(272)=1.233$, $p>.05$, which is not significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that male and female secondary school scheduled caste students do not differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on general self-esteem dimension of self-esteem inventory. Therefore, it can be said that the male and female scheduled caste students have the similar attitude towards their self while dealing with general feelings. Baumeister, (1998) stated that General Self-Esteem works as a quest for control of changing environment to suit the self and in terms of altering the self to fit into the environment or measure up to standards and it is found in both male and female



scheduled caste students. Hence, the hypothesis is fail to be rejected which implies that there is no significant difference.

In social self-esteem dimension of self-esteem inventory it is revealed from Table 1 and figure 1 that the mean score of male and female secondary school scheduled caste students are 25.76 and 33.46 respectively. Further when both the mean values were subjected to the testing of their significance of difference, the finding shows that there is a significant difference between male and female scheduled caste students with $t(272)=9.122$, $p<.05$, which is significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that male and female secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on social self-esteem dimension of self-esteem inventory. Therefore, it can be said that as compare to male scheduled caste students the female scheduled caste students have higher level of self-esteem on their social self-esteem dimension; it means female students feels socially accepted and attractive in interpersonal relationship. Heather and Polivy, (1991) stated that social self-esteem should be a sub-scale to measure the extent to which one feels socially accepted and attractive in interpersonal relationship and it is found more on female than male scheduled caste students. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant difference.

In cognitive self-esteem dimension of self-esteem inventory it is revealed from Table 1 and figure 1 that the mean score of male and female secondary school scheduled caste students are 33.18 and 38.36 respectively. Further when both the mean values were subjected to the testing of their significance of difference, the finding shows that there is a significant difference between male and female scheduled caste students with $t(272)=5.223$, $p<.05$, which is significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that male and female secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on cognitive self-esteem dimension of self-esteem inventory. Therefore, it can be said that female scheduled caste students have higher level of self-esteem in cognitive self-esteem dimension. It means female scheduled caste students view themselves as adequate, loveable, worthy, competent than male scheduled caste students. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant difference.

It is revealed from Table 1 and figure 1 that the mean score of total male and total female secondary school scheduled caste students on the variable Self-Esteem are 96.97 and 105.15 respectively. Further when both the mean values were subjected to the testing of their significance of difference, the finding shows that there is a significant difference between male and female scheduled caste students with $t(272)=4.252$, $p<.05$, which means there is a significant difference at 0.05 level. This indicates that male and female secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on self-Esteem. Therefore, it can be said that the female scheduled caste students have higher level of self-esteem than male scheduled caste students. Hence, the Hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant difference.

Table 2

Results of t-test examining the difference between government and private scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim in relation to self-esteem and three dimensions of self-esteem

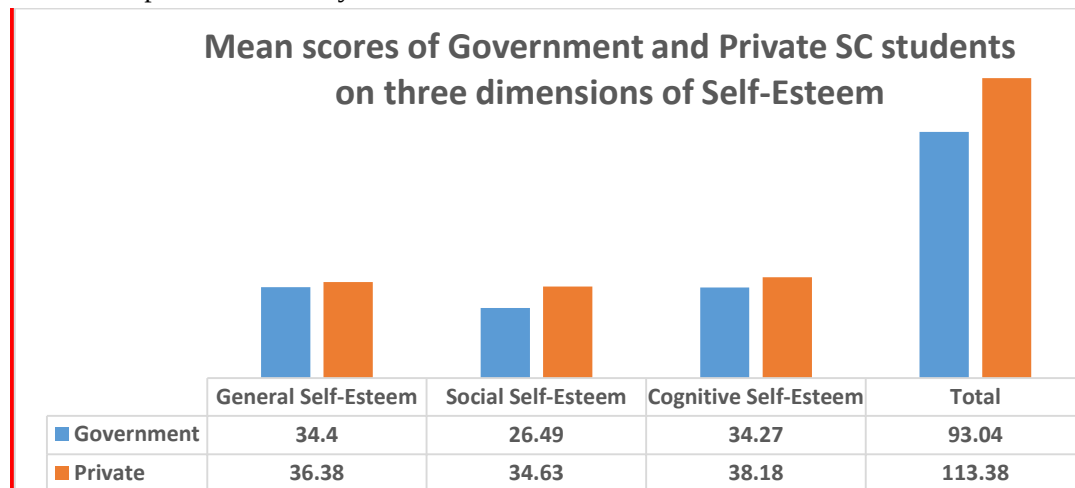
Dimensions of self-esteem		Government (170)		Private (104)		t(272)	p
		M	SD	M	SD		
General	self-esteem	34.40	7.77	36.38	7.29	2.090	.03*
Social	self-esteem	26.49	6.44	34.63	7.66	9.430	.00*
Cognitive	self-esteem	34.27	9.26	38.18	6.74	8.900	.00*

Total	93.04	16.30	113.38	10.43	11.371	.00*
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p<0.05*, p>0.05

Figure 2

Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on Self-Esteem along with its three dimensions among government and private secondary school scheduled caste students



It is revealed from the Table 2 and figure 2 that the mean scores of government and private secondary school scheduled caste students on three dimensions of self-esteem, i.e. general self-esteem, social self-esteem and cognitive self-esteem.

In general self-esteem dimension it is revealed from Table 2 and figure 2 that the mean score of government and private secondary school scheduled caste students are 34.40 and 36.38 respectively. Further when both the mean values were subjected to the testing of their significance of difference, the finding shows that there is a significant difference between government and private scheduled caste students with $t(272)=2.090$, $p<.05$, which is significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that government and private secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on general self-esteem dimension of self-esteem inventory. Therefore, it can be said that the private scheduled caste students have higher level of self-esteem on general self-esteem dimension it means attitude towards their self while dealing with general feelings is higher than government scheduled caste students. As Baumeister, (1998) has stated that General Self-Esteem works as a quest for control of changing environment to suit the self and in terms of altering the self to fit into the environment or measure up to standards and it is found more in private scheduled caste students than government scheduled caste students. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant difference.

In social self-esteem dimension it is revealed from Table 2 and figure 2 that the mean score of government and private secondary school scheduled caste students are 26.49 and 34.63 respectively. Further when both the mean values were subjected to the testing of their significance of difference, the finding shows that there is a significant difference between government and private scheduled caste students with $t(272)=9.430$, $p>.05$, which is significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that government and private secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on social self-esteem dimension of self-esteem inventory. Therefore, it can be said, in a comparison of government and private scheduled caste students, they do have difference on their social self-esteem dimension, it means private scheduled caste students feels more socially accepted and attractive in interpersonal relationship than the government scheduled caste students. As Heather and Polivy, (1991) has stated that social self-esteem should be a sub-scale to measure the extent to which one feels socially accepted and attractive in interpersonal relationship and it is found



more in private than the government scheduled caste students. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant difference.

In cognitive self-esteem dimension it is revealed from Table 2 and figure 2 that the mean score of government and private secondary school scheduled caste students are 34.27 and 38.18 respectively. Further when both the mean values were subjected to the testing of their significance of difference, the finding shows that there is a significant difference between government and private scheduled caste students with $t(272)=8.900$, $p<.05$, which is significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that government and private secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on cognitive self-esteem dimension of self-esteem inventory. Therefore, it can be said that private scheduled caste students have higher level of self-esteem in cognitive self-esteem dimension. It means private scheduled caste students view themselves as adequate, loveable, worthy and competent than government scheduled caste students. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant difference.

It is revealed from Table 2 and figure 2 that the mean score of government and private secondary school scheduled caste students on the variable Self-Esteem are 93.04 and 113.38 respectively. Further when both the mean values were subjected to the testing of their significance of difference, the finding shows that there is a significant difference between government and private scheduled caste students with $t(272)=11.371$, $p<.05$, which means there is a significant difference at 0.05 level. This indicates that government and private secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on self-Esteem. Therefore, it can be said that the private scheduled caste students have higher level of self-esteem than government scheduled caste students. Hence, the Hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant difference.

Objective 2: To study the difference in academic achievement among scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim based on the following demographic variables: Gender and Management.

H0₃ There is no significant difference between male and female scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim with regard to academic achievement.

H0₄ There is no significant difference between private and government scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim with regard to academic achievement.

Table 3

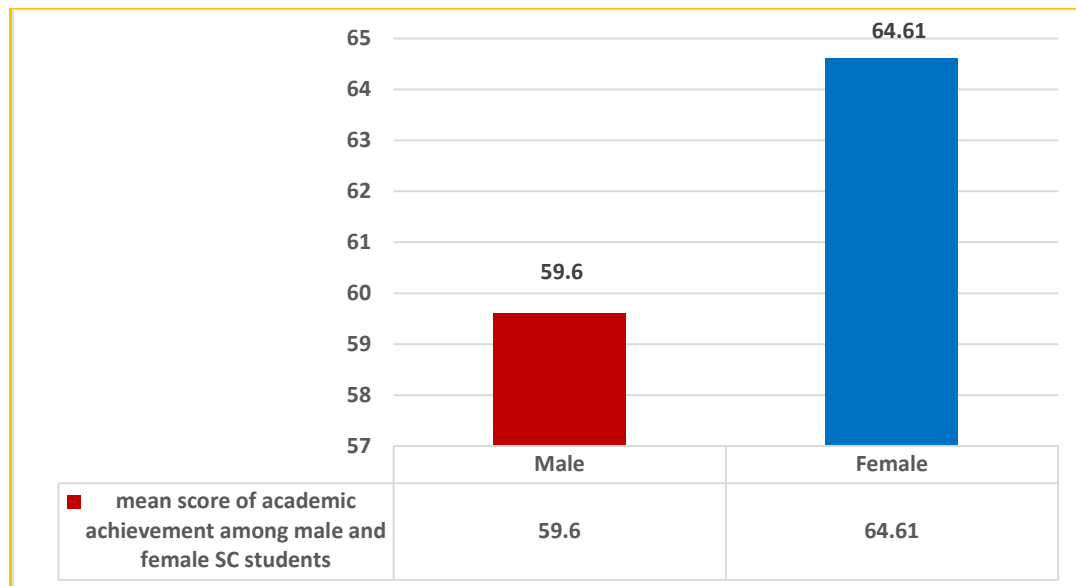
The results of t-test examining the difference between male and female scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim with regard to their academic achievement

Variable	Male(138)		Female(136)		t(272)	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Academic achievement	59.60	8.37	64.61	10.82	4.280	.00*

$p<0.05^*$, $p>0.05$

Figure 3

Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on academic achievement among male and female secondary school schedule caste students



It is revealed from Table 3 and figure 3 that the mean score of male and female secondary school scheduled caste students on the variable academic achievement are 59.60 and 64.61 respectively. Further when both the mean values were subjected to the testing of their significance of difference, the finding shows that there is a significant difference between male and female scheduled caste students with $t(272)=4.280$, $p<.05$, which means there is a significant difference at 0.05 level. This indicates that male and female secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on academic achievement. Therefore, it can be said that the female scheduled caste students have better academic achievement than male scheduled caste students. According to the present study it has been found that the female scheduled caste students have better academic achievement than the male scheduled caste students, it's because they differ in their self-esteem, it has also been found that the female scheduled caste students have higher self-esteem than male so that the female students have better academic achievement. The International Encyclopaedia of Education, (1994) define that affective component takes as its focus either the person as a whole (self-esteem), various particular domains, such as academic, general, cognitive, physical or social competence and family self-esteem. Hence, the Hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant difference.

Table 4

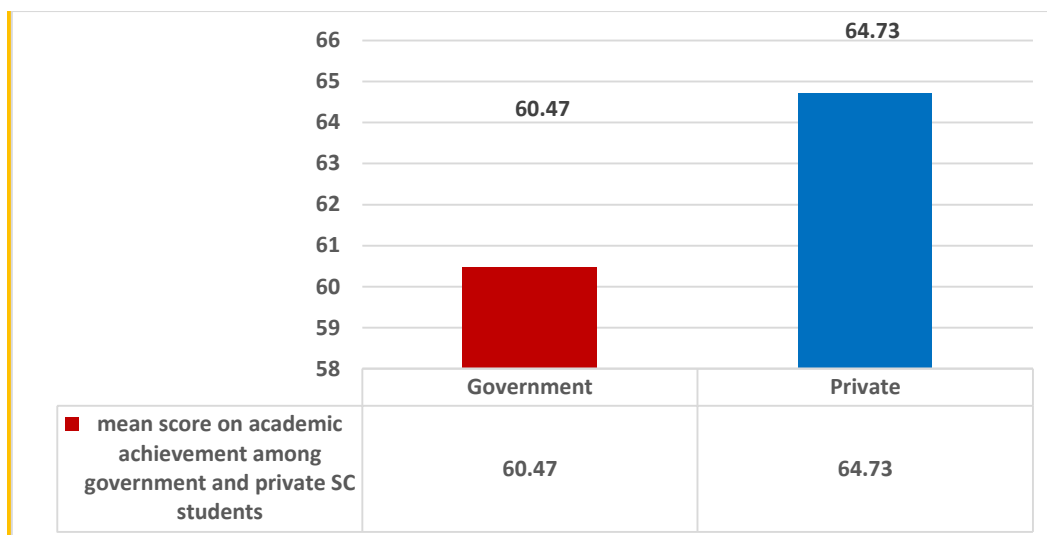
The results of t-test examining the difference between government and private scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim with regard to their academic achievement

Variable	Government (170)		Private (104)		t(272)	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Academic achievement	60.47	9.76	64.73	9.77	3.502	.00*

$p<0.05^*$, $p>0.05$

Figure 4

Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on academic achievement among government and private secondary school schedule caste students



It is revealed from Table 4 and figure 4 that the mean score of government and private secondary school scheduled caste students on the variable academic achievement are 60.47 and 64.73 respectively. Further when both the mean values were subjected to the testing of their significance of difference, the finding shows that there is a significant difference between government and private scheduled caste students with $t(272)=3.502$, $p<.05$, which means there is a significant difference at 0.05 level. This indicates that private and government secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on academic achievement. Hence, the Hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant difference.

Since, the mean score on academic achievement is (60.47) for government students and (64.73) for private scheduled caste students, it may be inferred that there is a significant difference between government and private scheduled caste secondary school students with regard to their academic achievement. Therefore, it can be said that the private scheduled caste students have better academic achievement than government scheduled caste students.

Correlational analysis

Objective 3: To study the relationship among self-esteem and academic achievement of scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim.

H0₅ There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim.

Table 4

The values of product moment correlation between Self-Esteem and academic achievement among scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim

Variables	N	M	SD	Self-esteem	Academic achievement	Remarks
Self-esteem	274	101.616	16.224	1	.620	Significant at 0.01 level
Academic achievement	274	62.094	9.968	.620	1	Significant at 0.01 level

$p<0.01^{**}$

Table 4 presents the relationship in terms of product moment correlation between the variables Self-Esteem and Academic achievement among secondary school scheduled caste students. It is revealed that the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in terms of product moment correlation, it came out to be significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement with $r(272) = .620$, $p<0.01$ level of significant indicating that change in self-esteem in this group is



associated with a similar change in their level of academic achievement. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant correlations.

Major findings of the study

The major findings of the study have been presented variable wise based on the objectives of the study are as follows:

Scheduled caste students' Self-esteem with respect to Gender and Management

The third objective of the present research was to study the difference in self-esteem among scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim based on the following demographical variables:

- a) Gender: (Male & Female)
- b) Management: (Government & Private)
1. The finding revealed that male and female secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their self-esteem. Further, it was found that the female scheduled caste students have better self-esteem than male scheduled caste students.
2. It was found that private and government secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their self-esteem. Further, it was found that the private scheduled caste students have better self-esteem than government scheduled caste students.
3. It was found that male and female secondary school scheduled caste students do not differ significantly with respect to their general self-esteem dimension of self-esteem inventory.
4. It was found that male and female secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their social self-esteem and cognitive self-esteem dimensions of self-esteem inventory. Therefore, it was found that female scheduled caste students have better self-esteem on social self-esteem and cognitive self-esteem dimensions than male scheduled caste students.
5. The finding showed that government and private secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their general self-esteem, social self-esteem and cognitive self-esteem dimensions of self-esteem inventory. Further it was found that the private scheduled caste students have better self-esteem on general self-esteem, social self-esteem and cognitive self-esteem dimensions than government scheduled caste students.

Scheduled caste students' academic achievement with respect to Gender and Management

The forth objective of the present research was to study the difference in academic achievement among scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim based on the following demographical variables:

- a) Gender: (Male & Female)
- b) Management: (Government & private)
1. The finding showed that male and female secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their academic achievement. Further, it was found that the female scheduled caste students have better academic achievement than male scheduled caste students.
2. The finding revealed that the government and private secondary school scheduled caste students do differ significantly with respect to their academic achievement. Further, it was found that the private scheduled caste students have better academic achievement than government scheduled caste students.

Relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement

The fifth objective of the present research was to study the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of scheduled caste students of secondary schools of Sikkim and the result reported a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement.

Conclusion

The present study explored the self-esteem and academic achievement among scheduled caste students and the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among scheduled caste



students of secondary schools of Sikkim. This study has contributed to shed light on the status of self-esteem and academic achievement among scheduled caste students studying in class IX-X of various secondary schools in the state of Sikkim. In conclusion, the exploration of self-esteem and academic achievement among scheduled caste students in secondary schools of Sikkim has provided valuable insights into the multifaceted challenges faced by this student demographic. The findings of this study underscore the interconnectedness of these psychological dimensions and academic performance, highlighting the importance of addressing them holistically to facilitate positive educational outcomes.

From the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that there exists significant difference between male and female scheduled caste students of secondary school students of Sikkim in self-esteem and in social and cognitive dimensions of self-esteem. There exists significant difference between private and government students on self-esteem and in social and cognitive self-esteem dimensions. There exists significant difference between male and female and private and government students in Academic Achievement. Therefore, there is a need to provide more guidance and Counselling, awareness programs, life skills education, inculcate Moral values, pleasant social environment in school and more family & teachers support to all the scheduled caste students studying in class IX-X in the different schools in the state of Sikkim for improvement and strengthening their level of self-esteem and academic achievement. It is evident that a supportive and inclusive educational environment plays a pivotal role in shaping the self-perception and academic success of scheduled caste students. Recommendations derived from this study emphasize the need for culturally responsive teaching strategies, positive role models, inclusive school culture, counseling services, parental involvement, skill development opportunities, socio-economic support, progress monitoring and the promotion of a growth mindset.

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