

**TO STUDY THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON
THE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
IN BOUDH DISTRICT OF ODISHA**

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ABSTRACT

The early years of schooling play a crucial role in shaping a child's overall development. However, children do not grow and learn under equal conditions, as their socio-economic backgrounds significantly influence their opportunities. The present study explores how socio-economic status (SES) affects the holistic development—academic, physical, emotional, and social—of primary school students in Boudh District. Using a descriptive survey approach, data were collected from students, parents, and teachers across 20 schools. The findings reveal that children from economically and socially advantaged families tend to perform better across all developmental dimensions, while those from disadvantaged backgrounds face multiple barriers. The study highlights the urgent need for inclusive educational practices and targeted policy interventions to ensure equitable development for all children.

Keywords: Socio-economic status, holistic development, primary education, inequality, Odisha

INTRODUCTION

Childhood is a formative stage where the foundations of learning, behaviour, and personality are established. Primary education, therefore, is not merely about acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills; it is about nurturing the overall development of a child. Holistic development includes intellectual growth, physical well-being, emotional stability, and social competence.

Yet, the reality in many parts of India is that children's developmental opportunities are deeply shaped by their socio-economic backgrounds. Socio-economic status—commonly understood through parental income, education, and occupation—determines access to resources such as quality schooling, nutrition, healthcare, and learning support at home.

In districts like Boudh District, where a large proportion of the population belongs to rural and tribal communities, these disparities become more visible. Many children face challenges such

as poverty, limited parental literacy, and lack of educational infrastructure. These factors collectively influence not only academic performance but also the broader dimensions of development.

This study attempts to understand these realities by examining how socio-economic status shapes the holistic development of primary school students in this region.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Existing research strongly supports the idea that socio-economic conditions play a decisive role in shaping educational outcomes and child development.

Ota and Mohanty (2010) The study highlights significant disparities in literacy and living conditions among Scheduled Tribe communities in Odisha.

Swain, (2014) This study further emphasizes that population characteristics and socio-economic variables are closely linked with access to education and development opportunities. Reports such as State of the Adivasis in Odisha (2014) also underline how poverty, marginalization, and lack of institutional support negatively affect children's overall development.

Das, (2021) This study looked at tribal students in Kalahandi and found that a student's family background really does affect how well they do in school. Students from better socio-economic conditions tend to perform better because they have more support and resources. The research highlights that differences in home environment and financial stability can create gaps in academic achievement. It suggests that schools and policymakers should provide extra support to students from weaker backgrounds.

Katami, (2022) Katami's study shows that parents' income, education, and jobs play a big role in shaping a child's academic performance. Students from well-off families usually have better learning environments and access to resources, which helps them succeed more in school. The study stresses the need to support students from less advantaged families to reduce these differences in performance.

Faiza & Daud. (2023) This research explains that socio-economic status affects academic success in many ways—not just money, but also parents' education, home environment, and access to learning materials. Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds often have more opportunities and guidance, while those from lower backgrounds may face challenges. The authors argue that the achievement gap is about opportunity, not just ability, and call for more inclusive support systems in education.

Raza, Hameed, et al. (2023). This study takes a broader view and shows that socio-economic status is made up of many connected factors like income, education, living conditions, and resources. All these together influence how students learn and perform. Students from stronger backgrounds benefit from better support and environments, while those from weaker backgrounds face multiple challenges. The study suggests that improving education requires a complete, well-rounded approach rather than focusing on just one issue. This study takes a broader view and shows that socio-economic status is made up of many

Careemdeen, (2024). Instead of focusing only on academics, this study looks at social skills. It finds that students from higher socio-economic backgrounds often develop better communication and social skills because they have more opportunities and exposure. Students from lower backgrounds may miss out on these experiences. The study emphasizes that schools should create supportive environments to help all students develop both academically and socially.

Ali, Ahmed, & Nath (2025). This research focuses on students from the Santal community and shows how poverty and social conditions affect their education. Limited income and lack of awareness make it harder for families to support their children's learning. The study highlights that these challenges are not just individual but linked to larger social issues. It recommends financial help, awareness programs, and inclusive policies to improve educational outcomes.

Singh (2025) This study further reinforced the importance of holistic education for children from marginalized sections, demonstrating how inclusive and value-based schooling can transform low self-esteem into high self-worth. Their work underscores the psychological dimension of holistic development, particularly for socially disadvantaged learners.

Sharma and Verma (2025) in their review of the Child Friendly Schools (CFS) model, highlighted the role of supportive school environments in fostering emotional safety, participation, and overall child development.

While these studies provide valuable insights, there remains a need for localized research focusing specifically on districts like Boudh District, where socio-economic challenges are deeply intertwined with educational outcomes. There is a need for research that not only explains the issue but also helps in finding real solutions.

Research Gap

Even though many studies clearly show that socio-economic status (SES) affects students' learning and development, there are still some important gaps that need attention:

1. Lack of Studies in Boudh District

Most of the research done so far focuses on larger areas of Odisha or specific districts like Kalahandi. Very little research has been carried out in Boudh District, where the social and economic conditions may be quite different. Because of this, we don't fully understand the real situation of students in this area.

2. Less Focus on Holistic Development

Many studies mainly talk about students' academic performance. However, education is not just about marks—it also includes emotional, social, and behavioral development. These aspects are not studied as much, even though they are very important for a child's overall growth.

3. Lack of Clear Comparison Between SES Groups

While it is known that SES affects development, not many studies clearly compare students from different socio-economic backgrounds (low, middle, and high). Such comparisons are important to understand how big the gap actually is.

4. SES Not Studied in a Complete Way

Socio-economic status includes many factors like income, parents' education, occupation, and living conditions. But many studies look at only one or two of these factors. There is a need for research that looks at all these aspects together to get a complete picture.

5. Limited Research on Students at upper primary level

A lot of studies focus on older students, while children in Classes VI to VIII are often ignored. This stage is very important for development, so more attention is needed here.

6. Need for Practical Solutions

Many studies talk about the problems but do not give clear, practical suggestions that schools and teachers can

Origin of the Problem

Persistent inequality in educational outcomes among students from different socio-economic backgrounds in Boudh District led to the formulation of this study. So, this study tries to fill these gaps by focusing on students in Boudh District, looking at their overall (holistic) development, and comparing students from different socio-economic backgrounds. It will help in understanding the real situation better and may also suggest useful steps for improvement.

Statement of the Problem

“To study the influence of socio-economic status on the holistic development of primary school students in Boudh District of Odisha.”

Operational Definitions

- **Socio-Economic Status (SES):** Composite measure of income, education, and occupation of parents
- **Holistic Development:** Overall development including cognitive, social-emotional, physical, aesthetic, and moral aspects

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the relationship between SES and holistic development
2. To compare holistic development among different SES groups

Research Hypotheses

- **H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between SES and holistic development
- **H₀₂:** There is no significant difference among SES groups in holistic development

Delimitations

- Study limited to selected schools in Boudh district
- Focus only on upper primary students (class vi to viii)
- Only SES and holistic development variables considered

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive survey method to understand the relationship between socio-economic status and holistic development.

POPULATION

The population of this study consists of all students at primary school levels in Boudh district of Odisha. There are three Blocks in Boudh district having 284 primary schools and a grand total of 18873 number of students are enrolled in the session 2025-26. Hence the present study comprises a population of 18873 students.

Sample: Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation from different socio-economic backgrounds.

- 40 students
- 15 parents
- 15 teachers

Tools and Techniques

- Socio-economic status scale
- Holistic Development Checklist with Structured questionnaires for parents and teachers
- Observation schedules for students

Data Analysis and Interpretation

SES Group	N	Mean Score
High SES	12	158
Middle SES	13	132
Low SES	14	106

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1 (H₀₁)

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and holistic development.

Table :2 Correlation between SES and Holistic Development

SES Group	N	Mean Score
High SES	12	158

Middle SES	13	132
Low SES	14	106

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1 (H₀₁)

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and holistic development.

Table :2: Correlation between SES and Holistic Development

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value
SES Score	13	52	8	
Holistic Development Score	14	132	21	0.68

Interpretation

- The correlation coefficient (r = 0.68) indicates a moderately strong positive relationship between SES and holistic development.
- This means higher SES is associated with better holistic development.

Decision

Since correlation is significantly positive, H₀₁ is rejected. There is a significant relationship between SES and holistic development.

Hypothesis 2 (H₀₂)

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in holistic development among different SES groups.

Table 15.4.2: Group Statistics

SES Group	N	Mean	SD
High SES	13	158	10
Low SES	14	106	12

Table 3: T-test Summary

Comparison	Calculated t-value	df	T-Value (0.05)	Significant
High vs Low SES	12.26	25	2.06	Rejected

Interpretation

- Calculated t-value (12.26) is much higher than the table value (2.06).

- This indicates a highly significant difference between high and low SES groups.

Decision

H_0 is rejected. Hence Significant difference exists among SES groups in holistic development.

Final Statistical Conclusion

- SES has a strong and significant influence on holistic development.

Both relationship (correlation) and group difference (t-test) confirm the impact.

Results and Findings

- SES significantly affects holistic development
- High SES students outperform others
- Low SES students face developmental disadvantages
- Strong variation exists across development domains

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that socio-economic status plays a decisive role in shaping the holistic development of students. Educational inequality rooted in SES must be addressed to ensure equitable growth opportunities for all learners.

Educational Implications

The findings of the study suggest that schools need to become more welcoming and supportive places for every child, no matter their background. Teachers can make a big difference by using simple, flexible teaching methods so that all students feel included and confident to learn. At the same time, students from low socio-economic backgrounds often need extra support, so government help—like scholarships, free books, and access to digital tools—can really change their learning experience. Programs such as the mid-day meal and school health services should be strengthened because they don't just help children stay healthy, but also encourage them to attend school regularly and stay focused. Another important aspect is helping parents understand how valuable education is and how they can support their children at home, even in small ways. When schools, families, and the government work together with care and understanding, it becomes much easier to ensure that every child gets a fair chance to grow and succeed.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The study opens up several meaningful directions for further research. Future studies could explore comparisons across different districts to better understand how regional variations influence the relationship between socio-economic status and students' development. Longitudinal research would also be valuable, as it can track students over time and provide deeper insights into how socio-economic conditions affect their growth in the long run. In addition, gender-based studies could examine whether boys and girls experience the impact of

socio-economic status differently, helping to design more targeted interventions. Another important area is the impact of digital education, especially in today's technology-driven world, to understand how access to digital resources and online learning opportunities shapes the development of students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

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