

Socio-economic status of college students in Dimapur: A comparative study between two colleges

Neisevono Khawakhrie

BA 6th Sem. Economics Honours

Department of Economics

Dimapur Govt. College

Ph. 8730897217 Email: neisevonokhawakhrie@gmail.com

Dr. Vinyühu Lhoungu

Asst. Prof., Department of Economics

Dimapur Govt. College

Oriental Colony, Dimapur - 797112, Nagaland.

Ph. 9436010274 Email: ahulhoungu17@gmail.com

Abstract

Socio-economic status encompasses not only income but also educational attainment, occupational prestige and subjective perceptions of social statuses and social class. This study investigates the socio-economic status of college students in Dimapur, aiming to understand how various socio-economic factors influence their educational experiences and outcomes. The overall objective of the study is to find out if there exist any significant differences in the socioeconomic status of the students in government and private colleges, and to find out if socioeconomic status of the students plays an important role in their decision making when choosing an institution to pursue higher studies. The study is based on primary data collected through structured questionnaire. Using the latest version of Kuppuswami socio-economic status scale, the findings revealed significant disparities in educational and occupational status, highlighting the influence of parental education on the socio-economic conditions of students in higher education institutions in Dimapur.

Keywords: Socio-economic, Status, Students, Colleges, Education, Government, Private.

Introduction

The term Socio-economic refers to the interaction between the social and economic habits of a group of people. The prefix socio refers to “the study of the behavior of people, including the ways they interact with one another or their family structures. Socioeconomic means relating to or concerned with the interaction of social and economic factors

Socioeconomic study is considered as one of the important variable in social science research. It has been and is being included quite often as a variable in education and other social science streams. Students getting enrolled in higher education institutions are from the most diverse population in terms of their family background, ethnic composition, age, gender, native language and socioeconomic status. Usually the concept of socioeconomic status is taken as the category of individuals or groups of

social standing. It is mostly measured as a combination of the indicators i.e. occupation, education and income.

Higher education, which has the function of cultivating human capital, has already become a key focus of developed countries around the world. From ministries of education to higher education institutions, many bodies are dedicated to enhancing student learning outcomes. However, social and educational problems derived from disadvantaged groups have long been hindering the development of individuals and the whole country. This study examines the learning motivations of economically disadvantaged versus non-disadvantaged college students.

In Dimapur, the socio-economic status (SES) of college students is a crucial yet underexplored area of research. Additionally, the comparative analysis of SES between different colleges remains largely unaddressed. Therefore, this study aims to examine the socio-economic status of college students in Dimapur, focusing on a comparative analysis between two colleges. By examining factors such as parental education, occupation, and income, this research seeks to identify disparities in SES between the two colleges and explore their implications for students' academic performance, access to resources, and overall college experience.

Literature Review

According to Eshetu (2015), in the contemporary educational landscape, parental socioeconomic status (SES) significantly impacts student academic performance, yet findings are inconclusive. In a similar study conducted by Chmielewski et al. (2015) it is mentioned that in the realm of education, the impact of parental socioeconomic status (SES) on student academic performance is a subject of extensive study, yet results remain inconclusive. While some research highlights the significance of parental education and health, others suggest family income may not directly correlate with academic achievement. Both studies concluded that, empirical evidence on this matter is limited, particularly in Ethiopia.

Bukhari and Khanam (2015) in their study highlights the significant impact of socioeconomic status (SES) on mental health, showing that individuals from lower SES backgrounds experience increased stress and limited resource access, which heightens their vulnerability to depression, particularly among urban females. Chen et al. (2020) also investigated the psychological factors and learning motivations of economically disadvantaged students in higher education using self-determination theory (SDT). By comparing these students with their more affluent peers, their research aimed to investigate educational outcomes by addressing the unique challenges faced by economically disadvantaged populations. Together these studies underscore the critical interplay between SES, mental health, and educational success, highlighting the importance of addressing psychological needs and resource accessibility.

The interplay between socio-economic background and educational outcomes has been a focal point in educational research, revealing persistent inequalities that impact students' academic success. Crawford (2014) reveals significant disparities in university dropout rates and degree classifications in the UK, with disadvantaged students facing greater challenges even when prior academic achievement is considered. This suggests the need for targeted support beyond school performance for these students. Hadi

Mohammed (2023) further emphasizes the role of family socio-economic status, showing that parental involvement, influenced by socio-economic factors, significantly affects student achievement and motivation, particularly in the context of Gombe State College of Education and Legal Studies. Crosnoe and Muller (2014) explore how family socio-economic status influences high school curricular choices and, consequently, long-term educational trajectories. Their findings reveal that both parental and peer dynamics contribute to the perpetuation of educational inequalities. Together, these studies underscore the necessity of addressing socio-economic disparities to promote equitable educational opportunities and improve outcomes for disadvantaged students.

Neupane and Gurung (2021), explores the multifaceted factors impacting students' academic success, spanning parental expectations, socio-economic status, family dynamics, parental involvement, student behavior, academic self-concept, and school environment. Unlike prior research, it concurrently examines the influence of family financial status, parental education, occupation, education expenditure, and residence on academic performance. Also revealed in a study conducted by Merritt and Buboltz (2015, that socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and academic self-efficacy affect academic success. Lower SES often correlates with lower self-efficacy, while parental support predicts college enrollment and graduation. Bandura's theory suggests parents' belief in their influence drives academic motivation. Both the studies aims to pinpoint the most influential factor among these variables by extending its investigation to university-level students across disciplines.

Pajarillo-Aquino (2023) highlights the significant impact of socioeconomic factors on students' academic performance, revealing how family background, parental education, occupation, and income shape educational outcomes. The study also emphasizes the influence of parental involvement and family dynamics on academic success, illustrating the complex relationship between socioeconomic status and performance. Similarly Lan and Wang, (2023) explores how values and SES affect adolescents' subjective well-being (SWB). They find that values like self-improvement and collective responsibility enhance SWB, particularly for low SES individuals. However, high SES adolescents may face internal conflicts related to collective responsibility, potentially diminishing their SWB. Together, these studies underscore the multifaceted influence of socioeconomic factors on academic performance and well-being, highlighting their importance in educational contexts.

Despite the significance of SES in influencing educational opportunities and outcomes, there is limited empirical evidence on how socio-economic factors impact college students' experiences in the state of Nagaland. The study is intended help gain valuable insights into the socio-economic dynamics of college education in Dimapur and contributes to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds in the region.

Methodology:

Data collection: The study is both descriptive and analytical, employing a mixed-methods approach. Primary data were collected via a survey conducted in June-July 2023, using questionnaires distributed through Google Forms. A sample of 200 were taken, 100 students from each college has been selected by simple random sampling. Secondary

data were sourced from reputable literature, including books, journals, websites, and articles.

Analysis tools: Statistical tools such as percentages, averages and modified Kuppuswami Scale for the year 2024 were used to analyse the data.

Objectives: The overall objectives of the study are:

1. To find out if there exist any significant differences in the socioeconomic status of the students in the government and private colleges.
2. To find out if the socioeconomic status of the students plays an important role in their decision making when choosing an institution to pursue their studies.

Data Analysis:

Father's educational status- The study revealed that the highest qualification status of fathers of students in government college is 'Below matriculate' with 10% of male and 28% of female students' while 2% of male students' fathers are 'Illiterate'. Whereas in private college the highest qualification status of fathers of students is 'Graduate' with 14% male and 28% female students father belonging to the category and the least are 2% male and 6% female at 'Below matriculate' category.

Mother's educational status- From government college, it is the same as the above ranking. With 16% male and 32% female student's mother at the 'Below matriculate' category and at the lowest is 2% of female students' mother at 'Illiterate' category. In private college, at the highest are 14% male and 16% female students' mothers at 'Graduate' category and at the lowest is 2% female student's mother at 'illiterate' category.

Mother's Occupation- In government college, the highest rank of occupation status of mothers is a housewife with 30% male and 44% female students' mothers. In the private college the highest rank of occupation status of mothers is a government job holder with 20% male and 32% female students' mother out of which 12% male and 22% female students' mothers earning about ₹ 30,000 – ₹ 80,000 per month.

Father's Occupation- In government college, the highest rank of occupation status of fathers is 'Business/Entrepreneurship' with 14% male and 14% female students' fathers engaged in and earn an average monthly income of ₹ 30,000 – ₹ 50,000. In private college, the highest rank in the father's occupation is 'Government job' with 12% male and 22% female students' fathers a govt. job holder with an average monthly income is ₹ 50,000 – ₹1.00 lakh.

Discussion:

In government college, at the highest rank we found about 70% students' mother and 28% students' father are housewives and business holders respectively. Whereas, in private college, about 52% of students' mothers earn ransom salary and about 34% of their fathers are government servants and are pretty well-off.

It is also found that about 34% male and 36% female students from Government College and 24% male and 42% female from private college belongs to big family. However, about 44% and 24% students from Govt. and Private colleges respectively are involved in social

activities while 46% and 76% students from Govt. and Private colleges respectively are not involved in any such activities. Hence, the study revealed that students in general are less indulged in social activities no matter them belonging to big, small or medium family.

Citing the example of students with less privilege goes to Govt. College and the privileged ones go to Private college stands true. We found that students who go to Govt. College have most parents working in agriculture or run small businesses with comparatively lesser earnings. On the other hand, students with comparatively higher parents' earning go to private colleges. Also, the underprivileged ones have no additional source of income, so going to Govt. College eases their monthly expenses.

Kuppuswamy Scale

Kuppuswamy devised a scale in 1976, which is commonly used to measure SES in urban and rural areas. It considers factors such as education, occupation, and family income to classify households into different socioeconomic categories.

Based on the modified Kuppuswamy scale for the year 2024, the following conclusions have been reached.

S. no.	Socio-economic Class	Kuppuswamy Score	Govt. College (No of families in %)	Private College (No of families in %)	Total
1	Upper (I)	26-29	-	3	03
2	Upper Middle (II)	16-25	13	21	34
3	Lower Middle (III)	11-15	25	20	45
4	Upper Lower (IV)	5-10	8	4	12
5	Lower	<5	4	2	06
	Total		50	50	100

As shown in the above table, students in Government College have a higher representation of lower-income families compared to private college. It can also be seen that Private college attract students from families with higher incomes and more diverse occupational backgrounds.

Conclusion: This study provides valuable insights into the diverse experiences and challenges faced by students from different backgrounds. By acknowledging and addressing these disparities, colleges can strive to create a more inclusive and supportive environment that enables all students to thrive academically regardless of their socio-economic circumstances. Overall, the study highlights disparities and similarities in the socio-economic backgrounds of students enrolled in government and private colleges in Dimapur. While both types of colleges have students from various socio-economic strata, private colleges continue to attract a higher proportion of students from families with higher incomes. These findings provide valuable insights into the socio-economic dynamics of college students in Dimapur and can inform policies and interventions aimed at promoting educational equity and access.

The study also found that many students irrespective of coming from large or small families are less involved in social activities preferring indoor activities over socializing.

In terms of college choices, Government College now attract not only economically disadvantaged students but also those with higher academic grades. On the other hand, private colleges are mostly attended by financially stable students irrespective of academic grades due to their higher fees, which can be a barrier for economically disadvantaged students.

This suggests that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds often opt for government colleges because they are more affordable. Meanwhile, economically stable students tend to choose private colleges. These findings shed light on the complex relationship between socio-economic status, social behaviour, and educational decisions among college students in Dimapur.

References

- Eshetu Amogne Asfaw (2015). Parental socio-economic status as a determinant factor of academic performance of students in regional examination: A case of Dessie town, Ethiopia . *African Educational Research Journal* 3(4), 221-229, November 2015 ISSN: 2354-2160
- Chmielewski, A. K., Parker, P., & Jerrim, J. (2015). Socioeconomic inequality in access to high-status colleges: A cross-country comparison. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 42, 20-32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2015.06.003>
- Bukhari, S. R., & Khanam, S. J. (2015). Prevalence of depression in university students belonging to different socioeconomic status. *Journal of Postgraduate Medical Institute*, 29(3), 156-159.
- Chen, C.-C. (Li, H., Peng & M. Y.-P., Yang, M., 2020). Exploring the influence of learning motivation and socioeconomic status on college students' learning outcomes using Self-Determination Theory. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 849. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00849>
- Crawford, C. (2014, October). Socio-economic differences in university outcomes in the UK: Drop-out, degree completion and degree class. *University of Warwick and Institute for Fiscal Studies*. Retrieved from <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/wps/WP201431.pdf>
- Mohammed, M. H. (2023). Influence of family socio-economic status on students' academic performance in colleges of education. *International Journal of Innovative Psychology & Social Development*, 11(4), 10-17. Retrieved from <http://www.seahipaj.org> ISSN: 2467-8546
- Crosnoe, R., & Muller, C. (2014). Family socioeconomic status, peers, and the path to college. *Social Problems*, 61(4), 602–624. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2014.12255>
- Neupane, D., & Gurung, S. K. (2021). Influence of parental socio-economic status on students' academic performance: Experience from Pokhara University, Nepal. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Perspectives in Higher Education*, 6(2), 50-67. Retrieved from <https://ojed.org/jimphe>
- Merritt, D. L., & Buboltz, W. (2015). Academic success in college: Socioeconomic status

and parental influence as predictors of outcome. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(5), 127-135. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2015.35018>

Pajarillo-Aquino, I. (2019). The socio-economic status of students and its effects on their academic performance. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, 8(4), 308. Retrieved from <http://www.garph.co.uk>

Lan, L., & Wang, X. (2023). Socio-economic status moderates the relationship between values and subjective well-being among Chinese college students. *Current Psychology*, 43, 6253–6260. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04818-4>

Mandal I, Hossain SR. Update of modified Kuppaswami Scale for the year 2024. *Int. J of Community Med Public Health* 2024;11:2945-6.