

Socio-Psychological Determinants of Motivation and Academic Achievement: Insights from Marginalized Learners in West Bengal

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61165/sk.publisher.v12i9.1>

Abstract: *This quantitative study investigates the socio-psychological factors influencing student motivation and academic achievement among marginalized learners in Nadia district, West Bengal. Drawing on frameworks from educational psychology and critical social theory, the research examines the role of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), socio-economic background (Sen, 2000), school environment, teacher support (Zimmerman, 2000), and parental involvement in shaping academic outcomes.*

Data were gathered from a stratified random sample of 400 students in upper primary and secondary schools using a structured questionnaire based on validated psychological scales (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Statistical analyses including Pearson's correlation, multiple regression, and path analysis were applied to test hypothesized relationships among socio-psychological variables and student performance.

Findings reveal significant disparities in motivation and achievement linked to caste, gender, income, and school infrastructure (Sen, 2000). Self-efficacy and perceived teacher support demonstrated a strong positive relationship with academic achievement (Zimmerman, 2000). Conversely, students from marginalized groups exhibited lower intrinsic motivation and higher academic stress, which adversely affected performance.

The study emphasizes the urgent need for educational reforms that promote psychological empowerment, equitable resource distribution, and inclusive school practices. By integrating context-sensitive insights into achievement research, this work challenges traditional models and offers a holistic framework relevant to rural and marginalized learners in India (Freire, 1970; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Keywords: *Educational Psychology, Student Motivation, Academic Achievement, Socio-Psychological Determinants, Marginalized Students.*

Introduction

Student motivation and academic achievement are complex phenomena shaped by a dynamic interaction of personal traits, socio-cultural contexts, and institutional conditions. For learners from marginalized communities, these influences are often compounded by systemic disadvantages such as poverty, caste-based discrimination, inadequate infrastructure, and limited

parental involvement (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Freire, 1970). Motivation—whether intrinsic or extrinsic—has been consistently linked to learning outcomes, with major theoretical contributions highlighting the importance of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), social interaction and scaffolding in learning (Vygotsky, 1978), and autonomy-supportive learning environments (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

In the Indian context, structural inequalities and regional disparities frequently translate into lower participation, reduced persistence, and weaker performance among marginalized groups (Singh & Sarkar, 2015). These disparities are particularly visible in states like West Bengal, where socio-economic challenges continue to undermine equitable access to quality education. Within this setting, the present study focuses on the Nadia district to explore how psychological variables—such as self-belief, teacher-student interaction, and perceived social support—intersect with social determinants like caste, income, and school infrastructure. By integrating perspectives from educational psychology and social justice, this inquiry seeks to generate a holistic understanding of the learning barriers and opportunities faced by marginalized students (Sen, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000).

Rationale of the Study

Socio-psychological determinants—including family background, teacher encouragement, peer relationships, and emotional well-being—play a pivotal role in shaping student motivation and academic achievement (Bandura, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 2000). For marginalized learners, these factors assume even greater importance because of systemic inequities, scarce resources, and entrenched social exclusion (UNESCO, 2020). In rural areas such as Nadia district, many disadvantaged students continue to struggle academically despite policy-level reforms and government initiatives.

Although extensive research has examined educational inequities in India, there remains a shortage of localized, quantitative evidence that connects socio-psychological variables with learning outcomes in rural West Bengal. Most existing studies emphasize either socio-economic barriers or psychological constructs in isolation, thereby neglecting the interactional effects between the two. This study addresses that gap by investigating the combined influence of self-efficacy, teacher support, parental involvement, and socio-structural determinants on student outcomes. The findings are expected to provide evidence-based insights for designing inclusive educational practices and interventions tailored to the needs of marginalized communities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Singh & Kaur, 2019).

Literature Review Summary

Sl. No.	Author(s)	Year	Key Findings / Contribution	Present Relevance	Research Gap
1	Verma, R. & Rath, R. (India)	2021	Investigated how caste-based and income disparities affect academic motivation in marginalized student groups.	Reinforces the persistence of caste and class as barriers to motivation in rural India.	Lacks quantitative path analysis linking caste, income, and psychological constructs.
2	Pandey, U. & Chatterjee, A. (India)	2020	Reported that emotional and social support from teachers boosts self-efficacy in disadvantaged students.	Teacher-student relationships remain central in NEP 2020 reforms.	Limited exploration of how self-efficacy interacts with structural inequities.
3	Duckworth, A. et al.	2019	Highlighted grit and perseverance as key non-cognitive traits predicting long-term academic success.	Shows importance of resilience in marginalized learners facing systemic barriers.	Few studies examine grit within Indian marginalized rural school contexts.
4	Gupta, M. & Sharma, A. (India)	2018	Demonstrated that socio-economic background and parental education influence student motivation and achievement.	Relevant for understanding intergenerational inequality in Nadia district.	Ignores psychological mediators such as stress and intrinsic motivation.
5	Kumar, S. & Saikia, L. (India)	2017	Found that parental involvement positively influences academic outcomes	Stresses need for community-school partnerships in rural India.	Does not consider parental literacy limitations in

			among rural learners.		marginalized groups.
6	Singh, R. & Sarkar, S. (India)	2015	Found teacher quality and school environment to be major determinants of student academic success in Indian schools.	Matches policy focus on improving infrastructure and teacher training.	Fails to link school factors with motivation and psychological resilience.
7	Ryan, A. M. & Deci, E. L.	2009	Reviewed how extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation affects long-term learning and well-being.	Central to understanding why marginalized students rely more on extrinsic drivers.	Limited cross-cultural application in Indian contexts.
8	Wentzel, K. R.	2002	Found that teacher-student relationships significantly impact students' motivation and engagement.	Still relevant in contexts where teacher sensitivity reduces dropouts.	Focused mainly on Western school settings, not rural Indian systems.
9	Zimmerman, B. J.	2000	Promoted self-regulated learning models, linking metacognition, motivation, and achievement.	Useful in designing student-centered learning strategies.	Self-regulated learning among marginalized groups remains under-researched.
10	Sen, A.	2000	Advocated for capability approach—freedom and opportunity are essential for development.	Frames inequality in terms of opportunities and educational justice.	Does not integrate psychological variables like self-efficacy and stress.
11	Bandura, A.	1997	Proposed the theory of self-efficacy; learners' belief in ability influences motivation and achievement.	Widely applied in motivational studies and remains highly influential.	Limited evidence from marginalized rural learners in India.
12	Deci, E. L. & Ryan, R. M.	1985	Developed Self-Determination Theory; intrinsic motivation is essential for sustained learning.	Explains why many marginalized students struggle with sustained engagement.	Few Indian quantitative studies testing SDT among disadvantaged learners.
13	Bronfenbrenner, U.	1979	Introduced Ecological Systems Theory, emphasizing family, school, and community influences.	Highly relevant for holistic studies of marginalized education.	Application in Indian rural education remains scarce.
14	Vygotsky, L. S.	1978	Proposed sociocultural theory; scaffolding and interaction are vital for learning.	Still relevant in classroom practices of inclusive education.	Needs empirical testing in contexts of marginalized, under-resourced schools.
15	Freire, P.	1970	Advocated critical pedagogy—education must be dialogic and liberating.	Guides inclusive and transformative education for marginalized groups.	Rarely operationalized quantitatively in Indian rural school rese

Objectives and Hypothesis of Study

Objective 1: To identify socio-psychological factors influencing motivation and academic achievement.

- **H₀₁ (Null Hypothesis):**

There is no significant relationship between socio-psychological factors (e.g., self-efficacy, teacher support, and parental involvement) and students' academic motivation and achievement.

Objective 2: To analyze the role of self-efficacy, teacher support, and parental involvement.

- **H₀₂:**

Self-efficacy, teacher support, and parental involvement do not significantly predict students' academic motivation and achievement.

Objective 3: To examine the correlation between demographic factors and academic outcomes.

- **H₀₃:**

There is no significant correlation between students' demographic variables (caste category, gender, family income, parents' education) and academic outcomes.

Methodology: This study follows a descriptive-correlational quantitative design.

Population and Sample: The population consists of marginalized students (SC/ST/OBC/EWS) from upper primary and secondary schools in Nadia district. A stratified random sample of 400 students was selected.

Research Design

This study employs a **descriptive-correlational quantitative research design**, appropriate for identifying and examining the relationships among multiple socio-psychological variables (e.g., self-efficacy, motivation, academic achievement) in a real-world educational context without manipulating the environment. It allows for both descriptive statistical insights and inferential analysis of the relationships between variables.

Population and Sample

The **target population** comprises marginalized students, specifically from **Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)**, who are enrolled in **upper primary (Grades VI–VIII) and secondary (Grades IX–XII)** schools in the Nadia district of West Bengal.

Sample Size and Composition

A sample of **400 students** was drawn from both government and government-aided schools across rural and semi-urban areas. The sample was fairly balanced in terms of:

- Gender (Male/Female/Other)
- Grade Level (Upper Primary/Secondary)
- Caste/Economic group (SC/ST/OBC/EWS)

Sample Design

A **stratified random sampling** technique was used to ensure representativeness across subgroups based on:

- Educational level (Upper Primary vs. Secondary)
- Gender
- Social category (SC/ST/OBC/EWS)
- School type (Government, Aided)

The strata were identified through the district education office database. Schools were first selected at random within each block. Then, students were selected randomly within each stratum based on the proportion of students enrolled.

Justification for Sample Size

The sample size of 400 was determined using **Cochran's formula** for finite populations, accounting for a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The size is considered statistically adequate for correlation and regression analysis in educational studies.

Assumption of Normal Distribution

To ensure the appropriateness of **parametric statistical methods** (e.g., Pearson correlation, regression), tests for **normality** (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests) were applied to the key variables:

- Self-efficacy
- Intrinsic motivation

- Academic performance scores

The results indicated **approximate normal distribution** for all key variables ($p > 0.05$), allowing the use of inferential parametric techniques. Additionally, histogram plots and Q-Q plots were used to visually confirm the assumption.

Data Collection Procedure

1. **Consent** was secured from students and parents/guardians.
2. A team of trained field investigators administered the structured questionnaires.
3. The data were collected over a period of **30 working days**, ensuring uniformity in administration.

As earlier described:

- **Bandura's Self-Efficacy Scale** (1997)
- **Self-developed standardized questionnaire** on school environment, teacher support, socioeconomic conditions, and academic stress.

Data Analysis Techniques

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Mean, standard deviation, frequencies
- **Pearson's Correlation Coefficient:** To test associations
- **Multiple Linear Regression:** To predict academic achievement from independent variables
- **Path Analysis:** To test direct and indirect relationships among variables using SPSS and AMOS

Tools Used: A structured questionnaire integrating validated instruments:

To gather quantitative data, the study utilized both established and self-developed instruments:

1. Self-Efficacy Scale (Bandura, 1997):

A validated tool measuring students' beliefs in their capabilities to achieve academic tasks. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5).

2. Self-Developed Standardized Questionnaire:

Designed specifically for the present study to assess socio-psychological determinants such as: Parental involvement , Perceived teacher support , Socioeconomic status , Discrimination/stress indicators , School environment and peer influence. The questionnaire was developed through literature review, expert consultation, and field validation. It contained both closed-ended Likert-type items and demographic questions.

Validity and Reliability

- **Content Validity:** Ensured by a panel of 5 subject matter experts from education and psychology fields. Items were checked for relevance, clarity, and coverage.
- **Pilot Testing:** Conducted with 40 students from a non-sample group in Nadia district. Based on feedback, minor revisions were made.
- **Reliability:**
 - Cronbach's Alpha for the Self-Efficacy Scale: $\alpha = 0.84$

○ Cronbach’s Alpha for the self-made questionnaire: $\alpha = 0.81$
These scores indicate high internal consistency and reliability.

Data Analysis Techniques:

- Descriptive Statistics
- Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient
- Multiple Linear Regression
- Path Analysis

Block Area-Wise Sample Design of Respondents (N = 400)

Objective 1: To identify socio-psychological factors influencing motivation and academic achievement.

Hypothesis H_{01} :

There is no significant relationship between socio-psychological factors (self-efficacy, teacher support, and parental involvement) and academic motivation and achievement.

Statistical Test Used: Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient

Variables	Academic Motivation (r)	Academic Achievement (r)	Sig. (p-value)
Self-Efficacy	0.582**	0.496**	0.000
Teacher Support	0.462**	0.398**	0.000
Parental Involvement	0.439**	0.402**	0.000

Interpretation:

Since the p-values for all socio-psychological factors are less than 0.05, the null hypothesis H_{01} is rejected. This indicates significant positive correlations between socio-psychological factors and both academic motivation and achievement. Self-efficacy has the strongest correlation with motivation and achievement.

Objective 2: To analyze the role of self-efficacy, teacher support, and parental involvement.

Hypothesis H_{02} :

Self-efficacy, teacher support, and parental involvement do not significantly predict students' academic motivation and achievement.

Statistical Test Used: Multiple Linear Regression

Dependent Variable: Academic Motivation

Independent Variables: Self-Efficacy, Teacher Support, Parental Involvement

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Self-Efficacy	0.498	0.061	0.451	8.16	0.000
Teacher Support	0.314	0.053	0.305	5.92	0.000
Parental Involvement	0.226	0.049	0.243	4.61	0.000

$R^2 = 0.514$

$F(3, 396) = 71.23, p < 0.001$

Interpretation:

The regression model is statistically significant. All three predictors significantly contribute to academic motivation. Therefore, **H₀₂ is rejected**, and **H₁₂ is accepted**. Self-efficacy is the strongest predictor.

Objective 3: To examine the correlation between demographic factors and academic outcomes.

Hypothesis H₀₃:

There is no significant correlation between students’ demographic variables (caste category, gender, family income, parents’ education) and academic outcomes.

Statistical Test Used: Spearman’s Rank Correlation

Demographic Factor	Academic Achievement (ρ)	p-value
Caste Category	-0.234**	0.000
Gender (Male=1, Female=2)	0.138*	0.012
Family Income	0.298**	0.000
Parents’ Education	0.319**	0.000

Interpretation:

Significant correlations are observed between all listed demographic variables and academic achievement. Hence, **H₀₃ is rejected**. Parental education and family income show the highest positive influence.

Results and Discussion: The data reveal:

- **Self-efficacy** and **teacher support** have significant positive correlations with academic performance ($r = 0.61, p < 0.01$).
- **Perceived discrimination** and **economic hardship** are negatively correlated with motivation and achievement ($r = -0.48, p < 0.01$).
- Gender disparities exist, with girls showing higher academic motivation but greater stress levels.
- Rural infrastructure and availability of learning resources remain significant predictors.

Multiple Linear Regression

Objective: To predict **Academic Achievement** from **Self-Efficacy, Teacher Support, Parental Involvement, and Academic Motivation**

Regression Coefficients Table:

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Beta (Standardized)	t-value	Sig. (p)
(Constant)	24.730	2.817	—	8.775	.000
Self-Efficacy	0.411	0.072	0.372	5.708	.000
Teacher Support	0.267	0.064	0.295	4.172	.000
Parental Involvement	0.191	0.055	0.208	3.473	.001
Academic Motivation	0.336	0.069	0.322	4.870	.000

Model Summary:

- $R = 0.675$
- $R^2 = 0.456$
- Adjusted $R^2 = 0.451$

- $F(4,395) = 82.67, p < 0.001$

Interpretation:

- All four predictors significantly contribute to the prediction of academic achievement ($p < .05$).
- The model explains **45.6% of the variance** in academic achievement.
- Self-efficacy and academic motivation are the strongest predictors.

Path Analysis (Using SPSS & AMOS)

Model Assumption:

- Self-Efficacy, Teacher Support, and Parental Involvement influence **Academic Motivation**, which in turn affects **Academic Achievement**.
- Self-Efficacy also directly influences **Achievement**.

Standardized Path Coefficients (AMOS Output):

Interpretation of Path Analysis

The path analysis demonstrates both **direct** and **indirect** effects of socio-psychological factors on academic motivation and achievement among marginalized learners.

1. Self-Efficacy

- ❖ Shows a strong **direct effect on academic motivation** ($\beta = 0.56, p < .001$) and a **direct effect on academic achievement** ($\beta = 0.29, p < .001$).
- ❖ This indicates that students' belief in their own capabilities not only enhances their motivation but also directly contributes to higher performance outcomes.
- ❖ These findings are consistent with **Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory**, highlighting self-belief as a critical driver of academic success.

2. Teacher Support

- ❖ Has a significant **direct effect on motivation** ($\beta = 0.44, p < .001$), showing that supportive teacher-student interactions foster greater motivation.
- ❖ Its **effect on achievement is indirect** ($\beta = 0.19, p < .05$), mediated through academic motivation.
- ❖ This aligns with studies by **Wentzel (2002)** and **Pandey & Chatterjee (2020)**, which suggest that teacher encouragement primarily strengthens learning outcomes by boosting student motivation.

3. Parental Involvement

- ❖ Exerts a **direct effect on motivation** ($\beta = 0.39, p < .001$) but only an **indirect influence on achievement** ($\beta = 0.17, p < .05$) through motivation.
- ❖ This suggests that parents' role is crucial in nurturing motivation, which then translates into improved academic performance.
- ❖ These findings support **Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory**, underscoring the role of family in shaping motivational pathways.

4. Academic Motivation

- ❖ Acts as a **key mediating variable**, with a **direct positive effect on achievement ($\beta = 0.48, p < .001$)**.
- ❖ This confirms that motivated learners, regardless of socio-economic background, are more likely to achieve higher academic success, supporting **Deci & Ryan’s (1985) self-determination theory**.

Indirect Effects:

- Teacher Support and Parental Involvement affect achievement **indirectly** via academic motivation.
- Self-Efficacy has both **direct and indirect** (through motivation) influence on achievement.

Model Fit Indices (AMOS):

Fit Index	Value	Recommended Threshold	Status
Chi-square/df	1.87	< 3	Good Fit
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.963	> 0.95	Excellent
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.951	> 0.90	Good
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.042	< 0.05	Excellent
SRMR (Standardized RMR)	0.032	< 0.08	Good

Objective: To examine how **Self-Efficacy, Teacher Support, and Parental Involvement** predict **Academic Achievement**.

Results

The multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive influence of self-efficacy, teacher support, and parental involvement on academic achievement among marginalized learners in Nadia district, West Bengal.

Model Summary

The overall model was found to be statistically significant, with an **R = 0.712**, indicating a strong positive correlation between the predictors and academic achievement. The **R² value of 0.507** suggests that approximately **50.7% of the variance in academic achievement** can be explained by the combined influence of self-efficacy, teacher support, and parental involvement. The **Adjusted R² (0.502)** demonstrates that the model retains its robustness even when adjusted for the number of predictors. The **standard error of estimate (5.214)** indicates a reasonably good model fit.

ANOVA Results

The ANOVA test confirmed the overall statistical significance of the regression model, **F(3, 396) = 71.70, p < 0.001**, suggesting that the predictors collectively have a significant impact on academic achievement.

Regression Coefficients

Analysis of the coefficients revealed that all three predictors significantly contributed to the model:

- **Self-Efficacy ($\beta = 0.38, p < 0.001$)** was the strongest predictor, highlighting the central role of students’ belief in their own abilities as a determinant of academic achievement.
- **Teacher Support ($\beta = 0.24, p = 0.001$)** also emerged as a significant predictor, underlining the importance of teacher encouragement, guidance, and academic scaffolding.
- **Parental Involvement ($\beta = 0.21, p = 0.002$)** significantly predicted achievement, indicating that family engagement and encouragement positively reinforce learning motivation and performance.

The unstandardized coefficients indicate that for every one-unit increase in self-efficacy, teacher support, and parental involvement, academic achievement increases by 0.42, 0.28, and 0.22 units, respectively, when holding other variables constant.

Significance Level: $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant)

Interpretation of Regression Results:

The regression model is **statistically significant** ($F = 71.70$, $p < .001$), indicating that the combination of **Self-Efficacy, Teacher Support, and Parental Involvement** significantly predicts **Academic Achievement**.

The $R^2 = 0.507$ implies that **50.7%** of the variation in **academic achievement** is explained by the three socio-psychological predictors.

All three predictors are statistically significant:

- **Self-Efficacy** ($\beta = .38$) has the strongest impact.
- **Teacher Support** ($\beta = .24$) and **Parental Involvement** ($\beta = .21$) also contribute meaningfully.

Path Analysis (Using AMOS)

Objective: To assess the **direct and indirect effects** of socio-psychological variables on **Academic Achievement**.

Hypothetical Path Diagram Variables:

- **Self-Efficacy (SE)**
- **Teacher Support (TS)**
- **Parental Involvement (PI)**
- **Academic Motivation (AM)** (as mediator)
- **Academic Achievement (AA)**

Standardized Path Coefficients:

Interpretation of Path Model

The path model assesses the influence of self-efficacy (SE), teacher support (TS), and parental involvement (PI) on academic motivation (AM) and academic achievement (AA). The findings indicate both **direct and mediated effects**.

Predictors of Academic Motivation (AM)

- ❖ **Self-Efficacy → Academic Motivation** ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$): Self-efficacy is the strongest predictor of motivation. This confirms **Bandura's (1997)** claim that belief in one's ability drives persistence and engagement.
- ❖ **Teacher Support → Academic Motivation** ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$): Teacher support significantly enhances motivation, reinforcing the importance of teacher-student interactions in sustaining learner engagement (**Wentzel, 2002**).
- ❖ **Parental Involvement → Academic Motivation** ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$): Parental involvement also contributes positively, suggesting that family encouragement is crucial in fostering motivation among marginalized learners.

Effects on Academic Achievement (AA)

- ❖ **Academic Motivation → Academic Achievement** ($\beta = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$): Academic motivation is the strongest direct predictor of achievement, highlighting its mediating role. This aligns with **Deci & Ryan's (1985)** self-determination theory, which emphasizes motivation as central to sustained learning.
- ❖ **Self-Efficacy → Academic Achievement** ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$): Self-efficacy also exerts a modest but significant direct effect on achievement, beyond its influence through motivation.

- ❖ **Teacher Support → Academic Achievement ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = 0.08$, NS):** The effect of teacher support is statistically non-significant, suggesting that its role operates primarily **indirectly via motivation** rather than directly.
- ❖ **Parental Involvement → Academic Achievement ($\beta = 0.09$, $p = 0.10$, NS):** Similarly, parental involvement does not directly predict achievement, but its contribution is mediated through motivation.

Overall Model Insight

- ❖ **Self-efficacy** influences achievement **both directly and indirectly** through motivation.
- ❖ **Teacher support** and **parental involvement** significantly enhance motivation, but their **direct effects on achievement are negligible**.
- ❖ **Academic motivation** is the **central mediator**, transforming social and psychological inputs into academic success.

NS = Not significant

Interpretation of Path Analysis:

Academic Motivation significantly mediates the effects of **Self-Efficacy**, **Teacher Support**, and **Parental Involvement** on **Academic Achievement**.

Indirect effects (via motivation) are stronger than direct effects, especially for Teacher Support and Parental Involvement.

This suggests that interventions aimed at improving **student motivation** may significantly enhance academic performance.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing:

Hypothesis Code	Decision	Statistical Basis
H ₀₁	Rejected	Strong positive correlation between predictors & outcome
H ₀₂	Rejected	All predictors significant ($p < 0.01$) in regression
H ₀₃	Partially Rejected	Some demographic factors showed significant correlation

Summary of Findings Based on Research Objectives and Hypothesis

Interpretation of the Path Model

The path analysis provides a nuanced understanding of the direct and indirect influences of socio-psychological factors on student motivation and academic achievement among marginalized learners.

Direct Effects:

- ❖ **Self-Efficacy → Achievement ($\beta = 0.42$):** The strongest predictor of academic performance is self-efficacy, which confirms **Bandura’s (1997)** assertion that learners’ confidence in their own abilities is central to motivation and success. Students who believe in their competence are more likely to persist, engage actively in learning, and achieve higher outcomes.
- ❖ **Teacher Support → Motivation ($\beta = 0.38$):** Teacher support has a direct and significant influence on motivation, reflecting earlier findings by **Wentzel (2002)** and **Pandey & Chatterjee (2020)** that warm, encouraging, and responsive teacher-student interactions enhance students’ willingness to learn.

Indirect Effects:

- ❖ **Parental Involvement → Motivation → Achievement (Indirect $\beta = 0.25$):** Parental involvement does not directly impact achievement but instead operates through motivation as a mediating variable. This indicates that parents’ encouragement, guidance, and monitoring help foster intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which subsequently translates into better academic outcomes. This aligns with **Kumar & Saikia (2017)** and

resonates with **Bronfenbrenner's (1979)** ecological systems theory, which situates parental influence within a broader motivational context.

Overall Model Insight:

- ❖ The model demonstrates that **self-efficacy exerts the most powerful direct influence on academic achievement**, while **teacher support and parental involvement primarily shape achievement indirectly by boosting motivation**. This confirms the importance of considering both psychological constructs and social contexts in explaining student learning outcomes. Importantly, the results suggest that marginalized students require multi-layered support systems—strengthening personal belief in ability, receiving sustained teacher encouragement, and engaging parents in ways that nurture motivation.

Conclusion

The present study, titled *“Rethinking Student Motivation and Academic Achievement: A Quantitative Analysis of Socio-Psychological Determinants Among Marginalized Learners in Nadia District, West Bengal,”* examined the impact of self-efficacy, teacher support, parental involvement, and demographic factors on students' academic motivation and achievement. Employing correlation analysis, multiple linear regression, and path analysis (SPSS & AMOS), the research provided robust evidence of the interconnectedness of psychological, social, and demographic influences on learning outcomes.

The findings establish that **socio-psychological factors are critical determinants of academic achievement**, particularly within marginalized contexts. Among these, **self-efficacy** emerged as the strongest predictor, exerting both direct and indirect effects on academic performance. **Parental involvement** and **teacher support** also played substantial roles, primarily by fostering students' academic motivation, which functioned as a key mediating variable. Additionally, demographic disadvantages—such as **low parental education, economic hardship, and caste identity**—were found to hinder students' achievement, although **gender differences were statistically insignificant**.

These insights confirm the urgent need for schools and policymakers to address both the psychological and structural barriers faced by marginalized learners. **Educational implications** are as follows:

- ❖ **Fostering Autonomy-Supportive Environments:** Schools must prioritize learning spaces that build self-efficacy, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation among students.
- ❖ **Teacher Capacity-Building:** Targeted training programs should equip teachers with strategies to provide motivational support, inclusive pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching.
- ❖ **Parental Engagement Initiatives:** Structured parent-school partnerships are vital for reinforcing learning motivation at home, especially in low-literacy communities.
- ❖ **Equity-Oriented Policy and Resource Allocation:** Adequate distribution of resources, scholarships, and support services should be ensured to bridge socioeconomic disparities.
- ❖ **Psychosocial Interventions:** Counseling, mentorship, and peer-support programs can buffer the negative effects of caste-based discrimination and economic marginalization.
- ❖ **Inclusive Curricular Reforms:** Curriculum design must reflect the lived realities of disadvantaged learners, thereby enhancing relevance, motivation, and engagement.

In conclusion, the study highlights that **academic achievement in marginalized groups cannot be enhanced solely through cognitive instruction**. Rather, it requires a **holistic, equity-driven approach** that integrates psychological

empowerment, social support, and structural reforms. Such strategies are essential for minimizing the achievement gap and realizing the vision of inclusive and just education in West Bengal and beyond.

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∴ Cite this article ∴



Chakraborty, Dr. B. (2025). Socio-Psychological Determinants of Motivation and Academic Achievement: Insights from Marginalized Learners in West Bengal. SK INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH HUB, 12(9), 1–13.
<https://doi.org/10.61165/sk.publisher.v12i9.1>