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**Socioeconomic and Educational Background and Educational Continuation Decision among the Secondary School Students:
A Study of Murshidabad District of West Bengal**

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Abstract:

The present study shows the relationship between socioeconomic and educational background and educational continuation decisions among the students specifically in Murshidabad District. In this study the researcher collected data from the 230 secondary school students in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. All the data are collect by interviewing with the students personally. The data is analyzed using percentage comparison method. The results of the present study show that there is positive relationship between socioeconomic status of the parents and educational continuation decisions of the secondary school students of Murshidabad district of West Bengal. Besides the data also shows that there are significant differences in educational continuation decisions of the students in respect to the variables such as gender and locality.

Key Words: Socioeconomic and Educational Background, Educational Continuation Decision, Secondary School Students

Introduction: Education is the bedrock of social and economic development. Education is the most powerful tool in the society. It is also the backbone of any society. Without education a society is collapsed. Education is very important for our lives. Without education people can't be high-developed machine, if looked at beyond its conventional boundaries, forms the very essence of all our actions. Education is a strong tool to change the standard of an individual. It brings the brightness in the life of a person. But education is influenced greatly by the family background of the students. Socioeconomic status of the parents has an important impact on the decisions of students for their educational continuation. The family background of the students becomes a strong obstacle in their further education. Research indicates that children from low-SES households and communities develop academic skills more slowly compared to children from higher SES groups. Initial academic skills are correlated with the home environment, where low literacy environments and chronic stress negatively affect a child's pre-academic skills. The school systems in low-SES communities are often under resourced, negatively affecting students'

academic progress. Inadequate education and increased dropout rates affect children's academic achievement, perpetuating the low-SES status of the community.

Need and Significance of the Study: There is great need and significance of this study. Education is viewed as the future maker not only of an individual or a community or a society but also of a country. Education can give a new shape to an individual. But attaining education for an individual is not a easy and simple thing. It depends on various things. Accessing education is very difficult for a student from a low socioeconomic background. They have to face many difficulties for the attainment of education. So their education is mostly dependent on their socioeconomic background. Up to a certain level of education the students can manage the expenditure which is needed for their education because it takes less money for their expenditure. But the plight of the students from low socioeconomic background starts when they need more and more money for their further education especially before they proceed for higher education. At this time the students cannot take the decisions for higher education by their own. They have to consider about their family background before they take decisions for their further education. So there is a positive relationship between socioeconomic background and educational continuation decisions among the students.

The Present Study: The study was planned to understand the relationship between socioeconomic status and educational continuation decisions of secondary school students. All the variables of their socioeconomic status were also discussed in details. In the following study the focus is given to the secondary school students of Murshidabad District of West Bengal.

Objectives of the study:

Main objectives

1. To find out the relationship between socioeconomic status and educational continuation decisions of students.

Specific objectives:

1. To draw out social, economic, educational and economic profile of the students.
2. To find out the differences between boys and girls in their educational continuation decisions, if any.
3. To find out the differences among the students of different religions in educational continuation decisions.

Review of related literature

Studies conducted abroad:

Akhtar, Zarina; Niazi, Hamid Khan (2011) in their study aimed to explore the effects of Socio-economic Status (SES) on learning achievement of students in Pakistan. The findings showed that upper class students are A and B grade achievers. The middle class students showed significant positive relationship with D grade.

Alisa (2010) conducted a study on the effect of family Background of the students on their education. He found that the gap in attainment between children from the poorest and

richest backgrounds grew particularly fast during the primary school years. By age eleven, only around three-quarters of children from the poorest fifth of families reached the expected level at Key Stage 2, compared with 97 per cent of children from the richest fifth.

Checchi D. & salvi A. (2010) conducted a research on parents' occupation and educational attainment. Their research is based on interviews taken from the high students in Ghana. Some negative correlation emerged with the probability of enrolment and low income jobs.

Patrice L. Engle and Maurin M. Black (2009) conducted a study on the effect of poverty on child development and educational outcomes. In this study he highlighted that poverty affects a child's development and educational outcomes beginning in the earliest years of life, both directly and indirectly through mediated, moderated, and transactional processes.

Studies conducted in India:

Farkhanda Ahmar and Dr. Ehtesham Anwar(2013) conducted a study on the role of socio economic status of the parents on academic achievement of higher secondary school students. This study examined the effects of gender and socio-economic status on academic of 102 males and 98 females in age range of 15 to 19 from five higher secondary schools of Lucknow city Uttar Pradesh (India). The result of this study showed the difference between high and low socio-economic status groups.

Taneja Sudesh (2012) conducted a study on parents' association in early childhood education. The study examines the association between parents' education level and parental engagement in their children's education among government schools in Haryana (India).

Barman, Subhash(2010) examined the impact of parental education, parental death, poverty, and socio-economic status on school attendance of children in India. A study of school children's attendance revealed that the educational attainment of the parents and wealth status are more important factors of children's school attendance as compared to other socio-economic factors. The author also recommends that literacy at the household level could be promoted to address child illiteracy in the country.

Hassan (2008) conducted a study on effect of parental social background on children's education. in a longitudinal study, found that there was a positive association between children's grades and their parental labour market. Stress and lack of social support to parents in poor families may negatively affect parental support for school success and intellectual development of their children.

Hypotheses of the Study:

1. There exists no significant relation between socioeconomic status and educational continuation decisions of higher secondary students of Murshidabad.
2. There exist no significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary students of Murshidabad in their educational continuation decisions.
3. There exist no significant differences among the students of urban area and rural area in their educational continuation decisions.

Method of the study: Normative survey shows what exists in the present. It is also used to describe and studies interprets the methods of studies. The population of this study is the secondary school students of Murshidabad district of West Bengal. The sample of this present study is 230 secondary school students of Murshidabad district of West Bengal. It comprises of 66 male students and 164 female students. In this present study the researcher has used simple random sampling technique. The researcher first identified all the higher secondary schools in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. To give equal chances to all the schools the researcher then used lottery method for sampling. By this lottery method, the researcher selected seven schools for this study. A socioeconomic and educational survey schedule and an interview schedule were used in collecting data. The data are analyzed using percentage comparison method. This percentage comparison method is made for each and every question. The frequency of the respondents is also presented in percentages. The researcher also used chi-square analysis for the analysis of the data to show the significance of the different variables in respect to the educational continuation decisions of secondary school students.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Item Wise Analysis

Respondents Based on Their Parents' Educational Qualification: The data shows that 13.64% male respondents' and 12.80% female respondents' parents are higher educated. 86.36% male respondents and 87.20% female respondents have said that their parents could not get higher education. The reasons for less number of educated parents are that most of the parents of the respondents had to face economic problems in their times. They did not get proper support from their parents for education. Besides their parents were mostly illiterate and so they were not aware about the importance of education.

Testing of Hypotheses:

Hypotheses: There exist no significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary students of Murshidabad in their educational continuation decisions.

Chi-Square Tests

Pearson Chi-Square	Category	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
	Gender	.029	1	.866	.509

The above table shows that the calculated value is .029 which is less than the table value (3.841) at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. So there exist no significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary students of Murshidabad in their educational continuation decisions.

Hypotheses: There exist no significant differences among the students of urban area and rural area in their educational continuation decisions.

Chi-Square Tests

Pearson Chi-Square	Category	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
	Locality	.085	1	.770	.617

The above table shows that the calculated value is .085 which is less than the table value (3.841) at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. So there exist no significant differences among the students of urban area and rural area in their educational continuation decisions.

Respondents Based on Their Feeling of Obstacle for Their Further Education: The data says that 56.06% male respondents feel many obstacles for their further education. This problem is more among the female respondents than the male respondents. 71% female respondents have problems for the continuation of their higher education. They have said that the economic condition of their parents is not so sound to support them fully for their further education. So they may have to face many difficulties in their further study. 70.44% respondents who belong to Muslim community feel also same problems but in case of Hindu it is 57.75%. It is only due to that the economic condition of Muslims are more pathetic than the Hindus. Among the female respondents this problems are more than male respondents because of their negligence towards their female children.

Testing of Hypotheses:

Hypotheses: There exist no significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary students of Murshidabad in their educational continuation decisions.

Chi-Square Tests

Pearson Chi-Square	Category	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
	Gender	4.548	1	.033	.025

The above table shows that the calculated value is 4.548 which is more than the table value (3.841) at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. So there exist significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary students of Murshidabad in their educational continuation decisions.

Hypotheses: There exist no significant differences among the students of urban area and rural area in their educational continuation decisions.

Chi-Square Tests

Pearson Chi-Square	Category	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
	Locality	.200	1	.655	.445

The above table shows that the calculated value is .200 which is less than the table value (3.841) at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. So there exist

no significant differences among the students of urban area and rural area in their educational continuation decisions.

Respondents Based on Availability of Higher Education Institution in Their Area: The data shows that 25.76% male respondents and 45.12% female respondents have said that there are higher education institutions in their areas. But 74.24% male respondents say that there is no facility of higher education institution in their areas. This problem of institution for higher education is more pathetic among the Hindus. 92.96% respondents say that they have no institutions for higher education in their locality. According to the most of the respondents the problem of higher education institution is due to the negligence of administrative people, policy makers and ministers. They do not give much attention for the development of higher education especially in rural areas. The data proves it clearly that 90% urban respondents have said that they have higher education institution in their areas.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypotheses: There exists no significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary students of Murshidabad in their educational continuation decisions.

Chi-Square Tests

Pearson Chi-Square	Category	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
	Gender	7.380	1	.007	.005

The above table shows that the calculated value is 7.380 which is more than the table value (6.635) at 0.01 level of significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. So there exists significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary students of Murshidabad in their educational continuation decisions.

Hypotheses: There exist no significant differences among the students of urban area and rural area in their educational continuation decisions.

Chi-Square Tests

Pearson Chi-Square	Category	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
	Locality	11.122	1	.001	.001

The above table shows that the calculated value is 11.122 which is more than the table value (6.635) at 0.01 level of significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. So there exist significant differences among the students of urban area and rural area in their educational continuation decisions.

Respondents Based on Their Opinion about the Impact of Early Marriage in the Way of Higher Education: The study shows that all the 100% respondents believe that child marriage is one of the crucial evils in the way of higher education. According to the respondents child marriage is the important disease in the society. If the child is married in early age, he or she has too busy in family life. For this child marriage the girls have to face

more problems because after marriage the girls have to go laws house and they have to work and maintain the family in laws house.

Respondents Based on Their Opinion about the Continuity of Higher Study after Getting Married: The data shows that 83.33% male respondents have high aspiration for higher education and they cannot stop education after marriage also. This aspiration of continuing further education is stronger among the female respondents than male respondents. Their percentage is 93.90%. They have said that in the society they are neglected for higher education, even in their family also. So they want to change this trend and increase girls’ education. They have also said that only girls can empower their family as well as their society. In urban areas 100% respondents have strong motivation to continue education after getting marriage also. Except urban areas less than 10% respondents believe that they have to leave education after getting married because they know that they have to support to their family after getting married.

Testing of Hypotheses:

Hypotheses: There exists no significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary students of Murshidabad in their educational continuation decisions.

Chi-Square Tests

Pearson Chi-Square	Category	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
	Gender	6.336	1	.012	.014

The above table shows that the calculated value is 6.336 which is more than the table value (3.841) at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. So there exists significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary students of Murshidabad in their educational continuation decisions.

Hypotheses: There exist no significant differences among the students of urban area and rural area in their educational continuation decisions.

Chi-Square Tests

Pearson Chi-Square	Category	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
	Locality	1.050	1	.305	.376

The above table shows that the calculated value is 1.050 which is less than the table value (3.841) at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. So there exist no significant differences among the students of urban area and rural area in their educational continuation decisions.

5.6. Findings of the Study:

1. There is a positive relationship between the socioeconomic status and educational continuation of secondary school students of Murshidabad district of West Bengal.

2. There exists significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary students of Murshidabad in their feelings of obstacle for further education.
3. There exist significant differences among the students of different religions in their feelings of obstacle for further education.
4. There exist significant differences among the students of different religions in their opinion about presence of higher educated persons in their areas.
5. There exists significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary students of Murshidabad in their opinion about the continuity of higher study after getting marriage.

Educational Implications:

1. As the secondary education is a very crucial stage in the life of a student for shaping his career and future life, due importance should be given to them in taking decisions for higher education.
2. The government, educationists and policy makers should consider the dearth of higher education institutions and provide adequate institutions so that the students can access higher education in their easy reach.
3. The parents of the students should be very supportive and cooperative when the students have to take decisions for higher study.
4. The parents should not give marriage to their children in early age because due to early marriage their children's dream of higher study may be stopped.
5. The parents should know how the higher education is importance for their children's life as well as their family.

Conclusion: In the present study we came to know that there is a positive relationship between social economic and educational background and educational continuation decisions of the secondary school students. The study has also shown that the students' fate can be changed by the parents' social economic and educational background. The study has given a positive signal to the government and policy makers for the development of higher education in our country. The present study will be a very helpful for the further study.

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