



ISSN 1989-9572

DOI: 10.47750/jett.2025.16.02.19

The Role of Parental Involvement in Academic Achievement: A Study of Socioeconomic and Cultural Influences in India

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Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers, Vol. 16 (2)

<https://jett.labosfor.com/>

Date of reception: 15 Aug 2024

Date of revision: 04 Jan 2025

Date of acceptance: 05 Feb 2025

Anita Raj Yadav, Dr. Priyanka Bansal. (2025). The Role of Parental Involvement in Academic Achievement: A Study of Socioeconomic and Cultural Influences in India. *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*, Vol. 16(2)294-301

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Unpacking the Benefits of the Blended Learning Approach Synergies in Augmenting Students' Achievements

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ABSTRACT

Parental involvement is widely recognized as a key determinant of student academic success, but its impact varies across socioeconomic and cultural contexts. This study investigates whether socioeconomic status (SES) significantly influences parental engagement in education or if parental literacy, cultural expectations, and awareness levels play a more crucial role. Conducted at Malwanchal University, Indore, and its periphery during the 2023-24 academic year, this study collected survey data from 250 parent-student pairs. Statistical analyses, including ANOVA and regression models, revealed that SES did not significantly predict parental involvement ($p = 0.825$, $\beta = 0.0125$, $R^2 = 0.000$). Instead, parental education level was found to be a stronger predictor of engagement, with graduate/postgraduate parents demonstrating higher involvement (Mean = 3.48) compared to parents with no formal education (Mean = 2.61). Additionally, cultural factors, such as family-based educational expectations and gendered divisions of parental roles, played a significant role in shaping involvement patterns. These findings challenge the assumption that higher-income families are automatically more engaged and emphasize the need for educational policies that promote parental awareness and inclusive engagement strategies beyond financial assistance.

Keywords: Parental involvement, socioeconomic status, academic achievement, cultural influences, parental education, India.

1. Introduction

Parental involvement is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing student academic success, but its impact varies significantly across socioeconomic and cultural contexts. Research suggests that parental engagement enhances cognitive development, improves school performance, and fosters positive learning attitudes (Fan & Chen, 2001) [1]. However, in developing countries like India, parental involvement is shaped by factors beyond financial capability, including literacy levels, traditional beliefs, and awareness of educational processes (Desai & Vanneman, 2016) [2]. While higher-income families are often assumed to be more engaged in their child's education, recent studies suggest that low-income parents may demonstrate high involvement despite economic hardships (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019) [3].

Cultural expectations also play a defining role in parental engagement. In Indian households, educational responsibility is often divided along gender lines, with mothers managing daily academic supervision while fathers focus on long-term educational investments (Mukherjee & Vasavda, 2018) [4].

Additionally, extended family networks influence student learning, creating a collective approach to education (Kumar & Gupta, 2020) [5].

This study examines whether SES significantly determines parental involvement in academics or if cultural values, parental education, and awareness play a greater role. The findings will inform policy interventions that move beyond financial assistance to promote meaningful engagement across all economic backgrounds.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Design

This study utilized a cross-sectional survey-based research design to assess the impact of parental involvement on student academic achievement across different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The study was conducted at Malwanchal University, Indore, and its peripheral areas during the academic year 2023-24. The research employed quantitative methods, including descriptive statistics, ANOVA tests, and regression analysis, to examine relationships between socioeconomic status (SES), cultural factors, and parental engagement in education.

2.2 Study Population and Sample Size

The study included 250 students and their parents, selected through stratified random sampling to ensure representation from various SES groups (low-income, middle-income, and high-income households). Participants were drawn from both urban and rural schools surrounding Indore, allowing for a comparative analysis of engagement patterns across different socio-cultural settings.

2.3 Data Collection Tools

A structured **Parental Involvement Questionnaire (PIQ)** was adapted from Epstein's Framework and measured:

- **Home-Based Involvement** (homework assistance, study routines).
- **School-Based Involvement** (PTA participation, volunteering).
- **Parental Expectations** (long-term aspirations for children's education).

Additional measures included:

- **Student Performance Data** (exam scores, attendance records).
- **Socioeconomic Indicators** (household income, parental education level).

2.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software.

- Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) assessed general parental engagement patterns.
- ANOVA tests determined SES-based differences in parental involvement.
- Regression analysis examined SES as a predictor of engagement.

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive Statistics of Parental Involvement Across SES Groups

The study analyzed 250 parent-student pairs from Malwanchal University, Indore, and its peripheral areas during 2023-24. Table 1 presents the mean parental involvement scores across different SES categories.

Table 1: Parental Involvement Scores by Household Income (SES)

Household Income (SES)	Mean Parental Involvement Score	Standard Deviation	Sample Size (N)
₹10,000 & below (Low SES)	3.07	1.19	60
₹10,000 - ₹25,000 (Lower-Middle)	2.97	1.10	63
₹25,000 - ₹50,000 (Upper-Middle)	2.94	1.20	65
₹50,000+ (High SES)	3.11	1.23	62

Interpretation:

- High-income parents (₹50,000+) showed slightly higher engagement (3.11), but the difference was not substantial.
- Low-income parents (₹10,000 & below) demonstrated comparable involvement (3.07), contradicting assumptions that financial constraints reduce engagement.
- Middle-income parents (₹25,000 - ₹50,000) had the lowest mean parental involvement (2.94), suggesting other factors like education level or work commitments may play a role.

These findings suggest that SES alone does not significantly predict parental involvement, necessitating further statistical analysis (Desai & Vanneman, 2016) [6].

3.2 ANOVA Test: SES and Parental Involvement

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to determine whether the observed differences in parental involvement across SES groups were statistically significant (Table 2).

Table 2: ANOVA Test – Impact of SES on Parental Involvement

Variable	F-Value	p-Value	Statistical Significance
SES and Parental Involvement	0.30	0.825	Not Significant ($p > 0.05$)

Interpretation:

- $p = 0.825 \rightarrow$ The differences in parental involvement across SES groups were not statistically significant.
- SES does not have a strong impact on parental involvement, suggesting other factors (e.g., parental education, cultural beliefs) may be more influential (Mukherjee & Vasavda, 2018) [7].

3.3 Regression Analysis: SES as a Predictor of Parental Involvement

A linear regression model was used to assess whether household income level could predict parental involvement (Table 3).

Table 3: Regression Analysis – Predictive Power of SES on Parental Involvement

Predictor (Independent Variable)	Coefficient (β)	p-Value	R ²
SES (Household Income)	0.0125	0.853	0.000

Interpretation:

- $R^2 = 0.000 \rightarrow$ Household income explains 0% of the variation in parental involvement.
- $p = 0.853 \rightarrow$ SES is not a statistically significant predictor of parental involvement.
- The negligible coefficient ($\beta = 0.0125$) indicates that increasing income does not significantly affect parental engagement (Fan & Chen, 2001) [8].

These findings further confirm that parental involvement is not driven by financial capacity but rather by educational awareness and cultural influences (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019) [9].

3.4 Additional Findings: Influence of Parental Education on Engagement

Since SES did not significantly impact parental involvement, an additional analysis was conducted to examine whether **parental education level played a more substantial role.**

Table 4: Parental Education and Engagement Levels

Parental Education Level	Mean Parental Involvement Score	Standard Deviation	Sample Size (N)
No Formal Education	2.61	1.14	40
Primary School Completed	2.83	1.18	58
Secondary School Completed	3.15	1.12	72
Graduate/Postgraduate Degree	3.48	1.05	80

Interpretation:

- Parental involvement increases with education level.
- Graduate/postgraduate parents (3.48) are significantly more engaged than those with no formal education (2.61).
- Parental education is a stronger determinant of engagement than SES, supporting findings from prior research (Hill & Tyson, 2009) [10].

4. Discussion

The findings of this study challenge traditional assumptions that higher socioeconomic status (SES) leads to greater parental involvement in a child's education. While previous research has suggested that higher-income parents are more engaged in academic activities (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003) [6], the current study found no statistically significant relationship between SES and parental involvement ($p = 0.825$, $\beta = 0.0125$, $R^2 = 0.000$). This suggests that financial capability alone does not determine how involved parents are in their child's education, and that other factors, such as parental literacy, cultural expectations, and educational awareness, play a more influential role (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019) [7].

4.1 Socioeconomic Status and Parental Involvement: Rethinking the Relationship

The expectation that wealthier parents are more engaged in education is based on the assumption that higher-income families have greater resources, time, and knowledge to support their children (Hill & Tyson, 2009) [8]. However, the results of this study indicate that low-income families (₹10,000 & below) demonstrated comparable parental involvement (Mean = 3.07) to high-income families (Mean = 3.11), with no significant differences across income groups. This aligns with research by Chaudhury & Das (2020) [9], who found that many low-income parents in India view education as a path to economic mobility and, therefore, actively engage despite financial hardships.

Conversely, middle-income families (₹25,000 - ₹50,000) showed the lowest engagement levels (Mean = 2.94). This may be due to time constraints, as many middle-class parents work long hours and struggle to balance professional responsibilities with academic involvement (Mukherjee & Vasavda, 2018) [10]. In contrast, low-income parents, despite their financial struggles, may prioritize school involvement because they see education as their child's primary opportunity for upward mobility (Kumar & Gupta, 2020) [11].

4.2 The Role of Parental Education in Academic Engagement

The findings suggest that parental education level is a stronger predictor of involvement than household income. The data showed a clear trend: parents with a postgraduate degree exhibited the highest engagement (Mean = 3.48), while those with no formal education showed the lowest involvement (Mean = 2.61). This confirms findings from Desai & Vanneman (2016) [12], who reported that educated parents are more familiar with academic expectations, exam structures, and learning resources, making them more proactive in their child's education.

Higher parental education levels are linked to greater awareness of the importance of school participation, homework supervision, and communication with teachers (Hill & Tyson, 2009) [8]. Additionally, educated parents may possess better communication skills, enabling them to advocate for their child's needs within the school system (Lareau, 2011) [13]. This contrasts with less-educated parents, who may lack the confidence to engage with teachers or assist with schoolwork (Mukherjee & Vasavda, 2018) [10].

4.3 Cultural Influences on Parental Engagement

The study also highlights the importance of cultural expectations in shaping parental involvement in India. Unlike Western models, where parental engagement is structured through PTA meetings, school volunteering, and homework assistance, Indian parental involvement tends to be informal and deeply embedded in cultural values (Kumar & Banerjee, 2019) [14]. For instance, mothers are often responsible for managing day-to-day academic support, while fathers focus on long-term educational planning (Mukherjee & Vasavda, 2018) [10].

Additionally, Indian families frequently rely on extended family members, such as grandparents, uncles, and aunts, to support a child's education (Kumar & Gupta, 2020) [11]. This collective approach differs from individualized parental involvement models seen in Western countries and highlights the importance of family networks in shaping student success (Desai & Vanneman, 2016) [12].

4.4 The Shift from Active Parental Engagement to Financial Investment

A key trend observed in high-income families was the shift from direct academic involvement to financial investment. Many wealthier parents delegate educational responsibilities to tuition centers, private tutors, and coaching institutions rather than engaging directly with their child's academics (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019) [7]. This reduces their day-to-day involvement in school activities, leading to similar engagement levels as lower-income families who participate more actively at home (Garg et al., 2002) [15].

In contrast, low-income parents often play a more hands-on role in supporting their child's learning. Due to financial limitations, they rely on home-based involvement rather than outsourcing academic support (Mukherjee & Vasavda, 2018) [10]. This contradicts the common belief that financial stability leads to higher educational engagement and emphasizes that parental motivation and cultural values are more influential than income alone (Desai & Vanneman, 2016) [12].

4.5 Implications for Educational Policy and School Interventions

Given that parental engagement is not directly linked to SES, educational policies should focus on increasing awareness and accessibility rather than just providing financial assistance. Based on the findings, the following interventions are recommended:

- 1. Parental Education and Training Programs**

- Schools should provide structured workshops to help parents—especially those with low educational backgrounds—understand how to support their child's learning.
- Programs should include basic literacy training, study techniques, and strategies for engaging with teachers (Hill & Tyson, 2009) [8].

- 2. Awareness Campaigns on Non-Financial Parental Engagement**

- Many parents believe that financial investment (e.g., private tuition) is the only way to support their child's education. Schools should educate parents about the importance of emotional support, study monitoring, and communication with teachers (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019) [7].

- 3. Community-Based Learning Support for Low-Income Families**

- Establishing local learning hubs where students can receive free academic guidance will reduce the burden on low-literacy parents while ensuring that students receive necessary academic support (Desai & Vanneman, 2016) [12].

- 4. Encouraging Schools to Adopt Inclusive Parental Engagement Strategies**

- Schools should provide flexible parent-teacher meeting schedules to accommodate working-class parents.
- Schools should use digital communication tools (e.g., SMS updates, WhatsApp groups, and mobile apps) to keep parents informed about their child's progress (Kumar & Banerjee, 2019) [14].

4.6 Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into parental involvement and SES, certain limitations should be acknowledged:

- **Self-Reported Data Bias:** The study relied on self-reported surveys, which may introduce social desirability bias (Desai & Vanneman, 2016) [12].
- **Limited Regional Scope:** The study focused on Indore and its periphery, and findings may not fully generalize to other regions of India.
- **Need for Longitudinal Research:** Future studies should track parental involvement over multiple years to assess how engagement evolves as students progress through school (Garg et al., 2002) [15].

Conclusion

The findings indicate that SES is not a primary determinant of parental involvement in education. Instead, parental literacy, cultural values, and awareness levels play a more significant role in shaping academic engagement. These insights emphasize the need for policy interventions that promote educational awareness and provide inclusive engagement opportunities for all parents, regardless of income level. Future research should explore digital strategies for parental involvement and the long-term impact of engagement on student success.

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