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A Comparative Study on Level of Educational Aspiration of Secondary School Students of Baripada Municipality

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Abstract

Educational aspiration is a key psychological factor influencing students' academic motivation, future goals, and personal development. This study investigates and compares the levels of educational aspiration among Class IX and X students under two educational boards- CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) and BSE (Board of Secondary Education), Odisha. It also explores gender-based differences in aspiration within each board. The objectives were: (1) to compare educational aspirations between CBSE and BSE students, (2) to examine gender differences among BSE students, and (3) to examine gender differences among CBSE students. Using a descriptive survey method, the study involved 180 students (90 from each board, with equal representation of male and female students) selected through stratified random sampling. The "Level of Educational Aspiration Test" by Dr. Yashmin

Ghani Khan was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent sample t-tests. The findings revealed a significant difference in educational aspiration between the two boards. CBSE students had higher mean scores ($M = 23.71$) compared to BSE students ($M = 22.62$), leading to the rejection of the first null hypothesis. Within the BSE group, female students scored slightly higher ($M = 24.20$) than males ($M = 23.22$), though not significantly, thus retaining the second hypothesis. In contrast, CBSE male students scored significantly higher ($M = 23.16$) than females ($M = 22.09$), resulting in the rejection of the third hypothesis. The study, limited to Baripada Municipality, underscores the influence of board affiliation and gender on student aspirations and recommends targeted interventions, especially for BSE students and CBSE females.

Keywords: Educational Aspiration, Secondary School Student

Introduction

Education is the transformative journey that nurtures knowledge, values, and vision enabling individuals to rise above ignorance, challenge injustice, and build a compassionate, inclusive, and sustainable world. It not only cultivates intellectual growth and fosters moral development, but also prepares individuals to become competent, responsible citizens capable of navigating the complexities of contemporary society. In an increasingly complex and knowledge centric global landscape, the role of education transcends mere academic instruction; it emerges as a critical instrument for individual empowerment, self-actualization, and upward social mobility. Central to this transformative role of education is the psychological construct of educational aspiration, which significantly shapes students' academic motivation and long-term life trajectories. Educational aspiration refers to the academic goals and future oriented ambitions that students set for themselves, serving as a critical determinant of their motivation, decision-making, and educational engagement. Family background, parental involvement, school environment, peer networks, and broader societal expectations collectively shape students' educational goals (Gutman & Schoon, 2018) ^[9]. Recent studies highlight that students from underprivileged backgrounds often face systemic barriers, limiting their aspirations and academic achievements (Gottfried *et al.*, 2022) ^[8]. Educational aspiration, therefore, is not only a predictor of student success but also a critical factor in addressing global educational disparities (Khattab *et al.*, 2022) ^[10]. Secondary education represents a formative phase wherein students begin to concretize their academic goals and contemplate future career possibilities. The educational ecosystem of Odisha is primarily influenced by three distinct boards of education: the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) and

the Board of Secondary Education (BSE). At this juncture, students in Classes IX and X are required to make critical decisions that shape their academic trajectories. This study conducts a comparative analysis of the educational aspirations of secondary school students studying under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha, within the Baripada Municipality area.

Significance of Educational Aspiration

Educational aspiration serves as a critical indicator of students' academic motivation and future orientation, influenced by an interplay of socio-economic background, familial support, and institutional factors (Parsons & Schoon, 2021) ^[13]. The secondary school stage is particularly pivotal, as it marks the period when students begin to formulate concrete academic and career goals. During this formative phase, aspirations are shaped by a range of determinants, including parental education, peer influence, and the quality of the school environment (Khattab, 2022) ^[10]. Existing literature consistently highlights disparities in educational aspirations across gender, socio-economic status, and geographical location, pointing to structural inequalities that influence students' outlooks and opportunities. Despite the growing body of research on educational aspirations, there remains a significant gap in localized studies, particularly within the socio-cultural context of Baripada a region where unique economic, cultural, and educational conditions may distinctly shape students' aspirations. The present study seeks to address this gap by examining and comparing the educational aspirations of secondary school students enrolled under two different educational boards in Baripada. By focusing on Baripada, this study provides region-specific insights that can inform local educational policies and interventions. The findings are expected to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of students' academic ambitions and to support the development of targeted strategies aimed at fostering higher educational aspirations among adolescents in similar socio-cultural settings.

Statement of the Problem

The problem for the present study is stated as, “A Comparative Study on Level of Educational Aspiration of Secondary School Students of Baripada Municipality.”

Operational Definitions

Educational Aspiration: In this study, educational aspiration refers to the level of academic goals and future educational ambitions expressed by secondary school students of Baripada Municipality. It is measured using a standardized scale questionnaire assessing students' desired level of education, career expectations, and factors influencing their aspirations.

Level of Educational Aspiration: The level of educational aspiration denotes the extent to which students aspire to pursue higher education. It is categorized into low, moderate, and high levels based on their responses to the survey tool used in the study. The level of educational aspiration indicates the degree to which students aspire to attain higher education.

Secondary School Students: Secondary school students, for the purpose of this study, refer to boys and girls studying

in classes IX and X in government, private, and aided schools within Baripada Municipality.

Comparative Study: A comparative study in this context means an analysis of differences and similarities in the level of educational aspiration among students based on various demographic factors such as gender, socio-economic background, type of school, and parental education.

Baripada Municipality: Baripada Municipality refers to the specific geographic area within Mayurbhanj district, Odisha, where the study is conducted. It includes all the recognized secondary schools functioning within its jurisdiction.

Review of Related Literature

Chauhan, *et al.*, (2024) ^[4] investigated on ‘Comparative Study on Level of Aspiration for Secondary School Students in terms of Nuclear and Joint Families’. The findings concluded that students from joint families exhibited significantly higher aspiration levels compared to their counterparts from nuclear families. This suggests that family structure significantly influences students' aspirations, highlighting the importance of a supportive family environment in nurturing and fostering students' future career goals.

Das and Yadav (2024) ^[6] conducted study on ‘Secondary School Students' Educational Aspirations: The Impact of the School Environment and Parental Encouragement’. The study found a strong positive correlation between educational aspirations and both the school environment and parental encouragement. Parental encouragement and the school environment were identified as significant predictors of educational aspiration, accounting for 15.1 percent of the variance.

Manger and Chettri (2024) ^[12] organized study on ‘Educational Aspiration of Secondary School Students of Namchi District, Sikkim’. The study reported no significant difference in educational aspirations based on gender or locality, indicating that boys and girls from both rural and urban areas shared similar levels of aspiration. A significant difference was observed between students from private and government schools, with private school students showing higher levels of educational aspiration compared to their government school counterparts.

Bashir and Peerzada (2023) ^[2] conducted study on ‘A Study on Educational Aspirations of Senior Secondary School Students’. The study indicates that there is no significant difference in educational aspirations based on the students' subject streams or residential backgrounds. The research highlights the influence of gender on educational goals while emphasizing the uniformity of aspirations across different academic disciplines and living environments.

Gantait and Baxi (2023) ^[7] organized study on ‘Educational Aspiration and Socio-Economic Status of Secondary School Students’. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between students' socio-economic status and their educational aspirations. It was observed that students from higher socio-economic backgrounds demonstrated higher levels of educational aspiration, while those from lower socio-economic backgrounds exhibited moderate to low aspirations.

Alibraheim and Taifour (2023) ^[1] conducted study on ‘The Relationship between Mothers' Educational Levels and their Children's Academic Performance’. The findings revealed that there is no significant relationship between mothers'

educational levels and their children's academic performance. This suggests that mothers' education does not necessarily predict or influence their children's scholastic achievements.

Schörner and Bittmann (2023) ^[14] made a study on 'Children's aspirations, their perceptions of parental aspirations, and parents' factual aspirations- gaining insights into a complex world of interdependencies'. The study revealed that both parents and children mutually influence each other's aspirations over time. Additionally, it was found that children's aspirations are shaped not only by parents' actual aspirations but also by how children perceive those aspirations.

Chen, et al., (2023) ^[5] organized study on 'The influence of individual, peer, and family factors on the educational aspirations of adolescents in rural China'. The study highlights the critical role of individual factors as mediators between contextual influences and aspirations, suggesting that interventions to boost aspirations among rural Chinese youth should address multiple domains of influence.

Becker, et al., (2023) ^[3] investigated on 'Are They Still Aiming High? The Development of Educational Aspirations of Lower Secondary School Students with Immigrant Backgrounds in Germany'. The findings revealed a positive association between students' school performance and their aspirations, with the strength of this relationship increasing over time.

Leonard, et al., (2022) ^[11] organized study on 'The Influence of Parental Background on the Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Ankpa LGA of Kogi State'. The findings revealed that parental socioeconomic status, marital class, income level, family size, and parental education level significantly influenced students' academic performance.

Delimitations of the Study:

1. The study is restricted to secondary schools located within the jurisdiction of Baripada Municipality, thereby excluding students from rural and semi-urban areas outside the municipality.
2. The study covers government and private secondary schools within Baripada Municipality, selecting six schools (3 CBSE and 3 BSE) for data collection from secondary-level students. Residential, special education, and alternative institutions (open schooling, vocational centers) are excluded.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To compare the educational aspiration of secondary level students of CBSE Board and BSE Board.
2. To compare the educational aspiration of male and female students of BSE Board.
3. To compare the educational aspiration of male and female students of CBSE Board.

Hypotheses of the Study:

1. H_01 : There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration of CBSE and BSE Board students.
2. H_02 : There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration of male and female students of BSE Board.

3. H_03 : There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration of male and female students of CBSE Board.

Methodology

Population

The study considers only secondary school students (Class IX and X) enrolled in government and private schools within Baripada Municipality. Other educational levels such as primary, higher secondary, or college students are not included.

Sampling

In order to collect data for the study, a total of 180 secondary school students from Baripada Municipality were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. This method was employed to ensure objectivity and minimize selection bias. The sample was drawn from six secondary schools- three affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and three affiliated with the Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha. From each school, thirty students were selected, maintaining an equal proportion of male and female participants. This balanced representation across gender and school board facilitated a meaningful comparative analysis of the educational aspirations of students within the two educational systems operating in the municipality.

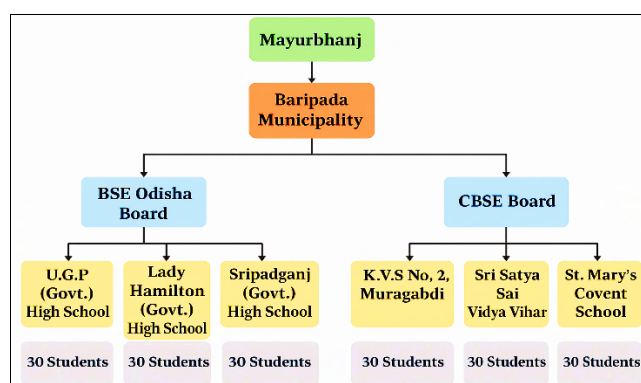


Fig 1.1: Sample distribution of Boards and Schools in Baripada Municipality

Tools of the study:

The researcher has used the 'Level of Educational Aspiration Test' developed by Dr. Yasmin Ghani Khan in 2009.

Statistical Techniques:

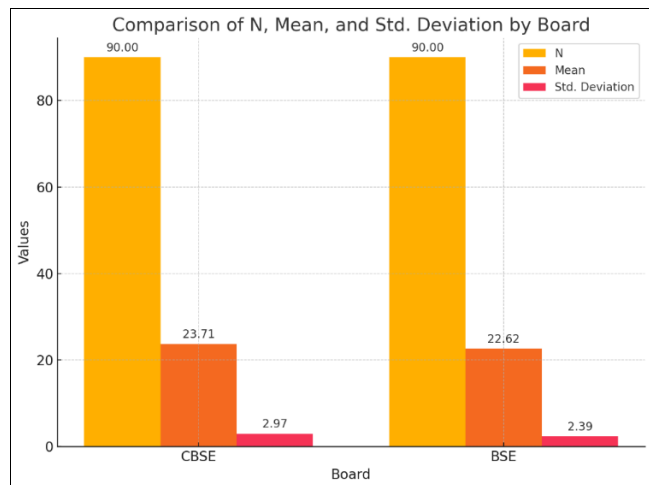
The scores were analysed step by step using the right statistical techniques. For this purpose, Mean, Standard Deviation, t- test was used. The results obtained were interpreted and discussed in relation to the underlying problem and contributing factors, in order to derive meaningful insights.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

H_01 : There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration of CBSE and BSE Board students.

Table 1: Level of educational aspiration between CBSE Board and BSE Board

Board	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t value	Significance
Educational Aspiration Scores	CBSE 90	23.71	2.973	178.000	2.710	.007**
	BSE 90	22.62	2.387			

**Graph 1:** Comparison of Educational Aspiration data with respect to Board

Interpretation

The findings reveal that CBSE students ($M = 23.71$) scored significantly higher in educational aspiration than BSE students ($M = 22.62$). The t-test result ($t = 2.710$, $p = .007$) confirms a meaningful difference. This suggests that the educational board influences aspiration levels, possibly due to curriculum quality and academic environment.

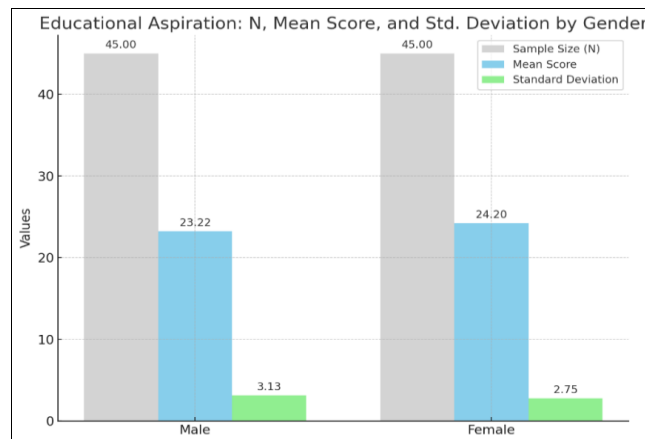
Result

Since the p-value (.007) is below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. It indicates a significant disparity in aspiration between CBSE and BSE students. The result implies that institutional factors like exposure, guidance, and support systems may shape students' future academic goals and motivational outlook differently.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration of male and female students of BSE Board

Table 2: Level of educational aspiration between male and female of BSE Board

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t value	Significance
Educational Aspiration Scores	Male 45	23.22	3.133	88.000	-1.573	.119*
	Female 45	24.20	2.752			

**Graph 2:** Educational Aspiration Differences Between Male and Female Students in the BSE Board

Interpretation

The analysis reveals that female students ($M = 24.20$, $SD = 2.752$) showed slightly higher educational aspiration scores than male students ($M = 23.22$, $SD = 3.133$). However, the computed t-value of -1.573 and p-value of 0.119 suggest this difference is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

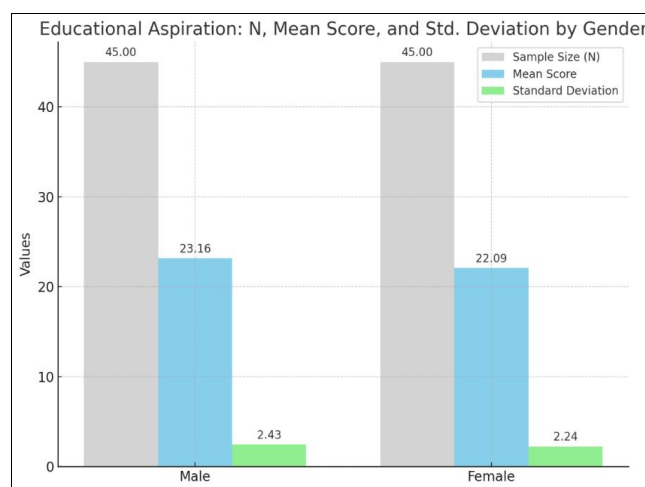
Result

As the p-value exceeds the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis stating no significant gender-based difference in educational aspiration among BSE Board students is retained. Therefore, it can be concluded that both male and female students exhibit similar levels of educational aspiration, with no meaningful statistical difference observed between them.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration of male and female students of CBSE Board.

Table 3: Level of educational aspiration between male and female of CBSE Board

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t value	Significance
Educational Aspiration Scores	Male 45	23.16	2.430	88.000	2.163	.033*
	Female 45	22.09	2.244			

**Graph 3:** Comparison of Educational Aspiration of Gender with respect to CBSE Board

Interpretation

The mean score for male CBSE students ($M = 23.16$, $SD = 2.430$) is higher than that of female students ($M = 22.09$, $SD = 2.244$). The difference, though modest, suggests that male students may receive more encouragement or face different societal expectations influencing their educational aspirations.

Result

An independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in educational aspiration scores between male and female CBSE students ($t = 2.163$, $p = 0.033$). As the p-value is below 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that gender significantly affects educational aspirations among CBSE students.

Findings:

Major findings of this study are;

1. A statistically significant difference was found between CBSE and BSE students' educational aspirations, with CBSE students ($M = 23.71$) scoring higher than BSE students ($M = 22.62$). Higher aspirations among CBSE students may be attributed to curriculum design, exposure to competitive examinations, better resources, and career-oriented learning environments.
2. Within the BSE Board, female students ($M = 24.20$) scored slightly higher than males ($M = 23.22$), but the difference was not statistically significant. This suggests that male and female students in the BSE Board possess nearly equal levels of educational aspiration, reflecting a narrowing gender gap.
3. Within the CBSE Board, male students ($M = 23.16$) scored significantly higher than female students ($M = 22.09$), indicating persistent gender differences in aspiration. The gender gap in CBSE schools highlights the influence of social expectations and the need for targeted motivational and guidance programs for female students.

Suggestions

The present study explored the educational aspirations of secondary school students in Baripada Municipality, offering valuable insights but with certain limitations in scope, sample size, and coverage. Future research may expand geographically to include multiple districts or states, and incorporate students from diverse boards such as ICSE and Navodaya Vidyalayas for broader comparisons. Longitudinal studies could trace aspiration development over time, while qualitative methods may capture deeper personal perspectives. Further exploration of influencing factors like socio-economic status, peer pressure, and school environment, along with rural-urban comparisons, intervention-based studies, and gender-focused research, can enrich understanding of educational aspirations.

Conclusion

The study clearly indicates that students under the CBSE Board possess significantly higher educational aspirations compared to those from the BSE Board, underscoring the impact of curriculum design, school environment, and academic exposure on students' future goals. While gender differences in aspiration among BSE students were minimal and statistically insignificant, CBSE male students exhibited notably higher aspirations than their female counterparts,

highlighting the need for gender-sensitive strategies within that context. These findings reinforce the conclusion that both the education board and gender play influential roles in shaping students' academic ambitions. Despite moderate to high overall aspiration levels among Baripada Municipality students, the disparities suggest unequal access to motivational support, career guidance, and learning opportunities. Socio-economic status, family support, and school infrastructure emerge as key contributing factors to these differences. To bridge these gaps, there is a pressing need for inclusive and equitable educational initiatives, particularly targeted at underrepresented and disadvantaged groups. This study provides crucial insights for educators, policymakers, and guardians to design interventions that uplift educational aspirations across all segments, ensuring every student receives the encouragement, resources, and opportunities necessary to achieve their full academic potential.

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