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**A Study on Emotional Skills and Adjustment towards First and
Second Language Learning and Academic Achievement**

Smita Sinha, Ph.D.

A Study on Emotional Skills and Adjustment towards First and Second Language Learning and Academic Achievement

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Introduction

A comparative study of the performances of Orissa Secondary board examination results show that while many good students score good marks in science and mathematics, they perform poorly in language papers. While some feel subjects like science and mathematics have more market values and hence they concentrate more on these subjects, others feel languages taught in school are difficult to learn and hence neglect studying them.

Students from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are impacted worse by of these kinds of attitudinal and adjustment problems towards first and second language learning.

Problems with the Learning of the Dominant Language of the State

Although Oriya is the official language of Orissa, there are many regional dialects and the vast number of tribal languages spoken in the state. For most tribal students, Oriya becomes a difficult language to learn. Even an Oriya student speaking a regional dialect finds it difficult to write standard literary Oriya language in school. Moreover, many children also feel they have the right to learn their mother tongues and pursue their education using their mother tongues. So, they may develop a negative attitude towards standard Oriya or English and suffer adjustment problems. These attitudes get reflected in their achievements.

Study of Emotional Intelligence

Study of emotional intelligence has received greater attention in recent years (Law, Wong and Song, 2004). A definition of this kind of intelligence, according to Salovey and Mayor (1990), is the subject of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (p. 189).

This definition was followed by many other proposals (e.g., Bar-on, 1997, Davies, Stankov and Robert 1998, Mayor, Caruso and Salovey (2000a)) which contained only minor differences.

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The common elements of all of the definitions, were as follows: an ability to understand one's own, or others' emotions or feelings, the ability to express one's own emotions or feelings, and the ability to regulate or control one's own emotion or feeling.

Assessment of Emotional Intelligence

To enable an assessment of emotional intelligence, a variety of scales corresponding to these definitions were also developed. For example, Mayor, Caruso and Salovey (2000b) developed the multi-factor emotional intelligence scale which corresponds to the definition proposed by Salovey and Mayor (1990). Taksic (2000), who developed the emotional intelligence skills and competence questionnaire (ESCQ), also followed the definitions of Salovey and Mayor (1990).

The ESCQ has three subscales; the ability to perceive and understand emotion, the ability to express and label emotion and the ability to manage and regulate emotion. Emotional skills are also related to self-esteem.

The openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness are important subscales of adjustment to language learning situations. Adjustment is an adaptive process, which includes reaction to a variety of demands or pressures upon an individual. So, different people adjust differently to similar learning situation.

A person with positive attitude towards a language adjusts emotionally, socially and educationally better and achieves better academically.

Coleman (1960) explained that effective adjustment means that an individual copes with the problems in such a way so as to maintain his integrity and well being. **Need achievement** is defined as a desire for attaining some specific standard of excellence. Good (1959) defined **academic achievement** as the knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subjects, usually designated by test scores or marks in the school subjects or by test scores assigned by teacher. Basically it affects cognitive, affective and cognitive aspects of behaviour of the student.

It is difficult for people to reach at the same level in all three dimensions at a time. Some may be at a somewhat higher level in one domain and at a somewhat lower level in other domains.

Rogers (1977) emphasized that larger the gap between an individual's self concept and reality, poorer the adjustment of individual becomes. Batterson (1988) reported that student's self concept and the way others see him were positively related with the school

achievements. Many students fall short of realizing their full capacities because of lack of adjustments. Proper adjustment is very significant for achievement.

Some Indian Studies

Khanna (1987) found that socio-economic status was positively related with global scholastic achievement. Deutsch (1960) revealed that poor academic performance of the socially deprived children is the cumulative result of a large number of interfering, obstructing and handicapping factors in their personalities, home, school and society.

Sachidananda (1974) reported that lack of stimulation, encouragement and motivation at home and shyness, manifested by low participation in the school activities and feeling of inferiority serve as important constraints for backward people.

Ushasri (1980) revealed that though there was no difference between socially advantaged and socially disadvantaged in their mental abilities but socially disadvantaged group was inferior in academic achievement. Academic achievement was significantly influencing scholastic achievement.

Mehta (1996) reported that school performance of SC and ST was significantly lower than non-backward boys. But the difference between SC and ST boys was not significant. He found that subjects with higher degree of conflict, anxiety and frustration showed significantly poorer adjustment. Well adjusted students enjoy a sense of inner harmony because they develop a feeling of self-satisfaction. They show maturity in social behaviour, which is characterized by their attitude to people with different social, religious and socio-economic background leading to better adjustment in life.

The emotional and academic adjustment to first and second language papers in school exams are crucial as these exam papers are presented to the students using the media of instruction. Hence the total academic achievement depends on the proficiency in the language of instruction and examination.

The Objective of the Present Study

The objective of the present study is to make a comparative study of SC, ST and non-backward class high school boys on emotional skill and adjustment towards first and second language learning and academic achievement.

Sample: A sample of 600 male students belonging to class X from Oriya medium government schools in Mayurbhanj, Cuttack, Khurda, and Ganjam districts of both urban and rural areas affiliated to the Orissa Board of Secondary Education was taken. Out of the 600 students, 150 were taken from the SC category (75 urban and 75 rural), 150 were

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ST students (75 urban and 75 rural) and 300 from non-backward (150 urban and 150 rural) social class category. The age of the students ranged between 14-16 years. While some of them speak some variety of Oriya dialects at home, others speak various tribal languages totally distinct from Oriya.

Tools and Measures

1. Academic achievement of students was measured by obtaining the marks obtained in 9th class final examinations from school records.
2. The emotional (attitudinal) and educational (language learning) adjustment level of the students was measured in classroom setting using the adjustment inventory for school students (AISS) developed by A. K. P. Sinha and R. P. Singh (1984). Their emotional adjustment, which includes attitude and emotional skills and educational adjustment to first language (standard Oriya) learning situation and second language (English) learning situation were measured. The percentage of final marks in the previous class (9th class) was obtained from the school authorities to find out the academic level of the students. Furthermore, the scoring of the inventory was carried out according to the manual of the inventions. Then mean, standard deviation and t-ratios of the scores and marks obtained were calculated to draw the results.

Result and Discussion

Non-backward and SC boys of total and urban population did not differ significantly in different areas as well as in the aggregate, but rural non-backward boys were found to be educationally better adjusted to 1st language than rural SC boys (Table 2,4,5). However, in other areas of adjustment, i.e., emotional, second language-educational adjustment and aggregate sphere, both these groups were found to be almost on the same level of adjustment.

Non-backward boys tended to be emotionally educationally favorable to 1st language and aggregately better adjusted than ST boys (Table-1). However, in the 2nd language adjustment area, both these groups revealed no significant difference (Table-1). Rural non-backward boys tended to be educationally adjusted to 1st language (Table 3), educationally adjusted to 2nd language (Table-4) and aggregately (Table 5) better adjusted. However, both these groups revealed significant difference in emotional adjustment area (Table 2).

In urban areas, no difference in adjustment level was found between ST and non-backward boys. There was no difference between SC and ST boys (Rural, urban and total) on different areas of adjustment, i.e., emotional, educational adjustment to 1st

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language learning, educational adjustment to 2nd language learning as well as aggregate adjustment (Table 1, 2,3, 4, 5).

Non-backward boys were found to have a higher level of academic achievement than SC and ST boys (Table-1). This trend was particularly significant in rural areas where the difference in academic achievement in favour of non-backward boys (Table-6) was found. But in urban areas no significant difference was found. SC and ST boys (Rural, urban as well as total) were found to have no difference in their level of academic achievements (Table 1, 6).

Table-1

Mean scores on emotional adjustment, educational adjustment to 1st and 2nd language learning, aggregate adjustment and academic achievement of scheduled caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) and non-backward boys (NBC)

Groups	N	Emotional adjustment	Educational (1 st language) adjustment	Educational (2 nd language) adjustment	Aggregate adjustment	Academic adjustment
				Mean		
SC	150	5.37	7.25	5.61	18.47	44.64
ST	150	5.85	7.41	6.05	19.31	44.80
NBC	150	5.06	6.74	5.43	17.60	49.06
Groups	N	T-ratio				
SC Vs NBC	150	0.89	1.89	0.51	1.04	**4.20
ST Vs NBC	150	*2.27	*2.34	1.74	**2.94	**4.29
SC Vs ST	300	1.18	0.49	1.16	1.48	0.16

* Significant at 0.05 level

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table-2

Comparison between mean scores on emotional adjustment of rural SC, Urban SC, Rural ST, Urban ST Rural NBC and Urban NBC boys

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Groups	Rural SC	Urban SC	Rural ST	Urban ST	Rural NBC	Urban NBC
Mean	5.61	5.31	5.88	5.83	5.01	5.11
n	75	75	75	75	150	150
Groups	T-ratio					
Rural SC		0.83	0.43	0.34	1.14	0.96
Urban SC			1.43	1.33	0.26	0.04
Rural ST				0.9	1.75	1.57
Urban ST					1.64	1.46
Rural NBC						0.25
Urban NBC						

Table-3

Comparison between mean scores on Educational (1st language) adjustment of rural SC, Urban SC, Rural ST, Urban ST, Rural NBC and Urban NBC boys.

Groups	Rural SC	Urban SC	Rural ST	Urban ST	Rural NBC	Urban NBC
Mean	7.85	6.64	7.50	7.31	6.68	6.80
n	75	75	75	75	150	150
Groups	T-ratio					
Rural SC		**2.93	0.69	1.22	**2.98	*2.78
Urban SC			1.83	1.59	0.11	0.44
Rural ST				0.40	1.97	1.72
Urban ST					1.58	1.38
Rural NBC						0.38
Urban NBC						

* Significant at 0.05 level

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table-4

Comparison between mean scores on Educational (2nd language) adjustment of Rural SC, Urban SC, Rural ST, Urban SC, Rural NBC and Urban NBC boys.

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Groups	Rural SC	Urban SC	Rural ST	Urban ST	Rural NBC	Urban NBC
Mean	5.69	5.53	6.68	5.41	5.51	5.35
N	75	75	75	75	150	150
Groups	T-ratio					
Rural SC		0.29	1.88	0.58	0.40	0.64
Urban SC			*2.02	0.23	0.05	0.33
Rural ST				*2.54	*2.44	**2.48
Urban ST					0.20	0.12
Rural; NBC						0.36
Urban NBC						

* Significant at 0.05 level

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table-5

Comparison between mean scores on aggregate adjustment of Rural SC, Urban SC, Rural ST, Urban ST, Rural NBC and Urban NBC boys.

Groups	Rural SC	Urban SC	Rural ST	Urban ST	Rural NBC	Urban NBC
Mean	19.16	17.31	2.07	18.55	17.20	17.27
N	75	75	75	75	150	150
Groups	T-ratio					
Rural SC		1.83	0.85	0.59	1.93	1.87
Urban SC			**2.78	1.29	0.11	0.04
Rural ST				1.49	**2.85	**2.78
Urban ST					1.36	1.29
Rural NBC						0.08
Urban NBC						

* Significant at 0.05 level

* Significant at 0.01 level

Table-6

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Comparison between mean scores on academic achievement of Rural SC, Urban SC, Rural ST, Urban ST, Rural NBC and Urban NBC boys.

Groups	Rural SC	Urban SC	Rural ST	Urban ST	Rural NBC	Urban NBC
Mean	44.17	45.12	44.86	44.74	51.18	46.95
N	75	75	75	75	150	150
Groups	T-ratio					
Rural SC		0.62	0.48	0.43	**4.28	*2.15
Urban SC			0.19	0.29	**3.73	1.50
Rural ST				0.09	**4.01	1.72
Urban ST					**4.18	1.89
Rural NBC						**3.38
Urban NBC						

* Significant at 0.051 level

** Significant at 0.01 level

Conclusion

The present study reveals that non-backward boys are far better and adjusted emotionally and educationally to language learning situation (both 1st and 2nd) and have higher academic achievement than SC and ST boys. This difference was particularly seen in rural areas in comparison to urban areas. Many factors have been identified which may be responsible for this state of affairs. The problems of untouchability, low socio-economic status, lack of self-esteem, lack of exposure to importance of education and language learning have influenced the adjustment of backward students. Similarly parent children relationship (Morrow & Wilson, 1961) and socio-economic status of schools (Gangadeep, 1986) also influence the adjustment to language learning situation and achievement level of students. Conflict, anxiety, frustration and a feeling of inferiority complex towards their own mother tongue which differ from the school languages also affect the learning process.

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Smita Sinha, Ph.D.
Department of Linguistics
Berhampur University
Berhampur 760 007
Orissa, India
smitas6@yahoo.com