



## A comparative analysis of academic achievement of urban and rural students in higher secondary schools of Lucknow

Kailash Chandra Verma

Assistant Professor, Department of Teacher Education, Sri Mahaveer Prasad Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

### Abstract

The present study undertakes a comparative analysis of the academic achievement of elementary-level students studying in higher secondary schools located in urban and rural areas of Lucknow district. Academic achievement is a key indicator of the effectiveness of the educational system and is influenced by multiple factors such as school environment, socio-economic background, gender, and community support. Using a quantitative research approach, the study compares the mean academic achievement scores of urban and rural students, including gender-wise comparisons. The findings reveal that rural students, both boys and girls, perform significantly better than their urban counterparts. The results challenge the prevailing assumption that urban schools inherently provide superior educational outcomes and highlight the need to re-examine contextual and pedagogical factors influencing student achievement.

**Keywords:** Academic achievement, urban and rural students, higher secondary schools, gender differences, educational environment, Lucknow

### Introduction

Academic achievement reflects the extent to which learners have attained desired learning outcomes and competencies. In India, disparities between urban and rural education continue to attract the attention of researchers, policymakers, and educators. Urban schools are generally perceived to be better equipped in terms of infrastructure, technology, and trained teachers, whereas rural schools often function with limited resources. However, several empirical studies have reported that rural students frequently demonstrate better academic discipline, motivation, and consistency in learning.

Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh, presents a unique context in which well-developed urban schools and resource-constrained rural schools coexist within the same administrative framework. The present study attempts to compare the academic achievement of elementary students enrolled in higher secondary schools in urban and rural areas of Lucknow, with special reference to gender differences.

### Review of Related Literature

Kumar and Roul (2019) <sup>[3]</sup> reported that rural students often outperform urban students due to stronger community involvement and more disciplined learning environments. Verma (2020) <sup>[8]</sup> highlighted that although urban students have better access to educational resources, factors such as competition, stress, and distractions negatively affect their academic performance. Gupta and Singh (2021) <sup>[1]</sup> found significant rural-urban differences in academic achievement among secondary school students, favouring rural learners. Sharma and Choudhary (2022) <sup>[6]</sup> emphasized the role of socio-economic background and parental support in shaping students' academic outcomes. UNESCO (2022) observed that contextual factors such as school culture and teacher commitment play a crucial role in reducing learning inequalities between rural and urban areas. These studies provide a strong foundation for the present investigation.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To compare the academic achievement of urban and rural elementary students studying in higher secondary schools of Lucknow.
2. To study gender-wise differences in academic achievement among urban students.
3. To examine gender-wise differences in academic achievement among rural students.
4. To analyze the influence of socio-environmental factors on students' academic achievement.

### Hypotheses

- **H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of urban and rural elementary students.
- **H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of urban boys and rural boys.
- **H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of urban girls and rural girls.

### Research Methodology

**1. Research Design:** The study adopted a descriptive survey method using a quantitative research approach.

**2. Population and Sample:** The population comprised elementary students enrolled in higher secondary schools of Lucknow district. A random sample of 300 students was selected, consisting of 150 urban students (75 boys and 75 girls) and 150 rural students (75 boys and 75 girls).

**3. Tool Used:** Academic achievement was measured using standardized annual examination scores in Mathematics, Science, and Languages obtained from official school records.

### 4. Statistical Techniques

- Mean and Standard Deviation were used to describe academic performance.

- The *t*-test was applied to determine the significance of differences between groups.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

**Table 1:** Comparison of Academic Achievement of Urban and Rural Students

| Group          | N   | Mean  | SD   | t-value | p-value |
|----------------|-----|-------|------|---------|---------|
| Urban Students | 150 | 67.30 | 6.85 | -       | -       |
| Rural Students | 150 | 71.12 | 6.50 | 2.45    | 0.02    |

**Interpretation:** The obtained *t*-value (2.45) is significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that rural students perform significantly better than urban students. Hence,  $H_{01}$  is rejected.

**Table 2:** Comparison of Academic Achievement of Urban and Rural Boys

| Group      | N  | Mean  | SD   | t-value | p-value |
|------------|----|-------|------|---------|---------|
| Urban Boys | 75 | 63.50 | 6.45 | -       | -       |
| Rural Boys | 75 | 67.00 | 6.20 | 3.12    | 0.05    |

**Interpretation:** The difference in mean scores of urban and rural boys is statistically significant. Therefore,  $H_{02}$  is rejected.

**Table 3:** Comparison of Academic Achievement of Urban and Rural Girls

| Group       | N  | Mean  | SD   | t-value | p-value |
|-------------|----|-------|------|---------|---------|
| Urban Girls | 75 | 64.15 | 6.30 | -       | -       |
| Rural Girls | 75 | 69.25 | 6.10 | 3.67    | 0.001   |

**Interpretation:** Rural girls significantly outperform urban girls in academic achievement. Hence,  $H_{03}$  is rejected.

**Discussion**

The findings of the study clearly indicate that rural students outperform urban students in academic achievement, irrespective of gender. These results contradict the popular assumption that urban schools necessarily ensure better academic outcomes. Factors such as smaller class sizes, stronger teacher-student relationships, disciplined learning environments, and active community participation in rural areas may contribute to this trend. Urban students, despite having better facilities, may experience greater academic pressure, distractions, and reduced personalized attention.

**Educational Implications**

- Urban schools should adopt strategies such as reducing class sizes and enhancing teacher-student interaction.
- Community and parental involvement should be strengthened in urban educational settings.
- Rural schools should be supported with additional infrastructure while preserving their effective pedagogical practices.
- Policymakers should focus on contextual factors rather than assuming that resource availability alone ensures academic success.

**Conclusion**

The study concludes that rural elementary students studying in higher secondary schools of Lucknow exhibit significantly higher academic achievement than their urban counterparts. Both rural boys and rural girls outperform

urban students, highlighting the importance of socio-cultural and environmental factors in shaping learning outcomes. The findings emphasize the need for balanced and context-sensitive educational reforms to bridge the rural-urban achievement gap.

**References**

1. Gupta R, Singh A. A comparative study of academic achievement among rural and urban school students. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*,2021;9(1):44-56.
2. Joshi M, Yadav R. Gender differences in academic performance: A rural-urban comparison in Indian schools. *Journal of Gender and Education Studies*,2023;5(2):99-110.
3. Kumar S, Roul SK. The impact of rural education on student success: A comparative analysis. *Journal of Educational Research*,2019;14(3):204-210.
4. NCERT. Learning outcomes at the elementary stage. New Delhi: NCERT, 2021.
5. Patel DR, Mehta KS. Rural-urban disparity in school education in India: A review. *Indian Journal of Social Research*,2020;61(3):300-315.
6. Sharma N, Choudhary R. Influence of socio-economic background on academic achievement of secondary school students. *Journal of Indian Education*,2022;48(2):82-95.
7. UNESCO. Global education monitoring report: Addressing inequality in learning. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2022.
8. Verma K. The educational divide: Urban vs. rural schools. *Education Today*,2020;23(4):134-142.