Educational Equity and Achievement Gap among Minority and Other-than Minority Students: An analytical study of Murshidabad District, West Bengal, India

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Abstract
The present study aims to nature of equity and achievement gap among secondary students, minority students and other-than minority students in the district of Murshidabad of West Bengal. The descriptive survey design was adopted and simple random sampling is used for the study. The population consist of secondary students (class IX) of Murshidabad district. Questionnaire on educational equity was distributed among the 300 students and they are requested to provide their last year final examination marks on researcher prepare format of academic achievement. The study identifies the phenomena related to educational equity and achievement gap among total students, minority students and other-than minority students. Demographic factors influence on educational equity and achievement gap was reported by percentage analysis and inferential statistical techniques. Results and finding shows that educational equity provided in high school and high madrasah in the form of scholarships, stipend, proper toilet accessibility, library facility, tutorial class, special classes for science group subjects and remedial class. There is an achievement gap among all the students with respect to gender and types of school. While in the case of minority students there is an achievement gap among minority students with respect to types of school but there is no achievement gap among minority students with respect to the gender. There is an achievement gap among other-than minority students with respect to the gender but with respect to types of school, there is no achievement gap among the other-than minority students.

Keywords: Achievement Gap, Educational Equity, Gender, Minority Students, Other-than Minority Students, Types of school.
Introduction:

Education is the key to success. Education consists of everything that is directly or indirectly involved in knowledge cultivation, knowledge construction, and knowledge transformation. Education can only transform society into a leading society. Education is a process that involves the full possible development of an individual mind. Only Education can give the power of discrimination among good and bad in the language of Ghazali “Education is the activity of enabling an individual to recognize the God and discriminate between good and bad”. If a society gets a better education, its development definitely will be better. Education nurtures the future of the country in the word of Swami Vivekananda “Education is the Manifestation of divine perfection already existing in Man.”

According to Sacher Committee Report, 2006- The mean years of schooling (MYS) is lower compared to the average MYS for all children. The majority of Muslim boys and girls fail in their matriculation examination or drop out before that schools beyond the primary level are very fewer in Muslim localities. Exclusive schools for girls are the least. Muslim population are not so advance like other communities, still, they are sending their children to affordable government schools. Majority of Muslim populations are engaged in self-employment. Above 38% of Muslims in urban areas and 27% in rural areas live below the poverty level. They are concentrated in the location of the poor facility, i.e. Education Facility, Health Facility, Transport facility.

According to the census, 2011 Literacy rate of India is 74.04% overall Literacy rate of West Bengal is 77.08%, Muslim Literacy Rate of the state is 69.5%. In Murshidabad District where Muslims are the majority, the literacy rate even lower than the Muslim Literacy Rate, 63.2% only. When we believe that Education is the only mechanism that enhances the process of social, economic, and cultural development of the communities. Islam has paid topmost importance to education, where Allah orders the mankind to read, in His first revelation, bi-smillihir-rahmānir-rahim “Read in the name of your Lord.” (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ)

Among all the religious communities, Muslims are in the last and least educated section of Indian Society. In the state of West Bengal, the conditions of Muslims are more pitiable. Among all the districts of West Bengal, the status of Muslims of Murshidabad Districts is greatly discernible. To make a deep analysis of the educational progress in Murshidabad district, Education during the Nawabs of Murshidabad should be explored. The Nawabs were patrons of learned persons. Some Nawabs themselves were very educated or learned. NawabMurshidQuli Khan raised the sum of stipend, 2500 karri who read the Quran and the other person who was engaged in virtuous work. NawabAlivardi Khan himself was a great scholar and a great orator. He directly supports the arrangement of scholarly discussion with the cultured persons. During his regime Islamic knowledge, Persian as a language and other streams of study such as Mathematics, Astronomy. Flourished. Jayer Hussain Khan, Taki Quli Khan, Ali Ibrahim, Mir Muhammad Ali Fazil and some scholars who were brightened Alivardi’s court. Mir Mohammad Ali had a big library which possessed around 2000 books. So, the overall condition of education during the Nawab Period is Notable. So, it can be said that Education during Nawab period is far better than the present time. Why there is a difference? To analysis and explore the status of Muslim Education this research is demanded.

Research Gap:

In the year of 2018, Hourani & Litz conducted a study on Juvenile Education in Abu Dhabi: Insights from and Implications of School Policies for Educational Equity and Inclusion. While on 2016
Zhang Hongzh attempted a study on Educational equity research in the mainland of China: A historical perspective. In the same way, Hartline and Cobia in the year of 2012 worked on Closing Achievement Gaps and Writing Results Reports. Research objectives are closing the achievement gap for underserved and marginalized students. In 2011 Rowley and Wright attempted a study on No "White" Child Left Behind: The Academic Achievement Gap between Black and White Students. In 2010 Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten and Holland conducted a study on The Implicit Prejudiced Attitudes of Teachers: Relations to Teacher Expectations and the Ethnic Achievement Gap. By observing above studies, the researcher found that several studies were conducted separately on Educational Equity and Achievement Gap but there are fewer studies conducted on Educational Equity and Achievement Gap among Minority and Other than-Minority Students in Murshidabad District. Minority Education is an indispensable part of Indian education. Thus, the researcher found here a knowledge gap in research on Educational Equity and Achievement Gap among Minority and Other than-Minority Students as they are future destiny makers of the nation. So, the question is; does the student of 9th Grade have proper development regarding Educational Equity? The present study will try to find out the answer to this question and will try to fill the knowledge gap.

**Statement of the Problem:**

The problem formally stated as:

Educational Equity and Achievement Gap among Minority and Other-than Minority Students: An Analytical Study of Murshidabad District, West Bengal, India.

**Operational definitions of key terms Used:**

**Educational Equity:**

Educational Equity Researcher refers to various resources provided by the Central Government, State Government and the schools to uplift the students or individual towards better advancement.

**Achievement Gap:**

Here Achievement gap refers to Gap in the Academic Achievement of the students, Summative Evaluation Report of the students.

**Minority Students:**

Most of the students in these schools are Muslims, So Researcher referring Minority students means Muslim Students here.

**Other than Minority Students:**

Researcher refers to Hindu Students as other than minority students here.

**Research Questions of the Study:**

1. What is the nature of equity being provided to the students?

**Objectives of the Study:**

The study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

1. To assess the nature of equity being provided to the students.
2. To assess the mean difference in the achievement gap among students with respect to their gender.
3. To assess the mean difference in the achievement gap among Minority Students with respect to their gender.
4. To assess the mean difference in the achievement gap among Other than Minority Students with respect to their gender.
5. To assess the mean difference in the achievement gap among the students with respect to their types of school.
6. To assess the mean difference in the achievement gap among Minority Students with respect to their types of school.
7. To assess the mean difference in the achievement gap among other than Minority Students with respect to their type of school.

**Hypothesis of the Study:**
The following hypothesis were tested:

- $H_{01}$: There is no significant difference in the achievement gap among students with respect to their gender.
- $H_{02}$: There is no significant difference in the achievement gap among Minority Students with respect to their gender.
- $H_{03}$: There is no significant difference in the achievement gap among other than minority Students with respect to their gender.
- $H_{04}$: There is no significant difference in the achievement gap among the students with respect to their types of school.
- $H_{05}$: There is no significant difference in the achievement gap among minority Students with respect to their types of school.
- $H_{06}$: There is no significant difference in the achievement gap among other than minority Students with respect to their types of school.

**Delimitations of the Study:**
1. This study focusing only on five educational Institutions (High School and High Madrasah).
2. This study is delimited to 9th Grade Students only.
3. This study is delimited to Lalgola Block of Murshidabad District only.
4. For studying Achievement, the gap only Sciences (Mathematics and science), Social sciences (History and Geography), Language (English and Bengali) subjects and Work Education has been being considered.
5. This study is delimited to 300 Samples only.

**Methodology of the study:**
The methodology is the strategy of conducting research which is followed to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically. It is a logical approach to research. This study is based on descriptive survey research. By and large, methodology followed in this study has
been worked out in accordance with its objectives. The aim of these studies is to assess the nature of equity, the difference between educational equity and the achievement gap.

**Population:**

The present investigation is based on the population of secondary students (class IX) of Murshidabad district of West Bengal. Therefore, all the High school (Govt/Govt-Sponsored/Govt Aided/Private) and High Madrasah (Govt/Govt-Sponsored/Govt Aided/Private) of Murshidabad districts, West Bengal are carefully chosen in a random way. The total enrolment of Minority and Other than Minority students at High School and High Madrasah comprises the whole population of the study.

**Sample of the study:**

In this Study, simple random sampling technique has been used in the selection of schools situated in Murshidabad district of West Bengal and the students of these high school or high madrasah. For the determination of the sample, the investigator collects the list of High school and High Madrasah. The primary goal before the researcher was to select the sample of senior secondary schools. In this investigation, the sample consists of 300 students from different high school and high madrasah. Out of these 300 students, 176 were a minority and 124 were other than a minority. The major institutions contacted for data collection were Sekhalipur High School, Sekhalipur; ICR High Madrasha, SadarNashipur; Lalgola SM Girls High School, Lalgola; Chhaitani High Madrasah, Chhaitani; Lalgola MN Academy, Lalgola.

**Table 1: Distribution of Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.NO</th>
<th>Name of Schools</th>
<th>Type of School /Madrasah</th>
<th>No of Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sekhalipur High School, Sekhalipur</td>
<td>Govt. Aided</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ICR High Madrasha, SadarNashipur</td>
<td>Govt. Aided</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lalgola SM Girls High School, Lalgola</td>
<td>Govt. Aided</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chhaitani High Madrasah, Chhaitani</td>
<td>Govt. Aided</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lalgola MN Academy, Lalgola.</td>
<td>Govt. Aided</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tools used:

An open-ended self-made questionnaire was used by the investigator to measure the various aspects of educational equity provided in a school. In order to collect the Academic Achievement score of the respondents, the school authority was contacted and requested to provide the previous class (VIII) mark sheet. In case, if the school authority were not permitted to access the student’s personal data, the students (IX Class) were requested to provide their previous class (VIII Class) final year mark sheet during the administration of the test. The score of previous class final examination mark sheet’s score was considered as their academic achievement score.

Techniques Used:

Simple statistics vizPercentage and Inferential statistics viz “t” test methods were applied.

Results:

1. It is found that both 35% male and 28% female secondary school students are getting different types of scholarship from government and other organization but 100% agreed that they are getting a stipend. There is a 100% separate toilet facility in school for male and female students. Only 40% male and 58% female students are getting remedial classes, a special class for science group subjects and tutorial classes from the teachers, but 100% of students agree that their teachers do not guide them properly. 100% of students agree that schools provide a library facility. Students also declare that all the schools do not provide any type of orientation programme for both male and female students. 100% of students also said that teachers during the learning do not allow for earning money.

2. It is found that both 19% high school and 49% high madrasah secondary school students are getting different types of scholarship from government and other organization but 100% agreed that they are getting a stipend. There is a 100% separate toilet facility in high school and high madrasah. Only 40% high school students and 58% high madrasah students are getting remedial classes, a special class for science group subjects and tutorial classes from the teachers, but 100% of students agree that their teachers do not guide them properly. 100% of students agree that high schools and high madrasah provide a library facility. Students also declare that all the schools and madrasah do not provide any type of orientation programme for both male and female students. 100% of students also said that teachers during the learning do not allow for earning money.

3. It is found that both 43% male and 60% female minority school students are getting different types of scholarship from government and other organization but 100% agreed that they are getting a stipend. There is a 100% separate toilet facility in school for male and female students. Only 59% male and 88% female students are getting tutorial classes from the teachers. 40% male and 58% female are getting remedial classes and a special class for science group subjects but 100% of students agree that their teachers do not guide them properly. 100% of students agree that schools provide a library facility. Students also declare that all the schools do not provide any type of orientation programme for both male and female students. 100% of students also said that teachers during the learning do not allow for earning money.

4. It is found that both 19% high school and 49% high madrasah minority secondary school students are getting different types of scholarship from government and other organization but 100%
agreed that they are getting a stipend. There is a 100% separate toilet facility in high school and high madrasah. Only 40% high school students and 58% high madrasah students are getting remedial classes, a special class for science group subjects and tutorial classes from the teachers, but 100% of students agree that their teachers do not guide them properly. 100% of students agree that high schools and high madrasah provide a library facility. Students also declare that all the schools and madrasah do not provide any type of orientation programme for both male and female students. 100% of students also said that teachers during the learning do not allow for earning money.

5. It is found that both male and female other-than minority school student does not get any types of scholarship from government and other organization but 100% agreed that they are getting a stipend. There is a 100% separate toilet facility in school for male and female students. Only 11% male and 15% female students are getting remedial classes and a special class for science group subjects but 100% of students agree that their teachers do not guide them properly. 100% of students agree that schools provide a library facility. Students also declare that all the schools do not provide any type of orientation programme for both male and female students. 100% of students also said that teachers during the learning do not allow for earning money.

6. It is found that both high school and high madrasah other-than minority secondary school student does not get any types of scholarship from government and other organization but 100% agreed that they are getting a stipend. There is a 100% separate toilet facility in high school and high madrasah. Only 51% of high school students and 40% high madrasah students are getting remedial classes, a special class for science group subjects. Only 1% of high school students and 40% high madrasah students are getting tutorial classes from the teachers, but 100% of students agree that their teachers do not guide them properly. 100% of students agree that high schools and high madrasah provide a library facility. Students also declare that all the schools and madrasah do not provide any type of orientation programme for both male and female students. 100% of students also said that teachers during the learning do not allow for earning money.

7. Table 2 Shows Mean Difference in Achievement Gap among Students with respect to their Gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>“t” value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement Gap</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>300.38</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>305.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence (2-Tailed).

Table 2–It shows that there is a significant difference in mean scores on the achievement gap with respect to their gender for the sample of 300. The calculated “t” value is -.202 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence and indicates a negative value. The mean score with its SD of male students
were 303.38 and 204.80, the mean score and SD for female students were 305.17 and 202.74 respectively that means that there is a significant difference between male students score and female students score on the Achievement Gap. Thus it can be said that there is a significant difference in the achievement gap among male and female secondary students. Consequently, the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference in Achievement Gap among students with respect to their gender.” is rejected.

**Figure 1:** Show the mean difference in the achievement gap among students with respect to their gender.

![Figure 1](image-url)

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>“t” value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement gap</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>135.01</td>
<td>58.15</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NS:** Not Significant at both the level, at .01 level and .05 level of confidence

**Table 3**—It shows that there is no significant difference in mean scores on the achievement gap among minority students with respect to their gender for the sample of 176. The calculated “t” value is -1.847 which is not significant at both the level at 0.01 level of confidence and 0.05 level of confidence. The mean score with its SD of male students were 135.01 and 58.15 respectively, the mean score and SD for female students were 162.50 and 118.69 respectively that means the male students score equal to the female students on the achievement gap. Thus it can be said that there is
no significant difference in the achievement gap of minority students among male and female secondary students. Consequently, the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference in Achievement Gap among Minority Students with respect to their gender.” is accepted.

Figure 2: Showsthe mean difference in the achievement gap among Minority Students with respect to their gender.

![Figure 2: Showsthe mean difference in the achievement gap among Minority Students with respect to their gender.](image)

Table 4—It shows that there is a significant difference in mean scores on the achievement gap of other than minority students with respect to their gender for the sample of 124. The calculated “t” value is .328 which is a significant at 0.01 level of confidence and indicates a negative value. The mean score with its SD of male students were 521.85 and 85.77 respectively, the mean score and SD for female students were 517.08 and 76.00 respectively that means the female student's scores are higher to the male student's scores on the achievement gap. Thus it can be said that there is a significant difference in the achievement gap among other than minority students among male and female secondary students. Consequently, the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference in Achievement Gap among other than minority Students with respect to their gender.” is rejected.

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>“t” value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement Gap</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>521.85</td>
<td>85.77</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at 0.01 level of confidence (2-Tailed).**
Figure 3: Shows the mean difference in the achievement gap among other than minority Students with respect to their gender.

![Bar graph showing mean scores for male and female students](image)

Table 5—It is showed that there is a significant difference in mean scores on the achievement gap among the students with respect to their types of school for the sample of 300. The calculated “t” value is -11.172 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence and indicates a negative value. The mean score with its SD of High Madrasah students were 168.01 and 153.06, the mean score and SD for High school students were 393.12 and 181.91 that means the high madrasah students score higher than the High school students on the achievement gap. Thus it can be said that there is a significant difference in the achievement gap among the students with respect to their types of school. Consequently, the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference in Achievement Gap among the students with respect to their types of school.” is rejected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>High Madrasah Students</th>
<th>High School Students</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>“t” value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement Gap</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>168.01</td>
<td>153.06</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence (2-Tailed).
Figure 4: Shows mean the difference in the achievement gap among the students with respect to their types of school.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>High Madrasah Minority students</th>
<th>High School Minority Students</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>“t” value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean SD</td>
<td>N Mean SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement gap</td>
<td>105 112.7 44.9</td>
<td>71 207.09 125.6</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>-7.068**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence (2-Tailed).

Table 6—It shows that there is a significant difference in mean scores on the achievement gap among minority students with respect to their types of school for the sample of 176. The calculated “t” value is -7.068 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence and indicates a negative value. The mean score with its SD for High Madrasah Minority students were 112.71 and 44.93, the mean score and SD for high school minority students were 207.09 and 125.60 that means the high school minority students score higher than the High Madrasah minority students on the achievement gap. Thus it can be said that there is a significant difference in the achievement gap among minority students with respect to their types of school. Consequently, the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference in Achievement Gap among minority Students with respect to their types of school.” is rejected.
Figure 5: Showsthe mean difference in the achievement gap among minority Students with respect to their types of school.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>High Madrasah Other than Minority students</th>
<th>High School Other than Minority Students</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>“t” value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement Gap</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>555.13</td>
<td>25.29</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS: Not Significant at both the level, at .01 level and .05 level of confidence

Table 7–It shows that there is no significant difference in mean scores on the achievement gap among other minority students with respect to their types of school for the sample of 124. The calculated “t” value is 1.866 which is not significant at both the level, 0.01 level of confidence and 0.05 level of confidence. The mean score with its SD for High Madrasah other than Minority students were 555.13 and 25.29 respectively, the mean score and SD for high school other than minority students were 514.30 and 83.96 respectively that means there is no significant difference between the High Madrasah other than minority students and the High School other than minority students in Achievement Gap. Thus it can be said that there is no significant difference in the achievement gap of other than minority students with respect to their types of school. Consequently, the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference in Achievement Gap among other than minority Students with respect to their types of school.” is accepted.
Figure 6: Shows mean the difference in the achievement gap among other than minority Students with respect to their types of school.

Conclusion:
So after studying all these phenomena, it can be said that educational equity provided in high school and high madrasah in the form of scholarships, stipend, proper toilet accessibility, library facility, tutorial class, special classes for science group subjects and remedial class. From the above tables of hypothesis treatment, it is clear that there is an achievement gap among all the students, both minority and other-than minority students with respect to gender and types of school. While in the case of minority students there is an achievement gap among minority students with respect to types of school but there is no achievement gap among minority students with respect to the gender. There is an achievement gap among other-than minority students with respect to the gender but with respect to types of school, there is no achievement gap among the other-than minority students.

Acknowledgement:
The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Recommendations:
The following recommendations have been made accordingly based upon the findings of the study
1. Based on findings govt., the institution should promote research work in educational equity, the achievement gap and educational equity relation to achievement gap at a broad level; i.e. National Level.
2. Govt. provide proper educational equity to the students with special reference to the scholarship, stipend.
3. Govt. should reform educational policy with reference to educational equity, the achievement for all secondary students by giving importance to the madrasahs.
4. School should promote learning while earning facility to the students.
5. School should organize or observed different programme; i.e. orientation programme, minority right day to aware the students about the importance of education.
6. It is found that only 50% secondary students get tutorial class, 76% minority students get tutorial class, 13% other than students get tutorial class which broadly affect the achievement of the secondary students, minority students and other than minority students. So school authorities must take every possible step towards the tutorial class.

7. 100% of students agreed that the teacher does not guide them properly. So teachers should take initial steps towards guidance properly by reforming the process of teaching-learning.

8. This study will help to address and taking major steps towards the different issues; i.e. remedial class, a special class for science group subjects, students all over achievement, language achievement, science group subject’s achievement, social science group achievement and work education achievement among secondary, minority and other than minority students.

Suggestions for further study:
1. The same study should be done in a large sample by including more district.
2. Similar studies can be conducted at a different level of education, i.e. Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary Level of Education.

References:


