

Influence of Structural Barriers on Adjustment level and Academic Achievement of Secondary School students living below poverty line in Meghalaya

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Abstract—Education is one of the important parameters that determines the development of a person within and outside the society. It helps an individual to acquire and enhance various knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competencies which are needed for sustaining meaningful life in the society. In the present study, the researcher surveyed 943 students comprising of 299 males and 644 BPL students from four districts in Meghalaya. The researcher used self designed questionnaire, adopted Pre-Adjustment Scale constructed by Pareek and Rao and used previous year progress report card of the students for the present study. The findings of the result shows that male students have better Academic Achievement and females have better Adjustment level inspite of having the structural barriers.

Keywords: Pre-Adjustment Scale, Academic Achievement, Adjustment level, Structural Barriers

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the vital tools for the measurement of individual development and also for determining its transformation in social levels. Education helps an individual to acquire and enhance various knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competencies which are needed for sustaining meaningful life in the society. It also contributes for the critical thinking, social adjustments, emotional maturity and the ability of an individual to react and respond to the situations. It is not only a means to acquire knowledge and skills but also a mechanism for promoting social justice, reducing inequalities and improving the quality of life of individuals and communities.

Education helps in reducing and leveling the social and economic inequalities that can be seen in the society. It provides opportunities to an individual for the vertical movement along social mobility and improved livelihood. Students belonging to disadvantage group faces several barriers such as poor infrastructure, difficulty in transportation, lack of technology etc. These barriers affect the adjustment levels and academic achievement of the students. Structural barriers to secondary education encompass systemic issues like inadequate funding, lack of resources, and geographical inaccessibility, often disproportionately affecting students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These barriers can prevent students from accessing quality education, leading to lower graduation rates and limited opportunities.

Poverty remains one of the leading causes of educational exclusion and disadvantage in the world. Children living in poverty are more likely to experience obstacles including poor school infrastructure, limited access to learning resources, poor transportation facilities, inadequate learning support, and home environments that are not conducive to learning (World Bank,

2022). Education has been recognized as a fundamental right under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. Poverty is the absence of basic capabilities and not only low income (Sen, 1999). Sen said income is only one way to achieve well-being, the real concern is whether people can achieve valued functioning, such as education, health and social participation. Similarly, the World Bank (2022) defines poverty as “a condition characterized by severe deprivation of well-being” (p. 1) that includes low access to education, healthcare, nutrition, safe housing, and other vital services for human development.

Structural barriers constitute systemic constraints embedded within educational institutions through policies, organizational practices, physical infrastructure, and socio-cultural processes that influence students' access to equitable learning opportunities. In the present study, structural barriers encompass three interrelated dimensions: physical barriers, including inadequate school infrastructure, shortages of qualified teachers, insufficient teaching-learning materials, limited library and laboratory facilities, lack of resource rooms, inadequate digital infrastructure (e-facilities), ineffective assessment practices, and insufficient financial allocation for educational resources; socio-cultural barriers, including weak teacher-student relationships, limited collaboration among teachers, school administrators, non-teaching staff, and educational authorities, as well as issues related to gender, social class, ethnicity, and social acceptance; and policy barriers, referring to deficiencies in the implementation of educational policies, school governance, institutional practices, and adherence to state-prescribed educational guidelines. Collectively, these structural factors determine the quality, accessibility, and inclusiveness of educational opportunities available to learners, particularly those belonging to economically disadvantaged households. Learning outcomes are fundamentally shaped by the educational environment in which teaching and learning occur. According to UNESCO (2023), equitable learning outcomes cannot be achieved merely through school enrolment; rather, they depend upon the availability of quality infrastructure, competent teachers, adequate instructional resources, effective pedagogical practices, and supportive institutional environments. Schools lacking basic facilities such as libraries, science laboratories, information and communication technology (ICT) resources, inclusive classrooms, and appropriate teaching-learning materials often fail to provide students with meaningful opportunities to develop cognitive, affective, and practical competencies. UNESCO (2023) further argues that educational quality is intrinsically linked to the structural conditions under which learning occurs, emphasizing that deficiencies in school infrastructure and educational governance directly contribute to disparities in learning achievement.

Adjustment can be defined as a process by which an individual attempts to cope with, master and transcend the challenges of life by utilizing variety of techniques and strategies. There are two important qualities of adjustment. First adjustment is a process, that it involves continuous change. The second important quality is that people develop consistent patterns of adjusting to these constant changes. Erickson's view on adjustment is that, it is a function of the conflict between inborn instincts and societal demands. He has divided the entire human life span into eight distinct stages. At each stage, the society characterized by a particular culture puts up a specific demand which may or may not suit the urges or instincts manifested at that specific stage by the individual. In this way, at each stage of life one is faced with a crisis the resolution of which can have either a good or bad effect on one's adjustment.

Academic achievement is defined as the performance of the students in the subject they study in the school (Pandey, 2008). Academic achievement determines the student's status in the class. It gives children an opportunity to develop their talents, improve their grades and prepare for the future academic challenges. Academic Achievement known as Classroom achievement generally indicates the learning outcomes of pupils which requires a series of planned and organized experiences. Chaudhary (2004) suggested that academic achievement is the knowledge attained or skills developed by pupils usually in schools, measured by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers pertaining to school subjects or to fields of liberal arts or to sphere of ideas and abstractions. Academic achievement of students especially at the secondary school level is not only a pointer to the effectiveness or otherwise of schools but a major determinant of the future of youths in particular and the nation in general. The medium through which the attainment of individuals and the nation's educational goals can be achieved is learning. Learning outcomes have become a phenomenon of interest to all and this account for the reason why scholars have

been working hard to unravel factors that militate against good academic performance (Aremu & Soka, 2002). This phenomenon has been variedly referred to in literature as academic achievement, or scholastic functioning. Academic achievement of learners has attracted attention of scholars, parents, policy-makers and planners.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The present study is focused in the following objectives

- i. To study the Structural Barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL across sex.
- ii. To compare the Adjustment level of secondary school students living in BPL across sex.
- iii. To compare the Academic Achievement of secondary school students living in BPL across sex.

III. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- (i) There exist no significant differences in the structural barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL across sex.
- (ii) There exist no significant differences in the Adjustment level of secondary school students living in BPL across sex.
- (iii) There exist no significant differences in the Academic Achievement of secondary school students living in BPL across sex.

IV. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study has been delimited to class X students of West Khasi Hills, South West Khasi Hills, West Jaintia Hills and East Jaintia Hills districts of Meghalaya have BPL card of their family.

V. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

For the present study, the researcher conducted the extensive review on the related literature. The following sections describes the reviews of the studies done in India and abroad.

Ikela, P. K. et. al., (2025), in their study on, "Barriers to the education of San children in a rural community in Namibia", revealed that inspite of advances in providing basic education, the needs of educationally marginalized children remain a major challenge. This study investigated the barriers to education experienced by San children in a rural community in the Oshikoto region of Namibia by using the qualitative approach, utilising a descriptive case study design. The findings revealed that San children dropped out of school due to a myriad of factors, such as poverty, lack of parental involvement in education, negative school climate, and teenage pregnancy, among others and to stop this the children required support from the government and schools to complete their education.

Archana Sharma (2023) in her study on "Barriers to accessing secondary education in India", had made a comparative study and concluded that the states of Tamilnadu and Kerala has with its high literacy rate have been successful in reducing the dropout rate of girls in secondary schools by various government initiatives like distributing the free bicycles and other integrated educational programmes with initiatives related to health and nutrition. Whereas, the state of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh continue to struggle with high dropout rate and poor educational outcomes, despite various educational programmes and initiatives.

Darlene Ciuffetelli Parker and Palmina Conversano (2021) in their study on 'Narratives of common barriers and Accessibility: Poverty, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and the Call for a Post-Pandemic New Normal' explained that the intimate, intensely lived, and storied experiences during the pandemic, on teachers' narratives of teaching and education.

Woo, David James (2016) 'Structural barriers and organizational mechanisms for training and deploying ICT champions in a School' argued that the misalignment or contradiction between material and abstract resources within a school is structural barriers to systemic pedagogic innovation and effective teacher professional development.

Singh (2011) emphasizes discrepancies between rural and urban areas as well as a lack of relevant infrastructure. Bertini (2011) highlights the challenges faced by adolescent girls in rural areas in developing countries, thus looking at the intersecting effects of geography and gender. Porta et al. (2011) and Kabeer and Mahmud (2009) analyse the influence of household poverty, location, and gender on equity in education. They show that that poverty is the most significant barrier to educational equity in most countries.

The income of the parents plays a strong determinant of children education. Regarding father's labour market position, we expect fathers who are in salaried employment to be more aware of the importance of education and hence to invest more in their children's education (Breen, R. and Jonsson, J. O. 2005). The study carried out by Basu et al. (2003) find out that fathers who are in salaried employment are more likely to be aware of the importance of education and hence to invest more in their children's education. The children themselves may also be more aware of the benefits of education. Acharya (2007) conducted study in Nepal and found multiple factors i.e. poverty, geography, gender, ethnicity and caste, disability responsible for inequity in education. Glewwe et al. (2011) find ample empirical evidence that enrolment increases significantly when the distance to the nearest school decreases. Singh (2011) emphasizes discrepancies between rural and urban areas as well as a lack of relevant infrastructure. Bertini (2011) highlights the challenges faced by adolescent girls in rural areas in developing countries, thus looking at the intersecting effects of geography and gender.

Filmer and Pritchett (1999) analyse the effect of household wealth on students' educational attainment in developing countries. In South Asia, they identify significant attainment gaps between poor and rich households. Porta et al. (2011) and Kabeer and Mahmud (2009) analyse the influence of household poverty, location, and gender on equity in education. They show that that poverty is the most significant barrier to educational equity in most countries.

The reviewed studies by Hussain, Kumar, and Husain (2008), Zareena and Vatsala (2011), Shivagunde and Kulkarni (2012), DeRosier and Lloyd (2012), Yellaiah (2012), Sindhu (2018), Lee and Ahn (2020), Bunker (2021), Tahir et al. (2022), Nair and Menon (2022), Syed Inshaallah Tahir, Insha Rasool, and Shazia Jan (2022), Fareed et al. (2025), and Tripathi and Pandey (2026) were conducted in the area of students' adjustment, academic stress, home environment, social adjustment, school adjustment, and academic achievement. These studies collectively revealed that adjustment is an important factor influencing students' educational experiences, academic performance, social behaviour, emotional stability, and overall school life. The major factors related to adjustment identified in the reviewed studies include academic stress, home environment, parental education, socioeconomic status, school type (government, private, public), gender, rural-urban location, social support, peer relationships, digital learning environment, and institutional support.

The reviewed studies by Jackson and Lahaderne (1967), Beedawat (1984), Marsh et al. (1985), Hayes et al. (1988), Khurshid Alam and Tondon (1989), Patil and Dash (1990), Vijayalaxmi and Natesan (1992), Harikrishan (1992), Kaur and Gill (1993), Hirschi (1997), Stokes (1990), Bell et al. (1994), Ryckman et al. (1988), Young et al. (1994), Ahmed (1998), Suman and Umapathy (2003), Begum and Phukan (2001), Devi and Mayuri (2003), Robbins et al. (2004), Nuthana (2007), Pandey and Ahmad (2008), Ganihar et al. (2008), Naderi et al. (2009), Baharudin and Luster (1998), Webster, Young, and Fisher (1999), Catsambis (1994), Zhang and Manon (2000), Alam (2006), Ray, Elliott, and Stephen (2006), Annie Isabella (2010), Akan (2014), Khan, Iqbal, and Tasneem (2015), Jayanthi and Srinivasan (2015), Ilomo and Chawanga (2015), Machana et al. (2017), Jain and Mohta (2019), Ogbueghu et al. (2021), Oneye and Onyango (2021), Mabula and Ligembe (2022), Wankasi (2022), Kaizirege and Biswalo (2023), and Nkandu (2025) were conducted in the area of academic achievement, gender differences, socio-economic status, home environment, parental education, achievement motivation, school environment, and students' academic performance. These studies collectively revealed that academic achievement is influenced by multiple interrelated factors such as gender, parental education, socio-economic status, home environment,

study facilities, school type, distance from school, family size, parental involvement, household responsibilities, domestic violence, and achievement motivation. The findings also indicate that while some studies report gender differences in achievement, many others show no significant differences, suggesting that gender alone may not be a strong predictor of academic performance.

VI. METHODOLOGY

For the present study, the researcher employed multistage random sampling and survey method to collect the data from below poverty line secondary school students of West Khasi Hills district in Meghalaya. The researcher constructed the tool "Questionnaire on Structural Barrier for Students" for collecting the data. Also, the researcher used Class IX promotional exam marks for Academic Achievement and Pre-Adolescent Adjustment Scale developed by Pareek and Rao which covered adjustment in home, School, with teachers, with peers and general adjustment in life. For the analysis of the objectives, the researcher used t- test as the statistical tool.

To calculate (t) value from % of scores follow from test with steps. (Garret, H.E (1981). Statistics in Psychology and Education. Vakils, Feffer and Simons Ltd, Bombay, India, P-236.

$$t = \frac{IP_1 - P_2I}{\sigma_{End} \%} \quad P = \frac{N_1 + N_2 P_2}{N_1 + N_2} \quad Q = 100 - P \quad P_1 - \% \text{ of 1st Group}$$

$$P_2 - \% \text{ of 2nd Group} \quad \sigma_{Est} \% = \sqrt{PQ \left[\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right]}$$

VII. FINDINGS

VII.I. FINDINGS ON OBJECTIVE (I)

Table 1: Structural Barriers faced by Secondary School Students Living in BPL									
On Home to School Distance									
Question Sections Q.N.		Total				Sex			
		Yes	%	No	%	Male	%	Female	%
Home to school distance	1 a	651	68	312	32	220	34	431	66
	B	312	32	651	68	79	60	233	60
	C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2	0	0	963	10	299	31	644	69
	3	547	57	416	43	193	35	354	65
	4	687	71	276	29	211	31	476	69

	5	188	19	775	81	218	28	557	72
	Total	398	41	486	59	299	31	664	69

As per the table 1 analysis, it revealed from the data that, 67 % of students home to school distance was 1 km, out of which 34 % male and 66% female. 32 % of students home to school distance was 2km, out of which 40% male and 60 % female students.

Table – 2					
Differentials Among Groups on Structural Barriers faced by Secondary School Students Living in BPL On Home to School Distance					
Variables	Groups	P Value %	SE mean %	't'	Sig/Ns
Sex	Male vs. Female	31/299 69/664	3.50	10.86	Sig*

*Sig at .05** sig at .01 level of significance

From the above table 2 it is found out that there exist significant differences on the scores of structural barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL on home to school distance among sex groups (male Vs female). From the **Mean** %Value it can be seen that female students belonging to BPL used to face significantly higher structural barriers than the male students on home to school distance

Hence, the hypothesis is there are no significant differences in the Structural Barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL across sex is not retain

Table 3: Structural Barriers faced by Secondary School Students Living in BPL On Available of Educational Aids									
Question Sections	Q.N.	Total				Sex			
		Yes	%	No	%	Male	%	Female	%
Available of educational aids	1	572	60	391	40	123	22	449	78
	A	390	41	573	59	128	22	445	78
	B	452	47	511	53	142	28	369	72
	C	388	40	575	60	140	24	435	76
	D	0	0	963	100	299	31	664	69

E	0	0	963	100	299	31	664	69
F	430	45	533	55	187	35	346	65
G	392	41	571	59	145	25	426	75
H	0	0	963	100	299	31	664	69
I	0	0	963	100	299	31	664	69
J	272	29	686	71	163	24	423	76
2	0	0	963	100	299	31	664	69
3	321	33	642	67	188	29	454	71
A	215	22	748	78	238	32	510	68
B	182	19	781	81	255	33	526	67
C	270	28	693	72	206	30	487	70
D	0	0	963	100	299	31	664	69
4	750	78	213	12	239	32	511	68
Total	258	27	705	73	299	29	664	71

From the table 3 analysis of the data on availability of educational aids in schools revealed that 60% of students of BPL category replied that they have educational aids in each classroom in which 41% have charts, maps (47%), Pictures(45%), natural material (Coal, Stone and other locally available metals) (45%), Glove (41%), science instruments only (29%). All the sampled students replied that they do not have e-pictures, e-materials, worksheets and math materials in their schools. Maximum of them have replied that, their school lacking with educational aids for regular teaching learning

Table – 4 Differentials among groups on Structural Barriers faced by Secondary School Students living in BPL Availability of Educational Aids in Schools.					
Variables	Groups	P value/N	S Ed %	‘t’	Sig/Ns
Sex	Male vs. Female	29/299 71/664	3.44	12.21	Sig**

*Sig at .05 ** sig at .01 level of significance

Analysis given in the table 4 on availability of educational aids in schools responded by different groups. The result shows that there exist significant differences on scores of structural barriers on educational aids availability in school among Sex group (Male Vs Female). From mean % value it can be seen that, Female students face more structural barriers on availability of teaching-learning aids in schools than the male students. Hence, hypothesis states that There are no significant differences in the Structural Barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL across sex is not retain

Table 5: Structural Barriers Faced by Secondary School Students Living in BPL
On Available ICT Material in Schools

Question Sections	Q.N.	Total				Sex			
		Yes	%	No	%	Male	%	Female	%
Available ICT material in schools	1	236	25	727	75	276	38	451	62
	A	115	12	848	88	288	40	560	60
	B	115	12	848	88	290	40	558	60
	C	111	12	852	88	280	39	572	61
	D	75	8	888	92	286	39	602	61
	E	15	2	948	98	299	41	649	59
	F	0	0	963	100	299	41	664	59
	G	217	23	746	77	256	35	490	65
	H	108	11	855	89	266	37	589	63
	I	18	2	945	98	270	37	675	63
	J	107	11	856	89	253	35	603	65
	K	12	1	951	99	277	38	674	62
	2	121	13	842	87	280	39	562	61
	3	121	13	842	87	266	37	576	63
	4	352	37	611	63	208	29	403	71
	5	613	64	350	46	215	30	398	70
	Total	146	15	817	85	299	31	664	69

From the table 5 given below analysis of a data on availability of ICT material in schools revealed that, 75% students replied that in their schools they do not have ICT material for teaching-learning and those who had replied, that they have ICT materials in their school, as Computer-Desktop (12%), projector (12%), smart boards (13%), printer (11%), Cameras (2%) and CCTV (11%), which reflects the condition and status of ICT material availability in Secondary Schools of Meghalaya. Due to lack of ICT material teachers are compelled to teach in traditional ways. However, 64% students replied that, learning with ICT material makes them to understand contents in an easier way.

Table-6: Differentials among groups on Structural Barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL On Available ICT material in schools

Variables	Groups	P value/N	SEMD %	't'	Sig/Ns
Sex	Male vs. Female	31/299 69/664	3.45	11.01	Sig**

*Sig at .05 ** sig at .01 level of significance

Analysis given in table-6 on availability of ICT material in schools responded by different groups of Students. The result shows that there exist significant differences on scores of structural barriers on availability of ICT materials in schools among Sex (male Vs Female). From the mean % value it can be seen that, Female students face more structural barriers on availability of ICT materials in school than the boys. Hence, hypothesis one states that There is no significant differences in the Structural Barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL across sex is not retained

Table 7: Structural Barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL On Library corner in school classrooms

Question Sections	Q.N.	Total				Sex			
		Yes	%	No	%	Male	%	Female	%
Library corner in school classrooms	1	258	27	705	73	215	31	490	69
	2a	108	11	855	89	269	32	586	68
	b	196	20	767	80	229	30	536	70
	c	187	19	776	81	238	31	538	69
	d	242	25	721	75	212	29	509	71
	e	963	160	0	0	299	31	664	69
	3	258	27	705	73	232	33	473	67

	Total	316	33	647	67	242	31	542	69
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From the table 7 analysis of the secondary school BPL student's information on structural barriers with respect to library corner in their classroom, which revealed that, 73% of students replied that in their school there is no library corner in their school even not a single book is there in the classroom to refer. From that respondent 69% are female. 27% whose who replied that they have library in their school, out of them 89% replied that neither they visited their school library nor accessed books from the library.

Table – 8: Differentials among groups on Structural Barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL On Examination and Evaluation					
Variables	Groups	MP Value/ N	σ est %	't'	Sig/Ns
Sex	Male vs. Female	21/242 69/542	3.83	9.92	Sig**

*Sig at .05 ** sig at .01 level of significance

In table 8 The BPL category secondary school students responded on structural barriers on library corner in classroom as a dimension and the data analyses in table 7. The result shows that there exist significant differences on scores on library corner in school classroom among sex groups (Male Vs Female). From the mean% value it can be found out that female students replied significantly higher than the male students. Hence, on this dimension hypothesis one states that there are no significant differences in the Structural Barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL across sex is not retained

Table 9: Structural Barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL On sanitation facilities at school for students									
QuestionSections	Q.N.	Total				Sex			
		Yes	%	No	%	Male	%	Female	%
Sanitation facilities for students	1	753	78	208	22	218	29	537	71
	2	893	93	70	7	246	28	647	72
	3	181	19	782	81	248	32	534	68
	4	304	32	659	68	232	35	427	65
	Total	533	56	430	45	236	31	536	69

From the table 9 analysis of the data on sanitation facilities at school for students as dimension of structural barriers, the BPL students replied that Yes in their school sanitation facilities are available (78%), out of which 71% of female from different types of school but, more from Adhoc Schools (50%). 93% of students replied that in their school separate wash room/lavatory facilities are there from male and female students on which replied more by female (71%) and from adhoc school (50%). However, the plights as these that, 81% of students replied that in their school there is no running water and they used to collect water from nearby streams and ponds that near to schools on which female students replied more than the male students and students from adhoc school replied higher than the other groups. On drinking water facilities in schools 68% students replied that there is no such drinking water facilities in their schools and they used to bring from their home. However, in some schools drinking water direct from stream facilities are available as replied by 32% of students. They used to consider stream water is cleaner and use mineral water.

Table – 10: Differentials among groups on Structural Barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL On sanitation facilities at school for students					
Variables	Groups	MP Value/N	σ est%	't'	Sig/Ns
Sex	Male	331236	3.87	9.82	Sig **
	vs.	69/536			
	Female				

*Sig at .05 ** sig at .01 level of significance

In the table 10analysis given on differential among different criterion group on structural barrier face by the secondary school students living in BPL in sanitation facilities at schools. The data revealed that, there exist significant differences on the scores of sanitation facilities ins schools among sex groups (male Vs female). From the mean value of the significant groups, it has been seen that, female students face serious /bad sanitation conditions in their schools than the male students. Hence hypothesis one states that there are no significant differences in the Structural Barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL across sex is not retained

VII.II. FINDINGS ON OBJECTIVE (II)

The Academic Achievement which was collected from the school record of ten sampled secondary schools of class IX promotional exam marks and analyzed the differentials among different groups as per criterion variable of West Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.

Table 11: t-test for Academic Achievement

Criterion groups	Academic Achievement Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't'	Sig/Ns
Sex	Male	299	130.25	6.89	9.02	.01
	Female	664	125.29	9.66		

*Sig at .05 ** sig at .01 level of significance

For the academic achievement the value of 't' in Table 11 indicates that, Male and female secondary school students belonging from Economically Disadvantage group of West Khasi Hills district in Meghalaya differ significantly on their academic achievement score. However, from the mean score it is indicated that the male students have secured higher academic achievement than those of Female students who are studying in same educational settings besides various obstacles. Finally data revealed that, there exist significant differences between BPL students studying secondary schools of Meghalaya on their adjustment in criterion groups of Sex (Male vs. female). Hence, the second hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in adjustment level of secondary school students living in BPL across sex is not retained. Further, it has been found out that the mean scores of adjustment of Female students are better than the male students.

VII.III. FINDINGS ON OBJECTIVE (III)

As per the objectives researcher collected data on adjustment level of secondary school students from Economically Disadvantage group of West Khasi Hills district in Meghalaya by using Pre-Adolescent Adjustment Scale developed by Pareek and Rao which covered adjustment in home, School, with teachers, with peers and general adjustment in life.

Table 12: t-test for Adjustment level

Criterion groups	Adjustment Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't'	Sig/Ns
Sex	Male	299	16.71	6.36	20.83	.01
	Female	644	25.46	5.29		

*Sig at .05 ** sig at .01 level of significance

For the adjustment the value of 't' in Table 12 indicates that, Male and female secondary school students belonging from Economically Disadvantage group of West Khasi Hills district in Meghalaya differ significantly on their adjustment score. However, from the mean score it is indicated that the Female students have better adjustment capacity than those of Male students who are studying in same educational settings besides various difficulties. Finally, data revealed that, there exist significant differences between BPL students studying secondary schools of Meghalaya on their academic achievement in criterion groups of Sex (Male vs. female). Hence, the third hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in academic achievement of secondary school students living in BPL across sex is not retained. Further, it has been found out that the mean scores of academic achievements of male students are better than the female students.

VIII. CONCLUSION

From the study conducted, it is found that, 67 % of students home to school distance was 1 km, out of which 34 % male and 66% female. 32 % of students home to school distance was 2km, out of which 40% male and 60 % female students. It is found out that there exists significant differences on the scores of structural barriers faced by secondary school students living in BPL on home to school distance among male Vs female.). From the **Mean** %Value it has been found out female students used to face significantly higher structural barriers than the male students on home to school distance. There exist significant differences on scores of structural barriers on educational aids availability in school among Male vs. Female. From mean % value it can be seen that, Female students face more structural barriers on availability of teaching-learning aids in schools than the male students. The result show that there exist significant differences on scores of availability of ICT materials in schools among Sex (male Vs Female). From the mean % value it can be seen that, Female students face more structural barriers on availability of ICT materials in school than the Male students. There exist significant differences in scores on library corner in

school classroom among Male Vs Female. From the mean value of the significant groups, it has been seen that, female students face serious /bad sanitation conditions in their schools than the male students.

Also, data revealed that there exist significant differences in the academic achievement between male and female students. It further shows that male students show better Academic Achievement than their female counterpart and it is in the line of the findings by Khurshid Alam and Tondon (1989) and Kaur and Gill (1993) found that boys performed better than girls. But it is contrast to the findings by Marsh et al. (1985), Patil and Dash (1990), Vijayalaxmi and Natesan (1992), Harikrishan (1992), and Devi and Mayuri (2003) who found that girls performed better than boys in academic achievement.

Also, the study shows that there exist significant differences in the adjustment level between male and female students. It further shows that female students show better Academic Achievement than their male counterpart and it is in the line of the findings by Hussain, Kumar, and Husain (2008), Zareena and Vatsala (2011), Lee and Ahn (2020), Bunker (2021), Tahir et al. (2022), Syed Inshaallah Tahir, Insha Rasool, and Shazia Jan (2022), Fareed et al. (2025)

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