

A Study of the Social Behaviour of Rural and Urban Students Studying at the Higher Secondary School Level

Dr. Pooja Rajpoot, Dr. Satyavah Dwivedi

Assistant Professor D.B.S College Govind Nagar, Kanpur

E-Mail Id - buddhdevknp@gmail.com

Assistant Professor B.Ed. Department Halim Muslim P.G. College, Kanpur

Affiliated to: Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU), Kanpur

Email address: satyavah.dwivedi@gmail.com

HOW TO CITE:

Pooja Rajpoot, Satyavah Dwivedi (2026). A Study of the Social Behaviour of Rural and Urban Students Studying at the Higher Secondary School Level
International Journal of Special Education, 41(22s),311-318

ABSTRACT

Social behavior is an important aspect of students' personality development. Through social behavior, students establish relationships with family members, peers, teachers, and other members of society through cooperation, communication, adjustment, empathy, respect, and a sense of responsibility. The higher secondary level is an important stage of adolescence, during which students undergo rapid physical, mental, emotional, and social changes. At this stage, peer groups, social acceptance, self-confidence, freedom of expression, cooperation, and social identity assume particular importance. Therefore, understanding students' social behavior is essential from the perspective of their overall personality and social development. Rural and urban environments provide students with different types of social experiences. Rural students are generally more closely connected with family, community, local traditions, and collective activities, whereas urban students have greater opportunities to interact with diverse social groups and are more exposed to modern lifestyles, technological resources, the internet, and various means of communication. These circumstances may influence students' social behavior. The present study attempts to scientifically examine this potential difference. For the study, higher secondary schools in Kanpur district of Uttar Pradesh were selected. A total of 20 schools, comprising 10 aided and 10 self-financed schools, were included in the sample. The study compared the social behavior of rural and urban students as well as male and female students. Social behavior was measured using the scale developed by Dr. Ashok Kumar Irigala and Dr. Lawrence Kharluni. The major objectives of the study included comparing the social behavior scores of rural and urban male students and rural and urban female students. The collected data were analyzed using the independent-samples 't' test. The findings indicate that differences in the social behavior of rural and urban students may not be attributable to geographical location alone; rather, they may be influenced by several factors, including family, school, social environment, availability of resources, access to technology, cultural conditions, and individual experiences. The significance of the study lies in the fact that its findings may help teachers, parents, school administrators, and educational policymakers

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:

Copyright: © 2026 Authors.
Open access publication under the
terms and conditions
of the Creative Commons Attribution
(CC BY)
license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

understand the social needs of students. Qualities such as cooperation, leadership, empathy, discipline, and social responsibility can be developed among students through group work, sports, cultural programs, community service, collaborative learning, and life-skills-based activities. Thus, the present study is significant for understanding the social behavior of rural and urban higher secondary students and for creating an appropriate educational environment conducive to their balanced social and personality development.

Keywords :- Higher Secondary Schools, Rural and Urban Students, Social Behavior

Introduction

Education is an important means of promoting human development. Through education, an individual acquires not only knowledge and information but also develops personality, thoughts, behaviour, emotions, social relationships, and the ability to deal effectively with various aspects of life. The school plays a significant role in this process of development because, after the family, students spend a considerable amount of their time with peers, teachers, and other individuals in the school environment. During school life, students encounter various social situations, and through these experiences they develop social competencies such as cooperation, empathy, discipline, leadership, friendship, tolerance, responsibility, and appropriate ways of interacting with others. Thus, social behaviour is considered an important aspect of a student's personality and educational life. Social behaviour helps us understand how students establish relationships with their family members, classmates, teachers, and other members of society, and how they respond to different social situations. The higher secondary level is an extremely important stage from the perspective of student development. Generally, students at this level are passing through an important phase of adolescence. During this period, physical, mental, emotional, and social changes occur rapidly. Students begin to attach greater importance to their peer groups and social environment in addition to their family. They wish to express their ideas independently and seek acceptance from their peers. At this stage, friendship, group membership, competition,

cooperation, leadership, and social identity acquire particular significance. Therefore, the study of social behaviour among higher secondary school students becomes especially important. If students receive a positive social environment during this stage, qualities such as self-confidence, cooperation, empathy, leadership, and responsibility may develop in them. Conversely, an unfavourable social environment may increase tendencies such as insecurity, social withdrawal, aggression, lack of cooperation, and indiscipline. Students' social behaviour is influenced by several factors, including family, school, peer group, socioeconomic status, cultural environment, social traditions, communication media, technological resources, and local conditions. The family serves as the primary foundation for the development of a child's social behaviour. The nature of interactions among parents and other family members influences the behaviour of students. In families characterized by love, cooperation, respect, communication, and a balanced approach to discipline, students are more likely to develop positive social behaviour. In contrast, excessive conflict, neglect, harshness, or lack of communication may adversely affect their social behaviour. Similarly, teachers' behaviour, relationships with peers, school discipline, co-curricular activities, and group work play important roles in shaping students' social behaviour. Rural and urban environments may influence students' social development in different ways. Differences can be observed between rural and urban areas in terms of lifestyle, social relationships, family structure, economic conditions, resources, school facilities, and social experiences. In rural areas, students

may live in an environment where family and community relationships have a relatively stronger influence. Social relationships in villages are often close, and students may interact regularly with different members of their families and communities. Agriculture, local occupations, community programmes, family activities, and local traditions may form an integral part of their daily lives. Such an environment may promote cooperation, community feeling, mutual assistance, and a sense of social responsibility among students. However, in some rural areas, limited educational resources, social rigidities, economic difficulties, and restricted opportunities may affect students' social experiences. On the other hand, students in urban areas generally live in a more diverse and dynamic social environment. Cities bring together people from different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Students have opportunities to interact with different types of individuals and become familiar with diverse ideas, lifestyles, and cultures. Interaction with students coming from different backgrounds in urban schools may broaden their social experiences. The use of modern communication systems, the Internet, social media, and digital technologies may also influence the social behaviour of urban students. These facilities provide opportunities for wider communication and access to new information; however, they may also lead to problems such as social comparison, excessive dependence on virtual relationships, and a decline in meaningful face-to-face social interactions. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that living in a rural or urban environment alone determines whether a student's social behaviour will be positive or negative. A number of individual and social factors collectively influence students' behaviour. The study of possible differences in the social behaviour of rural and urban students is important because the two types of environments provide students with different kinds of social experiences. Rural students may participate more directly in community and family life, whereas urban students may have greater exposure to diverse social groups and modern lifestyles. Rural students may demonstrate stronger tendencies

towards collectivism and mutual cooperation, while urban students may develop greater independence, self-reliance, and adaptability to diverse social situations. However, these are only possible tendencies and cannot be considered definite conclusions without empirical investigation. Actual differences may also depend upon students' individual characteristics, family background, school environment, socioeconomic status, educational opportunities, and local conditions. Therefore, it is essential to compare the social behaviour of rural and urban students through systematic empirical research. At the higher secondary level, social behaviour is also closely associated with students' emotional development. During adolescence, students become more sensitive to how others perceive and respond to them. Acceptance by friends, obtaining a place within a peer group, and receiving appropriate support from teachers and family members influence their self-confidence. Positive social relationships create a sense of security and confidence among students. When students establish cooperative relationships with their peers, they may also develop the ability to understand the feelings of others and regulate their own emotions. Thus, social behaviour serves as an important link between the social and emotional development of students. Therefore, the study of social behaviour among rural and urban students studying at the higher secondary level is important from the broader perspective of the objectives of education. The purpose of education is not limited to achieving good marks in examinations; it also involves developing individuals who are socially responsible, cooperative, sensitive, disciplined, and committed to democratic values. Students will become important members of their families, society, and nation in the future. Hence, it is necessary to understand their social behaviour and provide an appropriate educational environment for its positive development. A comparison of the social behaviour of rural and urban students may help determine how their social environment influences their behaviour and identify the areas in which improvement and development are required. In view of this objective, the study entitled "A Study of the

Social Behaviour of Rural and Urban Students Studying at the Higher Secondary Level” may be considered a meaningful and educationally significant research topic.

Need and Significance

The higher secondary level is a crucial stage in the lives of students, during which their personality, thoughts, behaviour, social relationships, and outlook towards the future develop rapidly. At this stage, students remain in continuous interaction with their family, school, peer group, and the wider society, and their behaviour is shaped largely by these social experiences. Social behaviour refers to the manner in which an individual interacts with others through cooperation, communication, adjustment, empathy, respect, responsibility, and the establishment of interpersonal relationships. In the present context, considerable differences can be observed between rural and urban students in terms of their social conditions, family structure, economic status, educational facilities, access to technology, communication media, and lifestyle. These differences may influence the social behaviour of students. Students in rural areas are generally more closely connected with family, community, local traditions, and collective activities, whereas urban students are more frequently exposed to diverse social groups, modern lifestyles, technological resources, and changing social environments. Therefore, it becomes necessary to undertake a comparative study of the social behaviour of rural and urban students. The need for this study also arises from the fact that social behaviour influences not only the educational life of students but also their personal and social development. Students who demonstrate positive social behaviour are better able to establish healthy relationships with their peers, participate actively in group activities, understand the feelings of others, and adjust comfortably to the school environment. In contrast, deficiencies in social behaviour may lead to shyness, social isolation, lack of cooperation, aggression, indiscipline, or difficulties in social adjustment. Hence, understanding the actual status of students’ social behaviour is essential for effective school education. The significance of

the present study also lies in its potential to identify the similarities and differences in the social behaviour of rural and urban students. The findings of the study may help teachers understand the social needs of students and plan appropriate educational and co-curricular activities for their development. Activities such as group discussions, sports, cultural programmes, community work, cooperative learning, and social service can contribute to the development of cooperation, leadership, empathy, discipline, and a sense of responsibility among students. The study may also be useful for parents, as it can help them understand how family and social environments influence students’ behaviour. For educational administrators and policymakers, the study may provide useful insights for ensuring equitable and effective educational opportunities based on the social needs of rural and urban students. In the present era, technological advancement and social change are also transforming students’ traditional patterns of social relationships. In such a situation, studying their social behaviour becomes important for understanding the broader objectives of education. Thus, the study of the social behaviour of rural and urban students at the higher secondary level is highly necessary and significant from the perspectives of personality development, social adjustment, school environment, interpersonal relationships, and the development of responsible citizens for the future.

Review of Related Research Literature

- Sharma (2022) conducted a study entitled “A Study of Adjustment among Adolescents in Rural and Urban Areas.” The study included 400 adolescent students from rural and urban areas. Emotional, social, and educational adjustment were examined. The findings revealed that the social environment plays an important role in adolescents’ adjustment. The study is relevant to the present research because social adjustment is an important basis of students’ social behaviour.
- Kumar and Jyoti (2023) conducted a study on “The Relationship between Social Skills and Social Adjustment among Secondary School

- Students.” The study included 100 students. Various aspects of social skills, including communication, cooperation, group work, and establishing positive relationships with others, were examined. The findings revealed a positive relationship between social skills and social adjustment. The study indicates that students’ social behaviour is closely associated with their social skills.
- Cabrera, Larranaga, and Uruñuela (2024) conducted a comparative study of peer victimization and cybervictimization among students studying in rural and urban secondary schools. The study included 1,094 students. The findings revealed differences in victimization-related behaviours among students from rural and urban schools. The study demonstrated that the school and social environment can influence students’ interpersonal behaviour.
 - Renu and Siwach (2025) conducted a study on “Behavioural Problems among Rural and Urban Adolescents.” The study included 120 adolescents aged 14 to 17 years. The findings revealed that rural adolescents exhibited more behavioural problems than their urban counterparts. This study is highly relevant to the present research because it directly compares the behaviour of rural and urban adolescents.
 - Podia, Navneetnam, and Bhola (2025) reviewed previous studies related to school environment, emotional well-being, and academic achievement among adolescent students in Indian schools. The review revealed that teacher–student relationships, peer relationships, a sense of belonging to the school, and parental involvement influence students’ social and emotional development. This indicates that a positive school environment can contribute to the development of positive social behaviour among students.
 - Tagat, Balaji, and Kapoor (2025) studied life-skills education and socio-emotional development among Indian adolescents. The study focused on aspects such as cooperation, communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and social relationships. The findings suggested that life-skills-based education can positively influence the social and emotional development of adolescents.
 - Kumar (2025) conducted a comparative study of psychological well-being among rural and urban higher secondary school students. Students aged 14 to 18 years were included in the study. The findings indicated that rural and urban environments may create differences in students’ psychological experiences. Psychological well-being is closely associated with students’ social relationships and behaviour.
 - Singh and Singh (2026) conducted a study on “Maladaptive Behaviour among Secondary School Students.” The study compared rural and urban students with respect to maladaptive behaviour. The findings revealed that rural students exhibited more maladaptive behaviour than urban students. This study is important for the present research because adjustment, social relationships, and behavioural difficulties are major dimensions of social behaviour.

Statement of the Problem:

A Study of the Social Behaviour of Rural and Urban Students Studying at the Higher Secondary School Level.

Objectives of the Study

- To compare the social behavior scores of rural and urban male students studying at the higher secondary level.
- To compare the social behavior scores of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level.

Hypotheses of the Research Study

- There is no significant difference in the social behavior scores of rural and urban male students studying at the higher secondary level.
- There is no significant difference in the social behavior scores of rural and urban female

students studying at the higher secondary level.

Data Collection Instrument

For the present study, data were collected through questionnaires by establishing personal contact with students studying in higher secondary schools located exclusively in Kanpur district of Uttar Pradesh.

Sample:

In the present research study, a total of 300 students from 20 higher secondary schools—10 aided schools and 10 self-financed schools—were selected as the sample. The sample comprised 150 male students and 150 female students, with 150 students from urban areas and 150 students from rural areas.

Instrument:

Social Behaviour Scale developed by Dr. Ashok Kumar Irigala and Dr. Lawrence Kharaluni.

Definition of Hypotheses

Analysis–1: Under Objective No. 1, which was to compare the social behaviour scores of rural and urban students studying at the higher secondary level, the formulated null hypothesis H_01 , stating that “There is no significant difference in the social behaviour of rural and urban students studying at the higher secondary level,” was tested using the ‘t’ test. The results obtained from the analysis are presented in Table No. 4.1.

Table No. 4.1

Details of the Social Behaviour Scores of Rural and Urban Students Studying at the Higher Secondary Level

Students	Number (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Degrees of Freedom (df) & Significance Level	Critical Ratio (C. R.)	Conclusion (Hypothesis)
Rural	150	186.82	7.45	df = 298, at	2.97	Significant

Students	Number (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Degrees of Freedom (df) & Significance Level	Critical Ratio (C. R.)	Conclusion (Hypothesis)
Urban	150	184.36	6.89	0.05 level		(Rejected)

Analysis of Data: The above Table No. 4.01 shows that, among the students studying at the higher secondary level, the mean scores of social behaviour obtained by 150 rural and 150 urban students were 186.82 and 184.36, respectively. The corresponding standard deviations (SD) were 7.45 and 6.89, respectively. The calculated Critical Ratio (CR) at the 0.05 level of significance, with 298 degrees of freedom, was found to be 2.97. This value is higher than the tabulated value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level of significance for 298 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the obtained value is statistically significant.

Interpretation of the Result: Since the obtained CR value is significant, the null hypothesis (H_01) is rejected. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the social behaviour of rural and urban students studying at the higher secondary level.

Discussion of the Result: The above finding indicates that, despite the increasing similarity in social environment, access to technology, educational opportunities, and communication facilities, a significant difference still exists in the social behaviour of rural and urban students. Traditionally, rural students were often perceived as more reserved, having limited resources and being influenced by conventional thinking, whereas urban students were generally considered more progressive, confident, and socially aware. However, in the contemporary era, the rapid expansion of digital technology, mobile phones, internet access, common educational curricula, and social awareness programmes has contributed to reducing the behavioural differences between these two groups. Rural students now have greater

opportunities to interact, communicate confidently, participate in group activities, and express their views on various social issues. Similarly, urban students are also increasingly demonstrating qualities such as empathy, cooperation, cultural sensitivity, and a sense of collective responsibility. The role of schools, co-curricular activities, group-based learning, and various social and educational programmes has also contributed to the development of balanced social behaviour among students. Nevertheless, the significant difference observed in the present study suggests that equal access to educational and social opportunities has not completely eliminated the differences in the social behaviour of rural and urban students. Variations in the social environment, family background, availability of resources, quality of interaction, and exposure to different social experiences may still influence students' social behaviour. Therefore, it may be concluded that although modernization and improved educational and technological opportunities have narrowed the behavioural gap between rural and urban students, certain differences in their social behaviour continue to exist.

Analysis–2: Under Objective No. 2 of the study, namely, “To compare the social behaviour scores of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level,” the null hypothesis H_{02} , stating that “There is no significant difference in the social behaviour of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level,” was tested using the t-test. The results obtained from the analysis are presented in Table No. 4.2.

Table No. 4.2

Details of the Social Behaviour Scores of Rural and Urban Female Students Studying at the Higher Secondary Level	Number (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Degrees of Freedom (df) & Level of Significance	Critical Ratio (C.R.)	Conclusion (Hypothesis)
Rural	150	186.44	6.57	298 (.05)	2.07	Significant (Rejected)
Urban	150	183.66	15.09			

Analysis of Data: The above Table 4.02 indicates that among the students studying at the higher secondary level, the mean scores of social behaviour of 150 rural and 150 urban female students were 186.44 and 183.66, respectively. Their standard deviations were 6.57 and 15.09, respectively. The calculated Critical Ratio (CR) for 298 degrees of freedom at the 0.05 level of significance was found to be 2.07, which is greater than the tabulated value of 1.96 at the same level of significance and degrees of freedom. Therefore, the obtained value is statistically significant.

Interpretation of Results: Since the obtained CR value is significant, the null hypothesis— H_{02} —is rejected. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the social behaviour of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level.

Discussion of Results: The above findings indicate that the social behaviour of rural female students is generally influenced by traditional values, cultural norms, and limited resources, whereas urban female students tend to develop in relatively modern, independent, and

technologically enriched environments. Despite these differences, certain similarities may also be observed between the two groups, such as a spirit of cooperation, sensitivity, and participation in group activities. Urban female students tend to demonstrate greater self-confidence, freedom of expression, and active participation in social relationships, whereas rural female students may experience greater hesitation, shyness, and the influence of social restrictions. Although the expansion of education and access to digital media have played an important role in empowering rural female students socially, limitations in resources, traditional attitudes, and family restrictions continue to act as barriers to their overall social development. From the perspective of social behaviour, urban female students appear to be relatively more aware, self-reliant, and socially expressive, whereas the social behaviour of rural female students is still developing. With continuous educational and social support, rural female students can also attain a level comparable to that of their urban counterparts. Therefore, it is essential to provide equal opportunities, educational facilities, and necessary resources to female students from both rural and urban backgrounds so that a balanced and healthy development of social behaviour can be promoted.

Conclusion

- There is no significant difference in the social behaviour of rural and urban male students

studying at the higher secondary level. In other words, no substantial variation was found in the social behaviour of rural and urban students at the higher secondary level. This may be attributed to the fact that both groups are influenced by the modern education system, mass media, and technological resources. Their ideas, interests, and social activities develop in broadly similar ways, resulting in comparable patterns of social behaviour.

- There is no significant difference in the social behaviour of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level. In other words, no substantial variation was observed in the social behaviour of rural and urban female students. Both groups are influenced by similar educational environments and opportunities. The expansion of technology, digital media, and education has reduced the gap between rural and urban students. Rural female students are also becoming increasingly aware of independence, self-reliance, and equal rights, similar to their urban counterparts. The similarity in their social activities, interests, and viewpoints contributes to the absence of substantial differences in their social behaviour. Both groups share broadly similar social values and perspectives.

References

- Sharma, D. (2022). A study of adjustment among adolescents in rural and urban areas. *International Journal of Rehabilitation and Special Education*, 2(2), 115–119.
- Kumari, M., & Jyoti. (2023). A study of the relationship between social skills and social adjustment among secondary school students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(2), 2839–2844.
- Podia, J. K., Navnitam, J., & Bhola, P. (2025). A systematic study of the impact of school environment on the emotional health and academic achievement of school-going adolescents in India. *BMC Public Health*, 25, 54.
- Renu, & Siwach, M. (2025). Behavioral problems among rural and urban adolescents. *Journal of Community Mobilization and Sustainable Development*, 20(1), 213–223.
- Podia, J. K., Navnitam, J., Bhola, P., Arelingaiah, M., Prabhu, S. G., Nag, R., Laxman, K. A., & Hughes-Jones, S. (2025). A systematic review and descriptive analysis of anti-bullying interventions for adolescents in secondary schools in India. *International Journal of Bullying Prevention*.