



Self-Esteem of Secondary School Students Belonging To the Mannan Community

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ABSTRACT

Self-esteem is an individual's total sense of personal worth and respect, which reflects how they view, evaluate, and value themselves. Self-esteem is important for teenagers, particularly those in secondary school, because it influences academic progress, social relationships, emotional well-being, and long-term goals. A unique blend of cultural history, socioeconomic reality, and educational experiences influences self-esteem among pupils from the Mannan community, a Scheduled Tribe that primarily lives in Kerala's Idukki region. The current study focusses on the self-esteem of secondary school pupils from the Mannan community, a marginalised indigenous group that lives largely in Kerala's Idukki district. The study's goal was to examine the general level of self-esteem among these children and investigate variances based on demographic variables such as gender, class level, and kind of school. A descriptive survey method was used to collect data from a representative sample of secondary school students in the Mannan community using Self-Esteem Scale, which was developed by the investigator. The data demonstrated that the majority of students had a moderate level of self-esteem, with significant disparities across demographic categories. Students' self-perceptions were found to be influenced by factors such as socioeconomic background, cultural identity, and access to extracurricular activities. The study also found that there exists a significant difference in the self-esteem of secondary



school students belonging to the Mannan community with regards to gender, class of study and type of school. The study emphasises the need of culturally sensitive pedagogy, guidance and counselling services, and community involvement in developing positive self-esteem. It indicates that increasing self-esteem is critical not just for boosting academic performance, but also for encouraging social integration, cultural pride, and general personal development among Mannan adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is a fundamental psychological construct that represents a person's overall assessment of their worth, abilities, and social value. During adolescence, especially in secondary school, self-esteem is critical in shaping academic achievement, social interactions, emotional well-being, and life goals. It has an impact on how pupils view themselves, respond to difficulties, and interact with their local environment as well as society at large. Low self-esteem during this developmental stage has been linked to poor academic performance, withdrawal from social activities, behavioural issues, and lower future aspirations, whereas healthy self-esteem promotes resilience, motivation, and positive life outcomes (Rosenberg, 1965; Orth & Robins, 2014). The study of self-esteem is especially important when focussing on pupils from marginalised or indigenous populations, whose sociocultural, economic, and educational circumstances may differ significantly from the general population. The Mannan community, which is classified as a Scheduled Tribe in Kerala, is primarily situated in the Idukki district. Traditionally noted for their unique governance structure led by a hereditary king, the Mannans have historically relied on agriculture, forest produce, and customary laws for survival. However, as with many indigenous communities, they face obstacles such as restricted access to quality education, economic restraints, cultural marginalisation, and insufficient representation in mainstream developmental strategies. These socioeconomic and cultural factors might have a direct or indirect impact on Mannan adolescents' self-esteem, altering their academic and social participation.

Secondary school students from the Mannan community often experience a complex interplay of traditional cultural identity and the pressures of adapting to the modern educational system. The mismatch between home and school environments, exposure to stereotypes, and the struggle to reconcile indigenous traditions with contemporary aspirations can either erode or enhance their self-esteem depending on the support systems available. Investigating their self-esteem is, therefore, not only crucial



for understanding their psychological well-being but also for designing culturally responsive educational strategies that empower them. The purpose of this study is to investigate the self-esteem levels of secondary school students from the Mannan community, as well as how their socio-cultural background, educational experiences, and personal perceptions influence their self-concept. By doing so, it hopes to contribute to the larger conversation about tribal education, adolescent development, and inclusive pedagogical approaches in India. The findings may provide useful information for educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders seeking to promote equal educational opportunities and holistic development for tribal adolescents.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Self-esteem is an important factor in a person's entire development, influencing academic success, social adjustment, emotional stability, and decision-making abilities. Developing a strong self-concept during adolescence, especially in secondary school, is critical for promoting resilience, goal orientation, and positive social behaviour. Self-esteem is particularly important for students from marginalised and indigenous communities because it modulates the consequences of socioeconomic adversity, cultural marginalisation, and educational disparities (Baumeister et al., 2003). The Mannan community, a Scheduled Tribe in Kerala, has a distinct socio-cultural legacy, but they also confront economic constraints, restricted access to excellent education, and little representation in mainstream developmental programs. Mannan secondary school pupils frequently struggle to reconcile traditional beliefs with formal schooling demands, resulting in identity conflicts, feelings of inadequacy, and motivation gaps. Their self-esteem levels have a substantial impact on their ability to adjust to educational expectations, overcome sociocultural barriers, and actively engage in community and national development.

Despite the widely acknowledged role of self-esteem in adolescent development, there is a scarcity of empirical research on tribal populations in Kerala, particularly the Mannans. The present study gives information about psychological well-being and academic engagement of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community. It is useful in identifying socio-cultural and educational elements that either increase or decrease self-esteem and it help to facilitates the development of culturally responsive educational interventions that uphold indigenous identity while encouraging personal progress and provides guidance to policymakers, educators, and community leaders in developing inclusive and supportive learning environments. By addressing this gap, the current study can



contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical measures for improving the scholastic and social outcomes of secondary school children in the Mannan community. Instilling good self-esteem in these students is critical not only for their personal development, but also for the maintenance of their cultural identity and active involvement in the larger societal framework.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Adolescence is a vital period in human development when people construct their identities, develop self-perceptions, and establish a feeling of self-worth. Self-esteem, defined as an individual's total assessment of their own worth, has been found to influence academic achievement, social conduct, emotional well-being, and future goals. A high level of self-esteem in secondary school allows kids to adjust to academic challenges, interact well with peers and teachers, and confidently pursue personal and educational goals. In contrast, low self-esteem can result in withdrawal, poor academic achievement, emotional suffering, and less life options. Students from indigenous and marginalised groups' self-esteem is influenced not just by personal experiences, but also by socio-cultural, economic, and educational environments. The Mannan community, a Scheduled Tribe in Kerala, has a rich cultural past but suffers continuous issues such as economic deprivation, limited access to quality education, cultural marginalisation, and under-representation in mainstream development efforts. Secondary school kids in this community frequently traverse a dual environment, preserving traditional cultural norms at home while adapting to modern educational systems. Such circumstances may cause identity conflicts, feelings of inadequacy, and low self-esteem, potentially affecting their educational involvement and overall development. The present study deals with the self-esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community. Hence the present study is entitled as **'Self-Esteem of Secondary School Students belonging to the Mannan Community'**.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Is there any significant difference in the Self-Esteem of boys and girls of secondary schools belonging to the Mannan Community?
- Is there any significant difference in the Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community based on Type of School?



- Is there any significant difference in the Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community when classified on the basis of class of study?
- Is there any significant association between Self-Esteem and Gender of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community?

HYPOTHESES FORMULATED FOR THE STUDY

1. There exists a significant difference in the Self-Esteem of boys and girls of secondary schools belonging to the Mannan Community.
2. There exists a significant difference in the Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community based on Type of School (Government and Tribal).
3. There exists a significant difference in the Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community when classified on the basis of Class of Study (VIII, IX and X)
4. There exists a significant association between Self-Esteem and Gender of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the level of Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community.
2. To find out whether there exists any significant difference in the Self-Esteem of boys and girls of secondary schools belonging to the Mannan Community.
3. To find out whether there exists any significant difference in the Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community based on type of school (Government and Tribal).
4. To find out whether there exists any significant difference in the Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community when classified on the basis of class of study (VIII, IX and X).
5. To find out whether there exists any significant association between Self-Esteem and Gender of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community.



METHODOLOGY

Method adopted for the Study

Survey method was adopted by the investigator for the present study.

Population of the Study

All the secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community were the population of the present study.

Sample selected for the Study

The sample of the study consists of 433 secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community from Idukki district.

Tools used for the Study

A Self-Esteem Inventory developed by the investigator was used for the present study. The Self-Esteem Inventory consisted of 47 items and it has options like agree, undecided and disagree. The Self-Esteem Inventory measures the components of Self-Esteem viz; Self-Worth, Self-Confidence, Self-Identity, Personal Competency, and Sense of Belonging. The maximum score of the scale is 141 and the minimum score is 47.

Statistical Techniques used for the Study

Descriptive Statistics (Mean, Median and Standard Deviation), Inferential Statistics (t-test and ANOVA and χ^2 Test) were the statistical techniques used for the present study.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The major objective of the study is to find out Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community. Based on the objectives of the study, the obtained data were subjected to suitable statistical analysis and are interpreted under the following headings.

- **ANALYSIS ON THE LEVEL OF SELF-ESTEEM OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BELONGING TO THE MANNAN COMMUNITY.**
- **COMPARISON OF SELF-ESTEEM OF BOYS AND GIRLS OF SECONDARY**



SCHOOLS BELONGING TO THE MANNAN COMMUNITY.

- **COMPARISON OF SELF-ESTEEM OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BELONGING TO THE MANNAN COMMUNITY BASED ON TYPE OF SCHOOL.**
- **COMPARISON OF SELF-ESTEEM OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BELONGING TO THE MANNAN COMMUNITY WHEN CLASSIFIED ON THE BASIS OF CLASS OF STUDY (VIII, IX AND X).**
- **ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND GENDER OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BELONGING TO THE MANNAN COMMUNITY.**

ANALYSIS ON THE LEVEL OF SELF-ESTEEM OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BELONGING TO THE MANNAN COMMUNITY.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistical scores of Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community.

Table 1

The Descriptive Statistical Scores of Self-Esteem of Secondary School Students belonging to the Mannan Community

Variable	N	Mean	Median	95 % CI		SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
				Lower	Upper			
Self-Esteem	433	101.63	102.00	100.56	102.69	11.26	-0.158	-0.788

From Table 1, it is seen that the mean Self-esteem score was 101.63 with SD 11.26. Also, the median score reported was 102.00 indicating that more than half of the students obtained self-esteem scores above 102.00. The Self-esteem score distribution is negatively skewed since the skewness factor was -0.158. Thus, majority of the scores concentrated at the upper end. The kurtosis level reported is -0.788. Both the skewness and kurtosis values were in between +2 and -2 showed that the distribution of scores is not much deviated from the normal distribution. The 95% confidence interval for the mean of



self-esteem scores ranges from 100.56 to 102.69. Thus, it can be concluded that the self-esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community is average.

The level of self-esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community were analysed and the details are presented in Table 2 and Figure 1. The calculated mean value for self-esteem is 101.63 and standard deviation is 11.26. The secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community scored greater than 112.89 (i.e., Mean + Standard Deviation) have high level of self-esteem and those who scored less than 90.37 (i.e., Mean – Standard Deviation) have low level of self-esteem. The secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community scored between 112.89 and 90.37 have average level of self-esteem.

Table 2

Number and Percentage of Secondary School Students Belonging to the Mannan Community in Different Levels of Self-Esteem

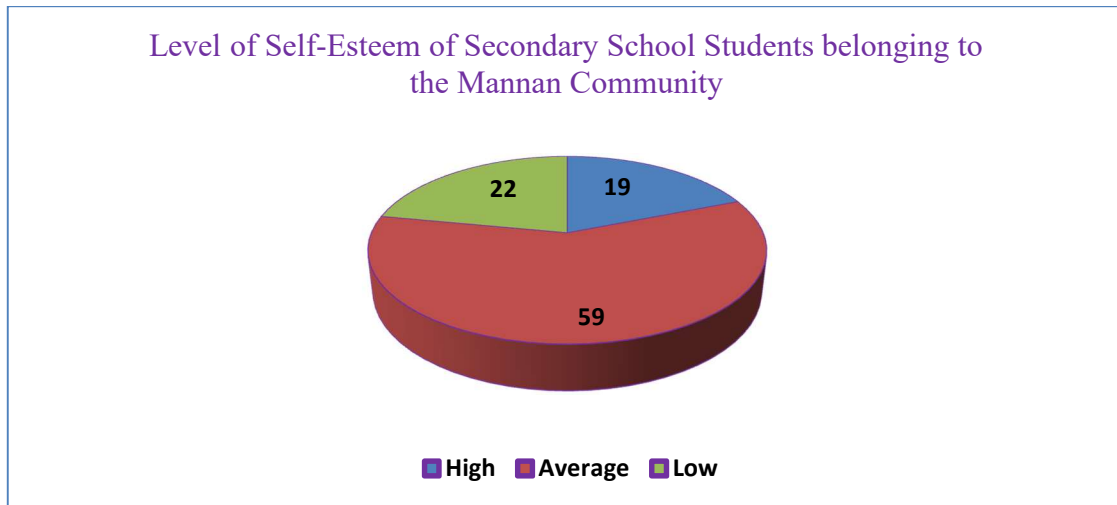
Level of Self-Esteem	No. of Students	Percentage
High	81	19
Average	255	59
Low	97	22
Total	433	100

From Table 2, it is interpreted that, 19% of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community have high level of self-esteem, 59% of them have average level of self-esteem and the remaining 22% have low level of self-esteem. The diagrammatic representation of different levels of self-esteem were shown in Figure 1.

The mean and standard deviation of self-esteem of boys and girls of secondary schools belonging to the Mannan Community were calculated. The significance of difference between the mean score of boys and girls were found out by calculating the t-value.

Figure 1

Pie Diagram Showing the Percentage of Different Levels of Self-Esteem of Secondary School Students belonging to the Mannan Community



COMPARISON OF SELF-ESTEEM OF BOYS AND GIRLS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS BELONGING TO THE MANNAN COMMUNITY

The data and results of the test of significance of difference between the large independent sample are given in Table 3.

Table 3

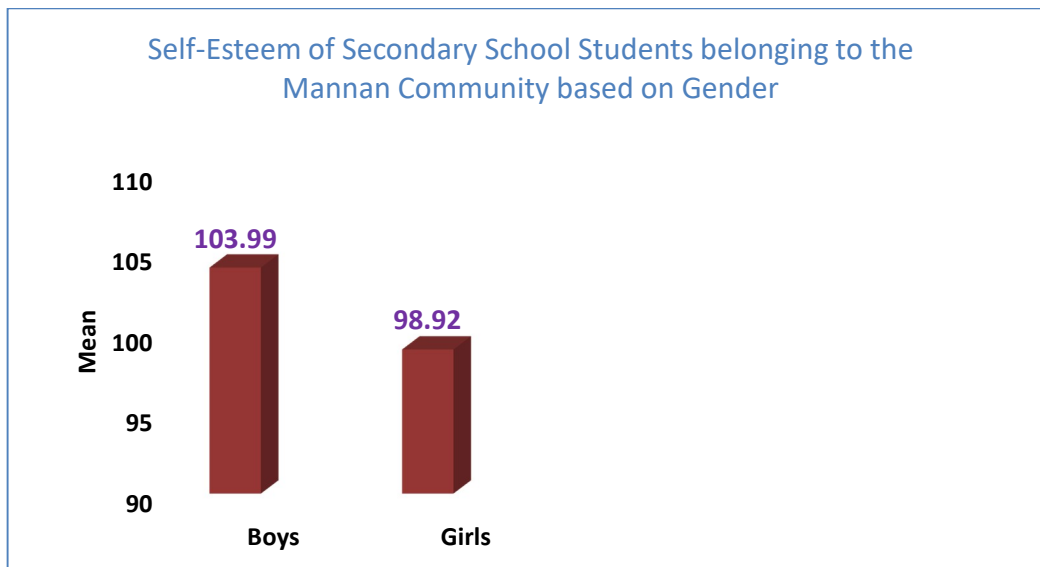
Data and Results of Test of Significance of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Self-Esteem of Boys and Girls of Secondary Schools belonging to the Mannan Community

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	CR	df	Level of Sig.	Effect Size
Self-Esteem	Boys	231	103.99	10.19	4.796	431	p<0.01	0.459
	Girls	202	98.92	11.83				

Table 3 shows the results of independent sample t test for comparing the significant mean differences in self-esteem scores between boys and girls of secondary schools belonging to the Mannan Community. The critical ratio obtained is 4.796 which is statistically significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). Effect size for this difference was 0.459. The calculated effect size was greater than 0.2 which clearly indicates a medium effect size. (Rule of thumb for interpreting effect size as a small effect size is 0.20, a medium effect size is 0.50 and a large effect size is 0.80 (Cohen, 1988)). It shows that there exists a significant difference in the self-esteem of boys and girls of secondary schools belonging to the Mannan Community. The inference is that the mean self-esteem scores of boys (mean=103.99, SD=10.19) is significantly higher than those of girls (mean=98.92, SD=11.83). The diagrammatic representation for the comparison of mean Self-esteem scores of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community based on gender is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Diagrammatic Representation for the Comparison of Self Esteem of Boys and Girls of Secondary Schools belonging to the Mannan Community



COMPARISON OF SELF-ESTEEM OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

BELONGING TO THE MANNAN COMMUNITY BASED ON TYPE OF SCHOOL

The mean and standard deviation of self-esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community based on type of school (Tribal and Government school) were calculated. The significance of difference between the mean scores of the Mannan secondary school students who are



studying in tribal schools and government schools were found out by calculating the t-value. The data and results of the test of significance of difference between the large independent sample are given in Table 4.

Table 4

Data and Results of Test of Significance of Difference between the Mean Scores of Self-Esteem of Secondary School Students belonging to the Mannan Community based on Type of School

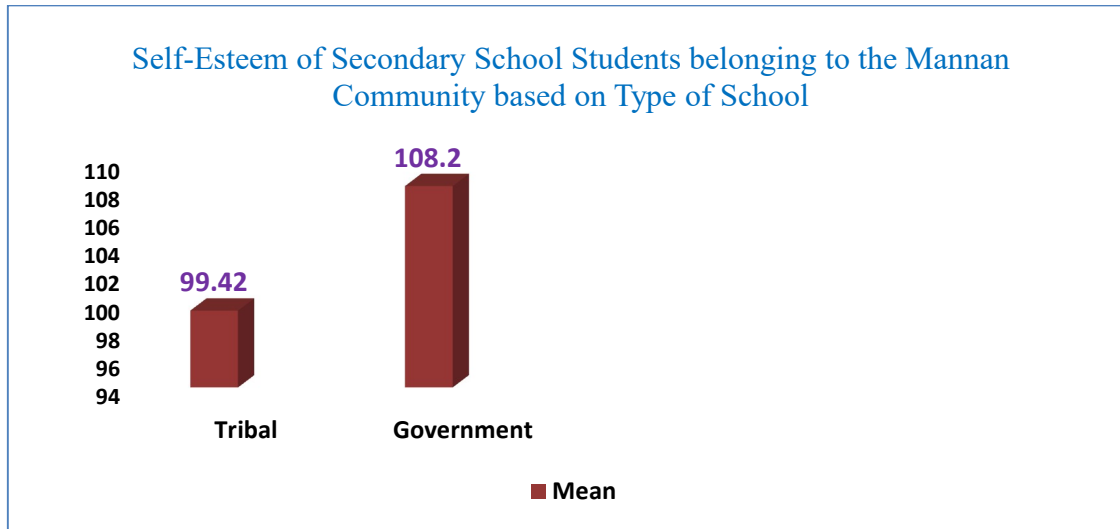
Variable	Type of School	N	Mean	SD	CR	df	Level of Sig.	Effect Size
Self-Esteem	Tribal	189	99.42	10.38	9.912	431	p<0.01	0.945
	Government	244	108.2	8.01				

Table 4 shows the results of independent sample t test for comparing the significant mean differences in self-esteem scores of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community based on type of school (Tribal & Government schools). The critical ratio obtained is 9.912 which is statistically significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). Effect size for this difference was 0.945. The calculated effect size was greater than 0.8 which clearly indicates a large effect size. It shows that there exists a significant difference in the self-esteem of the Mannan secondary school students based on type of school. The inference is that the mean self-esteem scores of the Mannan secondary school students who are studying in the government schools (mean=108.2, SD=8.01) is significantly higher than those who are studying in the tribal schools (mean=99.42, SD=10.38). The diagrammatic representation for the comparison of mean self-esteem scores of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community based on type of school is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3

Diagrammatic Representation for the Comparison of Self-Esteem of Secondary School Students belonging to the Mannan Community based on Type of School



COMPARISON OF SELF-ESTEEM OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

BELONGING TO THE MANNAN COMMUNITY WHEN CLASSIFIED ON THE

BASIS OF CLASS OF STUDY (VIII, IX AND X)

To compare the self-esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community when classified on the basis of class of study (VIII, IX and X), the investigator used ANOVA. The details of analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Comparison of Self Esteem Scores Across Groups VIII, IX, and X Using ANOVA

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F value	Level of Sig.
Between Groups	6819.364	2	3409.682		
Within Groups	49210.4	430	114.4428	29.794	0.01**
Total	56029.76	432			

****:** Significant at 0.01 Level



From the table, it is clear that there is significant difference in the mean scores of self-esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community ($F=29.794$, $p<0.01$) when classified on the basis of class of study (VIII, IX and X) at 0.01 level. Hence there is a need for conducting post-hoc analysis to find in which group, the significant difference exists. Hence the investigator used Scheffe's test of post-hoc analysis. The details are given in Table 6.

Table 6

Post hoc Analysis of Self-Esteem Scores Across Groups VIII, IX, and X

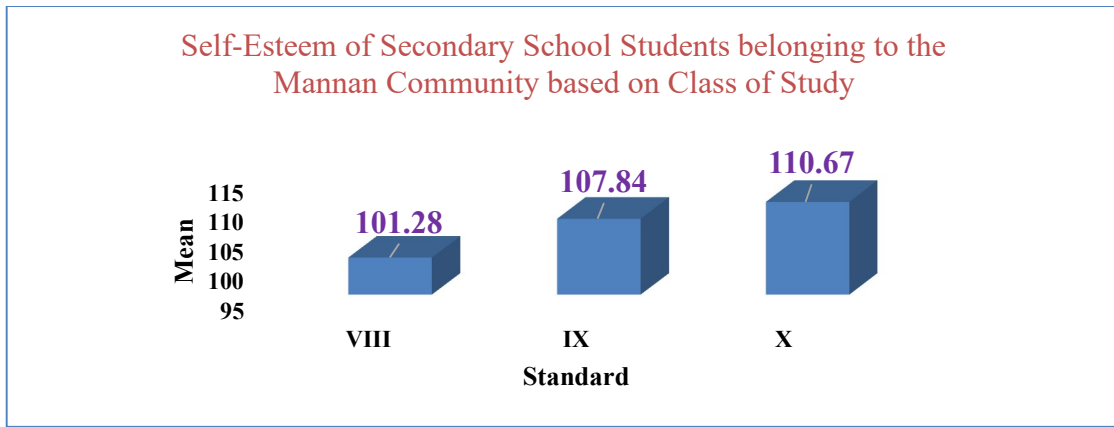
Variable	Class	N	Mean	SD	Pairs	Mean	Std.	p value
						difference	Error	
Self - Esteem	VIII	158	101.28	10.083	VIII - IX	6.555**	1.233	0.001
					VIII - X	9.387**	1.264	0.001
	IX	144	107.84	10.546	IX - VIII	6.555**	1.233	0.001
					IX - X	2.831NS	1.292	0.092
	X	131	110.67	11.551	X - VIII	9.387**	1.264	0.001
					X - IX	2.831NS	1.292	0.092

****:** Significant at 1% (P value <0.01); **NS:** Not Significant at 5% (p value > 0.05)

From the above table, Scheffe's post hoc test shows VIII standard students belonging to the Mannan Community has significantly lower self-esteem than IX and X standard students. There is no significant difference is found in the self-esteem of IX and X standard students. Specifically, the self-esteem of standard VIII vs. IX and standard VIII vs. X are significant (p value < 0.01), while standard IX vs. X is not significant (p value = 0.092).

Figure 4

Diagrammatic Representation of Comparison of Self Esteem Scores Across Groups VIII, IX, and X



ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND GENDER OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BELONGING TO THE MANNAN COMMUNITY

Table 7 shows the association between gender and self-esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community by using Chi- square test of independence.

Table 7

Association between Self-Esteem and Gender of Secondary School Students belonging to the Mannan Community

Variable	Gender	Levels			Total	χ^2	Level of Sig	
		H	A	L				
Self-Esteem	Boys	Count	46	145	40	231	7.386	0.05
		Percentage	20	63	17	100		
	Girls	Count	34	111	57	202		
		Percentage	17	55	28	100		

H- High A- Average L- Low

Table 7 shows the data and results of Chi- square test of the association between self-esteem and gender of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community. The result reveals that there exists a significant association between the levels of self-esteem and gender of secondary school students



belonging to the Mannan Community since the calculated Chi square is 7.386 with degrees of freedom 2. Thus, it is found that the association between self-esteem and gender of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community is significant 0.05 level.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The level of Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community is average.
- There was a significant difference in the Self-Esteem of boys and girl of secondary schools belonging to the Mannan Community.
- There was a significant difference in the Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community based on type of school.
- There was a significant difference in the Self-Esteem of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community when classified on the basis of class of study.
- There was a significant association between Self-Esteem and Gender of secondary school students belonging to the Mannan Community.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study on the self-esteem of secondary school students from the Mannan community have practical and policy implications for educational practice, curriculum planning, teacher training, and community-based interventions. These implications are critical for promoting holistic development and closing sociocultural and intellectual gaps.

- Textbooks that include Mannan indigenous history, traditions, and values can help children feel valued and appreciated.
- Teachers should receive training to comprehend Mannan students' socio-cultural backgrounds, obstacles, and capabilities.
- Schools should offer regular counselling sessions to help students with poor self-esteem, particularly those who suffer from social anxiety.
- Workshops for parents can be conducted to help them encourage and support their children's scholastic goals while maintaining their ethnic identity.



- Providing opportunities for Mannan students to demonstrate their talents in art, sports, storytelling, or traditional crafts helps boost their self-esteem.
- Activities that promote self-reflection, goal setting, and the identification of personal qualities can help children see themselves as capable and valuable individuals.

CONCLUSION

The current study investigated the self-esteem of secondary school pupils from the Mannan community, a marginalised indigenous population with a distinct sociocultural identity. According to the findings, personal, socioeconomic, and educational characteristics all have an impact on these pupils' self-esteem. Cultural marginalisation, restricted access to different learning opportunities, and financial constraints frequently impede the formation of a healthy self-concept. However, the study also emphasises Mannan students' resilience and adaptive capacity when exposed to supportive learning settings, culturally responsive pedagogy, and opportunity for meaningful engagement in academic and co-curricular activities. The findings highlight the importance of focused educational interventions, teacher sensitisation, and community engagement in fostering self-esteem and improving overall academic and personal progress. Mannan pupils' scholastic achievement, as well as their social integration, cultural pride, and long-term empowerment, all benefit from increased self-esteem. The study underscores that achieving equity in education necessitates addressing both psychological and socio-cultural elements, ensuring that each learner is identified, appreciated, and given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

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