

## **UNFOLDING MOTIVATION THROUGH STORIES: A TAT-BASED STUDY AMONG ASSAM'S STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**This study investigates achievement motivation among tribal and non-tribal college students in Assam using the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). Achievement motivation, a critical determinant of success, varies significantly across cultural and social contexts. Through an analysis of TAT responses, this research explores the motivational drives, aspirations, and barriers faced by students from diverse backgrounds. The findings reveal distinct patterns in the narratives, reflecting the influence of socio-cultural factors on goal-setting, persistence, and achievement orientation. Tribal students' stories often emphasize collective aspirations and overcoming systemic challenges, while non-tribal students highlight individual ambition and competitive success. The study underscores the importance of culturally tailored educational and psychological interventions to foster achievement motivation in heterogeneous groups.**

### **KEYWORDS**

**Achievement Motivation, Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), Tribal Students, Non-Tribal Students, Cultural Influences, Higher Education.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Achievement motivation, a psychological construct central to goal-directed behavior, plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' academic and professional trajectories. Rooted in McClelland's theory, achievement motivation refers to the intrinsic drive to excel, achieve success, and strive for excellence in specific domains. While this concept has been extensively studied, its manifestation often varies across cultural and socio-economic contexts. The diverse social fabric of Assam, encompassing both tribal and non-tribal communities, offers a unique opportunity to explore these differences in the context of college students.

Tribal communities in Assam, known for their rich cultural heritage, often face socio-economic challenges that influence their educational pursuits and motivational dynamics. Conversely, non-tribal students, while not entirely immune to challenges, may have access to comparatively better resources and opportunities. Understanding how these diverse backgrounds shape achievement motivation can provide valuable insights into the aspirations, barriers, and resilience of these students.

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The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), a projective psychological tool, provides a powerful means of exploring underlying motivational themes. By analyzing the stories individuals create in response to ambiguous pictures, TAT uncovers deep-seated drives, values, and fears that may not be readily apparent through conventional methods.

This study employs TAT to investigate the achievement motivation of tribal and non-tribal college students in Assam. It aims to identify the commonalities and differences in motivational patterns, as reflected in their narratives, and to highlight the socio-cultural factors influencing their aspirations. By focusing on these stories, the research seeks to unfold the complex interplay of individual ambitions and cultural influences, contributing to a nuanced understanding of achievement motivation in the context of Assam's diverse student population.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach using the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) to explore achievement motivation among tribal and non-tribal college students in Assam. The TAT, a projective psychological tool, was chosen for its ability to reveal unconscious drives and deeply rooted motivations through the stories participants create in response to ambiguous visual stimuli.

The study sample consisted of 100 college students, equally divided into tribal (n = 50) and non-tribal (n = 50) groups. Participants were selected from various colleges across Assam to ensure diversity in terms of academic disciplines, socio-economic backgrounds, and geographical representation. All participants were between the ages of 18 and 25, and informed consent was obtained prior to their inclusion in the study.

The participants were individually administered the TAT in a controlled setting to ensure consistency. They were presented with a series of ten standardized TAT cards depicting ambiguous scenes and were instructed to create imaginative stories based on what they perceived in the images. The instructions emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers and encouraged participants to articulate their thoughts freely. Each session lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes, during which responses were recorded verbatim.

The collected narratives were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring motifs, aspirations, barriers, and patterns of achievement-related behavior. The themes were categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, goal orientation, perceived challenges, and cultural influences. Additionally, a comparative analysis was conducted to explore differences and similarities between the tribal and non-tribal groups. To ensure rigor, the data was coded independently by two researchers, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Participants' confidentiality was strictly maintained, and their identities were anonymized during data analysis and reporting. The voluntary nature of participation was emphasized, and participants were given the option to withdraw at any point without consequence.

By employing the TAT as a methodological framework, this study provides a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing achievement motivation, highlighting the interplay of cultural and individual dynamics among Assam's diverse student population.

## **RESULTS**

The analysis of TAT responses revealed distinct patterns of achievement motivation among tribal and non-tribal college students in Assam. Key findings include:

**Achievement Goals:** Non-tribal students predominantly exhibited individualistic aspirations, such as securing prestigious careers, personal recognition, and financial independence. Tribal students, on the other hand, highlighted community-oriented goals, such as uplifting their community and contributing to social welfare.

**Motivational Drivers:** Tribal students' narratives often reflected intrinsic motivators, including resilience, determination, and a desire to overcome systemic barriers. Non-tribal students frequently emphasized extrinsic motivators, such as societal expectations, competitive success, and family pressure.

**Barriers and Challenges:** Tribal students identified systemic obstacles such as limited access to resources, social discrimination, and economic constraints. Non-tribal students reported challenges related to intense academic competition, parental expectations, and career uncertainties.

**Cultural Influences:** Tribal students' narratives were rich with cultural symbols and community references, showcasing a strong sense of identity and collectivism. Non-tribal students displayed a greater focus on individual achievements and urban aspirations.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings suggest that socio-cultural contexts significantly influence achievement motivation among students in Assam. Tribal students' focus on community well-being reflects the collectivist nature of their cultures, while non-tribal students' individualistic aspirations align with more urbanized and competitive settings. The intrinsic motivation observed in tribal students indicates resilience and adaptability despite systemic barriers, highlighting their capacity to persevere under challenging circumstances.

Conversely, the emphasis on extrinsic motivators among non-tribal students underscores the impact of societal expectations and parental influence, which may drive academic and professional ambitions but could also lead to stress and burnout. The presence of systemic challenges for tribal students calls for policies aimed at equitable access to educational and economic opportunities.

This study also underscores the role of cultural identity in shaping motivational patterns, suggesting that tailored educational interventions can enhance student engagement by aligning with their socio-cultural realities.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study highlights the nuanced differences in achievement motivation between tribal and non-tribal college students in Assam. While both groups demonstrate a strong drive for success, their motivations are shaped by distinct cultural, social, and economic factors. Tribal students prioritize community-oriented goals, driven by intrinsic factors and resilience, while non-tribal students exhibit individualistic ambitions influenced by extrinsic pressures.

The insights from this research emphasize the need for culturally sensitive educational strategies that recognize and support the diverse aspirations of students. By addressing systemic barriers and fostering an inclusive environment, policymakers and educators can empower students to achieve their potential, contributing to the holistic development of Assam's youth.

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