



## RESEARCHARTICLE

### EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF THE KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (KGBV) SCHEME ON THE ACADEMIC LIFE SATISFACTION OF FEMALE LEARNERS IN JHARGRAM AND BANKURA DISTRICTS

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#### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme on the academic life satisfaction of female learners in the Jhargram and Bankura districts. The KGBV residential schools serve as an extrinsic intervention designed to support academically disadvantaged girls from marginalized communities. Employing a descriptive survey within an ex-post-facto design, data were collected using the Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) from two groups: beneficiaries enrolled in KGBV hostels and a comparable reference group of non-beneficiaries. Each group comprised 295 staying in KGBV hostels (Study Group) and 589 attending as day-scholars (Reference Group) female students respectively. Statistical analysis revealed that both groups reported high levels of academic life satisfaction, but the day-scholars expressed higher satisfaction. Despite coming from socio-economically deprived backgrounds, KGBV beneficiaries displayed life satisfaction levels almost equivalent to their non-beneficiary peers. These findings suggest that the KGBV scheme effectively supports the psychological well-being of its students.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right and a cornerstone for individual empowerment and societal development. However, in many regions of India, disparities in educational opportunities persist, especially for female learners in rural areas. These disparities arise from systemic poverty, sociocultural norms, and inadequate infrastructure (Choudhary, 2018). In response to these challenges, the Government of India initiated the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme in 2004, targeting girls from marginalised communities to ensure their access to quality education. This initiative aligns with the broader goals of achieving gender equity in education, as emphasised in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (United Nations, 2015). The KGBV scheme operates through residential schools in rural and underserved regions, focusing on girls from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and minorities. These schools provide free education and facilities like boarding, meals, and healthcare, creating an environment conducive to learning (Mehta, 2016). Such comprehensive support aims to address the barriers that

prevent girls from continuing their education, fostering intrinsic motivation and academic satisfaction. Academic life satisfaction, defined as a student's subjective evaluation of their educational experiences, plays a pivotal role in determining academic performance and overall well-being (Huebner *et al.*, 2014). For female learners in rural India, factors like safe learning spaces, peer support, and access to resources significantly influence their satisfaction levels (Rani & Sharma, 2020). The KGBV scheme, with its focus on holistic development, has the potential to positively impact these determinants. However, limited empirical studies have explored the extent to which the scheme influences academic life satisfaction, particularly in the districts of Jhargram and Bankura in West Bengal. Jhargram and Bankura districts, predominantly rural and tribal, present unique challenges for educational access and retention among girls. Sociocultural constraints, early marriages, and economic hardships contribute to lower educational attainment in these areas (Mitra, 2019). Understanding the impact of the KGBV scheme

in this context is crucial for assessing its effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement.

**Significance of the Study:** The study holds substantial importance for educational policy, social equity, and the broader discourse on gender empowerment in India. This research offers critical insights into the effectiveness of educational interventions in fostering academic life satisfaction among marginalized female learners, aligning with broader goals of inclusive education and sustainable development.

**Contribution to Policy Development:** The KGBV scheme, initiated by the Government of India, aims to provide education to marginalized girls, particularly from Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) in rural areas (Ministry of Education, 2021). By analyzing its impact on academic life satisfaction, this study can offer evidence-based insights for policymakers to refine the scheme, addressing gaps and ensuring its effective implementation in rural settings.

**Promotion of Gender Equity in Education:** Education plays a pivotal role in fostering gender equity. The study focuses on female learners in underprivileged areas, shedding light on how targeted interventions like the KGBV scheme can bridge educational disparities. Such findings are crucial for advancing India's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), which emphasizes achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (United Nations, 2015).

**Empirical Insights into Academic Life Satisfaction:** Academic life satisfaction is a crucial determinant of overall well-being and educational outcomes (Suldo *et al.*, 2006). By exploring the interplay between the KGBV scheme and academic life satisfaction, the study contributes to the literature on the psychological dimensions of education, providing a nuanced understanding of how institutional support influences learners' satisfaction levels.

**Relevance to Socioeconomic Contexts:** Jhargram and Bankura districts, characterized by their socio-economic challenges and tribal populations, present a unique context to evaluate the effectiveness of government schemes. Findings from this study can guide interventions in similar regions across India, ensuring that educational programs are responsive to local needs and challenges.

**Practical Implications for Educational Practitioners:** The research can serve as a resource for teachers, school administrators, and other stakeholders involved in implementing the KGBV scheme. By understanding its impact on students' satisfaction with their academic lives, practitioners can adopt strategies that enhance engagement and outcomes.

**Foundation for Future Research:** This study sets the stage for further research on the long-term impacts of the KGBV scheme, especially concerning other variables such as intrinsic motivation, career aspirations, and social mobility. It also encourages cross-regional comparisons to identify best practices and areas requiring improvement.

**Broad Objective of the Study:** This study aims to probe into the relationship between the KGBV scheme and academic life satisfaction among female learners in Jhargram and Bankura

districts. The findings will contribute to the broader discourse on educational equity and inform policies aimed at improving the educational outcomes for marginalized girls in India.

### Specific Objectives of the Study

The following specific objectives were tried to achieve

**O<sub>1</sub>:** To know the present situation of *Academic Life Satisfaction* of the female learners of the both study group and reference group considered as a whole;

**O<sub>2</sub>:** To know the present situation of *Academic Life Satisfaction* of the female learners of the study group;

**O<sub>3</sub>:** To know the present situation of *Academic Life Satisfaction* of the female learners of the reference group;

**O<sub>4</sub>:** To compare the *Academic Life Satisfaction* of the female learners of the study group and reference group.

### Research Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were tried to prove

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The female learners of both the study group and reference group considered as a whole have high Academic Life Satisfaction;

**H<sub>2</sub>:** The female learners of the study group have high Academic Life Satisfaction;

**H<sub>3</sub>:** The female learners of the reference group have high Academic Life Satisfaction;

**H<sub>4</sub>:** The female learners of the study group and reference group do not differ concerning their Academic Life Satisfaction.

### Academic Life Satisfaction – the Construct of the Study:

Academic life satisfaction refers to the subjective evaluation of one's contentment with various dimensions of the academic experience, including the learning environment, interpersonal relationships, and personal academic achievements. It encompasses both emotional and cognitive assessments of an individual's perception of satisfaction within the academic context (Baker, 2004). This construct is considered integral to understanding the overall well-being of learners, particularly in adolescence when academic and social experiences significantly impact psychological development and future aspirations (Huebner, 1991). Academic life satisfaction is a multidimensional construct influenced by several factors, such as academic motivation, perceived support from teachers and peers, and institutional infrastructure (Suldo *et al.*, 2006). In rural and marginalized areas, these factors may interact uniquely due to the socio-economic and cultural challenges faced by learners. For female learners, additional gender-specific barriers such as limited access to educational resources, societal expectations, and familial responsibilities further influence their academic life satisfaction (Tuli, 2012). The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme aims to address these barriers by providing free residential schooling for girls from marginalized communities, thereby creating an inclusive learning environment. By ensuring access to quality education, fostering a sense of belonging, and promoting

aspirations, the scheme seeks to enhance academic life satisfaction among its beneficiaries (Ministry of Education, 2021). The construct's relevance to this study lies in its ability to encapsulate the program's effectiveness in creating positive academic experiences for female learners in Jhargram and Bankura districts. Research suggests that interventions like KGBV significantly improve girls' educational experiences by reducing dropout rates, improving self-confidence, and fostering a supportive academic ecosystem (Kundu, 2018). Such positive outcomes are closely linked to enhanced academic life satisfaction, which acts as a mediating factor between educational interventions and broader developmental outcomes, such as self-esteem and career aspirations (Eryilmaz, 2012). In this study, academic life satisfaction is examined not only as an outcome of the KGBV scheme but also as a dynamic construct that reflects the interplay of systemic interventions and individual psychological responses. By analyzing its dimensions, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how targeted educational policies can improve the subjective well-being of marginalized female learners.

## REVIEW OF ALLIED LITERATURE

The review of literature provides a comprehensive understanding of the existing studies related to the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme, academic life satisfaction, and their interrelation in the educational context of rural and marginalized communities. The reviewed literature establishes the significance of the KGBV scheme in enhancing educational access and outcomes for marginalized girls. However, it highlights the need for a focused inquiry into the scheme's impact on academic life satisfaction, particularly in underrepresented regions like Jhargram and Bankura. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring the interconnections between the KGBV scheme and academic satisfaction through a mixed-methods approach, offering both quantitative and qualitative insights.

**Studies on the KGBV Scheme:** The KGBV scheme was introduced in 2004 under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to provide educational opportunities to marginalized girls, particularly from Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and minorities (MHRD, 2007). The initiative primarily targets rural areas with gender disparities in literacy.

According to Saha and Biswas (2019), the KGBV scheme has significantly contributed to improving enrollment and retention rates among adolescent girls in economically backward districts. Research by Patra and Gupta (2020) highlights the scheme's role in providing a secure learning environment, promoting self-confidence, and reducing dropout rates. However, these studies also identify challenges, including infrastructure inadequacies and the lack of qualified teachers.

**Academic Life Satisfaction:** Academic life satisfaction, a sub dimension of overall life satisfaction, is a critical psychological construct influencing academic performance, motivation, and well-being (Suldo, Thalji-Raitano, & Ferron, 2015). It reflects students' perceptions of the adequacy and fulfillment of their educational experiences. Studies by Diener and Chan (2011) suggest that academic life satisfaction is closely tied to the

availability of resources, supportive teacher-student relationships, and a conducive learning environment. In the Indian context, Choudhury *et al.* (2018) observed that female learners in rural areas often face socio-cultural and economic barriers, adversely impacting their academic satisfaction and psychological well-being.

**Impact of Educational Interventions on Academic Satisfaction:** Several educational interventions have been identified as pivotal in enhancing academic life satisfaction among disadvantaged groups. Sharma and Prasad (2021) examined the effects of residential schooling programs on rural girls' education and reported significant improvements in self-efficacy, peer relationships, and academic satisfaction. Similarly, Huebner and Das (2022) emphasized that targeted interventions like the KGBV scheme foster a sense of belonging and empowerment among marginalized girls, positively influencing their academic experiences.

**Gaps in Literature:** Although the existing body of research underscores the efficacy of the KGBV scheme and its contributions to girls' education, there is limited focus on its specific impact on academic life satisfaction. Moreover, most studies adopt a quantitative approach, overlooking qualitative dimensions such as personal narratives and the lived experiences of the beneficiaries. The geographical focus has also been skewed towards specific regions, with scant attention to districts like Jhargram and Bankura.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The goal of the present study was to determine the effect of the "Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) Scheme" on the Academic Life Satisfaction of female learners. To do this, the descriptive survey method within an ex-post-facto research design was conducted.

**Variables:** A variable in scientific research refers to any characteristic, attribute, or phenomenon that can vary or assume different values among subjects or contexts (Kerlinger, 1973). Variables are typically categorized as independent, dependent, or controlled, with independent variables manipulated to observe their effect on dependent variables (Creswell, 2014). Understanding variables is essential to establishing causal relationships and ensuring scientific rigour in research design (Best & Kahn, 2006).

**Descriptive Survey Research:** In descriptive survey research, Academic Life Satisfaction was the only Independent Variable.

**Ex-Post-Facto Research:** Ex-post-facto research refers to a non-experimental research design where the researcher investigates the possible relationships between variables without manipulating them, relying on existing conditions or events (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). It involves analyzing the impact of an independent variable that has already occurred, making it suitable for studies where experimental manipulation is not feasible (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

This method allows researchers to explore cause-and-effect relationships retrospectively, emphasizing observation and analysis of data from natural settings (Best & Kahn, 2006). For the study on the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme, ex-post-facto research facilitates examining the scheme's effect on academic life satisfaction among female

learners without direct intervention. For this study, the KGBV scheme acts as an independent variable, while academic life satisfaction represents the dependent variable. Here two levels were considered – (a) Beneficiary of the scheme (Study Group, KGBV hostel dwellers) and (b) Non-beneficiary of the scheme (Reference Group, the female day scholars).

**Sample:** A total of 884 female learners, 295 KGBV hostel dwellers and 589day-scholar female learners participated in the study.

**Source of Sample:** Government, Government Sponsored and Government Aided Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools of West Bengal, India, (where the hostels were set up in the *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) Scheme*) were the source of the sample.

**Sampling Procedure:** In the present study “*Stratified Random Sampling Technique*” was adopted.

**Research Tool:** The selection of appropriate research tools is critical in ensuring the validity and reliability of any scientific investigation.

**Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS), (Huebner, 1994) [Bengali version of the scale was adopted and used]:** The 40-item Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS; Huebner, 1994) is designed to assess children and adolescents’ overall life satisfaction as well as their level of happiness in five areas: self, family, friends, school, and living environment.

The respondent’s contentment with their relationship with family members and the interactions among family members are referred to as the Family domain items. When it comes to interest, learning, and educational activities, the school domain questions examine how satisfied the respondent is with school life. Teenagers’ contentment with their classmates is the focus of the Friends domain items. In the self-domain, the respondent’s degree of self-satisfaction and the opinions of others are included.

Table 3.3.1. Dimensions-wise item distribution

Sl. No.	Dimension	No. of Items
1.	Family	7
2.	Friends	9
3.	School	8
4.	Living Environment	9
5.	Self	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

The domains contain a different number of items. By adding together all of the item responses in a domain and dividing that total by the number of items in the domain, the domain and total scores of each domain were made comparable. Here the mean score of the scale was normalized and the normalization procedure was as follows

Normalized mean = Mean of the item responses in the scale/Total number of items of the scale. Then, the normalized mean fell within the range extending from 1 to 5 with 3 as the mid-point (moderately satisfied). The mean of the scores of each family, friends, school, living environment and self-dimension were interpreted as

1.00 to 1.99	:	Highly Dissatisfied
2.00 to 2.99	:	Dissatisfied
3.00 to 3.99	:	Satisfied
4.00 to 5.00	:	Highly Satisfied

## RESULTS

The “Results” section serves as the cornerstone of a scientific paper, presenting key findings derived from the study’s rigorous methodology. In this paper, the results explore the impact of the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) Scheme on the academic life satisfaction of female learners in Jhargram and Bankura districts. By employing statistical analyses, the study seeks to elucidate the relationship between the KGBV scheme and improvements in academic experiences among participants. These findings contribute to the growing body of research on educational interventions and their implications for marginalized communities (UNESCO, 2021; Gupta & Verma, 2020).

### Academic Life Satisfaction of Female Learners Considering both the Study Group (i.e. KGBV) and Reference Group (RG) as a Whole

To prove hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> (i.e., The female learners of both the study group and reference group considering as a whole have high Academic Life Satisfaction) the descriptive statistics of the scores obtained by the female learners of both the study group and reference group considering a whole in the *Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)* are presented in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1

Figure 5.1 depicts the histogram with the normal curve of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) scores of the female learners of both the Study Group (i.e. KGBV) and Reference Group (RG) considering as a whole.

We can see from the visual examination that the aforementioned distribution of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) scores was about normal (Fein, Gilmour, Machin & Hendry, 2022).

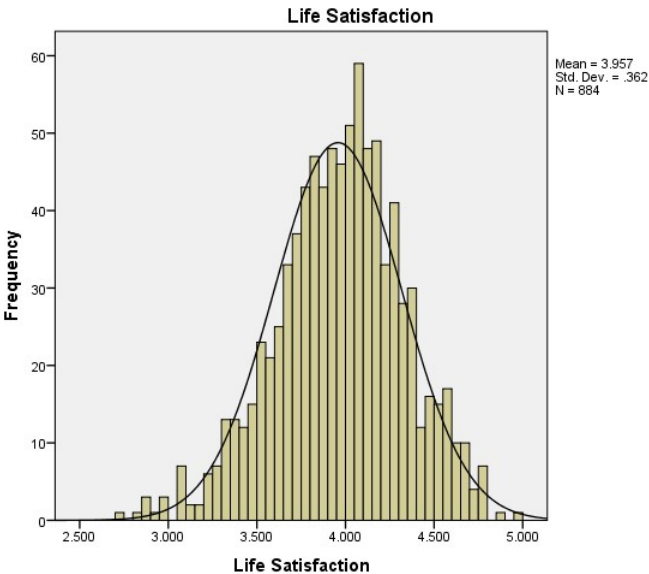


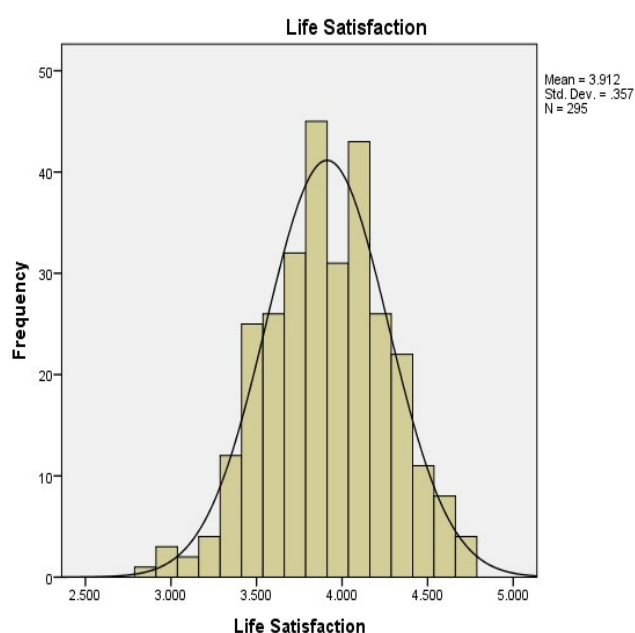
Figure 5.1. Histogram with Normal Probability Curve of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) Scores of the Female Learners Considering both Study Group (i.e. KGBV) and Reference Group (RG) as a Whole

### Academic Life Satisfaction of Female Learners of the Study Group (i.e. KGBV).

To prove hypothesis  $H_2$  (i.e., The female learners of the study group have high Academic Life Satisfaction) the descriptive statistics of the scores obtained by the female learners of the study group in the *Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)* are presented in table 5.2 and figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 depicts the histogram with the normal curve of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) scores of the female learners of the study group (i.e. KGBV).

We can see from the visual examination that the aforementioned distribution of *Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)* scores was about normal (Fein, Gilmour, Machin & Hendry, 2022).



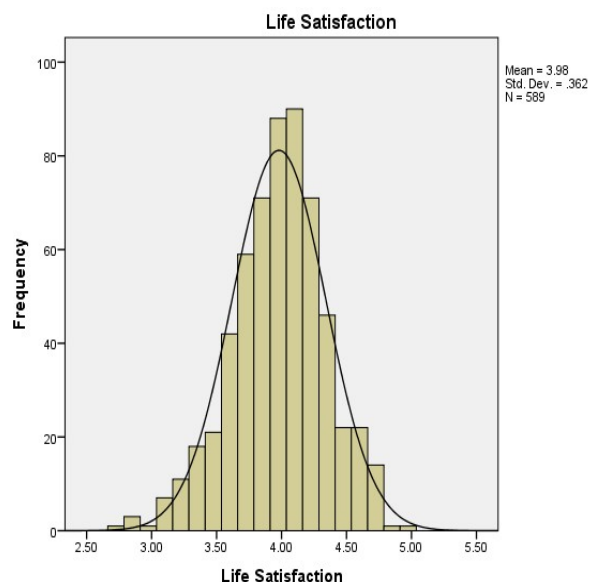
**Figure 5.2. Histogram with Normal Probability Curve of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) Scores of the Female Learners of the Study Group (i.e. KGBV)**

### Academic Life Satisfaction of Female Learners of the Reference Group (RG)

To prove hypothesis  $H_3$  (i.e., The female learners of the reference group have high Academic Life Satisfaction) the descriptive statistics of the scores obtained by the female learners of the reference group in the *Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)* are presented in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3 depicts the histogram with the normal curve of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) scores of the female learners of the reference group (RG).

We can see from the visual examination that the aforementioned distribution of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) scores was about normal (Fein, Gilmour, Machin & Hendry, 2022).



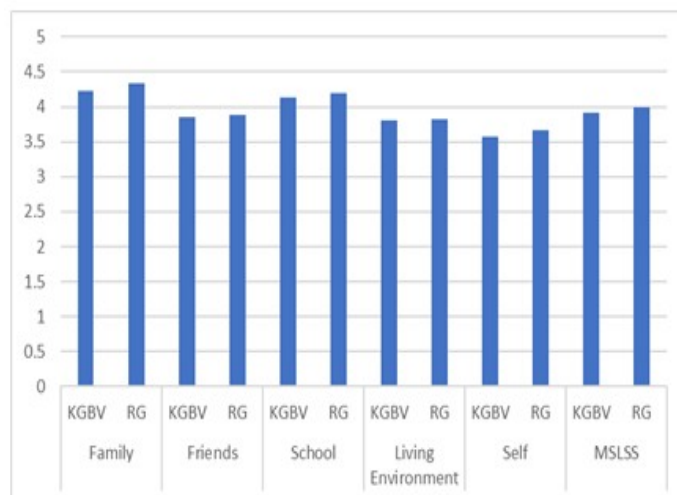
**Figure 5.3. Histogram with Normal Probability Curve of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) Scores of the Female Learners of the Reference Group (RG)**

### Comparative Analysis (Ex-Post-Facto Analysis)

To prove hypothesis  $H_4$  [i.e., The female learners of the study group and reference group do not differ concerning their Academic Life Satisfaction) the results related to the comparison between the female learners of the study group (i.e. KGBV) and reference group (RG) *Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)* score are presented herewith in Table 5.4(a) and Table 5.4 (b) as well as Figure 5.4

Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) of the female learners of the study group (KGBV) and the reference group (RG).

Figure 5.4 shows the bar diagram of means of scores of dimensions of different dimensions of the *Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)* of the female learners of the study group (KGBV) and the reference group (RG).



**Figure 5.4. Bar Diagram of Mean of the scores in Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) of the Female Learners of the Study Group (i.e. KGBV) and Reference Group (RG)**

**Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) Scores of the Female Learners Considering both Study Group (i.e. KGBV) and Reference Group (RG) as a Whole**

MSLSS Score	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
Family	884	3.00	2.00	5.00	4.30	0.54	Highly Satisfied
Friends	884	3.11	1.89	5.00	3.88	0.52	Satisfied
School	884	3.63	1.38	5.00	4.18	0.50	Highly Satisfied
Living Environment	884	3.33	1.67	5.00	3.82	0.55	Satisfied
Self	884	3.43	1.57	5.00	3.63	0.63	Satisfied
<b>MSLSS</b>	884	2.19	2.78	4.97	3.96	0.36	Satisfied

Table 5.1 displays the descriptive statistics for the scores on various facets and as a total of the *Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)* score of the female learners considering both Study Groups (i.e. KGBV) and Reference Group (RG) as a whole.

**Table 5.2. Descriptive Statistics of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) Scores of the Female Learners of Study Group (i.e. KGBV)**

MSLSS Score	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
Family	295	2.86	2.14	5.00	4.22	0.58	Highly Satisfied
Friends	295	2.89	2.11	5.00	3.86	0.47	Satisfied
School	295	2.75	2.25	5.00	4.13	0.52	Highly Satisfied
Living Environment	295	3.22	1.78	5.00	3.80	0.54	Satisfied
Self	295	3.43	1.57	5.00	3.57	0.66	Satisfied
<b>MSLSS</b>	295	1.98	2.80	4.78	3.92	0.36	Satisfied

Table 5.2 exhibits the descriptive statistics of scores on different facets and as a total of the *Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)* score of the female learners of the study groups (i.e. KGBV).

**Table 5.3. Descriptive Statistics of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) Scores of the Female Learners of the Reference Group (RG)**

MSLSS Score	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
Family	589	3.00	2.00	5.00	4.34	0.52	Highly Satisfied
Friends	589	3.11	1.89	5.00	3.89	0.54	Satisfied
School	589	3.63	1.38	5.00	4.20	0.48	Highly Satisfied
Living Environment	589	3.33	1.67	5.00	3.83	0.55	Satisfied
Self	589	3.43	1.57	5.00	3.66	0.61	Satisfied
<b>MSLSS</b>	589	2.19	2.78	4.97	3.99	0.36	Satisfied

Table 5.3 exhibits the descriptive statistics of scores on different facets and as a total of the *Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)* score of the female learners of the reference group (RG).

**Table 5.4(a). Group Statistics of Scores on Different Facets of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) of the Female Learners of the Study Group (i.e. KGBV) and Reference Group (RG)**

Life Satisfaction	Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
Family	KGBV	295	4.22	0.58	Highly Satisfied
	RG	589	4.34	0.52	Highly Satisfied
Friends	KGBV	295	3.86	0.47	Satisfied
	RG	589	3.89	0.54	Satisfied
School	KGBV	295	4.13	0.52	Highly Satisfied
	RG	589	4.20	0.48	Highly Satisfied
Living Environment	KGBV	295	3.80	0.54	Satisfied
	RG	589	3.83	0.55	Satisfied
Self	KGBV	295	3.57	0.66	Satisfied
	RG	589	3.66	0.61	Satisfied
MSLSS	KGBV	295	3.92	0.36	Satisfied
	RG	589	3.99	0.36	Satisfied

Table 5.4(a) shows the group statistics of the scores of different dimensions of the *Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)* of the female learners of the study group (KGBV) and the reference group (RG).

**Table 5.4 (b). Results of Independent Samples Test of Type Wise Comparison of Means of Scores of Different Facets of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) of the Female Learners of the Study Group (KGBV) and Reference Group (RG)**

Life Satisfaction		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Family	Equal variances assumed	5.27	0.02	-3.17	882.00	0.00
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.06	536.18	0.00
Friends	Equal variances assumed	3.65	0.06	-0.89	882.00	0.38
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.93	667.10	0.35
School	Equal variances assumed	4.40	0.04	-2.19	882.00	0.03
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.13	546.80	0.03
Living Environment	Equal variances assumed	0.01	0.94	-0.83	882.00	0.41
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.83	596.07	0.41
Self	Equal variances assumed	1.30	0.25	-2.07	882.00	0.04
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.02	551.98	0.04
MSLSS	Equal variances assumed	0.30	0.58	-2.78	882.00	0.01
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.78	589.85	0.01

From Table 5.4(b) it is observed that the two groups (KGBV & RG) differed (statistically) significantly in the dimensions of *Family*, *School*, *Self* and Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) score in total – the female learners of the reference group scored higher; whereas the two groups did not differ in the dimensions of *friends* and *Living Environment*.

## DISCUSSION ON THE RESULTS

From the results of Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 it was observed that in all three cases, on average the female learners expressed high academic life satisfaction. Hence, the Hypotheses H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub> & H<sub>3</sub> were accepted. The female learners in both the study group (i.e., KGBV) and reference groups reported high levels of academic life satisfaction – this may be the result of several empowering and encouraging aspects of the school setting. This school are made to give underprivileged girls a sanctuary where they can concentrate on their studies free from the typical distractions and social pressures they could encounter elsewhere.

Again, despite the high level of academic life satisfaction seen in both the study group and reference group female learners, from Tables 5.4(a) and 5.4(b) a (statistically) significant difference was found in academic life satisfaction between the study group and the reference group – the female learners of the reference group expressed higher academic life satisfaction. Hence, the Hypothesis H<sub>4</sub> was rejected. High academic life satisfaction among female learners is a crucial outcome of initiatives like the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme. Academic life satisfaction refers to the positive appraisal of one's educational experiences, including satisfaction with the learning environment, academic support, peer relationships, and self-accomplishment (Huebner, 1991). Several factors justify the potential for heightened academic life satisfaction among female learners, particularly in marginalized regions. The high academic life satisfaction among female learners under the KGBV scheme is a direct result of its targeted interventions addressing socio-economic, cultural, and educational barriers. The program's holistic approach to female education not only ensures academic success but also fosters a sense of fulfilment and motivation, laying a strong foundation for future aspirations and societal contributions.

- **Supportive Educational Environment** – The KGBV scheme, designed to improve access to education for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, ensures a supportive learning environment. By offering free residential schooling, the program eliminates barriers such as long commutes, familial responsibilities, and safety concerns, which often hinder female learners' educational journeys (Bandyopadhyay & Subrahmanian, 2008). Research indicates that an inclusive and safe educational environment significantly contributes to students' academic satisfaction (Crosnoe *et al.*, 2004).
- **Focus on Holistic Development** – KGBV schools emphasize not only academic performance but also the holistic development of learners, including life skills, co-curricular activities, and emotional well-being. Such integrative approaches enhance students' engagement and satisfaction with their academic experiences (Singh, 2016). Female learners, often marginalized in conventional schooling systems, benefit greatly from these targeted interventions, leading to greater academic life satisfaction.
- **Improved Self-Efficacy and Confidence** – Empowerment-focused initiatives within the KGBV framework, such as leadership opportunities and gender-sensitive curricula, help improve female learners' self-efficacy and confidence. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory suggests that belief in one's ability to succeed positively influences satisfaction and motivation. These outcomes are particularly significant for girls from rural areas, where cultural and socio-economic barriers often undermine self-confidence.
- **Reduction of Gender Disparities** – The KGBV scheme directly addresses gender disparities in education by prioritizing girls' access to quality schooling. By creating a space where female learners can excel without fear of discrimination or bias, the program fosters a sense of achievement and belonging. Studies have shown that a

sense of belonging and equity within educational settings positively impacts students' satisfaction levels (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

- **Parental and Community Support** – The scheme's efforts to involve parents and communities in the educational process create a more supportive ecosystem for female learners. Positive reinforcement from families and communities, coupled with institutional support, enhances the learners' perception of their academic experience, leading to greater satisfaction (Rumberger & Lim, 2008).
- **Empirical Evidence from Regional Studies** – Empirical studies on KGBV schools in similar contexts have reported high levels of academic satisfaction among female learners due to improved infrastructure, teacher support, and peer interactions (Srivastava & Singh, 2020). In the districts of Jhargram and Bankura, where educational access and quality have historically been challenged, the KGBV scheme is likely to have a significant positive impact on the academic satisfaction of female learners.

## CONCLUSION

The present study examined the influence of the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme on the academic life satisfaction of female learners in the Jhargram and Bankura districts. The findings indicate that the KGBV scheme has significantly contributed to enhancing the academic life satisfaction of its beneficiaries by addressing barriers to education, such as socioeconomic constraints and lack of access to quality schooling. These outcomes underscore the importance of targeted educational interventions in fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment for underprivileged female learners.

Moreover, the study highlights the role of residential schooling facilities, comprehensive curricula, and extracurricular activities provided by KGBVs in promoting holistic development. Participants reported improvements in self-esteem, motivation, and aspirations, suggesting that the scheme contributes to broader psychosocial benefits beyond academic outcomes. This aligns with prior research emphasizing the impact of contextual support systems on students' academic and emotional well-being (Bhan & Gupta, 2010; Mukherjee, 2019). However, the study also reveals challenges in implementing the scheme effectively, such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, and cultural resistance in some communities. These findings emphasize the need for continuous monitoring, enhanced resource allocation, and active engagement with stakeholders to ensure sustainable success. In conclusion, the KGBV scheme has demonstrated its potential to transform the educational landscape for marginalized female learners. Policymakers and educators must leverage these insights to design and implement similar initiatives in other regions facing educational inequities. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts and incorporate diverse perspectives to strengthen the evidence base for policy development.

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