



A study on the factors influencing students in the selection of colleges for undergraduate programs in mumbai.

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India's higher education system is the third largest in the world. Indian higher education system has expanded at a fast pace by adding nearly 20,000 colleges and more than 8 million students in a decade from 2000-01 to 2010-11. As the number of college and students is increasing simultaneously students have plenty of options to select the college. Thus, different factors including personal, external and social influences the choice of the students to select a particular college.

India has the third largest higher education system in the world in terms of enrolments, after China and the US. India is acknowledged to have the largest higher education systems in the world in terms of number of institutes. Higher education is the second largest opportunity in the Indian education sector. There has been phenomenal growth of higher education in India since Independence. These numbers have increased by 26 times in the case of universities and 66 times in the case of colleges. (Sudararajan and Gopal, 2016).

College selection is one of the many important choices students make in determining future career plans. The governance of the higher education system throughout the world has changed considerably in the recent years. The number of unaided college is increasing year after year; hence students are getting wider choice to select the best suitable college for higher studies.

Significance of the study:

Student's enrollment is the lifeblood of every educational institution. Today the increase in number of private and international educational institutions has lead to a high need to understand the role of institution in the life of student. The colleges must have strong in – depth understanding about factors that influence most to the students while selecting a college. There is also a need to understand the difference between the

characteristics of first – time and transfer students and to investigate the relative importance of factors influencing choice of college.

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of the research study are as follows:

1. To investigate factors influencing students in selecting college for undergraduate programs.
2. To determine whether demographic factors influence selection of college.
3. To understand the role of family members in selecting a college.
4. To evaluate the impact of college infrastructure on youth while selecting a college.
5. To frame relevant conclusions regarding youth selecting a particular college.

Review of Literature:

The author has identified different factors influencing student's while selecting college in University of Indonesia. The basic objective of research was to understand its customer needs and wants in order to remain competitive and survive among higher education providers. It was found that most of the students were of belief that cost is the most important factor while selecting a college. Financial factors include tuition fee, cost of study, cost of living and other related expenses. Thus, the socio – economic factor of student's family plays a vital role while selecting a college. Apart, from the cost, reputation, proximity to college, job prospects and parent's consultation were also considered. (Kusumawati, 2013)

The authors identified the students' view about selecting a college nearby to their residence. Majority of females prefer their college to be closer from their home as compared to males, emphasis on the female safety concern. The parent's education and family income is also considered while selecting college. Student's parents with high qualification are not much concern with the distance but they give prime importance to academic excellence of the institute, unlike, in the case of student's parents with low qualification. The cost also plays an important factor for those families with poor or average income as income has a direct relationship with fee structure followed in institutions. (Mattern and Wyatt, 2009)

The author emphasized on various people influencing the decision of selecting a college for further studies. The number of colleges is increasing mainly, among private colleges. Lately, there are foreign universities playing an important role in admitting students for higher education. Therefore, it leads to the competition among the educational institution. It was analysed that students are highly influenced by the suggestions given by their parents. Apart from parents, students also consult peers, consultant, siblings and teacher. Thus, it can be concluded that there are students who give credit to one person whereas, on another side there are people who give credit to a set of people. (Jackson, 2012)

Hypothesis of the study:

Hypotheses of the study were as follows:

1. The propensity to visit college website before selecting a college is high among undergraduate students.
2. There is a significant difference for the factors considered by students belonging to traditional and professional programs while selecting a college for undergraduate program.

Research Methodology:

The present study is exploratory in nature to provide clear guidance for empirical search. A study of related and pertinent books and articles along with clues for further investigation lead to formulation of workable hypotheses. The study is designed to gather descriptive information for formulating studies that are more practical in nature and can be implemented. Data is collected through survey method. Thus, the study makes use of a quantitative research approach. It was chosen because quantitative research allows the researcher to examine relationships and differences among variables.

Sampling technique:

The researcher adopted judgmental sampling method. In judgemental sampling a questionnaire was distributed by a researcher to students pursuing undergraduates programme from different colleges of western suburb college in Mumbai.

Analysis and Interpretation:

Hypothesis 1: The propensity to visit college website before selecting a college is high among undergraduate students.

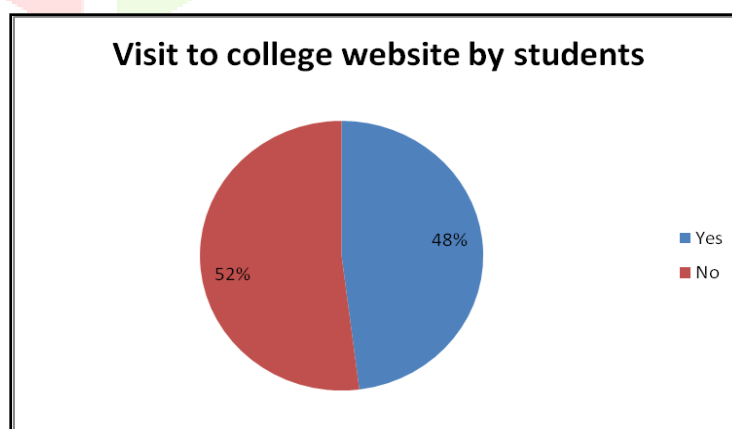


Figure 1.1 : Graphical representation of students visiting website

The figure shows the number of respondents visited college website before taking admission. It is depicted from the figure that 48% of respondents visit the website whereas, 52% do not visit the websites. The enrollment procedure has become online where; students need to select a list of college and accordingly needs to seek an admission.

Those who visit website view the college profile including infrastructure facilities provided to students, faculty’s profile, past results of college, special achievement in the field of academics, cultural or sports. Often the special feature of college is highlighted on website. Thus, all such details can be checked well on websites.

Nowadays, the student also writes the review of the college on website. Hence the new students can read the review given by past students and can take a decision whether to enroll in a particular college or not. Last but not the least, the images shown in gallery also attracts students to take an admission in a particular college. Lastly, website will act as a good marketing tool for promoting new colleges among youngsters. Hence, colleges should update their website on regular basis.

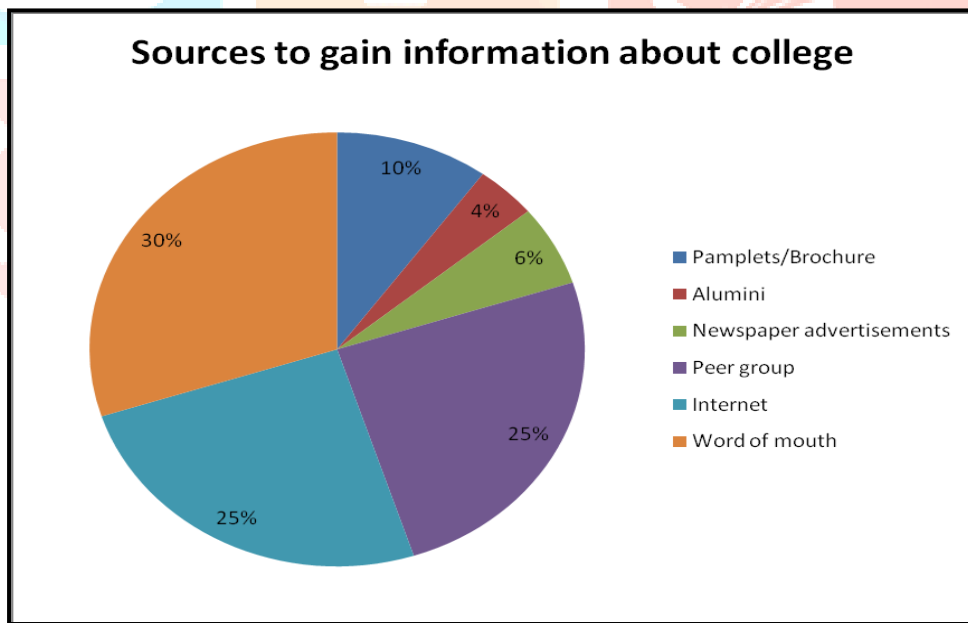


Figure 1.2 : Marketing activities adopted by colleges

Students consider technology as their first hand information but along with that there are many other ways to get the information about the college. As seen from the chart, 30% of students were influenced by the word of mouth. It refers to the reference given by their friends, relatives or any other who is associated with the college.

The peer group and internet acts as a good source to attract students to enroll themselves in a particular college. Almost, 25% of students have opted for these two options. Nowadays, very few colleges distribute pamphlets to students yet around 10% of students are influenced due to this marketing skill. Alumni consist of 4% and newspaper advertisement consists of 6% of appeal to students.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference for the factors considered by students belonging to traditional and professional programs while selecting a college for undergraduate program.

Table 1.1: Mean scores of Program

	Pursuing program	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Academics	Traditional	45	10.3778	1.91037	.28478
	Professional	55	10.9286	1.69338	.22629
Curricular activities	Traditional	45	10.5333	2.59895	.38743
	Professional	55	10.7143	2.07771	.27765
Infrastructure facilities	Traditional	45	11.4000	2.43460	.36293
	Professional	55	11.3571	1.65616	.22131
Socio – economic	Traditional	45	9.4222	1.82768	.27245
	Professional	55	9.8393	1.91432	.25581
Others	Traditional	45	11.0000	2.16375	.32255
	Professional	55	11.5179	1.84874	.24705

Using an alpha level of .05, an independent samples t – test was conducted to evaluate factors considered by male and female students while selecting a college for their undergraduate program.

In first, fourth and fifth variables the ‘Sig’ value for ‘Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances’ is not less than .05 therefore the t-value of equal variances assumed is considered for further interpretation of the study. Whereas, in second and third factor the ‘Sig’ value for ‘Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances’ is equal to or less than .05 therefore the t-value of equal variances not assumed is considered for further interpretation of the study.

Table 1.2: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Academics	Equal variances assumed	.482	.489	-1.534	99	.128	-.55079	.35897	-1.26306	.16148
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.514	88.787	.134	-.55079	.36374	-1.27356	.17197
Curricular activities	Equal variances assumed	3.802	.054	-.389	99	.698	-.18095	.46523	-1.10407	.74217
	Equal variances not assumed			-.380	83.236	.705	-.18095	.47664	-1.12894	.76703
Infrastructure facilities	Equal variances assumed	5.822	.018	.105	99	.917	.04286	.40824	-.76717	.85288
	Equal variances not assumed			.101	74.559	.920	.04286	.42508	-.80404	.88975
Socio – economic	Equal variances assumed	.015	.904	-1.110	99	.270	-.41706	.37563	-1.16240	.32827
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.116	96.054	.267	-.41706	.37373	-1.15890	.32477
Others	Equal variances assumed	.068	.794	-1.297	99	.198	-.51786	.39938	-1.31030	.27459
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.275	86.854	.206	-.51786	.40629	-1.32543	.28971

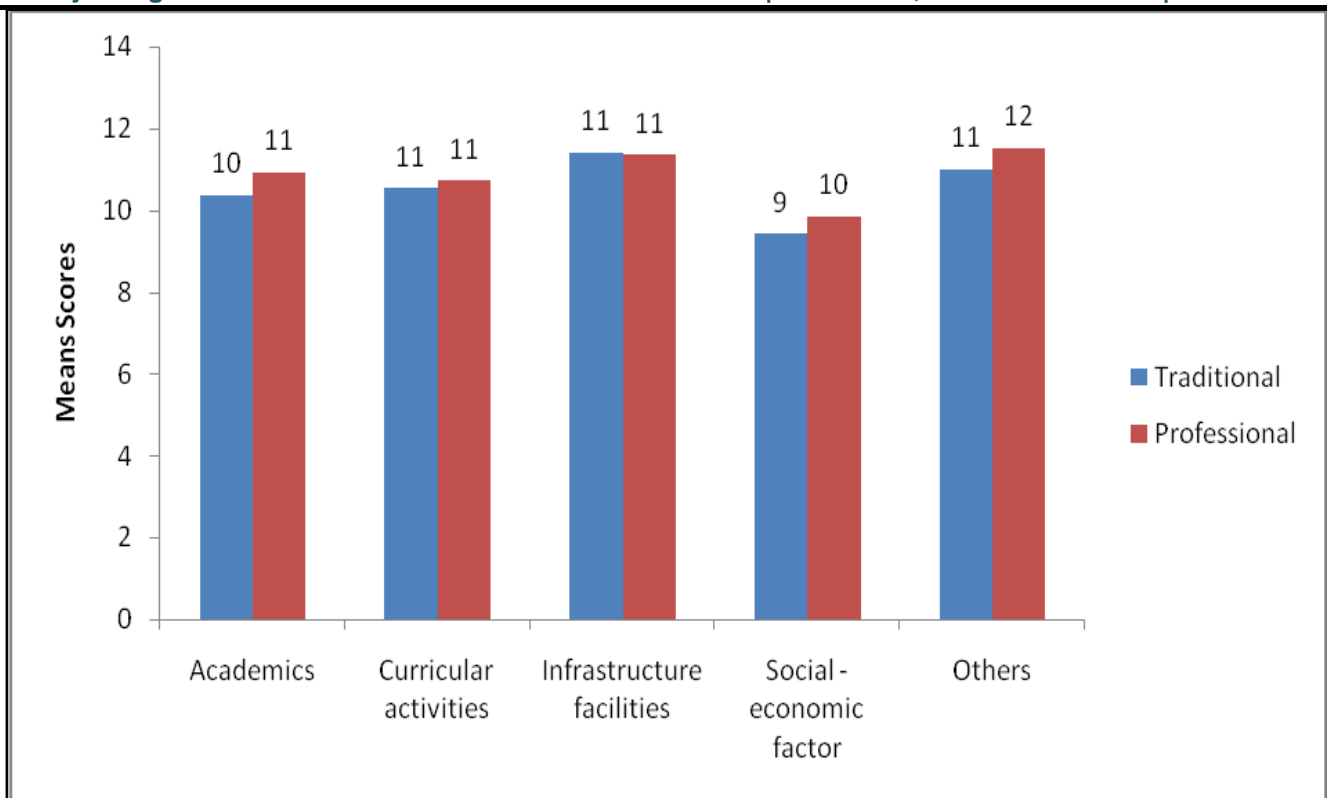


Figure 1.3 : Graphical representation of mean scores

Academic Factors:

No significant difference was found between students pursuing traditional and professional programs at under graduate level while selecting a college. The $t(99) = -1.53$, $P = .128$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -1.26 to 0.16. With a three point scale with one being not at all important and three being extremely important, traditional program averaged 10.37 (SD = 1.9) and professional program averaged 10.92 (SD = 1.69).

Curricular Factors:

There was a significant difference found between students pursuing traditional and professional programs at under graduate level while selecting a college. The $t(83) = -0.38$, $P = .705$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -1.12 to 0.76. With a three point scale with one being not at all important and three being extremely important, traditional program averaged 10.53 (SD = 2.59) and professional program averaged 10.71 (SD = 2.07).

Infrastructure Factors:

There was a significant difference found between students pursuing traditional and professional programs at under graduate level while selecting a college. The $t(74) = -0.10$, $P = .920$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -0.80 to 0.88. With a three point scale with one being not at all important and three being extremely important, traditional program averaged 11.40 (SD = 2.43) and professional program averaged 11.35 (SD = 1.65).

Social Factors:

No significant difference was found between students pursuing traditional and professional programs at under graduate level while selecting a college. The $t(99) = -1.11$, $P = .270$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -1.16 to 0.32. With a three point scale with one being not at all important and three being extremely important, traditional program averaged 9.42 (SD = 1.82) and professional program averaged 9.83 (SD = 1.91).

Other Factors:

No significant difference was found between students pursuing traditional and professional programs at under graduate level while selecting a college. The $t(99) = -1.29$, $P = .198$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -1.31 to 0.27. With a three point scale with one being not at all important and three being extremely important, traditional program averaged 11.00 (SD = 2.16) and professional program averaged 11.51 (SD = 1.84).

There is no significant difference between students pursuing traditional and professional programs in three factors they are academics, social and others while selecting a college for their further studies. However, there is significant difference in both the groups for the factors of cultural and infrastructure. The mean scores of students from traditional and professional programs do not have a significant difference.

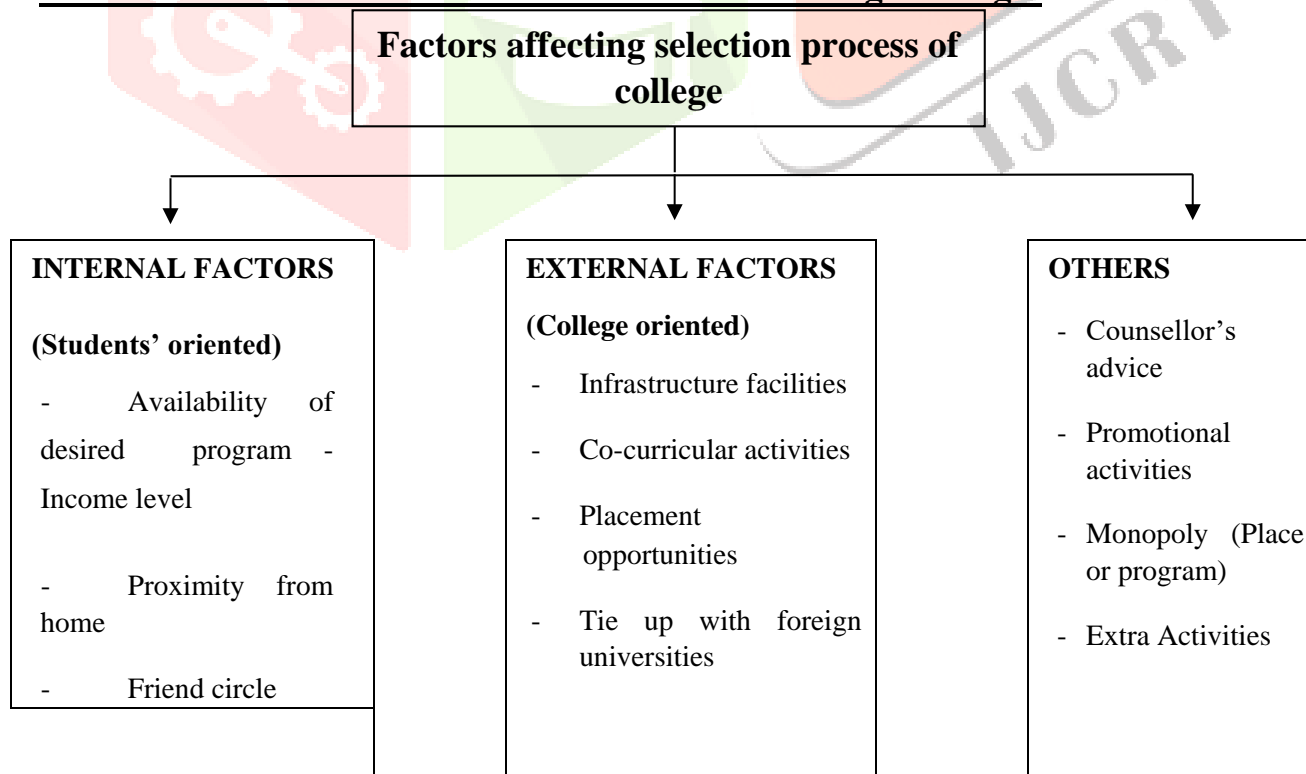
Suggestions and conclusions:**Internal and external factors considered for selecting a college:**

Figure 7.1: Factors influencing students' in decision making process

The factors are divided into three parts .i.e. internal factors, external factors and others. These all factors influence the decision of a student for selecting a college either individually or together. All these factors are explained in detail.

A) INTERNAL (Student's oriented)

1. **Availability of desired program:** The students wish to take admission for a particular program. Therefore, student's search starts with availability of program. If a desired program is not available in college, students may not opt for that college. However, it is advisable for every college to make maximum programs available to the students that will attract many students at a time.
2. **Income level:** Family income is one of the important factor influencing students to select a college. The income level has a direct relationship with fee structure of a college. Thus, students belonging to higher income level group will prefer studying in reputed and preferably for professional programs like BMS, BAF etc. While framing fee structure the income patterns of families residing in nearby vicinity must be considered.
3. **Proximity from home:** There are students who do not prefer travelling long distance for college. Moreover, students those who are working or enrolled for professional courses like CA, CS etc find it difficult to travel. Hence to save time they prefer to study in nearby college.
4. **Friend circle (peer pressure):** Often, student's decision of selecting a college is dependent on the decision of their friend. The peer pressure is one of the important factors influencing the decision process. Mainly, when the college is new for students they tend to take admission in group in a same college.

B) EXTERNAL (College oriented)

1. **Infrastructure facilities:** The students consider the infrastructure of the college before enrolling themselves. Infrastructure includes the classroom, college premises, computer labs, canteen etc. When students spend three years of their life in an institution they expect a good and spacious infrastructure.
2. **Co-curricular activities:** When students enroll themselves in a college they expect more than studies. The cultural festivals, techno utsav (tech fest), sports and annual day are part of the college. These events help students to develop their personality and learn management skills practically. Hence, based on past co-curricular activities students take a decision about enrolling in a particular college or not.
3. **Placement opportunities:** The trend of offering placement opportunities to undergraduate students is increasing especially among students belonging to professional programme. The factor of placement opportunities is important for students' enrolling for master's degree which is unlike for undergraduate students. However, it cannot be neglected as it is an important factor mainly for the students enrolled for professional programs.

4. **Availability of further courses:** Some colleges provide further course like master's program, diploma and other short term or skill development program. It today's competitive market graduation will not help students to fetch good job in a market hence; they are in search of additional courses or further studies. Thus, when students get everything under one roof they prefer to take admission in that college.

C) OTHERS

1. **Counselor's advice:** These days' students have started consulting career counselors to decide which college and program to be selected for further studies. Counselors have complete idea about colleges and programs offered in today's market. Hence, the advice of counselor plays an important role in the process of selecting a good college.
2. **Promotion activities:** The number of colleges is increasing and therefore, every college has to promote their features. There are various promotional activities like creating websites, tie ups with coaching classes, mouth of word, newspaper advertisement etc. Subsequently, this has also become one of the important factors to select a college. The marketing of college will help them to get more students.
3. **Monopoly (Program and place) :** It is an accepted and known concept that when there is a monopoly in a market, seller can enjoy the profits. When a particular program is offered in a single college students do not have choice they are bound to enroll themselves in that college. In rural areas or remote areas, there is single college in a locality; therefore, students will not have choice to select another college.
4. **Additional activities:** There are colleges which give prime importance to research and encourage students also to take up various research projects, however, providing students to grab sponsored research projects. Even when college has tie ups with foreign universities and help their students to enroll in foreign universities for their further studies encourages students to enroll themselves in a college.

There are many factors that influence the decision making process of a student. Apart, from factors there are people who also influence the decision of student. The requirement of a student varies and therefore different factors are taken into consideration by them.

Thus, every student has its own way to decide the best suitable college for further studies. Every college makes a best attempt to promote their college and prove their college as one of the best suitable college. Hence, it is believed that today the competition among educational institution is also high. Subsequently, every college must make efforts to market their college and attract maximum students to their college.

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