



# Educational Aspiration Of Secondary School Students: A Study

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**Abstract:** Educational aspiration is the enthusiasm for outstanding achievement and a goal that reflects the academic achievement that one hopes and wishes to achieve. It motivates and encourages students to pursue higher education and set higher career targets. The objectives of the study are to find the level of educational aspiration, and to compare the level of educational aspiration in relation to various demographic variables among secondary school students. The present study will enable educators and policymakers to develop a strategy that helps students build the abilities and confidence necessary to achieve their goals. The study revealed that secondary school students have an average level of educational aspiration. There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration in secondary school students based on gender, school type, parental level of education, and mother's occupation. A significant difference between the students with employed and self-employed fathers was observed.

**Keywords** - Educational aspiration, secondary school students.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a powerful tool to promote and develop sustainable growth in human life and society. It is a constant effort to develop the capacities, manipulate the environment, and fulfil needs. The results of education determine the advancement and status of individuals everywhere. It helps one to achieve incredible achievement, elevates a person's confidence, and morale to encounter a problem. It transforms people into useful citizens at all stages of life, paving the way to reach their highest potential. It is the strength that gives the skills, techniques, information, knowledge to know, understand, and respect the duties towards society, family, and the nation (Singh & Sharma, 2017; Alam, 2018; Kumar & Praveena, 2022).

Educational aspiration is the early impression of academic abilities and the highest level of education expected to be attained. It is a strong desire for high achievement, idealistic values, and goals that reflect the academic achievement one hopes to achieve. The levels of education are closely related to educational aspiration, a conceptual, visionary plan of a person's desire to achieve a higher level of education, making it distinct from ambition, which is the eagerness to achieve a particular supremacy. When aspiration is focused on the area of education, it is termed "educational aspiration." Sufficient knowledge about educational aspiration can tell a great deal about a student. Hence, it is crucial to know the educational aspirations of students from both educational and guidance points of view (Senthilselvam &

Subramoniam, 2015; Bashir, 2016; Kumar & Phogat, 2017; Chawla, 2018; Bora, 2021; Kedar & Varthan, 2021).

Educational aspiration encourages students to pursue higher education and develop career targets. It is influenced by multiple factors like gender, locality differences, the type of school management, family background, parental involvement, socio-economic status of the family, and parental education. It plays an important role in guiding future achievement among students. Highly aspiring students are expected to take advantage of educational opportunities that could result in academic achievement. In contrast, low aspirants are unlikely to make use of these opportunities, hindering their future academic success. Teachers, educationists, governments, and policymakers need to realise the importance of educational aspiration to recognise the potential and expectations of students (Rajesh & Chandrasekaran, 2014).

Merton (1957) developed educational aspiration theory, a motivational theory rooted in an individual's surroundings, education, and social class. Numerous developmental theorists made significant contribution to our understanding of children's behavior and functioning within their natural environment. However, many socio-developmental theories overlook essential variables critical to children's development, including the organizational, transactional, and ecological levels. The integrative model effectively describes children's normative development within the context of historically established social stratification. The conceptual frameworks for this study include the ecological models of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and the integrated model of Gracia Coll et al. (1996). Educational aspiration can serve both as a contributor and a predictor of social and academic achievement (Gorard et al., 2012). This study explores the independent and interconnected impact of community, school, parent, and students on the educational aspirations of secondary school students in Siaha. These variables can be categorised into three groups like parental, personal, and community related variables. This illustrates that both individual and collective relationships are vital for understanding the development of educational aspirations.

## II. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Educational aspiration is the first step in career development, as it energizes and encourages students to achieve their goals. It is an important variable in predicting academic achievement. It internally motivates students to set a future target and move towards it by putting effort in the present time (Biswal & Patel, 2017). Secondary school students are greatly driven by their aspirations, either in education or in a career. The present study aims to provide evidence on whether the different factors do or do not affect the educational aspiration of an individual. The results will help teachers, parents, and guardians build a better future with promising prospects. Siaha is located in the southernmost part of Mizoram and is one of the most remote district headquarters, with masses of uneducated and underprivileged people. Therefore, it becomes apparent from the investigator's perspective to study the educational aspirations of the secondary school students who are the future leaders.

## III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In general secondary school students had high level of educational aspiration. Both genders have realistic level of educational aspiration (Naqvi & Khan, 2018; Raja & Pandian, 2018; Zonunmawii, 2020). With regard to gender, girls have higher educational aspiration and more positive attitude than boys (Kumar & Phoghat, 2017; Hooda, 2018; Kedar & Vardhan, 2021; Mushtaq et al., 2021; Gantait & Baxi, 2023; Nashirul Sk, 2023; Bashir & Peerzada, 2024). In contrast, boys have higher educational aspiration than their counterpart (Senthilselvam & Subramonian, 2015). A contradicting result of no gender influence on educational aspiration was found (Raja & Pandian, 2016; Chawla, 2018; Bonia & Moran, 2020; Zonunmawii, 2020; Sarma, 2021; Thakur & Kundu, 2022).

Students of private schools have significantly higher than government schools. Educational aspirations are largely determined by the type of school and the structural features of the educational systems in which they operate (Alam, 2018; Hooda, 2018; Kedar & Vardhan, 2021; Gantait & Baxi, 2023). In contradictory, type of school management does not have any impact on educational aspiration of secondary school students (Rajesh & Chandrasekaran, 2014; Chawla, 2018; Bhardwaj et al., 2024).

Parental education plays a significant role in the level of educational aspiration among students. Parents of high achievers and higher level of education have higher educational aspiration children and rendered more support to their children studies than the parents of low achievers (Biswal & Patel, 2017; Begum & Narayanappa, 2019). In contrast, parental level of education is not associated with the education aspiration of children studies (Rajesh & Chandrasekaran, 2014).

Parental occupations do not have influence on educational aspiration of the children. The status of mother's occupation does not have impact on educational aspiration of their children (Rajesh & Chandrasekaran, 2014; Kumar & Phoghat, 2017). In contrast, the children of non-working mothers have higher educational aspiration towards their children compared to the working mothers (Thakur & Kundu, 2022). The previous studies revealed different demographic variables influence the students and their educational aspirations. So, the investigator is captivated to study this pertinent issue.

#### IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the educational aspiration of secondary school students.
2. To compare the educational aspiration of secondary school students in Siaha with regard to different demographic variables.

#### V. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The present study employed a descriptive survey method and data analysis is quantitative in nature. The permission is obtained from authorities and informed consent was taken from respondents. The identities of the students are kept confidential to address ethical considerations. All the secondary school students in Siaha located at Mizoram were considered as the population. Samples are proportionately and randomly selected based on school type and gender. Using stratified random sampling technique, 200 students were selected to represent the population. Level of educational aspiration test developed and standardised by Khan (2009) was used to collect data from students. For analysis of data, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and z-test were employed.

#### VI. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Level of educational aspiration among secondary school students

Variable	Level	High	Average	Low	Total
Total	n	47 (23.50%)	145 (72.50%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)
Gender	Boys	25 (25%)	72 (72%)	3 (3%)	100
	Girls	22 (22%)	73 (73%)	5 (5%)	100
School Type	Government	19 (19%)	77 (77%)	4 (4%)	100
	Private	28 (28%)	68 (68%)	4 (4%)	100
Father Education	Under Matric	18 (18.95%)	73 (76.84%)	4 (4.21%)	95
	Matric and above	29 (27.62%)	72 (68.57%)	4 (3.81%)	105
Mother Education	Under Matric	29 (24.79%)	83 (70.94%)	5 (4.27%)	117
	Matric and above	18 (21.69%)	62 (74.70%)	3 (3.61%)	83
Father Occupation	Employed	22 (28.95%)	52 (68.42%)	2 (2.63%)	76
	Self-employed	25 (20.16%)	93 (75%)	6 (4.84%)	124

Mother Occupation	Employed	19 (25.67%)	53 (71.62%)	2 (2.70%)	74
	Self-employed	28 (19.84%)	92 (73.01%)	6 (4.76%)	126

The table 1 revealed that 47 (23.5%) of the students have a high realistic goals, 145 (72.5%) have a normal academic goals, and only eight (4%) have unrealistic goals and carefree towards educational achievement. Thus, the majority of the secondary school students 145 (72.5%) have average level of educational aspiration.

It is also shown that, 25 (25%) of boys and 22 (22%) of girls have high level of educational aspiration, 72 (72%) boys and 73 (73%) girls have average level, and only three (3%) boys and five (5%) girls have low level. Therefore, most of the boys and girls level of educational aspiration is average.

It is revealed that, the level of educational aspiration of government secondary school students are 19 (19%) at high level, 77 (77%) average, and only four (4%) at low level. Among private secondary school students, 28 (28%) have high level, 68 (68%) average level, and only four (4%) have low educational aspiration. Therefore, irrespective of the type of school, the educational aspiration of majority of secondary schools students is average.

From the above data, among the 95 students with under matric fathers, 18 (18.95%) have high level, 73 (76.84%) average, and only four (4.21%) have low level of educational aspiration. Among the 105 students whose fathers education level is matric and above, 29 (27.62%) are high, 72 (68.57%) average, and only four (3.81%) have low level of educational aspiration. It is inferred that, high level of educational aspiration is higher among the students whose father level of education is matric and above. This is because high education level of fathers plays a role model encouraging children for higher academic and career desire.

Based on status of student's mother's level of education, 117 were under matric. There are 29 (24.79%) students at high level, 83 (59%) average, and five (4.27%) at low level of educational aspiration. The mother of 83 student's attain matric and above level of education. Among these, 18 (21.69 %) students are at high level, 62 (74.70%) average, and only three (3.61%) at low level of educational aspiration. The mother's with matric and above level of education are more common in the high and average level of educational aspiration because educated mothers are equipped with better knowledge on the prospects of higher education and set a higher goal for their children.

With regard to student's father occupation, 76 are employed and 124 are self-employed. Among the employed father, 22 (28.95%) students have high level, 52 (68.43%) an average level, and only two (2.63%) have low level of educational aspiration. Among the self-employed father's, 25 (20.16%) students are at high level, 93 (75%) at average, and only six (4.84%) at the low level of educational aspiration. Higher levels of educational aspiration are more prevalent among students whose fathers are employed. This is because of the experience and stable income of their father motivated them to set a higher goal. Low level of educational aspiration is common among children whose fathers are self-employed. This is because they are struggling to live quality life and are unable to provide time and resources for education, and often prefer to earn at an early age.

With regard to student's mother occupation, among the 74 students with employed mothers, 19 (25.67%) are high, 53 (71.62%) average, and only two (2.70%) have low level of educational aspiration. Among the 126 students with self-employed mothers, 28 (19.84%) are high, 92 (73.01%) average, and only six (4.76%) have low level of educational aspiration. Most of student's mothers are self-employed and possess high aspiration and expectations for their children to achieve in life.



Table 2: z- table for educational aspiration based on various demographic variables

Variables		n	Mean	SD	SED	z- value
Gender	Boys	100	20.37	3.37	0.44	0.02*
	Girls	100	20.36	2.88		
Type of School	Government	100	20.20	2.84	0.44	0.67*
	Private	100	20.54	3.40		
Father's Education	Under Matric	95	20.26	2.94	0.44	1.58*
	Matric and above	105	20.95	3.21		
Mother's Education	Under Matric	117	20.53	3.09	0.45	0.61*
	Matric and above	83	20.76	3.10		
Father's Employment	Employed	76	20.98	3.18	0.45	2.03 <sup>@</sup>
	Self-employed	124	20.02	3.05		
Mother's Employment	Employed	74	20.54	3.12	0.46	0.61*
	Self-employed	126	20.26	3.13		

\*Not significant at 0.05 level, <sup>@</sup> Significant at 0.05 level

From table 2, the mean and standard deviation for boys are 20.37 and 3.37, respectively, while for girls they are 20.36 and 2.88. The standard error of difference is 0.44. The z-value, 0.02 shows educational aspiration has no significant difference between boys and girls.

Table 2 shows that government and private secondary school students have mean scores of 20.20 and 20.54, respectively, with standard deviations of 2.84 and 3.40. The standard error of difference is 0.44. The z-value is 0.78; this shows the level of educational aspiration has no significant difference based on school type.

The same table above revealed the mean for students whose father's level of education is under matric and above matric to be 20.26 and 20.95, respectively, with standard deviation 2.94 and 3.21. The standard error of difference and z-value is 0.44 for both. As a consequence, educational aspiration does not differ significantly among secondary school students based on father's education.

Table 2 shows that the students of under-matric mothers have a 20.53 mean, and 3.09 standard deviation. The mean and standard deviation for students with matric and above mothers are 20.76 and 3.10, respectively. The standard error of difference is 0.45. The z-value, 0.61, is lower than the critical value, revealing level of educational aspiration has no significant difference among the secondary school students concerning the mother's education level.

Data analysis of Table 2 shows that the students with employed fathers have a 20.98 mean, 3.18 standard deviation, whereas self-employed fathers have 20.02 mean with 3.05 standard deviation. Standard error of difference is 0.45. The z-value, 2.03, is higher than the critical table value. Hence, there is a significant difference in the level of educational aspiration on secondary school students based on their father's occupation.

Analysis of Table 2 indicates that students with employed mothers have 20.54 a mean and 3.12 standard deviation, whereas students of self-employed mothers have 20.26 a mean and 3.13 standard deviation. Standard error of difference is 0.46. The z-value, 0.61, is lower than the critical value. Consequently, there is no significant difference in educational aspirations among secondary school students in Siaha, regardless of whether their mothers are employed or self-employed.

## VII. MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The majority of the secondary school students have an average level of educational aspiration.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration based on gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration between the students of government and private secondary school.
4. There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration between the children of matric and under-matric father.
5. There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration between student's whose mother's level of education is matric and under-matric.
6. There is a significant difference in the level of educational aspiration between the children of employed and self-employed fathers.
7. There is no significant difference in the level of educational aspiration between the children of employed and self-employed mothers.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the literature and present findings, the educational aspiration for majority of the secondary school students is average level. This means that they have realistic and normal goals. The level of educational aspiration can be cultivated in the students; thus, secondary school teachers should give special attention to students who have average and low levels of educational aspiration to improve their academic performance. Meanwhile, students with high educational aspirations should be motivated to aspire even higher. Teachers should be actively involved in student's education and follow different teaching methods that are more interesting, effective, and attractive to fill the knowledge gap of the students. Schools should properly establish a career guidance service every year to help students by providing them with a clear job description and expectations. Community role models and experts should be invited to speak at regular intervals to encourage students to pursue their goals.

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