

# STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## Abstract

The present study has attempted to explore educational aspirations of secondary school students having varying socio-economic backgrounds. A representative sample of 250 10<sup>th</sup> class students was randomly selected from government and private high schools located in rural and urban areas of Sambhal district. Tools for collecting the data included Educational Aspiration Scale developed by Dr. V P Sharma and Dr. Anuradha Gupta (1980) and Socio-Economic Status Scale (SESS) by A.K Kalia and Sudhir Sahu (2012). The data were analyzed using descriptive, correlational and differential statistics. The finding of the study revealed that educational aspiration is significantly and positively related to socio-economic status of secondary school students. It is also found that there is a significance difference in case of (i) educational aspiration across gender and types of school and (ii) socio-economic status across locality and type of schools of secondary school students. However non-significant difference is observed in case of (i) socio-economic status across gender and (ii) educational aspiration across locality of secondary school students. Interventions aimed at reducing the impact of socioeconomic inequalities should be given due considerations as it is associated with the level of educational aspiration of students. Addressing poverty of aspiration is necessary to build a society of fairness and opportunity. (Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture 2004, 15).

Key Words: Educational aspiration, Socio-economic status, Gender, Locality

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a vital force in promoting and sustaining growth and development of human life and society at large. The outcome of education determines the level of progress and status of the people living anywhere in the world. Education not only enables an individual to attain great heights of success in life but also boosts the confidence and morale of a person to face the life problems and helps in developing a well-adjusted personality. But this is possible only when they have the required amount of educational aspirations. When level of aspiration is centered on the field of education it is referred as educational aspiration. It is considered as a concept, referring orientation towards educational goals spaced in a continuum of difficulty and social prestige and arranged in an educational hierarchy. The levels of education are closely linked to educational aspiration. The higher the level of education, the higher is the educational aspirations. Aspirations as a cognitive state motivate or drive young people to strive for academic success (Khoo and Ainsley, 2005). Level of aspiration refers to the degree of quality of performance which an individual desires to achieve (2000). It is the index of an individual's ability for his future performance on the strength of his past experience, his ability and capacity, the efforts that he can make towards attaining the goal. It

encourages and energizes the individual to achieve educational goals an individual set for himself/herself. According to Sirin, Diemer, Jackson and Howell (2004), “Aspirations have been defined as the educational and vocational dreams that students have for the future.” According to Hurlock (1973), “Aspiration means a longing for what one has achieved with advancement on it’s as its end”.

Educational aspiration, on the other hand, focus on the desire to accomplish the goals or to succeed in particular educational fields. It represent a relatively abstract, idealistic plan; a person’s desire or hope to achieve high levels of education (Bohon et al. 2006; Reynolds and Pemberton 2001; Trusty 2002). Aspirations ‘represent idealistic preferences for the future so ... in some degree [they] might reflect students’ recognition of the social and economic importance of higher education rather than their personal desire to attend’ (Bohon et al. 2006: 208). Educational aspirations are influence by multiple intrapersonal and systemic factors (Gottfredson, 2002). Some individual factors related to students’ aspiration include their level of intrapersonal skills, self-reliance, self-control, self-concept and low mature responsibility (Marjoribans, 2002). Systematic variables related to educational aspirations include students’ socio-economic status (SES), the level of family’s engagement in their children’s education and level of parental education. Frank (1941) defined level of aspiration as “the level of future performance in that task, which an individual arranged his aspiration undertakes to reach. According to him an individual arranged his aspirations towards his possible attainment in a hierarchy of difficulties that he is likely to face. His level of aspiration is described to be most attractive orientation on the continuum of difficulty in relation to the goals he aspires to achieve.

Parents’ educational and economic backgrounds have a significant effect on their children’s education. Children from well off socio-economic background have fair chances of having better educational aspiration as it influence students’ higher education selection. Becker & Tomes (1979) assert that wealthy and well-educated parents provide favorable learning environment and better education. “For most children to succeed in school, their parents’ interest in their learning is of paramount importance. But this interest ought to be with what happens on a daily basis, because this is how the child lives, and this is how he understands his life. The essential ingredient in most children’s success in school is a positive relation to his parents.” (Bettelheim, 1987)

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### *Educational Aspiration: Concept and Definitions*

Aspiration is an ambition/goals set to achieve certain levels of life. It is an individual's desire to obtain a status objective or goals such as particular occupation or level of education (Kao and Thompson, 2003; MacBrayne, 1987). Educational Aspiration refers the level of aspiration or ambition of a person to achieve education in a School, College and University. (Oxford English Dictionary, Volume 7th Edition). Educational aspirations are early impressions about an individual’s own academic calibre (Furlong & Cartmel, 1995) and the highest levels of education that he/she expects to achieve (Furlong & Cartmel, 1995; Trusty, 2000; Ou & Reynolds, 2008 and Beal & Crockett, 2010). The Educational Aspiration Scale developed by V.P Sharma and Anuradha Gupta describes educational aspiration on the following dimensions. These are i) Past Experience in terms of marks obtained estimate of goal set, success or failure experienced ii) Amount of efforts made in the examination iii) Ability and capacity to study for the examination have a direct bearing upon setting a future goal. In the present study, educational aspiration is interpreted as the score obtained in the educational aspiration scale developed by V.P Sharma and Anuradha Gupta which is based on the above dimensions. High score of the scale denotes high level of educational aspiration.

### *Socio-economic Status: Concept and Definitions*

Socio-economic status is the indicator of person's achievements in education, employment and occupational status and income and wealth. Socioeconomic status can be defined as a person's overall social positions...to which attainments in both the social and economic domain contribute (Ainley et al., 1995: ix). According to a draft report of the Australian commission on health Krieger, Williams and Moss (2007) refer to socioeconomic position as an aggregate concept that includes both resource-based and prestige-based measures, as linked to both childhood and adult social class position from among the children. Hart (2014) say that socio-economic status refers to the level of education, income, and professionalism of an individual or group.

### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURES**

Soy (n. a.) conducted a study on relationship between socio-economic status and educational aspiration among higher secondary school students. The findings of the study are (i) there is a positive correlation between the socio-economic status and educational aspiration among higher secondary schools student (ii) Difference between higher secondary school students of government and private school in educational aspiration is not significant (iii) Difference between higher secondary school students of government and private school in socio-economic status is significant (iv) Difference between boys and girls of higher secondary schools students in educational aspiration is not significant and (v) Difference between boys and girls of higher secondary school students in the socioeconomic status is significant. Kumar and Phoghat (2017) studied educational aspirations of secondary school students in relation to their gender. The finding of the study revealed that boys and girls differ significantly on overall educational aspiration. Girl students have higher educational aspirations. Singh (2011) studied educational aspirations in secondary school students and found that educational aspirations of boys are better than girls. Medium of instruction also influence the educational aspiration. Ahuja (2016) in a study titled, "A Study of Self-Efficacy among Secondary School Students in relation to Educational Aspiration and Academic Achievement" noted that girl students, in comparison to boy students, had statistically significant higher educational aspirations scores. George, J. (2014) in a study of educational aspiration of higher secondary school students found that there exists a significant difference between male and female students where female students possess greater educational aspiration than that of male students. The findings are similar to that reported in Mau and Bikos (2000) and Goel (2004). George, J. (2014) in a study of educational aspiration of higher secondary school students also found that there is a significant difference between the educational aspiration of rural and urban favouring urban higher secondary school students. The findings are consistent with that reported in Shouping (2003) and Caitlin (2006). Similar conclusions were made in Katherine (2010). Wongoo (1991) conducted a study to find out whether the students from government and private schools differ significantly so far as their socioeconomic status and academic achievement was concerned and found that the government and private school students from highly advanced advanced and normal schools differed significantly so far as their socioeconomic status was concerned. Discerned significant difference on academic achievement was found between the students from government and private, highly advanced and advanced schools; academic achievement of students from normal government and normal private schools did not differ significantly; relationship between socioeconomic status and academic achievement when computed on total sample (N =180) was statistically significant. Kumar, S. and Gupta, M. (2014) in a comparative study of level of educational aspiration of secondary school students of government and non-government schools noted that non-government secondary school students have high level of educational aspiration in comparison to students of government schools.

Researches in the area of educational aspiration have shown that there are mixed findings with respect to gender as some studies reported that there is no significant difference between female and male adolescents

(Kaur, 2012 and Mishra, 2013) but it was also found out that male adolescents had comparatively better educational aspirations than female adolescents (Rajesh & Chandrasekaran, 2014). However other studies reported girls to be significantly better than boys in case of educational aspiration (Kumar and Phoghat 2017 and Ahuja 2016). Also, it was reported that the adolescents of rural locality had significantly better educational aspiration scores than students of urban locality (Rajesh & Chandrasekaran, 2014) however there was no significant difference between the students of Government and Public schools on same measure (Kaur, 2012). The inconsistencies in the findings of the earlier researches compel the present researcher to carry this investigation to ascertain the relationships and differences between the variables in hand. The present investigation will fill the void of knowledge.

## OBJECTIVES

In the light of the review of the literatures, the present investigation was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To study the relationship between educational aspiration and socio- economic status of secondary school students.
2. To compare secondary school students across gender (boys and girls), locale (rural and urban) and types of school (government and private) on the measure of educational aspiration and socio- economic status.

## HYPOTHESES

Based on the review of literatures and aforementioned objectives the present study formulated the following hypotheses:

- H<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between educational aspiration and socio- economic status of secondary school students.
- H<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference across gender (boys and girls) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration.
- H<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference across gender (boys and girls) of secondary school students in respect of their socio- economic status.
- H<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant difference across locality (rural and urban) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration.
- H<sub>5</sub>:** There is no significant difference across locality (rural and urban) of secondary school students in respect of their socio- economic status.
- H<sub>6</sub>:** There is no significant difference across types of school (government and private) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration.
- H<sub>7</sub>:** There is no significant difference across types of school (government and private) of secondary school students in respect of their socio- economic status.

## DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Sample of the study is delimited to secondary level students of Sambhal district of U.P only.
2. The study is delimited to certain selected demographic variables viz., gender (boys and girls) and locality (rural and urban), types of school (government and private) only.
3. The study is delimited to educational aspiration as dependent variable only.
4. The study is delimited to the following tool to gather the data:
  - Educational Aspiration Scale developed by Dr. V P Sharma and Dr. Anuradha Gupta (1980)
  - Socio-Economic Status Scale (SESS) by A.K Kalia and Sudhir Sahu (2012)

## METHODOLOGY

This study utilized survey techniques due to its descriptive nature. This section is comprised of sample, research tool and procedure of the data collection.

### *Sample*

The present study is conducted on secondary school students of Sambhal district (U.P.). A representative sample of 250 10<sup>th</sup> class students was randomly selected from government and private secondary schools located in rural and urban areas of the said district. The ages of the students ranged from 15 to 16 years.

### *Tools used*

The researcher used the following tool for collecting the data to study the research in hand.

#### **1. Educational Aspiration Scale by Dr. V P Sharma and Dr. Anuradha Gupta (1980)**

The scale has been developed on the rational that (i) past experiences (Pe.) in terms of marks obtained estimate or goal set, success or failure experienced, (ii) amount of efforts (Ae.) made in the examination, (iii) ability and capacity (Ac) to study for the examination have a direct bearing upon setting a future goal. There is no right or wrong answer. The subject has to compare between a pair of statement given in each of the items and weight one of this two by putting a cross-mark against it. The responses would be scored as 1 or as 0. The maximum score is 45 whereas the minimum is 0. Reliability Coefficient by test retest method and internal consistency by odd-even technique using S-B formula were found to 0.98 and 0.596 respectively. The validity of the scale determined against scholastic achievement is 0.692 and predictive validity established with EAS, form V is 0.596. These values are significant at .01 level of significance.

#### **2. Socio-Economic Status Scale (SESS) by A.K Kalia and Sudhir Sahu (2012)**

Socio-Economic Status Scale (SESS) SESS constructed and standardized by Kalia and Sahu (2012) was used to asses SES of adolescents. The scale is consisted of 40 items based on five different dimensions of SES i.e. Socio-Cultural, Economic, Possession of goods and Services, Health and Education. The Scale according to authors is highly reliable and valid having reliability co-efficient through split half method .68 and test-retest method .86. The factor analysis of the inter item correlation matrix by varimax with Keiser normalization identified five factors having Eigen value greater than unity. SESS can be scored accurately by hand and no key or stencil is required.

### *Procedure of data collection*

The researcher collected the data personally with prior permission of the schools and concerned teachers. The administration of the tool viz., Educational Aspiration Scale developed by Dr. V P Sharma and Dr. Anuradha Gupta (1980) and Socio- Economic Status Scale- A.K Kalia and Sudhir Sahu (2012) were completed following the instructions given by the authors of the respective tools.

## ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive analysis (Mean, Standard Deviations), correlational analysis (Coefficient of Correlation 'r') and differential analysis ('t'- test). The hypotheses were tested at varying level of significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **1. Correlation of Educational Aspiration and Socio- economic Status of the Secondary School Students**

The correlation was calculated using Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation between these variables. Results of the correlation coefficients between educational aspiration and socio- economic status of the secondary school students are presented in Table No. 1

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between educational aspiration and socio- economic status of secondary school students.

**Table No.1**  
**Correlation Matrix of Educational Aspiration and Socio- Economic Status**

Variables	Educational Aspiration	Socio- Economic Status
<b>Educational Aspiration</b>	*	.213 (.01)
<b>Socio- Economic Status</b>	.213 (.01)	*

Perusal of table-1 establishes that there is a significant positive relationship between educational aspiration and socio-economic status of the secondary school students. This proportional relation signifies that better socio-economic status of students significantly affect educational aspiration of the students. The reason for the better socio-economic status of students resulting into better educational aspiration and outcome may be due to distinct influences of social and the economic components of socio-economic status. It is largely observed that children from families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a higher level of aspiration, provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school (Williams et al., 1980; Williams, 1987; Williams et al., 1993). in their children. They also may Similar result is also reported by Soy (n. a.). Thus the null hypothesis  $H_1$  is rejected and it is reframed as there is significant relationship between educational aspiration and socio-economic status of secondary school students.

## **2. Comparison of secondary school students across gender (boys and girls), locale (rural and urban) and type of schools (government and private) on the measure of educational aspiration and socio-economic status.**

The comparison between the samples on the selected variables was done by testing the significance of difference between their means by using t-tests. The results are presented in the following tables.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference across gender (boys and girls) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference across gender (boys and girls) of secondary school students in respect of their socio- economic status.

**Table No.2**  
**Comparison between gender (boys and girls) on the selected variables**

Variables	Gender				t - value
	Boys (150)		Girls (100)		
	M <sub>1</sub>	$\sigma_1$	M <sub>2</sub>	$\sigma_2$	
<b>Educational Aspiration</b>	25.74	5.98	27.83	6.13	2.68 (.01)
<b>Socio- Economic Status</b>	62.21	15.34	64.31	15.49	1.05 (N.S.)

Table-2 presents mean scores of boys and girls of secondary school students for educational aspiration and socio-economic status Means and S.Ds of boys and girls on the measure of educational aspiration are 25.74 & 27.83 and 5.98 & 6.13 respectively. When the t-test was applied to compare the mean scores of educational aspiration of both the groups, t-value is found to be 2.68 which is significant at .01 level of significance, suggesting that there is a significant difference between boys and girls. Girls having better educational aspiration may be due to stimulating and friendly atmosphere, a positive attitude and encouraging fathers providing social support as well as strengthening sense of coherence might increase the educational aspirations. The boys, on the other hands, may felt more rejected with the autocratic atmosphere at home in comparison to girls who experienced more nurturance than boys. This result is in consonance with the researches of Kumar and Phoghat (2017) and Ahuja (2016). Thus the null hypothesis  $H_2$  is rejected and it is reframed as there is significant difference across gender (boys and girls) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration. On the other hands, comparison of mean scores of boys and girls on the measure of socio-economic status yields no significant result. Thus the hypothesis  $H_3$  is accepted.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant difference across locality (rural and urban) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** There is no significant difference across locality (rural and urban) of secondary school students in respect of their socio- economic status.

**Table No.3**  
**Comparison between locality (rural and urban) on the selected variables**

Variables	Locality				t - value
	Rural (175)		Urban (75)		
	M <sub>1</sub>	$\sigma_1$	M <sub>2</sub>	$\sigma_2$	
<b>Educational Aspiration</b>	24.57	5.24	25.39	5.39	1.11 (N.S.)
<b>Socio- Economic Status</b>	60.22	14.69	63.65	14.89	1.67 (.05)

Perusal of the table-3 reveals that respective means and S.Ds on the measure of educational aspiration for rural and urban secondary school students are 24.57 & 5.24 and 25.39 & 5.39. When the t-test was applied to compare the mean scores of both the groups, t-value is found to be 1.11 which is not significant at either level of .05 or .01 level of significances. This suggests that locality of the students have no influence on the educational aspiration of the students. It may be due to acknowledging the importance of education and thereby giving similar exposure to students in rural and urban areas by parents. Therefore, the hypothesis ( $H_4$ ) which states that “There is no significant difference across locality (rural and urban) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration” stands accepted. Means and S.Ds on the measure of socio-economic status for rural and urban are 60.22 & 14.69 and 63.65 & 56.8114.89 respectively. When

the t-test was applied to compare the mean scores of both the groups, t-value is found to be 1.67 which is significant at .05 level of significance, suggesting that socio-economic status differs in case of locality (rural and urban) of the students in this case. Hence the null hypothesis  $H_5$  is rejected and it is reframed as there is significant difference across locality (rural and urban) of secondary school students in respect of their socio-economic status.

$H_6$ : There is no significant difference across types of school (government and private) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration.

$H_7$ : There is no significant difference across types of school (government and private) of secondary school students in respect of their socio- economic status.

### No.3

#### Comparison between types of school (government and Private) on the selected variables

Variables	Type of Schools				t - value
	Government (125)		Private (125)		
	$M_1$	$\sigma_1$	$M_2$	$\sigma_2$	
<b>Educational Aspiration</b>	25.19	5.36	28.21	6.13	4.15 (.01)
<b>Socio- Economic Status</b>	61.73	14.94	65.21	15.13	1.83 (.05)

Table-2 presents mean scores of government and private secondary school students for educational aspiration and socio-economic status. Means and S.Ds of government and private secondary school students on the measure of educational aspiration are 25.19 & 28.21 and 5.36 & 6.13 respectively. When the t-test was applied to compare the mean scores of educational aspiration of both the groups, t-value is found to be 4.15 which is significant at .01 level of significance, suggesting that there is significant difference in educational aspiration between the groups favouring private secondary school students. Private secondary school students having significantly better educational aspiration may be due to availability of quanta of motivating and stimulating support from fathers in the forms of opportunities and encouragement in shaping their aspirations. Quality of schooling, parental social class may be other important mediating factors to strive for educational aspiration. This result is in line with the research of Kumar, S. and Gupta, M. (2014). Thus the null hypothesis  $H_6$  is rejected and it is reframed as there is significant difference across type of schools (government and private) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration. On the other hands, comparison of mean scores of government and private secondary school students on the measure of socio-economic status yields significant result at .05 level of significance. This result is corroborated with the findings of Soy (n. a.). Thus the null hypothesis  $H_7$  is rejected and it is reframed as there is significant difference across type of schools (government and private) of secondary school students in respect of their socio- economic status.

#### Findings

1. There is significant positive relationship between educational aspiration and socio-economic status of the secondary school students.



2. There is significant difference across gender (boys and girls) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration.
3. There is no significant difference across gender (boys and girls) of secondary school students in respect of their socio- economic status.
4. There is no significant difference across locality (rural and urban) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration.
5. There is significant difference across locality (rural and urban) of secondary school students in respect of their socio- economic status.
6. There is significant difference across type of schools (government and private) of secondary school students in respect of their educational aspiration.
7. There is significant difference across type of schools (government and private) of secondary school students in respect of their socio- economic status.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study provides significant information pertaining to the relationship between educational aspiration and socio-economic status among secondary school students. This study also compares educational aspiration and socio-economic status among the selected sample on the basis of their gender, locality and types of school. A representative sample of 250 10<sup>th</sup> class students was randomly selected from government and private secondary schools located in rural and urban areas of the said district. The data were analyzed using descriptive, correlational and differential statistics. The results showed significant positive correlation between educational aspiration and socio-economic status. A significant difference is noted in case of (i) educational aspiration across gender and types of school and (ii) socio-economic status across locality and type of schools of secondary school students. However non-significant difference is observed in case of (i) socio-economic status across gender and (ii) educational aspiration across locality of secondary school students.

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