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EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the relationship between educational aspiration, socio-economic status and academic achievement at the secondary level. Survey method is used to select a sample of 300 students at the secondary level. The research tools used are Educational Aspiration List (Strand and Winston, 2008) to measure the students' aspiration, Socio-economic Status Scale (Srivastava, 1991) to assess the students' socio-economic status and Academic Achievement Test to assess students' academic achievement. The results of the statistical analyses show a significant correlation between Educational aspiration, socio-economic status and academic achievement of the students at the secondary level. A significant difference is found between students in different categories of schools and gender pertaining to educational aspiration, socio-economic status and academic achievement at the secondary level.

Keywords: Educational Aspiration, Socio-economic Status and Academic Achievement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education being the subsystem of a society plays a key role in molding, shaping, reforming and reconstructing the society from time to time. One of the major features of contemporary educational thinking is the growing concern about the development of effective personality and efficiency of teaching-learning outcomes that can be assessed in terms of students' achievement. In the present system, the main goal of education has changed from enhancing the academic achievement in school subjects to harmonious development of the learners. Parents in the present days want their kids to get admission in schools which have facilities like, smart classrooms, smart boards, computer-based learning and hi-tech language laboratories. The development of the learners is possible only if proper individual attention is given to students for both, knowledge enhancement and skill development (Good, 1973).

2. NEED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

Academic failure and success have been the center of focus for educational policies for many years. As such, the academic achievement of all students including culturally diverse students needs to be examined in relation to their socio-economic status to unpack components of the underlying assumptions of students' academic achievement. Ramirez and Carpenter (2005) suggested that within group differences are important to recognize and understand students' academic achievement. The results of the study was beneficial to researchers in the field of multi-cultural education, educational policy makers and educators in general and it should help to guide professional practice that will support the learning of culturally diverse students. It was a contribution to research in multicultural education, cultural diversity, and academic achievement of students.

The main function of research in the field of education is to perfect the tools of education and to develop new ones to further productive research in this area. Research in the field of education, opens up perspectives and provides great insight to teachers, educationalists and policy makers. The education system as a whole and all its components should be investigated if research is to be comprehensive and successful. Highly qualified teams of researchers are essential to bring about a variety of interests, knowledge, and new techniques in education. As Education is a human venture and a realm of contingencies, it is important that educational researchers take into account the teachers, cultural background, intellectual limitations, needs, frustrations and the real problems faced in the classroom. Thus a need is felt to investigate the educational aspirations, socio-economic status and academic achievement of students, especially at the secondary level, a very crucial stage for children.

3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Studies reviewed pertaining to the present study have been compiled and presented below under appropriate headings.

3.1 Studies Related to Educational Aspiration and Academic Achievement

Educational aspirations play important roles in education attainment, and, in turn, status attainment processes. Students' educational aspirations have strong positive effects on their educational achievement and attainment which, in turn, have strong effects on their earnings Students with high educational aspirations are more likely than students with low educational aspirations to do well in school, attain higher education degrees, and reap the economic rewards of higher education degrees in the labor market. Students' educational aspirations also mediate the effects of their socio-economic origin. In other words, students' educational aspirations can strengthen or diminish the effects of where they come from on how well they do and how far they go in school.

Andaman (2002) found that a sense of school belonging was positively related to grade point average and self-concept and negatively related to school problems and absenteeism in a diverse sample of adolescents. Additionally, an increased sense of belonging to the school community by way of encouragement, and positive interactions with teachers, administrators, and peers, has been linked to overall school satisfaction and achievement.

According to Rothon (2007) it is possible that differences in educational aspirations might further account for the patterns found. Aspirations as used in this paper, refers to the desires and aims of young people. A distinction has sometimes been made between "aspirations" and "expectations". For example, it has been proposed that a distinction should be made between what a student hopes he/she will do and what they predict they will do. Other authors have used aspirations to refer to the desires and aims of young people, and expectations to refer to what their parents desire for them. No such distinction is made here. Aspirations refer solely to the aims of the young people. The author investigated the educational aspirations and specifically at the decision whether or not to remain in education after the age of 16.

Park (2008) compared the levels of educational aspirations and students disengagement between students with two parents and those with a single parent. The study was conducted over 9th and 12th grade students of Korea and found that students with single parent are much less aspirant to 4 year university education and are more likely to disengage than their counterparts with two parents.

Strand and Winston (2008) studied educational aspiration in inner city schools with a sample of over 800 pupils of age group 16-18 years and found no significant difference in aspirations by gender or year group but differences between ethnic groups were marked.

Rothon (2011) examined the relationship between education aspiration and achievement of secondary education in deprived area of London and found girls were more likely than boys to express a wish to remain in education beyond the age of 16 and also ethnic differences, socio-psychological variables particularly self-esteem and psychological distress were associated with high 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.

Kaur (2012) investigated educational aspiration of adolescents in relation to their intelligence on a sample of 200 adolescents studying in secondary schools of Amritsar District. The results indicate that gender and type of school do not influence educational aspiration of adolescents, but different levels of intelligence influence the educational aspiration of the adolescents. A similar study was conducted by Rajendra Reddy (2015).

3.2 Studies Related to Socio-Economic Status and Academic Achievement

The relationship between family socio-economic status and the academic performance of children is well established in sociological research. While there is disagreement over how best to measure socio-economic status, most studies indicate that children from low socio-economic status families do not perform as well as they potentially could at school compared to children from high socio-economic status families (Graetz, 1995). Most studies, however, compare students from across all socio-economic status backgrounds to reach the conclusion that low socio-economic status adversely affects a range of educational outcomes.

McMillan and Western (2000) argued that social economic status is comprised of three major dimensions: education, occupation and income and therefore in developing indicators appropriate for high education context, researchers should study each dimension of social economic status separately. They added that education, occupation and income are moderately correlated and therefore it is inappropriate to treat them interchangeably in the higher education context. An argument that is similar to Considine and Zappala (2002) who argued that the social and economic components of the socio-economic status equation may have a distinct and separate influence on educational outcomes. The researcher therefore reviewed literature on each of the components of social economic status in relation to academic performance.

Pedrosa and others (2006) in their study on educational and social economic background of undergraduates and academic performance at a Brazilian University found that students coming from disadvantaged socio-economic and educational homes perform relatively better than those coming from higher socio-economic and educational strata. They called this phenomenal educational resilience. This could be true considering that different countries have different parameters of categorizing social economic status. What a developed country categorizes as low social economic status may be different from the definition of low social economic status of a developing country. Additionally students do not form a homogenous group and one measure of social economic disadvantage may not suit all sub groups equally.

Rouse and Barrow (2006) investigated on socio-economic status and its affect on education and concluded that the job of the school is to teach so well that family background is no longer an issue. School districts are still facing the same issues faced 40 years.

Qaiser Suleman and others (2008) investigated the effects of parental socio-economic status on the academic achievement of secondary school students in District Karak, Pakistan. After statistical analysis of data, the researchers concluded that parental socio-economic status; parent's educational level, parental occupational level; and parental income level affect the academic achievement of students at the secondary level.

Argentin and Triventi (2011) focused on the relationships between social origin, participation in tertiary education (enrolment, drop-out, enrolment at second level and post-tertiary education) and occupational instability among university graduates in a recent period of university. Graduates Survey and the University Graduates Survey cover both pre- and post-reform cohorts. Results from logistic regression models show a slight decline in the association between parents' education and enrolment in tertiary education, whereas there is a reduction and a new increase of inequality in drop-outs. There remarkable effects of parents' education on enrolment in post-graduate courses, but smaller on the risks of having unstable jobs and both are mainly stable over time. Only a slight reduction of the role of social origin in university participation and in the transition to the labor market took place, but it seems not to be too closely connected to the specific reforms which occurred in the 1990s. Corroborative studies have been conducted by Sarasvathi (2011), Kezhia (2012), Parimalam (2013) and Aameena Khathoon (2015).

3.3 Critique

As the studies reviewed pertaining to educational aspiration, socio-economic status and performance of students are not very much in depth and the studies based on gender difference are inconclusive, it necessitates further investigation in the same lines.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The review done from the available relevant literature, relating to the present research area, led the investigator to conceptualize the problem in an attempt to fill in the lacunae found.

Thus the problem is stated as here under:

Educational Aspiration, Socio-economic Status and Academic Achievement of Students at the Secondary Level

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- (i) To investigate if there is any significant relationship between educational aspiration, socio-economic status and academic achievement among students in government, government-aided and matriculation schools at the secondary level;
- (ii) To investigate if there is any significant difference in educational aspiration, socio-economic status and academic achievement among students in government, government-aided and matriculation schools at the secondary level;
- (iii) To investigate if there is any significant difference in educational aspiration among boys and girls in government, government-aided and matriculation schools at the secondary level;
- (iv) To investigate if there is any significant difference in socio-economic status among boys and girls in government, government-aided and matriculation schools at the secondary level and
- (v) To investigate if there is any significant difference in academic achievement among boys and girls in government, government-aided and matriculation schools at the secondary level.

6. HYPOTHESES

(i) There is a significant relationship between educational aspiration, socio-economic status and academic achievement among students in government, government-aided and matriculation schools at the secondary level;

- (ii) There is no significant difference in educational aspiration, socio-economic status and academic achievement among students in government, government-aided and matriculation schools at the secondary level.
- (iii) There is no significant difference in educational aspiration among boys and girls in government, government-aided and matriculation schools at the secondary level.
- (iv) There is no significant difference in socio-economic status among boys and girls in government, government-aided and matriculation schools at the secondary level.
- (v) There is no significant difference in academic achievement among boys and girls in government, government-aided and matriculation schools at the secondary level.

7. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

As the method of investigation is designed on the basis of the problem, objectives and hypotheses formulated, it warrants a psychometrically sound design, procedure, tools and execution. The investigation is planned to verify hypotheses using suitable tools and appropriate statistics for data processing.

7.1 Research Design

The present study deals with the analyses of Educational aspiration, Socio- Economic status and academic achievement among students studying in different systems, namely, government, government-aided and matriculation schools, at the secondary level.

7.2 Sample selected

From the target population, a sample of 300 students were chosen from the secondary level studying in different systems of education, namely, government, government-aided and matriculation schools by adopting random sampling technique. The chosen sample comprised of 100 students from the government schools, 100 students from the government-aided schools and 100 students from the matriculation schools.

7.3 Tools used for the study

The research tool used for the present study to analyze the educational aspiration, socio-economic status and academic achievement among students in different systems of education at the secondary level are as follows:

- (i) Educational Aspiration List (Strand and Winston, 1979)
- (ii) Socio-economic Status Scale (Srivastava, 1991)
- (iii) Academic Achievement Test



8. ANALYSES OF DATA

The results of the analyses of data collected are compiled and presented in tables below.

Table-1: Analysis of Correlation between the Select Variables of Students at the Secondary Level

Variables	Educational Aspirations	Socio-economic Status	Academic Achievement
Educational Aspirations	1	0.08	0.15**
Socio-economic Status	X	1	0.06
Academic Achievement	X	X	1

^{**}significant at 0.01 level

From the above table (Table-1), it is evident that there is a positive correlation between the select variables educational aspirations, socio-economic status and academic achievement.

The analysis of variance commonly referred to by the acronym ANOVA, at its lowest level is essentially an extension of the logic of t-tests to those situations where comparison of means of three or more samples, called independent groups concurrently becomes essential.

The following set of tables (Table-2 to Table-2c) exhibits the analysis of variance of students in different categories of schools, following different systems of education at the secondary level, with regard to the select variables.

Table-2: Analysis of Variance of Educational Aspirations, Socio-economic Status and Academic Achievement of Students in different Categories of Schools at the Secondary Level

Variable	Source of Variation	df	Sum of Square	Mean of Sum of Square	<i>F</i> -ratio
	Between groups	2	1060.02	530.01	
Educational Aspirations	Within groups	297	57964.70	195.17	2.72*
	Total	299	59024.72	-	
Sacia	Between groups		5849.95	2924.97	
Socio- economic Status	Within groups	297	10740.65	36.16	80.88**
	Total	299	16590.60	-	
	Between groups	2	923.81	461.90	
Academic Achievement	Within groups	297	41241.11	138.86	3.33*
	Total	299	42164.92	-	

^{**}significant at 0.01 level

In Table-2, for the analysis of variance different categories of schools are treated as different groups. From the F ratios, it is seen that there is a significant difference in educational aspiration, socio-economic status and academic achievement of students in different categories of schools at the secondary level.

In order to establish the actual degree of difference between the students belonging to different categories of schools namely, government, government-aided and matriculation board schools, critical ratios were worked out and the actual difference between the mean scores was established. The tables (Table-2a to Table-2c) presented below thus indicate the mean difference between students in the different categories of schools at the secondary level.

^{*}significant at 0.05 level

Table-2a: Statistical Analysis of Means of Educational Aspiration of Students in Government, Government-Aided and Matriculation Board Schools at the Secondary Level

Variable	Sample Size	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	CR
Government	100	127.88	13.09	1.31	1.94	2 10*
Government-aided	100	123.65	14.28	1.43	1.94	2.18*
Government	100	127.88	13.09	1.31	1.95	1.89*
Matriculation	100	124.19	14.50	1.45	1.95	1.09
Government-aided	100	123.65	14.28	1.43	0.04	o ozns
Matriculation	100	124.19	14.50	1.45	2.04	0.27 ^{NS}

^{*}Significant at 0.05 level

SD-Standard Deviation

SEM-Standard Error of Mean

SED-Standard Error of Difference

CR-Critical Ratio

From the above table (Table-2a), it is evident that the Government board school students are significantly better in their Educational aspiration when compared to Government-aided board school students at the secondary level. Furthermore, on company government and matriculation board school students, government school students are better than matriculation school students at the secondary level. There is no significant difference between government-aided and matriculation school students in their educational aspirations at the secondary level.



Table-2b: Statistical Analysis of Means of Socio-Economic status of Students in Government, Government-Aided and Matriculation Board Schools at the Secondary Level

Variable	Sample Size	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	CR
Government	100	13.15	6.12	0.61	0.86	7.20**
Government-aided	100	19.31	5.98	0.60	0.00	7.20
Government	100	13.15	6.12	0.61	0.85	12.64**
Matriculation	100	23.93	5.94	0.59	0.65	12.04
Government-aided	100	19.31	5.98	0.60	0.84	5.48**
Matriculation	100	23.93	5.94	0.59	0.04	5.48**

^{**}Significant at 0.01 level

SD-Standard Deviation

SEM-Standard Error of Mean

SED-Standard Error of Difference

CR-Critical Ratio

It is evident that the matriculation board students are significantly better in their socio-economic status when compared to the government and government-aided board school students at the secondary level.



Table-2c: Statistical Analysis of Means of Academic Achievement of Students in Government, Government-Aided and Matriculation Board Schools at the Secondary Level

Variable	Sample Size	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	CR
Government	100	62.09	11.47	1.15	1.64	1.94*
Government-aided	100	65.28	11.75	1.18	1.04	1.94
Government	100	62.09	11.47	1.15	1.67	2.45*
Matriculation	100	66.18	12.13	1.21	1.67	
Government-aided	100	65.28	11.75	1.18	4.00	o cons
Matriculation	100	66.18	12.13	1.21	1.69	0.53 ^{NS}

^{*}Significant at 0.05 level

SD-Standard Deviation

SEM-Standard Error of Mean

SED-Standard Error of Difference

CR-Critical Ratio

It is evident that the matriculation school students are significantly better in their academic achievement when compared to the government school students at the secondary level and government-aided school students are significantly better than government school students in academic achievement at the secondary level. There is no significant difference between government-aided and matriculation school students in their academic achievement at the secondary level.

The analysis of variance with regard to the select variables of boys and girls in different categories of schools at the secondary level are analyzed and presented in tables (Table-3a to Table-3c) are presented here under.

Table-3a: Statistical Analysis of Means of Educational Aspiration of Boys and Girls in Government, Government-Aided and Matriculation Board Schools at the Secondary Level

	Variable	Sample Size	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	CR
Covernment	Boys	50	125.90	13.89	1.96	2.60	1.52 ^{NS}
Government	Girls	50	129.86	12.05	1.70	2.00	1.02
Government- Aided	Boys	50	119.18	13.92	1.97	2.73	3.28**
	Girls	50	128.12	13.32	1.88		
Matriaulation	Boys	50	124.90	16.30	2.30	2.04	0.49 ^{NS}
Matriculation	Girls	50	123.48	12.58	1.78	2.91	0.49***

^{**}Significant at 0.01 level

SD-Standard Deviation

SEM-Standard Error of Mean

SED-Standard Error of Difference

CR-Critical Ratio

The girls are significantly better than the boys in government-aided schools at the secondary level. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in government and matriculation board schools at the secondary level in their Educational aspiration.



Table-3b: Statistical Analysis of Means of Socio-Economic Status of Boys and Girls in Government, Government-Aided and Matriculation Board Schools at the Secondary Level

	Variable	Sample Size	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	CR
Government	Boys	50	13.22	6.23	0.88	1.23	0.11 ^{NS}
Government	Girls	50	13.08	6.06	0.86	1.20	0.11
Government-Aided	Boys	50	22.28	5.14	0.73	1 04	5.70**
Government Alded	Girls	50	16.34	5.28	0.75	1.04	3.70
Matriculation	Boys	50	24.94	5.93	0.84	1.18	1.72 ^{NS}
Iviatificulation	Girls	50	22.92	5.84	0.83	1.10	1.72

^{**}Significant at 0.01 level

SD-Standard Deviation

SEM-Standard Error of Mean

SED-Standard Error of Difference

CR-Critical Ratio

There is a significant difference between boys and girls in government-aided board schools at the secondary level. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in government and matriculation board schools at the secondary level in their socio-economic status.



Table-3c: Statistical Analysis of Means of Academic Achievement of Boys and Girls in Government, Government-Aided and Matriculation Board Schools at the Secondary Level

	Variable	Sample Size	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	CR
Government	Boys	50	58.16	9.03	1.28	2.16	3.63**
Covernment	Girls	50	66.02	12.35	1.75	2.10	0.00
Government-Aided	Boys	50	61.82	11.19	1.58	2.26	3.07**
Covernment / tided	Girls	50	68.74	11.37	1.61	2.20	0.07
Matriculation	Boys	50	66.16	11.88	1.68	2.44	0.02 ^{NS}
Managaari	Girls	50	66.20	12.49	1.77	,,	0.02

^{**}Significant at 0.01 level

SD-Standard Deviation

SEM-Standard Error of Mean

SED-Standard Error of Difference

CR-Critical Ratio

The girls are significantly better than the boys in government and government-aided schools at the secondary level with respect to their academic achievement. There is however no significant difference between boys and girls in matriculation board schools at the secondary level in their academic achievement.

9. **DISCUSSION**

Practical and attitudinal barriers to the formation of high aspirations are evident. Financial constraints may limit some groups' access to opportunities and enabling resources such as computers and private tuition may not be available to all. Equally, some individuals are limited by earlier achievement and choices such as leaving school or becoming a parent at a young age. But attitudes are also important in determining the achievement level of students.



In the present investigation, it is found that with reference to educational aspirations, the two groups, boys and girls, did not differ significantly in government and matriculation schools. Both the groups had almost similar educational aspiration. This may be attributed to highly competitive nature of the present education. Both the groups might have put equal amount of efforts towards their aspiration. The boys and girls were having same performance on academic achievement. This might be because of present day competitive education which provides equal opportunities to both boys and girls. This naturally enhances the level of educational aspirations, expectations, which ultimately increases the competitive spirit. This sometimes results in increased parental expectation about the children. Hence nowadays parents are providing equal opportunities and encouragement for both daughters and sons. But there is a significant difference found in between boys and girls of Government-aided schools, girls are better compared to boys in their educational aspiration. The home environment for girls would also therefore be more congenial. This ultimately might have contributed to better planning of work. The girls had significantly better reading and note taking habits as compared to boys. Girls are usually more home bound due to cultural factors. Hence, they spend more time at home than boys. This would have influenced them to develop aspiration towards their education.

In the present investigation, it is found that in socio-economic status there is no significant difference between boys and girls in government and matriculation schools. This can be explained that higher socio-economic status is a facilitating factor of academic achievement. It is quite natural that parents with high and moderate socio economic status are able to provide all the amenities required by the children for facilitating their academic performance. Both boys and girls had almost the same level of socio-economic status. As there is a changing trend in present day education as both boys and girls are becoming more competitive, venturesome, bold, open-minded, outgoing and independent. Both the groups are equally participating in all activities.

It is also found that for socio-economic status in Government-aided schools, there is a significant difference between boys and girls, boys are better than girls. It is observed that boys and girls family status was different and most of them were in low and medium socio-economic status. This may be the reason for boys and girls to differ significantly on socio-economic status.

It is also found that for academic achievement, girls are better than boys in government and government-aided schools. The girls in the recent years are given equal educational opportunities with much more concentration attention both at home and school. Moreover, by nature girls are more serious and matured than the boys of their same age; as a result they develop into adolescents with better cognitive abilities and determination to excel in their academics. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in matriculation schools since the teaching method, infra structure facilities, school atmosphere, equal education system and grade system, intelligence teachers, hardworking students, good attitude towards learning all blooms into very high and fruitful academic achievement.

10. CONCLUSION

It is clear that, while quantifying the variables effect may be difficult, having high aspirations is an important mechanism in achieving good educational and occupational outcomes. However, there is a need to consider the nuances that exist from the crossover of different aspects of identity including gender, social class, ethnicity, religion, immigration, disability status, and sexual orientation that create individual unique experiences. For instance, while for many groups educational and occupational aspirations may be high overall, cultural norms may mean that, for some groups, such aspirations may be reduced for girls, ambitions being focused instead on their future family.

In contrast, for other groups, educational effort and aspiration may be at odds with concepts of masculinity. It is not in these cases ethnicity or gender which influences aspirations, but the mixture of both. Therefore it is important to understand the intersection and contradiction between these different facets of identity in order to support the formation and fulfillment of aspirations of diverse groups and provide appropriate services to those facing multiple barriers.

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