

Career Aspirations of girl students: A Study in the girls' colleges of Upper Assam

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Abstract: In this present study an attempt has been made to find out the career aspirations of girl students studying in the girls' colleges of Upper Assam in relation to their socio-economic background. The data required for the study have been collected from the higher secondary first year students of the girls' colleges of Upper Assam. The respondents have been interviewed with the help of an interview schedule in order to collect the required information. In this study both primary and secondary sources of data have been utilized. The findings of the study reveal that on the basis of their different socio-economic backgrounds, the career aspirations of the respondents also differ. Factors like caste, religion, place of origin, etc. also significant impact in this regard.

Key words: Career, Career Aspiration, Socio-economic background, girl students, etc.

1. Introduction:

Being a social animal, every individual is surrounded by certain social background. This social background has included age, marital status, caste, type of family, religion, education, economic condition (income level), region, occupation, etc. Every society has these characteristics which have its influence upon the lives its members (Bangkim, 2009). This socio-economic background have great influence upon the personality, behaviour and all round development of the individual as well as the quality of life for children, youth and families (APA, 2016).¹ Considering this viewpoint, in the present chapter attempt has been made to provide information about the socio-economic background of the 400 respondents particularly selected for the study. As the present study is concerned with the career aspirations of the girl students, hence, examining the socio-economic background of the respondents is a fruitful attempt. Because, Domenico and Jones (2007) have stated that the career aspirations of an individual is influenced by his or her socio-economic condition. Mau and Bikos (2000) have also stated that the socio-economic background of the family plays a significant role in the career aspirations of an individual. Career is considered as those actions taken by an individual in his or her lifetime in the path of his or her occupation. It can be defined as an individual's general course of actions through a

phase of life, as in some profession (Dictionary.com). Barley (1989) defined career as a structural property of an occupation which could be identified as a sequence of positions held by an ideal practitioner. A person's career aspiration represents his or her orientation towards a particular occupation. There can be several factors affecting the career aspirations of an individual. It can be influenced by gender, socio-economic status and family support (Domenico and Jones, 2007). In India, there are different layers of socio-economic status. The socio-economic status also plays a significant role in the career decision of an individual. According to Mau and Bikos (2000), socio-economic status of the family plays a significant role in the career aspirations of an individual.

2. Conceptual understanding of Career and Career Aspiration:

The study requires the conceptual definitions of the terms Career and Career Aspirations. The term 'career' refers to the progression of related occupational roles during one's working life. The word 'career' is derived from the Latin word 'carrera' which means 'race'. The Oxford English Dictionary has defined career as a person's course or progress through life (or a distinct portion of life). Gutek and Larwood(1987) defined career " as a series of related jobs within an organization or different jobs within various companies." The meaning of the term "career" depends upon its uses by the individuals. At some point, it can be described as a general life pattern that includes virtually all activities. On the other hand, it can be described as the equation of career and occupation, which includes the advancement that one makes in his occupation. Thus, career

¹ American Psychological Association, (2016), Children, youth, families and socio-economic status. America. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/children-families.aspx>

refers to a socially recognized patterned sequence of occupational roles often with increasing prestige and rewards (Saikia, 2008).

And, 'Career aspiration' can be regarded as the main and indispensable objectives of one's life. It is defined as an individual's orientation towards a desired goal under ideal conditions. It provides information about an individual's interests and hopes.

3. Significance and Limitations of the Study:

Socio-economic background of the respondents plays a significant role in their career aspirations. Mau & Bikos (2000) have stated that there is a positive association between a family's socio-economic status and career aspirations. In this study, personal characteristics like caste, religion, area of living, type of family and monthly income of the family have been thoroughly examined. This study can become a good source of information regarding the link between socio-economic background and career aspirations of girl students. However, it is not free from limitations. These are mentioned below:

- i. The study is confined to the girl students studying in the girls' colleges of Upper Assam. Moreover, the respondents are from only Arts and Science stream. Therefore, there is scope for studying the career aspirations of commerce stream too.
- ii. The term "career aspiration" is broad and varies among individuals in the field. The present study covers a particular bundle of career options only. There is scope for further study including other career options also which are not included in this study.
- iii. In the present study, the socio-economic background has particularly referred to the place of origin, religion, caste, monthly income of the families, etc. of the respondents only.

4. Objectives of the study:

The broad objective of the study is to find out the socio-economic background and career aspirations of the girl students studying in the girls' colleges of Upper Assam.² However, the following specific objectives are taken into consideration for the present study:

- i. To know the socio-economic background of the respondents, particularly, caste, religion, place of origin, monthly income of the families of the respondents.

- ii. To observe the relationship between the socio-economic background of the respondents and their career aspirations.

5. Field and Methodology of the Study:

For the present study, the researcher has selected total 400 girl students studying in the girls' colleges of Upper Assam as respondents for the study. The colleges included in the study are Hem Prova Barooah Girls' College (Golaghat), Devi Charan Baruah Girls' College (Jorhat), Sibsagar Girls' College and Moran Mahila Mahavidyalay of Sivasagar, Manohari Devi Kanoi Girls' College and Duliajan Girls' College of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia Women's College and Digboi Women's College of Tinsukia district. Keeping in view the main objectives of the study, only the girl students studying in higher secondary first year have been selected as respondents for the study. For selection of the respondents purposive sampling method has been employed. Data required for the study have been collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary data have been collected with the help of interview schedule, a questionnaire and field observation. And, the secondary sources of data have been collected with the help of books, journals, official records, websites, etc.

The study is exploratory in nature and therefore, no hypothesis has been formulated in it.

6. Findings of the study:

Caste of the respondents and their Career Aspirations:

In the ancient time, occupations were mainly based on castes in India. However, in the present context of globalization, the concept of involving in occupations on the basis of caste has been changed.

In this study, it has been found that out of 400 respondents, 174 (43.5%) respondents belong to O.B.C., 54 (13.5%) belong to M.O.B.C., 96 (24%) respondents belong to General category, 36 (9%) respondents belong to S.C. and 40 (10%) respondents belong to S.T. category. The career aspirations of the respondents of different castes have been stated below:

O.B.C. respondents and their career aspirations:

It has been further found out that out of the 174 respondents belonging to O.B.C. caste, 17 (9.8%) respondents prefer administrative career, 78 (44.8%) respondents prefer teaching, 9 (5.2%) respondents prefer medical career and 4 (2.3%) respondents prefer career in engineering. Out of those 174 respondents, 18 (10.3%) respondents prefer career in legal practice, 15 (8.6%) respondents prefer career in business, 2 (1.1%) respondents prefer career in politics, 5 (2.9%) respondents prefer social service as career and 24 (13.8%) respondents prefer self-employment as their career. Among the rest of the respondents belonging to O.B.C. caste, 2 (1.1%) respondents aspire to become writer and choose writing as their career.

² Upper Assam is an administrative division of Assam. It is comprised of Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sibsagar and Tinsukia districts. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_Assam_Division)

M.O.B.C. respondents and their career aspirations:

There are 54 respondents belonging to M.O.B.C. caste. It has been noticed that out of those 54 respondents, majority, i.e. 32 (59.2%) respondents aspire for teaching career. Among the rest of the respondents, 3 (5.5%) respondents aspire for administrative career, 2 (3.7%) respondents aspire for medical career, 3 (5.5%) respondents aspire for career in engineering and 8 (14.8%) respondents prefer legal practice as their career. And the rest of the 6 (11.1%) respondents aspire for self-employment.

General caste respondents and their career aspirations:

In the present study there are 96 respondents belonging to General caste out of the total 400 respondents. It has been found in this study that, out of those 96 respondents, only 1 (1.04%) respondents aspire for career in politics. Majority of the General respondents, i.e. 32 (33.3%) aspire for teaching career. And, 10 (10.4%) respondents aspire for administrative career, 13 (13.5%) respondents aspire for career in medical, 10 (10.4%) respondents aspire for engineering career and 11 (11.4%) respondents aspire for career in legal practice. In the rest of the respondents, 6 (6.2%) respondents aspire for career in business, 4 (4.2%) respondents aspire for social service and 7 (7.3%) respondents aspire for self-employment as their career. It has been noticed that 2 (2.1%) respondents belonging to General caste aspire for career in dance choreography.

S.C. respondents and their career aspirations:

It has been found in this study that there are total 36 respondents who belong to the S.C. caste. Out of these respondents, majority of the respondents, i.e. 8 (22.2%) respondents aspire for career in business, 2 (5.5%) respondents aspire for career in administrative service, 6 (16.6%) respondents aspire for career in teaching and 2 (5.5%) respondents aspire for career in legal practice. It has also been noticed that 3 (8.3%) respondents aspire for career in medical service and 6 (16.6%) respondents aspire for engineering as their career. Moreover, 2 (5.5%) respondents aspire for self-employment. It has been further noticed that 2 (5.5%) respondents aspire for career in politics and 5 (13.8%) respondents aspire for career as airhostesses.

S.T. respondents and their career aspirations:

It is found in this study that there are 40 respondents in this study from S.T. category. Out of these respondents, 8 (20%) respondents aspire for administrative career, 4 (10%) respondents aspire for teaching career, 3 (7.5%) respondents of them aspire for career in medical services, 9 (22.5%) respondents aspire for engineering career, 4 (10%) respondents aspire for legal service, 4 (10%) respondents aspire for business, another 4

(10%) respondents aspire for social service career, only 1 (2.5%) respondent aspire for self-employment and 3 (7.5%) respondents aspire for other careers.

Religions of the respondents and their Career Aspirations:

Religion is considered as one of the significant aspects of human society. Religion is concerned with the spiritual aspect of human life. It does not mean only worshipping God but also developing true human character. Although religion is a personal choice, however, it has a social role to play also.³ In the present study the respondents belong to the following five different religions- Hinduism, Islamism, Buddhism, Jainism and Christianity. In this study, out of total 400 respondents, it has been found out in the study that 277 (69.25%) belong to Hinduism, 70 (17.5%) respondents belong to Islamism, 16 (4%) belong to Buddhism, 10 (2.5%) respondents belong to Christianity and 27 (6.75%) respondents belong to Jainism. The career aspirations of the respondents belonging to different religions are stated below:

It has been found that out of the 277 (69.25%) respondents belonging to Hindu religion, 22 (7.9%) aspire for administrative career, 122 (44%) aspire for teaching career, 20 (7.2%) aspire for medical career, 31 (11.2%) aspire for career in engineering, 17 (6.1%) aspire for career in legal profession, 18 (6.5%) aspire for career in business, 5 (1.8%) aspire for career in politics, 4 (1.4%) aspire for social service careers, 28 (10.1%) aspire for self-employment and 10 (3.6%) aspire for other careers like player, hotel management, writer, etc.

In case of the 70 (17.5%) of the Islam respondents, it has been noticed that 8 (11.4%) of the respondents aspire for administrative career, 25 (35.7%) aspire for teaching career, 3 (4.3%) aspire for medical career, 1 (1.4%) aspire for engineering career, 20 (28.6%) aspire for career in legal services, 2 (2.9%) aspire for career in business, another 2 (2.9%) respondents aspire for career in social service and the rest 7 (10%) aspire for self-employment.

Among the 16 (4%) Buddhist respondents, it is found that 4 (25%) aspire for administrative career, 3 (18.75%) aspire for teaching career, 5 (31.25%) respondents aspire for career in legal service, 3 (18.75%) respondents aspire for social service and the rest 1 (6.25%) respondent aspires for self-employment.

There are 27 (6.75%) respondents belonging to Jain religion. Out of these respondents 3 (11.1%) respondents aspire for administrative career, 5 (18.5%) respondents aspire for medical career, 1 (3.7%) respondents aspire for career in

³ Saikia, J. P. (2008), Youth and Career Aspiration, DVS Publishers, Guwahati, pp.46.

legal services, 12 (44.4%) respondents aspire for career in business, 4 (14.8%) respondents aspire for career in social service and the rest 2 (7.4%) respondents aspire for self-employment.

Place of Origin and Career Aspirations of the respondents:

In this study, it has been found that 202 (50.5%) respondents live in rural areas, while 93 (23.25%) lie in urban areas and 105 (26.25%) of the respondents live in semi-urban areas. The career aspirations of the total 400 respondents according to their places of origin have been stated below:

In this study, regarding the place of origin, it has been noticed that out of the total 400 respondents, 202 respondents (50.5%) live in rural areas. Out of the rural respondents, 132 (65.34%) prefer career in teaching, 19 (9.4%) aspire for legal profession, 16 (7.9%) aspire for self-employment, and 10 (4.9%) aspire for social-service as career. Among the rest of the rural respondents, 5 (2.5%) respondents aspire for administrative career, 8 (3.9%) respondents aspire for career in medical, 4 (1.9%) respondents aspire for business as a career, 3 (1.5%) respondents aspire for career in engineering and 3 (1.5%) respondents aspire for politics as a career. Out of all those 202 rural respondents, only 2 (0.99%) respondents aspire other careers like player and writer.

In case of the 93 respondents it is found in this study that 28 (30.1%) respondents aspire for administrative career, 8 (8.6%) respondents aspire for teaching career, 18 (19.3%) respondents aspire for career in medical, 15 (16.1%) respondents aspire for engineering career, 10 (10.7%) respondents aspire for career in legal services, 3 (3.2%) respondents aspire for career in business and another 3 (3.2%) respondents aspire for self-employment. Moreover, 2 (2.1%) respondents aspire for career in social services, only 1 respondent aspires for career in politics and 5 (5.4%) respondents aspire for other careers like writer, choreographer, etc.

It has been noticed in the study that there are 105 (26.25%) respondents are from semi-urban place. Out of these 105 respondents, 7 (6.6%) respondents aspire for administrative career, 12 (11.4%) respondents aspire for career in teaching, 4 (3.8%) respondents aspire for career in medical, 14 (13.3%) respondents aspire for career in engineering and another 14 (13.3%) respondents aspire for career in legal services. Moreover, 26 (24.7%) respondents aspire for career in business, 21 (20%) respondents aspire for self-employment, 1 respondent aspires for career in politics, another 1 respondent aspire for career in social services and 5 (4.7%) respondents aspire for other careers like writer, player, etc.

Monthly income of the family of the respondents and their career aspirations:

It has been found in the study that 125 (31.25%) belong the income group of below 10,000. The income group of rupees 10,001-20,000 which covers 92 (23%) of the respondents. 81 (20.25%) of the respondents' family income belong to the group of 20,001-30,000, 52 (13%) of the respondents belong to the income group of 30,001-40,000 and 50 (12.5%) of the respondents belong to the income group of above 40,000 rupees per month. The career aspirations of the respondents according to the monthly income of the respondents' families are stated below:

It has been noticed that out of the 125 (31.25%) respondents belonging to the monthly income level of below 10,000 rupees, 98 (78.4%) respondents aspire for teaching career, 5 (4%) respondents aspire for career in legal services, 4 (3.2%) respondents aspire for career in business, 16 (12.8%) respondents aspire for self-employment and only 2 (1.6%) respondents aspire for career like player. There are 92 (23%) respondents between the income levels of 10,001 to 20,000 rupees monthly income. Among these respondents 6 (6.5%) respondents aspire for career in administrative services, 16 (17.4%) respondents aspire for teaching career, 2 (2.2%) respondents aspire for medical career, 25 (27.2%) respondents aspire for career in legal services, 23 (25%) respondents aspire for career in business, 5 (5.4%) respondents aspire for social services, 14 (15.2%) respondents aspire for self-employment and only 1 (1.1%) respondent aspires for career in politics.

It has been found in this study that there are 81 (20.25%) respondents between the monthly income levels of 20,001 to 30,000 rupees. Out of these respondents 12 (14.8%) respondents aspire for administrative career, 11 (13.6%) respondents aspire teaching career, 6 (7.4%) respondents aspire for medical career and 18 (22.2%) respondents aspire for engineering services, 9 (11.1%) respondents aspire for career in legal services, 5 (6.2%) respondents aspire for career in business and 4 (4.9%) respondents aspire for career in politics. It has also been found that 8 (9.9%) respondents aspire for social services, 3 (3.7%) respondents aspire for self-employment and 5 (6.2%) respondents aspire for other careers like choreographer, writer, mass-communication, etc. There are 52 (13%) respondents between the monthly income levels of 30,001 to 40,000 rupees. It has been noticed that 8 (15.4%) of them aspire for administrative career, 18 (34.6%) respondents aspire for teaching career, 9 (17.3%) respondents aspire for medical career, 8 (15.4%) respondents aspire for engineering career, 2 (3.8%) respondents aspire for legal services, only 1 (1.9%) respondent aspire for career in politics, 4 (7.7%) respondents aspire for self-employment and 2 (3.8%) respondents aspire for other career like airhostess.

In this study, there are 50 (12.5%) respondents whose monthly income of the family is above 40,000 rupees. It is found in the study that out of these 50 respondents, 14 (28%) respondents aspire for administrative career, 9 (18%) respondents aspire for teaching career, 13 (26%) respondents aspire for medical career, 6 (12%) respondents aspire for engineering career, 2 (4%) respondents aspire for career in legal services, 3 (6%) respondents aspire for self-employment and another 3 (6%) respondents aspire for other careers like hotel management, mass-communication and writer, etc.

7. Conclusion:

Career aspiration of an individual is influenced by his or her socio-economic background. As it has been already mentioned earlier that in the present study, regarding socio-economic background of the respondents, only the caste, religion, place of origin and monthly income of the family of the respondents have been covered. Caste is one of the significant aspects of Indian society. In this study, it has been noticed that

respondents belonging to the Other Backward Caste (O.B.C.) has the highest aspiration for teaching profession. And, respondents of O.B.C., General and Scheduled Tribes aspire for career in politics. In case of religion, it has been noticed that respondents belonging to Hindu religion has the highest aspiration for teaching profession. Respondents belonging to Islam religion aspire for career in legal services. The Jain respondents have higher aspiration for business as their future career. The study reveals that respondents living in rural areas have higher aspiration for teaching profession. And, administrative careers are mostly aspired by respondents living in urban areas. Moreover, respondents living in semi-urban areas mainly aspire for business as their career. Regarding the monthly income of the respondents' families, it has been found that teaching profession is mostly aspired by the respondents whose monthly income of the family is below INR.10,000/-. On the other hand, respondents belonging to the monthly income level of above INR. 40,000/- aspire for administrative career.

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