

Occupational Aspiration of Indian Adolescents : Various Dimensions, Influencing Factors and New Emerging Careers

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ABSTRACT

The occupational aspiration of the individual at young age has a definite impact on choice of occupation at later years. The appropriate decision making depends upon the level of occupational aspiration of students. The aim of this study is to define the occupational aspirations of Indian adolescents, discuss the dimensions of occupational aspirations and finding new emerging careers and skill development programmes for adolescents at school level in India.

1. Introduction

Human being is the most intelligent creature of this universe and it always work to fulfill its needs and competences. Human beings have the power to know their life goals, aims and satisfaction level. Therefore, work is the only mean to provide necessities, comforts and luxuries of life to him. The importance of work in the life of an individual can hardly be ever estimated.

'Education' is a powerful medium by which a person is able to know about his aims, aspirations, life goals, interests and needs. According to Herbert Spencer – "Education should prepare the individual for complete living, life skills and favorable attitude towards vocation/occupation will help a person to secure a complete living. Education equips man with all the skills required to confront the challenges presented to him by the environment, teachers, schools and society have to play an important role to equip a child to meet the challenges of today."

With the advancement of scientific and gradual development of materialistic outlook, it is believed that education should enable the individual to earn his living. Right attitude and good vocational preference are to be developed in pupils for attaining a good future. The educational and occupational scene is rapidly changing co-curricular and curricular offerings have tremendously expended during the past few years. It has been extremely difficult for an educationist (teacher) to prepare the youth for education, occupation and life in this rapidly changing world. Growing children, who are studying in senior secondary classes, face many problems during their adolescence period. The young adolescents find him in the grip of personal adjustment problems. Conflict with peers, teachers, feeling of insecurity, loneliness, low achievements etc. creates emotional tensions and anxieties.

2. Occupational Aspirations

The term 'aspirations' is one which is often used synonymously with goals, ambitions, objectives, purpose dreams, plans, designs, intentions, desires, longings, wishes, yearnings, cravings or aims.

Oxford Dictionary (1972) defines it as a "Pure upward desire for excellence instead fast desire or logging for something above".

Eyessenk (1972) defines aspiration as the level of a possible goal; an individual sets himself in his performance.

Occupation aspirations are the thoughts feelings, fantasies and goals that people have about their work, that affect their motivation and decision making with respect to their occupational choice and subsequent participation in their occupation. Occupational aspiration usually means what the individual considers to be an ideal vocation for himself and it refers to the point in the vocational prestige hierarchy of various vocational fields which an individual view as a goal. Designed in this way, aspiration is quite similar, if not identical with a person's fantasy choice.

Occupational aspirations are "expressed career-related goals or choices" that provide important motivational momentum for career-related behavior and future educational and career success (Rajewski, p. 132). Aspirations can have lifelong consequences as they are associated with significant later outcomes, such as where one works and lives, and the standard of living one attains.

Johnson (1995) referred to it has expressions of occupational goals, leading several authors to regard them as important career motivational variables, providing to be predictive of later career attainment levels.

Adolescent's occupational aspirations and expectations have been viewed as significant determinants of both short-term educational and long-term career choices. The critical role for occupational aspirations in the career development of adolescents is reflected in their integral position in most career theories and in the large body of research conducted over the last century.

2.1 Dimensions of occupational aspirations

An aspiration is presupposed goal or ideal goal. This ideal goal is the inner structure of the aspirations. The ideal goal may be too easy for the person to achieve or may be too difficult for someone, knowing the ideal goal. The goal seeker may set his/her goal at a place for the next action; goal is actually the realistic goal.

2.2 Idealistic and Realistic occupational aspirations

The realistic goal is the goal for which the goal seeker is sure to achieve. Contrary to this, the realistic goal has been defined as the goal for which the individual is free to choose but is not sure of getting too achieved.

Haller and Miller (1957) indicate that idealistic occupational level of aspiration is the job for which one would choose it; he/she is free to choose. Whereas, realistic level the vocational aspiration is the goal for which the individual is really sure that he/she can get it.

Thus, the idealistic occupational aspiration refers to those aspirations which an individual considers best for him/her, if he or she is free to choose any vocation. Realistic occupational aspiration is that aspiration for which the individual is sure of getting it without any difficulty. As the orientation towards occupational goal, occupational aspiration has got an important place in the area of vocational psychology.

2.3 Level of Occupational Aspiration

Level of occupational/vocational aspiration has been defined as orientation towards occupational goal (Haller and Miller, 1967). It is considered as a concept which is logically as special instance of the concept level of aspiration. Its special nature consists only in the continuum of difficulty. The continuum of difficulty is the vocational hierarchy. Haller and Miller also developed a scientific scale for measuring the level of vocational aspiration. They in fact, designed a well standardized procedure for measuring the vocational aspiration for youngsters. As it has been clearly pointed out that the term level of vocational aspiration is a special nature consists only in the continuum of difficulty. This continuum of difficulty is the occupationally determined on the basis of rank ordering of representative vocations representing all level from day to day labour to top executive. Thus, the social standing of each profession can be different. As it has been already pointed out that the term occupational aspiration is a special instance of the concept of level of aspiration. Its special nature consists only in the continuum of difficulty. This continuum of difficulty is the vocational hierarchy that can be operationally determined on the basis of rank ordering of representative vocations representing all levels from day to day labour to top executive. Thus, the social standing of each profession can be difficult.

2.4 Methods of measuring occupational aspiration

Occupational aspiration measured in term of levels (i) high (ii) middle (iii) low. For its measurement several occupational classification methods were evolved. In the beginning these classification methods were based on 'economic activities' and they were generally un-dimensional (Edwards, 1943). Further, two dimensional occupational classification methods was evolved by Roe during 1954 (Roe, 1956). Her system contained

6 levels based on factors like responsibility, capacity and skill required by various occupations, later on Super (1957) added one more dimension, i.e., 'enterprise' and offered three dimensional classification system. Shah and Bhargava (1973) have devised a scale which measure general level of aspiration by providing goal discrepancy and attainment discrepancy scores. Grewal (1973) has also constructed a scale 'Occupational Aspiration Scale' on the basis of Haller and Miller's Scale (1971). According to this approach vocational aspiration is special instance of level of aspiration. Its special nature consists only in continuum of difficulty and is operationally determined on the basis of rank ordering of representative vocations representing all level from day to day labour to top executive. Thus, social standing of each job is different. On the basis of these social standings of various jobs, occupational aspiration scale was developed.

Occupational aspiration is formulated solely in term of the wants and wishes of individuals irrespective of the limitations imposed by reality (Crites, 1969). Occupational aspiration is purely determined by fantasies whereas occupational choice is more reality based and, therefore, no one has formulated any theory specifically for vocational aspiration alone. The theories of occupational choice are, however, discussed by Crites (1969), career striving theory by Atkinson and Raynor (1978) and their description automatically includes the process of crystallization of and the choice is crystallized on the parameters of age and reality orientation.

3. Factors that influence adolescents to take career decisions

An individual has the fundamental right to adopt any occupation in a democratic set-up. He aspires for the most, but owing of various social, cultural and personal factors and his aspirations seldom materialize. In spite of this, the process of his aspiring for certain occupations continues from childhood to adulthood but till adolescent period he is considered psychologically to be living in a world of 'fantasy', as far as future plans are concerned. Of course, the 'fantasy' starts weaving off as he grows in the age, possibly, it may be due to greater development and sharpening of reality orientation or maturity. His occupational thinking is thus, supposed to be influenced by these factors and the interaction effect of various sociological variables. It will, therefore, be worthwhile to review as to how and to what extent the above factors affect the occupational aspiration of the adolescents. Here we are discuss some important determinant that influence adolescents occupational aspiration –

3.1 Environmental determinants

3.2 Personal determinants

3.1 Environmental Determinants

- i. **Parental influence (Ambitions):** Parental ambitions influence occupational aspiration of the child. Parents always expect more from their first born, and therefore, the level of aspiration may be higher for the first born child than that for those born later.
- ii. **Social expectations:** Society expects more and more from some people than from others. It is generally

- assumed that one who is successful in a particular area may also be successful in other area, if he wishes.
- iii. **Peer pressure:** Friends may encourage or discourage a child for anything. If they encourage him, it is possible that he will develop a tendency of high goal setting.
 - iv. **Culture:** Cultural traditions are important factors for setting the goal better and rich cultural background helps the child in fulfilling high expectations.
 - v. **Social values:** It also varies with the area of achievement, social reward and prestige also work as a reinforce.
 - vi. **Competition:** Competition with siblings and peers in the hope of showing better than others is also an affecting factor for occupational aspiration.
 - vii. **Group cohesiveness:** It is also considered as a determinant of goal settings. One does better and set high goal when he is acting in a group.

3.2 Personal determinants

- i. **Wishes:** If one needs to achieve something or he has high achievement motivation, his level of aspiration for achieving will be higher, and thus his wishes influence the level of aspiration.
- ii. **Personality:** The personality traits also determine the kind and strength of his aspiration.
- iii. **Sex:** It is generally said that the boys and girls differ in their aspiration because of their different interests, goals and expectations of family and society.
- iv. **Socio-economic background:** It is noticed that middle and upper group have higher degree of aspiration than those of lower group.
- v. **Racial background:** Minority groups aspire higher than majority group. It is just a sort of compensation on the part of minority groups.

Apart from the above factors, socio-economic status, norms, traditions, level of attainment and superstitions play an important role in determining level of occupational aspirations.

4. New Emerging Careers and Skill Development Programmes for Adolescents in India

A career is totality of time and efforts devoted to the pursuance of work in order to live a meaningful life. Career is so important that it tends to define human personality and determine the quality of life that individuals live. Surprisingly however, majority of our school adolescents still indicate the traditional professions (medicine, law, engineering and so on) as their future aspiration. This indicates that they may not be aware of the new career set-up in India and which offer equally great career opportunities to the young ones.

The scheme of 'vocationalisation of higher secondary education' is a big step to help those school students, who wants to start their career in early age by enhancing their skills. This scheme is approved in Sept. 2011, was revised with the approval of the cabinet committee on skill development on February 12, 2014. The main reason for revision were continuation of the scheme during the 12th five year plan, in

incorporating the learning emerging out from the Haryana pilot on NVEQF and subsuming the scheme under the umbrella of RMSA. The revised scheme is now known as 'Vocationalisation of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education'. The scheme draws on the learning emerging from the pilot on NVEQF launched across 40 schools in 8 districts covering 4908 students.

The National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) is a descriptive framework that organizes qualifications according to a series of levels to knowledge along with skills. These levels are defined in terms of learning outcomes i.e., the competences which a learner must possess regardless of whether they were acquired through formal, non-formal or in formal education and training. It is a nationally integrated education and competency based skill framework that will provide for multiple pathway both within vocational education and between general and vocational education to like one level of learning to another higher level and enable learners to progress to higher level from any starting point in the education and skill system. NVEQF launched in these four sectors –

- i. IT (Information Technology)
- ii. ITES (Information Tech. enable Services)
- iii. Automotive
- iv. Security and retail

These sectors now have been expanded to include travel and tourism, healthcare, beauty and wellness, physical education and training of Gems and Jewelry sectors.

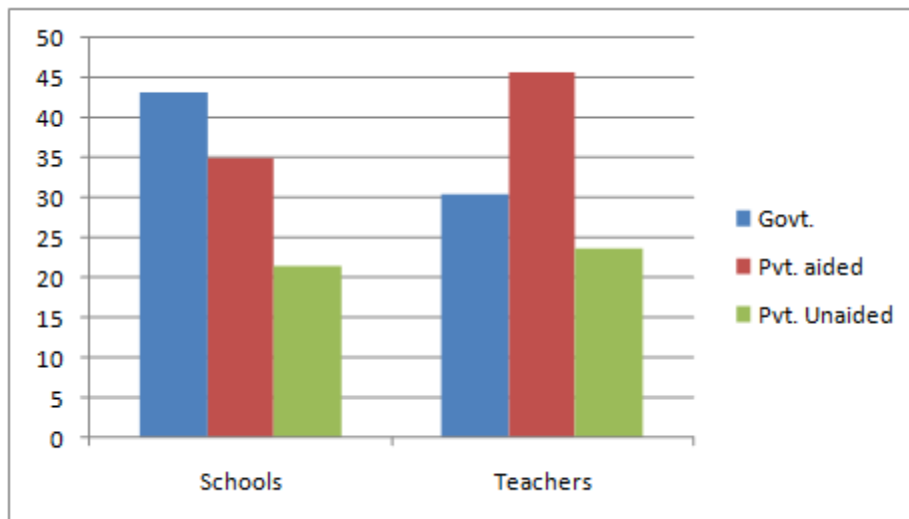
The components of the scheme include introduction of vocational education in government schools from class 9th, capacity building of existing vocational education teachers (VET) development of competency based modules for each individual vocational course, and performance linked incentive to government, added and recognized unaided private schools.

The main findings of eighth All India School Education Survey (8th AISES) with regarding vocational education in schools at secondary and higher secondary stages are as under

(A) Pre-vocational courses at school level

- i. A total of 5732 number of schools offering prevocational courses at class IX and X. Out of which 2485 (43.35%) are government (includes local body) schools followed by 35.05% private aided schools and the rest 21.6% are private unaided schools.
- ii. A total of 38995 teachers are in position of the time of survey for pre-vocational courses. Out of which are 64.42% male and 35.58% are females. Out total teachers for pre-vocational courses, 45.79% are in private aided schools followed by 30.58% in government schools and 23.63% in private unaided schools.

Chart A
Number of schools Class IX & X offering pre-vocational courses and teachers

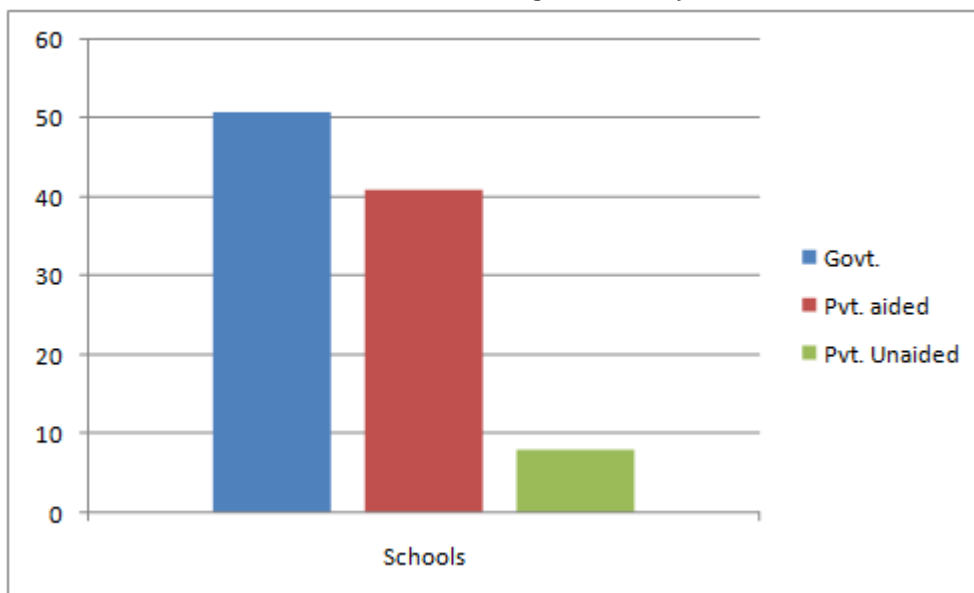


(B) Vocational Education at Higher Secondary Stage

i. A total 2812 higher secondary schools/degree colleges having class XI and XII are offering vocational courses out of the total schools, 1431 (50.9%) of schools are government managed followed by 1156 (41.1%) private aided and 225 (8%) private unaided.

The state of Tamilnadu has the maximum number of higher secondary /degree colleges, which is 33.04% of the total schools offering vocational courses at higher secondary stage in the country. Only seven states are having more than 100 higher secondary degree colleges offering vocational colleges at secondary stage. These seven states cover about 85% of the higher secondary schools.

Chart B
Status of vocational education at higher secondary level in India



5. Conclusion

A large number of students are going to colleges and universities without proper planning. They think of selecting a career after finishing their education. Democracy demands that education should be useful rather than ornamental. Mahatma Gandhi rightly states that 'true education ought to be a kind of insurance against unemployment'.

In a democratic setup an individual has the fundamental right to adopt any vocation he aspires for the most, but owing to

various social, cultural and personal factors his aspirations seldom materialize. In spite of this, the process of his aspiring for certain occupations continues from childhood to adulthood but till adolescent period he is considered, psychologically, to be living in a world of 'fantasy', as far as future career plans are concerned. Of course, the 'fantasy', starts weaving off as he grows in the age.

So the present study concluded that adolescents need career education and counseling services that would expose

them to modern career opportunities. This becomes more imperative considering the reality of the current high rate of unemployment among Indian youth. Therefore, schools should organize periodic career education and strengthen their

counseling services so that students can be exposed to the various emerging and highly promising careers in the modern world.

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