

Original Research Article

A study on occupational aspirations of senior secondary school students of a selected school of Mandi district, Himachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Background: Life is full of struggles and an individual has to face numerous challenging situations where there is need to make right decisions. In the era of advancement of scientific knowledge and gradual development of materialistic outlook, it is believed that education should enable the individual to earn his living. Occupational aspirations in the early years of life influence the vocational choice in the later life, which determine individual's success in regard to job satisfaction, productivity and adjustment. Hence this study was undertaken with a view to make an attempt to study the occupational aspirations of senior secondary school students of Mandi district.

Methods: Descriptive cross-sectional survey method was used. A sample of 100 students (50 girls and 50 boys) of senior secondary level (classes XI and XII) was randomly selected from the selected Government senior secondary school. Occupational aspiration scale by Dr. J. S. Grewal was used to collect data for the study. For data analysis, percentage, mean, standard deviation and t-test were used.

Results: Majority, i.e., 76% senior secondary students were found to have average occupational aspiration level. No significant difference was found in occupational aspiration level between urban and rural senior secondary students.

Conclusions: Majority of senior secondary students were found to have average occupational aspiration level, thus highlighting the importance of guiding the students from secondary education stage towards selection of a right career according to their occupational aspirations.

Keywords: Locality of residence, Occupational aspiration, Senior secondary school students

INTRODUCTION

Education is the first and most important right of individuals as it is the fundamental right of every person. It is the most powerful instrument for social, intellectual, moral and aesthetic development of every human being. It helps us in facing and dealing with challenges. The development in the field of education points to the development of the country. Education is the foundation of economic growth and social development and principle means of improving the welfare of individuals.¹

Globalization has converted the whole world into global village. Each and every information can now be shared within a minute across the world. Due to this, the world is becoming more and more competitive. Everyone wants to stand first in the row. Personal progress depends on the quality of performance. Parents have high expectations from their children and this puts a lot of pressure on students. The students of secondary level are in the stage when they have to select and prepare for their occupation. They need support of their teachers and parents, who can direct them in reaching their goals.²

Today's youth are not confined to the traditional carrier choices; they have natural aspirations and urges for education and development. These aspirations can prompt or hinder educational and career planning, guide learning, help organize life options and choices, and contribute to young people's preparation for adult life. A person's occupation should be according to his/her natural capabilities, interests and aspirations so that he/she can give the best possible outcome.³

Concept of aspiration

Aspiration means 'to desire' or 'to wish'. In other words, it denotes ambition for something in life. It is an integral part of a person's self-pictures not only what he is but also what he would like to be. Aspirations are not static and rigid. These are changed radically under strong-conditions, even break down entirely and these cannot be cultivated in a day. Since children are taught to acquire skills, values and information of various kinds, such acquisition of knowledge helps in developing educational and vocational aspirations.⁴

Concept of occupational aspiration

Occupational aspiration has been considered as an integral aspect of human life which helps in shaping the career of the individual and planning for future life. It is a goal-oriented attitude which involves conception of self in relation to a particular level of the occupational prestige hierarchy. Gottfredson (2005) observed occupational aspiration as the assimilation of an individual's assessment of the compatibility and accessibility of an occupation. Rojeswki (2007) described occupational aspiration as individual's desired occupational aims or objectives given optimal circumstances.⁵

Statement of the problem

The statement of the present study is as follows: "A study on occupational aspirations of senior secondary school students of a selected school of Mandi district, Himachal Pradesh".

Significance/rationale of the study

In the present world, students experience the stresses and strains of living. Selection of appropriate occupation for living is a crucial decision that a young adolescent must make. Today's society is changing fast and is very complex to live and adjust in. Difficulties and complexities come to the students in making decision about their career because of this fast-changing society. Occupational choice at the adolescent stage is a crucial factor as it gives direction to one's future. The choice has a far-reaching impact on one's future in terms of lifestyle, status, income, security and job satisfaction. Many students have a limited knowledge of occupations and a very narrow range of alternatives are available to them. In

many of the cases, an individual makes choice of an occupation as a result of the parental pressure, or as an influence of friends or prestige value of that occupation, not on the basis of his/her interests, abilities, and values. Students who are not aware of routine features of work like nature of work, tasks involved, skills and eligibility required for various careers, end up making unrealistic occupational aspirations. Therefore, it is important to understand the level of students' occupational aspiration so that career and occupational guidance programmes, and interventions can be developed further accordingly.

Objectives of the study

To find out the level of occupational aspiration of senior secondary school students. To find out the difference in occupational aspiration among senior secondary school students with respect to localities of residence (urban and rural).

Hypothesis of the study

There is significant difference in occupational aspiration of senior secondary school students belonging to urban and rural areas.

METHODS

Design of study

Descriptive cross-sectional survey method was used.

Place of study

The study took place at Government Senior Secondary School, Bhangrotu, Tehsil Balh, District Mandi, Himachal Pradesh.

Period of study

It was conducted for a period of 2 months (September 2023 to October 2023).

Study population

All students of senior secondary level (classes XI and XII) of selected Government Senior Secondary School were selected for the study.

Sample size and sampling technique

There were total 395 senior secondary students enrolled in the selected school (202 students in class XI and 193 students in class XII). Considering population proportion as 10% with absolute precision at 6% at 95% confidence level, sample size of 100 was obtained using the formula $4pq/d^2$. A sample of 100 students (25 girls and 25 boys from class XI and 25 girls and 25 boys from class XII) was selected by adopting simple random sampling technique.

Inclusion criteria

Senior secondary students who were present on the day of visit and who gave written informed consent to participate in the study.

Exclusion criteria

Senior secondary students who were not present on the day of visit and who did not give written informed consent to participate in the study.

Tool used for data collection

Occupational aspiration scale developed by an expert educationist Dr. J. S. Grewal was used. The present scale was adopted to get the prestige rating of 80 occupational titles taken from the dictionary of occupational titles of India. An individual's score for the whole inventory ranges from 0 to 72.

Collection of data

For collection of data, the researcher visited the school beforehand and took permission from the principal for collection of data. The researcher had conversation with the teachers and students in order to develop a good rapport with them. After 3 days from 1st visit, the researcher personally visited the school to collect data. Firstly, the researcher requested the principal to make a separate sitting arrangement for the sampled students in a classroom. After that the researcher gave necessary

instruction to the students about the questionnaire and allowed filling up the questionnaire. The researcher gave sufficient time to the students for filling up the questionnaire.

Statistical techniques used

Data was entered in Excel and analysed in SPSS 16. Percentage, mean, standard deviation and t-test were used.

RESULTS

Analysis of the present study was done in accordance with the objectives of the study.

Table 1: Percentage scores of senior secondary students in relation to their occupational aspiration (n=100).

Scores	Levels	Number of students (%)
49-72	High	13 (13)
25-48	Average	76 (76)
0-24	Low	11 (11)
Total		100 (100)

Table 1 shows that majority, i.e., 76% senior secondary students have average occupational aspiration level, whereas 13% senior secondary students possess high occupational aspiration level and 11% senior secondary students possess low occupational aspiration level.

Table 2: Comparison of occupational aspiration level among senior secondary students based on their locality of residence (n=100).

Locality	No. of students	Mean	SD	t-value	P value
Urban	26	37	±9.32	0.35	0.73 (Not significant)
Rural	74	36.14	±11.42		

Table 2 shows that the mean of urban and rural senior secondary students in occupational aspiration level were 37 and 36.14 respectively and the SD of urban and rural senior secondary students are 9.32 and 11.42 respectively. The calculated t-value of the scores of urban and rural senior secondary students in occupational aspiration level is 0.35 and the result is not significant at $p < 0.05$. So, the null hypothesis was rejected and no difference was found in occupational aspiration level between urban and rural senior secondary students.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, majority, i.e., 76% senior secondary students were found to have average occupational aspiration level followed by 13% senior secondary students possessing high occupational aspiration level

followed by 11% senior secondary students possessing low occupational aspiration level. According to a study of Lalrinluangi and Lalthanpuii among higher secondary school students of Aizawl district, most of the students (71.17%) had average occupational aspiration level, 38.23% of students had high occupational aspiration level and only 0.58% of students had below average occupational aspiration level.⁶ A study conducted by Saharia et al among higher secondary students of Darrang district of Assam showed that most of the higher secondary students i.e. 68% possessed average occupational aspiration, 23% students possessed high occupational aspiration and only 9% students had low occupational aspiration.⁷ A study conducted by Debnath et al among higher secondary school students of west Tripura district found that majority (70%) of students had moderate level of occupational aspiration.⁸ A study

conducted by Bora et al among secondary school students of South Kamrup area of Assam found that most of the secondary school students (50.20%) had above average level of occupational aspiration, 23.27% students had high level, 14.08% students had average level, 12.45% students had below average and no student had low level of occupational aspiration.⁹ According to a study conducted by Gupta et al among secondary school students of Haryana state, majority (70%) of secondary school students had moderate level of occupational aspiration, 16% students had high level and 14% students had low level of occupational aspiration.³

In our study, no significant difference was found in occupational aspiration level between urban and rural senior secondary students. A study conducted by Tirkey et al among higher secondary students of Chhattisgarh state reported that there was no significant difference between rural and urban school higher secondary students in their occupational aspiration.¹⁰ According to a study of Saharia et al among higher secondary students of Darrang district of Assam, no significant difference was found in occupational aspiration between urban and rural higher secondary students.¹¹

Limitation of the study is that it was confined to only one senior secondary Government school of Mandi district and was confined to only 100 class XI and XII students.

CONCLUSION

Majority of senior secondary students were found to have average occupational aspiration level, thus highlighting the importance of guiding the students from secondary education stage towards selection of a right career according to their occupational aspirations. Proper career guidance and counselling should be provided to the students keeping the diverse career options in mind. Teachers should take initiative to provide more career exposure to the students for making their occupational aspiration true.

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Conflict of interest: None declared

Ethical approval: The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee

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