

Occupational Aspirations Among University Students

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ABSTRACT: *The occupational decisions at matured level pave the way for future decisions to be taken by any individual in the world of work. Selection of career is an important task and a source of personal gratification. At present scientific developments and technological advancements have thrown thousands of new occupations open to an individual. Thus, the choice of right occupation is becoming difficult as our entire society grows more complex, more specialized and more technologically oriented. The present paper is aimed at exploring the occupational aspiration of 125 students in different post-graduate departments at the Davangere University in the state of Karnataka, India. Job aspirations tend to ascertain the correct path of young students according to their ability. It helps to move an individual from one socio-economic position to another. Hence, for occupational mobility students of higher level of education need to have correct planning and correct training through proper guidance. The major attempt of this paper is to find out the effecting factors which are responsible behind the job ambition or occupational planning for youth in a University. Youths in a University are most powerful and realistic to create change than any other generation. Constructive aspiration of youth has positive consequences in society. Thus the major thrust of this study was to analysis in details the future ambition of Students at a higher level of education. Aspirations of students have long been of interest to educational researchers and practitioners in general and sociologist of education in particular. The findings indicate that University students are aspiring to become teachers, given an opportunity, in public organizations and prefer to teach at graduate and post graduate level. Most of them are confident in achieving their goals by saying that their chances are bright to meet the ends with self-orientation and parents' suggestions in occupational choice.*

KEYWORDS: *Aspirations, Higher Education, Occupation, Occupational Choice, Students*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The modern social being is expected to spend most of his life time in the occupational world as he is required to spend the greater part of his days' time on the job doing one or the other task for the survival. Occupational aspiration is one's desire for any occupation or profession. It indicates to one's preference, liking, willingness, inclination to a particular occupation or profession. Occupational aspirations can be either idealistic or realistic. Idealistic aspirations consist of no limitations on opportunity, finances or ability when selecting a career. Realistic aspirations are the one's occupational expectations and perceptions with no real limitations (Rojewski, 2005). Youth are the most vital and concrete section of the population in any given society. Today they grow up with more power and potentiality to create a new world than any previous generation. In the contemporary Indian society post-graduate students being, youth have a major role to play in transforming the society (Lakshminarayana, 1985). They are full of energy and enthusiasm and are more adventurous. Youths have been generally identified all over the world as a group of human beings who have reached the end of puberty, but have not yet acquired the full right and duties of adult life. Youth have a concrete form of aspiration, like- occupational, professional, marital and career. Aspirations of youth generally tend to be on the higher side compared to their expatiations, although expectations tend to decline with age (Boyd et.al., 1984). The present study focused on key factors of post graduate student's subsequent professional choice, level of qualification and future planning. Aspiration of an individual may be a valid index of the subjects feeling of success or failure in a situation where he is free to change his goal from one trial to the next (Prakash, 1987). Occupational aspiration of a mature person is very much correlated with his/ her educational attainment. The study also tries to find out how far present generation in universities adjust with available infrastructure and adopt methodology to reach their occupational destination. There are great variety of aspirations among the university students studying in different PG courses. The concept of occupational aspiration is used with reference to the goalendeavoring behavior of an individual existing with a mission (Prakash, 1987). Aspirations have been treated as an important factor in motivating the individuals for self-achievement.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Occupational aspirations of students in higher learning are a critical ingredient for achievement in occupational outcomes and play an important role in the transition from university employment. They can prompt or impede educational and career planning, guide learning, help organize life choices, and facilitate students' preparation for occupational life (Rojewski et al., 2012). University education is an important stage wherein students begin to identify their aspirations. Therefore, it is imperative to ascertain the self-efficacy and readiness of the matured students to make adaptive career choices and set appropriate occupational aspirations. Setting occupational aspirations is an important developmental task for students who are on the threshold of entering into social life. It is a kind of orientation in which they are able to think, dream, and plan for their futures (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006). Occupational aspirations tend to reveal career-related goals or choices that provide important motivational impetus for the success of educational pursuits and career orientations in the near future (Rojewski, 2005). However, students with higher qualifications may have numerous options when they consider the occupational aspirations such as type of job, type of sector, self-employment preference, perception to become a teacher, under-expectation of influencing factors in occupational choice, and so on. Nonetheless, studies on occupational aspirations of students in universities are far and few between. Hence, exploring what and how occupational aspirations of students with higher potentialities are more significant. It is assumed that the results of occupational aspiration among university students are helpful for students, teachers, parents and researchers.

III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:

- i) To ascertain the occupational aspirations of the University students in different courses.
- ii) To analyze the implications of occupational aspirations for University students.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The present study was confined to the Post Graduate students of Davangere University. Students enrolled in the faculties of Social Sciences, Sciences and Humanities were selected for the study sample. On the basis of the simple random sampling method 125 post graduate students were drawn for this study. The interview method was adopted to elicit the required data.

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ginzberg (1984) analyzed that career choice is a lifelong decision making process for those who pursue greater gratifications from their job. The younger generation is more specific and conscious of the need for choosing their vocation. Ginzberg (1952), the group career theorist believed that choosing a career is one of the most important decision which one can make in their life. Boyd et al., (1984) suggested that changes in occupational aspirations and occupational choice are bound to be reflected by the changes occurring in the society at large. Riggert and associates (2006) have analyzed that college student employment has been increasing steadily for at least four decades. At present, approximately 80% of all college students are employed while completing their undergraduate education. Moreover, no theories have been established to explain the correlation between employment and student outcomes. Some concluding suggestions are offered for addressing these empirical challenges. Little (2008) in his study elaborated that UK graduates may well have prepared themselves for work by other means. And, of course, work-related does not stop after graduates' initial experience at work; majority of UK graduates had undertaken some work-related training within the previous 12 months. The single most important reason cited by graduates for undertaking such training was to update their knowledge of their current work, but UK graduates were slightly less to give this reason. The other important reason cited by a quartet of European graduates was to enhance their own career, but UK graduates were much more likely to cite this reason for work-related training. Career aspirations tend to be shaped by parents as the children undergo a socialization process in a social context (Luttenberger et al., 2014) and parents play a significant role in helping youths to go for a career choice (Dietrich and Kracke, 2009). Hence, parents can influence their child's knowledge about career aspiration by having discussions and by advising them in a proper channel (Chhin et al., 2008; Tynkkynen et al., 2012).

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since majority of the sample student respondents have expressed that they would like to seek jobs after completing their post-graduation, it is essential to know about the occupational aspirations of them. For this purpose, information was sought from the students on their intentions and interests. The data elicited from them covers such aspects as the preferred type of occupation, type of sector, preference for self-employment, orientation for a job etc.

Preferred Type of Occupation**Table-1: Type of Occupation**

Sl. No	Type of Occupation	No. of Respondents		Total
		Yes	No	
1	Teaching	67 (53.6)	58 (46.4)	125 (100.0)
2	Scientist	20 (16.0)	105 (84.0)	125 (100.0)
3	Entrepreneur	02 (1.6)	123 (98.4)	125 (100.0)
4	Administrator	19 (15.2)	106 (84.8)	125 (100.0)
5	Advisor	02 (1.6)	123 (98.4)	125 (100.0)
6	Social worker	11 (8.8)	114 (91.2)	125 (100.0)
7	Activist	02 (1.6)	123 (98.4)	125 (100.0)
8	Consultant	01 (0.8)	124 (99.2)	125 (100.0)
9	Politician	01 (0.8)	124 (99.2)	125 (100.0)
Total		125 (100.0)	125 (100.0)	

The data presented in the table-1 seem to indicate that, there were about 9 kinds of jobs on which the preferences of students were obtained. Teaching appears to be the most preferred job which was opted by majority (53.6 per cent) of the students, followed by Scientist 20(16.0 percent) and Administrator (15.2 percent) and Social work (8.8 percent).Jobs such as, advisor, consultant, politician, activist have very few takers. In the present employment scenario, generally, there are not many candidates who would prefer to go for teaching, and considering that there is acute shortage of teachers. It is a feel good factor to know that majority of them want to become teachers. The student community by and large seems to have disliked being politicians, but still only one has preferred.

Type of Sector to Work

Among the three viz. Government sector, National level, i.e., All-India Organizations and Private Sector, a majority of them would prefer a secured job in the government sector. The majority of the post-graduate students want to work in the government sector.

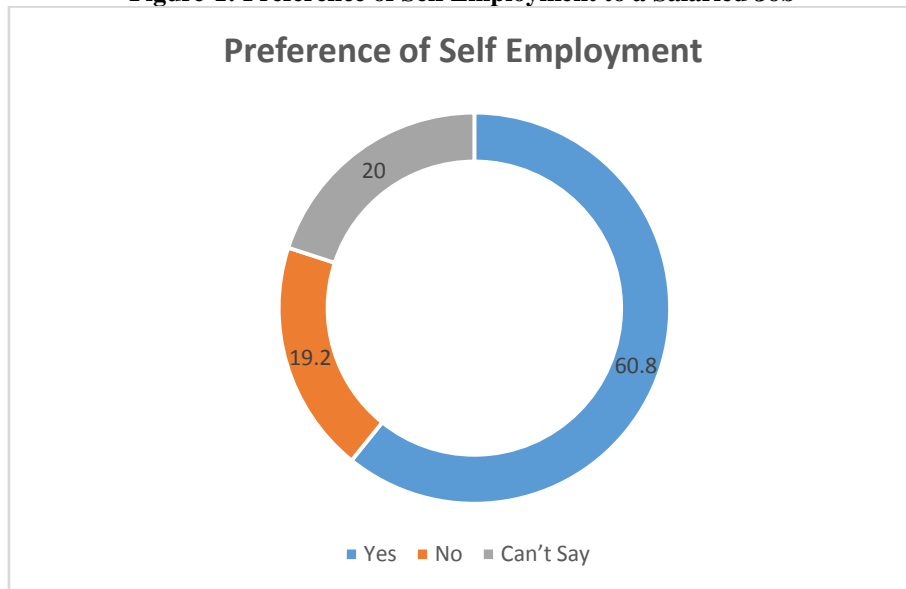
Table-2: Preferred Type of Sector

Preference to Work	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Government Agencies	70	56.0
National Institutes	38	30.4
Private Sectors	17	13.6
Total	125	100.0

The data presented in the table-2 seem to suggest a favorable trend towards opting for secured Government jobs. In the recent deregulation scenario, where the private sector is more dominant in the employment market as also downsizing of government jobs, Davangere University students do not like to take risks as they still prefer Government jobs. One should not forget here, that majority of sample students are having rural background and low socio-economic status. This explains their preference for government jobs as they feel, they would be safe and secured in government jobs. The second choice is all-India institutions and last preference is for the private sector. This also disproves the present youth's flair for private sector jobs and also the jumping from one job to the other which is the latest trend.

Preference to Self-Employment

To respond to the unemployment menace, the Government of India had in the past set up agencies to deal with specific areas and labor groupings in the country. Also, the National Bureau of Employment (NBE) serves as the main employment generation body. However, the evaluation of their programs in the areas of youth employment confirms that a nationwide action plan is still needed.

Figure-1: Preference of Self Employment to a Salaried Job

Even though the majority of the students prefer to choose government jobs, they are not averse to the concept of self-employment than salaried job. The number of students who prefer self-employment is 60.8 percent. It is believed that university education had not just prepared them to be able to face paid employment, but had also prepared them for the challenges of self-employment and therefore be job creators rather than job seekers.

Preferred Academic Level to Teach

To capture the long-term aspiration of respondents owing their exposure to university education, particularly in terms of career selection as a teacher it concerns, working with a type and academic level for teaching, they were asked to indicate preference. Generally, post-graduate students after completing their course tend to join or likely to get jobs as teachers in Pre university colleges, Degree colleges, University departments and Research institutes. However, here the finding is that 67 sample students chose to be teachers.

Table-3: Level of Academic Institution

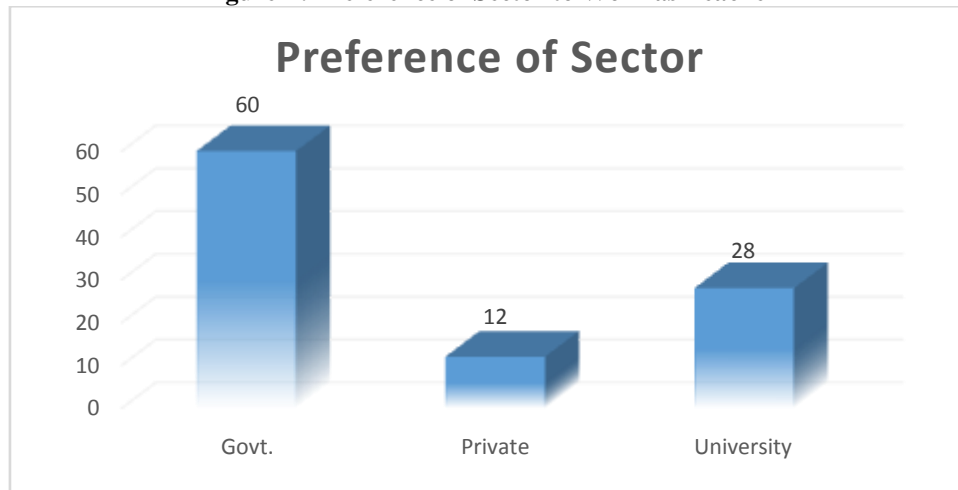
Type of Academic Institution	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Pre-University	10	14.9
Degree College	33	49.3
University Department	17	25.4
Research Institute	07	10.4
Total	67	100.0

The data seem to indicate that almost one half (49.3 percent) of students preferred to work with degree colleges as there are plenty of job opportunities tend to be created by the Government in order to meet the demands of higher education in various parts of the State by establishing new degree colleges. However, a significant proportion (25.4 percent) of them preferred to work with university post-graduate departments. It could be assumed that, these students are very much influenced by the benefits and are witnessing those benefits enjoyed by the present university teaching staff. And a small group (14.9 percent) of them opting for pre university colleges to start their career, while another small proportion (10.4 percent) of the research oriented sought to work with research institutes.

Preference of Sector to Work as Teacher

To work as a teacher, the preference exercised by respondents was quite high (60 percent) for Government sector, it may be due to various reasons, such as safety, security, UGC scale of pay, retirement age and other benefits, this is despite the fact that Government teachers are transferable to intra-colleges and intra-districts. While a significant proportion (28 percent) of them preferred University sector to work with. However, a small proportion (12 percent) of them has preferred private sectors.

Figure-2: Preference of Sector to Work as Teacher



An Assessment of Achieving Occupational Goals

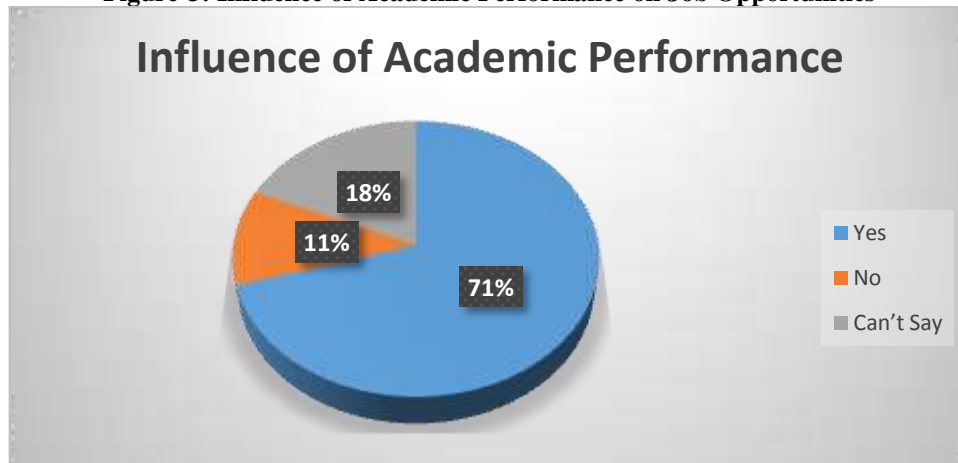
The high confidence level of students has already been established elsewhere. The data presented in the table-4 indicate that the majority (59.2 percent) of the students expressed bright chances and a significant proportion (24.8 per cent) of them indicated fair chances of achieving their set occupational goals. However, a small proportion (10.4 percent) of them failed to say anything. Seven students have expressed a poor chance which has taken as a serious note. Even if one student says so, it needs the attention of the University Authorities for action such as counseling or focused attention.

Table-4: Chances of Achieving Occupational Goals

Chances	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Bright	74	59.2
Fair	31	24.8
Poor	07	5.6
Can't Say	13	10.4
Total	125	100.0

Influence of Academic Performance on Job Opportunities

The present study also aimed at understanding the influence of academic performance, or grades they achieve at their respective exams, on job opportunities and career development. It is a common practice to consider the academic background of a job aspirant in the job market. Hence, there is an increasing pressure on post - graduate students to perform well in their courses to brighten their career. Getting a job is foremost in their minds for most of the university students at the time of graduation. They think that a sound educational performance can give them greater career opportunities and prepare them to make significant contributions in their chosen field.

Figure-3: Influence of Academic Performance on Job Opportunities

The data presented show that the majority (71 per cent) of the students has said their academic performance at the post-graduation would be the major determining factor in getting their aspired jobs. While, a small proportion (11 percent) of them has answered negatively. There may be some reasons for them to say so going by the recent incidents and developments like corruption and other factors. While the rest (18 percent) of them were undecided.

Influencing Factors in Choosing Jobs

Coming to deal with the probable's influence in selecting jobs for the future of post graduate students, the data seem to indicate that three-fourths (75.2 percent) of them have stated parents and self would be highly influential in choosing their occupations. However, teachers (13.6 percent), relatives (5.6 percent) and friends (5.6 percent) also have their say in suggesting the respondents a career path. Thus, it is suggested to call for a path breaking research in the field of occupational choice to understand this matter better.

Table-5: Influence of Probable Persons in Choosing Jobs

Persons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Parents	45	36.0
Teachers	17	13.6
Relatives	7	5.6
Self	49	39.2
Friends	7	5.6
Total	125	100.0

Preparation for Competitive Examinations

The present world is highly competitive. Obviously 80 per cent of the students are preparing to write various competitive examinations to get a good placement. Even merit or high distinction obtained it appears may not ensure good placements. Out of 100 who are preparing for various competitive exams single largest proportion (48.0 percent) of the students are preparing for the State sponsored exams like KPSC and KAS, followed by Central exams such as UPSE, IAS or IPS (30.0 percent). However, a small proportion (22.0 percent) of them are preparing for both.

Orientation for Ideal Job

The data pertaining to orientation toward an ideal job indicate that the single largest proportion (44.4 percent) of them stated that the opportunities to serve the society is the first criterion of an ideal job. This is highly a noble criterion in the present so called materialistic world. Occupational security is the second criteria opted by more than one-fourth (28.0 percent) of the post-graduate students. Money or monetary considerations do not play a major determining role. Coming to deal with the factors said to be contributing to get a teaching job in a university, the data seem to suggest that the major factor which would help to get teaching in the University system is merit. A sizeable proportion (70.4 percent) of them has said good academic contribution is the major factor to get into teaching in the University system. They also added that money, power, political influence, caste factor and contacts with reputed people will also play important roles to some extent.

VII. CONCLUSION

In contemporary society, every citizen experience discrimination in the field of education and employment. However, the job market has opened the new scope of education which gives new ideas and changes of achieving goal in life after education among younger generations. In reality, the chances of achieving aspiration in life do not seem to be much more satisfactory for the present generation. The ultimate goal of youth is status attainment through an occupational choice process. More importance is given to quality of life, lifestyle and satisfaction in the present scenario. If so, more research needs to be undertaken on these factors and the processes with regard to occupational choice and success. Thus, for leading a satisfied life educational and occupational attainments in the life of students, particularly at higher levels of education, plays a significant role indeed. Analysis of the data, in the present study, suggests that the majority of the post graduate students have an aspiration of becoming teachers and prefer to serve in government institutions particularly at higher levels. Students must also be aware of the fact that the recruitment process initiated by the government is rigorous, competitive and time consuming one. Hence, they need to be academically sound, competent and patient in aspiring for government jobs at the institutions of higher learning. Apart from these, the majority of students in the present study are ready to compromise with their aspiration by preferring self-employment.

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