



EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION OF YOUTH IN KUTTANAD REGION

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ABSTRACT

Aspirations mean a strong desire to achieve something. The student's aspirations are derived from a combination of educational and career goals. The present study is an attempt to discuss the educational and occupational aspirations of under-graduate students. The study was conducted in the Kuttanad region and the respondents were bachelor's students. For the purpose of the data collection, a structured questionnaire was formulated and conducted personal interviews with randomly selected 30 samples from the population of undergraduate students in the Kuttanad region. The study found that the majority of the students have higher career aspirations.

INTRODUCTION

Both present and future viewpoints can be used to contextualize the term "aspiration." Therefore, a student with aspirations is one who engages in a variety of activities in order to accomplish the goals that have been established. The capacity to recognize, categorize, and establish goals and objectives, as well as to act in accordance with them, is known as aspirations. Aspiration shows up in actions and engages people in things that are appropriate for them.

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION

Educational aspirations have been studied intensively by different disciplines to explain educational disparities, including psychological, social- psychological, sociological and economic perspectives (Domina et al. 2011; Rojewski 2005). The term educational aspiration generally used to refer to the educational goals students set for themselves, there is no single and universally accepted definition or common agreement as to what the term means (Lent et al. 1944; Quanglia and Cobb 1996; Rojewski 2005).

OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Career is considered as a course of successive situation that makes up someone's works his/her life. Powell and Butterfield (2002) describe that career aspiration is individual's desires for future employment. As mentioned above that aspiration is a strong desire directs and helps to achieve what they want if they work directly towards it. Career aspiration emerges from an individual and in return it influences one's norms, values and beliefs. The common factors influence individual's aspirations are family, education, social institution, community environment, ethnicity and age etc. Baruch (2004) said that aspiration is an aspect of intelligent career and its underlying values such as attitude, ethics, motivation, internal needs, identity and what motivates people to select a certain career, job and lifestyle. That is why, career aspiration should be analyzed as it will give impact to the professional performance of the individuals. According to Sachein's (1975) idea of career anchor, people maintain a variety of job interests.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Kuttanad region in Alappuzha district is abundant with paddy fields, and the majority of the people are farmers. Students in this region face numerous challenges, including flooding during the rainy season, transportation issues, a lack of good colleges, and so on. Due to the lack of good colleges in these regions, most people pursue their higher education in nearby districts. During the flood seasons, schools and colleges were flooded and reopened only after two months or more. The purpose of the study is to identify the educational and occupational aspirations of undergraduate students in the Kuttanad region and analyse how regional and ancestral jobs, like farming, affect the career choices of the students.

Research questions addressed in the study are:

- Do undergraduate students have high level of educational aspirations with respect to their courses?
- Do undergraduate students have high level of career aspirations with respect to their courses?



- What are the factors that influence the educational and career choices of students?
- Are family and friends involved in students' job choices?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the educational and occupational aspirations of undergraduate students in the Kuttanad region.
- To analyze the factors influencing the decision of students about their career
- To understand the regional and ancestral jobs affect the career choices of students.

METHODOLOGY

The study incorporates the collection of both primary and secondary data. The secondary data used for the analysis include data drawn from journals, magazines, and other online journals. The primary data is collected using structured questionnaires and personal interviews from 30 samples. Collected data were entered into Excel and analyzed using charts, graphs, tables, and the percentage method.

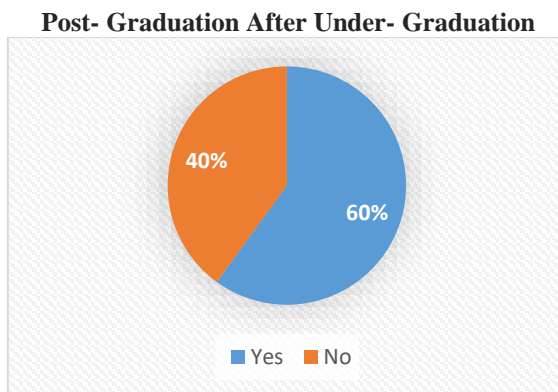
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A sample of 30 undergraduate students were collected using questionnaire method as well as personal interview method. The collected data were entered into the Excel and analyzed using charts, tables, percentages.

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The study was conducted in the Kuttanad region. The study was carried out on the 30 respondents in Kuttanad, with 50% of the respondents being girls and 50% being boys. 60% of the respondents studied BCOM, and BSC and BA were 25% and 15%, respectively.

Figure 1



Source: Primary data

The above pie chart shows 60 % of the respondents were interested in Post-graduation and 40% were not interested, and the girls were more interested than boys. Also the 40% of the respondents were interested in jobs after under graduation.

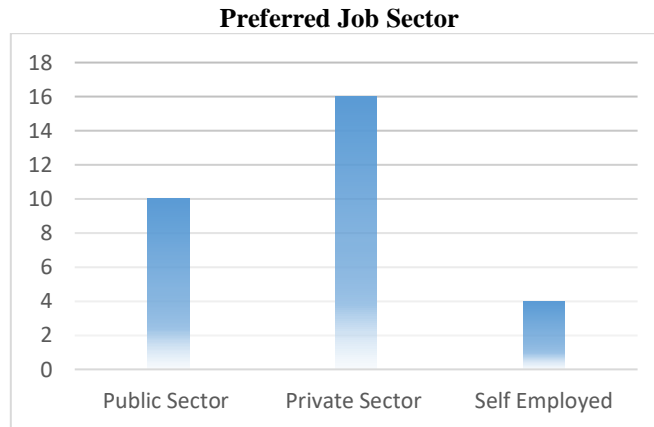
Table 1
Factors Influencing Aspirations

Response	No. of respondents	Percentage
Parents	8	26.66
Friends	4	13.33
Media	18	60

Source: Primary data

The table explains that 60% of the respondents influenced by the media during their career aspirations were the least influenced by 13.33%. During the personal interviews, found that most of the respondents used the internet, and they chose their courses and job opportunities through these internet sites and media.

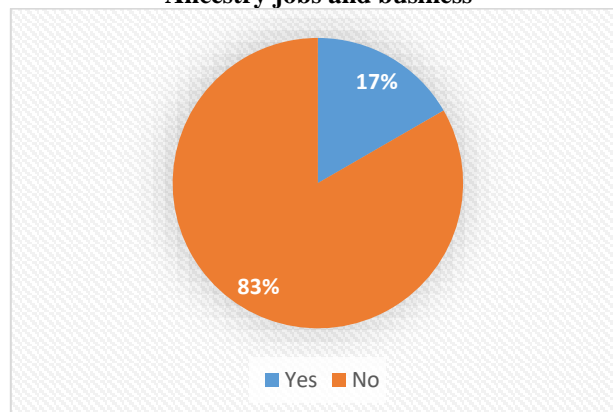
Figure 2



Source: Primary data

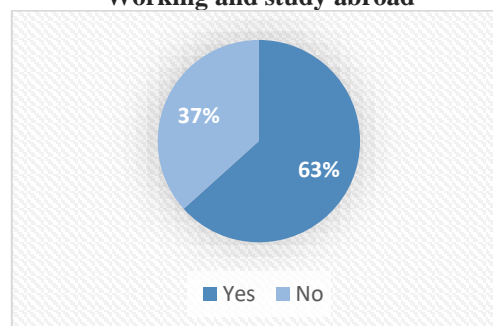
Figure 2 clearly shows that more than half of the respondents were prefers private sector jobs rather than Public sector or self-employed.

Figure 3
Ancestry jobs and business



The figure shows that 83% of the respondents were not interested in their ancestry jobs and businesses. In Kuttanad most of the people were farmers. Most of the farmers got this job as an ancestor. But the students, like youth, were not interested in the farming jobs.

Figure 4
Working and study abroad



Source: Primary Data

According to the statistic, 63% of the students were considering working or studying abroad. Because they believe it to be more practical and beneficial for their future.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the present study was to identify the educational and occupational aspirations of under graduate students in Kuttanad region. The major findings of the study include:



- More than half of the respondents were interested in pursuing their post-graduation after under-graduation.
- There is no relation between the educational aspirations and occupational aspirations of students and their regional or ancestral jobs like farming.
- 60% of the respondents relied on the media for their course search and job search.
- 63% of the students were interested in studying and working abroad after graduation.
- Through personal interviews, I found that most of the respondents believe there is an unemployment crisis in their locality.
- The respondents pointed out that there is a lack of educational infrastructure in the Kuttanad region and that other problems like transportation and frequent floods affect students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The government should increase expenditure in the education sector in the Kuttanad region. Due to frequent floods, schools and colleges have been closed for more than two months, necessitating an urgent solution.
- In the Kuttanad region, the majority of the population are farmers. However, the study indicate that the younger generation is not interested in farming. If the government were to introduce new agro-based industries in the region, combined with modern agricultural practices and technology, it could improve employment opportunities and attract more youth to the agriculture field.

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