

## LEVEL OF ASPIRATION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR SEX AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

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### ABSTRACT

The current study aimed at a study of level of aspiration of undergraduate students in relation to their sex and socio-economic status. The study includes 73 male and 75 female undergraduate students as samples selected from three undergraduate colleges of Nagaon town through applying stratified random sampling method from a population of 2434 male and 2485 female students. Standardised scale measuring level of aspiration was administered upon the samples. To measure the socio-economic status a scale was prepared by the investigators based on available resources. The collected data were then analysed through using mean, sd, t-test and Pearson's correlation technique. The findings showed that male undergraduate students are high aspirant than their female counterparts. The study further revealed that socio-economic status is significantly correlated with level of aspiration of male undergraduate students. Thus, the findings yielded the necessity for developing strategies to help the offspring to set the aspiration level in perfect consonance with his/her socio-economic status as well as psycho-physical condition.

**KEYWORDS:** Level of Aspiration, Sex, Socio-Economic Status, Undergraduate Students

### INTRODUCTION

#### THE BACKGROUND

In the words of Hurlock (1967) aspiration means, "a longing for what is above one's achieved level with advancement on its end. In other words aspiration means the goal an individual sets for himself in a task, which has intense personal significance for him and in which he is ego-involved". To aspire means to desire, this is a pre-requisite of any achievement. Level of aspiration is a person's expectations, goals or claims on his own future achievement in a given task. The concept of level of aspiration was first of all introduced in 1931 by Dembo, one of Lewin's students, in the course of an experimental investigation of anger. The word 'aspiration' is a translation from German word 'Ansprush' & 'Niveau'.

Level of aspiration is usually influenced by two types of factors environmental and personal. Environmental factors include determinants like parental ambitions, social expectations, peer pressure, social value, competition, group cohesiveness etc. In early childhood, before the child is old enough to know what his abilities, interests and values are, his aspirations are largely shaped by environment. On the other hand, personal factors play dominant role in determining his level of aspiration as the child grows older and become more aware of his abilities and interests. These personal factors include determinants such as wishes, personality, past experiences, values, interests, sex, socio-economic background, racial background etc.

In the present age of LPG, the education system has become materialistic aiming at preparing the offspring to money earning tools. Consequently, it influenced the aspiration of students also. Students exposed to a particular type of education may have different level of aspiration to those not exposed to that education as *Harbison (1991)* in his study to investigate the career aspirations of the students pursuing MSW degree revealed that those holding the BSW degree have

different career expectations and aspirations than those who do not hold this degree.

Gender and Rural-urban inhabitation are also strong determinants of level of aspiration. In Indian culture we generally observe that males are more aspirant than females which is corroborated by the findings of *Kruezer (1992)* who in his study on 311 university seniors reported that female have lower aspiration to leader and hope less in their career than do men. Similarly, as we know that rural culture is different from urban culture, there exists disparity in the areas like travel, telecommunication, facilities of trade and commerce, advanced facilities of technology, mass-media etc, all of which are supposed to exert influence on level of aspiration of students. *Duane H. Bajema and others (2002)*, concluded that high school seniors lived in towns and farms had a high level of congruence between educational and occupational aspiration. They further perceived that farm and town students had equally diverse aspirations.

In today's world of competitiveness, there is not a single individual who is devoid of ambition in some or other form. Every one of us possesses some sort of aspiration. Generally, a great deal of individual differences is found in goal setting behaviour. One may set his goal very high, while some other very low and some may have aspiration level near to their performance level or capacity. But, setting one's goal and level of aspiration in accordance with his socio-economic status as well as psycho-physical condition is of vital importance for balanced development of personality. Aspiration which is not in consonance with the socio-economic status and psycho-physical condition can create severe emotional and behavioural complexities. It also reduces the achievement level. *Boxer, Paul and others (2011)* revealed that students who aspire to achieve more than they expect to achieve are likely to have more economically disadvantaged backgrounds and poor academic performance. These students also reported lower level of school bonding, higher levels of test/performance anxiety and elevated behavioural/emotional difficulties. Similarly, *Cochran, Daria, B. (2011)* reported that socio-economic status and ability influenced the formation of occupational aspirations of adolescents.

Considering the above issues, it was realised to identify the level of aspiration of youths and to examine its relationship with gender and socio-economic status in our own context. As such the present study is stated as "*Level of Aspiration of Undergraduate Students in relation to their Sex and Socio-Economic Status*".

## OBJECTIVES

- To identify and examine whether there is significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their level of aspiration.
- To identify and examine whether there is significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their socio-economic status.
- To determine whether there is significant relationship between level of aspiration and socio-economic status of male and female undergraduate students.
- To examine whether there is significant difference in the relationship of level of aspiration and socio-economic status between male and female undergraduate students.

## HYPOTHESES

- **Ho I:** There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their level of aspiration.
- **Ho II:** There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their socio-economic status.

- **Ho III:** There is no significant relationship between level of aspiration and socio-economic status of male and female undergraduate students.
- **Ho IV:** There is no significant difference in the relationship of level of aspiration and socio-economic status between male and female undergraduate students.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted under descriptive method.

### Population and Sample

The present study aimed at a study of the level of aspiration of undergraduate students. It was also delimited to the three undergraduate colleges of Nagaon town of Nagaon District of Assam. As such the study included all the students irrespective of sex and area/stream of study enrolled in the three colleges during the study period 2012-2013 as its population.

Stratified Random Sampling method was employed in drawing the samples for the study. Total numbers of students enrolled in the three colleges are 4919 of which 2434 are male and 2485 are female. Applying proportionate allocation, 3% of students from both strata---- 'Male' and 'Female' has been taken from each of the colleges separately to guarantee a more representative distribution of students throughout the colleges. Thus, the final sample for the study consisted of 148 college students of which 73 are male and 75 are female students.

### Tools

The following tools were employed considering the objectives of the study and feasibility of their use.

- Level of Aspiration Measure by Dr. Mahesh Bhargava and Late Prof. M.A. Shah.

This measure gives three types of scores namely GDS (Goal Discrepancy Score), ADS (Attainment Discrepancy Score) and NTRS (Number of Times the Goal Reach Score). In the present study only GDS is taken into consideration as it is the index of level of aspiration. ADS and NTRS are the indexes of Goal Reaching Behaviour. It is a standardised tool where validity coefficients were found at satisfactory level.

- Socio-Economic Status Scale prepared by the Investigators. (Details is given in Appendix-I)

### Treatment of Data

As the study is mainly based on examining group performances, comparison between groups and relationship between variables, the statistical technique used for the study were 'mean', 'sd', 't-test', and 'Pearson's Correlation'. To test the Significance of 'r', Significance of difference between Means, 5% confidence level was taken into consideration in the whole analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results are presented and discussed as follows in the order of objectives of the study:

**Objective-- I:** *To identify and examine whether there is significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their level of aspiration.*

**Ho-I:** *There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their level of aspiration.*

**Table 1: Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Level of Aspiration between Male and Female Undergraduate Students**

Level of Aspiration				t	Level of Significance
Male (N=73)		Female (N=75)			
Mean	sd	Mean	Sd		
3.19	2.81	2.88	2.12	.763	Not Significant

The result of the mean score presented in table-1 revealed that male undergraduate students have higher aspiration with mean value of 3.19 than their female counterparts which is generally corroborated with our general observation in Indian culture. This finding also resembles the findings of Kruezer (1992) who reported that female have lower aspiration to leader than the males do. Though, a mean difference of 1.7 was observed between male and female group, it's not so high to make the difference statistically significant at .05 level. As such our first hypothesis stating "*There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their level of aspiration*" is fully retained.

**Objective-- II:** *To identify and examine whether there is significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their socio-economic status.*

**Ho-II:** *There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their socio-economic status.*

**Table 2: Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Socio-Economic Status between Male and Female Undergraduate Students**

Socio-Economic Status				t	Level of Significance
Male (N=73)		Female (N=75)			
Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd		
18.04	5.00	19.90	5.67	2.10	Significant at .05 level

On exploring the socio-economic status of the sampled students, it is found that female group outscored the male group in the mean score on socioeconomic status. The mean score on socio-economic status of male students is 18.04 which is 19.9 for female students. The t-analysis confirmed the difference as significant at .05 level. As such our second hypothesis which denies the existence of significant difference in socio-economic status between male and female undergraduates is rejected.

**Objective-- III:** *To determine whether there is significant relationship between level of aspiration and socio-economic status of male and female undergraduate students.*

**Ho-III:** *There is no significant relationship between level of aspiration and socio-economic status of male and female undergraduate students.*

**Table 3: Coefficients of Correlation between Level of Aspiration and Socio-Economic Status of Male and Female Undergraduate Students**

Correlation between Level of Aspiration and Socio-Economic Status	'r' Value	Level of Significance
Male Group (N=73)	.233	Significant at .05 level
Female Group (N=75)	.052	Not Significant

The table-3 depicting the relationship between level of aspiration and socio-economic status separately for male and female undergraduate students revealed existence of positive correlation between level of aspiration and socio-

economic status for both the groups. The correlation is much higher for male group in comparison to female group implying that socio-economic status has strong influence on level of aspiration or vice-versa so far the male undergraduates are concerned in comparison to female undergraduates. In this way, the relationship between the two variables is statistically significant for male students, whereas it is statistically insignificant for female group. As such our hypothesis stating ‘*There is no significant relationship between level of aspiration and socio-economic status of male and female undergraduate students*’ is partly retained and partly rejected. It is rejected at .05 level so far the male students are concerned whereas retained with regard to female students.

The implication of this finding is that an increase or decrease in socio-economic status corresponds an increase or decrease in level of aspiration or vice-versa of the undergraduate students. Thus, the present finding is corroborated with the findings of Cochran, Daria, B (2011) who reported that socio-economic status and ability influenced the formation of occupational aspirations of adolescents.

**Objective-- IV:** *To examine whether there is significant difference in the relationship of level of aspiration and socio-economic status between male and female undergraduate students.*

**Ho-IV:** *There is no significant difference in the relationship of level of aspiration and socio-economic status between male and female undergraduate students.*

In order to identify the significance of difference in the relationship of level of aspiration and socio-economic status between the two groups, firstly the ‘r’ value of both the group were converted into ‘z’ scores and then the standard error of the difference between the two ‘z’ scores were calculated. Afterwards, significance of difference was determined through using the following formula.

$$CR = \frac{Z1 - Z2}{SEDiff (Z)}$$

$$SEDiff (Z)$$

**Table 4: Significance of Difference in the Relationship of Level of Aspiration and Socio-Economic Status between Male and Female Undergraduate Students**

Male Group (N=73)		Female Group (N=75)		SEDiff (Z)	CR	Level of Significance
r-Value	z-Value	r-Value	z-value			
.233	.233	.052	.052	.16	1.13	Not Significant

Form the perusal of the results contained in the table-4, it is clear that though the relationship between level of aspiration and socio-economic status of male undergraduate students is much stronger than that of the female group, yet the difference is not statistically significant at .05 level. As such our fourth hypothesis stating “*There is no significant difference in the relationship of level of aspiration and socio-economic status between male and female undergraduate students*” is fully retained.

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

- Male undergraduate students have higher level of aspiration than the female undergraduate students.
- There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their level of aspirations.
- There is significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their socio-economic status. Female students outscored the male students so far their socio-economic status is concerned.
- There is significant correlation between level of aspiration and socio-economic status of male undergraduate

students. The relationship between level of aspiration and socio-economic status of female undergraduate students is not statistically significant.

- The relationship between level of aspiration and socio-economic status of male undergraduate students is much stronger than that of the relationship between the two variables of female group.
- There is no significant difference in the relationship of level of aspiration and socio-economic status between male and female undergraduate students.

## CONCLUSIONS

The above mentioned results and discussion shed light on the nature of aspiration of undergraduate students. The findings revealed that male undergraduate students have higher aspiration than the females, which offers implication to take-up and direct special efforts to empower women, strengthen their self-esteem and self confidence which in turn help them to aspire and achieve their optimum. As the study revealed positive correlation between level of aspiration and socio-economic status among undergraduate students, as such all the stakeholders- government, policy makers, educational institutions, teachers and primarily the parents should work hard to help the offspring to set the aspiration level in perfect consonance with his/her socio-economic status as well as psycho-physical condition, instead of encouraging fairly-tale dreaming.

The education system should be so designed that it helps the students to realise their own capabilities and to direct accordingly, instead of imposing from outside irrespective of individual differences. The present study also realises the necessity to investigate separately the educational aspiration, vocational aspiration, economic aspiration etc. of undergraduate students and factors determining them in order to have a better understanding of the youths and help guide them in the right direction without losing the most precious resource i.e. effort.

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## APPENDICES

### Socio-Economic Status Scale

The following items were taken into consideration to measure the Socio-Economic Status of the College students-

- Parental Level of Education.

- Occupation of Parents
- Monthly Income of parents.
- House Ownership.
- Condition of Housing

**Responsive Categories and Scores Assigned to Each Item Used in SES Index**

S No.	Item	Scores Assigned					Total
		0	1	2	3	4	
1	Parental Level of Education	Illiterate	Primary	Secondary	Graduate	PG	
2	Occupation of Parents	Unemplo-yed	Unskilled	Cultivation	Business	Govt./ Ex Govt. Ser.	
3	Monthly Income of Parents.	Nil	Below 3000	3001-10000	10001-30000	30001 onwards	
4	House Ownership	-----	Rented	-----	Owned	-----	
5	Condition of House	-----	Thatched	Tin	Cement	Two Or More Storyed	

The responses on the above five items were arranged into a Rating Scale. The total score indicates the overall Socio-Economic Status of a respondent.

