

ABSTRACT

**Social Background and Career Aspirations of
Students in Higher Education: A Study of two
Selected Universities in Lucknow**

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ABSTRACT

Social Background and Career Aspirations of Students in Higher Education: A Study of two Selected Universities in Lucknow

Contemporary society is complex in nature. It is very hard to survive and succeed in the present rapidly globalizing society where every day new challenges and career opportunities emerge. Choosing a career path is very difficult for an individual in the present highly competitive society. Choosing a career path is one of the most important tasks for students. Choice of a career – educational and occupational/professional - is inspired by one's self-aspiration to achieve in life. Christine Blower says, "Aspiration comes to mean individual success, achieved through competition". To get a good and well-settled life individuals have to do hard work in making a good career. According to Jon Cruddas, 'Aspiration' is a wish to improve one's social status and material wealth. The career aspirations of students are influenced by different factors in their life.

Career aspirations of students may be different at different levels education. Career aspirations of students, who enter into university or college relate to improving their labour market value by which they get better jobs. Pursuing a particular professional career needs a specific qualification. Some students want to enter into higher education because of intellectual interest, but most commonly students are motivated primarily because of social pressure or norms. Generally, we find two types of career aspirations among students at the university level, one is academic-intellectual and the other is occupational. The present scenario seems to suggest that occupational career aspirations are higher than academic career aspirations among students. Pieces of research reveal that most university-level students want to pursue their higher-level education to obtain specific qualifications by which they get better jobs in their career. All students do not have the same career aspirations which may vary across their social background, educational institutions and disciplines/courses.

It may be stated that career aspirations of people in general and of students in higher education in particular are shaped by their given historical setting, in addition to their individual choice. After Independence, India followed for over four decades an internally-focused state-led 'mixed economy' model of development in which both the public and private sectors co-existed. But the former occupied the commanding height. The state-owned public sector opened up numerous career opportunities at different levels for which university

students aspired, besides other opportunities in the private sector and political and social spheres. However, with the introduction of the regime of privatization, liberalization and globalisation and resulting growing dominance of the private sector in the economy and society, the opportunity scenario has significantly changed. This would certainly have an influence over career aspirations of people in general and of university students in particular. Hence, it is important to know in the present scenario the career aspirations of university students who have the potential to greatly contribute to the development of society besides their own growth.

Career aspirations of students can be better understood by combining and using both sociological and psychological approaches because individuals are influenced by their given social circumstances and also act on the basis of their own psychological make-up, wishes and desires.

Objectives: There are three objectives of the study: i) To examine the social background of university students; ii) To find out the nature of career aspirations of university students; and iii) To know the factors that influence career aspirations of university students.

Methodology: The research design of the present study is descriptive. Research strategy is mixed method which involves, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches of research. The universe of study consists of two oldest universities located in Lucknow city, which includes one oldest private university and one oldest government university. Purposive random sampling method is used to draw the sample of the study. The sample from each university selected for the study includes the students who are doing graduation. Tools of data collection include a structured Questionnaire and an Interview Guide. The total sample size for the questionnaire-based data is 283 students (i.e. 177 from the government university and 106 from the private university). By using Interview Guide detailed information was collected from 24 students (one student each from total 24 selected departments of both universities – 12 cases from the government university and 12 from the private university). The questions given in both the tools pertained to students' socio-economic background, their career aspirations and factors influencing their career aspirations/choices.

Chapterisation: The study consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 is Introduction which provides the details of the problem of study, conceptual clarifications, review of literature, significance of the study, objectives and hypotheses of the study, and its methodology. Socio-economic background of the students of both the selected universities is described in Chapter 2. Analysis of the nature of educational and occupational/professional career aspirations of the

students of both universities is given in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 discusses the factors that influence the educational as well as occupational/professional career aspirations of the students. Chapter 5 presents detailed individual cases of 24 students drawn from both the selected universities, which deal with their socio-economic background and both educational and occupational/professional career aspirations. Finally, main findings and conclusions of the study are given in Chapter 6. The hypothesis-wise major findings and conclusion of the study are as given below.

Socio-economic Background

First hypothesis of the study says: '*Socio-economic background of students in a private university is relatively higher than those studying in a government university*'. In this connection, we discuss below the main findings of the study related to the two selected universities located in Lucknow.

Here, it is found that: In the total sample of 283 students drawn from the two universities, gender-wise, the proportion of male students (50.2) is slightly higher than the female students (49.4), and there is only one student belonging to 'other' gender. When compared, the proportion of male students is higher in the government university (52.5% male students) but lower in the private university (46.9 %). In terms of spatial background, the majority of students are from urban background (61.8%) and the rest are from rural areas (38.2%). But the proportion of rural students is higher in the government university and lower in the private university. Religion-wise, the majority of the total students belong to Hindu religion (67.1%), followed by Muslims (31%), Christians (1.4%), and Sikh (only one student).

In terms of caste-wise break-up, the proportion of general category students is much higher in the private university (66%) than in the government university (48%). And the proportion of the reserved category students is much higher in the government university (SC - 18.6%, OBC - 32.2%, ST – nil) than in the private university (SC - 18.6%, OBC - 32.2%, ST – nil). The proportion of students living in pucca houses is marginally higher in the private university (88.7%) than in the government university (87.8%). In terms of father's educational qualification, the proportion of students in the private university at both the graduation and post-graduation levels is relatively higher in the private university than in the government university (father having graduation degree: private university - 43.4%, government university - 31.6%; post-graduation: private university - 31.1%, government university - 29.6%). Regarding mother's educational qualification also, the proportion of the students is higher in the private university than in the government university (mother having

graduation degree: private university – 29.2%, government university – 28.2%; post-graduation degree: private university – 21.7%, government university – 17.5%). Regarding father's occupation being business and government service, the proportion of students is roughly equal in case of both the universities (father in government service: government university – 35.6% students, private university – 34.0%; in business: government university – 25.4%, private university – 27.4%). But in case of father's occupation being labour, the proportion is almost negligible in both universities (government university – 1.1%, private university – 1.9%). Regarding mother's occupation, there is very little difference between the students of the two universities (mother being housewife: government university – 84.2% students, private university – 81.1%).

In respect of possession of expensive consumer durables (like AC, refrigerator, computer, sofa, cooler, TV) at family level, the proportion of students is higher in the private university than in the government university. For instance, 62.3% families of students of the private university have air-conditioner, but the ratio is only 35.6% in the government university. Similarly, 82% families of the students in the private university have refrigerator, whereas the ratio is 75.7% in the government university. Moreover, more families of students (69.8%) studying in the private university possess computer; the ratio is only 49.2% in the government university. Sofa is possessed by families of 65.1% students in the private university, whereas the proportion is 48.6% in the government university. But in terms of possession of conveyance/vehicles and agricultural machinery, the families of the students in the government university are slightly better than those in the government university. For example, 40.1% families of students of the government university own car whereas the proportion is 34.9% in the private university. In the government university 3.4% students' families own harvester, but the proportion is only 0.9% in the private university. Regarding ownership of tractor, the proportion of students' families is 11.9% in the government university whereas it is only 4.7% in the private university. In case of the family ownership of motorcycle/scooter, the proportion of students is 72.3% in the government university whereas it is only 36.8% in the private university.

Further, for analysis in terms of total monthly family income from all sources, the students are categorized into six classes: upper-upper class (monthly family income Rs. 6-10 lakh), lower-upper class (Rs. 3-6 lakh), upper-middle class (Rs. 1-3 lakh), lower-middle class (Rs. 50,000 - 1 lakh), upper-lower class (Rs. 25,000 - 50,000), and lower-lower class (upto Rs. 25,000). Here, it is seen that in terms of total monthly family income, the proportion of students belonging to upper-upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and upper-

lower class is higher in case of the private university than the government university. But the proportion of students belonging to lower-lower class and lower-upper class is higher in the government university than the private university. For example, in case of total monthly family income of Rs. 6-10 lakh (upper-upper class), the proportion of students is higher in the private university (15.2%) than in the government university (12.4%). But the proportion of students whose monthly family income level is that of lower-lower class (below Rs 25,000) and lower-upper class (Rs. 3 to 6 lakh), is higher in case of the government university than the private university. Moreover, as per self-identification of social class status of their family, the proportion of students reporting relatively higher status is more in the case of the private university than the government university. For instance, 20.8% students of the private university identify their family as belonging to upper class, whereas the proportion is only 9% in the government university. 57.5% students of the private university say that their families belong to upper-middle class, but the proportion is about six per cent less, i.e. 52% in the government university. Moreover, relatively lower proportion of students of the private university identify their family status as lower-middle class and lower class. For instance, the proportion of students identifying their family status as lower class is 4% in government university and only 0.9% in the private university. And the proportion of students reporting their family status as lower-middle class is 33.3% in the government university and 19.8% in the private university.

The description of individual cases of the students given in Chapter 5 show broadly similar trends.

On the basis of the above facts related to most of the socio-economic indicators (e.g. caste, class status, house type, father's educational qualification, possession of consumer durables, and family income), it may be stated that the socio-economic background of the students studying in the private university is relatively higher than those studying in the government university. So, the first hypothesis of the study is found to be valid.

Career Aspirations

The second hypothesis of the study was, “*Career aspirations of university students vary across universities*”. In this regard, the data reveal the nature of both academic and occupational/professional career aspirations of the students of the selected two universities – one government university and one private university.

Academic Career Aspirations

The academic/educational career aspirations of the students of the two universities have been examined in terms of streams of study opted by the students, studying subject of their choice, motivator of choosing the subject/course of study, objective/reason for choosing the subject/course, level of further study, getting proper guidance in their educational career, source of guidance, and major problem in acquiring education. In this connection, it is observed:

i) The students are enrolled in six streams of studies, viz. science, social science, humanities, management, commerce, and computer science/information technology. Here, there is found only some difference regarding the stream of study opted by the students of the two universities. For instance, the proportion of students enrolled in science is 17% and 15.1% respectively in the government university and the private university, which shows very little difference (only 2.0%). In social science, their proportion is almost equal, i.e. 15.8% and 16.0% respectively. There is not much difference in cases of humanities and commerce streams as well. But there is seen significant difference in the proportion of students enrolled in computer science/IT, i.e. 16.4% and 23.6% respectively (difference of 7.0%). In case of management stream also, the difference is over 4.0%. ii) As regards studying course/subject of their choice, there is found not much difference between the students of the two universities: their proportion being 96% and 94.3% respectively in the government university and the private university. iii) Further, the majority of students in both the universities are self-motivated in choosing the subject/course of their study: the proportion being 65.5% and 63.2% respectively in the government and the private universities. There is a difference of only about 2% in case of their parents motivating them to do a particular subject/course (the proportion being 24.3% and 21.7% respectively in case of students of the government university and the private university). iv) There is found some difference in their objective of choosing the subject/course of study in one respect: The majority (52.5%) of students of the government university have chosen their subject of study for acquiring knowledge of the subject, but the proportion is only 38.7% in case of the students of the private university in this connection. The second important objective of choosing their subject is employment opportunity and, here, their proportion is roughly the same, i.e. 39% in case of the students of the government university and 40.6% in case of the students of the private university. v) Regarding the students' wish to go for further study, there is almost no difference in case of the majority of students of the two universities, those who want to do their masters – the proportion being 53.7% students in case of the government university and 51.9% in the private university. But there is noticed significant difference between them regarding their

wish to do Ph.D. (26.6% students of the government university and 36.8% students of the private university), and post-doctoral study (1.7% students of the government university and 4.7% students of the private university). Only 4.7% students of the private university do not want to go for further study, but the proportion of such students is much higher in case of the government university (11.3% students). vi) The objective of further study of about half of the total students (47.7%) of both the universities is better employment opportunities (48% and 47.2% respectively). But regarding the objective of further study being acquisition of knowledge, there is significant difference between the students of the two universities (32.2% students in case of the government university and 39.6% students in case of the private university). vii) Also, there is significant difference regarding students getting proper guidance fully in their educational career (45.2% students in the government university but 61.3% in the private university. viii) As regards source of guidance in educational career, there is seen significant difference between the students of the two universities in some aspects. Internet is the source of guidance for 17.5% of the students of the government university but the proportion is only 7.5% in case of students of the private university. Similarly, family is the source of guidance for 34.5% students of the government university, but the proportion is only 22.6% in case of the private university. Self-motivation is the source of guidance for 20.3% students of the government university, but the proportion is 24.5% in case of the private university. ix) There is also observed some difference between the students of the two universities regarding the major problems they confront in acquiring education. Poverty of the family is the major problem faced by 13.6% students of the government university, but the proportion is less in private university (9.4% students). Major problem from their classmate side is faced by 10.2% students of the government university, but the proportion is slightly higher in the private university (14.2% students). As regards major problem faced from the side of education institution, the proportion of the students of the government university is much higher (31.1% students) compared with only 14.2% students of the private university. However, regarding the family environment not being favourable to study, the scenario is broadly the same for students of both the universities (11.3% students in the government university and 10.4% students in the private university).

Occupational/Professional Career Aspiration

i) There is found significant difference between the students of the two universities in terms of first choice of occupation/profession they wish to enter after completion of their studies. For instance, 57.7% of students of the government university wish to do some job/service

after studies, whereas the proportion is 41.5% in case of the students of the private university (i.e. a difference of about 17%). Similarly, only 3.4% students of the government university want to enter some independent profession, whereas the proportion is 13.2% in case of the students of the private university (i.e. a difference of about 10%). Only 9% students of the government university want to enter academic profession, whereas the proportion is 21.7% in case of the students of the private university (i.e. a difference of about 12%). About 18% students of the government university want to enter into business, whereas the proportion is 14.2% in case of the students of the private university (i.e. a difference of about 4%). About 5% students of the government university want to enter into politics, whereas the proportion is 1.9% in case of the students of the private university (i.e. a difference of about 3%). But very few students (1.4%) of both the universities wish to enter into agriculture. Only about 1% and almost nil (0.7%) students of the government and the private universities wish to take up labour as their occupation. ii) Main reason of choosing an occupation/profession after studies in case of majority of students of both the universities, is salary and perk (53.1% students in case of the government university and 51.9% students in case of the private university). Secondly, social status is the main reason of choosing an occupation/profession in case of 26.6% students of the government university and for 31.1% students of the private university (a difference of about 5%). Power position is the main reason for choosing an occupation/profession for 10.7% students of the government university and 4.7% students of the private university (a difference of 6%). iii) Large majority of students of both the universities are influenced by their own choice in choosing their occupation/profession (78.5% students in case of the government university and 82% students of the private university). Secondly, 19.8% students of the government university are influenced by their parents in choosing their occupation/profession, whereas the proportion is 16% in case of the private university (a difference of about 4%). Their relatives and friends have almost no influence on them in this connection. iv) Regarding the job/sector they wish to enter after their studies, it is seen that about 68% students of the government university want to enter the government sector, whereas the proportion is 50.9% in case of the students of the private university (i.e. a difference of about 17%). Six per cent students of the government university wish to join international organisations, whereas the proportion is 9.4% in case of students of the private university (a difference of about 3%). Around 16% students of both universities wish to join private sector. v) Parents of majority of students of both the universities want them to take up job, but the proportion is higher in case of the government university (67.2%) whereas the proportion is 51.9% in case of students of the private university (a difference of

about 15%). Parents of only 7.3% students want them to get into academics (teaching/research), whereas the proportion is much higher (21.7%) in case of students of the private university. Similarly, parents of 14.1% students of the government university want them to get into business, whereas the proportion is little less (10.4%) in case of students of the private university. vi) Further, regarding the status of job, majority of students of both universities wish to join upper class jobs; but the proportion is little less in case of students of the government university (53.7% students) than in the private university (57.5%). Secondly, the proportion of students who wish to take up jobs of upper-middle class status, is roughly equal for students of both the universities (around 25%). Just a few students of both the universities wish to take up jobs of lower class status (only 1.1%). Only 5% students of the two universities wish to take up jobs of lower middle class status. vii) the majority of students of the two universities fully know about pursuing their occupational/professional career, but the proportion is slightly lower in case of the government university (52%) than of the private university (56.6%). viii) Around 43% students of the government university have got proper guidance for pursuing their professional career, whereas the proportion is little higher in case of the private university (56.6% students). ix) There is seen significant difference between the students of the two universities regarding the source of guidance. For example, about 24% students of the government university are guided by themselves, the proportion is 33% in case of the private university (a difference of 9%). Similarly, family is the source of guidance in case of about 23% students of the government university but the proportion is 30.2% in case of the private university (i.e. over 7% higher). Internet is the source of guidance for 23.2% students of the government university, but the proportion is only 12.3% in case of the private university (a difference of 11%). x) There is a significant difference between students of the two universities regarding the major problems they face. For instance, for 8.5% students of the government university their major problem is poverty of their family, whereas the proportion is much lower at 2.8% for students of the private university (a difference of about 6%). Similarly, 14.7% students of the government university face the major problem of getting lower marks at examinations, but the proportion is 9.4% in case of the private university.

Further, there is found some similarities and differences between students of the two universities regarding their educational/academic and occupational career aspirations along caste, class, and gender lines. For instance: i) Overwhelming majority of students of all caste-categories are studying subject/course of their choice – the proportion being about 94%, 95%, 100% and 98% for General, SC, ST, OBC students respectively. But there is some difference

across categories regarding objectives of students for choosing their subject/course of studies. The proportion of students choosing their subject/course with the objective of employment opportunities is about 45%, 27%, nil, and 36% for students belonging to General, SC, ST and OBC categories respectively. The proportion of students wishing to do masters after their graduation is about 55%, 56%, 50% and 48% for students belonging to General, SC, ST and OBC categories respectively. The proportion of students who wish to do Ph.D. is about 30%, 20%, 50% and 35% for the students belonging to General, SC, ST and OBC categories respectively. The proportion of students who face the major problem of family environment being not favourable to studies is about 12%, 10%, 50% and 9% for students belonging to General, SC, ST and OBC categories respectively. For the highest proportion of students, their first choice of occupation/profession after studies is job/service, but here the proportion is about 48%, 51%, 50% and 59% for students belonging to General, SC, ST and OBC categories respectively. The students who wish to get into business after studies, the proportion is about 17%, 30%, nil and 9% for students belonging to General, SC, ST and OBC categories respectively. The students who wish to enter into the government sector job, the proportion is about 56%, 73%, nil and 68% for students belonging to General, SC, ST and OBC categories respectively. The students who wish to take up upper class jobs after their studies is about 59%, 59%, nil and 48% for students belonging to General, SC, ST and OBC categories respectively.

On the basis of parental class status also, there are some similarities and differences between the students' educational and occupational/professional aspirations. For example: Those who are studying subject/course of their choice, the proportion is about 95%, 93%, 100% and 100% for students whose parents belong to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class respectively. As regards those whose objective of choosing their subject/course of study is employment opportunity, the proportion is about 24%, 39%, 43% and 63% for students whose parents belong to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. Those who want to do masters, the proportion is about 55%, 49%, 60% and 63% for students whose parents belong to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. Those whose reason to go for further study is better employment opportunities, the proportion is about 55%, 42%, 55% and 63% for students whose parents belong to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. Further, there is found some significant differences in occupational/professional aspirations of students of the two universities along class position of their families. For example: i) Those who wish to get into job/service, the proportion is about 55%, 45%, 61% and 63% for students whose

parents belong to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. Those who wish to get into business, the proportion is about 18%, 18%, 14% and 13% respectively for students whose parents belong to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. Negligible proportion of students (0.7%) have opted for labour as their occupation, none from upper class and lower class. None from the lower and lower middle class have chosen agriculture as their occupation, though 4% and 5% students of upper-middle class and lower-middle class are willing to take up agricultural occupation. ii) The students who wish to enter government sector after their studies, their proportion is about 47%, 60%, 73% and 63% respectively for those belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. And the students who wish to join private sector after studies, their proportion is about 21%, 14%, 20% and nil respectively for those belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. iii) As regards the status of job the students wish to take up after studies, their proportion is 79%, 52%, 49% and 75% respectively for those belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. iv) The students who consider poverty of their family as the major problem in entering their chosen occupation/profession, their proportion is nil, 5%, 10% and 38% respectively for those belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class.

Further, along gender lines also there is observed some similarities and differences among students belonging to different classes with respect to their educational and occupational career aspirations. For instance: i) The proportion of male students and female students who are studying subject/course of their own choice is 93% and 98% respectively, showing a difference of 5% only. ii) In case of employment opportunity being the objective of choosing their subject/course, the proportion of male and female students is 43% and 35% respectively, showing a difference of 7%. But as regards knowledge acquisition being the objective of choosing subject/course of study, their proportion is 47% and 48% respectively, which is almost equal. iii) The male and female students who wish to do Masters' degree after graduation, their proportion is 56% and 50% respectively, showing a difference of 6%. But in case of desire to do Ph.D., the proportion of male and female students is about 25% and 35% respectively; here, the proportion of female students is 10% higher than male students. Furthermore, there is seen differences along gender line with respect to occupational/professional aspirations of the students. For example: i) Regarding the first choice of occupation/profession being job, the proportion of male students is about 46%, whereas it is 58% in case of female students (i.e. 12% more than male students). ii) As

regards desire to join government sector job, the proportion of male students is about 56%, whereas it is 67% in case of female students (i.e. 11% more than male students). In contrast, about 25% male students wish to join private sector job whereas the proportion is only 7% in case of female students (i.e. 18% less than male students). iii) Those who wish to join upper class job, the proportion is 56% and 55% for male and female students, which is almost equal. But only about 4% female students are willing to take up lower-middle class job, whereas the proportion is about 9% for male students. Just 0.7% of both male and female students each are willing to take up lower class jobs.

The description of individual cases of the students given in Chapter 5 show broadly similar trends.

Hence, on the basis of the above findings, it can be said that both educational and occupational/professional career aspirations of the students vary across the government university and the private university. But the variation is not high in many aspects related to their career aspirations. There are some differences as well as some similarities in their career aspirations. Similarly, there is observed some differences as well as similarities in their educational and occupational career aspirations along the axis of their caste, caste and gender. Hence, it can be said that the second hypothesis of the present study is only partly valid.

Factors Influencing of Career Aspirations

Regarding factors the third hypothesis of the study says, "**Parental socio-economic status of students influences their career aspirations much more than other factors**". In this connection, the main findings of the study relate to the influence of socio-economic background, caste, class, gender and fathers' occupation on both educational and occupational career aspirations of the students of the two universities; and also relate to motivators of the students for choosing educational and occupational career, such as self, parents, family members, neighbours, relatives, friends, teachers, educational institutions, famous personality, and parental ways of giving motivation.

i) Regarding the broad question of the factors that influence educational career aspirations of the students, the majority of students (65.4%), out of total 283 students, opine that parental socio-economic status influences their educational career aspirations more positively than other factors. But their opinion across caste/category line varies in this connection: the proportion being about 65%, 54%, 50% and 79% respectively in case of

students from the General, SC, ST and OBC categories. Only about 35% of the total students say that other factors influence their educational career aspirations more positively. ii) The majority of the total students (54%) are self-motivated in choosing their educational career, but here the proportion of students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories students is about 50%, 63%, nil and 59% respectively. Secondly, those who are motivated by their family in choosing their educational career, the proportion of students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories students is about 29%, 17%, 50% and 22% respectively. The proportion of those who have been influenced by their relatives, friends, teachers, educational institution, and famous personality, ranges between about 2% to 5% only, with some variation across caste lines. iii) One-third (about 34%) of the total students are motivated/influenced by their father in choosing their educational career, but here the proportion of students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories students is about 36%, 24%, nil and 34% respectively. About 18% of the total students are influence/motivated by their mother in choosing their educational career; but here the proportion of students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories students is about 19%, 20%, 50% and 14% respectively. The proportion of students who are influenced by their brothers and sisters, is about 12% and 9% respectively, with variation across caste lines. iii) The students are influenced by their family members in various ways for choosing their educational career. For instance: Around 34% of the total students are motivated/influenced by their family members by getting emotional support; but here the proportion of students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories students is about 37%, 22%, 100% and 32% respectively. Moreover, about 26% of the total students get motivated in choosing their educational career by the financial support given to them by their family members; but here the proportion of students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories students is about 23%, 34%, nil and 29% respectively. About 14% (each) of total students are motivated/influenced by their family members through getting relevant information and through discussion; but the category-wise proportion of students varies in this connection as well. About 27% of the total students are motivated/influenced by their cousins in choosing their educational career and their proportion here is almost equal across caste/categories. About 22% of the total students are motivated/influenced by their uncle/aunt; but here their proportion ranges between 50% in the ST category to only 17% in SC category. Around 10% of the total students are motivated/influenced by their grandfather/mother, with marginal difference in their proportion across caste/categories. iv) Over one-third (38.5%) of the total students are influenced/motivated by several factors at their school level in choosing their

educational career; with significant variation in their proportion across caste/categories (General- 41.3%, SC- 49%, ST- nil, OBC- 29.4%). Similarly, over one-third (36.4%) of the total students are influenced/motivated by several factors at their university level in choosing their educational career; with significant variation in their proportion across caste/categories (General- 32.3%, SC- 31.7%, ST- 50%, OBC- 45.9%). But at the college level, only about 16% of the total students are motivated/influenced in choosing their educational career, with significant variation across caste/categories (General- 17.4%, SC- 9.8%, ST- 50%, OBC- 17%). v) Only 4.9% of the total students say their caste has negative influence on their educational career, which has some variation across categories (General- 5.2%, SC- 9.8%, st-nil, OBC- 2.4%).

Further, there is seen differences across caste/category line regarding occupational/professional career choice/aspirations of the students. i) The majority of the total students (65.7%) say they are motivated/influenced positively more by their parental socio-economic status; but there is variation in their response here across caste/categories (the proportion of students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories being about 64%, 56%, 50% and 74% respectively). Secondly, about 34% of the total students opine that other factors influence their occupational/professional aspirations more positively (the proportion of students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories being about 36%, 44%, 50% and 26% respectively). ii) Almost half of the total students (49.1%) are self-motivated in choosing their occupational/professional career; but there is small difference across caste/category line: the proportion of students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories being about 46%, 54%, nil and 53% respectively. Secondly, about 31% of the total students are influenced by their parents in choosing their occupational/professional career; but there is significant difference across caste/category line: the proportion of students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories being about 32%, 20%, 50% and 29% respectively. The proportion of students influenced by their relatives, friends, teachers, educational institution, and famous personality ranges between 1.4% to 4.2% only. None of them is influenced by their neighbours in this connection. ii) Among family members, the majority of the total students (58%) are positively motivated/influenced by their parents in choosing their occupational/professional career; but there is significant difference across caste line: the proportion of students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories being about 63%, 49%, 50% and 53% respectively. Among the parents, the proportion of students who are motivated/influenced more by their father in ccaste choosing their occupational/professional career, is about 50% of the total, with small variation across caste

line. In contrast, only about 28% of the total students are motivated/influenced by their mother, with significant variation across caste line. The proportion of students who are motivated/influenced by their brother and sister in this regard is 17% and 9% respectively of the total students, with some variation across caste line. About 28% of the total students are motivated/influenced by their cousins in this regard, with some variation across caste line. The proportion of students who are influenced by their uncle/aunt in this connection is almost equal (about 16%) across all castes, excepting ST students (nil). The proportion of those who are influenced by their grandparents is about 12% of the total, with significant variation across caste-categories.

Further, there is observed some difference and similarity along gender line regarding the factors that influence the career aspirations of students. i) The majority of the total students (65.4%) hold that their parental socio-economic status influences their educational career aspirations/choices positively more than other factors; and here the proportion of male students and female students is almost equal, i.e. about 65% and 66% respectively. In contrast, about 34% of both male and female students opine that other factors influence their educational aspirations more positively. ii) Secondly, about 59% of male students and 50% of female students are self-motivated in choosing their educational career. About 21% of the male students and 30% of the female students are influenced by their family in choosing their educational career. The proportion of students who are influenced by their relatives, friends, teachers, and famous personality ranges between about 2% to 5% only, with some minor variation across gender. iii) Among parents, about one-third (34%) of the total students are influenced by their father in choosing their educational career; but here the proportion of male and female students is about 38% and 29% respectively. Moreover, about 18% of male students and 17% of female students are influenced by their mother in this connection; their proportion is almost equal here, but it is less than the father's influence. iv) About 33% of male students and 35% of female students get emotional support by their family members in choosing their educational career, which shows marginal difference. But the proportion of male students is about 32% and of female students 20% who get financial support from their family members in choosing their educational career, which reflect significant difference along gender line. v) Only about 5% of both male and female students say that their caste has negative influence on their educational career.

i) As regards parental socio-economic status positively influencing more the occupational/professional career aspirations of students, the proportion of male and female students is about 68% and 64% respectively. In contrast, about 32% male students and 36%

female students think that other factors have more positive influence in this connection. ii) About half of the total students (49%) are self-motivated in choosing their occupational career, but here the proportion of male students is higher (at 55%) than the female students (44%). The influence of parents is higher on the female students (34%) while choosing their occupational/professional career than on the male students (28%). In this connection, the influence of relatives, friends, teachers, and famous personality on both the male and female students ranges between 1.4% to 4.2% only, with some variation across gender. iii) The proportion of male students who are influenced by their family members in choosing their occupational/professional career is higher at 62% than the female students (54%). Among parents, almost equal proportion of male and students and female students (about 50% each) are influenced by their father in choosing their occupational/professional career. Same is the case regarding both male and female students influenced by their mother in this regard (about 28% each); but this proportion is much lower than in case of the influence of father. iv) Almost equal proportion of male and female students (34% each) are motivated by their parents through getting emotional support in choosing their occupational/professional career. Similarly, almost equal proportion of male and female students (about 22% each) are motivated by their parents through financial support in choosing their occupational/professional career. v) Only about 8% male students and 5% female students say that their caste has most negative influence in choosing their occupational/professional career.

There is found some differences and similarities regarding the influence of class factor on the students in choosing their educational career. For instance: i) The proportion of those who hold that parental socio-economic status has more positive influence in choosing educational career is about 55%, 66%, 69% and 63% among the students belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. But the proportion of those who hold that other factors have more positive influence in choosing educational career is about 45%, 34%, 31% and 38% among the students belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. ii) The proportion of those who are self-motivated in choosing their educational career is about 55%, 56%, 50% and 50% among the students belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. And the proportion of those who are motivated/influenced by their family in choosing their educational career is about 16%, 28%, 29% and nil among the students belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. iii) There is significant difference in the influence of father on the students' educational career choice, the proportion

being about 18%, 41%, 29% and 13% among the students belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. The trend regarding mother's influence is similar, the proportion being about 27%, 14%, 21% and 13% among the students belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. The trend is unequal regarding the influence of brother and sister on the students' educational career choice, though quantitatively it is much less than the influence of parents. iv) There is some difference across class in terms of emotional support given to the students by their parents in choosing their educational career, the proportion being about 37%, 32%, 38% and 38% respectively among the students belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. But there is significant difference in terms of financial support given to the students by their parents in choosing their educational career: the proportion being about 16%, 21%, 26% and 38% respectively among the students belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class. v) The proportion of students who say their caste has negative influence over their educational career is very small: the proportion being about 5%, 4%, 8% and 5% respectively among the students belonging to upper class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class and lower class.

Regarding occupational/professional aspirations/choices of students also, there is observed some differences and similarities in related factors across their class background. For example: i) About 66% of the total students opine that parental socio-economic status have more influence on their occupational/professional choices, here the proportion is about 58%, 65%, 79% and 36% among students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories. And among 34.3% of students who opine that other factors have more influence on their occupational/professional choices, the proportion is about 42%, 35%, 26% and 63% among students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories. ii) About 49% of students who are self-motivated in making their occupational/professional choices, the proportion is about 40%, 51%, 48% and 63% among students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories. And 32% students who are influenced by their parents in making their occupational/professional choices, the proportion is about 29%, 32%, 30% and 13% among students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories. iii) About 50% of the total students are influenced by their father in making their occupational/professional choices, here the proportion is about 40%, 56%, 45% and 36% among students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories. And 28% students who are influenced by their mother in making their occupational/professional choices, the proportion is about 29%, 27%, 31% and 38% respectively among students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC

categories. About 11% students are not influenced by their father or mother, and the same proportion of students do not know whether they have been influenced by their mother or father in this connection. iv) About 35% of the total students are motivated by their parents through getting their emotional support in making their occupational/professional choices, and here the proportion is about 37%, 32%, 38% and 38% respectively among the students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories. About 22% students are motivated by their parents through getting their financial support in making their occupational/professional choices, and here the proportion is about 16%, 21%, 26% and 38% respectively among the students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories. v) Only about 6% students say caste has the most negative influence on their occupational/professional aspirations/choices, and here the proportion is about 8%, 6%, 8% and nil respectively among the students belonging to the General, SC, ST and OBC categories.

Further, there is observed some differences and similarities regarding career aspirations/choices of the students on the basis of their father's occupation. For instance: Of about 65% of the total students who opine that parental socio-economic status has more positive influence on their educational choices/aspirations, the proportion is about 60%, 71%, 70%, 50% and 75% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. And of about 35% students who opine that other factors have more positive influence on their educational choices/aspirations, the proportion is about 40%, 29%, 29%, 50% and 38% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. ii) Of about 54% of the total students who are self-motivated in making their educational/academic choices, the proportion is about 55%, 48%, 57%, 50% and 58% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. And of about 25% students who influenced by their family in making their educational choices, the proportion is about 26%, 26%, 27%, 50% and 18% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. iii) Of about 34% of the total students who are influenced by their father in their educational choices/aspirations, the proportion is about 40%, 36%, 30%, 25% and 25% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. And of about 18% students who are influenced by their mother in their educational aspirations, the proportion is about 16%, 16%, 14%, nil and 35% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. Those who are influenced by their brothers and sisters in this connection,

their proportion is about 12% and 9% only of the total students, with some variation across their father's occupation. iv) Of about 40% of the total students whose educational career choices are influenced by emotional support given to them by their parents, the proportion is about 24%, 44%, 38%, 50% and 35% among the students whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture respectively. And of about 26% students whose educational career choices are influenced by financial support given to them by their parents, the proportion is about 25%, 23%, 23%, 25% and 43% among the students whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture respectively. About 14% students each are influenced in making their educational career choices by the information given to them by their family members and through having discussion, with some variation across their father's occupation. v) Of about 4% of the total students who say their caste has negative influence on their educational aspirations, the proportion is about 4%, 7%, 4%, nil and 8% among the students whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture respectively.

Further, there is also seen some differences and similarities regarding occupational aspirations/choices of students on the basis of their father's occupations. For example: Of about 66% of the total students who opine that parental socio-economic status has more positive influence on their occupational/professional choices/aspirations, the proportion is about 60%, 68%, 72%, 50% and 68% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. And of about 34% students who opine that other factors have more positive influence on their educational choices/aspirations, the proportion is about 40%, 32%, 28%, 50% and 33% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. ii) Of about 49% of the total students who are self-motivated in making their occupational/professional choices, the proportion is about 49%, 50%, 49%, 25% and 55% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. And of about 31% students who influenced by their parents in making their occupational/professional choices, the proportion is about 29%, 29%, 35%, 75% and 20% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. iii) Of about 50% of the total students who are influenced by their father in their occupational/professional choices, the proportion is about 53%, 47%, 50%, 75% and 45% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. And of about 28% students who are influenced by their mother in their educational aspirations, the proportion is about

25%, 31%, 32%, 25 and 25% respectively among those whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture. Those who are influenced by their brothers and sisters in this connection, the proportion is about 17% and 9% only of the total students, with some variation across their father's occupation. iv) Of about 35% of the total students whose occupational/professional career choices are influenced by emotional support given to them by their parents, the proportion is about 30%, 48%, 32%, 50% and 28% among the students whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture respectively. And of about 22% students whose occupational/professional career choices are influenced by financial support given to them by their parents, the proportion is about 17%, 19%, 27%, 25% and 33% among the students whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture respectively. About 12% and 14% students are influenced in making their occupational/professional career choices by the information given to them by their family members and through having discussion respectively, with some variation across their father's occupation. v) Of about 6% of the total students who say their caste has negative influence on their occupational/professional aspirations, the proportion is about 7%, 10%, 7%, nil and nil among the students whose father's occupation was government job, private job, business, labour and agriculture respectively.

The description of individual cases of the students given in Chapter 5 show broadly similar trends.

So, as per the above findings, there is observed differences in the opinion of students regarding the factors that influence their educational and occupational/professional career aspirations/choices. It emerges that in the opinion of majority of the students (about 65%) their parental socio-economic status has more positive influence on their educational as well occupational/professional career aspirations/choices; but about one-third (34%) students say that other factors have more positive influence on their educational as well occupational/professional career aspirations/choices. Moreover, there is observed some differences and similarities in terms of influence of the factors of caste, class, gender and father's occupation on the educational and occupational career aspirations/choices of the students. Hence, the third hypothesis of the study is found only largely valid.

Finally, it can be concluded that educational and occupational career aspirations/choices of the students are influenced by sociological factors like caste, class, gender and father's occupation of the students as well as psychological factors like their self-

motivation. And the influence of parental socio-economic status on their educational and occupational/professional career aspirations/choices is higher than other factors.