



## Educational Aspirations among the Students of Manipur University, India

Martina Meinam<sup>1,2\*</sup>, Sekhar Nath Ojha<sup>1</sup>, Yumlembam Jackie Singh<sup>2</sup>, Biswajit Lahiri<sup>2</sup> and Teresa Meinam<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>ICAR, Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Mumbai-400061, Maharashtra, India

<sup>2</sup>College of Fisheries, CAU (Imphal), Lembucherra, Tripura-799210, Imphal, India

<sup>3</sup>Manipur University, Imphal West, Manipur-795003, Imphal, India

\*Corresponding author email id: martinameinam3@gmail.com

### ARTICLE INFO

**Keywords:** Students Aspirations, Education, Career, Manipur

<http://doi.org/10.48165/IJEE.2023.59416>

**Conflict of Interest:** None

**Research ethics statement(s):**

Informed consent of the participants

### ABSTRACT

Educational aspirations provide students valuable insights that can inform educational policies, improve career guidance, promote equitable opportunities leading to better educational outcomes, and increase success in students' future careers. This study examined the educational aspirations of students in 2021 at Manipur University, India. A structured interview schedule was designed, and data were collected from 160 students through stratified random sampling from five Schools of studies of the postgraduate students of the University. Students in the School of Human and Environmental Sciences showed the highest Achievement Likelihood of Educational Aspiration Index (ALEAI). Study reveals that the majority of the students wanted to pursue higher education. Students' primary career advice was found to be their interests. Students were also motivated about their career choice mainly by their parents' support, followed by the influence of TV, radio, social media, and other media. Students should also be encouraged and empowered to decide on and stand for their right career. The study suggests that it is necessary to review the influences, programmes, and different factors affecting students at all stages of their education.

### INTRODUCTION

Students are the most promising segment of the population of a nation and their nourishment determines the development of the community and nation as a whole. Study suggests that about 70 per cent of young people are optimistic about their career prospects worldwide (Anonymous, 2017). Any person's achievement is mostly motivated by their aspirations. Many times, lower/ weaker ambitions are cited as one of the causes of anyone's inferior accomplishment, especially in children (Hari et al., 2022). Ambition is a form of self-development, and individual performance is affected by a desire to do well (Mali et al., 2015). It indicates what a person wants to be in his future life, irrespective of the limitations imposed by reality. Khanna (2009) defined aspiration as the fantasy of an individual regarding a future occupation or settlement. The ability to set goals and then pursue these goals

is sometimes referred to by educators as students' aspiration Ahmed et al., (2017). Schaefer and Meece (2009), opined that young people's goals have a significant impact on their life decisions. Academic aspiration refers to how realistically a person sets educational goals given their physical and mental attributes as well as their environment. Educational ambitions, which are sometimes characterized as idealistic or practical, are said to pertain to students' aims and plans within an academic context (Chow et al., 2012). The educational purposes that an individual sets for himself differ from one individual to another due to different factors can significantly influence how students want to pursue their education (Ghosh et al., 2021). Youth unemployment is a global concern, attributed among other things to a lack of appropriate skills. It has been determined that education that is skill-focused is an effective way to address the gap (Lekang et al., 2016; Modak et al., 2018). However, studying educational aspirations among

students provides valuable insights that can inform educational policies, improve career guidance services, and promote equitable opportunities, leading to better educational outcomes and increased success in students' future careers. National Education Policy, 2020 is a progressive shift towards a more scientific approach to education and if it is enforced in its true vision, the new education structure can be brought which aim to develop creative potential, skills, and analytical thinking which will be the need in the global job market (Arun et al., 2020).

Integrated modes of learning, which combine education with connections to business, hands-on learning, and the building of social capital in the entrepreneurial field (Lekang et al., 2017), appear to have an impact on how students evaluate, perceive, and make decisions about the field of possibilities as well as the direction of their lives after graduation (Yuan & Olivos, 2023). The study was carried during 2020–2021 to analyze the educational aspirations of the students of Manipur University. According to the 2011 population census, the total literacy rate of Manipur is 76.94 per cent, the number of unemployed youths in Manipur was 3,46,690 in 2018, which was registered in the state employment exchange as per records of the Directorate of Labour and Employment, and the Human Development Index (HDI) rank of Manipur is 15th (0.696).

## METHODOLOGY

Manipur, a state in north east India, was purposefully selected due to the convenience of data collection and ease of communication with the respondents. Manipur University, being the main University of the state, was selected for the study as it has diverse group of students from different backgrounds. Primary data was collected from 160 Post Graduate Students of Manipur University using stratified random sampling methods from five Schools of studies, i.e., the School of Humanities (n=30), the School of Human and Environmental Sciences (n=30), the School of Social Sciences (n=50), the School of Life Sciences (n=24), and the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences (n=26), through a semi-structured interview schedule.

Educational aspirations were measured using the Achievement Likelihood of Educational Aspiration Index (ALEAI) which was adopted by Haller & Miller (1963) and Bhanu (2006) were used with slight modification to find out the level of attainment among the students. Normalisation and the average score of confidence were used to find out the ALEAI. After normalisation, based on the respective ALEAI, scores between the ranges of 0 and 0.33 were regarded as low; scores between the ranges of above 0.33 and 0.67 were regarded as medium; and scores higher than 0.67 were regarded as high. The Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis test were used to find relationships among different variables.

**Table 1.** Students continuing higher studies

Response	Hum (n=30)	H&Env Sc. (n=30)	S Sc. (n=50)	L Sc. (n=24)	M&PhySc. (n=26)	Total (n=160)
No	13.3	26.7	30	20	15.4	21.08
Yes	86.7	73.3	70	80	84.6	78.92

Hum- School of Humanities, H&Env Sc.- School of Human and Environmental, S Sc.- School of Social Sciences, L Sc.- School of Life Sciences, M&PhySc.- School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Educational aspirations of students

From Table 1, it was found that the majority of the students (78.92%) wanted to pursue higher studies. The results showed that most respondents had aspirations towards higher education among different schools of studies: The School of Humanities (86.70%), the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences (84.6%), the School of Life Sciences (80%), the School of Human and Environmental Sciences (73.3%), and the School of Social Sciences (70%). The reason being that students compete for higher job opportunities; higher studies indicate higher job opportunities. Moreover, some students also wanted to continue their studies due to family pressure and to gain higher social status. Currently, the majority of the students are encouraged by their parents to study. Students were attracted to several good career opportunities in a competitive world that demands higher educational qualifications.

Students were asked on the reasons for wanting to continue or discontinue education/pursuing higher studies, which is listed in Table 2. The majority of the youth were continuing their education to acquire a better career. Nowadays, youths are well aware of the importance of education. Some of the reasons were that they plan to study further because they like studying; higher studies would help improve their social status; and they feel higher studies would provide more and better job opportunities. A few reasons for students wanting to discontinue their studies due to their financial problems and family responsibilities: they are not interested in studying further; they have no financial support to pursue further studies; they are confident of their own capabilities and can do well in jobs without further education. Lekang et al., (2016) found out that a few students did not want to continue their studies because they were not interested in studying further and family responsibilities also make them work in order to support them.

From Table 3, it was found that parents support for education seems high for all five 'Schools of Study'. Jungen (2008) stated that students' educational choices had a big influence on their kids' job decisions He also revealed that work ethics, family values, and gender stereotypes have been demonstrated to significantly influence employment choice. Relationships between different 'Schools of Studies' with different demographic variables, viz. Gender (Male, Female); Caste (UR, OBC, SC, ST); Year (1st Year, Final Year); Family type (Joint, Nuclear); Family size (5 or <5, >5); and family occupation (Farming & Allied Activities, Government Service, Private Service, Business), were presented in Table 4 with all five 'Schools of Studies'.

### School of humanities

It was found that females had more intent on continuing their studies in the School of Humanities. Different variables like caste, family, occupation, and family type show no significant difference

**Table 2.** Reasons for continuing or discontinuing education/pursuing higher studies

Statement / Questions	Response (%)	Hum (n=26)	H & EnvSc (n=22)	S.Sc (n=35)	L.Sc (n=24)	M & Phy.Sc (n=22)
<b>Reasons for continuation of studies/ pursuing higher studies</b>						
I plan to study further because I like studying	DA	10.3	33.3	15.4	-	15
	NAND	10.3	4.2	7.7	-	25
	AG	80.2	62.5	76.9	100	60
I have to study due to my family's pressure	DA	69	62.5	53.9	100	95
	NAND	13.8	25.0	7.7	-	-
	AG	17.2	12.5	38.4	-	5
Higher studies would help improve my social status	DA	6.8	20.8	26.9	18.8	5
	NAND	20.7	16.7	-	12.5	10
	AG	72.4	62.5	73.1	68.8	85
I am opting for studies as I have no other better options to do	DA	65.5	62.5	50	93.8	70
	NAND	20.7	20.8	23.1	6.3	10
	AG	13.8	16.7	26.9	-	20
I feel higher studies would provide more and better job opportunities	DA	27.6	20.8	3.8	-	-
	NAND	20.7	16.7	-	-	40
	AG	57.7	62.5	96.1	100	60
<b>Reasons for discontinuation of studies/ pursuing higher studies</b>						
I am not interested in studies/ any further	DA	40	85.7	40	44.4	-
	NAND	30	14.3	20	22.2	50
	AG	30	-	40	33.3	50
No financial support to pursue further studies	DA	100	85.7	80	88.9	75
	NAND	-	14.3	-	-	25
	AG	-	-	20	11.1	-
There are no good schools/colleges in the nearby locality	DA	-	14.3	-	33.3	50
	NAND	25	71.4	30	66.7	20
	AG	75	14.3	70	-	30
Hardly anyone in our community study further	DA	-	42.9	50	11.1	-
	NAND	50	28.6	20	22.2	-
	AG	50	28.6	30	66.7	100
I am confident of my capabilities now and can do well in my job without further education	DA	75	42.9	10	30	50
	NAND	25	28.6	20	30	50
	AG	-	28.6	70	40	-

D-Disagree; NAND-Neither agree nor disagree; A-Agree

**Table 3.** Parents support to education

Parents support education (n=160)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Humanities	73	27
Human and Environmental Sciences	77	23
Social Sciences	57	43
Life Sciences	65	35
Mathematical and Physical Sciences	71	29

with continuing studies. Howard, 2003 also confirms that female students showed higher educational ambitions than male students.

**Human and environmental sciences**

Males had more intent on continuing their studies, and students of joint family type show a significantly higher interest in continuing their studies in the School of Human and Environmental Sciences. Other variables like caste, family occupation, and family type show no significant difference, indicating interest in further studies.

**Table 4.** Relationship between different School of Studies with different variables

Educational aspiration		Mean Rank	p-value
School of Humanities (n=30)	Male	12.21	0.037*
	Female	18.60	
Human & Environmental Sciences (n=30)	Male	18.87	0.036*
	Female	12.13	
	Joint	14.50	0.047*
	Nuclear	8.79	
Life Sciences (n=24)	Farming & Allied Activities	4.83	0.039*
	Service (Government)	7.00	
	Service (Private)	19.50	
	Business	6.20	

\*p= p<0.05 there is a significant difference

### School of life sciences

Students whose family member works in the private sector are more intent on continuing their studies in the School of Life Sciences. The reasons include family pressure, social status, and the fact that higher studies mean higher job opportunities.

### School of social sciences

A significant difference was not found in any of the variables, which means they are more or less similar with reference to continuing the studies.

### School of mathematical and physical sciences

In the School of Social Sciences, significant differences were also not found in any of the variables, which mean they were more or less similar with reference to continuing the studies.

Relationship among different demographic variables and all the other variables taken for the study viz. Gender (Male, Female); Caste (UR, OBC, SC, ST); Year (1st Year, Final Year); Family type (Joint, Nuclear); Family size (5 or <5, >5); Family occupation (Farming & Allied Activities, Government Service, Private Service, Business) were presented in Table 5. It demonstrates that students with working family members have much greater educational aspirations than students with working family members in the business sector. This suggests that students with family members who are employed in the private sector were more motivated to pursue their education since more education equals more employment chances. Moreover, they want to continue their studies due to family pressure and for higher social status also. There is more or less similarity in educational aspirations among students with other variables, viz., Gender (Male, Female); Caste (UR, OBC, SC, ST); Year (1st Year, Final Year); Family type (Joint, Nuclear); Family size (5 or <5, >5).

Different findings suggest that family education status, sex, annual family income, landholding size, and academic performance were positively correlated with aspiration (Daundkar et al., 2011). Makkar (2010) found that urban students have higher educational aspirations than students in rural areas. Daundkar et al., (2011) found that lower socioeconomic status is associated with bigger

**Table 5.** Overall educational aspiration among all the students with different variables

Educational aspiration (n=160)	Mean rank	p-value
Farming and allied activities	22.42	
Service (Government)	35.17	0.049*
Service (Private)	54.06	
Business	34.97	

\*p= p<0.05 there is a significant difference

**Table 6.** Achievement likelihood of educational aspiration index (ALEAI)

ALEA-Index	Hum (n=26)	H&Env Sc. (n=22)	S Sc. (n=35)	L. Sc. (n=24)	M&Phy.Sc (n=22)
Low (<0.33)	14	20	8	2	18
Medium (0.33-0.66)	38	26	36	13	25
High (>0.66)	48	54	56	85	57
Mean score	0.648	0.76	0.716	0.75	0.644
Overall mean score	0.703				

goal disparities, or the distance between aspiration and performance, than higher socioeconomic status. Tiwary (1995) stated a tremendously significant difference in the level of aspiration of the different community categories, i.e., lower category people was superior in educational aspirations and upper category people were inferior to all. Positive correlations between participation outside of school and inside of it have been discovered by researchers. A high level of competition and a dearth of decent employment put individuals under strain. Numerous elements, such as attitude, interests, ambition, familial influences, and financial considerations, might affect a person's decision to pursue a career (Ojha, 2015 & Burns et al., 2023). Agricultural students have some plans to settle down in specific career after getting degree. Majority of the students aspired to settle themselves in suitable positions in any government departments. Remaining students were found to be interested in starting their own farms, expressed their desire to earn an income of more than Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1,00,000 per month (Arunachalam et al., 2020).

From Table 6, it was found that the ALEA index among different students in the school of studies falls at a medium or high level of ALEAI. The overall average mean Achievement Likelihood of Educational Aspiration Index (ALEAI) is 0.7, which depicts that students in general are likely to have high confidence in attaining educational aspirations and are more positive towards education and continuing studies. Bakar et al., (2002) stated that the most of the students felt confident in obtaining an area for further educational instruction or information. Moreover, a significant difference was not found between Schools of Studies or between any of the variables towards Achievement Likelihood of Educational Aspiration (ALEA), i.e., students across streams have been more or less similarly positioned with reference to the likelihood of attaining their aspirations. Hari et al., (2022) also stated that aspiration is one of key factor influencing the youth's educational preference and, hence, should be examined in conjunction with other factors to allow more logical and scientific approaches.

### CONCLUSION

A primary reason for continuing their studies is that they plan to study further because they aspire to do so. A majority of the students preferred a government job as their primary career aspiration. Job security is the major factor determining whether students across streams are more or less similarly positioned concerning the likelihood of attaining their aspirations. Understanding educational Education among students is important for understanding students' motivation and guiding educational planning. Addressing achievement gaps, career guidance, and counseling will help enhance student outcomes in achieving their educational goals. Studying the educational aspirations of students is essential for shaping effective educational

policies, providing appropriate guidance, and fostering a more inclusive and supportive education system. By understanding students' goals and challenges, academics and policymakers can work together to create an environment where all students can thrive and reach their full potential.

### REFERENCES

- Ahmed, J. (1998). Achievement motivation differences among adolescent boys and girls of various ordinal birth position. *Indian Psychological Review*, 50, 2-5.
- Anonymous. (2017). *Pathways to progress global youth survey*. Available at: <https://www.ipsos.com/en/pathways-progress-global-youth-survey-2017-economic-prospects-expectations>.
- Arun, D. P., Malik, J. S., & Shelar, R. (2022). Perceived challenges of National Education Policy, 2020 by the Students. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 58(2), 73-76.
- Arunachalam, R., Shri, K. P. S., & Sasmitha, R. (2020). An analysis of the aspirations of undergraduate agricultural students. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 56(4), 14-18.
- Bakar, A. R., & Mohamed, S. (2004). Academic performance, educational and occupational aspirations of technical secondary school students. *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 12(1), 31-43.
- Bhanu, V. L. (2006). Study on aspirations of rural youth and their attitude towards rural developmental activities in Dharwad district of Karnataka state. *M.Sc.(Ag.) Thesis. University of Agriculture Sciences, Dharwad*.
- Burns, E. C., Martin, A. J., Kennett, R., Pearson, J., & Munro Smith, V. (2023). High school students' out of school science participation: A latent class analysis and unique associations with science aspirations and achievement. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 60(3), 451-483.
- Chow, A., Eccles, J. S., & Salmela-Aro, K. (2012). Task value profiles across subjects and aspirations to physical and IT-related sciences in the United States and Finland. *Developmental Psychology*, 48(6), 1612.
- Daundkar, T. N., Gohad, V. V., & Andhalkar, G. K. (2011). Aspiration of students attending agriculture as vocational subject in higher secondary. *Advance Research Journal of Social Science*, 2(1), 134-135.
- Ghosh, A., Debnath, R., Lahiri, B., Debbarma, S. P., Shil, B., & Pandey, P. K. (2021). Fisheries education for tribal communities: A transect from Tripura. *Journal of Crop and Weed*, 17(2), 183-188.
- Haller, A. O., & Miller, I. W. (1963). The Occupational aspiration scale theory, structure and correlates. *American Journal of Sociology*, 79(4), 1031-1032.
- Hari, R., Chander, M., & Sharma, N. K. (2022). Comparison of educational and occupational aspirations of rural youth from farming families of Kerala and Rajasthan. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 49(1&2), 57-59.
- Howard, T. C. (2003). A tug of war for our minds: African American high school students' perceptions of their academic identities and college aspirations. *The High School Journal*, 87(1), 4-17.
- Lekang, B., Nain, M. S., Singh, R., & Sharma, J. P. (2016). Perceived utility of experiential learning programme of Indian Council of Agricultural Research. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 86(12), 1536-1546.
- Lekang, B., Nain, M. S., Singh, R., Sharma, J. P., & Singh, D. R. (2017). Factors influencing the utility of experiential learning programme of Indian Council of Agricultural Research. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 87(3), 325-336.
- Mali, M. D., Tekale, V. S., & Shaikh, J. I. (2015). Relationship between aspirations and personal, socio-economic and psychological characteristics of rural youth and constraints faced by rural youth towards self-development. *Agriculture Update*, 10(2), 100-104.
- Modak, S., Patel, M. C., Pal, P. K., Das, L., & Nain, M. S. (2018). A study of entrepreneurial competencies of Post graduate students in Agriculture. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 88(9), 1391-1395.
- Ojha, P. K., & Ghadei, K. (2015). Factors determining extension education as a career. *Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development*, 7(11), 308-310.
- Schaefer, V. A., & Meece, J. L. (2009), April. Facing an uncertain future: Aspirations and achievement of rural youth. *Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, 32(9), 4-7.
- Yuan, X., & Olivos, F. (2023). Conformity or contrast? Simultaneous effect of grade mates and classmates on students' educational aspirations. *Social Science Research*, 114, 1-35.