

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Educational aspiration of high school children from single parent families

■ Sushmita B. Matti, Sunanda Itagi and Shreela B. Matti

SUMMARY

The recent increase in single parent families affecting the educational aspiration among children. The present paper examines the educational aspiration of high school children from single parent families of Dharwad taluk which was conducted during 2019-2020. A total of 240 children were selected from urban (n=120) and rural (n=120) areas of Dharwad taluk through purposive sampling technique. A self structured questionnaire was used to collect the demographic characteristics of children. Mazumdar Educational Aspiration Inventory (2004) was used to assess the educational aspiration among children. Socio-economic status scale by Aggarwal *et al.* (2005) was used to measure the socio-economic status of children. The study outcomes highlighted that, educational aspiration was significantly associated with locality of children. Urban children had high educational ambitions than rural children. Gender was associated significantly with educational ambitions in both areas. Age was not associated significantly with children in both the areas. Girls had high aspirations than boys in both urban and rural areas. Ordinal position was not associated significantly with educational aspiration of children in both areas. Study further showed that children residing status was associated significantly with educational ambitions of children in both regions indicating that children residing with their mothers had high educational aspirations than their counterparts. Socio-economic status showed significant difference with educational ambitions of children in both the regions which points out that children with poor socio-economic status had low educational aspiration than children with upper socio-economic status. The study showed that nearly 24 per cent of children need intervention programme to improve their educational attainment and ambitions.

Key Words : High school children, Educational aspiration, Single parent family

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Family plays an essential function in our society. It provides a grater space to the children to become a successful individual. A child success is greatly depends on the type of family he or she has grown up. Nevertheless, children are not the one who choose their own families but they has to accept if their family cannot meet their desires and unable to provide them with ample of opportunities. In modern era, family structure has changing drastically due to increase in migration, marriage demands, change in societal structure, awareness regarding divorce etc. Hence, children are growing up in different type of family structures such as cohabitating families, step-parent families, blended families and single parent families (Perales *et al.*, 2017).

Single parent families are the one in which a father or a mother take care of their children alone due to the absent of their spouse or partner. According to Pew Research Center Analysis of 2010-2018 census and survey data average rate of single parent families across global wide is 6.8 per cent. UK has the highest per cent (23%) of single parent families followed by US (21%) And Russia (18%) and India has about 5 per cent of single parent families (Kramer, 2019). Growing up in one-parent families negatively affects the overall development of children. Many studies have pointed out that children from lone-parent families lack in high educational attainment and expectations than children from intact families (Garg *et al.*, 2007; Jude and Abiola, 2011 and Ntumi *et al.*, 2016).

Educational aspiration plays a major role in facilitating and moulding the children aspirations, attainment and achievement. It promotes children to achieve high on academics and motivates them to aspire for higher education. Educational aspiration reflects educational goals an individual sets for himself or herself. Family structure has a great influence of children educational aspiration.

Children from two-parent families aspire for high educational aspiration than children from one-parent families. In intact families, parents are more engaged with their children, tries to understand their children situations, desires and also children gets more love and affection from their parents. This motivates the children to aspire for high education. On the other hand children in single parent families have low educational aspiration due to low parental capital, low educational status of parents and disturbed family structure. Parental low educational expectations and negligence towards children's education, less importance to their desires may

lead to have low educational aspirations among children from single parent families (Garg *et al.*, 2007; Park, 2008 and Wang and Ngal, 2011). Apart from this being single parents they might have experience mental disturbances. Due to more work pressure parents are unable to concentrate on their children education. Hence, it is important to understand the children level of educational aspiration to conduct coping strategies which help them to build their carrier.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Equal number of sample was selected from both urban (n=120) and rural (n=120) areas of Dharwad taluk. A total of 8 urban and 9 rural schools were selected for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the 13-16yrs of children from single parent families. Self structured questionnaire was used to collect the demographic characteristics of children such as age, ordinal position, children residing status, type of family, educational level of parents and socio-economic status. Socio-economic status scale by Aggrawal *et al.* (2005) was used to measure the socio-economic status of children. Mazumdar Educational Aspiration Inventory tool was used to assess the children level of educational aspiration. It consists of 55 items divided into 7 dimensions; 1. Past experience 2. Goal period-long term and short term 3. Efforts made and success achieved in the examination 4. Education desired for personal development 5. Level of education desired 6. Education desired for self satisfaction and 7. Quality of education desired. It's a 5-point likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Greater score indicates high educational aspiration among children. Its reliability was found to be 0.61. Chi square test was used to examine the association between demographic characteristics and educational aspiration of children. T-test was used to assess the significant difference between parents educational level and educational aspiration of children.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Represents the distribution of high school children from single parent families. Equal per cent of boys and girls were selected from both urban and rural areas. Equal proportion of children were found between the age group of 14-15yrs. While 32.5 per cent of children belong to 13-14yrs in urban area and 15-16yrs in rural area. Remaining 29.2 per cent of them belong to younger age group in rural area and older age group in urban

area. Majority of rural children (63.3%) and 56.7 per cent of urban children are later born. Majority (78.3%) of urban children and 72.5 per cent of rural children are residing with their mother. More than half of the urban children (68.3%) as well as rural children (62.5%) belong to nuclear family. More than half (53.9%) of the rural children and 46.1 per cent of urban children belongs to middle socio-economic status.

Fig. 1. Depicts the educational aspiration of high school children from single parent families. More than half (66.7%) of the rural children and 55.8 per cent of urban children aspired medium level of educational aspiration. Whereas, 34.2 per cent and 20 per cent of urban and rural children desired for high educational aspiration. Level of educational aspiration was significantly associated ($\chi^2=6.167$) with locality of children, where urban children have high educational

aspiration compared to their counterparts in rural area. This might be because, in rural area lack of availability of resources both at home and school, less exposure to the modern technologies, lack of parental motivation and negligence towards their children education, low parental education children aspired for low educational aspiration. Also children are not regular to the school and most of them are engaged in household activities leads to low educational aspiration among children in rural area.

Fig. 2. Represented the association between gender and educational aspiration of high school children from single parent families. Majority (73.3%) of rural boys and 63.3 per cent of urban boys desired medium level of educational aspiration. In case of girls, 60 per cent of rural girls and 48.3 per cent of urban girls showed medium level of educational aspiration. Whereas 45 per cent and

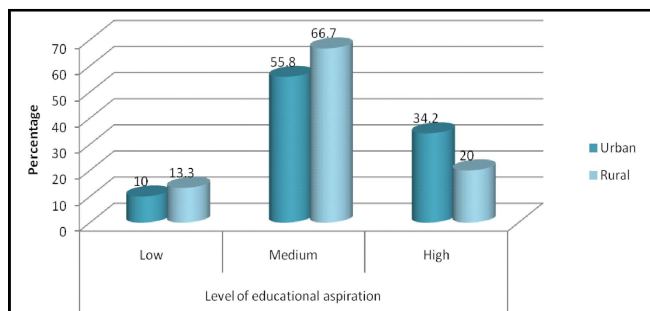


Fig. 1: Association between level of educational aspiration and locality of children from single parent families

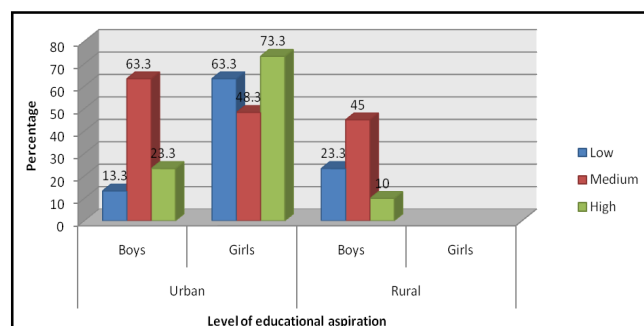


Fig. 2: Association between educational aspiration and gender of high school children from single parent families

Table 1: Distribution of demographic characteristics of high school children from single parent families on personal characteristics (n=240)

| Personal characteristics | Categories | Urban (n=120) | Rural (n=120) | Total |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| | | n (%) | n (%) | n (%) |
| Age (years) | 13-14 | 39 (32.5) | 35 (29.2) | 74 (30.8) |
| | 14-15 | 46 (38.3) | 46 (38.3) | 92 (38.3) |
| | 15-16 | 35 (29.2) | 39 (32.5) | 74 (30.8) |
| Ordinal position | First born | 52 (43.3) | 44 (36.7) | 96 (40) |
| | Later born | 68 (56.7) | 76 (63.3) | 144 (60) |
| | None | 10 (8.3) | 8 (6.7) | 18 (7.5) |
| Number of siblings | 1-3 | 103 (85.8) | 106 (88.3) | 209 (87) |
| | 4-6 | 7 (5.8) | 6 (5.0) | 13 (5.4) |
| Children residing status | With father | 26 (21.7) | 33 (27.5) | 59 (24.6) |
| | With mother | 94 (78.3) | 87 (72.5) | 181 (75.4) |
| Type of family | Joint | 38 (31.7) | 45 (37.5) | 89 (37.1) |
| | Nuclear | 82 (68.3) | 75 (62.5) | 151 (62.9) |
| Socio economic status | Upper middle | 5 (4.1) | 3 (2.5) | 8 (3.3) |
| | Lower middle | 60 (50) | 73 (60.8) | 133 (55.4) |
| | Poor | 55 (45.8) | 44 (36.7) | 99 (41.2) |

30 per cent of urban and rural girls desired for high educational aspiration. Gender was significantly associated with educational aspiration of children where girls have high educational aspiration than boys in both the regions. This might be because, girls are more studious, work hard, are regular to the school as compared to boys. Parents in single parent family structure pay more attention towards girls academics than boys. Similar outcomes were observed in Zeratsion *et al.* (2015) study, which indicated that boys aspired for low educational aspiration than girls in one-parent families, this is because boys change their aspirations from higher to lower levels.

Fig. 3 shows the difference between parental education and educational aspiration of high school children from single parent families. In urban area, the mean score of father's who completed education from 10th to graduation was 122.5±41.10 whereas in rural area the mean score of father's who possessed education

illiterates or just literates was 120.2±20.23. Father's education was not differed significantly with educational aspiration of children in both the areas. In case of mother's education, in urban area the mean score of mother's who possessed education from 10th pass to

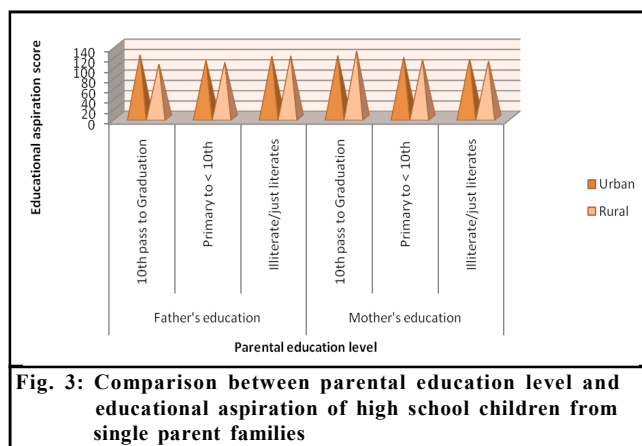


Fig. 3: Comparison between parental education level and educational aspiration of high school children from single parent families

Table 2 : Association between demographic characteristics and educational aspiration of high school children from single parent families (n=240)

| Personal characteristics | Educational aspiration Urban (n=120) | | | | Modified χ^2 value | Educational aspiration Rural (n=120) | | | | Modified χ^2 value | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| | Low n (%) | Medium n (%) | High n (%) | Total n (%) | | Low n (%) | Medium n (%) | High n (%) | Total n (%) | | |
| Age | 13-14 | 3 (7.7) | 22 (56.4) | 14 (35.9) | 39 (100) | 5 (14.3) | 23 (65.7) | 7 (20) | 35 (100) | 1.066 | |
| | | 14-15 | 4 (8.7) | 26 (56.5) | | 16 (34.8) | 46 (100) | 3 (6.5) | | | 35 (76.1) |
| | 15-16 | 5 (14.3) | 19 (54.3) | 11 (31.4) | 35 (100) | 8 (20.5) | 22 (56.4) | 9 (23.1) | 39 (100) | | |
| Ordinal position | First bom | 3 (5.8) | 30 (57.7) | 19 (36.5) | 52 (100) | 7 (15.9) | 30 (68.2) | 7 (15.9) | 44 (100) | 0.951 | |
| | later bom | 9 (13.2) | 37 (54.4) | 22 (32.4) | 68 (100) | 9 (11.8) | 50 (65.8) | 17 (22.4) | 76 (100) | | |
| Child residing status | Father | 6 (23.1) | 15 (57.7) | 5 (19.2) | 26 (100) | 3 (9.1) | 25 (75.8) | 5 (15.2) | 33 (100) | 7.864* | |
| | | Mother | 6 (6.4) | 52 (55.3) | 36 (38.3) | 94 (100) | 13 (14.9) | 55 (63.2) | 19 (21.8) | | 87 (100) |
| | Joint | 3 (7.9) | 20 (52.6) | 15 (39.5) | 38 (100) | 6 (13.3) | 29 (64.4) | 10 (22.2) | 45 (100) | | |
| Type of family | Nuclear | 9 (11) | 47 (57.3) | 26 (31.7) | 82 (100) | 10 (13.3) | 51 (68) | 14 (18.7) | 75 (100) | 0.807 | |
| | | Socioeconomic status | Upper | 2 (3.0) | 40 (61.5) | 23 (35.5) | 65 (100) | 8 (10.5) | 47 (61.8) | | 21 (27.7) |
| | Poor | 10 (18.2) | 27 (49.1) | 18 (32.7) | 55 (100) | 8 (18.2) | 33 (75) | 3 (6.8) | 44 (100) | | 7.984* |

* indicate significance of value at P=0.05

graduation was 120.5 ± 24.1 . In rural area the mean score of mother's who possessed education from 10th pass to graduation was 129.81 ± 45.56 , whereas the mean score of mother's who completed education from primary to less than 10th and who are illiterates or just literates were 112.8 ± 24.80 and 110.1 ± 26.52 , respectively. Mother's education was significantly differed with educational aspiration of children in rural area ($t=3.322$) but not in urban area. Due to low educational level and poor socio-economic status of mother's in rural area they work in low paid jobs and unable to fulfill their children educational needs. Due to lack of educational awareness among rural mother's they doesn't involve in their children educational activities leads to poor educational aspiration among children.

Table 2 highlighted the association between demographic characteristics and educational aspiration of high school children from single parent families. In urban area, more than half (56.5%) of the children belong to 14-15 yrs age group showed medium educational aspiration whereas 35.9 per cent of children belong to 13-14yrs fell under high educational aspiration. In rural area, 76.1 per cent of children belong to 14-15yrs had medium educational aspiration whereas 23.1 per cent of children belong to 15-16yrs showed high educational aspiration. Age was not associated significantly with educational aspiration of children from single parent families in both regions.

In rural area, more than half (68.8%) of the later born children and 65.2 per cent of first born children showed medium educational aspiration, whereas 22.4 percent of later born children desired for high educational aspiration. In urban area, 57.7 per cent of first born children and 54.4 per cent of later born children aspired for medium educational aspiration. There was not significant association found between educational aspiration and ordinal position of children in both the areas.

In urban area 38.3 per cent of children residing with their mother showed high educational aspiration whereas, 23.1 per cent of children residing with their father desired for low educational aspiration. Among rural children 75.8 per cent of children residing with their father aspired for medium educational aspiration whereas 21.8 per cent of children residing with their mother aspired for high educational aspiration. Educational aspiration was significantly associated with children residing status in urban area ($\chi^2=7.864$) but not in case of rural area. This highlights that, children residing with their mother had

high educational aspiration than their counterparts. This might be because mothers have better understanding of their children educational desires and interact more with their children, where fathers in single parent families engaged more in occupational work and lack of interaction with their children are unable to focus on their children educational desires. Similar results were found in Park (2008) study which showed that children from mother-only families had high educational aspiration than children from father-only families.

Regarding type of family, in rural area majority (68%) of children from nuclear family and 64.4 per cent of children from joint family aspired for medium educational aspiration. Similar trend was observed in urban area. Type of family was not significantly associated with educational aspiration of high school children from single parent family.

Pertaining to socio-economic status, in urban area 61.5 per cent of children with upper middle socio-economic class aspired for medium educational aspiration and 49.1 per cent of children with poor socio-economic status desired for medium educational aspiration. In rural area, more than half of the children (75%) belonged to poor class showed medium educational aspiration, whereas 27.7 per cent of children from upper middle socio-economic status desired for high educational aspiration. Educational aspiration was significantly associated with socio-economic status of children in both urban ($\chi^2=7.686$) and rural ($\chi^2=7.984$) areas. This showed that, children from upper middle class desired for high educational aspiration than children from poor socio-economic status. This might be because children with high socio-economic status have better resources, their parents work in high paid jobs, and are well educated. Whereas children in poor socio-economic status are unable to access to resources, due parental low educational level and work in low paid jobs and lack of negligence towards their children ambitions may leads to low educational aspiration among children.

Conclusion:

In brief the outcomes of the present study noted that, locality of the children was significantly associated with educational aspiration of children from single-parent families, where children from urban area had high educational aspiration than their counterparts. Gender was significantly associated with educational aspiration of children in both the regions, which showed that girls aspired for high educational aspiration than boys in both

urban and rural areas. Age was not associated significantly with educational ambitions of children in urban and rural area. Ordinal position was not significantly associated with educational aspiration among children in both the areas. Mother's educational level was significantly associated with educational aspiration of children in rural area but not in urban area which indicates that children with less educated parents aspired for low educational aspiration than their counterparts. Children residing status was significantly associated with educational aspiration of children in urban area. Which pointed out that children residing with their fathers had low educational aspiration than their counterparts. Type of family was not associated significantly with educational aspiration of children in both urban and rural areas. Socio-economic status was significantly associated with educational aspiration of children in urban as well as in rural area, which highlighted that children in upper middle class had high educational aspiration than children from poor socio-economic status. Overall the study outcomes highlighted that children from single parent families need intervention strategies to excel in their educational career. Schools and communities should identify such children and conduct intervention programmes for both parents and children which help them to choose their right career path.

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