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Title of the Thesis: A Study of the Factors Affecting the Higher Educational Aspirations of Christian Students in Delhi: Gender, Socio-Economic Status, Region of Origin, Familial Background

Abstract

Educationists and academia are aware that our nation is a conglomeration of numerous sects, cultures and communities and the Christian community is a dynamic segment of our Indian society. NCF 2005 states that orders and grading of social group, economic status, class, background, gender associations, and ethnic multiplicity symbolize Indian society to profoundly affect access to education and aspiration of children in school. It is notable that virtually every statement or pronouncement in educational policies in contemporary times has some reference of student aspirations. As we live in a multicultural and multi-religious society, it becomes imperative for us to be aware of the aspirations and potentials of the students belonging to the minority communities. Christians as a minority community constitute about 2.3% of the total Indian population in which 40% reside in urban areas and 0.9% belongs to the Delhi population. The pupils who come from the Christian minority group too have their own ambitions as a member of the society. Their higher educational aspiration is an area that prerequisites to be researched to get a better insight. Several factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, region of origin, family background and so on can affect educational aspirations. This research employed the Descriptive method to probe into the current status of higher educational aspirations and the effect of these factors on a sample of 300 Christian students studying in the schools of Delhi. The data collected from the students were analysed by applying Chi-square test.

Major Findings of the Study:

1. There were some major fields for which out of the sample of 300 students 12% aspired for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, 36% aspired for Computer Application / Information Technology, 14% for Modern Medicine and Surgery, 6% for Dental Care and 7% aspired for Nursing.
2. The maximum number of these students, that is, 59%, aspired to attain the highest level of higher education up to Post-graduation. It is to be noted that most of them, 68%, aspired for opting a Professional degree immediately after school.
3. On administration of the Level of Educational Aspirations Test (LEAT), it was found that a remarkable percentage, 63%, of Christian students had high level of educational aspiration that is, they were highly realistic and had well defined academic goals. Much less than half of the students, 21%, had average level of educational aspiration, that is, they were realistic and normal and are well-adjusted and optimistic. And very few of them, 16%, had low level of educational aspiration, that is, they are unrealistic and are carefree towards academic achievement.

4. There was no significant relationship between Gender and Higher Educational Aspirations of the Christian students; hence, Gender was not a factor that affects their higher educational aspirations.
5. With regard to Socio-Economic Status, students belonging to average socioeconomic status families comparatively have greater Higher Educational Aspirations followed by high socioeconomic students and then low socioeconomic students.
6. Region of Origin or the States of India where students originally belong to and come from plays a significant role and was found to be a factor affecting their Higher Educational Aspirations.
7. The factor of Familial Background is a complex one that influences their Higher Educational Aspirations.

In conclusion, it can be said that Gender of the Christian students was not a factor that affects their higher educational aspirations. Socio-economic status, region of origin and familial background in complex ways are factors that affect their higher educational aspirations. It has been found that Christian students have an appreciably good level of higher educational aspiration.

The findings and conclusion of the present study have certain implications on all the stakeholders, namely, students, teachers, school administrators as well as parents. For instance, the teachers must take efforts to study the student's innate faculties and determine the courses that are likely to suit the student's capacity and develop interests and abilities to eventually lead to the best possible avenues for a self-satisfying and socially industrious life. Schools can hold seminars or even small scale gatherings to inform these students about various scholarships and other aids that are available for them to realise their higher educational aspirations. In addition, schools can also come up with monetary and other aids of their own to nurture the higher educational aspirations of these students.