

## Educational Aspirations and Achievement Motivations of Higher Secondary Students

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**ABSTRACT** Educational aspirations play an important triggering role for a student to select their future academic targets and to go for higher education. The purpose of the study is to find out whether there is any effect of achievement motivations on educational aspirations of higher secondary students with respect to gender and their mother's employment status. The study was conducted with higher secondary students (n=88) from different schools of Kolkata, selected by purposive sampling technique. Survey research design has been employed for the study. The study found significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of the higher secondary students. The findings of the research are of immense importance because if one wants more students to pursue higher education then their educational aspiration level has to be uplifted and that can be effectively achieved by increasing their achievement motivation level.

### INTRODUCTION

A country can be socially and economically sustainable only by building a qualified and skilled workforce. Higher education plays the prime role for creating such workforce. At the same time education also helps to maintain the well being of both, individuals and the society. As the young generation develops knowledge in different arenas, the society progresses. Being an achievement-oriented culture, its individual is judged by his achievements. Educational aspiration is an important variable for predicting and securing a good academic score. Educational aspiration plays an essential role to motivate the students to go for higher education and to set higher academic targets. It is identified as a prime factor affecting lifelong learning by widening the scope of educational participation. Educational aspiration not only encourages a student to fix their academic or career targets but also provide them the required thrust to achieve those goals (Fraser and Garg 2011). Educational aspiration internally

motivates a student for setting a future target and moving towards that target by putting effort in the present time. Relying on internal aspirations also has a positive impact on the future wellbeing and functioning of the students (Niemiec et al. 2009). The need to achieve or achievement motivation could be a key player in developing educational aspiration among the students. Achievement motivation habitually gives thrust to an individual to achieve the prefixed targets with all the effort and moreover it helps to set realistic goals (Boruah 2010). This dynamic disposition of human behaviour involves needs, desires and ambitions to reach the aspirations of life.

### Objectives

The objective of the study is to study the effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of higher secondary students.

### Review of Literature

#### *Gender Basis of Educational Aspiration*

Goel (2004), Mau and Bikos (2014), Ahiya (2016) and Kumar and Phogat (2017) found in their studies that girls had higher educational aspirations than that of the boys. But Marini and Greenberger (1978) concluded that boys possess

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higher educational aspirations than the girls whereas Raja and Pandian (2018) found no significant difference in educational aspiration among boys and girls. Goel (2004) also added that one reason for girls having higher educational aspiration could be that boys felt rejected in home environment whereas girls get nurtured. The work of Beaman et al. (2012) showed that when adolescent girls were exposed to female leadership, their academic achievements and aspirations changed positively.

### ***Factors Affecting Educational Aspiration***

Kao and Tienda (1998), and Haller and Virkler (1993) suggested from their study that socio-economic factors do influence educational aspiration of the students. Various studies (Bashir and Bashir 2016; Gupta and Bashir 2017) showed a significant and positive relation between parental encouragement and educational aspiration. According to a study, maternal influence had greater and stronger effect on a child's educational aspiration than paternal influence (Bennett Jr. and Gist 1964). Flowers et al. (2003) indicated that students who have higher level of locus of control also have higher educational aspiration. Many other studies (Marjoribanks 2005; Rothon et al. 2011; Ahuja 2018) also found a strong relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement. Research showed significant difference between achievement motivation of students of working and non-working mothers (Rathee 2014; Ahuja 2018). Studies indicated that children of working mothers had higher achievement motivation than the children of non-working mothers (Dandona 2016). Moreover, daughters of working mothers showed higher achievement motivation than that of the sons of the working mothers (Pandya 1996; Goswami 2000; Sowmya and Manjuvani 2015; Dandona 2016). Female students with working mothers had higher achievement motivation than that of the female students of non-working mothers (Rathee 2014). The study by Pandya (1996) revealed higher achievement motivation in case of sons of working mothers than that of the sons of non-working mothers. Vaidya (2000) found no difference in achievement motivation of children between working and non-working mothers. There is a positive correlation between achievement motivation and academic

achievement (Awan et al. 2011; Fini and Yousefzadeh 2011; Gupta et al. 2012; Emmanuel et al. 2014). The study by Imam (2018) revealed that achievement motivation does act as a significant predictor of academic achievement of adolescents. Though the study by Changkakoti and Baishya (2020) found no significant relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement motivation, achievement motivation was found to be positively related to academic achievement and to the perception of students about their academic competence (Eskeles-Gottfried et al. 1998) and thus could motivate them to aspire for educational goals accordingly. The findings of the thorough review of literature indicate a gap in the area of educational aspiration and achievement motivation at higher secondary level. Very limited work had been carried out on achievement motivation as an influencer of educational aspiration. Maternal employment status could be explored along with gender effect as well. The present study could add a new dimension, as there is almost no work done on the effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of the higher secondary students.

### **Hypotheses**

- $H_01$ :** There is no significant difference in educational aspiration between male and female higher secondary students.
- $H_02$ :** There is no significant difference in achievement motivation between male and female higher secondary students.
- $H_03$ :** There is no significant difference in educational aspiration between higher secondary students having non-working and working mothers.
- $H_04$ :** There is no significant difference in achievement motivation between higher secondary students having non-working and working mothers.
- $H_05$ :** There is no significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of higher secondary students.
- $H_05.1$ :** There is no significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of male higher secondary students.
- $H_05.2$ :** There is no significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of female higher secondary students.

**H<sub>0</sub>5.3:** There is no significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of higher secondary students of non-working mothers.

**H<sub>0</sub>5.4:** There is no significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of higher secondary students of working mothers.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Methodology

The present study adopted a survey method. To study the educational aspiration and achievement motivation of the students of Kolkata and its outskirts, a survey research design has been adopted for the study.

The population of the study comprises all the higher secondary students of Kolkata and its outskirts, which includes North 24-Parganas, South 24-Parganas and Howrah. The categorical variables of the students include gender (male and female) and mother's employment of the students (non-working and working).

### Sample

A total of 88 students of higher secondary level from English medium schools of Kolkata and its suburbs, studying in the Science stream have been chosen as study sample using purposive sampling method. The sample structure is presented in Table 1. The age of the students ranges from 15 to 18 years.

**Table 1: Sample structure**

		Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
Mother's employment status	Non-working	29	38	67
	Working	13	8	21
	Both	42	46	88

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

### Tools of Data Collection

Two standardised tools were administered on higher secondary students (n=88) of Kolkata and its outskirts, namely, the Level of Educational Aspiration Test (LEAT), prepared by Yasmin

Ghani Khan (2011) was employed to assess educational aspiration. The test measures the level of educational aspiration and also predicts the type of educational aspiration. The final form of LEAT contains 30 items dealing with various aspects affecting directly or indirectly the level of educational aspiration. The reliability and validity of the scale are .88 and .66, respectively. The second is the Achievement Motivation Scale (n-Ach), prepared by Professor Pratibha Deo and Dr. Asha Mohan (2011), which was employed to assess achievement motivation. This is a self-rating type questionnaire with 5-points to rate, that is, Always, Frequently, Sometimes, Rarely and Never, and consists of 50 items. The reliability and validity of the scale are .69 and .54, respectively. The researchers made a questionnaire for collecting general information regarding employment status of the students' mothers.

### Data Collection

To conduct the survey permissions were taken from selected school principals for conducting survey on the higher secondary students of the respective schools. Data were collected using a Google Form due to COVID-19 restrictions. All the instructions regarding the survey were mentioned in the form.

### Data Analysis

To analyse the collected data, they were first subjected to descriptive analysis and normality was checked. As the data was found to follow normal probability curve, it was analysed by inferential statistics like t-test and one-way ANOVA. For this purpose, the IBM SPSS tool version 17.0 and Microsoft Excel 2017 were used.

## RESULTS

Educational aspiration is one of the predicting factors for the students to go for higher education.

As shown in Table 2, overall seventy-one percent students have a high educational aspiration level and twenty-eight percent have an average educational aspiration level, which implies a promising picture for the target group. Gender analysis shows that among male students eighty-

**Table 2: Percentage of educational aspiration levels of higher secondary students (overall and gender-wise), mean score and standard deviation**

S. No.	Educational aspiration level	Range of score	n			Percentage		
			Overall	Male	Female	Overall	Male	Female
1	High	>22	62	34	28	71	81	61
2	Average	15-22	25	8	17	28	19	37
3	Low	<22	1	0	1	1	0	2

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

one percent have high and nineteen percent have an average educational aspiration level, whereas in case of females sixty-one percent have high, thirty-seven percent have average and two percent have low educational aspiration levels. The calculated mean and standard deviation of the total sample are found to be 23.6 and 3.16, respectively. The mean score belongs to the high level of educational aspiration, which indicates that most of the high secondary students have a high educational aspiration. The means of male and female are 24.07 and 23.17, respectively.

As mentioned in Table 3, overall forty five percent students have average, twenty-two percent above average and fourteen percent have below average motivation levels, while seven percent have high and eight percent have low motivation levels. None are highly motivated. Gender analysis shows that forty-six percent male and fifty-three percent female students have an average motivation. Four percent male and ten percent females are highly motivated whereas fourteen percent male and five percent females have low motivation. Overall only four percent students have a lower motivation level. The cal-

culated mean and standard deviation of the total sample are found to be 146.67 and 20.26, respectively. The mean score (z-score: -0.04) belongs to the average level of motivation, which indicates that most of the high secondary students have an average motivation level. The means of male and female are 145.43 and 147.80, respectively.

The sample is categorised under gender (male, female) and employment status of mothers (non-working, working). The hypotheses are tested and analysed using independent sample *t*-test.

**Comparison between Male and Female Higher Secondary Students in Terms of Educational Aspiration**

As represented in Table 4, the difference between the pair of mean scores of educational aspiration of overall male and female higher secondary students is not significant at 0.05 level with calculated *t* value 1.36 (Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub>1 is accepted at 0.05 level). Therefore, the results indicate that there exists no significant difference in educational aspiration between male and female higher secondary students.

**Table 3: Percentage of achievement motivations of higher secondary students (overall and gender-wise), mean score and standard deviation**

S. No.	Achievement motivation level	Range of overall	n			Percentage		
			Overall	Male	Female	Overall	Male	Female
1.	Highly Motivated	+2.01 and above	0	0	0	0	0	0
2.	High Motivation	+1.26 to +2.00	6	2	4	7	4	10
3.	Above Average Motivation	+0.51 to +1.25	19	10	11	22	20	27
4.	Average Motivation	-0.50 to +0.50	40	23	22	45	46	53
5.	Below Average Motivation	-0.51 to -1.25	12	6	0	14	12	0
6.	Low Motivation	-2.00 to -1.26	7	7	2	8	14	5
7.	Lowest Motivation	-2.01 and below	4	2	2	4	4	5

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

**Table 4: Statistical comparison in educational aspiration between male and female higher secondary students**

	Sample size		Mean		<i>p</i> -value of Levene's test for equality of variances	<i>t</i> -test used	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> -value appropriate test
	Male	Female	Score of male	Score of female					
Total sample	42	46	24.07	23.17	.006	Unequal variance	1.36	76.3	.18

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

### Comparison between Higher Secondary Students of Non-working Mothers and Working Mothers in terms of Educational Aspiration

The difference between the pair of mean scores of educational aspiration of overall higher secondary students having non-working and working mothers is not significant at 0.05 level with calculated *t*-value of .52 (Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub>3 is accepted at 0.05 level) as presented in Table 5. Therefore, the results indicate that there exists no significant difference in educational aspiration of higher secondary students having non-working and working mothers.

### Comparison between Male and Female Higher Secondary Students in Terms of Achievement Motivation

As depicted in Table 6, the difference between the pair of mean scores of achievement motivation of overall male and female higher secondary students is not significant at 0.05 level with the calculated *t*-value of .55 (Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub>2 is accepted at 0.05 level). Therefore, the results indicate that there exists no significant difference in achievement motivation between male and female higher secondary students.

**Table 5: Statistical comparison in educational aspiration between higher secondary students of non-working mothers and working mothers**

	Sample size		Mean		<i>p</i> -value of Levene's test for equality of variances	<i>t</i> -test used	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> -value appropriate test
	Students of non-working mothers	Students of working mothers	Score of students of non-working mothers	Score of students of working mothers					
Total sample	67	21	23.70	23.29	.379	Equal variances	.52	86	.60

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

**Table 6: Statistical comparison in achievement motivation between male and female higher secondary students**

	Sample size		Mean		<i>p</i> -value of Levene's test for equality of variances	<i>t</i> -test used	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> -value appropriate test
	Male	Female	Score of male	Score of female					
Total sample	42	46	145.43	147.80	.444	Equal variances	.55	86	.59

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

**Comparison between Higher Secondary Students of Non-working Mothers and Working Mothers in Terms of Achievement Motivation**

Table 7 represents that the difference between the pair of mean scores of achievement motivation of overall higher secondary students of non-working and working mothers is not significant at 0.05 level with calculated *t*-value of -.57 (Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub>4 is accepted at 0.05 level). Therefore, the results indicate that there exists no significant difference in achievement motivation of higher secondary students having non-working and working mothers.

**Influence of Achievement Motivation on Educational Aspiration of Higher Secondary Students**

To study the influence of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of higher secondary students, the sample is categorised under gender (male, female) and employment status of mother (non-working, working). The hypotheses are tested and analysed using one-way ANOVA.

**Table 8a: Descriptive statistics of the total sample (achievement motivation)**

Level of achievement motivation	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD	SE
High motivation	6	26.33	1.51	.61
Above average motivation	19	25.42	2.12	.49
Average motivation	40	23.93	2.35	.37
Below average motivation	12	21.83	3.16	.91
Low motivation	11	19.73	3.72	1.12
Total	88	23.60	3.16	.34

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

**Table 7: Statistical comparison in achievement motivation between higher secondary students of non-working mothers and working mothers**

	Sample size		Mean		<i>p</i> -value of Levene's test for equality of variances	<i>t</i> -test used	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> -value appropriate test
	Students of non-working mothers	Students of working mothers	Score of students of non-working mothers	Score of students of working mothers					
Total sample	67	21	145.99	148.86	.371	Equal variances	-.57	86	.58

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

**Table 8b: ANOVA of the total sample (achievement motivation on educational aspiration)**

	Sum of square	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Between group	314.49	4	78.62	11.77	.000
Within group	554.59	83	6.68		
Total	869.08	87			

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

As shown in Table 8a and 8b, the Mean and Standard Deviation of total sample are 23.60 and 3.16, respectively. The obtained *F* value is 11.77 and the *p*-value is .000, which is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the result indicates that there exists a significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of higher secondary students. Therefore, hypothesis H<sub>0</sub>5 is rejected.

At this stage further analysis would find out whether this effect is significant separately for male and female students.

As represented in Tables 9a and 10a the Mean and Standard Deviation of male students are 24.07 and 2.33 respectively, and of female students are 23.17 and 3.74, respectively. The obtained *F* value for male students is 5.35 and the *p*-value is .002, which is significant at 0.05 level, as mentioned in Table 9b. Therefore, the result indicates that there exists a significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of male higher secondary students. Hence, hypothesis H<sub>0</sub>5.1 is rejected. Likewise, as shown in Table 10b the obtained *F* value for female students is 11.86 and the *p*-value is .000, which is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the result indicates that there

**Table 9a: Descriptive statistics for male higher secondary students (Achievement motivation)**

Level of achievement motivation	n	Mean	SD	SE
High Motivation	2	26	.0	.0
Above Average Motivation	10	26	1.25	.39
Average Motivation	18	23.78	2.16	.51
Below Average Motivation	5	23.6	1.67	.75
Low Motivation	7	21.86	2.48	.94
Total	42	24.07	2.33	.36

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

**Table 9b: ANOVA of the male higher secondary students (Achievement motivation on educational aspiration)**

	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Between group	81.62	4	20.40	5.35	.002
Within group	141.17	37	3.82		
Total	222.79	41			

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

**Table 10a: Descriptive statistics for female higher secondary students (Achievement motivation)**

Level of achievement motivation	n	Mean	SD	SE
High motivation	4	26.50	1.91	.96
Above average motivation	9	24.78	2.73	.91
Average motivation	22	24.05	2.54	.54
Below average motivation	7	20.57	3.46	1.31
Low motivation	4	16	2.16	1.08
Total	46	23.17	3.74	.55

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

**Table 10b: ANOVA of the female higher secondary students (Achievement motivation on educational aspiration)**

	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Between group	337.38	4	84.35	11.86	.000
Within group	291.22	41	7.10		
Total	628.61	45			

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

exists a significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of female higher secondary students. Hence, hypothesis  $H_{05.2}$  is rejected.

The present study also intended to find out whether achievement motivation effects educational aspiration of higher secondary students of non-working and working mothers separately.

As represented in Table 11a and 12a the Mean and Standard Deviation of students having non-working mother are 23.70 and 3.28 respectively, and of students having working mothers are 23.29 and 2.80, respectively. From Table 11b it is found that F value for the higher secondary students having non-working mothers is 8.85 and p-value is .000, which is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the result indicates that there exists a significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of higher secondary students having non-working mothers. Hence, hypothesis  $H_{05.3}$  is rejected. Whereas in Table 12b, F value for the higher secondary students of working mothers is 5.75, which is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the result indicates that there exists no significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of higher secondary

**Table 11a: Descriptive statistics for higher secondary students of non-working mothers (Achievement motivation)**

Level of achievement motivation	n	Mean	SD	SE
High motivation	5	26.40	1.67	.75
Above average motivation	15	25.20	2.31	.60
Average motivation	29	24.21	2.57	.48
Below average motivation	7	22.71	2.69	1.02
Low motivation	11	19.73	3.72	1.12
Total	67	23.70	3.28	.40

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

**Table 11b: ANOVA of the higher secondary students of non-working mothers (Achievement motivation on educational aspiration)**

	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Between group	258.06	4	64.52	8.85	.000
Within group	451.97	62	7.29		
Total	710.03	66			

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

**Table 12a: Descriptive statistics for higher secondary students of working mothers (Achievement motivation)**

Level of achievement motivation	n	Mean	SD	SE
High motivation	1	26		
Above average motivation	4	26.25	.96	.48
Average motivation	11	23.18	1.47	.44
Below average motivation	5	20.60	3.65	1.63
Low motivation	0			
Total	21	23.29	2.80	.61

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

**Table 12b: ANOVA of the higher secondary students of working mothers (Achievement motivation on educational aspiration)**

	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Between group	78.70	3	26.23	5.75	.007
Within group	77.59	17	4.56		
Total	156.29	20			

Source: Field study, June 2021-September 2021

students of working mothers. Hence, hypothesis  $H_05.4$  is accepted.

**DISCUSSION**

The study found no significant difference in educational aspiration between male and female higher secondary students, which is similar to the findings of Raja and Pandian (2018) but Goel (2004), Mau and Bikos (2014), Ahiya (2016) and Kumar and Phogat (2017) showed that girls had higher educational aspirations than that of the boys. Marini and Greenberger (1978) concluded that boys possess higher educational aspiration than the girls. The present findings suggest no significant difference in achievement motivation between students having non-working and working mothers, which is unlike the study results of Ahuja (2018) and Rathee (2014), which showed significant difference between achievement motivation of students having working and non-working mothers wherein children having working mothers had higher achievement motivation than the children having non-working mothers.

No significant difference of achievement motivation was also found gender wise for children having working or non-working mothers. This result is in support with the study by Vaidya (2000) but the findings of other studies in this area did find some significant differences (Pandya 1996; Goswami 2000; Sowmya and Manjivani 2015; Dandona 2016). The study by Changkakoti and Baishya (2020) found no significant relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement motivation but the present study found significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of higher secondary students. Achievement motivation habitually pushes a person to achieve goals and also to fix a realistic target (Boruah 2010) that positively affects their educational aspiration level. Moreover, achievement motivation has a positive effect on academic achievement (Gupta et al. 2012), which in turn positively correlated with higher educational aspiration (Trebbels 2015).

**CONCLUSION**

The study revealed that majority of the higher secondary students of Kolkata and its outskirts possess high educational aspiration level and average achievement motivation level. There exists no significance difference between male and female students in terms of educational aspiration and achievement motivation. Also, there exists no significant difference between students having non-working and working mothers in terms of educational aspiration and achievement motivation. The study concluded that there is a significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of higher secondary students.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The results of the present study carry great importance for the students, parents and teachers. The study shows significant effect of achievement motivation on educational aspiration of the students, which implies that if achievement motivation could be raised it will increase educational aspiration level of the students. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the parents and the teachers to motivate their children so that they can have high educational aspiration. It is also important for the policymakers to design their curriculum to boost the achievement motivation of the students. It will increase the enrolment in higher education,



which in turn will increase human resource of the country.

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