

PARENTAL OCCUPATION AND ITS EFFECT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF CHILDREN

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Abstract:

Parental occupation is the most determining factor of generating income which affects the overall development of young wards especially their academic development and progress. In this study an attempt has been made to thoroughly study and examine the effect parental income has on the academic performance of children studying in various institutions of district Srinagar in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Keywords: Occupation, Academic performance, Social status

1. Introduction

Occupational prestige as one of the components of socio-economic status encompasses income and educational attainment. Occupational status corresponds to the educational attainment of an individual through which obtaining better job and retaining better positions become inevitable. It consequently becomes an indicator and measure of social position/status in a society, hence describing job characteristics, decision making ability, emotional control and the psychological demands on the job (McNeal, 2001). Skill, authority, and economic control are singled out as the basic resources which differentiate occupations because these are the fundamental aspects of power as they provide the crucial means to the achievement of desired goals. But the more powerful an occupation, the more important it is that it be performed well, since the consequences of competent or incompetent performances are more telling for such occupations. For example, if a garbage collector does his job poorly, little is lost but if a surgeon is incompetent a life can be lost. Or, similarly, if a chain store manager makes a poor business decision it may cost a firm a few hundred or at the most a few thousand dollars; but a poor decision on the part of a major executive can run into millions. Consequently, the more powerful an occupation, the greater the incentive to attract competent personnel to it. And since the basic mechanism for inducing people to perform tasks is to reward them, it follows that the most powerful positions will be the most highly rewarded (Treiman, 1976). Occupational prestige is the subjective evaluation people give to jobs. To determine occupational prestige, sociological researchers typically ask nationwide samples of adults to rank the general standing of a series of jobs. These subjective ratings provide information about how people perceive the worth of different occupations. People tend to rank professionals, such as physicians, professors, judges, and lawyers highly, with occupations such as electrician, insurance agent, and police officer falling in the middle. Occupations with low occupational prestige are maids, garbage collectors, and shoe shiners. These rankings do not reflect the worth of people within these positions but are indicative of the judgments people make about the worth of these jobs (Anderson et.al, 2017). Therefore, if an occupation is more authoritative and commanding, it requires a stronger zest and zeal to commit to it and work towards accomplishing it.

Academic achievement has always been a crucial point and main centre of educational research despite varied statements about the aim of education. Academic development of the pupil is the primary concern and the most important goal of education. Not that other aspects of educational objectives are to be ignored but the fact remains that academic achievement is the unique responsibility of all educational institutions established by the society to promote a wholesome scholastic development of pupil. Academic achievement of an individual is so far considered to be influential partly by his ability to adjust to his environment, partly by his special abilities, intelligence and aptitude which are integral parts of his personality and partly by

the intensity of drives and motives which serve as the impelling force for his activities (Saini,2010). The world has become an arena for competition where academic performance is of paramount significance. Children are expected to attain good academic grades and outshine their counterparts in scholastic achievements. Thus, students along with their entire educational institutions are busy with the aim of securing good grades for future security.

Academic performance of students is the centre around which the whole education system revolves. The success and failure of any educational institution is measured in terms of academic performance of students. Not only the schools, but parents also have very high expectations from students with respect to their academic performance, as they believe that better academic results may lead to better career options and future security. Academic performance refers to the knowledge attained and designated by marks, assigned by teacher. In educational context, academic performance is the educational goal to be achieved by a student, teacher or institution over a certain period and is measured either by examinations or continuous assessments and the goal may differ from one individual or institution to another. Academic performance is the outcome of education, the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals (Narad and Abdullah,2016). The key aspect for the educators is to educate their students effectively so that they may be able to show quality performance in their academics. To achieve this objective, it is necessary for the educators to understand better about the factors that may contribute in the academic success of students (Farooq et.al, 2011). Academic achievement of pupils refers to the knowledge attained and skills developed in school subjects. So, academic achievement means the achievement of students in the academic subjects in relation to their knowledge attaining ability or degree of competence in school tasks usually measured by standardized tests and expressed in grades or units based on pupil's performance (Parveen et.al, 2013). Academic Achievement is one part of the wider term of educational growth. It refers to what a student has achieved in different subjects of studies, during the course of academic year. Academic achievement is affected largely due to the intra individual differences, (differences within the individual from time to time) or with individual differences, i.e., between one individual and another, between one group and another. Besides areas of functioning, individuals of the same group, same grade and same potential ability may differ in their academic proficiency due to many factors. At each stage in the schools some measure of achievement is used as determiner of the student's status and as a basis for decisions about the further opportunities for learning to be provided in subsequent stages. In the present context of education, achievement in academic subjects is the main concern of the teachers, students and parents. The scholastic attainment is the basis of selection and differentiation among students for different openings and avenues of advancement in various fields (Arora,2016). Thus, Academic performance, inevitably becomes an indicator of academic growth and augurs well for the future success of students. Educators, trainers, and researchers have long been interested in discovering variables contributing successfully to the quality of performance of learners. This study aims to focus on the link between parental occupation and its subsequent effect on children's performance.

2. Research Methodology

A sample of 250 respondents was selected to study the effect of parental occupation on the academic performance of students studying at various educational institutions of district Srinagar in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The sample for the study was selected by using purposive random sampling. It was withdrawn from students pursuing professional and nonprofessional courses at the under graduate, post graduate and doctoral level in district Srinagar. The respondents comprising the sample for professional courses under all the three categories was drawn from Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Government Medical College (GMC), Sher-e- Kashmir University of Agriculture Sciences and Technology (SKUAST), National Institute of Technology (NIT), SKIMS Medical College and Govt Polytechnic College. Likewise, students from Sri Pratap College,(SPC) Amar Singh College (ASC), Islamia College of Science and Commerce (ICSC), Government College for Women(GCW) MA Road and various departments of University of Kashmir comprised the sample for study under all the three categories pertaining to non-professional courses. Care was taken to give equal representation to both the genders.

The response of the respondents who formed the backbone of this particular study was collected by means of a systematically formulated structured interview schedule and the technique of non-participant observation was utilized to gather true information. The motivating factor for collecting information through an interview schedule was that the researcher would gain access to first-hand information and

gather invaluable relevant and resourceful data since an interview schedule is a tool which prompts the investigator to delve deep into the possibilities thrown open by the questions prepared in advance. This safeguards the accuracy of the data collected. The interview schedule was prepared meticulously after studying the literature available about the concerned subject and keeping the local educational scenario in mind. Care was taken to refrain from posing vague questions which would give rise to ambiguity and doubt. A pilot study was undertaken before conducting the actual research to check the validity and dependability of the interview schedule designed for the study. The interview schedule comprised both close as well as open ended questions and direct as well as indirect questions. The language of the questions was kept lucid in order to increase the level of understanding of the inquiry. Recording of minuscule details was done by the researcher with the help of the observation technique

3. Objectives of the Study

- i To investigate the influence of parental occupation on the academic achievement of students in District Srinagar.
- ii To lay down necessary policy recommendations.

4. Findings

Occupation of parents

Parents' level of education is the most important factor affecting students' academic performance (Zehri, & Abdelbaki, 2013). Parent's occupation determines the type of education children receive from their parents. Occupation of parent tends to exert a considerable influence on their children's education or academic performance in school. The kind of occupation a parent engages in determines his income as well as his social status. It is seen that difference in the occupation of parents is often manifest in different styles of child rearing, different ways of disciplining children and different ways of reacting to their children. Parents with high occupational class or prestigious occupations tend to provide a source of security to their children by their ability to meet emergencies, absorb economic shocks and offer the means to live comfortably. The data about the occupational status of parents disclosed information as depicted below:

Table 1: Occupation of the parents

Theme	Responses	Number	Percentage
Occupation of parents	Agriculture	37	14.80
	Business	50	20.00
	Government job	112	44.80
	Private job	9	3.60
	Labourer	33	13.20
	Any other	9	3.60
Total		250	100.00

The findings of the table divulge that a major proportion of the respondents had parents who were employed in the government sector. Accordingly, from the total of 250 respondents, 112 (44.80%) belonged to such families. This finding was hardly surprising given the fact that Kashmir is an industrially backward region. Here, Government is the major job provider and private sector is still in its infancy. A significant portion i.e., 50 (20%) respondents had parents earning their livelihood by engaging in business activities. There were 37 (14.80%) respondents who had parents engaging in agriculture to earn their livelihood. Also, 33 (13.20%) respondents came from families where parents worked as labourers. Finally, an equal number of

9 (3.60%) respondents had parents who worked in the private sector or had jobs other than those listed here, respectively.

Social status of parents who are employed with Government

Jammu & Kashmir government has different departments like health, veterinary sciences, education, agriculture, engineering, tourism, social welfare, handicrafts, police, railway, defence, research & development, pharmaceutical etc., where depending upon the age, educational criteria, positions, category etc candidates can apply for jobs. Apart from these services, several other government jobs are also offered to the people. There are many established government and public sector banks which need to fill up huge vacancies from time to time.

Contingent to suitability, qualification and merit different people are employed against different jobs. High profile jobs carry better prestige, better emoluments and better perks. Depending on the pay scales government jobs are classified as class I, II, III and IV. To know about the social status of parents due to their job profile, the researcher collected information which is tabulated below:

Table 2: Social status of parents who are employed with Government

Theme	Responses	Number	Percentage
Social status of parents employed with the government	Class I	19	16.96
	Class II	12	10.71
	Class III	39	34.82
	Class IV	42	37.50
Total		112	100.00

Source: Field work carried out in Srinagar, 2018

As discussed under table 1 majority of the respondents corresponding 112(44.80%) had parents who worked in the government sector. Out of this group, as is evident from table 2 the percentage of parents who worked as class IV and class III employees stood at 42 (37.50%) and 38(34.82%) respectively. Parents working as class II employees were 12(10.71%) and those working in the prestigious class I category totalled 19 (16.96%). Thus, a major portion of respondents came from families where parents worked as class III and class IV employees.

Social status of parents who are associated with agriculture

Agriculture plays a prominent role in the economy of this Himalayan region, with around 70 percent of its total population living in rural areas, who are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. However, with the passage of time agricultural land has shrunk which can be attributed to rapid urbanisation and the unplanned emergence of residential colonies in paddy fields. In the absence of a proper market for agriculture and a proper irrigation system in place, the state is facing a deficit in agricultural production and food grains are being imported from other regions of India. Additionally, the political scenario that unfolded in 2019 and the Covid pandemic of 2020 has made life particularly difficult for people belonging to this sector. Possessing more land implies higher income which in turn indicates higher social status. Data on the area of land (in Kanals) parents owned is presented in the table below:

Table 3: Social status of parents who are associated with agriculture

Theme	Responses	Number	Percentage
Area of land owned by parents associated with agriculture	> 10 Kanals of land	5	13.51
	9- 9.9 Kanals	8	21.62
	7-8.9 Kanals	10	27.02
	5- 6.9 Kanals	4	10.81
	3-4.9 Kanals	8	21.62
	1-2.9 Kanals	2	5.40
Total		37	100.00

Source: Field work carried out in Srinagar,2018

As per the table it is starkly clear that out of 37 respondents who came from this segment only 5(13.51%) hailed from families who were in possession of more than 10 kanals of land. The least represented group was between 1-2.9 kanals of land with just 2 (5.40%) respondents falling within this category. A land holding between 3- 4.9 and between 9.9 kanals found equal representation of 8(21.62%) respondents. Land holding between 5-6.9 and between 7-8.9 kanals found a representation of 4(10.81%) and 10(27.02%) respondents respectively. What emerges from the data is that barring a few exceptions most of the respondents come from families that have small land holdings.

Social status of parents who are associated with business

A couple of factors, viz., paucity of resources, treacherous terrain, infrastructural bottlenecks, and crippling effect of transportation had been responsible for the industrial backwardness of the region in general and that of the valley in particular. Furthermore, the absence of forward- looking entrepreneurial elite in the state as well as the lack of proper infrastructure (power, roads, railways etc) and dearth of raw material sources within the state which failed to attract the entrepreneurial elite from outside the state also acted as an impediment to the industrialization of the state. However, same is not true of the handicraft sector which played and continues to play an important role in the economy of the valley. In the absence of large-scale industries, handicrafts have remained a key economic activity from the time immemorial. The valley is known for carpets of various types and sizes, wood carvings, crewel, numdas, papier-mâché and other crafts. Handicraft is the traditional business of the State and has been of crucial importance given its large employment and export potential. The other major source of business in the valley tourism. The government is aware of the fact and they are trying to build an industrial atmosphere in the state, leading industrial houses of the country have been asked to set up units here. How far this initiative will be taken up remains to be seen. Relevant questions were asked to gauge the social status of the families of such respondents who came from business backgrounds.

Table 4: Social status of parents who are associated with business

Theme	Responses	Number	Percentage
Nature of business carried out by parents	Large scale	2	4.00
	Medium scale	31	62.00
	Small scale	17	34.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Field work carried out in Srinagar,2018

The table divulges that out of the 50 respondents who had parents involved in business, majority i.e., 31(62%) were engaged in running medium scale business. Parents of 17(34%) respondents were carrying out small scale business and only 2 (4%) respondents came from families indulging in large- scale business.

Additionally, 9(3.60%) respondents had parents working in the private sector. Barring two respondents whose fathers worked as small officers in private offices, parents of the rest were into blue collared jobs. Again, an equal number i.e., 9 (3.60%) had parents carrying out other kinds of menial jobs and finally 33 (13.20%) respondents came from families where parents worked as labourers. There is not much social prestige attached to private jobs in Kashmir as wages are low and working conditions abysmal. Labouring class is at the bottom rung of the social hierarchy with a very low socio-economic profile.

5. Role of parental occupation in academic performance of children

Occupational prestige is a component of socioeconomic status which encompasses both income and educational attainment. Occupational status reflects the educational attainment required to obtain a job and income levels. When parents have a better occupation, they make adequate provision for their children's education. They provide economic, social, psychological and emotional support to their children, and this would make it possible for the children to perform well in their educational attainment (Gachathi,1976). Fathers with high occupation are in a better condition to assist and encourage their children toward educational attainment. They can provide whatever is needed to support and encourage their children morally, intellectually, spiritually and psychologically. But parents with less prestigious occupation due to instability and financial problems cannot provide adequate modern facilities to enhance their children education (Memo et.al,2010). Paternal occupation thus has tremendous potential to impact the educational performance of children. Since research has established that the parental occupation is an important factor that has a strong bearing on academic performance respondents were asked their opinion about the impact of parental occupation on academic performance. The responses are given in table below.

Table 5: Role of parental occupation in determining academic performance

Theme	Responses	Number	Percentage
Does parental occupation have a role to play in academic performance?	Yes	234	93.6
	No	16	6.4
Total		250	100.00
If yes, which material resources does an occupationally well-off parent provide his children with	Fees		
	Text books		
	Uniform		
	Home library		
	Pocket money	34	13.6
	All of the above	200	80.00
	None of the above	16	6.4
Total		250	100.00
If no, what are the reasons?	Hard work and not parental occupation is the key to good Academic performance.	7	43.75

	If a parental occupation was the criteria only Students of parents involved in a sound occupation would excel in studies	9	56.25
Total		16	100.00

Source: Field work carried out in Srinagar, 2018

When respondents were asked whether parental occupational level played a role in academic performance, almost the entire sample 234(93.6%) stood in total conformity with the statement. They, in fact believed that inequality in education stemmed from socioeconomic disparity. Poor socio-economic background debarred children from gaining access to good schools, good books, expensive tuitions, recreational facilities and a room of their own where they could sit in seclusion and devote to studies. 200(80%) respondents were in total agreement that a resourceful socio-economic background meant that students who belonged to these households never felt the paucity of fees, text books, uniform, pocket money and home library. A relatively small number comprising of 34(13.6%) respondents said that students belonging to sound socio-economic families had availability of pocket money which was denied to those who hailed from the poorer section of society. When the researcher asked them how pocket money allowance helped in academic performance, many answered that with pocket money they could indulge in recreation which is so important for the health of a student. Pocket money, they also added was a gateway to socializing with like-minded friends over a cup of tea where they could discuss so many things related to academics. Besides these two major reasons they spoke at length about how having a little amount of money, which they can choose to spend as they like, adds to confidence and personality development. While an overwhelming majority saw the overpowering role occupational status of parents played in academic performance a very small number of 16(6.4%) respondents were of the opinion that it had no effect, whatsoever, on academic performance. Out of these 16 respondents 7(43.75%) believed that good academic performance was a direct consequence of hard work and non-availability of material resources was not a deterrent to scoring well in exams. They were quick to add the adage that “where there is a will there is a way”. According to them students who want to excel will do so by overcoming all hurdles. 9(56.25%) held that if there was any truth in the statement that socio-economic class had a strong bearing on educational attainment then only students hailing from affluent families would succeed in academics which clearly is not the case, as per them. They gave ample examples of great academicians who made it big in the academic circles despite belonging to the socio-economically weaker section of the society.

6. Conclusions

The significant conclusions of the study are as follows:

- I. The findings of the study divulge that a major proportion of the respondents had parents who were employed in the government sector. Accordingly, from the total of 250 respondents, 112 (44.80%) belonged to such families. This finding was hardly surprising given the fact that Kashmir is an industrially backward region. Here, Government is the major job provider and private sector is still in its infancy. A significant portion i.e., 50 (20%) respondents had parents earning their livelihood by engaging in business activities. There were 37 (14.80%) respondents who had parents engaging in agriculture to earn their livelihood. Also, 33 (13.20%) respondents came from families where parents worked as labourers. Finally, an equal number of 9 (3.60%) respondents had parents who worked in the private sector or had jobs other than those listed here, respectively
- II. The study revealed that occupational status of parents played an important role in academic performance. When respondents were asked about this almost the entire sample 234(93.6%) stood in total conformity with the statement. They, in fact believed that inequality in education stemmed from socio-economic disparity. Poor socio-economic background debarred children from gaining access to good schools, good books, expensive tuitions, recreational facilities and a room of their own where they could sit in seclusion and devote to studies. 200(80%) respondents were in total agreement that a resourceful socio-economic background meant that students who had parents occupying prestigious occupational positions never felt the paucity of fees, text books, uniform,

pocket money and home library. A relatively small number comprising of 34(13.6%) respondents said that students belonging to sound socio-economic families had availability of pocket money which was denied to those who hailed from the poorer section of society.

7.Recommendations

The following recommendations have been offered keeping in view the above-mentioned results of the study: -

- i. The government must seriously take the responsibility of improving the scenario of the quality of educational performance in the district of Srinagar by introducing adult literacy programmes to educate and empower the illiterate and semi-illiterate parents to improve their lot.
- ii. The government should also lead a mass enlightenment movement to instruct parents on the significance of education.
- iii. Religious scholars, town union leaders and political leaders should be made a part of the mass enlightenment movement keeping in view that the masses listen to them.
- iv. The government should provide aid by means of occupational support to parents of students in the district Srinagar through its employment plans.
- v. Provision of educational loans must be incorporated in the educational programmes of the government so that students are engaged in studying without stressing about monetary issues so as to retain the poor students in schools and enhance their academic performance.
- vi. Government should also improve on the socio-economic welfare of her citizenry as this will go a long way in raising the living standards of its people which will to a large extent impact on the income level of parents who will earn more in order to support the welfare of their children in schools.

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