



EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION AMONG TAMIL LINGUISTIC MINORITY STUDENTS

Sruthi. S

Research Scholar, NSS Training College, Ottapalam, Affiliated to University of Calicut.

**Dr. Seema Menon
K P**

Professor, NSS Training College, Ottapalam, Affiliated to University of Calicut.

ABSTRACT In diverse and multilingual societies, the educational aspirations of linguistic minority students play a crucial role in promoting social equity and inclusion. This study examines the academic goals of Tamil linguistic minority students in the Palakkad district and the factors influencing them. Participants were selected using a simple random sampling technique, and data were collected through a structured survey. Statistical analyses, including percentages, means, standard deviations, and t-tests, were conducted to test the research hypotheses. The findings revealed that female students demonstrated higher educational aspirations than male students, highlighting gender differences in motivation and future planning. Insights from this study can guide educators and policymakers in developing targeted interventions that support minority students, enhance educational outcomes, and foster a more inclusive and culturally diverse society.

KEYWORDS : Educational aspiration, Tamil linguistic minority students, Gender differences, Inclusive education

INTRODUCTION

In the southern Indian state of Kerala, renowned for its cultural diversity, the educational aspirations of students are influenced by different factors. Kerala is home to Tamil linguistic minorities, and understanding their educational aspirations provides valuable insights into the inter-relationship of culture, language, and education. Education is widely recognized as an important factor for individual and societal progress. It equips individuals with knowledge and skills, empowers them to make informed decisions, and can fundamentally alter the course of their lives.

Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory emphasized the role of self-efficacy in the formulation and pursuit of educational goals. Educational aspirations are influenced by different factors, including social, cultural, economic, and familial elements. Social cognitive theorists like Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) have emphasized the role of social support and contextual factors in shaping educational aspirations. The influence of cultural background and ethnicity on aspirations has been examined by scholars like Phinney (1990) and Swanson and Tokar (1991), revealing the inter-relationship between cultural identity and educational ambitions.

A family's socioeconomic status can significantly influence educational aspirations. Individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may face additional barriers and may have more modest aspirations, while those from more affluent backgrounds often aspire to higher levels of education. The presence of role models and mentors who have achieved educational and professional success can inspire students to set ambitious goals. These models provide guidance, encouragement, and a good example of what can be achieved through education. Peers can both positively and negatively influence educational aspirations. A supportive peer group that values education can reinforce high aspirations. On the other hand, negative peer influences may deter students from pursuing their educational goals.

Understanding the educational aspirations of Tamil linguistic minority students in Kerala requires exploration of the factors that influence their goals and ambitions. The availability and quality of educational resources, as well as government policies pertaining to linguistic minorities, contribute significantly to their educational aspirations (Kumar, 2017). At the societal level, a population with high educational aspirations is more likely to be educated, informed, and engaged in civic life.

Nurturing and supporting the educational aspirations of individuals, regardless of their background, is not only an investment in personal development but also a commitment to a more equitable, informed, and prosperous society. Recognizing and supporting the educational goals of Tamil linguistic minorities can lead to more inclusive policies and interventions that help bridge educational disparities, enhance individual opportunities, and contribute to the overall development and cohesion of multicultural societies.

Recent Studies

Sharath Kumar (2022) conducted a study on the levels of educational aspiration and anxiety among teacher trainees in Mysore district, Karnataka. The sample, selected through stratified random sampling, included 15 B.Ed colleges. The results indicated no significant difference in the levels of educational aspiration between urban and rural areas among teacher trainees in B.Ed. colleges in Mysore district. The study also revealed a strong correlation between the levels of educational aspiration and anxiety among teacher trainees in B.Ed. colleges in Mysore district.

Olav Nygard (2022) investigated the impact of pre-migration status and social capital on the educational aspirations of children of immigrants in disadvantaged Swedish schools. The sample included 960 students from such schools. Regression analysis showed that access to social capital and pre-migration status was linked to higher university aspirations, partly due to parental expectations.. The findings demonstrated that both pre-migration status and social capital played an important role in improving higher educational aspirations among children of non-immigrants in disadvantaged Swedish schools.

Matsuyama et al. (2021) examined the relationship between relative deprivation and the educational aspirations of 15-year-old adolescents in Japan. Utilizing data from the 2016 survey of the Longitudinal Survey of Newborns in the twenty-first Century, the study involved 17,662 participants. The results suggested that relative deprivation could act as a motivating factor for adolescents' educational aspirations, particularly among those with high income.

Objectives Of The Study

- To study the levels of educational aspiration among Tamil linguistic minority students of Palakkad district.
- To examine the difference in educational aspirations of male and female Tamil linguistic minority students.

Hypotheses Of The Study

- Tamil linguistic minority students possess different levels of Educational aspiration.
- There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Educational aspiration among Tamil linguistic minority students with respect to gender

Methodology

The investigator adopted a simple random sampling method. The sample consisted of 200 Tamil linguistic minority students. A survey method was used for the research.

Tool Used For Investigation

The investigator used the educational aspiration Scale (Developed and standardized by Dr V. P. Sharma and Dr. Anuradha Gupta) for assessing the educational aspiration of Tamil linguistic minority students of Palakkad district. The scale was developed based on the belief that past experiences, like exam scores, success or failure, the effort put into exams, and the ability to study, directly influence setting future goals. The scale's reliability, determined through test-retest and

internal consistency methods, yielded coefficients of 0.98 and 0.596, respectively.

Statistical Techniques

In order to find out the difference in Educational aspiration of Tamil linguistic minority students, Descriptive statistics and t-test were used.

Analysis And Interpretation

To Find Out The Different Levels Of Educational Aspiration Among Tamil Linguistic Minority Students Of Palakkad District

Classification of Tamil linguistic minority students of Palakkad district according to their educational aspirations is given in Table 1. The table also contains the number and percentage of Tamil linguistic minority students of Palakkad district with different levels of educational aspiration.

Table 1 Data And Results Of Educational Aspiration For The Total Sample

Variable	Category	Sample Size	Percentage
Educational Aspiration	High	48	28%
	Average	120	50%
	Low	32%	22%

From the above table 1, it is evident that 28% of Tamil linguistic minority students of Palakkad district possess high level of educational aspiration, 50% possess average level of educational aspiration and 22% possess low level of educational aspiration. The result shows that most of the students have an average Educational aspiration. Thus, the study points out the need for improving educational aspiration in Tamil linguistic minority students of Palakkad district.

To Find Out The Significance Difference In Educational Aspiration Among Tamil Linguistic Minority Students Of Palakkad District With Respect Gender

Table 2 The Data And Results Of The Test Show The Significance Of The Difference Between The Mean Scores Of Educational Aspirations Among Boys And Girls Students Of Tamil Linguistic Minorities Of Palakkad District.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Result
Girls	108	181.62	22.24	3.38	Significant**
Boys	92	163.69	18.56		

**Significant at 0.05 level of significance

As shown in table 2, significant difference was found between the mean scores of educational aspirations among Tamil linguistic minority students with respect to gender. The mean scores of the educational aspirations of girls and boys are 181.62 and 163.69 and Standard deviations are 22.24 and 18.56 respectively. When the Educational aspiration of boys and girls students of Tamil linguistic minority is compared the 't' value obtained is 3.38. Since the 't' value is greater than the table value at 0.05 level of significance, the mean difference between boys and girls students of Tamil linguistic minority was found to be significant.

Major Findings Of The Study

- Tamil linguistic minority students possess different levels of educational aspiration. The result shows that most of the students have an average level of educational aspiration.
- Educational aspiration of Tamil linguistic minority girls is higher than that of boys within the same linguistic minority.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings show clear differences in the educational aspirations of Tamil linguistic minority students, with gender playing a noticeable role. Girls in this community were found to have higher educational aspirations than boys. This pattern may be related to the growing availability of quality education and changing views on traditional gender roles. Nowadays, girls are encouraged to set ambitious educational goals. The presence of female role models in schools and workplaces has further motivated them to aim for success in their studies and professional lives. These aspirations reflect not only individual determination but also a broader shift in community attitudes toward supporting girls' education and empowerment.

Educational Implications

The findings emphasized the need for gender-sensitive educational practices for Tamil linguistic minority students. Schools and teachers

can create supportive and inclusive environments where students feel safe to express their educational aspirations, thereby enhancing motivation, self-confidence, and engagement in learning. Given that Tamil linguistic minority girls demonstrate higher educational aspirations, educators should sustain and further encourage this positive trend by providing continued access to quality learning opportunities, mentorship, and visible female role models from academic and professional fields. Boys require additional support to enhance their educational aspirations and overcome social and motivational barriers. Teachers can guide students in exploring diverse educational opportunities. By fostering trust, respect, and encouragement, help both boys and girls work toward meaningful educational and career goals.

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