



EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AMONG FEMALES: DOES ETHNICITY HAVE AN IMPACT?

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Paper Received On: 25 SEPT 2021

Peer Reviewed On: 30 SEPT 2021

Published On: 1 OCT 2021

Abstract

The present study examined the relative importance of intelligence, creativity, socio-economic status and adjustment in predicting education aspiration among females. It is found that dominant role of intelligence, creativity and SES. A nationally represented sample of 411 adolescents were selected from 15 Secondary and senior secondary school students through stratified random sampling technique. The results of the statistical analysis revealed that intelligence is a power full predictor of educational aspiration for the both the groups. In case of Muslim female sample both the non-cognitive factors – SES and adjustment are significant predictors of educational aspiration. The contribution of SES indicates that Muslim female groups need socio-economic resources for their development which includes favorable higher educational aspiration and similarly other aspirations for bright future. Adjustment is also found to be the additional significant predictor of educational aspiration for the said group. It is suggested that the results of this study if applied may prove beneficial for this socially and economically disadvantaged group community of India.

Keywords: Educational Aspiration, Ethnicity, Intelligence, Creativity, SES and Adjustment.

Introduction:

“Aspiration can be defined in various contexts depending on the field of study. In psychological research, aspiration is often defined as the desire to achieve or attain something, particularly higher goals, success, or personal development. Aspiration in this case, is seen as an individual’s motivation to reach certain level of success. Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, (2008) looks at how students’ academic aspirations impact their motivation and educational attainment. In sociology and education, aspiration can refer to academic or career goals that individuals or groups set for themselves. There are various cognitive and non-

cognitive factors that influence the adolescent's educational aspiration like intelligence, creativity, adjustment and socio-economic status (parental education, occupation and income). There are other factors like sex and ethnic background which is also influence educational aspiration (Syfrit et. al., 1988). Educational aspiration among females has been a significant area of research across various fields, particularly in sociology, psychology, and education. The concept of educational aspiration refers to the goals or expectations individuals have regarding their educational attainment. When it comes to females, research studies focus on how gender influences these aspirations, as well as how societal, cultural, and familial factors shape the educational goals of girls and young women.

Educational aspirations among females refer to the goals, ambitions, and desires that women and girls have regarding their education. These aspirations can be influenced by various factors, including family support, socioeconomic background, cultural norms, and access to education, role models, and government policies. There are various factors that influence educational aspiration among females like family support, socioeconomic status, cultural and social norms, peer influence, and access to schools and quality education, etc.. Studies have shown that females often have higher educational aspirations than males, particularly in developed countries. However, this trend is influenced by external factors such as socioeconomic status, race, and access to resources. However, there are also instances where cultural changes and empowerment movements have increased educational aspirations among girls.

At the same time it has been observed that culture and religion has a significant impact on female educational aspirations. Syfrit et. al. (1988) found ethnic identity was indirectly related to educational level of aspiration in the form of cultural variables while gender difference was also found to be strongly and directly associated with educational aspiration.

Therefore, the above factors instigate the researcher to study the differences among educational aspiration of females between two main groups as Muslim females and non-Muslim females.

Significance of the Study:

India is a pluralistic society where the people of different faith, customs, traditions, religion, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds reside in a peaceful manner. But the disparity exists in living standards, educational aspirations and goals of life, attitude towards education, and achievements among different arena of our society. Educational backwardness of the large

group of any country is really a cause of concern and must be dealt at utmost urgency to bring this population in the main stream of the society.

Researches in India and abroad have quite considerably succeeded in identifying predictors of educational aspiration. But it is difficult to find even a single study dealing with the level of educational aspiration of Muslims and Non-Muslim in India. These very important areas of educational research that cannot be ignored any more as India is striving to be a forward nation. As the data presented in various reports made it clear that Muslims are backward in the different aspect of their socio-cultural and economic areas. It is essential to study such problems taking into consideration each and every aspect in order to draw a meaningful strategy for the enhancement in the different fields of education.

In the present scenario, the investigator feels an urge to statistically identify the significant predictors of and their extent of predictability (relationship) with educational aspiration, both among the Muslims females and Non-Muslim females randomly selected groups. It is hoped that the results of this study if applied may prove beneficial for this deprived and underprivileged community.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the significant difference in educational aspirations of Muslim and Non-Muslim females
2. To study the correlation between predictive variables and the criterion variable (Educational Aspiration) for Muslim females and non-Muslim females.
3. To identify the significant predictors of educational aspiration and their extent of predictability for the Muslim female sample.
4. To identify the significant predictors of educational aspiration and their extent of predictability for the Non-Muslim female sample.

Hypotheses of the Study:

H.01: There will be no significant difference in educational aspirations among Muslim Females and Non-Muslim females.

H.02: There will be no significant correlation between the predictive variables and criterion (Educational Aspiration) among Muslim Females and Non-Muslim females.

H.03: None of the cognitive and non-cognitive variables will be found to be the significant predictors of educational aspiration for the Muslim female sample.

H.04: None of the cognitive and non-cognitive variables will be found to be the significant predictors of educational aspiration for the non-Muslim female sample.

Method of the Study: Descriptive Survey method of research was adopted to conduct the present study.

Design of the Study: In the present study the independent variables were intelligence, creativity, socio-economic status and adjustment whereas educational aspiration was the dependent variable.

Sample:

There are more than 411 secondary and senior secondary (+2) schools in the district Aligarh as per the records obtained from website of Uttar Pradesh Board (U.P.B.) Allahabad, Council of Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE) New Delhi, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) New Delhi and A.M.U. School Board, Aligarh Muslim University (A.M.U.) Aligarh. Out of total institutions only around 82 are located in Aligarh City.

15 Schools were selected through stratified random sampling procedure in such a way that the Males and females may get representation. From each selected school one section of class 9th or 10th was identified through random sampling technique. Finally, all the students of the selected sections present on that day were taken as sample for the present study. In this study 539 males and 264 females were taken.

Tools Used:

Following tools have been used for the study by the researcher:

1. Intelligence Test, Culture Fair (Scale 2, Form A) by Cattell, and Cattell, (1973).
2. Verbal Test of Creative Thinking (TCW) by Mehdi, B. (1997)
3. Socio Economic Status Scale (SESS) (FORM A, URBAN) by Shrivastava, G. P. (1997).
4. Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) by Mittal, V. K. (1965).
5. Educational Aspiration Scale (EAS) by Sharma, V.P. and Gupta, A. (1987).

Statistical Techniques:

The analysis of the data was done with the help of following statistical techniques: Mean, Standard Deviation, T test, Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r), and regression analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation

Objective 1: To study the significant difference in educational aspirations of Muslim and Non-Muslim females.

Table- 01**Significance of Difference in the Mean Educational Aspiration Scores**

Comparable Groups	N	M	SD	t-value
Muslim female sample	161	38.75	8.67	6.30***
Non-Muslim female sample	103	45.83	9.27	

*=P<0.05, **=P<0.01, ***=P<0.001

The obtained mean educational aspiration score of the Muslim female sample is 38.75 whereas it is 45.83 for the non-Muslim female sample. The calculated t-value is 6.30 for the difference between the mean educational aspiration scores of these two groups which is significant at 0.001 level. It can be again inferred from the above-mentioned Table 01 that the educational aspiration level of Muslim female is lower than their Non-Muslim female counterparts. Therefore, the hypothesis H.01 is rejected.

Objective 2: To study the correlation between predictive variables and the criterion variable (Educational Aspiration) subgroups.

Table- 02

**Correlation between the Predictive Variables and the Criterion Variable
(Educational Aspiration) for Muslim and non-Muslim Females**

Predictive Variables	Criterion Variable Educational Aspiration	
	Muslim female sample (N=161)	Non-Muslim female sample (N=103)
Intelligence	0.47***	0.39***
Creativity	0.04	0.01
SES	0.21**	0.27**
Adjustment	0.26**	0.28**

=P<0.01, *=P<0.001

It is clearly evident from Table 02 that the coefficients of correlation between intelligence and the criterion variable educational aspiration are found to be 0.47 for the Muslim female sample and 0.39 for the non-Muslim female sample. Both obtained values of coefficients are positive and significant beyond the 0.01 level. It can be said that students having high intelligence scores are also found to have a high level of educational aspiration for both groups.

The coefficients of correlation between creativity and educational aspiration are found to be 0.04 for the Muslim female sample and 0.01 for the non-Muslim female sample.

The coefficients of correlation between socio-economic status and educational aspiration are found to be 0.21 for the Muslim female sample and 0.27 for the non-Muslim female sample. Both values are positive and significant, with the significant level beyond 0.01. This shows

that students belonging to either group, having a high socio-economic status, also have positive educational aspirations.

The obtained values of the coefficients of correlation between adjustment and educational aspiration are found to be 0.26 for the Muslim female sample and 0.28 for the non-Muslim female sample. Both values are positive and significant beyond the 0.01 level of confidence. This clearly reveals that students belonging to both groups exhibiting high adjustment also show a high level of educational aspiration.

Therefore, hypothesis H.02 is rejected.

Objective 3: To identify the significant predictors of educational aspiration and their extent of predictability for the Muslim female sample.

The results of the stepwise regression analysis treating educational aspiration as the criterion variable and intelligence, creativity, socio-economic status and adjustment as the predictive variables for the Muslim female sample are presented in the Tables 03, 03A and 03B:

Table- 03

Stepwise Regression Analysis between the Predictive Variables and the Criterion Variable (Muslim Female Sample)

Predictive Variable(s) and Educational Aspiration	Df	R ²	R ² -change	F-change
Intelligence	159	0.222	0.222	45.37***
Intelligence and SES	158	0.265	0.043	9.14**
Intelligence, SES and adjustment	157	0.296	0.032	7.09**

=P<0.01, *=P<0.001

Table- 3A

Summary of ANOVA for Regression

Sources of Variations	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-change
Regression	3559.19	3	1186.40	22.03***
Residual	8453.37	157	53.84	
Total	12012.56	160		

***=P<0.001

Table- 3B

Regression Coefficients

Predictive Variables	Un-standardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	t-value
Constant	-5.42		0.84
Intelligence	0.23	0.44	6.44***
SES	0.27	0.21	3.13**
Adjustment	0.08	0.18	2.66**

=P<0.01, *=P<0.001

The analysis of the results presented in the Tables 03, 3A and 3B reveals that the predictive variables intelligence, SES and adjustment are found to be the significant predictors of educational aspiration for the Muslim female sample. The magnitude of the predictability is found to be 29.6% accounted for by the three predictive variables intelligence, SES and adjustment (Table 03). In this case also intelligence shared maximum percentage of variance (22.2%) in the criterion variable which is significant beyond 0.001 level as shown by the F-ratio (45.37) given in the Table 03. The second important contributing variable is SES which shared 4.3% of the variance being significant beyond 0.01 level ($F=9.14$). The least contributing variable is adjustment which contributed 3.2% of the variance in the criterion variable educational aspiration. It is significant beyond 0.01 level ($F=7.09$). Here, the creativity is eliminated from the model of prediction for educational aspiration of Muslim female sample as it has no significant contribution in the criterion variable.

The ANOVA for regression Table 3A shows that the model of prediction containing the three predictors namely intelligence, SES and adjustment shares the significant variance in the criterion variable educational aspiration due to the regression as shown by the F-ratio (22.03) which is significant beyond 0.001 level, Table 3A. The present model can be used to predict the educational aspiration scores significantly with the knowledge if the scores of the said predictors. All the regression coefficients presented in Table 3B are positive and significant. This shows that the variation in scores of the predictors (except adjustment) would result in positive and significant variation in the criterion variable educational aspiration. This means that the adjustment plays important and positive role as far as the educational aspiration of Muslim female adolescents is concerned. Therefore, hypothesis H03 is partially rejected.

The regression equation to predict educational aspiration of the Muslims female adolescents can be expressed as the linear combination of the significant predictive variables as follows:

$$Y = 0.23 X_1 + 0.27 X_2 - 0.08 X_3 - 5.42$$

Where;

Y = Educational aspiration score

X_1 = Intelligence score

X_2 = SES score

X_3 = Adjustment score

The percentage contribution of all the four predictive variables in the criterion variable educational aspiration for the Muslim female sample can be graphically represented as below:

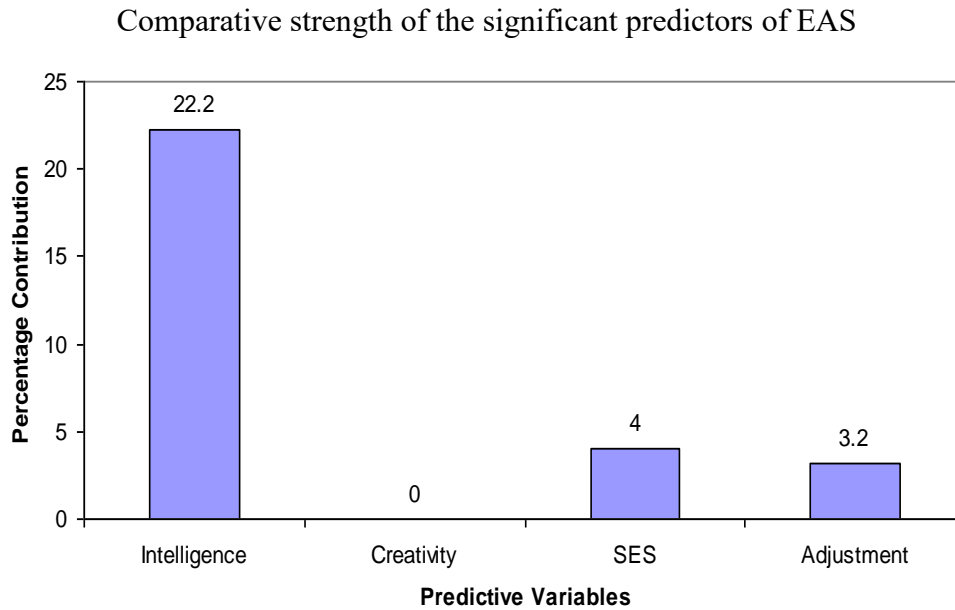


Fig. 1.0: Percentage contribution of the predictive variables in the criterion variable EAS for the Muslim female sample

Objective 4: To identify the significant predictors of educational aspiration and their extent of predictability for the Non-Muslim female sample.

The results of the stepwise regression analysis treating educational aspiration as the criterion variable and intelligence, creativity, socio-economic status and adjustment as the predictive variables for the non-Muslim female sample are presented in the tables 04, 4A and 4B:

Table 4
Stepwise Regression Analysis between the Predictive Variables and the Criterion Variable (Non-Muslim Female Sample)

Predictive Variable(s) and Educational Aspiration	Df	R ²	R ² -change	F-change
Intelligence	101	0.153	0.153	18.24***

***=P<0.001

Table 4A
Summary of ANOVA for regression

Sources of Variations	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-change
Regression	1340.69	1	1340.69	18.24***
Residual	74205	101	73.51	
Total	8764.85	102	----	----

***=P<0.001

Table 4B
Regression Coefficients

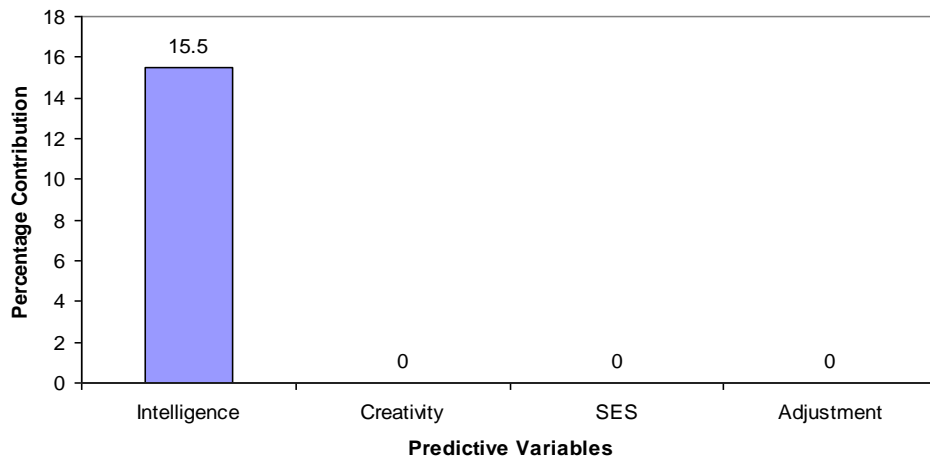
Predictive Variables	Un-standardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	t-value
Constant	25.87	---	5.45***
Intelligence	0.25	0.39	027***

***=P<0.001

The analysis of the results presented in the Tables 4, 4A and 4B show that the predictive variable intelligence is only found to be the significant predictor of educational aspiration for the Non-Muslim female sample (Table 4). The strength of the predictability is found by 15.3% which is significant beyond 0.001 level (F=18.24). Here again, the case is quite astonishing, i.e., creativity, SES and adjustment are dropped from the model of prediction indicating that the three variables have no significant share in the educational aspiration for the said group of adolescents.

The ANOVA for regression Table 4A reveals that the prediction model containing only one variable, cognitive in nature, shares significant variance in the criterion variable due to the regression for this sample. It is significant beyond 0.001 level as indicated by the F-ratio (18.24). The other predictive variables creativity (cognitive), SES and adjustment (non-cognitive) do not share significant variance in the criterion variable due to the regression for the sample. One can have good prediction of educational aspiration scores of the non-Muslim female adolescents with the help of the scores of intelligence. The regression coefficient which is shown in the Table 4B is positive and significant. It indicates that the positive change would occur in the scores of criterion variable educational aspiration due to change in the value of the predictor.

The percentage contribution of all the four predictive variables in the criterion variable educational aspiration for the non-Muslim female sample can be graphically depicted as below:



**Fig. 2.0: Percentage contribution of the predictive variables in the criterion variables
EAS for the Non – Muslim female sample**

The regression equation to predict educational aspiration scores of the non-Muslim female adolescents can be expressed in terms of the linear combination of the significant predictive variable intelligence as follows:

$$Y = 0.25 X_1 + 25.87$$

Where;

Y = Educational aspiration score

X₁ = Intelligence score

Comparative Strength of the Significant Predictors of EAS The comparative predictability strength of the significant predictors of educational aspiration in terms of the percentage shared common variance for the Muslim female and non-Muslim female samples are presented in the Table 05:

Table- 5

Comparative strength of the significant predictors of EAS in Muslim female and Non-Muslim female samples

Predictive Educational Aspiration	Variable(s)	and	% Shared Common Variance		z-value
			Muslim Sample	Female Non-Muslim Sample	
Intelligence			22.2	15.3	1.25
Creativity			----	----	----
SES			4.3	----	----
Adjustment			3.2	----	----

The results presented in the Table 5 reveal that for the Muslim female sample, the significant predictors of Educational Aspiration are intelligence, SES and adjustment,

whereas in the case of non-Muslim female sample, the significant predictor is only intelligence. The percentage shared common variance of intelligence in the educational aspiration of Muslim female sample is found to be higher than the non-Muslim female counterparts but this difference is statistically insignificant. This shows that intelligence plays an equally important role in the prediction of educational aspiration of both the groups. This finding is in the line with previous finding, about Muslim, non-Muslim and female, samples. It may also be noted that the SES along with adjustment are found to be the additional significant predictors of educational aspiration for the Muslim female adolescents. This shows that both the variables are playing the important role in the shaping of the educational aspiration level of the Muslim female adolescents.

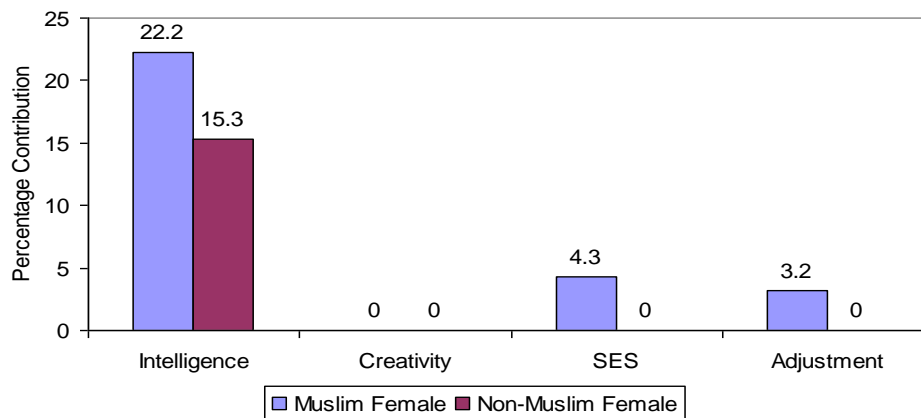


Fig. 4.13 Comparative Strength of the significant predictors of EAS of Muslim female and Non-Muslim female samples

Fig. 3.0: Comparative strength of the significant predictors of EAS of Muslim female and Non- Muslim female samples

Findings:

After careful analysis it was found, intelligence is a powerful predictor of educational aspiration for both the groups. The obtained values are 22.2% and 15.3% for Muslim and non-Muslim female sample respectively. (Table 3 and 4)

The comparison of said groups on intelligence as predictor of educational aspiration is non-significant. In case of Muslim female sample both the non-cognitive factors – SES and adjustment are significant predictors of educational aspiration. The contribution of SES is 4.3% which indicates that Muslim female groups socio-economic resources for their development which includes favorable higher educational aspiration and similarly other aspirations for bright future.

Adjustment is also found to be the additional significant predictor of educational aspiration for the said group. The reason being that a good adjustment condition certainly mitigates the

level of alertness to obtain higher educational aspiration scores. May be this psychological phenomenon is working well in the positive relationship between adjustment and educational aspiration in case of Muslim females. Surprisingly in case of non-Muslim females Creativity, SES and adjustment did not contribute in the model. It indicates that in their case intelligence has contributed strongly and independently for educational aspiration.

CONCLUSION

It is always a challenge for the researcher to study the characteristics associated with the personality of the learner. The findings of the present study calls for serious and concerted effort by all the stakeholders to enhance the educational aspiration of females for higher goals in the educational arena. Women constitute about half of the total population of a country, who work as mother, house maker and work force in every society. Thus, their contribution is more important for the development of a country. Muslim girls are backward educationally in comparison to their non-Muslim counterparts. Therefore, an extra effort is required to address their educational needs. The present study has revealed the intelligence among muslim girls is an important predictor of educational aspiration. However, the contribution of SES and adjustment can be enhanced through the counseling of parents as well as female students.

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