ABSTRACT

Level of aspiration is the standard a person hopes in a given performance. It is an important factor in the future achievement and attainment of individuals. The development of aspirations is influenced by background, environmental and personality variables.

The purpose of the present study was to compare the general and specific levels of aspiration of Ethiopian and Indian disadvantaged and advantaged groups of adolescents. Three background variables - SES, sex, and religious affiliation - that may put groups of individuals at disadvantage were considered as independent variables.

Based on the research literature reviewed, the following research hypotheses were formulated.

Socio-economically disadvantaged groups were expected to score lower than their advantaged counterparts on the measures of general and specific aspiration levels.

Girls were expected to score lower than boys on the measures of general and specific levels of aspirations.

Muslim groups were also expected to score lower than Hindu and Christian groups on the measures of general and specific levels of aspirations.

Further, specific questions were asked concerning the aspiration levels of the two countries groups of adolescents.

From Aligarh (India) and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), a total of 512 subjects were selected by means of stratified random sampling technique.
Disadvantaged and advantaged groups were identified on the bases of their parents' educational levels and occupational statuses, family income and quality of schools attended. Each comparison group was balanced by sex and religion.

The L.A. Coding Test (Ansari and Ansari, 1964), which is simply a letter substitution to arithmetic symbols, was administered to measure the general levels of aspiration. From the responses, I-bids, goal-discrepancies and shifts were calculated as indices of the different dimensions of general level of aspiration.

Grewal's (1975) Occupational Aspiration Scale was administered to the Indian subjects and its slightly adapted form was used for Ethiopian subjects. An Educational Aspiration Scale was developed and validated for the purpose of the present research.

Data was analysed using ANOVA and t-test. Analyses of the various comparisons revealed that:

In both countries, the socio-economically disadvantaged groups scored lower I-bids, higher goal-discrepancies, lower usual shifts, higher rigidity and unusual shifts and lower educational and occupational aspirations when compared with their advantaged counterparts of their respective countries. All the differences were statistically significant. The results were interpreted as that the disadvantaged groups are more likely to be less realistic, less flexible and more rigid and confused which they revealed in their goal-setting behaviour as compared to the advantaged groups.

In India, except for occupational aspirations, girls and boys did not significantly differ in the other measures of aspirations, indicating that girls are appearing to close in the gap with boys in terms of level of aspiration.
Ethiopian sampled girls were found to significantly score lower I-bids, higher goal-discrepancy and lower educational and occupational aspirations than their male counterparts. The gap was found much wider between the disadvantaged boys and girls.

In both countries, differences in the level of aspiration by the factor of religion were not statistically significant.

When Indian and Ethiopian adolescents were compared, some significant differences were found - Indian adolescents being more flexible and aspiring to higher educational levels. The observed differences were largely due to the differences between the disadvantaged Ethiopian and disadvantaged Indian groups. Ethiopian disadvantaged group appears to be more affected by the conditions of their country than the Ethiopian advantaged counterparts.

Based on the findings and the discussion that followed, suggestions for interventions and for future research are provided.

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