ABSTRACT

The present study is an humble attempt to investigate perceptions and aspirations of women students studying in two Women’s Colleges of Srinagar and Kashmir University. These are the only institutions which cater the educational needs of the girls in Srinagar.

The major objectives of the present study are as under:

1. To investigate and compare the perceptions and aspirations of graduate students representing different faculties.

2. To study and compare the perceptions and aspirations of the post-graduate students hailing from different faculties.

3. To investigate and compare the perceptions and aspirations of the students pursuing different professional courses of studies.

4. To analyse and compare the perceptions and aspirations of the respondents hailing from different parental financial backgrounds.

(Respondents whose parental monthly income is in the range of ₹ 1000-2500 have been kept under the category of lower income group; those whose parental monthly income is
within the income bracket of Rs 2500-4000 have been kept under the category of middle income group and the whose parental monthly income is Rs 4000 and above have been placed under the category of higher income group.

5. To investigate and compare the perceptions and aspirations of the respondents on the basis of their parental educational backgrounds.

(Respondents whose parental educational background is below or upto High School have been placed under the category of less educated group; the respondents whose parents are graduates have been kept under the educated category and the respondents whose parents have obtained masters or any other professional degree have been placed under the category of highly educated group).

6. To investigate and compare the perceptions and aspirations of the total respondents hailing from different courses of studies.

The sample of 535 respondents out of the total universe of 5251 has been drawn by adopting Random Sampling Method. The sample constitute women students enrolled in graduate, post-graduate and professional courses of studies, hailing from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.
Questionnaire was developed in order to collect the required information from the respondents. The questionnaire consists of two parts; one dealing with the fact finding information and other contains items related to the problem under study. In all there are 100 questions in the questionnaire, 50 questions are related to the area of perceptions and 50 questions to elicit responses towards aspirations.

Since perceptions and aspirations are unlimited, hence under certain delimitations the investigator has selected five areas for the purpose of investigation. These areas are economic, social, political, educational and religious.

The economic perceptions and aspirations of the respondents have been elicited by framing items related to economic conditions, opportunities and activities etc.

The data regarding social perceptions and aspirations of the respondents have been collected by framing items related to social conditions as well as social relations and interactions etc.

Political perceptions and aspirations of the respondents have been elicited by framing items pertaining to political activities, ideologies and political participation etc.
Under the category of educational perceptions and aspirations, items have been framed to elicit responses from the respondents pertaining to educational opportunities, facilities and system etc.

Religious perceptions and aspirations of the respondents have been elicited by framing items related to religious teachings and practices etc.

It is an open fact that socio-economic factors, proper rearing of children, children's education, role of parents, socio-economic family environment and political events and environment etc. hold a great impact in the formation, shaping and development of perceptions and aspirations of the individuals in the society.

The data initially has been analysed on the basis of percentages scored by each item under different categories. Furthermore, Chi-square test and Critical Ratio Method have been applied to work out comparisons and to find out whether any significant differences between perceptions and aspirations of the respondents are noticeable or not.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

The analysis of the data reveal that there are slight variations in the perceptions and aspirations of the
respondents representing different courses of studies. Yet greater variations are visible among the respondents hailing from different parental income and educational backgrounds.

The main findings of the study are as follows:

1. The percentage wise analysis and value of Chi-square reveal that very little variations are noticeable in the perceptions and aspirations of the respondents hailing from graduate classes representing different faculties.

2. Percentage wise analysis reveal slight variations in the perceptions and aspirations of the respondents hailing from post-graduate classes; but the value of Chi-square indicate that significant variations are not noticeable.

3. The percentage wise analysis and the value of Chi-square with regard to the perceptions and aspirations of the students representing different professional courses of studies reveal that very little variations are visible.

4. The percentage wise analysis reveal that students hailing from different economic backgrounds hold different perceptions and aspirations.

5. Percentage wise analysis reveal that variations are noticeable in the perceptions and aspirations of the respondents hailing from different parental educational backgrounds.
The value of Critical Ratio with respect to economic, social, political and educational categories indicate significant variations in perceptions and corresponding aspirations of the respondents. However, no significant variation is noticeable as far as the religious perceptions and aspirations of the respondents are concerned.

The analysis of the data based on Chisquare values indicate that there are some significant variations in the perceptions and aspirations of the respondents towards certain statements as reported below:

**ECONOMIC PERCEPTIONS**:

The value of Chisquare among the total respondents regarding the item no. 7 is 11.46, which is significant at .05 level (df=4), clearly indicate that differences are noticeable in the perceptions of the respondents. Respondents have exhibited differences in their perception that, "government servants and leaders of their state in order to make their economic basis more sound accept illegal gratifications".

**ECONOMIC ASPIRATIONS**:

The calculated Chisquare 9.75, significant at .05 level (df=4), indicate a clear differential in the economic aspirations of the total respondents regarding item no. 1. They differ in their aspirations, "to suplliment their parents earnings by taking up some part-time job while studying". Furthermore, the value of Chisquare 14.02
regarding the aspirations of the professional students for
the same item also indicate significant variations among
them.

Graduate students representing different faculties
also show significant variations in their aspirations regard­
ing item no. 6, as the value of Chisquare is 14.63, signifi­
cant at .05 level (df=4). They differ in their aspirations,
"to educate the economically weak masses of their society
to raise their voice against any kind of exploitation and
to start some extra economic activities on a small-scale also".

Furthermore, the Chisquare value regarding the economic
aspirations of the respondents hailing from the graduate
courses of studies is 13.15, significant at .05 level (df=4),
for item no. 7. The respondents differ in their aspiration
"to earn through legitimate means and to fight against the
prevailing practices of illegal gratifications operative in
their society.

SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS:

The value of calculated Chisquare do not exhibit any
significant difference in the social perceptions of the
total respondents.
SOCIAL ASPIRATION:

The Chi-square values indicate no significant variations in the social aspirations of the total respondents.

POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS:

The value of Chi-square reveals no significant variations in the political perceptions of the respondents hailing from all the courses of studies.

POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS:

The value of Chi-square 14.15, significant at .05 level (df=4), clearly show variations in the political aspirations of the total respondents regarding item no. 4. They differ in their aspirations "to enlighten the masses of their state not to cast their votes on the basis of religious considerations as it amounts to greater conflicts".

The calculated Chi-square 13.37, significant at .05 level (df=4), clearly indicate variations in the political aspirations of the total respondents regarding item no. 10. They differ in their aspirations "to raise voice that government should impose some financial limits in election expenditures which should be subject to accountability". Moreover, the value of Chi-square 15.18, with respect to the aspirations of students representing professional courses of studies is also significant at .05 level (df=4).
EDUCATIONAL PERCEPTIONS:

The value of Chisquare 10.29, significant at .05 level (df=4), reveal that variations are visible with regard to item no. 7. The total respondents differ in their perception that "members of their community are more in favour of religious education than scientific/rational education".

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS:

The value of Chisquare 69.56 is significant at .05 level (df=4) regarding item no. 7. The total respondents differ in their aspirations "to propagate among the members of their community about the usefulness of Scientific education based on analytical and rational principles instead of religious education alone". Furthermore, the value of Chisquare 14.76, for the students hailing from professional courses of studies is also highly significant for the same statement.

RELIGIOUS PERCEPTIONS:

On the basis of Chisquare analysis, the total respondents have not exhibited any significant difference in their religious perceptions.

RELIGIOUS ASPIRATIONS:

The calculated Chisquare 19.19, significant at .05 level (df=4), regarding item no. 1, clearly reveal significant difference in the aspirations of the graduate students. The graduate students from different faculties differ in
their aspirations "to educate, if possible the members of their community about the significance of offering prayers regularly as prescribed.

The Chi-square value 12.76, significant at .05 level (df=4), regarding item no. 2, show significant variations in the aspirations of the total respondents. They differ in their aspiration "to follow themselves and educate the members of their community to practice the laws as laid down in the Holy Scriptures".

Thus, it can be concluded that significant variations are noticeable in the economic and educational perceptions of the total respondents; whereas on the other hand significant variations are also noticeable in the economic, political, educational and religious aspirations of the respondents.

The analysis of the data further reveal that no significant variations are visible in economic and political perceptions of the respondents hailing from different parental income backgrounds; while on the other hand the variations are noticeable in the social, educational and religious perceptions of the respondents hailing from the three parental economic backgrounds.

The analysis further reveal that variations are visible in the economic, social and political aspirations of the
respondents representing the three income groups; whereas no variations are noticeable in the educational and religious aspirations.

The respondents hailing from less educated, educated and highly educated parental backgrounds have exhibited no variations in their economic and political perceptions; while on the other hand variations are noticeable in their social, educational and religious perceptions. Furthermore, the respondents from the above mentioned three classes of parental educational backgrounds have manifested variations in their economic, social and political aspirations; whereas no variations have been manifested in their educational and religious aspirations.

Finally, by applying Critical Ratio Method, significant differences have been identified between the perceptions and the corresponding aspirations of the respondents in each area of study except religious.