Aspiration level of a person is a measure of one's intentional disposition and is a vital element of one's long range behaviour. The knowledge of aspiration level as related to education and occupation of women students is essential both from educational and guidance point of view.

The educational and occupational status of women tends to be influenced by various behavioural and social variables. An improvement in the status of women in these two areas can be achieved by enhancing related aspirations of women students. To plan any intervention programme, aimed at enhancing these aspirations by manipulating the variables that influence them, the knowledge of the relevant variables becomes necessary.

In this context, the present study attempts to investigate the influence of socio-economic status (SES), an independent variable, on the three dependent variables i.e., educational aspirations (EA), occupational aspirations (OA) and attitude towards equality of women (ATEW) in one treatment. In an other treatment attitude towards equality of women is considered as an independent variable and its influence on the EA and OA of women students is examined.
The exposure one receives depending on one's faculty of study (FOS) and the type of college (TOC) at which one is studying also tends to influence one's educational aspirations, occupational aspirations and attitude towards equality of women. Hence, the effect of these two variables on the educational and occupational aspirations is also studied. A schematic representation of the relationship among the variables studied in the present investigation is given in figure 3.

Specifically, the study attempts to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the nature and quality of educational and occupational aspirations of women students? What are the motivating factors contributing to and constraints affecting these aspirations?

Note: The question is asked as educational and occupational aspirations influence the goal seeking behaviour and thereby tend to determine the educational and occupational status of women. So, high aspirations (realistic in view of one's potentialities) can be assumed to be leading to achievement of high educational and occupational status. Further, it is felt necessary to know (i) whether the girl students aspire to take up the occupations that are labelled as suitable for women or do they aspire to go for other occupations also, and (ii) the motivating factors behind their educational and occupational aspirations along with the influences affecting their aspirations.
Fig. 3: Schematic diagram showing the relationship among the dependent and independent variables used in the study.
2. Do socio-economic status, faculty of study and type of college influence the educational and occupational aspirations of women students?

Note: The question is asked in order to know whether these environmental variables in the immediate experience of young women determine their educational and occupational aspirations.

3. In what way does attitude towards equality of women influence the educational and occupational aspirations of the respondents?

Note: The question is felt necessary to learn the effect of attitude towards equality of women, a variable which is prone to be influenced by one’s socio-economic status, faculty of study and type of college among other factors; on the educational and occupational aspirations of women students.

4. Do high aspirants in the area of education aspire high as related to that of occupation too?

Note: The question is raised to know whether the educational aspirations of women students are matched with their occupational aspirations. Logically, it can be expected that a person who has high educational aspirations will have high occupational aspirations too. However, review of the related literature revealed that women in general tend to aspire low as related to the area of occupation, due to the influence of various factors. Hence, the question is felt essential.

A study of this nature will help to gain an insight into the nature of the hold of socio-economic status, faculty of study, type of college at which one is studying and attitude
towards equality of women on the educational and occupational aspirations of female undergraduate students. This knowledge may help the educators, counsellors and policy makers to know the drawbacks that are existing in the present set up of our society and its systems, which can cripple the chances of the girl students in achieving higher positions and of their chances of serving the society and herself in a better way.

The knowledge of the drawbacks in the set up can help us to suggest ways of rectifying the defects existing in the system and thus to pave the path for optimum achievement and psychological well-being of the future generation.