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## “Career Aspirations of Adolescent Orphans of Kashmir”: Pathways to the Future.

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### ABSTRACT

Adolescence goes to mark the influence of desires, likes and aspirations, and these in turn have a greater influence on paving the way to one's future, but in the case of the orphaned adolescents, the greatest impediments being encountered by them are the influx of uncertainties and lack of opportunities available to other strata of the social milieu. Pathetic to note are the career aspirations or other academic pursuits being felt by this orphaned posterity of Jammu and Kashmir. This study endeavours to explore the possible ways that go to determine the future availability of social support and assistance to broaden the systematic approach to fashion and design the futurity of this class of orphan children being nurtured in these institutions. The socio-economic realities involving the shaping of the careers of these children are impacted by the greater vulnerability to stress and strain through economic distrust that these children face while achieving their goals. However, the study and the findings therein go to uncover the fact that the inclusive guidance with a stronger system of support to educational programmes and services is a ray of hope for the children to enter into a diverse type of society that goes to shape their destinies.

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### Introduction:

Though career aspirations play an important role in an individual's personal and professional growth, they are often influenced by factors like educational opportunities, socioeconomic status and intrinsic motivation. For orphans, especially in areas like Jammu and Kashmir, their emotional, psychological, and



financial issues can have a significant impact on their ability to pursue their career goals. Though adolescent orphans, especially from Kashmir, face unique and multiple challenges that hinder the development of their career goals, yet these adolescent orphans tend to aspire and overcome the adversity through education and vocational training (Bhat & Ganie, 2019).

### **Career Development of Adolescent Orphans:**

In order to address the challenges and hardships faced by the adolescent orphans of Kashmir, various NGOs and government initiatives aim to support orphans in Jammu and Kashmir. These organisations provide educational scholarships, vocational training programmes, and career counselling programmes that help to expand the career possibilities of adolescent orphans of Kashmir. Various programmes like the "Udaan" scheme in Jammu and Kashmir, for capacity building of youth in Jammu and Kashmir through skill development and exposing them to the best of the corporates in India, which also benefits orphans by providing opportunities to receive quality education and vocational training (Government of Jammu & Kashmir, 2021).

In addition to the role played by non-governmental organisations, the role of teachers, mentors and societal support cannot be underestimated. The orphan show higher aspirations when they have a role model to follow. (Shaheen, 2020).

Moreover, it has been felt by the educational and welfare organisations that there is an urgent need for counselling vis-à-vis career choices and the provision of one-to-one mentorship for these adolescents. These programmes have a very positive and significant impact on the career aspirations of orphans.

### **Factors Affecting Career Aspirations in Jammu and Kashmir**

Career aspirations of individuals get influenced by a variety of factors, including personal, social, economic, and cultural factors. In Jammu and Kashmir, people suffer from political instability, socio-economic disparities and frequent conflict in addition to the mentioned factors. They have a direct impact on the career aspirations of the populace residing there.

### **Educational Opportunities and Access**

Education is the main agent of social change; be it a social problem or the goals or aspirations of the adolescents, education acts as a catalyst for that change. The availability, affordability and quality of education directly affect individuals' ability to pursue their desired careers. In regions like Jammu and Kashmir, there are issues of equity and access and significant disparities, especially in rural and conflict-



affected areas. According to Mir and Yousuf (2019), the region has witnessed a decline in educational infrastructure due to the ongoing conflict, which has led to disrupted schooling and inadequate facilities.

### **Socio-Economic Status**

Socio-economic status is a crucial determinant of career aspirations. In Jammu and Kashmir, many individuals come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Poverty and limited financial resources often hinder access to higher education and vocational training, thereby hindering the ability to pursue professional careers. A study by Khan and Shah (2020) suggests that young people from low-income families are more likely inclined to do jobs that offer immediate financial security, such as manual labour or government jobs, rather than pursuing their higher education or specialised careers.

### **Cultural Identity and Gender Roles**

Cultural identity and gender roles have a crucial role in shaping career aspirations, particularly for women. In many parts of Jammu and Kashmir, traditional gender roles often limit the career options available to young women. Women are frequently expected to prioritise family responsibilities over professional careers, which reduces their career aspirations and opportunities for economic independence. A study by Jabeena et al. (2020) highlights that gender stereotypes and societal expectations in the region often push women towards careers in teaching, healthcare, or other acceptable female-dominated professions, limiting their exposure to more diverse career fields.

### **Political Instability and Conflict**

Political instability and conflict are perhaps the most significant factors influencing the career aspirations of the adolescent orphans of Jammu and Kashmir. The region has been affected by prolonged political unrest, militancy, and violent conflicts, which have disrupted the educational fabric and the local economy. The ongoing instability has not only limited employment opportunities but also created an environment of uncertainty. According to Khurshid (2021), the lack of peace and security often leads young people to focus on survival rather than their long-term career planning. As a result, many young individuals may set aside their career ambitions to focus on basic needs such as safety and security.

### **Role of Family and Peer Influence**

Family expectations and peer influence are additional factors influencing career aspirations. Families in Jammu and Kashmir prefer to go for public sector jobs rather than the other options. As the situation in J&K has not been stable for almost two decades, there are a limited number of options available. So



families emphasise traditional and stable career paths. As noted by Bhat and Ganie (2019), the familial pressure can limit the range of career aspirations, particularly in the context of a region where public sector jobs are seen as the most reliable source of employment.

### **Objective of the Study:**

To study the general pattern of career aspirations among adolescent orphans of Kashmir

### **Review of Related Literature:**

### **Review of Related Literature:**

1. Abbassi (2022) studied a novel approach of career opportunities for orphans. A total of 302 students were included as a sample of the study; the questionnaire was used for the collection of data. The result revealed that career antecedents like human capital, family history, counselling, and child labour are all important antecedent opportunities. However, it was also found that there exists a significant relation between professional opportunities and the institutional assistance or outside exposure.
2. Suhail et al. (2021) conducted a study to know the character and temperament of adolescent orphans living in orphanages. The study involved thirty orphans from the districts of Baramulla and Srinagar. Research has shown that orphans exhibit higher levels of novelty seeking and are more impulsive than students who are not orphans. Additionally, orphans were found to be pessimistic and to have high avoidance scores. Orphans also displayed greater reward dependence when compared to non-orphans
3. Bhatia, A., and N. R. Hoshire (2021) carried out a study titled "Study on Personality and Creativity of Orphanage Children. The study was aimed at comparing the personality and creativity between orphanage students and children residing with their families. The study revealed that children living with their family appear to be more sociable and joyful, while children living in an orphanage appear to be more introverted and calm. Regarding creativity level, it was found that children residing with their family members have better creativity than children residing in orphanages
4. Debnath and Singh (2020) examined the influence of occupational aspiration & academic achievement of higher secondary students. The result pointed out that there exists a strong



association between occupational aspiration & academic achievement of higher secondary students.

5. G. Gnanasekar (2018) conducted a descriptive study to assess the personality development among the orphan children of Puducherry. The study was conducted on 30 orphan students, and a purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. The result revealed that the majority of the students scored higher on the personality development scale.
6. Vijayan, J.G. (2017) worked out “A study on the influence of occupational aspiration on the academic achievement of institutionalised adolescent orphans in Kerala.” The study depicted that there exists a significant positive relationship between occupational aspiration and academic achievement of students.
7. Dwivedi(2013) conducted a study on self-concept and personality adjustment in orphan children and children living in the home. A total of 60 students were chosen with the help of the purposive sampling technique. It was found that orphan children showed lower self-concept and adjustment than children living with their biological parents.
8. Priyanka, Dr Meenakshi Sharma (2011): Studied comparison in the occupational aspirations among orphan and non-orphan home-reared students. The study was conducted on 100 students (50 orphans and 50 non-orphans), using a standardised occupational aspiration scale. The sample was random. The purpose of the study was to assess the difference in occupational values (realistic, academic, social, etc.) of the two groups. The results showed that there exist no significant differences in the occupational aspirations of orphan and non-orphan students. However, the study revealed that non-orphans scored better than orphans based on realistic aspirations.

**Population:** The adolescent orphans studying in orphanages of Kashmir are the population of the study.

**Sampling Technique:** In the present study 151 adolescent orphans were selected with the help of **the purposive sampling technique**.

**Tools Used for Data Collection:** The researcher has used the career aspiration scale by Sarita Anand. The scale evaluates four components: dedication, motivation, realisation, and self-confidence.

**Statistical Techniques Used:** The data were analysed using descriptive statistics: mean, standard deviation, and percentage to describe the general trends in career aspirations.

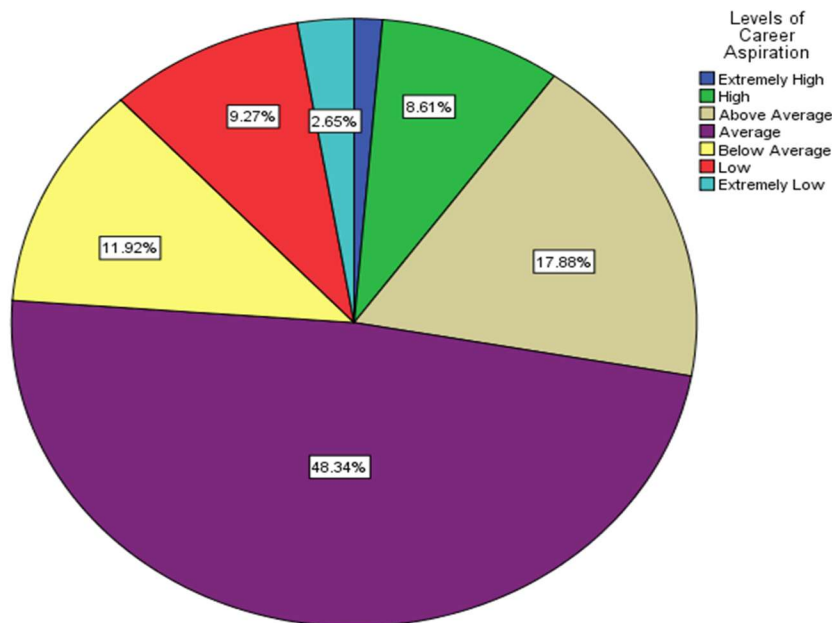
**Results and Interpretation:**

**Objective-1: To study the general pattern of career aspiration among adolescent orphans of Kashmir.** The percentage of level of career Aspiration among adolescent orphans of Kashmir is shown in table 1.1

**Table 1.1 Level of Career Aspiration**

S.No	N	Percentage	Grade	Level of Career Aspiration
1	2	1.3	A	Extremely High
2	13	8.6	B	High
3	27	17.9	C	Above Average
4	73	48.3	D	Average
5	18	11.9	E	Below Average
6	14	9.3	F	Low
7	4	2.6	G	Extremely Low
Total	151	100.0		

**SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY**



**GRAPH 1.1: Level of Career Aspiration**



Table 1.1 and graph 1.1 show that 48.3% of students show an average level of career aspiration, which means that nearly half of the adolescent orphans have moderate outlooks on their future careers. 17.9% of students have shown an above-average level of career aspirations; additionally, 8.6% of adolescent orphans have shown a high level of career aspiration, and 1.3% of adolescent orphans have shown an extremely high level of career aspirations, which highlights that only a small group of adolescents hold strong career ambitions. On the other hand, 11.9% of adolescent orphans have shown below-average levels of career aspirations, 9.3% of adolescent orphans have shown low levels of career aspirations and 2.6% show extremely low levels of career aspirations. The results showed that factors like lack of motivation, inadequate guidance and counselling and poor socioeconomic status had a negative impact on the level of career aspiration of adolescent orphans.

Overall, the results of the study revealed that most of the adolescent orphans hold average or higher levels of career aspirations, while only a few students show low levels of career aspiration. This could be due to varied factors, including environmental, emotional, or educational obstacles. Furthermore, the results further suggested that adolescent orphans should be provided with adequate guidance and counselling sessions for the increment of their level of career aspirations. (American Psychological Association, 2010).

**Table 1.2 Dimension-wise Mean and SD of Career Aspiration**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Dedication	151	25.56	2.550
Motivation	151	22.12	2.698
Realization	151	21.48	4.503
Self-confidence	151	24.43	3.326

**SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY**

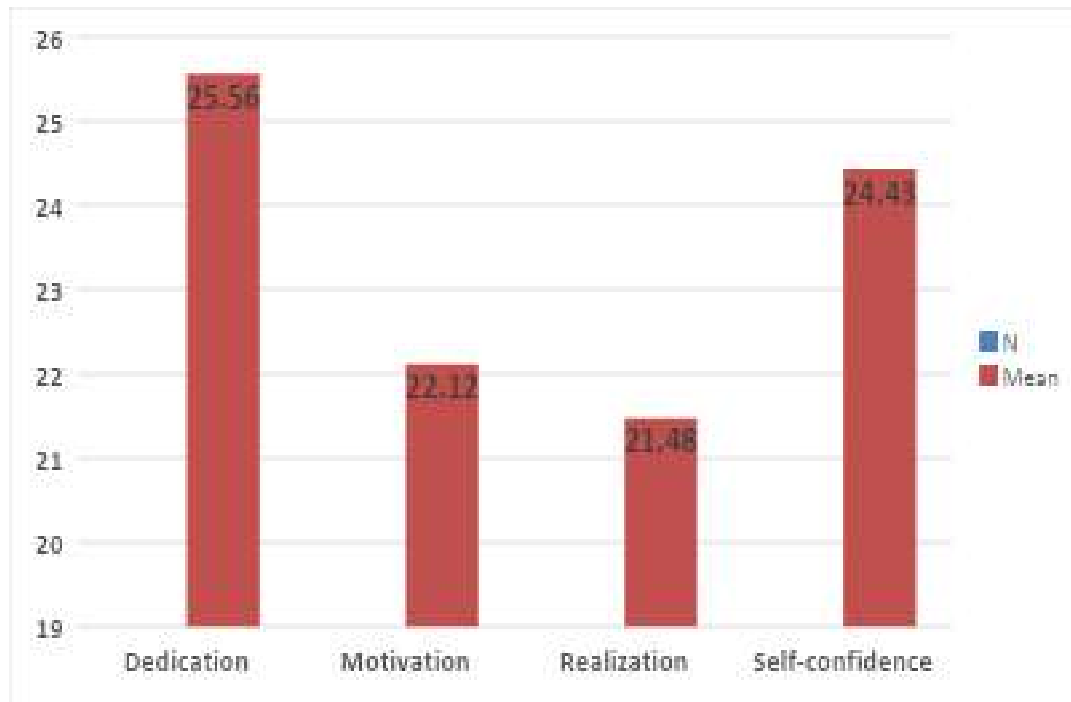
**GRAPH 1.2 Dimension-wise Mean and SD of Career Aspiration**

Table 1.2 and graph 1.2 show the mean scores of the 4 dimensions of the career aspiration scale, including dedication, motivation, realisation, and self-confidence, among 151 adolescent orphans in Kashmir. The dimension-wise analysis and interpretation of findings are given below:

**Dedication:** Table 1.2 indicates that the mean rank of adolescent orphans is 25.56 on the dedication dimension, which was found to be comparatively higher than other dimensions of the career aspiration scale. The result showed that the adolescent orphans show a moderate to strong commitment to achieving their career goals. It therefore gives a clear indication that adolescent orphans, despite facing personal, environmental and social problems, are always ready to work hard and show persistence in their career goals.

**Motivation:** Table 1.2 indicates that the mean rank of adolescent orphans is 22.12 on the motivation dimension of the career aspiration scale. The result showed that the adolescent orphans show a moderate motivation level for achieving their career goals. The reason for the moderate motivation is directly linked with their obstacles, including psychological, environmental and social factors that they tend to face while pursuing their futuristic plans.



**Realisation:** Table 1.2 indicates that the mean rank of adolescent orphans is 21.48 on the realisation dimension of the career aspiration scale, which is the lowest among the 4 dimensions of the career aspiration scale. The result showed that the adolescent orphans show a low realisation level for achieving their career goals. Which indicates that there exists a gap between their current actions and future goals of adolescent orphans.

**Self-Confidence:** Table 1.2 indicates that the mean rank of adolescent orphans is 24.43 on the self-confidence dimension of the career aspiration scale. Which is the second highest after the dedication dimension level of the career aspiration scale. The result showed that the adolescent orphans show a moderate to strong commitment of self-confidence for achieving their career goals. The results

The results of the study revealed that adolescent orphans in Kashmir have moderate levels of career aspiration, especially on the dimensions of dedication and self-confidence of the career aspiration scale. On the other hand, adolescent orphans show a low level on the realisation and motivation dimension of the career aspiration scale, which indicates that adolescent orphans need stronger motivation and better realisation skills for setting and achieving their futuristic plans. Moreover, stress should be given to adequate career guidance, counselling, and skill-building programmes for better and effective career planning goals.

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