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#### **Tulika Borah**

Department of Human  
Development and Family  
Studies, College of Community  
Science, Assam Agricultural  
University, Jorhat, Assam, India

#### **Arifa Momtaz Begum**

Department of Human  
Development and Family  
Studies, College of Community  
Science, Assam Agricultural  
University, Jorhat, Assam, India

#### **Toslina Sultana Begum**

Department of Human  
Development and Family  
Studies, College of Community  
Science, Assam Agricultural  
University, Jorhat, Assam, India

#### **Binapani Deka**

Department of Human  
Development and Family  
Studies, College of Community  
Science, Assam Agricultural  
University, Jorhat, Assam, India

#### **Zionvarzing Thiek**

Department of Human  
Development and Family  
Studies, College of Community  
Science, Assam Agricultural  
University, Jorhat, Assam, India

#### **Corresponding Author:**

#### **Tulika Borah**

Department of Human  
Development and Family  
Studies, College of Community  
Science, Assam Agricultural  
University, Jorhat, Assam, India

## Family environment and its influence on educational aspiration of adolescents

**Tulika Borah, Arifa Momtaz Begum, Toslima Sultana Begum, Binapani Deka and Zionvarzing Thiek**

### **Abstract**

The family environment can be a strong source of support for adolescents. Adolescence is a bridge period, a time of changeover from one stage to another. Positive relationship with parents is an important factor in molding the adolescent's personality which in turn may help in achieving their goals. Family environment are not similar for all families, it differs from one family to another and also there exist variations in parents and children themselves. Educational aspiration is an important variable in predicting academic achievement and is considered as an important element in academic motivation. Each family environment is unique and due to the diversity in families, the educational aspirations of adolescents may be influenced by family environment. Hence, the present study aims to study the relation between family environment and educational aspiration of adolescents. The study sample comprised of 120 numbers of adolescents of 16-18 years of age, selected randomly from Government and private higher secondary schools. A self-constructed questionnaire was used to collect information on educational aspiration of respondents and a standardized tool "Family Environment Scale" developed by Bhatia and Chadawas (1993) was used to assess the family environment of the respondents. Karl Pearson's correlation test was computed to assess the relationship between family environment and educational aspiration of adolescents. The correlation coefficient value of the family environment and educational aspiration of adolescents was found to be 0.246 at 0.01 levels of significance. It reveals that there exists a positive correlation between the two variables i.e. if the family environment increases; the educational aspiration of adolescents also increases and vice versa.

**Keywords:** Family environment, educational aspiration, adolescents

### **Introduction**

Education is a systematic process of learning for harmonious development of all domains of the human being- physical, social, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual. Education plays a crucial role in shaping the character and quality of people. It is a process which transforms the behavior of a person from 'instinctive behavior' to 'human behavior'. During the educational process people gain necessary skills and competencies to be able to function in different spheres of life. Education has become inevitable in today's world, and has established an important role in attaining future goals, especially for young people as this stage is also a period of goal setting. The goal of education is to help an individual in his universal development, though it cannot be achieved unless the person has the required amount of educational aspirations. For the adolescents, setting a goal can help them in building the desire or aspiration to reach their destiny. In order to become successful in life, one has to have certain goals or aspirations, as aspirations motivate people to be successful, positive, and effective.

Aspirations are that which drive individuals to do more and be more than they presently are. In psychology, aspiration has been defined as a strong desire to accomplish something. It is a determinant of an individual's performance level in the future and also acts as an important motivating factor of an individual. An aspiration of an individual may be influenced considerably by the expectations of significant people who interact with the individual. Aspirations can play a strong role in helping the students to push for better achievements (Kao and Thompson, 2003; MacBrayne, 1987) <sup>[8, 9]</sup>. Educational aspiration is the educational goals students' set for themselves. It is that level of attainment which one reaches in the course of his or her education. Educational aspiration is an important variable in predicting academic achievement and is considered as an important element in academic motivation. Educational aspirations may be influenced by family backgrounds, socioeconomic status, living areas and

neighborhoods. They may be different for the children of educated parents (Marjoribanks, 2005) <sup>[10]</sup>, those with a better economic status (MacBrayne, 1987) <sup>[9]</sup>, those who live in urban areas (Haller and Virkler, 1993; Akande, 1987) <sup>[6, 1]</sup>, and those holding relatively higher aspirations than their counterparts. Besides demographic factors, external factors such as parents, teachers, peers, family and personal factors such as self-efficacy, self-determination, self-confidence etc. may also influence educational aspiration. These factors in combination can determine one's achievement and help the individual to grow emotionally and psychologically.

The family environment involves the circumstances and social climate conditions within families. Family environment is the primary agent of socialization in which children's lives are centered initially within their families. Family members specially parent, are the immediate environment who nurture, support, protect and provide warmth to the child. Family environment has great influence on the development of a child. It has been shown by various studies that most of the children who are successful and well-adjusted come from the families with good environments. The family environment can be a strong source of support for adolescents. Positive relationship with parents is an important factor in molding the adolescent's personality which in turn may help in achieving their goals. Family environment are not similar for all families, it differs from one family to another and also there exist variations in parents and children themselves. According to Wall *et al.* (1999) <sup>[14]</sup> parents' support and role modelling have influence on adolescent's conception about educational and career opportunities.

Adolescence is a bridge period, a time of changeover from one stage to another. It is a period of transition from a child who mostly depends upon parent to an independent and self-reliant adult. This transition represents that adolescence is a most dynamic and influential period of human development. It is a period of rapid change in the individual's physical, cognitive, social, moral, emotional and sexual aspects which make this period crucial and significant. Many of them in this stage face numerous challenges and opportunities in their lives that influence their future life. Some of these challenges may be because of family, neighborhood or social factors. This period is not an easy time for the adolescents as well as for the parents. It is a period of multiple changeovers in spheres like education, career, employment and unemployment, as well as changes from one living circumstance to another. Hence, it is important to understand and support the adolescents to overcome these changes and challenges. A family environment where there is constant conflicts, hatred, anger and poor interaction with the members can have a negative impact on the lives of adolescents especially in their education. Bogenschneider (1999) <sup>[3]</sup> viewed that parental involvement was a force on achievement. Parents' social support is directly linked with students' school experiences, achievements and behaviors (Nurmi, 1987) <sup>[12]</sup>. It has been found that family support can encourage adolescents to devote and put bigger effort in learning (Gilbert *et al.*, 1993) <sup>[5]</sup>. Each family environment is unique and due to the diversity in families, the educational aspirations of adolescents may differ.

### Objective

The study entitled "Family environment and its influence on educational aspiration of adolescents" was under taken with

the objective to find out the relation between Family environment and Educational aspiration of adolescents.

### Method

A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to conduct the study. The study comprised of 120 numbers of adolescents who has attained 16-18 years were selected randomly from Government and private higher secondary schools. A questionnaire was used to collect the background information and Educational aspiration of respondents. To assess the family environment of respondents, a standardized tool "Family Environment Scale" developed by Bhatia and Chadawas (1993) <sup>[2]</sup> was used. The scale consists of 69 questions, divided into three subscales and eight different dimensions. The three subscales and dimensions are - Relationship Dimensions (Cohesion, Expressiveness, Conflict, Acceptance and Caring); Personal growth dimensions (Independence, Active Re-creational Orientation); System maintenance dimensions (Organization, Control). The items were scored on five-point like scale (5 for Strongly Agree, 4 for Agree, 3 for Neutral, 2 for Disagree, 1 for Strongly Disagree). Reverse scoring was done for negative items. Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between family environment and educational aspiration of the adolescents.

### Findings and Discussion

The family environments of respondents studying in government and private schools were assessed in three dimensions – Relationship, Personal Growth and System maintenance.

**Table 1:** Co-relation between Family environment and educational aspiration of adolescents

Variables	Mean	SD	Correlation coefficient (r)	Sig. value
Family environment	245.815	25.984	0.246	.007
Educational aspiration	46.955	4.82		

Significant at .05 level

No. of respondents = 120

Karl Pearson's correlation test was computed to assess the relationship between family environment and educational aspiration of adolescents. There exists a positive co-relation between the two variables,  $r(118) = 0.246$ ,  $p = 0.007$  ( $p < .01$ ). The correlation coefficient value of the family environment and educational aspiration of adolescents was found to be 0.246 at 0.01 levels of significance. It reveals that there exists a positive correlation between the two variables i.e. if the family environment increases; the educational aspiration of adolescents also increases and vice versa.

This may be because families with a healthier environment have children with higher educational aspiration and have positive outcomes in schools as found in the study, the majority of the family had an average score in all the dimensions of the family environment. Many studies have revealed that supportive parents have a positive impact on the academic achievement. Henderson (1994) <sup>[7]</sup> pointed out that the amount of parental involvement in the child's education is related to children's educational aspirations. Studies have also revealed that the Family environment continues to be of crucial importance throughout adolescence and young adulthood (Van Wel, 2000) <sup>[13]</sup>. Parents, in particular, have

been seen as the most significant others in shaping aspirations because they provide the opportunities, encouragement, and support to their children for learning (Garg *et al.*, 2002) <sup>[4]</sup>. The finding is consistent with the study done by Meena (2008) <sup>[11]</sup> who stated that good quality of home environment had a significant positive correlation with high level of scholastic achievement in adolescents.

### Conclusion

The findings of present study were in consistent with the previous research findings that a better family environment leads to higher educational aspiration of the child. If the family environment increases, the educational aspiration and achievement of the students also increase. These findings were not surprising but were in accordance with the study done by (Biedinger, 2011) <sup>[15]</sup> who suggested that high family environment leads to higher educational aspiration.

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