

Occupational Aspirations and Profile of the Participants of Skill Training in Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted with the participants of skill training programmes organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendras in Karnataka. Data was elicited from 538 participants spread over 16 districts attending 28 training programmes on 11 job roles related to agriculture. Occupational aspirations were measured using the 'near' opportunity space concept, with five choices that could be attainable in immediate future. The most prominent aspiration was to 'start a new enterprise' and thus to become self-employed and an entrepreneur. The aspiration to 'start a new enterprise' was strong for the participants of skill training on 'nursery worker', 'mushroom worker', 'tractor operator' and 'mango grower'. The next prominent aspiration was to 'expand the existing enterprise', which was strongly expressed among the participants of 'bee keeper'. The aspiration to 'earn more salary/wages in the present job' was strongest for the participants of 'tractor operator' followed by the participants of 'vermicompost producer'. Age of the participants was the strongest influencing factor, but negatively. Age could be a deterrent for entrepreneurship promotion and hence demands 'catch them young' policy. Married status of the participants positively and significantly contributed to occupational aspirations. Married, but young unemployed rural population must be attracted and supported with skill training on those job roles that have aroused higher aspirations for agri entrepreneurship.

Keywords : Occupational aspirations, Personal profile, Socio-economic profile, Skill training, Entrepreneurship

INDIA is one of the youngest nations in the world with more than 62 per cent of its population in the working age group (15-59 years) and more than 54 per cent of its total population below 25 years of age. In the next 20 years, predominant section of the population will be young and shall be seeking employment. It is for this reason that much of attention is given to skill development by Government of India through the National Skill Development Mission. To achieve the vision of 'Skilled India', the Mission would not only consolidate and coordinate skilling efforts, but also expedite skilling at scale with speed and standards (Anonymous, 2015). Agriculture Skill Council of India is working towards intensive skill development in agriculture and allied activities by developing qualification packs and model curricula for 182 job roles in agriculture sector (<http://asci-india.com/National%20Occupation%20Standards.php>).

The National Policy for Skill Development (2015), among other things, emphasizes a special role for Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in the skilling of rural farm and non-farm work force. KVKs play a pivotal

role in identifying local employment opportunities and providing adequate training through vocational education and post-training technical support according to needs of local areas. As India moves progressively towards becoming a global knowledge economy, the skill development programmes try to meet the rising aspirations (Anonymous, 2015). Education contributes to the process of aspiration formation. The formation of educational and occupational aspirations is integral to education.

Locke and Latham (2002) defined aspirations as forward-looking goals. Aspirations reflect the desired future and evolve over time in response to life experience and circumstances (Bernard *et al.*, 2014). Sherwood (1989) conceptualized aspirations as 'any goal an individual is willing to invest in before hand' based on 'active pursuit of goals' and 'willingness to work to achieve goals'. Occupational aspirations reflect on the desired career goals / options for an individual within the prevailing situations or socio-economic context.

Aspirations have been measured in many ways and the measurement tool differs with the respondents of the study. The occupational aspirations of high school seniors in Iowa using an open-ended question ‘What job do you want to have when you are 30 years old?’. Lee (2010) measured career aspirations by asking the participants to indicate the job they expected to have at age 30 from a listing of occupational categories. Marlene *et al.* (2018) asked whether students had specific goals for the future when completing their studies. All these were focusing on ‘distant’ opportunity space for assessing the aspirations of students who are still pursuing their education, and who have enough time to attain them. While studying the aspirations of Cocoa farmers in Ghana, Nana *et al.* (2012) studied three aspirations *viz.*, farming on own farm as primary occupation; farming as a means of capital accumulation towards non-farm primary occupation and formal work as primary occupation with no direct engagement with farming. Study of the occupational aspirations of the students undergoing formal education has been widely done, but very limited work has been done on the aspirations of participants of vocational education, particularly the agriculture and related vocational education. Considering the unprecedented attention and support being given to skill training in India, including in the areas related to agriculture and allied activities, the study was undertaken with following objectives:

1. To assess the occupational aspirations of the participants of skill training
2. To assess the job-role wise differences in the occupational aspirations
3. To study the personal and social profile of the participants and its influence on the occupational aspirations

METHODOLOGY

Data related to the study was collected from the participants of 28 skill training programmes on 11 job roles related to agriculture organized during 2018-19 by Krishi Vigyan Kendras in Karnataka. As detailed in Table 1, 538 participants from 16 districts of Karnataka constituted the sample.

Since the respondents had completed their education and were undergoing vocational education, the occupational choices needed to be specific to the job role on which skill training was conducted. Most importantly, the aspirations that could be attained in the immediate time-span were to be focused. Thus, their aspirations were measured using the ‘near’ opportunity space concept suggested by Sumberg and Okali (2013). The ‘near’ opportunity space considers place specific socio-economic characteristics, local resources and access to markets, that allow certain economic activities to take place in the given locale. The trainees were asked to indicate what they expected to pursue after acquiring the skills. Considering the occupation status of the participants

TABLE 1
Number of respondents for different job roles under skill training

Job role	Districts	Programmes (No.)	Respondents (No.)
Bee Keeper	Chikkaballapur, Chikkamagaluru	2	40
Dairy Farmer			
Entrepreneur	Gadag, Vijayapura, Davanagere, Bagalkot	4	77
Friends of Coconut Tree	Mysuru, Davanagere, Chamarajanagara, Udupi, Tumakuru	5	101
Mango Grower	Tumakuru	1	19
Mushroom Grower	Ramanagara, Mandya, Koppal	3	57
Nursery Worker	Belagavi, Kodagu, Mysuru, Chikkaballapur	4	68
Organic Grower	Belagavi, Bagalkot, Uttara Kannada, Bengaluru	4	80
Quality Seed Grower	Belagavi	1	17
Sericulturist	Chamarajanagara	1	20
Tractor Operator	Chikkaballapur	1	20
Vermicompost Producer	Gadag, Koppal	2	39
Total	16 Districts	28	538

at the time of their participation in the skill training, the given choices were - Start an own enterprise, Expand present enterprise, Earn more salary in the present job, Find a new job in the local area and Get job in government / recognized institutions. Data was collected on three-point continuum 'strongly desired', 'desired' and 'not desired', with a score of 2, 1 and 0, respectively. Since the respondents had an opportunity to express multiple choices, the job-role-wise differences in aspirations were compared using strength of the aspirations. The strength of aspiration was calculated using

$$A_{sj} = \frac{\sum A_j}{A_p \times N_j} \times 100$$

Where,

A_{sj} = Strength of Aspiration of Job Role j

$\sum A_j$ = Sum total of aspiration score for all the respondents for the job role j.

A_p = Possible aspiration score (2)

N_j = No. of Respondents for respective Job Role

Information on the personal and socio economic profile of the participants was collected by the respective training institutions as per the schedule provided to them. Age was measured in terms of completed years. Majority of the participants were male (10.59 per cent female) and were married (59.85 %). Education was measured in terms of number of completed years of schooling/education. It included the standard passed for those who attended up to the school level. Post-school education, expressed in terms of examination passed / qualification acquired was quantified with completed years of education as 12 for higher secondary / PUC / Polytechnic, 15 for graduates, 16 for professional degree, 17 for PG in general degree, and 18 for PG in professional courses. Occupation status of the participants was categorised into unemployed, daily wage workers, farming / home makers, skill workers, business, and employed. These categories were quantified with a score of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively. Family size was measured in terms of number of family members living together at the time of data elicitation. Family type was measured

based on the number of married couple living together. Nuclear family consisting of one couple living with or without unmarried children was given a score of 1. More than one married couple living together with or without parents and children is categorized as joint family and was given a score of two. Family income is measured in terms of annual income from all sources put together. Land holding was measured in terms of acres with or without irrigation. The data was analysed using frequency, ranking, correlation and regression using SPSS version 20.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The occupational aspirations of the participants of long duration skill training conducted by KVK's are presented in Table 2.

The most prominent aspiration was to 'start a new enterprise', which means to become self-employed, as reflected by more than 72 per cent response to this choice. The next prominent aspiration was to 'expand the existing enterprise' as indicated by about 70 per cent responses. The aspirations expressed by the participants of the skill training are in line with the stated ambition of the Government of India. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (<https://www.msde.gov.in/>) aims skill up-gradation and building of new skills for not only existing jobs but also jobs that are to be created. The Ministry aims large scale skilling with speed and high standards to achieve a 'Skilled India'. By becoming skilled after undergoing the long duration skill training, the participants expressed desire to 'earn more salary/wages in the present job' as the third most prominent choice. The

TABLE 2
Occupational aspirations of the skill trainees
(N=538)

Occupational Aspirations	Respondents		Rank
	Number	%	
Starting a new enterprise	390	72.49	I
Expanding the present enterprise	377	70.07	II
More salary/wages in the present job	368	68.40	III
Find a new job in the local area	269	50.00	IV
Get job in government / recognized institutions	268	49.81	V

aspiration to 'find a new job in local area', which is expressed by 50 per cent of the respondents, is particularly relevant for the removal of disconnect between demand and supply of skilled manpower in rural areas. The least expressed aspiration was to 'get a job in government / recognized institution', which may be because of the higher age level of the participants.

The strength of the aspirations for each of the five occupational choices among the participants of different job role training programmes is given in Table 3.

The aspiration to 'start a new enterprise' and thus to become self-employed and become an entrepreneur was strong for the participants of skill training on 'nursery worker', 'mushroom worker', 'tractor operator' and 'mango grower' with aspiration strength values of 80.15, 78.07, 75.00 and 73.68, respectively. Aspiration to 'expand the present enterprise' was strongly expressed among the participants of 'bee keeper', 'mango grower' and 'nursery worker' with aspiration strength values of 74.00, 71.05 and 70.59, respectively. The aspiration to 'earn more salary/wages in the present job' was strongest for the participants of 'tractor operator' with aspiration

strength value of 85.00 followed by the participants of 'vermicompost producer' (73.08). These job roles may be of strategic significance considering the place specific socio-economic characteristics, local resources and access to markets, that allow economic activities related to these areas to take place in the given locale. The aspirations of the participants of the training programme on dairy farmer / entrepreneur, friends of coconut tree, organic grower and quality seed grower were not as strong. These areas may have not enthused the participants to express their aspirations on the listed choices, may be due to limited opportunities in the given locale.

The personal and socio-economic profile of the participants and its relation with each of the five occupational aspirations is given in Table 4.

Aspiration to 'expand the present enterprise' was strongly and positively related to occupation status and possession of vehicles at the time of skill training. The occupation profile of the participants indicated that about 80 per cent were practising farmers with agriculture and allied activities, which might have influenced to aspire for strengthening their present enterprises. Aspiration to 'start a new enterprise' was more among the participants having lesser family

TABLE 3
Strength of occupational aspirations for the trainees of different job roles

Job role	Occupational Aspirations				
	More salary in the present job	Find a new job in the local area	Get job in government / recognized institutions	Expanding the present enterprise	Starting a new Enterprise
Bee Keeper	60.00	42.50	55.50	74.00	62.50
Dairy Farmer Entrepreneur	53.90	16.88	27.27	56.49	44.81
Friends of Coconut Tree	66.83	59.41	59.41	59.90	65.35
Mango Grower	57.89	68.42	60.53	71.05	73.68
Mushroom Grower	41.23	26.32	25.44	51.75	78.07
Nursery Worker	63.24	63.24	68.38	70.59	80.15
Organic Grower	56.25	38.75	31.88	69.38	54.38
Quality Seed Grower	33.75	15.00	10.00	37.50	31.25
Sericulturist	35.00	30.00	20.00	42.50	55.00
Tractor Operator	85.00	65.00	65.00	62.50	75.00
Vermi compost Producer	73.08	32.05	33.33	55.13	52.56

TABLE 4
Correlation between personal and socio-economic profile with the occupational aspirations of the skill trainees

Personal and Socio-economic profile	Occupational Aspirations				
	More salary in the present job	Find a new job in the local area	Get job in government / recognized institutions	Expanding the present enterprise	Starting a new Enterprise
Age	-0.046	-0.168 **	-0.246 **	0.042	0.003
Education	-0.051	0.052	0.053	-0.006	0.03
Gender	-0.025	0.048	0.03	-0.062	0.015
Occupation status	0.054	-0.024	-0.04	0.183 **	0.037
Married status	0.032	-0.06	-0.141 **	0.062	0.028
Total No. of Children	0.011	-0.094 *	-0.124 **	0.019	-0.007
Spouse occupation	-0.006	-0.105 *	-0.174 **	0.062	0.014
Family type	0.035	0.007	0.063	-0.036	-0.026
Family size	0.08	-0.082	-0.026	0.043	0.008
Family income	-0.011	-0.088	-0.117 *	0.013	-0.104*
Land (in acres)	0.007	-0.099 *	-0.125 **	0.069	-0.093 *
Vehicles	-0.055	-0.120 **	-0.136 **	0.103 *	-0.084

income and smaller holdings as the correlation values were found to be negatively significant. Lesser family income and smaller land holdings, which are interrelated, drive rural population to look for new livelihood opportunities and the same has been reflected in the present study. The data presented in Table 2 which indicated lower aspiration level for

finding 'job in local area' and get a 'job in government/reputed institutions', was probably due to the personal and socio-economic profile of the participants. Participants' age, no. of children, spouse occupation, land holding and possession of vehicles were negatively and significantly related to these two aspirations.

TABLE 5
Factors influencing the occupational aspirations of skill trainees in Karnataka

Personal and Socio-economic profile	Occupational Aspirations			
	Regression Coefficients	Standard error	t value	Sig
Age	-0.073	0.022	-3.315	0.001
Education	0.014	0.061	0.232	0.817
Gender	-0.295	0.561	-0.525	0.600
Occupation status	0.401	0.174	2.309	0.021
Married status	1.732	0.741	2.338	0.020
No. of Male Children	-0.136	0.304	-0.448	0.655
No. of Female Children	-0.048	0.275	-0.175	0.861
Spouse occupation	-0.447	0.245	-1.824	0.069
Family type	-0.362	0.493	-0.736	0.462
Family size	0.064	0.052	1.212	0.226
Family income	E	0.000	-0.535	0.593
Land (in acres)	-0.016	0.028	-0.552	0.581
Vehicles	-0.080	0.077	-1.040	0.299

The factors that significantly contributed to the occupational aspirations are presented in Table 5.

Age of the participants was the strongest influencing factor, but negatively significant. Age could be a deterrent for entrepreneurship promotion and hence demands 'catch them young' policy. The average age of the participants of the skill training programmes was 34 years, which ranged from 17 years to 68 years. Majority of them (313 out of 538 respondents) were more than 30 years of age and hence the age had negatively significant influence. This may also explain the lower aspiration strength for some of the job roles presented in Table 3. For example, the job-role wise strength of occupational aspirations indicated lesser strength of aspirations for 'quality seed grower' where the average age of the participants of this job role was 42.29 years. Whereas, the average age of the participants of 'tractor operator' who expressed very strong aspirations after the skill training was just about 32 years. Married status of the participants positively and significantly contributed to occupational aspirations. Marriage and family formation demands higher income to sustain the family and hence drives the individuals to aspire for occupational security.

The study has captured the occupational aspirations of the participants of skill training having varied personal, social and economic profile. The respondents represented 16 districts of Karnataka, covering the major agro-climatic as well as socio-cultural situations. The 11 different job roles represented agriculture, horticulture, dairy, mechanization, seed production and allied enterprises having wide relevance to the rural areas across Karnataka. Thus, the study proves to be a unique research, with potential findings for academicians, policy makers and development agencies. The occupational aspirations among the participants reflect the desire for becoming agri-entrepreneurs and to expand their enterprises, which is the ambitious goal of the nation at present. Skilled India needs more such aspirants who need to be nurtured with all possible programmatic and technical support. The specific job roles that have aroused higher aspirations towards self-employment and to expand

the existing enterprises have to be given more budgetary support. While choosing the participants for the skill training, the training organizers and institutions must keep in mind the personal and socio-economic profile of the participants that influence the occupational aspirations. Young, unemployed, married, low-income and small-holders need to be given priority for skilling the rural population.

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