

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RURAL PEOPLE IN THE CHOICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAREER PROGRESSION, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UDUMALPET TALUK

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Abstract

Education and Career are interrelated and interdependent. Education makes a man perfect and career creates an identity to an individual. Sometimes, choice of career is not purely based on the domain knowledge received, but the education makes one to choose career irrespective of fields. In India, Government gives much importance for the empowerment of people through education including women education. Rural areas are also expected to be participative in economic development so that the rural education and rural employment are fully focused by the government. The present study aimed at exploring factors influencing the rural people in the choice of higher education and career progression, with special reference to Udumalpet Taluk. There are 55 villages in Udumalpet Taluk. Of the available population 80 respondents were taken as sample using convenient sampling method. The findings revealed that the rural people are not aware of the new schemes of higher education and rural employment. Almost three-fourth of the respondents said that they are not able to compete in line with the urban population in terms of education and career. The respondents mentioned the finance as the primary factor that influences the choice of higher education and the income as the primary factor that influences the choice of career options after education. The study has further scope to analyze the individual factors affecting rural education and employment separately.

Keywords: Rural education, Rural employment, Higher education, Career opportunities, Career progression, Factors influencing rural education, Factors influencing career progression.

Introduction

From the ancient period to digital era, Education is always considered as potential one and it is followed by employment or career. Education helps in equipping oneself and planning what-to-be and how-to-be in career. Education and Career are interrelated and interdependent. Education makes a man perfect and career creates an identity to an individual. Sometimes, choice of career is not purely based on the domain knowledge received, but the education makes one to choose career irrespective of fields. In India, Government gives much importance for the empowerment of people through education including women education. Rural areas are also expected to be participative in economic development so that the rural education and rural employment are fully focused by the government. But the question mark lies in the place whether they are working actually and they are fruitful or not.

Rural areas are always under focused and underrated. But the economy is in the hands of rural development and produces from agriculture. While the cities and townships grow fast in rocket speed, the rural development happens in the tortoise speed. The challenges of rural people in acquisition of higher education and career progression are many and they highly impact the peoples' choices of what-to-be and how-to-be in career. Unless the rural education and employment are empowered, the nation's development is not even and uniform. The fullest concentration of rural education and employment will gradually increase the participation of rural people in higher education and employment. The enrolment ratio in higher education institutions should be increased post higher secondary class. As well as, the employment rate should be increased in villages, post-graduation.

Review of literature

Erica Chenoweth et.al (2004) examined the factors influencing rural high school students' towards college choice decisions. Individually age characteristics like family, peer and school and broader cultural influences all influenced them in predicting rural students' academic ambitions. Additionally, interest differences also emerged in patterns of prediction between males and females. Family and peer factors emerged as more salient predictors of college choices for males, whereas variables aligned with

individual academics preparation and external difficulties to college choices were most salient factors for females.

Rabia Habeeb et.al (2016) analyzed the various determinants of quality education in rural areas of Kech, District. Nature of the study was quantitative based. Population and units of study were the primary school teachers of rural areas. Data were collected from 290 teachers. It was analyzed by devising the SPSS software. Findings revealed that a number of the internal factors like classroom environment, facilities available and resources of school, teachers skill set and competence level, students aptitude range, technological facilities (ICT) as audio, video visuals, textbooks and course materials and other related things; and the external factors like extracurricular options, family situations and problems, economic-financial issues, political disturbances, socio-cultural values affected hugely the quality education in rural areas of the selected region.

Radhika Kapur (2019) attempted to study the viewpoint which obtains employment opportunities to enable and to sustain living conditions in appropriate levels. The rural individuals provided with number of job opportunities, including blue-collar as well as white collar jobs. They acquire higher educational qualifications. Then they are engaged in employment opportunities offered by reputed companies. The main focus of this research was to acquire an efficient understanding of job opportunities, in which rural individuals are fully engaged. The main areas taken into account are: nature of unemployment in India, types of job opportunities in rural areas, factors influencing candidates to get involved in employment opportunities and finally factors influencing the acquisition of job opportunities.

Olga Szafran et.al (2020) pointed out urban localized physicians were the main source of physicians supply for rural communities across Canada. The purpose of the study was to describe factors perceived to influence rural career choices and practices location of urban background family medicinal graduates. They conducted a qualitative and descriptive study by employing telephonic interviews with 9 urban background family physicians practising in rural areas. They identified four themes as factors perceived to influence rural career choice: Scope of rural practice, Rural lifestyle, Personal relationships and Positive rural experience. They also identified factors in 4 areas conceptualized to influence the choice of a particular rural practice location - having lived in the rural people, spouse influence, personal lifestyle and comfort zone with practice expectations.

Megha (2022) researched that India has the third largest higher education system in the world which is measured in terms of enrolments, preceded by China and the US. India is witnessed to possess the largest higher education systems in the world in terms of number of institutions. Higher education is the 2nd largest opportunity in the Indian education system. There was a phenomenal growth of higher education in India after Independence. It got expanded at a fast pace by accumulating about 20,000 colleges and more than eight million students from 2001 to 2010. Since the number of college and students keeps on increasing tremendously, students get plenty of options to select their desired college. So, various factors including personal, external and social impacts the choice of the students to select a particular higher education institution say college or university.

Statement of the problem

Education and employment are fundamental rights of every citizen. The government should ensure that the people avail education and employment properly. Rural areas are always under focused and underrated. But the economy is in the hands of rural development and produces from agriculture. While the cities and townships grow fast in rocket speed, the rural development happens in the tortoise speed. The challenges of rural people in acquisition of higher education and career progression are many and they highly impact the peoples' choices of what-to-be and how-to-be in career. Various factors are responsible for the rural people in choice of higher education and career progression. The present study aimed at exploring factors influencing the rural people in the choice of higher education and career progression. The study covers the population from 55 villages in Udumalpet Taluk. The study has further scope to analyze the individual factors affecting rural education and employment separately. Also, the factors hindering higher education and career planning can be analyzed.

Objectives of the study

- ❖ To understand the socio economic profile of the respondents.
- ❖ To explore the factors influencing the rural people in the choice of higher education.
- ❖ To analyze the factors influencing the rural people in career progression.

Research methodology

Research methodology is a system of doing research work. The study depends upon the data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through structured questionnaires. The secondary data were collected from websites and printed sources like books and journals. The questionnaire was carefully designed to align with the objectives of study. The first section of questionnaire collected information of personal profile of the respondents. The second section explored the factors influencing the rural people in the choice of higher education. The final section analyzed the factors influencing the rural people in career progression. Sample size of the study constitutes 80 respondents covering Udumalpet Taluk. Non Random sampling method was selected. The respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire and non-formally educated respondents were assisted. Convenient sampling was devised to draw out samples. The specific tools were also employed for the study including: Simple Percentage Analysis, Rank Analysis, Chi-Square Test and Correlation.

Hypotheses of the study

Following null hypotheses were framed for the study.

1. There is no association between gender and factors influencing higher education.
2. There is no association between family income and factors influencing career options.

Analysis of data**Socio-economic profile**

Factor	Components	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	31	38.75
	Female	49	61.25
Age Group	15-18	28	35
	19-21	24	30
	22-25	16	20
	25-30	12	15
Family Annual Income	Below Rs.120000	23	28.75
	Rs.120001-Rs.240000	30	37.5
	Rs.240001-Rs.360000	16	20
	Above Rs.360000	11	13.75
Medium of Instruction	Tamil	51	63.75
	English	29	36.25
Family Type	Joint	14	17.5
	Nuclear	66	82.5
No. of children availing education/career	1	16	20
	2	54	67.5
	Above 2	10	12.5
Category	School Student	17	21.25
	College Student	35	43.75
	Job Seeker	8	10
	Employee	16	20
	Discontinued	4	5
Educational facility	Available	41	51.25

	Not sufficient	34	42.5
	Unavailable	4	5
Promotion of employment	Available	17	21.25
	Not sufficient	38	47.5
	Unavailable	25	31.25
No. of earning members in family	1	28	35
	2	38	47.5
	3 & above	14	17.5

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the socio-economic profile of the respondents. 61.25% of the respondents are Female. 35% of the respondents belong to age group of 15-18. 37.5% of the respondents has family annual income is between Rs.120001 and Rs.240000. 63.75% of respondents have Tamil as medium of instruction during studies. 82.5% of the respondents belong to nuclear family. 67.5% of the respondents' family has 2 children availing education. 43.75% of the respondents are college student. 51.25% of the respondents stated that educational facility is available in the rural area. 47.5% of the respondents mentioned that Promotion of employment is not sufficient in the rural area. 47.5% of the respondents have 2 earning members in their family.

Chi-square analysis

(i) There is no association between gender and factors influencing higher education

Gender and factors influencing higher education are compared. The calculated chi-square value is 7.256 and table value (at degree of freedom 8) at five percent level is 15.507. Since the calculated Chi-square value is lower than the table value at five percent level, there is no significant association between gender and factors influencing higher education. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

(ii) There is no association between family income and factors influencing career options

Family income and factors influencing career options are compared. The calculated chi-square value is 7.137 and table value (at degree of freedom 10) at five percent level is 18.307. Since the calculated Chi-square value is lower than the table value at five percent level, there is no significant association between family income and factors influencing career options. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Rank analysis

Factors Influencing Higher Education

Factors	Total	Mean Score	Rank
Academics	310	3.88	IV
Family Income	400	5.00	II
Interest	280	3.50	V
Family Situation	370	4.63	III
Scholarships	440	5.50	I

Source: Primary Data

With the help of the primary data, the Factors Influencing Higher Education are ranked. Scholarships is ranked I. II rank is given to Family Income. Family Situation and Academics are given ranks III and IV respectively. Interest is ranked V.

Correlation analysis

Factors Influencing	
Higher Education	Career Options
14	10

18	14
13	16
16	15
19	13
0	12

The above table depicts the correlation between the Factors Influencing Higher Education and Factors Influencing Career Options. The correlation value arrives at 0.2721 which is the positive value. It interprets that there is a direct relationship between Factors Influencing Higher Education and Factors Influencing Career Options. Career Options are directly influenced by the Higher Education.

Findings

61.25% of the respondents are Female. 35% of the respondents belong to age group of 15-18. 37.5% of the respondents has family annual income is between Rs.120001 and Rs.240000. 63.75% of respondents have Tamil as medium of instruction during studies. 82.5% of the respondents belong to nuclear family. 67.5% of the respondents' family has 2 children availing education. 43.75% of the respondents are college student. 51.25% of the respondents stated that educational facility is available in the rural area. 47.5% of the respondents mentioned that Promotion of employment is not sufficient in the rural area. 47.5% of the respondents have 2 earning members in their family. There is no significant association between gender and factors influencing higher education. There is no significant association between family income and factors influencing career options. Scholarships is ranked I. There is a direct relationship between factors influencing higher education and factors influencing career options.

Suggestions

The findings revealed that the rural people are not aware of the new schemes of higher education and rural employment. Almost three-fourth of the respondents said that they are not able to compete in line with the urban population in terms of education and career. The respondents mentioned the finance as the primary factor that influences the choice of higher education and the income as the primary factor that influences the choice of career options after education. The government should actively participate in the promotion of higher education and employment opportunities in the rural area. Scholarships are not evenly distributed by the government and non-government agencies so that they have to ensure the channelizing of adequate amount of financial assistance to the students for pursuing higher education in rural areas. The government should also encourage the candidates and job seekers to get enrolled in employment opportunities portals. Also, the rural area unemployed people should be provided with skill development programmes and training sessions handled by the experts. The job fairs should be conducted by the government and non-government agencies time-to-time.

Conclusion

There are many factors influencing the rural people in the choice of higher education and career progression in rural areas. Those factors highly impact the education, career and lifestyle of a particular individual in rural area. In the light of National Education Policy, education should reach each and every needy people in India and it should not be refused to anyone. Also, the education should be able to help the learner to put him/her in a suitable job. So, the higher education institutions, government and non-government agencies should work together to make the vision of NEP as to achieve maximum enrolment ratio in higher education. Along with this, the companies should be expanded and diversified with lot of employment opportunities.

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