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WHO GOES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENTIAL DECISION AMONG INDIAN STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to examine the factors which influence students' decision to go for higher education in Indian context. The facts and figures highlight that the gap between secondary and higher education enrolment ratio is significant and a major chunk of 12th grade graduates don't go for higher education. Methodology of the present study involves mixed method approach and data was collected from the sample of 400 first year students. Self structured questionnaire and semi structured interviews were used for collection of data. Factor analysis and logistic regression have been used for analysis purpose. Findings of the present study highlight that different factors motivate students to go for higher education. Major motivation for pursuing higher education is economic. Perceived low academic grades and financial crisis are the major impediment for unsuccessful transition. Logistic regression results confirm that location, academic achievement, socioeconomic status, generation status, family support, relative functionalism, self efficacy are significant factors which influence students' decision to go for higher education. Present study contributes to the body of research in the Indian context where it is an unexplored area and needs worthy investigation in order to make Indian higher education system more inclusive and equitable.

Keywords: Inequality, Higher education, Decision, Transition.

INTRODUCTION:

India has made significant progress in increasing enrolment and school completion over the past decades with the large scale country-wide initiatives like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). This new vision of accessibility with the launch of Rashtriya Uchha Shikshya Abhiyan (RUSA) has increased the focus of Indian government on higher education which is currently experiencing a demographic dividend with the world's biggest tertiary age population (Vargheese and Malik, 2016; Vargheese, 2015; Tilak, 2015; British Council, 2014). Currently, India's gross enrolment ratio is only 21.1% with 29.6 million students in the age group of 18-23 years enrolled in higher education institutions (Vargheese, 2015). Though it is a significant improvement but a comparative picture around the world highlights that the enrolment in India are much lower than the average of the developed and developing countries. Position of India lies far below even those of the other BRIC (Brazil, Russia and China) nations. An important point worth noting in Indian context is the difference in the gross enrolment ratio between secondary and higher education, which is quite significant. The ratio in higher secondary was nearly 40 percent, while in higher education it was below 20 per cent in 2010–11 (Tilak and Biswal, 2015). These figures imply low transition from secondary to higher education in spite of high rate of pass percentage higher secondary level examination. Apparently, the transition rate from higher secondary to higher education in India was only 63 per cent during 2009–10 though the rate of pass percentage at higher secondary level was 77 percent in 2010 (ibid). These facts and figures highlight that a significant proportion of the grade 12^{th} graduates don't go for higher education.

Though, it has been well acknowledged that with expansion of educational system, Indian higher education system is at best moving from elite towards mass in terms of absolute number of students with wide variations across income groups, gender, social groups, geography (British Council, 2014). Persons belonging to the scheduled caste, females, from low income group and rural area are more disadvantaged compared to their counterparts and their population is more dominated who failed to enter into higher education (Sinha, 2011). Within the Indian context, there have been limited attempts to study the transition to higher education. A few earlier studies on transition to higher education are based on household data, particularly NSS data on employment and unemployment (Basant and Sen, 2011; Azam and Blom, 2009). Limitations of the disaggregated data in India do not make it possible to make accurate estimates of transition rates (Tilak and Biswal, 2013).

In this context, the purpose of the present article is to investigate the differential planning of students regarding going for higher education and the determinants of going for higher education. Though the present study is retrospective in nature, it will help in building our understanding regarding the differences between those students who go and those who don't go for higher education. There are considerable variations in how young people make their decision regarding going for higher education. The article organized as follows: in the next section, extensive literature review conducted around these issues. In the third section, methodology discussed and in the fourth section, analysis and discussion of findings presented. The summary of the main findings and implications conclude the article.

DECISION OF GOING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION- ECONOMIC VERSUS SOCIAL:

For every Indian student, their last year of higher secondary school is a year of transition. This particular transition point is unique as it involves a separation from the previous world of school and entry into a new world of adult life. Student's decision to go for higher education deploys critical and complex discourses (Nguyen and Taylor, 2003). This reveals individual choices of selection between the alternatives available. Senior secondary graduates do not pursue higher education in a random way. There exists evidence from the literature (Hooley & Lynch, 1981; Jackson, 1982) which have recognised that the decision to go or not to go for higher education is not a one-off decision taken at one time, but involves a decision process in which variety of factors become determinants over time. In connection with this the process by which student decides to go for higher education is undoubtedly sequential or multistage process and affected by several contextual factors at each stage ranging from personal and psychological to assessment of future benefits over present cost. Maxwell et al. (2000) suggest that there is no single factor at work. There are always combinations of factors that influence the decision whether to participate, or not, in post compulsory education. There are also some confounding factors in the decision-making process.

Decision to go for higher education by an individual is not a conventional economic decision but is a social decision (Akerlof, 1997). It may reflect to certain extent the assumptions of rationality of economic models. This decision in part may involve rational cost-benefit assessment to such educational decision (Mansaki, 1989

& 1993; Lauer, 2003). Thus, relative functionalism – a student's perceived usefulness of a specific life choice, such as going for, compared with other available options is playing a major role in choosing between to go and not to go for higher education. The relative functionalism of a higher education degree is clear; increased education is associated with higher income, prestige, better working conditions, and potential for promotion (Baum & Payea, 2005). Students and their parents who have the information about the benefits of higher education have more inclination of going for higher education. Parents' own familiarity with college through direct experiences was proven to be an influential asset - regardless of their current socioeconomic status (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001). Longwell-Grice's (2003) qualitative study revealed that first-generation students may view college differently; they may consider it to be a place where they prepare themselves for work – something to get out of the way instead of a possibly life-altering experience.

However, considering going for higher education as purely an economic decision may not be enough to explain differential of decision among students. There are other factors that may turn going for higher education as more of a social decision. In certain context the effect of family background may be mediated through particular social and cultural context as opposed to assessment of cost and benefit suggested by economic models. Numerous studies conclude that the influence of family greatly affects the future educational aspiration of students (McDonough, 1997; Jun & Colyar, 2001; Plank & Jordan, 2001; Gandara, 2002). Parents influence the decision of participation in higher education through the various roles they play: promoters and encouragers of particular behaviours, providers of resources, and role models (Conklin & Dailey, 1981; Hossler & Stage, 1992; Engle, 2007; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Lohfink & Paulsen 2005; Pike & Kuh 2005; Choy2001; Nunez et al., 1998; Terenzini et al., 1996; London, 1996; Riehl, 1994; Pratt & Skaggs, 1989; Bilson & Terry 1982; Fallon, 1997; Volle & Federico, 1997). However, offering parental support means engaging in decision making, asking pertinent questions, providing financial resources, and giving tangible support, which may include: arranging for college visitations, saving money for tuition, guiding the completion of applications and other forms, gathering information from college programs, and attending financial aid workshops (National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, 2007). Although many individuals can impact a student's decision about college over time like teachers and peers but parents have the unique potential to influence positively and directly their children's educational goals regardless of their own educational attainment (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Ceja, 2006; Horn & Nunez, 2000).

Self-efficacy or people's belief in their ability to be successful in higher education is pertinent factor influence student's decision. In fact, level of self efficacy is related to whether or a person is engages in a particular behavior. High expectations of self efficacy increase performance and a person's willingness to preserve (Bandura, 1997). The contribution of self efficacy to academic performance is well developed in the literature (Bryan & Bryan, 1991; Chemer, Hu & Gracia, 2001; Hampton & Mason, 2003). In line with this a handful of studies (e.g. Baird, 1976; Malaney & Issac, 1988; Ethington and Smart, 1986) suggest that students of greater academic achievement and greater academic and social integration at their undergraduate institution are the most likely to pursue graduate studies (Kallio, 1995). Moreover, socioeconomic background and demographic factors like gender and location also influence students' decision to go for higher education.

METHODOLOGY:

The present work has been focused on the following variables: family influence, self efficacy, relative functionalism, significant others- peer and teacher influence, awareness and access of financial resources and lemmatizing factor. These variables have been identified most pertinent which influence students' decision of going for higher education after going through a rigorous literature review (St. John & Somers, 1993; Valadez, 1998; Thayer, 2000; Choy, 2001; Gandara, 2001; Samarge, 2006; Stewart, Stewart, & Simons, 2007; Conley, 2008; Jenkins, Miyazaki, & Janosik, 2009).

The present study employed a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to explain the factors which influence students' decision to go for higher education.

Participants :

Purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of students. The present study involves a data set of 400 first year students. The sample was taken from Kashmir Valley of Jammu and Kashmir state, particularly from various colleges of districts of Srinagar, Baramulla and Budgam as highlighted in table 1.

Table 1: Sample distribution across different colleges

Name of colleges	Number of Students
AS College, Srinagar	44
Women's college MA road, Srinagar	56
GDC Beerwah, Budgam	66
Central University of Kashmir	50
T .K college lawaypora, Srinagar	48
GDC Magam, Baramulla	72
GDC Bemina, Srinagar.	64
Total	**400**

TOOL FOR DATA COLLECTION:

Self constructed questionnaire and semi- structured interviews have been used for data collection. The present study adapted the *Factors Influencing the Pursuit of Higher Education (FIPHE) Questionnaire* (Harris, 2009) that has been used in revealing the factors influencing the students' decision of going for higher education. The questionnaire contained the 63 items which focused on the six main variables viz. family influences items, self efficacy items, relative functionalism- benefits of higher education items, significant others-peers and teachers influences items, financial factors items and limitising factors like gender and society. The statements covered several sources of influence on educational and career plans including familial, psychological/individual and economic/occupational. The detailed dimensions include encouragement from the family, relative importance given by family to higher education, frequent conversation which happened between parents and children regarding higher education, Aspiration of the parents regarding their children higher education, role of the siblings regarding students' participation in higher education, support of the peers and teachers regarding participation in higher education. Items related to students own aspirations, their self belief, their perception regarding importance of higher education and reason for pursuing higher education were included. Some of the items regarding students' awareness regarding various scholarship opportunities and importance of cost of education have been included.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE :

The questionnaires were administered in person. The first year students were approached through the principal of the selected colleges. Permission was sought from the Principals. Data collection took place in different classrooms of the colleges.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE:

Descriptive statistics (percentages and cross tabulation) were computed. In addition, factor analysis was used. Factor analysis has been used as the statistical technique in order to reduce the items. The analytical approach adopted in factor analysis was the principal component techniques. The factors were rotated with the use of direct oblimin method. Through factor analysis, the original statements included in the questionnaire were grouped into "new" variables, thus simplifying the data set.

In addition, logistic model was used. Logistic regression is basically a choice model used when a student has to choose between the two or several choices; in this study, it provides the probabilities of the various determinants of students' decision of going for higher education. In present study, dependent variables students' choice (intended to go for higher education =1, other=0), was dichotomous. When the dependent variable is categorical or dichotomous, maximum likelihood methods are employed. Logistic model belongs to this category.

RESULTS:

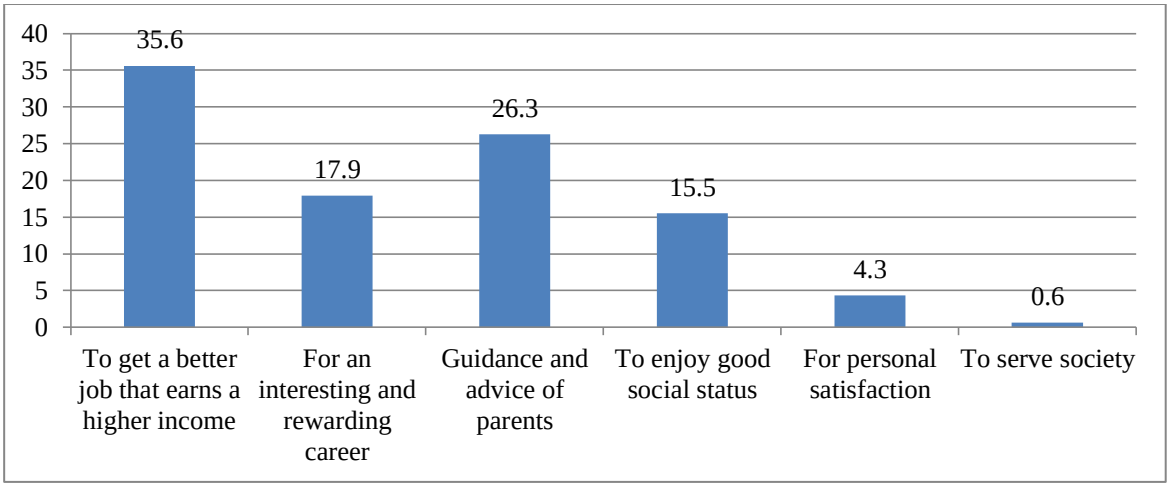
Descriptive statistics has analyzed the differences of students' decision or planning of going for higher education. As the present study is retrospective in nature, students were asked: what were their plans of going for higher education when they were in 12^{th} standard. Depending on the response of the students three categories of students have been identified.

Table 2. Distribution of student Plans regarding going higher education

Plans	Percentage
Definitely continue	80.8
Undecided	13.6
Discontinue	5.6

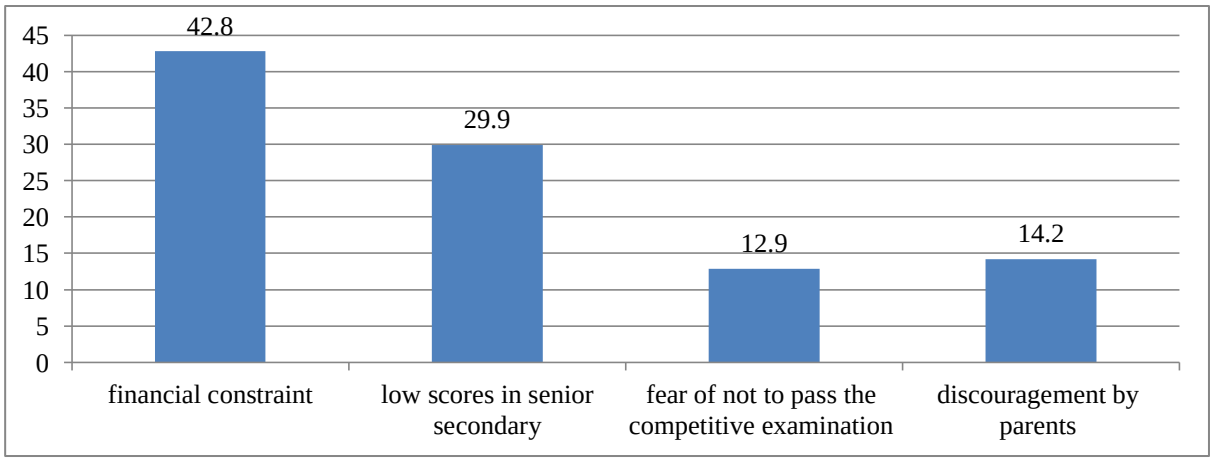
Eighty one percent of the students in the sample had a definite intention of continue their studies, 13.6 percent were undecided and only 5.6 percent stated they would not like to go for higher education (Table 2). Further, differential reasons for pursuing higher education among students have been highlighted in figure 1. Major reasons for pursuing higher education are economic. 35.6 percent of the students' main motive to go for higher education is in order to get a good job which can help them to fetch good income and to enjoy a good social status drives 15.5 percent of students. To have an interesting and rewarding career drives 17.9 percent of students. Guidance and advice of their parents are the main push which drives 26.3 percent of students and to serve the society drives 0.6 percent of students.

Figure 1: Differential reasons of going for higher education



Students who were indecisive and not planned to go for higher education were grouped together to understand the differential reasons of not going for higher education as highlighted in figure 2.

Figure 2: Differential reasons of not going for higher education



Above figure highlights that perceived low academic results and competitive examination results together constitute 42.8 percent of students' reason for not going for higher education. Financial constraint has been highlighted as the road block for not pursuing higher education by 42.8 percent of students. Parental discouragement has been highlighted by 14.2 percent of students as a reason for not pursuing higher education.
Further, in order to get better understanding of differential decision of going for higher education, semi structured interviews has been taken. As one of the interviewee (**Saima**) mentioned: "It wasn't really a decision.

I knew that the higher education was the next step. Some students also talked about going for higher education as something that was a natural step, but their narratives were more elaborated and they all included references to their future career plans. Students had strong ideas about who they wanted to become and knew that in order to achieve their goals they needed to go for higher education. Shanawaz, Jameel and Sohail knew from an early age that they wanted to become teacher, doctor and engineer and they knew they needed to go for higher education to achieve that. Other students did not have such strong ideas, but they stated that they knew they would be doing something that needed a higher education degree:

Samina: I wasn't entirely sure what I wanted to do, but pretty much every career choice that I could think of required higher education so it was just something I had to do. I would have preferred probably not to go for higher education if that had been an option.

Aamir: I always wanted to do something that I knew I'd have to go for higher education to do.

Saleem: Hmmm... I wouldn't say it was a choice (laughing). Because I come from a family where my father and mother hold higher education degrees and... it was not a question.

Students who follow this normal transition pathway of going for higher education are associated with middle and upper class background and a family history of higher education. Going for higher education is often linked to particular career trajectories and entry into prestigious professions or highly paid commercial occupations. These students have prepared for higher education by taking the preparation classes or using other instructional tools to prepare for higher education entrance exams. Contextual factors such as family, school and peer group played an important role in shaping their decisions as well as forming career goals at an early age.

Students who were undecided and intended to discontinue further education immediately after senior secondary highlighted that they were worried because of financial crisis and lack of good grades and is clearly stated by Ram and Ishaan below.

Ram: I belong to family with no higher education experience but my parents wanted me to go for higher education. My friends and teachers are also guided me him towards the higher education route. As I was worried about the grades in the 12th but fortunately I got the expected grades and thus I continued for higher education.

In **Ishann's** case, his family was completely unsupportive of higher education. The pressure from his family became high to get a job and contribute to daily livings financially so he got a job and gave up his higher education plans. Due to some distant relatives' influence and the support received from one of the teacher from high school he decided that he will not leave education and will go for higher education. In hindsight he felt that going for higher education and gaining a degree was important in order to improve his and his family's financial situation and future and this is why it was worth doing it.

Literature also supports this finding. Kysel, West and Scott (1992) found that both intending stayers and intending leavers said that their actual examination results could make them change their mind, with both unexpectedly good and unexpectedly bad results capable of changing decisions in either direction.

FACTORS INFLUENCING DIFFERENTIAL DECISION OF GOING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION:

The application of factor analysis to the 63 statements included in the questionnaire resulted in the extraction of six factors. In table 2, the statements included in each factor appear with their loadings. The six factors include only 31 of the original 63 statements. Certain statements were excluded from the factor specification because of their low loading on any factor. The factors created by the classification of the 63 original statements into categories are presented with their Eigen values in below table. Below table 3 highlights the statements included in each factor along with their loadings.

Table 3: Variables included in each factor and factor loadings

Factors	Variables/Statements	Loadings
Factor 1: Familial factor	My mother encouraged me to go for higher education	0.73
	My mother told me about the demands i would face while pursuing higher education	0.85
	My father expects me to earn good grades	0.81
	I can talk to my mother about my career goals	0.84
	My father did not tell me about the demands i would while pursuing higher education	- 0.77
	I cannot talk to my father about my career goals	- 0.94

Factors	Variables/Statements	Loadings
Factor 2: Self efficacy factor	I have the power to achieve my educational goals	0.82
	If I become unhappy with my life, I can do something to change it	0.73
	I choose higher education because I want to achieve something in life	0.82
	I picked higher education because i find it interesting	0.75
	I can pursue my college in any subject that i want	0.64
	Each person has the power to make life better or worse	-0.79
	I consider myself a good student	0.71
	I can be successful in any college major that I choose	-0.84
Factor 3: Relative functionalism	Getting a higher education degree will help me to get a better job	0.70
	Getting a higher education degree will make me more successful	0.62
	I can meet professional people by getting a higher education degree	0.81
	I can gain a lot of knowledge about this world by getting a higher education degree	0.86
	Getting a higher education will help me to improve my social status	0.88
Factor 4: Peer and Teacher influence	My high school teachers encouraged me to go for higher education	0.86
	My high school teachers did not talk about the importance of having a higher education degree	-0.69
	I cannot talk to my friends about my college experiences	0.92
	I cannot talk to my friends about my career goals	0.92
Factor 5: Finance related factor	Without financial aid I can still get a college degree	0.78
	I am knowledgeable of the various types of scholarships	0.71
	My parents sometimes worry about paying my tuition fee	0.66
Factor 6: Limitising factor	My gender limit my choice of higher education	0.72
	Society limits my choice of higher education subjects	0.86
	My location of residence limit my choice of higher education	0.69

Factor one, termed the familial factor, included statements concerning the encouragement by the parents for pursuing higher education and expectations of the parents for their children good academic achievement. It also includes statements regarding the parents make their children aware about the demands they would face in college. The second factor consisted of statements relating to the students personal motives for pursuing higher education and the subjective perception of their ability. It also included statements regarding choice of the college subjects. Factors such as motivation, self-esteem, and locus of control, influence the decision to attend college.

The third factor was related to the benefits of higher education. The statements included in this factor measured the attitude of students towards aspects of employment and economic benefits of higher education.

Factor four statements concerning the influence of teachers and peers regarding entry into higher education. Teachers and Peers can be termed as 'Significant Others'. Statements are related to encouragement by teachers for pursuing higher education and conversation between teachers and friends regarding higher education, career and future goals.

Factor five related to the students awareness regarding various scholarships and the importance of scholarships for pursuing higher education for the students and their parents. Finally factor six included three statements concerning the influence of gender, society and location on the choice of higher education.

INDEX CALCULATION:

After the extraction of six factors from the factor analysis, index has been calculated for these six factors. Before calculating the index, the data was normalized. The formula used for normalization is:

(Observed Value- Minimum Value) ÷ (Maximum Value- Minimum Value)

After the normalization, factor loadings and weights have been assigned. The weightage in the computation of an index are determined by using Factor Loadings and Eigen Values from the Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Thus, a composite index has been calculated named as familial influence index. By using the same formula self efficacy index, relative functionalism index, significant others (peer and teachers) index, financial index and limitising index has been calculated.

After calculation of index, In order to predict the factors determining the decision of entry to higher education of senior secondary students' logistic regression model had been used.

DETERMINANTS OF GOING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION:

In the model desire to go for higher education is the dependent variable and it is binary dichotomous variable with students planning to go for higher education as =1 and otherwise =0. The reason for taking this as the dependent variable is to explore factors determining decision to go for higher education. Only those independent variables have been taken over here which are having high correlation with the dependent variable. The value of Cox and Snell R square in the model is considerable and suggest almost 52.2 percent variation is explained by the explanatory variables (Table 4).

Table 4: Determinants of going for higher education

Factors	B	Exp (B)
Location	1.320***	3.745
Gender	1.555	4.733
Generation status	2.350*	10.488
Academic Achievement in 12th class- reference category is low		
Medium	2.450	11.590
High	2.482*	11.965
Socioeconomic status	4.191**	66.075
Familial support factor	3.619***	37.283
Self efficacy factor	3.542**	34.541
Relative Functionalism factor	3.554*	34.955
Constant	-13.982*	0.000
Cox and Snell R square	0.522	
Nagelkerke R square	0.698	

The value of the Exp (B) reveals that students from the urban area were 3.745 times more likely to decide regarding going for higher education as compared to students who were from rural area. This present finding is well supported by the literature which highlights that rural youth tend to have lower educational aspirations and achievement than their non-rural counterparts (Haller & Vickler, 1993; Hu, 2003; Rojewski, 1996). The argument for lower educational aspirations for rural students is that rural youth is disadvantaged in educational aspirations and attainment because of higher rates of poverty, poorer schooling conditions, lower parental and teacher expectations, and lower school achievement. Further, it is believed that rural students receive education that is inferior to that of their counterpart students in nonrural settings (Edington & Koehler, 1987; Graham, 2009). Le & Miller (2005) found that while rural area students tend to have a lower probability of completing high school and of participating in tertiary studies following high school graduation as compared to those from capital cities.

Gender is not coming as the significant variable regarding decision of going for higher education. This finding highlights that there is no significant difference between male and female students with respect to planning to entry into higher education. There exists support from the literature for this finding. Stage & Hossler (1989) through path analytic framework found women to be more interested in going to post secondary institution but received less family support in realizing the same.

Interestingly, generational status has been found significant variable which influence students' decision of going for higher education. This variable has been defined according to the educational level of parents. Senior secondary students whose parents were having qualification equivalent to or less than senior secondary have been defined as 'First Generation students' and the remaining students whose parents were having qualification more than senior secondary have been defined as 'Subsequent generation students'. Result of the logistic regression highlights that subsequent generation students i.e. whose parents were having education more than senior secondary were ten two times more likely to take the decision regarding going for higher education as compared to the first generation students. The finding of the present study is in support with the existing literature. Literature in the context of first generation students reveals that these students have lower educational aspirations than non-first generation students due in part to their disadvantaged backgrounds (Choy, 2001). Literature on first generation students suggests that these students often come from homes where parents do not encourage them to excel academically or to pursue higher education (Choy, 2001). Multiple studies have shown that the educational background of parents is one of the most important indicators on the predisposition of an individual's college choice process (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999). Students

whose parents do not have a college education had degree aspirations that were substantially lower than those individuals whose parents have had a college education (Terenzini et al., 1996). Studies reveal that parents who have a bachelor's degree or higher are able to transmit higher levels of human, cultural, and social capital to their non-first generation children (Choy, 2001; McDonough, 1997). This is not surprising since parents who have earned college degrees have been exposed to different perspectives about the world through their academic experiences. In turn, they may attempt to create similar opportunities for their children by helping them to learn, spending quality time with them in the home, participating in cultural activities, and engaging in social networking. All of these activities have the potential to influence the educational aspirations of their children. Parents who have a college education are more likely to increase expectations and enrolment of an individual than those parents who do not have a college education. An individual's parent is often found to be the most important individual in the college choice process (Hossler & Stage, 1992; NPEC, 2007).

Academic achievement at the senior secondary level has been found significant. Here the academic achievement in terms of percentage of marks achieved in the twelth class had been considered. Senior secondary students who had achieved high academic grades in the twelth class i.e. greater than 70% were twelve times more likely to take the decision of going for higher education as compared to students who were low and medium achievers. There exists literature which supports this finding as highlighted that academic strength and talent, as manifested in high school grades, have been shown to be a significant predictor in postsecondary enrolment (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999; Hu & Hossler, 2000).

Socioeconomic status of the family has been found significant variable which influence students' decision of going for higher education. The value of Exp (B) highlights that students from high socioeconomic group were sixty six times more likely to take the decision of going for higher education as compared to students who were from low socioeconomic group. There exists number of literature which supports the present finding. There is consensus among researchers that individuals from the highest income families are much more likely to go on to university than are those from lower income families (Mattila, 1982; Butlin, 1999; Corak, Lipps, & Zhao, 2003; Knighton & Mizra, 2002). Results for Indian context do suggest an increase in the income of the family is positively related to the increase in expenditure on education as "household expenditure on education is more elastic to household income. A one percent increase in total household income would result in 1.5 percent increase in household expenditure on education. If the household income per capita increases by one percent, expenditure on education per capita increases by 2.1 percent (Tilak, 2009).

Family support has been found significant factor which influence students' decision of going for higher education. The value of Exp (B) highlights that students who are getting higher family support are almost thirty seven times more likely to go for higher education as compared to students who are getting lower family support. Family support variable talks about encouragement from the parents, expectation of parents for achieving good grades and making children aware of the demands of higher education. Literature supports the present finding by highlighting that parents have often been shown to be most influential at the predisposition phase, by encouraging students to attend college and by increasing the expectancy that a student should attend college (Flint, 1992; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). According to Cabrera & La Nasa (2000), parents encourage their children to have high educational expectations. An individual's family may provide the greatest influence on a decision to attend college because they influence the expectations that an individual should obtain a college education. Conklin and Dailey (1981) indicated that the consistency of parental support did indeed have an impact on educational activity. They believed that students would be more likely to enroll in college if they were raised in a home environment where college was seen in a positive and optimistic light. The relationship between parental support and educational activity is typically positive. Parents also played an integral role in providing their children with access to colleagues, friends, and contacts that had knowledge about colleges and the educational opportunities they provided. With this added guidance, students were directed towards individuals who had experience with specific colleges. These students were often steered in the direction of a particular school wherever they knew it or not (Bradshaw, Espinoza, & Hausman, 2001).

Self efficacy has been found significant variable and value of exp (B) highlights that students with high self efficacy are almost thirty four times more likely to go for higher education as compared to students with low self efficacy. Literature in the context of the present finding highlights that self-efficacy expectations have consistently been found to directly affect career and educational intentions (Fouad & Smith, 1996), as well as interests and goals (Lent et al., 2003; Nauta & Epperson, 2003).

Relative functionalism has been found significant variable and value of exp (B) highlights that students with high relative functionalism are almost thirty five times more likely to go for higher education as compared to students with low relative functionalism. These results are supported by literature as highlighted by Coleman

(1988), students and parents tend to be strong proponents of a college education if they realize the long-term benefits of a college education. Parents who themselves have the experience of higher education share information about these benefits with their children. Students and parents who are not aware of social and economic benefits of higher education thus see it as an additional and heavy expense (Engle 2007; Fallon1997; Volle & Federico 1997).

The remaining factors peer and teacher influence, finance related factors and limitising factors have not been found significant in the current context.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Descriptive analysis highlights that the majority of students intended to go for higher education and the major motivation of their successful transition is to have a sound career. Second, students who were indecisive and not intended to go for higher education perceived low academic grades and financial crisis major impediment during which influence their successful transition. In qualitative analysis, students responses: "pursuing higher education is natural," "higher education is necessary to make a good carrier," "to make my dream come true," "everyone in our family goes for higher education", confirms these findings. Students who follow this normal transition pathway and successfully goes for higher education belong to upper and middle class background having the family history of higher education whereas who fail the successful transition belong to lower class backgrounds and are first generation. Third, logistic regression results confirm that location, academic achievement, socioeconomic status, generation status, family support, relative functionalism, self efficacy are significant factors which influence students' decision to go for higher education.

From the analysis and findings of the present paper, some of the important implications have been emerged. First, it is important to pay serious attention to reducing inequalities in access to higher education across different socioeconomic group. Unequal family incomes lead toward unequal access to higher education. A major reason for students who fail to do successful transition into higher education is due to lack of finances to meet the costs of higher education. Literature is also abundant that shows a strong correlation between participation in higher education and students' family background that include socio-economic factors. Mehta & Hasan (2006) find that lower completion rates at secondary level of education and economic status are more important factors that need to be addressed in this context. Second, parental education should be adopted as a criterion for affirmative action in place of caste and religion. As present study has found that students who fail to do successful transition into higher education are first generation. Majority of first generation learners are living in rural setting. Limited educational facilities in rural setting compel these individuals to exit from the education system before they reach at the higher level. Moreover rural students receive education that is inferior to that of their counterpart students in non-rural settings (Edington & Koehler, 1987). So one the one side, the first generation students lack the rigorous academic preparation because of poor social and cultural capital at home and on the other hand the inferior education in the rural setting makes these first generation learners doubly disadvantaged. It is important to provide the quality education in the rural setting for improving the participation of first generation learners in higher education. Third, admission procedures into higher education institutions depends on senior secondary examination results and in some cases competitive examination results and thus uniformity is missing. This creates a distorted growth path and unequal access to higher education (Tilak and Biswal, 2015). Therefore, a structural adjustment of entrance examinations would benefit especially the marginalised and first generation students. Thus, in order to realise the target set by Indian government of achieving gross enrolment ratio to 30% by 2020 and to make Indian higher education system more inclusive and equitable requires more participation of students who are low income and first generation.

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