

## Career Aspiration of ICSE Secondary School Students

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**Abstract:** Career is crucial to any individual as career selection has a far reaching impact on the individual in terms of lifestyle, status, income, security and job satisfaction. In the present global scenario, where individuals are engaged in rats' race in every walk of life, the 'career' schema starts developing early in life, in the form of career aspirations. Career aspiration is the desire, hope, ambition, orientation or the inclination towards a particular career that individuals see themselves following for lifetime. In India, secondary education is very vital component of the education system. It is widely believed to provide the optimum setting to prepare adolescents, for healthy and productive adult lives, including participation in social, political, and economic spheres. The following paper attempted to study the career aspiration of 133 ICSE secondary school students in Kolkata across gender. The paper also explores the various preferred career aspirations of the ICSE secondary school system. The Career Aspiration Scale for Secondary School Students (CAS-SEC) developed by Tazien, Roy & Banerjee (2018) was used for collecting data. Descriptive and Inferential statistics was used to analyse the data.

**Key Words:** Career Aspiration, ICSE secondary school students, Gender.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Career' is a word that often causes ripples of excitement, aspirations, needs, fears and confusions in the mind of any teenager. After all, who does not desire a good career? According to Beatrice (2010), "a career is an indispensable factor in the life of an individual". It may be defined as the progress and actions taken by an individual throughout a lifetime (Olaosebikan & Olusakin, 2014). Career is crucial to any individual as career selection has a far reaching impact on the individual in terms of lifestyle, status, income, security and job satisfaction (Beatrice, 2010). In the present global scenario, where individuals are constantly engaged in rats' race, the career schema starts developing early in life, in the form of career aspirations. Career aspiration is the desire, hope, ambition, orientation or the inclination towards a particular career that individuals see themselves following for lifetime. Career aspirations refer to an individual's expressed career-related goals or intentions and also include motivational components (Silvia, 2001). According to Gottfredson's theory (2001) most young people develop a cognitive map of occupations that arrays various jobs and occupations according to sex and prestige and, within that array, according to field of work. Aspirations represent a person's orientation towards particular goals and can be influenced by gender, socioeconomic status and family support (Domenico & Jones, 2007). The secondary school education in India comprises of two years of schooling - the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The age of the students in secondary school usually ranges from 13 years to 17years, that is, the teenage or the adolescent period. Secondary education serves as a link between the elementary and higher education and apart from grounding the roots of education among students, it is instrumental in shaping and directing the life of the students towards a bright future (Chaudhari, 2016). Therefore, secondary education is very vital. It is widely believed to provide the optimum setting to prepare adolescents, for healthy and productive adult lives, including participation in social, political, and economic spheres (Jacob & Lehner, 2011). In other words, secondary school gives the student a wider scope and perspective to develop into a wholesome and productive individual.

In the present education scenario a number of boards of school education exist. Each board of school education claims of preparing the students in the best possible way to meet the demands of the future. It is this that often leads parents to confusion in deciding the best board of school education for their child.

#### 1.1. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Wang & Staver (2010) identified students' career aspiration as the most important variable influencing students' later work experiences. Bindu & Padmanabhan (2016) explored the level of career aspiration among 250 higher secondary school students in Kerala state using Career aspiration scale by Grewal, 2011. The results of the study showed that the higher secondary school students possess average level of career aspiration and that gender, locale, and socio-economic status were found to influence the level of career aspiration. Dudovitz, Chung, Nelson & Wong (2017) assessed career aspirations and its association with hopelessness, self-efficacy, substance use, violence,

and risky sexual activity among 929 , 9th to 12th grade low-income minority adolescents in Los Angeles. The findings suggested that the adolescents with high career aspirations were found to have less hopelessness and high self-efficacy; aspirations requiring higher level of education were found to be related with low alcohol use, substance abuse and risky sexual activity. Mtemeri (2017) investigated factors that influence the choice of career pathways among high school students in Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. The study employed 1010 students and 20 teachers. The findings suggest that family members, both nucleus and extended family, schools, geographical location of schools and peers had an influence on students' choice of careers. OECD (2013) reported that girls have more ambitious aspirations than boys. Girls expect to work in high-status careers such as legislators, senior officials, managers and professionals. Girls in many countries have caught up with or even surpassed boys in science proficiency but not necessarily implying that girls want to pursue all types of science-related careers. This may be due to stereotypes with the representation of these fields as "masculine" and perceived to be more suited for men, whereas care-related fields, such as education or health, may be perceived as "feminine" and therefore more appropriate for women. The following paper attempts to study the career aspirations of secondary school students studying in ICSE school f Kolkata.

### 1.2. Objectives of the study:

- To study the nature of career aspiration among ICSE secondary school students.
- To study if any difference exists in the career aspiration of ICSE secondary school students across gender.
- To explore the various career preferences of ICSE secondary school students.

### 1.3. Research Questions:

RQ1: What is the nature of ICSE secondary school students' career aspiration?

RQ2: What are the various career preferences of ICSE secondary school students?

### 1.4. Hypotheses:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in the self-knowledge dimension of career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant difference in the career action behaviour dimension of career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant difference in the locus of control dimension of career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant difference in the parental Influence dimension of career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

H<sub>06</sub>: There is no significant difference in the influence of significant others dimension of career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

## 2. METHOD

The following study was a descriptive research using survey method to explore the problem. For the sample the students of IXth and Xth grade studying in different secondary schools affiliated to ICSE in Kolkata were considered. The total sample size was 133 out of which 51 were females and 82 were males. Stratified sampling technique was adopted to draw the sample from the population. The sample profile has been shown in Fig. 1.

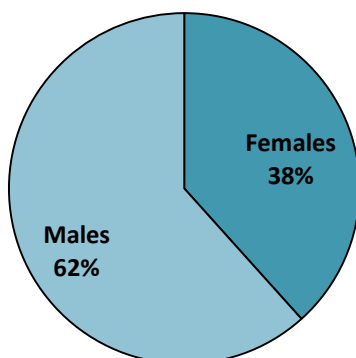


Fig. 1 is a pie-chart showing the percentage of male and female secondary school students in the sample

Participant Information Schedule was used to collect general information about the participants along with Career Aspiration Scale for Secondary School students (CAS-SEC) constructed by Tazien, Roy & Banerjee (2018). CAS-SEC was used to assess the career aspiration of secondary school students. It is a four point likert scale with response options as Very True, Quite A Bit True, Slightly True and Not At All True. It consists of 29 items distributed over 5 dimensions namely Self-Knowledge, Career action behaviour, locus of control, parents’ involvement, influence of significant others. The validity and reliability of the scale was found to be 0.82 and 0.86 respectively. The data collected were scored and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**3. RESULTS:**

**3.1. Objective 1: To study the nature of career aspiration among ICSE secondary school students:**

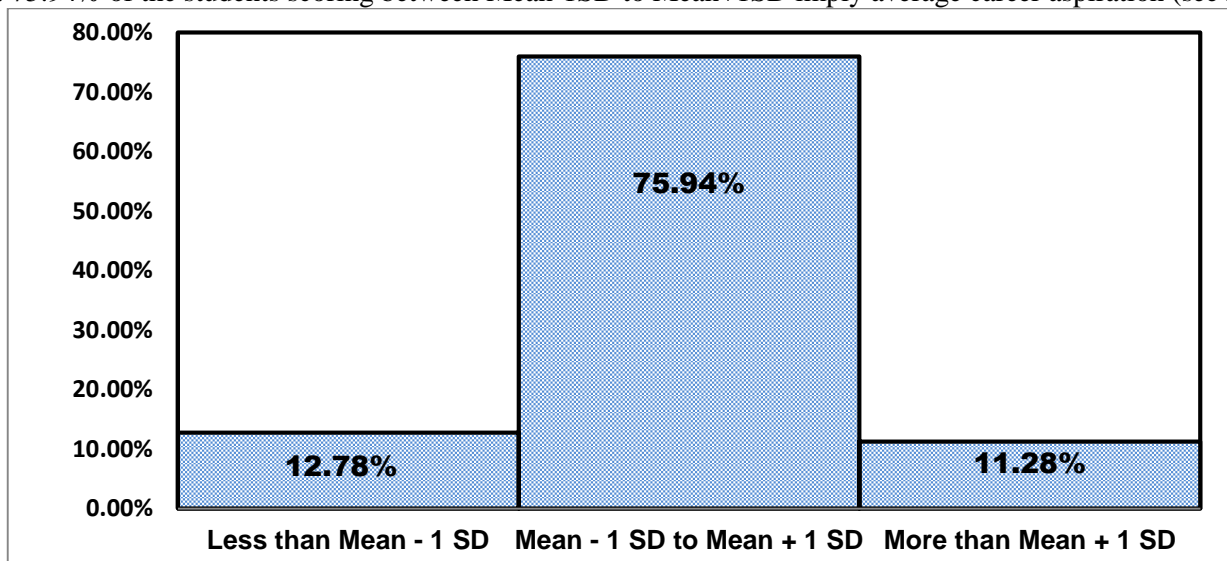
For studying the nature of Career Aspiration among ICSE secondary school students, descriptive statistics (Mean and standard deviation) were computed. Based on the descriptive statistics, the distribution was segmented into three parts - *Mean – 1SD* and *Mean +1SD* representing the extremes of the distribution and *Mean -1SD to Mean + 1SD* representing the middle average section of the distribution for secondary school students.

**RQ1: What is the nature of career aspiration among ICSE secondary school students?**

**Table 1 showing the distribution of Career Aspiration scores among secondary school students**

|                          | Percent of students Less than Mean-1 SD | Percent of Students between Mean-1 SD to Mean+1 SD | Percent of students More than Mean+1 SD |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Career Aspiration</b> | 12.78%                                  | 75.94%   | 11.28%                                  |

From the Table 2 it can be seen that 12.78% of the ICSE secondary school students have scored less than Mean-1SD and 11.28% of the ICSE secondary students have scored more than Mean+1SD, thereby suggesting that 12.78% of the students have low career aspiration and 11.28% have high career aspiration in reference to the whole group. 75.94% of the students scoring between Mean-1SD to Mean+1SD imply average career aspiration (see Fig. 2).

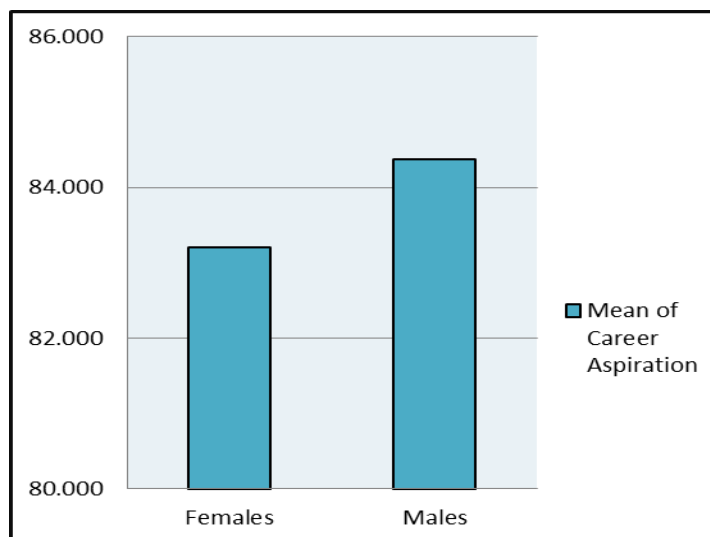


**Fig. 2 showing the nature of career aspiration among ICSE secondary school students**

**Objective 2: To study if any difference exists in the career aspiration of ICSE secondary school students across gender.**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

For testing null hypothesis H<sub>01</sub> with respect to objective 2, descriptive statistics and t test were conducted on the Career Aspiration scores. Insignificant difference was found in the Career Aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students. Therefore null hypothesis H<sub>01</sub> was not rejected (see Table 2 and Fig. 4). Results of t test indicated statistical insignificant difference (t = .602, p>0.05) between male and female ICSE secondary school students. According to Mean values female secondary school students (M=85.04) were found to be higher than their male counterparts (M= 84.17).



H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in the self-knowledge dimension of career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

In the dimension, *Self Knowledge (SK)* of CAS-SEC, t test result indicated statistically insignificant difference ( $t = .396, p > 0.05$ ) between male and female ICSE secondary school students (see Table 2 and Fig. 4). Null hypothesis H<sub>02</sub> was not rejected. According to the mean values male ICSE secondary school students ( $M=16.88$ ) were found to be very slightly higher than their female counterparts ( $M=16.73$ ) in this dimension.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant difference in the career action behaviour dimension of career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

In the dimension, *Career Action Behaviour (CAB)* of CAS-SEC, t test result indicated statistically insignificant difference ( $t = .277, p > 0.05$ ) between male and female ICSE secondary school students (see Table 2 and Fig. 4). Null hypothesis H<sub>03</sub> was not rejected. According to the mean values male secondary school students ( $M=17.43$ ) were found to be slightly higher than their female ( $M=17.26$ ) counterparts in this dimension.

H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant difference in the locus of control dimension of career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

In the dimension, *locus of Control (LOC)* of CAS-SEC, t test result indicated statistically insignificant difference ( $t = 1.08, p > 0.05$ ) between male and female ICSE secondary school students (see Table 2 and Fig. 4). Null hypothesis H<sub>04</sub> was not rejected According to the mean values female secondary school students ( $M=16.16$ ) were found to be higher than their male counterparts ( $M=15.67$ ) in this dimension

H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant difference in the parental Influence dimension of career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

In the dimension, *Parents' Influence (PaI)* of CAS-SEC, t test result indicated statistically insignificant difference ( $t = .541, p > 0.05$ ) between male and female ICSE secondary school students (see Table 2 and Fig. 4). Null hypothesis H<sub>05</sub> was not rejected According to the mean values female secondary school students ( $M=16.98$ ) were found to be slightly higher than their male counterparts ( $M=16.73$ ) in this dimension.

**Table 2 showing distribution of Mean, Standard Deviation and t test value of career aspiration scale (CAS-SEC) scores of the ICSE secondary school students with respect to gender**

| Dimensions              | Gender        |      |             |      | t test for Equality of Means |     |                 |                 |                       |
|-------------------------|---------------|------|-------------|------|------------------------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
|                         | Females(N=51) |      | Males(N=82) |      | T                            | df  | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference |
| Self Knowledge          | 16.73         | 1.83 | 16.88       | 2.34 | -.396                        | 131 | .693            | -.153           | .385                  |
| Career Action Behaviour | 17.26         | 3.48 | 17.43       | 3.48 | .277                         | 131 | .782            | -.172           | .621                  |
| Locus of control        | 16.16         | 2.19 | 15.67       | 2.69 | 1.08                         | 131 | .281            | .486            | .449                  |
| Parents' Influence      | 16.98         | 2.78 | 16.73       | 2.45 | .541                         | 131 | .590            | .249            | .459                  |

|                                 |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |      |      |
|---------------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|------|-----|------|------|------|
| Influence of significant others | 17.92 | 3.79 | 17.46 | 4.30 | .625 | 131 | .533 | .458 | .734 |
| CAS- SEC Total                  | 85.04 | 8.39 | 84.17 | 7.90 | .602 | 131 | .548 | .87  | 1.44 |

Note: \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$

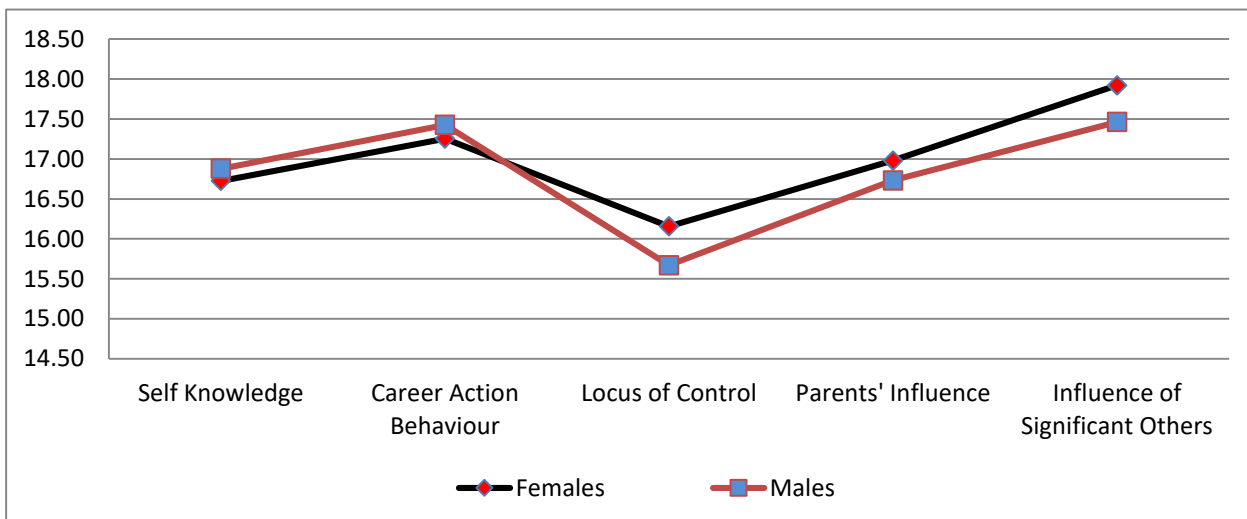


Fig. 4 showing the mean values of male and female ICSE secondary school students across the five dimensions of CAS-SEC .

H<sub>06</sub>: There is no significant difference in the influence of significant others dimension of career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students.

In the dimension, *Influence of Significant Others* (ISO) of CAS-SEC, t test result indicated statistically insignificant difference ( $t = .625, p > 0.05$ ) between male and female ICSE secondary school students (see Table 2 and Fig. 4). Null hypothesis H<sub>06</sub> was not rejected. According to the mean values female secondary school students ( $M=17.92$ ) were found to be slightly higher than their male counterparts ( $M=17.46$ ) in this dimension

**Objective 3 : To explore the various career preferences of ICSE secondary school students.**

**RQ2: What are the various career preferences of ICSE secondary school students?**

For studying the research question 2 with respect to objective 3, the career aspirations mentioned by the ICSE secondary school students were analysed descriptively. The responses of secondary school students as their career aspirations were coded into 20 categories. The categories have been as given in the Table 3.

From the pie chart given in Fig. 5, it can be seen that 29% of ICSE secondary school students aspire to become Doctors, 18% aspire to become engineers, 15% aspire to get into police or army profession, and 5% of the students aspire to be scientists in future. Interestingly, only 3% of the ICSE secondary school students aspired for the teaching. Professions like that of a pilot, banking, journalism, law and singing have been preferred by 4%, 2%, 2% and 1% of ICSE secondary school students. 3% of the students aspire to be social workers and 2% desire a successful and respected career.

Table 3 showing the various professions mentioned by ICSE secondary school students as their Career Aspirations

| CODE | PROFESSIONS   | CODE | PROFESSIONS    |
|------|---------------|------|----------------|
| 1    | DOCTORS       | 11   | PILOT          |
| 2    | ENGINEERS     | 12   | SPORTS PERSONS |
| 3    | TEACHERS      | 13   | GOVT SERVICES  |
| 4    | BUSINESS      | 14   | ARTIST(SINGER) |
| 5    | BANKING       | 15   | GAMING         |
| 6    | PSYCHOLOGISTS | 16   | SOCIAL WORKER  |

|    |             |    |                        |
|----|-------------|----|------------------------|
| 7  | POLICE/ARMY | 17 | JOURNALIST             |
| 8  | LAWYER      | 18 | CHEMIST                |
| 9  | SCIENTISTS  | 19 | SUCCESSFUL & RESPECTED |
| 10 | AIR HOSTESS | 20 | GREAT & BILLIONAIRE    |

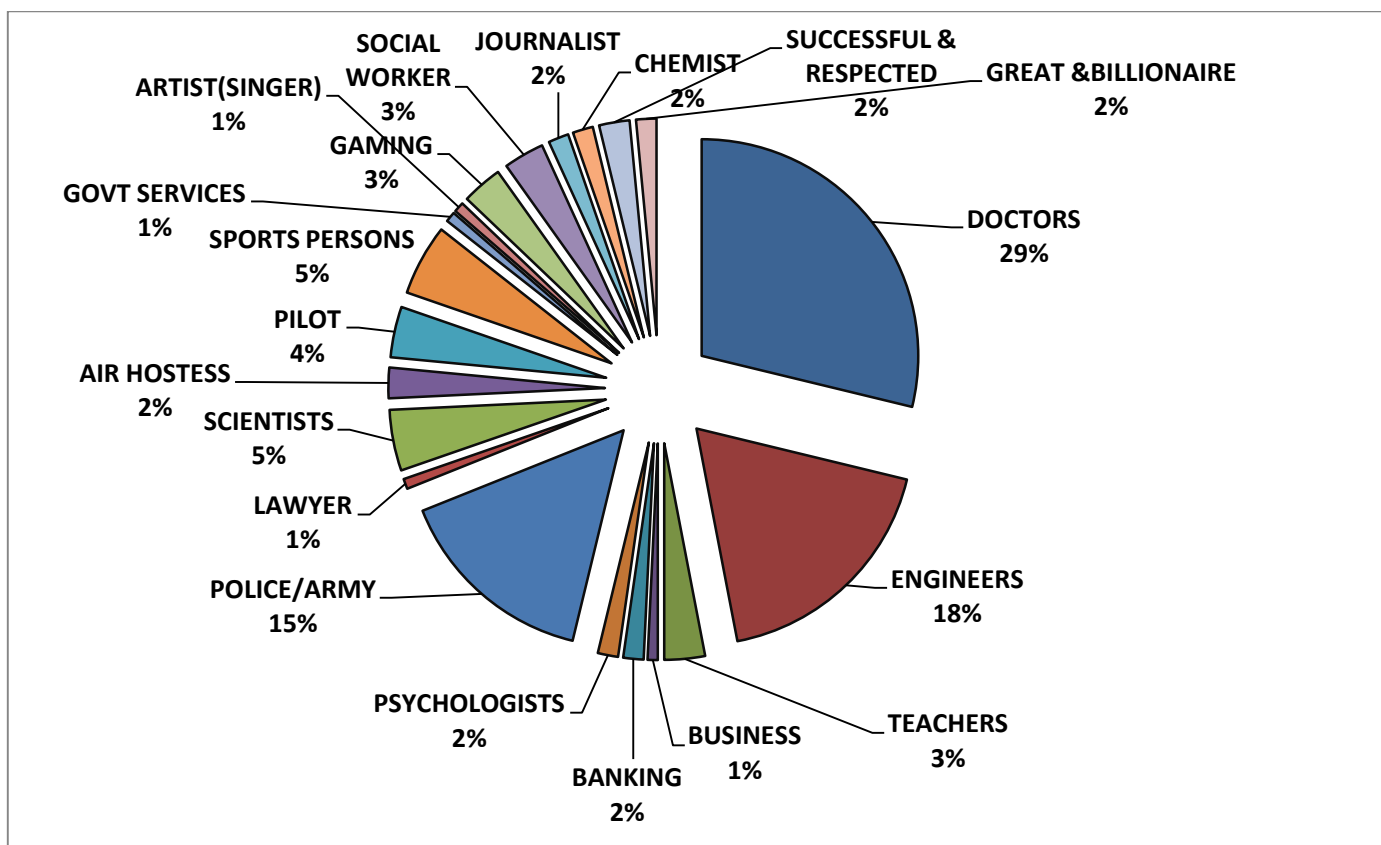


Fig 5 showing the percentage of the professions mentioned by ICSE secondary school students as their Career Aspirations

#### 4. DISCUSSION:

75.94% of the ICSE Secondary school students were found to possess average career aspiration (Bindu & Padmanabhan, 2016), while 11.28% and 12.78% of the students had low and high career aspiration respectively. No significant differences were observed in the career aspiration between male and female ICSE secondary school students (Mtemeri, 2017). Insignificant differences were observed between male and female ICSE secondary school students on the five dimensions of career aspiration – self-knowledge, career action behavior, loci of control, parents’ involvement and influence of significant others. The findings, however are not in line with the study of Bindu & Padmanabhan, (2016). The mean values showed that the female ICSE secondary schools possessed higher career aspiration (M=85.04) than the males (M=84.17). The male ICSE secondary school students scored better in Self-knowledge (M=16.88) and career action behavior (M=17.43) dimensions of career aspiration than their female counterparts (M=16.73 and M=17.26 respectively). This implies that the career aspiration of male secondary school student is more influenced by self-knowledge and career action behavior. The female ICSE secondary school students however, scored better in loci of control (M=16.16), Parents’ involvement (M=16.98) and Influence of significant others (M=17.92) dimensions of career aspiration than their male counterparts (M=15.67, M=16.73 and M=17.46 respectively). This implies that females were found to have more external loci of control, and that their career aspirations were more influenced by parental involvement and influence of significant others. The ICSE secondary school students were found to prefer traditions professions such as doctor, engineers, police and army. This finding is not completely in line with the study of Santha & Menon (2017) where class 9th and 10th standard students of Ward V and VI in Aikaranadu Grama Panchayath had preferred Teaching, medicine, banking, communication technology, nursing and architecture as their proposed career.

## 5. CONCLUSION:

On the basis of the discussion it can be concluded that a good percentage of ICSE secondary school students have average career aspirations. Gender does not influence career aspiration which implies that gender stereotyped career aspirations do not exist among ICSE secondary school students. The career aspiration of male ICSE secondary school students were more influenced by self-knowledge and career action behavior and that the career aspiration of female ICSE secondary school students were found to be more influenced by external loci of control, parental involvement and influence of significant others. The ICSE secondary school students prefer traditional career aspirations. The parents, teachers and the schools need to create awareness among ICSE secondary school students about the new career options.

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