

The Factors Influencing the Ambition of College Students

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ABSTRACT

The core purpose of a business entity is continuous growth which applies to mankind as well. The life of a human being has a meaning to live. Every individual travels his/her life towards a pre-set purpose. The purpose may be referred to as an ambition or goal or objective or aspiration. Though these words are used interchangeably, they are different from each other. The purpose may be set either by themselves or by someone else. In this article, the purpose that is defined by the respondents is referred to as ambition. Ambition is a strong desire to do or achieve something. Many studies have proved that both internal and external environments influence on students' ambition. In this study, it was decided to analyse only two factors namely, Socioeconomic status (external) and self-concept (internal). The study also aims to understand the impact of gender, self-concept, and socioeconomic status in setting up ambition among college-goers. Both primary and secondary data were collected. The primary data was analysed with the help of Statistical software SPSS-23. Frequency distribution, weighted average, independent means t-tests, chi-square tests used. The primary finding of the study revealed that there exists a difference in the ambition of the students with respect to gender and self-concept. Teachers find the study useful in identifying, understanding, and relating students' ambitions to their personal behaviour. The study assists the teachers to encourage the students in a specific way so that they can achieve their goal.

Keywords: Gender, Self-concept, Socioeconomic status, Ambition, College students

INTRODUCTION

A Lebanese-American artist, Kahili Gibran, has said that a person's aspiration helps to understand his/her heart and mind. By the words of the poet, the significance of setting up goals in life is ascertained strongly. Every creature born in the world has a purpose for its life. Webster's dictionary defines Ambition as a particular goal or aim something that a person hopes to do or achieve. Donald E. Super, a Career Counselor, attempted to shape a comprehensive career development theory in the 1950s. He had looked into peoples' career patterns, that change in occupational level and field over a while. The research findings state that though initially ambition of a person is set out by his/her parental socioeconomic level, patterns are also determined by their abilities, personality traits,

and the opportunities to which they are exposed. Super and his colleagues charted five major stages of career development, emphasizing on the fact that career patterns may change at various levels of individual lives. (i) Growth (roughly age 4-13 years), (ii) Exploration (Ages 14-24 years), (iii) Establishment stage (25-44 years), (iv) Maintenance (45-65 years) and (v) Disengagement (over 65 years) (Donald and Edward, 1981). The theory describes that the individual's attempt to understand themselves and find their place in the world of work is on the second stage, Exploration. Through classes, work experience, and hobbies, they try to identify their interests and capabilities and try to figure out where they fit. Grounded on the theory, it was decided to study the ambition set by college students of the age group between 18 and 26 years.

How to cite this Article: Sasirekha, A. and Stephen, A. (2025). The Factors Influencing the Ambition of College Students. *Internat. J. Appl. Home Sci.*, 12 (5 & 6) : 254-263.

Conceptual Review:

The concepts are defined in the following paragraph:

Ambition:

An ardent desire for rank, fame, or power with the talent and fierce ambition, desire to achieve a particular end (Definion of Ambition, n.d.). The English word ambition comes from the Latin *ambitionem* meaning 'going around'.

Self-concept:

It is attempting to understand about themselves. It includes nature (heredity and physiological/ biological dimensions) and nurture (environmental, developmental dimensions), dispositional traits, the social cognitive interactions between the person and the environment, and the socialization process.

Socioeconomic status:

American Psychological Association defines *Socioeconomic status* as the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power and control. In this study, the Socioeconomic status of the respondents was calculated using Kuppuswamy's SES Scale for 2018. Based on the three factors mentioned in the scale, the data collected were coded from 1 to 8. Further, to the group, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) value was referred for the month of September 2018 and the socioeconomic status was calculated. The CPI for the month of December 2020 is 157.3 (India Consumer Price Index (CPI), 2020). Based on the scores the respondents are grouped, automatically, as Upper (26-29), Upper middle (16-25), Lower middle (11-15), Upper lower (05-10) and Lower (Less than 5).

Review of Literature:

The review of literature has been clustered under three different categories, namely studies related to (i) Ambition and Gender, (ii) Ambition and Self-concept & (iii) Ambition and Socioeconomic status. Scales used to determine the Socioeconomic status of an individual were also reviewed.

Ambition and Gender:

Studies to understand gender differences look out

on academic performance, ambition, and career options showed interesting facts. Gender has an impact on aspiration among students (Gemici, Bednarz, Karmel, & Lim, 2014), regardless of the political culture, region or level of economic development, girls at the age of 15 years have more ambitious plans than boys (Joanna & Lawrence, 2009), the female students have more specific Career ambitions than male (Debasmita, 2013), 47 per cent of the females thought of a permanent career, 29 per cent expected to be full-time housewives, 31 per cent wanted to work until they were married whereas half of the male students wanted to start to work (Bani, 1977), men and women respond differently to their ambition and opportunity (Fulton, Maestas, Maisel, & Stone, 2006), the females' aspirations, had risen to the point that they were very similar to the males' aspirations (Hoover, 1998). the pattern of gender differences in work goals was not entirely identical (Bu and McKeen, 2001). On the contrary, one of the studies stated that there is no significant gender difference among the students in their career preference (Eisha and Bakshi, May 2017).

Ambition and Self-concept:

The studies associated with the influence of gender and socio-economic status on self-concept were reviewed and discussed further. A person's aspiration level is markedly determined by his self-image. The students to a great extent are aware of their capabilities (Debasmita, 2013), self-oriented and confident in achieving their goals (Somashyekher, 2018), also, the self-concept affects their level of aspiration and achievement (Young, Ambition, Self-Concept, and Achievement: A Structural Equation Model for Comparing Rural and Urban Students, 1998), a highly self-imaged person's self-oriented goal is not too easily swayed by the pressures of cultural experimentation (Kuldeep, 2016), more positive self-concept, high level of aspiration high academic achievements (Caplin, 1968), achievement anxiety emerges due to disruptive effects of diminished ability perceptions (Covington, Omelich, & Schwa, 1986)

Ambition and Socio-economic Status:

The ambition of the students is influenced by family and educational background (Bani, 1977), parental educational level, father's unemployment, doubts about the affordability of future study, school atmosphere, attitude towards school, social support from the father and a sense of coherence with the educational aspiration

(Geckova, Tavel, Dijk, Abel, & Reijneveld, 2010), Socio economic status, parental and peer influence (Gemici, Bednarz, Karmel, & Lim, 2014), the family, the ability of the learner self to identify his/her preferred career choice, teachers and the family and teachers' support (Shumba & Naong, 2012), geographic area-rural or urban, socioeconomic status (Young, Ambition, Self-Concept, and Achievement: A Structural Equation Model for Comparing Rural and Urban Students, 1998), parents low education, priority education and peer (Guyon and Huillery, 2014).

Gender, Self-concept, and Socio-economic status:

Self-concept among adolescent males and females has no significant difference (Sankar and Reddy, 2014), Contrary to the previous research, the social self-concept dimension showed gender difference (Linda A., Alexander, Hiram E., Yong, & Edward A., 2010), few academic achievements revealed that male students have better self-concepts than their counterparts (Puju & Netragaonkar, 2014), significant gender differences found in the self-evaluations of performance and their level of confidence (Sylvia and Edward, 1997). Students from urban areas are more likely to be driven by intrinsic factors Interest in a job, work that is personal etc.) whereas students from rural/semi urban areas are more likely to influenced either by extrinsic (Availability of Job, Well-paying or prestigious occupation) or interpersonal reasons (Gokuladas, 2010). A study on Self-concept and the socio-demographic influence among the female students found that more than 50% of the respondents had a high self-concept and there is no- Socio-demographic variable has influence over their self-concept (Kavitha and Godwin, 2014).

Socioeconomic status calculation:

The American Psychological Association defines Socioeconomic status (SES) as the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power and control (Socioeconomic Status, n.d.). There are many scales available to measure the SES, such as Edward's Social-Economic grouping of occupations, Chapi's Social Scale Revised, Warner's Index of Status Characteristics, Nam- Power Socioeconomic Status Scores and Hollings head Index

of Social Position in the western world and in India B.G Prasad, Pareekh scale, Jalota scale, Kulshreshtha scale, Kuppuswami scale, Radhukar scale, Shipurkar scale, Tiwari scale and Agarwal scale (Ankitha & *et.al.*, 2016). The scales developed in India were referred to and reviewed for this study purpose. A few of them were explained below:

The BG Prasad scale was developed in 1961 and the same was revised by the author in 1968. The scale is based on two factors Per capita income and All India average Consumer Price index. The scale uses per capita monthly income (total monthly income of the family/total members of family) and is therefore applicable to individuals. Consumer Price index (CPI), used for estimation of price changes in a basket of goods and service representative of consumption expenditure in an economy, is used for calculating SES in rural and urban population. The formula used for classification is $[CPI \times 4.63^{(\text{linking factor between 1960 and 1982})} \times 4.93^{(\text{linking factor between 1982 and 2001})}]$ (Pandey, Aggarwal, & Kakkar, 2018). An important limitation of this scale is that it takes into account only the income and, therefore, may miss out on the other factors affecting the social status of the individual.

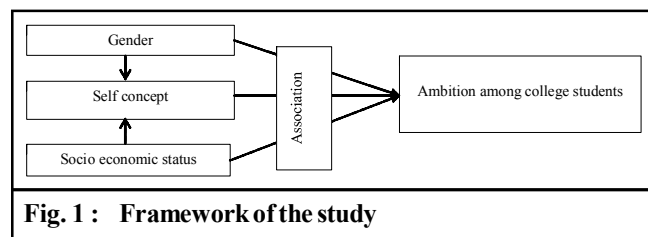
Udai Pareek Scale developed in 1964 considered following nine factors for calculating SES: Caste, Occupation, Education, Social-participation, Land, House, Farm power, Material possession and family. This scale does not emphasis on income and hence used for rural population (Ankitha & *et.al.*, 2016). After scoring the individual items, the total score is summed up. Based the score, the individuals are categorized into different class.

Kuppuswamy scale was developed for assessing the SES of an urban individual. It took three parameters into account, namely, education, occupation, and income of the individual

It was modified to enable SES assessment of a family rather than an individual. The parameters were modified as education and occupation of the head of the family and the income of the whole family, pooled from all the sources. Those three factors are coded from 1 to 8. This is the most commonly used scale for determining the SES of an urban family. These parameters are defined later in this section. In this study, the Socioeconomic status of the respondents was calculated using Kuppuswamy's SES Scale for 2018. As the respondents belong to urban areas, the scale was considered to be appropriate to calculate SES.

Framework of the study:

The following figure represents the framework of the research work. The impact of factors that influence the ambition of the respondents.



METHODOLOGY

The following are the objectives of the study.

- To know the socioeconomic background of the respondents and its impact in setting ambitions.
- To understand the self-concept of the respondents and its impact on setting ambitions.
- To identify the existence of gender differences in setting up ambition, if any.

The population of the study constitutes college students of Chennai city. A descriptive research design was implemented. Both primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data was collected from a sample of 150 respondents, from various colleges in Chennai. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire. The respondents were selected using the snowball sampling technique. Secondary data was collected from various published sources. The primary data collected were analysed using SPSS- 23. The Statistical analysis tools used were a t-test and a chi-square test.

The following hypotheses were tested

- (i) H_{01} : There is no association between Ambition and gender of the respondents
- (ii) H_{02} : There is no association between Ambition and socioeconomic status of the respondents
- (iii) H_{03} : There is no association between Ambition

and self-concept of the respondents.

- (iv) H_{04} : There is no association between self-concept and gender of the respondents.
- (v) H_{05} : There is no association between self-concept and socioeconomic of the respondents.
- (vi) H_{06} : There is no significant difference in the ranking of the factors with respect to gender

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic data such as gender, age, and qualification of the respondents is presented in the following Table 1.

Table 1 : Demographic data

Particulars	Details	Respondents	
		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	42	28
	Female	108	72
Age (In Years)	18-22	100	67
	22-26	40	27
	Above 26	10	7
Education of the respondents	UG	90	60
	PG	60	40
Education of the parents	Illiterate	6	4
	Below 10 th Std	11	7
	Passed 10 th Std	7	5
	Passed 12 th Std	11	7
	UG	57	38
	PG	55	37
Occupation of the father	Others	3	2
	Profession	57	38
	Semi-profession	49	33
	Semi-skilled	26	17
Income of the family per month (Rs.)	Self-employed	18	12
	Less than Rs. 25000	34	23
	25000-50000	88	59
	50000-75000	20	13
	More than Rs.75000	8	5

Source : Primary Data

Assessment Areas		
Sr. No	Assessment area	Affiliated sources
1.	Ambition and gender	(Larimier, Hannangan, & Smith, 2007), (Fulton, Maestas, Maisel, & Stone, 2006), (Fox , 2003), (Benschop, Van den Brink , Doorewaard, & Leenders, 2013)
2.	Ambition and Self-concept	(Fahey & Phillips, 1981) (Young, Ambition, Self-Concept, and Achievement: A Structural Equation Model for Comparing Rural and Urban Students, 1998), (Dhawan, Roseman, Naidu, Thapa, & Rettek, 1995), (Swann Jr., Chang-Schneider , & Larsen McClarty, 2007)
3.	Ambition and Socioeconomic status	(Sawitri and Suryadi, 2019), (Suzanne and Zavalloni, 1964), (Diomin, 2011), (Shi Hu, Creed, & Michelle , Does socioeconomic status shape young people's goal revision processes in the face of negative career feedback?, 2019), (Shi Hu, Shen, Creed, & Michelle, 2020)

Socioeconomic status of the respondents:

Based on the above demographic data, the Socioeconomic status of the respondents was calculated and presented in the following Table 2.

Table 2 : Socioeconomic score			
		Number	Percentage
Socioeconomic score	Upper Lower	8	5
	Lower Middle	12	8
	Upper middle	110	74
	Upper	20	13
	Total	150	100

(Source: Primary data)

Self-concept of the respondents:

To understand the respondents' self-concept (Perception about themselves), a question was included and the result is discussed below.

From the data (Table 3), it is very clear that 33 per cent of the respondents perceive themselves as highly capable and 66 per cent as capable and only one per cent perceive that they are mediocre.

Table 3 : Self—concept of the respondents		
	Frequency	Per cent
Highly capable	50	33
Capable	98	66
Mediocre	2	1
Total	150	100

(Source: Primary data)

Ambition statement by the respondents:

The following are the statements given by the respondents as their ambition in life.

From the Table 4 result, it is clearly understood that about 33 per cent of the respondents, wish to excel in the

Table 4 : Ambition of the respondents		
Ambition Statements	Frequency	Per cent
To excel in my field	50	33
To become an Entrepreneur	38	25
To be a successful person	12	8
To achieve my passion	8	5
To be an Independent person	8	5
To be a good person	4	3
To become the CEO of a company	4	3
To get a good job with good pay	4	3
Others	14	9
Not mentioned	8	5
Total	150	100

(Source: Primary data)

field of their own interest, 25 per cent wish to become an entrepreneur. About five per cent not willing to share their ambition. The other category includes making pollution free environment, Sustainability, Plastic free and cleanliness.

Testing of the existence of the association:

To understand the existence of an association between gender and ambition, the Chi-square test was administered with the following hypothesis:

H_{01} : There is no association between the gender of the respondents and their ambition.

It is evident that there exists a significant association between the gender of the respondents and their ambition at the 1 per cent level and hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Since the Cramer's V value is 0.419 it can also be interpreted that there exists an extremely good relationship between those two attributes (Table 5).

To understand the existence of an association between Self-concept and ambition, the Chi-square test was administered with the following hypothesis,

H_{02} : There is no association between the self-concept of the respondents and their ambition.

From the Table 6 it is evident that there exist a significant association between self-concept of the respondents and their ambition at the 1 per cent level and hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Since, the Cramer's V value is 0.317, it can also be interpreted that there exists a very strong relationship between those two attributes.

To understand the existence of an association between socioeconomic status and ambition, the Chi-square test was administered with the following hypothesis,

H_{03} : There is no association between socioeconomic status of the respondents and their ambition.

From the Table 7, it is evident that there is no association between the socioeconomic status of the respondents and their ambition at the 5 per cent level and hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

To understand the existence of an association between Self-concept and gender, the Chi-square test was administered with the following hypothesis,

H_{04} : There is no association between self-concept and gender of the respondents.

From the Table 8, it is evident that there is no association between the Self-concept of the respondents and their gender at the 5 per cent level and hence, the

null hypothesis is accepted.

To understand the existence of an association between Self-concept and the Socioeconomic status of

the respondents, the Chi-square test was administered with the following hypothesis,

H_{05} : There is no association between self-concept

Table 5 : Association between the gender of the respondents and their ambition

Gender of the respondents vs. ambition statement	Male	Female	Total	Chi- Square value	P- Value	Cramer's V value
To excel in my field	8	42	50	26.275	0.002**	0.419
To become an Entrepreneur	14	24	38			
To be a successful person	2	10	12			
To achieve my passion	4	4	8			
To be an Independent person	0	8	8			
To be a good person	2	2	4			
To become the CEO of a company	2	2	4			
To get a good job with good pay	4	0	4			
Others	2	12	14			
Not mentioned	4	4	8			

(Source: Primary data, **- significant at 1% level)

Table 6 : Association between self-concept of the respondents and their ambition

Self-Concept of the respondents Vs Ambition statement	Highly Capable	Capable	Mediocare	Total	Chi- Square value	P- Value	Cramer's V value
To excel in my field	14	36	0	50	30.138	0.036*	0.317
To become an Entrepreneur	17	29	1	47			
To be a successful person	4	8	0	12			
To achieve my passion	4	4	0	8			
To be an Independent person	0	8	0	8			
To be a good person	2	2	0	4			
To become the CEO of a company	2	2	0	4			
To get a good job with good pay	0	4	0	4			
Others	1	3	1	5			
Not mentioned	6	2	0	8			

(Source: Primary data, *- Significant at 5% level)

Table 7 : Association between the Socioeconomic of the respondents and their ambition

Socioeconomic status of the respondents vs. ambition statement	Upper lower	Lower middle	Upper middle	Upper	Total	Chi- Square value	P- Value
To excel in my field	0	3	41	6	50	34.316	0.157
To become an Entrepreneur	5	5	31	6	47		
To be a successful person	0	0	9	3	12		
To achieve my passion	0	0	7	1	8		
To be an Independent person	0	0	6	2	8		
To be a good person	0	1	3	0	4		
To become the CEO of a company	0	0	4	0	4		
To get a good job with good pay	1	0	2	1	4		
Others	1	0	4	0	5		
Not mentioned	1	3	3	1	8		

(Source: Primary data)

Table 8 : Association between self-concept and gender of the respondents

Self-Concept of the respondents vs. Gender	Highly capable	Capable	Mediocre Frequency	Total	Chi-square value	P- Value
Male	20	22	0	42	5.847	0.054
Female	30	76	2	98		

(Source: Primary data)

Table 9 : Association between self-concept and socioeconomic of the respondents

Self-Concept of the respondents Vs Socioeconomic status	Highly capable	Capable	Mediocre Frequency	Total	Chi-square value	P- Value
Upper lower	0	8	0	8	6.663	0.353
Lower middle	6	6	0	12		
Upper middle	36	72	2	110		
Upper	8	12	0	20		

(Source: Primary data)

and socioeconomic of the respondents.

From the Table 9, it is evident that there is no association between Self-concept of the respondents and their socioeconomic status at the 5 per cent level and hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

The factors that influence respondents:

The respondents were asked whether they are influenced by someone and asked to rank the same. The following Table 10 shows by whom the respondents are influenced in their life.

From the above results, it is very clear that the 8 per cent of them follow themselves. Whereas, among 92 per cent of the respondents, Parents are ranked first followed by teachers.

T-test to test the existence of significant differences with respect to influencing factors among male and female respondents

To understand the existence of gender difference, in ranking the factors, the following hypothesis was tested.

H_{06} : There is no significant difference in the ranking

Table 10 : Factors influencing the respondents

Having Role model	Frequency	Per cent	Influencing person	Ranks
Yes	138	92	Parents	1
			School Teachers	2
			College Teachers	3
			Almighty	4
			Siblings	5
			Celebrities	6
			Inspirational books	7
			Known Contacts	8
			Relatives	9
			Luck	10
No	12	8	Myself	NA
Total	150	100		

(Source: Primary data)

of the factors with respect to gender (Table 11).

It is very clear that there exists a significant difference in ranking for parents and inspirational books, whereas, there no significant difference between male and female for other factors.

Table 11 : Ranking of the factors with respect to gender

Factors	Gender	Mean	t- Value	p- value
Parents	Male	2.7619	2.202	.029*
	Female	2.0000		
Self (The individual)	Male	4.3333	-.157	.876
	Female	4.4259		
School Teachers	Male	4.5714	.134	.893
	Female	4.5185		
College Teachers	Male	4.6667	-1.137	.257
	Female	5.1111		
Almighty	Male	4.9524	-1.668	.097
	Female	5.9815		
Siblings	Male	6.4762	1.042	.299
	Female	6.0000		
Celebrities	Male	6.3810	.571	.569
	Female	6.1296		
Inspirational books	Male	8.0952	2.382	.019*
	Female	7.0370		
Known Contacts	Male	7.8095	.498	.619
	Female	7.5926		
Relatives	Male	7.8095	-1.849	.066
	Female	8.5741		
Luck	Male	8.0476	-1.161	.247
	Female	8.7037		

(Source: Primary data, *- Significant at 5 per cent level)

Perception of others:

The perception of the respondent's family members, relatives and Friends, on their capability are presented below. The following Table 12 represents how the respondents think of themselves and how their family members and relatives think.

From the Table 12, it is clear that most of the respondents' family members and friends have similar opinions on their capability. However, their relatives have, to some extent varied opinions.

Table 12 : Perception of others

Perception (Self-concept)	Family members		Relatives		Friends	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Highly capable	100	0	79	21	96	4
Capable	98	2	85	15	85	15
Mediocre	100	0	100	0	100	0

(Source: Primary data)

The respondents' ambition varies with each other, it is found that there exists a relationship between socioeconomic status and ambition. Very significantly, it is also noted that the ambition of the respondents, whose parent's income is between Rs.25, 000 and Rs 50,000, is to get a Good job and pay. They have also mentioned that financially they should be strong enough to meet their requirements, as they have struggled to satisfy their wants, in their early ages. The result contradicts the study conducted among the students of Central University, J&K (Eisha & Bakshi, May 2017).

Most of the respondents stated that their ambition is to excel in their chosen field followed by efforts to become an entrepreneur. There exists a significant association between gender and their ambition. It is one of the surprising results drawn from the data that the majority of the respondents who had stated that they wanted to be independent people are female.

There exists an association between self-concept and the ambition of the respondents. Though the respondents are aware that they are highly capable of achieving their goal, they are also aware that they have to make efforts for the same. Some of them have said that they are lazy to the extent that they postpone the execution, which in turn affects their progress.

While studying the self-esteem of the respondents, from the perspective of their parents, it was understood that almost all the parents believe in their ward's capability. One of the parents opines that their wards are not working hard, though they are capable. The relatives of most of the respondents believed in them and supported in achieving their ambitions. The respondents have said that their relatives trust them and know their capability. However, some of them are not confident of the respondents' capability, as they are away from them. Some of the respondents have also said that their relatives, and friends are jealous of them.

The ranking of males and females differs significantly with respect to the influencing factors namely, Parents and Inspirational books, whereas the ranking is insignificant with other factors.

Around one-fourth of the respondents prefer to be an entrepreneur. As most of the courses have included subjects related to Entrepreneurship and practical exposure was given to them through assignments, the college goers wanted to own a business, be independent and earn money. Through their subjects, they also aware of the sources of funds which facilitates them to ponder of being an entrepreneur.

It is also interesting to note that the respondents believe in themselves rather than relying on luck.

Future Scope of the Study:

The study has been conducted among the students of college goers of different places. This would help the teachers to understand the relationship between students' ambition and their circumstances. Further, the scope of the study may be extended to understand factors that have an impact on students from rural and urban areas, in particular. This may through light on the specific factors that the respondents are willing to attain.

Conclusion:

Every person wants to be successful in their life. For some success is to earn more, for some to be in a position to pay others, for some it may be to do good deeds and so on. All these are stated as ambitions in their life. There are several factors, such as controllable and non-controllable, that influence to set such ambition and accomplish the same. Some of those factors were studied. Based on the study it is concluded by saying that there exists a strong association between gender and ambition, socio-economic status and ambition.

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