Career Aspirations of Police Officers' Children: A Sociological Study

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Human beings, by nature, are inherently social beings whose survival and growth are deeply intertwined with the broader structures and dynamics of society. One of the most significant ways through which individuals interact with and contribute to society is through their professional engagements. These professional pursuits are not merely a means of livelihood but also reflect a complex interplay of psychological motivations, socio-cultural expectations, and individual aspirations. Professions emerge as responses to the diverse and evolving needs of different segments of society, while simultaneously acting as pathways for personal fulfillment, social mobility, and community development. In this context, the present study seeks to explore a specific facet of this intricate relationship between society and profession by examining the educational backgrounds of police personnel and analyzing the career aspirations of their children. The focus is particularly centered on families residing in the Adugodi Police Quarters in Bengaluru. Employing a combination of primary and secondary data sources, the study sampled 40 respondents through a method of simple random sampling to ensure unbiased representation. The findings from the study reveal a noteworthy trend: children of police personnel are increasingly demonstrating autonomy and independence in shaping their career paths. Unlike previous generations, where career choices were often influenced or even dictated by parental expectations and socio-economic constraints, the current generation appears to be more empowered, informed, and assertive in pursuing professions aligned with their personal interests and aspirations. This shift signifies a broader transformation in societal attitudes toward career selection, highlighting an encouraging move toward individual agency, diversified ambition, and progressive family dynamics.
	Keywords: Career Aspirations, Police Personnel, Children

Introduction:

Education serves as a cornerstone of both individual empowerment and societal transformation. It is a fundamental force that shapes thought, nurtures potential, and fosters the skills necessary for social and economic development. Particularly during adolescence—most notably between the ages of 15 and 18—education becomes a decisive influence in shaping a student's career outlook. These formative years are often marked by an eagerness to dream big and make choices that align with personal ambitions. However, the path to a fulfilling career is rarely navigated in isolation. The family environment, peer influence, the educational institution itself, and the broader socio-cultural context all play significant roles in guiding, encouraging, or, at times, misdirecting students.

Any imbalance or deficiency in these areas—such as lack of emotional support at home, inadequate school counseling, or peer pressure—can severely impact a student's academic performance and clarity regarding future goals. Furthermore, in the pursuit of social prestige or financial security, many students are drawn toward popular or lucrative professions without an honest evaluation of their own interests, aptitudes, or long-term satisfaction. This often leads to disillusionment, job dissatisfaction, and a sense of identity crisis later in life.

Making an informed and suitable career choice is not merely a matter of employment; it is a key element in the formation of self-concept and personal fulfillment. A well-considered career decision reinforces a young person's self-esteem and garners respect within their family and community. Therefore, early career planning and exploration are vital processes that help students discover who they are and who they aspire to become.

In the realm of higher education, the role of personal agency becomes even more prominent. Students begin to cultivate their own values, habits, and sense of direction. At this stage, stability at home, access to accurate guidance, psychological freedom, and introspective clarity become essential factors in steering one's career trajectory. The influence of family remains particularly profound during this period. Parental values, expectations, communication styles, and emotional support systems significantly shape how adolescents perceive success, manage ambitions, and respond to challenges.

In most families, especially in closely-knit societies, ideals and aspirations are passed down from one generation to the next. These intergenerational values play a central role in molding the outlook and decision-making patterns of young adults. As such, career orientation is not just a functional decision but a deeply social and emotional journey that integrates personal identity with familial legacy and societal contribution.

Objective of the Study:
1. To analyze the career aspirations of children of police personnel.

Literature Review:

Stitt-Gohdes & Crews (2005), *Gender Roles in Career Development***:** The authors explore the aspirations of both men and women for high-paying, prestigious careers but highlight a persistent gender imbalance in leadership roles. They argue that societal expectations and life events—especially marriage and family planning—often conflict with women's career advancement timelines. The study suggests that although women are equally ambitious, structural and cultural barriers hinder their professional mobility. Timing conflicts with marital responsibilities emerge as a key factor limiting women's progression into senior roles. This research underscores how gender roles and societal pressures perpetuate occupational segregation. It emphasizes the need for policy and cultural shifts to create equitable opportunities. Overall, it reflects enduring gender disparities in career attainment.

Lent & Brown (2006), *Social Cognitive Career Theory: A Framework for Career Development***:** The book provides a comprehensive overview of social cognitive career theory, rooted in Bandura's principles of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. The authors emphasize the theory's relevance in understanding how personal, environmental, and behavioral factors interact to influence career choices. They argue that despite its value, many researchers remain unfamiliar with its applications, limiting its broader implementation. The model is praised for its predictive value across gender, culture, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Lent and Brown advocate for incorporating social cognition into academic and career counseling. Their work bridges psychological theory and vocational planning. The study provides a flexible framework for exploring diverse career development pathways.

Betz & Fitzgerald (2006), *Career Development and the Psychology of Women***:** This book examines the historical shift in women's employment patterns, especially following World War II, when women increasingly entered male-dominated fields. The authors analyze how variables like gender, parental occupation, educational attainment, and societal expectations shape women's career trajectories. They contend that despite progress, deep-rooted stereotypes and institutional barriers continue to influence career outcomes. The book calls for a more nuanced understanding of women's career development, accounting for both structural constraints and personal agency. It highlights the importance of mentorship, role models, and affirmative policies. The authors contribute significantly to feminist psychology and vocational research. Their findings remain relevant in discussions on gender equity in the workforce.

Methodology and Techniques

The present research adopts a field-based, mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. This dual approach allows for the collection of measurable data while also capturing the nuanced experiences and perceptions of the respondents. The interview schedule, a primary tool of data collection, was meticulously designed in consultation with academic experts and field practitioners to ensure relevance, clarity, and contextual appropriateness. Prior to the full-scale study, a pilot test was conducted on a smaller sample to refine the structure and phrasing of the questions, ensuring reliability and validity of the instruments used. Data were gathered through direct engagement with the respondents using structured interviews and systematic field observation, allowing the researcher to assess both spoken responses and observable living conditions.

Study Area and Sample Population

The geographical focus of the study was the Adugodi Police Quarters, located in Bengaluru, Karnataka. This residential area is home to a diverse group of police personnel and their families, making it a relevant site for studying the socio-educational dynamics of law enforcement households. A total of 40 families were selected

as the sample population using the simple random sampling technique. This method was employed to ensure each household had an equal chance of being selected, thereby minimizing sampling bias and enhancing the representativeness of the study. The selected respondents included both male and female police personnel of varying ranks and educational backgrounds, along with their children who are at different stages of academic and career development.

Data Collection Methods
The study relied on both **primary** and **secondary** sources of data to triangulate findings and improve the robustness of the research.

1. Primary Data:
- **Structured Interviews:** Personal interviews were conducted using well-prepared interview schedules. These sessions were aimed at eliciting detailed information regarding the respondents' educational qualifications, career trajectories, aspirations for their children, and perceived barriers or motivations influencing career choices within the household.
- **Observation:** In addition to interviews, the researcher engaged in direct observation to gain insights into the everyday living conditions, family dynamics, educational environments, and socio-economic contexts of the police quarters. This method allowed for a more holistic understanding of the participants' realities beyond verbal accounts.

2. Secondary Data:
Secondary data were obtained from a wide range of credible sources to provide background, context, and validation for the primary findings. These sources included:
- Government documents and departmental records related to police services and public housing.
- National Census data and educational statistics.
- Academic books, peer-reviewed journals, and scholarly articles.
- Internet-based research, doctoral theses, policy papers, and encyclopedic references relevant to career development and police family life.

Data Analysis Techniques
Following the data collection process, the information gathered was systematically analyzed through a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods. The raw data were first coded and classified into relevant thematic categories. This was followed by tabulation to organize responses and facilitate comparison across variables such as gender, age, education level, and career aspiration.

Quantitative data were statistically interpreted to identify patterns, frequency distributions, and correlations within the dataset. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize key findings, while graphical representations aided in visual interpretation.

On the qualitative side, thematic analysis was employed to uncover underlying meanings, cultural norms, and individual motivations expressed by respondents during interviews. This interpretive approach, grounded in sociological theory, enabled a deeper understanding of how family structure, professional demands, and societal expectations influence the career planning of children in police households.

Overall, the methodological framework provided a balanced, multidimensional view of the research problem, enabling the study to capture both numerical trends and human experiences within a specific socio-professional context.

Table 1: *Factors Influencing Career Aspirations*

Influencing Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Educational level of parents	11	27.50%
Occupation of parents	08	20.00%
Age of parents	03	07.50%
Home environment	15	37.50%
Parents' ability to pay children's educational fees	03	07.50%
Total	**40**	**100.00%**

The above table discusses the various factors influencing children's career aspirations. Among the 40 respondents surveyed, 27.5% stated that the educational level of the parents influences their children's career aspirations, while 20% indicated the occupation of the parents as a significant factor. Additionally, 7.5% believed the age of the parents has an impact, 37.5% emphasized the role of the home environment, and another 7.5% identified the parents' ability to pay educational expenses as influential. It is notable that the highest proportion—37.5%—identified the home environment as the most impactful factor on children's career aspirations. This suggests that a supportive home and surrounding atmosphere significantly

contributes to academic and career success. The study reveals that only when the environment at home is conducive to learning can children hope to excel in both their educational and professional journeys.

Table 2: *Obstacles Faced in Achieving Career Dreams*

Challenges Faced	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poverty	03	07.50%
Unemployment	27	67.50%
Lack of parental support	02	05.00%
Caste/Class discrimination	04	10.00%
Financial difficulties	04	10.00%
Total	**40**	**100.00%**

The above table presents the challenges faced by children in pursuing their dream careers. According to the data, 7.5% of the children reported that family poverty was a barrier in achieving their career aspirations, while 67.5% indicated that unemployment posed a significant challenge. Additionally, 5% cited a lack of parental support, 10% faced caste/class-based discrimination, and another 10% struggled due to financial difficulties. It is particularly noteworthy that the majority—67.5%—of the respondents stated that unemployment was the major obstacle in reaching their desired career goals. This highlights a growing concern in recent times: although the number of educated individuals is increasing, suitable employment opportunities corresponding to their qualifications are not readily available. Moreover, with rising competition in the job market, the problem of unemployment continues to intensify.

Table 3: *Factors Influencing Career Choices*

Influencing Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Parents' expectations	05	12.50%
Educational/Personal/Professional factors	04	10.00%
Social status/respect in society	22	55.00%
Media (TV, newspapers, etc.)	01	02.50%
Advice from career counselors	02	05.00%
Work experience	02	05.00%
Friends	03	07.50%
Vocational education	01	02.50%
Total	**40**	**100.00%**

The above table discusses the various factors influencing children's career choices. Among the respondents surveyed, 12.5% stated that parents' expectations influence their children's career decisions, while 10% pointed to educational, personal, and professional factors. A majority—55%—reported that social status or respect in society plays a significant role in shaping career choices. Additionally, 2.5% acknowledged the impact of media (such as television and newspapers), 5% considered career counseling advice to be influential, another 5% highlighted the role of work experience, 7.5% identified peer influence, and 2.5% believed that vocational education had an impact on career choices. Notably, the highest proportion—55%—emphasized social status and societal respect as the most influential factor in determining a child's career path. This indicates that, particularly in families where parents are employed in government positions, there is a strong desire for their children to also secure prestigious or respectable occupations. Consequently, the aspiration for societal recognition and honor plays a dominant role in influencing career decisions among children in such households.

Table 4: *Standards for Employment Selection*

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Qualification	12	30.00%
Knowledge	18	45.00%
Examination	02	05.00%
Caste and Money	01	02.50%
Political Connection	03	07.50%
Support from Political Leaders	01	02.50%

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Luck	01	02.50%
Support from Employment Agencies	02	05.00%
Total	**40**	**100.00%**

The above table presents the opinions of respondents regarding the key criteria for employment selection. Among the total of 40 respondents surveyed, 30% stated that qualification is the primary criterion for employment, while 45% identified knowledge as the most important factor. Additionally, 5% believed examinations play a key role, 2.5% mentioned caste and money, 7.5% pointed to political connections, 2.5% stated support from political leaders, another 2.5% felt luck plays a role, and 5% reported support from employment agencies as a determining factor in securing a job. A significant majority—45%—considered knowledge to be the most critical criterion in job selection. This indicates that in today's competitive world, individuals with greater knowledge are more likely to secure jobs that match their qualifications and capabilities.

Table 5: *Factors Hindering Ambition Quality*

Key Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of good academic performance in class	30	75.00%
Inadequate parental support	02	05.00%
Insufficient learning resources	01	02.50%
Lack of career information	04	10.00%
Lack of educational information	02	05.00%
Others	01	02.50%
Total	**40**	**100.00%**

The above table discusses the key factors that hinder the quality of children's ambition. Among the total respondents, 75% stated that lack of good academic performance in class is the major factor affecting the quality of ambition in children. Meanwhile, 5% pointed to inadequate parental support, 2.5% cited insufficient learning resources, 10% mentioned lack of career information, 5% referred to lack of educational information, and the remaining 2.5% identified other reasons as significant barriers to children's ambition. A large majority—75%—identified poor classroom performance as the primary factor limiting the quality of ambition in children. This highlights the fact that in any educational or professional pursuit, an individual's interest and engagement play a crucial role. Therefore, when students perform poorly in class, it directly impacts their career aspirations and future goals.

Findings:

1. 37.5% of the respondents stated that the home environment has an impact on children's career aspirations. This study reveals that only when the home and surrounding environment are supportive of learning, success in academic and professional life becomes achievable.
2. 67.5% of the children reported facing unemployment issues while pursuing their dream careers. This highlights the fact that, in recent times, although the number of educated individuals is increasing, suitable jobs matching their qualifications are not available. Moreover, due to rising competition in the job market, the problem of unemployment has intensified.
3. 55% of the respondents expressed that dignity/respect in society influences children's career choices. This implies that parents, particularly those in government jobs, often expect their children to also pursue prestigious or government positions. As a result, societal notions of status and honor significantly shape children's career choices.
4. 45% of the respondents stated that knowledge is the primary criterion for choosing a profession. This indicates that in today's competitive world, individuals with greater knowledge are more likely to secure good jobs that align with their educational qualifications.
5. 75% of the respondents identified lack of good performance in class as a major factor that hinders the quality of children's ambition. This is because interest and involvement play a vital role in any educational or professional achievement. Therefore, when there is a lack of good academic performance, it directly affects a child's future career prospects.

Conclusion:

The present study highlights the multiple factors that influence and often hinder the career aspirations of children, particularly within the context of their social, academic, and familial environments. The data clearly indicates that the lack of academic performance in the classroom (75%) is the most significant barrier, underscoring the importance of consistent educational engagement and support. Equally important are the roles played by the home atmosphere (37.5%) and societal expectations regarding dignity and respect (55%), which shape the career ambitions and decisions of young learners. Furthermore, the growing challenge of unemployment (67.5%) despite higher education reflects a serious disconnect between academic qualifications and the availability of appropriate job opportunities. In an increasingly competitive and information-driven world, the availability of proper guidance, knowledge, and encouragement is essential to help children translate their ambitions into achievable goals. Parents, educators, and policymakers must collaborate to provide a nurturing environment, accurate career guidance, and equal access to learning resources. By addressing these factors collectively, we can foster a generation of confident and well-prepared individuals who are empowered to pursue careers aligned with both their aspirations and societal needs.

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