

VOCATIONAL PREFERENCES OF SECONDARY
SCHOOL GIRLS IN SRI LANKA

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Although vocational preferences as expressed at school level have little long-term reliability or realism, investigations of such preferences have been made frequently in many countries including Sri Lanka as they help to provide some insight into prevailing values and social attitudes that may affect development and into educational outcomes of socio-economic policy and planning.

This particular study had two objectives and was carried out in two stages. In Sri Lanka extensive participation of girls in the education process has led to increasing numbers seeking employment despite restrictive employment opportunities and a high rate of unemployment among women. It was felt in this context that a study of the vocational preferences and attitudes of girls on the threshold of leaving secondary school could provide information relevant to the problem of the participation of women in the total development process.

The second objective was to attempt to assess the impact of education experience offered by the school curriculum on vocational preferences by comparing where possible the results of two surveys. The subjects of the first survey in 1973 were a sample of girls enrolled in the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (Grade 10) class¹. In 1976 a second survey was carried out among a sample of National Certificate of General Education (Grade 9) girls² to

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1. This survey was carried out as a part of a UNESCO study of Educational and Employment Opportunities for Girls and Women in Sri Lanka in 1973. (mimeographed).
 2. The 1976 survey was made possible by a Research grant from the University of Sri Lanka, Colombo Campus.

ascertain whether the 1972 curriculum reforms had had any success in changing vocational preferences and attitudes. Unlike the first group the second group of students had not been divided into streams differentiated on a subject area basis. They had had a common curriculum which included subjects such as pre-vocational studies which were intended to create wholesome attitudes to a broad range of occupations which were seen to be relevant to social needs.

Methodology

A stratified random sample from 5 districts - Colombo, Kandy, Jaffna, Matara and Polonnaruwa was used in each survey. In 1973 a thousand girls studying in the GCE (OL) class and in 1976 a thousand girls studying in the NCGE class were drawn from one class each in 26 schools (10 urban and 16 rural) randomly selected from urban and rural schools and from schools with Sinhala, Tamil and English medium classes. The same schools were selected in both years and the same questionnaire administered. Responses were received from 979 in 1973 and 875 in 1976.

Six areas were explored

- (i) the stage in education at which respondents expected to seek employment
- (ii) willingness to work after marriage
- (iii) the employment sector preferred by respondents
- (iv) vocational choice
- (v) reasons for vocational choice and
- (vi) rating of occupations.

The data was analysed to examine relationships with four variables:

- (i) urban/rural school environment
- (ii) language medium
- (iii) two socio-economic levels as determined by parental occupations.

- (a) upper and lower middle class occupations and
 (b) urban and rural low income occupations and
 (iv) in the 1973 sample, enrolment in science and
 arts courses.

Contingency tables were constructed and chi-square (χ^2) values computed to assess significant differences between sub-groups divided according to these variables, and Spearman's rank correlation coefficients calculated to compare vocation ratings.

Level of Education and entry to employment

Tables I and II present the distribution of responses regarding the level of education after which employment was envisaged by respondents. In 1973 the largest number (36.7%) wished to seek employment after the GCE (OL) but the proportion that expected to work after their tertiary education was almost as large (33.7%). A higher proportion of the urban, middle class and science students wished to complete tertiary education before seeking employment and a higher proportion of rural, less economically favoured and Arts students opted for employment after ten years schooling - a difference which can be attributed to economic circumstances and the stronger motivation of science students for further education.

In 1976 the proportion seeking to enter the work force after the first stage of secondary education, the NCGE (Grade 9) had by this time replaced the GCE (OL), had declined markedly in the whole group (13.6%), and in all sub-groups. Half or over half in each group now aspired to complete tertiary education before employment. There was no science stream as a result of the introduction of the common curriculum but aspirations regarding completing tertiary education were higher among Tamil medium students and middle class and urban students, due perhaps again to motivational and economic factors.

One fact that emerges is that the level of educational expectations has risen in spite of graduate unemployment. It is also possible that the NCGE did not receive the same

TABLE I

Educational Level and Entry to Employment 1973

(Percentage Distribution of Choices of Girls)

Educational Level	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group	Sc.	Arts
Total No.	979	390	589	696	233	50	426	553	367	612
Before completing G.C.E.(O.L.)	3.7	1.7	5.0	3.7	4.3	2.0	1.9	5.4	1.9	4.9
After GCE (O.L.)	36.3	20.3	46.9	37.3	32.6	38.0	25.8	44.3	21.5	45.1
After GCE (A.L.)	21.4	21.0	21.6	21.2	24.5	8.0	21.1	21.5	17.4	23.7
After Tertiary Education	33.7	47.7	24.5	32.0	35.2	50.0	46.5	23.8	56.9	19.8
Undecided	4.9	9.2	2.0	5.8	3.4	2.0	4.7	5.0	2.3	6.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

acceptance as the GCE (OL) as a terminal course and as a qualification for employment, while relatively more students were also able to qualify for higher education on the basis of performance at this examination. The GCE Advanced Level is viewed in Sri Lanka more as a passport to higher education than as a terminal point in the education system. In both groups the small percentage of "undecided" respondents do not perhaps need to seek employment or have no inclination to do so.

Employment after marriage

There was little divergence of opinion on this matter in either sample. Nearly 90% of both 1973 and 1976 groups expressed readiness to be employed after marriage (Tables III and IV). The rural and less affluent groups made the most positive response for obvious economic reasons and the English medium group the least.

These aspirations have implications for a labour market in which the women formed only a quarter of the labour force (26.2%) and had a labour force participation rate of 26% as shown in the 1971 Census, while at the same time their unemployment rate (31.1%) was double that of men (14.3%). In Sri Lankan agrarian society women have always been engaged in economic activities, and it is refreshing to note that the education system is assisting in eroding the middle class concept of a completely and exclusively housebound woman.

Employment sector

83.2% of the 1973 group and 81.7% of the 1976 group have opted for employment in the state sector (Tables V and VI), and this is consistent with the findings of other surveys over the last two decades such as the 1952 survey and the report of the ILO mission in 1971.

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3. Green, T.L., "Education and Social Needs", in University of Ceylon Review, Vol.X October 1952 and "Results of a questionnaire on Attitudes of Undergraduates" in Matching Employment Opportunities and Expectations, Vol.II, ILO Geneva, 1971.

Further analysis shows that there are differences between the preferences of urban and rural, linguistic, and economic groups in both years and science and arts streams in 1973. A higher proportion of rural and less affluent students as well as of Sinhala medium students prefer government employment, evidently because they do not have the right connections to obtain employment in affluent organizations in the private sector nor the resources for self-employment. To disadvantaged groups government employment provides the greatest assurance of security, while the urban middle class has more access to the private sector, to land, and to credit and other infrastructural facilities necessary for entrepreneurial activities. This is reflected even more clearly in the responses of the English medium students who are largely urban group from metropolitan schools.

Vocational Choice

In response to a direct question as to the vacation they would select the most popular choices were the same ten occupations in both years (Tables VII and VIII). Thirty one other occupations in 1973 and thirty six in 1976 were selected by less than ten respondents each and in the majority of cases by one or two only⁴, and about 8% - 10% in each sample did not select any occupation.

It is interesting to note, however, that there have been significant changes in the order of popularity of the ten occupations. In 1973 teaching was the choice of the largest number (37.1%) and was displaced by "doctor" only by the science and English medium groups. In 1976 there was a significant increase in those who selected medicine as a career and the highest proportion in all groups except the rural, Sinhala medium and low income students selected this occupation as their first choice. There has been a marked

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4. These occupations include farmer, private secretary, administrator, cooperative stores manager, agricultural instructor, actress, artist, apothecary, radio artiste, musician, telephonist, architect, journalist, psychiatrist, surgeon, social service worker, politician, film star, receptionist, librarian, university lecturer.

decrease in the proportion selecting teaching as a vocation, and the numbers have declined even among the rural, Sinhala medium and low income groups in which it still ranks as the choice of the largest number.

Nursing has been selected by the third largest group in both years and is most popular among the rural middle class and Sinhala Medium students. There has been a decrease in the proportion electing to be clerks and stenographers and an increase in the numbers selecting the jobs of air hostess and engineer. The air hostess's job was an urban and western-oriented choice but those selecting engineering have increased in all groups including rural and low income groups. Accountancy and law are largely urban western-oriented middle class choices and aspirants to join the police force are confined chiefly to students from rural, Sinhala medium and low income groups.

In brief there has been no change in the range of occupations which the majority of students select and many of the old stereotypes survive. The most striking change has been the increase in the popularity of the medical and engineering professions among all groups. An explanation for this increase seems to lie in the curriculum changes since 1972 which made science education available for all NCGE students. In 1973 only science students could aspire to be doctors and engineers while arts students had perforce to be teachers, clerks and stenographers. With the removal of the curriculum differentiation the social status and economic benefits which gave such high prestige to medicine and engineering in Sri Lanka became 'attainable' goals for all aspirants to socio-economic mobility.

The fact that almost all these popular occupations belong to the service sector underscores

- (i) the age-old literary bias of the curriculum and its traditional economic value in Sri Lanka and
- (ii) the influence of sex stereotypes which have led to the concentration of women in industrialized countries and in the urban sector in economically developing countries in occupations in this sector of the economy.

It is also tantamount to a rejection of employment in the agricultural sector by young women in less economically developed countries where over half the women are actively engaged in agricultural activities. This dichotomy between aspirations and opportunities is a result of distortions in the development process in colonial societies and has significant implications for future directions in over-all policies.

Reasons for vocational choice

Positive or negative responses were obtained to a list of statement of reasons for choosing the occupation specified in the previous answer and Tables IX and X present the proportion of positive responses and significant differences. The conceptual scheme on which the list was based included the following areas:

- (i) influence of key persons
- (ii) material benefits
- (iii) practical considerations
- (iv) security
- (v) social attitudes - (a) status
(b) sex role stereotyping
- (vi) concept of service and
- (vii) personal predilection

Responses to (vi) and (vii) were conventional, but analysis of the other responses revealed interesting facets of values and aspirations as well as significant differences among some groups.

Parental occupations, peer choices and the advice of teachers have had minimal influence on all groups in both years. Parents' wishes, however, seem to have a stronger influence and the impact appears to be greater on Tamil medium and middle class students.

Where material benefits are concerned the 1976 group and its urban, middle class students in particular, showed a

higher degree of consciousness of the value of such incentives than the 1973 group. In both groups a high proportion of Tamil and English medium students attached importance to a 'good' income, promotional prospects and opportunity for going abroad. The only practical consideration which was adduced as a reason for choosing a vocation was availability of the type of occupation selected.

Concern with security as a motive for selecting a vocation was greater in 1976 than in 1973. In the latter year, more urban, middle class and science students were mindful of this need while rural students had a slightly higher degree of interest in this respect of employment in 1976. In both years security was a major concern with Tamil and English medium students.

The two social concepts in the list evoked different responses from the majority of respondents. While a considerable proportion of all groups were in agreement with sex role stereotyping of jobs, the status of a job or its "respectability" was of importance largely to the Tamil medium group. Those conditioned by traditional sex stereotypes with regard to employment had also declined slightly in proportion and those influenced by norms of prestige had increased in 1976.

On the whole the reasons most favoured by respondents were interest, service, availability, suitability for women, security, some material benefits and parents' wishes. In a society where education functions as an agent of mobility and where students were drawn from a broad spectrum of society it was inevitable that only 10% should have wished to follow their parents' occupation.

The use of chi-square test (see results in Tables IX and X) also showed that there was hardly any difference in reasons adduced for vocational choice between urban and rural students in both years, and between arts and science students in 1973. There were, however, very significant differences between:

- (i) students from low income and those from middle class homes and
- (ii) students from Sinhala medium and those from Tamil medium homes

with regard to the influence of parental wishes, material benefits, status and sex roles on selection of vocations.

Ratings of occupations

Ranking of occupations is a useful index to the socio-economic hierarchy of vocational aspirations as well as to the prestige scale of occupations in a society. Respondents were asked to rank 10 occupations in order of preference from a list of 33 randomly selected from high, middle and low income, and traditionally "feminine" and other employment. Occupations were ranked according to scores received.

It was found that the 10 occupations receiving the highest scores in both years (Tables XI and XII) were consistent with the ten most popular vocational choices given in Tables VII and VIII. Calculating Spearman's rank correlation coefficients for this data it was found that there was also high positive correlation in ranking between the 1973 and 1976 groups (.94), and between sub-groups in the two years - urban (.93), rural (.94), Sinhala Medium (.93), Tamil Medium (.84), English Medium (.87), middle class (.91) and low income (.90).

Nevertheless there were some noteworthy changes in preferences as in the case of vocational choice. In 1973 teaching was ranked first by the whole group as well as by the rural arts, Sinhala medium, Tamil medium and by both economic groups, air hostess by the urban and English medium groups and medicine only by the science group. In 1976 medicine was ranked first by all groups excepting English medium students who gave first place to accountancy, while airhostess was ranked second by the majority of groups. Teaching was ranked fourth, and received an even lower rating from urban and affluent groups. The clerical service too received a lower rank in 1976 but engineering had a higher rating than teaching, and law too improved its position in the list of preferences. Nursing, and the clerical and police services were rated higher by rural and less affluent respondents, and law and accountancy by urban and middle class students, but engineering was ranked high by all groups. There were, of course, some inter-group variations.

These changes indicate, once again, that the science-arts dichotomy has been somewhat resolved by curriculum changes since 1972 and that medicine and engineering were apparently felt to be feasible aspirations in 1976. The increasing number of girls entering the university for engineering courses has also perhaps helped to change the image of this profession as a "masculine" occupation.

The down-grading of teaching, however, seems to stem from more complex causes. An occupation which was preferred for its availability, the security it offered and its traditional appeal to women could have lost popularity as a result of graduate unemployment and steadily declining monetary rewards. Moreover, the doctor, engineer and even airhostess have opportunities of overseas employment or travelling which are denied to the teacher in the present context. The accountant has similar prospects but the fact that accountancy courses are not part of the free education system explains its higher rating by urban and middle class rather than by rural and less affluent respondents.

The other interesting feature is that while there is relatively high positive correlation in ranking in both years between students from urban and rural schools (.81 in 1973 and .88 in 1976), middle class and low income homes (.79 and .74), Sinhala and Tamil medium students (.84 and .83) and even science and arts students in 1973 (.80), there is low correlation between Sinhala and English medium (.44 and .40) and between Tamil and English medium students (.47 and .46) in both years. In fact, the vocational preferences of English medium students (all of whom are from Colombo) differ in many respects from that of other groups. English medium students rank accountancy, doctor, airhostess, engineer and nurse high in common with other groups but their other preferences such as private secretary, receptionist, hair-dresser and salesgirl are among those ranked relatively low by other groups. These occupations are essentially urban-based and are part of the cosmopolitan world of the metropolis to which these students belong. On the other hand this group gave a low rating to vocations such as cooperative manager and apothecary who have a more significant role in rural society.

The list of least popular occupations given in Tables XIII and XIV reflect negative attitudes to low income, low status and unfamiliar jobs. The trader is perhaps considered to be synonymous with petty retail trade in both organized and the informal sectors. Many school leavers end up as factory workers and salesgirls and often become a source of cheap labour. Hotel workers, hairdressers and receptionists are new metropolitan based avenues of employment. The mechanic and until recently the bus conductor, have been almost exclusively

male images. The farmer had a slightly higher rating in 1976 but the low popularity of this vocation in a largely agrarian society reflects the depressed state of the rural economy in which women have always been active participants in agricultural activities.

Some observations

This analysis of vocational preferences has helped to identify some aspects of the role of the education process, the environment and values in determining aspirations. Psychological factors affecting individual behaviour are outside the framework of this study but a Sri Lankan research study⁵ found that the vocational interests of rural secondary school girls were more influenced by environmental and non-intellectual factors, and those of urban girls by intellectual factors, while psychological factors were of less importance to both.

It has been seen that even in the brief period under review here (1973 - 1976) educational change has led to higher expectations and therefore to higher vocational aspirations since the age at which employment is sought is indicative of the level of vocational aspiration. In Sri Lanka lack of a pluralistic development in tertiary education and the narrow social hierarchy of university courses culminating in the goals of medicine and engineering have meant that the education process has exercised pressures towards social conformity to a very limited range of 'approved' jobs.

Environment and values are inter-linked and it is against this background that the oft-repeated claim that Sri Lankan youth are unrealistic in their vocational aspirations has to be examined. In most countries a much smaller proportion than that actually engaged in agriculture and industry express preference for these occupations, and manual and low income jobs are invariably at the bottom of any list of preferences.

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5. Muthulingam S. "An investigation of certain environmental and psychological factors involved in the vocational choice and scientific interests of a selected group of secondary school pupils in Ceylon". Ph.D. thesis, London (1971) - (unpublished).

Reasons for vocational choice in any country are usually material benefits, social approval and pleasant working conditions. In Sri Lanka where education is still viewed as an agent of socio-economic mobility despite the incidence of "educated" unemployment, students inevitably wish to escape from the drudgery and hardship of the living conditions of the majority to the most remunerative and socially rewarding occupation of which they are aware, and even to the glamour and fantasy they identify with the career of an airhostess.

As evident from this survey many of them, however, retain a sense of practicality at the same time, for the less prestigious occupations of clerk, nurse and policewoman are among the ten most popular choices and preferences. This may stem from what Rodman has termed 'stretch values' where the aspirations of the less affluent are also determined by an alternative set of values which enables them to adjust to their deprived circumstances and to accept lesser goals.

This survey has also revealed that vocational choices in Sri Lanka have not changed appreciably over decades, for T.L. Green in his study of vocational ambitions in 1952⁷ found that students preferred employment in the State sector and shunned occupations in 'production' such as in agriculture and industry, while the ten occupations rated most highly were those of doctor, teacher, engineer, farmer (which he felt was interpreted as landowner), advocate, air pilot, police, army, nurse and radio operator.

Education can neither create nor change vocational aspirations as these are in reality responses to socio-economic incentives. In Sri Lanka neither the economy nor the incentive structure has changed to any significant extent over the years.

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6. Rodman Hyman, "The Lower Class Value Stretch", Social Forces, Vol.42 No.1, Oct. 1963.
 7. Green, T.L., "Education and Social Needs", University of Ceylon Review, Vol. X, Oct. 1952.

In spite of all the pronouncements made during the last decade regarding the need to promote self-employment, successful entrepreneurship is with few exceptions still the privilege of the affluent, and clerical posts in the state sector have the aura of security even in a saturated labour market. Curriculum change has therefore little impact and extension of educational opportunities directs aspirations of a larger number to unchanged goals, particularly since the overseas labour market has always attracted the professional class. It would be interesting to see whether accessibility to skilled and unskilled employment in West Asia will have any influence on vocational aspirations or help to reduce the numbers seeking higher education.

Where women are specifically concerned the findings of this survey suggest an expanded women work force. The labour force participation of women increased from 13.9% in 1959 to 26.1% in 1970 but their unemployment rate also increased from 12.1% to 21.2% during the same period⁸. Whether the number of employed women will increase significantly or whether they will swell the existing 'labour reserve' of women will depend on the employment situation in the country. Currently the employment of women tends to be of marginal importance to many policy-makers and employers in view of the high incidence of unemployment in general.

Among more ambitious school leavers in many countries feminine vocational preferences do not differ markedly from male preferences in Sri Lanka, for instance, engineering is third in order of vocational preferences. On the whole, however, the acceptance of traditional sex stereotypes in employment by a considerable proportion of girls in Sri Lanka and the narrow range of their vocational preference offer little hope that their exclusion from some areas of employment will change significantly or that their participation in the total development process will be greatly accelerated.

8. A Survey of Employment, Unemployment and Under-employment in Ceylon, I.L.O. Review, Vol. LXXXVII, No.3, March 1963. Socio-Economic Survey of Ceylon - Dept. of Census and Statistics 1969/70.

While vocational preference can only change meaningfully with rapid over-all development two related problems merit attention:

- (1) Since the compulsion to social conformity revealed in this survey implies that vocational preferences can run counter to individual abilities, aptitudes and interests, there is need for education and vocational guidance programmes to create awareness of a wider range of choice within even the existing structure, and thereby to reduce frustration and wastage of human resources.
- (2) The aspirations of the majority of girls to combine marriage and employment also has important implications. Women form half the human resources of a nation while their biological functions and their crucial role in the home are vital for national development. The need to assist women to reconcile their dual role in the home and in employment without detriment to either becomes therefore the social responsibility of all policy-makers.

TABLE II

Education Level and Entry to Employment 1976
(Percentage Distribution of Choices of Girls)

Educational Level	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
Total Nos.	875	384	491	627	183	65	341	534
Before Completing NCGE	2.8	1.5	3.8	3.3	2.2	0.0	1.2	3.9
After NCGE	13.6	8.3	17.7	16.1	3.8	16.9	5.3	16.9
After HNCE	15.4	13.3	17.1	17.3	3.8	29.2	12.3	17.2
After Tertiary Education	58.5	63.3	54.8	52.4	84.2	46.2	71.8	49.5
Undecided	9.7	13.6	6.6	10.9	6.0	7.7	9.4	12.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: The NCGE replaced the GCE(O.L.) in 1975 and the HNCE replaced the GCE (A.L.) in 1976.

TABLE III

Employment after Marriage - 1973
(Percentage Distribution of Choices)

Employment after Marriage	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group	Sc.	Arts
Total Nos.	979	390	589	696	233	50	426	553	367	612
Willing	88.9	85.6	91.2	89.4	89.2	82.0	85.7	91.5	93.2	86.4
Unwilling	8.2	12.3	5.4	6.5	7.3	18.0	11.0	5.9	5.7	9.6
Uncertain	2.9	2.1	3.4	4.1	3.5	0.0	3.3	2.6	1.1	4.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE IV

Employment after Marriage - 1976
(Percentage Distribution of Choices)

Employment after Marriage	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
Total Nos	875	384	491	627	183	65	341	534
Willing	89.6	88.0	90.8	91.4	87.9	76.9	87.1	91.2
Unwilling	5.7	6.5	5.1	4.6	7.7	10.8	7.0	4.9
Uncertain	4.7	5.5	4.1	4.0	4.4	12.3	5.9	3.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE V

Choice of Employment Sector - 1973
(Percentage Distribution of Choices)

Employment Sector	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group	Sc.	Arts
Total Nos	979	390	589	696	233	50	426	533	367	612
Govt. Sector	83.2	70.3	91.9	88.1	76.8	46.0	72.7	91.3	76.8	87.1
Private Sector	5.8	12.6	1.4	3.0	8.2	34.0	11.5	1.4	7.9	4.6
Self-Employment	6.9	11.2	3.9	5.7	7.7	18.0	10.3	4.1	9.0	5.6
Undecided	4.1	5.9	2.8	3.2	7.3	2.0	5.5	3.2	6.3	2.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE VI

Choice of Employment Sector - 1976

(Percentage Distribution of Choice)

Employment Sector	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
Total Nos	875	384	491	627	183	65	341	534
Govt. Sector	81.7	75.0	86.9	86.5	77.6	47.7	71.8	88.0
Private Sector	6.9	9.4	4.9	5.7	1.6	32.3	9.9	4.9
Self-Employment	7.2	12.8	2.9	3.9	16.9	12.3	14.7	2.4
Undecided	4.2	2.8	5.3	3.9	3.9	7.7	3.6	4.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE VII

Vocational Choice - 1973 (By percentage)

Vocations	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group	Sc.	Arts
Total Nos.	979	390	589	696	233	50	426	553	367	612
Teacher	37.1	27.2	43.6	38.2	40.8	4.0	29.5	42.8	20.2	47.2
Doctor	17.8	24.6	13.2	14.0	25.3	34.0	26.5	11.0	43.1	2.6
Nurse	10.0	6.4	12.4	12.9	2.5	4.0	4.9	13.9	13.1	8.2
Clerk	6.4	4.1	7.9	8.2	2.1	2.0	3.3	8.8	1.6	9.3
Stenographer	4.6	4.9	4.4	4.0	1.3	28.0	5.9	3.8	0.5	7.0
Accountant	3.1	5.6	1.5	3.0	2.1	8.0	4.9	1.6	2.5	3.4
Lawyer	2.5	4.9	0.8	1.8	4.3	2.0	4.5	0.9	1.6	2.9
Engineer	2.0	3.8	1.5	1.4	4.3	0.0	3.5	0.9	5.2	0.2
Air Hostess	2.0	3.3	1.2	1.9	2.1	4.0	3.3	1.0	0.5	2.9
Police	1.8	0.0	3.1	2.4	0.4	0.0	0.2	3.0	2.2	1.6
Total	88.1	84.8	89.6	87.8	85.2	86.0	86.5	87.7	90.5	85.3

Only the ten most popular choices are included in this Table. Approximately 2% of the group selected 31 occupations, the majority of which were each chosen by 1-3 respondents. About 10% were undecided.

TABLE VIII

Vocational Choice - 1976 (By percentage)

Vocations	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
Total Nos	875	384	491	627	183	65	341	534
Doctor	29.4	40.0	20.8	22.6	51.9	30.7	42.8	25.8
Teacher	25.3	11.7	32.4	27.1	18.0	1.5	11.4	30.8
Nurse	6.2	3.9	7.9	7.8	2.7	0.0	8.8	2.4
Air hostess	4.9	8.6	2.0	3.2	6.0	12.3	8.8	2.4
Engineer	4.7	4.2	5.0	5.1	4.9	0.0	5.3	4.3
Clerk	3.7	2.8	4.2	4.6	0.5	3.0	1.7	4.8
Police	2.5	1.5	3.2	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.2	3.9
Accountant	2.4	2.8	2.0	1.8	2.2	9.2	3.2	1.8
Lawyer	1.8	3.6	0.4	1.3	3.8	1.5	4.1	0.4
Stenographer	1.7	2.6	1.0	0.8	1.0	12.3	2.6	1.1
Total	80.6	81.7	78.9	77.8	91.0	70.5	88.9	77.7

Only the ten most popular choices are included in this Table. The rest of the group selected 36 occupations, the majority of which were chosen by 1-3 respondents. About 8% were undecided.

TABLE IX

Reasons for Vocational Choice - 1973
(percentages of positive responses)

Reasons	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group	Sc.	Arts
Total Nos	979	390	589	696	233	50	426	553	367	612
<u>Influences</u>										
Father's/Mother's Job	8.0	9.2	7.1	7.0	9.4	14.0	10.8	5.9	5.9	9.2
Parent's wish	47.5	42.5	50.7	38.5	72.1	58.0	51.2	44.7	46.9	52.6
Teacher's advice	16.1	13.0	18.2	15.4	19.3	14.0	14.1	17.7	14.7	16.9
Friend's example	21.8	22.3	21.6	11.9	37.3	28.0	26.5	18.3	15.8	25.5
<u>Material Benefits</u>										
'Good' Income	34.7	41.0	30.5	23.8	57.9	78.0	47.4	24.9	33.8	35.2
Fringe Benefits	10.3	7.9	11.9	7.8	17.2	14.0	13.6	4.2	9.8	10.6
Good Promotion- al prospects	41.9	35.3	46.4	34.1	62.2	58.0	42.0	43.3	40.3	42.9
Opportunity to go abroad	46.1	53.3	41.4	22.3	68.2	76.0	56.8	39.8	57.2	40.0
Opportunity to pursue higher education	29.8	29.2	30.2	17.4	63.5	46.0	35.7	25.3	35.4	26.5

Reasons	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group	Sc.	Arts
<u>Practical considerations</u>										
No transfers	18.2	21.0	16.3	15.7	23.6	36.0	22.1	6.1	12.8	21.4
Availability of jobs	53.9	62.5	48.2	55.0	16.8	56.0	58.5	50.5	62.4	48.7
Urban location	23.7	27.4	21.3	20.9	27.0	48.0	28.4	19.7	19.1	26.6
<u>Security</u>										
'Safe' job	45.5	42.8	47.2	9.2	63.1	68.0	43.4	47.0	45.2	45.6
<u>Social Concepts</u>										
'Respectable' job	30.4	34.3	26.1	12.1	75.9	86.0	47.7	17.2	37.3	26.3
Suitable job for women	61.4	66.4	58.2	51.4	84.5	94.0	69.7	55.2	67.6	58.7
<u>Concept of Service</u>										
Service to country	76.6	82.3	72.8	77.2	72.5	88.0	80.0	73.9	76.3	76.8

Reasons	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group	Sc	Arts
<u>Personal Preference</u>										
Interest	80.7	89.2	75.0	72.3	93.9	96.0	83.3	78.7	82.0	79.9
Challenging job	52.3	68.4	51.8	53.6	57.8	82.0	71.4	48.5	66.8	43.6

Some significant differences

Significant differences were found between the groups specified below with regard to the reasons indicated in the bracketed figures since the values of χ^2 exceed the critical value of 9.210 at 1% level of significance for two degrees of freedom.

- (i) Urban and rural $\chi^2 =$ in (2) 22.8 (14) 16.2
- (ii) Sinhala Medium and Tamil Medium $\chi^2 =$ in (2) 62.24 (5) 77.15 (7) 47.57
(8) 100.9 (13) 160.3 (14) 34.9
(15) 88.4
- (iii) Middle class and low income groups $\chi^2 =$ in (5) 55.1 (8) 29.9 (14) 105.3
(15) 22.8
- (iv) Science and Arts $\chi^2 =$ in (8) 10.54 (13) 13.62

TABLE X

Reasons for Vocational Choice - 1976
(Percentage of positive responses)

Reasons	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
Total Nos	875	384	491	627	183	65	341	534
<u>Influences</u>								
Father's Mother's job	10.3	9.6	10.8	7.9	21.9	7.7	11.4	10.5
Parent's wish	42.1	45.8	39.1	35.2	76.5	40.0	52.5	38.9
Teacher's advice	16.5	10.7	20.9	20.7	31.9	12.3	7.9	18.7
Friend's example	21.9	18.5	24.6	22.4	13.2	13.8	20.5	24.9
<u>Material benefits</u>								
'Good' Income	46.9	56.8	39.1	41.3	81.4	89.2	58.9	39.1
Fringe benefits	10.7	13.0	20.6	19.1	28.4	13.8	13.5	20.4
Good promotional prospects	45.1	46.6	43.9	45.2	79.8	69.2	29.9	43.8
Opportunity to go abroad	50.4	54.9	46.8	43.7	77.6	67.7	57.5	46.1
Opportunity to pursue higher education	26.3	27.1	25.7	14.2	68.3	53.8	34.0	24.9

Reasons	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
<u>Practical considerations</u>								
No transfers	22.9	24.2	21.8	21.1	26.2	42.0	26.1	22.1
Availability of jobs	58.3	61.2	56.0	63.8	44.8	55.4	63.3	56.6
Urban location	24.8	30.2	20.6	19.8	33.3	29.2	27.9	21.7
<u>Security</u>								
'Safe' job	55.9	51.3	59.5	45.9	77.0	63.1	58.9	50.4
<u>Social Concepts</u>								
'Respectable' job	35.1	39.6	31.6	18.2	85.8	83.1	48.9	29.6
Suitable for women	53.6	54.9	52.5	49.4	87.4	73.8	67.7	53.7
<u>Concept of Service</u>								
Service to country	79.8	83.1	77.2	79.7	89.6	81.5	83.3	77.9

Reasons	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
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Personal Preference

Interest	73.4	79.9	68.2	73.0	78.1	86.6	88.6	67.2
Challenging job	61.2	74.7	50.7	64.1	84.2	72.3	82.4	60.9

Some significant differences

Significant differences were found between the groups specified below with regard to the reasons indicated in the bracketed figures since the values of χ^2 exceed the critical value of 9.210 at 1% level of significance for two degrees of freedom.

- (i) 1973 and 1976 $\chi^2 =$ in (5) 64.2 (8) 33.1 (13) 35.36 (14) 48.1 (15) 11.1
- (ii) urban and rural $\chi^2 =$ in (5) 23.1
- (iii) Sinhala medium and Tamil Medium $\chi^2 =$ in (2) 100.2 (5) 132.1 (13) 58.1
(14) 291.8 (15) 24.6
- (iv) Middle Class and Low income group $\chi^2 =$ in (2) 20.4 (5) 64.8 (14) 107.9 (15) 24.6

TABLE XI

Vocational preference - Rank Order of Occupations - 1973

(first ten preferences)

Vocations	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group	Sc	Arts
Teacher	1	2	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	1
Air Hostess	2	1	6	2	3	1	2	4	3	4
Doctor	3	3	3	4	2	3	3	5	1	10
Govt. Clerk	4	8	2	6	5	2	7	6	6	3
Bank Clerk	5	4	4	5	4	11	9	9	9	2
Nurse	6	7	5	3	10	10	6	2	4	5
Police Woman	7	13	7	7	12	22	13	7	7	7
Accountant	8	6	10	10	6	2	4	12	10	6
Lawyer	9	5	12	8	8	13	5	11	8	11
Engineer	10	9	9	11	7	12	8	9	5	19
Stenographer		10				7		10		9
Cooperative Manager			8	9				8		8
Private Secretary						4				
Journalist						5				
Receptionist						8				
Hairdresser						9				

TABLE XII

Vocational Preference - Rank Order of Occupations - 1976
(first ten preferences)

Vocations	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
Doctor	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1
Air Hostess	2	2	3	2	4	2	3	2
Engineer	3	3	4	4	2	4	2	4
Teacher	4	5	2	3	3	11	6	3
Lawyer	5	4	9	5	5	10	4	9
Bank Clerk	6	8	5	6	8	9	7	5
Nurse	7	7	8	7	7	5	8	8
Accountant	8	6	10	10	6	1	5	10
Police Woman	9	10	6	8	12	21	16	6
Govt. Clerk	10	9	7	9	10	22	17	7
Stenographer						6		
Apothecary					9			
Hairdresser						7		
Private Secretary						8		

TABLE XIII

Vocational Preference - Rank Order of Occupation - 1973
(least popular preference)

Vocations	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group	Sc.	Arts
Trader	1	1	1	1	5	10	1	1	2	1
Hotel Worker	2	7	2	3	1	15	4	2	3	2
Farmer	3	3	5	2	10	11	5	5	9	3
Hairdresser	4	10	3	5	2	26	10	4	1	7
Factory Worker	5	5	8	10	3	2	3	11	4	6
Bus Conductor	6	2	11	8	4	1	2	12	6	5
Receptionist	7	13	4	4	6	20	11	3	5	9
Salesgirl	8	9	7	7	9	14	9	9	10	9
Weaving teacher	9	4	14	6	16	4	6	15	8	12
Politician	10	17	7	13	11	7	13	6	13	10

Note: Rank has been assigned to the least popular choice.

TABLE XIV

Vocational Preference - Rank Order of Occupation - 1973
(least popular preference)

Vocations	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
Trader	1	2	1	1	6	6	3	1
Salesgirl	2	4	3	2	3	21	5	5
Factory Worker	3	1	9	8	1	2	1	11
Hairdresser	4	6	4	3	4	37	8	7
Bus Conductor	5	3	10	10	2	1	1	12
Receptionist	6	11	2	4	7	22	13	4
Hotel Worker	7	7	6	10	5	4	6	9
Mechanic	8	9	7	7	10	17	11	8
Farmer	9	10	8	6	15	3	12	10
Weaving teacher	10	5	14	11	9	8	4	2

Note: Rank has been assigned to the least popular choice.