

ABSTRACT

Rural Youth in Trinidad and Tobago:
Aspirations, Expectations and
Achievements.

Nasser Mustapha

In an attempt to provide information on present human resource development and utilization in rural areas of Trinidad and Tobago, this study examines the predicaments of high school students of County Victoria East over the six year period after graduation.

A theoretical framework for the study was developed by focussing on the psychological, sociological and economic dimensions of aspirations and achievements. Further, the concepts of rural and urban were discussed and findings from other longitudinal studies on aspirations and expectations were presented.

In 1982, background data on 300 rural youth were collected and factors affecting their occupational aspirations investigated. Secondly, the 1982 sample was compared to a 1985 sample of 300 rural youth to determine the consistency of their aspirations over time. Thirdly, in 1985, samples of 300 rural and 300 urban youth were compared on selected characteristics. Finally, in 1988, a follow-up survey of 1982 respondents was conducted in order to determine their educational and occupational attainments.

Similar research instruments and sampling techniques (systematic random sampling) were used in 1982 and 1985. In 1988, mail questionnaires were used to acquire data for an analysis of attainment levels.

Results show that aspiration levels did not vary significantly between 1982 and 1985. Chi-square analysis of data showed a significant relationship between area of residence (rural or urban) and ethnicity, religious background, religious activism, household composition, socio-economic status and occupational aspirations.

Results also indicate that achievements were lower than expectations and expectations were lower than aspirations. The data also showed a significant relationship between occupational attainment levels and father's education, respondent's socio-economic status, respondent's sex and father's occupational status.

Data were also provided on levels of educational attainment, present educational involvement, future educational plans, occupational history, present employment status, levels of job satisfaction, present occupational aspirations, perceptions of achievement levels and perceived goal blockage. In conclusion, this study helps one to evaluate the opportunity structure and to assess the contribution of education to economic development.