

ABSTRACT

This research was a study of the expectations and aspirations of a sample of secondary school leavers in Trinidad.

The sample consisted of six hundred and eighty secondary school leavers selected from the fifth and sixth forms of six secondary schools. These schools were divided into three categories on the basis of results in the General Certificate of Education examination of Cambridge University. The schools with the best results were called "A" schools, the next group in merit "B" schools and the third group in merit "C" schools. Two schools were selected from each group and the total sample consisted of three hundred and twenty boys and three hundred and sixty girls.

In conducting the study data were obtained from parents by an interview schedule to ascertain the expectations they had of secondary school leavers. These data when analysed formed the basis for preparing a Questionnaire to obtain data from school leavers with respect to their expectations and aspirations.

The first part of the Questionnaire was designed to make a survey and thus obtain crude estimates of school leavers' aspirations. The second part of the Questionnaire was designed to obtain attitudes of

the school leavers to certain social objects such as education, marriage, money and occupations such as Medicine, Law, Teaching and the Civil Service.

Attitudes to these objects were used as a measure of aspirations and the data obtained were subjected to statistical analysis to obtain the following:

- (a) correlation coefficients to find if there were any relationships among the aforementioned social objects.
- (b) Analysis of variances to obtain the differences between the means of groups divided according to sex, type of school, achievement in school and social origin.

The results showed that our school leavers had high educational and occupational aspirations much beyond the real-life situation but they were generally in keeping with the existing practices in the society with regard to age of marriage, the kind of marriage partners and the amount of money they wanted in their savings.

Sex and the type of school which the School Leavers attended, had marked influences on school leavers aspirations while achievement in school and social origin, though influential in one or two areas, were not wielding a strong influence in making significant differences in the aspirations of different groups.