

Career Aspirations of the 'Khatduh' (Youngest Daughter) belonging to Khasi Matrilineal Society studying in Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong, Meghalaya

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To understand the career aspirations of the youngest daughter (*khatduh*) belonging to the Khasi Matrilineal Society, Meghalaya. **Methodology:** The methodology chosen should be capable of describing these linkages of career aspirations of the youngest daughter in relation to societal norms, customary laws and traditions. A mixture of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches has been adopted. **Findings:** The number of siblings in the family can act as a great burden to the youngest daughter as she will eventually have to take care of them in case they choose not to get married and reside in their parents' house. This is in addition to the responsibilities of taking care of their parents, grandparents and siblings of the parents if any. The said situation has directly or unknowingly narrowed down the career aspirations of the youngest daughter, who were being hinted of their role(s) since they were young. **Conclusion:** The suggestions that surfaced from this study is to incorporate Career Counselling approach with cultural understanding of the client's background, personality, family environment, keeping in mind the financial situation in which she is in. Education has therefore become an important factor which influences the traditional way of thinking amongst the youngest daughter.

Keywords: Career Aspirations, Youngest Daughter, Khasi Matrilineal Society

Career Counselling aims to facilitate students to explore the world of employment and new career avenues and assist them in career planning wherein they gather information about themselves in terms of their interests, aptitudes, and abilities so that they can choose their career more effectively (iDreamCareer.com, 2019). Career Counselling thus serves to effectively balance and match the personal abilities, interest, and situation of the student with the external factors of employability and courses, prioritizing and choosing the best available option (Rohi, 2017). There is no agreed definition of career counselling worldwide, mainly due to conceptual, cultural and linguistic differences (Van & Athanansou 2008). However, the terminology of 'career counseling' typically denotes a professional intervention which is conducted either one-on-one or in a small group.

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Khasi Matrilineal Society

The unique institution among the Khasi is the matrilineal system. When the Khasis did adopt it, is difficult to say. Basing themselves on the not-yet-convincingly-proven opinion that the Khasis came from South East Asia or Cambodia, where there is no sign at all of the existence of this matrilineal family system, some scholars believe that the Khasis adopted their matrilineal family on their way in the hoary past to these present hills. They believe that the Khasis did this in order to tide over some unexpected vicissitudes of history that threatened their very existence and survival. Whatever this might be, one thing is sure, this matrilineal system has established itself very firmly that the Khasis in general have come to be convinced that this matrilineal system is their unique characteristic that distinguishes them from the rest of the human race.

According to The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, Matrilineages are unilineal descent groups that claim real or fictive kinship through maternal ties to a common ancestress through known genealogical links. In matrilineal systems, inheritance is traced from the maternal uncle (mother's brother) to the nephew (mother's son). The tendency is to preserve the economic and political identity of the sibling group. The means by which this is ensured entail control of women's labour, sexuality, and reproductive powers, by distributing them between husbands and brothers.

The characteristics of the Khasi Matrilineal system are:

- Descent is traced through the female line.
- Clan identity is inherited through the mother, and
- Ancestral property is generally passed down from the mother to daughters, then sons usually inheriting nothing.
- Extracted from Chapter III - The Khasi Matrilineal System (Delia, Syiem & Giri, n.d.).

Khatduh' (youngest daughter)

Women have a dominant role in the matrilineal society of Meghalaya. The youngest daughter of the family, the *Ka Khadduh* (Allen, 2012) is the custodian of all ancestral property. After marriage, husbands live in the mother-in-law's home. The mother's surname is taken by children. When no daughters are born to a couple, they adopt a daughter and pass their rights to property to her. The birth of a girl is celebrated while the birth of a son is simply accepted (Rimmer, 2016). There is no social stigma attributed to a woman remarrying or giving birth out of wedlock as the "Khasi Social Custom of Lineage Act" gives security to them. Women are known to intermarry outside their tribe (Bhaumik, 2013). The women who enjoy all the rights live an independent life, dress well, attend church, and many prefer not to get married. They enjoy total security, unlike in the rest of the country (Bouissou, 2011).

The youngest daughter of this society who inherits the ancestral property holds a pivotal role of looking after the welfare of her parents in their old age, as well as the welfare and education of her siblings (Rimmer, 2016) (Bhaumik, 2013). The property handed down to the youngest daughter comes with conditions. The khatduh has to look after her parents and unmarried brothers, orphaned nieces or nephews, and brothers that have divorced their wives or vice versa. Thus, she is in effect merely the stewardess or custodian of the property, with the maternal uncle the chief executor. Every family member has a say, and often it is not

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based on the most equitable formula. The issue of inheritance is the weakest link in the matrilineal chain, with a propensity to create conflict between individuals in society (Mukhim, n.d.).

Career Aspirations

A career aspiration is a path that you want your career to follow (Certiology, 2019). Aspirations help define your career goals, but are not the exact same things. Career aspirations are different from individual to individual. Some people need financial security above all else. They are the type that always seeks better paying positions as they become available.

When you focus your efforts, you can attain what you want (Georgevich, 2018). Aspirations give you the 'ginger' to achieve your goals. Goals are quite similar to aspiration; however, they are more definite and result-oriented. Goals take a shorter time to achieve. Aspirations could be termed 'long term goals' (Dada, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Although historically the notion of career was born in a Western, individualistic, industrialized context, and was nurtured by a work ethic that promoted freedom of choice, global forces over the years have transported it also to many other cultural and economic locations. It seems, therefore, that the manifestation of career can be seen in two contexts; contexts to which career is indigenous and contexts where it is, in many respects, culturally alien. In the former, the manifestation of career would be spontaneous and culturally congruent; in the latter, its manifestation could be the result of exigency induced by global transformations. It could thus be hypothesis that the delineation of career from work lies along a continuum (Arulmani, Bakshi, Leong & Watts, 2013).

While, this is a usual case in many countries, the youngest daughter (*khatduh*) in the Khasi Matrilineal Society suffers similar inequalities. The factors behind such a situation are the culturally related issues surrounding the youngest daughter which directly or indirectly affects their career decision making of the youngest daughter. The youngest daughter, because of the traditions that is being practiced since time immemorial is shoulder with many responsibilities. In such a scenario, the youngest daughter is briefed and told right from a very young age, directly and or indirectly in many occasions that she will have to bestowed such responsibilities in the future and it is inescapable.

This practice has brought in a lot of pressure to the youngest daughter throughout one's lifespan and this has affected her career aspirations and focus on her career. The Khatduh does not have the liberty of free thinking as she cannot make independent decisions with regard to her life and career. Hence, this calls for an immediate attention to study the matter and recommend steps which may be adopted to improve the situation of not only the youngest daughter but also of the parents who, by and large will be responsible for bringing in that change in their thinking process.

Research Objective:

To understand the career aspirations of the youngest daughter (*khatduh*) belonging to the Khasi Matrilineal Society, Meghalaya.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research design carried out in this study is a purposive sampling design under probability sampling design, collecting relevant quantitative and qualitative data, as well as capturing some retrospective histories and experiences of career decision made by the youngest daughter belong to the Khasi Matrilineal Society of Meghalaya State. Suitable sampling methods and appropriate data gathering tools were then developed.

Sampling Unit

The sampling unit chosen for this research study is the students who are newly enrolled in the Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong, Meghalaya in the Academic Year 2019-2020. The students were taken from various Courses across the University. The total number of enrolled students is 560.

Sampling Size

Out of the total number of enrolled students in the Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong, Meghalaya in the Academic Year 2019-2020, 64 students were taken as respondents, that is, because they fall in the inclusion criteria required for the study (*youngest daughter belonging to the Khasi Matrilineal Society of Meghalaya State*). The 64 respondents are the ones who voluntarily filled the questionnaire, while providing their proper consent to participate in the research study that was conducted.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection was initiated in May 2019 to August 2019. This period is a time whereby the newly enrolled students come for admission to the new academic year, both the undergraduate and postgraduate level. The questionnaire for the said study was enclosed to all the admission forms of the University with a proper instruction that only the student who is the youngest daughter of the family and belonging to the Khasi Matrilineal Society are requested to fill the questionnaire. The researcher was present throughout the time, to make sure that the students can get their doubts clear with regard to what is present in the content.

Data Management

Data management was done as soon as the data collection started. The information from each hard copy Performa were entered into MS Excel sheets and checked by the researcher to correct any error or incompleteness, if any. Periodic tabulations were done to monitor progress and ensure that the data were in the correct format.

Ethical Consideration

Approval for the study was obtained from the University Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was taken from the students before the questionnaires were given to them for filling.

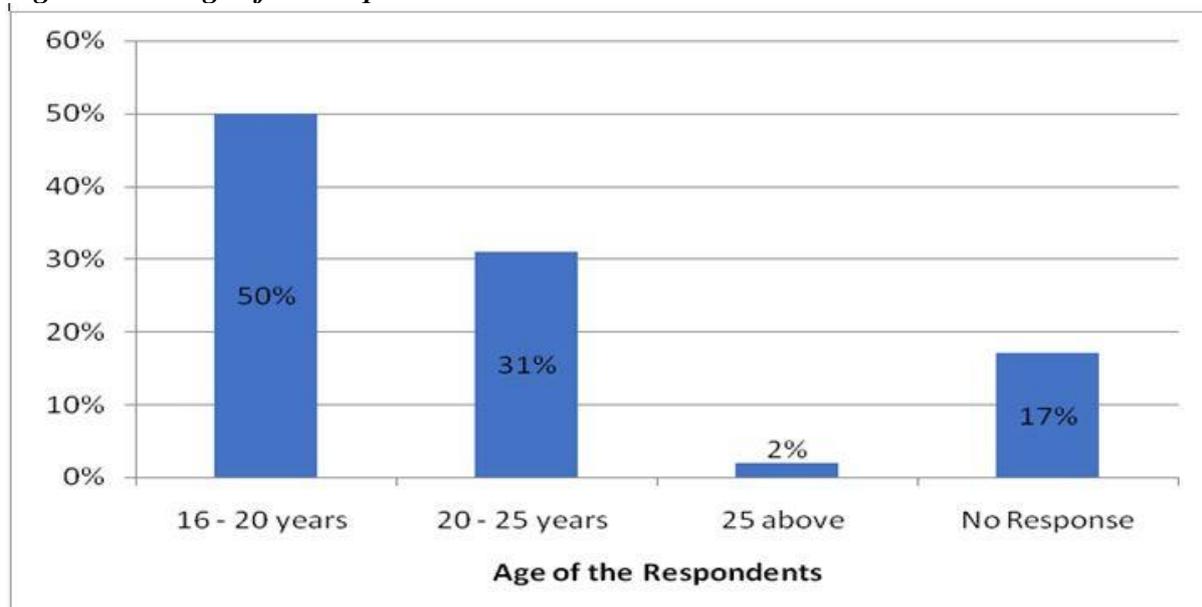
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this research is to study the career aspirations of the youngest daughter (khatduh) belonging to the Khasi Matrilineal Society, Meghalaya State. It is assumed that their career aspirations will be different as they are bounded by the societal norms and customary laws of the Khasi Matrilineal Society. In Figure I, the age of the respondents is reflected, in which 50% belonged to the age group between 16 to 20 years of age and the other 31% belonged to 20 to 25 years of age. The assumption is that the responses to the

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queries raised in the questionnaire had reasonable and mature opinions fairly because of the age group that they belonged to.

Figure 1: the age of the respondents



Child outcomes are interconnected within and across diverse domains of development. They result from and are enhanced by early positive and supportive interactions with parents and other caregivers. These early interactions can have a long-lasting ripple effect on development across the life course, whereby the function of one domain of development influences another domain over time. In the words of Masten and Cicchetti (2010, p.492), “effectiveness in one domain of competence in one period of life becomes the scaffold on which later competence in newly emerging domains develops... competence begets competence”. From the literature, the following four outcomes were identified as fundamental to children's well-being.

They are:

- Physical Health and Safety
- Emotional and Behavioural Competence
- Social Competence
- Cognitive Competence

These outcomes are important for children of all ages (National Academy of Sciences, 2016).

Roles are defined within the family system in ways that may influence parenting. Family members may operate with a division of labour based on their own personal resources, mental health, skills, and education, in which one member specializes in and is responsible for one set of functions, such as garnering economic resources needed by the family, and another takes responsibility for educating the children. When these differences work well, family members complement and compensate for one another in ways that may soften the rough edges of one and make up for the inadequacies of another (National Academy of Sciences, 2016).

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The tendency of entertaining all the career beliefs, cultural beliefs, safety check and adult career choices and opinions for the youngest daughter is also part and parcel of the package. This eventually leads to interference in the personal lives of the youngest daughter, marriage and others. In Table 1, the data of what the youngest daughter wants to become after completing their studies is shown. From what has been shown, the highest percentage is 27% which states that they would like to find a good job and support the family. This response may have come from the understanding that their future career plans has got to do a lot with sustaining their family besides contemplating what they desire to do or want to accomplish.

Table 1: Become after you complete your studies

3%	Job
1%	Environmentalism
19%	Lab Technician
6%	To work
1%	Work Hard
1%	A working Professional in Society
1%	I want to work in the Bank Sector
27%	To be able to find a good job and support my family
5%	Health Inspector
5%	Teacher
1%	To continue my master degree
12%	Professional Social Worker
6%	I want to study the process of business and become an entrepreneur
3%	Government Servant
1%	Researcher
3%	Networking Professional / Graphic Hardware & Software Networking
1%	Bachelor in Psychology with a specialization in Organizational Psychology

Although considerable discussion has focused on attitudes and beliefs broadly, less research attention has been paid to the effects of parenting attitudes on parents' interactions with young children or on parenting practices. Few causal analyses are available to test whether parenting attitudes actually affect parenting practices, positive parent-child interaction, and child development. Even less research exists on fathers' attitudes about parenting.

Given this limited evidence base, the committee drew primarily on co-relational and qualitative studies in examining parenting attitudes. Parents' attitudes toward parenting are a product of their knowledge of parenting and the values and goals (or expectations) they have for their children's development, which in turn are informed by cultural, social, and societal images, as well as parents' experiences and their overall values and goals (Cabrera et al., 2000; Cheah & Chirkov 2008; Iruka et al., 2015; Okagaki and Bingham, 2005; Rogoff, 2003; Rosenthal & Roer-Strier, 2006; Whiting & Whiting, 1975).

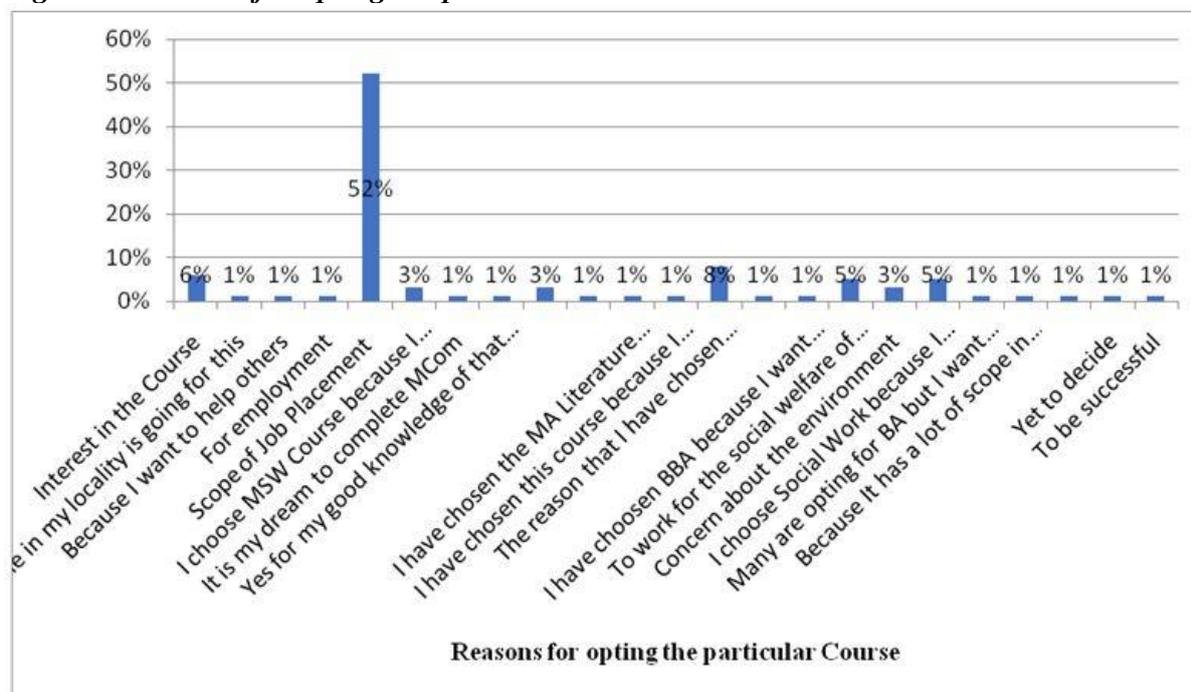
Parents have a key role to play in the decision-making and the general career path their children choose to pursue; but how involved should parents be in this decision-making process? Parents have adopted beliefs about success, how to be successful and what constitutes a ‘good job’ or ‘ideal life’. Anything we feed back to our children is based on these beliefs and our own experiences. Many of us make the mistake of trying to shield our

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children from the mistakes that we made - whether knowingly or unknowingly. While we can guide them away from some of the pitfalls we encountered, they'll inevitably make mistakes and hiccups along the journey – but these hiccups are vital for their personal growth (MidKent College, 2019).

Everyone has a unique set of skills and aptitudes. Each child is individual in their own way, and so may possess different skills and abilities to their parents. With this in mind, adopting a similar career role to either parent may not be the right course of action. When the respondents were asked the reasons in opting for a particular course, 52% responded saying that it is because of “Scope of Job Placement”. In other words, they were all looking for job security. This is evident that such decisions were taken on the basis that the information would have reached them through the parents, other family members, friends, neighbours and so on. Figure II shows that the various courses that they have chosen would have seemed promising to them and that they will be able to have a better promising career after completing such a Course.

Figure 2: Reasons for opting the particular course



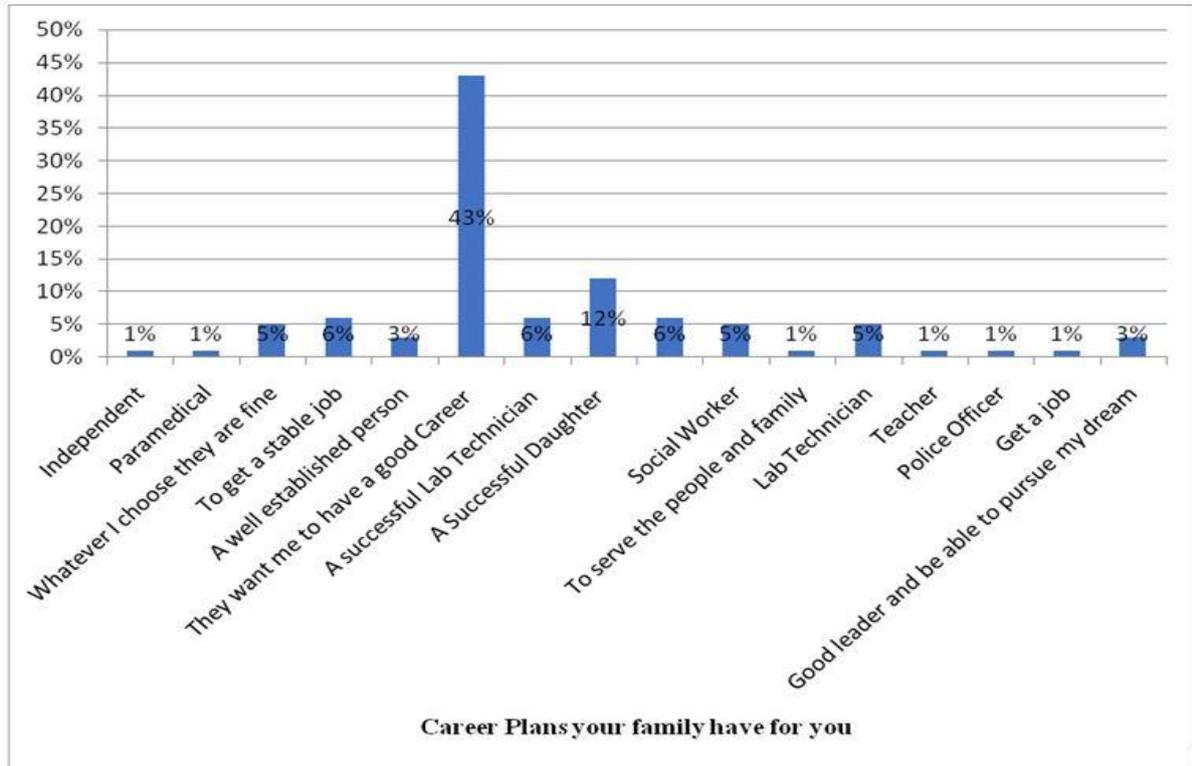
In line with what was discussed above, when asked about the career plans that the family members have for them, 43% (Figure III) said that they want them to have a good career without really specifying exactly what they want them to do. In other words, the youngest daughters have influences, guidance, hints and interferences in their career life from various angles like family members, parents, grandparents, siblings and others. Yet, they also want their youngest daughters to have a good career in which ever course that they opt for.

Of the different factors that are influencing change in their traditional system, migration is perhaps the most significant. “That’s why I have dealt with this concern and explored the links between migration and culture. Since the youth is moving to the cities for education, or

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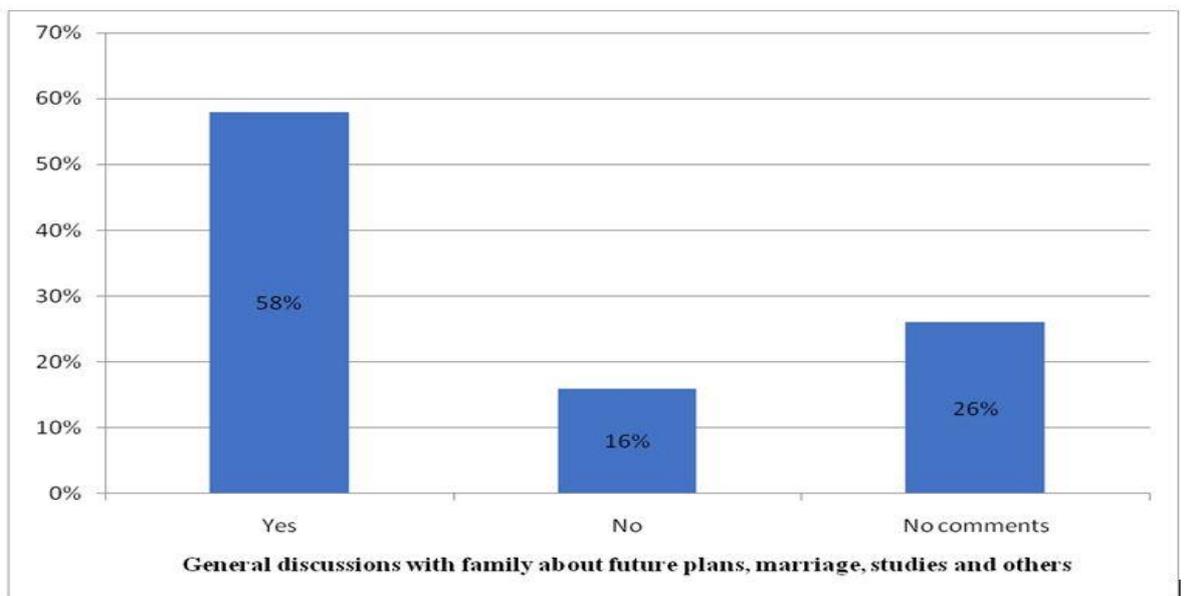
in search of more lucrative work opportunities, Khasi grandparents and parents fear that their next generation will not take forward their traditions” (Mahabal, 2016).

Figure:3 Career Plans your family have for you



The guidance provided to the youngest daughter by her parents and family members no doubt is commendable. In Figure IV, 58% of the youngest daughter have general discussions

Figure 4: General discussions with family about future plans, marriage, studies and others



about their future plans, marriage, studies and other important aspects of their lives. This reflects a careful and deep consideration of their step by step move by the family members

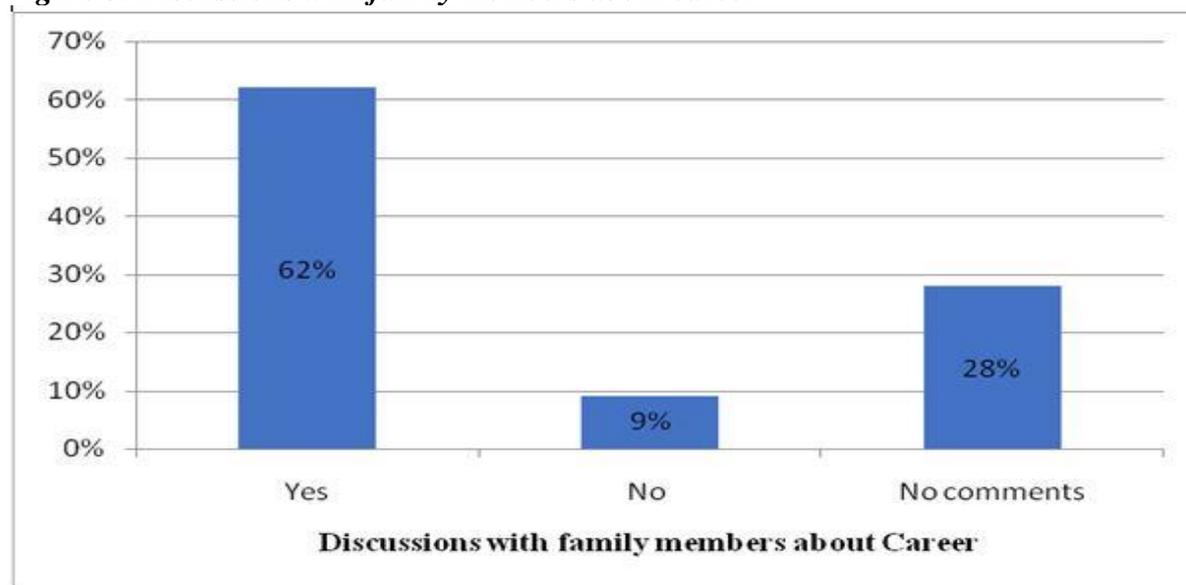
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to ensure that they are in the right track and their future career plans are in line with family responsibilities and roles of the youngest daughter. The role of relationships in forming the decision of career choices has been ignored for many years. So, there is a need to do the research in this area and even explore further the different types of relationships that affect this decision and why and how. The relative influence of different relationships and the importance of those relationships in making career choices like (mother, father, relatives, colleagues, etc.) need to be explored (Aggarwal 2008).

Some careers would be what we call 'tradition directed'. They belong to societies in which steadiness and predictability are valued. The lives of the parents tend to predict the lives of the children. Family, and other immediate cultural values, install in each a script for the roles that she or he is expected to occupy. Where things work that way, the children of the soil are likely to become farmers; doctors often turn out to be the offspring of medics; and military families spawn more uniforms. Working-class kids get working-class jobs; lasses get women's work; and children of migrant families get what's left. Roberts (1977) uses the term 'anticipatory socialisation' to refer to the dynamics; it corresponds closely with what Pierre Bourdieu means by 'habitus' (Irving & Malik, 2005).

Figure V shows that 62% of the respondents have discussions with their family about their careers. As reflected in the literature, there is a rigorous monitoring and follow up done by parents and family members during such discussions and beyond. Beyond what was discussed, one would notice that there is a great involvement of 'role model' concept in which students blindly follow what they are exposed or what we say in the career definition context 'over exposure'. Career decisions are also made base on the exposures one has.

Figure 5: Discussions with family members about career

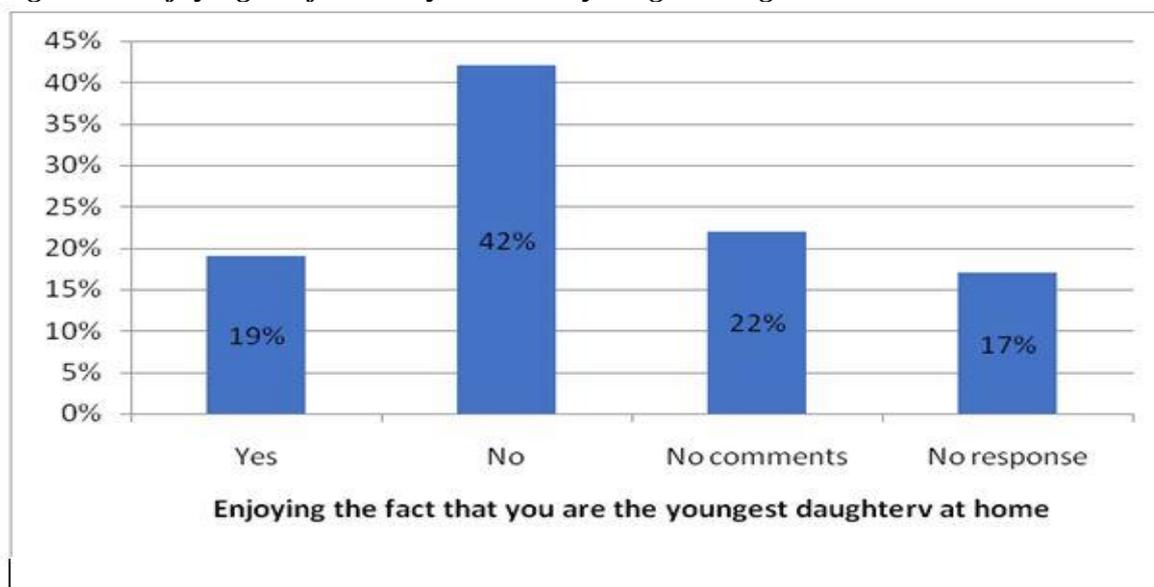


Career choices, therefore, are related to accessibility of various occupations, and the expectation of the individual that these three needs will be met. Astin's (1984) acknowledges that these expectations are related to early gendered socialisation, and the structure of opportunity, each of which interact with each other. Factors incorporated within the structure of opportunity include distribution of jobs, sex typing of jobs, discrimination, job requirements, the economy, family structure, and reproductive technology.

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The pressure that one goes through as the youngest daughter is felt at a very early age without it being explicitly mentioned. As seen in Figure VI, 42% of the respondents stated that they don't enjoy the fact that they are the youngest daughter at home. While the reasons could be many, the certain restrictions or in other words, the expectations that the family members and parents have from the said daughter stresses her a lot. A higher figure of 22% have opted of not even commenting on it.

Figure 6: Enjoying the fact that you are the youngest daughter at home



The pressure that the youngest daughter goes through has been reiterated time and again in the literature and it is something that is being discussed about at all platforms, writings – newspaper articles, books, social media and others. However, the pressure in relation to the pressure that she goes through in relation to her career is side line or vaguely mentioned as an additional issue which has not been mentioned about. In all the literature that the researcher has come across, the issue that was addressed is 'education' and not 'career' per say.

CONCLUSION

The number of siblings in the family can act as a great burden to the youngest daughter as she is bestowed with a lot of family and clan responsibilities.

This have implications in the Course that they choose, their future plans, job prospects and future career plans which leaves the youngest daughter with hardly a free mind to think, speak and or plan things for herself. Her career aspirations are brought to a closure even before she starts thinking of one. The family in this case has done all the planning, choosing and decision has already been taken on her behalf.

By and large all general discussions, which includes discussions related to career are being tilted towards what the family members and parents wants from the youngest daughter which directly or indirectly she has to obliged to. The hint in such cases is obvious and is said in ways and means for the youngest daughter to comprehend and act.

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The data also confirms that the respondents feel the pressure that there are a lot of compromises that they have to make at present and assumable in the future for being the youngest daughter at home. This includes compromises in choosing a course of study, opting for a certain career, place of studying, duration of the course, financial resources, career aspirations and the job prospects which as mentioned in the previous data has to be within Shillong and Meghalaya State.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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