Profiling of Competitive Exams Aspirants using Statistical Techniques

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Abstract

The study focuses on profiling the UPSC/GPSC aspirants based in Ahmedabad city and finding ways to help them understand the current circumstances. The study covers a focused analysis of the current scenario in the preparation of the Indian Civil Services Examination and provides insights into the expectations and preparation strategies of the aspirants. The study employs chi-square test and proportion test to assess the relationship between various factors such as family background, academic background and the preparation routine. The study further delves into various available resources and study mediums that can aid the aspirants in their journey and indicates effective methods for time management and stress management while preparing for the examination, using various statistical analysis methods.

Index Terms—ANOVA(Analysis of Variance), *Aspirants, Chi-square, Competitive exams, Profiling T-test, U-test.*

1. Introduction

Civil service examinations are highly competitive and extremely thorough tests that assess the knowledge, reasoning abilities and analytical skills of candidates. The UPSC exam is one of the most prestigious and challenging examinations in India. It is conducted by the Union Public Service Commission, which is a constitutional body responsible for recruiting candidates for various central government services. The exam is commonly referred to as the Civil Services Examination (CSE) and serves as a gateway to prestigious positions such as Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), and Indian Foreign Service (IFS), among others.

Apart from the Union Public Service Commission, individual states in India also conduct their own civil service exams. For instance, Gujarat Public Service Commission (GPSC) is responsible for selecting the best candidates for various administrative positions in the state government of Gujarat.

Both the UPSC and GPSC exams are highly competitive and require dedicated preparation, including a thorough understanding of the syllabus, current affairs, and conceptual knowledge in various subjects.

Profiling of UPSC and GPSC aspirants involves understanding their characteristics, motivations, and traits that are commonly observed among individuals preparing for these competitive examinations.

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2. Review of Literature

Ananda Ramesh, Kishore Kumar (2016) examined the practices and utility of resources by the aspirants of competitive exams. Their findings reveal that the motivating factor of the aspirants of competitive exams is self-motivation than any other motivating factors, the procurement of resources by the aspirants of competitive exams is more from training center than from all the other sources, and the resource utilized more by the aspirants of competitive exams is e-resource than that of other resources.

Prakash C., Suresh P., Tejaswi K., Prasad S., Pratiksha S. (2021) examined the effect of competitive examination on student behavior using statistical methods. Their findings reveal that parents who failed to meet their goals in their younger days want to fill that void through their child. The study also shows the attributes stress and anxiety are dependent on each other. There is an increasing need to analyze the profiles of these students.

Arvind Sharma, Mamta Singla, Balwant S Sidhu (2014) examined the psychological impact of civil services exam preparation on students. The results of the study consisting of two groups of students, one preparing for preliminary exams and other for main exams with repeaters and fresher students in each group showed that the students of preliminary group had significantly higher depression, anxiety, interpersonal sensitivity and anger hostility than students of mains group. Moreover, among preliminary group, repeaters had higher severe symptoms than freshers. Their study sums up that early intervention at different stages of stress can assist students in performing better and maintaining good mental health.

A. Madalaimuthu, D. V. Nithyanandan (2014) examined Emotional Intelligence and Self-Monitoring Among civil service aspirants. The study aimed to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-monitoring among the civil service aspirants. Results of the study indicated a significant negative association between emotional intelligence and self-monitoring among civil service aspirants. Furthermore, significant differences in these variables were observed based on factors like age, gender and other demographic factors.

3. Objectives of the Study

The objective of this paper is the profiling of the UPSC/ GPSC exams' aspirants. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To investigate the key purpose of aspirants behind preparation for the exam.
- To observe and analyze the academic backgrounds of the aspirants and its impact on their methods and modes of preparation.
- To observe and analyze the familial backgrounds of the aspirants and its impact on the aspirants' preparation for the exam and their performance in it.
- To observe and try to determine the ideal profiles of the aspirants to help them to optimize their performance.
- To study the various other relevant factors affecting the profiles of the aspirants and their effects on their preparation and performance.

4. Hypotheses

H_1: The stream and gender of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_2: The key purpose behind preparing for exam and gender of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_3: The preparation by and gender of the aspirants are independent of each other.

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H_4: The study with job and gender of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_5: The education level and native of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_6: The preparation by and native of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_7: The study medium and native of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_8: The study with job and native of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_9: The stream and caste of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_{10}: The exam (preparing now) and caste of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_{11}: The parent in govt. sector and caste of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_{12}: The preparation by and exam (preparing now) of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_{13}: The annual fees of classes and exam (preparing now) of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_{14}: The attempts and exam (preparing now) of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_{15}: The study medium and exam (preparing now) of the aspirants are independent of each other.

H_{16}: The study with job and attempts of the aspirants are indepen1dent of each other.

H_{17}: The key purpose behind preparing for exam and aspirants' parent's occupation are independent of each other.

H_{18}: There is no significant difference between average of study hours of urban aspirants and rural aspirants.

H_{19}: There is no significant difference between average of Family's Annual Income of aspirants who prefer to prepare for exams by classes and by self-study.

H_{20}: There is no significant difference between average of study hours of aspirants who study by classes and who study by self-study.

H_{21}: There is no significant difference between average of study hours of aspirants who study with job and who don't study with job.

H_{22}: There is no significant difference between average of study hours of male and female.

H_{23}: There is no significant difference between average Study hours due to Attempts

5. Research Methodology

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach for the profiling of UPSC/GPSC aspirants. The research methodology was designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from a sample of UPSC/ GPSC aspirants in the Ahmedabad city (Gujarat). The research design included the following steps:

Sampling: The study used a convenience sampling approach to select a sample of 500 students from various academic disciplines. The sample was chosen based on the availability and willingness of students to participate in the study.

Data collection: The study utilized a survey questionnaire and a Google form as data collection instruments. The survey questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended questions to gather information on the aspirants' academic and familial backgrounds. Majority of the data were collected through the city's prominent universities, colleges, coaching classes and libraries including Gujarat University library, SPIPA Academy, Chahal Academy, MJ library, to name a few.

Data analysis: The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The survey data were analyzed using Jamovi to compute frequencies, means and

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standard deviations. Other computer software like MS Excel and MS Word were also used in the project.

Ethical considerations: The study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles and guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, and confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the study.

Limitations: The study has some limitations, including the use of a convenience sample and the potential for self-report bias in the survey data. The study's findings may not be generalizable to other populations or settings.

6. Analysis and Interpretation

Profile of the Aspirants

Table 1: Personal Profile of the Aspirants

Particulars	Count	Percentage of Total (N=500)
Gender		
Female	214	42.8%
Male	286	57.2%
Native		
Rural	155	31.0%
Urban	345	69.0%
Age		
Mean	22.0	-
Median	21.0	-
Standard Deviation	3.03	-
Minimum	17	-
Maximum	34	-
Caste		
EWS	3	0.6%
General	187	37.4%
OBC	181	36.2%
SC/ST	129	25.8%
Study with Job?		
Yes	48	9.6%
No	452	90.4%
Parent in Government Sector?		
Yes	120	24.0%
No	380	76.0%
Has anyone from your family cleared UPSC/GPSC exams?		

Particulars	Count	Percentage of Total (N=500)
Yes	58	11.6%
No	442	88.4%
Father's/Parent's Occupation		
Business	167	33.4%
Farming	85	17.0%
Job	211	42.2%
Profession	37	7.4%
Family Annual Income		
0-3 lakhs	219	43.8%
3-6 lakhs	155	31.0%
6-12 lakhs	96	19.2%
12-18 lakhs	21	4.2%
18+ lakhs	9	1.8%

The table-1 shows that out of 500 respondents, The ratio of female to male aspirants is around 2:3. 31% of the aspirants are from rural background. The average age of the aspirants is 22 years whereas the median of their age is 21 years. 37.4% aspirants are from general category and 62% of the aspirants belong to OBC and SC/ST category combined. Around 10% of the aspirants have a job with studying. 76% of the aspirants have at least one parent in the government sector. 11.6% of the aspirants have a family member who has already cleared GPSC/ UPSC exams. 17% of the aspirants have a father/ parent who is a farmer and around 75% of the aspirants have a father/ parent who has a business or a job. 43.8% of the aspirants have annual family income below 3 lakh rupees and only 6% of them have an annual family income of more than 12 lakh rupees.

Table 2: Educational Profile of the Aspirants

Particulars	Count	Percentage of Total (N=500)
Education Level		
12th (HSC)	12	2.4%
Undergraduate (UG)	339	67.8%
Postgraduate (PG)	149	29.8%
Stream		
Arts	73	14.6%
Commerce	250	50.0%
Engineering	67	13.4%
Science	110	22.0%
Study Medium		
English	320	64.0%

Particulars	Count	Percentage of Total (N=500)
Gujarati	166	33.2%
Hindi	14	2.8%

The table-2 shows that 67.8% of the aspirants have an education of undergraduate/ bachelor's level, 29.8% of the aspirants have an education of post graduate level whereas only 2.4% of them have an education level of 12th standard. Half of the aspirants are from commerce background and only 13.4% of the aspirants are from engineering background. 64% of the aspirants have studied in English medium, 33.2% in Gujarati and only 3% in Hindi medium.

Table 3: Key Purpose Behind Preparing for Exam

Particulars	Count	Percentage of Total (N=500)
Financial stability	71	14.2%
Power	49	9.8%
Serving the society	234	46.8%
Social status	66	13.2%
Strong influence/ inspiration	80	16.0%

The table-3 shows that 46.8% of the aspirants have an objective of social service behind their preparation while only 9.8% of them have reported 'power' to be their key purpose behind their preparation.

Table 4: Study Hours of Aspirants

Particulars	Count	Percentage of Total (N=500)
0-2	26	5.2%
2-4	159	31.8%
4-8	214	42.8%
8+	101	20.2%

The table-4 shows that 63% of the aspirants study for more than 4 hours a day and 37% of the aspirants study for less than 4 hours a day.

Table 5: Attempts of the Aspirants

Particulars	Count	Percentage of Total (N=500)
0	356	71.2%
1	59	11.8%
2	40	8.0%
3	22	4.4%
3+	23	4.6%

The table-5 shows that 71.2% of the aspirants are freshers i.e., giving the exam for the first time and only 4.6% of them have given more than 3 attempts.

Table 6: Preparatory Profile of the Aspirants

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Particulars	Count	Percentage of Total (N=500)
Exam (Preparing Now)		
GPSC	192	38.4%
UPSC	308	61.6%
Preparation Started		
Before 12th	22	4.4%
First Year	80	16.0%
Second Year	84	16.8%
Final Year	203	40.6%
After graduation	85	17.0%
After postgraduation	26	5.2%
Preparation by		
Classes	336	67.2%
Self-study	164	32.8%
Preparation Mode		
Offline	347	88.7%
Online	44	11.3%
Annual Fees of Classes		
0-20k	66	17.8%
20k-50k	64	17.3%
50k-1 lakh	205	55.4%
Above 1 lakh	35	9.5%

The table-6 shows that 38.4% of the aspirants are preparing for GPSC while 61.6% aspirants are preparing for UPSC. Around 40% of the aspirants start their preparation from the last year of their graduation and only 4.4% of them start their preparation before 12th standard. 67% of the aspirants prepare by joining classes and 33% of them prepare by self-study. 88.7% of the aspirants study via offline mode of classes and 11.3% of the aspirants study via online mode (online classes/ YouTube videos/ video lectures). 55.4% of the aspirants pay fees of 50k – 1 lakh rupees to classes, while only 9.5% of the aspirants pay fees above 1 lakh to classes.

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses H_1 to H_{17} were tested using Chi-Square Test of Independence to find out whether various pairs of factors are independent of each other or not. The hypotheses H_{18} to H_{22} were tested using T-test/ U-test to find out whether there is a significant difference between pairs of factors or not. The hypotheses H_{23} was tested using Kruskal-Wallis Test to find out whether there is a significant difference between average 'study hours' due to 'attempts' of the aspirants or not.

Hypotheses Testing – Chi Square Test of Independence

Table 7: Chi-Square Test of Independence

Hypotheses	Factor 1	Factor 2	p-value	Result

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H_1	Stream	Gender	<0.001	Not Independent
H_2	Key Purpose behind Preparing for Exam	Gender	0.036	Not Independent
H_3	Preparation by	Gender	<0.001	Not Independent
H_4	Study with Job	Gender	0.003	Not Independent
H_5	Education Level	Native	0.099	Independent
H_6	Preparation by	Native	<0.001	Not Independent
H_7	Study Medium	Native	0.005	Not Independent
H_8	Study with Job	Native	0.306	Independent
H_9	Stream	Caste	0.139	Independent
H_{10}	Exam (Preparing Now)	Caste	<0.001	Not Independent
H_{11}	Parent in Govt. Sector	Caste	0.002	Not Independent
H_{12}	Preparation by	Exam (Preparing Now)	<0.001	Not Independent
H_{13}	Annual Fees of Classes	Exam (Preparing Now)	<0.001	Not Independent
H_{14}	Attempts	Exam (Preparing Now)	<0.001	Not Independent
H_{15}	Study Medium	Exam (Preparing Now)	<0.001	Not Independent
H_{16}	Study with Job	Attempts	<0.001	Not Independent
H_{17}	Key Purpose behind Preparing for Exam	Parent's Occupation	0.018	Not Independent

Hypothesis One

H_1: The stream and gender of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'stream' and 'gender' are not independent (p=<0.001) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Two

H_2: The key purpose behind preparing for exam and gender of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'key purpose behind preparing for exam' and 'gender' are not independent (p=0.036) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Three

H_3: The preparation by and gender of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'preparation by' and 'gender' are not independent (p=<0.001) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Four

H_4: The study with job and gender of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'study with job' and 'gender' are not independent (p=0.003) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Five

H_5: The education level and native of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'education level' and 'native' are independent (p=0.099) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis Six

H$_6$: The preparation by and native of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'preparation by' and 'native' are not independent (p=<0.001) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Seven

H$_7$: The study medium and native of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'study medium' and 'native' are not independent (p=0.005) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Eight

H$_8$: The study with job and native of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'study with job' and 'native' are independent (p=0.306) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis Nine

H$_9$: The stream and caste of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'stream' and 'caste' are independent (p=0.139) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis Ten

H$_{10}$: The exam (preparing now) and caste of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'exam (preparing now)' and 'caste' are not independent (p=<0.001) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Eleven

H$_{11}$: The parent in govt. sector and caste of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'parent in govt. sector' and 'caste' are not independent (p=0.002) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Twelve

H$_{12}$: The preparation by and exam (preparing now) of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'preparation by' and 'exam (preparing now)' are not independent (p=<0.001) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Thirteen

H$_{13}$: The annual fees of classes and exam (preparing now) of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'annual fees of classes' and 'exam (preparing now)' are not independent (p=<0.001) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Fourteen

H$_{14}$: The attempts and exam (preparing now) of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'attempts' and 'exam (preparing now)' are not independent (p=<0.001) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

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Hypothesis Fifteen

H_{15}: The study medium and exam (preparing now) of the aspirants are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'study medium' and 'exam (preparing now)' are not independent (p=<0.001) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Sixteen

H_{16}: The study with job and attempts of the aspirants are indepen1dent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'study with job' and 'attempts' are not independent (p=<0.001) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Seventeen

H_{17}: The key purpose behind preparing for exam and aspirants' parent's occupation are independent of each other.

The table-7 shows that the factors 'key purpose behind preparing for exam' and 'parent's occupation' are not independent (p=0.018) of each other and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypotheses Testing - T-test/ U-Test

Table 8: Independent Sample T-test/ U-test

Hypotheses	Factor 1	Factor 2	Normali-ty Test	T-test/ U-test	Result
H_{18}	Study hours	Native	p=<0.001 violation	U-test p=<0.001	Significant
H_{19}	Preparation by	Annual Family Income	p=<0.001 violation	U-test p=0.027	Significant
H_{20}	Study hours	Preparation by	p=<0.001 violation	U-test p=<0.001	Significant
H_{21}	Study hours	Study with Job	p=<0.001 violation	U-test p=0.772	Not Significant
H_{22}	Study hours	Gender	p=<0.001 violation	U-test p=<0.001	Significant

Hypothesis Eighteen

H_{18}: There is no significant difference between average of study hours of urban aspirants and rural aspirants.

The table-8 shows that there is a violation of the assumption of normality (p=<0.001) of study hours. Therefore U-test is to be applied which shows that there is a significant difference (p=<0.001) between 'study hours' and 'native'. Hence the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Nineteen

H_{19}: There is no significant difference between average of Family's Annual Income of aspirants who prefer to prepare for exams by classes and by self-study.

The table-8 shows that there is a violation of the assumption of normality (p=<0.001) of family's annual income. Therefore U-test is to be applied which shows that there is a

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significant difference (p=0.027) between 'preparation by' and 'family annual income'. Hence the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Twenty

H$_{20}$: There is no significant difference between average of study hours of aspirants who study by classes and who study by self-study.

The table-8 shows that there is a violation of the assumption of normality (p=<0.001) of study hours. Therefore U-test is to be applied which shows that there is a significant difference (p=<0.001) between 'study hours' and 'preparation by'. Hence the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Twenty-One

H$_{21}$: There is no significant difference between average of study hours of aspirants who study with job and who don't study with job.

The table-8 shows that there is a violation of the assumption of normality (p=<0.001) of study hours. Therefore U-test is to be applied which shows that there is no significant difference (p=0.772) between 'study hours' and 'study with job'. Hence the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis Twenty-Two

H$_{22}$: There is no significant difference between average of study hours of male and female.

The table-8 shows that there is a violation of the assumption of normality (p=<0.001) of study hours. Therefore U-test is to be applied which shows that there is a significant difference (p=<0.001) between 'study hours' and 'native'. Hence the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypotheses Testing - One Way ANOVA/ Kruskal-Wallis Test

Table 9: One way ANOVA/ Kruskal-Wallis test

Hypotheses	Factor 1	Factor 2	Normality Test	ANOVA/ Kruskal-Wallis test	Result
H$_{23}$	Study hours	Attempts	p=<0.001 violation	Kruskal-Wallis test p=<0.001	Significant

Hypothesis Twenty-Three

H$_{23}$: There is no significant difference between average Study hours due to Attempts.

The table-9 shows that there is a violation of the assumption of normality (p=<0.001) of study hours. Therefore Kruskal-Wallis test is to be applied which shows that there is a significant difference between average 'study hours' due to 'attempts'. Hence the hypothesis was rejected.

7. Findings of the Study

i. Around 60% of females and 43% of males prefer Commerce making it the most preferred stream. Around 6% of females prefer Engineering making it the least preferred stream among females and Arts is the least preferred stream by males with only 13% of them choosing it.

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ii. The key purpose to give the GPSC/UPSC exams for most females is to serve the society and for least number of females, it is power. The reason may be the upbringing of females as to always putting others before themselves. While major purpose for males, too, is to serve the society, least number of males are driven by the purpose of financial stability.

iii. Most number of aspirants study for 4-8 hours a day. The average study hours for females are 4.89 hours whereas for males, it is 5.72 hours.

iv. Only a small number of aspirants are studying while doing a job in which the proportion of male aspirants is more. Aspirants who have up to 1 attempt are not doing a job with study whereas those who have more than 1 attempts have a job with study. That being the reason, more attempts are observed among males.

v. Commerce stream is more preferred by urban aspirants whereas Engineering and Science streams are preferred more by rural than urban aspirants. The possible reason for this may be the status quo in rural areas, whereas urbanites go with the developing trends at the global level.

vi. GPSC exam is preferred more by rural aspirants and UPSC exam is preferred more by urban aspirants. Hence, it can be inferred from the data that GPSC aspirants are more from Engineering and Science stream whereas UPSC aspirants are more from Commerce stream.

vii. Most aspirants have studied in English medium but Gujarati medium is preferred more by the rural aspirants. GPSC exam is preferred more by rural aspirants and UPSC exam is preferred more by urban aspirants. Hence, it can be inferred from the data that aspirants from Gujarati medium prefer GPSC exam and those from the English medium prefer UPSC exam.

viii. Around 75% of the urban aspirants prefer to prepare by classes, 3/4th of them being freshers, who have 5 hours of study time on an average. While self-study is preferred by around 46% of the rural aspirants with an average study period of around 6 hours.

ix. Annual fees of classes ranging from 50k-1 lakh and above 1 lakh are observed more for urban aspirants and those ranging from below 20k and 20k- 50k are observed more for rural aspirants.

x. The average family annual income of rural aspirants is 3.5 lakhs, so self-study is observed more in rural aspirants as affordability of classes decreases in spite of less fees, whereas urban aspirants with an average family annual income of 5.5 lakh prepare by classes ignoring the higher rates of fees.

xi. UPSC is preferred more by General category aspirants while GPSC is preferred by OBC and SC/ST category aspirants.

xii. Annual fees of classes ranging from 50k- 1 lakh and above 1 lakh are observed more for UPSC aspirants and those ranging from 20k- 50k and below 20k are observed more for GPSC aspirants. In spite of that, UPSC aspirants prefer classes over self-study for preparation, meanwhile GPSC aspirants are neutral. The reason may be the higher difficulty level of the UPSC exam.

xiii. Serving the society is the key purpose of aspirants irrespective of their father's/parent's occupation. Those whose father's/parent's occupation is farming

have a purpose of financial stability more than others while those whose father's/parent's occupation is business have a purpose of power more than others.

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