

**FORMAL EDUCATION, ASPIRATIONS AND SOCIAL MOBILITY: A
STUDY OF EDUCATED YOUTH OF ASSAM, INDIA**

A THESIS TO BE SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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BY

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Abstract

This study attempts to understand the relationship between formal education, aspirations, & employment among youths in Assam. The focus is on the youths employed in unskilled-informal jobs in Guwahati. This study traces their educational experiences, the aspirations that preceded and followed their enrollment in education, & their struggles to convert these educational attainments and aspirations to employability. Data was collected primarily through semi-structured interviews, group discussions, case studies and observation methods. My study's youth relied enormously on educated distinction, educated consumption and education credentialism. The study is a youth narrative of longing for educated distinction and being valued more than their predecessors. Socio-economic problems and circumstances compel these youths to drop out of their pursuing education and prepare for opportunities for earning a livelihood. This research attempts to document how disadvantaged social agents are encouraged to invest in education for salaried employment and to understand the relation between formal education and career aspirations and the desire to attain social mobility among educated, employed rural youths (intermediate and degree holders) in Assam. It also documents the patterns of formal education and aspiration mismatch or gap and how youth as a category is influenced by waithood and prolongation of youth. The study argues that formal education is perceived by youths as an opportunity to avoid traditional occupations. Through formal education they seek to attain a secured white-collar job and they yearn for more finances, more value or respect and attainment of more socio-economic status. They believe that social mobility can be attained through