Aspiration and Experiences of Youth in Patna

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Abstract
This paper discusses the prevailing aspiration matrix of youth for jobs and concerns about their future. The aspiration matrix in this study is understood as complex interplay of culture, personal background of the migrant and their networks, and cooperative competitiveness they forge at destination. This helps us to sociologically explore and comprehend the concern of youth trying to overcome their ascribed statuses. The paper draws from semi structured interview data capturing the subjective understanding of two groups of youth one engaged in educational institutes for higher education and the other who are preparing for competitive exams waiting for their transition to work. The argument of this paper is that youth aspirations in provincial urban centers of India, in this case Patna (Bihar) are distinct, which trends a strong predilection towards competing for insufficient government jobs. Tragically, despite being aware of their own shortcomings, these youth struggle to stay in competition and recognizing extreme competition within the cohorts. The paper argues that regardless of these shortcomings the aspirations remain high even in the minimality of opportunities in jobs, and acknowledgments of shortcomings in personal capital and resources.

Keywords: India, Youth, Bihar, Aspirations, Urban, Higher Education

Introduction
The National Policy on Education 2016 of India designates India as an aspirational society (p. 35) where parents yearn for good education of their children. In addition, that education should be the most important aspect to be taken care of, to harness the demographic dividend that India has. To garner the benefits of this young population it is important to first invest and understand the ways-needs and situations of youth in India. National policies since the 2000’ in India have tried to primarily to focus on this aspect of understanding the youth. The Youth in India: Situation and Needs 2006–2007 (2010, p. xxiv) report admits that there is an urgent need to address the varying diverse situation-needs of youth population cohorts in India. The report in the same line of argument declares that the evidences on everyday life and aspiration of youth are limited.

The current political scenario is also an important lens to understand the homogeneous precarity of Indian youth and their aspiration towards their own futures of education and employment thereafter. Yadav and Kumar (2012) and the CSDS-KAS Youth
Survey (2016) reiterate the changes and significance of youth aspirations in the changing socio-political and economic scenario. The survey focused on to understand youth aspirations and anxieties in the changing conditions of India. It reflects that in the Indian social and political scenario, concern towards youth aspiration has never held much significance than what it holds now. This sudden spurt in recognition is a result of acknowledgement of the emergence of the middle classes and its aspirations. This discovery reflects in the election manifesto of current ruling party, the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) in India, which achieved its thumping win to power by focusing on the project that it would devise ways to cater to these neo-middle class aspirations, more so on and through youth. The manifesto in its pledge boasts of Productive Youth to achieve the idea of developed Brand India built on Quality, the best material our own aspirations (bold in original). The manifestos identifies this as a completely new class, which has emerged from the category of poor, and are yet to stabilize in the middle class as the neo middle class.

This line of argument strongly concedes the problematization of aspiration in Indian context collectively, both politically and socially. This is exhibited through the fact that as more and more people move into this neo middle class category, their expectations for better public services have to be met, education being the foremost. The various educational, scholarship schemes, and the task of upgrading and promoting higher-vocational education institutions operational these days are a result of this recognition.

There are different approaches to understand the youth situation in Indian context but this paper argues that the concept of aspiration can be rooted in the rise of the middle class in India after the 1990 guided by the IT (Information Technology) boom (see Fernandes, 2000; Baviskar and Ray, 2015). To capture this aspiration eruption education becomes an essential reserve, which also during the same time 1990 turned into an aspirational commodity for the youth (see Nisbett, 2009 and Mazzarella, 2010). The addition of aspirational aspect to youth and to education has problematized them simultaneously in the arena of the social discourse.

As Hart (2016) and Appadurai (2004) observe aspiration can be interpreted through multiple set of actions, dependent on ones social context. In this article, aspiration is interpreted as a personal capacity of individual dedication towards a particular trajectory, of settling for government job, controlled by their educational attainments and social attributes. Baker (2017, p. 1203) argues that a mix of education and aspirations leads to “reduction in educational attainment gaps, help to break cycles of disadvantage, and increase levels of social mobility”. Experiences of young people at university are by definition transitional. Béteille (2010) argues that education has created new prospects as well attitudes of mind, supplementing “new avenues of mobility, both inter-generational and intra-generational” (p. 107). In an aspirational society, it is natural that parents desire their children to obtain good education. However formally linking the development of skills in vocational fields, bringing an academic equivalence to vocational accomplishments has not been seriously attempted. This also means that avenues for horizontal and vertical mobility of students have not been provided to an adequate degree. Fostering dignity and social acceptability to high quality vocational training is an important goal that begs attention.
Imagining future through education

The methods and theories explaining aspirations range vividly. Hart (2016, p. 325-326) argues that it is difficult to chart out any detail of range of aspirations “there are many forms of aspiration and their roots and purposes vary significantly.” Adding in the same argument, that there are distinct interpretations of aspiration by individuals, which are mostly context driven. As Appadurai (2004, p. 67) would stress that aspirations are never individual rather they ‘are always formed in interaction and in the thick of social life’. Studies of youth aspiration are thus complex and its various axes of reference, dependence (on socioeconomic status) have pushed it towards the social valences of viz. gender, class and of course economic status of an individual. A typical understanding of aspiration in context of contemporary India helps us understand aspiration as an emerging independent feature of youth lives. Literature suggests that aspiration, identity, mobility, and education have a close correlation. It is also important to note that recent researches highlight the fact that the relationship between education and aspiration function in-sync (Brown, Reay and Vincent, 2013, 2016).

The contemporary studies on youth lives and aspirations decode an urgent sense of youth towards holding active agency. This quest for active agency overarches the social valences of youth via education. Until now, aspiration was a hopeful expression, reflection of goals for future but now this also entails a concern for the self-identity. It is, more so, like hopeful speculations for desired consequences. Baker (2017, p. 1205) suggests these hopeful speculations for desired consequences are “often distinguished from expectations that reflect beliefs about the likelihood of an outcome occurring”. Education has become an important factor in determining the aspiration of youth irrespective of the socio-economic status one belongs to. However, other auxiliary linkages which resonate with the Bourdieusien concept of habitus and capital resembling family socialisation, cultural values, parental income and education and social networks are important channels that influence and profile of youth aspirations. The indispensability of the Bourdieusien concept of habitus and capital to understand aspirations of youth, in the complex globalized world is hard to challenge. Brown, Reay and Vincent (2013), Sin (2013), Bathmaker, Ingram and Waller (2013), Halsey (2013), Reay (2013), Devine and Li (2013) highlight the indispensability of habitus and capital that concede important acuity into the relationship between social background and aspirations.

This obvious claim of relationship between social background and aspirations are important in Indian scenario where the middle class channels its aspiration of social mobility through education (Osella and Osella 2000). This bares the Bourdieusien approach that asserts aspirations reflect the resources, opportunities and capitals individual have to pursue the hopeful speculations for desired consequences. Studies on Indian youth by Nisbett (2009), Jeffrey and Dyson (2016), DeSouza, Kumar and Shastri (2009) and Dyson (2008) reiterate the need to understand youth under new circumstances and interactions of global world order. Singh (1960, p. 1627) recognizes this as a transitory youth shifting distinctly from a general collective to a group of actors in the social system, who are individualistic and subjective. These studies claim that the Indian youth realize their narrow chances in the complex Indian social order. Hence are self-motivated to achieve identity status and agency,
keeping in mind the harsh competition within the cohort, competing for similar, constricted jobs and education opportunities, solely guided by what Appadurai (2004, p. 59-84) calls “the capacity to aspire” sustaining their aspiration or conjectural futures. This conscious apprehension for future sustained through ‘the capacity to aspire’ is what we will call ‘cooperative competitiveness’, whereby the youth in the cohort help and get helped by their peer group to overcome educational or economic hurdles. Baker (2017) for this argues that the Rational choice scholars evaluate this ‘the capacity to aspire’ on the basis of how the youth see the “costs and benefits of pursuing particular educational and occupational pathways” (p. 1206).

In Indian context, the fieldwork suggests that the result of a degree should be a government job although some of the respondents choose higher education as an active hibernation period. During which they parallely prepared for employment oriented competitive examination enforced by their economic and social circumstances. The youth hunch on to this idea of getting into higher education that it would help in maximizing their ‘chances’ of getting jobs in future. Hence, enrolling into higher education is considered as a period of active hibernation.

**Contextualizing Bihar**

Ashish Bose, fittingly in the early 1980’s coined the term BIMARU to describe the backwardness of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh in terms of demographic and social indicators. The situation has changed, Bihar has experienced a major turn of development since the mid 2000’s. Aiyar and Mody (2011; p. 25) highlight the economic transition of Bihar attributing this turn to impressive economic performance and implementation of development oriented good governance model through state’s administration. Aiyar and Mody use the concept of leaders or high-growth states (for South and West: Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Gujarat) and the laggards or low-growth states (for Heartland: Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh) classifying in terms of demographic dividend and other economic factors of development (ibid, p. 8). They further argue that these laggard states will have the advantage of the demographic dividend that will further the economic progresses of these laggards or low-growth states.

They warn that there is no such data on ‘any state-wise projections of the evolution of the age-distribution over the next few decades’. However, they conjecture from available data reveal —

“... considering that the average 2001 working age ratio among the leaders was 62.1 percent versus 53.4 percent in the laggards, it seems very likely that the bulk of the projected large increments to India's working age ratio will come from the laggards (ibid, 25)”.

For Bihar, they are optimistic as it has a huge advantage in terms of the demographic dividend in future, taking into account the reforms the government initiated during the mid 2000’s.
The conjectures about population are revised by Mukherji and Mukherji (2015) who reiterate that during the years 1991-2011 the population growth in Bihar was higher than Indian average. They argue thereby that ‘Bihar has a significantly younger population today than India as a whole, allowing for a range of opportunities including additional time to prepare for maximizing the benefits of transition to a large working-age population’ (p. 138). It is important to note that these studies use a technical ‘working-age population’ to refer youths. A simple explanation of the term is the ratio of people working to those not working (Aiyar and Mody 2011). This also has a wider impact on the life stages of the cohort. Further Mukherji and Mukherji (2015) emphasize that given the accumulation of working-age population in Bihar, which will continue to rise “will only hit the replacement rate in 2027” (p.150). Thus, giving Bihar a deferred advantage of late unfolding ‘demographic dividend and a window of opportunity’ (ibid) towards economic development.

However, the advantages Bihar is speculating off these transformations are challenged by migration. Mukherji and Mukherji (2015) through the NSSO data estimate the economic linkages of out-migration of Bihar. Calculating that for every 1000 there are almost 584 Bihari out-migrants, contributing economically to the state, the highest among all states in India. The trends of out-migration from Bihar have seen subtle changes. However, Deshingkar et al. (2006) Mukherji and Mukherji (2015) Datta (2016) argue that the major cause had been for employment and livelihood options, excluding either the extremely poor or the very rich. But, this trend has changed considerably over the last decade, skewing the migration towards for education and for jobs in informal sectors, which included the educated and rich households. Deshingkar et al. (2006) attribute this change to the stagnant local opportunities and the failure of state mechanism through the 1990’s. Mukherji and Mukherji (2015; p. 197) add to this that while there were substantial increase in the Indian economy ‘there was little change in employment prospects in the pre-2005 Bihar economy.’

We see the migration transformation trajectory of Bihar changing from, to an extent, for livelihoods towards education. Datta (2015) argues that in case of Bihar “development is linked with more, not less mobility. It is associated with an expansion of capabilities, with increasing aspirations.” The migration for education, in Bihar or outside the state, is to be understood under this argument of ‘expansion of capabilities' and 'increasing aspirations'. The present scenario is that there is almost no data about migration for education within state.

The advantages that the demographic data of Bihar suggests appear hollow in terms of what it offers to its youth migrants in the provincial city capital. Das in 1998 (p. 3103) foresighted about the situation, Bihar would enter. He strongly opined that the migration of students from Bihar to Delhi for higher education has to be seen and evaluated under a different light i.e. beyond the news stories. Adding to this Das contends that youth migration deserves sincere consideration in relation to the political-economic impact of brain drain on Bihar. Attending to this concern, the past decade has seen Patna emerge as a education hub for the state. A number of higher education institutions of national repute have opened, both by the state and by the central government.
Method

The paper presents data from the qualitative interviews carried out with youth about their aspirations and their motivations for education. The research used interview questions, mainly reflexive, asking youths their experiences of migration and future plans after education— if they would choose higher education, prefer job, or step into business / entrepreneurship. Questions were also asked about how they connected their idea of future to the opportunities and their conceptions of social mobility. These options acted as signposts for guided confluence of researcher and the researched while interviewing. The interview questions were directed to gain insights into their (youth) aspirations, and to probe how, what they made sense of their future. The responses prompted vivid personal experiences of the present, references from the past and insights into the plans of the youth. The youth respondents came from diverse mix of social, cultural and economic backgrounds. The background distinction was reflected more so from their place of origin, mostly from the rural areas. While care was taken to choose youth who had migrated from rural to urban for higher education, some of the respondents are also from the urban areas. This helped generate a contrast between the conceptions of education aspiration of rural and urban youth. Given the nature of research, some local urban respondents volunteered to take part in the research. These respondents do not skew the nature of responses but rather open up new spaces for questioning the understanding of youth in the provincial capitals. These urban youth although being in same educational conditions see the rural migrated youth not as competitors but understand that the educational background of the migrated youth are weak and hence they have an advantage. Further, the distinctions among respondent ranged in the courses they were pursuing. The age of the participants (19–30 years) was also significant; they were selected because they were at a certain transition phase when they had to think about their next steps of their career aspirations. The educational status of the respondents has been divided into two groups of vocational/ professional and the non-professional courses. The term vocational/professional contains of respondents who were in advance levels of their Engineering, MBA or Law courses while by non-professional courses is meant Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) or a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc).

The geographical choice of Patna is determined by the fact that it is (I) rapidly urbanizing and (II) being capital of the state it has, in the recent past come up with, some of the best higher educational institutions. The institutions, for this research, have been chosen to represent the changing aspirations of the youth towards and from education. The five institutions, which have been chosen for the study are, Patna University (PU) established in 1917, is the oldest and largely caters to the traditional courses of education. The rest four are new educational institutions: Chanakya National Law University (CNLU) (2006), National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) (2008), Netaji Subhas Institute of Technology (NSIT) (2008) and Aryabhatta Knowledge University (AKU) (2010), all for vocational/ professional courses opened during the 2006-2008. The spurt of these new institutions caters to the new urban service economy that is emerging in Patna - management, fashion and law. As Ball, Maguire and MacRae (2000) stress that these new urban economies are a part of a “well-established process of the commodification of youth” (p. 281) and thrive on “the economy
of youth” (p. 281). The increase in diversity of educational course helps us illustrate and understand the youthscapes in India. The reflection and experience part of the research provides substantiation to the concept of Birmingham school that seeks to understand youth as a offshoot deviant stage. Failing or is rigidly adhering to the this, largely neglecting and being insensitive towards time and space discrepancies (Ball, Maguire and MacRae, 2000, p. 283) that emerge from the diverse spatial, socio-cultural and economic interaction complexes.

Apart from these, it has dense concentration of coaching institutes, which attracts the rural student crowd. The coaching centers, unlike proper educational institutions, acts as a buffer zone like a waiting room where the students prepare for competitive exams for government jobs. It is to be noted that the interviews uncovered the rural-urban disparity towards not only education but also the aspirations in life. These interviews put forth the changing outlook towards education and thereafter. It uncommonly revealed that even though some of the respondents from rural areas were academically faltering they hinged to the course at institution or coaching to gamble on their fortune.

**Educated youth learning to wait**

There can be no denying the fact that India has the world’s highest number of 10 to 24-year-olds, with 356 million. Since the census 2001 of India, the concerns to harness youth potential are becoming affairs of policy. The reports alarm off the potential the Indian youth population holds for social, economic progresses as unprecedented. The potential of this cohort are already being compared critically among countries. Mukherjee and Choudhury (2010) compile these estimates, stressing the youth in India, under the age of 34 years who constitute about 41% of the total population according to the 2001 Census. Referencing that by 2020, the average age of an Indian youth population will be 29 years, compared to 37 years for China and 48 years for Japan, for the population falling in the working age category, between 15 and 64 years.

This significant potential population cohort, the demographer’s call- the demographic dividend or the youth bulge. India is witnessing this youth bulge. A demographic understanding of the concept clears that youth bulge is a complex composition of age groups composed of large number of adolescents and young adults who are born when fertility is high followed by declining number of children born after fertility declines. A further technical understanding interprets youth bulge as a situation in which 20% or more of the population is of the age group 15–24 years. This portrays a picture of the paradoxical position of Indian youth population. At the same time, rendering youth as the target of special attention. Simultaneously imploring for state’ attention towards comprehending such a large youth population as asset and positive liability. Accentuating the essentiality to focus on the requirements to understand the special identity needs of adolescents and young adults in liberalizing and globalizing India.

The situation cannot be blindspotted in policy framing processes. The reason also lies with the fact as Durham (2000, 2004) puts forth for youth as a ‘social shifter’. Durham
means the category (youth) will be in existence endlessly, replenished always. Thus The State of World Population 2014 interprets youth as hopes for future stressing,

“Never before have there been so many young people. Never again is there likely to be such potential for economic and social progress. How we meet the needs and aspirations of young people will define our common future”.

Aspirations are not miniature non-functional prototypes of future for migrated youth who despite their social and academic backlashes remain enchanted with the prospects higher education offers. They situate their aspirations on the larger canvas of future, as means of achieving the desired social mobility. Despite being aware of their shortcomings, these youth struggle to stay in competition for jobs. Preparing for competitive exams, waiting for their transition to work acknowledging extreme competition this process embodies within the cohorts. These complex altering matrices between aspiration, education and acknowledgements of shortcomings of capitals mark the need to have a functional aspiration of future. This forms a strong background conducive for initiating personal aspirations however; the effects do ripple on to the eroding or overriding social ascribed statuses. Appadurai (2004) calls this “the capacity to aspire”. Arjun Appadurai (2004) identified aspirations as crucial point of reference toward the future as a capacity that allows individuals to perceive and navigate towards new opportunities, which obviously are not evenly distributed.

Harshit (24), a graduating Law student from premier institution in Patna says,

These ‘elite institutes’ (he uses this word) offer an experience that affects your subsequent phases of life. “Academics acts as a sifting tool for segregation of various student groups according to how they (students) gel based on their academic, language and interests, skills.

He also tells of his aspiration to apply for a foreign institute for higher education, but says, without regret that he has ‘bad grades’.

See my grades have been bad throughout sixty-two percent something. That is fine I understand that I have not devoted much time in my studies... I have interest in academic research. I have 3-4 publications 1 or 2 are in good publications. I have been part of several debating, moot court competitions and all. I do not regret (for my bad grades) but since I am looking forward to apply for foreign scholarships, it worries me.

The regret is a thing that these youth do not consider is an option, they know the way out of it- Education. When I asked him- What is the way out then? He responded-

I have decided I will work for two years and then apply. I have heard they require some kind of ‘working experience’. I will take a break, work then apply for higher studies.

It is important to notice that the background of respondents matter a lot in expressing a choice of discipline and careers thereof. In their studies Brown, Reay and Vincent (2013) Halsey (2013) Reay (2013) Dyson (2008) converge that the aspirations are exceedingly influenced by the patterns of socialisation, the peer networks, family-paternal income and the cultural values inculcated. As Avinash (25), who has finished his engineering
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course, and now works as an ad-hoc instructor, recounted his experience of schooling as he went to a local school where he knew everyone. “It was a small school,” he said and that he believed that this was all. But, he mentioned that he had “to do something big”. He said he was not aware of the economic conditions of his family where his father was the sole earning member from a private job. He added, “Engineering was a forced choice because it offered easy jobs... however it was difficult for me to make this choice, being aware of my family’ economic conditions...” He said that his experience of being in such a family has raised him to understand “the value of job, of having a fixed money flow”. It was observed that the patterns of socialization and aspiration of respondent youth was heavily guarded and guided by their acknowledgments of where they are coming from, referring to family’ social-cultural norms and where they belong, referring to the recognition of middle class-ness moreso the economic conditions of the family. As Osella and Osella (2000, p. 12) assert through Bourdieusien habitus that while making choices the agents kept in mind their social locations which corresponded to a “fixed set of options possibilities which itself is not limitless; they are more likely to make certain choices from the set of possibilities than others” thereby constricting the choices. Thus, choice and aspirations of education transcend from being an individual to dependent upon group’s commitments towards a particular trajectory (Hart, 2016, p. 326).

The term social mobility becomes plural, here, in terms that it encompasses the family, which is also a source of aspiration, inspiration and concomitantly as pressure factor for the individual. It is also agreed upon the fact that these ‘elite institutes’ offer an experience that affects an individual’s subsequent phases of life in Bourdieusien sense. However, the Bourdieusien concepts are offered an extension through Appadurai’ capacity to aspire.

The social background of the youth respondents were important determinants of their futures, more so for those coming from agricultural families as first generation learners (in higher studies and competing for government jobs) in the urban settings. This certainly deflects their attentions towards the glitter of the urban. During the field visits, it was observed that there are considerable cultural distances among the participants coming from rural backgrounds or the first generations into higher studies or into government job competitions and those from urban areas.

A respondent Amarjeet (22, AKU) who hails from small town belongs to an agricultural family, which is also, engaged in other small business activities. He says he the first from his family to pursue a Bachelor of Computer Application (BCA). BCA a popular course of computers which skills in computer usage and basic computer programming. Amarjeet says that his family’ economic condition is not good. Therefore, he has to get a job as early as possible. He mentions that for this course (BCA) “We have incurred some loans”. Upon asking what kind of jobs, he is looking for? He promptly replied “I am interested in banking sector jobs, they offer a lot of opportunities”. But, in the same line he himself mentioned “it is hard to get in. the course structure is diverse. There is lot of competition”. This acknowledgement does not deter him of what is to come if he fails. He said he was in two minds to explore his chances of highly competitive banking job, so he has a backup plan, he said “I am thinking of doing a Master of Business Administration (MBA) through
correspondence course and get into chain marketing”. Amarjeet has thought of the routes that he would transect to his success. Despite his familial economic situations, where his father is the only earning member. He is determined not to fail.

On the other hand, those respondents who were in ‘elite institutes’ were concerned about employment even before they could finish their studies. This feeling of getting job while in institutions (in case of professional course) was found upon the fears that once they move out of the campus they “... will have to fight with crowd. And it is really tough outside, inside is safe” (Harshit, 24, Law). As Maureen (21, Fashion design) says, 

... finding a job is not that difficult in our field. Since this field is still new. There are many but then the competition outside is tough. During campus placements, we compete among us but outside the campus the situation is difficult. Students from other NIFT’ have better experiences and exposure to the job field.

The new courses have added diversity to the student’s aspirations and anxieties (see Ball, Maguire and MacRae, 2000). In this work, we have considered this self-acknowledging experience as ‘cooperative competitiveness’. This arrangement acts as a safety net for the migrated youth who are still in process of figuring out the nature and extent of competition they are about to experience. The ‘cooperative competitiveness’ acts as a cushion helping the individual to adjust and integrate in the competitive framework. Respondents from non-professional course background have attested to the importance of being helped by friends in multiple of subjects they were not fluent in or say even aware of.

Most of the respondents, have hinged their aspirations onto higher education. The results of education are exceedingly being aspired to culminate into some kind of job, for many. For some job is a transitory phase towards continuing to higher studies. Offering better opportunities. Amarjeet and Harshit can be taken as examples of the many un(ac)counted youth who sense distress and anxiety that education infuses in oneself, holding themselves against their own individual self, engaged in cooperative competitiveness and the larger social world.

The works of Hendry and Kloep (2010), van Dijk et. al. (2011), Chisholm and du Bois-Reymond (1993), Bansal (2013), Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2004), Nisbett (2009) depict this precarity and the anxiety of youth towards future in the globalised world thereby reiterating Beck’ concerns. Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2004) make a very strong argument about vicious connection between youths and the contemporary challenges that the lived experiences and lives of youth ageing today will have a profound effect on the economic processes, the advancement in the technology, innovations in media, most importantly in the cultural and social realities.

**Conclusion**

This article deals with the aspiration and experiences of migrated youth in provincial capital of Patna in Bihar. It uses education as a prism to understand the aspiration and goals of youth, letting them reflect on their present statuses, their plans, their shortcoming, and
their motivations. These interpretations are important in context of Bihar since Bihar has a history of migration for education to various other states as argued by Das (1998). It highlights the shortcomings in the higher education scenario in Bihar and the aspirations that students hold of their own social progress, supposedly to be gained thorough education.

The article resonates that situation of youth in globalized world is precarious since the sociological understanding of this age phase, youth, is sociologically blurred. The claims through which adulthood can be recognized, such as taking responsibility, negotiated relationships with others, and upward social mobility are undefined in Indian context. The situation of youth in provincial state of Bihar is not different. The rapid, political-economic changes that Bihar has encountered in past decade have rendered youth into a phase of missing adulthood, altering the experiences and traditional rites of passage into adulthood. The realization of harsh economic realities (of self, mainly family), scant opportunities of jobs and the neo-liberal policies of informalization are pushing them to compromise with job and family.

In contemporary context, the condition of migrated youth can be understood through Beck’s frame intertwined with the recent researches on youth. Beck (1992, p. 90) argues for new socio-cultural commonalities where individualization is a process of societalization, can be implanted to understand the situation of provincial youth. Further, in contemporary world, the separation of individual from institutions is difficult. The individual is to be seen in relation to the institutions s/he is attached to/with. As Bansal posits, “the life cycle of an individual coexists with the life cycle of the social institutions” (2013, p. 16). Researches on youth, also in this study, mark the importance of institutions of higher learning in shaping identity and facilitating mobility.

The notion of aspiration and experience is important for provincial youth in Bihar because from this they derive and comprehend who they are, who they will become or who have they become. This also helps them stimulate and evaluate their opportunities, through prospects of migration and education. We contextualize and integrate the rural youth coming to urban areas for higher education to gain entrée to the new way of life. The new way of life, in context, thus is composed of conceptions and subjective experiences of self, regarding social order, opportunities and physical mobility i.e. migration. The findings suggest that mobilities and aspirations of rural youth should be treated as normal social phenomena and they are to be analyzed and interpreted in entirety with the social and individual past and their present histories.

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