

Obstacles in Career Development: An Indian Students Perspective

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Abstract: *Presents study was aimed to explore the career decision preparedness of the Indian students and the available decision making aid to these students, and effectiveness of the govt. policies related to the career development program. for this purpose both the primary and secondary data were used. For obtaining primary data a survey using stratified random sampling were used and govt. of India reports on education and employment were used. The finding indicates that the sources of career related information are largely compromised, as the various available sources of career related information are not prepared well to take these responsibilities. Further, the statistics indicates that education in India could not turn employment, which may be potential obstacles in the success of the career /skill development program in India.*

Key words: *career decision, career related information, educational preparedness*

Introduction

The word career is one of important and widely used term in our regular discourse. When we discuss career in Indian context, it refers to the individuals' adjustment starting from his school, study, employment and social life. Invariably it's meaning changes, at occasions it is also referred as a lifelong and continued employment regardless of one's qualification and the nature of work being undertaken. In western societies it is used as a handy term for denoting work histories and work patterns. The complex and differentiated societies use it to attribute coherence, continuity and social meaning to their life. It facilitates in bringing the people and work organizations in such way that are personally meaningful and beneficial to the organizations as well as to the society (Watts, 1981).

The industrialization of modern society has brought numerous career opportunities and selecting the desired career from available alternatives is really difficult and challenging, where most of the individuals face intricacy in making an appropriate and learned decision. During the process of career selection, an individual encounter various difficulties e.g., lack of knowledge about how to make a career decision (Gati, 1996). Such confusion intensified by problems of poor vocational identity, career barriers and inadequate decision making skills results in to a state of indecision (Shahrum, 2012). Undecided student might face the risk of poor adjustment, personal distress, academic failure and attrition.

Career also involves self identity, and reflects individuals' sense of who they are, who they wish to be, and their hopes, dreams, fears and frustrations. This is reflected in a foundational description of career given by Goffman (1959). The subjective and objective careers are blended in the living of one's life, as Cochran (1991) noted, 'Career is person's life, and in that usage, there is one career for every person' (Young & Collin, 2000).

Career Decision Making: The Indian Scenario

In Indian cultural setup, the self-concept, occupational aspiration and gender are important factors that can influence career maturity of the students (Hasan, 2006). Females are found to possess higher career maturity than their male counterparts. Students of private schools show higher career maturity attitude as compared of students of government schools (Dhillonm & Kaur, 2005; Sirohi & Vineeta, 2013). Moreover, students in schools with vocational guidance and counseling provisions show high career maturity in self awareness and occupational information as compared to one from those schools which are deprived of these provisions. In choosing a career, the students who are exposed to the guidance and counseling programs show much higher career maturity than their underprivileged counterpart (Sirohi & Vineeta, 2013). Male adolescents were better than female adolescents and urban adolescents were better than rural adolescents with regard their career maturity and emotional maturity (Saini & Rita, 2012). It was also reported that there is no difference between the vocational interests of secondary students of rural and urban areas on ten different vocational interest areas (Sharma & Kumar, 2007).

Home climate namely-control, protectiveness, social isolation, deprivation of privileges and rejection differ significantly on their career decision maturity (Badola, 2013). There exists no significant difference between secondary school students belonging to nuclear and joint family on different components of study habits. Students studying in Govt. schools are better on home environment and planning of work and planning of subjects than students studying in private schools but private school students are better than Govt. school students on preparation for exam component of study habit (Chand, 2013). Parental acceptance and encouragement were positively related with academic school success and academic competence and the children of working mothers had a greater feeling of rejection than non-working mothers (Lakshmi & Arora, 2006). However parental control (psychological & behavioral) showed negative relationship with academic success and competence. Advantaged and privileged socioeconomic status attributed success to personal characteristics and failure to external circumstances. Disadvantaged is not able to distinguish the success / failure outcomes or determine cause-effect relationships. Students from structured and independent family showed better performance than other children (Shrivastava & Chandiramani, 1995).

The process of good career decision making includes self-awareness (motivating factors); knowing the opportunities available and making a choice to pursue for a particular career. Making the right decisions can determine the direction of one's lives and overall wellbeing, and self-awareness is a fundamental part of this process. Being self-aware means one knows his / her skills, strengths, abilities, values and beliefs,

motivations and external influences and how the external influences affect on career decisions. Informed choices are usually based on an appreciation of what you can do and what you want to achieve.

The Government of India Report (2011) of the Working Group on Employment, Planning & Policy for The Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) of Labor, Employment & Manpower (LEM) Division of Planning Commission reveals that as the educational attainments increase there is a negative trend in employment and more than 50% of the population (secondary education or above) are not in labor force. Besides this, more than 75% of the labor force is working in unorganized and small scale sector. Another Government of India Report (2014), on Employment and Unemployment Survey (Vol. – 1 - 5) of Ministry of Labor & Employment, Labor Bureau, Chandigarh reports negative trends in self employment, whereas an increase in casual employment has been reported. The gross enrolment ratio in elementary education (class I to VIII) since 2001 has increased from 81.6% to 97 % in 2013-2014. Similarly the gross enrolment ration in secondary education (Class IX & X) has increased from 51.7% in 2004-2005 to 76.6% in year 2013 – 2014. The UGC (2005) University Development in India: Basic Facts & Figures', New Delhi & UGC (2006) 'Annual Report: 2004-05', New Delhi reveals that since 1951 the number of university imparting education has increased from 32 to 343 in year 2004 and the number of colleges have been increased from 695 to 17625.

On appraisal of the available literature, published statistics by the civil authorities, social discourse, we found that over emphasis have been given to the quantitative requirements requires opening more and more schools and colleges to strengthening the career development programs in India, whereas results are yet awaited. In Indian, the vision and efforts on career development at academia and state level seems to be similar to those of the western countries which have different socio-economic conditions and social values. Career development in India demands immediate and detailed study in the area of career development.

Present study is aimed to understand the career development process with following objectives:

1. What are the different available source of career related information to the Indian students
2. To understand the strengths and limitations with each career related information source
3. General career perceptions among Indian students

Method

Sample

The population in this study comprised of the students of class 10th and 12th studying in the various government and private schools located in the national capital region of Delhi NCR (India).

The purpose of taking sample from class 10-12 was that in India 10th is considered to be the gateway of any career and by completing 12 the crystallization of career takes place. The mean ages of the participants were 16 years.

The purpose of taking sample from Delhi NCR was that alone Delhi attracts about 41% of total interstate in-migration (Census of India 2011). The population of Delhi is heterogeneous and represents almost every Indian state. The migrants of eastern Indian states generally prefer to settle in the east Delhi. Similarly, the migrants from south and western states prefer to stay in south western part of Delhi and mix migrant population resides in north Delhi. Therefore, stratified random sampling method was used for the study.

The participants of this study comprises of 59% (252) of class 10, 17% (73) of class 11 and 24% (102) of class 12 of which 38% (162) female and 62% (265) male students.

The strata were classified mainly into south-west zone, north-east zone, private school. Further, a number of schools was approached randomly and the school were selected on the basis of the first cum first serve on the criteria of getting permission from the school management. Accordingly sample from 3 schools (2 Govt. Aided schools and one Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya) from each zone and one private school were included in this study.

Measures

An indigenously developed semi structures bilingual (Hindi and English) questionnaire comprising of personal information like name (optional), Age, Name of School, class of study, 8 descriptive / open ended items, 4 multiple choice item and one item for rank order were used in this study.

Development of the questionnaire

In order to ensure the suitability of the questionnaire, the questionnaire were given to 15 subject matter experts (SMEs) from having considerable experience in teaching and research. The print version of the questionnaire along with the main objective behind the item, were forwarded to all the SMEs with an option to offer item comments on the questions i.e. acceptable, not acceptable and accepted with amendment (if any, suggested by the SME). After obtaining the feedback, the questionnaire was finalized.

Pilot study

Pilot study was conducted on a representative sample (N=15) to ascertain the suitability of the questionnaire with respect to readability and understanding. No suggestions were reported by the respondents and it was assumed that the questionnaire can be used for the desired survey.

Conduct of Study

The surveys were conducted during Oct – Dec 2016. The principal of the targeted schools were approached personally and briefed about the purpose and potential implications and permission was sought. After obtaining necessary permission from the school administration the date for data collection were finalized.

The data collection were started with briefing the participants about the purpose of the study and sought participation of the volunteers. These volunteers were further explained as to how complete the survey questionnaire.

Result

The findings of the study are shown below according to the themes:

Table 1- Basic Personal and Demographic Statistics

Age Range - 14 -18 years		Mean Age =16 years	
Gender	Male (62%)	Female (38%)	
Type of School	Private & Govt. Schools		
Locations	Delhi NCR		
Class	10th (59%)	11th (17%)	12 (24%)

The result as shown in table- 1 above, the age of the sample range from 14 -18 years with mean age = 16. Out of 427 participants, 62% were male and 38% female. The 59% participants were of class 10, 17% were from class 11th and 24% of class 12 of which 62% were male and 38% female.

Table-2, Source of career related information to the Indian school students

Source of Information	No. of Response	% share
Family	359	25.0174216
Society & Friends	302	21.0452962
Teachers	279	19.4425087
Television & Radio and Newspaper	220	15.3310105
Internet & Social Media	219	15.261324
Other facilities (Books, Magazines, Counseling and Awareness Program)	56	3.90243902

As shown in table-3 above, it is evident that most of the Indian students are dependent on their family and immediate surroundings like society & friend (21.04%) and teachers (19.44%) and these are the main and primary source of career related information to Indian students. Besides these sources television serials are advertisement in the newspaper and radio and internet is also disseminating the career related information among Indian students.

Table-2, Descriptive statistics of the students and their preferences

Favorite present	Subjects at		Favorite subject at graduation level (same area)	Optimal Qualification for entering in job				
	Subjects	No.		%	10th (N=7)	12th (N=88)	Graduation (N=155)	PG (N=161)
Science		100	24%	86%	0	22	24	28
Commerce		71	17%	67%	0	10	17	22
Social Science		104	25%	70%	28.5	23	32	19
Arts		84	20%	60%	43	32	19	14
Others		56	14%	44%	28.5	13	8	17

The results (Table 2) reveals that social science is the most proffered course of studies (25%) flowed by Science (24%) and Arts (20%). Students having science as most preferred career option shows more confidence in their preference and prefers to continue the science as preferred subject at graduation level (86%) followed by social sciences (70%) and commerce (67%). Further, the students having science as a preferred career option believe higher educational attainment i.e. graduation or above (52%) followed by social science students (51%) for entering into the work of world (job).

Table – 4, Distribution of persons by educational classification based on Usual Principal Status Approach for the age group 18-29 years (in %)

Educational classification	Employed	Un-employed	Not in labor force
Not Literate	50.3	1.8	37.8
Below Primary	50.9	2.1	47.0
Primary	56.2	2.3	41.5
Middle/Secondary/Higher Secondary	40.5	4.4	54.8
Diploma/Certificate	32.3	9.3	58.4
Graduate & above	40.4	15.7	44.0

Source : GOI (2011) Report of the Working Group on Employment, Planning & Policy for The Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) Government Of India, Labour, Employment & Manpower (LEM) Division, Planning Commission

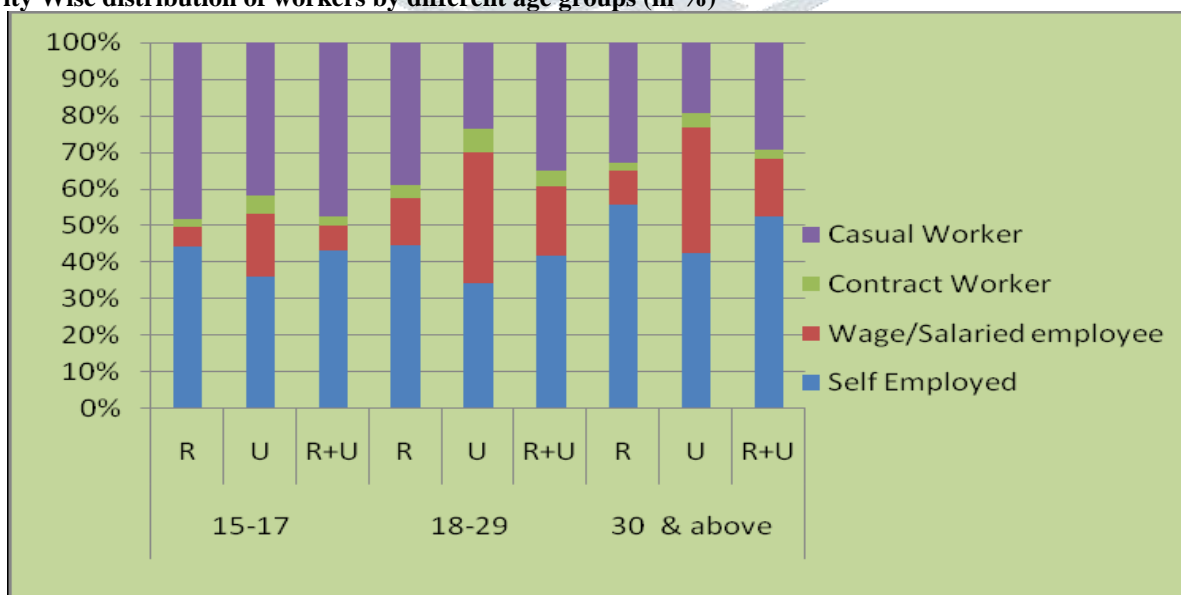
The statistics reveals that educational attainment and employment are negatively correlated. As there is increase in the higher educational attainment there is a significant increase in the employment percentage of the youth. Further the individual's participation in the labor force had negative relationship with educational attainment.

Table – 5, Distribution of workers aged 15 years & above by employment size in the estt.

Size of Estt.	% workers	Size of Estt.	% workers	Size of Estt.	% workers
≤ 6 workers	67	10-19 workers	4	Not known	8
6-9 workers	7	≥ 20 workers	14		

Source : GOI (2011) Report of the Working Group on Employment, Planning & Policy for The Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) Government Of India, Labour, Employment & Manpower (LEM) Division, Planning Commission

The report reveals that about 2/3 of the Indian population were found engaged in the unorganized and micro and small industries, as 67% of the Indian workers above 15 years of age are employed in a establishments having up to 6 workers only and the contribution of big industries in generating employment was just about 14% only.

Table - 6: Activity Wise distribution of workers by different age groups (in %)

Source : GOI (2014), Report On Employment and Unemployment Survey (Vol. – 1 - 5), Government of India, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Labour Bureau, Chandigarh

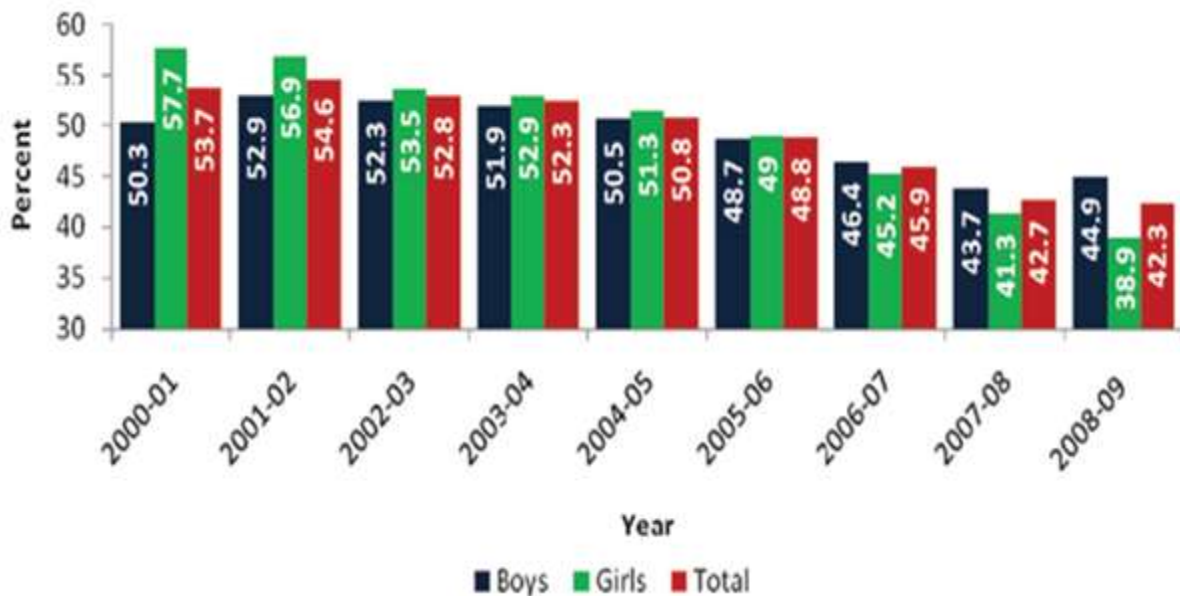
Table - 7: Activity Wise distribution of workers by different age groups (in %)

Head	15-17 Years			18-29 Years			30 Years & above		
	R	U	R+U	R	U	R+U	R	U	R+U
Self Employed	44.3	36.2	43	44.5	34.4	41.9	55.9	42.6	52.3
Wage/ Salaried employee	5.3	16.9	7.0	12.9	35.6	18.6	9.3	34	15.9
Contract Worker	2.2	5.1	2.6	3.8	6.6	4.5	2.0	4.0	2.5
Casual Worker	48.3	41.8	47.3	38.8	23.4	34.9	32.9	19.3	29.2

Source : GOI (2014), Report On Employment and Unemployment Survey (Vol. – 1 - 5), Government of India, Ministry of Labor & Employment, Labour Bureau, Chandigarh

The reports revealed that a negative trends in the permanent employment in the recent years as only 29.2% of the workers above 30 years age were found as casual workers against 34.9% of the casual workers from the age group of 18-29 years and 47.3% of the age group of 15-17 years. Similarly self employment also found to be negative as 52.3% of the workers above 30 years were found self employed against 41.9% of the workers from 18-29 years and 43% of 15-17 years age group.

Table-8, Dropout rates in elementary education (all Categories students) (class I – VIII) (2000-01 to 2008-09)



Source: Statistics of School Education, 2007-08, MHRD, GoI; Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2011, MHRD, GoI.

The above statistics of school education revealed that the drop out % of all categories of the students in elementary education was found to more than 42.3% throughout the duration of the report.

Discussions

In 1994, United States passed School-to-work Opportunities Act to provision services to prepare the students from kindergarten to the grade 12 for after schooling employment. The above act was aimed for thousands of students who were not planning for college, which couldn't be successful mainly due to lack of employer, parents and teacher involvement though they have some finest university training in the world, they lack educational preparedness for the enter workforce immediately after high school (Cindy, 2005).

In 2014, the govt. of India took an initiative in form of 'skill India program'. The govt. and the media reports considered it as one of most ambitious program of the government of Indian. A separate ministry 'Ministry for Skill Development' were started to look after the affairs related to skill development. This initiative is similar to the School-to-work Opportunities Act of USA. The result of both the programs is similar. The skill development program couldn't fulfill its objectives in last 4 years. The very basic question emerges that despite a huge investment and

priorities why the program couldn't been successful. The present study tries to answer some of the potential factors detrimental to the success of the skill India program.

The GOI Report (2011) of the Working Group on Employment, Planning & Policy for 12 five year plan reported a negative trend between education and unemployment. It reports that unemployment % increases with increase in educational attainment besides non-participation in the labor market. About 67% of the Indian population is engaged in unorganized sector. Success of any educational program it is required to be converted into employment or it must be able to generate employment. However, these findings reveals ineffectiveness of govt. initiative.

Although in the process of career development of Indian school students parents and teachers' play a very important role, they have been grossly ignored by the policy decision makers. Finding of presents study revealed that family, societies, teacher are the major source of career related information to the Indian school students. In order to make a well informed career decisions, it is very important that these sources of career related information are required be prepared well to take such challenging task. The Statistics of School Education reports that though the literacy in Indian have increased significantly but the dropout of the students at elementary education are almost equal to those who continue their high schooling and there too the dropout percentage are considerably high. Govt. policies are still focusing on increasing the literacy but not education. Further, in absence of quality education to the large number of people specially of lower economical strata which consist of about 70% of the Indian population, lack of proper career related counseling and guidance and lack of proper training to the teachers appears to be the serious concerns over the entire career related decision making process to the Indian students and the entire career development program. Further, while interacting with teachers of the various government and private schools, we noticed their apprehensions to discuss on the question whether they are imparted with the career related information and training. Therefore concerned govt. agencies involved in policy decision making were approached to gather the information / data. It yield no result and hence RTI (right to information under RTI Act-2005) request were made to the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Labor and Employment and Ministry of Skill Development of the Govt. of India. It was quite interesting to learn that even public information officers of these ministries are not aware of the function of their office, as these RTI requests were forwarded from one office to another office and one ministry to other ministries with a note that either the matter is not concerned with their office or nil information. Further, a very little information was available on internet regarding career development related training program in India. The data indicated lack of initiative at policy making level. The information gives a reason to conclude that the major sources of career related information to the Indian school students are not prepared well for these responsibilities.

Further, analyzing the other sources of career related information i.e. television, radio and news paper (15.33%), internet and social media (15.26%). It appears that most of the contents on television, radio and news paper are also published with an intension of commerciality and advisement. On further analysis of the data the participants of this study reported that most of the information on television are available in form of tv serials and tv commercials, thus most of the time they gives an inflated picture, leading to the state of confusion and indecision. The access to internet and social media to the Indian students are very limited. They report that very few organizations in India provide the details regarding career at their workplace.

To further investigate our research question, a detailed search was made to the NCERT, which is the nodal agency for the government of India for the development of educational policies. On review of the hindered of psychological tests and inventories, most of them are merely an adaptation of test developed in western countries. No information was available indicating an indigenous approach to understand the career development process.

Conclusion

The finding suggests that Indian school students lacks structured career development and guidance program. Clarity and priority is required for the effective execution of skill development program and the education should appears to be converting into employment so that more and more students attracts to towards these initiatives. Further, to ensure the success of these career development initiatives / programs attention is also required to be paid to strengthen teachers and parents with the career decision aid to have a well informed career decisions by Indian students.

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