

CAREER KNOWLEDGE OPTIONS AND GUIDE – A PERSPECTIVE REVISITED

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HYPOTHESIS

SOCIO-ECONOMIC problem of adolescents and youth arises in absence of shared vision, frozen mission, determined goal directed objective, unplanned education, lack of empirical career related data, meaningful emerging job market, mismatch between attitude-aptitude and available job, acquired proficiency and misguided educational pursuits. These lead to underemployment and unemployment. Thus, adolescents and youth, in search of employment, purposeful career and meaningful life, run from pillar to post. Those in the pursuit of higher education, pursuing the same without perspective, identified mission, misguided information, forced options and pre-conceived notions. The most critical problems amongst other include mismatch between skills required to fit in available employable horizon and skill available. Thus emerging critical phenomenon is unprecedented gap between ongoing educational systems, unplanned mushrooming of educational institutions and commercialization of education viz. a viz. needed educated but employable personnel - is an area of concern. This paper attempts to assess the perspective as well ground reality associated with career. It also attempts to suggest if NGOs could play a decisive role in the emerging commercially and dented mushrooming of higher education.

Introduction

This paper unfolds career related issues, associated knowledge, available options and required guidance for a satisfying tomorrow to suit individual's vision, mission and objective for a purposeful career and meaningful life. It further unravels to share perspective, which is financially viable, logistically reachable, financially approachable, socially practical and economically advantageous. The data unfolds as to which strata of society could make best use of such career-education-job perspective, which may be available when educational pursuit is accomplished with. This paper also attempts to share, the kind of available professional career in India and across the Indian Sovereign boundary. It subtly attempts unfolding the very need of career related knowledge, attempt disseminating available career options and sharing the empirical data with students, parents, teachers and career counselors with regard to kind of "mad rush" in offering degrees and diplomas "better than others" and how stinky it smells where neither basic facilities are available nor faculties worth name (Outlook, 2004). The paper further focuses on the very need of in depth empirical research on the subject captioned here in above.

Background

The bubbling Indian youth and children, irrespective of gender, along with respective parents, teachers and career counselors face a dilemma as to which stream of education they opt for. Soon after a student clears standard IX he/she visits a school of choice or a forced school and prefers admission to science

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stream. When one is not successful he/she opts for Commerce and upon failure to get a seat, helplessly settles for Arts. When desired options are not available, it is observed that one wishes to pursue education through correspondence inter-alia distance mode and so on so forth. After standard XII once again dilemma grips them, as the student faces critical choices with regard to the discipline of professional course to pursue with which individual may lead themselves to a satisfying career. Multiple educational options such as engineering, medical, armed forces, merchant navy, fine arts, or any graduation course with or without honors exist. Caught in a maze, the student may convince himself to opt for a BBA, BCom or BCA. They pursue career related study in the institutions of choice or compulsive/forced environment. This is attributable to lack of holistic data, available options, misguided conceptions and empirically validated knowledge. "We know that many engineering college have been opened by people who know nothing about education, but in accordance with the policy of privatizing education, we really cannot stop anyone from opening a college". "Any percentage, no CET (common entrance test), No AIEEE (All India engineering entrance examination) required", Reads an ad of an Engineering College in Punjab which has over half its seats vacant "Candidates with less than 40 per cent marks in class XII are getting admission to engineering courses (Outlook, 2004). More so in case one wants to spend money and wish to buy class 12th pass certificate is possible to obtain "in case they wish to pass class 10th or 12th one need not to spent much. He should have between Rs.5000/- to Rs10000/- and simply remaining at home admission is ensured. He will know the syllabus and need not worry or study and will get guarantee to clear the examination and obtain certificate" (Nav Bharat Times, 2004).

May as it be, another factor, bothering students and parents alike is the course fees, allied and associated expenditure. This too is due to lack of knowledge as well available information. As of now, institutions provide an undergraduate or post-graduate degree or diploma seeking Rs.15=0000/- to Rs.10 lacks per annum as fee excluding boarding, lodging, transport and associated expenses for an Indian degree or diploma. Worst, no comprehensive knowledge is available as to which degree or diploma is worth the salt and whether it is marketable and sellable for a meaningful career pursuit. Engineering discipline is no exception. In the medical discipline like BBS and MBBS the fees range from 20,000/- to Rs. 35 lacks (without valid money receipt). What is most disturbing and disgraceful is that today's prospective student, parents as well so teachers are confused by reading and appreciating the ranking systems which attempts to rank educational institutions without bringing them at par on defined and comparable parameter; which lacks scientific explanations.

Mushrooming of educational institutions with the added dilemma of dual degree from some unknown university of some developed country's counselors visiting five star hotels at regular intervals and continued appearance in media to share pragmatic career based knowledge with an attempt to attract students must be appreciated in length and breath to the extent required. The shared perspective appearing in media on specified educational institutions be taken with pinch of salt if so called career guide, councilors and such outfits really mean what they advised and if the advise rendered is based on empirical data and is practical to validate. "Some cash strapped institutions are awarding degrees to students who should be failed has raised the question whether British university degrees are reliable measures of their recipients' academic destination". "the 'degree for sale' scandal stretches from the prestigious colleges to the former polytechnics and involves undergraduate and post-graduate degrees". "Even some Oxford colleges have, it is alleged, become so desperate for funds that "they climbed aboard the graduate-student bandwagon" and it further says that "nigh on impossible to fail a master's degree, regardless of the quality of the student" (Hindustan Times, 2004).

The paradox between growing unemployment and lack of awareness about career options is the larger issue which drive young adults towards high-risk behavior. Adolescents, who are synonymously addressed as young adults are often led into vocations and careers unrelated to their aptitude and suitability (Employment News, 2004). Lack of awareness about new avenues, areas for employment, parental and

societal pressure specifically with regard to traditional careers like engineering, medicine, teaching have been having an adverse impact on the aspirations of the youth (Employment News, 2004). There is almost a complete lack of career guidance to adolescents and their parents alike. Where are therefore we leading when illiteracy eradication project is through and it poses a question “all is considered as literate, so what”? Are they employable? The personalities, education, career orientation, achievements, habits and values imbibed during this period are the ones that linger with them through adulthood. Among factors available proper career guidance and counseling for choosing the right employment opportunity is the most critical path which one is looking for direction. It is a prelude to understand present scenario, measure the ground realities and draw a “perspective” so as to march towards holistic and sustainable constituency drawl and constructively work in the stated direction to attain stated objective. Merely eradicating illiteracy, making youth as literate and educated is adding problem rather than solving the same if it is not tailor-made and “educated youth is made as employable job-seeker, any educational endeavor may remain a far cry whether education remains as a state controlled activities or it is privatized.

It must be ensured “the mission of education by the central and state government as a joint venture is the foundation to ensure the creation of enlightened citizens set to make India prosperous, happy and strong”, the President said in his address on the eve of 58th Independence Day”. “Be it examination reforms that include renewal of the evaluation system and entrance tests, reduction of dropouts, standardization of teaching and inequality of access to educational resources, Kalam came up with innovative ideas to set the rot right” (Hindustan Times, 2004). The rot in educational system is so deep rooted, be it state owned system or private institutions it hardly makes difference. Both have equally failed to provide much needed in put rather than add on mushrooming of private educational system. President’s call to clinch the rot is timed well as from Punjab when we traveled to down south we learnt that “Karnataka is home to a large number of medical and engineering college. That many of them are run by politicians, both ruling and opposition” “for admission into these colleges through a well-oiled, fool-proof government-run Common Entrance Test”. It is observed, “admission process has been inordinately delayed on the question of seat sharing issues. “Does the government, or for that matter college management, realize the harm they are doing?” (Hindustan Times, 2004) Around Delhi, in upcoming modern town like Greater Noida where number of private Institutions in the field of higher education mushroomed offering any and every kind of degrees and diplomas are under the “grip of education mafia” (Nav Bharat Times, 2004).

Semantic Survey

Under the background, we conducted semantic survey in Delhi and NCR of Delhi to find out students perception about self, what is his vision, mission and object as well expectations from the course they are pursuing. The question ranging related current on goings, educational systems and its relevance in the life were also put to. The sample is drawn from the category of students/Job seekers and job hoppers. The respondents belongs to State of Bihar, Orissa, Haryana, Kerala, west Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, and Punjab. The survey conducted is also aimed at finding out reasons behind the diminishing rate of employable educated youth despite thousands of opening appearing in various job portals, consultancy services, placement outfits, newspaper, internet and including ways to attract job seekers. Job seekers do walk in to attend ‘walk in interviews’ however are unable to get through the selection process? One of the CEO of a great BPO outfit commented that “out of every hundred job seekers appears for walk in interviews, only four makes it as success story”, “simply they do not match the industry requirement”.

Findings

- 1) Out of 450 samples surveyed 99.9% did not know as to what the career vision is all about whereas 99% is at loss when a direct question was put as to what is the mission of their life. And 98% student and job seekers did not know what the career objective is all about.

- 2) Out of 450 samples surveyed only 3% could confirm that what they are pursuing is precisely by choice and 77% confirmed that the situation they are placed in, is by accident and not as was planned and envisaged whereas 20% did not know what answer to offer.
- 3) Out of 436 samples 94% stated that the career they are pursuing with is chosen or forced upon them either by parents or guardian. They confided in that the situation they are placed in is certainly not what they wanted as well aspired.
- 4) Out of 443 respondents 95% revealed they knew that they hardly found themselves in a position to choose among available options neither it they are aware with regard to source from which they educate self on the subject.
- 5) Out of 428 respondents 89% disclosed that the industry requirement has changed drastically which have made the knowledge and skill redundant for getting a job and pursue career they love to.
- 6) Out of 450 respondents, 85% of them are not aware of the kind of employment options currently available neither they know Industries future requirement. Thus they do not know as to what preparation they do and in which specific discipline as well stream they pursue career.
- 7) When asked about emerging job market 93% out of 423 respondents appeared dejected to take up job in call center. However, when confronted with that there is no call center worth name exists, they neither knew about it nor they have any concept with regard to emerging Business Process Organization (BPO)' need. They are also not aware as to what are the discipline/job specification available in BPO.
- 8) Out of 194 males and 297 females, 92% males and 82% females revealed that they lack in either knowledge required or skill related with the practical aspects of the line they have chosen.
- 9) The study reveals that 72% out of 437 respondents feels that they are unable to get through any as they lack in communication skills. During interview 357 respondents revealed that they walked in to attend interview in BOP industry, however only 9 could clear final interview while 26 was through up to third level and others were routed out in first and second round itself. The major hurdle faced is accent neutralization, spoken English, fluency and regional influences and so on so forth.
- 10) Out of 420 respondents surveyed 219 are under the impression that the right education demands exorbitant financial commitment where as most of such Institutions are not worth salt to pursue educational pursuits with them.
- 11) It was revealed that 93% out of 448 respondents lack confidence to get through selection processes for the job they aspired most despite meeting educational criteria. They know that they are educated however not employable.
- 12) Out of 397, 82% respondents did not know where to go for getting the information about the career and employment options emerging in the coming time period.
- 13) It was learnt that 78% out of 412 confided that they lack decision-making power to go for right career and employment depending upon his/her ability, interest, knowledge and skill.
- 14) We visited those school boys who passed out class 12th and those appearing a very specific question as to which career discipline they wish to pursue, out of 670 participants 52% revealed that they wish to pursue career in engineering and 83% out of them stated that they wish to acquire management degree thereafter. However, 11% desires to opt for medical discipline irrespective of college, location as well reputation whereas 19% wish to enter into IT career as they consider software development would provide them unprecedented growth while most of them could not reveal as to what software development really means. However 8% desired to pursue management courses and remaining 10% did not know as to what they are doing – why they are doing.

- 15) 667 class 12th students made astonishing revelations. Out of them 87% respondents are uncertain or lack direction about career knowledge and employment opportunities, methodology involved in identifying those related options available in the event of failure to get most aspired one.
- 16) Out of 433 respondents 82% shared that there is need of authenticated knowledge about career, someone to share available options and provide them appropriate and structured guidance on continued basis.

Insight

The semantic survey provided an insight to Manushuo-Uthan. It undertook journey and examine possibility to develop a perspective so as to take up issues related with career, education and employability. Also examine possible steps and come out with proposed process to disseminate the result, concern is shared, road map to success is carved out and direction is provided. Thus, Manushuo-Uthan ventured through the "Career Knowledge – Options and Guide" project to visit institutions/ colleges / schools/ organizations/ society/ group of individuals, by invitation, to share research based career knowledge, provide multiple options and guide the stake holders to shed the possible cloud of dilemma. It is frightening to visit the growth of educational institutions, yet availability of employable personnel remains a far cry. Some data below is a factor, which requires immediate attention, which calls for empirical study:

Glaring Revelations:

- Between year 1950-51 and 2001-02 general and professional education colleges increased 4 and 12 time respectively.
- Number of colleges for general education-8737(2001-02)
- Number of colleges for professional education -2409 (2001-02)
- Between 1950-51 and 2002-03 number of universities increased by 13 times.
- Universities /Deemed universities/Institutes 350 - 2003.
- There are other universities in Delhi namely Delhi Hamdard University, GGS Indraprastha University, Jamia Millia Islamia University and JNU offering the similar courses as that of Delhi University.
- There are over 80 management institutions in and around Delhi.
- There are satellite campuses but no satellite is in place.
- Fee structure for management courses ranges from Rs.12000/- per annum to Rs.10 lacks per annum.
- The population of youth between 15 to 24 years amounts to 200 million.
- On the career front there are innumerable options, which include non-traditional and frontier areas including Sports, Advertising, Civil Aviation, Designing, Security, Navy, Air force, BSF, ITBP, CISF, CRPF, Railways, Banking, Insurance, Fashion, Vocation and many more.
- The recent Indian "National Sample Survey 2000" makes glaring revelations on the subject. It shows that 50% of the world illiterates' stay in India and an estimate of 24 % children in the 6-14 age groups do not attend school.

The Career Options

It is unfortunate that majority prospective student prefers to pursue career predominately in four disciplines viz. engineering, medical, management or IT related field. It is observed that number of career related options as well products available are many, ambiguous as well confusing compared to

those who could be absorbed for a meaningful career pursuit. The other disturbing revelation is that most of educated youth and job seeker available are either not employable or simply lack knowledge what is needed by the prospective employer. In order to deal with jam some of the emerging discipline where demand is more compared to product available in alphabetical order being illustrative and not exhaustive is placed herein below:

Advertising	Environmental Science	Merchant Navy
Agriculture	Fashion and Clothing	Navy
Air Force	Film Making	Nursing
Anthropology	Food Processing Industry	Ocean Science an technology
Archaeology	Footwear Technology	Paramedical Services
Architecture	Geology	Paramilitary Services
Army	/Geophysics	Pharmacy
Banking	Home Science	Photography
Biotechnology	Hotel Industry	Physics and Allied Fields
Chartered Accountancy	Information Technology	Plastic Industry
Chartered Financial -Analyst	Insurance and Actuarial	Psychology
Chemical Industry	Journalism	Radio and Television Broadcasting
Civil Aviation	Languages	Social Work
Civil Services	Law	Sports
Coast Guard	Leather Technology	Teaching
Company Secretary	Library and Information Science	Textile Industry
Construction	Management	Travel and Tourism
Cost Accountancy	Mathematics Statistics	Veterinary Science
Engineering	Medicine	

Due to lack of knowledge as well perspective despite educated today's job seekers are not employable. A daily wager is earning more compare to many engineering, management and IT graduate and postgraduates.

A Perspective

It has been observed that the stakeholders are lost in the web of meaningful career and purposeful life. During semantic survey the questions put with regard to career and their appreciation the following perspective emerged.

What is career?

- Is a meaningful life.
- Fulfillment of goal.
- Objective aspirations
- Way of life
- Accomplishment
- Need fulfillment
- Sustained satisfaction

The question was tailor made to identify as to what precisely the stakeholders means about career. The mirror reflection revealed that the career which could motivate them, they are sentimentally attached with the job they are performing where their feelings are given due weightage and respective emotional

involvement is valued. The four aspects, which are important for a meaningful career emerged, are:

- Motivation
- Sentiment
- Feelings
- Emotions

When direct questions were put related with career and accomplishment of expectation what was revealed is fulfillment of personal desire, what one wanted he got it, this was around his wish and is in fulfillment of his personal need. Thus, the four components emerged, which are:

- Desire
- Want
- Wish
- Need

During semantic survey the samples were subjected to identify their priority as well what factors do they consider important component for a meaningful career and purposeful life. What came to light is that most of them look for career either for economic or for commercial considerations, however quite revealing was 3% are eager to opt for politically motivated career to pursue with while 9% expressed satisfaction in case they get job in social/NGO sector? Most astonishing revelations made by 0.6% sample that in case some one pay them good amount of salary they do not mind to serve them life long as bonded employee whereas 3% are prepared to sacrifice for devotional pursuit, saintly vocation and are willing to surrender to those whom they believe has done wonders. The field emerged are:

- Economic
- Commercial
- Political
- Social
- Bonded
- Sacrificial
 - ✓ Devotional
 - ✓ Saintly
 - ✓ Surrender

Knowledge

During the survey conducted when the samples were subjected to dwell upon if they have empirical data related to the career they are pursuing or wish to pursue, what they could achieve till now is by accident or choice and what they are doing is self directed recourse or are pursuing on such rendered advice which have no base. It was astonishing to appreciate that most of the samples were pursuing career they were/are is without any missionary objective and visionary imagination. 78% of the samples were found to be under dilemma despite mid-way of their studies and 98% of those going through dilemma were apprehensive in case they would be able to pursue the meaningful career despite obtaining degree or diplomas. The survey further revealed the paradox, which is tabulated below. The study also revealed that the students lack the right perspective and information, and whatever little they know is

either wrong or not available at the right place/do not exist. The authenticity and validity of the information is also questionable. What they lack and going through is placed below:

- Mission
- Vision
- The dilemma
- apprehensions
- paradox
- perspective
- information –
 - Informed with empirical data
 - Reality
 - Availability
 - Authentic
 - Factual
 - Validated

The career path chosen by the individuals depends upon availability of the information which is subjected to above anomalies. The persons having professional degrees or diplomas like Doctors, C.A.'s, C.S's prefer to go for personal research and study. Others with entrepreneur background go for setting up their own businesses/join the family business or inherit the same. Others go in to service sector so as to earn livelihood or economically commercial pursuit. There are a few who join social service or chose for service in the name of God without personal bias. The career path, which was put to the respondents, summarized as under:

- Career Path
 - Profession
 - Business
 - Vocation
 - Service
 - In the name of God
 - To the society
 - Government Economic
 - Private Commercial

It was understood that 91% respondents are devoid of the basic knowledge with regard to the job openings and related methods of entering into those organizations. Manushuo-Uthan plans to enlighten the stakeholders with regard to openings in the employable organizations. The system they adopt, the processes involved and methodology envisaged is also planned to be placed in position. A fundamental question of openings vis-à-vis. size of the organizations put before respondents were.

- OPENINGS
 - Large
 - Medium Large
 - Medium
 - Small
 - Social
 - Personal
 - Family
 - Individual

Manushuo_uthan also wish to share with stakeholder's career knowledge available options and guide them on the following parameters.

- PERSPECTIVE
- KNOWLEDGE
- INFORMATION
- AWARENESS
- CLARITY
- DESIRE
- WILL
- SPEED

Conclusion

The semantic survey is a revelation that stakeholder are at a loss and finds themselves at the cross road of choosing educational pursuit. Despite being educated most of them are not employable. What ails the system can be further supported through empirical study. However, in a humble way a beginning has to be made when the meaningful education and purposeful life is properly woven educational system. Manushuo-Uthan in the cause of sustainable human development is committed to pursue the project to its logical conclusion. It is also committed to unravel that illiterate to become literate is a journey, however to make the literate as educated and convert them to become knowledgeable is a pursuit. Convert those knowledgeable as employable and inculcate in them a sense of wisdom aimed at sustainable educational endeavors is the mission.

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