

# Career Aspirations of Secondary School Students

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## ABSTRACT

Students' career aspirations at secondary level are crucial determinants of their future career paths; therefore, this paper aimed at exploring the career aspirations of secondary schools' students, and formulating a plan of action for career guidance in secondary schools. Career is vital to any individual as career selection has a far reaching influence on the individual in terms of lifestyle, reputation, earning, security and job satisfaction. In the present global system, where individuals are engaged in rats' race in every walk of life, the 'career' schema starts developing early in life, in the pattern of career aspirations. Career aspiration is the desire, hope, ambition, orientation or the inclination towards a particular career that individuals see themselves following for lifetime. In India, secondary education is very essential component of the education system. It is widely recognized to provide the excellent setting to prepare adolescents, for healthy and productive adult lives, including participation in social, political, and economic domains. The paper also explores the various craved career aspirations of the secondary school system.

## I. INTRODUCTION

"Career" is a word that often causes quivers of excitement, aspirations, needs, fears and confusions in the mind of any adolescent. After all, who does not desire a good career? According to Beatrice (2010), "a career is an indispensable factor in the life of an individual". It may be defined as the progress and actions taken by an individual throughout a lifetime (Olaosebikan & Olusakin, 2014). Career is crucial to any individual as career selection has a far reaching impact on the individual in terms of lifestyle, status, income, security and job satisfaction (Beatrice, 2010). In the

present global system, where individuals are constantly engaged in rats' race, the career schema starts developing early in life, in the pattern of career aspirations. Career aspiration is the desire, hope, ambition, orientation or the inclination towards a particular career that individuals see themselves following for lifetime. Career aspirations refer to an individual's expressed career-related goals or intentions and also include motivational components (Silvia, 2001). According to Gottfredson's theory (2001) most young people develop a cognitive map of occupations that arrays various jobs and occupations according to sex and prestige and, within that array, according to field of work. Aspirations represent a person's orientation towards specific goals and can be affected by gender, socio economic status and family support (Domenico & Jones, 2007). The secondary school education in India constitutes of two years of schooling - the 9th grade and the 10th grade. The age of the students in secondary school usually ranges from 13 years to 17 years, that is, the teenage or the adolescent period. Secondary education assists as a link between the elementary and higher education and apart from leveling the roots of education among students, it is instrumental in shaping and directing the life of the students towards a bright future (Chaudhari, 2016). Therefore, secondary education is very vital. It is widely believed to provide the excellent setting to prepare adolescents, for healthy and productive adult lives, including participation in social, political, and economic domains (Jacob & Lehner, 2011). Or we can say that, secondary school gives the student a broader scope and perspective to formulate into a wholesome and productive individual. In the present education scenario a number of boards of school education exist. Every board of school education claims of instructing the

students in the best possible way to fulfill the demands of the future. It is often leads parents to confusion in deciding the best board of school education for their child.

Career aspiration play a significant role in shaping an individual's study attitude. It boosts students academic motivation leading to enriched student's academic excellence. Career aspirations can be contextualized from both the present and future perspectives. In this respect, career aspiration assists students to recognise and set goals for the future, while being inspired and actively involved in the present study behavior toward those goals. Consequently, the construct of career aspirations is unique in that it combines the motivational components of the present (inspiration) with the future (ambitions) hence warrant studying. According to Kisilu, Kimani and Kombo (2012), career aspiration are the desires, dreams, ambitions, career thoughts by young individuals that inspire what they anticipate to study and engage in the world of work. According to investigations, if better career aspirations are shaped at school level, the better the performance and likelihoods of achieving the same (Nyugen & Blomberg, 2014; Nabil, 2015; Gorard, See & Davies, 2012; Rose & Baird, 2013; Brown, Launder & Ashton, 2010; Pugh, 2017). A recent study conducted by Dar (2019) conveyed that 17.83% of youths revealed low career aspirations while 58.33% falls in moderate level of career aspirations. This is despite the fact that the reality of unstable and changing job market of the 21st century is increasingly demanding for a highly educated and inspired workforce. Consequently, Peila Shuster (2017) declares that students in the 21st century, to a larger extent than before are likely to face their life courses with unclear or blurred career-life due to uncertain academic performance. It is clarified that adolescents who feel despondent and foresee a negative future may be more likely to participate in risky behaviors while those who perceive a greater sense of career self-efficacy might feel better equipped to make healthier choices and evade risky behaviors, even in the face of peer pressure (Bandura, 1977). Academic performance therefore plays an significant function in producing the best quality graduates who are accountable for a country's economic and social development (Jibeem & Khan, 2016; Brackett, Divecha, & Stern, 2015). Contemporary conditions therefore reveal the need for special spotlight to student's career aspiration which can energize individuals to better educational consequences. According to Super's (1990) theory of career development, high school students are at the exploration stage of career

development which encompasses crystallizing and specifying their occupational favorites while also making preliminary decisions about their career choices. Subsequently, Career development forms an necessary part of a learner's overall development, predominantly during adolescence (12-20 years). This is when significant biological, cognitive, social and emotional changes take place (Robinson & Diale, 2017). According to McDaniel (2016), secondary school's students are in adolescence stage which is critical time in the life path when individuals develop career expectations which influence later educational and occupational accomplishment in adulthood. Additional studies in developed countries have proven that career aspirations are mostly inculcated at secondary school level and they influence academic performance (Nabil, 2015; Nyugen & Blomberg 2014; Erikson, 1959). It is this early career thoughts that are fundamentally translated into career aspirations and develop work-related identity that help in selecting a future career. Counselling is one of the essential services for students in school. counselling is a professional service that focuses on the 'human' touch. As a professional service, counseling comprise of a wide selection of services and activities to help people prevent adversities, concentrate on their overall development and remedy existing concerns (Schmidt, 1993).

### **Career Development**

Career choice is a description of oneself into the world of work having identified the distinct occupation that one could perform best in relation to one's existing personality traits. It involves the person's creation of a career pattern, decision-making style, integration of life roles, values expression, and life-role self concepts (Herr & Cramer, 1996). Holland's theory maintains that in selecting a career, people search for atmosphere that will let them use their skills and abilities, and express their attitudes and values. Behaviour is determined by an interaction between personality and environment. This approach instruct that people are attracted to a given career that has similar qualities to their peculiar personalities and other background variables (Holland, 1992). Holland's perspective give prominence to the accuracy of self-knowledge and career information as necessary prerequisites for career decision making. The individual's interest paves way to the understanding of how individuals differ in personality, interest, and behaviors (Spokane, 1996). Interests are multifarious in nature and express our personality, style,

preferences, values and self-efficacy. Hence, people execute better when these variables are consistent with that of the chosen working environment.

#### **Student and Carrier Guidance Participation**

Participation in career guidance activities in school furnish students with necessary awareness, knowledge and skills required in the world of work. It is a scheme for providing occupational orientation to students to become familiar of what is contained and required in the career of one's choice that match interest and abilities. Occupational orientation is viewed as an important aspect of the career development process; adolescents must identify their interests and abilities, balance them with labour market opportunities and gradually develop an occupational preference (Super, Savickas, & Super 1996). The importance of providing "transition enhancement" assistance has been emphasized in the further education, training or employment of students (Baker 2000). Career guidance participation will help students acquire the knowledge, skills and awareness necessary for effective career development (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004). The relevance of vocational guidance and counselling programmes in satisfying the vocational needs of the students by helping them to explore the range and structure of occupation in the local, state and national levels cannot be underestimated (Manuel & Asuquo, 2009). Students are involved in career guidance for better self-understanding (Hiebert, Collins, & Robinson 2001). The inclusion of students' reaction is a result of recognition that adolescents maybe the best source for identifying their own needs and that including the student's perception could boost the accuracy of the assessment result

#### **Career Information**

Success is more likely when individuals make judgement about what they are to learn in a well-informed manner ;link what they learned to their interests, capacities, aspirations, and are then informed about the existing opportunities to which the learning can guide. Holland's theory emphasises the accuracy of self-knowledge and career information necessary for career decision making (Zunker, 1994). Good quality career information is a significant factor for first-rate career decision making. Career information should include relevant information about education and training opportunities, occupations and their characteristics; labour market supply and demand. Similarly, career information should include occupational implications of educational decisions,

and on the learning pathways that lead to special occupational destinations. Career information is necessary, but not enough for good-quality career decision making unless students have access to the information they need, understand the information, relate it to their personal needs and situation, and then convert it into personal action, with help of professional counselors and participation in career guidance related activities provided in schools.

#### **Importance of career guidance**

Guidance is a necessary term that has a far-reaching impact on individuals' lives. From the cradle to the grave, correct career guidance plays a vital role in constructing the path of life. When it comes to career, we know that we are living in a very competitive era where one has to compete in every sphere of their life to achieve the ultimate goal. In the modern era of globalization, where we have numerous career options, a complete and comprehensive career guidance strategy is the only precise option that will provide you with the desirable goal. With numerous opportunities and options available in our careers, people often get in the dilemma of narrowing down the best option. To conquer this problem, all you need is complete career guidance to enlighten you from your academics' at very beginning stage. Academic career guidance is one of the most significant guidance that students need to nurture their future. The decisions of early student life have a major impact on their career, which is not just prohibited to their academics but have an impact on their social, financial, and personal life. Students are considered as the future of a country, and for a prosperous future, students need correct guidance, especially at an early stage of their academics. The correct guidance by an expert career guidance counselor will enable the students to understand and choose their career options as per their knowledge, skills, interest, and capability.

#### **Career guidance at the stage of secondary education**

India is a very diverse country, and the education system is also very diverse and convoluted. The central education system is followed in all the states, while the states also have their respective state education board. In the ICSE board, ninth-standard students are given the option to choose among the stream of Arts/Humanities, Commerce, Science. Choosing of any stream is very crucial as the students have to appear for their class 10th board examination with the subjects in that stream. In the case of CBSE and many state boards, this stream bifurcation is done after the 10th standard. Hence we see that there is diversity along with options available for the students at the

stage of their secondary education. Now, let's understand how career guidance is important at the early stage of academics. Students preparing for the board exam have a common objective to triumph and succeed in order to obtain the peak in their career. With the exact guidance, the objective can be obtained because such an early stage in academics is considered as the ladder to reach the destination. The guidance not only helps to select the right stream but also helps in understanding its future benefits. The guidance helps the students to get encouraged and not to get distracted while studying.

### **Career guidance at the stage of higher secondary education**

Higher secondary education is a very crucial stage of students' academic careers. After a careful selection of subjects, students need to stay concentrated by avoiding all the distractions. The selection of subjects is very important, and one should conscientiously analyze his strengths and weaknesses before selecting the subjects. Complete guidance by a professional career guidance counselor helps a lot to ease the process. The importance of the counseling is not just restricted to the choosing of the subjects but also provides a complete strategy and execution plan that must be followed by the students. The counselor will provide all the basic information along with creating a positive mindset in the students. Higher secondary education gives a lot of alternatives to the students to select the subjects that are suitable to them as per their interest. One important thing that must be taken into consideration before selecting any career option is that it must have better future options. Choosing a career that does not provide better opportunities in terms of financial and social security will be a bad option. Hence it becomes important for students to get complete career guidance by a professional counselor before selection of career options.

In India, after passing the 10th standard, students have options to choose the subjects that are interesting and fulfill their requirements to achieve their objectives. The list of all streams and their relevant subjects that are available after passing the 10th standard is:

Arts/Humanities: History, Geography, Political Science, English, Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, etc

Commerce: Accountancy, Business Studies, English, Economics, Mathematics, etc

Science: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Computer Application, Statistics, etc

Career guidance for high school students plays a vital role because many students start their

preparations for the different entrance exams during this stage. Clearing these entrance exams is integral to get admission to the topmost colleges of the respective field. The burden of study upsurges straight away because the students need to concentrate on both entrance and board exams. The simultaneous preparation for both exams needs an extensive strategy to deal with the pressure. Here the importance of career guidance emerges, and career counseling by an expert career counselor becomes important.

## **II. CONCLUSION**

Career aspiration assists students to identify and set goals for the future, and being inspired. In India, secondary education is very vital ingredient of the education system. It is widely believed to provide the optimum setting to prepare adolescents, for healthy and productive adult lives, including participation in social, political, and economic domains. The level of students' participation in career guidance activities indicates that counselors need to improve the instruments for providing career guidance in schools to encourage student participation. Teachers, school administrators and policy makers as stakeholders need to improve what is expected towards making school guidance programs successful for the benefit of students, society and the country at large. However, the collaboration among the stakeholders needs to be improved. Stakeholders must join hands to improve the service collectively so as to assist students to make use of their abilities accordingly. The school career counseling should be designed to meet existing need of students. If proper career guidance is provided to the students then their dreams come true.

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