

A STUDY ON THE CAREER PREFERENCES OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR SEX, RURAL-URBAN INHABITATION AND LEVEL OF MEDIA EXPOSURE

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ABSTRACT

An attempt was made in this paper to study the career preferences of undergraduate students in relation to their sex, rural urban inhabitation and level of media exposure. Standardised scale identifying career preferences in ten areas namely Law and Order, Education, Artistic & Designing, Mass Media & Journalism, Commerce & Management, Science & Technology, Defence, Tourism & Hospitality Management, Agriculture and Medicine was administered on 120 undergraduate students selected from six undergraduate colleges of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district of Assam through using stratified random sampling method. For measuring level of media exposure a self structured questionnaire was employed. The collected data were then analysed through using 'Mean', 'sd', 't-test' and 'Pearson's correlation' technique. The findings revealed existence of significant difference between male and female as well as between rural and urban undergraduate students in certain areas of career. The study further showed significant relationship between level of media exposure and some areas of career preference of undergraduate students. The result, in this way will go a long to help parents, teachers, government, counsellors, and media personnel to use their human and material resources in planning and implementing policies to direct students in the path most suitable to them.

KEYWORDS: Career Preference, Media Exposure, Rural-Urban Inhabitation, Sex, Undergraduate Students

INTRODUCTION

Career is a regular occupation or profession in which one is making a living. Career preference is the occupation with the highest positive valence among alternative form of work value. Planning for career is very essential for the peaceful living and quality of life. It provides the basis of the individual's future life, his social recognition and finally contributes in the development of the country through proper utilisation of human resources.

Today, there is a public debate on the problem of unemployment. Unemployment among new graduates is a phenomenon that is found not only in India but also in other countries of the world. Among the other causes, one important causes of unemployment can be considered as the mismatch between market requirements and the employability of graduates that higher education institutions produce. Indian higher education is one of the largest of the world where currently 16 million students are perusing education with a GER of 12% in 2010. India, where more than 50% of the population falls below the age of 25, is now aimed at increasing the GER in higher education at 30% by 2020 which translate into an enrolment of 40 million students in higher education. Thus, in one hand the number of enrolment in higher education in India is growing day by day, while in other hand rate of unemployed graduates is increasing. According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt. of India, out of all university graduates only a meagre 13% are employable. (Soni, Rashmi.,

2012). According to the surveys carried out by NASSCOM and other agencies, more than 70 % of our engineers are not employable. In 2009-2010 fiscal year, the unemployment rate of India is 9.4 %. Further, in Assam workforce participation rates both for males and females are lower than that of the country's rate. A study conducted by Ranjit Borthakur of Balipara Tract and Frontier Foundation predicted that *if unemployment rate in Assam remains unchanged, there will be around 2.5 million unemployed person in Assam in 2022.*

Thus, in the present context of unemployability, choosing career intelligently is of vital importance. Career planning is influenced by so many socio-economic and personality factors like sex, community size, educational level, occupation and income of the parents, parental expectations, place of residence, quality and category of education received, social environment, availability of job opportunities etc.. Availability of knowledge of different types/areas of careers is undoubtedly helpful for the students to be familiar with the emerging professions. Because, quite often it is seen that most of the students are unknown about certain areas of career. Here, the role of mass-media becomes important as it is only way of getting knowledge of the outside social and market world.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Yadav, R. (2000) in his study on the vocational preferences of adolescents in relation to their intelligence and achievement revealed that the highly intelligent students prefer to go to jobs related to the area of Physical Sciences whereas the average and below average intelligence groups did not differ significantly in any of the area. The study further revealed that the level of intelligence influenced the vocational preferences to a great extent, showing that achievement and intelligence had good correlations with the area of physical science and executive jobs.

Esters, Levon T., and Bowen , Blannie E. (2005) in their investigation on factors influencing career choices of urban agricultural education students revealed that the parents and friends are the most influential factor in the choice of career so far the former students are concerned. The study further revealed that the events and experiences reported by former students who chose a career in agriculture focused around several themes which included career opportunities, high school educational experiences, and work experiences. Of the former students who did not choose a career in agriculture, events and experiences cited included having other career interests, a lack of interest in agriculture, and a lack of career opportunities.

Mehta, M., Bajaj, S. and Kumar, V.V. (2006) in their investigation on effects of personality intervention and career intervention programmes on vocational indecision among adolescent boys concluded that the personality intervention programmes were more effective than career intervention programmes in terms of reducing vocational indecision among students.

Another important study undertaken by **Talib, Mansor Abu and Aun, Tan Kit (2009)** to identify the Predictors of Career Indecision among Malaysian Undergraduate Students revealed that female undergraduates with high academic achievement and low occupational information, and vocational identity were more unlikely to have decided on their career.

Creed, Peter A. (2010) surveyed the 506 Australian high school students on career development and personal functioning. The study revealed that the work bound students had the poorest career development and personal functioning, the university students had the highest, whereas the college bound students falling in-between the two groups. The findings further suggested a relationship between career development and personal functioning in high school students.

SARA, Safyanu Shuaibu (2010) made a study on effects of learning styles on career preferences of senior secondary school students in Jigawa state, Nigeria. Here, the author revealed existence of significant sex difference in learning

styles as well as in career preference. The author showed that students' particular learning style greatly affects his choice or preference of one career over the other. The study further revealed that the female students tend to incline to artistic related careers whereas male students select scientific related careers.

Gaikwad, Vaishali., D, Sudeepa., and Madhukumar, Suwarna. (2012) in their study on career preferences and attitude towards the rural health services among the graduating interns of a medical college in Bangalore rural reported that all the interns were aspiring for post-graduation seats; not a single intern wanted to Practice with MBBS degree; only 33 interns (44.00%) would like to serve in rural areas; whereas only 7 (9.33%) interns wanted to settle permanently in rural areas and serve rural people. Thus, the authors concluded that the attitude of interns towards the rural service is not favourable. The foregoing account of the review of related literature has made the researcher clear that although a number of research studies have so far been conducted on career preferences, still there is lacking of some areas specially related to Media Exposure.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present global economic scenario demands one to be very serious in his/ her career planning. In this age of science and technology one should choose right career in accordance with his/her physical as well as mental abilities, potentialities, interests, aptitudes, cognitive structuring, personality make-up and availability of resources to which he belong. Students of higher education should be competent enough to choose their right career. But unfortunately, it is observed that in spite of the existence of individual differences in diversified, most students are choosing his/her career randomly, unintelligently, without analysing the future orientation, psycho-physical potentialities and at the will of the parents which in turn produce unemployed graduates. Today, most of the students in higher education are facing career related problems in the form of either career indecision or wrong decision. In such a situation, identification of most preferred areas of careers and their determining factors becomes very important that will help the parents, teachers, counsellors and policy makers to take appropriate steps so as to prevent any wastage of resources. Therefore, the present study was entitled as "*A Study on the Career Preferences of Undergraduate Students in Relation to their Sex, Rural-Urban Inhabitation and Level of Media Exposure*".

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify and compare the career preferences of rural and urban undergraduate students of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district.
- To identify and compare the career preferences of male and female undergraduate students of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district.
- To examine whether there is significant relationship between career preferences and level of media exposure of undergraduate students of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district.

HYPOTHESES

- Ho-I: There is no significant difference between rural and urban undergraduate students of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district in their career preferences.
- Ho-II: There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district in their career preferences.

- Ho-III: There is no significant correlation between career preferences and level of media exposure of undergraduate students of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district.

METHODOLOGY

The proposed study was conducted under descriptive method.

Population and Sample

The present study aimed at a study of the career preferences of undergraduate students. It was delimited to the undergraduate colleges (having Co-education system) of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district of Assam. Again, with regard to urban colleges, it was delimited to only urban residing students. As such the study included all the urban residing students of urban colleges and all the students of rural colleges irrespective of sex and area/stream of study enrolled in all the undergraduate degree colleges having co-education system of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district as its population.

Sampling was done in two levels. At first six (6) undergraduate colleges were selected through using stratified random sampling method of which three (3) were Rural and three (3) were Urban colleges. In the second stage twenty (20) students from each of the selected colleges of which ten (10) each for male and female were drawn through using stratified random sampling method. Thus the final sample for the study consisted of 120 undergraduate students of which sixty (60) each for male and female as well as for rural and urban.

Data Gathering Tools

- Career Preference Record by Vivek Bhargava and Rajashree Bhargava.

The CPP-BB is a standardized tool which measures career preferences in 10 main areas, these are *Mass Media and Journalism (MMJ)*, *Artistic and Designing (AD)*, *Science and Technology (ScT)*, *Agriculture (AG)*, *Commerce and Management (CM)*, *Medical (M)*, *Defence (D)*, *Tourism and Hospitality Management (TH)*, *Law and Order (LO)*, and *Education (E)*. The possibility of scoring maximum score in each area is 20 and minimum is to be zero.

- Media Exposure Inventory prepared by the Investigators. (Details is given in Appendix-I).

Treatment of Data

As the study is mainly based on examining group performances, comparison between groups and relationship between variables, the statistical technique used for the study were 'mean', 'sd', 't-test', and 'Pearson's Correlation'.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results are presented and discussed in the following heads—

Identification of Career Preferences of Undergraduate Students

Table 1: Mean Scores and Ranking Order of Career Preferences of Undergraduate Students

Areas of Career	Mean	Rank
Law and Order	9.44	I
Education	8.10	II
Artistic & Designing	7.35	III
Mass Media & Journalism	6.75	IV
Commerce & Management	6.23	V
Science & Technology	6.21	VI
Defence	5.86	VII
Tourism & Hospitality Management	5.85	VIII
Agriculture	4.88	IX
Medicine	3.78	X

From the perusal of the table-1, it was found that the most preferred careers of undergraduate students is Law & Order followed by Education and Artistic & Designing; whereas their least preferred area of careers is Medicine followed by Agriculture and Tourism & Hospitality Management. One emerging area of career i.e. Mass Media & Journalism is ranked at fourth place by the undergraduate students.

Identification and Comparison of Career Preferences between Rural and Urban Undergraduate Students

Table 2: Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Each of the Ten Areas of Career of the CPR-BB between Rural and Urban Undergraduate Students

Areas of Career	Rural Group (N=60)			Urban Group (N=60)			t	Significance
	Mean	sd	Ran	Mean	sd	Rank		
Law and Order	8.35	5.29	II	10.53	8.87	I	1.33	NS
Education	9.05	5.11	I	7.12	4.40	V	1.41	NS
Artistic & Designing	6.18	4.16	III	8.53	4.24	II	2.51	.05
Mass Media & Journalism	5.73	4.24	VII	7.78	4.16	III	2.18	.05
Commerce & Management	5.85	4.16	V	6.60	3.79	VI	.84	NS
Science & Technology	5.05	4.47	IX	7.38	4.69	IV	2.27	.05
Defence	5.80	4.55	VI	5.93	4.74	VII	.12	NS
Tourism & Hospitality Manage-	5.95	4.61	IV	5.75	3.80	VIII	.22	NS
Agriculture	5.10	3.89	VIII	4.65	3.73	IX	.53	NS
Medicine	4.05	4.14	X	3.50	4.18	X	.59	NS

N.S.- Not Significant at .05 level

The table-2 showed certain divergence between rural and urban undergraduate students in their career preferences. The most three preferred areas of career of rural students are Education followed by Law & Order and Artistic & Designing; whereas these are Law and Order, Artistic & Designing and Mass Media & Journalism for urban group.

Similarity was observed between the two groups in their least preferred areas of career which is Medicine for both the groups. Agriculture and Education are given higher preference by rural students than their counterparts which is always corroborated by our general observation with people.

Further analysis of the table-2 indicates existence of significant difference between rural and urban groups with respect three areas of career. These are Artistic & Designing, Mass Media & Journalism and Science & Technology.

In the entire three areas urban group scored significantly higher than the rural group. No significant difference was observed between the two groups in other seven areas of career under consideration though in the area of Education the mean score of rural group is much higher than the urban group.

Thus, our first hypothesis stating “*There is no significant difference between rural and urban undergraduate students of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district in their career preferences*” was partly retained and partly rejected. It was rejected at .05 level with regard to the career areas of Artistic & Designing, Mass Media & Journalism and Science & Technology.

But the hypothesis was retained at .05 level with regard to career areas of Law & Order, Education, Commerce & Management, Defence, Tourism & Hospitality Management, Agriculture and Medicine.

Identification and Comparison of Career Preferences between Male and Female Undergraduate Students

Table 3: Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Each of the Ten Areas of Career of the CPR-BB between Male and Female Undergraduate Students

Areas of Career	Male Group (N=60)			Female Group (N=60)			t	Signifi- nifi-
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank		
Law and Order	10.40	8.97	I	8.48	5.18	II	1.18	NS
Education	6.97	5.30	II	9.20	4.12	I	2.08	.05
Artistic & Designing	6.27	4.34	V	8.43	4.10	III	2.28	.05
Mass Media & Journalism	5.60	4.28	VIII	7.90	4.05	IV	2.47	.05
Commerce & Management	6.20	4.35	VI	6.25	3.61	V	.06	NS
Science & Technology	6.62	4.69	III	5.80	4.74	VII	.78	NS
Defence	6.47	4.42	IV	5.25	4.78	VIII	1.19	NS
Tourism & Hospitality Management	5.75	4.82	VII	5.95	3.52	VI	.21	NS
Agriculture	4.78	4.09	IX	4.98	3.53	IX	.23	NS
Medicine	3.40	4.24	X	4.15	4.07	X	.81	NS

N.S. - Not Significant at .05 level

A minute analysis of the findings reported in table-3 showed that male and female undergraduate students vary in their preferences for different areas of career. The areas of career of the male group in the order of preference are—Law & Order, Education, Science & Technology, Defence, Artistic & Designing, Commerce & Management, Tourism & Hospitality Management, Mass Media & Journalism, Agriculture and Medicine.

This order of preference for the female group is Education, Law & Order, Artistic & Designing, Mass Media & Journalism, Commerce & Management, Tourism & Hospitality Management, Science & Technology, Defence, Agriculture and Medicine. Thus, the findings reported by **Sara, Safyanu Shuaibu** stating that female students tend to incline to artistic related careers whereas male students select scientific related careers also goes parallel to the findings of the present study.

The two most preferred areas of career for both the group are Law & Order and Education, though the order of preference differs. Similarity is observed with respect to the two least preferred areas of career which are Medicine and Agriculture for both the groups.

Again table-3 indicates that the two groups differ significantly with respect to three areas of career which are Education, Artistic & Designing and Mass Media & Journalism. In the entire three areas female group scored significantly higher than the male group.

No significant difference was observed between the two groups in other seven areas of career under consideration though in the areas of Law & Order and Defence the male group scored relatively higher than their counterparts. Thus, the second hypothesis "*There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district in their career preferences*" was partly retained.

It was retained at .05 level for seven areas of career namely Law & Order, Commerce & Management, Tourism & Hospitality Management, Science & Technology, Defence, Agriculture and Medicine. But, the hypothesis was rejected at .05 level for the career areas of Education, Artistic & Designing and Mass Media & Journalism.

Relationship between Career Preferences and Level of Media Exposure of Undergraduate Students

Table 4: Coefficient of Correlation between Scores on Each of the Ten Areas of Career of the CPR-BB and Level of Media Exposure of Undergraduate Students

Areas of Career	r-Value	Level of Significance
Law and Order	.150	N.S.
Education	.148	N.S.
Artistic & designing	.269	.01
Mass Media & Journalism	.367	.01
Commerce & Management	.282	.01
Science & Technology	.165	N.S.
Defence	.153	N.S.
Tourism & Hospitality Management	.128	N.S.
Agriculture	.125	N.S.
Medicine	.195	.05

N.S.- Not Significant at .05 level

From table-4 it is clear that the third hypothesis “*There is no significant correlation between career preferences and level of media exposure of undergraduate students of Nagaon sub-division of Nagaon district*” was rejected at .01 level for the career areas of Artistic and Designing, Mass Media & Journalism and Commerce and Management and at .05 level for Medicine. No significant correlation was observed between level of Media Exposure and other six areas of career. Interestingly, all the coefficient of correlation were found to be low but positive which suggested that an increase or decrease in the scores on media exposure corresponds an increase or decrease in the scores in the various areas of career of undergraduate students.

IMPORTANT FINDINGS

- The most three preferred areas of career of rural undergraduate students are Education followed by Law & Order and Artistic & Designing; whereas these are Law and order, Artistic & Designing and Mass Media & Journalism for urban group.
- The least preferred area of career for both rural and urban undergraduate students is Medicine. Agriculture is given more preference by rural students than their counterparts which are always corroborated by our general observation with people.
- Urban undergraduate students are significantly higher than the rural counterparts in the career areas of Artistic & Designing; Mass media & Journalism and Science & Technology. No significant difference was observed in other areas of career between the two groups. Though not significant, rural students had much higher mean score than urban students in the area of Education.
- The first preference of male undergraduate students with respect to the areas of career is Law & Order which is Education for female students. Education and Science & Technology were ranked at second and third position respectively by male students which are Law & Order and Artistic and Designing for female groups.
- The least preferred area of career for both male and female undergraduate students is Medicine followed by Agriculture. With respect to the areas of Law & Order and Defence male students scored higher than their counterparts.

- There is significant difference between male and female undergraduate students with respect to career of Education, Artistic & Designing and Mass Media & Journalism, in all of which female students are significantly higher than male students. No significant difference was found between the two groups in other seven areas under consideration
- Level of media exposure is significantly (positively) correlated with career areas of Artistic and Designing, Mass Media & Journalism, Commerce & Management and medicine. It has no significant correlation with other six areas of career.

CONCLUSIONS

Today, most of the students in higher education are facing career related problems in the form of either career indecision or wrong decision. The findings of the present study identified the most preferred career areas of undergraduate students. Thus, the investigation yielded a great guide for the teachers, parents and counsellors in helping the students to make right choices considering their talents and abilities. The study further revealed a concern for the mass-media in developing strategies to educate the society in emerging issues and prospects of the outside job and social market, as it is found that level of media exposure is significantly correlated with certain areas of career. The present study will go of a long way in checking the problem of wrong allocation of our time, money and energy.

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APPENDICES

(Media Exposure Inventory)

The following items will be taken into consideration to measure the level of Media Exposure of the undergraduate students----

- i. News Paper / Magazine reading,
- ii. News Paper / Magazine subscriptions,
- ii. Radio / T.V. enjoyment,
- iv. Film going, and
- iii. Using Internet

Responsive Categories and Scores Assigned to Each Item Used in Media Exposure Index

S. No.	Item	Scores Assigned			
		0	1	2	3
1	News Paper / Magazine Reading	Nil	Rarely	occasionally	Regularly
2	News Paper / Magazine Subscriptions	Nil	Rarely	occasionally	Regularly
3	Radio / T.V. Enjoyment	Nil	Rarely	occasionally	Regularly
4	Participation in Social Activities	Nil	Rarely	occasionally	Regularly
5	Using Internet	Nil	Rarely	occasionally	Regularly

The responses on the above five items will be arranged into a Rating Scale. The total score will indicate the overall Level of Media Exposure of a respondent.

