

2014

ISSN 2278-5655

Aarhat Multidisciplinary International Education Research Journal (AMIERJ)

(Bi-Monthly)

Peer-Reviewed Journal

Impact factor:0.948

Aug-Sep Issues

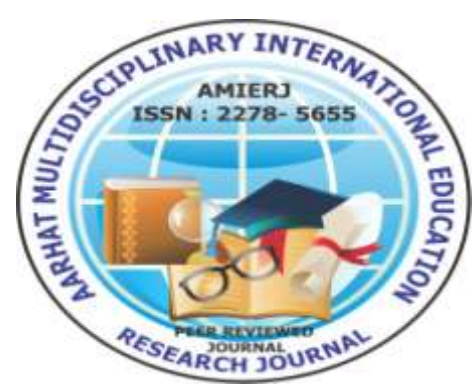
Chief-Editor

Ubale Amol Baban

PEER-REVIEWED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL



[Editorial/Head Office: 108, Gokuldham Society, Dr.Ambedkar chowk, Near
TV Towar,Badlapur, MS



STUDY OF CAREER DECISION MAKING AMONG GIRL STUDENTS OF EDUCATIONALLY BACKWARD BLOCKS OF PUNJAB

Education

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Abstract:

Career decisions are among the most important decisions a person has to make. Career choices have important and long-lasting consequences for the individual's overall well-being, health and financial situation. But career decision-making encompasses a large number of influences that are related to making choices about education, training, jobs and careers. The present study is an endeavour to assess the career decision making among the girl students belonging to schedule caste, backward class and general category of educationally backward blocks of Bathinda district in Punjab. The results highlighted that majority of the girl students of 10th class have no idea about career decision making. The major reasons of career indecision making are lack of guidance at home and school; parent's illiteracy; teachers insensitivity towards guidance; poverty; social pressures; no self assessment experience for students in school; no exposure to various new professions; and need of expert guidance.

Keywords: *Career Decision Making; and Educationally Backward Blocks.*

1.0. Introduction:

Decision means to make a selection between some choices in a condition of doubt to solve a particular dilemma. According to Stoner (2011) "decision making is the process of identifying and selecting a course of action to solve a specific problem". The term career



decision making means to make a decision related to a career. Career decision cannot be made overnight, it is a lifelong process. It is all about exploring and experiencing the world of career. It is also about understanding abilities, interests, skills, and values and combining these to create a meaningful framework for life. Choosing one's career depends on what one wants to do. It is not an easy task due to the complex and fluid character of the world of work; it involves not one decision, but a large number of decisions over a considerable period of time. Hence, a person's life may be seen as a string of career decisions, reflecting individual's groping for an ideal fit between self and work (Bordin, 1984). Career decision is the certainty of an individual about his/her career decision, where certainty relates to the extent an individual convinced that one can make decision (Osipow, Carney, Winer, Yanico & Koschier, 1987). There is also a concept of career indecision which refers to an individual's inability to make a decision for the profession (about their career) that he/she is striving for. Gati , Krausz and Osipow (1996) defined career indecisiveness as difficulties that an individual has in career decision making.

Making a career decision is a complex process as there are often many potential alternatives to select from considerable amount of information available about each alternative and many factors to consider while making a choice. The information that is available is generally reliable but can also be false or inconsistent. Moreover, there is a great deal of risk and uncertainty about the extent to which the chosen career path will fit a person's aspirations, preferences and capabilities over the years. The complexity of the process of career decision-making makes it difficult for most people to take the best decision, which is to make a well-informed decision that best helps them to achieve their goals.

Moreover, traditionally-bounded career paths have shifted towards less defined and predictable career pathways and to greater uncertainty and flexibility. In this new world of work, the need to change jobs or occupations quite frequently over one's career life has become the rule rather than the exception. Careers are now often seen as a sequence of various work roles rather than moving gradually upwards within a hierarchical structure (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996).



Career decision-making does not occur in a vacuum as it is dependent upon the various social, psychological and emotional factors. Individuals from different cultural backgrounds should be expected to differ in the expectations, aspirations, and values they bring to the career development process, they encounter different problems and barriers which they must resolve, and they differ in their attitudes about career development (Tinsley, 1994).

Krumboltz's (1996) theory of career decision making attempts to explain how factors including gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status influence the process of making a career decision:

- genetic endowment and special abilities (i.e. race, gender, and intelligence);
- environmental conditions and events including job opportunities, social policies, and educational systems;
- learning experiences consisting of both instrumental learning that occurs when an individual acts on the environment to produce certain consequences and associative learning that occurs when individual learns by reacting to external stimuli, observing models, or pairing two events in time or location; and
- task approach skills including performance standards, values, and work habits (Isaacson & Brown, 1997).

So, career decision making includes physical, cognitive and emotional development. There are lots of factors which influence career decision making process. These are generally classified as psychological and social factors. The most important feature which affects vocational development is skill that individual has. However development of these skills can only be possible with environment support. If one was permitted to suggest only a single variable to predict an individual's occupational status, it surely would be the socioeconomic status (SES) of that individual's family. As a measurement construct, SES usually incorporates one or more of the following: parents' educational attainment and occupational status, family income. All of these factors, as well as such corresponding variables as values, opportunities, and parental



encouragement, serve to enhance or limit an individual's potential vocational choice (Schoenberg et. al., 1984).

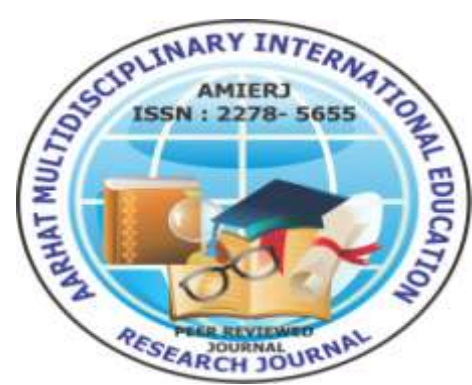
1.1. Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB) :

EBB means a block where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average and the gender gap is above the national average. Under Sarva - Shiksha - Abhiyaan a scheme named The National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) is being implemented in educationally backward blocks with a focussed intervention of Government of India, to reach the “Hardest to Reach” girls, especially those not in school. Launched in July 2003, it is an important component of SSA, which provides additional support for enhancing girl’s education over and above the investments for girl’s education through normal SSA interventions. About 3272 educationally backward blocks are covered under the Scheme in the 24 states including Punjab. All Educationally Backward Blocks have been covered under NPEGEL. In Punjab, in Bathinda district there are three educational blocks which are declared educationally backward. In Rashyriya Madhmik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RMSA), guidance and counseling, both as an approach and as a service, is an important strategy for promoting universalisation of Secondary Education in terms of its pro-active as well as remedial role. Guidance and Counseling services have an objective for promoting students’ retention and better scholastic performance in curricular areas, facilitating adjustment and career development of students, developing right attitudes towards studies, self, work and others.

The objective of the present research is to assess the career decision of girls in the educationally backward blocks about their career choices and up to what extent the interventions of various Govt. schemes helped them to make the career choice decisions. The other objective is to ascertain the influences of family, social environment and media on career decision making of girls.

2.0. Hypotheses of the Study:

There is no significant difference in the dimmension of career decidedness of career



decision making among SC, BC and General category secondary school girl students of educationally backward blocks.

- There is no significant difference in the dimension of career indecision of career decision making among SC, BC and General category secondary school girl students of educationally backward blocks.

3.0. Method of the Study:

In the present study, descriptive survey method is used to collect data from 360 girl students. Singh's Career Decision Making inventory (1999) was used to collect the quantitative data; which was translated into Punjabi by the investigator. The focussed group discussions were also done with the girl students to have an idea about the influences of family, social environment, media and of the various schemes under NPEGEL regarding their career decision making. The data was collected and focussed group discussions were conducted in January – February, 2014 in all the 15 schools.

3.1. Sample of the Study:

The sample for the present study was 360 girls of 10th class from 15 Government senior secondary and high schools of three educationally backward blocks i.e. Talwandi Sabo; Mandi Phul West; and Sangat of Bathinda district. The random sampling technique was employed for the selection of schools; and girl students belonging to different categories, i.e. schedule caste, backward class and general category were selected by stratified random sampling. The final sample include total 360 girls including 120 girls belonging to schedule caste category; 120 girls belonging to backward class category; and 120 girls belonging to general category.

3.2. Tools used:

For measuring career decision making of secondary school students Singh's Career Decision Making inventory (1999) was used; which was translated into Punjabi by the investigator. The scale consists of 18 items; 5 for decidedness scale and 13 items for indecision scale. Respondents are asked to circle the one option out of three options i.e. exactly like me,



somewhat like me and not at all like me for each item. Focussed group discussions were done with the girl students to have an idea about the influences of family, social environment, media on their career choices. A feedback in discussions was also taken regarding the influence of interventions of various schemes under NPEGEL and RMSA for career decision making among girls.

4.0. Results Interpretation:

4.1. Quantitative Results:

In order to analyze and interpret the quantitative data, the statistical techniques like mean and one way analysis of variance were used. The analysis of data has been presented in the following table:

4.1.1. Career Decision Making among SC, BC and General Category Girl students:

The scores on Career Decidedness and Career Indecision dimensions of Career Decision Making Inventory of girl students belonging to schedule caste, backward class and general category are presented as follows:

Table.1: Comparison of the Scores on Career Decision Making Inventory of Schedule Caste, Backward Class and General Category Girl Students

Components of Career Decision Making	Schedule Caste			Backward Class			General Category		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Career Decidedness	120	12.46	5.11	120	13.03	4.97	120	13.94	4.87
Career Indecision	120	28.17	5.92	120	27.41	6.69	120	25.99	5.43

From the table 1, it is clear that the girls belonging to general category scored high on the decidedness dimension of career decision making as compared to the girls of schedule caste and backward class category. On the career indecision dimension of career decision making; the girls belonging to schedule caste category scored higher than the backward class and general category girl students. It indicates that there is somewhat difference in the career decision making of the girls of three categories.



Table.2: Analysis of Variance on Scores of Career Decision Making Inventory among SC, BC and General Category Girl Students

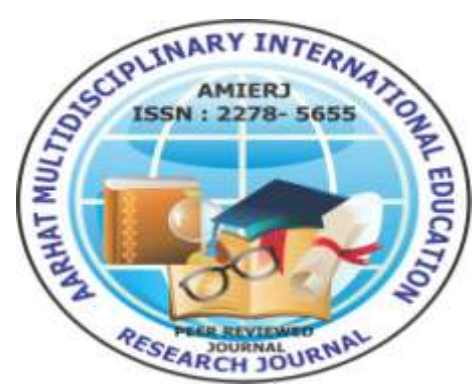
Components of Career Decision Making	Sources of Variation	SS	df	MSS	F-ratio
Career Decidedness	Between Groups	72.93	2	36.46	1.46 (Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance)
	Within Groups	8869.04	357	24.84	
	Total	8941.97	359		
Career Indecision	Between Groups	293.84	2	146.92	4.03 (Significant at 0.05 level of significance)
	Within Groups	13005.19	357	36.42	
	Total	13299.03	359		

Table 2 indicates that on the dimension of career decidedness of career decision making, there is no significant difference among the girl students belonging to SC, BC and general category. But on the dimension of career indecision of career decision making inventory, a significant difference is found among the girls of the three groups. As the mean scores on career indecision of schedule caste category girl students is higher than the backward class and general category girl students. To get a clear idea of significance of difference between the means of groups; t-ratio is computed for the three groups of students on the scores of career indecision and results are recorded in the Table 3.

Table 3: Comparison of Difference in Mean Scores for Career Indecision among SC, BC and General Category Girl Students

Groups	SC Mean = 28.17 S.D. = 5.92 N = 120	BC Mean = 27.41 SD = 6.69 N = 120	General Mean = 25.99 SD = 5.43 N = 120
Schedule Caste (SC)	---	0.05	2.97*
Backward Class (BC)	---	---	0.96
General Category	---	---	---

* Significant at 0.01 level of significance



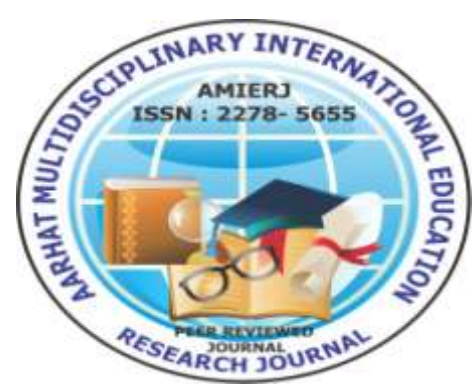
In the table 3, the t-ratio analysis suggests that on the dimension of career indecision of career decision making inventory, a significant difference is found between mean scores of the girl students of schedule caste and general category. However there is no significant difference in the schedule caste and backward class category girls; and backward class and general category girls on the dimension of career indecision of career decision making inventory. So, the results indicate that among schedule caste category girls career indecision is more than the general category girl students.

4.2. Qualitative Results

The qualitative responses on focus group discussions were analysed by means of content analysis. Data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing phases were employed in this process. The content of open - ended focussed group discussions with students was coded and organized according to the identified themes. The data based on themes was organized and labelled into structured summaries. The conclusions were drawn by comparing, contrasting and clustering the displayed data.

In 15 schools, focussed group discussions were made with 360 girls by selecting equal number of girl students of 10th class belonging to schedule caste, backward class and general category. The major areas of discussion were the influences of family, social environment, media on their career choices. A feedback in discussions was also taken regarding the influence of interventions of various schemes under NPEGEL, RMSA for career decision making among girls.

- ❖ **Career decision making:** Only 30.28% girls have idea about the choice of career. But only 25.55% have discussed it with their parents and only 12.77% have got the knowledge from various sources for a selected career choice.
- ❖ **Influence of Family:** 90% of the girls admitted that their family will decide finally about their career choice. Parents in consultation with the family friends or relatives will decide about their career.
- ❖ **Influence of Social Environment:** 82.77% girls conveyed that they have decided their career as the facilities provided to them by their family. Majority of girls revealed that they



will opt for the career in which training is not too much costly and for which they have not to go far away as their parents will neither allow them to travel alone nor to stay in a hostel. So, socio- economic – status and social environment are significant factors in career decision making.

- ❖ **Influence of Media :** 10% girls revealed that television and computer aided learning helped them to know about various new careers. However, they discussed that it is not easy for them to make career in those professions but they got an idea about the new professions and careers.
- ❖ **Role of Teachers:** Most of the students communicated that only a few teachers guide them about the various career choices or motivate them to make a career choice. Students highlighted that no special lectures are taken by teachers for career decision making.
- ❖ **Role of Govt. Schemes:** As per Rashtriya Madhmik Shiksha Abhiyaan, a guidance cell is established in each secondary and senior secondary school. But 74.44% students revealed that no written information is provided to them by the concerned teacher incharge of guidance cell. No special lectures by experts related to career decision making are organised in 12 schools. There was no display board of guidance cell activities in any of the school.

No psychological testing of abilities of students is done in any school and no psychological tests available in schools to test the abilities and constructs of students. No feedback is provided to students for self assessment No knowledge about various scholarships available for various career choices under Govt. schemes is provided in any school. Under the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) scheme of sarva – shiksha – abhiyaan; girls have shared that they got books and other facilities of touring; karate training etc; but an active guidance cell to be established to guide the students about the various careers and professions under NPEGEL activities. Girls also suggested that their parents need to be guided about various careers and scholarships available for girls in various Govt. schemes.



On the basis of overall discussion, it's revealed that there was a strong agreement between the open ended focussed group discussions and responses on the career decision making inventory. Majority of the participant students stressed that illiterate parents; passive teachers; and poverty are a big challenge for them to choose a career of choice. By establishing guidance cells and computer laboratories; providing uniforms and books; and organising tours and trips will not serve the purpose as continuous motivation, guidance and feedback is required to make a good career choice.

5.0. Discussion and Conclusion

The main objective of the study was to assess the career decision making among the girl students of educationally backward blocks belonging to schedule caste, backward class and general category. The study has revealed that there is no significant difference on the dimension of career decidedness of career decision making inventory among the girl students belonging to SC, BC and general category. As all the girls belong to same area and getting same guidance and instructions in the school, so it may lead to no difference on the dimension of career decidedness.

But on the dimension of career indecision, significant difference is found between the girl students belonging to SC and general category. Te results point out that guidance at home of girls of schedule caste category is not appropriate that those are indecisive in decision making about the career.

Further in the qualitative analysis, the major problems related to career decision making as highlighted by students are lack of guidance at home and school; parents illiteracy; social pressures of not sending girls in hostel or travel alone at distant places for study; passivity of teachers to provide guidance; no self assessment experience for students in school; no exposure to various new professions; and no expert guidance.

The changing nature of the world of work has dramatically modified the context for career decision making. The advent of a global economy has led to greater competition and pressures for productivity and also more opportunities for work in different parts of the world. The information technology revolution means greater emphasis on technological skills and



higher needs for continuous learning. The predominance of dual-earner households increases the need for dual career planning and gives rise to new challenges for work/life balance. All these factors contribute to increasing the number and the complexity of career decisions individuals may have to make during their lifetime. (Raaf. Dowie and Vincent, 2009).

Krumboltz (1996) suggested that an individual's decision to enroll in a certain education program, or become employed in a particular occupation, is the result of 'sequential cumulative effects of numerous learning experiences affected by various environmental circumstances and the individual's cognitive and emotional reactions to these learning experiences and circumstances'.

In an era of information and technology; a school should be the learning and guidance centre for students to have knowledge of capacities and capabilities of self. Teachers should be aware about the new techniques of information collection and dissemination. Teachers have to be the torch bearers to guide the illiterate parents and immature students about the new policies and procedures to have education of choice and guide the students to choose an appropriate career as per abilities. Government has to take initiative to implement the policies in letter and spirit and not only for the sake of policy implementation. The Govt. policies need to be publicised in such a manner that everybody should be aware and can avail benefit from that.

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