



CAREER MATURITY LEVEL AMONG ADOLESCENTS AT SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STAGE

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Abstract: The present research work is an analysis regarding the comparison of career maturity level among adolescents at the senior secondary school stage in terms of gender- male and female. The results were collected using the descriptive survey technique. A representative sample of 60 adolescent students including males and females was selected from senior secondary schools in Aligarh as respondents. For data collection, an Indian version of the career maturity inventory by Dr. (Mrs.) Nirmala Gupta was employed. The appropriate statistical measures such as mean, standard deviation, percentage, and t-test were applied for analyzing the data. Outcomes of the existing research indicate that most of the adolescents have revealed below average level of maturity in regard to attitude towards career selection, self-appraisal, knowing about jobs, and choosing a job. Whereas in the aspects of career planning and problem-solving, an average level of maturity was found among adolescents. The results also identify that among the six aspects of career maturity, significant gender differences were found on four dimensions namely self-appraisal, goal selection, planning, and problem-solving. Male adolescents scored marginally better in the aforementioned areas than their female fellow students. No significant gender differences were found in respect of attitude towards career selection and occupational information.

Index Terms - Career, Career Maturity, Adolescents, Senior Secondary education

I. INTRODUCTION

Even though civilization is advancing rapidly and mankind has been making fantastic achievements at global level, the competition among youth particularly during adolescents has been growing in order to attain most suitable career. Admittedly, Career maturity is one of the most crucial components of supporting one's future career growth. It would be relevant to refer here that Right to Education has been recognized as a fundamental right of a citizen under constitution of India. Certainly, it is the most influential element for one's social, intellectual, moral and aesthetic development. Here, we must agree with the opinion expressed by the study of World Bank which states – "education is the corner stone of economic growth and social development and principle means of improving the welfare of individuals" (Source: Sivakumar B, Shridhar N, 2016). Up to this time, among multiple aims of education, the principal objective of education is to enable the learner for opting the appropriate vocation or profession/ career of their own. It is submitted that greater the maturity, greater is the possibility of a learner to take sincere, satisfactory and constructive decisions with regard to selection of career. Additionally, it gives the learners the opportunity to work on developmental projects at different points in their professional growth (Kaur, P. 2012). Adolescence is the phase when the duties of a responsible adult are gradually becoming manifest in the child's mind. Since, one of the most important decisions an adolescent must make is opting a career. Therefore, Educational institutions should start well-organized guidance services to make the adolescents aware of choosing better career.

1.1 Career

The conventional idea of career deals with progression of an ordered hierarchy within an organization or profession. Traditionally, the term career has subscribed to the belief that it is associated with paid employment and identified as a single occupation. In the recent years, the term career is seen as a continuous process of learning and development. Over the course of a person's lifespan, it is the association between work roles and other life roles, including labor that is both paid and unpaid. According to Gysbers & More (1981)- "An individual's lifetime's collection of experiences, roles and situations make up their career". Moreover, the National Career Development Association (Sears, 1982) mentioned that – "Career is the sum of a person's engagement in employment and leisure pursuits throughout their entire lives". Raynor and Entin (1982) also noted that the idea of a career is a synthesis of behavioral and phenomenological conceptions. It represents how an individual perceives themselves in connection to their goals for past, present, and future within their sociocultural setting.

Reviewing the various definitions, Herr & Cramer (1992) contend that careers seem to be (a) specific to every person, (b) the result of an individual's preference and decision, (c) changeable and develop over the course of a person's existence (d) combined organizations of both pre-and post -vocational concerns and (e) one's life responsibilities in the spheres of leisure, family, and community.

1.2 Career Maturity

Career maturity is the ability to choose an option for a future profession and to draft a plan for the same. Consequently, it is the level that has been achieved in terms of cognitive, emotional, and other psychological aspects to carefully shape one's profession in light of the available social possibilities and limitations. (Source: Banvariya, M., 2018). The concept of career maturity is generally used as an eligibility qualification for making a wise occupational choice and believing in continuous development. The greater the maturity, greater is the possibility of situation when a person becomes enable to cope with stages of career development.

As stated by Hoyt in 1977, "career maturity is the level of self-awareness and understanding of one's professional environment.". Notably, "the capacity of an individual to make wise, age-appropriate career decisions, an understanding of the criteria needed to opt a career, and the extent to which decisions are long-term and realistic are all considered to be the characteristics of career maturity". (Crites, 1978; Jackson & Healy, 1996; King, 1990; Levinson, Ohler, Caswell, & Kiewra, 1998; Luzzo, 1995; Powell & Luzzo, 1998; Savickas, 1984, 1999; Super, 1983).

Considering the aforesaid definitions, "Career maturity implies that the students are optimistic about their readiness to make career decisions, that are suitable for a specific age group and/or developmental period and is capable of handling the tasks of the workplace at any stage of life"(Brown & Lent, 2005; Burkhead & Cope, 1984; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2002).

"Individuals with comparatively high degrees of career maturity are more likely to succeed and find job satisfaction as they exhibit a greater comprehension of the procedure involved in choosing a career, often consider about alternative professions, connect their ongoing actions to their prospective objectives, hold a strong sense of self-reliance when choosing a profession, are steadfast in their work decisions, and are determined to embrace the expectations of reality "(Savickas, 1984).

1.3 Adolescents

It has been observed by almost all the scholars that technically a child becomes an adolescent when he or she attains puberty, becomes sexually mature and being capable to reproduce an offspring. Here the maturity means more than just physical maturity. Additionally, it denotes mental, emotional and social maturity.

Apart from western countries, the period of adolescence begins at the smaller age in our country as children attain puberty earlier due to favorable climate and various societal influences. It concludes early owing to early maturation, however in the west – "the adolescence extends roughly from 13 years of age till 21 for girls and 15 till 21 for boys", (Harriman, 1946, p.3). In India, it usually ranges from 11 to 17 for girls and 13 to 19 for boys. The aforementioned categorizations of the adolescent development span are not strictly followed by scholars. However, in order to provide a rough approximation for universal applicability, adolescents are individuals having chronological age between 13 to 19. Therefore, adolescents are also known as teenagers.

Many adolescents struggle with challenges related to their career development. For instance, a matric level student who chooses unrealistic goals not related to his abilities and interest or one having problems in making any kind of preliminary vocational decision is actually going through age- and stage-appropriate issues. A certain amount of conflict is likely to arise as young people negotiate the challenging shift from student to employment roles and from adolescent to adult status.

1.4 Senior Secondary Education in India

Secondary Education System is almost uniform in whole over India. It is equally applicable in all the states as well as in union territories. However such secondary education is provided to students/learners under the control of numerous renowned boards such as State boards, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE) which governs the Indian Certificate of secondary Education (ICSE) as well as the Indian School Certificate (ISC) for classes starting from 10th and 12th respectively. Education at the senior high school level is also offered by some universities and colleges. Significantly, there are two stages to secondary education: Lower Secondary education which consists of grades 9th and 10th and other one is Senior Secondary Education which includes 11th and 12th grades. Senior secondary schools or higher secondary schools are acknowledged as educational institutions that offer instruction up to the 12th grade. Students are allowed to choose their preferred subjects and stream once they achieve this educational level. They can opt science, commerce, and the arts.

Senior secondary Education is crucial for students because it offers them an opportunity to advance in their career. As a result, career advancement is one of the key advantages of this education system.

Moreover, Senior secondary education fosters the formal development of reasoning, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities in adolescents, as well as the development of material that is pertinent to their future occupations. The most crucial years of the student's life are those of transition and adolescence. During this period, students' physical shape undergoes a fast change and they experience varieties of emotional changes and mood swings. Students are prepared for this stage by sharpening their skills and talents, which allows them to move from education to the working world smoothly. Due to societal taboos, social bias, and conventional beliefs and attitudes towards females, girls must generally face greater challenges during this transition.

The importance of secondary education for national development can be seen in the sizeable social and economic returns it generates. Compared to elementary education, secondary education has a significantly greater impact on growth, poverty reduction, and income redistribution. Despite this, secondary and senior secondary education remain the most neglected component of the educational system in many developing nations, including India. Most people between the ages of 14 and 18 can at least comprehend simple texts. Their aptitude for mathematics is poor and does not get better with maturity. At this age, perhaps pen paper assessments like Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) will be beneficial to evaluate higher level abilities. A severe crisis has been brought on by an increase in students, a lack of infrastructure, a lack of instructors, and a loss of credibility and quality. New Education Policy (2020) anticipated that the 10+2 structure of school education will be altered to reflect the new pedagogical and curriculum restructuring of 5+3+3+4, which will encompass the age range of 3–18 years.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

Selecting a career and effectively settling into it are crucial life tasks that help adolescents feel fulfilled. Such a bold decision has a significant impact on lifestyle, reputation, income, stability and work satisfaction. Adjustment in modern society is very difficult as today's society is dynamic and extremely complex. In such a critical situation adolescent may face difficulty and complications in determining their career with precision. The current imperative is to carry out the best course of action at the appropriate moment. This research will enable us to make an assessment of career maturity level among senior secondary students which incorporates career attitude and career competency. Such an assessment will be beneficial to know about their standard of planning, quality of preparation for their intended job in consideration of their needs, interest and surroundings, to ascertain their knowledge about various professions that are accessible in the modern world, their expertise and information about various fields and the experience required for different careers. The assessment will also be helpful to know about the fact as how to accomplish goals and make a choice regarding career. This study will emphasize to know about differences in career maturity level among adolescents with respect to gender and help in arranging the academics and courses in school which are appropriate and common to all the students including boys and girls of all streams. The present study will make the parents and teachers to understand their children and students about their abilities, interest and attitudes. By this way they are able to appreciate the significance of career counselling for students and prepare them according to their inner potentialities. In this research work, an attempt is made to determine career maturity level of adolescents studying in Senior Secondary Schools of Aligarh.

1.6 Objectives

- To find the level of career maturity among adolescents at senior-secondary stage.
- To compare the career-choice attitude level of male and female adolescents.
- To compare the self-appraisal level of male and female adolescents.
- To compare the occupational information level of male and female adolescents.
- To compare the goal-selection level of male and female adolescents.
- To compare the career-planning level of male and female adolescents.
- To compare the problem-solving level of male and female adolescents.

1.7 Hypotheses

- There is no significant difference in career choice attitude level of male and female adolescents.
- There is no significant difference in self-appraisal level of male and female adolescents.
- There is no significant difference in occupational information level of male and female adolescents.
- There is no significant difference in goal selection level of male and female adolescents.
- There is no significant difference in career planning level of male and female adolescents.
- There is no significant difference in problem solving level of male and female adolescents.

1.8 Delimitations

- The present research is confined to Senior Secondary schools of Aligarh.
- This research is restricted only to the students of 11th and 12th standard.
- This research includes only two measures of career maturity i.e. Career Choice Attitude and Career Competency.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Dr. Parwinderjit Kaur (2014) carried out research on adolescent's career maturity looking at the factors like gender and type of school where data on 800 teenagers attending secondary institutions in the Amritsar District was collected. It is observed that significant gender differences were noticed only on one dimension namely self-appraisal and only three variables-career attitude, self-appraisal and problem-solving reveal significant difference between adolescents attending aided and public schools. Similar research of career maturity among senior secondary schools was done by Suman Kumari Katoch (2017) where outcomes indicated that career maturity of students did not differ significantly according to their gender, locality and type of school. B. Sivakumar and N. Sridhar (2016) conducted the study to assess the career maturity of XI grade students. 200 students enrolled in eight senior secondary schools of Tamil Nadu were taken as a sample. Career maturity of XI grade students was found to be below average and low respectively. Adolescent boys and girls do not significantly vary from one another in terms of career maturity. In addition to the above-mentioned studies, Pooja Sharma and Abha Ahuja (2017) also mentioned about the relation between career maturity of Indian adolescents and the type of school they attend. She looked into differences on every aspect of career maturity and examined that students in private schools performed considerably better and therefore more career advanced than students of government school. Moreover, Dr. Kamlesh Dhull (2018) examined adolescents' career maturity in connection with their gender and the sort of school they attended in district Rohtak of Haryana. The findings from the research suggested that career maturity of female students was generally better than male students and students in private institutions were noticeably more advanced in their career choices than their fellows in government schools. Furthermore, Manikandan S & Venkatraman (2018) had investigated that the career maturity of students attending secondary school in Tamil Nadu is high and there was no significant difference between the mean career maturity scores of students studying in Tamil and English Medium schools as well as Rural and Urban schools. It was also discovered that there is a significant difference in the mean career maturity scores of students from government and private schools. Referring to the views of Sangeeta Kalita M (2019), it was reported that adolescent girls and boys of higher secondary school differ significantly in both the measures of career maturity whereas no significant differences were observed between urban and rural upper secondary students. In the recent study, Nur Izyan Liyana Ashiran et al., 2020 examined about career maturity level of adolescent girls residing in Malaysian shelter home. The findings confirmed that the mean value found for both the attitude and competencies domain and the overall career maturity level is at a high but on the verge of being low. Wherefore, counselling programmes are still needed for children living in shelter homes in order to encourage career maturity, especially in the area of attitude among adolescents.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Nature of Research

The researcher used the descriptive survey method for data collection.

3.2 Types of Variables

Independent Variable: Gender difference (adolescent boys and girls)

Dependent Variable: Career Maturity.

3.3 Sample Size

60 adolescents studying in class 11th and 12th of senior secondary schools of Aligarh.

3.4 Sampling

For sample selection, Simple random sampling technique was used.

3.5 Tools and Techniques for Data Collection

- The researcher has used the Indian version of career maturity inventory standardized by Dr. (Mrs.) Nirmala Gupta (2018). It has been designed to assess the maturity of attitudes towards career selection and career competencies that are crucial for making sensible career choices. The CMI contains two different kinds of measures, the Attitude Scale and Competency Test to determine the maturity of these career behaviour.
- Data was analysed by the statistical technique such as mean, standard deviation and t-test.

3.6 Sources of Data Collection

- First-hand information that the researcher herself had obtained by visiting the senior secondary schools in Aligarh.
- Research papers, theses, encyclopaedia, journals, etc. studied by the investigator for the existing research.

3.7 Procedure of Data Collection

In the existing research, the researcher personally visited the various Senior Secondary schools of Aligarh for data collection. The researcher first approached the administrators of the institutions where the information was supposed to be obtained. Following an agreement with the school administrators, students were requested to complete the surveys by filling the questionnaires as directed by the researcher. Questionnaires were collected from the students once they have filled out. At last, students were acknowledged for their active participation.

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 Level of Career Maturity among adolescents: -

4.1.1 Level of attitude towards career selection

S.NO	Frequency	Percentage	Level of Attitude towards career choice
1	-	-	High
2	-	-	Above average
3	16	26.66 %	Average
4	31	51.66%	Below average
5	13	21.66%	Low
Total	60		

Table 4.1.1: Classification of Adolescents on the basis of level of attitude towards Career selection

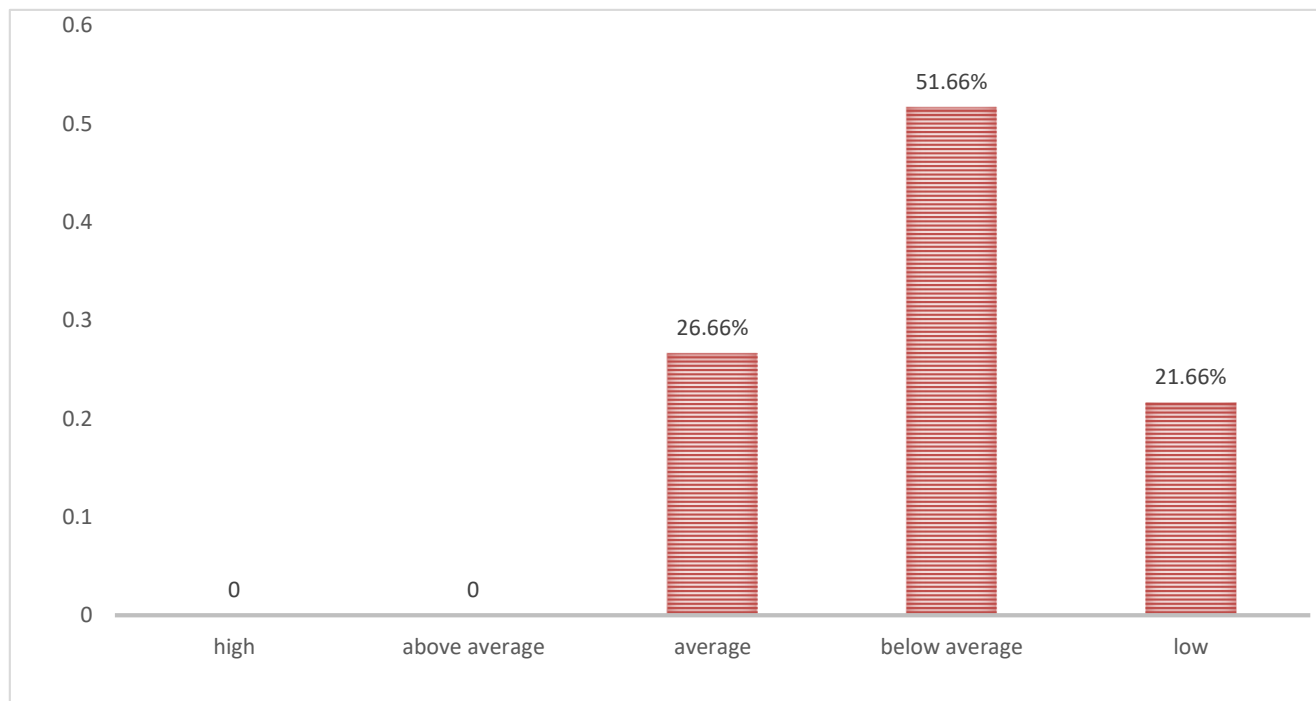


Fig. 4.1.1: Bar graph showing the level of adolescent's attitude towards career selection

4.1.2 Level of career competencies

S. No	Variables of Career Competence										Level of Career Maturity (CM)
	Self-Appraisal (SA)		Occupational information (OI)		Goal selection (GS)		Planning (PL)		Problem-solving (PS)		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1.	-	-	-	-	02	3.33%	01	1.66%	-	-	High
2.	-	-	04	6.66%	08	13.33%	15	25%	-	-	Above average
3.	07	11.66%	20	33.33%	13	21.66%	19	31.66%	28	46.66%	Average
4.	20	33.33%	26	43.33%	28	46.66%	17	28.33%	23	38.33%	Below average
5.	33	55%	10	16.66%	9	15%	8	13.33%	9	15%	Low
Total	60		60		60		60		60		

Table 4.1.2 Classification of Adolescents on the basis of level of Career Competencies

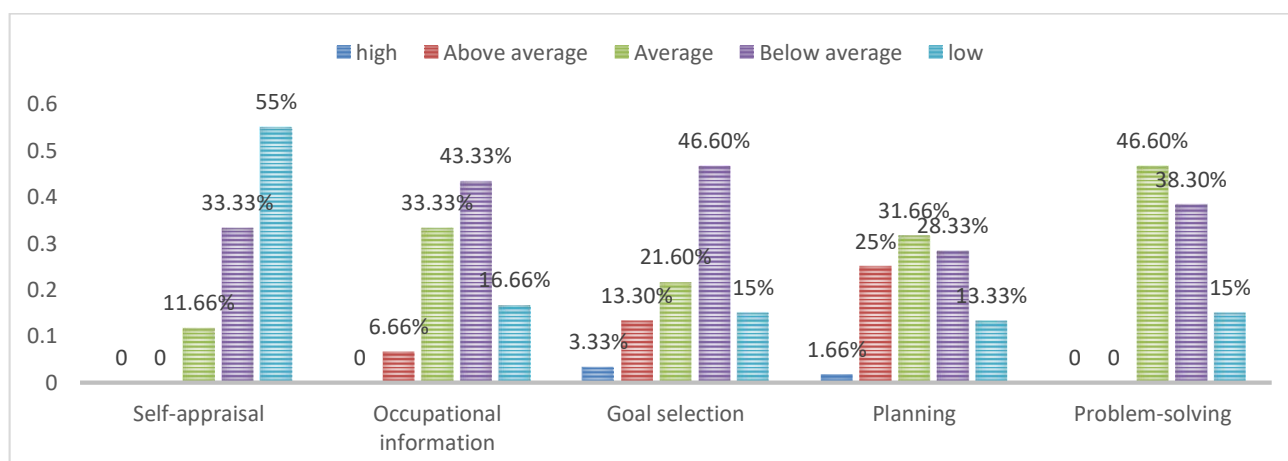


Fig.4.1.2: Bar graph showing the level of Adolescent's Career Competencies

4.2 Comparison of career maturity among adolescents with respect to Gender

S.NO	Measures of career Maturity	Pair of comparison	N	Mean	SD	Df	t value	P value (Sig 2 tailed)
1.	Attitude towards career selection	Male	37	24.540	5.470	58	0.967	0.337
		Female	23	23.130	5.521			
2.	Self-Appraisal	Male	37	3.594	1.363	58	2.634	0.008
		Female	23	2.695	1.145			
3.	Occupational information	Male	37	6.108	2.674	58	1.640	0.106
		Female	23	5.043	2.010			
4.	Goal selection	Male	37	6.405	2.661	58	2.962	0.004
		Female	23	4.521	1.879			
5.	Planning	Male	37	6.405	3.192	58	2.128	0.038
		Female	23	4.652	2.948			
6.	Problem solving	Male	37	4.135	1.548	58	3.084	0.003
		Female	23	2.782	1.807			

Table No-4.2 depicts the descriptive data in the form of Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) along with 't' value and p value.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Hypotheses testing

Testing of Hypothesis 1:

The mean scores for attitude towards career selection of male and female adolescents are determined to be 24.540 (SD=5.470) and 23.130 (SD=5.521) respectively. The 'p' value (sig.2 tailed) is more than 0.05, so it is not significant. This reveals that there is no significant difference between the career choice attitude of both the genders but male students have slightly higher attitude. Thus, H 1 is accepted.

Testing of Hypothesis 2:

The mean scores for self-appraisal of male and female adolescents are determined to be 3.594 (SD=1.363) and 2.695 (SD=1.145) respectively. The 'p' value (sig.2 tailed) is significant as it is below 0.05. This reveals that there is significant difference between the self-appraisal level of both the genders and male students have higher level of maturity. Thus, H 2 is rejected.

Testing of Hypothesis 3:

The mean scores for occupational information of male and female adolescents are determined to be 6.108 (SD=2.674) and 5.043 (SD=2.010) respectively. The 'p' value (sig.2 tailed) is more than 0.05, so it is not significant. This reveals that there is no significant difference between the occupational information level of both the genders but male students have slightly higher level of maturity. Thus, H 3 is accepted.

Testing of Hypothesis 4:

The mean scores for Goal Selection of male and female adolescents are determined to be 6.405 (SD=2.661) and 4.521 (SD=1.879) respectively. The 'p' value (sig.2 tailed) is significant as it is below 0.05. This shows that there is significant difference between the goal selection level of both the genders and male students shows higher level of maturity. Thus, H 3 is rejected.

Testing of Hypothesis 5:

The mean scores for career planning of male and female adolescents are determined to be 6.405 (SD=3.192) and 4.652 (SD=2.948) respectively. The 'p' value (sig.2 tailed) is significant as it is below 0.05. This shows that there is significant difference between the career planning level of both the genders and male students shows higher level of maturity. Thus, H 5 is rejected.

Testing of Hypothesis 6:

The mean scores for problem-solving of male and female adolescents are determined to be 4.135 (SD=1.548) and 2.782 (SD=1.807) respectively. The 'p' value (sig.2 tailed) is significant as it is below 0.05. This shows that there is significant difference between the problem-solving level of both the genders and male students shows higher level of maturity. Thus, H 6 is rejected.

5.2 Findings of the study:-

- Majority of adolescents were identified to have below-average level of attitude towards career selection.
- Regarding the aspects of career competency, most of the adolescents exhibits average level of maturity in planning and problem-solving. However; in self-appraisal, occupational information and goal selection, majority of the adolescents have displayed maturity at below average level.
- No significant gender differences were found in respect of attitude towards career selection
- There is significant difference among the self-appraisal, goal selection, planning and problem-solving scores obtained by adolescent boys and girls. Boys were slightly higher in the aforesaid aspects.
- No significant gender differences were found in respect of occupational information.

VI. CONCLUSION AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION

Based on the current research, the investigator eventually concludes that the results are not quite satisfactory. Results showed that most of the students' career maturity level is below average. Consequently, there is the need for school administrators, counsellors and parents to be conscious of all the indicators of career maturity and their resulting impact on students' career. This will allow them to recognise students with a low degree of career maturity in general and who might not be capable of making specific educational or vocational decisions. The research has significant implications for the education system of our country, where students are instructed using conventional method. The evidence shows that innovative teaching techniques like the modular and visual approach can enhance students' learning. The findings above also suggest that gender difference regarding career-maturity has been found in favour of male adolescents, so the parents as well as the school should lay emphasis on acquainting the girl adolescents with strategies and techniques which may help them to evaluate themselves and take better career decisions. Since self-appraisal is an important dimension of career maturity, so due recognition should be given to it and thus the differences between the gender can be minimized.

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