



Career Awareness Of Secondary School Students In Coochbehar District Of West Bengal

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Abstract

The present study examines the level of career awareness among secondary school students and explores differences based on gender and school locale. Adopting a descriptive survey method, the study was conducted on a stratified random sample of 125 students drawn from seven blocks of Coochbehar District, West Bengal. The findings reveal that the majority of students possess an average level of career awareness, with only a small proportion demonstrating very high awareness. Statistical analysis indicates no significant difference in career awareness between male and female students. It is also found that urban students exhibiting higher levels of career awareness as compare to rural students. The study highlights the need for targeted career guidance interventions, particularly in rural areas, to ensure equitable access to career-related information and opportunities.

Key words: Career Awareness, Secondary School Students

Introduction

Renowned sociologist O'Brien said that "Work is one of our greatest blessings. Everyone must have an honest occupation". The NEP-2020, also emphasizes on the holistic and multidisciplinary approach to education, integration of vocational education with mainstream education. Rao (2017), found that Secondary level is a very important and initial stage for the students and their parents to take a good decision, at the same times they both are confused to expansion of their future career (Bruhmbhatt, 2009). At this stage if the student chooses the right career path, then they can be successful and satisfied in their future professional life. In this regard Kindo & Astalin (2020), also agreed that this decision will have a great impact over their lives throughout; and this is the first decisive stage in their career because after class 10th they choice a particular subject stream and the career prospects depend on it (Sethy, 2019). The NEP 2020 focused on inclusive and equitable quality education with the fast-changing employment landscape and globally diverse ecosystem in education, it becomes critical that one should not only learn but also know how to earn. Hence, Students are start thinking about their career at secondary level as it is the stage where preparation for career starts according to their interest; but Kelichi et al. (2013), found that maximum number of the students are struggling with their career choice in adolescent stage and this is a serious problem.

Review of the related literature:

Author/s	Key findings
Sultana (2022)	Most of the students' career awareness lay down to extremely low category; it was also found that male students belonging to rural areas and science students have higher career aspiration and career self-efficacy level.
Uttamrao and Dhondiram (2022)	Male students are better than the female students; also found that no significant difference exists in the career awareness between students of Arts, Science and Commerce branches.
Ganapathy et al. (2020)	Most of the school students are aware about career choice but still there are students who are not sure about their career decisions or those who do not have much information regarding it.
Aman (2018)	Girl students from urban schools and students from science and arts stream are significantly more career oriented as compared to the students of rural schools and commerce stream.

Research Question:

The research questions framed for the research are:

1. What is the level of career awareness of secondary school students?
2. Do the secondary school students differ significantly in career awareness with respect their gender and local of the school?

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the level of career awareness of secondary school students.
2. To study the difference in career awareness of secondary school students in relation to their gender (Male and Female).
3. To study the difference in career awareness of secondary school students in relation to their local of the school (Situate in the remote area and Situate in the town).

Null hypotheses of the study:

H₀₁: There exists no significant difference in career awareness of secondary school students in relation to their gender (Male and Female).

H₀₂: There exists no significant difference in career awareness of secondary school students in relation to their local of the school (Situate in the remote area and Situate in the town).

Data and Methodology

Variables: In this present study two types of variables were used. Those were as follows:

Dependent variable- Career awareness; Independent variable- Gender: Male &Female and Local of the School: Situate in the remote area and Situate in the town.

Method of the study

Descriptive survey method was considered as appropriate method to carry out the present study.

Population of the study:

All the Government and Govt. aided secondary school students of Class- XI and XII in Coochbehar district of West Bengal were considered as the population under this present study.

Sampling technique of the study

Stratified random sampling technique was used in the study, for ensuring diverse participation of 125 students belonging to 7 blocks i.e. Sitalkuachi, Mekhliganj, Mathabhanga-I, Mathabhanga-II, Coochbehar-I, Coochbehar-II, abd Sitai of Coochbehar District (12 Blocks in total) in West Bengal.

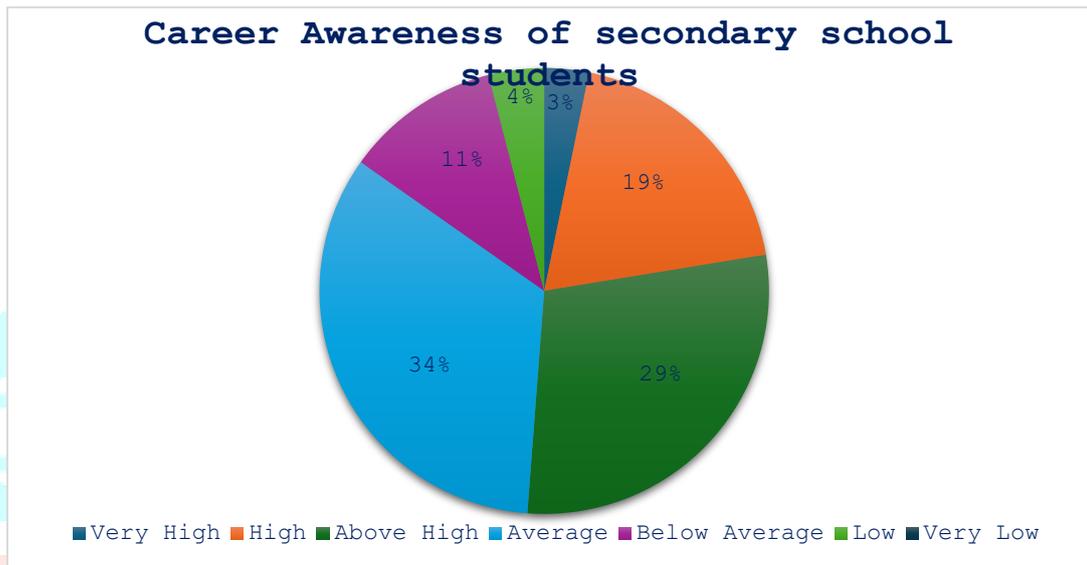
Result and Discussion

Objective 1: To study the level of career awareness of secondary school students.

It is observed that the most of the students came under the category of 'Average' level of Career Awareness with the percentage of 34. The percentage of 29 falls under the category of 'Above Average' level of Career Awareness and percentage of 11 falls under the category of 'Below Average' level of Career Awareness. The percentage of students 19 at 'High,' and 4 percent at 'Low' level of Career Awareness. The percentage of 3 falls under the category of 'Very High' Level of Career Awareness, and the figure also indicates that no student belongs to the 'Very Low' category.

Therefore, it may be noticed that majority of the students (34%) have Average level of Career Awareness and only about (3%) of the students had Very High Career Awareness.

Figure 1: Career awareness of secondary school students



Objectives 2: To study the difference in career awareness of secondary school students in relation to their gender (Male and Female).

H₀₁: There exists no significant difference in career awareness of secondary school students in relation to their gender (Male and Female).

Table 1: Gender wise career awareness of secondary school students.

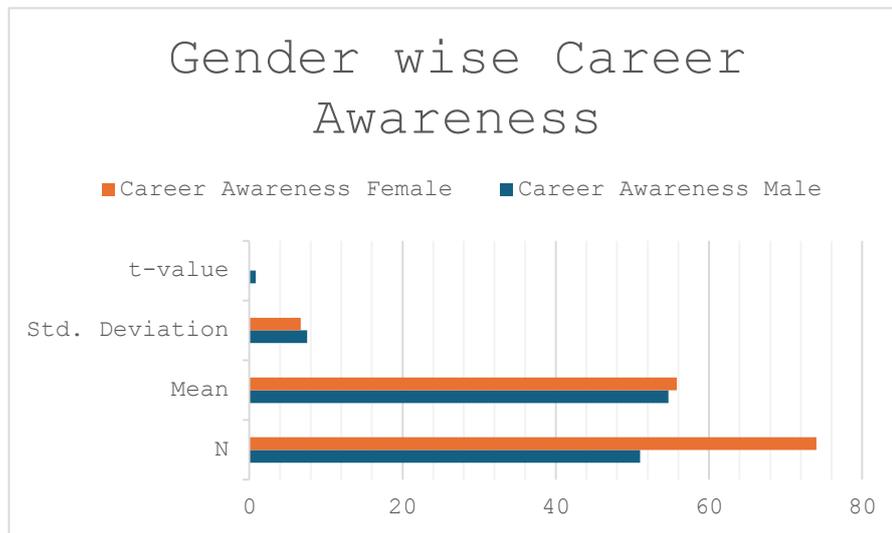
Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Career Awareness	Male	51	54.7	7.53	0.803
	Female	74	55.8	6.68	

*Significant at 0.05 level

By the observation of the Table 1, it was found that the calculated t-value was 0.803 which is less than the table value (df = 123, t-value 1.98 at .05 level of significance). Hence it is found that no significant difference exists on Career Awareness of secondary school students in relation to their Gender. Thus, the Null Hypothesis on Objective 2 is accepted.

Also, it is visible by the table Mean value of Male and Female Students are not so different (Mean value Male= 54.7, Female= 55.8). it was found that the Male and Female students have same level of Career Awareness irrespective of gender.

The result of the study (Figure No 2) designates that the Mean score of Female students is higher than the Male students in respect to their Career Awareness. As per the data collection observation by the researcher, there may be some lack of appropriate awareness, lack of support from their family, Parental influence, Peer influence and lack of facilities may be the reason behind this.

Figure 2: Gender wise career awareness of secondary school students.

Objective 3: To study the difference in career awareness of secondary school students in relation to their local of the school (Situating in the remote area and Situating in the town).

H₀2: There exists no significant difference in career awareness of secondary school students in relation to their local of the school (Situating in the remote area and Situating in the town).

Table 2: Local wise career awareness of secondary school students

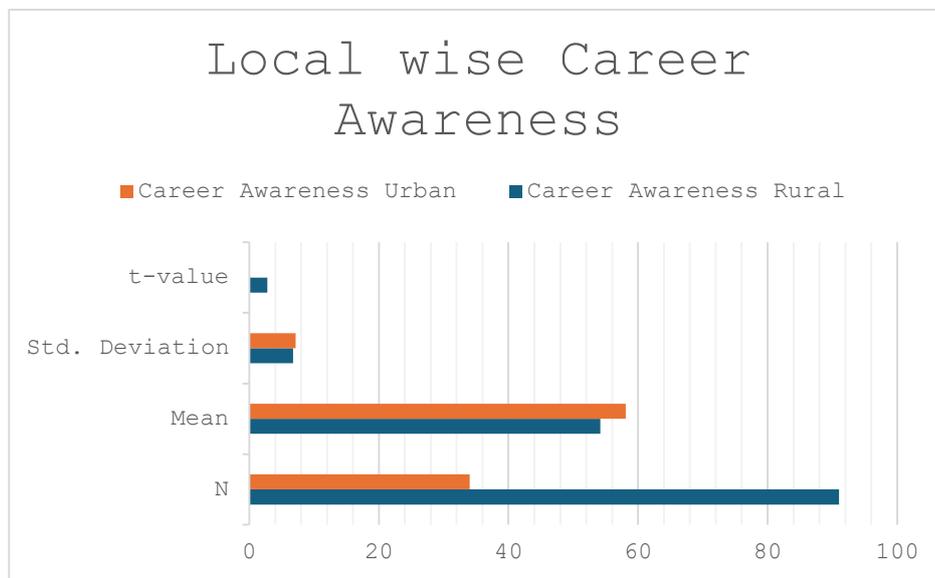
Variable	Local	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Career Awareness	Rural	91	54.2	6.73	2.786
	Urban	34	58.1	7.16	

*Significant at 0.05 level

By the observation of the Table 2 it was found that the calculated t-value was 2.786 which is greater than the table value (df = 123, t-value 1.98 at .05 level of significance). Hence it is found that a significant difference exists on Career Awareness of secondary school students in relation to their Locale. Thus, the Null Hypothesis on Objective 3 not accepted.

This difference was also visible by the table Mean value of Rural and Urban area students (Mean value Rural = 54.2, Urban = 58.1) it was found that the Urban area students are having great Career Awareness than the Rural area students.

The result of this study (Figure No 3) indicates the Mean score of Urban area Students is greater than Rural area students in respect to their Career Awareness. As per the researcher observation urban students are having better facilities and better opportunity to have the career relates information. There may be teachers, institutions or family's awareness was working behind this result.

Figure 3: Local wise career awareness of secondary school students.**Conclusion:**

The study concludes that although most secondary school students demonstrate an average level of career awareness, very few exhibit high or very high awareness, indicating scope for improvement. Gender does not significantly influence career awareness, suggesting that male and female students possess comparable levels of understanding regarding career options. However, school locale plays a crucial role, as urban students show significantly higher career awareness than their rural counterparts. This disparity may be attributed to better access to resources, institutional support, exposure, and information in urban settings. Therefore, the findings underscore the urgent need for structured career guidance programs, especially in rural schools, to bridge the awareness gap and promote informed career decision-making among secondary school students. Furthermore, these students would be the future of the nation so, their career related ability should be enhanced in the schools by giving a suitable environment, motivation, and information. To facilitate schools in helping students make informed career choices NCERT has developed TAMANNA (Try And Measure Aptitude And Natural Abilities): an aptitude test for senior school students.

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