Career Mapping of Undergraduate Students in Vijayapur District: An Educational to Occupational Transition

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ABSTRACT:

This study investigates the career aspirations and economic awareness of final-year undergraduate students in Vijayapur District, Karnataka, to understand their educational-to-occupational transition. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through surveys capturing socio-economic backgrounds, career preferences, awareness of government schemes, and economic knowledge. Findings reveal a strong preference for government jobs (57.4%), driven by job security and higher income. Awareness of government schemes is low (21.3%), and economic knowledge is limited, with only 29.8% aware of financial literacy concepts. Higher education's role in career readiness is perceived as inadequate by 42.6% of students. The study highlights gaps between educational preparation and occupational aspirations, recommending enhanced career counselling and curriculum alignment with market needs. These findings contribute to understanding career mapping in semi-urban India, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions.The study also highlights how enhancing career readiness and economic awareness among undergraduates can contribute to building a skilled workforce, supporting India's vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

KEYWORDS:

Career mapping, undergraduate students, career preferences, economic awareness, higher education

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Introduction

The transition from education to employment is a pivotal phase for undergraduate students, particularly in semi–urban regions like Vijayapur District, Karnataka, where limited resources and socio–economic constraints shape career trajectories. Career mapping, the process of aligning academic preparation with occupational goals, is critical for ensuring employability and student satisfaction(Boateng et al., 2015). In Vijayapur, a region dominated by agriculture and small–scale industries, students face challenges such as inadequate career guidance and limited exposure to diverse job opportunities.[1] This study aims to explore how final–year undergraduate students navigate this transition, focusing on their career preferences, economic awareness, and the role of higher education.By understanding and addressing students' career readiness and economic awareness, this study contributes to preparing a skilled workforce that can help realize India's vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

Rationale: Understanding career mapping in semi–urban contexts is essential for addressing youth unemployment and underemployment, which are significant issues in India. By examining Vijayapur students' aspirations and barriers, this study provides insights for policymakers and educators to design effective interventions.

Objectives:

1. To examine the career preferences of undergraduate students in Vijayapur District.

2. To analyze the influence of socio–economic background on students' career choices.

3. To assess students' awareness of job opportunities and government employment schemes.

4. To evaluate the role of higher education in shaping students' career readiness.

5. To identify gaps between students' educational background and occupational aspirations.

Hypothesis:

· H1: There is a significant relationship between students' socio–economic background and their career preferences.

· H2: Students are adequately aware of employment opportunities and

government schemes.

· H3: Higher education significantly impacts career readiness.

Review of Literature

Career mapping is increasingly recognized as a key strategy to bridge the gap between education and employment.Arney, (2024) stresses embedding career education into curricula. Yet employers continue to demand strong communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and technological skills(Fajaryati et al., 2020) and a persistent mismatch between graduate skills and labor market expectations remains(Nabi et al., 2006). To address this,Tomy & Pardede, (2019) developed the Map My Career tool, linking academic work with employability outcomes. In India, Adhikari et al. (2015) identified challenges such as academic stress, financial concerns, and career preparedness, showing the social dimensions of career readiness. Complementing this,Alvares et al., (2020) highlight alumni career mapping as a way for institutions to assess long-term career outcomes. Together, these studies suggest that in contexts like Vijayapur District, effective career mapping requires integrated frameworks, skill development, and alumni tracking to support smooth educational-to-occupational transitions.

Research Methodology

Research Design

A mixed-methods explanatory sequential design was used, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative insights from open-ended responses to explore career mapping comprehensively.

Sampling

A purposive sample of 47 final-year undergraduate students from colleges in Vijayapur District was surveyed, representing disciplines like Bachelor of Arts (hereafter BA)78.7%, Bachelor of Commerce(hereafter B.Com) 8.5%, Bachelor of Science(hereafter B.Sc) 6.4%, and others 6.4%. Participants were selected from institutions located across the district to capture diverse socio-economic and academic backgrounds.

Data Collection

A structured questionnaire with 22 questions was administered, covering demographics, career preferences, economic knowledge, awareness of government schemes, and perceptions of higher education's role.

Variables included age, gender, family income, parental education, career aspirations, and familiarity with terms like GDP and financial literacy. Qualitative data from open–ended responses were used to contextualize quantitative findings.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (fre–quencies and percentages) and inferential tests including Chi–square for hypothesis testing and a one–sample t–test for career readiness. Qualita–tive responses were thematically analyzed to identify patterns in students' career motivations and barriers.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographics

The sample comprised 47 students, with 63.8% female and 36.2% male, aged 19–24 (mean age: 20.9). Most students (78.7%) pursued BA, followed by B.Com (8.5%), B.Sc (6.4%), and others (6.4%). Residence was predominantly urban (70.2%), with 21.3% rural and 8.5% semi–urban. Family monthly income was below ₹10,000 for 27.7%, ₹10,001–₹25,000 for 44.7%, ₹25,001–₹50,000 for 17%, and above ₹50,000 for 10.6%. Paren–tal education varied, with 36.2% of fathers and 44.7% of mothers having primary education or below.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	17	36.2
	Female	30	63.8
Course	BA	37	78.7
	B.Com	4	8.5
	B.Sc	3	6.4
	Others	3	6.4
Family Income	Below ₹10,000	13	27.7
	₹10,001–₹25,000	21	44.7
	₹25,001–₹50,000	8	17.0
	Above ₹50,000	5	10.6

Career Preferences

Government jobs were the most preferred career path (27 students, 57.4%), followed by higher studies (12, 25.5%), private sector jobs (4, 8.5%), entrepreneurship (3, 6.4%), and undecided (3, 6.4%). Key reasons included job security (59.6%), higher income (48.9%), and passion/interest (46.8%). Competitive exams were planned by 55.3% of students, with UPSC, PSI, and KAS commonly mentioned.

Table 2: Career Preferences

Career Path	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government Job	27	57.4
Higher Studies	12	25.5
Private Sector Job	4	8.5
Entrepreneurship	3	6.4
Not Decided Yet	3	6.4

Awareness of Government Schemes

Only 21.3% (10 students) were aware of government schemes, with Yuva Nidhi and Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Yojana mentioned. This indicates limited awareness, contradicting H2.

Economic Knowledge

Awareness of economic terms was moderate: GDP (76.6%), Budget (63.8%), Inflation (27.7%), Subsidy (25.5%), Financial Literacy (23.4%), and Fiscal Deficit (14.9%). Only 29.8% followed economic news regularly or sometimes, suggesting gaps in economic literacy.

Table 3: Awareness of Economic Terms

Term	Frequency	Percentage (%)
GDP	36	76.6
Budget	30	63.8
Inflation	13	27.7
Subsidy	12	25.5
Financial Literacy	11	23.4
Fiscal Deficit	7	14.9

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4: Association between Family Income and Career Preferenc–es&Awareness of Government Schemes by Graduates

(Chi–Square Test for H1& H2)

Hypothesis	Variable(s) Exam-ined	Test Type	X^2 (df, N)	p-value	Result
H1	Family Income × Career Preferences	Pearson Chi–Square	1.35 (2, 47)	0.510	Not signif-icant
H2	Awareness of Gov-ernment Schemes (Aware vs. Not Aware)	Chi–Square Goodness-of–Fit	15.51 (1, 47)	<0.001	Significant deviation (low aware-ness)

The Chi–square analysis revealed no significant association be–tween students' family income and their career preferences (H1), suggest–ing that career aspirations are relatively similar across income groups. In contrast, awareness of government employment schemes (H2) was found to be significantly low, with only about one–fifth of students aware of such initiatives. This indicates a critical gap in outreach and dissemination of information, highlighting the need for targeted awareness programs to improve student knowledge of government schemes.

Table 6. One–Sample t–Test[2] for Perceived Career Readiness (N = 47)

Variable	M	SD	95% CI for Mean	Test Value	t(df)	p
Career Readiness (1–5)	2.94	1.06	[2.63, 3.25]	3	−0.41 (46)	0.685

The mean perceived career readiness score (M = 2.94, SD = 1.06) was not significantly different from the neutral test value of 3, t(46) = −0.41, p = .685. The 95% confidence interval [2.63, 3.25] also contains the neutral point. This indicates that graduates' perceptions of career readiness are essentially neutral, reflecting moderate confidence without a strong leaning toward agreement or disagreement. The variability in responses suggests differing levels of preparedness among individuals, highlighting the need for targeted career readiness programs to build greater confidence and readiness for the workforce.

Findings and Discussion

The preference for government jobs among students in Vijayapur

aligns with trends observed in semi–urban regions of India, where job security and social respect are major factors influencing career choices[3] (Kumar et al., 2024). The study revealed that most undergraduate students in Vijayapur preferred government jobs (57.4%), citing job security and income as key reasons. Only a small proportion considered private jobs or entrepreneurship, showing limited career diversification.

Chi–square analysis showed no significant link between family income and career choices, meaning students across economic groups shared similar aspirations, mainly toward stable government employment.

Awareness of government employment schemes was very low (21.3%), with only a few students mentioning Yuva Nidhi and Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Yojana. This indicates poor outreach and communication of such programs.

Students' economic knowledge was partial. While many knew GDP and Budget, awareness of financial literacy, subsidies, and fiscal deficit was minimal. Only 29.8% followed economic news, showing weak financial awareness.

Perceived career readiness was neutral (M = 2.94), with 42.6% of students feeling higher education did not prepare them for jobs. This re–flects a mismatch between education and market needs.

Overall, the findings point to a gap between education and career aspirations. Strong preferences for government jobs, low awareness of schemes, and limited economic knowledge highlight the need for better career counselling, skill–based curriculum, and awareness programs.

Suggestions and Recommendations

1. Colleges should establish structured career counselling units to help students understand various career paths, especially those from low–income backgrounds who heavily rely on informal advice from peers and family.

2. Since only 21.3% of students were aware of schemes, periodic work–shops and seminars in collaboration with government departments can raise awareness of programs like PMKVY, NCS, and Skill India.

3. Courses should embed employability–focused content—communica–tion, digital literacy, problem–solving—aligned with National Educa–tion Policy (NEP) 2020 guidelines.

4. With only 23.4% of students aware of basic financial terms, modules on budgeting, banking, and investment should be included.

5. Institutions should measure career preparedness annually using validated tools to identify skill gaps early and plan interventions.

6. Internships, live projects, and campus talks from industry professionals can help students bridge the education–to–employment gap.

7. With over 55.3% planning to take competitive exams, colleges should offer free or subsidized coaching through government–aided schemes or tie–ups with training institutes.

8. Targeted support like mentorship, career awareness sessions, and digital literacy training should be prioritized for low–income students who showed a high inclination toward public sector jobs.

Conclusion

This study reveals that undergraduate students in Vijayapur District predominantly aspire to government jobs, driven by job security and socio–economic constraints. However, low awareness of government schemes and economic concepts, combined with inadequate career preparation, hinders their educational–to–occupational transition. By implementing targeted interventions like career counselling and curriculum reforms, educational institutions can better equip students for the job market, fostering successful career pathways in semi–urban contexts.Improving career readiness and economic awareness among undergraduates is essential for building a skilled workforce, contributing to India's goal of Viksit Bharat @2047

Endnote:

1. Government of India, Ministry of MSME, "Brief Industrial Profile of BIJAPUR District," District IndustrialPromotion Scheme PDF, Bijapur (DCMSME report), 2012.

2.   Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, CI = Confidence Interval. Test value = neutral midpoint of the scale (3).

3.   https://www.turnthebus.org/students–blog–english/why–do–rural–students–in–india–hanker–for–a–government–job

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