

Assessment of Students' Inclination Towards Their Career After Final Year Exams- A Study Among the Graduate and Post Graduate Students in Jharkhand

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Abstract:

'Career' is one of the most buzzing words that not only thrives in the heart of the students, but also echoes in the minds of their parents who critically exert their best for the future career of their wards: be it to establish their career either in services or own business. This study examines the inclination of the Jharkhand students towards their career paths after completing their final year exams. *The* research study population includes UG and PG students from all districts of Jharkhand, currently studying at various higher education institutions in Ranchi. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining the secondary resources and primary data through the questionnaire to the students from diverse disciplines. It also investigates the role of educational institutions, government initiatives, and local industries in shaping career choices.

Findings from the study provide insights into students' readiness for the job market, their alignment with emerging career opportunities, and the gaps in current support systems. The research concludes with actionable recommendations for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to enhance career guidance frameworks and align them with students' aspirations and the region's socio-economic development goals. This study contributes to the broader discourse on youth empowerment and workforce preparedness in Jharkhand.

Keywords: Career planning, Pre-Placement, Business, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Green Entrepreneurship, Green Energy, Green Market, Start-up, Students, Jharkhand

1.0 Introduction

Defining career and job: The word "careere" comes from the Middle French word "*carriere*" and refers to both gallops and the routes that knights' rode. Eventually, the associated verb became "to go at top speed." These definitions gave rise to the common term "career," which refers to one's occupation: a field for or pursuit of successive progressive achievement, particularly in public, professional, or corporate life [1]. Moreover, a career is sometimes defined as a process that lasts the entirety of a person's life and during their developing stage [2].

Anatomy (constituents and factors) of the Career: A young adult's career decision is often considered as a significant life's turning point [3]. The three main factors influencing profession choice were opportunity, personality, and environment [4]. Career primarily carries many interdependent factors and can be broadly segregated into four (a) Home environment- the sum total of family background including education and economic status of the parents/family, (b) educational background of the student, and (c) the role of educational institutions and finally (d) Policies and Procedures.

Role of home environment and family background: The home environment and family background significantly shape a student's career choices. Parents' education, profession, and socio-economic status often influence students' aspirations, providing guidance or imposing expectations. A supportive home environment fosters exploration and confidence, while a restrictive one may limit opportunities. Values, attitudes, and career priorities are often molded by family discussions and examples. Additionally, exposure to parents' professions or family businesses introduces students to specific career paths at their early stage. The encouragement, or lack thereof, from family members can determine whether students pursue their passions, adhere to traditional roles, or seek innovative and non-conventional career opportunities.

Due to mostly the financial limitations, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds made poor career choices and selected occupations that needed less training. **Students who perform well academically have greater employment options and prospects than those who struggled** due to financial crunches [5].

A student's chosen career usually is influenced by a number of factors. The first factor (parents' education level and financial status) paves the path of **the second factor** (the level of education of the student) which is based on the elective subjects, specialization, technical skills and aptitude along with the level of educational institutions. Pupils that excel academically frequently have an advantage over others. This is particularly true in professions where academic achievement is crucial to admission, such as research, engineering, medicine, and law [6]. **The third element** that has influenced students' job decisions is opportunity. Students' perceptions of their future in terms of the realistic likelihood of a job in specific disciplines may be influenced by opportunity [7].

Objectives

- To understand how the students decide their career journey before completing their graduation or post-graduation.
- To analyze the role of higher education institutions in shaping the career path of their students.
- To examine the preference of career path among the students appearing in the final year exams of their graduate and post-graduate programmes.
- To analyze when the idea of business or entrepreneurial mindset emerges in the minds of the students.

Hypothesis: Observing the literature review, the following were the hypotheses proposed

Hypothesis-1 (H₀): Students develop a clear understanding of their future career paths during their education journey.

Hypothesis-2 (H₀): Majority of students interested in business or entrepreneurship often cultivate their ideas and entrepreneurial mindset during their graduation journey.

Data Collection and analysis: This research study was primarily based on secondary data from library sources. However, to contextualize the study within the current scenario in Jharkhand, primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire aligned with the research objectives and hypotheses. A total of 243 responses were gathered between April and June from graduating UG and PG students across all 24 districts of Jharkhand, studying in Ranchi, representing various disciplines, including Engineering, Science and Technology; Management, Commerce, and Finance; and Arts and Humanities, from diverse higher education institutions.

The collected data were analyzed qualitatively, presented graphically, and supported by descriptive and statistical parameters. Hypotheses were tested using z-scores.

Findings, discussions, and conclusions: As per the objectives of the research study, the findings are found to be aligned with and provide appropriate insights. Detailed responses, analysis, and findings are elaborated in Sections 5.0 and 6.0 of this research work.

2.0 Literature Review

Defining career and job: Every student makes career decisions during their educational journey. A career, in the professional path of any person, focuses on the type of field as per the set of abilities. According to the dictionary, a "career" is an occupation that a person pursues for a considerable amount of their life and that offers prospects for advancement [8]. It is a series of jobs, positions, and occupations held throughout the course of a person's life [9]. Career, work, and job are sometimes synonymous, [10] however, making the wrong profession choice will drain all of the resources and efforts in the wrong way and send parents and kids into a deep depression [11].

Anatomy (the constituents and factors) of the Career

Various Factors involved in deciding career: As students get closer to high school and college, choosing a job is a challenging procedure that leads to psycho-social stress [12]. This decision alone has the ability to either open or close doors to achievement or opportunity. A variety of factors, including as social and economic ones, as well as those related to family, school, and community, are likely to have an impact on an individual's ultimate career decision [13].

The factors can be broadly divided into two groups: internal variables, which are under their control and outside influences, which are beyond of an individual's control. **INTERNAL Factors: Intelligence and Aptitude:** To support their job choices, students require pertinent knowledge, abilities, accomplishments, and a high enough IQ. **Career Interest:** Comfortable career decisions are influenced by supportive settings, as well as individual interests and hobbies. **Personality:** Decisions are influenced by self-awareness regarding educational attainment and consistency in professional choices. **EXTERNAL Factors:** Parental approbation affects career decisions. Career decisions are influenced by prior experiences. Students want to show their parents how capable they are. There may not be much parental support for employment decisions. Career preferences are influenced by family expectations. Decisions are influenced by parents' job backgrounds. [14].

Several more studies cover additional environmental elements that affect students' professional choices, such as peer groups, institutional career environments, religious organizations, and family backgrounds. The word "environment" refers to several different aspects, including social, cultural, economic, and physical. According to experts, it is the culmination of all the physical, chemical, biological, and social factors that surround people. Additionally, the environment can be divided into: 1. The environment 2. The Environment of Biology 3. The Social Context. [15].

The role of parents: Parents play a significant impact in determining a student's career forecast because of their education, financial situation, and home atmosphere.

The careers of their children are greatly influenced by their parents. Various scholars and experts propounded that the parents frequently choose their children's job paths in advance and guide them accordingly. Research also highlights how parental attitudes, and the home environment have a big impact on professional choices, with values influenced by upbringing, education, and life events. [16].

- a. **Parents Education:** Students' job decisions are greatly influenced by their parents' income, occupation, and level of education, whereas the parental education serves as a major determinant [17]. Students' opinions on going back to school can be influenced by their parents' educational backgrounds. Parental expectations to take over the family business or external role models might also have an impact. [18].
- b. **Parents' Financial Status:** Individuals' opportunities are greatly impacted by poverty. The income level of a household can affect a student's future by influencing their job choices. Some students might have to use their personal income to fund their education. [19].

Role of education & training: Education is a key agent of development, improving immediate living conditions and enhancing future potential [20].

- a. **Students' Education and skills:** A student's school plays a crucial role in shaping their career choice, influenced by curriculum, school culture, and guidance. Schools should provide accurate career guidance and encourage continued education [21]. During adolescence, students explore potential careers, focusing on majors and colleges, but may not yet make a final decision. Students aim for careers suited to their abilities, though not all find the right fit [22].
- b. **Role of educational institutions and policy decisions:** Career choices often begin during the pre-university or university years [23]- Higher education is crucial for a country's development, providing quality education that empowers youth for self-sustainability [24]. Graduates' careers reflect the success of university education, influencing its performance assessment based on job market outcomes [25]. Besides academics, career selection is also an essential part of shaping an individual's future aspirations [26].

Research has also shown that a youngster who comes from a home where parents support them, and they live together performs better academically. In such a situation, the parents' occupation is most likely to have an impact on the child's career goals [27].

Empowering individuals with information begins at school level with the important role of school counsellors in the career management process. Proper career counselling should include testing learners to get an idea of aptitude, intelligence and interests. Stronger links may be necessary between higher education and industry. Higher education has to a great extent provided generic skills, such as research, numeracy and problem solving, but there is also a need for the provision of managerial, leadership and teamworking skills development to prepare students for the world of work. [28]

2.1 Career Opportunities in JHARKHAND

About Jharkhand: Although the latest available AISHE (2022) Report in the Govt Portal, states that the Jharkhand State has Central University (01), Institute of National Importance (05), State Public University (11), State Private University (15), Deemed University Private (01), and Grand Total (33), the State is working to provide high-quality education in light of the fact that education plays a major role in careers. According to AISHE (2022), Jharkhand has 366 colleges with an average enrolment of 1848 students, or

8 institutions per lakh of population (for youth aged 18 to 23). There are 365 colleges in the state, including 160 privates unaided, 41 private government aided, and 164 government colleges. Of the students enrolled, 76012 are enrolled in private unaided institutions, 98436 in private government aided institutions, and 49995 in government institutions, 674363 enrolments in total, as documented and accessible in the AISHE 2022 report.

The state is still having difficulty improving its socioeconomic standing and employment rate. Only appropriate policies with an action plan and accountability to make them deserve at the local level may address this.

There are a lot of ways that Jharkhand can use its resources and forces, particularly through the JOHAR: Jharkhand Opportunities for Harnessing Rural Growth Project, “Jharkhand State livelihood Promotion society” (JSLPS). The conventional career platforms in Jharkhand include a diverse range of career opportunities for graduating students across various sectors, including education, government, industry, healthcare, IT, agriculture, law, and more. With the state's evolving infrastructure and increasing focus on industrialization, the students can explore dynamic and rewarding career paths that align with their skills and aspirations. Entrepreneurship and Startups, Tourism and Hospitality, Agriculture and Rural Development, Government Jobs, Education and Research, Industry and Corporate Sector etc. where, the student can delve into for their career.

Industries in Jharkhand: Textile, apparel, and footwear; food and feed processing; mining; automobiles and auto-components; energy; health and medical education; tourism; IT, ITeS, and BPO are just a few of the businesses that call Jharkhand home. However, a broad range of industry-specific abilities are necessary to pursue employment prospects in these fields. [29].

Current interventions and developmental initiatives in Jharkhand include the Jharkhand Skill Development Mission Society (JSDMS), which was founded in 2013 as the main organization for skill development initiatives, is one of the current interventions and developmental projects in Jharkhand. In the past year, JSDMS has accelerated with the introduction of multiple programs: (i) Jharkhand's Saksham (i) Employability Excellence with College Education and Learning (Excel); (ii) Deen Dayal Upadhyay Kaushal Kendra (Mega Skill Center); (iv) Center of Excellence; and (v) Collaboration with ITE, Singapore [30].

Two employment development possibilities for Jharkhand are described in a report by Climate Policy Initiatives: The Accelerated Green Transition Scenario (AGTS) and the Ambitious Policy Scenario (APS). With strong legislative backing, investment in green infrastructure, and skill development, the APS sets high targets for the adoption of electric vehicles, renewable energy, and green manufacturing. By 2030, 81,332 direct and 311,410 indirect green employment are expected to be created under this scenario. By 2030, 137,172 direct and 492,924 indirect green employment are expected to be created, according to the AGTS, which adopts a more aggressive approach to green investment and policy [31].

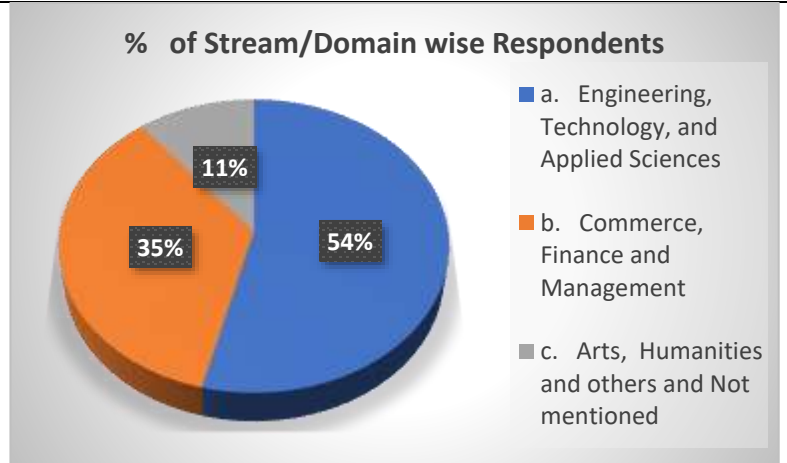
3.0 Data Collection and Analysis

Even though the research study was mostly based on secondary data from libraries, primary data was also gathered using a questionnaire that focused on questions pertaining to the objectives and hypotheses. Between April and June, 243 responses were gathered from UG and PG students who were graduating from various streams in higher education institutions in Ranchi and were enrolled in all 24 districts of the State of Jharkhand.

Most of them were in the 20–21 age range (=48%), followed by 22 years (=29%) and 23 years (13%) and the remaining 24–26 years. **Male** students made up 124 (=51%) and **female** students made up 119 (=48.9%) of the 243 (N) respondents. The majority of the respondents—170 (=70%) from the **undergraduate** programmes and 73 (=30%) from the **postgraduate** programmes.

They were enrolled in different higher education institutions in various fields such as engineering, science and technology, management, commerce, and finance, as well as the arts and humanities;

The total sample from whom the responses were collected, includes 11% Students from Arts, Humanities & Others, 35% students from the Commerce, Finance and Management stream, while 54 % together from the Science and Engineering & Technology background who were pursuing their Undergraduate and Postgraduate.

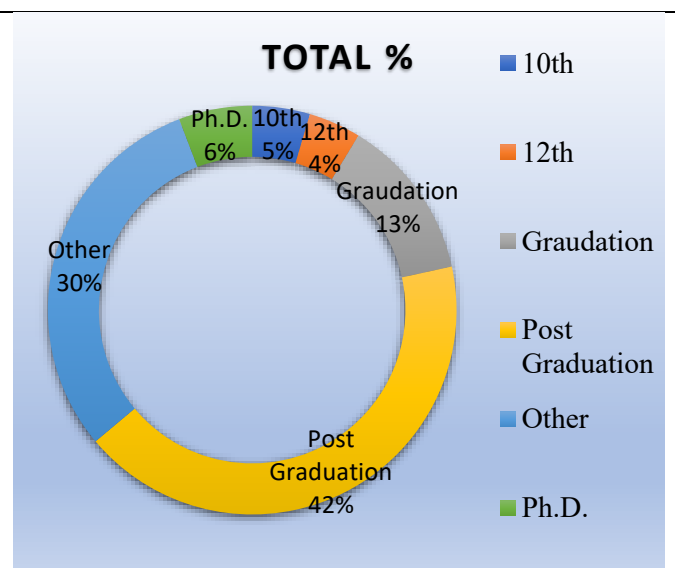


The sample altogether had the **mean** to be 49, the **median**: 21, and the **standard deviation**: 51 in the statistical (descriptive) analysis.

a. Educational Background of the parents and analysis of career options by their wards (Students/Respondents)

The below statistical presentation is the compilation of zone wise status of the parents' educational background.

In the response analysis of the 241 respondents about their fathers' educational background, majority (42.3%) of their father were postgraduate, followed by 30.3% who had technical or other educational background, then 12.9% had been graduated only. Where as 4.6% were only tenth grade, 4.1% upto the twelfth class, and 5.8% were reported to have Ph.D. degrees.

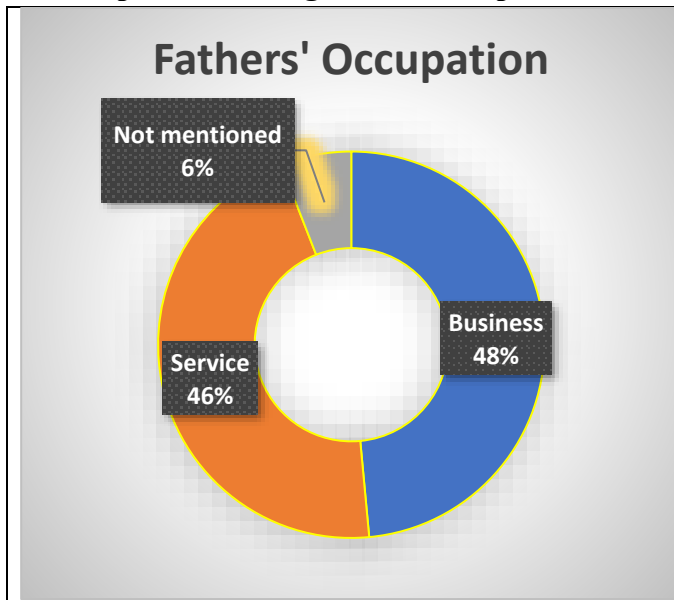


Statistical Analysis:

Mean: 40 ; 23 is the median; 39 is the standard deviation.

z-Score for two sample means of UG and PG found to be 1.420 (less than 1.959 of the critical value score of z test).

b. Occupational background of the parents: Business or Service



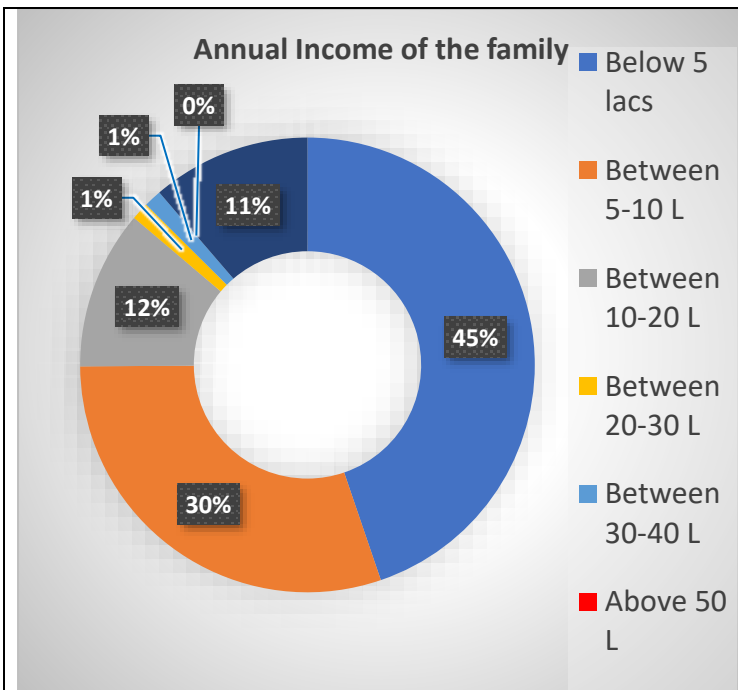
After the data analysis of 239 respondents who answered about their fathers' occupations, it was found that 46.4% (111) had a service background, while with marginal increase, 48.1% (115) had a business background, and 5.4% (13) did not reveal their fathers' occupation..

Analysis of Statistics:

- Average: 80, The median is 111.
 - 58 is the standard deviation.
- z-Score: 0.805 (less than 1.959).

c. Financial background of the parents

The below statistical presentation is the compilation of zone wise status of the parents' financial background.

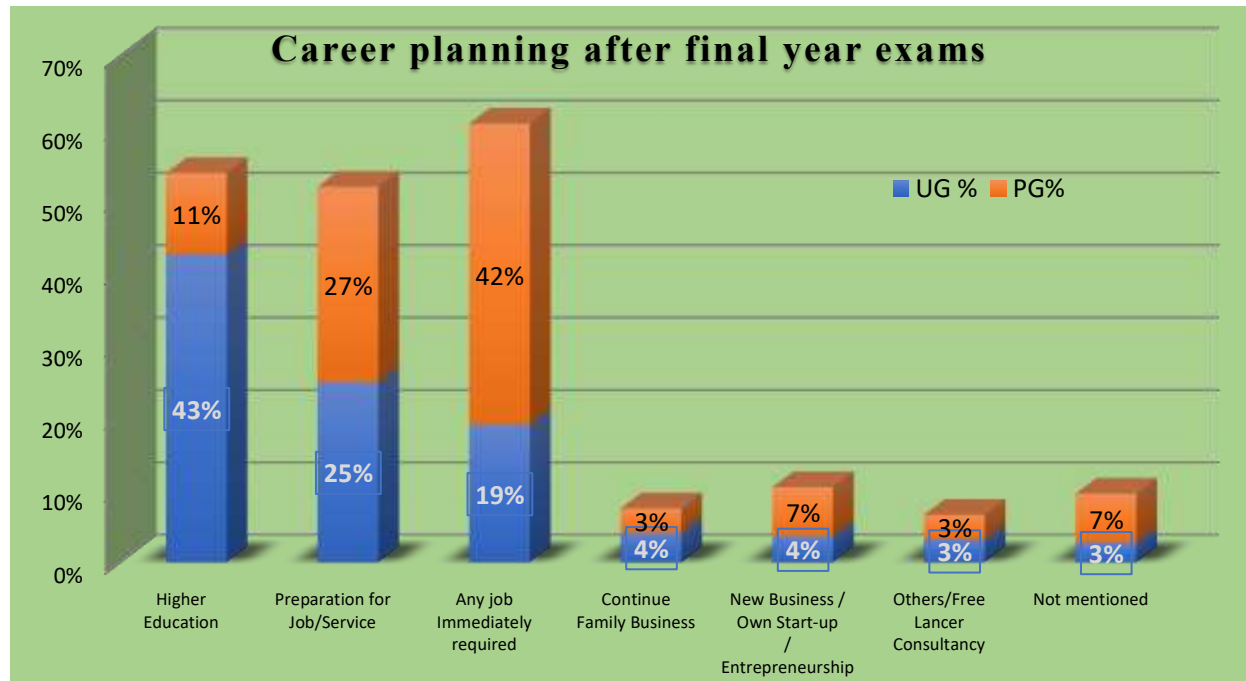


In the survey response analysis of 239 responses received, in the increasing order of the annual income found to be 0 (0%) for those having annual income over ₹50 lakh, 3 (1.3%) for ₹30–40 lakhs, 3 (1.3%) for ₹20–30 lakhs, 27 (11.3%) for ₹10–20 lakhs, 72 (30.1%) for ₹5–10 lakhs, and the majority of households (107, or 44.8%) made less than ₹5 lakh on family (father's) yearly income. However, 27 (25.2%) had not attended this question. **Analysis of Statistics:** Mean:34; The median is 27; 41 is the standard deviation.

z-Score for both UG and PG sample means: 0.627 (less than 1.959 of the z-critical norms).

4.0 Hypothesis & Testing

Hypothesis-1 (H_0): Students develop a clear understanding of their future career paths during their education journey.

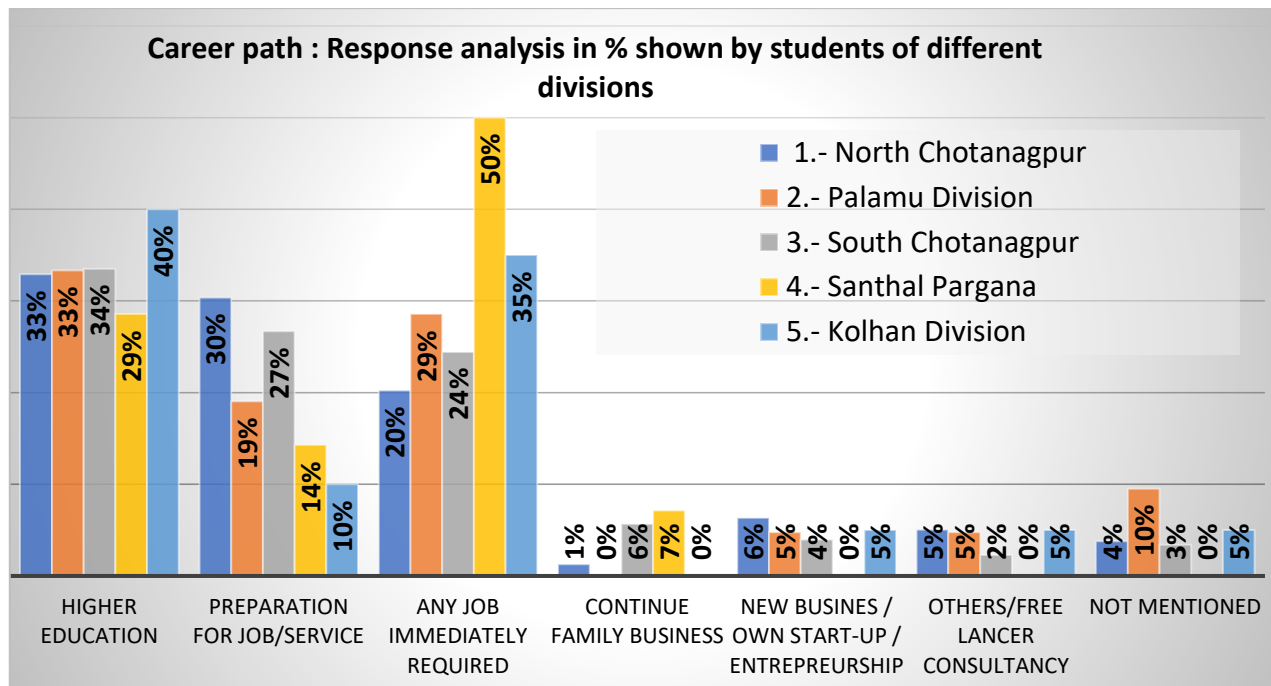


The students have shown better career planning in combination with other options like Higher Education/Preparation for Job/services, and/or any job immediately. Out of such a total of 310 responses, the students opted for Higher Education: 104 (=33.5%), Preparation for Job/Service: 79 (=25.5%); Any job Immediately required: 79 (=25.5%); Continue Family Business: 12(=3.9%); New Business / Own Start-up / Entrepreneurship: 14 (=4.5%); Others/Free Lancer/ Consultancy : 10 (=3.2%); No mention: 12 (=3.9%). The turning point for choosing a career usually starts during the pre-university or university era.

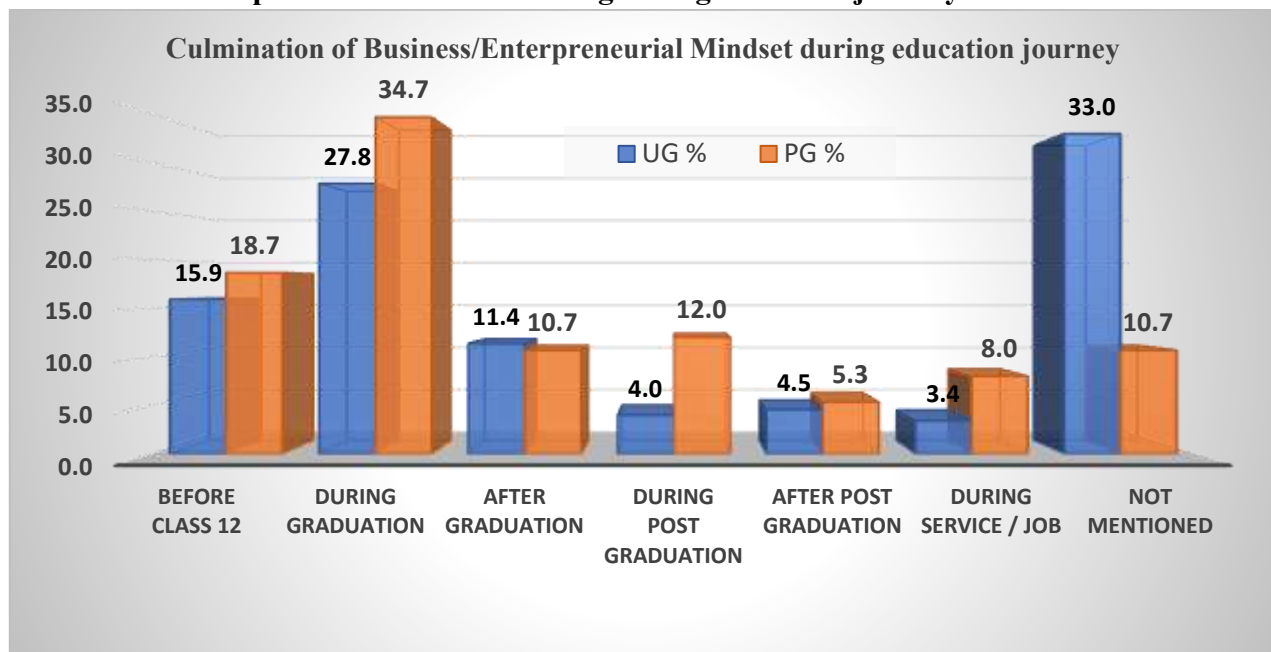
Statistical (Descriptive) Analysis: Mean= 44, Median = 14, Standard Deviation = 41.

For the evaluation of the hypothesis, Z-Test is found to be suitable for analysis for Two Sample for means, in which the null hypothesis is accepted if the z-score value is less than z-critical value: 1.959. After the statistical analysis, the **z-Score is found =0.540, which is less than its standard critical value 1.959. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and true.**

From the analysis of the responses received from the respondent students from various Divisions/Zones of Jharkhand: (1): North Chhotonagpur Division, (2): Palamu Division, (3) South Chhotonagpur Division, (4): Santhal Pargana (Division) and (5) Kolhan Division, the following is the projection of their career path after completing their UG/PG examination. The finding are briefed in Section 5.0.



Hypothesis-2 (H₀): Majority of students interested in business or entrepreneurship often cultivate their ideas and entrepreneurial mindset during their graduation journey.



As per the analysis of the 185 questionnaire responses received from 118 undergraduate (UG) and 67 postgraduate (PG) students, the culmination of business or entrepreneurship, for the 22.70% (42 students) first occurred before or during their 12th class. However, it is during their under graduation, where 40.54% (75 students) got the mindset ready for the business/entrepreneurship, followed by 15.14% (28 students) got ready after graduation, then 8.65% (16 students) during postgraduate studies. There were few respondents 6.49% (12 students) who marked this mindset after their postgraduate studies, and 12 students (=6.49%) mentioned this idea emerged during their job or service. **Statistical (Descriptive) Analysis:** Mean= 31, Median = 22, Mode=12, Standard Deviation = 25.

The Z-Test is shown to be appropriate for analysis of two samples for means in order to evaluate the hypothesis; if the z-score value is less than the z-critical value, which is 1.959, the null hypothesis is accepted. The statistical study yielded a z-Score of 0.888, below the typical critical value of 1.959. As a result, the null hypothesis is acknowledged as accurate.

Role of Higher Educational Institutions in shaping the career trajectory of the students: Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in shaping students' career paths by aligning academic curricula with market demands and fostering an environment of exploration and innovation. Thus, the career trajectories of the students are depending mainly on academic, practical, and professional aptitude by providing specialized knowledge, technical skills, and critical thinking capabilities essential for various careers.

Participation in clubs, sports, and cultural events nurtures a well-rounded personality. Further, the regular workshops, industry talks, and seminars expose students to career possibilities and emerging trends. The interpersonal skills like soft skills training, including communication, leadership, and teamwork, prepare the students for the workplace and the professional world. Inter-university events and collaborations with reputed institutions foster networking with professionals and peers which also paves the way for another edge in their careers.

Counselling Services in the institutions/universities and the mentorship programs guide students in identifying their interests, strengths, aspirations and aptitudes. In addition to the above preparing the student for both the services or the future business/entrepreneurship, many institutions support budding entrepreneurs through incubation centers, funding opportunities, and mentorship.

Industry Connections for internships and placements, through collaborations with industries and companies, offer practical exposure and job opportunities. Industry talks and events introduce students to career options and market trends. This is further supplemented by the strong alumni networks that often provide mentorship, internships, or job referrals. Exchange programs and partnerships with foreign institutions expand students' perspectives.

5.0 Findings & Discussions

- a. Regarding the educational background of the parents, 42.3% of fathers have a postgraduate level of education, and when combined with those having a graduate degree (12.9%) or other technical qualifications (30.3%), a total of 85.5% of parents are educated, generally providing their children with adequate insight into the future career prospects.
- b. Concerning the occupation of the parents, the majority were involved in business (48.1%), followed by those in service (46.4%).
- c. In terms of annual family income, 44.8% of respondents reported their income is below 5 lakhs, 30.1% fall between 5-10 lakhs, 11.3% earn between 10-20 lakhs, 1.3% between 20-30 lakhs, and 1.3% between 30-40 lakhs. The remaining 11.3% did not disclose their family's financial status.
- d. When it comes to career planning, 43% of undergraduate (UG) students have planned for higher education, compared to just 11% of postgraduate (PG) students. PG students, however, are more focused on preparing for jobs or services, with 27% planning for job preparation and 42% seeking immediate employment, outpacing UG students by 25% and 19%, respectively.
- e. The Students from Kolhan Division were more focused on pursuing Higher Education, while the students from Santhal Pargana had shown strong passion for 'Any Job immediately required'.

- f. In response to when the idea of business or entrepreneurship first came to their minds, 22.7% of the 185 respondents reported it occurred during their 12th class, 40.5% during their graduation, 15.1% after graduation, 8.6% during post-graduation, 6.5% after post-graduation, and another 6.5% cited their service or job as the moment the idea emerged.
- g. The majority of both UG (41.5%) and PG (38.8%) respondents identified their graduation years as the time when the idea of business or entrepreneurship first came to mind.

The findings of this study will provide adequate insight to the educators, career counsellors, and policymakers with sufficient information. It provides crucial information to assist them in developing plans and actions that will provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed career choices.

6.0 Conclusions & Suggestions

- a. Students begin considering their career paths before class 12 and make more elaborated decisions as they approach towards their graduation journey.
- b. Educated parents play a key role in guiding and shaping their children's career paths.
- c. Family and business backgrounds are the main motivators for students pursuing business or entrepreneurship.
- d. UG students prioritize higher education or preparing for a job, while PG students focus more on securing an immediate job and show less interest in further education.
- e. Youth without a business background are more inclined to prepare for jobs or seek immediate employment rather than start a business.
- f. Students from business backgrounds are more likely to start their own business or entrepreneurship than continue a family business.
- g. Youth interested in business or entrepreneurship tend to prefer existing or routine businesses over green entrepreneurship or manufacturing.
- h. Among aspiring entrepreneurs, green entrepreneurship ranks as the second choice after routine or existing businesses.

Ultimately, this research aims to enhance career readiness among students, facilitating a smoother and more successful transition into higher education and the workforce. Young graduates quickly familiarize themselves with labor market demands and form their own perspectives. The insights from this study will also serve as a valuable reference for future research in this area.

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