Abstract

The college years denote a transition point from education to work. It is a crucial time for career-related decision making which is a function of career development and is measured in terms of Career Maturity (CM). A perusal of available literature shows that no studies have been done in Meghalaya on Career Maturity amongst the Arts Students in Degree Colleges where students are in the process of transiting to the world of work. Hence, the present study was taken up to fill this research gap. The Students in Arts Stream from four Degree Colleges of West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya were purposively selected as sample, with 60 Male and 60 Female Students from Urban and 60 Male and 60 Female Students from Rural areas. Career Maturity Inventory by Dr. Nirmala Gupta was used for collecting data. The data was analysed with the help of Two-Way ANOVA. The result showed no significant influence of Gender and no significant influence of interaction between Gender and Locale on CM of the Students. However, the Mean Scores showed that both Urban and Rural Males had slightly higher CM than the Urban and Rural Females. The influence of Locale on the CM of Students was found to be significant and that the Urban Students were found to have significantly higher level of CM than the Rural Students.

1. INTRODUCTION

The college years are a crucial time for career-related decision making (Ping, 2009). It denotes a transition point from education to work for many and from College level education to advanced education for some. The process of decision making at this
point of transition is nothing but a function of career development. Career development, just like the other facets of an individual’s development is an important aspect of the developmental process. It is the process of managing life, learning and work over the lifespan (Walker, 2010) in a series of stages as conceived by Donald E. Super (1957) in his Career Development Theory. These stages, i.e. growth (birth to 14 years), exploration (15-24 years), establishment (25-44 years), maintenance (45-64 years) and decline (65+ years) are accompanied by a list of developmental tasks, such as, crystallisation, specification, implementation, stabilization and consolidation; and the ‘degree’ and ‘rate’ (Crites, 1973) to which a person successfully copes with these developmental tasks at each stage is measured in terms of ‘Career Maturity.’

Career Maturity is defined as “the individual’s readiness to make informed, age-appropriate career decisions and cope with career development tasks” (Savikas, 1999, as cited by Paton & Creed, 2003). Pickworth (1997) defines it as the individual’s readiness to cope with the developmental tasks which he is confronted with because of his or her biological and social developments, as well as society’s expectations of people who have reached that stage of development (cited by Mubiana, 2010). Building on Super’s Theory, J.O Crites (1973, 78) developed a measure of Career Maturity which consists of two dimensions – cognitive and affective (Themba, 2010). The cognitive dimension includes career choice competencies which comprises of five kinds of competencies – self appraisal, occupational information, goal selection, planning and problem solving. On the other hand, the affective dimension includes five attitudinal dimensions – involvement in choice process, orientation towards work, decisiveness, independence in decision making and compromising tendencies.

Career Maturity (CM), in the present study, is defined as the cognitive and affective behaviour of individuals which indicates their readiness to make informed career decisions at appropriate stages of career development.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

All available studies on CM done in India were reviewed. It was found that studies pertaining to Gender show inconclusive results. Kaur & Dogra (2011) and Sirohi (2013) found that Female students had higher level of Career Maturity than Male students. Mathur & Sharma (2001) and Singh & Sukhla (2015) found that Male students were more Career Mature than Female students. While Bhatnagar & Gupta (1988) and Kaur (1992) found no significant differences in the Career Maturity of Male and Female students as reviewed by Bhatnagar (1992). Pertaining to Locale, Alam (2013) found that Urban boys and girls were more career mature than Rural boys and girls. Through a perusal of available literature it was found that no studies have been done in Meghalaya on Career Maturity amongst the Arts Students in Degree Colleges. Hence, this study attempts to fill this research gap with the anticipation that the findings would significantly contribute to understanding the career behavior of the youth in Meghalaya.
3. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Undergraduates are the future knowledge workers of the economy. Since there is a positive relationship between enrolment in tertiary education rates and economic growth (Keller, 2006; cited by Holland et al, 2013), the career development needs of the undergraduates have to be understood and nurtured. As cited by Naidoo (1998) in his review, Career Maturity has become a well-established concept and is central to many career counselling and education programmes in schools and colleges (Herr and Crames, 1984) and to many career development programmes in business, industry and government (Hall, 1984). Given the significance of the construct in understanding the career behaviour of individuals, there exists a research gap in the country and the state, especially at the tertiary level where students are in the process of transiting to the world of work. Hence, the basic aim with which this study is undertaken is to find out the career readiness of the Students in Degree Colleges in the Arts Stream of West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya, who are in the exploration stage of career development.

4. OBJECTIVES

The study was carried out with the following objectives:

i. To study the influence of Gender on CM of Students in Degree Colleges in Arts Stream.

ii. To study the influence of Locale on CM of Students in Degree Colleges in Arts Stream.

iii. To study the influence of interaction between Gender and Locale on the CM of Students in Degree Colleges in Arts Stream.

5. HYPOTHESES

On the basis of the above objectives, the following \( H_0 \) were formulated:

i. There is no significant influence of Gender on CM of Students in Degree Colleges in Arts Stream.

ii. There is no significant influence of Locale on CM of Students in Degree Colleges in Arts Stream.

iii. There is no significant influence of interaction between Gender and Locale on the CM of Students in Degree Colleges in Arts Stream.

6. SAMPLE

Of the seven Degree Colleges in West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya, four Degree Colleges affiliated to the North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, were chosen for the study. The sample was further delimited to students in the Arts stream only. A total of 240 Degree Students (120 Males/ 120 Females) studying in Arts Stream were purposively selected as Sample comprising of 60 Males and 60 Females from Urban area and 60 Males and 60 Females from Rural area. The detail of the Sample is given in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>Name of the College</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Don Bosco College</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Career Maturity Inventory (CMI_GN) by Nirmala Gupta (1989) was used for collecting data. This inventory is an Indian adaptation of the CMI developed by J.O Crites in 1973 which was later modified in 1978. The tool comprises of two sub tests – Attitude Scale and Competence Test. The normal distribution of the scores was checked by using SPSS Version 20. It was found that the data were approximately normally distributed for both Gender and Locale with a skewness of .003 (SE = .221) and a kurtosis of -.696 (SE = .438) for Urban and Rural Males, and a skewness of -.232 (SE = .221) and a kurtosis of -.605 (SE = .430) for Urban and Rural Females (Lofgren, 2013).

8. RESULT AND FINDINGS

As per the objectives of the study, there were two levels of Gender, i.e. Male and Female, and two levels of Locale, i.e. Rural and Urban. So, the data was analysed with the help of 2 x 2 Factorial Design ANOVA in SPSS. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MSS</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (A)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>238.0</td>
<td>238.0</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locale (B)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15600.94</td>
<td>15600.94</td>
<td>112.87</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A x B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>32620.15</td>
<td>138.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>239</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from Table 2 that the F-Value for Gender is 1.72, which is not significant. This indicates that the Mean Scores of CM of Male and Female Students did not differ significantly, and so, there was no significant influence of Gender on CM of the Students in Degree Colleges in Arts Stream. Thus, the first $H_0$ that, there is no significant influence of Gender on CM of Students in Degree Colleges in Arts Stream is not rejected. It may, therefore, be said that the CM of the Students were found to be of the same extent in terms of Gender.

However, as can be seen in Table 2, the F-Value for Locale is 112.87 which is significant at 0.01 level with df = 1/239. It indicates that the Mean Scores of CM for Urban and Rural Students differ significantly. This means that there was a significant influence of Locale on CM of the Students. Thus, the second $H_0$ that there is no significant influence of Locale on CM of Students in Degree Colleges in Arts Stream is rejected. This, therefore, reveals that the Urban and Rural Students differ significantly in their CM. Again, from the same Table, it can be seen that the F-Value for Gender and Locale is .067 which is not significant. This means that the Mean Scores on CM of Male and...
Female Students from Urban and Rural areas did not differ significantly, and so, there was no significant influence of interaction between Gender and Locale on CM of Students. Thus, the third $H_0$ that there is no significant influence of interaction between Gender and Locale on CM of Students in Degree Colleges in Arts Stream is not rejected. Therefore, it can be said that the CM of Students were found to be independent of interaction between Gender and Locale.

Table 3: Gender & Locale wise N, Mean, SE & Percentile of CM of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55.18</td>
<td>13.17</td>
<td>30\textsuperscript{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>39.45</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>21\textsuperscript{st}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
<td>47.32</td>
<td>15.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>53.58</td>
<td>12.28</td>
<td>29\textsuperscript{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>37.07</td>
<td>08.12</td>
<td>20\textsuperscript{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
<td>45.32</td>
<td>13.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>54.38</td>
<td>12.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>38.26</td>
<td>10.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>46.32</td>
<td>14.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further, from Table 3, it can be seen that the Mean Scores of CM of Urban and Rural Males, which is 47.32, is slightly higher than those of Urban and Rural Females, whose Mean score is 45.32. This means that the Males were relatively more CM than the Females in Urban and Rural areas. Also, the Mean scores of CM of Urban Males and Females, which is 54.38, is significantly higher than those of Rural Males and Females, whose Mean Score is 38.26. This means that the students in the Urban area have significantly higher CM than the students in the Rural area.

Table 3 also shows that the scores of CM lies in the 30th percentile for Urban Males, 21\textsuperscript{st} percentile for Rural Males, 29\textsuperscript{th} percentile for Urban Females and 20\textsuperscript{th} percentile for Rural Females. According to Crites (1978), scores below the 50\textsuperscript{th} percentile are indicative of the potential for delayed or impaired progress related to career decision-making (Rojewski, Wicklein & Schell, 1995). Since the scores of CM of Males and Females in Urban and Rural areas lie below the 50\textsuperscript{th} percentile, it can be inferred that majority of the students do not have adequate level of CM as per their career development stage, but have delayed or impaired level of CM. In other words, the Students in Degree Colleges in Arts Stream of West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya show insufficient maturity in their career development and are not adequately ready to transit to the world of work.

9. DISCUSSION

The result of the study is in conformity with the findings by Bhatnagar & Gupta (1988) and Kaur (1992) who found no significant difference in the CM between Males and Females; and with the study by Alam (2013) who found that Urban boys and girls were more Career Mature than Rural boys and girls. A possible explanation for finding no Gender difference in CM in the present study could be the matrilineal structure of the...
society in the region where women assume an important role and where they face less discrimination in getting education and employment (Momin, 2007). Though no significant differences were found in the CM of Male and Female Students, we cannot ignore the fact that significant difference exists between Urban and Rural Students and that majority of the students have delayed or impaired levels of CM. There may be several possible explanations for this as viewed from the personal, societal and institutional levels.

At the Personal Level:
- Most students enter higher education without a definite plan for the future. They are not aware of the fast changing world of work. The changes in the social arrangement of work in the 21st century requires workers to develop skills and competencies that differ substantially from the knowledge and abilities required by 20th century occupations (Savikas et al, 2009), and most students in the Degree Colleges in the Arts Stream do not possess the required skills and competency.
- They lack motivation and therefore are not highly competent in terms of career development.
- Most students do not have access to career information.
- Since the State Government is the largest employing agency, most students aspire for government jobs either in the education sector or in the administration.
- Most students are reluctant to explore newer options available in the world of work.

At the Institutional Level:
- The curriculum is such that it does not nurture the career development of the students.
- No Career Guidance and placement cells are available, and if available, are not functional in the colleges.
- No job-specific degree courses are provided in colleges other than traditional courses.
- There is huge enrolment in Arts stream as illustrated in Figure 1. In case of West Garo Hills, Arts, Science and Commerce courses are provided only in two colleges, while the other five colleges provide only Arts course. The enrolment of the students in Arts Stream is more than the intake capacity of these colleges. Two colleges in the District have double shifts to accommodate more students enrolling in Arts stream.

![Figure 1: Distribution of Students in Different Streams](https://example.com/figure1.png)

Source: Enrolment data (2015-16) collected from the colleges and institutes of West Garo Hills District
At the Societal Level

- Since Vocational Education is considered a stigma in India, this may also be assumed to be true in Meghalaya, which explains why there is huge enrolment in the Arts stream.
- In terms of access, Meghalaya has only sixteen colleges which is below the national average of twenty three colleges per lakh population according to a report by Deloitte (Akula, 2015). This explains why enrolment of students exceeds the intake capacity.
- The recently initiated Chief Minister’s Career Guidance programme is not reaching all stakeholders, especially at the college level in both Urban and Rural areas.
- No major transformation has been observed in the functions of Employment Exchange run by the Government as per the current demands of the labour market.

10. SUGGESTIONS

The 21st century work environment is dynamic. Hence, skilling the youth in terms of employment and career would ensure their Career Maturity which is directly linked to workforce productivity. Meghalaya has India’s largest and fastest growing youth population (Meghalaya State youth Policy, 2012). Therefore, preparing the youth for future challenges, especially in the world of work, is of paramount importance. With recent emphasis being placed on skill development especially at the Vocational level, Higher Education should not be isolated. As per the National Policy on Education (PoA, 1992), Higher Education contributes to national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills. Therefore, the career development of the students in Degree Colleges needs to be ensured by equipping them with updated knowledge and employability skills relevant to changing needs of the economy. The following suggestions are made to cater to the observed and felt career development needs of the undergraduates in Meghalaya:

- Career guidance programmes should be organized at the College level. These programmes will provide awareness and information on career related interventions and help the Students to make appropriate career choices.
- More colleges, especially in the rural areas should be established offering not just the conventional courses of Arts, Science and Commerce but also other non-conventional courses.
- The curriculum should include skill development courses which would train the undergraduates in facing interview boards, writing resume, seeking jobs, maintaining inter-personal relationship, learning about job duties and responsibilities and the like.
- Subject teachers should be sensitized towards the career development needs of the students. They should be trained in order to facilitate Career Education through their teachings.
- Career counsellors should be appointed in the Colleges to cater to the career development needs of the undergraduates.
• The state should create more employment opportunities, especially for the university graduates.
• The functions of Employment Exchanges should be redefined. It should be able to provide up-to-date web-based career information to the students as well as monthly or quarterly circulars on career information to schools and colleges.

11. REFERENCES

[12] Lofgren, Kent (2013). "Normality test using SPSS: How to check whether data are normally distributed," [video file]. https://youtube.be/ledYgILn0