

Lacuna in Skills Development Leading to Unemployability - A Case Study

Dr. Janetius¹, Shilpa, S.T.²

¹Director, Centre for Counseling and Guidance

²MBA Student, NIT-Tiruchirappalli

Abstract: *This is a case study that portrays a young rural adult, his educational background, job-hopping, who lost interest and potency to work, and his inner struggles to establish an accurate career path. 'Right person for the right job' - a dictum by the American psychologist Frank Parsons points out the importance of inborn skills (aptitude) of an individual in sustaining a career. In the Indian scenario, there are no serious considerations given to the identification of the inner potency and people often think mistakenly that anyone can do any job. This lack of knowledge in one's own ability is the main cause of losing the potency to work, regular job-hopping, un-employability and even low job satisfaction.*

Keywords: Unemployability, Skills Development, Career decision, Vocational guidance, aptitude and interest

1. Introduction

A natural talent coupled with an interest is the key to career success. An individual can be productive in a career only if s/he chooses a profession based on their personality ((Parsons, 1909; Ginzberg, 1972; Holland, 1992; Roe, 1970; Super, 1994). In India, people seldom opt for a fitting job which suits their personality and inner dynamics, because they are not accurately guided by psychologists and mental health professionals in schools and colleges. Also, they don't seek assistance from such specialized professionals, even if it is accessible. The adolescents and young adults are guided by their parents, elders or some self-proclaimed gurus or peer groups, who are ill-equipped to assess an individual's inner mental acumen and personality dynamics to direct them towards their aptitude based career sets (Janetius & Mini, 2015; Mini, 2010; Vasantha, 1977; Yadav, 1979). Due to these pitiable circumstances, unproductive as well unengaged human resources are seen in every workplace. This case study elaborates a story of a rural young adult, who had lost his potency to work due to various reasons, to highlight the gap between skills development and human capital management.

2. Case Presentation

Mr. X is a 24-year-old male from a lower middle-class family. His family consists of four members; his parents and an elder sister. Both his parents are uneducated and they go for daily wage jobs. His sister is a college lecturer in a private college that pays less than 8,000 Rs. per month and she is the main source of permanent income for the family.

During his school days, he was an average student in the class. In his higher secondary, he scored just 57% of marks and was not able to decide the specific field of his college studies. He recalled his school teachers, who mentioned that the Commerce course is one of the easy courses to study at the Under Graduate level and there are many job opportunities available. Her sister, who is a college teacher, insisted that Commerce with Computer application (BCom-CA) would be a better choice. He was able to join a college

near his house without much difficulty, as the mushrooming of private colleges were hunting for students to fill the seats for their survival and income generation. In this pathetic social situation, he joined a private college. He joined blindly without any career goals and future plans.

His college days were spent in a very leisurely manner; whenever he liked to stay away from the classes he skipped unscrupulously. He spent more time in watching movies, roaming around with his friends in his newly bought motorcycle. Buying a new motorcycle had its own issues. He forced his parents to buy a motorcycle and refused to go to college without it. He did not apply for a driving license and his father being an uneducated person, did not bother much about the driving license before buying a motorcycle. His father also looked at his son going to college in a motorcycle, as a social prestige. He never developed any specific interest in the field of study, nor developed any skills in commerce or computers. Poor study habits and lack of assignment submission became the part of his college lifestyle. In the final semester, he was not able to complete the project work assigned in the course and he had to buy it from a shop as many of his unmotivated classmates did and submitted it without knowing any details. He managed to complete his UG. He was not able to get any placement, even though he went for few campus interviews.

After his graduation, his elder sister suggested him to go for some post-graduation, for the sake of getting a better job opportunity. In consultation with his friends, he joined Masters in Social Work (MSW) with HR specialization. Two days of fieldwork in the Social Work curriculum was an attraction for him to join the specific course. The fieldwork days were an added bonanza to skip classes. Fieldworks and the related activities in the curriculum gave him ample opportunity to roam around and waste time. He never developed any specific Skills or learned any Human Resource Management concepts. With much difficulty, however, he passed the Masters and joined the list of unemployable young adults.

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When he completed his PG course, his sister got married and the regular source of income to the family stopped. At this point, he was in a dire situation to get a job to shoulder the economic burden of the family. Since he was specialized in HR, he got a job in a metal-pipe manufacturing company as a supervisor. His monthly salary was around Rs.6,000, which was very less when compared to the daily wages some laborers get in the very same company. As he took up a job, his personal needs increased and the salary was not sufficient for his needs and had a hard time supporting the family economically. His parents started to scold him for not supporting the family economically, and his father, in particular, was harsh at him for the money invested on his education.

A kind of guilt and shame started to grow deep in him and the mental agony slowly started to engulf him. His college friend circles gradually vanished and he felt lonely and isolated in the society. He started to drink almost every day and his life became a directionless ship in the vast ocean. The whole economic problems of his family fell on his shoulders, as his parents started to nag him for money. Due to his lack of skills and mindset, he couldn't continue the job as a supervisor and resigned it within two months time. He often reasons out that he has to leave the job because of the low salary which was not even sufficient to accomplish his private needs but he failed to understand that he does not possess sufficient skill sets to sustain the job or get a better job. As per his post-graduate qualification and specialization, he is suitable for many supervisory, HR related jobs, but as per his skills, he is unemployable for any job. His lethargic attitude towards education, wasting time and energy during the college days, lack of skills development pushed him to a narrow end. In this condition, he shifted to another job as a supervisor, in a departmental store. Furthermore, in the last nine months, he has changed four jobs.

3. Case Analysis

This case identifies two major elements that are needed for a successful career and happy life: vocational guidance and life goal setting. Vocational guidance is very important in choosing a career. For example, Holland's theory of career development (Holland, 1992) classifies people into six different personality styles. The characteristics of each of these are described below:

- 1) *Realistic*: Likes to work with nature, plants, animals, tools, or machines; generally avoids social activities like teaching, healing, and informing others; Value practical things like what one sees likes to touch and use them.
- 2) *Investigative*: Likes to learn and solve math or science problems; generally avoids leading, selling, or persuading people; has a good understanding of math problems and like to solve them; sees oneself as precise, scientific, and intellectual.
- 3) *Artistic*: Likes to do creative activities like art, drama, crafts, dance, music, or creative writing; generally avoids highly ordered or repetitive activities; sees oneself as expressive, original, and independent.
- 4) *Social*: Likes to help people in the field of teaching, nursing, or giving first aid, providing information; generally avoids using machines, tools, or animals to

achieve a goal; sees oneself as helpful, friendly, and trustworthy.

- 5) *Enterprising*: Likes to lead and has high persuasive skills to market things and ideas; generally avoids activities that require careful observation and scientific, analytical thinking; often sees oneself as energetic, ambitious, and sociable.
- 6) *Conventional*: Likes to work with records in an orderly way; generally avoids ambiguous, unstructured activities, Values success in business; and see oneself as orderly, and good at following a set plan.

Theories of Holland and other psychologists (Super, Ginzberg) shed light on a person's aptitude and inner dynamics, which enable them to choose a right career, appropriate to the personality. For example, an artistic person is more likely to be successful and satisfied if s/he chooses a job that has an artistic environment, like a dance teacher, an environment dominated by artistic people, where creative abilities and expression are highly valued. Life goal setting is giving orientation for one's own future, both career and life plans. According to Victor Frankle (2006) every person must have a motive and goal in their life which gives meaning and purpose to life, which plays a significant role in every successful career.

4. Therapy Intervention

Reality therapy developed by William Glasser (1965; 1998) was the counselling intervention employed by the psychologist. Reality therapy promotes problem-solving and making healthier choices in order to achieve specific goals. Reality therapy maintains that the subject is suffering from an unsuccessful attainment of essential need that is part of his present life. Therefore, therapy focuses on the here-and-now and the future. It does not deal with unconscious dynamism regularly focused by Freudian psychologists or past issues of the client and his problems.

5. Conclusion

This case study reveals the basic issues related to career selection, success, and sustainability. The subject in the case study could be successful in a career as well in life path if guided to identify his inner personality, inborn talents by some psychological testing to identify his aptitude and interest as well as some therapy to set his future orientation which he lost in his careless college days. The study also brings out the following facts for consideration in the Indian scenario.

- 1) There is no importance given to the identification of inborn talents and interests of people in their selection of field of study as well as career.
- 2) The general attitude of students in our country is to enjoy their college life in a goal-less leisurely manner rather than having a focus on learning and skills development.
- 3) People look for lucrative jobs rather than pursuing a career which would be appropriate for their aptitude.

Psychologists reiterate the importance of identification of aptitude and interest in choosing a career and sustaining it. Until a person chose a career which suits his personality,

based on aptitude and interest, s/he can't sustain it and develop further in the career of life path.

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