# Unemployment among Educated Youth: A Study on the Career Plans of Under Graduate and Post Graduate Students in Higher Educational Institutions of East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya

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*Abstract: -* This research is a study on the career plans of under graduate and post graduate students studying in various educational institutions offering formal under graduate or post graduate programs located in East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya. Although the state witness a literacy rate of 74.43% and East Khasi Hills District in particular has literacy rate of 84.7 %, the current trend of unemployment, under employment and lack of self employment among educated youths in the state is still a concern (Rao, 2016). The overall greater unemployment rate (GUER) in Meghalaya state amongst those with atleast a graduate degree as of 2019 is 13.09 of the labor force (Center for Monitoring Indian Economy, 2019). It is commonly observe that unemployment and employability related issues among educated youth in the state were directly related to conditions of labor market and scarcity of jobs. However, this initial perception fails to take into account the career planning and career development resources for a student at the undergraduate (UG) and post graduate (PG) level as they prepare themselves for starting a career.

In this study, mixed qualitative and quantitative research was applied aiming at identification of career plans among the under graduate and post graduate students. Variables such as gender, socio-economic status, and other socio-cultural dimensions that may be influencing their plans were explored.

Following convenience sampling, a total sample size of 385 having 223 UG and 162 PG students, participated in this study with an average age of 20 for UG and 23 for PG. There were six faculty, 2 Heads of institutions, and 3 representatives from job providers in Meghalaya who were interviewed for this study.

Both undergraduate and post graduate students shows average to good career planning, however data from the qualitative research reveals that most of these students do not seem to have plans after their studies. There are also variations of the findings across gender, socio-economic status but not in the type of institution, level of study and ethnicity. This paper discusses at length the gaps between the student's perception of career planning and their expression of need for structured career services in the higher educational institutions.

Key words: Career planning, under graduate (UG), post graduate (PG), higher educational institutions, Meghalaya.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is commonly observed that on an average, undergraduate and post graduate students would have at least spent a minimum of 18 years and 20 years respectively since childhood, investing their time, effort and money on studies mainly with the objective of securing a job and building a successful career. Upon completion of their higher educational studies, students are expected to start earning and become independent. This expectation may compel them to look for a job for the sake of earning rather than focusing on career building in order to grow in their professional life. Amongst those that are able to secure a "job", the case of underemployment sets in due to mismatch of their educational qualifications, skills with the nature of the job that they are performing.

Choosing a career means more than just getting or working at any job. McDonald & Hite (2016) pointed out that while the meaningfulness of work in life among some people is to make ends meet, to some others, work means to seek out occupations to enhance a sense of self and fulfill one's potential. The term career which was not commonly used before the 1960 (Herr, 2001, p. 196), may be defined in several ways. Career in the broadest sense includes all the jobs that are held during the working life of an individual. According to Dessler and Varkkey (2009), a career may be defined as the occupational positions of a person over many years. This definition implies that for an individual to have a successful career he must also have successful occupational positions which will require career planning and development initiatives.

As most people in a modern society spend a major part of

their lives working at a job in any capacity, many fail to manage their career which is more than just getting or working at a job. People whose career goals and potentials went unfulfilled is mainly due to lack of career management support meant to enable individuals to better understand and develop their career skills and interest and to use these skills and interest more effectively (Dessler and Varkkey, 2009).

The management process of planning organizing, leading and controlling are basic functions performed by all managers including human resource managers (Dessler, 2008). Apart from these managerial functions, human resource personnel also perform operative functions of human resource planning, human resource development and compensation of employees. Human resource development (HRD) as pointed out by Rao (2010), is the process of improving, molding and changing the skills, knowledge, creative ability, aptitude, attitude, values, commitment etc., based on the present and future job and organizational requirements. As such the functions of human resource development include training and development, performance appraisal, organizational development and career planning and development.

Career planning and development remain an important activity of human resource as it plays a key role in helping managers to recruit and retain the skilled and committed workforce an organization needs to succeed (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2004). Career planning according to Rao (2010), is the deliberate process through which someone becomes aware of personal skills, interest, knowledge, motivation and other characteristics and establish action plan to achieve a goal. Therefore, career planning can be thought of as the process by which a student selects a career goal and identify paths to achieve the goal. In order for organizations to grow and be successful, career planning and development are crucial to human resource as they play an important role in supporting managers to attract and retain a competent workforce. Wesarat, sharif and Majid (2014) research on a review of organizational and individual career management also stressed on the influence of career planning and development initiatives on personal and organizational successes.

Similarly, the career success of any student after college also depends on the career planning and development initiatives that he/she receives during college. A great deal of attention has to be given to students in helping them prepare for the world of work, identify their career plans and provision of career related support which is important for them, the educational institution, the employers and the society as a whole. According to a survey on Work Orientation and Response to Career Choices- Indian Regional Survey (WORCC-IRS) conducted across 15 different

regions in the country, provision of career related services in various educational institutions is crucial to address the career related challenges among students (Arulmani & Nag Arulmani, 2005). A similar study conducted to determine career preparation status of high school students also reveals low career preparation among the students (Viray, 2017).

Metz, Fouad and Helledy (2009) pointed out that the awareness, preparation and management of a student's career which include career planning and career development activities seems to be lacking even as college students career expectations do not seem to resemble the current labor market requirements. The problem of career planning and development is not addressed as most educational institutions prepare students in academic and content area, but fell short in areas in the context of work in assisting them to manage their careers and career aspirations. Additionally, taking into consideration the changing nature of the requirement from the world of work , the nature of career and the way people pursue their career has changed and most failed to have a great career as they are unable to manage these career complexities (Popescu, 2015). Career planning is a key factor in helping individuals/ students manage this complexity. The establishment and implementation of career planning and career development support programs for students is as equally important as their own initiative on managing their career (Popescu, 2015).

The conceptual framework of career and its related components need to be explored in order to gain a wholesome perspective and understand the role of career planning and development programs in shaping an individual's career. The role of students and particularly that of the institution in planning and developing their career has been discussed at great length in the recent past especially with respect to enhancing, realization and fulfillment of career goals and plans, and still remains an important topic for research and practice. In order to aid career planning and attainment of career goals of students, an analysis of the career plans of under graduate and post graduate students should be conducted.

Prevailing employment market scenario in the state greatly influence the career goals of students entering active work life. A study conducted by the Institute of Applied Manpower Research has found that regular salaried government jobs followed by self employment in business or trade are the most sought after work by the educated unemployed graduates in Meghalaya ((Planning Department, 2009). This is an indication of high artificial or under employment in the state which also affect their jobs and career plans.

The state of Meghalaya is situated in the North-Eastern region of India, with a geographical area of 22,429 sq.km has a population of 29,66,889 of which 80.4 percent lives in the

rural areas (Census, 2011)**.** The level of employment and unemployment, its composition and the growth in employment opportunities are critical indicators of the process of development in any economy. The work force participation rate which is an indicator of measuring employment level in Meghalaya, in 2001, records a total of only 41.8 percent with 48.3 percent being male workers and 35.1 percent being female workers (Planning Department, 2009). According to Meghalaya State Development Report, although the unemployment rate in Meghalaya has decreased over the years, there is high unemployment rate in the age group of 15 to 19, 20 to 24 and 25 to 29. The unemployment rate in the urban sector for the age group of 25 to 29 years is significantly higher, which reflects the existence of large scale youth employment in the urban areas of the state. Similarly, the unemployment rate of the educated youth tends to be high and most unemployment is long term or of a chronic nature. Unemployment among youth who have completed at least graduate in the state was also observed to have increased to 13.09 percent in 2018-19 from 8 percent in 2004-05 (Center for Monitoring Indian Economy, 2019).

Meghalaya has a literacy rate of 74.43 percent with 75.95 percent male literacy and 72.89 percent female literacy (Rao, 2016). The pattern of education in the state includes primary schools, middle schools and higher secondary schools. According to Kumar and Ram (2013), Meghalaya is also home to several institutions of higher learning. Education services in Meghalaya has evolved and developed and colleges, in particular, have made their mark in terms of providing quality education to various sorts of courses for students to choose from. Most of the colleges in Meghalaya are affiliated to the North Eastern Hills University(NEHU), which is a central university in the state among other institutions of higher learning in Meghalaya. The Martin Luther Christian University (MLCU) established in 2006, is one of the universities in Meghalaya that aims to meet the challenges of the present day work place (Kumar and Ram, 2013).

### Methods

While Meghalaya has literacy rate of 74.43 percent, district wise data reveals that each district was not given equal importance while carrying out the program of spreading education in the state. District wise literacy rate was lowest in Jaintia Hills with only 63.26 percent literacy in the district and East Khasi Hills District recorded highest literacy rate in the state with 84.7 percent (Census 2011). Availability of educational institutions also determines the literacy rate in the state. In Meghalaya, there is a total number of 63 colleges offering under graduate programs and 13 universities offering under graduate and post graduate

programs in the state, out of which 33 colleges and 8 universities are located in East Khasi Hills District alone. For the above reason, East Khasi Hills District has been chosen as the location of the study for having the highest literacy rate from amongst all the eleven districts and highest number of colleges and universities in the state.

Other variable for inclusion in this study includes rural, urban and semi urban areas of East Khasi Hills District. Additionally, for the purpose of this study, only higher educational institutions offering under graduate and post graduate courses are included and selected students from various levels/ semester/ year took part in this research study.

Using convenience sampling method, the samples were derived. The quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. After obtaining the list of all colleges and universities located in East Khasi Hills District, a non-probability sampling design was used to draw out participants from the population in this study. A convenience sampling was used in order to select respondents from participating colleges and universities including organizations in the study.

There were three categories of respondents who took part in this study. These included male and female students of participating colleges and universities, an experienced faculty or head of institution representing the college/ university and a representative of private, public, government organizations.

The tools used in response to the objectives of this study, was a semi-structured questionnaire with closed and open ended items classified under three sections, was developed and administered to male and female UG and PG students for generating quantitative and qualitative information to ascertain their career plans. Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviation to describe the variables. For comparison of variables, Pearson's chi square test was used. Analysis of quantitative data was done using Microsoft Excel and statistical package for social science (SPSS). A qualitative method of data collection was used to gather information from faculty representative, head of institutions and representatives of various job providers located in the district. An informal in-depth interview was conducted among the various representatives so as to ascertain their views and opinions on career plans of students. An informal interview schedule containing items for discussions classified under three sections was also developed. Thematic analysis was used for analyzing qualitative responses from the interview after coding, categorization and deriving themes.

### Findings and Discussions

This section presents the career planning of the under graduate and post graduate students. Results of variations on the findings across age, gender, area of permanent residence, socio-economic status, program of study on their career planning is also presented.

*Table 1 : Demographic profile of UG and PG students*

| Program Level | Gender | | Age Mean$\pm$SD 21$\pm$2.7 | Socio Economic Status | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male 163 (%) | Female 222 (%) | | Low 217 (%) | Middle 84 (%) | High 84 (%) | Total 385 (%) |
| UG | 106 (47.5) | 117 (52.5) | 20$\pm$1.8 | 157 (70.4) | 34 (15.2) | 32 (14.3) | 223 (57.9) |
| PG | 57 (35.2) | 105 (64.8) | 23$\pm$2.5 | 60 (37.0) | 50 (30.9) | 52 (32.1) | 162 (42.1) |
| Total | (42.3) | (57.7) | 21$\pm$2.7 | (56.4) | (21.8) | (21.8) | (100.0) |

This section also presents the plans after studies, reasons for no plans, knowledge of careers and the required competencies, of both UG and PG students.

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of both UG and PG students. The mean age of the both UG and PG respondents is 21. There is more number of female respondents in both UG and PG and majority of the respondents belonging to low socio-economic status are UG respondents.

## 1. Socio –demographic profile of under graduate and post graduate students.

This section presents socio-demographic profile of under graduate and post graduate respondents on the basis of gender, area of permanent residence, community background and income level of parents which are presented in table 2, table 3 and table 4 respectively.

Table 2 presents the socio-demographic profile of both UG and PG students. There is more number of female respondents in both UG and PG and majority of the respondents are from rural areas. Out of 223 UG respondents, 52.5 percent are female respondents and 67.3 of the UG respondents are from rural areas. Among the PG

students, out of 162 respondents 68.8 are female and 60.5 percent of the PG respondents are from rural areas.

*Table 2: Socio demographic profile of UG & PG by gender and area of permanent residence.*

| Area of Permanent Residence | Gender (UG) | | | Gender (PG) | | | UG PG Total N=385 (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male N=106 (%) | Female N=117 (%) | Total N=223 (%) | Male N=57 (%) | Female N=105 (%) | Total N=162 (%) | |
| Urban | 21 (19.8) | 20 (17.1) | 41 (18.4) | 11 (19.3) | 34 (32.4) | 45 (27.8) | 86 (22.3) |
| Rural | 68 (64.2) | 82 (70.1) | 150 (67.3) | 34 (59.6) | 49 (46.7) | 83 (51.2) | 233 (60.5) |
| Semi Urban | 17 (16.0) | 15 (12.8) | 32 (14.3) | 12 (21.1) | 22 (21.0) | 34 (21.0) | 66 (17.1) |
| Total % | (47.5) | (52.5) | (57.9) | (35.2) | (68.8) | (42.1) | (100.0) |

The respondents are from a total of 12 different communities from different states in the North East (Table 3) including some states outside the North Eastern Region. The Khasis are among the highest number of UG respondents with 68.6percent followed by respondent from Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills from the state of Meghalaya. Among the PG respondents, the highest numbers of respondents are the Khasis again with 30.9 percent followed by the Garos with 18.5 and the tribes from the Nagas of Nagaland State with 15.4 percent.

*Table 3: Socio demographic profile of UG and PG by community background.*

| Community | UG N=223 (%) | PG N=162 (%) | UG-PG N= 385 (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Khasi | 153 (68.6) | 50 (30.9) | 203 (52.7) |
| Jaintia | 28 (12.6) | 19 (11.7) | 47 (12.2) |
| Garo | 14 (6.3) | 30 (18.5) | 44 (11.4) |
| Naga (Sumi/ Angami/ Rongmei/Tangkhul/ Konyak) | 0 (0) | 25 (15.4) | 25 (6.5) |
| Manipuri (Meitei) | 4 (1.8) | 5 (3.1) | 9 (2.3) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mizo | 3 (1.3) | 13 (8.0) | 16 (4.2) |
| Tamil | 1 (.4) | 0 (0) | 1 (0.3) |
| Arunachali (Nyishi/Adi) | 6 (2.7) | 4 (2.5) | 10 (2.6) |
| Tripuri | 3 (1.3) | 1 (0.6) | 4 (1.0) |
| Nepali | 3 (1.3) | 1 (0.6) | 4 (1.0) |
| Assamese (Bodo) | 0 (0) | 6 (3.7) | 6 (1.6) |
| Bengali | 2 (.9) | 3 (1.9) | 5 (1.3) |
| Not Mentioned | 6 (2.7) | 5 (3.1) | 11 (2.9) |
| Total N (%) | 223 (57.9) | 162 (42.1) | 385 (100.0) |

The highest numbers of respondents among the UG and PG respondents are from the low level income group (Table 4). Among the UG the low level income group represents 70.5 percent where as 37.0 of the PG respondents are from the low income level. There is a difference in the number of respondents from different levels of income at the UG and PG level of education, and it seems that there is more number of respondents form low income group at the UG level as compared to the PG level.

*Table 4: Profile of Male and Female UG & PG students by income level of parents*

| Income Level | Gender (UG) | | | Gender (PG) | | | UG PG |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male 106 (%) | Female 117 (%) | Total 223 (%) | Male 57 (%) | Female 105 (%) | Total 162 (%) | Total 385 (%) |
| Low Income Level | 75 (70.8) | 82 (70.1) | 157 (70.5) | 23 (40.4) | 37 (35.2) | 60 (37.0) | 217 (56.4) |
| Average Income Level | 18 (17.0) | 16 (13.7) | 34 (15.2) | 15 (26.3) | 35 (33.3) | 50 (30.9) | 84 (21.8) |
| High Income Level | 13 (12.3) | 19 (16.2) | 32 (14.3) | 19 (33.3) | 33 (31.4) | 52 (32.1) | 84 (21.8) |
| Total % | 47.5 | 52.5 | 57.9 | 35.2 | 64.8 | 42.1 | 100.0 |

## 2. Career planning of under graduate and post graduate students

This section presents the career planning of the under graduate and post graduate students. Results of variations on the findings across age, gender, area of permanent residence, socio-economic status, program of study, on their career planning is also presented. This section also presents the plans after studies, reasons for no plans, knowledge of careers and the required competencies, of both UG and PG students.

Table 5 shows the distribution of career planning at the UG and PG levels of education between male and female students. In table 7, the chi-square test of homogeneity indicates that the distribution of level of career plans at the UG and PG levels of education between male and female is not significant. This test, therefore, indicates that there is a variation in the distribution of career plan between male and female at both levels of education.

*Table 5: Career Planning Score by Level of Education and Gender (N=385)*

| Level of Education | Gender | Very Low | Low | Average | High | Very High | df | Chi-Square | P value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UG (n=223) | Male n=106 | 7 | 19 | 37 | 29 | 14 | 4 | 6.572 | .160 |
| | Female (n=177) | 7 | 29 | 44 | 32 | 5 | | | |
| PG (n=162) | Male (n=57) | 1 | 11 | 10 | 19 | 16 | 4 | 3.915 | .418 |
| | Female (n=105) | 0 | 25 | 25 | 34 | 21 | | | |

Table 6 shows the distribution of career plan at UG and PG levels of education by area of permanent residence. The chi-square test of homogeneity indicates that while there is no variation in the distribution of level of career plan at the UG level between respondents from urban, rural and semi-

urban areas, however there is a variation in the distribution of career plan between respondents from urban, rural and semi urban areas at the PG level of education.

*Table 6: Distribution of career plan at UG and PG levels of education by Area*

| Level of Education | Area of Residence | Very Low | Low | Average | High | Very High | Df | Chi-Square | P value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UG (n=223) | Urban (n=41) | 1 | 11 | 14 | 10 | 5 | | | |
| | Rural (n=150) | 7 | 36 | 60 | 35 | 12 | 8 | 25.867 | .001 |
| | Semi-Urban (n=32) | 6 | 1 | 7 | 16 | 2 | | | |
| PG (n=162) | Urban (n=45) | 0 | 6 | 10 | 16 | 13 | | | |
| | Rural (n=83) | 1 | 25 | 16 | 28 | 13 | 8 | 10.818 | .212 |
| | Semi-urban (n=34) | 0 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 11 | | | |

The distribution of level of career plan at UG and PG levels of education by parents level of income as inferred from the table 7 shows that the statistical inference in not significant (P>0.05). In the table, the chi-square test of homogeneity reveals that the distribution of level of career plans at the UG and PG levels of education between respondents from low income, average income and high income level is not significant. This test, therefore, indicates that there is a variation in the distribution of career plan at UG and PG level between students from different levels of parent's income. It can be inferred that the higher the income, the higher is the level of career planning.

*Table 7: Distribution of career plan at UG and PG levels of education by parent's level of income. (N=385)*

| Level of Education | Level of Income | Very Low | Low | Average | High | Very High | Df | Chi-Square | P value | Pearson's correlation Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UG (n=223) | Low Income (n=157) | 11 | 33 | 64 | 38 | 11 | | | | |
| | Average Income (n=34) | 2 | 9 | 6 | 13 | 4 | 8 | 8.974 | .344 | .106 |
| | High Income (n=32) | 1 | 6 | 11 | 10 | 4 | | | | |
| PG (n=162) | Low Income (n=60) | 1 | 18 | 11 | 21 | 9 | | | | |
| | Average Income (50) | 0 | 11 | 13 | 12 | 14 | 8 | 10.238 | .249 | .180 |
| | High | 0 | 7 | 11 | 20 | 14 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Income (n=52) | | | | | | | | |

Table 8 shows that the statistical inference in the career plans of the UG and the PG students is highly significant (P<0.05). The test of homogeneity shows that there is no variation in the career plans at the UG and PG levels of education. Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation however shows that there is a positive correlation between the level of education of the respondents and their career planning.

*Table 8: Distribution of career plan by UG and PG levels of education (N=385)*

| Level of Education | Career Planning | | | | | df | Chi-Square | P value | Pearson's correlation Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Very Low | Low | Average | High | Very High | | | | |
| UG (n=223) | 14 (6.2) | 48 (21.5) | 81 (36.3) | 61 (27.3) | 19 (8.5) | 4 | 28.623 | <.001 | .204 |
| PG (n=162) | 1 (0.6) | 36 (22.2) | 35 (21.6) | 53 (32.7) | 37 (22.8) | | | | |

As per data gathered from the qualitative responses, the plans after studies among those that scores high to very high in career planning is indicated in table 9.

*Table 9: Distribution of Plans after studies by UG and PG level of education*

| Plans after studies | Level of Education | |
|---|---|---|
| | UG (n=223) | PG (n=162) |
| Further Studies    n=52 (%) | 30 (13.5) | 22 (13.6) |
| Self employment n=40 (%) | 31 (13.9) | 9 (5.6) |
| Apply for Job    n=58 (%) | 27 (12.1) | 31( 19.1) |
| Multiple Plans    n=33 (%) | 9 (4.0) | 24 (14.8) |
| No Plans    n=202 (%) | 126 (14.8) | 76 (17.9) |
| Df | 5 | |
| Chi-square | 26.805 | |
| P Value | <0.001 | |

Table 9 indicates the distribution of plans after studies at the UG and PG levels of education. The distribution of plan after studies at UG and PG levels of education, as per the chi-square test of homogeneity, indicates that the distribution at the UG and PG level of education is highly significant (p<0.05). This test therefore points that there is no variation in the distribution of plans after studies at UG and PG level of education.

The qualitative response was also collected from the PG and UG respondents to determine the reason for lack of career planning. The qualitative responses from the UG and PG respondents for lack/ poor career planning includes "not yet thought of a plan, confusion in setting plan, multiple plans, no confidence in choosing career plan, contradicts with parents plans, financial restriction on setting plans, studies and interest not matching" and some of the respondents did not mentioned the reason. Table 10 indicates the distribution of the reason for lack/ poor career plan by UG and PG level of education.

The test of homogeneity in table 10, indicates that the reason for poor career planning at UG and PG level of education is highly significant (p<0.05) and there is no variation in the distribution of reason for poor career planning at the UG and PG levels of education. The most common reason for poor career planning at the UG and PG level is "not yet decided/ thought of a career plan".

*Table 10: Distribution of the reason for No plans after studies by UG and PG level of education (n=385)*

| Plans after studies | Level of Education | |
|---|---|---|
| | UG (n=223) | PG (n=162) |
| Not yet decided/ thought of a plan (n=105) | 89 | 16 |
| Confusion in setting career plan (n=35) | 23 | 12 |
| No confidence in choosing career plan (n=3) | 0 | 3 |
| Contradicts with parents Plans (n=3) | 1 | 2 |
| Financial constraint restrict setting of career plan (n=3) | 1 | 2 |
| Studies and interest no matching (n=3) | 2 | 1 |
| Not mentioned (n=43) | 28 | 15 |
| Not applicable (n=190) | 79 | 111 |
| Df | 7 | |
| Chi-square | 59.354 | |
| P Value | <0.001 | |

### 3. Knowledge of job competencies

The Meghalaya Draft State Youth Policy (Sports and Youth Affairs Department, 2012) pointed out that there is a mismatch between skill requirements and employment opportunities available in the state which is a major contributor to unemployment and underemployment. The case of mismatch of skills at the global context has also been a concern. The issue of mismatch of skills requires attention and linkage of government, industry, academia and other agency to identify and provide the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities or competencies. The critical role of the industry whether private, public, government agencies, or entrepreneurs would be to share their positional requirements such as job descriptions, job specification including term of references or general, technical and soft skill requirements of various entry level positions with the higher educational institutions. The report on a survey of 223 employers published by the Council for Industry and Higher Education, pointed out that it is important for industry to convey their requirements to educational institutions in a clear and consistent manner (The Council for Industry and Higher Education, 2008)

Table 11 indicates the knowledge of the various required competencies in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities which matches with industry requirements.

*Table 11: Distribution of knowledge of required (job) competencies by level of education*

| Program Level | Knowledge of Required Competency | | | | | |
| | Very Poor (n =13) | Poor (n =70) | Average (n= 119) | Good (n= 158) | Very Good (n =25) | Total (n= 385) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UG | 10 | 62 | 79 | 61 | 11 | 223 |
| PG | 3 | 8 | 40 | 97 | 14 | 162 |

The knowledge of required competencies as seen in table 11, at the UG level is average while at the PG level the knowledge is high to very high. However, the thematic analysis of qualitative data indicates that the knowledge of required competencies at the UG and PG level is low.

The following are responses each from the representative of institution and representative of various work organization after coding, categorization and deriving themes.

"The unemployment among graduates for me, I feel is the lack of both technical skills and soft skills. I feel most student sometimes takes up job which are not related to their studies/ skills. Students must also know how to build a career, not just finding a job" (Female Faculty, PG).

"A graduate without experience but with the functional skills will be recruited in specific/ functional roles. A PG with specific skills will be recruited for assistant managerial positions. A graduate/ PG with relevant experience and skills will be recruited for managerial level positions" (HR Manager, Pvt., Ltd).

***Qualitative responses on identification of career plan of UG and PG students.***

The themes below were extracted from the individual interview with faculty, heads of educational institutions, and representatives of various job providers in Meghalaya as well as the qualitative responses of the students.

#### A. Theme 1: Lack of clarity of plans

While the result from the quantitative data indicated high to very high career planning at the UG and PG levels of education, the result from the qualitative data after thematic analysis indicated poor career planning among the UG and PG students.

"…50 % of the final year students will have some idea of what they want to do. We still need to help the other 50% to draw their career plans. Most of them don't know what to do next" (Female faculty, PG).

"Most of the students that come for interview don't even know the requirement of the employers (job providers) and don't know what they are there for. Sometime we get random people who apply for jobs here" (Male HR, Private Limited).

"Most students do not know what they want to do in the future. If you ask them, they will either just keep quiet or they will just go with the flow, or some of them will reply for the sake of replying" (Female faculty, UG).

#### B. Theme 2: Insufficient career support in educational institutions

Quantitative data among the UG and PG students shows variation in their perception on the prevailing career support by their institution. While college (UG) student's perception on the support provided is average, the university student's (PG) perception on prevailing support is high. Responses from the representatives of institutions also indicate lack of career support.

"To be honest we don't provide any career support because we lack the resource especially financial resource to provide such support" (Female, Principal)

"As teacher we cannot be there all the time for students that needs help with career as we have to take classes, corrections etc" (Female faculty, UG)

"…if these support (career development support) are there, you are making life so easy for them. You will be helping them to find out about themselves who they are what they are good at and on the basis of that they will choose what profession they want to join. See from not knowing anything at all, over a period of getting these necessary help, they will have the basic idea of what they want to do and what are the steps they need to get there. It's like a blue print for their career" (Male proprietor, Private firm).

According to Super (2012), in his career development theory, students who are in the age range between15 to 24 are in the exploratory stage and are trying to discover their tentative career choice through classes, experience and hobbies. During the exploratory stage, a student will require support in discovering and identifying his/her career choice. Educational institutions have a big role in providing such career related support to students. The lack such support will affect the career goals and success of students as most of their potential may be left unfulfilled.

### C. Theme 3: Gender Difference and Career Planning

While it is also clear that there is a variation in the career planning between male and female at UG and PG levels of education, it may also be noted that the results of the findings also shows that the plans after studies between the male and female at the UG and PG level of education is also different.

This study reveal variation in the career planning of male and female at the UG and PG levels of education. As shown in table 5, at the UG level and PG level, male scored higher in career planning as compared to their female counter parts. It may be noted that at the UG and PG levels of education, "Khasis" (table 3) constitute a majority of the respondents and most of the respondents are female (table 1). A reason cited for variation in the career planning among male and female respondents is perhaps due to the cultural influence of Khasi culture on the career of the Khasi and the female "khatduh" (youngest daughter) in particular. It may be noted that the khatduh as per the matrilineal principle of the Khasi culture, apart from inheriting ancestral property and acquiring the line of descent from the mother, she also carries a tremendous amount of responsibility of caretaking her family (Wahlang, 2015). In the absence of a khatduh, the only daughter or the eldest daughter takes on these responsibilities. These responsibilities limit the career choice of a Khasi female.

### D. Theme 4: Rural-Urban divide and Career Planning

At the UG level, a significant numbers of respondents are from rural areas and equally significant numbers of the UG respondents are from low income level. The career plans is also lowest among those from rural areas and low income level at both UG and PG level. Result from the thematic analysis also indicates poor career planning among students from rural background.

"Some of the students have a career plan, some of them may have it within but they don't know. Teachers have a very big role to play, to help students clarify on their thoughts with career planning. Some of them are very simple. They come from very simple rural families, they may not know but they have a lot of efficiencies within them" (Female Faculty, UG & PG).

According to Manoharan and Arockiam (2017), their study also reveals that income and education of parents influenced the career planning and career path of a student. The findings seems to concur with the survey conducted by the Work Orientation and Response to Career Choices, Indian Regional Survey (WORCC-IRS) that reveals career related challenges among students could be addressed by providing career related services through educational institutions (Arulmani & Nag Arulmani, 2005).

### E. Theme 5: Education Level and Career Planning

The career planning among those that scored high to very high is higher among the PG as compared to the UG. Similarly among respondents with poor career planning, 40.0 % of the UG respondent cited "not yet decided/ not thought of a plan" (most common reason at UG and PG level) as the reason for poor career plan. At the PG level, those that cited "not yet decided/ not thought of a plan" as the reason for poor career plan is only about 9.8%.

As presented in table 8, both undergraduate and post graduate students show average to good career planning, however, data from the qualitative research reveals that career planning among these students is low. The variation in the response between the data gathered from the students, representative of higher educational institutions and representatives of various private, public and government agencies perhaps indicated the need for an industry-academia collaboration so as to bring about a career development system that could incorporate the industry requirements and required competencies including knowledge, skills and abilities with students career planning.

### F. Theme 6: Need for students support for identification of job/ industry required competencies

Result from the quantitative and qualitative data shows variation in the knowledge of required job competencies at the UG and PG level of education. As the management perspective to career development is the person-job fit, the career development system are much needed support for students to help them in setting feasible career plans and acquiring the required competencies. This indicates that merely having a degree without having the knowledge skills and abilities required to perform a job may not guarantee employment for students.

"From my experience jobs are a plenty but there are no takers for the jobs…. As far as recruitment of fresh graduates without experience, I do not mind it at all as long as they have the necessary skills for the job" (Male Proprietor Private Firm & College Principal/ owner )

"The interaction with waste management people from Government of Meghalaya last year has helped the student to know the requirement from them" (Female Faculty, UG/PG).

### G. Theme 7: Lack of employability competencies

Qualitative responses gathered from representatives of various institutions and representative of various job providers show lack of employability competencies or industry relevant competencies in the form of knowledge, skills or abilities among the UG and PG students. Following were some of the recorded responses.

"It is no point if a student passes and gets good grade but not doing well in life and his future… What will I do if I score 80% but do not have the skills, suppose I can't even speak proper English" (Female Faculty UG/ PG).

"For me, the main reason of unemployment among students I feel , its lack of both technical skills and soft skills required by the industry" (Female, PG)

"First and foremost communication skills has to be dealt with at the educational institution level and this should be dealt as a separate entity altogether. Secondly, the awareness for different technical skills required in different jobs such as sales, marketing, HR, finance, accounts must be created/ imparted among students. E.g., direct selling skills, sales skills etc.," (Male Proprietor and College Principal).

"Most of the students that come for interview don't even know the requirement of the employers and job providers and don't know what they are there for. Sometime we get random people who apply for jobs here. Basically they lack skills and because there are no skill candidates in the market, the recruiters they don't come and are not interested in that

market. In Shillong although there is enough supply of manpower, however supply of skilled manpower is not sufficient" (Male HR, Private Limited).

There has been increasing demand for the right people in organizations to achieve competitive advantage. Budhathoki (2006) pointed out that career development programs ensure a supply of people with the right abilities and talents that match the demand requirements for the right kind of people (right skills and abilities) by various organizations, that also require the supportive and integrated effort of top level management of institutions and organizations. One of the way in which career development programs are implemented is through the use of career development tools for enhancing, developing an individual's career planning and career development.

### Conclusion

From the information gathered, there is no indication of variation in the career planning at the UG and PG level. This call for uniform approaches in providing career planning support systems in the higher educational institutions for UG and for PG. Socio demographic variables such as gender, area of residence, income level of parents have an impact on the career planning of students. Results of thematic analysis also shows that students lack career planning as most of their plans do not seem to resemble the requirements of the labor market. The variation in the response between the data gathered from the students, representative of higher educational institutions and representatives of various private, public and government agencies indicates the need for an industry-academia collaboration so as to bring about a career development system that could incorporate the industry requirements and required competencies including knowledge, skills and abilities with students career planning.

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