

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

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**A COMPLETE STUDY OF CAREER CHOICES AND EMPLOYMENT INTRICACIES****SHREYA M****B. TECH. STUDENT****VELLORE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CHENNAI****NIMAL YUGHAN V****B. TECH. STUDENT****VELLORE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CHENNAI****JYOTIKA KATYAL****B. TECH. STUDENT****VELLORE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
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CHENNAI****ABSTRACT**

*Career decisions are considered the most important and are taken with utmost care and thought as they shape the lifestyle of the concerned person. Decades back, such decisions were taken by the head of the family and the child was not given the freedom to choose, as factors like family background, financial status, social status played a major role and upholding the family's values was the priority at that time. In the recent few years, parents have themselves started exploring new interests and have realised the importance of understanding one's interests and thoughts while choosing a career path. With new jobs coming up almost every day, the students are put in more confusion as to what to choose as their career path and are seeking the required guidance and information from a lot of sources. Although the interests of the child matter more now, there are still some factors that come into play when it comes down to finalizing a career choice. Through this paper, we attempted to touch upon the factors that we felt were most in play and conducted a detailed research on what the respondents feel about these factors and to what extent these factors affected them while making a career choice. A self-administered questionnaire with a total of 188 respondents helped us get the primary data, on which statistical analysis was done to get a deeper understanding on which factor played the most important role in the career decisions.*

**KEYWORDS**

career choice, employment intricacies, socio-economic factors, gender inequality.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Career choices made by students are known to be associated with positive as well as negative physical, psychological and socio-economic inequalities that continues well beyond the youth into their adult life. Therefore, it is a significant issue and as a huge impact in the life of students. A Student's career decision-making is required to go through a process of understanding what they want to pursue. Proper analysis and decisive choices affirm individual identity and fosters wellbeing, job satisfaction and stability. Career choices are affected by self-beliefs, outcome expectations ethnicity, culture, gender, socio-economic status, social support. The career choice they make will influence their entire life in a positive or negative way. A majority of students go through college

without knowing their interests and preferred career path. Before they make a surefooted choice, they have to experience what their career has to offer and the liabilities associated with it. This is a huge choice every student has to make and since they do not have all the information regarding the respective industry their choices are based more on personal interests and external factors like family, salary, past experiences, culture, race and gender. These factors have caused to certain career paths or jobs to be more preferred than the others. The goal of this study is to establish the relationship between the personal aspirations of students in their career choices and decision-making and the external influences which act upon them. Factors that majorly influence students when choosing a career or a job include family, friends, and mentors. Students may also choose careers based on how personally rewarding they are, if there is a potential for greater income and a growing need for jobs in a certain job field. The study aims to find out how the youth of today make their career choices based on their economic background, social influence, gender, caste, nationality, job-security, work conditions and more recent factors like the Covid-19 pandemic. The study also dives into how and at what scale these factors individually affect their decisions. This is achieved by formulating a questionnaire that can be used to gather consistent and reliable data that helps us arrive at a conclusion as to which factors are most prominent in making such a decision.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### EFFECT OF ECONOMIC BACKGROUND ON CAREER CHOICE

While there may be a variety of factors why someone chooses a particular career path, economic circumstances tend to play a significant role. Although this should not be the case and students should be free to pursue whatever career path they choose, the economic status of their families and their beliefs pose a barrier to the youth.

Mario Knoth (2007) argued that the classic theory does not justify why people choose low-returning educations or occupations and he devised a model that is supported by Akerlof (2000). Individuals choose a specific level or area of education because it provides a better predicted future financial gain and it benefits their identity by providing a more abundant self-image. The other viewpoint is based on a three-year longitudinal study conducted by P M Alexander (2012), the study discovered shifts in assumptions about the essential variables when deciding on a career path for their future. The two reasons where each female and male student's area unit very similar are self-efficacy and interest. According to Renabeni T. Murry (2017) socioeconomic status has no impact on undergraduate rising students' career choices. Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face additional challenges in terms of lack of preparation and experience. Gideon Arulmani (2003) revealed that current career science discussions are focused on the importance of understanding how economic backgrounds and social-cognitive environments affect career growth. There were differences in socioeconomic status, with the lower SES teams reporting higher levels of negative job views.

Asad Afzal Humayon's (2018) findings of multivariate analysis confirmed that the scholar's career choice is heavily influenced by his or her family's choices and beliefs, as well as his or her own interests and financial considerations. According to Mkpughe Christiana Ifeyinwa (2017), there is a connection between parent's socioeconomic status and their children's career choices and it should not be based on the family's wealth. Karen Leppel (2001) describes her research as looking into the effects of socioeconomic status and parental occupation on college major choice, with a focus on female and male differences. Students benefit more from having a male parent in a technical or executive occupation than male students benefit from having a female parent in a similar occupation. Students who value financial security are more likely to pursue a business degree. Hui-Hsien-Hsieh (2014) investigates the relationship between family socioeconomic status and positive personality, career choice self-efficacy. Socioeconomic status and proactive personality were both directly linked to self-efficacy in career choice. Florence Bosede Famolu (2020) looked into the impact of parent's socioeconomic status on undergraduates' career choices. It was found that parent's social status influences their career choice. Eydie J. Pettigrew (2009) compared the means between financially disadvantaged students and the others. In math, language arts, social studies, and science, the total number of financially disadvantaged students was lower. Laura McKenzie Shroder (2020) claims that the hospitality and tourism industry have a high turnover rate, with students graduating and opting out of the industry. Students' performance and industry exposure were also influenced by socioeconomic status and race. Monique Leito (2013) in their paper show that people with lower incomes choose careers with higher returns and less savings. Higher-income subjects pursue courses with more difficult entry requirements, according to the applicants' choices.

### SOCIAL INFLUENCE – FAMILY, FRIENDS AND OTHERS

When it comes to choosing a career path, one initially always turns to their well-wishers, which in most cases is family. We always tend to look at parental/family influence as one where the parents sit down with their kids and discuss their ideas about his/her future and explain to them why that particular career path is most suitable to him/her. Jamie L et al. (2015) found a different way through which parents indirectly lead an individual to make a career choice similar to theirs. This can be explained from real life examples where the kids expressed that they had multiple visits to a particular university since young age because their parents were alumni. This hugely impacted their decision of choosing that certain university or career stream. Tan Fee Yean et al (2019) did a research on final year UG students who belong to the STEM discipline to find out the parental influence on the student's choice of opting this discipline. Results showed that parents who themselves are in the STEM industry are likely to encourage their kids to follow their footsteps as they have enough experience in the industry to advise them. Referring to Kristen Tillman (2015) research, a similar conclusion can be drawn where, children of educators had a slightly higher parental influence in driving them into the teaching field than those of non-educators. The parental influence while a child takes any decision starts at an early age and it was found that the mother plays a very important role in such decisions (Ramona Palos et al. (2010)). Some children have anxious insecure attachment with their parents meaning that they always imagine their parents to negatively react to his/her decision about a career. Children with more secure behaviour tend to explore a lot more options and have a positive mind set about their career related discussions with parents. Having a good relationship with parents makes it easy for children to openly discuss their career interests and goals. Once the parents know their interests, they can help by introducing their children to friends or business contacts belonging to that particular field and help gather information on related to that field. (Cheng et al. (2016)). The study conducted by Fouad et al. (2015) showed that although the FIS (family influence scale) is to the same level for the families in the US and India, the family obligation is higher in that of immigrant population especially Asian and Latin Americans.

Peer groups play a vital role in influencing decisions of lifestyle, appearances and even educational choices. 75% of population believe to a greater extent that peers are a major support when it comes to job selection (Arab et al. (2014)). Asma et al. (2017) gathered 432 MS level students and studied the various factors that made them opt for their respective courses. The students expressed that they felt more comfortable when they are a part of a study group consisting of their close friends as it makes it easier for them to ask for help and hence were least influenced compared to by career counsellors. Tartaria et al. (2014) explains that students of universities mostly look for advice or inspiration from their immediate peers. They view them as a reference group and set them as benchmark for their own future ambitions. The women who belonged to the female majority group showed higher career aspirations regardless of implicit masculine stereotypes about engineering. This proves that to increase more women participation in a certain field, small groups of more women should to be formed even in male dominated fields (Nilanjana Dasgupta et al. (2015)).

Mentors need not always mean parents, they can be individuals who share the same professional interests or traits with their mentees. Having mentors with the same career interests definitely causes more influence on the individual (Eesley et al. (2017)). Kristen Tillman (2015) mentioned in her paper that most students who look for career advice not necessarily seek the help of their parents but look for guidance from other sources like their career counsellors and/or teachers. In a research done by Paras Jain (2017) it was found that the number of people who took career guidance was less than those who did not take career guidance in some selected professions like engineer, architecture, doctor, software engineers, teachers dress designers etc. The number of those who were satisfied with their jobs was higher in the group who took some sort of career guidance or counselling. This shows how important it is to have someone who can place a student's interests, qualifications, strengths and weaknesses in a broad perspective.

### GENDER'S INFLUENCE ON CAREER CHOICES AND EMPLOYMENT – GENDER DISPARITY

Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, discrimination still exists in most aspects of the society. One form of discrimination which is still very prevalent is gender inequality. Despite women excelling every possible field which were earlier male dominated. Mozahem et.al (2019) substantiate this argument by interviewing 30 female engineering students. He sheds light on the hurdles faced by these women including discrimination and sexual harassment in both social and professional settings. Even though many females graduate each year, most of these women shift to a different field due to the problems stated above. However, most of the women who were interviewed were strong believers of their capabilities and were determined to overcome these barriers. Corsell.S.J (2001) provides statistics on how

cultural beliefs on gender bias result in an influenced career related decision by men and women. The study shows men were likely to believe they were competent in mathematics than the female counterparts and females made a higher verbal ability self-assessment. Dick.T.P (1991) conducted a survey of 2213 school seniors. He realised that money earned from a career is a very important factor among the boys than the girls and this was a contribution by the influence of parents and teachers. A non-engineering career choice due to genuine interest was more in women than men. Rocha, V and Prag M (2020) found that women had less representation in start-ups as founders. Also, female start-up founders influence their female juniors towards an entrepreneurial career especially in a male dominated setting.

Schneider M.S (2010) studied lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students and found that the participants narrowed their options of college choices and job preferences on the basis of the discrimination they experienced in the past. Some women claimed that coming out as lesbians helped them remove the gender bias as it results in a decrease in social expectations. Sonica Aron of marching sheep in an article (India Today 2020) brought into light that in 2017, 8 out of the 23 transgender people who were employed had to quit their job as they could not find an accommodation and their employer had no legal obligation to help them in this matter. The lack of literatures giving an insight on the issues faced by such people (LGBT+) on a personal level while trying to make a career for themselves especially in India is a matter of concern. The high rates of discrimination on the basis of gender even today are worrying and makes us question our mindset as a society. Jessica Schieder (2016) studied that discrimination is not the key cause for gender wage gap but instead it is the choices made by women and men, mainly their choice of occupation. Sterling A D (2020) et al, Isabelle Bensidoun (2018) explains gender gap to be a reason of the lack of confidence amongst women towards certain careers. Most young boys and girls are confident that they will succeed in careers related to the STEM field, however most girls after reaching their teens start doubting their abilities. However, an article in the conversation (2021) surveyed thousands of Australian university students and found that women are more confident towards STEM careers than men. Siobhan Austen (2002) did research that even though women are more educated than men, they earn less. Since, women have to take care of family duties, the longer hours of higher paying jobs make it difficult for them to succeed.

#### **INFLUENCE OF CASTE/NATIONALITY ON CAREER CHOICE AND EMPLOYMENT**

Despite the today's generation that brims with youth activists and abundance of laws that strive to establish equality in our economy, the social standards such as caste and nationality still continue to have a strong impact on the society. Indian caste system was developed on division of occupations. Case study by Indervir Singh shows two caste groups 'Jat' and 'Bania' exposed to similar set of opportunities and education but however show difference in their occupational choice. Though presented with all factors and opportunities, they showed very little interest in shifting occupations. This paper is a modest attempt at showing how our society is divided into multiple groups. Workers are willing to reject substantial income, almost the maximum amount as 10 times their daily wages, to avoid workspace that disagrees with their caste identity. 43% of workers interested in temporary work refused a 10x bonus in order to avoid spending 10 minutes on tasks associated with other castes. (Suanna Oh, Worldbank-Blogs (2019)). A.H. Majid (2014) has presented a conceptual framework based on the role of cultural values in career choices. Individualism and collectivism as an important determinant that influence individuals' career choices, says Majid. This paper shades the light on differences in western and eastern culture.

Journal of International migration and integration shows that around 4.5 million students were enrolled outside of their country of origin in 2012. This paper highlights the increasing need of youth to settle abroad under the conception that a foreign degree is more significant than India's. It also pays attention to characteristics like family background, migration history and also adding a special section of individual preferences with respect to lifestyle, workspace and social perspective. ICEF (2018) investigates the role of nationality in career choices and discovers that the primary motivation is a "widespread perception of an entrenched lack of equal opportunities in India." To stand out among the fierce rivalry, the majority intend to bring their international work experience back to India. An article by Sukhdeo Thorat (2018) highlights that the effect of social discrimination and co-existing socio-economic realities are deeper weightages for classes like SCs for career choices. According to the 2011-12 NSSO statistics, even among wage labourers, SCs have a higher share of casual wage workers. This discrimination not only leads to higher poverty among SCs, but also reduces the economic progress. This emphasizes the fact that it is a systemic problem.

Caste is not an archaic tradition but an active facet of modern economy says Davis Mosse (2018). Dalits suffer restrictions to occupational chances within the same markets. Recent research carried out here, explores the harder-to-detect ways that caste identity influences opportunity. National Institute of Rural Development (2013) researches on the variable nature of occupation status of the rural youth in India. Although a high dependence was observed of rural STs Youth workforce on agriculture, the diversification into non-agriculture was observed to be high among rural youth workforce of SCs. It addresses the need for youth-specific policies to protect the employment rights of youth workers. 'Career choices of youth were largely class-specific and gender-specific' observed by a case study (2012) conducted in Mumbai. The Journal of the Indian Association for Career and Livelihood Planning (IACLP) says that despite the differing degrees of personal choices the decision is a portal to hierarchically ordered social relationships. An article in the Economic and Political Weekly (2017) attempts to study the paths of Dalit and non-Dalit students from similar elite educational backgrounds and yet face social disadvantages. Social and cultural capital influence significantly in sectors where hiring practices are less transparent. A detailed research on 'Influence of Culture and Ethnicity on Career Choice' (2018) uses identity economics to find a link between the influence and choice of career. It also addresses questions like if the numerous race groups have distinct cultural traits which can influence career choice and if these career choices influence the unemployment percentage. In this process it determines the extent of career choices themselves influence unemployment as most of the participants tend to choose due to the possession of traits belonging to their respective caste groups. The article by Michiel Bass (2016) explores the motives of scholars from India who have enrolled as overseas students. It was observed that majority have chosen to study at low metropolitan areas like Australia. While the idea of moving away from socio-economic constraints of India is believed to be fruitful, this paper also explores the difficulties encountered such as fooled by fraudulent work opportunities that may not exist.

#### **JOB SECURITY AND WORK CONDITION IN ORGANISED AND UNORGANISED SECTORS**

Surbhi Kapur and Prasana Kumar Sethy (2014) undertook an in-depth study on working and living conditions of workers in unorganized sector and concluded that, around thirty crore people work in the unorganized sector in India, and the number is growing. It has been observed that there is no legal security mechanism in place, that childbearing and rearing of children remains the primary responsibility of women employees, and that the government and legal framework of the country provide little assistance. Bad employer-employee relationships, discrimination at work, abuse, poor health and medical treatment, torture, and poor working conditions are all common occurrences in this industry. Amit K. Bhandari & Almas Heshmati (2006) observed that experience plays the most important role in explaining the pay difference. Some factors like skill, training, education, and migration play a significant role. There is a possibility of discrimination which can be associated to the cost cutting strategy of companies. The employment of contract workers is perceived as a cost cutting method. Education and income affect negatively the feeling of job insecurity. Casual and temporary workers are likely to have less job insecurity when compared to their full-time counterpart. Dr. Balwinder Singh (2009) found that the contribution of this sector in production is extremely significant but the Social Security for the workers of this sector is nearly nil. Unemployed workers are willing to work without job security More than 90 per cent workers do not have any social security. He concludes by saying the life of the worker should be mapped so that proper social security can be provided. It will also help in the manpower planning which will be helpful in creating the job opportunities. Arpita Mukherjee & Tanu M. Goyal studied the impact of Foreign Direct Investments in India and concluded that, FDI is likely to have an adverse impact on employment in the unorganised sector. It is seen that most unorganised retailers were not impacted by retail modernisation, while employees seem to have benefitted in terms of pay and quality of Employment.

With the advancement in the education field and economic liberalization the change from unorganised to organised sector and corporate business is being visualized in the modern competitive world yet most of the population is currently in unorganised sectors. The survey found that foreign retailers offer higher salaries, and overall salaries in the retail sector are likely to improve as a result. Bakotić, Danica & Babić, Tomislav studied the impact of working conditions on overall job satisfaction and found that there is no substantial difference in overall job satisfaction between workers in typical working conditions and workers in challenging working conditions. Patnaik, B.Chandra & Satpathy, Ipseeta & Tripathy, Narayan. (2017) identified that the various attributes identified in unorganized sectors are education level very low, professional and vocational skills are very low, lack of medical provisions, lack of security for old age, no clear-cut employee and employer relationship, dissatisfactory wage rate and pay period, denial of right to earn more leading to more poverty in unorganized sector. N.Prabaharan. (2018). concluded that the collective efforts are necessary for the welfare of unorganised workers. They are the section of the society that is in the need of protection, benefits, security, and assistance. Danica Bakotić.(2013) states that Job satisfaction is a particularly complex concept that's influenced by various factors, or more accurately by a gaggle of things that always have interwoven impact. Results of this study confirmed the conclusions of other papers handling this subject about the existence

of clear link between employees' job satisfaction and organisational performance but with very minimal intensity. Inuwa, Mohammed. (2016) found that job satisfaction features a positive and significant relationship with employee performance, it clearly signifies that an increase in level of job satisfaction will result in better performance. The study is believed further contribute motivational theories is that the sense that it combined expectancy with factors like job satisfaction. Prabhleen Kaur. (2019) established that job satisfaction is one of the foremost important aspects an organization must look out of as it features a big correlation with job performance and productivity. Specifically, this relationship appears stronger on collective bias, which features a greater effect to the units and organizational performance, including productivity, work process efficiency, and most importantly, profit. Then, personality traits and emotional states seem to possess a crucial role in determining individual satisfaction. Work environment and organization strategy are more likely to increase collective job satisfaction.

#### IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CAREER CHOICES AND WORKPLACE

Though overlooked during the initial months of 2020, COVID-19 is still a hot topic and is ruling the world like a boss. It had a huge impact on the lives of every individual without a bias. Organizations had to come up with innovative products/ solutions to get back on track. When it comes to students, COVID-19 can be idealized as a two-sided coin. It was the perfect opportunity for students to develop more skills and stand out compared to others.

The International Labour Organization (2020) published a review of how this pandemic situation had impacted the working-class people in India. The un-protected employers, casual workers and self-employed are the most affected with many losing their jobs. Retail, manufacturing and construction sector had immediate impacts on the growth and revenue. Meenakshi Pandey (2020) researches on how the Work from home concept aids in employees to manage their work and personal life better, reduce the commute time, increase productivity through organized work division which also comes with certain drawbacks. Anoop Khanna (2020) focuses on the impact on migrant workers who are vulnerable and un-protected laborers and are the most affected. There is not much impact on agriculture industry, transportation and supply chains and suggest that the migration policies must be reshaped to accommodate better. Park Cyn-Young et.al (2020) also ascertain the fact that there will be a spurt in the number of jobs that could be lost. The impact on jobs does not follow the same distribution as tech and pharma industries have prospered. The Catalyst (2020) performed a survey to gain insights about the impact of COVID-19 on workplace inclusion, gender equality, the results showing that workers feel promotion opportunity is less and women have a big chance to be over-looked. Kelsey, et al. (2020) focus on unemployment, mental health, disparities and work-family interface. Work-life balance and multi-tasking is the key to better performance and health. The report by McKinsey Global Institute explores the post-pandemic scenario of work. Jobs with more physical proximity will be disrupted more. The online meetings and remote work will continue on a large scale and faster adaptability to latest tech and trend is crucial.

Students are also equally affected by the COVID-19. The article published by India Today (2020) emphasizes on the impact of COVID-19 on graduating students which demands digital skills like content writing, graphic designing. Youki Terada (2020) states that there is a proven possibility of achievement gap to widen among students who don't have access online resources. It also talks about the mental health of students and ways to solve these issues. Sumitra Pokhrel, et al. (2021) have researched on the various challenges (accessibility, affordability, fairness in exams) and opportunities presented by the digital learning. They also mention about development program for teachers and methods to focus on to flawlessly implement in the future. Esteban et al. (2020) conducted a survey on 1500 undergraduate students from the Arizona State University about COVID-19's impact on them. It shows that there is delayed graduation and health impacts (on lower income group mainly), and various other factors which affect their performance. Changwon Son, et al. (2020) conducted interview surveys with 195 students in a university to understand the mental effects on them. 71% of the students reported an increase in stress, anxiety and key stressors were fear, worry about their loved ones, less interactions, disturbed sleeping, concerns about academics, and overthinking, financial difficulties. The ISE (2020) researched about job opportunity among graduates, many countries were expected to have a decline in the recruitment as employers wanted to limit the recruitment so many students continue their study by pursuing PG programs after UG. Liyuan Hu (2020) through his survey highlighted some positive impacts on the medical field as career choice of medicine did not drop significantly. A negative impact was seen among 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years who had insufficient knowledge about the environment in hospitals or clinics.

#### SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Career choice is an imperative issue in the developmental life of youths since it is associated with positive as well as harmful physical, psychological and socio-economic disparities that persist well past the youthful age into an individual's adult life. The main focus of this study is to analyse the factors that influence an individual while making a career choice. It establishes a relationship between various career choices and socio-economic factors and also helps in identifying the one that most affects these decisions.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This scientific research examines factors that majorly influence students when choosing a career or a job. There are numerous factors that have an influence on decision taken by students today, including friends, family and mentors. Students may also choose careers based on how personally rewarding they are, if there is a potential for greater income and a growing need for jobs in a certain job field. This research paper focuses on the following objectives:

1. To study the socio-economic background on the career choices of the respondents
2. To find out the gender disparity on the career choice and employment
3. To identify the job security and work condition in organized and unorganized sectors
4. To measure the impact of COVID 19 on career choice and workplace

#### METHODOLOGY

The research methodology defines the sequence of steps to be followed to systematically solve a research problem. A descriptive research design was used in this study. The research is performed with the help of primary and secondary data. A questionnaire has been used to collect the primary data. The secondary data was collected from various research papers, articles, blogs and, organization's reports. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that required questions about all the factors affecting career choice and employment intricacies were asked as it allows us to get as much information as possible. The questions were also sequentially connected based on each factor so that the respondents find it intriguing. The questionnaire was circulated using google forms to college students and fresh appointees as they will be making crucial career-based decisions and it was also collected from employed people to better understand the impact of COVID-19 and other employment intricacies. The data was collected from 188 respondents using the convenience sampling method. The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical tools like ANOVA, Chi-Square and, percentage analysis, of the data in hand, was performed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

#### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The primary data is collected from 188 respondents using a questionnaire (refer appendix).

**TABLE 1: RESPONDENT'S AGE AND PROFESSION** (count of profession)

	Employed	Student	Grand Total	Percentage
18-24	6	128	134	71.28
25-35	9	6	15	7.98
36-45	15	0	15	7.98
46+	24	0	24	12.77
Grand Total	54	134	188	100

Source: Primary data

**Inference**

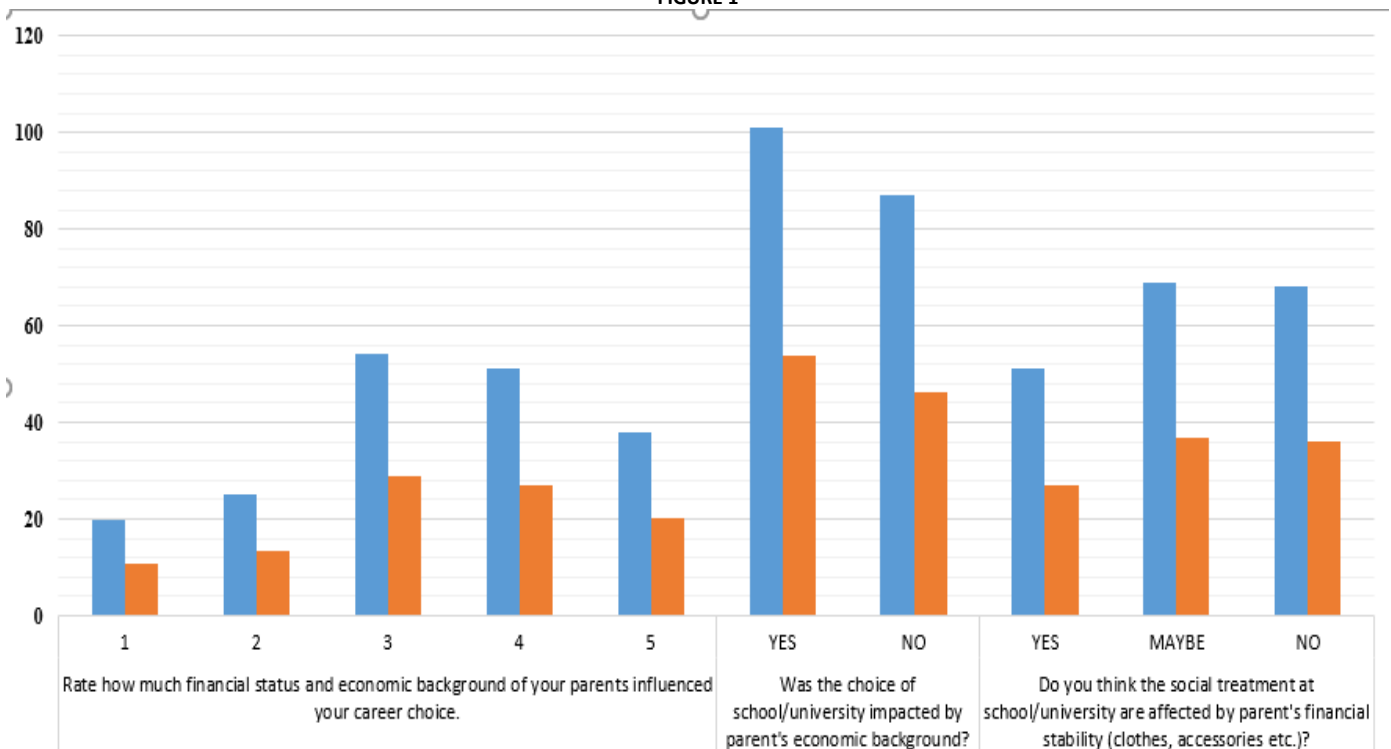
From Table 1, we can conclude that most of our respondents are students (71.28%) and the rest are employed (28.72%). Most of the respondents are from the age group of 18-24 (71.28%).

**TABLE 2: EFFECT OF ECONOMIC BACKGROUND ON CAREER CHOICE**

QUESTION	OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Rate how much financial status and economic background of your parents influenced your career choice.	1	20	10.64
	2	25	13.30
	3	54	28.72
	4	51	27.13
	5	38	20.21
Was the choice of school/university impacted by parent's economic background?	Yes	101	53.72
	No	87	46.28
Do you think the social treatment at school/university are affected by parent's financial stability (clothes, accessories etc.)?	Yes	51	27.13
	Maybe	69	36.70
	No	68	36.17
Would you have chosen a different career path if your parents weren't financially stable? If so, please state your alternate career choice.	Yes	79	42.56
	No	108	57.44

Source: Primary data

**FIGURE 1**



**Inference**

Around 47.34% (rating 4 and 5) of respondents answered in favour that financial status of parents does actually influence the career choices of the child. This proves that the interests of the child are not given much importance and the students are compelled to take up a high paying job to compensate the financial crisis of the family.

53.72% of the respondents feel that quality of education should not be compromised no matter how bad the financial background of the family is, but it is important to note that an almost equal percentage (46.28%) of respondents feel strongly that economic background plays an important role in determining the kind of education a child receives.

While there is a higher percentage (36.7%) of respondents who are on edge with their opinions on whether social treatment at educational institutes is dependent on the financial background of the family or not, a lot of them (36.17%) feel that it doesn't matter much as long as the behaviour/character of the child is at par with the required standard of the institute.

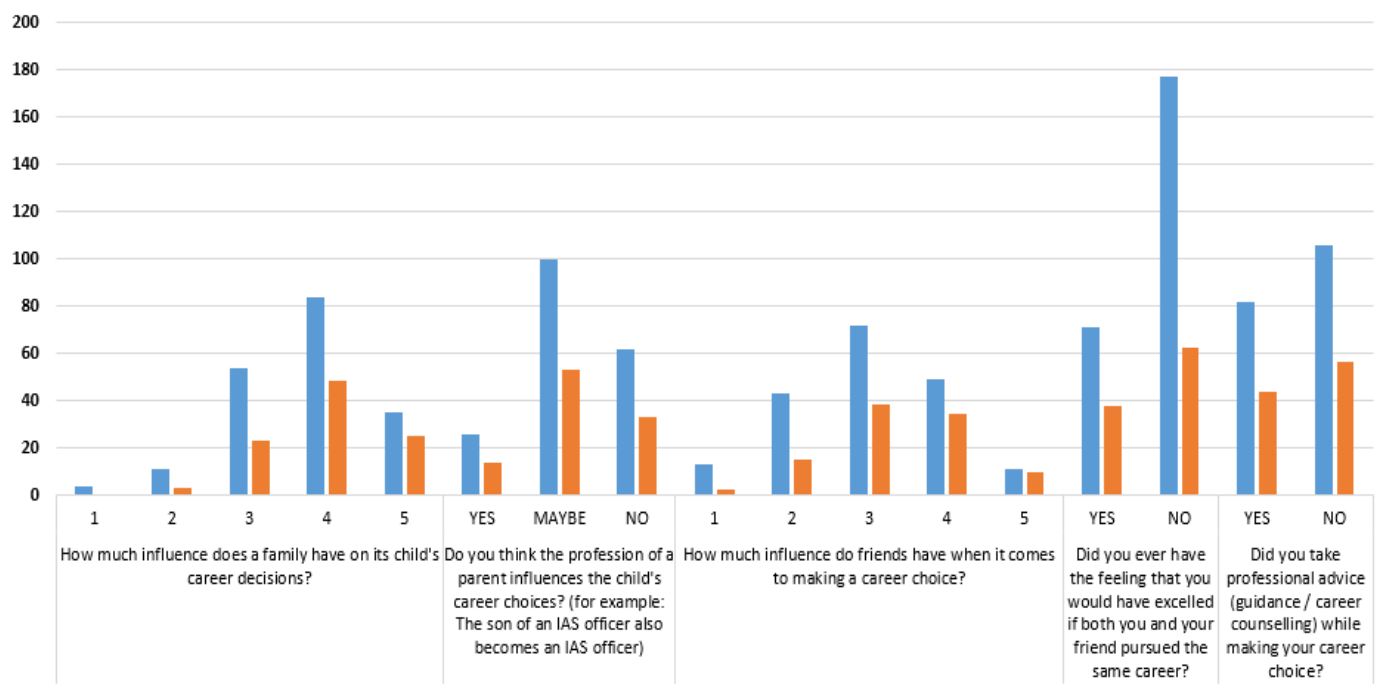
42.02% of the respondents expressed their interests on alternative fields/career paths when asked if they would have opted for a better career path in case they were financially stable. When asked specifically what their alternative career choices would include, the responses included, professor/lecturer, astronaut, higher studies, sports, acting etc. This may indicate that financial stability played an important role when it came to choosing a career rather than their interests.

TABLE 3: SOCIAL INFLUENCE – FAMILY, FRIENDS AND OTHERS

QUESTION	OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
How much influence does a family have on its child's career decisions?	1	4	0.57
	2	11	3.15
	3	54	23.18
	4	84	48.07
	5	35	25.04
Do you think the profession of a parent influences the child's career choices? (For example: The son of an IAS officer also becomes an IAS officer)	Yes	26	13.83
	Maybe	100	53.19
How much influence do friends have when it comes to making a career choice?	No	62	32.98
	1	13	2.30
	2	43	15.19
	3	72	38.16
	4	49	34.63
Did you ever have the feeling that you would have excelled if both you and your friend pursued the same career?	5	11	9.72
	Yes	71	37.77
Did you take professional advice (guidance / career counselling) while making your career choice?	No	177	62.23
	Yes	82	43.62
	No	106	56.38

Source: Primary data

FIGURE 2



**Inference**

As expected, most (48.07%) of the respondents feel that the influence of the family on a child’s career decisions is considerably high. This limits the opportunities that a child can explore given his/her strengths and weaknesses.

In one research, it was pointed out that children of educators had a slightly higher parental influence in driving them into the teaching field than those of non-educators. This can be supported by the response to this question where almost 53.19% of respondents are on the edge about whether or not the trend of children following their parents into the same profession still continues given the various other opportunities available.

Many believe that the opinions and choices of a child are a direct influence of his/her peer group. It seems to be the same case when it comes to making a career choice. 44.35% (Rating 4 & 5) of respondents feel that the influence of the friend circle on such career related decisions is considerably strong.

Almost 62.23% respondents feel that even if their friends were not a part of the same field, they would still feel motivated and would excel at their respective chosen careers. This shows that although the influence of friends may exist, it does not play an important role when it comes to a student’s performance in the field.

Many believe that students, especially in India, don’t specifically choose to take professional advice when it comes to their career. Although 56.38% of the respondents as shown, support this claim by stating that they haven’t received any sort of counselling related to their career path, it is important to note that nearly 43.62% of them have actually stepped up and opted for such services.

TABLE 4: GENDER'S INFLUENCE ON CAREER CHOICES AND EMPLOYMENT – GENDER DISPARITY

Question	Options	Frequency	Percentage				
What gender do you identify yourself as?	Female	55	29.26				
	Male	110	58.51				
	Other	23	12.23				
Has your gender ever influenced your career choices?	Yes	No	Yes	No			
	Female	11	44	20	80		
	Male	16	94	14.54	85.45		
	Other	20	3	86.95	13.05		
	Have stereotypes related to household chores/ societal expectations from a gender limited you professionally or while making a career choice?	Yes	Maybe	No	Yes	Maybe	No
Female		12	13	30	21.8	23.63	54.54
Male		11	17	82	10	15.45	74.54
Has the gender pay gap limited you from taking up a profession of your choice?	Other	20	0	3	86.95	0	13.05
	Yes	Maybe	No	Yes	Maybe	No	
	Female	3	5	47	5.45	9.09	85.45
Has your gender ever influenced your career choices? If yes, please mention how?	Male	6	7	97	5.45	6.36	88.18
	Other	20	0	3	86.95	0	13.05
	Yes	26			13.82		
	No	162			86.18		

Source: Primary data

**Inferences**

58.5% of the respondents identify themselves as male while 29.3% and 12.2% of them are female and others respectively. Among the total 188 respondents, 134 are students while the rest 54 are employed.

20% of the female respondents felt that their gender has influenced their career choices. While 94 out of the 110 male respondents answered with a no, the yes as an answer given by the remaining 16 is concerning. 86.9% of the respondents who identify themselves as the other gender gave yes as an answer.

21.8% of the females and 10% of the males felt that societal stereotypes influenced them while making a career choice. 15.9% of the overall respondents answered with a maybe when asked the same. Therefore, a total of 38.8% of the respondents faced this issue.

Even though the questionnaire was circulated among educated people, 15.4 % gave an affirmation when asked if the pay gap prevalent affected their career choice, while 6.3% gave maybe as the answer. The percentage of the responses would have been definitely higher if the questionnaire was circulated among all strata of the society.

Some of the responses given when asked how gender influenced career choices were as follows, "teaching profession is best for ladies as per the parents and society", "There are some companies that interview and hire only females in the name of "gender equality", "My college seat was given to a girl in the name of female quota", "Generally, if it's a boy there is more expectation from family", "I wanted to get into army, only because I am a girl, my father objected me not to.", "I wanted to go to higher studies but in my family they are afraid to send me alone".

The most surprising answers were that some men felt that they could not choose a career choice because of their family's expectations or society's expectations of them as the primary bread winner. This was an aspect unexplored in most literatures on this issue.

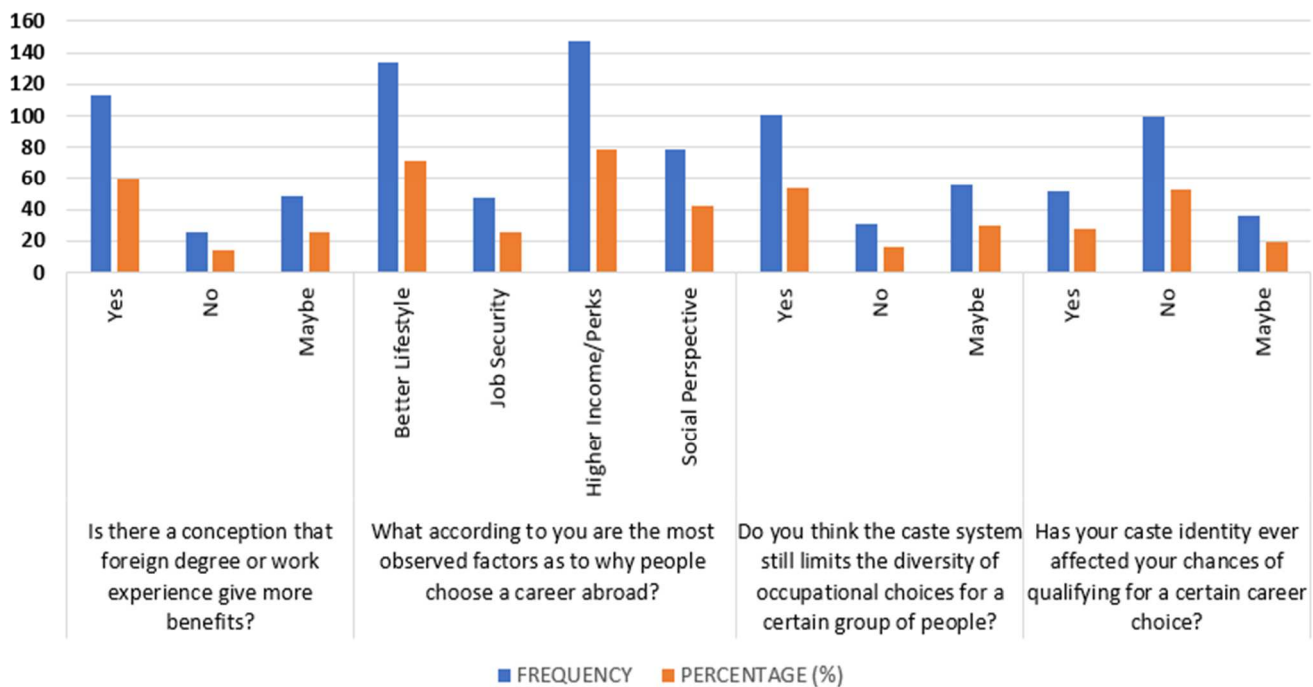
TABLE 5: INFLUENCE OF CASTE/NATIONALITY ON CAREER CHOICE AND EMPLOYMENT

Questions	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Is there a conception that foreign degree or work experience give more benefits	Yes	113	60.11
	No	26	13.83
	Maybe	49	26.06
What according to you are the most observed factors as to why people choose a career abroad?	Better Lifestyle	134	71.27
	Job Security	48	25.53
	Higher Income/Perks	147	78.19
	Social Perspective	79	42.02
Do you think the caste system still limits the diversity of occupational choices for a certain group of people?	Yes	101	53.72
	No	31	16.49
	Maybe	56	29.79
Has your caste identity ever affected your chances of qualifying for a certain career choice?	Yes	52	27.66
	No	100	53.19
	Maybe	36	19.15

Source: Primary data

FIGURE 3

Chart Title



**Inferences**

60.11 % of responses vote positively towards the conception that a foreign career choice is more fruitful relative to the local opportunities at hand, which is a majority reason for the youths to take up a career abroad. This data highlights that there is a majority spread of this conceived notion among youths irrespective of their beliefs in it, which is a career choice influence by itself.

Among the four provided factors of foreign-based career influences, 147 responses (78.2%) rank higher income/perks as the most observed factor, as most of the youths quit their country under the pressure to earn higher income in a lesser period. The other considerations are better lifestyle conditions with 134 responses and job security with 48 responses, which highlights the need for better quality of life with a stabilized career. The social perspective, considering the influences of caste that were studied also contributes to this notion as many people migrate to expect a change from the existing conditions of discrimination in labour markets or reservations etc., which was chosen by 42% of responses.

Majority of the responses (53.7%) have voted that the caste system is still a constraint in occupational choices for few sections. This highlights that the caste still operates as an active aspect in markets. As we still come across cases of repressed Dalit yet facing discrimination in the labour markets and other sections where hiring processes are less transparent,

The 29.8% response share of 'maybe' is also a significant aspect to interpret as most of the respondents come from elite educational backgrounds, the ancestral perspectives and other socio-economic limitations are not a subject of great influence relatively.

This specific study is to shift the subject focus on the participants' economic backgrounds based on personal experiences and not conceptions and only 27.66% has voted yes based on an experience, while 19.15% have voted maybe on a belief that the influence of caste can still be seen on career choices which makes about half of the participants cumulatively. While the rest 53.19% of respondents have voted no which implies that the caste system has not limited the career choice of many, in recent times, while remembering that this interpretation is based on a majority of socio-economically privileged participants of the study.

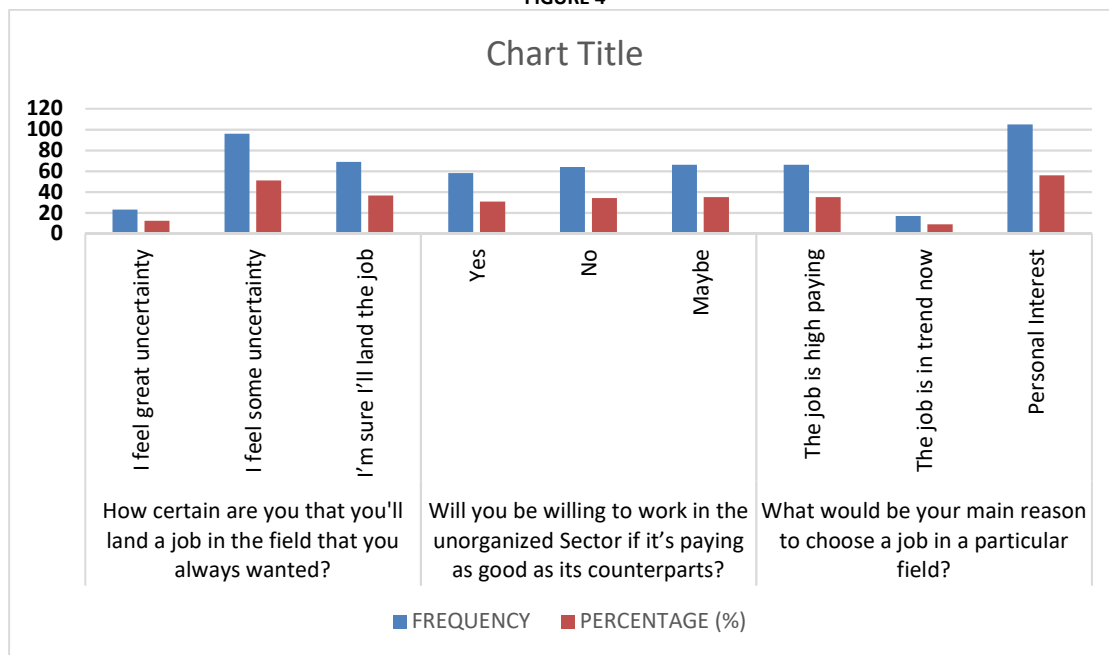
**TABLE 6: JOB SECURITY AND WORK CONDITION IN ORGANISED AND UNORGANISED SECTORS**

QUESTIONS	OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
How certain are you that you'll land a job in the field that you always wanted?	I feel great uncertainty	23	12.23
	I feel some uncertainty	96	51.06
	I'm sure I'll land the job	69	36.70
Will you be willing to work in the unorganized Sector if it's paying as good as its counterparts?	Yes	58	30.85
	No	64	34.04
	Maybe	66	35.11
What would be your main reason to choose a job in a particular field?	The job is high paying	66	35.11
	The job is in trend now	17	9.04
	Personal Interest	105	55.85

Source: Primary data



FIGURE 4



**Inferences**

It's understood the 12.23% i.e., 23 of the 188 participants are certainly sure that they won't land a job in their respective field. Whereas 51.06% or 96 of them are somewhat certain of landing a job in their respective fields and 36.7% or 69 of them are certain that they'll land a job in their respective fields. We can clearly see there is an uncertainty among the majority of students and employed personal regarding their expectation of job placements.

The aim of this question was to find out the willingness of people to work in the unorganised sector is it as paying as the organised sector. As the data shows people still have a stigma when it comes to the choice of choosing a job in an unorganised sector. (Maybe and No have constituted to almost 70% of the replies). Around 30.85% or 58 of the respondents are affirmative to the decision of choosing a job in the unorganised sector.

Contradictory to the popular belief that students choose their respective jobs and field based on the salary they would be provided we can see from the data obtained that more than 55% of modern students prefer to take-up a job in the field of their interests. We can also see that Salary plays a significant effect on this decision too driving around 35% of the students to make decisions based on it.

**TABLE 7: IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CAREER CHOICES AND WORKPLACE**

Questions	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Rate the level of uncertainty in your career choice caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.	0 – No impact	17	9.04
	1	23	12.23
	2	22	11.70
	3	50	26.59
	4	44	23.40
	5 – Strong Impact	32	17.02
Did you change your career choice due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic?	Yes	26	13.83
	No	121	64.36
	Not yet decided	41	21.80
Has the pandemic situation put you in a position to learn and develop new skills to boost your profile and sustain in this highly competitive world?	Yes, it was necessary	124	65.95
	No, just pressure	64	34.04
Has the COVID-19 declined the chance of promotion or increased pay?	Strongly agree	32	16.9
	Neutral	13	6.9
	Strongly disagree	5	2.65

Source: Primary data

**TABLE 8: EMPLOYED POPULATION**

What is your organization doing to address employee and customer concerns and mitigate risk?	Employed	Rank
Encouraging employees to work from home irrespective of their designation.	28	1
Reducing the employee count so as to decrease the investment	13	5
Nothing, just trying to keep the business alive.	8	6
Keeping most of the meetings in online mode to reduce the risk.	24	2
Changing the whole workflow structure to better adapt to this situation and increase revenue	20	3
Guiding its employees to develop digital skills to get accustomed to the new normal.	19	4

FIGURE 5  
Chart Title

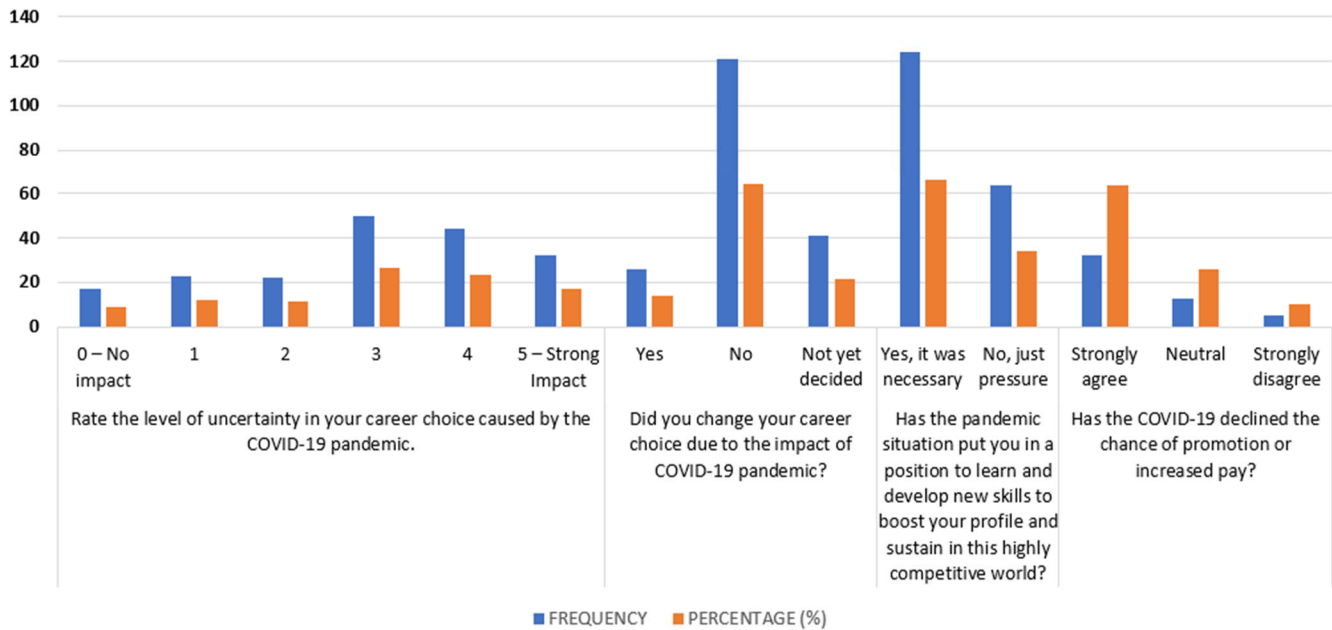
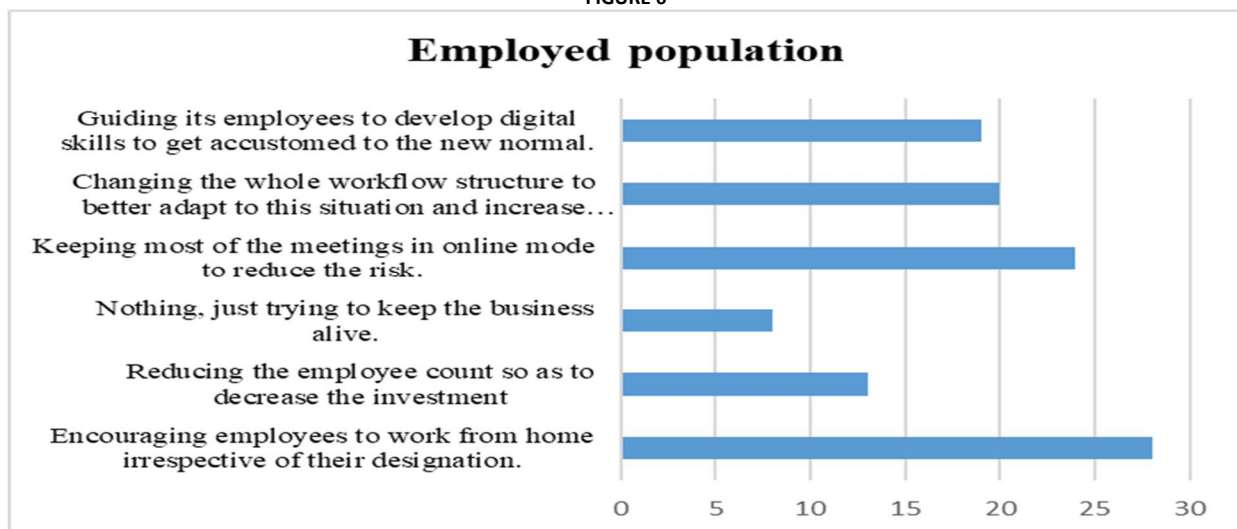


FIGURE 6



**Inferences**

40.42% of the total respondents have rated a higher level (rating of 4 and 5) of uncertainty on their career choice due to the pandemic and more than 30% are students. 37.04% of the employed people have rated an intermediate level of uncertainty on their career choice. The uncertainty is less among employed people than students as they already have a job in hand.

It is inferred that 64.36% of the respondents have not changed their career choice due to the pandemic. Only around 35% of the respondents have either changed their career choice or have not yet decided on it and the number is more for respondents who are students. This highlights the effect of pandemic on the career choice of students.

Almost 66% of the total respondents feel that this pandemic time was necessary to utilize this time to stand out and the rest 34% feel that it just instilled a lot of pressure on them. Out of the total employed respondents, most of them feel they had to use this time to better themselves. It is also inferred that out of the people who felt it was pressurizing, most of them have either changed their career choice or not have decided yet.

It is inferred that 64% of the employed people strongly agree that their chance of promotion or increased pay is affected due to this pandemic. 26% of them are neutral about their opinions regarding pay-roll. Only 10% of the respondents disagree that it did not affect their chance of promotion.

More than 58% of the employed people feel that their organization is doing well by encouraging its employees to work from home irrespective of their designation. Almost 50% of them say that their meetings are held online and through the literature survey it is evident that meetings will be continue to be held online to reduce the cost spent by an organization in arranging an offline meeting. The reduction in employee count is not much of a prevalence now as compared to the initial days of the pandemic. More than 40% of the employed people feel that their organization is better adapting to the situation by changing the structure of workflow and technologies to make them more efficient and also take efforts in enhancing the digital skills of the employees.

**ANOVA**

Ho: There is no significant difference between age and influence of family on their career choice.

H1: There is a significant difference between age and influence of family on their career choice.

TABLE 9: ILLUSTRATING ANOVA TEST RESULTS (AGE AND INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ON THEIR CAREER CHOICE)

	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	19.305	4.826	9.364	.000
Within Groups	52.054	.515		
Total	71.358			

**Inferences:** ANOVA Test applied to find out the significant difference between age and influence of family on their career choice. From the test it is inferred that the significant level (.000) which is less than 0.05, hence accept the alternative hypothesis and reject null hypothesis. Thus, it is noticed that, there is a significant difference between age and influence of family on their career choice. It was also witnessed by Asad Afzal (2018) that, the scholar's career choice is heavily influenced by his or her family's choices and beliefs, as well as his or her own interests and financial considerations.

#### Chi-Square

Ho: There is no significant association between the level of uncertainty in your career choice caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and change in your career choice due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

H1: There is significant association between the level of uncertainty in your career choice caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and change in your career choice due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

TABLE 10: ILLUSTRATING CHI- SQUARE TEST RESULTS

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.257 <sup>a</sup>	16	.002
Likelihood Ratio	9.968	16	.868
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.793	1	.181
N of Valid Cases	106		

\*a. 18 cells (72.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .66.

#### Inferences

Since from the Chi Square test  $0.002 < 0.05$ , there is reason to reject the Null Hypothesis. Hence, it was evident that, there is significant association between the level of uncertainty in your career choice caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and change in your career choice due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it was insisted by the article wrote by Amit Shrivastava (2020), lock down and economic slowdown during this pandemic strongly affect the young graduates gearing up to kick-start their professional journey.

#### SUGGESTIONS

Today's generation is fast-paced and we need spontaneous results but life doesn't work that way it's the small steps we take each day that drives us towards the goal. The results of the struggles you endure may not be evident for many years to come. That doesn't mean we can sit around waiting for the universe to tell you what your mission is. Challenging ourselves daily and exposing ourselves to various situations is how we find out what's right for us. This is a major fallback of the Indian society and education system, we have been taught all our lives to choose the safe path, the one that gives you a sense of pseudo-safety and satisfaction. Whereas It'll lead to a guilt-ridden life filled with stress and regret. We as an individual and a society, have to look at life from a different perspective, it's more than just merely existing and providing for your family. If we take the burden of expectations off the shoulders of the youth of today, they'll be able to achieve even greater heights and excel in fields of their capacity. Proper mentoring plays a major role too. Contrary to the popular belief that 100% hard work will ensure success, smart work and proper strategizing are much more effective in the modern world. Students, right from school age must be exposed to various fields of work, art, and entertainment instead of a monotonous way of education which merely enables us to develop a mentality to work for/under someone just for the sake of earning money. By doing so we can spark interests in them which will help them make a more conscious choice in their life rather than relying on the influence of family and society. The crux of the study is that there are a lot of options to choose from. One must understand that getting a job is just one small step in the journey of discovering his/her true abilities and that it is perfectly normal to pursue your field of interest and make a living out of it instead of taking up a job. Opportunities will appear at the right time if we have the perseverance to chase our dreams. Be patient, whatever the temporary results end up to be they are just a small part of the path you choose, trust the process. Once we do that, we'll see that the journey and experiences along the way are important that reaching the final goal.

#### CONCLUSION

This paper took into consideration six factors that gave us deep insights on the different situations which lead to choosing a career. The economic and professional background of the family highly influences the quality of education and job profile that an individual opts for. While many are forced to take up jobs that don't align with their interests but are financially promising, others opt for careers that are mildly influenced by the profession of their family members. Peer groups form the primary influencers of the outside world, and their experiences and opinions highly impact the interests of the child. It was noticed that many respondents showed interest in taking professional guidance which shows that the trend is changing and people have become more cautious when choosing one's career. Caste-based discrimination didn't seem to affect the career choice of many individuals in this age and time indicating a progressive shift in terms of influence of social divisions. As expected, many believe that a career away from hometown yields much higher pay and respect. Females and members of the LGBTQ community's career preferences are heavily influenced by gender along with important considerations such as job security and working conditions. Whereas the latter had negligible effects on men since they were the sole breadwinners in some families. Hesitation towards jobs in unorganized sector still prevails in the society even though working conditions and job security has improved significantly. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, although the level of uncertainty towards a career choice is more prevalent among the students many have not opted for a different career path. Organisations have responded positively in view of this pandemic by implementing a systematic management. Based on the ANOVA test results, it is observed that there is a significant difference between the age and family influence on the career choice, implying that the level of family influence on career choices does not necessarily depend on the age group. The Chi-Square test indicated a significant association between the level of uncertainty and change in career choice due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant that the higher the level of uncertainty higher is the probability of opting an alternative career path. Thus, the factors researched upon influence a person in different proportions which lead them to make a career decision that is best suited to them.

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