

PREFACE

Youth forms a sizable and vibrant segment of the population at world level. They comprise of 18% of the world's population and of this about 85% live in the developing world. Youth, in the age group of 15-64 years, is projected to reach 882 million by 2020 in India. Thus, India will be the world's youngest country till 2040. The 'demographic dividend' provides India great opportunities to reap dividend but it also poses a great challenge. The link between the demographic advantage and economic growth needs to be engineered with the help of active government support in the areas of education and employability in order to rising labour force productively employed.

The India employability report (2013) by Aspiring Minds, a research firm speaks on mismatch and gap in percentage of graduation and employment in India, one of the reason found was bad career matching. The nature of decision at transformation stage will either make or mar one's career. Educational and occupational aspirations represent a person's orientation toward particular academic and career goals (Goftfredson).

Social work professional working with Family and Child Welfare Services can initiate as active partners in fostering all-round development of youth. Social work profession can play a significant role through concrete action plan to guide youth and parents in raising career aspirations from childhood.

The present study has positioned all the efforts to understand Career Aspirations, Academic Achievement in depth and described various drivers of youth occupational aspirations and academic achievement. Further, study has concluded with significant suggestions for government to bring about changes at policy level for setting up of Career

Guidance Centers at various levels. Career Development Cycle and Career Preparation Process Model for social work intervention are also developed by the researcher.

The suggested action plan can prevent mal adjustments and facilitate in establishing occupational identity. It may bridge the gap caused due to mismatching of education and employment. Therefore, the present study can significantly contribute towards enhancement of services and practice in social work profession with specific reference to facilitate the role of parents, family, Government, NGO, Career Guidance Service centers in channelizing youth during the vulnerable phase of life.

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