

Career Portal and Live Career Sessions during lockdown- Joint Initiative of UNICEF and Jharkhand Education Project Council

A brief report

A. Career Portal as a joint initiative of JEPC and UNICEF to generate awareness amongst students and teachers on varied Career Pathways:



Sapna Sharma (Right) and Neha Sharma(left) are sisters, both study in grade 9, Doranda Highschool Ranchi. Neha wants to be a teacher while a nursing job excites Neha- Both exploring options from Career Portal

Limited awareness about career options has been perceived as a key bottleneck in states like Jharkhand which prevents students from aspiring for completing secondary and higher education. Besides this, it leaves adolescents who do not pursue higher education to settle for options that only provide them subsistence level wages. Due to inadequate knowledge about career streams, medical or engineering services and selected government jobs are viewed as ‘safe careers’ Families having limited resources believe that they may not be able to pursue these options that require more perseverance, time/cost and hence, often discontinue education soon after elementary level. The fact that further education may also contribute to vocations such as tailoring, plumbing or farming remains unknown to vast majority. Those who do continue education up to secondary or higher levels may only have narrow set of career goals which may not always be in congruence with their aptitudes and

abilities. Aspirations for career are often shaped by peer pressure, trends, and socialization of young people rather than information about employment options, assessment of one’s own aptitude or qualities and availability of schemes/ provisions to support education in a specific field.

In response to this issue, Jharkhand Career Portal has been developed by Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC) with support of UNICEF. ‘I Dream Career’ is the technical agency through which this initiative is being implemented. The initiative, which was formally inaugurated in December 2019, envisages to cover 9,000,000 students enrolled in all grade 9-12 schools registered with Jharkhand Academic Council. So far, more than 450,000 students

including boys and girls have been registered. Approximately 200,000 students have emerged as active users. Currently the portal is providing detailed and up to date information related to 546 career options. Along with the information about the said career options, the portal also provides information about various scholarship schemes that provide much needed financial support to the students.

B. Live interactions around career facilitated through Career Portal Platform:As COVIDrelated lockdown was announced for the country and schools and academic institutions closed down consequently, it was decided by the Jharkhand Education Department to promote greater use of multiple digital and remote learning resources, Career Portal being one among them. It was felt that even as Career Portal platform provides opportunities for students to explore career options of their choice, having live and interactive session may add to awareness amongst students and teachers related to career. It may also help in generating more interest around career portal. Thus, weekly live sessions have been introduced to supplement career portal.

As schools are closed, it is assumed that more teachers and students may use their time to get acquainted with the large plethora of career options available on the Career Portal. They may explore the portal and may also get their doubts cleared through online discussions. During this virtual/online support is vital. Thus, through weekly, one hour live interactive session on YouTube, Career Discussions centering around various career pathways have been initiated, these have also later been supplemented by interactive discussions with prominent personalities from the field of sports, fashion and other fields.

A series of sessions on YouTube is being hosted every week. Expert career counselors have been engaged to facilitate these sessions along with eminent professionals to talk about different careers. Information about these YouTube discussions is being shared through network of WhatsApp groups. The current report provides a brief on the five online sessions that was telecasted live on YouTube channel of Jharkhand Career Portal from 1st April 2020 to 29th April 2020. The topics of these one hour weekly live session were decided in advance and shared in various teacher groups on social media, so that they can share it with students.

C. Schedule of live sessions for April 2020

One hour sessions for weekly live telecast were planned and announced. These were on every Wednesday from 03:30 pm to 4:30 pm. The complete schedule for April 2020 was as following:

| Date | Time | Topic | Title of the session |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 April 2020 | 3:30-4:30 PM | Careerportal orientation | करियरपोर्टलसे करियरकेबारेमेंजानें 546 |
| 8 April 2020 | 3:30-4:30 PM | Whatafter school? | 10 /12 वीकेबादकेऑप्शन |

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 15 April 2020 | 3:30-4:30 PM | Vocational/Diploma Oriented career and its scope | वोकेशनल/डिप्लोमा करियर का स्कोप |
| 22 April 2020 | 3:30-4:30 PM | Career Options in Education and teaching | टीचिंग में करियर ऑप्शन |
| 29 May 2020 | 3:30-4:30 PM | Career options in Biology apart from Doctor | मेडिकल में करियर ऑप्शन |

D. Major areas/issues covered

The major areas discussed through the weekly one hour long live interaction are as under:

- ✓ How to access information about various career options: this was demonstrated live during the YouTube Session.
- ✓ Additional support: How students may get financial support through various scholarship schemes.
- ✓ Comparing Options: How to choose between various related options of academic and vocational courses related to academic and/or professional career.
- ✓ Filtering relevant information: Students may need to filter from the multi-level, detailed information related to a particular career option. This may also be needed when a student

is considering more than one career choices. In such a case filtering of information is very useful.

- ✓ Adult support: How teachers and parents may support the students in choosing and preparing for a career option.

- ✓ Different career options related to areas selected for each session. The experts tried to bring in all the relevant information linked to the topic chosen for any session e.g. sessions on vocational, teaching and medical career were organized.

झारखंड सरकार की पहल

Live Session

घर बैठे कक्षा 9 वीं से 12 वीं के बच्चों के लिये करियर मार्गदर्शन की सुविधा। **youtube** सीरीज में भाग लेके झारखंड करियर पोर्टल के बारे में जानें। टीचर्स जानें कि किस तरह बच्चों के साथ करियर मार्गदर्शन पर काम किया जा सकता है।

लाइव सेशन में जुड़े हर बुधवार
3:30-4:30 PM

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| 1 APRIL 2020 करियर पोर्टल से 546 करियर के बारे में जानें | 8 APRIL 2020 10 /12 वी के बाद के ऑप्शन | 15 APRIL 2020 वोकेशनल/डिप्लोमा करियर का स्कोप | 22 APRIL 2020 टीचिंग में करियर ऑप्शन | 29 APRIL 2020 मेडिकल में करियर ऑप्शन |
|--|--|---|--|--|

Subscribe to channel:
bit.ly/youtubechanneljhcareer

www.jhcareerportal.com #CareerGuidanceforall

E. About the sessions:

The details about each session are being shared here:

Session 01- How to use the Career Portal

The technical expert and CEO of 'iDreamCareer' Mr. Ayush Bansal presented the career portal related information to the viewers. Topics covered included operational details related to accessing and navigating through the portal. While these issues had already been discussed by

resource teachers, a hands-on session further helped the students who were yet to operate the portal. The recorded sessions were also viewed later by students.

Session 02- Choosing Careers based on Aptitudes and Interests: What after completing High school and Intermediate

Completion of grade 10th and 12th, are two turning points when students require career guidance- while some may continue further education, for some vocational education may be a suitable option. In either case career choices need to be made consciously and thus, the second YouTube Session taken by counsellor, MrLokman Singh was linked to career choices at these two critical junctures. With the help a presentation, students were explained what factors should be taken into consideration for joining vocational course, pursuing higher education and so on. Some pointers to help students determine whether they will choose Arts, Commerce or Science with mathematics or Physics/Chemistry/Biology combination were shared by him. He then gave a generic overview of alternatives both vocational and academic fields related to each stream.

Session 03- Vocational Careers

The session was facilitated by MrSamriddh Saxena, an expert on vocational careers. He highlighted how vocational careers may be an alternative for those looking forward to immediate opportunities to earn. He introduced the viewers with the range of vocational career options. After that he gave detailed information about the opportunities with Polytechnic and ITIs and the careers related to these. Career options with app based services like food and goods delivery (e.g. Zomato and Swiggy) that provide employment to people for delivering food/goods were discussed as a new and evolving trend. The career options discussed in the session include being a Disc Jockey, Fitness instructor, Jewelry designer and so on. Queries were taken up at the end of the session.

Session 04- Careers related to Teaching and Educational Field

A visit to any random classroom in Jharkhand School will reveal that a large number of students aspire to be teachers and predictably so as teachers are the first examples of professionals from organized sectors they come across. This session was facilitated by expert career counselor MrLokman Singh. While generally careers in educational field indicate towards careers in teaching alone but the session allowed students to think about options like librarians, library assistant, lab assistant and day care assistant as well. It was also emphasized that while one may begin career as day care assistant initially by getting a training, one may later choose to become nursery teacher after going for advanced training. Teaching careers related to physical education, stitching and tailoring, fine arts, embroidery were also discussed.

Session 05-Careers in Biology

In the session, Expert career counselor Ms. Tulika Krishnan talked about career options in Biology other than medicine. She said that while many aspire to be medical doctor but plethora of options in paramedical field and other alternatives linked to biology are available which may enable young people to contribute to health and wellbeing field. She precisely provided the relevant information and highlighted the scope of each career option during the session. Dialysis technologist, rehabilitation therapists, respiratory therapist and various other jobs related to Medical field were discussed. She said that these professionals are much in demand yet there is dearth of technologists in this field. Similarly, she explained lucrative and important careers in Nursing. She highlighted that nursing is not only for women, male nurses are equally required. After explaining about these careers, she gave detailed answers to questions related to what (to study), where (to study) and how (to get into the career). She also talked about the challenges and expectations related to each career option she discussed during the session.

F. The Response and Feedback from Participants

Live session on careers allow students and teachers to ask questions and clarify doubts. Planning of a series of Live YouTube sessions was guided by the same idea. For those, who missed the opportunity to take part in the live session could view them later. While the live viewership witnessed hundreds of viewers but even later the number of views kept going up. As many of the students could not get information about these sessions before live streaming due to technical issues linked with accessibility, they watched it later. Due to this number of views is continuously going up for each of the five sessions available on the YouTube channel of Jharkhand Career Portal.

Viewers posted live comments in appreciation to the presentation, shared information and for the responses given to their queries during the live sessions. Apart from that many members of the WhatsApp group titled 'Jharkhand Trainer Group' also shared their views about the session in the group. Besides the comments from teachers, feedback from teachers were also compiled. Key highlights are being shared as under:

- The live sessions on YouTube were a very good initiative to create awareness about the portal among students and teachers alike.
- The portal indeed has a galore of career opportunities which when surfed thoroughly will benefit students and teachers.
- The viewership could have been better with more teachers motivating students to join the session. It is needed to ensure that maximum numbers of teachers are informed about such a session well in advance and they are encouraged to share the information in relevant student groups using social media.
- The voices of the experts were clear, and teachers had no issue in understanding anything. About the first session some of the teachers felt that for students a more

simplified language and use of more Hindi terms would have been a better idea while for the last session the explanations by the expert remained the most appreciated.

- Short audios related to specific careers in Hindi may be recorded and be available for download on the portal, which teachers may circulate through WhatsApp groups when students need more information about a particular profession or vocation.
- Though scholarship information was given for class 12 students, but scholarships are vital for all classes who access the portal, it would have been better, if it was linked for every level.
- In the first session, at few occasions the presenter's comments were taken as being demotivating by a few participants (e.g. when the presenter said that cut off for Delhi University goes too high but did not elaborate on how to crack this cut off barrier). Slight deviations in the way the comment is made may dampen the confidence and motivation of the students, as more often than not, they already get demotivating messages from their neighborhood/ communities and hence extra caution has to be taken to prevent students from being demotivated. Similarly, in second session, the expert made some comment about the schools while mentioning his own experiences during his school days. Though the schools may have lacked basic facilities earlier but now the schools are well equipped in terms of those and the same was communicated to the concerned people.
- For the third session, many of the teachers were not able to join the session live as they were participating in an online meeting being conducted by the department at state level. These teachers informed in the teachers groups that they will watch it later and they requested that same should be done for the sessions missed by anyone (teacher or student).
- Students of Madarsa education and Madhyama education have skill sets that may differ from general students. The career choices for Madarsa students or even to the students of Sanskrit schools may not only be different but also very limited. The portal should try to provide specific information about such students also.
- The vocational courses linked to the art and craft of Jharkhand is very important for tribal and rural students of some districts, the careers related to these seem to be unavailable in the portal currently.

Along with these, there were some other feedbacks which teachers felt that can be sorted by exploring the portal itself.

G. Suggestions

The suggestions are also based on the inputs from teachers who attended the sessions. Many suggestions were given after the first session and were communicated to the team presenting the live sessions. It resulted into incorporation of the suggestions to some extent in each successive

session. Yet the mention is important as it gave shape to the presentation and discussions of the live sessions. The major suggestions given about the sessions are as follows:

- ✓ The session used demonstration of log-in and access to available information about the 546 career options to choose from, this is beneficial to users who get to use a computer system (desktop or laptop) to access the career portal but majority of students use smart phones for the same (especially during the lock down) and this demonstration was not much of help for them. Thus showing both the ways of log in can be more useful.
- ✓ High resolution images or enlarged display of specific areas of screen may be more helpful for the viewers. In specific cases enlargement of a particular portion may be helpful. This is more important when we have seen that it may not be easy for all the viewers to locate the cursor during all the times.
- ✓ Career counseling at district level at least in the beginning and end of academic sessions should be fruitful.
- ✓ Visuals of professionals related to careers may be increased to make the content more appealing to students.
- ✓ Access for teachers to the information provided in the state career portal is vital to their role in providing guidance and motivation to the students in using the portal. It will be hugely beneficial if teacher log-ins are created for accessing the portal.
- ✓ Schools should identify one teacher as a career counselor who may conduct regular sessions, help observe career day, invite entrepreneurs, plan local visits, and assign projects to boost the curiosity in students about different career options. Once students are made aware and are motivated, they will regularly check for more and more information about career of their choice.
- ✓ A guideline or manual for teachers may be circulated about how to use social media and online platforms for connecting more students.
- ✓ State level *Bal-Samagam* or science exhibitions (the programs that are already part of current practices) may also have career counseling as made part of programs through innovative ideas or games where more children from all participatingschools from all over the state come together to take part and showcase their talents.
- ✓ Organizing a career fair at district and state level may not only benefit students but it will also make their parents more aware and informed about future of their wards.
- ✓ If government sponsored scholarship forms are linked with the portal and schools are allowed to fill it for all the students having log-in id to the portal, it will have multiple benefits. It will save efforts and money of students in filling the scholarship forms with the help of cyber café or *Pragra Kendra* operators. It will also popularize the portal amongst the students of relevant classes.
- ✓ Audio Visuals of girls or women doing well in few career fields may be created and shared as motivation.
- ✓ Students' experiences related to use of state career portal may be documented and shared to educate other students.

- ✓ Success stories of people who belong to the state may boost the confidence of the students. For this success stories of state's government school alumni and their pre-recorded messages can be helpful.
- ✓ Currently many of the students may not be able to watch the sessions because of some reasons (e.g. lack of awareness/information about live sessions and their links as well as due to students' constant engagement with other online learning contents shared by the state) but these sessions will remain useful for students over a period of time and teachers can share the links wherever needed.
- ✓ The information about discussion in each session can be compiled and the brief can published in PANKH Senior (magazine published by the department for free distribution in schools), so that more students get to know about it and search for the relevant session online.

H. Way forward

After conducting five sessions successfully, the aim is to incorporate feedbacks and suggestions received during and after YouTube session and make the future sessions more fruitful. This will eventually help the learners get benefitted from the Career portal across the state.

Once the schools are open, more efforts can be taken to ensure better outcomes through the career portal by using the school infrastructure and resources. But even then, these sessions will help the teachers and students for more fruitful use of the Jharkhand Career Portal



