

WELCOME TO OUR

Career's Newsletter

VOLUME 5, 29TH EDITION

Reader's Note

We are pleased to release the latest edition of “The Next Step” Careers Newsletter, Volume 5, Twenty-Ninth Edition. This issue explores various courses and subject combinations. It offers a guide for students to make strategic career choices and build long-term professional success.

This edition discusses Fashion Design in the Age of AI, why adaptability matters more than choosing the right stream, and careers in India's Armed Forces, while also highlighting how vast career choices can sometimes be confusing. We truly appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

As always, if you have any suggestions for future topics or ideas you would like us to cover, we encourage you to write to us at careers@assamvalleyschool.com. Your feedback enables us to deliver content that resonates deeply with our readers.

Editor:
Ridge Hage

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Fashion Design in the Age of AI: New Careers for a New Generation



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Fashion is one of the most dynamic and ever-demanding industries in the world. Fashion is not only about clothing, styling and beauty, but it is also about business, technology, sustainability, communication and innovation. Over the years, fashion remains as job creator, a source of inspiration and a cultural force across countries and communities in the ever-changing world.

The importance of fashion and textile industry can be seen because of the employability it generates worldwide. According to the World Bank, 2019, ILO, 2020, the global apparel industry employs an estimated 430 million people and accounts for a sizable share of the world's workforce. The Indian textile and apparel industry contributes about 2% to the national GDP, and nearly 11% to the manufacturing GVA and provides direct employment to over 45 million people in the country (Ministry of Textiles, Annual Report-2023). As the demand for sustainable clothing, digital commerce and fashion technology continues to grow, the fashion industry is expected to continue expanding and creating new job opportunities in the coming years.

The Way the Fashion Industry

Works

Traditionally, the fashion industry functions in four interconnected layers like primary, secondary, retail and auxiliary. Each layer has its own role and together they turn raw materials into finished fashion products that are delivered to consumers at the end.

Primary Layer

Before garments are conceptualized, manufactured or styled, the journey of fashion begins at the primary level. This stage focuses on production of raw materials such as fibres, yarns, fabrics, dyes and other essential textile inputs. Here, the textile designers, material developers and fabric researchers work like a real game changer. They create the foundation on which all fashion products are developed. This layer is crucial because good fashion starts with good selection and innovation of fabrics. It creates diverse career opportunities in textile design, fabric development, print design, dyeing, weaving, knitting and material innovation. Students interested in this field can pursue studies in textile design, textile engineering, fabric technology. The job roles can include textile designer, print developer, material technologist and fabric researcher. With the advancement of technology, smart textiles are also gaining popularity. These innovative materials are extensively being applied across sectors such as automotive, healthcare, and sports, driving new possibilities in wearable technology and redefining the future of fashion and functionality.

Secondary Layer

The second layer is the place where ideas become clothes. Here, the fashion designers, pattern makers, sampling designers and production teams work collaboratively. They use the raw materials from primary layer for clothing and to create seasonal collections. Depending on the brand, audience and season, designers can either create new trends or follow existing ones. This layer is the heart of fashion creative. It includes creative skills like sketching, draping, pattern making, garment construction, fitting and finishing. Students who want careers here can choose fashion design, apparel design, garment construction or fashion technology. Common job titles include Fashion Designer, Apparel Designer, Pattern Maker, Costume Designer, Garment Technologist, Fashion Illustrator and Production Coordinator.



Retail Layer

The retail layer is where fashion meets the customer. This stage includes fashion buyers, merchandisers, store managers, e-commerce teams and sales professionals who help the fashion brands to place products in physical stores or online platforms. Retail is critical because no matter how exceptional a design may be, its success ultimately depends on how effectively it is priced, presented, and sold.

Students interested in this level can go into fashion merchandising, retail management, fashion marketing or business management. Job positions include: Fashion Buyer, Merchandiser, Retail Manager, Visual Merchandiser, E-commerce Executive and Sales Consultant. This layer is particularly important today with the rapid growth of online shopping and digital retail.

Auxiliary Layer

The fashion industry relies heavily on this layer. This layer consists of professionals including: Fashion stylists, Fashion communication specialists, Fashion Graphic Designers, Digital Designers, Fashion Bloggers, Photographers, Public Relations Experts, Entrepreneurs who create fashion brands and startups. The auxiliary layer plays a role in shaping the public image of fashion and its business direction. Students interested in this field can explore courses, such as:

Fashion Media, Styling, Visual Communication, Entrepreneurship, Fashion Business.

Some potential job titles in this layer include: Fashion Stylist, Fashion Journalist, Brand Strategist, Content Creator, Fashion Graphic Designer, Digital Fashion Designer, Fashion Blogger, Startup Founder. The auxiliary layer is vital in making fashion visible, desirable and commercially successful.



The fashion industry is an ecosystem, with many entry points and career paths. The infographic below provides a breakdown of the industry into four layers. It offers a snapshot of what you can study, the skill set required and the roles you can explore in each segment.



THE FASHION INDUSTRY: FOUR KEY LAYERS

From Raw Materials to Runway to Retail – A World of Opportunities

	 PRIMARY LAYER The Foundation	 SECONDARY LAYER From Fabric to Fashion	 RETAIL LAYER Connecting Fashion with Consumers	 AUXILIARY LAYER The Support Ecosystem
 Description	Involves sourcing and production of raw materials such as fibres, yarns, fabrics, dyes, and finishes. Foundation of the fashion value chain.	Focuses on transforming raw materials into finished garments and products through design, pattern making, and production.	Concerned with marketing, merchandising, pricing, branding, and selling fashion products to consumers.	Supports the entire fashion ecosystem through media, styling, logistics, technology, forecasting, and consultancy.
 Relevant Academic Courses	- Textile Design - Textile Engineering - Fabric Technology - Fashion Technology - Material Science	- Fashion Design - Apparel Production - Garment Manufacturing - Pattern Making - CAD for Fashion - Fashion Technology	- Fashion Communication - Fashion Marketing & Merchandising - Retail Management - Luxury Brand Management - Visual Merchandising	- Fashion Styling - Fashion Media - Fashion Journalism - Fashion Photography - Supply Chain Management - Fashion Business Management - Trend Forecasting
 Job Roles	 - Textile Designer - Fabric Developer - Print Designer - Dyeing Specialist - Material Technologist - Fabric Researcher	 - Fashion Designer - Pattern Maker - Garment Technologist - Production Manager - Sampling Designer - Quality Controller	 - Fashion Buyer - Merchandiser - Retail Manager - Visual Merchandiser - Brand Manager - E-commerce Manager	 - Stylist - Fashion Journalist - Content Creator - Photographer - Trend Forecaster - Supply Chain Manager - Fashion Consultant
 Key Skill Sets Required	 Knowledge of fibres & fabrics, textile processes, surface design, material innovation, sustainability awareness, research skills	 Design thinking, garment construction, pattern making, CAD skills, production planning, attention to detail	 Market analysis, consumer behavior, branding, communication, visual storytelling, sales strategy, digital marketing	 Creative direction, communication, storytelling, digital content creation, forecasting, networking, analytical thinking
 Industry Workplaces / Opportunities	 Textile mills, weaving/knitting units, dyeing & printing units, R&D labs, sustainable material startups	 Fashion houses, export houses, garment manufacturing units, design studios, couture ateliers	 Retail brands, luxury boutiques, e-commerce platforms, fashion chains, department stores, buying houses	 Media houses, magazines, production houses, advertising agencies, trend forecasting agencies, logistics firms, fashion tech companies

(OpenAI ChatGPT, Infographic on the Four Layers of the Fashion Industry, generated June 26, 2026).

Emerging Technology and Fashion Careers

In the contemporary landscape, the fashion industry is undergoing a significant transformation driven by emerging technologies. CLO 3D, Blockchain, IoT, Automation and AI are some of the tools that are revolutionizing the fashion industry, making it more sustainable, transparent and changing the way fashion is designed, tracked and marketed.

CLO 3D

CLO 3D is a digital fashion design software that allows designers to create realistic garment simulations before the creation of physical samples. This saves fabric, reduces waste, production costs and speeds up the design process. Students learning CLO 3D opens doors

to digital design, virtual sampling, and 3D fashion careers. It shows how the fashion industry is now moving from paper sketches to a more advanced digital environment.

Blockchain and IoT

Blockchain enables fashion brands to follow the journey of a product from raw materials to garment. It produces a secure digital record that can verify sourcing, ethical production and sustainability claims. The Internet of Things (IoT) uses connected devices and sensors to monitor inventory, material movement and supply chain activity in real time. Combined, these tools boost transparency, reduce fraud and promote ethical fashion

Automation

Automation is also becoming standard in fashion operations. It is used for inventory tracking, production planning, order processing and supply chain management. This cuts errors, saves time and helps brands to respond effectively in changing demand. It also enables fashion professionals to dedicate more of their time to creativity, strategy and innovation rather than repetitive manual work

AI in Fashion and New Career Paths

Artificial intelligence is transforming the fashion industry in a big way. It is reducing design cycles and transforming the way brands predict trends, manage inventory, tailor shopping and schedule production. AI trend forecasting tools can analyse social media, search patterns, runway images and consumer behaviour to spot styles before they hit the mainstream.

AI is also helping with virtual try-on and personalized shopping, making it easier for shoppers to make good buying decisions online. At the production and retail levels, AI helps brands to predict demand, reduce overproduction and make supply chains more efficient. That means the industry is moving faster, getting smarter and becoming more customer-centric.

AI is creating new career opportunities such as AI Fashion Trend Analyst, Fashion Data Scientist, Virtual Try-on Designer, Generative Design Technologist, Sustainable Supply Chain AI Manager and Digital Fashion Stylist. These roles require creative

and digital thinking, so students with a good understanding of both fashion and technology will be well placed for the future.

Choosing the Right College for Study

For students who plan to pursue a career in fashion, it is very important to select a design college that provides programmes across different levels of the industry. A good college should teach Fashion Design, but also offering Textile Design, Fashion Communication, Styling and Image Design, Merchandising, Retail, Digital Fashion and Ai powered Fashion Design. In such environment students get ample opportunities to explore interdisciplinary as well as multidisciplinary learning. Students learn how each layer of the fashion industry works, and how their own role connects with others. This is important because the fashion world does not function in isolation. Textile Designers, Fashion Designers, Fashion Stylists, Buyers, Fashion Communicators, and Digital Creators all rely on each other to take fashion from concept to the customer. A good design college not only provides quality education but also invests in creating opportunities that nurture an entrepreneurial mindset. This ensures that by the end of your studies, you are equipped not just to seek jobs, but to create them.



How Students should Prepare

Students who want to take fashion as a career option should begin with strong creative basics such as sketching, colour sense, fabric knowledge, and trend awareness. They must also explore digital tools, design software, communication skills and business understanding. Because modern fashion careers need more than just artistic talent alone.



A good first step is to build a small portfolio. Students can follow fashion trends, study different career paths and try creative projects or competitions. They can also opt for courses based on the layer of the industry that interests them the most.

Please remember, fashion is no longer just about clothing. It is a world of design, creativity, technology, business, and storytelling, full of opportunities for young people who are willing to learn and adapt.



The Death of the Perfect Career Choice: Why Adaptability Matters More Than Choosing the Right Stream



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What is a perfect career in a world that is increasingly becoming brittle and uncertain? The idea of a “perfect career” rests on an assumption that no longer holds that the world that we are planning for will exist by the time we arrive in it. A generation ago, this was a reasonable bet, the world was more certain, professions were slightly more secure, the future was probably a bit more predictable. Today stability is the biggest myth!! Roles that seem unshakeable a even a few years ago are being taken over by automation, AI tools, and other emerging technologies and business models.

What are then we are preparing ourselves for? An unknown future? Well think about this, in today’s environment selecting a single stream and treating it as a irreversible, high-stake decision is not just outdated but actively misleading.

It tells young people that the goal is to pick correctly once when what they really need is to be able to keep choosing well, repeatedly, for the next couple of decades. Interestingly, this shift is perhaps most evident and acknowledged in the Indian Education Policy itself, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is designed explicitly around the idea that rigid streams have outlived their usefulness. Hence, the NEP provides students the flexibility to move away from the fixed Science- Commerce-Arts silos and choose subjects across disciplines. The four-year undergraduate programme builds in multiple entry and exit points explicitly designed for students whose direction changes mid-course rather than assuming that everyone arrives certain and stays that way.

Careers today behave like lattices, they are full of sideways moves, jumps, and re-entries. Any graduate, for instance, can end up in UX design, a literature major can become a digital storyteller, and an engineer can pivot into public policy. Understanding this shift matters when we look at how we advise young people. We need to reward range and curiosity, the ability to combine seemingly unrelated skills, and this needs to factor into our classrooms and our ideologies. What matters most in today's world and that needs to be factored in today's classrooms is adaptability, the capacity to learn quickly, unlearn what is outdated and relearn new skills continuously. This is one of the most practical skills; it's like a meta-skill that determines whether every other skill stays relevant. Thus, instead of what to learn, institutions now need to teach "how to learn"; how to break down an unfamiliar problem, seek out the right resources, and build competence from scratch.

This will prepare students to move into fields that do not exist yet. A student who has only learned a fixed body of content is vulnerable the moment that content is automated, outsourced, or simply outdated. Students need to be comfortable with not knowing; skills such as recognizing structured argumentation, quantitative reasoning, or storytelling are no longer owned by one stream, they travel. Today the focus of curriculum needs to be to equip students with fast self-directed learning skills.



Adaptability is also the ability to begin anew, to put rest to all anxieties and be willing to be a beginner again. As skills are replaced, careers become more uncertain, we need to become more comfortable with the discomfort of beginning something new; unfortunately this is a skill that schools still need to teach. I must mention here that none of these points made above is an argument for choosing carelessly or for pretending that streams do not matter. Foundations matter, a student who wants to work in a quantitative field genuinely benefits from strong mathematics early on. The argument is against a different thing: the **outsized weight** we put on this one decision, and the anxiety we allow it to generate, as though a seventeen-year-old is expected to correctly forecast a labour market decades from now.

*Small
steps
every
day*



For educators, parents, and counsellors, this shift asks something harder than simply naming careers and matching them to streams. It asks us to help young people build the internal architecture for continuous reinvention, curiosity, resilience, the habit of learning rather than handing them a single, static map. The old question "What do you want to be?" assumes a fixed destination. Perhaps the better question, the one that actually prepares students for the world they're inheriting, is: "What kind of learner do you want to become?"

The perfect career choice was always something of a fiction. What we can offer instead and what will serve students far longer is the capacity to keep choosing well and the adaptability to understand that change is the only constant.



Beyond the Uniform: Exploring Careers in India's Armed Forces

A career built on knowledge, leadership, discipline and service

When students hear the words Armed Forces, they often imagine a uniformed officer, a parade ground and a life of discipline. But a career in India's Armed Forces extends far beyond that familiar image. The Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force offer diverse opportunities across technology, aviation, engineering, medicine, logistics, administration, education, information technology and many other fields.

For students considering this career pathway, the first question should not simply be "How do I clear NDA?" Instead, it should be:

"Is the Armed Forces environment suited to my interests, abilities, personality and aspirations?"

Three Services, Many Possibilities

The **Indian Army** offers career areas ranging from Infantry, Armoured Corps and Artillery to Engineers, Signals, Aviation, Medical Services, Logistics and Administration.

The **Indian Navy** provides opportunities in Executive, Engineering, Electrical, Aviation, Logistics, Education, Information Technology and Naval Operations.

The **Indian Air Force** offers pathways in Flying, Aeronautical Engineering, Weapon Systems, Administration, Logistics, Accounts, Meteorology and Education.

This diversity is important because students do not have to fit into a single stereotype of what a defence professional looks like.

The First Career Decision: Officer or Other Service Entry?

Broadly, students can explore two pathways.

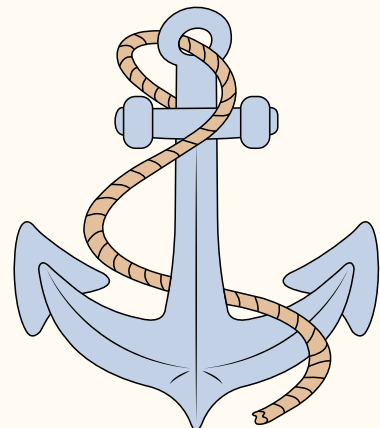
Officer Entry - Students aspiring to commissioned officer roles can enter through different routes:

After Class 12

- NDA / Naval Academy Examination
- Service-specific technical entries

After Graduation

- CDS
- AFCAT
- Technical Graduate/engineering entries
- NCC entries
- Other service-specific entries



NDA: The Gateway to a Tri-Service Career

For school students, the **National Defence Academy (NDA)** is one of the most prominent officer-entry pathways.

Located at **Khadakwasla, Pune**, NDA brings together cadets destined for the Army, Navy and Air Force for joint academic, military, physical and leadership training. After NDA, cadets proceed to service-specific training establishments.

The journey broadly involves:

UPSC Written Examination → SSB → Medical Examination → Final Merit → Training

The written examination includes Mathematics and the General Ability Test, while the SSB process assesses areas such as communication, teamwork, leadership, decision-making, personality and psychological responses. This makes one point particularly clear:

Defence preparation is much more than examination preparation.

Where Can Different Academic Interests Lead?

One of the most useful things for students to understand is that there is no single degree that defines a defence aspirant.

Students interested in technology might explore:

- Mechanical Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Electronics
- Computer Science
- Aerospace/Aeronautical Engineering



Students with an interest in the humanities may consider:

- Political Science
- History
- Geography
- Economics
- Psychology
- International Relations

Students interested in commerce can explore:

- Commerce
- Finance
- Accounting
- Economics

Students interested in medicine can pursue **MBBS and allied medical pathways**.

The important principle is to choose a degree in which you can perform well while also developing a strong civilian career option.



The Five Pillars of Defence Preparation

A successful defence aspirant needs more than academic knowledge.

1. Academics - Build strong fundamentals in relevant subjects and develop a consistent study routine.

2. Fitness - Running, endurance, strength, mobility and an active lifestyle should become part of your routine.

3. Communication - Read widely, speak clearly, listen actively and learn to express ideas with confidence.

4. Leadership - Take responsibility at school, participate in sports and activities, organise events and learn to work with others.

5. Character - Discipline, integrity, resilience and accountability are essential qualities for a demanding profession.



PREPARATION

The aim is therefore not merely to become someone who can **clear an examination**, but someone capable of handling responsibility, teamwork and demanding professional situations.

Your Next 90 Days

If you are currently exploring a career in the Armed Forces, start with a simple three-month plan.

MONTH 1 — DISCOVER

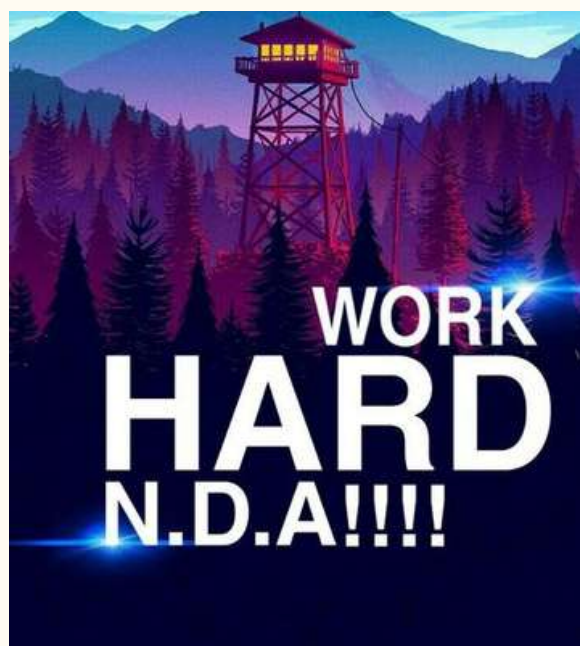
- Explore Army, Navy and Air Force pathways.
- Check your age and educational eligibility.
- Read the latest official notifications.
- Identify the examination or entry you may be eligible for.

MONTH 2 — BUILD

- Establish a structured academic routine.
- Begin regular running and strength training.
- Read current affairs every day.
- Participate actively in sports and team activities.

MONTH 3 — TEST

- Attempt mock examinations.
- Analyse your weaker areas.
- Continue developing physical fitness.
- Practise communication.
- Understand the SSB/AFSB process.
- Create a longer-term preparation plan.



Samiksha Ghorawat

More Career Choices, More Confusion

I would like to share something very important with you. Have you ever thought about what career options were available when your parents were in school or college? How many courses and career choices did they have compared with the number of options available to you today?

The world of careers has changed a lot. As a Careers Counsellor, one of the biggest challenges I see during counselling sessions is that many students are confused about their future. They are not sure what they want to do after Class 12. This is true for students from all three streams—Science, Commerce and Humanities.

But if we look at the past, our parents, teachers and coaches also had their own challenges.

In those days, there were fewer courses and career options. In many families, parents decided what their children should study. Students were often expected to follow the career path chosen by their parents.

If a child was not doing well in studies, we often heard comments like:

"Yeh toh padhta hi nahi hai!"

"Bas poora din isko cricket ya game khilwa do!"

"Number kahan se aayenge iske?"

Things have changed today.

Parents are now more open-minded. They are more willing to listen to their children and allow them to choose subjects according to their interests and abilities.

But there is another problem.

Today, we have too many choices. And sometimes, too many choices create confusion.

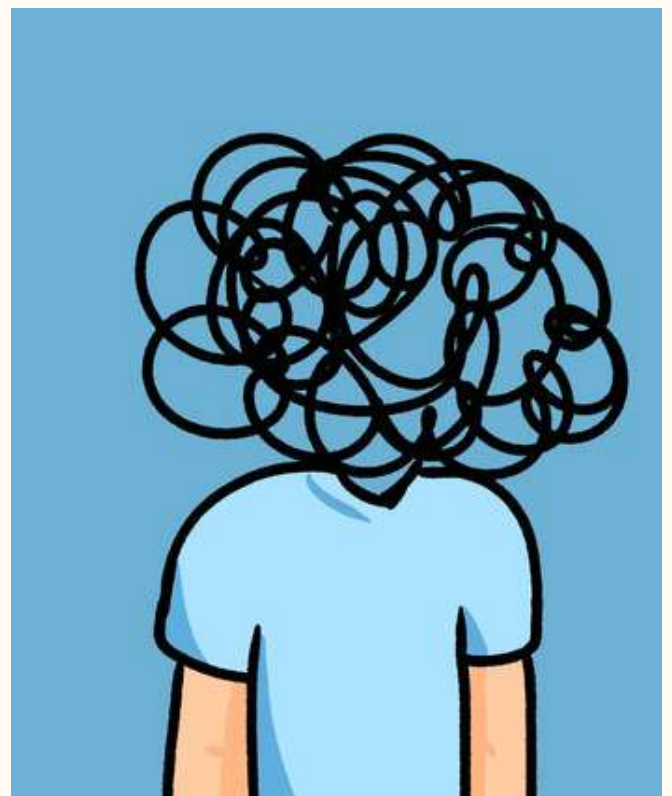
Students can choose from hundreds of courses and career options. But many students are not sure which option is right for them.

Sometimes, students choose a subject because they think it is easy. Sometimes, they choose a course because their friends are choosing it. At other times, they see something on social media and believe that it is the best career.

But choosing a career should not be based only on what is easy, popular or currently trending.

The Changing World of Careers

The career world has changed significantly. Many traditional careers are still important, but several new career options have also developed.



Science – PCM / PCB

Earlier options: Engineering, Medicine and Pure Sciences were among the most common choices.

New-age options: Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Biotechnology, Forensic Science, Cybersecurity, Environmental Science and many other specialised fields.

Today, Science students can combine their knowledge of science with technology, computers, data and research.



Commerce

Earlier options: B. Com, Chartered Accountancy, Banking and Finance were common choices.

New-age options: Business Analytics, Financial Technology (FinTech), Financial Markets, Digital Marketing, E-commerce, Entrepreneurship and specialised Management courses.

Commerce is no longer limited to accounting and traditional finance. Technology and data have become an important part of the business world.

Arts and Humanities

Earlier options: History, Political Science, Sociology, Literature, Economics and other humanities subjects were common choices. Many students went into teaching, research, civil services and related fields.

New-age options: Psychology, UI/UX Design, Digital Journalism, Liberal Arts, International Relations, Public Policy, Media and Communication, Integrated Law and many other fields.

Today, students from the Humanities stream can explore a wide range of careers.

Then Why Are Students Still Confused?

This is an important question.

Students today have more information, more courses, more universities and more career options than ever before. Still, many students are confused.

The problem is not always a **lack of choices**. Sometimes, the problem is **too many choices and not enough research**.

Social media also plays an important role. Students often see people becoming successful at a very young age and may feel that success should come quickly.

But we must remember that **success does not happen overnight**

Every successful person has faced challenges, failures and difficult situations. Learning, hard work, patience and consistency are important parts of any successful career.

Students should definitely be ambitious. They should dream big and aim high.

But at the same time, they also need to understand that there are no shortcuts to meaningful success.

Our Role as Parents and Teachers

As parents, teachers and counsellors, our job is not simply to tell students what career they should choose.

Our job is to help them understand **how to make the right career decisions.**

Students should learn to:

- Understand their interests and strengths.
- Research different courses and careers.
- Speak to teachers, counsellors and professionals.
- Make decisions based on their own interests and abilities.
- Not blindly follow friends or social-media trends.
- Accept failure and learn from mistakes.
- Be patient and willing to work hard.

Struggles make us stronger. Challenges make us more disciplined. Failures teach us important lessons.

The world of careers will continue to change. New careers will emerge and existing careers will change with time.

Therefore, students should not only ask:

"What career should I choose?"

They should also ask:

"What am I good at?"

"What do I enjoy doing?"

"What skills do I need?"

"What have I researched about this career?"

Remember, having many choices is a great opportunity. But making the **right and informed choice** is the real challenge.



Dream big. Explore more. Ask questions. Do your research. And most importantly, be patient with yourself. Enjoy reading and keep exploring!



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