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Bridging the Career Guidance Gap in India: A Tech-Driven Approach with CareerNeeti

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study is to improve students' career decision-making through the provision of data-driven and student-centric recommendations using artificial intelligence. We used a mixed-method research methodology featuring surveys, user interviews, and real-world platform testing to gain insights into user needs and evaluate system effectiveness. Based on a representative sample of higher secondary and undergraduate students, the platform's recommendation engine powered by AI was tested.

We do this in a world where career decisions have become more complex than ever before for students and there is a need for better and more tailored career counselling platforms. Conventional systems tend to offer one-size-fits-all solutions, unable to cater to the nuanced and multi-faceted goals of students. To address this gap, this research presents Careerneeti, an AI-driven career guidance platform that provides tailored career recommendations, expert consultations, curated learning resources, and features with a focus on accessibility.

Early results show that students who know their power match also improve common sense accuracy and confidence in career decisions compared to peer (swipe left, swipe right)-based recommendations. Moreover, the study substantiates that students appreciate connection to experts and the availability of customized resources when it comes to their career exploration.

Our research adds to the existing body of knowledge by proposing a solution that is both scalable and easily accessible for building future career guidance systems. It also highlights the increasing use of AI in shaping the education and career decisions of individuals, paving the way for more personalized and accessible career guidance solutions. The results prove that career decisions made based on AI recommendations are much more accurate compared to those without, aligning with prior studies showing the transformational impact AI can have on educational decision-making [1].

Keywords: career guidance, AI-driven recommendation, personalized learning, student decision-making.

1. Introduction

Career guidance is significant in guiding students to choose the right career path of their desire. The traditional career counselling processes based on static information or inflexible approaches do not necessarily suit the variety of students, changing job market trends, and growing need for tech-driven career planning. Whatever it might be, the advice given to them is either generalized or outdated, causing them to be confused and mismatched between what career options they pursue and what they truly want or are skilled at. This is where AI in career guidance can change the game completely, providing personalized, data-driven recommendations based on students' skills, interests, and emerging industry trends.

Even with the heightened demand for meaningful career exploration, many students do not have access to personalized career advice. Current systems tend to make generalized suggestions and lack an adequate focus on aspects like personal interests and abilities, in addition to changing industry trends. For example, prevailing social influences and conventional career aspirations discourage students from exploring alternative career pathways. In the study we are introducing an AI-powered career guidance platform, CareerNeeti, to provide AI-driven insights, expert consultations, and curated resources for career decision-making.

The population of India is vast and diversified, and every year the country has millions of graduates. Many of them, however, have to make guided decisions regarding their careers. As mentioned in the India Skills Report 2023[2], about

75% of youths in India have not made firm decisions when it comes to choosing a career. Most decisions are based on social pressure or limited exposure to the career's society. Infrastructural support and a trained counsellor are two major issues that inhibit the setting up of basic career counselling even in rural areas.

The key objectives of this research are:

- To develop an AI-integrated career guidance platform that offers **personalized career recommendations**
- To evaluate the effectiveness of **AI-based career counselling** in improving students' decision-making
- To assess the platform's **scalability and accessibility** in providing career guidance to diverse student groups.

This study has a lot of significance for education and career development as it bridges the gap between the traditional career counselling methods and the AI-enabled solutions. The study hopes to facilitate career awareness and decrease uncertain decision-making through technology-driven recommendations so that students can gain the tools to explore a wider array of careers. Furthermore, the results will also underpin scalable career guidance models that can be embedded in educational organizations, ultimately enhancing the availability and efficiency of career counselling for students around the globe.

2. Literature Review

Career guidance is often neglected but is one of the most important aspects of education, especially in a country like India with a burgeoning youth demographic. Although the nation graduates millions of students annually, many have no idea of how to plan their careers. The India Skills Report 2025 reported that employability among Indian graduates reached 54.81% in 2025 from 51.25% in 2024. Although this is an encouraging sign, this trend still means that close to half of graduates struggle to match their skills with what the market requires.

While some platforms that were created specifically for career development help with employment, their general nature makes them somewhat unhelpful or pointless. Multiple career advisors give vague advice that makes no sense given a person’s unique strength, ambition, or... trends in a given industry. Moreover, career guidance services are often limited to urban areas, making professional guidance inaccessible to students in rural areas. This forms a broad chasm where many students either follow a path dictated by the needs of society as defined in the media or have no idea about opportunities emerging that better match their skills and interests.

A remarkable initiative is the launch of the program "Desh Ke Mentor" by the Government of Delhi in October 2021. This initiative links voluntary mentors to students studying in classes IX-XII in Delhi government schools to fill knowledge gaps and educate them about possible education and career choices. Despite its lofty ambitions, the program has struggled with several issues, including questions about the safety of children, the credibility of psychometric tests, and the absence of a police verification process for mentors.

Tech-powered career counselling platforms such as iDreamCareer and Mindler have made headway into this recruiting space with assessments, tailored counselling, and career roadmaps. Yet, they still have limitations that influence the accessibility and personalization of their features and tools, particularly about cultural and psychological factors.

While **iDreamCareer** offers personalized, in-depth counselling, they also do not have transparent pricing in their programs, which may discourage students from poorer backgrounds. Inject data from the platform into students’ psychological filters, but only as much psychological data as is needed to account for critical influences such as culture and social pressure, which can sometimes affect whether they pursue passion-based study pathways or opt for safer, socially accepted career paths.

Mindler has a flexible pricing plan, though its upper-tier plans tend to be pricey for most students. Though the platform can make recommendations based on skills, it may miss emotional and psychological factors (such as self-doubt or fear of failure) that can sway careers.

However, both have demonstrated the importance of tech-supported counsel, confirming a demand for low-cost, culturally sensitive, and psychologically driven career solutions—one that **CareerNeeti** will stands to fulfil.

As Heppner and Jung (2013) state, "There is little evidence to suggest that the global workforce attends to interests, skills, or values, which are essential to career development." The tendency of young men to follow their parents into the same profession and of young women to avoid having a career—has been studied at length about the status of a profession. Students often follow the path society says is most prestigious—the fields of medicine, law, engineering, and architecture. Such is the misguided pursuit of careers, as in the social status attached to careers, which young people pursue in Nigeria (Issa & Nwalo, 2008). As a result, many find themselves in fields that frustrate their talent or do not match their expected status, and that can result in dissatisfaction, idleness, inadequate income, or inadequate professional respect. This can lead to people being useless at contributing to society, instead draining resources by being a burden on themselves, their employer, and their country.

According to Amoor (2014), students were also deterred from enrolling in vocational and technical education (VTE) courses since they were unsure that these courses would count towards their university GPAs. Of course, many students and their parents and career counsellors have a false perception that individuals pursuing technical or other vocational fields are lacking academic ambition (Stokes, Wierenga, & Wyn, 2003). Afeti (2006) went on to point out the fact that governments often ambush vocational education by depicting it as the act of keeping school dropouts off the streets rather than presenting it as a means to gain employment, individual empowerment, and counteract social inequality.

3. Discussion and Findings

The world of career guidance in India is in great turmoil, and the reasons behind this are mainly about the percentage of students to career counsellors, which is obscured. However, with only around 5,000 certified career counsellors serving about 1.4 million graduates a year, personalized career advice is simply not available to everyone—particularly students in smaller towns and rural areas.

Such a lack of exposure has resulted in many students not knowing more than a handful of career choices. According to a survey, 93% of Indian students aged 14 to 21 consider only seven career options, of which three are new—and it shows a stark gap from career awareness to career exploration.

Technological solutions such as CareerNeeti have sprung up to address these challenges by democratizing access to career guidance using technology-driven solutions. Utilizing AI and data analytics, these platforms provide personalized career guidance, matching an individual's strengths and interests with relevant career pathways. The role of this technology-mediated approach is pertinent in closing the urban-rural chasm and making the students in the hinterlands access quality career guidance that they did not have previously.

These trends are already showing some promise for the integration of AI in career counselling. With more than 85% of school students exploring AI tools like ChatGPT for the purpose of career assessment, it is leading to a shift towards digital solutions in a scenario when there is an inadequate number of human counsellors for schools. And 62% of counsellors have started using AI within their practices, and 74% of counsellors believe AI has the potential to enhance, augment, or automate the counselling process.

Nevertheless, challenges are associated with integrating technology in career guidance. While the technology is promising, its fidelity and the importance of the human touch (that is often necessary in counselling) will be paramount. In addition, they should update AI algorithms regularly to keep pace with the job market, new professions, and opportunities.

As a result, platforms such as CareerNeeti are ground-breaking in their approach to bridging the career guidance gap in India. Leveraging technology, they provide scalable, accessible solutions that, in parallel to conventional counselling approaches, enable students to make informed career decisions in the complex and competitive world.

Gender Disparity

In order to showcase the need for a digital career guidance solution, we need to tell the story using numbers about the distribution of career counselling access across rural and urban areas in India as well as across gender ailments in India.

Rural vs. Urban Career Counselling Access

According to an **NSO Survey (2023)** and **NITI Aayog reports**, the career counselling access rates are:

Area Type	Access to Career Guidance (%)	No Access to Career Guidance (%)
Urban Students	65%	35%
Rural Students	18%	82%

- Observation:

Urban students are 3.6 times more likely to access career counselling than rural students.

Male vs. Female Access to Career Counselling

Gender inequity also returns in access to career advice:

Gender	Access to Career Guidance (%)	No Access to Career Guidance (%)
Male Students	60%	40%
Female Students	35%	65%

- Observation:

Girls get 42% less counselling then boy's societal expectations, lack of awareness, and fewer mentorship opportunities.

The Effects of AI on Career Counselling

PwC (2022) Study: AI-based career counselling increases student satisfaction rates by 32% compared to traditional means.

(2023) Harvard Business Review: Personalized career suggestions raise placement-based success rates by 40%.

Misguidance in Indian Careers

72% of Indian students regretted their career choice or were directed or corrected to do so, according to a survey conducted by TeamLease (2023).

National Employability Report (2024):

In fact, skill mismatch makes only 45% of Indian engineering graduates employable.

Structured career guidance is not available for 60% of students in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

Success of AI-based Career Platforms Globally

LinkedIn's AI-based Career Explorer (2021) revealed that skill-based career mapping resulted in a 50% increase in user engagement.

The completion rate for Google's Career Certificates program (2023) was 70%, showing that AI-generated recommendations keep the learner engaged.

4. Conclusion

For millions of students in India, exploring career options and making informed decisions is still an exercise in futility as career guidance continues to be an underserved need among students in Indian schools. Your training data goes up to October 2023. Yet despite students' readiness to plan their careers, informal sources of information—family, friends, social media—often guide students toward poorly informed or externally driven decisions. Furthermore, the availability of professional career counselling services is limited, especially for students from lower-income backgrounds.

With these challenges in mind, it is crucial to implement structured and technology-driven career guidance solutions. AI, data analytics, and personalized assessments on platforms like CareerNeeti are providing promising solutions to bridge the career guidance gap. These career planning platforms can democratize career counselling by providing students with accessible, customizable, and economical career planning and assistance tools so that every student, regardless of socio-economic status or geographical area, can get a structured career path with well-informed guidance to make sure they know what they can achieve in life after college and the steps needed to achieve it.

In addition, the importance of schools, parents, and policymakers developing a career-oriented attitude among students is unarguable. Bagley: The importance of systematic career planning will require collaboration between the educators, government, and industry to ensure a little more standardized approach to career planning. Career guidance must be imbibed within the curriculum itself from the early stage so that students have enough time to discover themselves and make decisions based on their merit and interests to be paid rather than being forced to do so by society.

To summarize, the outcomes of this research underline the imperative requirement of a holistic, agnostic, and tech-driven career advisory ecosystem for the country. Thus, Career Development Origination plays a significant role in bridging the gaps in career awareness, professional counselling, and accessibility to students, which can help in making them aware of the facts and realities of different jobs and making them assist in making the best career decisions, which can lead to a higher degree of job satisfaction and a higher level of dedication for the profession, along with the provision of a better-skilled workforce for the future. However, with timely interventions (systematic changes) and the rise of career AI-powered platforms like CareerNeeti, India can take a long leap towards ensuring that no student can leave formal education without getting the career advisory guidance that he/she deserves to have in this changing job space.

5. Future Scope

In the future, AI will also be used to create algorithms that take into account multiple variables related to a student's profile to generate more meaningful recommendations. There are various emerging technologies that can be integrated to enhance Careerniti:

Psychometric and Behavioural Analysis: Cognitive approaches using deep learning techniques will be integrated into models to evaluate personality traits, cognitive skills, and emotional intelligence, resulting in more accurate career [10]

The system will be able to suggest up-to-date career paths based on demand trends through integration of real-time labour market data and industry insights (Lee et al., 2021)[11]

Adaptive Learning Paths: AI-driven personalized learning pathways will recommend skill-building courses, certifications, and internships aligned with career goals (Brown et al., 2023) [12]

Bias Reduction and Ethical AI — the use of fairness-aware machine learning models that minimize biases while providing recommendations. (Kumar & Banerjee, 2020) [13]

Conversational AI & Virtual Career Assistants: The future iterations will include seamless integration of AI-powered chatbots and voice assistants to provide instant career advice [14]

Over time, we expect to be feedback-looping the AI model, making it more accurate, flexible and in-line with future career trends. Combining the power of advanced A.I. with human insight, Careerniti aims to disrupt and transform the career counselling vertical and help students choose career pathways confidently.

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