

Careers: a Philosophical View

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Abstract:- One chooses, prepares and follows a career for a good life-style. This short paper looks at the person, life and purpose of life philosophically. All forms of life are governed by sustenance and multiplication. These two factors contribute to the foundation of happiness and purpose of life. Humans can also derive happiness by sacrificing own happiness. With free will, one can choose one's own purpose in life, a career to accomplish it and live a fulfilling life.

Keywords:- careers, life, life-style, philosophy, happiness.

I. BACKGROUND

Human beings are animals with advanced mental capabilities. These include cognitive, rational and emotive. Anthropologists inform us that homo-sapiens started as hunter gatherers. They invented simple stone and metal tools to enhance their physical capabilities. With time, animal husbandry and then agriculture developed. The purpose was to have more of 'food and shelter' with lesser effort. It seems that they wanted something more than just physical necessities. May be, they were pursuing happiness. Most probably this led to the idea of a 'life style'.

The word 'life' has, inherent chronological dimension. It includes the limited time that one has on this planet. Further, it includes the different aspects of growth, development and entropy. These translate into infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age and death. The natural phenomenon of life has self-preservation and multiplication inbuilt in it. These were the two basic properties of the first life form, amoeba and are responsible for evolution.

'Life style', therefore, is the style or the way one spends one's allotted time on earth. In modern times, a better life-style, in very simple terms involves two things. First is, earning a good living with minimum physical and mental hardships. Second is, having resources to do what provides maximum happiness. Happiness is a philosophical construct. We know that it is a mental state, we pursue it; still it is difficult to define it clearly.

One trains for a career or profession to achieve the best possible, life-style.

II. JOBS

Choice of a career is subjective. However, some qualities of careers are almost universally desired. These

include high salaries with perks, plenty of opportunities for promotions and good working environment.

Experts on jobs use the following factors and methodology.

A. Salary

Salary of the maximum number of persons employed, in a field indicates the expected salary.

B. Employed vs. unemployed.

More the persons in a field are employed as compared to the unemployed; more it is easy to get a job.

C. Projected new jobs

Some areas of work are expected to grow faster than others. Large expected growth means more job opportunities.

D. Growth.

This is the rate at which a profession is expanding. It considers the rate of actual growth in employment, over time, in a field. The percentage growth determines the availability and prospects in a job.

E. Future prospects.

Here, the quantum of possible openings, are compared with that of the qualified persons. Getting qualified in a field with future expansion and lesser entrants enhances one's employability.

F. Job-stress

Some jobs are more prone to high stress. People in such professions experience health and quality of life issues. High stress would deter the new entrants.

G. Lifestyle.

Purpose of a job is to provide a good lifestyle. A career that is conducive to balance is desired.

The above seven factors provide guide-lines on jobs. These include the expected remuneration, availability or ease of procuring, future prospects and how conducive they are to a happy life.

III. BEST JOBS

- *US News has ranked the following as the top best jobs:*

Software developer, dentist, physician assistant, nurse, orthodontist, statistician, pediatrician, gynecologist, oral surgeon, physician.

Another US survey of 25 best jobs in 2018 indicates that there is a high demand for the services of healthcare professionals. However the best job is that of a software developer. The career is critical to modern lifestyle.

- *Fastest growing jobs by 2020 include the following:*

Veterinary technicians, physical therapists, ultrasound technicians, occupational therapists, dental hygienists, biomedical equipment technicians, tower equipment installers and repairers.

10 best jobs for the future, according to another US survey are:

App developer, computer systems analyst, nurse, physician, health services manager, dental hygienist, market research analyst.

- *Fastest declining occupations are given as:*

Prepress technicians, machine tools setters, textile knitting and weaving operators.

Others are related to hardware, electrical and car industries, telephones, executive secretaries and administrative assistants.

IV. HAPPINESS

Nature has programmed 'life' to sustain itself and to multiply. This leads to evolution, which is an ongoing process. Humans are a leading part of this process. Mental development in humans adds to the two basic 'life' traits of sustenance and procreation. We can survive within certain physical conditions. These include temperature and availability of oxygen. When moved from extreme climatic conditions to 'temperate'; we feel good. That is why shelter contributes to happiness. Food and sex are also sources of happiness. Happiness, therefore, is derived from the activities of sustenance and procreation. However we are more than just physical beings. Happiness is experienced even when we sacrifice our own comforts for others. Doing something morally and ethically right, at the cost of physical or material loss, also can be a source of happiness. Even putting one's life in danger, like in some exploratory or fire-fighting jobs can give happiness. A smile, a sunrise and many other things cost nothing but give happiness.

In the modern world, money may not be a sufficient ingredient for happiness; however, it is necessary in general. Therefore a well-paying job, its availability and future prospects are worth exploring.

V. MODERN WORLD

The term 'modern world' and what it entails; are changing very fast. Looking at the history of civilization, the

pace of new developments and their extinction is quick. For example, the hydrocarbon fuels started as a boon and became villains in a short period. The good-jobs involving older sources of energy have become 'bad'.

A job refers to the human input in economic activity, which, in turn, is for humans. In the last a few decades, we have seen increased automation. Machines are taking over human jobs. That, understandably means two things. One, there are job opportunities in the fields involved in mechanization of jobs. Second, there are jobs, which cannot easily, be mechanized.

This is what is clearly reflected in the lists of good jobs above. The heart of mechanization, today, is computer software. That explains the continuous need for people trained in IT and those capable of innovations in this field. The ultimate in software is replication of human mind and that is Artificial Intelligence.

VI. CONCLUSION

Some of the deep and important philosophical questions involve "who are we" and "what is the purpose of life". The accepted scientific answers to the first question come from the theory of evolution. In very simple terms, life on earth started at random, with a single cell called amoeba. This, simplest form of life had the characteristics of survival and multiplication. All forms of life, on earth, evolved from amoeba and have the same two qualities in diverse, extreme or subtle forms. We humans are no exception.

We are a complex life form, with a body and a brain which is more developed than in any other life form on earth. Can this developed brain contribute to a different purpose to life from that of the other life forms? Let us simplify this question. Can the presence of extra neurons, alter the purpose of life? There is no scientific reason to believe that they can.

We humans, therefore, are the evolved form of life, which started at random. This conclusion does not speak very high of our existence. The good part is that, within limits, we are all different from each other. And further, that we seem to have a free will. That means, in principle we are free to decide on a purpose of life and pursue it.

A career is that economic activity which one performs to fulfill one's selected goals in life. The available economic activities change with times. For maximum efficiency, one's career should be in tandem with the chosen purpose of life. In such cases the job becomes a passion; the means and the end unite. Such a career paves the way for a fulfilling life.

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