

Lesson 29

Choosing a Career

Many of you may be thinking of securing a job in business firm or running a business of your own. Whether you will be able to do so depends on how you prepare yourself and plan for the work you would like to do. And it also depends on the kind of life you would like to lead keeping in mind your needs.

Most of your thoughts on what you want to become probably come from what you have heard while listening to radio or watching television; you may also have reading newspapers and magazines which advertise job vacancies or may have been advised by parents and relatives about what you should be. On the basis of your understanding you may think about the kind of work can be handled easily by you. You may start thinking clearly about your abilities and aptitudes for the future work-life. This necessitates the knowledge of what employment opportunities are available and the abilities required for different types of employment.

In the present lesson, you will learn about different aspects of choosing a career i.e. concept, importance, avenues, competencies, etc. which may be useful to decide your own career.

29.1 Objectives

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- explain the concept ‘career’;
 - recognise the importance of choosing a career;
 - identify the various career avenues in business;
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- explain the importance of self-employment;
- distinguish between self-employment and wage employment.
- enlist the competencies needed to pursue career in different avenues; and
- identify career in business on the basis of your own ability, interest and aptitude;

29.2 Concept of career

Career literally means an occupation with which opportunities for advancement or promotion can be availed of in life. It does not mean simply the choice of vocation. It implies various positions, one may occupy in course of his/her work-life. In a broad sense, career is an important aspect of one's life pattern. For instance, some of you who find a job of an office assistant may in course of time become office superintendent and may even be promoted as office manager. The work you do in different positions may be called your career-path and it is likely to influence your work habits and daily routine. Career covers a sequence of positions in a job or an occupation that a person is engaged in during his work-life and for which he/she develops abilities.

29.3 Importance of choosing a career

Choosing a career is an important aspect of life. The foundation stone of career building is laid down by the career you choose. In the past most of the people completed their studies and then decided about their career. But the present generation has started making career moves well before completing their school education. Career choice will probably affect an individual's eventful life-style more than any other choices he/she makes. The influence of job touches many facets of life, shaping our values, attitudes, and habits. In a world dominated by cut-throat competition making right career choice in the beginning is very important. There is definitely a need that one should go through a process which will enlighten and inform the individual with respect to the various career options. In this process the individual will also discover his or her own abilities which are very important parts of any career decision.

Intext Questions 29.1

Which of the following statements are true and which are false?

- (a) Career covers a sequence of positions in a job that a person is engaged in during his work-life.
- (b) Selection of a right career is essential in everybody's life.
- (c) Today's generation has very few career options.
- (d) Planning a career is not required at the early stage.
- (e) Knowledge of various career options is helpful in choosing the right career.

29.4 Career avenues in business

When any body is engaged in an occupation, he/she is said to be employed. The occupation of people today is related with some economic activity, and one's career objective invariably is to be in employment, that is, to be engaged in an economic activity for earning one's livelihood. Choice of career actually involves opting for one of the following two alternatives:

(i) Wage employment

(ii) Self-employment

Wage employment means serving another person for wages or salary. If someone is appointed as office assistant, he is expected to do what the office supervisor wants him to do, and he gets a monthly salary for his job. This type of employment is based on a contract between the employer and employee. The employee has to work for the employer, carry out the tasks assigned to him, and is remunerated for it. During working hours, the employee is to work under the supervision and control of the employer. Self-employment, on the other hand, refers to an occupation in which a person engage him/herself in some economic activity on his own to earn his/her livelihood. Let us discuss briefly the job opportunities or avenues of wage employment.

29.5 Wage employment

Job opportunities or avenues of wage employment exist in government offices, railways, banks, insurance companies, factories, trading concerns and various other organizations including schools, colleges, hospitals, etc. For clerical jobs, technical jobs, and other types of job at lower level, the nature of work to be undertaken depends upon the activities and objectives of the organization. Thus, office jobs in government departments, railways, banks, trading organisations, schools and hospitals involve different types of clerical work. Similarly, the nature of work of the technical staff in industries and transport companies also vary according to their functional differences.

Job opportunities for those who have passed the Secondary (class X) examination happen to be clerical jobs, or those of laboratory assistants in schools where the minimum qualification required is class X pass. But there are facilities for special training for them in ITIs and poly- techniques as well as state secretarial and commercial institutes. On completion of a technical or secretariat course, a person can find employment as technical staff in workshops or as office assistant or accounts clerk. With computer operation skill, he/she can be employed as computer operator.

Competencies needed for wage employment

After the discussion about job opportunities available for wage employment, let us study the requirements of various jobs in terms of skill, and personality-traits.

JOB	SKILL	PERSONALITY TRAITS
1. Clerical Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computational skill, ability to count, calculate and do arithmetical operation of various jobs • Technical skill (ability to handle office machine) • Communication skill (ability to convey and interpret messages) • Administrative skill (ability to handle paper work and other office tasks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diligence • Honesty & sincerity • Alertness • Emotional stability • Judgement • Commonsense
2. Stenographer and related jobs such as Personal Assitant (PA) Secretary, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational skills (ability to take and transcribe shorthand dictation). • Technical skills (ability to operate telephone, telex & fax machines) • Communication skills (ability to convey and interpret messages and deal with official correspondence). • Interpersonal skill (ability to interact with general public) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence • Diligence (Hardwork) • Judgement • Quality of Promptness • Persuasiveness
3. Accounts Clerk-cum-Cashier in Banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual skill (ability to handle foreign exchange transactions, dealing with Negotiable Instruments, sanctioning loans and advances) • Computational Skill (ability of calculation) • Technical Skill (ability to use machines) • Communication skill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpfulness • Diligence • Alertness • Honesty • Judgement

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| 4. Telephone Operator and Computer Operator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical skill • Operational skill • Communication skill (fluency in language) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerance and patience • Cheerfulness • Sociability • Courtesy and politeness |
| 5. Storekeeper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting skill (ability to maintain stores accounts) • Operational skill (skill of preparing voucher, delivery notes, purchase order, and inspection reports, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty • Integrity • Alertness • Watchfulness |
| 6. Counter Sales Jobs and Salesmanship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skill (ability to persuade customers) • Demonstration skill (ability of conducting demonstration and display of goods) • Promotional skill (ensuring sales promotion) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuasiveness • Honesty • Patience • Cheerfulness |

Intext Questions 29.2

Fill in the blanks by using appropriate words:

- (i) Occupation of the people is always related with _____ activity.
- (ii) At lower level, government departments mostly employ people for _____ jobs.
- (iii) For the jobs of a storekeeper a person must have the skill of preparing _____ order.
- (iv) Ability to handle _____ is necessary a most clerical jobs.
- (v) Fluency in _____ is essential for telephone operator.

29.6 Self-employment

You have learnt how you can choose a career for yourself involving paid employment. When you accept an employment, you have to undertake work that is assigned to you by your employer and you get a fixed amount as your salary or wage. But instead of seeking a job, you may do something on your own to earn your living. You may run a bookshop, medical store, or tailoring shop, etc. In other words, you may engage in trade on a small scale or render services for a

price. Such economic activities are based on self-employment. Let us discuss the characteristics, importance and avenues of self-employment as a career option.

What is meant by self-employment

If an individual engages in any economic activity and manages it on his own, it is known as self-employment. In every locality, you may come across small stores, repair shops or service units. These establishments are owned and managed by a single person, sometimes engage one or two assistants to help. Grocery stores, stationary shops, book shops, medical stores, tailoring shops, hire-cutting saloons, telephone booths, beauty parlour, repair shops for electrical good, bicycles, etc., are examples of activities which are based on self-employment. The owner of these stores or shops do earn their living from the income of the business of buying and selling or rendering services. They also bear the risk of loss if their income falls short of the expenses.

29.7 Difference between self-employment and wage employment

You have learnt about self-employment and wage employment. Let us distinguish between these two on the basis of the followings.

	Basis	Self employment	Paid employment
1.	Nature	Engage in activities on one's own.	Engage in activities assigned by the employer.
2.	Status or position	The position of the person is that of owner and may be, that of an employer.	The position of the person is that of an employee.
3.	Income or earning	Income or earning is not fixed. It depends on the ability of the owner.	Income of the employed person is fixed and may be increased, if the employer so decides.
4.	Work involved	Work involved is aimed at earning more and increasing the volume of business. The nature of work cannot be decided in advance and may vary.	The work to be performed by the employee is specific and pre-decided.
5.	Risk bearing	There is always risk of loss sometime and earnings may decline at times.	There is no risk of reduced income so long as the employee continues to work.
6.	Freedom of work	The owner is free to decide how to run the business depending on the available opportunities.	The employee has to work according to the terms and condition of employment.

29.8 Characteristics of self-employment

What you have learnt so far is about the meaning of self-employment and how it differs from paid employment. Let us learn the characteristics of self-employment:

- (i) Self-employment involves doing something on one's own, not for others, and to earn one's living.
- (ii) It involves ownership and management of some business activity by a single person, if necessary, with the help of one or two assistants.
- (iii) The risk of loss in business has to be borne by the owner alone.
- (iv) To start a business, the owner must have some amount of capital.

Some of the characteristics are highly motivating for persons to prefer self-employment rather than wage employment like:

- (a) privilege of ownership i.e., being the sole owner of business;
- (b) authority to take decisions;
- (c) freedom of work;
- (d) direct link between rewards and efforts.

29.9 Possible areas of self-employment

Having read about the characteristics of self-employment, you may like to know about the areas in which self-employment is possible. In the process of career planning you may consider the following areas for self-employment opportunity.

- i. Small scale retail business:** Single owners can easily start and manage small business units profitably with the help of one or two assistants. It can be a grocery store, stationery shop, or a cloth store, etc.
- ii. Providing services based on individual skills:** Services which can be rendered to customers by individuals on the basis of specialised skill can also be taken up by way of self employment. For example, repairing bicycles and scooters, watches and clocks, tailoring, hairdressing, etc. can be undertaken as individualized services to customers.
- iii. Occupations based on professional qualifications:** Activities which require professional training and experience are also amenable to self employment. Thus, for example, practicing doctors, lawyers, chartered accountants, pharmacists, architects, etc. are self-employed on the basis of their specialized training and skills. They have small establishments like a clinic, office space, chamber, etc. and offer services to clients with the help of one or two assistants.
- iv. Farming on a small scale:** Opportunities are also there for self-employment in small scale farming activities like dairy, poultry, fishery, horticulture, sericulture, etc.
- v. Village and cottage industries:** Activities like hand spinning and weaving, hand knitting, stitching garments, etc. can be taken up as self employment; these may be based on traditional inherited skills.

- vi. **Arts and crafts:** Those who have been trained in certain craftsmanship or art can be self employed in such occupations as those of goldsmiths, blacksmiths, carpentry, etc.
- vii. **Other areas for self-employment:** One can be self employed as hawker or pedlar carrying goods like vegetables, eatables and snacks, household crockeries, even carpets, cloth pieces, etc. as well as moving as service providers for repair of domestic gadgets like pressure cookers, kitchen utensils, etc.

Intext Questions 29.3

Which of the following statements are True and which are false?

- (i) Self employment means engaging in any economic activity on one's own.
- (ii) There is no limit to earning in wage employment.
- (iii) Some amount of capital is needed even when a person provides individualised service for a price.
- (iv) Self-employment in business involves risks of loss to be borne by the owners.
- (v) A goldsmith cannot be self-employed as he has to work under a jeweller.

29.10 Qualities required for success in self-employment

Having learnt about the opportunities of self-employment in different areas, you may feel that choice of self-employment rather than paid employment as a career is quite attractive. But you should choose it as an option only if you possess the necessary qualities to succeed in self employment. Let us know the various qualities required to successfully pursue self-employment.

- (i) **Mental abilities:** To be self-employed you need to have the ability to identify the most suitable area where there is opportunity of self-employment; also you should have the ability to take decisions with respect to all business operations; ability to deal with different types of customers is equally important. So also the ability to anticipate problems and bear risks.
- (ii) **Alertness and foresight:** A self employed person should be aware and alert about changes taking place in the market so as to adjust his operations. He should also have the foresight to anticipate changes to avail of opportunities and meeting threats likely to arise in the near future.
- (iii) **Self-confidence:** In self-employment, the owner has to take all decisions; he must also have confidence in himself to overcome problems and also while dealing with suppliers / creditors, customers and government officials.
- (iv) **Knowledge about business:** Any one who is self-employed in business must have full knowledge about the business, including technical knowledge and skill for running the business.

- (v) **Acquaintance with relevant laws:** It is not necessary for one to be a legal expert, but to be self-employed, one must have working knowledge of laws relating to the business and service activities in a particular place, which may include the Trade and Establishment Act, laws relating to sale tax and excise tax, if applicable, municipal regulations regarding location, pollution control, etc.
- (vi) **Knowledge of accounting:** Any one running a business must keep record of all transactions to ascertain profit or loss at periodical intervals, to pay his creditors on due date and collect his dues from customers, besides making payment of taxes, etc. For all these purposes, working knowledge of accounting is necessary for the person in business.
- (vii) **Other personal qualities:** A person in self-employment has to have the qualities of honesty, sincerity and be hard working.

29.11 Importance of self-employment

Why is self-employment as a career important? Let us recall that self-employment as a career involves a person doing some business of his own to earn his living. The business may be in the area of retail trading or providing services on a small scale. The importance of self-employment thus arises out of its advantages from different angles. Let us examine these in detail.

- i. **Growth of small-scale business:** There are several advantages which go with small-scale business which provides wide opportunities of self-employment. Small business units require small amount of capital and can be more easily be started than large-scale business.
- ii. **Scope of earning:** There is strong motivation which prompts individuals to engage in business on their own. The scope of increased earning is unlimited, as one can use one's talents for his own benefit. Freedom of work and to take one's own decisions also add to the desire of people to do their best in business.
- iii. **Entrepreneurship development:** Entrepreneurship refers to qualities of innovativeness, creativity and ability to operate in a more effective way. A person in self-employment to be successful in business has to be innovative with regard to the product he deals in or methods of production and marketing. Thus, self-employment also develops entrepreneurial qualities in individuals.
- iv. **Promotes quality of services:** Self-employed persons engaged in providing services are better able to satisfy customer needs due to personalized nature of services. Tailoring, hairdressing, repairing household gadgets, bicycles, etc. are areas of self-employment generally associated with better customer satisfaction.
- v. **Generating employment:** As a way of gainful occupation, self-employment of individuals has the potential of providing opportunities to the unemployed people to earn their livelihood. Thus, it has proved to be a remedy for the growing unemployment in India.
- vi. **Alternative to large-scale industries:** Self-employment is associated invariably with small scale business. Development of small business and industry may be useful in counteracting the evils of large-scale industries like growth of slums, impersonal treatment of workers, environmental pollution, etc.

7. **Opportunity for those unable to pursue higher education:** Students, who are unable to pursue higher education due to reasons beyond their control, can avail of self-employment opportunities as a fruitful career. This is a boon to them.

Intext Questions 29.4

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

- (a) In self-employment a person should have the ability to identify _____.
- (b) To succeed in self-employment a person must have _____ in his own ability.
- (c) To be successful as owner of a business one should have _____ about the business.
- (d) Knowledge of accounting is necessary for a person in self-employment to ascertain _____.
- (e) Entrepreneurship is related to quality of _____ and _____.
- (f) Self-employment provides opportunities of earning livelihood for those unable to pursue _____.

29.12 Identifying career in business on the basis of ability, interest and aptitude

There may be a general feeling that one can do all the jobs mentioned above. On the basis of your common understanding you may also think that you know what work can be easily handled by you. In due course, when you engage in any occupation or job, you may realize that it is different from what you thought it would be. It is therefore necessary that your choice of career should be based on your interest, abilities and aptitude. A person without good communication abilities can not be a successful salesman, one who has no interest in working with figures and computational skills can not be a good accountant, a person without language abilities can not be a good stenographer so on and so forth. It is suggested that you may start thinking about your strengths and weaknesses.

From the above description you may realise that one should identify one's interest, abilities in term of the avenues discussed earlier. You may eliminate those jobs in which you feel that you do not have interest. Select those jobs in which you have aptitude and interest. Do this exercise several times. Ultimately you may be able to choose a career based on your aptitude and interest and can develop the required competencies for doing the job successfully.

Intext Questions 29.5

Fill up the blanks by using suitable words:

- (a) Your choice of career should be based on your _____, _____, and _____.
- (b) You may start thinking about your strengths and _____.

- (c) Do not select a job for which you do not have _____.
- (d) Communication skill is _____ in modern world for all jobs.
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29.13 What You Have Learnt

- Career literally means an occupation with which opportunities for advancement or promotion can be availed of in life. Choosing career is an important aspect of life.
- Choice of career involves opting for one of two alternatives, viz. wage employment and self-employment.
- Wage-employment means serving another person for wages or salary. Self-employment refers to a person engaging in some economic activity on his own to earn his livelihood.
- Avenues of wage-employment consists of clerical or technical jobs at lower level.
- self-employment opportunities exist in several areas like small-scale retail business, providing services for a price, farming on a small scale, village and cottage industries, arts and crafts, etc.
- To pursue self-employment as a career, a person should possess certain mental abilities, alertness and foresight, self-confidence, knowledge about business, acquaintance with relevant laws, and knowledge on accounting.
- Importance of self-employment lies in growth of small business, scope of earning, entrepreneurship development, promotion of quality of service, etc.

29.14 Terminal Exercise

1. What is meant by (a) wage employment and (b) self-employment?
2. Define the term 'career'.
3. Explain the importance of choosing a career.
4. State briefly the avenues of wage employment in the area of business.
5. Describe the importance of self-employment in the present context of unemployment.
6. How is self-employment an alternative to large-scale industries?
7. State any four qualities required for success in self-employment.
8. What are the skills needed for clerical jobs?
9. Explain the skills required for accounting job.
10. Identify motivational factors for self-employment.
11. Compare self-employment with wage employment on the basis of earnings and risk bearing.
12. Enumerate the possible areas in which a person can be self-employed.

29.15 Key to Intext Questions

- 29.1 (a), (b), (e) – True
(c), (d) – False
- 29.2 (i) Economic
(ii) Clerical
(iii) Purchase
(iv) Office machines
(v) Language
- 29.3 (i), (ii), (iv) – True
(ii), (v) – False
- 29.4 (a) Job opportunities for self-employment
(b) Confidence
(c) Knowledge
(d) Profit or loss
(e) Innovativeness, creativity
(f) Higher education
- 29.6 (a) abilities, aptitude and interest
(b) weaknesses
(c) interest
(d) necessary

Activity For You

Take out one week's "Employment News" or any other newspaper and identify the job vacancies according to you interest, ability and aptitude.