

THE CRAFT OF CAREER PLANNING FOR AYUSH (AYURVEDA, YOGA & NATUROPATHY, UNANI, SIDHA AND HOMEOPATHY) PROFESSIONALS

JANMEJAYA SAMAL¹ AND SURESH KUMAR²

Journal of Research and Education in Indian Medicine, Varanasi – 221005 UP (India) ^{1,2}*

Abstract: Career planning is an indispensable part of each and every professional's life. Professionals engross in planning their career path irrespective of the type, place and the profile of work they are involved in. Career planning is a lifelong process that focuses on making choices to help manage the work and personal life. Good career planning requires information about the particular professional, the world of work and commitment. In a similar manner AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) professionals can also engage in career planning in a proper fashion to help themselves in managing work and personal development. The world of work is continually changing. The way people work is changing with things like telecommuting, job sharing, and other ways of working becoming more common. Advances in technology have made some jobs disappear and others very different from what they once were. In this context this essay is drafted looking at the special nature of AYUSH professionals in India. These professionals hardly get an exposure to lessons of career planning as a part of their educational training. This document would help the AYUSH professionals in understanding the process of career planning and extend a reference for planning their career.

Key Words: AYUSH, Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy, Career, Indian Systems of Medicine, Planning, Professional and Work life

INTRODUCTION

Career planning is a routine phenomenon for every professional on earth. Akin to day to day planning for various activities, a professional irrespective of type, place and profile do plan for his / her career. In fact daily life activities and professional career planning are very much integrated with each other. Ideas, skills and aptitudes learnt in personal life can be applied in professional life and vice versa and is so in career planning. The term career is a very common terminology and pops up in many places and has different meaning to different people.

Career planning is a lifelong process that focuses on making choices to help manage the work and personal life. Good career planning requires information about the particular professional, the world of work and commitment. Career planning include the entire gamut of work, learning and leisure activities that a person is involved throughout his/ her life (**Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014**). Hence managing a career is not a onetime decision but a series of decisions made over time (**Psychometrics, 2012**).

Proper Career planning has the following advantages;

1. Enter the workforce
2. Plan for education
3. Dealing with changing workplace demand
4. Anticipate change or trends
5. Plan to upgrade or maintain skills
6. Plan for career advancement (**Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014**)

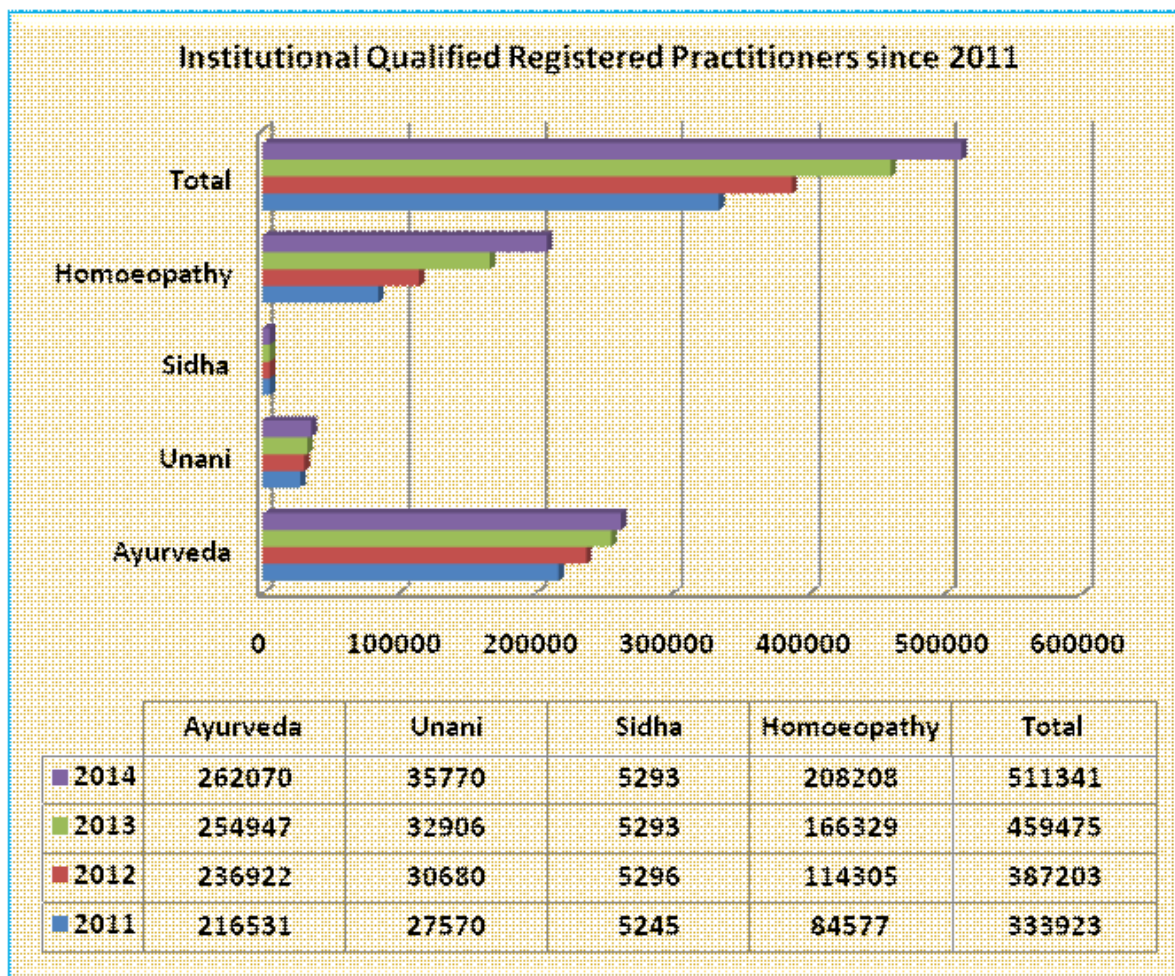
Career planning can be extrapolated to various forms of professions and professionals as well. One such professional group is known as AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) professionals who are predominately found to be practiced medicine in India. These professionals hardly get an exposure to lessons of career planning as a part of their educational training. This document gives a brief understanding and the current status of AYUSH professionals in India and an insight about the cycle and process of career planning for them.

Understanding AYUSH and its current status in India

AYUSH is an acronym for Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy and are the six Indian systems of medicine prevalent and practiced in India and some of the neighboring Asian countries with very few exceptions in some of the developed countries. In fact India is the only country to legalize six indigenous systems of medicine parallel to modern/allopathic system of medicine. All these six systems of medicine have got a formal education system in their respective disciplines in various states across the nation. The institutions offer UG, PG and even PhD programs in different disciplines across the pathies/systems. The undergraduate degrees imparted across different systems are of 5 and ½ years duration and the post graduations are of three years duration. The students in these courses are taught about the Non- clinical, Para-clinical and Clinical courses during their graduation like their Allopathic counterparts. The nomenclatures used for the UG courses are BAMS

(Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery), BNYS (Bachelor of Naturopathy and Yogic Science), BUMS (Bachelor of Unani Medicine and Surgery), BSMS (Bachelor of Siddha Medicine and Surgery), and BHMS (Bachelor of Homoeopathic Medicine and Surgery) for Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy respectively. (Janmejaya Samal, 2013) A special department called Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy (ISM&H) was created in March, 1995 and re-named as Department of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) in November, 2003 with a view to provide focused attention to the development of education and research in Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy systems. With the present central Govt. a separate ministry in the name of Ministry of AYUSH was created in 2014 which is headed by a minister of state. **Figure-1** shows system wise distribution of different components of AYUSH systems till 2014

Figure 1. Institutional Qualified registered AYUSH practitioners since 2011-14.



Source-Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India

Table 1. System-wise distribution (both Govt. and Private Institutions) of UG and PG institutions with their admission capacity (as on 1st Jan 2014)

Level	Ayurveda		Naturopathy		Unani		Sidha		Homoeopathy		Total	
	No. of Colleges	Admission capacity	No. of Colleges	Admission capacity	No. of Colleges	Admission capacity	No. of Colleges	Admission capacity	No. of Colleges	Admission capacity	No. of Colleges	Admission capacity
UG	260	13152	18	820	41	1911	8	410	186	12108	513	29101
PG	98	2441	-	-	8	100	2	94	37	753	145	3388
Exclusive PG	2	60	-	-	1	38	1	46	2	72	6	216

Source-Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India

published in 5th Jan. 2014 by the MOHFW. (Ministry of AYUSH, 2015)

Since the creation of a separate Ministry, there has been a substantial increase in the infrastructural facilities under AYUSH systems in the country. Presently, there are 3616 hospitals with about 56805 beds, 24722 dispensaries, 7, 36,538 doctors, 519 educational institutions with admission capacity of about 29101 UG student and 3604 PG students and 9044 drug-manufacturing units under AYUSH systems. Under NRHM, AYUSH facilities have been co-located with 331 District hospitals, 1885 CHCs and 8461 PHCs. (Ministry of AYUSH, 2015) (Table-1)

Career planning for AYUSH Professionals

As mentioned earlier career planning is a dynamic process and involves certain steps. The process of career planning consists of the following steps;

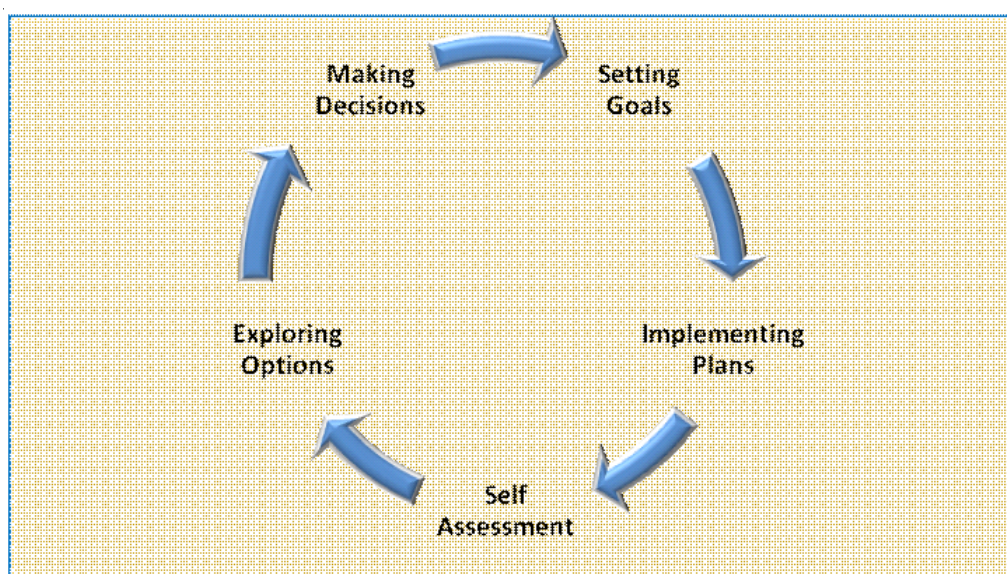
1. Self assessment
2. Exploring options
3. Making decision
4. Setting goals
5. Implementing plans (Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014)

A detail description of the above mentioned steps with reference to AYUSH professionals are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

Self assessment

Self assessment is the first step in career planning. It helps understand a person's inner world and other factors associated with career planning. Self assessment comprises up of the following important factors. A person desirous of proper career planning needs to understand each of these factors and analyze them diligently before landing up in a particular career option. Now let us understand each

Figure 2. Career Planning Cycle



of these factors in relation to AYUSH profession in particular.

The above picture clearly delineates “**interest**” as the central factor of all the other factors. Let us understand the term interest with an example; if a student finds him comfortable in understanding human biology and illness of a family member concerns him then medicine would probably be his prime interest as a career option. The second set of components includes “**skills, attitude and aptitude**” which are also integral part of self assessment. A mere interest in a particular profession won’t lead to accomplishment unless it is accompanied by the right kind of skills, attitude and aptitude. These three are discussed together owing to their close association with each other. Webster dictionary defines the word “**skill**” as the ability to use one’s knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance (Merriam-Webster, 2015) which means a person entering in to a particular profession should have the ability to effectively use that knowledge in real life situations. **Attitude** is defined as a feeling or way of thinking that affects a person’s behavior (Merriam-Webster, 2015) where as “**aptitude**” is defined as the natural ability to do something or to learn something (Merriam-Webster, 2015).

Hence, a person desirous of a particular profession in Ayurveda (or other sectors of AYUSH i.e Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Sidhha, Homeopathy) should have the right behavior and the natural ability to excel in that field. Having right interest, skills,

attitude and aptitude at one’s disposal does not necessarily guaranty one’s entry in to that profession which should secondly be backed with right opportunity. The word “**opportunity**” embraces an entire gamut of financial, social and educational opportunities required to enter in to a particular profession.

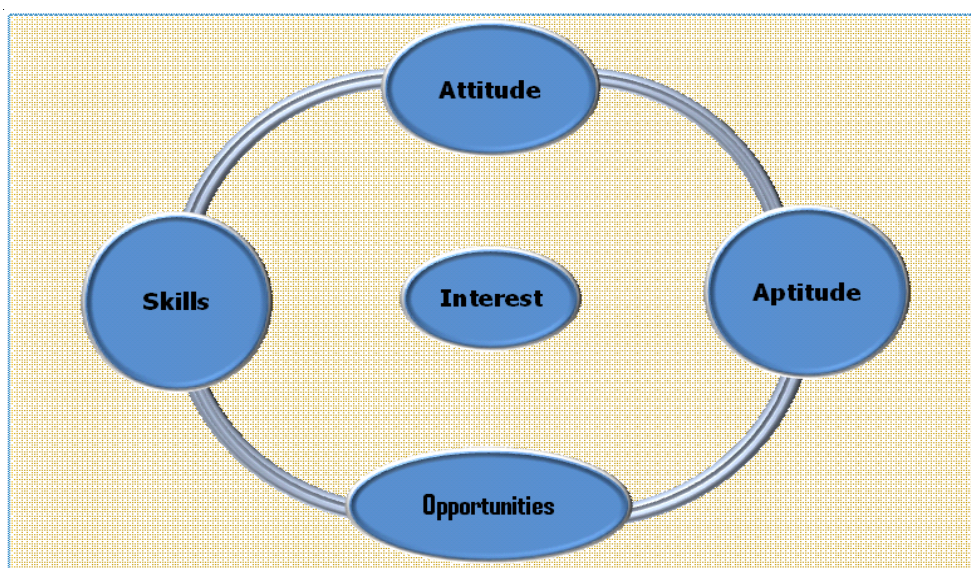
Exploring options

After making a thorough self assessment it is now the time to look around the options available. Now for AYUSH, it is an amalgamation of five professional disciplines such as Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Sidha and Homoeopathy hence students desirous of any of the particular wing can look for educational opportunities in that domain. But before that it is imperative to obtain the labor market information or the job market information. The labor market information includes;

1. Job description
 2. Wages
 3. Employment opportunities
 4. Trends and outlook such as future opportunities
 5. Unemployment or labor shortage
- (Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014)

Job description varies with positions held such as Medical Officer in respective discipline, research officer and teaching assignments so also the wages. Employment opportunities also vary with positions

Figure 3. Factors associated with self assessment



held such as a medical officer can work in a dispensary or a hospital whereas a research and a teaching assignment could be with a research organization or a teaching institution. Trends and outlooks should also be looked in to for having an idea about the future opportunities and recession etc. The last one is about unemployment which is an important aspect in labor market analysis as unemployment could be annoying and harassing in any professional domain so also in AYUSH domain.

Making decision

Having done a self assessment and job market analysis a person can now think of making a decision. Hence a person desirous of entering in to the profession of AYUSH and any of the wings of AYUSH for this matter should have an interest and passion for the same. But the question here is how a person can show interest without having any idea about this or any allied profession. This means interest is generated and backed with exposure to this or allied professional opportunities.

Let us understand it with real life situations; a student studying 10 +2 science is exposed to various career options in pure and allied scientific domains that includes under graduate programs in pure science and allied sciences such as medicine and engineering. Here a student desirous of opting medicine as a career can land up either in medicine, dentistry or finally in any branch of AYUSH as an alternate option to enter in to the world of medical science. Although in many instances AYUSH has not been accepted as a main stream medical profession but can be opted as an alternative to mainstream medical profession.

Setting goals

After making decision one needs to set goals for career. Goals could be short term goals and long term goals. Short term goals are those which can be accomplished in short span of time such as some days, weeks or a month span. Whereas long term goals are those which take more time such as some months and years. It is always easy and better to start with short term goals as long term goals might be frustrating owing to long time span. As for instance a person desirous to make a career in AYUSH discipline should begin with UG program and then depending upon the situation and interest may think of PG (MD / MS

(Ayurveda.) and PhD (Ayurveda) courses and accordingly plan the career.

This may happen as a person desirous of becoming an Ayurvedic physician during his earlier days may change his decision to become an Ayurvedic surgeon in due course of time hence setting long term goals at the early phase of life may not be right. It may also happen that one may change the profession and opt for an interdisciplinary career which may not be a pure AYUSH career. The goals should always be SMART that stands for;

S-Specific

M-Measurable

A-Achievable

R-Relevant

T-Time bound (**Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014**)

Implementing plans

Once AYUSH professionals completed research about themselves and the world of work, made decisions and set goals, they are ready to start working towards their goals. To help increase their chances of success, they should create a support network of friends, family members or former co-workers. They should select people who can help them meet their goals. Every career journey is unique and even though the path forward might look smooth, it's nice to have people standing by to help out if things get tough. Once the implementation is done one can go for a "force field analysis" which is a powerful method of gaining a comprehensive overview of the different forces acting on a potential organizational change issue, and for assessing their source and strength. Although primarily used in organizational setting it can also be used at individual level to understand the same (**Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014**).

Force Field Analysis was developed by Kurt Lewin (1951) and is widely used to inform decision making, particularly in planning and implementing change management programs in organizations (**Kurt Lewin, 2015**).

CONCLUSION

Career planning is a continuous and a dynamic process. It is something similar to planning various other activities similar to day to day activities.

It is not a constant process and keeps changing with the interference of changing environment. As professionals everybody should and need to be involved in career planning. This is also similarly applicable to the professional realm of AYUSH. In this particular document an attempt has been made to usher a systematic process of career planning with special reference to AYUSH professionals in India. This would definitely help as a guiding document and hand hold the professionals in planning their career especially the AYUSH professionals in India. Like any other activities the process of career planning after getting implemented should also end up with an evaluation so as to begin another planning cycle.

The evaluation would focus;

1. Work / life experiences
2. Learning experiences
3. Significant others
4. Personality / personal style
5. Values
6. Interests
7. Skills
8. Career alternatives
9. Barriers and strengths

A closer look at all these components would elicit results and trigger another cycle. AYUSH professionals should also indulge in doing so for a similar purpose.

References

1. **Janmejaya Samal.** Public health and allied career choices for AYUSH graduates in India. *Global Journal of Medicine and Public Health* 2013; 2(4):1-7.
2. **Lewin, K. (2015).** Force field analysis. Retrieved from the Value Based Management.net http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods_lewin_force_field_analysis.html
3. Merriam-Webster online dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/skill>
4. Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India, AYUSH Bhawan, B-Block, New Delhi, India.
5. Psychometrics Canada Ltd.: Building better organization through people. Edmonton AB T6B 0B5, Canada. http://www.psychometrics.com/docs/strong_p_sci.pdf (Accessed on 15/03/2015)
6. The Canadian Career Development Foundation, Ontario, Canada. http://www.manitobacareerdevelopment.ca/CDi/docs/plan_your_career.pdf (Accessed on 13/03/2015)