Determinants of Career Planning for Final Year Female MBBS Students of South Asia

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***Abstract*— Introduction: Selecting proper subspecialty and working place are always very challenging for medical students. There are lots of determinants which could influence the decision. Sometimes the decision could be gender-bias and family controlled.**
Methodology: This was a cross-sectional questionnaire based study. Female final year MBBS students of different medical colleges of south Asia were included in the study.
Results: Final year MBBS female students of 14 medical colleges of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal have participated in this study. The total number of participants was 162.
Highest number of the students (42%) want to work at South Asia followed by Europe (24.1%) and North America (20.4). Nearly one-third (32.1%) participants preferred their future work place to stay close to their family members and nearly one-quarter (24.1%) opted better life style. Medicine and allied disciplines were the most popular choice (50%) followed by Surgery and allied (31.5%) and Gynecology & Obstetrics (14.8%). Government hospital (40.7%) was the commonest choice for work place; 27.4% of them preferred to have their own clinic. Other participants selected research institute (12.3%), private hospital (11.7%).
Conclusion: Choosing future subspecialty, location of the working place and types of working places are very vital decision for any medical students especially for the future women doctors. Decision to be made by considering all the logical and practical parameters to ensure a pleasant and successful career and life.

Keywords— Female MBBS students; Career planning; Medical colleges of South Asia

I. INTRODUCTION

The options of choosing career as specialist for medical students has increased a lot as different sub-specialties have been established based on highly specialized knowledge. Though there are plenty and diverse options for the students but the factors opting a specific discipline yet to understand clearly. It is clearly understood that during the entrance of the undergraduate medical course students are preoccupied with several preconceived information and inclination toward certain specific programs.[1] All students are taught under a common and standardized curriculum but what are factors steer them towards any specific direction need to be evaluated. Few theoretical models have been considered to evaluate the decision-making factors related to career selecting.[2]

On the basis of acquiring technological excellence and maintaining quality of life, the medical student's selection criterion for career have evolved in course of time.[3] Apart from few important individual factors like work-life balance or interest in the subject some sociobiological factors also influence medical students in making decisions. Gender plays an important factor in choosing subspecialty now a day. Male doctors are more incline to salary, technical challenges or prestige, women select career by societal orientation and time related aspects.[4] At the end of the twentieth century the gender-ratio has been shifted to male to female predominance. This increasing tendency of female doctor predominance may lead to imbalance between patient care and population's need in the upcoming days.[5]

Career guidance and counseling service are becoming essential now for the medical students in order to choose their preferred disciplines. Commonly students select career on the basis of personal interests, job security, and financial stability.[6] Students who opt surgical specialty usually consider technical sills, procedure and outcome primarily. Determinants are similar in most of the countries but there are few exceptions which are very much country-specific and healthcare-specific. For example in few countries gender and family influence play the most important roles.[7] Lifestyle and opportunities of career growth are also two important determinants for medical students globally.[8]

II. METHODOLOGY:

This was a cross-sectional descriptive study to find out the career planning of the final year women medical students of different medical colleges of South Asia. Data was collected by online questionnaire. All the women final year MBBS students of South Asia were the study population. Students of other years and who refused to be included in the study were excluded. Online e-

questionnaire link was sent to the final year MBBS students of South Asia. Future subspecialty, future preferred country of job, reasons of preferring subspecialty and country were included in the e-questionnaire. After collection of all the data they were inserted into excel datasheet to prepare a master sheet. Descriptive mathematical analysis was done to find out the results. Different tables were displayed on the results of different answers.

III. RESULTS

Table-1 shows the distribution of the total 162 participants according to their country of medical colleges. Highest 129 (79.6%) students have studied in 7 medical colleges of Bangladesh. Nearly 13% (21 in number) were from one medical college of India. Medical colleges from Nepal was 4 in number and 10 (6.17%) students from these medical colleges have responded. There were 2 students from 2 different medical colleges of Pakistan.

Table -2 was prepared according the citizenship of the participants. Bangladeshi students (43.8%) were highest in number followed by Indian (34.6%), Nepali (19.1%), Pakistani (1.23%) and Bhutani (0.62%).

Table-3 illustrated that most of the students (42%) want to work at South Asia. Nearly one-quarter (24.1%) opted Europe followed by North America (20.4). A few students planned to work in Middle East (8.6%), Oceania (3.1%), East Asia (1.2%) or South America (0.6%).

Table-4 showed nearly one-third (32.1%) participants preferred their future work place to stay close to their family members. Whereas nearly one-quarter (24.1%) opted better life style when choosing their work place. Other reasons of choosing the region work place were better safety & security (13%), better financial benefit (10.5%), better healthcare infrastructure (9.9%) or better job opportunity (7.4%).

According to table-5, half of the participants (50%) wanted to make career in Medicine or allied disciplines. Nearly one-third (31.5%) preferred Surgery and allied whereas Gynecology & Obstetrics and paraclinical disciplines were selected by 14.8% and 3.7% participants respectively.

Table-6 explained that most of the participants (40%) selected their subspecialty because they had interest in that particular subject. One-third went for work-life balance. Other causes of selecting subspecialty were availability of job opportunities (6.2%) and salary (4.3%).

According to the table-7, most of the participants (40%) wanted to work in government hospital in future. One-quarter of them preferred to have their own clinic. Other participants selected research institute (12.3%), private hospital (11.7%) and Non-Government Organization (NGO) as future working place.

Table-8 demonstrates that, among the Bangladesh participants 38.03% wanted to work in Europe and 33.8% wanted to work in South Asia. On the other hand, majority of the Indians (63.16%) wanted to settle in South Asia followed by Middle East (17.54%). More than half (54.84%) of the Nepali participants preferred to work in North America and 25.81% of them opted South Asia.

Table-9 illustrates that near half (49.30%) of the Bangladeshi participants preferred government hospital as their working institution. Similar picture was for Indians (36.84%) and Nepali (38.71%) also. One-third of the Indian (33.33%) wanted to run their own clinic and one-fourth (25.81%) of Nepali wanted to work in research center.

TABLE I. DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO MEDICAL COLLEGES.

Country	Medical college	No of student	Total No.	Grand total
Nepal	B P Koirala Institute of Health Sciences	4	10	162
	Gandaki Medical College	3		
	Nepal Medical College	1		
	Patan Academy of Health Sciences	2		
Pakistan	Dow Medical College	1	2	
	Islamic International Medical College Rawalpindi	1		
India	GMC Srinagar	21	21	
Bangladesh	Army Medical College Cumilla	1	129	
	Dhaka Medical College	1		
	Enam Medical College	2		
	Jalalabad Ragib Rabeya medical college	2		
	North East Medical College	1		
	Sylhet Osmani Medical College	1		
	Sylhet Women's Medical College	121		

TABLE II. ACCORDING TO THE CITIZENSHIP OF THE PARTICIPANTS.

Citizenship	Number	Percentage
Bangladeshi	71	43.8
Indian	57	34.6
Nepali	31	19.1
Pakistani	2	1.23
Bhutanese	1	0.62

TABLE-3: ACCORDING TO PREFERRED REGION FOR WORKING IN FUTURE.

Region	Number	Percentage
South Asia	68	42
Europe	39	24.1
North America	33	20.4
Middle East	14	8.6
Oceania	5	3.1
East Asia	2	1.2
South America	1	0.6

TABLE IV. ACCORDING TO THE REASONS BEHIND CHOOSING THE REGION OF WORK.

Reason	Number	Percentage
Staying close to family	52	32.1
Better lifestyle	39	24.1
Better safety & security	21	13
Better financial benefit	17	10.5
Better healthcare infrastructure	16	9.9
Better job opportunity	12	7.4
Others	5	3.1

TABLE V. ACCORDING TO THE FIELD OF SPECIALTY PARTICIPANTS WANT TO PURSUE

Field of specialty	Number	Percentage
Medicine and Allied	81	50
Surgery and Allied	51	31.5
Gynecology and Obstetrics	24	14.8
Paraclinical	6	3.7

TABLE VI. ACCORDING TO THE MAIN FACTOR CONSIDERED FOR CHOOSING A SUBSPECIALTY

Factor considered	Number	Percentage
Interest in the subject	65	40.1
Work / life balance	54	33.3
Demand of the subspecialty amongst the patients	24	14.8
Availability of job opportunities	10	6.2
Salary	7	4.3
Others	2	1.2

TABLE VII. ACCORDING TO THE FORM OF EXPECTED FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

Form of employment	Number	Percentage
To work in a Government Hospital	66	40.7
To have your own clinic	44	27.2
To work at a Research	21	12.3
To work in a Private Hospital	19	11.7
To work in a NGO	8	4.9
Others	4	2.5

TABLE VIII. CHOICE OF REGION OF EMPLOYMENT ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY

	Bangladesh (N)	%	India (N)	%	Nepal (N)	%
Europe	27	38.03	6	10.53	5	16.13
South Asia	24	33.80	36	63.16	8	25.81
North America	13	18.31	2	3.51	17	54.84
Oceania	3	4.23	2	3.51	0	0.00
Middle East	2	2.82	10	17.54	1	3.23
East Asia	1	1.41	1	1.75	0	0.00
South America	1	1.41	0	0.00	0	0.00

TABLE IX. PREFERRED FORM OF EMPLOYMENT ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY

	Bangladesh (N)	%	India (N)	%	Nepal (N)	%
Government hospital	35	49.30	21	36.84	12	38.71
Own clinic	20	28.17	19	33.33	5	16.13
Research Centre	7	9.86	5	8.77	8	25.81
Private hospital	6	8.45	10	17.54	3	9.68
NGO	3	4.23	2	3.51	3	9.68

IV. DISCUSSION

Iktidar et al. conducted a similar study regarding the career preferences of Medical students in Bangladesh which yielded similar findings.[9] The study showed that amongst the preferred subject for a future career, Medicine was the most desired (65%), followed by Surgery (30.21%). Our data also showed a likeliness, with Medicine and Allied subjects being the most chosen field of specialty (50%), then Surgery and Allied (31.5%) and Gynae and Obstetrics (14.8%). The study concluded that amongst Bangladeshi students, factors such as passion, income, prestige and sense of contributing to the society accounted for the motivation behind choosing a field of practice.

Talha et al. conducted a study on preferences of specialties among Bangladeshi and Nepali female interns, which showed the most preferred specialty was Medicine, seconded by Surgery.[10] It was also observed that 67% wanted to pursue a career in Private Services, and the rest Government Hospitals (25%), Armed Forces (5%) and NGOs (3%). It is contrasted in our study, where the most preferred form of future employment is Government Hospitals (40.7%), followed by personal clinics, research and private services. The differences in preferences may reflect the changes in opinions throughout time as one gains perspective through working in the medical field in internship.

Nicholson et al. observed that student's aspirations about their future were strongly influenced by family and home and also by clinical placements.[11] It correlates with our findings on the motivation of students when choosing the region of work, where a large majority stated the region was chosen to be close to family (32.1%)

A study on workplace obstacles faced by Pakistani female doctors by Raza et al. concluded women were greatly influenced by marriage, in-laws, and gender stereotypes in a patriarchal society which then affected the choices they made in their professional career.[12] The study stated that serious work-life conflicts occured due to the female doctors' failure to balance the gender role of a homemaker and their earning jobs, which translated to workplace issues. Our study noticed that South Asian women consider a variety of societal factors when deciding on personal choices, such as their families, standard of living, safety and security, financial benefits and more. A great amount also chose to work outside South Asia (58%) if given the option, which may be to avoid the future possibilities of any such work-life complications.

A cross-sectional study conducted by Sawan et al. found that amongst medical students and interns in Saudi Arabia, 80% of students who considered a factor in their specialty choice being overseas experience were female.[13] 74.4% of females also considered friends, relatives and connections in the medical field while choosing. This is reflected in the data we collected which showed majority of female South Asian students wanted to work outside South Asia, with Europe (24.1%), North America (20.4%) and Middle East (8.6%) being top contenders.

Hossain et al. performed a mixed- method study on common motivating for female medical students in Bangladesh which concluded that the majority aimed for social status, respect, image of a 'noble profession' and prospects of helping the sick.[14] A large amount of our study population considered their interest in the subject (40.1%) and salary, although another key motivation was work/life balance which was the driving force behind one third of our participants.

V. CONCLUSION:

Opting future subspecialty, location of the working place and types of working places are very vital decision for any medical students especially for the future women doctors. Decision to be made by considering all the logical and practical parameters to ensure a pleasant and successful career and life.

VI. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

None of the co-authors declared any conflict of interest. This was a self-fund study. No artificial intelligence support was taken for this academic writing.

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