**Passion or compulsion?**

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Hundreds and thousands of students across Pakistan arrive at the crossroads of their careers every year. They have to choose between following their passion or pursuing a profession. Children want to follow their hearts but they are compelled to think otherwise because of the social laws of the system.

These laws are traditions and customs followed by the elders, mainly the students’ parents and relatives.

Have we ever wondered why students in Pakistan do not take up the profession of archaeology? Why do we not produce cartoonists and animators?

Why does no one want to become a game developer? Why do we not see students taking up a profession in aviation? Why has Pakistan not produced a driver for NASCAR or Formula 1? The answer is linked to our age-old, myopic, limited perspective that our elders so valiantly promote because it has been observed and pursued across generations.

The professions of medicine, engineering, and information technology are perhaps the only ones being openly and boldly pursued by our students. Doctors and engineers have become the national professions of Pakistan. Parents think that their child was born only to become a doctor or an engineer.

[Iran, US hold 'intensive talks' on prisoner swap, release of frozen assets](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Oct-2022/iran-us-hold-intensive-talks-on-prisoner-swap-release-of-frozen-assets)

The children also think they do not have any other career to choose from. There is nothing wrong with choosing medicine or engineering. There is everything wrong with the mentality that prevents one from choosing professions other than these two. What if a child wants to become a comic book artist?

What if someone aspires to become a hairdresser? One can also pursue becoming an astronomer. Parents and elders may not even consider them as professions, to begin with. Such children having aspirations considered to be “wild thoughts” by the myopic system will be compelled to pursue professions that are actively accepted in the market.

There was once a time when no one knew about the concept of a bachelor’s or master’s in business administration. Someone did learn the tips and tricks of the field, completed a degree in BBA or MBA, and earned a job. Today, BBA and MBA are degrees offered by every university or business school as the market accepts them. The same is the case with other professions. Imagine someone endeavoring to become a ‘carpenter assembler and repairer’ in our society.

[Death toll from Indonesia football riot, stampede jumps to 174](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Oct-2022/death-toll-from-indonesia-football-riot-stampede-jumps-to-174)

The child’s parents will immediately ask him/her to shun such thoughts. This is primarily because a carpenter is, unfortunately, not considered a profession that children actively pursue. If a university offers this course and the market provides a hefty starting salary to someone having a BS degree in Carpentry, then it will become the talk of the town. Becoming a carpenter in the west is considered an honor as one becomes a skilled worker. It is not the case in Pakistan.

Teachers must counsel parents so they may accept the career choices their children make. Students will only get a degree if they are compelled to pursue a profession. However, they will uplift their character, develop new industries and markets, and build future leaders if they are allowed to follow a career of their choice.