

## PHD Programme: Purpose and relevance for career goal

Minakshi Gupta\*

Department of Economics and Management, Lokmanya College of Commerce, Ahmedabad, India.

**Correspondence Address:** \*Minakshi Gupta, T-202, Venus Parkland, Vejalpur, Ahmedabad, Gujarat-380051, India.

### Abstract

This study is mainly concerned with finding out the relevance of PhD in the development and achievement of career goals. The study primarily aims at assessing the purpose and relevance of PhD for the growth of a person and for the growth of his career. In this framework, an attempt is made to examine the role of PhD in one's career growth and to bring out the benefits and relevance of PhD according to one's career plan. In this study the secondary information is being used. This is mainly literature based study. It was found in this study that a doctoral degree is very much important if one wants to pursue his career in either academia, research or in any industry sector. A PhD would give one the qualification, which means that one can go further up in the queue if one is putting an application for a job. It is the basic entry level requirement for being a lecturer. It provides complete knowledge and foresightedness about a particular subject or field. It provides an in depth study of a particular subject, which is very much desired to pursue a career in academia. The main point is that doing a PhD does change one. So, a PhD can be many things: research training, springboard for specialist expertise, rite of passage, and job credential. What it means for one depends on which opportunities one seizes.

**Keywords:** PhD Degree, Qualification, Career development, Academic field

### Introduction

Doctor of Philosophy, abbreviated as PhD, Ph.D., D.Phil., and 'Doctor of Philosophy' (university of oxford-what is dphil? 2014). It is the highest level of degree that a student can achieve. Doing PhD is like crawling around on the ground with a magnifying glass - less major discovery of new lands, more of the detailed investigation of familiar ones.

In actual, a PhD consists of certain attributes are:

- Mastery of the subject
- Research insight

- Respect for the discipline Capacity for independent research
- Ability to communicate results and relate them to the broader discourse

So, a PhD is a professional research qualification preceded by research training. A PhD can be a deep, specific education in a discipline, preceding a postdoctoral period of on-the-job training. It involves one doing a substantial chunk of research, writing it up and then discussing it with professional academics. One has a supervisor (or two, or more) to help and advice, but in theory at

least the PhD is something for which one takes the initiative, and so it is a demonstration of one's ability to do proper research independently. The process is rarely smooth; along the way one is likely to learn a great deal about how not to do research as well as about how to do it effectively. (Peter & Rugg, feb 2010)

### **Objectives of PhD**

The PhD program has these major objectives:

1. To conduct high-quality research relevant to private or public organizations,
2. To direct research by others, and to communicate research findings through teaching and writing; and
3. To prepare for the varied responsibilities and opportunities of careers in research and teaching or for positions requiring similar research and analytical skills.
4. An in-depth understanding and appreciation of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature are emphasized.
5. One can gain necessary conceptual, quantitative, and methodological skills to carry out high quality empirical research.

These objectives are accomplished by formal course work, independent study and reading, formal assignment, student-initiated research projects, and dissertation research.

### **Literature review**

(Tzanakou, 2014) This article "The wider benefits of PhD" states that PhD helps in providing certain traits like Personal development that includes Independent thinking, self-motivation, maturity; PhD also has a Social impact in terms of development of social skills (communication, presentation); accessing professional networks and building personal relationships; and Societal recognition and PhD also helps in Professional development in the form of Critical thinking, and it also provides basis for research career.

(Jalote) In his article, "Doing a PhD – Preparing for a Career in Research" he states that, PhD helps in developing the breadth in the discipline (can be provided through courses), expertise in a vertical area, and the ability to identify research problems. This is one of the most important abilities for a researcher. This ability requires a good knowledge of the recent developments in the area, and the ability to create a bigger picture and see how the different work fit and what might be missing.

(smaglik, 2014) "Employment: PhD overdrive". This article states that the rate of unemployment for people with PhD in science is increasing. The number of PhD holders either in employment or actively seeking work rose by 22% between 2001 and 2010, and even though unemployment in the group nearly doubled to 2.4% by 2010, it was still well below the 2010 national average of 8.2%, according to a report from the US National Science Foundation because the demand is reaching saturation point, especially in the biomedical-research sector. The increasing number of PhDs has seen competition stiffen, even in disciplines traditionally free from such problems.

(Brailsford, 2010) "Motives and Aspirations for Doctoral Study" This article states that most of the candidates pursuing PhD were not clear about their motives of doing PhD, so this research paper states that universities should offer workshops for would-be candidates before enrolment so that initial motives for doctoral studies should be clear to all the PhD candidates.

(Auriol, 2010) In his paper "Careers of Doctorate Holders: Employability and mobility patterns" he has mentioned that while there is still no consensus on the relationship between human capital and economic growth, PhD holders who have accumulated substantial human capital through education have been identified as "one of the key actors behind the creation of knowledge-based economic growth".

(raddon & sung, january 2009) In their paper “The Career Choices and Impact of PhD” they have mentioned that PhD graduates make a clear contribution to society in terms of political and social engagement, community development, knowledge and wealth creation, poverty reduction and social mobility and general enrichment of society.

(Leonard, 2004) “Continuing professional and career development: the doctoral experience of education alumni at a UK university” states that very little is known about the motivation and ways of doing doctoral in UK. We know least of all what use individuals make of a PhD or professional doctorate while they are studying or once they have one.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study primarily aims at assessing the purpose and relevance of PhD for the growth of a person and for the growth of his career. In this framework, an attempt is made to achieve the following specific objectives of the study:

- To examine the role of PhD in one’s career growth.
- To bring out the benefits and relevance of PhD according to one’s career plan.

### **Research methodology**

#### **Data collection**

In this study the secondary information is being used. The relevant secondary information is drawn primarily from various websites, newspapers, magazines, from personal contacts, journal on doctoral degree, research papers, publications and articles being published through various publications on the study of effects and relevance of doctoral degree on the career planning.

#### **Data Analysis**

In this study the Descriptive research method is being applied to analyze the data.

Descriptive research is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the study with the help of case studies, survey research and observational research. In this study various literatures regarding this study is being studied and the conclusion is drawn on that basis.

### **Results**

PhD students are often motivated to pursue the PhD by scientific and humanistic curiosity; the desire to contribute to the academic community, service to others, or personal development. A career in academia generally requires a PhD, though in some countries, it is possible to reach relatively high positions without a doctorate.

As Table-A shows that PhD provided certain attributes to the one who is pursuing it, in addition to that the motivation may also include increased salary, but in many cases this is not the result. However, some research suggests that overqualified workers are often less satisfied and less productive at their jobs. A PhD is also required in some positions outside of academia, such as research jobs in major international agencies. As well, in some cases, the Executive Directors of some types of foundations may be expected to hold a PhD.

A PhD can be viewed as one's entry into the research discourse (which equates roughly to the research community's dialogue about what it believes it knows and has a good basis for knowing). What it does is to prepare one to consider and debate what one knows and how one knows it. This means that one will develop one’s critical thinking that will learn about weighing evidence and questioning assumptions.

**Table A: PhD and Career in Academia.**

<b>ATTRIBUTES PROVIDED BY PhD</b>	<b>REUIREMENT IN ACADEMICS</b>
PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT (INDEPENT THINKING, SELF-MOTIVATION, MATURITY)	YES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	YES
MASTERY OF SUBJECT	YES
RESEARCH INSIGHT	YES
CRITICAL THINKING	YES
SOCIAL SKILLS (COMMUNICATION & PRESENTATION)	YES
CREATING NEW KNOWLEDGE	YES
IN-DEPTH THINKING	YES
PROPER FORMULATION OF PROBLEM	YES
PRESTIGE	YES
SELF STUDY, EXPLORATION OF NEW IDEAS	YES

### **Discussion**

It is clear from the literature review that PhD is helpful in developing a range of skills. Any postgraduate course provides a focused “time for reflection and self-development” (Murray, 2002). Some of the core skills that are identified as being developed through the doctorate include: The ability to work independently as well as working under supervision; Self-motivation and -discipline; Specialist and generalist knowledge within the given field; Time, project and document management, ability to priorities tasks; Critical thinking, analytical and writing skills; The ability to read and synthesize a range of documentation; Research skills; developing initiative; Communication, presentation and interpersonal skills; Problem-solving, flexibility in the face of change and creative thinking; Networking; Professionalism and ethical practice; Team work (e.g. in scientific team-based studies, or as part of seminar groups, conference organizing); Computing and information searching skills; Teaching skills; Taking responsibility for one’s own learning and learning how to learn, seen to support

lifelong learning for the future. (Becker, 2004) (burgess, 1997) (Cryer, 2001) (Delamonte, Atkinson & Perry, 2000) (Murray, 2002) (Rugg & Petre, 2004).

In addition to these, a UKCGE working group identified a desired outcome of doctoral study in the humanities, which can probably be broadly translated across all fields of doctoral study, as the development of generally highly-qualified and talented people, who will use a wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills that they have gained through doctoral research in a wide variety of contexts, in employment and beyond, enriching their own lives and the lives of others. (UKCGE, 2000).

### **Conclusion**

A doctoral degree is very much important if one wants to pursue his career in either academia, research or in any industry sector. A PhD would give one the qualification, which means that one can go further up in the queue if one is putting an application for a job. It is the basic entry level requirement for being a lecturer. It provides complete knowledge and foresightedness about a

particular subject or field. It provides an in depth study of a particular subject, which is very much desired to pursue a career in academia. Doctoral graduates in the academy could provide very useful information not only on their role within the academic profession and in knowledge creation more widely, but also by highlighting areas where more support and development might be offered. It provides a sense of giving something back to the community as a motive. The PhDs' view is that the students need to learn critical thinking skills valuable for later life; the other view is that the students need to be equipped to find jobs. Which is right? This is a good question, and one which would take us on a lengthy diversion. The main point is that doing a PhD does change one. So, a PhD can be many things: research training, springboard for specialist expertise, rite of passage, and job credential .What it means for one depends on which opportunities one seizes.

**References**

Becker, L. (2004). *How to Manage your Postgraduate Course*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Brailsford, I. (2010). *Motives and Aspirations for Doctoral Study*:. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 5, 13.

burgess, R. G. (1997). *'The Changing Context of Postgraduate Education in the United Kingdom*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

Cryer. (2001). *The Research Student's Guide to Success* (2nd ed.). Buckingham: Open university press.

Delamonte, S., Atkinson , P., & perry, o. (2000). *Supervising the PhD: A guide to sucess*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open university press.

Jalote, P. (n.d.). *Doing a PhD – Preparing for a Career in Research*. Retrieved aug 2014, from [www.iiitd.edu.in](http://www.iiitd.edu.in).

(n.d.). *Journal of Higher Education Management and Policy, the economic contribution of PhDs*, <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a912992314>.

Leonard, D. B. (2004). *'Continuing professional and career development: the doctoral experience of education alumni at a UK university'*,. *Studies in Continuing Education*,.

Murray, R. (2002). *How to write a thesis*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

peter, m., & rugg, g. (feb 2010). *The Unwritten Rules of PhD Research* (Open University Press).

raddon, a. (2006 b). *'Drawing the Boundaries in Academic Work: Individual Views and Experiences of Teaching, Research and Administration'*. *Beyond Boundaries*:. *SRHE Annual Conference*. Brighton.

raddon, a., & sung, j. (january 2009). *The Career Choices and Impact of PhD*.

Rugg, G., & Petre, M. (2004). *The Unwritten Rules of PhD Research*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

smaglik, p. (2014, july 09). *Employment: PhD overdrive. nature* 511(doi:10.1038/nj7508-255a), 255-256.

Snape, D. R. (2001). *Postgraduate Career Progression. Qualitative findings Prepared for the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research*. London: National Centre for Social Research Formerly SCPR.

Tzanakou, C. ( 2014 , april 11). *The wider benefits of a PhD*.

UKCGE. (2000). *Research Training For Humanities Postgraduate Students*. Lichfield: UK Council for Graduate Education.

(n.d.). Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctor\\_of\\_Philosophy#cite\\_note-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctor_of_Philosophy#cite_note-1).

- (n.d.). Retrieved from ^ <http://www.allbusinessschools.com/faqs/d-ba-phd>.
- (n.d.). Retrieved from ^ What is a PhD? [http://www.phdproject.org/downloads/What\\_is\\_a\\_PhD.pdf](http://www.phdproject.org/downloads/What_is_a_PhD.pdf).
- (n.d.). Retrieved from Becoming a Business Professor. [http://www.aacsb.edu/resource\\_centers/DoctoralEdu/BusinessProfessor-full.pdf](http://www.aacsb.edu/resource_centers/DoctoralEdu/BusinessProfessor-full.pdf).
- (n.d.). Retrieved from ^ "Doctoral degrees: The disposable academic". The

**IJSAR, 3(12), 2016; 44-49**

- Economist. 2010-12-18. Retrieved 25 December 2012.
- (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/What-is-main-purpose-doing-97158.S.137231109>.
- (2014). Retrieved from [www.findaphd.com](http://www.findaphd.com) › Advice › Finding A PhD university of oxford-what is dphill? (2014, july). Retrieved from [https://uni-of-oxford.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/\\_id/185](https://uni-of-oxford.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/_id/185).