



## Role of Career Counselling in Fostering Career Maturity Among Higher Secondary School Students in India

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### ABSTRACT

Current status of unemployment in India has created a challenging situation for policy makers and educationists as well as our government to figure out the factors behind it. Misfit of suitable candidates in different degree courses as well as work front are playing a major role in creating this critical situation. There is lack of guidance and counselling programs at school level as well as at higher studies, which leads to drop outs and less deserving candidature in educational and occupational areas. To overcome these problems, we need to provide suitable courses to the suitable persons and suitable jobs to the suitable candidates and this will happen by preparing career mature persons. Career maturity can be developed through the process of career counselling and the process is lifelong. For this career counselling services need to be introduced in a mass level from the beginning of education i.e. at schooling stage. So, there is a dire need to establish the importance of career counselling services with new ideas and innovative practices in the present situation in India.

**Keywords:** *Career Counselling, Career Maturity, Higher Secondary School Students.*

**Citation:** Smita Kumari & Mitanjali Sahoo(2022). Role of Career Counselling in Fostering Career Maturity among Higher Secondary School Students in India. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies*, 4(1), 170-175.

### INTRODUCTION

We are living in the difficult situation where we are facing health related issues, unemployment, poverty, poor quality of education etc. In the present situation guidance and counselling plays an important role in every aspects of life. Guidance and counselling is the assistance or help provided by a more experienced person to a less experienced person to solve certain major problems of the individual. National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) defined guidance as the process of helping a person to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of himself/herself and of his/her role in the world of work, to rest this concept against reality and to convert it into reality with satisfaction to himself and benefit to society. Guidance helps the individual in self-understanding and in self-direction. The terms guidance and counselling have been loosely or interchangeably used [1]. Guidance and Counselling solves the problems related to different aspects of life like educational, vocational, personal, health, psychological etc.

The problem of unemployment is very pertinent in India. People are experiencing lack of job opportunities. Everyone is feeling anxious about the situation who are working from home or sitting at home without vocational work. Not only school students, college students are also facing psychological problems about their study as well as career. The evolving areas like academic success, career and vocational development, social and personal development, resolving psychological problems, counselling for the parents as well as teachers and staffs in schools in India. It has been also identified by Kodad and Kazi [2] in their study. According to them need of school counselling in India is very essential. Saha [3] also established the need of guidance and counselling as felt by both teachers and students in West Bengal.

It is very difficult for the adolescents to choose suitable job or career for their future because they are confused and amazed at the same time by so many jobs and career options. One's choice of career can make his/her future comfortable or stressful. For choosing a suitable career one should be mature enough for taking decision about his/her career.

### CAREER MATURITY

Career maturity has been defined as one's ability to choose appropriate career choice including awareness of what is required and suitable. Super [4] explained career maturity as it takes place on the scales of career development from exploration stage to the retirement stage of an individual. Crites[5] defined career maturity as the central focus on developmental approach to understanding career performance and assessment of an individual's level of career progress in relation to his/her career related developmental tasks. Super [4] identifies five dimensions of career maturity which

are: planfulness, exploration, information gathering, decision making and reality orientation. Besides these characters one should possess competency of coping skills, readiness and problem-solving ability to become a career mature person. Studies are also conducted to find out the main components of career maturity. Amadi, Joshua & Asagwara [6] mentioned 4-components of vocational maturity which are self-knowledge, occupational information, involvement in decision making and independence in decision making. Career maturity helps to seek the better goal selection and career decision. If youth is provided with proper career advice, it will change the scenario. There is the need for development of career maturity among the youth so that they can contribute to the nation at maximum extent. To foster career maturity among higher secondary school stage, they need career counseling at the right time and at the right age.

There are many factors which affect career maturity such as family and parenting style, childhood fantasy, self-efficacy, personality type, previous experience, gender, interests, life roles, skills, ability, locus of control, social and cultural background, socio-economic condition and geographical location. Salomi [7] found that status of identity predicts career maturity of the adolescents. Sharma and Ahuja [8] found all the participants significantly differed on all component i.e. attitude, self-appraisal, occupational information, goal selection, planning and problem solving of career maturity. Kaur and Shukla [9] found significant difference in career maturity of higher secondary students in their educational disciplines. The study also revealed positive correlation between career maturity and self-concept. Family and parenting style influence career maturity of individuals. The study conducted by Chan [10] also found positive relationship between parenting style and career maturity. In 2016, Saimons & Mahato and Zahedani, Yaddani, Bagheri & Nabeiei also established the correlation between parental encouragement and career maturity in their studies. Parenting style is also correlated with the creativity and academic achievement of the students of higher secondary schools [11], which is very important factor of career maturity. He also found that the emotional atmosphere and freedom given by the family has positive impact on student's creativity and academic achievement. So, we can say family and parenting has positive impact on career maturity. The role of gender, stream of study, academic achievement, and family's socio-economic status in developing career maturity has been revealed by Ismail, Abdullah, Mohamad & Khairuldin [12]. Andleeb and Ansari [13] found male students more career mature than female students whereas female students showed more career maturity than male students in another study [14,15,16] on the basis of type of school and locality they belong. Students belong to both urban and rural region of residence found same vocational maturity [14, 17]. Some studies revealed the importance of socio-economic status in career development. According to Murry & Pujar [18] found negative correlation between socio-economic status and career decision making difficulty. Hence, it is clear from the above review that socio-economic status, gender, type of school, locality of schools are some important factors that affect career maturity. Hence, the above factors should be kept in mind while career counselling process is conducted.

## **CAREER COUNSELLING**

The counselling as profession came into practice by Frank Parsons in 1909 when he outlined it as a process of choosing a career and initiated vocational guidance. He believed that it is better to choose a vocation than merely to hunt for a job. In 1981 Crites in his book listed some important aspects of career counselling:

1. The importance of Career counselling is more than other type of counselling. Counselling deals with only inner world of an individual whereas career counselling deals with the inner and outer world of a person.
2. Career counselling can be practised as therapeutic purpose in which it enables a counselee to get an understanding of choosing a right career. It helps them to learn life skills to solve their problem and attain happiness and confidence in life. They can give more focus on non-career issues, because their career goal is set in a right direction.
3. Career counselling is more difficult than psychotherapy because it requires more knowledge of world of work and proficiency of dealing both personal and work variables of counselee where psychotherapy needs only inner world of the counselee.

However, career counselling provides a clarity to choose a career which builds a better future. It helps individual in choosing about their career on the basis of their interests and ability. Career counselling can be used through-out the career and it is a life-long process. Super's theory of career development also suggests a life-span view of career which starts from growth stage (age 4-13), exploration stage (age 14-24), establishment (age 25-44), maintenance (age 45-65) and end with disengagement (age over 65). So, we can say at every stage career counselling is required for a successful career span. Career counselling majorly can be used at 3-stages of individual's career. At high school stage the first counselling can be done and then at higher secondary stage which is transitional level, for opting streams/subjects according to one's ability and interest and choosing for specific career in future. After passing higher secondary stage at graduation level career counselling is very important as it decides the specific career for an individual for the life time. Parhar et al. [19] found the need of counselling in secondary level for school students in their study. They also observed no significant difference of guidance needs on the basis of gender, but the guidance needs of rural students were more than that of urban students. So, the process of preparing a career mature person through career counselling should start at higher secondary stage by the experts and career counsellors.

## TYPES OF CAREER COUNSELLING

### 1. INDIVIDUAL CAREER COUNSELLING

Individual career counselling is a process of one on one counselling therapy where the counsellor helps an individual to explore and choose about his/her career. Individual career counselling offers a counselee the chance to:

- **Create individual's competence profile:** Individual career counselling helps in creating counselee's competence profile on the basis of their abilities and interests.
- **Clarify professional goals and visions:** It clarifies counselee's confusion by providing information and responsibilities which occurs in any occupation and ultimately helps in setting professional goals and visions for the counselee.
- **Identify strengths and resources:** The entire process of individual career counselling focuses on the identification of counselee's strengths and weaknesses so that counselee can work on that for improvement and selecting a career accordingly.
- **Explore professional self-image and role understanding:** It provides a clear picture of counselee's interests and abilities as well as their strengths which helps in exploring self-image and an understanding about their reality based professional goals.
- **Reflect professional values and motives:** It keeps self-motivated and self-directed by enhancing counselee's coping skills and life skills.

### 2. GROUP CAREER COUNSELLING

Group career counseling is a form of counseling therapy where a small group of people works on problems related to career decisions with each other and directed by the counsellor. Group career counseling seeks to give counselee a safe and comfortable environment where they can work out problems and concerns related to career. It provides an opportunity to:

- **Give and receive support:** It is a platform where the counsellor works with a group of people who are seeking solution of a common problems related to a career. It gives support to every members of the group and also receive support from the counsellor.
- **Gain understanding of problems and explore possible solutions:** The counsellor provides an understanding of self- appraisal. In this form each members try to explore different solutions of the problems by giving their ideas and perceptions based on their experiences.
- **Practise interpersonal skills in a safe group setting:** It helps in developing interpersonal skills and social skills too through discussing with each other.
- **Increase observation and feedback skills:** It develops listening and observation skills and give opportunity to every group members for providing feedback on the discussion.
- **Enhance problem-solving skills:** It enhances problem-solving abilities of the group members by providing equal participation in the process of group counselling led by the counsellor.

Besides these type of career counselling, to meet the purpose of providing career counselling at mass level, there is need of developing a number of new methods of online service delivery like:

- **Online career coaching:** Now a days the counsellors are providing online career coaching service to their clients. This helps in keeping regularity in sessions of career counselling through online mode. It can be done for individual and group career counselling. In online mode we can connect with international personalities also.
- **Telephonic career counselling:** In telephonic career counselling, the counselee can contact any of his/her favorite career counsellors for help. The counsellors may be from abroad also.
- **Video conferencing:** Through video conference career counselling can be given in groups and also organized by school for children to solve their queries about career and career roles for their future.

## ACTIVITIES INVOLVED IN CAREER COUNSELLING

An emergence of new career counselling techniques includes different activities and tasks for the counsellor to produce career mature persons. It also emphasizes on counselee centered and holistic counselling approach and a more online based dynamic counselling approach. The mode of career counselling can be used in offline as well as online. Activity based career counselling can be done in the following ways:

1. **General conversation:** It involves two persons. The main objective of the conversation is to build a relationship between the counsellor and the counselee. Rapport building is very essential for assisting the counselee. It can be done by organizing Ice-breaking sessions, brainstorm games activities like SWOT analysis, JOHARI window analysis etc.
2. **Gathering career information about family:** Making career family tree, Career genogram can be used for gathering career information of family.

**3. Career exploration:** Several activities like Role Play/Skit/Drama based on different career roles can be used for providing exposure to different careers and job opportunities. Story writing based on different career roles can be used to know pros and cons about a career. Different Career-based Quiz, Career poster presentation can be used for exploring steps/responsibilities/qualification/eligibility involved in a career.

**4. Career information:** Career counsellor should organize several activities to give career related information and knowledge of world of work. The activities can be like career fair, career related talks, career day activities- inviting guest speaker etc.

**5. Career planning and goal selection:** Goal setting worksheet can be prepared by the counselee with the suggestion of the counsellor.

**6. Career assessment:** Counsellor should maintain career assessment workbook, Career assessment tests and advice about career on the basis of assessment.

**7. Follow-Up:** It is very important part of counselling process. The counselee should be followed after counselling sessions.

The activities involved in career counselling should be based on practical experiences rather than theoretical background only. It must give the exposure of real world of work which enhances the counselee's understanding the real picture of a career by himself/herself. The right way of using these activities leads to foster career maturity among the counselee.

### **ROLE OF CAREER COUNSELLING IN FOSTERING CAREER MATURITY**

The role of career counselling includes career assistance to the counselee in choosing a job and career development. It helps in identification of career preferences, exploring different career options, collecting and assembling data about careers, making decisions about careers and also implementing new strategies in surviving in the world of work. Additionally career counselling enable an individual as a career mature person so they can take important decision by themselves about career and its development. Sirohi [16] found higher career maturity of the students who are exposed to the guidance and counselling programs than the students who have not exposed to the guidance and counselling programs while choosing a job. Ismail, Abdullah, Mohamad & Khairuldin [12] in their study found that career guidance and counselling programs has an important role in the development of career maturity. In career counselling services, counsellors plays an important role in fostering career maturity in an individual. Jain [20] stated that career guidance and counselling have positive impact on student's career development and it also revealed the satisfaction level is higher of students who have been guided by career counsellors rather than not guided by career counsellors. With the knowledge, experience and continued practices of counselling make counsellor well equipped to help the counselee from stressful situation of deciding of career. Adding new additional strategies in career counselling practices might be helpful for career counsellors. Career counsellors can provide psychological support and career information according to one's need and ability. So as a career counsellors, there is need to be prepared for using interventions from a range of strategies, depending on the realistic career goal of the counselee.

With the help of career counsellors, career counselling helps in the fostering following characters to make a person career mature:

- **Self-appraisal:**-Career counselling provides self-appraisal services to the counselee. Self-appraisal is the opportunity for individuals to shine and evaluate their own performance during the time of promotions or feedback while working in any institution. It is a bridge between performance and feedback in a job. So, on the basis of self-appraisal in career counselling sessions, the counselee can relate his/her strengths and weaknesses with their progress and promotions. It makes them understand how important their job is and respect the hard-work done by themselves.
- **Self-motivated and Self-directed:-** In making right career decision career counselling provides assistance to the counselee and help them to become self-motivated as well as self-directed, so they can take right decisions independently based on their interest and abilities. It gives support in developing good communication skills and interpersonal skills by the counselee for career development.
- **Decision-making:** - Career counselling helps in choosing a suitable job for suitable person. Career counselling provides career information and its every aspects which enables an individual confident and knowledgeable which in turn it enables them to be a decision maker for their future career and best for their career development.
- **Goal-planning:** - Career counselling helps in making a successful career plan for a successful career which helps in setting achievable goals and based on their strengths and weaknesses. It helps in setting an achievable career goal. A right career decision makes a person happy and satisfied in their life which in turn helps to achieve career goals one by one without any pressure and anxiety.
- **Problem-solving:-** Career counselling resolves confusion and helps in exploring best career options. It enhances the problem-solving ability of counselee by giving a clear picture of the world of work. Career counselling make the counselee learn what to do in difficult situation and how to find solutions by their critical thinking.

## CONCLUSION

Life is full of roller coaster rides. One of the main ride of life is the professional ride which continues through-out the life after adolescence. If one will choose the right path it will become happy and joyful journey but at the same point if one will choose the wrong path it will become unhappy and stressful journey. So, making life easy and joyful one should choose the right career based on their interest and ability. For this there is need of practicing career counselling in traditional ways as well as establishing the online resources of lifelong career counselling services with new ideas and innovative practices in the present situation. It will help in fostering career maturity among individuals which in turn help in choosing right career choice for maximum professional growth and use of human resource. A career mature person possess character like self-appraisal, decisiveness in career decision making, involvement in career decision making, orientation to decision making about career and also having occupational information, goal selection, planning of career, problem solving ability etc. All these characters enables an individual to choose right career for him/her. In the present situation there are so many jobs and work areas but also in limited number. For everyone it is not easy to choose a career according to their interests and ability. Here the role of career counselling is the most important to help everyone to have use of their leisure time and find the actual talent for successful careers span. The requirement of incorporating an online based platform in career counselling services. It should be kept forth with greater emphasis on using online interactions and communications reaching to each and every individuals. There is need of developing a number of new methods of offline and online service delivery like virtual counselling services and mentoring, online career coaching, telephonic counselling, video conferencing, the inclusion of ICT based enterprises, use of social media as part of the counselling process to reach most of the youth who needs career counselling.

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