

Career Planning And Counselling

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Career planning and essence of success depends on one's perception about life and how one wants to groom one's future. Different people have different mindsets. Despite assumed to be the same, every person's thinking process takes shape right from the childhood and finally decides what the person wants from life and how his career should be groomed. This decision depends a lot on the person's strengths and weaknesses which have been developed since his childhood. The choice also depends on the family, environment in which the person grows up, objectives in life, economic background, etc.

Some of the career decisions are influenced by the environment of home and outside surroundings. All the factors, including the skills and aptitude one possesses, lead a person to decide about his or her career. Somebody loves sports, some are good in science, someone else likes art—there is no boundary of interests and a career can become successful in any of these areas. It is the command of our spirit and inner determination which lead us to our decisions.

Once we are sure about the interest we want to pursue and the decision is made, we should be able to put all our efforts in realising that dream. There is no room for regret once the choice has

been made. We must have the determination to move forward what may come.

In our country's present scenario of education, the education at the school level plays a prominent role in deciding students' short and long-term goals. The first goal for the student is set up by Class X Board exam about which major stream to take up (Science, Arts, Commerce) and is followed by the Class XII Board exam to set the long term goal (what to study as a career choice).

It is the time when the mind starts to decide about what is his/her long-term goal and objective. Again this long-term goal is influenced by socio-economic and other relevant conditions like rich/poor, rural/urban, male/female etc. In India, lots of decisions depend on the economic condition of the families also.

Despite all these, life goes on and we have to select a clear path of success. The most crucial time of the students' life in India is the time when they face the final Board exam (10+2), because at this point of time, they have to decide and select a stream to pursue thereafter.

People from rural areas with lower income group decide at a very young stage about their career. The school dropouts mainly get involved in earning wages by working as labourers, domestic help, wage earning workers in small factories etc.



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Career counselling

Employment opportunities in a country grow with the advancement of technology/science and with developments in all aspects—opportunities for different kinds of careers, e.g. Engineering, Medical, Law, MBA, Fashion Designing, Hotel Management, Mass Communication, even as entrepreneur etc.

Major factors influencing the decision are personal and professional satisfaction and financial gain. We all have expectations of earning more, to elevate social and economic status to a higher level as compared to the present status.

Time has come when the counselling/mentoring system should be strengthened to provide professional support to the students. Everyone can





not be a counsellor. The counsellor should be knowledgeable, a good human being, person of understanding and should possess skill of articulation, knowledge of behaviour, attitude and must be a professionally educated counsellor.

Art of counselling

Career Counselling is the guidance provided by qualified professionals, after assessing the intelligence, interest and personality of an individual to identify the careers in which the individual will succeed and counsel him/her accordingly. It helps the students to select courses based on their level of intelligence, interests, personality and to prepare for appropriate careers.

Career choices, in our country, are usually made when the students enter the 11th grade or when they enter college. It is during this period that they are confused to decide on the choice of courses/ careers. In such difficult, crucial decision-making circumstances, career counselling comes to the aid of students and guides them to choose the right career path. Students are under emotional stress in selecting courses due to pressure from parents, peer groups and the society. Career choices made under such pressure will lead to taking up courses/careers that one may not eventually find interesting, absorbing and satisfying.

The specific duties of a career counsellor

- Meeting with students regarding educational and vocational matters, determining the students' expectations in regard to what they want to pursue. The career counsellor should formulate a plan according to that.
- The career counsellor must also make various items available to the student to help them formulate good decisions with regard to their future steps relating to education or vocation. These items may include pamphlets, school applications, job applications, school catalogues and other various documents. These will give the students something to peruse and may, in fact, help them in the decision-making process.
- The career counsellor must have good networking with outside individuals who may help the students out in their pursuits like business owners, college administrators and parents of the students. By maintaining contact with these individuals, the counsellor will be able to present the student with the best options possible.
- A career counsellor should also be able to answer questions relating to financial aid. The career counsellor should know all about financial aid issues and know the procedure for applying for financial aid so that he/she can adequately explain it to the students.
- A career counsellor should also maintain contact with teachers and administrators at their specific school for a few different reasons. The career counsellor should consult the school administrators to inquire about getting programmes into the school which will aid in the future careers and goals of the students.
- Finally, allow the students to take natural decision. Do not impose.

The future generation

It is time we should approach the career planning of the students in India in a systematic and scientific way. In our country, most of the time students are stuck in a wrong career and their creativity and imagination do not get the opportunity to come to full use, just because they choose a career or a subject which their parents dictate to them. While choosing a subject/career the main points that should be kept in mind are the students' aptitude and interest for the subject. After choosing the right subjects, if proper guidance is provided to the students by the school or counsellor about how to go about their career, then the students will be clearer about their objectives and will be able to work towards achieving their goals in life. Accordingly, the schools should make sure that they can provide enough options to the students about the subjects they want to choose and there should be some professional counsellors who can provide them with all the information they require.

While choosing a career for the students, it is important that the parents in India also change their mindset and attitude. In India, a large section of the parents have some preconceived notions about which career is good and which is not good for their children. They would prefer their children to choose a professional career like Medical/Engineering rather than encouraging them to go for the career the students want to pursue, be it sports, dramatics, arts, etc. In many cases family and peer pressure makes them equally confused about the career of their children. This mindset needs to be changed.

The drop-outs in rural areas and amongst the economically backward semi-urban and urban population, are something to feel concerned about. Most of the time people in such situations are not aware of the importance of education and the facilities offered by the government for education. NGOs and government agencies should focus on increasing the awareness in these areas.

India's more than 1 billion population can become the main strength of the country. It is a huge pool of intelligence which is yet to be tapped to its full potential. If proper guidance and professional counselling are provided, the future generation can turn the country into the resource of professionals, scientists, artists, sportspersons, researchers, etc., and take the nation to another level in the world.