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CAREER COUNSELLING PROGRAM IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM AT HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STAGE

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Abstract: *Guidance and education together are the boon for students to follow their dream career and become successful. Dream careers of students also become reality when they seek help of career guidance while having their school education. Career counselling program at secondary and higher secondary level provides a broad idea of the world of work. It supports students' career aspiration in terms of enabling them to explore numerous career options and choose one dream career based on their ability and skills. For attaining this purpose, school curriculum needs to include career content at higher secondary level. Because curriculum is the totality of scholastic and co-scholastic experiences gained by the students during the entire process of education. Integration of career content in school curriculum creates a platform for resolving career-related issues and provides information related to career choices as well as career developmental tasks. Therefore, career counselling should be included in the school curriculum at higher secondary school stage. The present paper suggests different ways of blending career counselling in school curriculum.*

Keywords: *Career Counselling Program, School Curriculum, Higher Secondary School Stage.*

Introduction

Today's world of rapid development in terms of knowledge, economy and automated labour market, students are experiencing uncertainty in deciding about career and planning their future. They must learn more about life skills and the world of work. While developing life skills for better livelihood and building successful career, we have to focus on the importance and the benefits of integrating career lessons in the school curriculum to help students develop the proper employability skills, interview skills & thinking skills as they are the most important building blocks for our future career. School curriculum nowadays needs more emphasis on developing such skills in students to strengthen their ability to meet the needs and demands of the present society and to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of world of work. They must develop the ability to align their life and career decision with their age,

developmental stage, and life goals involved in career development process through-out the career life span. For this purpose, career counselling program must be introduced at higher secondary school stage through integrating career content in the school curriculum with academic lessons. It must be focused on developing such abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that bridges the gap between school life and career life while taking into consideration the psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills. Career counselling program must include training to build the capacity of students to make right career decisions and take actions that will enable them to cope with managing their conflicts related to career choices and lives in a healthy and productive manner resulting in positive impact on career life span as well as their lives. Lack of career guidance and counselling leads to increasing number of less skilled and unemployed professionals.

Current Scenario of Career Counselling in Schools

India has the most around 315 million student population in the world and matching that huge number of students there is the availability of career opportunities too. However, about 90% of these jobs require a specific set of skills and expertise for which scoring 90% or even 99% isn't enough (Samal, 2013). Additionally, there are burden of parents' aspirations for their kids, mismatch of the suitable job and individual and lack of career counselling adds-up to an individual missing out on a career path in which they can truly achieve greatness. And they end up in a rat race of which they never even want to enter. As a result today devastating number of engineers are unemployed, and many poor skilled doctors run a clinic like a shop. Who can say that these students could be a better painter or may be pilot or something else they deserve the most if someone had guided them when it required the most.

Recommendations of different commissions with special reference to NEP-2020

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) emphasized the diversified curriculum through vocational courses at higher secondary levels. One of the recommendations given by Kothari Commission Report reads that "At the higher secondary stage the pattern of education should be such that it will enable the students to acquire proficiency in some vocational aspect so that they can get an opportunity to get self-employment." Later, the National Policy of Education (1986), recommended vocationalisation, by introducing Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW) as a separate subject in higher secondary classes and vocational degree courses at higher education level. It emphasizes the development of potentialities of every child in the school is required for proper utilization of the vast human resource for national development. Now, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 garnered the required attention on vocational education in the present era of

innovation and development. The policy focuses on bringing vocational education into mainstream education, as recommended by previous commissions on education over the years.

Importance of Career Counselling Program at higher secondary stage

A major turning point in adolescent's life involves the career choice that they make while in higher secondary school. A large number of career options are available these days to the students, making it a difficult task for the youngster to make a mature choice. Moreover, their vocational choices are certainly influenced by many social and environmental factors like sex, age, rural and urban background. Other than that psychological factors like intelligence, personality, achievement, motivation, interest, aptitude, self-concept, academic achievement etc. also have influence on career choices of an individual. Lack of awareness of vocational opportunities leads to wastage of talent and time among the adolescents of country. Thus, career selection is an exclusively intellectual process in which various possibilities are sorted out in a logical manner.

Ways of blending career counselling in school curriculum at higher secondary stage

Course contents can become much more interesting to students when they see practically by experiencing them. It gives an idea of how these practical knowledge and skills can be applied in the workplace, especially it contributes to their skillful and successful future job. For making learning more skillful and based on real life situation, we can integrate career counselling program in school curriculum. It can be fulfilled by blending career related activities in course content of the school curriculum. The following points should be taken care of while integrating career counselling in school curriculum:

- **Blending career counselling by matching-up academic lessons with the counselling sessions**

Instead of organizing career counselling programs once in a year it would be great to blend career counselling practices in school academic curriculum. The career lessons includes real life experiences and live examples of work environment rather than providing only basic theories and their abstract information. The content of career counselling should consist of a variety of skill development workshops and useful talks by local people or guests sharing their experience about world of work. The answer of questions like- How does the content fit into the world of work? What behaviors are demonstrated when using these contents in the world of work? What skills are developed by learning and applying these contents can be answered through the blended school curriculum.

- **Finding content areas for integration**

Content areas such as career exploration, career information, career planning, deciding career pathway, career goal setting, exposure to real world of work etc. can be included in school curriculum. Initiation of conversation based on career related topics gives an opportunity to explore problematic area of career decision making mostly faced by the students. A discussion made by the career counsellor in the classroom helps in finding content area for integration of career counselling program in school curriculum.

- **Educating and training the school teachers for career counselling**

School teachers can discover a logical place to collaborate with the career counsellors in school environment. The curriculum alignment becomes more fruitful when school counsellors engage in conversations with teachers about career counselling lessons. Training a teacher for career counselling helps in regularizing the practice which impact the students' decision making process about their career.

- **Organizing skill development workshops**

The teachers or school counsellors can organize skill development workshops which helps

them in gaining real experience by doing it. It would make them more practical and skilled professionals.

- **Exploring job opportunities, interview skills, teaching employability**

By organizing career fairs school counsellor can provide opportunity to explore different career related information. A small talk can be initiated by the school teachers/counsellors. Because an interaction with person from society of different professions can make a difference in students' thought about their choice of career and they get real life experience of world of work.

Activities for blending career counselling content in school curriculum: The purpose of career counselling in schools will be achieved if it will be blended in school curriculum. Some techniques with sample activities have been discussed below.

Brainstorming techniques

Brainstorming techniques are very effective way of interacting to the individuals. It requires intensive and freewheeling discussions which encourage every member to generate creative ideas and solutions of a common problems. It allows students to think out of the box and evaluate the pros and cons of each idea. In brainstorming techniques, group activity such as Dice-breaker and Storm the Whiteboard can be used for rapport building.

Objectives: The main objective of this activity is to build a relationship between the counsellor and the counselee. It also helps in enhancing qualities like communication skills, positive attitudes, and self-confidence.

Activity I: Dice-breaker

Instructional Directions: Students will be grouped into 6 or more in teams. A dice will be provided for playing the game. A template of having questions in 6-parts (each for 1-6 numbers on dice) related to their hobbies/interests etc. will be provided. Each group will get a turn to roll the dice and what numbers come on dice, they will have to

answer all the questions of that part. Each team will get only 10 minutes for writing the answers. At last everyone will read their answers in front of the class.

Activity II: Storm the whiteboard

Instructional Directions: Divide the class into 3- teams. Each of them will line up behind one student who will stand at the whiteboard with a marker. There will be a time limit of 10 minutes for the completion of every round. It can be repeated in 4-5 rounds. Call out a category (occupational role, jobs, etc.) and the first students will have to write down something on the board about that particular given category. Then, they will pass the marker to the next person and go to the back of their line. At the end of the time, the team with the most number of ideas or words will be the winner.

Discussions

Discussion is the best way of sharing knowledge and ideas within groups. It practises problems solving, listening and communication skills. Activity practises under discussion for career counselling can be like SWOT analysis and JOHARI window for exploring personality of the counselee by the counsellor. Open house discussion will be helpful in sharing and exploring each-other's interest areas among the group members.

Objectives: Teacher/Counsellor will try to know the strengths and weaknesses of students/ counselee. Students will be able to explore their self-efficacy as well as each-others dream job. Students will be able to identify the pros and cons of different careers.

Activity I: SWOT Analysis(Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats)

Instructional Directions: First of all the teacher or counsellor will explain the meaning and purpose of the activity. The template of SWOT analysis will be used for the purpose. Then template will be distributed to the students. All the students will be asked to write their Strengths, Weaknesses,

Opportunities and Threats in the provided answer sheet. The students will be provided enough time to think and write their responses. Then all the responses will be collected from the students.

Activity II: JOHARI Window

Instructional Directions: First of all the teacher or counsellor will explain the meaning and purpose of the activity. Then a template having JOHARI window will be distributed to the students. The teacher/counsellor will ask them to write the answer/response to the questions given in the template. Give students enough time to think for writing their responses. At last teacher/ counsellor will collect all the responses from the students.

Activity III: Open House Discussion

Instructional Directions: Students will be grouped into 2-houses. An open house discussion will be started by the teacher or counsellor by providing career related topics like dream job, dream role etc. Each members will have the opportunity to discuss their interests as well as fear involved in their dream career/job.

Activity and Role Plays

It gives the opportunity to act their dream role by students. It is more like becoming active and participative through these activities. It helps in increasing empathy for others' work and their point of view as well as make a clear picture of their dream job.

Objectives: Teacher/Counsellor will try to explore students' dream jobs. Students will be able to explore their self-efficacy as well as each-others dream job and responsibilities involved in a career. Students will be able to identify the pros and cons of different careers.

Activity I: I am the Best

Instructional Directions: The students will perform individually. They will be asked to act a

character which is based on their dream career roles/role model. They will get enough time to think and perform. Dress-code of the career, unique identification code or other symbolic objects will be the criteria of judging the performance. The students will try to be the best at their dream roles.

Activity II: Fancy Dress Walk

Instructional Directions: Students select a theme based on their dream job. They will prepare a list of responsibilities involved in their dream job. They will prepare an outfit/objects related to their dream job with available resources. Then they will walk in the class and others will guess. After that they will explain the responsibilities involved in that career.

Group Work

Group work maximizes student input. It allows students interactions with each other and enhance ability of team building and team work.

Objectives: Students will be able to collect information about world of work. Students will be able to clarify their doubts about their career dreams. Students will be able to know the real picture of different career.

Activity I: Organizing career fair

Instructional Directions: Teacher/counsellor will organize a career fair with the help of other teachers as well as students. It be notified in advance, so that students can note their queries. Time and venue should be very clear in the notice. Career fair should cover all types of jobs and occupations. It must be attractive and informative.

Activity II: Career talks- Josh talks

Instructional Directions: The students will ask to interview session with one/more person from their family or society. They can name it as career-talks or josh-talks to make it interesting. The interview schedule will be structured and prepared by the students with the help of teacher/counsellor. The question will be based on real work

experiences and problem faced by that person in his/her career-span. After completion of interview process, students will present their project in the class.

Activity III: A to Z Antakshari

Instructional Directions: Students will be grouped into teams. The game will start with alphabet "A". One student will come up with career related skills that start with alphabet A and write on the blackboard. Rest of the students will guess the career name which requires that particular skill. Then antakshari will start and goes on until the time will up.

Activity IV: Job Description Adjectives

Instructional Directions: In this career exploration activity the students will write adjectives describing their dream's job on paper and make it like sticker. Then place the adjectives on their clothes. When every student will have their work done, they will walk around in the room and find others with similar adjectives. Paired those students who have the similar adjectives and form a group. They will be assigned assignment to explore different information about their dream job together and discuss in the class.

Benefits of blending career counselling in school curriculum

- **Making decisions about future life roles:** To recognize and understand about one's talents and abilities for survival in the world of work.
- **Matching suitable person to suitable job:** To make desired opportunities available for suitable candidates which in turn developing positive thinking for removal of undesirable traits and conflicts of individuals.
- **Valuing life and grow as a powerful identity:** To enhance human happiness by enabling them more productive and

powerful, attain valuable lesson and later eliminate adverse effect of problems during career development.

- **Adjusting with the trend of new normal:** To transform one's personality and develop self-efficacy, self-directed and self-motivated. So everyone can develop as an independent and confident person to achieve the ultimate goal of life.

Conclusion

Rigorous practice of career counselling services in school curriculum helps in preparing individuals for sustainability and career development from early stage of schooling. It recognizes and helps to understand about one's talents and abilities for survival in the world of work. Proper and continuous procedure of career counselling develops an optimistic and positive thinking among young professionals for removal of conflicts and stress about the work place. It develops problem-solving ability which later eliminate adverse effect of problems during career development and make individuals more productive. Moreover, it enable individuals to be self-directed and self-motivated. Hence career counselling practices should be started from early stage of schooling through incorporating career counselling in school curriculum and co-scholastic activities.

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