

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

One of the most pervasive influences on the direction of vocational guidance concepts has been the steadily broadening emphasis which has expanded from providing assistance with specific vocational decisions to include concern with facilitating vocational development. The latter emphasis has been broadened from a narrow concern for working with youth only at the time when they are required to take specific vocational decisions at school leaving and initial entry into labour market to giving assistance at all life stages right through the childhood and adolescent years which are critical in career decision making. Similarly, the thrust of vocational guidance processes has deepened in terms of the social and psychological dimensions with which these processes are concerned.

In a country like India, where vocational guidance is in its infancy, study throwing light on the vocational development of adolescents has useful implications as information pertaining to process of career development could provide useful guidelines to the curriculum planners and guidance workers to provide experiences suited to the needs of the students and society at large. Moreover, the information regarding career development of students will not only prove useful for the students in helping them to make suitable educational and vocational choices, but will also enable the teachers and

guidance workers to identify developmental competencies and inadequacies in the individuals to aid them in their greater self-development. This point of view emerges from the focus of vocational guidance to create in the individual the ability to profit and grow personally from vocational experience. Placing of career process concepts within the context of mental health, general growth and development is the contribution of this point of view. Analysing vocational development as one aspect of overall development, Super (1957) said that

"Like social development; emotional development and intellectual development, vocational development has both distinctive characteristics which make focusing on it worthwhile and common characteristics which reveal it as one way in which the general development of the individual manifests itself".

Thus, we have to place career development in the total personality structure as "work is not a separate part of life, it is a part and parcel with the entire developmental pattern" (Allen & Merrill 1968). Therefore, study of vocational or career development of individuals is useful not only to have better workers in the society but to have better citizens of a productive society.

The 'cross roads' conception of vocational choice having been replaced by developmental view (Ginzberg et al 1951; Super 1942, 1953), puts emphasis on how individuals make vocational choices rather than why they make them. Elaborating on this view, Super (1957) emphasized on the continuity of the choice process over a period of time and characterized it as

"a process far removed from reality in early youth and involving reality in increasing degrees with increasing age". Similar viewpoints were presented by Dysinger (1950), Beilin (1955) and Nelson (1962) who also put forth that choice is the result of an individual's past history and development and is, therefore, part of a larger developmental scheme. Jordaan (1955) emphasized that choice of a vocation may look sudden but the process by which an individual arrives at such a decision is not. It may be unexpected in the sense that it is not which one may have expected the person to select, because the influences which have been at work over a period of many years, can not easily be observed. Every vocational decision has a history and, to understand it, one needs to understand the events, experiences and decisions which have gone by. Thus, the process by which an individual arrives at the choice of a vocation can not be understood in terms of a single factor. It is, as Forer (1953) has explained, "the culmination of the individual's unique psychological development."

Thus, for many years the recognition has been clear that vocational guidance interventions must necessarily be designed in terms of the total context of psychological characteristics and social background of individuals. Career development has been described "as the interaction of psychological, sociological, economic or chance factors that shape the career or sequence of occupations, jobs or positions that

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individuals hold during their lives" (National vocational guidance association 1973). In this broadened view of occupational choice, concept of career development and the role of various factors that influenced this development, became popular. Interest in determining the maturity of individuals pertaining to such aspects, which have implications for later vocational choice, entry and adjustment in the occupation, came to be recognized. Super, emphasizing the continuity of the vocational development process, identified vocational maturity as a key concept and defined it "as the degree of development; the place reached on the continuum of vocational development from exploration to decline" (Super 1957). An individual's vocational or career maturity reflects his "readiness to make vocational decisions, called for by society, revealed by method of coping with developmental tasks, which are occupational in nature" (Super 1964). Thus, career maturity has come to be used as a prerequisite to the ability to make a wise occupational choice. And, if maturity represents development along a continuum, the greater the maturity, greater is the likelihood that individual is able to cope with developmental tasks called for by society.

Super (1955, 1960) identified dimensions of vocational maturity some of which were later modified by Crites (1961, 1965, 1969) in terms of career choice attitudes and competencies. Thus, one's attitudes towards work, competencies and

skills to deal with career decision making activities are the dimensions of career maturity proposed by Grites (1965). Students, who have developed maturity of attitudes and competencies in career decision making, may be better adjusted during the transition from school to work. Past performance is a powerful predictor of future performance. This proposition would imply that those individuals who are more mature in their decision making at exploratory stage would be better adjusted (more satisfied and successful) in their initial years of employment than those who were less mature (Grites 1976). As predicted in career development theory, the career attitudes and competencies are related to the outcomes of coping with the problems of preparing for, and progressing in, the world of work.

Attitudes towards work in our society have been changing since ancient times. In our earlier society, work ~~had~~ the meaning of a 'calling', which a man was called upon to perform under the divine law of 'Karma'. The philosophy of action, expounded in Chapter II of the Gita, enjoined on the man "only the right to work; but none to the fruit there of" and "do thy duty as prescribed: for action for duty's sake is superior to inaction" (Purohit Swami). The Law of Karma made people content with their work and status, for they could expect to be rewarded in this life and the next as well (Gulati 1973). Women viewed work with a particular dislike, except agricultural or labour women, no woman could ever be

imagined to cross the threshold of her house to go out to work, but gradually, changes came about, particularly with the coming of independence, provision of educational facilities for all, development of industries, transport and communications. Attitudes towards work changed and work became the means of economic reward, status and security and those who did not work were looked down upon by society as parasites. But, by and large, our people are still shrouded in the 'law of Karma' and 'faith in destiny'. Inadequacies in attitudes towards work and incompetencies in career decision making, which become evident during the high school years, result in confusion, insecurity, frustration, unemployment and, eventually, to vocational maladjustment, leading to dissatisfaction and unfulfillment in life.

Understanding of various factors within and outside the individual, which aid or inhibit normal vocational growth, could help the educational planners, teachers, and guidance workers to provide such experiences to students at various stages in their school life, which would enhance the process of career development. Identification of various socio-psychological factors which facilitate or depress career decision making attitudes and skills, could help students understand their own changing and developing self and, how various intrinsic and extrinsic influences could become assets, or set limitations to their career development, during higher secondary school years. The aim of the study is to

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identify some such factors in the individuals socio-psychological environment which facilitate career decision making at various stages in school life. The guidance workers could use the information in making the students aware from the beginning how they can utilize their resources and overcome their limitations. They can be helped to set realistic vocational goals to avoid wastage of efforts in useless shifts from job to job leading to frustration. Youth in India, in the absence of proper attitudes and competencies to deal with career problems, are adding to the unemployment figures in the country. The number of jobless registered has touched 72.7 lakhs in April, 1973 and educated unemployed borne on registers of employment exchanges in December 1972 number 33 lakhs. One can imagine the numbers that must have increased by now. Thus, for proper utilization of manpower resources, and to avoid large scale wastage and stagnation in the country, it is essential that capabilities, strengths and weaknesses are channelised in the proper direction from the beginning and students are able to relate realistically to the requirements and opportunities of the working world.

The study would also provide an understanding into the pattern of career development of students especially during the exploratory stage. During the junior and higher secondary school years, students undergo a variety of educational, vocational and personal experiences, which have repercussion for later development of vocational behaviours. What is the

pattern of this development? Whether school leaving stages are marked by greater maturity than earlier grades? What are the factors which will predict career maturity at these grade levels? The study attempts to provide answer to these questions. Findings of this study are likely to facilitate understanding the process of career decision making in the Indian situation which will, in turn, make it possible to improve education and guidance in the country.

Various longitudinal as well as cross sectional studies (Super 1960, Super, Kowalski & Gotkin 1967, Crites 1969, Gribbons and Lohnes 1964, 1968, 1969), have highlighted the role of factors such as, intelligence, social class and personality in career development. The present investigation aims to study the relationship of some of these factors with Career Choice Attitude and Competencies dimensions of Career Maturity. Are some individuals more ready than others to formulate realistic vocational goals or plans? Do they have better knowledge of self or world-of-work due to their better mental capacity, differing sex or higher socio-economic status? What personality characteristics at each stage are related to having more mature career attitudes and competencies? An attempt to answer some of these questions is made in the study which may contribute to the understanding of career development of higher secondary students in the Indian context. Identification of correlates of career maturity will also facilitate diagnosis of clients problems in career guidance and

counseling and would help in the implementation of effective guidance & counseling interventions. Moreover the role of factors in terms of sex and grade level differences would provide the guidance worker an understanding into the differential influence of these factors at various stages of development. With such an understanding developmental deficiencies could be identified and proper and timely help could be provided to the students by way of guidance programmes and interventions planned for boys and girls at different grade levels. The students could also be helped to understand the role of personal-social factors which have a bearing on their acquiring maturity in career decision making and, also, how they operate in their career development.

In order to understand, to evaluate and to predict ongoing vocational behaviour, it will be helpful to know the factors which enhance or inhibit the process of vocational growth. This information can provide the counsellor an insight into the developmental nature of career choice and how a number of factors set limitations or become assets for the client in this process. It is especially helpful to know what is typical and expected in the Indian context. Hence the major objective of the present investigation is to study the relationship of career maturity expressed in terms of Career Choice Attitudes and Competencies with selected

Socio-psychological variables in order to identify those variables which will predict career maturity at school stages VIII, X & XII.