



Role of College Libraries in Career Guidance

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Abstract

This paper discusses about the role of college libraries in career guidance choosing a right career is a crucial task in the modern world as multidisciplinary professional paths are available in today's job market. There is need to make an awareness among the college students about the different array of paths available to them to make a right choice. College libraries should perform this function for the youth. As they are serving the young generation.

Key Words: College, Libraries, Career, Guidance, Library Information and Science

1. Introduction

The choice of career is possibly one of the most critical decisions of a person's life as it shapes one's future and determines one's lifestyle. Career is not a chance, it is a choice but most often it is made on the basis of chance and not by choice. Career is defined as the way of making a livelihood. It denotes the profession or vocation adopted by a person. A good career improves the standard of living of the person and also the members of dependent family. Once a person enters into adulthood he has to make a choice about his career. Sometimes the decision is made for him much earlier by somebody else - by his parents or other relatives. Yet times the career decision is influenced by existing conditions in the society. In a communist society the state makes the decision. In an underdeveloped country the choice of career is mostly by chance. In a rural economy too people are not aware of different careers and how to prepare themselves to reach certain positions. Earlier career guidance was provided only in schools but now the need for it in higher education too realized.

Choosing a career can be very satisfying if you have made the right choice. Like, the famous adage goes, if you choose the job you love, you don't have to work a single day in your life. On the other hand, a wrong decision can leave you wishing that you had trodden a different path.

College libraries can play a vital role in career guidance. Libraries ought to extend their support in all spheres of knowledge and by providing career information in the library; it will be helping the users to have an aim in their lives. As a quality career resource center, library can play a major role in guiding and directing students in making more suitable career choices. Many libraries in Western countries are much ahead of us in providing career information to their users.

2. Career Development an Overview

Career development helps people to focus on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. It helps them to understand the labour market and education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career development tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career development is important in institutions of higher education because it helps the students to have a clear idea of career objectives, persist in their academic goals, gain career-related work experience, and find employment in their chosen fields and also to inculcate interest in life-long learning. A good quality guidance and better information, can help most students to make correct career decisions when they complete their graduation. The massive structural changes that are taking place in the world of work at global level mean that high quality career guidance is important than ever before.

3. Related Terminology

There are many different terms used across the world in the field of career guidance. For the purpose of this study each of the terms is defined below.

➤ Career

According to Handbook of Career counseling by UNESCO (2002) "career is the interaction of work roles and other life roles over a person's lifespan including both paid and unpaid work in an individual's life. People create career patterns as they make decisions about education, work, family and other life roles."

➤ Career Awareness Service

According to Jalaja and Dineshan Koovakkai (1997) "Career Awareness Service is a sort of reference service. It provides information regarding a particular job on request. In this sense Career Awareness Service is a Current Awareness Service. It alerts the potential candidates, to the current employment opportunities in various sectors."

➤ Career Counseling

"Career counseling helps individuals to achieve greater self-awareness, develop a life/work direction, increase their- understanding of learning and work opportunities and become more self-directed in managing learning, work and transitions. Career counseling facilitates the acquisition of skills, interests, beliefs, values, work habits and personal qualities enabling each participant to create a satisfying life in constantly changing cultural, social and work environments." UNESCO (2002)

➤ **Career Development**

Career development "is the total constellation of psychological, sociological, education, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to influence the nature and significance of work in the total lifespan of any given individual" (Maddy Berstein, C, 2000).

➤ **Career Exploration**

Dictionary of education (1973) defines career exploration as 'investigative activities or inquiries undertaken inside and outside the classroom to search out the necessary information about a future occupational or professional interest or goal.'

➤ **Career Guidance**

According to International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (1992) "Career guidance refers to assistance given to individuals, or groups of individuals, in addressing problems related to occupational and life choices, offering full opportunities for personal development and work satisfaction. Career guidance is a continuous process, the fundamental principles of which is the same irrespective of the age of the individuals involved, and with due regard for the characteristics of those individuals and their opportunities."

➤ **Career Guidance Services**

World Bank (2003) in its report mentions that 'Information, guidance and counseling services (hereafter referred to as 'career guidance services') comprise services intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. These services are an integral part of lifelong learning (World Bank, 2002) and may include services in schools, in universities and colleges, in public employment services, in companies, and in the voluntary and private sectors. The services may be on an individual or group basis, and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including web-based services). They include career information (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counseling interviews, career education programs and work taster programs.'

➤ **Career Information**

According to Canadian Career Development Foundation (2002) "Career Information is information related to the world of work that can be useful in the process of career development, including educational, occupational and psycho-social information related to working (e.g., job search, availability of training, the nature of work, the status of workers in different occupations)."

➤ **Career Information Service**

According to Jalaja and Dineshan Koovakkai (1997) "Career Information Service refers to that sort of information service which is aimed at providing the occupational information such as entry qualification and skills, initial training requirements, employment situation, job content etc., to those who are in search of a suitable employment."

➤ Career Planning

Career planning refers to the experiences provided, students, both group and individual, which are designed to help them understand, analyze and select a personal career goal. A definition of this kind suggests the input of the total information, counseling and placement services of a guidance program.

Dictionary of Education (1973) defines Career planning as 'the development by the student, with the assistance of counselors and teachers, of well - considered steps in his progression toward entry into a specific job or profession a process which unfolds at varying rates for different individuals.'

➤ Counseling

Handbook of Career Counseling defines counseling as "actively listening to an individual's story and communicating understanding, respect and empathy; clarifying goals and assisting individuals with the decision-making process. Counseling is a mutual relationship between a counselor (a professionally trained helper) and a client (a consumer of counseling services)." (UNESCO, 2002)

➤ Guidance

According to The new Encyclopedia Britannica (2002) "Guidance is the process of helping an individual to discover and develop his educational vocational and psychological potentialities and thereby to achieve an optional level of personal happiness and social usefulness."

Bhatnagar (1966) mentioned that guidance services have four functions to perform.

1. Helping the students solve their problems, understand and interpret their environment including its events, people and things correctly and take correct decision and make right choices.
2. Helping every student in such a way that he is able to achieve maximum satisfaction in life and contributes his best to the progress of the society.
3. Helping the students in such a way that they are able to develop their potentialities which contribute to their future adjustment in life's situations.
4. Helping each and every student in developing his physical, mental, emotional, social and ethical, i.e. every aspect of his life to the fullest.

4. Career Guidance in Higher Education Institutions

Educators are constantly searching for better ways to serve students - to achieve academic and technical skills; helping them to understand themselves and their direction in life; to meeting their emotional, social and mental needs. Changing nature of society today requires a constant updating of skills and knowledge through a flexible process of lifelong learning. The need for a coordinated and comprehensive career guidance program has grown as a result of the greater variety of jobs and skills required in modern society and greater awareness of how widely people differ in interests and abilities. For the overall development of personality of individual, one must have self-knowledge so that he can understand his own abilities, aptitudes, intelligence and personality in order that he can choose his own path. After the completion of graduation, most of the individuals find themselves at the cross roads. Having right choices in the selection of courses from the beginning will help one to get proper employment and to achieve success in life. Hence career guidance in higher educational institutions is the need of the hour. A

systematic career guidance and information services may result in a drastic reduction of the wastage that occurs at many levels of educational and occupational ladder. This also helps to reduce dissatisfaction and frustration in students.

To face the ground realities the University Grant Commission (UGC) (India) has given the green signal to a plethora of value-added, job-oriented diploma programmes in colleges and varsities. Higher education institutions welcomed UGC's project and started many vocational courses to meet the employment requirement in the country. Career Guidance cell is established in colleges to provide career advisory service to students. Guidance cell help students to clarify career goals, to understand the world of work and develop career management skills; It also provide personal advice, guidance or counseling to assist with decisions about initial courses of study, courses of vocational training, further education and training, initial job choice etc.

5. Role of Libraries in Career Guidance

Libraries can play a much important role in imparting career guidance. In formal education, library is described as 'heart of education'. The library system in higher education is committed to provide independent learning environment to student. From the book houses the libraries have gone to an individual residence to share the shelves of knowledge. Therefore, it can be inferred that the success of career guidance in educational institutions depends upon the efficient library system. Therefore the system of education has to take care of strengthening the library system and thus disseminate career information.

Librarians with their abilities in knowledge organization and dissemination skills can play a profound and enduring role in encouraging and assisting young. People to follow their hearts and to pursue their dreams. In developing countries like India college librarians can play a major role in the career development of the youth who comes to the library for guidance and support in their study and to prepare for their future career opportunities.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, Library is the logical location for the storage of most of the information needed to provide career information service. As new occupations are created in areas such as information technology and multimedia and as existing jobs change, previously reliable sources of information need to be re-evaluated. Better and timelier ways need to be found for young people and those who advise them to learn about the realities of work and jobs. In such a labour market career guidance is important in helping young people to understand themselves; in developing the tools that they need to understand available work opportunities; and developing the skills that they need to link themselves to these opportunities. Rapid developments in information technology such as World Wide Web and multimedia have created exciting new possibilities for sharing information and providing career guidance The modern college libraries are well equipped with information and also they have the means to access information, so they are in a better position in assisting and guiding the students at college level and university level.

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