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STRETCHING THE ROLE OF 'SELF' IN WISE CAREER CHOICES

Saba Anees

Assistant Professor, Al-Barkaat Institute of Education, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, Affiliated to Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar University (A State University), Agra, India

ABSTRACT

At its beginning the concept of guidance was limited only to vocations. The main purpose of guidance was to minimize juvenile delinquency which was an emerging problem at that time. The basic idea was to divert the teenage energy towards a direction; to give direction and meaning to their lives. Hence, to make them able to understand their needs, skills & abilities and thus making them able to realize of what they are capable of doing. Focus was to make 'wise' choice among the available ones.

Career guidance is a branch of guidance that is limited to the sphere of career only. It makes an individual able to make 'wise' choice among available careers as per his/her field of interest and qualification. Present-day competitive world has made it very difficult to grab hold of a career and to continue it as well. Most of the times, students do not realize their aptitude, their needs and their selves before making career decisions. Present paper signifies the importance of understanding self in striving for a better career option. The paper highlights the pre-requisites that should be considered prior to make any career choice. It also uncovers the principles set behind the development of self and various methods involved in the measurement of self. Considering the obscurity involved in the measurement of self, the paper also bring to light various psychological and social barriers restricting the revelation of self in a human being. At the end, some career development approaches and recommended career choices have also been explained to assist the students to go for 'wise career choices' in their future endeavors.

KEYWORDS: *Career Choices, Self and Wise*

INTRODUCTION

The term 'Career Guidance' is defined in several ways by different organizations. The OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) Career Guidance Policy review defines it as "services and activities 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."

The term Vocational Guidance is getting replaced with the term career guidance. Vocational guidance is focused upon the choice of occupation and is distinguished from educational guidance, which focuses upon choices of study-Career Guidance brings the two together and stresses the interaction between learning and work.

Career guidance is a process by which individuals are assisted in the making of their lives and career to better adapt to the environment. Following steps are involved in career guidance:

- Individual is first helped to recognize his abilities, interests and needs by administering standardized tests.

- After appraisal of the individual, he is now motivated to face the realities of life without being frustrated or overwhelmed.

- Necessary information is provided to the individual in the third step where he can make his career and how. In this way a harmony between him and the outer world is brought about.

- In the last step the individual is guided to find a placement after completion of course or training.

- There are four important characteristics included in the process

- It is a process of knowing oneself.

- It is a process of knowing the relationship between him and the environment i.e., what he expects from the environment and vice versa.

- It is the process of utilizing the potentialities in the best manner possible, making decision about oneself.

- Self-effort in the direction of goal.

Pre-Requisites of Career Guidance

The main purpose or aim of career guidance is to ensure "right person to the right job". Therefore, there must be some pre-requisites for career guidance. Before providing or receiving any kind of guidance two steps are considered as pre-requisites of it.

- Development of the self-concept

- Measurement of self-understanding

The term of self-concept came into focus through the studies of Rogers, Snygg& Combs etc. The Humanist view of Carl Roger's Personality Theory (1959) gave a new boom to the idea and significance of 'self-concept, self-worth, self-image and ideal self' for becoming a fully functioning person. Central to Rogers' personality theory is the notion of self or self-concept. This is defined as "the organized, consistent set of perceptions and beliefs about oneself.". It is all about 'know thyself'- modern version of old Greek motto.

Guidance process can only be made meaning if it is successful to build a strong self-image and self-concept within an individual. It is a start as well as an end of the process. Therefore, understanding of self or self -understanding is necessary for career guidance. In order to build a strong self-image and self-concept the individual seeking guidance must tell all his strengths and weaknesses to the guidance counselor and the counselor then must help him in knowing his needs, interests and abilities.

Development of the Self-Concept

According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, human baby is born with a few instincts and reflexes such as sucking, looking, reaching and grasping. Piaget named these abilities or potentials as 'schemas'. However, as a child

grows, with the interaction of physical and social environment, he is able to form different schemas, resulting in changes and modification in his cognitive structure. The task of such adaptation is carried out through the processes of assimilation and accommodation.

Similarly when a human baby is born he is not able to understand himself. The consciousness about oneself develops in an individual sometimes suddenly, sometimes slowly and sometimes never. To some it is electrifying and deeply satisfying; to others it is depressing and when it occurs it is the beginning of real self-understanding.

The process of self-understanding is mostly slow and relatively unconscious involving some degree of emotional maturity and readiness. The process makes an individual able to understand what he wants to be and what he is in reality. It also enables him to have a clear concept of himself, his surroundings, his responsibilities and various opportunities in the environment for self-development.

Following Are Basic Tools for the Development of Self-Concept

- **Elicited From Life Experiences and Dissonant from Age Aspect:** Real self-concept does not have any specific age to be developed. But in most of the individuals it develops during the period of adolescents. However it is speedily developed in gifted and youth making them able to realize their own strengths and weaknesses at an early age so that they can be fully developed. More versatile life experience leads to early development of self-identity and self-concept.

- **Self-Decisions Develop A Realistic Self-Concept**: The main purpose of guidance is to help the individual in solving his own problems. For this, he has to make choices among the various alternative available for which it is mandatory to understand himself and his needs and the choices available to him. But it is also important to note that while doing so, he must not develop the feeling of self-centered - the most important person in the world or the feeling of being worthless to himself and to others.

- **Gathering of Information is Needed**: For the development of self-concept it is needed that one should have all the necessary information about himself as an aid to clear self-understanding. As per the prevailing tradition the school counselor with special training in the methods and techniques of guidance together with other school personnel collects necessary information about pupils and record them. After that he, with other school teacher and the pupil discuss all the necessary facts and finding and helps the pupil in understanding himself.

- **Sociogram**

- Sociogram is a new method of developing self-understanding among pupils. It is a technique through which the entire class can be divided into small groups of students and through some questioning technique the 'most liked', 'most disliked' etc. categorization can be done. This technique makes the student to realize why I am not liked in the class and vice versa.

- **Introspection**

- Introspection is a relatively new term emerged in 18th century to represent looking inwards acts of one or self-observation in different conscious mental and emotional states. This makes the student to think over the philosophical aspects behind each of the action as well as to make required corrections in the explicit behaviour of one's personality.

- **Reflection:** Reflection denotes the valuable perception of a person about something. Talking in context of self, it signifies how does a person view himself in any social situation? It is considered as the highest form of learning subsequent to memory and understanding level. It provides assistance in the process of situational analysis and screening things from different perceptions.

MEASUREMENT OF SELF-UNDERSTANDING

The measurement of self-understanding is however a very difficult task. As it is very private and deep and cannot be completely communicated to other. Several attempts are made to disclose the core personality so that guidance may be based on individual's nature.

- **Autobiography:** Through these life stories, the student can tell how he sees himself and how the world perceives them and how they perceive the world.

- **Interview:** By providing a non-threatening atmosphere to the students, one can know the student much more than usual. Through interview process the feelings of the student will be expressed more comprehensively.

- **Scales and check-Lists:** The self-concept of students can also be measured through various scales and check lists to measure self-concept available in the market.

- **Clinical Counseling Sessions by Expert:** The clinical psychologist/counselor or therapist may use some psycho analytic batteries including projective tests to assess personality such as the Rorschach and the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), an objective personality test such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), a semi structured test like the Rotter Incomplete Sentence Test, and an intelligence test, usually the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale Revised (WAIS-R) to analyze and find out the implicit behaviour of one's personality, the emotional state of person as well as the mental disorders if exist.

Barriers in Understanding 'Self'

- **Psychological Barriers**

- Securing a meaningful understanding of an individual is not an easy task. Some psychological barriers are always there, especially in young people, which restrict them to reveal what they really are. Some of these psychological barriers are discussed as under:

- **Reluctance to reveal one's real self:** Adolescents always use to hide their real self. They show only that behavior which makes them star icon within their peer group. During this age, their attitude towards life is completely different as they want to build their image or identity totally different from others. They want to be unique and for doing this they usually hide their real self.

- **Problem in Understanding Other Person:** As we know every individual is different from others and every individual behave differently in different stages of life. What an adolescent feel and think is hard to be understand by an adult. Thus, one should keep in his mind the basic principles of adolescent age while understanding an adolescent. The counselor or teacher should be able to put himself/herself sympathetically and intelligently in place of the student. The teacher should not force the individual on those facts which he did not want to disclose. One should respect the privacy of student.

- **Individual Changes:** The most prominent difficulty while dealing adolescent is that their nature is volatile i.e. changing day-to-day. It leads to sudden changes in their data. Whatever data is get today is not applicable tomorrow. Therefore, it is necessary in these cases to collect and maintain cumulative record of their development. This cumulative record may include their school record, their changing interests, their attitudes toward teachers and fellow students and the changes in their personality patterns.

Social Barriers

Large and continuous changes in our society enhance the difficulty of understanding across the generations. Adults and adolescents live in truly different worlds. The role of family, religion, morals, the meaning of work and the philosophy of school all have undergone considerable transformation during this century. Let us discuss these social changes in detail:

- **Family Changes:** Nowadays, traditional joint family gets replaced with nuclear family. In joint family all family members share an intimate relationship with one another. And the child was taught to respect and value each relation. But today, this kind of feeling is almost disappeared from modern families. For this there may be two reasons: firstly, in most of the families both the parents are working and they do not have time to share an intimate relationship with their children; secondly, increased independence of children at an early age results in a decrease in the feeling of need for help or even for association with parents.

- **Religious Beliefs and Morals -Past and Present:** Modern developments in social, economic and industrial life bring a remarkable change in our beliefs, customs and morals as a result of interaction between India and different parts of world. Fast growth of material culture has left the non-material culture far behind. The parameters of good conduct are changing continuously. But young generation has a little concern about these problems of morals and religion or of home and family. The reason behind may be less conscious of youth towards these problem areas and their little sense of moral obligations.

- **The Meaning of Work is Changing:** Social changes in our society are bringing a lot of changes in the meaning of work also. Earlier, work can be understood as an activity which enables an individual to earn his livelihood. But now materialistic approach of people has changed the meaning of work. Previously, peoples were keenly involved in inventing some novel ideas. But today's young people are very lazy and love to be followers rather than being leaders. Hardwork is now replaced with working within comfort zone.

- **The Changing Educational Philosophy:** Earlier educational philosophy was either content centered or teacher centered, but the new educational philosophy places the child at the center of educational process and gave greater importance to the child's development. His needs for personal development, his own interests and desires, are dominant. His impulses for action are of extreme importance and should not be unduly restricted. He should have a large part in decisions regarding what he should do – even regarding what he should study.

Thus, if we wish to understand today's youth, we must first understand his world. The youth and his world are so much a part of each other that they cannot be known separately.

Approaches for Career Choices in Reference to Realization of 'Self'

Trait and Factor Approach

This group of approach emphasized the role of individual's trait in choosing a career. According to this approach, every individual possess some traits that have vocational importance, and these traits commensurate with the job demands.

Therefore, when a counselor assesses the student in the school through psychological measurements, he tries to match thee characteristics with those of the job demands which he had for various jobs and thus provides awareness about it to the student. Thus it is a kind of matching of personality traits of an individual with the requirements of a specific occupation. John Holland was the chief proponent of this approach. His approach of career development is based on the following four assumptions:

- Most of the individuals can be categorized into following six types: realistic, intellectual, artistic, social,enterprising and conventional.(RIASEC)

- Accordingly there can be six kinds of environments: realistic, intellectual, artistic, social,enterprising and conventional.(RIASEC)

- Individual always remain in search of that environment in which they can exercise their skills and abilities & can express their attitudes and values.

- Interaction of one's personality with his environment will decide his behavior.

Some examples of careers and personality types according to Holland	
ADAPTED FROM: HOLLAND, 1985	
Personality Type	**Suitable Careers**
Realistic	Barber, truck driver, draftsperson, machine mechanic
Investigative	Marine scientist, software designer, clinical psychologist, dentist
Artistic	Designer, sculptor, author, actor
Social	Social worker, nurse, judge, priest
Enterprising	Politician, real estate agent, salesman, manager
Conventional	Accountant, receptionist, banker, typist

Figure 1

Developmental Approach

This approach considers individual's development as a reason behind career development. Career Developmental Theorists such as Eli Ginzberg, Donald Super and Linda Gottfredson put forward the idea that occupational development keeps pace with the individual's maturation. Like other aspects of human development, career development is also described in terms of certain stage. Following are some of the stages for career development as described by Donald Super:

- **Growth Stage:** This is the initial stage of childhood, in which the child lives in his world of fantasy. The child's expressions are not rooted in reality. As the process of development continues, with the passage of time, reality orientations become stronger. The child become able to realize that there are different kinds of jobs in which he can perform well. Eventually, during these years rudimentary foundations of the individual's vocational self-concept are laid.

Stages of Career development according to Donald Super
Adapted from: Super, 1957, 1980

Career developmental stage	Approximate age range	Orientations and career developmental tasks
Growth stage	0–14	
Prevocational	0–3	Not oriented to work career or vocation
Fantasy	4–10	Thoughts about career are fantasy-based
Interest	11–12	Likes and dislikes begin to colour thoughts about work
Capacity	13–14	Career thoughts are influenced by ideas of personal ability
Exploration stage	15–24	
Tentative	15–17	Able to express career choices tentatively
Transition	18–21	Choices are increasingly oriented to realities and facts
Trial	22–24	Initial career commitment and first job
Establishment stage	24–44	
Trial	25–30	Job changes could continue as experiences occur
Stabilisation	31–44	Settles into a job and finds stability
Maintenance	45–65	Growth and development within the chosen career area
Decline	65 onwards	Preparation to leave the work force
Deceleration	65–70	Work activity decreases and slows down
Retirement	71 onwards	Leaves the world of work

Figure 2

- **Exploration Stage:** This stage is called the most crucial stage of career development. It is called crucial because it starts simultaneously with the developmental stage of adolescents. As well known, adolescents is a stage in which the children face the problem of identity crisis i.e. answer to the question 'who am I'? This is the right time to introduce students informally with some careers which can help them in finding their self-identity. Such career information can be provided their within school campus or through some other social media etc. Thus, during this stage they became able to realize, on the basis of information provided, that some careers are 'good careers' while others are not.

- **Establishment Stage:** This stage occurs during early adulthood. At this stage the individual actually make a career choice and establishes himself or herself as a worker. However the career decision is actually strongly influenced by the career development taken place during the earlier stages.

- **Maintenance Stage:** It is basically a time of building one's life as a professional in the chosen area through continuous adjustments and efforts to improve one's position.

- **Decline Stage:** During this stage one's outputs as a worker are said to decrease and preparation for retirement starts.

Ginzberg (1951) studied the theories of career and concluded that the occupational choice is a process. He has divided the process of career choice into three stages. These stages or levels are as follows-

- **Fantasy:** Ginzberg stated that the process of career development starts from the birth of a child and it ends with the life of child. It is a life-long process. But the study of career development is possible only from the age of 7. The period of fantasies is the child's age of 11 years.

- **Tentative Choices:** The age of tentative choices ranges from 11-17 years. He divided this stage in to following sub stages:

Interest Stage: At this stage, the child develops his interests. Therefore, it is also known as the interest-stage.

Capacity Stage: After the development of interest stage, the child starts paying attention towards his capacities.

Value Stage: After the capacity stage the child studies his values and analyses. Hence, it is known as value-stage.

Realistic Choices: The age after 17 is known as the age of realistic choice. Ginzberg has again divided realistic choice stage into following three sub stages:

- **Exploration Stage:** At this stage, the child explores various careers first of all. Therefore it is known as exploration stage.

- **Crystallization Stage:** At this stage, the child decides about his likings and decides in which direction he is to move.

- **Specification Stage:** At this last stage, the child adopts the specific group of careers. Therefore, this age is known as the specification stage.

Chance Approach

According to this approach the people enter into a career due to chance and thus the career choice may be directed by an unforeseen factor. Hence, it is impossible to analyses the factors behind any career choice made. The main proponents of this theory are Caplow and Herr Cramer.

CONCLUSIONS

In a country like India where the unemployment rate among youth after graduation is the highest i.e. 16.3% followed by post graduation level which account 14.2% of total unemployment rate among educated youth of India (New York Times Report, 2019) is an alarming phase to put the 'right person to right job'. Amidst to COVID-19 pandemic, where the total unemployment rate reached to 7.11% in 2020 from 5.27% in 2019 (World Bank Report, 2021), the more crucial steps are required towards career choices and decisions for enabling the future generation to cope with unforeseen and uncertain times.

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