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What is “Career”? What is Career Education?

2.1. THE BIRTH OF “CAREER”

Work and career are closely interwoven with human development across almost all cultures. The evolution of work has been influenced by the intermingling of a wide range of social, cultural, and economic forces. In most civilizations, occupations and trades ran in families and occupational skills were transferred to the young by the adults within the family or through professional guilds. The earliest form of career psychology emerged during the

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Industrial Revolution that swept across of Europe, England and America. The focus was on developing systems whereby people’s **traits** and **characteristics** could be identified and matched to suitable jobs. In the past, when the allocation of work roles was grounded upon social and cultural customs, the necessity for this kind of counselling and guidance was perhaps not

required. Today, in certain cultures and economies, the career chooser has before him/her a wide variety of occupational options and opportunities and most members of these cultures enjoy the freedom to select and follow careers of their choice. Since its emergence about a century ago, the field has rapidly developed and grown in the sophistication with which it has supported individuals’ engagement with the world of work.

A key point to be noted is that career manifested itself as an aspect of work in a Western, industrialised context in response to powerful social and economic transformations that were peculiar to those contexts. These cultures give the individual the freedom to follow his or her desires, interests and dreams. The freedom of the individual for self-determination is a deeply cherished and protected value.

In cultures and economies that did not come directly under such influences, human engagement with work has proceeded as it had for centuries earlier. Large sections of the global workforce, including those in the so-called emerging economics, are even today characterised by pre-industrial features and career as it has been portrayed above does not exist in these cultures and economies. Usually, these are cultures that are collectivistic in their organisation where factors other than personal desires influence the individual’s engagement with work. At the same time, the forces of Westernisation and the more recent influence of modernisation and globalization, have been such that the notion of a personal career has become a reality in many more parts of the world. Therefore, although historically, the notion of career has its roots in a Western, individualistic, industrialized context, and was nurtured by a work ethic that promoted freedom of choice, global forces over the years have transported it also to many other cultural and economic locations.

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2.2. THE JIVA APPROACH TO CAREER EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE

The Jiva system of career education was developed by The Promise Foundation, for India based on extensive research and consultation. Jiva means life in almost all Indian languages. The Jiva approach views work and occupation as being deeply integrated with the individual's life as a whole. Work is not seen merely as a job to be done or a livelihood to be earned. It is expressed as an extension of one's life, guided by clearly defined cultural practices.

The rest of this manual is based on the Jiva approach to career education and guidance.

2.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF CAREER

Career has certain distinct characteristics that make it a special kind of work.

2.3.1. Making a choice and exercising the will

Career brings with it the question of choice, decision-making and the exercise of one's will. Presented with numerous opportunities, the career chooser is required to choose between various possibilities and identify the career that he/she wishes to follow. Having made this choice the individual then is required to identify and select the path that will lead to the chosen career. Decision-making however does not end at the crossroads that the individual faces at the point of initiation into the world of work. A career path does not go directly from one point to another. Career goals are not uniform targets that one can reach soon after a career guidance workshop. Opportunities may be lost, failure may occur, circumstances may change. A career path twists and turns often bringing the individual to new crossroads. New career goals emerge when one target has been reached. All through his/her career, the person is required to take decisions and make measured choices. A good career education programme would teach the young person how to make effective decisions all through life.

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2.3.2. Suitability

A career implies specialisation. And specialisation requires suitability for a specific set of work skills. Discovering personal suitability for a career requires identifying personal interests, talents and inclinations. The question of suitability persists throughout the individual's career. Suitability is a particularly critical concept at the point of entry into a career. It is essential that the career aspirant discovers the career in which he or she is likely to excel and finds the highest level of comfort. Having entered a career, the moulding of personal suitability to career tasks is the challenge before the career aspirant. Further training would be necessary to sharpen basic suitability for a set of tasks as one's

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2.3.3. Preparation

Preparation for entry is an essential characteristic of the modern career. Career preparation presents two points for consideration. At one level, preparation comprises study, training and skill development to meet the demands of the chosen career. Inadequate training or a poor knowledge base compromises the type of job for which one would be accepted. At another level, career preparation is linked to the attitudes with which one views oneself and a career. For example, the unwillingness to mould oneself to the requirements of a career could result in severe conflict. Career preparation also requires developing an attitudinal readiness to survive and progress in the world of work.

2.3.4. Ongoing development

Career development is a life long process. To be successful the person must learn to fit into predefined systems and follow prescribed rules, while simultaneously showing excellence, creativity, and initiative. By its very nature, career offers opportunities for further development toward the higher levels of an area of specialisation. Promotions, switching employers, branching into other areas of specialisation are all examples of ongoing career development.

2.3.5. Social – personal dimensions

Successful career development is the result of an intricate psycho-social process. A group of people (society at large) presents a wide variety of needs that demand attention. Individuals from within this larger group, develop the expertise to meet one of these needs or specific components of a need in a professional manner. Career is a mechanism whereby society utilises the services of its members to contribute to its well being, progress and development. The larger society in return compensates the individual for delivering a particular service. An individual's career therefore is based on the interaction between personal gain and the service given to society at large. Career development suffers or even grinds to a halt when this delicate balance is disturbed. An individual willingly spends energy to meet career demands because this investment of effort yields some form of personal gain. At one level this maybe in the form of higher remuneration and material benefits. At another level, the career one follows and the career progress one registers is closely linked to social status and prestige. At the deepest level, a career is a mechanism that can facilitate the unfolding of personal potentials, the realisation of one's dreams and ultimately the actualisation of one's self.

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Write down the 5 main characteristics of career in your own words

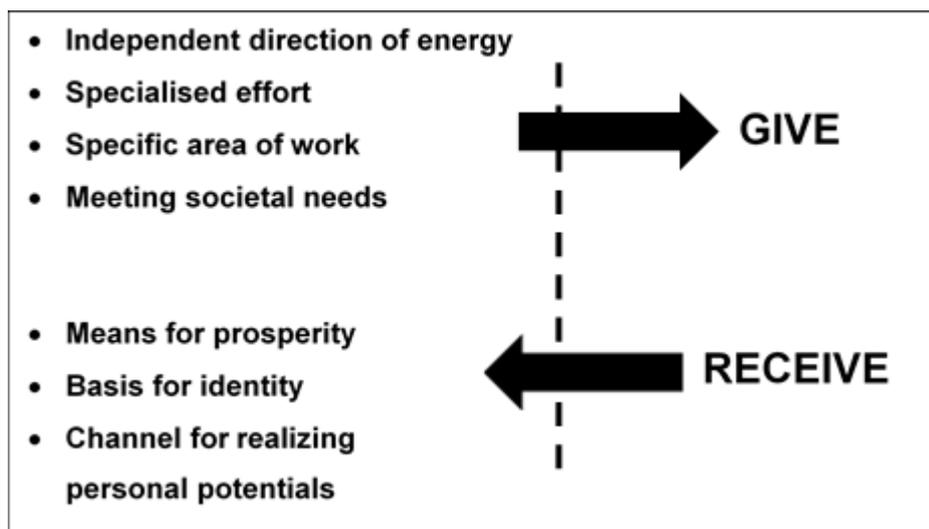
2.4. CAREER AND CAREER EDUCATION

2.4.1. What is “career”?

As shown in the figure below, Jiva describes career as being characterised by the independent direction of energy and specialised effort, toward meeting societal needs through a specific area of work, for which one gains the means not only for a livelihood but also for the realisation of personal potentials.

It must be kept in mind, that this description of career and its development is an ideal description. In reality, a variety of forces act together to facilitate, thwart or divert the unfolding of this process. A career rarely bursts abruptly upon the individual. A person’s orientation to work and then to career is something that develops over a period of time.

What is “career”?



2.4.2. Theories, Models, and Methods of Practice: Current State of Relevance

The advancement of the field of career psychology in Western contexts has been vigorous and has led to the formulation of a great variety of theories and approaches. A limitation of these theories is that do not account for the influence of “others” and the influence of the “group” on the individual. Such descriptions also move away from forms of human engagement with work which are holistic and integrated with ways of living. In such environments, life and career are well united. Even today, all one has to do is to step a few miles outside the cities of developing countries to enter a world of work that is characterized by pre-industrial features, where work is naturally linked to a community’s broader life.

While the idea of career is becoming increasingly widespread, we must keep in mind that the nature of its manifestation, the meaning attributed to it, and the manner in which individuals and groups engage with career can vary from one context to another. For one group, the focus of career guidance may be to help an individual discover in which occupational area (e.g., commercial art, biotechnology or law) he/she should specialise. In another setting, career guidance may be to help the members of a community identify and gain modern skills to manage their traditional, rural occupations in a viable manner.

Trends such as these are significant in emerging and economically developing economies. It is important for the career guidance specialist to keep these patterns of behaviour in mind when delivering career guidance services. Our final objective is not merely to help the

individual find a “good job”, but to teach him/her to optimise personal potentials such that prosperity for self as well as the group is achieved.

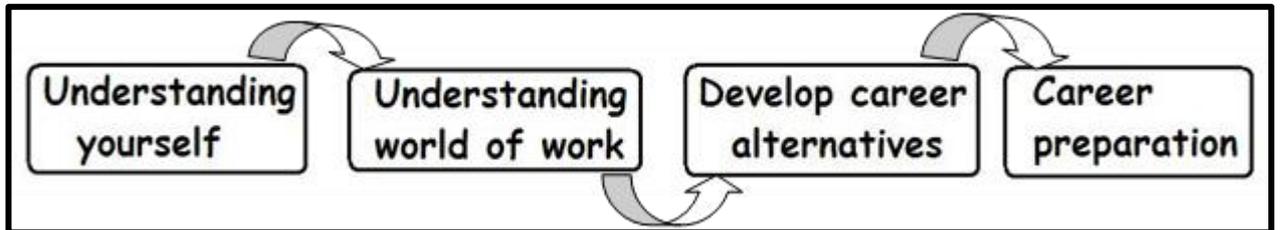
Thinking Point!

What is your definition of Career?

What is your definition of Career Education?

2.5. THE CAREER DISCOVERY PATH

There are many approaches to career guidance. But by and large, comprehensive career guidance is made up of four interlocking components. Jiva puts these themes of career education together as a *Career Discovery Path*, which is shown in the figure below.



The rest of this manual will explain each of these components and present workshop activities that address each of these components.

Assignment

The final step to complete your self-learning of this unit is to submit a simple assignment.

- Click on the link below. You will be taken to the assignment.
- Click on the **Submit** button at the end of the assignment. Your responses will be sent to us automatically.
- Proceed to the next unit.
- You will receive the evaluation from us.

Link: <https://forms.gle/qMt9nDLZcLk6rwjb8>

Important: You must submit all 7 assignments before the face-to-face virtual training session.