

4. UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD OF WORK

4.1. WHAT IS THE WORLD OF WORK?

The world of work is the other side of the coin of effective careers education. The world of work comprises all the different career opportunities open before the young person. Career choices are often limited to the careers that the young person knows or has heard about. Facilitating an understanding of the world of work widens the young career chooser's horizons. A second dimension to the world of work describes factors associated with a career within a specific field. This includes characteristics of a career, its projected scope for development, eligibility criteria for entry, entrance procedures and so on.

Three important activities are linked to helping the young person understand the world of work:

4.1.1. Wider possibilities

Career choices are often limited to the careers that the young person knows or has heard about. Career counselling opens new possibilities to the young person and widens the young career chooser's horizons. This includes helping the career chooser understand the specific characteristics of career development possibilities locally, nationally and if possible, internationally.

4.1.2. Components of careers information

Career counselling shows the young person how to enter a specific career and how to grow within that career. This includes characteristics of a career, its projected scope for development, eligibility criteria for entry, entrance procedures and so on. The figure below provides an overview of the important components of a unit of career information.

A unit of career information comprises the following categories:

- The name of the career
- A brief definition of the career
- An idea of the main potential area that the career draws from
- The path to entering and progressing in the career
- The future prospects of this career
- Information about courses leading to this career.

The young person must know that certain training programmes and careers require certain kinds of talents and interests. Linking careers with the career chooser's personal profile is critical part of understanding the world of work.

4.1.3. Career Interest and Occupational Preference

As we have seen in earlier sections, interest is a concept that is central to career guidance. However there can be a misunderstanding between the counsellor and the client with regard to what this means in reference to the world of work. If a person is asked "what are you interested in", he/she may understand this as what "career" are you interested in. It is important for the career counsellor to know that career interest refers to the psychological concept, closely linked to a person's personality. Our definition of career interest is: Career interests are activities that draw a person's attention, things that a person is curious about,

matters a person wants to pursue further, activities that a person considers worthwhile, and activities a person enjoys. Interest motivates and drives a person to preferentially seek out and engage with certain kinds of activities over others. Within this definition, career interests are patterns of likes, dislikes, and indifferences around specific themes and are directed toward certain kinds of activities rather than specific occupations. Interest in a career, is defined as occupational preference. This is different from career interests. Occupational preferences are reflected in the individual's attraction to a specific occupation. Therefore, when a person says she is interested in commercial art, she is expressing an occupational preference. On the other hand, if she says she is interested in a career that requires drawing, working with colours, designing, and visualisation, she is expressing career interests.

Career guidance programmes assess career interests, and based on activities for which an individual shows preferences, points him/her toward occupations that are composed of such activities. It is assumed here that if an individual shows low interest for an area of activities, it is also likely that he/she will show low interest for careers that are linked to such activities.

An often made observation in the day to day practice of career counselling is the lack of correspondence between an individual's stated occupational preference and his/her responses on a measure of career interest. A common example from many emerging economies, is the strong interest expressed by large numbers of students in medicine and engineering. Assessment of these students' career interests (interest for activities related to these occupations), more often than not, reveals a low correspondence between their occupational preference and career interests. For example, although high value may be placed on the profession of medical doctor, a low value may be placed on some of the activities central to this profession: cleaning infected wounds, working for those who are in pain. Similarly, a high value may be placed on the profession of engineering, but a low value may be placed on some tasks that are key to this profession: working with machines, applying mechanical reasoning. In other words, there may or may not be a concurrence between the value placed on a certain career and the value placed on activities related to that career, and without career guidance, a person may only realise this after he/she has entered the educational pathways into these professions.

4.1.4. Job versus Career

A feature of work in emerging economies over the last two decades is a massive increase in job opportunities. This is a phenomenon that has its origin in the modern economic principle of "outsourcing". The practice of trading goods and services across international borders is an ancient one. The Silk Route is an example of a network of trade routes that stretched for nearly 4,000 miles linking China, the Afro-Eurasian landmass, and Asia to Europe. While traditional trade focused on the buying and selling of goods that were not available locally, a key distinguishing feature of contemporary, globalized, international trade is the seeking of trading opportunities that have a cost advantage. In the globalized world, therefore, the exchange of goods and services can occur not merely because they are not available locally, but because it is cheaper to procure it from elsewhere. This has had a profound impact on local workforces, leading to loss of jobs at some locations and an unprecedented increase in job opportunities at other locations. This form of globalized trade requires cultural realignments and usually it is the recipient (developing) country that is required to realign.

While outsourcing has increased job opportunities, it has not increased career opportunities. This is because "key" tasks are still held by the outsourcing countries. So, what we have in emerging economies is an increase in jobs, not career opportunities. Such jobs are available for as long as they offer a cost advantage. If another country offers a better cost

advantage, such jobs will migrate to those countries. This leaves behind a new form of unemployment that is hard to recover from.

It is therefore essential that career guidance practitioners in emerging economies orient career choosers to the implications of “job choice” versus “career choice”.

4.2. QUALIFICATIONS: CERTIFICATES, DIPLOMAS AND DEGREES

4.2.1. What do qualifications mean?

Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees are different kinds of qualifications. Becoming ‘qualified’ means three things:

- Taking up a course and studying the contents of that course
- Facing an examination that will test your knowledge
- Completing the examination successfully

If the candidate is able to complete all these steps successfully, he / she will be awarded a document – a certificate, a diploma or a degree that declares that that he/she is ‘qualified’ in the subjects that taught in that course.

4.2.2. Eligibility

Most courses have eligibility criteria. All courses require you to have come up to a certain level in order to apply for that particular course. For example to enter a Diploma in Auto Mechanics, you must have at least passed the +2 (higher secondary examination) in science). To enter a full time post graduate degree in psychology, you must have studied psychology at the bachelor’s level.

4.2.3. Degree vs. Vocational Courses

The content of a course maybe theoretical, practical or a blend of both. Vocational courses are designed to be more practical than theoretical. The main objective of these types of educational programmes is to ensure that the student learns ‘how to do the job’. Vocational courses are offered by Industrial Training Institutes and Polytechnics.

Degree programmes are more theoretical. They maybe professionally oriented or maybe non-professional. Professional degrees prepare the student for a particular career (e.g. library science, engineering, medicine). However most professional degrees require the student to go on for further studies. Non-professional degrees are designed to deepen the student’s knowledge of a subject (e.g.: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science).

Some people think that vocational courses are ‘lower’ than other courses. This is not true at all. In fact, students who have completed Vocational Courses are very much in demand. It is also possible for the student who has completed a Vocational Course to go on for higher and further education.

Those who are not academically oriented or those who would like to begin earning quickly could consider vocational courses. Those who are prepared for long term study and who enjoy academic work, could consider degree courses.

4.2.4. Levels of Qualifications

Certificates

Certificates usually are less theoretical and more practical. They require a lower level of eligibility. For example there are certificate courses offered even after Class 7. Certificates are offered most commonly by Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs). Certificates could be also be offered at a high level of qualification where the eligibility is at least a graduate degree.

Diplomas:

Diplomas are higher than certificates. This is the next level of qualification. Diplomas are usually longer and have a little more theory than certificates. In India most good diplomas require a pass at least at the +2 or higher secondary level. These diplomas are usually offered through Polytechnics. Like certificates diplomas too can be offered at a high level of qualification. For example post graduate diplomas require that the candidate has already passed the graduate degree.

Degrees:

These are the highest levels of qualifications that a student can obtain. Degrees are offered only by universities. A degree offered by a college is valid only if that college is affiliated to a university. Degrees are also offered at various levels.

- Bachelor's Degree: This is also called the first degree and usually runs for about 3 years.
- Master's Degree: This is the next level in the degree system and is also called the second degree. Master's degrees usually run for about 2 years.
- Doctoral Degree: This is the highest degree and means Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Those who win this award can add Dr. to their name! Doctoral degrees usually last anywhere between 3 to 5 years.

Between the master's and doctoral degree is the Master of Philosophy degree (M.Phil.). This is usually a blend of theory, research and practice and prepares the student for doctoral studies.

4.2.5. Recognition

The certificate, diploma or degree that you win must be widely recognised. At the lowest level, the award may only be recognised by the institution that gives it to you. At the next level it may recognised within a particular region. A good certificate, diploma or degree is recognised at least at the level of your country. This means the courses has been checked and evaluated by an accreditation board in the country. The best certificates, diplomas or degrees are recognised all over the world.

4.3. SOURCES OF CAREERS INFORMATION

India does not have a designated system in place at the central or state level for the collation and dissemination of labour market information or careers information. Quite often it is up to the career counsellor to collate and manage a careers information data bank. Some of the sources of information include the following:

4.3.1. The Daily Newspapers

Admission notices, entrance exam details, policy matters are all carried regularly in the careers columns and educational supplements of national dailies. Most local careers information is often available only through the newspapers of the region.

4.3.2. Magazines

A few magazines are dedicated to careers information and career development issues. Examples include: Careers 360, Careers and Campuses. Almost all youth and family magazines carry a section on careers information.

4.3.3. College Information

College prospectuses provide in-depth information about specific institutes. Writing directly to colleges and collecting information from ex-students provides prospective career aspirants with the most current information about a given college. A career counsellor could also write directly to colleges and request to be included in their mailing list.

4.3.4. The Internet

Most leading colleges have their own web sites on the internet. The most accurate information about a specific college would be available on its website (though it is advisable to check when the website was last updated). The internet also offers specialised careers web sites. However these websites are to be treated with caution since the accuracy of the information provided very often is questionable.

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/43Ucjbb7Koj9PoMU9>

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