UNIT 2  EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING

Structure
2.0 Introduction
2.1 Objectives
2.2 Meaning of Educational and Vocational Counselling
    2.2.1 Educational, Vocational and School Counselors
2.3 Need for Educational and Vocational Counselling
2.4 Scope of Educational and Vocational Counselling
2.5 Educational Counselling
2.6 Vocational Counselling
2.7 Let Us Sum Up
2.8 Unit End Questions
2.9 Suggested Readings

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Most people have dreams about what they would like to be when they grow up. Sometimes these dreams or images start at a very early age. Or, as it often happens, a person may finish high school and still not really know what they want for a career.

Everyone is different. We all are special and unique. You have your own skills and abilities, strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes – about what you want to do with your life. This is reflected in the choices you make, decisions you take and plans you make for your life with regard to the educational and vocational aspects. However, sometimes you may not be very clear about what you want in your life. You may not even be aware of your strengths and limitations, interests and abilities. In the absence of these, you may make a wrong decision or inappropriate educational and vocational choice.

Working toward a career involves a process. It is like taking a journey to a certain destination. You just don’t arrive at a destination automatically. It takes planning and time before you get there. There can be many stops or the plan may change along the way. It takes planning, time, and effort to make proper educational and vocational planning. Counselling plays a crucial role to help you make appropriate educational choices keeping in mind your abilities and interests and arrive at a suitable career choice. Hence it is important to understand the concept, meaning and nature of educational and vocational counseling.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of educational and vocational counseling;
- Explain the need for educational and vocational counseling; and
- Identify the goals of educational and vocational counseling.
2.2 MEANING OF EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELING

Counselors work in diverse community settings designed to provide a variety of counseling, rehabilitation, and support services. Their duties vary greatly, depending on their specialty, which is determined by the setting in which they work and the population they serve. Although the specific setting may have an implied scope of practice, counselors frequently are challenged with children, adolescents, adults, or families that have multiple issues, such as mental health disorders and addiction, disability and employment needs, school problems or career counseling needs, and trauma. Counselors must recognize these issues in order to provide their clients with appropriate counseling and support.

School counselors help students evaluate their abilities, interests, talents, and personalities to develop realistic academic and career goals. Counselors use interviews, counseling sessions, interest and aptitude assessment tests, and other methods to evaluate and counsel students. They also operate career information centers and career education programs. Often, counselors work with students who have academic and social development problems or other special needs.

Educational counseling helps the individual with problems related to education. It is basically concerned with helping the students in choosing/selecting appropriate courses of study. The counselor takes into account the aptitude, interest, abilities and specific background of the student to provide educational counseling.

Vocational counseling aims at helping the person select a proper vocation and prepare for it. Deciding on a career/vocation is crucial as it involves lots of time, effort and money. Entering into a career which turns out to be inappropriate for the person will lead to job dissatisfaction, unhappiness and maladjustment in work life. All these will affect negatively the personal life of the individual. Hence deciding on a vocation is very important task. Vocational counseling facilitates this decision by providing appropriate counseling to the individual. Placement counseling is an important part of vocational counseling. The counselor makes the individual aware about his abilities, aptitude, attitude and interests; and helps him in a proper placement suitable to his abilities and from which he derives job satisfaction.

Thus the goals of educational and vocational counseling can be described as follows:

- Explore, analyse and develop the factors constituting their self-concept (interests, personal qualities and characteristics, values, skills etc.).
- Explore, evaluate, process and classify information and alternative education and vocation pathways with respect both to their needs and choices and to labour market requirements.
- Integrate information about education and vocation/career with information derived from self-observation so that they develop to decision-making capabilities both with respect to their orientation in education and choices in occupation(s) befitting their particular psychosocial make up.
- Create and implement own education and vocation plans.
Ultimately, the individuals will be able to make the correct choices with respect to their future occupation/vocation through educational and vocational counseling.

2.2.1 Educational, Vocational and School Counselors

Educational and vocational counseling is provided by the school counselors, educational counselors, vocational counselors and career counselors. They provide individuals and groups with career, personal, social and educational counseling. The counselor needs to take into account the personal social aspect of the individual in order to provide educational and vocational counseling.

A school counselor is a counselor and an educator who works in elementary, middle, and high schools to provide academic, career, college access, and personal/social competencies to K-12 students. The interventions used include developmental school counseling, curriculum lessons and annual planning for every student, and group and individual counseling. School counselors assist students of all levels, from elementary school to postsecondary education. They advocate for students and work with other individuals and organisations to promote the academic, career, personal, and social development of children and youth.

Elementary School Counselors provide individual, small-group and classroom guidance services to students. Counselors observe children during classroom and play activities and confer with their teachers and parents to evaluate the children’s strengths, problems, or special needs. In conjunction with teachers and administrators, they make sure that the curriculum addresses both the academic and the developmental needs of students. Elementary school counselors do less vocational and academic counseling than high school counselors do.

High School Counselors counsel students regarding subjects/courses to choose at the senior secondary/college level, admission requirements, entrance exams, financial aid, training/technical schools, and apprenticeship programs. They help students develop job search skills, such as resume writing and interviewing techniques. College career planning and placement counselors assist students/alumni with career development and job-searching techniques.

School counselors at all levels help students to understand and deal with social, behavioural, and personal problems. These counselors emphasise preventive and developmental counseling to enhance students’ personal, social, and academic growth and to provide students with the life skills needed to deal with problems before they worsen. Counselors provide special services, including alcohol and drug prevention programs and conflict resolution classes. They also try to identify cases of domestic abuse and other family problems that can affect a student’s personal development and thereby affecting his career development.

Counselors interact with students individually, in small groups, or as an entire class. They consult and collaborate with parents, teachers, school administrators, school psychologists, medical professionals, and social workers to develop and implement strategies to help students succeed.

Vocational Counselors also called employment counselors or career counselors, usually provide career counseling outside the school setting. Their chief focus is
Type of Counselling

helping individuals with career decisions. Vocational counselors explore and evaluate the client’s education, training, work history, interests, skills, and personality traits. They may arrange for aptitude and achievement tests to help the client make career decisions. They also work with individuals to develop their job-search skills and assist clients in locating and applying for jobs. In addition, career counselors provide support to people experiencing job loss, job stress, or other career transition issues.

Rehabilitation Counselors also provide vocational counseling to persons with disabilities.

They help people deal with the personal, social, and vocational effects of disabilities. They counsel people with both physical and emotional disabilities resulting from birth defects, illness or disease, accidents, or other causes. They evaluate the strengths and limitations of individuals, provide personal, educational and vocational counseling, offer case management support, and arrange for medical care, vocational training, and job placement. Rehabilitation counselors interview both individuals with disabilities and their families, evaluate school and medical reports, and confer with physicians, psychologists, employers, and physical, occupational, and speech therapists to determine the capabilities and skills of the individual. They develop individual rehabilitation programs by conferring with the client. These programs often include training to help individuals develop job skills, become employed, and provide opportunities for community integration. Rehabilitation counselors are trained to recognise and help lessen environmental and attitudinal barriers. Such help may include providing education, and advocacy services to individuals, families, employers, and others in the community. Rehabilitation counselors work toward increasing the person’s capacity to live independently by facilitating and coordinating with other service providers.

2.3 NEED FOR EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELING

The modern day has thrown numerous challenges. In this era of internet and global competition, going for relevant and suitable educational and vocational options has become a crucial decision. There are a plethora of choices available in the vocational market. In addition there is the pressure and expectation from the parents as well as the peer group. The society also has an influence on the types of courses and vocations chosen. In the process the individual – his abilities, interests, aptitude and values – are lost sight of. In this scenario counseling and consultancy services have become the need of the hour.

With many options in the field of education there has always been felt a need to have a professional guidance which could provide the right direction to a student. The issues relating to career opportunity are one of the most important concerns of a young mind. Education in India in earlier times in the decades of 60s, 70s and 80s used to be mostly detached from career and job opportunities. There was also lack of organised guidance except possibly from parents and senior family members. Therefore, we see a large number of cases where type of job and basic qualification a person possesses are totally divorced. This sometimes has raised serious concern about the utility of education. However, during last decade things have started changing dramatically. Today’s youth are
more focused, knowledgeable, inquisitive, and ambitious. One of the strengths of India as a country is existence of a huge working force whose median age is in 20s. This very demographic profile has created a significant opportunity as well as concern for all. This is significant as this strong and huge workforce can change the destiny of the country. But at the same time the large manpower can itself lead to disastrous consequence if not channelised properly. It may lead to rising unemployment rate, waste of precious human resource, increase in crimes and antisocial activities, depression and other mental health problems. We have the world’s largest population with one of the highest number of young people but majority of them are without right skills needed for modern jobs. The people living in rural places also have inadequate resources, knowledge and skills rendering them not fit for the growing challenges of the job market.

Hence there is a great need to equip the vast majority of our young people with right vocational skills. Developing the right work attitude and work values, providing training in right skills, promoting entrepreneurial spirit in huge urban and rural young population who come out of the schools / colleges (10th & 12th standard) is a major challenge. It is in this context that the concept of educational and vocational counseling is increasingly assuming more importance. Educational and vocational counseling in an organised manner is relatively a new phenomenon in India. One requires huge exposure to the world as a whole to be an effective counselor. Besides being a person with substantial understanding on a global scale of the economy, educational fields, emerging areas of opportunity, and a good psychologist, a good counselor is one who has execution ability of:

a) Aligning a student’s career goals and objectives with available economic opportunities not only in India but on a global basis,

b) Assessing basic competencies / skill sets of a student and aligning them with job functions and / or higher education in the right field,

c) Suggesting the most important field of study or career suitable for a candidate considering all facts of the case.

There is nothing right or wrong in an absolute context in the parlance of counseling. Counseling is nothing but an expert opinion given to a particular student in response to his / her query on a specific question (career or education related). The student needs to consider the option carefully, weigh pros and cons, discuss with family members and then take final decision. If necessary, the student should approach counselor with another round of queries.

2.4 SCOPE OF EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING

Counseling refers to a specialised assistance provided to the students in the area of educational and vocational counseling. It is a continuous and comprehensive process of helping students to become more efficient, adjusted and realise their true potential. In this process the educational and vocational counseling largely derives from personal counseling also. The counselor provides assistance in a variety of fields like employment, education, scholarships and other financial assistance, social life and personal adjustment. The students are helped to choose courses/training programmes, develop efficient study skills and get necessary
remedial assistance in educational related matters. The counselor also helps the students in pre-employment activities, job placement services and successful adjustment to the work situation and work colleagues in the field of vocational counseling.

Broadly educational and vocational counseling activities target individuals who are:

- about to make a choice with respect to their education and vocation,
- in search of new fields of study/training,
- already employed but dissatisfied with their current occupation, hence in search of new areas of training and professional development,
- unemployed or have lost their jobs for whatever reason and wish to resume employment, and
- the marginalised sections of the society and need proper educational and vocational counseling to realise their potential and establish themselves in the society.

### Self Assessment Questions

1) What do you mean by educational counseling?

2) Describe the meaning of vocational counseling

3) Who is a vocational counselor?
2.5 EDUCATIONAL COUNSELING

Education is not only about teaching, but also about learning. Education is “Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to be and Learning to Live Together.” It should aim at expanding the mental horizons and broaden the outlook of the students through training in cooperation, consideration, team spirit and service. Education should help channelise the youthful energies towards creativity and self actualisation. Counseling plays a very significant role in fulfilling these goals of education. Education counseling aims at making learning a joyful experience for the children. It helps them understand their abilities and personality dispositions so that they can perform at their best in the school.

Education has become an indispensable part of modern day life in view of the rising competitive market and the complexities of the present day world. In the present scenario, education only can ensure a bright future for our children. However, education itself has become so much complex and demanding that counseling has become a necessity in order to successfully adjust to the requirements of the educational setting, realise one’s goals and aspirations and achieve them.

Educational counselors make use of the psychological principles of learning, remembering, motivation and emotion to understand and explain different problems faced by the students with regard to learning, remembering, adjusting to the teaching-learning situation and the curriculum load. As Rao (1991) points out, education, viewed in the context of its counseling function, is concerned with the kind of activities, which if implemented, would best accomplish the educational goal of harmonious individual growth. The purpose of education is to make the person competent. Educational counseling by helping the students how to learn and developing an understanding of themselves enables them to adjust with the academic pressure and promotes the academic development of the students.
Educational counseling can broadly comprise of the following three sub-areas (Rao, 1991).

a) appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the student through administering objective tests, talking to the teachers; and then discussing these with the student in the light of his choices, interests and aspirations. This helps provide a proper choice of courses and co-curricular activities leading to successful adjustment to the educational setting.

b) identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the study skills and providing the necessary remedial services. Study skills and practices followed by the students is crucial to their scholastic achievement. Many students fail because of their faulty or inappropriate study skills. Improvement of these will benefit the students tremendously in their academic success.

c) resolving personal problems and improving inter-personal relations, leading to better mental health and thereby helping the student to achieve academic success. The relationship of the student with the teachers and the peer group is vital as it affects the mental health of the student. If the student is anxious, worried, feels inferior, withdrawn, harassed and prejudiced against, then it adversely affects his scholastic progress. Hence the educational counselor needs to take care of these issues while addressing the educational concerns of the student.

The objectives/goals of educational counseling at the elementary stage (std. I to VIII), secondary (Std. IX & X) and senior secondary stage (Std. XI & XII) are mentioned described as follows.

i) **Elementary Stage**

Counseling elementary school children is critical in the sense that this sets the stage for a positive or negative attitude of the child towards the school and academic activities. The goal of counseling at this stage is to make the transition from home to school a smooth experience for the child and learning a joyful exercise for the child. The major goal of counseling here is to help the child in making proper adjustment to the school situation. Counseling elementary school children involves helping them with their learning problems, and providing them with an engaging and enjoyable learning experience at the school. It also involves helping them to adjust with the teacher and peers. The following can be mentioned as the aims of counseling at the elementary stage:

- adjustment of students to the school
- improvement of teacher-student relationship
- acquisition of effective study habits and practices
- developing student potential
- inculcating basic academic skills
- improving test taking skills

ii) **Secondary Stage**

This stage marks a transition from childhood to adolescence. With the onset of adolescence, there comes the accompanied physical and physiological changes,
leading to an identity crisis. There is a need for greater independence from the parents and at the same time dependence on the peer group. The adolescents have their individualistic ideas, interests and emotions, and they desire recognition and acceptance and encouragement of these. During this stage, students face many academic and social pressures which creates stress in them. In this context, the goals of counseling lies in expressing warmth, understanding and friendliness towards the adolescents and the counselor tries to help the adolescent gain insight into his problems, and develop appropriate attitudes, interests and goals. Mentioned below are a few of the goals of counseling at the secondary stage.

- Development of proper academic skills
- Assisting in academic achievement
- Improving test taking skills
- Developing critical thinking skills
- Improve the decision making capacity of students

iii) Senior Secondary Stage

Students at the senior secondary stage are in their late adolescence stage/phase. They are progressing towards adulthood, but are not yet adults. They are in a crucial stage of life where it is high time for them to think consciously about their further educational plan and vocational avenues. They need to take concrete steps to decide and pursue their educational and vocational plans.

The goals of counseling at this stage are as follows:

- helping the student to obtain, organise and apply academic information from a variety of sources
- develop positive interest in learning through involvement in active and practical learning
- helping the student to make further educational planning taking into account his abilities, aptitude, interests and attitudes.
- Helping to develop critical thinking and decision making skills
- Assisting student to make successful school-to-work or school-to-higher studies transition

2.6 VOCATIONAL COUNSELING

The choice of a vocation is one of the crucial decisions in one’s life. It determines the type of people one would work with, the nature of the environment in which one would work and the type of work one is going to do. All these should commensurate with the type of person one is, i.e., the abilities, interests, aspirations, attitudes and the values one has and the particular situation and family environment one has. Hence a career should be chosen with utmost care, thought and planning. However, it is often found that this crucial decision is taken very lightly and not enough consideration and planning is given to it. Since it has a significant repercussion on the future life affecting one’s own and his family’s happiness, vocational counseling is the need of the hour. Vocational counseling should be an integral part of the total educational process.
There are a number of theories of vocational development which explains how does vocational choices and preferences develop in an individual. For example, Ginzberg suggests three stages: fantasy, tentative and the realistic stages in vocational choice. First, the individual makes choice at the fantasy level that is he wishes to be an artist or space scientist without taking into account the reality. At the tentative stage the person thinks about certain vocations on a tentative basis, but at the realistic stage he takes a decision based on his real abilities, aptitude, interest etc. A vocational counselor should know about the different theories of vocational development in order to provide better and comprehensive counseling to the individual.

Vocational guidance and counseling is a process of assisting the individual to choose an occupation, prepare for it enter in it and progress in it. It is primarily concerned with assisting the individual in acquiring an increased maturity for making vocational choices, helping the individual make decisions involved in planning a future and building a career. The problem is not solved once for all when an individual makes a choice. Counseling is required further also in terms of helping the person to adjust in the work place and deriving job satisfaction. So the process of vocational guidance is a life long process. It is a continuous process of effecting satisfactory vocational adjustment.

In the early days of vocational counseling, the counselor’s function was chiefly that of supplying information on training programs, or providing guidance leading to specific employment. More recently the recognition that psychological and social factors affect the choice of a vocation as well as the adjustment to it, and that personal and emotional problems often interfere with vocational planning, made it mandatory that the counselor be concerned with personality development, the counselor also must learn to understand and evaluate the student’s psychological adjustment level. Out of these new concepts, a different role for the vocational counselor emerged.

Vocational counseling today has become a process in which the experienced and trained person assists an individual:

1) to understand himself and his opportunities,
2) to make appropriate adjustments and decisions in light of his understanding,
3) to accept the responsibility for his choice,
4) to follow a course of action in harmony with his choice.

Some other goals of vocational counseling can be listed as follows:

- **Helping student in reaching optimal development**: A student at secondary level has interest in reading about and in investigating various occupations. School can do a lot to develop this interest e.g. a boy shows interest in mechanics. Simple machine may be given to him, which he may open, and put the parts together. He may be interested in getting knowledge of the underlying principals used in the machine. Information about the mechanical processes may be passed on to him by taking him to the factory and work shops. Interests, which have a vocational values, should thus be encouraged in all possible ways.

- **Helping student learn effective decision-making skills**: One can be expected to learn decision-making skills only when one has complete
information about his own capacities and weaknesses and also the information of vocational field of his choice. Skill in making a decision comes through following certain steps. He should learn to withhold a decision until he has examined all aspects of situation, that is, he must consider his own abilities and the world of work around him. He must arrive at a complete knowledge of the occupational fields of his choice through his own efforts. He should be able to reject all advice and information offered to him by his superiors and come to his own decision. The counselor’s responsibility is to enable the student in this decision making.

- **Helping student in selecting maturely and objectively a vocation:** Once the student is able to decide independently what occupation he/she should follow, they can benefit from the assistance given to them for selecting the best vocation. The counselor helps the student in choosing the career/vocation according to the interest, qualification etc.

Vocational counseling is often mistaken with vocational guidance. The latter is concerned largely with providing occupational or career information to the students. It consists of collection, classification, filing and dissemination of occupational information by use of several media of communication such as bulletin board, career corner, career pamphlets, films, documentaries, individual and group discussions. Vocational counseling is closely related to these functions. However, vocational counseling is basically more concerned with the vocational development of an individual. The main focus in vocational counseling is the student or the client. It is concerned with the discovery of his potentialities, interests and attitudes such that he is helped to actualise himself in the pursuit of his vocation. Vocational counseling uses several techniques of client appraisal and assessment and assists the individual in his self actualisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Assessment Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Describe the three sub-areas of educational counseling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.............................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.............................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.............................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.............................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.............................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Discuss the importance of educational counseling at the elementary stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.............................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.............................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.............................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.............................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.............................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you learned about two important types of counseling, that is, educational counseling and vocational counseling. Although these two can be treated as separate types of counseling, both are interdependent and overlap. Educational considerations have implications for vocational development and vocational counseling derives largely from the attitudes, values and interests acquired through the educational process. The meaning and scope of educational and vocational counseling were described. The present unit developed an understanding in you about the importance of educational and vocational counseling in the challenging and competitive environment prevalent in the current education arena and career field.

2.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1) Discuss the goals of educational and vocational counseling.

2) Discuss the importance of educational counseling in the present day school context.

3) Describe the roles and functions of a school counselor.

4) Explain the need for educational and vocational counseling.

2.9 SUGGESTED READINGS


