

Career Guidance and Counseling Services in Selected Universities/ Colleges in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala States

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Career guidance and counseling is one of the services for promoting employability skills, which are augmented through career guidance cells in the Universities/Colleges. Though the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi has given the direction to start career guidance and counseling cell in the Colleges/Universities, but a very few Colleges/Universities are offering career guidance services to the student community. In some other Colleges/Universities, some teachers and senior students are extending the career guidance services informally to the students. But these services are not comprehensive as they have no expertise in the area of career guidance and counseling. The author has taken up a project under UGC Emeritus Fellowship entitled 'A Comparative study on the best practices in Career Guidance and Counseling Programmes of Different Colleges/Universities in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala States' with an objective to study the universities/colleges, which are providing career guidance and counseling services to the students in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala states and the best practices/strategies followed by the selected universities/colleges. The present paper entitled 'Career Guidance and Counseling Services in Selected Universities/Colleges in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala States' is a part of the above project work presenting some basic observations and preliminary results relating to the sample universities/colleges selected for study, type of career guidance and counseling programmes implemented by the selected Universities/Colleges in A.P and Kerala and their nature and features, the methods and approaches used by the career guidance counselors/trainers. Before presenting the observations/ results, we try to understand the need for career guidance and counseling, providers of career guidance and counseling, review of studies conducted in India and abroad, objectives and method of investigation.

Keywords: Career guidance, Counseling, Higher education institutions, Remedial Coaching, Placements, Employability, Skill development.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most neglected areas in the field of education in India is career guidance and counseling of students at all levels of education. Though the UGC has given the direction to start career guidance and counseling cell in the Colleges/Universities, the guidance and counseling has been remained purely a theoretical and teaching subject. Career guidance and counseling is a comprehensive, developmental program designed to assist individuals in making and implementing informed educational and occupational choices. In some universities, well planned efforts are made to provide assistance to individual boys and girls in deciding upon their future careers and education, and other personal problems. But, very few Colleges/Universities are offering career guidance services to the student community. In some other Colleges/Universities, some teachers and senior

students are extending the career guidance services informally to the students. But these services are not comprehensive as they have no expertise in the area of career guidance and counseling. Choosing a right career has become a great challenge for many educated youngsters. They are in a race to grab jobs immediately after completion of their education. So, they are under compulsion to get whatever job is available even in an area not related to their education, interests and abilities.

Career guidance and counseling is one of the services for promoting employability skills. Employable skills are augmented through career guidance cells in the Universities / Colleges, execution of final year projects and internships in organisations, more focus on IT-oriented courses, formation of business clubs, networking of class rooms, introduction of part-time

jobs within the campus, giving communicative English as an additional course and conducting regular examinations testing the students' aptitude skills. The counselors should assist students with academic concerns such as career planning, classroom scheduling, graduation requirements and supportive services. But, the guidance is something that provides direction or advice to take a decision or course of action or showing the way. Counseling is a means of assisting and developing students. In short, without guidance and counseling, education will be both under-used and miss-used and will thus not give the full socio-economic returns. The researcher has taken up a project under UGC Emeritus fellowship entitled 'A Comparative study on the best practices in Career Guidance and Counseling Programmes of Different Colleges/Universities in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala States' with an objective to study the universities/colleges, which are providing career guidance and counseling services to the students in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala states and the best practices/ strategies followed by the selected universities/ colleges. The present paper entitled 'Career Guidance and Counseling Services in Selected Universities/ Colleges in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala States' is a part of the above project work presenting some basic observations and preliminary results relating to the sample universities/ colleges selected for study, type of career guidance and counseling programmes implemented by the selected Universities / Colleges in A.P and Kerala and their nature and features, the methods and approaches used by the career guidance counselors/trainers. Before presenting the observations / results, we try to understand the need for career guidance and counseling, providers of career guidance and counseling, review of studies conducted in India and abroad, objectives and method of investigation.

Need for Career guidance and counseling services in Universities / Colleges

To provide assistance /advice to the students and to make them/better informed in their future educational and career choices, career guidance and counseling services in higher educational institutions have become important. UNESCO has been working to raise awareness about the importance of career guidance and counseling to increase the effectiveness of teaching and training programmes throughout the world. Many developed countries have a very clear career guidance plans in their educational system from the school level. In India, such planning is not undertaken effectively and the services undertaken are inadequate. Most frequently, guidance and counseling programmes are usually developed as a more or less conscious adjunct of other activities [1]. The provision of diversified courses of instruction imposes an additional responsibility on teachers and school administrators for giving proper guidance to the students in their choice of courses and careers. The secret of good education consists in enabling the student

to realize what are his talents and aptitudes, in what manner and to what extent he can best develop them so as to achieve proper social adjustment and seek right types of employment. Thus, there is a greater need to organize career guidance services in the colleges / universities for grooming the students to meet the needs/requirements of the industry.

Providers of Career guidance and Counseling services

Career guidance and counseling services are being provided by the government, educational institutions, non-governmental institutions including corporate companies etc. Several Indian universities and colleges today are conducting Student Support and Career guidance and counseling programs through the Centers of Career Guidance and Counseling Cells, Placement Cells, Departments of Social Welfare & Employment, Training, Information and Guidance Bureau, Departments of Adult & Continuing Education, Psychology, Student Services, Physical Education, Finishing Schools, University Coaching Centres, Computer Training Centres, Department / University Central Libraries etc.

Career guidance and counseling service may take place in many different settings, such as: the classroom; the comprehensive counseling centre; the community agency, including voluntary organizations; during enrolment for educational activities; at employment-related agencies, perhaps with trained vocational counselors on staff; through medical services; in libraries; mobile information centers, and in diversity of informal setting. Further, there are counsel offices, counselors and tests to help the students to make informed career decisions. Career- testing instruments, computerized programmes and career resource centers are the other ways that help them to make good career decisions. Talking with advisors and people in a variety of professions also can be extremely helpful for the students, who are really interested in securing a job.

Further, the guidance and counseling service may take place any of the following forms: Publications (i.e., brochures, mailings); Announcements at public meetings; Specialized publications for particular target groups (e.g., student youth, the unemployed, school leavers, and marginal groups); School meetings and meetings in other educational institutions, community group meeting, trade union; Television, telephone contact, radio and public posters, newspapers; Theatres (e.g., information slides proceeding the movie), sports clubs, recreation places; Information (i.e., brochures, etc.) to relate agencies and other counseling services.

Review of Literature

The awardee has carried out the literature survey both local and outside universities. He noted that not many research studies were conducted in the area of

career guidance and counseling of students. However, a few studies were conducted by Paul *et al.* Stark and Stephen, Uzoamaka *et al.* Marcus *et al.* Raymond *et al.* Lynch [2], Varalakshmi, R.S.R., and T.M. Moly [3], Vavrus & Fletcher [4], Kelly Curtis [5], Cindy Van [6], Reddy, M C R. *et al.* [7], Reddy MCR [8] in the area of project.

Vavrus & Fletcher [4] have observed that the youth empowerment is an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people. Kelly Curtis [5] noted that the empowering youth specifically addresses four empowerment assets viz., offer ideas, focus on the development of those assets, provide opportunities for youth and enable them to grow into confident leaders in an engaging style for empowering young people in their own communities.

Reddy, M C R *et al.* [7] have conducted a study to know the career guidance and counseling services to the students in the areas viz., study/learning skills, personality development, higher education counseling, career guidance etc. The study has revealed that there is no good faculty and lab facility in the colleges, lack of relationship between teacher & student etc. Cindy Van [6] pointed out that the quality youth empowerment programs could greatly help the child, teen, or young adult in our life. Reddy MCR [8] in his study noted that some initial issues such as communication and creative skills; a geographic mismatch between where jobs are created and where skills are developed; and decline in manufacturing sector and shifting to other industries such as service and hospitality.

Reddy, MCR [9] stated that the Sri Venkateswara University Department of Adult and Continuing Education under UGC – Special Assistance Programme (DRS-I) has adopted different approaches viz., (1) Visits approach, (2) Camping approach, (3) Display and Documentation, (4) Counseling Approach, (5) On-campus approach, (6) Off campus approach, and (7) Campaign approach in Students' Counseling and Career Guidance to impart employability skills so as to secure the employment in different establishments by the under-graduate, post-graduate students and unempowered youth.

After thorough understanding of the research conducted in the area of project, much research was not been done in this particular area. The studies conducted in the area have covered the aspects relating to career development skills for the advancement of careers, skills needed for starting their own businesses, the influence of career preparation courses on students' achievement, establishing the relationship between a particular skills set and effective career management

etc. Some scholars only emphasized the career development at the expense of intellectual growth, awareness of the educational requirements for their preferred courses and perceptions of students on professional development, implementation of career guidance cells, type of career guidance and counseling services offered etc. But, the researchers have not studied the approaches adopted and methodologies/ strategies used in the universities/ colleges while conducting the career guidance and counseling activities, the role of collaborating institutions in the career guidance and counseling programmes and the best practices followed by the educational institutions. Therefore, the present research work would help in bridging the gaps in the above areas under career guidance and counseling services organized for the benefit of the students.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are to study the career guidance and counseling services offered by the selected universities/colleges for the students in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala states and to understand the methodologies and approaches used by the above sample universities/ colleges in conducting the above programmes.

Method of Investigation

Locale of the Study

The locale of the study covers selected universities/ colleges, which are conducting the career guidance and counseling programs in both the states of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. In the present study, certain universities/colleges, which are conducting the career guidance and counseling programs, are selected in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. They include: Acharya Nagarjuna University (Guntur), Sri Venkateswara University (Tirupati) in Andhra Pradesh, Calicut University (Calicut) and University of Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram) in Kerala.

Sample population

The Coordinators/Placement officers/Career guidance counselors etc. are selected as sample population to know about the approaches and practices followed in implementation of career guidance and counseling programs in the chosen universities/colleges. Similarly, the teachers/trainers who were involved in the instructional process are interviewed to know the various methods/ strategies adopted in the above programmes. The sample frame of the study is as follows:

Universities (2 in each state)	: 4
Colleges/Units (3 each from the university)	: 12
Coordinators/Placement officers/ others (12x3)	: 36
Teachers/trainers (12x5)	: 60

Research Tools developed

Three types of tools viz., an Interview schedule and Questionnaire schedule for collection of data are developed to collect the required data. Interview schedule for the Coordinators/Placement officers/ Career guidance counselors and the Questionnaire schedule for resource persons/trainers and trainers are developed after getting preliminary information from the selected universities, conducting a literature survey, interacting with the functionaries involved.

Collection of Data

Collected the required data from the sample population i.e., Coordinators/Placement officers and teachers / trainers by visiting the selected universities and affiliated colleges during the period from October 2018 to March, 2019. After meeting the Principal/Special officers of the colleges, the investigator has identified the Coordinators/Placement officers and teachers / trainers of different career guidance programmes such as Career guidance and counseling cell, Placement cells, Coaching centre for SC/ST students, Acquisition of Additional Skills Programme (ASAP) and Walk With Scholar (WWS) etc. The investigator or his field investigator has interacted with the coordinators/conveners of universities/colleges and filled the interview schedules. The investigator has also collected the list of trainers/trainers, who were involved in the training of students, for administering the questionnaire schedules. The investigator or his field investigator has approached the trainers/trainers and administered the questionnaire schedules and collected back the filled in schedules.

The collected data was coded, tabulated and analyzed separately with a view to realize the objectives of study. Simple statistical techniques are used for analyzing the data and presented the interpretation of data.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Sample Universities/Colleges selected for the study

The study was conducted in four universities viz., Acharya Nagarjuna University (Guntur), Sri Venkateswara University (Tirupati) in Andhra Pradesh, Calicut University (Calicut) and University of Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram) in Kerala. Data was collected from a sample of three colleges from each university and thus there were 12 colleges. The sample drawn from the selected universities are as follows: ANU Colleges, Nagarjuna Nagar, ANU Campus, Ongole and ANU College of Pharmaceutical Sciences (Acharya Nagarjuna University), S.V.U. Colleges, SVU College of Engineering and PVKN Govt., Degree College, Chittoor (Sri Venkateswara University), Calicut University (UoC) Campus, Calicut, Govt. Arts and Science College, Calicut and Sri C. Achutha Menon Govt. College, Thrissur (Calicut University) and

Kerala University (UoK) Campus, TVPM, Govt. College of Arts & Sciences, Kariavattom and Govt., College, Nedumangad (University of Kerala).

Career Guidance and Counseling Programmes organized by the Sample Universities/ Colleges

It is noted that the programmes such as Career guidance cells, Employment Linked Skilling Programme, Remedial Coaching for SC/ST / OBC (non-creamy layer) & Minorities, Coaching Classes for entry in services for SC/ST / OBC (non-creamy layer) & Minorities, Coaching for NET/SET for SC / ST/OBC (non-creamy layer) & Minorities, The Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC), Career Awareness and Recruitment Drive (CARD), Jawaharlal Knowledge Centers (JKCs), Career Guidance and Placement Programmes, Centre for Human Resource Development (HRD), Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED), Skill Development Centre (SDC), Psychological Counseling Centre, University Employment Information and Guidance Bureau (UEIGB), All Kerala Civil Services Scholarship -cum- Aptitude Test (IAS-SAT), Walk with a Scholar (WWS), Tutor Ward System and Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP) are organized by the selected universities/colleges.

Career Guidance Cell

The Career Guidance Cells are functioning in the Colleges with an aim to provide students' guidance in competitive exams, options in higher education, and placement. The Cells attempt to create awareness about career options among students and introduces them the options and avenues of fulfillment that would facilitate their growth and development and also help them to meet the challenges and knowledge explosion of the 21st century. It also tries to empower women graduates through a proper utilization of the emerging trends, choices and opportunities available in their respective fields of study. Campus interviews, spot counseling for further studies and seminars are regular features of the cell. The Cell conducts Campus recruitment trainings with the help of experts from outside in different modules like Communication skills, Aptitude skills, Numerical skills, Logical reasoning, Target orientation streaming and Personal interview.

Employment Linked Skilling Program (ELSP)

The ELSP Program is India's only finishing skills training program. It has been designed with the objective of getting the participants' job ready and employable by meeting the skill set needs of prospective employers. The course has been developed with an emphasis on lending practical knowledge rather than just theoretical knowledge, thus remarkably improving the participants' employability skills. ELSP aims to bridge the gap between student skills and employer needs thus creating a much efficient recruitment effort towards a workforce that is in sync with the growing industry needs.

A complete strategy for Skills Training Programs Linked to Employment (STDLE) will need to be developed so that underprivileged group can have access for skills training leading to employment. Skills are vital for productivity and growth and are in fact at the core of improving people's employment outcomes.

This unique program trains the students in certain essential skills and endeavors to make them 'Job Ready' professionals. The factors such as right skills (communication skills, sales skills, data skills, computer applications and domain knowledge), App Based Learning (Learningo) (helps the student learn and practice the skills on his/her Smartphone), Learn and Earn (students can learn on the job and start earning), Placement Assistance (evaluate the knowledge and competency levels of students and guide them on the areas of improvement), the ELSP Edge (gives the benefit of achieving work experience) that make them employable and give them a large edge over other freshers .

Remedial Coaching for SC/ST / OBC (non-creamy layer) & Minorities

In order to enable students belonging to SC / ST / OBC (non-creamy layer) / Minority communities, who need remedial coaching to come up to the 30 Level necessary for pursuing higher studies efficiently and to reduce their failure and drop-out rate, the UGC will provide financial assistance for conducting special classes outside the regular time-table. Students belonging to Other Backward Classes and General Candidates may also be allowed the benefit of such coaching classes. A nominal fee (not exceeding the monthly tuition fee) may be charged from the general candidates. However, physically challenged students and students who are General Candidates coming from families with income below the poverty line (as guided by the State/ UT/ Central Government) will be exempted from paying the fee.

Remedial Coaching is to be organized at Undergraduate / Postgraduate level with a view to: i) improving academic skills and linguistic proficiency of the students in various subjects, ii) raising their level of comprehension of basic subjects to provide a stronger foundation for further academic work, iii) Strengthening their knowledge, skills and attitudes in such subjects, where quantitative and qualitative techniques and laboratory activities are involved so that proper guidance and training provided under the programme may enable the students to come up to the level necessary for pursuing higher studies efficiently.

Coaching for NET/SET for SC / ST/ OBC (non-creamy layer) & Minorities

In order to ensure that more and more SC / ST/ OBC (non-creamy layer) candidates as well as

candidates from Minority communities become eligible to apply for teaching posts, the UGC has started the scheme for coaching SC/ ST and Minorities to prepare for National Eligibility Test (NET) or State Eligibility Test (SET) for Lecturers, during the Eleventh Plan. This scheme was developed with a view to access the students from SC, ST, OBC (non-creamy layer) and Minority communities and to improve at a faster rate so that the gap in enrolment rate (with the national average) is reduced. It is also important that these students not only complete higher education but are encouraged to choose teaching as a career and become role models to others of their group. Students belonging to Other Backward Classes, economically weaker sections and physically challenged students may also avail of this coaching facility. The main objective of the scheme is to prepare SC /ST candidates and candidates from Minority communities for appearing in NET or SET, so that sufficient number of candidates becomes available for selection of Lecturers in the University system from these groups.

Coaching Classes for entry in services for SC/ST / OBC (non-creamy layer) & Minorities

In order to prepare students belonging to SC / ST/ OBC (non-creamy layer) and Minority communities to get gainful employment in Central and other services mentioned above, the UGC is continuing the scheme of Coaching classes for entry in services for SC / ST & Minorities during the Twelfth Plan. The basic objective of the coaching scheme is to prepare students belonging to SC / ST/ OBC (non-creamy layer) and Minority communities to get gainful employment in Group 'A', 'B' or 'C' Central services, State services or equivalent positions in the private sector. The coaching under the scheme should be oriented for particular examinations conducted for selection to services, such as the IAS, State Public Services, Bank recruitment, etc. The coaching may be focused, taking into consideration the specific requirements of a particular competitive examination. The College may develop an Employment Information Cell for providing information about various competitive examinations in the area of its operation. The students belonging to economically weaker sections and physically challenged students may also avail of this facility. Applications may be sought by advertising in a local daily so as to cover students outside the college rolls. Coaching may be organised by dividing the candidates into groups of not more than twenty five students.

The Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC)

Andhra Pradesh is in the forefront in imparting skill training. Many skill training programmes for students and unemployed youth were conducted by APSSDC. The Corporation is providing advanced technical training to engineering and diploma students in the State in association with

SIEMENS besides training in soft skills and computational thinking to 188 Social Welfare and 237 Tribal Welfare schools. Various training programmes are implemented by the Corporation with an aim to provide training to 8 lakh people during 2018-19. For the first time in the country, AssaULTs are imparting training in Aerospace, Automobile and Ship Building technologies. The corporation has already trained the first batch of 120 people in drone technology and about 1,000 people are trained during the year 2018-19.

In addition, engineering students were trained by international organizations such as Google, Audacity, Amazon, Coursera and Autodesk and degree students were enrolled in certification courses by Tally, Zoho, Amazon Web Services, NSE Academy, and Insta EMI at the Employability Skills Centre. Further, with the help of London-based Brunel University, one lakh students and thousands of teachers were covered under training session in the Artificial Intelligence department.

The Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) is conducting training courses for beneficiaries of Mukhyamantri Yuva Nestham (MYN) scheme from December 10, 2018 to enhance their employability quotient. The main objective of the programme was to impart skill training to youth so that they get employment in industries as well as open market. In this connection, a specialized 40-hour training programme has been developed. The programme, Employability Skills Enhancement Module (ESEM), has been designed focusing on soft/life skills to equip the youth with the employable skills. The module comprises communication skills, interview essentials, basic presentation skills, e-mail writing, intra and interpersonal skills, social responsibility and growth development dynamics. The beneficiaries can select training centres of their choice through the MYN portal, developed by RTGS and after completion of training assessment; certification will be issued to the candidates. Around 555 training centres are expected to set up for imparting training to the candidates in all the mandals of the State.

Career Awareness and Recruitment Drive (CARD)

The CARD is an initiative to bring major ITES & IT companies to 2 tier cities as one of the projects of the Institute of Service Management (ISM) of Andhra Pradesh State Council for Higher Education (APSCHE). ISM is an institute under the aegis of APSCHE in collaboration with the IT and Communication Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh and NASSCOM is jointly organized a programme under the banner Career Awareness and Recruitment Drive (CARD). It is mainly for creating awareness in IT and ITES among the students, bringing home to them the industry requirements and enabling

recruitment for the rural students in particular. The CARD is helping in education of students and their parents about various career trends and importance of communicative skills irrespective of domain competence. The programme is mainly to sensitize the students and also conduct campus recruitment drives in various universities in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Jawaharlal Knowledge Centers (JKCs)

JKCs were started in 2006 working in the selected Govt., colleges under two universities in Andhra Pradesh with a view to enhance the employment potential of young graduates by imparting soft skills and computer knowledge. The main objectives of JKCs are: a) To impart requisite skills relevant for dynamic job market and to enable students seize employment opportunities; b) to enable the students to climb the ladder of success by providing world class infrastructure and trained, experienced faculty; c) To help students to realize potential and to motivate them to be creative, independent and self-reliant; d) To ensure empowerment of girl students by providing job skill; and e) to organise Job Fairs and Campus Recruitment Drives to facilitate the placement of JKC trained students.

This type of trainings organised by JKCs is extremely beneficial to rural students. As part of the skill enhancement programme, students are given 100 hour training each in communications, soft and computer skills gearing them up for higher employability. Apart from this, English language Labs have been set up where listening and speaking skills are imparted through online interaction with the Language Lab Software Platform. Students who undergo this programme can hope to be employed in BPO concerns and Call Centres pertaining to Insurance, Banking, Public Utilities, Telecom, Legal, Transportation, Manufacturing and Publishing Sectors.

Career Guidance and Placement Programmes in ANU

It is generally an accepted notion that students after completing their traditional Masters' Courses are in a state of confusion regarding their possible placements. To mitigate this situation of the students, the Acharya Nagarjuna University has established a Career Guidance and Placement Cell in 2004 with a regular faculty member as its Director. Engineering and Pharmacy colleges also have Career Guidance and Placement Cells separately for the needs of their students since 2013 onwards.

Every year the Cell collects the data of students from Heads of the Departments where the students are enrolled and the list of organisations of potential placements for the students of that Department. This information would be mailed to the organisations with a request to contact Acharya Nagarjuna University in case they have Human

Resource requirement. After receiving positive response, the people of the organisation and the students are made to meet in the campus and the selection process takes place. Besides these, some organisations visit the campus and conduct selection process for all the students through a centralized structure designed by the Placement Cell. A booklet called “Placement Brochure- Acharya Nagarjuna University” is published every year covering the activities of the Cell. Special drives in the name of ‘Career Awareness and Recruitment Drive (CARD)’ are organised periodically at the behest of AP State Council of Higher Education. With the intervention of the Placement Cell, various placement opportunities offered and large number of students was benefitted.

The University has created four different centers viz., Skill Development Centre (SDC), Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED), Centre for Human Resource Development (HRD) and Psychological Counseling Centre.

Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED)

The Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED) has been started in the Acharya Nagarjuna University (Guntur) on 9th September, 2014 by the Former Vice-Chancellor Prof. K. Viyyanna Rao, who has taken initiative for establishment of the Centre. The Centre is being operated with the university funds. Prof. Noorbasha Abdul, Senior faculty member in the Department of Commerce & Business Administration was the Director of the Centre. The main objectives of the Centre include: Imparting motivation, sharpening entrepreneurial traits and attitude; Guiding project planning and development; Assisting in identifying various industrial opportunities, incentives and facilities; Organising seminars/ workshops/ lectures periodically by the Bankers, Government agencies and Successful entrepreneurs; and also utilising the support of corporate companies and Non-Governmental organizations.

The Centre got its own library with good collection of books related to the fields of Entrepreneurship. It also got an attached reading hall facility for the students, research scholars, teachers and non-teaching staff on all the working days. The Center has a pool of resource persons volunteered to interact with the persons interested in promoting the Entrepreneurship.

Skill Development Centre (SDC)

Skill Development Centre (SDC) was started by Acharya Nagarjuna University in May 2015. SDC shall be a joint venture of University- Government – Industry with an aim to upgrade the skills set to students and makes them better employable. Prof. Noorbasha Abdul, Senior faculty member in the Department of Commerce & Business Administration is the Director of the Centre. The Centre is floated centre only with

the service motto without any financial support from any source. However, the Centre has entered into MOUs with organizations like Electronics Company Limited, Vijayawada, Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad, First Aid & Ambulance Services, Hyderabad, Prasad Automobiles, Guntur, Don Bosco Technical School, Guntur. Later, the SDC has also entered into an MOU with the Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) in 2015. Various career oriented activities were organized by the centre in collaboration with above Institutions and employment was also provided to the successful trainees.

Centre for Human Resource Development (HRD)

The Acharya Nagarjuna University has a structured a system for Career guidance and Placement of students. The Career Guidance & Placement Cell Established on 10th February 2003 and it was later renamed as Centre for Human Resource Development. The Centre for HRD is established with an objective to motivate, train and help the students in acquiring the employability skills along with practical skills and secure placements in the industries/ companies of their concerned. Thus, the Centre provides career guidance and counseling services for the students to build their career by organizing interactive sessions, lecture programmes and counseling activities. Every department takes special care for providing career guidance to the students by nominating a teacher counselor in the department. The University Placement Officer is providing the support services to the students and showing them with career opportunities and also arranging placements.

Psychological Counseling Centre

Psychological Counseling Centre was also started by Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur with an aim to solve the psychological problems of the students and provide exposure to solve their problems through the counseling programmes, specifically appointed two Consultant Psychologists.

The students may be having different problems such as educational and social. Psychological exposure and Counseling is needed in tackling of those problems such as academically backward, gifted and creative; students with learning difficulties. Further, monitoring the academic progress of students; assist them in further/continuing education and provide career information. Psychological exposure and Counseling are needed by the students, who are facing the stress and behavioral disorders.

Counseling psychologists will focus on the daily life stressors of their clients, teaching clients to find a balanced approach to overcoming stress. On the more extreme end, counseling psychologists are able to intervene and assist people in times of crisis or extreme stress; as the APA puts it, “They also provide

assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of more severe psychological symptoms.”

University Employment Information and Guidance Bureau (UEIGB)

University Employment Information and Guidance Bureaus (UEIGBs) are providing career guidance programs and advice to the University alumni and information regarding various courses of study. They also assist the students in getting admission to courses in other universities, to collect and disseminate occupational information, and details regarding scholarships and fellowships. The Guidance Bureau is giving individual guidance to candidates to choose professional courses and jobs by assessing the talents, interest, skill, aptitude, family background etc. Another objective of the Bureau is to equip the candidates to face interviews, Group Discussions.

The Bureau is expected to conduct coaching classes for the competitive examinations at the state and national levels. The Bureau conducts coaching classes for UGC/CSIR NET examinations, various competitive examinations conducted by the Public Service Commission, Bank Tests, Staff Selection Commission Test, State Eligibility Test etc. The honorarium granted to the resource persons is Rs 500/- per hour. Printed/Photocopies of notes and other study materials are given to each participants. The Bureau also conducts coaching classes to prepare the students belonging to Minority, SC & ST Community for the UGC/CSIR NET examinations (with the financial assistance of the UGC). Admission to above courses is often limited to 40 students. These coaching programmes were conducted twice a year. (i.e., for the exams. in June and December). The coaching classes were given for the general paper and detailed classes were given to Commerce and English subjects.

Bureau conducts one day Career Seminar in colleges to create awareness among the students on career opportunities and soft skill development. Seminar would focus mainly on career trends in India and abroad, opportunities for higher studies, how to face an interview and also on Personality development. Though these Bureaus are working both in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala states, they are active in Kerala by collaborating with the universities in implementing the career guidance and counseling programs.

All Kerala Civil Services Scholarship -cum- Aptitude Test (IAS-SAT)

This is an initiative exclusively designed for Graduate & Post Graduate students in their final years of college education. With this initiative, they aim to identify talented students with a passion towards the field, nurture and guide them to a career in the civil

services. Best performers in the Scholarship -cum- Aptitude Test shall avail a scholarship from iLearn IAS to pursue Coaching for the Civil Services Examination.

Walk with a Scholar (WWS)

WWS scheme proposes to arrange specialized mentoring programs for students in Under Graduate Programs in Arts, Science and Commerce and to provide guidance for their future. The scheme introduces the idea of mentoring and builds on the concept of mentor as a 'Guide' and 'Friend'. It helps the students in Arts, Science and Commerce Colleges to get necessary orientation to prepare them for employment or guidance necessary to select areas for higher study. The mentoring scheme for students will be purely voluntary in nature. It will be open for all students entering the first year of the Under Graduate Programme of Study. Students selected for the Programme should have secured at least 60% marks at the Higher Secondary (Plus Two) level. This stipulation of minimum marks is not applicable for SC/ST students.

Maximum number of students identified under WWS Scheme is 30. If the number of applicants exceeds 30, the College Council will evolve a method of selecting the required number of students so that the neediest students and those genuinely interested in the scheme alone are selected.

The Scheme aims at giving necessary orientation to needy students, to prepare them for employment and give them necessary guidance, motivation and necessary mental support to identify appropriate areas for higher study as well as employment. The mentoring scheme is planned to identify the opportunities available for the scholars, the areas suitable for them, and the manner in which the scholar should proceed before them and evolve ways by which they can be acquired.

Tutor Ward System

The tutorial system as envisaged by the UGC aims at improving personal rapport between the teacher and the student and his/ her environment—both academic and social. As a pedagogic model, the tutorial system has great value, because it creates learning and assessment opportunities through sessions. Tutorial sessions enrich the teaching- learning process by focusing on smaller groups and catering to the individual needs of the students. Tutorial sessions supplement the lecture class with additional information, knowledge and guidance. These sessions supplement the lecture class with additional information, knowledge and guidance. The tutor probes a student's understanding and pushes him or her to think through topics in much greater depth. Each and every student of the college gets personal attention from their

tutors. The students are divided into small groups and put under the personal supervision of a tutor.

The diverse activities conducted during the tutorial sessions enable the students to showcase their talents, boost up their confidence and also provide a welcome break from the fixed routine and curriculum. It is through the tutorial system that students develop powers of independent and critical thinking, analytical and problem solving abilities and skills in both written and oral communication and argument.

At the beginning of every academic year the College Council selects one of the teachers as the Tutorial Coordinator for the year. The Heads of the Department divide the students of every class into small groups and assign them to the respective tutors. The Tutorial Coordinator in consultation with the College Council prepares the tutorial guidelines for the year. Every week one hour, outside the regular class hours, is set apart for the tutorial session. The tutees are asked to fill in and submit a tutorial card that contains their personal profile, educational background, their interests, hobbies, and also their carrier goals in life. In the initial weeks of an academic programme students are given a chance to express themselves individually in the tutorial sessions and the tutors make a preliminary assessment. The tutor in consultation with the tutees selects a coordinator among them to organize each tutorial session.

The tutor in charge of a group of students plays the role of a mentor. As a mentor the tutor keeps a one-to-one relationship with the tutee based on encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect, and a willingness to learn and share. Tutors direct those who require professional assistance to qualified counselors and also help the students set long-term career goals and short-term learning objectives.

A very successful interaction in the tutorial system will instill confidence in the students and help the development of their personality. Many problems faced by the students can be sorted out with the help of the tutor. Students will have no hesitation in discussing the problems faced by them with their tutors and thereby a very cordial and friendly relationship between the teachers and students will be established in the campus. Every tutor keeps a record of the all-round information of the tutees under his/her supervision, a diary containing the reports of each session, and the attendance of the tutees in each session. The Heads of the Department make periodical assessment of the conduct of tutorials in the Department and submit a report to the Tutorial Coordinator. At the end of the academic year, the Tutorial Coordinator submits the years' tutorial sessions to the Principal to include in the annual report.

Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP)

ASAP is a joint initiative of General and Higher Education Departments, Govt. of Kerala. The motto behind this program is to generate more employable skills among the student population of Kerala by providing sector specific skill training programmes along with regular academic studies. This special training would be conducted during vacation and other holidays. The training would be conducted in two levels, Communicative Skills in English, Basic IT training and Elective Domain Specific Skill Course. The programmes are developed, delivered, assessed and certified with the active participation of the related industries to ensure labour market acceptance of the programmes. HCI is collaborating with ASAP as a training service provider for Elective domain specific skill course.

The major components of the program are Foundation module, Skill Course and Internship. The foundation module program mainly contain a 180 hours of program where the students get exposed with English speaking skill and basic skill of Computer. The training also focuses on personality development of the student. The idea of Skill Course is to impart skill training in different sectors including Hospitality, Beauty and wellness, Construction, Plumbing, Agriculture, Food Processing, Media and Entertainment etc. The students will be given training in any of the skill course based on the interest and aptitude. The idea of Internship is to impart the live skills required to sustain in current job market. It acts as a linkage between market and the text book. The students get exposed to market procedures and trends. It helps them to be updated with the present requirement. ASAP also attempts to provide placement assistance for the students. An exclusive Job portal has also been launched for this purpose. A 360 degree shift in thinking pattern, attitude, behavior and confidence level of students is an assurance from ASAP.

Major Observations

It is broadly observed some programmes such as Career guidance and placement programmes, Remedial Coaching for SC/ST / OBC (non-creamy layer) & Minorities, Coaching Classes for entry in services for SC/ST / OBC (non-creamy layer) & Minorities, Coaching for NET/SET for SC / ST/ OBC (non-creamy layer) & Minorities are organized by all the four universities and its constituent colleges. However, some colleges/units have not implemented the UGC (merged schemes) Coaching for SC / ST/ OBC (non-creamy layer) & Minorities and are not provided the information. Some programmes viz., Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC), Career Awareness and Recruitment Drive (CARD), Jawaharlal Knowledge Centers (JKCs) are specific to the universities/colleges in Andhra Pradesh. Some other programmes viz., University Employment Information and Guidance Bureau (UEIGB), All Kerala Civil Services Scholarship -cum- Aptitude Test (IAS-

SAT), Walk with a Scholar (WWS), Tutor Ward System and Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP) are specific and unique programmes to the universities/colleges in Kerala State. But the Career Guidance and Placement Programmes implemented and the Centres such as Human Resource Development Centre, Entrepreneurship Development centre, Skill Development Centre, Psychological Counseling Centre are created by Acharya Nagarjuna University. SIEMENS Training Centre of APSSDC is organizing training programmes in S.V. University Engineering College. University Employment Information and Guidance Bureau (UEIGB) is functioning actively both in Calicut and Kerala Universities and implementing the career guidance and counseling besides conducting coaching classes for the competitive examinations and also UGC/CSIR NET examinations. The programme 'All Kerala Civil Services Scholarship - cum- Aptitude Test (IAS-SAT)' is also implemented by the universities in Kerala. The programmes such as Walk with a Scholar (WWS), Tutor Ward System and the Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP) are implementing by the colleges under Calicut and Kerala Universities for the benefit of the students.

It is also observed that the programmes such as Mentoring, Motivational / Awareness Programs, Career Fairs and Campus Placements, Personality development classes are being conducted by the selected universities/colleges.

Methods and Approaches used in the Career Guidance and Counseling Sessions

It is observed that different universities/colleges are using different approaches, strategies in implementing career guidance and counseling activities. The career guidance and counseling providers have been undertaken certain strategies to promote employability skills among the students. They include: Orientations/trainings, Apprenticeships, Skill improving seminars/workshops, involving the students in projects and tasks, Promoting partnerships between Universities and Industries etc.

Some of the techniques adopted by the universities/colleges in providing guidance and counseling service to students are noted as: Establishing the close relationship with the student; Helping the student to explore problems and communicate; motivating the students to plan to solve the concern; encouraging the student to implement solution; and adopting follow-up measures.

Methods/Materials Used

The methods/approaches used in career guidance and counseling programmes include career coaching, mentoring, apprenticeship/internship, placements, project, school to work approach etc., to train the students for employability and to place them in the employment. Further, Career-oriented seminars,

workshops/conferences, Virtual learning etc., are being used to up-grade their employability skills. While transacting in the trainings/ orientations, the methods that are advocated for the training of students depends upon the size and nature, pace and time, content and objectives of learning. The methods include Briefing/ Lecture, Question & Answer, Group Discussion, Seminars/Workshop, Demonstration, Practical skills, Project method, Internship (Learn by Doing), Activity based method etc. These methods would be able to constantly attract new learners. By using relevant apparatus, aids and equipment, we can make the training methods more attractive and effective ones.

The aids and equipment play an important role in learning situation. There are different types of apparatus, aids and equipment. The supporting aids used in the process of training by all the trainers in the selected colleges/ universities are Black Board and Chalk, Charts/Flash Cards/Flip Charts, Activities and Exercises by the trainers and teachers. Smart board devices and LCD Projector for Power Point Presentation are used by some trainers and teachers for simplifying the hard content and for easy/quick understanding. E-content materials are supplied by some universities/colleges to the trainee students. Social media is also being used for popularizing the employability skills and creating motivation among the students.

CONCLUSION

Career Guidance and Counseling Services in Selected Universities/ Colleges in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala States is a part of the project work carried out by the author. In this paper the author has tried to present some basic observations and preliminary results of his project study. Career guidance and counseling programmes implemented by the selected Universities / Colleges in A.P and Kerala are discussed and also described the nature and features of those programmes. The methods and materials used by the career guidance counselors/trainers in imparting the training content in the selected universities/colleges.

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