

# Evaluation of Career Guidance & Counselling Cell activities for Vocational Higher Secondary Students in Kerala

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**Abstract :-** Career guidance and counselling cells have been functioning in Kerala vocational higher secondary schools. They provide counselling and career guidance to students from time to time. Vocational higher secondary school students in their adolescent age are faced with problems from several phases and walks of life. The students lack maturity and understanding to evaluate situations that they faced and need help and mentoring to solve their problems. This study aimed at assessing the career guidance and counselling activities and programmes imparted to vocational students. 229 vocational students from 9 different schools who were from different courses, 47 vocational teachers and 10 career masters from the central region of Kerala participated in this survey. Vocational students and teachers were requested to rate their levels of agreement for the following statement: ‘Career guidance provides awareness about various job opportunities and helps in exploring higher studies options’ on a 5-point scale. 10 career masters were also interviewed to assess whether career guidance and counselling programmes were carried out effectively. The responses received threw a light on the achievement of career guidance and counselling activities.

**Keywords :-** Career Guidance & Counselling, CGCC, Kerala VHSE, Vocational Career, Vocational Guidance, Vocational Higher Secondary Schools.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Vocational education is inevitable for making one self-sufficient and for the industrial growth of the nation. We are now going through a period where education is shifting to vocational skill-oriented teaching. Providing physical, mental and cultural facilities needed to improve extra-curricular excellence is one of the functions of Career guidance and counselling cell (CGCC). Even though Kerala has achieved a lot in the field of higher education, still the rate of unemployment is increasing. Unemployment of even professional graduates and limited availability of human resources for technical training are factors that hinder the overall development of the state in various sectors. Vocational education can, to a certain extent solve such problems and provide the available human resources with the necessary technical know-how.

‘The main objectives of the guidance and counselling programmes should be the maximum development of the individual. Counselling is not an end in itself but it is a means, an integral part of the total educational goal of leading an individual to a more authentic existence than hitherto’ (Kumari, 2013)<sup>[1]</sup>. Mehta and Gupta (1990)<sup>[2]</sup> conducted a study to find out ‘vocationally who is better informed’. The study showed that ‘most of the students were lacking precise and appropriate information about the

careers that they could enter. The study also indicated that girls required information and encouragement to take up new vocational avenues in non-traditional fields’. ‘Vocational guidance aids in acquiring skills, attitude and knowledge through which individuals could develop the vocational behaviors deemed necessary to manage with decision-points; obtain vocational identity and develop vocational maturity’ (Herr and Cramer, 1972)<sup>[3]</sup>.

Gysbers (1973)<sup>[4]</sup> revealed that ‘Career guidance helps people learn decision-making skills, identify and use information important to understanding themselves and their career options’. Lalhriatpui (2018)<sup>[5]</sup> suggested that ‘SCERT should provide career guidance and career awareness programme to vocational students who choose different vocational courses. Expert interactions for different courses could also be arranged by higher secondary schools’. Sinha (2006)<sup>[6]</sup> studied the unemployment problem among youths. In his study, it was found that a ‘major proportion of students were undecided about their future career. These could be correlated to the lack of career guidance. Guidance and counselling students through the involvement of faculty and senior teachers is a must’. Mamita (2017)<sup>[7]</sup> revealed that ‘it is essential to make sure that good vocational guidance program is available to the students. Education is to motivate and guide the child

while he is still in school, to choose a right vocational choice based on his abilities, aptitude, interest, personality, qualities and present circumstances'. Vaid and Gupta (1990)<sup>[8]</sup> revealed that inadequate vocational career guidance was being given to the students.

In the present study, career guidance and counselling cell activities in vocational higher secondary schools were examined with the help of feedback received from the vocational students, vocational teachers and career masters. Many a CGCC activities were carried out in the vocational schools that helped in motivating students who were deviated from studies due to family, personal and mental problems and also helped in improving the performance of students lagging behind in their studies. The aim of career guidance and counselling cells in schools is to make them aware of good higher education options and job opportunities. Career guidance and counselling aims at the holistic development of students in all vocational higher secondary schools in the state. From time to time, students were provided with guidelines for developing a clear understanding of VHSE education and its career potential.

#### Goals of CGCC

1. To impart awareness to the students about higher education facilities relevant to the taught vocational course
2. Counselling the students to help them get back to studies by overcoming family, social, personal, or psychological problems.
3. Organizing seminars and workshops for the multifaceted development of VHSE.
4. Conducting job fairs in each district.
5. Giving students opportunity to interact with technical experts/entrepreneurs to provide them with a clear understanding of career awareness and general knowledge.
6. Conducting career planning and career exhibitions.
7. Helping the students to know about the vocational higher secondary courses which gives them good job opportunities.
8. To make students aware of the vocational skills they should acquire for their higher education and also in their place of work.
9. To give good knowledge to teachers and parents about the career options so that they can guide the students in choosing the right path.

## II. CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOLS

### 1) Naveenam

Naveenam seminar was conducted in schools in online mode to create awareness among students and parents about the possibilities and opportunities the students can get by opting for VHSE courses. Seminar sessions were given to those who had applied for VHSE admission in each school through the online admission software, namely 'Ekajalakam' and also for students and their parents who have passed class 10 from the same school.

The main objective to conduct this seminar was to create a public awareness about the VHSE courses. Students and parents can get acquainted about the post 10th class learning potential, understand more about the school activities and job opportunities. Contents for the Naveenam seminar included vocational course briefing, subjects to be studied in each course, higher education opportunities, job opportunities, scholarships and stipends for each course and seat reservation for higher education.<sup>[9]</sup> This seminar helped students to opt for the vocational stream of studies.

### 2) She Camp

She camp was a one day programme conducted to create awareness amongst female students of the vocational higher secondary schools. This programme helped students to gain confidence and to be secure in the society. Students can interact with experts like female doctors/counsellors regarding the minimum age for marriage, social security, physical hygiene and the importance of women's education.

The main objective of the one day camp was to mould physical and mental strength in students, provide knowledge to maintain a healthy adolescent period for female students, the importance of sex education, various stages of femininity, the importance of personal and environmental hygiene, how to deal with sexual exploitation and personal and social upliftment through education.

The benefits of these camps were to build a healthy and hygienic adolescent habits in the adolescent students, develop good eating habits and to understand the importance of personal hygiene and to know the role of women in shaping a healthy generation and to be confident in achieving them.

### 3) Happy Learning

Reluctance to study and fear of facing exams was seen in some of the students. Happy learning seminar helped students to interact with the counselling experts. The students got awareness about learning habits, learning strategies, behaviors related to learning, methods for reducing exam stress and skills for writing exam well. Happy learning also benefited the students to improve

performance in learning and learning-related activities and to score good marks in exams.

#### 4) Positive Parenting

This programme allows parents to interact with a doctor/counsellor. Parents are free to ask questions related to adolescent age problems. The counsellors counsel the parents about how to have a good conversation with the students and how to spend time with them to hear their problems so that parents can build a strong relationship with their children. The objectives of this programme were to help the parents understand the characteristics of adolescence, awareness of their behaviour to their children, parents must be approachable to their children to build a good behavior in them and to realise that having a good conversation with them is absolutely important to mould up their children.

#### 5) Face to Face/ Entrepreneurial Interaction

Face to Face interaction is an entrepreneur interaction programme which helps students to build confidence in them so that they too can become entrepreneur in their future. This entrepreneurial interaction programme is to give insight to students about different entrepreneurial ideas and to motivate students to become an entrepreneur in their future. Main goals to conduct this programme is to encourage students to start self-employment, to make them aware of how to build a good personality and behavioural qualities needed to become an entrepreneur, to provide awareness to students about new entrepreneurial ideas and to give knowledge about the different stages of entrepreneurship.

#### 6) Career Talk

Career talk is conducted in schools to encourage students by giving them an opportunity to wear the professional dress they wish to choose in future and to talk to other students about the profession they would wish to choose in the future. The concept behind this programme is to motivate students to achieve their dream career.



Career talk by students

#### 7) Career Aptitude test

A career aptitude test was a short career explorer test that includes several multiple choice questions. This is a powerful way to dig deep into one's personality and

interests, and then use that data to find out a list of careers that would be suitable for them in future.



Students writing career aptitude test

#### 8) Career Planning

Career Planning is about understanding student's abilities and leading them to the right career which helps them to achieve their future goals. The purpose of this programme is to provide students with insights about various avenues of learning, careers and skills. Career experts from different sectors leads the career planning programme. Students can choose a career according to their interests, tastes and personalities. Students will get a good awareness about the courses, institutions and job opportunities that would help the students to advance in his/her career.

#### 9) Cyber Awareness Programme

Crimes through mobile phones, computer or computer network is known as cybercrime. Crimes like child abuse or exploitation, computer intrusion/hacking, cracking, credit card frauding, child pornography, morphing, creation and distribution of videos and photos using camera and electronic gadgets through computer or mobile network come under the category of cybercrime. The usage of internet and spending valuable time in social media is increasing day by day in children. Sometimes it leads children to cybercrime intentionally or unintentionally. Lack of proper guidance to children is one of the reasons why cybercrime is increasing. So cyber awareness programs were conducted in schools to create awareness in children about the cyber world; motivate children to use cyberspace as a resource for gathering knowledge and education; provide awareness about cyber laws; provide awareness about the reasons leading to cybercrime; and the precautions to be taken while using the internet. This programme helps students to understand the cyber world which includes modern technologies to gather information, will be helpful to mould up a young generation with social commitments and to further educate students about cybercrime and cyber law.

#### 10) Reading Corner

Reading is very essential in children to increase their knowledge and personality formation. Reading Corner in schools helps them to develop reading habits. Newspapers and magazines are being provided to students in the reading corner in schools. Language skills, communication and



creativity can be improved through good reading habits. Students are given opportunity to display their creativity by making pamphlets in the reading corner. Reading benefits students by improving their vocabulary; improving thinking ability, knowledge and memory; and helps to formulate new ideas. They can identify social problems and create a unique perspective on them.

11) *M-Governance*

M-Governance is implemented by a free students messaging sending system for notifying parents through SMS on their mobile phone in a timely manner. To convey various events in schools and students scores to students and parents this one is helpful. Attendance of children on respective day can also be intimated to parents through the '3rd Bell' students attendance alert software launched by department<sup>[10]</sup>.

12) *Career Slate*

Career slate is a project of the vocational higher secondary department for imparting knowledge to students about higher education and job opportunities<sup>[11]</sup>. There are 4 categories of career slate 1) Curriculum – This segment consists of an article related to curriculum of vocational subject of their study. 2) Higher Study – It explores the various opportunities for higher studies after the VHSE course within the country and abroad. 3) Career - To make students familiarize with the institutions and employers who offer job opportunities in the concerned vocational areas and 4) General Awareness - This section portrays the inspirational articles and valuable information for igniting students for empowering their emotional intelligence.

13) *How are you?*

This programme allows students to talk to a renowned psychologists through telephone during their public exam days so that the students can be stress free while writing their examinations and would be more aware about how to use their time effectively. This programme helps students to face their exams with good mental exhilaration. How are you programme helps students of vocational higher secondary schools who are facing stress during their examinations to approach psychologists from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm. Tele-counselling deals with the health and emotional concerns of students.

III. ANALYSIS OF CGCC ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL

This study aimed at assessing the career guidance and counselling activities and programmes imparted to vocational higher secondary school students in Kerala. 229 vocational students from 9 different schools who were from different courses, 47 vocational teachers and 10 career masters from the central region of Kerala participated in this survey. Vocational students and teachers were requested to

rate their levels of agreement for the following statement: 'Career guidance provides awareness about various job opportunities and helps in exploring higher studies options' on a 5-point scale. 10 career masters were also interviewed to assess whether career guidance and counselling programmes were carried out effectively. Random sampling was done and questionnaires were administered to collect the related information.

From Analysis it was found that all activities were conducted in the schools as per the guidance provided by Career guidance and counselling cell working under VHSE. As it was compulsory to conduct these programmes and funds were allotted by the VHSE department for conducting these programmes, career masters were appointed in the schools to conduct counseling and guidance activities.

Table 1. Carrer Masters Feedback on Career Guidance and Counselling Activities

Career Guidance & Counselling	Ratings	Count	Percentage
1) Whether these programmes were conducted at your school			
a) Naveenam	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
b) She Camp	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
c) Happy Learning	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
d) Positive Parenting	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
e) Face to Face/ Entrepreneurial Interaction	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
f) Career Talk	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
g) Career Aptitude Test	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
h) Carer Planning	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
i) Cyber Awareness Programme	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
2) Does your school have a Reading Corner?	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
3) Had the school utilised the student messaging software '3rdbell' to send free SMS to parents and students about students attendance and programmes conducted at school	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
4) Is the career slate articles given by the department beneficial to the students?	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
5) Did you receive departmental training for a career master every year?	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
6) Whether you've been added to a Whatsapp group for exclusive career program updates?	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
7) Is funding for career programs provided by the department?	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-
8) Did you receive a remuneration for being a career master ?	Yes	10	100
	No	Nil	-

Questions were asked to career masters regarding whether all career guidance and counselling activities were conducted in the school and it was found that 100% of the schools had conducted programmes such as Naveenam, She

camp, Happy learning, Positive Parenting, Face to Face, Career talk, Career Aptitude test, Career Planning and Cyber Awareness Programmes. Reading corner was also functioning well in all schools. Every year department conducted training to career master to enhance their skills to conduct career guidance and counselling programmes. The State Institute of Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT) - Kerala is the authority for conducting 3 day Capacity Enhancement Programme (CEP) training for career masters in vocational higher secondary schools.

Vocational students and teachers were requested to rate their levels of agreement for the following statement: ‘Career guidance provides awareness about various job opportunities and helps in exploring higher studies options’. The students and teachers rated on a 5 point scale from ‘Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree’. Table 2 shows the results of the students and teachers feedback about career guidance and counselling.

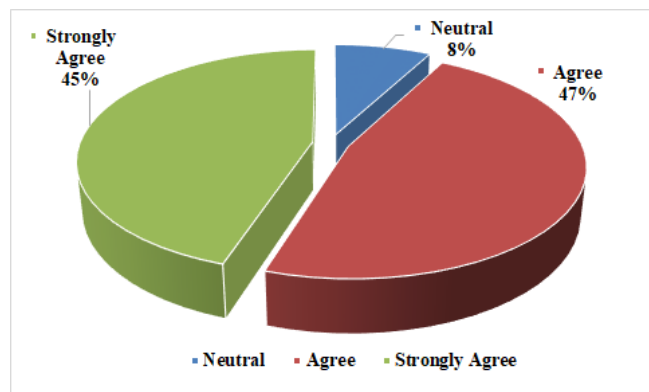
Table 2. Feedback on Career Guidance and Counselling

Career Guidance & Counselling	Ratings	Students Feedback			Teachers Feedback		
		N	N%	Cumulative %	N	N%	Cumulative %
Provides awareness about various job opportunities and higher studies	Strongly Disagree	Nil	-	-	Nil	-	-
	Disagree	Nil	-	-	Nil	-	-
	Neutral	18	7.9	7.9	1	2.1	2.1
	Agree	108	47.2	55	29	61.7	63.8
	Strongly Agree	103	45	100	17	36.2	100
	Total	229	100		47	100	

Regarding the question to students ‘whether career guidance and counselling classes at schools provided awareness about various job opportunities and helped in matters regarding higher studies’, it was found that none disagreed with the statement, only 18 (7.9%) students had a neutral opinion, while 108 (47.2%) students agreed and 103 (45%) of the students strongly agreed with this statement.

Figure 1. Students feedback on Career Guidance and Counselling

Provides awareness about various job opportunities and higher studies

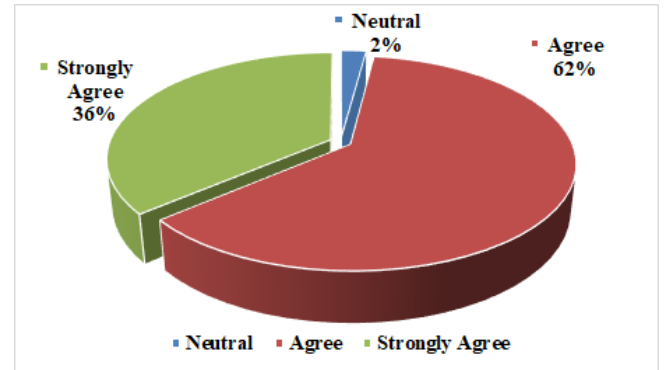


Regarding the question to teachers ‘whether career guidance and counselling classes at schools provided awareness to students about various job opportunities and

would help them in matters regarding higher studies’, it was found that none disagreed with the statement, only 1 (2.1%) teachers had a neutral opinion, while 29 (61.7%) teachers agreed and 17 (36.2%) of the teachers strongly agreed with this statement.

Figure 2. Teachers feedback on Career Guidance and Counselling

Provide awareness to students about various job opportunities and would help them in matters regarding higher studies



It was thus clear from the above figures that career guidance and counselling cells in the vocational higher secondary schools was functioning efficiently.

‘How are you’ telephonic programme was effectively conducted on exam days from 4.30 to 6.00 pm. Also, the department conducted ‘How are you’ programme during all days from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm with 2 district counsellors from 14 districts in Kerala to make students stress free during their examination time and to eliminate the fear in students during the pandemic time.

It was seen that a faculty was assigned as a ‘career master’ in every school for conducting career guidance and counselling programmes and a remuneration of Rs.1000 was allotted to them for an academic year to carry out the activities of maintenance of registers, arrangement of programmes etc. Every year the department issued guidelines for conducting CGCC programmes and funds were allotted for conducting the programmes effectively. The department also awarded the career master award for the best career master in each district. This motivated the career masters to arrange excellent career guidance and counselling programmes in their schools. Social networking groups i.e., whatsapp groups were also formed in district and state levels to monitor career guidance and counselling activities.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Career guidance and Counselling programmes were seen to be functioning effectively in vocational higher secondary schools. Each school had a well-trained career master to carry out CGCC activities with full dedication. The career master was aided with the funds provided by the department for conducting the activities/programmes. Centralized programme chart was issued by the department in the

beginning of the year giving instructions regarding how and when to conduct these programmes and the fund allocation for each programme. Also, career masters were given training every year to make them efficient to do their task. All career masters interviewed reported that career guidance and counselling programmes were conducted in their schools. Also 92% of vocational students and 98% vocational teachers surveyed agreed that the career guidance and counselling classes at schools provided awareness to students about various job opportunities and helped them in matters regarding higher studies.

[11] [http://www.vhse.kerala.gov.in/vhse/career\\_slate.html](http://www.vhse.kerala.gov.in/vhse/career_slate.html)

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