



Resources, Strategies, and Structures for Establishing Career Services in Developing Countries: Illustrations from India

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Abstract

The issue of career guidance in the economically developing world context has attracted attention from the careers community, both from the theoretical/academic perspective and from the service delivery/policy perspective. After describing the context of economically developing countries, in this paper the framework suggested by the International Labour Organization (ILO) for developing career guidance systems in low-and middle-income countries is used and a brief status report of career services in India as a representative country, under six themes is presented: (a) understanding the country context; (b) development of career information; (c) promotion of work choice, search, and maintenance skills development; (d) organisation of service delivery; (e) staff development to support service delivery; and (f) improvement of governance and coordination. Next, the recommended steps for establishing a career services system in an economically developing country are listed. These steps include: reviewing existing career services, creating baseline data on career development behaviours, creating a robust labour market information base, identifying possible target groups and their locations, training career professionals, and a coordinated and concerted policy making and implementation.

Keywords: developing country, career services, career information resources, labour market information, career counselling, employability skills, staff development, governance

It is important to recognise that the career development in developing countries could be different from the experiences of developed nations. There is an important role for public policy in encouraging and supporting systematic research that would throw further light on the prevailing

orientations to work, livelihoods and careers which would then lead to the formulation of reliable and valid methods for the delivery of career development services, relevant to the developing world context. (ICCDPP, 2006, p. 3).

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The issue of career guidance in the developing world context has attracted attention from the careers community, both from theoretical/academic perspective (e.g., Leong & Pope, 2002) and from the service delivery/policy perspective (e.g., du Toit, 2005; Hansen, 2006; Watts & Fretwell, 2004). The quotation above is an excerpt from the communiqué released at the conclusion of the third International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy in 2006 and brings these issues to centre stage in an emphatic way. Reviews of career guidance systems in 55 countries by various multilateral agencies over the last decade present important insights related to structures, strategies, and best practices for setting up career services. Incidentally, Asia, Africa, and South America are “thinly represented” and, the three countries with the largest populations in the world—China, India, and the USA—are absent from these reviews (Watts, 2008, p. 3). It is opportune to capture some recent developments in this regard in the developing world context. This paper uses the framework suggested by the International Labour Organization (ILO) for developing career guidance systems in low- and middle-income countries (Hansen, 2006) and attempts have been made to document examples from India as a representative developing country. After a brief summary of the developing world context, the paper covers the six key elements that Hansen (2006) has stated needs to be taken into account in the development of career guidance:

- understanding the country context
- development of career information
- promotion of work choice, search, and maintenance skills development
- organisation of service delivery
- staff development to support service delivery
- improvement of governance and coordination

After a brief report of the status in regard to these six elements, steps for establishing a career services system in a developing country are listed.

Developing Countries: Concept and Context

Third World nations, developing countries, low- and middle-income countries, emerging and developing nations, developing and transition economies, Global South: Are they the same or different? The list of countries under each of these categories varies but there are significant overlaps. Nonetheless these terms are being used interchangeably to denote comparatively poorer countries that have struggled to attain steady economic development (Tomlinson, 2003). It is interesting to note that international agencies that classify countries have been cautious enough to point out that the designations "developed" and "developing" are intended for statistical convenience and do not necessarily express a judgment about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process (UN Statistics Division, 2012). It also does not imply that all economies in the group are experiencing similar development (World Bank, 2012). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) classifies 150 countries as developing and emerging economies (IMF, 2012) which make up 85.1% of the world population and 48.9% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Although at differing stages of economic development, these countries do have commonalities which have specific relevance for developing career services. Du Toit (2005), Hansen (2006), and Watts and Fretwell (2004) have summarised these characteristics in comprehensive ways. Using their perspectives along with some recent observations, the characteristics of developing countries (especially with regard to career development and services) are listed as follows:

- Poverty and unemployment remain the two key problems in developing countries. In the context of deprivation, the compulsion to get any job is likely to mean that the concept of occupational choice is pushed far into the background.
- Most countries are moving from centrally planned economies to a free market driven one. This means a plethora of new opportunities and new challenges.
- Global competition coupled with the use of new technologies has made traditional livelihoods more precarious.
- The labour forces in most developing economies are in the informal sector and an over-supply of unskilled or semi-skilled labour is common. Career support services for this sector remain largely unknown.
- The limited public resources in these countries call for careful prioritisation of investments.
- Social exclusion based on class, caste, gender, religion, ethnicity, and location is rampant. Career services should not only take these factors in to account, but also optimise the means to achieve social justice.
- Cultural factors may have a significant bearing on not only the career development process but also on the

design and structures of career services.

- Research on career development theory, career policy, and service delivery are in their infancy in these countries.

Career Services in Developing Countries: Key Elements

Understanding the Country Context

In order to establish relevant career services, it is important to understand the country context in terms of its cultural milieu, demographics, labour market characteristics, and institutional infrastructure. The importance of understanding the cultural context has been highlighted by many scholars (e.g., Arulmani, 2011; Leong, 2002; Leong & Pearce, 2011). It has been found that context-specific, culture-resonant models have worked better than universal acultural designs (Arulmani, 2011). Merely establishing careers provision may not adequately serve the need. It is important to ensure that key messages are delivered in a culturally-appropriate way. Box 1 summarises an interesting experiment that took place in the Island nation of the Maldives (Arulmani, 2007b; Arulmani & Abdulla, 2007).

Box 1

Understanding the country context: The Maldives experience

Under an Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded project, the researchers (Arulmani & Abdulla, 2007) noted there was an environment of negative mindsets among young people toward vocational, skill-based training and occupations. As a result, very few local youth opted for these vocationally-oriented career paths. This in turn resulted in employers preferring an expatriate workforce, leaving large numbers of Maldivian youth unemployed. It was considered important to promote affirmative and positive attitudes toward work first and then to supplement it with a career counselling programme. Social marketing was used as a tool to develop the acceptance for career services and then it was followed by a career guidance intervention which led to stronger impact and more sustainable outcomes.

In India, in order to understand the country context, a study was conducted in 2005-2006 under the title: Work Orientations and Responses to Career Choices: Indian Regional Survey (WORCC-IRS) (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2006). It was conducted at 12 different locations in eight languages, covering a sample of close to 10,000 Indian young people. Using the lenses of socioeconomic status, caste, and gender, the study documented career path orientations, career decision-making difficulties, perceived barriers, expression of self-efficacy, personal interest patterns, social cognitions, emotions pertaining to career preparation, occupational prestige, level of career awareness, and a number of related variables. It was noted that orientations to work and career were significantly influenced by career beliefs pertaining to the prestige attributions of occupational families. Most importantly, it was seen that in the Indian context, notion of a personal career was still somewhat alien. Choice of career was largely dominated by the views of the family and community. The findings of the WORCC-IRS were discussed by leading social scientists, educators, psychologists, youth workers, and policy makers at a National Consultation on Career Psychology (NCCP). Three key recommendations came out of this consultation (Arulmani, 2006):

- Use the WORCC-IRS findings to develop culturally validated teaching-learning material for careers education suitable for the Indian context.
- Develop a skilled workforce to deliver career counselling services around the country.
- Draw the attention of policy makers to the importance of career counselling.

These recommendations gave shape to the Jiva approach to career and livelihood planning. The findings of the WORCC-IRS

and the recommendations of the NCCP were interpreted in the context of the prevailing educational system and labour market, and a model for career guidance in the Indian context emerged.

In another exercise, QUEST Alliance conducted a series of pilot studies and extensive consultations with schools teachers, administrators, and educators in various regions of India including Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Delhi (QUEST Alliance, 2011). Based on their findings, the organisation formulated a model that focused on enhancing academic engagement and facilitating students' career decision making. The model has been implemented in government schools in Delhi and Bihar.

Development of Career Information Resources

Information has been the key throughout the history of career development practice since Parsons (1909). Labour market information (LMI) includes occupational information; job information; career information; employment trends; employer information; and educational, training, and course information (Bimrose, Marris, Barnes, & Mason, 2006). Unlike economically more advanced countries like Canada and Australia, a well functioning labour market information system is still a distant dream in most economically developing countries. However, there are a few exceptions. In the developing world, Jamaica appears to be one of the leaders in establishing an effective and comprehensive labour market information system (LMIS) (National Skills Development Commission/United Nations Development Programme, 2011). Box 2 summarises the Jamaican experience.

In India, the main producers of LMI at the central level are: Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGET), the Labour Bureau of India, the National

Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), and the Central Statistical Office. There are some useful and innovative initiatives at state levels as well (NSDC/UNDP, 2011).

However, the information available is fragmented, limited, delayed, and not presented in a user-friendly manner. Hence, its usage level is limited. One encouraging development, however, can be seen in the form of the National Policy on

Box 2

Development of career information services: The Jamaican experience

The Jamaican LMIS was launched in 2002 by the planning and monitoring unit of Ministry of Labour and Social Security. It has three key components, namely: Labour Market Information (LMI), Electronic Labour Exchange (ELE), and Related Services. The component of LMI includes general information on the wider economy, definitions, legislations, socioeconomic data, summary and detailed labour demand and supply data. ELE facilitates efficient matching of job seekers and employers where seekers can post résumés and execute job searches and employers can post vacancies and search for potential employees. Under Related Services, there is information on support services such as career counselling, sources for funding for educational pursuits, and course offerings at institutions. Wide coverage and interactivity appear to be the key features of the Jamaican LMIS.

Skill Development (Government of India [GOI], 2009) which acknowledges the importance of LMIS as a prerequisite for minimising skills mismatch and maximising the relevance of skill development initiatives. It mandates the National Skill Development Corporation to constitute Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). One of the functions of these SSCs is to establish a well structured, sector specific Labour Market Information System (LMIS) at national, state, and local levels. The National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) will be responsible for dissemination of information at the national level. In compliance with this mandate, NSDC with UNDP-India recently commissioned a concept paper on “Labour Market Information System: An Indian Perspective” (NSDC/UNDP, 2011), which has been prepared by Ernst & Young Private Limited. The National Skill Development Commission (NSDC) has launched an online platform, Skillpedia (NSDC, 2012) which attempts to bring job seekers, employers, and training providers in the skills sector together to complement

the Government of India’s goal of creating a 500 million skilled workforce by 2022, when India completes 75 years of its independence. At this portal a candidate can search for training opportunities or jobs by sector, region, city, and employer. They can also post their résumés. Employers can post specific skills requirements and job openings. They can search for skilled workforce by skill set, sectors, regions, state, and city. They can also pre-screen candidates using the inbuilt assessment engine. Training providers can post the details of various courses on offer. While this portal is up and running, vigorous activities are yet to be seen on this platform.

Some efforts have also been made by non-government organisations. One of the objectives of the India-based Jiva project (www.jivacareer.org/project) was to develop a standard system of classification of occupations relevant for India. The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) developed by the ILO and the 2004 version of the National Classification of Occupations (NCO) developed by the Government of India were

used for standardising career names and definitions to develop a Careers Dictionary for students and career choosers. Following the structure of the ISCO, the careers have been defined at two levels. At one level the characteristic of a career was defined, at another level the tasks related to that particular career were listed. This standardised career information was made available in the following forms:

- Careers Information Data Manager software that presents comprehensive information on 164 careers including their definitions, potentials required, career paths, eligibility, examples of specialisations, and details of colleges and institutions where certificates, diplomas, and degrees are offered in preparation for these careers in India.
- A set of Career Information Cards classified according to a theoretically validated scheme (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004) presented in a user-friendly manner.
- A Careers Dictionary for quick reference, which is an abbreviated version of the information on the Career Information Cards.
- A Career Information Resource Handbook which contains key information about schemes, scholarships, and the courses offered by government departments related to career development, with specific emphasis on the disadvantaged.

Promotion of Work Choice, Search, and Maintenance Skills Development

In an era when all-age career services are being advocated (e.g., Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2004; Watts, 2011) it is assumed that policy makers would attempt to make provisions for the same. This means that there should be career education in schools, counselling to facilitate educational choice related to subjects/courses/colleges/careers using appropriate assessment tools, training on job search and career preparation skills

(such as résumé writing and interview techniques), enhancing job readiness to facilitate easy entry into gainful employment, career management skills to progress in the career and deal with career transitions, and post-retirement counselling. Surprisingly, an all-age career service is a reality in three high-income countries only, namely New Zealand, Scotland, and Wales (Watts, 2008). However, there are significant developments in different pockets.

Career Education

The position paper prepared by a national focus group on work and education in India (NCERT, 2007) advocates reconstructing “the entire school curriculum from the pre-primary to senior secondary stage with a view to making productive work (and other forms of work as well, including social engagement) a pedagogic medium for knowledge acquisition, developing values and multiple-skill formation” (p. III). The recommendations of this focus group are yet to become operational. Once operational, the policy is likely to prepare young people better for the world of work.

However, a few organisations, such as QUEST Alliance, have made small but significant efforts in the direction of career education. QUEST Alliance has developed Career Education modules for students in grades 7-10 (QUEST Alliance, 2011). The module for the students of Classes grades 7 and 8 focuses on enhancing academic engagement in four subjects, namely: English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. In the process of teaching key concepts, each module introduces new careers in a learner-friendly way through the lens of the subject. It also helps students acquire decision-making skills.

Career Counselling

In India, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the largest school affiliating agency in the country, had

made career counselling in higher secondary classes mandatory from 2009. CBSE introduced the Student Global Aptitude Index (SGAI) in 2011 as an optional activity for grade 10 students studying in CBSE-affiliated schools across the world (CBSE, 2012). SGAI is a collection of indices such as aptitude, interest, and personality. Unlike conventional aptitude tests, which indicate career orientations, SGAI aims to indicate subject orientations at higher secondary level (e.g., science, humanities, commerce). A manual of activities for teachers has also been developed as a supporting resource. During the years 2011 and 2012 more than 300,000 students took the CBSE SGAI across the world. At the same time, not much development has been noticed in preparing counsellors to deliver the service. A few self-motivated teachers do conduct career awareness sessions and a few interested principals do hire counsellors.

In the non-government sector there are a number of organisations who have developed their own career counselling model. The Jiva Approach has been designed by The Promise Foundation, a Bangalore based organisation. It has developed a series of culturally- and developmentally-appropriate worksheets to facilitate understanding of self, understanding the world of work, choosing career alternatives, and preparing for a career primarily for students who are in higher secondary classes. For the purpose of assessment, the model uses a blend of qualitative and quantitative techniques including standardised aptitude tests, an interest inventory, a checklist of hobbies and accomplishments, a performance test to assess spatial and mechanical abilities, and parental input about the client's academic and behavioural history.

Leveraging technology to reach a larger audience for delivering career services is a welcome development in India. In addition to Skillpedia, career portals such as www.meracareerguide.com (selected as

country's best career counselling platform for the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India ASSOCHAM National Excellence Awards 2013), www.onestepup.in (which uses videos and other devices to deepen career learning), www.jobeeestan.com, www.youngbuzz.com are being used by a number of users. Most of these portals provide online psychometric assessments and complement it with face-to-face interaction or an email follow up.

Job Placement and Employability Skills Training

The Department of Labour and Employment in India is mandated to deliver career services through its bureaux and employment exchanges but it largely serves as a placement agency. However, placement services are generally being taken care of by private players. Services to develop career preparation skills such as résumé writing and facing interviews are largely concentrated in big cities. An interesting initiative has been taken up by the Community and Progress Foundation (CAP), a Hyderabad-based organisation. Its Basic Employability Skill Training (BEST) is designed for school dropouts, unemployed secondary school graduates, street youth, retrenched workers, and migrant youth. The program supports both employment opportunity oriented workforce preparation and microenterprise development (CAP Foundation, 2011).

Career Services in the Vocational Sector

With a National Policy on Skill Development (GOI, 2009), a full chapter on Skill Development and Training in the 11th Five Year Plan (Planning Commission, 2007), massive investment in skill development, design of a slew of new curricula and opening of vocational institutions, vocational training is going to take a quantum leap in India. Although the vital importance of guidance and counselling for students in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

programmes has been underscored (Hiebert & Borgen, 2002; Sultana, 2012; Watts, 2009; Zelloth, 2010) no policy or provision is yet in place in India to bring career guidance and the TVET system together. However, the recently constituted National Skills Development Corporation has been established to develop employability through skill development by creating, funding, and enabling training ventures. It has tied up with a number of organisations to develop trade specific as well as generic employability skills in the vocational sector through approximately 80 training partners and 21 sector skill councils spread over nearly 1,500 centres across the country (NSDC, 2009a). This organisation is mandated to assess and train 1.74 million young people comprising school dropouts, educated unemployable youth, and unskilled workers in 10 years for Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI); Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), and the unorganised work sector (NSDC, 2009b).

Organisation of Service Delivery

The main sectors for delivering career services include: schools, tertiary education, public employment services, employer based services, and the private and voluntary sectors (Watts & Fretwell, 2004). Schools have been the most common institution for delivering career services in most of the developing nations (e.g., Chang, 2002; Pope, Musa, Singaravelu, Bringaze, & Russell, 2002; Watts & Fretwell, 2004). In most cases, career counselling is subsumed under general guidance activities undertaken by the school counsellor. In a context where trained counselling professionals are few and far between, it is the dedicated teacher who dons the hat of a career counsellor. However, there are instances where the school administration does invest in career guidance services by deputing their counsellors and/or teachers for training. For instance, the Jiva project of The Promise Foundation in Bangalore, offers a certificate in career guidance and

livelihood planning that prepares teachers and counsellors to establish career resource centres in their respective schools. The course focuses on skills to conduct group workshops on various career learning themes, help students identify their potentials and make career choices, create career development posters and cards, organise careers fairs, and conduct workshops for parents. Apart from modules like this, some schools also offer career services as part of life skills development programmes.

Career guidance services are not well established in the higher education sector in most of the developing nations perhaps because these countries are focussing on improving services at the school level. While the University Grants Commission in India has made funds available for conducting career counselling services in undergraduate colleges, in cases where the service is delivered it generally does not go beyond career awareness sessions. Most professional colleges and some universities offer placement services as a selling point for their institutions. The availability of professional career guidance services in such institutions is not known. A summary of career services in Indian higher education systems is provided in Appendix A.

Barring the exceptions of a few multinational companies, provisions of career development services at the workplace is virtually unknown in India. A few voluntary and for profit private organisations are providing career services in the community but the population covered by them is very small.

Staff Development to Support Service Delivery

There seems to be no legitimate excuse today for situations in which those providing career services have no training in career interventions yet, too often, this is the case. Careers are much too complex to allow this

situation to continue. (Niles & Karajic, 2008, p. 371)

Despite the fact that the qualifications and standards of career counsellors have emerged as a significant issue in the careers world (e.g., Plant, 2001) and it has been found that interventions by a career professional work better than an information-only intervention (Gillie & Isenhour, 2003), not enough attention has been paid to preparing careers professionals in most developing nations. However, in a country like India, due to the increasingly high demand for career counselling services, practitioners from a variety of backgrounds have entered career counselling, most with few or no qualifications in career development (Arulmani, Christo, & Kumar, 2007). Counselling professionals are trained in India through courses offered by the university system and through the initiatives of voluntary organisations (Arulmani, 2007a). However, there are very few courses in India which are specifically designed for preparing career counselling professionals. The International Diploma in Guidance and Counselling (IDGC) run by the NCERT (2012) is one such example. The NCERT has been offering in-service training for school teachers, teacher educators, school administrators, as well as untrained guidance personnel through its diploma in Guidance and Counselling for many years (Gupta, 2006). In order to make the course accessible to larger numbers, this course has now been redesigned as IDGC with components of both distance/online as well as face-to-face modes. As per its website, the course aims at meeting the needs of students from developing nations, particularly from SAARC and Afro-Asian countries with similar socioeconomic and educational problems and needs. The intake capacity of each of the six centres is a maximum of 50 with 30% seats allocated for non-Indian candidates. It is pertinent to note that only 4 out of the 14 modules on offer focus on career development and related themes.

Other than this diploma course, a number of university departments are offering degree and diploma programmes in guidance and counselling under various course names where a paper/module/chapter has been dedicated to career guidance (see an indicative list in Appendix B). For delivering career services, in a huge country like India, there is only one PhD programme, two masters' level courses, two diploma courses, and a couple of certificate courses (see Appendix C for a list). A review of curricula of these courses indicates that they focus more on building capacities for counselling students in high school and higher secondary school. They do not train counsellors for specifically dealing with students who are in higher education, vocational education or for helping young people who are out of school or people with special needs. At the same time, most of the counselling training programmes in India are known to have imported ideas, models, and structures from the West (Arulmani, 2007a). If the services and training initiatives are not grounded in indigenous realities, they are not likely to be sustainable and relevant (Kapur, 2006).

Professional associations must play an important role in ensuring continuing education and professional development through periodic conferences, publications, and other networking opportunities. Some of the prominent associations in the developing world are: The Career Development Association of the Philippines, The South African Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance, the Indian Association for Career and Livelihood Planning, the India Career Development Association, and the Asia-Pacific Career Development Association.

Improvement of Governance and Coordination

As Hansen (2006) has rightly summarised, the coordination of career guidance activities is challenging because of: the fragmented nature of service

delivery, lack of a robust professional establishment uniting practitioners, bifurcation of public leadership between departments of Education and Labour, and lower visibility and support due to the dispersed nature of services. She lists five means through which services can be created or strengthened at the national level, which include: legislation, public funding, programme planning, monitoring and evaluation, national coordination mechanisms, and regulation or standard-setting.

In the Indian context, policy pronouncements in the recent past highlight that Indian policymakers have also been acutely aware of the significance of career guidance and counselling services in the current context. These documents emphasise the importance of career information, guidance, and counselling services for adolescents and youth (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2003; Planning Commission, 2001, 2006a), for students in secondary schools (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2005, n.d.), and young people in the vocational sector (Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2008; Planning Commission, 2006b). As a result, the 11th Five Year Plan has provided budgets for career counselling activities to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports through funding provided to community-based organisations and to the Ministry of Human Resource Development through funding provided to schools and colleges. While there are sketchy provisions for monitoring of such initiatives, no emphasis has been laid on programme planning, evaluation, national coordination mechanisms, and regulation or standard-setting for service delivery. In this context, an experience from the Maldives may be worth considering. Under the Employment Skills Training Project, a Career Guidance Working Group (Arulmani, 2007b) was constituted to ensure smooth coordination. This inter-ministerial group consisted of members from Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth Development and Sports,

and the Maldives College of Higher Education. In the Indian context also, Ministries of Labour and Employment, Youth Affairs, and Human Resource Development should coordinate career services nationally.

For coordination at the service delivery level, career specialists at employment exchanges (Public Employment Services) can provide services in a school/college/community setting. Similarly, a career practitioner in a school or college can work with neighbourhood communities as well.

Establishment of Career Services in the Developing World Context: Recommended Steps

Review of Existing Career Development Services

As mooted by the OECD (2004), a national review of career services should be conducted by developing a questionnaire on career services that can be used both for national and institutional service audits. This review must seek opinions from all the stakeholders including students (both present and past), employers, faculty members, and families. This review should also target specific groups of students such as rural students, students in transition from study to employment, students who are dropping out from or changing their courses, distance learners, international students, the disadvantaged (socially, economically, and geographically), and the disabled. It would not only give a status report of existing services, it would also inform about best practices, problem areas, existing gaps, neglected areas, and future possibilities and challenges.

Creating Baseline Data on Career Development Behaviours

As the first step, it is important to generate a comprehensive database of career orientations, mindsets, perceived

barriers, key influences, and career development mechanisms of individuals across the life span from different contexts and different educational levels. This database would be vital for designing a contextually-relevant career services system. This kind of an exercise was undertaken for higher secondary students in 13 different regions of India which yielded invaluable data and insights that led both to impact on policy as well the formulation of a culture-resonant approach to career guidance (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2006). Such an exercise is required for college and university students, out-of-school adolescents and young adults, and those who are already employed so that suitable interventions can be designed.

Creating a Robust Labour Market Information Base

As pointed out earlier, timely availability of accurate and relevant information is vital in any career guidance programme. Countries in the developing world are at different levels of development of centralised labour market information systems (LMIS). It is important that career practitioners are also consulted at the development stage because they are perhaps able to assay the felt needs of career choosers better. National Skills Development Council (NSDC) with UNDP-India recently commissioned a concept paper on “Labour Market Information System: An Indian Perspective” (NSDC/UNDP, 2011). While this concept paper acknowledges the importance of careers practitioners for a comprehensive LMIS, they were not consulted in the formulation of this paper! It is also important to note that the mere availability of LMI does not automatically mean that it will be used effectively for making occupational and educational decisions. Users need to be oriented and trained to use LMI effectively. Although the National Policy on Skills Development (GOI, 2009) mandates widespread dissemination of LMI at all the levels, no plan seems to be in

place yet for capacity building of users. A review of the literature for this paper showed that training in LMI for careers practitioners in India is almost non-existent. Most of the curricula reviewed barely touch upon LMI and there is almost a complete absence of well-structured learning resources for career guidance practitioners. Inclusion of counsellors’ voices in development of LMIS and their capacity building for using this system are vital aspects for creating a relevant information database and ensuring its adequate usage.

Location of Career Services: Target groups and their Specific Career Development Needs

Theoretically, all services that deal with the needs of present or future jobseekers should become a location for situating career services. But for planning purposes, it is useful to look at broad target groups and situate the services strategically. Some key locations could be as follows:

Educational and Training Organisations

At the elementary school level, focus should be more on career education where emphasis is laid on helping students understand the links between careers and the subjects they are studying. For the students in secondary and higher secondary levels, opportunities should be given for self-discovery which may facilitate an appropriate choice of stream/course at a later stage. For students in higher education, more focus should be at course/major selection before the beginning of the course and a series of opportunities for career preparation at the end of the course with considerable emphasis on résumé writing and interview techniques because they are about to enter the labour market compared to their counterparts who are in schools. Similarly, for the students in vocational and technical training institutes services should be made available at the beginning and at the end as well so that

they choose the course appropriately and they also become job ready.

Public Employment Services (PES)

These are employment services, popularly known as an employment exchange in India. People register their details and requirements for employment with these exchanges. In some Indian states, this registration is mandatory if a person wishes to be considered for a government job. Most often the PES serves merely as a placement agency. These agencies could expand their role and become guidance providers.

Community-based organisations (CBOs)

These could be organisations that serve youth in the community. A number of CBOs are working with youth who are not in education, employment, or training on issues related to education, livelihoods, and allied sectors (Bakshi & Joshi, 2014). They usually have credibility in the community, as well as easy access to and experience of dealing with the target group. These advantages make CBOs a natural location for situating career services. Raising self-efficacy for decision-making, instilling a sense of hope and optimism, and ability to connect with and utilise existing support services would be some of the key expectations of a career service for this type of target group.

Human Resource (HR) Departments

Career development services in organisational contexts are conspicuous in their absence in developing countries. It is important that these services are promoted as a key HR function within the organisation. These services can focus on increasing job readiness, placement in an appropriate department, and information about and smooth transition to a new opportunity.

Institutions Catering to Special Needs

Educational and career successes are closely associated with coping with special needs as well recovering from physical and psychological illnesses. Therefore, rehabilitation centres, occupational therapy units, institutions for people with special needs, de-addiction centres, prisons, correctional institutions, facilitation centres for migrants and refugees are all examples of locations where suitably adapted career guidance services can be located.

It is important to note that a number of best practices are available for replication for each of the locations mentioned in the previous paragraphs. Due to limitations of space let us take an example of career services in tertiary education sector only. A manual commissioned by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2002) for developing, implementing, and assessing career counselling services in higher education settings as a follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education organised in 1998 provides a good starting point. This manual has been developed as a reference tool for those who are involved in the reform and revitalisation of higher education systems and institutions (UNESCO, 2002). It provides a framework, lists out possible tools to be used, and details the various components of a centre.

Training Career Professionals

Career counselling can be seen both as a role and as a profession. In order to prepare them for an additional role, practitioners working in the locations mentioned in the previous section would benefit from pertinent inputs of theory and skills so that they can address the specific career development needs of their respective target groups. Pre-service training curricula can have a module on the same. For in-service practitioners, short, add-on courses would be useful for staying updated and/or gaining skills relevant for

new target groups. In order to train career professionals who could provide specialised services, curricula should be devised based on suitable competency frameworks and contextual requirements through postgraduate degrees/diplomas.

Coordinated and Concerted Policymaking and Implementation

For a national career counselling service to become a reality, policy action is vital. While a number of stakeholders need to be involved in developing a robust career guidance system, ultimately it is the policymakers who play the most fundamental role in ensuring that the following are in place: funding; capacity building measures; and mechanisms for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation are in place. The OECD has published a series of useful documents for policymakers. However, policymakers need to decide the level at which career services are to be provided. On the one hand, career services could be conceptualised as a mandatory requirement for all the citizens of a country. On the other hand it could be left loose and optional. If it is to be a mandatory service, a number of further issues must be addressed: the levels at which these service are to be provided, the qualifications of the staff, quality control and coordination mechanisms. For example in India, there are at least 20 departments/ministries which have employment-related schemes for young people directly or indirectly. In most of the cases they are not aware of each other's initiatives leading to wastage of resources on the one hand and overall ineffectiveness on the other. In a context where resources are scarce, prioritising target groups in terms of population coverage and urgency

of need, would be a key guideline to plan a career service.

Conclusions

Compared to their more developed counterparts, the establishment of career information, guidance, and counselling services in economically developing world context is in its infancy. However, as discussed in this chapter, some vigorous movements can be discerned in a country like India. There are policies advocating career services and funds to enable career services. However, almost no attention has been paid to building the capacity of the people who are supposed to shoulder the responsibility of service delivery. The trained workforce for delivering career services is grossly inadequate, the training they receive is partially irrelevant, and the coverage of the clientele is limited largely to young people in the school sector. The need is to prepare to community of career guidance professionals who can address different kinds of career development needs using culturally resonant methods and who can leverage information technology to its fullest. It is also important to keep in mind that it is in developing countries that 85% of young people in the age group of 15–24 years are found (World Bank, 2006). Most of these youth live in rural areas characterised by a rapid decline in work opportunities and a high level of uncertainties (ILO, 2010). As Ratnam (2011) has asserted, the question of nature and thrust of the career services required in the developing world context must be looked into. At the same time it is important that career services are viewed and planned as a unified whole which would ensure availability of quality services for career information, guidance, and counselling across all age groups.

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Appendix A

Current status of career services in the Indian higher education system

According to the website of Directorate General of Employment and Training (www.dget.nic.in), the Vocational Guidance and Employment Counselling programme was formulated as a part of National Employment Service in the year 1956 and has been in operation since 1957. It aims at catering to the educational and vocational guidance needs of students and job-seekers. The key objectives include: rendering continuous assistance to individuals in preparing to choose, change, and adjust to occupational life; generating awareness and appreciation of the realities of the employment market; and collaborating or cooperating with other agencies in the field to stimulate and promote joint efforts to enhance their employability. As per the website, the services are being delivered through the network of 938 Employment Exchanges in general and specialised services by trained personnel through 360 Vocational Guidance Units set up in the District Employment Exchanges and 82 University Employment Information and Guidance Bureaux (UEIGBx) functioning in Universities in particular. In addition to conducting individual and group counselling programmes, facilitating self-awareness and awareness of labour market, the UEIGBx are expected to perform some special functions like organising career conferences/exhibitions/seminars/career campaigns to disseminate occupational information; coaching classes to develop desired level of skills, speed, and knowledge which can help increase employability by preparing students for competitive examinations/interviews conducted by various recruiting agencies such as the Union Public Service Commission and Staff Selection Commission; motivating and assisting alumni to opt for self-employment; setting up of guidance booths during college admission time ; and conducting and organising campus recruitment programmes.

The 11th Five Year Plan provided for a grant of up to Rs 3 lakhs for eligible colleges to set up and run career counselling cells. The guideline document of University Grants Commission (UGC, n.d.) articulates the following functions of the cell:

- gather information on job avenues and placements in different institutions,
- provide information related to the courses that the college offers,
- analyse information in the local, regional, and national contexts in order to explore its relevance and utility for student placements and on-job training,
- organise seminars and guidance workshops for informing students about the emerging professional trends, job profiles, leadership roles, entrepreneurship, market needs and risks,
- implement national socioeconomic policies related to career development and livelihood planning.

Of the stipulated amount of Rs 3 lakhs, Rs.2.00 lakhs is a non-recurring grant supposed to be used for purchasing computers with internet, and a laser printer, photocopier, and FAX. The remaining Rs.1.00 lakh is a recurring grant supposed to be spent on paying TA/DA and honoraria to resource persons and buying reading material. The guideline specifically says that no regular teaching or non-teaching post under the scheme is permitted to be created or funded.

Under 11th Five Year Plan, there is also a scheme of remedial coaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and minority communities students. One of the key objectives of this scheme is to provide career guidance and psychological counselling for capacity building to those who are in need of such counselling.

Some institutions also invite private career counselling professionals for conducting workshops but such initiatives are few and far between and are largely limited to tier I and tier II cities.

Industry associations such as Confederation of Indian Industries and occupation-specific associations such as Institute of Chartered Accountants of India conduct career counselling programmes in colleges and universities. Philanthropic organisations such as Rotary and Lions Clubs do conduct careers workshops at some places. The current review did not yield any evidence of the impact and effectiveness of the initiatives mentioned above probably owing to the absence of any formal assessment.

Appendix B

Indian postgraduate counselling courses with a module or a chapter on career counselling

Course Level	Examples of Course Name	Examples of Institute
Degree	M.A. in Guidance and Counselling	Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal
	M.Sc. in Psychological Counselling	Sampurnna Montfort College, Bangalore
	M.Sc. in Clinical and Counselling Psychology	Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College, Ujire
	M.A. in Counselling Psychology	Amity University, Noida, Lucknow
	M.Ed. in Guidance and Counselling	Punjab University, Chandigarh
Diploma	M.A. in Counselling	Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
Diploma	Post graduate diploma in Guidance and Counselling	Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla; Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore; M S University, Baroda; University of Madras, Chennai; Rani Durgavati Vishwavidyalay, Jabalpur; University of Mumbai, Mumbai; Annamalai University, Annamalainagar; Pt Ravi Shankar Shukla University, Raipur; SNDT University, Mumbai; Sri Venkateshwara University, Tirupati; Vinayaka Missions University, Salem; Nirmala Institute of Education, Panjim; Amity University, Guragaon, NOIDA, Lucknow, Jaipur, Gurgaon; Government College of Education Psychology and Guidance, Jabalpur; University of Goa, Taleigao Plateau, Goa; Periyar University, Salem; Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi; SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education, Mumbai; NCERT through Department of Educational Psychology and Foundations of Education (DEPFE), National Institute of Education (NIE), New Delhi and five Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs) at Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Mysore and Shillong.
Certificate	Certificate in Guidance	Indira Gandhi National Open University
	Basic Skills in Counselling	Parivarthan: Counselling, Training and Research Centre, Bangalore

Appendix C

Courses for the training of career practitioners

Course Level	Course Name	Institute
Degree	Ph.D. in Career Counselling and Livelihood Planning	Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong
	M.A. Career Counselling	Rajiv Gandhi National Institute for Youth Development, Sriperumbudur
	M. A. Career Guidance	Bharathiar University, Coimbatore
Diploma	Diploma in Vocational Guidance	Institute of Vocational Guidance and Selection, Mumbai
	PGD Vocational Guidance and Career Counselling	U.P. Rajrashi Tandon Open University, Allahabad
Certificate	Certificate Course in Basic Skills for Career Counselling	Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong