

CHAPTER III

VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 Vocational Choice
- 3.2 Vocational Development
- 3.3 Vocational Maturity
- 3.4 Intelligence and Vocational Development
- 3.5 Attitudes and Vocational Development
- 3.6 Interests and Vocational Development
- 3.7 Personality and Vocational Development
- 3.8 Family and Vocational Development
- 3.9 Summary

3.1 Vocational Choice

The term vocational choice is frequently used in the discussion on vocational development. However, it does not refer to a single event taking place at a particular time in the life of an individual. It is a process, in the sense that an individual is required to make a series of choices in his educational and pre-vocational environment before the final act of choosing a particular occupation takes place. In the initial stage, the choices that are made are more general and gradually they become more and more specific. The final act of choosing a specific occupation does not mark the end point in the process. It still continues within the occupation chosen. The term vocational development is preferred by many, to the term vocational choice, as it takes into account all the developmental processes. The use of such a term will lead us to explore the various factors which determine vocational choices at various stages.

3.2 Vocational Development

The concept of vocational development is very comprehensive as it considers the continuity of the development of interests, preferences and

vocational choices. Vocational development is actually one of the aspects of the individual's personal development. It starts from the early years of childhood especially from the point at which the child begins to be aware of various work related experiences. During this time, the child sees in his environment, number of persons doing different types of jobs. His ideas about jobs are, in the initial stages, very crude and fantastic. At a later stage these ideas give rise to both general and specific interests which in turn are realized in subsequent educational and vocational activities. Besides this, number of factors in the child's environment exercise their influence in his vocational development. Vocational development is essentially a development in relation to vocational choice. It can be thought of as a continuum which can be broken down into sub-stages of development.

The thorough understanding of the processes involved in vocational development is of immense importance to specialists in the field of guidance. In actual practice, the researches are very few and they are of fairly recent origin even in countries where the guidance movement has been started since

long. Two important researches are worthy of mention in this connection. One of these was conducted by Dr. Eli Ginzberg and his associates¹ at the University of Columbia. In this project, large number of individuals were interviewed in the matters pertaining to educational and vocational choice. This resulted in the publication of a book entitled "Occupational choice; An Approach to General Theory". The second project which is generally known as "Career Pattern Study" has been undertaken at Teachers' College, Columbia University, under the guidance of Dr. Donald E. Super. This is a longitudinal study in which the vocational development of adolescent boys is being followed for a period of twenty years.

In India, the guidance movement is yet in the initial stages of development. The guidance workers in this country, have not moved beyond the construction and standardization of various instruments of diagnosis. Moreover, the conditions of individual's personal development in this country are

1 Ginzberg, E., et al, Occupational Choice, Columbia University Press, New York, 1951.

different from those in other countries. The studies in the area of vocational development will, therefore, certainly throw light on the practices followed in vocational guidance centres.

3.3 Vocational Maturity

The concept of vocational development is intimately related to the concept of vocational maturity. Vocational maturity refers to the individual's ability or preparedness to choose, prepare for, enter and achieve success in an occupation. It is thus, a measure of the degree of development which can be located on the vocational development continuum. Vocational development, is concerned with the whole process, which includes choice, entry, adjustment and establishment in an occupation. Ginzberg and his associates¹, while studying this process felt the need for dividing vocational development into various phases. The first phase is characterized by fantasy choices which are influenced by emotional forces and the individual's strivings towards becoming an adult. The second phase is the period of tentative choices which are generally determined by interests, values

1 Ibid.,

and the realization of abilities. The final phase is regarded as the period of realistic choices because such choices are governed by the awareness of occupational realities and the concept of self. This final phase is again sub-divided into three phases, namely, exploratory, crystallization and specification.

The development of the concept of vocational maturity is the result of Super's¹ own observation during his study of vocational development in 9th grade boys. When students are confronted with the problem of making curricular choices, it should be ascertained whether the necessary development has taken place or not to make such choices. At the time of making such choices, the individual's vocational development must be characterized by the requisite degree of vocational maturity. In order to ascertain the degree of vocational maturity, it is necessary to specify the criteria of maturity. Such criteria as the awareness of the need for making a choice of occupations, consistency with which vocational choices are made, interest patterns, and

¹ Super, D.E. and Overstreet Phoebe L., The Vocational Maturity of Ninth Grade Boys, (New York: Teachers College, Bureau of Publication, 1960.

compatibility of ability and preference, have been proposed from time to time. The better criterion would be the synthesis of these various criteria.

The concept of vocational maturity thus, requires the development of an adequate criterion and preparation of scales to detect vocationally mature and immature individuals. If vocationally immature individuals are detected by means of such scales, they can be helped to increase their maturity, thus enabling them to make suitable choices.

In promoting vocational development the counsellor should have a better knowledge of the tools, techniques and resources of vocational guidance. The traditional approach of counselling consisted of matching individuals in terms of their abilities with job requirements. Even in this kind of approach, it is assumed that an individual is maladjusted both because he lacks knowledge of himself and of the world of work. In this approach, too much emphasis is placed on facts.

According to the modern approach, the maladjustment is not so much due to facts as it is due to

attitudes. Most of the problems pertaining to vocations are emotional in nature. Instead of reacting to facts, the counsellor gives much more importance to the feelings and attitudes of the client. During counselling, the counsellor stimulates the client to talk freely about various aspects of his background. Thus, the client is helped in exploring his psychological self rather than in solving a specific problem which he brings to the counsellor. With this comes self understanding and self acceptance which enable the individual to face facts and to deal with them rationally and confidently. Many things about the client, examined in the light of the new self understanding, are now retained or rejected depending upon whether they are consistent or inconsistent with the self-concept respectively. New values emerge during this process and they are incorporated into the self-concept. Actually there is no discrepancy between the two approaches discussed above. A judicious combination of these approaches might prove to be more helpful.

There are number of studies which are directly concerned with the nature of choice processes operating from childhood to maturity. Vocational choice processes

have been correlated with number of factors like intelligence, interests, aptitudes, family status and personality factors. In this section, these various factors are examined in the light of current researches.

3.4 Intelligence and Vocational Development

The role played by intelligence in educational and vocational choice has been frequently studied. Intelligence test scores have been correlated with such criteria as vocational choice, ability to secure a particular job, adjustment to job, satisfaction, and success in training. It is now known that more intelligent persons have more appropriate occupational objectives. This is quite obvious because the more intelligent persons have better insight in their own abilities and in job requirements. Some of the research findings as reported by Super regarding the role of intelligence are as follows:

- (1) People tend, in so far as circumstances permit, to gravitate toward jobs in which they have ability to compete successfully with others.

(2) Given intelligence above the minimum required for learning the occupation, additional increments of intelligence appear to have no special effect on an individual's success in that occupation.

(3) In routine occupations requiring speed and accuracy, intelligence as measured by an alertness rather than a power test is related to success in the training period and in some vocations, after the initial adjustments are made.¹

The role of intelligence in higher occupations and in skilled and unskilled occupations needs yet to be studied.

3.5 Aptitudes and Vocational Development

Aptitudes, like intelligence, also play an important role in the process of decision making. In fact, very little is known about the role of aptitudes in vocational preferences. The effects of aptitudes on vocational development may be general as well as specific. Some aptitudes like spatial visualization do influence the preferences of certain occupations while some other aptitudes like perceptual speed and

¹ Super, D.E., Appraising Vocational Fitness, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1960, p. 99.

accuracy have no such known influence. Aptitudes are also related to advancement in occupations or success in training. At present, our knowledge of the precise role of aptitudes in vocational choice is incomplete. It is generally believed, that there are many factors other than aptitudes which determine success in occupations and even if we are capable of measuring aptitudes with perfect accuracy, it would contribute very little to the solutions of problems related to occupational choices. Despite the fact that there are gaps in our knowledge of the role of aptitudes in vocational preferences, during the recent years a considerable amount of information has been accumulated which may enable us in future to understand the processes involved in vocational development.

3.6 Interests and Vocational Development

It is most probable that an individual will choose an occupation in which he is interested. Interests in activities which are non-vocational in nature provide very useful clues to the inclinations of the individual. There are well standardized tests ~~while~~ which could be profitably used to determine interest scores. It would be possible to know on the basis of

scores, whether the interest patterns of a particular person in a particular occupation are similar to those who are successfully engaged in the same occupation. Many things are now known about the nature of interests and about the role played by them in vocational development. It is known, for example, that heredity plays an important part in the development of interests, that the interest patterns are related to general intelligence, that there is no relationship between special aptitudes and interests. Interests as measured by interest inventory are related to vocational development. It has been observed that people tend to enter and to continue in those fields which provide opportunities to express their interests. Three different types of interests have been distinguished. They are, (1) expressed interests (2) manifest interests and (3) inventoried interests.

Expressed interests refer to the likes and dislikes of an individual. They are generally not very reliable especially during childhood and early adolescence. They are susceptible to change. The changes in expressed interests are in accordance with the needs of the individuals. From middle adolescence onwards, occupational preferences become more and more

stable. They are moderately related to inventoried interests.

Manifest interests are inferred from activities engaged in. They are susceptible to change with the changes in age. It can be said here that participation in various activities at different stages of development is not as much a function of enduring interests as it is a function of needs. Some persons retain their hobbies and activities for years together. In such cases manifest interest are related to inventoried interests and also to stability in job.

Inventoried interest scores are obtained by administering the Interest Inventory. Inventoried interests are related to choice and entry. People do enter occupations which are generally in line with their inventoried interests. Success in an occupation is known to be related to interest in some occupations. Advancement in an occupation might be expected to be partly a function of interest. Satisfaction in work, is most logically related to interests. In summary, vocational interests are best defined in terms of the methods used to measure them. Interest Inventory

which gives scores for various types of interests is found to be better than any other method. Inventoried interests are related to vocational development, for there is a strong tendency among people to enter and remain in fields which provide outlets for their interests as measured by Interest Inventory.

3.7 Personality and Vocational Development

It is quite reasonable to assume that personality is in some way related to occupational choice. The selection of an occupation is a medium through which personality expresses itself. Just as vocational development is a continuous process, personality development is also a continuous process. Vocational development takes place under a variety of influences. This is also true for personality. It is, therefore, interesting to know how these two variables are related. There has been a persistent search for this kind of relation but in actual practice very little success has been achieved. Personality has been studied in relation to occupational preferences, entry into the occupations, and success and satisfaction in occupations.

There is some truth in stating that

personality is related to occupational preferences.

According to Super's self-concept theory:

The occupation preferred should be one in which the individual expects to be able to be the kind of person he perceives himself as being, to assume a role which is congenial and compatible with the self-concept.¹

In a given occupation, one possibility is that different persons might see a particular role. The second possibility is that different persons might see different roles in the same occupation. In this latter case, it is quite possible that some individual factors are playing a part. This has gained some support from Raylesberg² research in which it was found that engineering occupation was seen in terms of different roles by different persons.

The relationship between personality and entry into the occupation is not clear enough. Success and satisfaction in an occupation have also been found to be related to personality. If personality is defined in terms of certain needs it can be assumed

1 Super, D.E., The Psychology of Careers, (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1957), p.232.

2 Singh, L.C., "Relation Between Personality and Vocational Choice", Guidance Review, Vol.1, No.2, April, 1963, 70-73.

that individuals will tend to gravitate towards those occupations which provide opportunities for satisfying the needs. The choice of an occupation is an expressive act which includes motives, abilities, information or knowledge and personality. The development of Vocational Preference Inventory by Holland¹ is based on this reasoning. This inventory when correlated with Cattell's 16 Personality Factors Questionnaire revealed the fact that the preference of occupational titles is related to personality variables. Izard² also found that experienced engineers differed from liberal arts students in ten out of fifteen needs of the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule. It is worthwhile studying the need patterns in the case of various occupational groups in relation to personality variables.

It can be concluded from the above discussion that the relation between personality and occupational choices is not very clear. Clear-cut personality

1 Holland, J.L., "A Personality Inventory Employing Occupational titles", J. Applied Psychology, Vol.42, No. 5, 1958.

2 Izard, C.E., "Personality Characteristics of Engineers as Measured by Edwards Personal Preference Schedule", Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol.44, No. 5, 1960.

traits have as yet not been found to be related to occupational choices. Secondly, it is conceivable that personality differences in terms of needs will be found in various occupations. It is also possible to construct an image of a typical personality for certain occupations, although, of course the relation between such personality patterns and occupational choices may not be very clear.

3.8 Family and Vocational Development

The role of the family in vocational development should be considered from social, psychological and economic points of view. The family provides excellent opportunities for identifying with role models. Not only that the family provides opportunities for the satisfaction of many needs, but it also creates new needs. It is here that the child develops attitudes towards various types of work. The family is to a considerable extent responsible for the development of work values. The accessibility or inaccessibility of certain occupations largely depends upon economic resources of the family and in general upon family support. Thus, the family exercises a great deal of influence in the shaping of an individual.

The availability of opportunities for experiencing various activities pertaining to various occupations depends upon the structure of the family and its location. A boy residing in a town finds ample of opportunities for his development than another boy who is residing at a far off place. If the facility for the furtherance of education and specialization is not available in one's own town and if the family fails to provide the necessary financial support, the boy will have to be satisfied with what is available in his home town. The family also influences the development of vocational interests and preferences in subtle ways. The unexpected death of the bread winner may make it necessary for a young boy to discontinue his study and take up any job which is available. Some of the college courses are so very expensive that many bright students have to give up the desire to study them as they fail to get the necessary help from the family.

The socio-economic status of the family seems to be a major determinant of the level and quality of education available, the type of job available and the level of work aspired to. The

upper and the upper middle class families tend to have a higher level of vocational aspirations than do the lower and middle class families. The amount of information available pertaining to various occupations depends upon the socio-economic status of the family. Generally, the upper class people tend to aspire for professional, business and administrative jobs, while the lower class people tend to aspire for skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled jobs. Hence, a boy from upper class can get more information about 'higher' occupations than the boy from the lower class can get. The traditional ideas of prestige of occupations might influence the vocational development. The concepts of 'high occupations' and 'low occupations' which are firmly rooted in the minds of many people do influence the vocational thinking of young persons.

The family is a cultural unit. It represents not only the culture of the society at large but it also has its own distinctive cultural patterns which vary widely from family to family. From this point of view, family exerts a considerable amount of influence on the vocational development. Our occupational thinking is much more influenced by the caste to which we belong and the religion that we practise.

Both religion and caste serve as barriers to the preference of certain occupations. Family is, moreover, responsible for the development of work attitudes. Especially in the upper and the upper middle class families, work involving manual labour is considered to be below the dignity. The family also provides opportunities for the development of work values which are among the important determinants of vocational choices. Individuals are generally motivated to prepare for and enter into those occupations which are in keeping with their work values. If the work value is the monetary gain, the individual will try to choose that occupation which enables him to accumulate more wealth. If the work value is intellectual pursuits, the individual will tend to select that occupation which is in accordance with this value.

The development of well integrated personality depends to a considerable extent upon the way the child is treated and brought up by his parents and other members of his family. If the satisfaction of some of the needs of the child is denied wittingly or unwittingly, if the child is not given opportunities for independent thinking and self expression, he may develop the feeling of insecurity which may hinder the

adjustment to certain occupations. Generally, individuals are motivated towards the preference of those occupations which provide opportunities for the satisfaction of many of their strong needs. The vocational adjustment will then depend upon the extent to which these needs are satisfied. Too much training for independence in all respects during childhood might on the other hand motivate an individual to keep himself away from entering any occupation. Such an individual may find satisfaction for his need of independence in setting up his own business.

Thus, the family provides many opportunities for the individual's personal development. The concept of self gradually develops as a result of these various influences. Opportunities for experiencing various job related activities, availability of role models for identification, development of work attitudes and work values, are some of the most important influences which shape the occupational self-concept of an individual. It is this self-concept which every individual tries to implement by selecting a particular occupation.

3.8 Summary

Vocational development is an important aspect

of an individual's personal development. It can be regarded as a continuum which can be broken down into sub-stages of development. It is intimately related to vocational maturity which refers to the degree of development. Vocational maturity is a point which can be located on the vocational development continuum. The measurement of the degree of development requires the specification of the criteria of maturity and the preparation of the scales. These scales can then be used to detect vocationally mature and immature individuals. While promoting vocational development, the counsellor should try to help the client in developing an adequate conception of his self-concept rather than in solving a specific problem. Vocational development is influenced by intelligence, aptitudes, interests and personality. Family also plays a very important part in vocational development. While selecting an occupation every individual tries to implement the self-concept that emerges as a result of these and many other influences.