**A Review on Guidance and Counseling in AJK**

**Submitted To: Mr. Munawar Hussain Qureshi**

**Submitted By: Imrana Arif**

**A Review on Career Guidance and Counseling in AJK**

Career counseling, a process in which an expert practitioner analyzes a candidate in terms of his capabilities and interests and then matches them with various career opportunities, helps a candidate in choosing the right career. “A counselor helps a student choose a goal or to reinvent the chosen one,” The strengths and weaknesses of an individual are assessed and the best career path is suggested. “In career counseling, we study the overall personality of the candidate. Many students are very intelligent but suffer from problems like depression. We try to understand their problems and guide them. She feels that teachers too should try to guide their students. “They should consider this as their responsibility.

Despite growing need of career counseling in schools, colleges and universities, there is a serious dearth of career counseling cells in the educational institutes of Kashmir. Of all the private and government colleges, only a few possess separate career counseling cells. The number can be counted on one’s fingertips. And most of them do not even function the way they are meant to. They call organizing a couple of gatherings each month and talking to students on Fridays as “counseling” Our professors and senior teachers talk to students on Fridays and discuss various ways of excelling in one’s career with them.

The practice of organizing recruitment drives, instead of advising students about what career they should choose, stands true for the career counseling cells of many other colleges and universities as well. They work like placement cells and conduct recruitment drives once in three or four months in the name of career counseling. Although recruitment drives have been taking place in the colleges and universities since a couple of years now, and are something to cheer about, but the practice of career counseling is not implemented with seriousness. And if at all it takes place, it is on a very small scale.

Another problem facing the counseling system in Kashmir is that there are no experts who could systematically study the strengths, weaknesses and the overall personality of a candidate. Formal counseling is done by psychologists and behavioral scientists who are experts in the field. It requires scientific equipment and structure. “Counseling can be done only by experts and it requires systematic and scientific labs and equipment,” Further, in Kashmir just about anybody is appointed as the head and given the responsibility of counseling. And there is no accountability in taking care of these responsibilities. The appointed counselor or the counseling cells rarely work towards the expected goal, and they are seldom questioned or appraised. “Lack of a formal appraisal and accountability also adds to the improper functioning of such cells, nobody takes counseling seriously.”

The biggest problem, it seems, is the general lack of awareness about the importance of career counseling. “People don't understand the importance of proper guidance. They don’t think it’s important.”

Besides counseling cells, parents of the students too need to develop a broader perception in this regard. They need to understand that a job misfit or a misfit career is one of the biggest problems their child may suffer from in future. “The problem doesn't lie with the students alone but with the parents too. They look for scope which is the wrong way of choosing a career. We don't realize that we're forcibly putting our wards into a field of study which is not their cup of tea. This is the reason why many students get frustrated, consequently, and even some commit suicide.

Our colleges and universities should realize the importance of career counseling cells in helping stop thousands of students from choosing a wrong career that can ruin their lives. The moment student’s start demanding proper career counseling cells, the authorities will wake up from their slumber.