4. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING : A MISSING COMPONENT OF ENGINEERING EDUCATION

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Introduction

Engineers are the very important citizens of any country. They are the persons, who are responsible for every change that takes place in the society. They are the persons who provide water to the thirsty, light to darkness and food to hungry. They are the persons, who are responsible for the implementation of every project. That is why, the engineers are responsible for every developmental change in the society. As a result of this fact only, they are also called change-managers and change-agents. As a matter of this fact only, a society having more number of quality engineers, progresses faster than the one which has less number of quality engineers. So, the engineering education to be imparted to our students plays a vital role in the development of the country.

So far as the system of Indian engineering education is concerned, it is one of the largest in the world. It caters to the educational needs of the millions of the students belonging to different socio-economic strata of the society and provides leadership in different walks of life. So, to achieve the basic aim of engineering education, there exists a strong need to bring out the best from the individual personality. This purpose can be served by the selection of appropriate engineering courses which should always be in consonance with the interest and hidden potentialities of the students. But most of the students are in disadvantageous state on account of the negligible guidance available either at home or at the engineering colleges.

The guidance and counseling are of paramount significance in shaping the future of the upcoming engineers. Guidance enables each individual to understand his abilities and interests to develop them to the maximum possible limits. Guidance is defined as a series of services that include appraisal, counselling, placement and follow-up. Guidance is a continuous, sequential, educational process and hence, it is different from counselling. Although Guidance and Counselling are the two most common terms used interchangeably, but they differ from each other considerably, Guidance emphasizes at advice-giving and is advisor-directed. Guidance concerns with the decision or product which is specific to the situation at hand.

Counselling, on the contrary, is mainly concerned with the process of decision making and assumes that learning from one situation can be transformed to another. The counsellor acts as an enabler or felicitator. The process of counselling also includes informing, advising, assessing, enabling and advocating.

Counselling consists of four stages – exploring, understanding, decision making and finally acting. Guidance is, thus, a generic term and counselling is a particular activity in the process of guidance.

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Guidance and Counselling in India

Although the formal beginning of guidance and counselling took place in 1908 in USA, but in India it is a very late phenomenon. Guidance and Counselling got acceptance in India only after the recommendations of Mudaliar Commission of Secondary Education (1952-53). These recommendations envisaged the development of habits, attitudes and qualities of character so as to enable the students to bear worthily the responsibility of democratic citizenship. The recommendations of Kothari Education Commission (1964-66) provided further momentum to the concept of guidance and counselling. As a result, numerous State Bureas of Guidance and Counselling were opened and strengthened under the supervision of Central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance (CBEVG). Some universities started offering courses in guidance as optional papers for master's degree in education and psychology. During this time only, full time post-graduate diploma courses were started by Central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance (CBVEG) at NCERT New Delhi; by Institute of Vocational Guidance and Selection, Mumbai; by Bureau of Psychology, Allahabad, and by Madras University.

The concept of guidance and counseling emerged as a new area in the educational system and hence a large number of researches were conducted in this field by various researchers in a few research and educational organizations. National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) also emphasized the need for right vocational choices and vocationalisation of education.

It is evident from the available literature that guidance and counselling services thrive and form an integral part of the educational system in the advanced countries. But such services are available only in 9% of the educational institutions in India. It is a very deplorable situation in a developing country like India, where parental support is also negligible on account of the mass illiteracy and rampant ignorance.

Despite the opening of huge number of engineering colleges in various States of the country, the facility of guidance and counselling is a very neglected phenomenon, nearly in all of them. Although most of the engineering colleges in India are having the facility of Training and Placement Cells, but they do not provide an adequate resource towards guidance and counselling.

Advantages of Guidance and Counselling

The concept of guidance and counselling is helpful in developing right kind of attitude in engineering graduates. With the assistance of the guidance and counselling, they will be able to take appropriate decisions keeping in view their inter and intra-individual differences. This, in turn, will be helpful to a large extent in developing the team-spirit which is the dire necessity of the time and place. So, the major role of a counsellor is to bring out the best from the individual's personality for the betterment of the self and the society. This great purpose requires a well-organized and accessible guidance and counselling programme at each level of engineering education. In the absence of proper guidance and counselling, the engineering students face a number of problems and deviate from their basic aims to excel in different departments and fields.

On account of the absence of proper guidance and counselling, the engineering students may lack in intrinsic motivation resulting in poor study habits, poor performance in examination, anxiety and frustration, alienation and asocial behaviour, and hence more number of drop-outs. This will also result in under-achievement, unemployment or under-employment, lack of job satisfaction, reduced efficiency of work and un-optimum achievement of educational objectives.

Objectives of Guidance and Counselling

The students enter the engineering institutes

with their unique strengths and weaknesses. They are in need of information about various learning opportunities; for assistance in determining the learning direction and career; for financial assistance; for help in learning how to learn; for help with personal or family emotional or psychological support and in managing stress and anxiety. Thus, the educational guidance and support may serve a number of important functions for the individual, the institution, the society, the organization and the nation as a whole. Guidance and Counselling helps the engineering students in removing their individual barriers pertaining to information, disposition, institution, etc. As a result, they have improved access to educational opportunities.

Variety of Courses in Engineering Education and Role of Guidance and Counselling

Rapid industrialization, expansion in information technology, mass communication, urbanization, technological advancement, knowledge explosion, alien ideas and night entertainment culture, consumerism and serious unemployment problems have placed the engineering students at greater distress. Moreover, new choices of courses, vocations and occupations are emerging everyday in this scientific and technological era. Engineering students, specially first generation learners, find it difficult to choose their courses in the light of their interest, abilities and aptitude. The job scenario is also changing because of technological advancement, growth of business and trade, and international scenario. As a matter of these facts, the engineering students should have a right kind of guidance and counselling so that their choices be realistic, objective and be guided by futuristic orientations.

Suggestions

It is a well-established fact that talents and creative abilities of the engineering students play a significant role in discoveries and inventions in different areas. Thus, the identification of talented and creative students by providing a systematic Guidance and Counselling at an appropriate time, can help them become the producer of knowledge.

To meet the above objectives, the following measures are suggested to be taken in order to rejuvenate the guidance and counselling programmes in Indian engineering education system ;

i) Mass media must indoctrinate youths about difference in abilities and multiplicity of the courses available in different universities.

ii) TV programmes should also take care of guidance and counselling related to engineering students. Engineering college students should be given chance to participate and ask questions about their educational and career problems.

iii) All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), New Delhi, must come forward to introduce guidance and counselling as a compulsory paper at B.Tech. level in engineering institutions.

iv) A short training course should also be organized for engineering college teachers in guidance and counselling programmes to equip them with knowledge and necessary skills required to work out the problems of the students.

v) ISTE-AICTE sponsored orientation programmes and re-fresher courses must contain guidance and counselling as an important component.

vi) The universities as well as other distance mode institutions must immediately start PG diploma and certificate courses for training in-service engineering teachers in guidance and counseling to address the need of the educational system as a whole.

vii) The Training and Placement Cells

established in engineering colleges may take up guidance and counselling programme with an expert hand appointed for the purpose.

viii) Counselling services should be made available through electronic media by experts at national and state level.

Concluding Remarks

Guidance and counselling thus seems to be an integral part of our entire engineering education system. This is the need of the hour also. Millions of our students who are first generation learners in engineering education are attracted towards few socially accepted vocations and professions without knowing their abilities, interest and aptitudes. This tendency is dangerous for them as well as for the development of the country. Guidance and Counselling can thus provide means to boost up the morale of engineering students. Moreover, this will also produce the most required engineering graduates needed for the development of India.

References:

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