

# Role of Career Counseling Cell in Enhancing Career and Employment Information Services in the Colleges of Dibrugarh District, Assam

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## Abstract

*It is a universal fact that information is necessary in every walk of human life. People are in the need of different types of information to meet day to day problems. Career and employment information is very much important for student community as it guides them towards career awareness. Now a days, every student talks about career and employment opportunities in their early college days. Career counseling plays a vital role among the students of rural degree colleges where they have no opportunity to go for professional career counselor. In this regard, Career Counseling Cell of the colleges should play a vital role. But in practice it is observed that the cell provides services on paper only. In most of the colleges, the cell exists only in the time of NAAC accreditation. This paper tries to explore the role of career counseling cell in the colleges of Dibrugarh District, Assam.*

**Keywords:** Career and Employment Information, Career Counseling Cell

## 1. Introduction

Knowledge emerges from information, and information is the main medium by which one can go past all the hurdles of life. Human beings are dependent on information for every aspect of life. It becomes integral part of our day to day life. People are in the need of various types of information to solve daily problems. The need of information for a layman to a scholar has increased day by day in recent times. It leads the people to solve problems in life. Information explosion confuses general people to a great extent. Right information at the right time is very crucial for everybody. Information is the most important and rationalistic ingredient for higher education. It helps to grow the stock of knowledge. Career and employment information is mostly required by the students at the early part of their higher education.

## 2. Career and Employment Information

In simple words, career is a journey of an individual through learning, working and fulfilling various aspects of life. Simultaneously, employment means getting engaged in service or other works. Now a days, career and employment information is most important for every student or youth. Every student seeks a healthy career in life. The increasing population threatens everybody to think about career opportunities. Information on career and employment opportunities guides the students to choose an engagement in future. Such information helps students to plan for selecting a career in future.

Every individual is unique by birth. So while selecting a career, same factors continue to operate. It depends upon the individual to decide what one would like to do for living. But several factors like - parental influence, influence of teachers and friends, career counseling, reading books and magazines and



proper information play a vital role in selecting a career. People often choose a career without any planning or serious consideration. So most of the people fail to find a useful and satisfactory engagement and they have to do the kinds of work which they do not like. This leads to inefficiency of manpower in workplace. Most of the workers face difficulties to change profession in later part of life. So planning of a career is essential in early part of life to avoid wastage of time and unhappiness in future life. Proper education and several vocational training programs help students to acquire abilities and skills for selecting a proper career.

College is a premier higher educational institute especially in rural areas. It provides curriculum based education and a brief knowledge on career opportunities. College through its wings like college library and career counseling cell tries to take care of the students in respect of different information needs. The study is based on the prospect of career counseling cell in the colleges.

### **3. Career Counseling Cell**

University Grants Commission (UGC) clearly indicates in its XI plan that every college should have a career and counseling cell (CCC) to look after the matters relating to career and employment guidance of the students. The scheme of establishing a Career and Counseling Cell in Colleges has been formulated to address the diverse socio-economic challenges and geographic backgrounds of the heterogeneous population of students coming to the Colleges vis-à-vis equity of access and placement opportunities through availability of appropriate institutional support information. The career and counseling support that an institution offers to its students makes them confident to perform better. Coun-

seling thus addresses both the academic and the career concerns and opportunities. The inculcation of guidance about market patterns and employability can help the institution in building a base for its students. This exercise will result in their socioeconomic integration. Career and Counseling Cell would help the students with appropriate guidance to establish linkages with the world of work and locate career opportunities vis-à-vis the realities and job profiles in the context of highly competitive emerging occupational patterns.

These could be taken care of through the active liaison of the Career and Counseling Cell with the recruiting agencies and HR personnel of reputed firms. The active participation of institutional experts from these could give greater onsite experience in search of suitable candidates. In this exercise, the institutions, for positive help, could also involve their alumni. They could also undertake affordable training programs to acquaint the students with the high demand market areas and invoke industry institution linkages. It has to support the students in the development of soft skills and communication ability to challenge the rigors of competitive examinations or vocational courses. It has to be a resource center of information, guidance and counseling with free accessibility and internet based global connectivity and exchange of information on professional placements. UGC provides financial assistance up to seven 7 lakhs for the functioning of the Cell and it is included in the 14 merged schemes.

But in practice, it is observed that career and counseling cell is not providing the career and employment information service to its students properly. The cell exists in paper only and only during the time of NAAC accreditation, it exists physically. The

purpose of UGC in creating the cell is seems to be vague.

#### 4. Objectives

The main objectives of the study are

- ❖ To find out the sources of career and employment information, and
- ❖ To explore the role of Career Counseling Cell

#### 5. Scope Of The Study

There are all together sixteen (16) colleges in Dibrugarh District of Assam, out of which, eleven colleges are NAAC accredited. The study has been conducted in four colleges only. It covers the coor-

dinator of Career Counseling Cell and 5<sup>th</sup> semester students.

#### 6. Methodology

As the paper is a survey based study, the investigators tried to collect relevant data from the stakeholders by adopting survey through structured questionnaire over telephone. Due to the fact that survey was time bound, it was carried out through mobile phones and emails.

#### 7. Analysis

##### 7.1 Colleges of Dibrugarh District selected for the study

**Table 1: Colleges of Dibrugarh District Selected for the Study**

S. No.	Name of the College	Year of establishment	Year of last accreditation	NAAC grade
1	DHSK College	1945	2003	B++
2	MDK Girls College	1963	2011	B
3	Naharkatiya College	1964	2005	C++
4	Namrup College	1973	2011	B

The Table 1 shows that DHSK college and Naharkatiya college have not been accredited for a long time. It effects the development of these colleges. It is a major setback for these colleges as it is not possible to assess these colleges by NAAC.

MDKG and Namrup colleges have been accredited by NAAC recently. Among these colleges only Naharkatiya College was awarded with C grade.

##### 7.2 Career Counseling Cell of the Colleges

**Table 2: Career Counseling Cell of the Colleges**

Name of College	Separate Room	Year of Establishment	Fund	Opening Time	Office Assistant
DHSK College	Yes	2010	-	College time	1
MDK Girls College	Yes	2004	-	When needed	Nil
NHK College	No	2002	-	Doesn't arise	Nil
Namrup College	Yes	2005	-	When needed	Nil

This Table 2 indicates that only Naharkatiya college did not have a separate room for the cell. Among the other four colleges, the information and career guidance cell of DHSK college is well equipped and active in true sense. This college opened the cell for whole college day with the help of an office assistant. Other two colleges open the cell when

needed by the coordinator, because they do not have other staff for the cell. The coordinators were not aware about the funds of the CCC as the fund is handled by the Principals only. The CCC receives grant up to seven (7) lakhs during the plan period.

### 7.3 Equipment of CCC

**Table 3: Equipment of CCC**

Name of the College	Computer	Laser Printer	Photocopier	Fax
DHSK College	6	3	1	Nil
MDK Girls College	1	Nil	Nil	Nil
Naharkatiya College	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Namrup College	1	1	0	0

Regarding equipment of the CCC, DHSK college is very rich with six computers, three printers and one photocopier. Moreover they have a scanner, projector and binding machine. The other colleges are very poor in this regard. But there are clear instructions in UGC guidelines that the cell should be well

equipped with modern technology. As Naharkatiya college does not have a separate room, it is obvious that they may not have any equipment.

### 7.4 Sources of Career and Employment information

**Table 4: Sources of Career and Employment information**

Name of the College	Reading materials			Internet	Newspaper clipping
	Books	Periodicals	Newspaper		
DHSK College	1000	7	1	Yes	Yes
MDK Girls College	100	0	0	Yes	Yes
Naharkatiya College	0	0	0	No	No
Namrup College	0	3	0	Yes	Yes

The sources of career and employment information are also very limited in CCC of the colleges. The main sources are books, periodicals, newspaper, internet and newspaper clippings. Again DHSK college stands high with regard to all sources and Naharkatiya college stands at the bottom of the list.

## 7.5 Functions and programs of CCC

Table 5: Functions and programs of CCC

Name of the College	Types of programs	Number of programs
DHSK College	Workshop, counseling, coaching	20
MDK Girls College	Career orientation, seminar, workshop, etc	7
Naharkatiya College	Seminar, counseling	2
Namrup College	Workshop, motivational class, counseling	3

All the colleges mostly organize seminars and workshops with renowned career experts of the state. The duration of the programs is one to three days. Only CCC of DHSK college organizes various coaching classes. The number of programs included in the Table 5 is from the last academic year.

## 7.6 User satisfaction

Efforts were also made to study the users' opinion on Career Counseling Cell. For this purpose, ten students of 5<sup>th</sup> semester from each college have been taken.

## 7.7 Sources of information

Table 6: Sources of information

Name of College	Sufficient	Average	Insufficient
DHSK College	8	2	0
MDK Girls College	3	5	2
Naharkatiya College	0	0	10
Namrup College	0	2	8

The Table 6 indicates that most of the students (80%) of DHSK college remarked that the books, journal, newspapers, internet and newspaper clip-pings are sufficient to meet their requirements. 30% students of MDKG college feel it insufficient. The scenario in Naharkatiya and Namrup College is very poor.

## 7.8 Quantity of Equipment of CCC

Table 7: Quantity of Equipment of CCC

Name of College	Sufficient	Average	Insufficient
DHSK College	10	0	0
MDK Girls College	0	5	5
Naharkatiya College	0	0	10
Namrup College	0	2	8

As seen from Table 7, only the Information and Career Guidance Cell of DHSK College is well equipped among the surveyed colleges. Though MDKG and Namrup College have one computer each in the cell, that is for official purposes but not for students.

## 7.9 Programs of CCC

Table 8: Programs of CCC

Name of College	Sufficient	Average	Insufficient
DHSK College	7	3	0
MDK Girls College	5	5	0
Naharkatiya College	0	0	10
Namrup College	2	5	3

Table 7 reveals whether the programs organized by the CCC of the colleges are sufficient or not. The students of DHSK and MDKG rate the number of programs as healthy. The rate is more or less the same in Namrup college, while it is very poor in Naharkatiya College.

## 8. Findings

The objectives of establishing Career Counseling Cell in the colleges is highly appreciable. But the truth is that except some colleges, it exists on paper only. A further study in depth will reveal the real picture of the functioning of the CCC. Some findings of the study are listed as follows:

- ❖ Re-accreditation process is not completed in two old colleges of the district. They have not accredited their colleges since 2003 and 2005.
- ❖ Three colleges have separate room for CCC and only one college opens their CCC whole day with the help of an office assistant. Two colleges open their CCC only when the Coordinator feels it necessary. One College does not have a separate room for CCC.
- ❖ One college has all the equipment in the CCC such as computer, printer, photocopier, scanner, projector, digital camera binding machine, etc. for students. Two colleges have one computer for official purpose. One college does not have not any equipment at all.
- ❖ Regarding sources of information, one college is sound enough with more than one thousand books, periodicals, newspapers, internet connections, newspaper clipping, etc. Other colleges are poor in comparison to this college.
- ❖ All the colleges organize career oriented programs frequently.
- ❖ Students of only one college rate their CCC as highly resourceful, well equipped with sufficient programs. Students of other colleges are not happy with their CCC.

### **9. Suggestions**

On the basis of the study and the findings given above, some suggestions are as follows:

- ❖ The CCC should be more active to help the students. It must have a separate room with all equipment.

- ❖ It should remain open on all working days, so that students can come at any time.
- ❖ Sources of career and employment information should be enhanced. Free internet facility should be provided to students.
- ❖ CCC should organize more practical classes or coaching than theoretical one.
- ❖ Periodic inspection can help the CCC to function more precisely.

### **10. Conclusion**

Now a days, student support services in colleges are very important from accreditation point of view. College is responsible for all-round development of the students. Among various services, information and career guidance service is vital. The idea of establishing Career Counseling Cell in colleges is appreciable but it should be evaluated periodically so that students may not be deprived of the opportunities. The cell should always be active so as to help the students. It is the prime duty of the library to disseminate information. If college library and CCC can work together, it will be more fruitful for the student community.

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