
UNIT 11 CAREER PATTERNS

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11.1 INTRODUCTION

After going through the unit on Nature of Work and Career Development, you are now aware of the concept, nature, approaches and theories of career development and the role of work in our daily life. This Unit will deal with the concept of career patterns, which refers to sequence of occupations in the life of an individual or a group of individuals. This sequence will be analysed in order to ascertain the major work periods which constitute a career. This sequence may differ considerably, or it may be in the same field with or without vertical movement. The word “career” is to be distinguished from other interchangeably used words such as vocation, job, or profession. Career patterns are developmental in nature. They must be understood in terms of life stages. Many genetic, social, economic and environmental factors influence the determining of career patterns. They take various shapes. These are called types of career patterns. With experience, they start stabilizing and career maturity takes its shape. Gradually, these career patterns lead to vocational success and vocational adjustment. Life adjustment process, to a large extent, depends upon vocational adjustment. Therefore, the career planning is very important for everybody, and sooner one realizes this, better it is. Hence, the role of teachers is very important in the planning of career of students.

11.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- describe the concept of career patterns;
- distinguish the term career patterns from other related terms such as vocation, job, profession;
- classify the various career patterns;
- distinguish between career patterns and life stages;
- describe the determinants of career patterns;
- distinguish between career patterns and career maturity;
- identify different types of career patterns;
- differentiate between vocational success and vocational adjustment and their relationship with career patterns;
- identify factors affecting career patterns, vocational success and vocational adjustment; and
- describe the role of teachers in the planning of careers of students.

11.3 UNDERSTANDING CAREER PATTERNS

The term career pattern was originated in the field of sociology, in the context of study of social mobility by means of occupational mobility. Career development is part of all round development of the individual. Today, career has emerged as one of the most significant areas of concern for those who advocate education for national development. The dramatic increase in interest to develop this potential through education and work among all sections is visible if you scan the career literature publications.

11.3.1 Career Patterns and Other Related Terms

In order to understand the term career patterns, it is better to differentiate it from other related words or terms being used inter-changeably. These words are position, job, occupation, career, profession and vocation. Let us take an example of an institution where people work in different ways. Let us assume there are 2000 staff members or workers in an organization at various levels, such as peons, clerks, officers, skilled workers, executives, managers and so on. These various levels technically are called positions. The number of same positions in same category is termed as job. For example, stenos come in one type of job and clerk's job is different from peons etc. There may be ten peons, 15 clerks. All peons do similar work and all clerks perform similar task. Hence, clerical is one job. Occupation is a group of similar jobs in which people perform essentially the same task, drawing on the same body of knowledge and using the same basic skills independently of the person pursuing it. Career refers to all the activities in which a person is involved throughout his/her life. Technically, a career is a sequence of positions in jobs or occupations, which a person has followed during the course of his/her life. Profession means the person fulfils the requisite qualifications at the higher level. For example, the professional person called doctor is MBBS or MS. She is technically qualified. Vocation is the choice of a

type of occupation or the choice of a career. The term vocation is used to denote an occupation and to characterize an occupation, which has some of the personal meaning of career. In the choice of a vocation, there are three broad factors;

- A clear understanding of one's self, aptitude, abilities, interests, ambitions, resource, limitations and their causes.
- Knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work.
- True reasoning on the relationship of these two groups.

The differentiation may be clear from the following:

'Thirty years ago, I wanted to make teaching as my career. I took up that vocation and involved myself in the day-to-day job requirements and met the demands of my occupation. My dedication has been rewarded with various promotions in the last thirty years. People say that I have joined the best profession. My professional experience has found use through my participation in workshops, seminars, visiting professorship etc. Today, I am happy with such diversified activities and my career development'.

Career patterns refer to sequence of occupations in the life of an individual or group of individuals.

The above discussion would have made clear the minute differences among the word career and the commonly inter-changeably used terms in this field.

11.4 THE RELATIONSHIP OF CAREER PATTERNS WITH LIFE STAGES

Occupational choice is a lifelong process of decision making for those who seek major satisfaction from their work. This leads them to reassess repeatedly how they can improve the adjustment between their changing career goals and the realities of the world of work, and lead a productive life in society. All these are related to career pattern. The concept of Career Pattern is closely parallel to the psychological concept of life stages, in which the major events and concerns group themselves. It varies from one stage of life to another, justifying the classification of life into a sequence of characteristic stages. In order to understand this relationship, let us see how psychologists and sociologists have defined life stages.

Super (1957) had defined **five life stages**. The stages are:

The Growth Stage	-	0 – 14 years approximately
The Exploratory Stage-		14 – 25 years
The Establishment Stage	-	25 – 45 years
The Maintenance Stage	-	45 – 66 years
The Decline Stage	-	65 – +years

Super views career development as a life long process that passes through a series of developmental stages and that career choice decision is the cumulative effect of a series of decisions rather than one decision taken at one point in time.

The Growth Stage (0-14): This stage is a base for career patterns. It is the preparation for the selection of career in today's time. Due to the wide exposure, young generation is mentally more alert and their cognitive development is positively affected by the exposure through variety of media. Children at this stage are, to some extent, able to form ideas as to what they would like to be as adults. At this stage, the child is normally in the middle school. In schools, they are exposed to various possibilities of different areas of the world of work they may enter into, with a hope to make appropriate decision in selecting suitable subjects at 10 + 2 level. With the exposure of general information about various subjects, students develop certain liking and disliking towards different subject areas. Their aptitudes and interests also start manifesting in terms of their achievements in various school subjects. In this stage career pattern process helps the person to become aware of his/her interests and skills, so that these can be matched with a suitable job. The person is thus expected to concretize his/her choice. Self-concept develops through identification with important figures in family. School needs are dominant. Role playing in fantasy is important until the age of ten years. Interests are major determinants of aspirations and activities during 11-12 years of age. Interest and capacity become more important with increasing social participation and reality testing. At the age of 13-14 years abilities are given more weight and job requirements are considered.

The Exploratory Stage (14-25): Adolescent exploration includes developing an understanding of the self, trying out the role of budding adult, finding a mate, finding an occupation, and finding one's place in the community. This is the stage when the students start exploring different fields. Students at this stage have to take a decision about which stream of studies they would like to follow – arts, commerce, science, fine arts etc. These subjects are, to some extent, career oriented and they have to stick to the opted subjects. At present, a mix and match pattern is also followed in many schools. Students can choose any five subjects. For example, science students can take up Economics. Commerce students can take up subjects like political science. Arts students can take up mathematics, if they are interested, as it is an important subject in all fields.

Students at this stage also want to be self-sufficient, so they take up many side jobs. The role of guidance and counselling is very important at this stage. The adolescent starts exploring different vocations to decide which occupation s/he would like to follow. S/he even works as apprentice to learn about the area in which s/he is interested. Here the question arises that a person not only wants to earn, but also likes to take up a job which is psychologically satisfying and is also meeting parental status or ambitions. Hence social norms, personal and psychological needs are related to the selection of an occupation. An individual's career does not exist in a vacuum. The various spheres are interrelated and a full understanding of careers must be seen in the context of individual's other activities, beliefs, social status, intellectual level and so on. Self-examination, role tryout and occupational exploration take place in school, in leisure activities and part time work. This stage has the following three sub stages:

- i) **Tentative** – At the age of 15-17 years, needs, interests, capacities, values and opportunities are considered. Tentative choices are made, tried out in fantasy, discussion, courses, work, and so on.
- ii) **Transition** – At the age of 18-21 years, reality considerations are given

more weight as the youth enters the labour market or professional training and attempts to implement a self-concept.

- iii) **Trial** – This starts approximately at the age of 22-24 years. A seemingly appropriate field having been located, a beginning job in it is found and tried out as a life role.

The Establishment Stage (25-45): As the career pattern becomes clear, effort is put forth to stabilize it to make a secure place in the world of work. For most persons these are the creative years. Establishment includes establishing a family, a home and a role in the community as well as making a place in the world of work by establishing a practice, building a business or developing a work history.

At this stage a person wants to make a name for oneself. He tries to become an important part of the world of work to get recognition and to serve and contribute meaningfully to the society at large. In this process of self-adjustment, he moves toward self-actualization by getting professional maturity, and in addition, contributes towards cultural and moral heritage. At domestic front too, he plays an important role of fulfilling his responsibilities to initiate his wards towards the world of work and social life.

The Maintenance Stage (45-65): Having made a place in the world of work, the concern now is to hold on. Maintenance is the process of holding one's own place in the family, keeping the home intact, keeping up appearances in the community, and seeing that the business/profession continues to flourish. At this stage, it has generally been seen that a person has gained a lot of experience in one's profession. Therefore, the individuals attempt to maintain what they have achieved for which they would try to innovate, acquire new skills or look for new challenges. Though, it is difficult to achieve anything spectacular at this stage. An individual actively moves toward the goal of self-actualization as all other needs are more or less fulfilled. Money is used as a means towards the process of self-realization.

The Decline Stage (65 plus): As physical and mental powers decline, work activity changes, and in due course ceases. New roles must be developed, first that of selective participant, and then that of observer rather than of participant. Decline manifests itself not only physically (in decreased energy and stamina) and vocationally, but also in other respects, as in the lessening of family responsibilities and restriction of roles in the community. Decline stage has two main sub stages:

- i) **Deceleration (65-70):** The pace of work slackens, duties are shifted and the nature of work is changed to suit declining capacities. Many find part-time jobs to replace their full time occupations.
- ii) **Retirement (70- +):** As with all specified age limits, there are great variations from person to person. But complete cessation of occupation comes for all in due course; to some easily and pleasantly, to others with difficulty and disappointment, and to some only with death, (Super, et. al. 1957).

- **Life Stages and Work Periods**

Miller and Form (1951) defined sociological life stages centering around work. During the career period, individuals pass through different phases of holding

permanent or temporary jobs. Based on the various phases of the career journey, Miller and Form formulated five life stages or work periods.

Preparatory work period: In this period, there is an orientation to the world of work through home, neighbourhood and school activities. This stage is just like a growth stage, as described earlier.

Initial work period: This period begins with the first part-time or summer work experience at about the age of 14. The adolescent is introduced directly to the world of work as a part-time participant. This period matches with the exploratory stage.

The trial work period: This period is a replica of the stage of establishment. It is just like an entry into the regular labour market. It happens during the age 16-25 years. It continues until a suitable work position is attained, usually after considerable changing of jobs. The person finds a type of work, where he feels satisfied and provides for success ahead.

The stable work period (35-60/5): At this stage individuals find a work position which is more or less permanent in nature. If they change the work for better prospects, in rare cases, they once again enter the trial period.

The retirement period (60-65+): The retirement period is a replica of the decline stage.

11.5 TYPES OF CAREER PATTERNS

The types of career patterns are different from the concept of life stages. It is in terms of the nature of the chosen career in terms of time period. Davidson and Anderson (1937) found four types of career patterns in this regard. They are:

- i) **The Stable Career Pattern:** This pattern is applicable on those persons who have gone directly from school or college into a type of work that they have consistently followed, i.e., they have skipped the trial work period. A person chooses a career and sticks to that till he retires. A few examples of people having stable career patterns can be Defence Services, Banking, Civil Services, Central Services, Income-tax, Teaching, Secretarial Services, Chartered Accountancy and so on.
- ii) **The Conventional Career Pattern:** In this case the typical progression is from initial through trial to stable employment as Managerial, Clerical, MBA, Computer Engineering, Executives and so on. The person has not taken up a stable career. He tries his fortunes in different careers, before he finally takes up any stable or enduring one, which is satisfying to him.
- iii) **The Unstable Career Pattern:** Here, the sequence trial-stable-trial is followed. In this category, we may consider careers related to various crafts as career in fashion technology, dance, music, etc. The person moves from one to another career or business or part-time job, as Consultant, Property Dealer etc.
- iv) **The Multiple-Trial Career Pattern:** In this pattern frequent change of employment takes place with no one type sufficiently prolonged or dominant to justify calling the person established in a career. Examples may be quoted from Consultant, Technical Assistants' etc.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

1) Answer the following questions in 2-3 lines.

i) Distinguish between Vocation and Career

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ii) Name the life stages given by Super

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iii) What are the Work Period as described by Miller and Form?

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iv) What are the types of career patterns?

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11.6 DETERMINANTS OF CAREER PATTERNS

As discussed earlier the pattern emerging in the job movement of a group of individuals, is termed as career pattern. The sequence, frequency and duration of the trial and stable jobs are determined by many factors. Among them the following are important:

- individual parental socio-economic level;
- mental ability;
- skills;
- personality characteristics (needs, values, interests, traits and self-concept);
- career maturity; and
- the opportunities to which one is exposed.

Self-concept and socio-economic status, however, are the most important factors as the determinants of career patterns because they:

- i) tend to open or close opportunities; and
- ii) help to shape occupational concepts.

Krumboltz (1989) describes the decision process in the choice of an occupation being determined by the following four factors:

- Environmental conditions and events (number and nature of jobs, training opportunities, social policies and procedure of selecting trainees and workers, technological developments and change in social organizations).
- Genetic endowments and special abilities (race, sex, physical appearances and characteristics, intelligence, computing ability, muscular co-ordination).
- Learning experiences (instrumental learning experiences in which antecedent, covert and overt behavioural responses and consequences are present).
- Task approach skills (attitudes, knowledge, skills, performance standards and values, work habits, perceptual and cognitive processes, mental sets and emotional response an individual brings to new situations and tasks). These skills develop readiness to cope with the development tasks.

Above mentioned factors are all determinants and not the processes. The process is the interaction among the determinants. The interaction between the individual and society results in self-observation generalizations. These are self-precepts. In self-concept theory these precepts are viewed as organized self-observations or self-concepts (Super and others, 1953). Social learning, experiential learning and interactive learning are the processes involved in the formation of self-concept in general and occupational self-concept in particular.

Socio-economic status, intelligence and academic achievement affect the career patterns. The wards of the poor are likely to have unstable or multiple career patterns than others. On the other hand, the wards of rich are more likely to have stable careers.

11.7 CAREER MATURITY

Career maturity is a constellation of physical, psychological and social characteristics. It is both cognitive and affective. It includes the degree of success in coping with the demands of earlier stages and sub-stages of career development. Career maturity is, however, a hypothetical construct. Its operational definition is perhaps as difficult to formulate as is that of intelligence. Career maturity is the first dimension depicted by the Life Career Rainbow. It is longitudinal and covers the life span of an individual.

Career maturity is generally defined as the individual's readiness to cope with the developmental tasks with which he or she is confronted because of his/her biological and social developments, and because of society's expectations of people who have reached that stage of development. This readiness is both affective and cognitive as shown by research with the Career Development Inventory (CDI). The CDI assesses two affective variables, namely Career Planning (or planfulness), and Career Exploration (or curiosity). It also assesses three cognitive characteristics including:

- Knowledge of the principles of career decision-making and ability to apply them to actual choices;

- Knowledge of the nature of careers, occupations, and the world of work; and
- Knowledge of the field of work in which one's occupational preference falls.

A component of career maturity, identified in the Career Pattern Study (CPS) monographs by Super and others (1957) and in Crites (1978) adaptation is Realism.

Realism is a mixed affective and cognitive entity. It is assessed by combining personal, self report and objective data and comparing the aptitude of the individual with the aptitudes typical of people in the occupation to which he/she aspires.

Realism is a "Trait" It can be assessed through Career Development Inventory (CDI) or Career Maturity Inventory (CMI). However, no single measure can be called maturity, as any test or inventory score is at best an assessment of one or more aspects of a complex whole.

11.8 VOCATIONAL SUCCESS

Vocational success leads to feelings of autonomy, of being somewhat in control of one's present and even of one's future. It also leads to the development of interest in the things in which one has been successful. Finding that one can, to some extent, control one's activities helps in the development of self-esteem. At the same time, it leads to an understanding that one can plan for future events and have success in their shaping. Thus develops the ability to plan, to identify and solve problems, and to make decisions.

11.8.1 Vocational Adaptation

When a person is relatively unaffected by the job and its challenge it is termed as vocational adaptation. It is also called as vocational adjustment. If you glance through your job from the date of joining or compare your roles and responsibilities as a progressive teacher with the teachers taught you in students' days, you can certainly discriminate the expectations from teachers at that time with that of present teachers. At that time teachers were the only source of information. Today, you have been using other sources like TV programmes, Newspapers, Computers, CD, ICT, etc. as information providers and you as a teacher had adapted yourself as per the requirement of the job.

11.8.2 Criteria of Vocational Adjustment

Vocational adjustment is a function of the degree to which an individual is able to implement his/her self-concept, to play the kind of role s/he wants to play, to meet his/her important needs in his/her work and career. This means self-realization.

To what extent the improvement in vocational adjustment can lead to improvement in other aspects of adjustment. Logically, it should do so, since general adjustment is a synthesis of specific adjustments. By relieving tension, clarifying feelings, gaining insights, achieving success, an individual develops a feeling of competence which is one important area of vocational adjustment. It

is possible to realize the individual's ability to cope more adequately with other aspects of living, thus bringing about improvement in general adjustment will bring about improvement in others.

Assisting a client to use his/her assets to make a better vocational adjustment will result in his/her being able to make a better adjustment in other areas of living.

Maladapted individual who has genuine problems of vocational adjustment, can be helped by counsellors. It has been found that improvement in vocational adjustment has brought about improvement in the overall adjustment of such persons.

The client's readiness to work on the vocational adjustment problem is one criterion of the wisdom of working on it. Nevertheless, this alone is not enough, the maladjusted client must also be willing to work at least occasionally in his related emotional problems in other areas. This may be a prerequisite to a programme in vocational adjustment.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

2) Answer the following in brief.

i) Define career maturity.

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ii) Identify five important determinants of career patterns.

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iii) Define vocational success

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iv) What is vocational adaptation?

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v) What are the criteria of vocational adjustment?

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11.9 TEACHER'S ROLE IN CAREER PLANNING

Choosing a course that will qualify for one's chosen career is a difficult task. The choice depends on a number of factors such as stream, subject, duration, location and financial expense and aligning two or more of these specifications are not that simple. In today's complicated technology world, the window to success lies in deep thinking. One has to think a lot before one chooses any career. Many new careers are emerging like production director, TV journalist, video editor, sound recorder, web-engineer and so on. It is difficult for students to keep track. In this complicated situation, teachers can play an important role in determining the career patterns of students. Teachers need not have a separate degree in this area, but they will have to take a little interest in this field. Today, most of the leading dailies, both national and state, cater to the career related needs of youth. Each of the leading newspapers has reserved a day of the week to include a supplement on career information; usually it covers all the major aspects of career patterns. It covers articles on a particular career, or an institution. It deals with career information queries, current career fairs, admission in foreign universities etc. It provides guidelines for the preparation for entrance tests for various courses, interviews with heads/directors of the institutes. In addition to this it deals with happenings in educational circles or university campuses and articles on development of qualities, skills and attitudes for better performance in various professions.

11.9.1 Facilitating Career Exploration

The teacher should try to help students to develop career plans. While organizing effective career exploration, he should consider learning objectives, learning styles of students, available resources, available staff and compatibility of techniques within the existing programme.

Career exploration includes self-exploration, development of decision-making skills, exploration of educational, and career possibilities and contact with the world of work. It accomplishes several goals including the following:

- Increase the students' knowledge about themselves, their interest, abilities, needs and values.
- Develop positive work attitudes.
- Increase their knowledge of occupational possibilities, the structure of the world of work, job duties and requirements.
- Point out the implication of occupational and self-knowledge for educational and vocational choice.
- Help them in developing decision-making, problem-solving and planning skills.
- Improve skills in seeking, creating, evaluating and communicating vocational information.
- Develop job seeking skills.
- Motivate the students to attend schools regularly.
- Group setting provides an opportunity to use simulation in career exploration.

11.9.2 Providing Career Information

The young boys and girls are in great need for career related information. Besides opening their eyes to the world of work, information motivates them in choosing and preparing for the work also. The dissemination of career information should begin at the elementary school stage. Here the teacher should integrate career information inputs into teaching of subject matter. He/she can explain the relationship of various subject contents with variety of work as well as the career options in his/her teaching subject. The school teacher at all stages should promote the development of positive attitudes towards education as preparation to careers and decision-making. They should also help them develop values appropriate to future careers.

11.9.3 Providing Career Literature

Reading about occupations is highly stimulating. It helps to develop understanding about various occupations, the nature of work, qualifications required, method of entry, salary and other benefits and scope for further advancement. The teacher should look for career books, admission notices, magazines and periodicals on careers and other material and expose their students to the latest career information. He/she can recommend to the library to procure the career literature. The career literature helps a lot in motivating students to plan for a career and make related decisions.

11.9.4 Providing Role Models

As stated earlier, adolescents lack suitable role models to identify with, and to develop work-related identity. They need people as role model who are achievers, career oriented and successful. The role models should be selected from a variety of careers, traditional as well as non-traditional who are satisfied with their career and life style. Only these types of role models can help students to improve their self-image, instill in them confidence to choose suitable career and experience self-fulfillment in the chosen career path. The role models can be presented in a number of ways:

- 1) Ideally, guest speakers selected as role models should be invited to the school to interact with students about their achievements, work and how they achieved and established themselves.
- 2) Teacher can talk about successful workers in traditional and non-traditional occupations.
- 3) The files on achievements of persons in various fields, such as, toppers in academic and co-curricular activities, award recipients, leaders, social workers, writers, eminent researchers, defence and police services, etc. could be maintained and displayed. Even students could be asked to collect and file this type of material.
- 4) Pictures of successful alumni with their achievements could be displayed.
- 5) Special achievements of staff member may be highlighted through display or in school assembly.
- 6) Mention may be made about local achievers and achievers from disadvantaged sections of the society.

The role models can be provided at all stages of school education and are effective in promoting career development.

11.9.5 Providing Individual Assistance

The above-mentioned strategies may not be sufficient for some of the students who need special help. Such students include girls and other disadvantaged and deprived sections of students. Such students need special attention. Teachers through their support and care can help them to enhance their self-esteem. But as the teachers also have limited time to work individually on each student, they should identify such students and refer them to school counsellor. But as teachers they should facilitate their social and emotional development and encourage them to continue their education.

11.10 ROLE OF PARENTS

Role of parents in the career development of their children is very important. They provide opportunities, facilities and environment conducive to career development. The parents can do the following in order to promote career development.

- i) They should consider them as individuals who have the right to develop and enjoy in this world. They should bring them up in such a way that they are equipped with positive qualities.
- ii) Specially in the case of girls the parents should understand the importance of education. They should change their mind-set of educating girls only for acquiring suitable grooms or procuring employment in case of eventuality.

11.11 LET US SUM UP

The analysis of career patterns has revealed that professional workers typically like varied initial work experience and tend to proceed immediately from college to stable professional employment. In our country, generally we find professional workers like engineers, medical practitioners, defence personnel etc. following this type of career patterns.

White-collar workers generally have secure type of career patterns as compared to the blue-collar workers. Secretaries, Office Superintendents, Clerks, come in this profession. The prevalence of unstable and multiple trial career pattern in blue-collar jobs, and conventional and stable pattern in white-collar jobs is generally found.

The career patterns in India are changing. New careers are merging with new developments on the rise. New services are coming up. Things, which were not heard earlier, are becoming popular, especially in the urban sectors.

These days, careers which were side business earlier, have become full-fledged professions of educated persons. For example, art-craft, clay modeling, flower arrangement, interior decoration, coaching centres or private tuition. Opening private or so called public schools, textile designing, opening computer institutions, fast food joints, super markets, running chartered buses, property

dealing, magazine publishing, private firms, making films, cassettes, jewellery crafting etc. have become career choices for many people.

11.12 UNIT-END EXERCISES

- 1) Define career patterns, vocation, occupation and job.
- 2) What are the determinants of career patterns?
- 3) What are the different classifications of career patterns?
- 4) How is the concept of life stages related with the concept of career pattern?
- 5) Distinguish between career pattern and career maturity.
- 6) What are the criteria of vocational success and vocational adjustment?
- 7) What is the role of teachers in the career planning of their students?

