UNIT 7: AN OVERVIEW OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Concept of Career

7.4 Career Theories

7.4.1 Origin of Career Theories

7.5 Scope of Career Theories

7.6 Aspects of Career Development

7.7 Present Status of Women in Assam

7.7.1 General Condition

7.7.2 Status in Education and Career

7.8 Need and Problems of Career Development

7.9 Problems of Career Development for Women

7.10 Factors and Process of Women's Career Development

7.11 Strategies and Action Plan

7.12 Role of the Teacher

7.13 Let Us Sum Up

7.14 Further Reading

7.15 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.16 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- elucidate the concept of career.
- comprehend how to apply the principles of career theory and career personality theory in guiding students.
- describe the present condition of women in the field of career.
- recognize the need for career development for women.
- discuss the factors and processes involved in career development for women.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will briefly discuss the meaning of career, the scope of career theories, and their contribution to guidance and counselling. These topics are very important in planning a child's career. This is because a child's or a person's self-satisfaction and ability to become useful to society depend on choosing the right career.This unit also focuses on the condition of girl students, the need for career development for girls, issues related to career development for girls, factors affecting girls' career development, and the possibilities of career development in Assam. It also gives importance to discussing the present condition of women in Assam.It is hoped that studying this unitit will help you establish yourself as a skilled teacher and guide.

7.3 CONCEPT OF CAREER

A person plays work-related roles as a student, an employee, and a pensioner. In another sense, a person also performs non-working roles, such as a homemaker and citizen, along with working roles. In this broad meaning, the word "career" can be considered the same as "life-career."

Career refers to the total development of a person. It shows how a person earns and lives life. The concept of career points to the different roles a person has to perform in various areas of life. These roles are:

1. **Biological roles** – child, sibling, husband, wife, parent, and other family relations.
2. **Social roles** – student, friend, group member, and citizen.
3. **Vocational roles** – worker, manager, etc.
4. **Personal roles** – cultural identity, self-expression, self-realisation, etc.

Each of these roles is an important part of a person's career.

A super-defined career is the total set of roles that a person performs during his or her lifetime. He explained career as all the activities and work a person does throughout life, through which career fulfilment is achieved. These activities include work done in the family, fulfilling personal interests, physical ability, spirituality, group behaviour, and personal life.

Ginzberg and Moore explained career as all the roles a person performs in life, such as citizen, family member, student, and worker. A person performs these roles in

different settings, like home, school, society, and workplace, and goes through various events such as entering school, getting a job, marriage, or retirement.

The “development” of a career refers to the continuous process through which a person shapes and builds himself or herself every day.

7.4 CAREER THEORIES

When a person prepares to enter a career, he or she moves forward by making certain decisions. In this process, psychological and social forces of different types of human behaviour play an important role. This means that many personal-social and educational-vocational factors contribute to career choice.

When the influence of these factors is understood and organized into a logical relationship, a theory is formed. Therefore, a theory is a logically arranged set of assumptions or statements that help explain the past and predict the future.

Theories of human behaviour try to study individuals in their environment and understand how they manage their personal-social and educational-vocational activities. A career theory especially tries to understand career behaviours. It organizes the human interests, abilities, and socio-economic influences that contribute to the origin, growth, and achievement of a person’s career goals.

7.4.1 Origin of Career Theories

Career theory developed from the need to explain how and why a person enters a particular career. A brief description of the development of career theory is given below.

At first, career theory was known as the psychology of vocational traits. As a trait psychology, it studied whether men and women would succeed or fail in a wide range of occupations. Based on different personality traits—including demographic, social, and psychological factors—individuals were matched with suitable occupations.

Parsons was the first to successfully provide vocational guidance according to psychological principles. To bring proper adjustment between a person and a job, he conducted aptitude tests and connected the results with vocational information. Parsons followed three steps in career counselling: self-analysis, vocational analysis, and true reasoning (logical decision-making).

During the First World War, aptitude tests greatly helped in placing individuals in suitable jobs. These tests became very popular for recruiting people into military service. Intelligence tests started under the leadership of Alfred Binet helped in preparing the Army Alpha Test during World War I. During World War II, more advanced tests such as the Army General Classification Test were used. The two World Wars brought a revolution in test construction in America and led to the development of new tests and research on workers.

After the wars ended, unemployed soldiers were given opportunities to be placed in proper civilian jobs. As a result, job analysis, skill profiles, and job psychographs became important in worker selection. Some important contributions in this area include the General Aptitude Test Battery, the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, and the Occupational Outlook Handbook.

In addition, E. L. Thorndike and Edwin Ghiselli provided information about the relationship between job preference and success. Famous career theorists such as Anne Roe and J. L. Holland studied the relationship between personality traits and occupations and emphasized success and achievement at work.

Even today, the trait-psychological approach is used in vocational psychology. At present, advanced knowledge and applied guidance theories are used. Clinical psychology, psychometrics, personality theories, and social psychology have progressed greatly and have given importance to developmental aspects of individuals.

Developmental psychology of children's careers studies children from the time they begin planning for a career until they attempt to choose one. Over time, vocational psychology gradually moved toward developmental psychology and became known as "career psychology."

According to Ginzberg, vocational choice follows a developmental process. In this context, personality theorists Roe and Holland also included developmental aspects in their theories. They stated that when a person's personality matches with a job, he or she will seek better opportunities in the future and try to improve his or her career further.

7.5 SCOPE OF CAREER THEORIES

A career has psychological and social importance. The practical value of career theory and career psychology lies in situations where decision-making is important in psychological, sociological, and vocational fields. The scope of career theory is broad in three main areas. These are:

1) Career theory helps in understanding different situations. It considers various factors of a person's home environment and school environment. The home is the first place where a child learns personal and social skills, career awareness, and self-exploration. The school provides a suitable environment for self-exploration. It helps students choose the right subjects according to their abilities and interests. The school informs students about the world of work, prepares them for job interviews, helps build the right attitude, manage stress, and develop communication skills. It also trains students to take responsibility for their mental and physical health.

2) The main areas related to career theory include educational and vocational guidance and counselling in schools, psychology of employees involved in selection, training and promotion of workers, work motivation, and group dynamics.

3) The principles of career theory are mainly based on knowledge of personality development. This knowledge includes cognitive, emotional, moral, and social development of a person, adolescent psychology, vocational behaviour, organizational behaviour, and labour economics. Social scientists view a worker from a dynamic perspective and explain the interaction between the individual and society.

From the above discussion, it is clear that career theory helps a counsellor provide proper and confident guidance. It makes the guidance process more effective and helps in correctly predicting students' behaviour. With the help of career theory, necessary intervention strategies can be used. Moreover, career theory can open new directions through research in guidance and counselling.

7.6 ASPECTS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

One of the important programs of guidance and counselling is career counselling. Career counselling does not mean only searching for a job or getting employment. The aim of career counselling is to help a person choose the right life goals and objectives and build a meaningful career.

Human development is connected with many aspects, such as physical, social, emotional, moral, intellectual, and spiritual aspects. Therefore, human development is considered a complex subject because the overall development of a person depends on the balanced and interrelated growth of all these aspects. If a person can adjust well in the social environment and build good relationships, then he or she can also succeed in career development. So, career development is considered a comprehensive process. For the healthy development of children, growth in the following areas is very important:

1. Physical ability
2. Emotional maturity
3. Communication skills
4. Work skills, abilities, and competencies

We observe people in different careers and think about how they chose their careers. They may have studied a subject with proper planning. They might have selected that subject from many alternatives and then shaped their career in a planned way. Mental maturity plays an important role in choosing the right option from different alternatives. A person gradually becomes aware of his or her future career. This awareness includes job stability, economic security, and personal satisfaction.

Various factors influence a person's career planning and the actions taken after planning. These include how much information the person has received, the type of environment in which he or she lives, and the kind of life events experienced. In other words, career development depends on the kind of role models, home environment, school curriculum, and other support such as counsellors, teachers, and peer groups that a child receives. If there is an opportunity for practical or hands-on work in school, it becomes more helpful for the child.

Therefore, career development is a continuous learning process about oneself. Through this process, a person examines himself or herself in relation to the world of work, personal resources, family resources, and available choices. As students grow older, they become more mature regarding career decisions. The factors that help in career maturity include proper attitude, knowledge, and skills. These help a person gain the necessary knowledge required as a future worker and achieve long-term career goals.

7.7 PRESENT STATUS OF WOMEN IN ASSAM

In any society, the status of women is determined by their level of awareness,

type of participation in work, health condition, economic condition, educational status, active involvement, and role in decision-making.In the field of human development and gender equality, Assam is not the worst among the states of India, but its position is still quite low. Compared to women living in other parts of the country, the status of women in Assam is considered somewhat different. However, this does not mean that women and men are equal here.The reason for this difference may be several factors, such as fewer barriers in ethnic mobility, the absence of the purdah system, and the long-standing influence of tribal work culture, where the rural economy is largely connected with women's labour and women's entrepreneurship.

7.7.1 General Condition

In the field of work participation, the Female Work Participation Rate (FWPR) is high. However, women do not benefit much economically even though they carry most of the workload. In Assam, women's work participation rate is higher than men in the primary sector. But it is lower in the secondary and service sectors. Since the 1990s, women's employment in the organized sector has been around 30 percent. Most of the women employed in this sector work as permanent, temporary, or casual workers in the tea industry of Assam. It is clear that women have always been employed mainly as workers in the tea industry. Only recently, breaking a 200-year-old tradition, in 2018, Mrs. Dr. Manju Devi became the first woman to hold the position of tea garden manager.

It is true that in Assam, women's position is very poor when we look at their representation in decision-making bodies. In fact, women's status in decision-making institutions in Assam is among the lowest. Not only in elected bodies, but also in administrative positions, women's participation is low. In the area of women's health, the death rate in Assam is high and has increased over time. According to the Sample Registration System, Registrar General of India, 2016–18, the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in Assam is 215 per 100,000 live births (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare). The sex ratio in Assam is 954 females per 1000 males.

7.7.2 Status in Education and Career

A woman's career is determined by her educational foundation. It is known that formal education influences women's participation in work and helps in

developing their potential. Since Independence, the literacy level of women has steadily improved, but it is still far behind that of men. The number of women enrolling in higher educational institutions has also increased significantly. Women's participation in technical and professional courses has grown noticeably. According to the 2011 Census, the female literacy rate in Assam is 67.3%. Although the gap between male and female literacy is still noticeable, it has reduced over time and is much lower than the national average. However, from 1981 to 2001, the dropout rate of both boys and girls (especially girls) in Assam remained higher than the national average.

It is important to note that for boys, the level of education achieved is directly related to their vocational opportunities. But this is not the same for girls. Many girls are not motivated to compete with boys in choosing subjects for higher education or to develop themselves for career purposes. Instead, they often see education as a way to achieve a better life, to handle adult or situational challenges, to find a better marriage match, to become a better mother, and as preparation for life rather than for a career. In a way, everything seems to end with the completion of college education.

However, there are various schemes for women in Assam. These schemes are supported by both the central and state governments. They focus on employment, education, and health, along with other important and related measures.

7.8 Need and Problems of Career Development

You know that basic and higher-level needs are universal, regardless of gender or any other differences. We need to have access to education at all levels. Girls should be encouraged to use their education for their benefit and to take their rightful place in the employment sector. In this regard, proper preparation and training are very important. The work environment gives them opportunities for self-expression and provides social connections, economic independence, and helps fulfil various other needs of self-realisation.

7.9 PROBLEMS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN

As a teacher, you may have noticed that there are various issues and problems related to girls' career development. The problems in women's career development arise from traditional beliefs about women's participation in certain occupations, extreme views about gender roles, negative attitudes about self-efficacy, lack of empowerment, sexual harassment at the workplace, and other related factors. Let us discuss these problems in this chapter.

1) Socially imposed gender traits:

Natural differences between genders have never created barriers to development. However, wrong beliefs based on socially assigned gender roles create discrimination against women. This negatively affects their career development. Gender norms about personal and social responsibilities are often based on beliefs about masculine and feminine traits. For example, aggression, confidence, and independence are considered male traits, while nurturing, sensitivity, and passivity are considered female traits. These ideas create obstacles for girls in choosing careers.

2) Family versus work responsibilities:

Traditionally, women have been assigned the role of homemakers. Even if a woman works, she is not free from household responsibilities. She has to balance both home and work. As long as these roles do not affect career development, it is manageable. But household responsibilities often prevent women from stepping outside the home. They influence women's values, attitudes, aspirations, and achievement motivation as participants in the world of work. Sometimes, work participation is even seen as a threat. This becomes a barrier to women's development.

3) Gender-based stereotypes:

In employment selection, gender discrimination is often seen. Traditionally, society believes that certain jobs are for men and certain jobs are for women. For example, engineering and medical professions are often considered suitable for men, while teaching and nursing are considered suitable for women. Because of such beliefs, discrimination can occur in selecting candidates, deciding salaries, or accepting women in leadership positions.

4) Curriculum and teaching-learning process:

There are gender differences in curricular and co-curricular activities between boys and girls. Teachers may also show gender bias in teaching. School textbooks may present content with gender bias, which is reflected in classroom teaching. In co-curricular activities, girls are often given easier tasks such as singing, literary activities, or reception duties instead of challenging tasks. As a result, girls do not get exposure to different types of work or hands-on practice, and they fail to develop necessary self-efficacy and self-confidence.

5) Safety at the workplace:

Another widely discussed issue is the safety of girls at the workplace. Parents and sometimes teachers discourage girls from joining male-dominated jobs due to fear of physical danger, sexual harassment, or problems related to travelling at odd hours.

6) Girls' education:

Girls' education is affected by many factors that may not apply to boys. These include lack of proper toilet facilities for girls, the absence of female teachers, failure to address the problems of adolescent girls, and lack of transport facilities.

7) Lack of awareness about women's legal rights:

Constitutional and legal provisions for women's welfare and development are powerful tools for their protection and well-being. These include specific laws and rights such as the Equal Remuneration Act, Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, laws against eve-teasing, Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, marriage laws, Maternity Benefit Act, etc. However, lack of awareness about these rights makes women less confident. It is important to make them aware and sensitive so that they can protect themselves and use these rights when needed in educational and work situations.

8) Poor self-image or low self-esteem:

In many societies, girls are treated with fixed expectations about behavior, attitudes, and aspirations. Often, a girl is not preferred even before birth. After birth, she may be treated as unwanted. She may be neglected in nutrition, health, and education. She is often seen only as a helping hand at home. She may be controlled, neglected throughout life, and treated as a sexual object. As a result, she develops a poor self-image. Discrimination against girls exists in different forms across cultures, communities, and

socio-economic levels. The development of a weak self-image or lack of awareness about self-esteem becomes a major psychological barrier to their career development.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q No. 2: Write True or False.

(a) Women's participation in work is an indicator of their status in society.

(b) It is clear that girls and boys compete equally in choosing subjects.

(c) The issue is not due to the absence of constitutional provisions, but due to lack of awareness about them.

Q No. 3: What is meant by occupational gender discrimination?

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7.10 FACTORS AND PROCESS OF WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Women's career development is influenced by various socio-psychological factors. Some gender-specific aspects and dimensions of career development among girls include cognitive factors (ability and information) and emotional factors (interests and attitudes). In this section, we will discuss some of these factors.

1) Personal and career awareness:

Girls' career development is influenced by their involvement in self-exploration and career exploration activities. If girls grow up in a gender-neutral environment, they tend to develop a realistic self-concept, vocational self-concept, and career identity. Sometimes, personal choices may depend on parents' wishes and decisions if girls do not show enough confidence to follow their own interests.

2) Attitude towards career:

A person's attitude towards career is related to career behavior and the kind of life they imagine for themselves. It includes the choice to work or not to work, preference for certain jobs, and personal values. Women are often pressured to think of career as something that interferes with child-rearing and household responsibilities. Their career attitudes are usually influenced by values such as balancing home and work, fewer working hours, and having a safe and secure work environment.

3) Level of aspiration:

The level of aspiration is directly related to a woman's career planning. It helps a girl set and define career goals. Factors such as family socio-economic status, parental encouragement, personal self-esteem, belief in self-efficacy, and positive female role models contribute to a girl's level of aspiration. This is reflected in the type of career she chooses.

4) Direction of choice:

When choosing career options, girl students face many limitations. Terms like "gender-specific" and "gender-appropriate" strongly influence the beliefs and job attitudes of girls, their parents, and often teachers. As a result, girls may not reach their full potential.

5) Traditional domestic roles of girls:

Generally, women work outside the home to earn money to support household needs. These women usually belong to lower and lower-middle-class families. They are often engaged in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs, or in traditional professions such as clerical work, teaching, and nursing.

6) Desire to use acquired education:

Some educated women do not want their education to go to waste, so they take up office jobs (often called "white-collar jobs"). Some of these women are career-conscious and work seriously. Higher living standards and increasing aspirations for higher education also motivate women to take certain types of jobs.

7) Willingness to prove self-worth:

Some women have a strong desire to achieve and prove their abilities. They pursue higher education, show efficiency in work, increase their professional aspirations, and aim for a career rather than just a job. Many of these women are found in non-traditional careers and work hard to reach top positions.

9) Need for status and empowerment:

Being engaged in a career gives identity, status, empowerment, and social recognition. A housewife may not need to work for economic reasons, but she may feel a lack of recognition for her unpaid work and may receive less respect for domestic duties. Therefore, she may prefer to work outside the home. Many such women start their careers later in life.

10) Small family size:

With one or two children, women find more free time after the children start going to school. Some women engage in income-generating activities at home, while others look for paid employment. However, due to high and increasing unemployment rates, finding a job at this stage can be difficult.

11) Increasing job opportunities for women:

With the government's conscious efforts toward women's development, educational and job opportunities for women have expanded rapidly in recent times. These opportunities are mainly in clerical, sales, and service occupations, where a large number of educated women are employed.

12) Change in social attitudes and values:

Since Independence, there has been a gradual change in social attitudes and values toward women's development. This change has encouraged women to develop their potential in education and career.

7.11 STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLAN

In the field of career development, strategies to improve the condition and position of girls and women should be result-oriented and development-oriented. The main objective is to help them benefit directly or indirectly from programs and activities.

For this, four types of goals can be imagined:

1) Specific goals:

Some specific goals include changing attitudes, empowering girls, expanding opportunities for girls, and ensuring equality in education and employment.

2) Target groups:

Career development for girls does not focus only on girls. The target groups that need to be addressed include girls and boys, parents, the community, employers, teachers, and educators.

3) Goal-oriented strategies and activities:

The strategies include awareness programs to bring about attitude change among girls, boys, the community, educators, and employers; ensuring facilities and support for

girls and women; providing skill training; orientation and training for teachers, educators, and textbook writers; and orientation and training for educational policy planners.

4) Orientation and training materials:

There is a need for coordinated efforts to develop materials for orientation and training aimed at women's empowerment.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q No. 4: Mention the factors that influence the level of aspiration of girls.

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Q No. 5: How does career choice influence career development?

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7.12 ROLE OF THE TEACHER

From the above discussion, it is clear that women represent undeveloped human potential. Since schools are seen as social institutions responsible for developing the potential of students, teachers have an important role in girls' career development.

Attitude towards Girls' Education

Teachers' attitude towards girls' education should focus on building human resources. They should encourage and support girls in identifying and nurturing their talents for personal development. Teachers need to examine their own gender biases and behaviours that may prevent girls from realizing their career potential. They should discourage separating subjects, skills, activities, hobbies, and behaviours based on gender, as this creates a major obstacle to development. Personal growth and taking on new roles are very important.

Creating a Supportive Environment for Girls' Career Development

Teachers should try to create a learning environment that supports girls. They should not encourage traditional stereotypes about "appropriate" or "inappropriate" behavior for girls. Girls should not be encouraged to be timid, anxious, fearful, passive, dependent, overly obedient, sensitive, or technically incapable. Teachers should challenge the biases

imposed by adults that girls often face and help them improve their self-image.

Providing Career Information and Awareness about Different Schemes

Girls need access to information. Information not only opens their eyes to the world of work but also motivates them to choose and prepare for careers. Career information should begin at the primary school level. Teachers should include career-related discussions in their subject teaching. They can also recommend purchasing career-related books for the school library. Career literature greatly helps girls in planning and making career decisions.

At the school level, both primary and secondary curricula and co-curricular activities aim to make children aware of their surroundings. Students are made sensitive to different work situations and workers, and they are encouraged to explore their likes, dislikes, preferences, values, and abilities related to work. In a gender-neutral environment, positive and unbiased attitudes towards all types of work are encouraged.

Presenting Role Models

There is often a lack of suitable role models for girls to help them develop work-related identities. Girls need role models who are successful, career-oriented, and accomplished women. These role models should be selected from both traditional and non-traditional careers, who are satisfied with their career and lifestyle and respect themselves as women. Only such role models can help girls improve their self-image, build confidence to choose suitable careers, and experience self-fulfilment in their chosen paths.

1. Selected women guest speakers can be invited to schools to share their achievements, work experiences, and how they achieved success. Students can interact with them and clear their doubts.
2. Teachers can discuss successful women working in both traditional and non-traditional professions.
3. Achievements of girls and women in various fields—such as academic and co-curricular excellence, award winners, leaders, social workers, writers, researchers, defence and police services—can be highlighted. Students may also be asked to collect and present such information.
4. Photographs and achievements of successful female alumni can be displayed, and they can be invited to interact with students.

5. Special achievements of female staff members can be recognized and highlighted during school meetings.
6. Achievements of local women from disadvantaged sections of society can also be shared.

At all levels of school and college education, presenting such role models can be very effective in promoting girls' career development.

Providing Individual Support

For some girls who need special support, the above strategies may not be enough. Due to traditional upbringing and home and community environments, some girls deeply experience gender discrimination. They may struggle with accepting themselves as individuals and building self-esteem. Such girls need special attention. A female teacher, through her interest, support, and care, can help them come out of their limitations and build self-respect and a meaningful lifestyle. These girls should be identified and referred to trained counsellors for further support.

2 7.13 LET US SUM UP

- Career refers to the overall development of an individual.
- In a broad sense, career means all the roles that a person has to perform in life.
- Career development is an important aspect of human development.
- Career theories help in understanding the factors that influence career-related decision making.
- In any society, the status of women is determined by their level of awareness, pattern of participation in work, health condition, economic status, educational level, active participation, position in decision making, etc.
- In terms of participation in work, the Female Work Participation Rate (FWPR) is high. However, women do not benefit economically from it.
- It is important to motivate, prepare, and train girls to use their education for their benefit and to secure a suitable place in the employment sector.
- The various issues in girls' career development include fixed gender identity, balancing family and work responsibilities, gender-specific attitudes, gender-biased curriculum and teaching methods, lack of facilities for girls' education, lack of awareness about women's legal rights, and poor self-image or low self-esteem.

- The factors influencing girls' career development include personal and career awareness, attitude towards career, level of aspiration, direction of career choice, girls' domestic roles, willingness to use acquired education, desire to prove self-worth, need for status and empowerment, small family size, increased job opportunities for women, and changes in social attitudes and values.

O 7.14 FURTHER READING

- NCERT (2016). *Career Development-I (Medulely)*. New Delhi.
- Sharma, R. A. (–). Fundamentals of Guidance and Counselling. Meerut :Vinay Rakheja.

K 7.15 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Question 1:

A career theory specially tries to understand career behaviours. It organizes the human interests, abilities, and socio-economic influences that contribute to the origin, growth, and application of a person's career goals.

Answer to Question 2:

(a) True

(b) False

(c) True

Answer to Question 3:

Occupational gender stereotypes refer to the generalized view about the suitability of different occupations for men and women.

Answer to Question 4:

Family socio-economic status, parental encouragement, personal self-esteem and belief in self-efficacy, and positive female role models contribute to the level of aspiration of a girl.

Answer to Question 5:

If careers are chosen based on "gender-specific" and "gender-appropriate" ideas, girls are deprived of reaching their full potential. In this way, it affects the career development of girls.

M 7.16 MODEL QUESTIONS

[A] Short Questions *(Write about 150 words for each question)*

Q 1: What is meant by career?

Q 2: What is human development?

Q 3: What is the relationship between personality and career?

Q 4: Mention five indicators of the status of women in society.

[B] Essay Type Questions *(Write the answers within 300–500 words)*

Q 1: Explain the importance of studying career theory.

Q 2: Discuss the scope of career theory.

Q 3: Explain how personality theories play a role in shaping a career.

Q 4: Discuss the issues related to the career development of girls.

Q 5: Discuss how girls' attitudes toward career and the social attitudes and values affect their careers.

Q 6: Give a detailed description of the role of teachers in the career development of girls.

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