The Career Preparation Process Model: A summary

The Career Preparation Process Model suggests first of all that career preparation is a process that occurs within a particular social-cognitive environment. Within this environment, socio-economic status variables and career beliefs interact with each other and have a unique influence on the sources of self-efficacy. These factors in turn influence the manner in which choice and volition are exercised and career developmental tasks resolved. Some groups imbibe career beliefs and are exposed to sources of self-efficacy that predispose them toward immediate, unskilled (possibly unplanned) entry into the world of work. The career beliefs and the sources of self-efficacy that other groups are exposed to, move them toward further education. The dynamics of this process of career preparation has the final outcome of insecure or fruitful employment in the future, according to how personal potentials and career satisfaction are actualised. The figure at the bottom of this excerpt presents a schematic illustration of this model of the career preparation process.

Illustrations of the model

Ram – a boy from a low SES home

Ram is a boy, living in extremely difficult social and economic circumstances, who is doing poorly in his studies and whose parents are illiterate and unemployed. The career beliefs prevailing in this environment are likely to place a low value on career preparation, self-direction and persisting toward career goals. The Career Preparation Process model postulates that this environment could impact Ram's sources of self-efficacy in the following manner: Ram's vicarious experiences through the role models he is exposed to could reflect failure experiences, with bitter and defeatist attitudes (e.g. his father's earnings after a day of extremely strenuous physical labour could be a mere Rs. 80). Social persuasory forces (verbal persuasion) could be such that Ram experiences

a high degree of pressure to begin contributing to the family income at the earliest (e.g. "What you have studied so far is good enough; now go out and get a job"). It is possible that significant others in his environment express scepticism toward career preparation activities (e.g. "Look at that college graduate, he doesn't even have a job."). His own poor academic performance could create negative emotions toward education (e.g. "In any case I'm failing in my exams; I'm no good in my studies."). Overall, Ram's environment places constraints on the success experiences (performance accomplishments) that he could have with career preparation. At the end of high school Ram would be confronted with the career developmental task of seeking employment or going on for further education. The Career Preparation Process model postulates that by this time Ram's social learning experiences have been such that his thinking patterns are characterised by negativity and scepticism about the career preparation process. Ram could have learned to believe for example, that "undergoing further education to enhance work skills is a waste of time", or "studying further is only for rich folk". The model goes on to postulate that this combination of socio-economic factors and social-cognitive factors, would have led to the development of a higher self-efficacy for seeking immediate employment than for career preparation activities. As a result it is most likely that Ram would enter the world of work as an unskilled labourer, which in turn places him on a career development trajectory toward uncertain employment.

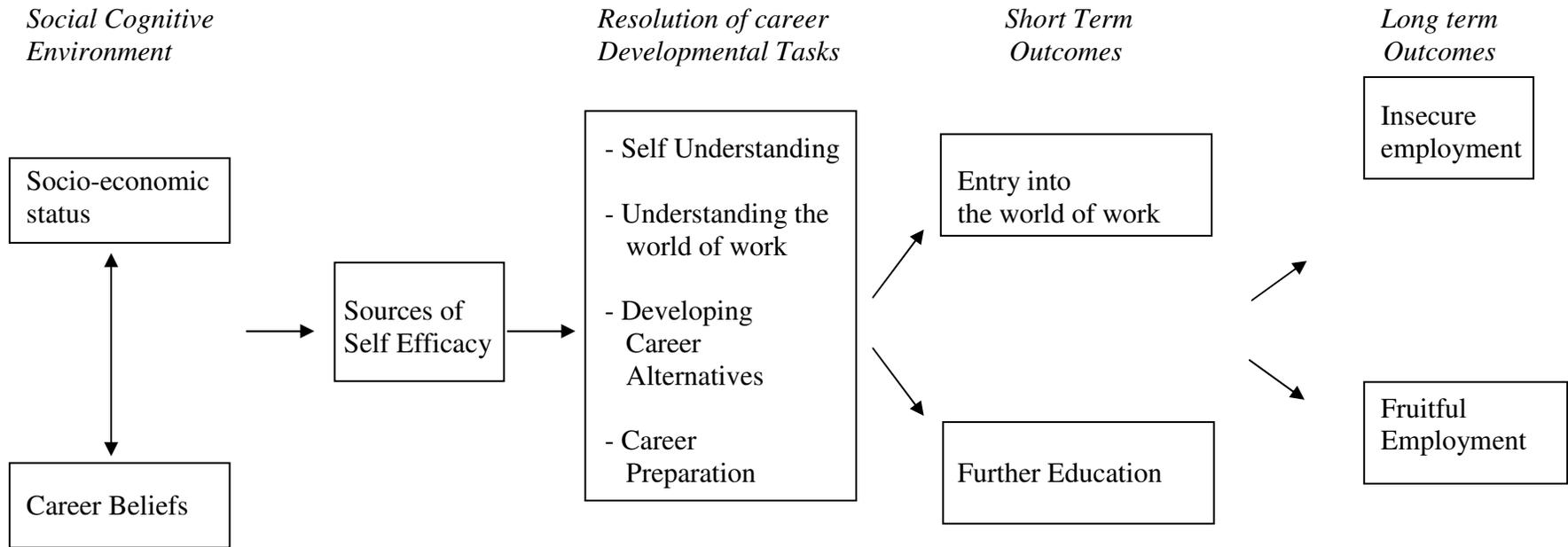*Swamy – a boy from a middle class home*

Swamy is a boy who is doing reasonably well in his studies and whose parents are educated and hold secure government jobs. This family is likely to believe that certain careers are valuable, prestigious and that these careers must be sought after. Career preparation is likely to be associated with strenuous efforts to enter courses that lead to these careers. According to the Career Preparation Process model this environment could impact Swamy's sources of self-efficacy in the following manner: Swamy's vicarious experiences through the role models he is exposed to could reflect success experiences as a result of career preparation. Swamy would be strongly encouraged (social persuasory forces) to apply the utmost effort toward preparing for high prestige careers (e.g. "If you

become a doctor, you will be highly respected"). His socio-economic environment could be such that it offers numerous opportunities for success experiences (performance accomplishments), related to preparing for a high prestige career. At the end of high school Swamy would be confronted with the career developmental task of seeking immediate employment or going on for further education. Swamy is likely to have developed a higher self-efficacy for pursuing further education and it is most likely that he will persist along the path toward the chosen career.

The prevailing social-cognitive environment while providing every support for career preparation, has not accommodated Swamy's personal interests and aptitudes. The crucial question now is with regard to *outcomes*. If Swamy possesses the interests and the aptitudes for the chosen career it is likely that he will do well at this career and experience satisfaction with his career. If this were not the case, Swamy would enter a career for which he does not have the suitability and it is likely that his employment status would be insecure.

In summary, the Career Preparation Process model views career development as a process that moves along with the individual's physical, cognitive and social maturation. The model highlights however that social cognitive factors and social learning experiences concurrently influence this process. It is into this tapestry of development that counselling for the effective elaboration of career progress must be woven.

The Career Preparation Process Model

Social Cognitive Environment

Resolution of career Developmental Tasks

Short Term Outcomes

Long term Outcomes

Socio-economic status

Career Beliefs

Sources of Self Efficacy

- Self Understanding

- Understanding the world of work

- Developing Career Alternatives

- Career Preparation

Entry into the world of work

Further Education

Insecure employment

Fruitful Employment

Sources of Self Efficacy: Performance Accomplishments
Vicarious Experiences
Verbal Persuasion
Physiological / Emotional Arousal

Please refer to the book cited at the head of this excerpt for a more complete description of the Career Preparation Process Model