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About Presenters:

Ms. Kinjal Maru is a student in the M.Sc. programme in Human Development at the Nirmala Niketan College of Home Science, University of Mumbai. She has graduated with a B.Sc. in Human Development from the same college. In her view, very few human beings take care of themselves in the right sense. She wishes to address modern woes such as stress, depression, and suicide resulting from an ever-growing hectic lifestyle and related alienation. In her career she plans to bring together the resources from the fields of Human Development and Counselling.

Dr. Anuradha Bakshi is a Reader Designate at the Nirmala Niketan College of Home Science, University of Mumbai. She has completed her PhD from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, USA, and her master's degree from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. She has also taught at both her alma mater universities and at the Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work, University of Mumbai. Her research career began as an undergraduate student and has spanned over two decades in varied areas such as resiliency, education, and spirituality.

As one of the senior-most faculty in Nirmala Niketan, she has served as a Department Head (2004-2007). She is teaching students in the B.Sc., M.Sc., and PhD Home Science programs. She has presented papers at international conferences; last year she chaired a session on research in Human Development at an international conference. She is a consultant in multiple areas such as Research Methods and Statistics, and Human Development.

Student support and welfare is one of her priorities. As a university teacher, she has invested substantial time in career guidance and counseling of students, especially advanced students and alumnae. In fact, her interest in the welfare of "her protégées" has led her to track their life paths both formally (i.e., through research) and informally.



Title of Paper: Youth Services in the Kutchi Community: Critical Evaluation with Regard to Career Guidance

Abstract:

In each culture, there are multiple ways in which individuals are guided and supported in selecting, preparing for, entering, and progressing in an occupation or a career. This includes professional career guidance services as also support from family, peers, and the community. It is important to examine community support which can be both organised as well as more informal. In this presentation, one community has been selected to illustrate organised community support for career guidance in India: this is the Kutchi community in Mumbai and Thane. Kutchi is in northern Gujarat; there are many different sub-communities such as Kutchi Visa Oswal, Kutchi Desa Oswal, Kutchi Luhana, Kutchi Vagad and so on. The Kutchi Visa Oswal community has been selected as a case example for this presentation; there are 43,510 Kutchi Visa Oswal families in Mumbai and Thane. The main organisation through which services are provided to Kutchis in this community is the Kutchi Visa Oswal Seva Samaj (KVOSS) which has centres all over Mumbai. There are many organised activities, schemes and facilities offered to youth and others in the community through the KVOSS of which several are relevant for career guidance and support: For example, the Computer Loan Scheme, the KVO Book Bank, Educational Loan, Stree Utkarsh Yojna (supporting women in their entrepreneurial activities), personality development workshops, youth camps, career guidance seminars, and the Jivan Disha youth forum. The perspectives of 10 committee members and experts, and 50 Kutchi youth from Mumbai and Thane including beneficiaries, are included in this survey. Conclusions are drawn with regard to the extent to which the services meet the career guidance needs of youth in the Kutchi Visa Oswal community. Implications for culturally-relevant, professional career guidance practice are discussed.