

## **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES FOR THE ADOLESCENCE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE INNOVATIVE PRACTICES OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELLORS**

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*Adolescence stage is a crucial period in one's life. It starts from the age of 10-11 and continues up to 18-19 years of age. This is a stage where rapid physiological and psychological changes/development occurs. Many a times the individuals are in a state of stress, confusion and dilemma. Adolescence students at this stage require a lot of help. They require help in knowing the issues related to the physiological development, emotions, dealing with their own peers and elders, and issues related to their education and future career. Adolescence education becomes inevitable for empowering young individuals to face the life with bold and confidence.*

*The objectives of adolescence education could be achieved to a large extent by organizing regular guidance and counselling services/programmes effectively in schools. Guidance and counselling is one of the students support services in schools. It is considered as a helping profession and which is an integral part of education. The present paper focuses on the practices followed by the professional school counsellors in helping the adolescence. A meta-analysis of the couple of papers on the best practices in guidance and counselling presented by the practitioners for the regional seminar on 'current practices in school guidance programme' is made and the results are systematically presented in this paper. This paper concludes with the extent of support rendered by the professional counsellors through the guidance and counselling services for the well-being of adolescence.*

**Key words:** *Guidance and Counselling, Adolescence Education.*

### **Introduction**

The purpose of education is to develop the human potential within the individual. It is for the holistic development of the total individual. Individual requires help in all stages of life. During the adolescence stage, the help required is crucial for their later life. Adolescence stage is a period of high stress in one's life. It starts from the age of 10-11 and continues up to 18-19 years of age. This is a stage where rapid physiological and psychological changes/development occurs. Many a times the individuals are in a state of stress, confusion and dilemma. Adolescence students at this stage require a lot of help. They require help in knowing the issues related to the physiological development, emotions, dealing with their own peers and elders, and issues related to their education and future career. Adolescence education becomes inevitable for empowering young individuals to face the life with bold and confidence.

The Government of India has taken a decision to implement the Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) in all secondary and higher secondary schools. According to the new guidelines issued by the MHRD, the 'Adolescence Education Programme' (2005) aims to: (i) Reinforce/support development of behaviours that will empower adolescents to make healthy choices. (ii) Provide opportunities for the reinforcement of existing positive behaviour and strengthening of life skills that enable young people to protect themselves from and to cope with risky situations they encounter in their lives. (NACO/MHRD), 2005). Further, it has been pointed out that adolescence education must be able to do far more than explaining about the physiological changes and the process of reproduction. The wider expectation of an adolescence education is to help pupils develop a mature and well –balanced personality with a capacity to deal with his/her feelings and inter-personal relationships problems and the internalization of personal needs to avoid extreme attitudes (RIEM, 2000).

National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) provided guidelines for facilitating healthy growth and development of students across all school stages and scope for guidance /counselling at each of these school stages from elementary through secondary and higher secondary stages. Further focusing on Higher Secondary stage NCF states: “Given the developmental nature of this stage, guidance and counselling by trained professionals must be made available to children. Interventions to enhance self/career awareness, career exploration and planning are also essential. Besides, this stage coincides with adolescence, a period in an individual’s life that is marked by personal, social and emotional crises created due to the demands of adjustment required in family, peer group and school situations. The provision of these services in schools would help create the support system required to cope with increasing academic and social pressures” (p.70).

Thus, one could see that the major goals of guidance and Counselling and adolescence education are focusing on the wellbeing of the Individual with specific areas of intervention. Many of the objectives of the Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) could be better achieved through an effective school guidance and counselling programme.

**Guidance and Counselling**

Guidance and counselling is one of the students support services in schools. Student support services are non-instructional activities that are conducted in school for the whole development of the students. It is considered as a helping profession and which is an integral part of education. The three major areas of guidance are: (i) Educational Guidance (ii) Vocational/Career Guidance and (iii) Socio-Personal guidance. Much of the components of the adolescence education are also a part of the socio-personal guidance. According to the guidelines issued by the RMSA (NCERT, 2015) stipulates the following as the major goals of socio-personal guidance. The goals of socio-personal guidance are to:

- Help students understand the various physical and socio-emotional development that take place in the concerned stage of life.
- Help students to know and appreciate themselves
- Guide how to relate effectively with others
- Help to overcome the fear, anxiety, tension, etc which hinder their well being and personal adjustment.

The following table provides the various aspects that are covered under the socio-personal guidance.

Personal-Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing/ facilitating self-understanding</li> <li>• Enhancing self-esteem</li> <li>• Developing self- confidence</li> <li>• Self-discipline</li> <li>• Promoting adjustment to school</li> <li>• Developing Healthy peer relationships</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Understanding society’s requirements from adolescents</li> <li>• Understanding expected social behaviour</li> <li>• Understanding peer pressure &amp; coping with it</li> <li>• Assertiveness training</li> <li>• Coping skills to deal with problems/ways to approach problems of life</li> <li>• Managing stress and conflict</li> <li>• Bullying : reasons, consequences, control</li> <li>• Minimising violent behavior</li> <li>• Substance abuse and its prevention</li> </ul>
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In the absence of the trained counsellors' availability in most of our schools, to provide the guidance and counselling services, it has been recommended that the existing teachers could be empowered to take up the role of counsellors also.

### **Innovative Practices of School Counsellors**

The following paragraphs provide a gist of the activities carried out as a part of the guidance and counselling services by the professionally trained counsellors.

Kalyani Kenneth (2014) presented a paper titled 'Stressing demand for school guidance: Experience sharing' reported that she has come across students with dyslexic, hyper active, attention deficit hyper active disorder, behavior problems, slow writer, slow learner and so forth. Counselling services for the secondary school students, she has addressed psychological, social and academic issues that can range from problems with school work, to bullying, to health concerns like depression. She has observed that there is a growing gap in the relationship and communication gap between adolescence and family members. Influence of mass media or social network also played a pivotal role in influencing the behavior of adolescence lot of change are observed in the behaviour of students at this stage and the role of guidance counselor or paramount in bring about desirable behavior among the adolescence.

Chrisia Laura Pinto (2014) in her paper titled 'Guidance and counselling to adolescence-an initiate by Ursuline Franciscan Educational Society (UFES)' reported that the major aim of the society is to "experience fullness of life" by the individual as adolescence. The areas focused on adolescence counselling are for their physiological, biological, psychological and social changes. The problems faced by students from broken families, single parent, children with domestic violence background and sexual abuse, loss parents at early childhood, poverty, fear of failure and teachers, attitude of parents towards children's behavior, school violence, Identity create and obstruction to leading towards "fullness of life". According to them caring for the adolescence is a challenge and an opportunity. As school counsellors, there is a lot can be done for the fullness of life of an individual which is the ultimate vision of UFES.

Smita A Desai and others (2014) in their paper titled 'Best Practices in School Counselling: The Dristi Model' which is implemented in schools across Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Bengaluru focused on providing counselling and remedial education services for the adolescence. The programme comprises of identification of behavior/learning/social difficulties and providing guidance and counselling and also providing crises intervention. The interventions made are of more preventive in nature. The problems handled are behavioral difficulties (hyper activity, in attention, ride and disturbing the class etc.) and emotional difficulties (anger management, loss of self-esteem and social skill).

Pratibha R and N Ramkumar (2014) highlighted the life skill programme of Prema Vidya titled "Voices from the Field" which is a case study of 10 children in the urban schools of Bengaluru where Prema Vidya programs have been implemented. The skills program of Prema Vidya comprised of aspects like self-awareness, empathy, communication, interpersonal skills, coping with emotions, creative thinking, critical thinking, decision making, problem solving and coping with stress. The life skill content designs and delivered 8<sup>th</sup> grade focuses on the personal transformation process, 9<sup>th</sup> grade on the empowerment view point and 10<sup>th</sup> grade entirely focuses on the study skill areas.

Malini Ayyer (2014) and her paper titled 'School Guidance Programme: Best Practice' focused the activities under taken by her in an International school of Andhra Pradesh where she is working as a Counsellor. She has pointed out that personal counselling is done on a regular basis every year to the entire adolescence group (grade 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>) of students in her school. The personal counselling helps to make the students feel that there is somebody to listen there woes, worries and concerns and they do not or shy away from going to a psychologist/counselling. According to her during the past five years there was a drastic improvement in children coming to her and opening up their fields. In overcoming the difficulties of each student's in his/ her growing years and gives confidence to face the situation. According to her the school

guidance practices, if made regular, helps in improving behavioral changes, closing achievement gap, equal educational opportunities and support access to every student. The personality development workshops organized as a part of guidance activity creates awareness on topics such as adolescent, assertiveness and many more. Along with this she has also used music therapy to eliminate stress and induce concentration among all the adolescents.

Pabitra Kumar Das (2014) in his paper titled ‘Teacher counselors are better for students developmental need: A case study of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS)’, KIIT University Bhubaneswar reported that in the institute among 22500 students, nearly 8000 are belonging to adolescence period and especially this period is known for optimum developmental face of an individual. 10 to teen boys as well as girls under go physical, social and psychological transformation and these transformations considerably influence the rest for the individual life. He pointed out that guidance and counselling prior to development and need of adolescence is acknowledged worldwide and the same has been put into practice in the institute KISS. Institute use a question box approach in identifying the counselling needs which are kept in the school, college and the hostels at every students reach. Weekly, the questions are collected and they are sorted as areas pertaining to health including reproductive health and personal hygiene, behavioral problems, careers and academic concerns etc. Appropriate measures are taken after counselling which include, follow up sessions, making referrals, informing the respective stake holders for taking corrective measures. The teacher counsellors are involved in the school and college provided behavioral plan for promoting positive and helpful behavior of students in the campus, which focuses more on prevention rather than remediation.

Indira Ramani (2014) in her paper titled ‘students support services in a tribal school’ of excellence through the guidance and counselling in Khamam district of Telangana state reported that for the tribal children physiological changes during adolescence have ramification in the psychological and social aspect of life. Most of the tribal students deal with the changes without fulfilling the required knowledge and proper understanding due to lack of awareness, ignorance of illiterate parents and poor home environmental condition. Teachers of this school provided guidance and counselling service round the clock as these schools are residential type.

Visalakshmi Sridhar and Maxim Pereiri (2014) presented the paper titled ‘SPEAR: A mental health promotion programme for urban high school adolescence’ which is being implemented in the school in Bengaluru. The SPEAR programme incorporated mainly WHO’s life skills framework. This was conceived and developed by a group of mental health professionals for the high school urban students in India. It is a multi-year programme for adolescence beginning with class 8<sup>th</sup> and continuing into class 9<sup>th</sup> and class 10<sup>th</sup>. The outcomes of the project shows there is a improvement in adolescent wellbeing and assertiveness

### **Conclusion**

The above cited practices of the school counsellors reveal that most the socio-personal problems of the adolescent students are the major focus in their guidance activity. Much of these are handed through personal counselling. The areas of interventions in the socio-personal guidance are: Health related adolescence problems, bullying, behavioral problems, enhancing self-esteem, developing self-confidence, coping with peer pressure, understanding good social behaviour etc. The analysis of the practices of the school counsellors shows that much of the activities included as a part of the adolescents education programme are being attended by the school counsellors. Similarly, the other programmes like Life Skill Education Programme (LSEP) organized in the school are also focusing on development of the ‘Whole Individual’. Thus, there is a need for convergence of various programmes in the school for the adolescents to face the life with bold and confidence.

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