

CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHER COUNSELLORS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE SMART CITY BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA

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Abstract

Secondary school students are identified at the age of adolescence by role confusions, conflicts and anxiety. Teacher counsellors' faced various challenges to handle such students. Thus the present study seeks to investigate Challenges Faced by Teacher Counsellors of secondary Schools in the Smart City Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Study employed descriptive survey design, participants being the principals and teacher counsellors of Bhubaneswar city, where guidance and counselling services were carried out. Descriptive statistics in frequencies & percentage were used to analyse data. Study found that teacher counsellors were facing many challenges like non-availability of adequate resources, lack of time, lack of professional training & skills, heavy work pressure, lack of parental support and support from school administration. Based on the above findings, study recommended that, a full time counsellor must be appointed on regular basis for each school, school management should provide minimum basic requirement, sanction necessary funds to the teacher counsellor or counsellor. Principals and parents should possess positive attitude towards guidance and counselling services carried out in schools.

Keywords: Guidance & counselling services, Secondary School and teacher counsellor.

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Introduction

Guidance and counselling in school is a distinct profession that gives importance on the interactions among students and their environment. It helps to reduce the effects of environmental and institutional barriers that may create barrier on students' academic performance. Secondary school students are at the age of adolescence. This specific stage of human development characterized by role confusion, role conflict and anxiety. So to face those developmental characteristics among secondary school students, guidance and counselling services is very much necessary and it is designed for school students to address their physical, emotional, social and academic difficulties (Kalhotra, 2011). Due to the developmental characteristics children at this age faced various problems and facing difficulties in adjusting themselves in the busy materialistic world. Busy materialistic world and working parents create a big gap between parents and children. The gap effect on educational as well as social environment of children and felt the needs of educational and social guidance services. This Guidance services is regarded as a continuous process. The task of educational guidance and counselling is to enable students to make their own decisions on selection of discipline, adjust to their studies by improving the study habit, attitude and reliving subject matter difficulties (Anastasi, 1990) and the social guidance and counselling service is doing adjustments from time to time with its society(Kothari, 1966)..

The idea of providing guidance and counselling in schools has been visualised just after independence. Guidance centres in different regions were established for the first time by the recommendation of Mudaliar Commission (1952-53) for training of guidance officers and career masters and for carrying out research work in educational and vocational guidance by Central Research Organization. At the same time to provide guidance services in an organized manner Central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance (CBEVG) and All India Educational and Vocational Guidance Association (AIEVGA) were established. NPE 1986 and POA 1992 linked guidance services with the vocationalization of education and emphasised on the needs of guidance and counselling cell. Later on National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE, 2000) also emphasis for guidance services and assisting students for choice of courses and selection of a suitable career after secondary and well as higher secondary level. National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) stated that guidance and counselling become an integral

part of curriculum and the functions of guidance and counselling can be carried out through the curriculum. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) also emphasise on guidance and counselling and mentioned that guidance and counselling as one of the important areas to achieve the goals of Universalisation of Secondary Education and improvement quality of education at secondary level.

The profession of educational counselling is its infancy stage in India (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013), but now days due to high parental pressure and parental expectation, this profession is getting wide publicity in India. Thus to supply the require number of professional different agencies are already taken initiation. The Department of Educational Psychology and Foundations of Education, New Delhi acts as a nodal centre for guidance activities at the national level and offering training and orientation programme for training of guidance personnel and for setting up guidance services in schools. Now days there are many universities / institutes offer postgraduate diploma in counselling to prepare competent and effective counsellor for school level. NCERT also offering post graduate diploma in guidance and counselling through all its constituent units, that is Regional Institutes of Education to prepare teacher counsellors.

The provision of these services in schools particularly at secondary level help students to cope with increasing academic and social pressures. As per the guidelines of CBSE, all CBSE schools were suggested to establish a school guidance and counselling units to tackle students' problems like disobedience, drug abuse, stealing, bullying nature, child abuse, and aggressiveness. Now days it has found that many adolescents involves in many unwanted, unlawful activities. It was also found that aggressive nature of students, sexual abuse by peers are increasing now days, which raises a question on functioning of counselling unit and functioning of teacher counsellor in school. Thus, emphasis has given on trained teacher counsellor; those are able to provide guidance services effectively in all levels of schooling.

Rationale

School counselling service seem to have appeared like a blessing to the students to cope with the increased stress and strain. This special services contribute a lot towards maintaining the mental health of the younger generation (Sharma, 2013). Various commissions had already recommended the importance and necessity of guidance and counselling services for secondary

school students. Guidelines of CBSE mentioned on appointment of counsellor in each school (THE HINDU, 2014), but in reality it was found that many schools having established guidance and counselling cell but the purpose of its establishment did not come in action (THE HINDU, 2014). The school management and school authority faced different problems like handling aggressive children, handling hyperactive children, bullying nature of children, handling children with special needs, handling disobedience, drug abuse, stealing, child abuse, and aggressiveness etc. (Affulo, 2005). It raises a big question on the effective functioning of counsellors in schools. Hence the present study intended to find out the major barriers and problems faced by counsellors to provide effective counselling services at secondary level.

Statement of the problem

The present study was attempted to know about perceptions of school authorities about guidance and counselling services and whether or not teacher counsellors were faced any challenges to perform their duties in secondary schools of Bhubaneswar city. Thus the problem related to the study was stated as “Challenges Faced by Teacher Counsellors of Secondary Schools in the Smart City Bhubaneswar, Odisha”.

Operational definition of the key term

- **Teacher Counsellor:** A teacher having specialised training for conducting counselling services for students in secondary level.
- **Guidance & counselling services:** Assistance given by a specialised trained teacher counsellor to solve student’s unwanted behavioural problem.

Research question

What are the challenges faced by teacher counsellors of secondary schools in the Smart City Bhubaneswar?

Objective of the study

To find out the challenges faced by teacher counsellors of secondary schools in the Smart City Bhubaneswar.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design of survey in nature. The target population of this study comprised all secondary school Principals and secondary school teacher counsellors of Bhubaneswar City.

Twenty Principals and twenty teacher counsellors were selected as sample through purposive sampling technique. The rationale behind the purposive sampling was that the school having established guidance and counselling unit and respondents possessed the information and were willing to share the same for the purpose of the study.

The instrument used for data collection was researcher made questionnaire. Two different types of questionnaires were designed to obtain relevant information. A specific type of instrument was used for Principals/Head Teachers and another type of instrument was used for teacher Counsellors. Each questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A for demographic information and B for overall perception of respondents on guidance and counselling services and challenges, barriers faced by them.

To establish the face validity, the draft questionnaires were subjected to expert evaluation. Based on the feedback obtained from the expert, certain items were modified and some of the items were eliminated from draft questionnaires.

Delimitations

Present study was delimited to-

- CBSE schools
- Schools having Guidance and Counselling unit

Analysis of Data

Descriptive statistics in percentages and frequencies were used to analyse the data collected through survey questionnaire.

Result and Discussion

Qualifications

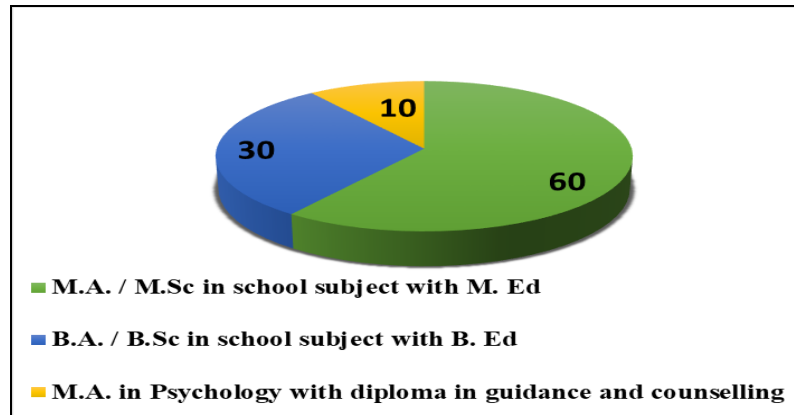


Fig 1: Educational and Professional qualifications of counsellors

Figure 1 reveals that majority of counsellors were highly qualified and they were from different disciplines. Majority (60%) had master's degree with professional qualification for teacher education and very less (10%) had background of psychology with diploma in guidance and counselling course. This study reveals that the very few (10 %) were found to have specialized qualification as well as professional training for conducting guidance and counselling services, but rest of all teacher counsellors don't have any qualifications on this specialised field, still they were involved in guidance counselling services. This figure explained that lack of expertise counsellor school are depended on teacher counsellors but many cases teacher counsellors were not taken any specialised training which make a significant effect on guidance and counselling service implementation effectively in schools (Pasley, 2001).

Availability of Resources

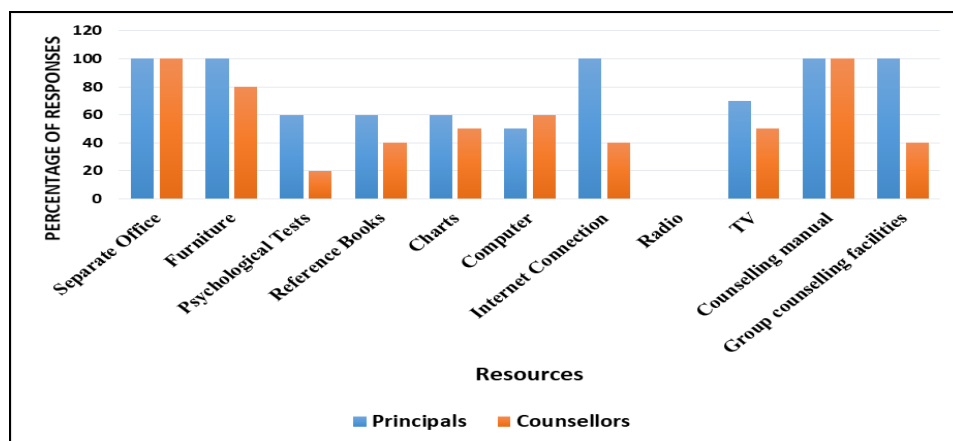


Fig 2: Availability of Resources for Guidance and Counselling Services

Figure 2 reveals contradiction on responses given by principals and teachers counsellors on availability of resources for counselling services. As per the view of principals, the guidance and counselling units have separate office for counselling, adequate furniture, Internet Connection, Counselling manual and Group counselling facilities. They opined that other than radio facility most of the resources are in adequate amount. Whereas according to teacher counsellors though separate office and counselling manual are adequate, they face problems due to lack of necessary psychological tests. Majority (60%) of teacher counsellors say about inadequate reference books, limited number of charts, and unavailability of internet connection and lack of resources for group counselling facilities. Thus, the above figure stated that most of the secondary schools were lacking of basic facilities, resources and reference materials required for counselling services (Ngumi, 2003).

Attitude of Principals towards Guidance & Counselling Services

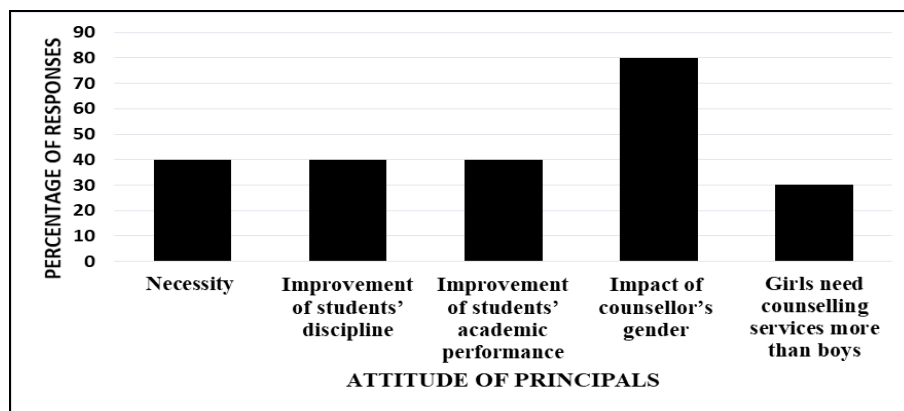


Fig 3: Attitude of Principals towards Guidance & Counselling Services

Figure 3 reveals that approximate half (40%) of the principals were supported guidance and counselling services but the majority (60%) of them were confined on their rigid and fixed attitudes to their traditional ideas and they believed that school can run smoothly without any formal guidance services (Achebe, 1986). Adimula (1988) supported the view of Achebe and said that some teachers as well as principals believed that the counselling services provided by counsellors were meaningless and unnecessary for students. Principals were believed that guidance and counselling service had no impact on improvement of academic performance and discipline though counsellors were not well trained to handle students discipline through Guidance and Counselling programme (Affulo, 2005). The figure also explained that 80%

Principals perceived that the gender of teacher counsellor had an impact on guidance and counselling services inclining towards females (Agnihotri, 2012).

Duties and Responsibilities of Teacher Counsellors

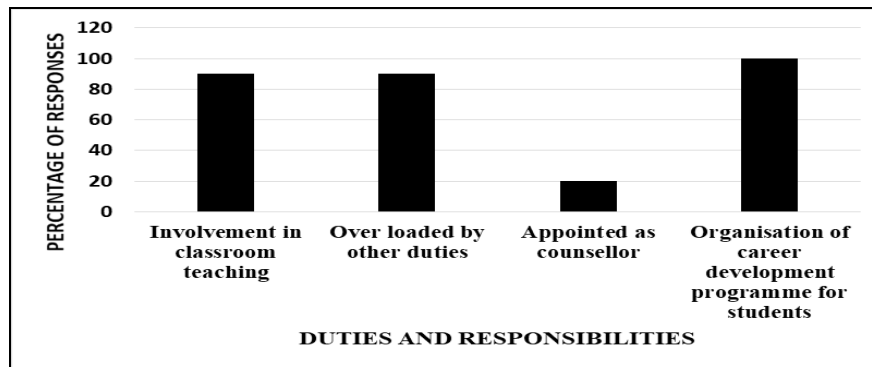


Fig 4: Counsellors views on Duties and Responsibilities of Counsellors

Figure 4 explain that almost all (90%) teacher counsellors were involved in class room teaching along with counselling services. In addition, teacher counsellors were overloaded by different duties. The figure also revealed that only 20% were appointed as counsellor only, whereas rest of them were appointed as subject teacher but they are compelled to perform counselling services with or without any specialised training for counselling. Which explained that many time teacher counsellors were overloaded with other administrative and works rather than teaching or counselling services which diminish counselling services (Chireshe, 2006). Findings of Chireshe was supported by Ondima et al., (2012) showing that counsellors were overburdened with teaching duties and were not getting sufficient time to devote to guidance and counselling services. The figure also shows that all teacher counsellors were involved on organisation of career development programme for student's, which leads to student empowerment and utilisation of the strength to optimal development (Makinde, 1984).

Scope and Provisions for Professional Development of Teacher Counsellors

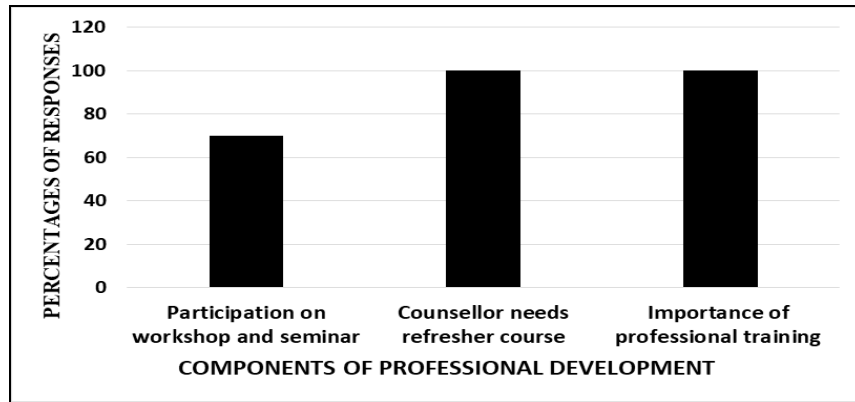


Fig 5: Scope and Provisions for Professional Development of Counsellors

Figure 5 shows the need of refresher courses for self-development and self-enrichment for teacher counsellors. Teacher counsellors opined that professional training as an important component for professional development and its play a significant role on guidance and counselling services implementation effectively (Pasley, 2001). Majority (70%) of teacher counsellors stated that they were allowed to participate on different seminar and workshop, although few (30%) teacher counsellors said that they were not allowed to participate and exposed to further training, workshop and seminar (Aabbogu, 2008).

Support Services for Guidance and Counselling

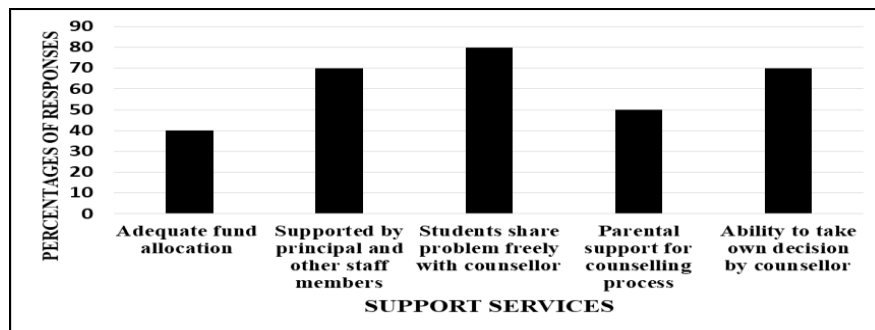


Fig 6: Support Services for Guidance and Counselling

Figure 6, shows majority (80%) of teacher counsellors opined that students share their problems with them freely. Approximately half (40%) of teacher counsellors were satisfied with the fund allocated as financial resource for the school guidance services which is a basic requirement to establish a counselling office and purchasing counselling equipment (Bukoye, 2004).

Above figure also explained that approximately two third (70%) teacher counsellors were getting support and help from their respective principals as well as other staff members during the counselling process to take open as well as collaborative decision regarding the student

counselling. Whereas only half (50%) of teacher counsellors got support from parents for school counselling process, because parents were not agree to accept the view of teacher counsellor regarding their children (Agnihotri, 2012). According to teacher counsellor's view, parents were fully denied to accept any kind of assistance and they were not interested to hear and accept any negative comments about their son or daughter from teacher counsellor.

Other Challenges faced by Teacher Counsellors

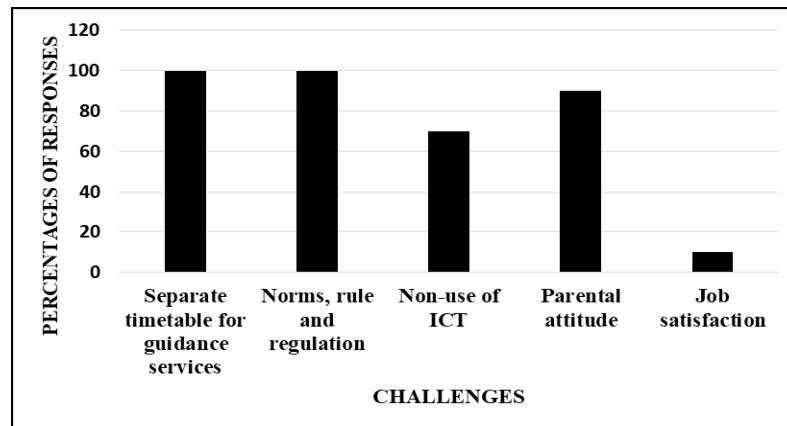


Fig 7: Other Challenges faced by Teacher Counsellors

Figure 7 reveals that all the teacher counsellors face challenges during counselling services because of unavailability of specified, separate and fixed time table and reference materials for counselling services (Ngumi, 2003). It also stated that fixed rules and regulation and norms of the school were another barrier to teacher counsellors for carrying out the process smoothly. Very few teacher counsellors opined that their school management make a slot specified for counselling service at the last period. Majority (70%) of teacher counsellors opined that unavailability and non-use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) as major professional challenges for teacher counsellors in counselling services (Modo & George, 2013). It was also found that counsellors were faced obstacle from parents due to their unwillingness and lack of support towards counselling services for practice (Rutondoki, 2000). The figure also shows that only two (10%) teacher counsellors were satisfied on their profession but rest of all (90%) teacher counsellors were dissatisfied due to excessive workload and over burden responsibilities they have to performed, which leads them to do injustice to their profession (Sharma, 2013 & Prabu, 2015).

Major Findings

Major findings of the study has been given below

- It has been found that only 2 person having adequate qualification and they were appointed as counsellor, whereas rest of all were from different subject background with or without specified professional qualification.
- It has been found that contradiction on responses given by principals and teacher counsellors on availability of resources for counselling services. Teacher Counsellors were opined that most of the schools were lacking of basic facilities, resources and reference materials required for counselling services but principals were opined that they have sufficient resources for counselling services.
- 80% Principals perceived that the gender of teacher counsellor had an impact on counselling services and Majority (60%) of principals were confined on their rigid and fixed attitudes and they believed that regular formal counselling services are not necessary for school level.
- Almost all (90%) teacher counsellors were opined that they were overburdened with different duties and not getting sufficient time to devote for counselling services.
- Majority (70%) of teacher counsellors stated that they were allowed to participate on different professional development programmes such as seminar, workshop, and refresher courses.
- Teacher counsellors were getting support and help from their respective principals as well as other staff members but majority (70%) of parents were not ready to accept any kind of assistance from teacher counsellors.
- Majority (70%) of teacher counsellors were opined that major professional challenges faced by them during counselling services were as follows-unavailability of specified, separate and fixed time table, reference materials and non-use of Information Communication Technology (ICT), over burden responsibilities.

Recommendations

Findings of this study revealed that lots of challenges were faced by teacher counsellors which have negative impact on the quality of counselling services provided to secondary students in the smart city Bhubaneswar.

Based on the findings following recommendations were made:

1. As per the guideline of CBSE, all schools have to mandatorily established guidance and counselling cell and importance should be given on proper functioning for realising the main objectives of guidance and counselling services.
2. It has been recommended that minimum one academic counsellor should be appointed in each school on regular basis, and he/she should assigned negligible teaching load.
3. If any school appoint a subject teacher as counsellor, the teacher must have specialised training for counselling service and then only he/she will be allowed to conduct counselling services.
4. The study also recommended that principals should allow counsellors/ teacher counsellors in refresher courses, training programmes and workshop to upgrade their knowledge and to acquaint with new techniques and issues related to counselling services.
5. As it is found that many parents as well as school principals are rigid toward their belief that guidance and counselling services are not necessary for school students, it is the role of counsellors/ teacher counsellors to expand and create awareness on counselling services by giving it a wider publicity in schools.
6. Relieve counsellors/ teacher counsellors from heavy teaching load and other non-academic loads to devote the full effort to counselling services effectively.
7. School authority has to supply minimum basic requirements, specified, separate and fixed time table and resources for the counselling service.

Conclusion

The school counselling profession of today's world is dynamically different than its historical beginnings. Contemporary issues, education, structure, challenges and student provide a complex backdrop for this helping profession. In the contemporary society school counsellors are essential to the success of the individual and the functioning of school. Based on the findings it can be concluded that a trained professional should be appointed in each school and above all these recommendations go a long way in helping the teacher counsellors as well as counsellor to take up their profession at its topmost level. With this rigor and dynamism in delivering counselling services to the expectation of the stakeholders and with full efforts academic

counsellor can serves as nation builder and teacher counsellor get little relief from their extra work.

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