Guidance and counselling interventions among secondary school students of Uttar Pradesh- an Analysis

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Introduction

The concept of giving education for the enhancement of cognitive aspect alone has been taken away long back. The purpose of any level of education system is to foster the all-round development of students. The school plays a major influence in enhancing the behavior and modifying the personality of the students in all respect. Each and every student should feel that they are being cared and secured throughout their education. In order to ensure this, teachers should have clear cut idea about their students related to their aptitude, attitudes, socio economic background along with wide range of personal and social aspirations. The responsibility of making the students productive and useful citizens are vested in the hands of teachers.

Once in the life of each and every student, they will come at a particular point, where they face a dilemmic situation related to their education. None other than their teacher could help them to overcome this situation. In this fast-moving world, every student may face emotional trauma or mental stress in their life. they need the helping hands of their teachers at this juncture. A good teacher with proper orientation of guidance and counselling could only help the students in all respect. Guidance and counselling in harmony with education will meet demands of students in all spheres of their life.

Guidance and counselling should be treated as part of the curriculum (NCF, 2005). As per the recommendation of NCF, “Guidance and counselling functions can be carried out through the curriculum by integrating guidance philosophy and practices through curricular offerings thereby adopting a proactive and preventive approach”. As far as Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan is considered, it promotes various activities and sensitization programmes to equip educational, personal, social and career aspirations of students. It is of immense significance and needs to be taken forward (Draft guidance and counselling guidelines for states, 2015).

Need and Significance of the Study

The need for this study is having much relevance in the present scenario. Our younger generation are facing many problems including academic stress, less tolerance to frustration, unhealthy and
cut throat competitions, confusions in making choices of education and career. Students are trying hard to compete in this technetronic world and as a result, student unrest, suicides, antisocial and social deviant behaviours have become common phenomenon in the country. To handle the students involved in this and also to prevent those who are susceptible to this is the need of the hour which can be made fruitful through timely and effective interventions of guidance and counselling. There is an emergent need to check the awareness of guidance and counselling facilities available in the country among parents and teachers. This paper makes an attempt to identify the existing recommendations of various commissions and where those recommendations stand in our country.

Methodology

The study is qualitative in nature. Descriptive analysis of the recommendations of various commissions related to guidance and counselling is done in the study using empirical data. Current situation of secondary school students in Uttar Pradesh related to their mental health were identified using the data revealed through newspapers and other authentic sources. Need assessment Inventory was used among students to identify the extend of the need for guidance and counselling at the secondary school stage. Unstructured interview was conducted to collect details related to the awareness and reach of the existing guidance and counselling services among teachers and parents.

Objectives

1. To analyse recommendations of various commissions and policies in relation to guidance and counselling
2. To identify the present situation of secondary school students in Uttar Pradesh related to the need for guidance and counselling
3. To analyse the reach of programmes to different stake holders of the society including parents, students and teachers of Uttar Pradesh
4. To suggest Plausible solutions to the problem

Analysis and Discussion

Analysing recommendations of various commissions and policies in relation to guidance and counselling
The importance of guidance and counselling at secondary school stage was first recognized by Secondary Education Commission. The specific recommendations included training for guidance officers and also conducting research. Education commission (1964-66) took an expanded view of guidance and counselling in all sense. According to the commission guidance and counselling should not only confined to the educational and vocational aspect, instead, should be an integral part of education having both adjustive and developmental views. The commission also stressed the need for guidance and counselling for students facing adjustment problems. Satisfactory transition from home to school can be made only when guidance services are implemented at primary school levels so as to develop an insight in to the world of affairs. Provisions for trained counsellor, guidance programmes in schools, necessary supervisory staff to inspect and offer consultation to the school workers, introducing the guidance concept through in service or pre service programmes to the teachers were also certain major recommendations of the commission. National Education Policy 1986 and Programme of Action 1992 also linked guidance services with the vocationalisation of Education. POA recommended that there should be proper vocational guidance given to parents, teachers, and students in relation to various courses available, training and placement, job opportunities at different levels in different parts of the country. The policy also recommended the appointment of a trained counsellor for establishing guidance advise centre and giving training to the teachers. Later the revised scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary Education (VOSE) (1993) suggested that Vocational Guidance Teacher (VGT) be appointed in each school for the purpose.

National Curriculum Framework for school Education (NCFSE, 2000) recommended guidance and counselling programmes as the means for providing proper choices in relation to Education and Career, but not stressed the importance of guidance and counselling in the holistic development of the students. According to NCFSE, there should be provision for appointing one guidance counsellor in every higher secondary school and one visiting guidance counsellor for a cluster of 3-4 higher secondary schools.

National Curriculum Framework, 2015 advocates the importance of giving training to secondary school teachers in guidance and counselling. NCF, 2015 recommends that only trained teachers could help the students to meet their developmental needs and also direct positively their beliefs, values, attitudes and aptitudes towards a better world of work. NCF also gives stress on
the point that, it is at the secondary school where the students learn core curriculum with all the basic disciplines. So, proper guidance and counselling is essential for discovering their own interest and aptitudes which are leading paths for developing their future.

NCF, 2015 also highlighted the need for guidance and counselling at higher secondary school stage to enhance their career awareness and career exploration. Since this stage coincides with the period of adolescence and their problems, guidance and counselling seeks much importance at higher secondary school stage. Guidance and counselling will help the adolescence to meet their academic and social pressures and also help for a better social, emotional and home adjustment.

RMSA has laid importance in the interventions of guidance and counselling with many provisions like strengthening existing bureau of guidance, appointing guidance counsellor at school along with providing fund to schools through District Resource Centre. RMSA also provided provisions for providing sensitization programmes for teachers and principals.

**Analysing present situation of secondary school students in Uttar Pradesh related to the need for guidance and counselling**

From the explanation cited under the head recommendations of the commissions it is very clear that from 1964 onwards our government and related organisations have been giving much importance to guidance and counselling for secondary and higher secondary students. They had given much importance in solving the social and academic issues of students and helping them for a better career choice. A lot had been done by the government since independence till now. But the million-dollar question is that even then also why the situation or the condition of students is not improving as expected?

The highest rate of students becoming victims of cyber bullying has been recorded in India as reported by Comparitech, UK based Consumer tech review in 2018. The survey was conducted in 28 countries. Many instances of cyber bullying has been reported in the country in the year 2018 by the parents. The survey results show that 37% of parents agreed that their children have become victims of cyber bullying, which is 15% more than in 2016. It is accountable that Indian parents were ready to disclose that their children have been victimized through one or the other way, at least once in their life time through cyber bullying. The cases of cyber bullying among children raised
in India between the year 2011 to 2018 as per the report. Such cases of inhuman treatment of bullying can be prevented to a large extent with the help of effective guidance and counselling interventions at school.

One student commit suicide every hour in the country, National Crime Records Bureau released, 2015. The fear of academic failure is such a prevalent cause for suicides among students that it is recognised as a category — ‘Failure in Examinations’ — by the NCRB. 2% of all suicides in the country in 2015 falls into this category. And these numbers are only on the rise, a 52% rise from 17 every day in 2007 to 26 every day in 2016. It has been estimated that on an average of 75,000 students committed suicide in India between 2007 and 2016.

As far as the suicidal rate in India is concerned, Uttar Pradesh ranks 20th on the list of states. The maximum number of suicides in Uttar Pradesh as reported in 2006 is 3,009. Among the states, West Bengal and Maharashtra has been reported with the maximum number of suicidal rates in 2006, 15,725 and 15,495 cases respectively. The state has been experiencing rising incidence of student suicides especially due to academic stress which is considered as the sixth most common case of suicide among students. Unwanted comparison and parental pressures are completely bewildering our students and putting them in deep mental trauma. Before giving counselling to the students, it should be noted that their parents need to give counselling to accept their children with their innate abilities and potentials.

The mood swings and related verbal and nonverbal gestures of the students should not be left unattended at this juncture of rising incidence of depression and suicidal tendencies among students in the country. Special care should be taken by the teachers and parents for any change in the behavior of students. Whatever the students express need to be pondered more with utmost care. “What a child says is just as important as what she doesn’t say and by keeping a close watch on children, parents can preempt suicides,” says Krishna Dutt, clinical psychologist at Lucknow’s Chattrapati Shahuji Maharaj Medical University.

One of the most alarming situations in Uttar Pradesh is the rising incidents of suicidal rate in the state after the declaring of the board results. Student suicides rises at its peak traditionally after declaration of board results. Among the total students attended exam in the year 2019, 10 percent of the students dropped out because of strict anti-copying vigilance. The educationists are in a worry as they are expecting poorer result in the coming years. Nearly 158 students are said to
be committed suicide last year because of their poor board exam results and educationist are expecting a higher number this year.

Sandeep Kumar, a friend of Shubham’s, who had studied with him since Class 9 told us, “We were in the same class this year, but he was absent from school most of the time.” When asked to describe Shubham’s academic performance especially since most in his family had associated his suicide with his fear of failure, Kumar just shrugged and said, “He was an average student.” Sumiran Das, the Dean of Adarsh College in Chilla who had interacted with the victim previously, elaborated on the same: “He used to study hard. He wasn’t very weak but he wasn’t very smart; he was an average student.”

Priya Bose (14) was a student of City Montessori School (CMS), who hanged herself from the ceiling fan on the reason that she couldn’t perform well in her final exams. This class VIII student was under deep anxiety and depression with the thought of her marks in the exams. “I am doing this because I am fed up and irritated with life. Nobody but I, am to be held responsible. Sorry Ma,” read her suicide note.

A analysing the reach of programmes to different stake holders of the society including parents, students and teachers of Uttar Pradesh

While analyzing the reach of the recommendations of the commissions and policies, the condition is so pathetic. Teachers were not even aware of the sensitization programme and most of the schools were finding it difficult to organize guidance programmes due to lack of time and deprived of fund. They don’t have any direct collaboration with the District Resource Centre of the respective Districts for releasing fund and no further follow up is being established in the schools.

When a survey was conducted using Need Inventory among students it was identified that students were highly in need of the guidance and counselling at their schools. On further analysis of the responds of the students to the questionnaire it was found that students were facing many adjustment problems in the classroom like bullying and unhealthy competition. They are also facing problems related to social groupings inside and outside the school. Academic stress and unhealthy comparison of parents are putting students under pressure which may even lead to suicide of the students. Sibling rivalry has become a common issue among students. They are
finding it very difficult to cope up with the problems. The fact is that a few of the students couldn’t
discuss their problems with the parents as parents couldn’t find time to spare with their kids.
Majority of the students are under the impression that their illiterate parents could not help them
in solving their issues. Students are even confused on finding their inner talent for developing well
directed aptitude and attitude to survive in a better world. Even in the midst of all these problems,
students are also accepting the fact that their schools couldn’t help them to get through their
problems. There is no provision in the schools for providing guidance and counselling and they
are not even aware about such programmes in their schools.

Parents are also completely un aware about such programmes in the schools. They never
reach the school authorities in getting information related to choices of courses and career
information. As per the response of the parents, they are always in a dilemma situation after
completing higher secondary education related to the future of their kids which stands unresolved.
Financial crisis and illiteracy also make the situation worse and they are completely deprived of
the information related to guidance and counselling.

**Plausible solutions**

Considering the existing situation, the researcher would like to suggest certain possible solutions
for the better access of students to various courses as per their attitude and also for a better
adjustment in their life. Provisions should be made to make the recommendations of the
commissions to put in practice. Instead of being in paper, it should take the shape of reality. The
manipulated system of arranging the fake set up of guidance and counselling procedures in the
schools during the time of inspection should not be promoted. A check can be made by conducting
surprise visits to the schools by the concerned authorities. Sensitisation programmes for the
teachers and principals/ head of the Institutions should not only for name sake. Teachers should
be given orientation towards the problems of the students.

There should be provisions to share the problems of the students. Group guidance
techniques like career conference, career corner, career talk, career committee etc. Provisions
should be made by the District Resource Centres in the timely release of fund to the schools and
proper and timely follow up should be there for the assessment of the guidance and counselling
services in the schools.
There should be provision for making the parents aware about the existing services provided through guidance and counselling in schools. Parents should get knowledge related to the existing courses in education for the higher studies of their kids. Uttar Pradesh is a state where the literacy rate of the adults is very low and female literacy rate is minimal as compared to other states. Parents are not aware about the vocational and technical courses available inside and outside the country. They should also be given orientation towards the existing scholarships and schemes available to their students. Parent should be given proper orientation through counselling for accepting their kids with his existing strength and weakness. They should be given awareness on various social disabilities of the child, if any, and also information related to coping strategies. Many of the schemes in our country are untouched and unnoticed by majority of the poor sections of our country due to their ignorance. Provisions should also be made to strictly implement the recording of guidance and counselling given to students time to time and also the follow up procedures taken by the institution regarding this.

Conclusion

The government initiatives are highly appreciable as far as our country is concerned. But the proper implementation of these initiatives through the hands of different stake holders of the society and finally reaching to the students; needs a proper and thorough check. The diluting of all the policies and recommendations as it reach the public is a serious concern that the concerned authorities should look in to. We need our citizens, who could think well and act well in all the circumstances of life. They should be given supporting hands in all walks of life related to their education, employability, career and even in personal lie. The highest reach of intolerance among our younger generation is leading to serious social deviance and antisocial behaviours. Student unrest has become a common scene in almost all the colleges and universities. Instead of resolving the conflict in a better way, our younger generation is trying to make it worse and that too for the vested interest of someone else, whose covert faces has yet to be identified by our students. This paper will definitely throw some light on the importance of various commissions and their recommendations along with an analysis on the condition of our secondary school students which seeks the emergent need of guidance and counselling. The solutions suggested by the researcher will be an eye opener so as to maintain proper guidance and counselling sessions in our schools.
References

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