

## Position Paper on Guidance and Counseling in Schools

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### 1. Introduction

Modern day living, economic reforms, globalization, changes in the family system, increases in divorce rates, and single parenting has resulted in various emotional, social, vocational, and mental health problems in India for the last decade. These tremendous economic and social changes have had adverse effects on school-going children and adolescents, which led to an increase in suicide rates, enormous academic competitiveness, and, peer and parental pressure (Arulmani, 2007; Kodas & Kazi, 2014). Counseling at the school or community setting will be an external source of support for addressing various problems of school-going children and adolescents.

Indian society with its strong family bonds and a warm community feeling and spiritual essence was providing the shock absorbers in times of crisis and a support system to deal with the various psychosocial issues. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why profession of counseling in India was resisted. Changing trends in society, families, industry, institutions and individuals, especially the younger generation which is confused. In the recent years the Indian society seems to have undergone a total metamorphosis.

In 1993 Arulmani (2007) noted in a survey he conducted that only 5 percent of school principals believed counseling in schools was important. However, in 2000 for the same survey, 95 percent of school heads agreed that school counseling was not only important, but is an urgently required service.

A breakdown of the joint family system, micro mini family units, single parenthood, increased competitiveness in schools, increased sociability of the children, immense technological advances, peer and parental pressures, over exposure to Technology, gadgets and social media. We see increase in Psychological Issues Sexuality-related Issues, Family-related Issues Peer-related Issues, Academic-related issues, Relationship conflicts, Career confusions Stress & Anxiety, Alcohol, Drugs, gadgets and porn addictions, difficulty in communication, Lack of opportunities, Health and Fitness Related Issues, Difficulty in Communication, Lack of confidence, Unhealthy and unnecessary peer competition Physical handicap/ deficiency ADHD ( Attention deficiency & Hyper activity disorder) OCD/By polar disorder. It is resulting in an environment laden with stress and strain for the children. School counselors seem to have appeared like a blessing to the students and the parents to cope with increased stress and strain and contribute towards maintaining the mental health of the younger generation.

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## **Relevance of Guidance and Counseling in School education**

Guidance and counseling in the modern age have become escalated needs because of a multiplicity of problems that the individual faces in important domains of life. The terms guidance and counseling are used interchangeably. Guidance is a broader term which includes counseling as one of its services. It means help or advice to deal with the complex problems linked with your work, education, personal relationship and making into easier ones. Guidance is regarded as a conceptualized programme of activities that offers a gateway out to the existing problems in the present era of complex scientific and technological developments. The aim of guidance and counseling is to assist behavior change, enhance coping skills, promote decision making, improve the relationship and to facilitate users' potential.

Guidance is needed wherever there are problems. The need and importance of guidance are as follows.

- Self-understanding and self-direction: Guidance helps in understanding one's strength, limitations and other resources. Guidance helps individual to develop ability to solve problems and take decisions.
- Optimum development of individual
- Solving different problem of the individual
- Academic growth and development
- Vocational maturity, vocational choices and vocational adjustments
- Social personal adjustment
- Better family life
- Good citizenship
- Conservation and proper utilization of human resources
- National development

Guidance and Counseling program aims to fulfill the following needs of students in the school system.

**1) Educational Guidance Need:** In educational guidance the emphasis is on providing assistance to students to perform satisfactorily in their academic work. Other needs include selection of appropriate course of study, overcome learning difficulties, foster creativity, and improve levels of motivation and so on.

**2) Vocational Guidance Need:** Students also need guidance in selection of a vocation and preparation for the same. Vocational guidance enables students to acquire information about career opportunities, career growth and educational/ training facilities.

**3) Personal, Social and Emotional Guidance Need:** Guidance concerned with personal need of individuals enable them to adjust themselves to their environment so that they become productive and efficient human being. The main purpose of social guidance is to make individual's effective and responsible citizen by enabling them to contribute to the society, assume leadership, conform to social norms, develop healthy and positive attitude towards different sections of the society, etc. Guidance also helps individuals in attaining emotional maturity. In addition, guidance services also assist individuals in maintaining health, both mental and physical and spending leisure time more meaningfully by developing good hobbies.

Guidance and counseling help to recognize and understand about one's talents and abilities, help to develop an optimistic outlook for removal of undesirable traits, it aids to develop resourcefulness and self-direction in adapting to changes in society. Guidance and counseling earn recognition through their services rendered in enhancing human happiness by being healthier, more productive, attain valuable lesson and also eliminate later stage problems. The major aim of guidance and counseling services is to encourage students' academic, social, emotional and personal development. These are thus, an integral component of education as well. Guidance and counseling have become very imperative for young children and schools have a massive role in fetching out the best in children, as at today's time young minds need guidance to polish their personality and also help to attend to the physical, social, psychological, educational and vocational needs of the school students who go a long way to remove impediments of learning (Dhami, 2020).

Every student is unique with learning ability and interest areas which may have a degree of variance from his peer group. Children are exposed to the concept of schooling when they are young. In those tender years, most students tend to form an extremely strong and dependable bond with their teachers. A teacher is seen as a credible and trustworthy figure who becomes a students' source of knowledge and a window to the external world. Over the years, based on the guidance and empathetic counseling by the teachers, students choose their path in life and regard these mentors as the first friend, philosopher, and guide in their lives. Not only do teachers impact a student's educational and career choice, but also shape their personality and character. Therefore, the guidance and counseling that a student receives during elementary years, become the foundation on which they build their lives and contribute to society (Bansal, 2021).

The relevance and importance of Guidance and Counseling in schools is mapped to the existing school education system in India. The details are as follows:

### **1. Pre-primary stage to Primary Stage (3-11 years)**

The modern education system emphasizes on physical growth and technical knowledge are prioritized in the system and it has failed to induct the sociocultural doctrines fundamental for the society. This has resulted into the learned millennial being more and more incompetent to learn the expertise required to become a worthy human resource for the society. Therefore guidance and counseling should be seriously considered and counseling centers need to be set up in schools for all students. To make this possible, the concerned authorities must organize and come up with a systematic quick action plan. Consequently students will acknowledge their knowledge, potential, talent, interest, curiosity and skills which will helps them to contribute immensely for the social welfare. This will be the pathway for a meaningful education leading to an all-round development of the child.

### **2. Upper Primary level (12-14 years) 6th – 8th Grade**

Upper primary level pre adolescence are number of addicts and juveniles in high schools has seen a steep rise recently, and there seems to be no improvement in the numbers. According to a survey in 2020, the number of convicted juveniles in the country are 2,12,000. Considering the intensity of the crime committed by these juveniles, the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act, 2012 has reduced the minimum age of criminals from 18 to 16. The rise in juvenile crime in Karnataka has compelled the state to set up a place of safety for their protection under Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. A survey by NCRB (National Crime Records Bureau) has revealed that only 5% of the juveniles from Karnataka are literate. This situation needs to be contemplated.

### **3. Secondary level to Senior Secondary level (15-18 years) 9th – 12th Grade**

It has been noticed that most of the children endure psychological distress in the school level, which results in them committing suicide as they experience the pressure of higher education. The student suicide rate has been constantly increasing in all states of India. There have been 1.7 lakh registered student suicide cases from 1995 to 2019. According to NCRB report 2020, the student suicides in India rose from 10,335 in 2019 to 14,825 in 2020. It can hinder the development of the country. Children, who are the future beacons of our society, are getting erased as early in their student life without access to proper nurturing. The most appropriate solution for this is to make children conceive education in the most earnest and contentful way possible. Children must be provided with proper guidance from time to time in their school life and to protect them from undergoing psychological distress, counseling should be at their disposal.

#### **Major Transition indicated in NEP 2020**

The key overall thrust of curriculum and pedagogy reform across all school stages will be to move the education system towards real understanding and towards learning how to learn - and away from the culture of rote learning as is largely present

today. The aim of education will not only be cognitive development, but also building character and creating holistic and well- rounded individuals equipped with the key 21st century skills.

The Indian education system and successive government policies have made steady progress towards bridging gender and social category gaps in all levels of school education, large disparities still remain - especially at the secondary level - particularly for socio-economically disadvantaged groups that have been historically underrepresented in education. Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) can be broadly categorized based on gender identities (particularly female and transgender individuals), socio-cultural identities (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities), geographical identities (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts), disabilities (including learning disabilities), and socio- economic conditions (such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor). While overall enrolments in schools decline steadily from Grade 1 to Grade 12, this decline in enrolments is significantly more pronounced for many of these SEDGs, with even greater declines for female students within each of these SEDGs and often even steeper in higher education.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommends Career Guidance and Counseling for school students. The policy envisages that the curriculum and the pedagogy of the schools must develop among the students a conscious awareness of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world. Vocational and Career counseling should be made available to all the students and help them in identifying their interest and talent and devise appropriate career pathways. Hence, schools are required to implement a developmental approach by considering career education and guidance proposals with respect to NEP 2020.

1. "Children are unable to learn optimally when they are undernourished or unwell. Hence, the nutrition and health (including mental health) of children will be addressed, through healthy meals and the introduction of well-trained social workers, counselors, and community involvement into the schooling system". [NEP 2020, 2.9]

2. "All participants in the school education system, including teachers, principals, administrators, social

workers, counselors, and students, will need to be sensitized to the requirements of all students, the notions of inclusion and equity, and the respect and dignity of all persons". [DNEP 2019, Introduction to Chapter 6]

3. Fundamental principles of the education system include "counselors and/or well-trained social workers that work with and connect with students, parents, schools, and teachers in order to improve attendance and learning outcomes have been found to be especially effective for children in urban poor area;" [NEP 2020, 6.5]

4. "recognizing, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres". [NEP 2020, Principles of this Policy, p.5]

### **Anchors to NEP 2020**

The following quotes have been taken from relevant chapters of the NEP 2020 and Draft NEP 2019 prepared by the Kasturirangan committee (DNEP 2019). Please read Sections 2, 3, 6 and 7 of NEP 2020, and Chapters 2, 3, 6 and 7 of DNEP 2019 in detail.

1. "While the teachers will have the central role in student care and well-being, each school complex will have one or more capable counselors available. The counseling available will range from career guidance to mental health. While there may be other areas of counseling that can be identified and mechanisms established to offer them, the following will be provided: a. Counseling on choice of subjects in secondary grades, including vocational subjects, and on choices in higher education, leading to potential career choices b. Support and counseling on age related growth and development issues, especially during the adolescent years c. Support and counseling on mental health issues, including stress and mood disorders ..... This counseling support should also be able to identify cases requiring clinical mental health support". [DNEP 2019, P.7.2.4]

2. "Social workers and counselors will be hired to school complexes ... to work with students - and their parents, teachers, ... and community members - to help ensure the retention in school and the mental health of all children". [DNEP 2019, P2.16] Position Papers – Vision and Anchors 75

3. The education system will "ensure that every school has: (a) adequate number of counselors/trained social workers and teachers (shared or otherwise)". [NEP 2020, 7.5] "Adequate numbers of social workers will be appointed to the school complexes depending on the student population and the population of adult learners in that geography." [DNEP 2019, P7.2.3]

4. "Explicit training in socio-emotional skills ensures higher levels of attention and emotional and cognitive regulation that are necessary not only for wellbeing, empathy towards others, and lower stress, but also leads to increased academic success". [DNEP 2019, P.4.6.8.6]

5. "Counselors or well-trained social workers connected to schools/school complexes and teachers will continuously work with students and their parents and will travel through and engage with communities to ensure that all school-age children are attending and learning in school." [NEP 2020, 3.3]

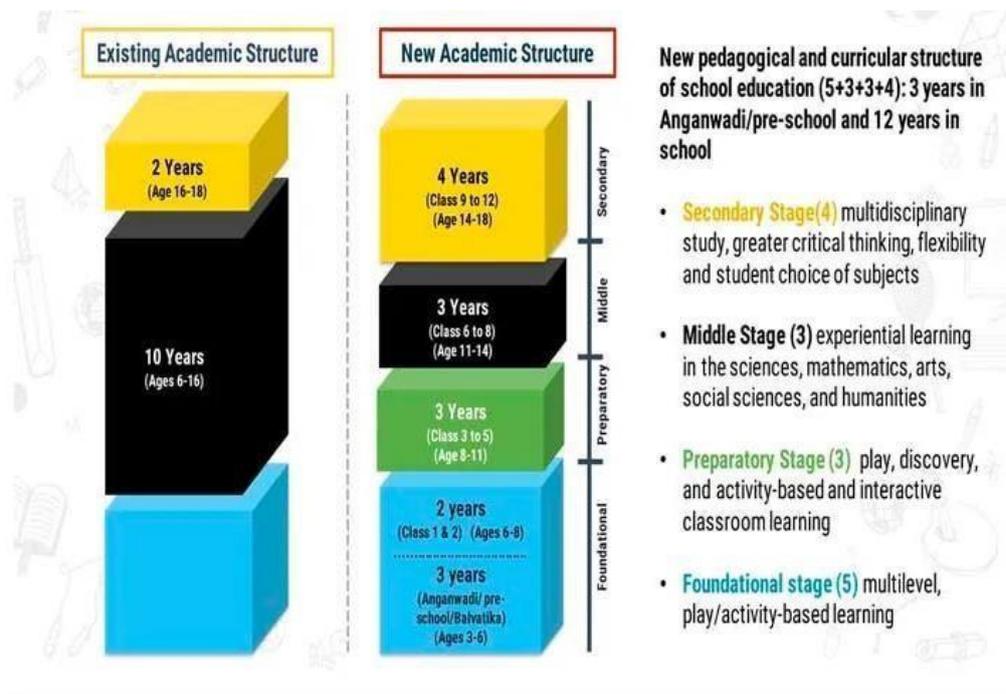
6. "...schools, social workers, counselors, and/or health workers will help instruct parents, students, and the community-at-large on good health, hygiene, cleanliness, and timely vaccination practices, and will connect them to the appropriate health services so that children may return to school as soon as possible". [DNEP 2019, P3.9]

7. "The new and existing schools that will enhance access for children in urban poor areas, as per P6.6.1, will also invest in hiring excellent social workers and counselors". [DNEP 2019, P6.6.2]

8. "Social workers and counselors will be hired to school complexes (see P3.8 Draft NEP 2019) to work with students - and their parents, teachers, tutors, ..., and community members - to help ensure the retention in school and the mental health of all children". [DNEP 2019, P2.16] "School complexes could also share counselors, trained social workers, technical and maintenance staff, etc. to further support teachers and help create an effective learning environment." [NEP 2020, 5.10]

9. "The mechanisms to make such counseling available will have to be responsive to the practical reality of the school complex, including training some of the teachers or social workers to be able to play the role of counselors, appointing full time counselors for one or more school complexes, and arranging for counselors to visit the schools frequently". [DNEP 2019, P.7.2.4]

10. "Efforts will be made to involve community and alumni in volunteer efforts for enhancing learning by providing at schools: one-on-one tutoring; the teaching of literacy and holding of extra help sessions; teaching support and guidance for educators; career guidance and mentoring to students; etc. In this regard, the support of active and healthy senior citizens, school alumni and local community members will be suitably garnered. Databases of literate volunteers, retired scientists/government/semi government employees, alumni, and educators will be created for this purpose." [NEP 2020, 3.7]



**Figure 1.1** – Showing the transition from existing and new school structure as per NEP 2020 Source: <https://www.globalcareercounsellor.com/blog/panel-discussion-on-nep-2020-role-of-a-career-counselor/>

**Suggestion- 1.2 Need for Guidance and Counseling at different stages**

<p><b>5 years Foundation stage3- 8 years</b></p>	<p><b>3 years Preparatory Stage8- 11 years</b></p>	<p><b>3 years Middle Stage 11-14 years</b></p>	<p><b>4 years Secondary stage 14-18 years</b></p>
<p>1. To help satisfactory transfer from home to school</p> <p>2. To help child in development of personality</p> <p>3. To diagnose difficulties in the learning</p> <p>4.To identify pupils in need of special education</p>	<p>1. To develop habits, attitudes, interests and personality qualities</p> <p>2. To plan activities and programs which aim at development of good and healthy habits and attitude</p> <p>3. To help the children to make a good beginning and to plan intelligently of their education.</p>	<p>1. To get the best out of their education and to prepare pupils how to enter the secondary schools.</p> <p>2. To identify learning difficulties and the special needs of children.</p> <p>4. To develop an insight into the world of work. To help potential drop-outs to stay in school.</p>	<p>1. To assist the child regarding the possibility and desirability of further schooling.</p> <p>2. To acquaint students with the nature and purpose of the higher secondary school or +2 curriculum through</p> <p>3. To assist them make an assessment of their own abilities, skills and interests and to relate them with the curricular courses in</p>
			<p>the higher secondaryschool or +2 stages.</p> <p>4. To help to resolve their personal and socialproblems.</p> <p>5. To help students in selecting appropriate vocational career.</p>

## 2. Context

### History of Guidance and Counseling

School counseling has emerged over a century ago as a result of various socio-political and cultural changes in the Western society such as United States. Similar socio-political cultural trends have shaped up school counseling or guidance all over the world including India (Akos, Jain & Gurjar, 2014). Counseling or school counseling in India is still in its infancy stage.

According to the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), school counseling programs are “comprehensive in scope, preventive in design and developmental in nature” (ASCA 2012, p. 51). Likewise, recently, Indian School Counseling Association (ISCA) has developed a national model of Professional School Counselors which is influenced by ASCA and the British Association of Counseling and Psychotherapy (BACP) (Jain, Agaskar, Kakkar, Behl, 2019).

In terms of establishing school or community-based clinics, the first credit goes to Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), to start their first field action project in 1937 by inaugurating the Child Guidance Clinic (CGC) at Wadia Hospital. Now known as Muskann, Centre for Child and Adolescent Guidance is still continuing outreach programs in school and communities to foster mental health in children (<http://www.tiss.edu/>). Around same year, Wadia hospital opened their school health unit and later in 1979, Niar hospital set up their own school mental health clinic (Kodas & Kazi, 2014). The efforts by government funded hospitals and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) to build up clinics dedicated to school mental health was mainly focused in urban areas with very limited resources. It is hard to pinpoint the official beginning of school counselors in the Indian school system. The following timeline will provide brief history of school counseling and education system of India (Jain, Agaskar, Kakkar, Behl, 2019).

Arulmani (2007) gave credit to the Acharya Narendra Dev Committee and stated that the Dev committee emphasized the importance of counseling and guidance in education as early as in 1938. Various committee such as the Mudaliar Commission (1952); the Kothari Education Commission (1964 66); the National Policies on Education, (1986 and 1992) have made recommendations for the formalization of counseling services to India at the national level. During 1960s and 1970s, guidance and counseling were considered as pillars of the education system and various guidance related services for students were offered by the Central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance (CBEVG) and professional development activities were operated by the All India Vocational and Educational Guidance Association (AIVEGA). During that era, the number of schools providing guidance service in one form or the other was 3000. However, most of these schools hired only a career master, who was responsible for disseminating vocational information.

Gradually interest in guidance and counseling related activities started to decline in 1980s and 90s and now again interest in counseling has sparkled around 2000. The Working Group on Adolescence for the 10th Five Year Plan has pushed for counseling services for school going children and adolescents (Planning Commission, GOI). This report has suggested various interventions at the government and non-governmental level such as setting up counseling centers in school and other educational institutes, online counseling services and telephone help lines, and outreach activities for students, teachers and parents. They also made a strong recommendation to appoint qualified

counselors at higher secondary schools and intermediate colleges. Secondly, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT, 2005), also recognized that guidance and counseling be made available in schools to deal with stress related problems and incorporate teachers and parents to lessen stress. They also emphasized on the teachers with a background in guidance and counseling to students in achieving educational, developmental and emotional needs and assisting them to prepare for future vocational life (Jain, Agaskar, Kakkar, Behl, 2019).

During 2000, CBEVG delegated their work to regional and state level Institute of Guidance to help students in the choice of suitable educational curricula and career options (Kinara & Asha, 2008). In 2001, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), one of the largest education boards in India made it mandatory to have a trained school counselor in all their schools. They also started telephone counseling in various cities to provide help for students during examination time. They trained almost 40 principals and school counselors to provide tele-counseling for almost around the clock. According to Carson et al (2009), CBSE mandated hiring of 9,586 school counselors all over India at their schools. Although this will be considered as a positive change and now more students can use services provided by School Counselors, only 3% or less school-going children attend CBSE affiliated schools and the rest of the other school-going children are part of the State Education Board (Carson, Jain & Ramirez, 2009).

Further, The Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), following a directive of the Supreme Court, appointed a R.K Raghavan committee in 2007 to recommend anti-ragging measures. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has adopted the guideline based on Raghavan committee report and encouraging an appointment of a full-time counselor at each level of schooling such as Primary, Upper-Primary, and Secondary/Senior. Every student at Secondary or Senior Secondary level must receive at least twenty sessions of psychological counseling in an academic year. Further, CBSE also encourages parents and teachers to be part of these sessions if required (Compendium of CBSE Circulars-II). As per the ASCA, school counseling programs are proactive and preventive in nature. On the contrary, the need for school counseling programs in India was mainly reactive and academic in nature. It is mainly considered in the context of preventive ragging in educational institutes in India (Jain, Agaskar, Kakkar, Behl, 2019).

## **Current status of Guidance and Counseling in the State of Karnataka**

### **Glimpse of School Education in Karnataka**

Statistics show that the education sector is making significant progress in the Karnataka state. In 2001, the literacy rate was 66.64 %, which increased to 75.60% in 2011. Currently, Karnataka is ranked 9th overall in the literacy rate, the literary growth plans reflect the prospects for the future. The education system is classified as school education, graduate education, technical education, and higher education. There are a total of 62229 schools in the state, including government and private. There are 25278 junior primary schools, 36951 senior primary schools, and 15867 secondary schools. The Karnataka Government which has implemented “The Right to Education Act” for all children is in force. The state has adopted a 10+ 2+ 3 mode of the education system. So, between 1 and 10 years of schooling, pre-school education is 2 years, and graduate education is at least 3 years.

Two language subjects and four optional subjects can be studied in the pre-university system. In the

arts, commerce and science disciplines, 23 subjects and 11 languages can be studied through 50 combinations. There is 1202 government, 637 aided, 1936 unaided, 165 bifurcated and 13 corporation pre-university colleges in the state.

### **Guidance and Counseling Status in the state of Karnataka**

According to Kodas and Kazi (2014), school counselors can be very helpful to students and parents to cope with metamorphic economic and social changes in Indian society and to maintain their mental health. However, available counseling services are based on Western approaches to psychology and anyone with little or no training can offer counseling services in India (Arulmani, 2007).

Venkatesan and Shyam (2015) conducted an exploratory cross-sectional study in the state of Karnataka in which the role and duties of counselor are still vague and undefined. A content analysis revealed that school counselors wanted to focus on student problems and issues but parents and teachers were keener on academic advising, student discipline, conflict resolution, crisis interventions etc. School administrator were expecting school counselors to help them in admissions and staff development. Thus, it showed a disparity in perception of school counselors' role and responsibility. As per the study, in 101 national and international schools in Karnataka, only 19 out of the 101 had employed counselors for the students.

At state level, DSERT, Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance, Directorates of Employment, work for guidance of students. DSERT/State Guidance Bureaus coordinate guidance services at the state level. They organize state level training /orientation for guidance personnel. State Directorates of Employment coordinates vocational guidance program through employment exchanges in states. They also have publication on occupational information.

In Karnataka state, DSERT has designed a training Programme and resource literature in 2011-12 titled "Koushal" i.e., resource literature of Educational and Vocational Guidance for students. Efforts were made to train high school teachers of Government and aided schools of Karnataka.

In 2012-13 the schools which were have established Guidance and counseling centers to provide educational and vocational guidance. The structure is as follows:

- a. Committee is formed headed by the Head Master, 2-3 teachers and parents.
- b. Action Plan is prepared for the academic year to conduct guidance and counseling activities.
- c. The services provided through these committees are:
  - Student Individual Inventory Services
  - Informative Services
  - Placement Services
  - Follow up Services
  - Support Services
- d. Physical resources like separate room, Cupboards, charts, Projectors etc. provided by schools
- e. Material Resources have to be collected by the schools from the Department

With these good objectives guidance centers were established, currently due to lack of guidance, supervision by the officials and DIETS these centers have become inactive.

In collaboration with Health Department from the year 2019-20, Counselors are appointed on ad-hoc basis and deputed to selected Government Pre – University Colleges and High Schools for one day in a week to conduct guidance and counseling. But appointed counselors are MSW qualified and are unable to deliver the academic and personnel counseling effectively.

### **At college Level(PU)**

- I. In the year 2011 the Director, Department of Pre-University Education passed circular Papushie/shaisha-04/vritti ma ka/2011-12 dated 02.09.2011 to organize special guidance programme one hour in every week. The following guidelines have been suggested.
  1. Total 30 hours (periods) in a year. It should start in the month of August and end in the month February.
  2. Following subject should involved in the programme.
    - Study Skills – 6 periods
    - Achievement Motivation – 2 periods.
    - Information about competitive exams- 4 periods.
    - Different courses after PUC-
    - Different Entrance Exams
    - Scholarships'
    - Brief anecdotes of Successful people in the society.
    - Psychological Counseling.
  3. All colleges should establish Guidance Units .
  4. Experts in the district should be utilized.

This programme is also stopped due to lack of guidance , supervision by the officials.

### **Life skill training Programme.**

Pre University college Lecturers and Degree College lecturers for each colleges one lecturer is trained through NIMHANS Bangalore through them every year Life skill workshop will be given to all the students.

Shashi Kumar, General Secretary, Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka, said that except a few elite schools, most institutions do not have counselors. “It is practicality unviable to appoint in-house counselors. Most schools refer students to outside counselors,” he added. Parents said that now with pre-board examinations starting in various schools in February, counselors are needed.

“Over the pandemic, the number of students approaching me for problems had reduced. Now with classes restricted to three to four hours a day, there is said to be a lack of time, hence counseling has been suspended,” said the counselor (The New Indian Express, 2021).

### **3. Concerns and Challenges**

#### **Challenges related to Guidance & Counseling**

The principle of guidance and counseling in schools is to make progress in academic achievement, increase acquisitions and application of conflict resolution, promote affirmative study attitudes and behavior and reduce school dropouts of the children.

Students fall victim to the stressful academic environment and the high expectations of their parents. It is debatable whether this rat-race brings out performance in students or not but what is clear from several researches is that it definitely brings out performance anxiety in them. That's when the need of a school counselor becomes even more demanding. Dr. Anjana Dogre, Counselor for Udgam School for Children adds, "the change in lifestyle, upbringing of kids, medical conditions, growth of technology, nuclear family, and lack of guidance from grandparents has led to a vacuum in children's lives, they need someone to confide their personal problems."

School kids, who are at the peak of vulnerability at this age, need a neutral and non-judgmental counselor who not only understands their feelings, but also helps them in ventilation of feelings and emotions. The Capital's leading Senior Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Director of PALS, Deepali Batra says that schools are the logical point of entry to increase the efficacy of mental health services to children and adolescents. And yet the deployment of counselors in schools remains as an elusive phenomenon in the country.

Experts say psychological problems such as using gadgets excessively, insomnia, suicide attempts, depression, anxiety, school refusal, gaming disorder, substance abuse, relationship problems, conflict with parents, learning and behavioral problems are on rise.

"Most of the children going through such emotional disturbances who receive mental health services at all, the school system has been the sole provider. Offering services in the schools improves access to treatment," says Batra. Children spend a majority of their time in school and their problems can be identified, dealt with, and improved through counseling thus, avoiding big damages. Adding to that, school counselor for Udgam School, Vidhi Shah stresses on the importance of counseling, for not just students, but also their parents who fail to even recognize their kids' problems, "parents are unable to bring a balance in their parenting approach and that, sadly plays with the child's emotional& mental well-being."

"The teachers in today's times prefer limiting their classroom interaction to the syllabus and the students, who spend a majority of their time in school, end up suffocating in their own bubble of disillusionment, walled with books and examinations," says a Delhi University Professor.

The fact still remains the same, counseling is still as important because the human capital development requires inputs into training as well as health, as ill health impedes learning. Simply put: "healthy (happy) students' study better." Pratap Sharan, a professor in the Dept. of Psychiatry, AIIMS says, raises concern regarding the mental well-being of the youth of our nation. What are we as parents, school authorities, and the policy makers of India doing to produce healthy and happy

students? (Gaur, 2019)

It is important to assess whether the Indian society is ready to accept the services of a counselor or is burdened with stigma towards this service. The study by Kodad and Kazi (2014) highlights the following:

There is definitely a need for counseling in schools in India. ii. It is evident with the increasing number of suicide cases among school students. iii. Changing family trends such as working mothers, divorces, single parent families have reduced the emotional cushioning provided so far by most of the Indian families. iv. Also, the immense technological advances, the increased social life and issues such as drug abuse have contributed to stress and strain on the students.

#### Challenges related to Guidance and Counseling

Challenges	5 years Foundation stage 3-8 years	3 years Preparatory Stage 8-11 years	3 years Middle Stage 11-14 years	4 years Secondary stage 14-18 years
Educational	Communication, reading writing	Mastering fundamentals of school subjects	Helping them to shift from concrete level to abstract	Application of knowledge,
Vocational				□
Remedial teaching	□	□	□	□
Personal guidance	□	□	□	□
Orientation programs			□	□
Study habit programs			□	□
Scholastic aptitude test			□	□
Counseling for drop outs			□	□
Referring severe cases to outside agencies	□	□	□	□
General orientation to secondary school streams			□	
Counseling to students from other schools			□	□
Assisting students and parents for stream				□
Orientation for occupation/placement				□

#### Limitations within which the state has to work

The current education counseling system of India still follows the conventional methods of counseling. Studies have revealed that education counselors confront numerous difficulties like non-accessibility of sufficient assets, absence of time, absence of parental help and backing from school organization, lack of expert training and supervision, stress due to high-intensity work pressure. Findings uncovered that educational counselor defy a ton of snags which contrarily affects the nature and quality of counseling offered in the country. Some of the facts limitations are as follows:

**Awareness** - It is evident from a report that 60% of the school principals are rigid and stick to the idea of not incorporating education counseling in their curriculum.

**Details and knowledge** – A study suggests that 60% of educational counselors lack proper access to reference books and resources required for proper guidance.

**Distance learning** – Findings are suggestive that around 20% of the education counselors lack proper training in counseling.

**Data storage** – A report stated that around 70% of educational counselors are unable to excel in their careers due to the non-usage of Information Technology Bhartiya and Agrawal (2021).

#### 4. Way Forward

Guidance services as essential educational support service has to be recognized, and given a place in the education system

Availability of qualified personnel are scarce and efforts should be made to produce adequate manpower.

Guidance and counseling as part of curriculum. Guidance should be regarded as an integral part of education and not as a special, psychological or social service which is peripheral to educational purposes. It is –meant for all students not just for those who deviate from the norm in one direction or the other. Every child has the potential to develop self-understanding which includes understanding of abilities, interests, behaviors, attitudes, values, conflicts, anxieties, likes, dislikes, impulses emotions, goals and one's role in society (Adegoke,2004).

In this view, guidance and counseling functions can be carried out through the curriculum by integrating guidance philosophy and practices through curricular offerings thereby adopting a proactive and preventive approach. To address the developmental needs and concerns of students at different stages of schooling, a professionally trained person, a counselor or a teacher-counselor is required to work within and with the system. The purpose of guidance and counseling services is to help each student develop as an individual in his or her own right, make choices and set goals on the basis of his or her strengths. By attending to the special needs and requirements of students belonging to different social, economic and cultural backgrounds, guidance and counseling helps students engage in the educational process and, thereby, benefit from the curricular experiences (Alutu, 2006).

Guidance programme, which provides students with information, skill and necessary services in the early school years, has been found to be effective in preventing problems from occurring later in school years (Bergin, Miller, Bergin & Koch1990). Counseling is a service under the guidance programme. Alutu (2006) asserted that to facilitate learning the instructor should consciously

adopt instructional strategies that will allow for guidance of the learners.

In carrying out the policy implementation in terms of Counseling and Guidance, the focus areas have to be developing and applying strategic planning and management principles in guidance and counseling, resource mobilization, facilitating the development of the programme and Monitoring and Evaluation of the programme.

## **5. Recommendations**

Research demonstrating the effectiveness of school counseling is compelling and needs strong consideration from a policy perspective. Several studies point to the benefits associated with regular access to a school counselor, particularly with students most in need of interventions and support in high-poverty districts (Carrell & Carell, 2006; Dvorsky, 2014; Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley & Pierce, 2012; McIntosh, 2010; Wood, 2013). Another study showed the value of staffing school counselors at the elementary level. Students in districts with the assistance of school counselors beginning in kindergarten, produced higher graduation rates, higher college entrance and persistence rates, lower chronic absenteeism rates, and fewer out-of-school suspensions when compared to schools with schools' counselors beginning in 6th grade (Parzych, Donohue, Gaesser, & Chiu, 2019).

Economists have found that hiring a school counselor was three times as cost effective in increasing academic achievement and reducing student misbehavior as hiring an additional teacher to reduce class sizes (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2014) Together these studies provide important insight into the impact of school counselors on student success when allotted the time and resources

The varied areas school counselors can effectively be utilized are to improve student behavior, academics and access to career options. " Counseling will be alive in the twenty-first century, but its metamorphosis may challenge the comfort level and stretch the imagination of the twentieth-century counselor."

Competent and qualified school counselors provide high quality services to ALL students in the areas of academic, career and social emotional learning. No longer are school counselors considered a resource for identified students – all students deserve and have the right to the fundamental resources and services provided by school counselors.

Some of the recommendations for effective implementation of Guidance and Counseling services in the schools are as follows:

- **Pre - School Diagnosis**

As a diagnostic tool, pedagogical observation analysis and assessment will assist the teacher and the institution in understanding the child's readiness for school and the learning process.  
Development Needs Assessment

- The teacher has to identify the individual child's development levels covering educational, psychological, physical abilities and environmental aspects which has a bearing on the child's development.
- Specifically for age 3 – 6 years Pedagogical Observation will help teachers identify

developmental concerns and gives a way forward in early intervention.

- **Post Diagnostic Process**

A system of using Performance / Functional Behavior assessment, results in helping the teachers plan the further course of action in terms of giving guidance to the child as well as the parents.

- **Career Guidance and Counseling**

The education setting needs to arrange Career Orientation visits to see and learn about the workplace and the environment for certain professions and Vocational Training Centres across all levels of schooling. In addition, at the higher levels of school education, Career Planning sessions as part of the school schedule will help students make mindful decisions about their career and build a successful future pathway.

The schools need to have a system of updating relevant and updated information regarding education and career to a given level of education. For this, the support of industry experts, career counselors and assessment companies would add value to the process.

The initiative would be effective when parents would be enlightened about the child's interest and choice of career in Parents' – Teachers' meeting and builds a support system.

- **Teacher Counselors Perceptions on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling**

The entire process of pre and post diagnosis will help the teacher identify learning difficulties, risk behavior, language disorders, special abilities, talents and aptitude and interest areas based on which further measures can be planned. This process has to be collaborative with all the teachers and the Head of Institution carrying out problem – prevention tasks and activities. In order to help the teachers, understand the nuances of Guidance and Counseling, a Certificate program covering Psychology, Pedagogy, Speech therapy, Career Advisory and Educational Therapy may be offered. If this has to be a reality, teachers have to develop a growth mindset and believe that Guidance and Counseling programmes create independent and successful citizens for the future.

- **Resource Support**

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The teachers have to be equipped with adequate training covering the latest theories and techniques of Counseling, new challenges on the personal, psychological and social aspects, paradigm shift in the career pathways and emerging technologies and other school ecosystem related facets. The Guidance and Counseling Centers also need to be equipped with adequate reference materials on Personal, Academic and Vocation Counseling, use a tech-platform to maintain students' profile and have a mechanism of follow up as the child progresses to higher levels in the same institution.

- **Regulation** - Have a Board Policy and Administrative Regulation that defines the scope of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program in the schools i.e., across all stages of schooling and all types of schools.

- **Multi-Tiered System of Support** - A three-tiered system of increasingly intensive interventions that are comprehensive in scope, preventative in design and developmental in nature can be applied. In Tier I and Tier II, rather than a "wait to fail" approach, school

counselors can frequent monitor student progress, which allows for early identification of academic and behavior issues at the first sign of trouble. Additionally, school counseling teams can maintain a reflective Professional Learning Community (PLC) process to target a range of interventions extending from students in danger of failing to those with behavioral, attendance or social/emotional challenges and everything in between. When issues with students and their families are determined to be severe (Tier III), school counselors can refer them to professionals for intensive therapeutic interventions.

- **Define Accountability Outcomes** - School Teachers and counselors can directly impact certain measurable accountability outcomes such as Student Achievement, Course Access, Pupil Engagement, Parent Engagement, School Climate and Other Student Outcomes.
- **Happiness Curriculum** – The school time table may have a period dedicated as Happiness period instead of using other nomenclature which carries a stigma in our society, such as counseling, mental issues and others.
- **School counseling leadership** - Maintain “School counselors' job responsibilities defined and protected so that they can do the important tasks they are trained to do. Given the complexity and ever-increasing societal pressures, school counselors need high-quality and consistent professional development along with structures, support and oversight at the district and state level, in order for them to fully realize their potential to equitably help all students achieve and flourish”.
- **Counselor as member of the Leadership team** – The School counselor may be made a member of the leadership team in the educational institution in order to break the silos and myth of considering counseling as a separate entity.
- **Professional Body** – There can be School Counselor's Association in order to have continued professional development and evaluate their contribution.
- **Accreditation of Guidance and Counseling Programs** – Strengthen the counseling programs and profession by defining the counselor's role, eligibility, training, and supervision. Get appropriate accreditations and recognition such as the International registry of Counselor Education (IRCEP) application of Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).
- **Licensing for Professional Practice** - In order to maintain quality outcomes, it is essential to have licensing for the counselors', which may also be offered to teachers in the school system. For instance, according to Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), clinical psychologist, vocational counselors, rehabilitation social workers, rehabilitation psychologist, rehabilitation counselors can apply to register in the Central Rehabilitation Register.
- **Establish the quality standards** – It is imperative to establish a uniform code of conduct, ethics and requirements to practice as “counselors” in the state. For instance, have education in “Guidance and Counseling”, as part of the Teacher education curriculum, and have

mandated minimum hours of work experience and supervised training under a qualified professional or practitioner (as we do not have the concept of Licensing).

The school systems have to be places of support and comfort to students. A child needs a helping hand in behavior change, developing coping strategies, understanding values and ethics, building an optimistic outlook towards self and life, forming self – direction and resourcefulness, enhancing happiness and productivity and ultimately in becoming a socially productive, morally upright and intellectually alive citizen of the society.

## Recommendations

Aspects	5 years Foundation stage 3-8 years	3 years Preparatory Stage 8-11 years	3 years Middle Stage 11-14 years	4 years Secondary stage 14-18 years
Delivery Setting (Integration into the School system)	Teacher plays pivotal role in providing warmth to kids	Learners interest to be taken care		
Delivery Methods (Pedagogy)	Child cantered Play way	Participatory	Group learning Discovery learning	Nurture creativity and originality
Content & Materials	Play materials	Concrete materials		
Teacher Training and Eligibility	NTT/ Diploma	D El Ed	B Ed	Masters with B Ed
Infrastructure required				
Stakeholder involvement -Parents -Govt./ Management  -Teachers -Support Staff -Community	Need to co- ordinate and aim for providing healthy environment for the child to grow	”	”	”
Changes required in Process			Appointing counselors	Appointing counselors
Follow up measures (Monitoring & Documentation)			Counseling need to be documented Child can be called for follow up	Counseling need to be documented Child can be called for follow up

## 6. Conclusion

As rightly said, life is a journey of uncertainties, despite best efforts, we are met with situations we have not planned for. In such times, the investment made by the school, the teachers, the counselors and the parents, in shaping an individual and building the strength of character, confidence and reassurance is what comes to the rescue of a student.

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**Methodology adopted :**

1. survey done in Regional, National and International schools - discussion with teachers
2. Various material, journals online and off line referred
3. Discussions with academicians and mental health practitioners