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ROLE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES IN SCHOOLS FOR UNIVERSILISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

The Parliament enacted The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 to provide to every child full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school. As the effort to achieve UEE is stepped up, the elementary school classes now cater to many children of school-going age coming from diverse backgrounds. Sometimes it is said that all students do not stand in need of guidance and counselling, and that it is only in the case of deviants that something needs to be done in order to put them on the right path. This has created the misconception that only the deviants need help and guidance and that there is no need to bother about the normal students who would grow up to their own accord without any external help or guidance. But the aim of guidance and counselling is to give each student an equal opportunity to attain perfection as per their potentialities by the best education that can be provided. In view of this, all students need guidance. Even the children who are considered as normal differ in their capacities physical, mental and emotional. They would, therefore, need to be observed and studied in different situations and guided accordingly. Teachers with a background in guidance and counselling can design and lead activities to meet the developmental needs of children, thus laying the foundation for the necessary attitudes and perceptions towards the self and the world of work. They can also provide the needed support and guidance to children belonging to various strata of society for their sustenance through the elementary school years.

Keywords: Counseling, Education, Elementary education, and Learning.

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Introduction

The need for providing education to all children has been recognized by the Constitution since its adoption. The Directive Principles of state policy casts a duty upon the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children upto the age of fourteen years. In the year 2002, a new Article 21A was inserted in the Constitution which made free and compulsory education a fundamental right to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years. Pursuant to this Amendment, the Parliament enacted this Act (The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009) to provide to every child full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school.

As the effort to achieve UEE is stepped up, the elementary school classes now cater to many children of school-going age coming from diverse backgrounds. Sometimes it is said that all students do not stand in need of guidance and counselling, and that it is only in the case of deviants that something needs to be done in order to put them on the right path. This has created the misconception that only the deviants need help and guidance and that there is no need to bother about the normal students who would

grow up to their own accord without any external help or guidance. But the aim of guidance and counselling is to give each student an equal opportunity to attain perfection as per their potentialities by the best education that can be provided. In view of this, all students need guidance. Even the children who are considered as normal differ in their capacities physical, mental and emotional. They would, therefore, need to be observed and studied in different situations and guided accordingly.

Most of the students leave their schools due to some problems. The problem may be personal, social and educational. If we look backward to the history of getting universalization of elementary education we generally talk about few problems like drop out, wastage and stagnation. We try to find out the causes of above said problems. But here one question arises in our minds that are we competent to find out these causes? Where are we lagging behind? The answers of these questions are very simple and i.e. lack of competency based teacher education programme. If a teacher has given proper training about the concept and utilization of guidance and counseling services in the school from the very beginning of his training then to some extent we will be near to our goal i.e. universalization of elementary education. Guidance helps the individual in understanding the simple questions to which he fails to respond i.e. what he wants to do? Where he wants to go? How he can best accomplish his work?

Aims and Objectives of Guidance and Counselling Programmes

The aims of the guidance and counselling service are similar to the purposes of education in general—to assist the student in fulfilling his basic physiological needs, understanding himself and acceptance of others, developing associations with peers, balancing between permissiveness and controls in the educational setting, realizing successful achievement, and providing opportunities to gain independence. The purposes of guidance and counselling provide emphasis and strength to the educational program. Some specific aims of the school guidance and counseling program include the following:

1. Checking the wastage and stagnation in education.
2. Realizing the aims and objectives of education.
3. Making right educational choices.
4. The need of proper educational adjustment.
5. Providing information to the individual regarding his potentialities, mental abilities, interests and aptitudes.
6. Assist the individual in becoming capable of solving his own problems in his own characteristic manner.
7. Help in making further decisions in the light of success and failures, if required.

Guidance and Counselling Services in Schools

Any guidance programme consists of educational guidance, vocational guidance and personal guidance. The main objective of a school's guidance and counseling program is to provide a broad spectrum of personnel services to the students. After an adequate diagnosis of a student or a group, guidance programme is properly designed to help him is known as guidance services (Sharma 2009, p. 92). These services include student assessment services, student information services, placement services, follow-up services, and counseling services. These services should be organized to facilitate the growth and development of all students in an integrated manner.

Student Assessment Services

Any type of guidance given to an individual is impossible if there is lack of information. Assessment services help us to get the knowledge of an individual related to his personal, social or psychological area. Thus, it is very essential to collect the information and maintain a record of each student's activities e.g. study habits, academic achievement, problems of adjustment, areas of interest etc. It also helps the guidance worker to share this information with parents, teachers, administrators and other professionals. All the other important services like, information, placement, follow-up and counseling services are also based upon this assessment.

Student Information Services

Information services play a very vital role to discover and to develop the dormant potentialities of an individual. A proper choice of course and careers can be made only if the student knows the opportunities available, the requirements of particular courses and careers. Today we live in 21st century and in this competitive or scientific world it is very essential to make the students up to date with new innovations, discoveries and inventions. So, this service is designed to provide accurate and current information to the students so that they can make their choices intelligently.

Placement Services

Placement as understood in the guidance field usually indicates assistance offered to the individual in taking the next step, whether toward further training, a job situation, or a different course of study (Chadha 2002, p. 236). This service helps the individual to choose a course of study according to his potentialities. It helps the students to place them on right job based on his interest and capabilities.

Follow-up Services

It is quite essential for the guidance worker to know whether the counselee has been really benefited by his efforts. This knowledge enables him to bring about changes and improvements (Rani 2004, p. 256). Thus, it is very essential for a guidance worker to maintain contact with former students. The basic aim of the follow-up services is to ensure that the beneficiary has settled and adjusted well in his chosen area or work or educational stream and in life.

Counselling Services

Under the group guidance services, students who require individual attention may be identified. The school guidance programme should be able to cater to the needs of individual, as this is most important. Counselling services are generally for those who are under-achievers, whose academic performance declines; late comers; absentees; needing extra attention for academic achievements; dropouts from the school; have sudden problems at family front; are not able to adjust with the school environment, have adjustment problems with some teachers or classmates; who are shy; show attention getting behaviours; first generation learners; show problems behaviours or have unrealistic aspirations (Agrawal 2006, p. 44). The counseling service is designed to facilitate self-understanding and development through small-group relationships. The aim of such relationships tends to be on personal development and decision making that is based on self-understanding and knowledge of the environment. The counselor assists the student to understand and accept himself thereby clarifying his ideas, perceptions, attitudes, and goals; furnishes personal and environmental information to the pupil, as required, regarding his plans, choices, or problems; and seeks to develop in the student the ability to cope with/and solve problems and increased competence in making decisions and plans for the future. Counseling is generally accepted as the heart of the guidance service.

The Role of the Teacher

The findings of the researches done in the different aspects of guidance and counselling show that there are insufficient counsellors in schools; inadequate availability of counselling facilities; and that the qualification of guidance and counselling personnel has impact on the quality of guidance services they provide to school students. Moreover, Guidance services in schools have, for a very long time, been left in the hands of school teachers who are already over-loaded, and without training in the area of guidance and counselling. Recent developments in Indian education, especially the opportunity for free and universal education, have resulted in a new scale of problems in schools and the nation at large. Many children go to school without knowing what they are supposed to do, and leave school without any idea of what type of jobs or careers they should follow. In addition, they have little understanding of themselves and their socio-economic and political environment. Thus, it is necessary to train the teachers at the very beginning i.e. at the time of their training programme to cope with the different problems of

the students. Teachers with a background in guidance and counselling can design and lead activities to meet the developmental needs of children, thus laying the foundation for the necessary attitudes and perceptions towards the self and the world of work. They can also provide the needed support and guidance to children belonging to various strata of society for their sustenance through the elementary school years.

Conclusion

Guidance and counseling services play an integral part in the overall student services department of any elementary or secondary school. In this context, it is extremely important to recognize the role that guidance and counselling play for meeting the needs of students going through the elementary and secondary stages of education. Provision for guidance and counseling services is necessary in view of the fact that today we are facing tremendous changes and modernization in the society which demands more help to the students who are not alone able to cope with these changes. The aims of guidance and counseling programs in schools are to assist individuals to develop the ability to understand themselves, to solve their own problems, and to make appropriate adjustments to their environment. Major services include student assessment services, student information services, placement services, follow-up services, and counseling services. These services should be organized to facilitate the growth and development of all students in an integrated manner.

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