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Guidance and Counselling Needs in Capacity Building of Pre-Service Teacher Trainees

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Abstract

The present-day educational scenario placed the teachers with multiple roles, and one such area is guidance and counselling where they are expected to be competent through their pre-service teacher training programme as students look up to them for guidance and support in every situation of their student life. Guidance and counselling services in educational system is to develop, assess and improve educational programmes for all the stakeholders to effectively handle the children. The learners consist of different age groups who are vulnerable and need support. The National Curriculum Framework (NCERT, 2005) has endorsed the inclusion of guidance and counselling in the curriculum. In the light of this, it is inevitable that pre-service teachers are equipped with basic guidance and counselling skills since it is evident that India is still deprived of the true spirit of guidance and counselling wherein adequate attention has not been paid yet. The initiation of effectively integrating guidance and counselling along with the teacher educational programme is encouraged by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT, 2015). In this study, the author has discussed the pressing need of furnishing pre-service teachers with the skills of guidance and counselling so that they are well equipped as they venture into their teaching profession.

Keywords: *Teacher education, Capacity building, Pre-service teachers.*

Introduction

It is asserted that every teacher has a guidance role and can provide guidance and counselling services to students. To meet this challenge of the new millennium,

teacher education in India calls for a tremendous modification with intensive training in various aspects (Varshney, 2014). Since every trained teacher who has undergone professional training programme is expected to acquire desired knowledge and skills, it is presumed that they would integrate guidance philosophy and principles in their day-to-day teaching work and other school activities. This views every teacher as having the potential to be counsellors and reach out to a large number of students. The approaches to provide guidance and counselling services to students may vary but the focus of all the approaches is aimed at addressing the challenges faced by students (NCERT, 2015). There is a pressing need to revitalize and reinforce the quality of pre-service teacher educational programmes nationwide, since teacher education is the only powerful instrument to improve the quality and standard of school education and through it all forms of transformation and quality development can be initiated (Varshney, 2014).

It is universally accepted that students usually encounter many setbacks along their learning expedition as they climb the ladder of knowledge and education. These setbacks could be related to their academic performance, social relationships, emotional changes and problems of personal lives. Some of them may have problems in the context of their present academic life; while some may have roots in their past development. To ensure that a student is able to successfully deal with the crises and continue with quality endeavour in her academic pursuit, it is crucial to identify the root problem and extend timely support. At this juncture guidance and counselling can play a very significant role. The scope of its significance is not confined to facilitating the optimal development of the students and academic accomplishments. Rather, it makes an effort to see what led to crisis occurrence and continues to extend remedial inputs and support to the learner. This aspect is benevolently carried out with much love, true respect and unconditional acceptance regardless of how wrong the student might be (Odera, 2014).

Teacher Education : According to Taylor (1969), “Teacher education refers to the policies, procedures, and provision designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and skills they require to perform their responsibility effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community”. As it is a professional programme

of education for the preparation of teachers at the elementary and secondary school levels through formal course work and practice teaching for the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable them to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein”.

Capacity Building : Can be defined as the progression of developing and fortifying the skills, abilities and resources that an individual requires to survive, adapt, and thrive in the fast-changing world. Adebayo (2016) defines capacity building as the growth of knowledge, skills and attitudes in an individual and groups of people relevant in design, development, management and maintenance of institutional and operational infrastructure and processes that are locally meaningful.

Pre-service Teacher Trainees : Refers to student, teachers who are enrolled in a two-year Bachelor of Education programme by learning the skills and knowledge needed for teaching before they enter into service as teachers.

Secondary School Students

Today’s young people are living in an exciting time, with an increasingly diverse society, new technologies and expanding opportunities. In their preparation to be the next generation of parents, leaders and citizens, every student needs support and guidance. Adolescent years are full of growth, excitement, frustration, disappointment and hope. It is the time when students begin to discover what the future holds for them. Hence, teachers who are their constant companions should help them in setting appropriate goals and career for the realization of their full potential through guidance. Secondary school is a time of increasing stress and pressure from peers. During these adolescent years, they evaluate their strengths, skills and abilities, and rely heavily on peer acceptance and feedback. They face increased pressures regarding risk behaviours involving sex, alcohol and drugs while exploring the boundaries of more acceptable behaviour and meaningful relationships. Their life is one full of uncertainty and turmoil. So, Gendavani (2013) posited that guidance and counselling is the need of the hour to determine the priority needs of high school students in dealing with academic pressures

and in making concrete decisions. As students' progress through primary and secondary stages of schooling, they need an environment that is secure, warm, caring and nurturing (Aurobindo, 2015). The purpose of any education system is not only to foster academic learning but also all-round development of children. Thus, guidance and counselling can facilitate the students in fulfilling their physiological needs, like understanding themselves and the acceptance of others, develop healthy relationships with peers and have a balance in their educational setting. Hence, most of the teachers and students advocate that students need proper guidance (Karim & Usman, 2016).

Guidance and Counselling of Students

Guidance and counselling are imperative in modern education, being the process by which students are given counsel, to solve their personal problems and handle their emotional conflicts. It serves as a means of offering support when they face problems that impact their performance and relationship with others with the objective of bringing about the highest improvement and self-realization. It therefore aims at assisting students to harmonize their talents, interests and values, to enable them to develop their potential fully, formulate life goals and plans which are realistic. Since every stage of learning has its own uniqueness of excitement, anxiety and problems, guidance and counselling are required to assist the learners to cope up with the demands each stage offers and come up victorious. If students are motivated by teachers, they will do better things related to learning but when ignored they tend to be maladjusted and affect their learning (Odera, 2014). In a school setting, teachers attend to the needs of students, parents, guardians and the community which entails dedication of energy, time and skills to provide both direct and indirect support to students. Rightly the first education commission commonly known as Mudaliar Commission (1952-53), recognized the importance of proper guidance for students as an integral part of education programme. Education commission (1964-66) encouraged guidance and counselling for students by expanding the scope of guidance services beyond educational and vocational guidance. Guidance helps the adolescents to understand themselves better (Vinutha & Indiramma, 2017). While educational guidance helps students to select appropriate educational course with regard to talent, interest and other personality characteristics (Gendavani, 2013).

Need of Training Pre-Service Teachers in Guidance and Counselling

a) Complexity of Students' Life

The student's life is getting complex day by day with changes taking place in every sphere of life, that guidance and counselling service is inevitable to help them for optimum development. 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 (Kodad & Kazi, 2014). Today's adolescents are living in a world which has no boundaries for them as they face serious challenges of adapting themselves to the ever-expanding demands of the society (Vinutha & Indiramma, 2017). The academic stresses, cut-throat competition, drop-out, suicide, anger, violence, drug abuse, child abuse, sex abuse are some of the concerns. A vast majority of them lacked a sense of direction, and get involved in destructive activities which lead to social damage and loss. At this point in time, timely guidance and counselling by a teacher would be commendable, in a country like ours where we witness a huge chasm between a hand-full of professionally trained counsellors to cater the needs of an enormous population of students. This testifies the need for every teacher to be equipped with basic guidance and counselling skills to reach out to the needs of the large student community (Georgiana, 2014). Robert and Elizabeth (1983) opined that teenagers are under constant anxiety and pressure that consists of egocentrism, distrust and helplessness. Therefore, guidance and counselling are required during the adolescent period to assist them in understanding their stages of development and adjust to school life.

b) Agents of Transformation

Since Teachers interact with students on a daily basis both academically and socially, it is their fundamental responsibility to engage guidance and counselling interventions on students with a lasting impact. Besides, there is no higher calling for a teacher than improving the lives of her students. The goals of education, in harmony with guidance and counselling aims to facilitate development of students in all spheres of life and make education a meaningful and satisfying experience. It integrates guidance philosophy and practices through curricular offerings thereby adopting a proactive and preventive approach. It transforms the development of children by creating stress-free

environment for learning, encouraging them to learn independently and cope up with the demands and challenges of life. Recognizing its contribution as agents of change and transformation, deliberate efforts have been initiated by the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) and the Ministry of Education to equip 21st century School teachers in guidance and counselling (Aurobindo, 2015). Since the teacher is the pivot of the entire educational system and the main catalytic agent for introducing desirable changes in the teaching learning process, all attempts need to be made for motivating teachers to become innovative and creative. It goes without saying that a self-motivated and really industrious teacher can utilize his own resources to keep himself abreast of new knowledge and skills (Singh, 2014).

c) Multiple Roles of Teachers

Teachers being educational leaders have a great role in providing sound foundation to students who are nation builders of tomorrow. The role of a Teacher does not limit itself to maintain discipline in the school, making the students conform to the rules and regulations of the institutions and pass the examinations with good grades. This is because every purpose of education is to develop a harmonious personality of the learner and make pupils fit to live with the ever-changing world (Mangal, 1990, p. 273). Throughout history, people called 'Teachers' have played many different roles and they continue to do so today. But today's world is passing through rapid changes and great advancements. In such a climate, even education system cannot resist change. As a result, the imperatives of new times, new demands and new visions assign more challenging role and responsibility to the teacher (Das, 2015). To fulfil their multiple roles professionally, teachers need to be competent in their responsibilities towards their students inside and outside the classroom. One of the most important roles where teachers can offer help beyond the four walls of the classroom is by providing guidance and counselling to students (Lai-Yeung, 2014). This only goes to affirm the extent to which teachers are accountable for their students who are entrusted to their care not only to enhance their academic and intellectual development but also deal with various psychological and emotional issues of the students. It is surmised that the future of the nation can be forecasted by analysing the type of students that we have today. If the

students of today are imbibing a disciplined and healthy way of life, we can certainly expect a matured, disciplined and healthy nation. These students can pave the way for building a strong and progressive nation in future. A timely modification in behaviour today can bring about a sea of change tomorrow. Hence, we need to train the pre-service teachers with new perspectives and the pre-service teacher education programmes should have paradigm shift with this emphasis (Singh, 2014).

d) Identification of Guidance Needs

A teacher is an important part of the educational leadership team and provides valuable assistance to students regardless of whether she works in an elementary school or middle school or high school. Many at times this becomes an inexplicable saddle for teachers in establishing a balance in carrying out their duties effectively. A person who is always there for the students at crucial turning points in their lives with a listening heart and a word of encouragement since they together work under so many constraints (Das, 2015). The role of a teacher is ever-increasing from just imparting knowledge to dealing with bullying, drop outs, parental pressure, peer pressure and suicide, a teacher must be aware of new social issues based on changing trends. Considered as the main resource for students, the teacher has the responsibility to identify the guidance needs of the students and refer them to trained counsellors and recommend them to the parents (Georgiana, 2014). Apart from subject teaching, teachers are entrusted with many responsibilities in which guidance and counselling is one major duty which they do it daily in different measures, even though it is not titled officially. Therefore, it is evident that teachers require competency with basic guidance and counselling skills as they discharge their responsibilities inside and outside the classroom (Lai-Yeung, 2014). School counsellors too consider that teachers can take action at the class level in order to prevent certain situations, thus reducing the number of cases that later reach their attention. A strong starting point in preventing a high number of problems is represented by classroom communication with students (Georgiana, 2014).

In this study author has employed Guidance Needs Inventory (GNI) developed and standardized by Grewal (1982) to identify to the level of guidance needs among

secondary students. The GNI has 65 items, catering to five components of guidance namely: Physical Guidance, Social Guidance, Psychological Guidance, Psychological Guidance, Educational Guidance and Vocational Guidance. This was employed since various aspects of guidance that secondary students need are addressed. The survey conducted consisted of 750 students of standard VIII, IX and X for the academic year 2018-2019 belonging to the Educational Boards of State, ICSE and CBSE respectively in the city of Bengaluru. The analysis of the survey confirmed that secondary school students need guidance and counselling as shown in the figure below.

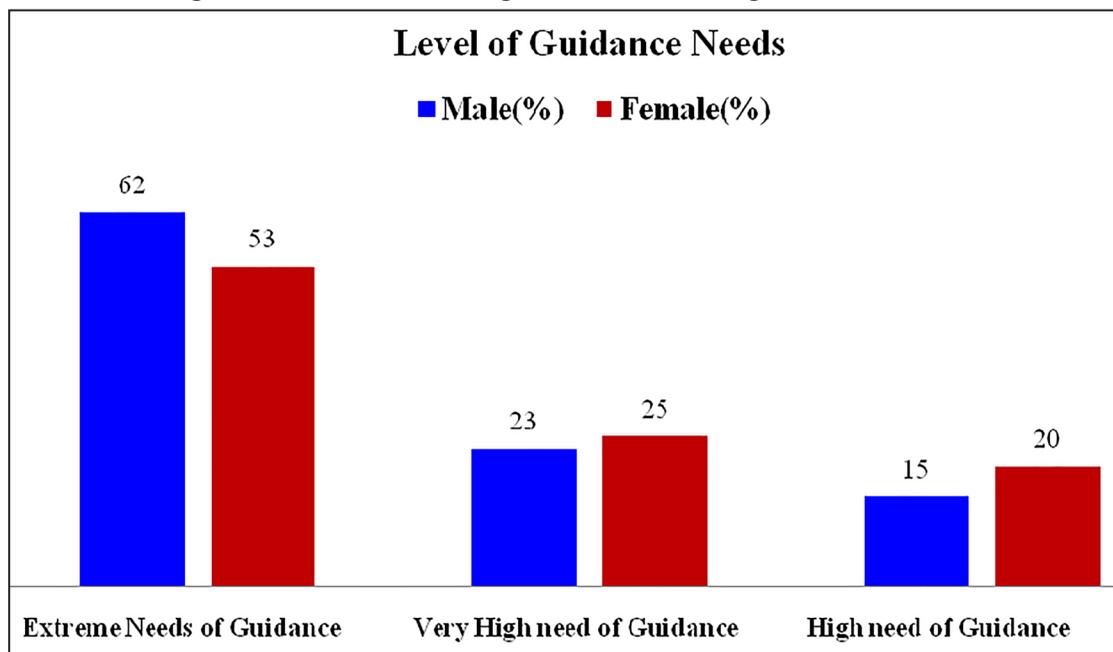


Fig. 1: Level of Guidance Needs among Secondary School Students.

The figure 1 shows that 62% male and 53% female are in extreme need of guidance, 23% males and 25% females are in very high need of guidance and 15% males and 20% females are in high need of guidance. This indicates that secondary students are immensely in need of guidance.

e) Teacher as Mediators of Students, Counsellors, and Parents

When it comes to students, teachers are the best who can identify learning

difficulties of the students. There are instances where students who apparently seem normal might be having emotional disturbances in their environment, home and neighbourhood. Yet, when a teacher walks into the class rooms she will be in a better position to identify the unique needs of the students and refer them to professionally trained counsellors and give awareness to the parents. This is feasible only if the teacher is trained and equipped with basic guidance and counselling skills.

The general public is inclined to consider counselling as a remedial function and gives lot of emphasis on immediate goals, which are problem solution, tension reduction and the like. Parents, the press, administrators are prejudiced when it comes to counselling and the general public often wonder what counsellors are capable of doing on a daily basis in educational institutions. If teachers are equipped as counsellors, they will be competent to effectively handle students in their personal and social development, ensuring that today's students become the productive and well-adjusted adults of tomorrow. More than anybody else, teachers understand their students' field of study and the problems they face, more sensitively can facilitate the smooth operation of the class. Since teachers have ample opportunity to conduct observations of the students their problems can be addressed as early as possible, before it gets aggravated (Ahmad, 2013).

The author conducted a session with a set of 150 pre-service teachers for the B.Ed. programme of 2017-2019, to get first-hand information and their views with regard to training them in guidance and counselling skills. It was an open-ended questionnaire with five items and their responses are tabulated and analysed and presented as follows:

Item 1: Do teacher trainees of B.Ed. programme require basic guidance and counselling skills?

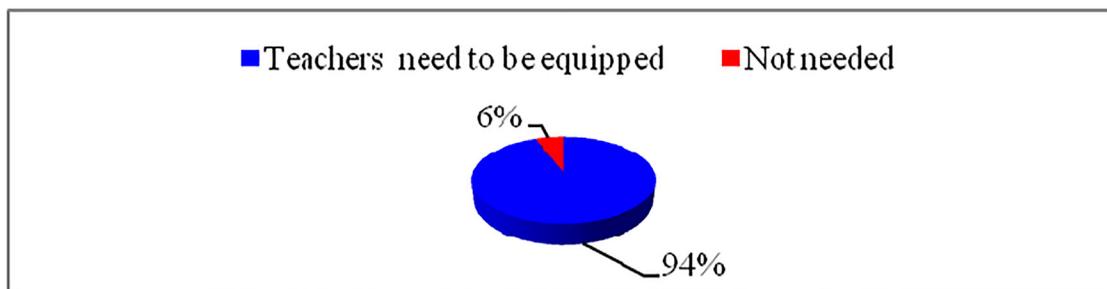


Fig. 2: Percentage Distribution of Requirement for Basic Guidance and Counselling Skills.

The figure 2 shows that 94% of the teacher trainees felt the need to be equipped with guidance and counselling skills and just 6% of them do not feel the need to be equipped.

Item 2: Do you feel confident to give guidance and counselling to students after completing B.Ed.?

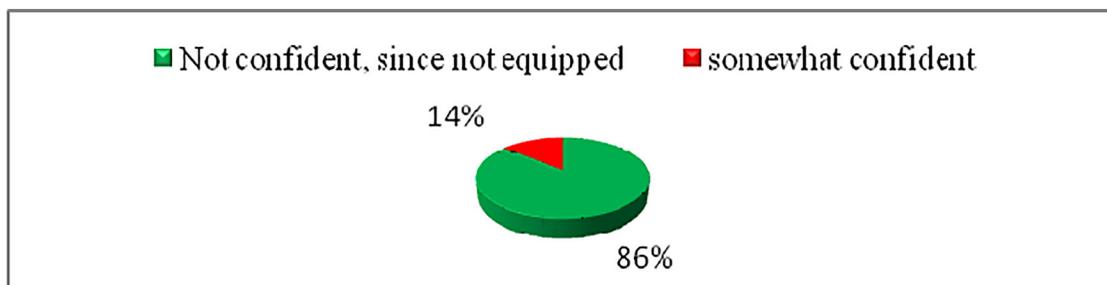


Fig. 3: Percentage Distribution of Confidence Level of B.Ed. Teacher Trainees to Give Guidance and Counselling to Students.

The figure 3 shows that 86% of the teacher trainees feel incompetent to give guidance and counselling to students in spite of going through a professional course, since they are not specifically trained in guidance and counselling skills.

Item 3: What role can you play in guidance and counselling after completing B.Ed. programme?

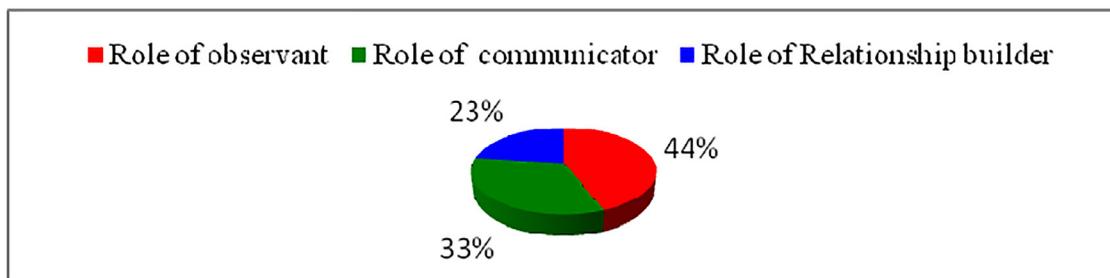


Fig. 4: Percentage Distribution of Roles after Completion of B.Ed. Programme.

Among the teacher trainees 44% of them said, they would play their role as an observant. They are of the opinion that by observing the changes in the behaviour of the students in the class and in the school premises, teachers can identify their guidance needs so as to provide timely guidance and counselling to the students.

Item 4: As a teacher what is your function to avail guidance and counselling to students?

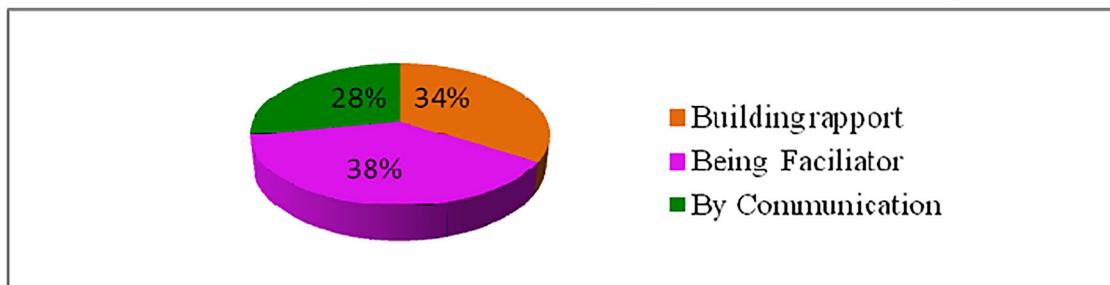


Fig. 5: Percentage Distribution of Different Functions of the Teachers to Avail Guidance and Counselling to Students.

The 38% of teacher trainees feel that by being a facilitator, their function of a teacher can be effective.

Item 5: How will you integrate guidance and counselling in your classroom teaching?

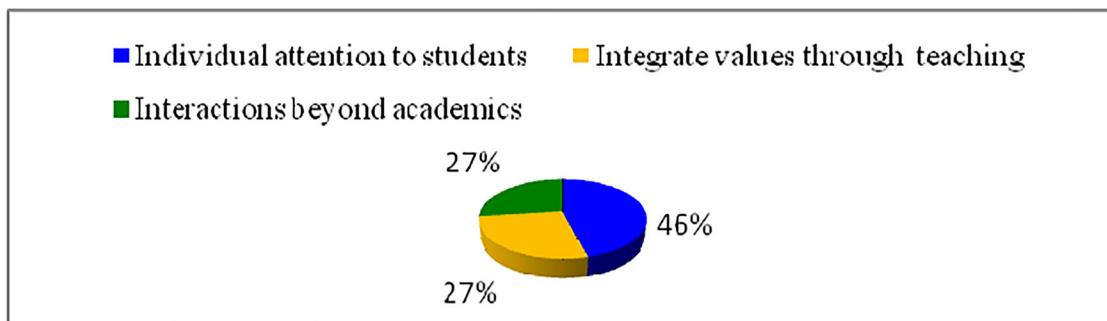


Figure 6: Percentage Distribution of Integrating Guidance and Counselling in the Classroom Teaching.

The opinion of 46% of teacher trainees asserts that guidance and counselling will be more effective by giving individual attention to the students.

The responses from the pre-service showed that 94% of them are of the opinion that teachers require training in guidance and counselling skills and they should be equipped. It is observed that 86% of them feel incompetent to give guidance and counselling to students in - spite of going through a professional course of two years since they are not specifically trained in the area of guidance and counselling. Further, 38% of them said they can be facilitators, mediators to link students, counsellors, parents and management while 44% of them said they would play their role as an observant, identify the behavioural changes in the students and give timely guidance. The remaining 46% of them were of the opinion that guidance and counselling will be more effective by giving individual attention to students.

Conclusion

The need for teachers to be equipped in guidance and counselling in modern times has augmented because of the multiplicity of problems that students face in the various domains of life. Rapid changes in every aspect of living cause many strains and stresses on them as they struggle for better adjustment and existence in this complex society. Moreover, the age of the students during adolescence is sensitive and highly vulnerable, wherein they experience conflicts between themselves and the society. Regardless of

the role of other educational personnel in schools, teachers have a very important role in the implementation guidance in schools both inside and outside the classroom (Ahmad, 2013). By virtue of the teaching profession, it necessitates that teachers are the right personnel to tender guidance and counselling to the students who spend six to eight hours in their company. They are the reliable sources to impart counselling assistance to the pupils regarding the educational, vocational and social information needed to make wise choices. If not, students may seek guidance from other fonts and gather information that might not lead them to a prosperous future (Odera, 2014). Thus, it is of paramount importance to train and equip the present and future pre- service teachers with basic guidance and counselling skills for the benefit of students.

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