



National Conference on 'Guidance and Counselling in India: Status, Trends, Practices and Innovations': A Brief Report

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Guidance and counselling is an integral part of education. However, in India, it has been placed at a low priority by the school education sector. Although everyone is aware of the need and importance of guidance and counselling at the school stage, one hardly finds trained counsellors working on a regular basis in the government schools of all states. Since there is a growing demand in the schools of India for guidance and counselling services, it was felt that a national conference would create an opportunity for all the stakeholders to share and reflect upon the status, trends, practices and innovations in the field. Thus, a three-day National Conference on 'Guidance and Counselling in India: Status, Trends, Practices and Innovations' was organized by the Regional Institute of Education, a constituent unit of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi at Mysore from 16-18th November, 2016 at the Institute premises.

The conference proceedings included keynote addresses from seven experts, invited papers from state representatives and selected papers from practitioners followed by discussions. More than 120 participants including practicing counsellors, teacher counsellors, counsellor educators, educational administrators, and researchers from different parts of the country attended the three-day conference.

Discussions and deliberations were held on themes such as: status of guidance and counselling services in India, trends and practices in the field of guidance and counselling, innovative practices in the area of guidance and counselling, research trends and its implications on practices in guidance and counselling, and avenues available for professional development of counsellors who work within an educational set-up. More than fifty papers were presented by the practitioners and researchers during the three days addressing these themes.

The following draft recommendations emerged during the three day deliberations.

- There is a need to strengthen the State Educational and Vocational Guidance Bureaus (SEVGBs) existing in the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) of the states with persons trained in the field.
- There is a need to integrate the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) initiatives with the existing SEVGBs/Cells. Appointments under RMSA should be made strictly according to the norms laid down for the appointment of Counsellors.
- As the Government alone cannot meet the needs of the all students in the Country, there is a need to involve the other parties. The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should make an attempt to collaborate and coordinate with schools, colleges and other institutions to meet the actual needs, rather than working alone.

- The teacher-counsellor model advocated by the NCERT is a good initiative. However, the Country needs full-fledged counsellors appointed on a regular basis as it exists in the schools of Delhi.
- There is a need to set up agency like National Council of School Counsellors and develop appropriate mechanisms to accept and accredit institutions and courses/degrees offered by them by a professional agency to ensure the quality of services rendered to the students.
- There is a need to have a standard common curriculum for counsellor preparation across the country. This curriculum should be approved by the national council/agency before the programme is offered.
- There is a need to develop Indian Standards and a Professional Code of Ethics for Indian counsellors working in the educational setting.
- Counsellors need to have a passion for the profession. Institutions providing counsellor education programmes may develop suitable mechanisms to identify the right kind of people to enter to the field.
- Guidance and counselling services in India need to be tailor made to benefit the actual educational needs of students.
- There is a need for sensitising parents and involving parents in the guidance and counselling activities of the schools.
- Culture sensitive strategies may be adopted while counselling students from varied backgrounds.
- Professional development programmes such as refresher courses, seminars etc., may be organized on a regular basis for the practicing counsellors.
- There is a need for more professional programmes through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode to balance the supply and demand aspect.
- Guidance and counselling should be made an integral part of school and teacher education curricula.
- Interlinking and collaboration between schools and different resource centres needs to be established.
- There is a need for creating awareness of the activities of National Career Services (NCS) among the job seekers and job providers.
- Teachers and counsellors should be trained in creating entrepreneurial awareness, entrepreneurial selection and entrepreneurship development programmes among students.

- There is a need for developing sufficient career literature and making it available to school and college students in print and non-print form.
- Schools and colleges should have incubators to attract the talented students to start their own start-ups to reduce the unemployment in the country.
- Career education as a school subject (which exists in developed countries) should be made a subject of study in school curricula of secondary and higher education.

Reported by:

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