

## Students' Perceptions about the Provision of Psychosocial Guidance and Counseling Services at the Secondary School Level

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### Abstract

*This quantitative study aimed at investigating the availability of psychosocial guidance and counseling services in secondary schools of district Haripur. The main objectives of the study were to investigate the provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services in the secondary schools, compare urban and rural areas in the provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services, and compare differences between male and female schools regarding the provision of guidance and counseling services. Population of the study consisted of all students of Grade 10 studying at the secondary school level in District Haripur. A sample of 400 students was randomly selected from grade 10 students, using stratified random sampling technique. The data was collected using questionnaire validated through experts. The collected data was analyzed using percentages and student t-test. Results of the study indicate that formally, there was no provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services to the secondary school students. Informally, psychosocial guidance and counseling services were more frequently provided in urban schools compared to rural schools. There is a need for establishing formal structures and mechanisms for providing guidance and counselling services in schools for supporting students, instrumental for student career decisions and all-round development.*

**Keywords:** Psychosocial, Guidance and Counseling, Counseling Services, Secondary Schools

### Introduction

Guidance and counseling services are considered as the third force in education system, in addition to the instruction in education. They play a significant role in preventing personal, social, emotional, psychological as well as educational problems of secondary school students (Eyo, Joshua, & Esuong, 2010). Experts therefore agree on the three aspects of guidance viz. educational, vocational, and psychosocial (UNESCO, 2000). The need for guidance and counseling has been felt since times immemorial. However, this need has become more severe due to the growing complications in the living styles of people coupled with other complications. Additionally, due to ever-increasing complexity of social interactions students of both schools and colleges have been facing adjustment problems such as loneliness, insecurity feelings, conflict with teachers, low academic achievement (Landy, 2006). These complexities require a robust education system that

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provides a conducive learning environment for students and guidance and counseling services for students. Therefore, provision of guidance and counselling services would ensure employing a capable person for enabling students to seek direction regarding their own lives, make their own point of view and decisions (Nayak, 2004). More specifically, counseling involves assisting the students in overcoming their social and emotional hurdles during the process of learning (Landy, 2006).

According to Okobiah and Okorodudu (2006) guidance and counseling is carried out by actions or behavior of relevant services and also processes of serving persons within and outside the school, to get their full potentialities in their emotional, moral, social educational, academic and vocational development. According to Muro & Kottman (1995), guidance is the process of steering the students to professions that are according to their aptitudes and goals. Counselors usually help the individuals in their social and personal problems. Here they deal with their problems like dropping out, substance abuse, suicide thoughts, deviant sexual behaviors and sleeping disorders and the ultimate objective is to look at the problems from personality adjustment point of view (Egbule, 2006). Ugwuegbulem and Igbokwe (1996, p. 32) enumerated the following as the objectives of personal-social guidance and counseling services:

1. To make the school child happy, well-adjusted and self-confident.
2. Recognize students' thoughts and attitudes, behavior towards others and improve on the feelings and attitude particularly if they are negative.
3. Identify the nature of students' association with friends and society, and to make sure that it is a progressive, effective and beneficial one.
4. Help the student to judge and accept weakness.

Keeping in mind the significance of guidance and counseling in schools, this study sought to investigate the provision of this important feature of educational process with special reference to District Haripur.

### **Significance of the Study**

Apart from academic failure in schools, most students often face difficulties in opting a particular vocation and have to come across other psychosocial problems at the secondary level. Therefore, the resolution of these problems is always considered the responsibility of school authorities. The current study is an attempt to investigate the availability of psychosocial guidance and counseling facilities in secondary schools. Recommendations based on findings of this study may help the students support their psychosocial development as well as academic achievement.

This research has direct or indirect potential benefits for all grade 10 as well as teachers involved in teaching. Teachers play a pivotal role in the development of a nation and hence teacher-training programs are expected to have guidance and counseling courses for prospective teachers so that they engage with their students with a positive frame of mind. Teacher educators in general may find the study useful for becoming aware of the

guidance and counseling services at secondary level. This study may sensitize the university teachers to provide the basic skills of guidance and counseling to prospective teachers whether they are studying at the B.Ed., M.Ed. M.Phil., and PhD levels and equip them to help the students in their service as teachers.

The study may provide new insight to curriculum planners in considering useful strategies and bringing about positive attitudinal changes in teacher training programs. The study may also prove useful to future researchers in the field of teacher education in general.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. Investigating the provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services in secondary schools.
2. Comparing the availability of psychosocial guidance and counseling services among male and female secondary school students.
3. Comparing the provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services in urban and rural secondary schools.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What psychosocial guidance and counseling services are provided in the secondary schools of District Haripur?
2. Is there any difference between male and female secondary schools with regard to provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services?
3. How far do differences exist between urban and rural secondary schools with regard to provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services?

### **Research Methodology**

A quantitative research methodology guided the study, which involved developing and using a survey questionnaire for gathering data from the field, centered around the provision of guidance and counseling services at the secondary school level in district Haripur.

### **Population of the study**

The target population for the study consisted of all grade 10 students of secondary schools of District Haripur.

### **Sample of the study**

A total of 400 students was selected for data collection. There were two hundred (200) male and two hundred (200) female students from both urban and rural secondary schools. The data were collected from ten (10) male and ten (10) female secondary schools.

### Sampling Technique

Keeping in view the objectives and research questions of the study, stratified random sampling technique was used for data collection purposes.

### Research Instrument

The questionnaire was developed and validated through experts. The questionnaire comprised of nine items. It was constructed on four point Likert scale based upon various options, exploring perceptions about guidance and counseling services in the schools. They were “Never,” “Sometimes,” “Often,” and “Always”. The coding system was used where each point was assigned number ranging from 1 to 4. Option “Always” was assigned 4, “Often” was assigned 3, “Sometimes” was assigned 2, and option “Never” was assigned 1 number. The Cronbach Reliability indeed of the Questionnaire was 0.795.

### Data Collection

The data was collected by administering the questionnaire to the sampled 400 students, 200 male and 200 female students. Since the data was personally collected, therefore 100% return ratio was achieved. The gathered data were then processed through MS Excel.

### Data Analysis

The data gathered from the sampled male and female students from both rural and urban secondary schools were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Furthermore, percentage and student t- test was used for data analysis. The obtained results were then tabulated and interpreted.

### Results and Discussion

**Table 1 Provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling provided by teachers in the secondary schools**

S. No	Statements	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
1	Teachers provide counseling on psychosocial issues	40 10.0%	114 28.5%	125 31.3%	121 30.3%
2	Teachers assist students in their social adjustment	40 10.0%	98 24.5%	161 40.3%	101 25.3%
3	Teachers identify students with psychosocial problems	49 12.3%	89 22.3%	176 44.0%	86 21.5%
4	Teachers provide information about the effectiveness and appropriateness of the psychosocial counseling services	68 17.0%	109 27.3%	104 26.0%	119 29.8%
5	Teachers collaborate with government and other stakeholders in the provision of education	68 17.0%	109 27.3%	104 26.0%	119 29.8%
6	Teachers help in identifying responsibilities in society	13 3.3%	58 14.5%	156 39.0%	173 43.3%
7	Teachers help an individual to solve	18	45	129	208

	problems related to any complex situation	4.6%	11.3%	32.3%	52.0%
8	Teachers resolve conflicts among students	8	50	158	184
		2.0%	12.5%	39.5%	46.0%
9	Teachers solve the emotional and psychological problems of students	25	95	161	119
		6.3%	23.8%	40.3%	29.8%

Table 1 highlights provision of different types of psychosocial guidance and counseling services by the secondary school teachers in District Haripur. According to statement 1, a majority of the students (i.e. 246, 61%) responded that teachers do not help them in solution of their psychological and social problems. In response to statement 2, 262 students (i.e. 65%) responded that teachers do not provide assistance in adjustment in their social life. According to statement 3, a majority of the respondents (i.e. 262, 65 %) were of the view that teachers are not indulged in conducting research about the need of provision of guidance and counseling services in secondary schools. Similarly, statement 4 suggests that a little more than half of the respondents (i.e. 223, 55%) agreed that information about the general effectiveness and appropriateness of guidance and counseling is not provided by the teachers in the schools. Moreover, the same number of respondents (i.e. 223, 55%), in response to statement 5 shared that teachers are not in contact with and collaboration with Government and other stakeholders regarding the provision of guidance and counseling services at school. According to statement 6, 329 students (i.e. 82%) shared that teachers do not help them in identifying their responsibilities in society. In response to statement 7, 337 respondents (i.e. 84%) unanimously agreed that teachers do not solve problems related to any complex situation. Similarly, in response to statement 8, a majority of the respondents (i.e. 342 85%) were of the view that teachers do not resolve conflicts among students. According to statement 9, 280 respondents (i.e. 69%) shared that teachers do not solve the emotional and psychological problems of students.

**Table 2 Comparison of location wise students regarding the provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services**

Location	N	Mean	S. D	t- value	p- value
Urban	200	3.01	0.51	2.079	0.038
Rural	200	2.91	0.41		

Table 2 presents comparison between rural and urban areas regarding the provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services. The calculated value of t (2.079) indicates that there is a difference in provision of guidance and counseling services in rural and urban secondary schools. It indicates that in urban secondary schools psychosocial guidance and counseling services are more frequently provided as compared to rural secondary schools. These results are consistent with those of Eyo, Joshua and Esuong (2010), who found students in urban schools show higher positive attitude to guidance and counseling services than students in rural secondary schools due the availability of psychosocial guidance and counseling in urban location.

**Table 3 Gender wise differences in the provision of psychosocial guidance counseling services**

Gender	N	Mean	S. D	t- value	p- value
Female	200	2.97	0.45	0.741	0.46
Male	200	2.94	0.42		

Table 3 shows comparison between male and female students regarding the provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services. The calculated value of t (0.741) indicates that there is no difference in provision of guidance and counseling services in male and female secondary schools.

### Conclusion

As a whole, there is no formal provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services to the students at the secondary level. Teachers do not provide guidance and counseling on psychosocial issues and do not assist students towards their social adjustment. Teachers neither take initiative regarding students' counseling needs nor provide information about the general effectiveness and appropriateness of the guidance and counseling services. Teachers do not collaborate with government and other stakeholders in the provision of education and mostly they do not help in identifying student responsibilities in society. In most cases, teachers do not help students to solve problems related to any complex situation and do not resolve conflicts among students; they do not solve the emotional and psychological problems of students.

In urban areas, there is relatively more awareness towards the provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services, as compared to rural school students. There is a difference in provision of guidance and counseling services in rural and urban areas secondary schools; it indicates that in urban schools the psycho social guidance and counseling services are more frequently provided as compared to rural areas secondary schools. It implies that the teachers of urban schools are aware of the importance of psychosocial problems of students and help them in overcoming such problems.

In all, there is no difference between male and female students and schools about the provision of psychosocial guidance and counseling services provided by the teachers in secondary schools. It implies that the male and female teachers have less knowledge and level of motivation to guide their students regarding their psychosocial adjustment and development.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered for helping teachers, policy makers and practitioners ensure that appropriate guidance and counselling services are provided at various levels of education:

1. Teachers may be trained through workshops, seminars, conferences to obtain the skills of guidance and counseling the students.
2. Teachers may be motivated for providing guidance and counseling to students through in-service trainings.
3. Special attention may be given to the training of rural areas teachers.
4. Guidance and counseling may be introduced as a subject at the secondary level.
5. For better psychosocial performance of students in secondary schools, every school should have a purposeful guidance and counseling unit both in urban and rural areas with the services of specialized counselors as the heads.
6. Government should establish guidance and counseling units both in rural and urban schools to fill the current gaps in schools.

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