

STATE OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLING_{IN} **INDIAN** SCHOOLS



A brief Global History of Guidance Counselling

The world first realized the need for Guidance Counselling over a century ago.

In 1908, Frank Parsons, who is now known as the 'Father of Vocational Guidance', established the first ever career counselling institute, called the 'Vocation Bureau at Civic Service House', in The United States.

Counselling in its various forms has often been considered unnecessary, excessive and most commonly, a 'western concept', with little acceptance in the Indian society. Historically and globally, Counselling has deep stigmas attached to it. Because of the lack of understanding about Counselling in general, Guidance Counselling has remained undermined and relatively unexplored in India.

With that being said, in the past decade, Counselling has somewhat found its feet in the Indian School.



The Evolution of Guidance Counselling in India



2013

The secondary education department expected to issue a government order making counselling centers manned by clinical psychologists mandatory in government and private schools.

2000

Central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance delegated the work of guidance professionals' training to the Regional Institutes of Guidance at Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar and Mysore.

1966

The number of schools that primarily provided Vocational Guidance was 3,000.

1961

Guidance services were initiated in schools by trained counsellors and career masters with assistance from school teachers.

1954

Central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance established by The Ministry of Education, Govt. Of India.



THE IDENTITY OF THE INDIAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Following orders from the Supreme Court of India and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (MHRD-Gol), a famous R K Raghavan Committee was constituted, which recommended, among other things, the deployment of counsellors in secondary and senior secondary schools. It mandated the arrangement for a specified number of regular and periodic psychological counselling sessions per year for every student till they exit school with the involvement of parents and teachers during such exercises. While these recommendations have been translated into repeated 'circulars' from Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE, 2012), much has been practiced only in the context of preventing ragging in educational institutions.

School counselling must stress on 'building self-concept, self-image, acceptability, pressures, sense of entrepreneurship and sportsmanship' within the larger learning process [1]. This appears to have been relegated to the background.

The deployment of counsellors in schools remains as an elusive phenomenon in the country. An exploratory cross sectional study was conducted on the availability of school counsellors, profiling their expected and actual on-site work activities in a sample of national and international high schools located in Karnataka. Their official websites showed that 19 out of 101 schools have counsellors on their rolls. From another sample of 74 respondents, 1000 activities (Mean: 13.51) that described their job profile was elicited. Content analysis shows that counsellors want to focus on student problems and issues, while parents and teachers want them to undertake academic advising, student discipline, conflict resolution, crises intervention, career choice and guidance.

The school administration and students expect them to liaise, handle admissions and conduct staff enrichment programs. They prefer counsellors who give low priority for advocacy, equity and child rights or community issues, which is what counsellors themselves want to do. In totality, the wide disparities between the ascribed, expected and actual roles of school counselors are at a risk if compared to their optimal job performance in Indian school settings [1].



THE QUALIFICATION QUANDRY

While counselling, including Career and College Guidance is an absolutely critical aspect of Education; there are not too many noteworthy qualifications in the country that award Professional degrees for School Counselling.

The scenario of professional school counselling in India is pathetic. There are no known university level academic programs available yet with exclusive focus on this professional pursuit. Usually, post graduates in allied fields, such as psychology (educational, child, clinical or applied), social work, human development, sociology, or other humanities don the role of school counsellors.

A Post Graduate Diploma Course in Guidance and Counselling offered by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, under MHRD-Gol, since 1958, is deemed as the closest to an official program authorized for the profession [2].

The objective of the course is to prepare counsellors for providing guidance services for students at secondary and senior secondary levels. It is claimed that nearly over a 1200-1500 counsellors were trained in this program through 39 batches till 2000. A report on program evaluation of this course found that only half of the candidates who completed the training were actually on jobs that was somewhat linked to students and counselling [1].

Further, they were all reported to be available only in Delhi. Many of them carried out predominantly career guidance work and did not possess an affiliation to a professional body for certification, revalidation or job advancement [2]. In recent years, this course has been replaced by an International Diploma Course in Guidance and Counselling through Distance/Online Mode in their spirit to focus on needs of developing countries, providing opportunity for multi-cultural interactions, and exposure to prospective trainees for alternate strategies (NCERT, 2014) [1].

Certifications and qualifications for Career Guidance Counselling are even lesser in the country, which results in students being at the mercy of the experience, self-learning and motivation of the individual counsellor for Career Guidance. UCLA Extension's Global Career Counsellor certification is one of the few credible programs available to aspiring Indian career counsellors [3].

THE UNIVARIETY CAREER GUIDANCE SURVEY 2017

Univariety conducted a survey in **2017** with **a sample of 542 Educators across the country**. The respondents were a cross section of School Management, Principals and High School Co-ordinators from 450 schools across tier 1 & 2 cities in India. It also included University Admission Directors and faculty from 25 Universities across India, USA, UK, Australia and Dubai.

The survey assessed the stance of educators on the importance of Career and College Guidance in Schools.

What is the role of Schools in providing Career & College Guidance to students?

82%

Must provide Career & College Guidance from Grade 8

10%

Must provide Career & College Guidance from Grade 11

8%

Must provide Career Information but not be actively involved in any other activities

How important do parents consider the school's role to be in Career Guidance?

27%

More important than supporting Academic Performance

53%

As important as supporting Academic Performance

18%

Not as important as supporting Academic Achievement

2%

Not at all important





THE CHALLENGES OF URBAN INDIAN SCHOOLS

Indian Education has perceivably come a long way in the past decade. However, the deep-rooted 'Mark-sheet-syndrome' does not look like it is going anywhere. To their credit, Indian Schools are faced with the onerous task of ensuring '100% Board results'.

The following factors have stymied the growth of Guidance Counselling in Indian Schools:

Cornered to focus singularly on Academic scores because of the 'Cut-off culture'.

Inability to provide any or adequate guidance because of syllabus completion pressure.

Co-curricular activities included superficially to feign 'holistic experience' without any real value addition.

Budgets focused on visible factors like infrastructure over investment in guidance resources & professional development of staff.

TOP CHALLENGES FOR INDIAN STUDENTS

Inadequate & unstructured career guidance from school

Reliance on private counsellors and agents, who are biased and have no deep knowledge of students, to provide guidance

Pressure to join 'top colleges' and 'top courses' with no mapping of the student's Aptitude, Interest and Personality

Reliance on sporadic counselling and internet searches to understand full breadth of student's career options

Last minute rush to choose career and apply to colleges in Grade 12

Lack of back up plans for career and college selection

Negligible knowledge and information of scholarship options for Undergraduate courses in India and Abroad

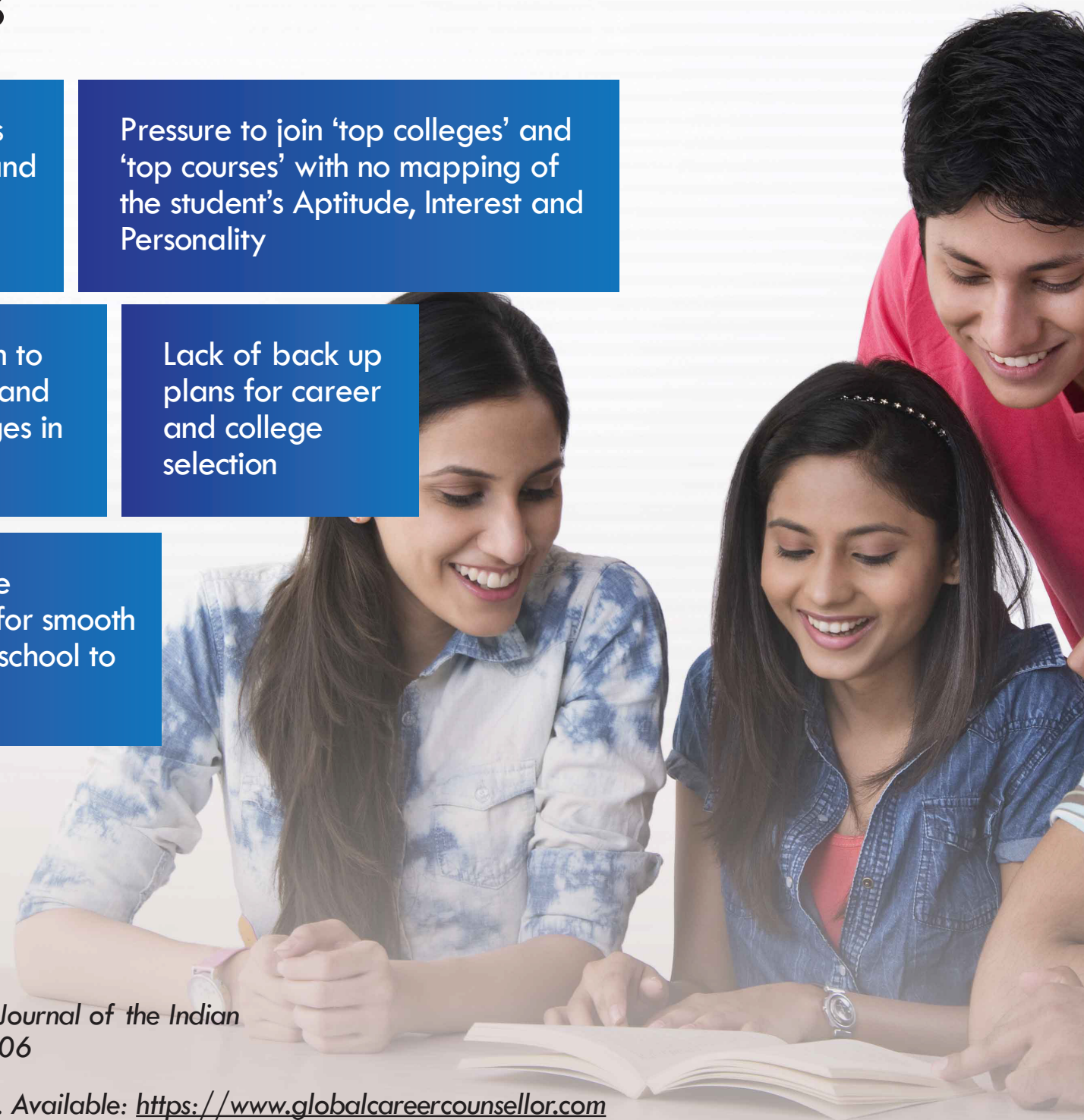
Lack of College preparedness for smooth transition from school to college life

References:

[1] Venkatesan, Srinivasan & R Shyam, H., Professional Identity of School Counselors in India, *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*. 41. Pages 25-36, 2015

[2] G.K. Joneja, A Follow-Up Study of Trained Guidance Counsellors, *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 32, No.3, Pages 153-170, 2006

[3] UCLA Extension's Global Career Counsellor Certification, [Online]. Available: <https://www.globalcareercounsellor.com>





Univariety is India's first company to use technology to setup a complete career & college guidance cell inside progressive schools. Students receive guidance from counsellors, digital tools, university admission officers and from the past students of the school. Univariety runs a successful Global Career Counsellor program for certifying teachers in association with a top University - UCLA Extension. Univariety has proved to be a comprehensive partner for schools wanting to go beyond the regular and focus on student success.

☎ +91-40-3090-3900

✉ contactus@univariety.com

🌐 www.univariety.com