

Barriers and Challenges in the Operationalization of Efficient School-Based Guidance and Counselling Services in India

Shikupu Chishi and Boyillapalli Venkata Rao

Nagaland University, Meriema

This study examines the obstacles that Indian schools have in providing adequate guidance and counselling services. It seeks to provide suggestions for policy, advance professional growth, increase awareness, recommend facility upgrades, push for government assistance, and foster teamwork. Nine articles published in UGC care-listed journals and six theses published in Shodhganga (an Indian thesis reservoir) between 2014 and 2023 were examined in the systematic review. Selected articles were analyzed qualitatively using Content analysis and the SWOT analysis technique. The results point to several important issues, including a lack of qualified counsellors, inadequate infrastructure, low student-to-counselor ratios, policy gaps, differing roles played by counsellors, a focus on problem-solving rather than personality development, lack of political will, restricted access to technology and assessment tools, lack of resources, low awareness, lack of thorough support from stakeholders, and insufficient government resources.

Keywords: School Guidance & Counselling services, Guidance-counsellor's issues, Problems and challenges

Guidance: "Guidance is assistance made available by competent counsellor to an individual of any age to help him direct his life, develop his own point of view, make his own decisions and carry his own burden" (Crow & Crow, n.d.).

Counselling: "Counselling is a personal relationship between a counselee and a professionally trained counsellor who aims to assist him to communicate and meet his immediate needs and problems" (Dinkmeyer, 1996).

The education system plays a pivotal role in shaping students' lives, covering academics, mental well-being, and personal growth (Rume, 2017). The National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) emphasizes the strong connection between Guidance and Education, concentrating on fostering cognitive skills like critical thinking and problem-solving, along with social, ethical,

and emotional growth, from the foundational stages of education (Agarwal, 2023, p. 3). The NEP 2020 mandates a robust counselling mechanism in each school, addressing various student needs such as aspirations, weaknesses, stress, and emotional adjustments, guiding them through Obstacles encountered throughout their educational path and beyond (Crucial Role of Guidance and Counselling in NEP 2020 Implementation, 2022).

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) recognizes counselling as integral to the curriculum, supporting proactive education. Each student's unique reactions to their environment highlight the necessity of guidance and counselling, particularly in the face of pervasive life changes. Factors such as intense competition, academic pressure, parental expectations, academic struggles, career decisions, violence, abuse, family dynamics, and health concerns like

HIV/AIDS can trigger depression and anxiety in students who may lack the maturity to respond effectively. School counselling services are vital in assisting students to tackle these challenges. However, the effective implementation of these services encounters significant issues and challenges.

Hence, the objective of the present study is to identify the obstacles and difficulties impeding the effective implementation of guidance and counselling services in Indian schools and suggest measures to elevate the field by bolstering the professional growth of counsellors and educators, cultivating awareness and favourable attitudes towards guidance and counselling services, improving facilities, advocating for governmental support, and fostering collaborative alliances which will ultimately contribute to students' holistic well-being and academic triumph.

Various studies conducted between 2014 and 2023 in various regions of India have consistently highlighted deficiencies in providing guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. Rume, Z. (2014) identified poor awareness and implementation issues in Nagaland because of poor political will and qualified personnel. Panja, S., & De (2015) pointed out the dearth of counselling services in schools. Tarkasband (2016) found inadequate guidance and counselling procedures in Mumbai secondary schools. Kumar (2017) highlighted low student to counsellor ratio in schools of Delhi. Marbaniang (2017) identified various shortcomings in guidance and counselling services in Shillong secondary schools. Thomas., Goerge & Jain (2017) identified policy gaps and suggested actions for efficient counselling programs. Periera & Rekha (2017) discovered technology, role definition, and support deficiencies for counsellors. Manjula (2018) noted discrepancies in mental health promotion efforts between private and government schools. Yasmeen (2019)

compared guidance in government and private schools, emphasizing problem-solving over holistic development. Pandey (2019) stressed the need for counselling training in Chhattisgarh. Batra & Pyari (2019) observed resource inadequacies in Delhi schools with counselling rooms. Thomas & Dey (2020) highlighted differences in counsellor roles and policy gaps. Sumana (2021) reiterated the lack of counselling services in school settings. Rahman & Azm. S. (2023) identified implementation obstacles due to insufficient infrastructure and expert assistance.

Method

Tools

For the study, open-access research articles and theses about school guidance and counselling services published between 2014 and 2023 were gathered. 15 studies, comprising 6 theses and 9 articles, were carefully reviewed and scrutinized before being chosen for analysis in this study. These studies mostly address problems and obstacles associated with providing efficient guidance and counselling services in Indian schools. The selected data was analysed using content analysis and SWOT analysis techniques.

Data Analysis

An organized and consistent technique for summarizing a large body of text into a small number of content categories according to specified coding principles is known as content analysis (Berelson et al., 1952-1996). To make the comprehension of the results easier, the data is arranged into words and themes. The researcher employed a deductive coding strategy for this investigation. In deductive coding, a set of codes is created by reviewing the data set; in other words, the codes are predetermined based on the content. Table 1 presents the themes that the researcher discovered from 15 studies that directly address the problems

and obstacles that obstruct the proper execution of guidance and counselling services in Indian schools. The themes from Table 1 were then coded and categorized into six issues and challenges by the researcher, who also counted their frequencies and presented the results in

Table 2 for interpretation of the detected themes based on their frequency. The SWOT analysis technique was applied based on the content analysis findings to display its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The SWOT matrix table is presented in Table 3.

Table 1. Themes related to problems and difficulties found in 15 Indian studies

Reviewed papers	Issues and challenges of school Guidance and Counselling services in India	Retrieved sources/journals
Rume, Z. (2014). "A study of vocational guidance programmes for secondary students of Nagaland".	Low awareness and implementation issues due to a lack of trained professionals and political will.	Shodhganga-inflibnet. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/388691
Panja, K, S & De, K, K (2015). "Attitude Towards Career Guidance and Counselling Among Higher Secondary School Teachers Under Present Scenario in West Bengal".	Low availability of counselling facilities in schools.	Indian journal of applied research, 5(12). https://www.worldwidejournals.com/indian-journal-of-applied-research-(IJAR)/
Tarkasband, U. (2016). "A critical study of the guidance and counselling practices in secondary schools in greater Mumbai".	Unsatisfactory practices of Guidance & counselling services in secondary schools.	Shodhganga-inflibnet. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/119506
Kumar, A. (2017). "Guidance and counselling services, academic achievement and occupational aspiration of adolescents in secondary schools".	Poor student-to-counsellor ratio and its impact on academic achievement.	Shodhganga-inflibnet, http://hdl.handle.net/10603/372236
Marbaniang, E. (2017). "An investigation into guidance and counselling services in secondary schools of Shillong".	Lack of Awareness, insufficient Guidance and Counselling Centres, limited Training for Teachers, limited Access to Professional Counsellor's, lack of Comprehensive Support, inadequate Focus on Co-curricular Interests.	Shodhganga. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/169876
Thomas, E George, S.T & Jain. S (2017). "Public Policy, Policy Research & School Counselling in India".	Policy gaps in implementation.	International Handbook for Policy Research on school-based Counselling http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58179-8_20

<p>Periera, M. & Rekha, S. (2017). "Problems, difficulties and challenges faced by counsellors".</p> <p>Mandira (2018). "A study of counselling programmes in CBSE affiliated schools and their success for student support".</p> <p>Manjula, M. (2018). "Mental Health Promotion at schools: Need, challenges and role of teachers and counsellors".</p> <p>Pandey, R. (2019). "Impact of counselling & guidance services on development of students of government higher secondary schools".</p> <p>Batra, H., & Pyari, D. (2019). "A study of the Status of Guidance and Counselling Services in Secondary Schools of Delhi".</p> <p>Yasmeen, S. (2019). "Effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in Government and Private school: A comparative study".</p> <p>Thomas, E. & Dey, M. A. (2020). "Role of School Counsellors and the Factors that affect their Practice in India".</p> <p>Sumana, B. (2021). "A sociological study on counselling services in pre-university colleges".</p> <p>Rahman, S. P. & Azm, S. (2023). "Importance Of Guidance and Counselling Service in High School: A Study on Opinion of Teachers And Students".</p>	<p>Unclear job description, lack of support from families, communities and school leaders and lack of technological advancements.</p> <p>Inadequate training of the functionaries and not entirely useful to them.</p> <p>Lack of uniform implimentation between private and government schools in terms of the inputs and implimentation of the programmes</p> <p>Need for government policies and trained teachers.</p> <p>Resource deficiencies in counselling services.</p> <p>Counselling focused more on addressing problems rather than personality development.</p> <p>Policy gaps and role discrepancies among counsellors.</p> <p>Absence of counselling facilities in educational institutions.</p> <p>Implementation challenges due to a lack of expert support and adequate infrastructure.</p>	<p>The International Journal of Indian Psychology, 4(3). http://dx.doi.org/10.25215/0403.127</p> <p>Shodhganga-inflibnet. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/251426</p> <p>Positive schooling and child development. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0077-6_13</p> <p>International Journal of Research in Human Resource Management, 1(2). https://doi.org/10.33545/26633213.2019.v1.i2b.26</p> <p>Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research, 6(4). http://doi.one/10.1729/Journal.20620</p> <p>Shodhganga-inflibnet. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/273293</p> <p>Journal of School-Based Counselling Policy and Evaluation, 2(1). https://doi.org/10.25774/t4b6-9880</p> <p>The International Journal of Indian Psychology, 9(1). https://doi.org/DOI:%2010.25215/0901.066</p> <p>Journal of Namibian Studies. https://doi.org/10.59670/jns.v35i.4135</p>
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Table 1 presents a summary of 15 research papers that were conducted in the area of school guidance and counselling in India. These studies have been divided into categories based on subjects that are pertinent to the challenges and issues that arise when introducing these programs into Indian schools.

Table 2. Frequencies of issues and challenges derived from Table 1

Issues and challenges	Frequency
1. Policy gaps & implementation problem	8
2. Lack of trained professional	7
3. Lack of facilities	6
4. Lack of Comprehensive Support	3
5. Lack of awareness	2
6. Role discrepancy	2
Total	28

Table 2 presents a summary of the six issues and challenges (a total frequency of 28) from 15 Indian studies that address the barriers to the successful implementation of school guidance and counselling services in India. Eight investigations by different researchers found problems with the policies and how well they were carried out in providing guidance and counselling services in Indian schools. Seven research studies discovered that there is a shortage of experts with the necessary training, which makes guidance and counseling services less effective. Six research found that Indian schools lacked adequate resources for counselling and guidance services. Three studies found that implementing guidance and counselling services in schools receives too little support from different stakeholder groups. Two investigations showed that there is a dearth of awareness regarding guidance and counselling services, which presents an obstacle to their delivery. Furthermore, two studies discovered differences between the

functions of school counsellors and guidance.

Findings

The findings point to a variety of challenges and barriers hindering the effective implementation of guidance and counselling services in Indian schools. Several themes emerged from the research conducted by several investigators. First, it was discovered that a significant obstacle impeding the successful deployment of guidance and counselling services in schools was the problem of policy and its implementation. This demonstrates the need for stricter and more robust policies in order to support these services. A second significant factor influencing the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services is the dearth of professionals possessing the requisite expertise. This demonstrates how important it is to support programs for the training and professional development of individuals employed in this sector. The lack of appropriate facilities for guidance and counselling services at schools constituted the third biggest obstacle, indicating the need for enhanced infrastructure. Fourthly, the results demonstrate the general lack of awareness regarding guidance and counselling services, which is a major obstacle to their delivery. Closing this information gap may increase students' and teachers' adoption and use of these services. Fifth, three studies revealed that the stakeholders in India did not offer sufficient comprehensive support for the successful execution of school guidance and counselling services. It could be challenging for schools to fulfil all of their learner's demand and provide essential assistance for their academic, social, and emotional growth if they do not have the right support systems in place. Sixth, two studies found that the implementation was hindered by insufficient support from different stakeholder groups and differences in the roles of school

counsellors. This highlights how crucial it is to have precise role descriptions and involve stakeholders in programs that promote guiding and counselling. In summary, these results demonstrate the complexity of the problems that Indian schools confront while implementing guidance and counseling services, pointing to the necessity of comprehensive and coordinated efforts to resolve these problems and obstacles.

SWOT Analysis

A strategic planning and management tool called a SWOT analysis is used to assess the internal and external elements that affect an organization's, project's, or venture's success. This method assists people or organizations in methodically identifying their opportunities and dangers (external variables) as well as their strengths and shortcomings (internal factors). A SWOT can be used for any planning or analysis activity that could impact the school or establishment's future finance, planning, and management decisions. It enables you (the governors and management) to conduct a more comprehensive analysis (Morrison, 2018). The study sought to comprehend the current situation of the subject under investigation by applying SWOT analysis. Several relevant elements are revealed by a SWOT analysis based on the themes clarified in studies addressing the challenges and complexities experienced in establishing effective guidance and counselling services at the secondary school level. Strengths include devoted experts and institutional backing; Weaknesses include scarce resources and a shortage of personnel. The use of technology to improve service delivery presents opportunities, while external financing limits and changing student needs pose threats. Developing focused plans to raise the standard and increase the accessibility of guidance and counseling services in secondary schools can be made feasible by analyzing these insights.

Table 3. SWOT Matrix

	Positive	Negative
Internal	Strength	Weakness
	Research focus	Inadequate service
	Awareness generation	Role ambiguity
	Regional Insights	Lack of awareness
External	Policy Advocacy	Lack of Training
	Opportunities	Threats
	Policy reforms	Resource constraints
	Professional training	Resistance to change
	Holistic approach	Misconceptions
	Training camps	Institutional resistance

Strengths:

1. Issue Illumination: The combined results of these research provide a useful instrument for illuminating the common problems related to guidance and counselling services in Indian secondary schools. They give a thorough summary of the issues, highlighting the urgent need for advancements in this crucial field of education.
2. Promotion of Importance: A number of studies emphasize the value of counselling services and raising awareness of them in schools. Through this activism, educators, students, and legislators are encouraged to acknowledge these essential needs, opening the door to a more encouraging learning environment.
3. Regional Diversity: The research covers a range of Indian regions, providing a comprehensive view of the difficulties encountered in diverse settings. Because of this regional variation, a more detailed

understanding of the ways in which socioeconomic, cultural, and geographic factors influence the delivery of guidance and counselling services is made possible.

4. **Policy Advocacy:** Some research actively promotes the inclusion of counselling in school policies rather than only identifying obstacles. Governmental lobbying has the potential to enhance services and resource allocation, paving the way for more extensive reform.

Weakness:

1. **Resource Deficiencies:** The scarcity of resources is a recurrent theme indicating that numerous schools lack the staff and facilities required for counselling to be conducted effectively. This lack of resources reduces the effectiveness and accessibility of counselling services, limiting their potential influence.
2. **Role Discrepancies:** The differences in school counsellors' roles and operation that have been brought to light point to a lack of agreement and clarity about their duties. This ambiguity can potentially undermine the efficacy of counselling programs by causing inefficiencies and inconsistent service delivery.
3. **Low Awareness:** A number of studies reveal that legislators, educators, and students have a poor understanding of mental health issues and counselling services. This ignorance suggests that these vital services would not be completely appreciated or used, which would restrict their ability to successfully meet the requirements of pupils.
4. **Inadequate Training:** The inadequate training of instructors and counsellors

in counselling techniques and approaches has been noted as a major problem. This shortfall has an immediate influence on the calibre of counselling services rendered because practitioners might not have the abilities and know-how to assist pupils properly.

Opportunities:

1. **Policy Formulation:** The research offers insightful information that might help shape more sensible regulations pertaining to counselling and guidance services in schools. With the use of this study, policymakers can develop frameworks that improve and bolster these services.
2. **Training Initiatives:** With the focus on training, educational institutions have the chance to fund extensive teacher and counsellor training programs. These kinds of programs can close the knowledge gap and enable counsellors to provide more effective counselling.
3. **Holistic Approach:** The findings show how important it is to approach counselling from an all-encompassing perspective, considering academic challenges and personal and mental health issues. This strategy is in line with the growing notion that education encompasses both personal growth and general well-being.
4. **Awareness efforts:** Since few people are aware of the benefits of counselling services, there is a chance to start focused efforts informing educators, parents, and students about these services. A higher level of awareness may result in more people using and accepting counselling services.

Threats:

1. **Resource Limitations:** The ongoing discussion of resource shortages presents a serious risk to the successful delivery of counselling services. It is difficult to provide students with high-quality counselling support in the absence of enough resources.
2. **Resistance to Change:** Adoption of counselling services as a necessary component of the educational process may be hampered by stakeholders' resistance to change. Overcoming established habits and resistance can be quite difficult.
3. **Perception Issues:** Counselling may not be as widely accepted or adopted as it may be if people think that its primary goal is to address problems instead of foster total personality development. It is crucial to change this view in order to highlight the proactive and beneficial features of counselling.
4. **Lack of Institutional Support:** One major barrier to integrating counselling into the educational system is the absence of institutional support and commitment. Sustainable improvements might not materialize if decision-makers and educational institutions don't support them.

The SWOT analysis emphasized the diversity of opportunities and obstacles for enhancing school guidance and counselling services in India. It draws attention to how urgently policy changes, public awareness campaigns, resource allocation, all-encompassing support, and training are needed to address the dangers and vulnerabilities shown in the studies while enhancing the potential and strengths found therein. In the end, resolving these problems

might result in an all-encompassing, more supportive atmosphere for learning that provides students with the tools they need to succeed both intellectually and personally.

Discussion

A complex network of interrelated problems is brought to light by the examination of the difficulties in establishing efficient guidance and counselling services in Indian secondary schools. These problems are not discrete rather they are frequently connected, forming an intricate web that demands an all-encompassing strategy for efficient service provision. According to the study, infrastructural concerns like the absence of designated counselling spaces are linked to human resources difficulties like the scarcity of certified counsellors. These issues are further made worse by ambiguous roles and a lack of comprehension of the value of counselling services. Program development and resource distribution are significantly influenced by government policies, or lack thereof. It's essential to take a comprehensive strategy because solving a problem in isolation is unlikely to produce long-term solutions. Even with the best of intentions, piecemeal approaches are unable to address the complex nature of these challenges. Adopting a comprehensive strategy to address numerous difficulties at once is necessary for meaningful transformation. It's critical to comprehend that these challenges are frequently the result of systemic problems that are deeply embedded in the educational system rather than being merely surface-level concerns. They therefore require long-term, sustainable solutions. In order to offer unambiguous direction and assistance for the execution of guidance and counselling services, policies need to be reviewed and updated. To successfully overcome these obstacles, cooperation between various parties is essential. To bring about significant change, communities, educational

institutions, government agencies, and counsellors must collaborate. To make sure that the funds required for the creation and delivery of guidance and counselling services are allotted, advocacy for funding increases and legislative changes is crucial. By making such a thorough effort we can expect to make long-lasting improvements in the provision of guidance and counselling services, which will eventually improve students' academic performance and general well-being.

Limitations

1. Only theses and articles published between 2014 and 2023 are included in this study.
2. Only open accessible sources were used to gather data for the study.
3. Only six theses and nine articles that particularly address problems and obstacles in the area of school guidance and counselling in India were covered in the study.

Conclusion

In summary, while the effort to introduce guidance and counselling services that are effective in Indian secondary schools is praiseworthy, there are significant obstacles in the way of its implementation. These challenges include a lack of qualified counsellors, disparities in roles, a lack of funding, and a lack of knowledge of the significance of counselling services. External factors like gaps in policy and a lack of broad support from stakeholders exacerbate these internal problems. Because of this, solving these complex problems calls for a team effort including many stakeholders. Qualified counsellors should be hired and trained, roles and guidelines should be clearly defined, resources should be allocated wisely, technology should be integrated into counselling procedures, awareness campaigns should be started, and the community should be included in the process.

By working together to overcome these obstacles, secondary schools may establish a learning environment that supports students' overall development and is in line with academic objectives. This is in line not just with the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 but also sets the stage for future generations to benefit from a better educational framework that gives all students the tools they need to succeed both personally and intellectually.

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- Shikupu Chishi**, Research Scholar, Department of Education, Nagaland University (A Central University) Kohima Campus Meriema-797004, Email: shikupuchishi101@gmail.com
- Boyillapalli Venkata Rao**, PhD., Associate Professor, Department of Education, Nagaland University (A Central University) Kohima Campus Meriema-797004, Email: boyillapalli.vrao@nagalanduniversity.ac.in