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Focus: Parents' Concerns

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Perspectives of Teachers on Need for School Social Work

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Abstract:

Adolescents have their own psychosocial problems in the school setup. As National development depended on education India adopted the National policy for children in August 1974, which recognized children as the 'Nation's Supremely important asset' and school education has been described as a "Social Vaccine". Introduction of school social work at this stage is very urgent. An attempt had been made to know the teachers' opinion regarding the necessity for school social work. 162 teachers in Bijapur district were chosen for a survey study. The conclusion drawn from the study is that teachers feel that school social work intervention will change the quality of life of children and it is the need of the hour.

Key words: Adolescents, School social work, Teachers' perspective.

Introduction:

Teachers have a special role as "Gurus" in India. Teachers play a vital role in the teaching set ups as they mould the personality of the students during their formative period of school life which will affect the future generation in their overall development¹. In India there are five school teachers in most villages for every health worker. Teachers when committed and trained can be an invaluable resource for health education both in school and in the community. Good health is essential for effective learning and education is a means of empowering children and adults to attain and maintain health and ensure wellbeing².

Need for school social work:

Approximately 80% of World's children live in developing countries and their wellbeing as adults depends heavily on the education they receive³. India had adopted the National policy for children in August 1974, according to which the state has to provide adequate services to children both before and after birth and through the period of growth, to ensure their full physical, mental and social development and recognized children as the 'Nations Supremely important asset'⁴. School education is a complex process and multi dimensional factors influence the teaching process. School education has been described as a 'Social

Vaccine' and it can serve as a powerful preventive tool⁵.

Catalysts for development:

School social workers can play the role of catalysts in achieving National development as school social work is the application and adoption of the method and philosophy of social work in the school setup to help students to help themselves, it is branch of social work and deals with the social, physical and psychological aspects of children. In the year 1970 school social work was initiated in India Approximate number of school social workers employed in India is estimated to be more than 10,000⁶. Through school social work students, their parents and community can achieve maximum benefit from interdependent support. Social work is preventive and developmental. Conventionally social work functions are defined in terms of 'restoration of impaired capacity, provision of individual and social resources and prevention of social dysfunction' (Panwalkar ¹, 1987).⁷

The need for outside help:

The family is in need of outside help to prevent breaking apart when it is faced with a crisis. Such a situation is created by a variety of

factors such as lack of money, illness, existence of a physically or mentally handicapped member, or an unhealthy emotional situation, which creates problems of interrelationships. Often these factors are so intermingled that it becomes difficult to identify the real cause of the family trouble. Influence of such condition on adolescents at home can lead to further severe psychosocial problems.

Ills of unitary family:

D. Paul Choudhary (1972)¹² in his article "*Strengthening the Family through Social Services*" says that traditionally the Indian joint family, whose members were bound together by strong ties, functioned as the country's main social security protection. But the process of industrialization and the growth of urban centre have weakened to a large extent the traditional Indian family and, in some cases it is no longer possible for the joint family to look after all its members. The unitary family that is now emerging comprises husband, wife and children, though not infrequently dependent parents also live with them. The changes taking place in the joint family have to ascertain social problems such as broken homes, neglected children, juvenile delinquency, neglect of the aged and the handicapped. These social problems, it would appear, have

become more widespread because of the breakdown of the basic social security protection formerly provided by the institution of the joint family.

NASA standards:

Community based modifications in NASA standards for the practice of social work with adolescents Need based modification in NASA standards like ¹³

- a) Knowledge of adolescent development.
- b) Assessment-social worker shall demonstrate an ability to assess adolescent services, including access to social institutions and community based resources that provide services for adolescents and their families.
- c) Knowledge of family dynamics and systems.
- d) Cultural competence- social workers shall demonstrate culturally competent service delivery.
- e) Self-empowerment of adolescents – social worker shall help adolescents achieve self-empowerment
- f) Understanding adolescent needs.
- g) Multidisciplinary case consultancy- social worker shall practice in multidisciplinary case consultation across agencies that

provide services to adolescents
h) Confidentiality.

i) Work environment –social worker shall assume an active role in contributing to the improvement and quality of the work environment, agency policies and practices with clients, and their own professional development.

j) Advocacy- social work administrators in youth services agencies shall advocate for an increased understanding of the needs of youth.

k) Policies for effective practices- social work administrators in youth services agencies shall establish the environment, policies, procedures and guidelines necessary for effective social work practices with adolescents.

Easy availability of social workers at school is a boon to adolescents as it helps them, encourage them to seek the advice and support of social workers at ease, any time during school hours ¹⁵

Purpose of study:

To know what actually are the opinions of teachers dealing with adolescent students at high schools, the present study titled 'Perspectives of Teachers on Need for School Social Work' was conducted. It intends to elicit the opinion about school social work of

teachers who are working in high schools of Bijapur district, a socio economically backward district¹⁶ of Karnataka state.

Aims and objectives:

- 1 To focus on the opinion of teachers about school social work in high schools
- 2 To find out the relationship between gender and subject taught by teachers to their opinion

about the need for school social work

Material and methods :

Study area: Bijapur District

Study design: Cross sectional

Study setting: 30 high schools

Sample size: 162 teachers

Study period: November 2010 to March 2011

Study technique: Questionnaire

Statistical analysis: Percentage

Table No 1 and chi square.

Distribution of Teachers According to Type of School and Opinion about School Social Work

Type of school	Necessary		Not necessary		Not answered		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Govt school	17	(53)	9	(30)	4	(17)	30	(100)
Private unaided	22	(61)	9	(25)	5	(14)	36	(100)
Private aided	61	(63)	31	(33)	4	(04)	96	(100)
Total	100	(100)	49	(100)	13	(100)	162	(100)

$X^2=6.526$

$P=0.163$

No association found

Table No 2

Distribution of Teachers According to Medium of Instruction and Opinion about School Social Work

Medium of Instruction	Necessary		Not necessary		Not answered		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
English	37	(65)	15	(29)	3	(06)	55	(100)
Kannada	47	(71)	14	(23)	4	(06)	65	(100)
Urdu	16	(38)	19	(45)	7	(17)	42	(100)
Total	100		48		14		162	(100)

$X^2=13.228$

$P=0.01$

Association found

Table No 3

Distribution of Teachers' Gender and their Opinion

Gender	Necessary		Not necessary		Not answered		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Male	23	(48)	17	(35)	8	(17)	48	(100)
Female	76	(66)	32	(29)	6	(05)	114	(100)
Total	100	(60)	49	(31)	13	(09)	162	(100)

$X^2=7.324$

$P=0.026$

Association found

Table No 4
Distribution of Teachers According to Their Experience and
Opinion about School Social Work

Experience in years	Necessary		Not necessary		Not answered		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1 -5	25	(61)	12	(29)	04	(10)	41	(100)
5 -10	17	(55)	11	(35)	03	(10)	31	(100)
10 -15	18	(55)	11	(33)	04	(12)	33	(100)
15 -20	12	(71)	04	(24)	01	(6)	17	(100)
20 -25	08	(53)	06	(40)	01	(07)	15	(100)
25 -30	13	(72)	04	(22)	01	(06)	18	(100)
>30	05	(71)	02	(29)	—		07	(100)
Total	98		50		14		162	

$X^2=5.754$ $P=0.9280$ No association found

Results and discussions:

Out of 162 respondents 114 [70%] were male and 48 [30%] females. Among teachers who participated in the study 79 [49%] were from rural schools and 83 [51%] were from urban schools. It is observed that language teachers were maximum 61 [38%] followed by Science teachers 55 [34%], Social science 27 [17%], Sports 13 [8%] and Gk/ Drawing masters / computer teachers were only 6 [4%], 104 [64%] were fulltime permanent teachers and 58 [36%] were temporary/ part-time teachers.

From Table no 1 we infer that among the total 162 teachers maximum were from private aided schools 96 (59%) followed by 36 (22%) private unaided schools and 30 (19%) belonged to government schools

$X^2=6.526$ $P= 0.163$ there is no association between type of school and opinion school social work

In Table no 2 medium of instruction of teachers and their opinion about school social work was analysed. It is found in this study that maximum teachers 65 (40%) were from Kannada medium schools followed by English medium 55 (34%) and Urdu medium teachers were 42 (26%) 71% Kannada medium, 65% English medium and 38% Urdu medium school teachers were of the opinion that school social work is necessary in the schools.

$X^2=13.228$ $P=0.01$ there is association between medium of instruction of teachers and their opinion about school social work

Inference from Table no 3 where gender of teachers and their opinion about school social work was

compared. Among the 162 teachers 114 (70%) were men and 48 (30%) women. 66% male teachers and 48 % female teachers have opined that school social work is necessary in schools. $X^2=7.324$ $P=0.026$ Association is found between gender of teachers and their opinion about school social work.

In Table no 4 experience of teachers and their opinion about school social work is compared. It is found that the highest percentage of teachers 72% who had 25 to 30 yrs of experience felt the need of school social work at schools followed by 71% of teachers who had 15 to 20 years of experience and more than 30 years of experience also felt the need for school social workers. $X^2=5.754$ $P=0.9280$ No significant association was found

between number of years of experience and their opinion about school social work.

Conclusion:

School social work is the need of the hour. There is an urgent need to focus more on the opinion of teachers on issue like school social work. This aspect is one of the most important component of adolescents' growth and development. Thus teachers along with their routine activities just by a simple change in their opinion and rational outlook can bring out proper action which can greatly contribute to the adolescents health and complete wellbeing, .In this way teachers can contribute to the quality of life of adolescents which leads to national development by influencing students, their parents and also community as whole.

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Focus for February 2015

The focus '**Safe Schools**' offers a lot of possibilities for different professionals who are even peripherally involved with schools and school children to share their rich experience regarding the safety aspect of school in which they are professionally involved. Police officials (both Law and Order and Traffic) can think of all the precautions a school has to consider for the safety of children in and near schools during and immediately after school hours. Fire fighters have a lot to say about the fire safety and all the precautions needed for averting another Kumbakonam.

Non-teaching staff of the schools also can share their views on preventing hitherto seen but ignored warning signs of corridor meeting, bullying near toilets, obscene writings in the inner walls of unfrequented places and exchange of 'notes' during lunch hours. Opinion of parents can be gathered too in this regard and if it is consolidated can give a clue to Government to consider making certain precautionary/ safety measures mandatory in every school.

Post-graduate students of social work who have the opportunity to be placed in schools can find out from all professionals and non-professionals involved even peripherally with the school system regarding the global or overall safety net for the school child by informal talks or with semi-structured interview schedule. The wealth of knowledge found can be shared in these pages so that the management will benefit from the rich material which may otherwise be not available. This is only a loud thinking. ~ Ed.