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Documentation on Activities of Child Guidance Centre



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PREFACE

Learning and behaviour problems are on rise among school going children due to unprecedented stresses, changing family structures, increasing pressures for achievement, influence of media, exposure to internet etc. Broadly, these problems arise among children due to lack of information about self and the environment resulting in conflict with self and others. Typical problems of school children show up in the form of aggressive behaviour, depression, attention deficit disorders, excessive tension, memory disorder, scholastic backwardness, learning problems, performance anxiety for exams, withdrawal etc. As per the study of ICMR the prevalence of mental and behaviour disorders among children was 12.8 per cent. The parents of these children especially those who are employed worry about their care and management. Even non working mothers due to other work loads in the house do not spend as much as time as they want with their children.

Children with these problems often need professional help and guidance to overcome their difficulties. However, most of the schools are not technically or professionally equipped to address their problems due to various reasons and limitations. In India there is paucity of services for children with behavioural and learning problems, especially in school setting.

Child Guidance Centre was started at Regional Centre, Lucknow in February 2003 to provide services to children up to 14 years of age having learning and behavioural problems. As a pioneer project it provides assessment and intervention services such as individual counselling, parental counselling, play therapy, remedial education, behaviour management, medical intervention, family therapy and strategies with children and their family through multi disciplinary team consisting of Psychiatrist, Clinical Psychologist, Social Worker and Special Educator. The centre has linkages schools and referral centres to promote child mental health. Besides clinical services, the CGC organizes series of advocacy programs on learning and behavioral problems of children for School Principals, Teachers and Parents. These advocacy programs have received appreciation by School Managements and Principals and they realized that there

is a need for effective counselling and guidance services in school premises to promote child mental health. With these efforts more numbers of children with learning and behavioural problems are being identified. Since it is a unique program in the State of Uttar Pradesh, the present documentation was undertaken to analyze the data of children reported to Child Guidance Centre for initiating counselling and guidance services to children in schools. The findings of the documentation indicate positive impact on promotion of child mental health.

I hope that the findings and recommendations of the documentation would help the policy makers, Government, and educational institutions, voluntary organisations in providing counselling services and setting up of Child Guidance Centres for children having learning and behavioural problems. I would like to record my appreciation of the efforts put up by Dr. V.D.Gadkar, Deputy Director and Principal Investigator of the Project and Ms. Hilda Ferrao, Project Assistant for completing the documentation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Child mental Health in India is noted to be a neglected area. Learning and behavioural problems are on rise now-a-days among school going children due to unprecedented stress, changing family structure, increasing pressure for achievement, influence of mass media etc. Broadly these problems arise for children due to the conflict with self, lack of information about self and environment. Typical problems of school children come up in the form of aggressive behaviour, depression, attention deficit disorders, excessive tension, memory disorders, scholastic backwardness, learning disability, performance anxiety for exams, withdrawal etc. However, most of the schools are not technically or professionally geared up to address the problems of these children due to various reasons and limitations. Children with these problems often need professional guidance and counseling to overcome these difficulties. Since services of Child Guidance centre for assessment and remedial services for children having learning and behavioural problems were non-existent in the city, the Regional centre Lucknow started its Child Guidance Centre in February 2003 to provide services to children up to fourteen years of age having learning and behavioral problems.

Child Guidance Centre is a unique program in the State of Uttar Pradesh. It was, therefore, felt to make documentation of activities of Child Guidance Centre that this documentation may be used by institutions working with children having difficulties in learning and behavioural problems and the counselling and guidance services are made essential services.

Objective of the Project Study

- To analyze cases reported to CGC with various difficulties;
- To document processes involved in assessment, intervention and management of children with difficulties;
- To disseminate the documentation to other organizations working for promotion of child mental health;

Methodology

The present document has been prepared on the basis of cases of children having learning and behavioral problems reported to Child Guidance Centre for assessment and intervention services.

Sample

The samples for the study were taken from the inception of CGC i.e., February 2003 to 2007. In all 372 children were registered, of which 108 were selected through purposive sampling technique who went through complete assessment and intervention services of Psychiatrist, Special Educator, Clinical Psychologist and Social Worker.

Major findings

The major findings that emerged out after analysis of the data, personal observations, interviewing the various stakeholders and discussions with CGC staff were as follows—

- Majority of male children were found with problems in their developmental perspective showing gender difference. This implies that boys are more susceptible to suffer from different problems. One of the major complaints of the parents was that their children were scholastically backward, lacked concentration and therefore needed guidance in CGC.
- In terms of age majority of the children were found belonging to 6 to 14 years and the remaining were above 14 years. This is the period when children are filled with energy and competition and want to do things of their own. These children also needed guidance for healthy development.
- It is also noted that majority of the children were coming from more than 5 kilometres of their residence to CGC for the assessment and intervention.
- Changing trends in social and economic conditions of families have implications on psychological satisfaction of members and children. Majority of the children were belonging to nuclear families.
- Majority of the children belong to the Hindu religion (86%). This is consistent with the proportion of Hindu's population in the country.
- According to income of the family 32.40 per cent of the children were found to belong to upper class, at the same time there were 20.37 per cent of the families belonging to lower middle class. This indicates the impact of the developmental problems on children irrespective of the family types.
- The education status of the parents revealed 52 per cent of the children's fathers and 44 per cent mothers were graduates. This denotes that the children had good educational background in the family for study.

- As per occupational status of children's parents it was found that all children's fathers were engaged in work. May be because of father's occupation they do not give as much time to their children as desired.
- Majority of the mothers were housewives so the mothers could give much of their time for their children, helping them in development and growth, in their studies, listening to their stories, observing daily activities and sharing their own life experiences. Comparing mothers with fathers of children it may be said that formers giving more time to children than their counterparts.
- Separation of parents or loss of a parent is another equally important dimension of child's suffering and stress, depriving the child of love and affection of the other parent. The study indicates that 12.13 per cent children's parents were separated and one child had lost one of his parents.
- Attachment is a biologically based strategy that provides emotional and physical protection for children. The study indicates that all the children were attached with their father or mother where as 18 children (16.66%) were attached to others than parents.
- The study also points out that more than two third of the children were not afraid of anyone in the house and less than one fourth children were afraid of someone in the house. This suggests poor healthy relationship between children and parents and family members.
- Historical studies on the value of children's contribution to their families households demonstrate that children's productive role in pre-industrial households has shifted with industrialization, being defined as useful being. The study indicates majority of children (71.29%) were involved in household works.
- Education is very important for future development of children as well as for the nation as they are the future assets of the nation. Majority of the children (87.96%) were interested to go to school. 13 children (12.4%) were not interested to go to school, these children needed interactive learning.
- Majority of the children have not repeated the grade, where as one third of the children have repeated the grade. Repeating the grade always has a negative effect on performance of the children.
- Relocation to a new school may be stressful, as it demands learning about new school routines and academic standards. Findings reveal that sixty five per cent of children have changed 2 to 5 schools till the time they had come to the CGC. The reason for changing school was due to the long distance, dissatisfaction with the schools and transfer of jobs of their parents.

- In terms of cognitive and motivational problems three fourth of the children (75.92 %) demonstrated poor memory and attention, 69.44 per cent had poor academic performance and 53.70 per cent children were lacking motivation for studies.
- Facilities for children regarding education were not sufficiently available. About 70 per cent children do not have separate room for study. These children's parents did not feel the need of having a separate room for study.
- Tuition is indeed beneficial for certain children who have difficulties in learning and grasping. The study indicates 55 percent children had the facility for the tuition.
- Play is a rite and a quality of mind in engaging with one's worldview. Children's involvement in play with others indicates more than one third children (81.48%) were involved in play where as 20 children (18.61 %) were not involved in play.
- Communication skills facilitate interaction with others. Communication disorders are problems related to the development of these skills. The study indicates two third of children (69.44 %) were receptive and expressive in communication.
- Children and their issues are the first priority in every family. In an ideal family children are loved, cared and their needs are met. The study indicates that majority of the children (73.14 %) were able to manage all the self help skills.
- Socializing with friends and getting involved in activities outside of school are a big part among children. The study indicates majority of the children (90.74 %) were aware of their neighbourhood.
- Socializing with friends and getting involved in activities outside of school are a big part among the children of being socializing with others. The study indicates that two third of the children were friendly with their neighbours as well as with the school environment.
- Milestones are changes in specific physical and mental abilities (such as walking and understanding language) that mark the end of one developmental period and the beginning of another. The study indicates that almost two third of the children (72.22 %) had normal Early Development Milestones.
- People who suffer and have early traumatic experiences and do not have proper upbringing show the effect of family or cultural influences. The data reveals only one third of the children (30.55%) had normal birth and 14

children's (12.96%) mothers had high risk pregnancy, 10 children (9.25%) were kept in incubation, 9 children (8.33%) had illness soon after the birth and 8 children (7.40%) went through the delayed birth, 5 children (4.62%) had Diarrhoea with dehydration.

- Behavioural problems are on the rise nowadays among school going children due to unprecedented stresses, changing family structures, increasing pressure for achievements and influence of mass media etc. The study indicates majority of the children's (83.33%) behaviour was acceptable and 9 children's (8.33%) behaviour was acceptable to some extent and 9 children's (8.33%) behaviour was not acceptable.
- According to common behaviour problems indicates three fourth (35.18%) of the children were found engaged in lying, stealing, truancy and jealousy and 28.78 percent children were restless, disobedience and had poor attention.
- Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations. The study indicates 17.59 per cent children had learning problems and less than one fourth (12.96%) children were slow learners who needed guidance and assistance by professionals for improving learning skills.
- The study indicates that the maximum children had consulted Social Worker and the Psychiatrist followed by Special Educator and Psychologist. This indicates that the services of Social Workers and the Psychiatrists are very essential as they are exclusively involved in counselling.
- The study indicates that majority of the children (87.04%) received guidance at CGC, whereas 14 children (12.96%) were referred to other centres for the services as per their problems.
- According to source of referral to CGC indicates out of 108 children, 50 children were referred by various schools and other children came by various sources, such as self referral, advertisement, doctors / hospitals etc. This points out that there is a need to create awareness among school teachers and principals regarding contribution of child guidance centre for the promotion of positive child mental health. This would help in identifying problems of children at early stage and intervention services could be provided accordingly.
- The study indicates that majority of children had improvement in academics (51.85%) as well as in behaviour (41.66%). This indicates that there was a

need of counselling for children as well for parents for preventing learning and behavioural problems at early stage.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Para Professionals

The team needs to regularize visits to homes, schools, hospitals and referral centres, which requires redefining of Para Professionals roles, which will demand transfer of skills to parents, other Para Professionals in the community, schools etc., rather than delivering all the services directly on their own.

Infrastructure

To create attraction towards the centre more of pictures / posters to be displayed on the notice board.

Group Counselling

Plan to organize group counselling to parents having similar problematic children. This would help parents to be sensitive towards their children.

Outreach Programs

During the year, CGC has conducted 12 orientation programs for teachers and staff on learning and behavioral problems of children. These programs need to be continued and extended to other teachers training institutes, B.ed, M.ed centres, Social Work departments, Psychology department and Hospitals.

Extension work

Today the focus is on development of services in local setting and in establishment of community support systems rather than clinical and institutional models of service delivery mechanism. Therefore, one of the visible strategies to ensure coverage could be to create linkage and integrate services in settings where children are already available i.e. child care programs, schools, juvenile homes, orphanages etc.

Conclusion

Child Guidance Centre is a unique program in the State of Uttar Pradesh. It was therefore, felt to document on activities of Child Guidance Centre for initiating counseling and guidance services to children in schools as essential services so that further this documentation be used for institutions working with children having difficulties in learning and behavioural problems.