

A STUDY OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMMES IN THE SCHOOLS OF DELHI

Researcher: Mohd. Muzahir Ali

Supervisor: Prof. Ilyas Husain

Deptt./Faculty: Educational Studies, Education

Major Findings:

The school social workers operating in private schools of Delhi are performing several tasks like undertaking programmes to enrich the educational inputs of the schools, arranging recreational programmes to provide healthy outlet to children and also to enhance the attracting and holding powers of schools, to provide services in collaboration with voluntary and governmental agencies in order to prevent conditions hindering the interests of their children, organizing staff development programmes to support their role as teachers, initiating parental educational programmes to support their role as facilitators, organizing community related work and family supportive activities, helping children in solving problems especially of absentees and those related to health and poverty, the development school programmes to assist disadvantaged students to make use of schooling, to sensitize the students towards the underprivileged sections of the society, to enable the students to gain from the education imparted in the schools to overcome their personal problems and receive guidance for a future career, identification of hurdles that affect learning and to develop community understanding and support of the school.

The popular image of a school social worker came out to be that of a promoter of social awareness and personnel with skills to deal with the emotional and educational problems of the students. The students today have both the needs stated above. Neither of these can be compromised. However, it seems that although the work of school social workers as promoters of social awareness is appreciated, the second aspect of providing help in overcoming educational and emotional problems of students is gaining more importance. The school social workers normally project themselves as experts in both areas but due to time constraints are unable to do justice to either.

The School Social Workers forwarded quite a few reasons for students' lack of interest in community service programmes. Majority of the students preferred to work in projects which were performed outside school and this preference was found to be significantly associated with the sex of the student. More boys than girls favoured 'out of school' projects. Inadequate or lack of transport facilities for 'out of school' projects was found out to be a major hindrance for limited participation in a particular project.

An important finding of the study is that majority of students tended to discuss their Community Service Programmes related activities with their mothers. There is a general lack of interest and involvement with students work in Community Service Projects among other family members.

Another important finding of the study is that the perception of the role of the functionaries themselves is different from what the principals or head of the schools think their role is. This gains significance because principals are the chief functionaries in the schools and much depend on their understanding of the roles of the functionaries. The school social workers believe that they are trained to take up counselling whereas the principals consider them as experts in community services.

It is very clear from the study that the training of the school social workers does not contribute sufficiently in their preparation to take up counselling work. The training and subsequent in-service training, which is equally important if not more important, do not provide the necessary skills required by the functionaries i.e. school social workers.

It was also found that counselling works done by the school social workers get very little time for effective individual counselling because of their involvement in so many activities and the high pupil-functionary ratio. The pupils have indicated, and they are quiet clear about it, that the one-to-one technique of counselling was quite inhibitive. A need to devise procedures to eliminate the possibility of a stigma/label during the counselling process is also highlighted by the students.

Principals emphasized those goals of Community Service Projects that referred to learning outcomes for students in terms of inculcating service orientation and developing proper social attitudes etc., whereas the School Social Workers response tended to focus more on community oriented goals (service to community).

The study also indicated that students appreciated the manner in which the social workers dealt with them. It is heartening to note that both teachers and pupils acknowledged social workers to be competent and relevant in dealing with problems of adolescents and in providing family life education.

Both teachers and students have given their acceptance of social work programme but the social workers' unique contribution in the implementation of various components of the programme has not fully been recognized. The teachers, on the whole, did not receive social workers in leadership role.

The need for in-service training of the School Social Workers had been felt both by the principals and the school social workers alike. The study also shows that the state of documentation of the work by the School Social Workers is not at all satisfactory.

On the whole, the study shows that the students were more favourably disposed towards Community Service Programme as a whole than the teachers.