

Counseling of Youth: A Study in Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati

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ABSTRACT A Youth Counseling Centre was formed in the Department of Population Studies and Social Work. The purpose of the center was to provide information on the need for counseling for the personal and academic problems of students. This centre had arranged meetings of the students of S.V. University colleges in their Departments. A trained counselor was appointed to counsel the students. The counselor has exposed the students about various personal problems faced by students and remedies to overcome those problems. A questionnaire was given to the students to get a feedback and to assess their personal needs – academic and personal. The students were encouraged to come for counseling for their individual problems, if any in the Department of Population Studies. The students have listed out several problems in the questionnaire. Several students have approached the department for personal counseling in matters of Life Skill Development, Personality development, Stress management and Career planning etc. The findings of the individual questionnaire and personal counseling are discussed in the paper.

INTRODUCTION

Youth in general are at cross-roads regarding their future owing to expectations from parents and the society. In fact, youth are in transition from childhood. Both these stages put a strain on youth. As children they might have got more attention for every small thing from parents. However, parents are wary about their children in teenage. Teenage brings forth several changes both physical and mental. Parents fear that their children may go astray with peer influence and media exposure.

Adolescence is a preparation for worldly life in terms of education, training and employment. Often they are forced to take studies with disinterest. They slowly wean away from the parents and form unions with fellow adolescents and youth. When a third person with knowledge on adolescents and youth problems meets them, they come out with their problems (Rao 1991). Therefore, youth counseling assumes greater importance in schools and colleges (Riddle 1962; Rao 1967)

In this study the experiences of Youth counseling center established in the department of Population Studies and Social Work have been presented.

Major Objectives

The major objectives of the Youth Counseling center are as follows:

- To provide general counseling to students
- To provide life skills
- To provide coping skills in stress situations
- To develop positive thinking about life
- To guide them for career planning
- To develop better communication skills
- To modify the behaviour of youth to take right decisions
- To promote better inter personal communication, adjustment, and right behaviour

METHODOLOGY

A Youth counseling center was established in the department of Population Studies and Social Work, Sri Venkateswara University to counsel the students of seven University Colleges on several issues with the financial assistance from University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi. Entire students of University colleges have been taken as the universe of the study. There are 45 departments in the University Colleges. Due to paucity of time thirty (30) departments have been covered. The Heads of the departments were consulted for fixing the date and time for group counseling. The group counseling was done in their respective classroom situation. Total students covered were 633. One page questionnaire on the need for counseling and opinion on counseling and the nature of their personal problems has been elicited at the end of the session.

The classroom sessions were conducted by a trained counselor. Two more external counselors were also involved in the process. Later on the students have been encouraged to meet the counselors for their personal problems. However, the paper confines the scope for the classroom sessions.

The data was coded and analysed using computer facility. Two and three way tables have been prepared for presentation. However, some of the questions posed by the students in the classroom sessions have been given in verbatim for better understanding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Many faculty members and Heads of the departments have shown concern and interest towards counseling of students. They have immediately accepted the dates and time for counseling classes. Some heads of the departments have followed protocol and some discouraged the efforts.

The group counseling classes have given encouragement for counseling. Some of the science departments have shown interest than other departments. Several questions or enquiries have been made by the respondents in group counseling.

They are:

How to improve memory?

How to share thoughts with parents if they are illiterate?

How to improve their knowledge?

How to tackle postponement of issues?

How to control emotions?

How to plan the career?

How to choose the subject to study in competitive exams?

How to move with students of other departments?

How to choose the right person as a friend?

How to maintain good relationship with friends?

How to concentrate on studies?

How to develop self- confidence?

Some time some students feel anxious moments, particularly to meet a favorite cinema hero, tense moments in cricket, and to meet political leaders. Students desire to know the coping mechanisms for anxious situations. In the following paragraphs the data of the students obtained from the questionnaire has been given

Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

An equal proportion of the sample consists of boys (49.9 percent) and girls (50.1 percent). Median age of the respondents has been 22 for girls and 23 for boys. Science stream of students have accounted for more than half of the sample (56.2 percent). Remaining students belong to Arts (39 percent) and Humanities (4.7 percent). A few of the respondents (3.9 percent) were married. Most of the respondents have expressed their satisfaction for the coverage of topics in counseling. Further, a good proportion of respondents have expressed a desire for more information on several issues (Table 1).

Table 1: Personal characteristics

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	316	49.9
Female	317	50.1
Female (Median age)	22 years	
Male (Median age)	23 years	
<i>Streams</i>		
Science	356	56.2
Arts	247	39
Humanities	30	4.7
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Married	25	3.9
Unmarried	608	96.8
<i>Opinion</i>		
No opinion	15	2.4
Good	533	84.2
Useful	85	13.4
<i>More Information Needed</i>		
No answer	63	10.0
Not necessary	131	20.7
Some information	439	69.4

Information on Specific Problems

Specific Problems: A good proportion of respondents (64 percent) have problems such as academic, personal, positive thinking and career planning. Other issues were: stress management, communication skills, and aspects of personality development. Remaining proportion of students have no problems. However, some of these respondents have come for personal counseling (Table 2).

Around one-fifth (16.2%) of Arts and Humanities students stated that they have personal problems whereas one-tenth (11.2%) of science students expressed the same. On the other hand science students have more (15.7%) academic

Table 2: Specific problem of the respondents

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Communication skills	19	3.0
Personality development	26	4.1
Positive thinking	80	12.6
Stress management	38	6.0
Career planning	70	11.1
No problem	228	36.0
Personnel	85	13.4
Academic	87	13.7
Total	633	100.0

Problems according to stream of study:

issues than Arts and Humanities (11.2%). There were slight differences between Arts & Humanities and science students regarding problems of lack of positive thinking, communication skills, career planning etc. (Table 3).

Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents according to specific problem and study stream

<i>Specific problem of the respondents</i>	<i>Study stream of the respondent</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Arts and Humanities</i>	<i>Science</i>	
Communication skills	11 4.0%	8 2.2%	19 3.0%
Personality development	15 5.4%	11 3.1%	26 4.1%
Lack of positive thinking	38 13.7%	42 11.8%	80 12.6%
Stress	15 5.4%	23 6.5%	38 6.0%
Career planning	30 10.8%	40 11.2%	70 11.1%
No problem	92 33.2%	136 38.2%	228 36.0%
Personal	45 16.2%	40 11.2%	85 13.4%
Academic	31 11.2%	56 15.7%	87 13.7%
Total	277 100.0%	356 100.0%	633 100.0%

- Results are not significant

Sexwise Differentials of Problems

It has been noticed that male students have more personal problems (18 percent) than female students (8.8 percent). However, both men (13.6 per cent) and women (13.9 percent) had similar academic problems. Similar was the case with career planning (male: 11.4 percent and females: 10.7 percent) (Table 4).

Table 4: Specific problem of the respondents according to sex of the respondent

<i>Specific problem of the respondents</i>	<i>Sex of the respondent</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	
Communication skills	13 4.1%	6 1.9%	19 3.0%
Personality development	11 3.5%	15 4.7%	26 4.1%
Positive thinking	46 14.6%	34 10.7%	80 12.6%
Stress management	22 7.0%	16 5.0%	38 6.0%
Career planning	36 11.4%	34 10.7%	70 11.1%
No problem	88 27.8%	140 44.2%	228 36.0%
Personnel	57 18.0%	28 8.8%	85 13.4%
Academic	43 13.6%	44 13.9%	87 13.7%
Total	316 100.0%	317 100.0%	633 100.0%

Opinion about the Counseling Session

Most of the respondents have expressed that these programmes are good. Around one tenth of respondents have expressed that these programmes are useful to all students (Table 5).

Table 5: Percentage of the respondents about the counseling class according to Opinion of the respondent and Study stream of the respondent

<i>Opinion of the respondent</i>	<i>Study stream of the respondent</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Arts and Humanities</i>	<i>Science</i>	
No particular opinion	6 2.2%	9 2.5%	15 2.4%
Good	230 83.0%	303 85.1%	533 84.2%
Useful	41 14.8%	44 12.4%	85 13.4%
Total	277 100.0%	356 100.0%	633 100.0%

CONCLUSION

Students in general are in need of more information of several aspects of personal development. It was desired that these counseling classes may be conducted at the time of choosing a course. Unfortunately career planning activities are seldom available for students at different levels. Further, parents and children need to be exposed to different problems faced by them. In the absence of proper counseling problems are found in the homes as well as in the colleges.

College administrations are not in a position to understand the problems of the students. Hence we see campus unrest all over India.

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