Prospects of School Psychology in India

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India is the second largest country to provide school education to her children. More than 130 million children are in the classrooms. The Government of India is taking several initiatives to educate all her children between the age groups of 6 and 14 years. This paper analytically discusses certain basic issues related to school psychology and its future prospects in India. The major objectives are (i) To explore the international perspectives of school psychology so as to apply it in India, (ii) To examine current research trends in school psychology in India, and (iii) To describe the role of professional organisations in school psychology. To achieve these objectives, the researcher used psychological literatures and the documents on current practices. The analytical discussion encourages that there is a scope for developing school psychology related research in India as a potential major discipline so as to cater to the needs of the children. It also encourages the policy makers, psychologists, parents and teachers to show concern on school psychology.

Keywords: School psychology, School psychologist, School education, InSPA.

In India, school psychology is a new field of study. It has not been widely introduced in the university departments. The University of Pune offers a diploma programme in school psychology. In western countries school psychology is a popular subject of study. It mainly applies principles of clinical psychology and educational psychology to the diagnosis and treatment of children’s behavioural and learning problems. The school psychology is intertwined with issues related to education and psychology of children. As the children grow the role of school psychologists are vital and essential.

Since there is no specific graduate program in school psychology, the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in association with Commonwealth of Learning, Canada offers International Diploma in Guidance and Counselling – a one year Diploma Course for training of professionals in guidance and counselling, combining distance/online and face-to-face modes. The course is open to teachers, teacher educators, educational administrators and untrained guidance personnel from India, Other SAARC, and Afro-Asian countries (NCERT, 2010). This course will train teachers to counsel students regarding different issues e.g. career-related problems, personal, social and value conflicts. It will be based on the ‘teacher-as-counsellor’ model and will be a six month course, including an internship. At present, some schools in the metropolitan cities have counsellors. Government schools have educational vocational guidance counsellors (EVGCs), who are in charge of two to three schools in a district (Banerjee, 2005). In India, school psychologists are generally known as counselling psychologists or counsellors. The psychological services available to schools are extremely limited in relation to the hundreds of thousands of schools spread over the country (Mukhopadhyay, 2005).

Indian School Education

The modern education system in India is largely borrowed from western education.