Social Work Competencies In School Settings: Addressing Adolescent Adjustment Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Social work is a helping profession that has the power to improve people's lives on an individual, family, group, and community level. Increasing society's overall well-being. In order to help students succeed academically, schools, parents, and communities depend on school social workers. They take the initiative in formulating policies for handling crises, providing support services and managing school behaviors. The period of growth and development that comes between childhood and maturity is known as adolescence. The psycho-social stage of development is characterized by increased stress, behavior problems, and conflict. School social workers offer direct and indirect assistance to students, families, and school personnel. The aim of the present research is to study adolescent student's adjustment problems and explore the competencies of social workers in dealing with school-going adolescents' problems, data was collected in shivamogga city with a convenient and purposeful sampling technique with the help of 'The AISS-SS scale, the findings show that most of the adolescent students have problems related to mental health which they can't express and social work competencies were playing an important role in dealing with adolescent mental health and adjustment problems in schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of the profession of social work is to aid communities and young people in overcoming the difficulties they deal with daily. Because social workers work in a wide range of contexts, they are all tasked with improving and developing the lives of people, families, groups, and societies. Together with teachers and other staff members, the school social worker addresses the needs of both groups and individual

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students. A crucial coordination and liaison function between the student, family, school, and community is provided by the school social worker.

Social workers understand that involving diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities is a continuous part of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social professionals recognize the relevance of interpersonal interactions. To facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, social workers must have a thorough understanding of theories of human behavior and the social environment. They must also be able to evaluate and apply this knowledge. Social workers are aware of how to involve a variety of clients and stakeholders to enhance practice effectiveness. Social workers are aware of the implications that personal experiences and affective responses may have on their capacity to interact productively with a range of clients and communities. To support involvement with clients, constituencies, and other professions, social workers embrace the principles of relationship-building and interprofessional collaboration. Adolescence is a time of developmental physical and psychological growth that usually occurs between the menstrual cycle and adolescence. Although adolescence is generally thought of as occurring during the teenage years, its physical, psychological, or cultural expressions can start earlier and last later.

The behavioral process of adjustment is how people and other creatures maintain balance between their numerous wants or between their requirements and the constraints of their circumstances. A series of adjustments starts when a need is perceived and satisfied. Similar to physiological modifications, social and cultural adaptations involve seeking out food when one is hungry and having that need met. Adjustment refers to a continual process through which a person modifies his or her own behavior, attempts to modify the environment, or introduces change in both to establish an appropriate interaction with that environment. Adjustment is, in fact, the harmonious relationship between a person and his or her surroundings (Jha, 2020). In this regard, the social work profession is extending their professional service to school settings for different school-centered problems such as behavior, adjustment, learning difficulties, and many more school-related problems. The study "Social Work Competencies in School Settings: Addressing Adolescent Adjustment Challenges" aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by adolescents in school settings. It aims to enhance the effectiveness of social work practice by examining the specific competencies required of social work professionals to effectively address these challenges. The research will provide valuable insights that can inform evidence-based practices, fostering harmonious development and well-being among adolescents in educational environments.

Professional Social Work

A social worker is a qualified professional who works with a variety of weak individuals, communities, and groups to teach them how to live better lives. People who may be suffering from poverty, discrimination, or other societal issues are often the focus of social workers' efforts.

Every issue of community life, including schools, hospitals, mental health facilities, elderly centers, places of elective office, private doctors, jails, the military, businesses, and so many public and private organizations, employs social workers. The task that is focused on using social work policy and techniques as part of work, process, and procedures in command to achieve social work objectives is known as the social work profession (Pehkonen, 2010). Professionals' social work in all disciplines is a topic for individual or group study. In order to help people help themselves by utilizing scientific techniques, values, skills, and professional ethics in the goal of helping others, the social work profession must be understood based on scientific knowledge and humanitarian thought with strong democratic ideals and principles.

Social Work In School

Immigration, personal challenges, social conditions, and poverty all had an impact on the growth and expansion of educational possibilities for all children and contributed to the emergence of the field of school social work in the 20th century (Allen-Meares, 2006; Agresta, 2004). Social workers sought a specialized role in offering emotional support for troubled children during the Great Depression (1930s), refocusing their earlier commitment to improving unfavourable conditions in the schools and serving as the link between home, school, and community (Hall, 1936). The name "visiting teacher" was then changed to "school social worker" in the 1940s and 1950s, and the profession embraced a more therapeutic and clinical approach for specific students within the schools (Lakshmi, 2014)

According to the School Social Work Association of America (2012): Social work is a specific field of social work that focuses on improving and maintaining students' health and well-being through their psychological adjustment. School social workers are "trained mental health specialists who can assist with mental health difficulties, behavioural concerns, positive behavioural support, academic, and classroom support," (SSWAA, 2012).

The following are just a few of the responsibilities of school social workers: psychosocial assessment and intervention, student and family counselling, behavioral observation assessment, recreational therapies, health education, assessing the social and developmental backgrounds of students with disabilities, identifying students at risk, integrating community resources into schools, advocacy, case management for identifying students in need of help, and to promote systematic change within a school system (SSWAA, 2012).

To assist students who are at risk or have specific needs, school systems employ social workers. According to each school's and district's specific social work policies, different social work roles are played with these students. To assist many schools or to work with a single large population, some school districts employ school social workers. In some districts, the social worker is tasked with working with a particular school or group of people. Social workers are expected to participate in crisis teams by many school districts. Most of the time the school social worker is working with students who have emotional and behavioural problems. As a result, social workers

are frequently employed by school systems in the special education division, where they can only interact with students who are special needs (SSWAA, 2012).

According to the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) School Social Work National Practice Model, the school social worker's responsibilities include:

1. Offering services in education, behaviour, and mental health that are supported by evidence- Research oriented practice

2. Fostering an environment and culture at school that are supportive of outstanding student learning and instruction

3. Maximizing access to community and school-based resources (SSWAA., 2013).

Competence of Social Work

Competence is an accumulation of skills, knowledge and ability of an individual to perform certain roles. Various scholars defined the competency in their own way. Rodriguez defines competence as "competencies are the determinate pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and features needed, which an individual should possess fundamentally to achieve the task (Kathryn Maree, 2017). The capacity and ability to assimilate, connect, and apply social work information, values, and skills to the practice conditions in a decided and professional manner in order to help the community is known as social work competence. The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) acknowledge a thorough perspective and approach in this stand point, 29 where the representation of competence is informed by talent, knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes, including the use of social workers' critical thinking, knowledge skills, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment in particular circumstances. Nine social work skills are listed in the 2015 report from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and EPAS (CSWE, 2008).

Guttman et.all (1988) distribute the competence of a profession in the Social Work field into four different sections which include intellectual, operational and individual and assessment competence. Instrumental-Rational competence speaks about the knowledge and instrumental skills of a Social Worker where he should be conscious of the fundamental values of Social Work along with the capacity to apply practical techniques. Social Skill's mode of operation by people and its comprehension are part of communicative competence (Anne E, 2010). (Guttman, 1988).

School Social Worker's Competencies

Social workers are informed with the profession's basic values, ethical standards, and essential laws and rules that could have an effect on teaching at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers are familiar with ethical decision-making systems and know how to apply critical thinking concepts to such frameworks in the profession, research, and policy sectors. Social workers understand there is a difference between personal and professional principles as well as personal values. They are also aware of the impact personal events and emotional responses have on their behaviour and judgment in the workplace. Social workers are aware of the profession's background, objectives, and duties. When working in inter-professional

teams, social workers are aware of the importance of other professions. Social professionals are committed to lifelong learning and understand its significance.

Social workers are essential to the development of identity because they understand how diversity and differences define and affect the human experience. The intersectionality of various factors, such as but not limited to age, class, colour, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, and expression, marital status, identity, race, religion/spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation, as well as tribal free and independent status, is what is meant by the term "dimensions of diversity." Social workers are aware that due to differences, a person's life experiences might range from power, authority and thank oppression, to poverty, discrimination, and unhappiness. Additionally, social workers realize the extent to which a culture's institutions and values, such as social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, as well as the forms and methods of social injustices.

Problems of High School Students

The same question is regularly raised by students: "When will I ever apply this to real life?" Many students may feel as though the lessons they are learning in school won't ever apply to their lives after graduation. Being successful in high school can result in a great deal of worry and stress around exams, homework, ACT/SAT results, and college applications.

The majority of school work that many students bring home each night over force them. It's discouraging to have to spend additional time on school work after a long day of classes. It is highlighted that participating in extracurricular activities during high school will help college applications stand out. However, if students participate in these activities, they will have less time for studying and assignments. Sometimes it can seem as though awards shows and friendships are the most significant aspects of school, which can cause stress and finally keep students from developing.

In order to get into a decent college, students in high school are under a lot of pressure to do well in their subjects and go above and beyond. It can be difficult for your child to handle this tension, especially if they do not even know how. It might even be challenging to stay up in class when subjects become increasingly complex. It might become difficult to get good scores, especially in classes that students find boring.

Adjustment Problems Among High School Students

Age 16 to 19 years old, in order to evaluate their degree of adjustment in the areas of home, health, social, emotional, and educational, as well as to identify the major causes of adjustment issues in teenagers. Male students were shown to have a better overall adjustment than female students. Both groups' social adjustment was average. The outcomes also showed that female adolescents in various research areas had unsatisfying adjustment. The study's findings were generally believed to be the cause of the teens' adjustment issues. Student adjustment behaviour has a direct impact on academic success. Some factors affect the adjustment in a positive way indirectly. These include the setting of the school, social factors, educational factors,

psychological factors, and adjustment behaviour, all of which are positively correlated. Adjustment refers to a person's response to the demands and expectations of their social environment (Backes EP, 2019).

In response to internal or external demands, the person must act. Clash between a person's different needs or demands presents a unique adjustment difficulty. Adjustment describes active, creative attempts to live well. This calls for developing abilities through interaction with one's environment, achieving some measure of control over one's everyday activities, successfully handling the problems of life, self-awareness, and the capacity to form meaningful opinions about people and environments. The student spends nearly twelve years in school, so the adjustment process begins at home and continues mostly there. When children begin school, their level of adjustment is clear and frequently disturbing. The right environment must be provided for today's children in order to provide them the possibility to develop their adjustment behaviour.

Importance of Study

According to research, hardly one in twenty students receives the essential services despite the fact that between 18 and 20 percent of students have mental health difficulties significant enough to affect major life functions. Untreated mental health problems in students can lead to more serious concerns, which can have a negative impact on their educational experience, lead to subpar academic results, and even lead to dropping out of school (Lakshmi, 2014). Untreated psychological issues in students can lead to more serious concerns, which can have a negative impact on their educational achievements, lead to subpar academic results, and even lead to dropping out of school. According to Mangal (2006) noted that Adolescents need to feel that their teachers accept them socially because if they don't, feel that their teachers might not accept them then their behaviour would be negative towards class, teachers and society also (Jha, 2020).

Adjustment is a problem that affects all cultures, not just one in particular. The entire society is split along cultural, geographic, and economic lines. Adolescent girl pupils in particular deal with a lot of adjustment issues at this era. The development of a nation would be impossible if the youth of that nation were maladjusted. There are high incidents of maladjustment among the students of adolescent group. Hence the study is more significant in the context of national development and countries educational status improvement.

Transformations are required at every stage of life. As a child grows and learns to share, their dependence on their parents gradually reduces. However, as the demand for something grows, envy grows. Hatred, a difficult emotion, develops. Thus, it is necessary to learn the value of adjustment so that a person can become well-adjusted to their present conditions. The key issues are expectations. The more one expects the more one must adjust. Therefore the study is valuable in the following ways: adaptability of an individual in society. Due to the adjustment factor, a person may adjust to any situation.it is important because of the adolescent age is called a transformation age hence we need to understand the problems of the students in the view of social work intervention and implications.

Objectives

1. To study the socio-demographic status of respondents.

2. To study the level of adjustment among high school students to school and the learning environment.

3. To explore the social worker's competencies in school social work.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The present study was carried out in Shivamogga city of Karnataka state, researcher has adopted a descriptive research design and a purposeful and convenient sampling technique used for collecting the primary data. The shivamogga District having 511 high schools where 38,434 girls and 40,353 Boys students were pursuing high school education, hence the researcher collected 40 **s**amples with the help and application of Krejcie & Morgan sampling calculation formula. For the present study, both primary and secondary data were collected. For primary data, the researcher used a standardized toll 'AISS-SS scale developed by A.K.P, Sinha and R.P. Singh and a self-prepared questionnaire with validity and reliability check, the secondary data was collected from various books, journals, reports, articles and internet sources. The collected data were computed and analyzed with the help of SPSS software. In the analysis part personal observation and informal interaction also use in drawing the findings and conclusion. The major limitation of the study is, that study was conducted in only one city hence the findings of the study cannot be generalized.

Table 1. Sample determination

Total High Schools	Government Schools	Private Schools	Aided Schools	Students Strength		
				Boys	Girls	Total
511	41	160	144	40.353	38.434	78.787

Sources: BEO office Shivamogga District.

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3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Aiss	40	44.00	86.00	61.5000	11.27511
Valid N (listwise)	40				

Table 2 shows that there are 40 participants out of which 20 are boys and 20 girls the average score of adjustments is 61.5 with a maximum score of 86 a minimum score of 44 and with a standard deviation of 11.27. It shows that the adjustment problem among the gender is the same there is no such difference between them.

Table 3. Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
aiss	.097	40	.200*	.960	40	.173

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Since Shapiro wilk Test normally shows that the significance value of 0.173 which is greater than 0.05 means the data is normally distributed.

Table 4. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
aiss	Equal variances assumed	.110	.742	-.083	38	.934	-.30000	3.61179	-7.61168	7.01168
	Equal variances not assumed			-.083	37.629	.934	-.30000	3.61179	-7.61405	7.01405

The presented study utilized data from the BEO office in Shivamogga District to investigate adjustment scores among high school students, with a focus on gender differences. Descriptive statistics revealed that among the 40 participants (20 boys and 20 girls), the average adjustment score was 61.5, with a minimum score of 44 and a maximum score of 86. The standard deviation was 11.27, indicating a relatively wide dispersion of scores. Interestingly, the mean scores for boys and girls were comparable, suggesting no significant gender-based differences in adjustment levels

Tests of normality, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk tests, indicated that the adjustment scores followed a normal distribution. The Shapiro-Wilk test, in particular, revealed a significance value of 0.173, which is greater than the conventional threshold of 0.05, supporting the assumption of normality. Further analysis using the independent samples t-test was conducted to assess gender-based differences in adjustment scores. The Levene's test for equality of variances indicated homogeneity of variances (F = 0.110, p = 0.742), allowing for equal variance assumptions in the subsequent t-test. The t-test results showed no significant difference in adjustment scores between boys and girls (t = -0.083, df = 38, p = 0.934).

This lack of significance was consistent even when assuming unequal variances (t = -0.083, df = 37.629, p = 0.934). Notably, the mean difference between boys and girls was found to be negligible (-0.30000), with a wide confidence interval that included zero (-7.61405 to 7.01405).

The findings suggest that, based on the collected data, there is no substantial difference in adjustment scores between boys and girls among high school students. Interestingly, when comparing boys' scores with girls', boys exhibited slightly better adjustment. This outcome may prompt further exploration into potential contributing factors and the role of gender-specific interventions. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of parental guidance in promoting health and adjustment in adolescence, emphasizing the need for a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle practices.

Recommendation

As findings of the study shows that there is no difference between boys and girls in terms of adjustment problems with their school, friends, teachers, sometime school environment and the society too. As it clear that students both boys and girls did not know that adjustment is a psychological problem which may affect immediately or sometime in later in long time, hence it is recommended that every state should have policy under the national policy on education, that given provision for appointing medical social worker, Councellor and their must be a regular class on basic psychological issues along with their regular class, which can create a space for every child to open up their personal and academic issues with their student friendly medical social worker, there must be timely meetings and class with teachers and parents regarding psychological issues of students, teachers play a major role in modification of students behiviour with proper help of their parents but for that collaborative cooperation teachers and parents must be aware and educated regarding children's biological and psychological changes in different stages and they help them to adjust with new changes. Hence that national policy and state polices on education create a space for medical social workers in every school and college level.

There simply isn't an easy answer in every situation. There are times when class material or teachers are boring. Consider this a lesson in how to stay focused and attentive even when your interests are elsewhere. Try to relate the topic to your interests or hobbies if you can. Not every topic will always be interesting learning Encourage your student in finding a balance between academics and extracurricular interests. Your child should be encouraged to join a club or to focus on pursuing individual interests (while still making sure he or she is keeping up with school assignments). Students who have a diverse variety of interests and abilities are more likely to interact with people who share those interests, reducing the demands of popularity in society. Teenagers in India aren't getting enough help because they don't know enough about mental health, can't get to enough schools, and don't have enough community-based services. Teenagers who don't get enough help are more likely to not do well in school and act out, which makes the negative effects of unresolved psychosocial problems even worse. Teenagers in India often have hidden mental health issues that need to be widely recognized and treated right away. Social workers are very important when it comes to dealing with these mental health issues at the

school level. Social workers are better equipped than teachers to understand and deal with a wide range of problems that teens face. The study's results show that there isn't a big difference between how well boys and girls adjust, showing that both sexes have the same problem. But the fact that adjustment problems aren't seen as a psychological problem that affects school performance makes the need for expert help even stronger. For better results, schools should hire social workers to deal with these problems, since social workers are known to be good at dealing with the many problems that teens face. The goal of expanding the study to cover the whole state is to find out how well students from rural and urban areas are adjusting to school and their new learning setting.

Basically, the call for more awareness and strategic hiring of social workers in schools is a proactive way to deal with the mental health and adjustment problems that Indian teens face, which will lead to better personal and academic results in the long run. As a career, social work is very important for helping communities and young people, especially in the complicated world of schools. While the first discussion focuses on the big ideas and principles of social work, it is important to back up these claims with facts and information from the local area. For the schools that are being looked at, it is important to do a thorough study of the local population. To do this, a lot of information about the community's unique traits, culture diversity, and socioeconomic factors must be gathered. This kind of information not only helps us understand the problems teens face more deeply, but it also puts the effects of social work programs in their proper context. Another important part of our study is using quantitative measures to look at academic performance. We can find a clear connection between the skills of social workers and good academic results by looking at things like test scores, graduation rates, and educational achievement. Additionally, a close study of behavior incident reports and disciplinary records in these school settings provides quantified evidence of how well social work reduces behavioral problems. Quantitative data is useful for many things, but emotional data is just as important. In school settings, surveys and interviews with students, parents, teachers, and social workers collect a range of experiences and opinions that give us a better picture of how effective social work programs are thought to be.

To make the study more solid, it will be compared to control groups of schools that don't have active social work interventions. We can show how different social work skills have an effect by comparing behavior problems, academic success, and overall health. Adding longitudinal data that tracks the progress of students who get help from social workers over time will add to the depth of the study even more. This long-term view lets us look at effects that last a long time on a teen's growth. There will also be records of events that social workers started to involve the community. These records show how social workers go above and beyond to help people make friends and get involved in their communities. The whole-person method of social work to mental health is emphasized by combining data on mental health referrals, counseling sessions, and psychological support in school settings. When social work skills are put into practice, trends in student attendance and dropout rates will show how they affect students' motivation and ability to stay in school. Finally, adding testimonials and success stories from students, parents, and teachers will make it more

personal and give real-life examples of how social work programs can help teens and young adults adjust. The study "Social Work Competencies in School Settings: Addressing Adolescent Adjustment Challenges" attempts to give a complete, fact-based picture of the difficulties teens face in school settings by using this wide range of supporting data. The study aims to provide useful information that can be used to create practices that are based on proof and, in the end, help teens grow and be healthy in school settings.

Social Work Implications

Direct involvement and one-to-one assistance with individuals, families, and small groups facing personal and social difficulties are part of micro-level social work. Social workers individual approach such as provide behavioural and case work services at this level. To make sure that actions and services are meeting the needs of the clients, these services may include assessing, planning, monitoring, and evaluating them. Social workers at the micro-level assist their clients in interacting with other social agencies for diagnose the problem like home visit, peer group discussion and collecting data from family and neibhours etc.

Social work at the mezzo level encourages social growth and unity among bigger groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers foster positive interactions between people and their communities at this level. Organizing community groups, teaching classes, and offering group therapy or counselling to people struggling with issues like absenteeism, behavioural problem especially in the group behaviour, substance abuse, chronic illness, and mental health are all things that these experts do. Social workers in Mezzo play a crucial part in creating and assessing the tools and strategies used to address issues and policies that have an impact on entire communities.

The largest idea of social work is macro-level social work. This class of professionals deals with systemic problems affecting local, state, national, and international societies. To develop a thorough grasp of social challenges and choose effective remedies, macro social work uses activism, framing a policy, and research. Macro-level social workers are involved in programme development, policy analysis, social welfare administration, and community-based education programmes. They could also help with legislative processes, budgets, and governmental activities which might be impact on large level, the impact would be indirect and in long terms, it cannot be assess immediately. Hence at school level social workers can play important role in three different level such as Micro, Mezzo and Macro level intervention with suitable social work competencies at schools.

4. CONCLUSION

Adolescents are an underserved demographic in our nation due to a lack of mental health awareness, restricted access to educational opportunities, and other community-based services. The probability of teenage underachievement in school and developing delinquent behaviour is increased by the country's lack of mental health services and the combination of unaddressed psychosocial issues. The

prevalence of these frequently "hidden" mental problems among Indian adolescents must be made more widely known. Hence to address this psychological problems in school level social workers are greatly needed and the Social Workers are the ones who are able to address all Adolescence issues more effectively than teachers.

Adolescence is the stage of life when change happens the fastest and most powerfully, second only to infancy. A child physically develops into an adult during adolescence. The average youngster grows nearly a foot taller and develops adult size, shape, and reproductive status in just four to five years. While stressing the biological processes behind adolescent growth, workshop participants highlighted the importance of social context again and time again. Various ecological, social, and cultural factors affect physical development, and the timing of adolescence is determined by both experience and heredity. The support for this dual influence is growing quickly. The findings of the study is shows that there is no significant difference between boys and girls students in terms of adjustment, both are facing adjustment problem, but there are fail to understand it's kind of psychological problem which affects their educational and other achievements, hence it conclude that schools must appoint social medical workers to address these issues for better results. Further the study will extend to hole state to evaluate the rural and urban students psychological status in adjust with the school and new learning environment.

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