

DOERS TODAY, NATION BUILDERS TOMORROW

The Need for Counselling in Schools



ILLUSTRATION: OISHIK JAWAD

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According to experts, day by day adolescent problem behaviours are increasing harrowingly. Increasing academic pressures, difficulties in adjusting with parents, teachers and peers as well as adjusting themselves in the rapid transition of life are some of the main reasons behind such erratic behavior. In a study on secondary level students of

rural Bangladesh, Morshed and Ahsan found that 21 percent students are either suffering from a type of problem behaviour such as emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity inattention, peer problems or are at risk of having such problems. A study by Rabbani and Hossain (1999) showed that, 13.4 percent of urban primary school children in Dhaka city have been suffering from emotional, conduct and

undifferentiated disorders. Incidents related to mental health and problem behaviour have become very frequent in the daily newspapers of the country. Suicide, vandalism, peer bullying, and absenteeism among school going children are also on the rise.

As education is considered the cornerstone for development of any nation, we wonder – is Bangladesh's education system catering to the moral education

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Families are considered the first and foremost learning institution of children and beside schools, family members play the most important role in shaping a child's future. Unfortunately, the ever changing economic, educational, and cultural systems have led to weaker family ties, especially in urban areas, which is one of the primary reasons why children encounter moral degradation and mental health issues.

Educational institutions are in a position to provide school students with necessary guidelines and tools that would help them realise their full potential and prepare them mentally for the global competition. It is high time that we recognise that traditional schooling system is inadequate and earning only good grades in exams will not help students to cope with the challenges. Addressing family issues is difficult, however, it is possible for schools to create a secure and healthy environment through effective counselling programmes from the very beginning.

Over the last few years, there has been a huge growth of interest in the field of guidance and counselling. This has manifested itself in a number of areas such as health care, family, workplaces, and of course schools. Despite the interest, incorporation of counselling programmes in schools is still a very new idea in Bangladesh and most of the programmes are run with a "same size fits all" idea. Before starting counselling services at schools, the management needs to realise that every child and adolescent is different from one another and so are their problems. Taking a generic approach towards counselling in schools will only be counter-productive.

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