

**ADOLESCENT'S COUNSELLORS DURING POST COVID:  
ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

**A Dissertation submitted to the University of Kerala in partial fulfilment of  
requirements for the Masters of Social Work Degree Examination.**

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## **CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL**

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled “**ADOLESCENT’S COUNSELLORS DURING POST COVID: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**” is a record of genuine work done by **Ms. Angel Antony**, fourth semester Master of Social Work student of this college under my supervision and guidance and that it is hereby approved for submission.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Angel Antony do hereby declare that the Dissertation titled **“ADOLESCENT’S COUNSELLORS DURING POST COVID: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES”** is based on the original work carried out by me and submitted to the University of Kerala during the year 2021-2023 towards partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Masters of Social Work Degree Examination. It has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or other similar title of recognition before.

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## **ABSTRACT**

*India's covid 19 pandemics brought a drastic change in the society. Adolescence is a transitional period, a period where physical and psychological changes occur. During the pandemic period they had to go through a different dimension of covid, due to quarantine and social isolation and various other experiences. Similarly, a counsellor also went through this same physical and psychological challenges.*

*For counselling, it has always been client and their problems focused, but we have never looked through the windows of a counsellor. For a mental health professional, it is their role to provide mental health to common people, but if their mental health is affected it would affect their clinical efficiency.*

*This study is a qualitative study, the data collected with 5 adolescent school counsellors who have experience with counselling adolescents after the pandemic period. The research design is multiple case study.*

*The findings of this research were, the school counsellors had a role of subject teachers. Therefore, the major professional challenges were role conflict, unavailability of resources, time constraints and difficulty in handling cases. Other than these, professional challenges, there were other psychological challenges observed, that is the counsellors observed client characteristics of depression, aggression and anxiety.*

*Therefore, the research topic "Adolescent's counsellors during post covid: Issues and Challenges", focuses on the professional and psychological challenges faced during the post pandemic period.*



# **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

India's covid 19 pandemics brought a drastic change in the society. For adolescents, who are standing at a transitional stage had to go through more of changes which affected them psychologically. In a normal adolescences period, they face many changes during this transitional period. Physical changes are the most observable change in an adolescent. Erik Erikson's theory of psychosexual development suggests that adolescences is a crucial period for identity exploration. They may take up questions like who they are, they experiment different roles, risk taking and decision making become new experiments. Peer relationship becomes the top priority, with the peer groups more of emotional support, experiences, and develop social skills.

The quarantine period made to restrict themselves in the homes and get separated from their family members. During this transitional stage, where they had to give importance for mental health, instead they had to restrict themselves from many things and even had to lose their loved once. They whole dimensions of adolescence period, who should have gone through the track of adolescent development, the track was changed due to the pandemic.

Counsellors are mental health professionals. They experience compassion fatigue due to their empathetical approach as it is a nature of their work. In a normal day to day life, they face a lot of professional and psychological challenges. Just like how physical health is important, mental health is also equally important. For a mental health professional, it is very important to help out the client. There are a lot of professional challenges which affect the counsellors, there will be emotional exhaustions, hours and hours and sessions, can strain personal relationships, and would lead to challenges in maintaining a balance between professional and personal life.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a great change in the behaviour and perceptions of the adolescents. They went through a drastic change physically, socially and mentally.

At the same time, the adolescent counsellors also went through the same changes, therefore their work life was much more stressful. They also had to go through a series of changes in their physical, social and psychological level. It has only been adolescents and their issues, but no one has ever looked through the windows of a counsellors. Especially, their work life and burnouts during covid period. They also have faced a lot of issues and during their ongoing work life they have been facing various challenges.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

### **1.2.1 COVID-19: PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT**

The pandemic period affected the individual's mental health and well-being in a variety of ways, including through social isolation, job loss and financial instability, illness and trauma. During this time period many cases were reported as psychological disorders. There was an increase in the number of depressive, obsessive and anxiety disorder reported, other than these there was a sharp increase in the cases of death due to drug overdose, suicides and alcohol induced death. There are various studies conducted to analyse the psychological impact of COVID-19 among different age categories of people. For everyone, the pandemic brought a drastic change at their psychological level. During the pandemic period, everyone's mental health was deteriorated. Those who were not able to uplift their deteriorating mental health, were fall prey to various psychological disturbances, which causes a severe impact in their social functioning.

### **1.2.2 ADOLESCENTS**

According to WHO "Adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. It is a unique stage of human development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health". It is a transitional period where changes happen at physical and psychological level, and this change would result in their every aspect of life. Especially when crisis situations come across their lives, they face it and overcome it with their perspectives of life. It is an age period where adolescents tend to take decisions on their own, and tries to become independent. Now when certain situation they face, their decisions will be completely based on their experiences of their life. This adolescent period is a transitional period where mental health is extremely important. Adolescence is the most complicated phase of one's life. Adolescents have an important role to play in this society. Today's young generation are the hope, future citizens and leaders of tomorrow. Adolescence time period is a window of opportunity. They face many stages of learning new skills, rational thinking and experiencing unfamiliar emotions.

An adolescent's psychological functioning is designed based on the environment an individual is brought up. It may vary depending on the social environment. As they

cross through this stage, they face many challenges such as academic stress, identity crisis, family conflict, peer pressure, relationship issues, breakups, chances of falling prey to alcohol and drugs world. Adolescence is not an easy period for individuals. Certain physical factors such body weight, acne problems, sudden physical changes in the body can affect the adolescent's psychological health. Teenagers are often confused about their role and are torn between their responsibilities as growing adults and their desires as children (Michelle bowyer, 2023). Peer influence is one of the significant factors that drive adolescents to take up smoking and drinking or to do drugs.

### **1.2.3 ADOLESCENT'S PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT DURING PANDEMIC**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a big change in the adolescents over a period of times. In a recent study conducted shows that, "globally, adolescents of varying backgrounds experience higher rates of anxiety, depression, and stress due to the pandemic. Adolescents also have a higher frequency of using alcohol and cannabis during the COVID-19 pandemic", (Jones, E., Mitra, A., & Bhuiyan, A., , 2021)(Jones, et al 2021). An adolescence period which everyone considers to be a transitional period, were one experiences unfamiliar emotions, reality check ups, crisis situations, coping crisis, were all locked up to another world. A world which had traumas, health issues, poverty, loss of family members, fear of death, which further resulted in anxiety, depression, behavioural changes, addictions and so on. The environment which was created during the pandemic period moulded them to this new version on self.

After the pandemic period when the schools were reopened this new version of self was reflected on them and witnessed by others like parents, teachers and school authorities. During the pandemic period students had to attend online classes, those students who belonged from low financial background were not able to afford to buy smartphones or computers for attending online classes, this affected the academic level after the schools reopened. On the other side, those who had access to phones and computers were fallen prey to screen addiction. "COVID-19 has had an unequal impact on children and adolescents, particularly those from more disadvantaged backgrounds, whose schools were closed for a long period of time, and who lacked support both at home and school," said WHO Regional Director for Europe Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge. This reported stated

that due to the pandemic situation the adolescents had adverse effect on mental, physical activities and school performances. “Adolescents who reported negative impacts on their school performance and relationships with family and friends were more likely to experience poor mental health and well-being, including low life satisfaction and higher levels of psychological and physical health complaints”, (WHO,2023). After the schools reopened a lot of things changed, the adolescents had to travel from a virtual world to a reality world. Many things affected them negatively, which was experienced and witnessed by people.

#### **1.2.4 COUNSELLING**

Counselling, a process which enables people make decisions and act on them. A trained expert who helps people overcome their issues after a systematic chain of sessions. The types of counselling vary, depending on the needs of the clients. Carl Ransom Rogers (January 8, 1902 – February 4, 1987) was an American psychologist, who is considered to be the father of counselling. A counsellor is someone who counsels the client. According to Harriman, “Counselling is the psychotherapeutic relationship in which an individual receives direct help from an adviser or finds an opportunity to release negative feelings and thus clear the way for positive growth in personality.”

There are three aspects of counselling:

- **Process:** It is a process where a time set by the counsellor and the client, to identify the problem affecting the clients, to explore into the problem, emotions and together find better solutions to the affecting problems.
- **Therapy:** a therapy is done when a counsellor examines a client's feelings, experiences and behaviour and helps the client explore into his issues from a different perspective or from a different dimension.
- **A relationship of trust:** It is a type of relationship maintained which is filled with trust and maintained with confidentiality. Whatever the clients speak out to the counsellor, the counsellor is required to maintain this deal of confidentiality.

A counsellor uses different strategies and methods to explore into the problem of the clients and find out better solutions to the problem together with the client.

Counselling process is client-focused. This process would help the client to overcome the challenges and experience new changes in life.

There are different formats through which the counselling sessions takes place, they are:

- **In-Person:** It is a face-to-face counselling session; the counsellor here would enable the client to face the problems of life and make decisions on their own and act on them.
- **Group Counselling:** These sessions would help in addressing the issues and identify them, and would help in developing their network. But if the individual has more personal issues, it's better to go on for an In-person session.
- **Telephonic Sessions:** These sessions are taken where telephone is used as a tool in between the counsellor and the individual. But here a disadvantage is that, expressed emotions can't be seen.

A counsellor needs good number of skills for the counselling. The most important skills are communication skills, which is very important for the counselling, communication skills not only refer to speaking skills it also refers to non-verbal communications, body gestures which shows expression of empathy, love and support. Other than these there are various other skills which are essential for a counsellor. The next skill is empathy skills, which is considered be the utmost important skills for a counsellor. Showing empathy helps a client to build a good trust on the counsellor and would help the client to become transparent towards the counsellor. Other than, these skills there are various other skills required for a counsellor such as, problem solving skills, decision making skills, interpersonal skills, active listening skills and so on.

### **1.2.5 ADOLESCENT'S COUNSELLOR**

Adolescent's counsellors are professionals who have been trained on how to listen to young adults and to address different things an adolescent might be going through.



Here, the adolescent counsellors more focus into assisting behaviour change, enhance coping skills, promote decision making and improve the relationship.

Adolescent's counsellors work at different settings. Some of the counsellors work at institutions such as: rehabilitation centres, psychiatric hospitals, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and educational institutions. School counsellors are licensed professional who work at schools who interact with students in dealing with issues like academic stress, personal life, crisis situation and how to cope up with the situations. There are different views regarding the role of a school counsellor by different authors. According to Bemak 2000, described "school counsellors as being instrumental in the integration of community-wide mental health services". According to House and Martin (1998) said that "the school counsellor plays a powerful role in:

- promoting student advocacy,
- developing higher educational and career aspirations in students,
- eradicating educational practices such as student tracking that inadvertently maintain inequities among disadvantaged student groups and stratify opportunities and
- using data to identify educational practices that may help or hinder student progress".

Here, adolescent counsellors face different challenges in dealing with the issues of adolescents. It is considered to be difficult in dealing with them because adolescence is considered to be a transitional stage. A conflict with surrounding people can be witnessed while dealing with the adolescents. as compared to other adolescent's counsellors, school counsellors are found to be the ones who spend most of the time with the adolescents in school. School counsellors are the ones who observe and witness the changing behaviour patterns of the adolescent. They are the ones who witness their transitional period. Adolescent's counsellor had to go on with lot of challenges and issues on a daily basis, but there was an increase into these issues and challenges once the schools reopened after the pandemic.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

India's covid pandemic which showed a severe impact on people physically as well as psychologically. However, everyone got mentally affected due to pandemic and still affected with it. Adolescents, especially who are in a transitional period where changes happen at physical and psychological level. Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, with an onset that includes pubertal maturation and an offset that is marked by independence from the parent. (Dahl, 2001).

The pandemic brought a great change in their psychological level. COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the mental health and social, emotional, psychological, and educational well-being of adolescents (Golberstein, 2020). During the covid period, adolescent counsellors were engaged with them. Client's issues have been focused, but have never looked into the issues of a counsellors who has gone through the same pandemic period.

This study shows the issues and challenges which the counsellors have faced, their work life and burnouts, and the attitude of adolescents towards these counsellors have changed during the covid period, and ways of handling them. With this ongoing professional life, the counsellors often forget the importance of self-care, which turns to decrease in the quality of mental as well as professional life. A recent systematic review found that relatively high rates of symptoms of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and stress were reported in the mental health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic globally. (Wang C, 2021). School counsellors are especially at risk for harmful levels of stress due to their numerous responsibilities and various roles, and this chronic stress can lead to emotional and physical problems on a personal level (Taryn Akgul, 2021). The school counsellors also had to do other responsibilities assigned to them, therefore it was difficult for the counsellors to handle them. Certain studies showed that school counsellors faced issues like non-availability of adequate resources, lack of time, lack of professional training & skills, heavy work pressure, lack of parental support and support from school administration. After the pandemic when the school reopened the counsellors faced some more of challenges and issues in addition to earlier problems. This time the issues and challenges were not only at the professional level, but also affected at the personal life.

Since the pandemic time brought a drastic change, the personal quality of life and clinical efficiency of the counsellors must have declined to a level. In this study we will be deeply analysing and looking through the windows of a counsellor life.

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The pandemic brought a drastic change in adolescent's lives, more at a psychological level. They had to go through traumas and adapt a new lifestyle. Similarly, the counsellors also had to face traumas and adapt a new lifestyle. In fact, they had to go through a lot as they worked during that time. We had always focused and prioritised on adolescents and their issues, but have never looked into the windows of a counsellors.

This study mainly focuses on the issues and challenges faced by adolescent counsellor during the covid pandemic. This study aims at prioritising the issues of a counsellors, their work life with adolescents, their burnouts, how much it is easy to handle the adolescents, what are the challenges, especially during the COVID period and what all were the challenges and issues faced after the Covid period. This study will focus on them and their issues and challenges faced, so that it will help in uplifting their problems which they faced in life and find ways in improving their situations. The concept of compassion fatigue must have been increased highly during this period. Due to the pandemic situations a drastic change has occurred in the lives of these mental health professionals, they have also gone through these tracks of traumatic situations, exposed to greater traumas and while going through these traumas, an interaction with a distressed client is enough to increase the risk of compassion fatigue in a mental health professional.

This study would help on understanding about the perception about the adolescents from the adolescent counsellors. Even though a counsellor's job is to provide good mental health for the clients, at times they often forget to take care of themselves. this study will help the researcher in finding out the issues and challenges faced by the counsellors, and how it affected them in their personal and professional life. So that in future, if any natural disaster or man-made disaster occurs, the counsellors are able to

handle the situation in a better way without affecting their personal and professional lives. This study specifically focuses on the adolescent school counsellors, as they are the ones who spend most of the time with the counsellors; they are the ones who witness the transitional stage of an adolescent.

Therefore, the research topic- “Adolescent’s counsellors during post covid: Issues and Challenges” focus on finding out possible interventions in dealing with them. This would also help in promoting self-care for the counsellors and also provide innovative strategies in enhancing their mental health.

The upcoming chapters will be dealing about the literature review, methodology, data analysis and findings and at last the conclusion.

## **1.5 CHAPTERIZATION**

The upcoming chapter will be dealing about:

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

CHAPTER 4: Case Description

CHAPTER 5: Thematic Analysis

CHAPTER 6: Findings, Suggestion

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

Bibliography

Annexure

## **CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

## **2.1 OVERVIEW**

Review of literature is a key step in the research process. Review of literature refers to an extensive, exhaustive and systematic analysis of publications relevant to the research topic. This would help to get a basic idea of a problem, and would help in future investigation and justify the need for replication.

## **2.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Deolmi, m., & Pisani, F. (2020), A study on “Psychological and Psychiatric impact of COVID-19 pandemic among children and adolescents”. The study shows the statistical data collected and analysed from different countries regarding the mental health during the pandemic. Each data showed a moderate level of depression and anxiety among the adolescents. Even addictive and thought disorders also developed. Results showed that, during COVID-19 pandemic, feeling of fear, nervousness, sadness and anxiety are higher in quarantined adolescents. It shows the interventions required.

A study which was conducted by, Moore et al. (2020), “Stress and resilience among professional counsellors during the COVID-19 pandemic”. Shows among a sample of 13 counsellors and identified client characteristics (i.e., Unpredictability, manipulative and impulsive), relationship Dynamics (i.e., Countertransference, intensity, and counsellor-client match). Professional counsellors must be prepared to support clients, especially those who face greater burdens and exacerbated mental health distress and are experiencing the compounding effects of social isolation; navigating the realities of living through a global health crisis; and addressing concerns related to mass unemployment, fear of illness, economic recession (Golberstein et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2020; Torales et al., 2020), and suicide (Thakur & Jain, 2020). Additional studies have linked increased counsellor stress and burnout to countertransference management (Choi et al., 2014), ethical dilemmas (Henderson, 2013; Mullen et al., 2017), negative counselling experiences, and professional self-doubt (Zeeck et al., 2012). Providing disaster mental health counselling may also increase counsellor stress in ways that contribute to empathic occupational hazards.

*Burnout* refers to a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by ongoing involvement in emotionally demanding occupational situations (Pines & Aronsin, 1988). Whereas compassion fatigue is characterized by feelings of deep

empathy and sorrow for those who suffer (Stamm, 2002), burnout refers to the overall diminished capacity to care (Rossi et al., 2012).

Wardle, E., & Mayorga, M. (2016), A study on “Burnouts among the counselling profession: A survey of future professional”. This study focuses on obtaining results on possible indicators of burnouts, from students who are at master’s level in counselling. The results showed that the students have some level of indication that burnout is something they should be aware and pay attention to, or they are at situations which are threatening to their physical and mental well-being. Current and future professional counsellors face many challenges because of the nature of the work and the role expectations of the counselling professional (Yu, Lee, & Nesbit, 2008). Professional counsellors find themselves working in different settings such as non-profit agencies with limited funding or mandated short-term counselling (Osborn, 2004). These settings can create mental and emotional challenges for the counsellor as they strive to accommodate the number of mental health clients with a range of diagnoses seeking help (Evans & Villavisanis, 1997).

Turgoose, D., & Maddox, L. (2017) A study on “predictors of compassion fatigue in mental health professionals”. This study focuses on the, professionals who are working in mental health settings are at risk of developing compassion fatigue, which is described as negative effects of working in a psychological distressing environment on a person’s ability to feel compassion for others. Results showed the professionals with personal history of trauma may be more vulnerable to secondary traumatic stress reactions because of their potential reactivation of traumatic memories and elicitation of immense empathetic responses.

A resulting investigation and report highlighted how a lack of compassion had led to serious failings (Francis, 2013). In response to this investigation, the government recommended that compassion should be at the forefront of effective health care (Department of Health, 2013). However, studies have suggested that compassion fatigue can occur in a range of mental health professionals and settings, such as psychologists (Aukštinaitytė & Zajanc̆kauskaitė - Staskevič̆ienė, 2010), psychiatric nurses in forensic units (Lauvrud, Nonstad, & Palmstierna, 2009), trauma therapists (Killian, 2008), mental health counselors (Thompson, Amatea, & Thompson, 2014), and telephone counsellors (O’Sullivan & Whelan, 2011). Clinical social workers in the



United States, who often carry out therapy, can also be at risk of compassion fatigue (Thomas & Otis, 2010).

Bradley, N., Whisenhunt, J., Adamson, N., & Kress, V., (2014) A study on “creative approaches for promoting counsellor self-care”. This study focuses in the importance of self-care among the counselling professionals, which would help in bringing quality in personal life as well as clinical efficacy. This article also tells, promoting different strategies for self-care, some of the creative strategies which were used are “little changes are a big deal”, “every plant needs water” and “scrapbook journaling”.

The therapeutic use of creativity can take multiple forms, including art, drama, movement, music, play, poetry, writing, and sandtray (Malchiodi, 2005). Although no single definition or operationalization for creativity in counselling exists, Duffey et al. (2009) described creativity in counselling as a process that requires authenticity and an openness to think in novel ways, encourages unrestricted expression, and facilitates deeper connections with self and others. Solution-focused brief therapy techniques (De Shazer, Dolan, Korman, Trepper, & McCollum, 2007) might also be used to help counsellors identify what they need to be doing to take care of themselves. Self-awareness and self-reflection are requisite to counsellors monitoring their well-being (Richards et al., 2010). One way for counsellors to reflect and monitor their well-being is through journaling, which has been shown to be therapeutic in the clinical setting (Utley & Garza, 2011).

Khanda, S., (2018) A study on “Challenges faced by teacher counsellor of secondary school in the smart city Bhubaneswar, Odisha”. This article focuses on the challenges faced by teacher counsellor of secondary school. The study found that teacher counsellors were facing many challenges like non-availability of adequate resources, lack of time, lack of professional training and skills, heavy work pressure, lack of parental support and support from school administration. The article based on the above findings, recommended that a full-time counsellor is required at each school, the school management should provide minimum basic requirement.

School counselling services have seemed to have appeared like a blessing to the students to cope up with the increased stress and strain. These special services contribute a lot towards maintaining the mental health of the younger generation (Sharma, 2013). The school management and authorities faced different problems like

handling aggressive children, handling hyperactive children, bullying nature of children handling children with special needs, handling disobedience, drug abuse, stealing, child abuse, and aggressiveness etc. (Affulo, 2005). It raises a big question on the effective functioning of counsellors in school.

Adimula (1988) supported the view of Achebe and said that some teachers as well as principals believed that the counselling services provided by counsellors are meaningless and unnecessary for students. Findings of Chireshe was supported by Ondima et al., (2012) showing that counsellors were overburdened with teaching duties and were not getting sufficient time to devote guidance and counselling services.

Pincus, R., Wright, L., & Justice, J. (2020). A study on “COVID-19’s Effect on Students: How School Counsellors Rise to the Rescue”. This study focuses on how school counsellors can be used to obtain a better understanding of the social and emotional effects of COVID-19 by collaborating with administrators to emphasize using school counsellors as a mental health provider in schools. School counsellors are in an ideal position to educate students and stakeholders about risks and warning signs of suicide, influencing school culture to improve the lives of vulnerable students, and referring potentially suicidal students to additional professional help (Gallo, 2017). A positive school climate is cultivated by school counsellors’ trusting relationships with students, staff, and administration. Austin et al. (2016) noted that a positive school climate promotes school safety by school counsellors collaborating with school principals to identify students suffering from mental health illness. During and after the pandemic, school counsellors may be the only source of mental health counselling in school buildings, assisting students with their social emotional needs (ASCA, 2016; Donohue et al., 2015; Springer et al., 2020).

Jackson-Cherry and Erford (2018) listed several ways in which school counsellors use their expertise in crisis management to facilitate a safe learning environment. Fein et al. (2008) noted school counsellors are trained in forms of person-centered, narrative, and family systems’ counselling that could assist students struggling when dealing with COVID-19 issues.

Akgul, T., Brown, J., & Karch, L., (2012). A study on “The personal and professional impact of COVID-19 on school counsellors: An exploratory study”. This article focuses on how Covid 19 impacted school counsellor roles, their personal lives, and how they

coped with the impact of COVID 19 on their personal and professional lives. School counsellors often identify mental health concerns before families due to the amount of time students spend in school (Pincus et al., 2020). According to Farmer et al. (2003), 70% of the mental health care received by children and adolescents takes place in the school. . School counsellors are often assigned a plethora of non-counselling related duties which include test coordination, scheduling, discipline, maintaining records, and administrative tasks (Chandler et al., 2018; 6 2019). School counsellors must often split their time between counselling and non-counselling related duties, which takes time away from more appropriate counselling activities (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). According to role theory, Ivey and Robin (1966) assert that “Role conflict occurs in a situation in which there is a systematic difficulty involved in assuming, maintaining a role, or functioning in a role situation” (p. 30). There are several factors that contribute to role conflict in school counsellors (Freeman & Coll, 1997).

School counsellors are especially at risk for harmful levels of stress due to their numerous responsibilities and various roles, and this chronic stress can lead to emotional and physical problems on a personal level (McCarthy et al., 2010). Experiencing stress over an extensive period of time can lead to emotional and physical health problems, burnout, and increases the likelihood of leaving the profession (Mullen & Gutierrez, 2016). Mullen et al. (2018) found a strong correlation between perceived stress and burnout in school counsellors, “When school counsellors experience greater stress, they are likely to experience greater burnout” (p. 5).

Heled, E., & Davidovitch, N., (2021). A study on “School Counselling During the COVID-19 Crisis—From Crisis to Growth”. The study focuses on school counsellors in Israel, the structure of their work before and during the COVID crisis, and conclusions for the profession’s future. Heled and Davidovich (2020) found that the counsellors complained about an insufferable, suffocating workload that continually exceeds their work hours. Due to the heavy workload, they do not manage to reach students who need them; rather only what they called students on edge in urgent cases such as suicidal statements, severe violent incidents, or dropouts.

Studies have shown that consulting with colleagues and their support moderate pressure and burnout among counsellors (Heled & Davidovich, 2020; McCarthy, Kerne, Calfa, Lambert, counsellors found that consulting with colleagues was perceived by

counsellors as a factor that curbs pressure in their work (Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, & Solomon, 2005). Also, Savitz-Romer and colleagues (2020) suggested that it is necessary to increase guidance and support to meet the specific needs of counsellors. Since the pandemic intensified trauma, sorrow, and isolation, counsellors might need explicit training in these areas.

Situmorang, D., (2020). A study on “Online/Cyber Counselling Services in the COVID-19 Outbreak: Are They Really New?”. This article focuses on to explore the use of online/cyber counselling during the COVID-19 outbreak to solve psychological problems. Online/cyber counselees/clients frequently converse more unreservedly when they feel they are in a secure, non-judgmental environment and habitually make more profound revelations to the pastoral/spiritual counsellor or psychologist, and disclose their problems sooner than they might in a face-to-face session (King et al., 2006; Goss & Anthony, 2004; Reynolds et al., 2006; Suler, 2004). . Freud and Morita connected with counselees/clients regarding the side effects and treatments (Barnett, 2005; France et al., 1995). The revelation of their problems may be increased by the sense of privacy that counselees/clients may experience by not being physically seen or by not having to disclose their character (Cartreine et al., 2010).

Karibeeran. S., Anjali., Kumar. A., Babu. A., Cipla. C., Hemalatha. P., Krishna. J., (2020). A study on “Mental Health Status of Indian population during Covid19 outbreak”. This study focuses on anxiety and stress disorder during COVID:19 among the common people. This study was conducted by evaluating the mental health status of the people using PHQ-9 and GAD-7. The result of the study showed that, female and higher level of depression as compared to male. It is not just the only case in depression but also at the level of anxiety female are at the top. “There are few studies which showed that major depression is higher among women than in men” (Cyranowski, Frank, Young, & Shear, 2000; Ford & Erlinger, 2004). The study also revealed that, the women from urban areas suffered more level of anxiety and stress as compared to rural areas.

Maris. J., Christopher. J., (2010). A study on “Integrating mindfulness as self-care into counselling and psychotherapy training”. This article focuses on the possible ways of applying mindfulness in the training of counsellors and psychotherapist. This article explains about the importance of mindfulness training, and best way of practicing self-

care. This practice would prevent burnouts, stress and compassion fatigue during the sessions.

The study also told that “Mindfulness is of interest to practitioners from almost all theoretical orientations from psychoanalysis to cognitive behavioural therapy and is central to such approaches as mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002), dialectical behavioural therapy (Linehan, 1993), acceptance and commitment therapy (Hayes, Follette, & Linehan, 2004), self-compassion training (Germer, 2009), and Hakomi therapy (Kurtz, 1990)”. This study resulted that the practice of mindfulness training can enhance the psychological well-being of counsellors. This study focuses on giving more importance to the self-care practice.

Belen. V., Valeria. J., Arrieta. G., (2021). A study “Counselling Challenges in the New Normal: Inputs for Quality Guidance and Counselling Program”. This study focuses on the issues and challenges faced by guidance counsellors in providing counselling services to students during the pandemic period. The study resulted in finding mental health issues among the students and unstable internet connection as a primary concern. The study also said “Online counselling programs are often viewed as less effective due to the lack of face-to-face interaction (Villarreal-Davis, Sartor, & McLean, 2020)”.

The study also mentioned “As the modern school environment grows in complexity through high-stakes testing, state and federal standards, and district report cards and evaluations, professional school counsellor roles are increasingly being re-directed to duties further away from the important mission of recognizing and addressing the mental health needs of students” (Neyland-Brown, Francis & Burns, 2019). The study final result mentioned that counsellors are also human beings, they may also experience compassion fatigue, stress, burnouts and emotional stress as they help out the students.

A study revealed that “educating for mindfulness strategies, self-awareness, and communication skills also may be helpful for school counsellors. Providing a supportive environment and acknowledging school counsellors’ work may help them increase their sense of matter in their workplace” (Kim & Lambie, 2018). Here, “A similar study revealed that some perceived challenges on the delivery of distance learning, and the number one on the list is internet connection/ connectivity” (Asio & Bayucca, 2021). The end of the study concluded that online counselling services are

not easy and there are various challenges in various other coping strategies to deal with counselling challenges by the beginning of school year 2021-2022.

Gunduz, B., (2012). A study on “Self-Efficacy and Burnout in Professional School Counselors”. This article focuses on the relationship between self-efficacy and burnouts among school counsellors. The study mentioned that “self-efficacy beliefs of school psychological counsellors are defined as their judgments on their capabilities to provide psychological counselling and guiding service to students and other people related to students in an effective manner (Friedlander, Keller, Peca-Baker, & Olk, 1986; Larson & Daniels, 1998; Larson et al., 1992; Sharpley & Ridway, 1993)”.

According to Larson and Daniels, “the mechanism of counselling self-efficacy beliefs accepted as a creative skill helps school counsellors use their existing cognitive, behavioural and social skills by integrating these skills with their roles as counsellors”. In this study, some other studies mentioned “that people with high levels of self-efficacy beliefs address more easily changes and difficulties arising from these changes (Hill, Smith, & Mann, 1987; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1987; Nease, Mudgett, & Quinones, 1999)”. According to Freudenberger (1974), “people who suffer burnout are idealists who exert efforts to reach their goals and do more than pulling their weights. From a similar point of view, school counsellors are professionals who are highly motivated, willing, talented and creative to help students. However, these characteristics trigger school counsellors’ suffering burnout as they are to meet demands at emotional, physical and mental levels (Cummings & Nall, 1983 cited in Kesler, 1990). As a result, counsellors may have decreased confidence in their skills and self-efficacies thus eroding their talents and competencies (Crutchfield & Borders, 1997)”.

The result of this study revealed that those counsellors who have more of social support lack in suffering from burnouts. The findings of this study also mentioned that it is totally based on the perception of profession. For a counsellor, it is based on his/her perception how to see profession. It differs from person to person. According to results of this study, “counsellors who cannot receive any social support suffer higher level of burnout, in parallel with numerous findings of other studies revealing the importance of social support in burnout (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Baysal, 1995; Cheuk & Sai, 1995; Çam, 1991; Girgin, 1995; Gözüm, 1996; Ok, 2002; Russel, Altmaier, & Van Velzen,

1987)”. The result of the study also mentioned that those school counsellor who see jobs as a positive are considered to be more self-efficient and less burned out.

Bryant. R., Constantine. M., (2005). A study on “Multiple Role Balance, Job Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction in Women School Counselors”. This study focuses on the multiple role balance, job satisfaction and unique work life experience of women school counsellors. This study mentioned that “Role balance theory acknowledges that different roles might come into conflict with each other, but women’s ability to adjust their entire system of roles to accommodate potential conflicts will likely produce more rewarding results (Marks & MacDermid, 1996)”. It also says “the potential multiple role balance issues that women school counsellors could face within the context of their jobs might not only relate to their perceived levels of job satisfaction (Duffus, 1998), but also may permeate to broader role balance issues within their personal lives (Moen & Yu, 2000)”.

In the present study it says that “it is possible that specific job characteristics of school counsellors—such as having a strong sense of personal control, experiencing role quality across various professional and personal roles, and having some professional autonomy— may be related to women school counsellors’ job satisfaction, because such characteristics generally have been shown to be positively related to life satisfaction in other professional women (Tangri, Thomas, Mednick, & Lee, 2003; Yoder, 2003)”. The study also mentions the implications for counsellor self-care. “In 1990, ASCA first published role statements for elementary, middle, and secondary school counsellors, and it continues to develop current iterations of counsellor role statements that codify and strengthen school counsellors’ abilities to define and maintain more consistent job roles”. Engaging in social activities, and gathering would help a women counsellor to enhance self-care.

Falls. L., Nichter. M., (2007). A study on “The Voices of High School Counselors: Lived Experience of Job Stress”. This study focuses on the experiences of job stress, from the own voices of high school counsellors. The study mentions that earlier “ Situations involving high external demands and low perceived control and support lead to job stress, and chronic job stress can lead to burnout (Karasek, 1979; Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Sauter & Murphy, 1995; Van der Doef & Maes, 1999). Evidence has suggested school counsellors regularly experience situations of high demand and low

control, due to the complex and diverse nature of the work they perform and the populations with which they work (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Bluestein, 2001; Borders, 2002; Casey-Cannon, Hayward, & Gowen, 2001; Constantine & Gainor, 2001; Dahir, Sheldon, & Valiga, 1998; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Israelashvili, 1998; Mullis & Edwards, 2001; Parr, Montgomery, & DeBell, 1998; Rowley, Sink, & Macdonald, 2002; Sandhu & Aspy, 2000)”.

It is also said that, “school counsellors often experience a lack of support and a general feeling of low self-efficacy due to role ambiguity, role conflicts, and work overload (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, & Solomon, 2005; Davis & Garrett, 1998; Herr, 2002; Sears & Granello, 2002; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). These chronically stressful situations lead to school counsellors who are at risk for job stress, a precursor to burnout (Herlihy, Gray, & McCollum, 2002; Paisley & McMahan, 2001; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006)”.

The study resulted said that, school counsellors experienced role conflict as they were given various other jobs and also had time constraints as they experienced job overload. The study also mentioned that “Role ambiguity is an incomplete sort of role sending, where the information necessary to carry out one’s job is not available or incomplete” (Thompson & Powers, 1983, p. 239). The qualitative study also focused on giving priority to the population they serve, as the negative affects would affect the population, whom the counsellors are providing services.

Blake. M., (2020). A study on “Other Duties as Assigned: The Ambiguous Role of the High School Counselor”. This study focuses on the role conflict faced among the high school counsellors, as there are high workload and their job description is not clear. “In the 1980s, a burst of professionalization led to the creation of counselling education standards and the Council for Accreditation of Counselling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) through the ACA (Schweiger et al. 2011). In more recent years, the profession has grown and expanded past vocational guidance; counsellors with master’s degrees in school counselling or a related field now provide social/emotional, academic, and postsecondary counselling to students in all grade levels (CACREP 2018)”. “Role ambiguity is characterized by vague, incomplete, or inconsistent information or expectations regarding role responsibilities, how these responsibilities should be met, and how they will be evaluated (Biddle 1986; Freeman and Coll 1997;



Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman 1970)”. The study resulted that “The lack of a clearly defined role, and discrepancies with their graduate training, led Ash view counsellors to experience contradictions in their work roles, goals, and expectations (Herr 2002; Lipsky 2010)”.

This study also resulted that “in addition to role ambiguity, school counsellors also had multiple roles they were expected to embody that were in conflict with each other, creating role conflict (Freeman and Coll 1997). School counsellors answer to a diverse group of stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, school and district administrators, counsellor educators, and community members. Each group has different expectations for counsellors, and these expectations sometimes conflict and affect how the school counsellor’s role is defined and implemented (Freeman and Coll 1997; Paisley and McMahan 2001; Rizzo et al. 1970; Van Sell et al. 1981)”.

Especially this study revealed that “much of counsellors’ role conflict came from the discrepancy between the expectations they originally had of the job versus what reality actually looked like (Freeman and Coll 1997)”. This role conflict happened due to unique way of counselling style as the school organizes.

Freeman. B., Coll. K., (2017). A study on “role conflict among elementary school counsellors: a national comparison with middle and secondary school counsellors”. This study focuses on the role conflict which happens between the school counsellors of elementary and middle school counsellors. “According to Rizzo, House, an Lirtzman (1970) and Schuler, Aldag, and Brief (1977), the Role Questa naira specifically measures role conflict related to internal standards, ternal expectations, heavy role demands, conflicting responsibilities, incompatible requests from others. Construct validity and reliability for t Role Questionnaire has been supported across various samples (Rizzo et 1970; Schuler et al., 1977; House & Schul, 1983)”.

The article also mentioned that “School counsellors struggle with role conflict, which is apparent of the many conflicting demands currently placed upon them. counsellors report much higher role conflict than, for example, community college counsellors (Coll & Rice, 1993)”. Hardesty and Dillard (1994), elementary school co need to take proactive steps to solidify their role in schools a study notes, to protect themselves from such consequences as bur turnover, and job dissatisfaction”.

Bain. S., (2012). A study on “School counsellors: a review of contemporary issues”. Ringeisen, Henderson, and Hoagwood (2003) declared that schools are a key factor in the delivery of mental health services to students. School counsellors are at the forefront of working with students suffering from mental health issues. For many school counsellors, the never-ending demands to be guidance counsellor, school administrator, extra-curricular organizer, and mental health expert have produced an incredible amount of stress”.

McCarthy, Kerne, Calfa, Lambert, and Guzman (2010) conducted a survey of the demands on school counsellors and the effect of those demands on stress perception. Although most of the counsellors interviewed found the school counselling career very rewarding, many of their numbers had been impacted by emotional and physical exhaustion as well as burnout”.

Hanson. M., Grier. T., Skovholt. T., (2001). A study on “Career Counselling for Longevity: Self-Care and Burnout Prevention Strategies for Counselor Resilience”. This study focuses on the developing self-care strategies while prolonging their professional longevity. “For counsellors, self-awareness may be particularly important regarding interpersonal style. For example, many people attracted to the helping professions receive validation and admiration for their helping attempts early in life (Grosch & Olsen, 1994)”. “Heightening self-awareness is equally useful to preventing professional stagnation and is a strongly emphasized value in a variety of high touch professions. Introspection is a frequently endorsed method of developing self-awareness, increasing personal maturity, and enhancing professional effectiveness. (Hanson, 2001)”. This study focuses on the model of recognizing hazards of “high touch” work, such as availability of limited resources.

The earlier studies shows that the, issues and challenges faced by counsellors. Their professional challenges and psychologically challenges are more specifically mentioned. The review of literature also shows the various professional challenges faced by counsellors such as, role conflict, lack of availability of resources, time constraints, and various other challenges faced during the COVID pandemic period. Other than these professional challenges, various psychological challenges are also

specifically mentions such as mental health issues among counsellors, stress, burnouts, depression, compassion fatigue, and emotional exhaustion.

Other than these issues and challenges, studies also show coping strategies and methods for self-care.

# **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Methodology is the most important part of the study, which enables the researcher to form blue print of the research undertaken. Research methodology involves the systematic procedure by which the researcher starts from the time of initial identification of the problem to its final conclusion.

The present study was aimed at understanding the issues and challenges faced by adolescent's counsellor during the post covid period.

This chapter involves the research title, research questions, conceptual definitions, research approach, research design, sampling population, sampling techniques, criteria of selection of sample, sample size, pre-test, data collection and ethical consideration.

### **3.2 RESEARCH TITLE**

The title of the study is “**ADOLESCENT’S COUNSELLORS DURING POST COVID: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**”.

### **3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- **GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS**
  - What are the challenges faced by adolescent's school counsellors during post COVID- 19.
- **SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS**
  - To know the socio-demographic profile of the participants.
  - What are the professional challenges faced by counsellors in dealing with emerging issues of adolescents during the post covid period?
  - What are the psychological challenges faced by adolescent school counsellors?
  - To determine the coping strategies of adolescent school counsellor.

### **3.4 CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION**

#### **3.4.1 ADOLESCENTS**

- **Conceptual:** The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) defines an adolescent as any person between ages 10 and 19.

- **Operational:** In this study adolescents are those young school going students between the age category of 12 to 18.

### 3.4.2 COUNSELLOR

- **Conceptual:** Someone whose job is to give advice and help to people with problems (MacMillan Dictionary).
- **Operational:** In this study counsellor are those trained professionals, who enable the young minds to make choices and act on them. In this study the adolescent counsellors are also termed as school counsellors.

### 3.4.3 CHALLENGES

- **Conceptual:** The situation of being faced with something that needs great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully and therefore tests a person's ability (Cambridge dictionary).
- **Operational:** In this study the challenges are the professional and psychological problems which the adolescent counsellors faced in dealing with emerging issues of adolescent during the post Covid period.

## 3.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

Research approach is the most significant part of any research. The appropriate choice of the research approach depends on the purpose of the research study which was undertaken. This study uses **Qualitative Approach**.

## 3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design provides the backbone structure of the study. It determines how the study will be organized. The research design adopted for the study was **Multiple Case Study**. The aim for selecting this design was get an in-depth knowledge about the challenges and issues faced by the counsellors.

## 3.7 SAMPLING POPULATION

A population is a group whose members possess specific attributes that a researcher is interested in studying.

A target population is a group of population that the researcher has to study and to whom the study findings will be generalized. The population for this study were **Adolescent's School Counsellor**.

### **3.8 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

A sampling technique is a process of selecting a portion of the population to obtain data regarding a problem.

**Convenient Sampling** method was considered best to select the sample for the study. This method was taken due to geographical proximity, availability of time, and willingness to participate in the research.

### **3.9 CRITERIA OF SAMPLE**

- **INCLUSION CRITERIA**

- Adolescent school counsellors were selected as samples for this study.
- Counsellors with counselling experience with adolescent after the COVID pandemic.

- **EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

- Adolescent's counsellor from private institutions other than educational institutions.

### **3.10 SAMPLE SIZE**

Based on the criteria, **5 adolescent school counsellors** were selected as the sample for the present study.

### **3.11 PRE-TEST**

The pre-test was done by collecting the information from 4 school counsellors. A semi structured interview guide consisting of 8 questions and demographic details were asked. The researcher collected the data from the participant through face-to-face interview. Based on the pretest, modifications to the tool were made and after that the tool was finalized.

### **3.12 DATA COLLECTION**

The data was collected from **5 school counsellors**. A **semi-structured interview guide** was used as a tool. The data was collected by conducting a **face-to-face interview**. The researcher visited each school for data collection and interacted with the school counsellors, and got to know and get an in-depth idea about the challenges and issues which they faced during the post covid period.

### **3.13 DATA ANALYSIS**

- The data collected was analysed on the basis of different themes using the data collected from participants and categorized under definite sub themes. The researcher tried to identify, analyse and interpret qualitative data patterns. The data analysis is done through **Thematic analysis**.

### **3.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

- A permission letter was obtained from the principal of the researcher's institution for data collection.
- A prior permission was obtained from the principal of the school, before interviewing the school counsellor.
- An informed consent was obtained from all the participants prior to data collection after informing them about the study and the purpose of the study.
- The participants were assured that the collected data will only be used for academic purposes.

### **3.15 LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE**

#### **• LIMITATIONS**

- Limited number of participants.
- Counsellors who had counselling sessions with adolescents after the pandemic period.



- Only school counsellors were selected for this study, other than from the private institutions.

- **SCOPE**

- This study will help to understand the challenges and issues faced by the counsellors, especially after the COVID pandemic.
- This study will help to understand the attitude of adolescents and school authorities regarding the importance of mental health after the pandemic period.
- This study will help to understand the coping strategies adopted by the school counsellors.
- The findings of this study would help the researcher to find possible interventions to improve their personal quality and clinical efficacy.

# **CHAPTER IV: CASE PRESENTATION**

## CASE 1

The counsellor said that, the adolescents had gone through a different time. The adolescents were very new to the covid. In fact, we the counsellors were too new to covid. Everything was in online mood. After re-joining the school, it was tough to handle the adolescent groups. Some started watching porn, some developed aggressive behaviour towards the everyone. It was really difficult to handle them.

Yes, there were cases of depression and social anxiety, there were the greatest number of cases of social anxiety reported, they were volunteered too. The counsellor also told that it was easy to raise the issue to the school authorities. The school authorities at the beginning were very cooperative and understanding towards the counsellors. The school authorities understood the current situation and knew that the counsellors will be able to handle them. therefore, all the support was given to the counsellor regarding the addressing of the issue to the handling of the case till the very end. The counsellor said that they did not face any challenges in raising the issue to the school authorities. The counsellor said that *“I think the school authorities have now realized the importance of mental health among students. So now, even if any issues among the students is identified the school management gives time and help the student to recover from the situation”*

The counsellors said that, they did not encounter any cases of addiction. But yes, when we all returned back, I got the cases where the adolescents have tried intaking alcohol and cigarette, but were not addiction cases. The counsellor told that other than other than addiction cases, there were cases of self-harm and sexual abuses cases were reported. Those were very difficult to handle. Learning disability cases were also reported. Those cases of learning disability and self-harms cases were referred to various institutions, for this the counsellor would suggest the institution and parents would be taking them back. Now to provide psycho education to the parents is the biggest challenge. The counsellor said that *“some of the parent won't understand the condition of the child. On the other side, some parents accept the situation and would listen to the counsellor's advice, but to a majority level it is extremely difficult to give psycho education to parents”*.

There was no difficulty in building a rapport with the client. During the covid period, everyone focused on building good mental health for everyone. This importance of

mental health was seen in every student. So therefore, even if they feel any discomfort mentally, they would surely approach the counsellor without any hesitation. Every case which comes are volunteered therefore, there is no difficulty in building a rapport with them. the counsellor thinks that after covid period, it has become easier to build a rapport with the client, and it all depends on the way how one handles the case, and how one builds a rapport through which technique. The counsellor said that *“the schools during the covid period gave so much of importance to mental health, that the students now reach out for counsellors without any inhibitions”*. *“Now when they approach to us, handling those cases is different part of it. I haven’t encountered any violent cases, but I have encountered cases of POCSO, now going through all those formalities is a difficult part”*.

The counsellor said now the lifestyle of the adolescent have changed. *“They have experienced a virtual set of life. now to get them back to a reality world, what the counsellors does is to provide a time table. A fixed schedule will help them to improve their daily routine. Make them more involved in physical activities. Other than, these two in common, the counsellor also suggest various other activities depending upon the client”*. Under most of the cases which the counsellor has received, mostly they suggest a proper scheduled time table and involving in physical activities.

Other than all these, the counsellor mentioned about the other professional challenges. *“I am a counsellor but at the same time, I am a psychology teacher. There are instances when I had to take extra session for counselling, but due to my scheduled teaching period I have to cancel it and go on teach them”*. The counsellor also told that, sometimes issues which occur at the home, decrease the quality of their professional life. the counsellor said that *“Sometimes, there are situations when I had small issues in my family (as you know family life is not that much easy) and during the counselling session, I was not able to concentrate. I was constantly thinking about the whole situation at my home. Later, I would try my best to solve the issues, after that only, I am able to focus on my counselling sessions with my client”*.

The counsellor also said that there are few other professional challenges which they face at the school level. The counsellor said that *“time management is a big issue for me. I myself being a school counsellor, also a psychology teacher finds it difficult in managing both these roles”*. *“Now the students who come up for the counselling*

*session are from higher classes. Now if they sit with me and attend the counselling session, there are chances of them missing their classes. Sometimes teachers ask me to let the student sit in class and learn rather than making them sit with counselling". The counsellor also told that "Now if I need the student for taking a session, my class time their class time everything gets mixed up. I feel this is the biggest professional challenge which I have face".*

The counsellor said that, in professional life there are a lot of psychological challenges faced. Stress is most of the psychological challenge faced. The counsellor said *"during the pre-covid period, I faced a lot stress and burnout in my professional life, but the post-covid gave me a big amount stress level as compared to pre-covid period".* The school counsellor said that before the students somewhere had an inhibition towards counselling, but during the pandemic period, the school authorities gave so much of importance for mental health and online sessions were held to bring out awareness on mental health. after the school reopened so many students came up for counselling sessions. With that the number of cases increased. *"As being a psychology teacher, it was difficult to handle both the teaching as well as counselling in a balanced way. It was very stressful for me to handle the cases. After the counselling sessions I feel very tired and my mood totally goes off".*

The counsellor said cases are volunteered but, in some cases, the client remains unresponsive, and the transparency level is too low. It is very difficult to handle these cases. The counsellor felt it to be difficult to handle was very much stressful. *"After attending so many cases, sometimes, I feel that I don't have empathy or I am not able to express any type of emotions within myself, it not only happens after the counselling sessions, but also happens during the session, and I think this increased after the pandemic".* This expression of emotions affected the counsellor not just in professional life but also at personal level. *"I feel very exhausted after the sessions, compassion fatigue is at high. During the pre-covid period, it affected me but I think post-covid period has increased the level compassion fatigue within me".*

The counsellor did not experience any countertransference during the counselling sessions. As being in a professional platform the counsellor, had leaned and practiced the concept of countertransference. *"I had felt it once, but the moment I felt it I referred the case to another counsellor at that time, I would take it too long because I know it*

*may affect the professional quality*". The counsellor said, it is always good to refer the cases when you experience a countertransference, if experience it for too long the professional quality of the counsellor gets affected.

The counsellor said that during the pre-covid period rarely students visited the counsellor for counselling services. But now during the post-covid period, more numbers of students are visiting, therefore due to more hours of sessions and stress, make the counsellor develop client characteristics. The counsellor said *"I got 2 to 3 cases, which were volunteered. Those cases had aggression towards their fathers as their fathers were alcoholic and used to beat them. I had to sit silently and listen to them until their vent out their aggression during the whole sessions. Later, I got to observe it within myself. I was always a calm person, but after those sessions, I started behaving very rudely to other, I started getting angry on everyone without any reasons"*. *"I too experienced cases of depression, which were extremely difficult to handle, after taking long hours of session made me feel depressed, with zero productivity. I used to sit in a silence, feeling helpless, being sad without any reason. Later, when my mother pointed it out, I realized what was happening"*. The counsellor told at times, it happens when the counsellor deeply gets into the cases, and strains a lot. Later only the realization happens when someone points it out or the counsellor itself realizes it.

The counsellor said that after most of the counselling sessions, the counsellor feels frustrated any when feels to vent it out the counsellor would seek spiritual help. The counsellor said *"I am a prayerful person, I feel good when I pray, I feel connected to God. After the counselling session, when I feel to vent out my emotions, I sit silently and pray to God, which makes me feel better"*. *"Even after that if I don't feel good, I would communicate it with other, my close ones, at the end when I communicate it feel better within myself"*. The counsellor said that without ventilation process, it feels like being stuck inside of something. The counsellor said there are times when the counsellor was not able to vent out these emotions or do the ventilation process. *"I sometimes practice relaxation techniques and breathing exercises, which is also done as a part of my expression of emotions"*. The counsellor said now this ventilation process is done sometimes, after the re-opening of schools, as a greater number of cases are approaching.

## CASE 2

The counsellor said that, *“in my opinion I think all the just a few of them have suffered physically and mentally due to COVID, as they were quarantined and had to restrict themselves from going outside. But a majority of the students enjoyed during the pandemic period. They were busying enjoying playing online games, they even did make many international friends through online gaming. I believe those friendship is genuine and they still maintain those relationships”*. The counsellor believed that this pandemic period, most of the students enjoyed a lot, at least towards the end they enjoyed. The counsellor said that *“now for example: I met one of my students, he said he was sad, as one of his friends was not well, later got to know his friend was from Chicago and he got this friendship from online game”*. The counsellor said that after the school reopened one case, she received was of gaming addict, and another one case had the issue of socialization. The counsellor said that *“he suddenly started getting introvert and was continuously wearing a mask, which was triggered by COVID”*.

The counsellor said that she put a lot of strain and time in helping out the child. The counsellor also mentioned another case, where the student was scoring high grades when online exams were conducting, but when suddenly switched to offline mode, the students started scoring low grade. It was a great issue for the student; he was not able to face the teachers. The student stopped going to attending classes and for 2 months he didn't attend the classes. Later, through counselling services he recovered and came back. The counsellor said that the school management gave full support for the counselling services. The school management gave importance to counselling services and the even if they encounter any cases, they would be in support to the school counsellors.

The counsellor said that they did not encounter any cases of addiction. But when the counsellor interacted with the students from higher classes, they counsellor got to know that few of them have tried intaking alcohol and cigarette, but it was not the cases of addiction, it was because they saw their male members in the family intaking these substances and their intake was just on the basis of curiosity. The counsellor said those students said *“if your intake this you will see heaven”*. The counsellor did not encounter any cases of addiction, but when parents got to know they were overly concerned. The

counsellor recalled a cases of gaming addiction where the parents blamed the school authority, as the parents were helpless and blamed the school authority for not taking care of the child. The counsellor said that there is a big set of formality to be followed. *“Confidentiality consent need to be taken. The school has provided a set of protocol which need to be followed. Even while confidential is followed we need to make it very clear who is should know what, to which level this confidentiality needs to be followed”*.

*“I feel now students doesn't have that inhibition among themselves, as because during the pandemic period the school gave so much of importance for self-care, mental health that they reach out to us without any inhibitions. The level of strictness was also declined, therefore students reach out to us”*. The counsellor recalled certain cases of violent behaviour, self-harm. The counsellor recalled an incident where *“I still remember one case, where I took a session for a boy, during the session, the boy started symptoms of head banging and self-harming which was due to psychiatric illness. The whole situation was witnessed by the teachers and students. After the case was referred to a psychiatric hospital, I had to give explanation to everyone who witnessed the whole scenario. I had to go through a lot of difficulties. Later, got to know that the student had borderline personality disorder, and had severe depressive symptoms”*. The counsellor said that it was very tough to handle the situation, as the scenario was witnessed by the other co-students, further consequences were apart to come, therefore an explanation was given to all teachers and students. I detailed report was also asked to be submitted. The counsellor also told that there was a case where the father of the student was alcoholic and the student during exam time had to reside at friend's house as a refugee.

The counsellor said that they prefer more of physical activities to be followed. The counsellor said that she gives task like Dairy Journal. The counsellor said *that “most of the time I make students do write journals, or personal dairy writing which makes them ventilate their emotions. Turning someone who is in need is the most important thing”*. The counsellor also said that she makes students draw based on their emotions. *“Sometimes it is good to make them do drawing activity. And they draw very beautifully which I later collect them and attach them at the walls of my room. For those students who face screen addiction, I make them do productive screen work like, I tell them to play online chess games which are productive for them”*. the counsellor also said that for those who have suicidal tendencies depression issues, the counsellor suggests the to



read certain books, watch certain series and listen to music. They are the best source of ventilation process.

Other than, these professional challenges, the counsellor listed out some other professional challenges faced.

- The role conflict issue is a major issue. The counsellor is also a psychology teacher. The counsellor also said that, *“For me a role conflict has always been an issue. There have been situations when, I knew the child needs counselling service but the other teachers would just ignore it and they would believe that, the child will be behaving better once he gets a beating. In fact, the school authorities also believe the same. It is very hard to convince the other teachers the importance of counselling services, but the other teachers won’t think too much, their motive is to just finish up the syllabus”*. *“Here a teacher counsellor conflict arises; a power sharing issues is there”*.
- Next challenge mentioned about is the providing psycho education for parents. *“For me a role conflict has always been an issue. There have been situations when, I knew the child needs counselling service but the other teachers would just ignore it and they would believe that, the child will be behaving better once he gets a beating. In fact, the school authorities also believe the same. It is very hard to convince the school authorities and other teachers the importance of counselling services, but the other teachers won’t think too much, their motive is to just finish up the syllabus”*. The counsellor said it is tough to handle the parents.
- Another professional challenge which the counsellor faced is about sometimes, family and profession gets mixed up. The counsellor said that if a supportive family is there, it is easy to handle the professional challenges. In this professional life, *“sometimes it makes me difficulty to handle certain matter, sometimes, I think like a parent sometimes I think like counsellors”*. The counsellor said that sometimes when they meet the client they think, what if their own child also becomes the same. After the counselling sessions, they counsellor said that those sessions affect the family life at times.
- The time constrain is another bigger issue the counselling sessions. The counsellor said that she meets at least 240 students during the psychology teaching period. In between I get cases for counselling. *“I can’t just take 10 or*

*15 mins for per client, I need at least 1-2 hours to take a session. In between my teaching schedule also comes up. It becomes difficult for me to take sessions. I have to set special time for taking session, mostly on PT periods and on lunch time. The time constraints are a major issue*". The counsellor was wishing if there was any special counselling period added on the class timing.

- The counsellor said, that the counsellor had gone through the stage of compassion fatigue. The counsellor said during the early stages of counselling career, the counsellor was very empathetic and expressed emotions with the client during the sessions. Earlier when students used to visit for counselling sessions, the students had family support which was an advantage for the counsellor to handle. But now the counsellor is facing difficulty in handle the students as many of the students are coming from separated and broken families. The counsellor said now, the single parenting, separated families and broken families are becoming very common in the society.

At times I get clients, who are from these backgrounds, *"when I encounter the cases of broken families and separated families it makes me feel sad, I even question God why it happens, why is it so common? Especially during the post-covid period I feel more number of cases (broken families, neglected parenting) are reported. Now whenever I encounter these cases, I feel a numbness within myself"*. The counsellor said that *"earlier at the beginning of the career, I used to be very passionate and dedicated for my career, I used to express empathy and used to express all my emotions. But now after the covid period, when I encounter these cases I feel I have lack of empathy within myself. I feel I can't express any sort of emotions"*. The counsellor said *"sometimes, all what is needed is to just sit and listen"*. The counsellor said, that they have faced situations of helplessness during the counselling sessions. The counsellor recalled a case where, the father of the client was alcoholic and the family was suffering like anything.

It was totally a situation where the counsellor or anyone, no one could do anything. The counsellor said *"even after knowing the situation of the family, even after seeing the client crying, I felt very helpless and I couldn't express empathy"*. The counsellor said that as comparing with the starting professional journey, now the counsellor is facing compassion fatigue. The counsellor also too felt stress and burnouts, the counsellor encounter daily two to three cases.

The counsellor said *“At times, I feel mentally drain out when during the sessions. The counsellor also mentioned some cases, where the clients talk a lot with the counsellor, which makes me stressed out, it brings out a negative burn out”*. The counsellor also mentioned situation when the counsellor took all these stress and burnouts to home, which negatively impacted the counsellor and also the family members.

- The counsellor encountered cases of transference and countertransference. Repeatedly, encountering cases of transference and countertransference increased the level of negativity within myself. The counsellor said *“when students approach me with cases for counselling services, after the sessions, I start to think are my children going to be like this. This thinking affects me and at times, it has affected my parenting”*. The counsellor said this countertransference has created an influence on the counsellor. The counsellor recalled a case when the client explained a situation happened in school, which once happened to the counsellor during childhood time, and it affected the counsellor during the counselling sessions. *“Once a student told me an incident which happened in school, which I was able to connect because the same incident happened to me during my childhood. This influenced me, this whole affected me during the counselling sessions, I was over concerned towards my client, I took more hours of sessions with my client”*.
- The counsellor observed client characteristics within self after the counselling sessions. The counsellor said *“once I received a client with high level of anxiety, the client develops anxiety during the exam time. It becomes very difficult to handle the client, hours of sessions are needed to handle and help out the client, the client shows extreme level of restlessness and excessive worrying. After handling the sessions, after returning back to home I also started to show excessive worry towards small things and started to develop restlessness”*. The counsellor said this is not just one case, but so many cases of anxiety during exam time was reported to the counsellor. As during the covid period, all the exams were conducted through online mode, but now after rejoining to school many students are facing stress and anxiety towards exam. The counsellor, said the counsellor had to handle so many cases of anxiety during exam time.

- The counsellor said that they do the ventilation process after he counselling session. The counsellor said *“I do not do the ventilation process every time, but at some cases, I do the ventilation process, if I don’t feel good, I would talk out with the close friends or with my close family members”*. The counsellor said *“I also practice mindfulness and meditation process, which helps me to vent out my emotions”*. The counsellor said that, they encounter cases when the counsellor feels to express and vent out the emotions. The counsellor said as comparative to earlier times, now the counsellor feels more time is needed for ventilation process.

### CASE 3

The counsellor said that most of the students faced academic issues. Learning disability was a major issue. Some of them did not even knew how to write properly. As before the pre covid period, those students who were at 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> class, rejoined the classes when they were at 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. So that transition for them was difficulty. The counsellor stated that, it is not just a learning disability issues rather various other issues like screen addiction, love affairs gaming issues. *“The moment the school identifies an issue of the students all are supportive. I got the greatest number of cases of love relationships. It was very difficult to handle those students. Most of them were depressed. A majority of POCSO cases were also reported. Now to do the POCSO formality there was a set of formalities followed”*. The counsellor said, even though the school authorities would be supportive towards the counselling services, a conflict between teachers and counsellors arises. The counsellor said that even though the school is supportive, sometimes teachers won’t stand in support to the counsellors. *“If a student is called for a session, at a teaching period, which will be around 1-2 hours, the teacher in charge of that period, won’t stand for it and rather, prefer the student to send for the session at some other period.*

The counsellor encountered addiction cases. It was drug usage; 2 to 3 cases of addiction came up. The counsellor said that they tried their best to help out the student with counselling services and therapy but the level of addiction was very high that the counsellor had to refer the cases to a de-addiction centre. The parents were called and informed about the situation. One case was addiction was reported but it was handled

by providing psychoeducation to the student as well as to the parents. Now counsellor also stated the difficulty in providing psycho education to the parents. Stated that the toughest task is providing psycho education to parents. The parents won't understand or realize the intensity of the situation of what their child is going, rather they either prefer to blame other or defend their children.

The clients were very much cooperative towards the counsellors. The counsellor received some cases which were violent in nature, but by taking time and building a rapport, the client developed a cooperative behaviour towards the counsellor but was not an easy task. The counsellor encountered cases of suicidal tendency, behavioural issues and so on. The counsellor did not encounter any cases of attack on self but there were cases of self-harm. Other than that serious level of violent attacking cases was not encountered.

The counsellor said now the present students after rejoining the classes, have now developed anger management issues. *“Those cases which I received if they have anger management issues, I would make them do anger management training, relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, and ways how to cope up in situations. Today's generations do not know how to cope up with situations in life”.*

The biggest professional challenges which the counsellor has faced is of handling POCSO cases. The counsellor told the difficulty in reporting POCSO cases, first needs to report it to the school authorities, then to DCPU and informing the parents. Sometimes the accused would be from the family itself. To handle those cases are really tough. The counsellor said to handling legal are not easy. Sometimes parents itself blames the counsellor for reporting it to the police. Other than this handling of cases another professional challenge which the counsellor faces is the providing of psycho education to parents. The counsellor said *“What I think is that provide psycho education for parents is extremely tough whether it is from rich family background or from poor family background. For the poor family background parents, if provided psycho education parents would just listen to it and tend to forget it. The importance of the psycho education is difficult to convey. Whereas on the other side providing psycho education for rich educated family members, if provided psycho education parents would, deny all the factor, they would be in denial zone. Whatever told whatever explained will have no value. Instead, they would just question us back. That's why I*

*feel providing psycho education to parents is difficult irrespective of their background”.*

The counsellor said there were a stress period, when the schools were reopened and more number of students reported for counselling sessions. The counsellor said that she did not encounter any cases which developed a state of compassion fatigue among oneself, but after the school reopened most number of cases were reported which brought an increase in the level of stress, as being a school counsellor, side by side the counsellor also performs the duty of a psychology teacher. *“When more number of cases were reported it was difficult to maintain a balance between teaching and counsellor, which increased stress level”.* As the school authorities gave full support to the students facing mental health issues, the students approached the counsellors without any inhibitions. The counsellor said *“long hours of sessions made me feel drained out”.* The counsellor said in some cases they don't need any counselling services. All that they want is someone who would listen to all what they want to say.

The counsellor did not encounter any cases of countertransference, as the counsellor said being in a professional set up the counsellor tries its own maximum not to encounter any cases of counter transference. Even if encountered, the counsellor would ensure to refer the cases to other counsellors without any delay.

The counsellor observed a client characteristic on self after the sessions. The client started to develop a particular way of talking. A change in the voice tonality was observed. *“I had a counselling session with one of my clients who speaks very slowly, I always use to speak in a very speed voice tone, after interacting with the client for hours t, slowly I also started speaking very slowly. My tone changed, but this happens after the counselling sessions and would remain for few hours later gets back to normal high speed”.* *“Other than this change in voice tonality, I started to behave very rudely to others. as I think the reason was that cases I encountered had aggression”.* *“I encountered a case of POCSO where the, client had aggression towards the accused who was close family members, the client vented out its aggression during the counselling sessions. It took long hours of sessions, later, even I also started behaving very rudely and got angry over small thing in my home”.* The counsellor later realized it and understood the reason might be caused due to not doing the ventilation process.

The counsellor did not do any proper ventilation process, once the counsellor started observing client characteristics on self, the counsellor understood the importance of ventilation process. the counsellor said that due to this crossover and stress, a proper ventilation process is not being followed. The counsellor very rarely follows the ventilation process and vents out the emotions. *“Whenever, I feel to vent out my emotions, I would communicate it with other, like my close family members are with my close friends, or else I would communicate with my colleagues”*.

#### CASE 4

The counsellor said that it was the counsellor did not receive that much cases. As the counsellor belonged from government school, not that much of cases were reported. The school was supportive towards the counselling. Some of the cases were of behavioural issues. As the school is a government school, the school focuses on the mental health of the students. The counsellor mentioned the time constraints as a major issue. Since the school is a girl’s only government there are not much of cases reported. The counsellor mentioned about a gender difference in matters of cases. The school is fully supportive when a case is identified.

As the school was a girl’s government school no cases of addiction were reported, in other schools which the counsellor visited encountered some cases of screen addiction. Those cases were referred to de-addiction centres. The counsellor itself referred those cases to the centres, for this special psycho education was given to the parents.

The students were cooperative towards the counsellors. Their reached out to the counsellors without any inhibitions.

The counsellor prepares life skill chart for the clients. Other than that, the counsellor provides general awareness classes for the students. The counsellor is a value education teacher at the school. The counsellor also faces this role conflict as they are required to take special value education per week according to hours. The counsellor said *“I am a government school counsellor, I am posted in this school for counselling services, but on the other hand I am required to teach value education classes for children. Most of the time, instead of taking counselling sessions, I am asked to report to classes and take awareness session on various topics. Sometimes, during the free periods, to engage the children I am asked to take value education classes”*. Sometimes, in order to bunk out

the classes the students reach out to the counsellors therefore, a conflict arises between the real client and fake client.

The professional challenges faced by the counsellor is the handling issues related to family. Sometimes the root cause for the issue of the client would be caused due to family issues. Even though counsellor cannot get inside the family issue and solve it out, rather than can help out the client to deal with the issue. The counsellor also handled cases of POCSO, which was difficult to complete the formalities. The counsellor said *“Since I am a government school counsellor, when a POCSO case was reported, I had to go on with a lot of legal formalities, I had to report the matter to school authorities, then to DCPU, and then to the parents. A complete detailed report was asked to be submitted at various places. After the COVID pandemic when the students rejoined the school a lot of POCSO cases were identified. It was very stressful for me to do all these legal formalities”*. The counsellor also said that professional life always has professional challenges, which may even affect one’s own personal life.

The counsellor said, *“if you are emotionally weak, there are higher chances of you getting stressed out”*. During the pandemic period, the counsellor went through a traumatic event. The counsellor lost a close family member during the covid period, as the family members had a close bonding with the counsellor, it took some time for the counsellor to overcome the loss. The counsellor said, *“when the school reopened, so many cases were reported, which I had to attend and had to take long hours of sessions, I was emotionally very weak still, I did my counselling service to the students as this was my responsibility. This overload of cases and my emotional condition made me feel mentally drained out, I felt stressed out and I lost the capability to express my emotions especially empathy”*. *“It took some time for me to become emotionally strong. Earlier during the beginning of my career, I was an emotionally strong person, but during the covid times the loss of my close family members made me emotionally weak, which affected my professional quality”*.

The counsellor has encountered counter transference, the counsellor said *“I too have child of the same age of the clients. Whenever they approach to me with a help, I try my best to help out the client, whenever I hear out their problems, I feel will my child be also turning out to be the same”*. After the counselling session certain factors affect the counsellor in personal life. As a mother, the counsellor is very much attached and



concerned about the child. So whenever client approach and interact the counsellor at times connects it.

The counsellor said that she observed client characteristics within self, after the counselling session. The counsellor said *“as I earlier mentioned those who are emotionally weak have higher chances getting emotional breakdowns”*. The counsellor said during the covid period she lost the close family member due to which the counsellor was emotionally weak. After the post-covid period, the counsellor received more number of cases which had depressive symptoms. Long hours of sessions were required in order to help out the clients. after the counselling sessions, slowly the counsellor started to observe depressive symptoms on self. The counsellor said *“I was emotionally very weak, on the top of that I received cases with depressive symptoms, after attending long hours of sessions, I started developing depressive symptoms within myself. I had lack of sleep, and poor food intake”*. The counsellor said, it took some time for the counsellor to overcome the loss and get emotionally strong.

The counsellor said *“therapist also needs therapy”*. The counsellor after the counselling session tries its maximum to vent out the emotions. The counsellor said *“After the post-covid period due to overwork load and stressful time, a proper ventilation process of emotions was not possible, but now after the counselling sessions, I try my best to do the ventilation process. the counsellor spends leisure with the close family members, planning an outing with the co-employees helps the counsellor to feel good. The counsellor said “I love drawing, whenever I need to vent out my emotions, I sit somewhere peacefully and draw whatever comes in my mind”*. Mostly after every session the counsellor in order to vent out the emotions sits a draw anything that comes in mind.

## CASE 5

The counsellor stated that *“some of the students must have felt this depression, anxiety and social isolation, but I don’t think there is any need to make it affective after returning back to school. After returning back to school, the students did not face any sort of issues in their other activities then why it is still affecting their behavioural and learning issues. “I feel these all are “excuses”, the moment client’s approach to us we get to know if it’s really affecting their mental health or not”*. The counsellor stated that

students after returning back were much more involved in physical activity, all the other factors were not affected by the pandemic, then why the students are facing academic issues only. The counsellor stated that family issue cases reported, which affected the academic performance of the student. The school authority was supportive towards the counselling services and gave much more importance to mental health of students. Now to get the students for providing counselling sessions, a series of protocol needs to be followed. If those cases are serious and needs to be brought Infront of the school authority, a detailed report is required to be submitted to the school authority. The counsellors mentioned about the role conflict issues which occur, as the counsellor is a psychology teacher and to handle both teaching and counselling is a difficult matter.

The counsellor encountered cases of screen addiction, which was at high level even after providing ways to overcome the addiction, the students had to referred to the de-addiction centre. On informing the matter to the parents, the parents blamed the school authorities for not been able to handle the students. Most of the time parents on explaining the issue of the client, they go on denial mode. The counsellor stated that *“It is very hard to make the parents understand the problem and the situation”*.

There were cases of POCSO, a lot of formalities was set to be followed. The counsellor said that *“I had to handle POCSO cases. Most of the POCSO cases accused are the family members itself. Once a case is identified at school, the school authorities had to report it to the DCPU. When the parents came to know about it, they fought with us, regarding the consent taking and prior informing”*. The clients are very cooperative towards the counsellor and only clients with self-harm behaviour approach the counsellors.

In order to build a healthy coping strategy, the counsellor, sets at only one concept that is “positivity”. The counsellor believes that that positivity has a better aspect of life, rather than focusing on negativity. To those clients who have panic attacks, the counsellor suggest out meditation and yoga techniques. Relaxations techniques, breathing exercise are followed. The counsellor focuses on positivity. The counsellor mentioned that *“see every challenge as an opportunity and face it”*. the counsellor was worried about the students the present generations, saying that the present generation are not capable of handling situation or challenges. The counsellor also suggests out physical activity to do the ventilation process, as “sublimation” a part of defence

mechanism. The counsellor stated that speaking about positivity increases the chances of facing the challenges and not getting affected by the challenges.

The professional challenges which the counsellor faced is, the students are now taking each and every excuse in connecting with the covid pandemic. There are a lot of time constraints issues faced, as the counsellor is itself a psychology teacher, it is difficult to handle both together. Time constraints is also another factor, the counsellor wished if there was a specific period of counselling itself. The counsellor said that *“I have always had difficulty in dealing with these two things. On one side I act as a counsellor for children. Many of them come voluntarily. There are times when I had to focus more on teaching and I was in a hurry to complete the syllabus before exams, therefore I had to give counselling a secondary space. This is not just my story but all the teachers who are counsellors teach other subjects especially psychology face the same role conflict issue”*. *“Time constraints is a major issue”* Other than these to handle rebel behaviour clients are also difficult to handle. The counsellor found it be the next professional challenge.

The counsellor experienced high level of stress during the post-covid period. The counsellor, was also a psychology teacher, therefore, it was very difficult for the counsellor to handle both teaching and counselling together. The counsellor, experienced this due to more number of cases were being reported. The counsellor said *“after attending the sessions, I feel physically and mentally exhausted. I don't feel like taking classes. Sometimes I just feel to quit anyone and just focus on my one thing. With this compassion fatigue my teaching quality also gets affected”*. The counsellor said earlier it was easy to handle both teaching and counselling together, but now after the post-covid period, it has become difficult to handle. The counsellor said, it is not just the teaching quality which gets affected, but also in personal life it gets affected. The counsellor said that she wants to quit anyone and just focus on one thing in order to upbring the professional quality.

The counsellor encountered countertransference during the counselling sessions. The clients faced high level of anxiety during the exam time. The counsellor said that they also experienced high level of anxiety during the exam time, as the counsellor was not that good in studies, whenever exams arrive high level of anxiety used to develop on the counsellor during her childhood. The counsellor said, *“whenever clients approach*

*me with anxiety during exam time, I could see myself within them. I was also once like this during my school days, as I was not got at studies, I also had anxiety during my exam time*". Therefore, in order to help out the client, the counsellor took long hours of sessions and took the cases with special care. The counsellor said that she started receiving a greater number of cases after the covid period.

The counsellor did not develop or observe any client characteristics within the counsellor. The counsellor said *"I did observe client characteristics within myself. I could experience a counter transference during the session, but specifically I have observed client characteristics within myself"* especially after this pandemic period. The counsellor said *"I don't know what happens at times and how I end up being moody and upset. Sometimes, other who see me being upset without no reason and sitting with zero productivity, they say maybe I have mood swings. I inside within myself I knew, I did not have mood swings or anything. After this pandemic period, I started feeling mental exhaustion and totally drained out. With zero productivity I have never being like this"*.

The counsellor practiced proper ventilation process after the counselling sessions. The counsellor vented out the emotions by communicating it with close family members or close friends who are from the same field. The counsellor said *"I have a habit of writing personal diary entry, which helps me to vent out my emotions and I feel good. This helps me to not take my professional things into my personal life, but at times professional life and personal life gets mixed up together"*.

# **CHAPTER V: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

According to LeCompte and Schensul, research data analysis is a process used by researchers to reduce data to a story and interpret it to derive insights. The data analysis process helps reduce a large chunk of data into smaller fragments, which makes sense. Thematic analysis is a method for analysing qualitative data that involves reading through a set of data and looking for patterns in the meaning of the data to find themes. It is an active process of reflexivity in which the researcher's subjective experience is at the centre of making sense of the data.

## 5.2 PERSONAL PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

**Table 5.2**

<b>CASES</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>SEX</b>	<b>EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION</b>	<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>	<b>YEARS OF WORK EXPERIENCE</b>
1	40	F	MA Psychology, Dip. in clinical counselling	Married	5
2	36	F	M.Sc., M.Phil.	Married	7
3	31	F	MSW, PG Diploma in counselling	Married	5
4	35	F	MA Psychology	Married	12
5	42	F	MA, PhD	unmarried	11

The profile of the participants gives an idea about the basic details of the participants. The participants are between the age group of 31 to 42. All the participants are female and are married. Only participant is unmarried. The participants have 5 to 11 years of experience. All the participants are highly qualified.

## 5.3 THEMES

### **Theme 1: Professional Challenges**

The data collected from 5 participants; the results showed that all the 5 participants have faced professional challenges during the post covid period. The main professional challenges are role conflicts, difficulty in handling cases and difficulty in providing psycho education for parents. Based on the first theme, the following sub themes can be analysed.

#### ➤ **Sub Theme 1.1: Role Conflict**

The data collected from the participants, all these participants said that they have experienced this crisis of role conflict. The participants said that at times they are not able to define their roles. Based on this sub theme, the following sub themes can be analysed.

#### ➤ **Sub Theme 1.1.1: Crossover**

The participants all work as a school counsellor, side by side they all are teachers who teach “psychology” subjects in classes. A balance between counselling and teaching is difficult to handle at times. Only one participant is a counsellor who teaches “value education” classes for students.

**Case-1:** *“I am a counsellor but at the same time, I am a psychology teacher. There are instances when I had to take extra session for counselling, but due to my scheduled teaching period I have to cancel it and go on teach them”.*

**Case-2:** *“For me a role conflict has always been an issue. There have been situations when, I knew the child needs counselling service but the other teachers would just ignore it and they would believe that, the child will be behaving better once he gets a beating. In fact the school authorities also believe the same. It is very hard to convince the school authorities and other teachers the importance of counselling services, but the other teachers won’t think too much, their motive is to just finish up the syllabus”.*

**Case-4:** *“I am a government school counsellor, I am posted in this school for counselling services, but on the other hand I am required to teach value education classes for children. Most of the time, instead of taking counselling sessions, I am asked to report to classes and take awareness session on various topics. Sometimes, during the free periods, to engage the children I am asked to take value education classes”.*

**Case-5:** *“I have always had difficulty in dealing with these two things. On one side I act as a counsellor for children. Many of them come voluntarily. There are times when I had to focus more on teaching and I was in a hurry to complete the syllabus before exams, therefore I had to give counselling a secondary space. This is not just my story but all the teachers who are counsellors teach other subjects especially psychology face the same role conflict issue”.*

➤ **Sub Theme 1.1.2: Time Constraints**

The data collected from the participants, the participants said that they have experienced time constraints issues, as the school counsellor are also subject teachers.

**Case-1:** *“time management is a big issue for me. I myself being a school counsellor, also a psychology teacher finds it difficult in managing both these roles”. “Now the students who come up for the counselling session are from higher classes. Now if they sit with me and attend the counselling session, there are chances of them missing their classes. Sometimes teachers ask me to let the student sit in class and learn rather than making them sit with counselling”*

**Case-2:** *“I can’t just take 10 or 15 mins for per client, I need at least 1-2 hours to take a session. In between my teaching schedule also comes up. It becomes difficult for me to take sessions. I have to set*



*special time for taking session, mostly on PT periods and on lunch time. The time constraints are a major issue”.*

**Case-5:** *“I have always had difficulty in dealing with these two things. On one side I act as a counsellor for children. Many of them come voluntarily. There are times when I had to focus more on teaching and I was in a hurry to complete the syllabus before exams, therefore I had to give counselling a secondary space. This is not just my story but all the teachers who are counsellors teach other subjects especially psychology face the same role conflict issue”.*  
*“Time constraints is a major issue”.*

➤ **Sub Theme 1.2: Case Handling**

All the participants have stated that there was difficulty in handling the cases. Various cases had its own difficulty level. The counsellors told that handling the cases is the biggest professional challenge experienced. Based on this sub theme, the following sub themes can be analysed.

➤ **Sub Theme 1.2.1: Adhering to institutional protocols**

The participants had told that they had to follow a protocol set up the school authorities. The participants told that to follow this protocol and complete the counselling is difficult.

**Case-1:** *“I think it is difficult to do the counselling sessions, by completing all the formalities. The school has made a set of rules and regulations to be followed by the school counsellors, before conducting the counselling session. Those are some basic things like consent taking from the school authorities to do the session with the student without missing the classes, maintain confidentiality, and in all these things time constraints is a major issue. Now how will I do all these things, when I am a psychology teacher too at other side”.*

**Case-2:** *“Handling different cases are extremely difficult to handle. I still remember one case, where I took a session for a boy, during the session, the boy started symptoms of head banging and self-harming which was due to psychiatric illness. The whole situation was witnessed by the teachers and students. After the case was referred to a psychiatric hospital, I had to give explanation to everyone who witnessed the whole scenario. I had to go through a lot of difficulties”.*

➤ **Sub Theme 1.2.2: Legal cases**

The participants said that they have faced difficulty in moving on with legal cases like POCSO. The counsellors said that they had to move on without a lot of legal formalities, which took time.

**Case-4** *“Since I am a government school counsellor, when a POCSO case was reported, I had to go on with a lot of legal formalities, I had to report the matter to school authorities, then to DCPU, and then to the parents. A complete detailed report was asked to be submitted at various places. After the COVID pandemic when the students rejoined the school a lot of POCSO cases were identified. It was very stressful for me to do all these legal formalities”.*

**Case-5:** *“I had to handle POCSO cases. Most of the POCSO cases accused are the family members itself. Once a case is identified at school, the school authorities had to report it to the DCPU. When the parents came to know about it, they fought with us, regarding the consent taking and prior informing”.*

➤ **Sub Theme 1.3: Psycho education for parents**

All participants have stated that, providing psycho education for parents is a tough task. The participants told that providing psycho education for children is easier as compared to providing psycho education to parents.

**Case- 2:** *“It is tough for me to provide psycho education for parents. It is that from the moment their children are with us, it is our responsibility to handle them. Parents say that on a day majority of the time kids spend their time in school, then why not the school management is not capable of handling them. The parent instead to receiving a proper psycho education, would just blame the school management for their child’s condition”.*

**Case-3:** *“What I think is that provide psycho education for parents is extremely tough whether it is from rich family background or from poor family background. For the poor family background parents, if provided psycho education parents would just listen to it and tend to forget it. The importance of the psycho education is difficult to convey. Whereas on the other side providing psycho education for rich educated family members, if provided psycho education parents would, deny all the factor, they would be in denial zone. Whatever told whatever explained will have no value. Instead, they would just question us back. That’s why I feel providing psycho education to parents is difficult irrespective of their background.*

**Table 5.3**

**Professional Challenge: Global Theme**

<b>GLOBAL THEME</b>	<b>MAIN THEME</b>	<b>SUB THEME</b>
Professional Challenges	Role conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Crossover</li><li>➤ Time constraints</li></ul>
	Case Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Adhering to institutional protocols</li><li>➤ Legal Cases</li></ul>
	Psycho education for parents	

## **Theme 2: Psychological Challenges**

The data collected from 5 participants; the results showed that all the 5 participants have faced psychological challenges during the post covid period. The main psychological challenges are stress, countertransference, and observance of client characteristics. Based on the first theme, the following sub themes can be analysed.

### ➤ **Sub Theme 2.1: Stress**

The data collected from the participants, all these participants said that they have experienced this stress. The participants said that at times they are not able to handle both the task, and after the sessions it makes them mentally drained out. Based on this sub theme, the following sub themes can be analysed.

#### ➤ **Sub Theme 2.1.1: Compassion Fatigue**

The data collected from the participants, the participants said that they have experienced stress, and most of them have experienced compassion fatigue. They had lack of empathy and were not able to express any kind of emotions.

**Case-1:** *“After attending so many cases, sometimes, I feel that I don’t have empathy or I am not able to express any type of emotions within myself, it not only happens after the counselling sessions, but also happens during the session, and I think this increased after the pandemic”.*

**Case-2:** *“when I encounter the cases of broken families and separated families it makes me feel sad, I even question God why it happens, why is it so common? Especially during the post-covid period I feel more number of cases (broken families, neglected parenting) are reported. Now whenever I encounter these cases, I feel a numbness within myself”.*

**Case-4:** *“when the school reopened, so many cases were reported, which I had to attend and had to take long hours of sessions, I was emotionally very weak still, I did my counselling service to the students as this was my responsibility. This overload of cases and my emotional condition made me feel mentally drained out, I felt stressed out and I lost the capability to express my emotions especially empathy”. “It took some time for me to become emotionally strong. Earlier during the beginning of my career, I was an emotionally strong person, but during the covid times, the loss of my close family members made me emotionally weak, which affected my professional quality”.*

**Case-5:** *“after attending the sessions, I feel physically and mentally exhausted. I don’t feel like taking classes. Sometimes I just feel to quit anyone and just focus on my one thing”.*

➤ **Sub Theme 2.2: Countertransference**

The data collected from the participants, all these participants said that they have experienced this stress. Only one participant did not face countertransference. Whenever the participants encountered countertransference either they would, refer the cases to another counsellor or continues with the client.

**Case-1:** *“I had felt it once, but the moment I felt it I referred the case to another counsellor at that time, I would take it too long because I know it may affect the professional quality”.*

**Case-2:** *“when students approach me with cases for counselling services, after the sessions, I start to think are my children going to be like this. This thinking affects me and at times, it has affected my parenting”.*

**Case-4:** *“I too have child of the same age of the clients. Whenever they approach to me with a help, I try my best to help out the client, whenever I hear out their problems, I feel will my child be also turning out to be the same”.*

**Case-5:** *“whenever clients approach me with anxiety during exam time, I could see myself within them. I was also once like this during my school days, as I was not got at studies, I also had anxiety during my exam time”.*

➤ **Sub Theme 2.3: Observance of client characteristics**

The data collected from the participants, all these participants said that they have observed client characteristics on themselves after the session. The participants observed characteristics of depression, aggression, voice tonality and anxiety. Based on the sub theme, the following sub themes can be analysed.

➤ **Sub Theme 2.3.1: Depression**

The data collected from the participants, two participants observed depression, after their counselling sessions, which impacted on their personal life.

**Case-1:** *“I too experienced cases of depression, which were extremely difficult to handle, after taking long hours of session made me feel depressed, with zero productivity. I used to sit in a silence, feeling helpless, being sad without any reason. Later, when my mother pointed it out, I realized what was happening”.*

**Case-4:** *“I was emotionally very weak, on the top of that I received cases with depressive symptoms, after attending long hours of sessions, I started developing depressive symptoms within myself. I had lack of sleep, and poor food intake”.*

**Case-5:** *“I don’t know what happens at times and how I end up being moody and upset. Sometimes, other who see me being upset without*

*no reason and sitting with zero productivity, they say maybe I have mood swings. I inside within myself I knew, I did not have mood swings or anything. After this pandemic period, I started feeling mental exhaustion and totally drained out. With zero productivity I have never being like this”.*

➤ **Sub Theme 2.3.2: Aggression**

The data collected from the participants, only two participants observed aggression, after their counselling sessions, which impacted on their personal life.

**Case-1:** *“I got 2 to 3 cases, which were volunteered. Those cases had aggression towards their fathers as their fathers were alcoholic and used to beat them. I had to sit silently and listen to them until their vent out their aggression during the whole sessions. Later, I got to observe it within myself. I was always a calm person, but after those sessions, I started behaving very rudely to other, I started getting angry on everyone without any reasons”.*

**Case-3:** *“I encountered a case of POCSO where the, client had aggression towards the accused who was close family members, the client vented out its aggression during the counselling sessions. It took long hours of sessions, later, even I also started behaving very rudely and got angry over small thing in my home”.*

➤ **Sub Theme 2.3.3: Voice tonality**

The data collected from the participants, only one participant observed change in voce tonality, after their counselling sessions, which impacted on their personal life.

**Case-3:** *“I had a counselling session with one of my clients who speaks very slowly, I always use to speak in a very speed voice tone, after interacting with the client for hours t, slowly I also started*



*speaking very slowly. My tone changed, but this happens after the counselling sessions and would remain for few hours later gets back to normal high speed”.*

➤ **Sub Theme 2.3.4: Anxiety**

The data collected from the participants, only one participant experienced anxiety, after their counselling sessions, which impacted on their personal life.

**Case-2:** *“Once I received a client with high level of anxiety, the client develops anxiety during the exam time. It becomes very difficult to handle the client, hours of sessions are needed to handle and help out the client, the client shows extreme level of restlessness and excessive worrying. After handling the sessions, after returning back to home I also started to show excessive worry towards small things and started to develop restlessness”.*

**Table 5.4**

**Psychological Challenge: Global Theme**

<b>GLOBAL THEME</b>	<b>MAIN THEME</b>	<b>SUB THEME</b>
Psychological Challenges	Stress	➤ Compassion Fatigue
	Counter transference	
	Observance of client characteristics	➤ Depression ➤ Aggression ➤ Voice tonality ➤ Anxiety

### **Theme 3: Ventilation process**

The data collected from 5 participants; the results showed that all the 5 participants do ventilation process either most of the time or rarely, based on their time constraints. All the participant has done ventilation process of emotions through various ways, some of them vent it out through drawing, practicing mindfulness and meditation and some of them vent it out by communicating it with others. Based on the first theme, the following sub themes can be analysed.

#### ➤ **Sub Theme 3.1: Art and expressive therapy**

The data collected from the participants, only two participants vent out their emotions through expressive techniques like drawing and writing diary.

**Case-4:** *“I love drawing, whenever I need to vent out my emotions, I sit somewhere peacefully and draw whatever comes in my mind”.*

**Case-5:** *“I have a habit of writing personal diary entry, which helps me to vent out my emotions and I feel good. This helps me to not take my professional things into my personal life, but at times professional life and personal life gets mixed up together”.*

#### ➤ **Sub Theme 3.2: Mindfulness and Meditation**

The data collected from the participants, only two participants vent out their emotions through practicing meditation and relaxation techniques.

**Case-2:** *“I also practice mindfulness and meditation process, which helps me to vent out my emotions”.*

**Case-1:** *“I sometimes practice relaxation techniques and breathing exercises, which is also done as a part of my expression of emotions”.*

➤ **Sub Theme 3.3: Effective Communication**

The data collected from the participants, only three participants vent out their emotions through effective communication, by communicating it with close family members or with friends or with colleagues.

**Case-1:** *After the counselling session, when I feel to vent out my emotions, I sit silently and prayed to God, which makes me feel better”. “Even after that if I don’t feel good, I would communicate it with other, my close ones, at the end when I communicate it I feel better within myself”.*

**Case-2:** *“I do not do the ventilation process every time, but at some cases, I do the ventilation process, if I don’t feel good, I would talk out with the close friends or with my close family members”.*

**Case-3:** *“Whenever, I feel to vent out my emotions, I would communicate it with other, like my close family members are with my close friends, or else I would communicate with my colleagues”.*

**Table 5.5**

**Coping Strategies: Global Theme**

GLOBAL THEME	MAIN THEME
Ventilation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Art and Expressive Therapy</li> <li>➤ Mindfulness and Meditation</li> <li>➤ Effective Communication</li> </ul>

The analysis of the data collected reveals how the participants of the study, faced various professional challenges like role conflict, difficulty in handling cases, and difficulty in providing psycho education for parents. This also revealed, how participants of the study, faced various psychological challenges like stress, countertransference, depression, aggression and so on. Some professional challenges like crossover, time constraints were common in all participants. Some cases found difficulty in handling cases especially POCSO cases. While some found difficulty in providing psycho education to parents. While on the other side some psychological challenges like stress and counter transference was common in the participants. Few participants observed client characteristics like depression, aggression, change in voice tonality and anxiety.

The researcher understood that the COVID pandemic brought a drastic change which affected the professional and personal quality of the counsellors. Even though the counsellor faced these issues and challenges in common a major increase in these issues and challenges was observed after the COVID pandemic. After the pandemic, an increase in the number of cases was observed, which lead to a difficulty in handling it as the counsellor faced crossover, difficulty of handling cases and time constraints, which led to a decline in the professional quality of a counsellor. Similarly, this also affected the psychological part of the counsellors, as the counsellors also went through the pandemic situations, which affected their mental health; this also brought a decline in the personal life.

# **CHAPTER VI: FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS**

## **6.1 FINDINGS**

### **1. To know the socio-demographic profile of the participants.**

- All the participants are highly qualified, with a degree in either psychology or counselling.
- All the participants were female and had age above 30 and good number of work experience.

### **1. What are the professional challenges faced by counsellors in dealing with emerging issues of adolescents during the post covid period?**

- There was no separate teacher assigned to take role of a counsellor.
- The participants were school counsellors and also subjects teachers (psychology and value education). There was a difficulty in handling both these roles. At times, the participants had to give much more priority to the role of a subject teacher as compared to the role of school counsellor.
- The participants experienced time constraints, as there was no separate period for counselling, nor specific time slot allotted for counselling sessions. This brought a lot of difficulty in dealing with the cases as the participants were not just school counsellors but also subject teachers.
- To conduct a counselling session, it is difficulty as the school counsellors has to go through a lot of formalities and fulfil the protocol, which is time consuming. For school counsellor cum subject teacher, adhering to institutional protocol was a professional challenge.
- During the pandemic period, students received mental health awareness during their online classes, which resulted in students approaching counsellors without any inhibition.

- After the pandemic period, many legal cases were reported. POCSO cases was reported the most during the counselling sessions, and fulfilling these legal formalities was mentioned as a professional challenge by the participants, as so many cases were reported at a time.
- The participants mentioned their difficulty in providing psycho education to parents as compared to children.

## **2. What are the psychological challenges faced by adolescent school counsellors?**

- All the participants have faced stress, in their work time. After the pandemic, when the schools reopened, an increase in the cases for counselling was reported, due to which work stress was a major psychological challenge factor.
- The participants were so much psychologically affected that they lost the ability to express empathy. All the participants experienced compassion fatigue during the counselling sessions.
- Long hours of counselling sessions lead the participants feel mentally drained out and emotionally weaker, without any proper rest, with that feeling at times the participants had to continue with taking the classes for the students.
- After the pandemic period, the behaviour of the students changed that, during the counselling sessions, the participants experienced counter transference, which further affected the participants in their personal life.
- Due to these psychological challenges, the participants started observing client characteristic on the participants.
- The participants expressed depressive symptoms and zero productivity after the counselling sessions, which was observed in their personal space.

- Expression of rude behaviour was observed on the participants after handling cases of aggression, which affected in their personal space.
- Other than these, depressive and aggressive symptoms, anxiety was also observed among the participants, which was remain for a temporary period of time.
- All these symptoms were either observed by the participants itself or by any other close members of the participants.

### **3. To determine the coping strategies of adolescent school counsellor.**

- The ventilation process of emotions, for the counsellors was well followed, but still after the pandemic the following up of ventilation process of emotions has decreased.
- The participants followed art and expressive therapy as a part of ventilation process of emotions after the counselling sessions.
- Other than these, art and expressive therapy the participants also followed meditation and mindfulness as a part of ventilation process.
- The participants consider effective communication to be the best technique to ventilation process of emotions.

## **6.2 SUGGESTIONS**

- In the school curriculum, a special importance should be mentioned for counselling.



- A specific time slot should be mentioned in the school time table specifically as counselling period.
- Separate teachers should be assigned for counselling and subject teaching, no teachers should be balancing both the works together.
- School counsellor should be provided with special awareness sessions on importance of self-care.
- The schools should appoint a professionally qualified counsellor for adolescents.
- School counsellors who are facing psychological challenges, should take frequent breaks in between the sessions, which would improve the clinical efficiency.

### 6.3 SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS

The possible social work implications, **Advocacy** would play an important role in implementing new laws and policies which can be made to ensure the safety and well-being of the counsellors. **Education** through, workshops, awareness sessions or training on self-care techniques, and how to handle stress management can play a vital role in uplifting the well-being of the counsellors. Other than these, methods at individual level, counsellors can practice **Relaxation techniques** through practice of yoga, breathing exercise, mindfulness and mediation as a part of self-care. At peer level, **Group Work** can be conducted to enhance oneself for self-development and growth. More **Social Work Research** should be conducted in order to know the professional and psychological challenges faced by the counsellor. Only through latest studies, the new updates of issues and challenges can be traced out, which would help in enhancing their well-being.

## **CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION**

## **CONCLUSION**

According to the data collected from the research, it was resulted that, the schools during the covid pandemic provided mental health awareness classes to the students through online. After the schools reopened, many students approached the counsellors without any inhibition, which further resulted in workload for the counsellors as they were not just school counsellors, but subject teachers as well.

The participants were also the ones who overcome the barriers of COVID pandemic, just as like the adolescents. The adolescents age period is a transitional period. This transitional period got affected during the pandemic period. All these dimensions of an adolescent were left upside down.

After the schools reopened, there were many cases for counselling, as the school counsellors were subject teachers, they had to do overwork, at times had to give more priority to the role of subject teacher. With these professional and psychological challenges, there clinical efficiency and quality of personal life was declined. Even though the participants tried out ventilation process techniques, still it did not reach up to the quality.

The research works shows the professional and psychological challenges faced by adolescent's counsellor during the post covid.

There are certain social work implications like, conducting awareness session for self-care practice to be followed by the school counsellors, and the importance of self-care. Other than that, practicing relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation and mindfulness. More of social work research studies would be promoted so that the challenges and issues faced by the counsellors in the new normal could be addressed.

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# **ANNEXURE**

## **ANNEXURE**

### **A) Socio-demographic profile of the participants.**

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Educational Qualification
4. Marital Status
5. Years of work experience

### **B) What are the professional challenges faced by counsellors in dealing with emerging issues of adolescents during the post covid period?**

1. Adolescents have experienced high level of anxiety, depression and stress. As an adolescent school counsellor were you able to address the issues of students to the school authorities? How challenging it was for you to raise the issue.
2. Did you encounter any cases of addiction (screen addiction or substance addiction)? If yes, how challenging it was for you to handle it, and did you refer the cases to any de-addiction centres.
3. In your opinion, do you think the adolescents were more cooperative as compared to post COVID period? How difficult it was for you to build a rapport with your client.
4. How did you help your client in developing a healthy coping strategies, resilience, and emotional regulation techniques to navigate the post COVID challenges, effectively.

5. Are there any other professional challenges, which has affected your role and job duties as a school counsellor after the pandemic period.

**C) What are the psychological challenges faced by adolescent school counsellors?**

1. What was your psychological state when you experienced stress during or after your counselling sessions?
2. How challenging it was for you to handle counter transference?
3. Did you observe any client characteristics and mannerisms within yourself, after the counselling sessions with your client?

**D) To determine the coping strategies of adolescent school counsellor.**

1. How did you vent out your emotions after the counselling sessions?  
Explain your ventilation process briefly.