



# Evaluating the Guidance Needs of Secondary School Students: An Empirical Investigation in Shimla City of Himachal Pradesh, India

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**Abstract:** The contemporary world is undergoing rapid transformations, leading to intricate challenges such as conflicts, frustration, and unhealthy competition. These complexities contribute to a value crisis within the social system, affecting personal values, family dynamics, and fostering maladjustment among adolescents. Against this backdrop, the present research delves into the guidance needs of secondary school students in Shimla city. The study uses a descriptive research design, employing the Guidance Need Inventory (GNI) for data collection. The study encompasses the entire student population of arts and science streams of Government Senior Secondary Schools operating in Shimla city, with a sample size of 240 students selected through a simple random sampling technique. Descriptive statistics reveal uniformly high levels of guidance needs across all areas for all students.

Intriguingly, the results indicate that guidance needs do not significantly differ based on gender and academic stream, except for the sociological part in relation to their stream. The findings underscore the pressing need for guidance programs within schools, emphasizing the importance of employing trained professionals to address the diverse and high-level guidance needs of students. In light of the ever-evolving challenges in today's society, the study con-

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**Prabhat Mittal and Rajeev Bansal** (eds), Social Development and Governance: Innovations in Education, Technology & Management (ISBN: 978-81-966500-9-4)

[https://doi.org/10.48001/978-81-966500-9-4\\_3](https://doi.org/10.48001/978-81-966500-9-4_3)

tributes valuable insights into crafting targeted interventions that can positively impact the physical, social, psychological, educational, and vocational development of students, fostering their overall efficiency and well-being.

**Keywords:** Guidance Need, Secondary School, Student, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

### 3.1 Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of contemporary education, the holistic development of students stands as a paramount concern, requiring a nuanced understanding of their guidance needs. The intricacies of the modern world, marked by rapid societal changes, technological advancements, and evolving career landscapes, have given rise to multifaceted challenges affecting the academic, social, psychological, and vocational dimensions of students' lives. Recognizing the imperative role of guidance in navigating these complexities, this research delves into the comprehensive exploration of the guidance needs of school students.

The term 'guidance needs' encapsulates a spectrum of requirements extending beyond traditional academic support. It encompasses the students' quest for direction in educational pursuits, assistance in navigating intricate career pathways, and support in managing the multifarious challenges associated with personal development and social interactions. As students grapple with an ever-expanding array of choices, societal expectations, and personal aspirations, the role of guidance becomes pivotal in fostering their resilience, adaptability, and overall well-being.

This research is not merely an exploration of theoretical constructs; rather, it aspires to unravel the practical dimensions of guidance needs through empirical investigation. By focusing on school students, the study homes in on a critical phase of development where individuals shape their identities, formulate academic goals, and begin to discern the contours of their future careers. Understanding the intricacies of guidance needs during this pivotal period holds profound implications for the efficacy of educational systems, the well-being of students, and the broader societal fabric.

To navigate the complexities of this inquiry, the research employs a descriptive research

design, aiming to provide a comprehensive and detailed account of the guidance needs prevalent among school students. Through systematic data collection and analysis, the study aspires to contribute nuanced insights that transcend conventional paradigms, fostering a deeper understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of students' guidance needs. As the educational landscape continually evolves, the findings of this research aspire to inform the development of tailored guidance programs that resonate with the evolving needs of school students, thus helping with their holistic development and ensuring their readiness for the challenges of the future.

## 3.2 Literature Review

In the evolving landscape of education, understanding the nuanced needs of students has become imperative for crafting effective guidance and counselling programs. This literature review delves into various studies conducted globally, shedding light on the diverse challenges faced by students at different educational levels. A chronological synthesis of these studies reveals overarching trends and specific nuances in different settings.

Bishop et al. (1998) analysed survey data from 803 college students in the United States. The study revealed that over half of students sought help with time management and career uncertainty. Thirty-five to fifty percent needed help with study skills, test anxiety, fear of failure, depression, and anxiety. Gender differences were noted, with females expressing more concern about career choices, life partners, and fear of failure than males. The research highlighted common challenges faced by college students and emphasized gender-based variations.

Güneri et al. (2003) conducted a two-part study of 599 Turkish university students, revealing differing needs based on Grade Point Average (GPA), gender, and age. The research incorporated surveys and interviews with campus counselling staff, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in the existing counselling model. Recommendations included revising the counselling model to enhance coordination and organizational structure.

Watts & Sultana (2004) synthesized three coordinated reviews of national career guidance policies conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD),

the European Commission, and the World Bank. The article highlighted differences between high-income and middle-income countries, emphasizing the need for stronger mechanisms within countries to develop a vision and strategy for delivering accessible career guidance throughout individuals' lives. The research underscored career guidance as a public good aligned with policy goals related to learning, the labour market, and social equity.

Kesici, (2007) explored the guidance and counselling needs of middle school students in grades 6-8 using qualitative research methods. Semi-structured interviews with 90 students identified needs related to study skills, exam anxiety, career exploration, and interpersonal issues. Differences emerged by grade, emphasizing the importance of implementing guidance programs tailored to developmental stages.

Kesici (2008) investigated the guidance and counselling needs of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students in Turkey through interviews with 37 parents. The study identified diverse needs, including effective study methods, motivation, career awareness, social skills, and addressing general adolescent issues. Recommendations focused on starting school counselling programs targeting learning skills, motivation, and career awareness.

Dogar et al. (2011) surveyed 60 secondary school girls in Pakistan to assess their needs across educational, vocational, social, emotional, and behavioural domains. The study identified the highest needs in career choice (45 per cent) and emotional guidance (40 per cent), highlighting the necessity for tailored vocational and emotional counselling programs for this population.

Sculli (2011) discussed the role of needs assessments in comprehensive school counselling programs (CSCPs) and the ASCA National Model in assessing the counselling needs of high school students. The article emphasized the importance of needs assessments in understanding and meeting the counselling needs of high school students.

Ghamari (2013) surveyed 512 secondary school students in Iran, revealing top needs across occupational, educational, physical, psychological, and social domains. The study indicated consistent needs across different academic tracks but identified higher psychological needs among urban students compared to their rural counterparts. The findings suggested the importance of tailoring guidance programs based on subgroup differences.

Parhar et al. (2013) studied the guidance needs of rural and urban secondary school students in Jalandhar district of Punjab state in India. Using the Guidance Needs Inventory (GNI), the research found that rural students exhibited higher mean scores of guidance needs compared to urban students across various areas. The study provided insights into the specific needs of secondary school students in different settings.

Chircu (2014) compared career counselling needs among 962 technical college students in Romania across three academic years. First-year students were primarily interested in further education options, second-year students focused on salaries and work conditions, while third-year students were concerned with finding a job after graduation. The study demonstrated that counselling needs varied based on the students' academic progression.

Valentina & Singh (2014) examined the guidance needs of secondary school adolescents in Imphal district of Manipur state in India, with a focus on gender differences. The research revealed variations in guidance needs between boys and girls, emphasizing the importance of targeted guidance programs to support the overall development of adolescents.

Seeja & Antony (2015) provided a comprehensive overview of research conducted on the identification of guidance needs among higher secondary school students in Kerala. The study used a normative survey method and highlighted significant guidance needs among students, particularly in educational, personal, and vocational domains.

Sharma (2015) investigated the educational guidance needs of 140 elementary school students with learning disabilities in Himachal Pradesh. The study revealed an average level of educational guidance needs among all students, with no significant differences seen between rural and urban students. The findings emphasized the need for comprehensive guidance programs in elementary schools.

Özmen et al. (2016) investigated students' perceptions of counselling services in primary schools, involving 512 fifth-grade students in North Cyprus. The study used a School Guidance Services Scale (SGSS) and highlighted students' perception of insufficient counselling services, emphasizing the need for improvements in primary school counselling.

Valentina & Singh (2016) presented findings from an analytical study conducted in Imphal district of Manipur state in India, analysing the guidance needs of adolescents across differ-

ent education streams. The study involved 600 participants from diverse socio-demographic backgrounds and highlighted a consistent need for guidance in physical, social, psychological, educational, and vocational domains among adolescents.

Negi (2017) investigated the educational and psychological guidance needs of 120 college students in Himachal Pradesh, India. While the study found no significant differences based on gender or area alone, it identified interaction effects between gender and area on both educational and psychological guidance needs. The study emphasized the potential benefits of tailored guidance programs considering gender and background intersections.

Rao (2017) explored the guidance needs of high school students in India, emphasizing the significance of professional guidance in informed decision-making. The study investigated problems faced by students and examined potential influences of familial variables. The research underscored the crucial role of guidance services in mitigating academic difficulties and enhancing overall student well-being.

Balci (2018) conducted a quantitative survey to explore the career guidance needs of 241 middle school students in Turkey. The study identified that over half of students expressed a need for assistance in managing time, dealing with career uncertainty, improving study habits, and handling test anxiety. Additionally, over 35 percent reported requirements for support in addressing fear of failure, depression, anxiety, assertiveness, and other related issues. The findings provided valuable insights into the specific guidance needs of middle school students in Turkey.

Keshf et al. (2012) explored the career guidance and counselling needs of 18 Pakistani undergraduates through in-depth qualitative interviews. Thematic analysis identified seven key needs, including self-awareness, information/guidance, direction, practical exposure, informed decision-making, emotional management, and meeting academic needs. The study emphasized the importance of proactive guidance-seeking behaviour among students and suggested tailored institutional offerings to address identified needs.

Ramli et al. (2021) examined the need for a website-based reality counselling self-help model to alleviate academic stress among high school students in Malang Raya. The study surveyed high school counsellors and identified key characteristics, content, materials, and ob-

jectives for the proposed model. The findings suggested the necessity of such a model to address academic stress and improve the mental health of high school students.

This chronological review of these studies underscores the complexity of students' guidance needs, the necessity for tailored interventions, and the importance of considering cultural, geographical, and developmental variations in designing effective counselling programs. The collective findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by students at different educational levels and in diverse geographical contexts, providing a foundation for the development of targeted and comprehensive guidance services.

### **3.3 Research Methodology**

#### **3.3.1 Research Gap**

The existing literature reviews primarily focus on higher education institutions and secondary schools in diverse international settings, providing a comprehensive understanding of guidance needs. However, there is a noticeable research gap concerning the specific guidance needs of government secondary school students in Shimla city of Himachal Pradesh in India. The current studies largely omit the unique socio-cultural context, academic environment, and challenges faced by students in this region. A new study in Shimla city could bridge this gap by examining the distinctive needs of government secondary school students, offering targeted insights to enhance guidance programs tailored to their local context, thus contributing to the existing body of knowledge.

#### **3.3.2 Research Objectives**

Based on the provided hypotheses, the research objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate and identify the levels of guidance needs among government secondary school students.

2. To assess and compare the guidance needs of government secondary school students in various area of guidance based on their academic streams and gender.
3. To synthesize the findings and offer practical recommendations for the development and implementation of tailored guidance programs in government schools, considering academic streams and gender differences.

These research objectives aim to systematically investigate and analyse the hypotheses, providing a comprehensive understanding of the guidance needs among government school students and informing the development of targeted support initiatives.

### 3.3.3 Sample Design

The study followed a quantitative approach to research. The targeted population for this study comprised of all students of arts and science streams of Government Senior Secondary Schools in Shimla city. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample of 240 students 120 male (60 arts & 60 science) and 120 females (60 arts & 60 science) studying in 12th class from six Government Senior Secondary School of Shimla city of Himachal Pradesh. Table 3.1 describes the sample distribution in the study area.

Table 3.1: School-Stream-Sex wise Distribution of the Sample

Sr. No.	School Name	Arts		Science		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
1	Kasumpati	3	10	4	22	39
2	Sanjauli	7	9	11	11	38
3	Summer Hill	9	12	4	6	31
4	Totu	13	19	11	11	54
5	Phagli	9	10	10	10	39
6	Lal Pani	19	-	20	-	39
<b>Total</b>		60	60	60	60	240

Source: Field Survey.



### **3.3.4 Data Collection and Analytical Tools**

Data was collected via interview method in September 2023. For the collection of data Guidance Needs Inventory (GNI) developed by Grewal (1982) was used to identify the strength of guidance needs of individual in five areas, namely physical, sociological, psychological, educational and vocational. For data entry and analysis, Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics have been used respectively. Descriptive as well as inferential statistics has been used to analyse the processed data. Analysed data has been presented in the cross-tabular form.

## **3.4 Results and Discussion**

### **3.4.1 Identifications of Level of Guidance Needs among Students regarding their Stream and Sex**

Table 3.2 reveals significant variations in guidance needs among students of arts and science streams across various areas. In the arts stream, most students require guidance in educational (57.5%) and vocational (57.5%) areas, followed by sociological (50%) and psychological (50%) areas. Physical guidance needs are relatively lower (44.2%). In comparison, science students exhibit a higher need for guidance in sociological (37.5%) and psychological (37.5%) aspects. Educational (58.3%) and vocational (54.2%) guidance needs are also substantial. However, physical guidance requirements are significantly lower (6.7%). Interestingly, both streams show a minimal need for very low-level guidance across all areas.

Overall, the findings suggest a crucial role for guidance services in catering to diverse needs of students from different streams. While arts students require more support in educational and vocational areas, science students seek assistance with sociological and psychological aspects. Tailored interventions and resources should be developed to address these specific needs and enhance student well-being and academic success.

Table 3.3 indicates that, for both sexes, most students exhibited low to high guidance needs in all evaluated domains. Around thirty-two to forty-seven percent of males and nearly twenty-

eight to thirty-eight percent of females showed low level of guidance needs required, while about 42 to 60 percent of males and nearly 45 to 63 percent of females showed the requirement for high level of guidance needs. This suggests that the majority of students, regardless of sex, have modest to substantial advising needs across the board.

However, some variations between sexes emerge within the very low and very high categories. Slightly more females (11.7%) than males (10%) reported very high educational guidance needs. Additionally, nearly twice as many males (18.3%) as females (10.4%) signified very high vocational support required. Yet when viewed comprehensively, both sexes showed largely comparable distributions of predominantly low to high advising necessities in most areas evaluated. Only minor differences were evidenced in the outlier groups, implying that overall guidance needs are relatively similar between male and female students.

Table 3.2: Level of Guidance Needs among Students regarding their Stream

Areas	Stream	Very Low	Low	High	Very High	Total
Physical	Arts	5 (4.2%)	40 (33.3%)	53 (44.2%)	22 (18.3%)	120 (100%)
	Science	8 (6.7%)	42 (35%)	62 (51.7%)	8 (6.7%)	120 (100%)
Sociological	Arts	6 (5%)	45 (37.5%)	60 (50%)	9 (7.5%)	120 (100%)
	Science	18 (15%)	46 (38.3%)	45 (37.5%)	11 (9.2%)	120 (100%)
Psychological	Arts	8 (6.7%)	48 (40%)	60 (50%)	4 (3.3%)	120 (100%)
	Science	11 (9.2%)	54 (45%)	45 (37.5%)	10 (8.3%)	120 (100%)
Educational	Arts	1 (0.8%)	38 (31.7%)	69 (57.5%)	12 (10%)	120 (100%)
	Science	2 (1.7%)	34 (28.3%)	70 (58.3%)	14 (11.7%)	120 (100%)
Vocational	Arts	3 (2.5%)	29 (24.2%)	69 (57.5%)	19 (15.8%)	120 (100%)
	Science	8 (6.7%)	31 (25.8%)	65 (54.2%)	16 (13.3%)	120 (100%)
Overall	Arts	1 (0.8%)	35 (29.2%)	74 (61.7%)	10 (8.3%)	120 (100%)
	Science	2 (1.7%)	43 (35.8%)	71 (59.2%)	4 (3.3%)	120 (100%)

Source: Authors' own calculations. Note: Percentages are given in parentheses.

While some small variances exist between sexes in the very low and very high categories for certain domains, the majority of both male and female students signify remarkably analogous

guidance support levels across physical, sociological, psychological, educational, vocational, and overall needs. The bulk of both sexes demonstrate low to high level of guidance needs required, with only subtle differences in the extremes.

Table 3.3: Level of Guidance Needs among Students regarding their Sex

Areas of Guidance Needs	Sex	Very Low	Low	High	Very High
<b>Physical</b>	Male	4 (3.3)	39 (32.5)	61 (50.8)	16 (13.3)
	Female	9 (7.5)	43 (35.8)	54 (45)	14 (11.7)
<b>Sociological</b>	Male	9 (7.5)	48 (40)	52 (43.3)	11 (9.2)
	Female	15 (12.5)	43 (35.8)	53 (44.2)	9 (7.5)
<b>Psychological</b>	Male	8 (6.7)	56 (46.7)	50 (41.7)	6 (5)
	Female	11 (9.2)	46 (38.3)	55 (45.8)	8 (6.7)
<b>Educational</b>	Male	1 (0.8)	38 (31.7)	69 (57.5)	12 (10)
	Female	2 (1.7)	34 (28.3)	70 (58.3)	14 (11.7)
<b>Vocational</b>	Male	6 (5)	33 (27.5)	59 (49.2)	22 (18.3)
	Female	5 (4.2)	27 (22.5)	75 (62.5)	13 (10.8)
<b>Vocational (Additional)</b>	Male	2 (1.7)	38 (31.7)	72 (60)	8 (6.7)
	Female	1 (0.8)	40 (33.3)	73 (60.8)	6 (5)

Source: Authors' own calculations. Note: Percentages are given in parentheses.

### 3.4.2 Comparison of Guidance Needs of Students regarding their Stream and Sex

Table 3.4 reveals a nuanced picture of student guidance needs based on their chosen academic stream. Significant differences emerged in the areas of sociological and educational guidance. Arts students reported significantly higher perceived need for sociological guidance ( $M = 32.21$ ) compared to science students ( $M = 29.28$ ),  $t(238) = 2.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . In contrast, science students expressed slightly higher needs for educational guidance ( $M = 43.93$ ) compared to arts students ( $M = 43.19$ ), though this difference was not statistically significant. No significant differences

were observed in the remaining areas of physical, psychological, and vocational guidance needs between the two groups.

Table 3.4: Comparison of Guidance Needs of Students regarding their Stream

Areas	Stream	N	M	SD	SEM	t-value
Physical	Arts	120	23.17	6.98	0.64	1.80
	Science	120	21.59	6.58	0.60	
Sociological	Arts	120	32.21	9.04	0.83	2.19**
	Science	120	29.28	11.50	1.05	
Psychological	Arts	120	27.04	8.02	0.73	1.14
	Science	120	25.79	9.01	0.82	
Educational	Arts	120	43.19	11.25	1.03	-0.50
	Science	120	43.93	11.52	1.05	
Vocational	Arts	120	18.98	4.95	0.45	0.19
	Science	120	18.85	5.80	0.53	
Overall	Arts	120	144.59	33.92	3.10	1.13
	Science	120	139.44	36.67	3.35	

Significant at \*\*\*1%, \*\*5%, and \*10%.  $\alpha = 0.05$  and d.f. = 238. N = Number of Observations, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, and SEM = Standard Error of Mean. Source: Authors' own calculations.

Overall, the data suggests that while both arts and science students require guidance across various domains, their specific needs may differ depending on their chosen stream. Further investigation is needed to understand the factors underlying these differences and tailor guidance programs. Table 3.5 compares the guidance needs of students regarding their sex. No significant differences were found between males and females in all five areas of guidance needs. The t-values ranged from -0.38 to 1.29, which are all well below the critical value of 1.97 at  $\alpha = 0.05$  with 238 degrees of freedom. This suggests that the observed differences between males and females are likely due to chance and not indicative of any true gender-related differences in guidance needs.

Students from arts and science streams exhibit distinct guidance needs. Arts students re-

quire more support in educational and vocational areas, but science students seek help with sociological and psychological aspects. Overall, the majority of both arts and science students have low to high guidance needs across various domains.

Gender also plays a role in shaping guidance needs, although the differences are more subtle. While males show slightly higher needs for vocational guidance and females for educational support, these discrepancies are minor and not statistically significant. Both male and female students show comparable distributions of guidance needs, with most requiring low to high levels of support across all assessed areas.

These findings highlight the importance of tailoring guidance services to cater to the diverse needs of students from different academic streams and sexes. Further research is necessary to understand the underlying factors influencing these variations and develop more effective and personalized interventions.

Table 3.5: Comparison of Guidance Needs of Students regarding their Sex

Areas of Guidance Needs	Sex	N	M	SD	SEM	t-value
Physical	Male	120	22.93	6.40	0.58	1.24
	Female	120	21.83	7.18	0.66	
Sociological	Male	120	31.21	10.10	0.92	0.69
	Female	120	30.28	10.77	0.98	
Psychological	Male	120	26.21	8.21	0.75	-0.38
	Female	120	26.63	8.87	0.81	
Educational	Male	120	44.50	11.49	1.05	1.29
	Female	120	42.62	11.22	1.02	
Vocational	Male	120	19.06	5.74	0.52	0.41
	Female	120	18.78	5.02	0.46	
Overall	Male	120	143.90	34.45	3.15	0.83
	Female	120	140.13	36.26	3.31	

Significant at \*\*\*1%, \*\*5%, and \*10%.  $\alpha = 0.05$  and d.f. = 238. Source: Authors' own calculations. Note: N = Number of Observations, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, and SEM = Standard Error of Mean.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The findings of the study shed light on the significant and uniform high-level guidance needs among secondary school students in Shimla city. Notably, both male and female students in government schools exhibit similar levels of guidance needs across various domains, highlighting a shared need for comprehensive guidance despite gender. The guidance needs are consistently similar across academic streams, except in the sociological area, suggesting a nuanced aspect of divergence based on the chosen stream.

Based on the insights derived from this research, several recommendations can be proposed to enhance the guidance and counselling landscape in schools. Foremost, school organizations should actively advocate for and recommend suitable programs to policy planners. These programs should ensure the longevity and effectiveness of guidance initiatives within educational institutions. To achieve this, the employment of trained professionals is crucial. These professionals should not only possess the qualifications but should also be provided with the requisite facilities and structural support to effectively manage and deliver guidance services in schools.

Recognizing the importance of informed decision-making in academic and vocational pursuits, students should be equipped with exhaustive and up-to-date information about new courses and their future prospects. Dissemination of this information can be achieved through collaboration with state governments and leveraging mass media channels such as radio, television, and bulletins. Additionally, organizing seminars, discussions, and orientation programs for students focused on educational and vocational interests can prove instrumental. These initiatives have the potential to enhance students' self-concept, stimulate their interests, and ultimately contribute to their overall personal and academic development.

In essence, implementing these suggestions can pave the way for a more robust and effective guidance framework in schools, addressing the diverse needs of students and preparing them for a successful and fulfilling future.

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