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PARENTS' OPINION ABOUT THE CHALLENGES FACED BY ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

The present article intends to describe the mothers' knowledge on the challenges faced by adolescents. Most of the parents do not recognize the issues of their children. Children express stress in their behaviours. Adolescents face various issues at family, school, and society, such as poverty, adjustment problem, broken family, frequent fights at home, death of the parents, single child, no place to play, homework issues, difficulty in understanding the lesson, and other developmental issues. If suitable help is not provided in time, it affects their future as an adult. The formal academic system may not permit a teacher to handle children with psycho- social issues. The teachers' role is limited to classroom teaching. This article makes an effort to assess the knowledge of mothers about the challenges faced by adolescents. The researcher has collected data from the mothers of children, who are studying in the high schools of the selected schools of Bengaluru using the questionnaire method.

Keywords: Adolescents; Parents; Challenges.

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1. Introduction

Today's children's are the future citizens. Children need a healthy and peaceful environment to grow. School and home are the places where children spend most of their time. It is the responsibility of these two institutions to provide a favourable environment for the healthy growth of the child. Parents and the teachers play a significant role in the life of the children. Earlier, we had the joint family system where people were there to fulfil the needs of the children. Gradually, due of technological development and modernization, the role of social institutions changed. These changes led both advantages and disadvantages in both

environments. Today's children are under pressure to excel in academics and extracurricular activities. Changing roles of women at home, breakdown of the joint family system, single child concept and technological advancement are influencing the life of children also. The role of parents cannot easily be explained. The society and social institutions expect too much from them. A parent may be good in fulfilling the physical needs for their child. However, understanding the children and helping them might have been considered as an additional responsibility. Parents require enough skills to handle it.

Adolescents are faced with a tremendous number of developmental tasks. We tend to think primarily of the biological changes that the adolescents are experiencing, such as puberty and social changes. To fully understand adolescence, it is critical to understand the diversity of changes that adolescents experience beyond the biological and social. These changes include emerging sexuality, acquiring interpersonal skills for dealing with members of the opposite sex, and intimate relationships (Dworkin & Gengler, 2005). Many adults think that children do not have any problems. We need to understand that most of the families do not teach life skills to the children. So children fail to manage their problems. Today's families are very complex in structure and day- to- day schedules of families are complicated and lead to stress in family members. Adults' family stress impacts on children too. Children express stress in their behaviour (Ravi, 2007).

Adolescents face various issues at family, school and society, such as poverty, adjustment problem, broken family, frequent fights at home, death of the parents, single child, no place to play, homework issues, difficulty in understanding the lesson, and other developmental issues. If suitable help is not provided to them in time, it affects their future as an adult. The formal academic system may not permit a teacher to handle children with psycho- social issues. A teacher's role is limited to classroom teaching. A good quality of life of the child includes good housing, health services, financial stability, family environment, social network; practical coping skills, etc. Ninety percent of the children in India have a poor quality life. Child and adolescent mental health have given less importance. The overall development of any country is dependent on the mental development of its children. Alcohol and drug abuse in children has increased tenfold. Poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, poor health and hygiene are adversely affecting millions of children in India (Roy, 2011). Children living in families characterized by unemployment, substance abuse, inadequate healthcare, poor quality child care, and high level of child abuse and neglect can lead to higher level of impairment in the children's social, behavioural, and academic functioning. Similarly, poverty also leads to serious social and personal issues (Webb, 2003). Communication within the family is particularly important during adolescent years, especially concerning reproductive health issues. Family communication affects the adolescent's identity formation and role-taking ability. Adolescents who experience the support of their families feel free to explore identity issues. Discussions between parents and children significantly facilitate the development of higher levels of moral reasoning in adolescents (Nundwe, 2012).

2. Review of Literature

For all children, the quality of home learning environment promotes more intellectual and social development (Churchil, 2011). The significance of parental involvement in a child's education has been documented for the past forty years. Parental efforts to help the child with homework,

and attending parents' workshop and conferences have a positive impact on the children's academic, personal, and social well-being. Parental involvement positively impacts on the academic skill of the child. As parents increase their interaction with school, faculty, and other parents, it helps to build appropriate behaviour in the children and increases social control (Grubbs, 2013).

A study conducted by Aunola et al. (2000) on the influence of parenting styles on academic achievement of adolescents identified four types of parenting styles such as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Adolescents from authoritative families applied most adaptive achievement strategies and adolescent from neglectful families applied maladaptive strategies. It was found that there is a relationship between different styles of parenting and academic achievement of the adolescents. Bogels et al. (2011) highlighted that both fathers and mothers influence in the area of social anxiety among adolescents.

There is association between family instability and problem behaviour among children, when the child moves to first grade. Instability is also related to family structure during the time of child birth. Children born in cohabiting families, single mother families, and two biological married parent families experience instability. Children who experience instability present behavioural problems. Studies have found that family instability varied by family structure during time of birth, and the emotional, social, and material resources in the family (Cavanagh & Huston, 2006). Lack of parenting skills, unrealistic expectations about children's behaviour and capabilities, difficulty to control and manage anger, feelings, and stress, frequent family crises, and drug or alcohol abuse leads to parental child abuse (Silva, 2001).

Children who experience frequent verbal aggression and severe physical violence from parents show higher rates of physical aggression, delinquency, and interpersonal problems than other children (Vissing et al., 1991). Behavioural, emotional, and functional problems of children of depressed mothers living in low income, high risk urban environment are higher than those of children whose mothers do not have depression (Riley, 2009).

Marital conflict estimated change in children's behaviour. Boys were found to be more affected than girls (Jenkins et al., 2005). Domestic spousal violence against women has wide ranging mental health implications. A study was carried out in rural, urban non- slum, and urban slum areas from India for 9938 women in the age group of 15-49 years using the questionnaire method. It was found that there were four type of physical violence such as slap, hit, kick or beat were at increased risk of poor mental health. This may influence the physical, mental and social well-being of the children (Kumar et al., 2005).

Children with adult supervision were less likely skip school, use alcohol, steal or hurt someone (Aizer, 2004). Parent-child communication about tobacco and alcohol use is important to the child who uses these substances. Both parent and adolescents were interviewed for the study. Parents' communication varied based on the family characteristics; it included parents' substance use and mother's education level. The study also found that parent and child communication was not related to initiation of smoking or drinking, they speak more to rules and discipline (Ennett, 2001). Nash et al. (2005) studied parental monitoring and their communication with children and

found considerable amount of parental disapproval and less involvement associated with significant indirect effects on adolescent alcohol use.

A study by Davis (2005) found that socio- economic factors were indirectly related to children's academic achievement through parents' beliefs and behaviours, but it affected differently for various racial groups. Parents' year of schooling was also found to be a significant socio-economic factor to be taken in to consideration. Family background characteristics play an important role rather than income in determining child outcomes (Balu, 1999).

Parents' academic involvement, behavioural problems, achievement and aspirations was examined by Hill et al. (2004). The study was carried out with students in the age group of 12 to 16 year old. It was found that parent academic involvement in 7th grade affects negatively, to 8th grade as behavioural problems, and positively to 11th grade aspirations. The study found that academic involvement of highly educated parents leads to fewer behavioural problems and academic involvement of lower educated parents' results in positive aspiration among students, but not in the area of behaviour and achievement.

Parents' academic involvement serves different purposes among the student community. They can help in their children's achievement by positively involving in their life. They can help to structure the learning habit of children. They need to be more supportive rather than controlling. Various researches show that positive involvement of parents in their children's life enhances their studying as well as performance (Pomerantz et al., 2005).

3. Objectives of the study

- To know the parents opinion on challenges faced by students at home and school.
- To assess on the source approached by the parents for the solution.
- To find out parents knowledge on type of services available in the school to address the psycho- social issues of their child.

4. Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature. The questionnaire tool was used to collect data from the respondents. The populations of the study were parents of high school students studying in Government and Private secondary schools of Bengaluru. There are 786 (primary with upper primary and secondary and primary with upper primary and secondary and higher secondary) high schools are there in Bengaluru. The table gives details about the spread of different schools (Government/Private).

Table 1: Selections of schools

With regard to the selection of schools				
Total number of schools			Number of the schools selected for the study	
Type of School	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Central Government	2	16	1	2

Department of Education	9	9	1	1
Local Body	0	24	0	2
Private Aided	3	14	1	1
Private Unaided	96	178	10	18
Tribal or Social Welfare Department	7	3	1	1
Sub total	117	244	14	25
Total	**361**		**39**	

*(10% of the schools were selected conveniently from each category of schools)

With regard to selection of respondents for the study from each selected secondary school, the researcher selected 25 percent of parents from one class conveniently for the study and the total respondents came to 239.
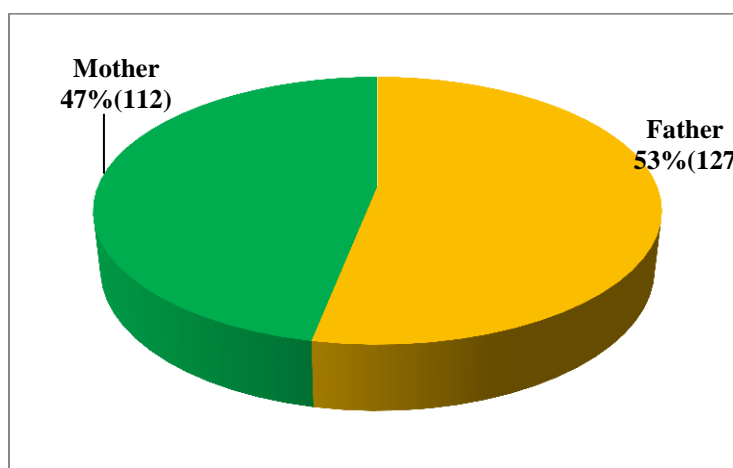
5. Discussion

Figure 1: Gender Distribution of the respondents

Knowing the gender of the respondents is an important aspect of the study because each gender plays its own role in upbringing the children, and both mother and father influence differently on the lives of the adolescents. Figure 1 shows that 53.1 % of the respondents were fathers and 46.9% of the respondents were mothers.

The involvement of both father and mother involvement contributes significantly and independently to an offspring's happiness and the study also revealed that the father's involvement has a stronger effect on the lives of the adolescent children (Flouri & Buchanan, 2003).
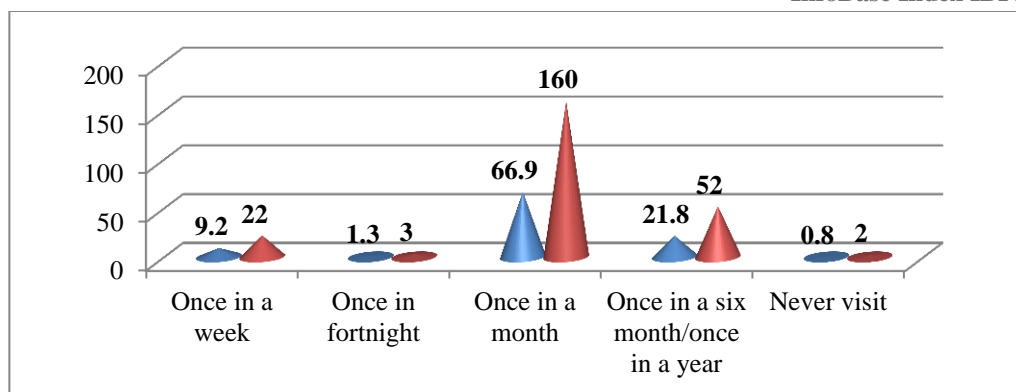
Figure 2: Parents visit to Childs school

Figure 2 reveals how often parents visit their child's school. This is an important factor for the study because parents' involvement results in substantial benefit to the children, parents, educators, and the school. Parents become sensitive to the children's emotional, social, intellectual, and developmental needs. They become more understanding of the school and its functioning.

The result reveals that 66.9% of the respondents visit their child's school once in a month and 21.8% of them visit once in a six months or once in a year.

Many researchers have proved that, the parents' involvement in children's schooling proved to be fruitful. But more involvement is not always better for the children. The meaningful parental involvement may leads to academic achievement and leads children's mental health development (Pomerantz, 2007)

Table 2: Parents' reasons for visiting the school

Visit to child's school	Percent(Frequency)	Reasons for visiting the school
Once in a week/ fortnight	10.5(25)	Academic related issues
Once in a month	66.9 (160)	To pay the school fees
Once in a six months/once in a year	21.8 (52)	To attend the parents meeting
Never visit	0.8 (2)	These parents completed their primary education and are male parents
Total	100 (239)	

It is evident from Table 2 that 66.9% of the respondents visit their child's school once in a month. Majority of the data was collected from state syllabus schools, where the school fee is collected every month. The reason for parents' visits to the school may be only to pay the school fee and rarely to discuss about their child. And 21.8% of the respondents visit the school once in six months or once in a year because some of the schools arrange parents' meeting after completion of summative assessment, 10.5% of the parents visit their child's school once in a week or once in a fortnight as they go to pick their child every day and they meet the class teacher once in a week or fifteen days and discuss academic related issues with the teacher, and

0.8% of the parents never visit their child's school. It is observed from the tool that, these parents completed their primary education and they are male parents.

Table 3: Parents opinion on issues faced by students at home

Issues N=239	Percent(Frequency)
Poverty	34.7 (83)
Addiction to technology	41 (98)
Adjustment problem	12.6 (30)
No time to teach	32.6 (78)
Broken family	24.7 (59)
Single child	11.3 (27)
No place to play	38.1 (91)

Adolescence is a period of growth, in which identity formation is addressed. The role of the family is very crucial at this stage. Many family factors can influence a young person's behaviour and have a significant influence on their physical, intellectual, and emotional growth. All the issues presented in the table may affect the physical and mental well-being of a child.

In Table three, 41% of the respondents said that their children are addicted to TV, mobile, and other electronic devices at home. Majority of the respondents from various occupational background and both male and female parents, 34.7% shared that poverty is an issue, 32.6% said no time to teach, may be because both parents are working and they reach home very late, 38.1% of the respondents shared that they do not have proper place to play at home due to poor provision of play grounds and lack of play areas at home, especially in urban areas, and 24.7% of the respondents answered broken family is an issue. Frequent fights at home or unpleasant environment in family leads to stress in children and it affects their physical and mental well-being. About 12.6% of the respondents said that children face adjustment problem at home and 11.3% answered single child is an issue to them .The reasons may be due to nuclear family system and urbanization children do not get the opportunity for socialization and disequilibrium in family environment leads to adjustment issues among the children.

Gillock & Reyes (1999) examined the nature of stress in the lives of 158, urban low income, Mexican-American high school students. The main reasons of the stress among students were, stress that is characteristics of their developmental level, poverty, racism, conflict and violence. Study also found that there were gender differences observed in the kind of stressors these groups experience .Gender differences also found in the academic achievement among them and there is not sufficient caring and emotional support to face the negative effect of the stress in urban low income group.

Table 3: Challenges faced by children at school and source approached by parents for solution

Challenges	Source approached by parents for solution. In Percent (Frequency)			
	Through counselor	Through teacher	Through friends	Through family members
Homework (N= 75)	10.7(8)	69.3(52)	33.3(25)	38.7(29)
Reading and writing	8.6(8)	81.7(76)	36.6(34)	40.9(38)

issues (N= 93)				
Difficulty in understanding the lesson (N=83)	1.2(1)	73.5(61)	24.1(20)	28.9(24)
Difficulty in making friendship (N=25)	0.0 (0)	92(23)	32(8)	44(11)
Adjustment issues (N=54)	7.4(4)	81.5(44)	24.1(13)	29.6(16)
School bullying (N=35)	0.0(0)	80(28)	28.6(10)	48.6(17)

Adolescence is a major phase in human growth. Hence, it is important to provide a healthy environment at school and home, where basic physical and psychological needs are met to ensure learning and growth in life. Children face different issues at school and they bring these problems home and manifest it in various behaviours. Many parents think that the child may outgrow the problems and use dysfunctional means of correction like beating, scolding, etc. Table 3 indicates that 69% of the respondents meet the teacher to resolve homework issues, 81.7% find solution through teacher for reading and writing issues, 73.5% of the respondents talk to the class teachers regarding difficulty in understanding the lesson, 92% of the respondents meet the class teacher with regard to difficulty in their child making friends, 81.5% discuss adjustment issues of their child with the class teacher, and 80% said that they meet the teacher to resolve issues of fights between the students. None of the respondents met the doctor and very few percent of the respondents met the counsellor to discuss the issues their child faces at school. The analysis reveals that children face different issues at school and majority of the parents meet school teachers and discuss the different issues their child faces at school, others find solution through friends and family members, and less percentage of the parents seek professional help (counsellor and doctor). The reason may be lack of knowledge of the professional services available to address these issues.
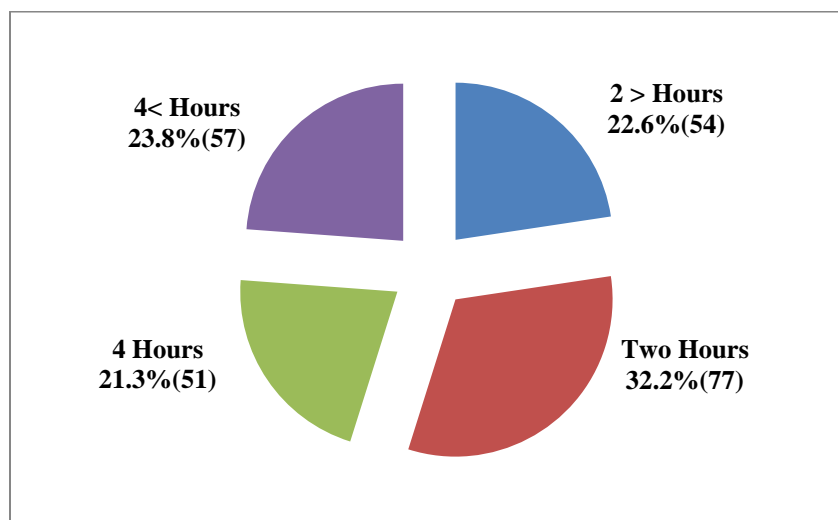

Figure 3: Amount of time parents spend with their child at home

Adolescents prefer to spend more time with their peer group than with family members. But it is important for parents to develop a healthy relationship with teenagers. Spending quality time

with the child leads to bondage between child and parents. Children share many things with their parents, and parents can guide them in what is right and wrong.

The study has found that 32.2% of the respondents spend 2 two hours per day with their children, 22.6% of the respondents spend less than two hours with children, 21.3% of the respondents spend 4 hours, and 23.8% of them spend more than that.

The analysis describes that majority of the respondents spend good time with their children. However, are they spending quality time with their child needs to be examined. In the past, unemployed mother's time with the children was reduced by the demands of unpaid family work and by the use of mother substitutes in child care, especially in large families. Today, employed mothers seek ways to maximize time with their children by joining for part- time work or exiting from the labour force for some years. They also differ from unemployed mothers in other uses of their time.
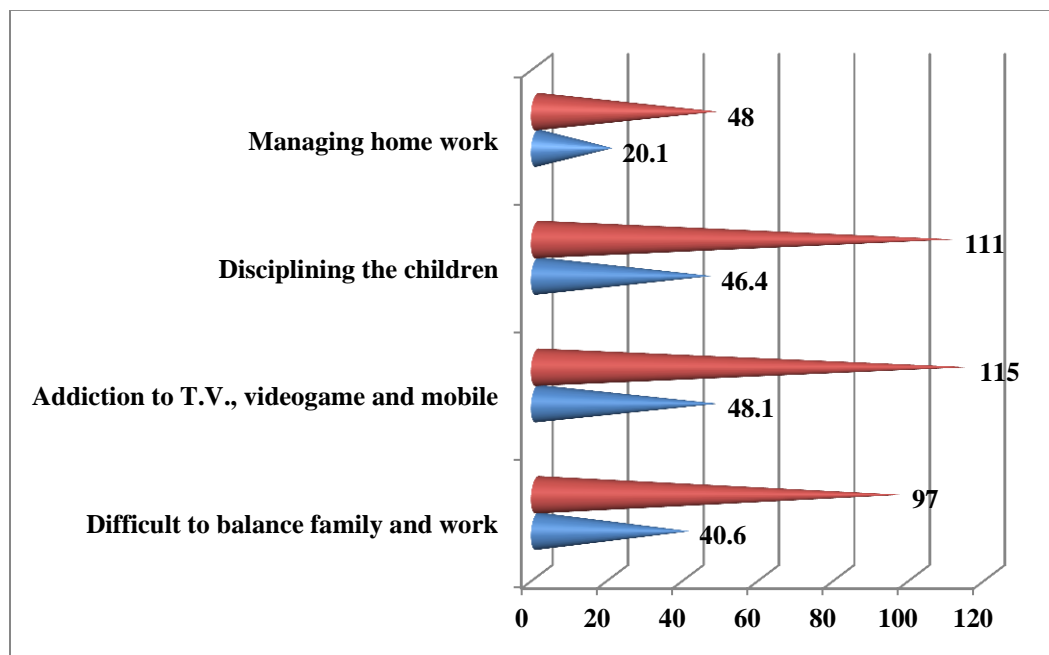

Figure 4: Opinion of the respondents on challenges faced by them in child care

Parenting is a challenging task in modern times. Changes in lifestyle, and new demands and requirement in life put forward multiple challenges to parents in upbringing their children.

The analysis reveals that 48.1% of the respondents said that children's addiction to T.V., videogame and mobile is a major challenge to them, 46.4% respondents felt that disciplining the children is a major challenge to them, 40.6% found it difficult to balance family and work, and 20.1% felt managing homework as a major challenge. Parents should be trained on how to deal with the challenges in child care so that they can handle it effectively.
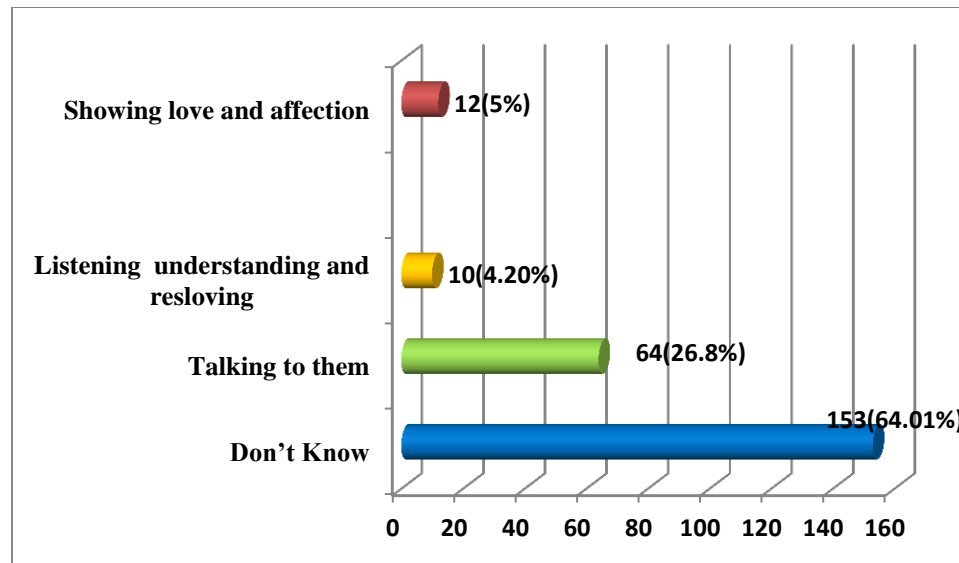
Figure 5: Measures adopted by parents

Children face many psycho- social issues at home and school and they cannot solve all the problems by themselves. Some children discuss their problems at home and school. However, quite a lot of children do not discuss their issues with anyone. The reason may be the social system where the child lives   may not provide an opportunity to discuss their concerns. Psycho-social issues arise when the child's emotional needs are not met. It is the responsibility of the parents to listen to the concerns of the children and to render effective help to them. Otherwise, it can lead to negative or unfavourable consequences.

Majority, 64% of the respondents did not make any effort to resolve the psycho- social issues of their child, and 26.8% of the respondents said that they talk to the child on different problems faced by the child at home, and others said that they listen and try to understand the child .They show love and affection to the child.

It is evident from the figure that majority of the parents did not adopt any specific way to resolve the psycho- social issues faced by their child. The reason may be that the psycho- social issues are not much understood by the parents or they may be busy with their life.
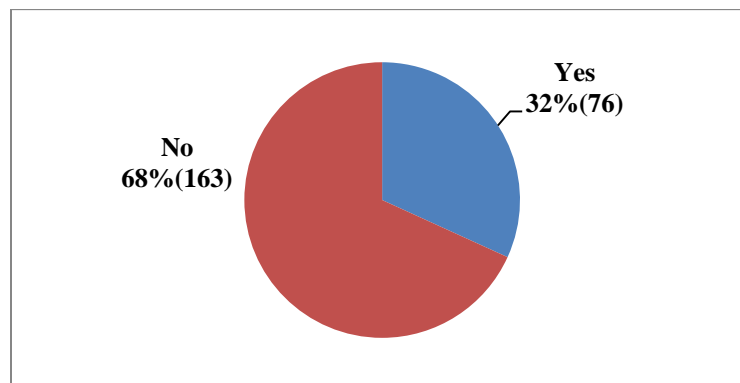

Figure 6: Parents awareness of type of services available in school to address the psycho- social issues of school children

Type of services available in the school means workshops and training for parents, school personnel, and students to help themselves.

Majority, 68% of the respondents are not aware of the services available in the school to address the psycho- social issues of school children. It is also found that, majority of the respondents, who completed their college and above are not much knowledgeable about it.

It is clear from the figure that majority of the respondents, irrespective of their education qualification, are not aware of the services available in the school to address the psycho- social issues of school children. The reason maybe, according to the observation of the investigator, that majority of the schools do not have such facilities to address the psycho- social issues of the children.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that the role of the parents cannot be easily explained. The society and social institutions expect too much from them. A parent may be good in fulfilling the basic needs for their child. However, understanding the children and helping them might be considered as an additional responsibility. Parents require skills to handle it. If they fail to fulfil the psycho-social needs of the children, it may lead to various behavioural issues among children. Majority of them discuss these issues with teachers, friends, and family members, and few have taken professional help. Many of the respondents have not adopted any specific method to discuss the psycho-social issues of the children and they are not aware of the type of services available in the school to address these issues.

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