



ESTABLISHING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A TRAINING PROGRAMME ON ADOLESCENCE EDUCATION

Abstract: *The present study attempted to develop and study the effectiveness of a module based training programme on Adolescence Education for Secondary School Teachers and Students. Sample comprised of 10 secondary schoolteachers and 65 students out of which 40 were boys and 25 were girls. The study was designed so as to develop and implement an Adolescence education programme on a selected sample of adolescents and evaluate the changes in the sample as a result of the training programme. Tools of the study were teacher and student questionnaire, observation schedule, HIV/AIDS test, Semi structured interview and effectiveness test. Data was analysed qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Summarizing the entire conduction of the Adolescence Education programme it provided the intended information and proved to bring about changes in the overall students characteristics. The overall information and knowledge about HIV/AIDS and reproductive health issues increased. The mode of Adolescence Education fused with the regular subjects did bring about positive transformations providing thus ample examples for educational institutions to imbibe the Adolescence Education programme.*

Key words: *Adolescence, Adolescence Education, HIV/AIDS, Modules*

Introduction

Adolescence can be described as a time of transition in the biosocial status of the individual. It is a period of physical, psychological and social maturity from childhood to adulthood extended from the onset of puberty to the attainment of full reproductive maturity (NCERT, 1998). 'Adolescence' has been defined as including those between 10 and 19 years of age (WHO). Psychologist Stanley Hall advocated that adolescence is critical in terms of being a developmental stage characterized by dominant biological factors and a period of "storm and stress". According to Sigmund Freud adolescence development follows a sequence of psycho sexual stages. Aptly described in terms of being a crisis state where one needs to establish a personal sense of identity with emphasis on the importance of learning and environment holding that biological drive are decisively shaped by psychological and social influences. Adolescent development can be visualized from five principal domains namely physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. Adolescence in general is a complex period and various studies have found the attributes of adolescence to include risk-taking, deviant behaviours, and potentially destructive behaviours with or without understanding the immediate or long-term consequences of their actions.

Studies have shown that adolescents are vulnerable and therefore they need to be empowered with relevant knowledge that will enable them cope with various developmental problems. UNESCO, Principal regional Office for Asia and Pacific (PROAP), Bangkok used 'Adolescence Education' for the first time as the title of a package on sex education (UNESCO, 1991). National Council of Educational, Research and Training (NCERT) had later used this term 'Adolescence Education' in a seminar in 1993 meant for debating on the issues and implication of introducing sex education in school curriculum. The recommendation that followed was the incorporation of suitable components of Adolescence Education in the curriculum at various stages of schooling. Reddy, D.N. (1990) conducted study on the attitudes of students, teachers and parents towards sex education and found that majority of the students and a majority of teachers thought that sex education was necessary. The adolescents saw peers as important source of sex education and stressed the need for proper sex education (Gandhi, B and Arora P 1993).

Rationale of the Study

Keeping in picture the sensitive and threatening global scenario compounded by serious threats like HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse, drug abuse and other risky behaviours it becomes pertinent to seriously advocate for adolescence education. Yadav, S (2003) conducted a study of awareness and attitude of students towards adolescent reproductive health and highlighted that students have low awareness about various aspects of physiological and psychological development and were not aware about issues related to growing up aspect, health, pregnancy, inter personal relationships, HIV/ AIDS/STDs and drug abuse. The level of awareness was low among girls. The schools did not teach about the reproductive health (Kotecha , P.V., 2003). An educational intervention for adolescents is strongly felt as the need of hour particularly in India because the school curriculum does not include the crucial elements associated with growing up. Biological input of the curriculum alone does not suffice for addressing the critical concerns of growing and fostering healthy development. There is need to focus on the physiological, emotional, socio-cultural, intellectual and moral dimensions alongside. The present study was conceptualized so as to attempt to design an Adolescence Education programme for Indian adolescents. Mohanty, M and Mohanty ,S (1997) study recommended that sex education should be introduced in the school curriculum in form of Adolescence Education. Rao, S.V. and D'Souza (2000) conducted a need assessment study in Adolescence Education revealed that the general awareness and knowledge level among the students was inadequate and their attitudes towards various issues of Adolescence Education was also unfavorable. From the review of related literature a clear-cut need is evident in terms equipping the adolescents with information ranging form physical maturation, formation of partnerships, sources of information, counselling and services, their rights in accessing services and exercising choice,. Sex Education, HIV/AIDS etc arises. The study explores the possibilities of converting the school curricular content into meaningful activities that would result in skill building among adolescents and smoothen the journey towards adulthood. The objectives of the study catered to finding out the awareness level of the secondary school teachers and students regarding adolescents and adolescence education, identify the plug in points from each subject of the secondary school curriculum which can take a centre stage in Adolescence Education and developing , implementing and ascertaining the effectiveness of the training programme.

Methodology

The Adolescence Education programme was modular in nature. The study was designed so as to develop and implement an Adolescence education programme on a selected sample of adolescents and evaluate the changes in the sample as a result of the training programme.

The curriculum prescribed by Gujarat Secondary Board of Education was studied in detail. The Standard IX textbooks of various subjects like Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies and Hindi were analysed in depth. *Plug in Points* from the Textbooks, which formed links with the components of Adolescence Education were identified and the investigator designed the modules which would use these plug in points as effective medium to incorporate the elements of Adolescence Education via the prescribed curriculum. 17 modules for Adolescence Education programme were designed by the investigator .The teachers after being oriented regarding the usage of the modules implemented the modules sessions and activities in the subject specific classes. Co-curricular strategies were also an integral part of the programme and implemented through specific activities. The modules were interwoven into the teaching learning methodology.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the awareness level of the secondary school teachers regarding adolescents and Adolescence Education.
2. To find out the awareness level of the students of IX th Std regarding adolescents and Adolescence Education.

3. To identify the plug in points from each subject of the secondary school curriculum which can take a center stage in Adolescence Education.
4. To develop training programme for imparting Adolescence Education
5. To implement the training programme on Adolescence Education
6. To study the effectiveness of the training programme in terms of the impact on the students, teachers and overall school environment.

Tools of the study

- **Teachers Questionnaire:** purpose was to gather data regarding the perception of the teachers regarding adolescence and issues related to them, their views, and knowledge as well as attitude towards Adolescence Education.
- **Students Questionnaire:** to find out the perception of the students regarding their selves, their choices, personal issues, attitude towards school, teachers, and education in general, their knowledge and attitude towards reproductive health matters, relationships.
- **Observation Schedule** (unstructured)
- **HIV/AIDS test (pre-test- post-test)**
- **Semi structured interview for Teachers** to ascertain the overall observations of the teachers constituting the sample towards the programme.
- **Overall Effectiveness test** by using a questionnaire on effectiveness for the students as well as a rating scale.

Procedure of the study

The Adolescence Education programme was planned in 4 stages:

Stage 1: Analysis of the curriculum of IX std prescribed by Gujarat secondary board of Education

Stage 2: Designing of modules for imparting Adolescence Education

Stage 3: Implementation of Adolescence Education programme

Stage 4: Evaluation of the Adolescence Education programme

Sample of the Study: The sample of the study consisted of teachers of secondary section as well as students of IXth std. All the 10 secondary schoolteachers teaching in the school were taken as a part of the sample. These teachers were teaching subjects like languages, social science, science, mathematics, computers as well as physical education. The total students sample was 65 out of which 40 were boys and 25 were girls.

Data Analysis was done in terms of frequency and percentages as well as qualitatively.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers perception towards adolescence and Adolescence Education

- The teachers had a fair understanding and a sound knowledge about the adolescence phases of life and considered it to be a stage of development of all kinds i.e. physical, mental as well emotional.
- The typical problems faced by the teachers while dealing with adolescents were inclination to opposite sex, teasing and pairing between girls and boys, infatuations, ego hassles between boys and girls, adolescents becoming rebellious and attention seekers. According to the teachers, the adolescents

felt they knew everything, were loud, misbehaved, restless, headstrong, and ill mannered. They easily got angry when punished, give false excuses and were a very much confused.

- Teachers were of the opinion that learning in adolescence should not to be confined within the academic boundaries and had to be much broader and aim at developing the individual in all dimensions.
- The teachers perceived Adolescence Education in terms of a type of education that deals with imparting of knowledge about physical changes, sexual changes, HIV/AIDS, STD's, family planning, population explosion and sex discrimination. None of them had a vision regarding what else could be the components of Adolescence Education. They did not consider the emotional, psychological as well as social dimensions and restricted themselves to narrow meaning of linking Adolescence Education with sex related matters and perceiving it to be another name for sex education.
- Most of the teachers had a positive attitude towards Adolescence Education being a part of the curriculum. Many teachers were of the opinion that Adolescence Education can be successfully imparted by way of integration, modification in teaching learning practices as well as through co-curricular ways and trained schoolteachers could be effective in imparting adolescence education. Few teachers however believed that it was work of science teachers and counselor.
- Majority of the teachers were in favour of integrating the contents of Adolescence Education with the different subjects and co-curricular activities. However when asked to actually integrate it they had reservations since they felt it would cause extra load on teachers. The cited reasons for this were in terms of over load of teaching work, corrections, co-curricular activities and time restraint with the anxiety for syllabus completion. Such innovations they felt would be at the cost of academics. The teachers would have to go for trainings and workshops and will need to do a lot of research, all at the cost of their own personal time. The teachers who were willing to experiment with integration of Adolescence Education reported that for doing so they needed guidance and training.
- Most teachers viewed Adolescence Education as another terminology for sex education therefore they felt hesitant to teach the topics. Use of terms likes 'sensitive issues' etc reflects this. They need training if they have to teach such education otherwise they would feel uncomfortable
- Teachers were looking forward to special programmes for adolescence which would lead the to have a healthy life style and resolve their personal queries

Characteristics, profile and perceptions of Adolescents

- Friends were the biggest strength of the target group of adolescents. Lack of confidence was the biggest weakness of most of the students.
- Majority of the students named their parents as their role models.
- Most of the students showed a favourable attitude towards their school. Almost all students enjoyed coming to school because they could meet and spend time with friends. Studies and career-oriented goal for attending school were secondary reasons as far as school related interest was concerned.
- Many of the students perceived their studies to be not as per their expectations and not significant. They specified that the purpose of learning should be made clear to them and lessons should be linked with everyday experiences in life and also give answers to different questions related to life.
- Future related anxiety coupled with parental pressure to study and fear of poor academic achievements was the most prominent worries that were plaguing the adolescent students. Lack of freedom was another problem, which was being faced by the. This lack of confidence was reportedly stated more by girls in comparison to boys. Inferiority complex was found to be quite high among the girls in comparison to boys. Sexual development was again a problem area more in girls.
- The major sources of problem solving of the adolescent students were parents followed by their own selves and friends respectively. Teachers were considered by relatively very few students as far as problem solving were concerned.

- Peers group influence and inclination stood out very prominently. Peers were observed to be quite important for both boys as well as girls. Importance of being accepted by friends was a very important factor on their lives. Peer pressure was evident and the boys reported to face more peer pressure than girls
- All the students had heard about HIV/AIDS. However many could not write the full form of HIV/AIDS and STD. Regarding the knowledge about AIDS many had correct information.
- A good number of the adolescents had received information on reproductive health issues with the girl outnumbering the boys. Friends proved to be the most major source of information on reproductive health issues followed by magazines, teachers, parents, media & Internet and newspapers. Regarding the Birth control methods most of the students were not aware of which were the methods.

Adolescents, Reproductive Health issues and HIV/AIDS

- The adolescent's perception and knowledge of meaning of sexual matters in the post test in comparison to pre-test became more scientific and logical.
- Before exposure to the session on HIV/AIDS majority of the adolescents reportedly felt awkward and embarrassed when they were asked to attend talks on sexual matters. The preference for such kind of exposure was limited. Girls did not want to attend such programmes amidst boys. Post-test the students became more comfortable with the issue.
- Mother seemed to be the most preferred source of reproductive health education followed by friends in both pre-test as well as post-test. Teachers were the least preferred sources in the pre-test however the post-test responses indicated a change in the perception of teacher's role according to the adolescents. The teachers were also now preferred as sources along with medical professionals for information concerning reproductive health.
- The number of students who wanted to be taught about reproductive health in school increased considerably from pre-test to post test.

Effectiveness of the Adolescence Education Programme

- In the beginning of the implementation of the Adolescence Education programme many students were not interested in the activities and sessions. They were quite open enough to show their lack of interest and found the sessions not useful. Gradually their involvement in the activities and participation increased. The interactions slowly moved from being out of focus to being more focused.
- The amalgamation of the Adolescence Education components with the school curriculum requires more planning and time allotment.

Student's perception regarding the effectiveness of the programme

- Students showed a affirmative attitude towards the programme topics though they were not a part of their regular syllabus and found the contents of the programme relevant as well as functional information required for their age group.
- Most students reported that their self-concept heightened after undergoing the programme and now they had a more realistic opinion about their personalities. They felt more confident with their sexual identities and were more scientific in their approach of dealing with sexual matters. According to them the different life skills however required more exposure and training.
- Many students reportedly had questions during the conduction of the sessions but were reluctant to ask as they felt awkward and embarrassed. Some students felt they needed more clarification and information while others were satisfied and reported that their queries were satisfied in the sessions as they received all information in an elaborate way and their doubts were cleared as the topics were dealt in detail. They discussed with their friends about the topics and found it now easier to communicate and share the information. . Many times when they were hesitant or unable to ask in

class they thought on the issues. Many reposed that they started thinking over the problems they were facing and finding solutions.

- Majority of the students preferred a special teacher to teach them about reproductive health issues. Other than science teacher and school counselor they did not consider the other subject teachers for imparting Adolescence Education.

Discussion

The changes adolescents undergo have tremendous impact on adolescents. This impact can be negative or positive. If they get a positive support from environment they accept these changes as healthy but if there is negative support or negative response then they develop some problems in accepting these changes which in turn can become a hurdle to their healthy growth and development as adults. Therefore in order to fully understand the impact of these changes, the problems created by these changes and finding effective ways of dealing with the problems there is a need to study the profile of the adolescents.

From the findings a profile of the selected sample of adolescents can be outlined. Typical of adolescence stage the responses have indicated the characteristic traits of adolescents. Affinity for peers seemed to be high as adolescents have giving priority to friends and named them as their strengths. . This is a typical attribute that emerges out in adolescence where friendships form the most preferential crux in the social hemisphere. Lack of confidence may be attributed to the fact that adolescents no longer find their childhood identities adequate but have not yet formed their adult identities fully. They need a setting within which they can experiment with alternate roles. This accompanied by pubertal changes may develop a sense for apprehension in them. Emotional vulnerability as expressed by girls can be explored in order to ascertain the influence of gender on emotional expressions.

Adolescents showed an average response towards their school. Although academic achievement is considered to be most attributable to the school environment it is not reflected from the responses of the students. With passage of adolescent the earlier cognitive needs shift to more demand for developing themselves in all respects. Classroom developed values can become a means to develop a sense of identification with a group and form a sense of security through clear expectations and boundaries of behaviour. Adolescents are in a stage of life wherein they require vivid and enriching learning experiences which can help them solve their queries and satisfy their curiosities. Students view effective teachers as those who move beyond the realm of academic boundaries and relate to them personally too.

The major sources of problem solving were parents and on their own followed by friends. Teachers were seen by relatively very few as far as problem solving were concerned. Peer group importance is evident form the responses. Contrary to the belief that adolescents oppose parents form the response it can be gathered that adolescents appreciate and value their parent's guidance. Adolescents do not give teachers much prominence. In helping adolescents the primary thing for a teacher to do is to inform him about the exception of his physical growth and development, the causes involved and how to deal with them effectively. Teachers need to be trained to respond to the behaviour of adolescents with suitable emotion.

The students possessed considerable knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS students. They had heard about HIV/AIDS but did not exhibit any kind of knowledge regarding sexually transmitted diseases. Adolescents have to be comfortable regarding sexual matters. Studies have indicated that furnishing the adolescents with facts they need to know regardless of whether or not they are sexually active readies them to learn to make their own choices, and develop their own systems of ethics and values. It is evident from the analysis that there is a great deal of impact of friends as they are being trusted and consulted on reproductive health issues followed by technology and media sources. Parents have to

increasingly recognize the importance of raising awareness among their adolescent children, and not be inhibited by their own inadequate knowledge of the subject on the one hand, and their own embarrassment about raising these issues with their children on the other.

Enhanced life skills could have led to enhanced self-esteem, self-confidence, assertiveness, social sensitivity, communication skills, positive relationships and ability to set and achieve goals as reported and observed in the sample of the study. The classroom setting probably portrayed reflections of real life situation and contexts, encouraged curiosity, exploration and investigation and possibility of learning with the requirement of learners to be accountable for classroom discussions vested in learner. The Adolescence Education programme thus overall appeared to have combined the needs of young adolescence in the academic boundaries thereby promoting healthy self-images and relationships, stimulating the adolescents, providing them a platform to identify themselves with, providing the crucial knowledge inputs they need and challenging them towards making their life constructive and meaningful.

Recommendations of the Study

- Adolescence Education has to be included in the school curriculum.
- Educational policy makers and planning committees at national level have to make conscious efforts to devise adolescence-centered programmes keeping in view the needs and profile of adolescents. Massive advocacy of such programmes has to be done.
- There is an urgent need to train teachers in Adolescence Education. Pre service and in service teacher training programmes have to be modified so as to incorporate Adolescence Education as a major thrust area. Teachers should be thoroughly trained in HIV/AIDS transmission; prevention and compassion, so as to enable them pass on appropriate and accurate messages to students.
- Analyzing and redesigning the syllabi and textbooks for adolescents with identified entry points for integration with Adolescence Education and devising suitable activities has to be an immediate focus.
- Mass advocacy of adolescence education programmes.
- Indicators need to be developed for assessing the effectiveness of Adolescence Education programmes.

Conclusions of the Study

An attempt was made by this research to address to the components of Adolescence Education. A study of the profile a, characteristics, needs and perception of adolescent students revealed that they perceived schools as uncomfortable and unattractive environments, lacking in the basic tools of learning apt to meet their needs. Schools have to gear up to smoothen the breath-taking pace and path of adolescence. The mode of Adolescence Education fused with the regular subjects did bring about the expected transformations. This research can thus provide ample examples for educational institutions to imbibe the Adolescence Education programme

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