

**EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAM IN AWARENESS  
GENERATION ON SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**

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**Abstract –**

Adolescents consist of one fifth of India's population & are considered as an asset to the country. To address the growing & concerning needs of adolescents Government of India has launched various interventions.

School health & Wellness program launched by Ministry of Health is an intervention which address the needs of adolescents by creating awareness about many aspects. There are 11 thematic modules which are covered by education department in collaboration with health department for prevention & promotion of key health programs. School teachers are identified as health & wellness ambassadors who take sessions on various topics.

The study tried to understand the awareness level of adolescents on topics related to puberty, sexual health & knowledge about HIV/AIDS & how the SHWP program is contributing in creating awareness on adolescent knowledge. The contribution of health ambassadors in execution of SHWP program & imparting knowledge to students is tried to be explored.

**Keywords:** School Health Program, Thematic Modules, HIV/AIDS, Puberty

**INTRODUCTION :**

The World Health Organization defines adolescents as those people between 10 and 19 years of age. It is one of the most dynamic , rapid & impressionable stage of life during which the adolescents undergo physical, sexual, psychological & emotional changes .The dynamism of the phase needs special efforts , programming & policy level changes to address to their ever changing demands .

Among the various stages in life adolescence remain as the most complex & versatile phase. The health related behaviours acquired during adolescents remain with the individual for the rest of their life .Hence adoption of healthy behaviour during adolescence is considered as an investment for the rest of the life of an individual.

Government of India has launched multiple initiatives to address the health needs of adolescents . Under Ayushman Bharat scheme National School Health Program was also launched .The aim of the program was to initiate healthy behaviour which includes health promotion & prevention for adolescents .Under the health promotion activities under which the adolescents are provided with knowledge on various domains . The students from middle & high school are provided information

on Puberty and related changes , Prevention of substance abuse ,HIV/AIDS , Sexual & Reproductive Health & Violence Prevention.

#### **METHODS :**

The study was conducted in the Ranchi district of Jharkhand. Quantitative methods were used for data collection. The data collection was carried out through selection of schools . For the selection of school simple random sampling technique was adopted . From the selected schools respondents were selected . The primary data was collected through the structured schedule of the selected sample and in-depth interviewing of respondents to understand the change in knowledge & awareness level among the school goers on sexual & reproductive health after attending the discussions on the thematic areas through school health & wellness program. The data was collected specifically on how the introduction of thematic modules on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS , puberty & related changes has helped them in developing a better understanding & clear the myths & misconceptions associated with it . These respondents were interviewed for the quantitative data collection through a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire. The information was collected from each selected beneficiary on a one-to-one field-level survey with the defined questionnaire. The interview was focused on information gathering on information pertinent to sexual health, puberty & HIV/AIDS . Systemic random sampling was adopted to select the 422 respondents for the study. The data collection followed Cochran's formula using a 5% margin of error, 95% confidence interval, and response distribution assumed at 50% .

#### **Results and Discussion**

Knowledge about puberty among adolescent boys & girls were assessed. The questions included whether the adolescents are aware about the bodily physical changes that appear during puberty.

| Awareness level | % Respondent |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Boys            | 70%          |
| Girls           | 65%          |

The data showed that 70% boys were aware about the changes that occur during puberty where as only 65% of girls were aware about the changes that occur during puberty

However, upon asking the details of major changes that occur during adolescents in depth the awareness was found to be low. The questions asked to adolescents were on three parameters, the bodily physical changes that occur, whether there are any hormonal changes & whether there are changes in reproductive system.

| Awareness level     | Boys (%) | Girls (%) |
|---------------------|----------|-----------|
| Changes in physical | 60%      | 40%       |

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| appearance of adolescent of opposite sex |     |     |
| Hormonal Changes occur during puberty    | 30% | 20% |
| Growth of reproductive organs            | 45% | 40% |

60% of boys & only 40% of girls were aware of physical changes that occur during adolescent age. Similarly when the adolescents were asked on whether any hormonal changes occur during adolescent age only 30% of boys & 20 % of girls were aware . The growth of reproductive organs happening in puberty was known only to 45% of boys & 40% of girls.

The role of teachers in dissemination of messages related to puberty during thematic modular session was also studied.

| Responses                                   | %   |
|---|-----|
| Asked to learn self                         | 30% |
| Skipped                                     | 40% |
| Narrated briefly                            | 15% |
| Conducted separate session for boys & girls | 18% |
| Explained in detail                         | 2%  |

The data showed that only 2% of teachers explained the various changes that happen during puberty in detail to adolescents . 30% of teachers asked the students to learn the topics on their own .There were 40% of cases where the teachers skipped the topic entirely & 15% narrated it briefly . Their were 18% cases where the teachers conducted separate sessions for males & females.

The questions on awareness about HIV AIDS among adolescents were also studied. The specific questions asked were on knowledge about the correct mode of transmission of HIV AIDS .

| Responses                 | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Correct (Boys)            | 27% |
| Partially Correct (Boys ) | 43% |
| In Correct (Boys )        | 30% |
| Correct (Girls )          | 17% |

|                               |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Partially Correct<br>(Girls ) | 36% |
| In Correct (Girls )           | 47% |

27% adolescent boys & 17% adolescent girls had correct knowledge of HIV AIDS. 43% of boys & 36% of girls had partial whereas 30% of boys & 47% of girls had incorrect knowledge about the spread of disease .

The role of teachers on dissemination, modes of transmission of HIV AIDS was also studied. The questions asked were on whether the various route of transmission of the disease was shared with the adolescents.

| Responses           | %   |
|---------------------|-----|
| Discussed in detail | 45  |
| Partially discussed | 25% |
| Not discussed       | 30% |

45% of teachers discussed the modes of transmission of HIV/AIDS ,25% of teachers discussed it very briefly however their were 30% of teachers who didn't touch the topic .

### **Discussion**

Adolescents awareness on puberty & sexual health is dependent upon how the details are communicated by teachers during SHWP. The correct knowledge on changes that occur during puberty & changes that happen in body in-terms of hormonal & growth of reproductive organs make adolescents aware about their sexual & reproductive health.

Although 70% of boys & 60% girls were aware about the changes that happen during puberty but in-depth knowledge on physical, hormonal & internal changes that occur was lacking in both genders. Similarly, the awareness on the correct modes of transmission of HIV was found to be very low among both the gender. Teachers play a crucial role in dissemination of correct knowledge about sexual health, puberty & HIV AIDS among adolescents. School health & wellness program provides a platform for the dissemination of information.

### **Conclusion**

Achievement of the aims & objective envisaged in school health & wellness program will result in generating awareness about sexual health among the adolescents. The platform provides a powerful medium for dissemination of correct knowledge from authentic source & the sessions conducted during the thematic module dissemination provides a platform to adolescents to brainstorm & arrive at logical explanation for all their doubts. There is a need to provide hands on resource material to the adolescents which can be used as a ready reckoner for all their doubts . Also the choice of school health ambassador should be done carefully to bring the desired result as envisaged in the program document of SHWP & bring about desired changes.

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