

## HEALTH EDUCATION IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: AN INTERVENTION STUDY IN PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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### ABSTRACT

Health education training programs/programmes\* are essential to health promotion. The mental health and emotional well-being of adolescents are important which ultimately can shape the life chances and outcomes of that child into adulthood. The present study aimed to promote mental health and well-being through planned adolescent health education programmes and develop a model for skill development training for children in schools. A quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design was represented. 60 participants, boys and girls between the age of 10-12 were selected from two government schools in Mangalore City with a disproportionate Stratified random sampling technique. The study results show that the planned teaching programme helped participants to enhance their knowledge and attitude towards mental health from 30 (46.1%) to 36 (55.3%) there are significant changes observed among them in their sleep patterns, the energy level at interest at  $X^2=0.027(*)$   $p = 0.05$ . Implementing effective intervention programs for young people at the school level is crucial to promoting their psychological well-being.

**Key Words:** Adolescents, Mental Health, Wellbeing, Teaching program/program\* & Effectiveness

### INTRODUCTION

In Human beings' adolescence is a period of tremendous growth and potential at the same time it is also a considerable risk to health and well-being. Health is a very important part of the growth and development of an individual to be productive and to maintain a decent and quality life. Health is also determined by various factors such as living conditions which may have a greater impact on health and wellbeing. Factors responsible for health are genetics, natural environment, income, education, peer relationships, family, etc. which are considered both the economic and social parameters of measurement. Particularly when this research is carried out, mental health has an overall impact on the health of young people. Social outcome and risk behaviors such as drug abuse, tobacco, addictive behaviors, adolescent pregnancy, school dropout, and delinquent behaviors associated with poor mental health can affect wider health and development. Poor mental health can affect the wider health and development of adolescents and is associated with several health and social outcomes such as drug abuse, tobacco, and addictive behaviors, adolescent pregnancy, school dropout, and delinquent behaviors. There are growing consensus that health development during childhood and adolescence contributes to good mental health and mental health-related problems. Children and adolescents with mental health-related disorders are at much greater risk of dropping out of school which even has the social and economic relevance and suffering from long-term impairments. Enhancing life skills, problem-solving skills, and self-confidence can prevent mental health problems such as conduct disorders, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders as well as risk behaviors/behaviours\* including those that relate to sexual and addictive behaviors. In light of the pressing needs of young people with mental illness school health programs are important for young students to enhance their capacity to equip with positive mental health and well-being among young students. Therefore, the present study initiated a planned teaching program to develop a model for skill development training for children in schools as it has economic relevance in the days to come and which in turn will bring the changes in

economic sphere, social, and political spheres in the global level.

### **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Young people are more prone to mental health complications and it is also considered as one of the major public health issues (Peter et al., 2007). The major cause for psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse later could be childhood with social and emotional difficulties (Costello et al., 2005; Stansfeld et al., 2008). Therefore, it is necessary to identify the symptoms, and proper attention at an early age may prevent the majority of issues as they grow. The school system has a greater role to play in promoting mental health and well-being which may have a better impact on mental health among adolescents. This program promotes positive social and emotional learning (OECD, 2015) and prevents mental health problems among young people (Viner et al., 2012). Family peer, community, societal, and cultural influences are leading causes of mental health issues among children and adolescents (Viner et al., 2012, WHO, 2014). The models of socio-ecological mental health promotion stress the individuals, families, and communities and recognize that mental health is embedded and also influenced by the socio-economic ecology (Barry, 2007; Zubrick et al., 2005). This perspective describes that mental health can be seen as patterned by the settings where people live, work, play, and learn to adopt positive ways to promote mental health (Barry, 2007). School can play a significant role in the promotion of positive mental health and can prevent mental health problems (Weare and Nind). However, promoting mental health through the school system depends on the knowledge and attitude acquired by the children and adolescents.

A high percentage of adolescents suffer from mental health problems. These problems often persist into later stages of development. Public health policy should have priority for reducing the burden of adolescent mental health through implementing preventive youth health care programs. It is estimated that 20 percent of adolescents at the global level are affected with mental health problems up to 12 percent at the age of 4-16 years, and 50 percent of mental, behavioral, and psychological problems have their onset during the adolescent period. This may affect the participation of young people in classroom learning, scholastic achievement, relationship problems, mental health, and psychological well-being. There are a lot of risk-taking behavioral problems that emerge during childhood and adolescent period which can be preventable through universal preventive, curative, and promotive school mental programs.

School programs can imitate competencies which is the potential to prevent high-risk behaviors, and psychological, and emotional problems and enhance resilience among young people. These young people can achieve and maintain optimal psychological functioning and well-being (WHO, 2005). Mental health is a part of the overall growth and development of individuals. Adolescence age is influenced by factors that determine health. Promoting school mental health programs could be effective in enhancing their skill to face difficulties, adjust, and have positive thinking in their life. In this context, the present research is intended to promote the mental health of adolescents. The present research study strives to apply the life-skills competency-building approach to promote mental health among adolescents in schools through quality methods. It aims to develop an experimental framework to achieve better social functioning among adolescents which may have a direct positive impact on mental health.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The research paper titled, *“Health Education is an Essential Part of Human Development: An Intervention Study in Promoting Mental Health and Well-being among Adolescents”* has the following objectives for analysis and to arrive at the research results.

- To assess academic difficulties and focused issues among adolescents

- To conduct training on the effectiveness of planned teaching programmes in promoting the mental health and well-being of Adolescents
- To study the association of post-test knowledge scores with academic difficulties and focused issues scores

## METHODOLOGY

A pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design was used to study 60 adolescent boys and girls aged 10-12 from selected government schools in Mangalore taluk which is considered to be one the education hubs of India. Mangalore taluk comes under Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka state, India. A disproportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select participants. Demographic profile Questionnaire, Semi-structured questions as well an appropriate scale as per the objectives of the study were used to assess the academic difficulties and focused issues among adolescents. A comprehensive model was developed to introduce a planned teaching program. The method of data collection was qualitative with direct interaction with adolescents in classroom settings which was a focus group with pre-test and post-test intervention. Willingness to participate in the study was obtained by written consent from the participants explaining the objectives of the study. Care was taken to ensure privacy and confidentiality. The participants were made comfortable by maintaining anonymity in the questionnaire administered to them. The data collected was edited, coded, analyzed, and interpreted by using SPSS version 19. Analyzed data presented with tables. The data obtained was planned to be analyzed by both descriptive and inferential statistics based on the objectives of the study. The data were analyzed in terms of descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, median, and standard deviation), and inferential statistics (t-test and Chi-square test) were used to find out the association of post-test on knowledge scores with the academic difficulties and focused issues scores.

## RESULTS

The results of the study are portrayed based on the objective of the study. The assessment is done in terms of demographic characteristics, participants' opinions on parents, difficulties coming across connected family and school education, and perceived knowledge and attitude on mental health before and after planned teaching programs.

**Table:1-Demographic profile of the respondents**

Demographic Profile		Gender	
		Male	Female
Age	12-13	6 (10)	7(11.7)
	14-15	29(48.7)	18 (30)
Type of family	Nuclear	17(28)	34(56.6)
	Joint	03(5)	06(10)

(Data given in parenthesis indicates the percentage)

The present study assessed a total number of 30 students from two government schools. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents on age and type of family gender-wise. Selected participants were school-going adolescents between the ages of 12- 15 years. Among them, the majority were between the ages of 14-15 years mostly 9std. students (78.33 percent) among them 10 percent were boys and 11.7 percent were girls and the remaining were between the ages of 12-13 years (21.7 percent) among them 48.7 percent were males which is the majority of all ages of selected participants and 30 percent were girls. Adolescent age is very crucial for the future development of a person. It is said to be transitional where major changes take place in their growth and it may have a greater impact as they reach adulthood.

Family type plays a very significant role in building values, belief systems, socializing, and behavior patterns which are likely to affect his or her attitude towards a particular problem. Further respondents were also distributed based on the type of family where a majority of the participants belonged to nuclear families (85 percent) particularly girl's 56.6 percent and boy's 28 percent. On the other hand, 15 percent of them come from joint families where 5 percent were boys and 10 percent were girls.

A family exerts a powerful influence on the academic achievements of students. It is said that the family is a "*unit of kinship*" that makes its members strong enough to achieve something in life (UNESCO 1992). Increasing trends in changing families from joint families to nuclear families and the changes in the family system can be attributed to the processes of urbanization, industrialization, and migration.

**Table:2- Schools-related difficulties faced by adolescents**

Difficulties	DF		DNF	
	F	P	F	P
<b>Student (personal)</b>	18	30	42	70
<b>Study</b>	27	45	33	55
<b>Parents &amp; Teachers</b>	57	95	3	5
<b>Friends</b>	52	86.67	8	13.33
<b>TOTAL</b>	39	60	26	35

**(DF-Difficulties faced, DNF- Difficulties not faced)**

Poor academic performance is caused by school-related issues such as lack of motivation, loss of interest in school work, poor relationship issues with other fellow children and teachers, school environment, and other personal issues affecting studies, etc. The study shows that of the adolescents 95 percent faced issues because of parental and teacher-related aspects like not being clear about the class lecture, parental force to study, tuition tension, etc. as well as friends 86.67 percent, study-related issues faced by parents 45 percent and personal related were 30 percent. The study shows that a majority, 57(97 percent) of the participants faced school-related problems due to pressure from parents and teachers and 52 (86.67 percent) due to the influence of friends.

Many young students consciously miss their school and are found to be repeatedly truant or dropouts. Among these young students' large numbers have poor academic achievement and have had little success in or satisfaction with school-related activities, **Sharon Levy (2017)**. This can be a risk factor for making ineffective decisions and problems. School difficulties can range from minor to and severe may last shorter or longer term. Even short-term school problems cannot be avoided which may hurt their performance and may lead to mental health issues. Significant people have a very important role to play in understanding and guiding them for better career prospects.

**Table:3- Parental support**

Parents support	Yes		No	
<b>Supportive</b>	48	80	12	20
<b>Sharing</b>	21	35	39	65
<b>Strict &amp; Discipline</b>	44	73.3	16	26.67
<b>Expectation</b>	49	81.6	11	18.3
<b>Freedom</b>	34	56.6	26	43.3
<b>Total</b>	39	60	26	40

In table no. 3 the study explores the categories of parental support which are supportive, sharing, strict discipline, expectation, freedom, etc. Parents' authoritarian practices may bring a conflicted relationship between them and young people which is much higher in this study, i.e. 44(73.33 percent). Parental involvement in assisting and supporting children in education is crucial and the way they involve themselves is most important (**Christian, Morrison & Bryant, 1998 Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002**). Therefore parent-teacher training programmes are very much essential to deal with young people, especially to empathizing with their issues and problems.

Parents are the most influential persons in the lives of young people. Parents must understand and empathize with their issues and challenges. There should be close intimacy, love, and affection toward them, and a conducive family environment has to be created so that young people can share and adjust to these situations. When a conflicted relationship between parents and children creates a bad impression, young people may find difficulties in sharing with them. They may look for alternatives like friends and other habits. Family “*is where, when you go there, they have to take you in. It is a safe harbor, and a supportive environment for personal growth and expression,*” **Baumrind, 1991**.

**Table:4- Mental health knowledge among adolescents**

Mental Health					
	Pre-test			Post-test	
Level of knowledge	Range of score	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Good</b>	13-27	16(26.66)	14(23.33)	20(33.33)	16(26.66)
<b>Poor</b>	0-12	19(31.66)	11(18.33)	15(25)	9(15)

(Data given in parenthesis indicates the percentage)

The results in Table 4, show that 50 percent of (Males 19, 31.66 percent, and Girls 11, 18.33 percent) of them have poor knowledge of mental health. The study assessed knowledge among adolescents on the identification of mental health disorders and help-seeking, knowledge on prevention of mental disorders, strategic knowledge about seeking self-help, knowledge regarding treatment, and skills to gain support and first aid to others. During the pretest the participants were asked to identify correct answers, they are the level of good scores ranges from 13-27 and the level of bad scores is below 0-12. During the pre-test 16(26.66 percent) of the male and 14(23.33 percent), female adolescents were able to identify correct answers and after training sessions, it increased to 20 (33.33 percent) among the males and 16(26.66 percent) Most mental disorders show their first signs, and increase in prevalence, from childhood through adolescence, **Kessler RC, et al (2005)**. The school is the obvious arena for universal programs, **Gott J (2003)**. The study reveals that teaching methods are useful in promoting mental health education among young students.

**Table:5- Association between pre-test and post-test on mental health knowledge perceived by participants**

Variables	Post-test score
Pre-test score	$X^2=0.027469$ * $p = 0.05$

Chi-square test  $p < 0.05$  significant \*

In summary, the association between pre-test and post-knowledge on mental health is significant at  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, a planned teaching programme helped participants acquire knowledge on mental health well-being which was very effective.

Worldwide 10-20 percent of children and adolescents experience mental disorders (WHO) finding about the association between pre-test and post revealed that there was a significant difference found at  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, the planned teaching programme was effective in bringing change in the behavior patterns of young people which predicts better mental health and well-being.

Young people may have experiences of intense emotions due to stressful or traumatic events. It may affect how they feel, think, and handle daily activities such as going to school, studying, sleeping, eating, etc.

**Table:6- Significant changes in the adolescents at the Pre-test and Post-test level**

Significant changes	Pre-test						Post-test					
	High			Low			High			Low		
	M	F	Results	M	F	Results	M	F	Results	M	F	Results
Sleep	28	22	50 (83.33)	7	3	10 (16.67)	26	22	48 (80)	9	3	12(20)
Energy level	26	20	46 (76.67)	9	5	14 (23.33)	35	25	60 (100)	0	0	0
Interest	30	19	49 (81.67)	5	6	11 (18.33)	34	23	57 (95)	1	2	3 (5)
Coping mechanisms/life skills	11	8	19 (31.6)	2 4	17	41 (68.4)	26	19	45 (75)	9	6	15 (25)

(Data given in parenthesis indicates the percentage)

Significant changes observed among adolescents were divided into sleep, energy level, and interest. These changes determined the level of effect on adolescents' mental health. A high level of change adversely affects their academic performance. In the post-test, it was found slight changes in sleep patterns in connection to the use of electronic gadgets (TV, mobile, laptop, etc.), stress, etc. as per the study concern only among 28 boys from 80 percent (pre-test) to 26 boys at 74.2 percent but there were no changes found among 22 girls at 88 percent. There were significant changes found among both boys and girls regarding energy level in terms of participation in sports, health, exercise, food habits, etc where it increased from 76.67 percent in the pre-test to 100 percent in the post-test and interest in academic and curricular activities in connection to studies, concentration, understanding the subject,

participating in sports and cultural events, etc. were raised from 81.67 percent in the pre-test to 95 percent in post-test. The study assessed the level of coping mechanisms and life skills acquired by participants. The results of the study show that 41 (68.4) of the participants lack coping mechanisms and life skills and after the intervention, it found that there were changes observed that 45(75) of the participants were able to improve upon skills to manage their emotional, social and academic-related problems. This shows that there were positive changes seen among participants after the planned teaching programme.

**Table:7- Association between Significant changes of adolescents in pre-test and post-test**

Variables	Post-test score
Pre-test score	$X^2=0.055782^*$ $p = 0.05$

Chi-square test  $p > 0.05$  significant \*

Factors combined to decrease sleep in adolescents are psychological, parental, societal, and cultural features of a teen's life, and biological, by which the brain processes regulate the amount and timing of sleep (Mary, 2017).

Adolescents are in a period of life also marked by positive energy, idealism, and a belief in the possibility of changing the world. Any strategy to develop young people must build on these positive capacities and adolescents' ability to engage as active partners in their development (IAWGCP, 2008). School education should enhance quality in terms of skills and knowledge to face the demands of future life.

As per the results of the study, the intervention program was effective, and found that there are positive changes among adolescents. Especially intervention promoted to adoption of better sleep patterns which are strongly associated with better physical, cognitive, and psychological well-being. Poor or disordered sleep could be an impairment of cognitive and psychological functioning and worsen physical and psychological health well-being (Serge Brand, 2011). Sleep disturbances may have several additional somatic complications such as poor academic performance, absence from school poor psychological well-being, etc. Therefore, it is important to have alterations in sleep patterns which could help to have normal functioning during adolescence. Parents have expectations of their children with everything from grades in school and how they dress to college and career choices later on. Parental disappointment creates conflict and problems in the relationship between them and their teenagers. It often comes across as anger, giving teenagers the feeling of rejection from the people who were once the most important figures in their lives. When parents argue, teenagers may feel that they were somehow the cause, according to Teen Advisor. This can lead to alienation if the parents allow their words and actions to escalate out of control.

### **EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME**

Mental health is essential to good health and well-being and persuades and improves the socio-economic living conditions across the lifespan. Healthy development should be part of childhood and adolescence which lays the foundation for better adult life.

School-based mental health services refer to any mental health service delivered within a school setting, which can include neighborhood schools, school-administered programs in hospitals, and special education programs (Whitman et al., 2008). American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP, 2004) prescribes in its policy that school mental health programs are ways to promote mental health services in schools. Health professionals, educators, and mental health specialists can work together and implement effective school-based mental health services (Brenner et al., 2007). Academic performance and

learning experience could be better if school administration, board members, teachers, parents, and students recognized the value of social, emotional, and physical health problems and other major barriers (Adelman & Taylor, 1999). The study portrays that one in five young people between the age of 5 to 18 have emotional or behavioral problems which is a significant warrant for a mental health diagnosis. There may be disturbances in the psycho-social functioning of children at home, school, etc. due to emotional, behavioral and psychological health problems (Brenner et al., 2007). In this regard, school-based mental health programs may be the most efficient and effective model for treating many children since they can combine school and clinic services. The initial skills development part of behavioral and cognitive-behavioral interventions may be best delivered at a clinic. However, the application phase of treatment involving the transfer of skills to a community setting may be best completed by clinicians working in schools. The partnership between clinic and school-based care may take advantage of the strengths of both models of care.

Despite the recognition of the importance of mental health promotion for children and adolescents, mental health remains a neglected public health issue, especially in low and middle-income countries. Due to the misappropriate burden of mental disorders and their adverse consequences mental health is inequitably distributed among people living in poverty and other forms of social disadvantage. Schools can be one of the important sources of promoting mental health for young people. It provides a platform for emotional and social competence and it also helps them to improve in academic learning. They can also access mental health services without any fear or any other means of drawbacks. Mental health outcomes depend on its association with educational opportunities throughout life. As per the World Health Organization, the promotion of emotional health and well-being is the core future. It can be implemented through a whole school approach which leads to positive mental health, and social, and educational outcomes. Programs such as life skills training, counseling, social and emotional learning, value education, and early intervention can address emotional and behavioral problems. This may have long-term benefits for young people, including improved social functioning, positive healthy behaviors, and academic performance.

The present study initiated a planned teaching programme to bring compressive changes and enhance skills to have better mental health and well-being among adolescents. The study gave a progressive change and improvement through this planned teaching programme. This type of planned teaching can be initiated as part of the school curriculum. Health professionals, psychiatrists, counselors, social workers, and psychologists have a greater role to play in initiating this program. They can also train significant people, parents, relatives, and teachers to identify and provide compressive treatment to promote mental health at the school level.

## MULTIDISCIPLINARY RELEVANCE AND SOCIAL SCIENCE IMPLICATIONS TO RESEARCH PRACTICE

Positive mental health education enhances knowledge and attitude for better physical and psychological development. Application Mental health education in educational institutions cultivates students' psychological quality and promotes overall improvement (Ying Jin, 2022).

Multidisciplinary research and practice could be a driving force for social, psychological, and economic development. It provides a platform for technological and theoretical innovation. Young people are active and they have innovation potential. They only require a platform for rational thinking which may have a positive impact on their mental health and they can perform well on their academic and co-curricular activities as well as look for better prospects. Therefore, the present study highlights the need for a multidisciplinary approach, and interventions to promote the mental health and well-being of vulnerable children and young people

Social Scientists are positioned at the interface between economic, social, and psychological well-being



offering practical support to parents, and carers, advocacy for services to regenerate communities, and interpersonal skills to strengthen the internal and external resources required to promote mental health in children and adolescents

Promoting Mental Health needs through a social science perspective with a comprehensive approach can focus not only on protection but also on effective strategic interventions. The present study highlights the need for social science interventions to support the mental health of vulnerable children and young people through economic and social policies, Chambers of Commerce can take the initiative for the promotion of programs that would help adolescents come up with certain changes and developments. Social science is positioned at the interface between economic, social, and psychological well-being offering practical support to parents, and carers, advocacy for services to regenerate communities, and interpersonal skills to strengthen the internal and external resources required to promote mental health in children and adolescents.

## CONCLUSION

The Adolescent Health Education program is crucial to address the needs of Adolescents with mental health conditions. Programs require a multilevel approach with varied development platforms. Schools are the source of promoting knowledge and information. Various strategies are required to reach adolescents. a supportive social environment and social networks can be appropriate. Effective interventions strengthen the promotion of mental health which helps an individual's capacity for risk-taking behaviors and builds resilience for managing difficult situations and adversities which can be a scope for future research.

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