SUMMARY
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AIDS AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS
ADOLESCENCE EDUCATION: A STUDY OF PARENTS,
TEACHERS AND STUDENTS OF MANIPUR

Introduction

AIDS has become a global problem. The full form of AIDS is Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome. According to global HIV and AIDS epidemic published by UNAIDS in Nov. 2010, people living with HIV/AIDS in 2009 are estimated to be 33.3 millions among which 30.8 millions are adults. Around 1.8 million people died due to AIDS in 2009. NACO Annual report 2010-2011, based on HIV Sentinel Surveillance 2008-09, mentions that there are 23.9 lakhs people infected with HIV/AIDS in India with an estimated adult HIV prevalence of 0.31%. Out of which 39% are female and 3.5% are children. Almost all part of the world population is being targeted by this dreadful disease, AIDS. The most affected group is adolescents of the age group 10-19 years. Adolescents shares about 18% of the world population (United Nations Department of Economic and social affairs, population division, world population prospect: the 2008 revision) More than 22% of India population is in adolescent age group 10-19 years.

Counseling and Testing centers across the countries during 2009-2010 (NACO Annual Report 2009-2010) shows that 87.1% of HIV infections are still occurring through heterosexual routes of transmission, while parent to child transmission accounts for 5.4% of HIV cases detected, Injecting drug use accounts for 1.6%; men who have sex with man accounts for 1.5% and contaminated blood and blood products accounts for 1%.
The problem

It has been found that adolescents of the age group 10-19 years are most affected by HIV/AIDS. This is due to physical, psychological and emotional changes which disturbs an individual, they generally fall into unwanted sexual activities that may cause HIV infections. One of the remedy to this dreadful disease is to provide information about sexuality and adolescents' reproductive health needs to the people so that they can protect themselves. Education is the only medium through which people can be informed regarding various social issues. To get success in such a mission the first step is to equip the stake holders i.e. Parents, Teachers and Students regarding various ways and means of protection from HIV infection.

Attempts were made under the name sex education. Due to cultural taboo the term sex education has been replaced by ‘Adolescence education’. National Seminar on ‘Adolescence education’ held in April 1993 organized by NCERT recommended the introduction of adolescence education in the school curriculum. Some of the States like Orissa have already started adolescence education program in school curriculum. Some states like Maharastra are against the introduction of ‘Adolescence education’ in school curriculum. Manipur being one of the most HIV infected states, it is necessary to provide proper information to masses regarding ways and means of protecting themselves from this dreadful disease.

HIV/AIDS

HIV (Human immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired immunodeficiency Syndrome), a condition in human beings which progresses to failure of the immune system that allows life threatening opportunistic infection and cancer to thrive. HIV infection in human is considered as pandemic by World Health Organization. HIV touches the lives of children and families in every country in the world.

The major route of HIV transmissions are through unprotected sex with HIV infected person, from HIV infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, through the process of birth and breast feeding, through blood transfusion, by using HIV infected contaminated syringe, needle and sharp instruments by several people, transfused with HIV contaminated blood and body fluid.
The spread of HIV in India has been diverse and most extreme cases are found in the Southern half of the country and in the far North East. The highest HIV prevalence rates are found in Maharashtra and Gujarat in the west; Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu in the South and Manipur, Nagaland in the North East and West Bengal in the East. In case of India, especially in Southern States, the infections are mostly due to heterosexual while injecting the drug causes the people of Manipur and Nagaland to get infected. (NACO April 2006).

Although HIV is still incurable but treatment with antiretroviral drugs reduces both the mortality (dead) and morbidity (illness) of HIV infection. Antiretroviral drugs are expensive and the majority of the world’s infected individuals do not have access to medication and treatment for HIV and AIDS. Due to limited sources of anti retroviral medication available universally, giving awareness and educating about the causes, modes of transmission and consequences will help in preventing of this deadly disease. Younger people are more vulnerable to sexually transmitted HIV as well as drug abuse. They need to be educated about the cause, the implication and the ways of contracting the dangerous disease. Sex education and awareness programs would help in prevention of the disease. To have a comprehensive control on HIV/ AIDS, governments, with support from family, community and non government and religious organizations need to respond to ensure people’s right to information on HIV prevention, treatment and care.

Despite the serious efforts at preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, thousands of people continue to be its victim throughout the world. Thus not only the health- workers, medical and paramedical people should be involved in these efforts, but a program of education to raise the awareness of the people also needs to be put in place. Such a program should essentially be directed at the young adolescents who fall prey to the malaise more easily.
Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out parents', teachers' and student's awareness about the HIV/AIDS

2. To find out parents', teachers' and student's, awareness about the ways of transmission, preventive and rehabilitation measures.

3. To find out parents', teachers' and student's, awareness about Adolescence Education

4. To find out parents' teachers' and student's, attitudes towards Adolescence Education in relation to their socio-economic and educational background.

Research Questions

Since the present study is an exploratory survey, no hypotheses are proposed to be tested. Instead the study is intended to answer the following research questions.

1. What is the extent of awareness of parents, teachers and students regarding HIV/AIDS?

2. Does gender affect a person's awareness of HIV/AIDS?

3. What is the extend of awareness of parents, teachers and students regarding the ways of transmission of HIV/AIDS?

4. Does gender affect a person's awareness of the ways of transmission of HIV/AIDS?

5. What is the extent of awareness of parents, teachers and students regarding preventive measures of HIV/AIDS?

6. Does gender affect a person's awareness of preventive measures?
7. What is the extent of awareness of parents, teachers and students regarding rehabilitation measures of HIV/AIDS?

8. Does gender affect a person's awareness of rehabilitation measures?

9. What is the extent of awareness of parents, teachers and students regarding ‘Adolescence education’?

10. Does gender of a person affect a person’s awareness of ‘Adolescence education’?

11. What is the attitude of the parents, teachers and students towards ‘Adolescence education’?

12. Does the attitude towards ‘Adolescence education’ differ between male and female respondents?

13. Does religion affect the attitude of parents, teachers and students towards ‘Adolescence education’?

14. Does educational qualification affects attitude of parents, teachers and students towards ‘Adolescence education’?

15. Does occupation of parents affect their attitude towards ‘Adolescence education’?
Delimitation of the study

Due to paucity of time and resources at the investigator’s disposal, she could not undertake the study at macro level like a country or a state. The study is therefore delimited to examining a sample of students of class IX to XII in the two districts of Imphal East and West of the state of Manipur. Parents and teachers of the students of the sample are also included as per requirement of the study.

Design
The present piece of research is Descriptive in nature.

Population
The population of the present study comprises of all students of Imphal East and Imphal West of Manipur state, studying in IX to XII standard and all the parents and teachers of these students.

Sample
For selection of sample, incidental and purposive sampling technique was used. The sample was selected from 24 schools located in north, south, east, west and central parts of Imphal East and Imphal West district. The sample consisted of 500 students studying in IX, X, XI & XII standard, 250 parents and 250 teachers of these students.

Tools used:
To collect the requisite data from the respondents, the investigator has developed two questionnaires related to Awareness regarding HIV/AIDS and another related to Awareness about ‘Adolescence education’ & Attitude towards ‘Adolescence education’ along with a Personal Information Schedule, which contains the items related to socio-economic and educational background of the respondents.

The questionnaire for measuring Awareness of HIV/AIDS,’ consisted of 33 items. The questionnaire related to Awareness regarding ‘Adolescence education’ and Attitude of the respondents towards ‘Adolescence education’ contains 27 items (13 items for awareness about ‘Adolescence education’ and 14 items for attitude towards ‘Adolescence education’).
Techniques of data analysis

The collected data were classified and tabulated according to the objectives and research questions of the study. Since the study is purely descriptive and qualitative in nature, the data have been analysed by comparing the proportions, viz. percentages of different category of variables and inferences were drawn.

Major findings

The analysis of data and its interpretation lead to the following major findings:

Findings regarding Awareness of HIV/AIDS

(A) Findings regarding Parents Awareness

1. 95% of the parents in the sample knew the full form of HIV/AIDS. This proportion was slightly higher among females than males.

2. In general 93% of the parents had no misconceptions about HIV/AIDS. However only 58% of the males and 53% of the females were aware of the fact that HIV/AIDS can spread through homosexual intercourses.

3. While more than 90% of the parents were aware that HIV/AIDS can spread through unprotected sex, infected blood transfusion and the use of same syringe by many persons, only 85% of them had reasonably good knowledge of different aspects of sex and only 66% were aware of the possibility of transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child.

4. 91% of the parents were aware of the various preventive measures but only 72% of them were aware of the fact that having sex with only one person (spouse) could prevent the spread of the malady and having sex with strangers could lead to its spread.
5. 83% of the parents were aware that a healthy (controlled) lifestyle was necessary for rehabilitation. However only 57% were aware that nutritious diet with various vitamins could help rehabilitation. In this case males had greater awareness than females.

(B) Finding regarding Teachers' Awareness

1. 94% of the teacher respondents knew the full form of HIV/AIDS. There was not much difference between male and female teachers in the regard.

2. 96% of the teachers did not have any misconceptions about HIV/AIDS, in general. But only 62% of the teachers were aware of the fact the homosexuality could lead to the spread of the malady. In this case awareness was found to be greater among males than females.

3. 95% of the teachers were aware of the fact that HIV/AIDS could spread through unprotected sex, infected blood transfusion, having sex with several persons and the use of one syringe by several persons. However, only 77% of the teachers were aware of the possibility of mother to child transmission of the disease. Here also males had greater awareness than the females.

4. 93% of the teachers had reasonably good knowledge of the preventive measures.

5. While only 87% of the male teachers were aware that a healthy (controlled) lifestyle could lead to longevity, about 97% of the female teachers had this awareness. However, only 74% of the males and 71% of the females were aware of the positive impact of nutritious food on longevity of HIV/AIDS patients.
(C) Findings regarding Students’ Awareness

1 90% of the Secondary and Higher Secondary school students knew the full form of HIV/AIDS. However the proportion of male students was larger than that of female students in regard to the full form of HIV.

2 90% of the students had no misconceptions about HIV/AIDS in general. However only 57% of them were aware that having sex with a partner of the same sex could spread HIV/AIDS.

3 90% of the students were aware that unprotected sex, infected blood transfusion, having sex with several persons and use of the same syringe by many people could spread HIV/AIDS. However only 70% of them were aware that HIV/AIDS can get transmitted from mother to child.

4 Over 90% of the students were aware of the various preventive measures. However only 71% of them were aware of that fact that having sex with only one person (spouse) could prevent the spread of this malady.

5 70% of the students were aware that a healthy (controlled) lifestyle could lead to longevity. However 85% of them were aware about the impact of nutritious diet which includes various vitamins.

Findings regarding Awareness about ‘Adolescence education’

(A) Parents’ Awareness regarding ‘Adolescence education’

75% of the parents were found to have fairly good knowledge of the physiological changes that occur during adolescence among boys and girls. They were also aware of concepts of HIV/AIDS, use and abuse of drugs. However, only about 62% of them were aware of equality of sexes and the natural attraction of the opposite sex during adolescence. The extent of awareness was greater among females than males.
(B) Teachers' Awareness about ‘Adolescence education’.

84% of the teachers had a fairly good knowledge of the physiological changes that occur during adolescence among boys and girls. However, only 64% of them were aware of equality of sexes and the development of attraction for opposite sex during adolescence. The extent of awareness was greater among male teachers than their female counterpart.

(C) Students' Awareness about 'Adolescence education'.

72% of the students were aware of the 'Adolescence education. Only 50% of the students were aware of the process of growing up and the changes physical and psychological associated with it. The extent of awareness was greater among males than females.

Finding regarding Attitude towards ‘Adolescence education’

(A) Parents attitude towards 'Adolescence education'

In general parents have favoured that proposal that adolescence boys and girls should be educated in the process of growing up. They should be made aware of the physical and psychological changes that take place during adolescence. They should also be made knowledgeable in reproductive biology, sexuality, HIV/AIDS – their spread and prevention. Most parents are in favour of this education being provided by parents, older siblings and teachers. This education may also be included in some form in school curriculum. In this regard they do not seem to have objection to having co – educational class or showing Adolescents audio – visual (multimedia) materials to educate them on matters related to healthy and matured approach to sex.

However, most parents have objection to introducing ‘Adolescence education’ as a separate academic subject mainly for two reasons, one that it would add burden to the already overburdened Secondary school students of today and second, the students would only like to pass exams in the course also rather
than use the knowledge to keep them mentally and physically healthy and to become matured and cautious in matter of sex. As compared to male respondents, female respondents have more favourable attitude towards different aspects of ‘Adolescence education’ and its inclusion in school curriculum.

In relation to the religion the extent of the positive attitude to ‘Adolescence education’ varies among different communities, Christians 92%, ‘Others’ 90% and Hindus 88%,

Educational attainments of parents seem to influence the attitude towards ‘Adolescence education’. 94% of the Graduate parents favoured the inclusion of ‘Adolescence education’ in school curriculum while those with H.S.L.C 84%, H.S.S.L.C 89%, Post graduates 77% and those in ‘Other’ profession 66% favoured the inclusion of ‘Adolescence education’ in school curriculum.

Like religion nature of occupation of a parent also seems to cause variation in the attitude of parents towards the inclusion of ‘Adolescence education’ in school curriculum. Thus those in business 88%, those in government service 86%, the ones in teaching 83%, those in professions only 71% and those in ‘other’ professions 85% favoured inclusion of Adolescence education in school curriculum.

(B) Attitude of Teachers towards ‘Adolescence education’

90% of the teachers working in the secondary and higher Secondary schools favoured the inclusion of ‘Adolescence education’ as school subject in the Secondary and Higher secondary school curriculum. Female teacher respondents have more favourable attitude towards ‘Adolescence education’ as compared to their male counterpart.

Educational attainments seem to influence the attitude of teachers towards Adolescence education. Thus while 90% of the Graduate and Postgraduate teachers favoured the inclusion of Adolescence education in secondary, higher secondary school curriculum, among the teachers with ‘Other’ qualification only 80% favoured such an inclusion.
(C) Attitude of students towards ‘Adolescence education’

Like their parents and teachers a vast majority of the students also favoured inclusion of ‘Adolescence education’ in the school curriculum. However, the proportion of students at the higher secondary stage is greater (81 %) than those at the secondary level (77%). Similarly while 90% of the Science students favoured the inclusion, among the Arts students only about 64% favoured such an inclusion. Male students have more favourable attitude towards ‘Adolescence education.

Thus while in general Parents, Teachers and Students favoured inclusion of ‘Adolescence education’ in the school curriculum in some or the other form, larger proportion of about 50% from each category of respondents do not favour inclusion of Adolescence education as a separate subject. This situation is found across religions, occupation etc.

Conclusion

It has been found that more than 90% of the respondents have awareness about the concepts, transmission, preventive measures and rehabilitation measures of HIV/AIDS. Among the respondents, teachers have more awareness regarding HIV/AIDS followed by parents and students. More than 70% of the respondents have awareness about ‘Adolescence education’. The same trend as in HIV/AIDS has been found in case of awareness regarding ‘Adolescence education’.

An overall responds reveals that those parents having government service as their occupation has been reported to have maximum support towards different aspects of Adolescence education. As compared to Hindu parents, Christian parents have shown more positive views towards ‘Adolescence education’. Female parents have more favourable attitude towards ‘Adolescence education’. It was also reported that higher the educational qualification of parents, greater is the attitude towards ‘Adolescence education’.
Overall observation shows that Post graduate teachers have shown more positive attitude than Graduate teachers. Regarding introduction of 'Adolescence education' in high school curriculum, Hindu teachers have more positive views as compared to Christian teachers whereas Christian teachers were more inclined to giving Adolescence education as a compulsory subject in schools. Female teacher respondents have more favourable attitude towards 'Adolescence education' than their male counterpart.

Overall observation shows that Higher Secondary Science students have more favourable attitude towards 'Adolescence education' as compared to Secondary and Higher Secondary Arts students. But most of the students do not like to make it a compulsory school subject. It has been observed that maximum numbers of Christian students are having positive views regarding 'Adolescence education'. It is further observed that in case of Hindu student males are found to have more positive attitude towards 'Adolescence education' which among Christian students females are found to have more positive attitude towards 'Adolescence education'. Students do not want to make it a compulsory subject in school. As compared to females, male students have shown more favourable attitude towards 'Adolescence education'.

However, it is significant to note here that positive attitude reflected by the data reflects that in general people – young and old, men and women, across religions and occupations and educational attainments are aware of the consequences of the spread of HIV/AIDS. But the levels of awareness of the causes, processes and remedies though apparently significantly high (over 90%) but still about 10% of the people lack such detailed awareness. The situation is the same with regard to providing 'Adolescence education'. But about 50% of the people are not in favour of adding a separate subject of 'Adolescence education' to the already overloaded school work.
Education implications

The findings of the study listed above have serious implication for the teaching, learning process in our school system.

It is generally conceded that education is the media through which one’s character can be molded according to the needs of the society. Our present society is facing a great threat from the dreadful disease, AIDS caused by HIV, Manipur is one of the states affected by this dreadful disease. The study may imply that much development and positive change can be brought in HIV awareness level of the new generation if proper education is imparted to the members of the society.

As our study shows that with regard to different aspects of the problem majority of the people are aware of the causes and consequences of the spread of HIV/AIDS and also have a positive attitude to the provision of ‘Adolescence education’ to the young people in some or the other form. But there still about 10% - 25% (depending on various aspects) of people whose awareness low and do not have such a favourable attitude to the inclusion of element of Adolescence education in the school curriculum. In view of this situation it is imperative to initiate vigorous programmes and schemes of action including education to eradicate the ignorance about HIV/AIDS and create a favourable attitude to the inclusion of ‘Adolescence education’ in some form or the others not only in formal education but also in adult literacy programmes and non formal education, so that all the people fight together against their malady and prevent its spread and rehabilitate the unfortunate ones who have some how caught this dreaded disease.

With an objective to show down the spread of HIV infection so as to reduce impact of HIV epidemic in the country, international agencies like UNESCO and UNAIDS are taking leading role to improve awareness about the disease and to prevent from it. Government of India has launched National AIDS Control Program in 1987. Various projects have been sponsored by the agencies. One of the objectives of NACP II is to launch
National Adolescence Education Program so that the students who are the focus of the society can equip themselves with the skill of protecting themselves from various undesirable incidences which may lead to serious disease like AIDS.

Present study shows that students have enough knowledge regarding awareness of HIV/AIDS but still the disease cannot be controlled. It is being transmitted from high risk group to woman and children. The study implies that students can be equipped with necessary life skills to protect themselves from such infections and diseases through proper education.

To make the policies and projects launched by the government success, teacher's role can also be taken into account. Each and every teacher should be well aware about the social problems such as HIV/AIDS. A teacher is believed to be a guide and facilitator for the young and growing mind. The right outlook and the attitude of teacher is sure to leave and indelible marks on the mind of the children. She/he has a crucial role in developing the right kind of outlook and attitudes in the students. Therefore, the interaction between the teachers and taught will inculcate in our children rational outlook, Scientific inquiry and scientific oriented mind and capacity of making right decision in life. This would empower our children to solve varied problems which encompass their lives.

The study also implies the important role of parents in giving education to children. Parents being one of the most important components of the society, they themselves need awareness about this dreaded disease to protect themselves and their families. Parents need to be educated regarding the different aspects of ‘Adolescence education’. Only when they are well informed, they can provide necessary information to their children particularly when there is an infected family members, they could be able to deal with proper attitude with the patients. They can also be able to help in sustaining the efforts done at school, in home environment and help children proper attitude and values to face the situations.
The present study also implies that education is not only means that brings social changes. Other factors such as socio-economic background, the advancement in the field of science and technology have a great impact upon individual and the society. To bring about the required changes in the society children have to be given opportunities to explore the facts of the world by themselves through the agencies of the mass media like radio, T.V, newspaper, magazines, journals, internet, traveling and social interaction.

The study also implies that attitude towards ‘Adolescence education’ is very much necessary in our state Manipur. Knowledge and information about HIV/AIDS needs to be given from the grass root. Such an effort should be a strategy on various levels. The study also reveals that only teachers or parents cannot successfully provide ‘Adolescence education’ to children. There should be co-operation among the different component of the society. Only there is co-operation among the members of the society and Government, the policies and projects could be successful. The most striking inference found from the present study is that more than 50% respondents deny including ‘Adolescence education’ as a compulsory school subject. This implies that it would be successful if provided as a part of every subject in the integrated mode of curriculum.

The present study implies that the attitude towards ‘Adolescence education’ is varied according to socio economic status of the respondents. Hence while providing necessary education sociological background of the respondents should be taken care of.

Further the study implies that it is necessary for the people of Manipur to have a clear picture of what HIV/AIDS actually is besides just the basic concept that is a dreadful disease. Superstitious and traditional believes about this disease and out-casting people suffering from HIV/AIDS which do not have scientific reasoning need to be wiped away. It could be carried out through discussion, seminars, brain storming and rationalization. They should understand that old practices and values need constant revision and modification according to the changing time in order to bring development in the changing society.
Suggestions for further research

Every work has got its own limitation. Present study has also some limitations. As explained earlier, due to paucity of time and resources at the disposal of the investigator the study could not cover a large geographical area and was restricted to two districts of Manipur. In this study a very limited number of Government and Private schools were selected. The investigation could not cover a larger area.

To overcome these limitations some suggestions for further research are the order.

6. Considering the devastating implications of the spread of HIV/AIDS it is imperative that a study be conducted on all the nine districts of Manipur with special emphasis on the backward districts. Awareness of HIV/AIDS with respect to socio-economic conditions of different sections of the society can also be conducted.

7. Studies should be undertaken to include the samples of college and post-graduate students as well to ensure that the malady is wiped out of the educational system.

3. A disease does not strike only the children and youth in our schools and colleges, it can strike anybody anywhere. Therefore, children and young people who have not been to school should also be studied so that non formal and even informal agencies can be involved in educating them.

4. Finally, it would be advisable that studies be conducted in other states as well, especially the North-Eastern states of India, where the extent of prevalence of the disease seems to be greater than that in the main land.