

Building the abilities of Adolescent Girls: Becoming Agents of Change – Investigating , improving the self and reflecting on the mirror image in adolescent girls by training them in social and life skills

Objectives: The following are the objectives that are aimed to be realized in the student community

1. Making students' cognitive abilities result in productivity, efficiency and impact.
2. Equipping students with knowledge regarding hygiene, gender, nutrition etc.
3. Engagement with social service.
4. Inculcation of leadership qualities.
5. Acquisition of meta-learning skills.
6. Assessment of one's own strengths and weaknesses.
7. Becoming change makers by empowering adolescent girls to resolve their confusions about courses, career, relationships etc.,
8. Realization of the efficacy of social skills and life skills.
9. Ability to gain access to resources and technologies in achieving personal tasks.
10. Engagement with various social activities for realizing the significance of adolescence for healthy and wealthy society.

Context/Introduction:

Today, adolescent life is irremediably stuck in a neo-medieval world and it is due to the mindset of the men and women in the society.

Adolescents face incidents such as sexual abuse, child trafficking, bride burning, child marriages, murder, rape etc., and these odd elements build a wall against the growth and development of adolescent girls. The social and physical boundaries of girls have become a face-off for the safe living of the adolescent community. The crimes against the adolescent girls increased by leaps and bounds which make them vulnerable in not developing into strong personalities. Even though the government implements laws for the protection of adolescent girls, the violence against them makes everyone to ponder about solutions for these noxious acts. Violence against girls exists everywhere: girls on many occasions are victimized by all sorts of discriminations, deprivations and obstructions in goal achieving process. The incidents may occur at home, school, public places etc. On the other end of the spectrum the adolescents face many health problems such as anemia, hyper and hypothyroidism, nutrient deficiencies etc. As the stage of adolescence is transitory the adolescents are also confused with career choice and goals to be achieved. These all are because of lack of knowledge about themselves in all walks of life.

Being the faculty of women's college, with adolescent learners in the first year of their undergraduate programmes, the staff felt the dire need to address the pervasiveness of negative

social norms such as gender discrimination, early marriages, domestic violence etc., as these norms are directly linked to high risk for maternal, infant and under-5 mortality rates. To make students involve in extending social service and as responsible citizens of India the college has stepped in to incept “Kishori Vikasam” scheme to UG level students. Kishori Vikasam is a scheme of government of Andhra Pradesh which is a motivational training given to adolescent girls in the areas of health, child rights, acts, career guidance, life skills etc. Having received the training the students in turn educate adolescent girls and make them strong in multifaceted areas of their lives. As Peer Group Trainers (PGTs) the students of DKW College initially trained and motivated the students of the college and then went to many residential girl hostels like KGBVs, Welfare Hostels and other government residential institutions to create awareness and empower them. The students managed the resources very well in carrying the action plan. The students are trained on several aspects such as

1. Gender awareness and equity
2. Peer pressure
3. Nutrition
4. Beauty consciousness
5. Relations, values and customs
6. Changes in adolescence
7. Menstruation, menstrual health and hygiene
8. Impact of child marriages
9. Sexual abuse and harassments
10. Child trafficking and related acts
11. Differences between love and attraction
12. Life skills and
13. Career guidance

Practice:

Wanting to serve the community that they are born into and become the change makers, the students of DKW college extended the benefits of the training that they have had, to the adolescent girls in a phased manner. The execution of any program needs to be monitored for fruitful results. A staff member, Smt. K. Aparna Devi from the department of Home Science, acted as district resource person and monitored the program. In the first phase 100 undergraduate students from the college, representing all programmes of study, were trained in the respective modules. Each peer group trainer was given full-fledged knowledge by the experts in various professions, for 2 days, in order to achieve the desired objective. The students were instructed to choose topics of their choice. They collected material for the chosen topics as to enhance their cognition and confidence. In the first phase, 50 students went to all government schools in Nellore local to attain the goal. They created awareness among students of both boys and girls. This program brought students to be together to discuss and express their feelings. They dealt

with and experienced an avalanche of emotions. They understood the group dynamics. They expatiated the contents to the inmates of the hostel. These students who are called Peer Group Trainers talked with impeccable vocabulary which showed their communication skills to elicit the difficulties that adolescent girls and boys face in all domains of their lives. The students employed an eclectic means to achieve the target. The adolescent girls and boys received the PGTs euphorically. Adolescent girls and boys shared the problems they are experiencing. PGTs came to know about the problems that boys and girls are facing and they have made use of their knowledge of self and of community to get rid off from the problems. They have introspected thus on the first hand experiences that they have had and utilized the knowledge they gained in helping the adolescent girls and boys. They identified the following problems.

1. Health- anemia, nutrient deficiencies, thyroid problems
2. Hygiene- menstrual problems, no proper water facilities in hostels
3. Gender discrimination at home
4. Confusion about their career
5. Lack of knowledge on child rights and acts
6. Child marriages
7. Many are in love etc.,
8. Adjustment problems in the family

The students tackled the issues encountered by the adolescent girls through different ways for the development of physical and psychological health of adolescent girls. The students made efforts in changing the mindset of the adolescent girls. The wrongs done by the adolescent girls were also shared with the Peer Group Trainers. This has thrown the door wide open to cease the future moral disasters. The wiser responses from the Peer Group Trainers to these sensitive issues are that they

1. Patiently sat with the children
2. Understood the motivating factors
3. Gave sensitive and sensible moral rehabilitation
4. Made them realize their ability to disconnect from the rotten segments of society.
5. Developed deep connection, some emotional and intellectual attachment which was crucial in changing the attitudes.

Peer Group Trainers tried and succeeded to a large extent to expel out all their set beliefs and feelings by expounding life skills. Adolescent girls recognized their self with a better grasp of what they are and a fair appraisal of how well they are. Peer Group Trainers guided the adolescent girls in legible way to put things back on the right track. PGTs also focused on the

expanse of career that adolescent girls have to choose after SSC. PGTs created awareness with the help of audiovisual aids like laptops, charts, mobiles etc and explained the real success stories of women and men to motivate adolescent girls and boys. In the second, third phases total 50 students took part in this program. They went to various government and non- governmental residential schools covering SPSR Nellore district and had given motivational training nearly to 5,000 adolescent boys and girls which is a tumultuous achievement. The areas they visited include Kovur, Podalakur, S.R Puram, Atmakur, Udayagiri, Marripadu, Nandipadu, A.S. Peta, Kondapuram, Kaligiri, Sangam, SC Puram, Buchi, Golagamudi, Alluru, Vidavaluru, Kodavaluru, Seetharamapuram. In this way the students of DKW college as Peer Group Trainers succeeded in empowering the adolescent boys and girls for their bright future. The Peer Group Trainers' ostensible commitment to achieve the motto inspired other students to extend social service to the society.

Evidence of success:

With the genesis of Kishori Vikasam scheme the students of DKW college lashed at the ugly negative societal norms which are hindering the development of adolescent girls, to some extent, by investigating premier causes of immense frustration, disappointment, catharsis and provided possible solutions. The response of AG's boosted the self confidence of PGTs to accomplish the task with ease. The impact of PGTs' interaction with AG's honestly elucidated productive results which happened because of the manoeuvring efforts of PGTS. The success evidenced in the AG's promises to

- 1.Pursue higher studies
- 2.Saying no to child marriages
3. Adopt hygienic and safety measures by using sanitary napkins
4. Eat healthy and nutritious food
5. Set goals
- 6.Choose best career options according to their strengths
7. Enhance cognitive abilities
8. Learn and fight for their rights by knowing child rights and acts promulgated by the government etc.,

The PGTs have taken the phone numbers of AG's parents and counseled them about the future of their children. The success is attained through proclaimed credentials like communication skills, better cognition, intra and interpersonal skills on the part of PGTs in helping the AG's overcome the problems in all facets of life.. The Principal of DKW college Dr. Ch. Mastanaiah garu appreciated the PGTs for edifying AG's in order to empower them. He also promised to add extra 5 marks in Academic Performance for participating in social activity and thus created a colourful and electrifying atmosphere.

Problems encountered and resources required:

Woes spring up while implementing any program which are admissible and should be corrected as and when they arise. Very few problems are encountered while working out the action plan. One of the main problems was students' missing their regular class work in the busy schedule of semester system. It was also one of the reasons for the initial shying away of many students from the activity. However all the faculty supported the students by giving them additional classes on their return. Other problems include selection of the topics by PGTs, selecting the placement area, collecting and distributing the material and environment at the work place, getting to know each other etc., To quell students fears, to submerge oddities, to make diversified personalities and cooperate with each other, to portray the inner strengths, to reinforce the positive attitude, the staff employed only one strategy that is counseling, to unravel these problems. Counseling was done on the following aspects

1. Potential integration of human resources
2. Abilities to transform the situations accordingly
3. Realising their responsibilities that help PGTs in accomplishing tasks easily
4. Sustaining motivation even in hard times

Resources Required:

Human resources:

1. Energy
2. Social skills
3. Commitment
4. Attitude
5. Leadership qualities
6. Empathy
7. Problem solving skills
8. Intelligence etc

Nonhuman Resources:

Time

Money(met with the support from the district authorities who sponsored the programme)

Vehicle (met with the support from the district authorities who sponsored the programme)

Suggestions:

1. This type of counseling is necessary to men who are the real perpetrators of discrimination, violence and so on.
2. Compulsory counseling on moral values to different communities in the society in the weekends.

To make adolescents fly like a skylark Kishori Vikasam is definitely a boon to tune their lives towards success.

IGNITING THE SPECTRUM OF CAPACITY COHERENCE OF STUDENTS

Objectives:

- To regularise periodical face to face communication with students in non-academic context.
- To make it a venue for the important announcements and sharing of important information.
- To impart information sharing in human communication and not just through notice board display.
- To inculcate discipline.
- To provide a platform for students to present on current developments in the chosen subject.
- To help students to overcome the fear of public speaking.
- To respect the national song and national anthem by singing.

Context/ Introduction: In the context of Andhra Pradesh, students till 10th standard participate in daily student assembly and thus practice some norms of discipline. But as they progress to plus two education and undergraduate education, all the focus is only on academics, students suddenly feel disconnected to each other and the institute and as one of the binding factors is not practiced they slowly drift into a lack of belongingness. Against this background the college felt the need for such a periodical regular congregation which will help the students to create a conducive environment.

Practice: The student assembly is conducted every Monday at 9.45 a.m. All the students assemble in the quadrangle of the inner structure of the college where the flag post is situated. The student union chair person conducts the assembly. The Principal/Vice Principal/ the senior most lecturer will preside over the assembly. The proceedings start with the recital of our national song Vande Mataram. Every Monday one department has to make its presentation. Members of staff present the activities planned in the department and also the progress of the activities taken up as well as the achievements if any. Students too make presentation on the latest developments in the chosen subject related to the department and also share the job and higher education opportunities in the fields concerned. Then the Principal/Vice Principal/ the senior most makes announcements or gives instructions about attendance, class work, any new developments or activities and so on. Students and staff who have made valuable contributions with their achievements are appreciated and commended. The Assembly concludes with the national anthem Jana Gana Mana.

Evidence of success: Regular periodical face to face meeting of all the main stakeholders of the institution has clearly resulted in improvement of many student affairs of the college. First important aspect is the increased attendance of students. Though all the rules have been clearly shared with regard to attendance it is only after regular instruction and reminders during the student assembly that has improved their attendance. Another aspect is the frequent reminders about cleanliness of the campus and their role in keeping it clean. Similarly online registration for scholarships and other such things also pick up momentum once they are reminded in the assembly. The best part of the assembly is

the appreciation received by successful students in front of the whole college gathering in the various fields motivates the other students towards better performance.

Problems encountered and resources required: When the assembly was initially conducted on daily basis class time for the first hour from 10 am to 11 am is losing at least 10 minutes. Noticing this, the assembly is rescheduled to Monday of every week. Similarly the assembly presentations by the departments were not covered by all the departments. Hence a schedule for the whole year is given at the beginning of the academic year. Yet another problem was that when the assembly was being conducted it was noticed that some of the students were abstaining themselves from it. So the discipline committee of the student union ensures that all the students are at the assembly by checking the classrooms before the beginning of the assembly.

Resources required:

Human Resources:

1. Knowledge
2. Ability
3. Skill
4. Efficiency

Non-human Resources:

1. Time
2. Ground
3. Mike
4. Speakers
5. Books
6. Internet

Suggestions:

- Assembly can be twice in a week.
- To promote research work and update information, every Tuesday research abstracts can be read out by students in the concerned discipline.