

Executive Summary
Youth for Upliftment of Vibrant Adolescents
(YUVA)

**(A new experiment in training youth for spreading sexuality and
gender sensitivity in adolescents)**



**Jnana Prabodhini's Institute of
Psychology**



**Jnana Prabodhini's
Institute of Psychology**
प्रज्ञा – मानस संशोधिका

**Maharashtra State Women's
Commission**



Pune, June 2019

Youth Participants & Master Trainers (with volunteers)



Gogte - Joglekar College, Ratnagiri



IIE campus, Shivapur (Dist, Pune)



Astha Skill Development Complex, Latur

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JPIP team,

and

The YUVA volunteers who carried this mission on their strong shoulders
with dedication

Index

1. Project at a glance	2
2. Contents.....	3
3. The participant's profile.....	6
4. Assessment Tools	8
5. The Execution Flow.....	9
6. What did the trainers 'training comprise of?.....	10
7. Unique features of the trainings.....	11
8. Practice Sessions.....	14
9. Important Findings.....	16
10. Did boys and girls show any difference?	17
11. What did the Youth gain as mentors?.....	18
12. Conclusions, Limitations and References.....	19
13. Looking ahead.....	20





Project At a glance.....

Youth has tremendous potential to trigger social change. Gender parity is an area in which youth can contribute significantly. Gender roles have a strong relationship with sexual identity. Socio-cultural realities are instrumental in shaping the gender and sexuality stereotypes leading to a biased, conflicting and ignorant behavior. This can lead to increased incidences of abuse, sexually risky behavior patterns and gender based violence. *Shaping the adolescent minds to nurture healthy attitudes towards sexuality and gender parity is the need of time.* Young adults can play a very crucial role in this change by establishing a constructive and rational dialogue with the adolescents. However first they need to be empowered for being instrumental in this change process. *The present two tiered experimental study is a successful attempt to empower youth through in depth training in sexuality education and gender parity along with mentoring skills to become facilitators in spreading this message.* At level one, impact of intensive training imparted to 113 youth from urban India in the two mentioned areas was studied through a repeated measures quasi experimental design. Three tools namely 'Stepping into Youth- Knowledge Test, Stepping into Youth- Attitude Test and Stepping into Youth- Gender Concepts test were used. At level two, the impact of a series of 20 classroom sessions conducted for the adolescents by these young adults was studied. *Significant positive changes were noted on all the three variables at both the levels.* The qualitative analysis of the youth facilitators' FGDs supports the findings and indicates towards the change triggered in the adolescents through active engagement. This shows that young adults can play a crucial role in initiating positive social change aiming towards abolition of sexual abuse and gender inequality. **Key words:** Empowering Youth, Gender parity, and sexuality education.

Contents

Aim: To help the youth to build mentoring potentials and develop a scientific attitude towards one's own and towards other's sexuality along with gender issues and be able to spread the message to adolescents.

Introduction: Adolescence is the age of stress and storm. All the aspects of personality are undergoing rapid development and change. This is an age when a child starts seeking his/ her identity and looks forward towards entering into the youth for experiencing autonomy and freedom. Early years in adolescence are crucial as the heightened sensitivity towards oneself and the world makes children vulnerable to many life threatening risks. Experimentation in sexual behaviors is one of the main issues in this age. Thus it has been observed globally that there is an increasing need to impart sexuality education in the early adolescent years and also to develop a gender sensitive attitude in youth. Sex education, which is more precisely called sexuality education or sex and relationships education, is the process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. Sex education is also about developing young people's skills so that they make informed choices about their behavior, and feel confident and competent about acting on these choices.(AGI, 1994)

In this, delivering the scientific and technical information about the physiological and anatomical details supplemented with information on Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and AIDS is not sufficient. The children also need to know about issues such as ‘facing and dealing with abuse’, ‘meaning and limitations of relationships’, ‘concept of beauty and personality development’, ‘complementarity and equality between the genders’, ‘impact of media on one’s life and how to deal with it’, ‘choice of a life partner’ and such other issues, because young people can be exposed to a wide range of attitudes and beliefs in relation to sex and sexuality which sometimes appear contradictory and confusing. It is a fact that many young people and sex educators have strong views on what attitudes people should hold, and what moral framework should govern people's behavior but it is important to remember that talking in a balanced way about differences in opinion does not promote one set of views over another, or mean that one agrees with a particular view.

Sex education that works starts early, before young people reach puberty, and before they have developed established patterns of behavior. However, the precise age at which information should be provided depends on the physical, emotional and intellectual development of the young people as well as their level of understanding. In a conservative society like India, it can be provided to children ranging from pre-adolescent age to the college going youth since there is little chance that the latter group has received such education in their adolescent years. Here also, what is covered and how, depends on who is providing the sex education, when they are

providing it, and in what context, as well as what the individual young person wants to know about.

Over years there has been a lot of turbulent discussion on this topic at different levels and in different sections of society. However one needs to look at this issue objectively and rely on what is being proved through empirical means. A survey conducted by the center for youth development and activity, points out that 94% children feel the need to get scientific education about sexuality. A surprisingly 74% of them are satisfying it through sources like T.V., porn films, or peer comments and other such material. (Kothekar,M., 2008)

Addiction is an equally serious problem rising rapidly in early adolescent age groups across India. Substance abuse and addiction to electronic gadgets are eating up the future of the young generation. Internet addiction and gadget addiction studies also show a serious picture. In a study involving 987 adolescents with a mean age of 16.82 years about 74.5% were moderate (average) users of internet.

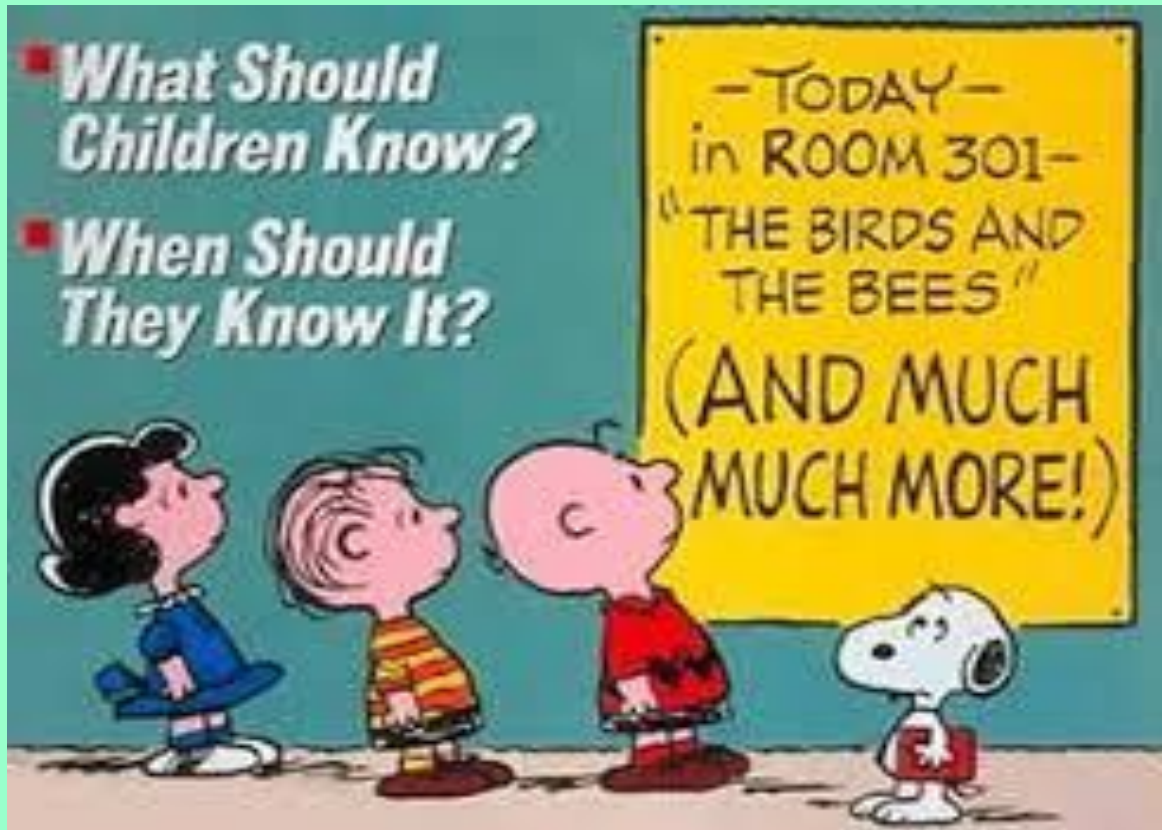
It has been observed that ‘mentoring’ is highly effective for young teenagers to bring about attitude change regarding many sensitive issues (Watve S., 2013). Children can easily identify with young adults (slightly older than them) who still shares some common set of ideas, imageries, and ‘slang ‘(language) of communication. Their influence on the children is readily established and may last much longer. Involving the youth in shaping lives of the adolescents close to them in many ways can make a difference.

Need for Sexuality education in India

The sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents in India are largely overlooked or not understood by the Indian healthcare system. Healthcare professionals are not taking comprehensive sexual histories, and sexual health is not openly discussed due to cultural and traditional norms in Indian society (Mamulwar et.al.2015), (Gott, Hinchliff & Galena, 2004),

Researchers have claimed that a well-designed school sexuality education can help combat the culture of ignorance, hesitation, shame, and fear associated with the disease in the community, from which the disease is born. (Shajahan, Ismail, S. Rao, & Kevan Wylie, 2015) . The present study thus aimed at building such a system in which the youth could be trained to trigger a dialogue through sexuality education with adolescents. This could work on two levels. The youth becoming more well informed and developing appropriate attitude towards sexuality and

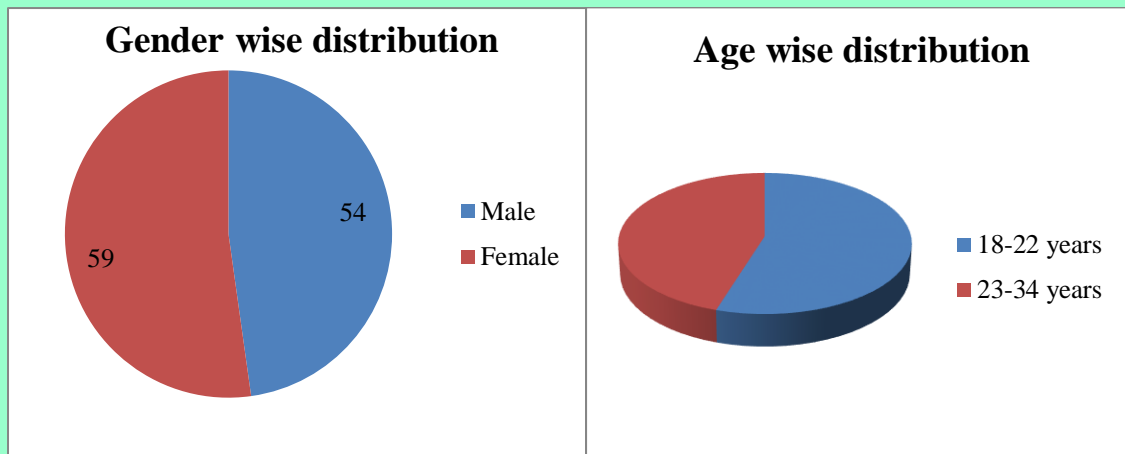
gender issues as well as they transferring it to the adolescents by implying learner friendly techniques.



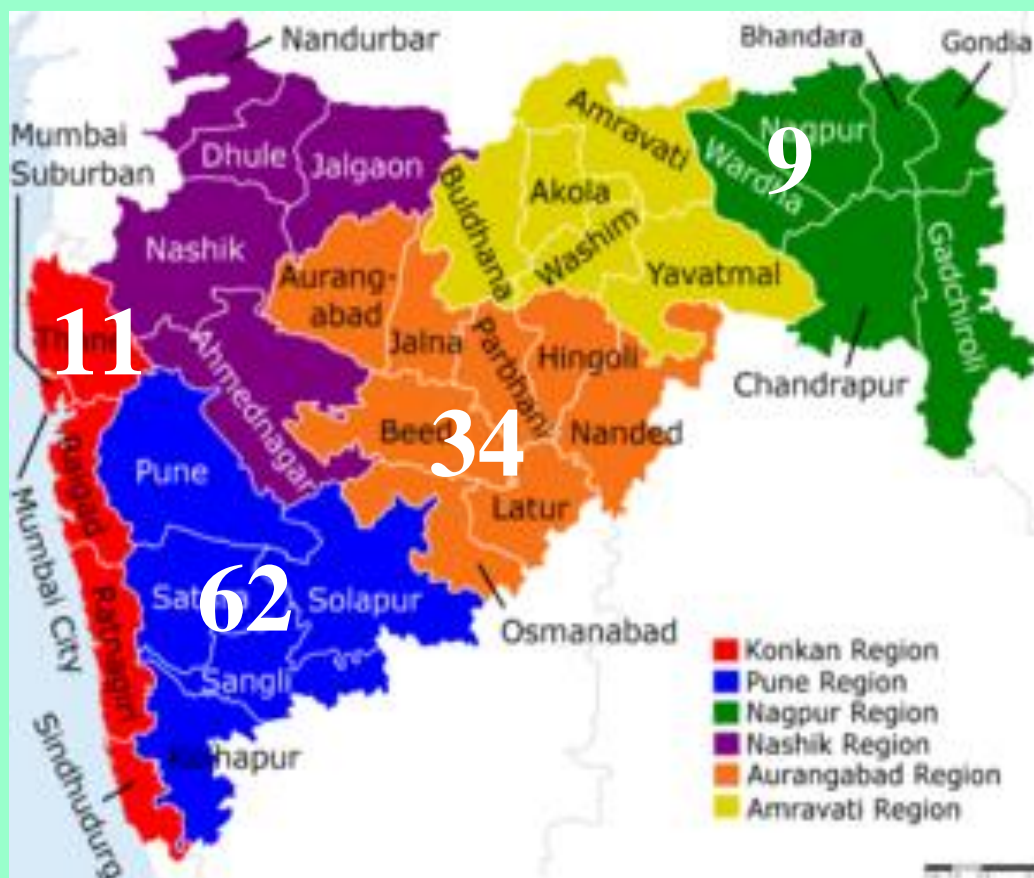
Source: <https://shopaholicmin.wordpress.com/2016/11/24/safeguarding-our-children-with-sex-education/>

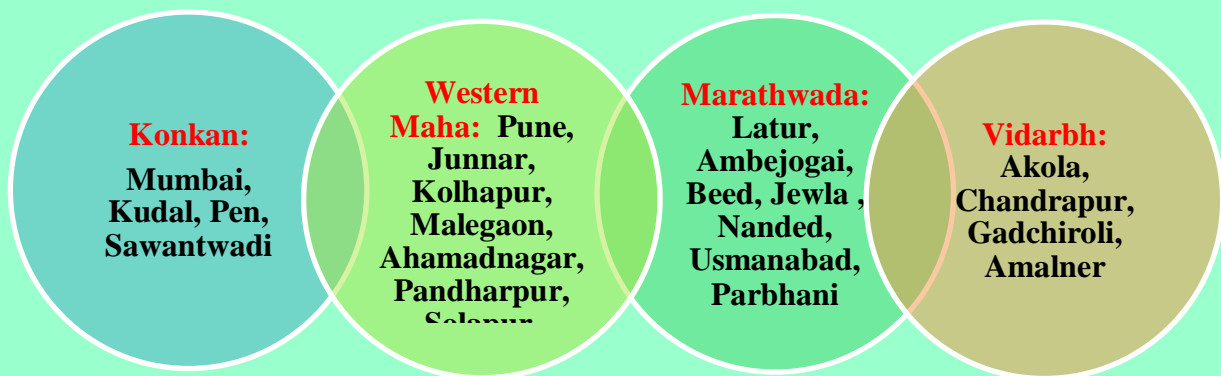
The participant's profile

The participant's profile: College-going youth (N= 113) from different parts of Maharashtra who responded to the appeal for participating in a unique program on sexuality education were enrolled for the program.

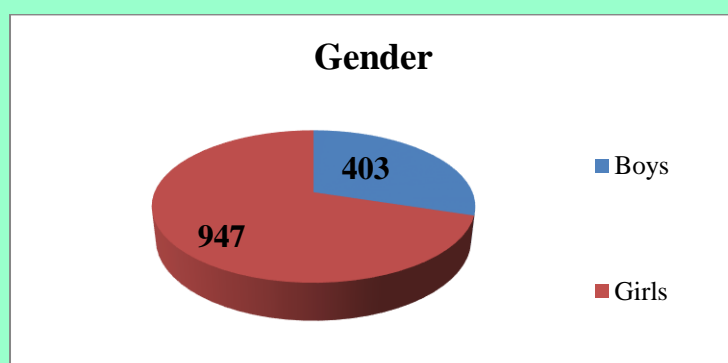


Places represented (region- wise participant numbers given)





Adolescents reached out by the Youth Mentors: 1350 (Boys: 403 Girls: 947)



Assessment Tools (with some sample items)

Stepping into youth: Knowledge test (SYKT): Four sub-areas

Stepping into youth: Attitude test (SYAT): Ten sub-areas

Stepping into youth: Gender concepts test (SYGC): Seven sub-areas

A feedback form probing the experiences of the mentors

Composite sexuality awareness test: 25 items combining above three tools (for adolescents)

SYKT

Question:

1. Adolescence means.....
- a: Age between nine to twelve.
- b: Phase of rapid psychological and physiological changes.
- c: Age Twenty one to twenty-five.
- d: None of the above.

Question No.	A	B	C	D
1		√		

SYAT

Question: Male and female are two faces of one nature.

Question No.	Answer
1	A

SYGC

Question:

Characteristic

Scale

**Naturally
Feminine**

**Naturally
Masculine**

Wearing 'Turban'

1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10

Mehendi Drawing

1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10



Intelligence

1____2____3____4____5____6____7____8____9____10

The Execution Flow

Step 1

Master trainer selection and training was done to maintain the uniformity and standardization in imparting the training content.

All master trainers were paired and given the task of developing the lesson notes for each of the topics in the master trainer's module

Step 2

Sample selection was done by appealing youth on social networking apps and enroll themselves for the intervention program.

A final list of 160 youth was prepared out of which 113 completed the intensive training for seven days

Step 3

Training was conducted at three different places in the administrative zones of Maharashtra state.

Pre-test and Post- test were conducted at the training venue

Step 4

The mentors went in field and conducted 22 classroom sessions for adolescents in thier vicinity.

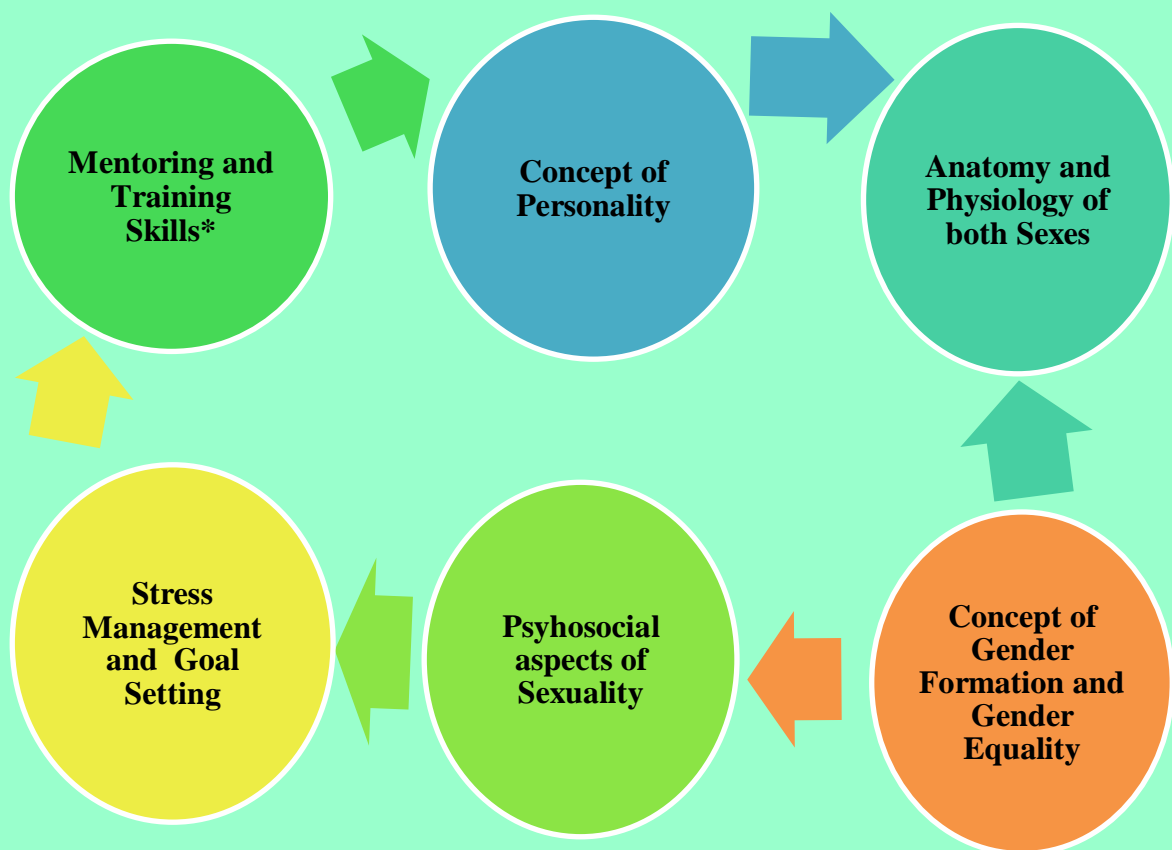
Stability testing and two days feedback meeting was conducted after completion of field work.

What did the trainers' training comprise of?

- ❖ Informative sessions on physiology, anatomy and health related issues
- ❖ Attitude building sessions involving interactive methods (Mass- media, Sexual abuse , Substance abuse, Sexually risky behavior, Peer pressure , Concept of beauty, Healthy friendship, Gender equality, Goal setting- Stress management)
- ❖ Demonstrations and Practice sessions in groups

While conducting the training, different methods were used for different sessions which included role plays (demonstrated by the facilitators and later participated by the trainees), Checklists, Focused Group Discussions, Stories, Paper pencil tasks, Group games/ activities, Video Clips, and movies, experience sharing of social workers). The participants were given rigorous practice sessions for the delivery of the content in their prospective field work.

The training covered the following major topics



Unique features of the training

- All the participants were self-enrolled, new to the content of the training, had first time exposure to such training, initially hesitant to talk on sexuality issues but changed to complete immersion later
- Residential nature gave opportunities to introduce many outdoor and interactive / physically active sessions
- Morning prayers and meditation retained the energy and stimulated reflective thinking
- Post-dinner discussions with role models triggered thinking over life goals
- Gradual rise in ‘role play participation’/ ‘expression’, ‘finesse in practicing classroom delivery’



Meditation moments to self-reflect....

Energy boosting morning gym





Training sessions in action



Pre-post assessment





Delivering scientific inputs



Interactive methods



Practice sessions

- Based on the eight module booklets, in small groups of 4-5 youth mentors, including both boys and girls, supervised by the master trainers
- Given empathic but candid feedback about their performance in the practice sessions and guided to shape their presentations in a precise still impressive manner
- Master trainers also provided all type of assistance in planning their field sessions



Training content- booklet set for youth mentors (developed @ Jnana Prabodhini)

Master trainer guiding the mentors



Discussions and Role Plays





Important Findings

(All the findings are based on proper statistical analysis)

Impact on the total group:

A. Knowledge about sexuality:

- ❖ The knowledge of the prospective mentors significantly improved as results of the training on all the four areas covered under SYKT.(anatomy-physiology, myths – misconception, health-hygiene, diseases)
- ❖ This positive change continued during the practice period which is reflected from improvement captured after six months (after completion of their field work)
- ❖ Similar significant positive change was noted in knowledge of the adolescents whom they trained.

B. Attitude towards Sexuality:

- ❖ Overall attitude and the attitude towards all the ten subareas significantly improved for the mentors as an effect of training.
- ❖ The mentors maintained the change throughout the practice period.
- ❖ They could transfer this positive change of attitude towards sexuality in the adolescents they interacted.

C. Gender concepts :

- ❖ The overall gender concept of the mentors became significantly more egalitarian as results of the training.
- ❖ After the field work it still improved substantially indicating that their experiences of implementing the modules on gender stereotypes for children triggered further alteration of their views in a more constructive direction.
- ❖ Though it is difficult to reduce gender stereotypes these mentors could bring about the desired change even in those adolescent they talked to during field work, showcasing how such young mentors can influence children's 'minds for a better future.

Did boys and Girls show any difference?

- No gender differences in the youth mentors were observed at the beginning on knowledge about sexuality and gender concepts. However, boys showed slightly higher scores on attitude towards person's sexual needs as compared to girls while the girls were more sensitive and had upper hand on attitude towards sexual abuse, media and need of sexuality education.

- At the end of the training, the whole group showed significant gain on knowledge about sexuality and no significant difference was observed across genders in the gains. Both showed similar improvement.
- The effect of intervention has been slightly different for boys and girls for certain areas in attitude towards sexuality. The boys showed significantly better improvement on attitude towards a person's sexual needs while the girls on- attitudes towards pre-marital relationship, socio-cultural correlates, attitude towards sexual abuse, attitude towards media and attitude towards sexuality education in general.
- After the field work at stability testing, these differences vanished and both gained equally on the attitude scale in general again emphasizing on the impact of immersion in the topic for a considerably longer period.
- Regarding egalitarian gender concepts, both boys and girls benefitted from the training. But certain statistics indicated significant improvement favoring the boys population on 'professional choices, availability of opportunity, leisure time activities' and the total scores on SYGC. This shows the discussions and exercises implied during the training for eradicating gender stereotypes have actually benefitted the males more than the females. (Which is again a pleasant surprise blooming out of this experiment!!?)



What did the Youth gain as mentors?

- Increased confidence, Patience building, Overcoming inhibition,
- Appreciation and respect gained from children
- Increase in awareness about sexuality issues
- Motivation to contribute in social good

- Experience sharing with children
- Boost in knowledge building habits
- Learned Self-Management

Responses of the school authorities:

**Most students were from low Socio economic class so the headmaster resisted permission.*
**When teachers read the titles of our module books then then they permitted us to conduct session but with a caution warning- 'carefully!'*
**School needs more in-depth information in this session.*

Student's pre- knowledge about the topic:

**In pre testing they did not understand some words and needed some explanation.*
**Students really don't have the appropriate knowledge about 'sexuality'*
**During the sessions students were not ready to ask the question in front of other friends, but after the class they used to come and ask individually.*

Ability building:

**Increased stage daring, speaking ability.*
**Answered unexpected questions well*
**We learned group management and group coordination*

Students response :

**Shared their experiences related to 'Abuse'*
**Students told us everything about 'Blue whale' game*
**Shared their experiences related to drug use and sex issues*

Topics most appreciated:

**Sexual Abuse and Beauty were appreciated most by girl community.*
**Addiction, Media were the most discussed topics all over.*
**Students were very curious and appreciative of the anatomy and physiology part. Asked many queries.*

Conclusions

1. A well designed and rigorous training can shape the attitudes of youth mentors positively by making them more informed about sexuality issues and sensitize them to gender equality.

2. Such mentors can serve as change agents by delivering the insights they learn to the adolescents around them.
3. The adolescents who undergo such training offered by the youth mentors also display clarity in thinking and positive attitudinal changes with respect to sexuality issues and also become gender sensitive.

Limitations

1. This intervention has been carried out for urban and semi- urban youth.
2. The individuality of each youth mentor might have influenced the adolescents differently.
3. Selection of schools by the mentors for execution of the program was based on convenience.

References

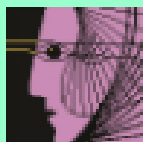
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Looking ahead.....

Sexuality education is perceived as a basic human right that falls under the broader title “reproductive rights” as emphasized by reputable NGO's such as the Family Planning

Association of India and International Planned Parenthood Federation as well as the World Association for Sexual Health (WAS). With India being one of the signatories to the 1994 United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), it is obliged to provide free and compulsory comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents and young people as part of commitments made under the ICPD agenda.)

One of the most significant findings of the study indicates that **majority of youth perceived family life education to be of utmost important**. This highlights that Indian adolescents realize the range of potential health risks and challenges lurking before them and demands the appropriate knowledge, skills, and training to lead a responsible and healthy lifestyle. Such experiments need to be replicated/ scaled up for rural youth to reach out the grass-root populations.



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Identifying & Nurturing Potentials

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Youth Mentors in action on field....





Certification at hands of Hon. Vrunda Keertikar
(Member, Maharashtra State Women's Commission)



Yuva Volunteers commitment towards society: Few names



Salman Mujawar : (Kolhapur) established his own NGO with friends and is in action to propagate what he learned....



Rahul Birajdar : (Solapur) is now an activist on social media and conducts sessions for school children in rural area. Started a movement of 'Men for respecting women'.



Suraj Kaygude : (Shirdi) did Masters in Psychology, worked in Saiyam project (JPIP) for Anti Addiction Awareness, has started own Personality Development cell in rural area.



Varsha Mane : (Kolhapur), currently working with NGO ,worked in Womens' Quality of Life Project(JPIP), has continued Adolescent Communication in Rural Area.



Anagha Dhuri : (Sawantwadi),completed her Masters in Psychology, worked in project on Womens' Quality of Life (JPIP), worked as research assistant in project conducted by Family Planning Association of India.



Shweta Sathe : (Pune) ,completed her Masters in Social Work,working as counsellor at Manavya (Rehabilitation Center for HIV+ Children)

YUVA is unique effort of combining motivation with social cause. It depicts how youth can be inspired through intensive training to transcend responsible sexual behavior and gender equality through imparting the knowledge and attitude to young adolescents in their vicinity. The success of this effort lies in the innovative, learner friendly content and methodology that has evolved from a long, continuous, dedicated effort done by the master trainers of Jnana Prabodhini 'Samvadini' group and the scientific structure offered by the researchers in JPIP. This can help people to implement similar efforts/experiments and turn it into a large movement.

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