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Challenges of school going adolescents: Perception of Secondary School Teachers in Lunglei

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Abstract

Introduction: Adolescents undergo varied experiences such as physical, psychological and behavioural changes in their journey from childhood to adulthood. This may reflect on their behaviour and academic performance in school. Apart from parents, secondary school teachers deal with adolescents every day at school and have to deal with differing personalities and behaviours. They are one of the key elements in a school-going adolescent's life.

Objective: This study probes into teachers' perception on the challenges faced by school going adolescents.

Methods: The study is cross sectional in nature and data was collected using free listing method and analysed using Anthropac software.

Findings: Teachers perceived that their adolescent students' challenges were mainly related to family environment, stress and negative coping; as well as relationship issues.

Conclusion: Findings bring out the need to incorporate parents and teachers active cooperation and participation for the overall development of school going adolescents. The study suggests that introducing school social worker/counsellor in schools must helpful for providing counselling and life skills to adolescents in schools.

Keywords: Adolescents, challenges, perception, school-going, teachers

Introductions

Adolescence refers to a life stage between 10 and 19 years of age in the human life span (World Health Organization). In India, adolescents constitute 19.6 percent of the population comprising almost one fifth of the total population (source?). Adolescence is the period of transition between childhood and adulthood. It includes some big changes to the body, and to the way a young person relates to the world (Casey, Duhoux, & Cohen, 2010) [3]. They often suffer from psychosocial problems at one time or another during their development (Kakkad *et al.*, 2014). Approximately one third of an adolescent's daily time is spent in school, which have play a role of shaping adolescents' behaviour (Panahi 2015).

Several studies have shown that a challenge faced by adolescents includes use of alcohol, tobacco, and other intoxicants; they are prone to sexual behaviours that can lead to unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. mental health issues such as eating disorders, depression, learning disabilities, and dropping out from school have been found along with family conflict and poverty (Cohen2012; (Das *et al.*, 2015; Deb *et al.*, 2015; Harikrishnan *et al.*, 2016, 2017; Harikrishnan & Sailo, 2019; Nagendra & Koppad, 2017; Nair *et al.*, 2017) [7, 8, 12].

Several studies reveal that quality of relationship between teacher-student and peer play a crucial role in terms of sense of belongingness in school for the students (Uslu & Gizir, 2017) [33]. Teachers are regarded as an agent for adolescents who can influence and encourage them (Wanders *et al.*, 2020) [35]. The nature of the teacher-student relationship can influence by the characteristics of students; gender, family income, personal behaviour and parents' involvement (Wyrick, 2012) [37].

The current study aims to understand the challenges faced by school going adolescents from the perception of teachers.

Methodology

The study is cross sectional in nature and follows a multi stage sampling procedure. In the first stage, Lunglei town was identified as sample area.

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In the second stage, all High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools of Lunglei town were identified. In the third stage, selection of three government and three private schools was made based on location (core and periphery). The study was conducted in 3 governments and 3 private schools in Lunglei Town, Mizoram. A cross sectional descriptive design was followed where the sample consisted of 10 teachers of Classes VIII to XII. Free listing method was used to identify the challenges faced by adolescents from the perception of teachers. Respondents were asked to list out challenges faced by school-going adolescents and their responses were analyzed in terms of frequency and rank using Anthropic Software. The perceptions of teachers were sorted into their perception of adolescent challenges, adolescent challenges related to family and home environment; and teachers' challenges in dealing with adolescent students. Written permission was taken from school authority and informed consent was obtained from participants prior to the study.

Results

Respondent teachers' socio demographic details indicate age range of 35-55 years and more than half of the respondents (60%) were male teachers. Majority of the teachers (80%) had teaching experience of more than 15 years.

Table 1: Family related challenges of school going adolescents: Teachers' perception

Sl. No	Family related challenges	Frequency (%)	Average Rank	Salience
1.	Poverty	50	2	0.377
2.	Family conflict	40	1.75	0.325
3.	Lack of family administration	30	3	0.133
4.	Divorce	10	2	0.067

Source: Computed

Table 1 shows Teachers' perception on family related challenges faced by school going adolescents. The challenges most frequently mentioned were Poverty (50%), Family conflict (40%), Lack of family administration (30%) and Divorce (10%). Lack of family administration, poverty and divorce ranked the highest among teachers' perceived list on family or home-related challenges of adolescent students.

Table 2: Teacher's perception on behavioural challenges faced by school going adolescents.

Sl. No	Behavioural challenges	Frequency (%)	Average Rank	Salience
1.	Substance abuse	60	2.83	0.325
2.	Excessive use of Mobile phones	30	1.67	0.225
3.	Social media addiction	20	3	0.12
4.	Emotional immaturity	20	3	0.12
5.	Relationship problems	20	3	0.11
6.	Online gaming addiction	10	3	0.06

Source: Computed

Table-2 shows teachers' perception on behavioural challenges faced by school going adolescents. Majority of respondents perceived that adolescents faced challenges such as Substance abuse (60%), Excessive use of Mobile phones (30%), a fifth (20%) each mentioned Social media addiction, Emotional immaturity and Relationship

problems; followed by Online gaming addiction (10%). Social media addiction, Emotional immaturity, Relationship problems, online gaming addiction and substance abuse ranked the highest on teachers' listing of challenges faced by school going adolescents.

Table 3: Teachers' perceived challenges at school.

Sl. No	Teacher's challenges	Frequency (%)	Average Rank	Salience
1.	Lack of parental support	40	3.25	0.173
2.	Lack of career guidance	20	2	0.15
3.	Difficulty in using English language	10	1	0.1
4.	Lack of interest in studies	10	2	0.075
5.	Laziness	10	4	0.04

Source: Computed

Table 3 shows Teachers' perceptions of challenges at school. Their challenges are Lack of parental support (40%), Lack of career guidance (20%), Difficulty in using English language (10%), Lack of interest in studies (10%) and Laziness (10%). Among the challenges mentioned, laziness ranked the highest followed by lack of parental support, lack of career guidance and lack of interest in studies.

Discussion

The teacher-student-parent relationship is a major factor for the development of adolescents. The major challenges of adolescents related to family as perceived by teachers were Poverty (Medina & Suthers, 2008) [20], Family conflict (Hatahet & Hamed Alqudah, 2016; Wanjiku, 2010) [14, 36], Lack of family administration and Divorce (Ross & Miller, 2009; Short, 2002) [25, 27]. The teachers list of adolescent challenges showed a high rank for Lack of family administration, Poverty and family conflict. Harikrishnan, U., & Sailo, G. L. (2020) [13] also found that problems faced by adolescents related to family are lack of proper parenting, family financial problems and family conflict. Teachers also perceived that most of the school going Adolescents were facing challenges such as Substance abuse, Mobile phone use, Social media addiction, Emotional immaturity, Relationship problems, and Online gaming addiction. The teachers list of adolescent challenges showed a high rank for Social media addiction (Adhikari *et al.*, 2015), Emotional immaturity (Jobson, 2020), Relationship problems (Thamarasseri, 2019) [32], and Online gaming addiction (Milani *et al.*, 2018) [21], which is also similar to the findings of the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine report (2009) [22]. Singh *et al.*, (2020) [22] also found that online gaming addiction was related with behavioral and emotional problems among adolescents.

The study also explored teachers' challenges with regard to looking after adolescent students. They perceived that parents did not give enough support to the children in their children's education, students also lacked proper career guidance, had difficulty in using English language and most of them were not interested in their studies. Teachers' challenges in school indicates high ranking for Laziness, Lack of parental support (Khan & Chohan, 2010) [8], Lack of career guidance (Crişan *et al.*, 2015) [6] and Lack of interest in studies (Dişlen, 2013) [9]. Shukla (2010) [28] also found that adolescents don't receive proper career guidance; they are expected to have high achievement by their parents without focusing their interest and ability.

Conclusion

From the study of experienced teachers' perceptions on adolescent students, it can be seen that School-going adolescents face challenges at a personal level, at home and in the school environment. The triad of student-teacher-parent relationship and family-school relationship needs to be strengthened for the development of students especially in the secondary school stage. Since adolescence is a stressful time in the human life stage, it is an enormous challenge for parents to deal with their adolescent children; for teachers who have to deal with adolescent learning and problematic behaviours in the classroom as well as for the adolescents themselves who are struggling to find their identity along with the pressures of scholastic and family life. School social workers and teachers need to work together as a team to provide counselling and life skills to adolescents in schools. Systematic assessment and intervention among school going adolescents is required along with active involvement and collaboration of teachers and parents.

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