



THE IMPACT OF SOCIALWORK INTERVENTION ON THE LEVEL OF ASSERTIVENESS AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN DELHI

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Abstract

This study was conducted among adolescents who were the beneficiaries of a social welfare organization in Delhi. The aim of the study was to gauge the effectiveness of social work intervention in enhancing the level of assertiveness. It is believed that assertive individuals are able to create healthy social relations by being respectful towards the rights of self and others. There were 22 girls and 18 boys as participants of the study. Ten sessions of designed social work intervention was provided to these 40 adolescents. The research was conducted as a pre and post study model. Using Dr. Tasneem Naqvi's Assertiveness Inventory, the level of assertiveness was ascertained. Boys scored slightly more than girls in both pre and post study. However, it was found that there was a significant difference at 0.05 level in the 't' test of pre and post scores of the level of assertiveness among the adolescents in both the sexes. Thus, it can be said that social work intervention can be effectively used for enhancing the level of assertiveness.

Keywords: Social work intervention, assertiveness, and adolescents.

Introduction

Assertiveness is an important life skill. It refers to one's ability to take a stand for self without violating others rights. This skill development is important especially during adolescent phase as during this phase peers and friends influence a lot in the adolescents' decision making. According to Hill (1993), the balance of influence on social development during adolescence shifts progressively from parents to peers. And according to Virkler (2009), "Assertive people enter friendships from 'I count my needs. I count your needs' position,"

Hence it is important that the adolescents are made competent enough to stand for themselves and not succumb to peer pressure for all the activities that are uncomfortable or dangerous to them. Studies like Andrea et al. (2013), found that assertiveness was associated with self esteem and psychological well being. So, for an overall positive development of adolescents, its important that they have a positive level of assertiveness.

Social work is considered as a problem -solving profession. There are six major social work methods to solve problems at individual, groups and community level. Unfortunately, the possibilities of these methods are not fully explored. The general consensus is that social work interventions are purposeful actions undertaken by social workers which are based on knowledge and understanding acquired, skills learnt and values adopted that help clients achieve interventional goals.

Dufour and Chamberland (2004) identify that there are virtually no studies that evaluate the effectiveness of social work or case work interventions for children, young people and families that enter the child protection system. Even in the context of India, the statement holds true.

Family is considered an important factor which influences the psychological development of an individual. Bandura (1986), asserts that all behavior except primary reactions are learning. Parent influence from heredity, family social statute, economy, thought and belief, custom, will, education level of parent, age and family form and member behavior pattern to each other, and total atmosphere of family on personality and personal and social behavior, are effective too. (Hargie & Owen, 1990). And when the family is not playing an active role how it is affecting the level of assertiveness is yet to be explored. Hence, the adolescents under the care of social service organizations were considered in this study. And whether social work interventions primarily social case work and group work can help in enhancing the level of assertiveness is needed to be tested. For that purpose, after the intervention again the level of assertiveness has to be assessed.

In this study, an attempt was made to see whether social work intervention can help in enhancing the level of assertiveness among adolescents.

Methods and materials

Based on the objectives, the universe of the study included all the adolescents falling under the age category of 12 to 18 years who are under the care of social service organization in Delhi. Research design adopted for the study is a pre test and Post test model with different methods and techniques of social work acting as intervention to enhance assertiveness. There was no control group in this study as the researcher chose not to deprive any adolescent who has given their consent for the study from benefiting from this intervention. Since other external factors such as home environment, school environment and peer group influence were not controlled, this study becomes quasi experimental in nature and adopts quasi experimental research design.

Convenient sampling which comes under non probability sampling, was used for the study. This method was chosen as it was important that the same adolescents were available throughout the study. Letters requesting permission to conduct the study were sent to five non government organisations working with adolescents. Only one organisation gave the full freedom to the researcher to carry out the research without any interference. Hence, the adolescents under the care of Vaish Public Welfare Trust, Delhi were selected for the study. The total sample size for the study was 40. This included 22 girls and 18 boys. All the adolescents of the social service organization who agreed to be the part of the study till its full duration were included. It was important that the participant adolescents were available throughout the study. Otherwise, the effectiveness of the social work intervention would have been difficult to assess. Adolescents of the social service organization who were not ready to be the part of the study till its full duration were excluded. It was necessary to exclude them as otherwise the proper implementation of the social work intervention would not have been possible.

Both primary and secondary sources were used for the data collection. The primary data has been collected from the adolescents under the study and other key stakeholders that are adolescents' family and Vaish Public Welfare Trust employees who were engaged with the families of the adolescents as part of their work. Secondary data were used from the various reports, articles, research papers, books and websites. The researcher has used the personal data sheet covering the demographic details and Assertiveness inventory by Dr. Tasneem Naqvi for pre and Post test. The reliability of the inventory was found to be .821 under Spearman –Brown formula and using item by item computation of point biserial correlation with formula suggested by Garret (1967), the developer of the inventory proved its validity. Semi structured interviews, house visits and observations of the researcher were also used for the data collection from adolescent families regarding the participants.

After obtaining the consent from the adolescent participants, the researcher administered the assertiveness scale to them. The 40 adolescents were divided into three groups. First group consisted of six boys and seven girls. Second group consisted of six boys and seven girls and third group consisted of six boys and eight girls. Total ten sessions of the designed social work intervention was conducted. After the completion of these sessions, the assertiveness scale was re-administered among the adolescents to ascertain the new scores. Statistical calculations were done on both the pre and post data to find whether the social work intervention provided was effective or not.

The designed social work intervention for the groups included sessions covering social group work and one focused group discussion covering various factors related with assertiveness. It covered majorly five sub themes that are family and friendships, confidence, freedom from guilt, acceptance and communication. The adolescents who score less than the average were given social case work intervention. In between and after the completion of the sessions, researcher visited the homes of the adolescents according to the availability of their parents. It helped the researcher to know whether the training is helping the adolescents or not.

Table 1.1 Sample format for preparing a session for the groups.

Session 3	
Objectives	(1) To make adolescents understand that being a good friend doesn't mean to agree with everything their friend tells them. (2) How to disagree amicably.
Methodology	Interactive lectures and role plays
Total session time	1 hour 15 minutes
Activities done	1) Interactive session on good friendships and why saying no is ok. 2) What are the ways to say no without spoiling friendship and feeling guilty. 3) After the lecture, giving examples of different real life scenarios and making the participants do the role play.
Goal of next session	how to accept a no.

Every session was planned in advance and executed. The sessions were conducted in the open field behind the social organization building. Since was the shade of trees to protect the participants from the scorching heat. All the participants were very cooperative and they were always eager to know what each session will unfold. There were many occasions when they too initiated activities especially recreational ones.

For the social work intervention with the ten adolescents who scored less than the average score, the sessions were usually conducted at their convenient place which was usually their respective homes. Since, their parents were out for work, there were no particular interruptions during the sessions. It was found that these adolescents opened up more during these one to one sessions. And this helped them to be more active in social group work sessions.

Data analyses and interpretations

The Quantitative analysis techniques using SPSS were used to measure the level of assertiveness, before and after the social work intervention. The data has been represented in tabular forms for better comprehension.

Research ethics

The consent of the participants was sought verbally to ascertain that they are ready to cooperate with the researcher throughout the study period.

Only pseudo names were used instead of original names so as to keep the identity of the adolescents as protected as possible.

Results and Discussions

Table 1.2 Overall assertiveness score obtained by adolescents before and after the social work intervention

	Pre study	Post study
males	1336	1397
females	1630	1684
	2966	3081

In the pre study, it was found that the level of assertiveness among adolescents ranged from non assertive to average assertive. There were conflicts within the group. Social group work was done with all the 40 adolescents. However social case work was done in addition with those 10 adolescents who scored less than the average in the level of assertiveness.

Table 1.3 Overall scores of those 10 adolescents who were given an additional social case work intervention.

	Pre Study	Post study
Overall score	712	751

The designed social work included twenty sessions each of which having duration of an hour in average. It included social group work, focused group discussions and games, story-telling and one act plays. Social case work and counseling was conducted with the ten adolescents who scored less than the average score of the groups which included eight girls and two boys. House visits and

semi structured interviews were undertaken in order to assess the changes if any to be found among the adolescents during and after the intervention.

Table 1.4. Mean and standard deviation based on pre and post study scores of assertiveness and corresponding 't' values relating to assertiveness.

	number	mean	Standard deviation	't' test
Pre assertiveness and post assertiveness	40	-5.610	17.652	-2.035*

*significant at 0.05 level

According to the above table representing the result of the t test, it is revealed that the difference between pre assertiveness and post assertiveness scores is significant at 0.05 level. In the post study, it was found that the average level of assertiveness among the adolescents has improved irrespective of the sexes. Through house visits and semi structured interviews with families of the adolescents, it was ascertained that there has been a positive change in the behavior of the participants. The ten adolescents who were given social case work intervention in addition of the other social work interventions, also found to be has come in par with the average assertiveness level of the whole group.

Through the home visits and semi structured interviews with the family researcher got to know that the quarrels with the siblings have been reduced and an amicable relation with the friends and neighbours were reported. The social service organizations employees also reported that the adolescents who were silent has started opening up more. According to them, it was a welcome change.

Overall, it can be concluded that the possibilities of social work interventions to be used effectively in enhancing positive psychological variables is immense. More such studies will help to create competent individuals who can coexist in a positive manner. Social workers in school settings can play a major role in ensuring that the adolescents are given appropriate intervention so as their transition towards becoming responsible youth is smooth.

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