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RB Jain
Department of Community
Medicine, Pt. B.D. Sharma
PGIMS, Rohtak, Haryana,
India

Arun Kumar
Department of Community
Medicine, SHKM Govt
Medical College Nalhar, Nuh,
Haryana, India

Pardeep Khanna
Department of Community
Medicine, Pt. B.D. Sharma
PGIMS, Rohtak, Haryana,
India

Career support and guidance to school going adolescents by their teachers in a rural block of state Haryana, India: A cross sectional study

RB Jain, Arun Kumar and Pardeep Khanna

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Abstract

Teachers regularly come in interaction with adolescents and might have influence on the behavior and thinking, and may determine their future career choices. The present study was conducted to know the realistic situation of perception of adolescents regarding the career guidance from these functionaries in a rural block of State Haryana, India. The study was carried out in the rural field practice area attached to Department of community medicine, Pt BD Sharma Post Graduate Institute of Medical Science Rohtak. This was a community based cross sectional study. A total of 320 (80 from each school) adolescents were selected from ninth class onwards by random sampling from four selected schools (two Girls and two Boys Senior Secondary Schools) with strength of more than 250 students. The data were collected on a predesigned, pre-tested, semi-structured schedule by interview technique after obtaining informed consent from the concerned adolescents/ heads of schools. The data so collected were compiled and analyzed using statistical software in the form of percentages and proportions, chi square test, etc. More than half of the study subjects (ie, 52.5%) didn't receive any career guidance. However, 94.7% of those who received career guidance, were satisfied by the guidance provided by their teachers. There is a need to sensitize Govt schoolteachers to address the career guidance need of the adolescents, particularly those who are in senior classes when they are at the stage of choosing a career stream.

Keywords: Adolescent, beri, career, development, guidance, support, teachers, social environment

1. Introduction

The World Health Organization defines adolescents as young people aged 10-19 years^[1]. Adolescents constitute approximately 22% of the population in the South-East Asia Region (SEAR)^[2]. Adolescents are important assets of a country because they are the future of a country; they will become tomorrow's young adults and provide the human potential required for the nation's development. Teachers are one of the key stakeholders who are to understand and respond to adolescent needs^[3]. Moreover, teachers are the people who regularly come in contact with adolescents and might have influence on their behavior and thinking, with the likelihood of affecting their future career selections. Very few studies had been carried out on this subject^[4], and hardly any in rural areas of State Haryana in our country. Hence, the present study was conducted to know the realistic situation of perception of adolescents regarding career support and guidance from their schoolteachers in rural block Beri of district Jhajjar, Haryana, India. It was part of a larger study regarding holistic guidance and support to them by various stakeholders.

2. Materials and Methods

It was a cross sectional study. The study was carried out in rural Block Beri, District – Jhajjar, State Haryana (India) which was the rural field practice area attached to department of community medicine, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (PGIMS) Rohtak. A total of four Govt Senior Secondary Schools (two boys' and two girls') with student strength of more than 250, were selected randomly by drawing of lots. From those schools, 20 adolescent students from each class i.e., 9th to 12th from each school were selected randomly. Hence, a total of 320 school going adolescents from the classes 9 to 12 were selected, and interviewed after obtaining informed consent from the school Principal and the adolescent students.

Correspondence
Arun Kumar
Department of Community
Medicine, SHKM Govt
Medical College Nalhar, Nuh,
Haryana, India

Apparently healthy adolescents (both male and female) who had completed thirteen years of age were included in the study. Equal numbers of study adolescents of both the sexes were selected from each class. The detailed methodology, like sample size calculations, etc, is described in the "Materials and Methods" section of the already published article of the authors [5]. Ethical approval and prior permission to carry out the study was also obtained.

Data was entered in Excel spreadsheet and was then analyzed using appropriate statistical tests as in, proportions, chi square test, etc.

3. Results

All the selected study adolescents completed the interview and hence the response rate was 100%. Mean age of study adolescents was 15.65 years for boys and 15.02 years for girls with the overall combined mean age of 15.33 years. Studied detailed socio-demographic characteristics of the subjects are available in the already published article [5]. The disturbing observation was that more than half of the study subjects (ie, 52.5%) didn't receive any career guidance. However, 94.7% of those who received career guidance were satisfied by the guidance provided by their schoolteachers as was evident from table 1.

Table 1: Perception and satisfaction of adolescents regarding career guidance provided by their teachers

Perception of adolescents regarding contribution of teachers in career (n = 320)		Male	Female	Total
Support and guidance provided by teachers	Received	72	80	152 (47.5%)
	Not received	88	80	168 (52.5%)
	Total	160	160	320 (100%)
Satisfaction of adolescents	Satisfied	69	75	144 (94.7%)
	Not satisfied	3	5	8 (5.3%)
	Not applicable	88	80	168
	Total	160	160	320 (100%)

The table 2 shows sub hoc analysis after segregation of the career guidance received by the adolescents of various classes from their teachers. Regarding this career guidance, the proportions of adolescents who were studying in classes

10 and 12 were found to be slightly more than that of the adolescents studying in classes 9 and 11. This difference was though not significant at 5% significance level. [P value = 0.097]

Table 2: Class wise perception and satisfaction of adolescents regarding career guidance provided by their teachers (N=320)

		CLASS					P value*
		Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth	Total	
Support and guidance received from teachers	Received	33	45	32	42	152	0.097217
	Not received	47	35	48	38	168	
	Total	80	80	80	80	320	
Satisfaction of adolescent	Satisfied	31	42	29	42	144	0.303267
	Not satisfied	2	3	3	0	8	
	Not applicable	47	35	48	38	168	
	Total	80	80	80	80	320	

Among girls, 64/160 (40%) wanted to choose teaching as their future career and 28/160 girls (17.5%) wanted to opt medical profession in their future career. 40/160 (25%) boys wanted to join defense services and 33/160 (20.6%) intended to choose field of engineering as profession in their future life. Rest of the choices of adolescents were as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Pattern of future career choice intentions among selected adolescents

Career choice intention	Male	Female
Farmer	0	0
Masson	1	0
Business or shop	7	0
Teacher	9	64
Engineer	33	9
Doctor	14	28
Defence Services	40	13
Other (hotel management/ lawyer/ etc)	15	14
Subtotal	119	128
Do not know	41	32
Total	160	160

Out of the 247, 164 (i.e., 66.4%) (or 76 boys and 88 girls) adolescents had their career choice intentions due to their

previous personal experiences rather than inspirations / guidance from others. (Table 4) Only 16 out of 128 (12.5%) females were inspired by their teachers for their future career choices whereas, 34 out of 119 (28.6%) male adolescents attributed the inspirations from the parents for their such choices. None of the boys mentioned teachers as the main influencing person / factor for their future career choice intentions. (Table 4)

Table 4: Identified reasons for career choice intentions among selected adolescents

Reasons	Male	Female
Influenced by Brother's/ sisters' s advice	2	5
Inspired by peer opinion	2	0
Inspired by teacher(s)' advice	0	16
Inspired by parents advice	34	10
Pressurized by elders'/parents'	2	8
Inspired by relatives'/ neighbour' s advice	3	1
None of above [mass media/ personal experience/ role model/ politician/ money/ status/ serve the country/ lack of resources (eg in NDA*/ defence services authorities bear most of the expenses)]	76	88
Sub total	119	128
Not applicable	41	32
Total	160	160

*National Defence Academy

4. Discussion

The study population in the area was homogenous having more or less similar living conditions and pattern of cultural beliefs. The studies already conducted on the topic were limited. In the current study, though satisfaction of adolescents to whom career guidance was provided by the teachers was substantially good (~95%), the overall contribution of teachers in providing career guidance to the adolescents was less than 50% (ie 47.5%). (Table 1) Teachers being eternal resource and one of the key stakeholders who regularly came in contact with the adolescents and career guidance being one of the important needs of the adolescents, the above finding called for the urgent need that the teachers must provide periodic counseling / guidance to the school going adolescents regarding future career prospects. On long term basis, necessary measures could also be planned for ensuring career guidance and monitoring the impact of the guidance provided to adolescents to fill the gap.

In a longitudinal study conducted by Hirschi A, *et al.*, in German speaking part of Switzerland, the authors investigated predictors and outcomes of active engagement in career preparation among 349 adolescents from the start to the end of eighth class. Their age ranged from 12 to 16 years with ~50% girls. The results showed that the state at the beginning of the career decision-making process was the strongest predictor of the later state in these measures [4]. Surprisingly, on *sub hoc* analysis as shown in table 2, the career guidance received by the adolescents studying in classes 10 and 12 was found to be slightly more than that by those studying in classes 9 and 11. Likely reason for the finding could be the coherence with the general belief that 10th and 12th were considered as the important classes for deciding future career and students might become more serious about their studies, and hence future career, in those classes.

Out of 320, 247 (77.2%) adolescents had thought of their future career choices. A high percentage i.e., 40% of female adolescents wanted to choose teaching as their future career and ~18% females wanted to opt medical profession in their future career. Among the boys, 25% wanted to join defense services and ~21% desired to choose field of engineering as profession in their future life. 73/320 (22.8%) adolescents were still undecided about their future career. (Table 3)

On exploration of the reasons for those future career choices, it was found that ~66% adolescents had their career choice intentions due to their personal experiences eg motivated through watching television (TV)/ inspired by the role models/ politician/ enough money/ higher social status/ desire to serve the country/ lack of enough resources in the family (eg in National Defense Academy (NDA)/ defense services authorities bear most of the expenses). (Table 4)

Among the rest of the 34% (36% males; 31% females) adolescents, (12.5%) females were inspired by their teachers for their future career choices whereas majority of the males (28.6%) attributed the inspirations from the parents for such choices. None of the boys mentioned teachers as the main influencing person / factor for their future career choice intentions. Table 4, when interpreted further, showed that although 144/320 (ie, 45%) of the adolescents had received satisfactory guidance from their teachers, the outcome / impact of the guidance was hypothesized to be negligible, particularly in case of boys, and hence they went by their parents' advice or personal experiences, etc for their future career choices. In other words, in spite of the low literacy

levels of the parents, they constituted a major component of those persons on whom the adolescents depended for their future career choice intentions and who came in regular contact with the adolescents. That called for the need of sensitization of teachers for more effective and need based career counseling as well as periodic joint parent – teacher meetings to address the career guidance needs of the adolescents.

5. Conclusion

Overall contribution of teachers in providing career support and guidance provided to the adolescents is perceived to be less by adolescents (ie, 47.5%).

However, satisfaction of the adolescents to whom career guidance is provided by teachers is substantially good (ie, 94.7%). Apart from mass media, role models, etc, male and female adolescents largely attribute to guidance received from parents and teachers respectively for their future career choice intention.

6. Recommendation

- There is a need of measures for career guidance enhancement.
- School teachers must be encouraged to provide routine counselling and guidance to the school going adolescents regarding future career prospects and to encourage the feedback from adolescents.
- On long term basis, necessary measures might be planned for monitoring the impact of the guidance provided to the adolescents in this regard.
- Measures may be planned to incorporate career guidance to adolescents through media, awareness campaigns, presenting appropriate role models and encouragement of parents and teachers for active participation in this issue.
- Parents may be encouraged to take part in parent-teacher meetings wherein such issues may be discussed and the importance of career guidance to adolescents emphasized.
- Integration of career guidance might also be incorporated in already running programs for adolescent education.

7. References

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