

## Developing a Model Intervention Program for Adolescent's Mental Health: A School Based Approach

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### ABSTRACT

Technological advancements, modernization, and socio-cultural changes in the past few decades have brought about significant changes in the mental set up, notions, conduct, and expression of children and adolescents. In India, adolescents make up 21.9% of the total population (Census Report, 2011). However, this subgroup of the population was not distinctly identified until the Report of Working Group on Adolescents for the 10th Five Year Plan for the Government of India which highlighted the mental health status of adolescents in India. In the last decade, there have been multi-layered efforts on the part of the government, education boards, NGOs, academicians, and researchers to devise ways to help this student group. These efforts have contributed to identifying strategies to intervene in the problem scenario at different levels. It has been observed that mental health intervention should involve schools, teachers, parents, and peers to ensure its wholesome impact and effectiveness. Through comprehensive analysis, an investigator designed and implemented a 120-hour School-Based Intervention Program based on two major constructs: 1) Character Strengths, and 2) Panchkosh. The intervention was found effective in alleviating psychological and behavioral problems in adolescent students.

**Keywords:** *Mental Health, Psychological Intervention, Adolescents, Positive Psychology, Panchkosh, Character Strengths*

**T**ransitioning from childhood to adolescence is proved to be very challenging and dramatic. Adolescence is the time when teenagers focus on the wings of independence – how far they can fly-how fast they can go-they look for new adventures (Pruitt, 2000).

Literature has maintained that adolescence is a time for roller-coaster rides and impulsivity. Parents & teachers, who deal with this group, need to answer one question- What are the ideal conditions that need to be provided to adolescents to bring out the best in them? There is no single formula to this, and for each adolescent, it has to be tailor-made. Family and school are major constituents in this ecological system of an adolescent, with whom, immediate, active, and prolonged interaction occurs. Hence, each substituent under these

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two components has the potential to stimulate the physical, psychological, and social aptitudes of adolescents (Deb, Bhadra, Sunny, & Sahay, 2020).

Researchers have reported that adolescent students from the urban area are under the vicious shadow of psychopathologies such as depression, interpersonal problems, low self-concept, generalized anxiety, behavioral misconduct, etc (Kumari & Jahan, 2022)(Bansal & Barman, 2011) (Singh, Bassi, Junnarkar, & Negri, 2015). These studies have also warned about its detrimental effect on students' social, educational, cognitive, and emotional well-being and probably being gravely into major health risks in the future. Hence, efforts are desperately required to alter students' surroundings in terms of their experiences related to social, academic, interpersonal, familial, and exposure to available superfluous information to attain virtuously orientated and holistically healthy young minds.

**National Mental Health Program and Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karykram by Govt. of India** are the efforts to address this issue and provide direction, support, infrastructure, and trained manpower to respond to the present scenario (Roy & Rasheed, 2015) (Kaur & Sharma, 2023). With the same objective, various intervention programs were developed and implemented by researchers to lessen the breadth and width of academic, social, psychological, interpersonal, and intrapersonal problems and enhance personal competence.

### ***Need for School-Based Intervention Program:***

A report titled '**Mental Health Programs in School**' by **World Health Organization (WHO)** published in 1994 has mentioned the need for comprehensive school-based mental health programs for all grades where all health facilities will be available, which provide a safe and supportive environment and supports school-family-community interaction (Hendren, Birell Weeison, & Orley, 1994). It has also mentioned that school-based intervention aims to provide an experience that will strengthen the children's coping abilities to counter environmental stress and disadvantages with which they have to cope while growing up.

Schools, with the full support of families and the community, are presently the best place to develop and run comprehensive mental health programs. It is so because it is the strangest social and educational institution for any kind of intervention. Secondly, schools can serve as safety nets for students as they, along with the family system, have a profound effect on students' development.

Recent times have witnessed a paradigm shift in defining a good school, as UNICEF has underlined the need for a child-friendly school. The holistic philosophy of Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) is likely to produce a major shift in defining what schools are for and how they can influence change in the wider society through their current child-family-community links and the future activities of their students (The Child-Friendly Schools, 2009).

Presently, the school curriculum lacks in developing life skills and psycho-social competence in students. Psycho-social competence means a person's ability to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The formal curriculum of education places major emphasis on meeting the knowledge gap between basic learning and globally required potential. Few efforts are continuing to inculcate life skills in students, but it surely does not get vital attention and time frame for implementation, may be due to a major emphasis on academic achievement, only. Not even parents are aware of the fact that

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this type of other-than-academic training and capacity building is a must for a child to succeed in the real sense & to face the outer world.

Thus, the main aim of the research study reported in this paper was to describe the process of development and designing of 120 school-based Intervention Program 'Manoday' to alleviate psychological and behavioral problems in high school students. Secondly, it also aimed to examine the effect of this intervention on the high school students who underwent the intervention.

### **METHODOLOGY**

**Study Design-**The study adopted an exploratory qualitative research design. It undertook a flexible path to review and examine the efforts by Schools, NGOs, and Educational Institutes which are trying to experiment and exercise various ways to improve mental health and total wellbeing in students. It facilitated essential information to help establish a 360<sup>o</sup> view of the research problem. It allowed for an integration of the available pieces of evidence available in the domain to collectively develop the intervention program and the activities incorporated in 'Manoday'.

**Research Setting** –The study was conducted in a Saksham Sevasadan School, a CBSE School in Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

**Sample & Recruitment**– Intervention was meant for high school students with Moderate levels of Psychological and Behavioral Issues. The sample was recruited through a 03-step process.

**Pre-Intervention Testing**-Total 210 students were accessed through the Adolescent Psychopathology Scale (APS-SF) by William Rynolds to identify Psychological and Behavioral Issues, if any.

**Identifying prospective participants for** the assessment and interpretation, a total 72 students passed the selection criteria.

**Parental Consent and finalization** participants were minor, it was mandatory to have parental consent to participate in the **Manoday** Intervention Program, thus, parents of all 72 students were contacted and Manoday Intervention Program is explained to them. Finally, **44** students of Saksham Sevasadan School studying in high school (average age = 14. 8 years) participated in the study.

#### ***Data Collection***

##### **Phase 01-Review of Activities &Intervention Programs for Mental Health Issues:**

Adolescent Mental Health, being a point of concern all around the globe, is found to be widely researched. It has been evident that psychological and mental health problems in school-going adolescents have been piling up in India for a few decades. Numerous efforts have been made to measure objectively and mention the status of issues and problems related to adolescent well-being. On the other hand, it is observed that comparatively fewer efforts have been made to exercise the prospective solution to the issue and evaluate the effect of different interventions for the enhancement of mental health, as a whole.

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Following are the glimpses of such welcoming exertions in this respect:

i) A Goa-based NGO '**Sangath**' is working with 32 schools in Pune (Maharashtra, India) and New Delhi (India) where they have implemented **Modular Behavioral Intervention** on 80 adolescent participants. Their basic focus was to help participants with Depression, Anxiety, and Conduct Difficulties. The components used were Behavioral Activation, Exposure & Assertiveness. This program '**PRIDE**' facilitated digital platforms for mental health intervention such as **Problem-Solving App (POD Adventures) & Man Mela (Story Telling Platform)**. **Self-Directed Digital Course** is also offered to students who are below the clinical threshold and seeking help for behavioral issues (Patel, 2022).

ii) '**Institute for Psychological Health (IPH)**' is a widely recognized NGO in Thane, Maharashtra which works in the area of mental health, addressing a number of issues in different segments of society. The institute runs an activity named 'Cool Club'. It addresses different aspects of emotional-mental health that this transition of adolescence to adulthood brings about in areas such as self-esteem, friendships, peer pressure, use of social media, decision-making, and many more such topics that are pertinent to this age group. Each session is designed on a new theme and is conducted using the medium of role plays/group activities/discussions (Institute for Psychological Health, 2020).

iii) **Aanadniketan, is a school in Wardha, Maharashtra, India** runs on the basic principles of '**Nayi Taleem**' – the idea of visionary Mahatma Gandhi for imparting education. It aims toward the holistic development of students and facilitates activities that reach to Head, Heart, and Hand. It identifies education as a media of transformation towards a sustainable world. This institution emphasizes on doing day-to-day learning skills as well as arts and crafts activities (Akhil Bhartiya Nai Taleen Samiti, 2016).

iv) **Punrutthan Samrasta Gurukulamat Pimpari-Chinchwad, Pune, Maharashtra, India** is a school with a difference. It is a residential school for children from all kinds of nomadic tribes. Obviously, these children have issues like Behavioral Misconduct, Lack of Interpersonal Communication, low self-esteem, issues with aggression, and violent behavior. In the absence of stable habitation and family structure, these kids were found to be uncivilized and unfocused, unaware about studies and society, in general. This institution imparts education to them which is based on the concept of **Panchkosh Vikas**. This is an effort to cultivate and apprise the 05 koshas of human existence namely, Annamay Kosh (Physical Sheath) – Pranmay Kosh (Energy Sheath), Manomay Kosh (Psychological Sheath) - Vigyanmany Kosh (Intellectual Sheath) - Anandmay Kosh (Blissful Sheath). Regular activities include practicing different Art Forms (such as painting, Creative Artifacts, Wooden Art, etc.), Working on farms, music and rhythm, Naipunya (Excellence in Physical Activities), Maitra (Developing Belongingness), Ayurved (Indian Science of Medicine). These activities are found effective for the holistic development of students (Gogate, 2016).

iv) **Vidyabharati's Schools**-Since 1952, VidyaBharati has been playing a very important role in the education sector of the country in promoting Bharat-centric education by enlightening the students, inculcating in them cultural & moral values, and social consciousness for building competent generation for the nation and society. It is committed to reconstructing and developing a strong, harmonious, cultural, and prosperous nation based on developing the national educational system. Through Sarsaswati Shishu Mandir and VidyaBharti Schools, the institution embraces child and adolescent education based on two constructs, namely 'Panchmukhi Shisha' and 'PanchpadiShiksha'.

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'Panchmukhi Shiksha' is the concept of the total development of a child. It has the following five components: Physical - Mental - Moral - Spiritual - Vocational Education whereas Panchpadi Shiksha Paddhati is a highly attractive, impressive, and fruitful methodology of learning. There are five steps in this system, namely Adhiti (Study), Bodh (Comprehension), Abhyas (Exercise), Prayog (Applications of the knowledge), and Prasar (Extension of knowledge)(Vidyabhrati, 2018).

**v) Punrutthan Vidyapeeth** – This is an institution based in Ahmadabad, Gujrat. It works to develop an alternate education system for India. It is a research-oriented organization that works to explore and establish education and curriculum in the Traditional Indian Way. A set of 05 books name Bhartiya Shiksha Ka Pratiman, published by Punrutthan Vidyapeeth, narrates the ways and ideas of inculcation of values and pride of being Indian in young minds. These books present a great number of activities that need to be implemented to cultivate a confident, positive, and value-based balanced human mind with the right perspective towards society, country, and world(Katdare, 2018). It gives a major thrust on Transcendental, Creational, Family, Social, Global, and Individual development. It also suggests incorporating Panchkosh Vikas for the holistic upbringing of students (Punrutthan Vidyapeeth, 2018).

**vi) AnandSabha** – The **Anand department** was established to promote happiness and well-being in **Madhya Pradesh**. It runs various programs like **Anand Sabha, Alpviram, Anand Utsav, Anand Club**, etc. through which it focuses on the concept of Anand, which means happiness, and aims to remove mental ailments such as jealousy, passion, malice, anger, greed, ego, and others. The department promotes yoga, meditation, pranayama, devotion, study, music, sports, and other activities to remove these mental diseases and achieve long-lasting bliss. **Rajya Anand Sansthan** that in addition to the prescribed curriculum of various subjects in schools, students should also be made aware of those subjects so that they can understand some important dimensions of life. For this, sessions should be organized based on modules specially prepared. In these sessions, students will not study any subject matter but will do activities that will develop their understanding of these dimensions. Such sessions have been named Anand Sabha. Several sessions of Anand Sabha address the question what is the basic desire of man? What do we want to become and what do we want to achieve? What is our role and responsibility with ourselves, with family, with society, and with nature? How can we remain happy while living life with all this? What are universal human values? Becoming responsible towards society and nature, helping others, experiencing gratitude, using the power of determination, etc. are topics that can be experienced through positive experimentation. Once this is experienced, inner transformation of the student is possible(Rajya Anand Sansthan, 2022).

### **Phase 02 - Identifying Underlying Components to Design School-Based Intervention:**

After the extensive review of various activities undertaken during mental health interventions and the principles and philosophies underlying these intervention programs, the following constructs and activities have been identified as instrumental in improving students' mental health (Table 1):

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**Table 1: List of Constructs and Activities Identified for Intervention Programs**

a. Teaching Moral Values and Virtues	f. Use of audio-visual resources
b. Co-curricular activities aimed at self-independence,	g. Inculcating Sports, Exercise, and Meditation as a part of the routine
c. Panch Kosh Vikas	h. Developing Vision, Resilience, Humility, Humanity, Sense of Gratitude and accomplishment
d. Panchpadi Shiksha	i. Inclusion of various forms of Art related activities in routine
e. Peer Group Intervention	j. Collective efforts by Schools, Students, and Parents

It was also noted that the involvement of Parents and Teachers is most important for the successful implementation of the Intervention Program as well as holistic and long-lasting outcomes.

**Phase 03 – Development of an Intervention-**

To encapsulate all the above findings, the investigator acknowledged two major constructs for designing of intervention program, 'Manoday'. All the activities were based upon the development of **Character Strengths & Virtues along with the alignment of PanchKosh** in the individual. The main focus of the intervention program was to realize problem areas within and strengthen of **Self** through the development of PanchKosh and Character Strengths in students. The description of the Manoday Intervention Program is given in Table 2.

**Table 2: Features of the Manoday Intervention Program**

<b>Structure of the Intervention Program</b>	8 Sessions (01 Session for Sensitization towards Intervention, 06 Sessions dedicated to 01 <b>Virtue</b> (& related Character Strengths) per Session, 01 Session for Concluding and Follow up
<b>Structure of Session</b>	Gathering & Prayer, Exercise followed by Meditation, Quick Bites for Energy, Silence Hour combined with Art Activities, Group Activity, Expert Talk/Audio-visual Screening, Concluding Session with Q & A, Group Discussion, Case Study, Instructions for coming week
<b>Total Hrs of Intervention</b>	120 Hrs (It was a 120-intervention program with 50 Hours of activities on school premises, 50 hours of activities at home with Parents/ Family, and 20 hours of activities as a daily routine.
<b>Tools for Intervention Session</b>	Inspirational Talks, Therapy Games, Mindfulness Activities, Musical Inputs, Reading for Self-Insight, Daily Self Affirmations, Exercise and Meditation, Art & Craft Activity as a tool for Team Building & Self- Identification, Silence Hour for Inner Connect, Pariwar Ka Upnishad & Pitara (Re-communicating & Re-connecting with family and peers).
<b>Toolused for Pre &amp; Post Intervention Assessment</b>	Reynold's Adolescent Psychopathology Scale (SF)

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### Phase 4: Assessment (Pre & Post-Intervention)

Participants of Manoday Intervention Program were assessed with the help of Rynold's Adolescent Psychopathology Scale (SF). This test assesses the psychopathology of the adolescents (Age Range -12 to 19 years) on the 12 clinical scales, out of them 6 scales are consistent with the DSM-IV symptoms specification and the remaining 6 evaluate related and important domains of adolescent psychological problems and competencies. These scales are Conduct Disorder (CND), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (OPD), Major Depression (DEP), Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTS), Substance Abuse Disorder (SUB), Eating Disturbances (EAT), Suicide (SUI), Academic Problems (ADP), Anger/violence proneness (AVP), Self-Concept (SCP), and Interpersonal Problems (IPP).

In the Pre-Intervention Phase, the results of this test served as a selection criterion for inclusion in the intervention. Post-Intervention Assessment helped in analyzing the effectiveness of the Manoday Intervention Program to alleviate psychological and behavioral issues in participants.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Pre-Intervention Scores of participants on the *Adolescent Psychopathology Scale (APS-SF)* and Post-Intervention Score of the same were evaluated to find out the significant difference in Mean, if any. Following are the results after statistical analysis-

**Table No. 03: t values for 12 subscales of APS-SF-**

Scales	Pre-Intervention Scores		Post-Intervention Scores		t value
	M	SD	M	SD	
Conduct Disorder (CND)	51.64	8.01	49.82	8.40	1.04
Oppositional Defiant Disorder (OPD)	50.57	8.16	47.82	7.78	1.62
Major Depression (DEP)	47.27	5.09	43.15	4.72	<b>3.92*</b>
Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)	52.50	9.14	46.95	8.22	<b>2.99**</b>
Post-Traumatic stress disorder (PTS)	54.32	8.87	49.68	9.27	<b>2.40*</b>
Substance Abuse Disorder (SUB)	57.18	8.59	56.80	9.16	0.20
Eating Disturbances (EAT)	58.05	9.14	51.34	9.38	<b>3.40**</b>
Suicide (SUI)	56.34	9.17	52.36	9.18	<b>2.03*</b>
Academic Problems (ADP)	57.20	11.76	52.07	10.80	<b>2.13*</b>
Anger/violence proneness (AVP)	54.75	12.89	50.32	11.52	1.70
Self-Concept Problems (SCP)	54.05	8.74	50.14	7.51	<b>2.25*</b>
Interpersonal Problems (IPP)	58.52	11.38	54.39	10.51	1.77

(\* = 0.05, \*\* = 0.01)

These results indicate that the 120 Hours School Based Manoday Intervention Program is effective and efficient to lessen the various psychopathologies in adolescent students. Participants have shown significantly lower scores on Major Depression (M1= 487.27, M2= 43.15)  $t = 3.92$   $p > 0.01$ , Generalized Anxiety Disorder (M1= 52.50, M2= 46.95),  $t = 2.00$   $p > 0.01$ , Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (M1= 54.32, M2= 49.68),  $t = 2.40$ ,  $p > 0.05$ , Eating Disturbances (M1= 58.05, M2= 51.34)  $t = 3.40$   $p > 0.05$ , Suicide (M1=56.34, M2 = 52.36),

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$t=2.03$ ,  $p > 0.05$ , Academic Problems ( $M_1=57.20$ ,  $M_2=52.07$ ),  $t = 2.13$ ,  $p > 0.05$ , Self Concept Problems ( $M_1=54.05$ ,  $M_2=50.14$ ),  $t = 2.25$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

In Post-Intervention Testing participants exhibited lower scores on Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Behavior Disorder, Substance Abuse Anger Violence Proneness, and Interpersonal Problems, but they were found statistically insignificant.

These results underline and promote the use of this intervention program to address the psychological and behavioral issues in adolescent students. It also emphasizes the wholesomeness of the intervention program as it has included Students (Participants) and Teachers and Parents as monitoring facilitators. It also narrates how effective any intervention or activity can be if implemented in a group of peers. This triad (Students & Peers, School Administration & Teachers, Parents & Family) is truly a very fruitful discourse to alleviate different issues with adolescents.

### CONCLUSION

Manoday Intervention Program was designed after examining various activities and interventions being implemented to solve the psychological issues in adolescent students. It is a 120 Hours School-based Intervention Program that was implemented on school premises. This intervention Program is found useful and effective in lessening psychopathologies such as Depression, Post-Traumatic Stress, Generalized Anxiety, Eating Disturbances, Suicide, Academic Problems, and Self-Concept Problems.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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