AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF A JOYFUL AND WHOLESOME EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM TO AWAKEN EMPATHY IN URBAN YOUTH

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Abstract

Empathy is one of the ten core life skills as enlisted by UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO that can help us understand and accept others who may be very different from ourselves. Today's need is to make learning interesting by developing interactive youth programs to provide joyful and wholesome experiences so as to awaken empathy in urban youth. Such interactions can bring about a shift of frame of reference due to social comparison that will be helpful in the long run. The primary purpose of this exploratory study was to develop and implement the joyful and wholesome experiential program to awaken empathy in urban youth and analyse their experiences after the program. A group of 50 Std. XIIth students were randomly selected who planned recreational and educative yet interesting activities. Sample of students visited a rural school along with mentor teacher where they interacted with children and conducted activities for (1st to 4th) primary children and local school (1st to 7th) for underprivileged children. A questionnaire prepared by researcher, to understand the response of students after the program, was filled by participants. A detailed analysis of the responses was done and experiences of youth were studied. The thoughtful and guided interaction can give immense satisfaction and some realizations with a lot of fun and happiness.

Keywords: *Experiential learning, Joyful and wholesome, urban youth, awaken empathy.*

Introduction

Through education we need to make learning interesting by developing interactive youth programs to provide joyful and whole some experiences. Such interactions can bring about a shift of frame of reference. In spite of many luxuries of life being available, today's youth feel neglected, bored and disinterested (Lindner & Johns, 2002) in the daily activities. This boredom may be due to lack of meaningful activities, joyful experiences and wholesome interaction in the present education system.

By relating to the seemingly disadvantaged, challenged and deprived in community, a paradigm shift can be achieved, that helps instil greater realization about self-worth, (Cooley 1902, Mead 1934 as inBong and Skaalvik, 2003; Gilbert, 2005 as in Dykhuis, 2010) by self-

assessment through social comparison. (Sestito, Cozzolino, Menna, Ragozoni, Sica, 2010) This may prove to be an important step towards positive youth development that will be helpful for the well-being of the youth, nation and world.

Education

Adolescent education is the backbone of the country's development and it is unfortunate that there is no uniformity at this level in our country.(Agarwal. K, 2006) Our National Curriculum Framework (2005) recommends interventions to enhance self-awareness, connecting knowledge to life outside the school, enriching the curriculum to provide for overall development of children. Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) recommends to instil independence of thought and action, sensitivity to other's well-being and ability to work towards and contribute to social change. (AEP, NCERT)

Adolescence

Adolescence is the period of time, stretching from puberty to early 20's, a time of great change which has a profound effect on adolescents' motivation and learning (Schunk and Meece, 2005); an important developmental phase characterized by significant changes in virtually every aspect of an individual's life, calling for new psychological adaptations. (Holmebeck & Greenley, 2002 as in Moksnes, Lohre, Espnes, 2013)

Joyful and Wholesome Interaction

"Education is the creation of sound mind in a sound body. It develops man's faculty specially his mind so that he may be able to enjoy the contemplation of supreme truth, goodness and beauty"…… Aristotle

The word 'sound' has a very subtle and contextual meaning used very wisely and astutely by Aristotle. In context of body and mind, it means healthy in their own ways though. The word wholesome has a very similar meaning and usage. The word 'wholesome' originates from whole (healthy) + -some; related to German "heilsam" i.e. healing as per Collins dictionary.

The meaning of wholesome as per dictionary is- promoting health or well-being of mind or spirit; sound in body, mind or morals.

(http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wholesome)

The definition of joyful as per the dictionary is expressing delight or happiness; (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/joyful); full of joy as a person or one's heart; glad; delighted; experiencing, causing or showing joy.

(http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/joyful)Joyful and wholesome interaction denotes anInterpersonal communication which is full of joy and promotes well-being of mind and spirit.

Experiential Learning

"Education is not a preparation for life, rather it is the living. Education is the process of living through a continuous reconstruction of experiences. It is the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfil his possibilities. "John Dewey

John Dewey (1938) defined educators as facilitators, who connect students' learning to their experiences, help to shape their understanding through cooperative enterprise, not dictation. Experientialists believe that change and growth readily take place due to active involvement in their learning, (i.e. physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally) than mere receiving of information and that it should have enough fun for participants to keep doing it and enough options for participants to continue to learning new and different ways, so as to promote life-long learning.

Rogers (1969), feels thatexperiential learning means quality involvement of whole-person, i.e. both his feeling and cognitive aspects being in the learning event.Kolb (1984) defined learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience for which sufficient opportunities, space, and guidance to reflect upon the service experience is needed. It means developing student's confidence, self-esteem, personal strengths and a rounded sense of purpose and fulfilment which helps improve attitude, life-balance and emotional well-being. (Guide to facilitating effective experiential learning activities - experience-based training methods - learner-centred development) Absence of Threat, Mastery, Immediate Feedback, Choices, Adequate Time, Meaningful Content, Collaboration, Movement and Enriched Environment are the nine brain body compatible elements proposed by Susan Kovalik that facilitate learning process.

Community Interaction

Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities. (Learn and Serve-America's National Clearinghouse as in Ponder, Vander-Veldt and Lewis-Ferrell, 2011)

It is an educational methodology with explicit academic learning objectives, community work and deliberate reflection. (Benneworth and Charles, 2013 as in Nuangchalerm, 2014) Spring,

Grimm and Dietz (2001) have reported that community service programs are non-curriculum based, recognized by school, may be compulsory or voluntary and include activities that take place off school grounds or within school. Some schools do not have service learning due to lack of time, lack of funding, absence of coordinator, etc.

Although this is a type of community activity, the researcher has deliberately termed this program as interaction and not service due to many reasons. Firstly, the word service sounds as act of favour to others whereas, interaction is a mutual give and take. The adolescents get an opportunity to interact, empathize, exert their power of influence and be responsible citizens. They are showered with a lot of love, respect and affection by the deprived children too. The children receive the needed attention and a joyful learning experience from the youth, who appeal to them greatly and with whom they can connect easily. Also, service is an ongoing activity, while continuous visits are not feasible to plan, due to time constraints in the hectic HSC schedule; possibly this is a limitation of this study.

Empathy as a Life-skill

Common elements of life-skills are- Self-awareness, Empathy, Interpersonal relationship skill, effective communication, decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, coping with stress and coping with emotions. (Sharma, 2003) Empathy is among the ten core life skills as enlisted by UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO as a part of social skills. Empathy is the ability to imagine a situation that another person is experiencing despite possessing familiarity with that situation. Empathy can help us understand and accept others who may be very different from ourselves. It can significantly improve one's social interactions, increasing sensitivity towards others values too. (NCERT)

As compiled by Hakansson (2003) empathy is defined as a process of humanizing objects, of reading or feeling ourselves into them (Titchener, 1909); more of understanding of others feelings than a sharing of them (Kohler, 1929); an ability to understand (Mead, 1934); experience of foreign consciousness in general (Stein, 1989); to perceive internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with emotional components (Roger, 1957); capacity to think and feel oneself into the inner life of another person, very basis of human interaction (Kohut, 1959); source of prosocial motivation, empathy contributes to altruism and compassion for others in distress (Hoffman, 1989); affective response that stems from apprehension or comprehension of others emotional state or condition (Eisenberg, 2002); vicarious emotion that is congruent with but not necessarily identical to emotion of other,

(Batson, 1991) and a multidimensional phenomenon divided onto-perspective taking, empathic concern, personal distress and fantasy. (Davis, 1983)

Rationale for study

Adolescent Key-Issues

The ill effects of terrorism, sex and substance abuse, drug addiction, suicidal tendencies (CDE Centre for Disease control and prevention 2011), crimes and violence are spreading globally. Rates of crime begins to rise in mid-teens & peaks at about age 18. A great majority of crime are committed by young people. (Eisner, 2002)Today more than 21% of Indian population lies in the age group of 10-19 years. (Census 2011). Presently, there is increased electronic gaming of which 94% contains violence (Haninger & Thompson, 2004) as well as over-addiction of mobiles. Adolescence period is marked by heightened emotions and mood swings. (Harrington, 2001) The key issues of adolescents generally revolve around the following: managing emotions, a strong need for identity, relationship building, resisting peer pressure, communicating one's feelings and emotions, negotiating safer life situations, etc. (Sinkar and Aurora, 2012)

In this sensitive and vulnerable phase of life youth are burdened with a crucial step of choosing their career. One of the many root causes of this scenario is lack of quality education or seemingly lack of impact of existing education on our students. The educational activities, especially at HSC level, seems to be too academic, exam oriented, far more pressurizing, deficient in concrete ideas for all round development (Morrissey, Werner-Wilson, 2005) and lacks meaningfulness too. Due to monotonous, rote learning based syllabus, youth energy and aggression seems to be improperly channelized.

Pressures due to major physiological, mental, emotional and social changes, apart from parental, peer, societal and self-aspirational, lead our youth towards indecisiveness and confusion to understand their own likings and make proper choice of career.

Needless to say most of these frustrated isolated and dejected youth resort to drugs, violence get involved in crimes and delinquencies or get hooked up by gangsters and anti–social groups of the society. Adolescents suffer from mental illnesses, psychological distress, depression, anxiety, negative emotions which leads to suicidal ideations, (Muris, 2001) drug and substance abuse (Ford & Schroder, 2009) and sexual risk behaviours. (Hessler and Fainsibler-Katz, 2010 as in Robert F. Valois, Keith J. Zullig, Amy A Hunter, 2015) Suicide

ranks as the third leading cause of death among youth aged between 15-24 years (Heron et al, 2006, as compiled by King, Strunk, Sorter, 2011)

Need of the hour

Yildiz and Duy (2013) recorded that: -Lack of empathy or low levels was related to aggression (McPhedran, 2009; Miller and Eisenberg, 1988), offending (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2004), depression. (Derntl, Seidel, Schneider and Habel, 2012; Lee, 2009) High levels of empathy are related to prosocial behaviour (Eisenberg and Miller, 1987; Rameson, Morelli and Lieberman, 2011), altruism (Van Lange, 2008), relationship satisfaction (Cramer and Jowett, 2010) and subjective well-being. (Wei, Liao, Ku and Shaffer, 2011) Empathic understanding gets people closer to each other and eases interpersonal communication. As people receive empathy from others, they feel understood and valued. (Dokmen, 2005)

Current theory suggests that young adolescents need opportunities for physical activity, development of competence and achievement, self-definition, creative expression, positive social interaction with peers and adults, a sense of structure and clear limits and meaningful participation in authentic work. (Quinn, 1999; as in Morrissey and Werner-Wilson, 2005) Experiential learning can help students develop positive attitudes towards life, encourage acceptance of responsibility, promote community involvement, develop power of thought and help them understand their strengths and weaknesses in a real world context, thereby inspiring personal growth through the development of global competencies. (Eyler and Giles, 1999)

Astin et al (2000) found that students, who participated in community service activities and experiences showed more lasting effects on personal and academic growth, than those involved in classroom based learning. Dykhuis (2010)suggests that student volunteering could be equally beneficial to themselves and their community andsupports the studiesabout teenagers being at a peak time of self-growth but, do not necessarily have sound self-knowledge. A paradigm shift can alter some of future decisions as per Gilbert (2005) and Timson (2008) who feels, at the very least volunteering can't hurt and who knows? It may well help change the world, one privileged kid at a time.

Certain kinds of service help young people discover unknown aspects of themselves & see new relationships between themselves and society. Experience of dealing with and assisting people could have impact on self's capacity for doing good to others, which may prove to be

a good opportunity for adolescents. (Reinders and Youniss, 2006)Social experiences may develop responsibility and may successfully enact new behavioural demands and expectations. (Roberts, Wood, & Smith, 2005; Wood et al., 2007)

Lee, Olszewski-Kubilius, Donahue and Weimholt's (2007) literature revealed that positive effects of service learning activities, particularly for academic, personal and interpersonal growth of adolescents are well-documented. E.g. - enhanced students' problem-solving abilities (Conrad and Hedin, 1982; Goldsmith, 1996); personal, social and civic responsibility (Conrad and Hedin, 1982; Goldsmith, 1996; Hamilton and Fenzel, 1988; Newmann and Rutter, 1983; Waterman, 1997; Zeldin and Tarlov, 1997); and social competence (Newmann and Rutter, 1983; Osborne, Hammerich, and Hensley, 1998); better communication skills, empathy and confidence (Hamilton and Fenzel, 1988), greater self-esteem (Conrad and Hedin, 1982; Goldsmith, 1996; Hamilton and Fenzel, 1988; Newmann and Rutter, 1983); self-understanding or awareness, higher levels of moral and ego development. (Cognetta and Sprinthall, 1978)

Development of empathy is a key attribute required for building collaborative relationships, providing quality service, promoting social inclusion, promoting general well-being, stimulating creativity, innovation and generating solutions to problems, trust building among members, etc. (Miller and Wallis, 2011) Empathy is a mediator to interpersonal communication, proactive health behaviour (Wilkin et al 2007), self-efficacy and interpersonal conversation leading to social learning, (Papa et al 2000) it constitutes the social awareness skill seen in outcomes as prosocial behaviours. (Durlak et al 2008)

Thus, it is a fundamental building block for positive growth and development. (Zahn-Waxler and Radke-Yarrow, 1990) (As reported by Felt, 2011) Demonstrated benefits of participation in volunteer activities include increased respect for others, increased altruism, development of leadership skills and a better understanding of citizenship, these behaviours appear to carry over into adulthood. (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2000)

A possible way to engage adolescents as per researcher, is to develop interaction based, joyful and wholesome, experiential programs to release their stresses during these precious years. Hence, the researcher chose to develop a joyful and wholesome experiential program to awaken empathy in the urban adolescents. It involves activity-based interaction, between urban adolescents and deprived children in community. Researcher implemented a small pilot study to find the workability and feasibility of the program, as well as to analyse experiences

of the urban youth. One of the suggestions of Mierke (2013) is to integrate experiential learning into the curriculum, across disciplines, grade levels & divisions.

The experience of visiting and interacting with the deprived (children) in the community may help realize certain realities about the society, enabling a paradigm shift (to some extent) due to social comparison. By the word deprived the researcher means, those children, who due to some reasons, are deprived of good quality life, educational facilities, parents, proper place in society, social status, good health and nutrition, etc. It may prove to be a memorable experience to adolescents as well as children. The primary purpose of this study is, to develop and implement the joyful and wholesome, experiential program for urban youth. This pilot study also aimed to analyse the experiences of the urban adolescents after the program.

Positive Youth Development

Empathy is a component of communication that can be improved with appropriate training, (Winefield and Chur-Hansen, 2000); allows to understand the intention of others, predict their behaviour and experience an emotion triggered by others emotion. (Yadav and Iqbal, 2009) The ability to empathize is important for promoting positive behaviours towards other developing social competence, engaging in altruistic behaviour and facilitating social interactions and relationships. (De Waal, 2008; Eisenberg ad Miller, 1987 as in McDonald and Messinger, 2011)

Study by Morrissey and Werner-Wilson (2005) shows that youth can have caring attitudes and can engage in behaviours that provide assistance to others. Participation in constructive leisure activities facilitates positive development. Youth outcomes that have been overlooked include a positive sense of self, a sense of connection and commitment to others and ability and motivation to participate fully in community life. (Zeldin, 1995) Community provides opportunities for youth to learn how to act in the world around them- to explore, express, earn, belong and influence through such venues as school-sponsored programs, national youth serving organizations, religious and volunteer organizations. (Newman, Smith and Murphy, 1999) (As in Morrissey and Werner-Wilson, 2005)

Youth do want to spend their out-of-school time in activities that engage their hearts, minds and bodies and they want to contribute to the work of the larger society and they also want to have fun. (Quinn, 1999) Components of Positive Youth Development, as defined by Larson (2000) include creativity, leadership, altruism and civic engagement. By fostering an

atmosphere that embraces our youth and provides them with opportunities to grow and to demonstrate caring abilities, we can foster positive youth development.

Review of related literature

As reported by Ponder, Vander-Veldt and Lewis-Ferrell (2011), experientialists believe that structured reflection and active engagement are critical to the development of intellectual components such as knowledge, skills and cognitive development. (Dewey, 1938; Eyler, 2002; Eyler and Giles, 1999; Kolb, 1984) One of the assumptions of experiential education is that students will be surprised by exposure to situations and information that conflicts with their assumptions of the world and they will be challenged to explore further. (Eyler, 2002) Findings of Caulfield and Woods (2013) imply that experiential learning may lead to socially responsible behaviour that continues to occur well after, the formal learning experience ends; although it is time intensive and more costly. Future research could explore how students accept responsibility, promote community involvement and develop community collaborations experientially.

Fawcett, Garton and Dandy (2009)strongly felt a need to provide adolescents with a variety of structured leisure activities that foster positive development. Also, the myriad of reasons for participating in activities include fun, enjoyment, skill development, fitness, appearance, friendship, status, etc. They cited, Lindner & Johns' (2002) study that boring activity and lack of enjoyment were the two most common negative reasons for abandoning a structured leisure activity.

Yildiz and Duy (2013) investigated the effectiveness of an interpersonal communication skills psycho-education program to improve empathy and communication skills of visually impaired adolescents. Their literature review reveals that, empathy can be defined as an ability to understand the other person is aspect in interpersonal relationships. Thus, empathy is one of essentials in interpersonal relationships and communication; it is an ability and a tendency. (Kaya and Siyez, 2010) Social interaction is the basic ingredient that supports social environment and maintains it. (Hargie, 2011) Communication meets one of the fundamental psychological needs of human being, a need for interaction. (Kaya, 2010) Interpersonal communication can be defined as a psycho-social process in which at least two individuals reciprocally disclose information, emotions, thoughts and experiences they have

by specific means. (Kaya, 2010) Healthy interpersonal communication results in deeper, meaningful and satisfying relationships. (Korkut, 1996)

Singh (2014) concludes that when teachers use strategies to reduce stress and build a positive emotional environment, students gain emotional resilience and learn more efficiently. Kohn (2004) proved several benefits of joy in the classroom and that if students are engaged and motivated they feel minimal stress, information flows freely, they achieve higher levels of cognition, make connections, and experience "aha" moments. Such learning comes not from quiet classrooms and directed lectures, but from classrooms with an atmosphere of exuberant discovery. Neuro imaging studies and measurement of brain chemical transmitters reveal that students' comfort level can influence information transmission and storage in the brain. (Thanos et al, 1999)

Need for study

Many studies have been carried out related to effect of community service on empathy, social responsibility, very few have been on students in current Indian background. Although researches have been conducted separately on the positive effects of interventions (e.g. service based activities) on empathy, social responsibility, etc.; very small number exist on Indian adolescents. Moreover, there are hardly any researches being carried out for Indian middle adolescents group. Researcher sensed a wide gap as, there isn't any research done to evaluate such a full-fledged experiential program developed for Indian youth. There are recommendations for the same in our National Policy and National Curricular framework, only a few researchers seem to have explored this area especially on adolescent in current Indian background. The researcher's feels the need to develop and implement an experiential program based on adolescent needs for the well-being of the youth, nation and world.

Statement of Problem

To develop an experiential learning program of joyful and wholesome interaction, forurban youth to awaken empathy in them and to analyse their experience after the program.

Operational definitions of terms

1. **Urban Youth**

   XIIth standard students in the age-group of 17-18 years, who have enrolled in Junior colleges in Pune city.

2. **Joyful and wholesome interaction**

   Interpersonal communication which is full of joy and promotes well-being of mind and spirit.

3. Experiential learning

A process when a personally responsible participant cognitively, affectively and behaviourally processes knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes in a learning situation characterized by a high level of active involvement.

For this study it means learning through personal experience and involvement.

4. Empathy

Empathy is the ability to be aware of and understand how others feel. (Baron, 2006; Maliha and Rehana, 2010)

For this research it is a skill to understand another person's needs and feelings and taking an active interest in their concern in the youth. The indicators considered for this research will be any of empathic concern, perspective taking and personal distress.

5. Awaken

For the current research awaken denotes to trigger or raise feeling of empathy in youth.

Objectives

1. To develop an experiential learning program of joyful and wholesome interaction for Std. XIIth students.

2. To implement the experiential program of joyful and wholesome interaction as a pilot study for Std. XIIth students.

3. To analyse the experiences of the Std. XIIth students after implementation of the experiential learning program of joyful and wholesome interaction.

Methodology

Researcher has made an attempt to apply some of the experiential learning principles like, John Dewey's principles (emotional, physical, intellectual and social safety), Kolbe' s experiential cycle and include few of nine elements of Susan Kovalik as well as the Risk Competence theory.

Preparations for program included planning for documentations for e.g. permission letter for planned number of visits, number of students, allotted time, tentative dates of visit and planning for bus transportation to rural school.

A group of 50 Std. XIIth students were randomly selected for pilot study after collecting consent letters from their parents and orientated for research purpose. Sensitization was done followed by, discussion and planning for visit. A skill development workshop of students was

conducted for purpose of team building. Students planned activities that were recreational and educative yet interesting to the school children for whom they were conducted. The pilot group visited a rural school (1st to 4th)with their mentor teacher and local school for underprivileged (1st to 7th) on the decided day. They interacted with children and conducted activities for primary children, which was partly recorded in form of videos and photographs. The researcher held a reflection session on experience and discussed challenges that students faced if any, during the interactive visit, for modifications in future. A questionnaire was filled by the pilot group to find out the experiences of the students and to know about program.

Data collection Tools

Self-prepared questionnaire to find out the experiences of students during the entire program.

Analysis and interpretation

Table 1: showing options of pilot group to all questions

No	QUESTIONS	a	b	c	d	e	f
1	To what extent did you enjoy the overall program?	39	11	0	0	0	0
2	Which part of program did you enjoy?	11	29	23	8	0	4
3	To what extent do you think this experience will help you in future??	30	18	2	0	0	0
4	If yes, in what way do you think this experience will help you in future life?	20	2	15	28	0	7
5	Given a chance, would you choose to participate in such activities in future?	34	14	2	0	0	0
6	What do you think was the aim/were aims of this activity?	10	15	32	35	2	0
7	According to you, what was/were most challenging part/parts of this entire program?	5	2	29	11	9	2
8	After this program which of the following realization do you think you experienced?	14	30	26	23	0	1
9	To what extent did you enjoy interaction with school children?	38	12	0	0	0	0
10	How would you rate the response of school children when you interacted with them?	39	8	2	0	0	1
11	Which of the following did you experience while you interacted with school children?	10	37	25	0	6	0
12	In what way do you think this interaction with school children made a difference in you?	24	16	28	18	0	0

| 13	To what extent do you think thisinteraction with the school children made a difference in you?	30	18	2	0	0	0
14	Can you describe your interaction with your classmates while planning the activities?	34	13	25	17	2	0
15	What kind of activities did you plan for the visit?	19	30	20	23	2	0
20	How would you rate the overall experience?	36	13	0	0	0	1

Q. 1, Q. 3, Q. 5, Q. 9, Q. 10 and Q. 13 and Q. 20 are rating type of questions while remaining are multiple options type of questions**.** The detailed analysis of responses is given below.

Response to rating type of questions:-

Table 2: showing responses of all students to rating type of questions.

Q. No	a	b	c	d	e	f
I	39	11	0	0	0	0
III	30	18	2	0	0	0
V	34	14	2	0	0	0
IX	38	12	0	0	0	0
X	39	8	2	0	1	0
XIII	30	18	2	0	0	0
XX	36	13	0	0	0	1

Frequency curve | **Pie chart**
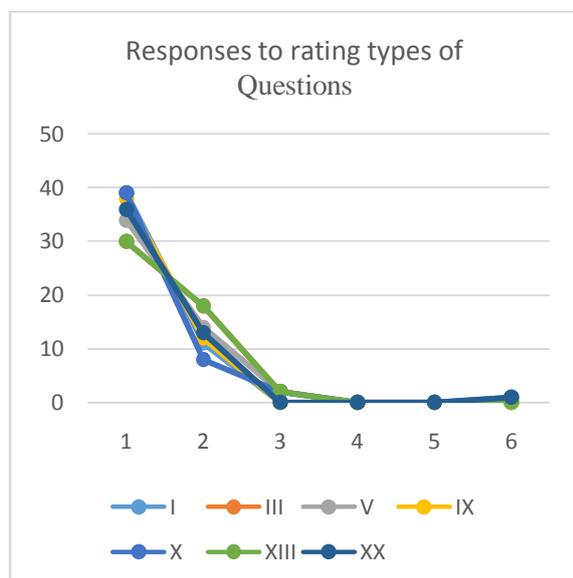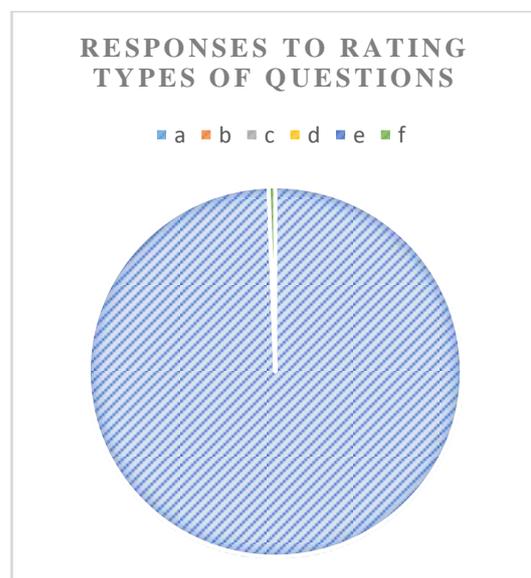
Series 1 shows the frequency of options a, b, c, d, e and f for Q. 1 of Questionnaire. Series 2 shows the frequency of options a, b, c, d, e and f for Q. 3 of Questionnaire. Series 3 shows the frequency of options a, b, c, d, e and f for Q. 5 of Questionnaire, series 4 for Q. 9 and Series 5 for Q. 10, series 6 for Q. 13 and series 7 for Q. 20. It can be observed that option 'a' has

maximum frequency followed by 'b' with zero or others except options 'c' and 'f'.(f stands for any other)

Pie chart indicates the proportion of 'a, b, c, d, e and f' options for Rating type of Questions. The option with maximum weightage is 'a' followed by b, then c and least for f, zero for d and e.

Response to multiple options type of questions

Table 3: showing responses of all students to multiple option type of questions.

Q.no	a	b	c	d	e	f	Q.no	a	b	c	d	e	f
II	11	29	23	8	0	4	XI	10	37	25	0	6	0
IV	20	2	15	28	0	7	XII	24	16	28	18	0	0
VI	10	15	32	35	2	0	XIV	34	13	25	17	2	0
VII	5	2	29	11	9	2	XV	40	30	20	23	2	0
VIII	14	30	26	23	0	1							

Frequency curve   **Pie chart**
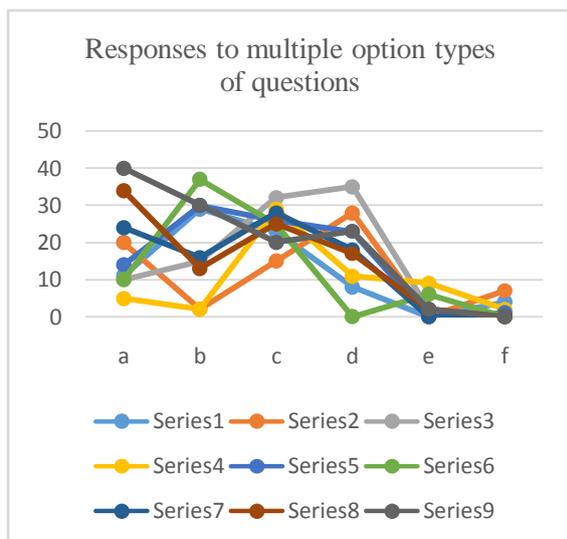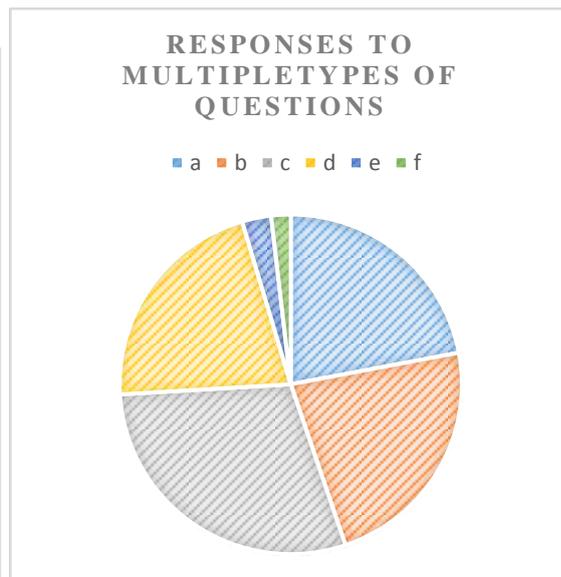
Series 1 shows the frequency of options for Q. 2 of Questionnaire as shown in table above. Series 2 shows the frequency of options for Q. 4 of Questionnaire. Similarly, series 3 shows the frequency of options for Q. 6, series 4 for Q. 7, series 5 for Q. 8 and series 6 Q. 11, series 7 for q, 12, series 8 for Q, 14, series 9 for Q. 15 of Questionnaire. It can be observed that different options have varied frequencies for different questions. Pie chart denotes the proportion of weightage for options a, b, c, d, e, and f. Maximum weightage for 'd' followed by 'b' and 'c', then 'a' with lowest for 'e' and 'f' options.

Q. 16 and Q. 17 were personal type of questions (to know gender and name of school visited) while Q. 18 and Q. 19 were general open-ended type of questions.

Findings and discussion

Responses to rating type of questions

Q.1   To what extent did you enjoy the overall program?

Maximum have marked 'a' as response which means 80% girls enjoyed program to a great extent. All except one have marked 'a' as response which means 76% boys enjoyed program to a great extent. Rest enjoyed to some extent. Overall 78 % enjoyed the program to a great extent while remaining enjoyed to some extent

Q.3   Do you think this experience will help in future?

60% have chosen 'a' response that indicates this experience will help them in future to a great extent. Nearly 36 % have chosen 'b' response that indicates this experience will help them in future to some extent. Remaining 4 % felt it will help in future to small extent. None have reported negative.

Q.5   Given a chance, would u choose to participate in such activities in future?

68 % students mentioned they will surely choose while 28 % youth, may choose to participate in such activities in future. Only 4 % were undecided about the same.

Q.9   To what extent did you enjoy interaction with the school children?

76 % youthenjoyed this interaction with children ta a great extent while remaining 24 %enjoyed to some extent.

Q.10   How would you rate the response of school children when you interacted with them?

78 % youth felt the response of school children was good. In fact one girl has written awesome for same. 16 % felt it was satisfactory while 4 %were undecided about the same and 2% have reported as unsatisfactorydue to activities they had planned being unsuitable for school children.

Q.13   To what extent do you think this interaction with the school children made a difference in you?

60 % boys and girls felt this interaction made a great difference in them while remaining 36 % felt it did make a difference to some extent and 4 % felt this experience made difference to a small extent in them.

Q.20   How would you rate the overall experience?

Nearly 72 %students including boys and girls have reported the experience as Good while nearly 26 % felt it was satisfactory while 2% reported it as an awesome experience.

The most encouraging fact is almost all seem to have enjoyed the experience of interaction with children and valued it too.

Responses to multiple options type of questions

Q.2   Which part of program did you enjoy most?

Nearly 60 % girls and boys have marked response 'b' i.e. they enjoyed interaction with school children. It is followed by planning of activities being 2[nd]most enjoyed part of program. 22 % boys and girls enjoyed discussion with classmates too.

Q.4   In what way would this experience will help in future?

56 % youth think this experience will help them lead a much more contented life, while 40% think it will help to happily avail facilities they get in life and 30% reported that they may derive inspiration from children in their difficult times. 14 % have mentioned other than given options like to remain contented, to choose social work as part time profession, to speak with children, to get well versed for stage performance too and 4 % felt it can be helpful to choose social work as a profession.

Q.6   What do you think was the aim/were the aims of this activity?

More than 70% boys and girls think the aim of this program was to develop care and concern for others in community 66% think it wasto make them aware of realities of life. 30 % youth also felt aims were giving joyful experiences outside classroom and 20 % felt it was introducing them to new atmosphere. Few reported other options like socially responsible and that they will gain something good.

Q.7   According to you, what was/were most challenging part/parts of this program?

Planning of activities was most challenging part for 58 % students, while interacting with classmates and with school children was found challenging for 22% boys and girls. Less than 10% found understanding aim of program as challenge while 18 % chose 'not applicable' option which may imply that they didn't feel any of given as challenge. 4% reported the most challenging part as interacting with classmates. Few reported that activities selected,had posed challenges as they were unsuitable for small children or that children were too young for planned activities.

Q.8   After this program which of the following realization did you experience?

60% girls and boys realized that something ought to be done for the children; 52 % realized they should be contented with what they have; 46 % had realization to trust themselves in difficult times while; less than 30 % found themselves fortunate compared to others.

Q.11   Which of the following did you experience while interacting with children?

75% volunteers recorded happiness as their experience during interaction with children, 50% experienced satisfaction, 20 % girls and boys were thrilled while interacting with children.

Few participants mentioned other experiences too, like excitement, inspiration and learning new things during interaction.

Q.12   In what way do you think this interaction with school children made a difference in you?

60% participants think the interaction made them feel responsible. Nearly 50 % felt more confident while more than 36 % felt concerned for children after interaction while a few couldn't describe the same.

Q.14   Can you describe your interaction with your classmates while planning the activities?

Interaction with classmates was described as sharing of ideas by 70 % adolescents, interesting by 50% boys and girls, activity based by less than 35% and face to face by 35 % boys. Few other responses mentioned were learning new, interpersonal relationship and teamwork to a great extent.

Q.15   What kind of activities did you plan for the visit?

The kind of activities described by maximum was educational (60 %), followed by informational (nearly 50 %) then art and craft (40%) while 80% say they had planned recreational activities. Few mentioned other kinds as learn by enjoyment and which they will enjoy.

Responses to General Questions:

Q.18   Name the activity which yielded maximum and minimum response.

Maximum response to: - Sports-5, Outdoor- 3, Dog & Bone- 2, Energisers-3, Maths-2, Geography- 2, Games & Words making- 7, Science-2, Stories-1, Music-2, Quiz-2, Drawing and coloring-6.

Minimum response to: - Maths-2, Stellarium- 4, Spin wheel-2, Laptop videos-2.

Q.19   Would you like to Share any touching experience or anything else related to activity?

Some of touching moment shared by students are as follows (unedited as written by them):-

1. I helped Pooja who was crying to go home and sat with her through all activities to make sure she feels happy.

2. One kid had problem to understand even basics yet, was still trying.

3. Children had an urge to learn and were emotionally attached to us in matter of hours.

4. Children got emotionally attached to us, hugged us, and didn't want to leave, clicking photographs with them and saving those memories was good.

5. Students were very intelligent and somehow reminded of our past.

6. One boy named Piyush was very intelligent and mature as compared to his age.

7. Experience was extremely satisfactory, learned a lot from it, was amusing being elder amongst all and learned from little children.

8. We got good response from them & felt very exciting while conducting activities.

9. Icebreaker was most awesome activity, great connectivity between children and us.

10. It was a great experience, children were full of emotions.

11. When their break was over two girls from my class came and held my hand and took me to class with them.

12. Meeting children with totally different emotions was great, they were very excited and blended with us very quickly.

13. I loved talking to people there, children reciprocated in most pleasant way.

14. During break, 4th Std. students came to me saying…Didi, r u going to come again?

15. I said…..Yes….they said… please come back this year itself as we will move on to 5th Std. (to another school) It was a touching experience.

16. I think the overall experience was very good and helpful for us as we could realise the problems children are still facing in rural areas and could contribute our little. We did not face any such problems in conducting activities as children were very co-operative but one problem was that there was only one class for 1st and 4th class students so it was difficult to conduct different activities for 4th class students. I would love to be a part of this programme further also.

17. The first time we entered the smile on faces of children was the best feeling. Even the time when we were having lunch together, felt amazing.

18. While we were leaving a girl named Rutuja asked whether we are going to visit next Saturday, when we said 'no' she looked really sad and told it was her birthday and she would have been happy give us chocolates and share the day with us. I was so touched.

19. The activity was fun and as we were in groups teaching for first time was very interesting, in the end it was good work.

20. I think the school children were so very interested in Science and aspired to become Doctors, Engineers, etc. which made me think that the children were so very aimed in their life.

21. This activity is really helpful for us to understand the reality. It gave me satisfaction and I enjoyed the activity.

22. The children were extra-ordinary in their own way.

Personal Interpretations of students

Table 4: Descriptions made by studentsabout activities and experience.

No	Activities yielded maximum response or Special remarks	No	Description of picture/image/feeling in mind by students
1	Using dolls, cars, chocolates to explain sums	1	Highly talented, well-mannered, disciplined children.
2	Explaining digestive system went well	2	Two types of faces-happy (rural child) and bored. (urban child)
3	Interactive games , touching moments were there	3	Happy and excited, makes me feel special (like a celebrity)
4	Moral activities	4	Stream of water, droplet of water on plastic moving intact.
5	Our musical performance was enjoyed by girls	5	You get encouraged with their enthusiasm.
6	No remarks	6	Conscious of social barriers or pressures especially girls.
7	Drawing and singing songs	7	Eagerness and smile on face.
8	Time was not enough	8	Children were more capable than our expectations.
9	Dumb charades, touching moments	9	Butterfly-free and open-with no inhibitions.
10	Drawing, touching moments	10	A window through which light of hope is coming in darkness.
11	Dumb charades	11	An observatory-all eager to see what is in outer space.
12	Sports worked, yes touching moments	12	Disciplined, innocent and cultured children.
13	Physics experiments	13	One half-we bunking classes; other half-they need and want.
14	Games worked well, less response initially	14	Dance floor-initially nervous, excited; then don't want to leave.
15	Periodic table, fun and interesting activity	15	Kids pulling GCC members and their candid expressions.
16	Sports like kabaddi, there were touching moments	16	Faces/eyes- full of emotions.
17	Many touching moments	17	Eager to make friends.
18	Introduction and ambition in life, art and craft	18	Garden with beautiful flowers, more potential in rural schools.
19	Quiz worked well, touching	19	Urban attitude and rural innocence.

	moments		
20	No remarks	20	Students are teachers and we are students.
21	All activitiesyielded good response	21	Two girls pulling me back in class.
22	Quiz worked well	22	Couldn't think of anything.
23	Purchased things made by them made me happy	23	Full moon day- souls as bright as moon, mountains –big heart, rainbow-colourful, lake-pure, flower-beautiful. (children)
24	No remarks	24	Couldn't fill questionnaire.

An interesting conversation between the researcher and students yielded following results. On the way back from the visit the researcher had asked a few participants to draw/imagine a picture/image/feeling in mind related to their experience or about the feeling that appealed to them the most. Researcher had one to one interaction with students who were expected to describe the mind image/picture. Some random remarks that are given above have been written by students and compiled by researcher.

Table 5: Few other remarks written by few students.

1	Had fun acting teachers to young minds
2	Learn from those who live more with less
3	I love children and my skill of interacting with them is good too
4	Experienced love and acceptance from children
5	It helped in cultivating Interpersonal relationship
6	The children were so interested that made me more curious in interacting
7	We must be happy in whatever we have
8	This experience is encouragement for us to do charity work
9	It will help us to make the world a better place
10	Enjoyed teaching students very much.

Conclusion

The thoughtful and guided community interaction can give immense satisfaction, with a lot of fun and happiness. Such service experiencescan initiate some realizations in our youth, about the harsh realities of lifeand also, may awaken,certain life-skills like empathy in our youth; which help students cope with the many demands and stresses during the period of adolescence, and can prepare students for the transition to adult life. (Lehr et al, 2003; Neumark-Sztainer et al, 2006) As a step towards positive youth development, thisexperiential program can be helpful in the long run and hence, needs to be researched. There is a need to implement such an intervention for urban adolescents, evaluate it and study its qualitative as well as quantitative aspects through a mixed data multi-method research.

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