

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL-BASED HIV EDUCATION

**Dr. Sunayana J. Kadle**

Assistant Professor

Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan's, Smt. Surajba College  
of Education, Juhu (North), Mumbai

## INTRODUCTION

The Sixth Millennium Goal in the list of eight International Development Goals that all 193 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations had agreed to achieve by the year 2015 is Combating HIV/AIDS.



The epidemic has had a devastating impact on societies, economies and infrastructures. In countries most severely affected, life expectancy has been reduced by as much as 20 years. Young adults in their productive years are the most at-risk population, so many countries have faced a slow-down in economic growth and an increase in household poverty. The target is set for the population aged between 15–24 years to have a comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS. This population includes both male and female population in the age group 15-24 years. AIDS has caused an estimated 36 million deaths worldwide. As of 2012, approximately 35.3 million people are living with HIV globally.

For nearly 30 years, HIV / AIDS have been shrouded in myths and misconceptions. In some cases, these mistaken ideas have either prompted the very behaviors that cause more people to become HIV-positive or increased discrimination in the society. Myths are regarding

**Cause, transmission, cure, precautions, high risk factors of getting AIDS etc. The difference between HIV and AIDS.**

**NEED FOR THE STUDY:**

Schools play a pivotal role in providing AIDS education for young people. Not only do schools have the capacity to reach a large number of young people, but school students are particularly receptive to learning new information. Therefore schools are a well-established point of contact through which young people can receive AIDS education. In phase II of the country's National AIDS Control Programme, the Adolescent Education Programme (AEP) was launched.

The programme trained teachers and peer educators to educate the student community both in and out of school about life skills, HIV prevention and HIV related stigma and discrimination. Under the initiative 112,000 schools were covered and 288,000 teachers were trained. Teachers and peer educators are trained to teach about the subject, and students are educated through active learning sessions, including debates and role-play. For the students of the ninth standard, the science subject deals with AIDS its causes and prevention. These students have to be aware of this deadly disease. Having correct information is the key to understanding and preventing HIV/AIDS. AIDS education also helps to reduce stigma and discrimination, by dispelling false information that can lead to fear and blame. The students Myths about AIDS surely will increase stigma and discrimination in the society and sensitivity towards the people suffering from AIDS will not be developed. Thus the following research question came to the mind.

**Research Question:**

- Are the Secondary school Students really Aware of this deadly disease? or just studying about AIDS as one of the chapter for the examination.
- Do students have Myths about AIDS?

**With this Query in mind, the researcher thought of** conducting the present study to check the knowledge and Myths of HIV/ AIDS among the school children of secondary schools in Mumbai.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

The present study is entitled as **To study the level of awareness about “HIV/ AIDS” among secondary school students of mumbai**

**OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS**

**Level of awareness**

Measured by considering the myths about the *HIV/AIDS in students*..For the study 12 myths were taken into consideration, related to **Cause, transmission, cure, precautions, high risk factors of getting AIDS etc. The difference between HIV and AIDS, full form of AIDS,STD's**

***HIV/AIDS:***

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is the final stage of HIV disease, which causes severe damage to the immune system.

***Secondary School Students:***

The learners from the Secondary Section of the school education that includes the students of standard IXth.

***Mumbai***

Mumbai city includes the two distinct regions: Mumbai City district and Mumbai Suburban district.

**VARIABLES OF THE STUDY:**

**Independent Variable**

Programmes conducted on HIV/AIDS in schools.

**Dependent variable:**

- Levels of awareness about HIV/AIDS( on the basis of the myths in students)
- Secondary school students

**AIMS OF THE STUDY:**

The main aim of this research was **“To study the level of awareness about “HIV/ AIDS” among secondary school students of mumbai**

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- To assess current levels of Awareness about AIDS among secondary school students in Mumbai.
- To assess current levels of Awareness about AIDS among secondary school students in Mumbai with reference to Gender
- To provide suggestions for school AIDS education.

### **HYPOTHESIS:**

- There is no significant difference in the current levels of Awareness about AIDS among secondary school students in Mumbai with reference to Gender

### **SAMPLE SIZE:**

1206 Secondary school students studying from Std. IX was the sample of the present study.

### **TOOLS OF RESEARCH**

The researcher has used the Multiple Choice questionnaire, prepared by the researcher to collect information from students. The Questionnaire has personal information such as Name, Name of their school, Board type, and Gender.

**Awareness about AIDS Questionnaire:** To find out about the Awareness about AIDS in Students of standard IX, the Multiple Choice questionnaire prepared by the researcher, consisted of a set of 12 Multiple Choice Questions. The Researcher went through the Topic related to AIDS in the syllabus and prepared the Questions accordingly. The Questions focused on General Awareness of AIDS- Full Form of the acronym, Causes, Prevention, Cures and Myths. Medical Details were not asked. The Content validity and Reliability was established. Reliability was found to be 0.73.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **Data Collection:**

The data was collected from students of different secondary schools in Greater Mumbai. The responses were scored.

#### **Scoring of the Scale:**

The scoring was done using four point rating scale. There were a total 12 Multiple choice questions in all items in the tool. Each Item consist of a stem and a set of 3 to 5 options. In some items only one answer was correct whereas in other items there were options like all of the above and none of the above. The correct answer was scored as 1 and the wrong as 0. The minimum possible score on the tool was 0 and the maximum possible score was 12.

### **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

#### **The data was subjected to Descriptive and Inferential Analysis.**

The Scores obtained by the secondary school students were subjected to Descriptive Analysis for which the measures of Central Tendency, Variability and measures from normality were calculated

**TOTAL SAMPLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ON AIDS AWARENESS TEST**

MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE	STD DEV	SKEWNESS	KURTOSIS
7.088723	7	7	2.415975	-0.12426	-0.55563

The table shows that there is no difference between mean and median and mode. Thus the values obtained for mean, median and mode are equal. The standard deviation was found to be 2.42. The distribution is slightly negatively skewed and mean lies on the left of median. The kurtosis was found to be -0.55, which is less than zero; hence the distribution curve is platykurtic in nature indicating slightly flat distribution and heterogeneity within the group. This indicates that the distribution of scores is near normal. Thus, the sample selected is representative of the population.

The Maximum score which can be obtained on the AIDS awareness Questionnaire is 12 whereas the mean is found to be 7. **This means 58.33% of the students are fully aware about AIDS.**

**DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SCORES OBTAINED BY THE STUDENTS OF VARYING CATEGORIES ON THE AWARENESS TEST**

**SAMPLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF VARYING ON THE AWARENESS TEST ON AIDS**

SAMPLE		SAMPLE SIZE	MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE	STD. DEV	SKEWNESS	KURTOSIS
GENDER	GIRLS	7.406	7	7	2.266	-0.22	-0.2818	7.4065
	BOYS	6.848	7	6	2.498	-0.017	-0.685	6.848

**Gender – Girls / Boys**

The table shows that the mean, median and mode scores of girl students are in descending order while that of boys students are in ascending order. The distribution for both the girls and boys student slightly negatively skewed indicating high scores on a variable. The distribution curve for both is Leptokurtic indicating a sharper distribution. This shows that the both the groups are heterogeneous.

**Inferential analysis**

The 't' test was used for testing the hypothesis

**Hypothesis**

**There is no significant difference in the Awareness of knowledge about AIDS among the Girls and Boys of secondary schools**

**TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS-**

Group	N	Mean	$\sigma$	$\sigma_m$	df	t
Girls	519	7.41	2.66	0.151	1204	3.573
Boys	687	6.85	2.50			

\*\* P <.01, \* P <.05

**Observation:** The calculated 't' is significant at 0.01 level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Interpretation:** It implies that there is a significant difference in the Awareness of the knowledge about AIDS of the Girls and the Boys of Secondary school.

**Findings:** This means that the Girl students are more Aware about AIDS than the Boys.

$H_0 \neq 0$

**MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

Most of the Students are well acquainted with the full form of AIDS, but around 10% still are not aware of the full form of AIDS.

20% of students are not aware that AIDS is caused by the Virus.

It is quite alarming to know that 50% students are not aware of all the ways in which AIDS is transmitted. If students have to protect themselves from AIDS they need to be cautious alert and aware of all the ways and not have half information about transmission. The students don't know that infected syringes and tattooing can be a cause for AIDS.

Though more than 50 % of the students feel that teachers are the best people who can give information about AIDS, many others trust the information from Media or peers about AIDS.

50% students are not aware of the precautions to avoid AIDS in the true sense. Students have the notion that there is a treatment or AIDS this will surely make the students take the disease lightly and students may become careless and casual in their attitude towards the disease. Students are also not aware of the people who are at high risks and in a city like Mumbai with students being a part of various social circles are at a high risk so they have to be aware of this. Students are of the impression that HIV and AIDS is the same thus this concept and difference between the two needs to be clarified by teachers.

Students said that people looking tired may have AIDS. This is again a wrong conception in the minds of the children. They need to be aware that appearances are deceptive it is absolutely difficult to tell whether person has AIDS from outward appearance otherwise students may indulge into risk taking behavior with healthy looking individual which is dangerous.

It is essential for students to be sensitive towards people with AIDS and hence students should also know well that holding hands or sharing a cup may not be a cause of AIDS.

There is a significant difference among the secondary students of the SSC schools and the ICSE schools in the Awareness about AIDS.

There is a significant difference among the Girls and boys of secondary schools.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**

From the major Findings it can be concluded that students are not fully aware about AIDS. More than 50% students have wrong notions about the AIDS disease in spite of the topic being a part of the curriculum and a very important topic for a healthy life. This has a wide implication for the teachers. Teachers should see that the awareness is developed in the students, for which teachers should ensure that all the students are able to grasp and understand the acronym to its true sense.

It is essential for teachers to focus on the proper details of AIDS as we have the challenge to eradicate AIDS as a Millennium goal.

Students are ready to get information from Media or peers about AIDS, in fact they should trust teachers for information and teachers too should be approachable and Sex Education and AIDS classes should be conducted seriously by school. The school should develop confidence in students so that they approach the teachers. Regularly the topic needs to be discussed in school in form of discussions from articles from the newspapers, Exhibitions, calling the Experts, Scenario based learning, Quiz and test on Aids awareness from time to time .etc. in order to ensure retention about AIDS causes and precautions to be taken.

Especially because Mumbai is a City which exposes children to Sex at an earlier stage as students have a variety of social circles. Teachers should take up this topic seriously and ensure the students are learning well.

Students can be involved in age-appropriate HIV education and in ensuring that schools are safe, inclusive, and supportive environments in many capacities, including roles as:

- Peer educators.
- Members of clubs or groups such as the White Ribbon Campaign and Gay-Straight Alliances (increasingly known as Rainbow Alliances).
- Leaders and participants in events and activities such as World AIDS Day, Sexual and Reproductive Health Day, Day of the Girl, Day of Pink, Black History Month, National Aboriginal Day, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, International Day against Homophobia, and Trans Day of Remembrance.

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