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## CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAPITAL STRUCTURE AND OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE WITH CONSERVATIVE ACCOUNTING MOHAMAD LASHKARI, MOHAMADREZA ABDOLI & KHDIEH MOHAMMADI SIYAPRANI	1
2.	PARADOX OF COMMUNITY REACTIONS TO CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND IRRESPONSIBILITY IN KENYAN HOTELS THOMAS KIMELI CHERUIYOT & DANIEL KIPKIRONG TARUS	5
3.	TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: A CASE OF GREEN ADVERTISING FOR CONSUMER'S RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR AKPOGHIRAN, I. PATRICK	11
4.	STUDENTS SATISFACTION AND CHALLENGES IN PROBLEM BASED LEARNING IN COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LANGUAGES, MEKELLE UNIVERSITY, ETHIOPIA CHALACHEW WASSIE WOLLIE	16
5.	AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPOT AND FUTURE PRICES OF CRUDE OIL DR. HARSH PUROHIT, HARTIKA CHHATWAL & HIMANSHU PURI	24
6.	EMERGING LIFESTYLE OF WOMEN AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FOOTWEAR PURCHASE V R UMA & DR. M I SAIFIL ALI	30
7.	ACCOUNTING FOR WAGE INEQUALITY IN INFORMAL SECTOR DR. NEERU GARG	34
8.	COMPLAINTS GIVING ATTITUDES OF MOTHERS ABOUT ADULTERATED FOOD IN INDIA DR. S. RAMESHKUMAR, G. PADMA PARVATHY & DR. G. PAULRAJ	38
9.	INDIA AND UNITED ARAB EMIRATES - TRADE DIMENSIONS AND GROWTH TRENDS SHESHAGIRI.B, DR. G. G. HONKAN & DR. L. D. VAIKUNTHE	44
10.	PROBLEMS OF GRANITE INDUSTRY IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT VASU JALARI, NALL BALA KALYAN KUMAR & M.DEVA RAJULU	48
11.	TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: ISSUES AND STRATEGIES C.ARULJOTHI & DR. S. RAMASWAMY	55
12.	ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS IN THE CORPORATE WORLD DR. A. CHANDRA MOHAN & PREETHA LEENA .R	59
13.	A STUDY ON TEACHER'S OPINION ABOUT ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES IN MATRICULATION HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN VIRUDHUNAGAR DISTRICT M.S. YASMEEN BEEVI & DR. M. JAYALAKSHMI	63
14.	INDIAN TEXTILE INDUSTRY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF COIMBATORE REGION K. N. MARIMUTHU & DR. MARY JESSICA	67
15.	PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT DR. HEMANDRI TIKAWALA, MUKESH R. GOYANI & JIGNESH VAGHELA	73
16.	MEASURING EDUCATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND THE DETERMINANTS OF EFFICIENCY OF THE STUDENTS IN SALEM DISTRICT, TAMILNADU DR. R. KALIRAJAN & DR. A. SUGIRTHARANI	76
17.	EFFECTIVENESS OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS –A STUDY DR. MUNIVENKATAPPA & RAMANA REDDY. B	82
18.	THE LEVEL OF JOB SATISFACTION AND OPPURTUNITIES AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN TAMILNADU DR. M. JAYASUDHA	87
19.	SUB-PRIME CRISIS: CONCEPT AND ORIGIN DR. RAJESH PAL	90
20.	LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS OF KERALA: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE MALLIKA.M.G	95
21.	LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA: AN OVERVIEW OF ITS PERFORMACE DR. H H BHARADI	101
22.	AGRI TOURISM IN KARNATAKA – ISSUES CONSTRAINTS AND POSSIBILITIES SHUSHMA HAMILPURKAR	106
23.	REACHING THE UNREACHABLE THROUGH MICROFINANCE: CHALLENGES BEFORE INDIA MANISHA SAXENA	112
24.	PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN PEASANTS IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN KARNATAK STATE DR. RAMESH.O.OLEKAR	118
25.	THE EFFECT OF OPEN INTEREST CHANGE IN THE FIRST 20 MINUTES ON INTRADAY INDEX MOVEMENT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY BASED ON NSE NIFTY OPTION DR. BIMAL JAISWAL & ARUN KUMAR	122
26.	ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISES ON INDIAN ECONOMY BHAVNA RANJAN & SAKSHI WALIA	128
27.	POPULATION AND REGIONAL INEQUALITY IN INDIA DR. M. R. SINGARIYA	133
28.	SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF ELECTED WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES IN UTTAR PRADESH BHAVANA SINGH	140
29.	A SEPARATE AGRICULTURE BUDGET FOR INDIA-NEED OF THE HOUR HARSHAL A.SALUNKHE	145
30.	A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT METHODS OF HEALTH EDUCATION ON 'HIV/AIDS' AWARENESS AMONG ADOLESCENT STUDENTS AT UTKAL BHARTI SCIENCE COLLEGE, PALASUNI JANMEJAYA SAMAL	149
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	152

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## A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT METHODS OF HEALTH EDUCATION ON 'HIV/AIDS' AWARENESS AMONG ADOLESCENT STUDENTS AT UTKAL BHARTI SCIENCE COLLEGE, PALASUNI

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**Z.P., GADCHIROLI**

### ABSTRACT

*This study reflects the impact of different methods of health education on HIV/AIDS awareness among adolescent students. +2 Science Students were selected for this study. As teenagers they are the most vulnerable group in the society and are believed to be the most active group in disseminating the message to a greater segment of the community. The study was conducted in a residential science college named Utkal Bharti Science College, Palasuni, BBSR in which the students represent major part of the state of Orissa and few students are from outside the state. Students were from three different educational backgrounds such as Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Indian Council of Secondary Education (ICSE) and Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Orissa. The entire students were divided in to five groups and five different methods of health education were imparted to them. The methods of health education used for the study are plain Lecture, Lecture with audio-visual aid, Textbook, Focus group discussion and a Radio play. A date was finalized with the permission of the principal of the college and consent of every student was taken before initiating the study. Before imparting health education a base line data was collected to know the awareness status of each student. A questionnaire was distributed among each group after imparting each method of health education to assess the impact of corresponding method of health education. At the end a comparison was made to find out the most effective method of health education among these students. The most effective mode of health education among these students was "Focus group discussion" (FGD). Plain lecture, Lecture with audio-visual aid, Radio play and Textbook followed FGD in a descending order. This is small study with small sample size but similar studies can be conducted among various groups to elicit better avenues for imparting health education.*

### KEYWORDS

Adolescent students, Awareness, Health education, HIV/AIDS.

### INTRODUCTION

The pandemic of HIV/AIDS has scared the humanity. Scientists at all parts of the globe are trying endlessly for a miracle for this monster but the fruit is still sour. This indicates that though the results are not futile but not sufficient enough to create a magical impression on this disease. The drugs available these days are only supportive but not to throw the HIV out of human life. Most of the viral strains and subtypes of HIV (HIV-1, HIV-2 and A, B, C, E subtypes of HIV-1) are prevalent in India placing a great challenge before the great Indian brains to work on it. When we talk of preventive, promotive and curative health care, the former plays a pivotal role as said by John Flegenheimer; "Prevention is better than cure". This is very rightly applicable to HIV/AIDS, as the sure cure of this disease is still a distant dream. Among various methods of disease prevention health education finds a very significant role. Different type of health education methods create awareness in the community thereby helping the common man to stay away from various types of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Health education is a process that informs, motivates and helps people adopt and maintain healthy life practices and life styles and advocates environmental changes as needed to facilitate this goal and conducts professional training and research to the same end. (Adopted from national conference on preventive and social medicine, USA)

### OBJECTIVES

As on date no medicine has been developed to cure the disease with few supportive therapies, so prevention of this disease takes a vital role to lower HIV/AIDS load from the community. Health education is one of the best media to disseminate awareness among the general public. Health education will help in:

- Preventing fresh infection in the community by the way of spreading knowledge of different media of transmission and the ways to get rid of them.
- This will help in health maintenance of the people living with HIV+ by life style administration.

The objective of selecting adolescent student is to trap the right group in the community. As this mass represents age group 10-19 which is biologically and socially prone to unprotected sex due to the modern form of life style, so the basic objective of the study is to make them aware and spread the message through them. In this study +2 Sc. Students of a residential science college were chosen for better convenience. The study was conducted in Utkal Bharti Science College, BBSR in which the students are mainly from Orissa and a few are from outside of the state.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### SUBJECT

For the study purpose +2 Science students were selected from a residential science college from Bhubaneswar city. The name of the college is Utkal Bharti Science College, Palasuni, BBSR. 100 students were taken from the batch of 2<sup>nd</sup> yr +2 Science. All these students were divided in to five groups. Grouping was done on the basis of simple random sampling. The sample represents the following characteristics:

1. The students represent different parts of the state of Orissa both from rural (37%) and urban (63%) areas and some students are from outside of the state. The purpose is to find out preoccupied awareness and impact of health education on HIV/AIDS awareness among these geographically varied groups.
2. The 10<sup>th</sup> medium of their education was also inquired in to and the purpose is to find out preoccupied awareness and impact of health education on awareness. The mediums were BSE (Orissa) (61%), CBSE, and ICSE (both 39%). The course content and pedagogy of these councils have different scopes and limitations on HIV/AIDS awareness.
3. The optional they have in their curriculum, i.e. IT/Biology was also inquired in to. The college was having two optional during the study period as a fourth optional. This was looked in to because the two optional subjects such as Information Technology and Biology has different scope and limitation with respect to HIV/AIDS awareness.
4. Gender based classification of the sample was also done to assess gender based preoccupied awareness and the impact of health education on awareness. As the transmission of HIV/AIDS is primarily via sexual mode and open discussion on these issues have different scope and limitation among male and female adolescent students. The sample constituted 59% male and 41% female participants.

### STUDY INSTRUMENT

The study is based on a "Questionnaire" devised on the idea of incorporating questions ranging from basic awareness on different media of HIV/AIDS transmission to some basic scientific questions such as CD4 cell etc. The Questionnaire consists of 10 questions.

## PROCEDURE

A date was finalized with the permission of the principal of the college for conducting the study. Consent of each student was taken before the study. As the study consists of five different health education methods, so the study was conducted in five different days as per the convenience of the study participants. The entire class was divided into five groups on the basis of simple random sampling. Each of these five groups enjoyed different types of health education. On the first day of the study before imparting different health education methods to their respective groups a base line data was collected to know the preoccupied awareness among these students. In the second phase of the study different health education methods were imparted to the respective groups and again data were collected to assess their improvement. Different methods used in the study are as follows:

### 1. PLAIN LECTURE (BLACK BOARD AND CHALK)

20 students (identified for this purpose) previously tested on questionnaire method were taken and were given a plane lecture on HIV/AIDS for a period of 1Hr. A resource person, expert in the field of HIV/AIDS delivered the plane lecture. After the class the students were again tested.

### 2. LECTURE WITH AUDIO-VISUAL AID (MS POWER POINT)

20 students (identified for this purpose) previously tested on questionnaire method were selected and were given a lecture on MS power point on HIV/AIDS for a period of 1Hr. The same resource person delivered the lecture on audio visual aid. After the class the students were again tested.

### 3. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

20 students (identified for this purpose) previously tested on questionnaire method were selected and were made to sit on a FGD for a period of 20 minutes. After the discussion the students were again tested.

### 4. TEXT BOOK (TEXT BOOK OF ZOOLOGY AVAILABLE IN THEIR COLLEGE LIBRARY)

For this purpose 20 students (identified for this purpose) previously tested on questionnaire method were taken for the study. In this particular method students with biology as a subject were taken because biology students will find it interesting, as it is a part of their curriculum, which is not the same in case of Information Technology students. After 3 days the students were tested.

### 5. RADIO PLAY (AN INTERVIEW WITH A DOCTOR)

An interview was recorded in a tape recorder in the same format as in professional private radio channels like FM and was broadcasted as if a radio programme and 20 students (identified for this purpose) previously tested on questionnaire method were made to listen it carefully. The interview is a "question-answer type" where a doctor is answering various questions related HIV/AIDS asked by the interviewer. After the play the students were tested.

## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this study five different methods of health education were taken to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS awareness among adolescent students. Among different educational methods adopted in the study the most effective method was FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION. Next to FGD other methods are plain lecture, lecture with audio-visual aid, radio play and textbook in a descending order. In this study a pretest and a posttest was conducted to assess the impact of various methods of health education on HIV/AIDS awareness among adolescent students. The questionnaire consists of ten questions. Each right answer was awarded by one mark. The mean improvement was calculated by subtracting total pretest marks from the total posttest marks of each student. The same method was applied to find the mean improvement among various groups such as Male/Female, Rural/Urban and English medium/Oriya medium students.

In this study the most effective method of health education is FGD, and the reason might be familiarity of students among each other. The group discussion was among the students of the same class and all the classmates are familiar to each other, they can understand each other and can express their views in a way of their own comfortability. They may feel comfortable to discuss all related issues, which they may not feel with other resource person (as the disease is related to many kind of social issues mainly sex). The second important point might be participative commitment of each candidate to take part in the FGD and to get appraisal and recommendation among the peers and others.

FIG-1: BAR DIAGRAM SHOWING SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

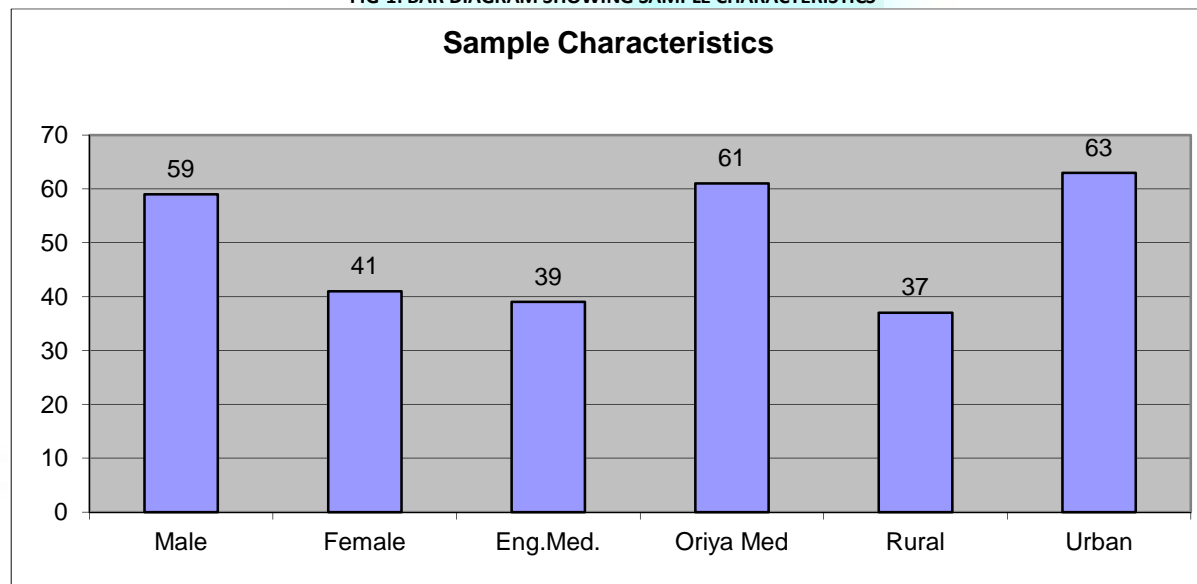
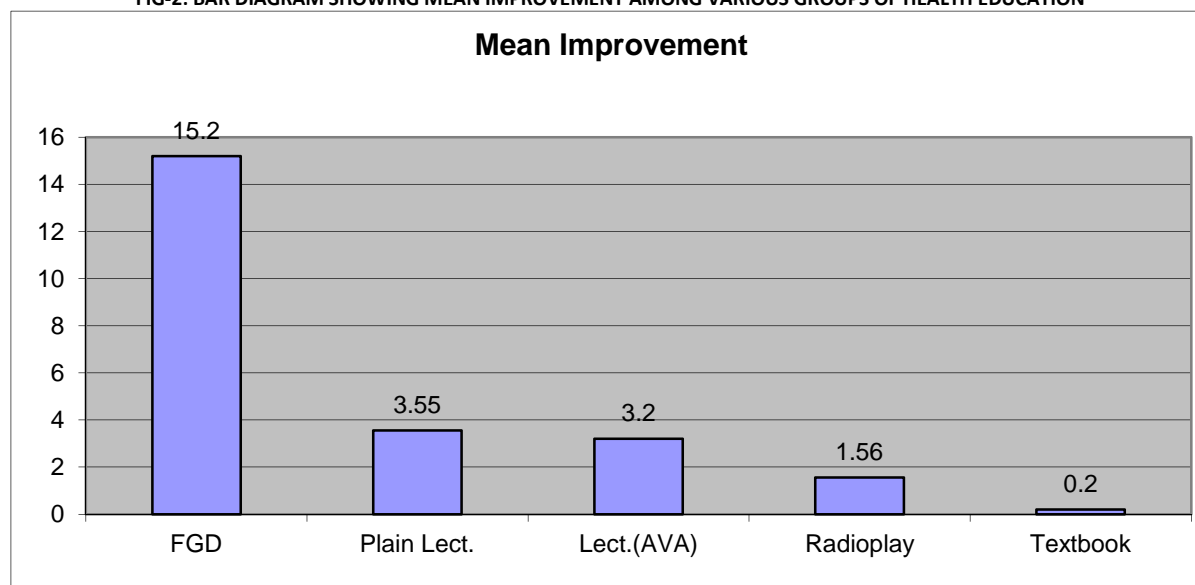




FIG-2: BAR DIAGRAM SHOWING MEAN IMPROVEMENT AMONG VARIOUS GROUPS OF HEALTH EDUCATION



The awareness of male students after being imparted by health education was more than that of female students. The reason might be shyness of the girls to discuss issues related to human sexuality. Again discussion on sexual health, sex education and other related issues among the peers are limited in certain parts due to socio cultural hindrances.

Secondly a comparison is made in between English medium students and regional medium (Oriya) (as per their 10<sup>th</sup> medium). It is found that the English medium students are more aware than the regional medium students. The English medium syllabus at 10<sup>th</sup> standard covers certain subjects of human biology and allied issues and is not the same with the regional medium students.

A similar comparison is made between rural students and urban students and the urban students are found to be more aware than their rural counterparts. Probably the comparative exposure of urban students to external world is more than their rural counterpart.

## CONCLUSION

Among different educational methods adopted in the study the most effective method was focus group discussion. Next to FGD the other methods are plain lecture, lecture with audio-visual aid, radio play and textbook in a descending order.

## RECOMMENDATION

This study was conducted in a residential college consisting of junior science students studying +2 Science. This is a study among intellectual mass, which cannot be applied to all community or generalized. Focus group discussion was found to be the most effective method of health education in this study, which carries limited value for other masses.

Similar studies can be conducted among different communities to find out the most effective method of health education. As the characteristic of every community is different from the next one so the method of health education is also expected to be a different one. HIV/AIDS has given many nightmares to mankind since it came to us and various attempts to find out preventive measures would always be a welcome step as- "prevention is better than cure."

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