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## HIV/AIDS AWARENESS AMONG STUDENTS OF TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL AREA OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

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### Abstract

*HIV/AIDS has rapidly established throughout the worlds over the past three decades and has emerged as the important public health problem. Adolescents are at greater risk of acquiring infection because of changing behaviour pattern. More than one third of reported cases of HIV/AIDS in India are among adolescent age. The purpose of the study was to assess the awareness regarding HIV/AIDS of senior secondary school students of tribal and non-tribal area of Himachal Pradesh. In this study 200 student both girls and boys (100 tribal area students and 100 non-tribal area students) from Chamba & Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh selected as sample. The HIV/AIDS awareness tool developed by Kumar (2016) was used to collect the data. The t-test statistical technique was used in this study to analyse the data. The results showed that there is significant difference awareness regarding HIV/AIDS among senior secondary school students of Tribal and Non-Tribal area of Himachal Pradesh.*

**Keywords:** Awareness, Secondary school, Tribal and non-tribal area.

### INTRODUCTION

India has the third largest HIV epidemic in the world. In 2015, HIV prevalence in India was an estimated 0.26%. This figure is small compared to most other middle-income countries but because of India's huge population (1.2 billion) this equates to 2.1 million people living with HIV. In the same year, an estimated 68,000 people died from AIDS-related illnesses. Overall, India's HIV epidemic is slowing down, with a 32% decline in new HIV infections (86,000 in 2015), and a 54% decline in AIDS-related deaths between 2007 and 2015. The HIV epidemic in India is driven by heterosexual sex, which accounted for 87% of new infections in 2015. However, the epidemic is concentrated among key affected populations such as sex workers. The vulnerabilities that drive the epidemic are different in different parts of the country. The five states with the highest HIV prevalence (Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka) are in the south or east of the country. Some states in the north and northeast of the country have also reported rising HIV prevalence (NACO - 2015). A modern world is in the threatening grip of epidemic breakdowns and human immunodeficiency virus tops in the list. It poses serious challenges to mankind on a global scale. The acquired immune deficiency (AIDS) caused by human immune deficiency virus (HIV) has been a significant public health problem and remain the most serious infectious disease challenge. HIV continues to be a major global public health issue having climbed more than 39 million lives so far. It has become the serious problem amongst the people in India with utmost spared rate and of them adolescents is the highest risk group contracting HIV/AIDS. It has been reported that risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS due to lack of awareness, sex education and education on prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Thus in view of the rapid progressive epidemic of HIV/AIDS, it is imperative to convergent the focus on school health including awareness programme regarding HIV/AIDS. Secondary school students are in the adolescents' age which is the time they began to be interested in sexual relationships. The youth are at a stage when they may want to experiment with sex without giving much consideration to the implication of their present behaviour. School children of today are exposed to the risk of being victims of HIV/AIDS which was quite unknown to their predecessors of few

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decades ago. The budding age of adolescent and youth open the gate of adulthood through which the curiosity and the emerging sexual urge start entering into their life. If they are not guided properly at this stage the future may become a very big question mark in terms of sexual behaviour and sexual relationship. It is mostly said that prevention is better than cure. But as well as HIV/AIDS is concerned, there is a possibility for prevention but not for cure. So what is more disturbing is that the most infected and affected victims of HIV/AIDS are the youths. Programme manager and policy maker have often recommended that school can act as the centre point for disseminating information and education on HIV/AIDS. Hence, school education has been described as a “social vaccine” and it can serve as a powerful preventive tool.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Review of related literature has been done by the investigator as under. Khan (2008) in his study observed that 90% students knew that it is sexually transmitted and 88% students knew about the spread of HIV by the use of contaminated needles. He concluded that non- medical students lacked awareness about the disease. Kumar and Kumar (2011) found that female tribal school going adolescents are more aware than male adolescents with respect to government provisions/facilities for bringing HIV/AIDS awareness. But there is no significant gender-wise difference in overall HIV/AIDS awareness among tribal school going adolescents. Both male and female adolescents have moderate HIV/AIDS awareness level and possess more or less the same knowledge and information regarding HIV and AIDS. Sharma et. al. (2013) found that all the students heard about HIV/AIDS whereas only (31%) students are knew the difference between HIV/AIDS. Approximately one third of the students had knowledge about the entire risk group for the disease. Lower percentages (46%) of students were aware of sexually transmitted infections whereas greater proportion (64%) students of the subject knew about ICTCs. More than half (56%) students believed that HIV infected people should be shown a friendly attitude. Kumar Senthil, Rao Viswanatha, Naveen, Vaishnavi N and Prema Sembulingam (2015) observed that basic knowledge about HIV was better with 54.83% of correct answers. But regarding the routes of transmission of HIV, correct answers were only 41.26% whereas 44.58% of wrong answers and 14.16% of “don’t know” answers were seen. The knowledge on mode of transmission (62.36%) and prevention and treatment (53.55%) was fairly good but the knowledge on identification of HIV infected person was poor with only 39.63% of correct answers. Jain and Mittal (2015) revealed that the selected boys and girls were having awareness and knowledge about HIV/AIDS regarding general issues, mode of transmission, preventive measures and source of knowledge. Both boys and girls were having positive attitude towards infected person. Shinde et. al. (2016) he observed that awareness regarding mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS was found expressed as unprotected sex by 85.94% students. Awareness regarding prevention of HIV/AIDS 70.70% students believes condom as a best means of protections against HIV followed by safe blood 43.75% students and disposal syringes 40.23% students. Nwatu et. al. (2017) revealed that there were 183 despondence with a mean age of 15-13 years all female. There was a high level of awareness of HIV (97.8%) students and STIs (94.5%) students while 74.3% students had correct knowledge of modes of transmission, 60.7% students incorrectly identify causal contact as modes of transmission of HIV. Only 59% students correctly identify all the HIV prevention method tested, while 74.9% students practiced all modes of prevention.

## RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

HIV/AIDS is best viewed as a major epidemic which poses serious challenges to mankind on a global scale. At present the only way to restrain from the epidemic is the prevention. The epidemic can only be wiped out through promotion of responsible behaviour and imparting education about the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS to the general population and specially the adolescents. In India under the guidelines of the National AIDS Control Programme (NACO), various media (traditional, print, electronic media and



outdoor media) are being used its Information Education and Communication (IEC) programme in disseminating various aspects related with HIV/AIDS to the people during the past one decades under. More than one third of reported cases of HIV/AIDS in India are among adolescent age. The present study is aimed to assess the awareness regarding HIV/AIDS of senior secondary school students of tribal and non-tribal area of Himachal Pradesh.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the awareness regarding HIV/AIDS among senior secondary school students of Tribal and Non-Tribal area.
2. To study the awareness regarding HIV/AIDS among senior secondary school students of Tribal area in terms of gender.
3. To study the awareness regarding HIV/AIDS of senior secondary school students of Non-Tribal area in terms of gender.

**HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

1. There is no significant difference in the awareness regarding HIV/AIDS among senior secondary school students of Tribal and Non-Tribal area.
2. There is no significant difference in the awareness regarding HIV/AIDS among senior secondary school students of Tribal area in terms of gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the awareness regarding HIV/AIDS of senior secondary school students of Non-Tribal area in terms of gender.

**METHODOLOGY**

In the present study survey method under the descriptive method of research was used in present study. All the senior secondary school students of Chamba and Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh constituted the population of the study. It included the students (boys and girls) studying in all government and private schools of the said districts. In the present study the investigator used random sampling technique for selecting the 200 senior secondary school students (100- students of tribal area and 100 - students of non-tribal) from Kangra and Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh as a sample. Keeping in view the nature of the present study the investigator used the tool, “HIV/AIDS Awareness Test”, developed and standardized by Kumar (2016). The reliability of the tool is 0.84. To collect the related data, investigator personally visited the schools for data collection from the students. The researcher personally administered the HIV/AIDS awareness test to each individual and collected the required information about the present study. The information was tabulated in a systematic manner to arrive at certain conclusions for the study. Since the data from the HIV/AIDS Awareness test was available in the form of scores, so as to find out the significance of difference between the various groups ‘t’-test was applied.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

The analysis of data is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of HIV/AIDS Awareness among Tribal vs. Non-Tribal Students, Tribal Boys vs. Tribal Girls and Non-Tribal Boys vs. Non-Tribal Girls

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-test
Area of School	Tribal	100	35.69	4.60	198	3.359
	Non-Tribal	100	37.89	4.66		



Tribal Area School	Boys	50	36.77	4.79	98	2.428
	Girls	50	34.6	4.12		
Non-Tribal Area School	Boys	50	39.37	4.34	98	3.500
	Girls	50	36.3	4.43		

Analysis was done to study of the influence of various demographic variables such as gender, and area of schools Tribal and Non-Tribal on awareness regarding HIV/AIDS among senior secondary school students. Since the calculated values from area of school Tribal and Non-Tribal ('t' - 3.359) which is greater than table value ('t' - 2.60) with the significance level of 0.01 with df 198. This means that senior secondary school students of Tribal and Non-Tribal area differed significantly regarding HIV/AIDS awareness. The mean score shows that student of non-tribal area are more aware about HIV/AIDS than students studying in tribal area schools. Table 1 shows that the calculated value for the students of tribal area school i.e. Boys and Girls ( 't' - 2.428) which is less than table value, 't' - 2.63 at significance level 0.01 with df 98. This means that senior secondary school students of tribal area do not differed significantly regarding HIV/AIDS awareness. The mean score shows that boys and girls of tribal area school are almost equally aware about HIV/AIDS and related issues. Table 1 further revealed that the calculated t-value for the students of non-tribal area school i.e. Boys and Girls (3.500) which is greater than table value 2.63 at the significance level of 0.01 with df 98. This means that senior secondary school students of non-tribal area differed significantly regarding HIV/AIDS awareness. The mean score shows that boys of non- tribal area school are more aware about HIV/AIDS than girls studying in these schools.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The findings of present investigation are as under:

- Senior secondary school students of Tribal and Non-Tribal area differed significantly regarding HIV/AIDS awareness. The students of non-tribal area are more aware about HIV/AIDS than students studying in tribal area schools.
- Senior secondary school students of tribal area do not differed significantly regarding HIV/AIDS awareness. The boys and girls of tribal area school are almost equally aware about HIV/AIDS and related issues.
- Senior secondary school students of non-tribal area differed significantly regarding HIV/AIDS awareness. The boys of non- tribal area school are more aware about HIV/AIDS than girls studying in these schools.

**EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

The educational implications related to present results showed that the efforts should be made to build on the existing avenues of awareness, by expanding the scope, ensuring that apart from the electronic and print media, government and non-governmental agencies, there should be a community based service, where every community has a HIV/AIDS clinic, with the sole responsibility of educating the community on HIV/AIDS pandemic, with this, individuals in every community would be reached. There should be home, school and NGO etc, where every individual in the community and school irrespective of age will be well educated on the causes, mode of transmission and effects of HIV/AIDS pandemic etc. More efforts should be



made by government and non-governmental agencies to reach at risk individuals who may not be in schools, and provide them with the necessary HIV/AIDS education so as to reduce the spread of the scourge.

## CONCLUSION

The study has brought into light some of the important issues about HIV/AIDS Awareness among Students of Tribal and Non-Tribal Area of Himachal Pradesh. The action strategies needed for making them awareness toward HIV/AIDS on an urgent basis. Because HIV infection is a dynamic process and could change as a function of time, more and more similar studies targeted at general public particularly in tribal and non-tribal areas are needed at regular intervals to test the results of the preventive measures & efficacy of the existing policies. This study focused on future citizens of the country. Including HIV/AIDS related educational material in the curriculum for school students may increase their awareness about HIV/AIDS and promote a positive attitude towards HIV/AIDS care and prevention. Relevant community training and health promotion campaigns can drive out misconceptions about HIV/AIDS and thereby reduce phobias of healthcare specialists as well as general population and HIV/AIDS patients. To conclude, this study point out that educational endeavour could be broadened to increase awareness on the widespread knowledge related to HIV/AIDS among school students.

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