

CASE STUDY ON COVID-19: CARE & SUPPORT SERVICES

Background

Covid-19 pandemic posed a serious threat to the survival of the human population across the world. The havoc caused irrevocable destruction of human life and happiness. Such public health disaster occurs once in a century. In the last century, span flue caused such a havoc on a higher scale causing human losses. Our Kalaburagi city reported the first case of Covid-19 death in India. Subsequently, strict protocols framed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare being implemented across the country.

Challenges to social work practice

Social Work Practice necessitates for the students to develop competencies and skills to perform and show the output-outcome of the fieldwork practice.

1. Social Work is a practice-based profession. Direct practice was hindered by the Covid-19 Protocols. Movement and physical interactions were curtailed and restricted.
2. The students require rigorous training as per the curriculum of the MSW Course. Normally, trainings for a period of 3 weeks are conducted in the Department. Due to shutdown, the university went on virtual mode of education.
3. Due to social isolation, quarantine and shutdown limited movement allowed, the fieldwork on the conventional mode was a challenge.
4. Non-government Organizations (NGOs) and Government agencies opened internships and volunteerism opportunities for the students to extend their services in different roles.

Innovation in fieldwork

Appropriate to the time, the Department of Social Work designed the innovative ways of student placement for the students. Students were motivated to prepare to take-up internship and volunteerism opportunities to work in and around their native places. The students were placed in different agencies to extend the care and support services to the victims of the Covid-19.

Responsive interventions in the communities

The students worked in different roles with varied responsibilities, such as –

1. Care provider to the Covid patients,
2. Fundraiser to mobilize funds for CM Relies Fund,
3. Online Counsellor to extend psycho-social support services to the victims and affected clients of Covid,
4. Online blood mobilizer to support the blood to the Covid victims,
5. Educator role to provide care and support,
6. Case worker to conduct case studies of the health professionals,
7. Resource mobilizer to support the education materials for the children,
8. Advertiser to mobilize donors and volunteers to work during Covid period,
9. Document writer, to prepare reports of the programmes conducted during the Covid,
10. Medical assistant to assist the ASHA workers and health workers in palliative care of the Covid patients,
11. Community cook to work in community kitchens to support in the preparation, packing and distribution of the food packets,
12. Organizer to conduct blood mobilization campaigns,
13. Care taker to liaison with the government health officials, and
14. Youth volunteer to provide food support services to the needy persons and families.

Impact: The students could help and support hundreds of individuals and families during the Covid period. Social Work students as volunteers rightly filled the gap to support the victims and affected individuals and families.

Drug abuse prevention programs

Background: One of the most widely discussed public health problems in the world is the health impact of tobacco use, which kills more than 6 million people globally every year (Jayakrishnan et al, 2016). The World Health Organization attributes over four million deaths a year to tobacco. This figure is expected to rise to 10 million deaths a year by 2030, with 70% of these deaths occurring in developing countries (Gupta, Mishra, Nagarajappa, Kumar, & Lalani, 2019). In India, tobacco kills 8–10 lakhs people each year and many of these deaths occur in people who are very young. The World Health Organization predicts that tobacco deaths in India may exceed 1.5 million annually by 2020. Tobacco smoke contains 4000 harmful or poisonous chemical like nicotine, tar, carbon monoxide and many others. There is evidence that the earlier the person begins to smoke, the greater is the risk of life threatening diseases such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema, cardiovascular diseases and lung cancer (Sinha & Bhardwaj, 2016).

Similar to tobacco, alcohol consumption has profound implications on human life. Drug abuse is a complex phenomenon. There are several macro and micro issues that determine the use of psychoactive substances in the community. Stress relief, curiosity, recreations, lack of social support are some of the reasons. National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bengaluru has conducted a National Mental Health Survey with support of Government of India which has studied the prevalence of Substance use disorders in India. The overall prevalence for any substance use disorder was 22.4% with tobacco use disorders contributing to the maximum (20.9%). The prevalence of alcohol use disorders was 4.6% and for other drugs it was 0.6% (National Mental Health Survey of India, 2016).

Capacity building of students: Understanding the consequences of drug abuse and necessity of generating awareness & conducting sensitization programs for drug abuse prevention, Department of Social Work, Central University of Karnataka, Kalaburagi in collaboration with National Institute for Social Defense, New Delhi organized capacity building training programmes for Master of Social Work (MSW) students and M.Phil in Psychiatric Social Work scholars of Central University of Karnataka, NSS Volunteers of Central University of Karnataka.

Community sensitization: Further these trained students have organized awareness generation and sensitization programmes for Drug Abuse Prevention in Pre University Colleges, Degree Colleges, B.Ed. College and surrounding villages. In Kadaganchi, Alloor, Basavantawadi, Pattan, Suntanoor, Gola B, Bhusnoor, Bosaga, Naroona, and Nimbarga villages awareness programs were conducted to generate awareness among the students to prevent their indulgence in substance abuse.

Sensitization strategy: The trained volunteers have conducted rallies, poster exhibition, street plays, Dramas, Songs, Sessions for generating awareness and for sensitization about substance abuse, mental health and physical health. The trainees could sensitize youth with their dedicated efforts in awareness generation and sensitization programs.

Program Impact: The drug abuse prevention programs created catalyst agents who conducted programmes in villages, which account more than 5000 beneficiaries followed by 400 students, teaching and non-teaching staff of Central University of Karnataka.

CASE STUDY ON KALIKA KENDRAS

Academic mandate of the universities

Community engagement integrated as an academic responsibility for the higher education institutions to collaborate with the neighboring villages of the Central University of Karnataka (CUK) to apply multi-disciplinary knowledge systems to catalyze the village development.

Background

Kalaburagi district is one of the backward regions of Karnataka state in terms of human development, education, agriculture, and livelihood and development process as a whole. There have been collaborative efforts between the government schools and the civil society organizations and Non-government Organizations (NGOs) to build the capacities of the teachers and support the required infrastructure. However, the result in terms of improving the academic performance of the rural children has shown meekly positive, but largely negative.

Social work intervention

Department of Social Work of CUK, as part of the Master of Social Work (MSW) course, expected to demystify the knowledge domain, develop the skills of the students, and to exhibit practice domain require undertaking the rural interventions to empower and catalyze the process of community development of the villages. Need assessment, community mobilization, community engagement, community participation, stakeholder approach, bridging the resources and needs in the villages are the professional practices that indicate a strong vision to translate the academic provisions into community development through setting a right learning context for the students.

Kalika Kendras (remedial centers) in villages

Need assessment: Visits were made to the villages around the Central University of Karnataka along with the functionaries of Gram Vikas, an NGO working to support the education of the rural children. Visits were made to the government schools of Kadaganchi, Suntanur, Sawalagi, Tellur, Gola and Gunjbalad villages, to understand the gaps, and needed intervention to achieve minimum educational level and bring desired change. Open interaction held with the school teachers to understand the level of education of the village children.

Observations: It was reported that the children in the primary school and high school, hail from a poor socio-economic background. The children lack education-support after the school hours. Hence, lag behind in the learning due to lack of facilitating and supporting system in the village. The children who belong to a better socio-economic condition afford private coaching and tuition. So, they perform better. However, the economically deprived children tend to deprive from minimum quality education.

Remedial Coaching through Kalika Kendras

A teacher was recruited on an honorarium basis to support the children of different classes to achieve minimum educational status. An open space in the village was earmarked to conduct the kalika kendras. The children were given remedial coaching, after the school hours. Kalika Kendras opened in Kadaganchi, Suntanur, Sawalagi, Tellur, Gola and Gunjbalad villages. Teachers with commitment were identified to teach the children to achieve minimum learning.

Intervention impact

In each Kalika Kendra, around 30 children were allowed to attend the remedial coaching. The children were given good socialization through adopting traditional practices of Gurukulas. Overall, 160 village children attended the kalika kendras to achieve minimum learning for their standard.

CASE STUDY ON LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENT CHILDREN IN COMMUNITIES

Background: Adolescent is a critical transition period of human development in the life span of every individual. The children in the age range of 13 to 19 show typical problems, needs, challenges corresponding to their age and situations. The right development socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively take place during this period. Development should happen in the right way and right direction. The adulthood depends on the foundation of the adolescent development. The adolescents require to prepare for the emerging roles and responsibilities in family, school and community. They desperately need coping and adjustment skills and behaviours to make right negotiation with the changing and critical situations of life.

Life Skills Intervention: Life Skills are “The abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of Everyday life” (WHO, 1993). World Health Organization (WHO) defined and designed Life Skills for the adolescents to bring desirable change in the behaviours of the adolescents through providing an opportunity of experiential learning. Life skills activities are standard intervention to extend psycho-social support to the adolescent children of the world across the countries. Social Work being a practice-based profession intend to intervene at a critical period to extend the needy support to the individuals and groups in the community setting to bring **Behaviour Change**.

Human capital development of MSW Students

Master of Social Work (MSW) students intervene as part of their fieldwork with different age group individuals to bring desired change in them. Human capital development of the MSW students in terms of developing knowledge and skills is a prerequisite to empower the needy individuals.

1. Rigorous 10-days Life Skills Training, an In-house training program, is conducted every year to develop the competencies of the students to conduct life skills activities with the adolescents.
2. The Life skills training is offline usually. However, during the Covid period, the training was Virtual. VR technologies utilized to conduct the Online Life skills training.
3. A day-long deep learning and experiential learning equip the students to independently work with the adolescent population.
4. Life skills are protective shield for the adolescents.

Life Skills development of adolescents

Achieving desired change among the adolescents has been a comprehensive and impact-making work. Experiential and group-based learning provides an opportunity for the adolescents to reflect

on their experiential learning to exert influence on their behaviour in the appropriate direction of development.

Behaviour Change Impact:

Every year, life skills of the approximately 400 adolescents were developed in both urban and rural communities -

1. Critical thinking,
2. Problem solving,
3. Decision making,
4. Empathy skill,
5. Critical thinking,
6. Coping with emotion,
7. Interpersonal relationship,
8. Coping with stress,
9. Creative thinking, and
10. Self-awareness.

Skill development experiential learning not only shown desirable behaviour change, but also produced by-product results which made a deep impact on the lives of the adolescents. School drop-out reduced; dealing and negotiating with the life situations drastically improved.