

ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN AIDS PREVENTION

Author

Neeti Malhotra

Supervisor

Dr. Anjali Gandhi

Department of Social Work

Jamia Millia Islamia

Findings of the Study

In the Knowledge Attitude and Practice (KAP) study conducted on college students, there were 53.3% males and 46.7% females in the sample. As many as 96.4% of respondents had more than two media available in their house. Regarding the source of HIV/AIDS message, TV scored the highest with 41% of the respondents citing TV as their source of receiving a message on HIV/AIDS. A negligible 0.5% of the respondents each said that parents and teachers had been their source of HIV/AIDS message. AIDS was believed to be a cause of concern in India by almost 88% of the respondents but very few respondents (38%) felt that they were personally at any risk of contracting AIDS. While over 77% could give the full form of AIDS, only 51% knew what STDs stood for. Knowledge about the linkage between STDs and AIDS was also low.

The majority of students who had a sexual experience were in the age group of 20–29 years.. Almost 1 in 5 students is sexually active out of which 41% did not use a condom. Students both male and female were unequivocal in demanding correct and good education on sex. They were critical of parents and teachers for making sex a taboo subject. With regards to their attitudes, students tended to blame people with HIV/AIDS, attached a lot of importance to the route of transmission of HIV, and were generally fearful of remaining in contact with a friend who had HIV/AIDS. Thus despite fairly good knowledge, the attitudes were not positive.

Regarding findings on NGOs, the study found that of the 26 NGOs, only 3 were working entirely in HIV/AIDS while the remaining 23 were working in the field of AIDS and other fields such as reproductive health, family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, literacy, drug deaddiction and rehabilitation etc. A huge majority of the staff of the NGOs were voluntary social workers compared to professional social workers (199 and 34 respectively) While 10 NGOs were working with a general audience, the remaining 16 were working with diverse audience groups. Only 6 NGOs used scientific methods and tools such as KAP surveys or interviews to learn about the knowledge, attitudes or needs of the target audience. Messages were pretested by only 6 NGOs and none of the NGOs used any social, behaviour or communication theory to base their programs on.

Amongst the ninety **IEC materials** reviewed for the study, a majority (65) were posters, out which a bulk (48) were handmade. Very few innovative material was found. 70 of these materials were meant for a general audience and only 14 were targeting the youth. According to the scale developed for the materials: 27 were effective, 40 moderately effective and 21 were ineffective.

All the five **people living with HIV/AIDS** who could be interviewed complained of discrimination and apathy particularly from medical staff. They criticised the work of

NGOs – felt that there was too much preoccupation with the sexual means of transmission of HIV in the messages as well as work of NGOs and blamed it for the stigma attached to AIDS.