
EXPLORING SCOPE OF MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE IN BRINGING POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL CHANGES IN VULNERABLE YOUTH OF DELHI

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Abstract: Development of any nation needs multipronged strategies to curb its inherent social issues and many developed nations have successfully done it. Similarly developing nation like India has also put a lot of effective measures curbing the cause and effects of various existing social problems persistent in the country. Drug addiction is one of the most predominant social problems that curbing the potential of reproductive youth, the drivers of development of India and other developing countries. Around 20 million children are becoming addicts yearly in India. Society for Promotion of Youth and Masses (SPYM) runs a 90-day rehabilitation program of the Juvenile Justice Board for drug addict youth in conflict with law. The present study was undertaken to get an in-depth understanding of the different aspects of this program in rehabilitation of the drug addict youth and what is its impact on their lives. The study method included Most Significant Change Story technique (MSC) conducted with the youth participants and various stakeholders. A total of 122 stories collected and were content analyzed.

Keywords: Participatory, Behavior Change, Rehabilitation, Most Significant Change.

Introduction: Among all countries in the world, India has highest proportion of younger age groups. India is home to approximately 60 million population which is younger than 25 years of age. Youth serve as building blocks for a nation. Development of any nation needs multipronged strategies to strengthen their youth and curb its inherent social issues. Similarly, India has also put a lot of effective measures. Drug addiction is one of the most predominant social problems that curbing the potential of reproductive youth, the drivers of development of India and other developing countries. Around 20 million children are becoming addicts yearly in India.

The incidence of drug abuse among children and adolescents is increasingly higher than the general population. Twenty million children a year and nearly 55,000 children become tobacco addicts daily in India (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2012). At the national level, drug addiction and abuse is intrinsically linked with racketeering, violence, terrorism, illegal money transfers, conspiracy and corruption. Easy availability of these substances adds to the complexity of this problem.

There are several factors that lead Indian youth today towards the trap of drugs. Sharma (1986) explained that it is not the only fact that drugs are taken by youth to get pleasure in fact, there are some other causes which lead to large scale drug abuse world over. Some of these may be mentioned as curiosity, influence of peer groups, desire to overcome fatigue, depression, lack of affection, easy availability, doctor's prescription, lack of medical supervision and family support, lack of follow-up program. (Sharma, 1986).

Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique is a participatory, monitoring and evaluating tool designed by Rick Davies in 1996. It is a qualitative technique that captures the nuances and multi-directional aspects of change that can't be captured through quantitative process. Since it brings out data in the form of stories written by people, it provides detailed insights not only about the significant change but also the various process factors which facilitate the change. Another distinguishing feature of this method is the validation of facts at each level by the participants itself.

MSC technique involves the collection of stories at different levels of the intervention (for example program staff, vulnerable youth and interns) and collectively deciding on the most significant change stories based on the selected themes (called domains). The domains reflect broad categories, such as change in the confidence and literacy level, a significant change in their life skills as well as lessons learned. These stories generated by people provide a rich-text of qualitative data containing the socio-cultural background, their perceptions about an issue and their experiences as a response to the change taking place. The next part of the technique is the story selection which is an important method for measuring the most valued change by the community. For selection of story with the most significant change, participants engage in discussion to select those stories which are considered to be the most illustrative of significant change (Davis & Dart, 2005).

Methodology: The study uses the cross-sectional approach to understand the effects on youth currently enrolled as well as alumnae of the rehabilitation programme. The locale was Society for Promotion of Youth and Masses (S.P.Y.M) rehabilitation center located at Adharshila Observation Home, SewaKutir Complex GTB Nagar Delhi. To seek multi-stakeholder perspectives, non-probability purposive sampling technique was used. For the study, the sample was compromised of youth, program staff and volunteers who interned in the program. A total of 122 stories were collected from different groups followed by “story enrichment process”. It included a second round of one-to-one discussion with the story narrator to clarify points mentioned in the story to understand the process of change in detailed and better manner.

Data Analysis: The analysis was done at two different levels. These were Meta-Analysis and Content Analysis. Meta-analysis is a quantitative analysis of the stories which provides insights about the system of collection of stories, the issues addressed in the stories both positive as well as negative and the persons recognized in the stories. It helps in analyzing the overall picture of the stories. While the Content Analysis of the stories analyses and provides a deeper understanding about the change factors in terms of context factors, process factors and impact factors.

Content Analysis was done by developing a framework to interpret various aspects told in the stories. Since these stories represent qualitative data with a high amount of subjectivity, each of the stories provided a useful inside and required to be interpreted in a logical manner. The content of the stories was analyzed to bring out the context of change, the process of change and the impact of change. These factors were identified to understand the dimensions of PKM project and change in the lives of youth.

Findings: The MSC stories were analyzed to understand the key aspects about the functioning of the project and its subsequent influence on the lives of vulnerable youth. Stories analysis revealed a range of factors that provided insights about the larger context about its functioning as well as the effects perceived because of the programme activities. The analysis was done at two different levels. These were Meta-Analysis and Content Analysis.

Meta-Analysis: Meta-analysis is a quantitative analysis of the stories which provides insights about the system of collection of stories, the issues addressed in the stories both positive as well as negative and the persons recognized in the stories. The findings of meta-analysis showed that the total number 122 of stories collected, almost half of the stories were collected from the boys admitted in the center and another half were collected from the program staff members. Maximum number of stories were collected in the months of October, November and December, 2014. Most of the stories were raising aspects about the program interventions like literacy classes followed by library facility and others. Various characters were mentioned in the stories, as most of them mentioned different program staff members in which maximum number were depicting positive aspect while some stories were also raising negative aspects of staff members. While about half of the total number of stories were also mentioned peers within the center followed by family and friends as key characters of the story.

Content Analysis: Content analysis of stories provides a deeper understanding about the nature of change boys experienced due to their participation in PKM project as well as the aspects about the

project contributing to these changes. These factors were broadly classified as: Contextual factors, Process factors and Impact factors.

The **Contextual Factors** emerged the stories described various issues about the background profile of the boys got admitted in the center. It was observed that these boys belonged to low income families and trapped into the web of crime due to their huge money expenses to sustain their drug habits. Because of the bad influence of peer group and drugs they left their schools and those boys who studied a little again relapse into illiteracy as a result of ill-effects of drugs. When they were abusing drugs or in the influence of it, they lost their consciousness and behave badly by being abusive, physically violent and eve-teased the female members of the society. They got admitted into the center because they caught by the police because of their various anti-social activities. Clearly, the boys formed a very difficult group of marginalized youth because of both their circumstances and habits.

The **Process Factors** emerged from the stories analysis explained the process of change as perceived by the staff members and the boys these included the enabling factors which facilitated the vulnerable youth in adopting a change as well as any negative restricting factors which can impact the program and it's functioning. The analysis showed that all the three aspects, characteristics of innovation, key influencers as well as negative aspects of the program influence the process of change in a deep manner. The programme was able to satisfy all the characteristics of an innovation. As in terms of relative advantage, the nature of interventions was very different from the nature of other past interventions as they were flexible, participatory as well as need based. They also provide these boys important tangible skills to sustain the recovery. The PKM interventions were compatible enough with the needs and level of these boys in terms of content, activities, methodology, dignity and respect and lastly also provided inclusive environment. The interventions were not very complex in nature as all the stakeholders were able to understand the logic and value of each and every strategic intervention and able to identify relationship in various programs components. There was a scope of trialability in the interventions as the staff members were allowed to use any kind of experimentation for the result improvement. In terms of observability the programme was able to make changes visible and recognized by different stakeholders of the program.

In successful running of the project there was a great role of key influencers who acted as motivators, path guiders and supporters for the boys as well as staff members. Some of the negative aspects of the program were putting a bad impact on the functioning of the program as the staff members were working in a stress of performing with difficult youth group which was not easy as sometimes they also behaved badly with staff members. Along with all these hardships, the staff members were in a pressure from authorities to display positive results in the skills and behaviors of the boys. The environment and situation became even more difficult because of it sexual overturns. The volunteers as well as boys were sexually active due to which the female staff members were not feeling secured in the environment. To address all these hardships continuous work was done by the staff members to minimize the ill-effects of it on the program.

The **Impact Factors** gave an account of how habits, thinking patterns, skills and attitudes of different stakeholders changed after taking an active participation in the PKM project. The impact factors emerging from the stories showed that the staff members and the boys themselves were able to comprehend the relation between the PKM project and various JDC components as well as changes in the thinking patterns, skills, attitudes, behavior and in their lives as a whole.

Conclusion: The impact factors emerging from the stories have clearly shown that the staff members and the boys themselves were able to comprehend the relation between the programme and the changes in the thinking patterns, skills, attitudes, behavior and in their lives as a whole. This further builds up a firm ground for a discussion on the role of programme has been playing as a rehabilitation program for bringing change in the lives of those boys who are less than 18 years of age, drug addicts and are in-conflict with law. MSC technique is therefore has been proved as an effective tool to capture all the minute as well as significant changes in the attitudes, believes and behavior of the participants.

Youth especially drug using adolescents need a nourishing, supportive and protective environment during their treatment and rehabilitation so that they can come out of the 3-month period as empowered confident adolescents with life skills to face the world outside. If opportunities are offered in the positive environments planned, they will pick up the positive qualities that prepare them not only to resist peer pressure to avoid drug addiction, but also to grow into responsible adults.

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