

The Student Police Cadet Project in Kerala: A Transformative Model for Adolescence

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Abstract

The Student Police Cadet (SPC) Project is an innovative model of smart community-based proactive policing, designed by the Kerala Police in 2010. This study aims to understand how the SPC Project was implemented and the changes in values, skills and behaviour experienced by the cadets in the capital of Kerala. In this cross-sectional study, the data was collected from former student police cadets and Community Police Officers who facilitated the movement, by administering questionnaires and in-depth interviews. It was found that the objectives and programmes of the SPC Project successfully reached its targeted population. The study also identified various difficulties in implementing the project and put together suggestions to improve the efficiency of the SPC Project.

Keywords

student police cadet, community policing, youth, crime, security

Introduction

India is fortunate to have the demographic advantage of the highest number of youth in the world. Although Kerala is well placed in the human development index, in order to take advantage of this valuable asset, the State administration had to enhance the competencies of these citizens. As agents of socialisation, schools play a crucial role in the development of the emotional and social skills of an individual. Student life is the most decisive formative period in the life of a person that demands the acquisition of knowledge, character formation and all-round development. Students need to convert their class-room studies into practical life by integrating

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these studies with their personal learning experiences and be ready to make them part of the social context. The Student Police Cadet (SPC) Project is a massive experiment in this direction initiated by the Kerala Police.

The SPC Project is a school-based youth development initiative, implemented jointly by the Departments of Home and Education, and supported by the Departments of Transport, Forest, Excise and Local Self-Government. It is a project with the objective to train high school students to evolve as future leaders of a democratic society by inculcating in them respect for law, discipline, civic sense, empathy with vulnerable sections of society and resistance to social evils. It aims to enable the youth to explore and develop their innate capabilities, thereby empowering them to resist the growth of negative tendencies such as social intolerance, substance abuse, deviant behaviour, and anti-establishment violence. The SPC Project strengthens students' commitment towards their family, community, and the environment (Student Police Cadet Year Book, 2015).

Adolescence

Adolescence is typically defined as the period of growth beginning from 10-12 years of age and ending around 21-22. Researchers studying adolescent development believe that it is important to consider adolescence in terms of early and late periods. Early adolescence begins around 10-15 years of age and is characterised by important physical changes and cognitive and social changes. Early adolescence gives great importance to peer approval (Ashford et al., 2001: 357). Biologically, adolescence begins with the onset of puberty and this process defines sexual maturity. Piaget (1972) views adolescence as the final stage of cognitive development, the formal operational stage, where intelligence is demonstrated through the logical use of symbols related to abstract concepts. Social dimensions include families, groups, support systems and communities. Adolescents spend an increasing amount of time in the company of peer groups. Weakening family relationships, deteriorating moral standards, the substantial use of intoxicants, growing intolerance, criminal and deviant behaviour, lack of personal goals and low self-esteem are common amongst youngsters, along with other physical and mental problems. Entering into student policing was therefore proposed as a measure to streamline adolescent well-being as a critical source of social development. Social skill trainings can be effective

methods to address many peer related adolescence issues. Peer groups are usually organised according to cliques and crowds (Ashford et al., 2001: 410).

Youth-Indian Scenario

In 2010, India accounted for 17.8 per cent of the world population (GOI, 2017). The National Youth Policy of India (2014) defined 'youth' as persons in the age group of 15-29 years. The growth pattern in the youth segment differs substantially from that of the general population. According to *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision*, the population database of the United Nations Population Division, India has the world's highest number of 10 to 24-year-olds, with 242 million (cited in GOI, 2017: 2). Globally, the number of adolescents and young people are at an all-time high, but that number might not increase much in the coming decades if global fertility continues to decline. Worldwide, around 200,000 homicides occur amongst youth between the ages of 10–29 years each year, which is 43 per cent of the total homicides globally- (Youth Violence, 2016). Youth violence has a serious, often lifelong, impact on a person's physical, psychological and social functioning. Youth violence greatly increases the costs of health, welfare and criminal justice services, reduces productivity and decreases the value of property (Youth Violence, 2016). As per the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), a total of 41,385 juveniles were apprehended during 2015 out of which 40,468 were boys and 917 were girls. The percentage of girls to total juveniles was found to be decreasing from 2011 and reduced to 2.2 per cent in 2015 (National Crime Records Bureau, 2016). Singh (2013) observes that, since the dawn of independence, India has faced a multitude of internal security challenges to its nationhood. While giving a panoramic view of the internal security situation, he argues that every decade a major problem was added to the internal security from independence. The fifties saw the north-east going up in flames, the sixties the beginnings of the Naxalbari movement, the seventies turbulence in Assam, the eighties witnessed terrorist movements in Punjab, the nineties the beginning of insurgency in Kashmir and the current decade has been marked by the onslaught of international terrorism in the hinterland. Young adults are found to be vulnerable. Young people are vibrant, dynamic and energetic, and constitute the most valuable human resource that forms the foundation of the future development of any nation. They tend to explore and experiment

with sexual identity and practices and high-risk behaviours, resulting in a disproportionately increased risk of violence, injuries and reproductive tract infections, including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Many young people are forced by circumstances to become involved in a variety of risky behaviours (Arora et al., 2015).

Policy Initiatives for Youth in India

The youth has always been of vital concern of the Government of India. Various youth development programmes undertaken by the Government of India after Independence, such as the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) in 1972, the National Service Scheme (NSS) in 1969, the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) in 1993, the National Youth Corps (NYC) during 2010-11, the National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development (NPYAD) in 2008, the International Co-operation (IC) in 2005, Youth Hostel (YH) in 1985, Assistance to Organisation of Scouts and Guides in 1984, and the National Young Leaders Programme New Scheme during 2014-15 bear testimony to this fact (GOI, 2015). It was in the International Year of Youth (1985) that a separate Department of Youth Affairs and Sports was created by the Government of India. This Department took the initiative by formulating a National Youth Policy. A comprehensive National Youth Policy was first evolved and presented to both houses of Parliament in November-December 1988 and was adopted by the Government. Later, the National Youth Policy, 2014 (NYP-2014) was launched in February of that year, which proposed a holistic 'vision' for the youth of India, which is "to empower youth of the country to achieve their full potential, and through them enable India to find its rightful place in the community of nations" (GOI, 2014: 5).

Community Policing

The Government of Kerala launched the *Janamaithri Suraksha* Project, which was a community policing project started in March 2008 in 20 selected Police Stations. Kerala police is the first police department in South Asia to undertake community policing (About Kerala Police, 2018). The term community police means a method of policing by members of the police organisation, quite distinct from the traditional style, which seeks the cooperation of the community, understands the needs of the "community", gives priority to the security of the "community", and, taking into account

the resources available within the “community”, attempts to streamline the activities of police personnel at local police stations to address the special problems of each community to increase their efficiency and productivity (Kerala Police, 2017: 1).

For young children the policeman is a heroic figure. As they move into their teens many become enemies of the police. The roots of this transformation are mysterious, but they are genetic, psychological or sociological (Neiderhoffrt and Smith, 1974). In the campuses of the educational institutions there is an unwritten code which usually restricts police officers from entering and performing their duty. In many campuses police have no jurisdiction unless they are called in for a particular reason. Therefore interaction between police and the youth is irregular and it paves the way for troubles without understanding each other (Neiderhoffrt and Smith, 1974).

The Student Police Cadet (SPC) Project: An Overview

The SPC Project of the Kerala Police is an innovative model of smart community-based proactive policing and a more cost-effective strategy of crime prevention. It is a school-based youth development initiative that trains high school students to evolve as the future leaders of a democratic society by instilling within them respect for the law, discipline, civic sense, empathy for vulnerable sections of society and resistance to social evils. The project also enables the youth to explore and develop their innate capabilities, thereby empowering them to resist the growth of negative tendencies such as social intolerance, substance abuse, deviant behaviour, and anti-establishment violence. Equally, it strengthens their commitment to their family, the community, and the environment (The SPC Programme, 2017) Through a “Catch them Young” method, the SPC Project tries to identify anti-National ideologies in thoughts and actions and create responsible citizens. The project is also designed to tackle the modern issues faced by the youth such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria ISIS Recruitment, blue whale game and drug use. The National Police Congress held in Dehradun, India in 2011 recommended the SPC Project for all states of India. The programme has also been replicated in four Indian States (Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka and Rajasthan). The Government of Sri Lanka has invited a group of SPCs to Sri Lanka for their project implementation.

The SPC Project has its roots in *Janakeeyam* (Janamaithri Suraksha Project), a community-level initiative by the Kochi City police in 2006, where more than 400 high school students from 30 local schools interacted with police officers, engaging in wide-ranging discussions on community issues and visiting police stations. During these discussions, the students expressed a desire to have a permanent arrangement for ongoing communication with the police. Accordingly, a pilot Student-Police Project was launched on an experimental basis in a few selected schools. Afterwards, in Kozhikode in January 2010, a squad of specially trained high school students was entrusted with the responsibility of crowd management at the Kerala School Youth Festival, Asia's largest youth-focused cultural festival involving more than 10,000 participants. Following the successful execution of this task by the cadets, and in the light of the success stories from project-implemented schools, a detailed proposal for a state-wide school-based training programme was prepared and submitted to the Government of Kerala. On the basis of this report, the Government of Kerala issued an order, GO (P) 121/2010/Home on 29 May 2010, with the stated objective of moulding a generation of law-abiding, socially committed and service-oriented youth. A state-level Advisory Committee was constituted for the SPC Project (Vijayan, 2011).

As per the Student Police Cadet Year Book (2015), the SPC Project has the following specific objectives based on core objectives.

- To mould a generation of youth who willingly respect and abide by the law, practice civic sense, democratic behaviour and selfless service to society as the natural way of life.
- To facilitate the development of good health, physical and mental fitness, self-control and discipline in the youth, thereby enhancing their capacity for hard work and personal achievement.
- To enable the youth to work with police and other state enforcement authorities including Forest, Transport, and Excise in preventing crime, maintaining law and order, promoting road safety, improving internal security and disaster management.
- To develop social commitment among the youth and empower them against deviant behaviour in themselves and others, thereby preventing growth of social evils such as drug and alcohol abuse, intolerance, sabotage, separatism, and terrorism in society.
- To enable the youth to explore and develop their inner potential in achieving success, by inculcating in them leadership, teamwork skills,

innovative thinking and problem solving abilities.

- To increase knowledge and understanding of the effective use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) among the youth, preventing its negative influence and enabling them to benefit from the vast potential of ICT.
- To motivate the youth to develop a secular outlook, respect for other's fundamental rights and willingness to carry out their fundamental duties as enshrined in the Constitution of India by developing in them qualities of Patriotism, Open-mindedness, Large-heartedness, Inclusiveness, Capability and Effectiveness (POLICE) (Student Police Cadet Year Book 2015).

Background of the Study

There is a rapid increase in the crime rate in our Indian economy. These crimes are committed due to unpunished offenders. The problem of crime is an ongoing menace to society. From petty theft to robbery with violence, crime continues to be a headache to the government of the day (Kannappan and Ugarthi, 2018). The SPC Project has been described as a perfect model of community policing in order to prevent the anti-social and anti-national elements among the youth of Kerala. The SPC Project is a school-based capacity development initiative, which aims to complement the education system through strengthening the values, behaviour and attributes of the youth. The project has now been expanded to a total of 429 high schools across Kerala with a combined strength of nearly 37,000 cadets, 860 trained teachers and 1,500 police officials (SPC Year Book, 2015). Project administration is carried out by committees at the state, district and school levels. As the SPC Project is comparatively new, very few studies have been conducted. As per the State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) records, Thiruvananthapuram district had a higher number of crimes during 2015-2016 (Kerala State Crime Records Bureau, 2016). The Thiruvananthapuram district is also very unusual because it contains all the urban, rural, tribal and coastal geographic specifications. The SPC directorate, SPC secretariat and all other major SPC officers are situated in Thiruvananthapuram.

Methodology

The general objective of the study is an in-depth understanding of the SPC Project in the Thiruvananthapuram District. The study seeks to

understand the profile of ex-cadets of the SPC Project, various activities under the SPC Project, and assess the changes in values, skills and behaviour of ex-SPC cadets. The study also throws light onto the challenges experienced by ex-SPC cadets and Community Police Officers. The design of the study is descriptive and consists of all the SPC and Community Police Officers in the Thiruvananthapuram district. Cluster sampling was used as the area is wide and has geographical sub-divisions such as urban, rural, coastal and tribal. In cluster sampling, samples are taken by dividing the area into a number of smaller non-overlapping areas and then randomly selecting a number of these smaller areas called clusters. The area is divided into clusters using the details of police districts. As per the SPC Year Book (2015: 64-65), there are 54 SPC schools in Thiruvananthapuram district out of which 31 schools are in rural areas, 15 in urban, 5 in coastal and 3 schools in tribal areas. The data was collected by 120 SPC ex-cadets (60, 30, 20 and 10 from rural, urban, coastal and tribal respectively) which were randomly selected from clusters. Data was also collected from 8 Community Police Officers (CPO) from urban, rural, coastal and tribal areas of the Thiruvananthapuram district. Questionnaires were used to collect information from ex-cadets and a guide was used to conduct in-depth interviews with key informants. The data was collected in February 2017.

Results

Profiles of Ex-Cadets

The majority of the respondents (78.33%) were 15 years old. Sixty-five per cent of respondents were female and 35 per cent male. The gender of the respondents shows that females had good opportunities in the SPC. The SPC Project operates in urban, rural, coastal and tribal schools. All the ex-cadets were trained by the SPC Project for two years between 2015-2017. Most of the respondents had undergone all the activities as per the objectives of the project. The majority of the respondents (73.3%) had joined the SPC Project because they were inspired by its objectives and activities. It clearly shows how much the project positively influenced the students and motivated them to join for a good cause. It also throws light onto the success of the SPC activities in the previous year. All the respondents were selected for project through entrance exams and physical tests. All the students had equal opportunities to join the SPC Project and the selection of students was based on cut-off marks in entrance exams and physical tests.

Activities under the SPC Project in the Thiruvananthapuram District

There are mainly two types of activities, namely regular and special. Regular activities include eight hours of indoor and outdoor classes for the cadets every week. These activities are based on the syllabus developed by the SPC Directorate and the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). Special activities were conducted based on the initiatives by schools and specific instructions from the SPC Directorate. Special activities conducted in the SPC Thiruvananthapuram district during the academic years of 2015-2017 were the following:

My Tree My Dream: Every year the cadets, in association with the Kerala Forest and Wildlife Department, plant saplings in and around their school premises, their residential compounds and other public places. They take the lead in schools along with Nature Clubs to water, nurture and protect trees.

Friends at Home: As part of this activity, cadets visits old age homes, palliative care centres, hospitals, homes of differently-abled, sick and less privileged children. The main objective of this programme is to engender a sense of compassion and empathy among cadets.

Subhayatra: This programme is supported by the Kerala Motor Vehicle Department and the Kerala Road Safety Authority. As part of this programme, traffic awareness campaigns were conducted and groups of cadets in uniform stationed at strategic locations. The students undergoing this training are expected to act as role models for others by obeying rules. In schools' morning hours they also control traffic inside the school compound along with security.

Zero Pesticide Farming: As a school initiative, cadets and teachers started various kinds of farming and cultivation including bananas, medicinal plants, paddy, vegetables and tuber crops. Some of the schools also have pisciculture activities.

Anti-substance Abuse Programmes: Under this programme, the Kerala Excise department conducts indoor classes, workshops and field visits to train SPC cadets in various aspects of substance abuse. The main objective of this programme is to ensure that school premises are free from substances and shops dealing with harmful substances. The cadets also serve as active informants to the police regarding drug use.

Total Health Programme: This programme is taught in association with the Health Department to promote health and fitness levels among SPC cadets. Besides awareness classes on various health related subjects, the cadets are also trained in social support activities.

Punarjani (Responsible Waste Management): The programme is supported by the Kerala Suchitwa Mission. The special focus of this project is on working towards a plastic free community. This programme includes various training sessions, workshops and field visits.

Exposure Visits: Schools taking part in the SPC Project arrange various exposure visits to old age homes, orphanages, de-addiction centres, Regional Cancer Centres, and the Indian Space Research Organisation.

Camps: These camps include cadets from several schools, giving more opportunities to cadets to meet and interact with each other and experts in various fields to learn from them. This is organised at district and state levels.

Commemoration of Special Days: SPC schools also organise various programmes related to special days such as Environment day, Anti-Drug day, Human Rights day and AIDS day. As part of the commemoration, cadets and functionaries organise programmes to highlight the topic, enabling them to provide awareness to the community.

Academic Supportive Classes: These classes were provided by the experts in each subject. The main objective of the supportive classes is to improve the academic performance of the cadets.

Yoga, Karate and Kalari Training: These trainings are part of both regular and special activities. The main objectives of these trainings are to improve physical and mental fitness and build the qualities such as self-confidence.

Digital Literacy Programme: This programme is supported by the Kerala State IT mission. The safe and effective use of Information and Communications Technology is one of the main objectives of the SPC. The programme aims to make the cadets aware of the safe use of ICT including mobile phones and social media, and train cadets how to promote digital literacy. As part of community intervention, the IT mission provided tablets with inbuilt digital literacy software. Cadets were able to teach digital literacy to the community using the software enabled tablets.

Disaster Management: The main objective of this activity is to create an awareness of disasters and the probability of their occurrence, and to enable

them to prepare an action plan for managing disasters. Several mock drills and awareness classes were conducted as part of this activity.

Water Conservation Programmes: This programme aims to provide awareness of the proper use of natural resources and to provide training in various water conservation methods like rain harvesting and watershed management.

Short Film making: The SPC directorate conducts short film competitions based on the themes of various social problems and awards the best every year. The main objective of this programme is to enable cadets to think critically and creatively.

Changes in Values, Skills and Behaviour Experienced by ex- Student Police Cadets

The core objective of the SPC Project is to bring about positive changes in values, skills and behaviour among cadets. The values of social collectives, often termed cultural values, represent the goals that their members of the social collective are encouraged to pursue, and they serve to justify the actions taken by collective members and leaders in pursuit of these goals (Schwartz, 1999). As per the SPC objectives, values include law and citizenship, problem solving, societal values, and traffic awareness. Skills include leadership, personality, communication and disaster management. Behaviour includes health, hygiene, healthy lifestyles, promoting health among others, understanding mental health, first-aid training, nature conservation, fellow feeling for all living things on earth, media literacy, effective use and management of information received from the media, the ability to analyse a piece of news/TV programme or social media content critically, and awareness of the safe use of mobile phones in personal, social and academic contexts.

Changes Experienced by Ex-Cadets in Values

As per the SPC objectives, values include law and citizenship, family and society, and traffic awareness. A five point rating scale was used which included the options of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree to assess the changes experienced in values relating to improving the understanding of human rights, the Indian Constitution, child rights and the development of patriotism.

Table 1. Changes Experienced by Ex-Cadets in Values

<i>Changes in Values</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Total</i>
Law and Citizenship Understanding of Human Rights	86.70	13.30	0.00	100.00
Valuing Indian Constitution	71.70	25.00	3.30	100.00
Understanding of Child Rights	88.30	6.70	5.00	100.00
Development in the value of patriotism	88.30	10.00	1.70	100.00
Family and Society				
Realised the importance of family in finding solution to problem	75.00	21.70	3.30	100.00
Understands communal harmony	60.00	30.00	10.00	100.00
Build better relationship with opposite sex.	73.30	21.70	5.00	100.00
Traffic Awareness				
Improvement in Traffic awareness	80.00	20.00	0.00	100.00
Equipped to promote traffic rules among others	81.70	18.30	0.00	100.00

Table 1 shows that most of the ex-cadets experienced positive changes in terms of law and citizenship. About 87 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to understand human rights. Seventy-one per cent of respondents strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to understand the Indian Constitution. Eighty-eight per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to understand child rights, and 88.3 per cent strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to develop the value of patriotism. The changes experienced by the ex-Cadets relating to family and society were assessed in terms of understanding the importance of family in finding solutions to problems, understanding communal harmony and helping to build better relationships with the opposite sex. The study reveals that most of the ex-cadets experienced an improvement in familial and social relationships through SPC training. Seventy-five per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to understand the importance of family in finding

solutions to problems. Sixty per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training enabled them to understand communal harmony. Seventy-three per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training helped to build better relationships with the opposite sex. Eighty per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training improved their traffic awareness and 81.7 per cent strongly agreed that SPC training equipped them to promote traffic rules among others and enabled them to act as role models in obeying traffic rules.

Changes Experienced by Ex-Cadets in Skills

As per the SPC objectives, skills are subdivided into leadership and personality, communication and disaster management.

Table 2. Showing the Changes Experienced by Ex-Cadets in Skills

<i>Changes in Skill</i>	<i>Strongly</i>		<i>Neither</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Dis-agree</i>	
Leadership and Personality					
Building leadership	83.40	13.30	3.30	0.00	100.00
Cooperative problem solving	70.00	26.70	3.30	0.00	100.00
Development of critical thinking	51.70	38.30	10.00	0.00	100.00
Working in groups	81.70	16.70	1.60	0.00	100.00
Decision Making	73.30	18.30	8.40	0.00	100.00
Communication					
Communicate effectively	61.70	30.00	8.30	0.00	100.00
Confidence for public speaking	68.30	20.00	11.70	0.00	100.00
Disaster Management					
Developed awareness on disaster	38.30	41.70	16.70	3.30	100.00
Enabled to prepare an action plan for managing disasters	35.00	36.70	23.30	5.00	100.00

From Table 2, it is evident that the majority of the ex-cadets experienced positive changes in leadership and personality. Eighty-three per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training supported leadership building. Seventy per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to improve their problem solving capacity, 51.7 per cent strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to develop critical thinking skills, 81.7 per cent strongly agreed that SPC training improved their attitude to working in groups, and 73.3 per cent strongly agreed that SPC training improved their decision-making skills. The majority of the cadets experienced improvements in communication after joining the SPC. Sixty-two per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training enabled them to communicate effectively and 68.3 per cent strongly agreed that SPC training built confidence in public speaking. The study shows that the ex-cadets were not fully satisfied with the training they were given in disaster management, but more than a half of them agreed that SPC training provided them with basic information about disasters.

Changes Experienced By Ex-Cadets in Behaviour

The SPC defines positive behaviour in terms of health, hygiene, nature study and media literacy. The majority of the respondents stated that SPC training encouraged a healthy life style and equipped them to promote health among others.

Table 3 shows that 80 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to develop a healthy lifestyle, 60 per cent strongly agreed that SPC training equipped them to promote health among others, 66.7 per cent strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to understand mental health and 61.7 per cent strongly agreed that SPC trained them in first-aid procedures. The majority (91.7%) of respondents strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to develop awareness of nature conservation. Eighty-five per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training provided opportunities to participate in activities which conserve and protect nature. The respondents also agreed that SPC training instilled a fellow feeling for all living things on earth through various activities conducted by the SPC. The majority of the cadets had enough chances to understand and work at conserving nature. Sixty-six per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to understand how to effectively use and manage information received from the media,

Table 3. Changes in Behaviour Experienced by Ex-Cadets

<i>Changes in Behaviour</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Total</i>
Health and Hygiene				
Developed healthy lifestyle	80	20	0.00	
Equipped to promote health among others	60.00	31.70	8.30	100.00
Understand mental health	66.70	31.60	1.70	100.00
Trained in First-aid	61.70	25.00	13.30	100.00
Nature Study				
Develop awareness on the nature conservation	91.70	8.30	0.00	100.00
Participation in activities to conserve and protect nature	85.00	13.30	1.70	100.00
Inculcated a fellow feeling for all living things	53.30	40.00	6.70	100.00
Media Literacy				
Understand how to use in effective use and manage information received from media effectively	66.70	26.70	6.70	100.00
Ability to analyse a piece of News/TV programme or Social Media content	66.70	33.30	0.00	100.00
Helped to have awareness of safe use of mobile phones in personal, social and academic contexts	85.00	11.70	3.30	100.00

66.7 per cent strongly agreed that SPC training enabled them to critically analyse a piece of news/TV programme or social media content, and 85 per cent strongly agreed that SPC training helped them to develop awareness of the safe use of mobile phones in personal, social and academic contexts. It shows that most of the cadets recognised the safe use of media and were able to act as role models for other students.

Challenges Faced By SPC Ex-Cadets and CPOS

Open ended questions were asked to identify the challenges the ex-cadets had faced. Most of them faced some difficulties in managing their SPC

activities along with other school activities. The majority of them said that sometimes they faced a shortage of time to concentrate on SPC activities. Many respondents said that they had experienced de-motivation from some teachers, school and tuition centres due to missing certain sessions when they take part in SPC activities. Cadets also were de-motivated by family members when they reached home late owing to SPC activities, and this problem was mainly faced by girl cadets. Cadets were often threatened by friends and other people who support illegal activities, as cadets were very active in collecting information regarding drug use among students and distributors in and around the school premises. Another problem they faced was that cadets had very minimal time for games, arts and other cultural activities. The SPC functionaries also focus less on games, arts and sports. There is limited provision in the SPC to collect suggestions and feedback from the ex-cadets. Because of these limitations, most of the cadets' needs and problems are not known to the policy makers or high-level officers. Many cadets had the experience of having low quality and insufficient food during outdoor training. As the SPC includes various outdoor trainings such as parades, drills and karate, the food supply should be adequate to maintain the health of the cadets. A delay in fund allocation is the major reason for this. Many cadets faced difficulties in executing programmes because of transportation problems. As the SPC consists of many community level programmes and camps, proper transportation is very important.

Challenges Faced by Functionaries

The functionaries included in the study are Community Police Officers (CPO) and Drill Instructors (DI). CPOs and DIs carry out the duties of the SPC Project apart from their regular activities in schools and police stations. This heavy workload causes stress to the functionaries. As per the SPC Project, the dress, food and all other materials are to be provided by the government through the SPC. Sometimes the funds are received late due to administrative problems. This causes financial constraints and some CPOs and DIs spend money from their own accounts which is often not reimbursed. DIs are the police officers of the respective station areas. They are specially trained and experienced in carrying out SPC activities, but most of the time their services are unused because of transfers. If a DI is transferred to an area which does not have an SPC School, his /her services

also become unused. On the other hand, the new DI posted to a school may face difficulties in managing activities. In every week the SPC programme includes eight hours of indoor and outdoor classes. Schools depend mainly upon external resource people to conduct indoor classes, but many schools are facing shortages of these resources which sometimes affects the regular curriculum and weekly activities of the SPC.

Suggestions

Proper Funding: Even though the Project is going well, the government has only allocated a minimal amount from its budget. In order to achieve more milestones, the SPC Project should have a proper budget allocation and utilisation with the support of the State and Central Governments. A policy change incorporating the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund could be an effective one. The government should realise that the money spent on the SPC could be more beneficial in preventing crime than spending money on arms and weapons.

More Awareness and Publicity: The awareness of the function and benefits of the SPC Project is very low amongst people, even the highly educated, which results in less public support and participation. The government and SPC officials should promote the benefits and success stories of the SPC among the masses. It would also help to receive funds from others. SPC officials could use the mass media for the branding and promotion of the SPC not only in Kerala but also at a national level. Representation of the SPC team at national and international conferences and programmes should be highly encouraged.

Creation of Permanent Posts in the SPC: Most of the officials are posted to the SPC with additional duties apart from their regular ones. It affects their quality of work and results in the overburdening of duties. The government should sanction more permanent posts in the SPC and fill them through direct recruitment and deputation from other departments.

Give Preference to Cadets in Government Jobs: In the current situation, the government needs more honest, disciplined and experienced officers in order to fulfil the duties of the government and to understand the need of grassroots training. The SPC trains its members so that they are suitable

for carrying out government duties. By considering this, and to promote the SPC, the government could give preference to cadets for government jobs as a token of appreciation, especially in law enforcing agencies.

Expand to More Schools: The present study shows that the SPC Project is a successful community policing model which has made a lot of positive interventions resulting in the overall development of adolescents. These benefits should reach a maximum number of adolescents and the Project should expand to more schools throughout the state and nation.

Start Foundation Courses from Upper Primary class: Nowadays, even small children are exposed to crime and anti-social elements. There is an urgent need to intervene among small children even from upper primary classes. The SPC should start at least the foundation course among UP students.

General Class for all Students in SPC Schools: At present, the SPC select a maximum of 88 students in a school and the majority of the students are not part of the SPC. But trainings which are imparted through the SPC are also important for others. SPC officials and schools should provide at least a one hour common class a week for all students and teachers in the respective schools. It will enhance the reputation of the SPC Project and result in more support from students and other staff for SPC activities.

Appointment of Social Workers: The SPC Project depends on social group work methods and processes and always tries for community intervention which comes under the community organisation method of professional social work. The scope of professional social work is relevant to the SPC Project. The service of a professional social worker will enhance the professional quality of the SPC. The government could take necessary actions to incorporate the social work discipline and social works into the SPC Project.

Training Academy and Quality Training: Proper and quality training for CPOs and DIs is vital because they are the persons who serve as the backbone of the SPC. The government could create a separate training academy and module for training. The training needs to start with a pre-course and continue with more regular in-service trainings.

Increased Honorarium of Community Police Officers (CPO): CPOs are the teachers of the respective SPC schools and do extra work for the SPC besides their regular academic duties. They have to arrive early and are only able to leave late because of SPC activities. Sometimes they have to devote their holidays to the SPC. After doing all this they receive only a minimal honorarium on an annual basis. The authorities should prioritise increasing their honorarium as a token of appreciation for their rigorous work.

Common System for Feedback and Evaluation: The success of every social project depends upon how it collects feedback from the implemented activities by the stakeholders and how the project team improves by solving the difficulties. The SPC officials could develop a common method for feedback mechanisms and take extra care in collecting timely feedback from cadets and associated officials.

Conclusion

The Student Police Cadets Project of the Kerala Police is an innovative model of smart community-based proactive policing and understood as a cost-effective strategy of crime prevention. The SPC Project concentrates on providing numerous opportunities for learning continuously at regular intervals along with traditional schooling. The present study shows that the SPC Project also focuses on the critical needs of the community and educates students to deal with human-centred problems. The findings reveal that most of the objectives set by the SPC are achieved. In short it can be stated that the SPC is a transformative model which has proved to be of great potential by transforming the youth and creating a generation of disciplined youth for a promising futuristic India if implemented meticulously across all states.

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