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Influence of non-formal education on behavioral change of adolescents

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Abstract

Adolescence is a phase of a life which involves the changes in cognitive, emotional, psychological, and biological development. Young people are facing great challenges and risks like poverty, social inequality, discrimination, and health issues. In such challenges, developing positive behavior is important among adolescents. Non-formal education is vital in the development of positive behavior. SAMVAD is a non-formal education that intake adolescents from marginalized communities like Dalits and Badi in Nepal and trained them in three phases; dialogue and problem solving phase, life-skill phase, and vocational training phase. However, behavior change on adolescents due to SAMVAD is hardly researched. The main purpose of my research is to see the behavior change among adolescents who graduated from SAMVAD. For the purpose of examining the behavior change in adolescent, this study has applied qualitative design using case study approach. The findings of this study asserted that SAMVAD training improved the attitude in hygiene, improved health behavior, developed confidence for communication, increased belligerence against social ill, developed positive attitude towards career goal, and conscious on financial literacy. However, result also shows that SAMVAD has disturbed the relationship with societal setting while trying to show the competency learned in SAMVAD. The findings of this study can be useful for leaders of educational institutions to integrate the non-formal education along with formal education system for holistic development of adolescents. The findings can be useful for local level government and NGOs. They can weight what to focus on while providing the non-formal education like SAMVAD.

Keywords: Adolescents; Non-formal education; Health; Hygiene; SAMVAD.

Introduction

Adolescence is a phase of a life which involves the changes in cognitive, emotional, psychological, and biological development. According to World Health Organization [WHO] (2023), the age of 10-19 in which child convert into adulthood is known as adolescence. In this phase of life, youth gain competencies, social connections, values, and attitude for successful adulthood (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Some youth perform better in this phase. But some may develop harmful and precarious behavior. Such harmful and precarious behavior may lead to poverty, social inequality, discrimination and health issues among adolescent.

Today 1.8 billion adolescents lives different part of the world mostly residing in the developing countries (United Nation Development Programme [UNDP], 2023). According to UNDP, young people are facing great challenges and risks like poverty, social inequality, discrimination, and health issues. Mostly girls and young women are facing greater challenge (UNDP, 2023). Thus, they must be rightly guided for developing positive behavior for mitigating such challenges. Adolescent needs generous amount of help, support, and instructions for gaining positive behavior. With positive behavior, adolescent could be important stakeholders in achieving the sustainable social and economic development (United Nation Children's Fund [UNICEF], n.d.).

There are many ways like formal education, non-formal education, and informal education which help adolescent develop positive behavior with the help of different sources like

families, schools, communities, and culture (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Formal education refers to organized and systematic education system with rigid curriculum in term of content, methodology, and objectives and non-formal education refers to systematic education system with flexible methodology and contents which can adapt to the needs and interest of participants (Dib, 1988). However, Dib (1988) defined informal education as non systematic education without the objectives and possible to learn by daily activities (Chhetri & Bhattarai, 2024). All the education systems are equally important for the behavior change of adolescents. However, many researchers like Paudel (n.d.) believes that with the characteristics of context specific education with flexibility in time and methods, non-formal education can reach to larger number of adolescents.

Non-formal education is instrumental on changing behavior of the adolescents. [Özyazıcıoğlu et al. \(2011\)](#) claimed that non-formal education plays important role in changing the health and hygiene behavior. They educated 145 high school students in Turkey with the help of self-prepared material. They found that such health education influence on change of behavior, awareness, and toilet-menstruation hygiene practice. Likewise, the study of Santhanakrishnan and Athipathy (2018) also claimed that health education program helped in the improvement of knowledge and menstrual hygiene practice among the adolescent school girls in Coimbatore, India. Similarly, the study of LeCroy et al. (2017) claimed that The Go Grrrls program in US targeted at adolescent girl improved the condom technical skills and knowledge of sexual transmitted disease among participants. Non-formal education can change diverse dimensions of behavior on adolescents like developing positive life skills and positive attitude towards civic engagement and involvement in awareness programs. For example, Marcus et al. (2017) also claimed that adolescent civic involvement like raising awareness of child marriage and gender equality increased after their participants in non-formal education. The study of Engebretsen (2013) revealed that Filles Eveillees project in Burkino Faso provided the financial literacy education improved the saving behavior among the female adolescent domestic worker.

Like in many countries, adolescent in Nepal also faces challenges like health issues and mental disorders (Sharma, 2022). It is important for Nepalese adolescents to develop positive behavior in-order to survive from such challenges. Many non-formal educations are being implemented in Nepal working on behavior change in adolescents. For example, the study of McMichael and Robinson (2016) claimed that water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) intervention has developed the hygiene behavior among the participant of mid-western Nepal. Similarly, the study of Devkota et al. (2020) revealed that non-formal sessions and demonstration about handwashing improved the handwashing behavior among the Nepali students from community school located at Chitwan. One such non-formal education is SAMVAD organized by Stromme Foundation.

SAMVAD intake adolescents from marginalized communities like Dalits and Badi and trained them in three phases; dialogue and problem solving phase, life-skill phase, and vocational training phase (Stromme Foundation, n.d.). SAMVAD is one year program where participants need to graduate after completing three phases. The main objectives of SAMVAD are to empowered adolescents fight against social mal-practices like child marriage, health issues, and gender discrimination. SAMVAD also equipped adolescents with life-skills and vocational training (Stromme Foundation, n.d.) to develop positive attitude towards career growth. However, in my understanding behavior change among participants of SAMVAD is hardly researched. The main purpose of my research is to see the behavior change among adolescents who graduated

from SAMVAD. In order to achieve this purpose, the research question for this study is: “What behavioral changes in adolescents occurred due to SAMVAD?”

To answer this research question, this study utilizes the theoretical lens of behavioral economics. Adolescents engage in daily activities and interact with many people like families, peers, teachers, etc. Some activities and interactions develop positive behavior whereas some activities and interaction foster negative behavior among adolescents. However, to foster positive behavior among adolescent is challenge. Behavioral economics is the framework that can intervene individual decision makers influenced by cognitive, social, and emotional factors (Wong et al., 2021). According to them, this framework suggests the increased impact due to interventions from the account of irrationality. Here in this study, the SAMVAD can be viewed as interventions and behavior change may be viewed as impact.

Methodology

For the purpose of examining the behavior change in adolescent because of SAMVAD, this study has applied qualitative design using case study approach. According to Creswell (2014), a case study is a qualitative research design used by the researcher to explore in-depth understanding of one or more individual, activity, program, or event. According to Creswell, researcher collect in-depth information by using various data collection instruments over a sustained period of time. Case study cannot be used for statistical generalization. However, it can be used for analytical generalization where previously developed theory can be used to compare results of the case (Yin, 2014). Case study has two approaches. They are post-positivist and non-positivist philosophical foundation. Yin (2014) conducted case study in positivist foundation, where researcher assumes and measures objective reality independently (Rashid et. al, 2019). However, researchers like Marriam (1998) and Stakes (2005) used a non-positivist foundation to conduct their case study research. According to Greener (2008), when researcher believes that each individual constructs and perceives their own reality then it provides them multiple views. Such approach of conducting case-study is non-positivist. This study has implied a non-positivist foundation of case study. For this purpose, through the consultation with the project coordinator and staffs from SAMVAD project in Airawati Village, Pyuthan, the information-rich cases as suggested by Yin (2014) were selected. Participants were selected from seven wards who participated in SAMVAD training and graduated from the training. This covers the rich information from all directions.

Data Collection

The study participants were seven female graduates (Participant Rita, Participant Sita, Participant Gita, Participant Mita, Participant Bidhya, Participant Laxmi, and Participant Parbati), from Airawati rural municipality, Pyuthan. There were only female participant because number of girls graduate is too high compared to male. At first SAMVAD was organized for female adolescent only. We called seven participants for their availability for interview through project coordinate of SAMVAD. Once they agreed, we scheduled the interview date. To collect data, this study implemented in-depth interview method. This method is important to get deepen and sharpen understanding of the event or case (Brouneus, 2011). All seven interviews were conducted face to face. The interview duration was 20-30 minutes. During the interview, we listened to them carefully and patiently. At the end of the interview, we asked them to add up their experience which we failed to capture. We also get their consent to record the interview. We also observed the behavior of participants during the interviews. After returning from the field, we reflected field experiences in the note.

Data Analysis

To analyze data, at-first we, we transcribed all the recorded interviews. It was followed by the coding of the transcribed document. All the coded data were categorized. After the categorization, we developed theme, considering the framework of behavior economics. Similarly, we analyzed different documents available in SAMVAD, consulted with the staffs of SAMVAD to see if the findings from the interview were consistent with the themes developed from the coded data. Similarly, at every stage of the research credibility was maintained. In-order to achieve this preset thinking and minds were not imposed during the research. Likewise, we were ethical at every stage of the research especially in our critical and reflective roles. The pseudonyms were used for every participant.

Findings

The analyzed data established behavior change of adolescents graduated from SAMVAD. The findings of this study asserted that SAMVAD training improved the attitude in hygiene, improved health behavior, developed confidence for communication, increased belligerence against social ill, developed positive attitude towards career goal, and conscious on financial literacy. The following sections explain the behavior change of adolescents graduated from SAMVAD. Result also shows that SAMVAD has disturbed the relationship with societal setting while trying to show the competency learned in SAMVAD.

Changed attitude in hygiene

During interview phase with participants, everyone agreed that after graduating from the SAMVAD, the attitude towards health and hygiene has improved. Although they have learned about hygiene in their school, but the attitude to implement in their daily practice was improved after they graduate from the SAMVAD. They understood the benefits of the hygiene and started implementing in their daily life. On this regards, participant Rita shared:

We were taught to wash hand before and after we eat food and also after touching dirty stuffs. We were taught this in school as well, but SAMVAD helped to develop the practice. For example during SAMVAD class, in break when we eat something we were monitored if we wash our hand or not. So, this makes us aware about washing hand. Now it has become the habit to wash the hand before and after eating.

This shows that after graduating from SAMVAD, participants are aware about their personal health and spread of diseases. SAMVAD has fostered the good hygiene practices among participants. On the personal hygiene, participant Bidhya shared:

I know the importance of pad for hygiene during period. However, in our village, there is a shortage of menstruation pad. But in SAMVAD, we were taught to make homemade pad from clean clothes. Before I used to use dirty clothes (multiple times same piece of cloth) because of which I was prone to different kind of diseases. Now, the condition has changed, I prefer pad most of the time during my period. Even if there is a shortage of pad, I use clean clothes and make it like a pad and use it during the period.

This shows participants of SAMVAD are aware of multiple facets of personal hygiene. SAMVAD not only improved the attitude in personal hygiene, but it also fostered the positive attitude towards community hygiene. On this, participant Gita shared:

We were taught about washing hand before and after eating food. Apart from that, we were asked to keep our surrounding clean by the instructor of SAMVAD. We were taught not to throw waste everywhere around our place. These were the things taught in the school also but after SAMVAD, we practically started implementing it. For example, in our community we (Member of SAMVAD graduate forum) have implanted dustbin in perishable and non-perishable

goods separately in many places in our ward. We asked everyone there to put such perishable goods and non-perishable goods in the respected dustbin.

Graduate of SAMVAD are concerned about their personal hygiene and cleanliness of locality. They are positively working for the cleanliness of their locality even after the graduating from the SAMVAD training through SAMVAD Graduate Forum network. This shows, their attitude towards hygiene has improved. They are also involved in teaching and training other members of society in maintaining hygiene. On this regards, participant Parbati expressed:

We had training on hygiene during menstruation from SAMVAD. Training was focused on how to use pad and dispose them in safer way. Now, we are teaching mothers group on this issues. Most of them use piece of cloth (not hygienic) in their period. We teach them how to use house made cleaner pad using piece of cloth.

Other participants also agreed on their understanding of importance of personal hygiene and societal hygiene and their involvement in improvement of hygiene and cleanliness of their locality through SAMVAD Graduate Forum. This, shows that graduate of SAMVAD have developed the positive mindset on personal hygiene and societal hygiene.

Changed Health Behavior

Apart from personal hygiene, SAMVAD graduates are aware of good health and its practice. In formal education in their school they learn about good health behavior theoretically, the SAMVAD increased their awareness and contributed in improved health behavior. One of the behavior they developed was good food habit as they were aware of balanced diet and its important for their healthy life. On balanced diet, participant Laxmi revealed:

Yes after SAMVAD, I was also very aware of balanced food for good health. Now, I eat little rice but more food grains, green vegetables. Most of the time my lunch and dinner is good mix of different types of food which provide me the entire required mineral for my body. I also regularly eat meat, ghee. So, now my diet is quite balanced. I have reduced the consumption of junk foods.

In SAMVAD, they were taught about the importance of balanced diet and provided information about the balanced diet. Different experts on balanced diet were invited during the SAMVAD. This acts as a role model for participants in embracing healthier food habit. They could make informed decisions about their good health habit. Participant Sita conveys:

We were taught to eat clean food. We were taught healthy eating habit. Like, what are needs for our body, we must consume accordingly. We should not eat more than required. Everything like protein, fat and other mineral required for the body must be balanced.

This shows that participants embraced healthier food habit after SAMVAD. Apart from the good food habit, SAMVAD also influenced student to exercise and rest properly. All the participants agreed that they were aware of importance of exercise and rest for healthy life. On this, participant Sita expressed:

We were also taught to rest and exercise as needed by the body. I realized the importance of physical activities for good health. Therefore, I go for jogging every morning from Sunday to Friday. I take rest on Saturday.

This sharing of their experience reveals that participants hold the importance of balanced food and exercise for healthier life. Thus, they adopt the balanced food habit and involved in physical activities. Apart from this, participants were also more aware in sexual education. In SAMVAD they were taught about negative consequences of unsafe sexual relationship. On this, participant Mita shared:

We were taught about the unsafe sexual relationship. We were also taught about the safety measures and family planning methods. I have not experience anything about sexual relationship but I have educated what I have learned in my community, for example there used to be my neighbor aunty. She did not know about family planning methods. They already had 5 children. So, I asked her to use five moth injections for family planning. I asked her to even visit and know more about these family planning methods from the health worker from nearby health post. With my advice, she visited the nearby health post and used the family planning injection. So, I feel happy that whatever I learned in SAMVAD, I could use this to aware other.

This sharing indicates that participants are more informed about the unsafe sexual relationship. Although they have not experienced sexual relationship, they are happy to teach others for safe sexual relationship in their neighborhood. Another participant Gita revealed:

There are health posts in each ward of our village, so many women are aware about family planning and unsafe sexual relationship. However, there are few women who hesitate to visit such health post and are not aware about unsafe sex and pregnancy problem. We consult them from the SAMVAD Graduate Forum. We teach them there are different mediums to be protected from unsafe sex like using of condom or family planning injection. We asked them to use such protective measures.

These sharing show that participants gained knowledge about the unsafe sex and family planning in SAMVAD. They are using this knowledge to educate their community. This shows their commitment on better sexual relationship. Educating others may reinforce their safe sexual relationships in the future.

Belligerence against Social Ill

After graduating from SAMVAD, participants developed fighting spirit against the many bad social practice like child marriage, gender discrimination, and Chaupidi (discrimination against women during menstruation). They are aware of such bad practice exist in their locality and continuously fighting against it. Regarding child marriage, participant Rita revealed:

There were many child marriage practices in our village. It was culture in our village. But we could not do anything as we were not aware of the consequences of child labor. But after we enrolled in SAMVAD, we were taught about the consequences of child marriage. We learned that child marriage may increase the abuse, violence, and exploitation of child along with violation of child rights. Children are deprived of education. They become mother at small age which will affect their health because of the complication in pregnancy.

We were taught to speak up against the child marriage. We were taught to complaint about the child marriage. Now, we fight against the child marriage. Many times we have made a complaint against the child marriage in police. This has helped to reduce the problem of child marriage in our village. Through our SAMBAD graduate forum we also organize the awareness program against the child marriage. Last year we stopped 18 child marriages.

In an interview, another participant Gita shared similar views:

Child marriage is one of the major problems in our village. SAMVAD teach us about the consequences of child marriage. We used to have lots of discussion session in SAMVAD for child marriage, where we realize the negative consequences of child marriage. So, to stop this act, we organized many rally and drama to aware people about the consequences of Child marriage. In the awareness program we told people that the most influenced from the child marriage are the child bride and groom. They will not achieve their career growth. It will ruin their career. So, it has been reduced due to such awareness programmer. Even if someone tries to do child marriage we report it in the police office. I remember one incident where parents of one of my

relative were about to marry her when she was around 15. I personally initiate to stop it by reporting this act in the police. In SAMVAD we were taught how to approach police office and report without releasing my identity. Thank god my relatives did not know who reported it. Anyways, I could stop the child marriage. We are involved in stopping many child marriages through SAMVAD graduate forum.

The expression of participant shows that SAMVAD developed the spirit of breaking all the barriers of society to end the ill practice of the society. They become determined to fight against the bad practice of the society. Likewise, in regards to chaupidi, participant Parbati shared:

We had training on which we were taught what to do and not to do during the period. We were taught to speak against the ill practice of menstruation. The instructor uses the example of goddess. We believe in god. Even goddess does bleed but they are worshipped. But why should we suffer during the period. This statement really touched me and influenced me on the issue of discrimination during period. From that point, I left following the rituals of period like staying outside of house and also asked my parents not to follow. Now, even they don't force me to stay outside or stop me to enter in the kitchen during my period.

SAMVAD has promotes social change among the graduates of SAMVAD. They developed the habit of working together to stop the ill practice of the society. They have realized that such ill practices of society are barriers to human rights and equality. In regards to one of ill practice of society, gender discrimination, participant Bidhya conveyed:

Before whenever I used to reach home late, my parents used to scold me but they never scold on such issues to my brother. They used to say you are a girl; you should be responsible to come home early. You will ruin the family prestige. It is fueled by the negative word of society. So, I tried to reach home early. Once I started the SAMVAD, I started participating in different events which are known to my family. Now, even if I reach home late, they never scold me as they know that I am doing well. So, now I am not afraid of reaching home late of course for genuine reason. I convince my family that I am involved in good thing and fighting against the social issues. So now they allow me to participate in SAMVAD program. Even my society understood that I am involved in good things. So, even people from society do not talk bad thing about me when I return home late.

Such sharing shows that graduate of SAMVAD are determined and resilient against the bad practice of the society. SAMVAD helps to cultivate fighting spirit against such practices. Through SAMVAD, they have educated themselves and working together with other members of SAMVAD graduate forum to fight against such issues. They are not hesitant to speak out on such bad practices of the society and leading by the example to fight against the bad social practice. They developed belligerence against Social ill.

Confidence to Communicate

SAMVAD helped participant becoming more confidence. After graduating from SAMVAD, they can express themselves, share their ideas, and communicate effectively in front of masses. On this regard, the participant Mita revealed:

I learned to believe in myself during SAMVAD. I learned to express myself. Before SAMVAD I could not speak in front of other, but now see I am sharing my idea confidently with you. This is what I learned in SAMVAD.

The entire participant agreed that they were not confident and shies to talk in front of masses. They revealed that after joining SAMVAD, they became confident to express their ideas. They started discussing in the school about social issues confidently with teachers and friends. In

SAMVAD participants used to discuss on different topics on social issues on a daily basis. SAMVAD slowly developed their confidence. One of the participants Bidhya shared:

In SAMVAD, we discuss on different social issues. Through the discussion we analyzed the problem and look for solutions. Before, I was so afraid to ask question to teachers. Even if I did not understand any concept, I was hesitant to ask question. But, in SAMVAD we used to discuss in a entertaining way. There was gunasopeti (box for complaint). We used to put the discussion topics on such box and without providing identity we used to discuss on the topics. Slowly, I was less afraid discussing on the topics that I was not clear. And even in school, I started asking question and sharing my feelings. Now, I am not afraid of asking question to teacher. To speak in front of others was nightmare for me. But in SAMVAD we were taught to debate and slowly I develop the confidence to speak in front of others.

SAMVAD provides hands on experience to the participants to express themselves in front of the other participants on different social issues. Because of this, they slowly understood their abilities and were confident to express themselves in front of masses. In SAMVAD, participants were taught to express their feeling and share their ideas.

Changed attitude towards Career Goal

At SAMVAD, participants were taught to develop the five year career development plan. In such plan, they decide what career they want to pursue. And, they make plans and strategies to achieve their career goal like which subject to study and what requirements needs to be fulfilled. They continuously seek help and information from others who are from the career they decided to choose. They are continuously working on their career development plan after they graduated from SAMVAD. In an interview, participant Rita shared:

My aim is to become teacher. It is my childhood dream. However, I did not know what I should do to become teacher. But from the SAMVAD, I learned to make career development plan for teacher job. In this plan, to become teacher what I need to know and what education I required were identified. For example, to become teacher in career development plan, I planned to take education in high school and prepare teacher license exam. I will take education in my bachelor. I will also prepare for the teacher license exam. I am following career development plan to achieve my career goal.

Participants learned goal setting and planning in SAMVAD. Now, they are committed to achieve their goal. They are continuously working on their career goal. Another participant, Gita expressed:

I wanted to work as government office. In SAMVAD, I was taught to make career development plan. In plan I put emphasis on what on what to study and how much cost it take. As I said earlier, we have started saving for this. I am also consulting with many people who are currently working in government office about the procedure to get job in government organization. SAMVAD had helped me to make this plan. And, I am working according to the plan. In my free time, instead of being lazy, I prepare form Loksewa.

Participants are working according to career development plan they made during SAMVAD. They developed self-awareness and staying motivated to achieve their career goal. They developed positive attitude and consistently working on their career goal. They are working hard for this.

Conscious on Financial Literacy

Most of the participant became more conscious on their unwanted expenses and also informed about their family's income and expense. In SAMVAD they were taught to maintain list of their family's expense and income and aware them about the significance of saving. SAMVAD helped them to make informed and responsible financial decision. One of the participants Bidhya conveyed:

Chuineghaito helps me to identify the expenses of house and help to identify the unnecessary expenses. This has increased the saving. I stopped unnecessary expense and start using my personal belongings responsibly. For example, now I never tear unused paper from my notebook, if any paper is left I use it for other subject or for next year. Similarly, if my dress becomes old I tried to use it as much as I can. I don't demand new dress every year. Before there used to be show off during festivals by cooking lots of food. Lots of food use to be wastage. I convince my parents to reduce food wastage. Now, our family only cooks food as required. This has reduced the food wastage. These are small but significant contribution from my side to increase saving of my family.

This sharing shows participant become responsible on expenses and realized the significance of saving. They are helping their family in saving and reducing their unwanted expenses. On the financial literacy, another participant Parbati shared:

In SAMVAD, we were taught about keeping record of income and expense of the home through chuineghaito. So, now I follow this and keep account of my family like earning and expense. With this I realized the importance of saving and start reducing unwanted expenses. I used to be very demanding but now I am not asking money for unnecessary cloths and junk food. I eat whatever my mother gives me. Now, we are also saving money for my education in the future.

With all these experiences, it shows that after graduating from SAMVAD, they become more conscious on financial literacy and make informed and responsible financial decision. They developed the habit of saving and cut down the unwanted expenses.

Reciprocal Influence

With SAMVAD, majority of the participants accepted that their behavior is positively influenced. However, there are also reciprocal influences of changed behavior. Social setting and culture stopped their adherence to practice the thing they learned during thier non-formal education. Participants experienced disturbed relationship with their relatives and teachers from school. Such incidents make them reluctant to show their changed behavior. One of the participants Mita shared.

Once I reported the child marriage case of my relatives. However, my identity was disclosed and I was blamed for stopping my cousin sister child marriage. The relationship with them is disturbed. Even my parents were not happy about the incident. I tried to fight against child marriage but this incident has disturbed me mentally. Every time I meet with my uncle and aunt, they always blamed me for stopping the marriage of my cousin sister. Although, I am on the right side but I am afraid to face them.

Non-formal education is good way to influence adolescents to change their behavior positively. However, it has also negative influence on the life of adolescents. In the one hand they developed the confidence to communicate, but in other hand they are not adherent to speak up. Regarding this issue, participant Gita shared her story.

There are many things that we learned in the SAMVAD are also the part of the syllabus in our course in school especially the course content of the social studies. So, I know lot of stuffs

on social studies and whenever my teacher asked I try to answer them before other students. Because of this, my teacher feels that I am over confident. They blamed me to be more knowledgeable than I should be. Every time I tried to share my experience from SAMVAD on course content, they blamed me “Khub Janne Vais” (you gain more knowledge before time). Thus, now I don’t try to speak up in the class. I feel afraid.

This kind of experience sharing shows that SAMVAD has disturbed the relationship with societal setting while trying to show the competency learned in SAMVAD. While going through the change due to SAMVAD, they face mental pressure against the pre-existing culture and social setting.

Discussion

Their stories illustrate the competencies they developed from the SAMVAD which helped them in the changed of the attitude in hygiene, changed health behavior, developed confidence for communication, belligerence against social ill, changed attitude towards career goal, and conscious on financial literacy. However, this study also suggested some reciprocal influence. All the participants valued the SAMVAD training. As suggested by framework of behavior economics, SAMVAD as intervention helps to change the behavior as an increased impact among participants of SAMVAD

One of the major behavior changes due to SAMVAD among the participants is improved attitude in hygiene. They developed the habit of hand washing before and after eating food, keeping surrounding clean, and stay hygienic during menstruation. They believed that for better health, hygiene is important. Many researchers also have claimed that non-formal education plays important role in developing hygienic behavior among participants. For example, the study of McMichael and Robinson (2016) claimed that water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) intervention has developed the hygiene behavior among the participant of mid-western Nepal. Such interventions help in the habit formation and develop positive attitude among participants. Similar result was presented by [Özyazicioğlu et al. \(2011\)](#). They educated 145 high school students in Turkey with the help of self-prepared material. They found that such health education influence on change of behavior, awareness, and toilet-menstruation hygiene practice. Non-formal education plays important role in changing the hygiene behavior. The study of Devkota et al. (2020) claimed that non-formal sessions and demonstration about handwashing improved the handwashing behavior among the Nepali students from community school located at Chitwan. The non-formal education develops the knowledge and practice of hygienic behavior. School-based intervention among children in Pakistan to promote personal hygiene helped in the improvement of hygiene knowledge and practices of children (Pradhan et al., 2020). Likewise, the study of Santhanakrishnan and Athipathy (2018) also claimed that health education program helped in the improvement of knowledge and menstrual hygiene practice among the adolescent school girls in Coimbatore, India. These all studies show that non-formal education plays important role in the improvement in hygiene behavior among the participants. These results are consistent with the findings of this study.

SAMVAD has influenced in the changed health behavior like improved hygiene behavior among participants. Participant of SAMVAD were aware and more knowledgeable in sexual education. They were also aware about unsafe sex and importance of good and balanced food habit for healthier life. Other researcher also claimed that non-formal education is important on improving the health behavior. The study of Ross et al. (2007) claimed that Mema Kwa Vijana, Sexual Reproductive Health Program (SRH) was instrumental on improving the knowledge and attitudes towards the HIV and pregnancy. Similarly, adolescent pregnancy and reporting of

experience of unwanted sex was significantly reduced among the girls adolescent after they participated in BRAC in Uganda (Bandiera et al., 2020). After non-formal education, participants gain the knowledge of unsafe sex and protective measures against the unsafe sex. The study of LeCroy et al. (2017) claimed that The Go Grrrls program in US targeted at adolescent girl improved the condom technical skills and knowledge of sexual transmitted disease among participants. Apart from sexual reproductive health, many researchers claimed that non-formal education influenced adolescent to change their food habit for their better health. One such example is study of Rodreguez et al. (2022). They revealed that educational intervention on eating habit motivated the participant to improve their eating habit and correct unhealthy habits. The participants reduced the consumptions of foods like sugary foods and pasta. These studies show that non-formal educations are instrumental on improving the health habit. The findings of this study also reveal that SAMVAD has improved the health habit of participants.

SAMVAD also increased the belligerence against the bad practice in the society. Participants were engaged in awareness program to fight against the social ill practice like child marriage, gender discrimination, and chaupidi. Many researchers claimed non-formal education is instrumental on improving the awareness and fighting against the bad practice of society among adolescent. The study of Mehra et al. (2018) intervention strategies such as youth information centre helped in the reduction of the child marriage in villages in India. The participant of SAMVAD also claimed that they were actively involved in reducing the child marriage in their village. Participants of SAMVAD also developed the fighting spirit against the gender discrimination. Participants were involved in awareness program against child marriage and even reported the child marriage to police to stop it. They also actively involved in awareness program against gender discrimination. Marcus et al. (2017) also claimed that adolescent civic involvement like raising awareness of child marriage and gender equality increased after their participants in non-formal education. Thus, the findings of this study is consistent with many other researchers claiming increased belligerence against Social ill.

The participants of SAMVAD also developed confidence to express their idea and communicate with others. They were also more positive towards their career goals along with the improved financial literacy. The study of Marcus et al. (2017) also claimed that school extra-curricular clubs helped participants in the improvement of emotional skills like self confidence to speak out and express themselves. Non-formal education helps in developing confidence by providing hand on experience to discuss on social issues which helps participants in developing confidence to speak in front of masses. The study of Girls Education Challenge (2018) in their thematic review also claimed that extra and co-curricular activities in non-formal setting leads to the development of the confidence among participants to speak out. Non-formal education also leads to the better perception of employability among participants of such program. Many researchers claimed the similar findings. For example, the study of Ho et al. (2022) claimed that career development learning improved the students' perceived employability. Non-formal education is also instrumental on the improved financial literacy among participants. The finding of this study also suggests that participants of SAMVAD are more conscious about their expenses suggesting improved financial literacy. Many other researchers also convey similar results. The study of Engebretsen (2013) also revealed that Filles Eveillees project in Burkino Faso provided the financial literacy education improved the saving behavior among the female adolescent domestic worker. Non-formal education is helping participants on making informed financial decisions. The studies of Batty et al. (2014) and Collins et al. (2013) also claimed the

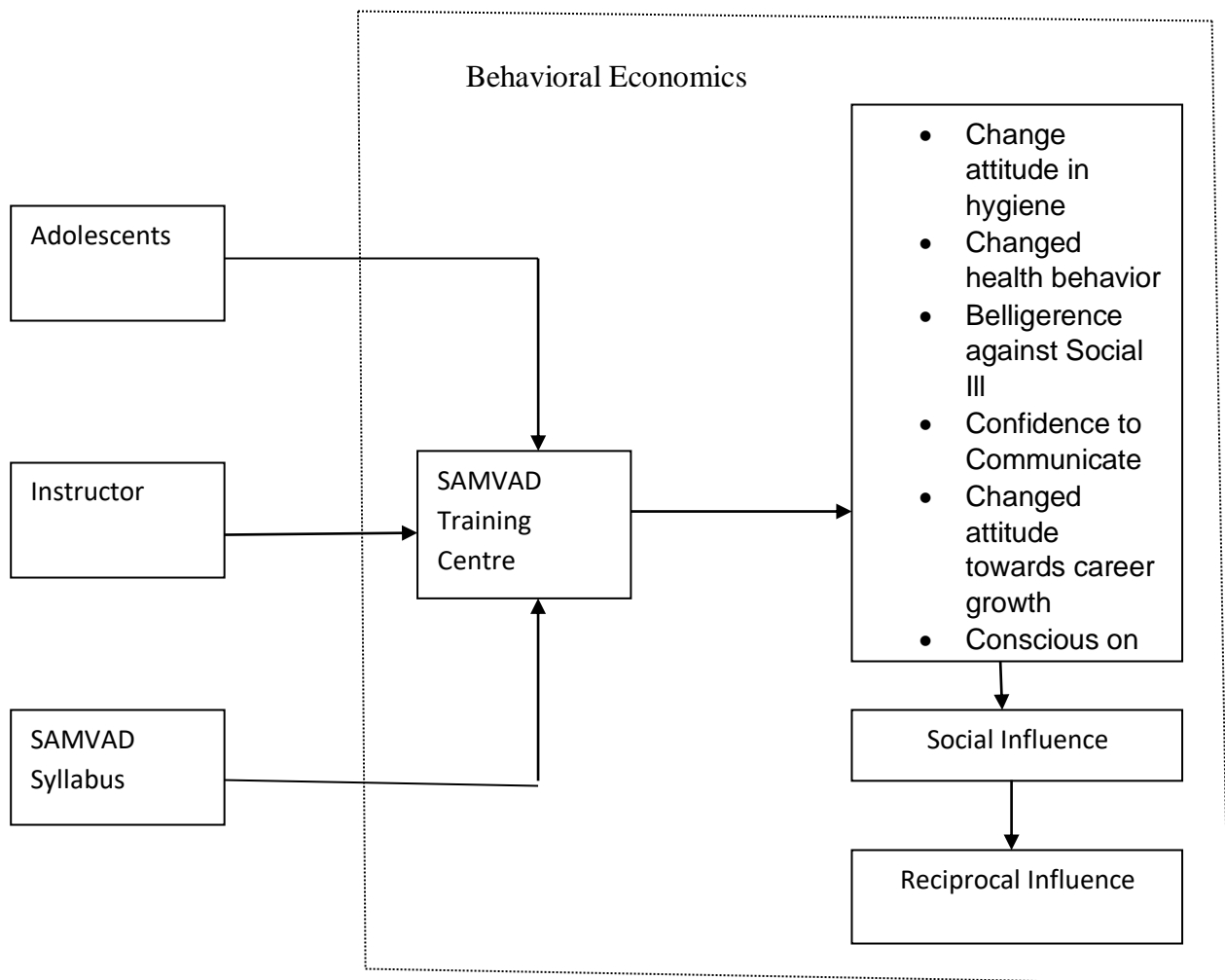
similar findings. According to these researcher, non-formal education helped participants in making well-informed financial decisions.

The findings of this research suggest that reciprocal influence of non-formal education in the form of disturbed relationship and mental pressure to fight against existing culture and social setting. This makes them not to adhere to implement change behavior. There have not been many studies made on reciprocal influence on behavior change by non-formal education. However, studies on influence of non-formal food education on food behavior suggested that because of the existing physical and social environment of unhealthy food practice leads to continue the unhealthy eating practice and physical activity before non-formal program (Davis et al., 2000). The environmental challenges leads to the abandonment of the behavior change because of undermining the individual’s confidence in their self management skills (Jeffery et al., 1990).

Based on these discussions, researchers present the model of behavior change due to SAMVAD in figure below.

Figure

Influence of SAMVAD on Behavior Change of Adolescents



Conclusion and Implications

Adolescence is a phase of a life which involves the changes in cognitive, emotional, psychological, and biological development. In this phase, they faced many challenges. Thus, they must be guided properly to influence them for positive behavior change. With the proper intervention in the form of non-formal education, it is possible to change the behavior among adolescents positively.

SAMVAD is one such non-formal program which empowered adolescents to fight against social mal-practices like child marriage, health issues, and gender discrimination. SAMVAD also equipped adolescents with life-skills and vocational training to develop positive attitude towards career growth. This study utilizes the framework of behavior economics to study the behavior change among participants of SAMVAD. It helped them in the improvement of the attitude in hygiene, changed health behavior, developed confidence for communication, increased belligerence against social ill, positive attitude towards career goal, and conscious on financial literacy. However due to social influence, they also have reciprocal influence.

The findings of this study can be useful for leaders of educational institutions to integrate the non-formal education along with formal education system for holistic development of adolescents. The findings can be useful for local level government and NGOs. They can weight what to focus on while providing the non-formal education like SAMVAD. Similarly, while providing non-formal education, they need to be aware about reciprocal influence on participants which increase their mental stress.

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