

## **Bal Nirman Ki Kahaniyaan – A Guide to Happy Adolescence**

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### **Abstract**

*Adolescence is a door to adulthood. As the transition is taking place, there are some common characteristics which are noticed in the growing child. Adolescent depression is a serious mental health problem which leads to a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest in activities. And may also cause physical, emotional and functional problems. Teen depression may have serious consequences and may require serious treatment too. Depression in adolescents varies in signs and symptoms though major change is seen in their attitude and behaviour, which may cause significant distress and problems in school and at home. The stories included in the study are a set of twenty storybooks, including stories on moral values and human virtues. The set of storybooks is titled as 'Bal Nirman Ki Kahaniyaan' written by Pt. Sriram Sharma Acharya. Present study shows the effect of a story based intervention over the 20 dimensions of personality, measured by the Multi-Dimensional Assessment of Personality, Form – C. The story based intervention, when given for 40 days, shows a significant difference between pre and post-test readings of the 20 dimension of personality being measured by the test. The results advocate that listening or reading stories based on moral values may help adolescents grow up as individuals with better mental health and clarity in thoughts and hence keeping the disorders like depression away from adolescence. It would also help the children at this tender to understand their emotions better.*

**Keywords** – *Dimensions of Personality, teen/adolescent depression, moral based storytelling, reading storybooks, Bal Nirman ki Kahaniyaan, story intervention, emotional intelligence.*

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## **Introduction**

Adolescence comes with a lot of changes and a greater deal of challenges in a child. The physical and psychological changes can be well noticed while the child is entering his teens and welcoming his adulthood. Children who face challenging circumstances, react differently to them. The way a child faces his circumstances makes all the difference. The irritability or unhappiness in adolescent might be a symptom of teen depression. Teen unhappiness is a common symptom along with many other changes happening in a teen's life. Researches show that one out of every eight adolescents has teen depression. Emotional intelligence is found to be inversely proportionate to the degree of depression in an individual.

The researcher in her study advocates the fact that stories related to human virtues and moral values help in fighting stress and strengthens emotional immunity. There are different modes of knowing a story, like narration, listening, watching or reading but exposure to the values, being talked about in the story matters the most. Having her roots connected to Shantikunj Haridwar, the researcher strongly believes and witnesses the ideology of the movement, which emphasises the refinement of thoughts. It says 'we become, what we think' and so it is very important to give a creative and constructive direction to thoughts. The movement, commonly known as 'Vichar Kranti Abhiyan', is a unique movement for refinement of people's thinking and positive orientation of mass psychology. The unique experiment of "Vichar Kranti" - gradual refinement of thoughts, the righteous transformation of attitude and sublime transmutation of human psychology up to the divine realms of spirituality is the foundation of this mission. The founder of the mission, 'Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya', wrote about 3000 enlightening books on wide-ranging topics. This enriching literature includes storybooks for children, titled as "Bal Nirman ki Kahaniyaan". Not only these but other collection of stories based on moral values had been a big source of inculcating moral values amongst the children. Many types of research suggest that through stories, children not only connect to the characters of the stories but also develop a sense of correlation of the situations of stories to their real life. Stories also help them socialise. Researches tell that moral based stories give direction to the ambiguous or distracted thinking of children in a very effective manner, as listening or reading a story, teaches them in the way that nothing else can. Organised thinking helps in building the personality of an individual based on ethical and moral values, hence, emerging as a better human and contributing to the building of better society and nation, at large.

Compassion, empathy, sympathy, etc. are very commonly used terms. But, more focussed work in the direction of developing these virtues in children is needed. These terms are not for throwing impression over crowds about our understanding of these soft skills, but we should understand that without these we cannot think of human society with a humanitarian approach.

While looking for what works the best in developing virtues related to humanity, and equipping children with something that helps them fight their emotional disturbances, the researcher came across the role of storytelling in understanding emotions and handling them in the right perspective. As the trend of joint families is almost vanishing, the drawbacks of this trend of nuclear families, which is not only disturbing the social health of families but also spoiling the personalities of children.

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence**

Over the years, discontent with the classification system for childhood behaviour problems has led to considerable rethinking, discussion, and empirical investigation of the issues related to the diagnosis. According to the DSM – the IV classification system of childhood and adolescent disorders, major disorders enumerated are- ADHD, Conduct Disorders, Delinquent Behaviour, Anxiety Disorder, Childhood Depression, Autism. There is a wide range of causes leading to these disorders. (Marie Gervais)**Teenage Depression**<sup>1</sup>Crowe, Marie & Ward, Nic & Dunnachie, Bronwyn & Roberts, Morian. (2006). Characteristics of adolescent depression. International journal of mental health nursing. 15. 10-8. 10.1111/j.1447-0349.2006.00399.x. Depression is a common psychiatric disorder that is acknowledged to be increasing in disease burden. The rates of adolescent depression particularly a concern as they continue to increase. The seriousness and pervasive effects of depression on young people's lives support the view that research that extends the knowledge in this area is vital. This is a descriptive study of the characteristics of depression in a sample of 121 adolescents attending an outpatient specialist adolescent mental health service in New Zealand. The adolescents were required to complete two self-report measures to assess the presence of depressive symptoms, the severity of depression, and particular characteristics of the depression. The findings revealed that irritability was the most common characteristic along with other interpersonal and thought processing symptoms.

#### **Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Teenage Depression**

<sup>2</sup>A study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence, anxiety and depression among adolescents. Two hundred and fifty high-school students were administered the Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS), a self-report measure of emotional intelligence, along with measures of thought suppression, self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. The results provide support for the hypothesis that emotional abilities are an important and unique contributor to psychological adjustment.<sup>23</sup>Through reading, you can come to understand your state of mind and improve your behaviour, because, in some way, you can find yourself in the pages of a good novel or a beautiful poem. When you read, the brain can experience and empathise with the words, which help you identify and express what's happening inside you.<sup>3</sup>

**Storytelling and Emotional Intelligence**<sup>4</sup>Verbal communication is a joint activity; however, speech production and comprehension have primarily been analysed as independent processes within the boundaries of individual brains. Here, we applied fMRI to record brain activity from both speakers and listeners during natural verbal communication. This coupling vanishes when participants fail to communicate. Moreover, though on average, the listener's brain activity mirrors the speaker's activity with a delay, we also find areas that exhibit predictive anticipatory responses. We connected the extent of neural coupling to a quantitative measure of story comprehension and found that the greater the anticipatory speaker-listener coupling, the greater the understanding. We argue that the observed alignment of production- and comprehension-based processes serve as a mechanism by which brains convey information.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>5</sup>A story can put your whole brain to work. And yet, it gets better: When we tell stories to others that have helped us shape our thinking and way of life, we can have the same effect on them too. The brains of the person telling a story and listening to it, can synchronise, says [Uri Hasson](#) from Princeton: "When the woman spoke English, the volunteers understood her story, and their brains synchronised. When she had activity in her insula, an emotional brain region, the listeners did too. When her frontal cortex lit up, so did theirs. By simply telling a story, the woman could plant ideas, thoughts and emotions into the listeners' brains."<sup>5</sup>

### **Role of Education in Human Life**

Education is an essential human virtue, a necessity of society, basis of good life and sign of freedom. Education not only makes us intellectually strong but also helps us become a better being as a human and a better component of nature. (Dr. Ajay Bharadwaj)

But it is also true that education, if is confined to only bookish knowledge, leads to an imbalanced growth of an individual. And if it aims at developing only technical skills, will only produce nature made robots with no wisdom and rationale of where and how to use the knowledge to serve humanity and nurture the gifts of nature.

Value-based education is a tool which provides us with not only a profession which we can pursue but also a purpose in life. The purpose of our life is undoubtedly to know oneself and be ourselves. It is very aptly said that: 'Know thyself' was written over the portals of the antique world.'(Dr Ajay Bharadwaj)

### **Moral Education and Morality**

Morality and education are intimately associated. Education, in its broad sense, penetrates all aspects of our socio-communal life. Thus the education of morality is a very basic duty of the community on the one hand and family in particular as both these are informal agencies of education. Education is a traditional

phenomenon that the parents and elders in the community manifest a moral responsibility to see that the young in the community grow up morally and righteously. ( Joseph C. Mukalel)

Moral values control the entire spectrum social life of the individual. Social life, governed by social attitudes controls interpersonal relations and dealings between individuals in a community. (Joseph C. Mukalel )

**Morality** is the belief that some behaviour is right and acceptable and that other behaviour is wrong. (Fazilah Idris<sup>a</sup>Zaharah Hassan<sup>a</sup>Azizah Ya'acob<sup>a</sup>Saran Kaur Gill<sup>b</sup>Noor Aziah Mohd Awal)

Merriam Webster says, 'It is a doctrine or system of moral conduct.'

### **Story Telling – A Tool for Developing Emotional Intelligence**

Piaget's theories of child development support the use of children's literature with very young children. From age 4 to 7, children learn to understand different perspectives from their own because they change from being self-centred to other-centred. During this time, children understand not only fantasy stories but also more realistic stories to develop their relationship with others and to satisfy their curiosity about people and the world (Russell, 1994).

Meaningful storybooks for children gives experiences that have a connection to their lives. So, literature can help children learn about the real world in a pleasurable and fascinating way, perceive their surroundings, and understand relationships with others (Yoo, 1997). In other words, children's literature provides children with fundamental answers about who they are, how they should live in their world, and how they should live with each other. According to Weaver (cited in Brynildssen, 2002: P. 33-34). "*Literary characters have almost the same potential for influencing the reader as the real people with whom a reader might share a reading experience*". (Dr. Mona Mohammad Farid)

The connection between drama and moral education in young adolescence has not been widely researched. This study examines the role of process drama. In this study, process drama is defined as educational drama for awareness and conflict resolution through the creation of a dramatic collective exploring the moral values of junior high school age students. Students examined their values through themes of family, friendship, and other issues of personal importance. This study suggests that dramatic engagement focusing on the personal story can be a significant moral education tool for junior high students. (Marie Gervais)

There are several ways that one might morally educate a child. One can demonstrate various virtues and encourage the child to copy his or her behaviour. One can issue a series of imperatives and punish if failure to abide by them. Moreover, one might tell the child stories with moral lessons to elicit favourable behaviour and to discourage unfavourable behaviour. In this research, we study how kindergarten

teachers can better serve more appropriate aims of moral education by using stories. The main findings of this study are as follows: first, moral education is considered complementary material in kindergarten in Indonesia. Few teachers use stories as moral education in kindergarten. Second are, therefore challenged to explore the content of stories and help children connect the story with their daily lives. Third, how teachers see morality affects the way they convey moral values in a story. (Husni Rahim and Maila Dinia Husni Rahiem).

Value needs to be inculcated since a young age to form a human personality which rooted in moral and ethics. Teachers have to deal with a variety of teaching methods and pedagogy that emphasises the concept of ‘student-edutainment’ in the process of teaching and learning. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the use of storytelling and story reading to inculcate moral values and ethics among preschool children. Data collected qualitatively using focus group interviews, observations, document analysis (children’s creative painting) and video recording. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis using *NVivo software version 10.0*. The result shows, storytelling and story reading methods capable of fostering moral values such as helping, loving and well behaved. Also, aspects such as regulation of the code of ethics, social ethics, human relations, well-mannered and courteous are the practice of pre-school children. The results of this study can build a reference database for the kindergarten teachers, Development Research Centre of the National Child (CDRC), parents and the community.

**Methodology Research Design** Within group pre-post research design was be used for the study.

**Sampling** Accidental Sampling **Sample size**- 20 ( Sainik Kids Public School, Bahraich, class 8th)

**Tools\_ Sanjay Vohra. - Multi-Dimensional Assessment of Personality Series**

(MDAPS–V) Form C (English) has 100 items which measures 20 dimensions covering adaptability, achievement, motivation, boldness, competition, enthusiasm, general ability, guilt proneness, imagination, innovation, leadership, maturity, mental health, morality, self control, sensitivity, shrewdness, suspiciousness, social warmth and tension of adolescents (age 10 – 14 years).

### **Variables**

#### **Independent Variable**

An Educational Intervention gave for 40 days. Following a schedule will be followed every week. A Prayer — 5min

1. Pranakarshan Pranayam – 5 min
2. Story Telling (Bal Nirman ki Kahaniyan) – 20 min
3. Good Thought (Repetition and discussion of same thought whole week) – 4 min

4. Om Chanting – 1 min

Total Duration 35mins

**Dependent Variable-**

Adaptability, Academic Performance, Boldness, Competition, Creativity, Curiosity, Enthusiasm, Excitability, General Ability, Guilt Proneness, Individualism, Independence, Leadership, Maturity, Mental Health, Morality, Self Control, Sensitivity, Social Warmth and Tension.

**Statistical Method** - Correlated t-test.

**Hypothesis** – Null Hypothesis

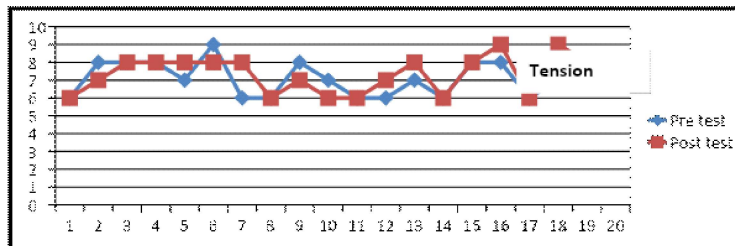
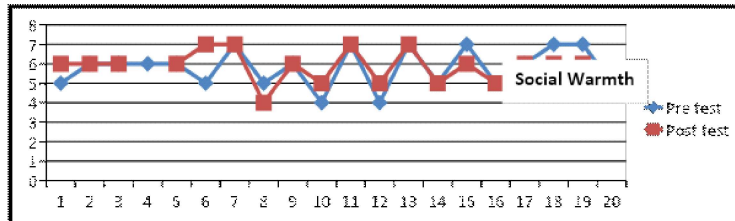
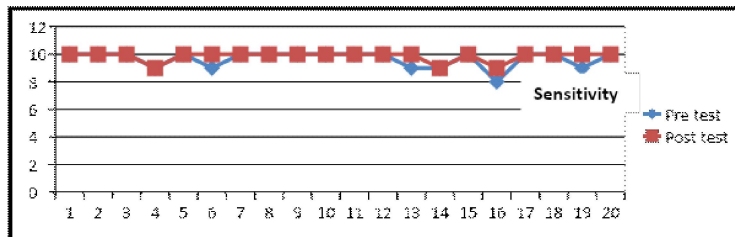
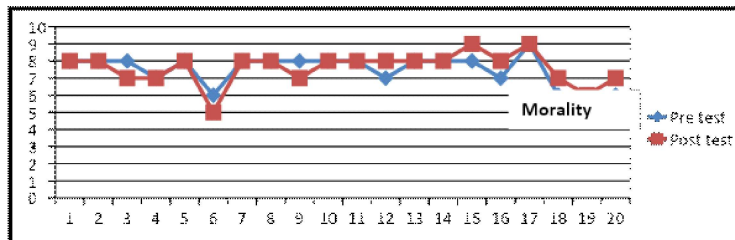
<b>Dimensions of Personality</b>	<b>Value of Correlated t-test (Absolute value)</b>	<b>(Critical value) .05 level of significance</b>	<b>Null Hypothesis</b>
Adaptability	2.139233	2.093	Rejected
Academic Performance	0.812728	2.093	Accepted
Boldness	0.640723	2.093	Accepted
Competition	1.482352	2.093	Accepted
Creativity	1.399248	2.093	Accepted
Curiosity	1.394538	2.093	Accepted
Enthusiasm	0.858395	2.093	Accepted
Excitability	0.786398	2.093	Accepted
General Ability	1.503505	2.093	Accepted
Guilt Proneness	2.183069	2.093	Rejected
Individualism	0.732695	2.093	Accepted
Independence	0.887041	2.093	Accepted
Leadership	0.887041	2.093	Accepted
Maturity	2.142306	2.093	Rejected
Mental Health	0.825578	2.093	Accepted
Morality	0.67082	2.093	Accepted
Self Control	2.202869	2.093	Rejected
Sensitivity	0.410391	2.093	Accepted
Social Warmth	0.764121	2.093	Accepted
Tension	1.03999	2.093	Accepted

Out of 20 null hypothesis four hypothesis were rejected, hence telling that there is a positive impact of the intervention over following dimensions of personality-

- **Adaptability**
- **Guilt Proneness**
- **Maturity**

**Self Control**

And results show that there was no significant impact of the intervention over the remaining dimensions of the personality. **Graphs** are the graphs displaying the changes in the 20 dimensions of the personality of the children studying in a school, that took place when given the exposure to the intervention for 40 days.



**Discussion**

As shown in the result table, four dimensions of the personality of the children,



are found to be significant at .05 level of significance with 19 as degree of freedom, hence rejecting the null hypothesis, while the remaining 16 dimensions were not found to be significant at .05 level of significance, hence accepting the null hypothesis. However, the graphical representation of data shows that there are changes in the readings of all the dimensions of the personality of the children being exposed to the intervention for 40 days.

Such practices, focused on training the thought process of children, would help them become better individuals and would lead to good mental health. Storybooks like ‘Bal Nirman ki Kahaniyan’ help giving children exposure to good literature. Such books not only entertain the children but also help them in developing good reading skills and habits.

Elders, who are blessed with the responsibility of bringing up an individual from a child to an adult, should understand their role as a parent, warden, teacher, etc. It’s not only in the school that we need such a package of practices but everywhere, and all the time, we should be committed to making a better society with the healthy thinking process. Children don’t learn from what they hear, rather they learn from what they see. What we follow and do would matter at large to bring up a better generation. Character building and personality development is a constant process, which continues for the lifetime, but ignoring the adolescence of a child, is an injustice towards his future.

Such an exposure if can bring about significant changes in four dimensions of the personality of children, it can be inferred that exposure to the same, for a longer period, will bring about significant changes in other dimensions of personality too.

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