



STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN SERVICE-LEARNING (SL) PROGRAMME OF ARUL ANANDAR ARTS & SCIENCE COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

Students' involved in service-learning as part of their regular curricular program learn to connect the classroom experience with life in the community. The study mainly seeks to evaluate the student's involvement toward Service-Learning program of Arul Anandar College of arts & science. A total of 120 students were selected from Arul Anandar of arts & Science College in Madurai, Tamil Nadu by using purposive sampling method. The data was collected through direct interview method by using semi structured interview schedule. The study revealed that through service-learning program the student's involvement towards community development is highly increasing. In addition, the students' academic learning was detected as the major benefits from engaging in service-learning.

KEYWORDS :- Service-Learning, Community Development, Students' Involvement and Academic Learning.

Introduction

Service-Learning has been used in universities in many countries for more than a decade, and more recently in universities in the United Kingdom, Europe, and Asia. The practice is an adaptable and diverse activity used in a broad range of educational settings, where educators aim for students to have meaningful and aggressive learning experiences (Carrington & Sagers, 2008).

Service-Learning is a form of experiential education which links academic learning to real-world experiences in community settings. It fosters civic responsibility by focusing on reflective thinking, critical and an appreciation of larger social issues inherent in a democracy. Service-Learning (SL) has its origins on John Dewey's (1938) experiential learning since it is an innovative educative methodology that connects theoretical foundations and practice. The aim of SL should be to innovate and give attention to the needs of current society, even as responding to new models of learning (Domangue & Carson, 2008).

According to David Kolb (1984), experiential learning theory is "a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior". This model provides a exclusive perspective on learning and development of students. Kolb presents an integrated model that shares the following characteristics of experiential learning: i) Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes, ii) Learning is a continuous process grounded in experience, iii) The process of learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world, iv) Learning is an holistic process of adaptation to the world, v) Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment, and vi) Learning is the process of creating knowledge. These characteristics of the experiential learning process can be concise in Kolb's definition of learning as the "process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience".

Objectives of the study

1. To elicit the personal background of the students
2. To analyze the Level of Involvement in Service-Learning (SL) activities of the students

Methodology

The area selected for the present study is Arul Anandar arts & Science College in Madurai District, Tamil Nadu. Before conducting the study the permission letter were obtained from the Head of the institution. A total of 120 interested students from 3 different disciplines were selected purposively. The study is basically "Descriptive in nature". The data was collected

through direct interview method by using semi structured interview schedule. Both primary and secondary data were collected for the study. The collected data were statistically analyse and interpreted by using appropriate statistical tools. The data presented in this study were collected during 2017 to 2018.

Results

Service-Learning program helps the students to involve during the period of their course. Arul Anandar college have their own credit-based service-learning program called ARISE - Arul Anandar Initiatives for Social Education. It is a compulsory program for all undergraduates who are doing second year. Through this programme students can get an opportunity to reach out the people as learners with the knowledge and the skills gathered and to help them develop themselves by mobilizing the locally available resources.

Table 1: Personal Background of the Respondents

Personal background of the respondents	
Variables	No. of respondents (n=120) %
Gender	33.3
Male	66.7
Female	
Age	58.3
17 to 19 years	41.7
19 to 21 years	
Religion	56.0
Hindu	38.0
Christian	06.0
Muslim	
Programme	35.8
Rural Development Science	35.0
Philosophy	29.2
Economics	

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by gender, age, religion and programme of the study during 2017-2018. The majority of the students were female (66.7 percent), age between 17 to 19 years (58.3 percent), more than half (56 percent) were belong to Hindu religion, and either rural development science or philosophy programme (70.8 percent).

Table 2. Level of Involvement in Service-Learning (SL) activities of the students

Sl. No.	Variables	Involvement Levels		
		Low	Medium	High

1.	Regular coaching classes for school Children	7 (5.8)	54 (45.0)	59 (49.2)
2.	Youth welfare programmes	1 (0.8)	60 (50.0)	59 (49.2)
3.	Women Empowerment	2 (1.7)	55 (45.8)	63 (52.5)
4.	Health & Sanitation programmes	4 (3.3)	45 (37.5)	71 (59.2)
5.	Protection of Environment	9 (7.5)	49 (40.8)	62 (51.7)
6.	Non-formal Education	0 (0)	57 (47.5)	63 (52.5)
7.	Evening Tuition for village children	0 (0)	58 (48.3)	62 (51.7)

Figures in parenthesis refer to per cent to total) (Source: Compiled from field data)

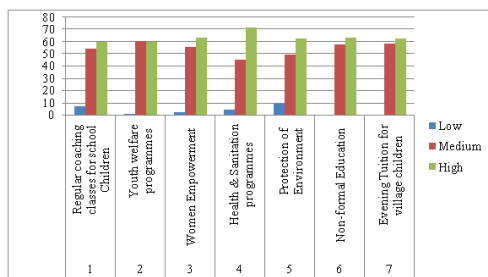
need to create more joint platforms to learn and exchange each other's concerns and success stories. This study was to inquire into the learning processes that occur while students engage in service-learning.

References

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Figure 1

Level of involvement in Service-Learning activities of the respondents (on coaching classes, youth welfare, women empowerment, environment, non-formal education and evening tuition for village children)



Level of involvement in Service-Learning activities

Table 2 shows that the respondents' level of involvement in SL activities on health and sanitation programmes was high (59.2 percent), 52.5 per cent of the respondents expressed that their level of involvement in SL activities on women empowerment and non-formal education was high. Another 51.7 per cent of the respondents reported to have high level of involvement in SL activities on protection of environment and evening tuition for village children.

Major Findings

Students involvement in Service-Learning Activities

- All the respondents in the study, through their service-learning experiences, developed a better sense of self.
- The development and integration of service-learning into the college experience creates a more holistic learning environment, which engages students' minds as well as their hearts.
- The respondents have a high level of involvement in health and sanitation programmes (59.2 percent), compare to other activities.

Conclusion

Service-learning can be an effective strategy in changing both the way students learn and the way they involve themselves within their community. This study demonstrated that the students were highly involving toward underserved populations. Through their service-learning experiences, students made connections with their personal and intellectual development. They also acquired and were able to apply this new knowledge. These connections provided the necessary links to academic learning. Service-Learning program is still in an infant stage, institution and communities