



Life Skill Development: Educational Empowerment of Adolescent Girls

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a vital stage of growth and development. It is characterized by rapid physiological changes and psychological maturation. As adolescents mature, their mental process becomes more analytical, developing abstract thinking and independent ideology. As today's adolescent girls are tomorrow's women, imparting education and developing life skills and capabilities in them have prime importance. Life skill education promotes mental well being and equips them to face the realities of life. The present study was conducted to know the life skill development among rural adolescent girls and impact of intervention on life skills. The sample for the study comprised of 120 adolescent girls studying in 8th and 9th standards of Uppinbetageri and Amminbavi villages of Dharwad taluk. The girls belonging to age range of 13 to 15 years were randomly selected for the study. Checklists were used to collect the information regarding various life skills such as problem solving ability, creative thinking, critical thinking, coping with stress and empathy. The results of the study revealed that at pre test, majority of the adolescent girls experienced medium level of creative thinking (55%) and empathy (76.7%). About 7.5 per cent had high level of critical thinking, coping with stress (70.9%) and problem solving ability (65.8%). After the intervention, majority of adolescent girls had high level of critical thinking (94.16%) followed by coping with stress (79.12%), problem solving (70%), creative thinking (50%) and empathy (57.5%). Thus, the intervention on life skill education is helpful for the rural adolescent girls to take positive actions and improving their coping skills of stress and problem solving ability.

Key words: Adolescent girl, life skill, creative thinking, critical thinking, coping with stress and empathy.

INTRODUCTION:

Adolescents need help and guidance in decision-making, problem solving, critical thinking, developing interpersonal skills, self-awareness, empathy, coping with stress and managing emotions. They need support and guidance which is the responsibility of the parents to help children by understanding and solving their problems. Adolescence is the transition period from childhood to adulthood and also a period of experimenting, experiencing and expanding. During this stage, many adolescents experience anxiety, confusion and difficulty in their preparation for adulthood. Parents have to struggle to develop life skills among their children, so that adolescents take responsibility for making

choices, resisting negative pressure and avoiding risky behavior. Attempts should be made to understand the adolescent, and to safeguard, protect and guide them. Extra care is needed while offering help to adolescents problems because it is not easy for teenagers to accept the fact that they need help. The Life Skills Education is a good support system for adolescents at the community level. Effective acquisition and application of life skills can influence the way one feels about others, ourselves and will equally influence the way we are perceived by others. It contributes to perception of self confidence and self esteem in turn promotes overall well being of an individual (Anuradha, 2014).



Life skill of a person develops over the years continuously in a dynamic manner. Life skills have been defined by WHO (1999), as abilities for positive and adaptive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It is through life skills they will solve their problems, manage situations and cope up with a variety of stressors. Life skill education enhances young people's ability to take responsibility for making choices, resisting negative pressure and avoiding risky behavior. The ten life skills are as follows;

1. Critical thinking: - It is an ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute us to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behavior, such as values, peer pressure, and the media.

2. Creative thinking: - It is the ability to look beyond our direct experience and address issues. It contributes to both decision making and problem solving by enabling us to explore the available alternatives and various consequences of our actions or non-action.

3. Decision making –It is a choice that makes between two or more possible options.

4. Problem solving: - Having made the decisions about each of the options, choosing the one which suits the best, following it through even in the face impediments and going through the process again till a positive outcome of the problem is achieved.

5. Interpersonal relationships: - Interpersonal relationship skills help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with. This means being able to make and keep friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being. It also includes keeping good relations with family members, which are an important source of social support.

6. Effective communication: - Effective communication means that we are able to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations. This means being able to express opinions, desires, needs and fears.

7. Coping with emotions: - Coping with emotions involves recognizing emotions in ourselves and others, being aware of how emotions influence behavior, and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. Intense emotions, like anger or sorrow can have negative effects on our health if we do not react appropriately.

8. Self-awareness:- Selfawareness includes our recognition of ourselves, our character, our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognize when we are stressed or feel under pressure. It is also often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy for others.

9. Empathy: - Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person, even in a situation that we may not be familiar with.

10. Coping with stress: - Coping with stress is recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how this affects us, and acting in ways that help to control our levels of stress.

The present study focuses on the impact of educational empowerment of rural adolescent girls on life skill development.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

The population of the study consisted of adolescent girls studying in 8th and 9th standards of Uppinbetegeri and Amminbhavi village of Dharwadtaluk. The total sample of 120 adolescents girls from the age group of 13-15 years were selected randomly from 8th and 9th standards from



both the villages. Prior permission from the head master was taken before assessing the students on various life skills. The girls were made to sit in one class room and were assessed for five life skills namely, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, coping with stress and empathy by using self administered checklist as a method of data collection. Based on the total scores obtained the girls were divided into three categories as Low, Medium and High.

The intervention was given to rural adolescent girls for a period of 3 months i.e. two days in a week in the form of training through developed training module, guest lectures, brain storming methods, working in small groups and role play to discuss and practice the skills. The different training methods are used for different skills. After training, adolescents are instructed to practice the life skill in real life situations. The main aim of life skill intervention is to make rural adolescent girls to perform better in all walks of life by acquiring psychological competence, finding proper solutions to day to day problems, creating positive attitude, coping with different situations in life and improving ability. After the intervention, a gap of one month later the post test assessment was done to know the impact of intervention on life skill development of girls. Frequency and percentages were computed in order to know the levels of life skills of adolescent girls. Students' t' test was used to know the comparison between pre test and post test results on the various life skill development of adolescent girls.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Table 1 shows the distribution of adolescent girls for various life skills during pre and post test. At pre test, majority of adolescent girls had high level of critical thinking (77.5%), coping with stress (70.9%), problem solving ability (65.8%) followed by medium level of empathy (76.7%) and creative thinking (55%) respectively. Very few adolescent girls had

low level of creative thinking (9.2%) and critical thinking (0.8%).

After the educational intervention, post test results revealed that majority of adolescent girls had high level of critical thinking (94.16%), coping with stress (79.12%), problem solving (70%), creative thinking (50%) and empathy (42.5%). It is very interesting to know that none of the respondent had low level of life skills. Thus, intervention found to be effective among adolescent girls to develop and enhance their life skills. The results of Sharma (2003) are also in line with our research findings indicating that after the life skill intervention programme. Majority of the adolescent girls (51%) had high level of life skills as compared to pre test. The findings are supported by Nejad (2010) authenticated that Life skills training is an effective prevention method for a range of problems with adolescents, as well as an effective intervention for adolescents experiencing a wide variety of mental, emotional, behavioral, and physical problems. This education brings up the sense of qualification, capacity of being effective, ability to deal with defeating problems, objective and rational approaches to the problem. Life skills programmes are comprehensive and include various areas like thinking, behavior and emotions to achieve a healthy life.

Table 2 shows the mean scores of adolescent girls in life skill development before and after the intervention. There is a significant difference between pre test and post test scores of adolescent girls with regard to problem solving, coping with stress and empathy. Further, the mean scores indicated that life skill development was significantly better at post test than the pre test. The intervention on life skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, coping with stress and empathy helped the rural adolescent girls to take positive actions to protect themselves, in solving problems, coping with the stress and to promote positive social relationships. The findings are supported by Cutinha (2012) and Srikala and Kishore (2010) who reported that



education of the impact of model on life skill education of school children improves adjustment of the adolescents with teachers, school, increases prosocial behavior, coping with stress and self esteem as there was a significant difference between the groups between experimental and control group. These results were supported by Aparna and Raakhee (2011), who reported that life skill education is a good support system for adolescents at the community level to acquire and develop skills which are necessary for their life. Turner et al (2008) reported that life skills can be taught and life skill education is an educational innovation that can spread to empower adolescents to protect themselves and to promote their health and positive social relation.

Life skill education is a value addition programme for the youth to understand self and able to assess their skill, abilities and areas of developments. After the intervention program, majority of the adolescent girls had high levels of life skills. So, the intervention on life skill education is helpful for the rural adolescent girls to take positive actions and improving their coping skills of stress and problem solving ability. Life skills are the building blocks of one behavior and need to be learnt well to lead a healthy, meaningful and productive life. Attempts should be made to understand the adolescents problems and guide them in acquisition of life skills. The intervention on life skill development is a good support system for adolescents at the community level.

CONCLUSION:

Table 1. Life skill development of adolescent girls at pre test and post test
N=120

Sl No.	Life skills	Low		Medium		High	
		Pre test	Post test	Pre test	Post test	Pre test	Post test
1	Coping with Stress	-	-	35 (29.2)	9 (7.5)	85 (70.9)	111 (92.5)
2	Critical thinking	1 (0.8)	-	26 (21.7)	17 (14.2)	93 (77.5)	103 (85.8)
3	Problem Solving	-	-	41 (34.2)	20 (16.7)	79 (65.8)	100 (83.3)
4	Creative thinking	11 (9.2)	-	66 (55.0)	36 (30.0)	43 (35.8)	84 (70.0)
5	Empathy scale	-	-	92 (76.7)	35 (29.2)	28 (23.6)	85 (70.8)

Note: Number in the parentheses indicate percentages

Table 2: Mean score comparison of life skill development of adolescences at pre and post test



N=120

Sl. No	Parameters		Mean	SD	T test
1	Coping with stress	Pre test	42.94	5.51	9.20**
		Post test	50.08	6.45	
2	Critical thinking	Pre test	38.58	4.58	3.80**
		Post test	40.76	4.27	
3	Problem Solving	Pre test	37.16	2.22	9.25**
		Post test	40.30	2.98	
4	Creative thinking	Pre test	18.10	5.37	6.84**
		Post test	22.44	4.41	
5	Empathy	Pre test	88.55	8.31	8.37**
		Post test	97.43	8.12	

Note: * - Significant at 0.05 level

** - Significant at 0.01 level NS – Non-Significant

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