

An Exploratory Study On Life Skills Intervention And Its Impact On The Study Skills Among Young Adolescents

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I. INTRODUCTION

An adolescent is a period of liveliness, positive energy and resources for the country, and need to be respected, appreciated and accepted as such. They have unlimited energy, vitality and idealism, as well as a strong urge to experiment and create a better world. World should be proud of having one of the largest reservoirs of youth population i.e. 1.8 billion out of the total population (UNFPA, 2014). There are seventeen developing countries in the world whose half of the population age is less than 18 years. India is home to more than 243 million individuals aged between 10-19 years which accounts for 20% of the total population of the country. The recent researches indicated that the life skills competencies in the young are not adequate to address the challenges of 21st century (Deffenbacher, Lynch, Crede and Kuncel, 2008; Rao, 2011). The education, today, needs to enable a child to deal effectively with the environment, makes maximum use of resources, discern available opportunities and face the challenges of society. To enable these behavioural transformations in the child, the system needs to enrich the school curriculum with effective life skills training programme.

II. LIFE SKILLS: CONCEPT AND MEANING

The meaning and concept of life skill is beyond its definition. It is easy to define the concept in general but to suit the explanation in all the particular life situation and throughout life is difficult. Goody (2001) says that it is not enough to ask how life skills are defined in general; rather it is essential to ask how they are defined in particular life situations and throughout life.

Quane (2002), says that 'life skills are developed as a result of a constructive processing of information, impressions, encounters and experiences- both individual and social that are part of one's life and work, and the rapid changes that occur in the course of one's life. In this situation, life skills education and training paves the way for identifying the capacity through self- analysis, assessing the requirement and training in the respective area for a better and effective result. Life skill will help the individual to translate knowledge, attitude and values into healthy behaviour. That is, life skills is the ability that can be imbibed and improved through practice, to translate the knowledge, attitude, and values in to positive behaviour, to deal efficiently with the needs and challenges of day to day life (Nair R.V.2010).

III. COMPONENTS OF LIFE SKILLS

Life Skills-based education can be defined as basically being a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas - knowledge, attitude and skills (UNICEF, 2002). WHO (1996a) has categorized a core set of life skills into the following three components:

- a. Thinking skills: includes self-awareness, social awareness, goal setting, problem solving, and decision-making. To be able to think critically, information should be provided in order to make informed decisions and choices. The skills to think critically can also be developed if the teenagers are given the opportunity to look at different perspectives of an issue, the pros and the cons of making one decision over the other and making them realize the negative consequences of making hasty, unplanned decisions.
- b. Social skills: include appreciating or validating others, working with others and understanding their roles, building positive relationships with friends and family, listening and communicating effectively, and taking responsibility and coping with stress. Social skills enable the adolescents to be accepted in the society and to accept social norms, which provide a foundation for adult social behaviour.
- c. Coping/Negotiation skills- means not only negotiating with others but with oneself as well. For effectively negotiating with others, one need to know what one wants in life, is firm on one's values and beliefs and can

therefore say “no” to harmful behaviour and risky temptations. Effective coping strategies that help one to balance with one’s own emotions and stress effectively.

According to the internal policy paper by the Ministry of Youth, New Zealand a young person’s positive skills should include the following: Self-confidence, ability to cope with challenges, help seeking behaviour, productive work habits, desire to learn, involvement in sports, supportive group of friends, healthy behaviour or lifestyle, involvement with cultural groups, good social skills, sound identity, and hobbies, skills, interests (Adolescence Education Newsletter, 2001).

There is considerable evidence suggesting children’s cognitive, social and emotional skills can be negatively affected when they grow up in disadvantaged learning contexts (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000;Schady et al., 2014). Furthermore, recent evidence suggests that the stress associated with growing up in poverty negatively affects children’s brain development and brain functioning in adulthood (Angstadt et al., 2013). Life skills programmes, therefore, have significant scope to enhance social, emotional and thinking skills among school children. It can help to navigate their challenging environments leading to better academic performance and social mobility.

IV. REVIEWS OF THE RELATED STUDY

Nitin, K., (2016) conducted a study on ‘Effectiveness of Instructional Strategy on Life Skill of Problem Solving in Terms of Class VIII Students’ Achievement in Science’. The objective of the study was to compare interactional strategy based on life skill of problem solving between pre-test and post-test of class VIII students of Raja Ram Sehanighigher secondary schools, Indore. The method was experimental in nature and the pre-post-test in single group was done for this study. The sample was done purposively by selecting thirty students (15 boys and 15 girls) from class VIII. The data was collected by using self-developed tool namely achievement test and reaction scale. Analysis of the research shows that the t-value of 11.325 for achievement is significant at 0.01 level with $df=29$. It indicates that the mean achievement scores of the students before the treatment differ significantly from that after the treatment. Thus, the Instructional Strategy on life skills was found to be effective in terms of achievement of students on criterion test.

Study was conducted by Parvathy and Renjith (2015), titled ‘Impact of Life Skills Education on Adolescents in Rural School’. The major objective of the study is to analyze the knowledge of life skills among adolescents and the impact of life skills education training on their knowledge level. The study is carried out in the coastal area school at Karunagapally, Kerala. An experimental study method involving pre- post design is conducted with experiment-delayed group. A sample size of 57 is taken with 30 samples in experimental group and 27 samples in experiment-delayed group. The result of the study shows that the experimental and experiment–delayed groups were found similar in their socio-demographic status. The study has revealed significant impact of life skills education training on adolescents.

Joseph (2014) explored the effect of life skills training on the enhancement of emotional intelligence of adolescents in XI standard. Data was collected from 503 students from six higher secondary schools in Chennai City. The Mangal Emotional Effect of Life skills Training on Resilience among School Adolescents 30 Inventory by Mangal and Mangal (2009) was used to identify the measure of emotional intelligence. t-test was used to analyze the results. The findings indicated that life skills training have a significant effect in improving emotional intelligence in adolescents. The study further shows that, life skills have an effect on self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem and well-being.

Jose et al. (2014) evaluated a group of life skill trainers in undertaking life skills training among girl children residing at Abhayabala. The author and his team administered life skills training spanning 14 sessions through the medium of social group work, for 43 girl children, in the age group 11-19, hailing from difficult circumstances, sheltered and rehabilitated at Abhayabala. The CDC self-esteem scale was used to be pre and post intervention assessments of the girl children and the same was evaluated to ascertain the effectiveness of the life skill training in enhancing self-esteem and equipping them to live a life of self-worth and dignity. The findings of the study revealed that the intervention had helped to improve self-esteem improvement in self-esteem generated better self-awareness, enhancing self-image, assertiveness, critical thinking and reflection about oneself and entitlement learning to trust as well as develop interpersonal relationship, etc.

Mostafa (2013) ‘The Efficacy of Training Life Skills on Educational Achievement and Social Acceptance’, examined the relationship between learning life skills and academic achievement. The main purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of teaching life skills on educational achievement and social acceptance of middle school (Grade VI-IX) students of Boukan town, Iran. The aim of the project is to enhance psychological, social abilities and prevention from causing harmful behaviour for health and safety. Research was conducted to assess the effectiveness this program. Method of feedback with two groups of experiment and certification of sample amounts 619 people in each group were selected. Research tools consist of questionnaires of life skills, social acceptance and

questionnaire of individual and personal background information. The findings indicated that the skill of knowing oneself and excitements have influences on students' educational achievement. Teaching communication skills was effective on problem solving among the students and in return it improves their academic achievement, whereas a decision making skill has effect on the academic achievement of the students. In general, the result shows that teaching life skills leads to improvement of educational performance among students.

Nanda (2013) conducted a study on behaviour modification through family and life skills education of adolescents. For the implementation of the intervention, a statistically viable sample of 171 non-migrant, unmarried adolescent girls in the age group of 11-18 years belonging to low socio-economic background was purposively selected from 8 villages of Pinjore block of Panchkula district of Haryana. The girls were divided into two age groups i.e. early adolescent girl (11-15 years) and later adolescent girl (16-18) for analysing the impact of intervention on behavior modification. These girls were given family and life skill education at the Anganwadicentres of their respective village during initial orientation in the first month and continuing education in subsequent months for one year. After the pre-test and post-test analysis the result revealed positive gains in skill acquisition with improved social behaviour, decision making skills, problem solving skills and adjustment to life challenges.

Fallachai (2012) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of instruction of academic and life skills on the freshmen academic achievement. Research procedures used semi-experimental with pre-test and post-test design with control groups. Sample of 170 freshmen were randomly selected and assigned in experimental and control groups. An examination consisted of three stages: administering pre-test, applying variables, and administering post-test. Throughout the examination process, all the members of the experimental group were first trained in sessions of 90 to 120 minutes for 9 weeks, and finally post –test was administered for both experimental and control groups. The administering variables consists of teaching academic study and life skills such as studying and learning method, note taking techniques, stress management, problem solving, decision making, communication skills, critical and creative thinking. Analysis was conducted to determine whether there was any difference between the two groups. Primary result shows that the experimental group shows higher performance than the control group. This arrived at the conclusion that the students' who had received academic and life skills training. The statistical results also obtained from analysis of covariance testing showed the educational program was significant after controlling the effects pre-test, that is, teaching students life skills was effective on their knowledge and grades. In order to get more in depth understanding, the study suggested that such study should be repeated with larger sample. The foregoing studies proves that life skills education helps an adolescents in abstaining from substance abuse, boosting self-confidence, self- empowerment, enhancing emotional intelligent, enhancing academic standards, fostering resilience, behaviour modification and strengthening interpersonal relationships. Studies and successful intervention programs reveal that, when developing in-school life skills-based education, it is important to place it in the context of wider education sector reforms. Ultimately, to be effective, the life skills teach in schools are inclusive, child-friendly, adequately resourced and provisioned, staffed by trained and motivated teachers, and which utilize participatory and experimental methods (including continuous assessment). It should begin in the junior grades and continue through the higher ones, applying life skills, over time, to more sensitive and complex issues (Rao, 2011).

V. LIFE SKILLS AND ITS PROCESS OF ENHANCING STUDY SKILLS

Life skills competencies are necessary for the total development of students. The competencies are the knowledge, skills attitudes and behaviour that students need to possess to become healthy and well-balanced individuals. Schools will need to appreciate the inextricable link between physical, cognitive, psycho-social and psycho-sexual development and to adopt a balanced approach that pays attention to these dimensions in their students (Infante, 2001).

Life skills enhance human capabilities and prepare the young for the survival and participation in an increasingly skill-based global economy. Life skill lays foundation for lifelong learning, enabling people to access and process information both in formal and non-formal setting leading to better quality of life.

The research in the area of life skills indicates that students need supplementary study skills to improve their comprehension and capabilities to cope with the demands of various subjects at school level (Mostafa, 2013; Sclater, &Lally, 2013).All study skills needed in school education are gained by practice, trial and error method through reflection and feedback from teachers, parents and peers.

VI. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the present study is to assess the effectiveness of life skill training on enhancing study skills among school going adolescents.

VII. METHODOLOGY

7.1 Research Design

This study follows Quasi- Experimental research design. Quasi-experimental design involves selecting groups, upon which a variable is tested, without any random pre-selection processes. In this research One Group Pre-test Post-test Design was used. In this design, only one group has been used for the intervention study. The researcher was set out to compare the effectiveness of life skills training on study skills before and after the intervention. The level of study skills was assessed before the intervention program. After the three months of training in life skills, the post-test was conducted to the members of an experimental group.

Table- 1 Plan of study

Pre-test	Intervention	Post-test
Study skills	Life Skills Training Programme	Study skills

Table-2 Research design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	O1	X	O2

O1 = Pre intervention

O2= Post intervention

X = Treatment

Sample

Purposive convenient sampling technique was used for data collection. A sample of the study consists of adolescents between the age group of 12 to 15 years (studying in 8thStd). Total sample taken is 188 (boys– girls). The study was conducted among the urban adolescents in Ghaziabad district of UP studying in CBSE stream.

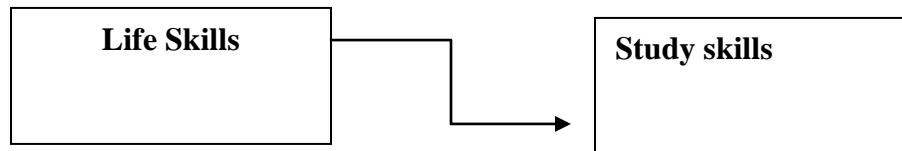
Training was imparted to the sample population on life skills on the basis of a module developed by the investigator for the purpose. The major content of the module is self-awareness, empathy, effective communication, interpersonal relationship, problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, creative thinking, coping with emotion, and coping with stress. For effective facilitation, different training methodologies like brainstorming, demonstration, role-play, power point presentation, video visuals, discussions, simulations and debriefings were used during the training sessions. The entire training was for forty eight hours completed in three months sessions of 50 minutes each.

Variables

Figure-1 Variables

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



The dependent variable of the study is learning behavior, and the independent variable is life skills.

The Inclusion Criteria employed in the study were:

Adolescents between the age group of 12 to 15 years

Adolescents studying in 8th standard and willing to participate

Exclusion criteria planned to adopt for the current study

Adolescents with learning difficulties

Adolescents with mental disabilities

Adolescents studying in 8th standard but below 12 years of age

Adolescents studying in 8th standard but above 15 years of age

Adolescents studying in 8th standard and not willing to participate

VIII. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted only among the 8thstd students of public schools where students from high income groups are studying. More over the span of intervention was brief and the data immediately after the intervention only has been collected. In order to understand the impact of training in study skills, data could have been collected and analysed after six months and one year of intervention. However due to the paucity of time the researcher could not do it.

IX. TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

9.1 Study skills Inventory

Study Skills Inventory (SSI) developed by researcher was used for the assessment of study skills in adolescents. It is a standardized questionnaire having reliability of .90. The multi-dimensional study skills inventory consists of 85 items in the form of statements in built with a 5 point scale for the respondent to check the appropriate response which is most descriptive of him/her. It has both positive and negative items. The scale measures 11 dimensions of study skills such as Association, Concentration, Comprehension, Consultation with Teacher, Homework, Learning Motivation, Memory, Preparation for Examination, Time Management, Taking Notes and Textbook reading.

X. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analyses of data collected are compiled and presented in tables below.

Table-3 Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	98	52.12766
Female	90	47.87234
Total	188	100

Figure –2 Graphical representation of gender

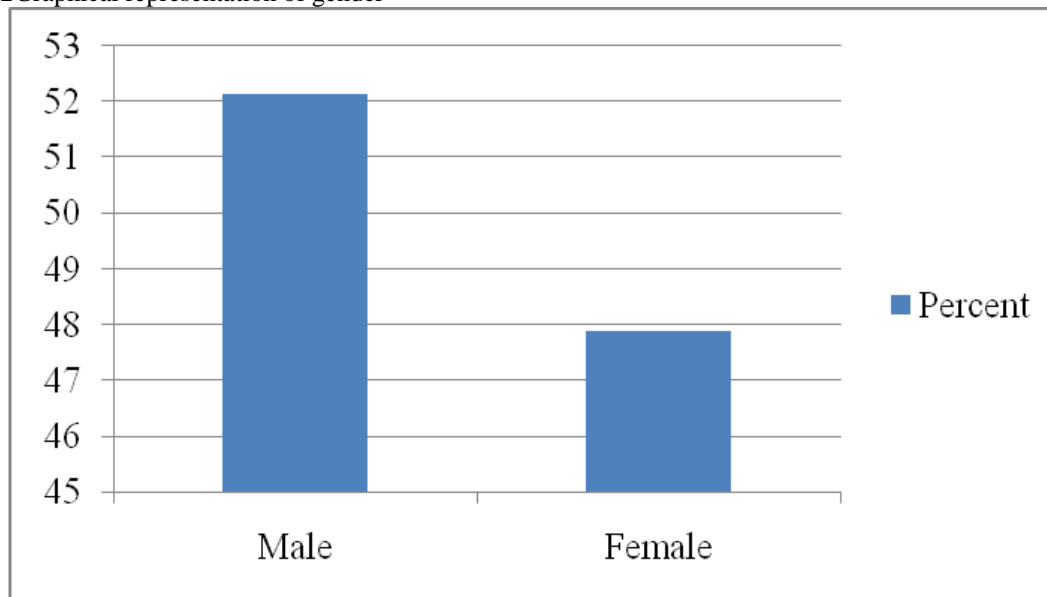


Figure-2 shows that the study consists of 52.127% of boys and 47.872% of girls.

Table 4 Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Pre SSI	266.8042	189	19.74300	1.4360
Post SSI	345.7143	189	22.31884	1.62346

The table 4 shows that during pre-test, the mean score was 266.8042 and standard deviation was 19.74300. Whereas the post-test shows that increase in mean score as 345.7143 and decrease in standard deviation 22.31884. This has proved that there is positive impact on life skills intervention in changing the study skills among the young adolescents positively.

Table 5 Paired Samples Correlations

	No	Correlation	Sig
Pair 1 Pre SSI & Post SSI	189	.093	.204

The table 5 shows the correlation was .093 and the significance is .204.

Table 6 Paired Samples t' Test

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 Pre SSI – Post SSI	-38.210	188	.000

The table 6 shows that the paired 't' test score is .000 (df 188) it indicates there is an extremely high significance. There for it has been proved that the life skills intervention has an impact on enhancing study skills among young adolescents.

XII. CONCLUSION

The present intervention study conducted among the school-going adolescents in a public school which follows CBSE curriculum has proved that training in life skills can modify the study skills among them. This supports several other studies conducted in various settings that life skills are an effective method to improve the social and emotional competence, positive behavior, and educational improvement of adolescents (Renjith and Parvathy, 2015; Paul & Mahendran, 2012; Mustafa 2013).

The CBSE system has introduced life skills education in its curriculum up to 12th standards.

Whereas in the majority of the schools, the life skills lessons are not handled properly, or there are no trained teachers to conduct the sessions. As a result, the students are deprived of the benefits of life skills education in schools.

A proper and relevant intervention in life skills can help these school children to develop their cognitive, social as well as coping skills and to lead a positive and healthy life.

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