

IMPACT OF LIFE SKILL EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON RURAL ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG MOTHERS



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ABSTRACT:

The present study was taken up for Empowering Rural Adolescent girls and Young mothers with life skills to lead a Quality life and also to help women to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The sample consisted of 75 girls (12 – 19 yrs) and 75 young mothers (19+ yrs -25yrs) from 5 operational villages of Chevella Mandal, RR district. Checklist (developed by scientists from 9 State Agriculture Universities, All India Coordinated Research Project, Child development component), was used to find out the Life skills (5) of rural Adolescent girls and young mothers. Pre test results showed average scores of the selected sample in all the 5 areas ie Critical thinking; Creative thinking; Problem solving; Empathy; and Management of stress. Based on the results, training programmes were conducted for a period of 10 months, using effective methodologies for enhancing the Life skills of the sample. Post test results showed a positive impact, reflecting the effectiveness of the training programme. However compared to young mothers, rural girls scored better in all the five selected life skills.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization has defined Life skills as, "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life"(WHO, 1997a). UNICEF has defined Life skills as "a behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills". Life skills are essentially abilities that help promote mental well-being and competence in

young people as they face the realities of life. In short, Life skills empower young people to take positive action to protect themselves and promote health and positive social relationships (McGuire and Priestly, 1981; Francis, 2007).

Need / rationale for Life Skills Education Programme:

During the 21st century, individuals globally undergoing significant transition and changes are the adolescents. Today's youth is exposed to more information and cultural alternatives than in earlier periods. This provides them with culturally diverse choices, which cannot be easily exercised due to economic dependence. During adolescence, *life skills development* is more an active process. Despite superior intellectual abilities, the adolescent's behaviour is occasionally coloured by emotions rather than by rationality. Frequently the adolescent is in an emotional dilemma of wanting to be guided by parents, yet wishing to be free from them, and more aligned to their peers. Many critical issues culminate at this stage – puberty, dealing with sexuality and gender issues, tackling emotional upheaval, finishing basic schooling, need to make future educational or career choices, facing responsibilities as an individual, etc. Hence Life Skills Development has a direct relevance for Adolescents.

Objectives of the study:

- Finding out the Demographic profile of the selected sample
- Finding out the Life skills of the selected sample
- Organizing training programmes and work shops to enhance the Life skills of the selected sample
- Impact assessment of the Life skill training programme

METHODOLOGY

Location of the study: For the present study, Chevella mandal, RR District was selected which was 45 km from AICRP – H.Sc, ANGRAU (Acarya NG Ranga Agriculture University) campus.

Sample: 150 samples (75 adolescent girls & 75 young mothers) were selected from two villages (Kandawada & Malkapur), which had Government Zilla Parishad High Schools and also young mothers. The group comprised of rural school going adolescent girls (75) & young mothers (75) in the age range of 12- 25 years.

Total population of Kandavada village was 2791. Out of this 1456 were males and 1335 were females. Regarding caste structure, 70% belonged to BC and 20% belonged to SC category. With regard to land holdings, 37% of the families were having small land holdings and 33% were having marginal land holdings. 43% were laborers, 37% were agricultural farmers and 10% followed caste occupations. Regarding literacy level, 43% of the male members were literates and 27% of females were literates.

Total population of Malkapur village was 2035. Out of this 1045 were males and 990 were females. Regarding caste structure, 60% belonged to BC category, 20% belonged to SC and 20% belonged to OC category. Regarding land holding, 50% of the families were having small land holdings, 10% were having marginal land holdings, and 40% were landless and working as agricultural laborers. Regarding literacy level, 40% of the male members were literates and 17% of females were literates

Measurement Tools:

- Interview Schedule to collect base line information about the selected sample

- Checklist to find out the Life skill (5) levels of the selected sample

Description of the tools used for the study:

1. Critical Thinking: This tool consists of (both positive and negative statements) 15 items. The maximum possible score is 45 where positive statements will carry 3 for agree, 2 for disagree and 1 for undecided. Reverse scoring is done for negative statements. The respondent who score more than 36 will be considered as good; Score between 26 and 35 will be considered as average and Score below 26 will be considered as poor in Critical thinking skills.

2. Creative Thinking: This tool measures one’s creative ability. It consists of 10 statements. Each statement carries different scores. The maximum possible score is 30. Score above 20 will be considered as good, Score between 10 - 20 will be considered as average and Score less than 10 will be considered as poor in Creative thinking skills. Higher the score, higher the creativity.

3. Problem solving: This tool consists of (both positive and negative statements) 16 items. The maximum possible score is 48 where positive statements will carry 3 for always, 2 for sometimes and 1 for never. Reverse scoring is done for negative statements. The respondent who score more than 38 will be considered as good ; Score between 27 and 37 will be considered as average and Score below 27 will be considered as poor at problem solving.

4. Empathy: This tool consists of (both positive and negative statements) 40 items. The maximum possible score is 120 where positive statements will carry 3 for strongly agree, 2 for undecided and 1 for strongly disagree. Reverse scoring is done for negative statements. The respondent who score more than 40 will be considered as good ; Score between 68 and 94 will be considered as average and Score below 68 will be considered as poor in Empathy.

5. Stress Management: This tool consists of 40 items. The maximum possible score is 120 where positive statements will carry 3 for strongly agree, 2 for undecided and 1 for strongly disagree. Reverse scoring is done for negative statements. The respondent who score more than 40 will be considered as good ; Score between 68 and 94 will be considered as average and Score below 68 will be considered as poor in stress management.

Results:

Phase: 1 Demographic profiles of the selected sample

- 80% of the rural girls belonged to middle income group
- 57% of the mothers belonged to middle income group

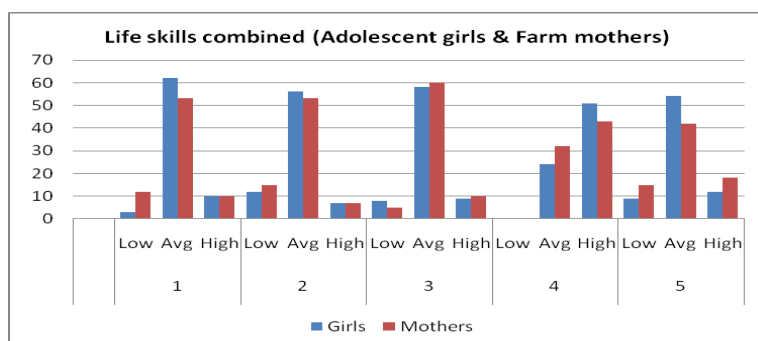
Table: 1 Life skills combined (Adolescent girls & Farm mothers)

| Adolescent girls (N=75) | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|---------|------|
| Life skills | Low | Average | High |
| Creative thinking | 3 | 62 | 10 |
| Critical thinking | 12 | 56 | 7 |

| Young Mothers (N=75) | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|---------|------|
| Life skills | Low | Average | High |
| Creative thinking | 12 | 53 | 10 |
| Critical thinking | 15 | 53 | 7 |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|----|----|
| Problem solving | 8 | 58 | 9 |
| Empathy | - | 24 | 51 |
| Stress management | 9 | 54 | 12 |

| | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|----|
| Problem solving | 5 | 60 | 10 |
| Empathy | - | 32 | 43 |
| Stress management | 15 | 42 | 18 |



1. Creative thinking
2. Critical thinking
3. Problem solving
4. Empathy
5. Stress management

Life skill scores of both the sample (adolescent girls & young mothers) showed average scores in all the selected 5 areas ie Critical thinking; Creative thinking; Problem solving; Empathy; and Management of stress.

Phase IV: A Comprehensive module on Life skill education for empowering rural adolescent girls & mothers for quality life' is prepared. This module covered 5 important Life skills such as: Critical thinking; Creative thinking; Problem solving; Empathy; and Management of stress.

Phase V: Based on the results, awareness cum orientation programmes were organized on Creative thinking; Critical thinking; Problem solving; Decision making and Management of stress to the Adolescent girls & young mothers in the operational villages for enhancing life skills. Exercises, Role plays, Group games, Group work, Interactive sessions, presenting real life situations, Open ended stories etc were some of the methods used for enhancing the life skills of the sample.

Training programmes organized under Life skills

| Training Programme | Activities & Methodology |
|------------------------|--|
| Stress Management | Stress Management techniques were demonstrated through breathing exercises, Meditation, General exercises and Yoga. |
| Decision making skills | Decision making skills were demonstrated through group exercises, role plays, open ended stories and responding to situations presented. |
| Problem solving | Problem solving skills were demonstrated through group exercises, role plays, open ended stories and responding to situations presented etc. |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Critical thinking | Critical thinking <i>skills</i> were demonstrated through group exercises, role plays, open ended stories and responding to situations etc. |
| Creative thinking | <i>Creative thinking skills</i> were demonstrated through group exercises, role plays, open ended stories and responding to situations etc. |

Phase VI: Impact assessment was done on the selected sample to find out the impact of training programmes conducted on selective Life skills: Creative thinking; Critical thinking; Problem solving; Empathy and Stress management.

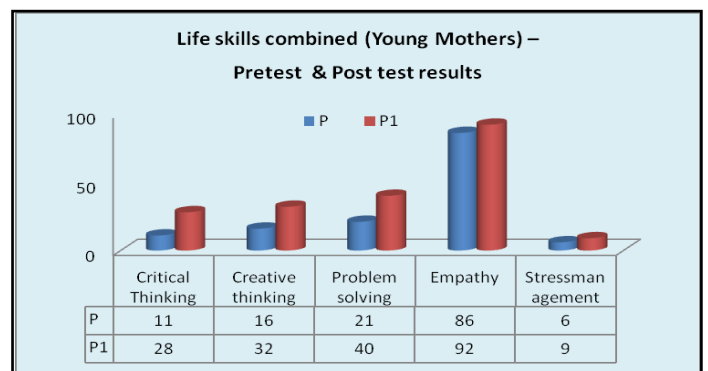
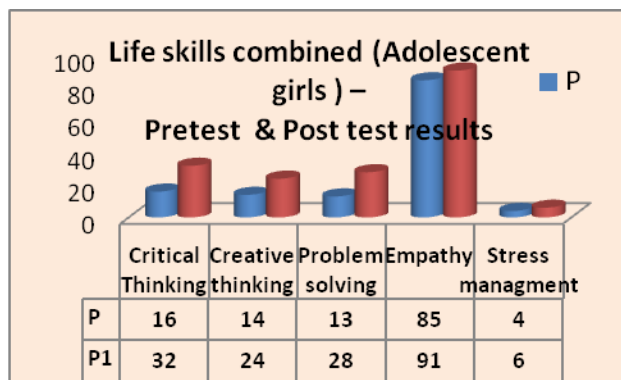
Table: 2 Life skills combined (Adolescent girls & Farm mothers) – Post test results

| Life skills | Type of test | Adolescent Girls | | | Life skills | Type of test | Young mothers | | |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|---------|------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------|------|
| | | Low | Average | High | | | Low | Average | High |
| Cre T | Pre test | 3 | 62 | 10 | Cre T | Pre test | 12 | 53 | 10 |
| | Post test | 3 | 36 | 36 | | Post test | 10 | 40 | 25 |
| Cri T | Pre test | 12 | 56 | 7 | Cri T | Pre test | 15 | 53 | 7 |
| | Post test | 9 | 36 | 30 | | Post test | 10 | 38 | 27 |
| PS | Pre test | 8 | 58 | 9 | PS | Pre test | 5 | 60 | 10 |
| | Post test | 7 | 35 | 33 | | Post test | 5 | 45 | 25 |
| Emp | Pre test | - | 24 | 51 | Emp | Pre test | - | 32 | 43 |
| | Post test | - | 10 | 65 | | Post test | - | 22 | 53 |
| SM | Pre test | 9 | 54 | 12 | SM | Pre test | 15 | 42 | 18 |
| | Post test | 7 | 32 | 36 | | Post test | 10 | 32 | 33 |

Adolescent girls (N=75)

Young Mothers N=75)

Cre T = Creative thinking; Cri T = Critical thinking; PS = Problem solving; Emp = Empathy
 SM = Stress management.



Scores of adolescent girls & mothers which showed average scores in all the selected **Life skills**

(5), showed remarkable improvement in all the areas. During pre test, out of 75 rural girls, 62 fell under average category in Creative thinking, however due to the impact of the training in the selected skills, 36 moved to average category and 36 moved to high category. Similar trend was observed with reference to the remaining skills and also with young mothers, reflecting the effectiveness of the training programme. However compared to young women, rural girls scored better in all the five selected life skills.

CONCLUSION:

Life Skill Education in school is an important means to promote psycho-social competence among young individuals.

References

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