

Impact of Life Skill Training on the Cognitive Skills Development – Lessons Learned from Career Guidance and Adolescents Counselling Cell in Kannur District, Kerala

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Abstract— Life skill education training gives much significance nowadays. A relevant and proper implementation of life skill education is a need of an hour, for today's society. Imparting life skills education to the students can be helpful as it specifically addresses the needs of children, helps in motivating, providing practical, cognitive, emotional, and social and self-management skills for life adjustments. Yadav P, Iqbal N (2009) showed positive results of imparting life skills education to students and bringing the change in adolescent's attitude, thought and behavior by providing supportive environment to them. According to Albertyn et al. (2004) life skills training enhance critical thinking abilities, which further impacts were living life actively, being responsible in the job and in future planning too. The objectives of the study are (a) to assess the impact of life skill training on the cognitive skills development (b) to study the effectiveness of self-analysis/introspection activities on the process of self-development (c) to assess the impact of life skill training on creative thinking and critical skill development (d) to assess the impact of life skill training on the decision making and problem solving skill development. The study is a descriptive in nature. The investigator prepared an interview has made among the randomly selected 50 volunteers from the 170 volunteers who were attended in the Souhridha volunteer training programme during the year 2014-2015 in the Kannur district. The findings imply that that the life skill training is highly effective for the self-development of the participants.

Keywords: life skills training, random sampling, cognitive development, problem solving

I. INTRODUCTION

(WHO) defines Life skills as the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

The career guidance and adolescent counselling cell of the Directorate of Higher secondary education, Kerala is promoting adolescent counselling and health programmes under the name 'souhridha' in the higher secondary schools of Kerala state. 'Souhridha' literally means 'friendship'. The programme is intended to develop positive peer pressure among students through various adolescent empowerment programmes. Many adolescent issues are routed in negative peer group dynamics. As a part of the implementation of 'souhridha' club activities in the school, the volunteer leaders of the schools are required to undergo two days residential training at district level which is mainly based on life skills and leadership. After the

training the volunteer leaders are required to lead the club activities in the school.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Life skill has come to be considered as an effective tool for behaviour modification since last few decades. WHO (1997) defines life skills as the "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life." In the working paper on life skills for children and adolescents in schools, WHO (1997) has cited various instances in which teaching of life skills has shown effectiveness in a wide variety of educational programmes with demonstrable effectiveness, including the programmes for the promotion of intelligence. UNICEF defines life skills as "a behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas, knowledge, attitude and skills."

A relevant and proper implementation of life skill education is a need of an hour, for today's society. Imparting life skills education to the students can be helpful as it specifically addresses the needs of children, helps in motivating, providing practical, cognitive, emotional, social and self-management skills for life adjustments. Yadav P, Iqbal N(2009) showed positive results of imparting life skills education to students and bringing the change in adolescent's attitude, thought and behavior by providing supportive environment to them. According to Errecart et al., (1991) and Caplan et al., (1992) life skills education proves to be an effective approach in primary prevention education, as its more interactive, uses problem solving approach and is activities based. Hence, teacher and the taught both involve in learn and fun too. On the whole, life skills education, have found to be an effective psychosocial intervention strategy for promoting positive social, and mental health of adolescents which plays an important role in all aspects such as strengthening coping strategies and developing self-confidence and emotional intelligence, as well as enhancing critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills as has been well documented in the aforementioned studies. Thus, there is, significance and importance of life skills education to be integrated into the regular school curriculum and given on a daily basis by a life skills trainer/ teacher/counsellor to enhance the mental health of students, equip them with better adapted skills to face the challenges of changing life situations and empower them to become fully functioning contributors to the host society in particular and the world in general. In the light of above discussion, it could be concluded, that, Life skill education has its importance and significance in overall

development of students. Our findings are in common to the findings of Botvin, et al., (1998), Nair. M.K.C, (2005) many more, suggesting life skill education program as a good supportive system for adolescents.

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 Sehani higher 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.

A. Life Skills proposed by WHO

Self-Awareness

- Creative Thinking
- Critical Thinking
- Decision making
- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Interpersonal Skills
- Empathy
- Coping with emotions
- Coping with Stress

This study is designed to develop insights on the process of cognitive skills development self-awareness, creative thinking, critical thinking, Decision making, and problem solving skills of the adolescents.

Also, another significance of the study is to illustrate the importance of integrating life skills in to our school curriculum which is proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO). Adolescents require different life skills to overcome their problems which they encounter in the day to day life. This also will help them to transfer their

acquired knowledge for practical purposes in life and lead a balanced and confident life. The cognitive skills development is very much essential for the practice of all other life skills.

1) Programmes aimed at developing life skills have produced the following effects:

lessened violent behaviour; increased pro -social behaviour and decreased negative, self-destructive behaviour; increased the ability to plan ahead and choose effective solutions to problems; improved self-image, self-awareness, social and emotional adjustment; increased acquisition of knowledge; improved classroom behaviour; gains in self-control and handling of interpersonal problems and coping with anxiety; and improved constructive conflict resolution with peers, impulse control and popularity. Research studies have also shown that sex education based on life skills was more effective in bringing about changes in adolescent contraceptive use; delay in sexual debut; delay in the onset of alcohol and marijuana use and in developing attitudes and behaviour necessary for preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS (ESCAP 2003).

B. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To assess the impact of life skill training on the cognitive skills development.
- 2) To study the effectiveness of self-analysis/introspection activities on the process of self-development.
- 3) To assess the impact of life skill training on creative thinking and critical skill development
- 4) To assess the impact of life skill training on the decision making and problem solving skill development.

III. METHODOLOGY

An interview has made among the randomly selected 50 volunteers from the 170 volunteers who were attended in the Souhridha volunteer training programme during the year 2014-2015 in the Kannur district.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis and discussion was carried out based on the study here furnishes below;

Attribute	Total Number of Respondents	To a great Extend	To some extend	Not at all
Facilitated Self Development	50	47(94%)	3(6%)	0

Table 1: Self Development

Attributes	Total Number of Respondents	To a great Extend	To some extend	Not at all
Developed self awareness	50	45(90%)	5(10%)	0
Improved self confidence	50	43(86%)	6(12%)	1(2%)
Developed self control	50	40(80%)	7(14%)	3(6%)
Improved Self discipline	50	42(84%)	6(12%)	2(4%)

Able to make self-decision (Self-determination)	50	44(88%)	6(12%)	0
Provided Right Goal orientation	50	45(90%)	4(8%)	1(2%)
Understood about the importance of values in life	50	35(70%)	10(20%)	5(10%)

Table 2: Self Awareness

Attributes	Total Number of Respondents	To a great Extend	To some extend	Not at all
Creative thinking skills	50	43(86%)	5(10%)	2(4%)
Critical thinking Skills	50	44(88%)	4(8%)	2(4%)
Developed Decision making Skill	50	41(82%)	6(12%)	3(6%)
Developed Problem Solving Skills	50	42(84%)	6(12%)	2(4%)

Table 3: Creative Thinking, Critical thinking, Decision making and Problem solving skills

Attribute	Total Number of respondents	Yes	NO
Provided Peer Education	50	40(80%)	10(20%)
Life Skill Training , peer education training is required for peers	50	50(100%)	0

Table 4: Peer Education

V. MAJOR FINDINGS

- 1) The study on the impact of life skill training on the cognitive skills development among the trained volunteers shows that the life skill training is highly effective for the self-development of the participants.
- 2) The study reveals that life skill training and its follow up programmes in the school are effective for the development of cognitive life skills self-awareness, creative thinking, critical thinking, decision making and problem solving skills (WHO).
- 3) The self-analysis /introspection process in the training has helped the students to developed self-awareness which resulted in the development of self-confidence, self-control, self-discipline, self-determination etc. The self-evaluation facilitated through the self-analysis is one of the major reason for the improvement of self-awareness. It is evident that the students with high self-esteem perform well in their day to day life.

- 4) Majority of the participants, more than 90 % were responded that they could be able to recognize their strengths and weakness, likes and dislikes, goal orientation, values etc. after the training programme in a conscious way. They were also facilitated few friends to identify their strengths and weakness through the peer education, peer counselling programmes of souhridha club in the school.
- 5) Majority of the respondents, more than 90 % reveal that they could be able to think differently and analyze the merit and demerits of a situation/option/problem after the training in a conscious way. The critical thinking skill has helped them to developed proactive social behaviour.
- 6) The scientific steps on decision making and problem solving have helped them to solve their problems in a more effectively way and intervene the problems of peer group in a successful manner.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Life skill training can be included in any type of adolescent empowerment programme.
- 2) It will be helpful for the students to develop cognitive skills through life skill training and which promote their scholastic performance.
- 3) Life skills can be include as a pedagogy for curriculum transaction
- 4) It should incorporate life skills in curriculum
- 5) Life skills must be an integral part of self-development /personality development programme
- 6) Peer education and peer counseling programme can be facilitated through the life skill training.
- 7) Life skills training must be an integral part of adolescent health programme.

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