

NEED ASSESSMENT FOR LIFE SKILLS BASED EDUCATION AMONG SCHOOL GOING ADOLESCENTS IN MYSORE

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence, a vital stage of growth and development, marks the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. Adolescents are intensely influenced by their peers and outside world in general. The evidence shows that one in five adolescents experience significant symptoms of emotional distress and nearly one in ten are emotionally impaired. The most common disorders among adolescents include depression, anxiety disorders and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and substance abuse disorder. Life skills education can be an important vehicle to equip young people to enable productive participation in society.

OBJECTIVE

To assess the knowledge regarding life skills among adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study was conducted among high school children (adolescents) in Mysore city. Information regarding knowledge of life skills among study subjects was collected by administering the questionnaire to all the students studying in 8th, 9th and 10th standard. Data was entered in an excel sheet and analysed using SPSS software 22.0.

RESULTS

Among 347 subjects included in the study, mean age of the students was 14.5±2.9 years. Life skills score was low (<397) among 21.5% of the students, moderate (398-437) among 50.7% and high (>438) among 27.8% of the students. 94% of the students felt that there is need for life skills based education in the schools.

CONCLUSION

Around 1/5th of the adolescents having lower life skills knowledge scores imply that there is a need for school based life skills education among adolescents.

KEYWORDS

Life Skills, Adolescent, School.

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INTRODUCTION: Adolescence, a vital stage of growth and development, marks the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. Adolescents are intensely influenced by their peers and outside world in general. Some 1.2 billion adolescents (10–19 years) today make up 18 percent of the world's population. More than half of all adolescents live in Asia. In absolute numbers, India is home to more adolescents – around 243 million – than any other country.¹ They constitute around 22.8% of the total population in India. Of this, 12% belong to 10-14 years age group and 10% to 15-19 years age group. The evidence shows that one in five adolescents experience significant symptoms of emotional distress and nearly one in ten are emotionally impaired.

The most common disorders among adolescents include depression, anxiety disorders and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and substance abuse disorder. Life skills education can be an important vehicle to equip young people to enable productive participation in society. Life skills have been defined as "the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The ten core life skills as laid down by WHO are self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, effective communication, interpersonal relationship, coping with stress, coping with emotion. In this background, the present study was conducted with an objective to assess the knowledge and need regarding life skills based education among adolescent school children.

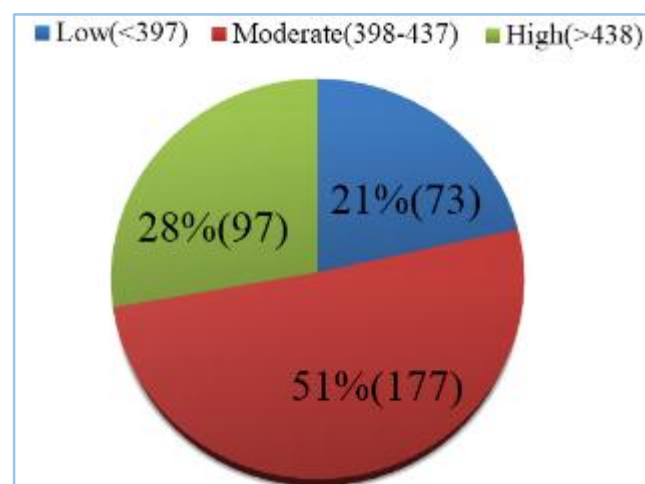
METHODOLOGY: A cross-sectional study was planned in a selected high school of Mysore city during the month of August 2015. After obtaining Institutional Ethical Committee's clearance, permission from school authorities was obtained.

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All the students studying in 8th, 9th and 10th class available on the day of data collection were included for the present study. Students were met and initial rapport was built in their respective classrooms. Verbal consent was obtained from them after briefing them about the purpose of the study. Information regarding knowledge on life skills among study subjects was collected using the questionnaire developed by Vranda et al² after obtaining the permission. Printed forms of questionnaire were distributed among the students and were asked to read and fill it in a designated period of time. Any queries regarding the questionnaire were cleared by the researcher which assisted the students to understand the questions better and reply to it.

The questionnaire contained items related to all the ten life skills: Decision Making (10 Items), Problem Solving (13 Items), Empathy (12 Items), Self-awareness (10 Items), Communication Skills (10 Items), Interpersonal Relationships Skills (18 Items), Coping with Emotions (9 Items), Coping with Stress (9 Items), Creative Thinking Skills (14 Items), Critical Thinking Skills (10 Items). Each item was scored into five different levels: Never (N), Rarely (R), Sometimes (S), Usually (U), Always (A). Each item was entered in excel sheet and analysed using software SPSS version 22.0.

RESULTS: The present study included 347 adolescents. The mean age of the students enrolled in the study was 14.5 years (+2.9 years). It was observed that 48% of the students were females. 94% of the students felt that there is need for life skills based education in the schools. Life skills score was low (<397) among 21.5% of the students, moderate (398-437) among 50.7% and high (>438) among 27.8% of the students. (Graph 1).



Graph 1: Distribution of Study Subjects According to Total Life Skills Score. (n=347)

Life skills	Low	Moderate	High
Decision making	-	41(28.5)	103(71.5)
Problem solving	-	19(13.2)	125(86.8)
Empathy	-	98(68.1)	46(31.9)
Self-awareness	-	22(15.3)	122(84.7)

Communication skills	-	56(38.9)	88(61.1)
Interpersonal relationship skills	-	30(20.8)	114(79.2)
Coping with emotions	1(0.7)	54(37.5)	89(61.8)
Coping with stress	-	55(38.2)	89(61.8)
Creative thinking	-	19(13.2)	125(86.8)
Critical thinking	-	30(20.8)	114(79.2)

Table 1: Distribution of Study Participants According to Awareness Regarding Life Skills (n=347)

Table 1 shows that knowledge level regarding decision making as a life skill was moderate among 28.5% of the adolescents and high among 71.5% of the adolescents. Overall, it was observed that the knowledge regarding life skills was moderate to high among study participants. The study also revealed that around 86% of the students felt that there is a need to include life skills education in their curriculum.

DISCUSSION: A study titled "A study of core life skills of adolescents in relation to their self-concept" developed through Yuva school life skills programme conducted by Dr. Sandhya Khera³, Mrs. Shivani Khoslain, New Delhi investigated the relationship between self-concept and core life skills. The study selected randomly 500 adolescents studying in secondary classes of Sarvodaya schools situated in South Delhi. The Major finding of the study was that there was a positive co-relation between Core Affective Life Skill and Self-concept of adolescents which means those who possess these essential skills are having better confidence in all aspects.

A descriptive cross-sectional survey of adolescents from class VIII, IX, and X of a public co-educational secondary school of Kathmandu.⁴ was done with the help of self-administered questionnaires prepared in English and translated into Nepali. Focus Group Discussions consisting of boys only, girls only and a mixed group comprising of one student from each section of each class were conducted to confirm the results of the study. A total of 347 adolescents participated in the study. 176 adolescents (51%) had life skill scores above the mean, and were termed as having "High level" of life skills and 171 (49%), had "Low level" of life skills scores which is higher than the present study (21.5%), varied questionnaire might be the reason for the same. Mother's education was significantly associated with increased level of life skills in adolescents ($P=.001$). Most of the teachers were not aware of the concept of life skills. Connectedness and family support were other important factors influencing the level of life skills in the adolescents.

CONCLUSION:

- Life skills education was moderate to high among significant proportion of the study population.
- Life skill management for adolescent is the need of today's world.

- Life Skills Education makes a person “a balanced adult” who contributes meaningfully to society.
- Therefore, life skills education has to be recognised as a methodology to address a variety of issues of child and youth development.

LIMITATIONS:

- The study was limited to a single school as an initial effort towards wider assessment.
- Factors influencing the knowledge regarding life skills were not considered due to time constraint.

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