INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

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Editorial

Life skills education is one of the youngest disciplines with a strong footing in Psychology that emerged during the second half of 20th century. RGNIYD is the first institute in the country, which launched a post graduate programme in life skills education considering its relevance in the field of human development, especially in psycho-social development. During the year 2010, the faculties, students and trainers of Life Skills Education from Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD), has decided to form a professional association for the promotion of Life Skills Education in the country.Thus, the Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE) was formed during the 2nd International Conference on Life Skills Education. Subsequently, the "Indian Association of Life Skills Education" was registered on 31stof March 2011, under The Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act, 1975, Sl.No.47/2011, with the aim "To ignite the minds, to unleash the power and empower individuals to face challenges in life". The stipulated role of IALSE is to address the emerging trends in life skills education and strengthen the theoretical framework of this new field.

The basic objectives of IALSE are to: bring together social scientists, educationists, scientists, practitioners and policy makers from various disciplines into one forum to explore and work in the areas of life skills education; encourage mutual and collective efforts to develop, promote and apply life skills to improve quality of education and learning through inter-disciplinary and trans- disciplinary approaches; access current status and

best practices in relation to application of life skills approach in education and training; strengthen the network with other sub-regional, regional and trans-regional organizations working in the areas of Life Skills Education and training; encourage conferences, seminars, consultation, workshops, to enable sharing of research findings and experiences relating to life skills education and training; disseminate new theories and innovative inter-disciplinary and trans- disciplinary approaches for understanding and addressing emerging trends in Life Skills Education; Initiate steps to promote Life Skills approach in teaching, training and to strengthen the theoretical framework of Life Skills Education; publish books, journals and such other literature which would promote the dissemination of knowledge in the field of Life Skills Education and enable scholars in Life Skills Education to enhance their career opportunities and fulfil professional commitments.

IALSE from its very inception, is actively engaged in organising international conferences in Life Skills Education, developing training manuals, research studies and publication of journals. Since the registered office is at RGNIYD and the members and office bearers are largely from RGNIYD, the activities of Association and the Department of Life Skills Education was going on together and IALSE has not taken up any specific tasks. But from 2013 onwards, IALSE works independently with the active support and cooperation of our members. We conducted the 5th International Conference of Life Skills Education during February 2014 in collaboration with Loyola College of Social Sciences, Thiruvananthapuram and the Proceedings Book of the conference was also published. During the General Body meeting held at Thiruvananthapuram, it has been decided to publish the journal of IALSE and entitled it as, **"International Journal of Life Skills Education".** The first issue of bi-annual journal will be released during the 6th International Conference of Life Skills Education scheduled from 12th to 14th February 2015 at Guwahati.

The Vol. 1,No.1 of the International Journal of Life Skills Education is in your hands. Publishing a journal in itself require a lot of life skills. Getting the article from scholars, peer reviewed by experts, editing and getting sponsorships for printing are all tiresome exercises. However, we are successful in bringing out the first volume and hope to continue the publication of all volumes on time in future. With your active support, we are sure that, it is not an impossible task.

Your comments on the articles are welcome, which will help us in bringing out our future volumes in a better manner.

Wish you all the best

Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair
President, IALSE & Managing Editor

Promoting School Based Life Skills Education to Influence and Empower Adolescents Towards Healthy Transition to Adulthood

Swati Parmar* & Manju Katoch**

Abstract

There are approximately 315 million young people aged 10–24 years in India, representing 30 per cent of the country's population. Lack of appropriate knowledge and hesitation on the part of parents and teachers towards open discussion on issues that affect adolescents increase the risks and vulnerability amongst this cohort. Life Skills Education (LSE) aims to empower young people to take positive action to protect themselves and promote positive social relationships. The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) India's, programme, Youth LIFE, has been conceptualized on this approach to develop a comprehensive selflearning digital life skills and health information package. The digital curriculum is designed for young boys and girls studying in classes 6, 7 and 8 (aged 10-14 years). This self-learning programme involves innovative and new ways of learning through edutainment - simulation games and exercises. The first phase of programme implementation has reached out to approximately 1600 students in the schools in Delhi. Schools were divided into two groups for implementation – one group used the digital curriculum and the other the print curriculum. Structured self-administered pre and post questionnaires were used to assess the adolescents' knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and life-skills issues, and its retention through use of different models. Focus Group Discussions with students and in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers and principals to ascertain the social desirability and cost effectiveness of the two models. Knowledge gain was found to be 24.22% higher among students where digital curriculum was used. The cost effectiveness analysis using direct cost of implementing the Youth LIFE package shows that use of print medium has lower effectiveness/cost ratio (0.05) as compared to digital medium (0.11).

Key Words

Adolescent education, Life skills, sexual and reproductive health information, digital curriculum

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Introduction

World Health Organisation defines adolescence both in terms of age (spanning between 10 and 19 years) and in terms of a phase of life which is marked by special attributes some of which include rapid physical growth and development; physical, social and psychological maturity, but not all at the same time; sexual maturity and the onset of sexual activity; experimentation; development of adult mental processes and adult identity; transition from total socio-economic dependence to relative independence.

According to Census 2011 (provisional data) there are more than 225 million adolescents in India, accounting for almost 21% of the country's population. Adolescents are agents of change in their societies. They are the resource to be nurtured, trained and developed into productive citizens and leaders of tomorrow. They have the right to a safe and supportive environment, accurate and age-appropriate information, positive role models, and friendly health counseling. Adolescents are not a homogenous group; their situation varies by age, sex, marital status, class region and the cultural context. A large number of them are out of school, get married early, work in vulnerable situations, sexually active and exposed to peer pressure. These factors have serious social, economic and public health implication.

With evolving levels of critical thinking and problem solving during this phase, the adolescents establish a social identity. It is not only a time of opportunity but also of vulnerability to high risk behaviors which can have lifelong consequences, especially related with health aspects. Therefore, adolescents are faced with challenges and vulnerabilities that impact their lives, including sexual and reproductive health, education, nutrition and lack of autonomy and decision making in many pertinent areas of their lives. It is therefore imperative to engage these adolescents with a comprehensive package of Life Skills so that they are able to make informed decisions and take positive action to protect them, and promote health and positive social relationships.

Life Skills Education (LSE): A must for Adolescents of today

LSE provides an integrated and holistic approach to adolescent development. With a central goal of empowering adolescents to envision and attain a better future, LSE aims at developing a cadre of empowered, educated and healthy adolescents, capable of making autonomous decisions in life. LSE is based on a framework where 'core life skills' include thinking skills, social skills and negotiation skills. Thinking skills help in understanding the physical, physiological, mental and emotional changes during puberty, thereby helping adolescents to cope with these changes and help them planning their

life. Social skills facilitate in strengthening relationships by helping adolescents to understand themselves, appreciate the importance of friends and family and helping them to improve their communication skills. Negotiation skills help in problem solving, decision making and maintaining positive relationships. It also helps adolescents adopt hygienic practices, improve their nutritional status and choose to eat wisely.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2000 (NCERT) observed that schools can and must strive to restore and sustain the universal and eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of the people, their moral and spiritual growth enabling them to realize the treasure within. Continuing with its efforts in the area, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) reinforces co-scholastic areas such as Life Skills, Sports and Games, etc. Co-curricular activities as part of mainstream education has included LSE for the co-scholastic assessment of the student. The schools are now mandated to provide and also assess the students on parameters of Life Skills.

CEDPA India: A glimpse of its work with adolescents

The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) India is a non-governmental organization (NGO) which works with communities, women leaders, civil societies and the government to give women and youth the tools to lead healthy life. CEDPA India has been a pioneer institution in working with adolescents on LSE. CEDPA began its investment in youth in India in 1987 with the launch of the Better Life Options Programme (BLP) to help adolescent girls and young women to make better life choices concerning their health, economic status, civic participation, education, and employment. The programme is based on an empowerment model and combines elements of education, family life education, life skills, vocational training, health information and services and personality development. To achieve maximum impact, the programme is implemented through state governments, education departments, schools and indigenous partner NGOs with CEDPA providing core curricula training, technical assistance and measurement oversight. Subsequently, over the past two and a half decades, CEDPA in India has launched a number of groundbreaking initiatives and programmes as part of its commitment to continuous programme and institutional improvement. Over the past two and a half decades, CEDPA India has experimented, incubated, piloted, refined and implemented - at substantial scale - a full portfolio of youth programmes for both in school and out of school adolescents.

Why to practice Life Skills Education ?

Traditional classroom education, especially targeting youth around Life Skills and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), is not totally effective according to public health experts and epidemiologists. Evaluations of the CEDPA India's other programme such as *Udaan* (meaning 'taking off' in the local Indian language), an in-school adolescent education programme which brought forth that the students were eager to learn but the quality of adolescent education being imparted in schools was poor – the teachers had poor facilitation skills and were hesitant in conducting sessions on sensitive topics, particularly (SRH) issues. Similar intervention was made by Care India in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh where the implementation approach was based on print media, games and formation of adolescent girl's groups. The project faced various challenges in addressing the issues especially in social settings where open discussion on sexuality is taboo and matters related with SRH are often not expressed even when they are identified as perceived needs. The teachers who were trained in the project and reproductive health issues, found it difficult to combine the additional responsibility with their existing commitments due to lack of time.

Can Technology interface help?

Educational technology, especially computers and computer-related peripherals, have grown tremendously and have permeated all areas of our lives. The influence of the technology on the psycho-social development of adolescents is profound. The digital medium in India is being harnessed extensively for supplementing the various core curriculum subjects being taught in the classroom – e.g. Maths, Science, Social Sciences, etc. Report of the Working Group on Adolescents for 10th Five Year plan, commissioned by Planning Commission, Govt. of India, states that learning in adolescence has a lot to do with motivation, interests, personal inclination and identity. To make LSE more interesting for the adolescents, the design needs to be radically changed to include a more creative and non-threatening format. The design must also address the inhibition among the teachers in conducting LSE and SRH sessions thus improve the quality of transaction. The question which arises here is, how technology can be used to deliver a learning tool that can address these preferences and challenges.

YouthLIFE: Life Skills through New Technologies

It is presumed that the quality of adolescent education programme being imparted in schools can be improved with the help and support of IT infrastructure. An interactive CD based curriculum can help teachers and facili-

tators to conduct sessions on sensitive topics, particularly SRH issues, in an easy and effective manner. Interactive CDs are popular amongst the new generation adolescents and can be used very effectively to create an enabling environment for open discussions. Further, it would help reduce the burden on teachers and students by cutting down preparation time for the sessions as well as home assignments.

Nowadays schools in many cities have introduced Smart classes, in which academic curricula are taught in a digital mode, through various visuals and animations. This is found to aid enhanced learning and retention among students. This initiative has provided the schools with an additional infrastructure, which can be utilized for other digital group learning.

The YouthLIFE Project, an intervention designed by CEDPA India specifically for the new generation adolescents, was conceptualized and designed to use the existing IT infrastructure in schools to improve the quality of adolescent education programme being imparted in schools. The programme comprises of an interactive, self-learning CD based curriculum to help teachers and facilitators conduct sessions on sensitive topics, particularly SRH issues, by engaging students in interactive and simulative games and exercises leading to effective learning and preparedness to face challenges of everyday life. Every class receives the modules via CD-ROM which consists of topics around Growing Up, Relationships and Healthy habits, and is viewed by the students in an audio visual room as a group, with the teacher as a facilitator of the sessions.

The programme designed for classes 6-8 it involves learning through edutainment and simulation games and exercises. The curriculum involves six hours of in-school teaching and approximately six hours of home/class room assignments. The project is supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The programme launched in 2012 has successfully reached out to more than 1600 adolescents girls' and boys' in selected schools of Delhi in its pilot phase.

Feasibility study

Effectiveness of digital platform as a learning tool and its cost effectiveness was assessed over a period of one year through a feasibility study conducted in two groups of schools – group 1 schools, where the curriculum was delivered through digital platform and group 2 school, where the curriculum was delivered through traditional approach of participatory classroom learning. Randomized design was used for the purpose of the study. Structured self-administered pre and post questionnaires were used to as-

sess the adolescents' knowledge on LSE and SRH, and its retention through use of different models. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with students and In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with the teachers and principals to ascertain the social desirability. IDIs were conducted with the teachers to ascertain the cost effectiveness of the two models.

Effectiveness of technology use in knowledge gain on LSE

Knowledge of at least 4 or more ways of maintaining good relationship with parents like being honest with them, putting your opinion in front of them, talking to them politely, sharing every secret with them, being obedient, and expressing what you like/dislike, increased by 17.3% (Pre test: 35.2%, Post test: 52.5%) in Group 1. And 14.1% (Pre test: 47.1%, Post test: 61.4%) is observed in Group 2.

Fig 1: Ways of maintaining good relationship with parents
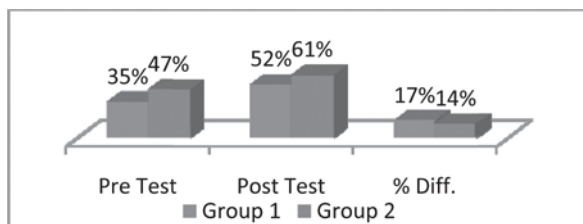
Knowledge of indications of bad touch such as hugging tightly increased by 34.9% (Pre test: 46.4%, Post test: 81.3%) in Group 1, whereas a gain of only 19.4% (Pre test: 49.8%, Post test: 69.2%) is observed in Group 2. Similarly, knowledge of pinching of bottom to be a bad touch increased by 27.8% (Pre test: 63.4%, Post test: 91.2%) in Group 1, whereas a gain of 28.5% (Pre test: 56.1%, Post test: 84.6%) is observed in Group 2.

Fig 2: Indications of bad touch

Knowledge of students having correct understanding of at least one or more ways in which bullying is inflicted increased by 30.3% (Pre test: 50.7%,
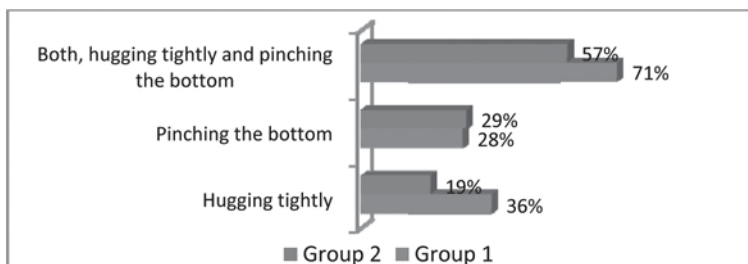
Post test: 81%) in Group 1, whereas a gain of only 16.6% (Pre test: 61.2%, Post test: 77.8%) in Group 2. Also, increase in knowledge of students of correct ways of avoiding being bullied increased by 21.4% (Pre test: 15.4%, Post test: 36.8%) in Group1, whereas gain of only 11.9% (Pre test: 17.6%, Post test: 29.5%) is observed in Group 2. Overall understanding of bullying and ways of avoiding it increased by 26% (Pre- test: 33.1%, Post- test: 58.9%) in Group 1 and 14 % (Pre- test: 39.4%, Post- test: 53.6%) in Group 2.

Fig 3: Bullying and ways of avoiding it
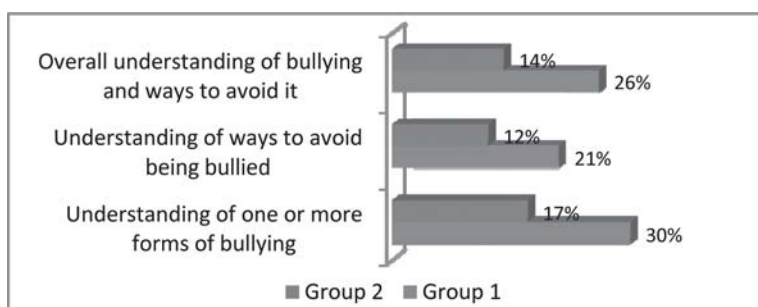
Understanding of gender equality amongst students was gauged through their response to statements like 'Boys should be given more chance to pursue higher education than girls', 'Every family must have a son', 'A girl should be allowed to choose her life partner', and 'A boy should be allowed to choose his life partner'. Correct understanding of gender equality increased by 31% (Pre test: 49.2%, Post test: 80.1%) in Group 1, whereas an increase of only 9.6% (Pre test: 56.9%, Post test: 66.5%) in Group 2.

Fig 4: Gender equality
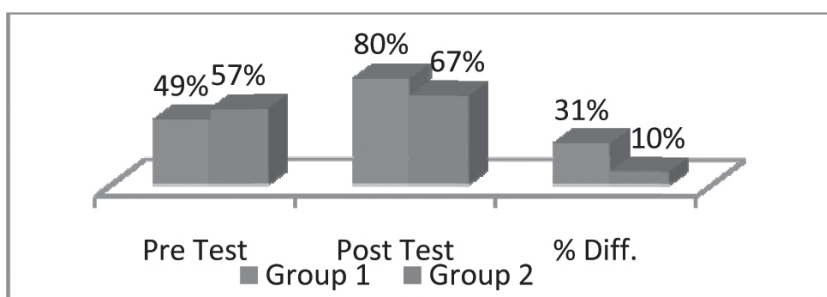
Understanding of substance abuse was gauged through students response to statements like 'Chewing tobacco is safe because there is no smoke', 'Alcohol promotes good sleep', 'Beer is not hard liquor so it can be consumed safely', 'If your friends are drinking, you need to drink with them to

have a good time', 'Coffee, tea and energy drinks contain drugs which causes dependency' and 'Smoking occasionally is not dangerous'. Correct understanding of substance abuse has increased by 17.6% (Pre test: 5.6%, Post test: 23.2%) in Group 1, whereas knowledge gain of 5.3% (Pre test: 14.7%, Post test: 20.1) was observed in Group 2. A comparison of the overall increase in knowledge through sessions conducted by teachers with the aid of CDs (Group 1) and sessions conducted by teachers with the aid of printed material (Group 2) indicates that Group 1 has exhibited 24% higher knowledge gain as compared to Group 2.

Fig 5: Correct understanding of substance abuse
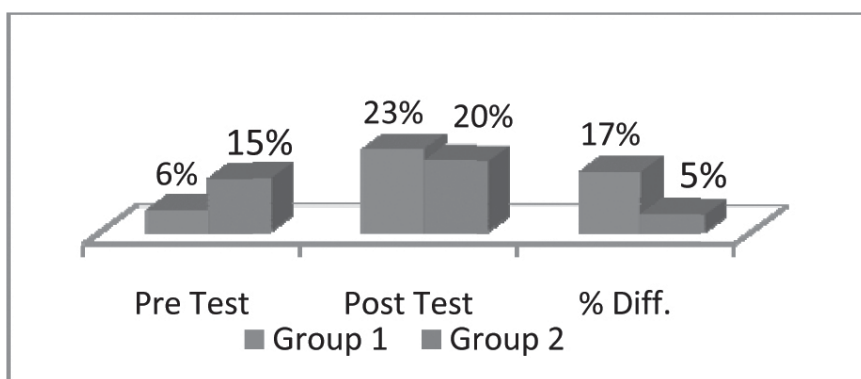
Cost effectiveness

The cost effectiveness analysis using direct cost of implementing the YouthLIFE package shows that use of print medium has lower effectiveness/cost ratio (0.05) as compared to digital medium (0.11). These results imply that in schools that have the IT infrastructure spending Rs. 1 on teaching YouthLIFE curriculum through digital medium would provide more than twice the learning benefit of spending Rs. 1 on teaching the same through print medium.

Social desirability

During the FGDs all the students from Group 1 schools shared that the learning process under YouthLIFE programme using digital media (CD) "was a unique experience which made learning enjoyable, interesting and fun."

IDIs were conducted with the teachers and the principals to assess social desirability. A majority opined that the CD based modules were very effective in delivering the curriculum. "CDs made teaching the YouthLIFE module much easier, the modules were self-explanatory and did not require much explanation. Visual aids made the sessions interactive, and learning by students much faster as compared to book based teaching. It also helped us overcome our hesitation in discussing sensitive issues." – Teacher, Basava International School, Dwarka, Delhi. "Transaction of sessions through the YouthLIFE CDs with its animations, activities, games was not only very appealing to children but also very effective in imparting life skills. The level of participation amongst the students was very good. The students enjoyed the learning process and also learnt faster through the CDs." – Principal, J D Tylter School, Delhi.

Conclusion

The digital media is more effective in increasing knowledge among students in comparison to print media. Further use of print medium has lower effectiveness/cost ratio (0.05) as compared to digital medium (0.11). These results imply that in schools that have the IT infrastructure spending Rs. 1 on teaching YouthLIFE curriculum through digital medium would provide more than twice the learning benefit of spending Rs. 1 on teaching the same through print medium - thus, making the CD based curriculum a preferred method of teaching in schools that have the required IT infrastructure.

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Role of Family in Developing Life Skills and Psychological Hardiness among Adolescents

Jagpreet Kaur* & Dalvir Singh**

Abstract

The objective of the present study is to explore the role of family in developing life skills and psychological hardiness among adolescents. The study was conducted on a random sample of 300 adolescents studying in + 1 in government and private schools in Sangrur district of Punjab. The data was collected with the help of life skills scale, psychological hardiness scale and family climate scale. Correlation was used to study life skills and psychological hardiness in relation to family environment among adolescents. Regression was used to study family environment components of expressiveness, conflict, acceptance, cohesion, independence, active recreational orientation, organization and control and total family environment as predictors of life skills and psychological hardiness among adolescents. The correlational analysis indicated that life skills are significantly correlated with all the eight dimensions of family environment except control dimension. Also, a significant relationship of control, challenge and global psychological hardiness with family environment and its dimensions was observed. The results of step-wise multiple regression revealed that only cohesiveness, active recreational orientation and organization dimension of family environment emerged as significant predictors of life skills among adolescents. Further, the analysis revealed that total family environment emerged as a significant predictor of control, challenge and global psychological hardiness among adolescents. Implications of the results are discussed.

Key Words

Adolescents, Family environment, Life skills, Psychological hardiness

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Introduction

Family environment is considered as a system where the behaviour and relationship among all family members is interdependent. A stimulating physical environment, encouragement of achievement and affection are repeatedly linked to better performance of children. Every individual bears an impact of the environment in which she is brought up. Family is almost the exclusive environmental factor, which influences the first few primitive years of life. The family environment maintains its importance for the psychological development of the child. Research indicates that those adolescents shows more success in life belongs to households in which parents are both supportive and are accepting the child's needs for more psychological independence (Olsson et al. 1999; Madhu and Matla, 2004; Powell, 2006; Lee et al. 2006 and Deepshikha and Bhanot, 2011).

Life skills are defined as abilities, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour that must be learned for success in society. Life skills, being skills of adaptive and positive behaviours, enable individuals to enhance psychosocial competence. Life skills are found to affect academic success, peer relationship, family relationship, employment, and extra-curricular and leisure activities (Sharma, 2003; Slicker et al. 2005; Gambill et al. 2008; Gooding, 2009). Contextual factors influencing the development of life skills appear to include not only experiences within the school curriculum and the guidance and counseling programs but also talent development opportunities, and family and peer relationships (Yuen et al. 2010; Bouck, 2010). Life skills are accepted as valuable and worthwhile, can effectively influence the development of the positive attitude towards life (Papagcargious and Kavga, 2009; Sallee, 2007; Jone and Lavallee, 2008; Forneris et al., 2010).

Over the past 20 years, the psychological hardiness construct has emerged as a buffer in the relationship between stressors and illness and has been shown to enhance performance, conduct, and morale (Maddi, 1999). Thus, hardiness is a personality construct formed of three interrelated beliefs about oneself in interaction with the world, namely, commitment, control, and challenge. The commitment belief leads one to try to find, in whatever is being experienced, that which seems interesting and important, rather than lapsing to feelings of alienation. The control belief leads one to try to influence the directions and outcomes of whatever is going on, rather than lapsing into passivity and powerlessness and the challenge belief leads one to seek growth and wisdom through experience, whether positive or negative, rather than to feel entitled to easy comfort and security in a predictable world. It is a personality style that encourages human survival and the enrichment of life

through development (Lambert and Lambert, 2003) and is a pervasive aspect of personality reflecting a general tendency towards psychological health (the opposite of neuroticism), extroversion, openness, and to a lesser extent agreeableness and conscientiousness. People who have courage (hardiness) to simultaneously favour involvement with others and events (commitment), keep trying to influence the outcomes going on around them learning from their influence the outcomes going on around them learning from their experiences, whether positive or negative (challenge), have more fulfilling, satisfying, resilient, and remarkable lives (Maddi et al., 2002).

The effects of family structure on child development are mitigated by such factors as family functioning and parenting. In addition, the outcomes for children from single-parent families vary with the distribution of other factors affecting the family such as the level of the mother's education and family income. The nature of children's family environment has a very strong effect on children's cognitive and behavioural development, and on the prevalence of childhood vulnerability. The factors within this environment that have been shown to have an impact on child development parenting skills, the cohesiveness of the family unity, the educational level and mental health of the mother, and the extent to which parents are actively engaged with their children. In fact, family environment is the quality and quantity of the cognitive, emotional and social support that has been available to the child within the home and connotes the psychological environment of home. Thus, a young person's social adjustment is not a thing apart, but is closely linked with his adjustment to his home and school relationships. It usually follows that an adolescent who experiences a normal and well-integrated home and school life carries over into all his other associations a similar wholesomeness of attitude and control of behaviour (Verma and Sangita, 1991; Field et al. 1995; Kokko and Pulkkinen, 2000 and Lai and Mcbride-Chang, 2001). On the basis of these observations, it was thought worthwhile to study family environment as a predictor of psychological hardiness among adolescents.

Objectives

- To study family environment as a predictor of life skills among adolescents.

- To study family environment as a predictor of psychological hardiness among adolescents.

Hypotheses

· Family environment and its dimensions will be the significant predictor of life skills among adolescents.

· Family environment and its dimensions will be the significant predictor of psychological hardiness among adolescents.

Limitations of the study

The study was limited to the adolescents studying in +1 class in government and private located in Sangrur district in Punjab.

Operational definitions of the terms used

1. Life Skills: It may be defined as "abilities for adoptive and positive behaviours that enable individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". It includes decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship, self-awareness empathy, coping with emotions and coping with stress (WHO, 1997) as measured by Life Skills Scale (Sharma, 2003).

2. Psychological Hardiness: Psychological hardiness refers to the constellation of three dispositions commitment, control and challenge and summation of three determining global hardiness as measured by psychological hardiness scale by Nowack (1990). The components of psychological hardiness are defined as:

Control: The control disposition is expressed as a tendency to feel and act as if one is influential (rather than helpless) in the face of the varied contingencies of life.

Commitment: The commitment disposition is expected as a tendency to involve oneself in (rather than experience alienation from) whatever one is doing or encounters.

Challenges: The challenge disposition is expressed as the belief that change rather than stability is normal in life and that the anticipation of changes are interesting incentives to growth rather than threats to security.

2. Family Environment: It refers to the quality and quantity of the cognitive, emotional and social support that has been available to the child with in the family and connotes the psychological environment of family as perceived by adolescents to be measured by Bhatia and Chadha (2004). It has eight components namely (i) cohesion, (ii) expressiveness, (iii) conflict, (iv)

acceptance and caring, (v) independence, (vi) active recreational orientation, (vii) organization; and (viii) control.

i.   **Cohesion:** It is degree of commitment, help and support of family members provide for one another.

ii. **Expressiveness:** It is theextent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and express their feelings and thoughts directly.

iii. **Conflict:** It refers to the amount of openly expressed aggression and conflict among family members.

iv. **Acceptance and Caring:** It is the extent to which the members are unconditionally accepted and the degree to which caring is expressed in the family.

v.   **Independence:** It isthe extent to which family members are assertive and independently make their own decisions.

vi. **Active Re-creational Orientation:** It refers to the extent of participation in social and recreational activities.

vii. **Organization:** It connotes thedegree of importance of clear organization structure in planning family activities and responsibilities.

viii.**Control:** It is thedegree of limit setting with in a family.

METHOD & PROCEDURE

The study was descriptive. The method requires a sample and certain research tools for the conduct of the study.

Population of the study and sample

The population of the study were the adolescents studying in government as well as private schools located in Sangrur district of Punjab. In the present study, stratified random sampling method was used to select the sample giving due representation to gender and locale. Eight schools (four rural and four urban) were selected randomly from the list of various schools located in Sangrur district. The method of stratified random sampling was employed to select a sample of 300 students from eight selected schools of Sangrur district of Punjab.

Research tools

The following tools were selected and used by the investigator in the present study:

1.   Life Skills Scale by Sharma (2003) was used to measure life skills among adolescents. It is a 31 item scale which covers all the different areas of life skills viz. self-awareness, empathy, interpersonal relationship, communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, coping with stress and coping with emotions. The adolescents were asked to mark the 31 statements as strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree or strongly disagree as per their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements. The scores ranged from 1 to 5 according to the Likert's scale, each positive statement getting a score of 5 for strongly agree and each negative statement getting a score of 5 for strongly disagree and so on.

2.   Psychological Hardiness Scale by Nowack (1990) was used for measuring psychological hardiness among adolescents. This is a 30-items scale to be responded on 5-point rating i.e. (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) neither agree nor disagree (4) disagree (5) and strongly disagree. The scale has 10 items each pertaining to challenge, control and commitment dimensions.

3.   Family Environment Scale by Bhatia and Chadha (2004) was used to measure the family environment of adolescents in the present investigation. This scale measures family environment in terms of eight sub-dimensions viz. cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance and caring, independence, active re-creational orientation, organization and control.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Correlation was used to study psychological hardiness in relation to family environment among adolescents. Regression was used to study family environment components of expressiveness, conflict, acceptance, cohesion, independence, active recreational orientation, organization and control and total family environment as predictors of psychological hardiness among adolescents.

Life Skills in relation to Family Environment

The table 1 shows the coefficients of correlation of life skills with the eight dimensions of family environment and the total family environment. It may be seen from the table 1 that the correlation coefficient of life skills with cohesiveness (0.357), expressiveness (0.210), conflict (0.235), acceptance (0.166), independence (0.181) and organization (0.261) dimensions of family environment is positive and significant at 0.01 level. It indicates that there is a significantly positive relationship of life skills with cohesiveness, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance, independence and organization dimensions of family environment.

Table 1

Life Skills among Adolescents in Relation to

Family Environment

S.No.	Dimension	Life Skills
1.	Cohesiveness	0.357**
2.	Expressiveness	0.210**
3.	Conflict	0.235**
4.	Acceptance	0.166**
5.	Independence	0.181**
6.	Active Recreational Orientation	0.162**
7.	Organization	0.261**
8.	Control	-0.019
9.	Total Family Environment	0.263**

*p<0.05; **p<0.01

The correlation coefficient of life skills with active recreational orientation (0.162) dimension is negative and significant at 0.01 level. It shows that there is a significant and negative relationship of life skills with active recreational orientation dimension of family environment. The correlation coefficient of life skills with control dimension of family environment is not significant even at 0.05 level. The correlation coefficient of life skills with total family environment (0.263) is positive and significant at 0.01 level.

Family environment as predictor of life skills among adolescents

From the result of correlation analysis, it was revealed that all the dimensions of family environment are significantly related to life skills among adolescents except the control dimension of family environment. Since the purpose of the study was to study family environment as the predictor of life skills among adolescents, stepwise multiple regression was carried out. Only the values of coefficient of correlation (r) and multiple correlation (R) determining the total effect of contributing factors, R^2 and R^2 change along with percentage variance in the set of predictors are reported in the table 2.

Table 2

Family Environment as a Predictor of Life Skills among Adolescents (N=300)

S. No.	Dimension of FamilyChange Environment	R	R^2	R^2	% Variance
1.	Cohesiveness	0.357	0.127	0.127	12.7%
2.	Active Recreational Orientation	0.462	0.214	0.086	8.6%
3.	Organization	0.490	0.240	0.026	2.6%

The table 2 shows the results of step-wise multiple regression. It shows that only cohesiveness, active recreational orientation and organization dimension of family environment emerged as significant predictors of life skills among adolescents while explaining only 12.7%, 8.6% and 2.6% of the variance respectively in life skills among adolescents. Cohesiveness and organization dimensions of family environment were found to be the positive contributors to life skills among adolescents. However, active recreational orientation was found to be a negative contributor towards life skills among adolescents. On the basis of the above results, it may be concluded that out of these three predictors, cohesiveness, dimension of family environment emerged as the most significant predictor of life skills among adolescents followed by active recreational orientation (ARO) and organization dimensions of family environment.

Psychological Hardiness in relation to Family Environment

The table 3 shows the correlation coefficients of psychological hardiness and its components with family environment and its dimensions. The table 3 reveals that the correlation coefficient of commitment component of psychological hardiness with any of the dimensions of family environment as well as total family environment is not significant even at 0.05 level indicating than there is no significant relationship of commitment dimension of psychological hardiness with any of the family environment components. It may be further observed from the table 3 that the correlation coefficient of control dimension of psychological hardiness with cohesiveness (-0.248), conflict (-0.313), acceptance (-0.206), independence (-0.228), active recreational

orientation (-0.205), control (-0.172) dimension of family environment is significant at 0.01 level.

The correlation coefficient of control dimension of psychological hardiness with expressiveness dimension of family environment is significant at 0.05 level. It indicates that there is a significant relationship of control dimensions of psychological hardiness with cohesiveness, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance, independence, active recreational orientation and control dimension of family environment. The correlation coefficient of control dimension of psychological hardiness with organization (0.111) dimension of family environment is not significant even at 0.05 level. The correlation coefficient of control dimension of psychological hardiness with total family environment (0.336) is significant at 0.01 level.

Table 3

Psychological Hardiness among Adolescents in relation to Family Environment

S. No.	Dimensions of Family Environment	Commit-ment	Control	Challenge	Psycho-logical Hardiness
1.	Cohesiveness	0.58	-0.248**	-0.247**	-0.244**
2.	Expressiveness	-0.046	0.144*	0.118*	0.167**
3.	Conflict	-0.039	-0.313**	-0.248**	-0.329**
4.	Acceptance	0.035	-0.206**	-0.280**	0.250**
5.	Independence	0.009	0.228**	0.238**	0.253**
6.	Active Recreational Orientation	-0.026	0.205**	-0.161**	0.190**
7.	Organization	-0.029	0.111	-0.084	0.122*
8.	Control	0.058	-0.172**	-0.086	-0.115*
9.	Total Family Environment	0.022	0.336**	0.309**	0.345**

$p < 0.05$*; $p < 0.01$**

The table 3 further shows that the correlation coefficient challenge dimension of psychological hardiness with cohesiveness (-0.247), conflict (-0.248), acceptance (0.280), independence (0.238) and active recreational orientation (0.161), dimension of family environment is significant at 0.01 level. The correlation coefficient of challenge dimension of psychological hardiness with expressiveness (-0.118) dimensions of family Environment is significant at 0.05 level. It indicates that there is a significant relationship of challenge dimensions of psychological hardiness with cohesiveness, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance, independence and active recreational orientation. The correlation coefficient of challenge dimension of psychological hardiness with organization (-0.084) and control (-0.086) dimension of family environment is not significant even at 0.05 level. The correlation coefficient of challenge dimension of psychological hardiness with total family environment (-0.309) is significant at 0.01 level.

The perusal table 3 further reveals that the correlation coefficient of psychological hardiness with cohesiveness (-0.244), expressiveness (0.167), conflict (0.329), acceptance (0.250), independence (0.253) and active recreational orientation (0.190) dimension of family environment is significant at 0.01 level and the correlation coefficient of psychological hardiness with organization (0.122) and control (-0.11) dimension of family environment significant at 0.05 level. It indicates that there is significant relationship of psychological hardiness with all the dimensions of the family environment. The correlation coefficient of psychological hardiness with total family environment (0.345) is significant at 0.01 level. It indicates that psychological hardiness among adolescents is significantly related to all the eight family environment components as well as total family environment.

Family environment as predictor of psychological hardiness among adolescents

The table 4 shows that the result of step-wise multiple regression analysis of psychological hardiness in relation to family environment.

The results of step-wise multiple regression revealed that none of the family environment dimensions as well as the total family environment emerged as a significant predictor of commitment dimension of psychological hardiness among adolescents. The perusal of the table 4 reveals that total family environment emerged as a significant predictor of control dimension of psychological hardiness among adolescents while explaining only 11% of the variance in control dimension of psychological hardiness among adolescents.

Table 4

**Family Environment as a Predictor of Psychological
Hardiness among Adolescents**

S.No	Dependent Variable	R	R^2	R^2 Change	F-value	% Variance
1.	Control	0.336	0.113	0.110	37.82**	11%
2.	Challenge	0.309	0.095	0.092	31.42**	9.2%
3.	Psychological Hardiness	0.345	0.119	0.116	40.31**	11.6%

p<0.05*; p<0.01**

Further, the table 4 showed that family environment emerged as a significant predictor of challenge dimension of psychological hardiness among adolescents while explaining only 9.2% of the variance in challenge dimension of psychological hardiness among adolescence. The table 4 indicates that family environment emerged as a significant predictor of psychological hardiness among adolescents while explaining only 11.61% of variance in psychological hardiness among adolescents. It may be concluded that family environment was found to be a positive contributor to control, challenge dimension of psychological hardiness and total psychological hardiness among adolescents.

On the basis of above results, it may be concluded that total family environment emerged as a significant predictor of control and challenge dimension of psychological hardiness and as well as total psychological hardiness among adolescents. However, none of the family environment components or total family environment emerged as a significant predictor of commitment dimension of psychological hardiness among adolescents. Similarly, family environment was also found to be a significant predictor of psychological hardiness among adolescents. These results find support from a number of earlier researches (Kaur, 2005; Lifton et al. 2005; Kaur, 2007 and Maddi et al. 2009).

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. As the study revealed cohesiveness, organisation and active recreational orientation were important contributing factors influencing the level of life skills in the adolescents, so it becomes the duty of the parents to have more cohesiveness and organization in the family. Also, they should be made aware about the importance of a conducive family environment in the course of adolescent development.

2. Total family environment was found to be a significant predictor of control, challenge and global psychological hardiness among adolescents. Hence, it is the family from where hardy attitudes begin to develop among adolescents. So, it is essential for the parents to develop such a conducive family environment for the adolescents where they are given enough opportunities to develop self-control, challenge accepting attitudes and a hardy personality.

3. Life skills training and hardiness training should be an important aspect of school enrichment programme and the families too need to be strengthened as hardy individuals having life skills take the lead in charge, show greater performance, leadership, morale, conduct and health. Hardiness training approach can help adolescents in building attitudes and managing resources which improve the individual and can help turn adversity to advantage.

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Skill Development and Career Needs of School Dropout Adolescents and Youth: A Study conducted among the Rural Villages in Tamilnadu

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Abstract

Youth- hood is the period of life when young people start realizing their aspirations, dream of their careers, assuming their economic independence and finding their place in society. Too many young people are not benefitting fully in the present educational framework. Inappropriate education and training is seen as an obstacle to find suitable work by young people. Young people in general, and school dropouts in particular, are facing many challenges in finding a job of their choice. As they drop out of schools, they are less skilled and unable to identify or use opportunities for career advancement. Many a times their career needs and aspirations are not spelt out. Keeping this in view, a pilot study was initiated towards developing a career guidance material for adolescent school dropouts. The specific objectives of the study among others are; to identify the career needs and aspirations of the adolescents, identify the skill gap among school dropout adolescent and to identify the challenges faced by adolescent school dropouts in terms of job skills and placement opportunities. Purposive sampling method was adopted to collect data from the respondents. NGOs help was taken since they are working in the area for long time and with their support one could reach the target group conveniently. Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to bring out the views of adolescents and youth. The study was conducted among 400 adolescents and youth in the rural villages of Tamilnadu. The study shows that adolescents and youth are ignorant about the career choices available. Their knowledge on various career options and career advancement is limited and it has highlighted the requirement of career guidance and skill up-gradation for school dropout young people.

Key words

Adolescents, youth, career, skill development and up-gradation

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Introduction

The young people are the most energetic and vigorous section as well as most valuable human resource of every country. While the developed world is aging fast, India is blessed with 70% of her population below the age of 35 years. Estimates show that, in years' to come India will probably have the world's largest number of young people. The population between the age of 10–19 years is approximately 230 million, the largest ever cohort of young people to make a transition to adulthood. Rough estimates reveals that through the formal system only below 5% of the adolescent population can receive skill training. The remaining unskilled and semi-skilled persons, who are already working, and or joining the job market will be given continuous or further training for up-gradation of their skills through a variety of delivery systems.

India is a fast growing young economy and by 2025, it would be the youngest growing economy in the world. The growing economy poses various challenges and bring in enormous opportunities. With the burgeoning youth population, it will be difficult to meet the trained manpower requirements of the economy as well as tackling the ever increasing unemployment problems. It is recognized that emerging requirements of training, both formal and non-formal, and assessing the capacity and potentials of the existing institutional set up in relation to the emerging skill requirements, an appropriate framework for skill development of rural youth could be prepared.

Rationale of the Study

Adolescents in general, and school dropouts in particular, are facing many challenges. Since they drop out of schools, they are less skilled and unable to identify or use opportunities for career advancement. Many a time their career needs and aspirations are not spelt out. It is imperative that they get career guidance for which specific materials are to be designed. Keeping this in view, a pilot study was initiated towards developing a career guidance material for adolescent school dropouts.

Many a time poor children in India do not find opportunity to study further and turn out to be school dropouts. They are forced to work to support their family to address their crucial livelihood issues, with no other viable alternative in place. Some need to join their family business. Children perform a variety of jobs: some work in factories, making products such as carpets and matches; others work on plantations, or as domestic servants at different houses. Some of the major sectors, generally the adolescent drop -outs find jobs in the sectors such as mining, quarrying, agriculture, fire works, silk

manufacture, diamond cutting industry, beedi making, domestic labour, construction, brick kilns, glass and bangle factories, carpet industry, leather works, etc. In fire and cracker works, majority of the workers are below 14 years. Many of them even begin working at the age of five to seven. The nature of work includes dyeing outer paper, rolling, gunpowder, making fire crackers, dipping material into chemicals and packing the final products. Similarly all the other sectors mentioned before have also identified specific activities in which children are generally employed, primarily due to economic reasons.

The reasons for school dropout and child labour includes poverty, Illiteracy, scarcity of schools nearby areas, ignorance, social regressive practices, blind customs and traditions and migration. Boys often work long hours than girls, doing hard physical labor outside the home for very small wages. On the other hand, girls look for household activities as well as those that could be done at home akin to cottage industries.

Children do not have any idea of the world of work. Neither the parents nor the teachers are teaching them the conditions of the world of work. More so is the curriculum, which is mostly devoid of vocational and technical education. Going by the trend in employment, under-employment and unemployment, the labour requirement and work force development in this country assumes greater significance.

Skill Development and Training

Skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development. The economy becomes more productive, innovative and competitive through the existence of more skilled human potential. India has vast potential, especially human resources of human resource. Indian labour force is sought after across the globe. However, the changing global economy opens up opportunities within India, as more Multi-National Companies (MNCs) are investing in India. However, there is a mismatch between the skilled and trained manpower requirement and the available skilled manpower. If we look into employment, its composition and the growth in employment opportunities could play a critical role in the process of development of our economy. Increasing pace of globalization and technological changes provide both challenges and growing opportunities for economic expansion and job creation.

India's Workforce Development

It is imperative that India focuses on workforce development. A Rapid Assess-

ment carried out by USAID has brought out in their findings and recommendations with special reference to workforce development in India.Its main findings include:

1. High economic growth yet large gap between skills demand and supply and "skills mismatch" is the central bottleneck in the Indian labor market system.

2. It is estimated that the expanding workforce will require about 15 million new jobs every year, against the 10 million new jobs being projected by the government. Jobs creation is primarily in the rural non-farm sectors of agribusiness and service sector.

3. It is pointed out by the corporate business executives that there is a need for greater employability skills in their workforce, including mastery of basic literacy and numeracy skills, inter-personal skills, communication skills, IT skills, and critical thinking skills, rather than specific technical skills.

The study put forward the following key recommendations:

1. Building a bridge of better communication and understanding on workforce development between partnering institutions.

2. Promoting core employability skills and competencies.

3. Encouraging active labor market programs for all skill levels of youth, but with particular attention to rural and vulnerable youth.

4. Giving priority to "second chance" programs (i.e. non-formal education and training to unemployed youth)

The Way Out

'Modular Employable Skills'(MES)programmeunderMinistry of Labour and Employment and programmes taken up by National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) under Ministry Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, Youth Affairs and Sports for skill development can play a significant role in achieving the mandate of the Government of India in skilling the nation. Application of MES among the needy adolescents and youth population in India can act as a supplement to our growing economy as well as great relief to our burgeoning youth population. The needs and aspirations of the youth as diverse and the programmes under MES and NSDA is not reaching every corner of the country and the skill requirement of the nation.

Skill gap analysis and studies are being taken up by various organisations and on the basis of their findings new programmes are being planned. The present study is an attempt to understand and identify the existing skill development scenario in Tamilnadu, to develop a frame work for developing a career guidance training manual for adolescent school dropouts and youth.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

This study is akin to the frame work of Skill Development based on MES by the Director General of Employment and Training (DGET). It is obvious that skill formation, skill up-gradation, multi-skilling, skill gap identification, skills grouping and validation for employability have to be part of a larger exercise. However this study has its focus on career aspirations of adolescent and youth engaged in various employment activities in different sectors like agri-labourers, construction workers, mill workers (cotton), quarry (stone, sand), mechanic workshop, hotels, helper in industries(ancillaries), brick kiln, plantation (cashew nut), domestic servants, petrol bulk, department stores, petty shops and similar others. It may be due to early school dropout or discontinuation from higher learning, they turn out to be child labour or young person at work. The reasons are many which include economic condition, poverty, book phobia, teaching methodology, learning difficulties, availability & access to higher education, personal security issues, family situation, traditional beliefs, transportation issues, illiterate parents, being orphan, health problems, inferiority complex, language issues (English), ragging and many more. For clarity the group is divided into two age groups of 13-18 (Adolescent - school drop out) and 19 -24 (Youth – College discontinued).

Pilot study for this project has been initiated at Nagapattinam and Dharmapuri with the set interview schedule. About 30 samples have been interviewed and obtained necessary suggestions have been taken to modify the schedule appropriately. As this project envisages preparation of a training manual for career counseling for the target audience, it is decided to cover the pockets of child labour across different sectors and sections of population. This includes fishermen, quarry workers, match and fire workers, brick workers, quarry workers, agriculture and plantation workers, and the like.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1.   To identify the career needs and aspirations of the Adolescents.

2.   To identify the skill gap among school dropout adolescent

3. To identify the challenges faced by adolescent school dropouts in terms of job skills and placement opportunities.

4. To suggest ways to increased job skills and placement opportunities for unemployed vulnerable youth in Tamilnadu.

5. To suggest ways to identify the formal and non-formal education and training opportunities and institutions that can help prepare out-of-school unemployed youth

6. To develop a framework for designing required materials for Career Guidance to the dropout adolescents and youth.

Area of Study

This study is conducted in pockets of child labour prone areas like Viruthunagar, Thanjvur, Pudukottai, Krishnagiri, Thiruvallur, Nagapattinam and Dharmapuri districts. Some of the NGOs involved in this study include GOMATHY Foundation, NAATRU, WAY Foundation, SHED and ASHOCA. The sectors in which these agencies are working include, Salt Packing, Match & Fireworks, Printing, Agriculture, Plantation, Quarry, Construction and Fishing. This study is limited only to have a fair idea in evolving a framework for developing a career guidance manual.

Methodology

Purposive sampling method was adopted to collect data from the respondents. NGOs help was taken since they are working in the area for long time and with their support one could reach the target group conveniently. Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to bring out the views of adolescents and youth. Groups and cliques of boys and girls were identified by NGOs and FGDs conducted among them. To get a clear picture of youth needs and aspirations, the team also conducted focus group discussion with dropout youth (one mixed gender, one women), unemployed graduates and with NGOs. A survey was conducted among school dropouts to identify the challenges faced by them and to understand their career needs and skill gap in particular. Based on the results of this survey, required materials for Career Guidance, to address the needs of the school dropouts has been suggested. Efforts have been made to incorporate the suggested manual in the scheme of vocational training centers for adolescents, transit schools, NGOs and Youth clubs.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Biographic Details of the Respondents

Primary data had been collected with the support of NGOs namely Gomathy Foundation, Naatru, Way Foundation, BEST, and SHED, covering pockets in Viruthunagar, Thanjavur, Pudukottai, Krishnagiri, Thiruvallur, Nagapattinam and Dharmapuri districts. The targets included adolescents and youth from sectors like Salt Packing, Match & Fireworks, Printing, Agriculture, Plantation, Quarry, Construction and Fishing.

Table 1: Age

S.No	Gender	Adolescent		Youth		Total	
		Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %
1	Male	156	57	30	11	186	68
2	Female	75	27	13	5	88	32
	Total	**231**	**84**	**43**	**16**	**274**	**100**

Source: Field Study

Table 1 brings out the distribution of adolescents and youth in this study. It is found that the responses of male are high 186 out of 274 (68%). It was found that the response from the female is less as they were found mostly reserved in giving their opinion. Among the respondents 84% are adolescents in the age group of 10-19 and 16% are youth in the age group of 20-35.

Table 2 : Education

Education	Male				Female				Total	
	13-19	20-35	Total	Perce ntage %	13-19	20-35	Total	Perce ntage %	Abso lute	Perce ntage %
Illiterate	2	0	2	0.7	1	0	1	0.4	3	1.1
Primary	40	10	50	18.2	11	1	12	4.4	62	22.6
Secondary	28	10	38	13.9	19	7	26	9.5	64	23.4
High School	71	10	81	29.6	31	5	36	13.1	117	42.7
HSC	12	0	12	4.4	13	0	13	4.7	25	9.1
ITI	1	0	1	0.4	0	0	0	0.0	1	0.4
Diploma	2	0	2	0.7	0	0	0	0.0	2	0.7
Total	**156**	**30**	**186**	**67.9**	**75**	**13**	**88**	**32.1**	**274**	**100**

*Source: Field Study

Table 2 depicts that most of the respondents (i.e.) 117 (42.7%) have studied up to high school before entering the world of work. It is obvious that this group constitutes the major work force in the informal sector. Out of the respondents 64 (23.4%) who were working 62 (22.6%) have attended school, up to secondary and primary level respectively. The presence of illiterate workforce is insignificant in the informal sector.

Table 3: Sector

Sector	Male		Female		Total	
	Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %
Agri Labourer	0	0.0	27	9.9	27	9.9
Beautician	0	0.0	1	0.4	1	0.4
Brick Worker	0	0.0	9	3.3	9	3.3
Carpenter	1	0.4	1	0.4	2	0.7
Centering Worker	0	0.0	8	2.9	8	2.9
Cleaner	0	0.0	1	0.4	1	0.4
Cotton Mill Worker	0	0.0	16	5.8	16	5.8
Driver	7	2.6	1	0.4	8	2.9
Entrepreneur	0	0.0	1	0.4	1	0.4
Farmer	0	0.0	20	7.3	20	7.3
Fishermen	7	2.6	0	0.0	7	2.6
Fitter Helper	7	2.6	0	0.0	7	2.6
Gardener	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.7
Industrial Helper	12	4.4	0	0.0	12	4.4
Labour	21	7.7	0	0.0	21	7.7
Mason	29	10.6	0	0.0	29	10.6
Match & Fire Worker	19	6.9	0	0.0	19	6.9
Painter	6	2.2	0	0.0	6	2.2
Plumber	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.7
Poultry Worker	4	1.5	0	0.0	4	1.5
Printing	15	5.5	0	0.0	15	5.5
Salesmen	4	1.5	0	0.0	4	1.5
Salt Packer	15	5.5	0	0.0	15	5.5
Sand Mixing	5	1.8	0	0.0	5	1.8
Service	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.7
Social Worker	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.4
Stone Cutter	12	4.4	0	0.0	12	4.4
Teacher	4	1.5	0	0.0	4	1.5
Textile Mill Worker	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.7
Welding Helper	12	4.4	0	0.0	12	4.4
Total	**189**	**69.0**	**85**	**31.0**	**274**	**100**

Source: Field Study

From Table 3 we can infer that Construction (10.7%) Agriculture (9.9%), Unskilled labour (7.7%) Match & fire and Mill are the major sectors involving adolescents and youth the maximum. Sector wise analysis brings out the importance of working with is age group and provides focus on their career aspirations and need.

Table 4: Income

Income	Male				Female					
	13-19	20-35	Total	Percentage %	13-19	20-35	Total	Percentage %	Total	Percentage %
<5000	83	4	87	31.8	29	2	31	11.3	118	43.1
5001 - 7500	18	2	20	7.3	39	3	42	15.3	62	22.6
7501 - 10000	67	4	71	25.9	13	2	15	5.5	86	31.4
>10000	8	0	8	2.9	0	0	0	0.0	8	2.9
Total	**176**	**10**	**186**	**67.9**	**81**	**7**	**88**	**32.1**	**274**	**100**

Source: Field Study

The Table 4 shows that 118 (43.1%) respondents were drawing less than Rs.10,000/-. This is typical of those involved in the informal sector. However the disclosed income may be at a lower side because of inherent bias in revealing actual drawings. About 86 (31.4%) respondents were drawing between Rs. 7501 and 10000. It is interesting to note that adolescents are capable of drawing more than Rs.5000. But one thing we could infer is that they ought to go to work at early ages to earn livelihood for themselves or to augment the family requirements.

Table 5: REASONS FOR DROPOUT

Reasons for Dropout	Male		Female		Total	
	Absolute	Percentage %	Absolute	Percentage %	Absolute	Percentage %
Difficulty to Study	0	0	1	0.4	1	0.4
Disabled	0	0	1	0.4	1	0.4
Economic Problem	24	8.8	14	5.1	38	13.9
Exam Failure	16	5.8	7	2.6	23	8.4
Family Problem	32	11.7	11	4.0	43	15.7
Lack of Guidance	13	4.7	1	0.4	14	5.1
Lack of Interest	40	14.6	9	3.3	49	17.9
No Information from Respondents	61	22.3	44	16.1	105	38.3
Total	186	67.9	88	32.1	274	100.0

Source: Field Study

As shown in Table 5, lack of interest (38.3%), family problems (15.7 %) and economic needs (13.9%) are the most stated reasons for school dropout and that too to augment family income. It is obvious that there is link between school dropout and child labour especially in the informal sector. However reasons like inability to learn, loss of interest and absence of guidance are noteworthy.

Table 6: Interest in Studies

Studies	Male		Female		Total	
	Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %
Regular	9	16.1	3	5.4	12	21.4
Part time	4	7.1	1	1.8	5	8.9
Distance	25	44.6	10	17.9	35	62.5
Others	2	3.6	2	3.6	4	7.1
Total	**40**	**71.4**	**16**	**28.6**	**56**	**100**

Source: Field Study

Table 6 shows that 62.5% prefer the distance mode to pursue studies. Whereas 21.4% want to study through regular mode. Most of the respondents are ignorant about the learning opportunities available to them. Even they are unaware of National Open School. The learning is that a thorough orientation is needed to help them know what, when, where and how they can pursue their studies either to augment their income or knowledge or both.

Table 7: Source of Career Guidance

Career Guidance	Male		Female		Total	
	Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %
Parents, Friends, Relatives & Neighbours	46	28.75	23	14.375	69	43.1
News Paper & Media	6	3.75	0	0	6	3.8
NGOs	72	45	13	8.125	85	53.1
Total	**124**	**77.5**	**36**	**22.5**	**160**	**100**

Source: Field Study

Table 7 shows that NGOs (53.1%) are providing the information on career to the adolescents and youth. For 43.1% of the respondents, source of career guidance is their parents, relatives, neighbours and friends. It is obvious that those sources should be well aware of the career choices available. Whether they are getting correct information or not is a question to be pondered.

Table 8: Skill Level Perception

Skill Level	Male		Female		Total	
	Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %
Somewhat	9	8.3	1	0.9	10	9.3
Fair	25	23.1	7	6.5	32	29.6
Good	36	33.3	8	7.4	44	40.7
Expert	9	8.3	13	12.0	22	20.4
Total	**79**	**73.1**	**29**	**26.9**	**108**	**100**

Source: Field Study

The table 8 shows that 40.7% could identify their skill level as good and 20.4% as excellent. For 29.6% feels their skill level as fair and 9.3% as somewhat good. This shows respondents understanding of work and their performance. However a study on the perception of their employers on their work could throw more light on the skill levels of these young workers. More so is the need for technical, vocational, soft and life skills needs and levels of these young people needs to be studied to compare against their own and employer's perceptions.

Table 9: Aspiration Status

Aspirations	Male		Female		Total	
	Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %	Abso lute	Percen tage %
Waiting for Opportunities	23	27.7	1	1.2	24	28.9
Seeking Support	20	24.1	13	15.7	33	39.8
Enhancement of Skills	19	22.9	5	6.0	24	28.9
Restart Education	2	2.4	0	0.0	2	2.4
Total	**64**	**77.1**	**19**	**22.9**	**83**	**100**

Table 9 shows the aspiration of the respondents towards career progression. 39.8% seeks support for career progression, whereas 28.9% waits for an opportunity and for skill up- gradation.

Table 10: Aspiring Sector

Sector	Male		Female		Total	
	Absolute	Percentage %	Absolute	Percentage %	Absolute	Percentage %
Beautician	1	0.4	1	0.4	2	0.7
Carpenter	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.4
Construction	12	4.4	2	0.7	14	5.1
Dairy	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.4
Driver	4	1.5	4	1.5	8	2.9
Electronics	8	2.9	0	0.0	8	2.9
Electricals	2	0.7	3	1.1	5	1.8
Entrepreneur	10	3.6	3	1.1	13	4.7
Farmer	5	1.8	12	4.4	17	6.2
Gardener	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.7
Health Worker	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.7
House Keeping	3	1.1	0	0.0	3	1.1
Painter	5	1.8	0	0.0	5	1.8
Petty Shop	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.4
Plumber	8	2.9	6	2.2	14	5.1
Poultry	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.4
Salesmen	4	1.5	0	0.0	4	1.5
Service	2	0.7	2	0.7	4	1.5
Social Worker	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.7
Store Keeper	2	0.7	2	0.7	4	1.5
Tailor	5	1.8	2	0.7	7	2.6
Teacher	4	1.5	0	0.0	4	1.5
Technician	11	4.0	0	0.0	11	4.0
Trainer	2	0.7	1	0.4	3	1.1
Turner	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.4
Welder	14	5.1	0	0.0	14	5.1
Others	74	27.0	49	17.9	123	44.9
Total	**187**	**68.2**	**87**	**31.8**	**274**	**100**

Source: Field Study

Table 10 shows shift from one sector to another. The shift shown is marginal only maybe due to their lack exposure to various trades which are available in the market. Farming, construction, plumber, etc. are sought after trades.

Table 11: Skill Training

Skill Training Need	Male				Female				Total	
	13-19	20-35	Total	Percentage %	13-19	20-35	Total	Percentage %	Absolute	Percentage %
Interested	71	16	87	52.7	20	8	28	17.0	115	69.7
Not Interested	33	6	39	23.6	10	1	11	6.7	50	30.3
Total	**104**	**22**	**126**	**76.4**	**30**	**9**	**39**	**23.6**	**165**	**100.0**

Source: Field Study

Table 11 shows that more than half of them (69.7%) are interested to undergo skill training. This is a very positive outcome, as skill training adds to employability. Hence skill analysis should be part of the career guidance programme to this target group.

Focused group discussion (FGD)

Focused Group Discussion was conducted to obtain the necessary information from the respective workers in various sectors. The objectives of the Focus Group Discussions are as follows:

i.   To identify the present status of dropout adolescent and youth

ii. To identify their present engagement, (i.e.) work and study

iii. To explore skill status and needs for skill up gradation

iv. To look for input in creating a training manual for career counselling

FGD 01 - Fishermen Youth – Nagapattinam

A FGD was conducted at Akkaraipettai, Nagapattinam District, organized by the AVVAI NGO

Participants: Selected boys and girls from Akkaraipettai area, which is a tsunami affected area. About 11 adolescents and youth (5 girls and 6 boys) in the age group of 13 to 27 years participated in the FGD. All are engaged in fishing and allied activities.

The boys are involved in fishing. Many of them are school dropouts and the reasons are:

i.   Personal inability - Unable to learn

ii.   Fear of Failure, Fear of Teacher, Humiliation by Teachers, Humiliation by Peers ,fear of teacher, homework pressure and class room treatment

iii. Family conditions, economic needs, responsibility of shouldering the family, need for engaging   in labor etc.

Girls often refer to:

i.   Cooking at home & house hold chores/domestic engagements

ii.   Take care of younger ones/siblings care at home

iii. On attaining puberty etc.

Not limiting to above, many more reasons are added to the adolescents' dropout from schools. More so they did not join colleges or could not continue college due to financial constraint or unaffordability.

Open discussion brought out that they do not know and do not care for their career progress. The money they get by fishing is more for their age and got a taste to it. Their work timing and style do not permit them to think about career or savings. Rather they spend lavishly and get into habits like drinking, smoking and so. Girls assist fish processing. Very few are into net knitting, boat repair, on board engine repair etc.

The discussion brought out that some of them wanted to be owners of fishing craft. Some are interested to learn skills related to fishing. Many are shying away. Girls are interested to continue studies, especially computer related learning.

FGD 02 - Salt Packaging Workers – Tuticorin

A FGD was conducted at Mullakadu, Tuticorin District, organized by the Gomathy Foundation, NGO. Participants: Selected boys and girls from Mullakadu area, which is closer to salt pans. About 12 adolescent and youth participated in the age group of 13 to 26 years

Outcome: All were involved in salt packaging activities.

The boys were engaged in bundling and girls in pack filling. Many of them were school dropouts and the reasons are:

i.   Personal inability, unable to learn

ii.   Fear of humiliation by peers ,fear of teacher, fear of homework pres-

sure and class room treatment

iii. Family conditions, economic needs, responsibility of shouldering the family.

Girls often refer to

i. Cooking at home & house hold chores/domestic engagements

ii. Take care of younger ones/siblings care at home

iii. On attaining puberty.

Discussion brought out that they get easy money for the laborious job, and they do not require skill or educational qualification. The money they get by bundling is more for their age and got a taste to it. They can think about career or savings, but the work nature makes them feel tired. Back pain is their obvious complaint. Boys get into habits like drinking, smoking and so. Very few girls are into pump/motor repair, salt pan works etc. Bonded labor kind of situation indirectly exists. According to their bargaining capacity, the boys and girls can get advance from contractors. Because of this they cannot shift the jobs at their will. The discussion brought out that some of them wanted to grow as contractors and some of them want to shift to better jobs. Some are interested to learn vocational skills. Many are shying away. Girls are interested to continue studies, especially tailoring, computer and handicrafts.

RESULTS, INTERPRETATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The study shows that adolescents and youth are ignorant about the career choices available. Their knowledge on various career options and career advancement is limited. The following are the major findings of the study:

Education: 42.7% of the respondents were studied up to high school.

Skill Level Perception: 20.4% feel that they are experts and 40.7% feel that they are good at their work.

Employment Sectors: Out of the 30 sectors, construction (10.7%) agriculture (9.9%), unskilled labour (7.7%) labour constitutes the most.

Income: 43.1% were drawing less than Rs.5000/- and 31.4% between Rs.7500/- and Rs.10000/-. This signifies that skill up gradation can augment their earning capacity as well employability.

Reasons for School Dropout: The result shows 17.9% lack of interest; 15.7% have family problem and 13.9 % show economic problem as the reason for dropout. A close look at this may show interplay between all these reasons.

Studies: 62.5% wanted to continue studies through distance learning.

Career Guidance: 43.1% say that their guide is parents, relatives or neighbours which mean their exposure is limited. Mostly they are not professionals and not aware of career choices. Aspiration Status: 39.8% are waiting for support and 28.9% are waiting for either opportunities or enhancement of skills. This signifies need for counseling, guidance and support.

Skill Training: 69.7% are interested in skill training.

♦ Higher studies are a chance and not choice for most of the adolescent and youth. Especially for rural women it is not even a distant dream.

♦ Most of the school dropouts are no more interested in studies. However would be interested to get trained if that would augment their income or earning capacity.

♦ Some are interested and career oriented, willing to become an entrepreneur or move abroad as a skilled person.

♦ Most of them are unaware of the career choices within their sector. They do not know what to do other than present work.

♦ Skill acquisition, skill gap and skill up gradation sounds new and good to them.

♦ With motivation and support they may be willing to work towards new Skill acquisition and skill up gradation.

Sectors Employing Adolescent and Youth

Many sectors are employing adolescent and youth for work. It includes the following:

1. Cheap labour and productivity

2. Young, dynamic and obedient

3. Ignorance about labour laws

4. Availability and accessibility

The sectors include:

- Agriculture, Horticulture and Plantation Crops

- Construction, Brick Making, Quarry

- Shops and Establishments including Petty Shops, Clothing Shops, Grocery Shops, Stationery Shops, Tea shops and the like.

- Hotel, Hospitality and Tourism Industry

- Service Agencies like Courier, Milk Vending, News Paper, Auto mobile repair, Air conditioning and Refrigeration etc.

Cheap Labour and Productivity

Utilization of adolescents and young person's human resource means high productivity. The cost of labour is also cheap. Cutting across sectors we can realize this. Adolescent and young persons are engaged in agricultural work like transplanting, harvesting, weeding, pruning, plucking leaves, fruits and flowers, thrashing and winnowing etc. In construction work, they are engaged in moving sand, stones and bricks, screening them, mixing and preparing mortar, watering, digging pits, and many assistant works. In match and fireworks, they are involved in stacking the sticks, labeling, packing, wetting with chemicals, rolling, and drying and collecting works. In printing they are engaged in DTP, sizing and cutting, binding, pasting wrapper, arranging and feeding papers to and from machines, screen printing, drying and collecting. The charges paid to them are usually lower than normal. However recent trends show that experienced one is paid at par with industry practices in vogue. As the youngsters get money in their hands at a very early age, they loose interest in studies and prefer to work. There may be many reasons why they turn to work, but the truth and foremost reason is economic reasons.

Young, Dynamic and obedient

Usually in the work spot the adolescent and youth are sincere, active, dynamic and regular. Their work efficiency and sincerity retains them in the industry. They are obedient to their masters and maximum work is extracted from them. They are usually free from house responsibilities and are engaged in job for long hours without any compliant or disturbance. That is why they are preferred.

Ignorance of Labour Laws

This is one of the important factors that make adolescent best choice for the contractors. They are mostly unaware of their rights and entitlements in the world of work. For them, money is fun and power. Apart from whatever they share in the family, they maintain a personal money that gives them freedom and choice. Many a times it is spent on personal choices like, edibles, cloth, mobile phone, cinema or addictive areas like smoking, drinking, pan, gutka, ganja and other narcotics. Addictive behaviours lead them to bad environment, resulting in loss of health, respect or job even. On the other hand, they spent on relationships either on building or on maintaining. Hence they do not concentrate on their entitlements, except for a comparison of wages among them and that too age and experience based. Because of awareness, now a days youngsters manage to get a certificate for age proof to escape from the legal issues. Only to that extent they are aware of and nowhere about the labour laws, workers rights, etc.

Availability and Accessibility

Availability and accessibility to youth is very high, be it urban or rural. Hence it is easy for labour contractors to attract youth. The recent job fairs are examples exemplifying the fact that youth are available and accessible to job. However, the quality and skills level is the issue.

Challenges Faced

Adolescent and Youth face many problems in their road towards their career and life advancement. These include continuing education, employability and skill up-gradation.

Continuing Education

Universalisation of Primary Education has made some dent into the society and hence the primary education rate is better. High school dropouts is usually higher, the reasons are mainly the cause of being low/poor social economic conditions of the family. Children are forced to gain employment to support the family income. After they are into the world of work, they are unable to think of continuing education or higher studies. Any informal learning or training is their first choice if that would any way augment their income or earning capacity.

Employability

Since the adolescent and youth are school dropouts, they hardly possess any employability skills. Just through working as an unskilled labourer they gain their skills. Proper guidance and counselling will help them to identify and match the need for skill acquisition, gap identification as well as skill development in them.

Skill Analysis

If we look into various sectors these adolescents and youth are working, there is no skill analysis happening professionally. However based on experience, they are paid. In most of the cases, it is their efficiency that earns them the money. This is because most of the jobs are either piece work or job work and piece rate is the order of these sectors. Those who learn and become efficient, move away from work. If a professional categorization and training based on skill analysis could happen, it would turn out to be a boon to them. This is where MES training becomes significant.

Career Needs and Aspirations

The career needs and aspirations are very much limited for two reasons. The first being the career prospects available in their current work (sector), i.e. the scope for progress and the skill set required for upward movement. The sector per se should offer opportunities. The second being the capability of the individual and family circumstances that creates the enabling environment. Because of this, most of the time they are clueless about their future. Very few, that too boys, are aspiring for specific job or going abroad on some trade like driving, welding, centering, earth moving or the like.Girls hardly have any aspiration than settling in family after marriage.

When we look into the Career aspirations, it is limited to either earning or to the work they know. They either do not know about other career options or are unable to appreciate the options available. This clearly warrants the need to give them guidance and counseling for their career. Their self-awareness about skills is very much limited, as they are unskilled or semi-skilled workers in different sectors. They do not have knowledge about opportunities available. However, their contractors know and offer them the work. So the dependency on the contractors is very high. In construction, salt packing and fire and match industries, this is obvious. If we look on to

their interest for continuing education, it is very poor. As they start working, they fail to study further in augmenting their skills and capacities. However, for augmenting their earning, some are interested in pursuing vocational training in generic field or specific field.

Guidelines for Career Guidance Material Production

The career guidance manual should address, Personal Guidance, Career Guidance and Educational Guidance needs and contain following information:

i.   Inputs on developmental career counseling validated through exhaustive review by practitioners, leaders in the field, and field tests.

ii. A template offering a list of suggested activities to enhance the career development (The Career Development Activities Chart).

iii. A list of materials and resources to be used by practitioners in career guidance activities.

iv. Address list for Sources of Information

v.   Work sheets for Career Planning & Action with Activities

vi. It should include Training Materials for Guides/Mentors

vii. It should focus on generic and specific skills that match the personality as well as the sector (world of work).

viii. Skill certification should be addressed and guidance to obtaining such certification should be part of the manual.

1. Sector identification: It is important to identify different sectors in the world of work; especially in the case of dropouts. This study has identified some sectors where, adolescents and youth are employed gainfully.

2. Area matrix based on sector: Based on geographic location, a matrix need to be prepared to include all the sectors in that locality.

3. Skill advancement: It is important to list out the basic skills that they possesses and the advance skills they wish to acquire.

4. Support Sources: Identify the support sources.

5. Course Availability: The courses which are available in the vicinity may be identified.

6. Technology Substitution: It is important that technology substitution can swipe the career advancement opportunity in a sector and force people

out of job. Hence exposure to multiple sectors as well as training in skills that are common to multiple sectors, are to be identified and made a part of the manual.

7. Marketing: Personal marketing is important. The individuals should be capable of selling themselves ie make them available in the job market so that the prospective employers can reach them.

Sector specific guidance materials have to be produced. It should address the skills at different levels. This means whether the skill(s) are at entry level, functional level or professional level. This calls for skill gradation and grouping. Sector specific case studies are to be included in the manual. This would give clarity and an idea to the aspiring young people, who were drop-outs earlier. Listing and mapping of various skills based courses is essential to guide the adolescent and youth.

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Life Skills Education for Healthy Living: A study among the Adolescents in Bihar

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Abstract

Global and Indian experiences have shown that educational interventions focused on Life Skills development have proven very effective in empowering adolescents to manage their sexual and reproductive health issues and concerns, including avoidance of risky behaviors. The Adolescent Education Programme (AEP) in India is thus, an important initiative for school going adolescents that aims to empower young people with accurate, age appropriate and culturally relevant information to promote healthy attitudes and develop skills to enable them to respond to real life situations in positive and responsible ways. The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) India's programme *Tarang*, being implemented in Bihar in partnership with Department of Education, Government of Bihar and the United Nations Population Fund, since 2010, involves non-conventional methods such as - role plays, case studies, group discussions, brainstorming, value clarification and other interactive ways of, to deliver Life skills training to adolescent boys and girls. *Tarang* seeks to not only empower and inform its primary target audience (class 9 and 11) students in government schools about health issues, but also build an enabling environment for them in schools, at home and in community settings in order to help them achieve their full potential. *Tarang* has so far reached out to over 3 lakh adolescent boys and girls across 809 schools through its cadre of 1500 Nodal Teachers, 114 Master Trainers. A knowledge, attitude, belief and practice survey has been conducted among the students to establish the baseline. Regular monitoring is conducted through Adolescent Education Cell established at the State Council Educational Research and Training in Patna. Process Evaluation conducted to examine various processes that have been set up to achieve the programme objectives indicates that the programme has generated interest among the stakeholders and 86% percent principals, 100% Master Trainers, Nodal Teachers and students opined that the programme is relevant in school education.

Key words

Adolescent Education Programme, Life Skills Education, Sexual and Reproductive Health education, adolescents, Tarang

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Introduction

Adolescence is a period between childhood and adulthood; some also refer to it as a period of confusion. There are several changes occurring simultaneously during this period - biological and psychological. Adolescents (10-19 years) in India represent almost one-third of the population. Findings from Youth in India: Situation and Needs Survey (2009) conducted by International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS) shows that young people are poorly informed on several issues related to their health and wellbeing and make a strong case for empowering young people with information and skills for informed and responsible decision-making. Global and Indian experiences have shown that educational interventions focused on Life skills development have proven very effective in empowering adolescents to manage their Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) issues and concerns, including avoidance of risky behaviors.

With increasing school enrollment rates a substantial proportion of young people can be easily accessed in school settings. Schools are a valuable venue for providing information and enhancing skills of young people on issues related to their health and well-being. The Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) is an important initiative in this direction that aims to empower young people with accurate, age appropriate and culturally relevant information, promote healthy attitudes and develop skills to enable them to respond to real life situations in positive and responsible ways. National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) co-ordinates the programme and works through both curricular and co-curricular formats to contribute towards holistic development of young people in pursuance of the National Curriculum Framework, 2005.

Scope for AEP in Bihar

Young people aged 10-24 constitute a total of 24 million, and account for 29% of Bihar's population. In order to make any meaningful progress on development indicators, the state needs to make significant investments in this particular human resource to enable the young people to achieve their potential. Youth Study findings demonstrate that child marriage continues to dominate the lives of young men and women in the state. Of those aged 20-24, 77% young women and 13% young men were married before the age of 18. However, it is noteworthy that education has a protective effect on

preventing child marriage in Bihar. Data from the Youth Study shows that the proportion of young women married before the legal age declined to 58% among those who had gone through some secondary education and 15% among those who had completed at least 12 years of education. Findings further show that despite norms prohibiting pre-marital opposite sex mixing, 17% of young men and 5% of young women acknowledged the experience of a romantic partnership before marriage. Fourteen percent young men and 3% young women reported premarital sex.

It is a concern to note that findings from the Youth Study indicate that young people are not well informed about the physiological or psychological changes during adolescence. In the age group of 15-24, 19% young men reported anxiety about nocturnal emission and 11% young women reported menstrual problems. It is well recognized that age appropriate and correct information are the pre-requisites to informed decision making and responsible behaviors on issues related to reproductive and sexual health. Furthermore, 52% boys and 46% girls in the age group of 15-24 reported that boys should do as much domestic work as girls, suggesting conservative gender role attitudes (Youth Study, 2009).

Findings from the study also show that in the age group of 15-24, 28% young men and 15% young women reported comprehensive awareness on HIV/AIDS. Substantial proportions of young people reported substance use. In the age group of 15-24, 32% young men and 1% young women reported use of tobacco and its products, 5% young men and 0.1% young women reported use of alcohol at least once a week or more frequently in the past 1 month. Similarly, 1% young men and no young women reported use of drugs (ganja, charas, brown sugar, etc.).

CEDPA India: A glimpse of its work with adolescents

The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) India is a non-governmental organization which works with communities, women leaders, civil societies and the government to give women and youth the tools to live healthier lives. CEDPA India has been a pioneer in working with adolescents on Life Skills Education (LSE). CEDPA began its investment in youth in India in 1987 with the launch of the Better Life Options Programme (BLP) to help adolescent girls and young women make better life choices concerning their health, economic status, civic participation, education, and

employment. The programme is based on an empowerment model and combines elements of education, family life education, life skills, vocational training, health information and services, and personality development.

Over the past two and a half decades, CEDPA India has launched a number of groundbreaking initiatives and programmes as part of its commitment to continuous programme and institutional improvement. To achieve maximum scale and impact, the programmes are implemented through state governments, education departments, schools and indigenous partner NGOs with CEDPA India providing core curricula training, technical assistance and measurement oversight. CEDPA India has experimented, incubated, piloted, refined and implemented - at substantial scale - a full portfolio of youth programmes for both in school and out of school adolescents. CEDPA India's projects and interventions have so far impacted the lives of 200,000 out of school, 800,000 in school young people and 500,000 adults who support youths in their communities. Some of the pioneering work includes collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in the states of Jharkhand and Bihar in the form of AEP- UDAAN and AEP-Tarang, respectively, to mainstream LSE in schools.

The baseline

A comprehensive baseline was conducted in 2011 by CEDPA India through an external agency to capture the status before initiating the programme. The knowledge, attitude, belief and practice (KABP) survey conducted among class 9 and 11 students in Bihar reveals that 61% adolescents (class 9 and 11) justify wife beating under various circumstances. 73% believe child beating is not harmful while 56% believe it is necessary to keep the child in check. Only 15% adolescents are aware that child beating is a form of domestic violence. Only 19% could identify inappropriate touching by an uncle as sexual abuse. 40% adolescents had used some form of intoxicant in the last 6 months. 25% reported peer pressure as a reason for trying intoxicants. The responses from teachers also reported similar trends. The qualitative findings among teachers and District Educational Officers (DEOs) show that there is a huge demand for adolescent education in schools in Bihar. Though the Govt. of Bihar (GoB) has already initiated adolescent education in schools, it only addresses some basic issues surrounding adolescents. Hence, there is a scope of introducing a comprehensive, culture specific curriculum on adolescent education in Bihar.

Tarang

AEP-Tarang is an example of a successful partnership between the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), Government of Bihar (GoB), CEDPA India and UNFPA and is being implemented to delivers LSE and SRH education to adolescents attending government schools in 9 districts of the state of Bihar in India. Since 2010, CEDPA India has worked closely and in partnership with MHRD, GoB, at the state and district level, to provide technical assistance and to build the capacity of teachers to implement AEP in the state. Tarang is currently being implemented in 809 schools across 9 districts in Bihar identified in consultation with the State Council Educational Research and Training (SCERT), GoB. While the primary target comprises students, Tarang is designed to additionally reach out to school teachers, principals, education officers, parents, policy makers, media and civil society. Tarang seeks to not only empower and inform adolescents about health issues, but also build an enabling environment for them in schools, at home and in community settings in order to help them achieve their full potential.

Approach

The programme follows a co-curricular activity-based learning approach that enables young people to respond to real-life situations more effectively. It uses a school-based transaction methodology where trained school teachers deliver the curriculum. Further, the programme follows a cascade model of training where Master Trainers (MTs) from within the Government schools orient selected teachers, known as Nodal Teachers (NTs) who are then entrusted the responsibility of transacting various activities with school Students of Classes IX and Class XI in classroom settings. The project focuses on empowering students in class 9 and class 11 with information and skills for improved health including reproductive and sexual health and well-being, and setting up monitoring systems for effective AEP implementation in schools. Technical assistance is also being provided by CEDPA India, to develop the capacities of the state and district level officials of the Department of HRD to effectively implement, consolidate and sustain the Tarang programme.

In first phase, till 2012, the emphasis was on developing a state specific curriculum and IEC material, training MTs, completing the training of Nodal Teacher, and setting up processes to roll out the programme. An AE cell

was created within SCERT and a Nodal Person was appointed. Review of AEP was included during routine Monthly Principal Meetings chaired by DEOs and quarterly district level review meeting were instituted with NTs and MTs under the chairpersonship of District Programme Officer (DPO) Secondary Education or the Programme Officer, Secondary Education. DEOs/DPOs reviewed AEP during their routine school monitoring visits. Regular review meetings were also held with SCERT. Monitoring checklists were designed to capture responses by Principal, NTs and students during the monitoring visits. MTs were given an orientation on the monitoring checklist. During this phase school monitoring visits were conducted in only 40% schools.

Process evaluation

As the interventions are recent a process evaluation of Tarang was conducted in mid 2013to examine various processes that had been set up to achieve the programme objectives and to provide insights into the programme for any mid-course corrections to enhance impact.

Transaction of Tarang

The study revealed a teacher-student ratio of 1:164 in the sample schools, which is four times the ideal batch size of Tarang design of 40 participants in a batch. Both, principal and MTs commonly reported the NTs to be interested and motivated in overall implementation of Tarang sessions. However, skewed teacher-student ratio was found to be affecting the regularity on Tarang sessions, thereby leading to reduced effectiveness of these sessions.

Appropriateness of nodal teacher training

Role of training was considered critical in smooth implementation of the programme, specifically in organizing and conducting Tarang sessions. Training under Tarang were regarded as important, relevant, appropriate and needed, to prepare teachers for their future role as NTs. Overall training was found to have an energizing impact on teachers, which led to proper implementation of the programme, according to principals, training added to their knowledge, and has favorably influenced the quality of teaching by NTs. Few stakeholders also felt the need of re-training as they considered four-day training as inadequate to prepare teachers for their new role.

Understanding of TARANG and Nodal Teachers' role and responsibilities

Nodal Teachers and principals both recognize transaction of Tarang sessions as NTs' responsibility. However, a gap in their comprehensive understanding is visible with respect to Nodal Teacher's awareness on Tarang programme. Only around one-third NTs were able to correctly identify number of Tarang sessions to be conducted for classes 9 and 11, while one-third principals were unable to comment upon the quality of Tarang programme in their respective schools. Further, understanding of their responsibilities under the programme on preparing of session calendar and annual reporting format was found to be low.

Methods used for transaction of Tarang sessions

During training, teachers were taught participatory methods of teaching and learning viz. group discussion, role play, games etc. However, the difference between learning/ training and application of these methods in Tarang transaction with students is evident as only a small proportion of NTs reported consistent use of these methods. This difference can be associated with various factors such as, large batch size, lack of adequate infrastructure and interest and motivation of both teachers and students.

Impact

Though it is too early to assess the impact of the interventions, both, Nodal Teacher and students corroborated to have an overall positive impact of Tarang sessions. Around one-fifth of NTs reported to have observed a positive impact of Tarang among students. According to NTs, Tarang sessions have led to enhancement of students' self-confidence and have changed their point of view, removed hesitation, helped them build their life skills, besides providing valuable learning on important issues related to their health and well-being. Students are interested in receiving this education and have now started to discuss their problems without any hesitation with their parents. Among the various attributes of the programme, students value Tarang as very useful for their lives. Students mentioned that Tarang helped them develop their life skills; become more disciplined; Tarang has helped remove their hesitation, and develop self-confidence and a helping attitude towards others.

Monitoring of Tarang implementation at school level

The priority in implementation of Tarang has been on ensuring regular class-room transactions for which periodic directives are issued by the Department to ensure that the sessions are undertaken in all schools. A rigorous monitoring of the implementation of the programme in schools has been taken up to ensure success of the programme. Monitoring checklists have been developed and 55 MTs from the Education Department have been identified and trained as monitoring officers to administer the checklists. A total of 685 schools have been monitored in all the nine implementation districts during 2013.

Tarang has so far reached out to over 3 lakh adolescent boys and girls across 809 schools through its cadre of 1500 NTs and 114 MTs. Monitoring data indicates 91% of the schools visited have been transacting AE sessions with class 9 students and 14% with class 11 students in the current academic year. 86% schools have incorporated Tarang in their school timetable while sessions are being transacted in 4% schools without a timetable. Session records are being maintained in 95% of the schools where sessions are being conducted. 79% session records are being maintained on self-designed formats. 91% of these records were found to be updated. Support was rendered to the principal/NT in improving the implementation of Tarang in a total of 630 schools (92%) out of 685 that were visited during the year. Sessions were conducted by monitoring officers in 365 schools. The students in schools where the AE classes are being transacted were very enthusiastic about the programme and were of the opinion that this programme is beneficial to them and it should be continued in the future.

A strong sense of ownership and genuine participation in design, project implementation and monitoring and evaluation are critical to successful implementation and sustainability of any programme. The success of Tarang lies in the fact that the entire implementation modalities have been worked out in partnership with SCERT, the primary implementing agency for the State Education Department of Bihar. The adaptation of training curriculum, the design of the training of teachers, the involvement of the District Education offices in rolling out of the programme in district and block level schools, the monitoring of the programme have all been undertaken with the involvement of the government system in the state.

Appendix

AE	Adolescent Education
AEP	Adolescent Education Programme
BLP	Better Life Options Programme
DEO	District Education Officer
DPO	District Programme Officer
GoB	Government of Bihar
HRD	Human Resource Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IEC	Information Education Communication
IIPS	Indian Institute of Population Sciences
KABP	Knowledge Attitude Belief and Practice
LSE	Life Skills Education
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MT	Master Trainer
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NT	Nodal Teacher
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

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Synergizing Youth Programmes: an Interface of NSS and NYKS and it's impact in Community Development

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Abstract

Youth participation in community development is increasingly recognized as an important development strategy. The opportunities for participation that young people get in their communities may influence their self-development and personality. Government of India has launched two schemes viz, National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) to promote youth participation and volunteerism. These organizations work independently among student and non-student youth groups. The present study is an attempt to understand the impact of the synergy of NSS and NYKS at the village level. The aim of NSS is to develop the student's personality through community service. The cardinal principle of the NSS programme is to inculcate the values of volunteerism and community service among the students, and to provide service to the society without any prejudice. NYKS works with the objective of providing the non - student youth an opportunity to help them grow and involve in the nation-building activities. It carries out its work through Youth Clubs and Mahila Mandals and further by means of implementation of projects and schemes. The objectives of the study are to understand the process of synergy among the student and non-student youth in collaboration and to find out the effectiveness of synergy on volunteerism (among students/ non students).Methodology used to conduct the study is case study method. The study was conducted at Doopakunta village of Warangal district (Andhra Pradesh). The present study is qualitative in nature, primarily focusing on the process of synergy between the students and non-students in community development. Study confirms that synergy is possible between the NSS volunteers and Youth Club members provided frequent interaction among volunteers, monitoring by senior level functionaries of both organisations and their willingness to collaborate. More activities are needed to strengthen the synergy and to sustain it.

Key words

Youth participation, community development, volunteerism

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Introduction

Youth are the valuable asset of every country. Youth forms the most dynamic and progressive component of the society in all the places and in all the times. If the youthful exuberance and creative energy are properly channelized, there is no educational, political, social and economic goal that cannot be realized. Youth participation in community development is increasingly recognized as an important development objective and a strategy. The opportunities for participation that young people experience in their communities may influence their development and the kind of transitions they make to adulthood. The National Youth Policy (NYP) 2003 recognizes that today's youth, who have better access to skills and information than those of earlier generations, can play an important role in influencing the political processes and the socio-economic development of the country. The NYP 2014 also visualizes in creating a bond between young people, on the one hand, and the community, on the other. There will be greater acceptability of the young people in the community and as a result, it will be able to make optimum use of their potential, energy, and enthusiasm. In this process, the young people will get enhanced understanding of the constraints and problems of the community.

National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) are two different Government organizations under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports which work for the development of youth and welfare of the society at large. The National Service Scheme, popularly known as NSS was started in 1969. It is a voluntary group of young people in Colleges, Universities and at Higher Secondary level working for promoting voluntarism among students through campus-community linkage. The aim of the NSS is to develop the student's personality through community service. The cardinal principle of the NSS programme is to inculcate the values of voluntarism and social service among the students, and to provide service to the society without any prejudice. NSS volunteers strive to ensure that every one in our society who is needy gets every possible help so that they can also enhance their standards and lead a life of dignity in the society. In this process the volunteers themselves learn to face the challenges of daily life, the problems of the villagers, the nuances of community development and how to lead a happy life in the extreme scarcity of resources and so on.

An evaluation study of NSS was conducted by Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai in 2008-09 and it shows that almost 73 percent of NSS volunteers comes under low income group with an annual income of less than Rs. One lakh. Almost 98 percent of the NSS volunteers came within

the age group of 25 years. Female and male NSS volunteers formed 53.7 percent and 46.3 percent of the student volunteers respectively. 52% of the students belonged to the general category followed by OBC (31.4 %), SC (12.7%) and ST (4.1%). Out of the 723 NSS volunteers selected for the study, a very large number of volunteers belonged to Hindu religion (87.4%) followed by Muslim (3.9%), Christian (3.2%) and other religions (5.5%). 76 percent of Programme Officers were above 35 years of age and have several years of experience as teachers in degree and junior colleges. Out of 71 NSS Programme Officers covered under the study 46.5% were Post Graduates, 36.6% were Ph. Ds, 8.5 % were M. Phil and 5.64% were M. D. Out of 71 NSS Programme Officers 64.8% were teaching in Degree colleges, 19.7% in Junior colleges and 11.3% taught at both Degree and Junior colleges. The study reveals that a vast majority of volunteers perceive NSS experience as contributing to their personality development, helping them to understand and to serve the community and a constructive opportunity for the use of leisure time.

At national level NSS is managed by Programme Advisor's Cell under the charge of a Joint Secretary level Officer of Government of India. The peculiarity of NSS is that it has the dual control of both Centre and State Government. At the state level a Deputy/Assistant Programme Advisor heads the Regional Office of NSS from the Centre Government, whereas a State Liaison Officer (SLO) liaison the functioning of NSS between Centre and State. Interestingly, the salary of the SLO is paid by Centre Government, but located in State Government Office under the administrative control of State. Again the NSS at the college level is administered by NSS Programme Coordinators of Universities, Engineering Colleges and Polytechnics by a Coordinator at Technical Cell, and in Schools by Programme Coordinator in Higher Secondary and Vocational Higher Secondary Education. Though activity of NSS is at the unit level in a College or School, they have multiple controls. If there is no coordinated work among various functionaries, then a unit will get three different types of directions, which is noted as the important drawback of NSS. NSS has a network of 35 lakh volunteers and 35000 Programme Officers in the country, perhaps one of the largest student networks in the world for volunteerism.

Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK) is a scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, which was started in 1972, and has been active ever since in providing the youth of the country with opportunities to grow and develop themselves. Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) was formed as an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Youth

Affairs and Sports in 1987 to manage the scheme of NYK. It works with the objective of providing the non - student rural youth an opportunity to help him grow and involve in the nation-building-activities. It carries out its work through Youth Clubs, and Mahila Mandals and further by means of implementation of various projects and schemes with the participation of youths.

Vision foundation, New Delhi (2003) conducted a study on "Evaluation/ Management Audit of Central schemes of NYKS". The major finding of the study shows that Youth Clubs played a major role in enrolling the youth for the various programmes. The National Service Volunteers of NYKS played an important role in motivating the youth to get associated with NYKS and the local NGOs played the least role. The study revealed that the programmes on awareness of social issues were conducted in large number of villages where as seminars and workshops were arranged in minimum number of villages. Programmes related to income generation, youth development and sports promotion were more popular in all the states. 96% of the informants have reported that they have been benefited by NYKS programmes. The study also reveals that only activity which has been repeated more than 5 times in about one fourth of the villages are Cultural Programme. In about 40% of the villages the adventure promotion programmes and the seminars and workshops have not been repeated at all.

NYKS has a well-built system of national, state and district offices with defined responsibilities. It has a large network of youth club and mahila mandals at villages and connects almost all villages in the country. Perhaps it is one of the largest youth network in the world without parallels. As many as 10 million youth club members voluntarily work in their communities for community development.

Volunteering is the perfect vehicle to discover something one is really good at and develop a new skill. It is an incredible experience, benefiting communities, and of course the volunteers themselves. In India NSS and NYKS are two different Government organizations, which provides a platform for volunteerism to student and non- student youth for the development and welfare of the society. Often people think that volunteering has a meaningful, positive impact on the community and through voluntary service the volunteer will learn several skills which helps them to develop their personality and world view. The advantages of volunteerism are:

Learn or develop a new skill

Volunteering can help the volunteers to develop various skills through different types of activities that they involve. For example planning and imple-

menting a major fund-raising event can develop goal setting, planning and budgeting skills. Supervising and training other volunteers' helps to develop supervisory and training skills.

Be part of community

People and societies co-exist and depend on each other for survival but growth of materialism and commercialism are strengthening by disregarding traditional values. Communities are diversified but at the same time we can really bridge that expanding gap through volunteering. Volunteering is ultimately about helping others and having an impact on people's wellbeing.

Motivation and sense of achievement

As a volunteer the individual would have made a decision to help on own accord, free from pressure to act from others. Volunteers predominantly express a sense of achievement and motivation, and this is ultimately generated from your desire and enthusiasm to help.

Boost career options

A survey carried out by Time Bank through Reed Executive showed that among 200 of the UK's leading businesses; 73% of employers would recruit a candidate with volunteering experience over one without, 94% of employers believe that volunteering can add to skills and 94% of employees who volunteered to learn new skills had benefited either by getting their first job, improving their salary, or being promoted.

New interests and hobbies

Sometimes we do get locked into the "rat-race" of life and volunteering can give that escape to everyday routine and create a balance in our lives. Finding new interests and hobbies through volunteering can be fun, relaxing and energizing. The energy and sense of fulfillment can carry over to a work situation and sometimes helps to relieve tensions and foster new perspectives for old situations. Sometimes a volunteer experience can lead to innovative experiences or help to explore a hobby or interest we were unaware of. We can strengthen your personal/professional mission and vision by exploring opportunities and expanding our horizons.

Meeting a diverse range of people

Volunteering brings together a diverse range of people from all backgrounds and walks of life. Volunteering also offers an incredible networking opportunity. It opens a great way to learn about people from all walks of life,

different environments, and new industries. Networking is an exciting benefit of volunteering and we can never tell who we will meet or what new information we will learn and what impact this could have on our life.

Further, volunteering would be able to develop skills such as planning, self-confidence, time management, project management, communication, listening and negotiation, forward thinking, lateral thinking, innovation, creativity, team working and leadership. These skills are learned, not simply in a classroom or training course, but by being lived out week after week through real-life situations. Volunteering provides the perfect arena for developing a well-rounded individual with strong employability skills.

Understanding the community intervention programme done by these two organizations, the researcher is developing a model for interface between NSS/NYK at field level. The basic idea is to develop synergy between NSS and NYKS at village level. The expected benefits are that, NSS volunteers will get immense field exposure which leads to the development of their personality. The NYKS volunteers on the other end will get inputs for knowledge enhancement and personality development from NSS volunteers. Further the essence of team work and cooperativeness will develop among the student and non-student volunteers.

People work in isolation or in groups. When individuals work together it yield more results. Like in Mathematics, 1+1= 3. It is synergy that gives more results. Working in synergy is beyond coordination or cooperation. It means that teamwork will produce an overall better result than if each person within the group were working toward the same goal individually. Due to synergy the group becomes more cohesive; its functioning is affected in a number of ways. First, the interactions and communication between members increase. Common goals, interests and small size all contribute to this. In addition, group member satisfaction increases as the group provides friendship and support against outside threats. Frequent interaction enhances the quality of teamwork and its result. NSS and NYK are two organizations with different target groups, but almost similar ideology. Both organizations mandate is to work together in all possible areas and in tandem, which never materializes. As individual organizations both are doing tremendous work in community development and personality development. Is synergy possible between two organizations? Can't NSS and NYKS work together? Is there any strategic problem in working together? Which are the factors hindering coordination and synergy of NSS and NYKS at grass root level? How can we encourage them to interact and work together? These are certain questions the researchers try to find out answer through this study.

Need and importance of the study

National Service Scheme is an ideal value based programme for student youth. This programme was envisaged to accomplish our father of nation Mahatma Gandhiji's long cherished desire of involving the youth in Nation building process.The philosophy of the NSS is well explained in its motto, "not me, but you" which underlines on the belief that the welfare of an individual is ultimately dependent on the welfare of the fellow being. NYKs also focus on empowerment of rural youth through its various activities. Though both the organizations work among youth, there is no synergy in their activities and they have stand alone programmes. There is no successful model available in the country to show the interactive programme of both NSS and NYKS. NSS volunteer being a student is aware of the different government policies and programmes targeted for the development of rural community. On the other hand NYKS non-student volunteer have knowledge and experience on the issues and problem faced by the rural community. The team work between these two types of volunteers will give a better platform for the implementation of the programmes and activities more effectively. If there is linkage between the NSS volunteers and member of the youth club of NYK, then we can reach to the interior villages and can conduct various programme on various issues like general health, mental health, HIV/AIDS, adolescent health and population education etc. Besides, employment generation programme like vocational training in different trades can be conducted to overcome the problems of unemployment among rural community. The knowledge of the educated youth (NSS volunteers) and their voluntary zeal linked with the local wisdom of the village youth and their skills can be put together to develop the villages.

The study was made possible through a UNFPA sponsored project. UNFPA supported Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) for its adolescent health and development programmes. One among various programmes is an action research "Synergizing youth programmes: an interface of NSS and NYKS and its impact in community development". RGNIYD has identified Doopakunta village in Warangal district, Andhra Pradesh to undertake the study considering the convenience of a College in the 15 Km distance of the village and a Project Coordinator from the area who was a former student of RGNIYD. Project Coordinator took the role of a facilitator in arranging the interactions of both NSS and NYKS functionaries at village level. The strategy adopted by RGNIYD is:

- Meeting between NSS Programme Officer, College Principal, NSS Volunteer leaders, District Youth Coordinator of NYKS, President and

members of Village Panchayat at the College

- First meeting at College and second meeting at the village along with the youth club members

- Joint meeting of all the village level government functionaries at the village, youth club, NSS volunteer leaders for knowing each other and to explain the objectives of the project

- Need assessment study of the village through resource mapping of the village with the participation of villagers and panchayat

- Training in Life Skills, Personality Development and Leadership

- Awareness programme on various development schemes of the government

- Introducing some token programmes by RGNIYD like, total blood group literate village by identifying blood group of all the villagers, zero drop out and 100 percent enrollment campaign, clean village campaign, urgent need of sanitation, vocational training programme, etc. and

- Frequent meeting to assess the progress of activities

Research Design

The objectives of the study are:

- To indicate the process of synergy among the student and non-student youth

- To find out the effectiveness of synergy on volunteerism (among students/non student)

- To identify the problems faced and the ways and means to solve it.

- To analyze the involvement of students and non-students in voluntary work.

Methodology used to conduct the study is the case study method. The study was conducted at Doopakunta village of Warangal district (Andhra Pradesh). The present study is exploratory and qualitative in nature. A systematic procedure was followed for undertaking the research project. The primary and secondary sources have been used for the collection of data. The observation method along with interview with the help of schedule has been used as main source to collect field data.

The data was collected for the research from 30 samples (subjects), categorized under two groups namely, NSS volunteers and Youth club mem-

bers. Each group comprises of equal number of samples that is 15 each drawn by adopting the purposive sampling method. The samples were drawn from the NSS Unit of Sri Gayathri Degree and P.G. College and Yuva Chaithanya Youth Association of Doopakunta village of Warangal district.

The limitation of the study is that the project is for only one year and hence the process of synergy can't be assessed over a longer duration. Moreover the concentration is only on the village level and hence the teamwork at national or regional level could not be assessed. Another factor to be noticed is that the teamwork has been facilitated by a third party (RGNIYD) and not a natural process emerged either from NSS or NYKS or led by them.

Village Profile

S. No	Particulars	Details about the Particulars
1	Name of the Village	Doopakunta
2	Name of the Village Panchayat	Doopakunta
3	Name of the Block/Mandal	Geesugonda
4	Total Population	Male: 700 Female: 650
5	Name of the Panchayat President During the study period (2011-12)	J. Kittaiah
6	No. of Wards	8

Educational Facilities

1	No. of School in the village:	Middle: 1			
2	Name of the School	Upper Primary School			
3	No. of the Teachers Working	6			
4	No. of Students Studying (2011-12)	Class	Boys	Girls	Total
		1-5	45	43	88
		6	06	08	14
		7	04	03	07
		Grand Total			109
5	No.of Anganwadi / ICDS Centre	2			
7	No. of the children in ICDS	Boys: 73 Girls: 105			
8	No. of Adolescent Girls Group	One			
9	Present Activities of ICDS;- Pre-School Activities (singing and cultural activities)				

Health Facilities

1	Hospital Facility	Government : No
2	Private Medical Practitioners	Allopathy: NO Ayurvedha: NO Sidha: No Yunnani : No Traditional Healers: No
3	Primary Health Centre	No
4	Veterinary Dispensary	Yes

Other Infrastructure Facilities

1	No. of Water Tanks	1
2	No. of Public Taps	15
3	No. of Ponds	1
4	Type of Road Facility	Tarred Road
5	Transportation Facility in the Village	Auto Rickshaw
6	Public Distribution Service (Ration Shop)	Yes (1 Shop)
7	No. of. Youth Clubs	4
8	No. of Fans Clubs	No
9	No. of Self Help Groups	28
10	Public Library Facilities	No
11	Community Building Available	Yes
12	Common Occupation Pattern	i. Cultivation ii. Daily Wage Labourers (Agriculture)
13	Type of Houses in the Village	Hut: 20 Tiled: 190 Concrete: 65 Total: 275
14	Toilet Facility	Attached house: No Non-attached house: No Open Defecation: Yes
15	Places of Worships	Temple: 2 Church: 1
16	Provision Shops	8

The village profile shows that it has primary education facility, Anganwadies, youth clubs, self-help groups, etc. It is an indication that education is being given importance by the village community and social awareness to that extent is visible. Though protected drinking water is available, health and hygiene facility is almost absent. There is no primary health care facility in the village and no toilet in the village. Open defecation is rampant and the villagers seem to have no complaints in this regard. It is an agriculture community and cultivation is their main occupation, followed by animal husbandry. It is worth to note that there is a veterinary dispensary in the village, though there is no dispensary for the villagers.

Case study of Youth Club members

Anil is a 22 year old youth with MBA is working in a private firm. He belongs to the SC community of Hindu religion and his family annual income is Rs. 60,000. From last 5 years he has been member of Yuva Chaithanya Youth Association and at present he is the President. He was member of NSS during his college days so he is well aware about the NSS objectives, principles as well as the activities of NSS. But he never knew that there is an area where both NSS and NYKS Youth Club Members can work together for the development of the community. He is of the opinion that NSS and NYKS should work together as he feels that when these two organisations work together they can implement more programmes which they are not able to conduct as standalone organisation. According to him there was a difference in opinion when he meet NSS volunteers for the first time but it was clear when they have open discussion with NSS, Youth Club members, villagers and Self Help Groups. Further he tried to motivate the fellow youth club members to solve their issues in working together with NSS volunteers as their main objective is the development of the village and in this way synergy has started developing. When they started working together to execute the programmes of the NSS and NYKS interface project, there was full cooperation among the volunteers. Still he opined that with more programmes and activities they can build strong synergy. Personally he feels this project gives him in depth knowledge of community service and volunteerism and he can continue providing his volunteer service in a better way. Besides, it helps in improving his personality. Now he can talk with full confidence at public gathering and it also really improved his communication skills.

Ramesh is a 31 year old youth. He has completed M.com and at present working as a Programme Manager in a private organisation. He belongs to the SC community of Hindu religion. His family annual income is Rs.60, 000/-. He is a member of Yuva Chaithanya Youth Association from last 6 years. He is of the view that NSS and NYKS volunteers should work together. He further feels that there were no major issues while working with

NSS volunteers because he thinks that although they are from different organisation, the NSS volunteers are also from the rural background so there was no difference in opinion. He feels that at present there is a synergy among volunteers but in order to sustain it there should be frequent interaction and activities. With the help of this project he came to know about various government schemes which is very much useful for the community development. He also thinks that this project has helped him in developing personality and because of it he got his current job.

Siva is 18 years old and his parents are illiterate. At present he is working as a mason. He is a 10 std drop out. He belongs to SC community of Hindu religion. He comes from low socio-economic background. He is a member of Yuva Chaithanya Youth Association from last 2 years. He came to know about NSS only after working for this project and he feels they should continue working because working with NSS volunteers not only enable to carry out various programme but it also inspire young people like him to continue their study. At present he is planning to continue his study through National Open Schooling. (He got the idea from the awareness programmes during the project). In addition, this project has given him information on various government schemes which is very much useful for the development of the village as well as for youth. Further this collaboration ventures has helped him in developing self-confidence and now he feels that he can do much better things in life for betterment of his family as well as for himself. He is also of the opinion that although these two volunteers belong to two different organisations with different background there were no issues while working together. He feels that there is total coordination among NSS and Youth Club volunteers.

Case study of NSS volunteers

Vyshnavi is a 20 year old at present she is studying in 2nd year B.com. Her father is a businessman and mother is home maker. She comes from a forward class Hindu family and family annual income is Rs. 6, 00,000/-. Vyshnavi is an active NSS volunteer from her school days. But she was not aware about the NYKS and it was only after working for this project she came to know about it. Now she is very much aware about the objectives and activities of NYKS in fact she wanted to join NYKS after her studies so that she can continue her passion for community development work as well as empowerment of the young people. She also personally feels that after working for this project her outlook towards volunteerism has changed and now she came to know that volunteerism is not only helpful in developing the village community but it also help volunteer, in personal growth. Moreover after success of programme like Blood Identification Camp she want to do much more service for the society. With the help of this project she came to know about Life Skills which help in building up her confidence

level and leadership quality. She is of the opinion that there is never been any issues in working together to conduct the activities as the main purpose from both the side are serving the people. She also said that there is close coordination among these two types of volunteers but still she personally think that with more activities, say once or twice a week, then it will help us in strengthening our partnership.

Ajay is a 19 year old boy pursuing his 1st year B.A. in Political Science. His father is a teacher and mother is home maker. He belongs to SC and he is a Christian. His family annual income is around Rs. One lakh. He has only one year experience as a NSS volunteer. He came to know about NYKS only after working for NSS and NYKS Interface Project. He never face any issue in working together with NYKS Youth Club members and he further think that there is synergy among these two types of volunteers, but there is need for frequent interaction then the coordination can be sustained. He further thinks that NSS and NYKS should work together in future also because only with such kind of combined work and effort volunteers can reach the unreached. Personally this project has helped him in improving his communication skills, how to deal with others and it also helped in learning leadership skills.

Observations of Principle and NSS Programme Officer, Gayathri college

Principle of Gayathri College Warangal and NSS Programme Officer feels that NSS and NYKS Interface on Community Development is a very innovative idea to strengthen the sense of volunteerism among the students. As a part of the project orientation programme, community development and volunteerism help the students to understand the fact that volunteerism not only help in development of the community but also the development of the volunteers themselves. They also give their opinion that they find tremendous improvement in the development of the personality in many of their students who are working as volunteer for this project. Further they think that they never find any issues working together with NYKS youth club members. They feel that although these two volunteers are from two different backgrounds, they also work together with common objective which is the development of the village.

Observations of Panchayat President, Doopakunda Village

President of village Panchayat is very much happy with the work which has been carrying out with NSS and NYKS Interface on Community Development Project. He feels that NSS and Youth Club Members has given their best service and he always find them working together without any difference in opinion or ideas, although they are from different organisations. He

further feels that villagers are also very much happy with various programmes like orientation on government schemes and health camp through which, now his village is blood group literate village. He feels that if such kind of activities and service from NSS and youth club continue, then his village will become a modern village and an example to show to the rest of the country.

Suggestion from Focus Group Discussion

As part of data collection researcher has conducted a focus group discussion with the NSS volunteers and Youth Club members on the topic problem faced by volunteers on building synergy. Issues identified during the focus group discussion are:

1. Lack of frequent interaction among the NSS and Youth Club members
2. Communication gap
3. Lack of punctuality in attending programmes on time
4. Lack of proper transportation
5. One month long strike in Warangal
   (study was conducted during the Telengana agitation)

As solutions to the problems, the volunteers have given suggestion that there need to be frequent interaction among the NSS volunteers and youth club members. The number of activities should be increased, as working together for long period to carry out such activities bring better team work among the volunteers which lead to development of strong and sustainable synergy. But they suggest that the programmes and activities should be conducted on holidays preferably on Sunday in order overcome the issue of punctuality from both the sides. They further decided to continue the open discussion between NSS volunteers and Youth Club members to overcome any of the issues and difference in opinion.

Discussion

Studying the results obtained from NSS volunteers and Youth club members, attention is drawn to the fact that both NSS volunteers and Youth club members are of the view that they should work together. It not only helped in bringing together two different organizations to work together and also gave them a platform to share their ideas and opinion. When they work together two different principles and ideas are merging and come up with a better one which helps in the development of the village. They also expressed that, with this collaboration venture they can carry out much more activities which they are not able to conduct as stand-alone organizations. Further they feel that there is great synergy among the NSS volunteers and Youth Club members but in order to sustain it there is a need for frequent

interaction and more activities should be carried out.

In analyzing the results of this study, the researcher found that NSS volunteers are of the opinion that this project has helped them in building up their self-confidence and ability to interact with others. It also improved their communication skills and in building leadership skills. Now they understand the fact that volunteerism not only helps in developing the village and its communities but it also lead to personal growth of the volunteers.

In the case of the Youth club members they are also of the opinion that the project helped them in improving their leadership qualities, self-confidence, communication skills, mobilizing village resources and to motivate oneself and others. Most importantly after working together with NSS volunteers they came to know about various government schemes.

Major findings

The following inference has been derived based on the analysis of the data collected:

1. NSS volunteers and Youth Club members are of the opinion that NSS and NYKS should work together.

2. The major problem faced by both the volunteers in building synergy are lack of frequent interaction among the NSS and Youth Club members, Communication gap, lack of punctuality in attending programmes on time lack of proper transportation, programme timing and One month long strike in Warangal.

3. This collaboration venture helps both the NSS volunteers and Youth club members on the overall development of their personality.

4. There was difference of opinion when they starts working together due to difference in principles and background but with open discussion they came to a common platform where both their ideas and principles were merged to one.

5. NSS volunteers and Youth Club members are of view that they are able to carry out more activities in working together than working as a stand-alone organization.

6. The difference in political views, religion and castes differences does not create any issues in building synergy and in working together.

7. Both the NSS volunteers and Youth club members felt that the villagers are very much happy with their work.

Suggestions

1. Frequent interaction among the NSS volunteers and Youth club members is needed for better synergy and to sustain it.

2. More joint activities should be carried out.

3. The proposed activities or the programme should be conducted on holiday preferably Sunday or general holiday to ensure punctuality.

Conclusion

Who will bring both organizations in one umbrella to work together? It's a question to be answered by authorities. Both NSS and NYKS are from the same Department and Ministry in government. Though the Chief Executive Officers of both the organisations are from government and same cadre (Joint Secretary) the interactions and efforts for collaborations seldom takes place. At national and state level both NSS and NYKS have systems which can be tied up, but not tied. At district level NSS has no set up for one point coordination, whereas NYKS has its district office and well built infrastructure. NYKS has its youth clubs, mahila mandals and self-help groups in almost all the villages. NSS has its units in almost all colleges in the country. At present it is being extended to higher secondary schools also. It is high time that both these organisations should work together for the benefit of the youth of the country. Government of India may take a considered view on the issue of collaboration between NSS and NYKS from national to village level taking into account of its functional difficulties, benefits to the volunteers and community and above all to bring meaning and purpose to the existence of both NSS and NYKS.

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Ageism and Geriatrics-
The role of Life Skills:
A Study focused on North East India

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Abstract

There are essentially three objectives of life skill development in ageism and geriatrics; understanding yourself better, living a more conscious life and attainment of personal satisfaction. However, ageism in particular as defined by Robert Butler is a combination of three factors: aging process, others' attitudes towards these elders, and institutional policies and practices. Ageism could also be looked upon as a stereotype human phase based on chronological age. United Nations recognizes 60 years as the age of becoming old. As of now, the number of old people in India is 117 million and likely to reach 150 million in the next thirty years. Life expectancy in India is around 65 ½ years and an improvement over 60 years about five years back. Improved medical facilities and greater consciousness among the masses are the chief factors contributing to this rise in life expectancy. Geriatrics goes hand in hand with ageism as it deals in medical treatment and well being for the elderly. Both these areas of ageism and geriatrics carry significance for inhabitants of North East India. This geographical region of India is characterized by several ethnic groups having deep rooted values. However, with the passage of times and increased influence of the Western world, larger tribes have disintegrated. Even joint families have broken up into nuclear units. In several instances, the elderly of a family are left to look after themselves with the younger generation immigrating to more lucrative locations. Under such socio-cultural changes, a more conscious effort across all levels towards betterment of life for the aged is imperative.

Key words: Ageism, geriatrics, life skills

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Introduction

Ageism according to Robert Butler is a combination of three factors: aging or process of growing old, attitudes of others to these aged individuals, and institutional guidelines and practices. Aging is a natural process that brings with it several pitfalls and some benefits. Efforts must always be taken to reduce these pitfalls and enhance benefits. United Nations recognizes 60 years as the age of becoming old. As of now, the number of old people in India is 117 million and likely to reach 150 million in the next thirty years. Life expectancy in India is around 65 ½ years and an improvement over 60 years about five years back. Improved medical facilities and greater consciousness among the masses are the principal factors contributing to this rise in life expectancy. This trend is similar for the North Eastern states too. During the last decade, not only the number of hospitals and health centers have increased but also the facilities being provided to the patients have also improved

Medical Infrastructure in North East

The north-eastern states of India have undergone favourable changes in medical sciences and health facilities. Some years ago, only the states of Assam and Manipur have medical colleges. The first medical college in this region was established in Dibrugarh in 1947. Guwahati Medical College in 1960 and Silchar Medical College in 1968 were the next to start. The next medical college and hospital came up in 2009 in Jorhat after about a gap of 40 years. One hospital each in Diphu and Kokrajhar, both in Assam, are expected to start functioning as Medical Colleges from 2014.

Manipur's first medical institute, RIMS (Regional Institute of Medical Sciences) became functional in 1972. Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital has upgraded itself to Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences with introduction of MBBS course. Likewise, NEIGRIHMS (North East Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences) has been commissioned as a medical college and super-specialty hospital in Shillong, Meghalaya. This institute after becoming fully functional is expected to offer training in areas of Pediatrics, Gynecology, Obstetrics, and Anesthesiology. For increasing medical facilities in this region, Indian Government has plans of forming AYUSH, an institute promoting alternative treatment of Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy within the premise of NEIGRIHMS.

Another Central Government effort, NRHM (National Rural Health Mission) aimed at providing health care to villagers throughout India has been

implemented in all the North Eastern states. The objective of this mission is to make quality healthcare accessible to all villagers irrespective of their age. This mission further aims at improving different medical facilities and care under the same roof. Though considerable improvement has taken place in offering medical facilities and health care over the last few years in the north-eastern states, there are still gaps to be filled in particularly for the aged.

Ageism and its Medical Consequences

Together with rest of India, life expectancy has also gone up in the seven north eastern states. Ageism brings along with it, its .share of concerns like ill-health, loneliness, and senility which cannot be ignored. Though there is no definite age as to when these pitfalls begin, they do set in without fail. Diseases like arthritis, diabetes, hypertension, dementia, and Alzheimer's are common. Coronary and heart ailments are also usual among people once they grow old. Incidences of diseases are not age specific, but normally affects more easily the elderly people. Reasons for vulnerability against diseases could be several. Men and women when they grow old lose their immunity and become susceptible to various illnesses. Some of these illnesses are due to natural disfunctioning of the body, while some are because of unwarranted habits such as smoking, drug addiction, and excessive consumption of unhealthy foods etc. practiced over several years.

As human body ages so does its resistance and adaptability. It is common experience that a person after becoming old, finds it difficult to adjust to a new environment both physically and mentally. One of the main reasons for this lack of adaptability is physical disability. An old individual is more susceptible to catching a cold or having a heat stroke than a middle-aged person due to the natural deterioration of the immune system.

Diabetes is a common disease found in patients of all ages, particularly the elderly. Diabetes is of multiple kinds: diabetes mellitus type 1, diabetes mellitus type 2, gestational diabetes and diabetes insipidus. As its incidence is gradual it is seen mostly among adults and old aged. The chances of this disease increases with obesity. A great drawback of this type of diabetes is its progressive nature; i.e. it gets worse with age and body weight. Medication of insulin in the form of tablet or injection becomes regulatory. Controlled food intake, regular monitoring of blood sugar level and medication are the requirements to prevent progressive growth of this disease.

Hypertension or high blood pressure is another disease that builds as you

age. Though exact causes of this ailment are not known, several factors have been identified with the occurrence of this disease. Obesity, insufficient physical activity, smoking, unregulated alcohol consumption, old age, stress, family history, thyroid disorders, and kidney diseases are some of the factors that contribute to hypertension. As many of these factors are closely associated with old age, elderly men and women need to be wary about this disease. Controlled food intake, regular physical activity, quitting smoking, reducing alcohol consumption and regular meditation, are ways of combating hypertension.

Arthritis is a disease typically connected with old age. This is a musculoskeletal disorder more profound in people after fifty five years of age. It has been identified as the main cause of immobility among old people. This disease specifically relates to joints, and could affect people of all ages. Arthritis though is a possibility among patients of all ages, elderly people are the worst affected.

Alzheimer's and dementia are neurological disorders commonly occurring among older people. It may be noted that dementia is a disease associated with brain functioning. Alzheimer's is a manifestation of dementia and is characterized by its gradual worsening over time. A patient's behavior, memory and thinking ability are affected adversely when affected with Alzheimer's. This disease though closely related to aging is not at a direct consequence to this process. This primary cause of this illness could be traced to family history. Though onset of this disease could take place before a person reaches 60 years of age, it normally occurs in people after they have reached this age. This mental illness is featured by loss of memory and perception; change of behavior and personality; and impaired reading, writing, and speaking skills. Alzheimer's. Is known to worsen over time and there are no systematic treatments for this illness.

Diseases and Geriatrics

Incidence of diseases and their treatment takes a different dimension altogether when the concerned patient is over 60 years of age. Treatment of old patients is distinctive from treating other patients as it requires a more sensitive, caring, and dignified approach. In case of old patients it is not only important to treat an illness but also take care of other consequential issues, such as stable livelihood, support of family members, and occupational therapy. Aged people have their own beliefs and interpretations which over time become rigid. They are less likely to compromise sudden changes and

new development. For a more holistic and comprehensive approach for treating aged patients a new stream 'geriatrics' originated. Geriatrics is only concerned with old patients; patients of 60 years or more.

These aged patients in addition to treatment, need counseling, care and psychological support. Geriatrics not only involves doctors and nurses, but also occupational therapists, and social workers. Family members also form an important constituent in geriatrics. The purpose of geriatrics is to create a comfort zone for a patient so that he or she is never distressed even under severe traumatic conditions. An environment is created which assists in fast recovery and faster come back to normal lifestyle. Each of the different constituents has a significant role to play in geriatric method of treatment. If doctors and nurses are responsible for actual treatment of an illness, the actual recovery is a supportive effort by family members, occupational therapists, and social workers. Continual interaction with therapists and family members works as a motivation to faster recovery and coming back to normalcy for aged patients. Geriatric is not the same for every disease, and the involvement of different personnel also varies depending upon the severity of a disease. In some cases, an attention of a couple of weeks is sufficient for a patient's recovery, while in other cases it could take several months. Severe cases of osteoarthritis take many months for recovery, while Alzheimer's is non-curable. Geriatric becomes more critical in cases of these non-curable or terminal diseases.

'Geriatrics' as a specialized stream is still in its nascent stage. Geriatrics is a totally neglected area in India, let alone North East. Hospitals and private nursing homes are somewhat equipped to cater to normal cases of surgery. For specialized treatments there are only a handful of medical centers and clinics. Even if therapeutic treatments are possible, the chances of proper geriatrics are dismal. Though medical teams of doctors and nurses are formed from time to time depending upon the severity of a patient's condition, rarely are geriatric teams formed involving family members, occupational therapists, and social workers.

Geriatrics and Social structure

Family members being a vital component of geriatrics, social structure plays a pivotal role. There are two aspects of approaching this issue. In situations where family members stay together as in a joint family set-up, geriatrics could be generated inherently. However, in cases where families are nucleated it becomes imperative to form geriatric teams for treating aged pa-

tients. Constituting a team of doctors and nurses is not difficult. Difficulty arises in getting occupational therapists and social workers together. Trained therapists are not available readily in India, and the situation is worse in North Eastern states. In the case of occupational therapy somewhat unexplored concept and ill-developed network of social workers makes it difficult to develop geriatrics in a concerted way

In geriatrics, psychological support which can only be provided by near and dear ones, plays a crucial role. Presence of family members creates an environment of comfort for a recovering patient, particularly if the concerned person is elderly or a child. Old patients and children require enough cajoling and comforting for getting relief. Situation becomes graver if the illness affected is of a serious nature. All along, members of a family have been a source of strength and moral support for convalescing patients. Presence of family members forms this source of happiness for recovering patients. Here lays the significance of family members. With time, these supports from members of family have become skeletal. Indian families traditionally stayed together with the eldest member of the family at the helm. Over years, this joint family structure is gradually disappearing and getting replaced by nucleated structures. Compulsion and choice are dual causes for this outcome. Both these factors need close examination as causes for lack of growth in geriatrics in North East India.

Tribal societies of North East have deep-rooted social bonding and could be used as the most effective tools for geriatrics. Though geriatrics is intrinsically involved with ageism it is not a focused area of treatment in India, let alone the North East. For geriatrics to take proper shape, awareness and strengthening of social structure are prerequisites. Unlike in Western countries where services like occupational therapy and counseling is available at a price, they are mostly voluntary in India. People still fall back on their kith and kin for advice or instructions in times of trouble.

Geriatrics is a concept which could be successfully nurtured with support of family members in a social set-up as in tribal regions of N.E. India. The first step in this direction would thus be creating an environment where families and tribes stay together. Simultaneously it would be necessary to establish sufficient number of health centers and medical units for wider territorial coverage.

Probable Initiatives

Introducing geriatrics in the states of North East India requires a conscious

and focused effort from every quarter: governmental, non-governmental, and charitable. It is the responsibility of local governments to highlight this area to outsiders so that organizations offering health services, particularly for the aged, are motivated to begin services. Teams of qualified medical practitioners and specialists, nurses and therapists are needed to be identified and posted. For this it is essential to have a proper infrastructure of roads, communication, power, medical units, and educational institutes.

Infrastructure forms the basic building blocks of an economy. A strong infrastructure is capable of not only attracting investments but also retaining local resources. Responsible governments should always endeavor to draw in investments but also protect every resource available. Investments have a multiplier effect on an economy which is subsequently reflected in a community's social structure. A prosperous economy is the key to a healthy society. It is a known fact that health care services and medical facilities in economically developed countries is more advanced than in less developed or developing nations. Geriatrics is a highly specialized form of medical care imparted to chronologically aged people. For providing effective geriatric care it is initially important to establish a focused area of treatment and care for old patients.

Local governments in the first place must take suitable measures to set up hospitals equipped with latest instruments and appliances for offering comprehensive care for patients, especially the elderly ones. Improved health facilities become particularly crucial for old patients as they are relatively immobile. Wherever medical facilities are inadequate, patients have to seek treatment from a distant location, which is neither desirable nor feasible. The situation becomes worse if an illness is chronic or patient's resources are limited. The challenge faced by the governments in these seven states is extension of medical facilities to communities across these seven states. As already stated, a difficult terrain coupled with inadequate transport infrastructure adds to the woes of local patients. Efforts should be on to establish super-specialty hospitals at district levels and workable medical units at block levels.

Any hospital or health care unit is incomplete or useless without a team of able doctors, nurses and support staff. For geriatrics an additional support team in the form of counselors, therapists, and social workers is mandatory. Health and administration departments need to man these medical units with qualified professionals and support staff. If necessary, recruits might be taken from other regions or cities. This is an area of lacuna for local govern-

ments of these seven states. Lack of higher education facilities result in large scale migration of young learners including those pursuing medical studies. These students after successful graduation avoid returning to their homeland because of inadequate facilities and infrastructure. So a vicious cycle exists in the creation of qualified medical professionals and lack of infrastructure. In order to overcome this stalemate, governments should take initiatives to create adequate infrastructure and accommodate qualified professionals. Geriatrics needing a different approach could only be provided by super-specialty medical units. These medical units should be equipped to tackle old age diseases like arthritis, diabetes, hypertension, and neurological disorders. As these diseases are closely connected with ageism they demand special attention. Once these units work successfully, geriatrics as an independent department could be developed.

Importance of life skills

"Life skills education is designed to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of psychosocial skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way; it contributes to the promotion of personal and social development, the prevention of health and social problems, and the protection of human rights" (WHO 1999). Life skills enable the people to deal with challenging situations positively and successfully. It develops the social, individual and reflective skills of the people. Life skills enhance abilities that help to facilitate communication, negotiation, to think critically and solve problems and make independent decisions. Life skills are very important for geriatric care, as the care givers are handling stressful and critical situations. Life Skills of old age people help them understand their self and lead a sensible and positive life.The life skills of care givers help them to understand the old age people in a better way and care them with empathy.

Some of the major objectives of life skill development are:

a) Understanding yourself better;
b) Living a more conscious life;
c) Attainment of personal satisfaction

Understanding yourself better

This is perhaps the most obscure and unexplored area of personal assessment. It is a strange phenomenon that we often fail to judge ourselves: our strengths, our weaknesses and our talents. It often takes a second per-

son to identify these talents and strengths. Through a continuous process of realization, it is possible to discover your actual self. For some this takes place early in life, while for others it could take several decades. Life skill development programs help in self discovery and make living more meaningful. After knowing yourself, you could train others to become more responsible human beings.

Living a more conscious life

Your perspective of life changes after you could relate yourself to society. Any life skill development program changes your attitude towards family members, neighbors, and the elderly. These programs change the perspective of life and your attitude towards others, especially senior citizens. Without undergoing any such life skill development, it actually is difficult to realize the actual essence of life and the importance of caring for the elderly. Your quality of life is determined by your deeds and taking care of the old aged is a way of making it more meaningful and fulfilling. Many old people have money to support themselves, but lack human support which is even more crucial than earning money. With advancement of age, you tend to become weaker both mentally and physically. Support is sought in form of younger persons who are optimistic, positive and cheerful. These are qualities that enrich you as a person and make you more conscious to the needs of the aged and the debilitated.

Attainment of personal satisfaction

Life skill learning is all about personal satisfaction in a holistic sense. Satisfaction through materialism is momentary and easily obliterated. There is no joy like appeasing the worries of old people who always seek solace and need constant moral support. Your joy is multiplied several times when you do something worthwhile for elderly men and women who stay close to you. Just extending your helping hand is a great step towards elating elders.

Supporting the senior gentry in North East

Geriatric care in North Eastern states needs special mention as there has been a definite change in societal structure. A considerable section of younger population has migrated out of this region to other more lucrative Indian provinces, leaving the elderly lonely and unprotected. Even within the region families have broken up to become nucleated units. Potential earners regularly leave their parents behind and settle in cities of this region. Orientation on life skills to old age people will help them to understand their issues better

and to cope with the situation, the stress and emotions. It will help them to rediscover themselves, their self and motivate them to adjust and adapt with their environment. The service providers in geriatric care may be given training in life skills so that they can take up their work efficiently for the satisfaction of the old age people.

The alienation of the seniors leads them to loneliness and emotional stress. The need of the hour is to become more sensitive to the needs of old aged and take adequate care of them. Enough employment opportunities should be created in the rural and semi-urban areas so that migration could be restricted. Industries based on local agrarian products like cane, bamboo, and timber need to be promoted as these are labor intensive and could absorb a substantial section of available labor force. Adequate opportunities at district levels could prevent movement of local inhabitants to other areas keeping familial structure intact. This perhaps is the most feasible and humane way of keeping the seniors stress-free.

Here once again the support of family members becomes evident. Aged patients always seek attention, care, and sensitivity. Family members with life skills knowledge are the best people to provide this. Family being the basic unit of a community or tribe in North East India must be protected and maintained if geriatrics with life skills is to become a successful trend. Members of a family must work hand in hand with doctors and life skills trainers for treating an aged patient successfully.

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A Study on the Extent of
Life Skills among the Adolescents

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Abstract

Adolescence is a unique period in human development due to various reasons. It is imperative that adequate skills and abilities are to be nurtured, to deal effectively with the developmental concerns and hassles of the period. Life skills are very important in this milieu; it provides abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour to visage the demands and challenges of everyday life. The research design is explorative in nature and the researcher had chosen purposive sampling for collecting the data. The data was collected under the heads of ten core life skills; decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions and coping with stress. It was found that majority (73. 97 %) of the adolescents have average score in life skills.

Key Words

Adolescence, life skills, research, challenges

Introduction

Life skills have a great role in enhancing adolescents into a fruitful and healthy citizen of tomorrow, helping them handling their challenges and facing the demands of day to day life in a more healthy and constructive way. Life skill is defined as "the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (WHO, 1994). Adolescence needed help and guidance in decision making, problem solving, critical thinking, developing interpersonal skills, self-awareness, empathy, coping with stress and coping with emotions.

The fast growing incidence of conflicts, crisis, smoking, drinking, tobacco use and other substance abuse, suicides, crimes and risk behaviours among

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the adolescents is a matter of great concern. Life skills are very important in this regard. Life skills enable individuals to translate knowledge and attitudes into actual abilities. Acquisition and application of life skills will help in our personal realms and our interaction with others. Life skills help in promotion of mental, physical and social wellbeing (WHO, 1994). The life skills approach asserts that if children and young people are provided with the opportunity to learn skills in a supportive environment, they can confidently manage their lives in a positive manner while serving as valuable resources to their friends, families and community

Significance of the Study

In the current scenario of increased urbanization and rampant globalization, person's ability to cope, adapt and thrive in an environment of constant change is an essential requisite for success. Along with this the suddenness and rapid pace with which the changes take place in the body and mind the adolescents hitherto are facing difficulties in coping with the challenges. The stress on achievement and performance from the teachers and parents in addition, are resulting in increased rates of mental health problems among adolescents. In the competing society the educational system works like a factory, the child is being viewed as just a product of the system. The personal growth and development of the child has been overlooked. Instances of youth resorting to desperate and often violent actions against themselves or others have provided a stark warning of the consequences of further neglecting the importance of life skills of adolescents.

At the United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting held at WHO, Geneva (WHO, 1999) life skills education was considered as crucial for:

- The promotion of healthy child and adolescent development;

- Primary prevention of some key causes of child and adolescent death, disease and disability;

- Socialization; and

- Preparing young people for changing social circumstances.

School is an appropriate place for the introduction of life skills education because:

- The role of schools in the socialization of young people;

- Access to children and adolescents on a large scale

- Economic efficiencies (uses existing infrastructure);

- High credibility with parents and community members; and

- Possibilities for short and long term evaluation (WHO, 1993)

In Indian schools, the education ministries had initiated such moves and recognized the importance of preventive and developmental aspects of life skills. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) asserts that life skills are to be introduced in the schools. In addition the School based Assessment Scheme launched by CBSE has a component on co-scholastic areas of Life-Skills. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA) taking steps to impart the life skill education in their curriculum. Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) being implemented by MHRD in collaboration with NACO is based on life skills. National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) also brought out a Framework on 'Education for Values in Schools' which emphasizes on life skill education. The United Nations Population Fund has joined hands with the Human Resources Development Ministry to impart life skills education to students pursuing courses under the National Open School. UNFPA and Human Resource Development Ministry have even launched a video series to train tutors to improve quality of teaching to students. The 11th and 12th five year plans are also stressing the importance of life skill education among the adolescents. But still in most schools, value education and vocational education are confused with life skills education. (Shiela Ramakrishnan, 2010). A lot of thought requires to be given on how to bring in life skills education into the mainstream curriculum. The schools need to develop anin-depth conceptual and practical framework of the programme which should be made functional at all levels of schooling starting from pre-primary, extending to primary, middle and the secondary stage. (Subitha, 2013).

The researcher believes that school education should emphasize not only on academics but also the mental well-being of children to make it a positive place of learning. This research study is aimed at assessing the extent of life skills found among the adolescent school children. This study will help to understand the extent of life skills among the adolescents and will help to plan the strategies based on the findings.

Research Methodology

The research design selected for the study is explorative in nature. This study explores the extent of life skills found among the adolescents and will explore the possibilities of enhancing the life skills among the adolescents.

The researcher had chosen Purposive sampling in the study. The data was collected from 73 students from 8th standard. The primary data was collected through Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS), (A. Radhakrishnan Nair, R. Subasree, Sunita Ranjan, 2010). A vast range of secondary data was accessed and reviewed through various sources like national and international publications in the form of books, journals, articles, magazines, reports, and programmes and policies of governments, websites and reports of national and international organisations relevant to the study. The data collected on the selected sample was classified, tabulated, analysed and interpreted through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Major Findings

The analysis is presented within the heads of global life skills and ten core life skills; decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions and coping with stress.

Global Life Skill

Acquisition and application of life skills will help in one's personal realms and in the interaction with others. Life skills help in promotion of mental, physical and social wellbeing (WHO, 1994). The global life skill is based on the aggregate scores obtained by the adolescents for the ten core life skills namely the self-awareness, decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, empathy, coping with emotions and coping with stress.

Table - 1

Global Life Skill

| Sl. N.	Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very High	-	-
2	High	5	6.8
3	Average	54	74
4	Low	13	17.8
5	Very Low	1	1.4
	Total	73	100

The Table 1 disclosed that majority (74 %) of the adolescents have average life skills while, 17. 8 percent have low score in the life skill. It was also observed that none of the respondents have very high level of life skills, and only a nominal 6.8 percent have high life skills.

Decision Making Skill

Decision making is the ability to deal constructively with important issues in our lives and take appropriate decisions and actions. It helps us how to consider the different options available and to take the best possible decision in every situation.

Figure 1
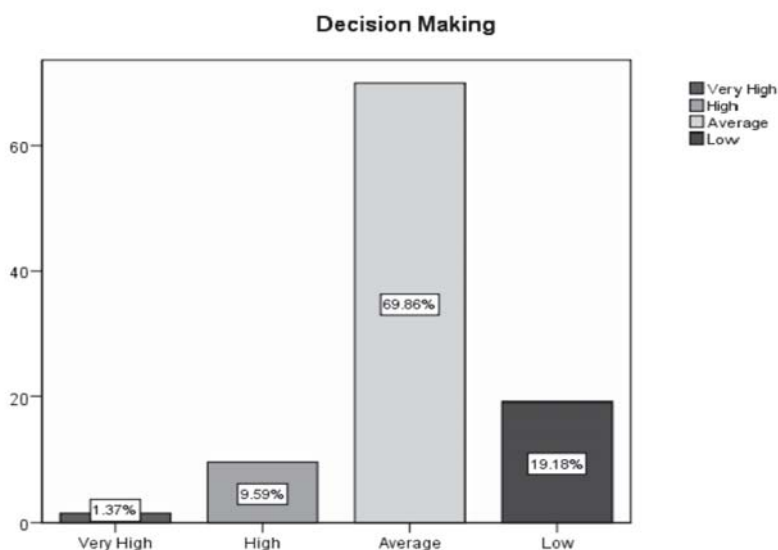
Decision Making

The Figure 1 shows that 69. 86 percent of the respondents have average decision making skill whereas 9.59 percent have high decision making skill. It is also noted that 19.18 percent of the respondents have low decision making skill. Decision making skill helps the adolescents to take constructive decisions of life especially in areas of health, career choices etc. It helps them to deal constructively with decisions in their lives. The life skill of decision making will help the adolescents to make the right choices in the different spheres of life.

Problem Solving Skill

Problem solving skill helps to deal constructively with problems in lives. Leading a healthy life, problem solving skill is very essential especially for the adolescent population.

Table- 2
Problem solving

Sl. N.	Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very High	-	-
2	High	9	12.3
3	Average	48	65.80
4	Low	13	17.80
5	Very Low	3	4.10
	Total	73	100

Table-2 shows that 65.8 percent have an average score in the life skill of problem solving and 12.3 percent have high problem solving skills. However 17.8 percent of respondents have low and 4.1 percent have very low problem solving skill. The life skill of problem solving skill will help the adolescents to look into different approaches to deal effectively with problems they face in the day today life.

Creative Thinking Skill

Creative thinking is a novel way of seeing and doing things. It consists of generating new ideas, shifting perspective easily, conceiving something new and building on other ideas. It helps the adolescents to be successful in the life.

Table – 3
Creative Thinking

Sl. N.	Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very High	-	-
2	High	4	5.50
3	Average	55	75.30
4	Low	13	17.80
5	Very Low	1	1.40
	Total	73	100

From Table-3 it is clear that Majority (75.3%) of the adolescents have an average creative thinking skill and around 17.8 percent have below average level of creative thinking skill. It is also being revealed that none of the respondents have very high score while, a nominal group (1.4%) has high score in the creative thinking skill. Creativity is an ability to respond adaptively to the needs for new approaches and new   products. Creative thinking involves students in learning to generate and apply new ideas in specific contexts, seeing existing situations in a new way, identifying alternative explanations, and seeing or making new links that generate a positive outcome.

Critical Thinking Skill

Critical thinking is the ability to analyse information and experiences in an objective manner. It can contribute to healthy living by helping us in recognising and assessing the factors that influence attitudes and behaviour, like or values influence of peer group and the media.

Table- 4
Critical Thinking

Sl. N.	Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very High	-	-
2	High	-	-
3	Average	50	68.50
4	Low	20	27.40
5	Very Low	3	4.10
	Total	73	100

Table-4 shows that 68. 5 percent of adolescents have average critical thinking skill. Whereas, 27. 40 percent have low level of critical thinking. The important factor is that none of the respondents have a score above average (high or in the very high) level of critical thinking skill. Critical thinkers will enable our adolescents to be open about new ideas and base their judgments on evidence.

Effective Communication Skill

Effective-Communication is the ability to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to our culture and situations. It helps us to express our opinions and desires, and also our needs and fears. Study found that majority (71.23 %) of adolescent have an average effec-

tive communication skill while 19.18 percent have high level of effective communication skill. A nominal 1.37 percent each have very high and very low level of effective communication skill respectively.It is very important for the adolescents to develop effective communication skills as it helps them to develop good and constructive relations and provide base for their future plans.

Interpersonal Relationship Skill

Interpersonal relationship skill is very important for adolescents as it enable them to relate positively with the people, with whom they interact. It gives the ability to maintain friendly relations with family, friends, and colleagues, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being as well as an important source of social support.

Table- 5
Interpersonal Relationship

Sl. N.	Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very High	1	1.40
2	High	8	11.0
3	Average	48	65.80
4	Low	12	16.40
5	Very Low	4	5.50
	Total	73	100

Table- 5 shows that majority (65.8 %) have average score in the life skill component of interpersonal skill, and 11 percent have high level of interpersonal skill. And its also observed that 16.4 percent adolescents have low interpersonal skill and a 5.5 percent have very low interpersonal skill. It is important to practice and improve interpersonal skills as they are the foundation of building relationships with others. People with solid interpersonal skills know how to build effective relationships and know the importance of emotional intelligence in leading a good life and efforts that has to be taken to enhance the interpersonal skills.

Skill of Self Awareness

Self-awareness means the recognition of 'self' and of our character, our strengths and weaknesses, our likes and dislikes. It is often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy with others.

Figure 2

Selfawereness

Legend:
- Very High
- High
- Average
- Low
- Very Low
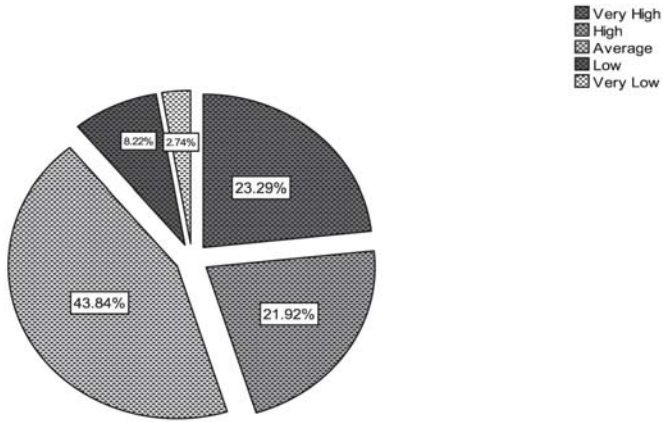
The study observed that (Figure-2) 23.29 percent of the respondents have very high level of self-awareness, while a significant 43.84 percent have average and a 21. 92 percent have high level of self-awareness skill. Self-awareness of an adolescent determines the level of confidence and the ability to set goals among the adolescents, which are vital for the development.

Skill of 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. Empathy can improve social interactions and can also encourage the adoption of a nurturing attitude towards people in need of care and assistance and who are different from us.

Table – 6
Empathy

Sl. N.	Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very High	-	-
2	High	1	1.40
3	Average	41	56.20
4	Low	30	41.10
5	Very Low	1	1.40
	Total	73	100

From Table- 6 it is found that 56. 2 percent of adolescents have average empathy skill, whereas 41.1 percent of the respondents have low empathy skill. It is surprising to see that only 1.4 percent of the adolescents have above average level of empathy.The life skill of empathy will help the adolescents to find what they have in common even with their own groups and thus help them to empathize with others who are unlike them.

Skill of Coping with Emotions

Coping with emotions means recognising and managing ones emotions, the constructive way. It helps us to respond appropriately with the situations and to maintain a good relation with others.

Table – 7

Coping with Emotions

Sl. N.	Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very High	1	1.40
2	High	7	9.60
3	Average	48	65.80
4	Low	14	19.20
5	Very Low	3	4.10
	Total	73	100

Table- 7 shows that (65.8 %) of the adolescents fall under the category of average, while a significant population of 19. 2 percent is having low coping skills and 4.1 percent are with very low level of coping with emotion skills. The life skill of coping with emotion will help the adolescence to deal effectively with their emotions.

Skill of Coping with Stress

Coping with stress means recognising the sources of stress in our lives, recognising how stress affects us, and acting in ways that help us to manage our stress in a constructive way, by changing our environment or lifestyle and relaxing.

Table- 8
Coping with Stress

Sl. N.	Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very High	1	1.40
2	High	7	9.60
3	Average	48	65.70
4	Low	14	19.20
5	Very Low	3	4.10
	Total	73	100

According to table-8 majority of the adolescents (65.7 %) are in the category of adolescents with average coping skills with stress, and 9.6 percent have high coping skills. It is also found that a significant (19.2 %) portion have low stress coping skills. Adolescents are exposed to stress and violence around them all the time. The life skill of effective coping with stress will help the adolescents to handle effectively the stressful events in life.

Recommendations

The recommendations have been made after analysing the findings of the study and observations. From the review of literature and research findings it is clear that high score in life skills help adolescents to become mentally healthy, active and pass the phase of adolescence in a constructive way.

Enhance the effectiveness of Existing Programmes

The government and the education department have a lot of programmes for imparting and developing the life skills of adolescence. In majority of the places the life skill programmes are not undertaken in an effective manner and the life skill training is entrusted with the teachers without proper training in life skills. Social work is a potential profession that can enhance the life skills of adolescents; appointment of professional social workers in schools is a good choice.

Life skill development programme based on social group work

The researcher suggests life skill training programme through social group work method to enhance the life skills of adolescents. The adolescents having low and very low level of life skills need intensive intervention programmes. Therefore life skill intervention programme through social group work is very important.

Life Skill Training Camps/ Workshops

The education department has to make adequate policy level decisions to conduct life skills training camps on regional basis, for the adolescents. These camps should be oriented to make the participants as the peer trainers and the camp could serve as a place for Training of Trainers (ToT) on life skills.

Life skill clubs in Schools

Each school should establish a life skill club. The club should meet at least once in a week and share their ideas, issues, concerns and perspectives related to life skills. The members of the life skill club should be trained to become the peer educators for life skills

Life skill training for Parents and Teachers

The school environment and family atmosphere are the important factors contributing to the life skill development of adolescents. So efforts have to be taken to associate the parents and teachers in life skills sessions. Separate trainings have to be organised for the teachers and the parents.

Introduce Life Skill Based Classroom Teaching

The teaching-learning process in a classroom should be focussed on life skills. The language texts comprise tales, stories and plays which have good potential content of life skills. The teachers should be trained to link those stories, tales and plays with the specific life skills in contextual basis. Use of audio- visuals will make the teaching and learning process more attractive and interesting to students.

Conclusion

The period of adolescence is characterized by its liveliness, boldness, and nimbleness. But the suddenness and rapid pace with which the changes take place in the body and mind make the period of adolescence a unique one in terms of stress and strain. It demands for guidance and direction to make healthy and informed choice to face the challenges of the everyday. School education should emphasize not only academic aspects but also the mental well-being of children to make it a positive place of learning. Life skills are very important in this regard. The study revealed that majority of the adolescents have average level of life skills but only a nominal percent have high level of life skills and none of the adolescents have very high life skills.It demands for a change in the pattern of life skill education;the promotion of life skills through group work have a good potential in this regard. The recommendations of the study like life skill camps/ workshops, life skill training for parents and teachers, life skill clubs in schools, and placing social work trainees as life skill trainers will also help to enhance the life skills of adolescents.

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Life Skills in Dentistry:
For A Culture of Friendly and Scientific Oral Health Care Delivery

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Abstract

Dentistry, as a part of health care profession, plays a major role in sustaining quality of life of individuals. Developing and sustaining good dentist-patient relationship requires constant nurturing which influences treatment outcomes, patient satisfaction and compliance. These factors are important in improving quality of life of patients. Life skills can play a major role in nurturing relationships both dentist-patient and dental teacher-student as well as dentist's relationship with society at large. Dental patients who seek oral care for debilitating conditions such as oral cancer, oral manifestations of auto-immune disorders and acute pain due to dental caries expect oral health professionals to treat them as individual human beings rather than just 'mouths'. Perceiving patient as an individual with unique characteristics helps to bring dignity back to the patient whose sense of self-worth is already lost due to the bad health conditions. Therefore, life skills education and training for oral health professionals and students play a major role in rekindling abilities such as empathy and effective communication. Life skills such as critical and creative thinking can also foster scientific temper among both dentists and patients to attain a goal of healthier society.

Key words

Life skills, dentistry, oral health, scientific temper, well-being.

Introduction

Dentistry is an important part of health care profession which actively participates in providing clinical oral care, public oral health care as well as academic and research endeavours. As oral health care professionals, dentists who deliver oral health care services in private and government hospitals have the responsibility to develop and sustain healthy doctor-patient

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relationships. Oral healthcare professionals involved in teaching and research endeavours in dental teaching institutions have the responsibility to nurture good teacher-student relationships which in turn can help young dentists to be better communicators with their patients.The doctor-patient relationships are essential component of any health care profession especially so with dentistry. Oral diseases can impair general well-being and quality of life of individuals especially among those suffering from oral cancers and autoimmune disorders. Dental patients who seek oral health services require immediate care in most of the instances due to acute dental pain or oral precancerous and cancerous lesions. In other instances, especially in the recent information era where patients are highly informed, patients seek oral health services for both preventive and restorative care other than emergency dental problems.

Dentistry as much as any other profession requires life skills education. Life skills are useful behaviours required for solving problems and questions especially regarding human interactions encountered daily in dentistry. Human interactions basically revolve around patients and students in dental teaching institutions and with patients for practicing dentists. In either situation life skills can help build a sound healthy platform for these human interactions. Healthy human interaction leads to healthy relationships, one of the important factors for achieving optimum health care. Achieving optimum health for a society is the ultimate goal of any health care field.

Importance of empathy, effective communication and interpersonal relationship skills

Interpersonal relationship skill is an important life skill which enables dentists to understand day to day interaction effectively. This helps a practicing oral health care professional in a healthy dentist-patient relationship. A good dentist-patient relationship requires empathy and effective communication skills. Effective communication skills greatly influence dentist's ability to perceive patient's problems and enables effectively communicating oral health instructions. Communication with patients does not limit its scope to information exchange rather extends to include creating, nurturing and sustaining the doctor-patient relationship through the entire process of establishing cognitive connection with patients, drawing diagnosis, planning and consensus on treatment options, and especially on patient compliance with the treatment plan. Communication process is the entire cycle of passing the message by a sender to a receiver and it is understood to be complete only when the sender receives the feedback from the receiver. The feedback process ensures the passage of message to the receiver. Patient compliance with

the treatment plan agreed upon by both dentist and the patient is an indication of this 'feedback' component of the communication process. Hence feedback, which is most commonly neglected in our exchange with patients, is a good indicator of our success in establishing a relationship.

With the rise in consumerism in dentistry, patients look for a dentist who is more patient-centred, person-focused rather than a doctor who exhibits characteristics of high physician control type. A dentist who adopts the style of 'person-focused' will be more patient centric and hence more approachable(Flocke Susan et al 2002). The person-focused style of a physician requires the dentist to embrace good communication and empathy skills. The necessary requirement of developing good communication skills is not yet realised in dental teaching curricula in many dental schools especially in developing countries such as India. The learning and teaching atmosphere of dental schools should incorporate training dental students in the area of communication with patients. This process of communication requires the underlying concept of empathy. Empathy can be described as an ability to imagine what life is like for another person. Without empathy, our communication with others will be one sided and we will be bound to face problems in relationships as we will be indifferent to emotions of others (RGNIYD, 2009). It is imperative that a dentist as an oral health physician has the skills of empathy for effective communication with patients.

Empathy for dignity conserving care and a culture of friendly oral healthcare

This aspect of understanding patients' feelings brings to picture the concept of dignity conserving care as proposed by Harvey Max Chochinov in 2007. It is also known as whole person care or psychosocial care. The intimate connection between care provider's affirmation and patient's self perception, underscores the basis of dignity conserving care. A dentist with empathy skills knows how his or her patient feels and is willing to provide emotional support. When the patient says, "I feel lousy because my friends ridicule me for my bad breathe or crooked teeth" and the dentist is able to respond by saying, "Well, I understand how you feel. Let us work together about what's wrong with your teeth and we will come to a treatment which may best suit you". This kind of reply from a dentist immediately will induce a sense of togetherness in patients. Empathy also helps in showing dignity and conserving the personhood of the patient.

Such an approach provides benefits both for patients and dentists(Susan J Hawken, 2005) Benefits for patients are mainly patient satisfaction and com-

pliance. Higher levels of patient satisfaction and compliance are seen to be associated with physician's nonverbal behaviours such as distance between the doctor and patient, forward lean and body orientation. Dental schools should incorporate teaching and training dental students in these areas of effective communication including verbal and nonverbal forms. Effective communication with positive talk and information giving will increase patient compliance. Patient centred communication is shown to increase positive patient perception that is required for better recovery from discomfort and better emotional health(Stewart M et al, 2000).Such an approach also benefits dentists by creating higher work satisfaction and less frustration in daily work. Higher patient satisfaction also reduces the chances of malpractice claims. Communication gap is the most important factor in patient dissatisfaction which is a critical factor influencing patient complaints. Therefore it is always beneficial to use effective communication skills with empathy.

Involving the patient in decision making towards planning a treatment for his/her oral health problem places responsibility on the patient equally and helps increase compliance. This essentially nurtures the relationship and also helps build a culture of kindness in the dental hospital set up. Dentistry should embrace the skills of effective communication, empathy and interpersonal relationship by training dental students in these areas. Dentists in dental teaching institutions should be the role models for future dentists by inculcating these characteristics.

Critical thinking and creative thinking skills for effective clinical decision making and scientific health seeking behaviour.

Critical thinking skills are essential to think logically and rationally. Dentists need to incorporate critical thinking skills in clinical decision making, scientific health information gathering and systematic prioritization of treatment plans for their patients. The importance of critical thinking skills for dental student community is enormous since it fosters a sense of objectivity required for clinical learning. Critical thinking is essential for organising creative ideas, understanding the depth and breadth of subject matter, detecting bad reasoning, and to arrive at a systematic problem solving. Training in these areas will enhance the practicing dentists' clinical decision making abilities as well as improve thinking of divergent ideas for implementing these decisions in patient's lives. Training dental students in these areas will inevitably improve their clinical learning, patient treatment, and their academic and research endeavours.

The importance of critical thinking among patient community is another area which needs greater attention. In this era of information technology, patients are faced with enormous amount of health information that is easily accessible. The quantity ofhealth information does not ensure the reliability and validity of this information. There is a greater portion of unreliable and invalidated sources of information available on the Internet. The ability to logically discern the sources of health information among patient community is an important factor in reducing pseudoscientific health practices. Pseudoscientific health care services, including oral health services, contribute a large percentage of our country's health care delivery system (Jilani A et al, 2008). Critical thinking ability among patients can help them seek science based medicine and dentistry which reduces the disease burden and unnecessary complications and cost spent on such quackery.

Conclusion

The life skills should essentially be the part of our everyday life both for personal and professional needs. The societal congruence has a greater influence on our blurring of these skills as we grows. Rekindling these abilities in every individual at every stage of our lives, be it childhood, adolescence or adulthood, enhances quality of our interactions and leads to a healthier outlook and relationships. Dentistry should embrace the concept of life skills education and training for its members to bring a positive high quality work culture both in teaching institutions and for private practices.

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Impact on the Academic Performance of High School Students between the age group of 13-15 through Life skills Training

Subasree*

Abstract

The current study focuses on the effectiveness of life skills intervention programme on academic performance of high school students. Achievement is a fundamental aspect of everyday life, affecting people's work, interpersonal relationship, sense of being, and leisure (Struthers et, al. 1996). The students' academic achievements are directly connected with their psycho-social wellbeing. In the study experimental research design was adopted to test the hypotheses. The study was carried out among 8th, 9th and 10th standard students between the age group of 13 and 15 years (N=96). Random sampling method was adopted for the study and the students were screened based on inclusion criteria to assign them randomly to experimental and control group. The experimental group was subjected to a very specific Life Skills Intervention Programme. The study revealed that the Life Skills Training Programme has shown impact on academic performance and change in behaviour among the students who attended the LST programme.

Key words

Life skills intervention, Academic performance

Introduction

Achievement is a fundamental aspect of everyday life, affecting people's work, interpersonal relationship, sense of being, and leisure. (Struthers et al.1996). The standard achievement – oriented domain in education, particularly for school students, includes high performance on tests, passing courses, and completing degrees. However, academic achievement is strongly influenced by demographic and psychological factors. The student's academic achievements are directly connected with the person's psycho social wellbeing.

Researches on academic achievement of young students have identified the influence of different variables that correlate with the better performance

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of the students. (Abar, Carter, & Winsler, 2008; Curcio, Ferrara & De Gennaro, 2006; G.M. Johnson, 2008; W. Johnson, McGue, & Lacono, 2006; Layne, Jules, Kutnick, & Layne, 2008, Liew, McTigue, Barrois, & Hughes, 2008; Mizuno et al., 2008). In recent years there has been tremendous increase in use of life skills as an arena for developing skills in youth. Life skills is being viewed as those personal characteristics and skills such as goal setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard work ethics that can be facilitated or developed in academics and potentially transferred for use in non- academic settings.

Previous studies have also documented two psychosocial factors, locus of control and self-efficacy, as important predictors of academic performance of college students (Findley & Cooper, 1983; Kernis, 1984; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Niemiec, Sikorski, & Walberg, 1996; Cook, 1997; Wiest, 2001; and North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2004). Research has shown the quality of children's social relationships to their academic achievement (Guay, Boivin, & Hodges, 1999; Noack, 1998; Pettit, Clawson, Dodge, & Bates, 1996). Cicirelli et,al. (1965) and suggested that academic achievement can be predicted through creativity testing.

Several well-designed studies have documented the positive effects of social and emotional learning on students of diverse backgrounds, from pre-school to high school, in urban, suburban, and rural settings (Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, et al., 2003; Zins, Weussberg, Wang, & Wallberg, 2004).There are a lots of research studies that revealed the relationship to life skills and academic performance among various school settings. A longitudinal study proved that, interventions strengthened students' social, emotional, and decision –making skills and also positively impacted their academic achievement, both in terms of higher standard test scores and better grades (Fleming, Haggerty, Brown, Catalano, et al., 2005).

The transition to high school may be a challenge for students, both academically and socially. Healthy strategies for coping with problems and developing planning skills, and problem-solving skills are among the factors identified as instrumental in students making a successful transition from middle school to high school and higher secondary level. In *School Leadership that Works*, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) analyze 69 research studies since 1970 in addition to their own survey conducted on 650 principals. Their findings lead them to 21 central leadership behaviors and responsibilities that are critical to school success. Researchers recommended that middle schools foster these skills by providing students with opportunities to

improve life skills, by coaching and discussion to learn coping skills, and also through programmes designed to strengthen social skills. Research has shown that middle schools foster these skills by providing students with opportunities to improve life skills, by coaching and discussion to learn coping skills, and via programmes designed to strengthen social skills.

In this study, considering the emerging emphasis on training youth on Life skills, the researcher has carried out an intervention programme on life skills to find out the relationship as well as the contributing factors on academic performance. The previous related studies shows that ten core life skills namely: Self awareness, Empathy, Effective Communication, Interpersonal relationship, Critical and Creative thinking, Problem solving and Decision making skills, as well as Coping with Emotions and Stress has a connection with students performance and their overall personality development. Based on the review of previous research studies following objectives are framed for the present study:

Objectives

1. To examine the effect of life skills training programme on academic achievement/performance of the students studying in 8th, 9th and, 10th standard.

2. To study the prospective relationship between academic achievement and ten core life skills.

3. To find out the relationship between academic achievement and which skills contribute towards enhancing academic achievement.

Hypotheses formulated for the study are

· There will be a significant difference in academic performance and life skills among experimental group boys and girls as a result of Life Skills Training Programme.

· There will be no significant difference among control group as a result of Life Skills Training Programme on Academic Performance and Life Skills.

· There will be a significant gender difference on level of academic performance and ten core life skills as a result of Life Skills Training programme.

· The each of the ten core Life Skills will contribute towards high score in Academic Performance.

Research Method

In the present study the Quasi Experimental Research Design was adopted to test the hypotheses. The Pre- Post experimental research design with control group was utilized for the current study.

The Table- 1 explains the **plan of the study**

Table - 1

Pre- Test	Intervention	Post-Test
Academic Performance Ten Core Life Skills	Life Skills Training Programme	Academic Performance Ten Core Life Skills

The Table-2 shows the **Research design** adopted to test the research questions

Table-2

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-Test
Experimental Group Control Group	O_1 O_3	X -X	O_2 O_4

O_1, $O_3 =$ Pre intervention scores of group 1 and 2.
O_2, $O_4 =$ Post intervention scores of group 3 and 4.
X = Life Skills Training Programme.
-X = No Life Skills Training Programme.

Nature of Sample:

The sample for the present study was collected among 8th, 9th, and 10th standard students between the ages of 13 and 15 from Holy Cresent Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Thriuvalluvar Dist., Tamil Nadu. The Random Sampling method was used for the present study and the students were screened based on the Inclusion Criteria to assign them randomly to Experimental and Control Group. The total sample size was 96. The sample for the main study was 42 students, comprises of 21 boys and 21girls.

There were two groups' namely experimental group N=31 (13 boys and 18 girls) and Control Group N= 11 (3girls and 8 boys).

The **Inclusion Criteria** employed in the study were:

♦ Subjects who scored low or average in Academic Performance (As per the school records and teacher's report as well as student's self

reported grade point average).

- Subjects who scored low or average level of life skills.

The **Exclusion Criteria** planned to adopt for the current study:

- Subjects who scored high in both academic performance and life skills score.
- Subjects who have attended any training programme related to self development.
- Subjects who have not volunteered for the training programme.

Description of the tools

- Academic Performance – Student's self report, Teacher's report and school performance record.(Unit test results, mid-term results and quar terly exam results, Mid term and Half yearly exams results)
- Life Skills Tool to measure the level in each core life skills by Nair. A et. al. (2010)

Procedure:

After obtaining the necessary permission from the concerned school authorities, students were met in their classrooms. The students were told that participation was voluntary and that their responses would be kept confidential. The pre-test of the study was done by administering necessary questionnaire. The students were informed that it would take a little more than an hour to answer the questionnaire. The participants were given clear instructions to answer questions and doubts were clarified to help them answer better. In fact in some cases the participants were assisted with translations (in Tamil) to make them understand the concept clearly.

With due consideration of inclusion criteria the samples were selected randomly for the research study. The students belonging to 8th, 9th and 10th standard were assigned as a mixed group and further they were called for orientation session.

The features of the Orientation Session

- Subjects were randomly assigned into the experimental and control groups.
- The control group students were requested to leave the room in a polite manner.
- The experimental group was given orientation on Introduction to Life Skills.

- Time schedule was fixed for the training programme based on the school authorities and participant's concern.
- The students were given instructions to keep up the confidentiality.
- They were informed about the plan of Training programme .

This was followed by a Life Skills Training Programme. The programme was given over a time frame of one week. It was followed by conducting a post- test with the necessary questionnaire.

The Life Skills Training Programme

The Life Skills Training programme consists of the following objectives:

- To enable the students to understand the concept of life skills and its need in successful life.
- To make the students realize their potentials.
- To equip the students to plan and implement new skills and techniques for meeting future problems.
- To help the students to aspire for higher performance.

The students met every day in a big hall away from class rooms and it was made sure that they are present on time for the programme. Initially the Openers and Warm ups was utilized as an ice- breaker which helped them to overcome inhibitions by stimulating, challenging and motivating the participants to have free interaction with others. The activity enabled the trainer to build rapport with the subjects. This led to warm friendly and understanding condition, which was essential for an effective relationship between students and the facilitator. By establishing the rapport by accepting and understanding the level of participants and each other's role as well as objective of the programme, the facilitator proceeded with the process.

➤ **The overview of the Training Programme is given below.**

➤ **Self Awareness**

- To enable the students to know themselves.
- To make them understand their strengths, weakness, opportunities and treats.
- To understand their positive aspects and which can bring them self worth.
- To enable them to know the self value.

Exercise on Know Yourself

- Identifying their level of understanding about their self.

- Participants were asked to list out their likes and dislikes, what really interested them.
- SWOT analysis was done to know their strength, weakness and areas they should develop.
- Group activities were done to make them understand other's perceptions about themselves.
- Participants were encouraged to share their happy experiences to open up freely.
- Self-disclosure was motivated to develop a sense of worth.
- Feedback was given about their participation and others in group also were encouraged to give feedback on participants view.
- The participants were given tips to identify the inner strength through interaction.

> **Empathy**

- To help the participants to understand their own feelings and emotions.
- To make the participants to realize the feelings of other person.
- To enable them to be genuinely interested on the others.
- To facilitate the participants to be sensitive to another person's emotional state.

Exercise on Know others

- The participants were asked to observe the other person when they are sharing about themselves.
- One by one all were asked to share one story from their life which they felt very bad and happy (either one for each participant).
- The other participant's reaction and reflection were observed and they were asked to express the feelings for the other person who spoke about themselves.
- Different situations were given (Case Studies) to the participants and they were encouraged to have group discussions.
- They were asked to present the different views from each one of them and further discussions on how they felt about characters in the case study.

> **Effective Communication**

- To make them understand the importance of proper communication
- To encourage them to communicate clearly and precisely.

- To help them to understand the concepts behind the communication.
- To motivate them to listen actively to others and its importance in understanding what others are conversing.

Exercise on Know to communicate

- The participants were educated on different kinds of communication and its importance.
- They were asked to practice listening skills
- They were asked to present a concept in front of others clearly.
- They were given some tips to improvise their communication.
- The students were given guidelines on assertive communication.

➢ **Interpersonal relationship skills**

- To help to enhance once relationship with people.
- To understand different kind of relationships and difference in each one's perspective.
- To know the importance of maintaining and sustaining positive relation ship with other people.
- To handle relationship issues and to know how to break relationship (if so) healthily.

Exercise on Know to connect

- The participants were asked to draw a relationship circles and explain how others are important to him/her, to what extent.
- The participants were given some tips on maintaining healthy relation ships.
- They were informed to share one incident form their life where they felt the importance of other person.
- The participants were asked to reflect on the good qualities which en hances good relationships.

➢ **Coping with Emotions**

- To understand one's own emotions.
- To be aware of the emotions help in responding appropriately to that emotions.
- To make them realize the adverse effect of negative emotions if one's do not respond appropriately.

♦ To enable them to understand others emotions too to handle difficult situations.

Exercise on Know to cope up

♦ The participants were asked to be aware of their emotions and they were given activity to express different emotions in a pictorial form.

♦ This enabled them to be expressive as well as empathies with others emotions.

♦ The participants were given guidelines to manage emotions.

♦ They were made aware how it helps in solving problems and help in building relationships without hurting others

➢ **Coping With Stress**

♦ To make them understand about the stressful situations in life.

♦ To understand the effect of stress and the importance of stress management were discussed in detail.

♦ The stressful situations of them were explored and tips were given to adopt a planned life style.

♦ Relaxation techniques were provided based on their need.

♦ Time management and scheduling the time were made based on each individual's preference.

Exercise on Know to manage

♦ The participants were taught to prioritize their work.

♦ The academic calendar with time schedule was prepared by students to manage the time.

♦ They were told about how much effectively they can manage their time.

♦ The importance of saying no when it is required and disturbing them.

♦ Cultivating a positive outlook towards the people around.

➢ **Critical Thinking:**

♦ To explore the various source of information to a particular problem.

♦ To analysis critically and rationally.

♦ To approach any issue without judging and analyzing both sides.

♦ To help in problem solving and decision making.

Exercise on Know to be rationale

♦ The participants were given critical situation to come out with possible

solutions.

- Group discussion were held to share and have unbiased view.
- Given puzzles to solve.
- Participants were encouraged to present on best choice possible based on the group discussion.

> **Creative Thinking:**

- To be innovative and think out of the box.
- To look beyond direct experiences and generate new ideas.
- To respond situations flexibly and adapt to change quickly.
- To help them to create original ideas and guide them to look in new perspectives.

Exercise on Know to be unique

- Given activities and puzzles to look beyond the usual way of thinking.
- The participants were involved in Group activity to present themselves creatively to others.
- They were encouraged to come out with an innovative product and sell among other.

> **Problem Solving:**

- To realize importance to solve problems effectively.
- To make them understand problems are inevitable
- To help to identify their own problem area.
- To explore more options using critical and creativity.
- To guide them to plan and prioritize

Exercise on Know to slove

- Participants were given themes to work on.
- They were asked to do step by step process in Problem solving.
- The participants were asked to brain storm various strategies for solving the problem.

Decision Making:

- To help the students in deciding on the basis of factual.
- To make them understand the steps involved in decision making.
- To generate options and make a decision.

♦ To guide them to implement and take the responsibility of the conse quences.

Exercise on Know to be responsible

♦ The participants were given case studies and asked to write the right decision for the problem

♦ They were asked to generate more alternatives

♦ They were given tips to manage their action plan

♦ The participants were asked to be aware of the consequences and built confidence in facing them.

The main strategies used during the entire Life Skills Training Programme session were:-

♦ Discussions

♦ Activities and games

♦ Group activities

♦ Feedback

♦ Role plays

♦ Home activity

♦ Lecture

Based on the above mentioned criteria, the training programme was provided by the investigator and two trainers to add more value to the training as it controls the investigator's biased approach towards the results if any. Further the post test was conducted on life skills and their following examination marks were collected to compare the results. The discussion with teachers really helped to know about the student in detail. After three months the follow up study will be conducted with the same students who attended the Life Skills Training to explore the long lasting effect of the training programme on academic performance. Moreover the training was provided for a short duration to know and identify whether this type of short term training helps the students in long run and whether they internalize the concept and apply in their practical life. The study was carried out based on the multivariate analysis which is used to explore the possible relationships and differences with the experimental and control group and tested quantitatively with the help of SPSS package.

Results and Discussions

The present study focus on the Life Skills and Academic Performance of

the experimental and Control group. The result of the study with the respective hypothesis is discussed below.

♦ There will be a significant difference in Academic Performance and Life Skills among experimental group as a result of Life Skills Training Programme (LST).

♦ There will be no significant difference among control group as a result of Life Skills Training Programme (LST) on Academic Performance and Life Skills.

Table 3: Indicates the difference between pre and post test as a result of LST on Academic Performance and Life Skills:

Table 3

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	't' value
Experimental Group	Pre-test-Life Skills	339.03	31	27.071	3.255*
	Post test-Life Skills	365.00	31	40.315	
	Pre-test- Academic performance	565.36	30	202.119	2.253*
	Post test- Academic performance	534.60	30	211.981	
Control Group	Pre -test-Life Skills	356.73	11	38.673	1.026(N.S)
	Post test-Life Skills	341.82	11	29.010	
	Pre -test- Academic performance	419.42	11	121.425	2.043*
	Post test- Academic performance	363.64	11	143.492	

The table 3 illustrates the difference between pre and post test results which shows a significant t' value , that too in the experimental group the t' value is significant at 0.05 level . The results denote that the Life Skills and Academic performance as shown difference as a result of LST. The mean value also suggest that the Level of Life Skills improved after the LST and in academic performance though it shows difference significantly but the mean value as not increased much this may be because the training was provided for a week only as well as immediately after that the examination followed so, the students may not be able to practice the Life Skills taught in the LST. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted that "There will be a significant difference in Academic Performance and Life Skills among experimental group as a result of Life Skills Training Programme (LST)".

In the case of control group there is no significant results in Life Skills whereas the academic performance as shown difference in pre and post test may be

due to the examination pressure and since it a main exam (Half yearly) or they would have picked up naturally as they are constantly watched by the teachers. Hence, the hypothesis is partially accepted "There will be no significant difference among control group as a result of Life Skills Training Programme (LST) on Academic Performance and Life Skills".

The table 4, Shows the Gender difference between pre and post test on Life Skills and Academic Performance of Experimental and Control Group:

There will be a significant gender difference on level of academic performance and ten core life skills as a result of Life Skills Training programme.

Table 4

		Gender	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Experi-mental Group	Pre-test Life Skills	Male	13	330.15	20.599	1.59(N.S)
		Female	18	345.44	29.831	
	Post test- Life Skills	Male	13	346.31	40.117	2.35*
		Female	18	378.50	35.666	
	Pre-test-Academic performance	Male	13	535.15	257.116	0.25(N.S)
		Female	18	555.77	202.561	
	Post test-Academic performance	Male	12	516.08	231.445	0.38(N.S)
		Female	18	546.94	203.940	
Control Group	Pre-test Life Skills	Male	4	343.75	14.930	0.828(N.S)
		Female	7	364.14	46.955	
	Post test- Life Skills	Male	4	341.75	42.484	0.006(N.S)
		Female	7	341.86	22.364	
	Pre-test-Academic performance	Male	4	511.08	108.969	2.241*
		Female	7	367.04	99.170	
	Post test-Academic performance	Male	4	443.50	152.828	1.475(N.S)
		Female	7	318.00	126.320	

The above table indicates the difference between boys and girls on Life Skills and Academic performance as a result of LST. There is no significant gender difference in pre test as a result of LST in Life Skills and academic performance among experimental group. Whereas the post test as shown significant difference at 0.05 level only in Life Skills is may be because the girls representation is little higher than male, but not in the academic performance of experimental group.

The Control group boys and girls do not differ in pre and post test of Life Skills as well as post test of Academic performance. There is a significant difference among boys and girls in pre test of academic performance alone.

The boys were little playful during the LST whereas the girls are little focused and they participated actively during the LST programme. Based on the observations of teachers and the investigator the boys and girls both are treated same in the learning environment only in the case of serious practice the boys seems to be little playful comparatively.

Table 5 indicates the Life Skills of experimental group as result of LST in the entire ten core Life Skills:

♦ The each skill of ten core Life Skills will contribute towards high score in Academic Performance.

Table 5

Group	Dimensions		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	't' value
	Self Awareness	Pre-test	37.16	31	4.148	2.890*
		Post test	39.97	31	4.902	
	Empathy	Pre-test	36.65	31	5.863	3.095*
		Post test	41.10	31	6.610	
	Effective Communication	Pre-test	28.58	31	5.175	3.124*
		Post test	32.35	31	5.930	
	Interpersonal Relationship	Pre-test	37.10	31	5.969	0.777(N.S)
		Post test	38.16	31	4.554	
	Creative Thinking	Pre-test	27.39	31	3.989	3.219*
		Post test	31.00	31	4.131	
	Critical Thinking	Pre-test	42.74	31	4.633	0.485(N.S)
		Post test	43.45	31	7.348	
	Decision Making	Pre-test	35.52	31	5.189	2.678*
		Post test	39.58	31	7.112	
	Problem Solving	Pre-test	34.48	31	3.659	0.332(N.S)
		Post test	34.84	31	5.453	
	Coping with Emotion	Pre-test	33.84	31	4.893	2.565*
		Post test	36.90	31	4.269	
	Coping with Stress	Pre-test	25.58	31	4.193	2.223*
		Post test	27.65	31	4.889	

The table 5 illustrates all the dimensions of ten core life skills as a result of LST in both pre and post test clearly denotes the significant difference in Self Awareness, Empathy, Effective Communication, Creative Thinking, Decision Making, Coping with emotions and coping with stress at 0.05 level. Whereas Inter Personal Relations, Critical thinking and Problem solving are not shown difference in pre and post as a result of LST.

Table 6 indicates the difference between pre and post on all the dimensions of Life Skills among Control Group.

Table 6

Group	Dimensions		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	't' value
Control Group	Self Awareness	Pre-test	38.36	11	4.696	0.232(N.S)
		Post test	38.91	11	3.780	
	Empathy	Pre-test	39.18	11	5.135	0.367(N.S)
		Post test	38.09	11	7.463	
	Effective Communication	Pre-test	30.55	11	6.905	0.737(N.S)
		Post test	29.27	11	4.338	
	Interpersonal Relationship	Pre-test	39.09	11	5.873	1.663(N.S)
		Post test	35.82	11	3.970	
	Creative Thinking	Pre-test	29.00	11	6.033	0.253(N.S)
		Post test	29.64	11	6.087	
	Critical Thinking	Pre-test	43.73	11	4.585	1.070(N.S)
		Post test	41.45	11	4.251	
	Decision Making	Pre-test	37.64	11	5.065	1.158(N.S)
		Post test	35.27	11	4.628	
	Problem Solving	Pre-test	35.36	11	4.760	0.553(N.S)
		Post test	34.36	11	4.843	
	Coping with Emotion	Pre-test	35.64	11	6.038	1.323(N.S)
		Post test	33.55	11	5.556	
	Coping with Stress	Pre-test	28.18	11	4.996	1.129(N.S)
		Post test	25.45	11	5.317	

The above results exhibits that there is no significant difference between pre and post among control group students clearly indicates that they were not benefited by LST programme.

Conclusions
The Life Skills Training Programme has shown effect on Academic Performance and Life Skills for the students who attended the LST programme. The students' performance as well as their general behavior has improved among experimental group students.

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Creativity in the Classroom:
Schools of Curious Delight (5ᵗʰ Edition)

"Creativity in the Classroom: Schools of Curious Delight is a book on creativity written explicitly for teachers. This book is designed to help teachers and trainers to incorporate important aspects of creativity in the daily activities of classroom life. It offers to provide lesson plans, activities and different assessment methods that help students to develop essential skills and attitudes for creativity.

This book contains two parts. The first section deals with the theoretical framework of creativity which is a thought-provoking exploration. The themes he weaves are mainly concerned on the definition of creativity, richly displays the models in creative process and analyses various theoretical foundations of creativity. These aspects of creativity help to investigate the significance of the concepts of creativity precisely which forges various models of creative process have been critically analyzed in this section. Two units in this section are fully devoted on theories on creativity. One of the unit focuses on individual creativity whereas the later unit emphases on systems approach. Systems approach in creativity is relatively a new area that attempts to explore evolutionary models and organizational models of creativity.

Part two of the book discusses classroom activities, practices and guidelines for teaching core content in ways that support student creativity. Teaching creativity in different subjects areas are discussed in this section. Principles for teaching creativity in the content areas like social sciences, sciences, languages and Mathematics are examined as separate units with sufficient examples and activities.

The 5ᵗʰ Edition includes an extended section on technology, where tips for teaching with new technology aided methodology is included. A complete

new section on assessment is also included in this edition. The new chapter of assessment explores the strategies for assessing creativity and ideas for classroom assessment that supports creativity. Another prominent area discussed in the book attempts to study the different activities on creativity for students with special needs. This edition also includes a new segment on problem finding, the most recent revisions to the Creative Problem Solving model, recent research on the links between creativity and intrinsic motivation, and numerous lessons developed by practicing teachers.

The book provide ample theory and examples of applications to enable teachers to use the information in their everyday grouping arrangements, lesson plans, assessment activities, and grading schemes. This manuscript is a blend of research and theory, application and pedagogy. Creativity in the Classroom: Schools of Curious Delight, Second Edition is designed to help teachers' link research and theory regarding creativity to the everyday activities of classroom teaching. It is a very helpful book that applies up-to-date research on creativity to their everyday classroom practice. The 5th edition of this book continues in the tradition of its predecessors, providing both theoretical and practical material that will be useful to teachers for years to come. It is ideal for courses dealing with creativity, teaching gifted and talented students, and for critical thinking courses.

Reviewed by

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Advanced Counseling Techniques

Author:	Varun K Sehgal and
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The book titled "Advanced Counseling Techniques" deals with the recent techniques in counseling which is widely used in the present professional settings. In the light of counseling technique as a means towards sorting out concerns related with clients, this book encompasses different strategies for constructive communication with the clients. This book is designed to help counselors and psycho therapists to know how different techniques can be utilized to increase their ability not only to be effective with clients, but also to influence how the clients view themselves, their world and how they interact with others.

First three chapters in the book deals with counseling services in career guidance and counseling need assessment, which focuses on the need and importance of career counseling and the ways to proceed for counseling need assessment. Career counseling is a very recent area of specialization in counseling. Different models in career counseling, various dimensions of assessment are explained in detail in this book.

Next three chapters focus on counseling services to manage anger and aggression, integrative approach to counseling and psycho therapy and rational emotive spiritual therapy respectively. The chapter on rational emotive spiritual therapy is very informative as this is an integrated counseling approach combining spiritual therapy with different faith based interventions. All the faith based interventions are clearly discussed in the chapter. This book emphasis on principles, models and approaches in counseling techniques with ample examples and case studies.

Group counseling, humanistic and cognitive behavioral approaches in counseling and animal assisted therapy in counseling also discussed in the later chapters. This part has explored different behavioral theories and approaches.

This portion stresses on how to conduct group counseling and various methods in conducting group counseling.

The chapter on animal assisted therapy is relatively a recent method in India and it's been proven very effective among children with special needs. Another chapter completely focuses on mental health promotion through counseling services and the areas in which counseling can be effective in mental health practice. This book also explores different opportunities to promote online counseling services and lastly the book talks on cross cultural counseling.

As a critical point, the flow of the book is missing at some point of the time yet the book provides an overview of few innovative techniques like animal assisted therapy, rational emotive spiritual therapy and e-counseling. The book provides advanced techniques, concepts and models in counseling that can be useful for mental health practitioners who work with different target groups. It is proven to be useful for counseling students also.

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The Art of Thinking Clearly

It's human to make mistakes. Several connections in our brains send out illogical and distorted perception of reality which leads to inaccuracy in our judgments. These inaccuracies in judgments or errors are results of a tendency called cognitive error. These errors which seem to be simple miscalculations/ mistakes are systematic deviation from logic i.e. from rational, thought and behavior. The journey of how do we rid ourselves out of these maladies of mind should begin with the way to recognize them. We could begin our journey by reading "The Art of Thinking Clearly" by Rolf Dobelli. The book is a compilation of newspaper columns the author wrote spread over 99 chapters. The book aims to explain simple errors in our day to day thinking.

The author intentionally uses the word 'systematic' to explain these errors. According to him these are not just occasional errors in judgment, rather routine mistakes, and barriers to logic that we stumble again and again. These are repeating patterns that are carried through years, generations and through centuries. The author explains the largest and most common logical errors of day to day living like - Why do we trust someone who says something well, even if what they're saying is superficial? Or even, why do we think that somebody believes a certain viewpoint, just because they say it out loud, even in reporting or fiction? Why are we willing to travel 10 minutes to save 10 rupees on a 100 rupees purchase, but we wouldn't dream of it for a purchase of 10,000 rupees, to save the exact same 10 rupees?

Dobelli says "Our brain is a complicated thing, full of decision-making capabilities that we can't begin to fully comprehend… not to mention full of errors". He has recognized and penned down such common pitfalls. Further he adds that once armed with this list of errors one could resist their pull and gain an upper hand in the dealing with situations. The book gives the reader certain categories, terms, and explanations which will help them to understand and avoid behaviors and judgments that lead to irrationality.

Through the various illustrations the author establishes that we need to know about what we should not do, rather than what we should i.e. Negative Knowledge. Over the years beginning from the evolution of mankind we have evolved from being gathers to hunters and gradually towards various forms of technology. With evolution so has our thinking evolved, today our brains are designed to reproduce rather than reach for the truth. We use our thoughts to primarily to convince and persuade others and ourselves. Thus in this era of negotiation, we need to break through the systematic sets of fallacies that are sediment in our way of thinking.

The most interesting part of the book is that Dobelli mentions possible ways to deal with each fallacy at the end of each chapter. Through the book the author suggests that the only way to avoid cognitive biases/errors is to embrace and encourage ourselves to consciously eliminate our thinking errors so that the positive side in us could emerge. One of the aspects that strike the readers is that, the thoughts and chapters are too short and quick. Thus by the time the reader understand and tries to internalize a concept, the next notion pops up. This leaves the reader a sense of incompleteness in understanding each fallacy in detail.

Concluding we could say that drawing from collective wisdom of ancient philosophers like Aristotle and contemporary thinkers as Nassim Nicholas Taleb, Barry Schwartz etc., 'The Art of Thinking Clearly' builds on the growing popularity of behavioural economics. Though it is not structured as a self-help guide, its 99 precepts provides the reader useful reference to avoid the common systematic errors which afflict each one of us. In the end it can be established that in situations where the possible consequences are large (important personal or business decisions), we need to be reasonable and rational. In situations where the consequences are small (What to wear today, fried food or not etc.), we can forget about rational optimization and let intuition take over. And finally, when one has to take a decision around the area that they master, one could give the intuition the lead when you are in your circle of competence. In order to summarize the entire book in two lines the author clearly states that – ' ….. find out where your circle of competence is. Get a clear grasp of it. ….. if you face a consequential decision made outside that circle, apply hard, slow, rational thinking. For everything else, give your intuition free rein'

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Why do we need Life Skills?

Life Skills Education is designed to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of psychosocial skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way.It is a holistic approach to the development of values, skills and knowledge in the learner, which assists young people to protect themselves and others in a range of risk situations.Life Skills help in developing positive and flexible attitude in life.

Life Skills help in building self-confidence and self- esteem and enable us to adapt to situations and people.We learn Life Skills from our own experiences, perceptions, insight, stories, books, parents, teachers, religion, media, culture etc. We all have inherent Life Skills. To get the best out of them we need to sharpen them regularly. Enhancing Life Skills enables us to adapt to situations and people and helps us to lead a healthy and positive life

The World Health Organisation defines **Life Skills** as ' the ability (capability) 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 everyday life'. There is a core set of life skills which can broadly be classified into social and negotiation skills, thinking skills and coping skills that are at the heart of skills-based initiatives for the development of capacities of an individual.

Social and Negotiation Skills: This set of skillsconsists of self-awareness, empathy, interpersonal relationships and effective communication skills.

Self-awareness: recognition of 'self', our character, our strengths and weaknesses, desires, likes and dislikes, values and skills.

Empathy: is the ability to be sensitive to another person's situation, to understand his/her concerns, worries, fears and needs and how they feel.

Interpersonal relationship: is ability to establish, sustain and end relationships with a positive note.

Effective communication: is the ability to listen and to express verbally through spoken or written language and non-verbally through gestures and body movements, in ways that are culturally acceptable

Thinking Skills: This group of life skills are critical and creative thinking, problem solving and decision making.

Critical thinking: is the ability to analyse information and experiences in an objective manner.

Creative thinking: Creativity is the ability to generate new ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing ideas.

Problem solving: Enable us to deal with problems in our lives in a constructive manner.

Decision making: is an ability to choose from the varied options based on the existing knowledge of the topic under consideration keeping in mind the posi-

tive or negative consequences of each of the option.

Coping Skills: are coping with emotions and stress.

Coping with Emotions: is an ability of being aware how emotions influence behaviour, and being able to respond to emotions appropriately.

Coping with Stress: is an ability which helps in recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how this affects us physically and emotionally, and learning how to cope with them.

Purpose of Life Skills Education

Life skills helps us to reinforce existing knowledge, positive attitudes and values, pro-social and healthy skills and behaviour. It helps to prevent or reduce myths and misinformation, negative attitudes and risky behaviours

Why do we need life skills?

- To develop a dynamic self-image and great self esteem
- To improve the communication skills
- To make relationships better and handling interpersonal problems
- To boost our decision making ability and make informed decisions
- To help us to deal with the challenges of everyday life
- To become a well-adjusted individual

Life Skills can be applied in:various spheres of life of an individual, especially in; Education, Career Development, Health, Family & Marriage, Workplace, Interpersonal Relationship, Violence Prevention / Conflict Resolution and Media Literacy

Life Skills based education focus on the holistic development of the child or student. It imbibes in children the values of positive and healthy living, work values, respect to fellow being and volunteerism. Life skillshelps in:

- Identifying clear objectives and outcomes
- Implementing student-centred learning
- Encouraging active, hands-on, and cooperative learning
- Focusing on critical thinking/high-order thinking for students
- Training teachers to ensure effectiveness
- Involving parents in learning activities
- Considering school climate
- Collaborating within a school, and between a community and a school

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Since 1987 Centre for Centre for Catalyzing Change (Formerly CEDPA India) has mobilized and equipped women and girls to break gender barriers, access opportunities and realize their rights. Impacting the lives of over one million girls and boys in India, our youth programs have imparted life skills education, gender and reproductive health information via participatory and innovative curriculum to equip adolescents with practical life skills, leading to improved confidence in personal decision-making and increased self-esteem.

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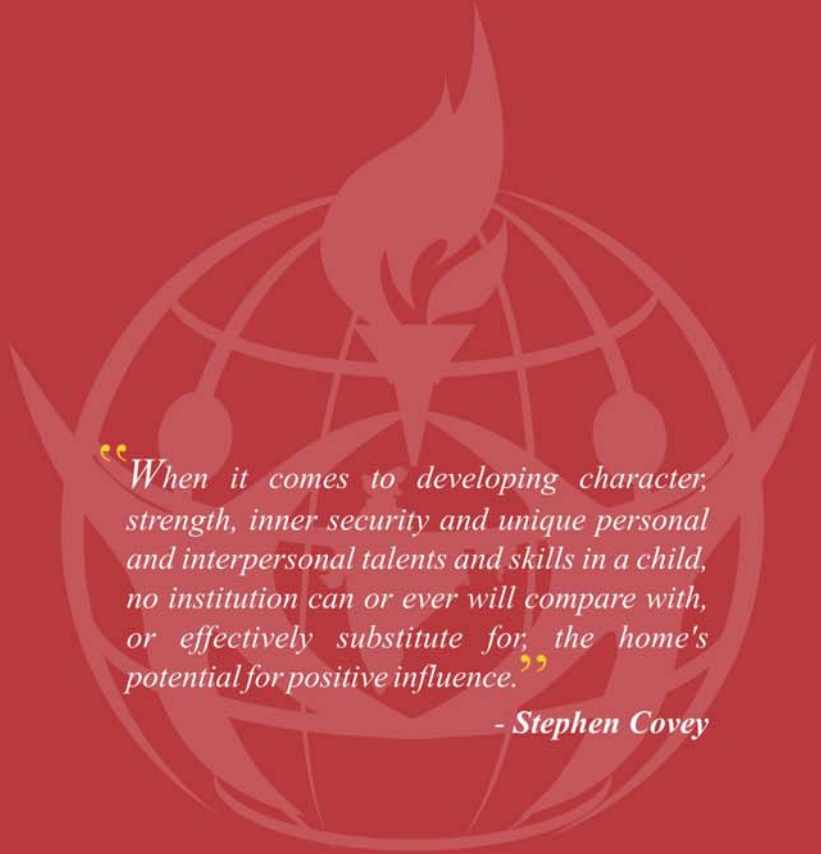
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