

ASSESSMENT OF LIFE SKILLS AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NEYYATTINKARA TALUK

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ABSTRACT-Life Skills can be defined as the ability to cope with stresses and challenges of daily life. Life skills are “the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.”(WHO, 1993). Today, despite the deep cultural changes in the way of life, many people have not the basic and required skills in dealing with life problems. Life Skills modify behavior by converting ‘what we know’ and ‘what we think/ feel and believe’ into ‘what to do’ and ‘how to do’. Higher Secondary Students are in adolescent period. They are eager to explore freedom and responsibility. This may lead them into risk situations and therefore they need life skills. Life skills will help them to cope up with problem and to take responsible decisions and to communicate effectively. A descriptive study was conducted with the aim of assessing the life skills of higher secondary School students in Neyyattinkara Taluk. Total 200 higher secondary School students were included in the study and data collection tool was a two part questionnaire. The first part consisted of personal and family information related to socio-demographic characteristics and the second part was the Life Skills Assessment Test. Based on the Life Skill Assessment Test, study showed that 14% of respondents had High level of life skills, 73% had Average level of life skills and 13% had Low level of life skills. The study also showed that there was no significant difference in levels of life skills on the basis of gender, Educational Qualification of Parents, Job of Parents and family income. There is significant difference in the levels of life skills on the basis of Locality. Urban students had high mean scores than rural students.

KEY WORDS- *Life Skills, Higher Secondary School Students.*

INTRODUCTION

Life Skills can be defined as the ability to cope with stresses and challenges of daily life. Life skills are “the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.”(WHO, 1993). Life skills empower young people to take positive action to protect them and promote health and positive social relationships.

Life Skills are tools to handle and face life boldly, happily and successfully. They are essential for opening the closed minds. Life skills are needed for developing psychosocial competence. Psychosocial competence is the ability to maintain a state of well-being while interacting with others or dealing with oneself in various day to day situations.

The ten core life skills as laid down by WHO are -Self-Awareness, Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Interpersonal Relationships, Effective Communication, Empathy, Coping with Emotions and Coping with Stress.

HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The term ‘Higher Secondary School Students’ means the students studying in XI and XII standards. In this study the term Higher Secondary School Students refers to the XII standard students studying Political Science as one of their subjects.

Higher Secondary Students are in adolescent period. They are the positive resource for the country. They have unlimited energy, vitality and idealism. It is an important opportunity to explore one’s social and political views. During adolescence the physical, intellectual, and emotional characteristics and patterns of childhood are gradually replaced by adult ones, and girls and boys progressively evolve into a state of relative socio-economic independence (UNICEF, 1999). During this period crucial physical and mental changes take place which gives rise to need of mental adjustments and the necessity for establishing new attitudes, values and interest. They will find it is difficult to cope with the issues and demands that is put forward. They will always be in search for answer to who they are and what they want to be, and always be in search of direction. Physical changes in this period provides them with their final preparation for taking on adult roles. Experimental behavior is very common in this period of development so they practice high risk behaviors like rash driving, alcoholism, drug and other substance abuse, unsafe sexual habits. In this period they may be emotionally weak and not able to handle their emotions and physical changes and due to peer pressure they may get into habit of substance use.

IMPORTANCE OF LIFE SKILLS

Today, despite the deep cultural changes in the way of life, many people have not the basic and required skills in dealing with life problems. They have been vulnerable with face of their problems and requirements of life. Life skills play a special role during adolescence in solving many psycho- social problems. Life skills helps to the promotion of personal and social

development, prevention of health and social problems, and the protection of human rights. Life skills empowered the adolescents to promote and protect their rights.

Some research studies indicated that individual and life skills have been introduced as a factor to improve social relations. Some studies in adolescents shows that due to lack of life skills which hinder their adjustment with social conditions and poor social adjustment is one of the factors causing psychological problems. Life skills have been effective to neutralize risk factors. Life Skills modify behavior by converting 'what we know' and 'what we think/ feel and believe' into 'what to do' and 'how to do' (WHO, 1997).

Life Skills are a group of competencies that help adolescents in goal setting, developing self-confidence and good interpersonal skills. Life skills are essential for promotion of healthy child and adolescent development, socialization and preparing young people for changing social circumstances. These skills make teens to acquire independence and confidence. Life skills empowered the adolescents to promote and protect their rights.

Among all other stages adolescents being most susceptible stage in human life span. Their self-development and the process of socialization can be accelerated by imparting life skills in them. It helps them to grow up by understanding their capacity, learning societal norms, values, interests and hopes. Life skills empowers children and makes adolescents to do things in a correct perspective. This automatically leads to a positive developments in them (Dr. V Rajasenan Nair, 2010).

NEED OF THE STUDY

Higher Secondary School Students are eager to explore freedom and responsibility. This may lead them into risk situations and therefore they need life skills. Life skills will help them to cope up with problem and to take responsible decisions and to communicate effectively. There are very limited studies conducted on life skills among Higher Secondary School Students. The present study was conducted to assess life skills of Higher Secondary School Students in Neyyattinkara Taluk (Kerala State) and to find out the significance difference based on the levels of life skills and selected socio- demographic variables.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the levels of life skills of Higher Secondary Students.
2. To find out the significance of difference in the levels of life skills of Higher Secondary School Students on the basis of the socio-demographic variables (Gender, Locality, Educational Qualification of Parents, Job of Parents and family income).

HYPOTHESES

1. There exists significance difference in the levels of life skills scores of Higher Secondary School Students.
2. There is no significance difference in levels of Life Skills based on the socio-demographic variables (Gender, Locality, Educational Qualification of Parents, Job of Parents and family income) among Higher Secondary School Students.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted with the aim of assessing the levels of life skills of Higher Secondary School Students in Neyyattinkara Taluk and to find out the significance difference in the levels of life skills based on selected socio- demographic variables (Gender, Locality, Educational Qualification of Parents, Job of Parents and family income). The study sample included 200 XII students from Humanities branch. The investigator adopted survey method to collect data.

Data collection tool was a two part questionnaire. The first part consisted of personal and family information related to socio-economic characteristics and the second part was the Life Skills Assessment Test. The test contained thirty six questions related to six selected life skill components which are Self-Awareness, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Effective Communication, Empathy and Coping with Stress. Persons who scored 144 and above has high life skills, between 108 and 143 has moderate life skills and less than 108 has low life skills. In this study the independent variable was socio- demographic variables and dependent variable was Life Skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collected data were analyzed to find out the levels of life skills of Higher Secondary School Students and to find out the significance of difference in the levels of life skills based on the socio-demographic variables.

Table 1. Levels of Life Skills among Higher Secondary School Students

Levels of life skills	Number of students	Per cent
High group (M+SD) [149.45]	28	14
Average group {Total - [(M+SD) + (M-SD)]}	146	73
Low group (M-SD) [121.83]	26	13
Total	200	100

It was found that 14% of respondents had High level of life skills, 73% had Average level of life skills and 13% had Low level of life skills.

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation and Significant Difference based on Gender

Gender	Number	Mean	S.D	t	Significance
Female	106	136.45	12.70	0.87	Not Significant
Male	94	134.72	14.99		

From Table 2 it is observed that 't' value is not statistically significant. It showed that there is no significance difference in the levels of life skills on the basis of their Gender.

Table3. Mean, Standard Deviation and Significant Difference based on Locality

locale	Number	Mean	S.D	t	Significance
Urban	100	143.2	10.03	9.24	Significant at 0.01
Rural	100	128.08	12.94		

Table 3 revealed that the obtained 't' value was statistically significant at 0.01 level. It showed that there is significant difference in levels of life skills of Higher Secondary Students on the basis of Locality. Urban students had high mean scores than rural students.

Table 4. Significance of Difference Based on Job of Parents'

Variable	Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Parents Job	Between groups	1040.616	2	520.31	2.77	Not Significant
	Within groups	36917.46	197	187.3982		
F is not significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance						

From Table 4 it is observed that 't' value is not statistically significant. It showed that there is no significance difference in the levels of life skills on the basis of their Parents' Job.

Table 5. Significance of Difference Based on Educational Qualification of Parents'

Table 3: Significance of Difference Based on Educational Qualification of Parents						
Variable	Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Parents educational qualification	Between groups	464.8769	2	232.4385	1.221	Not Significant
	Within groups	37493.20	197	190.321		
F is not significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance						

From Table 5 it is observed that 't' value is not statistically significant. It showed that there is no significance difference in the levels of life skills on the basis of their parents' Educational Qualification.

Table 6. Significance of Difference Based on Family Income

Variable	Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Monthly income	Between groups	656.697	2	325.35	1.734	Not Significant
	Within groups	37301.383	197	189.347		
F is not significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance						

From Table 6 it is observed that 't' value is not statistically significant. It showed that there is no significance difference in the levels of life skills on the basis of their Family Income.

CONCLUSION

Life skills are essential components for the success of life. In this fast and competitive world a child without life skills cannot compete with others. Life Skills can change students mental set up and the style of functioning. It promote self-confidence and help in assessment of behavior patterns. Today's young bloods are the power of the nation and determine the Nation's destiny. So it is important to develop good life skills in their life.

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