

LIFE SKILLS NEED ASSESSMENT AMONG TRIBAL STUDENTS AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

Present study aimed to examine life skills training needs of tribal students at secondary level. The survey method was applied with sample of 88secondary tribal students and 22 teachers of Ekalabya Model School. Self-developed life skills needs assessment check list for students and Life skills needs assessment check list for teachers were used for data collection. The data were analyzed by using frequency and percentage. The majority of the responses of students and teachers indicated that tribal students required life skills education especially self-awareness, effective communication, interpersonal relation etc. The result of the present study has obvious implications for parents, teachers, and counselor for planning, organizing, and implementing life skills education in tribal area.

Keywords: Life Skills, Tribal Students

INTRODUCTION

Rapidly changing social, moral, ethical and religious values have influenced certain 'life styles' in the present society especially among the adolescence. Almost 30 percent of children and adolescents experience a diagnosable psychological disorder during their life, and it might that 70 to 80 percent of them didn't receive suitable intervention. These disturbances usually make dramatic dysfunctions in school, home, and family performances which ultimately may influence educational drop out; and sometimes these problems act as a gate for delinquent behaviours in society (Evans,Mullett,Frans,2005). Adolescent boys and girls face many changes and challenges during these important growing up years. This is also the age when their personalities are being shaped along with development of personal and social skills. It is important to equip the adolescents with the necessary skills to adopt these changes and deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

Education for life skills has started all over the world at school level in order to prevent psychological diseases and social abnormalities. All most in all countries school is a place where students, teachers and school workers spend many hours in their lives. During this period programmes of education and health can have more effect because students are in their dynamic period of life i.e., childhood and adolescence. In addition to academic activities schools have been providing resources for the development of student's psychological health which can be obtained through life skills education. So, schools should emphasize on the provisions and maintenance of child's psychological health and take necessary action in order to fulfill the objectives of education; all round development, rather than only concentrating on increase of marks in school subjects.

It seems necessary to instruct life skills to adolescents because it improves individual mental health. Life skills to adolescent's education has been known as a preventing programme in the world. Life skills are cognitive, emotional and practical abilities which are vital for success in life. Life necessities determine the aims of these skills (World Health

Organization, 1994). Life skills help young people navigate the challenges of everyday life. It enables them to develop into healthy, responsible, and productive adults. Life skills are “abilities for adoptive and positive behaviour that enable an individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” WHO (1994).

Life skill or skill for psychosocial competence is the reflection of affective skill of an individual. The cognitive skill based on the assimilated information and knowledge, the socio-cultural environment, the value system and beliefs all play a role in the development of life skills. Although life skills differ from vocational training, or livelihood skill (Psychomotor competence) that enable a person to earn a living, some have envisaged life skills as competence and actual behaviours. Life skills can be innumerable, some of the important life skills are self-awareness, empathy, interpersonal relationship skill, effective communication, decision making, problem solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, coping with stress and coping with emotions. These skills help to develop psychosocial competence and empower young people to have control over what they do.

The adolescence of today face many more choices and demands than ever before. Dealing with academic competition, handling family responsibilities, transcending daily life conflicts, dealing with peer pressure, preparing for future roles, making crucial carrier choices on the one hand provide them with greater independence but on the other hand can also lead to greater conflict and frustration, thus affecting their psychosocial well-being. It is essential to help the adolescence acquire enduring self-esteem, inquiring habits of mind, reliable human relationships, a sense of belonging in a valued group, and a feeling of usefulness. Adolescents need a basis for making informed, deliberate decisions, especially on matters that have major consequences, such as educational and occupational futures and human relations (Hechinger, 1992).

For the students to enter the community of responsible adults prepared for a diversity of social roles, they must possess critical thinking and problem solving skills along with effective coping resources and personal and social competencies. The most direct interventions for the promotion of psychosocial competence in the young people can be done by teaching of life skills in a supportive learning environment (WHO, 1994). It will not only help promote the well-being of the student, but also contribute to national health and future of our nation.

Despite remarkable worldwide progress in the field of diagnostics, curative and preventive aspects of health and psychological disorder still there are people living in relative isolation, in natural surroundings, maintaining a socio-cultural distance from others. Owing to their unique traditional life ways, the concept of health and wellbeing of tribal people also differs from the rest of the population in many ways.

A tribe is a segmental organization. It is composed of a number of equivalent, unspecialized multifamily groups, each the structural duplicate of the other: a tribe is a congregate of equal kin group blocs (Sukant & Surendra, 2008). A tribe may be seen as a sub-group of the society. The members of a tribe live in a common territory and have a common dialect which is the prime means of communication. Each tribe has a uniform social organization and possesses cultural homogeneity. The tribal population is characterized by a heterogeneous cultural pattern with variegated economic conditions and activities depending largely on ecology. There are also wide variations in psychological, cultural, social, economic and political background of various tribal groups. In a country like India there is a large number

of tribes which because of historical and sociological reasons have stayed away from the mainstream.

India is a homeland of a large number of tribal populations. In India, the tribal form a significant section of the population, because they constitute 8.14% of the total population and have distinct cultures, dialects and economic pursuits in different ecological settings. There are over 500 tribes (with many overlapping communities in more than one State) as notified under article 342 of the Constitution of India, spread over different States and Union Territories of the country. Odisha occupies a special position in the tribal map of India. It is regarded as the homeland of the tribal having a total tribal population of about 81, 45,081, which is 22.21 percent of the State's total population according to Census 2011. The state has the 3rd highest tribal population in the entire country, which accounts for roughly 11 percent of the total tribal population of India. According to the provision of the Indian Constitution there are 62 communities listed as STs in Orissa. More than 80 percent of them live in designated scheduled areas. There are 13 sections of these tribes in the state identified as Primitive Tribes, who are very primitive in nature from the cultural and technological standpoints. (Orissa Development Report, 2002). Many special programmes and policies have been implemented for economic and educational development of scheduled cast.

The stress faced by tribal student in such a current situation is enormous. There is an urgent need to provide tribal youth with a new set of ways and systems to deal with the demands of life. Since the 'individual' rather than the 'system' is recognized as the basic unit of the society, it is essential that the tribal youth be helped to develop skills inherently to handle a wide variety of choices, changes and stressors. Therefore, it becomes vital to prepare the individual at younger stage to face these changes and mature into a person prepared to face the challenges of adult life. They need abilities-skills to face the demands of everyday life. Life skills equip tribal students in facing these changes with a positive outlook.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

It is vital to equip the tribal adolescents with necessary life skills to broaden their horizon, understand and adopt those traditional beliefs which are rational and practical and become gender sensitive so as to be a part of the national development through the building better society. If the future generation becomes more aware and sensitive, it will better equip them to stop the ill practices and beliefs prevalent in the tribal society. There is a need to identify the life skills needs of tribal students as a starting point. By identifying such needs, then it will be possible to develop life skills education programs that address them directly and also provide important information for further development. Surveying students' needs has multiple benefits (Nicholas, 2002). Among these benefits are: (a) their usefulness in developing large and small group programs focused on the expressed student needs especially, (b) it is an efficient method of identifying student concerns, and (c) to aid in the training and preparation. Various studies have been conducted on life skills across the world.

Findings of these studies are Rahmati et al. (2010) reported that life skills instruction affects social adjustment positively. Gharamaleki et al. (2010) reported that life skills training effects on decreasing mental disorders symptoms especially anxiety, depression and stress of students suspected to the mental disorder. Muafi et al (2010) reported life skills training influence self-efficacy, self-esteem, life interest and role behaviour for unemployed youth. Sobhigaramaki and Rajabee (2010), Eslaminasab et al.(2011), found that life skills instruction affects mental health and self-esteem of adolescents positively. Esmaeilinasab et al. (2011) found that life skills training lead to significant increase of self-esteem in study group. Golestan et al. (2011) found lack of life skills significantly raises the risk of relapse

among adolescents. Maryam et al. (2011) found that life skills training lead to significant increase of self-esteem in the study group. Khera and Kosla (2012) found positive co-relation between Core Affective Life Skill and Self Concept of adolescents. Malik et al. (2012) reported that life skill training significantly decrease academic anxiety and increase adjustment level of students. Fallahchai (2012) reported that life skills training improve the life skills and academic achievement. Also, not significant different between male and female students in the score of life skills and academic achievement observed. Gomes and Marques (2013) reported that students who received the life skill intervention reported having more developmental experiences related to life skills, greater life satisfaction and a stronger tendency to be optimistic. Prajna and Premsingh (2015) found that the life skills and academic achievement are positively correlated.

From the above discussion it can be clearly said that life skills training is very helpful in different aspects of life. Unlike the importance of life skills training, there is paucity of research investigation among Indian students. Due to paucity of research in this area in India in general and tribal students of Odisha, there is urgent need of research in order to develop the life skills of tribal children. Therefore it is important to identify the life skills relevant to tribal students. This would give insight to explore life skills needs assessment among tribal students at secondary level.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the life skills training needs at secondary level as perceived by schedule tribe students.
2. To examine the life skills training needs for schedule tribe students at secondary level as perceived by teachers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey method was employed to find out life skills needs among tribal students. The sample for this study consists of 88 secondary school tribal students and 22 secondary school teachers, selected randomly from 11 Ekalabya Model School of Odisha. From each school, 8 students (4 boys and 4 girls) and 2 teachers were selected.

Self-developed life skills needs assessment check list for students and teachers were used to ascertain life skills needs among tribal students. The check lists consists of 60 and 56 items respectively covering ten life skills namely self-awareness, empathy, problem solving, decision making, effective communication, interpersonal relation, coping with emotion, coping with stress, critical thinking, creative thinking. The content validity of both the checklist was ensured by taking comments of experts from the department of education and psychology. The split half reliability co-efficient of both the check list were calculated and found to be 0.80 and 0.78 respectively. The collected data were analyzed by using percentage and accordingly interpretation was made.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The first objective of the study was to examine the life skills training needs among tribal students at secondary level. For this investigator calculated frequency and percentage of response of students, which is given in the table-1.

Table 1. Life Skills Needs of Tribal Students as Perceived by them

<i>Life Skills</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Self-awareness	74	84.09
Effective communication	71	80.68
Coping with stress	70	79.54
Interpersonal relation	69	78.40
Decision making	53	60.22
Critical thinking	51	57.95
Problem solving	50	56.81
Creative thinking	48	54.54
Empathy	45	51.13
Coping with emotions	45	51.13

The table-1 indicates 84.09% of students express that they need training in developing self awareness, 80.68% in developing communication skills, 79.54 for coping with stress, 78.4% for interpersonal relationship, 60.22% for decision making, 57.95% for critical thinking, 56.81% for problem solving, 54.54% for developing creative thinking, 51.13% for developing empathy and coping with emotions. It can be said that above 80% of students opined that they need training in self awareness and effective communication, above 78% of students need training in coping with stress and interpersonal relation and above 55% of students need training in decision making, problem solving and critical thinking. The response of the students is graphically presented in figure-1.

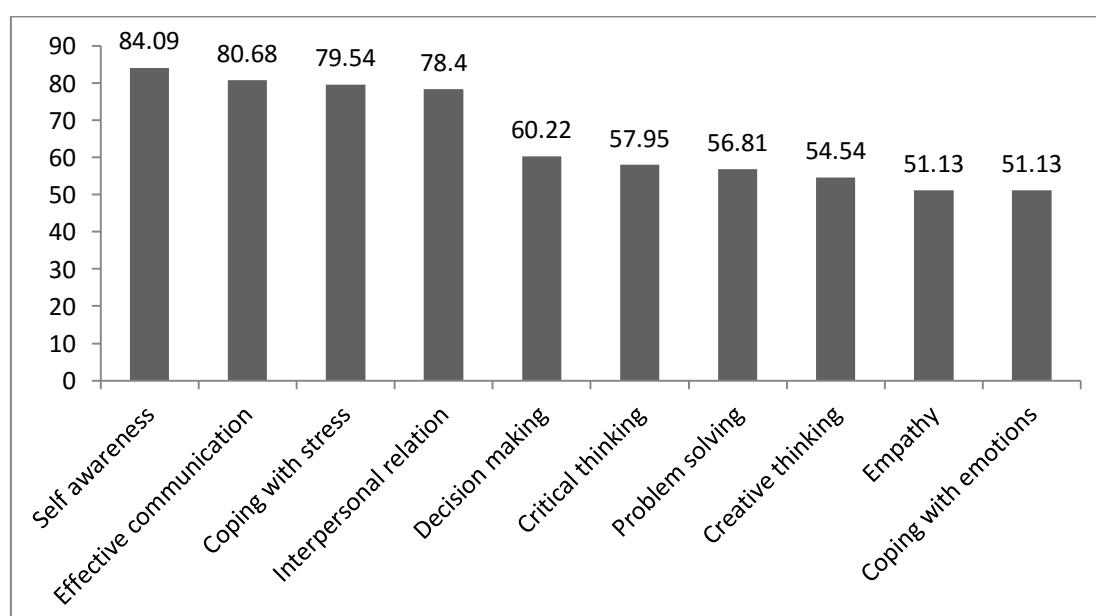


Figure 1. Percentage of Students Need Training in Different Life Skills

The second objective of the study was to examine the life skills training needs of tribal students at secondary level as perceived by teachers. For this investigator calculated frequency and percentage of response of teachers, which is presented in table-2.

Table 2. Life Skills Needs of Tribal Students as Perceived by Teachers

<i>Life Skills</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Decision making	19	86.34
Effective communication	17	77.27
Coping with stress	16	72.72
Self-awareness	15	68.18
Interpersonal relation	15	68.18
Coping with emotions	14	63.63
Critical thinking	14	63.63
Problem solving	13	59.09
Creative thinking	12	54.54
Empathy	11	50

Table 2 reveals that 86.34% of teachers feel students need training in decision making, 77.27% of students need training in effective communication, 72.72% of students need training in coping with stress, 68.18% of students need training in self-awareness and interpersonal relation, 63.63% of students need training in coping with emotions and critical thinking, 59.09% of students need training in problem solving, 54.54% of students need training in creative thinking and 50% of students need training in empathy. It can be concluded that teachers feel that tribal students should give training in decision making, effective communication, coping with stress, self-awareness, interpersonal relation and coping with emotions. The response of students on needs of life skills is presented in figure 2.

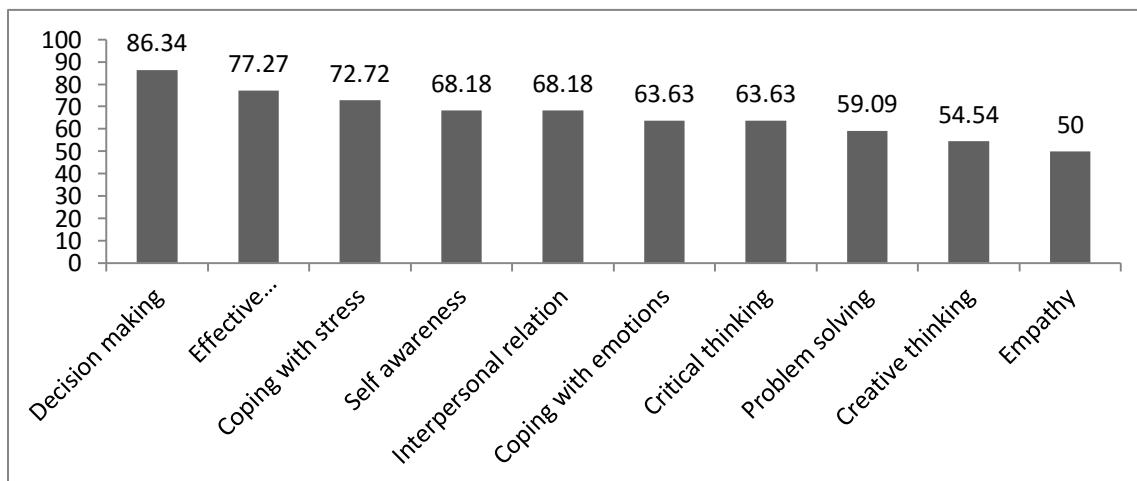


Fig.2. Percentage of Teachers Response for Students Need Life Skills Training

The investigator also compared the opinion of students and teachers regarding need for life skills training of tribal students, which is presented in table-3.

Table 3. Comparison of Students and Teachers Response on Life Skills Training

<i>Life Skills</i>	<i>Percentage of Students</i>	<i>Percentage of Teachers</i>
Self-awareness	84.09	68.18
Effective communication	80.68	77.27
Coping with stress	79.54	72.72
Interpersonal relation	78.4	68.18
Decision making	60.22	86.34
Critical thinking	57.95	63.63
Problem solving	56.81	59.09
Creative thinking	54.54	54.54
Empathy	51.13	50
Coping with emotions	51.13	63.63

The table-3 indicates difference of opinion between students and teachers regarding life skills training needs of tribal students. Majority of students (above 80%) feel training in self-awareness and effective communication but majority of teachers feel that decision making and effective communication. It can be said that both teachers and students agreed for training on life skills such as effective communication, coping with stress and interpersonal relation. Comparison of students and teachers response on life skills training is presented in figure-3.

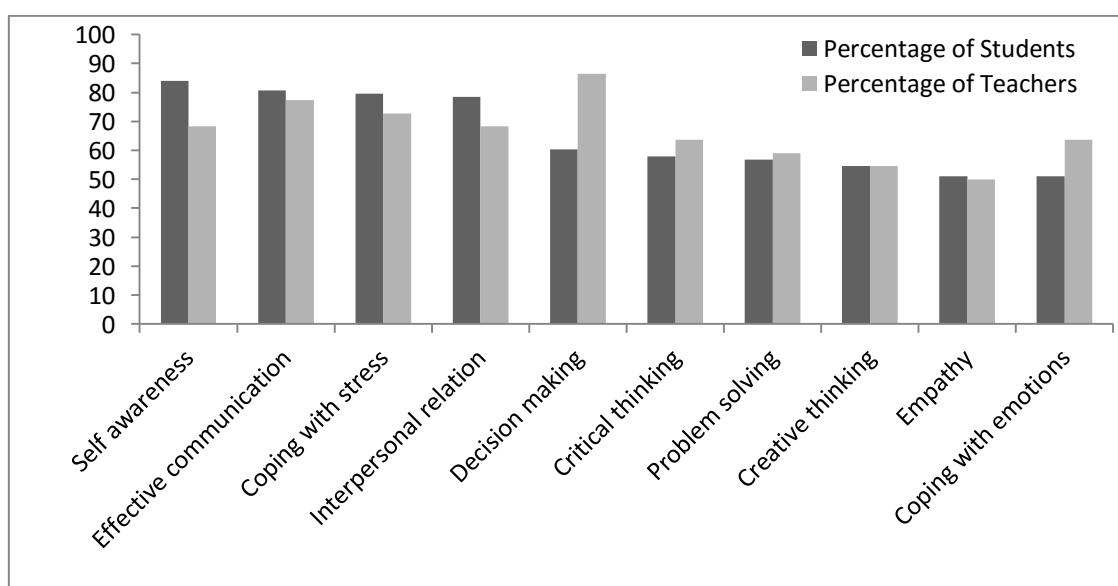


Fig 3. Percentage of Students and Teachers Response on Life Skills Training

MAJOR FINDINGS

- 80% of students opined that they need training in self-awareness and effective communication, above 78% of students need training in coping with stress and interpersonal relation and above 55% of students need training in decision making, problem solving and critical thinking.
- Majority of teachers feel that tribal students may give training in decision making, effective communication, coping with stress, self-awareness, interpersonal relation and coping with emotions.
- Both teachers and students agreed for training on life skills such as effective communication, coping with stress and interpersonal relation for tribal students.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The result of the present study has obvious implications for both educational theory and practice. The present study will enable the teachers and parents to identify life skills needs among tribal students at secondary level with the help of 'Life Skills need assessment check list for students and teachers' constructed by the researcher himself. The appropriate identification will help the teachers and parents to plan the right remedial measures. Teachers play a significant role in the development of children thus teacher must be trained in life skills so that they can help the students in developing life skills. For this life skills education must be placed in pre-service curriculum. Findings of the present study will useful for planning, organizing, and implementing life skills education in tribal area. An important implication of the present findings is the establishment and development of life skills education for tribal students. Since the results indicate that tribal students may require help in addressing various life skills needs, then it is important for the government to institute programmes in schools that will address the needs of students appropriately. The result of the study is beneficial for counselors to guide tribal students in developing good self-esteem and adjustment, so that it may improve their quality of life reduce their depression, anxiety, and stress related problems.

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