

Effect of Life Skills Training Program on Psychological Well-being of Rural Adolescents

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The objective of the study was to investigate the effect of life skills training program on psychological well-being of rural adolescents from two villages in Maharashtra. Life skills training program covering ten life skills as given by WHO (1997) was conducted for one academic year on students from 8th and 9th grade (13-15 years of age) belonging to two schools. Students were screened on intelligence using Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices and only those above 25th percentile were selected for the intervention. Students were tested on psychological well-being at the beginning and end of the training program. Psychological well-being was measured using the scale of psychological well-being by Kulkarni (2015). Paired t test was used to analyse the data. Results revealed that there was a significant increase on total psychological well-being ($t=-6.63$, $p<.001$) of students after the intervention as compared to their pre-test scores. Significant differences were also found on all the dimensions of psychological well-being. Results indicated a positive impact of such training on rural adolescents.

Keywords: Life skills training, Psychological Well-being, Rural adolescents

Adolescence is a vital stage of growth and development. It is considered as an important milestone in a person's life as the attainment of various developmental tasks lays the foundation for an individual's personality and identity for the rest of his life. Adolescence is also marked by several vulnerabilities which require awareness and attention. Indian teenagers are constantly exposed to various challenges and stresses posed due to rapid globalization and urbanization. The lives of current youngsters are more complicated than ever because of exposure to social media, academic stress and easy availability of addictive substances. For many mental health disorders, the age of onset is adolescence. Data available from many community based mental health studies in India depicts a high prevalence rate among adolescents. Two studies have shown prevalence of severe and extreme levels of depression with 11.2% in school dropouts and 3% among school going adolescents aged 13 to 19 years (Nair, John & Paul, 2004; Bansal, Goyal & Srivastava, 2009). According to reports, the age specific rate of suicides among 15-29-year olds is on the rise

from 3.73% to 3.96% per 1,00,000 population per year from 2002 to 2011 (National Crime Records bureau, 2012). From these studies, it is evident that mental and emotional needs of adolescents should be catered to. These studies also point towards the need of various mental health and related interventions for the prevention of possible mental health issues and for promotion of psychological well-being. One such way to prevent the occurrence of psychological disorders and to promote well-being can be life skills training. If this training is given at the right age, it can go a long way in terms of making the person more adept at handling various challenges in life. Life skills education can also lead to holistic growth of adolescents as it caters to their social, emotional, interpersonal and psychological needs.

Life skills as defined by WHO (1997) are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour, which enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of day-to-day life. The 10 core life skills given by WHO are as follows-