

# Effectiveness of Life Skills Training Program on Assertiveness, Stress Management and Interpersonal Communication Skills of Adolescents in Rural Area

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## ABSTRACT

The present research was conducted to study the effectiveness of a training program on three life skills i.e. Assertiveness, Stress Management and Interpersonal Communication skills of adolescents. The study was 'Quasi Experimental' in nature with 'Pre -test Post-test Non-Equivalent Control Group Design'. The sample of the study comprised class VIII students studying in government school situated in rural area of Union Territory of Chandigarh. The Experimental Group was given training in three life skills namely Interpersonal Communication Skill, Managing stress and skill of Assertiveness whereas no such intervention was given to the Control Group. The results of the research study indicated difference in the scores of pre- test and post- test of Experimental group with post-test scores significantly higher than that of the pre test scores. Whereas, there was no significant difference in pre -test and post -test scores of 'Control Group'. This implies that the training programme was effective in enhancing life skills among the rural adolescents.

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## 1. Introduction

Adolescence is the most important period of human life and an important era in the total lifespan. A considerable importance has been accorded to this phase of life, as it is a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. Thus, they have to adapt and adjust to the newer roles and responsibilities that they are expected to assume. It is that period of development that brings not only opportunities for progress, but also many challenges for them. Today, Adolescents have to face more challenges, as conditions and situations are at a state of dynamic flux. Due to the development of science and technology, there is a rapid change in our society that has made it very complex. These changes require newer strategic approaches so that youngsters are better equipped to handle the effects of these changes. The introduction of Life Skills Training as a part of the school curricula is one of the strategies adopted in recent times to prepare the individuals to deal with difficult situations by providing training in life skills right from the school life. Further, unlike children of urban area, adolescents from rural background are deprived of the basic facilities. So, training in life skills becomes vital in order to enable them to compete at global level and become successful global citizens that is possible through enhancing their psychosocial competencies.

The World Health Organization (1997) defines Life Skills as "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". Teaching of life skills as broad skills in relation to daily life helps in the improvement of mental well being, healthy interaction and positive behavior. Nair and Pejaver (2001) have given Self-awareness/Self-esteem, Empathy, Effective communication, Interpersonal relationship skills, Creative thinking, Critical thinking, Decision making, Problem solving, Coping with emotions, and Coping with stress as the domains of life skills in the rural context.

Many studies have reported benefits of life skill education for children and adolescents like advancement in self esteem, self confidence and general well being etc. (Tacade, 1990, Errecart et al., 1991; Caplan et al., 1992); life skill education also helps in alleviating antisocial activities and behavior (Botvin et.al. 1984, Pentz, 1983, Perry and Kelder, 1992). Some researchers have also reported that life skill education boosts the academic performance of individuals (Weissberg et.al. 1989). These skills are the major contributors to negotiate and mediate challenges faced by young people to become productive citizens (Prajapati, Sharma, & Sharma, 2017, Savoji & Ganji, 2013 and WHO, 1993).

A number of studies have been conducted regarding development of training programmes in life skills and effectiveness of these programmes on various psychosocial constructs. Findings of the study conducted by Maryam, E. (2011) indicated that self-esteem of experimental group after training in life skills increased significantly in contrast to subjects of control group. Roodbari, Sahdipoor, and Ghale (2013) also reported that life skill training has a positive effect improving social development, emotional and social adjustment. The present research is concerned to develop a training programme for three life skills namely assertiveness, stress management and interpersonal communication especially for adolescents from rural locality.

## 2. Objective of the Study

1. To see the effectiveness of Life Skills Training program on Assertiveness skill, Skill of Managing Stress and skill of Interpersonal Communication among the adolescents studying in rural schools.

## 3. Hypotheses

The following were the hypotheses of the study:-

1. There will be no significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores in skill of assertiveness, managing

stress and interpersonal communication of Control Group in rural area.

- There will be no significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores in skill of assertiveness, managing stress and interpersonal communication of Experimental Group in rural area.

#### 4. Method Adopted for the Study

The present study was aimed to find out the effectiveness of a life skills training program on the three life skills namely assertiveness skill, skill of managing stress and interpersonal communication skills on adolescents. So, the investigator adopted the '**Experimental Method**' to conduct the research study.

#### Sample

The training program was implemented among adolescents studying in class VIII with a view to improve the various life skills namely assertiveness, managing stress and interpersonal communication among them. The study was conducted in one school from rural locality of Union Territory of Chandigarh. '**Purposive Sampling Technique**' was used for the selection of schools. Since the study was, '**Quasi experimental**' in nature so, intact classrooms were selected as sample. From the selected school two sections of class VIII were randomly selected. Again one of these sections was randomly assigned as 'Control Group' and other as 'Experimental Group'. For the present study; the researcher selected 95 students as total sample from Government High School Karsan. U.T., Chandigarh. Experimental Group consisting of 45 students and Control Group consisting of 50 students. Due to the absence of some pupils in either pre-test or post-test or irregularity in the training, the final sample consisted of 53 students only with 20 students in experimental group and 33 in control group

**Table 1 Distribution of the selected sample**

Name of the School	Locality	No. of Students	
		Experimental Group	Control Group
Government High School Karsan	Rural	20	33

#### Tools Employed

The following tools were employed to collect the data:-

- Skill of Assertiveness scale
- Skill of managing stress
- Skill of interpersonal communication (All three tools prepared by the investigator)
- Modules on life skill training program. (Prepared by the investigator)

#### Design

In the present study 'Pre- test Post- test Non-equivalent Control Group Design' was used to conduct the study. The experiment was conducted on the students of the same school. Pre- test and post- test were given to both the groups. The effects of experiment method were tested by giving a post-test. In this study Experimental Group is exposed to Experimental

treatment i.e., 'life Skill Education Program' for over a week and the other group, which acts as the Control Group, is not exposed to any treatment.

#### Experimental Procedure

The research was conducted in 3 phases. The following procedure was followed in each phase.

#### Phase I

This phase is also called 'pretesting phase'. During this phase both Control Group as well as experimental groups were administered scales prepared by the investigator on skill of assertiveness, skill of managing stress and interpersonal communication skills.

#### Phase II (Intervention)

In this phase, the Experimental Group was exposed to life skills training Program of one week. Before the commencement of the intervention the Experimental group was further randomly divided into sub-groups consisting of 5 to 11 students, to facilitate the application of life skill strategies in the Training Program. Before proceeding with intervention, students were given a brief introduction of different types of life skills, their relative importance and how mastery in these life skills help in facing the challenges of daily life. Each skill was taught for two days to each group. The trainers and students were rotated according to the roaster prepared for the program. The entire program consisted of 6 sessions; each session was for the duration of one and a half hour, spread over a period of six days with two days devoted to each skill.

Life Skills Training Program was developed by the researcher as per the objectives of the study and considering the contextual need for program planning. For identifying the component of each category, available related literature was referred by the researcher. Number of reports and documents of World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF on the Life Skills were referred for gaining better understanding with regard to the specific life skills.

The Life Skills Training programme was participatory in nature where the students were given opportunity to interact and participate thereby understanding the contents mostly through experiential learning.

The training was conducted through power point presentations, Role-play, Discussions and Group exercise/activities like games etc.

The Control Group was not given any intervention as their result was compared as the base line. The students who belonged to the Control Group remained in their respective classes.

#### Phase III (Post Test)

After the completion of Life Skills Training Program, students of both Control Group and Experimental Group were administered all the tests given in phase 1 to measure effectiveness of Life Skills Training.

**Table 2 Phases of Experimental Design**

Phase	Experimental Group	Control Group
Phase 1 Pre Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-test in life skills of Assertiveness</li> <li>• Managing Stress</li> <li>• Interpersonal communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-test in life skills of Assertiveness</li> <li>• Managing Stress</li> <li>• Interpersonal communication</li> </ul>
Phase II Experimentation	Intervention programme on life skill education	Nil treatment
Phase 3 Post Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post –test in life skills of Assertiveness</li> <li>• Managing Stress</li> <li>• Interpersonal communication</li> </ul>	Post-test in life skills of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assertiveness</li> <li>• Managing Stress</li> <li>• Interpersonal communication</li> </ul>

**Statistical Analysis**

The obtained data were analyzed by employing t-test

**5. Results and Discussion**

**I. Comparison of pre- test and post- test scores in Control Group**

**Table 3. Mean scores, S.D and t value between pre-test and post-test for skill of assertiveness, Managing Stress and Interpersonal Communication among Adolescents of Control Group of Rural area (N=33)**

Life Skill	Pre test		Post test		t-value	Level of Significance
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Assertiveness	47.12	7.21	49.21	7.24	1.18	Not Significant
Managing Stress	101.76	12.37	103.18	7.75	.57	Not Significant
Interpersonal Communication	34.09	5.50	33.30	3.95	.67	Not Significant

From Table 3 it is clear that the t-values between pre-test and post-test scores of Control Group in rural area were computed to be 1.18, .57 and .67 respectively for the skill of assertiveness, managing stress and Interpersonal Communication. None of these t- value is found to be significant. This implies that there was no significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores of control group belonging to

school in rural locality of Chandigarh. Thus hypothesis stating “There will be no significant difference in pre test and post test scores in skill of assertiveness, managing stress and Interpersonal Communication of control group in rural area is accepted. We can say that there was no significant change in the life skills of the Control Group in rural school as this group was not given any training.

**II. Comparison of pre test and post test Scores in Experimental Group**

**Table 4 Mean scores, S.D and t value between pre-test and post-test for skill of assertiveness, Managing Stress and Interpersonal Communication among Adolescents of Experimental group of Rural area (N=20)**

Life Skill	Pre test		Post test		t-value	Level of Significance
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Assertiveness	48.55	5.84	54.95	4.11	4.01	Significant at .01 level
Managing Stress	106.30	6.89	122.25	9.47	6.08	Significant at .01 level
Interpersonal Communication	34.15	3.01	37.10	3.99	2.64	Significant at .01 level

From Table 4 it is clear that the t-values between pre-test and post-test scores of Experimental Group in rural area were computed to be 4.01, 6.08 and 2.64 respectively for the skill of assertiveness, managing stress and Interpersonal Communication. All of these t- values are found to be significant at 0.01 levels. This implies that there exists a significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores of Experimental Group belonging to school in rural locality of Union Territory of Chandigarh. Thus hypothesis stating “There will be no significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores in skill of assertiveness, managing stress and Interpersonal Communication of Experimental Group in rural area is rejected at .01 level. We can say that there was significant change in the life skills of the Experimental Group in rural school. Further, the higher mean score of post test in the skill of assertiveness (Mean=54.95), Managing stress (Mean=122.25) and

Interpersonal Communication (34.15) as compared to that of the pre test scores indicates that there was a substantial increase in these skills after the training to experimental group. Thus it can be concluded that the training was effective in enhancing the skill of assertiveness, managing stress and Interpersonal Communication among eighth class students studying in rural locality.

**6. Educational Implications**

The findings of the present study suggest that Life Skills Training Program was effective in enhancing the skills of assertiveness, stress management and interpersonal communication among adolescents in rural locality. So, it is suggested that life skills should be an important component of school curriculum. Such activities should be employed in curriculum transaction that enhance these skills among the

students. The schools should organize training program based on participatory approach for the adolescents. Such program should give an opportunity to analyze and explore the

challenges and dilemmas and encouragement for group work and discussions for adolescents in particular.

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