



Life Skills Among The Adolescents In Thanjavur District: A Social Work Perspective

KEYWORDS

Adolescents, Life Skills, Academic Performance and Social Work Intervention .

Ms. R. INDIRA

Dr. A. ANAND JERARD SEBASTINE

Doctoral Research Scholar (Full Time) Centre for Rural Development, Periyar Maniammai University, Thanjavur

Assistant Professor of Social Work ,Centre for Rural Development , Periyar Maniammai University, Thanjavur

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to analyse the life skills among adolescents in Thanjavur District. Of all the stages of human life, adolescence is considered to be the most crucial one next to fetal stage since numerous physiological, psychological and social changes occur. Adolescence is viewed as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood whose cultural purpose is the preparation of children for adult roles. They are a unique population with specific health concerns and needs. Hence, the present study is aimed at analyzing the Life Skills among the adolescents in Thanjavur District. Descriptive Research design is used and a total of 30 students are selected from the students by adopting Simple Random Sampling. An attempt is also made to suggest the need for social work intervention among the adolescents based on the salient findings of the study. Further results and suggestions would be discussed in the full paper.

Introduction of the Project

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 necessary skills to adopt these changes and deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. So this project was planned and implemented for imparting life skill education.

Adolescence: An important phase of life

Adolescence is the span of years between childhood and adulthood. The term adolescence comes from the Latin word *adolescere*, meaning 'to grow' or 'to grow to maturity'. It is customary to regard adolescence as beginning when children become sexually mature and ending when they reach the age of legal maturity. Adolescence is often described as a phase of life that begins in biology and ends in society. However, studies of changes in behavior, attitudes and value throughout adolescence have revealed not only that these changes are more rapid in the early than in the latter part of adolescence but also that the behavior, attitudes and values in the early than in the latter part of the period are markedly different from those in the latter part. During, this time a number of physical, cognitive and social emotional changes take place in the body. Therefore, it becomes extremely important 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 adolescents in facing these changes with a positive outlook.

Life Skill and adolescents' development

A WHO document (1994) defines life skills as "abilities for adoptive and positive behavior that enable an individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life".

The youth 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 youth 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 youth 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 psychological 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 youth, but also contribute to national health and our future as a nation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Aim:

The overall aim of the study is to study the Life Skills among adolescents in Thanjavur District and to analyze the need for Social Work intervention among them

Objectives

1. To understand the socio demographic characteristics of the adolescents.
2. To assess their life skills among them.
3. To critically examine the need for social work interventions among adolescents based on finding.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Since the study attempts to describe the characteristics of the adolescents and to analyze the relationship between various socio-demographic characteristics and Life Skills, Descriptive Research Design was adopted. According to Kothari (2009), descriptive research studies are those studies, which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group, whereas, diagnostic research studies determine the frequency with which something occurs or its association with something else.

UNIVERSE AND SAMPLING:

Universe

The universe for the present study constitutes all the adolescents studying in the Government Higher Secondary School, Budalur, Thanjavur District.

Sampling Method:

The research has adopted Simple Random Sampling and 30 members were selected for the study.

Tools for data collection:

The researcher has used self prepared questionnaire to collect the basic details related to their family and education. The researcher has also used a Life Skills Assessment Scale.

Statistical Methods:

The researchers have applied the appropriate statistical tests to identify the relationships between various independent variables and with Life Skills.

RESULTS

The following section of the paper presents the sample characteristics, salient findings of the study along with suggestions for social work interventions pertaining to the study.

Sample Characteristics

- Majority (68.3%) of the respondents belong to 16 years of age
- Majority (60%) of the respondents are Hindus
- Majority (67.7%) of the respondents hail from nuclear family.
- Majority (73.7%) of the respondents are currently studying in eleventh standard.

Findings related to Educational Conditions:

- Most (45%) of the respondents' fathers are involved in agriculture based occupation.
- Majority (79.3%) of the respondents' mothers are home makers.
- Most (45%) of the respondents Fathers' has education up to only 10th standard.
- An equal proportion (25% each) of the respondents' mothers has education up to high school up to higher secondary.
- An exact half (50%) of the respondents do not have any boy siblings in their family and about 51.4% of them do not have no girl Sibling too.

**Table 1
LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT**

S. No.	PARTICULARS	No. of Respondents (n:30)	Percentage
A	NO ONE KNOWS MY TRUE FEELINGS		
1.	Always true of me	3	10.0
2.	Very true of me	17	56.7
3.	Sometimes true of me	7	23.3
4.	Occasionally true of me	2	6.7
5.	Not at all true of me	1	3.3
B	I POSTPONE MY WORK TILL THE LAST MINUTE		
1.	Always true of me	6	20.0
2.	Very true of me	15	50.0
3.	Sometimes true of me	3	10.0
4.	Occasionally true of me	4	13.3
5.	Not at all true of me	2	6.7
C	I DON'T LIKE TO BE ISOLATED		
1.	Always true of me	5	16.7
2.	Very true of me	19	63.3
3.	Sometimes true of me	4	13.3
4.	Occasionally true of me	1	3.3
5.	Not at all true of me	1	3.3
D	I DON'T WANT TO BE FORCED OR HURRIED TO SOLVE PROBLEMS		
1.	Always true of me	6	20.0
2.	Very true of me	13	43.3
3.	Sometimes true of me	4	13.3
4.	Occasionally true of me	2	6.7
5.	Not at all true of me	5	16.7
E	OTHER PEOPLE'S TROUBLE DOESN'T DISTURB ME MUCH.		
1.	Always true of me	6	20.0
2.	Very true of me	15	50.0
3.	Sometimes true of me	3	10.0
4.	Occasionally true of me	4	13.3
5.	Not at all true of me	2	6.7
F	I DON'T KNOW THE RIGHT WORDS TO ASK FOR HELP.		
1.	Always true of me	8	26.7
2.	Very true of me	18	60.0
3.	Sometimes true of me	2	6.7
4.	Occasionally true of me	1	3.3
5.	Not at all true of me	1	3.3
G	I EASILY MINGLE WITH PEOPLE.		
1.	Always true of me	5	16.7
2.	Very true of me	15	50.0
3.	Sometimes true of me	4	13.3
4.	Occasionally true of me	4	13.3
5.	Not at all true of me	2	6.7
H	HEALTH WISE I AM VERY SENSITIVE.		
1.	Always true of me	4	13.3
2.	Very true of me	14	46.7
3.	Sometimes true of me	4	13.3
4.	Occasionally true of me	5	16.7
5.	Not at all true of me	3	10.0
I	WHATEVER I SAY PEOPLE MISUNDERSTAND ME.		
1.	Always true of me	4	13.3
2.	Very true of me	16	53.3
3.	Sometimes true of me	6	20.0
4.	Occasionally true of me	2	6.7
5.	Not at all true of me	2	6.7
J	I FIND THAT MY FRIENDS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ME		
1.	Always true of me	3	10.0
2.	Very true of me	3	10.0
3.	Sometimes true of me	4	13.3
4.	Occasionally true of me	5	16.7
5.	Not at all true of me	15	50.0

- From the above table, the following inferences are made:
- More than half (56.7%) of the respondents say that no one know their true feelings.
- Nearly 50% of the respondents admit that they postponed their work till the last minute.
- Majority (63.3%) of the respondents accept that they don't like to be isolated.
- Nearly half (43.3%) of the respondents accept that don't want to be forced or hurried to solve problems.
- Half (50%) of the respondents admit that other people's trouble doesn't disturb them much.
- More than half (60%) of the respondents admit that they don't know the right words to ask for help.
- Half (50%) of the respondents admit that they mingle with people easily.
- Nearly half (46.7%) of the respondents admit that they are very sensitive health wise.
- More than half (53.3%) of the respondents admit that they are misunderstood what they say people.
- Nearly half (50%) of the respondent does not agree that their friends take advantage of them.

Table 2
LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT

S. No.	PARTICULARS	No. of Respondents (n:30)	Percentage
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4.	Occasionally true of me	5	16.7
5.	Not at all true of me	15	50.0

From the above table, the following inferences are made:

- More than half (66.75%) of the respondent does not agree that parents & family help them to decide.
- Nearly half (50%) of the respondents accept that they go by whatever friends decide.
- More than half (53.3%) of the respondents accept that they are unable to control their emotions.
- Majority (50%) and (33.3%) of the respondents accept that they feel burdened with their studies.
- Majority (50%) and (33.3%) of the respondent does not accept their friendship doesn't bother me.
- Nearly half (43.3%) of the respondents accept that they does not definitely act once they thought a solution.
- More than half (53.3%) of the respondents accept that they make wrong decisions in difficult situations.
- More than half (53.3%) of the respondents accept that they are unable to talk about difficult or negative feeling.
- More than half (53.3%) of the respondents agree that when they want somebody as their friend, they are able to go & start a talk.
- Nearly half (40%) of the respondents agree that they don't like discipline as it tries to make them to become like others

SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Studies clearly illustrate the increase in aggressiveness, suicidal cases, drug use, and depressive cases among adolescents. This gives us the clear image of the struggle that adolescents go through, the problems they face. So providing an experience that would strengthen adolescents coping abilities to counter environmental stress and disadvantages with which they sometimes have to cope with while experiencing is an essential need. One best-practice model for contributing to the healthy development of adolescents is a life skills approach..

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