

KGBV Residential Programme of Girl Children: Effectiveness of Life Skill Training Programme on Well-being

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ABSTRACT

Cut throat competition is the hard reality and survival of the fittest is the mantra to live in this world. In this situation those persons, who can handle intrapersonal and interpersonal relations very well, they are successful. In this context, life skill education has become the essence to survive. Life skill education provides individual the strength, courage, and power to become resilient against the extremities of the world. From 1990s onwards WHO, UNICEF and other international organizations are working on it and able to identified ten psycho-social skills that an individual requires to survive. These skills are more relevant for children and adults belonging to marginalized and deprived sections of society as they are often being exploited either physically, sexually or mentally. It has been found out in researches that marginalized sections of society are most vulnerable to all kinds of exploitation and abuses. In this context, KGBV girls who belong to the most downtrodden sections of the society are being given training on life skill education. A research was carried out on two set of KGBV girls one who received training on life skill education from the master trainer (teachers) and other group who did not. A total of 240 students were taken as sample. A well being scale developed by Margaret Kern *et al.* called EPOCH was used in present research to see the effectiveness of the training programme. It was found out that group which received training on life skill education had significantly higher mean score in all the dimensions of EPOCH well being scale than those who didn't. This indicates life skill education training programme has positive impact on the well being of children.

Keywords: Life Skill education, Disadvantaged girls, well-being, KGBV, training

The traces of life skill education dates back to ancient Vedic times wherein emphasis of education was on realisation of innate potentialities which leads human beings to live a "healthy and fullness of life". The life skill mentioned at that time was in a way different to the existing life skill education. But in both the cases, healthy living of an individual is prioritized. The urgent need to provide life skill education especially to our young ones, adolescent and youth was outcome of the dramatic changes in the global economies, matched with technological transformations which are impacting the individuals in workplace and everyday life. To cope with this ever increasing challenge in the different facets of life it is indeed necessary that young generations are equipped with the necessary psycho-social skills so that one can manages the critical situations with

great strength, courage and wisdom. In modern time, life skill education was first introduced in 1979 by Botvin when he introduced a training programme for seventh to ninth grade children. He employed strategies which build students' abilities to refuse the offer of drugs through improved assertiveness, decision making, and critical thinking skills. Opportunities to learn and practice these "problem specific" skills are part of general Life Skills (source: <https://lifeskillsguru.wordpress.com/2015/04/09/origin-of-life-skills/>). Thereafter, in the year 1986 in the first ever international conference at Ottawa, life skill was associated with health. After that series of discussions and debates on health, hygiene, including promoting mental health life skills by WHO (1993). Later on UNICEF re-defined the life skills as an adaptive behaviour.

From 1994 onwards UN different agencies, are trying to provide life skill education in school children and among adolescent as it is the most vulnerable groups for social exploitation. As India has a huge population of adolescents in the age group 10-19 years who are in the formative years of development, therefore to develop as individual who are physically, mentally, emotionally healthy productive person, life skill training or education is introduced. Life skill education programme is initiated through incorporating in school curriculum and through training programme. The focus is to develop in adolescents such competencies which help them to meet future exigencies in a very normal manner. India's female population is almost half of the total population. Over the decades they are subjugated to various exploitation and injustices. The percentage is high among females who belong to marginalized groups. Education which acts as a tool of empowerment for any society presents a gloomy picture for these marginalized groups. It was found that only 53.7% of the total female population were literate. The percentage of girl's enrolment at primary level and upper primary level was even scarier. At primary stage gross enrolment ratio of girls is 85.9% but at upper primary stage it drops to 49.9%. In case of marginalized sections of society it was much lower. Census 2001 further reveals that almost 3073 blocks are educationally backward in India especially where rural female literacy rate is less than national average as well as the difference in literacy level between male and female is more than 20%. Government of India took a decisive decision to improve the level of education among girls especially at the upper primary stage and thus opened KGBV-residential schools in this EBB. These schools are mainly meant for girl children belonging to SC/ST/OBC/minorities and children belonging to below poverty line.

The main objective is to empower girls of these communities through education. Some of the ways other than education to empower these girls is through training programme related to self-defence, vocational training, health and hygiene as well as in training in life skills education as it will help them to cope up with immediate and future exigencies. UNICEF and other NGOs in association with State Resource Centres of MP government are regularly conducting training programmes on life skills for KGBV girls.

Justification of Study

Youth are the powerhouse of a nation. They are the resources which need to be nurtured so that, they become a socially and economically productive member of the society. India is one of those countries which have largest population of youth. As a human resource, if they can be harnessed optimally, India becomes a nation of knowledge power. But, it is also true that to transform into a knowledge power, their psycho-social competencies needs to be trained. But unfortunately, big chunks of youth group are living socio-economically marginalized lives in the nation. They are abused, sexually exploited, victims of human trafficking, alcoholic and drug abuse, violence, and serious physical and mental health problems. UN agencies as diverse as UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNDP and the UN Secretariat itself have initiated several intervention programmes to improve the situation of youths especially of underdeveloped and developing countries but improvement in situation is far from satisfactory. This is more so for the population of youth belonging to socially marginalized women and girls. Marginalized girls living in families impaired by drug and alcohol abuse, mental health problems, violence, and poverty may find it more difficult to access these resiliency factors and therefore are more vulnerable to risk-taking behaviour (Tuttle, Heider & David, 2006).

These girls are often subjected to various kinds' of abuses, vulnerable to sexual exploitation and are at disproportionately high risk of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS. They often lack access to reproductive health information, counselling, legal protection, and health and other services, so reaching them requires special planning, advocacy efforts, and supplemental resources (Reaching the Socially Marginalized Youth, 1999). Girls studying in residential programme of KGBV are also belongs to marginalized groups of society and majority of the students are first generation learners. Government started the KGBV scheme in 2004 for SC/ST/OBC/BPL and minorities girls not only intend to provide education to these girls but also empower them socially and because of it variety of training programmes related to physical, emotional, social aspects of human development are given so that in real life situations they can combat

it in an effective manner. They are given training in health and hygiene, training for skill development, training for coping against the sexual exploitation and violence including training for life skill. These training programmes help them to make them aware, sensitize and build their capacity against the odd situations of life so that they can deal and manage them effectively in a positive manner. Life skills are the abilities for adaptive behaviour. Life Skills Training helps students to realize the need to inculcate life skills education.

It also aimed to give an exposure to this kind of training, to strive for continuing their education. That will help students and individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday lives. Life Skill sessions including all the ten core life skills - Self-Awareness, Empathy, Effective Communication, Interpersonal Relationship, Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Coping with emotions & Managing stress are taught to children of KGBVs by trained teachers of KGBV on Life Skill Education to face all the challenges of life and cope up with any situation with positive thinking.

Objectives of the Research

Following were the objectives of the study

1. To find out the level of well-being among girls who received training on life skill.
2. To find out the level of wellbeing among girls who did not received training on life skill.
3. To compare the wellbeing between girls who undergone training and those do not undergone training on life skill.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: It was a quasi experimental study wherein experimental group was exposed to intensive life skill training of one week duration in the hostel whereas no such training was given to control group. The effect of treatment was measured through Wellbeing Scale in both the groups.

Sampling Technique & Sample: In Madhya Pradesh there were in all 207 type III KGBV schools functioning under special component of SSA programme. These residential schools accommodate girls in the age group of 10-14 years from nearby areas who were either dropped out from school

system without completing elementary education or never been enrolled in schools as boarders. Bhopal, Sehore and Dewas district had 8, 8 and 5 girls hostel. Out of it one girl hostel from each district was selected. Teachers teaching in KGBV schools were given intensive training by the master trainers so that they can provide training to students of KGBV. A random sample of 40 students each that had undergone training was selected from each hostel. In all a sample of 120 students who had undergone training on life skills were selected. An equal number of girls who had yet not undergone such training in the present academic session were also selected to compare the effect of life skill training programme. Thus, in all 240 students were selected for present investigation.

Tools Used: A culture free Well-Being scale developed by Margaret Kern *et al.* called EPOCH was used in present research. It is five factor model which measure well-being named Engagement, Perseverance, Optimism, Connectedness, and Happiness (EPOCH). According to this tool, the measure of these factors is defined as:

- ❑ *Engagement*, we mean the capacity to become absorbed in and focused on what one is doing, as well as involvement and interest in life activities and tasks. Very high levels of engagement have been referred to as “flow” (p. 5).
- ❑ *Perseverance* refers to the ability to pursue one’s goals to completion, even in the face of obstacles. It is a sub-facet of the Big Five personality trait of conscientiousness, and comprises the drive component of “grit” (p. 5).
- ❑ *Optimism* is characterized by hopefulness and confidence about the future, a tendency to take a favourable view of things, and an explanatory style marked by evaluating negative events as temporary, external, and specific to situation (p. 5).
- ❑ *Connectedness* refers to the sense that one has satisfying relationships with others, believing that one is cared for, loved, esteemed, and valued, and providing friendship or support to others (p. 5).
- ❑ *Happiness* is conceptualized as steady states of positive mood and feeling content with one life, rather than momentary emotion (p. 5).

There in all twenty items in the scale and all the items of the scale were positively worded. Each item was scored on 1 to 5 scale with Almost never = 1, Sometimes = 2, Often = 3, Very often = 4, and Almost always = 5. The items of factor Engagement are (5,7,11,12), Perseverance (2,9,17,19) Optimism (3,13,15,18) Connectedness (1,10,14,16) Happiness (4,6,8,20). Scores were computed as the average of the four items. To compute the mean score of each factor, arithmetic mean of 120 student's scores were calculated. The reliability of the scale was established on different samples either through test-retest measure and split half method and reliability varies from 0.80 to 0.95. This scale had high predictive and concurrent validity.

RESULTS

As there were five factors in the scale, therefore, mean score of each factor was computed for both the groups. The average score of each factor was shown in the Table 1 as well as through Fig. 1. From the Table 1 it is clearly evident that mean score of each of the factor of wellbeing scale for the sample of students undergone life skill training were much higher than the average score of the factor, which indicates that sampled girl students

who had undergone life skill training they had high engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness and happiness.

In case of sampled girl students who were not undergone training, out of the five factors three of them (perseverance, optimism, and happiness) mean score were marginally high than average score whereas in rest of the two factors(engagement and connectedness) the mean score was less than that of average score of these factors. It is also evident from the table that mean score of sampled students undergone life skill training was much higher than the mean score of sampled students that did not undergone life skill training. Therefore, it can arguably said that life skill training have much more positive effect on wellbeing of girls (experimental).

Further, whether the difference in the mean score in each of the factor was significant or not, to test t-test was calculated. It is evident from Table 2 that in all the five factors the t-test was found out to be significant between the sample of students' who had undergone life skill training and the sample who did not receive training. Thus, it can be concluded that life skill training have positive effects on the wellbeing of the girls.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Sampled Students on Different Factors of Well-being Scale

Sl. No.	Factors of EPOCH Scale	Average Score of Each Factor	Mean Score of Sampled Group Undergone Life Skill Training	Mean Score of Sampled Group do not Undergone Life Skill Training
1	Engagement	3	3.97	1.77
2	Perseverance	3	4.38	2.02
3	Optimism	3	4.72	2.17
4	Connectedness	3	4.24	1.87
5	Happiness	3	4.77	2.43

Table 2: Mean and S.D of Experimental and Control Group

Factors of EPOCH Scale	Mean of Sample Students (Life Skill Training) M_{ST}	Standard Deviation (SD_1)	Mean of Sample of Students (No Life Skill Training) M_{SNT}	S.D ₂	t-value
Engagement	3.97	0.77	1.77	0.91	20.2173*
Perseverance	4.38	0.86	2.02	0.99	19.7137*
Optimism	4.72	0.63	2.17	1.02	23.3009*
Connectedness	4.24	0.75	1.87	0.98	21.0382*
Happiness	4.77	0.84	2.43	1.06	18.9538*

*Significant at .01 level

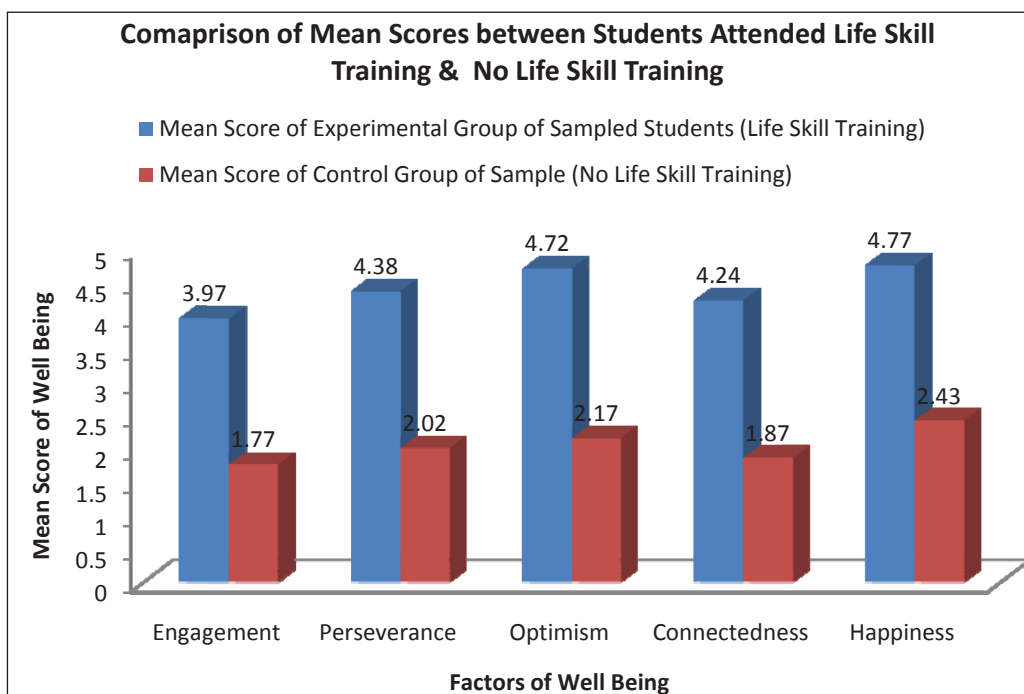


Fig. 1: Mean Scores Obtained by Experimental and Control Group in EPOCH Scale

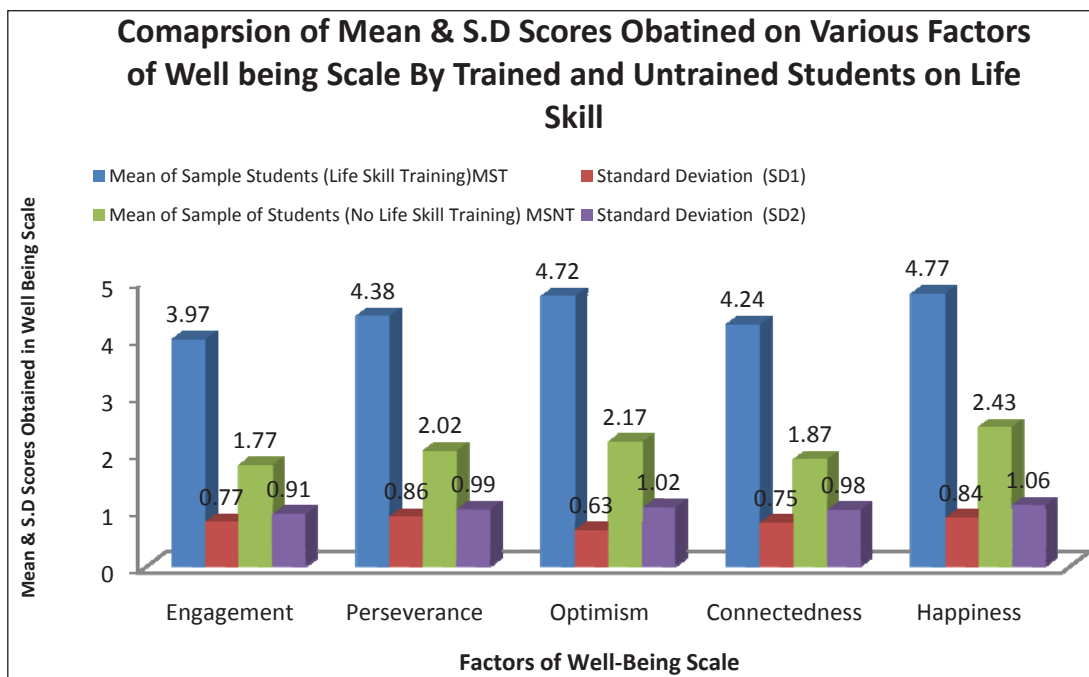


Fig. 2

CONCLUSION

Children coming in the KGBV schools are from socially and economically underprivileged families. Their struggle for life is immense. Most of the times girls from this section of society exploited and as a result they force to lead a life of fear, anxiety, depression, which leads to poor physical and mental

health. They are also subjected to various social taboos and even sometimes addicted to ill practices. KGBV schools not only provide them education but also equip them with life skills so that they can lead a healthy and productive life. As life skills are competencies as well as an individual's adaptive behaviour which help them in meeting future

exigencies. It develops in an individual the insights of knowing self as well as others, realizing one's innate potentialities, one's strength and weakness as well as to deal with daily life situations with more positive and pro-active approach. The training provided by the teachers on various skills of life help them to cope with future life in better manner. The present research has indicated that life skill training actually enhances individual well-being.

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