



**SKILL STREAMING: SOCIAL SKILLS INTERVENTION AMONG
RURAL ADOLESCENTS**

UGC – MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT

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FINAL REPORT

India is the youngest country in the world and by 2020 the average age of Indian population would be around 29 years (RGNIYD, 2017). Hence, preparing the youth segment of the population for the future challenges such as rapidly changing technology oriented job market and other aspects of the modern society becomes vital. In particular 71.5 % of youth population of India is living in rural area (Central Statistics Office, 2017). Therefore, improving rural adolescents' competencies such as Knowledge and Social Skills would be at most necessary, to make them fit into the higher education and job placement, since they share a large part of the youth population in India. Youth can contribute to the Nation in terms of workforce however, they need to be properly educated, motivated and developed (Lehmann, 2015).

Private organizations and Multi National Corporations are not providing enough job opportunities to the rural candidates since they have limited skills (Biswas, 2019). According to the Yorke (2006) adolescents should have a set of achievement motivations and skills such as leadership, communication, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that are required for education and employment. Social Skills deficit affects the individual's ability to integrate with the different aspects of the society (Ham, Whittenburg, & McDonough, 2016). The rural Adolescents' development is an important part of making them competent to meet the demand of the mainstream society (Vatankhah, 2013). Lack of Social Skills makes many rural youth to restrict themselves in village based jobs

(Anbuthambi & Chandrasekaran, 2017). Hence improving Social Skills would help the rural adolescents to grow beyond their limitations and compete with the adolescents from mainstream society. Majority of the underprivileged rural students found it difficult to excel in education, job, and entrepreneurship (Anbuthambi & Chandrasekaran, 2017). Providing training during the adolescent period of the individual would be effective because learned skills will help them when they enter into workforce. The social context of the rural adolescents provides no opportunity to acquire social skills since the parents and other members of the village are unable to facilitate necessary Social Skills development (Spence, 1995). Therefore providing learning experience that was not available in the village context and providing appropriate intervention would help the rural adolescents to acquire adequate Social Skills. Thus, the present study was aimed at examining the effectiveness of Social Skills Intervention in Self-Leadership, Communication Locus of Control, Intrapersonal Emotional Competency and Interpersonal Emotional Competency, Peer Relation Skills, Managing Aggression, Engagement in Schools, reducing Educational Stress, Friendship Making Skills and Emotional Intelligence among rural adolescents.

The Social Skills intervention was developed based on the application of the observation learning model of the social cognitive theory such as attention, retention, motivation, motor reproduction, and reinforcement. Social Skills Intervention consists of activities such as Modelling, Role play, Reinforcement and feedback. The modelling of the intervention helped them to pay their attention by observing the skilled behaviours and develop retention and motivation. On the other hand role-play activity helped the participants to reproduce the observed skills physically under the supervision of

facilitator. Further the feedback and reinforcement from the facilitator helped them to be motivated and make necessary changes in their behaviour. The Social Skills Intervention facilitated the participants to get exposure with new skills through observation and role play activities along with the feedback and reinforcement from the facilitator. According to Bandura (1986) guided instruction from others, verbal reinforcement and observing others behaviour effectively influence the cognitive development of the adolescents. Socially guided learning will encourage children to act self directionally for dealing intelligently with difficult situations in future (Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1978). Vygotsky(1978) believes that development is a lifelong process and social interaction is the major factor which predicts the individual's cognitive development. He called this process as "Zone of Proximal Development"and in this process potential development takes place as a result of adult guidance and collaboration with skilled peers. Therefore, the social cognitive theory based Social Skills Intervention was found to be appropriate to provide effective skill acquisition process among the rural adolescents.

The previous research studies showed that modelling, roleplay, feedback and reinforcement are effective techniques to develop various kinds of adolescents' skills, but most of the interventions contained any one of the technique or combinations of two techniques. However, the present study has developed social skills intervention by integrating all the four techniques such as modelling, roleplay, feedback and reinforcement together. The review of literature showed that different kinds of psychological interventions were used for suicidal ideation, substance abuse behaviour, bullying, schizophrenia, alcohol addiction, social anxiety disorder, depression, and stress of adolescent students. Further, the Review of Literature indicated that Social Cognitive theory based interventions have improved

the key abilities of the adolescents such as communication skill, happiness, academic performance, academic well being, critical thinking, attention and working memory.

Objectives

- To examine the efficacy of social cognitive theory based Social Skills Intervention programme on adolescents' social skills development and measure the effectiveness.
- To find out the effectiveness of social skills intervention in improving rural adolescents' self leadership, communication locus of control, intrapersonal emotional competency and interpersonal emotional competency.
- To measure the effectiveness of social skills intervention in enhancing rural adolescents' Peer relation skills, Aggression Management skills, engagement in school, educational stress coping skills, friendship making skills and emotional intelligence.

SingleGroup Before, After and Follow-up Experimental Research Design was used to examine the effectiveness of the Social Skills Intervention in enhancing adolescents Emotional Competencies and other Psycho Social Skills to equip their employability potential. The following tools were used in this study:

- Personal Information Sheet
- Revised Self Leadership Questionnaire [(RSLQ) Houghton & Neck, 2002]
- Communication Locus of Control Scale [(CLCS) Hamilton, 1991]

- Short Profile of Emotional Competency [(S-PEC) Mikolajczak, Brasseur&Hauwel, 2014]
- Adolescent Peer Relation Instrument [(APRI) Finger, Yeung, Craven & Parada, 2008]
- The Aggression Questionnaire [(AQ) Buss & Perry,1992]
- The Student Engagement in School Questionnaire [(SESQ) Hart, Steward &Jimerson, 2011]
- Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents [(ESSA) Sun, Dunn &Hou, 2011]
- McGill’s Friendship Questionnaire [(MFQ) Mendelson&Aboud, 2012]
- Emotional Intelligence Scale [(EIS) Hyde, Pethe&Dhar, 2007]

The sample of this study were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria of this study in order to include the suitable appropriate participants who represent the population of rural adolescent and exclude who did not meet the criteria. The 11th grade students from the Government Higher Secondary School, and V.R.T Girls’ Higher Secondary School, Anaimalai, Coimbatore, were selected to participate in the Before, After and follow up Experimental Research Project. Around 100 students who hailed from a typical village ‘Anaimalai’ area were selected for the study including 50 girls and 50 boys to serve as the sample of this study. The Purposive Sampling method was used to select the appropriate suitable sample. Anaimalai is a village that it is surrounded by the hills, located in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu state. Agriculture is the major resource for living, and people are doing agricultural related work and business. Students from below poverty line and lower middle class were studying in these schools to pursue their secondary, and higher secondary courses. Parents of these students were mostly uneducated and earning agricultural

based daily wages. Students of these schools have less exposure with modern cultural, social, educational and technological developments. Students from this cultural and geographical background served as rural adolescent participants of this study.

The present research study was carried out in Four Phases:

Phase I: Before Intervention: During the before Intervention, the set of questionnaires were administered to the participants and the facilitator gave instructions to the students. The duly filled questionnaires were collected from all the participants.

Phase II: Intervention Phase: During the Intervention phase, the following four intervention activities such as i) Video Modeling, ii) Roleplay, iii) Feedback Session and iv) Reinforcement techniques were administered sequentially one after the other to the experimental group of the rural adolescents. The modelling was done in one full session and role play, feedback and reinforcement took place in one single session. After the role play the students got the feedback and reinforcement from the facilitator in order to understand what they have done and sensitized accordingly.

Modelling: The videos pertaining to the social skills were shown to the participants as model behaviour. Through the video model, the participants got opportunity to observe the behaviour of skilled individuals who used their Social Skills in different kinds of social settings.

Role Play: After the modelling session, the role play activities were carried out and the major objective of the role play was performing like the model that was shown in the video and try repeating similar activities of the model.

Feedback: After the roleplay sessions, feedback was given to the students about their performance in Role play. The feedback session emphasized the ways in which the

required activities are reproduced during role play and the type of changes required in the real life situation. The facilitators, peer group members and the audience provided individual feedback to all the participants.

Reinforcement: The participants who performed the roleplay received the reinforcements from the facilitator as well as from the audience in order to encourage participants to behave in similar way in real life situations too.

Phase III After Intervention Assessment: After the successful completion of the Social Skill Intervention among the experimental group of the participants, the same set of the questionnaires were administered to the participants once again for the purpose of comparing the difference between before and after the administration of Social Skill Intervention.

Phase IV Follow-up Phase: In the follow-up assessment was carried out after six months of the intervention, in this assessment the participants were once again administered the same set of questionnaires which were used during before-test and after intervention.

Analysis of Data: The appropriate statistical analysis such as Descriptive Statistics, ANOVA, and Post-hoc tests were used to test the proposed hypotheses and also to draw meaningful inferences.

Key Findings

The demographic details of the participants have shown that all the participants tend to have a more disadvantaged socioeconomic condition with reference to income, education of the parents, and living place. It showed that most of their parents were uneducated and earn just meager income.

Further, the research results revealed that the implementation of the Social Skills Intervention tend to increase the participants' abilities significantly with reference to their Self Leadership Skills enabling them to evaluate their own personal beliefs and assumption which could likely change their dysfunctional beliefs. These results are in accordance with the findings of Grasten (2016) which highlighted that through a process of self analysis, individuals may identify, confront, and replace dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions with more rational beliefs. Similarly, the Communication Skills was found to have a significant increase after the intervention. Further, the Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Emotional Competency, as well as Peer Relation Skills also improved after the implementation of the Social Skills Intervention. The immediate feedback and group discussions improved the students' communication skills (Lin, 2013). Interpersonal training was more effective, as the participants were adolescents than adults (Bernecker, Coyne, Constantino&Ravitz., 2017). Lau and Wang (2013) advocate that focus group discussion and feedback from the expert will help the students to develop their group conversation skills. Further, the results revealed that the participants' ability to manage Aggression, Emotion and Stress has improved significantly after the Social Skills Intervention. Their engagement in school and friendship making skills has also improved significantly. Observing one's own self from others perspective will also help the individual to identify the problem which he/she is facing and it will also help to find the effective solution (Pattakos&Dundon, 2017).

The results illustrated that there is an utmost necessity to adopt the Social Skills Intervention technique in the school curriculum for the development of the disadvantaged rural adolescents in their school environment. Similarly, School Psychologist could also

use the Social Skills Interventions for the rural students for those who were hailing from weaker socio economic background. The Government and other Agencies working on Rural Adolescents' Development could also use the Social Skills Intervention as part of their programme. Therefore, considering and implementing the following specific recommendations would help to develop effective strategy for rural adolescents' development. The following comprehensive recommendations ranging from school curriculum upgrade to National level school education policy and to NGOs were suggested.

Recommendations

- The Students who underwent Social Skills Intervention can serve as peer educators by assisting other students in school as well as visiting nearby schools to conduct Social Skills Intervention activities with new participants. The students who completed the social skills intervention should be considered as a Brand Ambassador of Social Skills Intervention. The teachers who facilitated social skills intervention can also visit schools along with the peer educators to assist the teachers of nearby schools in conducting social skills intervention. Through this process inter school exchange programme can be initiated to cover all the rural schools enabling the students to get adequate exposure of Social Skills to gain confidence while facing the societal demands by experiencing the Social Skills Intervention.
- A facilitators' community can be developed for each educational district. The community should consist of School Psychologists, Teachers, and Brand Ambassadors of Social Skills Intervention. Regular meeting can be conducted for facilitators' community in order to discuss and assess the progress of social skills intervention among the schools in particular educational districts. This community

would help to update the social skills intervention based on new needs and maintain the quality of the social skills intervention.

- In order to make students familiar with people from different ethnic and socio economic background, National level inter school network may be developed. In this network students should visit school students in other states of India and also students from north India can visit the students in Tamil Nadu and vice versa. During the visit joint social skill intervention can be conducted, therefore rural students would get opportunity to learn new skills from brand ambassadors from different socio cultural backgrounds.
- Government can include Social Skills Intervention as part of curriculum of the schools in order to ease the process of peer ambassador programme, inter school exchange programme, and National level inter school programme. If the curriculum is updated with the inclusion of Social Skills Intervention, then the above mentioned programmes can also get fixed number of hours and suitable infrastructure in all the schools.
- Government can also include Social Skills Intervention strategy in teachers training and educational studies as curriculum in order to improve awareness and equip the concerned teachers working in the Government Schools. Teachers can be trained through training for trainers programme to learn to provide explanation about modelling videos and narrating stories to the students, and also the ways in which teachers can organize and conduct role play sessions by forming groups and providing necessary feedback and reinforcement.

- The Social Skills Intervention can be included in the Skill India programme conducted by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). Social Skills intervention can be provided as a mandatory to the rural adolescent participants who enroll in different kinds of training programme in Skill India programme. This inclusive approach will make the programme more beneficial as the rural participants can gain social skills as well as technical skills that would make them competent to work in developed organizations.
- Industries and Organizations should invite rural school students to visit their workplace as a part of Corporate Social Responsibility programme. Through this Industry Visit Programme (IVP), students can observe the way people are interacting, conducting, meeting, and working etc. This visit and exposure will serve as a model to the rural adolescents. Further, the Social Skills Intervention programme can be sponsored by organizations to be conducted in rural students.
- The services of School Psychologists can be used to impart Social Skills Intervention among students with skill deficiency. School Psychologist can identify the students who are in need of social skills intervention and continuously provide the modelling, role play, feedback and reinforcement to the concerned students.
- NGOs working on rural youth development can use the Social Skills Intervention. Particularly those NGOs who are working with tribal and other community have little access to the mainstream society. Initially, the adolescent students of those communities need to be identified and formed as a group, and then they can be facilitated with the Social Skills Intervention. This process may help the tribal

adolescents to gain competency to meet the demand of higher studies and job placement in different kinds of organizations.

The findings and recommendations of the present study can contribute to accelerate the skill development drive of Government of India. In the process of developing and implementing the new plans and policies relating to youth development, the exposure of these interventions may be more beneficial to the rural adolescents if the recommendations of this study are considered. This project may contribute its part in the youth development policies of Government and other agencies.