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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON LIFE SKILLS IN RELATION TO THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF TRIBAL CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

The current changes replaces the traditional societies and resulting in different behavior and life styles as compared to previous days. Even though the tribes are living away from the so called civilized society their lives are also subjected to various changes. They are going away from their own culture but not completely merged with the outer society. This situation makes their lives very tough and pathetic. Today the socio-economic condition of Kerala is found to be better, but it doesn't reflect in the tribal life. These people are not enough skilled to challenge with the current needs. In this article the researcher attempted to study the life skills found among the tribal adolescent in relation to their academic performance. The results were very significant; these children possess less life skills and score comparatively less percentage of academic scores. It is also understood from the study that the life skills and academic achievement are positively correlated.

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INTRODUCTION

As days passes the complexity of life is increasing. The needs and challenges of life are being transformed from time to time. The class room education alone does not contribute completely to solve these problems; it needs comprehensive and multi-strategic approaches to empower the psychosocial competency of individuals. In particular where health problems are related with behavior or where there is inability to react effectively with challenges of life the enrichment of psychosocial competence could make an important contribution. In to days world everything is being in fingertip but it is always a question that whether people are well equipped to deal with the social transition. People are needed to be very much skilled to cope up with these transitions.

Life skills

Life skills are those psycho-social skills which strengthen individuals themselves to deal with the demands of life. Life skill development is a natural process start when the child is born but it often needs intervention to boost the skill development. The ways individual grow, learn, and behave provide the basic steps for life skill development. Life skills enable individuals to identify their own strength and weakness so that to keep a steady personality. WHO, (1997) defines that life skills are "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior

that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of every-day life". UNESCO also explains that life skill is "a behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: Knowledge, attitude and skills". Nair (2012), point out that life skills are of two types such as generic life skills (required for the overall development of an individual) and problem specific life skills (focus particular problems). The WHO has recommended ten core life skills needed for individuals which come under generic life skill category. They are self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem Solving, effective communication, interpersonal relationship, coping with stress and coping with emotions. These skills are inter related each other and works together for the holistic development of individuals.

Adolescence is usually called as the period of stress and storms but this the most productive span of life due to the fast functioning physical, intellectual development. However it is very dreadful that only a few percentage utilizes their strength and capabilities in a productive way because of lack of motivation and proper guidance. Even though the tribes are living away from so called civilized society the globalized changes reflects in their life too not in a profitable way but in an undesirable mode. At present the indicators of socio-economic development is high in Kerala but it doesn't reflect in tribal life. Their life is in the transforming state losing their identity. There are a lot of issues that the tribal adolescents face

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today, it can be poor academic standard, sexual abuse, alcohol and drug addiction, obsession towards pornographic sites, violence etc. these all issues make them unable to apply their complete potential. These tribal youth often lacks a real role model from their community. Here the importance of life skills emanates. Life skills are positively correlated with the psycho-social well-being of adolescents (LenkaSubhasmitha and Misra Santa,2011). Hence the researcher would like to analyze the life skills among the tribal adolescents.

Objectives

- To study the socio-economic status of the respondents
- To understand the academic status of the respondents.
- To assess the life skills found among the respondents.
- To assess the relationship between life skills and academic performance of the students.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted descriptive methodology. Collected 80 tribal students from different schools of Kannur district Kerala. Samples were collected by proportionate random sampling technique from the VIIIth, IXth and Xth standard. The tools administered are Life Skills Assessment tool and self- prepared questionnaire for collecting socio-demographic details. The Life Skill assessment tool was constructed by the Rajive Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development and which has hundred questions with ten dimensions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

With regard to the socio demographic characteristics the findings shows that 52.5% of the respondents are male and the rest of 47.5% are female. 61.3% of the respondents belongs to the 12-14 age group and 31.8% belongs to the 15-18 age group. With regard to their domicile except one the 79 respondents live in rural areas. Majority (78.8%) of the respondents belong to Karimbala tribal community, 16.3% belongs to Mavila community and the rest 5% belongs to Paniya community. It is understood that a vast majority (93.8%) is living in nuclear family that is the traditional joint family system of tribal culture has been broken to nuclear families.

It is satisfactory to see that only 2.5% of mothers and 6.3% of fathers are found illiterate while compared to the previous statistics. Regarding their economic status 6.3% only comes above poverty line. 80% of fathers and 54.7% of mothers are coolie workers. 23.8% says that their mothers are house wives and their father’s income is enough to run the families. Only 5% of the fathers and 1.3% of the mothers are in government service. It shows that today’s also the majority is not being involved in the sector of public administration and they are in a pathetic economic condition.

Many of the literature point out that the tribal culture is dependent on alcohol. But here 67.5% expresses that their fathers are not alcohol dependent. It can be considered as an advanced change of tribal transfusion. A less percentage (3.8%) of mothers are still alcohol dependent.

While considering the academic environment; 50% of the students reveal that they have undergone personality development sessions at schools conducted by the experts or school counsellors. It is appreciable that the school counsellors have been appointed at all the Government Higher Secondary schools and most of the aided Higher Secondary schools by the state government on honorarium basis.

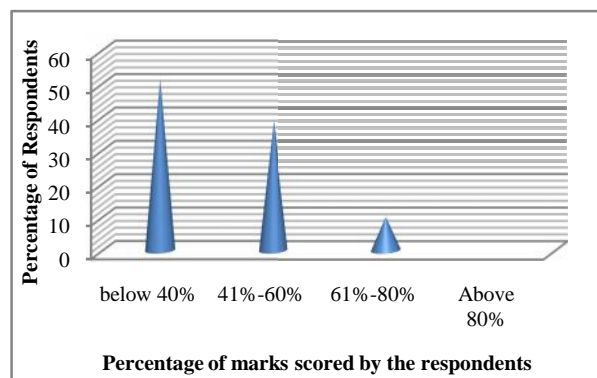


Diagram 1 Percentage of academic score achieved by the respondents

The above diagram reveals a pitiable result that 51.3% of the students scored below 40 percentage in their last exam. 38.8% shows marks (41-60) percent and a few (10%) only scored more than 80 percentages of marks. No student scored marks more than 80%. Even though the government provides lots of facilities for the educational progress the tribal students are far away from the quality education.

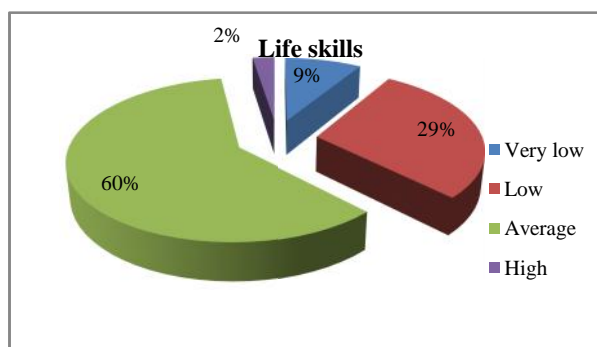


Diagram 2 Life skills possessed by the respondents

The diagram indicates that the life skills found among the tribal adolescents. More than half of the respondents possess average life skills and only a few (2%) have high life skills. It is very dreadful that no tribal students come under the category of very high life skills. Tribes are living in poor socio-economic condition; it echoes in their life skills too.

Socio-demographic correlates of academic scores.

The t test result shows that type of family and personality development classes attended by the students have no influence on their academic score. But there is a significant difference in the academic score with regard to the gender (t= 3.853, P<.01) and drinking habit of father (t=3.370, P<.01). While checking the score it is clear that girls are more interested in studies and pursuing high scores in exams. The result also reflects the impact of alcohol consumption of fathers among children. The

test is significant at 1% level; it means that there is a big difference in the academic scores of children with regard to their father's drinking habit. The children of those alcohol consuming fathers score lesser percentage than the other.

Table 1 Socio-demographic correlates of academic scores

Variables	Mean of academic scores	SD	Statistical inference
Sex			t = 3.853
Male	36.95	13.025	P<0.01
Female	47.61	11.556	Significant
Drinking habit of father			t = 3.370
Yes	35	11.08	P<0.01
No	45.72	13.12	Significant
Birth order			f = 3.235
First borne	38.13	12.51	P<0.05
Second borne	45.10	13.45	Significant
Last borne	45.95	13.50	Significant
Father's Education			f = 3.830
Primary	40.78	13.48	P<0.05
Secondary	46.30	12.18	Significant
Above secondary	59.33	11.50	Significant
No education	32.25	6.44	Significant
Father's occupation			f = 3.003
Government job	29.25	21.25	P<0.05
Private job	58.50	16.26	Significant
Daily wage	43.33	12.06	Significant
Self employed	40.00	18.11	Significant

It is also understood from the study that there is no significant difference in their academic score with respect to standard of studying, caste, mother's education and occupation. But the birth order of children (f=3.235, P<.05), education (f=3.830, P<.05) and occupation of father(f=3.003, P<.05) have significant impact on the percentage of student's marks. That is where the educational status of father is high there the children are also good in studies. The last borne children are found to score comparatively good marks in exams.

Socio demographic correlates of Life skills

Table No 2 Relationship between caste and Life skills

Caste	Mean of life skills	SD	Statistical inference
Karimpala	392.34	24.03	F=3.173
Mavila	324.79	24.68	P<.05
paniya	324.47	21.66	Significant

Result explains that socio-demographic variables such as caste, type of family, standard of studying, birth order, father's education and occupation, mother's education and occupation have no impact on the life skills. Statistical analysis shows no significant difference in life skills with respect to the above mentioned variables. But there is significant difference in life skills according to the community in which they belonged (f=3.173, P<.05). Among the three groups Karimbala children shows high life skills than others.

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Table 3 Correlation between Academic percentage and Life skills

Variables	Correlation value	Sig.(2-tailed)
Life skills		
Academic percentage	.212**	.000

Table indicates that there is a 0.01 level significant positive correlation exists between life skills and academic achievement percentage. That is those who possess high life skills, score high marks in exams.

CONCLUSION

The above discussions reveal that tribes are in the transition state from the traditional habits and habitats. Slowly they merge up with the so called civilized society. The transition influences both significantly and adversely. Alcohol dependency in both male and female is found to be reduced. It is very considerable in such a situation where the alcoholic dependency of father is influencing the student's academic achievement. They also come out from their traditional joint family system to nuclear family system. It is clear from the study that the poor standard of living reflects in their academic achievement and life skills. Majority of the students score less percentage of marks and also they possess low life skills. There are different factors which influence on life skills and academic achievement. It can be concluded from the study that life skills and academic achievements are interdependent and interrelated. Hence it is very necessary to makes changes in the policy level as well as implementing level to boost up the life skills so that the holistic development of tribal students can be achieved.

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