



Understanding Life Skills among Adolescent Girl Students of Howrah Region: Importance in Covid 19 Situation

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Abstract- Life Skills are regarded as one's ability to behave positively and help people to translate the attitudes and knowledge into proper action. In adolescent period the teenagers are going through several crises and dwindle between right and wrong so proper Life Skills are there to show them to which way to go. In present Covid 19 situation when the whole world is contained in a room of isolation proper Life Skills can guide them to be adaptive. This study was done to see the presence of Life Skills among the adolescent girls of Howrah region and it proved that in some areas of Interpersonal communication Skill, Decision Making and Problem Solving the urban adolescent girls surpassed the rural ones' in the area of the awareness of Life Skills. Adolescent girls who read in private sectors were more aware of Life Skills than the teenage girls reading at government sectors. Teen Girls who were attached to co-curricular activities developed higher level of Life Skills than the ones' who were not. This paper also discussed about the importance of the presence of the Life Skills in the Covid 19 situation and how the knowledge would help a person to be adaptive with this problematic situation.

Keywords- Life Skills, Adolescent Girl Students, Howrah Region, Covid 19 Situation

INTRODUCTION:

With the newly evolved Scientific Development of human civilization, many controversies in the daily existence of human beings start disturbing the balanced life in this modern society. From eight to eighty the knowledge of 'To Live and Let Live' becomes one of the most important instruments for peaceful co-existence. In this respect Life Skills comes to the forefront. Also termed as 'Psycho-social Competency' Life Skills are regarded as 'abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable human to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life'. To be an active involved citizen Life Skill Education should be started from childhood first from their parents and secondly the school has to take the responsibility to nurture the students in Life Skill Training. Adolescent age is considered to be the most problematic age in human life and the physical and mental changes the teens go through this period make a huge change in their life. Hundreds and thousands of queries surround a teenage girl like a fog and she is in search of possible answers. Situation changes with the passage of time but in this particular period knowledge of Life Skills within a person can lead one to become patient, creative and thoughtful over the situation where without being impulsive in a particular matter she wants to apprehend the situation by her own. Amidst the present scenario of Covid 19 pandemic this skills can help a lot to become stress free and also to become innovative though being surrounded in the four walls of a house.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The problem of the following study was stated below-

Understanding Life Skills among Adolescent Girl Students of Howrah Region and its Importance in Covid19 Situation.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To find out the level of awareness of Life Skill among the Urban and Rural adolescents Girl students.
2. To analyse the amount of consciousness of Life Skills among the adolescent girl students reading in Government and Private sector.
3. To identify the degree of difference of understanding the Life Skills between the adolescent girls' students engaged in Co-curricular activities and those who were not.
4. To signify the necessity of Life Skills among adolescent girls' students in Covid 19 situation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. Would there have been any difference in the level of awareness of Life Skill between the rural and urban adolescent girls' students?
2. Would there have been any difference in the awareness level of Life Skills in the adolescent girls reading in Private and Government sector?
3. Would the adolescent girls' students associated with co-curricular activities have developed higher degree of understanding life skills than the adolescent girls' who would have been devoid of such association?
4. What would be the importance of the presence of life skills among adolescent girl students in Covid 19 situation?

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS:***Life Skills-***

World Health Organization defined Life Skills as "The abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable an individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday." Life Skills according to WHO are as follows-

- i) Decision Making
- ii) Problem Solving
- iii) Creative Thinking
- iv) Critical Thinking
- v) Effective Communication
- vi) Interpersonal Relationship Skills
- vii) Self- awareness
- viii) Empathy
- ix) Coping with Emotions
- x) Coping with Stress

Adolescent Girl Students-

Adolescence is defined as the transformational phase of growth as well as development between the periods of childhood to adulthood. WHO declares that an Adolescent is regarded as a person between the ages of 10-19. Here adolescent girl students refers to the girl students of high schools average age (16-18) years.

Howrah Region-

As a district of West Bengal of Eastern India, Howrah is regarded as a highly urbanized sector. Located on the Western bank of river Hooghly this metropolitan city plays a very important role in the transportation system of West Bengal.

Covid 19 Situation-

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary 'A mild to severe respiratory illness that is caused by a corona virus (Severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 of the genus Betacoronavirus), is transmitted chiefly by contact with infectious material (such as respiratory droplets) or with objects or surfaces contaminated by the causative virus, and is characterized especially by fever, cough and shortness of breath and may progress to pneumonia.' Coming from the city of Wuhan of China this virus has created havoc at present in India and thus physical distance is regarded as one of the most important criteria of safe survival.

DELIMITATIONS:

1. This study was done only with the adolescent girls' students.
2. This paper was restricted only in the area of Howrah.
3. This paper was conducted only to assess the level of awareness of Life Skills.
4. This study can be done in more elaborate scale with more samples.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Srikala & Kishore (2010) discussed in their article about the usage of Life Skill Education in school curriculum and how this in turn could help in developing Mental Health. Aparna & Rakhee (2011) described in their research about the importance of various Life Skills and how they were to be imparted among adolescents through Curriculum. Dinakaran & Gabriel (2014) in their study examined about the presence of Life Skills among the adolescent girls of Kemp's Town at Trichirappalli and declared that nearly 50% to 60% teenage girls had behavioral as well as decision making skill. Pujar et. al.(2014) described in their experimental research how the skills of Stress Management, Problem Solving and behavioral issues of a adolescent girl developed with the intervention of Life Skill Education. Parvathy & Pillai (2015) described in their experimental study about the significant effects of Life Skill Education Programme on the Teenage girls of the rural schools of Karungapilly, Kerala. Shwetha (2015) made an experimental research to study the effect of Life Skill Training Program on stress management and emotional maturity of the adolescents and the experimental group showed the positive impact of this training. Joseph & Thomas (2017) made an experimental research with 25 Devadasi teenage girls of Karnataka and displayed the effective programme of Life Skills on them. This study actually wanted to focalise the necessity of developing 'Tailor made Life Skill Programme' for 'girls at risk and also for vulnerable groups. Prajapati. Et. al. (2017) wrote in their paper about the significance of Life Skills in an adolescent's life. Life Skill education played an important Part in solving the adolescent issues and concerns. Bandela & Chandra Sekhar (2019) discussed about the need of Life Skill Education in the development of self-effectiveness. Heath (2020) in her article described why Adaptability an important skill learnt by Life Skill Training became more and more significant in adjustment with pandemic situation and how the uncertainty and trauma could be minimized through this coping strategy. Hooten (2020) in the article described about the need of Life Skill Education for high schools and college students to gain the skill of resiliency. Kumar (2020) in his article criticized the politicians for the lower level of awareness of Life Skills that could turn them into taking troublesome decisions in Covid 19 situation. McKeever (2020) in an article described about five necessary life lessons which could be taught to kids while in home isolation. Singh (2020) in his article discussed about how the parents could teach their children the necessary Life Skills in Covid 19 lockdown. Vachani (2020) in article in the Indian Express described the Pandemic situation of Covid 19 as the most important time to teach the kids Life Skills at home to cope up with the emergency situation.

METHODOLOGY:

This study was a Descriptive Survey and was done by Mixed Method. (Qualitative and Quantitative both).

VARIABLES:

Awareness about Life Skill among the Adolescent Girl students was regarded as Dependent Variable and the areas, gender and location were regarded as Independent Variables.

POPULATION:

The adolescent girl students of Howrah region were taken as Population.

SAMPLE:

90 adolescent girl students (average 16-18 years of age) from 6 schools were taken by Simple Random Sampling technique. Their socio-economic status was checked by Modified Kuppaswamy socioeconomic Scale updated in 2020 by S. Saleem.

DESIGN:

A questionnaire consisting of 50 questions in five point Likert Scale and 20 open ended questions of Interview in relation to the 10 Life Skills administered by WHO was given online to all the samples and their answers were represented through bar diagrams describing their awareness about various life skills and after that the importance of those Life Skills in Such Covid 19 situation were discussed. Here Complementary Life Skills can be paired to reveal 5 main Life Skills “areas” as shown below-

Decision Making & Problem Solving	Creative Thinking & Critical Thinking	Communication & Interpersonal Relationships	Self-awareness & Empathy	Coping with Emotions & Coping with Stress
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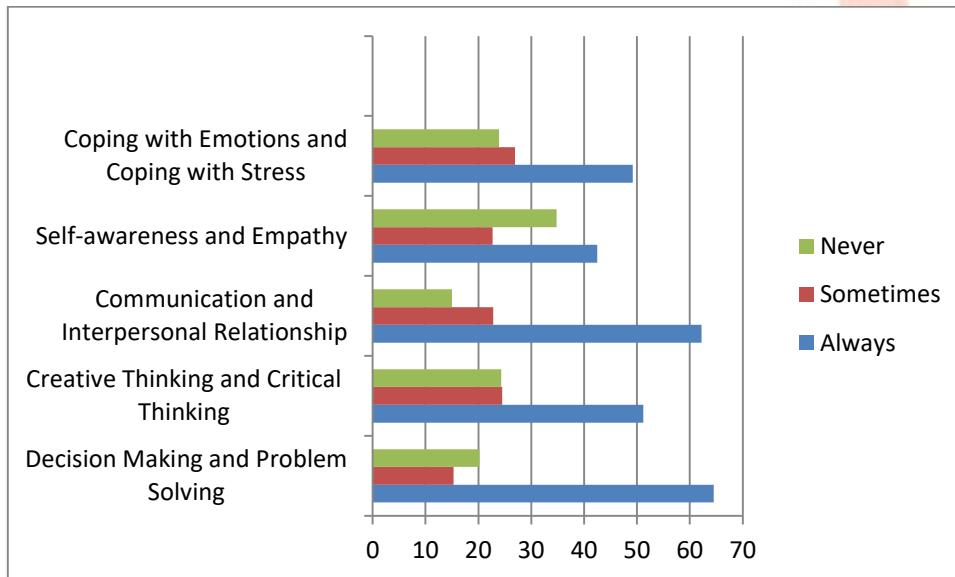
Source- Life Skills Education for Children and Adolescents in Schools; Programme on Mental Health World Health Organization, Geneva 1992

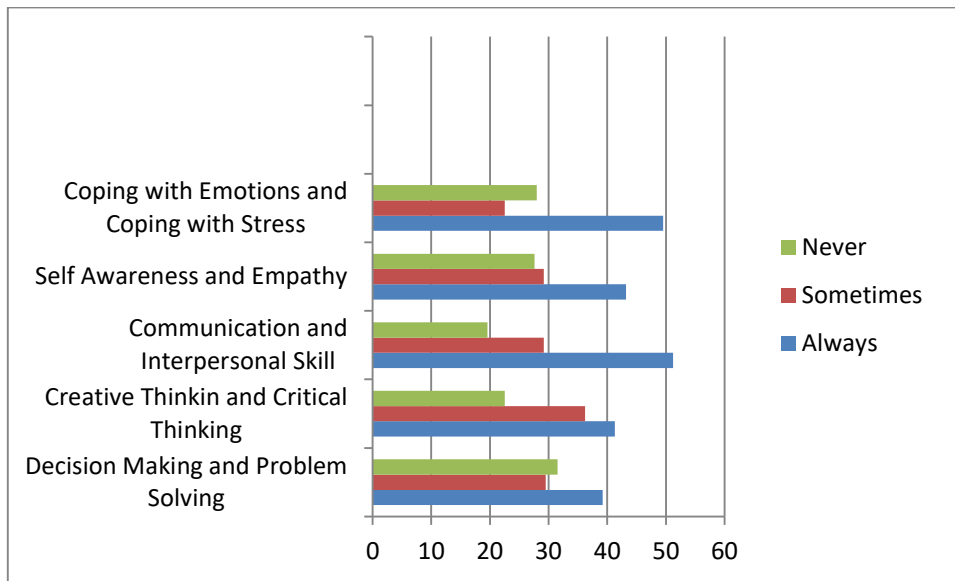
DESCRIPTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS:

Research Question-1

Would there have been difference in the level of awareness of Life Skill between the rural and urban adolescent girls' students?

Result of Awareness Level of Life Skills among the Urban Adolescent Girl Students-

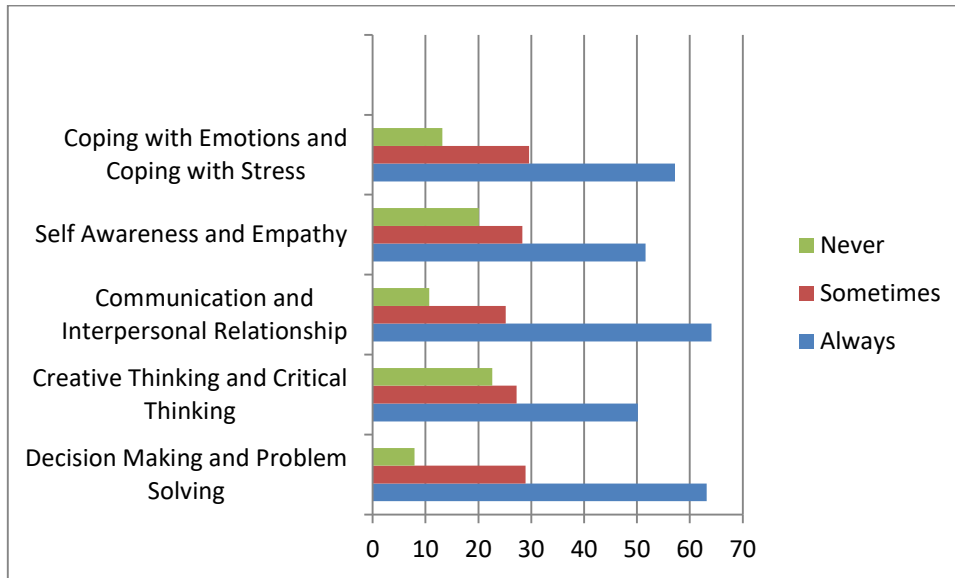
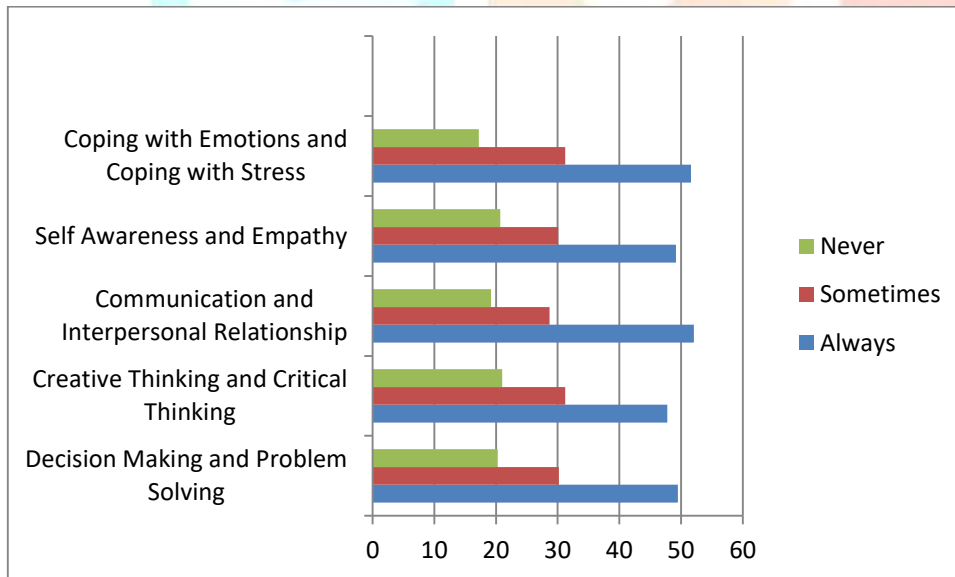


Result of Awareness Level of Life Skills among the Rural Adolescent Girl Students-**INTERPRETATION-**

45 adolescent girl students were taken as sample from each of the sectors. The above two diagrams showed that there were some differences of Awareness of Life Skills between adolescent urban and rural girl students. Near about 65% of urban adolescent girl students could take decision and could solve problem of their own where rural girl students lagged behind.(nearly 40%). In communication and Critical Thinking areas the urban adolescent girls surpassed the rural ones by near about 10% of greater level of awareness. But in the skills of Self Awareness and Empathy and also in Coping with Stress and Emotion both picturized near about same level of awareness that ranges between 40% to 50%. From the answers of the interview questionnaire given to them it could be summarized that the rural students in some cases trailed behind the urban adolescent students because of the urban social system, beliefs of their parents, age old notion of a girl's role in family, lack of awareness of modern education system and lack of consciousness of women empowerment. As the rural girls were not allowed to take part in any problem related to society and home, their thinking power, analyzing power and decision making power got a hard blow and they felt a particular type of inferiority complex due to their birth as a woman.

Research Question-2

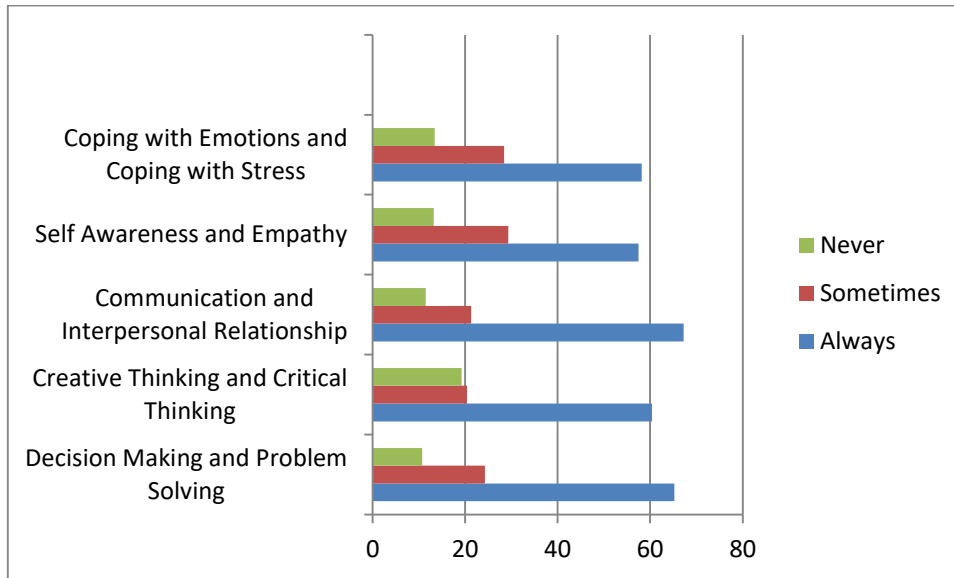
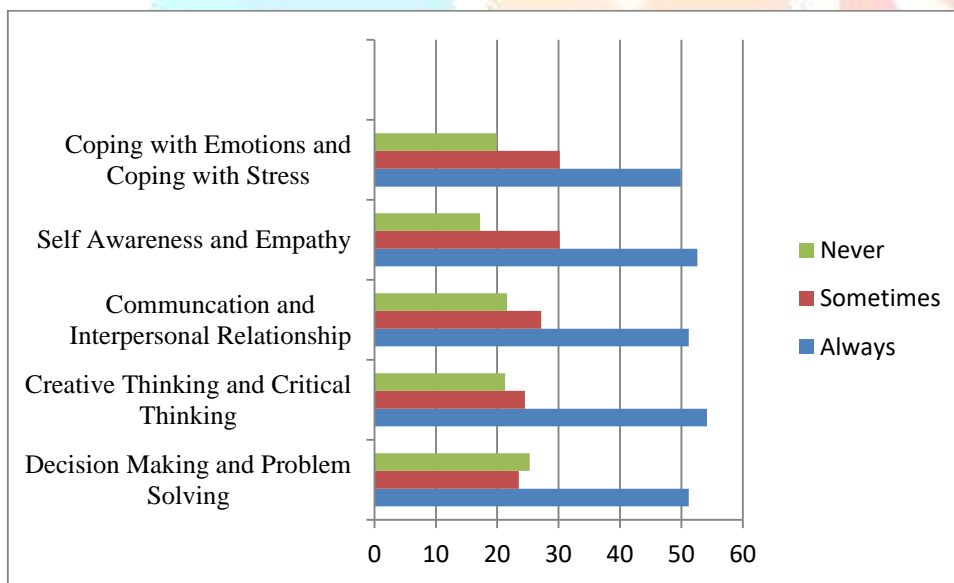
Would there have been any difference in the awareness level of Life Skills in the adolescent girls reading in Private and Government sector?

Result of Consciousness of Life Skills of Adolescent Girl Students Reading in Private Sectors-**Result of consciousness of Life Skills of adolescent girl students reading in government sectors-****INTERPRETATION-**

Here 51 teenage girl students were from government sectors and rests 39 were from private sectors. Both the two diagrams depicted that the adolescent girl students reading in Government sectors were not as aware of Life Skill as that of Private sectors' adolescent girl students. In the area of Critical and Creative Thinking and also in the area of Skill of Empathy the government school students resulted near about same way but in rest of the cases particularly in the areas of Decision Making, Problem Solving and interpersonal Communication Skills the Private Sector based adolescent girls revealed a much better level of understanding of Life Skills. In case of Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills the girls reading in private sector showed a greater level of awareness ranging from 63% to 65% where as the adolescent girls who were reading in Govt. sector released lower level of awareness ranging from 49% to 52%. From the interview questionnaire it could be concluded that this distinction might happen due to the curriculum difference, addition of co-curricular activities, Interdisciplinary Subjects, Teachers Readiness, Parental Attitude etc. As a student of private sector the adolescent girls generally got a broad field of educational approach where the use of Technology, Laboratory Innovations, Smart classrooms could make them smart enough to cope up with the new challenges of life while developing Life Skills.

Research question-3

Would the adolescent girls' students associated with Co-curricular activities have developed higher degree of understanding life skills than the adolescent girls' who would have been devoid of such association?

Results of the Adolescent Girls' Students Associated with Co-curricular Activities about the Degree of Understanding of the Life Skills-**Results of the Adolescent Girls' Students Associated with only Curricular Activities about the Degree of Understanding of the Life Skills-****INTERPRETATION-**

In this respect 50 teenage girls were associated with co-curricular activities and rests 40 were only depended on curricular study. Co-curricular Activities can be regarded as a mirror of the academic curriculum which can take place after the completion of the regular school hours or may be operated by any organizations outside. The adolescent girl students who were associated with any other co-curricular activities had reflected better level of understanding the Life Skills. More than 60% of teenage girls associated with co-curricular activities had higher level of Life Skills where as the teenage girls who went through only curricular syllabus in confined classroom resulted in near about 50% of awareness of Life Skills. In the area of Decision Making and Problem Solving (65%) and Communication and Interpersonal Relationship (67%) the adolescent girls engaged in co-curricular activities excelled the girls related with only curricular activities ranging from 49% to 55%. From the answers of them from the interview it could be analyzed that this might be happened because co-curricular activities demands patience, respect, cooperation, collaboration, good level of communication, democratic outlook, feelings of brotherhood etc.

Research Question-4**What would be the Importance of the Presence of Life Skills among Adolescent Girl Students in Covid 19 Situation?**

Life Skills are generally regarded as the skills which are needed for safe mental health. These quintessential values are not to be found in mugging up the textbooks or securing a higher level of marks in the exam. Rather it can be inculcated in collaboration in a person through interaction, communication, co-operation etc. Adolescent period of a human being's life is regarded as 'The Period of Storm.' Girls are not different. Sudden changes in physical structure and mental maturity throws an adolescent girl into an ocean of utter confusion. Indulging with hundreds of unsolved queries they start believing in group participation which can help them to identify their roles in society as an individual and make her understand that she is not the one encompassed with such unsolved questions rather it is a normal process of human life of going through the transition. This total concept generally gets its shape in schools, societal organizations, groups etc. But now the situation has become topsy turvy with the upheaval of corona virus where maintaining a physical boundary becomes the key of sound health. Capturing in a tight fence of home for proper education of heart and the mind the importance of Life Skill Education has come to the forefront. Some necessities of Life Skill Education in Covid 19 Situation are as follows-

i) To be blessed with Adaptability-

Adaptability refers to the skills of creativity and flexibility in front of a new situation. In the face of this new Covid 19 problem the Skill of Problem Solving and Decision Making can develop their skill to embrace change in a new situation without harming the mental health.

ii) To Move forward and Recognize Benefits-

In the worldwide lockdown condition when we have started to live in discomfort. Stress prevails almost everywhere. Proper life skill education can lead one to move forward and finding out the possible benefits from the virtual world of comfort.

iii) Engaging Oneself in Healthy Coping and Indulge in Positive Interventions-

Life Skills teach us how to cope with stress or adverse emotions .Lockdown can deny walking but it can open up a great vistas of works and innovativeness which cannot be possible in other time due to tight schedule of study.

iv) Resiliency Skills-

Proper Life skill education can make oneself free of stress and worry and thus the power of coping can bring out of her the latent talents that are suppressed due to the hard time schedule of day to day work.

v) A Closure Look at Finances and Money Managements-

Due to the continuous closure of the various organizations job market starts faltering. So spending money uselessly can lead one up to a great problem. So an adolescent girl who can be attracted by the new gadgets and goods can learn to hold herself back with the proper education of Life Skills and thus coped with the adverse situation.

vi) Optimistic Thinking Pattern-

When the entire world has plunged into the ocean of pessimism, joblessness, poverty, death and despair a person with proper life skills can direct his thinking pattern in an optimistic way to spray a ray of hope in the midst of a vacuum.

vii) Time Management-

Lockdown in a country in 21st century does not denote lockdown in a person's life rather it's a time to rediscover oneself, inner potentialities, own creativity in different activities. So to get absorbed in such activities time management becomes a great issue of concern. Management Skills learnt by an adolescent girl as well as a boy can be a greater form of advantage.

viii) Reading to have Fun-

Home quarantine can lead oneself towards the development of reading in a constructive way where bookish knowledge will get association of various e-books and through online conversation and thus the adolescent need of peer group can also be propagated.

ix) To Subsist Emotional Outburst-

Barricaded continuously within the four wall teens get exhausted and in a want of looking at the familiar faces peers and with whom they can share their feelings. Thus this emotional disruption can lead her to a state of emotional disequilibrium. Proper Life Skill Education can help her to channelize her emotions to a proper way of equilibrium.

x) Feeling Compassionate to Others-

Proper Life Skills can teach one to feel compassion for others. Leaving the ego or selfishness a teen can feel empathy for others who belong to a distressed condition in such a situation. Thus her self-identity can be fulfilled as well as the immense energy within a teenager can pave its way to a positive ground.

xi) A Key for Feeling Happy-

Happiness regarded as a key to success. A person full of happiness would never be agonized. He/she can bear every situation cheerfully. As being a future wife and mother this patience and happiness help a teenage girl to grow with maturity.

xii) To Become Creative-

Creativity needs the lessons of Life Skills to snatch out the best within her and to re-shape it by utilizing these unwanted holidays.

FINDINGS:

1. Urban girl students showed a greater level of awareness of Life Skills than the rural ones.
2. In case of Empathy and Coping with Stress rural adolescent girls had more or less same level of awareness as of the urban adolescent girls.
3. Adolescent girls reading in Private sector had much higher level of consciousness of Life Skills than the adolescent girls reading in Government Sector.
4. In the case of Decision Making, Problem Solving, Communication and Interpersonal Skill adolescent girls reading in Private Sector were much more progressive than the adolescent girls of Government Sector.
5. Adolescent girls who were engaged in Co-curricular activities showed greater level of understanding of Life Skills than teenage girls who were not.
6. Co-curricular activities played a great role in developing Life Skills among the teenage girls.
7. Feelings of togetherness, belongingness, collaboration, continuous conversation with others, determination associated with co-curricular activities could lead the adolescent girls towards the achievement of Life Skills.
8. Newly enacted syllabus of the private sectors (high schools/colleges), expertise of the teachers, rules and regulations of schools and last but not the least the importance given to the co-curricular activities could play a great part in the development of Life Skills among the teenage girl students.
9. Life Skills are very much important in today's pandemic situation to cope up with the arising difficulties and to arrive at every solution independently, thoughtfully and fruitfully.
10. Life Skills are very much effective in managing stress of the teenage girls in Covid 19 situations.

CONCLUSION:

Adolescence, the most crucial and most important stage of a life of a girl when she transforms from dependence to independence, sexually dormant to sexually active, when she is utterly confused the role of hers in the society then lessons of Life Skill can show her the way to know and analyse herself, to know her inner potentiality, teach her to be active, accept every loss as the stair of victory, to regard every downfall as the foundation stone of her upward journey, so proper Life Skill Education is very much needed for developing well maintained mental health of a teenager. Our world is now under a great curse of corona virus where Education system as well as the whole society has been victimized.

Bondage in home has disturbed the free spirit of a teen and here are the needs of proper life skill through which they can see light in darkness, success in failure, benefit in the face of utter loss, happiness within distress and thus can illuminate herself as well as the whole world into a new world of possibilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i) This study can be done on adolescent boys also.
- ii) Not only the teenagers, adults also should know about the value of Life Skills.
- iii) In such Pandemic situation of Covid 19 some online classes regarding the teaching of Life Skills should be arranged.
- iv) Parental attitude towards growing of Life Skills among the students should be estimated.
- v) Online Happiness Classes initiated by Delhi Government should be patronized in a larger scale.
- vi) Large Scale Life Skill Education is needed for good Academic Achievement.
- vii) Depression in Covid 19 situation can lead to many anti-social activities and thus this education should be continued.
- viii) For disseminating knowledge of Life Skill among adolescent learners Teachers should be well aware of these skills so Life Skill Education Program should be introduced and highly weighted in teachers' training courses.

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