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## Life skills among the disabled students at elementary level in West Bengal

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### Abstract

Life skill, when being considered from a certain point of view, became an inevitable requirement to every single individual for a healthy and peaceful social life. Maintaining one's own well-being is not the sole purpose of life skills anymore, rather it is a collective competency towards sustainable development of the society. Students, especially with disabilities, are the promising members of our society and thereby need to be equipped with different life skills at various stages of their life development. At the elementary level of education, to see the reflections of different life skills in their day-to-day life are on the focus in the present study.

A total of 70 students were administered with the Life Skill Assessment Scale for the purpose of study. In general, female students were found to be more competent in applying life skills than male students which is statistically significant. Also, statistically insignificant differences were found between different group of students in terms of family type and caste which pointed towards the fact that in general, life skills are absolutely learned and not dependent on various demographic factors of social life which were accounted in the study.

**Keywords:** Life Skill, LSMS, Mental Health, Disability

### Introduction

Mental Health promotion is an integral and essential part of overall health healthy body; healthy mind and health social relationship and productive work ability are called health. Therefore it is said that there is no health without mental health. Mental health is the realistic awareness and assessment of self, reorganization of one own emotion and expressing them properly, ability to established healthy social relationship and cope with problems in day-to-day life. According to WHO The school mental health promotion is new important and integral system of worldwide (Kapur, 1997)<sup>[6]</sup>. Life skill education is one of the important aspects of mental health promotion in school.

Life skill education programmed started in India, in the community mental health unit of NIMHANS, Bangalore, the guidance Dr. R. Partha sarathy. He had developed a student environment programme (Varanda, 2011) which is encompassed the ten core Life skills listed by WHO in 1993. Hence, he is the father of Life skill education programme in India .After that a comprehensive Life skill education module developed of the department of psychiatry, NIMHANS (Bharat *et al*). The NCERT with collaboration 2005 with MHRD and NACO had adopted Life skill base adolescence education programme as preventive approach agonist HIV-AIDS. School of Life skill education in social harmony, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of youth development, Tamilnaru, had indicated an in annual international conference and international activity in Life skill education and help to stimulated new thinking in the area of education for 2001.

Described in this way, skills that can be said to be life skills are innumerable, and the nature and definition of life skills are likely to differ across cultures and settings. However, analysis of the life skills field suggests that there is a core set of skills according to WHO (1997) that are at the heart of skills-based initiatives for the promotion of the health and well-being of children and adolescents; these are Decision making, Problem solving, Creative thinking, Critical thinking, Effective communication, Interpersonal relationship skills, Self-awareness, Empathy, Coping with emotions and Coping with stress.

### Importance of life skill for the disabled students

- Find new ways of thinking and problem solving
- Recognize the impact of their actions and teaches them to take responsibility for what they do rather than blame others
- Build confidence both in spoken skills and for group collaboration and cooperation
- Analyze options, make decisions and understand why they make certain choices outside the classroom

- Develop a greater sense of self-awareness and appreciation for others

A well-defined society means a collective of peoples equipped with necessary knowledge, attitude and skills i.e. life skills. A person with disability constitutes a significant part of our society. Fear of rejection, dishonor, and non-cooperation from peoples around them suppresses their spontaneous productive attempt. Therefore, to furnish themselves for service to the society, life-skills are the need of the hour. Considering the necessity, life-skills must be inculcated at different developmental stages of children, especially of those with disabilities.

**Delimitation**

The study was delimited to 70 disabled students at elementary level (V-VII) in South 24 Parganas District of West Bengal. Only 4 life skills viz., Communication, Decision making, Problem solving and Coping with conflict were accounted for the study.

**Objectives**

- To find out the present status of life skill among the school going disabled children in rural area in West Bengal.
- To find out the rate of prevalence of life skill among the school going children with respect to of Gender, caste and structure of family.

**Hypothesizes (H<sub>01</sub>-H<sub>03</sub>)**

There is no significant difference in the rate of prevalence of life skill among the school going children with regard to their Gender, Caste and Family Structure.

**Methodology**

This study was conducted by the Cross sectional survey

research framework among disabled students at elementary level using Life Skill Assessment Scale (Vranda, 2007; 2009). 55 disabled students at elementary level from West Bengal Govt. aided School in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. In this study, independent variables are Gender, Caste and Family Structure; and the dependent variable is Life Skills among the students. The raw data 70 disabled students gathered were individually tabulated in Excel sheet and then the data was analyzed using statistical Package for Social Science (version 20.0).

**Result**

The study was conducted on a total number of 70 disabled students at elementary level whose life skills mean score is 4.0029 and SD 0.74. The result is shown table 1.

**Table 1:** The average score of the students in Life Skills.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Life skill among the students	70	2.00	4.80	4.002	.74483

**Gender wise result of Life Skills (H<sub>01</sub> test: Independent Sample t-test)**

**Table 2:** Average Score of Life Skills according to Gender variable

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Life Skills Score	Male	44	3.83	0.87	0.13
	Female	26	4.30	0.27	0.05

This table indicated that the Life Skills score of students in terms of their Gender. The mean score of male students 3.83 and the female students 4.30 measured through the cumulative score in LSMS; So the female students more life skills mean score than the female students.

**Table 3:** Independent Samples Test of H<sub>01</sub>

Variable	Gender (Independent)	N	Mean	SD	df	t value	Sig. (2 tailed)	Remarks
Life Skills	Male	44	3.83	0.87	68	-2.678	0.009	Sig. (P<0.01)
	Female	26	4.30	0.27				

On the basis of this table, it can be concluded that the researcher can't accept the null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>). Hence it can be said that, there is no significant difference in the rate

of prevalence of Life Skills among the disabled students at elementary level with respect to their gender variable.

**Types of Family wise result of Life Skills (H<sub>02</sub> test: Independent Sample t-test)**

**Table 4:** Average Score of Life Skills according to Types of Family variable

Group Statistics					
	Types of Family	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Life Skills Score	Nuclear	56	3.91	0.79	0.10
	Joint	14	4.37	0.30	0.08

The mean score of disabled students who have belonging in nuclear family is 3.91 and students of Joint Family mean scored is 4.30 measured through the cumulative score in

LSMS; So the disabled students who have live in joint family, they have more life skills mean score.

**Table 5:** Independent Samples Test of H<sub>02</sub>

Variable	Types of Family (Independent)	N	Mean	SD	Df	t value	Sig. (2 tailed)	Remarks
Life Skills	Nuclear	56	3.91	0.79	68	2.12	0.037	Sig. (P<0.05)
	Joint	14	4.37	0.30				

On the basis of this table, it can be concluded that the researcher can't accept the null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>). Hence it can be said that, there is no significant difference in the rate

of prevalence of Life Skills among the disabled students at elementary level with respect to their Types of Family variable.

**Caste wise result of Life Skills (H<sub>03</sub> test: ANOVA - test)**

**Table 6:** Average Score of Life Skills according to Caste variable

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
General	25	3.95	0.768	.153	3.6347	4.2693	2.00	4.80
SC	12	4.18	0.199	.057	4.0567	4.3099	3.80	4.40
ST	33	3.97	0.851	.148	3.6740	4.2775	2.00	4.80
Total	70	4.00	0.744	.089	3.8253	4.1805	2.00	4.80

From the above table, it was found that the SC disabled students at elementary level shows better life skills score (4.18) than the General (3.95) & ST (3.97) students.

**Table 7:** ANOVA Test of H<sub>03</sub>

ANOVA					
life skill among the students					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.480	2	.240	.425	.655
Within Groups	37.800	67	.564		Not Sig.
Total	38.279	69			(P>0.05)

So, the null hypothesis can't be rejected.

**Discussion**

From the Major findings of the study based on the analysis and interpretation of collected data, it can be said that –

- Out of the total number of disabled students at elementary level in West Bengal, the overall Life Skills mean score is 4.0029; so, it can be said that total disabled students have very good life skills (Communication, Decision making, Problem solving and Coping with conflict).
- The mean score of male students 3.83 and the female students 4.30 measured through the cumulative score in LSMS; so the female students more life skills mean score than the male students and the difference was statically Significant.
- The mean score of disabled students who have belonging in nuclear family is 3.91 and students of Joint Family mean scored is 4.30 measured through the cumulative score in LSMS; So the disabled students who have live in joint family, they have more life skills mean score; and the difference was statistically Significant.
- On the basis of Caste variable, SC disabled students at elementary level have more Life Skill score in LSMS from the General and ST students, but the statistics shows that the difference was not significant.

In most life skill among the school going students the assessment has been relied on various method like interview, observation (real time) and report and significant. On of the main problems in the area of life skill among the disabled students at elementary level is the lake of valuable instrument for measuring life skill.

In India today's adolescents' specially disabled students are exposed to more information and cultural alternatives than in earlier periods. The study also estimated the prevalence rate of different skills of Life Skills, which are very important for disabled children even school going students for enhancing their psycho-social competencies for adaptation to the changing environment in the modern time.

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