

Influence of gender and locality on effectiveness of life skills education among students of senior secondary school in Jaipur district

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Life skill refers to a positive behaviour, that encompasses a mix of knowledge, behaviour, attitude and values and designates the possession of certain skills and know how to do something positively, or reach a goal. Life skills education frame work provides the praxis for addressing the core concerns as well as aspirations of the adolescents and the youth of today's India. Life skills were differing to men to men. Life skills also influence by gender and locality also. A life skill for urban men was different from men living in rural areas. The main objective of present study was to examine the role of gender and geographical location in the effectiveness of Life Skills Education. The study was conducted on 2 urban and 2 rural blocks of Jaipur district. A sample of 200 male and 200 female adolescents studying in government schools of Jaipur District were selected through multistage sampling. The data was collected with the help of LSAS scale. Results indicate that the life skills were improved after the classroom learning of the subject among both boys and girls and urban and rural students. In the beginning of the course all students whether boy and girl belonging to urban and rural background were possessing the similar level of LS or LS's were at the same platform but variations were seen after the formal teaching of LS. But after completion of the subject significant difference was found in both boys and girls students and urban and rural students. But yet girls had better improvements in life skills as compare to boy's students and difference among them was significant but rural and urban students LS's did not show significant difference, hence geographical locality no more remains a constraint in the effectiveness of LSE.

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Life skills are a comprehensive set of universal cognitive and non-cognitive skills and abilities, connecting behaviour, attitudes, and knowledge,

which youth can develop and retain throughout their lives. Life skills increase young people's well-being and help them to develop into active and productive members of

their communities. In India, out of total population of 121 crores, 83.3 crores live in rural areas (Census of India, 2011). Thus, nearly 70 per cent of the India's population lives in rural areas. These rural populations can be characterised by mass poverty, low levels of literacy and income, high level of unemployment, and poor nutrition and health status. The adolescent girls in Rajasthan state are vulnerable section. The dropout rate in the state is quite high. In Rajasthan almost two-thirds (65%) of women age, 20-24 years got married before the legal minimum age of 18 and by the age 19, 36 per cent of women have begun childbearing. Thus the low marriageable age and child bearing age makes the girl and her baby caught in the viscous trap of poverty, illiteracy and malnutrition. Thus, the knowledge related to Reproductive Health is an essential requirement of the prospered society.

Hence, to tackle these problems and for development of youth and more specifically rural adolescent and girls as well the Department of Education and the Board of Secondary Education of Rajasthan incorporated Life Skills Education Subject in the curriculum of the 11th (eleven) standard by 2006. The LS subject aimed to make the adolescent boys and girls in urban and rural aware about themselves, their abilities and short comings and help them to overcome their short comings. The program activities were planned so as to equip the economically backward adolescents with necessary skills to broaden their horizon, understand and adopt the traditional beliefs which are rational and practical and become gender sensitive so as to be a part of the national development through the building better society.

Here it is important to see whether such programmes can be uniformly designed and implemented in the curriculum of school students and their effectiveness is also not influenced by such factors as locality and gender.

Objective of study :

- To examine the impact of LS after completion of the subject among boys and girls and among urban and rural area students.
- To study the difference in Life Skills Education learning on the basis of gender and locality.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

Area of the study:

The study was carried out in the Government Senior

Secondary Schools of Jaipur district of Rajasthan. Jaipur district is divided into urban and rural. The study was carried out in two urban blocks and two rural blocks, urban blocks were Jaipur and Amer and the rural blocks were Jamwa, Ramgarh and Kotputli.

Participants:

Four schools (two boy's schools and two girl's schools) from each block were selected for assessing the impact of LSE. 25 students were selected from each school, thus constituting 50 boys and 50 girls were selected from 4 schools in each block. This constituted the study group of 400 students from 16 schools from four blocks. Hence, same numbers from urban area and 100 boys and 100 girls from rural area were selected. Only 11th grade students were selected for the study, the main reason for selecting only 11th grade students was that Life Skills Education was introduced as a compulsory subject in eleventh standard only.

Instrument:

The data were collected by using the LSAS scale (Life Skill Assessment Scale) prior to the beginning of the Life Skills course. LSAS consisted of statements on a 5- point scale (always true of me, very true of me, sometimes true of me, occasionally true of me).

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To assess the impact of life skills learning on youth the evaluation was conducted on 400 students before and after the LSE course. It is, however, very challenging to accurately measure changes in life skills competencies and changes in youth behaviors. But through a careful data collection and data interpretation the impact of Life Skills learning was clearly visible. Table 1 depicts the the overall level of life skills in pre and post test phase among girls and boys individually and among students from urban and rural setting.

According to the Table 1 in pre-test majority (86%) of the boys and girls students belonged to average category but in post-test the percentages went down to 82 per cent and 76.5 per cent in boys and girls, respectively. At the same time in pre-test 7 per cent boys and 6.5 per cent girls were high achievers and this increased to 9.5 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively. Whereas there was no one in pre-test in very high category but in post-test 4.5 per cent boys and 6 per

cent girls improved to very high category. Thus, high percentages of girls are there in high and very high category as compared to boys. Similar findings were brought forward by Sangwan *et al.* (2012) who concluded in their research that girls were comparatively better than boys in overall life skills and its aspects and significant differences were found in overall life skills.

Similarly the overall scores categories among urban and rural students showed that there is marginal difference in scores of urban and rural students. In post-test 8 per cent urban and 9 per cent rural students fall in very high category whereas in pre-test nobody was there in this category thus major improvement can be seen in

this category.

Improvement of only 1% (7.5%-6.5%) was noticed in high category in urban locality, and in rural locality there is no improvement. In pre-test more than 85 per cent urban and rural students belong to average category but in post-test the percentage drops down to a little more than 80 per cent in this category as there is a shift towards high and very high categories. Above score categories results show improvement in both male and female students as well as from urban and rural background after programmed learning. All students reflect that the classroom teaching has helped them to improve as post scores show a shift from lower to upper

Table 1 : Overall scores of LS among boys and girls students

Sr. No.	Overall score categories		Boys		Girls	
			Pre f (%)	Post f (%)	Pre f (%)	Post f (%)
1.	Very high	> 417	0 (0)	9(4.5)	0(0)	12(6)
2.	High	387-417	14 (7)	19(9.5)	13(6.5)	24(12)
3.	Average	325-386	172 (86)	164(82)	172(86)	153(76.5)
4.	Low	293-324	7(3.5)	6(3)	8(4)	8(4)
5.	Very low	< 293	7(3.5)	2(1)	7(3.5)	3(1.5)

Table 2 : Overall scores categories of urban and rural student

Sr. No.	Scores categories		Urban		Rural	
			Pre f (%)	Post f (%)	Pre f(%)	Post f(%)
1.	Very high	> 417	2 (1)	16 (8)	0(0)	18(9)
2.	High	387-417	13 (6.5)	15 (7.5)	16(8)	13(6.5)
3.	Average	325-386	171 (85.5)	162 (81)	176(88)	165(82.5)
4.	Low	293-324	11 (5.5)	5 (2.5)	5 (2.5)	4(2)
5.	Very low	< 293	3 (1.5)	2 (1)	3 (1.5)	0(0)

Table 3 : Mean difference between pre and post LSE among boys and girls (n=200)

Sr. No.	Cores of LS	Boys			Girls		
		Pre Mean S.D.	Post Mean S.D.	z values	Pre Mean S.D.	Post Mean S.D.	z values
1.	Self-awareness	41.21(5.52)	41.93 (5.14)	6.237*	42.14 (4.25)	44.43 (4.01)	13.854*
2.	Empathy	38.81(4.14)	40.00 (4.11)	8.758*	38.57 (3.76)	42.03 (3.64)	22.494*
3.	Effective communication	29.82(3.72)	30.78 (3.83)	8.010*	29.37 (3.65)	32.42 (3.36)	15.692*
4.	Interpersonal relationship	41.45(4.95)	42.42 (4.80)	7.368*	42.37 (5.03)	45.18 (4.14)	15.947*
5.	Creative thinking	30.82(3.64)	31.40 (3.61)	7.112*	30.44 (3.76)	31.98 (3.54)	11.593*
6.	Critical thinking	40.53(5.19)	41.27 (5.24)	4.863*	39.71 (5.00)	42.09 (5.34)	13.516*
7.	Decision making	35.79(3.82)	36.80 (4.22)	6.861*	36.38 (3.46)	40.81 (3.51)	19.866*
8.	Problem solving	37.34(4.95)	37.90 (4.76)	4.571*	37.42 (4.66)	37.98 (4.27)	6.194*
9.	Coping with emotion	33.07(5.01)	34.41 (5.01)	8.909*	32.74 (4.75)	37.78 (3.55)	17.085*
10.	Coping with stress	24.47(4.59)	25.19 (4.57)	5.532*	24.53 (4.37)	28.64 (3.22)	19.670*

*indicates significance of value at P=0.01
Values in parentheses shows S.D

categories.

To statistically assess the difference and see the impact “z” test was applied on the means at pre and post stage for boys and girls separately. Mean values depicts that all the ten life skills were improved after the completion of the Life Skills Education subject for both boys and girls. The z values among boys depict that all skills like (6.237) self- awareness, (8.75) empathy, (8.01) effective communication, (7.36) interpersonal-relationship, (7.11) creative and (4.86) critical thinking’s, (6.86) decision making, (4.57) problem solving and (8.90) coping with stress and (5.53) coping with emotions show significant difference at 0.01 level of significance (Table 3).

Corresponding “z” values for girls (13.85) for self-awareness, (22.49) empathy, (15.69) effective communication, (15.94) interpersonal-relationship, (11.59) creative and (13.51) critical thinking’s, (19.86) decision making, (6.19) problem solving and (17.08) coping with stress (19.67) for coping with emotions, all show significant difference. Peeping in to the mean values of pre and post-test for boys and girls clearly depicts that girl students learned all the life skills effectively as their means were higher to boys.

Similarly to observe the impact of locality the comparison of pre and post LS among urban and rural students was done and shown in Table 4.

Data in Table 4 depicts that there is a significant difference between the pre and post life skills among urban as well as rural students. Mean values depicts that all the ten life skills were improved after the completion

of the Life Skills Education subject. All the “z” values for urban students on different LS like (9.57), self-awareness, (15.31) empathy, (10.63) effective communication, (11.11) interpersonal-relationship, (7.82) creative and (7.95) critical thinking’s, (11.87) decision making, (4.91) problem solving and (12.44) coping with stress and (11.37) coping with emotions are significant at 0.01 level of significance. Table also shows the mean values of rural students in pre and post phase and these values show that students learned all the life skills effectively. Z values for all cores of LS are significant at 0.01 level of significance showing significant improvements. Thus, the teaching of LSE subject had become beneficial for both urban and rural students. Pujar *et al.* (2014) also reported that the intervention on life skills education is helpful for the rural adolescent girls to take positive actions and improving their coping skills of stress and problem solving ability.

Further to assess the differences in the LS on the basis of gender and locality the pre mean scores for boys and girls and urban and rural students and post scores after the LSE were compared. Main reason for calculating the difference between pre mean scores and post mean scores was to see whether gender and locality has made any difference in learning. Z test was applied between the mean for all cores of LS before programmed learning in boys and girls and urban and rural students. “z” values in Table 5 show that there is a no significant difference among boys and girls and urban and rural students at pre stage in all cores of LS. This shows that

Table 4 : Mean difference between pre and post LSE among urban students (n=200)

Sr. No.	Cores of LS	Urban		z values	Rural		z values
		Pre	Post		Pre	Post	
		Mean S.D.	Mean S.D.		Mean S.D.	Mean S.D.	
1.	Self-awareness	41.39 (5.13)	42.89(5.16)	9.57*	41.96 (4.74)	43.47 (4.33)	10.10*
2.	Empathy	38.67 (4.02)	41.33(3.88)	15.31*	38.71(3.89)	40.70(4.12)	12.91*
3.	Effective communication	29.67 (3.71)	31.59(3.68)	10.63*	29.52 (3.67)	31.61 (3.72)	11.97*
4.	Interpersonal relationship	41.70 (4.85)	43.53(4.52)	11.11*	42.13 (5.15)	44.07 (4.85)	11.30*
5.	Creative thinking	30.68 (3.65)	31.58(3.55)	7.82*	30.58 (3.75)	31.79 (3.62)	10.65*
6.	Critical thinking	40.39 (5.17)	41.99(5.43)	7.95*	39.85 (5.05)	41.37 (5.16)	10.57*
7.	Decision making	36.10 (3.65)	38.64(4.37)	11.87*	36.07 (3.66)	38.97(4.36)	12.40*
8.	Problem solving	37.47 (4.82)	37.82(4.63)	4.91*	37.29 (4.81)	38.06(4.41)	5.80*
9.	Coping with emotion	32.93 (5.11)	36.37(4.74)	12.44*	32.88 (4.65)	35.82 (4.55)	11.36*
10.	Coping with stress	24.47 (4.48)	27.00(4.33)	11.37*	24.53 (4.49)	26.83(4.30)	11.50*

*indicates significance of value at P=0.01
Values in parentheses shows S.D

all students irrespective of gender and locality are having same level of LS.

In the next step post mean scores of boys and girls and urban and rural students were compared. Table 6 shows the post mean scores for all 10 cores of LS in both gender and locality.

The post mean scores for girls were higher than boys for all individual LS. To see whether the girls gained significantly higher as compared to boys “z” test was applied.

Calculated “z” values shown in Table 6 reveals that there is significant difference in improvements between the girls and boys, on (5.41) self-awareness, (5.20) empathy, (4.53) effective communication, (6.13) interpersonal relationship, (10.31) decision making and (7.74) coping with stress and (8.72) emotions at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, girls have significantly

improved and reflect significant difference from boys on these skills. But “z” values for (1.62) creative thinking skill, (1.53) critical thinking and (.188) problem solving skills do not show significant difference. Thus, with respect to these skills both male and females are at the same stage showing no difference in improvement. On the other side “z” values to compare the means at the post stage between urban and rural students shows that there is no significant difference in post-test among urban and rural students. This depicts that the impact of Life Skills among urban and rural students is uniform which also confirms that locality does not have any impact when such programmed teaching are built into curriculum. Thus, the gain is uniform for urban and rural students but gender differences are visible reflecting that girls are more sincere or they are not distracted and hence show better improvements.

Table 5 : Mean difference regarding pre LS

Sr. No.	Cores of LS	Boys	Girls	z values	Urban	Rural	z values
		Pre (n=200)	Pre (n=200)		Pre (n=200)	Pre (n=200)	
		Mean	Mean			Mean	
		S.D.	S.D.			S.D.	
1.	Self-awareness	41.21(5.52)	42.14 (4.25)	1.88	41.39 (5.13)	41.96 (4.74)	1.15
2.	Empathy	38.81(4.14)	38.57 (3.76)	0.60	38.67 (4.02)	38.71 (3.89)	0.10
3.	Effective communication	29.82(3.72)	29.37 (3.65)	1.22	29.67 (3.71)	29.52 (3.67)	0.40
4.	Interpersonal relationship	41.45(4.95)	42.37 (5.03)	1.84	41.70 (4.85)	42.13 (5.15)	0.85
5.	Creative thinking	30.82(3.64)	30.44 (3.76)	1.02	30.68 (3.65)	30.58 (3.75)	0.27
6.	Critical thinking	40.53(5.19)	39.71 (5.00)	1.60	40.39 (5.17)	39.85 (5.05)	1.05
7.	Decision making	35.79(3.82)	36.38 (3.46)	1.61	36.10 (3.65)	36.07 (3.66)	0.08
8.	Problem solving	37.34(4.95)	37.42 (4.66)	0.16	37.47 (4.82)	37.29 (4.81)	0.37
9.	Coping with emotion	33.07(5.01)	32.74 (4.75)	.067	32.93 (5.11)	32.88 (4.65)	0.10
10.	Coping with stress	24.47(4.59)	24.53 (4.37)	0.13	24.47 (4.48)	24.53 (4.49)	0.13

Values in parentheses show S.D.

Table 6 : Mean difference regarding post LS

Sr. No.	Cores of LS	Boys	Girls	z values	Urban	Rural	z values
		Post (n=200)	Post (n=200)		Post (n=200)	Post (n=200)	
		Mean	Mean			Mean	
		S.D.	S.D.			S.D.	
1.	Self-Awareness	41.93 (5.14)	44.43 (4.01)	5.411*	42.89(5.16)	43.47 (4.33)	1.227
2.	Empathy	40.00 (4.11)	42.03 (3.64)	5.207*	41.33(3.88)	40.70(4.12)	1.585
3.	Effective communication	30.78 (3.83)	32.42 (3.36)	4.530*	31.59(3.68)	31.61(3.72)	.068
4.	Interpersonal relationship	42.42 (4.80)	45.18 (4.14)	6.138*	43.53(4.52)	44.07 (4.85)	1.141
5.	Creative thinking	31.40 (3.61)	31.98 (3.54)	1.621	31.58(3.55)	31.79 (3.62)	.585
6.	Critical thinking	41.27 (5.24)	42.09 (5.34)	1.539	41.99(5.43)	41.37 (5.16)	1.160
7.	Decision making	36.80 (4.22)	40.81 (3.51)	10.314*	38.64(4.37)	38.97(4.36)	.744
8.	Problem solving	37.90 (4.76)	37.98 (4.27)	.188	37.82(4.63)	38.06(4.41)	.541
9.	Coping with emotion	34.41 (5.01)	37.78 (3.55)	7.745*	36.37(4.74)	35.82 (4.55)	1.171
10.	Coping with stress	25.19 (4.57)	28.64 (3.22)	8.721*	27.00(4.33)	26.83(4.30)	.394

*indicates significance of value at P=0.01

Values in parentheses shows S.D

Conclusion:

The findings indicate that there was a significant difference in pre and posttest phases reflecting improvement in LS's among boys and girls and urban and rural students. The study concludes that if programmed teaching is done effectively at school level, improvement in LS can help the adolescents to combat with challenges of life. Further the results prove that before the classroom learning the level of LS among gender and locality was same. But after completion of the course through improved LS's were seen in both for boys and girls and urban and rural students but when the improvements are compared in girls and boys with each other and similarly the mean gain of urban and rural students compared it was found that significant difference exist in the gain of boys and girls not in the case of urban and rural students. The result shows that girls had better level of Life Skills as compared to boys, which shows that the classroom learning of Life Skills Education benefitted girls more. Further it is concluded that this type of subject should be incorporated in secondary classes also.

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