ABSTRACT

Studied in the area of Social Problem-Solving Skills have led to understanding that this skill is an important dimension of social cognition and an intervening variable in promoting psychological well being.

Hence, a study was carried out with the objectives to assess the Social Problem Solving Skills among preadolescents and to explore the psychosocial variables related to this skill. The study also evaluated a psychological intervention involving Social Problem Solving Skills training for its effect on enhancing the social adjustment of children and the related variables.

A multiphase design with three stages was used in the study. After identifying the existing social problems and the skills used in solving them among preadolescents, appropriate vignettes were adapted for a SPSS Questionnaire along the lines of a similar questionnaire developed by Elias and Clabby.

In the second stage, the Social Problem-Solving Skills Questionnaire was administered to 340 subjects drawn from 6th and 7th standards of three schools in Bangalore South Region. At this stage, the selected measures of psychological variables namely, adjustment, anxiety, self-concept, aggression and moral development were administered along with an information schedule.
In the third phase of the study twenty subjects who volunteered to undergo training were randomly assigned to the experimental and control group of a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the effect of social problem-solving skills training.

Training was focussed on the areas of readiness skills, interpersonal sensitivity, identification of the problem, associated feelings, prescribing the goal and alternate means for reaching the goal. Simulated games and role-play techniques were used.

Descriptive statistics like Mean, Standard Deviation and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation were obtained for the different measures. Two way Analysis of Variance of the different variable measures was carried out for the main effects of Social Problem Solving Skills and the factors of sex, age, order of birth and socio-economic status.

The most frequently reported social problems of preadolescents falls in the areas related to interactions with parents, teachers, siblings and peers. Significant positive correlations were noticed between Social Problem Solving, Moral Development, Adjustment of children and the school Marks. Girls showed greater appreciation of their Behavioural Conduct and greater Responsibility on moral development scale, whereas, boys were more anxious and they could foresee the negative consequences of situations. The
younger group showed better School Adjustment, were more appreciative of their Social Acceptance, Physical Appearance and Behavioural Conduct as compared to the older group. A significant score difference was found among the only child and the last born on Interpersonal Sensitivity and Problem Analysis and Action.

The higher socio-economic-status group as compared to the lower was better in their school performance and Adjustment, showed greater Moral Responsibility and Adherence to Rules, and were better on Problem Analysis, and Action, Specificity of Planning, anticipation of Negative Consequences and Alternative acts to overcome obstacles in problem situation.

The study also revealed the need for a strategic intervention for promoting competence and mental health among preadolescents.