



Life Skill Rejuvenation by ASAP: A Study on Higher Secondary Schools

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Life skill REJUVENATION BY ASAP: a STUDY ON HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS Akhil Raj Research Scholar Research & PG Department of Commerce SD College Alappuzha Abstract Various skill development programmes are running in Kerala. Additional Skill Acquisition Programme is the flagship programme of Government of Kerala for the implementation of life skills among the higher secondary school as well as the collage students. The vision of the government is to develop the skills among the next generation and build competent human resource.

ABSTRACT

Various skill development programmes are running in Kerala. Additional Skill Acquisition Programme is the flagship programme of Government of Kerala for the implementation of life skills among the higher secondary school as well as the collage students. The vision of the Government is to develop the skills among the next generation and build competent human resource. Skill development acts as the key factor of recruitments and self-employment. The students of higher secondary schools will get assistance in enriching the significant life skills which can be used fruitfully in future. Even though the Government has taken various measures to implement the programmes, there are some constraints too. Majority students are out of the skill development programme as there is a limitation of maximum number of students who can opt the courses. In order to bring balanced development, though this programme is expected to be implemented throughout the schools uniformly, an empirical study shows that there is a disparity in this regard. The study has been conducted in Kollam district of Kerala state, by comparing the ASAP students and non-ASAP students.

KEY WORDS

Life Skills, Skill education, Skill training.

INTRODUCTION

From the origin itself, human resource is a vital element in economic activities. The development of the human resource is inevitable for the development of a progressing nation like India. Human capital is playing an important role

in the development of a country. If India can utilise its human resource effectively, the burden of high population growth can be avoided. Human resource management is necessary for making these resources fruitful. Development of skill and skill education thus becomes relevant to vocationalise the education system. Commerce education from the beginning itself was focusing on developing job-oriented skills like Office Secretaryship, Stenography and Computer Applications, Accountancy and Auditing, Marketing and Salesmanship, Banking, Retail, Financial Market Management, Business Administration etc.

The requirement for the different job roles in modern society is under rapid change. The reflection of the same can be seen in the changes occurring in the education system. Technical and vocational education and training are being promoted by the Government of India for the vocationalisation of education since the beginning of the XI Five Year Plan. Authorities are rearranging and reframing the curriculum and syllabus of various courses as per the mandates of National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF).

Development of human resource by providing skill development training has been recognised by most of the state Governments also. Various programmes were undertaken by Education Departments of the concerned states. By understanding the significance of skill development through higher education, Government of Kerala is now promoting two important programmes that are currently running under the direction of coordinated efforts of different Government departments viz. Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP) and the Additional Skill Enhancement Programme (ASEP). Kerala Academy for Skill Excellence (KASE), a non-profit company is a nodal agency for facilitating and coordinating various skill development initiatives of the state. The curriculum and syllabus should be remoulded to make the learning of life skills an inevitable part of it. The World Health Organization has defined life skills as, “the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. “Skill is the ability to use one’s knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance”. The skill of every person has to be sharpened through the various training programme to make them competitive and capable of doing a specific task. Skill development is an initiative by the Government of Kerala to promote the efficiency of the human resource in Kerala state. Government of Kerala is imparting the various skills like life skills, social skills etc. through the education system itself. Various programmes were undertaken in higher secondary, degree level education system to develop the skills.

Review of Literature

- Mary Jane Weiss (2000) in her article “Differential rates of skill acquisition and outcomes of early intensive behavioural intervention for autism”, explains how the students are different in developing various skills by adapting to the environment. Life skills development and a comparison with normal and differentially able students are carried out here.
- Sasmita Palo & Nayantara Padhi (2003) in their study “Measuring effectiveness of TQM training: an Indian study” suggest the various methods of measuring the effectiveness of a training programme like ASAP.
- Teresa D. LaFromboise & Hayes A. Lewis (2008) in their study “The Zuni Life Skills Development Program: A School/Community-Based Suicide Prevention Intervention”, states the relevance of life skill education in preventing suicide rates among Americans. How life skills affect the personality of a person has also been studied.
- Dr Baiju K Nath & Neethu S. (2015) in their study “Additional Skill Acquisition Programme in Kerala (ASAP): A promising initiative for vocational aspirants among students in schools and colleges”, states the vocational aspects of ASAP and its working among the higher secondary

school students. Various issues faced by the students take part in the programmes was also analysed.

- Godhaniya, Vipul B (2015) In his study “Developing writing skills in English of undergraduate students in Northern Gujarat”, suggests the importance of skill development among the students through various Government initiatives and he explains some tools to measure the awareness of students about the skills.
- Benson Davis (2018) In his study “Balancing Skill Education and General Education: A Study on Additional Skill Acquisition Programme of Kerala”, states how skill development and training influence the general education of the beneficiaries. In addition to that, the study also focused on finding out the motivation to join ASAP and access to training.
- John Mathew (2018) In his study “Study the impact of skill and vocational education in the socio-economic development of rural youth living in the backward district of Mandla, Madhya Pradesh”, explains the skill development policies, Skill India, vocational education in India, vocational education training and skill development.

Need and Significance of the Study

As the job roles are changing rapidly due to the technological upgradations and innovations, 21st century depends more on skill development and skill training for staffing and human resource management. Skill education is now an inevitable aspect of capacity building among the youth. Kerala has a wide range of educated youth lacking the life skills to identify their potentials. Though the education system is developing in our state, the implementation of the National Skill Qualification Framework and skill education are in a toddler stage. Kerala Government is trying to develop the skills of its youth through various skill training and development programmes. Additional Skill Acquisition Programme is such a relevant training programme provided for life skill rejuvenation of higher secondary school students in Kerala. The programme is now shifting to the second phase. In this scenario, the effectiveness of such a programme was evaluated and the problems faced by the students those who are outside the training frontiers was also identified.

Statment of the problem

Skill development is an inevitable factor for job recruitments and achieving self-employment in the present scenario. Therefore, skill development and enhancement of skills get predominant consideration than knowledge acquisition. Both central and state Government consider skill development with due importance. Life skills are of prime importance to be studied as it helps in moulding a person's competency and personality. Educated unemployment is a major threat to our nation's economic growth due to the inability of the educated youth in competing with the human resources of other countries. Various skill development programmes are carried out in the state of Kerala as well. The effectiveness of these programmes in catering to the needs of the students in the present scenario has to be studied. The participation and completion rates in many of these programmes remain low. So, the effectiveness of such programmes among the beneficiaries has to be assessed. There is a lack of awareness among the students and the society about the changing needs of today's world and the importance of skill development. There are some hindrances to the smooth running of skill development programmes in our state. These problems should be identified. The role of skill development programmes on improving the quality of human resources and its impact on reducing unemployment in Kerala has to be gauged. Thus, in this context, it is imperative to conduct a study on “Life skill rejuvenation by ASAP: A study on higher secondary schools.”

Definition of keywords

Life Skills: The skills that are essential for a person to adapt with the challenges and demands faced in his life. These are relevant for showing positive behaviour and psychosocial competency.

Skill education: Skill education is the systematic process of absorbing or gaining knowledge with an aim to attain a specific goal. It develops a sense of rational thinking and judgement among the learners.

Skill training: Skill training is an act of imparting a specific skill or any behaviour to a person. It is basically concerned with the increase in knowledge, skill and abilities of people in performing a particular task.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the effectiveness of ASAP in building life skills awareness among higher secondary students.
2. To compare the awareness level of life skills among ASAP students and non-ASAP students.

Hypotheses of the Study

H₁: The HSS students undergone ASAP skill training programme are well aware about the need of life skill development and its usages.

H₂: The HSS students who were outside the frontiers of ASAP skill training programme are well aware about the life skills, its development and usage.

H₃: There is significant difference between ASAP students and non-ASAP students in life skills awareness level and its usage.

Scope of the Study

This study evaluates the effectiveness of skill education programme (ASAP) among the higher secondary school students. It is intended to pursue and evaluate students' awareness level of life skills towards using it for their future achievements and accomplishments. The study also focuses on the comparison between the ASAP students and non – ASAP students on their awareness and knowledge about life skills and its importance.

Methodology of Study

The study is designed as descriptive. Judgemental sampling technique is used to gather relevant information from the respondents. The study was based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from the beneficiaries of the programmes. The skill development programmes promoted by Government of Kerala is divided into three categories viz:

- i) before higher education,
- ii) within higher education and
- iii) after higher education.

Here, the study focuses on programmes before higher education. The students are the primary beneficiaries of the programmes. So, samples were selected from the population using the judgemental sampling technique. The other beneficiaries are skill trainers, training partners, educational institutions and job recruiters. The secondary data were collected from various Government departments related to the coordination of the skill development programmes. Structured questionnaire has been used to elicit responses from the respondents. Statistical tools like percentage, coefficient of correlation, one sample t-test, multiple classification analysis etc. were used for analysis and interpretation of data.

Table 1: Details of the Research Design

Nature	Population	Sample	Variables	Tools	Statistical Techniques
Structured questionnaire	Higher Secondary School Students of Kollam District	60 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Life skill awareness among ASAP students •Life skill awareness among non-ASAP students 	Structured questionnaire to test life skill awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mean •Standard deviation •Independent sample t- test

A sample of 30 students were randomly selected as representatives of ASAP students and 30 others were selected as representatives of non-ASAP students.

The study is descriptive in nature. It is one of the most important and vital aspect of any research studies. For the collection of primary data, a structured questionnaire was used. Data were collected from higher secondary students of Kollam district.

Analysis and Interpretation

Analysis of life skill awareness among ASAP students

- To study the awareness level of students about life skills after completing the ASAP training programme.

Hypothesis 1: The HSS students undergone ASAP skill training programme are well aware about the need of life skill development and its usages.

Mean and Standard deviation was applied to find out the level of awareness among the students.

Table 2: Life Skills Awareness level of ASAP Students

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Verbal interpretation regarding the total number of students
Life skills awareness level among ASAP Students	30	85.43	15.659	Mean + Standard Deviation = 101.089	Above Average = 8
					Average = 22
				Mean - Standard Deviation = 69.771	Below Average = 0

[Source: Primary Data (SPSS)]

Interpretation

A close examination of table 2 shows the total number of above average students is 8, total number of below average student is 0 and number of average students is 22. This means that the level of life skills awareness among ASAP students are varying but all of them have awareness about life skills.

Therefore hypothesis 1 is accepted. That is, the HSS students undergone ASAP skill training programme are well aware about the need of life skill development and its usages.

Analysis of life skill awareness among non-ASAP students

- To study the awareness level of students those who have not attended any skill courses.

Hypothesis 2: The HSS students who were outside the frontiers of ASAP skill training programme are well aware about the life skills, its development and usage.

Mean and Standard deviation was applied to find out the level of awareness among the students.

Table 3: Life Skills Awareness level of Non-ASAP Students

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Verbal interpretation regarding the total number of students
Life skills awareness level among Non-ASAP Students	30	85.43	15.659	Mean + Standard Deviation = 101.089	Above Average = 0
					Average = 15
				Mean - Standard Deviation = 69.771	Below Average = 15

[Source: Primary Data (SPSS)]

Interpretation

A close examination of table 3 depicts, the total number of above average students is 0, total number of below average student is 15 and number of average students is 15. This means that the level of life skills awareness among Non-ASAP students is varying but half of them is below average.

Therefore hypothesis 2 is rejected. That is, The HSS students who were outside the frontiers of ASAP skill training programme are well aware about the life skills, its development and usage.

Comparison between ASAP students and Non-ASAP students

- To gauge whether there is a significant difference between ASAP Students and Non-ASAP students in life skills awareness level and its usage.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference between ASAP Students and Non-ASAP students in life skills awareness level and its usage.

Independent Sample t-test is done to find out whether there is any significant difference between the two groups.

Table 4: Group Statistics

	ASAP/non-ASAP student	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Aggregate of Weights	ASAP Student	30	99.77	5.354	0.978
	Non-ASAP	30	71.10	6.718	1.226

[Source: Primary Data (SPSS)]

Table 5:Independent Samples t-Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means						
		Sig. (p - value)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed) (p - value)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Aggregate of Weights (Equal variances assumed)	0.068	18.278	58	0.000	28.667	25.527	31.806	
Aggregate of Weights (Equal variances not assumed)		18.278	55.251	0.000	28.667	25.524	31.809	

[Source: Primary Data (SPSS)]

Interpretation

A close examination of table 4 shows the comparison between the awareness levels of two viz. ASAP students and Non-ASAP Students.

Here, the p value of Levene’s test for Equality of Variances is greater than significance level of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). So, considering the t- value of equal variances assumed.

Degree of freedom is 58

t – value is 18.278 greater than critical value of t (two tailed) 2.00 ($18.278 > 2.00$)

p-value is less than significance level 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

Therefore hypothesis 3 is accepted by rejecting the null hypothesis. That is, there is a significant difference between the life skills awareness level of ASAP Students and Non-ASAP students.

Findings of the Study

Findings of the present study are as follows:

- The study found that skill education is the key for the upliftment of the future generation.
- Government of India and Kerala has taken various measures to promote skill development among the youth as the UN and WHO suggested the importance of skilled youth for sustainable development.
- Additional Skill Acquisition programme is a flagship skill development training initiative undertaken by the Education department of Kerala for enhancing the skills of students in Government/Aided schools.
- Majority of the ASAP students are aware about the life skills and they know how to use it for their development.
- The awareness level of Non-ASAP students or students who were not undergone any skill training is varied and most of them have a below average awareness level.
- There is a significant difference between ASAP Students and Non-ASAP students in life skills awareness level and its usage.

Table 6: Tenability of Hypothesis

No.	Hypothesis	Inference
1	The HSS students undergone ASAP skill training programme are well aware about the need of life skill development and its usages.	Accepted
2	The HSS students who were outside the frontiers of ASAP skill training programme are well aware about the life skills, its development and usage.	Accepted
3	There is a significant difference between ASAP Students and Non-ASAP students in life skills awareness level and its usage.	Accepted

CONCLUSION

Life skills is a topic that students should learn about so they can boost their confidence and ability to do things. It is important to learn life skills in an early age, so the child can learn good things and manage difficult situations in a calm way. ASAP course is an innovative programme started in Kerala to raise the employability of the higher secondary and under-graduation students. The scheme is different in its mode of operation from the traditional way of vocational education. The students undergoing general education are offered vocational courses during their regular course by conducting skill classes on Saturdays, Sundays, vacation and holidays. The study sought to find whether the scheme had a deleterious effect on the general academic performance of the students. The beneficiary students are predominantly from socially disadvantaged groups and they are offered skill training free of cost.

The beneficiaries feel that the skill training did not have a negative impact on their general education. The beneficiaries also claimed the positive impact of ASAP in their general education especially in improving their English language skills. The approach of beneficiaries towards the scheme was tactical since most of them joined ASAP to get acquainted with an area of interest rather than to enter the labour market right after the higher secondary education. The occasional clashes between the ASAP training schedule and regular school programme are a cause of concern. The scheduling of the skill classes should be arranged with minimum overlapping with the general education curriculum. The skill classes can be given on a continuous basis in vacations instead of Saturdays and Sundays thereby reducing the burden among the students and improving the quality of skill training delivery. Further studies should be encouraged to analyse the various dimensions of skill training among the beneficiary students. The awareness of life skills is very relevant now a day. Skill training courses and initiatives by the authorities help the youth in generating awareness among themselves and the society.

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