

Research Paper

Fostering Social Skills through Life Skills Intervention among Vulnerable Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

This research explores how to support the development of social skills among indigenous adolescent girls during the critical period when social identities are formed. In light of the distinctive obstacles encountered by tribal adolescent females attributable to cultural, economic, and geographical elements, this study examines the effects of interventions targeting social skills on a sample of twenty-five Paniya tribal girls residing in the Wayanad district of Kerala, India. Researchers used a pre- experimental research design with one group pre-test post-test method, using purposive sampling. The research demonstrated a statistically significant discrepancy ($p < 0.001$) between the scores obtained prior to and subsequent to the assessment of communication, interpersonal, and empathy skills. The results emphasized the imperative for greater international investment in the education of social skills. The findings of this study hold significant importance for policymakers, educators, social workers, and community leaders who wish to champion curriculum reforms that adequately address the needs of marginalized communities. Through endorsing the proposition of augmented financial resources and placing greater emphasis on social skills education, this research makes a valuable contribution to the progress and well-being of indigenous adolescents across the globe. Additionally, the study underscores the transformative impact that life skills training has on tribal adolescents, specifically in terms of nurturing ongoing progress, improving social interactions, and stimulating positive change. By doing so, it makes a substantial contribution to the advancement of indigenous adolescent girls' maturity and global empowerment.

Keywords: Tribal Community, adolescent girls, life skills, social relationship, intervention

Adolescence is a pivotal stage marked as significant changes in social, emotional and cognitive spheres (Shearer et al., 2021; Graber & Petersen, 2017). During this stage, individuals contribute to shape their character (Ahunovna, 2021). Gaining social skills and abilities at this time is crucial for their whole-person development. Social maturity includes learning the right attitude for personal, social and interpersonal situations to interact effectively with others (Anand et al., 2014).

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India is a land that embodies a rich symphony of culture and histories. Census, 2011 reports that, there are 104 million (8.6 %) scheduled tribal population in India, the second largest tribal inhabitants of the world following Africa. Over 700 distinct tribal groups are in India with diverse culture and tradition. According to the 2011 census, Scheduled Tribes constitute 8.6% of India's total population. Kerala has 1.45% of the total population as tribals, which covers 36 distinct Scheduled tribes. The Paniya community is the largest Scheduled Tribe in Kerala, and they primarily reside in Wayanad District (Sabu, 2020). Having been historically marginalized economically and socially, the Paniya tribe encounters obstacles when obtaining resources, education, and employment opportunities (Malith, W.C., 2018). Unfortunately, most individuals residing in the Paniya community do not own any land, and struggle with poverty and various health issues. They belong to indigenous communities referred to as Scheduled Tribes (STs) or 'Adivasis', who face significant marginalization in society due to being daily wage laborers. Trapped in multiple cycles of vulnerability, the Paniya Tribe perceives their situation as challenging to escape (Mohindra et al., 2010).

Paniya adolescent girls are the most vulnerable population even among the tribal groups, facing problems related to education, communication, socialization, employability, health issues. Analyzing the present scenario of Paniya tribal adolescent girls in Wayanad, it is found that they lack self-confidence, communication skills, socialization skills, interpersonal relationships (Rahna & Nithya, 2022). They are discriminated, exploited, denied opportunities, and kept isolated from the mainstream society that they become most vulnerable to such exploitations (Taylor et al., 2017). The psycho-social challenges faced by this indigenous adolescent are poor academic performance, low self-esteem, and lack of confidence, which can significantly impact their well-being and development (Rahna & Nithya, 2022).

The present study highlights the efficacy of an intervention that targets improving three critical elements essential for developing social skills in tribal adolescent girls: communication, interpersonal relationships, and empathy. By effectively attending to these facets, the intervention substantially contributes to the holistic enhancement of social aptitude among adolescent girls from tribal communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adolescents undergo a dynamic and continuous process of development, encircling their cognitive, psychological, emotional, and social skills (Omrani et al., 2019; Kern et al., 2021). It is a crucial phase where external factors, such as living environments and peer relationships, can have a profound impact on their behavior and attitudes (Tavares et al., 2020; Ross et al., 2020; Fearon et al., 2014). They blossom with potential for self-expression, curiosity, explorations, and a thirst for discovery and adventure (Grant, 2022). During this dynamic journey, equipping with life skills training, empowers them to tackle the challenges (Andela et al., 2019).

Tribal communities are distinct from the non-tribal community in internal and external diversity. The tribal traditional life style, socio-economic status are differentiating tribal people from other mainstream society. The skills for the better social and emotional intelligence of tribal adolescent girls are poor (Nandwana & Joshi, 2010), which may lead to the poor social and emotional control and imbalances.

Characteristics of Paniya Tribe

Kerala, following Article 342 of the Indian Constitution, acknowledges the existence of 36 tribal communities, the majority of which are centered in the districts of Wayanad, Idukki, and Palakkad. The 2011 Census Report reveals that the tribal community, distributed among fourteen districts, comprises 1.45% of Kerala's total population. The literacy rate within tribal communities is significantly lower than the overall literacy rate, which underscores a notable discrepancy in educational achievement (Census, 2011; Sabu et al., 2020). Notwithstanding governmental endeavors to enhance literacy rates within tribal communities, specific ethnic groups, namely the Paniya and Kattunayakkas, persist in enduring the challenges of illiteracy while upholding their customary ways of life. Having been marginalized economically and socially, the Paniya tribe encounters obstacles when obtaining resources, education, and employment opportunities (Malith, W.C., 2018). This drawback results in an absence of employable competencies, which impedes the acquisition of higher-paying employment opportunities and forces individuals to accept low-skilled, precarious positions (Saranya et al., 2022). The Paniya people, who have a long history of shifting cultivation and foraging, have experienced adverse effects on their traditional livelihoods due to alterations in land use and government policies (Nitheesh, 2019). These consequences include diminished self-esteem, social isolation, and feelings of hopelessness (Saranya et al., 2022; Karuveetil et al., 2020; SCERT, 2020; UNICEF, 2018; Kabita, 2014).

The Paniya tribe, which is primarily located in the state of Wayanad in southern India, faces numerous obstacles and systemic marginalization, including limited access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities (Sabu et al., 2020). A life skills-based approach can effectively close knowledge gaps, especially for students with limited access to such opportunities (Parvathy & Ranjith, 2015). Adolescent females residing in this particular community face supplementary susceptibilities, such as prejudice rooted in their gender, premature matrimonial unions, and restricted autonomy in making choices (Joy & Srihari, 2014).

Shelly (2017) conducted research in a tribal residential school located in the Wayanad District of Kerala, highlighting the various difficulties encountered by tribal adolescents in their social, emotional, and academic lives. The research findings indicate that students frequently experience resentment, anxiety, dread, and disagreements. These results underscore the critical need for social skills training for tribal adolescents, as previously discussed in the literature reviews. The intervention outlined in this document equips individuals with the essential skills to navigate various life challenges effectively. Evaluating the extent of life skills knowledge assumes heightened significance when considering life skills education for adolescents, particularly in underprivileged rural school settings where opportunities are frequently restricted.

In Wayanad, the school drop-out of Paniya tribal students is comparatively higher than the other tribal students (Joy & Sreehari, 2014). Limited access to schools and hospitals, poor infrastructure facilities, language barriers, economic constraints, early marriage and pregnancy, social isolation, reproductive health, and hygienic issues are the other notable challenges (Saranya et al., 2022; Karuveetil et al., 2020; Kabita, 2014). The study recommends for the implementing the motivation training programs for the tribal adolescents and parents to understand the value of education. Therefore, tribal adolescent girls require constant support from society, family and educational institutions to promote the abilities necessary for their future.

Social Skills Acquisition

Social skills comprise a range of behaviors that empower individuals to navigate social tasks successfully. When considering adolescents, these abilities improve their social interactions with peers, enabling them to engage actively in various activities and communicate effectively (Gresham et al., 2010). It is worth noting that social skills encompass the assessment of the competence and conduct of others within particular social contexts, thereby emphasizing the intricate character of such conduct (Gresham et al., 2010). Adolescents place significant importance on cooperation and positive social conduct, as these factors foster amicable relationships with instructors and peers and promote compliance with academic regulations (Schneider, 1992). To assert that the cultivation of social skills is a critical component of adolescent advancement, exerting influence on both academic achievement and interpersonal aptitude. Practical interpersonal abilities are critical for establishing and maintaining significant professional and personal relationships. Efficient communication facilitates improved comprehension, collaboration, and cooperation among individuals, whereas empathy cultivates comprehension and benevolence (Kern et al., 2021) The ability to resolve conflicts constructively is paramount to prevent the escalation of disagreements, whereas cooperation is an essential element in the pursuit of shared goals.

Within the framework of aboriginal communities, Rose et al., (2019) emphasizes the persistent marginalization that isolates them from more extensive development endeavors. Scheduled Tribe (ST) adolescents encounter various obstacles, particularly females grappling with diminished emotional resilience, heightened domestic obligations, and diminished visibility. Given the paramount importance of social skills, the capacity to comprehend, regulate, and conduct oneself rationally in interpersonal interactions is the subject of this research. Developing social intelligence, which Goleman (2020) defines as the capacity to comprehend and interact with others constructively, becomes particularly crucial for adolescents from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Family environments may lack diversity in these circumstances, which can restrict exposure to a range of ideas and lifestyles that have the potential to expand one's horizons and aspirations. Interventions that target the development of social and emotional skills (Durlak et al., 2010; Lauer et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2017) have positively impacted adolescent academic and social outcomes.

Social skills play a crucial role in addressing the obstacles encountered by adolescents from the Paniya tribal community. Cultivating social skills can facilitate the exploration of resolutions for many challenges, encompassing but not limited to enhanced education, conflict resolution, improved communication, access to support networks, employability, leadership, advocacy, and mental health. Developing social skills is ultimately instrumental in assisting adolescents from Paniya in surmounting challenges and enhancing their general welfare (Kern et al., 2021).

There is no much literature that studies the social skills and the importance of intervention to improve the social skills of the Paniya adolescent girls. Hence this study becomes significant in contributing to the need for understanding the social skills of the target population and an intervention. It can be used to replicate social skill training in marginalized communities especially in tribal communities worldwide.

Theoretical Background

This research utilizes multiple theoretical frameworks to thoroughly comprehend the developmental dynamics and obstacles encountered by tribal adolescent females residing in Wayanad, Kerala. Drawing inspiration from Social Skills Theory (Goldstien,199; Bandura,1977) this study underscores the importance of interpersonal relationship skills, effective communication, and empathy during adolescence as fundamental elements for achieving successful social functioning. In support of this viewpoint, Life Skills Theory emphasizes the importance of developing practical abilities in problem-solving, stress management, and decision-making to promote successful living and overall wellbeing. Consistent with the social and emotional learning theory (Goleman,2011), the research acknowledges the importance of incorporating these competencies into educational environments to positively influence academic achievement, interpersonal connections, and psychological wellbeing. Using Cultural Context Theory (Vygotsky,1978) helps us understand the unique problems arising from economic, cultural, and geographical factors. This shows how important it is to make interventions sensitive to different cultures to meet the needs of tribal adolescent girls. This study examines the inadequate attention given to economically and socially disadvantaged adolescents in tribal communities, with a specific focus on the importance of life skills education, considering adolescence's crucial role in personal and social development. The study's purview transcends scholarly deliberations; it acknowledges the interdependence of social and life skills in influencing holistic welfare and prosperous existence and tackles the complex obstacles encountered by tribal adolescent females within their social surroundings.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample comprised of 25 Paniya adolescent girls aged between 12 to 15 years from pre-metric tribal residential hostel at Wayanad district of Kerala. The participants were studying from 7 to 10th standard.

Research Design

The study employed a pre-experimental research design with one group pre-test post-test. To make the intervention effective and dynamic, researcher selected 30 Paniya adolescent girls using purposive sampling method for continuous training, evaluation and follow up. Five of the participants did not attend the entire sessions. Therefore, the researcher included only 25 samples for the post-assessments. Researchers designed a “social skills training program” tailored to the needs of adolescent girls from Paniya tribe. The program was developed based on a pre-assessment of their life skills which necessitated the intervention.

Prior to the intervention, all participating individuals and the hostel in-charge provided their informed consent in writing, ensuring ethical standards and respect for the autonomy of the participants. Pre-assessment was done based on the RGNIYD’s scale for determining the social skills of the adolescents. Understanding the importance of an intervention to improve the social skills, researchers drafted an intervention module with activities which enhance the social skills of the adolescents. The intervention lasted for three months and aimed to enhance specific social skills, including communication, empathy, and interpersonal relationship. After the intervention period, a post-evaluation was conducted using the RGNIYD’s scale for determining the social skills of the adolescents which was used for pretest. Analysis was made on the results of pre-test and post-test and found significant improvement among the Paniya adolescent girls after the intervention.

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Research questions

1. What is the level of social skills among tribal adolescent girls in the Wayanad district?
2. What is the significance of an intervention method in enhancing social skills among Paniya adolescent girls? What intervention would be possible for empowering them?
3. What outcome would be expected from the social skills intervention?

Objectives:

1. To evaluate the existing social skills of tribal adolescent girls in Wayanad district
2. To implement a targeted intervention on social skills based on the pre-assessment of the girls' social skills.
3. To assess the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing the social skills of tribal adolescent girls in the Wayanad district.

Hypotheses

- H1: There will be a statistically significant difference in the interpersonal relationships of tribal adolescent girls before and after the intervention.
- H2: A significant difference will be observed in the communication skills of tribal adolescent girls before and after the intervention.
- H3: There will be a significant difference in the empathy skills of tribal adolescent girls before and after the intervention.

Instruments

- The researcher adapted the RGNIYD's scale for determining the social skills of the adolescents prepared by Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, which demonstrated a reliability of 0.84 and a validity of 89 per cent. It included the 5point Likert scale ranging from "always true" to "true," "sometimes true," "not true," and "never true."
- The study employed a paired t-test to analyse the mean scores before and after the social skills interventions, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 29).

Intervention module

An Intervention module was prepared by the researchers taking into consideration of the needs of enhancing social skills especially communication, interpersonal and empathy. Group and individual assignment directed towards improving communication skills through group discussions, role play, basic communication technique sessions, games, and real time situational exposure. Interpersonal skill enhancement through face-to-face interactions, group interactions, etiquettes, values and morales for societal living, role play and real-time exposure. Empathetic skill training was given through real life situations, problem solving techniques, role plays, etc.

This module was systematically arranged in such a way that Paniya adolescent girls were trained for three months continuously closely observed and monitored. Repeating the activities to ensure maximum outcome was ensured. The module was prepared in the cultural context of Paniya tribe which was validated by experts working among Paniya tribe, academicians, social workers and life skill trainers.

Table 1. Social Skills Training Schedule

Timeline	Hours	Skills	Method	Activities
Month 1	10	Communication	Group activities, story -telling, Role plays, public speaking and writing, brainstorming	Ice breaking session, Understanding Cues, Political candidate campaign elocution, Word Warier Challenge, Imaginary writing
Month 2	10	Inter-personal relationship	Team building exercises, Roleplay, group activities and Brain storming	Friendship flower and blind walk, The Art of Relationship, Laugh and learn, Web of Life
Month 3	10	Empathy	Story -telling, group activity, individual activity, Short-film, Critical thinking exercises	Insight into Your Action, One home but different plans, The power of Perspective, Cultivating compassion

RESULTS

The variables follow a normal distribution, and we used the Shapiro-Wilk test to determine the p-value for these variables. The research involved 25 tribal adolescent girls residing in the Paniya hamlet within the Wayanad district of Kerala.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of participants

Characteristic	Type	No. of participants	Frequency (%)
Adolescent's Age	Early	6	24
	Middle	11	44
	Late	8	32
Family Type	Nuclear	17	68
	Joint	08	32
Father's education	Illiterate	5	20
	Primary	18	72
	High School	2	08
	Higher secondary	-	-
	Degree and above	-	-
Mother's education	Illiterate	15	60
	Primary	10	40
	High School	-	-
	Higher secondary	-	-
	Degree and above	-	-
Monthly Income of parents	Upto 5000	15	60
	6000-10000	09	36
	11000-15000	1	04
	15000 and above	0	-

N=25

Table 3. The mean differences and SD of variables of the study

Variables	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Pair 1	Pre-Interpersonal Relationship	2.0400	25	.29700	.05940
	Post-Interpersonal Relationship	3.8291	25	.35435	.07087
Pair 2	Pre- Communication	2.0311	25	.26935	.05387
	Post-Communication	3.6844	25	.36946	.07389
Pair 3	Pre-Empathy	2.7309	25	.35060	.07012
	Post-Empathy	3.9927	25	.37383	.07477

Continuous variables are presented as mean (SD), and categorical variables are presented as frequency with percentages in the descriptive statistics. We conducted a paired sample t-test to compare the mean scores for social skills and intervention between pre- and post-assessment tests.

Table 4. Paired t-test and p-value of the pre-and-post social skills of the samples.

Paired Samples t- Test		Paired Differences		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Variables (3 Pairs)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Lower	Upper				
			1	Pre- Inter- Post-Inter	-1.78909	.49357	-1.99283	-1.58536
2	Pre-com Post- com	-1.65333	.48253	-1.85251	-1.45415	-17.132	24	.000
3	Pre- Empath Post- Empathy	-1.26182	.31853	-1.39330	-1.13034	-19.807	24	.000

p-value <0.001

The presented data encompass socio-demographic details and the outcomes of paired sample t-tests conducted on pre- and post-assessment measures, focusing on social skills, interpersonal relationships, communication, and empathy. Mean scores indicate the average differences before and after the intervention for each variable, with a 95% confidence interval and degrees of freedom ('df'). The results demonstrate statistically significant mean differences in interpersonal relationship skills (pair-1), communication skills (pair-2), and empathy skills (pair-3), as evidenced by p-values less than 0.001. The acceptance of all three hypotheses underscores the effectiveness of the social skills intervention among Paniya tribal adolescent girls in Wayanad, Kerala.

The Paniya tribal community, concentrated in Kerala and Tamil Nadu's southern states, faces persistent challenges among its adolescent population. Addressing issues like illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, and social marginalization is crucial for their development and wellbeing. A targeted social skills intervention program designed for Paniya tribal adolescents resolves existing problems and invests in their future. Empowering these adolescents with necessary social skills benefits them individually and contributes to the social and economic upliftment of the entire Paniya community. This approach aims to

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foster a more inclusive and equitable society, promoting the thriving of every member, regardless of background (Rahna & Nithya, 2022).

The study's comprehensive baseline assessment, intervention program development, and implementation involved collaboration with community members, school teachers, tribal promoters, and NGO workers. The standardized tool by the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development gauged initial social skills levels. Experts validated and executed a targeted intervention module over three months in collaboration with Paniya tribal adolescents based on the findings. External experts collaborated in post-intervention assessments, which revealed an improvement in the participants' social skills compared to initial assessments. This study highlights the efficacy of tailored interventions in addressing the unique needs of marginalized tribal populations and promoting their social integration and wellbeing.

The research findings, demonstrating a significant difference (p -value 0.000) between pre- and post-intervention assessments, align with previous studies emphasizing the positive impact of life skills education on adolescents' social and academic skills. Specifically, the study reduces school dropout rates and enhances academic performance (Durlak et al., 2010; Lauer et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2017; Sinkar, 2013). The study's focus on improving social skills among adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds resonates with research highlighting the challenges faced by students in underprivileged families and the need for life skills interventions (Anthony et al., 2009; Frazier et al., 2015).

The study's results underscore the effectiveness of the life skills intervention in enhancing the social relationships of tribal adolescent girls from the Paniya community. Statistical significance, with a p -value of 0.000 and SD of 0.49357, supports the positive impact of the intervention. The study's findings align with previous research, emphasizing the positive outcomes of life skills interventions, including improved social skills, reduced school dropout rates, and enhanced academic performance (Khera et al., 2012; Sinkar, 2013). The study recognizes the importance of addressing socio-demographic characteristics, and the lack of significant differences between pre- and post-assessment stages adds credibility to the findings (Sinkar G., 2013).

The study evaluates the differences in communication, interpersonal relationships, and empathy skills between pre- and post-assessment among tribal adolescent girls. Statistically significant mean differences, supported by p -values of less than 0.001, confirm the acceptance of all three hypotheses. The study's findings align with existing research emphasizing the positive impact of intervention programs on adolescents' social and academic skills (Durlak et al., 2010; Lauer et al., 2006; Taylor et al., 2017). The outcomes contribute to the body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of tailored interventions in addressing the specific needs of marginalized tribal populations, ultimately promoting their social integration and overall wellbeing.

The Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development developed a standardized scale of life-skills assessment, ensuring reliability (0.84) and validity (89%) in this study. This rigorous approach strengthens the study's credibility and aligns with previous researches highlighting the positive impact of life skills education on adolescents' health outcomes and wellbeing (Alwell & Cobb, 2009; Cronin et al., 2017; Gautham et al., 2020; Weichold & Blumenthal, 2016). The study's emphasis on social and emotional maturity aligns with the

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importance of life skills in enhancing adolescents' health knowledge, attitudes, and overall development (Samhitha et al., 2020).

Implementing a life skills intervention focused on social skills significantly enhanced the social relationships of tribal adolescent girls. The study's findings align with previous research, indicating that life skills education positively impacts adolescents' social and academic skills. The statistical significance of the study, with a p -value of 0.000, underscores the effectiveness of the intervention. Moreover, the study recognizes the importance of addressing socio-demographic characteristics, with no significant differences observed between the pre-and post-assessment stages. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on life skills interventions, emphasizing their role in promoting positive social outcomes among adolescents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of this study's focused intervention and methodology has made evident the substantial progress in the social aptitudes of tribal adolescent girls from the Paniya community in Wayanad, as well as the wider ramifications of imparting life skills education to marginalized communities worldwide. The positive results of the research emphasize the profound impact that the targeted life skills intervention could have on the individuals involved, particularly in terms of enhancing their abilities to communicate, develop supportive relationships, and demonstrate empathy. As indicated by p -values less than 0.001, the statistically significant mean differences validate the intervention's efficacy. This is consistent with the findings of numerous international studies (Durlak et al., 2010; Lauer et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2017) that teaching life skills to adolescents can have a positive effect on educational and social domains.

Although the socio-demographic information presented in Table 2 provides significant contextual information, it is acknowledged that these variables may not directly impact the outcomes of the interventions. Still, understanding the different social, economic, and family situations that the tribal adolescent girls came from help us understand the group we are studying better and shows how important it is to look at problems from around the world when trying to help marginalized groups.

The research is notable for implementing a standardized life-skills evaluation instrument provided by the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, significantly increasing the study's validity and reliability. Employing a paired t -test and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 29) for comprehensive statistical analysis enhances the study's credibility and helps secure robust conclusions regarding the positive impacts of the intervention.

Replicating positive results in various global contexts is more likely when they align with prior international research on life skills interventions for marginalized groups (Khera et al., 2012; Sinkar, 2013). There is more and more evidence that life skills education works because it is consistently carried out. This shows how important it is for society as a whole to meet the unique needs of marginalized communities around the world. The intervention's design to address the unique obstacles encountered by the Paniya tribal community underscores the importance of community-specific and culturally sensitive strategies in fostering social integration and general welfare. This finding emphasizes the significance of recognizing and addressing the unique requirements of marginalized communities when developing interventions worldwide.

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In addition, community initiatives and educational curricula that incorporate life skills education have far-reaching implications for the strategic and sustainable integration of fundamental abilities into everyday existence on a global scale. This extends beyond the immediate scope of the study and is consistent with the overarching objective of promoting community resilience and self-sufficiency.

The study underscores the critical need for continuation initiatives at a global level, in recognition of the lasting effects that life skills training has produced. This factor is crucial in maintaining and optimizing the observed long-term advantages, guaranteeing ongoing positive progress, and encouraging more engaged members of their communities around the world to continue contributing. Consistent with the study's objective of promoting inclusive and equitable societal progress worldwide, the advocacy for the ongoing incorporation of targeted life skills education is evident.

This discourse provides additional clarification regarding the diverse and substantial contributions of the studies. It emphasizes the transformative potential of life skills education for marginalized populations worldwide and affirms the positive outcomes of the life skills intervention. Given the study's limitations, including the relatively small sample size and the narrow focus on the Paniya tribal community, it is crucial to exercise caution when generalizing these findings to different international contexts and approach them with nuance. This research makes a substantial contribution to the global dialogue on inclusive and equitable societal development by serving as a beacon for the continued incorporation of targeted life skills education in order to empower and elevate marginalized communities.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this research illuminates the global necessity of supporting the development of social skills among indigenous adolescent females, acknowledging the pivotal significance of this period in the formation of social identities. This study sheds light on the distinctive obstacles encountered by Paniya tribal girls residing in the Wayanad region of Kerala, India. These obstacles are multifaceted, encompassing cultural, economic, and geographical elements.

A statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) was observed in the scores for communication, interpersonal, and empathy abilities prior to and subsequent to the assessment, as determined through the implementation of purposive sampling. This indicates the efficacy of social skills interventions. This discrepancy underscores the urgent requirement for heightened international financial commitment towards social skills education, particularly in regard to marginalized populations.

The knowledge acquired from this study is crucial for policymakers, educators, Social-workers and community leaders, as it establishes a groundwork for supporting curriculum reforms that take into account the intricate needs of indigenous and tribal communities across the globe. Through endorsing the proposition for increased financial investment and focus on social skills education, this research significantly contributes to the overall progress and well-being of indigenous youth worldwide.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the transformative impact that life skills training has on tribal youth, as it stimulates constructive transformations, enhances interpersonal exchanges, and promotes ongoing advancement. The significance of these interventions in promoting the development and maturation of indigenous adolescent females worldwide and fostering a

more equitable and inclusive future is indisputable. In anticipation of future developments, the results of this research underscore the ongoing imperative to prioritize and execute efficacious social skills education initiatives on a global scale, with the aim of benefiting marginalized communities.

Ethical Approval

Prior to commencement, of the study received approval from the researcher's Institutional Review Board (IRB No. RCEC/00357/08/22), ensuring alignment with the ethical research guidelines of the University. Obtained official authorization from the State Government of Kerala Tribal Department, demonstrating respect for local regulations. Informed consent was acquired from study participants, their parents, and institutional authorities whom the participants affiliated with. Participants were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the intervention at any point of time, emphasizing voluntary participation and autonomy.

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