

## **SUMMARY OF UGC MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT**

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### **IMPLEMENTING A SOCIAL LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR THE UPLIFTMENT OF RURAL GIRL STUDENTS OF BACKWARD COMMUNITIES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Development of social skills is a prime concern of education. Nowadays, social scientists and educationists all over the world give emphasis in the social development of human beings through education especially of the backward communities. A person having higher level of education can possess a higher social status and hence accessibility to quality education is an effective tool for social development.

Article 246 of the constitution of India has entrusted the state with the responsibility of promoting the economic and educational interest of the SCs and STs. Even though there are innumerable programmes for the cognitive training of the students, efforts to assure social upliftment among backward children are very rare. The weaker sections of the community are still marginalized in getting proper socialization and social skills. Poor health and

malnutrition cause poor classroom performance, early school dropout and withdrawal from social participation. If they are provided with the right type of education, the backward communities especially rural children will come to the active social scenario. Since gender equality in education focuses on equality of treatment also, the rural girl children of backward communities must be given special attention for sustained change. Main streaming a gender perspective through building and strengthening the less privileged to enhance their social skills can be achieved through social literacy programmes.

Social literacy includes development of social skills, knowledge of society and positive human values that engender the desire and abilities in human beings to act positively and responsibly in range of complex settings. Enabling the rural girls of backward communities to acquire social skills so that they can grow into healthy and productive adults is possible through appropriate social literacy programmes.

### **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

A number of programmes and schemes have been formulated and implemented for improving the quality and standard of living of backward communities as well as of women. They include schemes for improving basic amenities, infrastructural facilities, health and nutritional programmes financial assistance and the like. Education should be given top priority for enjoying the fruits of real development.

The investigators, being teacher educators, observed in the classrooms that the girl students of rural schools especially those who belong to backward communities have strong inhibitions to interact inside the classroom as well as in the society. These students were also found being neglected by majority of teachers. Teachers are reluctant to ask questions to them, assuming that they rarely give correct answers. General programmes for the backward communities are not enough to strengthen these groups since their mental, emotional and social set is unstable. Continuous withdrawal from active social groups may develop feelings of inferiority among them and this may cause further detachment from the mainstream of the society.

The role of teachers to empower the minority groups inside the classroom is significant. Through enhancing the confidence and energizing the skills of the poor and the less privileged, the teachers can build up an active social group within the four walls of the school. This will enable them to extend the acquired skills to the immediate neighborhood as well to the society where they live in. Through a well-planned social literacy programme that strengthens the internal capacities, the rural girl students of backward communities can be brought to the forefront and help them to act as responsible social beings. The present study is an attempt in this direction.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The present study aims at achieving the main objective as:

- Preparing and implementing a social literacy programme for the rural girl students of backward communities.

The specific objectives of the social literacy programme are:

- To develop awareness in social values.
- To make them aware of the specific legal, economic and educational provisions to safe guard themselves.
- To bring attention towards the social issues which affect them directly or indirectly
- To develop skills for healthy social life.
- To strengthen social participation by breaking the emotional barriers they feel.
- To encourage them to become responsible citizens to contribute for social wellbeing.
- To improve academic performance through knowledge acquisition.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The sample for the present study includes 156 high school girl students of standard VIII & IX belong to backward communities in the rural areas of Pathanapuram Panchayat in Kollam district. Three high schools were selected for the study. The details of the sample selected are given below.

**Table 1. Details of the Sample**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Name of the School</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
1	Mount Tabor Girls High School, Pathanapuram	68
2	CAM H.S Shalempuram, Pathanapuram	26
3	St. Goretti H.S.S, Punalur	62

The sample was selected with the help of the class teachers since they have more familiarity with these students.

## **PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY**

### **Phase – I Preparation of the Social Literacy Package.**

The investigators prepared package for social literacy training which was used as a coaching guide for the whole programme to train and motivate the target group. This package includes the following topics:

- a. Developing self-confidence.
- b. Communication and interpersonal relationship
- c. Systematic study habit.

- d. Awareness about physical and mental health.
- e. Economic and legal provisions for backward communities
- f. Awareness about social evils and social issues

### **Phase – II Training for Social Literacy**

The investigators got prior permission of the school authorities for allotting time for interaction with the students. The class teachers are given a brief orientation of the programme so that they can follow-up the activities. The first terminal examination marks were recorded as pre training achievement to assess the present academic level. The training proceeded with following strategies.

- Induction to social literacy programme through general briefing
- Individualized interaction to identify the barriers and needs
- Media aided (video/PowerPoint/newspaper/audio) awareness on social literacy
- Group Discussions
- Oral/Poster Presentation by students
- Counselling

The above approach helped to identify each student and their needs and facilitated in fostering their social skills.

### **Phase – III Reflection, Evaluation and Follow up Activities**

The students are asked to write down their attitudes, thoughts and benefits during the programme. The teachers' reflections were also collected. The teachers were asked to collect opinion of the parents regarding their children's improvement. All these data were used as evidences of the success of the programme.

The marks obtained for second terminal examination was collected and used as post training achievement. The marks of the first and second terminal examinations were used to compare the performance before and after the training. For effective follow up, the teachers of the schools are given guidance for supporting the students and motivating them to improve their social skills further. The investigators also visited the schools and took feed-back from students and teachers.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The present study is intended to find out the effects of a social literacy training programme developed and implemented for the uplift of rural girl students of backward communities.

### **Major Outcomes of the Programme**

The reflections of the students, teachers and parents showed that the following are the major outcomes of the programmes

- Improved self-confidence and self-awareness

- Developed ability to identify social problems that hinder the development of girl students
- Got awareness on physical and mental health
- Acquired knowledge about economic and legal provisions for backward communities
- Enhanced communication skills
- Developed goal setting ability for life
- Developed study habits for better learning
- Developed ability of sensitization towards social issues

### **Comparison of Academic Achievement**

Academic achievement was taken as a quantitative evidence for the development of the target group in order to supplement the qualitative results obtained. The comparison of the academic achievement prior to training and after training is as follows.

#### **(i) Achievement of Target Group of St. Goretti H. S. Punalur.**

The following table (table. 2) shows the average marks obtained by the target group for the various subjects in the tests of pre-training and post-training periods.

**Table 2. Achievement of target group of St. Goretti H S Punalur**

**Total no. of students-62**

	<b>Average marks per subject out of 50</b>			
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Pre-Training</b>	<b>Post-Training</b>	<b>Difference in Marks (%)</b>
1	Malayalam I	26.30	31.48	5.18(10.36)
2	Malayalam II	33.12	37.85	4.73(9.46)
3	English	24.96	29.72	4.76(9.52)
4	Physics	24.75	27.45	2.70(5.40)
5	Chemistry	24.41	26.98	2.57(5.14)
6	Biology	26.00	29.19	3.19(6.38)
7	Mathematics	25.25	26.51	1.26(2.52)
8	Social Science	25.12	28.69	3.57(7.14)
	<b>Aggregate Average</b>	<b>26.12</b>	<b>29.73</b>	<b>3.61(7.22%)</b>

Achievement of target group of St. Goretti H.S. Punalur is given in Table 2. The above table signifies that the training programme has considerable positive influence on the achievement of students in various subjects. Malayalam subject marked the highest difference in marks 5.18 out of 50 (10.36%). English also has similar influence in achievement. The difference in marks is 4.76 out of 50 (9.52). Mathematics subject was experienced by them as the most difficult and the difference in marks is 1.26 out of 50 (2.52% only). The difference in the aggregate average marks of pre training and post training was found to be 3.61 out of 50 (7.22% improvement). In general there is a considerable increase in marks of post training achievement in all subjects. This signifies the fact that the training programme was highly useful for them to enhance their academic achievement.

**(ii) Achievement of Target Group of CAM H.S. Salempuram**

The following table (Table 3) shows the average marks obtained by the target group for the various subjects in the pre-training and post-training tests.

**Table 3. Achievement of target group of CAM HS Salempuram**

**Total no. of students-26**

Average marks per subject out of 50				
SL.	subject	Pre-Training	Post training	Difference

<b>No</b>				<b>in Mark (%)</b>
1	Malayalam I	27.19	29.30	2.11(4.22)
2	Malayalam II	21.50	28.62	7.12(14.24)
3	English	19.69	23.61	3.92(7.84)
4	Physics	23.69	26.38	2.69(5.38)
5	Chemistry	23.30	23.65	0.35(0.70)
6	Biology	23.42	28.50	5.08(10.16)
7	Mathematics	23.07	23.98	0.91(1.82)
8	Social Science	18.73	26.84	8.11(16.22)
	<b>Aggregate Average</b>	<b>22.61</b>	<b>26.36</b>	<b>3.75 (7.50%)</b>

Achievement of Target group of CAM H.S Salempuram, Pathanapuram is given above. In the midst of many difficulties, the students of this school have registered a considerable progress in Malayalam second paper, Biology and Social Science in post training (difference in marks are 7.12, 5.08 and 8.11 respectively). But it is very meager in Chemistry and Mathematics (difference in marks are 0.35 and 0.91 respectively). For the subject English, the difference is notable (difference in marks is 3.92). It is proved that the teaching strategies adopted in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and English need to be revamped for the benefit of these students. Their pre-training achievement in Social

Science was the lowest of all other subjects. But in the post training test, their performance in the subject was high. (difference in marks is 8.11, 16.22% improvement). This shows that social literacy enhancement programme helped in improving the Social Science Achievement.

**(iii) Achievement of Target Group of Mount Tabor HS Pathanapuram**

The following table (table. 4) shows the average marks obtained by the target group for the various subjects in the pre-training and post-training tests.

**Table 4. Achievement of target group of Mount Tabor HS Pathanapuram**

**Total no. of students-68**

<b>Average marks per subject out of 50</b>				
<b>SL. No</b>	<b>subject</b>	<b>Pre-Training</b>	<b>Post Training</b>	<b>Difference in Mark (%)</b>
1	Malayalam I	26.61	28.50	1.89(3.78)
2	Malayalam II	22.36	24.23	1.87(3.74)
3	English	19.38	20.54	1.16(2.32)
4	Physics	22.14	24.86	2.72(5.44)
5	Chemistry	21.35	22.75	1.40(2.80)
6	Biology	22.55	25.57	3.02((6.04)
7	Mathematics	22.25	22.79	0.54(1.08)
8	Social Science	17.51	23.98	6.47(12.94)

	<b>Aggregate Average</b>	<b>21.76</b>	<b>24.15</b>	<b>2.39 (4.78%)</b>
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Achievement of Target group of Mount Tabor H.S., Pathanapuram is given in Table 4. The post training performance of the students of this school is satisfactory in all subjects and in the case of Social Science and Biology, it is appreciable. Their achievement in pre training test in Social Science was the lowest of all other subjects. But the post training achievement was the highest when compared to all other subjects.

Thus the analysis shows that there is considerable improvement in the academic achievement of these students which proved that they are motivated to learn through the social literacy training programme. Hence the social literacy programme is found to be successful in enhancing the academic achievement of rural girls of backward communities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The social intelligence of a person, that helps one to perform efficiently as a social human being, needs to be nourished in the classrooms. As a miniature of the society, the classrooms and school presents many hurdles before the marginalized and socially deprived students from identifying and utilizing their full potentials. The personal

barriers in the growing process of girl students are crucial and teachers are the apt tools for making changes in the cognition of learners. The teacher interventions to promote social literacy are to be considered as a prime responsibility of teachers at any level of education. As mentors, teachers have to assume their responsibilities wholeheartedly for the social development of the student community especially for the uplift of the more needy ones in the society.