AATCC Review

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Empowering Rural and Tribal Women: Enhancing Self-Awareness through Intervention and Identifying Determinants

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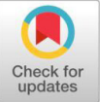
ABSTRACT

The present study is to examine the effectiveness of the intervention program in enhancing self-awareness levels among rural and tribal women. One hundred and twenty (n=120) women were selected from Adilabad and Kumarambheem Asifabad districts of Telangana State. The sample comprised of rural (60%) and tribal (60%) with ages ranging between 25-50 years, were drawn by purposive random sampling method. A self-developed scale was administered to collect the data. The findings of the study revealed that the majority (63%) of the rural and tribal women were not adequately aware of their own self prior to intervention. After the intervention, 58 % of rural and tribal women enhanced their self-awareness levels after exposure to the intervention. The present findings emphasise a need for planning suitable intervention programs for enhancing self-awareness levels among women. Findings of the study highlighted the significant improvement in self-awareness levels among rural and tribal women which can serve as a foundation for personal growth, self-empowerment, and community development among marginalized populations.

The study faced challenges related to the cultural diversity and geographical dispersion of the rural and tribal communities, as well as potential language barriers and limited access to education and resources among the participants. Moreover, this research underscores the need for continued efforts to design and implement culturally sensitive and region-specific programs to address the unique challenges faced by rural and tribal women, ultimately promoting their well-being and social progress.

Keywords: Women empowerment, rural women, tribal women, intervention programme, self-awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Self-awareness is the capacity to accurately identify and recognize one's emotions, perceptions, thoughts, and their influences on one's behaviors. This is the ability to correctly evaluate their preferences, needs, strengths, values, weaknesses, self-efficacy, and self-confidence maintenance (CASEL, 2015; Sharp, 2012). Self-awareness is also an essential component for intra-personal growth, life satisfaction, and self-fulfillment in life (Stefanus *et al*. 2021). According to self-awareness theory (Duval and Wicklund, 1972) a person who has a strong sense of self is able to look inward and examine their thoughts, feelings, emotional responses, behaviors, strengths, and flaws which helps an individual to become proactive, confident, empathetic, creative, communicative and other positive aspects of their self and be able to work towards their self-development and achieve a sense of self fulfillment. Self-awareness makes an impact on people's day-to-day lives and provides initial evidence of the outcomes associated with the practice of common mindfulness and self-awareness techniques (Steiner, 2014). There are various researches has been done from more than a decade, which show that self-awareness is a major contributing factor for success, growth, and development. But research studies revealed that women especially from marginal communities had poor self-awareness (Sandhya and Sreedevi 2021 and Prashanthi *et al.* 2021).

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The rationale of the study stems from the pressing need to address the apparent lack of self-awareness among rural and tribal women. This study is motivated by the understanding that self-awareness is a crucial component of personal development, empowerment, and overall well-being. The existing gap in self-awareness levels within these demographic groups underscores the need for targeted interventions that can uplift their self-perception, enhance their understanding of strengths and weaknesses, and enable them to make informed life choices. Moreover, the study recognizes that self-awareness is intricately linked to factors like family independence, education, self-esteem, role clarity, and locus of control. By examining these factors and their influence on self-awareness, the study seeks to provide valuable insights for tailored interventions.

The significance of the study lies in its potential to bring about positive change in the lives of rural and tribal women. Empowering these women with higher self-awareness can lead to increased confidence, better decision-making, improved emotional well-being, and a stronger sense of agency in their lives. Additionally, the study acknowledges that such interventions can have a cascading effect, impacting not only individual women but also their families and communities. By uncovering effective strategies for enhancing self-awareness, this study aims to contribute to the broader goal of promoting gender equity, personal growth, and socio-economic development within marginalized communities.

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SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is confined to a specific group of 120 women residing in rural and tribal areas of Adilabad and Komaram Bheem districts in Telangana. The primary focus of the study is to investigate the impact of a self-awareness intervention program on the levels of self-awareness among these women. Additionally, the study aims to assess the potential influence of various factors, including family independence, education, self-esteem, role clarity, and locus of control, on their self-awareness. It's important to note that the findings of this research are not intended for generalization beyond the defined sample and geographic area. The study predominantly employs quantitative methods, relying on mean scores to measure changes in self-awareness. The ultimate goal is to gain insights into effective strategies for enhancing self-awareness among rural and tribal women, with the overarching aim of contributing to their personal growth and development.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several studies have delved into the realms of self-awareness enhancement and life skills education, shedding light on their transformative effects across diverse populations. Kumari and Rani (2021) demonstrated a shift from moderate to high self-awareness among rural women post-intervention. Raj and Devi (2021) revealed positive effects on emotional intelligence and life satisfaction in young women through life skills education. Sandhya and Sreedevi (2021) found intervention-enhanced self-awareness among rural women during COVID-19. Prashanthi et al. (2021) addressed low self-awareness in empowering farm women. Bari and Rani (2021) highlighted gaps in self-knowledge among rural adolescent girls. Aziznejad et al. (2019) showed how self-awareness training for mothers benefited their sons. Buvaneswari and Sylvia (2018) discovered varied self-awareness levels among nursing students. Turan (2018) demonstrated life skills' impact on self-awareness and self-respect in young girls. Soolgi and Sungjae (2016) underscored reflection-based interventions in nursing for self-awareness improvement. Parvathy and Pillai (2015) found positive outcomes of life skills education on self-awareness among rural adolescents in Kerala.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Ex-post facto research design was employed to collect the data.

Locale of the study

- Adilabad and Kumaram Bheem districts of Telangana state were purposively selected for conducting the study. Telangana is the only south Indian state with a tribal population of 9.34 percent out of its total population as per 2011 census (Tribal Welfare Department Telangana state). Which is the most backward and with the highest tribal and rural population in Adilabad and Kumarambheem Asifabad districts. (Earlier Komaram Bheem Asifabad was part of the Adilabad district and it became a new district in 2016).

Sampling Procedure

- A purposive random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Women under the age groups of 25 to 50 years were selected to represent the sample.

Sample Size

- A sample of 120 (n1=60 rural and n2=60 tribal) women was identified and the primary data was collected from women with the help of a self-developed scale.

Tools Used

- The investigator developed a scale to gather the data on self-awareness levels among women.

STATUS OF SELF-AWARENESS LEVELS AMONG WOMEN BEFORE INTERVENTION

Self-awareness is the ability to see oneself clearly and objectively through reflection and introspection. A person with good self-awareness can gain insight into his own values, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, strengths, and weaknesses and more deeply understand him/her-self. It helps to become more proactive, confident, and creative and encourages positive self-development (Sutton, 2016). Thus, self-awareness is an essential component for intra-personal growth and self-fulfillment in life.

The table 1.1 deals with the level of Self-Awareness among the respondents prior to intervention. Self-awareness was studied in terms of essential knowledge and skills of women about their personal abilities, challenges, needs, desires, values, choices and life goals to attain sense of self-fulfilment. The data on levels of self-awareness among women obtained is discussed below.

Table 1.1 Distribution of women based on levels of self-awareness before intervention. (n1=60, n2=60, n=120)

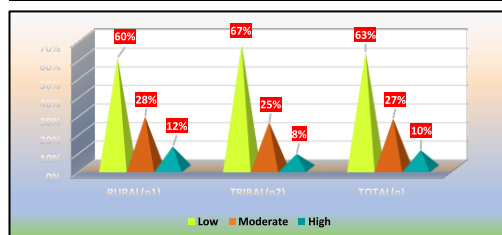| S. No	Self-Awareness	Rural (n1)		Tribal (n2)		Total (n)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Low	36	60	40	67	76	63
2	Moderate	17	28	15	25	32	27
3	High	7	12	5	8	12	10
	Total	60	100	60	100	120	100

Figure 1.1 Self-awareness levels of rural and tribal women before intervention

The above table 1.1 reveals that about two-thirds of the respondents (63%) had low levels of self-awareness followed by moderate levels (27%) and only a meagre percent (10 %) had high levels of self-awareness. A similar trend was observed in both rural and tribal women(Figure 1.1). This indicates that the majority of the rural and tribal women were not adequately aware of their own self.

The above findings clearly depict that the majority of the rural and tribal women had poor self-understanding and self-concept. They were not fully aware of their existing abilities and skills. They were able to express only some of their personal strengths in which they are good at, values, and deepest desires in their life.

However they were not very aware of their own emotional states, personal needs, and choices in life. They were also not familiar with their own weaknesses in which they needed to improve upon in their life. Apart from these, they had very poor insight over what were their challenges and barriers in life and how to face and overcome them. It was also observed that though they had little idea about the different goals they hope to achieve in their lifetime but do not have much clarity about in which direction they needed to move in order to achieve their goals and how to make use of their existing strengths effectively. This might be due to the reason that the majority of rural and tribal women were uneducated, less trained on practicing different aspects of self-awareness which in turn might lead to the development of poor self-image and negative self-beliefs.

The above results were supported by Prashanthi *et al.* (2021) who found that the majority of the farm women (66%) had low self-awareness skills followed by moderate and high. Similarly, Sandhya and Sreedevi (2021) found that 60% of rural women had low self-awareness skills followed by moderate (23%) and very few had high levels. Kumari and Rani (2021) also found that rural women had self-awareness in only some aspects of their lives. Along with these, Bari and Rani (2021) and Buvaneswari and Sylvia (2018) revealed similar findings.

It can be concluded from the above results that only few rural and tribal women had awareness on some aspects of their self and the majority were not having adequate self-awareness skills. Hence, there was a need for intervention to enhance self-awareness levels among rural and tribal women to attain a better sense of self-fulfillment.

EFFECT OF INTERVENTION ON SELF-AWARENESS LEVELS OF WOMEN
Subsection deals with the effect of intervention in enhancing the levels of rural and tribal women in the dimension of self-awareness. The details of the effect of the intervention on self-awareness levels are discussed below.

Table 1.1 Distribution of women based on levels of self-awareness before intervention. (n1=60, n2=60, n=120)

S. No	Self-Awareness	Rural (n1)		Tribal (n2)		Total (n)	
		Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	Low	36 (60%)	5 (8%)	40 (67%)	11 (18%)	76 (63%)	16 (13%)
2	Moderate	17 (28%)	13 (22%)	15 (25%)	22 (37%)	32 (27%)	35 (29%)
3	High	7 (12%)	42 (70%)	5 (8%)	27 (45%)	12 (10%)	69 (58%)
Total		**60 (100%)**	**60 (100%)**	**60 (100%)**	**60 (100%)**	**120 (100%)**	**120 (100%)**

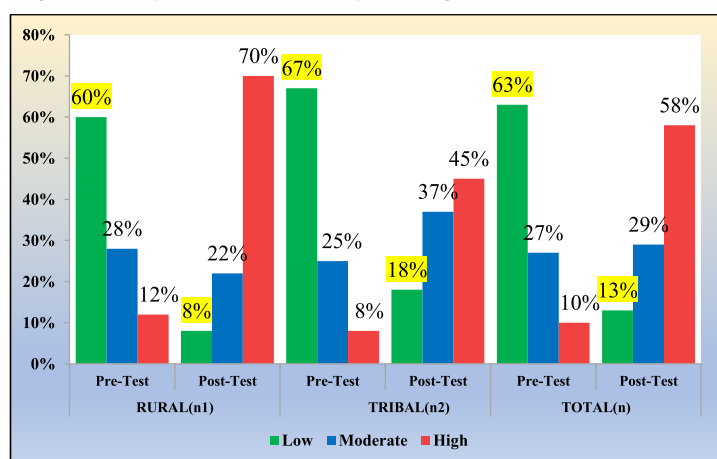*(Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentages)*

Figure 1.2 Self-awareness levels of rural and tribal women before and after intervention

The above Table 1.2 represents the levels of self-awareness that altered as a result of an intervention program. It was found that low levels of self-awareness were reduced from 63 % to 13 % of women, moderate levels of self-awareness were enhanced from 27 % to 29 % and high levels from 10 % to 58 % of women after exposure to the intervention. It clearly indicates that both rural and tribal women with low self-awareness were drastically upgraded to high followed by moderate levels of self-awareness after receiving the intervention program.

It was also noticed that self-awareness levels improved slightly more among rural women when compared to tribal women (Figure 1.2).
From the above findings, it was noticed that the majority of the women who were not well aware of their existing abilities and skills were well aware and started acknowledging their capabilities after being exposed to the intervention. Women who were to some extent aware of their strengths, values, and deepest desires in life were well-known after receiving the intervention. Women who were very poor in identifying their own weaknesses, flaws, self-needs, life choices, and emotional patterns were able to realize and reflect well after receiving the intervention. They were motivated to work on their weaknesses on a regular basis. Women who had little idea about goals were able to gain a clear understanding of their purpose in life and were able to express in which direction they needed to move in order to achieve their goals in life. They were also able to spotify their own challenges and barriers and began to find different ways to deal with and overcome them. They began to focus more on themselves by paying more focus and attention to themself.
On par with the above, Kumari and Rani (2021) also revealed that the intervention program on emotional awareness, self-appraisal, self-confidence, self-consciousness, self-efficacy, self-concept, self-reflection, self-motivation, self-regulation, and social awareness had improved the mean scores of self-awareness levels among farm women at 0.01 level of significance.

Similarly, Aziznejad *et al.* (2019) found that intervention in defining and acquainting self-awareness skills such as self-concept, types of self, benefits, factors affecting and barriers to self-awareness enhanced mean scores in components of self-awareness among mothers at 0.01 level of significance. In line with the above, Turan (2018) also indicated that Life skills intervention (critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, communication skills and interpersonal relations, coping with emotions and stress, self-awareness, and empathy) had increased the perceived self-awareness levels and better self-respect among young girls. Apart from these Soolgi and Sungjae (2016) stated that self-reflection training enhanced self-awareness levels. From the above results, it can be concluded that the intervention improved self-awareness levels among rural and tribal women.

Table 1.3 Mean differences in self-awareness levels of women before and after intervention (n=120)

S.No	Component	PRE-TEST		POST-TEST		t value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	Self-awareness	26.29	6.96	31.58	7.96	6.15**

**p≤ 0.01 level of significance

Table 1.4 explains the mean score differences in self-awareness levels of rural and tribal women before and after the intervention. It is evident from the table that the mean scores of self-awareness levels enhanced from 26.29 with SD 6.96 to 31.58 with SD 7.96 after exposure to the intervention. The calculated paired 't' value 6.15 was found to be statistically significant at a 0.01 level of significance. It clearly depicts that the content covered under intervention helped rural and tribal women to learn more about discovering their own selves. It can be inferred that strategies like looking into self, identifying and reflecting on one's own strengths and weaknesses, values, ideologies, desires, needs, life goals, cha3llenges and barriers, etc. helped the women to gain more insight about their own self and they were well aware of what they are and where they need to improve, etc. Thus, the intervention planned under the study enhanced self-awareness skills among rural and tribal women. The findings of the study were in line with Sandhya and Sreedevi (2021) who revealed that intervention had enhanced the mean scores of self-awareness levels among farm women at 0.01 level of significance. Similarly, Raj and Devi (2021) also revealed that life skills education had improved the mean score differences in self-awareness levels of young women at 0.01 level of significance. In line with the above, Parvathy and Pillai (2015) found that Life skills educational training had increased the overall self-awareness among adolescents at 0.05 level of significance.

Hence, it can be concluded that the intervention program had a significant positive effect on the knowledge and skills of women related to self-awareness. Further, it can be concluded that the strategies used under educational intervention were found to be effective in enhancing the self-awareness levels of rural and tribal women. It helped the women to enlighten more about their real selves and also enabled them to shift their perception from a deficient mindset to a growth mindset in order to achieve personal growth and development.

Table 1.4 Determinants of self-awareness among women

This section deals with the findings and discussion regarding determinants or contributing factors for the self-awareness levels of women. Stepwise regression was carried to analyse the determinants.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.649	.421	.390	6.178
Predictors: Family Independence, Education, Self Esteem, Role clarity and Locus of control			

Coefficients					
Independent Variable	Regression Coefficient	Std. Error	Beta	't' Value	Sig.
Family Independence	3.050	.833	.293	3.661**	.000
Education	1.436	.439	.253	3.274**	.001
Self-Esteem	2.044	.807	.188	2.531**	.01
Role Clarity	1.852	.736	.185	2.515**	.01
Locus of control	1.854	.755	.188	2.452**	.01

Note: Level of Significance: **0.01

The table 1.5 depicts the contribution of independent variables to the self-awareness skills of women analyzed through step-wise regression. The above regression model explains that five independent variables together contributed 42 per cent of variance toward self-awareness skills among women. These were family independence (t=3.661), education (t=3.274), self-esteem (t=2.531), role clarity (t=2.515), and locus of control (t=2.452) at 1 per cent level of significance.

The regression coefficient table indicates that for every unit change in family independence increases self-awareness by 3.050 units, a unit change in self-esteem increases self-awareness by 2.044 units, a unit change in locus of control increases self-awareness by 1.854 units, a unit change in role clarity increases self-awareness by 1.852 units and a unit change in education increases self-awareness by 1.436 units. Further, it can also be inferred that women who had better independence in their families, good self-esteem, role clarity, internal locus of control and education had high self-awareness skills. Similar findings were observed by Hajifathali*et al.* (2021) who found that self-esteem is positively related to integrative self-knowledge, mindfulness, and self-control.

Therefore, it can be concluded that family independence, self-esteem, locus of control, role clarity and education were found to be significant predictors of self-awareness skills among rural and tribal women.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the presented findings highlight the prevailing lack of self-awareness among rural and tribal women, with a majority exhibiting poor self-understanding, limited recognition of personal strengths, and insufficient insight into emotional states and life choices. The intervention program brought about a remarkable transformation, leading to significant improvements in self-awareness levels. The shift from low to high self-awareness was evident, indicating that the program was effective in enhancing self-knowledge. The content covered within the intervention, encompassing introspection, identification of strengths and weaknesses, understanding values, desires, and goals, as well as addressing challenges and barriers, proved instrumental in fostering self-awareness. The intervention's success was further supported by the statistical analysis, which demonstrated a notable increase in mean self-awareness scores post-intervention. This positive effect was substantiated by the regression model, revealing that family independence, education, self-esteem, role clarity, and locus of control collectively contributed significantly to the variance in self-awareness skills among the women. Thus, the intervention not only expanded self-awareness but also paved the way for personal growth and development, shifting perspectives from deficiency to growth mindsets. In summation, this study underscores the potency of well-structured interventions in cultivating self-awareness among rural and tribal women, fostering empowerment and positive self-perception.

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