



Importance Of Life Skills Education For Youth

KEYWORDS

- Adolescence – It means period of transition from childhood to adulthood.
- Adaptive – It means that a person is flexible in approach and is able to adjust in different circumstances.
- Life skills – It means the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (WHO).
- Livelihood skills - It refer to capabilities, resources and opportunities to pursue individual and household economic goals and relate to income generation.
- Positive behaviour – It means that a person is forward looking.

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to understand the Importance of Life Skills Education for Youth. "Education in India has seen tremendous growth over the past decade, both in number of students and number of colleges. An attempt is made in the present study to understand what are the Life Skills which are needed the most for our students to overcome the lags created by our education system. The objectives of the study are to understand the major troubles of students in their education and the strategies which can be adopted to overcome those troubles. The study will be made by referring several other literatures on "Life Skills" published by various sources. In the above context, a Qualitative study will be conducted on "IMPORTANCE OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION FOR YOUTH". This being a non-empirical study the analysis will be made from the data and contents collected from various articles published by various authors and released through various sources. The references of the same will be given in reference part. The hypothesis of the analysis is Implementation of Life Skills program for Youth in Schools and Colleges will reduce the problems of Young Minds.

Introduction

Life Skills include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner. Essentially, there are two kinds of skills - those related to thinking termed as "thinking skills"; and skills related to dealing with others termed as "social skills". While thinking skills relate to reflection at a personal level, social skills include interpersonal skills and do not necessarily depend on logical thinking. It is the combination of these two types of skills that are needed for achieving assertive behaviour and negotiating effectively. "Emotional" can be perceived as a skill not only in making rational decisions but also in being able to make others agree to one's point of view. To do that, coming to terms first with oneself is important. Thus, self-management is an important skill including managing with feelings, emotions, stress and resisting peer and family pressure.

Goal

The goal of this paper is to find what behavior development approach addresses the knowledge, attitudes and value enhanced Life Skills for Youth.

Teenage years

Adolescence has often been portrayed as a period of stormy stress, but adolescents can make an immense contribution to society if they are given proper support and space through handholding and informed interaction. Adolescents are the most productive force of a country as they have unlimited energy, vitality and idealism, as well as a strong urge to experiment and create a better world. WHO defines early adolescence both in terms of age (10-14 years) and in terms of

a phase of life marked by special attributes. These attributes include rapid physical, psychological, cognitive and behavioural changes and developments, including the urge to experiment, attainment of sexual maturity, development of adult identity, and their transition from socioeconomic dependence to relative independence.

As a dynamic productive force, it is important for adolescents that the transition from childhood to adulthood is smooth and effortless. But it is a fact that most of the adolescents are unable to utilize their potential in an appropriate way and are engaged in non-productive activities due to lack of proper guidance and motivation. These high risk behaviours affecting society to a large extent and therefore require effective and immediate programmes which would be beneficial to young adolescents. In this connection, Life Skills Education plays a vital role in creating awareness and providing guidance and direction to them. It empowers them with improved decision making skills, abilities that promote mental wellbeing and competencies to face the realities of life. Life Skills Education would enable adolescents to clear their issues and know their rights; build their self-esteem and self-confidence; and develop the ability to take responsibility for self, relationships and society around them.

There are ten basic Life skills according to WHO,

- Self-awareness
- Empathy
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Decision making
- Problem Solving

- Effective communication
- Interpersonal relationship
- Coping with stress
- Coping with emotion

Who needs Life Skills?

Anyone who wants to lead a meaningful life needs Life Skills. They are applicable to all ages of children and adolescents, since young people in this age group seem to be the most vulnerable to behaviour related health problems. Life Skills are thus needed for the promotion of good health and well-being, rather than as an intervention aimed only at those already at risk. Ouane (2002) says "Life Skills are developed as a result of a constructive processing of information, impressions, encounters and experiences, both individual and social, which are a part of one's daily life and work, and the rapid changes that occur in the course of one's life".

Life Skills Edification

The Life Skills Programme can be designed in such a way that it can be infused into other school subjects or it can be introduced as a new subject. Whatever design is followed, it must ensure greater potential for success. School education plays an important role in Life Skills Development among individuals, especially in the current time when traditional mechanisms for passing on Life Skills are no longer adequate, considering the influences that shape a young individual's development.

The school is an appropriate place for the introduction of Life Skills Education because:

- It is one of the most important agencies of socializing the child.
- It has an abundant potential to provide them with varied experiences in their formative years.
- It remains in constant contact with the parents and the community.
- It has experienced teachers who can effectively deliver the Life Skills programme to the students and help them become more responsible, healthy and resilient adults.

Some of the Characteristics of a classroom environment which are supportive of Life Skills Education are given below,

- Reflections of real life situations and contexts.
- Collaboration among teachers, disciplines and students.
- Encouragement of curiosity, exploration and investigation.
- Responsibility for learning opportunities.
- Acknowledgement of effort, not just performance.
- Focus more on process than product or final presentation.

For health promotion, life skills education is based on the teaching of generic life skills and includes the practice of skills in relation to major health and social problems. Life skills lessons should be combined with health information, and may also be combined with other approaches, such as programmes designed to effect changes in environmental and social factors which influence the health and development of young people.

The methods used in the teaching of life skills builds upon what is known of how young people learn from their own experiences and from the people around them, from observing how others behave and what consequences arise from behaviour. This is described in the Social Learning Theory developed by Bandura (1977). In Social Learning Theory, learning is

considered to be an active acquisition, processing and structuring of experiences.

In life skills education, children are actively involved in a dynamic teaching and learning process. The methods used to facilitate this active involvement include working in small groups and pairs, brainstorming, role play, games and debates. A life skills lesson may start with a teacher exploring with the students what their ideas or knowledge is about a Particular situation in which a life skill can be used. The children may be asked to discuss the issues raised in more detail in small groups or with a partner. They may then engage in short role play scenarios, or take part in activities that allow them to practice the skills in different situations - actual practice of skills is a vital component of life skills education. Finally, the teacher will assign homework to encourage the children to further discuss and practice the skills with their families and friends.

Ascertaining an Finest Stratagem for Life Skills Education

The wide range of motives for teaching life skills to children and adolescents include the prevention of drug abuse and teenage pregnancy, the promotion of mental well-being and Co-operative learning. For adults, life skills appear in programmes such as communication and empathy skills for medical students and counsellors, problem solving and critical thinking for business managers, and coping with emotions and stressors for people with mental health problems.

Given the wide ranging relevance of life skills, an optimal strategy for the introduction of life skills teaching would be to make it available to all children and adolescents in schools. Life skills teaching promote the learning of abilities that contribute to positive health behaviour, positive interpersonal relationships, and mental well-being. Ideally, this learning should occur at a young age, before negative patterns of behaviour and interaction have become established. Even in countries where a significant proportion of children do not complete schooling, the introduction of life skills education in schools should be a priority. Life skills education is highly relevant to the daily needs of young people. When it is part of the school curriculum, the indications are that it helps to prevent school drop-out. Furthermore, once experience has been gained in the development and implementation of a life skills programme for schools, this may help with the creation and implementation of programmes for other settings.

Mounting Life Skills Packages

Designing and implementing a life skills programme is only a part of the life skills programme development process. It is equally important to secure long term support and resources for life skills education, and to engage, from the very beginning, all of the potential agencies that would have a role to play in the process of life skills programme development. Implementing a life skills programme will require the introduction of teaching methods that may be new to teachers, and the success of the programme will depend very much on the availability of in-service training, as well as efforts to include training in participatory learning methods in teacher training colleges.

The introduction of life skills education will require input from the school and education authorities, for teacher training and the development of teaching manuals, as well as for the ongoing support of teaching programmes once they are in place. This investment is worthwhile considering that the potential gains of life skills education are so far reaching.

Apart from the impact on child health, there may be other benefits for the school as an institution. For example, evaluative studies of life skills programmes suggest that the methods used can help to improve teacher and pupil relationships and there are indications that life skills lessons are associated with fewer reports of classroom behaviour problems. Other positive effects include improved school attendance, less bullying, fewer referrals to specialist support services and better relationships between children and their parents.

A life skills programme will have to be proven worthy of the resources allocated to it. Process and outcome evaluation studies should be carried out, and results shared with all the relevant decision makers that could affect the future of the life skills programme. A programme that has a component of on-going assessment of its use and impact offers scope for keeping in touch with changing priorities, and is more likely to be modified and maintained over time.

Seventh, eighth, and ninth graders - experience deepening social relationships as they form, and experiment with personal identity, preferences in dress and appearance. This new interest in appearance, fuelled by physical changes, can lead students at this egocentric phase to think that all eyes in a room are on them- this is what the psychologists call "the imaginary audience". Adolescents continue to look to peers as the key influence in their lives, and thus mutuality and loyalty of friendship increases. Students group themselves in same friend groups, and some more intimate, one-on-one relationships begin to form. Above all, students are concerned with "fitting in". This is also the stage in which students develop a generalized "self-concept". Adolescents begin to see themselves as having certain characteristics e.g. "popular," "sporty," "different".

Males and females experience challenges during adolescence. National studies have indicated that the academic performance of female students begins to slip as these students enter

adolescence, particularly in Mathematics and Science; they may begin to internalize societal stereotypes about women and suppress their ability to express their point of view or assert themselves. Male students are likely to have more self-confidence and higher career aspirations, but they are also less likely to graduate from high school.

The journey of early adolescents is from 10-14 years. At this stage, there are two main psychosocial dynamic changes that usually happen.

Establishing an identity that is separate from the parents - this has been called one of the most important tasks of adolescents. The question of "who am I?" is crucial as a 13 year old tries to figure out where he/she 'fits' into this world, and this creation of his/her identity is influenced by the opinions of influential others (e.g. parents, other caring adults, friends, etc.). Hence, the early adolescents begin to feel 'peer pressures' as they begin to spend more time with their friends. It is within friendship groups that teens can develop and practise social skills. However, most 13 year olds will still look to their parents for guidance when it comes to school work, basic values and long term education goals.

Rapid Physical growth - During the teen years, adolescents experience rapid changes in their physical development, e.g. there is usually a rapid growth in height, weight, etc. Many 7th graders may not feel comfortable or understand these changes as these lead them to feel confused and embarrassed. They become more conscious of their 'physical' being and even start comparing themselves with their peers.

Conclusion

Thus it can be concluded that efforts has to be made to enable the education of learner in a more comprehensive manner by providing the right content on Life Skills Education through the most viable usage of strategies for the teenage group. This can make our current young minds to act in par with the demands of the society.

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