



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Education

ROLE OF LIFE SKILLS IN PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS

KEY WORDS: Modern Education system, learners. Life skills, Life Skills Education (LSE).

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ABSTRACT

The present system of education is centralized towards and helps an individual to get a job and make a living. An activity that promotes lateral thinking or help in holistic development of child is not considered academic and necessary. The present education systems are obsessed with production of individuals who gets a quick job. Independent, abstract and absolute thinking is not promoted; hence it is time to think out of the box. According to Sir Kenneth Robison, a typical educational institution (school) has in it, all the qualities of a factory, that is there are separate subjects, separate facilities; children are educated by batches and by groups¹. The modern Education system is targeted on mass production and 'learners' are a product of a mechanical system. We have made them literate but not educated. Education is one that brings a desired change² and without it, it is only merely increasing the literacy rate. To a large extent centers of education do have an economical interest and hence there is increase in quantity of students pass out. There is a gap between a complete and mature individual with life skills that should have come out our system and the present graduate walking out. Life skills are deemed necessary to assess a situation, Come out with a unique a solution, ability to communicate electively, have effective interpersonal skills and have capacity for convergent and divergent thinking. We try to find the etiology of this and suggest probable solution, where education system must play a role in developing life skills by Life Skills Education (LSE).

INTRODUCTION: For a country to be healthy, firstly its children needs to healthy. Health is not mere absence of disease³; it also includes a complete social and mental well being. The disease part is addressed by the health sector but the other two components, the social and mental well being is responsibility of all and educational institutes in particular where the children spend much of their time. Children live in diverse circumstances and have diverse needs in order to make them healthy by all dimensions of health we need to impart necessary life skills as prevention is deemed better than cure. To make them better citizens they need to be sensitized, motivated and taught life skills that will improve their psychological competence. The capacity of individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life is called Psychosocial competence. It is a person's ability to maintain a state of mental well-being and demonstrate this in adaptive and positive behavior while interacting with others. The Indian constitution has empowered children with fundamental right to education. They have right to appropriate education with necessary social and environmental factors that help them live a healthy life, nutrition and positive and conducive environment where they learn not only books but also lessons of life. The challenges for children are numerous among those who reach school many are the only one among their social and economically deprived families. Competence of children has an important role to play in the promotion of health in its broadest sense. The inability to deal effectively with stresses and pressures of life can be mitigated by enhancement of psychosocial competence. Well informed and skilled children are likely to make better decisions. Negative reinforcement, peer Pressure and lack of positive role models may divert children on a totally wrong path⁴ that prompt them to make unsafe and unhealthy choices. Which may later lead to anxiety, depression, and many students end up their life. E.g. the stress level that the students studying at coaching institutes at Kota are facing is very high⁵. The problem statement is where and who will impart these life skills? And in what ways we can achieve the realistic goals? Children require guidance and assistance from teachers who nurture these saplings in ground of school along with their parents peers and society as well. Psychosocial competence can be achieved by the teaching of life skills in a supportive learning environment and school-based programs for children and adolescents.

Defining the life skills:

According to the world health organization (WHO) life skills are "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals

to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life⁶." The life skills are the heart of skills-based initiatives for the promotion of the health and well-being of children and adolescents. That include Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Decision making, Problem solving, Effective communication, Interpersonal relationship skills, Self-awareness, Empathy, Coping with emotions, Coping with stresses effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The life skills taught to young people are abilities that they can acquire through learning and practice. For E.g. problem solving can include following steps 1) define a problem; 2) think of all the different kinds of available options and solutions 3) weigh up the advantages and disadvantages for each; 4) and choose the most appropriate solution and plan how to realize it.

Decision making helps young to deal constructively with life situations such as making decisions about their actions in relation to health. Students should know what different options are, and what effects different decisions will have. Similarly **problem solving** enables us to deal constructively with problems in lives. Significant problems when left unresolved cause mental stress and physical strain to children. **Creative thinking** can help students find available alternatives and various consequences of our actions or non-action, and can guide them respond adaptively and with flexibility to daily lives situations. **Critical thinking** involves analyzing information and experiences in an objective manner, that influence attitudes and behavior, such as social values, peer pressure, and the media. **Effective communication** verbal and non-verbal can convey what is appropriate to cultures and situations can render advice and help at time of need. **Interpersonal relationship** skills help to deal with others and interact positively with them. **Self-awareness** is recognition of self, of our character, of our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. **Empathy** is the ability to behave in a manner keeping self in position of others, even in a situation that we may not be familiar with. Empathy can help to encourage nurturing behavior towards people in need of care such as those with mental disorders or AIDS sufferers; these are the people who are neglected most by the people whose support they require. **Coping with emotions** involves recognizing emotions in ourselves and others, being aware of how emotions influence behavior, and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. **Coping with stress** is about recognizing the stress in life, knowing how this affects us, and acting in ways that help to control our levels of stress. It is learning how to relax, so that tensions created by unavoidable stress do not give rise to health problems.

Relevance of life skills:

Changing culture and broken families have broken the chain of knowledge of life skills that used to be transferred from generation to generation. Young individuals are living a more virtual life with friends on social media⁷. All this have made students more vulnerable to the stress than ever before, hence the need to impart the life skills has become more relevant than ever before. UNICEF promotes teaching abilities in developing of life skills⁸. Students lack support to acquire and reinforce life skills and are not sufficiently equipped with life skills that help them deal with the increased demands and stresses of change in lifestyles and cultures.

Life skills should be promoted as essential skills in the education of young people the education we are offering student that help earn lively hood is entirely different from inducing life skills in these individuals where the technical and professional knowledge help them attain financial security the later one help them deal with daily life situations. Life skills help them remain emotionally intact and happy which they cannot acquire with financial independency alone. More over with greater urbanization and more metro cities developing in India the level of stress have increased⁹.

What changes can life skills bring?

Adolescent age is the most venerable time period for fluctuation in psychosocial quotient. The teaching of life skills to students and young college individuals in a wide variety of educational programs may be an effective tool for imparting the moral values, prevention of substance abuse, prevention of AIDS and promotion of self-confidence and self-esteem. Communication and empathy skills will help future professionals problem solving and critical thinking will help future for business managers and other such vast range of benefits exists. Teaching life skills at School College could form the foundation of life skills education (L.S.E) for the promotion of mental well-being, healthy interaction and behavior. More problem specific skills that could be built on this foundation include dealing with peer pressures, unprotected sex and drug abuse.

Role of education in life skills and psychosocial development:

Ideally, skill learning should start at a young age, before negative patterns of behavior and interaction have become established hence the role of teacher education is crucial. There are wide range of aims and objectives for teaching life skills to children and adolescents.

The school/college is most suitable place for the introduction of life skills education L.E.S¹⁰. Schools are first units that play role of in the socialization of young people and they have access to children and adolescents on a large scale the experienced teachers already in place who have learned many things with time. The cost involved is less as the school college infrastructure is already in place. Educational institutes have high credibility with parents and society. The outcome measures short and long term can be evaluated as students stay there for long years.

There is evidence that in preventing school drop-out when it is part of the school curriculum. After gaining expertise in development and implementation of a life skills program for schools, this may be expanded to help with the creation and implementation of other such programs of public benefit. Life skills lessons bring about changes in knowledge attitude and positive health practices. Life skills education should be based on the teaching of generic life skills and includes the practice of life skills keeping in mind major health and social problems. This includes. Promoting skills upon what is known to young people learn from their own experiences and from the people around them, from observing how others behave and what consequences arise from their behavior. The methods used in the teaching of life skills builds upon what is known to young people, learn from their own experiences and also from the people around. A life skills lesson may start with a teacher exploring with the students about what are 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. Children should be actively involved and the teaching

and learning should be a dynamic process. Different methods can be used to facilitate this active involvement such as, brainstorming, role play, games and debates in small groups or with a partner, practice short role play scenarios, take part in activities that allow them to practice the different skills is essential component of learning and encourage the children to further discuss and practice the skills with their families and friends. Life skills initiatives can be organized in different setups in the country such as Non-governmental organizations, education authorities, and religious groups. Life skills are already being taught in many schools around the world. 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. In countries like India where most of children do not complete schooling¹¹, the introduction of life skills education will promote the learning of abilities that contribute to positive health behavior, positive interpersonal relationships, and mental well-being.

Conclusion and future recommendation:

In the rapidly changing scenario it is urgent need to focus on delivering life skills education at the very grass root level that is in schools and colleges. The teachers must be sensitized and trained to bring out necessary change in Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (K.A.P) of the youth towards the life skills. Authorities need to introduce appropriate training manuals for L.E.S and will require ongoing support of teaching programs once they are in place. The potential benefits of such program will outweigh the investment done and benefits will be more than imagined now at this juncture of time. Apart from the impact on child health, there will be benefits for the school as an institution and society and country as a whole. A life skills program will have to be proven worthy of the resources allocated to it. Process and outcome of evaluation studies should be reviewed and results should be shared with all the important decision makers that could affect the future of the life skills program. There should be scope for future modifications as we learn more lessons in time ahead.

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