

## LIFE SKILL EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENTS: its RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE

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### **Abstract**

*Adolescents are considered to be the productive members of a society due to their physical and intellectual capacity. But unfortunately most of the adolescents are unable to utilize their potential to maximum due to inappropriate environment. They are always engaging in antisocial activities and spoiling their life. To make life of adolescents valuable and to convert them to individuals with high potential, educational system should be reformed giving due importance to life skill education. Life skills are those abilities which will help in the promotion of general well being and psychosocial competence of the individual. Life skills empower young people to take positive action to protect them and promote health and positive social relationships. It also entails being able to establish productive interpersonal relationships with others. In the present paper the investigator goes through the importance of life skills, various life skills, life skill education and the benefits imparting life skill education in our curriculum.*

**Key words:** Life skill, life skill education, adolescents, transition, relevance

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transition period of development and adolescents are considered as the productive members of a society. Now a days the life of adolescents are becoming miserable due to many reasons including inappropriate home and school environment. They are becoming individuals who are less motivated, less confident and are engaging in antisocial activities and spoiling their valuable life. Adolescence is a period when the intellectual, physical and all the capabilities are very high but their antisocial activities and behavior are deteriorating all their capabilities and they are becoming a burden to the society. Imparting life skill training through inculcating life skill education will help our adolescents to overcome such difficulties in life.

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life [WHO, 1996<sup>1</sup>]. Life skill education aims to provide students with strategies to make healthy choices that contribute to a meaningful life. Life skills are the abilities that help to promote mental well being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. It helps the young people to take positive actions to protect themselves and to promote health and meaningful social relationship. Life skill facilitates a complete and integrated development of individuals to function effectively as social beings. Life skills can be applied in the contexts of social and health events. With life skills, one is able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decisions in solving each problem or issue as it arises. It also entails being able to establish productive interpersonal relationships with others. Developing life skills helps adolescents in translating knowledge, attitude and values into healthy behavior that makes their life fruitful. Life skills also help in empowering girls by imparting healthy behavior and helping them to avoid risks and to make appropriate decisions at the right time.

In the present paper the investigators are going through the different life skills that can be imparted through life skill education and the benefits of life skill education

## MAJOR LIFE SKILLS

The core set of life skills which help in promoting health and well being of children and adolescents are

- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Creative thinking
- Critical thinking
- Effective communication
- Interpersonal relationship skills
- Self-awareness
- Empathy
- Coping with emotions
- Coping with stress

**Decision making** - The process of assessing an issue by considering all possible/available options and the effects those different decisions might have on them.

**Problem solving:** - Having made the decisions about each of the options, choosing the one which suits the best, following it through even in the face impediments and going through the process again till a positive outcome of the problem is achieved.

**Creative thinking:** - It is the ability to look beyond our direct experience and address issues. It contributes to both decision making and problem solving by enabling us to explore the available alternatives and various consequences of our actions or non-action. It helps us to look beyond our direct experience, and even if no problem is identified, or no decision is to be made, creative thinking can help us to respond adaptively and with flexibility to the situations of our daily lives.

**Critical thinking:** - It is an ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute to health by helping us to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behavior, such as values, peer pressure, and the media.

**Effective communication:** - Effective communication means that we are able to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations. This means being able to express opinions, desires, needs and fears. And it also means being able to ask for advice and help in a time of need.

**Interpersonal relationships:** - Interpersonal relationship skills help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with. This means being able to make and keep friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being. It also includes keeping good relations with family members, which are an important source of social support.

**Self-awareness:-** Self awareness includes our recognition of ourselves, our character, our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognize when we are stressed or feel under pressure. It is also often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy for others.

**Empathy:** - Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person, even in a situation that we may not be familiar with. Empathy can help us to understand and accept others who may be very different from ourselves, which can improve social interactions, for example, in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity. Empathy can also help to encourage nurturing behavior towards people in need of care and assistance, or tolerance, as is the case with AIDS sufferers, or people with mental disorders, who may be stigmatized and ostracized by the very people they depend upon for support.

**Coping with emotions:** - 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. Intense emotions, like anger or sorrow can have negative effects on our health if we do not react appropriately.

**Coping with stress:** - Coping with stress is recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how this affects us, and acting in ways that help to control our levels of stress. This may mean that we take action to reduce the sources of stress, for example, by making changes to our physical environment or lifestyle.

Inevitably, cultural and social factors will determine the exact nature of life skills. For example, eye contact may be encouraged in boys for effective communication, but not for girls in some societies, so gender issues will arise in identifying the nature of life skills for psychosocial competence. The exact content of life skills education must therefore be determined at the country level, or in a more local context. However, described in general terms, life skills are being taught in such a wide variety of countries that they appear to have relevance across cultures.

## LIFE SKILL EDUCATION

Life skill education is a value added program which aims to provide students with strategies to make healthy choices that contribute to a meaningful life. It helps adolescents to understand their self and to assess their skills, abilities and areas of development. It also helps adolescents to get along with other people and adjust with their environment and making responsible decision.

The main objective of life skill education is to enable the learner to develop a concept of oneself as a person of worth and dignity. Life skill education is a basic learning need for all individuals. Various skills like leadership, responsibility, communication, intellectual capacity, self esteem, Interpersonal skill etc. extends its maximum level, if it is practicing effectively. We need to create life skill education as the cornerstone of various youth programmers and an integral part of our formal education process.

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 as 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.

Skill based approach in life skill education follows well established mentoring techniques to develop students innate quality and also motivating them to adopt socially acceptable pattern of life style's

particularly, strategy consisting of a group of people combined together to help themselves by identifying their talents and directing them to choose an appropriate steps to enhance their skill and abilities as a part of development.

In order to have an effective implementation of life skill education there is a need for professionally trained and skilled personal from within the country. Professional training requires a purposely planned programmed of study prepared by experts which has the approval of a competent authority and a group of experts to train the trainers of life skill education.

## **BENEFITS OF TEACHING LIFE SKILLS**

Imparting life skill education in children and adolescents will bring valuable benefits which include

- a) Promotion of self esteem, peace education, self confidence etc [ TACADE,1990<sup>2</sup>]
- b) Prevention of antisocial activities and behavior [Botvin et.al. 1984<sup>3</sup>, Pentz, 1983<sup>4</sup>]
- c) Helps in the promotion of general well being and primary prevention[Errecart et al., 1991<sup>5</sup>; Perry and Kelder, 1992<sup>6</sup>; Caplan et al., 1992<sup>7</sup>]
- d) Life skills enable individuals to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities and enable individuals to behave in healthy ways, given the desire to do so and given the scope and opportunity to do so.
- e) Results of research studies also prove that life skill education improves the academic performance of individuals [Weissberg et.al. 1989<sup>8</sup>]

## **CONCLUSION**

Adolescence is a period when the intellectual, physical and all the capabilities are very high but their antisocial activities and behavior are deteriorating all their capabilities and they are becoming a burden to the society. Imparting life skill training through inculcating life skill education will help our adolescents to overcome such difficulties in life. Life skill education can serve as a remedy for the problems as it helps the adolescents to lead a better life. There for life skill education is a need of the society and every education system should impart life skill education as a part of its curriculum as it is capable of producing positive health behavior, positive interpersonal relationships and well being of individuals.

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