

# Life Skill Education and National Development

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As per the recommendations of UNICEF most of the schools in India have introduced life skills component in the Primary and Higher Primary school curriculum. Life skills may be viewed as a range of psycho-social and cognitive abilities that equip children to make informed decisions and choices, manage their emotional well-being and communicate effectively. The important life skills identified by UNICEF are Decision – making, Problem-solving, Creative thinking, Critical thinking, Communication, Interpersonal skills, Self-awareness, Empathy, Coping with emotions, Coping with stress. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 has emphasised on constructive learning experiences, and on the development of an inquiry - based approach, work-related knowledge and broader life skills. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), in 2005, introduced life skills education as an integral part of the curricula through Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) for classes 6 to 10 and has developed life skills manuals for teachers teaching classes 6, 7 and 8. However the major issue is even after fourteen years after introduction of life skill education in schools most of the schools are not having trained teacher in that particular area. Ironically most of the schools are making the children to mug up and say the life skills instead of focusing on imbibing them as a part of personality through demonstrations, activities and other practical methods. Adding to it most of the parents are also tuned to think that the academic progress of child alone can lead to the success of child, which is a myth. Here it requires change in the attitude of parents and teachers. Building teacher's belief the potential of life skills education and their capacity to impart such skills. Life skills education in schools clearly needs to take place in the context of broader education system reforms. To be effective, life skills ultimately need to be age - aligned, and inculcated in schools that are inclusive, with trained and motivated teachers who can employ participatory and experiential teaching practices. This would definitely address the mental health issues of the adolescents and entrepreneurial issues of the adults.

Key words: Life skill Education, Attitude of Parents, Belife of Teachers.

## Introduction

As per the recommendations of UNICEF most of the schools in India have introduced life skills component in the Primary and Higher Primary school curriculum. Life skills may be viewed as a range of psycho-social and cognitive abilities that equip children to make informed decisions and choices, manage their emotional well-being and communicate effectively. The important life skills identified by UNICEF are Decision – making, Problem-solving, Creative thinking, Critical thinking, Communication, Interpersonal skills, Self-awareness, Empathy, Coping with emotions Coping with stress.

**Importance:**

With cultures and lifestyles in transition, many young people are not adequately equipped with life skills to help them deal with the augmented demands and stresses they experience. Effective use of Life-Skills can influence the way children feel about others and themselves which in turn can add to the children's self confidence and self-esteem (Life-Skills Education and CCE Manual CBSE, 2010).Improvement in Life skills can result in individuals making informed choices to serve the interests of self and others, becoming "proactive" and change agents. They are able to resolve conflicts, cope with stress and develop negotiating skills for personal and social interests. Life-Skills play an important role in the promotion of mental well-being which contributes to our motivation to look after ourselves and others. It helps one to understand and deal with relationships, friends, parents, teachers, etc. People who do not have a clear definition of life are never happy and content. They will not be able to move ahead in life. If a child is empowered to bring an understanding and balance in life, he will grow up to be more satisfied (Khwaja, 2011).Life skills are acknowledged for their contribution to the healthy developmentof children and adolescent, prevent risk factors as well as prepare children andadolescents for dynamic life situations (WHO, 1999).In the OECD (2016) report, 8.4% of all participating students reported that they were victims of nasty rumours.Life skills has been identified as an essential resource for developing psychosocial, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and resilience skills to negotiate every day challenges and productive involvement in the community (Desai, 2010; Galagali, 2011).The adolescents are in a state of confusion, stress and uncertainty about coping with their lives due to mood disturbances brought on by hormones and the immaturity of the "impulse control" centre in their brains (Kastner & Wyatt, 2002).With a tremendous shift in the structure of society, there is reported rise in teen stress, which can be because of disturbed family dynamics, peer pressure, inability to cope with studies, drug abuse, lack of competence etc. leading to maladaptive behaviour (Singh & Kaur, 2015) There is a pressing need to understand the factors that give rise to and maintain aggressive behaviour across childhood and adolescence, (Reebye & Moretti, 2005). The reviews asserts the importance of the need for life skill education.

**Life Skill Education in India:**

National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 has emphasised on constructive learning experiences, and on the development of an inquiry -based approach, work-related knowledge and broader life skills. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), in 2005, introduced life skills education as an integral part of the curricula through Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) for classes 6 to 10 and has developed life skills manuals for teachers teaching classes 6, 7 and 8. However the basic question is about the implementation of the life skill education programme in schools in its desirable and true form. There are some important concerns both regarding the quality of life skill education provided at schools and its impact

July 13, 2016 India Today report says that only 7% of the Indian engineering graduates are employable. India's contribution to global suicide deaths increased from 25.3% in 1990 to 36.6% in 2016 among women, and from 18.7% to 24.3% among men (The Lancet 2018). Adding to it marital conflicts, divorce and violence are also on an increasing rate. Life skills not only prepare an individual to perform well at the personal level it will also enable an individual to contribute for national development.

We are living in a globalized world that necessitates the need for life skills than before. The globalized world is throwing more competition many new players are entering the areas of production, employment and marketing. If the future generation has to sustain there is a need to have life skills such as creativity and emotional stability. One is cognitive and the other one is behavioral. Still both play an important role.

The changing structure and role of family is another major factor that stresses the need for the effective life skill education at schools. Decades back the family interactions would imbibe the necessary life skills, which has changed drastically today. The religious institutions which would play an important in imbibing the resilient capacities among the individuals are losing its importance today.

#### **Short term and long term benefits of life skills:**

The short term benefits of life skill education being improved focus, attention and learning. The emotional capabilities of relating, contributing and accepting would increase. Further it would also help the individual in handling day to day demands in the effective manner. In the long run it helps individuals to develop the right kind of attitude and personality which would bring them success both in personal and familial life. This would go a long way in creating a healthy and productive society.

#### **Who are the key players:**

In India most of the schools and parents strive for academic excellence, However, the basic question is whether the children are learning essential skills and equipped to deal with life effectively in the future? According to Noddings (2005, p.34), schools should support students to be “healthy, competent and moral people”. This involves equipping pupils with essential life skills that would help them to lead “healthy and productive life” (UNICEF, 2012, p.1). Therefore it is important to know how life skills education is implemented in today's schools.

The proper execution of life skill education requires a proper policy, an effective implementation strategy and Active participation of the key players.

If we have to look at the policy, whatever we have today is serving the purpose. Moving on to implementation strategy proper attitudinal change and training is required for the educator.

If we look at the perspective of teachers it's been found that most of the times the teacher focuses on completing the syllabus and making the child thorough in their respective subject. Some times in schools people are teaching it as they teach other subjects. Teaching life skills requires special qualities among teachers. To achieve purpose there is a need to bring changes in the attitude of teachers regarding life education and imbibing them with necessary skills to teaching them.

Making life skill education effective also requires the right attitude and involvement of parents. Many a times parents always focus on making the child to perform effectively in academics, undermining the importance of developing life skills. There is a need for alteration of this attitude among parents. Always extension of proper co operation and facilitation of family members would bring better results.

Conclusion: Having 50% of the population below the age of 25, it is our responsibility to nurture and lead them in right direction. This will automatically leads to national development. Even after 16 years after implementation most of the schools today are teaching life skills as a ritual rather than considering it an important part of the child development. In this context the three key players are Institutions that imparts education, teachers and parents. It is essential that all the three key players must be made to realize the importance of life skills, develop right attitude towards it and participate with conviction.

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