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LIFE SKILL EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES



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ABSTRACT:

In the current scenario of increased urbanization and rampant globalization, the children here are very confused. There is a lot of stress on achievement and performance from the teachers and parents. Till now we see that in school much of emphasis is on developing skills of memorization and retention. A skill is seen as related to the mastery of a particular subject and not as it would be applied in real life. A lot of thought and efforts are required on how to bring in life skills education into the mainstream of curriculum. The educational institutions need to develop conceptual and practical framework of the

programme which should be applied at all levels of schooling starting from pre-primary, extending to primary, middle and the secondary stage. This will enable students to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of every day life by developing generic skills related to the areas such as health and social needs through which students can fight the challenges such as smoking, drug/addiction and violence, teenage pregnancy, AIDS and many other health issues. The life skills approach to education has played a vital role in providing meaningful education to the marginalized section of the society. Efficient networking of educationists, psychologists, mental health professionals and policy makers would be required to develop a concrete life skills education programme. The result of the studies showed that the education programme need to be started among all development stages of the child and should have effective and strong monitoring and evaluation system. On the whole we can say that life skill is still at its initial stage in India and a lot of has to be done through researches in context to the development of the life skills. The study is an attempt to find out ways to minimize day to day life problems of the children. If we judge in Indian context, still a revolutionary change is awaited until it is successfully introduced in every state of India.

KEYWORDS

Life skill, Education, Curriculum, Learning.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most outstanding decisions in the school Education emerged out of recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-66), has changed the educational scenario of the country. For the first time, it was decided that there would be undifferentiated curriculum during first ten years of schooling and during these years both boys and girls will read all compulsory subjects. In 1968, a policy decision was taken to implement the recommendation. It was the most important step towards universalization of secondary education. The boldness was evident from the fact that the nation was far behind the goal of attaining universal elementary education at that stage. The figures of wastage and stagnation revealed the status of UEE. The figures at school stage make the picture clearer. Presuming that 70% children joined the school, drop out by the time, they reach higher class. Even if all of them join secondary stage, a large majority of fortunate children get education up to secondary stage. In modern age a child may be brilliant in the music and mathematics, but may not have inclination toward other aspects of life, he would remain 'failed' for life. We find that behavior does not always follow the mind. This is when incidents of "I know but I can't help it" occur. What we need is the ability to act responsibly. Life skills enable us to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities.

The role of media in education was conceived as of for reaching significance with the expansion of T.V. in early 1980s. There were great hopes that quality of education in schools would improve. Youth in particular and others in general would get opportunities to learn at their own in time and space. It was also expected that media will play a greater role in issues of national concerns like universal elementary education, etc. But the expended media in many ways has failed to draw the attention of nation towards UEE, girls' education, quality of education and essential life skills to be developed in the school. What is Life? There is no generally accepted definition of life. In fact, there is a certain clearly discernible tendency of each biological scientist specially to define life in its own terms. The average person also tends to think of life in his own terms.

Man tends to define in terms of familiarity in every day life. The metabolic definition of life is still popular with many biologists. It describes a living system as an object with definite boundary continually exchanging some of its materials with its surrounding but without altering its general properties, at least over same period of time. All organisms on earth, from the simplest cell to man him, are machines of extraordinary powers. They effortlessly perform complex functions. They exhibit elaborate behavior patterns. They are engaged in indefinitely constructing from raw materials in the environment more or less identical of conies of themselves. In short Darwin's theory of natural selection states that complex organisms developed or evolved, through replication' mutation and replication of mutations. A genetic definition of life therefore would be a system capable of evolution of natural selection.

LIFE SKILLS AND EDUCATION:

A skill is a capacity usually acquired through training and experience to do some thing, to perform competently certain task. Skills are differentiated by the tasks they address. The skill of riding a bicycle is different from that of solving crossword puzzles. Ability is the nearest synonym for the skill although the letter often connects a higher level of training, experience and proficiency. The skill — ability relationships suggest 'skill' has two distinct connotations. Some skills refer to an acquired ability or capacity. Other implies highly competent performance. The core meaning of skill can be extended in several ways as procedural knowledge. Skill is set of activities that can be 'schematized or purposively sequenced. National Curriculum Frame Work for School Education, (2000) emphasizes, "While responding to the impact of globalization in today's world, learning to live and work together and ways

and means to develop it, assume great significance.

The national programme Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) or the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) professes to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities in all the children through provision of community owned quality education which is relevant to life. It draws very strongly upon the basic education system of Mahatma Gandhi and the Nai Talim of Dr. Zakir Hussain. Skills lead to development in the children. It refers to capability to think and observe independently in real life situations. The life is a long process. What ever is done by a person in life it is all skill.

CATEGORIES OF LIFE SKILL:

Various experts have categorized life skills. Categories which the group agreed on was six fold category. However, people do not agree on any one category system. The most common classification may be as follows: 1. Psycho physical (a) Relaxation, 2. Social (a) Cooperation (b) Team work 3. Intellectual: (a) Problem solving (b) Analysis (c) Synthesis 4. Economical: (a) Dignity of labour 5. Emotional skills (a) self poise (b) Sympathy(c) Empathy (d) Adjustment 6. Moral

CHALLENGES:

Education is defined as a process of the empowerment; enlightenment and transformation of human being achieve a better and higher of life. This would take into account the improvement and enrichment of the psychological and physical life of the children. Education is a process which begins with life and with life. Education should therefore bring about mental equilibrium through right physical activities. Education helps a person to acquire and develop generic life skills. Education by and large suffers basically from the gap between its content and the living experience of the student. Education ideally must prepare students to face the challenge of life for this. It needs to be linked with the different life skills. The abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of every day life by developing in them generic skills related to wide variety of areas such as health and social needs(WHO). It is through these skills that student can fight the challenge of drug/ addiction and violence, teenage pregnancy, AIDS and many other health related problems. The skills would also make students aware of issues such as consumer rights, questioning the quality of good and services available to them, writing to the manufacturers and civic authorities about the quality of goods and services that they expect. Besides legal literacy, understanding of civic and administrative procedures would also be made available to students to make their life comfortable. (NCERT, 2000).

An important characteristic of the life skills is that they are temporal spatial in nature. Hence they are required to be contextual. There are certain life skills such as, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, self awareness and coping with stress, decision making, interpersonal relationship and empathy these are of enormous importance for successful living. Education for life would encompass three aspects: 1. Education for the lifelong learning, 2. Education for the life skills and 3. Education for decent living. Certain board critical skills related to scholastic as well as co-scholastic areas at the elementary level for day to day living have been identified. These are as follows: Psycho-social skill, Communication skill, Self learning skill (Autonomy in learning), Healthful living skill, Observational skill, Problem solving and decision making skill, Cooperation and team work related skill, Recreational skill, Computer related skill, Work related skill, Disaster management skill and Entrepreneurial skill (covering, economic aspect, etc.)

The first initiative of the life skills approach to education was embedded in the Basic education

programme (1937-61) or the Wardha scheme of education of Gandhiji. It was essentially education to equip the learner to face life through knowledge. Training in good habits: Socially useful behavior for the citizenship, dignity of manual labour, and all round development of body mind and spirit were some of the life skills identified under the scheme. Aim of life skills in education at elimination and negation of the gap between the content of education and the living experience of students. All skills were performance oriented and action in nature. Certain skills were identified by UNESCO. The Dakar Framework for Action draws on the Delors (1996) report's are in the form of four pillars these are as follows: Learning to know, Learning to do, Learning to live together and Learning to be

Life Skills Relevant to Curriculum: Efforts were made to identify the life skills for students studying in elementary schools. Life skills relevant to elementary curriculum are the life skills required for the children and adolescents in the age group 6-14. These life skills are based upon the different aspects of life of the children and adolescents. Development of life skill depends upon the quality of learning which takes place in the family school and community. The study is based on the research which reveals that the students don't have a clear idea about life skill. Inadequacy is found even among the parents and teachers as a result of which students, who have difficulties in understanding the concept to develop ideas of life skill education curriculum face further complications. So the study strongly recommends the life skills-based education for the acquisition of knowledge in the process of both teaching and learning in the development of needed skills and attitudes to support healthy behaviors.

POSSIBILITIES:

The major emphasis should be laid on to identify core skills and specific skills. It is important to mention that certain life skills are identified first and thereafter curriculum and transactional modality to develop those skills in the students are prepared. For example life skills in scholastic area such as in language may include meaningful effective and comprehensive communication of thought. In Mathematics, application of mathematics in day to day life is another important life skill. In the area of Environment Studies, cleanliness, healthcare awareness for environment safety habits and an awareness of the role of the individual in the society are important life skills. There is a need to equip the students to face life confidently and face the challenges with courage and conviction.

Some other simple basic life skills can be identified and integrated in the curriculum. In order to ensure that it does not add to the curriculum load. It is important that few topics of the syllabus are replaced by the emerging requirements of the curriculum. A link between cultural, historical, social and economic aspects may be established while identifying the life skill. Life skills can be identified in five dimensions these are: Psycho, physical, social, economic and occupational, moral and spiritual. The life skills approach to education has especial significance in providing meaningful education disadvantaged and marginalized section of the society.

The Delors Commission Report mentions as 'Learning to do' an important area of life skills. This section of the report had addressed itself to the issue of vocational training. Students can be taught to put what they have learnt into practice adapt to future work. The commission in the report has identified the ability to develop competence for transitioning towards generic skills i.e. life skill to perform a task well. It has also stressed the ability to communicate well with others, and manage and resolve conflicts (Delors Commission Report).

Education for life skills can be broadly defined as helping children to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities - to know what to do, when to do and how to do in the real life situations. Life skills are spatial. They are across cultures and regions. They are also temporal. Their relevance varies with variation in time. The method used in teaching of Life Skills builds upon the social

learning theory and on what we know of how young people learn from their environment; from observing how others behave and what consequences arise from behavior. Sandhan (2009) believes that skills do not 'happen'. These are acquired through practice; practice is possible through exposure and opportunity. It involves the process of Participatory learning using basic components: 1. Practical activities, 2. Feedback and reflections, 3. Consolidation and reinforcement, 4. Practical application to day to day life challenges, 5. Generating positive and negative examples of how the skills might be applied, 6. Encouraging verbal rehearsal and action, 7. Promoting Skills Acquisition and Evaluative Performance, 8. Providing opportunities, fostering self – evaluation and skill adjustment.

The school curriculum should have lectures substantiated with situational case studies and role plays where children can practice correct behavior and experience its effects. Efficient networking of educationists, psychologists, mental health professionals and policy makers would be required to develop a concrete workable life skills education programme. The education programme would need to transcend across all development stages of the child and should have an inbuilt monitoring and evaluation system.

CONCLUSION:

The study has implications for educational planners, administrators, curriculum developers and parents. Our entire education may be planned around the essential life skills. Therefore, the curriculum for elementary level may include content for promotion of life skills. The parents at home should facilitate the development of Life Skills among their wards. In the present study the conclusions are drawn purely hypothetical even than they give way for understanding of the trend of behavior in children. The following research studies may be undertaken for deeper understanding of the problem to an acceptable outcome. A lot of thought requires to be given on how to bring in life skills education into the mainstream curriculum. The schools need to develop a nine-depth conceptual and practical framework of the programme which should be made functional at all levels of schooling starting from pre-primary, extending to primary, middle and the secondary stage. This research throw a light on some aspects of life skill curriculum planning for the students and is looking forward for giving due consideration to the students current and future needs. The researcher has the confidence that such studies will help in creating innovative, broad based and comprehensive curriculum and help in the holistic development of children.

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