

## A Study on the Role of Schools in Enhancing Life Skills among Adolescent Students

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### Abstract

Life Skills are defined as “the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (WHO). These abilities empower them with positive thinking that leads them to take positive action and build positive social relationships, enabling them to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual practical abilities, i.e.,- ‘what to do and how to act in positive and healthy ways. The objectives of the study were: (1) To identify the ways used by school teachers to inculcate life skills among students (2) To identify the initiatives taken by school principals for effective implementation of life skill education in schools. The sample of the study comprised of 100 students randomly selected and 10 school principals selected from 10 secondary schools in Delhi Region, India. The tools used in the study were 3 point Rating Scale (self developed) for students and Open-Ended Questionnaire (self-developed) for school principals. The result indicated that there were numerous ways practiced by teachers and many initiatives were taken for effectively implementing life skills education by school principals to inculcate life skills among students in which it was found that in regular intervals, organization of life skills seminars etc. and other initiatives are taken in schools.

**KEYWORDS:** Life skills, School Principals and School teachers

### Introduction

Adolescence is a stage of life when an individual face lot of problems on every aspect of his/her development as well as encounter many new situations and circumstances that require to use strategies which help them to deal with it. This is the period when they need to build up confidence, find new ways of thinking, take responsibility, make choices, explore many options, develop a sense of self-awareness and appreciation for others and also try to understand why they are taking certain decisions and making choices and this is only possible through developed life skills. Life Skills are defined as “the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (WHO). Life skills are very important for the promotion of the health and well- being of the children at adolescence stage. WHO identified ten (10) such core life skills i.e. Self-awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Decision making, Problem solving, Effective communication, Interpersonal relationship, Coping with stress, and Coping with emotions that help adolescents to adapt this 21<sup>st</sup> century changing world and cope up with stress and emotional problems successfully.



The 1989 [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC) linked life skills to education by stating that education should be directed towards the development of the child's fullest potential. Life skills are usually associated with managing and living a better quality of life. They help us to accomplish our ambitions and live to our full potential. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 has emphasized on constructive learning experiences, and on the development of an inquiry-based approach, work-related knowledge and broader life skills. The impact of life skills training is positive on self-esteem, adjustment and empathy among adolescents. Life skills survey of department of education and skills, 2014 revealed positive impact on schools in improving general health of students.

### Need of the Study

Now-a-day adolescents exposed to more information and cultural alternatives than earlier. In this, 21<sup>st</sup> century competitive world they are facing more challenges and problems in their life because of this changing scenario all over the world and it become essential for them to cope up successfully in this changing environment and this is possible through a positive outlook towards this changing environment along with psychosocial competencies. This positive outlook enable them to overcome these

challenges efficiently is known as life skills and these skills mostly developed in schools through various training programs. Life Skills “can help people to make informed decisions, communicate effectively and develop coping and self-management skills that may help an individual to lead a healthy and productive life.” Practicing life skills leads to qualities such as self-esteem, sociability and tolerance, to action competencies to take action and generate change, and to capabilities to have the freedom to decide what to do and who to be. To cope with the increasing pace and change of modern **life**, students especially at adolescence stage, need new **life skills** such as the ability to deal with stress and frustration. With the help of life skills, adolescents can understand themselves in a better way and overcome themselves from unfavorable situations & improve their performance scholastically as well as co-scholastically. Life skills are not only helpful for the individuals but it is also benefited for the whole society as it contributes in recognizing cultural awareness and citizenship that makes international cooperation easier; respecting diversity, developing negotiation skills, the ability to socialize and empathize. Through this, many mental, health, and social problems can be controlled at very basic and initial levels. The basic goal of the Life Skill enhancement is to develop a mentally and physically moderate society with agreed and suitable lifestyle and behaviors.

Life skills can be acquired through learning and practice. It enables individual to translate knowledge, attitudes and values in to actual abilities. Effective acquisition and application of life skills influence our self- concept and self- esteem therefore it plays an important role in the well- being of the adolescent and prevents them from mental disorder and behavioral problem. As we all know that teaching in the school is mainly for students learning i.e, modification of behavior in a desired way and life skills are the skills through which we develop a positive behavior that enable individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. School is an institution that provides environment where children learn and experience different situations and understand the ways through which they can deal with difficult situations and problems facing in their life. A positive school environment plays a significant role in determining the student’s sense of belongingness and their level of satisfaction. School is the only place where children prepare themselves for life and therefore teacher become very important as they are the most important figure in the life of the children. Many theorists such as Albert Bandura, Watson believed that an individual’s interaction with the environment shapes his/her behavior, knowledge & attitude and life skill helps them to develop the qualities that require for their successful adjustment in the environment.

WHO suggested that School is an appropriate place for introduction and enhancement of Life skills in adolescents’. In school, adolescents learn social, emotional and thinking skills besides academics when they interact with peers, teachers and other members of the society. Most of the time children spend in school so it becomes important that School should provide a conducive environment for the development of life skills especially for adolescents. WHO argues that those skills students practice in classroom is more likely to be used in and outside the school.

In school the teacher is the first person from whom children learn their social skills. Open minded, well balanced and a planned teacher has a great power to bring a positive change in the child's behavior. Teachers make a child comfortable, guide & teach him the early concepts and developmental skills of life. When the child grows and develops mastery in different skills, teacher becomes a real guide in nurturing his interest and learns to make him more independent. Teachers through their methods and techniques of teaching can indulge students in activities that ultimately serve for the development of life skills. Teacher should be well trained and equipped with the use of different techniques and skills that provide adolescents an environment to learn and develop life skills. Students are deeply influenced by the teacher's personality and through their personality; teachers can bring change in the behavior and attitude of the learners. Teacher not only create environment but give opportunities to students for the enhancement of different life skills such as problem solving, decision making, self-awareness etc. Teacher should identify life skills by keeping individual differences in mind and train them accordingly.

Principal role is vital in a school, as a leader it is the responsibility of a principal to take major initiatives that enrich school as well as class room environment with the activities and opportunities that aware students about their potential and help them to use it maximum for their development. Principal is mainly responsible for the arrangement of learning environment and methods of evaluation as well as content presentation. The school principal should be well verse with the ten core life skills and implement life skill education in schools to enhance school environment & make it favorable for students, to inculcate it in a practical way.

### **Review of literature**

Nelson- Johnes (1993) states that life skills are personally responsible sequences of self-helping choices in specific psychological skills areas conducive to mental wellness. People require a repertoire of life skills according to their developmental tasks and specific problems of living.

Khera, S. & Khosla, S. (2012) found a positive relationship between core affective life skills and self-concept of adolescents which means those who possess these essential skills are better self- confident in all aspects.

Tareman&Mahuja. (1999), "Educating the life skills is one of the factors of psychological health development and the achievement of such skills would lead to individual, social, cultural and political evolutions."

Pujar, L.L. &Patil, S.S. (2016) found that intervention on life skill education is helpful for the rural adolescent girls to take positive actions and improving their coping skills of stress and problem solving ability.

Aparna.N&Raakhee.A.S. (2011) discussed the importance of life skill at adolescent stage and discuss the different life skills that can be imparted through life skill education and the benefits of life skill education for adolescents.

Ramesh and Farshad C. (2004) in his study proved the effectiveness of like skills training in increasing mental and physical health, pro-social behavior and decreasing in behavioral, social problems & self-destructive behaviors.

Roodbari, Sahdipoor, and Ghale (2013) in their research showed that life skills training has a positive effect and improves social development, emotional and social adjustment, suggesting an increase in compatibility of children and public health.

### **Research Design**

Statement of the problem: **A Study on role of Schools in Enhancing Life Skills among Adolescent Students**

### **Objectives of the Study**

- (1) To identify the ways used by school teachers to inculcate life skills among students.
- (2) To identify the initiatives taken by school principals for effective implementation of life skill education in schools.

### **Methodology**

The present study was descriptive in nature and employed Sample Survey method.

### **Sample**

The sample of the study comprised of 100 students randomly selected and 10 school principals selected from 10 secondary schools in Delhi Region, India. The tools used in the study were 3 point Rating Scale (self developed) for students and Open-Ended Questionnaire (self-developed) for school principals.

### **Scoring Procedure**

Self Made Rating Scale for identifying the ways used by school teachers to inculcate life skills among students. The rating scale had 10 items and each item had 5 options that are scored from 5, 4,3,2,1 in the positive stated statements (always, very often, often, rarely and never) to respondents and a score of 5-1 obtained from each item positively.

### **Item-wise Analysis and Interpretation**

1. I regularly get counseling for developing my life skills.  
Interpretation: 90% of students stated that teachers and counselors always gave them counseling for developing life skills among them
2. I get assignments based on life skills education

Interpretation: 76% of students said that they always got assignments related to life skills.

3. I believe that the Life Skills lessons taught in classes are useful in developing my personality.

Interpretation: 96% of students found that the life skills taught are always beneficial to them and help in developing life skills and overall personality among them.

4. I understand my grading of life skills is based on my participation in life skills activities

Interpretation: Around 88% of students stated that they always understood that their grading was based on their participation in the activities and overall behavior. 12 % of the students felt that they often understood their grading based on their performance.

5. There are workshops and exhibitions based on life skills conducted in my school.

Interpretation: 87% of students stated that their schools always conducted workshops and exhibitions based on life skills.

6. The home assignments based on life skills are discussed in classroom.

Interpretation: 89% of students that home assignments based on life skills were always discussed in classrooms.

7. There are rewards given to students who regularly participate in life skills activities and enhance their personality.

Interpretation: 94% of students stated that they were always given rewards to students who regularly participated in the life skills activities.

8. I feel life skills incorporated in every subject are important for comprehensive development.

Interpretation: 94% of students always felt that life skills incorporated in every subject were important.

9. I understand my behavior, hygiene and overall personality are the main evaluator components for life skills.

Interpretation: 90% of students stated that they always understood their behavior, hygiene and overall personality are the main evaluators for life skills.

10. I understand that other skills are also required for a balanced personality and not only academics.

Interpretation: 89% of students stated that they always understood that other skills are also required for a balanced personality

### **Analysis and Interpretation from Open-ended Questionnaire**

Item1: How do you plan Life Skills' activities for students?

87 % of the school principals were of this view that the life skills activities are to be conducted subject wise in every formative session while 13% that these activities were conducted as and when time permits in their academic calendar.

Item2: What difference do you feel among students after the implementation of Life Skills Education in the school?

95% of school principals felt that after the training in life skills, students had an overall development of personality and behaved more properly while 5% told that there was a slight improvement in attitude and behaviour of students

Item 3: How do you make sure as a principal, that teachers participate in trainings conducted on Life Skills?

90% of school principals expressed that they make it compulsory for teachers to organize and participate in such workshops while 10% of the school principals just issued a circular in the vacations for teachers to voluntarily participate in the trainings conducted for life skill education.

Item 4: Generally, on what themes does your school conduct exhibitions?

Only 45% of school principals expressed that they emphasized on anyone of the life skills and organized exhibitions on related themes once every academic year while 55% said that they conducted exhibitions according to their curriculum.

Item 5: How do you ensure that your teachers maintain cumulative records of the students?

89 % of School Principals instructed their teachers to ensure compulsory record keeping and checked them on monthly basis and also discusses the issues therein. 11% of the Principals checked the records as and when required.

Item 6: How do you motivate your teachers to enhance Life Skills among students?

70 per cent school principals explained that to motivate teachers to enhance life skills in students, they asked teachers to attend workshops regarding life skills. 30 per cent of the principals said that they conducted discussions and different activities for developing life skills among students.

Item 7: Do you think that the separate assessment of Life Skills is helpful for the students? Give reasons

All the school principals strongly felt that separate assessment of life skills was very helpful because earlier these skills were taught as hidden curriculum but now separately focusing on these skills, assessing them helped to bring clarity and a detailed description.

Item 8: How do you ensure that teachers are able to transact life skills among students?

95% school principals told that they regularly took rounds to observe and supervise teaching learning activities of teachers for ensuring that teachers were able to transact life skill education to students while 5% told that they asked and discussed with their teachers on the best ways to develop life skills among students.

Item 9: How do teachers respond after the special training sessions attended on Life skills?

70 % of school principals found that their teachers were satisfied after their training in life skills to actively discuss, participate and implement in their classes while 30 % felt that teachers were satisfied but they found their training and its implementation hectic and burdensome.

Item 10: How do you ensure that teachers avoid subjectivity and objectively grade the Life Skills of students?

90% of school principals expressed that to ensure teachers' grading done objectively, they discussed with teachers before result preparation, grading done on life skills and other activities and then later checked the report cards prepared by them while 10% discussed the result with the teachers and so tried to ensure teachers' grading was done objectively.

### **Conclusion:**

Therefore, we can conclude that there many ways of developing life skills that were implemented in schools. When students are more aware of life skills, then life skills would develop more among them; when the participation in life skills activities of students increases, then their life skills would develop more; and when there is more clear assessment of life skills, then life skills would develop more among students. Moreover many initiatives were taken by maximum number of schools to develop more life skills among students but more efforts are needed to be made so as to have more effective impact on developing life skills among students

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