

Importance of Life Skills Education (LSE) in Teacher Education Program for Quality Enhancement

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Introduction

Education aims to achieve overall development of an individual. As a result, the teacher's role in education is critical. The teacher is exclusively responsible for the success and efficacy of instruction. The quality of education is determined by the quality of the teaching. There is a rapid change in the education system due to advancement in the 21st century. Teachers can no longer follow the conventional educational system, which relies primarily in the transmission of knowledge. The role of teachers is not only limited to teaching in a mastery area of a subject or successfully delivered content to the class. Indeed, the role of teachers has become more complicated and challenging. **Stronge, Grant & Xu** “visualize the aim of 21st century teaching as the development of knowledge, higher-order skills (such as the 4Cs of creativity, critical thinking, critical thinking, communication, and cooperation), as well as the development of lifelong learning habits and the ability to learn how-to-learn with technology as the central roles in the new picture of teacher effectiveness”. There is a need to rethink the education system and the role of teachers in order to meet the educational requirements of the modern world.

It is the need of the hour for skill-based education rather than knowledge-based education to be able to fit into the changing and competitive world. The present system of education is at the process of transition stage from traditional knowledge-based education to skill based education system. Various skills and competencies of the teachers are required to effectively deal with the changing situations and challenges to meet the requirements of the educational needs. In the transition period of educational system lack of skills and competencies of teachers and their poor ability to adapt with the changing environment becomes a main issue and problems. Therefore, one key approach to overcome this challenge is by implementing and internalising of life skills through teacher education program to enhance the role of teachers to face the realities of their changing role.

Review of Related Literature

According to B. Razia (2016), teacher education programs should be reformed to prioritise life skill education in order to improve the efficiency of prospective pre-service teachers and transform them into high-potential persons. The importance of including life skill education in teacher education curriculum was emphasised to impart diversity of skills among prospective teachers, thereby building an open and flexible mind, not only to adapt to diverse classroom situations but also to develop life skills of their students in real teaching situations. Simulation, brainstorming, scenario analysis, role acting, games, and other interactive and participatory

teaching methods were proposed for training potential teachers in Life Skill Education. The need of including life skills education as a full subject in teacher education programs has been highlighted in the study, which is important to improve the efficiency and well-being of future teachers.

Behrani (2016) looked at the problems that teachers and administrators have while implementing life skills education programs in central board secondary schools.. It was found that the main problems from teachers were requirement of time for conducting activities, teacher preparation and evaluation of students by teachers; some teachers were unfamiliar with the many approaches to teaching life skills programs; teacher also requires preparation to assimilate LSE in curriculum; requires patience and guidance by teachers sometimes less comfortable to an authoritarian style teacher and the discomfort in the evaluation of life skills education since it is a component of a continuous compressive evaluation (CCE). The researcher suggested that for proper teacher preparedness, proper rules and regulations for implementation should be included for further strengthening the programs as life skills-based education succeeds or fails based upon teaching quality. The researcher further suggested the need to provide quality training and on-going support to life skills teachers and instructors.

Sadhu (2014) investigated the life skills of student teachers and discovered that the majority of them had an average level of life skills that were insufficient. There was no substantial difference in life skills between male and female pupil teachers, or between urban and rural pupil teachers. However, there was a substantial disparity between science and arts student teachers. When compared to arts student teachers, science pupil teachers were shown to have a better high levels of life skills. According to the study, there is a need to train the teachers and, as a result, improve life skills among pupils.

Dixit & Amad (2013) observed the importance to impart life skills in schools and other institution education for which teacher must have knowledge of giving life skills to their students as they face psychological and emotional problems. Therefore the researcher suggests that ‘ life skills education’ should be necessary part and parcel of teacher education, which includes ten life skills: - Self-awareness, Empathy, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Effective Communication, Interpersonal Relationship, Creative Thinking, Critical thinking, Coping with Emotions, Coping with stress, as described by WHO.

Emergence of Life Skills Education – A Global Perspective

. Life Skills Education (LSE) has a long history of supporting child development and health promotion, and teachers played an important part in the students' development of life skills.

1. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, established in 1986, acknowledged life skills as a means of making better health decisions.
2. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) stated that education and life skills are inextricably connected.
3. The World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, 1990, has envisaged their vision and concern about the relevance of education and particularly for the need to focus on appropriate life skills for survival, capacity building, and improved quality of life for all learners from all over the world.
4. The UN Inter-Agency Meeting, 1998, emphasized on the speedy development of life skills through United Nations agencies at country level. Many teachers are already involved in activities linked to the development of life skills, but they require assistance in developing effective life skills education approaches for health promotion and primary prevention.

Emphasis on life skills through Teacher Education:

The introduction of life skills education necessitates teacher training in order for the program to be implemented effectively. This can be done as in-service training, but attempts should be made to include it into teacher education programs.

The successful implementation of a life skills program depends on:

- the development of training materials for teacher trainers;
 - a teaching manual with lesson plans and a structure for a sequential, developmentally appropriate program;
 - teacher training and ongoing support for the program materials
5. World Education Forum Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000: The Dakar Framework for Action - Education For All: Meeting our Collective Commitments re-affirm the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990) that every child, youth and adult has the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs including the full development of human personality. Out of six goals of EFA, two goals have included life skills – **Goal 3:** Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs; **Goal 6:** Improving all aspects of the quality of education so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.
 6. Inter-Agency Working Group on Life Skills in EFA-UNESCO (2004): Considered some of the central issues within a life skills approach to education and clarified of life skills-based education as a process,

ie involving development of knowledge, attitudes (and values etc.) and skills to be able to cope with new challenges throughout life, - as such life skills-based education is a process to be applied to various learning areas, not a domain or subject in itself.

Reflections on the Secondary Source

Tracing the past, it makes clear that the need and importance of life skills has been emerged due to various behavioural problems of the youngsters and the need to impart life skills education has been emphasised in order to develop life skills to the students to reduce high-risk behavioural problems and to create a supportive environment in which to ensure quality education and to improves the living standard.

A great emphasis has been persistently focused on life skills education all over the world. It has drawn the attention of the people through conference, meetings, discussions and research towards the importance of life skills education for quality sustenance and the need to impart life skills education by a competent teacher. As a result, teacher education should be responsive to educational requirements. Hence importance should be given to impart life skills education through teacher education program to enhance their role and to be able to inculcate necessary skills to the students to effectively deal with the various situations positively.

Perception of Life Skills

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (WHO). It enables a person to turn their knowledge, attitude, and beliefs into practical skills. It is essentially those abilities that help to promote physical, mental and emotional wellbeing and competence of an individual as they face the realities of life.

There are ten core life skills (identified WHO) that includes:

Self Awareness: The ability to introspect, analyze and accept one's thoughts, actions and feelings. It encompasses our self-awareness, character, strengths, weakness, wants, and dislikes. It embraces self-concept, self-image and self-esteem.

Empathy: It allows us to be sensitive and understanding of the situation and feelings of others. It starts with our ability to understand and accept different kinds of people around us. "Putting oneself into other's shoes".

Effective Communication: It allows us to express ourselves in culturally appropriate ways through verbal and nonverbal communication. It encompasses assertiveness and listening.

Interpersonal Relationship: It helps us to form positive relationships with the individuals we contact with. It makes one's relationship with others responsible and effective.

Creative Thinking: It's the capacity to explore at several options and come up with new ideas by merging, altering, or reapplying with old ones. It necessitates the capacity to think creatively and outside the box.

Critical Thinking: It enables us to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner through “logical thinking” and “analytical thinking”.

Decision Making: It helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives we take after considering various options and choose the best options from the alternatives.

Problem solving: helps us to cope constructively with problems that arise in our daily lives. The process of problem solving requires clearly identifying the problem, exploring the available alternatives and deciding on the best possible solution of the problems.

Coping with emotion: It involves recognizing emotions within us and others, recognizing how the emotions affect our behavior and how best can we respond appropriately. If we don't react correctly to intense emotions like anger or sadness, they might have a negative impact on our health.

Coping with Stress –It helps us in recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how this affects us, and acting in ways that help us control our levels of stress, by changing our environment or life style and learning how to relax.

Status of Life Skills in India

Life Skills Education is a holistic approach that enables the practise and reinforcement of culturally relevant psychosocial skills and are age specific based on the developmental tasks of an individual during a life span. In India, the National Population Education Program (NPEP) was established in 1980 with the goal of integrating population education within the country's current educational system. The focus here was on family life education. Later on Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) was one of the six basic themes of NPEP, focusing on critical population education and development issues. In the 1990s, the focus shifted to adolescent reproductive and sexual health (ARSH), which was designated as an essential priority area under the National Prevention and Education Program (NPEP). Following the sex education controversies in 2005, the program was renamed The Adolescent Education Program (AEP).

Adolescent Education Program (AEP)-2005. This program had the following broad objectives:

- All schools to integrate and provide accurate age appropriate life skills based adolescence education in a sustained manner in schools
- To adopt a structured education program to enhance knowledge and skills of adolescents to deal with challenges of life.
- The methodology adopted for AEP was to be interactive, participatory and based on life-skills.

In 2005, The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) recognized AEP as an important area in school education and life skills were taught to the adolescents understanding the importance of life skills in the education domain. It has emphasized on constructive learning experiences, and on the development of an inquiry-based approach, work-related knowledge and broader life skills.

Through Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation, India's Central Board of Secondary Education has integrated Life Skills Education into the curricula for classes VI through X. (CCE) and developed life skills manuals for teachers that provide teachers broad guidelines for each of the ten core life skills identified by WHO. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) also has, under its agenda, life skills training in upper primary classes.

Life skills have come to be adopted in a full-fledged manner in the education, health and organization sectors. NGOs have also proliferating the concept of life skills in many parts of India.

While there have been dispersed efforts around life skills, focus on curriculum integration and teacher development remains poor (Singh & Sharma).

Importance of life Skills Education for Quality Teacher Education Program

Teacher Education is a crucial stage for education to develop teaching proficiency of student-teachers.

Teacher education is to enriched and enhanced the role of teachers. One of the critical challenges of teachers in today's world is "skills mismatch" between the competencies teacher need to succeed in the teaching profession and those they actually possess in real life. Hence teacher education is to fulfil this gap. Life skills education, thus, is of prime importance in teacher education.

Life Skills is a holistic approach to life. The importance of Life Skills Education for teachers has been clustered in the table in three broad categories:

	Areas of Life Skills Development	Importance
1.	Importance of Life Skills for Personal well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to internalise and practice life skills in their day to day life challenges • Able to build positive self-concept and develop their self-esteem, self-confidence and self-control enabling to identify and build on strengths • Helps in goal setting for life • Enables to develop a healthy lifestyles • Able to manage and cope with their emotions and be a responsible individual. • Able to identify the source of stress and cope with stress that

		<p>they may face in their daily life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves resilience • Flexible and adaptable to any situations with positive attitude and behaviour. • Helps in learning to focus on personal performance
2.	Importance of Life Skills in Social Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable to relate to others in an empathetic manner. • Able to appreciate differences • Enable to effectively communicate with assertiveness to others and built a good interpersonal relationship (IPR) • Enable to create a supportive environment • • To establish positive relationships with the people with whom they interact. It makes one's relationship with others responsible and effective.
3.	Importance of life skills for development of thinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solve problems by using both logic and feelings. • Develops creativity in thinking process • Improves reasoning and logical thinking • Improves decision making process

Conclusion

Life skills education is an important aspect which needs to be included in teacher education, program as it develops the three broad categories of life skills – social skills, thinking skills and coping skills. Through life skills education the personal well-being, social well-being and psychological wellbeing of the teachers can be promote which is essential for the teachers as teachers are bound to work in a diverse situations with students from different background, and behaviour. The effectiveness of education depends on the quality teaching. As a result, life skills enable teachers to use their knowledge and abilities in the teaching-learning process. Life skills through teacher education program can enhance the role of teachers to face the realities and challenges. In addition, life skills program enables the teacher with scaffolding to develop life skills in the students. Thus, life skills education has become an important area to be focus in teacher education program to ensure quality education.

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