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LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENTS: IT'S NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

Life skills are a vast group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills that is needed for every individual to lead a healthy and productive life. These are the skills that help in promoting mental wellbeing and competence in young people. Adolescence is considered as a period of stress and storm in which teenagers go through different physical, emotional, social and cognitive changes. In this period teaching life skills is very much important for the adolescents which assist to effectively communicate, think critically and creatively, taking rational decisions in their life. Life skills education help in empowering the youths to act responsibly in the society. These life skills are important because these will help teenagers in coping with problems they faced in their everyday life. Life skills education can be imparted through different strategies like brain storming, role play, group discussions etc. Life skills education should be provided to every young people so that they can live a happy and successful life.

INTRODUCTION:

Life skills refers to those skills and abilities of an individual which is needed to live a healthy and productive life. These skills help every individual to take right decisions, make effective communication and develop self-confidence and self-awareness which is very much needed for adolescents. Adolescence period is the most problematic stage of people where they transit from childhood to adulthood and go through various physical, social, emotional

changes. Adolescence period or phase is viewed as the most productive stage of an individual in the society but in today's competitive world their lives are becoming more painful due to unsuitable home and school environment. Because of which they are suffered from anxiety, depression etc. which lead to maladaptive behavior and adjustment problems for the adolescents. To cope up with these challenges life skills education should be provided to the adolescents.

Life skills are the capabilities or skills that is helpful in promoting mental wellbeing and competence in youth. Proper attainment and utilization of life skills may impact on what we think about ourselves and others and also the way we are perceived by others. These skills can help individual to develop self -confidence, self- awareness, and self -understanding. It helps people to develop positive thinking such as to perceive everything and every individual in a positive manner, take right decisions to promote meaningful social relationships. Life skills facilitates complete progress or enhancement of adolescents or teenagers which helps them to behave in an effective way as a social being. Life skills help young people to develop positive attitude towards everything happening in their surroundings and live their life fruitfully.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 1997) life skills are “the abilities of adaptive and positive behavior that enables individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life”. Here adaptive denotes ability to adjust in every situations and positive behavior refers to a positive attitude towards everything and every situation.

UNICEF defines life skills as “a behavior changes or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: Knowledge, attitude and skills”. Therefore, we can say that life skills are those capacities or skills that is very helpful in promoting mental well-being and self confidence in adolescents. These skills guide teenagers in living happy and successful life.

In this study researcher has tried to discuss different life skills that can be imparted through life skills education and its need and relevance for adolescents and also the strategies of developing these life skills.

The core life skills:

There are ten core life skills that are suggested by the World Health Organization (WHO,1997). These are discussed below-

➤ **Self- Awareness:** Self-awareness means the ability to understand ourselves. It involves about awareness of our own emotions, behavior, strength, weakness etc. People who have great sense of self- awareness may know their strong and weak points. Having self-awareness skills can help an individual to develop own self- concept and to become more self-confident which is very important for every individual. Self-awareness is necessary for every young people to understand their own self and their wishes, desires, goals etc. and the way to achieve these desires in life.

- **Empathy:** Empathy is another important life skill which helps us understand others in a better way. It is the ability of an individual to understand and accept others whose thinking and behavior may be different from us and this lead to develop interpersonal relationships in the society. Empathy also includes the ability of an individual to understand about what other think, feel and help people to understand feelings, emotions, and sentiments of others.
- **Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking is the ability to think critically or to make intentional and intelligent judgement about the people, object, events etc. It helps us to decide the importance or significance of what is observed or communicated and to find out the justification before accepting any conclusions.
- **Creative Thinking:** Creative thinking is a process through which people may develop something new; it may be new or unique things, ideas etc. This creative process involves evaluating the existing situations and develop new ideas or solutions. Individual having strong creativity can find out solutions to very problems of their life.
- **Decision making:** Decision making is another important life skill that help us to take right decisions. It is the ability of an individual to choose the right choice among the available options or alternatives.
- **Problem Solving:** Problem solving is the ability of an individual to find out every possible solution to the problems of life. Human life is problematic and every individual face problem in their life. Therefore, this problem solving skill helps an individual to face problem confidently and find out effective solutions.
- **Effective Communication:** Effective communication refers both verbal and non-verbal communication ability of an individual. It helps us to develop our communication skills and improve our ability to express not only feelings and wishes but also needs and anxiety, stress and seeking guidance from others.
- **Interpersonal Relationship:** Interpersonal relationship is the ability which enables us to collaborate positively with others. It helps us to maintain friendly relationships in the family or in the society.
- **Coping with stress:** Stress is inevitable part of human life. Every individual feels stress in their life; may it be academic stress, work stress or any other personal stress. Therefore, coping with stress skill helps us to identify the source of stress in our lives and to manage it effectively which ultimately lead to live a happy life.
- **Coping with emotions:** Coping with emotions is the ability to understand emotions of ourselves as well as others. It helps us understand how emotions influence behavior of an individual and respond appropriately to different emotions.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENTS:

Adolescence is a transitional period of human life when various physical and psychological changes are occurs. Adolescents who are also known as teenagers, youth, young people, form a distinct population group in society because of their unique biological, psychological and social characteristics. During this period adolescents try to adjust their behavior, attitude according to the need of the society. The youth in this stage start to think differently. They like to being independent of the family members, establish friendships with their peers and develop their own believe and attitude. To cope up with these changes and to adjust and perform effectively in the society life skills education is very much important for every teenager during their adolescence period.

Life skill education is a program of teaching the core life skills in an effective teaching-learning environment. The major objective of the life skills education program is to help students with the strategies to take right decisions that contribute to a meaningful life. Life skills education enable individuals to understand themselves as well as evaluate their strengths, weakness and development level. It also assists youth to behave effectively in the society and to adjust with the changing environment and enables them to make responsible decisions. Life skills help adolescents improve their lives. In life skills education program basic skills building activities are taught through group discussion, brain storming, role play etc. These life skills help an adolescent to overcome problems they face in their life. By acquiring these skills young people learn to interact with others in the society. It helps them to control their feelings and take right decisions whenever needed. The need and importance of life skills education for adolescents are discussed below-

- Life skills are important for adolescents because they help them in developing social and emotional skills which is needed for adolescents in successful transition from childhood to adulthood.
- It assists teenagers to develop social skills as well as problem solving ability which ultimately help them to shape their own particular personality.
- It promotes positive social attitude and behavior among the adolescents.
- It is necessary for promotion of self-esteem, peace and self confidence among the adolescents.
- It is important to prevent anti-social activities and behavior of adolescents.
- It helps adolescent to stay away from using tobacco, alcohol etc.
- Life skills are needed for the adolescents for being able to explore the alternatives.
- It is also necessary for adolescents to make rational decisions in their life.
- It is important to develop critical thinking, creative thinking etc.
- It is necessary to maintain good social or interpersonal relationships in the society.

Thus, life skills are important in our personal as well as social and emotional development. Life skills help students to adjust effectively in school environment. These skills also help young people to increase working ability which lead them to success in work situation. Therefore, life skills education should be provided to every young individual to become happy and successful in their lives.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS:

Life skills can be developed using following strategies-

- **Brainstorming:** Brainstorming is a system utilized in the development of life skills. It is a process where every individual of a group will have a typical theme on which, they will discuss deliberately. In school students can actively engage in teaching learning process and get chance to share their ideas through this process which ultimately leads to the healthy development of essential life skills for adolescents including communication skills, creative thinking. Critical thinking etc.
- **Role- play:** Role play is a method where a group of individuals or students participate in small drama acting different roles. Through role play students get opportunity to develop different life skills specially empathy and interpersonal relationships as they play role of others.
- **Discussion:** Discussion is another important strategy of developing life skills in adolescents. Through discussions students get opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas and learn from others. It helps to understand things from others perspective. It helps an individual in developing listening skills, empathy and communication skills.

CONCLUSION:

Life skills enables the adolescents to live a happy and successful life. Providing life skills education helps to build the foundation for learning skills of individuals. A proper and relevant life skills education is needed for every youth to effectively adjust and participate in society. It helps an individual in proper social, emotional, cognitive development. Life skills education helps adolescents in promoting mental wellbeing which help them in the development of emotional intelligence, self- confidence as well as enhancing decision making ability, critical thinking, creative thinking skills. Thus, life skills should be taught in every regular schools by a life skills trainer/teacher/counsellor so that students learn basic skills which are very much needed in the present society to enhance mental health, peace and adjust in the changing environment.

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