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IMPACT OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION & SELF ESTEEM IN ADOLESCENCE – A REVISIT

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ABSTRACT

Over the years there has been an increasing interest about Life skills. Adolescents' tender and flexible behavior with magic-bouncing curiosity and capacity to discover, learn and generalize has enormous scope of empowerment if/when put in an environment where protection, growth and socialization converge on the issues of adolescent health, life skills and guidance for better future. India today is undergoing a rapid change in the context of growing globalization and urbanization. Adolescents today are facing severe challenges and there is a dire need to improve their psycho social competence and resilience. This paper provides a review of the articles on the impact of life skills education in promoting the self-esteem of adolescents.

KEY WORDS: *Life Skills Education, Impact, Self Esteem*

INTRODUCTION

Over the years there has been an increasing interest about Life skills. Adolescents' tender and flexible behavior with magic-bouncing curiosity and capacity to discover, learn and generalize has enormous scope of empowerment if/when put in an environment where protection, growth and socialization converge on the issues of adolescent health, life skills and guidance for better future.

The term 'life skills' has been conceptualized defined and applied differently by academics and practitioners. While Hamburg (1990) defined life skills training as teaching of requisite skills for surviving, living with others and succeeding in a complex society, Powel (1995) viewed life skills are the life coping skills consonant with the

developmental tasks of the basic human development processes. According to WHO (1996) Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

EFA global monitoring report identified five contexts that use the term 'life skills'. First, the term is used to capture the 'generic skills' such as problem solving, working in teams, networking, communicating and negotiating. Second, it is used to represent 'contextual skills' that are skills needed in daily life, which are strongly connected to certain contexts such as livelihood skills, health skills, skills related to gender and family life, and environment skills. Third, it is used to refer to legal literacy, family literacy, health literacy, environment literacy,

and so on. Fourth, 'life skills' is used in school context, to refer to any subject matter, other than language or mathematics, e.g. science and technology, civic sense, community development, health nutrition, and HIV /AIDS. Last, it is used to express the miscellaneous skills such as cooking, making friends and crossing the street. Thus life skills are combinations of generic skills, contextual skills and literacy skills.

The World Education Forum (2000) saw the adoption of Dakar framework for Action. Out of the 6 goals, goals 3 & 6 focused on life skills.

Goal 3: Ensuring that learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;

Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality education and ensuring excellence of also those recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Thus life skills are not just a set of skills but a combination of different skills. Hence they should be viewed and understood as a culmination of the combination of guide skills (skills related to making or doing something) and psycho social abilities. Based on this, life skills programme can be defined as educational approaches or processes that enable learners to enhance and generate desirable characteristics or psycho social skills which are necessary and relevant to specific contexts (such as in a political process, work place, at home or in a community) and specific sectors and domains (such as health, environment, gender, work etc) in specific time frames. Thus life skills are effective for individual empowerment, and development of a community and a nation. Life skills programmes are not new to many educators working on policy, planning and implementation. Various organizations, documents, and international and regional forums have discussed its importance. Some of the research on the impact of life skills education on high school adolescents is discussed in the following section.

IMPACT OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION IN ADOLESCENCE

Research provides evidence that training adolescents in life skills enhances social development (Sajedi (2009), Ahadi *et al.*, (2009), leads to sustained development (Patel 2006) and promotes emotional adjustment (Tuttle and colleagues (2006), Pour Seydi *et al.*, (2010), Navidi (2008) and Hamidi (2005) and also paves ways to improved social compatibility (Roodbari et al 2013). It also reported that training in life skills also promotes increased

awareness on reproductive health (Awasthi & Kumari 2012). Bharath & Kishore (2008) proposed a model school mental health programme using the life skills methodology to promote the psycho social competence of adolescents in schools.

Life skills have been a area of research interest to many other researchers from other regions such as Kerala (M.K.C.Nair, 2005) and Khatmandu (Sharma S, 2003) The latter in a cross sectional survey of 347 high schools students of a public coeducational secondary school in Kathmandu observed that 51% of the children had high level of life skills while 49% had low level of life skills. Mother's education was found to be significantly associated with higher life skills levels in the adolescents. Empowering adolescent rural girls by enhancing their life skills has been the interest of some researchers. Pujar et al (2014) found significant improvement on various life skills in a sample of 328 rural girl students in Dharwad taluk, Karnataka. Authors observed that 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. Parvathy & Pillai (2015) also in a study on adolescent boys and girls in a coastal school in Kerala reported the significant impact of life skills education.

IMPACT OF LSE ON SELF ESTEEM AND SELF CONCEPT OF ADOLESCENTS.

Self-esteem is a widely used concept both in popular language and in psychology. It refers to an individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself. The most broad and frequently cited definition of self-estee is Rosenberg's (1965), who described it as a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self (p. 15).Self-esteem, the judgment we make about our own worth and the feelings associated with those judgments. Self-esteem is generally considered the evaluative component of the self-concept, a broader representation of the self that includes cognitive and behavioral aspects as well as evaluative or affective ones

Life skills education to adolescents is also reported to improve their self-efficacy and self-esteem (Bharath & Kishore 2010), improved self-concept (Sandhya & Shivani 2012). Prakash (2013) in study on 650 high students found a significant correlation between social intelligence and the ten core life skills. Yadav & Iqbal (2009) conducted a study on 60 students (30 boys & 30 girls) in Delhi.

The aim of their study was to assess the impact of life skills training on self esteem, adjustment and empathy among the adolescents. Results revealed that subjects improved significantly in post conditions on self esteem, emotional adjustment, educational adjustment and total adjustment and empathy. Bharath & Kishore (2010) maintain that mental health promotion of adolescents using life skills education is essential for empowering the adolescents. They assessed the impact of their programme on 605 adolescents from two schools in Bangalore district and found that the subjects at the end of the programme had significantly between self esteem, adequate coping better adjustment and prosocial behavior. Authors outside India, too report on the effectiveness of life skills training. Esmailinasab et al (2011) in a study on 160 students in Karaj City found that life skills training lead to significant increase of self esteem in study group in contrast to control group subjects. Similar findings were reported by Niaraki and Rahimi (2013).

CONCLUSION

In the current scenario, in light of the challenges faced by the adolescents today, life skills education is the key for strengthening their coping mechanism and there by enhancing their problem solving abilities.

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