



Life Skill Education: Way to build Efficiency among Students

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Abstract

Life skills encompass the adaptive and positive behaviors essential for individuals to effectively navigate daily challenges and complexities. These skills—integrating cognitive, social, emotional, practical, and personal dimensions—empower individuals to make sound decisions, manage stress, foster healthy relationships, and achieve self-sufficiency. Recognizing their significance, institutions worldwide, including those in India, are integrating life skills education into academic curricula as emphasized by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This paper explores the critical role of life skills in personal development and societal progress, highlighting their categorization, implementation challenges, and potential benefits. Through a descriptive and interpretative analysis based on secondary data, the paper delves into methodologies for embedding life skills within educational systems, underscoring their indispensability in fostering holistic, self-reliant individuals capable of adapting to a rapidly changing world.

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Introduction

Life skills are ability for adaptive and positive behavior with which an individual can effectively deal with the challenges of daily life. A person needs these skills to successfully handle the intricacies of their environment. The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF also placed strong emphasis on the value of life skills in empowering people to successfully handle issues they face on a daily basis. The goal of life skills education is to provide people the skills they need to successfully navigate the difficulties of modern life. It is a crucial part of holistic learning. The national educational policy, 2020 aims to impart education to students which will make them self sufficient and self reliant. Various universities and colleges already have taken steps towards fulfilling this vision. In this mission, the institutes have put great emphasis on integrating skill education in the course curriculum. In this skill enhancement course, various skills including life skills are given to its students. Without proper skills, it is practically impossible for anyone to be self sufficient or self dependent because essential skill can only pave the way for self employment. Moreover, in our life we have to handle different problems. The ability to successfully negotiate these obstacles of daily life requires a variety of skills. These skills include both cognitive (thinking skills) and social (interpersonal skills), enabling people to make wise judgments, control their emotions, communicate clearly, develop wholesome relationships, and handle stress. Therefore, skill must compliment knowledge in any course curriculum.

Objectives

This paper is written to discuss the value of life skills for both individual growth and society's benefit. It also discusses the importance of life skills in a society that is changing quickly and tries to analyze the means to incorporate them into educational systems and the challenges that it might face in this process.

Methodology

The method used in this paper is purely interpretative and descriptive in nature, based primarily on secondary sources of data like books, journals and internet.

Discussions

Life skills basically include the skills related to interpersonal communication, human relations, problem solving, decision making, skills related to fitness, healthcare, identity and purpose in life. Based on these, life skills can be broadly categorized in the following category:

Cognitive Skills includes abilities to think critically, solve problems, make decisions, and be creative. These abilities help people examine events, weigh their options, and come to wise decisions. By encouraging the capacity to separate unreliable information from accurate information, critical thinking fosters a sense of intellectual autonomy. While decision-making skills give people the assurance to make decisions that are in line with their personal aims and beliefs, problem-solving skills allow the investigation of novel options. On the other side, creative thinking cultivates the ability to foresee novel options and tackle problems from novel angles.

Social skills, on the other hand, are essential to fostering healthy relationships because interpersonal interactions are a cornerstone of contemporary culture. This group includes effective communication, active listening, empathy, and conflict resolution. People with good communication skills can communicate themselves effectively, which promotes understanding and prevents misunderstandings. By cultivating understanding of other people's viewpoints, active listening fosters cooperation and respect between people. Empathy fosters the ability to comprehend and share the sentiments of others, encouraging kind relationships. With the right tools, people may resolve conflicts in ways that benefit all parties involved and deepen interpersonal bonds.

It is becoming increasingly clear that emotional intelligence is essential for both personal success and wellbeing. Self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and management are all included in this category. Self-awareness entails ability to identify and comprehend one's own feelings, which promote emotional openness. Self regulation enables people to control their emotions in a variety of circumstances, fostering emotional stability. Beyond social interactions, emotional abilities encompass recognizing and controlling one's own and other people's emotions. The ability to regulate stress gives people coping mechanisms for demands and obstacles, which increases resilience in the face of difficulty.

To manage a variety of activities and responsibilities, people need a range of practical talents. This category includes skills like problem-solving, time management, organization, and financial literacy. The ability to make informed decisions about money, investments, and financial planning is ensured by financial literacy. Optimizing productivity and juggling several responsibilities are made easier with time management and organizing abilities. Practical problem-solving abilities enable people to overcome obstacles with efficiency, facilitating effective functioning in both the personal and professional realms.

Personal skills are related to a person's identity and personal growth. Goal-setting, self-motivation, flexibility, and resilience are a few of them. Setting goals helps people create and pursue worthwhile aims by giving them direction and a sense of purpose. Self-motivation enables people to maintain

their motivation and focus on their goals. Individuals with adaptability and resilience abilities are better able to deal with change and recover from setbacks, which promotes a sense of empowerment and agency.

National Education Policy 2020 and life skills

Since life skills are essential requirement to successfully navigate the difficulties of modern life, can it be integrated to the course curriculum in any academic institution?

The National Education Policy, 2020 is prepared to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution. The aim of education will not only be cognitive development, but also building character and creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with the key 21st century skills

Out of 22 principles listed in the NEP 2020 two principles highlighted the importance of life skills. Moreover, the vision of the Policy also hinted at the importance of life skills. The vision of NEP 2020 is to instill among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen.

NEP 2020 offers students a large amount of flexibility in choosing their individual curricula, certain subjects, skills, and capacities should be learned by all students to become good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings in today's rapidly changing world. In addition to proficiency in languages, these skills include: scientific temper and evidence-based thinking; creativity and innovativeness; sense of aesthetics and art; oral and written communication; health and nutrition; physical education, fitness, wellness, and sports; collaboration and teamwork; problem solving and logical reasoning; vocational exposure and skills; digital literacy, coding, and computational thinking; ethical and moral reasoning; knowledge and practice of human and Constitutional values; gender sensitivity; Fundamental Duties; citizenship skills and values; knowledge of India; environmental awareness including water and resource conservation, sanitation and hygiene; and current affairs and knowledge of critical issues facing local communities, States, the country, and the world. NEP 2020 puts lot of emphasis on life skills because they enable people to translate their knowledge, attitudes, and values into useful abilities in a stressful and challenging world. For both personal and professional success, it is essential to be able to act properly, manage your emotions, and deal with stress. Life skills lay the groundwork for people to respond constructively to life's demands, fostering mental wellbeing and fostering a sense of community. A collection of fundamental talents known as "life skills" enables people to successfully manage the challenges of daily living and lead satisfying lives. The need for life skills has increased more than ever in today's dynamic and linked society. These abilities go beyond what is often taught in the classroom and cover a wide variety of social, emotional, and practical competencies that are essential for both personal growth and

success. The desire to provide people with the tools to overcome obstacles in their personal and professional lives is at the heart of the demand for life skills. The necessity of adaptability and critical thinking has increased due to the quick development of technology and the dynamic nature of the labor market. People with strong problem-solving, decision-making, and creativity abilities may confidently face new challenges and come up with creative solutions. These abilities are useful for handling the intricacies of relationships, finances, and health as well as in the workplace. Additionally, the growth of emotional intelligence is intimately related to the requirement for life skills. Emotional resiliency and self-awareness are essential strategies for preserving mental health in a time of pressures and uncertainty. Building healthy relationships and resolving problems successfully depends on life skills including stress management, empathy, and effective communication. They encourage empathy, allowing people to comprehend and appreciate different points of view and fostering societal harmony. In the context of schooling, the requirement for life skills is particularly striking. While academic knowledge is unquestionably crucial, it is lacking in real-world application without life skills. Students are given competencies that go beyond textbook knowledge when life skills education is incorporated into the curriculum, preparing them for difficulties in the real world. These competencies enable students to succeed not only academically but also in a variety of other sectors of life, from fundamental ones like time management and organization to more complex ones like negotiating and networking. Life skills are crucial for both personal development and fulfillment. Achieving one's goals requires strong goal-setting, self-motivation, and resilience. People that have these abilities are more able to bounce back from failure and keep going in the face of challenges. As a result, self-confidence and a sense of success are fostered. Thus, the quest for happiness and self-fulfillment is entwined with the requirement for life skills. Cultural sensitivity and adaptation are crucial in today's worldwide society. Life skills enable people to flourish in multicultural situations and work across borders, which help people build a global perspective. In an interconnected society, successful communication and cooperation are made possible by open-mindedness and cultural awareness. The numerous difficulties of modern life make the requirement for life skills essential. These skills enable people to handle complexity with assurance, make wise choices, and retain their well-being in the face of difficulty. By encouraging empathy, effective communication, and cultural understanding, life skills education not only advances individual development but also advances society. Recognizing and prioritizing life skill development is a crucial first step to holistic development and success in contemporary society. Keeping this importance in mind, Gauhati university develops a course curriculum for four year undergraduate programme (FYUGP), where skill development is given lot of importance. There is a provision of common course in the curriculum; and these common courses include ability enhancement course, skill enhancement course and Value added course. Considerable autonomy is offered to every institution to develop these courses on the basis of local needs.

However, this process is not without any challenges. Traditionally, education institution believes in imparting

knowledge, rather than skills, to students. Infrastructure is developed to facilitate that process of learning. Now, with the implementation of NEP 2020, the shift from knowledge to skills, often pose challenges to the teachers and educational institutes. Earlier, skills education was limited to certain departments like education, psychology. This too was confined to theoretical classes. Most of the teachers lack required training to give hands on training on these skills to its students. Therefore, it is not out of the apprehension that these skill course will be taught in the classroom where students will memorise definitions and example for examinations. In such situation, the whole effort will be futile.

To successfully overcome such challenges, we first need change our thinking that a college is not only a place for acquiring knowledge; it is also a place for developing skills which will help to run the life of students smoothly. Secondly, training on life skills should be given to the teachers. Collaborations and linkages should be made between colleges and skill development centre so that students can reap its benefits. Lastly, the evaluation of these skill courses should not be done through pen and paper only. A more practical approach should be followed where their skills can be tasted in a real life situation.

Conclusion

Life skill teaching program is provided for promotion of mental health and prevention of social damages. In this study, we examined different kind of skills such as creativity, problem solving, control of anger, empathy, resolving conflicts and self-awareness which help us behave properly and wisely in different situation and communicate with other adaptively and solve problems without aggression. These important skills must be part of the course curriculum for any institutions. NEP 2020 puts lot of emphasis on the life skills in its curriculum. However, there will be some challenges in this process which can be solved with proper strategy.

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