

Role of Life Skill Education in Mitigating the Crisis Faced by People Owing to Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Life Skills Education is a form of education that focuses on cultivating personal life skills such as self-reflection, critical thinking, problem solving and interpersonal skills. The United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) defines life skills based education as basically being behaviour change or behaviour development. Generally the term life skills refers to a group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and think critically. Life skills are empowering skills that enable people to cope with the changes and challenges of life. Strengthening life skills helps students to meet the challenges and risks, maximize opportunities and solve problems in co-operative, non-violent ways. At present life skill education may appear as a very important non-pharmaceutical instrument to fight against COVID-19. In the light of this, people are becoming habituated with this new normal situation owing to pandemic with their basic skills of life and knowledge and it can be done in a very systematic manner through life skill education. The entire globe is going through the under crisis, Where the unemployment, lack of job security, anxiety, mental illness, etc. due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This new challenge requires immediate and effective responses from a socially responsible system of education. However, it has been felt that life skills education bridges the gap between basic functioning and capabilities. It strengthens the ability of an individual to meet the needs and demands of the present society and helps in dealing with the above issues in a manner to get desired behavior practical. Imparting life skill training through inculcating life skill education will help people to overcome such difficulties in life. The present discourse will focus on the above mentioned issue through the article entitled as **“ROLE OF LIFE SKILL EDUCATION IN MITIGATING THE CRISIS FACED BY PEOPLE OWING TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC”**

KEYWORDS: Life skills education, Mitigating Crisis, COVID-19 Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

Life skill education is a form of education that focuses on cultivating personal life skills such as self-reflection, critical thinking, problem solving and interpersonal skills. In 1986, the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion recognized life skills in terms of making better health choices. 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. The 1990 Jomtien Declaration on Education

for All took this vision further and included life skills among essential learning tools for survival, capacity development and quality of life. The 2000 Dakar World Education Conference took a position that all young people and adults have the human right to benefit from "an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be and ultimately learning to become as stated by UNESCO aims of education".

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Life skills-based education is now recognized as a methodology to address a variety of issues of child and youth development and thematic responses including as expressed in UNGASS on HIV/AIDS (2001), UNGASS on Children (2002), World Youth Report (2003), World Program for Human Rights Education (2004), UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005), UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children (2006), 51st Commission on the Status of Women (2007), and the World Development Report (2007). According to Errecart et al., (1991) and Caplan et al., (1992) life skills education proves to be an effective approach in primary prevention education, as its more interactive, uses problem solving approach and is activities based. Hence, teacher and the taught both involve in learn and fun too. Our findings are in common to the findings of Botvin, et al., (1998), Nair. M.K.C, (2005) many more, suggesting life skill education program as a good supportive system for all in the present COVID-19 situation. Life Skill Education enhances social, emotional and thinking skills, and helps the 21st- century youngsters to achieve their goals, by strengthening their abilities to meet the needs and demands of the present society and be successful in life but still further empirical research is needed from future researchers, academicians and professionals in the related field to demonstrate robust findings.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY:

In a constantly changing environment, having life skills is an essential part of being able to meet the challenges of everyday life. The dramatic changes in global economies over the past few month due to lockdown and Pandemic COVID-19 have been matched with the transformation in technology and these are all impacting on education, the workplace and our home life. To cope with the new normal due to COVID-19 and increasing pace and change of modern life, students need new life skills such as the ability to deal with stress and frustration. In this aspect, education is important, but education to support and live life better is more important. It has been felt that life skills education bridges the gap between basic functioning and capabilities. It strengthens the ability of an individual to meet the needs and demands of the present society and helps in dealing with the above issues in a systematic manner to get desired behaviour. Imparting life skill training through inculcating life skill education will help all people to overcome such Pandemic COVID-19 situations in life. The present paper focuses on the importance of life skills education and its role to mitigating new challenges & Crisis in the present perspective.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The major objectives of the present research are:

- To highlight the various types of life skill education to help us to survive in this difficult time.
- To suggest some possible solution for mitigating the crisis faced by people owing to COVID-19 Pandemic through Life Skill Education (LSE).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The present study attempts to describe the Importance of Life Skill Education during this grim period of COVID-19. Therefore the researcher considered the title of the problem as: **“ROLE OF LIFE SKILL EDUCATION IN MITIGATING THE CRISIS FACED BY PEOPLE OWING TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC”**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The topic has been a significant area of interest to the researchers, theorists, and practitioners, and there have been numerous researches carried out to emphasize the importance & effectiveness of life skills education in the development of students' social, emotional and cognitive development & dealing with their psychosocial problems and issues.

According to Albertyn et al. (2004) life skills training enhance critical thinking abilities, which further impacts were living life actively, being responsible in the job and in future planning too.

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.

Tuttle et al., (2006), during their investigation, add the life skills to students' curriculum. The results of this study suggested the extraordinary capability of teens to positive promotion and flexibility.

Puspakumarag (2013) in his study showed that life skills training was effective in preventing a wide range of problems such as substance abuse, teenage pregnancies, violence Bullying & to promote self-confidence and self-esteem among the adolescents.

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.

The present paper focuses on how enhancing social, emotional and thinking skills through life skills education, helps the 21st- century youngsters to achieve their goals strengthens the abilities to meet

the needs and demands of the present society and be successful in life.

METHODOLOGY:

It is a qualitative study. It is based on official documents and secondary data. The conclusion made in the study is based on primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources are Government report and books and the secondary sources data from journal, article, news paper etc. and information were extracted from various websites. It is a descriptive research.

LIFE SKILL EDUCATION:

According to UNICEF, Life Skills are a behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address balance of three areas:

- Knowledge
- Attitude
- Skills.

The world bodies such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and WHO list the ten core Life Skills as:

1. Self-awareness
2. Critical thinking
3. Creative thinking
4. Decision making
5. Problem Solving
6. Effective communication
7. Interpersonal relationship
8. Empathy
9. Coping with stress
10. Coping with emotion

Life skills training/ education takes into account psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help students to take right decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner. (WHO) defines Life skills as the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life? Life skill has been classified into three broad categories:

Thinking skills:

Thinking skills are the skill that enhances the logical faculty of the brain using an analytical ability, thinking creatively and critically, and developing problem-solving skills and improving decision-making abilities.

Social skills:

Social skills include interpersonal skills, communication skills, leadership skills, management skills, advocacy skills, co-operation and team building skills, etc.

Emotional skills:

Emotional skills, involves, knowing and being comfortable with oneself. Thus, self-management, including managing/coping with feelings, emotions,

stress and resisting peer and family pressure imparting life skills.

Pandemic Situation in the light of Life skills Education (LSEs):

As because of the unavailability of vaccine and influenza drugs, Life skills Education (LSEs) are the only strategy which may be followed by the individuals by their own initiative for their own safety. Govt. should conduct more awareness programmes to educate as well as aware people about the Life skills Education (LSEs) to face the corona situation. The dissemination of the proper knowledge should be conveyed among the people of the nation as much as possible to avoid any sort of superstition or wrong notion. LSEs may not be the ultimate solution to save people from infection spread by deadly corona virus but can reduce the rate of rapid growth and delay the process of spreading infection. It is true fact that Life skill Education (LSE) is indispensable to eradicate and save people from uncertain mortality owing to COVID-19 but until or unless the specific vaccines or drugs are available the LSEs are the only way to tackle the frustrating situation.

Following are the important strategies can be developed through like Life skill Education (LSE) to face the corona situation:

1. **HAND HYGIENE (HH):** is recommended as part of general hygiene and infection prevention, including during periods of seasonal or pandemic influenza.
2. **RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE (RE):** Respiratory etiquette is recommended at all times during influenza epidemics and pandemics. It can be adopted as a part of life through life skill education.
3. **FACE MASK (FM):** Face masks worn by asymptomatic people are conditionally recommended in severe epidemics or pandemics, to reduce transmission in the community. Awareness can be generated among masses about the benefits of wearing face mask through life skill education.
4. **SURFACE & OBJECT CLEANING (SOC):** Surface and object cleaning measures with safe cleaning products are recommended as a public health intervention in all settings in order to reduce influenza transmission.
5. **OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES (OEM):** Installing UV light in enclosed and crowded places (e.g. educational institutions and workplaces) is not recommended for reasons of feasibility and safety.

6. CONTACT TRACING (CT): This intervention could be considered in some locations and circumstances to collect information on the characteristics of the disease and to identify cases, or to delay widespread transmission in the very early stages of a pandemic in isolated communities.

7. ISOLATION OF SICK INDIVIDUALS (ISI): Voluntary isolation at home of sick individuals with uncomplicated illness is recommended during all influenza epidemics and pandemics, with the exception of the individuals who need to seek medical attention. The duration of isolation depends on the severity of illness (usually 5–7 days) until major symptoms disappear. In India isolation appears as a major weapon to battle against the deadly virus.

8. QUARANTINE OF EXPOSED INDIVIDUALS (QEI): Home quarantine of exposed individuals to reduce transmission is important strategy. Through the life skill education various technical issues can be adopted.

9. SCHOOL MEASURES AND CLOSURES (SMC): School measures (e.g. stricter exclusion policies for ill children, increasing desk spacing, reducing mixing between classes, and staggering recesses and lunch breaks) are conditionally recommended, with gradation of interventions based on severity.

10. WORKPLACE MEASURES AND CLOSURES (WMC): Workplace measures (e.g. encouraging teleworking from home, staggering shifts, and loosening policies for sick leave and paid leave) are conditionally recommended, with gradation of interventions based on severity. Extreme measures such as workplace closures can be considered in extraordinarily severe pandemics in order to reduce transmission.

11. AVOIDING CROWDING (AC): Avoiding crowding during moderate and severe epidemics and pandemics is conditionally recommended, with gradation of strategies linked with severity in order to increase the distance and reduce the density among populations.

CONCLUSION:

A relevant and proper implementation of life skill education is a need of an hour, for today’s society. Imparting life skills education to the individuals can be helpful as it specifically addresses the needs of children, helps in motivating, providing practical, cognitive, emotional, social and self-management skills for life adjustments with this grim situation COVID-19 Pandemic. Yadav P, Iqbal N(2009)

showed positive results of imparting life skills education to students and bringing the change in adolescent’s attitude, thought and behavior by providing supportive environment to them.

On the whole, life skills education, have found to be an effective psychosocial intervention strategy for promoting positive social, and mental health of adolescents which plays an important role in all aspects such as strengthening coping strategies and developing self-confidence and emotional intelligence, as well as enhancing critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills as has been well documented in the aforementioned studies. Thus, there is, significance and importance of life skills education to be integrated into the regular school curriculum and given on a daily basis by a life skills trainer/ teacher/ counsellor to enhance the mental health of People, equip them with better adapted skills to face the challenges of changing life situations and empower them to become fully functioning contributors to the host society in particular and the world in general. In the light of above discussion, it could be concluded that, Life skill education has its importance and significance in overall development of peoples during this Pandemic COVID situation.

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