



INCULCATION AND PROMOTION OF VALUES THROUGH LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

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Life skills education helps in the development of values among students at the school level to reach their full potential and prepare them for the challenges of everyday life. In this context, the entire process of education should be value-oriented and lead to skill development. The purpose of value inculcation through life skills education is to develop an integrated and balanced personality in the child. The study throws light on the ten core life skills of the World Health Organisation that are self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem-solving, effective communication, interpersonal relationship, coping with stress and coping with emotions. The paper also highlights various teaching methods to instil values through life skills in a classroom such as class discussions, brainstorming, case studies etc.

KEYWORDS: Core Values, Life Skills Education, Empathy, Self Awareness, Self Management

INTRODUCTION

What is often ignored as important educational outcome of learning systems is the number of skills gained, attitudes mastered and values clarified and internalized at the end of a specific life-cycle, thus putting the learning actors (i.e., the children and youngsters for which a particular kind of learning or schooling is facilitated) in a better position to self-define and shape their own lives into qualitative existences.

Thinking about values and critical thinking not being a part of the Education for All (EFA) goals, makes the educational systems irrelevant or meaningless for a lot of beneficiaries. Children are not in a state of 'blank slates': they are raised within a value system; they live within a particular context

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and have own ideas about that and bring a set of value-loaded luggage with them as reference framework. Education therefore needs to facilitate children to unfold their luggage, take stock, reorganize, change or adapt, in other words to facilitate a process of clarifying the values that they have, in order to be able to embrace, adapt or reject them. Education that tries to mould, rather than to facilitate children to mould them, is therefore bound to be irrelevant (Coppens, 2006).

Educational institutions should give importance alone to value-based education rather than preparing the students to get more marks in examinations. Education should mould the personality of an individual. Education should be a light of knowledge which should lead the world in a right path. As quoted by Swami Vivekananda “Excess of knowledge and power, without holiness, makes human beings devils. We want that Education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one’s own feet” (Sowbhagya, 2017).

WHAT ARE VALUES?

A value is a principle, a guide a norm by which a person lives. The need of value education has not been emphasized only in India but its need is felt important all over the world. In philosophical contexts values are those standards or code of conduct conditioned by ones cultural tenets and guided by conscience, according to which human beings are supposed to conduct themselves and shape their life pattern by integrating their beliefs, ideals and attitudes to realize cherished ideas and aims of life. All values are effective, cognitive and directional aspects, they guide us to shape our priorities in deciding what is right and wrong. Values reflect our attitudes based on what we believe about everything. The term value has been used variously to refer to interest, pleasures like preferences, duties, moral obligations, wants, goals, desires and many other kinds of selective orientations. Life without proper values will be disastrous indeed leading to chaotic and unspeakable dangers in life. The role of value education is to understand and bring noble values that should shape any individual or nation (Lindsey, 2005).

PROMOTION OF VALUES THROUGH THE PROCESS OF INCULCATION

Fixing up of values in the mind is value inculcation. The values such as truth, love, non-violence, honesty, punctuality, integrity, self-discipline, equality, courage, cleanliness, democratic and self-reliance are required to be inculcated in the young mind. These values are needed not only in personality development of an individual but it is a key factor for the survival

of entire humanity. Education is the most powerful agent of inculcating such values. Value based 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. It aims to help children reach their full personal potentials and prepare them for the challenges of everyday life (National Research Council, 2012).

Life skill education has a long history of supporting child development and health promotion. In 1986, the Ottawa Charter of Health Promotion recognized life skills in terms of making better health choices. The 1989 Convention on 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". Life skills education is included in two out of the six EFA Goals. The third goal says - Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. The sixth goal emphasizes on improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills ([Ampiah, 2011](#)).

Expected learning outcomes include a combination of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills with a particular emphasis on those skills that are related to critical thinking and problem solving, self-management and communication and inter-personal skills (National Research Council, 2012).

WHAT ARE LIFE SKILLS?

Life skills have been defined as the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (World Health Organization, 2004). 'Adaptive' means that a person is flexible in approach and is able to adjust indifferent circumstances. 'Positive behaviour' implies that a person is forward looking and even in difficult situations, can find a ray of hope and opportunities to find solutions. Life skills are a comprehensive set of universal cognitive and non-cognitive skills and abilities, connecting behaviour, attitudes, and knowledge, which youth can develop and retain throughout their lives ([Kingsnorth, Healy, & Macarthur, 2007](#)).

Life skills as defined by some important world organizations are as follows:

Life skills are a large body of psychosocial and interpersonal skills that can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them lead a healthy and productive life (UNICEF, 2012) .

Life skills increase young people's well-being and help them to develop into active and productive members of their communities. (World Bank, 2007)

Executive function and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully (Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2006).

The Ten Core Life Skills laid down by WHO (2004) are:

- **Self-awareness:** It includes recognition of 'self', our character, our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognize when we are stressed or feel under pressure. It is often a prerequisite to effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy with others.

- **Empathy:** Empathy can help us to accept others, who may be very different from ourselves. This can improve social interactions, especially, in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity. Empathy can also help to encourage nurturing behaviour towards people in need of care and assistance., or tolerance as is the case with AIDS sufferers, or people with mental disorders, who may be stigmatized by the very poor they depend upon for support.

- **Critical Thinking:** The ability to evaluate and analyse a situation by applying critical reasoning is a crucial skill in everyday life, as well as in education. For students preparing for university, developing critical thinking skills is now highly regarded as a key ingredient for academic success. Critical thinking skills form an important part of decision making, problem solving and being able to qualify your judgments. It enhances language and presentation skills. Thinking clearly and systematically can improve the way students express their ideas. In learning how to analyse the logical structure of texts, critical thinking also improves comprehension abilities. Critical thinking is crucial for self-reflection.

- **Creative Thinking:** Creative thinking (a companion to critical thinking) is an invaluable skill for college students. It is important because it helps you look at problems and situations from a fresh perspective. Creating thinking is a way to develop novel or unorthodox solutions that do not depend wholly on past or current solutions. It's a way of employing strategies to clear your mind so that your thoughts and ideas can transcend what appear to be the limitations of a problem. Creative thinking is a way of moving beyond barriers.

- **Decision Making:** Decision making involves the process of choosing

between two or more courses of action. In many everyday decisions, you must decide your course of action in a split second. For example, if you're driving and you need to decide whether or not to turn down a road or keep going straight, you need to make that decision within only a few seconds. You won't have time to draw out a lengthy plan of which road you should take.

- **Problem Solving:** The ability to solve problems is a skill, and just like any other skill, the more you practice, the better you get. So how exactly do you practice problem solving? Learning about different problem-solving strategies and when to use them will give you a good start. Problem solving is a process. Most strategies provide steps that help you identify the problem and choose the best solution. There are two basic types of strategies: algorithmic and heuristic.

- **Interpersonal Relationship:** Interpersonal skills are the skills we use every day when we communicate and interact with other people, both individually and in groups. People with strong interpersonal skills are often more successful in both their professional and personal lives. Interpersonal skills include a wide variety of skills, though many are centered around communication, such as listening, questioning and understanding body language. They also include the skills and attributes associated with emotional intelligence or being able to understand and manage your own and others' emotions.

- **Effective Communication:** Effective communication means that on the bases of ways which are appropriate to our cultures and conditions, we are either verbally or non-verbally able to express ourselves in most effective manner. This means being able to express opinions and desires and also fears and needs.

- **Coping with Stress:** Now a days copability is considered to be more important than capability. There are two parts to coping, one is being able to tolerate stress: to function reasonably well in stressful situations and get through them. The second part is recovering i.e., getting back to normal when the stressful situation is over. Good coping skills prevent stress from getting us down and help us thrive, even in challenging times.

- **Coping with Emotions:** Coping with emotions is all about the capability to speak or express the way one is feeling. It is a life skill that leads to a healthy and prosperous life. Coping with emotions include the following. Understand the impact of emotions on perception, realize the effect of emotions on behaviour and assess its influence on others, understand the role of physiological or bodily changes behind the emergence of emotions. Emotions, thus, create responses in the brain called feelings. These feelings are caused by physical changes in the body that include expressions of the face leading to chemical changes in the brain.

MAIN APPROACHES TO VALUE EDUCATION

Superka, Ahrens and Hedstrom (1976) state that there are five basic approaches to values education as a part of life-skill education: inculcation, moral development, analysis, values clarification and action learning. A short outline of these five approaches along with their purposes are as follows:

- **Inculcation:** The main purpose of inculcation is to instil or internalize certain values in students and change the values of students so they more nearly reflect certain desired values.
- **Moral Development:** It helps students to develop more complex moral reasoning patterns based on a higher set of values and to urge students to discuss the reasons for their value choices and positions to foster change in the stages of reasoning of students.
- **Analysis:** It helps the students use logical thinking and scientific investigation to decide value issues and questions and also use rational, analytical processes in interrelating and conceptualizing their values.
- **Value Clarification:** For awareness of students to identify their own values and those of others, for open and honest communication of their values by the students and to help students use both rational thinking and emotional awareness to examine their personal feelings, values and behaviour patterns is the main purpose of this approach.
- **Action Learning:** It aims to provide students with opportunities for personal and social action based on their values and also provide encouragement to students to view themselves as personal-social interactive beings, not fully autonomous but members of a community or social system.

TEACHING METHODS FOR INCULCATION OF VALUES THROUGH LIFE SKILLS

Various methods have been employed to inculcate values through life skills or 21st century skills in school education such as sport, drama and fine arts, storytelling, experiential workshops, mentoring initiatives, interactive classroom learning and discussion. There have been multiple innovations in the delivery of life skills in recent times, through games and simulations, experiential activities, and technology. Some of the important methods for inculcating values through life skills are as under ([D'Rozario, Low, Avila, & Cheung, 2012](#)) :

- **Class Discussion:** The class examines a problem or topic of interest with a goal of better understanding an issue or skill, reaching the best solution, or developing new ideas and directions for group. Class discussion increases student's interests and engagement, provides Instructor with Feedback – as

students answer questions, instructors can gauge whether the students understand the materials, promotes preparation – if the instructor regularly engages students in a classroom discussion, then students are more likely to come prepared in class, develops students speaking skills – Instructors prepare students to speak confidently in front of their peers. Public speaking is a skill that improves with more practice. Helps students to develop skills in listening, assertiveness and empathy.

- **Brain Storming:** Brainstorming is a technique by which a group attempts to find a solution to a specific problem by amassing ideas spontaneously. It is a process for generating creative ideas and solutions through intensive and freewheeling group discussion. Every student is encouraged to think aloud and suggest as many ideas as possible, no matter seemingly how strange or weird. Analysis, discussion, or criticism of the aired ideas is allowed only when the brainstorming session is over and evaluation session begins. It is a highly effective technique for maximizing group creative potential, not only to generate ideas but also to determine which ideas are most likely to succeed in a specific area of interest. The biggest advantage is the high number of generated ideas. At best, participants with different knowledge and different experiences come together. They bring together various ideas and suggestions. Joint brainstorming improves the class atmosphere.

- **Case Studies:** Situation analysis activities allow students to think about, analyse and discuss situations they might encounter. Case studies are real life stories that describe in detail what happened to a community, family, school or individual. Case studies are powerful catalysts for thought and discussion. Students consider the forces that converge to make an individual or group act in one way or another and then evaluate the consequences. By engaging in this thinking process, students can improve their own decision making skills.

- **Debate:** Debate is a process that involves formal discussion on a particular topic. In a debate, opposing arguments are put forward to argue for opposing viewpoints. A reasoned debate allows students to explore and gain understanding of alternative viewpoints and, for the participants, develops communication, critical thinking and argumentation skills. It also offers a chance to present higher thinking skills.

- **Games and Simulations:** Educational games are defined as a set of competitive activities which consist of strict rules to reach desired goals such as acquiring or improving knowledge and skills. Simulations, like educational games, consist of a different medium of instruction where the act of imitating a situation, event, and/or environment closely mirrors the real world. Educational games are innovative teaching tools that have been shown to promote critical thinking, enhance clinical confidence building and promote problem solving skills. Their acceptance for a wide variety of situations (i.e., academics,

music, and arts) and capacity to accommodate different learning styles (e.g., interactive, group demonstration/activities, technology-based learning) have made them a popular choice for students and progressively minded instructors.

- **Role Play:** Role playing helps students explore human relations- by enacting problems and then discussing the enactment, students together can explore feelings, values and problem-solving strategies. Role Playing as a model of teaching has roots in both personal and social dimensions of education. This helps individuals resolve personal dilemmas with the assistance of social groups. Regarding the social dimensions' students work together and analyse social situations, with special reference to interpersonal problems. Herein, some students are given the part of role-players, while the rest are observers. Each person puts himself in the position of another person and then tries to interact with others who are playing roles. Doing so generates not just sympathy, but empathy. Students learn to put themselves in other shoes and consider problems with different perspectives. As empathy, sympathy, love, and friendship are generated during the interaction, role playing will be effectively carried out. Thus, in order to have a clear understanding of oneself, understanding of others too, is essential. As [Joyce, Calhoun, and Hopkins \(2008\)](#) puts it, "the essence of role playing is the involvement of participants and observers in a real problem situation and the desire for resolution and understanding that this involvement engenders."

CONCLUSION

On the whole, values inculcation through life skills education, have been found to be an effective psychosocial intervention strategy for promoting positive social, and mental health of students. This 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 above-mentioned content. Thus, there is, a significance and importance of inculcation of values through 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 students, equip them with better adapted skills and values 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.

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