Opinion of Teachers for Inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools of Visakhapatnam District

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Abstract: Today every individual in the family and society face many problems due to over ambitions, burdens, health related problems, lack of decision making skills and so on. This brings out an increase in amount of stress and strain which leads to various problems like depression, poor health conditions, tiredness, suicides etc. In such cases, the children from those families are highly neglected which in turn leads to loss of confidence. Lack of decision making and lose their self assurance and self reliance. In some families both parents are working in different field, they completely neglect their children. Thus, basic life skills are required for today’s individual to face the challenges of the day to day life. They ensure every person to make more informed decisions which will affect their future, the future of their family, the future of their community as well as nation’s future. The central board of secondary education has recognized the importance of life skills and focused on developing life skills among young learners. The board has introduced life skills education in class 6 way back in the year 2003-2004 and subsequently in other higher classes. The life skills education is not taught under the syllabus prepared by the Andhra Pradesh state government. So the researcher selected the study to know the opinions of teachers for inclusion of life skills education in secondary school of state government. Hence, the researcher undertook the problem “Opinions of Teachers for inclusion of Life skills Education in Secondary Schools in Visakhapatnam district”.

1. Introduction:

The term “Life skills” is defined as the study of the skills required by people for managing and living a better quality of life. Life skills help us to reach our goals and ambitions in a better way. They give us confidence and feel secured by implementing life skills.

‘Life-Skills’ refers to a large group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills which 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. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions and actions toward others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health. Thus, life skills are not necessary to be learnt by teaching. We can also learn through our personal experience and our deeds indirectly. So, we can say life skills education is a never ending process.

Life skills have been defined as,

“The abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”

-----World Health Organization.

‘Adaptive’ means that a person is flexible in approach and is able to adjust in different circumstances.

“Positive behavior” implies that a person is forward looking and finds a ray of hope, solution and opportunities even in difficult situations.

In general, the ten core life skills laid down by World Health Organization are:

1. Self-awareness.
2. Empathy.
3. Critical thinking.
5. Decision making.
6. Problem Solving.
7. Effective Communication.
8. Interpersonal relationship.
10. Coping with emotions.

1. Self-Awareness:-Self awareness is the recognition of ‘Self’, or character, our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us 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.
2. Empathy:- Empathy is to have a successful relationship with our loved ones and society, to understand and care about other people’s needs, desires and feelings. Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person. The absence of empathy makes our communication with others as one-way traffic. Empathy enables us to understand ourselves as well as others and allow us to communicate our needs and desires. Empathy can improve social interactions, especially, in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity.

3. Critical thinking:- Critical thinking is an ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute to health by helping us to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behavior, such as values, peer pressure and media.

4. Creative thinking:- Creative thinking is a novel way of seeing or doing things. It is characteristic of four components. They are,
   a) Fluency.
   b) Flexibility.
   c) Originality and
   d) Elaboration.

5. Decision Making:- Decision making is a life skill that helps us to deal constructively with decisions about life. It teaches about life. It teaches how to make decisions actively.

6. Problem Solving:- Problem solving helps us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. Significantly that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain.

7. Interpersonal relationship: - Interpersonal skills help us to relate positively interacting with others. This skill is necessary to make and keep friendly relationships. These friendly relationships are necessary to maintain mental and social well-being.

8. Effective Communication: - Effective communication is the ability to express ourselves both verbally and non-verbally according to the situation.

9. Coping with Stress: - Coping with stress is the ability to recognize the sources of stress and its effect on our lives and acting in ways that help us control our levels of stress by changing lifestyles and relaxing whenever possible.

10. Coping with Emotions: - Coping with emotions is the ability to recognize emotions within, and their influence on the behavior. It also deals with the ability to control the intense emotions like anger or sadness that cause negative effects.

Components Of Life Skills:
These ten life skills can be shown or combined into three main groups which are as follows:

Thinking Skills: Thinking skills consist of decision making, problem solving skills and information gathering skills. The individual must be able to think or guess the future results of the present actions and deeds of others. They should be able to think about the alternative solutions and put them into practice. In some situations of life critical thinking and creative thinking also must be used.

Social Skills: Social skills include verbal and non-verbal communication, active and good learning skills and the ability to express their feelings maintain healthy interpersonal relationships. They also include negotiation skills, refusal skills and assertiveness which helps the learners to settle down arrangements empathy, a social skill, is the ability to listen and understand others needs. It is one of the most useful and important interpersonal skill. Teamwork and the ability to cooperate include expressing respect for those around us. These qualities are important for an adolescent to be accepted in the society. They result in the acceptance of social rules and regulations that provide foundation for adult social behavior.

Emotional skills: These skills help us to increase self control, so that the individual believes that he/she can affect the world. Self esteem, self evaluation, self awareness and the ability to set goals also come under self management skills. Anger, sorrow and anxiousness must be discussed. Stress, time management, positive thinking and relaxation techniques are the important skills to be learned by the learners.

In addition to enhancing knowledge, the focus of the modules is on development of value enhancing life skills in students.

Objectives of life skills program:

- To develop concept of life skills with respect to everyday life.
- To create awareness about the ten core life skills and their inter relatedness.
- To develop life skills of creative thinking, critical thinking, empathy, coping with stress, coping with emotions, inter personal relationships, communication skills, decision making skills, self awareness and problem solving.
- To apply these life skills in all spheres of life.

IMPORTANCE OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION:

Life skills education enhances the well being of a society and promotes outlook and gentle healthy behavior. It enables the individual to

- Translate knowledge, attitude, skills and values into action.
- Promotes well being of the mental state as this motivates them and others.
- Improve self perception building self confidence, building self esteem and self worth.
- Communicate effectively and develop negotiation skills.
- Develop positive attitude towards themselves and others.
- Handling real life situations innovatively and effectively.

Life skill education also gives long term benefits to the society such as social, educational, health, cultural, and economic benefits.

1. Social benefits:
   - Improves the process of relating to others in a friendly way among learners.
   - Helps learners to utilize their leisure time fruitfully.
   - Enables learners to choose good and reliable friends.
   - Assists learners to avoid risky situations.
   - Result in meaningful interaction among learners, teachers and the school community.
   - Helps in character building.

2. Educational benefits:
   - Enhances benefits in schools.
   - Helps all learners to empower their communication skills and performance.
   - Reduces learner problems such as substance abuse and teenage pregnancies.
   - Strengthens teacher pupil’s relationship.
   - Leads to desirable behavior change.

3. Health Benefits:
   - Prevents and controls diseases such as STI’s, HIV and AIDS.
   - Helps aids people to be responsible for their own and others health conditions.
   - Contributes to an individual’s well being in physical, mental, emotional and social conditions.
   - Contributes to less strain on health facilities.

4. Cultural Benefits:
   - Plays a vital role in clarification and give a clear idea of cultural values in the society.
   - Enhances harmonious and peaceful interaction between people of various cultures and traditions.
   - Suggests learners to avoid practices that may put self and others at risk.
   - Enables people to adopt and maintain meaningful cultural practices.

5. Economic Benefits:
   - It gives rise to huge productivity due to a motivated, strong and energetic labor force.
   - Resources like time, money and energy are saved as learners acquire skills to control and manage themselves and their surroundings.
   - Repair of damaged or spoilt property.
   - Buy teaching learning resources.
   - Rehabilitation drug and substance abuses

DIFFERENT METHODS SUGGESTED FOR TEACHING LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

By various methods, we can be able to inculcate life skills in adolescent students. The following are some suggested methods which could be able to teach Life skills education

- Brainstorming
- Story telling
- Discussion
- Role play
- Debate
- Case studies
- Songs and Dances Poetry and Recitals
Objectives of the study:

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives.

1. To study the opinion of teachers for inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools of Visakhapatnam District.

2. To study the opinion of male and female teachers towards inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools of Visakhapatnam District.

3. To study the opinion of urban and rural area teachers towards inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools of Visakhapatnam District.

4. To study the opinion of teachers based on their school management towards inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools of Visakhapatnam District.

5. To study the opinion of teachers based on their teaching subject towards inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools of Visakhapatnam District.

Construction of the Research Instrument:

The present investigation is intended to study the opinion of teachers for inclusion of life skills education in secondary schools of Visakhapatnam district. After going through various previous investigations and research articles in journals and periodicals and some of the research papers published on the subject matter, the investigator has present research problem taken into opinion of teachers for inclusion of life skills education in secondary schools of Visakhapatnam district. The investigator had developed and adopted the tool as given in the annexure to collect the opinions.

The final instrument for teachers hence, comprises of an opinionnaire with a provision for gathering personal data and questions relating to inclusion of life skills education. The Lickert scale technique was used. Each statement is followed by three options i.e. Agree, Disagree and Cannot say. The tools were finalized for the collection of the data.

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Population and sampling:

The researcher adopted a simple random sampling technique to identify the schools and teachers for collecting the data. All together 150 teachers from
ten schools in Visakhapatnam were randomly selected for the study.

**Statistical Techniques used:**

The present study is of more of qualitative in nature, collected data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Quantitative data were analyzed with the simple statistical techniques. The investigation has been carried out by the descriptive statistical analysis, such as calculating measures of central tendency like mean and calculating measures of dispersion like standard deviation. For testing the null hypothesis, the ‘t’ - test and analysis of variance have been used by the investigator. The ‘t’ test was used to test the null hypotheses when the data was correlated from matched groups. Analysis of (ANOVA) variance with Scheffe’s Post Hoc Test (if ANOVA is significant) was used to find out the effect, if any, of the variables studied.

The investigator used correlation for studying the relationships of variables, T-test to test the significant difference between two means and ANOVA to test the significance of difference among classed in different variables. The data were coded and prepared for analysis using the statistical package for research software programme (SPSS).

**Major findings :**


2. There is a significant difference between male and female teachers overall perceptions towards Inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools of Visakhapatnam district.

3. There is a significant difference between male and female teachers perceptions with respect to About Life Skills Education.

4. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers perceptions with respect to Decision Making and Problem Solving.

5. There is a significant difference between male and female teachers perceptions with respect to Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking.

6. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers perceptions with respect to Effective Communication and Inter Personal Relations.

7. There is a significant difference between male and female teachers perceptions with respect to Self Awareness and Empathy.

8. There is a significant difference between male and female teachers perceptions with respect to Coping with Emotions and Stress.

9. There is a significant difference between urban and rural area teachers overall perceptions towards Inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools of Visakhapatnam district.

10. There is no significant difference between urban and rural area teachers perceptions with respect to About Life Skills Education.

11. There is no significant difference between urban and rural area teachers perceptions with respect to Decision Making and Problem Solving.

12. There is a significant difference between urban and rural area teachers perceptions with respect to Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking.

13. There is a significant difference between urban and rural area teachers perceptions with respect to Effective Communication and Inter Personal Relations. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

14. There is a significant difference between urban and rural area teachers perceptions with respect to Self Awareness and Empathy.

15. There is a significant difference between urban and rural area teachers perceptions with respect to Coping with Emotions and Stress.

16. There is a significant difference among teachers overall perceptions based on their school management towards Inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools of Visakhapatnam district.

17. There is a significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their school management with respect to About Life Skills Education.

18. There is no significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their school management with respect to Decision Making and Problem Solving.

19. There is a significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their school
management with respect to Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking.

20. There is no significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their school management with respect to Effective Communication and Inter Personal Relations.

21. There is a significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their school management with respect to Self Awareness and Empathy.

22. There is no significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their school management with respect to Coping with Emotions and Stress.

23. There is a significant difference among teachers overall perceptions based on their subject towards Inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools of Visakhapatnam district.

24. There is no significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their subject with respect to About Life Skills Education.

25. There is no significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their subject with respect to Decision Making and Problem Solving.

26. There is no significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their subject with respect to Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking.

27. There is no significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their subject with respect to Effective Communication and Inter Personal Relations.

28. There is no significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their subject with respect to Self Awareness and Empathy.

29. There is no significant difference among teachers perceptions based on their subject with respect to Coping with Emotions and Stress.

Conclusions:


Private school teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to About Life Skills Education, Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking and Self Awareness and Empathy towards Inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools in Visakhapatnam district than that of rural area teachers than that of government and aided school teachers.

According to their teaching subject, teachers expressed one and the same opinion with respect to overall response towards Inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools., About Life Skills Education, Decision Making and Problem Solving, Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking, Effective Communication and Inter Personal Relations, Self Awareness and Empathy and Coping with Emotions and Stress towards Inclusion of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools in Visakhapatnam district.

Educational Implications:

1. Life skills education from the primary level enables students to face the society confidently.

2. Life Skills training along with the regular academic activities improve the quality of the student’s life, thereby improving the quality of the society.

3. The life-Skills education at the secondary level enables the adolescent student to cope with the physiological changes and hormonal changes and make them psychologically stable.

4. Life-Skills education at the higher level helps the students to plan their career and reach their goals by
overcoming their stress and negative peer pressure.

5. Life-Skills education contributes in developing and assertive personality

6. Life-Skills education helps to build positive attitudes and values, ultimately contributing to overall personality of the student.

Suggestions:

In present day conditions the students are prone to many other problems in and around the society. The life skills education help them to overcome those difficulties and can adjust according to norms of the society. So every student should learn life skills to meet the needs & demands of the society. This study gives some suggestions as follows.

1. Life-skills education should be included in the curriculum.

2. Objectives for life-skills education should be based on student needs of society.

3. Training programmers’ should be conducted for teachers as well as students about life-skills education.

4. Conducting work-shops and guest lectures on life-skills in schools, college and universities. Teaching methods should be experimental by involving the students. These methods should be creative and innovative in order to come up with other relevant methods and activities.

5. Books related to life-skills education should be provided to the learners for creating awareness.

6. Learners interest and curiosity must be motivated by the teachers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


3. UNICEF, Life-Skills–Based Education in South India.


