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Life Skills Education: Origin and Development of the Concept

Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair* & Ms. Sunitha Ranjan**

Abstract

Psychosocial competence has a significant role to play in terms of enhancing and maintaining physical, mental and social well-being, fostering the development of active, productive and responsible members of society. Life Skills Education is a holistic approach which nurtures the practice and reinforcement of psychosocial skills which are age specific, culturally relevant and based on the developmental tasks of an individual during a life span. Societal transformation, coupled with technological advances, have given rise to myriad issues and challenges, shifts in knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and mind sets. Being prepared with the necessary competencies to face the future complex life challenges are vital. This paper attempts to narrate the origin and development of the concept of life skills education and training across the globe. The methodology adopted is to trace the history through e-resources, especially from various UN agencies. The paradigms of 'lifelong learning' and the four pillars of learning to know, to do, to be and live together, which form the basis and philosophy of life skills education, has much relevance in today's world.

Keywords: Life skills education, psychosocial competencies, cognitive and non- cognitive skills, origin and development of life skills education

Introduction

Life skills are psycho-social in nature and called as psychosocial competencies. Psychosocial competence is a person's ability to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It is a person's ability to maintain a state of mental well-being and to demonstrate this in adaptive

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and positive behaviour while interacting with others, his/her culture and environment.

According to WHO (1997), psychosocial competence has an important role to play in the promotion of health in its broadest sense; in terms of physical, mental and social well-being. In particular, where health problems are related to behaviour, and where the behaviour is related to an inability to deal effectively with stresses and pressures in life, the enhancement of psychosocial competence could make an important contribution. The most direct interventions for the promotion of psychosocial competence are those which enhance the person's coping resources, and personal and social competencies. IYF (2014), has defined life skills as 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. Life skills increase young people's well-being and help them to develop into active and productive members of their communities. Life Skills Education is a holistic approach which facilitates the practice and reinforcement of psychosocial skills which are culturally relevant and are age specific based on the developmental tasks of an individual during a life span.

The objective of this paper is to narrate the origin and development of the concept of life skills education and training across the globe and not to discuss on the life skills perse. The methodology adopted is to trace the history through e-resources, especially from various UN agencies.

Origin of the Concept

The term life skill is of recent origin, in the second half of the 20th Century. Initially the programme was designed to develop the personal competence of the people to help them to overcome their risk-taking behaviour. Adkins (1965) used it as a tool to address problem-solving behaviour to manage personal affairs, Botvin (1972) considered it as tool for controlling risk-taking behaviour, Hopson and Scally (1980) as a tool for personal competence and self-empowerment, etc. UN agencies like UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF, UNAIDS, etc. have looked upon life skills as the best tool for behaviour change communication, competency development and developing self-management abilities.

Conger, D. Stuart, et al (1973) published a book titled "Readings, in Life Skills¹", perhaps first book on life skills published with the title life skills,

1 Conger, D. Stuart, et al (1973) published a book titled "Readings, in Life Skills". Saskatchewan NewStart, Inc., Prince Albert.; Training Research and Development Station, Prince Albert (Saskatchewan). PUB DATE Sep 73'. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED108032.pdf>

in which they have quoted the training programme of Adkins (1965). In this book R. Himsl(1973:13) has defined life skills, as “*problem solving behaviors appropriately and responsibly used in the management of personal affairs. As problem solving behaviors, life skills liberate in a way, -since-they include a relatively small class of behaviors usable in many life situations. Appropriate use requires an individual to adapt the behaviors to time and place. Responsible use requires maturity, or accountability. And as behaviors used in the management of personal affairs, the life skills apply to five areas of life responsibility identified as self, family, leisure, community and job.*”

Contributions of Winthrop R. Adkins

Adkins (1984)² has recorded that “*the first Life Skills program was tested at Project Try (Adkins et al., 1965), a \$4.5 million antipoverty training program in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area. It was during this period that we coined the term Life Skills to describe the kind of behavior-based psychological learning needed to help people cope with predictable developmental tasks. Later the term diffused into the general culture and has since acquired a variety of meanings ranging from those used by other psychologists, such as Gazda, Carkhuff, and Egan, to those used by people in other educational disciplines, such as English as a second language (Jones, 1974) and literacy (Northcutt, 1975).*”

Adkins (1984) reported that, “*The initial program made use of problem-centered, experience-based, and behaviorally oriented learning groups and employed a mixture of teaching and counselling methods to facilitate learning. Development of resources and learning activities that could structure the learning sessions was mainly the responsibility of trained teachers and counsellors.*” He further states that, “*Gradually, the present four-stage learning model was developed, incorporating video and other learning methods. A program development process was created to permit the systematic development of Life Skills units by full-time trained developers. In 1971, with funds from the U.S. Bureau of Adult Basic Education, a Life Skills Development Project was established, and work began on making*

2 Certain paragraphs from the article of Winthrop R. Adkins have been quoted to give a clear picture of the development of the concept of life skills education/training in US and Canada. The structured and well researched programmes were developed over a period of time targeted for the benefit of the youths from disadvantaged and marginalised communities for developing their personal and social competence and later for all categories of youths. Initially the programmes were focused on developing employability skills and to address those issues which counselling could not be effectively resolved, specifically the issues related to learning. Later life skills programmes were widely used for developing personal and psycho-social competence.

use of the learning model in developing a ten-unit Employability Skills Program (Adkins, Wylie, Grothe, Kessler, &Manuele, 1975) for adults dealing with the psychosocial tasks of choosing, finding, planning, and getting a job. Three years later a field-tested multimedia program with 260 learning components was completed. It was published in 1975 by the Psychological Corporation, a division of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, which disseminated the program to many schools, training centers and community agencies throughout the country. In 1979 the Institute for Life Coping Skills, Inc., a non-profit organization, became the publisher of the Adkins Life Skills Program: Employability Skills Series. The Institute has continued to disseminate the program, has revised the videotapes in color, and is now completing a second edition of the program. Over the past several years, steps have been taken to lay the base at Teachers College for the development of new Life Skills programs for other psychosocial problems of other populations. The R & D Center for Life Skills and Human Resource Development and master's and doctoral specialties to train counselors of adults and psychosocial program developers have been established.”

Later Adkins (1984) has developed the Structured Inquiry Learning Model for life skills training. This model has five stages; stimulus stage, evocation stage, objective-inquiry stage and application stage. In this model, life skills programme consists of a number of units, each of which focuses on a specific coping problem, such as how to cope effectively with a job interview, etc. The programme is delivered by a trained facilitator in a small group of 10 to 15 pupils. A structured pattern of questions and counselling skills such as paraphrasing, reflecting feelings and summarizing to help participants identify critical issues are used by the facilitator. The entire process is totally participatory. Videos are used for modelling situations or teaching knowledge as well as for monitoring practice of behaviour that is new and providing feedback. The application stage helps the pupil to translate his new knowledge, feelings and insight concerning the problem into behaviour.

Contributions of Hopson & Scally

Hopson and Scally has published their seminal work on life skills, titled “*Lifeskills Teaching*” in 1981 which is considered as a pioneering work on the subject, in that they have defined life skills and presented a framework for life skills training. They have defined life skills as the generalised skills that will help one become more self-empowered. In this book they have grouped the life skills under four headings; Me-Skills I need to man-

age and grow, Me and You- skills I need to relate effectively to you, Me and Others- Skills I need to relate effectively with others, and Me and specific situations- Skills I need for my education, at work, at home, at leisure and in the community.

For Hopson and Scally (1981:57), self-empowerment is central to the vision of life skills. To them self-empowerment is a process by which one increasingly takes greater charge of oneself and one's life. They stated that operating in a self-empowered way entails being able to:

- look at oneself objectively and believe that one is open to change;
- having the skills to change some aspects of oneself and the world in which one lives;
- being able to use one's feelings to recognise where there is a discrepancy between what is and what one would like it to be;
- being able to specify desired outcomes and the actions required to achieve them;
- being able to act to implement plans of action;
- living each day aware of one's power to assess, reassess, influence and self-direct; and
- enabling others to gain the power to take charge of their lives and influence the different arenas of their lives.

Hopson and Scally (1981:58) offer an operational definition of self-empowerment. It says, self-empowerment is believing in oneself, taking charge of oneself and having the ability to identify the alternatives in any situation, so that one can choose on the basis of one's values, priorities and commitments. They state that to become more self-empowered, one needs awareness, goals, values, life skills and information (knowledge):

- Awareness: Self, Others and Systems;
- Goals: Commitments and Outcomes;
- Values: People and Systems;
- Life skills: Me, Me and You, Me and Others, and Me and specific situations
- Information: Me, You and The World.

Subsequently, Hopson and Scally (1986) has revised the classification of life skills into skills for learning, skills for relating, skills for working and playing and skills for developing self and others. According to them the skills for learning are: literacy, numeracy, information-seeking, learning from experience, using whole-brain approaches, computer literacy and study skills. Skills for relating are: Making, keeping and ending relationships, communication, assertiveness, being an effective member of a group, conflict management, giving and receiving feedback, parenting, and influencing. Skills for working and playing are: Career management, time management, money management, entrepreneurship, choosing and using leisure options, preparation for retirement, seeking and keeping a job, managing unemployment, home management, setting objectives and action planning. Skills for developing and self and others are: Being positive about yourself, creative problem-solving, decision-making, stress management, transition management, managing sexuality, maintaining physical well-being, making the most of the present, pro-activity, managing negative emotions, discovering interests, values and skills, discovering what makes us do the things we do, developing the spiritual self, helping others and developing the political self.

Faure Commission

The report of the International Education Commission ‘Faure Commission’ published in 1972 under the title ‘Learning to Be’, had established the concept of ‘lifelong education’ at a time when traditional education systems were being challenged. He introduced the concept of ‘learning to be’, as the purpose of education, which was later adopted by Delors Commission also as one of the pillars of education. Among other themes, the basic premise on which the report developed was:

An over-all, lifelong education can produce the kind of complete man the need for whom is increasing with the continually more stringent constraints tearing the individual asunder. The purpose of education is not to assiduously acquire knowledge once and for all, but learn how to build up a continually evolving body of knowledge all through life—‘learn to be’.

Though Faure Report has not mentioned life skills education per se, it has laid the foundation for its development as a such. Learning to be is enabling the people to stand in their own legs i.e., self-management and self-development.

Contributions of Dr. Gilbert Botvin

In 1979, noted behavioural scientist and Professor of Psychiatry, Dr. Gil-

bert Botvin, published a highly effective life skills training programme for children in the seventh to ninth grades in USA specially to address the issue of drug abuse among adolescents. He has started the life skills training programmes in 1972 and still continuing and published a series of studies on the basis of his programmes. The training strategies are to build students' abilities to refuse the offer of drugs through improved assertiveness, decision making and critical thinking skills. The training programmes and research work of Dr. Botvin unique, which has popularised life skills education as a tool for behaviour change especially in modifying risk-taking behaviour of adolescents.

The Brooks Model³

David Brooks, at Syracuse University, used an empirical approach to classifying life skills; he classified over 300 life skills descriptors into four generic categories. The four categories are interpersonal communication and human relations skills, problem-solving or decision-making skills, physical fitness or health maintenance skills and identity development or purpose in life skills (cf. Gazda & Brooks, 1985; Gazda et al., 1987).

Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion

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.

Jomtien Declaration

In 1990 the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien Declaration) declared the purpose of education as, "every person - child, youth and adult - shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning." (World Declaration on Education for All, Art. 1, para. 1.). This declaration has brought the need and importance of life skills education to the attention of educationists across the globe.

3 Quoted in Lucia Junior Ngoepe. (1997). https://repository.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/19249/Ngoepe_LJ.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Delors's Commission

Delors's Commission report submitted to UNESCO named "Learning the Treasure within" (1996) had elaborated the need for changing perspective and approach towards education. The four pillars of education as recommended by the Delors Report can be seen as the philosophy of Life Skills Education, namely, learning to know, learning to live together, learning to be and learning to do.

Hamburg Declaration

According to the CONFINTEA V, the fifth International Conference on Adult Education, 'the objectives of youth and adult education are: a) to develop the autonomy and the sense of responsibility of people and communities; b) to reinforce the capacity to deal with the transformations taking place in the economy, in culture and in society as a whole, and c) to promote coexistence, tolerance and the informed and creative participation of citizens in their communities, in short to enable people and communities to take control of their destiny and society in order to face the challenges ahead' (Hamburg Declaration 1997, para 5). The resolution passed in this conference has underlined the importance of life skills recommended by Jomtien Declaration in 1990.

United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting

United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting was held at WHO (1999) headquarters in Geneva on 6-7 April 1998. The purpose of the Inter-Agency Meeting was to bring together the staff of United Nations agencies that are working to support the advancement of life skills education. It was planned as an opportunity for different organizations to clarify and agree upon a common conceptual basis for support from the United Nations system to facilitate the development of life skills education in schools. The discussions led to agreement among participants on a wide range of key issues. The Meeting conclusions are summarized under five main headings relating to: concerns shared by the organizations represented; the definition of "life skills"; the reasons for teaching life skills; life skills education in schools today; and life skills outside schools.

The meeting has resolved that, life skills education is aimed at facilitating the development of psychosocial skills that are required to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It includes the application of life skills in the context of specific risk situations and in situations where children and adolescents need to be empowered to promote and protect their

rights. The meeting has agreed upon 10 core life skills under five basic areas that are relevant across cultures: decision-making and problem-solving; creative thinking and critical thinking; communication and interpersonal skills; self-awareness and empathy and coping with emotions and coping with stress.

Dakar World Education Conference

The Dakar World Education Conference (2000) 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 included life skills in two out of the six EFA Goals (EFA-Education for All).

Regional Framework Introducing Life Skills Education in SEAR countries, WHO

The outcome of the inter-country meeting held at Bangkok, Thailand, from June 5-9th in 2000, was the development of the Regional Framework document to incorporate life skills education to adolescents in particular and to strengthen and promote their healthy development. The document consists of two parts, ‘Part I- Life Skills Education: Issues, Concepts, Development and Lessons Learnt’ focussing on the issues faced by adolescents and life skills education in general and in South-east Asia region (SEAR) countries in particular as also a set of core life skills identified by WHO, along with lessons learnt from country experiences leading to the recommendations. A Planning Framework for Life Skills Education initiatives forms the Part II of this document, which outlines various steps for effective implementation, starting with ‘Setting up a Life Skills Education Initiative, conducting orientation, developing teaching materials for life skills education, training of trainers and the last step being, implementation and evaluation of life skills education. This document throws much light on the status (the strengths and weakness) of each of the SEAR countries in implementing life skills education and the challenges faced at the individual and national level.

The vision of WHO/SEARO with the joint efforts by UN agencies working to support life skills education in the region was to promote conducting of workshops to advance the felt need for life skills education, implement a national action plan for coordinated and systematic approaches to nurture and facilitate enhancement of life skills in young people. Further, this exercise was carried out with the expectation that it would inspire many other countries to take the issue of life skills education in schools and for out-of-schools children as a serious national priority. As life skills are contextual

in nature, this inter-country meeting discussed and addressed the specific and diverse challenges faced by these adolescents, in order to groom them to be healthier and proficient individuals.

United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV and AIDS

In 2001 member states represented in the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV and AIDS committed themselves to ensuring that: . . . at least 90 per cent, and by 2010 at least 95 per cent of young men and women aged 15 to 24 have access to the information, education, including peer education and youth-specific HIV education, and services necessary to develop the life skills required to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection. (United Nation, 2001).

Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDG-2030)

In Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDG-2030), Goal 4 visualises to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all. The sub goals clearly spell out the need of skills to make education more meaningful:

- Target 4.4 by 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
 - o Access: Equitable access to TVET needs to be expanded while quality is ensured. Learning opportunities should be increased and diversified, using a wide range of education and training modalities, so that all youth and adults, especially girls and women, can acquire relevant knowledge, skills and competencies for decent work and life
 - o Skills acquisition: Beyond work-specific skills, emphasis must be placed on developing high-level cognitive and non-cognitive/transferable skills, such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, communication skills and conflict resolution, which can be used across a range of occupational fields
- Target 4.5 by 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations
- Target 4.7 by 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including,

among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

- o It is vital to give a central place to strengthening education's contribution to the fulfilment of human rights, peace and responsible citizenship from local to global levels, gender equality, sustainable development and health. The content of such education must be relevant, with a focus on both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of learning. The knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by citizens to lead productive lives, make informed decisions and assume active roles locally and globally in facing and resolving global challenges can be acquired through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED), which includes peace and human rights education, as well as intercultural education and education for international understanding.

UNESCO Position paper on Education-2015

UNESCO Position paper on Education-2015 asserts that: Education..... aims at enabling and empowering people to realize their rights, fulfil their personal expectations for a decent life and work, and contribute to the achievement of their societies' socio-economic development objectives.

- The content of learning must promote:
 - Acquisition of basic knowledge and cognitive skills,
 - Problem solving and creative thinking;
 - Understanding and respect for human rights;
 - Inclusion and equity;
 - Cultural diversity; and
 - Foster a desire and capacity for lifelong learning and learning to live together

UNICEF-MENA Conceptual Programmatic Frame work (CPF) in Life Skills Education

In 2017 UNICEF-MENA has come out with a comprehensive Concep-

tual Programmatic Frame work (CPF) in life skills education. *The MENA Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative represents a country and regional collaborative endeavour towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. It seeks to reformulate traditional understandings of life skills and citizenship education in the region, while recalling fundamental questions about the purpose and role of education in societal development that are relevant to the current context.*

The LSCE Initiative focuses on three inter-locking challenges: An elusive knowledge society, as a result of poor quality of education, low levels of learning outcomes, and limited equity and inclusion; Declining economic growth, as a result of a lack of employability skills, high youth unemployment rates, gender disparities in accessing the labour market, lack of job creation, and a weak business environment; Weak social cohesion, as a result of mounting violence and radicalization as well as weak civic engagement.

The theory of change for the MENA LSCE Initiative is driven by the compelling need to achieve tangible impact in these three inter-related areas where life skills and citizenship education can make a difference: the achievement of a knowledge society through improved education outcomes; the realization of economic development through improved employment and entrepreneurship; and the attainment of enhanced social cohesion through improved civic engagement. At the heart of the LSCE Initiative is the proposition of a rights-based and transformative vision of education that fosters successful individuals in the context of the workplace while fulfilling education's role to enhance academic and personal development as well as social cohesion.

Life skills are defined within the CPF as cognitive and non-cognitive, higher-order, transversal and transferrable skills for learning, for employability, for personal empowerment, and for active citizenship. A set of 12 core life skills for MENA has been identified using the four-dimensional model. They are: creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, cooperation, negotiation, decision-making, self-management, resilience, communication, respect for diversity, empathy and participation.

Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations (DeSeCo) Project

The vision articulated in ‘Learning: The Treasure Within (1996), which is also echoed in The Faure Report (1972), was that of “Learning throughout Life”. This paradigm lays the backdrop on the 21st century skill sets required to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing world. With the swift social, economic and environmental changes, it became increasingly vital to look at the bigger picture in shaping the long-term challenges facing education. The OECD Education Policy Committee in 2015 did just this by placing the ‘learners’ decisively at the heart of curriculum change, designing and developing a more evidence-based and systematic curriculum. In continuation to this, OECD launched the Future of Education and Skills 2030 project in 2015 with the aim to help countries prepare their education systems for the future. It started by revisiting the OECD Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations (DeSeCo) project, which was launched by the OECD during late 1997. The aim of developing this conceptual framework was to appraise the identification of key competencies- (i) use tools interactively (e.g., language, technology), (ii) Interact in heterogeneous groups and (iii) Act autonomously, enabling for a successful life and well-functioning society. This certainly helped to strengthen international assessments as envisioned, to define overarching goals for education systems and lifelong learning.

The thrust in the Future of Education and Skills 2030 project report, in the first phase (2015-19), is “on ‘what’ questions – what kinds of competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) today’s students need to thrive in and shape the future for better lives and for individual and societal well-being”, while the second phase (2019 and beyond), “on ‘how’ questions – how to design learning environments that can nurture such competencies, i.e. how to implement curricula effectively”. Working towards this outcome, saw policy makers, researchers, school leader, teachers, students and social partners from around the world coming together to work with the OECD from 2016 to 2018 to materialise this education and learning framework’s vision that sets out the types of competencies required by students of today to thrive in and shape their future.

Further, building on the DeSeCo framework, the OECD Learning Compass 2030, an actionable and multi-dimensional one, includes new insights encompassing and addressing the emerging and future concepts that are essential to students in order to thrive in the world, namely,

- Creative New values
- Reconciling tensions and dilemmas and

- Taking responsibility

The constructs that reinforce the competency include adaptability, creativity, having a curious bent of mind, open-mindedness, shared-responsibilities, understanding others' perspective (empathy), being pro-active, building relationships, having the ability to reflect upon and evaluate one's own actions in the light of experiences, considering personal, ethical and societal goals and showing responsible citizenship behaviours.

It is to be noted that this Learning Compass 2030 is neither an assessment framework nor a curriculum framework, but a broad structure emphasising that learning does not only happen in schools. The Learning Compass is a tool students can use to direct themselves leading to self- exploration, adapt to people, situations and environment to transfer the skills to competencies for enhancing the full potential and shaping a better future that expands well-being. This evolving learning framework, ropes in the wider goals of education and shows the way to enhance the concept of individual and collective well-being.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills, (P21)

A group of educators and business leaders in coalition proposed the Framework for 21st Century Learning, to define and illustrate the knowledge, skills and support systems students require to succeed in work, life and become a responsible citizen. It identifies the essential competencies and skills required for students and prepares them for being future ready in terms of employability. The framework also supports the teachers in teaching these skills. The P21 framework ensures that every child experiences the 21st century learning with emphasis on the 4Cs' – communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. The P21 provides eleven competencies categorised into 3 skill sets – (i) Learning and Innovation Skills, ii) Information, Media and Technological P21 Skills, iii) Life and Career Skills. The Framework continues to be used by thousands of educators and schools globally who are keen on putting the 21st century skills at the centre of learning.

Indian Scenario

India, the land of ancient wisdom has no dearth of life skills training for her children. The Gurukula system of education in India, where the student learns from the face/mouth of the Guru (Gurumukham) is a form of experiential learning or learning by doing can be considered as the best method for life skills education. The teachings of Bhagavad Gita, Vedas and Upa-

nishads are the storehouse of knowledge on life skills. The philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi has highlighted the importance of life skills teaching. For both of them education means character building and man-making education. It is the development of oneself and enable a person to stand in their own legs. Education is the development of mind, body and brain and strengthening their abilities. The educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi are the philosophy of life skills education in the present form being practised across the globe.

In modern India the importance of life skills education has been recognised and efforts were made to implement the same in various national programmes focussing on adolescents and youths. The National Population Education Programme (NPEP) was introduced in India in 1980 with the aim of institutionalizing population education in the existing education system of the country. The focus was on family life education. Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) was one of the six basic themes of NPEP, focusing on critical population education and development issues. In the 90s, the focus moved on to Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH). It was identified as an important focus area under NPEP. Post 2005, in the wake of the controversy on sex education, the programme was restructured as The Adolescent Education Programme (AEP). In the Adolescent Education Programme (AEP) -2005 - the methodology adapted for AEP was based on life-skills approach. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF) recognized AEP as an important area in school education.

The National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) being the coordinating agency adopted a Co-curricular Approach in life skills education and worked through the three National School Systems – CBSE, NVS, and KVS. Broadly Life Skills Education is being conducted in two ways; viz., Life Skills as part of curriculum with grades and without grades.

Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has introduced a Post Graduate Programmes in Life Skills Education in 2008 and developed Training Manual to train adolescents and youth in life skills. A series of trainers' training programmes were organised by RGNIYD and has popularised life skills programme across the country. Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has taken up life skills training programme for empowering adolescents from 11th Five Year Plan period onwards. Apart from these, various state governments have introduced life skill education in their school curriculum like Delhi, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, etc. the role of multi-lateral organisations, bilateral organisations, international non-government

organisations in popularising life skills education and training in India is worth mentioning.

Government of India has declared the National Skill Qualification Framework (2013). The NSQF has given a new focus on the skill training and its components. Professional knowledge, professional skills, core skills and attitude has been given thrust in all the training and educational programmes in India. This has mandated the thrust on life skills programmes in the training and academic curricula in all educational streams. A new Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship was created and new skill development and entrepreneurship development policy (2016) was released. Skilling India project was launched in mission mode, special purpose vehicles like The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), The National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) and Sector Skill Councils in PPP mode were started. In all the training programmes of these agencies' life skills components has been incorporated.

National Education Policy 2020 is a land mark initiative of India in transforming and empowering education and has mandated life skills education in the school and higher education sector. The basic features of NEP-2020 are:

- To develop competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values)
- Empowering and transforming education
- Developing full human potential for developing an equitable and just society and promoting national development
- Education to provide skill set to youths according to their requirements
- Ensures knowledge, attitudes and skills
- Inquiry, discovery and analysis based
- Enabling how to think
- To develop critical thinking and innovative thinking abilities
- Develop good human being capable of rational thinking & action with compassion and empathy, courage & resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination
- Along with cognitive capacities, focus on social capital and emotional wellbeing, ethical moorings and values

- Recognising, identifying and fostering the unique capabilities of each student
- Flexibility to students to select the learning trajectory
- Multidisciplinary and holistic education
- Life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork and resilience

To develop well-rounded individuals that possess critical 21st century capacities: in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields;

- To create an ethic of social engagement;
- Life skills, such as communication, discussion and debate; and
- Rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields.

UGC (2019) has introduced life skills as part of curriculum in all the undergraduate programmes in India. As per the Quality Mandate of University Grant Commission (UGC), it has taken initiatives for providing life skills (including soft skills) to students enrolled in Institutions of Higher Education especially at under-graduate level. According to UGC, life skills play an important role in increasing the employability as well as self-esteem of the students. These may include communication skills, interpersonal skills, time management, team work, flexibility, problem solving, professional skills, decision making skills, leadership abilities and universal values among others.

Conclusion

It is evident that Life Skills Education as a body of study has evolved since its inception stretching across different domains, through territorial boundaries and having significant scope in terms of enhancing competencies of individuals to prepare them for the future. Tracing its origin and development, puts into perspective the emerging felt need and issues (globally and locally) that emerged during the different times, which this discipline aimed to address. The immense discussions and deliberations by noted behavioural scientists, along with designing and developing of diverse frameworks and contributions by the UN and other international and national agencies, helped strengthened this concept which is well received by all around the world. Life competencies are important facets of human development and human intelligence.

For all individuals to realise their goals and navigate through life research emphasises the requirement of ‘core foundations’. This is beautifully explained in the OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 Conceptual Learning Framework and defined “as the fundamental conditions and core skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that are prerequisites for further learning across the entire curriculum. The core foundations provide a basis for developing student agency and transformative competencies. They are also the building blocks upon which context specific competencies for 2030, such as financial literacy, global competency or media literacy, can be developed”.

The paradigms of ‘lifelong learning’ and the four pillars of learning to know, to do, to be and live together, the basis and philosophy of life skills education, has much relevance in today’s world. Life Skills Education is here to stay and its importance is even more felt to prepare students/ individuals successfully face the maze of challenges that life throws upon.

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Enhancing Academic Performance through Life Skills Education: A Conceptual Study

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Abstract

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 has talked in a great length about learning and knowledge. Every student enters into an institution with a hope of securing their future by improving his/her academic performance. It is not merely the classroom learning that equips the young adult to enter into an ever-changing competitive adult world. The student needs to develop and excel in multiple competencies. Life skills education promotes mental well-being in young people and equips them to face the realities of life. Life skills is understood to be the ability for adaptive and positive behavioral approach in addressing the challenges of life. By supporting mental well-being and behavioral preparedness, life skills education equips individuals to excel in their academic endeavors. This paper is an effort in understanding the academic performance in the context of life skills.

Keywords: Academic performance, Life skills.

Introduction

Education has become increasingly important in providing a competitive edge for individuals, regions, society and the nation as a whole in the global market. By education we intend to bring about certain desirable changes in students. Different persons define education in different ways. The term can be understood in a literal and philosophical sense. In the literal sense we can define education as “a discipline that is concerned mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school like environments as opposed to various informal means of socialization” (Robert P. Gwinn, 1991, p. 372). Rabindranath Tagore expresses it as “all round growth and development of the individual in harmony with the universal, the supreme person who has in himself the various levels of consciousness and experi-

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ences corresponding to man's physical self, life, mind and soul" (Kapani, 2000).

Education is a social process. It has a social function as well as social relevance. A school is created by the society and the society is shaped and moulded by the school. Thus, education is both a cause and product of society. It originates in the society and it must fulfil the needs and aspirations of the society. There is, thus, an intimate relationship between education and society. Modern education has a two-fold function. It must help in individual development as well as social progress. An individual can only develop in the right direction in the social environment. Education helps to solve multifarious social problems.

School climate has an important influence on learning (Pyper et al., 1987); students are motivated by an authoritative teaching style that is demanding, supportive and fair (Hawkins et al., 1988; Schaps and Battistich, 1991). Participation in academic and co-curricular activities increases bonding because students are reinforced by their own success experiences and enjoy the opportunity to affiliate with peers and teachers who share their interests (Hawkins and Weis, 1985). Adolescents, especially the middle school students, have an acute need to demonstrate competence and be recognized for achievement (Steinberg, 1993; Wigfield and Eccles, 1994b). Those who feel blocked from academic achievement may be tempted to quit trying, or end up in misbehaving or seeking anti-social avenues of achievement and recognition. If students do not develop the social skills they need to compete academically and do not have other opportunities for demonstrating achievement and competence within the school setting, they may develop antisocial attitudes and behavior (Hawkins and Weis, 1985; Steinberg, 1990). Researchers also identified that social skills curricula can improve self-management and self-control skills, thereby improving learning skills, school adjustment and academic performance (Hawkins and Weis, 1985; Schaps and Battistich, 1991). The study by Mashishi and Rabin (1999) suggested that if educators aim to develop the kind of people that will be able to cope with the demands of the society, educators need to utilize research on student learning at the tertiary level to improve their own teaching and the quality of student learning.

Schooling has a direct effect on children's educational achievement, their acquisition of literacy, numeracy and scientific knowledge. The learning of specific knowledge and skills is a direct effect of classroom teaching (Good and Brophy, 1986b). However, social cognitions and feelings are also influenced by school and these may be just as powerful in predicting

later outcomes as intelligence or school curriculum. Such indirect effects of school are more elusive because they are mediated by children's motivation to learn or avoid learning, their conception of themselves as pupils, and the attributions they create for explaining success and failure. Cognitive and motivational mediators of indirect effects continue to exert an influence on individual development outside and beyond school (Sylva, 1994).

The purpose of this study is to establish the relationship between life skills, and academic performance. The present study will explore the relationship between life skills and academic performance and evaluate the impact of life skills training on enhancing the study skills and academic performance among school going adolescents.

Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to understand the impact of life skills training programme to enhance the academic performance of school going adolescents.

The methodology adopted for the study is conceptual analysis on the basis of literature review.

Academic performance

The term "performance" is used in this study in the sense of 'acquired ability' or 'tendency to do', namely, the understanding, memorizing, mental processes such as thinking, reasoning, attitudes and motor skills.

Academic performance is the accomplishment or proficiency of performance in a given task or body of knowledge in the school curriculum and the subjects (Goddard, 2003). Further, it refers to the pupil's knowledge attainment and the skills developed in the school subject which is assured by the authorities with the help of achievement tests in the form of examinations (Lopez, 1995).

A lot of research has been done which reveals that students' study habits have positive relation with their academic performance (Covey, Stephen R, 2008). Developing good study habits helps students to take responsibility for the learning process, set practical goals, be aware of performance and progress, use time wisely and understands and retain content (M. Young, 1989). Thus, studying effectively is the fundamental step in being a good student.

Life skills

Life skills lead to a positive behaviour and the ability to adjust efficiently with the needs and challenges of everyday life. The strength of positive behaviour depends on the depth of the skill acquired by the individual. The total reflection of one's behaviour is the sum total of the appropriate combination of different skills. The most appropriate intervention for the promotion of the psychological competence of children in schools is by enhancing competencies through the optimum use of available resources by the process of life skills education and training (Nair, 2010). Life skills are promoting psycho-social abilities and consequently they provide psycho-physical health. Education about life skills makes the individual able to improve his knowledge, develop values and views, meaning that the individual knows when and how to do a task.

Powell (1985) defines life skills as the life coping skills consonant with the development processes, namely, those skills necessary to perform tasks for a given age and gender in the following areas of human development - psychological, physical, sexual, vocational, cognitive, moral, and emotional spheres. Hopson and Scally (1986) categorise life skills under four areas: (1) Learning/Academic skills, (2) Relative skills like communication and assertiveness, etc. (3) Working and playing skills like time management, and (4) Developing self and other skills like stress management, decision making, etc.

Life skills as a tool for enhancing Academic performance

The life skills approach aims at assisting student to gain new ways of learning as well as control over their behaviour and to take informed decision that can lead to positive values (Githaiga et al., 2014). Through Life Skills Education, learners acquire and develop skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making, interpersonal relationships, stress and anxiety management, effective communication, self-esteem, assertiveness and empathy (Veena and Vivek, 2010). Life skills approach is an interactive educational methodology that focuses on learner centred, youth-friendly, gender sensitive, interactive and participatory learning (Rooth, 2000).

A number of research results indicated the advantage of life skills in school settings. (Ramesh and Farshad, 2004; Smith et al.). As evaluative studies of life skills programmes suggest, methods used can help to improve teacher and student relationships (Parsons et al. 1988). There are research indications of improved academic performance as a result of teaching life skills (Weissberg et al., 1989).

Reviews

Behroz-Sarcheshmeh et al., (2017) did a study on the ‘Effect of Training of Life Skills on Social Skills of High School Students with Intellectual Disabilities’. This is an experimental study with pre-test and post-test design with a control group. The sample includes 40 high school boys with intellectual disabilities between 16 and 18 years of age who had enrolled in public schools in Tehran during the academic year 2011–2012. The participants were selected randomly from two schools and were divided into two groups randomly (experimental and control group), each of which consisted of 20 students. Social Skills Rating Scale developed by Frank Gresham and Stephen Elliot in 1990 was used for the study. This scale has three forms: a teacher form (SSRS-T), a parent form (SSRS-P), and a student form (SSRS-S). SSRST was used in this study. The data were analysed by multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) using the SPSS software. The result depicted that the effect of covariate (pre-test) was significant ($F_{1, 37}=43.884, P<0.0005$), indicating that the pre-test and post-test scores were significantly correlated. Furthermore, the effect between experimental and control groups was significant, $F_{1, 37}=561.894, P<0.0005$. ANCOVA demonstrated a significant difference between the means of the two groups and also showed a positive and significant effect of life skills training.

Muthulakshmi and Pamela (2016) conducted a study on life skills in relation to achievement in genetics among eleventh standard students. The objective of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of life skills training on academic achievement and achievement in genetics among eleventh standard students. The sample consisted of 64 eleventh standard biology group students from government schools in Chennai. The random sampling technique was used. Modules on Genetics based on life skills was developed and standardized by the investigators and public exam marks from tenth standard had been taken as an index of academic achievement. An Achievement Test was developed for 50 marks from the lesson ‘Genetics’. The reliability of the tool was found to be 0.71. Pre- and post-test comparison design has been followed to measure achievement of the students. One experimental group and one control group were adopted for the study. The result of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in mean scores of achievement in genetics and academic achievement between the students who were given ‘Life-skills’ training with pre-test and those who were not given the training.

Nitin (2016) conducted a study on the ‘Effectiveness of Instructional Strat-

egy on Life Skill of Problem Solving in Terms of Class VIII Students' Achievement in Science'. The objective of the study was to compare instructional strategy based on the life skill of problem solving between pre-test and post-test of class VIII students of Raja Ram Sehani Higher Secondary School, Indore. The method was experimental in nature and the pre-post-test design was used for this study. The sample was done purposively by selecting thirty students (15 boys and 15 girls) from class VIII. The data were collected by using a self-developed tool, namely, the achievement test and reaction scale. The analysis of the research shows that the t-value of 11.325 for achievement is significant at 0.01 level with $df=29$. It indicates that the mean achievement scores of the students before the treatment differ significantly from that after the treatment. Thus, the instructional strategy on life skills was found to be effective in terms of achievement of students on the criterion tested.

Prajina and Premsingh (2015) made a 'Study on Life Skills in Relation to the Academic Achievements of Tribal Children'. This research adopted a descriptive methodology. The sample comprised 80 tribal students from different schools of Kannur district of Kerala. Samples were collected by proportionate random sampling technique from the 8th, 9th and 10th standards. Life Skills Assessment Scale (Nair et al., 2010) and self-prepared questionnaire were used for collecting socio-demographic details. The result explains that socio-demographic variables such as caste, type of family, standard of studying, birth order, father's education and occupation, mother's education and occupation have no impact on life skills. Statistical analysis shows no significant difference in life skills with respect to the above-mentioned variables. But there is a significant difference in life skills according to the community in which they belonged ($f=3.173$, $P<.05$). Among the three groups Karimbala children showed higher life skills than others. The t test result shows that the type of family and personality development classes attended by the students have no influence on their academic score. But there is a significant difference in the academic score with regard to gender ($t= 3.853$, $P<.01$) and the drinking habit of the father ($t=3.370$, $P<.01$). The result also reflects the impact of alcohol consumption of fathers among children. The test is significant at 1% level; it means that there is a big difference in the academic scores of children based on their father's drinking habit. The children of the alcohol consuming fathers score lesser than the other students.

Mostafa (2013) made a study on 'The Efficacy of Training Life Skills on Educational Achievement and Social Acceptance', which examined the

relationship between learning life skills and academic achievement. The main purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of teaching life skills on educational achievement and social acceptance of middle school (Grade VI-IX) students of Boukan town, Iran. The sample of the study was 619. The research tools consisted of questionnaires of life skills, social acceptance and questionnaire of individual and personal background information. The findings indicated that the skill of knowing oneself and social acceptance have an influence on the students' educational achievement. Teaching communication skills was effective on problem solving among the students and, in turn, it improves their academic achievement, whereas a decision making skill has no effect on the academic achievement of the students. The result of the study shows that teaching life skills leads to improvement of educational performance among students.

Sasikala (2012) conducted a study on the 'Influence of study skills and academic achievement of B Ed. Teacher Trainees'. The sample for the study constituted 100 B.Ed trainees of private, government and government aided colleges in Chennai. The tools used for this study were the Study skill scale constructed by M. Kanchana (1986) and the Achievement test questionnaire constructed by the researcher. The results revealed that the respondents developed favourable study skills and academic achievement towards the teaching profession after the completion of the programme. That is, the teacher trainees who have UG level of educational qualifications have secured a better mean score than those with the minimum level of educational qualifications prescribed for B.Ed. teacher trainees ($116.63 > 110.7$). And the calculated 't' value of 1.39 is found to be statistically not significant at 0.05 level.

Amirian (2012) examined the effect of life skills education on the academic achievement of high school male students in his study on 'Effect of Life Skills Education on Academic Achievement of First Year High School Boy Students'. The study assessed the impact of training of problem-solving skills, self-awareness and coping with stress skills and the impact of these three methods together on students' academic achievement. The results of the study revealed that teaching problem-solving, self-awareness, and coping with stress skills separately as also together has an impact on the students' academic achievement and there are significant differences in achievement in the experimental and control groups.

Fallahchai (2011) made a study on the 'Effectiveness of Academic and Life Skills Instruction on the Freshmen Academic Achievement'. This research was conducted using the empirical method which, in turn, em-

ployed the model pre- post-test, with experimental and control groups of 170 newcomer students in the first semester of the academic year 2010. The instruments used were Life skills inventory, average grade first term, and demographic questions. The experimental group attended 10 weekly sessions (35 hours) of academic and life skills training. The ANOVA analysis did not show any significant effect of the test. The result shows that the F ratio (0.51) doesn't exceed the F critical value (2.65) on the .05 level of the significance. This implies that there is no significant difference and the two groups were almost homogenous. To examine the effect of the independent variables, t-test and analysis of covariance were used in order to examine the signification of difference between experimental and control groups in terms of academic achievement and life skills.

Factors leading to academic performance

Students' academic gain and learning performance is affected by numerous factors including gender, age, teaching faculty, students' schooling, the social economic status of the father/guardian, the residential area of students, the medium of instruction in schools, tuition trend, daily study hour and accommodation as hosteller or day scholar (Ballatine, 1993; Blevins, 2009; Parri, 2006). Many researchers have conducted detailed studies about the factors contributing to student performance at different study levels. Graetz (1995) and Furstenberg and Graetz (1995) stated that "a student's educational success is contingent heavily on social status of student's parents/ guardians in the society." Considine and Zappala (2002) also noted that the parent's income or social status positively affects the student test score in examination.

There are various factors inside and outside the school that contribute to the quality of the academic performance of students (Crosnoe et al., 2004). This study focused only on some of the factors in the school that influence the student's achievement scores. The key aspect for the educators is to educate their students effectively so that they may be able to show quality performance in their academics.

Life skills are promoting psycho-social abilities and consequently they provide psycho-physical health. Education about life skills makes the individual able to improve his knowledge, develop values and views, meaning that the individual knows when and how to do a task. Life skills motivate healthy behaviour and increase self-confidence. Therefore, we can say that they will lead to the increase of psychological health and that they have an important role in the prevention of psychological diseases and behavioural problems (Nori, 1998).

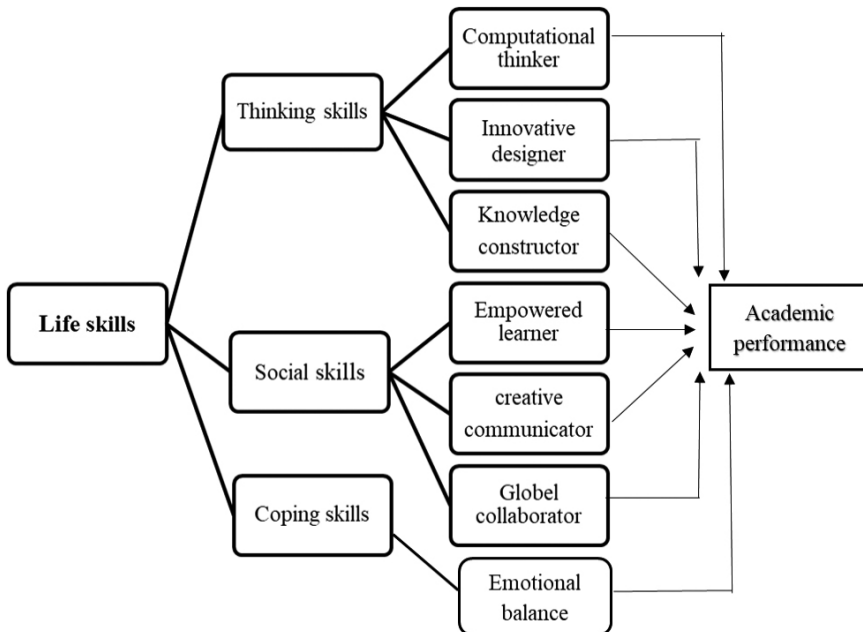


Fig 1 (Source: self)

Conclusion

Life skills are considered an empowerment tool in developing skills, values and attitudes among the adolescent students. The utility of life skills in developing academic performance was not studied holistically. The researcher here attempts to understand the impact of life skills and also the inter linkage of life skills and academic performance.

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Prerequisite of Life Skills Education for Citizenship Development

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Abstract

Indian society is a multi-cultural society. The foundation of this nation is very strongly based on the ancient values and ethos. Citizen is the legal term for the residents of the nation. The youth population is very high and they become eligible to cast their vote after attaining the age of 18 years. A citizen is expected to fulfill his / her constitutional obligations along with their social obligations. With community living everybody, as a citizen, has certain roles and responsibilities. The state grants them rights and responsibilities automatically become obligatory upon them. Life skill education intends to prepare the generations for future challenges on the one hand and at the same time equips them with skills to cope up with the issues emerging in their day-to-day life. The journey of life becomes easy with the application of these skills. It is also necessary to learn that which life skill is to be used in which circumstance. So, basically the life skills are tools which may be used at the appropriate time. Life skills training has always been present in the Indian education system since ages. The western world needs to learn them afresh because of stress and issues in their day-to-day life. Life skills may be learnt in a formal education system as well in an informal setting. Mahatma Gandhi's life is perhaps the best example of life skills in modern times. The youth of today is the most vulnerable lot in the sense that they have wide exposure. The youth is indifferent from the politics of the country. Their perception of politics makes them stay away from it. The best example of life skill teaching is the speech of Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the battle field of Kurukshetra (Mahabharata). The need of Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCA) is felt by the international agencies and many of the countries of world. The New Education Policy (NEP) has tried to reorient our education system towards the ancient values and ethos. The future of the nation lies into the hands of the young citizens and they hold the key. They are to be trained and equipped with life skills to overcome challenges.

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Keywords: Citizenship, Constitution, Community, Social Fabric, Obligations, Rights, Democracy, Life Skills.

Introduction

India is known for its multi-cultural setting which provides an opportunity to all other sub-cultures to flourish, survive and maintain its unique identity. The framers of the Constitution of India were well aware of this fact and hence they decided to adopt federal system of government. Single citizenship is one of those features which unites the entire nation with one single thread. Every region prospering on this land has its unique culture and heritage. They must be protected and at the same time united too. So, irrespective of religion, language, customs and traditions the nationality is one and all are Indians. The residents of the nation are bound together by the feeling of nationalism. The nation cares for those living under the national umbrella. The residents of a nation are also known as citizens. This very title means that the person is aware of community living. A citizen is expected to fulfill his / her constitutional obligations along with social one. With community living everybody, as a citizen, has certain role and responsibility. The state grants them rights and responsibilities automatically become obligatory upon them. India has a very high number of youth population. This lot of population must be made aware of their roles and responsibilities in the present constitutional framework. They must learn their legal rights and social duties.

Life skills education intends to prepare the generations for future challenges on the one hand and at the same time equips them with skills to cope up with the issues surfacing in their day-to-day life. According to World Health Organization (WHO), life skill is *“abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”*.⁵ *An individual needs to change his / her behaviour according to situation. “Adaptive means that a person should have the flexibility to adjust according to the situation. For positive behavior, a person needs to have positive thinking and look at opportunities even in difficult situations, in order to cope with the situation.”*⁶ *Ten core life skills have been identified by the World Health Organization. These are essential for a balanced human personality. “Life skills are generic skills, relevant*

5 EDUCAFL. Journal of Education of English as Foreign Language, Vol 2, No 1 (2019), accessed on 06 07 2020 from <https://educافل.ub.ac.id/index.php/educافل/article/view/143/135>

6 Ms. Adhila Hassan. PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LIFE SKILLS, accessed on 06 07 2020 from jau.in/attachments/downloads/personality.pdf

*to many diverse experiences throughout life.”*⁷ So, life skills are basically tools to strengthen the capabilities of citizens. The constitution provides legal setting in which rights and duties are available side by side. A citizen must obey the constitution, perform social responsibilities, exhibit tolerance and have a knowledge of public affairs. If these qualities are missing then the life skills education is there to prepare them for the same. Life skills and citizenship education have emerged as an inter-linked domain.

Citizenship and the Constitution of India

Chapter II, (Article 5 to 11) of the constitution of India is dedicated to citizenship. Article 5 says:

“At the commencement of this Constitution, every person who has his domicile in the territory of India and—

- (a) who was born in the territory of India; or*
- (b) either of whose parents was born in the territory of India; or*
- (c) who has been ordinarily resident in the territory of India for not less than five years immediately preceding such commencement, shall be a citizen of India.”*⁸

Citizenship title is available to everybody living on Indian territory since generations. It is universal except few exceptions in India. Article 9 of the constitution of India states as:

*“No person shall be a citizen of India by virtue of article 5, or be deemed to be a citizen of India by virtue of article 6 or article 8, if he has voluntarily acquired the citizenship of any foreign State.”*⁹

Citizenship can be withdrawn if an Indian citizen accepts the citizenship of other country. The Parliament being the legislative organ of government, enjoys the privilege to amend or make any fresh law in this regard as states Article 11: *“ Nothing in the foregoing provisions of this Part shall derogate from the power of Parliament to make any provision with respect to the acquisition and termination of citizenship and all other matters relating to citizenship.”*¹⁰

Citizenship based on heredity or residence is also known as natural citi-

7 Partners in Life Skills Education Conclusions from a United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting. Department of Mental Health World Health Organization Geneva, accessed on 06 07 2020 from https://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/30.pdf

8 <https://fsi.me.gov.in/Images/pdf1/Part2.pdf>, accessed on 07 07 2020

9 <https://fsi.me.gov.in/Images/pdf1/Part2.pdf>, accessed on 07 07 2020

10 <https://fsi.me.gov.in/Images/pdf1/Part2.pdf>, accessed on 07 07 2020

zenship. Another form is of naturalized citizenship. It may be acquired following the due process. These legal provisions become operative after the enforcement of the constitution but the idea of citizenship is very old and unique in Indian culture. Kautilya has used the term “King (Raja) and Subjects (Prajā)” in his book “Arthshastra”. Here the king is the ruler and he acts as a guardian and custodian of faiths of people living under his reign. The ‘subject’ is emotionally attached to the ruler and owes allegiance to him. In modern times king is replaced with government and subject has been re-designated as citizens. So, this very idea of citizenship has always been present in Indian customs and traditions. Now the state appears as the guardian and recognizes rights of its citizens and expects them to perform their duties. The state always intends to develop the qualities of a good citizen in every individual since childhood to adulthood. These very foundations make them realize that politics of the country has to be respected, the social fabric has to be maintained, cultural tolerance is necessary and legal provisions are to be obeyed.

Citizenship and Role of Education

Citizenship is like a membership of a state / nation. This membership entitles you for benefits and duties. The young lot of India is getting this membership by virtue of their parents residing on the land of India. The civil society of India expects them to behave according to the laws, customs and traditions of the land. When people live in family, they learn culture and values. It is obligatory for the family to make them learn the family values and tradition. In the same manner it is obligatory for the state to make the citizens aware not only about the laws but also about the customs and traditions. These things cannot be infused in one single day. This learning exercise is a long process and in fact, they are cultivated. Now the formal education system plays a significant role in this respect. It inculcates moral values and help in maintaining ethical standards. Here comes the role of life skills education. No education can ever operate in vacuum. Education is imparted in a social setting. In society one learns to behave in a co-operative manner with others. Formal education prepares you for a better future. It prepares youth for employability also.

Life Skills

Life skills changes according to time and circumstances. Ten core life skills identified by the World Health Organization are as: *problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication skills, decision-making, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy, and*

*coping with stress and emotions.*¹¹ These skills prepare oneself for a better choice in any given circumstances. The journey of life becomes easy with the application of these skills. It is also necessary to learn that which life skill is to be used in which circumstance. So, basically these life skills are tools which may be used at the appropriate time. The challenges of life sometimes make an individual very low and sometimes it even takes them to a very negative direction and they commit suicide. Challenges are there in every walk of life. They go along with individuals from cradle to grave. One wrong choice may cost very dear to individuals and sometimes they are not even reversible. It is necessary to make an individual strong physically, mentally and emotionally. *“The young people can be made aware of their rights and duties and their responsibility to themselves and society. The need to preserve their physical and mental health has to be realised.”*¹² Life skills, learned once and works forever, it is not like so. It is a life time learning and life long process. One needs them in everyday life and every field of life. *“Teaching and learning life skills are incredibly important for empowering children and young people to achieve success in education, employment and personal goals. Nevertheless, few education systems have integrated life skills into their education systems.”*¹³ Life skills may be learnt in a formal education system as well in an informal setting.

Life Skills in Indian Culture and Tradition

Life skills training has always been present in the Indian education system since ages. The western world needs to learn them afresh because of stress and issues in their day-to-day life. The best example of life skill teaching is the speech of Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the battle field of Mahabharata. *“In the battle field Arjuna was stuck when he saw his relatives as opponents. To motivate him Lord Krishna preached Bhagavad Gita as a counseling to do his duty while multitude of men stood by waiting Krishna gave education to perform his duty as a prince, as a warrior, as a righteous man to fight against evil and restore peace and order.”*¹⁴ The message of Vedic wisdom of Gita needs to be understood by students specially and by every adult citizen in general. You need to control your desires, anger and greed. It reminds you of your duty when you are in a dilemma. It also enlightens your self-consciousness.

11 Module 7, Life Skills, accessed on 07 07 2020 from https://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/action/message/escap_peers_07.pdf,

12 Life Skills in Non-Formal Education: A Review, accessed on 07 07 2020 from http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/HIV_and_AIDS/publications/Life_skills_in_non-formal_education.pdf, accessed on 07 07 2020

13 <https://www.unicef.org/mena/reports/measuring-life-skills>, accessed on 08 07 2020

14 Life skills in education - perspective through Bhagavad Gita concepts, accessed on 08-07-2020 from https://www.mygov.in/newindia/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/newindia285254_1507102842.pdf

Mahatma Gandhi is perhaps the best example of life skills in modern times. His entire strength is dependent upon the preaching and teachings of different religions and especially Hinduism. His life is full of experiments and from where one gets the courage or strength to keep on experimenting throughout life? For Gandhi, it is embedded in the roots of Indian culture. He has admitted experimenting every day in his life. Subhash Chandra Bose is also an example in this respect. A simple human being going abroad and erecting an entire range of fighters for the nation was not an easy task. He could do so and gave a tough time to the British only because of his life skills. Swami Vivekananda's message to the youth of the country is so profound that still they find relevance and an entire set of educational institutions are run by Ram Krishna Mission in various parts of India promoting the Vedic education and Indian culture and tradition. He wanted youth to come forward and work for the nation. They have the solution and their contribution will solve the problems of India. Life skills were not taught in India in ancient system of education rather it was part of everyday teaching through life experiences. Indian tradition not only talks about the human beings but it cares about the entire eco-system. "*Indian culture emphasizes empathy with human beings, animals and the nature around us.*"¹⁵ It takes care of the entire universe.

Youth Development: Challenges and Concerns

The youth of today is the most vulnerable lot in the sense that they have wide exposure. The impact of globalization has made the world very small and inter-connected but at the same time the graded difference is creating inequalities also. There is rural and urban divide, gender discrimination, age gap, varying social and economic status etc. The youth is in a fix. The challenge before the youth to save themselves from the exploiting designs of certain anti-social elements, their peer groups and parental pressure etc. The education system is also posing new set of challenges for them. Once they finish their formal education to a certain level, they are facing disappearing job market. Once they enter into family life, another set of challenges are waiting for them. It has become more challenging because both the partners are working in most of urban families. The traditional joint family system is giving way to nuclear family system. The children born here are devoid of family cultural values and traditions in majority of the cases.

15 Life Skills in Non-Formal Education: A Review, accessed on 07 07 2020 from http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/HIV_and_AIDS/publications/Life_skills_in_non-formal_education.pdf

The youth of economically and socially deprived section of society have challenges different from the affluent class. This marginalized sector is coping with for a respectable social position and a prosperous life. Girls are the most neglected lot in semi-classical Indian system. The scenario is changing only in urban areas because of education and awareness about rights but the rural areas are still untouched. Their health issues especially menstrual cycle related topics are still a taboo. They cannot be discussed in open or public. The sanitary pads are not available to them in rural areas. Even in urban areas going to market for buying these necessary items is kept secret. Lack of toilet facilities compel them to relieve themselves in public and they become vulnerable.

To counter these everyday challenges, the youth need to be imparted with life skills. They must not have any kind of complex.

Democracy and Youth

Indian democracy has provided an opportunity to the youth of India to cast their votes once they achieve the age of 18 years. Young voter means those between the age bracket of 18 to 25 years. *“Forty-five million young people, having become eligible to vote as they turned 18, have been added to India’s electoral roll since 2014, according to 2018 data from the Election Commission.”*¹⁶ Their number is growing as electorate but at the same time their participation in political process is missing. They are not interested in contesting elections, an opportunity the constitution provides. *“... even though the youth are coming out to vote in large numbers, they are still absent from another critically important area of the political process”*¹⁷. It means that the youth of today has a different perception of politics. The youth is indifferent from the politics of the country. Their perception of politics makes them stay away from it.

Life Skills and Citizenship Education

Every nation wants their lot be a responsible citizen. The sense of responsibility grows within a constitutional framework. The constitution draws its strength from the legacy of the nation on the one hand and on the other from the customs and traditions. The adaptive behaviour of population cannot be imposed from outside. *“There is growing awareness of the need for life skills training to help youth manage the transition from school to*

16 The Future of Youth Vote in India by Dhruv Nair. July 17th, 2019, accessed on 07 07 2020 from <https://bpac.in/the-future-of-youth-vote-in-india/>

17 The Future of Youth Vote in India by Dhruv Nair. July 17th, 2019, accessed on 07 07 2020 from <https://bpac.in/the-future-of-youth-vote-in-india/>

work and become active, healthy citizens.”¹⁸ The need of Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) is felt by the international agencies and many of the countries of world. An informed citizen can only turn into a responsible citizen. *“The Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) - Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF) has been developed as part of a regional initiative in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), by UNICEF. The LSCE Initiative brings together partners at the country, regional, and global level to support a holistic, lifelong, and rights-based approach to education in MENA.”*¹⁹ They have identified 12 core life skills. All of them are inter-connected and need lifelong learning. These are tailor made designs also for different age groups.

The world community has realized the importance of LSCE of late. *“Societies that systematically support the development of life skills of their citizens can expect them to become active citizens who will be willing to act ethically and in non-violent ways, who will find themselves in multicultural societies and will be tolerant to cultural and other diversities – and at the same time, be able to defend and fight for their rights.”*²⁰ LSCE is the only way to equip citizens legally, physically, mentally and emotionally.

Ten core life skills are required for one’s personality development. UNICEF defines life skills as *“a behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills”*.²¹ “The modern day life is far different from the life of ancient or medieval period. The internet and communication technology has created a virtual world. The digital world needs digital literacy. The pandemic of Covid-19 has already introduced new standards of life. The entire human population has to change their lifestyle. New stress has started developing due to lockdown measures. Post corona the patients are being taught different set of Life Skills to cope with post recovery symptoms. Indian tradition of Yoga has also taught the world that the only way for keeping good physical and mental health lies with them. Life skills trainings are becoming more and more important day by day.

18 Strengthening Life Skills for Youth a Practical Guide to Quality Programming. The World Bank, accessed on 07 07 2020 from https://www.s4ye.org/agi/pdf/Project_Design/Strengthening_Life_Skills_For_Youth.pdf

19 UNICEF MENA Life Skills and Citizenship Education - Conceptual and Programmatic Framework, accessed on 07 07 2020 from <http://exploresel.gse.harvard.edu/frameworks/47>

20 The life skills approach in Europe. 2018, accessed on 07 07 2020 from https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Life-Skills-Approach-in-Europe-summaryEN_FI_NAL_13042018-1.pdf

21 Ms. Ádhila Hassan. PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LIFE SKILLS, accessed on 06 07 2020 from jau.in/attachments/downloads/personality.pdf

Future Prescription for India

Citizenship and Life Skills Education are lacking in India while it is already being accommodated in significant number of countries. The present-day education system of India is failing somewhere because the young generation is being devoid of the values of a good citizen. There is growing skill deficit among the youth. India needs to develop LSCE as it has been done by UNICEF and MENA. *“It has two main components: (i) the development of a Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF) on life skills and citizenship education that serves as a guide to strategy development and programming at the country level, and (ii) the organization of technical support to countries on planning and implementation.”*²² The four dimensions of learning according to the CPF are as:

The Cognitive Dimension deals with fundamental basic skills. It will empower the learner to know inner self and make them able to have a better understanding of the world. The focus is on problem solving, critical thinking and hence enhancing the creativity.

The Instrumental Dimension teaches the learners to learn through experiences. Exposure for new demands is a must for future and it beyond the fixed academic curriculum.

The Individual Dimension lays emphasis on inter-personal skills needed for better human being. One needs to practice self-control and self-protection along with resilience.

The Social Dimension is the most important arena. *“It adopts a human rights-based approach consistent with democratic and social justice values and principles, and it constitutes the ethical foundation of the three other Dimensions of Learning (Cognitive, Instrumental and Individual).”*²³ It justifies the entire exercise of citizenship education.

Each dimension includes three life skills and sub-skills also. *“A set of 12 core life skills for MENA has been identified using the four-dimensional model. They are: creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, coopera-*

22 UNICEF-MENA. (2017). Reimagining Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa: A Four-Dimensional and Systems Approach to 21st Century Skills. Retrieved 05 07, 2020, from [https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/images/commitment/temp/5abbe9777bab3_LSCE%20Conceptual%20and%20Programmatic%20Framework%20\(CPF\).pdf](https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/images/commitment/temp/5abbe9777bab3_LSCE%20Conceptual%20and%20Programmatic%20Framework%20(CPF).pdf)

23 UNICEF-MENA. (2017). Reimagining Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa: A Four-Dimensional and Systems Approach to 21st Century Skills. Retrieved 05 07, 2020, from [https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/images/commitment/temp/5abbe9777bab3_LSCE%20Conceptual%20and%20Programmatic%20Framework%20\(CPF\).pdf](https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/images/commitment/temp/5abbe9777bab3_LSCE%20Conceptual%20and%20Programmatic%20Framework%20(CPF).pdf)

tion, negotiation, decision-making, self-management, resilience, communication, respect for diversity, empathy and participation.”²⁴ Employment and entrepreneurship are needed to make an economically prosperous life and civic engagement is required for a better citizenship. The human resource will be lost if their potential is not channelized in a positive direction. The aims and objectives of an education policy cannot be achieved because when implemented, it comes across a wide gap between its conceptualization and real execution. The cluster of life skills are inter-linked and over-lapping. The holistic approach holds the key. It is necessary for respecting diversity of a nation. It is possible with quality education only. The learner in an educational system must get an opportunity to develop the potential at its fullest. Education must aim not only on knowledge but applicability of the knowledge at right moment is equally challenging.

Conclusion

The New Education Policy (NEP) has tried to reorient our education system towards the ancient values and ethos. India happened to be a world leader and relegated to a subsidiary position. It has the potential to achieve the same position. A liberal form of education is favoured by this policy to enable the students to make use of their talents in a best possible manner. Flexibility of tenure is also allowed at under-graduate level. Focus is on developing vocational skills along with life skills. Vocational education starts at the school level itself. It is aiming to enable the new generation of India future ready. The demands of 21st century can be met with a change in education system and the same is reflected here.

Life skills education is already continuing in India in school education system but the need is to identify the right life skill for right people because of their different needs and circumstances. The youth of today needs LSCE because the democracy of the country is looking towards them to play more active role. At the same time, they need to be aware about the social fabric of India to avoid communalism and live with social harmony. They must assert their rights and perform their duties at the same time. Growing unemployment are also a matter of concern. A person who can take care of the family and make others learn to live peacefully, can only be responsible citizen. So, life skills are not only there to make a balanced personality but to produce a good citizen also. Any learning that starts at a young age becomes more effective and carried for the rest of life. The respect for the

24 UNICEF-MENA. (2017). Reimagining Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa: A Four-Dimensional and Systems Approach to 21st Century Skills. Retrieved 05 07, 2020, from

laws of the land can only be ensured through LSCE. The survival of Indian culture and values demand the adoption of LSCE in a more effective manner. It will encourage the youth to develop the willingness and ability to participate in civic and public affairs at multiple levels i.e., local, provincial or regional, national or international.

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- https://www.mygov.in/newindia/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/newindia285254_1507102842.pdf
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How should School Education be Today? A Sketch

Dr. Geetha G Nair*

Abstract

School education today is not a mere attainment of 3Rs of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. It is not acquiring literacy or skills alone. It is education of 3Hs –the Education of Head, Heart and Hands and should include modern concepts of Environmental Education, Population Education, Vocational Education, Consumer Education, Women’s Education; Personal, Social and Health Education and Life Skills Education. A narrative using existing data justifying the inclusion of these today in School Education is presented. It is a concept paper based on collection of data through survey of literature. The concept is school education and the impact of various parameters of society on community life and the necessity to include these as relevant subjects for the purpose of schooling as it is the school students who form our future. School education here has been linked to Population Education, Environmental Education, Vocational Education, Women’s Education, Consumer Education, Personal Social and Health Education and Life Skills Education per se. Though some of these such as Environmental Education is dealt with at the primary level and Population Education at the secondary level in school textbooks, it is not sufficient for the next generation students. Hence specific chapters on these topics be included at the secondary level alone with thrust on the latest trends in these areas along with practical experience on these topics and related problems through direct interactions with the community. Importance at par with that of Vocational Education needs be given by the government to the other areas of Education mentioned here for successful schooling benefiting both school goers as well as the society. Community Schooling would be ideal at the secondary level for the upcoming generations.

Keywords: School Education, Environmental Education, Population Education, Vocational Education, Women’s Education, Consumer Education, Life Skills Education, Community schooling, Smart schools

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Introduction

School education today is vastly different from olden days when there was no transport, no communication facilities and no computer facilities. In those days schools were establishments of education treated by students and parents alike with respect and fear. In the 1920s and the days of the British Raj, convent education got a lot of precedence over school education. It meant a little more than merely learning the 3 Rs- i.e. it groomed the personality of the child with skills, social, emotional and negotiation skills etc. and prepared them to enter the adult world. Whereas today despite all facilities of transport, communication and computer technology etc we only create a less than human being with a lot of information and factual knowledge akin to computers or robots.

Our students who enter the portals of collegiate education or the tertiary level are partially formed netizens – half-baked personalities with no sense of direction and lost identities because of the plethora of vocational pursuits available along with the pseudo valueless lives and the competition resulting from population explosion and enmasse approach and demands for a collegiate degree. A degree is a mere symbol of education today meaning the person can acquire or buy it and a degree need not necessarily imply the education of the educated. Education today is mere attainment of factual knowledge in a fast moving world exploding with information. Education is a mere attainment of degrees and a degree is a mere passport to a better life. Education today means being literate and being loaded with sufficient number of degrees which have no relevance to the vocation adopted/obtained for earning a livelihood. Education today is the ability to earn livelihood in an office set-up or with a white collar job. Education today is the ability to do all and sundry starting from reading writing and arithmetic to using a computer, doing a job, possessing a degree (unrelated to the job), living in an urbane set up, using an android with all its apps and reproducing it or even misusing it, doing research i.e. searching for information that already exists somewhere without finding out something new, getting a doctorate in a few years and doing a hair-splitting exercise in research which is not very useful for the existing populace or future generations. Education has led to the production in India of about 821 universities (<https://en.wikipedia.org>) catering to these needs of the masses who wish to live at a different level from that of the past because of technological advance, computerization and digitization. Education today signifies mere information flow at one's finger tips at the touch of a button.

Education has led to e-governance and is vastly different from the BritishRaj's paper mediated governance. Education has created computers, machines and robots to take care of all our needs be it a house, a school, a college, a hospital or office. This e -education has over powered our lives and made it easier for us to work and live but then where are we? Have we progressed from where we were in the past? No. Infact ,we have lost a lot- we have lost skills of direct personal communication and collaboration; we have lost the human touch in our lives(cf. the Humans of New York Blog on Facebook); and have created a mess of the surroundings or environs in the name of educational progress; we have created laws and by-laws to divide and rule at home and outside.

Study design: The study is based solely on data collection and literature survey.

Hypothesis:

1. School education is the backbone of any polity/community
2. School education cannot be completed without keeping abreast of immediate problems of the Community.

Methodology

Different aspects of society or community

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as Important focal points

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Literature survey on the above

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Analysis of data/literature

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Interpretations and conclusions

Observations based on Literature

To put it more succinctly let us have a look at the present day problems in society which education should be able to resolve---

Population explosion All the education and all the Government efforts at the grass roots level has not been able to reduce the overcrowding of cities and the resultant destruction of the simpler and healthier village and rural lives. There is constant migration from villages to cities for more facilities. Is Education therefore a mere facilitation of an easier life or life style?

Loss of the environment More cities and more concrete jungles, more of roads and more of cutting of forests, more of electricity, more of lampposts and more of network of wires and cables on the road side, more of man-holes on the roads, more of dug-out land, more of buildings and industries, more of waste lands and water bodies. Why has education not taken care of all these and why has it spoilt the environment?

Lack of jobs Look at the degrees given in the Universities in Science, Commerce, Arts, Computers so as to enable us to have an occupation or earn our livelihood. There are 540 Universities (private, Central, State and Deemed) Institutes, Boards etc. in our country according to National Academic Depository(<https://nad.ndml.in>) as on 7th June 2019. Hundreds of students pass out every year acquiring a specific kind of knowledge but no expertise. To do a job one needs expertise and experience. We live together and grow as a society learning from each other by serving each other in various ways each of which becomes an occupation or job. There is no casteism based division of labour in society and there are yet different kinds of jobs in today's society. We live together and grow as a society by learning from each other, by serving each other in various ways each of which becomes an occupation or job. Teaching-- how skilled we are in it? and in doctoring, and engineering and constructing? These are the major professions today. Research is an occupation and there are corollaries of this major field. Yet a teacher has to sweep and clean, an engineer to sit at home and a doctor may join politics and a researcher may commit suicide due to lack of funds .

Vocationalisation This should start at the school level. Students chose a stream be it Arts / Science / Commerce at the school level and move on to the tertiary level of Education. They may not continue in the chosen lines of study because of stiff competition at the entry level and end up in a job for which they have an aptitude. This makes all education and degrees earned meaningless and purposeless.

Women's Education Where has education for women landed them? Deep inside women are no different from what they were prior to liberation movements and gender equality propaganda. There should be no gender bias please if only to ensure that man and woman both are human beings. The stricture ends there. Biologically speaking the two genders are different and need civic/ legal equality for living a just and equal life in a slowly evolving and just waking up unjust society. You cannot make the genders biologically equal. School education should train girls to take up jobs close to their aptitude and their gender interests. Conditioning of girls to be like boys is a lost phenomenon. They are encouraged to pursue their interests without any pre-conditioning. There could be specific vocations for girls. Conditioning of boys and girls was a necessity earlier for enhancing and preserving the biological and social differences between the sexes. It helped in maintaining a certain order in society and does help in maintaining biological constancy of the sexes-what they call epistasis (antagonistic interaction between genes) in genetics. Hansen (2013) says that theoreticians have discovered many roles for epistasis in evolutionary dynamics driven by natural selection. These include crucial roles in the evolution of sex and recombination. Where are all the men gone? Women's liberation has emasculated men to a great extent so much so that we may need men's education or man making as a separate discipline.

Social evils Have we done away with rape, murder, juvenile delinquency, psycho-sexual perversions, drug addiction, alcoholism, corruption at high places, burglary (thefts), hoarding and terrorism at the national and international levels? No! Biological differences play a triggering role in rape and for justice gender equality is a must. Murders and corruption are rampant because of socio-economic imbalances. Psychological and sexual perversions are hidden in India in the form of juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, alcoholism, voyeurism, exhibitionism, kleptomania etc. This is primarily due to lack of family life, togetherness and empathy as opposed to the more open west. Exposure to aggression and violence in childhood with lack of basic amenities and other unmet needs breeds terrorism in the youth of today so that they can have their way.

Consumerism It is the latest and largest evil of today's society and is spreading like cancer. The number of products outnumber the needs of consumers. As the demands of goods has increased the need to produce the goods has also increased and this in turn is affecting the environment especially through pollution and resource depletion giving us socio-economic problems. Consumerism has led to moral degradation where people buy

goods and services they do not need to be at par with those at higher level as a status symbol and has led to loss of values and integrity. As economy pertains to careful management of existing resources, small courses on Consumerism, Capitalism, and Economics could be introduced in a general way at the secondary level.

Discussions

Population education and school education

One of the arguments against population growth is that it reduces the amount of education that children receive because of hunger, malnutrition, disease and poverty. Lower birth rates mean more education for eg., a 1.2% rate of population increase leads to an average of 7 years of schooling while a 3.7% rate of population increase leads to an average of 3.7 years of schooling (Simon and Pilarski, 1979)

Education on the other hand leads to lower birth rates and slows population growth. The demand for education, the supply of education and a budget constraint in turn effect population growth and its influence on amount of education. The effect of education on reducing population growth makes it easier for countries to develop a more educated workforce and also makes it easier to make economic growth and eradicate poverty. Ofcourse increased economic growth means increased consumption. At this stage population growth adds pressure to the system. A global population living the life style of the average American requires 5 times the resources we have available on earth (Global Footprint Network). Slower population growth helps countries develop.

The consensus over the past 20 years was that world population which is currently around 7 billion would go up to 9 billion and level off or probably decline (www.classroom.synonym.com). Global human population growth amounts to around 83 million annually or 1.1% per year—it is expected to keep growing and estimates have put the total population at 8.6 billion by mid 2030, 9.8 billion by mid 2050 and 11.2 billion by 2100. In India the population is 1,367,978,345 as of June 14 2019 (<https://www.un.org>). India has nearly a fifth of the world's population (demographics of India, Wikipedia). India as a developing country (rank number 2 in list of countries by population) has many mouths to feed and stave off hunger. More the population, more the hunger to be satiated, more the resources needed and utilized and lesser the education status and therefore poverty is certain. World Hunger Day is observed each year on May 28th. Population growth brings in hunger, malnutrition, diseases and an inverted population

pyramid as life expectancy increases and fertility declines. The latter leads to a greying population and topples the economy.

There is a direct correlation between population growth and educational issues (Arnette, 2018). Population taxes the number of teachers needed for teaching, also it causes school overcrowding which in turn causes negative feelings amongst students. Districts need to build more and bigger schools which costs money which the school does not have. Negative feelings bring in negative attitudes that lead to drug usage, gang mentalities and a lack of education, idealism etc. Negative attitudes cause less chance for extended education –lowering earning potential and resulting in poverty to student.

Population increase leads to not only food and resource scarcity, it breeds ignorance, squalor and diseases. It leads to overcrowding in cities and taxes the government. Education minimizes these bad effects by giving individuals knowledge they need to lead a better quality of life. Education lowers birth rates and slows population growth.

Amount of education is further affected by demand, supply and budget constraint of education. When education lowers birth rates countries develop a more educated workforce and makes economic growth easy thereby eradicating poverty. Increased economic growth means increased consumption which adds in turn pressure to a system if there is further population growth. A global population living the lifestyle of an average American requires 5 times the resources we have available on earth (Global Footprint Network).

NCERT textbooks teach population education in XII Standard under Chapter 13 on Organisms and Population related aspects of Human Health and Disease, Strategies for enhancement of food production and Microbes in Human welfare. Besides this, the chapter covers ecological factors such as biotic and abiotic factors and covers population attributes, population growth and population interactions. Population interaction mentions interaction between various life forms in the environment.

School education should orient students in Population Education. As a part of Population Education a chapter on Reproductive Health is included in the XII Standard NCERT textbooks from pages 57-66 under the heads of family planning, birth control, population sterilization, medical termination of pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, infertility etc.; from pages 145 to 164 in discussions on Human Health and Diseases viz., common diseases in humans, immunity, allergens, auto immunity, immune

system in the body, AIDS, cancer, drugs and alcohol abuse etc.

Anything that contributes to the welfare and well-being of a human being and the community can form a part of school education and population education does that. Because when there is a population explosion it concerns the individual in society. Population explosion leads to difficulties in the form of overcrowding, dearth of materials and resources resulting in less resources and money for school education, negative attitudes and crime and terrorism and ultimately leads to poverty through an uneducated mass or workforce causing underachievement, less of earning capacity and therefore poverty.

It is but imperative to get adolescents educated in these areas so that they become aware of the world around them and prepare for their future in a proper way. Population education in the school curriculum in developed countries like US concentrates more on Environmental concerns and policies whereas in Asia it gives more emphasis to family planning policies and other population issues (like growth effects on family, community, socio-cultural and personal factors (Okobiah, 1981). Population Education should enable students to make informed decisions on population. A conceptual framework in Population in the US consisted of 5 major parameters viz., demographics and a description of the human population, basic population concepts and processes, population dynamics, the causes and consequences of population change and population issues (Okobiah, 1981).

According to PRSD Report (1991) Population Education could be included in Primary School level especially for those countries like Melanesia which have a high drop-out rate after primary schooling. It should include new areas of concern like sexuality education to address new pregnancy, environmental education to address pollution, green house effect, drift netfishing, logging, erosion, AIDS/STD etc. It should propose innovative teaching methodologies to develop responsible behaviours like raising self-esteem, planning, decision making so that individuals can control their own lives.

State's eradication of illiteracy not achieved in India by 1990, the reason for shortfall in achievement of educational goals is rapid population growth especially of school age groups (Jagasuriya, 1982). Population education can bring decline in fertility, more birth control, more child survival, human emancipation, plural demographic effect and reduce poverty and famine.

Environmental Education and School Education

What are the definitions of the term Environmental Education? The answer to the environment and school aspects lies in these definitions. Environmental Education refers to organized efforts to teach how environment functions, how human beings manage behavior and ecosystems to live sustainably(www. wikipedia.com). UNESCO emphasizes the role of Environmental Education in safeguarding future /global developments of societal quality of life(QOL) through the protection of the environment, eradication of poverty, minimization of inequalities and insurance of sustainable development(UNESCO, 2014a).

All the definitions given above can be completed within the purview of school education and schooling per se. How the surroundings and environs biosphere technically look and function in order to sustain us and the lives of other millions of organisms around us ; the life cycles and characters of these organisms at minutisissimal level-all forms a part of Biological Science (Science – to know).

How human beings behave and how their behavior affects another organism and the environment in turn , how we form part of the environment and all the factors(biotic and abiotic-living and non-living) form system of checks and balances with one affecting the other in a chain- like fashion and viceversa.We have to sustain the environment and live sustainably and this is possible at the school level for the school children are the future of the world. One has to inculcate values to sustain the environment at a young age through modification of their behavior. As explained by Nair, (2013), issues and concepts taught to an individual (the student in school here) leads to attitude development. Interactions with socio-cultural scene with an acquired attitude leads to behavior and thereby the personality of an individual. To summarise—it is the environment –be it the physical or socio-culturalthat shapes the personality of an individual by modifying their behavior. This personality can further modify the environment leading to an ecological crisis or solution.

It is necessary to instill in the school goer who is the future of the worldthe attitudes of

- a cleaner environment
- a greener environment
- a plastic free environmental water way
- pollution free (free of CH₄, NO, NO₂, SO₂, CO₂ and other HC) environment

- preservation of existing water bodies (there are 110 lakes in Mysore and many of them are neglected) and rivers (river Cauvery in Mysore)
- of preservation of existing forests and the flora and fauna therein
- of preserving the soil crust for the future by preventing soil erosion
- of fighting environmental catastrophes like famine and drought
- of fighting flood ravages that disturb the biogeochemical cycle in the sub-continent of India
- of preserving this blue and green planet for posterity through sustainable means (Sustainable Development Goals 1-17)
- to develop careers in Environmental Sciences like that of a government Park Ranger, IFS Forest Officer, Environmental Engineer, Teacher, Landscaper and Landscape Consultant, Gardener, Nursery and Herbarium Keeper etc.
- to take global issues of nuclear warfare, climate change, greenhouse effect, population explosions, food-security, fuel efficiency, deforestation, biodiversity loss and water scarcity and formation of concrete jungles through urbanization. Soon we will have to transit to the nearest planet Mars due to population increase and climatic change and due to release of still larger amounts of CO₂ into the atmosphere (55.4 gigatonne of CO₂ will be released into the atmosphere by 2023). Increased population also brings in more mouths to feed (Hunger Project started in 2011 because there are 815 million people living in chronic hunger world wide).
- to curtail population rise and bring in unhindered technological and economic growth
- to change the world for the sake of posterity

Population education in developed countries has Environmental Education as its major thrust area in conceptual framework. So does environmental education (EE) figure as a whole unit in Engineering courses etc. But that has not taken away the burden of bludgeoning concrete jungles that stare at us in the urban skyline. Therefore it is imperative that Environmental Education forms an inseparable part of any school curriculum be it at the primary or secondary stage and in Engineering and Architecture courses as mentioned earlier. EVS at primary level, Environmental Education at Secondary level and Ecology at the tertiary level are different names of the same subject.

NCERT the apex Educational organization of the country advocates this through its textbooks EVS Studies at the primary level from 1st to 5th standard. We had in our times (1966-76) a CBSE syllabus where we stud-

ied Science/ General Science. This underlines the fact that EVStudies is truly a part of General Science. At a later stage(secondary) from VI to VIII Standards various concepts have been incorporated(mgbis.ces.iisc.ernet.in) with an infusion model at senior secondary stage for Environmental Education.

One of the important Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the UN Development Council is” Change the World” and Education is the most powerful tool you can use to change the world. There are 17 SDGs proposed to be achieved asGlobal priority from 2016-30. Environmental Education is a mere tool for Education for Sustainable Development(ESD) in India and this is being implemented based on NCF(2005) and the Supreme Court Directive(Sonowal, 2009). A graded series for classes 1-12 have been developed. Based on Supreme Court Directive on Environmental Education the following method of implementation of EE has to be adopted.

I and II	---	Through activities
III and V	---	Environmental Studies (EVS)
VI to X	---	Infusion Model
XI to XII	---	Project Based study

Environmental education in the NCERT textbooks is a part of primary level Science as Environmental Studies for 3rd 4th and 5th standards. This is very relevant and well placed as the child grows up in a surrounding i.e the environment and values for the Environment could be easily imbued at this stage. In an age of fast depleting forest resources and massive environmental exploitation to satiate the needs and intellect of man, Environmental education will instill values of preserving and cultivating the environment around and appropriate use of natural resources around us. So the students learn thereby to keep the environment clean and hygienic

Vocational Education and School Education

What is your vocation? Vocation is an area of work. I am in the teaching vocation. Students passing out of secondary stage into tertiary stage of Education do so with the hope of entering the world of work and earning a livelihood. Secondary school offers Arts, Commerce and Science streams of study. In Arts the students can choose to be a writer, an author, a poet, a painter, dancer and musician and a multitude of other vocations . One who opts for Commerce hopes be an Economist, a Consultant, an Accountant and so on. A Science student wishes to be a Researcher, a

Scientist, a Teacher, a Programmer, a Technician, an Electrical Engineer, a Doctor, a Nurse, a Farmer or a modern Agriculturist etc. But does the secondary stage syllabii ever prepare them for this world of work? No. Most of the time they get some content with no practical experience in the field of work for which they have an aptitude. Students have to be prepared for the world of work, the prime reason being to make them financially independent and professional at a young age.

Indian Labour Force is 509 million strong and the school and college population is 100 million strong. The latter is a huge mass lying in our very hands, their energy and skills unutilised and not channelised. Global shortage of manpower by 2020 is 56.8 million. New entrants to the workforce per year is 12.8 million. Perhaps this is one reason for the low productivity of Indian Industry and labour force which is abysmally low. There is shortage of skilled labour in Agriculture and service industry. GDP of India in the last decade is 8-9%. So why not direct this hundred million strong mass of teens and youth and prepare them for work? (www.wikipedia.com).

Vocational Education and vocational training introduces children to the real world of work and provides them with the requisite knowledge and skills for the same. First comes knowledge acquisition, followed by corresponding skills for a particular job which gives them in turn an understanding of the work area enabling them to apply the knowledge. In ancient India vocationalisation was according to caste, so that vocation of an individual became inherited, highly professionalised and was carried down from generation to generation. Caste was created for the sake of vocationalisation and for bringing order and system in society. And each vocation and its nuances and specialities were preserved by entire families/communities/establishments of society devoted to it. There is no such system prevalent in society now. Casteism of the past has not been properly understood nor the vocations and the skills our ancestors bestowed us with properly preserved. Vocationalisation may be necessary to preserve long lost skills.

As it stands today vocationalisation of secondary and higher secondary education is a centrally sponsored scheme (<https://mhrd.gov.in> > vocationalisation). Schools should introduce vocational education as an additional 6th subject at secondary level and as a compulsory elective at senior secondary level (especially from IX to XII Standards). A framework has been prepared for states to identify and offer financial support to village level skilled and semi-skilled persons to apprentice students in voca-

tional courses in school by GOI. The curriculum has to be compliant with NOS National Occupational Standards and job roles should be as per sector skills Council adopted by State Boards of Education. Schools have to involve industry for hands on training as advocated in National Skills Qualification Framework. Incentives are to be given for 100 students per school and students have to complete level 2 and level 4 of NSQF. Schools are required to prepare teachers and NSQF compliant curriculum. The first Skill India Development Mission was launched on 15/07/2015. Vocational Education Training has been introduced now nationwide for upgradation of 1896 Government run ITIs and 3218 ITCs. There are 50000 skill development centres in public-private partnership mode.

The National Institute of Open Schooling has proposed the following broad vocational education areas—Agriculture, Home Science, and Hospital Management, Business and Commerce, Computer Science and IT, Engineering and Technology, Health and Para Medical Teacher Training, Life Enrichment Courses and Special Projects(<https://www.nios.ac.in>).

Graduates who come out of Universities have mere bookish knowledge even if they are front rankers. They are mostly unskilled, unproductive and a loss to the economy of the nation. There is mass production of graduates at the universities without requisite skills pertaining to their degrees. According to Nasscom-Mckinsey World Institute, 75% Engineering, 85% Arts, Science and Commerce graduates are unacceptable as either their education is not up-to-date or they have no marketable skills. Look at the graduates turning up for an interview for the posts of Lab Assistants and Lecturers and Technicians in our colleges and Universities. Half of them cannot speak a correct sentence in English and they wish to be Lecturers and teachers. The rest would not have touched an instrument and employed it and they wish to run a sophisticated lab set up. Vocational Education is necessary for the prosperity of a nation. Lack of it is taxing on the economy. At present there are 4 million youth registered in employment bureaus of 28 states and 7 Union Territories. And there are 260 million who are either unemployed or underemployed.

Vocational Education will prepare individuals for jobs based on manual activities—it is non-academic and related totally to a specific trade or vocation. It is expected that Vocational Education and National Skill Development Corporation funding will contribute 30% to skilling and upskilling target of 500 million citizens by 2022.

In a world teeming with human population, adolescent population is on the rise. Earning a living is the prime concern of all adolescents. Our educa-

tion system at the secondary level gives direction to the adolescents according to their aptitudes to pick up a career but does not make them career savvy. They do not have enough skills to pursue a career after secondary education. The Ministry of Skill Development has done a lot in this direction by offering scholarships after plus two through vocationalisation. Vocationalisation is a must for every school student and for this vocationalisation should be introduced after the plus 2 stage through courses such as Diploma in Teaching, Diploma in Science Education, Diploma in Life Skills Education, Diploma in Computers, Diploma in Tailoring and Designing, in Dietetics, in Cooking and so on. These will enable students to pursue a career immediately after Senior Secondary

School Education. Also students may be introduced at the Secondary level to useful skills such as swimming, cooking, yoga, housekeeping, tailoring, typewriting, shorthand, dancing, music, personal grooming, gardening, Bonsai, woodwork, painting etc depending upon their aptitude. This not only enhances their value on passing out of senior secondary school but adds to their immediate repertoire of skills useful for earning a living.

Women's Education and School Education

How do we educate our girls today? Of course there is gender equality and accessibility to all fields of activity at par with men. This gender fluid status of society today has taken away some of the special attributes of each sex. The society itself is fluid and in a state of flux. There is no definite direction to proceed in except for the yardstick of progressive and prosperous comfortable life with a high standard of living and forward looking mentality which does away with the old system and values. There is marginalization of society with transgenders becoming not so uncommon. The Government has recognized them as a separate community and sex. And where do we go from here? The two sexes are biologically and physiologically different. But there is social, civic and political equality for both the sexes in the eyes of the law. So education at school should make them aware of their biological differences and they should otherwise be equal in all social spheres being two different sexes of the Homosapiens race. Biological equality is not possible.

When you educate a man you educate an individual but when you educate a woman you educate the entire nation –the saying goes. Why did they eulogise the role of child bearer so much in words such as ‘The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world’ Because it is the woman who bears and rears children and she only looks after the family and nurtures it. When each woman of a country responsibly nurtures her family andcares for it,

the entire nation is taken care of. Many are the travails of a woman be she a daughter, a wife or a mother the three major roles of a woman in society and the problems that haunt these roles are rape, incest, sati, widowhood, single woman syndrome, financial dependence and joblessness, lower daily wages, destitution, trafficking and harassment at work places. And an educated woman who is worldly wise can overcome all these problems through restraint, knowledge, understanding, sensibility, ingenuity, planning and versatility and resilience.

Let us look at some facts about girls' education in the world. From 1970-1992, the combined primary and secondary involvement for girls in developing countries rose from 38-68%. Within East Asia it rose to 83% and in Latin America to 87%. The least developed countries have an enrolment figure of only 47% at primary level and 12% at secondary level. The female literacy rate has increased from 8.6% in 1951 to 64.63 % in 2011. Current male literacy in India is 81.3% and female literacy rate is 65.6%. And there are statistically 145 million women in India who cannot read or write.

India leads in women's Education from ancient times. Since it is likely that India may become a super power one day and therefore women's education becomes all the more important. Despite women's liberation movements gender inequality persists both amongst rural, educated and working urban women. All experience gender bias. What does this gender bias mean? She is a female and she is different. Her capabilities are different. Both the sexes can never be the same with similar abilities unless one of them goes in for a sex change. What we need is a humane attitude towards the biologically stronger and fairer sex. We need to do away with wrong attitudes to both the sexes that does away with gender bias. We have a gender fluid society now. It remains to be seen whether this is what we want. Whether this will affect biological evolution of sexes is another dimension of the problem. Generally, the efficiency of women for a particular task is lowly weighed against males, underestimated for promotions or holding responsibilities. Despite this women do invest more time and more of their income in their jobs and families than men do.

According to UNESCO (<https://en.unesco.org>.) 130 million girls between 13 and 17 are out of school. Women form 59% of the total illiterate population of the world. Refusing to give women and girls an education nations suffer as much as a billion loss in revenue. Throughout the world there is loss of dollar 92 billion each year. All this only because of the natural role of a woman in bearing and rearing children by virtue of her biological structure and also because of the social more or mind fixation that edu-

cating a woman is a waste of time and money as they are born only to be married off and manage the household. As Science and Technology have advanced a lot., educating a woman not only increases revenue to the exchequer, it makes a woman more confident and make her more aware of her health and happiness. It makes her assertive and brave and able to face the social ostracism of any kind and project herself as a free individual.

Women's education /Girl's education is all about feeling safe, getting a job, becoming financially independent and learning socio-emotional skills to navigate in a changing world. It is apt to put it across today that Women's Education is more about having control and mastery over her body and becoming decisive in her life.

Women's or Girls' Education should be given precedence in schools to prepare them for the world of work tomorrow and also for their role as mother. Courses in sewing, knitting, embroidery, painting, dancing, music, self defence, the fine arts, crafts, cooking, food and nutrition, health awareness, family planning, personal grooming and hygiene, early childhood care and development, nursing, gardening, first aid, gardening, plant medicines, etc should be introduced and offered at the school level as a special paper and at the collegiate level as a full time course. They will have the option to go in for a regular course in Science/Arts/ Commerce apart from this at the school level. May be a couple of these courses could be made compulsory for girls at the secondary level.

Women's education will help in the prevention of social evils such as sati. RoopKanwar of Deorala in Rajasthan was a widower buried along with husband irrespective of whether it was voluntary on Sept 4 1987. Sati is a superstition in contradiction to modern Science. Education at school through adolescence education will make them aware of their sexual differences and help them maintain their biological differences while striving for social equality through assertiveness, effective communication and confidence building measures. Let women undergo courses in Effective communication, Personal, Social and Health Education. Health education is a must for women at all ages. The relevant courses at the secondary stage of education would be Adolescence Education,

Consumerism and School Education

Consumerism is slipping into the cycle of wanting more and more commodities, products and services. Educational Institutes (schools, Colleges and Universities) market and sell their idea of Education. For eg., Bansal Institute in Kota is a preparation hub for coaching IIT JEE exams and the

strategies the Institute uses for brand marketing are logos, catchy taglines, student merchandise and advertising. A consumerist model of education promotes the students the students and supports their demands. This is one reason why parallel colleges used to flourish in states like Kerala. Students aspire here for tangible benefits in the form of degrees, career prospects and financial well being. Batches of students to join workforce are produced.

Institutions should take a stand and a different standard of consumer choice within higher education sector.. The original purpose of higher education system should be reflected viz., to provide quality teaching opportunities for scholarship, a supportive academic environment, to provide campus culture which can be given without lavish buildings(Carey, 2009). Consumerism finally leads to rapid decline in the quality of education which is already happening through tutorials –just selling merchandise(degrees and guides) and where Institutes serve as mere training Institutes not that of imparting education. It is going on all over the world...

Dowe need to create market relationships in order to enfranchise the consumers of education? Education is not an off the shelf product available for exchange or refund. The sum of the matter is that one has to sanctify education by doing away with consumerism in education. Education has to be sacrosanct.

Consumerism has led to moral degradation where people buy goods and services they do not need. As economy pertains to careful management of existing resources , small courses on Consumerism vs. Capitalism, Economics etc.could be introduced in a general way at the secondary level.

Social evils and School Education

If education is meant to improve society why are social evils so rampant? Why does not education make people more civilized and sane? The social evils of today viz., corruption , communalism, consumerism, alcoholism, drug abuse and terrorism, trafficking to name a few-why are they still laming our society? We get educated to avoid these but get caught in the trap of social evils. We are subject to corruption in Government offices.—where the signature of an ordinary official inthe Municipality office costs you money. Every other day there is news in the paper of looting and arson in the name of religious differences. We need more and more of products from the market to compete with people from other strata of society. Teenagers and adolescents get habituated to alcohol and drugs due to lack of job opportunities or even due to consumerism in education. Sri Lankan

Church was bombed by terrorist of late. Despite women's liberation trafficking and flesh trade are common both in urban and rural areas.

Corruption Corruption is the use of power for private profits and is a breach of law. In India as mentioned earlier corruption has become a threat to National Development. Central Vigilance Commission was formed in 1960. The oath on Central Vigilance Day by Government offices is mere lip service. Reasons for corruption are scarcity, nation oriented political elite, changes in ethics of political administration and a Government policy where purchases are Government controlled(wikipedia.com).

Schools should teach the students basic values and character and leadership education because once the corruption starts, it spreads like cancer. Nothing is more important than values, social life and civic sense. Literacy is very important to kill corruption, Adult education should be encouraged. Rate of literacy is up by 10-15% after independence. Adult literacy rate (1997) in India was 54%. Free and compulsory Education till 14 was a contemplation of the Constitution but has taken 60 years to even discuss it. Both civic and moral values need to be instilled in public through education.

Trafficking India is home to 40% of the world's 46 million slaves. Anuradha helped to rescue 1200 girls from sexual slavery and prevented 45000 from being trafficked. She established charity Maiti Nepal and was given Padma Sri in 2017([https:// their world. Org/ voices/ anuradha-korata-maiti-nepal-on-education-fior trafficking-victims](https://theirworld.org/voices/anuradha-korata-maiti-nepal-on-education-for-trafficking-victims)). Why should this trafficking occur at all if education be there free for all?

Communalism Communalism is strife and antagonism based on religious differences. Communalisation of curriculum is saffronisation and affects the young school goer's mind. Pursuing the Hindutva agenda in Education is saffronisation. If one introduces Veda, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads in School and makes it compulsory for Non-Hindus to learn it, Christian and Muslim sentiments may be hurt. If we are a secular country learning about one's religion can be made optional in school. Both VidyaBharti and SanghParivar promote Hindutva communalism in schools(Frontline, 2012). To cite a few instances –attacks on Hussain's painting and Deepa Mehta's film; a civil injunction on ProfessorJha's book on beef eating in Ancient India; ban on Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie.

Textbooks for school children are manipulated to promote a certain religion. India has suffered enough communalism, leave textbooks alone. (Dhavan, 2001)

All social evils emerge from socio-economic differences. How do we achieve social and economic equity? We as a democratic country are still struggling for that social equity by increasing reservation (35%) for women and minorities and the scheduled classes to reduce social imbalances. This along with vocationalisation has already brought in social and economic equity between different sections of society. It would be advisable to introduce schemes for different sections of society at school level to reduce the disparities eg., mid day meals, free education for girls and boys through co-eds and special schools for minorities and the rural community. A special example is the JNVs all over India which caters to the rural community students from 6th standard onwards.

Personal, Social and Health Education and School Education

As stressed already earlier education pertains mostly to numeracy and literacy—all the efforts of SSA and MSA are towards that and we are still far from achieving goals.

Education is not only of 3Rs but it is a study and discipline of the mind, body and soul. Schooling derived from the Greek word *skhole* “spare time, leisure, rest, ease; idleness; that in which leisure is employed; learned discussion;” also “a place for lectures, school”. According to Merriam Websters dictionary school (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/school>) in noun form means an organization that provides instruction; and in verb form to teach or drill in a specific knowledge or skill (well schooled in languages), to discipline or habituate to something (school oneself in patience), and to educate in an institution of learning (The child was schooled at great cost to her family). Discipline of the body, mind and soul are a must have in any curriculum for school education the world over. What is an individual who cannot take care of his persona, his body and mind. The very essence of civilization (are we civilized?) is social interaction. Civilisation started perhaps when man gave in to his gregarious instincts and started living together and this entailed formation of clans, tribes, joint families and today’s nuclear families. Relations and relationships developed when we started living together with social give and take, social mores and other social interactions. And if we wish to keep this civilization going in today’s digital and tech society, social education is a must. It entails values, good behavior, humane attitude, feminism, gender sensitization, gender stereotyping, time management, personal grooming and social etiquette.

Both mental and physical health are important for an individual in society. They say if you have lost wealth you have lost nothing but if you have lost

health you have lost something. Maintaining the balance of one's mind, keeping oneself happy and usefully occupied are basic to one's health. A healthy mind and body makes way for a healthy society devoid of social problems. Health in the teen years through knowledge of adolescence issues, maintenance of hygiene, drug abuse, alcoholism, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy etc are very essential and this can be promoted by the Government directly through schools rather than through primary health centres which reach out feebly to the half ignorant masses.

It is to be remembered that even literacy and numeracy can be achieved only through health. Health of our children should precede as well as accompany literacy and numeracy. Most children in Karnataka go to school without breakfast. Our children eat poorly and eat lesser varieties of foods. Majority of mothers and children are still malnourished and/or undernourished. It is mostly a struggle for most to live their lives- it is a hand to mouth existence and how will the students therefore digest knowledge of numbers and languages that we dole out to them.

Is the average height of Indians going down? Economists have increasingly turned to height data to gain insight into a population's standard of living. Differences in wealth between the two groups were mirrored by a fairly dramatic difference in average heights. The average height of all men in elite group was 173.9 cm while the non-elite were several centimeters shorter at just 171.2 cm (Miller, 2016).

The average height of an Indian woman is now 152.6 centimetres (5 feet), and that of a man 164.9 cm (5 feet 4.9 inches), according to a new research report from the Imperial College London. A little over a century ago, in 1914, Indian men and women stood at an average of 148 cm (4 feet 10 inches) and 162 cm (5 feet 3 inches) respectively. These figures come from 100 yearsworth of data on the average height of 18-year-olds in 200 countries. This study gives us a picture of the health of nations over the past century, and reveals that the average height of some nations may even be shrinking while others continue to grow taller," said Majid Ezzati, a professor from the school of public health, Imperial College London. "It confirms we urgently need to address children and adolescents' environment and nutrition on a global scale and ensure we're giving the world's children the best possible start in life." Indian men were ranked 178 among 200 in 2014, while Indian women stood at 192. In 1914, Indian men were 101 on the ranking, while women were at 163. "There are two primary factors responsible for these results—India has one of the highest undernutrition and malnutrition levels in the world," V Mohan, chief of diabetology at Dr

Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre, told the Mint newspaper. Latvian women are the world's tallest, with an average height of 169.8 cm (5 feet 6 inches), while among men, Dutch are the tallest at 182.5 cm (5 feet 11 inches)(Manu Balachandran, 2016) .

With population increase and overcrowding comes decline in education and poverty and malnourishment and resulting bad health and therefore along with social education health education is equally important. Pages 93 to 95 of National Education Policy (2019) talks of ethical and moral reasoning which is what personal and social education is all about. It could be a separate non-statutory course as in UK. According to PSHE Association ([www. globeschool.org.UK](http://www.globeschool.org.UK)), PSHE education is a planned programme of learning through which children and young people acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives. As part of a whole school approach, PSHE develops the qualities and attributes pupils need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society. PSHE is also called SPHE(Social Personal and Health Education), PSHEE(Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education), PSED(Personal Social and Emotional Development), and PSHCE(Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education). The elements of PSHEE in UK (Gov. UK,2010) mentioned in the Schools White Paper 2010 are 1) acquiring and understanding accessible relevant information in relationship/sex education, healthy life style, emotional literacy, drug addiction, anti-bullying/safety, citizenship/diversity, financial/career education; 2) developing attitudes and values that underpin self-esteem, health and well-being, learning and achievement; 3) developing and personal social skills of identification of emotions, managing change, informed decisions, development of self-respect and empathy and conflict management.

A whole school approach or normative approach is adopted for teaching PSHE which is managed by a co-ordinator and has continuous and formative assessment. A safe learning environment is provided by not discussing personal issues.

Unless the family is highly educated, the students who go to normal school do not get educated in these aspects which are essential for the development of a wholesome personality after schooling. Incidentally personality development and character formation never seem to be the goals of education these days when we lack personalities with qualities of self-reliance and sacrifice like Gandhi /of self-achievement and learning like Nehru/ of strength and character leading to National Integration like that of Sardar VallabhBhai Patel/of liberated women like Indira Gandhi with character,

fire of determination, sacrifice and leadership qualities. Where are such characters nowadays? As per the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) data 2011- 2012, there are 1.3 million schools in India([www,google.com](http://www.google.com)). Not one character or leader of the above qualities has risen up in the last two decades from the above schools. Character and intelligence –that is what true Education is all about but the educated today are far from having these qualities.

Personal, Social and Health Education should have Training in Effective Communication, Health Education, Nursing, Child care Cooking and Housekeeping, Food and Nutrition . Also courses on Women’s rights, Adult education, psychology and well being , and de-addiction and drugs as well as alcoholism be introduced.

Life Skills Education and School Education

Life Skills Education is defined as psycho-social competencies to adapt to the challenges and problems of day to day life and for this WHO(1994,1997) has advocated the development of 10 generic skills of Solving(Problem solving, Decision making), Thinking(Critical thinking and Creative thinking),Relationship(inter personal relationship skills and effective communication), Understanding (Self awareness and empathy) and Coping (Coping with emotions and Coping with Stress). Life Skills arose as a discipline because of the increasing adolescent population in the Latin Americas. The World Health Organisation found Life Skills Education necessary to keep the mental Health of a young adolescent populace. It is considered as a non-scholastic subject by GOI and therefore not introduced through syllabi in the Curriculum. However NCF 2005 has stressed its importance both at the primary and secondary levels of Education. Teaching Methodology of the ten generic skills is through quizzes, group discussions, buzz group discussions, role play, brain storming, anecdotes, case studies, situational analysis, experiential learning and participatory learning. The facilitators are teachers, doctors, parents and peers etc. Approach is participatory. Life Skills have been integrated into academics by NIOS, New Delhi. Life Skills have been proved to enhance academic achievement(Gonzalez,1990). It is important not only at the primary and secondary stage(NCF,2005) but at all stages of life viz., for Vocational education, Citizenship education, Career education, Health education, Personal and Social education, Peace education, Adolescence education. Several organizations like i-point Bangalore (www.i-point.co.in), and Mindlab UK (www.mindlabeurope.com) and LUCSA(2007) have evolved for the purpose of life skills education. Started with the need for educating adolescents against HIV/AIDS, drug

abuse, alcoholism, unwanted pregnancy, juvenile delinquency etc. Life Skills Education has now been found to be essential in every aspect of life to improve the overall quality of life.

Life skills precede values. In a cult or era of fluid genera and fluid society and hi-tech life , the age old values and morals have to be looked at against a life skills perspective . All values owe their origin to life skills. Moral Science used to be a part of English reading classes during our school days . This Moral Science and the values it taught were life skills of creative , critical thinking , problem solving, decision making skills, empathy and self awareness skills, interpersonal relationships and effective communication and coping skills. Life skills have been drawn out into values by the seers of the past. These values may not be necessary but could be carried as a back pack by the students of today into their future.

Analysis and interpretations

A summarized and telescopic view of what is required for school education today is illustrated in Figure 1.b All these parameters are highly interrelated and affect each other.

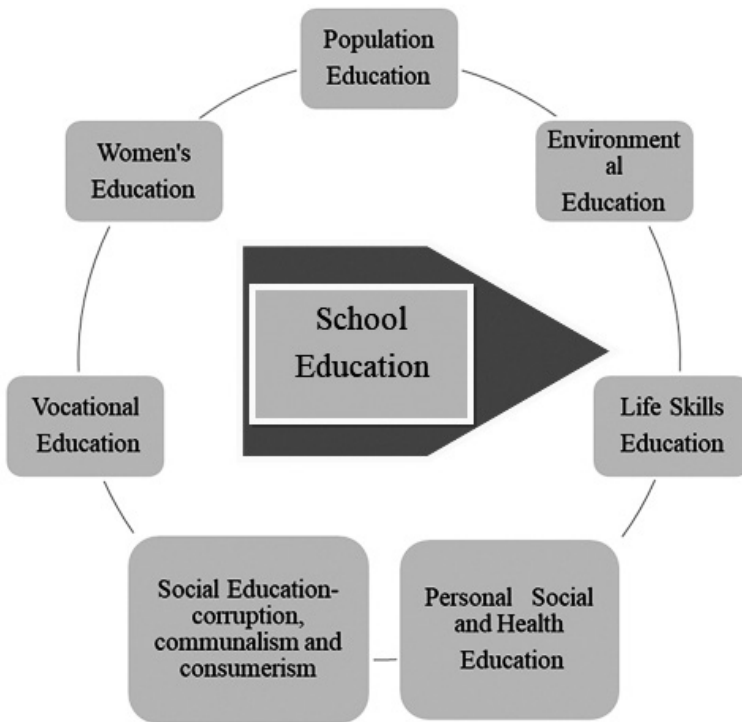


Figure 1 Different facets of School Education required today

The draft National Education Policy 2019 discusses at length policybased changes for school education as summarized in Figure 2. We have tried here to bring details of the curriculum required for holistic development through the above discussions.

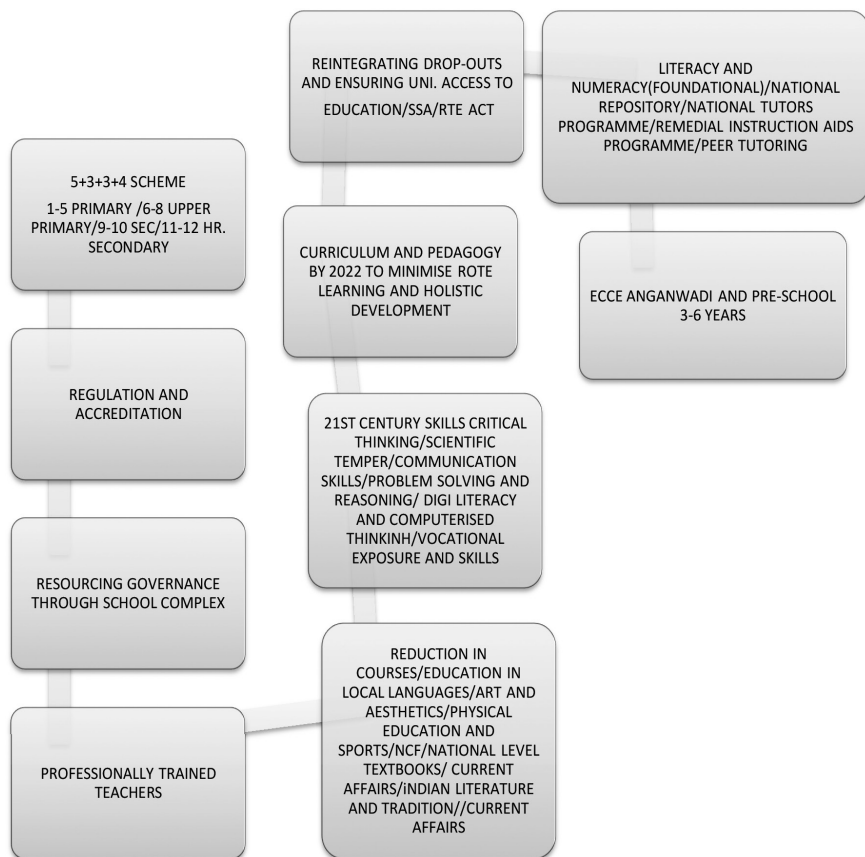


Figure2 School Education as given in National Education Policy 2019

Based on the discussions in this paper , a concept map as given in Figure 3 has been put forth projecting the interrelationships and interdependence of the various curricular disciplines mentioned as required for School Education where we cannot restrict ourselves to numeracy and literacy alone. Literacy and numeracy are basic to School Education but it is Life Skills Education ,Vocational Education, Women’s Education and PSHE and Population Education , Social Evils, Consumerism and Environmental Education which are very essential for negotiating through the plethora of day to day challenges and problems we encounter in the community today.

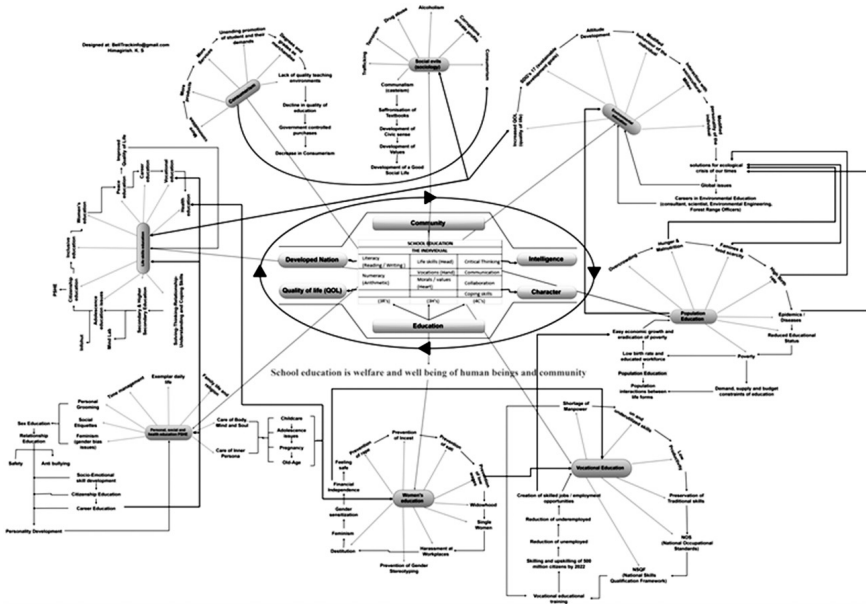


Figure 3 Proposed concept map of School Education

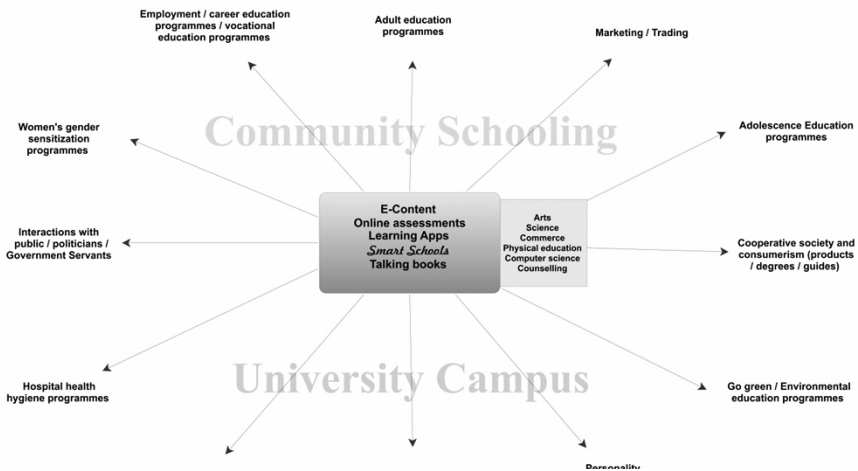


Figure 4 The Smart School Concept and Community Schooling

Conclusions

There is no knowledge that is useful unless it is applied to day to day life.

Students pass out from the Higher secondary schools with knowledge of 5 subjects such English, Hindi, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science / Arts / Commerce and with the parents being satisfied that they have spent 12 years in school without a bad mark on achievement, attainment, learning outcomes, attitude, behaviour and character. Though most of the learning is assisted or may be facilitated by documentaries, videos and smart classes, a lot needs to be done to enable the schooled to apply the knowledge gained hitherto for the benefit of the community and their own livelihood and wellbeing. School and the immediate community can form a well-knit complex deriving benefit from each other as shown in Fig 4.

Smart schools will be the schools of tomorrow with age specific curricula, digitised content or resources, online/offline assessments, digital library, a mobile app for digital resources (like Byjus learning app), talking books, digitised or mapped resources (www.smartschooljunior.com) and audio-visual and ICT hardware (www.smartschoolonline.in). Smart schools should be closely associated with the community directly and situated in a higher education/tertiary education centre/university. It would also learn from the community source and solve their problems through interactive suggestions, the teacher being a facilitator. Learning outcomes would be little below the bench mark if knowledge and skills gained at school level are not applied to the problems of Society. Therefore, a smart school product has to be in liaison with the communities given in the Figures 3 and 4 for the benefit of society. And community schooling as carried out in America would be ideal for India with its diverse religions, languages, ethnicities and underdeveloped milieu. The community schools also have been termed as schools of the 21st century with a beautiful liaison and partnership between the school, the community and the family. It is all the more commendable in India because of the diverse milieu, the demographics of the nation for the development of youth power, health, family life and a healthy community. The school becomes the fulcrum of all community activities along with community after, during school hours and on off days and weekends leading to a healthy, versatile nation.

NCERT, New Delhi is doing pioneering work for the development of e-resources on its own textbook material through various PAC and Institutional Programmes and e-pathshalas. The material can very well be directed towards the development of e-schools (smart schools) and connect with the larger community through its various departments and their activities (population education, women's education, vocational education, publication

divisions & Diploma in Guidance and Counselling Programmes.

It is suggested that an effort be made through workshop mode to plan the development of such community schools and smart schools. In the final analysis school education should orient itself to environmental education at the primary level, to moral education and life skills education at the secondary level.; vocationalisation , personal, social and health education at the higher secondary level.

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National Education Policy 2020 and Inclusion of Life Skills Education in Curricula: The Way Forward

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Abstract

The purpose of education is to help individuals realise their potential and contribute productively to the society. Educational policies have strived to ensure that education achieves these outcomes, and becomes a force of transformation for individuals and communities. Life skills are the psychosocial abilities which empower individuals to develop their personal agency and to positively contribute in social development. The transformative potential of life skills is being realised all over the world. Increasingly, the place of life skills is shifting from being on the periphery of educational curricula to being placed at the core of educational endeavours. In India, the National Education Policy 2020 also focuses on development of life skills at all levels of education.

This study proposes to suggest the conceptual model for inclusion of life skills derived from the existing literature in the field and designed to achieve quality learning outcomes through holistic development of the learner as envisaged in the National Education Policy 2020. An account of life skills viewed from various perspectives is outlined in the study. This is followed by analysis of the National Education Policy 2020 in the context of life skills education. The various provisions in the policy are discussed in the light of the Theory of Change (UNICEF, 2016). Finally, a model of life skills education, designed to achieve the outcomes of NEP is suggested for inclusion of life skills in the curriculum.

Keywords: Life Skills, National Education Policy 2020

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Introduction

Life skills are the psychosocial abilities which equip individuals to make informed choices, manage emotional well-being and social relationships as well as make the best use of their potential. The transformative potential of life skills is being realised all over the world. Hence, life skills are being integrated in the educational curricula to supplement the existing cognitive learning outcomes and ensure holistic education. In India, life skills have been a part of the formal, informal and non-formal education. The recent National Education Policy 2020 includes life skills as one of the policy principles.

The purpose of this study is to suggest a conceptual model for inclusion of life skills derived from the existing literature in the field and designed to achieve quality learning outcomes through holistic development of the learner as envisaged in the National Education Policy 2020. An account of life skills viewed from various perspectives is outlined in the study. This is followed by analysis of the National Education Policy 2020 in the context of life skills education. Finally, a model of life skills education, designed to achieve the outcomes of NEP is discussed.

Concept of Life Skills

The term life skills have been defined by various organisations with reference to its application in their own respective area of work. Adkins (1965) has developed life skills programmes for the benefit of the youths from disadvantaged and marginalised communities for developing employability skills and their personal and social competence. R. Himsl (1973:13) has defined life skills, as “problem solving behaviors appropriately and responsibly used in the management of personal affairs. Hopson and Scally (1981:58) defines life skills in terms of developing personal competence and self-empowerment. They defined self-empowerment as believing in oneself, taking charge of oneself and having the ability to identify the alternatives in any situation, so that one can choose on the basis of one’s values, priorities and commitments.

The World Health Organisation (WHO,1994), considers life skills in the context of health and defines life skills as abilities for adaptive and positive behaviours that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skills are thus viewed as psychosocial competencies to propagate mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. WHO lists ten core life skills classified under the three categories of social skills, thinking skills and coping skills. Social skills comprise of the skills

of self-awareness, empathy, effective communication and interpersonal relationships. The thinking skills deal with critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making and problem solving, while the coping skills involve coping with emotions and coping with stress.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2005) views the abilities in the context of the demands made by the society on individuals. Taking cognizance of the fact that the complex demands of the societal challenges need a set of competencies that go beyond mere knowledge and skills, OECD initiated a project titled Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo). The project aimed to provide a conceptual framework for the identification of key competencies which are needed for full participation in society. OECD proposes that the key competencies must be important for all individuals, must help the individual to meet the demands in a variety of contexts and contribute to valued outcomes for individuals as well as societies. The DeSeCo project classified these key competencies into three main categories, viz., competencies which equip the individuals to use tools interactively, enable them to interact effectively in heterogenous groups and to take responsibility of managing their own lives and act autonomously. OECD views life skills from the perspective of key competencies needed for full social participation of individuals. OECD looks at the key competencies to enable the individual not only cope with but to transform the society as they deal with challenges and demands. OECD has initiated The Future of Education and Skills 2030 project to reconsider the key competencies needed for the future. These competencies, termed as transformative competencies include creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas and taking responsibility. These competencies are critical for learners of today to become the change agents of tomorrow.

UNICEF on the other hand looks at life skills through a rights-based empowerment approach for youth. Life skills are defined as a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitudes and skills. It stresses that life skills are needed throughout life and hence, must be developed early and practised throughout life (UNICEF, 2019).

Thus, there is general agreement that life skills are psycho-social abilities that enable individuals to learn, make informed decisions, maintain their own well-being as well as positive social relationships. Though life skills are abilities, and are inborn to some extent in all human beings, they can be learnt and improved through practice. There is also a clear demarcation

that livelihood skills as money management and entrepreneurial skills well as practical skills such as gardening, cooking etc do not fall in the domain of life skills. Life skills are cross cutting competencies, valid across cultures and contexts, though they need to be learnt in the specific context that they are to be applied. Life skills include knowledge, skills as well as attitudes and values required for positive behaviour change.

Inclusion of life skills in the curriculum: A rationale

Life skills are the competencies that help individuals to not only cope with but also play a proactive role in the challenging situations that they face in day-to-day life. As the challenges in society become more complex individuals need more than knowledge and skills to deal effectively with the complex demands.

In the present times of uncertainties, education needs to equip learners at all levels of education with these critical abilities for empowered functioning. India, with its unique advantage of the demographic dividend needs to revamp education to leverage the potential of its youth. Life skills can serve as a strong bridging force to reduce the skill gap and ensure that our graduates are equipped with the technical knowhow as well as the employability skills needed for a productive workforce.

Life skills also lead to empowered functioning through development of personal agency and enable individuals to become change agents, by raising their voice against social inequalities. They also enable a positive contribution towards the society through inculcation of skills leading to active citizenship.

Thus, life skills lead to positive outcomes for the individual, communities and societies, and are an integral part of quality education.

National Education Policy 2020 and Life Skills Education

The National Policy on education stresses on the role of education for fulfilling human potential, developing an equitable and just society and promoting national development (National Education Policy, 2020). The vision of the NEP is to:

- Develop nationalistic fervour (pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds)
- Develop competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values. As per NSQF (2013) knowledge, core skills, professional skills and attitudes)

- Develop global citizenship (commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being).

Taking note of the changes across-the-board, the policy underlines the need to change the focus of education from learning of facts to learning how to learn. The skills of critical thinking, innovation, problem solving need to be developed in the learners through education. This calls for revisiting the methodology of education, and adoption of experiential, inquiry based and learner centred methodologies. In addition to cognitive skills, the policy highlights the role of education in building character as well as facilitating compassion, caring and ethical conduct among the learners.

Major features of NEP are:

- Empowering and transforming education
- Developing full human potential for developing an equitable and just society and promoting national development
- Foundation of new India
- Preparing India for 21st Century
- Education to provide skill set to youths according to their requirements
- Ensures knowledge, attitudes and skills
- Inquiry based, discovery based and analysis based
- Enabling how to think
- To develop critical thinking and innovative thinking abilities
- Life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork and resilience

Thus, the policy emphasizes on development of higher order cognitive skills, as well as the socio-emotional competencies, and character building. All these competencies fall under the purview of life skills. In order to achieve the aims of the National Education Policy 2020, and for development of these capacities in the learner, life skills education is the most essential tool.

Since the conceptualisation of life skills adheres to the general agreements outlined above but is customised as per the context in which they need to be applied, there is a need to have a clearly defined conceptual framework for integration of life skills into the curriculum. National Education Policy

2020 refers to the four pillars of learning put forward in the Delors's report (1996), *“Learning: The Treasure Within”* to ensure that education results in the full development of human personality or holistic education. The pillar of Learning to Know includes the skills of learning how to learn and acquiring a body of knowledge to enable learning throughout life. The pillar of Learning to Do involves the competence of dealing with many situations and work in teams. Learning to Live Together refers to developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of mutual interdependence, while Learning to Be is about realising one's own potential and to be able to act with greater autonomy and personal responsibility. The four pillars of learning also provide the conceptual framework for integration of life skills into the curriculum for holistic development of the students.

Conceptual model for Life Skills in Education in the context of National Education Policy 2020

With its goal of developing full human potential of individuals, NEP 2020 states, *“education must develop not only cognitive capacities, both the foundational capacities of literacy and numeracy and higher order thinking capacities such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also social, ethical and emotional capacities and dispositions”* (National Education Policy, 2020, p4). It also emphasises the role of education as the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility and for inclusion and equality.

The fundamental principles of the policy include recognizing, identifying and fostering the unique capabilities of each student, in academic as well as non-academic areas. Conceptual understanding needs to be developed, as opposed to rote memorization. Abilities for innovation and logical reasoning also need to be enhanced. Development of human values like empathy, ethical conduct and responsibility are underlined. Respect for pluralistic traditions of the Indian society need to be developed, and constitutional values need to be fostered in students. The principles specifically mention that life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork and resilience need to be developed through education.

The vision of the policy is to nurture in students a sense of being truly Indian in thought, spirit, intellect and deeds, yet also global in terms of commitment to human rights, sustainable development and global well-being. This vision is to be realised through development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions. Thus, life skills, which are transversal and transferable abilities, involving development of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes for positive outcomes for individuals and societies are the

best enablers, for achieving the vision of NEP 2020.

Realisation of this vision of NEP 2020 involves sweeping changes in the educational system, in the inputs, processes, outcomes as well as the role of the support systems to achieve this change. The Theory of Change (ToC) proposed by the UN agencies (2016), is useful for analysing the process of change required for realising the vision of the NEP. It is a theory of the beliefs about how change can be made to happen and outlines the major elements of that change. The purpose of a theory of change is to analyse the different factors which could impact the change as well as the underlying assumptions and risks.

The Theory of Change proposed in UNICEF's Global Framework for Transferable Skills (UNICEF, 2019) assumes that learner empowerment can be achieved through provision of equitable and quality learning opportunities with life skills at their core, coupled with advocacy, enabling environments and support systems. The theory states four assumptions for systematic development of life skills across the life course for the learner, which are also included in NEP 2020. The four pre-requisites, and their inclusion in NEP is as follows:

- 1. Effective pedagogical strategies such as learner-centered approaches which depend largely on the enabling role of teachers and facilitators. It also requires the age-appropriate learning materials to support the pedagogies:**

In the section on curriculum and pedagogy NEP 2020 (p-11) remarks that learning should be holistic, integrated, enjoyable and engaging. It proposes the restructuring of the curricular and pedagogical structure of school education to make it responsive and relevant to the developmental needs and interests of learners at different stages of their development. This path breaking change will ensure that appropriate pedagogical strategies are used for optimal development. The policy strongly advocates the use of learner centred methods for conceptual understanding and application. It advises the use of experiential learning methods (NEP 2020, p 12) and a shift towards competency-based learning and education. It also points out the need to train teachers and provide appropriate materials. In life skills literature, experiential learning methods and competency-based approach are advocated for effective facilitation of life skills (WHO, 2003) and this is also reflected in the provisions in NEP.

- 2. Enabling environments where all learners can participate and feel physically, socially and emotionally safe:**

Provision of enabling environments is also included as the NEP 2020 states that learners need to be provided with an environment where they feel safe and cared for, and where all the appropriate resources for learning are made available to them (NEP, 2020 p.6). The provision of a safe space for expression and learning will give an impetus to effective inculcation of life skills.

3. A multiple pathways approach including formal, informal and non-formal education to ensure equity and inclusion:

In the section on ensuring universal access to education, the policy broadens the scope of school education to include both formal and non-formal education modes (NEP, 2020, p.10). In addition to this provision, an emphasis on using multiple pathways for promotion of life skills education is needed. In the formal system, life skills may be integrated through curricular subjects by identifying plug points for integration. In addition, the non-formal and informal systems may be used for providing life skills inputs to those who cannot avail the formal system of education. The utilisation of multiple pathways will ensure access and equity of life skills education. It also takes into account that life skills can be developed at different times in varied settings. It acknowledges the use of different approaches, like curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular for integration of life skills.

4. A systems approach which addresses the inclusion of skills in national policies and plans, curricula frameworks, coordination and partnership frameworks, budgeting and financing, human resources and capacity development, M&E and certification frameworks:

The inclusion of life skills as a core area as well as a specific mention in the principles of NEP has ensured inclusion in the guiding educational policy. The policy also includes specific changes to be made in the other aspects like curriculum frameworks as well as human resources and capacity development. The policy outlines that, *“Specific sets of skills and values across domains will be identified for integration and incorporation at each stage of learning, from pre-school to higher education. Curriculum frameworks and transaction mechanisms will be developed for ensuring that these skills and values are imbibed through engaging processes of teaching and learning”* (NEP, 2020, p 12).

The integration of life skills needs coordinated programmatic interventions that considers all the components of the system. Partnerships with NGOs and other organisations working in the area of life skills may be explored

for effective integration. Parental and community involvement in life skills initiatives must be maximised. Adequate financial provisions must be made for feasible interventions. In the previous attempts to integrate life skills education, capacity building of teachers and monitoring and evaluation of the planned programs have been found to be the weak links (Singh and Menon, 2015). Hence, attention must be given to reinforce these areas. The policy advocates an overhaul of the systems to achieve its objectives. This restructuring needs to be done, with focus on integration of life skills education as one of the determining factors for the restructuring.

NEP 2020 provides for all the necessary requisites to usher in the change needed for integration of life skills education. It highlights the role of quality education, providing access to all, the need to revamp educational institutions in terms of infrastructure as well as methodologies and the need to ensure the resources in terms of trained teachers, technology support for enhanced learning.

Since the pre-requisites for inculcation of life skills education are laid out in the policy, the implementation needs to be based on a sound conceptual model of life skills. This may be derived from the evidence-based models of life skills education, and aligned with the vision and principles of NEP 2020. The policy refers to the four pillars of education elucidated in the Delors report (Delors, 1996). The four pillars of education are also widely recognised as the philosophical underpinnings of life skills. Hence the authors suggest a model for life skills education, with the Delors four pillars of education as its basis. The model is adapted from the UNICEF-MENA (2017) life skills and citizenship education framework for transformative education.

The ten core life skills by WHO, are categorised into four dimensions based on the four pillars of education, and aligned with the principles and vision put forward in the NEP 2020. The targeted learning outcomes of life skills education, in line with NEP 2020 are:

- Enhanced cognitive skills to comprehend, adapt and innovate to face complex problems
- Developing positive social relationships and ability to work in teams through development of social skills
- Individual empowerment through realisation of potential and development of individual agency

- Closing the skills gap through development of psychosocial skills required for gainful employment

These outcomes are addressed in the context of the pillars of learning and can be achieved through the inculcation of the ten core life skills according to WHO.

The pillar of learning to know, the cognitive dimension, corresponds to the domain of learning in the framework. This includes the core life skills of critical thinking, creativity and problem solving. NEP 2020 has repeatedly stressed the need to develop these skills to achieve the outcome of students learning how to learn. The policy principles state the need to develop creativity and critical thinking to encourage logical thinking and innovation. These could be achieved through facilitation of the life skills included in the dimension of learning.

The pillar of learning to live together, the social dimension corresponds to the domain of connection in this model. NEP 2020 has stressed on the need to develop empathy in the principles of the policy. It also provides for the development of feelings of respect for others and developing global citizenship, while maintaining pride in the Indian culture and traditions. These outcomes could be achieved through integration of the core life skills of interpersonal relationships and empathy in the connection dimension of the model.

The pillar of learning to be, corresponds to the domain of empowerment in the model. The NEP has as its core realisation of individual potential as the aim of education. In the Indian philosophical traditions self-awareness through self-reflection has been the path for realisation of innate potential. For an individual to make the most of one's capacities, effective coping strategies are crucial. The skills of coping with stress and coping with emotions help in maintaining personal well-being which is essential for attaining one's potential. Hence, the outcome of realisation of creative potential of the individual in the NEP could be realised by facilitation of the core life skills of self-awareness, and coping with stress and emotions outlined in the empowerment dimension.

Lastly, the pillar of learning to be, the Instrumental dimension, corresponds to the domain of employment. Quality education for gainful employment is one of the outcomes of the NEP 2020. Development of the core life skills of informed decision making and effective communication will ensure employability and positive contribution of individuals towards national economy. The NEP observes that India is set to become a global leader, and

must make the most of its demographic dividend. This can be achieved through facilitation of life skills in the employment domain of the model.

The proposed model is represented below:

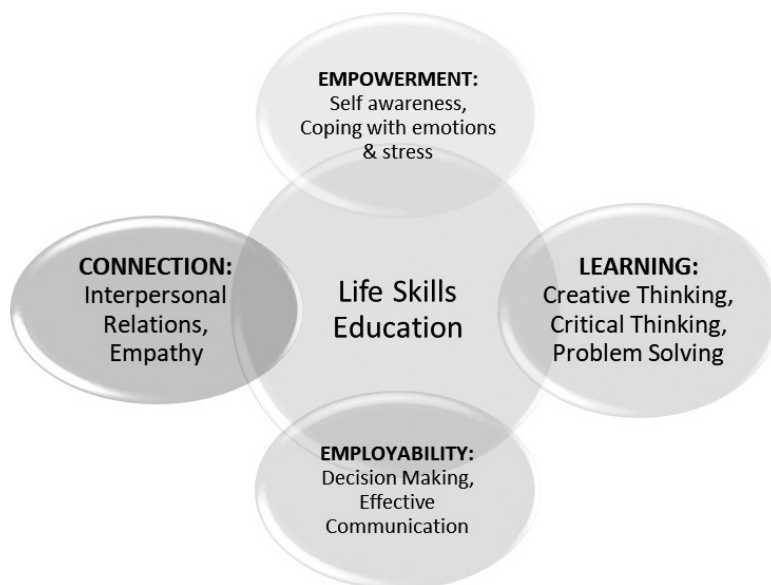


Fig 1

The model outlines the ten core life skills in the four domains. NEP 2020 has highlighted the need to develop the skills of negotiation and resilience. These skills are outcome skills developed as a result of effective internalisation and practice of the core life skills. The development of ethics and values which is emphasised in the policy is also a natural corollary in the process of life skills education. Hence, effective implementation of the model for integration of life skills could pave the way for achieving the outcomes envisaged in NEP 2020.

Conclusion

Life skills as transferable skills, connect, reinforce and help development of other skills like foundational skills, digital skills and job specific skills (UNICEF, 2019). NEP 2020 has opened up pathways for integration of life skills in the curriculum through giving a thrust on development of these skills through education. Adoption of a sound conceptual model to plan the life skills initiatives, could be the first step in putting the provisions of NEP 2020 into practice. Further, appropriate curricula and systems need to be created for the effective implementation of NEP 2020 with a focus to develop life skills among the students.

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Assertiveness and Ambition among Working Women

R. Anindhitha* & R. Kanmani**

Abstract

Assertiveness is the ability of a person to be able to stand up for themselves in a calm way without being aggressive or passively accepting. It is an important aspect taught as a part of communication skills training. Ambition is one's strong desire to achieve success. Both assertiveness and ambition have been viewed as "unwomanly". In today's scenario where women are bread winners too, this has changed.

This study aims to examine the relationship between assertiveness and ambition among working women. The study sample consists of 200 working women ranging within the age group of 20yrs to 50yrs. The tools used to measure Assertiveness and Ambition variable, include standardised questionnaires of Rathus Assertive schedule and the 5 point Ambition scale by A.L.Duckworth. Purposive sampling technique has been adopted for the selection of the sample and it's an explorative research design was opted. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to explore the relationship between the variables. The results showed a significant correlation between levels of assertiveness and levels of ambition.

Keywords: Ambition, Assertiveness and Working women.

Introduction

Over the past few decades, there has been a drastic change in our views towards working women. There have been improvements in conditions of work, autonomy to women and for equal remuneration for work. In spite of such changes, a research article shows that ambition in women is mostly

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held a secret and is almost never overtly expressed (Fels.A, 2004).

Previous studies have already proven that men are viewed to be more assertive in their job setting than women are (Ashby.J.S, Schoon.I, 2010). In addition to this it is also to be noted that it is acceptable for men to show their ambitious and assertive nature than women (Tolor.A. Kelly.R.B, Stebins.A.C, 2010). It is proven that women experience more work stress than men (Blom,Victoria, 2012). But they are always excluded as ambitious workers, though not explicitly, because of gender norms and rules that still prevail (Benschop.Y.,et.al., 2013)

In today's scenario, women are taking up masculine occupations which has been proven to decrease their leadership self-concept and lowered their interest in such occupations (Rudman.A.L., Phelan.E.J., 2010). With the number of women in the workforce gradually decreasing in India (Sharma.N.C, 2015), recreating the place of working women in the society and the significance of carving an empowering environment is of great importance. Invoking the ambition of women has a major role to play in this matter.

Ambition is one's strong desire to achieve success. Ambition level has a direct impact on job performance (Hogan.J., Holland.B.,2003). Being assertive (an important life skill) reduces work stress and hence leads to an increase in job performance (Demerouti.E.,et.al., 2011), thereby, helping individuals achieve their ambition.

Does assertiveness affect ambition? This study seeks to answer that question. The samples taken were 200 working women between 20yrs and 50yrs of age. Rathus Assertive Schedule and 5-item ambition scale by A.L.Duckworth were used to measure the variables. The results show that there does exist a significant relationship between assertiveness and ambition with very little difference among occupations and age.

Through the following sections, the study done is discussed in detail with the hypothesis, methodology, tools and results summarised finally.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between levels of assertiveness and ambition among working women between 20-50 yrs of age.

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis is framed by the researcher:

1. There will be no significant relationship between Assertiveness and Ambition.
2. There will be no significant difference between the levels of ambition and assertiveness, among the different age groups.
3. There will be no significant difference among the different occupations.

Methodology

Explorative research method is adopted in this study. An exploratory method facilitates the analysis of the relationship between two variables. Since the relationship between Assertiveness and Ambition had not been clearly defined in working women, exploration was undertaken to understand the relationship fully.

The target population was working women between 20yrs and 50 yrs of age. A sample of 200 women from varied sectors of the workforce is taken. They were administered with the 32-item Rathus Assertiveness schedule and 5-item ambition scale by A.L.Duckworth. Pearson Product moment correlation was computed to determine the relationship between the two variables. Test of significance is calculated to find if there exists any significant difference among the different groups of occupations.

Measuring Instruments

Rathus Assertive Schedule was used to measure the level of Assertiveness. It contains 32 questions where the subject rates himself/herself on a scale of 1 to 4 (1=Not at all; 2=Sometimes; 3=Often; 4=Always). For each question, the number rated is assigned as the score for that question (except for questions using reverse scoring). 12 questions use reverse scoring: 3, 6,7, 8, 10, 20, 21, 22, 25, 27, 28, 29. The higher the score obtained, the lesser the assertiveness.

The 5-item Ambition scale by A.L.Duckworth was used to assess the Ambition of the samples. It consists of 5 questions with 5 point rating scale (1=Very much like me; 2=Mostly like me; 3=Somewhat like me; 4=Not much like me; 5=Not like me at all) . All the questions except no.4 use reverse scoring. A higher score implies higher ambition levels.

Results

The results are summarised and discussed below:

Table 1: Showing Averages of Assertiveness, Ambition and Age.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Ambition	18.69	3.118	200
Assertiveness	71.96	10.078	200
Age	33.62	7.746	200

The Table 1 illustrates the average values of Ambition scores, Assertiveness scores and the average age of the sample. It can be observed that the sample has an average score above the 50% mark on both the variables.

Table 2: Showing correlation between Assertiveness and Ambition

Assertiveness and Ambition	Pearson Correlation	-.322**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 summarises the correlation between assertiveness and ambition. According to the values shown here, there exists a negative correlation between the values of Assertiveness and Ambition i.e., an increase in the assertiveness score leads to a decrease in the ambition score. As mentioned earlier, a higher assertiveness score implies lesser assertiveness. Therefore, the negative correlation in the values implies that as the trait assertiveness increases in the individual, ambition also increases. This relationship is significant at 0.01 level implying a linear relationship between the two variables. Thus, this disproves Hypothesis 1.

Table 3: Showing correlation between Age and Assertiveness

	t- value	P value
Age and Assertiveness	98.058	.00001

**Difference is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Showing correlation between Age and Ambition

	t- value	P value
Age and Ambition	68.1922	.00001

**Difference is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For this study, the samples were divided into three age groups: below 25 years of age, from 25 to 34, from 35 to 45 and above 45 years of age. Table 3 and Table 4 shows that there exists a significant difference between the Age groups on both Assertiveness and Ambition.

The sample could be divided into 6 groups of occupations (as shown in Table 5, Table6): medical and healthcare, services, financial, research, teaching, IT and private companies. Medical and healthcare include medical professionals of all specializations, nurses, and healthcare assistants;

Table 5: Shows mean assertiveness levels for different occupations- Assertiveness:

Occupation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Health care	11	76.73	7.850	2.367
IT and Private	29	74.03	11.519	2.139
Financial	43	71.44	9.713	1.481
Services	31	69.74	10.721	1.925
Teaching	65	71.12	9.512	1.180
Researcher	21	73.52	10.108	2.206
Total	200	71.96	10.078	0.713

Table 6: Shows mean Ambition score for different occupations-Ambition:

Occupation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Health care	11	17.73	3.663	1.104
IT and Private	29	18.28	2.590	0.481
Financial	43	19.21	3.144	0.479
Services	31	19.29	3.013	0.541
Teaching	65	18.57	2.915	0.362
Researcher	21	18.14	4.102	0.895
Total	200	18.69	3.118	0.221

There was very little difference in the levels of assertiveness and ambition between different occupations, although there were more responses from the teaching and financial occupations (Table 5, Table 6). It was found that the Health care occupation gave the highest mean score on assertiveness implying the least assertive behaviour.

Discussion

The statistical results from the survey of 200 working women has disproved our key null hypothesis that there will be no significant relationship between Assertiveness and Ambition. In line with the expectations, the findings showed significant correlation between levels of assertiveness and ambition in working women. It was also found that the relationship of levels of assertiveness and ambition had very little difference within / between the different sectors of occupations and age groups.

The key finding of the study as noted in Table 2: shows significant correlation between Assertiveness and Ambition – where lesser levels of assertiveness also lead to lesser levels of ambition. The possible reasons for this pattern could be as discussed in a recent qualitative study (Archana, et.al.,2016) has looking into assertiveness in Indian Context: Perspectives of Women in Coastal Karnataka has discussed the possible reasons for the lack of assertiveness amongst a similar population. Three themes were identified to be contributing factors for varying levels of assertiveness among working Indian women: Perceptions of others to one being assertive, sense of freedom after expressed one's emotions assertively and consequences of being assertive.

In the Indian context, there exists massive expectations upon household chores and child nurturing to be a woman's first call and responsibility is still prevalent (Pushpendra.S, et.al.,2020). Midst such societal norms that do not greatly favour women to prioritise their careers, the need to say no, to know their needs and to be able to speak up (assertiveness skills) may prove crucial to having a chance at building her occupational ambitions.

Our findings also throw light upon how assertiveness skills training, if commenced from early years into adulthood might enable women to be more ambitious through their career journeys. With the changes in the modern world that has now begin to support women empowerment, assertiveness may also give way to clearer communication, better decision making, recognizing priorities and building boundaries, and giving women their voice to express their expectations. Such training could also be seen as a start to inviting better gender equality of opportunities in work spaces.

Use of a larger and a more diverse sample in future researches would facil-

itate a more accurate analysis of all the variables involved.

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