

Life Skills

(Volume - II)

Dr. USHA RAO



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LIFE SKILLS

VOLUME - II



Dr. USHA RAO

M.A. (Phil.), M.A. (Psy.), M.Ed., Ph.D.,

Former Principal of Gokhale Education Society's

College of Education & Research,

Parel, Mumbai - 400 012.



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- New Delhi** : "Pooja Apartments", 4-B, Murari Lal Street, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj,
New Delhi - 110 002. Phone: 011-23270392, 23278631; Fax: 011-23256286
- Nagpur** : Kundanlal Chandak Industrial Estate, Ghat Road, Nagpur - 440 018.
Phone: 0712-2738731, 3296733; Telefax: 0712-2721216
- Bengaluru** : Plot No. 91-33, 2nd Main Road Seshadripuram, Behind Nataraja Theatre,
Bengaluru-560020. Phone: 08041138821, 9379847017, 9379847005
- Hyderabad** : No. 3-4-184, Lingampally, Besides Raghavendra Swamy Matham, Kachiguda,
Hyderabad - 500 027. Phone: 040-27560041, 27550139
- Chennai** : New-20, Old-59, Thirumalai Pillai Road, T. Nagar, Chennai - 600 017.
Mobile: 9380460419
- Pune** : First Floor, "Laksha" Apartment, No. 527, Mehunpura, Shaniwarpath
(Near Prabhat Theatre), Pune - 411 030. Phone: 020-24496323/24496333;
Mobile: 09370579333
- Lucknow** : House No 731, Shekhupura Colony, Near B.D. Convent School, Aliganj,
Lucknow - 226 022. Phone: 0522-4012353; Mobile: 09307501549
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Ahmedabad - 380 009. Phone: 079-26560126; Mobile: 09377088847
- Ernakulam** : 39/176 (New No: 60/251) 1st Floor, Karikkamuri Road, Ernakulam,
Kochi – 682011. Phone: 0484-2378012, 2378016 Mobile: 09387122121
- Bhubaneswar**: 5 Station Square, Bhubaneswar - 751 001 (Odisha).
Phone: 0674-2532129, Mobile: 09338746007
- Kolkata** : 108/4, Beliaghata Main Road, Near ID Hospital, Opp. SBI Bank,
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PREFACE

No doubt, teaching is an art and education in any society can become meaningful only when it fulfills the objectives of developing the entire personality of the children for which teachers should have a thorough knowledge of the individual differences, their needs and also of their parents too! In fact, education is that process through which a child gets developed individuality and a person into personality. Education does not simply refer to the number of years the child spends in a school; but it refers to the change in behaviour, attitude and culture that is brought about in the individual as a result of having undergone education during a particular period. Hence, the main characteristic of any educational process is to bring about the best in the children. Accordingly, it may be taken into consideration the fact that a teacher has to decide not only what to teach but also how to teach. He or she also need to know why a particular experience or activity is being offered and what will be the outcome of it. The teacher has to understand properly the aims and objectives which are to be achieved through curriculum. He/she should also try to understand the fact that the aims and objectives differ from country to country. So also, the aims and objectives of a particular school system in the same country may differ from those of another system. Such variations must be clearly understood by the teachers.

It is with reference to the above said context, I believe, that the knowledge about life skill education comes as a great help to the teachers. In fact, life skills play a great role in tackling students' challenges in various situations. So also, it is needed to note that the challenges to teachers in the classrooms is to understand the development of students' academic achievement motivation and create interventions that foster high levels of academic achievement. Being motivated makes children dynamic and they, thereby, get self-respect too. Life skills are important for a growing mind; and enables the students to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities.

Life skill education is a new branch of study related with the branch of Social Psychology: Different methods of enriching life skill are –

- Dramatization,
- Buzz sessions,
- Discussion,
- Debate,
- Simulation,
- Case Study
- Role Play, etc.

Universal life skills that are easy to teach are social skills like critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, hygiene (HIV/AIDS), time management, money management, etc. and a trained teacher can easily tackle this.

Another important thing to note is that fast growing technological changes have too much impact on the way we live, work, shop and play. Now, technology of today is multiplying daily; and the new technology of today becomes outdated as soon as it reaches the market! In adopting the technological changes, it is crucial to develop effective life skills to respond flexibly to the complex problems, to access to synthesize, to communicate effectively, to manage information dynamically, to create solutions and to produce new knowledge continued.

Now, there is one more point to note. Teaching of life skills to the students is felt to be an altogether different category; so, an attempt has been made to write few examples of lesson-notes to our readers. In fact, it is a known fact that teaching is a complex activity and like any other professional course, the student-teachers' behavior is modified during training period so as to increase their ability to bring about the desired changes in school students. It is true that a professional socialization of the teaching profession has 3 main components – (i) knowledge, (ii) attitude, and (iii) teaching competency. Now, for developing the third component, activities like micro teaching, school teaching are incorporated in the B.Ed. course. All micro skills of teaching get mastered by student-teachers in micro teaching. But, for practicing, it is very important to plan all the activities in a very systematic way which is labeled as 'Lesson-planning'. Lesson-plan is a work that is to be covered in a class-period which runs for 30 to 35 minutes. It is a blueprint, guide-map, comprehensive chart, very much systematic and elastic approach of the development of all activities. This is usually prepared by Herbartian Procedure with steps of Introduction, Statement of Aim, Presentation, Recapitulation, Application and Homework.

However, with due respect to Herbartian Steps in Lesson-planning, the authoress has tried to give a lesson-note for each skill in a little bit different manner. Hence, how to teach each skill to the students has been given at the end of each chapters, mostly, the practicing of debate, role-play, discussion, case study, dramatization, etc. have been made use of as methodology. Matter, in fact, has been covered from various sources and it has been mentioned at the end of each lesson-plan whenever it was felt necessary. This attempt has been made with a view to help the student-teachers by assisting them to plan their respective lessons. Moreover, 'Life skills' being introduced as a new subject in the B.Ed. syllabus, it was sincerely felt that such a guideline will help the student-teachers.

On the basis of the above said facts, there is an honest feeling that a healthy syllabus of B.Ed. course with more practice of lesson-plan should be necessarily framed with the intention of assisting our would-be teachers!

It is because of the above said fact, after having described the ten score skills in detail, few lesson-notes too have been included with the teaching of a particular topic in a particular manner. It is hoped that this will give a sort of guideline to the teachers while teaching in their regular classrooms. No doubt,

there are enough number of many more skills to learn on the way while we all are walking. Hence, it is requested to look at these ten life skills as a starter kit. In fact, I have myself chosen those ones which have specifically helped me the most on my path to self-betterment!

It is my request to all the student-teachers and all those who have interest in the said subject, to learn all the life skills that are described here. This will become a good support system for many years to come! However, one has to remember that one does not have to be a good starter; he/she has to start to be good! “Things do not happen; they are made to happen” – said John Kennedy. How very true! I always think that time will pass away; so, why not put oneself into contributive and productive use? This thinking actually helped me to make some commitment of writing the current volume. ‘We make life by what we give’ – said Winston Churchill. I do believe in this statement and I am quite generous in giving to my readers something useful to them; and this contribution itself will make my life! Having said this, here, I say, comes the time of acknowledgement. I am greatly thankful to all those who helped me either directly or indirectly in giving a good shape to this volume. I do want to express my pleasurable gratitude to my student Dr. Helen who gave me her supporting hand whenever I needed. I am indeed profoundly thankful to her for her timely assistance. I am also very much grateful to all my Ph.D. students as well as to the librarian of Banastheli University. I am indebted to my publisher, Shri Kausthubhji, who is a true professional and whose personal concern and work ethics made it possible in bringing out this volume, which has given me a great satisfaction. I have honest feeling that I have tried my level best on writing life skills by taking extreme care that my presentation of each line of each chapter have been done with perfection. Yet, I definitely like to ask for excuse for the shortcomings, if any, and I acknowledge all sources from which the knowledge has flown.

Writing of the two volumes on the subject of life skills has really become a journey of touching people with satisfactory possibilities.

MY SINCERE THANKS TO LORD SRI KRISHNA. FOR GIVING ME MORAL AS WELL AS PHYSICAL STRENGTH IN COMPLETING THE TASK UNDERTAKEN.

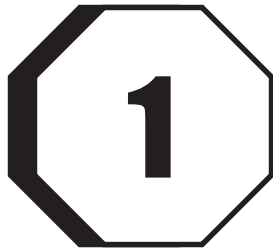
Jai Shri Krishna!!!

Usha Rao

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LIFE SKILLS

» Introduction

Education is a process of human enlightenment and empowerment for a better quality of life. It is true that education is a necessity for better life. The world in which we live has witnessed rapid changes at a mind-boggling speed. These rapid changes have far-reaching consequences on child development and education too. The youth of today is exposed to more information and cultural alternatives than in earlier periods. This provides them with culturally diverse choices which cannot be easily exercised due to economic dependence. Rapidly changing social, moral, ethical and religious values have ushered in certain lifestyles in the present society especially among the youth; and the most affected are adolescents.

Each and every individual staying on this earth wants to lead a very happy life. For this, he or she needs to be very skillful. The very many skills that an individual needs to go through a smooth life, gets through his or her life experience. In fact, entire life is an ongoing learning process. From the very childhood till death individual has different experiences. But, sometimes he or she fails to cope with the existing situation. This is because, different societies have different traditions as well as different cultures. Because of this fact, there is a difference in the amount of skills possessed by children.

It is only during recent years, a study of life skills has emerged as a subject of attraction. Being a branch of social psychology, the subject of life skills concentrates on the social behavior of human beings in relation to different social situations. Life skill is a positive behavior and an ability to adjust very efficiently with the needs and challenges of everyday life. The strength of the positive behavior depends on the depth of skill acquired by the individual. In fact, the total reflection of one's behavior is the sum total of appropriate combination of different skills. Scientifically, it is the psychological competency and consistency of the concerned individual.

The meaning and concept of life skill is beyond its definition. It is easy to define the concept in general but to suit the explanation in all particular life situations and throughout life is difficult. Goody

(2001) says that it is not enough to ask how life skills are defined in general; rather, it is essential to ask how they are defined in particular life situations as well as throughout life.

The extent, to which a person exposes to the desired skills and practice, determines the level of his or her overall development; and helps to solve physiological, psychological and social problems. Hence, imparting life skills is the basic attempt that has to be initiated for strengthening the behaviour of our children as well as others. Acquiring the basic skills modify the behaviour of our children.

As any other animal, human beings are also having inherent 'capacity' to do many activities. By training and practice, 'ability' will emerge and subsequently, the capacity and ability transforms into capability. People will also have inherent skills to do some specific activities in a commendable way. For doing a particular activity, if the individual is having 'skill' associated with the 'capacity', he/she can normally do the activity in a better way. Then, he attains 'competency' to do the activity. In normal life, this happens only based on situational requirement. It also takes much time to imbibe the competency. This need not always be positive also.

Life skills are thus the abilities which make persons to live a fruitful life. In other words, life skills are those competencies that assist people in functioning well in the environment in which they live.

Life skills are problem solving behaviours used appropriately and responsibly in the management of personal affairs. They are a set of human skills acquired via teaching or direct experiences that are used to handle problems and questions commonly encountered in daily human life. The subject varies greatly depending on societal norms and community expectations.

For example UNICEF enumerates many "psychosocial and interpersonal skills generally considered important." It asserts sex skills are a synthesis: "many skills are used simultaneously in practice.

Life skills can vary from financial literacy, substance abuse prevention, to therapeutic techniques to deal with disabilities, such as autism.

There is no definitive list of life skills. The choice of, and emphasis on different skills will vary according to the topic and local conditions (e.g., decision making may feature strongly in HIV/AIDS prevention whereas conflict management may be more prominent in a peace education program). Though the list suggests these categories are distinct from each other, many skills are used simultaneously in practice. For example, decision making often involves critical thinking ("what are my option?") and values clarification ("what is important to me?"). Ultimately, the interplay between the skills is what produces powerful behavioural outcomes, especially where this approach is supported by other strategies such as media, policies and health services.

There are diverse understandings of life skills, but no classification is universally established. The generic understanding of life skills from the dual angle of personal fulfillment and realization of responsibility includes both empowerment and self-fulfillment and the capacity to be a part a heterogeneous group and strive for common goals. UNICEF has defined life skills as psychosocial and interpersonal skills that are generally considered important. The World Health Organization (WHO) 1993 defined life skills as, the ability for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with demand and challenges of everyday life. WHO (1994) identified the core set of life skills that include problem solving, decision making, goal setting, critical thinking, communication skills, self-awareness, assertiveness and skills for coping with stress.

The term life skills refers to a broad group of psychological and interpersonal skills that enable the individual to adapt to and deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life. Hence, it is necessary for an individual to acquire life skills and take charge of one's own life. To equip our new

generation to withstand the storm of unhealthy development in the society, they must be strengthened with effective life skills. In fact, teacher-educators too are highly responsible in developing life skills in their student-teachers. As teacher-educators, it is important on their part to provide the student-teachers with the knowledge they need to enhance not only their career but also their quality of life across social spectrum.

Life skills refer to a multiplicity of psychosocial and interpersonal competencies. As Coleman notes (1998), competencies are coordinated bundles of habits. Life skills can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, develop coping and management skill that can help them lead a healthy life as well as productive life. Some of the life skills are self-directed, while others are directed towards others or both self-directed and others' directed.

The new millennium has marked a great transition for the whole mankind and paved the way for the development in the field of science and technology. On the one hand, man has been trying to conquer nature and on the other hand, he has not been able to understand the extent of relationship between himself and others more intimately. The more he explores the outer world, the less he tries to learn about his own inner self. Unfortunately, man is becoming more and more ambitious within a short duration of time either by hook or by crook. This is causing tension and unrest not only in a particular individual but is affecting the whole society causing conflict. In the era of accelerating change, there is a need to become aware of the impact of change on our environment and relationship among individuals as well as families. It is here that we have to understand clearly about life skills and also about its implementations. Life skills offer self empowerment in relating to self and other while providing coping strategies for understanding the past, managing the present and creating the future.

» History

Life skills is in existence from the period when man started living on the earth, but Life Skill Education as a concept started emerging only during recent years. Life Skill Education became imperative due to the paradigm shift on the focus of education from the ancient work-related learning approach to the more theoretical oriented overall development approach. The recent focus on development, based on human resource development, emphasized the need for life skills development for all people.

Around four decades ago the effort to increase the life skills of the people and thereby, to optimize the Human Resource Development started. After launching the literacy programme, it became very clear that the classroom education method would not work upto the expectation. Therefore, it took a shift from the classroom style to the situational context of the learner, making the teaching process useful to the learners thereby, improving the learning situation. This was actually the turning point to people who started understanding the applicability of education and literacy to help people learn better life skills (Oxenham, 2000). Such developments in the field of literacy, education as well as human resource development contribute very much for the development of Life Skill Education. So also, UN agencies also started focusing on the health aspect of adolescents through Life Skill Approach. The limitation of this approach was that they could reach only to a very small group of population and the activities were restricted to health related issues only. During the period, there was a feeling that the kind of education that is being imparted in schools had failed to meet the expectations of the people. It does not equip boys and girls to meet real life challenges (Sandon, 2005). In the meantime, it was felt that imparting the knowledge of life skills is for all people to improve their life situations.

Whatever that has been discussed so far, one can arrive at the conclusion that school programmes should provide opportunities to strengthen existing health programme activities in school life such as

coping with stress, fostering self-esteem, caring, decision making, etc. There, then came in urgent need to provide today's children with new systems to face the challenges with rising demands of life.

Concluding, it may be said, then, that if children are to face a new world of rapid changes there is need to drill in them various life skills.

Life skills are nothing but a value addition programme for the youth to understand self and be able to assess their skill abilities and areas of development. It allows the youth to be effective persons who can make a difference, socialize with other people, be able to adjust with their environment and come out as a self-reliant productive citizen.

►► **Meaning of Life Skills**

A skill is a learned ability to do something well. Life skills are abilities that individuals can learn which will help them to live a fruitful life. In other words, life skills are those competencies that assist people in functioning well in the environments in which they live. Skills are learned in sequential steps related to the age and stage of development of the young person.

Life skills are “the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enables individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (WHO, 1997). It further encompasses thinking skill, social skill and negotiation skill. It also helps the young people to develop and grow into well behaved adults. Life skills enable individuals to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities. Life skills are abilities that enable individuals to behave in healthy ways, given the desire, scope and opportunity to do so. Effective acquisition and application of life skills can influence the way we felt about ourselves and others, i.e., the self-concept, and equally will influence the way we are perceived by others.

Life skills are problem solving behaviours used appropriately and responsibly in the management of personal affairs. They are a set of human skills acquired via teaching or direct experience that are used to handle problem and questions commonly encountered in daily human life. The subject varies greatly depending on social norms and community expectations. It means, human development aims at improving people's capabilities in all dimensions: Economic, Social, Cultural, Political and Ethical. For all this education is one of the most powerful instrument for reducing inequality; hence, good quality education is very essential in the context of globalisation.

In order to impact essential life skills very effectively to children, the four pillars of education mentioned in Delor's Report have been taken into consideration (1996); i.e., Learning To Know, Learning To Do, Learning To Live Together and Learning To Be.

Further, it is also important to be noted that, life skills include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, cope with everyday stress, and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner. Essentially, there are two kinds of skills—those related to thinking termed as “thinking skills”; and skills related to dealing with others termed as “social skills”.

While thinking skills relate to reflection at a personal level, social skills include interpersonal skills and do not necessarily depend on logical thinking. It is the combination of these two types of skills that are needed for achieving assertive behavior and negotiating effectively. Apart from this broad categorization, “Emotional” can be perceived as a personal skill not only in making rational decisions but also in being able to make others agree to one's point of view. To do that, coming to terms first with oneself is important. Thus, self-management is an important skill including managing/coping with

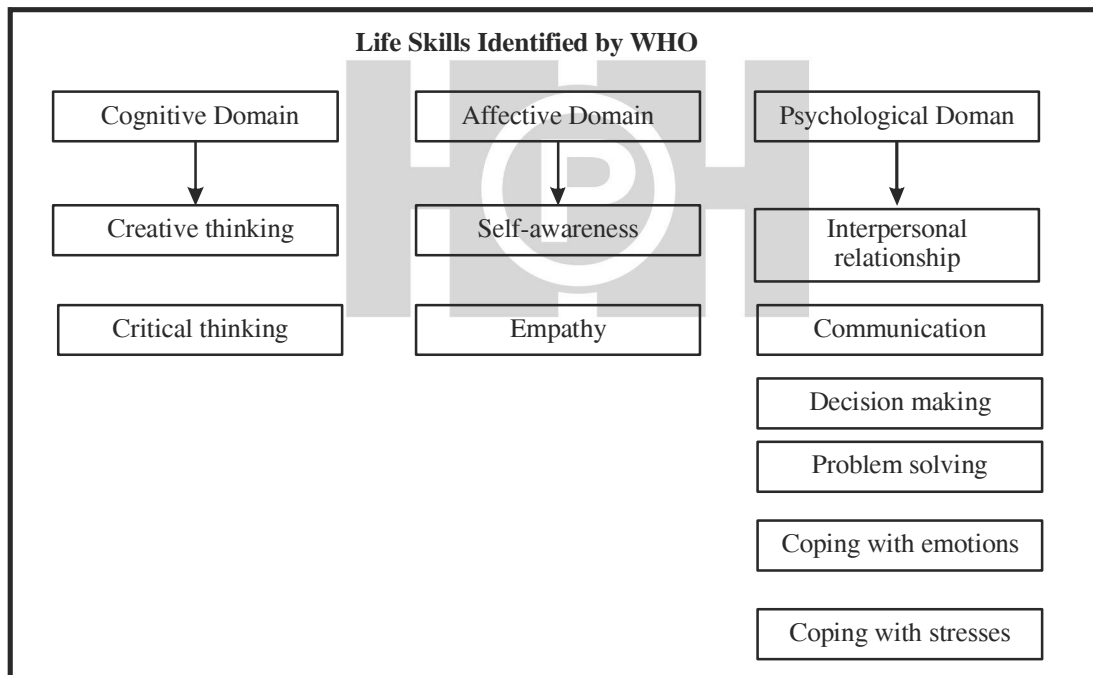
feelings, emotions, stress and resisting peer and family pressure. Young people as advocates need both thinking and social skills for consensus building and advocacy on issues of concern.

In fact, it is Abraham Maslow, in his discourse on hierarchy of human needs, has stressed that belongingness is an essential need which has to be met before one could ever achieve a sense of self-worth. Many psychologists, philosophers and the theologians too support this notion.

So too, true to say that life skills comprise a wide-range of generic skills that help a person to cope with various facts of life. It facilitates in strengthening the survival capacities of a person; and enhances his or her abilities with the changing environment and empower him or her to make rational choices about the future.

In fact, there are diverse understanding of life skills, but no classification is universally established. However, life skills identified by WHO is as follows :

►► Definition



A well formulated definition facilitates clear and general understanding of the term “Life Skills”, as well as how they are imbibed, learnt, developed, applied and evaluated. The term “Life Skills” has gained currency in the fields of physical and mental health, formal and informal education, vocational sphere and social policy, yet remains without a full and widely accepted definition due to changing needs and demands of times that keep on adding new skills to the existing inventory.

WHO, UNICEF, and other agencies, provides a conceptual foundation for life skills approach based on human development.

The **World Health Organisation** has defined life skills as, “the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.”

The World Health Organisation (WHO) categorises life skills into the following three components:

- (a) Critical thinking skills/Decision making skills – include decision making/problem solving skills and information gathering skills. The individual must also be skilled at evaluating the future consequences of their present actions and the actions of others. They need to be able to determine alternative solution and to analyse the influence of their own values and the values of those around them.
- (b) Interpersonal/Communication skills – include verbal and non-verbal communication, active listening, and the ability to express feelings and give feedback. Also in this category, are negotiation/refusal skills and assertiveness skills that directly affect ones’ ability to manage conflict. Empathy, which is the ability to listen and understand others’ needs, is also a key to interpersonal skill.
- (c) Coping and self-management skills – infers to skills to increase the internal locus of control, so that the individual believes that he can make a difference in the world and affect change. Self-esteem, self-awareness, self-evaluation skills, stress management, time management and the ability to set goals are also part of the more general category of self-management skills.

UNICEF defines life skills as “a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills”. The UNICEF definition is based on research evidence that suggests that shifts in risk behaviour are unlikely if knowledge, attitudinal and skills-based competency are not addressed.

UNICEF promotes the understanding that the life skills approach can be successful, if the following are undertaken together.

- (a) The Skills – This involves a group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills which are interlinked with each other. For example, decision making is likely to involve creative and critical thinking components and values analysis.
- (b) Content – To effectively influence behaviour, skills must be utilized in a particular content area. Whatever the content area, a balance of three elements needs to be considered: knowledge, attitudes and skills.
- (c) Methods – Skills-based education occurs when there is interaction among participants. It relies on groups of people to be effective. Interpersonal and psychosocial skills cannot be learned from sitting alone and reading a book. If this approach is to be successful, all three components, life skills, content and method should be in place.

The International Bureau of Education (IBE) derives its understanding from the Delor’s four pillars of learning—learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together and defines life skills as personal management and social skills which are necessary for adequate functioning on an independent basis.

International Youth Foundation (IYF) opines that the cognitive, emotional and social skills are needed to make a successful transition from childhood into adulthood. These skills influence the choice young people make and help them become caring, confident, and responsible adults.

True to say, we all have to be very proud to note about A.P.J. Abdul Kalam who has very rightly said that schools must move from being educational centers to becoming knowledge and skill centers!

Powell (1995) 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 area of human development—psychological, physical, sexual, vocational, cognitive, moral, ego and emotional.

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
4. Developing self and other skills like stress management and decision making etc.

Brooks (1984) used empirical approach to classify life skills. Using the Delphi study, in conjunction with developmental psychology theorists (Erikson, 1963; Havighurst, 1972; Kohlberg, 1973; 1976) classified 305 life skills descriptors into four categories such as (1) interpersonal communication and human relations skills; (2) problem solving and decision making skills; (3) physical fitness and health maintenance skills; and (4) identify development/purposes in life skills.

Thus, there are many different interpretations of life skills but no definition is universally accepted. Different organisations attach different meanings to the term based on their applicability. Life skills defined in a general way mean a mix of knowledge, behaviour, attitudes and values and designate the possession of some skill and expertise to do something, or achieve an objective. Some of the general definitions and interpretations are given below.

The constituents of life skills thus include the abilities necessary to apply conceptual thinking and reflection in concrete situations. They imply capacities to be involved in effective interception with the environment and provide an appropriate motivation attitude.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) categorizes life skills into the following three components:

- (a) Critical thinking skills/Decision making skills – include decision making/problem solving skills and information gathering skills. The individual must also be skilled at evaluating the future consequences of their present actions and the actions of others. They need to be able to determine alternative solution and to analyse the influence of their own values and the values of those around them.
- (b) Interpersonal/Communication skills – include verbal and non-verbal communication, active listening, and the ability to express feelings and give feedback.
- (c) Coping and self-management skills – infers to skills to increase the internal locus of control, so that the individual believes that he can make a difference in the world and affect change. Self-esteem, self-awareness, self-evaluation skills, stress management, time management and the ability to set goals are also part of the more general category of self-management skills.

International Youth Foundation (IYF) opines that the cognitive, emotional and social skills are needed to make a successful transition from childhood into adulthood. These skills influence the choice young people make and help them become caring, confident, and responsible adults.

The ten core life skills as laid down by WHO are:

1. Self-awareness
2. Effective communication
3. Critical thinking
4. Creative thinking

5. Decision making
6. Problem solving
7. Empathy
8. Interpersonal relationship
9. Coping with stress
10. Coping with emotion

The Pan-American Health Organisation defines life skills as social and interpersonal skills (including communication, refusal skills, assertiveness and empathy), cognitive skills (including decision making, critical thinking, and self-evaluation), and emotional coping skills (including stress management and increasing an internal locus of control).

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has adopted a more generic definition of life skills in the context of the DeSeCo project (Rychaen and Salganik, 2001). It defines life skills on three general criteria, namely that (a) key competencies contribute to an overall successful life and a well-functioning society, (b) they are instrumental to meeting important challenges in a wide spectrum of relevant contexts, and finally, (c) they are relevant to all individuals. These key competencies are: (a) functioning in socially heterogeneous groups, (b) acting autonomously and (c) using tools interactively.

Hamburg (1990) defines life skills training as the teaching of requisite skills for surviving, living with others and succeeding in a complete society. The generic skills are communication, interpersonal negotiation, self-regulation and decision making skills. Nelson-Jones (1993) states life skills are personally responsible sequences of self-helping choices in specific psychological skills areas conducive to mental wellness.

In fact, the core life skills have been divided under three broad headings as shown below :

1. Social Skills

- (1) Self Awareness
- (2) Effective Communication
- (3) Interpersonal Relationship
- (4) Empathy

2. Thinking Skills

- (5) Creative Thinking
- (6) Critical Thinking
- (7) Decision Making
- (8) Problem Solving

3. Emotional Skills

- (9) Coping with Stress
- (10) Coping with Emotion

Life skills includes psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy and productive manner. Essentially, there are two kinds of skills those related to thinking termed as “thinking skills”; and skills related to dealing with other termed as “social skill.” While thinking

skills relate to reflection at a personal level, social skills include interpersonal skills and do not necessarily, depend on logical thinking. It is the combination of these two types of skills that are needed for achieving assertive behaviour and negotiating effectively. “Emotional” can be perceived as a skill not only in making rational decisions but also in being able to make others agree to one’s point of view. To do that, coming to terms first with oneself is important. Thus, self-management is an important skill including managing/coping with feelings, emotions, stress and resisting peer and family pressure. Young people as advocates need both thinking and social skills for consensus building and advocacy on issues of concern.

The life skills include Problem Specific, Area Specific and Generic. They promote the requirement for development of personality.

Problem Specific skills relates with the specific abilities to cope up with adolescent needs and to keep away from unwanted harmful activities.

Area specific skill concerns with the area where persons have proficiency.

Generic skills are the Ten-core life skills (as given by WHO) help students to become more familiar with different life skills so that they will be better equipped to handle difficulties, improve themselves, overcome weaknesses, and be able to fit well in any environment.

Life skills are ideal for those who aspire to improve themselves and aim to become a better and well-equipped individual.

▶▶ Life Skill Models

Certain models for Life Skill Education have been developed through researches. These Models offer a comprehensive understanding of importance of life skills. They also help to understand how Life Skill Education needs to be transacted A brief summary of Life Skill Models is given below.

The Saskatchewan New Start Model of Life Skills

The Saskatchewan New Start Model states that “Life skills, precisely defined, means problem solving behaviours appropriately and responsibly used in the management of personal affairs. As problem solving behaviours, life skills liberate in a way, since they include a relatively small class of behaviours usable in many life situations. Appropriate use requires an individual to adapt the behaviours to time and place. Responsible use requires maturity, or accountability. And as behaviours used in the management of personal affairs, the life skills apply to five areas of life responsibility identified as self, family, leisure, community and jobs.”

The Saskatchewan New Start Model of life skills assumes that life skills are skills that can be identified, demonstrated, broken down into component parts, learned through imitation and practice and transferred to other situations.

▶▶ Life Skills Process Model

This model is developed as a course of study. The life skills course integrates content and three process dimensions: a student response to content dimension, a student use of group dimension, and a problem-solving dimension. The student response to content dimension includes three types of responses or domains of learning: affective (feeling), cognitive (knowing) and psychomotor (acting/doing). The student use of group dimension describes the purpose of the learning group. The group process allows the member/participant to develop skills of self-expression, practice new behaviours and use feedback to modify behaviours. The group provides both acceptance and challenge. As mutual trust develops, students’ progress from safe, to careful, to risky use of the group.

According to the life skills problem solving model, individuals progress through six steps: recognizing a problem situation, defining the problem, generating possible solution/predicting results, choosing solutions, implementing the solutions, and evaluating the results.

►► The Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model of Life Skills

A skill is a learned ability to do something well. Life skills are abilities, individuals can learn that will help them to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life. In the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model categories of life skills are identified and divided on the basis of the familiar four Hs from the 4-H Clover that represent Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. The TLS Model is intended to be inclusive for all possible life skills. The terminology in the TLS Model is not the same as that used in any one other current list of life skills. By being generic, the model allows those developing curriculum to incorporate any specific life skills that youth programmers may wish to address using whichever terminology is descriptive of that skill.

The purpose of the TLS Model is to provide a way to simplify coordination of life skills development with ages and stages tasks so programs will be developmentally appropriate and more effective in achieving identified outcomes. For too long, these strategies have been treated separately when describing aspects of youth development. Life skills development is mapped sequentially over four age groupings of youth to indicate a continuum of growth. This continuum will guide planners in identifying an appropriate developmental level for content delivery. By assigning developmentally appropriate tasks to specific life skills, the TLS Model has the potential to greatly improve the possibility of achieving measurable program success in youth development.

There is not complete agreement on the specific life skills needed by youth, or on a set of desired behaviours that ensure success in life. It is easier to identify the problem behaviours that occur when the youth do not reach the expected societal goals. By reviewing a number of models proposed by several

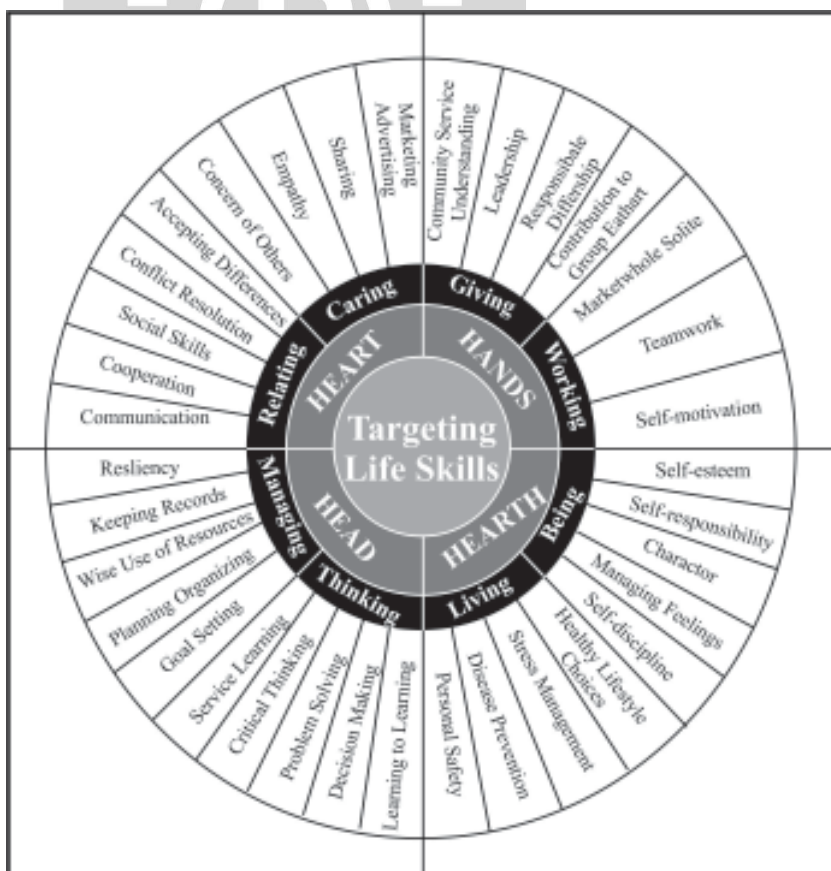


Figure: The TLS Model of Life Skills

authors, certain consistent categories of competencies emerged. These categories can be used as the basis of life skills development. Authors generally agree that life skills are learned through experience. Life skills often must be practiced over and over before mastery is achieved.

The TLS Model provides a format incorporating major points of youth program planning:

- Assisting youth to reach their full potential through a positive approach to life skills development;
- Delivering information and skill practice at the appropriate developmental level for the target audience;
- Writing specific learning objectives for life skills development that are measurable;
- Completing an instructional plan that creates experiences based on experimental learning theory to achieve life skills development;
- Identifying observable/measurable indicators of change using these indicators to effectively evaluate program impact/goal.

▶▶ **Transtheoretical Model**

This model was developed by Prochaska (1979 and DiClemente, 1982), describes stages that identify where a person is regarding his/her change of behavior. The six main stages are precontemplation (no desire to change behaviour), contemplation (intent to change behaviour), preparation (intent to make a behavior change within the next month), action (between 0 and 6 months of making a behaviour change), maintenance (maintaining behaviour change after 6 months for up to several years), and termination (permanently adopted a desirable behaviour).

NIMHANS Model [National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS)]

The NIMHANS model of health promotion using life skills approach for adolescents in secondary schools was initiated in late 1996 but crystallized in late 2002 by Bharath Srikala and Kumar K. V. Kishore from National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bengaluru, India. It is a model which is comprehensive focusing on all developmental issues of adolescents; it uses experiential learning with peers using participatory methods thus enabling the adolescent with psychosocial skills. According to this model the generic LS, which need to be taught at the school level especially to adolescents, are –

- Critical thinking and Creative thinking
- Decision making and Problem solving
- Communication skills and Interpersonal relations
- Coping with Emotions and Stress
- Self-awareness and Empathy

The model also uses the available infrastructure of the school and the teachers for implementation of the program in a continuous manner over the academic years as a co-curricular activity for maximum effect.

▶▶ **Characteristics of Life Skills**

The identification of the characteristics is needed for development of approaches that can be useful for developing various skills enabling the individual to be successful in all the walks of life. The various characteristics of life skills are –

1. Life skills are not static skills, but evolve according to circumstances
2. Life skills cannot be learned in an abstract and theoretical way
3. Life skills are developed by way of constructive processing
4. Life skills are in constant evaluation in terms context
5. Life skills can be broken down into component parts
6. Life skills can be learnt through imitation and practice
7. Life skills are skills that can be transferred to other situations
8. Process of life skills development depends on family school, gender difference, geographical ideation, etc. Such factors reciprocates the degree and extent of life skill development.
9. Skill are acquired through practical experiences; and it requires individuals to subject their experiences also and probe them when it happens in life.
10. Life skills are developed as a constructive processing of experiences which are a part of individual's daily life which occur in the course of life.
11. There are diversity of cultures and inherent abilities; so one has to encourage this diversity. Because life skills are in constant evolution of individual's personal and his or her personal contexts.
12. Life skills development being a learning process can be broken down into component parts and then mastered through practice.
13. Imitation always contributes to learning skill, Imitation helps children in acquiring complex behaviour.
14. A skill that is learnt is usually applied to situations that are new to the individual. A skill cannot remain limited to a particular situation only. Individuals can simultaneous apply number of skills, e.g., in writing a report giving presentation, using media, etc.
15. Life skills that focus on values also, can bring about a positive behavioural change.
16. Life skills are the beginning of wisdom that focus on behavioural change.
17. Effective acquisition and application of life skills along with values, can influence the way we are perceived by others.
18. Life skills contribute to the perception of self-confidence.
19. Life skills are used in different situations such as:
 - (a) To negotiate effectively at home, school or workplace, one needs to have thinking skills as well as social skills.
 - (b) When faced with difficult situations one tends to think critically, to analyze all the pros and cons of the situation to think out of box to find a solution to seemingly difficult problems.
20. Many life skills are required to manage a particular situation effectively. In a way, various life skills work best in conjunction. In fact, the appropriate combination of life skills in a given moment is an art. Children learn their life skills from parents, teachers and significant others who act as their role model. They gradually learn to use a particular skill effectively in diverse situation to cope with challenges of life.

21. Life skills help individuals to enhance their behaviour and capacities. Life skills can change our mental set up and the style of functioning. It will improve the perception of others about us. This enhanced ability will improve utilization of human resources and increases productivity.
22. Life skills promoted by teachers will bring marvelous changes among students and themselves

They can

- learn the skills that are considered essential for success.
- learn the ten skills that are considered highly important life skills.
- learn the skill that will help them address problems and make decisions effectively.
- effectively learn the needed job skills.

►► Classification of Life Skills

Life skills include Generic Life Skills, Problem Specific Life Skills, and Area Specific Life Skills. Generic Life Skills are the skills that are required for the overall development of the personality. Problem Specific Life Skills are the specific abilities that are particularly needed during adolescence to cope up with the adolescent needs and concern and to keep away from many harmful and unwanted activities. Area Specific Skills are the skills needed to handle the different activities related with an area where the person likes to have proficiency. Generic life skills include ten core skills. Based on its association and purpose these ten core life skills can again be grouped into Mother Skills (Self-awareness, Empathy), Survival Skills (Interpersonal relations, effective communication), Thinking Skills (Critical thinking, Creative thinking), Negotiating Skills (Decision making, Problem solving), and Coping Skills (Coping with Emotion and Coping with Stress).

►► Reasons for Teaching Life Skills

The meeting considered that life skills are essential for the promotion of healthy child and adolescent development; Primary prevention of some key causes of child and adolescent death, disease and disability, and socialization (preparing young people for changing social circumstances). Life Skills Education contributes to basic education, gender equality, democracy, good citizenship, childcare and protection, equality and efficiency of the education system, the promotion of lifelong learning, quality of life and the promotion of peace. It suggests that the learning of life skills might contribute to the utilization of appropriate health services by young people. Areas of primary prevention for which life skills are considered essential include adolescent pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, violence, child abuse, suicide, problems related to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other psychoactive substances, injuries, accidents, racism, conflict and environmental issues.

►► Recommendations Related to Life Skills Development

Education throughout life is based on four pillars: Learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be learning to know is by combining a sufficiently broad general knowledge, with the opportunity to work in depth on a small number of subjects. This also means learning to learn, so as to benefit from the opportunities education provides throughout life. Learning to do, in order to acquire not only an occupational skill but also, more broadly, the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams. It also means learning to do in the context of young peoples' various social and work experiences which may be informal, as a result of the local or national context or formal,

involving courses, alternating study and work. Learning to live together is by developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence—carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts – in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace. Learning to be, so as better to develop one’s personality and be able to act with ever greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility. In that connection, education must not disregard any aspect of a person’s potential: Memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities and communication skills.

The concept of learning throughout life is the key that gives access to the twenty first century. It goes beyond the traditional distinction between initial and continuing education. It links up with another concept often put forward, that of the learning society, in which everything affords an opportunity of learning and fulfilling one’s potential. In its new guise continuing education is seen as going far beyond what is already practiced, particularly in the developed countries, i.e. upgrading, with refresher training, retraining and conversion or promotion courses for adults. It should open up opportunities for learning for all. For many different purposes – offering them a second or third chance, satisfying their desire for knowledge and beauty or their desire to surpass themselves, or making it possible to broaden and deepen strictly sectional forms of training, including practical training.

►► **Life Skills and Increase in Academic Achievement of Students**

Today, our Indian society is going through a phase of transformation. Hence, the education system has to boost the potential for excellence, innovations and competitiveness. So too, the school authorities need to know the fact the students of today need support in developing better values and morals. They should also know the fact that our youngsters being at a crucial stage today, they will have to face an alarming and more violent situation in the coming decade. It is here that, life skills promote knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring more acquisitions in the academic area. Let us now take into consideration each life skills (as stated by WHO) separately, their relevance in academic achievement.

When we start talking about the skill of self-awareness, it is to be noted that this skill includes recognition of our self, our character, our strength and our weaknesses. It helps in goal setting and moral reasoning in a broad sense. The skill also contributes for intrinsic motivation for academic achievement.

Skill of Empathy improves social interactions and reduces the diversity. This skill is also helpful for teachers to design their teaching methods appropriate for their students, the students’ needs, abilities, drawbacks, etc. Teachers themselves act as a counselor.

Students do face many problems in their day to day life; and their unsolved problems create mental and physical strain; when taught properly, the student, students are able to tackle their problems related to their teachers, their friends’ motivation, etc. The academic achievement of the system directly or indirectly utilizes the benefits of problem solving skill.

Further, problem-solving skill becomes helpful in taking correct decisions. So too, it paves the way for thinking activity—both critical and creative; and this provides the way and becomes basis for achievement in academic area.

Now, coming to coping skills, it may be said that, coping with emotions as well as coping with stress are such skills that give the students an aid to help their pressures from peers, parent and others.

The effective communication skills aid the students to express their thoughts either verbally or non-verbally; and it contributes to share their opinions, desires, needs and also fears with others. Further, this skill also improves student’s leadership qualities.

►► **Role of Life Skills in Students Personal Development**

Personal development is the study and practice of improving all aspects of an individual's life like career, relationship, health, happiness and other personal goals, so also, personal development is the pursuit of developing, having and mastering the skills that helps the person to become the best will all that he/she has. Thus personal development is concerned with knowledge, attitudes, skills, relationships, etc., that can be utilized in and outside the classroom. It also includes activities that improve, that develop the talent and potential for human capacity and enhances the quality of life. Personal development includes activities like –

- (i) Improving potential talent,
- (ii) Spiritual development,
- (iii) Improving health development,
- (iv) Improving social abilities,
- (v) Improving human capacity, etc.

If a person wants to accomplish anything in life, and realise the full potential, he or she must have knowledge of life skills. In order to excel in his or her job, sports or any other activity/discipline, a person must have a mastery over certain skills. It is because of this reason, life skills have been defined as “the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enables the individual to deal effectively with the demand and challenges of everyday life.” Life skill thus, include psychological competencies and interpersonal skills that helps a person to make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships and cope with managing his/her life in healthy manner.

Personal development is an on-going process and journey. As Robert Stevenson said – “To be what we are and to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life.”

►► **In A Nut Shell.....**

Education is the way of life. Life skills education is a significant way of how to lead one's life as one ought to lead in order to be justified to others as well as to oneself. It is a pointer to one's development in diverse dimensions—physical, mental, emotional, social, aesthetic, cultural and so on. It also indicates how to direct and diversify the essence of life so that education really becomes natural and spontaneous vehicle of efflorescence of one's desirable and worthwhile personality.

Life skills in life today have been severely affected by reasons due to our aggravating aspirations and sky kissing life style is undeniable. The socio- aesthetic excellence that we want to receive through education for life skills has been at continual crossroads with our increasing love for newer things and commodities without which we equate education with meaninglessness and bereft of any worth.

The following are some of the essential socio-aesthetic life skills that necessitate regular and sincere practice in every form and strategy of educational endeavor:

- (a) Service to the poor and the disadvantaged, the downtrodden and the neglected, the dishonored and the belittled.
- (b) Practice of humility and reverence, modesty and warm embrace to one and all irrespective of caste, creed, community, race, religion, complexion, nationality, etc., whatsoever.
- (c) Appreciating truth, beauty and goodness as invaluable components of socio-aesthetic serenity of poignancies.

- (d) Exercising joy, freedom and creativity in terms of socio-aesthetic fulfillment of the inner essence and excellence of humans.
- (e) Devoting steadfastly to the finer socio-aesthetic nuances of tolerance magnanimity and austerity, perseverance, righteousness and simplicity.

Life skills are central to psychological theories that aim to understand how skills and competencies develop. Life skills are a group of cognitive, personal and interpersonal skills that enhance person's abilities. Life skill learning does not take place in a vacuum; the ultimate expression of life skills learning – adaptive and positive behavior – is greatly influenced by the environment in which individuals live, learn and act. Hence, life skills are the abilities to be developed in every individual to equip them to meet challenges of life and maximize opportunities to live a healthier, happier and productive life. It is the life skills, that, if properly developed, provide knowledge to actualize behaviour change.

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior which helps the person to deal successfully with challenges of everyday life. Adaptive means a person is flexible in approach and positive means opportunities to find solutions. Hence, life skills are essentially those abilities that help promotional well-being in youths to face realities in life. In fact, life skills are necessary for successful living. Essential life skills include such things as being able to recognize and describe one's feelings, giving and receiving feedback, setting realistic goals and employing problem solving strategies. It is true to say, then, that, life skills are self-helping skills that help individuals in decision making, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, etc.

►► Need and Significance of Life Skills

Life skills have been identified as the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables the person to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Adaptive means a person is flexible in approach. Life skills induced psychological competencies and interpersonal skills, and helps a person to make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others and cope with managing his or her life in a healthy manner. In spite of all such things, it is a sad thing to note that many a time certain factors promote high risk behavior such as alcoholism, drug abuse and casual relationships become boredom. Over and above there is peer pressure that affects a lot. So too, the psychological push factors such as inability to tackle emotional pain, conflicts, frustrations and anxieties about the future are often driving force for high risk behaviour. Teaching of life skills is therefore, an efficacious tool for empowering the children to act responsibly, take initiative and to take control. It is based on the assumption that when the youngsters are able to rise above emotional *impasse* arising from daily conflicts, entangled relationships and peer pressures, they are less likely to resort to antisocial or high risk behaviours.

Teaching of life skills is necessary because it accelerates the growth and development of attitudes for maintaining planned social order for democratic living. Hence, one of the necessary skills required for 21st century students is life skills. These skills help them to become more self-directed, independent learners who can adapt to change, manage projects, take responsibility for their work, lead others and produce good results. By acquiring basic life skills helps the individual to deal with life problems in a better way. In fact, there is no good health without a good mental health. Essentially, mental health promotion aims to reduce factors which damage mental weakening, e.g., abuse of children, bullying, discrimination and social exclusion and to strengthen factors that are known to enhance mental health,

e.g., good education, good family relationship, safe play areas, etc. All such things indicate the necessity of life skills programmes in actual classroom practices, because this directly contributes in awareness, attitude, behavioural changes, motivation, reduction of stress of students. It is the confidence level of the students that must be boosted.

»» Conclusion

Concludingly, it may be said, then that, life skills are the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enables people to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life. It further encompasses thinking skill, social skill as well as negotiation skill. It also helps children to develop and grow into well-behaved adults. Life skills enable the individuals to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities.

Thus, a well-formulated definition facilitates clear and general understanding of the term 'life skills', as well as how they are imbibed, learnt, developed, applied and evaluated.

WHO, UNICEF and other agencies, provide a conceptual foundation for life skill approach based on human development.

According to UNICEF, life skills are behaviour development approach designed to address the students to make positive differences in their lives. It provides emotional well-being in young children and equips them to face the realities of life. Life skills can be effectively taught through active rather than passive methods. They have benefits for the students in terms of protecting their health and promoting social interests. They also result in improved teacher-student relationship. Life skills are the abilities children can learn that will help them to lead a fruitful life. Life skills enable the children to learn and use knowledge, to develop reasoning strength, to manage emotions and to live with others (Anna Maria Hoffmann, 2006). With life skill, a person is able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decisions in solving each problem as it arises.

It may be concluded, then, by saying that life skills enable the children to translate, knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities. Effective acquisition and application of life skills can influence the way the person feels about himself or herself and others, and equally will influence the way he is perceived by others.

Life skills contribute to a person's perception of self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem. Life skills, therefore, play an important role in the promotion of mental well-being. Promotion of mental well-being contributes to a person's motivations, prevention of his/her mental disorders and also the prevention of behavioural problems.

In other words, life skills are the skills that equip people to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skills are viewed as crucial for everyone to cope with a rapidly changing world. They are the skills that can lead one to success as well as accomplishment both in his or her professional as well as private life.

Secondary level of school education is the most crucial period particularly for adolescent. It is a period of stress and storm to them and this is also a stage where they develop cognitively with more of analytical thinking process. It is also a stage where our young adolescents get easily influenced by their peers. It is therefore a turning point in his or her life with regard to various skills like thinking skills, emotional skills, social skills, etc. Hence, the learning environment period to an adolescent should be congenial to attain all the skills, particularly, all those skills that come under the label of 'life skills'. Being good at scoring high marks in the academic fields is not the only criteria for success in the life. Ability to deal with one's own feelings and understanding the feelings of others in any given situation

helps one to complement academic intelligence and cognitive capacities with a human understanding of issues. Putting down the knowledge gained into effective practice is the real key to effectiveness in any field. It is in this context, life skills play a crucial role. Life skills provide a strong practical framework to build, develop and manage any circumstance one is confronted with these include one's ability to listen well, handle conflict patiently, communicate effectively, accept responsibility willingly, manage time understandingly, working with other empathically accept criticism boldly, work nicely even under pressure and demonstrate good manners. All such said things mean that education is meant to prepare students for life by means of getting up to the merging needs of the society. Needs of the society do not remain the same all the time because it is always in a state of flux. An individual is leading a more sophisticated lifestyle today than what he/she as leading two or three decades ago. The world's economic, political and social spheres has rendered present day society very complex. Copa and Pease (1991) have listed several forces that contribute to the complexity of present day society. Some of them are as given below :

- (i) Changing family pattern
- (ii) Expansion of role of teratology
- (iii) Changing job demands
- (iv) Worldwide competition
- (v) Increasing interdependence of people
- (vi) Neck to neck competition in the student world
- (vii) Parent enlarged expectations from their children – so they are pressurised.

Because of the above said facts, present day society is no more satisfied with the existing system of education. Erickson has well said (1995) that our attempts to race through text books packed with trivia is increasingly becoming futile. What 21st century demands of education, as Erickson (1995) continues to note, is to shift focus from what students know to what they can do with what they know. Acquired knowledge has no value unless it is put to use. Students need to go beyond memorization of low level content to the acquisition of life skills so that our system of education would be capable of developing greater self-efficiency, self-esteem, etc.

Life skills have become the global currency of 21st century, but this currency can depreciate if it is not used ! Recognizing the need for life skills development, the Government of India has adopted skill development as a national priority and introduced life skills in the education realm to create a skilled workforce. Life skill approach is a comprehensive, multi-strategy approach for on-growing skill development; and brings about desired positive behavior in a person though the transfer of appropriate values in the learner. Goal here is to reduce risk behaviours, and thereby provide life skill education to enhance human capital, in fact, they youth development approaches based on life skills, work best when the entire community gets involved in creating a continuum of services needed by the youth to grow into healthy and productive adults.

From a psychological standpoint, life skills are those mental and emotional skills which enables a person to cope better in his or her life. Hence, life skills are defined, many a time, as the ability to cope with stresses of daily life, specially in skills like communication, decision making, problem solving, time management, etc. Life skills represent psychosocial skills that include reflective skills like creative-thinking and personal skills like self-awareness.

Life skills are of very much importance to adolescents. Main objective of life skills is to help the adolescents to develop a concept of oneself as a person of worth and dignity. Life skills are basic learning

needs for all people. Various skills like leadership, communication, intellectual capacity, self-esteem, etc., extend the maximum level, if it is practiced effectively. Hence, it is an assured fact to note that life skills help people to take informed decisions, think critically, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathise with others and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner. It is in this connection, it may be said that, truly, very correctly it has been said by Cronin (1996) that “life skills are those skills that contribute to the successful independent functioning of an individual in adulthood.”

Education is a character-building process; and the central purpose is to prepare an individual to be intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually capable and must be with all the potentialities to meet the challenges and hazards of life confidently as well as more successfully. Gone are the days of students' result in terms of exclusive examination marks or grades alone, but the result-oriented education now also imply the formation of students as well-equipped personalities endowed with all sorts of life skills. Students of today must be educated for enabling them to live tomorrow. For this, the great educationists have to consider the society as it exists today. Then, seeing the present trend of changes and the extent to which society will be able to cope with the changes, they (educationists) will be able to reckon what sort of life society will have in the coming 20 or 25 years and also an idea about the characteristics of the ways of life of that time.

The NCF (National Curriculum Framework) has suggested that education ideally must prepare learners to face challenges of life. For this, it needs to be intimately linked with different life skills, the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables the individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life by developing in them the skills in wide variety of areas such as health and social needs. It is here we can talk of life skills that they promote mental well-being in the young students to face realities of life-implementation of well-designed life-skill education programme can play better roles in moulding the personalities of the students as well as nation. Children of today are the citizens of tomorrow; therefore, they should be well-trained to acquire different life skills that will help them to live in the society with satisfaction.

Education being the process of all-round development of an individual, enables an individual to lead his or her life efficiently as well as successfully. Every individual has certain goals in life. He or she tries to achieve these goals in the endeavor that he or she has to acquire certain skills to lead a happy life that encounters a number of challenges in economic, political, social and technological fields. This can be done by development of life skills in an individual. Every teacher has to keep the life skills in his or her mind while creating optimum and challenging learning atmosphere in the classroom situation. Though syllabus completion is one of the primary objective, of the teachers, it is also essential for them to note that they have to help their students to attain their desired goals even while facing the various obstacles in their path. The ambition of a student is really wonderful and is a real sign of youth, without which, life is meaningless, useless and monotonous. But it will become possible only through the development of life skills in the students and for this, there is a need to include parents. It has been very contently said by Shri Narayanan, S. (2003) that nearly 80% of students are unable to talk to their parents about their personal problems and 40% are afraid of examination failure. This fact cannot be ignored and it is here we come to life skills which are problem solving behaviour used in the management of personal affairs.

Inclusion of life skills in the system of education will help the students to discover and develop their hidden potentials and innate abilities which in turn will enable them to see the signs of the time and needs of the hour, thus making their education relevant to the life situations. When they are down

in dumps and unable to withstand such situation, the knowledge of life skills will help them to make the best out of such challenging situations. Life skills are essential for fruitful life. Teachers should model themselves to processing a wide range of skills for making learning excellent, they should demonstrate the skills to making learning enjoyable as well as memorable.

Knowledge of life skills is helpful to develop psychosocial competency among the students. Repeated practicing of these skills leads to certain mastery of such skills to real life situation and also gain control over the situation. It is, thus, a promotional programme which improves the positive mental health as well as self-esteem. Any programme, therefore, has to be incorporated into the educational system to be feasible, effective and also cost effective. Schools need to be recognized as the single most important and recognized forum to reach out to the youngsters. In a country like that of ours, where resources and trained professional are few, it is better to be more practical to be involved and work with the teachers. With the help of trained teachers it is easier to develop life skills among students effectively.

Ability to communicate and interact effectively with other people is associated with a number of social consequences. This ability has variously been referred to as life skills. Life skills approach is thus a comprehensive, multi strategy approach, aiming at bringing out effectively the desired positive behaviours in the individuals through the transfer of appropriate knowledge, values and attitudes in the learner. Life skills are, in fact, the techniques that helps children to have a positive outlook and act with sensitivity, logic and rationality. Life skills enhance productivity and self-confidence. Integrating life skills with education help children to improve interpersonal relations.

Life skills vary according to time and space. It is not necessary that skills relevant at one period of time may also be useful for all times. Life skills are those skills that students need in their everyday life. These are essential for special education students too because they enable an, easier transition from school to life in the real world. Hence, life skills are necessary for successful living. Crocin (1996) has defined life skills as those skills that contribute to the successful and independent functioning of an individual in adulthood. The essence of life skills acquisition cannot be weighed in terms of degrees, diplomas or other documents; rather, it is demonstrated in their level of independent living, community adjustment and enhanced quality of life.

The methods used in teaching of life skills builds upon the social learning theory; and it involves the process of practicing learning using the following four basic components –

1. Practical activities
2. Feedback and reflection
3. Consolidation and reinforcement
4. Practical application of day to day life challenges.

To enhance the life skills in students few of the following techniques may be involved –

1. Class discussion
2. Brainstorming
3. Role plays
4. Demonstration and guided practice
5. Audiovisual activities like music, art, theatre, dance
6. Education games and simulations
7. Case studies

8. Storytelling
9. Debates
10. Decision making or problem trees.

Concludingly, it may be said, then that, through life skill education one can move towards a more positive and holistic approach in order to educate the new generation and through them the future generation.

Let it be repeated by saying again, then, that life skills are those capabilities that enable the individual to deal effectively in different life situations. In fact, innumerable life skills are needed to function as complete individuals and responsible member of social as well as political groups like family, community, society, workplace, market, state and other likewise, institutions life skills are those techniques that makes the person to have positive outlook. Integrating life skills with education gives the person chance to improve interpersonal relations; and helps to develop strength to face unforeseen circumstances. Life skills help to acquire a joyous living. Some of the broad areas of life skills are household-related skills, family-related skills, personal skill, environmental awareness skills, etc., that help him or her to deal effectively with the challenges of everyday life. Life skills also include proper time management, good study habits, concentration, completion of home assignments, etc. So, also, life skills are the perfect companions for the students to make positive companions for the students to make positive differences in their lives. Considering the importance of life skills, the 164 nations committed to 'Education For All' have included life skills as basic learning need for all young people. Around the world, life skills based education is being adopted as a means to empower young people in challenging situations. Life skill education is designed to facilitate the practice of psychological skills in a culturally appropriate way. Life skills include proper time management, good study habits, concentration, completion of assignments, etc.

