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## Need of Life Skill Education for Prospective Teachers

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### Introduction

A skill is the knowledge and ability that enables us to do something well. We all continuously use various types of skills in our daily routine life. Sometimes we use many skills very effectively to solve the problems, taking decisions, etc. in different situations, or sometimes we display inappropriate behaviour and we do not know how to use a particular skill in an effective, proper and appropriate way in a specific situation. These types of behaviours are not harmful for one who express it and for others too. We all have two types of life skills (1) Natural life skills, and (2) learned life skills. We get natural life skills by birth from our heredity whereas skills those are learned by us from our environment or society through experiences are called learned life skills. We can learn these skills in a formal or non-formal way through our environment or through various incidents. Learning how to use them

effectively and continuously will help us to deal with the situation more effectively. Knowledge regarding the life skills is essential for a teacher dealing with students. This article describes the types, importance, need and significance of life skills education for prospective teachers and discusses the various strategies and methodologies to impart life skill education among prospective teachers. This information will help to understand the need of life skills education.

### Life Skills

The word life skill is made up of two words – ‘Life’ and ‘skill’. Life means the quality that people have when they are not dead and skills means ability to do well. Thus life skills mean all the abilities that help us to live a fruitful life. In other words we can say that life skills are abilities, individuals can learn that will help them to live a fruitful life. Life skills

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### Life Skills

<i>Thinking skills</i>	<i>Social skills</i>	<i>Emotional skills</i>
1. Critical thinking	5. Self awareness	9. Coping with stress
2. Creative thinking	6. Effective communication	10. Coping with emotion
3. Decision making	7. Interpersonal relation	
4. Problem solving	8. Empathy	

are individual skills/abilities that each one of us possesses and yet, need to enhance in order to meet challenges of life. Effective acquisition of life skills can influence the way one feels about oneself and others, and can enhance one's productivity, efficacy, self-esteem and self-confidence. They also provide tools and techniques to improve interpersonal relations. Life skills are needed for creating a demand and effectively utilising the existing education, health and other services.

Life skills are defined in the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model (Hendricks, 1996) as "Skills that help an individual be successful in living a productive and satisfying life."

Life skills are the beginning of wisdom which focuses on behaviour change or developmental approach designed to address a balance of three areas – knowledge, attitude and skills.

Life skills are essentially those abilities that help promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life.

Life skills enable individuals to translate knowledge, attitude and values into actual abilities, i.e., what to do and how to do it, given the scope and opportunity to do so.

The World Health Organisation (1993) 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".

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.

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

1. *Critical Thinking*: Critical thinking is an ability to analyse information and experiences in an objective manner.
2. *Creative Thinking*: Creative thinking is a novel way of seeing or doing things. It has one of the four components – fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration.
3. *Decision Making*: Decision making helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives.
4. *Problem Solving*: Problem solving helps us to deal constructively with problems in our lives.

5. *Self Awareness*: Self awareness is the ability to understand our strengths, weaknesses, values, outlook, character, desires and dislikes.(self-identity, self-confidence, ego identity, self-esteem).
  6. *Effective Communication*: Effective communication is the ability to express, both verbally and non-verbally in ways that are culturally acceptable.
  7. *Interpersonal Relationship*: Skills help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with.
  8. *Empathy*: Ability to understand and accept others. Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person. Empathy helps us to accept others, who may be very different from ourselves.
  9. *Coping with Stress*: It means recognising the sources of stress in our lives, recognising how this affects us and acting in ways that help us control our level of stress.
  10. *Coping with Emotions*: It means involving, recognising emotions within us and others, being aware of how emotions influence behaviour and being able to respond to emotions appropriately.
- Primary prevention of some key causes of child and adolescent death, disease and disability.
  - Socialisation.
  - Preparing young people for changing social circumstances.

### **Life Skill Education**

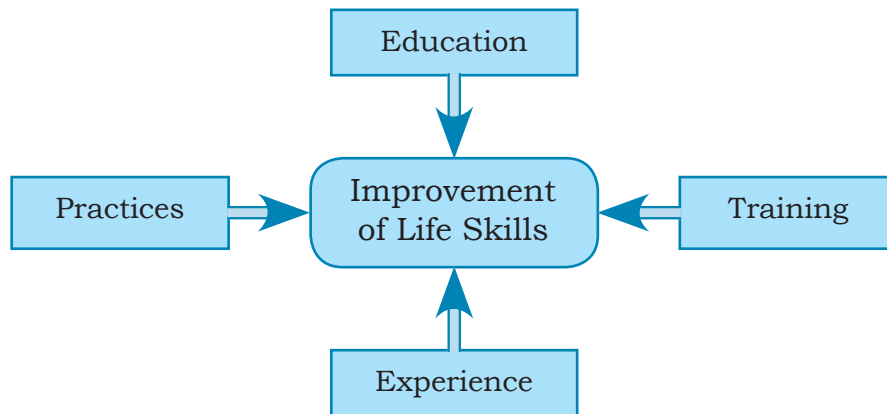
Each and every person has to play various roles in their individual life so they use various life skills in different occasions and different circumstances to solve the various problems and for establishing a good relationship with others. It has been observed that majority of persons are not able to perform their role and functions effectively. Most of them have to regret on their decisions, communication skills etc. They feel unable to take decisions, solve the problems, lack of confidence. They are not able to identify their innate powers, capacity or abilities.

Education helps us to overcome these problems and plays a very important and vital role in improving the sharpness and effectiveness of life skills. Education provides us opportunities to gain the experiences through practice/training. Education helps us in shining the life skills by rehearsal. Rehearsing the use of life skills in simple situation can make it easy for us to utilise them in complex situation too.

Life Skills Education was founded in 1979 by three people who were all working with young adults in

### **United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting (WHO) in Geneva considered that life skills are essential for –**

- The promotion of healthy child and adolescent development.



Boston. One was an English teacher running an employment-training/ GED programme for high school dropouts; two were counsellors and the directors of a community youth office.

Life skill education is an interactive methodology, which focuses on knowledge, attitudes and skills and is specially designed to enhance efforts to positively develop and change behaviour. The focus on behaviour change as a primary objective distinguishes life skills from other 'information only' approaches.

The main objective of life skill education is to enable the learner to develop a concept of oneself as a person of worth and dignity. It should help one to understand oneself and lead to growth in personal responsibility.

Life skills education contributes to basic education; gender equality; democracy; good citizenship; child care and protection; quality and efficiency of the education system; the promotion of lifelong learning; quality of life; the promotion of peace.

### **Need of Life Skill Education for Teacher Trainees and Prospective Teachers**

In the present scenario the role of teacher is very crucial. Today they have to face very tough and new challenges. The role of the teacher has been challenging especially at the primary and elementary level as they are expected to follow learner-centred, activity-based and problem-solving teaching-learning strategies. They have to play a vital role in the development of desirable attitudes, beliefs and values among students. The prospective teacher is therefore expected to acquire adequate knowledge, understanding about the subjects along with necessary life skills to perform work, various activities and developing positive attitude among students. Their roles are not confined to transmission of knowledge besides that they have to perform many other roles:

- In their personal life

- In the student's life such as the role of
  - A teacher
  - An organiser
  - A moderator
  - Facilitator of learning
  - Guide and counsellor
  - Promoter of social moral values
  - Modifier of human behaviour

In order to carry out different roles and responsibilities a prospective teacher needs to have a fairly good life skills.

Besides that prospective teachers have to face many social and emotional problems. Most of the young teacher trainees are not fully trained, experienced or fully matured. They are neither a fully trained experienced teacher nor a fully mature student. In other words we can say that they have lack of experiences and their maturity level is not so high. The young teacher trainees could be engaged or involved in many antisocial activities which create a lot of social problems like alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual abuse, smoking etc. These habits deteriorate their physical and intellectual capabilities and their high risk behaviour could affect society in a larger context. Major problems of the young teacher trainees are:

- They are not able to understand their own ability, strengths, weaknesses etc.
- They want to be their own identity.

- They are not able to recognising the sources of stress.
- They feel that are not able to solve the problem properly.
- They do not know how they can control the emotions in different situations.
- They feel lack of confidence and lack of experience.

To overcome these problems and to discharge their complex roles, responsibilities and functions effectively, prospective teachers own perspective skills and abilities must be fully developed. Life skill education increases the awareness among the prospective teachers about all the social and emotional problems and helps to alleviate social evils from the society. Therefore life skill education is a basic learning need for all the teacher trainees. It is the starting point for the teacher trainees to analysis their potential. It will help the trainee teachers to empower themselves in challenging situations. For this they require training and practice to perform their varied role and discharge their function and responsibilities.

#### **Significance of Life Skill Education for Teacher Trainees**

- To be able to explore alternatives.
- To provide inner power and strength to deal with life.
- To analysis their potential.
- To be able to understand self and assess their skills, abilities and areas of development which

enables them to analyse their capacity to enhance the function in a most productive way.

- Weigh pros and cons.
- Make rational decision. To be able to foresee the consequence of different decisions. No decision is also a decision.
- To be able to tolerate ambiguity and willing to change their priorities as per the requirement.
- To be able to establish productive interpersonal relationship with others.
- Lay the foundation for good health and mental well being.
- Help to prevent the psychological disturbance.
- Communicate effectively.
- Be assertive.
- To be able to take positive action to protect themselves and to promote health and meaningful social relationship.
- To be able to adjust with their environment and to solve the conflict.
- Ability to take everything in the right sense.
- To be helpful in developing 4H i.e., Head , Heart, Hand and Health.
- To prepare responsible citizens.

*National Curriculum Framework–2005* also puts forth need of imparting life skills. According to the *National Curriculum Framework–2005*, every person should have ability of thinking and making ethical decision independently or in a group. It is essential to sensitise students regarding emotions then only they can



survive in the world with satisfaction. To understand others, cooperation, social responsibility and good interpersonal relations are essential for teachers. *NCF-2005* has following expectations about preparation of teachers.



- Teacher must be co-operative, feel belongingness, respect other groups and respect democratic values.
- Teacher must realise the need to upgrade continuous knowledge.
- Teacher must have ability to communicate clearly and think logically to understand the world around him/her and to fulfil social responsibility towards National development.
- Teacher should be emotionally developed, happy and cheerful.
- Teacher should guide her/his students to think.

To fulfil these expectations teachers must be provided professional knowledge, skills and education of life skills too.

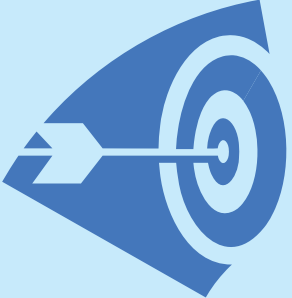
Various methods can be used to enhance life skills among teacher trainees/prospective teachers:

1. *Heard and said method*: Discussion, Brainstorming, Buzz session, Quiz, Debates , Story telling.
2. *Self-learning method* : Experiment, Programmed learning.
3. *Action-oriented method*: Case study, Simulation, Role play, Games.
4. *Mixed method*: Workshop, Seminar.

<i>Methods</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Life skills</i>
<p><i>Discussion:</i> A discussion is an oral exploration of a topic, object, concept or experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examines a problem/topic</li> <li>• Developing new ideas</li> <li>• Reaching the best solution</li> </ul>	<p>Listing skill Assertiveness Empathy Communication skill</p>
<p><i>Brainstorming:</i> Brainstorming is a process for developing creative solution to problems</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively generate a broad variety of fresh ideas about a particular topic</li> <li>• In a short period of time</li> <li>• Analyzing and Evaluating the ideas</li> <li>• Appropriate decision are taken or</li> <li>• Solved the problem</li> </ul>	<p>Creative thinking Critical thinking Problem solving Decision making Communication skill Interpersonal relationship</p>
<p><i>Buzz session:</i> Buzz session is a short, small group discussion session. It is used as an effective means of achieving trainees' participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem is put before the trainees in an open session or small groups</li> <li>• Give them 4-5 minutes</li> <li>• Presentation of various aspects of problem</li> <li>• Solve the problem</li> </ul>	<p>Interpersonal relation Communication skill Thinking skill Self awareness Decision making</p>
<p>Role Plays</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatisation of various activities</li> <li>• Trainees are made to experience different problems faced by different people</li> </ul>	<p>Empathy Communication skill Decision making Interpersonal relationship</p>
<p><i>Games/Quiz:</i> A quiz is a form of game or mind sport in which player (as individual or in team) attempts to answer questions correctly. Quizzes are also brief assumption used in education to measure growth in knowledge, abilities and skills.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Games activities can be used for teaching content and for reinforcement</li> </ul>	<p>Critical thinking Problem solving Decision making</p>

Simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities structured to feel like the real experiences</li> </ul> 	Empathy Coping with emotions Decision making Interpersonal relationship
Situation Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities allow to explore problem and dilemmas</li> <li>• To think</li> <li>• To share ideas</li> </ul>	Problem solving Critical thinking Empathy Coping with stress Interpersonal relationship
Case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real life stories</li> <li>• Describe in detail</li> <li>• Powerful catalysts for thought and discussion</li> </ul>	Self awareness Empathy Problem solving
Debates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A particular problem or issue is presented</li> <li>• Solving the problem</li> </ul>	Thinking skill Creative thinking Critical thinking Problem solving Communication skill
Story telling	A medium for sharing, interpreting, offering the content and meaning of a story to an audience or a story is a description of imaginary people, an event or things.	Problem solving Thinking skill



<p>Problem solving</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the problem or issue</li> <li>• Collect the information</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Solving the problem</li> </ul>	<p>Problem solving Thinking skill Critical thinking Creative thinking</p>
<p>Co-curricular activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities conducted simultaneously with academic activities</li> </ul>	<p>Creative thinking Self awareness Empathy Communication skill Interpersonal relation</p>
<p><i>Workshop:</i> Workshop is group based learning. Its main purpose is to acquaint trainees with complex problems and develop skills.</p>	<p>A workshop involves a number of activities like presentation of resource person, demonstration, group discussion, practical and evaluation. Workshop may continue for a few days involving 5-6 hours group work every day. Activities include Interaction based lecture Brainstorming Discussion</p>	<p>Problem solving Decision making Communication skills</p>

The methods used during the training period should aim at right development of whatever knowledge, attitudes or life skills have to be developed in the trainees. It is very important to use various methods in the training period, which are helpful in developing the life skills in prospective teachers.

**All the life skills are linked with each other**

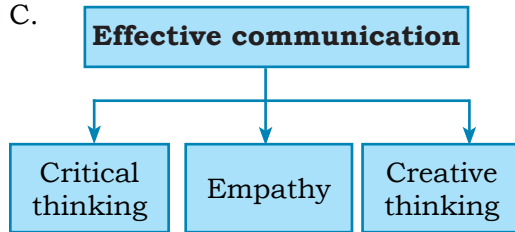
When we try to learn one life skill it means simultaneously we are using or learning more than one life skills, e.g.,

- A. Getting to know you  
Self Awareness+ Critical thinking

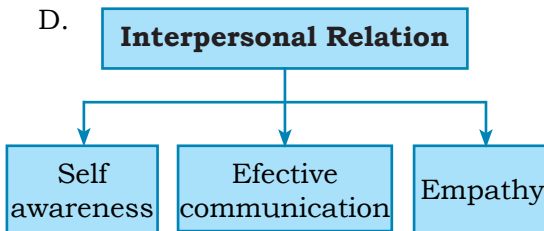
B. Working towards your goal

Self Awareness+ Critical thinking+  
Creative thinking

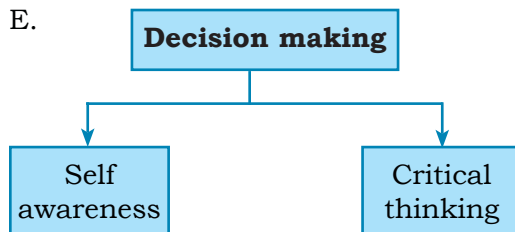
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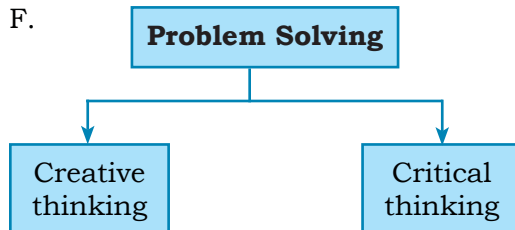
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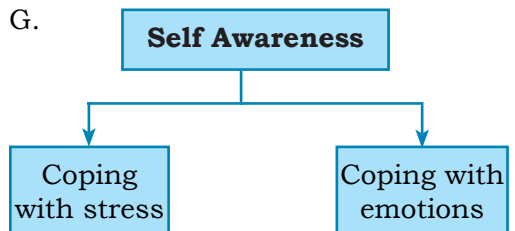
E.



F.



G.



## Conclusion

It is observed that life skill education is not being considered as an important issue in existing teacher education and life skills are not taught to the would be teachers/ prospective teachers. I believe that the teacher training institute is a good place to develop life skills among prospective teachers. In these institutions, besides academics, teacher trainees can also learn social and emotional skills. Most of the trainees are found in their adolescent stage and often look to the community for guidance, support and direction. For its application there is need for inclusion of life skill education in teacher education.

The programme of the teacher education should incorporate such activities that enable the prospective teacher to develop different competencies, logical thinking, physically fit, mentally fit, emotionally sound and socially effective, so that they lead healthy life and serve their home and community. During the pre-service training programme a trainee should be provided necessary life skills.

The major objective of teacher training institutes is to facilitate personality development of prospective teachers. Therefore curriculum should be designed and transacted to enable the prospective teacher to discover his/her talent, potential, develop in him/her the productive and social life skills to enable him/her to enjoy sound physical and emotional health. Therefore life skills must be the part of curriculum.

Training institutions play a crucial role in building or undermining self-esteem and sense of competence. We, therefore, believe in a comprehensive teacher-training programme in life skills education that would prepare

not only better teachers but also would support children's educational and mental health requirements. Therefore we need to create life skills as the cornerstone of various teaching programmes.

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