EFFECTIVENESS OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Today’s teenagers are the leaders of tomorrow. They are under immense pressure, societal as well as from their peers. Girls are especially vulnerable at this stage. By cultivating life-skills, they can withstand the demanding situations of existence. ‘Life Skills Education’ (LSE) includes behaviour development that has knowledge, attitude and skills components. It enables a person to translate knowledge, attitude and standards into honest skills and develop a discerning individual capable of making right choices under any given situation. In recent years, the idea of Life Skills has been used mainly in the framework of health and reproductive health. It is the individual’s competence to sustain a state of mental wellbeing leading to adaptive and positive behaviour in interpersonal relations, and in relation to her/his culture and environment. A review of literature was conducted to explore the realm of LSE, find out current trends and emphasis, recognise lacunae areas and propose future direction of the programme. The review emphasises that the LSE has a significant role in the social and personal improvement of adolescents and it should be implemented by all stakeholders to ensure health and happiness in adolescent girls.

Key words: Adolescent girls, Life skills education

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INTRODUCTION
As adolescent girl programmes around the world adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, life skills programmes remain imperative part of girls’ education. It is important to consider how to adapt programmes in terms of their content and the delivery to help girls navigate the added risks they may now be facing. [Emily Boost et al., (2020)]. LSE would sensitize adolescents to their distresses and help know their rights; shape their self-esteem and self-confidence; and augment their capability to take accountability for self and surrounding. It encompasses psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that assist people to make knowledge selections, clear up problems critically, solve real life situation creatively, talk effectively and efficiently, construct good relationships, and it helps to empathise with others. People educated in life skills deal with their lives healthily and productively. There are two skills: one associated with questioning termed as "wondering skills"; and the other related to managing others, termed as "social skills". Questioning capabilities relate to mirrored image at a personal scale; social capabilities include interpersonal talents and rely upon logical wondering. It is the mixture of these forms of competencies which are desired for realising assertive behaviour to negotiate successfully. Researchers have recommended that middle schools could foster these skills by providing students with opportunities to upgrade their Life Skills. So the key drives of LSE are to allow young adolescents to respond to real life situations in optimistic and responsible ways; to boost mindfulness among youths about the social anguishs and to correct social glitches (Neha Sharma et al., 2013). Life Skills include psychosocial abilities and interpersonal abilities that help people to make well-versed choices, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively and efficiently, build healthy relationships, understand others, and manage their challenges in a healthy and vibrant way. Application of Life Skills will help them to praise, balance and reinforce each other (Neha Sharma et al., 2013).

The investigator made a thorough search of research studies, reports and publications of various departments of the nursing field in India and abroad. Various online databases were also searched for collecting the literature related to the present study. Following are the areas of search: —

1. Literatures associated with Adolescent Health
2. Literature associated with Life skills
3. Literature associated with Components of Life Skills
4. Literature associated with outcomes of Life Skill Based Education
5. Literature associated with adolescent girls’ Health, and Life Skills

1. Literatures associated with Adolescent Health: (WHO, 2017) defines youth as the period between the age of 10 and 19 years that is transition from youth to adulthood which entails significant adjustment to the bodily and social changes. It is a time frame wherein a lot of physiological changes and demands for brand spanking new social roles take form. Teens have to do adjustments and regularly face several crises and dilemmas. The adolescent stage is full of struggle, peer pressure, stress, tension, cognitive issues (hassle-fixing, selection making) as well as behavioural and emotional issues (UNICEF, 2015). Marindli et al., (2014) carried out a longitudinal study among 1713 youths on hours of television viewing and sleep period in adolescents; they discovered that youngsters with longer periods of television viewing had shorter sleep duration. The study concluded that spreading LSE in social media for teens is important for their healthful stress-unfastened lifestyle. Life skills are imperative because they give young people more control to progress in their lives. Life skills deliver young people with a healthier understanding of themselves and others, so that they can make better choices and learn to cope with challenging events in the world they inhabit. Unambiguously, life skills education can help young people to become more aware of what they are doing; how they are doing things; how they gain evidence; and how other people think, feel and perform (WHO, 2020). Thus the implementation of life-skills education in schools allows the adolescent girls to address daily challenges of life efficiently. It empowers adolescents to behave responsibly and to lead a wholesome life by meeting the changing needs of society.
2. **Literature associated to Life skills:** Life skills are described as “The abilities for adaptive and cognitive behaviour that enables people to deal efficiently with the demands and demanding situations of normal lifestyles.” Lifestyle skills deal with the capacity to build the country of intellectual and physical well-being even as interacting with others within the comparable way of life and environment (UNICEF, 2015). Life skills and competencies training for the adolescents will improve their adjustment with peer, organisation, instructors and parents. By increasing this empathy, communication talents, interpersonal relationships, their social interactions, self-belief, and self-efficacy will empower future lifestyles of adolescents (Beena Johnson, 2017). Life skills must be a part of quality education that is hypothesised and integrated with the recognised primary and secondary education curriculum and literacy and numeracy. To boost fine and adaptive conduct, it is imperative to help the individuals to practice psychological abilities that may reduce chance of destructive behaviour and capitalise on it (Munsi et al., 2014; Prajian, 2014; Aishath Nasheeda, 2018).

3. **Literature associated to Components of Life Skills:** Components of life skills refer to a huge group of psychosocial and interpersonal competencies, that may help people to make knowledgeable selections, talk efficiently and effectively, increase coping and self-management abilities which could help them to lead a healthy life (Beena Johnson, 2017; Aishath Nasheeda, 2018). Life skills training may be defined as being a conduct exchange to balance three regions: know-how, mind-set and abilities. The contents of the life skills application include effective attitudes and values that will construct survival competencies consisting of inter and intrapersonal communication abilities, making a right selection, and possessing assertive capabilities (UNPFA, 2015; UNICEF, 2017). WHO in 2017 has categorised life kill capabilities into the following three additives: thinking skills, social skills and negotiation skills.

- **Thinking skills** include self-attention, social cognisance, aim putting, hassle-solving and selection-making. To think seriously, the facts are needed to be provided to make healthy choices, thinking effectively for looking at distinctive perspectives of a problem, the pros and the cons of making one decision and facilitating identification of the negative outcomes of creating hasty and unplanned selections.

- **Social skills** include appreciating or validating others, working with others, building tremendous relationships with others, listening and speaking effectively and efficiently, assuming responsibility and coping with stress and emotions. Social skills permit youngsters to be accepted in society, accepting social norms, which provides a foundation for them to grow in a congenial environment with healthy relationships.

- **Negotiation skills** mean qualities that allow two or more sides to reach an agreement. Correctly negotiating with others involves saying “no” to harmful conduct and volatile temptations that are part of these skills. Negotiation skills also need to be imparted in schools and also in the house for the growing children.

According to WHO (2017), Life skills programmes are intended to impart a comprehensive set of social and behavioural skills that empower entities to deal meritoriously with the challenges of everyday life. Life skills education Programmes can help shape any or all of the following skills: decision-making (e.g. critical and creative thinking, and problem solving); community living (e.g. effective communication, resisting peer pressure, building healthy relationships, and conflict resolution); personal awareness and management (self-awareness, self-esteem, managing emotions, assertiveness, stress management, sexual and reproductive health behaviours and attitudes). Life skills programmes can allow and guide learners to consider judgmentally about how gender norms and human rights concerns oversee their communications with others and disturb their behaviours.

4. **Literature associated with outcomes of Life Skills Based Education:** Mirzei SH and Hasani, J. (2015) have conducted their research to assess the effectiveness of life skills abilities. They found that lifestyle competencies in the schools are the simple correlates of cognitive emotion regulation strategies so that it may assist youths to improve their psychological and emotional abilities. Through powerful LSE they learn how to deal with stress and anxiety in day-to-day life. (Aishath Nasheeda, 2018). Hetrick et al., (2015) indicated that schools form a crucial
base for teaching children about intellectual fitness. Current systematic critiques, primarily of faculty based interventions document that a wide range of mental fitness applications have been taken across students of all levels, and with diverse fitness promotion, sickness prevention and symptom- reduction therapeutic modalities. Teaching life skills like self-awareness, communication and problem solving impacts in refining behaviours among adolescent girls (Zahra Sharbaf Olyaie et al., 2016). LSE for adolescent girls is a fundamental intervention organised to train girls with evidences about norms, so that they can be change negotiators in their own lives (UNICEF, 2020). Advancement of life skills training among pupils has led to enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem, and the individuals’ preparedness in managing pressures besides developing adaptive behaviours (Zahra Sharbaf Olyaie et al., 2016).

- **Literature associated with adolescent girls’ Health, and Life Skills:** Adolescent girl’s health covers morbidity, mortality, and reproductive fitness which are linked to environmental degradations, violence, and occupational dangers, all of which have implications for adolescent girls’ health. Life skills training works on enhancing people’s individual skills during their lives to help them make healthier choices and thus allowing them to choose more positive actions (Vishnu, 2014). Joseph et al., (2017) carried out a study and observed adolescent girls are at peril and therefore, Life Skills Education reduced the number of devadasi girls in Karnataka, boosting their courage to face the society, an example of younger people fallen in hard circumstances. This is an endorsement of the researcher’s need in presenting life skills education. Parvathy and Pillai (2015) did an experiment to make an attempt to evaluate the impact of lifestyles abilities on children in rural areas in Kerala. They discovered a widespread impact of lifestyles competencies on children who underwent LSE showing significant association in tackling problem at (p<0.01). They concluded that this opens an arena to conduct greater research in this subject with modifications and contextualisation of training modules. Kiruba et al., (2018) in her research study on life skill education among adolescent girls observed that among the subject adolescent girls 48 (61.5%) of them were having poor thinking skills, 23 (29.5%) were having average thinking skills and 7 (9%) were having good thinking skills. There was a substantial difference in the mean scores of pre-test thinking skills with that of post-test thinking skills (p<0.001). There was an important association between number of siblings and thinking skills (chi square value 12.99 P<0.05). Pushpa (2016) had done a study to evaluate the life skills education among young people on their instructional achievement and tension relief methods practised by those 300 students from Hamirpur district of Himachal Pradesh. Verbal check by innovative questioning, anxiety Scale check and personality scale check had been administered to the students. They discovered that youngsters having high educational achievement are more innovative than adolescents having low educational fulfilment. Tension had been found to be negatively related and creativity substantially related to achievement. Extraversion and neurotism were observed to have a poor relationship with creativity. Girls face hindrances between school and productive work; about more than a third i.e. 34% of young women in developing countries are jobless and out of the labour force, and numbers of drop-outs were more in the school. Even though the gender gap in school enrolment has been decreasing, the gender gap is on the rise in involvement in the labour force. Involving adolescence girls is critical in decision making process so that behaviours established during this period do not upset their horizons later in life. Adolescent boys characteristically enjoy heightened autonomy in movement but for girls it often comes with increased restrictions and they have only fewer opportunities and less freedom to use the choices. During this impressionable period in their lives, LSE is a key to afford adolescent girls with the receptacle of skills to empower them to live in the society fruitfully and confidently.

**CONCLUSION**

Life skills education is intended to deliver to the students a variety of healthier competencies that will ensure them a significant later life. Life skills are the capabilities that help to secure for the adolescents mental well-being and proficiency as they progressively face the uncertainties of life. It aids the adolescents to take to positive activities to guard themselves and to encourage healthy social relationship. Life skills enable them to attain comprehensive
development to function effectively as social beings. Life skills education is a basic learning needed for all young people. It will help the young people to empower themselves in challenging situations. Various skills like self-esteem, leadership, responsibility, intellectual capacity, communication, interpersonal skill contribute most in life if they are practised effectively during adolescence (Dhinakaran, J. 2014). Building life skills among adolescents by providing them with psychosocial support in schools and other community fora can aid to promote good mental health. LSE will help to reinforce the ties between adolescents and their families (Kiruba J C, 2018). If problems arise, they should be perceived and relieved by the capable and caring health workers. Teenagers are skilful of scrutinising their own strengths and weaknesses and what is best for them, as they track their career. Therefore, it is important to give them the right direction by imparting LSE thus enabling them to succeed in this competitive and challenging world.

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ARTICLES

