



ENRICHMENT OF LIFE SKILLS IN TRAINEE TEACHERS: A NEW DIMENSION OF TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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Introduction

It is rightly said by Lokmanya Tilak that ‘The Teacher’ is one who has certain golden virtues within himself or herself and who continuously tries to imbibe those virtues among his or her students for the benefit of the students, for his or her own benefit and the benefit of the Nation. Thus teacher is a social engineer who does the noble work of ‘Man Making’ and ‘Nation Building’. As per well-known Psychologist Gordon Willard Allport, Personality is a dynamic organization within an individual of those Psycho- Physical traits which determine its characteristic behaviour, thought, knowledge, conduct and the unique adjustment with the surrounding environment. Hence if we need to create effective and efficient students, we must develop the personality of the teachers first. So Teacher Education should now look towards the Skill- Development of the trainee teachers. Enrichment of life skills should be an integral part of the Teacher Education Curriculum. Certainly with the other aspects of Teacher Education namely Micro- Teaching, Integration Lessons, Simulation Lesson Sessions, Content-cum- Methodology Workshop, Evaluation Workshop, Lesson Planning Sessions, Teaching Aids Workshop etc., now it has become an urgent need to add in Teacher Training, ‘The Life Skills Identification and Enrichment Programme’ similar to the searching 10 Core Elements and 10 Values in a particular topic in Content-cum- Methodology Workshop. It has now become an obligatory aspect of teacher education that each and every trainee teacher should be well aware of the life skills.

Life skills have been defined by the World Health Organization as abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and the challenges of everyday life. Every education system, thus, has a duty to support the development of life skills among its clients in order to enable them function effectively in society. Life Skills are a set of abilities that let oneself form good relationships with others in everyday life and at work as well as these skills help to reduce unwanted stress on an individual. The people with good Life Skills are more likely to respond to situations appropriately and in a socially accepted manner. Life skills determine an individual’s response to any situation. These skills are helpful for the people as far as their social adjustment is concerned.

Life skills certainly promote Psycho – Social competencies because they make person know how to control emotions in a better way and to react in proper way. **Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Self-Motivation, Empathy, Decision Making , Problem Solving ,**



Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Effective Interpersonal communication and Socio–Life skills are the kinds of Life skills which have to be developed in the student community. If these skills need to be developed in the student, first of all would be teachers i.e. Trainee Teachers should be trained in this regard. They should be trained in searching the life skills enriching learning experiences in various topics in their First and Second Methodology Subjects. It is also true that ‘Life Skills’ is not a stand alone teaching subject, instead as a teacher, we must integrate Life Skills in the teaching process irrespective of which subject we teach.

Need of the Life Skills Training

Teacher Education for preparing humane & professional teachers needs to be holistic. Along with content & methodology there is a need to integrate emotional competencies, such as, self-awareness and self-management, social sensitivity and social management. There is a need to integrate life skills, such as, self-awareness, empathy, interpersonal relationship, effective communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, and coping up with emotions and stress. There is a need to integrate info-savvy skills, such as, asking, accessing, analyzing, applying and assessing.

There is a need to integrate techno-pedagogic skills, such as, media-message compatibility, media designing, integration of message media and modes, realizing proximity of message forms, media language proficiency, media choice, message authenticity and media credibility, media automation, media integration and media acculturation. There is a need to integrate human development climate through trust, risk taking, openness, reward, responsibilities, top support, feedback, team spirit and collaboration. There is a need to integrate spiritual intelligence dimensions, such as, spirituality, soul or inner being, self awareness, quest for life values, convention, commitment and character, happiness and distress, brotherhood, equality of caste, creed, colour and gender, inter-personal relations, acceptance and empathy, love and compassion, flexibility, leadership, life & death. The teacher education programmes need to integrate in numerous skills & competencies.

In Primary and Secondary Education, teachers interact with growing children. When the child attains the age of 13 to 15, he or she undergoes radical and startling changes of mental as well as physical nature. In adolescence, the child becomes exquisitely conscious of his or her sex. Some sort of physiological changes takes place during this particular period. Hence it is of prime importance that parents, teachers and school administrators should take due cognizance of this fact. It is necessary to give these children appropriate guidance and proper counselling so as to make them good citizens of the nation. The development of life skills is first step towards this. The enrichment of thinking, emotional and social life skills is necessary for making the child psychologically and socially competent. Hence the Curriculum of Teacher Education should include the training of the Life Skills, what sort of Curricular and Co-Curricular activities should be arranged to create the opportunities for the development of life skills.

Meaning of Life Skills Education for the Trainee Teachers

Education is an endeavour to learn and to propagate the best that is known and thought in this world and thus to establish the current of fresh and true ideas. Life Skill Training to

the trainee teachers is one of these endeavours. “The real purpose of education is lost due to the domination of written examination. Education tries to cover as much as information as can be given in the course of ten years of schooling to the students and one or two years of training to the teachers. It does not attend to the process that should govern the Development of attitudes and skills along with the cognitive competencies. It does not stress the affective and psychomotor domain of the performance of a student.” “Emotional intelligence is the psychological faculty that provides you with social - emotional skills. It has five components that can be translated into **five essential social – emotional aptitudes** :

- **Self Regulation** :- to be capable to conduct ourselves and to control our emotional states.
 - **Self Consciousness** :- to recognize and understand our feelings.
 - **Motivation** :- Management of feelings in order to achieve our objectives.
 - **Empathy** :- identifying and decoding the feelings of others.
 - **Social Abilities** :- being able to relate and influence others. Goleman’s Five Emotional Competencies.
- 1) The ability to identify and name one’s emotional states and to understand the link between emotions, thought and action.
 - 2) The capacity to manage one’s emotional states – to control emotions or to shift undesirable emotional states (at will) associated with a drive to achieve and be successful.
 - 3) The ability to enter into emotional states (at will) associated with a drive to achieve and be successful.
 - 4) The capacity to read, be sensitive to, and influence other’s emotions.
 - 5) The ability to enter and sustain satisfactory interpersonal relationships.

Hence the ‘Trainee Teachers’ should be well oriented in these emotional skills also. “Life –Skills also known as Soft Skills, are the skills necessary for successful living. To get the best out of life and to become the best you can be, it is necessary to have Life-Skills. These skills can help people, more precisely teachers and would be teachers in all respects particularly in making right decisions, communicate effectively and develop self management talents to lead a healthy and productive life. All this is necessary to be a good teacher.

Defining Life Skills

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Described in this way, skills that can be said to be life skills are innumerable, and the nature and definition of life skills are likely to differ across cultures and settings. However, analysis of the life skills field suggests that there is a core set of skills that are at the heart of skills-based initiatives for the promotion of the health and well-being of children and adolescents. It is the responsibility of the teachers to do this noble task. Hence the teachers, Student- teachers should be given proper training in this regard.

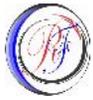
- **Decision making** helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives.
- **Problem solving** enables us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. Significant problems that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain.



- **Creative thinking** contributes to explore the available alternatives and various consequences of our actions or non-action. Creative thinking can help us to respond adaptively and with flexibility to the situations of our daily lives.
- **Critical thinking** is an ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute to health by helping us to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behaviour, such as values, peer pressure, and the media.
- **Effective communication** means that we are able to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations. This means being able to express opinions and desires, but also needs and fears.
- **Interpersonal relationship skills** help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with. This may mean being able to make and keep friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being. It may mean keeping good relations with family members, which are an important source of social support.
- **Self-awareness** includes our recognition of ourselves, of our character, of our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes.
- **Empathy** is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person, even in a situation that we may not be familiar with. Empathy can help us to understand and accept others who may be very different from ourselves, which can improve social interactions, for example, in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity.
- **Coping with emotions** involves recognizing emotions in ourselves and others, being aware of how emotions influence behaviour, and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. Intense emotions, like anger or sorrow can have negative effects on our health if we do not react appropriately.
- **Coping with stress** is about recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how this affects us, and acting in ways that help to control our levels of stress. This may mean that we take action to reduce the sources of stress, for example, by making changes to our physical environment or lifestyle.

In the opinion of the Secondary Education Commission – The school of today concerns itself not only with the intellectual pursuits, but also with the Emotional and the Social Development of the child, his Physical and Mental Health, his Social Adjustment and other equally important aspects of his or her life in a world, with an All Round Development of his Personality. During the process of Education of the child, he or she has to be continually appraised with regard to the level of intelligence, interest, attainment and aptitude. In our Education system, the Methods of Instructions have to be accepted as per child's special needs. Even our evaluation pattern should help us to understand our students better so that they may be assisted to overcome their weakness as best as possible.

21st century is called as modern era, because of advanced technology, scientific attitude and search for excellence. Every man and woman face a lot of problems in every walk of life, in every field of activity and in every work to be accomplished. Our education system is not exceptional of these problems. In this noble field we find lots of competitions.



All of us strive for Excellency in achieving our goals and if our students deserve Excellency there should be stress on their minds which can lead to number of psycho – social problems. For example – Increase in suicide cases among students.

So ‘Development of Psycho-social competencies and Life skills’ is necessary to reduce ‘Stress’ on the minds of our young students and to make these teenagers to be socially well – adjusted individuals with proper and implementable .

Training in Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation for the Trainee Teachers

Teacher Education Programmes at B.Ed. And M.Ed. level should be exhaustive as far as Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation is concerned. Because Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation is a such a kind of evaluation pattern for the proper assessment of the Development of Life Skills namely Thinking Skills, Emotional skills and Social Skills among the students. From assessing only the academic performance of the student, the focus has changed to the assessing the personality of the students which comprises an assessment of Development of Life Skills among students also. This is a wave of reform in education system, in the field of educational psychology as well as evaluation pattern. Whether the Methods of Instructions, school counselling patterns and Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation pattern really develop and assess the performance of students as far as enrichment of psycho-social competencies based on Life skills is concerned is a problem of special consideration. Hence, only theoretical aspect and knowledge of Life skills will not make our Trainee Teachers to become efficient persons. There should be proper implementation of Life Skills Development programmes and evaluation patterns to assess the development.

Training in Counselling for the Trainee Teachers

Also proper training to the Student Teachers should be given in the process of Counselling. Proper Counselling Training Programme is still needed to make Life Skill Training effective and appropriately applicable. Counselling is the individualized and personalized assistance with personal, educational, vocational problems in which all pertinent facts are studied and analyzed and a solution is sought, often with the assistance of specialists, school and community resources and personal interviews in which the counsellee is taught to make his own decisions. Counselling is consultation , mutual interchange of opinions, deliberating together.

Student’s progress or failure in the classroom depends on several Emotional, Affective, Cognitive and Psychomotor factors. But in all these, Emotional aspect is very crucial. To make the students socially well-adjusted and to reduce unwanted stress on the minds of our young ones should be given proper attention.

For this purpose some Counselling Techniques should be deliberately given prominence in dealing with the students. These Techniques should be a part of teacher training.

Counseling Techniques for the Trainee Teachers

- Free Association Techniques.
- Anxiety Reduction Techniques.
- Applied Behaviour Analysis.



- Assertiveness Training.
- Social skills Training.
- Modelling.
- Behavioural rehearsal.
- Role Playing.
- Self Instructional Training.
- Self Control Techniques.

Promoting Psycho –Social Competency among Trainee Teachers.

Promoting Psycho-social competence denotes the personal ability to deal effectively with the challenges of everyday life. Life skills can be taught for promoting psychological competence by enhancing the person coping resources. Educational And Counselling based Approach Promoting Psycho-social competence.

Life skills can be effectively taught through active rather than passive methods. This can involve distribution of facts sheets, discussion in small group, modeling, and role play activities and audio-visual presentations etc. They have benefits for the Trainee Teachers in terms of protecting their mental health and promoting social interests. This can be resulted into improvement of student-student, teacher-student relationships and nurturing healthy institutional atmosphere.

Psycho-social competencies based on life skills can be operationalized through content, thematic or activity approach.

For developing counselling programme focus should be on following processes.

- 1) Content approach which will focus on information for increasing knowledge
- 2) Thematic approach which will build appropriate themes for the target group into experimental sessions.
- 3) Activity approach for Trainee Teachers which will be built around activities that have scope for providing experiential learning for building psycho-social competencies and life skills.

For the complete personality development of the Trainee Teachers apart from scholastic activities, co-scholastics opportunities for the development and enhancement of life skills must become integral part of Teacher Education Curriculum.

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