

Strengthening life skills through emotional intelligence education

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ABSTRACT

To cope up with the growing speed and revolution of advance life, our students require new life skills like the talent to deal with frustration and stress. In a broad way, approach related to life skills develops different skills in adolescents to build the necessary abilities for human development and to accept behaviors positively which assist them to effectively deal with the tasks of routine life. Life skills assist adolescents to transfer positively from infancy to maturity through the growth of social skills and emotional skills. Emotional intelligence is connected with having life skills. Emotional intelligence was considerably related with the skills of satisfaction of life, solve different problems, and to cope up with stress. The connection between life skills and emotional intelligence explored that high level of emotional intelligence was significantly correlated with high level of satisfaction with life, to cope up with stress, problem-solving, and lower stress. Children need social coaching and proper guidance as they learn appropriate ways of behaving and adapting to their own environment. Emotional literacy improves relationships, creates loving possibilities between people, makes cooperative work possible, and facilitates the feeling of community. So it is very helpful to develop life skills. It will take time to develop your emotional intelligence, but it will lead to maintainable change of behavior through which you will improve the way to manage yourself and learn the way you work with others. Research specifies that the people who are emotionally literate can do better in many areas of their lives. Emotional intelligence is a way of recognizing, understanding, and choosing how we think, feel, and act. So it is the essential for the society that our recent education system should be revised while thinking about the increasing importance of emotional intelligence and consequently get benefits for our students, but only then if it is appropriately incorporated in our educational curriculum.

Keywords: Life skills, emotional intelligence, emotional literacy

In this frequently changing environment, life skills are an indispensable part of being able to meet the challenges of our mundane life. Over the past five years there were many ups and downs found in global economic sector which consequently impacting our education system, the place of work and our family life. To manage growing speed and some changes in present life, children require new life skills like the talent to deal with high level of stress and frustration.

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World Health Organization (WHO) explored life skills as “abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. ‘Adaptive’ signifies that a person is suitable in methodology and is capable of adapting new situations. ‘Positive behavior’ means a person is optimistic and in complicated situations he can discover a new way and chances to meet out the challenges of any problem. Life skills symbolize the psycho-social skills which regulate positive behavior and embrace thoughtful skills such as skills to solve any difficult problem and think critically, private skills like, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills. Through involving life skills we can get different qualities like self-esteem, tolerance and sociability, act proficiencies which take action and create adjustment, and to proficiencies to feel free to take decision appropriately.

Life skills include interpersonal skills and psycho-social competencies which assist people to build appropriate decisions, solve different problems, critical and creative thinking and communicate efficiently, form healthy strong relations, empathize with other people, and manage their personal lives in a healthier and fruitful way. Basically, these skills divided into two categories - which related to process of thinking and named as “thinking skills” and skills which connected to how to deal with others named as “social skills”. First one related to thinking at a private level where as second one related to inter-personal skills and do notes sequentially hang on think logically. It is the blend of both of these skills which are required for attaining positive behavior and negotiating excellently. “Emotional” may be supposed not only as a skill to make decisions rationally but also to prepare others to approve one’s view point. Self-management is vital skill which includes managing different moods, emotions, stress and also learns to resist burden related to peer and family problems. So, in order to get success in their life and for better character formation young generation need both emotional and social skills.

WHO recommended following life skills:

1. Self-awareness
2. Empathy
3. Critical thinking

4. Creative thinking
5. Decision making
6. Problem Solving
7. Effective communication
8. Interpersonal relationship
9. Coping with stress
10. Coping with emotion

Self-awareness comprises of understanding of our inner personality, of our internal powers and flaws, wishes and hates. By the development of self-awareness we can identify our selves at the time of feeling stress or feel burden. Moreover, it is essential for remarkable communication skills and interpersonal relationship, including developing empathy for other people.

Empathy is, in a different situation with which we may not be familiar with at that time enhance our ability to imagine life from another person’s point of view, even Empathy can assist us to understand those persons who may be unknown to us, in this way we can develop social collaborations, such as, diversity in our society on the basis of ethnic and cultural diversity. Empathy may also assist to develop inspiring behavior towards those people who require care and help.

Critical thinking is an ability to examine various experiences and vast information on the basis of objectivity. It also may contribute to health with the help of diagnose and measure those factors which effect attitudes and behavior, like, peer pressure, values, and the media.

Creative thinking helps us in making decisions and solving different problems by assisting us to discover the accessible substitutes and several pros and cons of our responsibilities. It assists us to go through our past real experiences, and learn from it by diagnosing problems or our style of decision making, in this way we can learn from our experiences and try to think creatively for the welfare of others. It help us to adapt any situation flexibly.

Decision making contribute to deal positively with different decisions of our life. Young people make decisions actively about their actions regarding health

by evaluating the diverse choices, and also learn that what effects different decisions to avoid conflicts.

Similarly, **problem solving** help us to react productively with different problems related to our lives. Important problems which are left unsolved may increase level of stress and can associate with physical strain.

Effective communication enables us to express ourselves, verbally as well as non-verbally, in appropriate ways which are according to the cultural norms and valuable for the society. This means we are able to express our views and wishes in an effective manner without harming anybody. It means we are able to understand the right time for an advice and any type of help. **Interpersonal relationship** skills help us to react positively with other people with whom we share our feelings. This enables us to make and keep sociable relationships with other person which deals with friendly behavior and which may be beneficial for our social and mental well-being. It helps us in keeping noble relationship with members of our family, who are very important source of social support.

Coping with stress is related to identifying the causes of stress in our lives, enquiring how these causes disturb us, and afterwards suggest us the ways which help to resist any level of stress. So, this means that we should take necessary steps to decrease the causes of stress, like, to make changes in our surroundings or way of living. It means to learn how to be calm, to avoid tensions which are created by unavoidable stress to avoid problems related to health.

Coping with emotions helps to identify emotions in ourselves and others, to make us aware of influences of emotions on our behavior, and how to react to such type of emotions properly. So, if we do not prepare to react in proper way with suitable emotions, then, intense emotions, like sorrow or anger may be negatively affect our health and life.

Importance of life skills

1. Life skills are basically enable us to support complete well-being and proficiency in adolescents as they encounter with the real situations in life.

2. Life skills are the foundation of intelligence which emphasizes on positive change of behavior and keep balancing skills, knowledge and attitude.
3. Life skills assist people to convert skills, values, attitudes and knowledge into realities such as how to do it and what to do.
4. Life skills provide us social support, healthy cultural values and suitable surroundings which motivate us to have an ability that how to behave in positive manner in the society.
5. Life skills contribute to awareness of self-esteem and self-confidence.
6. We all use life skills in our lives to negotiate effectively in conflicting situations, even at home, school or place of work. Moreover while facing situations which are challenging we try to think in a critical way and examine consequences and try to find the solution of challenging problems.
7. Life skills help us to adapt new circumstances.
8. After learning Life Skills children gradually learn to cope up with the different challenges of life.

Life skills assist adolescents to move effectively from infancy to maturity by developing emotional and social skills. It assists to develop bond of healthy social interaction and skills to solve any type of problem which assist adolescents to highlight their specific personality. It contributes to judge various situations by thinking analytically. It gives support to adolescents to distinguish between hearing and listening to avoid misconceptions or miscommunications. It encourages the improvement of self-esteem and helps to control anger, fear and stress.

However, in the recent years, big changes have taken place in our traditional society owing to industrialisation and globalisation. The impact is evident in the entire society, with no exception to adolescents. The family ties have weakened; moral, social, religious and cultural controls rarely exist and a new life style emerged among the adolescents. The highly competitive world of today and the absence of traditional norms and support have heightened the stress among adolescents resulting

in multiple mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, rejection, diffidence, anger, confliction in interpersonal relationship and failure. [Smith *et al.* 2004] Alcohol abuse and criminal behaviour among the adolescents too are not uncommon.

Emotional intelligence is connected with having life skills. Nettelbeck *et al.* (2005), explored in a study the relationship between having life skills and emotional intelligence. Experiment was conducted by the selection of 246 students of first year in order to find the relationship between having life skills and emotional intelligence. These skills included satisfaction of life, solving problems and cope up with the level of stress. The findings explored that emotional intelligence was significantly related with the skills of satisfaction of life, solving problems and cope up with stress. The relationship between these two explored that high level of emotional intelligence was significantly correlated with high level of satisfaction of life, cope up with stress and solving problems and lower stress.

Salovey and Mayer (1990), categorized the abilities of emotional intelligence into five domains:

First is self-awareness which means noticing oneself and identifying a feeling in reality. Second is Managing emotions which shoes about managing feelings in order to make them appropriate; recognizing what is beyond that feeling; try to find the ways to deal with different emotions such as, fears and anxieties, angry and sad mood. Third one is Motivating oneself, which means directing emotions to attain our aim; control yourself emotionally. Fourth is Empathy which keep us sensitive to outer world or other persons' views or feelings and the last one is Handling relationship, which enable us to make healthy relationship through understanding emotions in others and developing social skills to make our life better.

In other words, in layman language it is the ability to identify and realize our emotions and responses that is called self-awareness. It also teach us about how to manage, control and change our emotions according to the situation which is self-management. By connecting our emotions in proper way in order to keep us

motivate to take necessary action to achieve our goal is called motivation. Recognize other persons feeling and identify their emotions and keep understanding others more effectively is termed as empathy. Make healthy relationships, social interactions, work together as a group with cooperation with others is called social skills.

Social success is about children learn and master new skills to contribute effectively in the social domain. Children require guidance and social awareness as they learn right ways of behaving and adapting to their environment. This must be direct and specific and given in a manner that appeals to children's learning styles. Getting the children to practise using certain behavior in real-life contexts and having wide-ranging opportunities to apply their social learning is essential, as providing children with feedback about the appropriate way to behave. Assessing children's social mastery will inform when help in understanding and learning appropriate behavior is required.

Children do not start out knowing how to behave in the social world, nor do they know the names of emotions any more than they do the names of animals or toys. This has to be taught so they are able to develop their social emotional capabilities. Children's current knowledge and skills are the beginning point for continuing their learning. It is pre requisite for students to keep themselves up to date regarding knowledge, children ought to be always willing to learn and keep themselves motivate to learn every time, and have an ability of incorporating new information into their personal lives. In order to make them responsible, children should be capable of recognize threats and chances, and always encouraged and be motivated to act properly and modify behaviors that assist themselves as well as others. To teach helpful attitude, they ought to be able to see beyond themselves and praise the acts of others.

Emotional intelligence education is a wide range of skills that children of all ages can develop and improve. These skills are critical for emotional well-being and life success. By developing their emotional intelligence individuals can become more productive and successful in their life. Emotional intelligence education can help individuals to get success throughout their life by

developing productive skills. As we know individuals have different personalities, wants, needs, and ways of showing their emotions. So through emotional intelligence education we can mould their emotions to be productive member of the society.

Emotional literacy helps our emotions which work for us instead of against us. It improves relationships, develop love and care between people, encourage work with cooperation, and inculcate the feelings of unity in community. So it is very helpful to develop life skills.

The concepts of emotional intelligence and emotional literacy can help schools help children in many ways. Developing problem-solving, thinking and social skills can increase confidence, motivation and academic performance and decrease behavior problems. These skills are of tremendous importance, especially given the increasing prevalence of problems in our society related to our emotional health. At a time of increasing affluence and raising standards in health, education and the workplace, mental health problems such as depression and anxiety are increasing at an alarming rate.

It will take time to develop emotional intelligence, but definitely it will lead to positive change of behavior which will develop the way to manage and control yourself and teach to work in a group cooperatively.

Some advantages to develop emotional intelligence are following:

- enriched relations;
- enhanced to communicate well with others;
- improved skills of empathy;
- social integration;
- gain respectful attitude from other persons;
- upgraded job opportunities;
- adjust in new environment confidently;
- feeling self-confident and inculcate positive behavior;
- minimize level of stress;
- increased creativity;
- learning from mistakes.

Research explores that people who are emotionally literate attain superiority in different areas of their lives. Durlak (1995) and Durlak *et al.* (1997) explored that programs which teach social and emotional skills results in less dropouts, high level of motivation and high morale. Greenhalgh (1994) explored that if we learn about how to manage emotions we can learn in an appropriate manner which will be helpful in our whole life, on the other hand Salovey and Mayer (1997) found that emotions assist us to prioritize, select, anticipate and plan. To analyze these findings, it is found that our children who has deficiency of such type of skills which are associated with emotional challenges may be suffer a lot in their life's. So considering this, teachers play an important role in assisting to inculcate or develop those skills which assist children to recognize and manage their emotional lives. Consequently, this act will support children to concentrate more efficiently in school, and help them to achieve their academic or social goal.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a way to identify, understand that how we should think, feel, and act thoughtfully. Emotional Intelligence enhances our social relations and improves self-awareness. It teaches us how and what we should learn; it allows us to manage important things in right time in our daily life.

Tradition all your education system has usually concentrated on academic results, which leads to superiority and every time having high expectation from our children regarding success, money and power. But only this is not sufficient to make our children perfect personality. There are other factors which could be taken into consideration for all-round development and progress of our children.

We always assume to consider that people who are successful are god gifted right from their birth; however, it is clear that with the passage of time, natural ability appears to develop in some people and decrease in other people. If Emotional intelligence, taught at an early age, it can affect the growth of the children positively, by converting them into superior people.

It is not compulsory to just cover the minds of children with facts, theories and figures. It is not like our traditional system of education; rather emotional

intelligence enables children to face the tests of life and not a life of tests! So, there should be a component of social and emotional learning (SEL) in the process of their growth, introduce it at school, with their teachers and friends and at home with their relatives who are very close to them. By introducing emotional intelligence to our children, they can easily learn how to control their emotions, how to resolve conflicts positively and make important decisions independently.

As per research it explored that by promoting social and emotional learning among children lead to minimize aggression and fierceness, improved academic results, and well knowledgeable atmosphere. This will have sustainable positive impact on the adult life of our children in the future.

Thus it is prerequisite for our education system that our education system which is in trend needs to be revised by considering the increasing significance of emotional intelligence and its profits to our children as well as society, if it is properly incorporated in their current system of educational curriculum. On the other hand, if we ignore this part then we are admitting that academic results gain importance to us than considering our children as a perfect personality.

Social and emotional learning will get successful only if it is the mutual responsibility of teachers and parents. Finally children who are using their emotional intelligence will be well equipped to face the challenges of their future life, when they will be able to work in a team to achieve a common goal, develop innovative plans and strategies, and cope up with dissimilarities and conflicting situations with others.

By developing emotional and social skills in the schools, the academic performance of children rises, the occurrence of problematic behaviors decreases, and the interactions with others will show better quality. In this way, children will become the dynamic, responsible and contributing members of society that we all want... Thus, social and emotional education is sometimes called the missing piece, that part of the mission of the school that, while always close to the thoughts of many teachers, somehow eluded them. (Elias *et al.* 1997) (Greenhalgh 1996) states,

“Emotional literacy, or emotional intelligence, is actually a better predictor for lifelong achievement than is conventional IQ. A person’s IQ predicts only a small part of lifelong success – ranging from 4-20%. Emotional intelligence, on the other hand, predicts about 80% of a person’s success in life.”

Such statistics clearly show that all children will get benefit by becoming emotionally literate and by acquiring better acceptable social and emotional skills in order to modify their own behaviors. This fact has implications for schools in terms of how they are committing themselves to ensuring that students and pupils have the opportunities to develop these skills both within and beyond the school curriculum.

In other words, emotional intelligence is the ability to identify your emotions, realize what they are conveying to you, and understand how your emotions affect other persons around you. It also comprises your sensitivity of others: when you are aware about how they feel in a particular situation, this permits you to handle your relationships more efficiently.

Researches showed that the people who are perfect in managing their emotions, do not get angry in situations which are stressful. Instead of this these people have the ability to look at a problem patiently and peacefully find a solution of the problem. They are brilliant and independent decision makers, and they also know when to believe their insight. Although they have strengths, but still they are generally willing to look at themselves honestly. They consider criticism seriously, and they are easily aware about it that when they should use it to develop their performance and skills. Such types of people have a high level of emotional intelligence. They are fully self-aware and they are also able to sense the emotional needs of other persons and get success in their life by developing such type of life skills.

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