

# **Life Skills Awareness among Teachers in the Schools of Kerala**

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## **Abstract**

A person needs a set of social features and personal capabilities to interact themselves and other people in and around their environment and make a decision that requires high ability, also to find solutions to various kinds of problems. Moreover, the skills required to deal positively with any condition to get the desired outcome is called life skills. Life skills can be developed through encouragement to adapt to society and promote positivity in personal behaviors and adopt a positive perspective towards work. If we want to live life successfully, then we need to understand the importance of life skills. And it is also very important to implement it in our life. If this happens then our life can move in a simple and right direction. Life skills make us competent to know how to make our life easy and simple, how to create a positive life, and how life can be spent in the right way. Therefore, life skills are very important in our life. It polishes the ability to adapt to all kinds of circumstances and succeed in every aspect of society. Lack of life skills in the lives of new generations needs to be taken care of as it is important in life. Due to the absence of life skills, not only personal life but professional lives and careers get affected.

## **Introduction**

Education is a lifelong process by which man adapts himself gradually and gracefully to his physical, social, and spiritual environment. To give the common man insight through education, a well-balanced, scientifically based education is essential. Education has influenced the life of common man so much, so that no individual can adjust himself to his complex environment without having a considerable amount of scientific knowledge and life skills. Life skills are a set of abilities which will help individuals 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. While dealing with daily challenges an individual needs to know certain adaptive and positive behavior which are the life skills. Life skill education is essential for all children and especially for adolescents because young blood seem to be most vulnerable to behavior related health problems. Life skill education curriculum contains several life skills that can form the independency of students so that it has an impact on their ability to anticipate all the problems of life. Life skill education has two perspectives, improving mental well-being especially among young people in dealing with life problems, and increasing children's skill activities. Problem solving is an important skill for life. It is an ongoing process and integral part of everyday life. Effective problem solving requires a controlled mixture of analytical and creative thinking. Problem solving is an integral part of everyday life either at home or at work. A problem must first be felt, understood and then alternative choices be created. We need to have proper time management skill along with other skills to solve our problems. Problem solving is an art to be mastered. It requires proper methods and procedures in reaching a rational solution. Today's children and youth live in a world confronting varied challenges. To thrive in a world afflicted with poverty, conflict, violence, gender and ethnic discrimination, environmental degradation and disease, one requires more than literacy and numeric skills. Life skills promote mental well-being and develop competence in children and youth as they face the realities of life. Acquisition of essential life skills helps an adolescent to protect himself from the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, early and promiscuous sex, adolescent pregnancy, STD's/HIV/AIDS, and many other health related problems.

## Defining Life Skills

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable humans to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life (WHO). This concept is also termed as psycho-social competency. UNICEF defines life skills as “a behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills”. The core life skill strategies enlisted jointly by UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO are problem solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, effective communication skills, inter-personal relationship skills, self awareness building skills, empathy and coping with stress and emotions. 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 and cope with managing their live 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 related to reflection at a personal level, social skill 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. “*Emotional skills*” can be perceived as a skill not only in making rational decision but also in being able to make other agree to one’s point of view. To do that, coming to term first with oneself is 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. Life Skills include psychological competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decision, solve problem, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner.

## Objective

The main objective of the study was to find out life skills awareness among school teachers of Kerala.

## Procedure of the Study

The investigation was designed as a descriptive study and normative survey was the method adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 500 school teachers of Kerala from Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary levels selected through stratified random sampling.

Life Skills Awareness Inventory for the school teachers was the tool used for the study. Life skill awareness among school teachers with respect to the ten core life skills categorizes viz., creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, self awareness, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, coping with emotions and coping with stress was examined with the life skills awareness inventory. The collected data was analyzed and interpreted using the statistical technique of percentage analysis. 4 percent of school teachers possess high awareness of core life skills 31 percent possess average awareness and 65 percent have low awareness of life skills.

Incidence of life skills awareness among teachers in the schools of Kerala were: creative thinking (50 percent), critical thinking (34 percent), problem solving (38.8 percent), decision making (44.25 percent), self awareness (42 percent), effective communication (22 percent), interpersonal relationships (47.5 percent), empathy (39 percent), coping with emotions (49 percent) and coping with stress (18 percent).

## Conclusion

The ultimate goal of education is to equip our children and youth with necessary skills and face challenges, defend themselves from potential harm and make their way confidently in this world. Life skills education is very important especially for teachers who prepared young minds. Life skills education enable teachers to translate knowledge, attitude and values for handling real life situations to the children helping them decide what to do, when to do and how to do it with ease. The findings of study revealed that life skills awareness among teachers was very low. The teachers should enhance life skills awareness and provide quality education through innovation and creativity and equip children more analytical in approach, recognize the relationship between knowledge and power.

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