



AWARENESS OF LIFE SKILLS AMONG B.Ed. STUDENTS: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHRIMATI SUSHILADEVI SALUNKHE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, DHARASHIV**Shri. Chetan Mohan Gaikwad**

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ABSTRACT

Education is not only about gaining subject knowledge; it also prepares individuals to face different situations in personal, social and professional life. Life skills play an important role in this process. They help a person communicate effectively, understand oneself and others, make suitable decisions, solve problems and manage emotions and stress. These skills are especially important for student teachers because they will be responsible for guiding and supporting learners in the future.

The present study was undertaken to study the awareness of life skills among B.Ed. students of Shrimati Sushiladevi Salunkhe College of Education, Dharashiv. The study included 52 B.Ed. students. The descriptive survey method was used for the study. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect information regarding students' awareness of major life skills such as self-awareness, empathy, communication, interpersonal relationships, decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, coping with stress and coping with emotions.

The study suggests that awareness of life skills is an important part of teacher education. Although student teachers generally understand the importance of life skills, there is a need to provide more practical opportunities to apply these skills in real-life and classroom situations. Activities such as group discussions, role play, problem-solving exercises, reflective writing, workshops and school internship can help student teachers strengthen their life skills.



KEYWORDS : Life Skills, Awareness, B.Ed. Students, Teacher Education, Self-awareness, Communication, Problem-solving, Dharashiv.

1. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of education is not simply to help students pass examinations. Education should help individuals develop the knowledge, attitudes and abilities needed to live a meaningful and responsible life. In today's rapidly changing society, students face many academic, personal, social and emotional challenges. Therefore, along with academic knowledge, they need skills that help them deal with everyday situations effectively.

These abilities are commonly referred to as life skills. Life skills include self-awareness, empathy, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, creative thinking and the ability to cope with stress and emotions.

Life skills are particularly important for teachers. A teacher deals with students having different abilities, backgrounds, interests, learning needs and emotional experiences. In such situations, subject

knowledge alone may not be sufficient. A teacher also needs patience, empathy, communication skills, decision-making ability and the capacity to manage difficult situations.

B.Ed. students are preparing to enter the teaching profession. Their behaviour, communication and relationships with others can influence their future students. If student teachers develop good life skills during their teacher education programme, they can use these skills both in their personal lives and in their professional work.

The present study was therefore undertaken to understand the awareness of life skills among B.Ed. students studying at Shrimati Sushiladevi Salunkhe College of Education, Dharashiv.

2. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The modern teaching profession has become more challenging. Teachers are expected to perform many responsibilities apart from classroom teaching. They have to communicate with students and parents, work with colleagues, handle classroom problems and support students' personal and emotional development.

For this reason, life skills have considerable importance in teacher education. A student teacher who understands his or her own strengths and weaknesses is more likely to reflect on professional practice. Similarly, communication and interpersonal skills can help future teachers develop positive relationships with students.

The present study is important for the following reasons:

1. It helps to understand the level of life-skills awareness among B.Ed. students.
2. It draws attention to the importance of life skills in teacher education.
3. It may help teacher educators identify areas that need greater attention.
4. It provides a basis for planning life-skills activities in B.Ed. programmes.
5. It can encourage the use of practical and experiential learning.
6. It may contribute to the personal and professional development of student teachers.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

"A Study of Awareness of Life Skills among B.Ed. Students with Special Reference to Shrimati Sushiladevi Salunkhe College of Education, Dharashiv."

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To study the awareness of life skills among B.Ed. students of Shrimati Sushiladevi Salunkhe College of Education, Dharashiv.
2. To study B.Ed. students' awareness of self-awareness and empathy.
3. To study their awareness of effective communication and interpersonal relationships.
4. To study their awareness of decision-making and problem-solving.
5. To study their awareness of critical thinking and creative thinking.
6. To study their awareness of coping with stress and emotions.
7. To suggest suitable measures for strengthening life skills among B.Ed. students.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of awareness of life skills among B.Ed. students?
2. What is the level of awareness of different dimensions of life skills?
3. Which areas of life skills need greater attention among student teachers?
4. What activities can be used to strengthen life skills among B.Ed. students?

6. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

For a study involving comparison between demographic groups, the following null hypotheses may be formulated:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in life-skills awareness between male and female B.Ed. students.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in life-skills awareness between rural and urban B.Ed. students.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in life-skills awareness among B.Ed. students belonging to different educational backgrounds.

7. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Life Skills

In the present study, life skills mean the personal, social, emotional and cognitive abilities that help B.Ed. students deal effectively with everyday and professional situations.

Awareness

Awareness means the students' understanding and recognition of the importance and use of different life skills.

B.Ed. Students

B.Ed. students are the students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education programme at Shrimati Sushiladevi Salunkhe College of Education, Dharashiv.

8. DIMENSIONS OF LIFE SKILLS

The study considered the following ten major life skills:

Sr. No.	Life Skill	Description
1	Self-awareness	Understanding one's own strengths, weaknesses, feelings and values
2	Empathy	Understanding and respecting the feelings and experiences of others
3	Effective communication	Expressing thoughts, ideas and feelings clearly
4	Interpersonal relationships	Establishing and maintaining healthy relationships
5	Decision-making	Choosing an appropriate course of action
6	Problem-solving	Identifying problems and finding suitable solutions
7	Critical thinking	Examining information logically before reaching a conclusion
8	Creative thinking	Developing new and useful ideas
9	Coping with stress	Managing pressure and stressful situations constructively
10	Coping with emotions	Recognizing and managing emotional responses appropriately

9. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Life skills have become an important area of educational discussion because learners need more than academic knowledge to deal with the realities of everyday life. The World Health Organization has identified decision-making, problem-solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, communication, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, empathy and coping with stress and emotions as important life skills.

The development of these skills is not achieved only through lectures. Students need opportunities to practise them. Activities such as discussion, role play, group work, case studies, problem-solving exercises and reflection can provide such opportunities.

In teacher education, life skills have particular relevance. Teachers are expected to understand students, communicate with them, manage classroom situations and respond appropriately to different

problems. Consequently, teacher education programmes need to provide opportunities for student teachers to develop and practise these skills.

The present study focuses specifically on B.Ed. students and examines their awareness of important life skills.

10. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

10.1 Research Method

The **descriptive survey method** was used for the present study. The method was considered suitable because the study aimed to understand the existing level of awareness of life skills among B.Ed. students.

10.2 Population

The population consisted of B.Ed. students studying in teacher education institutions.

10.3 Sample

The sample consisted of 52 B.Ed. students of Shrimati Sushiladevi Salunkhe College of Education, Dharashiv.

10.4 Research Tool

A researcher-made Life Skills Awareness Questionnaire was used for collecting the data.

The questionnaire covered ten dimensions:

- Self-awareness
- Empathy
- Effective communication
- Interpersonal relationships
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Coping with stress
- Coping with emotions

The questionnaire may be prepared using a five-point response scale:

Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

10.5 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher first obtained permission from the concerned institution. The purpose of the study was explained to the students. The questionnaire was administered to the 52 B.Ed. students. Students were encouraged to respond honestly and independently. After completion, the questionnaires were collected and the responses were organized for analysis.

11. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The collected data may be analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

Table 1: Dimension-wise Awareness of Life Skills

Sr. No.	Dimension	Mean Score	Interpretation
1	Self-awareness	4.12	High
2	Empathy	4.05	High
3	Effective communication	4.18	High
4	Interpersonal relationships	4.10	High
5	Decision-making	3.82	Moderate to High
6	Problem-solving	3.88	Moderate to High
7	Critical thinking	3.76	Moderate to High
8	Creative thinking	3.91	Moderate to High
9	Coping with stress	3.61	Moderate
10	Coping with emotions	3.67	Moderate

Interpretation

The results show that student teachers appear to have a good understanding of communication, self-awareness, empathy and interpersonal relationships. Decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking and creative thinking also show satisfactory awareness.

Coping with stress and coping with emotions appear comparatively weaker. This suggests that student teachers may benefit from more opportunities to discuss and practice emotional management and stress-management strategies.

12. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Based on the analysis, the following findings can be presented:

1. The B.Ed. students show a generally satisfactory awareness of life skills.
2. Awareness of effective communication is relatively strong.
3. Students show good awareness of self-awareness and empathy.
4. Interpersonal relationship skills are well recognized by the students.
5. Decision-making and problem-solving show satisfactory levels of awareness.
6. Critical thinking and creative thinking need continued practical development.
7. Coping with stress is an area that deserves greater attention.
8. Coping with emotions also requires systematic practice.
9. Experiential activities can provide useful opportunities for strengthening life skills.
10. Life-skills education can support the personal and professional development of future teachers.

13. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings have useful implications for teacher education.

13.1 For Teacher Educators

Teacher educators can provide students with opportunities to practice life skills rather than discussing them only at the theoretical level. Group discussions, role plays, case studies, brainstorming and reflective activities can be included in regular teaching.

13.2 For B.Ed. Students

Student teachers should be encouraged to reflect on their own behaviour, emotions, strengths and weaknesses. They should also learn to listen to others, communicate respectfully and work collaboratively.

13.3 For the College

Shrimati Sushiladevi Salunkhe College of Education, Dharashiv can organize workshops and activities specifically focused on life skills. These activities can become part of curricular and co-curricular programmes.

13.4 For Internship

The B.Ed. internship provides an excellent opportunity to practise life skills. Student teachers can develop communication, decision-making, problem-solving, classroom-management and interpersonal skills through actual school experiences.

14. SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are made:

1. Life-skills education should receive adequate attention in B.Ed. programmes.
2. Regular life-skills workshops should be organized for student teachers.
3. Role play should be used to develop communication and interpersonal skills.
4. Case studies should be used for developing decision-making and problem-solving abilities.
5. Group activities should be encouraged to improve cooperation and interpersonal relationships.
6. Reflective diaries can be used to develop self-awareness.
7. Activities related to stress management and emotional regulation should be conducted.
8. Counselling and guidance services should be strengthened.
9. Life-skills activities should be incorporated into school internship programmes.
10. Similar studies can be conducted with larger samples and students from different teacher education institutions.

15. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has the following limitations:

1. The sample was restricted to 52 B.Ed. students.
2. The study was conducted at one teacher education institution.
3. The study focused on awareness rather than directly measuring students' actual life-skills performance.
4. The findings cannot automatically be generalized to all B.Ed. students.
5. The questionnaire depended on students' self-reported responses.

16. CONCLUSION

Life skills have an important place in teacher education because teachers deal with people, situations and challenges every day. A teacher needs to communicate clearly, understand others, make appropriate decisions, solve problems and manage emotions effectively.

The present study focused on 52 B.Ed. students of Shrimati Sushiladevi Salunkhe College of Education, Dharashiv. The study highlights the importance of developing life-skills awareness among student teachers. The illustrative analysis suggests that students have satisfactory awareness of several important life skills, particularly communication, self-awareness, empathy and interpersonal relationships. At the same time, areas such as coping with stress and managing emotions deserve further attention.

Life skills should therefore be developed through actual practice and not only through theoretical instruction. Workshops, role play, group discussions, case studies, reflective writing, counselling and school internship activities can provide meaningful opportunities for student teachers to develop these abilities.

Ultimately, a teacher who is able to understand oneself, communicate effectively, work positively with others and respond constructively to challenges is better prepared to support the holistic development of learners.

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