

Block

3

CRITICAL DEBATES IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

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Expert Committee

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(Chairperson)
Former Head, Department of
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NCERT, New Delhi

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Lal Bahadur Shastri Sanskrit
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Dr. Vandana Singh

Dr. Elizabeth Kuruvilla
Dr. Niradhar Dey
Dr. Anjali Suhane

Course Coordinator : Dr. Elizabeth Kuruvilla, SOE, IGNOU

Course Preparation Team

Course Contribution

Unit 8

Dr. Amita Puri
Associate Professor
Amity University
Haryana

Unit 9

Dr. Sutapa Bose
Associate Professor
SOE, IGNOU, New Delhi

Unit 10

Prof. K.S. Joseph
Retd. Professor
Department of Education
M.S. University, Baroda

Unit 11

Dr. P.D. Subhash
Assistant Professor
Planning & Monitoring Division
NCERT, New Delhi

Content Editing

Prof. Jessy Abraham
IASE, Faculty of Education
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi

Language Editing

Dr. Abhishek Tiwari
Assistant Professor
Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri
Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth

Course Design and Format Editing

Dr. Elizabeth Kuruvilla
Assistant Professor
SOE, IGNOU, New Delhi

Proof Reading

Dr. Elizabeth Kuruvilla
Assistant Professor
SOE, IGNOU, New Delhi

Material Production

Prof. N.K. Dash
Director
SOE, IGNOU, New Delhi

Sh. S.S. Venkatachalam
Assistant Registrar
(Publication)
SOE, IGNOU, New Delhi

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BES-121: CHILDHOOD AND GROWING UP

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- Unit 2 Socialization and Growing Up in Diverse Contexts
- Unit 3 Agencies of Socialization

Block 2: Growing Up: Infancy to Adulthood

- Unit 4 Understanding Growth and Development
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Block 3: Critical Debates in Childhood and Adolescence

- Unit 8 Growing Up with Media**
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-

BLOCK 3 CRITICAL DEBATES IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Introduction

This block serves as a window to peep into the various debates that arise during childhood and adolescence. While passing through the stages of childhood and adolescence, you might have faced with various issues and problems. You know that adolescence is a critical juncture in the expression of behaviours that are acceptable to all. During their growing up process, adolescents experience different conflicts within themselves as well as with others, and also face different problems. This block will give a rich and comprehensive picture of these issues and problems, the life skills needed to combat with these problems and the role of different organizations and legislation to protect child rights.

This Block consists of four units.

Unit 8 entitled 'Growing Up with Media' is an issue that is high on the worry list of teachers and parents. This Unit contains an extensive discussion on the impact of media upon children and find ways and means to channelize this force in a constructive way in the lives of children, the future citizens of tomorrow. Discussion on gender stereotyping in media space is also covered in this Unit.

Unit 9 focuses on some of the problems faced by adolescents and the role of teacher in addressing these problems. We devote this Unit exclusively to adolescent problems, covering some main problems among adolescents such as substance use and abuse, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, depression, delinquency and compulsive internet use. This Unit comes to an end by the discussion on the ways to prevent and intervene in these problems by the teacher.

Unit 10 will help you understand life skills and life skills education. You know that adolescents become easily prone to risky behaviours. Here lies the importance of life skills. Life skills are strengths, skills and capacities that can help adolescents face life problems with a positive attitude and carry out various tasks effectively. By going through this Unit you will realize the importance of life skills education programme in schools.

In **Unit 11**, we attempt to examine the child rights perspective in the cultural context of India. You will come to know the various rights of the child listed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which is an international convention, seeking to establish rights of children. The role and importance of major organizations in the protection of child rights are also detailed in this Unit. Finally, you will find discussion on the role of a teacher in protecting child rights.

In this way this block will flare-up your curiosity to read and think more on childhood and adolescence debates, examine child rights and the need to develop life skills among children.

UNIT 8 GROWING UP WITH MEDIA

Structure

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Objectives
- 8.3 Children's Use of the Media
- 8.4 Constructing Gender Stereotypes in Media Space
 - 8.4.1 Gender Stereotypes on Television programmes
 - 8.4.2 Gender Roles in Advertising
 - 8.4.3 Depiction of Children and Adolescents in Media
- 8.5 Impact of Media on Children
 - 8.5.1 Media and Learning about the Social World
 - 8.5.2 Social Media and Creativity
 - 8.5.3 Media and Peer Culture
 - 8.5.4 Media Violence in Children's lives
- 8.6 Role of Teachers and Parents
- 8.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 8.8 Unit –End Exercises
- 8.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 8.10 References and Suggested Readings

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Children now-a-days are going online at younger ages with the rapid increase of various devices in the market like tablets and touch screen devices. Number of children using such technological gadget sitting at home, at school, at cafe or at friend's place has been increasing over time. In fact, in this present day scenario, media is like the peer who is there available 24x7 with the children and influences their mental, emotional and social well being. Thus, we may say that such technological innovations act as a dynamic and disruptive force, be it television, movies, books or the ubiquitous universe of digital media, transforming the role of media in the lives of children and adolescents. Children and teens are 'digital natives,' drawn online from infancy to engage in an ever-changing digital ecosystem that is enhanced by mobile media.

Role of media in children's lives has generated the following questions:

- How long do children interact with different types of media?
- How do children use media?
- How do media impact on children's lives?

In this Unit we will be mainly concerned with the third question, as this has most important issue relating to children's development. As teachers or prospective teachers, we need to understand the impact of media upon children and find ways and means to channelize this force in a constructive way in the lives of children, the citizens of tomorrow.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- identify the influences of gender stereotypes in media;
- elaborate upon the impact of gender roles in advertising;
- discuss the relationship between social media and creativity;
- describe how peer culture influences gender stereotyping;
- discuss the strategies to be used by teachers and parents in diminishing the negative influence of media on children;
- critically analyze media messages and programmes; and
- sensitize teachers and parents about their roles in regulating media influence.

8.3 CHILDREN’S USE OF THE MEDIA

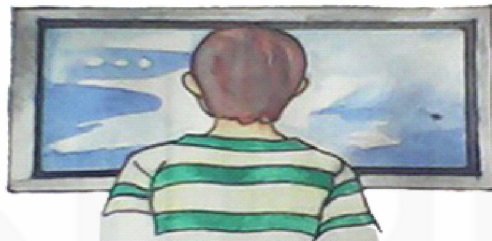


Fig. 8.1: Child and television viewing

Children’s lives are dominated by media—from traditional television to the ‘new media’ such as iPads, tablets, apps in mobiles, and social media. Today’s children are spending an average of seven hours a day on entertainment media including television, computer, cell phones and other electronic devices. Studies have

shown that excessive media use can lead to attention problems, school difficulties, sleep and eating disorders, and obesity. In addition, the internet and cell phones can provide platforms for illicit and risky behaviours. Therefore, the role of parents and teachers assume great significance these days as our children get exposed to many undesirable patterns on line which is not good either for their mental health or physical health.

Media which comes under interactive technology is considered as a cultural tool for mediating social interactions, thereby placing the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky relevant to contemporary communication researchers. The two tenets of socio-cultural theory- (1) dominant activity and (2) the zone of proximal development resound deeply with children’s lives in the digital age. According to Vygotsky, the dominant activities are pervasive among children within a particular culture. In the digital age, engagement with media and interactive technology should be considered as dominant activities for children. Therefore, it is important to consider use of media as a dominant activity which affect children as well as shape the larger cultural landscape.

The tenet of ‘zone of proximal development’ (ZPD) provides an explanation for how the child learns with the help of others. The ZPD is the distance between the child’s actual developmental level and his or her potential level of development under the guidance of more expert adults. Using media as a means of social interaction, the child learns by constructing his or her understanding by social events in the world. This phenomenon is known as scaffolding. For example, the internet helps children access adult-targeted sites and thereby increases their knowledge in various topics.

8.3.1 What do children do online?

Due to enhanced and easy accessibility to internet, children from very young age become ardent social media users. They play games on internet, use Face book, You Tube and Google in a heartbeat. Most of their time is spent on texting, commenting and posting their own status updates. In other words ‘they like, they post, they share’ what they want. And they value it very much.



Fig. 8.2: Child's use of iPad

How can media benefit children?

There are various ways in which media benefit children. Let's have a look at the ways in which younger children are benefitted:

- There are various computer games and educational apps which make learning of *literacy skills* interesting and funny as well.
- Children seem to enjoy getting familiarized with various shapes and sizes, counting, addition, subtraction etc. thereby learning *numeracy skills*.
- Interestingly, children also develop helping behaviour in terms of cooperation, coordination, sharing, giving way, taking lead, etc. in terms of playing computer games and using educational videos, thereby acquiring *social skills*.

The older children also get benefitted in different ways:

- They learn to develop *critical thinking* and *problem-solving* skills through various apps and games meant for their ages. The teacher needs to keep herself/himself abreast of these technological advancements.
- They also learn *family values* and learn to adapt gradually and adjust themselves in their wants by observing other people's needs and interests. This happens through various social games and quizzes which are available in terms of educational apps.
- There are also apps which seem to develop *creative thinking* too and give huge impetus to developing imaginative vistas in their fertile mind. The teacher just needs to light the spark in terms of creative arts, clay modeling, graphics and designing etc.

Adolescents too benefit in a number of ways:

- They learn to develop *social skills* and *online etiquettes* in dealing with people organizations.
- They get *access to various information* related to their future careers. For example, a student who wants to prepare for various competitive examinations will have ready access to many websites which can help her/him.
- A student who wants to



Fig. 8.3: Access to internet

learn guitar can have online access to various tutorials who will teach her/him how to play guitar.

- They can also *improve* their *general knowledge* and hone up their *political awareness* which will be of immense help to them for competitive exams.
- They also learn good moral behaviours by watching serials which emphasize on instilling good values in oneself and the significance of it as well.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Elaborate with examples, how media can benefit younger children.

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ii) Do you think that media can benefit adolescents? Give reasons for your answer

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8.4 CONSTRUCTING GENDER STEREOTYPES IN MEDIA SPACE

Before going into the details of gender stereotyping in media, it is useful to analyze the way how gender is represented in media. The following questions help us focus on differences in the portrayal of men and women in television programmes and advertisements:

- Are males and females evenly distributed in media or is the balance skewed?
- Are female reporters limited to certain subjects?
- Are traditional gender roles reinforced-for example, females in family life and males in occupation outside the home?
- Are independent and active females pictured as superwomen and other women as docile and emotional?
- Are females depicted primarily as the objects of male desire?
- How are females portrayed as victims of violence?
- Does the representation of females help us understand the various dimensions of females in terms of interest, aptitude, personality, etc.?
- Do media programmes reflect multicultural diversity?

Media is really instrumental in shaping the way we think about gender stereotypes. In fact media promotes gender stereotypes in various ways. Young boys and girls learn and enact the roles which they watch on TV, magazines and newspapers. In

addition to this blurred reality, women are portrayed with ultra-thin and so called “ideal” bodies and men are shown with over-the-top defined muscles. These stereotypes can give your child the wrong message about what the rest of the world looks like.

Let’s discuss gender stereotypes in media in detail.

8.4.1 Gender Stereotypes on Television Programmes

Technological advancements during 1990’s made media presence felt by the Indian masses in terms of opening up great variety of TV programmes which were hitherto unavailable. There was hope among TV viewers that they would get a lot of information through various programmes and will be able to watch world news and things happening globally. However, unfortunately, TV ended up being a means of infotainment rather than what people had hoped for. Lots of eve-teasing scenes and domestic violence scenes are shown rampantly leaving indelible mark on the young minds.

The working woman is the epitome of modern values while the housewife embodies Indian values – here modernization and westernization are equivalent to moral degradation. Many serials depict the newly married daughter-in-law being showered household responsibilities and her young adolescent brother-in-law/sister-in-law enjoy her discomfort as she gets a scolding from her mother-in-law. All these visual exposures are imbibed by today’s generation. In such scenario, a teacher’s role becomes very significant and s/he can actually play the agent of social change by having discussions in the class on social evils pervading the Indian society. During such discussions s/he can actually mould the young minds as to what is right and how the wrongs in the society can be set right. This is the stage to implant such positive seeds of thought in young minds and teacher is in right position to do so. In fact, it is very rare to find serials which show women doing well in both personal and professional roles. The women today, unlike shown on TV, are forging ahead to meet the challenges involved in coming out of the traditional cultural barriers and also asserting their independent identity.

Activity 1

Case 1: *Ashie, a 14 year old girl studying in Class VIII did not respond at all when her father once shouted at her in a playful manner. Her mother had expired a few years back and her paternal grandmother was brought in to look after her. He was surprised as Ashie was the girl who would always answer back even when she was in the wrong. On some other occasions when she showed the same behaviour when her father scolded her for something – it troubled him as it was totally unlike her “normal” behaviour. He met the class teacher and shared with her this dilemma. Gentle probing revealed that her grandmother had told that all wives get a scolding from their husbands so she should get this training of not answering back from that age itself. She would show the serials which propagated this belief and the poor girl was in the state of traumatized conflict.*

1) If you are the teacher of Ashie, how would you help her?

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8.4.2 Gender Roles in Advertising

Gender equality seems a far reality when popular media seems insistent on portraying gender roles in very “traditional”, “outmoded” ways. Certain aspects that deserve attention from a gender perspective are listed below:

- Portrayal of females in terms of the interplay of their personal and professional relationships. For example, when a female is depicted as working outside the home, is she also portrayed as strong in terms of her personal relationships, or is she depicted as confused in need of male support?
- What is the gender environment when females are portrayed as heading new roles, for example as police officers?
- How is the family structure depicted? Who is the focus of family life and activity?
- How are males and females depicted in terms of emotions?

Traditional Gender Stereotypes in Advertising

In general, review of the advertisements, anytime, anywhere, reveals that:

- Females are shown in submissive roles or very provocative roles wearing seductive clothing;
- Females are generally shown as product users rather than as competent authority;
- Females are shown either doing domestic work or in a home environment rather than at work.

Overall, there is clear evidence that portrayals of men and women in advertising are not equal, but rather conforms to common beliefs about appropriate gender roles and gender stereotypes. Go through the following case:

Case2: Aditya, a good looking 14 year old boy studying in class VIII wants to be a model as he grows up. So far so good. But he has stopped studying seriously and says “to be a good model you do not need to be good at studies and models earn more than these studious studs”. Fortunately, his parents and class teacher coordinated together to make him see reason and they were able to convince him with their patience and understanding.

Here, a teacher’s role is immense as s/he is dealing with such students in the class and can help them understand their problems, queries and dilemmas. Also, a teacher needs to realize that adolescence is a stage of rebellion as they are growing up. Therefore, a teacher is in a far better position than the parents to shape the young minds in the right direction.

Check Your Progress 2

- Notes:** (a) Write your answers in the space given below.
(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

Have a look at the pictures and answer the questions given below:



Fig. 8.4



Fig. 8.5

i) What do these pictures convey?

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ii) How is gender stereotypes propagated in these pictures? Give reasons for your answer.

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8.4.3 Depiction of Children and Adolescents in Media

The portrayal of adolescents is not fair in media. Many media portray adolescents as emotional, overly dramatic, immature and unable to take rational decision. These adolescents in the media are shown partying and going on adventure trips which make the adolescents watching them in media feel quite unreal – as they are the ones doing all the less significant work like finishing homework in time, studying, revising and trying to work really hard in a competitive manner. These portrayals make the adolescents feel that they are missing out on components of “experience” that the media likes to exaggerate.

Children are depicted as manipulating their parents to buy for them what they like from the depiction in the media, which may not always be the case in real life. The adolescents are either depicted as very obedient and conforming to the norms and all hell breaks loose on them when they move away from the “protected” fold of the parents. An adolescent with issues in real life is not depicted in a fair manner which leads to unrealistic role models / icons in the eyes of today’s adolescents.

Case 3: *15 year old Sonia, studying in class IX is emotionally attached with the tele character she sees on the TV everyday. In the serial there are 3 school girls vying for his attention. Gradually, her interest in academics has started diminishing and she started caring more for her appearance, looks and dresses. She made her mother buy a most expensive dress for her birthday party because she wanted to compete with the three girls on the TV who were trying frantically to catch the attention of this batch mate of theirs. Her parents did not realize what was going on but were upset with her errant behavioural changes.*

Luckily, her class teacher too noticed these changes in her and gentle persistent probing led to many cues and clues about the changes which were going on inside her. And finally, she could get rid of this ardent desire of hers to woo a boy whom she meets on television everyday.

The above case makes very clear that a teacher’s role is immense in dealing with adolescents in the class. While teaching their topics/subjects in the class, they should keep an eye about any untoward changes happening in their students. They should view their students as growing individuals and also pierce through their invincible barriers they weave around themselves as they become adolescents.

8.5 IMPACT OF MEDIA ON CHILDREN

The risks and opportunities of the changing media and communication environment raise new questions in the lives of children in the digital age. In this digital age, the impact of media on children’s attitudes, beliefs and behaviours was primarily examined through the social and psychological study. Media is impacting childrens’ lives in various ways. The way they behave, the way they look and are looked at are all influenced directly or indirectly by media. Media sells dreams and adolescents just buy them without thinking of the consequences.

Case 4: Rohan, a timid 15-year-old boy of class IX was going through a trauma in the school which his peers and teachers were unaware of. He was being physically abused and bullied by one of his overgrown classmate. He would touch him inappropriately in toilets and would do various things in his private parts. Rohan was too angry and frustrated but did not have the confidence to report to his class teacher or even tell his parents about it. One day, he got an idea from a TV programme and next day he confides to a matured friend and lured his class fellow to the toilet where they took revenge of him.

In this case, even though Rohan was a victim, his teachers or his parents should have noticed something amiss in his behaviour as the abuse had been going on for months. It was this frustration which led to this violence guided by some programme on TV.

Teachers have to develop a “third eye” of noticing when things go amiss and the student manifests such deviations in various ways over some time like the eye movements, frown on the forehead, lowering of concentration, absenteeism, etc. These tell tale signs reflect a lot about what is going on and teachers have to learn to develop the ability to understand her/his children.

In the following section we will learn more of the impact of media on adolescents.

8.5.1 Media and Learning about the Social World

Case 5: Swati was a cute 14-year-old in class VIII who was very focused on becoming a doctor. But slowly, her behaviour started changing. She was gradually becoming dreamier in the class, less focused and less regular in doing home work. If she was ticked off in the class for becoming dreamy, she would start crying. Gentle probing by her science teacher revealed that she was developing poor image of her body because she thought

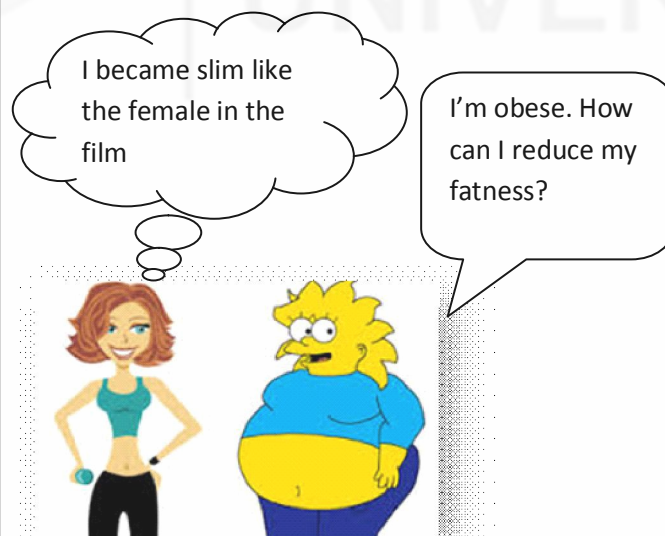


Fig. 8.6: Developing sense of image of one’s body

she was obese and thus sinking into depression.

Her teacher's persistence and perseverance helped her come out of this dilemma and she was on the track once again in studies. There are various things one learns from the social world. Let's have a look at the following:

- **Sex in the media**

There are various ways in which sex is shown in the media, through pictures, language, songs, actions, provocative dresses/ content and so on. All these audio visual contents leave their imprint on the delicate mind of a child.

- **Violence in the media**

These days, many juveniles have admitted that they were motivated to do a particular crime by watching TV or reading about it in the newspapers. Most kids know that violence is not the answer but the media contradicts this learning. Teachers have to keep on explaining to the child in various ways at varying times that violence in the media is for entertainment only and not for realistic problem-solving.

- **Obesity and the Media**



Fig. 8.7: Obesity and the media

It's a vicious cycle here. The issue of pencil slim figures or zero sized figures is highlighted by the media and children get enamored by the hefty pay packet which these young heroines/models earn, which make them seem that money comes without any hard work unlike that associated with studies and examinations.

Also at the same time, the number of hours they sit in front of the TV adds to their physical lethargy leading to obesity and related issues. Teachers have to keep on warning children and the parents about this malaise. The information which children may not be able to "lump in" from their parents may be able to take it from their teachers. Therefore, teachers have a greater role in shaping the young minds especially adolescents who are going through several turmoil – physical and mental.

- **School Performance and the Media**

Overexposure to the media is also linked to poorer academic skills. Teachers have to develop the skill of letting students know the adverse effects of media if they feel that the children are becoming under-achievers.

But the media does not always negatively impact the child. It can also be beneficial for the children. It can also help them learn independently, communicate, have fun, relax and grow up.

8.5.2 Social Media and Creativity

There are certain media benefits for children and adolescents. Researchers have shown that video games can have a positive impact on children. When played in moderation such videos have improved children's motor skills, hand-eye coordination, problem solving skills and creativity.

Television, movies, computer games and the internet have also shown a positive influence on children; especially when the teachers and parents get involved in their lives in using them and help them make good choices.

Case 5 : *Astha is a budding 16 year old class X student whose aim is to become an engineer. She knows that her father may not be able to fund her studies abroad but that is her aim. Her teacher told her about finding profiles of various US Universities on the website and she started applying for fees waiver and to find out other benefits which may be available. She is happily doing the same in her free time while studying hard to improve her academics.*

In this case, Astha's teacher is giving the right guidance to her and she is able to use the internet creatively to suit her needs. Adolescents can also be media creators, not just consumers. Some adolescents as amateurs start making their own movies, taking photographs and creating online content which helps them develop critical thinking, social, technical and artistic skills.

Teachers can help the children get media benefits by telling them to visit quality websites, encourage them to use educational software which offers extra learning opportunities. They can also suggest the students to look for TV programmes and movies that give children the chance to find out about places, animals, people, ideas, and issues and cultures which otherwise cannot see or connect with. These can inspire them to try new activities and think about their new ideas. Some movies and TV programs can expose the children to **diversity**, especially ethnic diversity, which is a good thing.

Software, apps and websites that get children drawing pictures or making up stories or rhymes can **foster creativity**. For adolescents, especially, this can also be a way for them to express their ideas and feelings. This way teachers will pave way for developing media related creativity and sensitivity in the adolescents.

8.5.3 Media and Peer Culture

Peer influence on a child is very strong especially during adolescence. The adolescents' thoughts, behaviours, actions, attitudes, opinions, etc. are all shaped by their peers and they also like to emulate the group they are in. Peer interaction about media content set up norms for acceptable content for the group and decides which media they should use. Shared media use such as mobile phone, WhatsApp, laptop, etc. is another way whereby media penetrates into the peer culture.

Case 6: *Sanjeev, a 14-year-old-boy is very conscious of the fact that his father is a sweeper. His ambition is to study abroad. But he knows that his father will not be able to afford this. So, in his own way he found four like-minded friends, spoke to his class teacher for guidance and accordingly they approached a bank for an educational loan who guided them for further paper work. All this procedure took a few years. But at age 18, these four adolescents are now in Denmark pursuing their educational dream.*

Here, the role of the teacher is significant, who when approached, was able to give wings to their dreams by giving appropriate guidance at the right time and channelized their energies in the right direction.

8.5.4 Media Violence in Children's lives

Read the following case:

Case 7: *This is a true report of the British 14-year-old Hannah Smith who turned to popular social networking site Ask.fm in July 2013 for getting assurance from others. Stressed out from studying for exams and anxious about the return of eczema that made her feel ugly, Smith opened up about*

her feelings on the site, which allows users to pose questions and others can respond to anonymously. The responses came in quick succession but some anonymous people told her to kill herself online which she did promptly. Her father demanded action against the site for cyber bullying.

Source: Johnson, Chandra (May 28, 2014). Growing up digital: How the internet affects teen identity. Retrieved from <http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1553/growing-up-digital-how-the-internet-affects-teen-identity.html>.

Through this case we see that adolescents’ need for validation and confirmation that you are ok is so huge that its denial may result in severe identity crisis. They will go to unknown sites to have this validation from unknown people that they are ok because they do not get it from their parents or teachers or significant others in their lives. Media may often play a positive role, but at times, a negative role too as in this case. The teachers need to stress such fact of cyber bullying to the students in the class. At the same time, they must be sensitive about such issues when they themselves deal with non-compliant adolescents at school.

Online vs. real-time identities

Many adolescents view their online and real-time identities as identical and it can be a recipe for disaster. They don’t have the impulse control to understand the damage they can do to themselves online. Some children are affected by digiphrenia. Digiphrenia is the experience of trying to exist in more than one incarnation of oneself at the same time. Many adolescents today develop this kind of disorder.

Here again, teachers’ role is very significant.

Case 8: *Anitta, an eleven year old girl studying in class V was gradually showing withdrawal behaviour in the class. She was not interacting much with her class fellows and was becoming absent-minded in the class. Her parents also reported that she was becoming quieter and stopped taking any interest in studies. She wept very often and was seen spending more time in front of the mirror. The school counselor told her class teacher to talk to her gently and probe delicately with her. Preliminary probing revealed that she was going through the trauma of cyber bullying on the web. Some people had poked fun of her looks in the picture she had posted of herself and it was difficult for her to deal with the comments.*

In this case, teacher gradually, helped her come out of this dilemma and made her realize the difference between real world and online world. Subsequently, smile was back on Anita’s face again and she was once again the cheerful girl she used to be.

Activity 2

Conduct a study in your classroom to find out the types of media use by adolescents. How did their use of media influence their development in positive and negative ways?

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8.6 ROLE OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Though we have discussed in brief about the role of teachers and parents in different contexts of regulating the media influence on children and adolescents, in this section we will elaborate more on their role. Teachers and parents need to play a more proactive role in shaping the young minds in the classroom and at home. For this, the teachers require training and sensitization to first unlearn their own biases and pre-conceived notions. Once sensitized themselves, they can play a crucial role in creating the right environment free from gender bias. You can conduct workshops on parenting to sensitize them about the kind of exposures the present lot of students are privy to and ways to deal with these issues. You will also learn from such workshops about dealing with such sensitive issues in daily life.

Some of the following suggestions can be given to parents:

- Adopt co-viewing as a form of intervention. For example, when watching a violent programme, parents can explain the effect of violence in one's lives.
- Discuss with your children about the concept of cyber bullying as they start becoming active in the online world.
- Make regular dialogues an integral part of everyday parenting.
- Setting up home rule time in terms of number of hours allowed being online.
- Model the kind of online behaviour you would like them to be.
- Discuss about the undesirable behaviour they get exposed to online and what is wrong in those. This will help develop good quality parent-child relationship and the children will be more receptive to what the parents value.

Teacher educators can also guide schools to be sensitive about such exposures and how to cope up with these while the children are with them in school. Little minds get confused with so many conflicting exposures they see online and in real life as well.

In-service teacher training workshops can deal with the issues of the following kinds:

- Sudden changes in children's personality and behaviour like getting irritated more often, getting more weepy or withdrawn, etc.
- Unexpected changes in friendship groups
- Social withdrawal – less interaction with fellow-students
- Loss of concentration
- Less interest in schoolwork
- Absenteeism
- Decline in physical health
- Increased negative self- perception

Case 9: Shama used to be a healthy fun-loving 13 year old girl who came from a middle class background. Daughter of a Government official, her dream was to become an engineer. Her teachers did not notice any change in her, but one day her parents brought her to school with various complaints like she was becoming more aggressive, disobedient at home and refuses

to take food. Gentle probing by the school counsellor revealed that she was teased by her classmates for putting on weight and acne on her face. She was crying when she spoke about these issues. She told the counsellor, “ I am overweight. I look so bad. What will I do in life? No one will even look at me. When I see all those beautiful girls on TV, I get angry with my mother for not making me beautiful.”

In this case, the teachers and parents have to reassure the child about her perceptibly wrong image of her body so that she comes out of her dilemma and is able to focus on the present. Therefore, the role of parents and teachers is immense especially in dealing with adolescents who are really hypersensitive at this stage and age. As parents and teachers, they should respect and accept opinions and feelings of adolescents, and also correct those if they are wrong. It is also important to teach media literacy to help children understand how the media are trying to manipulate their thinking in subtle ways. Sensitizing teachers about gender roles, empowerment issues, and media power that can play a major role in making them march towards a better tomorrow. At various places in this unit, we emphasized the significance of continued collaboration between parents and teachers in shaping the children for a better tomorrow. It is, thus, very important for both parents and teachers to team together to handle both children and adolescents with sensitivity, understanding, tolerance and care.

8.7 LET US SUM UP

Media has a tremendous power to affect people’s thoughts, opinions and psyche. Therefore, it is media’s responsibility to be more responsible in what is projected and presented in terms of various audio visual media. However, as we have observed at various points in the module, media’s potential is yet to be tapped fully in curtailing the prevalent gender bias in the society and in promoting proper education for empowerment of children and adolescents. Today most of the newspapers, television channels, internet sites and the people owning them and holding responsible positions therein are required to modulate their role and responsibility towards advancement of women empowerment and progress. This is possible only if the existent bias, prejudices and various kinds of physical and mental abuse meted out towards girls/women are reduced to sensitize all the members of the society. And teachers along with teacher trainees have also a significant role to play in this societal transformation.

The case studies presented in this Unit must have enabled you to understand the issues related to gender and the impetus needed to improve the present scenario. You must have also learnt the use of media to focus, discuss and debate the issues concerning gender with a view to bringing an improvement in the present society with the able, responsible and positive intervention of teachers, parents and teacher trainees.

8.8 UNIT-END EXERCISES

- 1) Elaborate upon the ways in which media benefit children’s development.
- 2) What should be the role of media in representing children and women?

8.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. i) Media benefit children in various ways. The knowledge is presented in the form of colourful pictures which aid learning and study becomes interesting in the form of various games and fun activities.

- ii) Yes. Certainly media can benefit adolescents in various ways. It's a source of information, knowledge and many facets of outside world to them, in terms of preparing for competitive exams, learning new things, etc.
2.
 - i) One picture reflects women as a product user of cosmetics and the other one shows the women in a subservient role. These pictures indirectly convey that the women's role is not linked with intelligentsia or high status.
 - ii) Gender stereotypes are propagated very evidently in these pictures. Women are shown as cosmetic users whose job is to look pretty and fair to attract men. The other picture propagates the role of women as "workers" who do subservient and menial works for the domestic upkeep of the house.

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UNIT 9 CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AFFECTING ADOLESCENTS

Structure

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Objectives
- 9.3 Contemporary Issues Affecting Adolescents and School Interventions
 - 9.3.1 Bullying
 - 9.3.2 Substance Use and Abuse
 - 9.3.3 Teenage Pregnancy
 - 9.3.3.1 Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)
 - 9.3.4 Depression and Suicide
 - 9.3.5 Delinquency
 - 9.3.6 Compulsive Internet Use
- 9.4 Role of School in Addressing the Contemporary Issues
- 9.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 9.6 Unit –End Exercises
- 9.7 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 9.8 References and Suggested Readings

9.1 INTRODUCTION

With a large population of adolescents, India can enjoy a demographic dividend and reap its socio-economic benefits, provided there are investments in health and education of the youth and their rights are protected (The Economic Times, Nov. 18, 2014). Investments in health and education are all the more necessary because growing incidences of depression, suicides, substance use, bullying and other such alarming trends among adolescents are often reported. For these problems the adage ‘prevention is better than cure’ is pertinent for schools as they are in a better position to prevent rather than cure full blown problematic cases. Hence, this unit introduces you to some of the common problems faced by adolescents through a brief description of each problem. The description is followed by suggestions for the school and the teacher in particular for preventing and/ addressing the problem. The suggestions are however, general and you may enrich and contextualize them on the basis of your experiences.

9.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- list some of the contemporary problems affecting adolescents;
- discuss the causes of the problems;
- explain the consequence of the problems; and
- describe the preventive steps that may be taken to lessen the occurrence of these problems.

9.3 CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AFFECTING ADOLESCENTS AND SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS

During adolescence the development of autonomy accelerates due to rapid physical and cognitive changes, expanding social relationships, and additional rights and responsibilities (Zimmer-Gembeck, & Collins, 2006). Autonomy has been defined in many ways in the context of adolescence. One such definition underscores the freedom to make choices, pursue goals, regulate behaviour (Collins, Gleason & Sesma, 1997, as cited in Zimmer-Gembeck & Collins, 2006) and this may lead to an urge to experiment and take risks, which may not always lead to socially desirable outcomes but in the long run may lead to problematic behaviour. Apart from autonomy, other factors, in fact, a complex of factors, which are difficult to extricate but nevertheless strengthen one another, may cause these problems. For instance, societal conditions like poverty, broken home, low parental supervision, academic stress, influence of peers, parents, community, neighbourhood, media and the like may trigger the onset and the continuation of these problems.

Most of these problems are widespread and while some are old, a few are the outcomes of the present socio- cultural scenario. However, all of them may be viewed along several dimensions, each of which poses a question. For instance, can these problems be prevented? Can they be overcome? What is the role of social agencies like family, community and school in preventing these problems? Can high achievers and the privileged also fall prey to these problems? Are there fixed solutions that can be prescribed for these problems? As you study the sub-sections comprising this section and relate the content to your field experiences and reflect on them, you are likely to pose more such questions as well as get answers that allow you to take a critical view of the content we have included.

9.3.1 Bullying

Read the following cases and try to answer the questions that follow:

- A young girl in Kolkata suffered severe trauma after a group of her seniors locked her inside a toilet after school hours. She had to be hospitalized. She did not survive (BBC NEWS, 13 September, 2013).
- A widely circulated mobile clipping of group of students pushing around a student repeatedly and hurling abuses at him at a Delhi school (The Times of India, March 13, 2014).
- Do these instances involve acts of bullying? What is bullying? What are the characteristics of a bully and that of the bullied? Is bullying restricted to a single incidence or is it episodic?

Do these instances involve acts of bullying? What is bullying? What are the characteristics of a bully and that of the bullied? Is bullying restricted to a single incidence or is it episodic?

Bullying is an aggressive behaviour normally characterized by repetition and imbalance of power and is socially unacceptable within the ethos of a democratic society but it is emerging as an international issue (Sampson, 2002; Smith & Brain, 2000) as it affects the victim's sense of security. Bullying is also not an act of one time aggression but is repetitive and purports to hurt the victim not once but repetitively. Sampson says that it is so widespread and common in schools that it is considered as a prime concern for children's safety in schools.

The aggression meted out may be verbal, with abuses, teasing and humiliation to hurt the victim emotionally or it may include physical assaults. There may also be other subtle, covert forms of bullying, difficult to discern. For instance, the exclusion of a child from a group and keeping him/her isolated, destroying or taking away the victim's possessions like pen, lunch box, books, notebooks, smearing ink on clothes, also amount to bullying. Some children are at greater risk of getting bullied. This is because of factors like personality, family background, disability, peer group reputation, race, religion, ethnicity and so on that may make the victim different from the rest in a group and getting singled out for bullying.

Bullying therefore involves individuals at two ends, one who bullies and the other who is bullied. The latter is naturally weaker and helpless in warding off the more powerful former. Bullying may be carried out by individuals or as we see in the cases above by gangs. We find in the second case that bullies are not necessarily older than the victim.

Bullying results in the victim getting physically and emotionally hurt. However, the bully also harms himself/herself. Studies indicate that while the one being bullied may develop low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, mistrust of others, suicidal tendencies, an aversion for school and may remain affected till a long time, one who bullies may also turn out to be an adult who indulges in violence and abuse (Smith, Debra & Rigby, 2004).

Cyber bullying, an online bullying through emails or social media, is also a widespread problem today. Technology expands the space within which there can be bullying and with an increasing access to advanced technology; incidents of cyber bullying are on the rise. This type of bullying may include the circulation of hate mails, offensive posts, personal informations, threats, unsolicited advances through social networking services, blogs, text messages, offensive postings and so on.

Role of a Teacher

In higher education, students, nowadays, need to give an undertaking that they will not carry out ragging, which is a form of bullying. The individual student thus becomes responsible for his/her conduct. However, in schools, teachers and the school administrators are responsible. As a teacher, you may consider the following:

- Not dismissing the complaint of the bullied as bullying may or may not stop with time and even if it does it may leave behind scars that are difficult to heal.
- Never discouraging a child from reporting bullying as many children shy away from reporting such incidents.
- Having a policy against bullying and make children as well as parents aware of it.
- Counselling the victim and ensuring support and protection, developing confidence in the victims without encouraging them to retaliate through violence.
- Dealing firmly with the bullies but without meting out corporal punishment.
- Encouraging team work and trying to keep the victim in the company of children who are not bullies.
- Breaking the gangs that bully and segregating the members in different teams.
- Discussing the matter with parents of bullies as well as the victims.

It is not unusual to find a teacher causing an emotional hurt to a student. Students

often emulate teachers and one abused by a teacher may also be abused by his/her peers. Hence, there is the need to create an environment in which every child is respected.

9.3.2 Substance Use and Abuse

Substance abuse is a worldwide public health concern which begins in the early youth for fun and subsequently influences the whole life of the individuals (Qadri et al., 2013). The epidemic of substance abuse among the young children in India in schools and colleges resulting in changing cultural values, increasing economic stress cannot be ignored (Reddy & Biswas, 2013). Use of these substances, possession and consumption of substances like alcohol and tobacco are illegal and a punishable offence. Even possession of narcotics (drugs) is absolutely illegal. Which are these substances? These substances are products like alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, marijuana, pills that are not prescribed to the taker, opiates, cocaine, amphetamines, hallucinogens, depressants, inhalants, club drugs, and performance enhancing drugs (Goldstein, 2011, cited in Matheson & McGrath, 2015). Cigarette smoking is also on the increase among teenagers (Windle & Windle, 2006) and so is the consumption of chewable tobacco. Most of these substances are relatively difficult to procure but some like cough syrup, shoe polish, glue, spirits used in ink remover and even tobacco products are not.

Why are these substances dangerous? These substances can affect not only learning but also the mental and physical wellbeing of the user, habit formation and association with those sharing the habit. Besides, intoxicants are a common cause of violence, accidents, injuries and death and can also enhance the risk of unprotected sex and its consequences. Intravenous drug use may lead to HIV infection. There is also a risk of death and serious ailment through intentional or accidental overdose of drugs. Children may also resort to theft and crimes to afford these substances.

While some children give up the use of these substances after a point of time or continue using them moderately, some may develop serious cravings for these substances and indulge in frequent and heavy usage reaching the level of abuse. This is a matter of concern. There are many studies which reveal that there is high correlation between abuse during adolescence and becoming drug addict in adulthood (Chakravarthy, Shah & Lotfipou, 2013). However, even those who use intoxicants moderately may be involved in accidents and violence.

Why do adolescents begin such practice? Research findings indicate that use and sometime heavy use of addictive substances like drugs and alcohol are begun for relaxing, getting social acceptance in the peer group, avoiding rejection and reducing negative feelings (Kuntsche, Knibbe, Gmel, & Engels, 2005, as cited in Matheson & McGrath, 2014). Easy availability of substances has been the most common reason for continued use, along with other reasons like relief from stress, and acceptability among peers (Tsering, Pal, & Dasgupta, 2010). Substance use by parents, peers, community members, role models, influence of media, low level of parental monitoring are also risk factors that may lead to initiation of substance use.

A considerable number of college students have their first drink of alcohol in school itself. Alcohol consumption among teenagers in urban schools is increasing at alarming rate; about 45% of class XII students drinking excessively. The reasons for this trend are many: elevating mood when upset, bored, for relaxing, getting acceptance among peers, getting plenty of money from parents but less supervision, easy access to alcohol, and the like.

Source: The Times of India, Oct 18, 2010

Case 1: *A child who had passed with high grade points in class X examination 2011 did not want to join the science stream. Nevertheless, in keeping with his parents' wishes, he opted for science in the XI standard and joined a tutorial that claimed to help children crack joint entrance examination for engineering. After a year he explained his falling grades in school to his parents saying that he was devoting his time to tutorials as admission to a good engineering college was more important than school grades. He told his parents that the tutorials were holding extra classes and often came home late in the evening. After some time, his parents found that he had been missing school as well as the tutorial. They also found that he had been spending time with his friends drinking regularly and at times heavily. It did not require much probing to make out that he had been doing it with his pocket money. His explanation was that he found his subjects difficult and he disliked being at school as well as the tutorial.*

A school unlike a tutorial has certain responsibilities. Hence,

Should the schools have discussed with parents-

- the need to not just allow but encourage children to make subject and career choices?
- the irregular attendance and falling grades?

Should the schools have discussed with the child-

- the reasons for his irregular attendance and falling grades?
- the reasons for his academic problems?

Role of the Teacher

It is very important to have comprehensive prevention and control programs for substance abuse in schools and the community, targeted toward adolescents and their parents and other family members. Hence, teaching the ill effects of substance use may not be adequate. However, you may keep a watch on students who have irregular attendance, are lethargic, tired, have red eyes, appear to be disheveled and drowsy, exhibit depression, sudden mood changes, irritability, and a general lack of interest in the school activities, new friends and the like.

You may also consider these steps:

- Communicate that even occasional use of alcohol and drugs at farewell parties, New Year, Valentine's Day, birthdays, wedding ceremonies and other occasions may lead to harmful impacts and these occasions may be more enjoyable when one remains alert and active;
- Convey that regular use of some substances like drugs and alcohol will lead to risk behaviours.
- Communicate that substance use is not glamorous and convey through pictures, videos and oral descriptions of real incidents that outcome may be quite unglamorous;
- Communicate to parents that parental supervision needs to be strong and regular, children must maintain account of pocket money spent and parents also need to be open for discussions on these issues with children;
- Seek the interventions of the school counsellors and /ask parents to seek professional help for dealing with the problems of substance use and abuse;

- Ask parents to be vigilant about empty vials, plastic pouches, syringes, paint cans, cigarette stubs, and other things that are normally not used at home and unexplained loss of money and valuables;
- Build partnership with the community by taking prevention programmes like campaigns and poster exhibitions to the community; and
- Show video programmes and powerful visuals depicting the consequences of substance use and abuse and hold relevant discussions.

9.3.3 Teenage Pregnancy

Adolescence is a phase of rapid physical growth and development leading to sexual maturation and desire for intimate relationships (Naswa & Marfatia, 2010). Emerging sexuality during this stage may lead to engagement in sexual activities including intercourses (Crockett, Raffaelli & Moilanen, 2006) leading to pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy is however discouraged in societies like India that lay down the minimum age of marriage. Still, in spite of access to schooling facilities and biological science being a part of the core curriculum till secondary level, teenage pregnancy is on the rise. In metros most teens are fully aware of their options and are well informed to come in time for an abortion (The Times of India, July 24, 2013). This makes questionable the assumption of factors like lack of information about contraception, lack of sex education and poverty as the prime reasons for the rising teenage pregnancies. If those educated and well informed consider abortion as a quick fix for the 'problem of pregnancy', the issue surely calls for serious deliberation.

Information and prudence help in practicing abstinence but the latter may wane with the use of intoxicating substances. Easy availability of abortive pills, pregnancy termination facilities, changing socio-cultural ethos due to the influence of media and peer pressure may also lead to the shedding of the age old inhibitions and overcoming the social stigma attached to premarital sex and pregnancy. Crockett, Raffaelli & Moilanen say that cultural proscriptions against sex before marriage are counterbalanced by permissive attitudes reflected in the media. (Miller, Bayley, Christensen, Leavitt, & Coyl, 2006).

School going girls usually terminate their pregnancy if they have the means. Hence, birth of underweight babies, complicated deliveries and the like may not be serious issues for them. Nevertheless, it is a matter of concern as it may affect learning and unprotected sex may lead to sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection, anaemia and physical and mental stress besides the ethical issues involved in treating abortion as an easy solution for getting rid of the unborn but living fetus. Therefore, schools need to hold discussions on this issue with children. Schools also need to hold discussions with parents to communicate that close parent-child bonding and parents' disapproval of adolescence sex and unprotected sex and supervision without over controlling are effective as these measures have been found to lessen adolescent pregnancy risks (Miller, et al., 2006).

9.3.3.1 Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Unprotected sex and sex with multiple partners can lead to the spread of a number of sexually transmitted diseases like Herpes, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, Human Immuno deficiency Virus (HIV) infection, which may lead to Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Hepatitis B. Nawasa & Marfatia (2010) point to the fact that the disclosure and declaration of HIV status to self and family is challenging and a guilt ridden process. Besides its treatment still being difficult and the social stigma attached to it being high, the affected individual finds it challenging to lead a normal life.

The risk of acquiring such STI during adolescence is high (DiClemente & Crosby, 2006). The National AIDS Control Organisation of India also says that physiologically, young people are more vulnerable to STIs than adults. It also says that lack of access to correct information and common misconceptions about modes of HIV transmission, tendency to experiment and an environment which makes discussing issues around sexuality a taboo adds to their vulnerability. Sex with multiple partners, unprotected sex, substance abuse and STIs are found to be positively correlated (DiClemente & Crosby, 2006).

India is among 12 high burden countries like South Africa, Nigeria and Tanzania that are home to the 2.1 million adolescents living with HIV. A UNICEF report says that AIDS-related deaths amongst adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 increased by 50% between 2005 and 2012, and that many adolescents were unaware that they were infected.

Experts have advised a combination of high-impact interventions like contraception, antiretroviral treatment, and so on in addition to investments in other sectors one of which is education.

Source: The Times of India (Dec 1, 2013)

Role of school

Schools have a crucial role to play and you may hold discussions on the following:

- dangers associated with unprotected sex ;
- modes of HIV transmission;
- abortion and contraception;
- significance of abstinence till adulthood;
- avoiding multiple partners;
- progressiveness and modernity not being synonymous with recklessness and immoral behaviour;
- adolescence as the phase in life, which should be devoted to education and building healthy habits for leading quality life.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) How is bullying different from a fight that may break out between children?

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ii) Will the intake of chewable tobacco amount to substance use? What is the role of a teacher in this regard?

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iii) Do you think that sex education should be an integral part of school curriculum?
Justify.

9.3.4 Depression and Suicide

Deliberate self-harm is common in adolescents and there are many reports that indicate that suicide is one of the major killers of adolescents and for every adolescent committing suicide there are hundreds more who attempt suicide (Hawton, Rodham, Evans, Weatherall, 2002). Suicide is among the top three causes of death among youth worldwide but it is an important, largely preventable public health problem (Radhakrishnan, & Andrade, 2012). Why do children attempt suicide? Suicides as per Seroczynski, Jacquez & Cole (2006) may be attempted because of three sets of risk factors: (1) psychological, which is due to psychiatric problems like depression, substance abuse; (2) behavioural like attempted suicide, which is a strong indicator of future attempts; and (3) family risk factors like loss or separation from family members, stress faced by family members, unstable home environment due to conflicts, lack of cohesiveness.

Depression and suicide are often juxtaposed because depressed adolescents are more likely to attempt or commit suicide (Seroczynski, Jacquez & Cole, 2006) and the prevalence of depression in adolescent students is high and suicidal ideation is significantly high among depressed students (Nagendra, Sanjay, Gouli, Kalappanavar & Vinodkumar, 2012). How will you know that a person is depressed? As per Seroczynski, Jacquez & Cole, depression is a syndrome and includes symptoms like sadness, irritability, appetite loss, weight loss, fatigue, feeling of worthlessness, guilt, suicidal thoughts or behaviours, and many other such symptoms. As teachers you may also watch out for signs like social withdrawal, crying, irrational worries or fears, not having confidence, irritability, aggression and academic problems.

Depression is linked to many factors like problems in family, academic problems, dissatisfaction with own body image, bullying including cyber bullying, substance use and abuse, financial problems and the like. Irrespective of the cause it needs to be taken seriously as it is a debilitating disease that affects academic and general well being and may not be cured on its own and may make the person attempt suicide.

It's estimated that 15-20 lakh suicide attempts occur in India every year. For every suicide committed, there are a minimum of 15-20 persons attempting suicide. Not all suicides are reported to police due to the stigma attached to it. A NIMHANS study has found that 11% of college students and 7%-8% of high school students have attempted suicide. In the survey, 1,500 school and college students were included and it was found that adolescents are under stress due to academic pressure, relationship with parents, peer groups and

romantic relationships. High rate of cyber-bullying is also a significant reason for depression among adolescents.

Source: The Times of India, Sep 10, 2014

India has some of the world's highest suicide rates and it is the highest in the 15-29 age group. The number of adolescents committing suicides includes many from well to do and educated families. There are many reasons for it, one being the outcome of the economic boom and open markets causing greater job anxiety, higher expectations, more pressure to achieve.

Source: NDTV, June, 22, 2012

These reports justify school based mental health initiatives. These initiatives may include approaches aimed at educating school pupils about mental health problems and screening for those at risk (Hawton, Rodham, Evans, Weatherall, 2002). Hence, depressed adolescents need to be identified and helped with the help of school counselors (Bansal, Goyal, & Srivastava, 2009).

Role of School

You may also consider these steps:

- A child may not be humiliated and his/her self-esteem may never be hurt;
- Parents may be told not to have unrealistic expectations from children;
- A child may not be compared to another, a brighter one.
- Symptoms of depression may be taken seriously.
- Practices that provide encouragement, involve children in tasks may be a part of the school activities

9.3.5 Delinquency

Cases of juveniles indulging in heinous crimes are rising sharply (The Times of India, Aug 20 2015). Juvenile delinquency refers to crimes committed by minors, and historically juvenile justice system focuses on rehabilitation and treatment than punishment (Flannery, Hussey, Biebelhausen, & Weste, 2006). In India, one is a minor up to the age of eighteen and crimes committed by those in this age group comprise juvenile delinquency. This comprises acts like theft, pick-pocketing, rape, physical assaults, vandalizing property and other such serious offences. Many interrelated factors instead of a particular reason can be ascribed to juvenile delinquency. These factors may be interlinked and may be home based, community based as well as school based but many studies indicate that poor school performance, truancy and dropping out of schools are connected to delinquency.

Young people who are at risk of becoming delinquent often live in difficult circumstances like parental alcoholism, conflict in family, poverty, broken family, abusive conditions, orphans, loss of parent(s), lacking the means of subsistence, housing and other basic necessities (World Youth Report, 2003). Many get involved in anti-social activities to fulfil their basic needs and need for recreation by earning money through these activities (Haveripet, 2013). However, the commonly held view that children from poverty stricken families with parents having lower levels of education are more prone to commit crimes is contested by cases of children from well-to-do families turning delinquents. There are, however, cases that establish a significant relation between substance use and delinquency and those using drugs

are more likely to commit violent acts (Flannery, Hussey, Biebelhausen & Weste, 2006).

Role of School

Read the following:

The United Nations (UN) Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency known as the Riyadh Guidelines, adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution in 1990, upholds the need for the prevention of juvenile delinquency as an essential step toward crime prevention in society. The guidelines issued in this regard require the society to engage young people in lawful, socially useful activities and develop a humanistic orientation towards society and life.

These guidelines consider education as one of the means for attaining this and requires all young persons to be able to access public education that in addition to academic and vocational education, develops respect for their culture as well as for different views and cultures and also teaches the social values of the country, human rights and fundamental freedom.

Schools should also nurture children's personality, and optimize the development of their abilities through their active involvement and effective participation in relevant activities that foster a sense of identity with and of belonging to the school and the community.

Schools need to impart guidance regarding vocational opportunities and career development and counselling for preventing and addressing problems of substance abuse, especially to those from the disadvantaged sections. Besides, the school climate should provide emotional support to children and avoid harsh disciplinary measures, particularly corporal punishment. Schools also need to partner with parents, community organizations and other agencies involved in the affairs of the youth.

The curriculum and teaching in schools need to be of high quality and co-curricular activities of interest to young persons need to be organized in the school. The school should also formulate policies and rules along with students' representatives and implement them in a just way.

9.3.6 Compulsive Internet Use

How much time do teenagers with access to smart phone and internet devote to these technologies? For what purpose do they usually use these technologies? Is the use supervised by an adult? You must be aware that children today spend considerable time gaming, watching videos, chatting, socializing through social networking sites, surfing websites. This is seldom supervised by an adult. This is also done at the cost of the time that can be utilized for educational activities, physical exercise and pursuing healthy hobbies. Even if they are using internet for educational purposes, prolonged use may impact health and cause problems like obesity and related problems, problem of eyes and so on. Prolonged use gets more serious when it involves immoral activities and addictive practices.

What is internet addiction? World Health Organisation (WHO) Report (WHO Expert Committee - 1964), Davey & Davey (2014) define addiction as dependence and continuous use of something for the sake of relief, comfort, or stimulation, which

often causes cravings when it is absent. They also say that apart from addiction to substance like drugs or alcohol, there may be behavioural addiction such as addiction to mobile phone. Smart phone, as per these authors, are making internet accessible and prolonged duration of usage can increase likelihood of hazards resulting from mobile phone use like depression, anxiety, insomnia, aggressiveness and may also damage the interpersonal skills of adolescents. It has been reported that excessive Internet use has a significant negative impact, leading to Internet addiction or pathological Internet use involving uncontrollable and damaging use of the Internet to the extent of addiction to specific things and activities on the Internet like adult websites containing porn. Some people start spending most of the time on dating and chatting, gambling and obsessive shopping. Although the latter may not be immoral, yet such purposeless use may affect health and waste time and cut down the time spent on physical activities, pursuing hobbies and socializing in the real world.

Teachers' role may comprise the following:

- Developing hobbies in children for relaxation;
- Encouraging students to engage in sports, games and other activities requiring physical activity; and
- Discussing the impact of prolonged use of Internet and visiting harmful sites.

9.4 ROLE OF SCHOOL IN ADDRESSING THE CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

The causes of the problems we have discussed are often complex with factors too closely intertwined to be segregated, identified and eliminated. Besides, the ways to address the problems, not being fixed, are hard to prescribe. Nevertheless, the role of a school is significant, especially in taking preventive measures as the remedy for a full blown problem usually lies at professional centers, outside the domain of the schools. Schools, therefore, have twin role of developing programmes that nurture positive and socially desirable traits in children and at the same time adopting measures for dealing with those deviating from accepted social norms through counselling services, partnership with parents and the community and by providing information about preventive measures as well as about professional help to the victims. The role of schools is therefore multidimensional but it lies more in prevention. The role is also general in nature as development of self-esteem, self-confidence and the ability for critical thinking and other life skills can help in making right choices and prevent these problems.

Higher degrees of behavioural and emotional school engagement lead to a significantly lower risk of substance use and involvement in delinquency (Li, et al., 2011). Hence, the school climate needs to be enriched with joyful and co-operative rather than competitive activities. Co-curricular activities that develop physical and mental health and relieve stress may be mandatory for all children. Activities like yoga, meditation, sports, manual work, vocational education, music and other fine arts, reading sessions, discussions, watching relevant films and videos are also necessary. Role play also helps in developing necessary attitude. Besides, the school environment needs to be inclusive with respect for one and all. Partnership with parents and community, organizing awareness campaigns within the school and in the community are also important.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What are the symptoms of depression?

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ii) Why is even a failed attempt of suicide a cause of concern?

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iii) Describe the initiatives you take for building the mental health of your students.

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9.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed some of the issues affecting adolescents. One such issue pertains to bullying in schools. It is quite common but often goes unnoticed till it leads to serious consequences. Unlike a one time act of aggression, bullying is repetitive and involves an imbalance of power. The more powerful individual attempts to hurt the less powerful one by causing physical and mental hurt. While the person bullied is affected, the bully may also develop psychological problems. The school should deal with such problems by formulating proper rules and by taking cognizance of the problem and dealing with it.

Consumption of addictive substances is also a cause of concern. Even occasional incidents of substance use may lead to accidents, violence and other such untoward incidents and regular use may cause physical and mental problems. The teacher therefore has to be cautious about symptoms of substance use, frequent absence from school and regularly hold awareness campaigns in the school and in the community. Teenage pregnancy is also a cause of concern as it affects health and unprotected sex raises the chances of contacting sexually transmitted infections, especially HIV infection. Sex education and discussions on these issues are required at school. Depression and suicide are also widespread problems. Teachers should be cautious about symptoms like sadness, irritability, weight loss, fatigue and other such symptoms and provide necessary support. Juvenile delinquency is another issue that demands attention. A democratic environment in the classroom, quality teaching and learning, vocational education, development of hobbies, counselling

services are some of the measures that may be adopted at schools. Excessive Internet use has also a significant and negative impact that may lead to Internet addiction. The teachers' role regarding most of these problems is similar and lies more in prevention through the organization of discussions, awareness campaigns, and life skills education.

9.6 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Collect newspaper reports of bullying in schools and hold discussions with your peers on the preventive measures that your schools may take for bullying.
2. Download videos depicting the impact of substance abuse. Select an appropriate one and show it to your students. Organise a discussion on it after the students have watched it.
3. Ask your students to hold interview with their peers on the impact of substance use and record it using cell phone/other device and help them in converting it into a video programme.

9.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.
 - i) Bullying like a fight involves an act of aggression but it is marked by repetition and imbalance of power and the bully is more powerful and the bullied less powerful.
 - ii) Yes, for children this amounts to substance use. The teacher should ensure that shops selling tobacco products do not operate in the vicinity of the school. S/he may frame rules banning tobacco use on school campus. S/he may organize campaigns against tobacco use with children putting up pictures, posters and slogans against tobacco use. S/he may invite experts to interact with children on the effects of tobacco use.
 - iii) Write your own answer.
2.
 - i) Symptoms like sadness, irritability, appetite loss, weight loss, fatigue, exhibition of feelings of worthlessness, and guilt.
 - ii) Suicide is one of the major killers of adolescents and indicates the problem pertaining to the mental health of the person attempting it. Besides, for one failed attempt, there may be more attempts that are better planned and executed leading to death or serious health issues.
 - iii) Write your own answer.

9.8 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 10 LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENTS

Structure

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- 10.3 Understanding Life Skills and Life Skills Education
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10.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 9 of this block, you have gone through some of the contemporary issues that affect adolescents in general. Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. It is an important stage in one's growth and development. Adolescents experience a spurt in their growth. The sudden functioning of sexual glands and increase in physical energy make them restless. Their emotions are not consistent but fluctuating. This makes them moody. Sadness and happiness alternates frequently. As a result, their emotional balancing is often disturbed. They may remain tense and anxious most of the time. They are likely to be haunted by a sense of fear, anxiety and depression. Despite all these, adolescence is a period in which important decisions are made. It is the time to know who you are and what you want to be in life. It is a period when you decide which stream and what course of study you should pursue. It is you, not your parents, who should make decisions related to your future. Therefore, you are likely to face several issues and problems during this stage. If

you develop a few life skills, they can help you in a big way, not only to know and manage yourself, but also to handle well the issues and problems you confront now and hereafter in your life.

Life skills are skills, strengths and capabilities that help you to face problems of everyday life with a positive attitude and handle issues effectively. Life skills strengthen your capabilities and help you face life problems with ease and confidence. This Unit attempts to provide you with details about some of the most fundamental life skills and how they can be used for all round growth and development.

10.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- define what life skills education are;
- spell out innumerable benefits that can be drawn out of life skills education;
- explain the importance of developing life skills;
- name the various core life skills;
- expound life skills that can lead to self-understanding and self-management;
- apply skills for building up self-awareness and self-management;
- define various skills that can help you learn to live together;
- build up abilities for getting along with others amicably;
- name the life skills that can help you handle issues and problems;
- make optimum use of these skills to handle issues and problems you face in your day-to-day life; and
- explain the steps schools take to teach life skills to students.

10.3 UNDERSTANDING LIFE SKILLS AND LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

Life skills are abilities that help you face life problems with ease and confidence. They refer to a multiplicity of psycho-social and interpersonal competencies that consist of bundles of habits. Life skills help adolescents make informed decisions, communicate effectively, develop coping and management skills to lead a healthy and productive life. Life skills such as self-esteem, self-awareness, assertiveness, coping with stress, coping with emotions, etc. can enable you to understand yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, your character and personality, and your values and principles. Your awareness about your positive points can enable you to make the most of your strengths and eliminate your weaknesses. As a result, in course time, you will be able to learn better and gradually move towards excellence. Similarly, life skills like effective communication, interpersonal relationships, empathy and conflict resolution help you understand others and get along with them amicably. Some other life skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making and problem solving help you deal with issues and problems that you face in your life.

Life skills, therefore, are very important for an individual. In spite of this, so far no serious efforts are being made to teach these skills to students. Even though we teach them a number of cognitive skills, life skills are yet to find their way into our class-room teaching. The World Health Organization has recognized its importance

and efforts and is already afoot to teach these skills to the adolescents in schools. It has helped some state governments and a number of teachers have been trained to infuse these skills with the curriculum that already exists. In course of time, it is hoped that our students will be equipped with these skills. Once students develop these skills, they will not only know themselves and get along amicably with others, but also handle the problems and issues they face in their day-to-day life.

10.4 IMPORTANCE OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENTS

Life skills, as we have already noted, are abilities that enable adolescents to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life. Adolescence is a time wherein teenagers go through a lot of physical and emotional changes. Their body begins to grow rapidly in shape and size. They also experience hormone change and sexual maturation. Girls experience menarche and boys, spermatarche. All these changes make them uncomfortable. They leave them confused and vulnerable. These pubertal changes affect their self-esteem and they develop poor body image. They become more concerned about how they look rather than what they want to accomplish in their life. If adolescents are equipped with life skills, they will be able to cope with all such situations successfully.

You have studied in Unit 9 how adolescents become prone to risky behaviours. Adolescence is a period of excitement, experimentation, and change. Adolescents are curious and want to experiment several things. They may easily divert their attention into activities such as smoking, using drugs, fighting, and taking laws into their hands. They are also prone to sexual relationships owing either to coercion or peer pressure. Many are pushed into action without giving any thought to consequences. Such individuals can possibly become subject to sexually transmitted infections. They need to learn the importance of saying “no” especially at times to negative peer pressure. They need to learn to take control of their emotions and make informed decisions. In all such situations, life skills surely guide them and place them on the high way to development.

Thus, life skills supply adolescents with capacity to deal with effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skills like critical thinking, creative thinking, etc. are higher order skills. If the students manage to equip themselves with these skills, they will be able to make predictions, make inferences, formulate hypotheses, draw conclusions, make decisions, solve problems, identify assumptions, recognize logical inconsistencies, etc. Self-awareness, for example, is a life skill that can throw ample light on oneself. It can shed light on our emotions, our behaviours, our social competence, our preferences, our goals, etc. Developing interpersonal relations is yet another important life skill. It is a competence that helps us relate to others effectively. In this way each life skill has much to contribute towards making us more effective and efficient. Life skill education, therefore, is something that is unavoidable as far as adolescents are concerned. It will unquestionably place them on the highway to growth and development.

10.5 CORE LIFE SKILLS

The term “core” refers to something fundamental or very important. Life skills are several in numbers. It is not necessary for students to learn all of them. However, the benefits that they yield are so inestimable that it is totally unjust to deprive them of developing at least a few of the most important ones. The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified a few life skills as basic. They are self-esteem, self-awareness,

assertiveness, coping with stress, coping with emotions, effective communication, interpersonal relationships (managing peer relationships), empathy, conflict management, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision-making and problem solving. These core life skills are categorized under three heads, namely, (i) life skills for self-understanding and self management, (ii) life skills that help to live with others, and (iii) life skills that help you handle various issues and problems that you face in your day-to-day life. As these life skills are crucial to students, we discuss each of them briefly.

10.5.1 LIFE SKILLS FOR SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-knowledge is basic to growth and development. In case, you know very little about yourself, your chances for development are meager. It is awareness about your positive and negative aspects that motivate you to make the most of your positive qualities and eliminate your weaknesses. It is awareness and intense motivation that enable you to spend your time and energy to accomplish tasks. If you develop life skills such as self-esteem, self-awareness, assertiveness, coping with stress and coping with emotions, they will provide you with the required insight into all aspects of your life that will help you manage yourself well. Hence these life skills should be dealt with at some length.

10.5.1.1 Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to the state of mind of an individual arrived at as a result of accurate and objective assessment of his or her abilities, affiliations, and influences. The way we think, feel and act depends largely on our self-esteem. It is such a state of mind that hardly leaves any sphere of your life untouched. Whether or not you are confident, assertive, willing to take risks, responsible, optimistic, internally-driven and proactive depends to a great extent on your self-esteem. When your self-esteem takes a downward trend, you begin to show up the tendency to run away from responsibilities, turn out to be fatalistic, reactive and wait for things to happen rather than take the initiative needed to make them happen. You become lonely and moody, and get hurt easily, exhibit lack of confidence and wait for approval from others. As you lack vision, you fail to set moderately challenging goals and carry them through to success. You will then hardly get opportunity for experiencing success and the happiness that accompanies it.

Enhancing your self-esteem is important, if you wish to develop a wholesome personality, increase your capacity to learn, and not to fall a victim to depression and other psychological disturbances. The causes of low self-esteem are many. Lack of clear-cut and meaningful goals and objectives, self-indulgence, procrastination, lack of self-discipline, harbouring shame, guilt, remorse, self-pity, comparing yourself and your accomplishments with those of others, depending on others for doing things, judging yourself for every frailty, shortcoming or mistake are some of the major reasons that prevent you from cultivating a high level of self-esteem. In case, you wish to nurture a high level of self-esteem, you have to set realistic goals, develop assertiveness skills, take up responsibility for your own growth and development, monitor your own emotions and impulses and lead a life of values and principles.

10.5.1.2 Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is knowledge about yourself. It has to do with paying ongoing attention to your internal state such as your moods and feelings, your beliefs and values, your behaviour and attitudes, etc. and having an impartial assessment of them. It is a

neutral awareness of what is happening in you. It involves awareness about your own emotions, your behaviour, your locus of control, and your strengths and weaknesses. Individuals with a strong sense of self-awareness can know where they are strong and where they are weak. As we develop awareness about our self-worth, we become more self-confident. As a result, with the passage of time, we will be more decisive, make sound judgements using the emotional and cognitive information available within us.

In case we lack self-awareness, there are quite a number of ways to build it up. Introspection and feedback from others are just two of these ways. You may begin your introspection with a single thought related to some period in the past. Then you allow your mind to gradually work backward recalling specific incidents, people, places and events associated with that particular period. This type of reflection about the past, your role in various occasions will give you the required insight about yourself. In spite of introspection, you may not get to know all what you need about yourself. In that case, asking one of your close relatives or friends for feedback would be a fine way of knowing more. This will enable you to have another's opinion about your strengths and weaknesses, to get assurance whether or not what you are doing is right, to verify whether you see yourself the same way as others see you. Feedback, be it positive or negative, is important. It gives another's opinion on how you behave. It is a way of learning more about yourself and the effects of your behaviour has on others. Unless you seek feedback, you may never come to know about those aspects. In the absence of feedback, no change can be worked out. You stand to lose the opportunity to learn and develop.

10.5.1.3 Assertiveness

Assertiveness is not aggression as many take it for. It means knowing our rights well and standing up for them while remaining conscious about the rights of others. Assertive people are neither aggressive nor abusive. They are neither garrulous nor over controlled. They have the ability to communicate clearly and unambiguously while remaining conscious about the needs, wishes and rights of others in any social encounter. They have the capacity to express their rights with the needed intensity in ways that are appropriate. For example, someone in your class asks you to show the assignment to copy, but you don't oblige as the assignment should be done without any help. Individuals who are assertive do not resort to sabotage even when they have to disagree with others. In short, what assertiveness envisages is not something of confrontation but a win-win situation or a constructive compromise.

As we have already noted, assertiveness involves knowing our rights and standing up for them. We have the right to express our feelings, opinions and beliefs, to say "yes" or "no", to change our mind, to make reasonable request to others, etc. Merely knowing what our rights are is not enough. We should also know how to put them across to others in ways that are polite and unambiguous. Only when we are in a position to convey to others what we want in crystal clear terms will our chances of getting it improve. Absence of assertiveness can literally ruin your personal growth and force you to lead your life as per the whims and fancies of others. In fact, if you are not assertive, people might use you like doormats.

Assertiveness is something that is learned. It can be built up if you can spare sufficient time and energy. Developing it has several advantages. It is something that is liberating. It would open up several possibilities for growth and development. In case you lack assertiveness, you may look around for any of your friends who are assertive. Begin to observe him or her and closely study his/her ways of interaction. This will give you opportunity to identify what you miss out. In course of time, with sustained

practice, you will turn out to be as assertive as the person whom you have made as model for imitation and practice.

10.5.1.4 Coping with Stress

Coping with stress is just another life skill that you need to know. Stress generally refers to the reaction that people show when they encounter excessive pressure. Depending upon our attitude and our level of tolerance, the pressure we experience may keep varying. Stress lays much more of a demand on the person's ability than it can meet. This tension which is beyond one's capacity to cope with lead to stress. People tend to experience stress when the pressure becomes excessive.

Causes of stress are many. Every day we are confronted with several situations that produce stress. As a student, you may feel stressful if you have the habit of postponing your task of learning. What you are supposed to learn today, you put off for tomorrow. This postponement goes on and on till the exam date approaches. Then you have a lot of things to study in a little time. It is quite natural to feel tense. Apart from this, your ways of thinking, feeling and acting, can lead to stress. Similarly, when you are involved in dull and uninteresting tasks, conflict with peers whom you love, physical ailment, threat to your security, personal loss through death, etc. stress can occur.

Even though stress when it is excessive is harmful, a slight amount of stress is a great source of assistance. It is essential for spurring motivation providing the stimulation for taking up challenging tasks. To get the most out of life, we require a certain amount of stress. It would act as an impetus to complete tasks that are important. Thus a mild stress can be a useful source for creative energy. However, if it is severe, it can turn out to not only damaging but also fatal. Stress is the root cause of many illnesses. If stress responses are not managed in time, they can lead to fatal consequences such as hypertension, ulcers, diabetes, muscular dystrophy, etc. If we do not learn to cope with stress, our immune system would decline and signs of hypertension, neurosis, apathy, and depression, etc. would begin to show up rather early in life.

There are several ways to cope with stress. One of them is to challenge our way of thinking. We need to avoid preoccupation with debilitating negative thoughts and focus only on our strengths and victories. Similarly we have to avoid the habit of worrying and projecting the worst that can happen. We also need to assess whether or not worry is worth the price we pay. Similarly, by getting organized, avoiding procrastination, developing a good sense of humour, striking a balance between study and leisure, we can keep stress at bay to a great extent.

10.5.1.5 Coping with Emotions

Emotions are powerful feelings that are directed at something or someone. Emotions and impulses propel people to action. Emotions can be positive or negative. Anger, fear, anxiety, worry etc. are examples of negative emotions while hope, optimism, love, etc. are examples of positive ones. Emotions, be they positive or negative, would keep on crossing the mind. We cannot stop them. But whether we entertain them is something that is within our power. In case we entertain them they can run riot and land us in trouble. We have to intervene in time and put a check on them before they assume the shape of a monster. Emotional management, however, doesn't mean total suppression. In fact, emotions are an important element in our lives. What is required is emotional restraint, some sort of tempered balance and wisdom. Total absence of emotions can make our life dull and isolate us from the richness of life. So when emotions are muted, it can create dullness and distance. When left

unchecked, they become pathological and lead us to depression, over whelming anxiety and raging anger. Unless we keep distressed emotions under check, we will not experience emotional well- being.

Hence, we have to find ways to cope with our emotions. Controlling emotions is easier said than done. This doesn't mean that we should allow our emotions to go on unchecked. So when we are under the grip of strong feelings, we should strive to know precisely what feelings we are presently expressing, name those feelings and trace the sources from which they spring up. Once we are able to identify our inner feelings and sources from which they arise, we are in a better position to bring our discretion and rationalization to bear upon them. In the process, we will be able to assess the pros and cons if we allow our feelings to go unchecked. This will give us a fair idea as to whether or not to continue with the expression of our feelings or to bring some sort of constraint on them so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively. Symptoms of deficiency in emotional management manifest themselves in incidents of violence, juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes, suicide rate of teenagers, rapes and mental illnesses.

Life skills, such as self-esteem, self-awareness, assertiveness, coping with stress, and coping with emotions can provide you with the much needed understanding about yourself and ability to manage yourself so that you can go steadily along the path of growth and development without any sort of disturbances. So these skills are inevitable for you. The understanding and insight you gained from picking up these skills will enable you to focus on your studies and come out with glory.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What does self-awareness mean?

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ii) What do you think are the main causes of stress?

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iii) Explain any of the ways for coping with stress.

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iv) What do you think are the consequences of not being assertive?

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10.5.2 LIFE-SKILLS FOR KNOWING AND LIVING WITH OTHERS

Contemporary world, the world in which we live, is a world of violence where what is focused is diversity and not unity. There is constant strife in societies of the world in the name of religion, caste, ideals, etc. Individuals and groups are found involved in perpetual battle against one another for power, wealth and status. With better means of communication and transportation, mobility of people from one part of the world to other parts has become a trend. As a result, the world is fast becoming a melting pot of races, cultures, religions and ideas. It may so happen that the family that lives next to you may be a Punjabi, Bengalee or a Tamilian. We cannot build walls between us and our neighbors and live a secluded life. In case we keep on developing biases and prejudices, and keep on waging private battles, against one another, there is little scope for growth and progress. In a pluralist country like India which is a socialist democratic republic involved in building up an egalitarian society, where peace and serenity prevail we have to give up sectarian tendencies and learn to live together. Learning to live together is the foundation stone of democratic living.

Some of the life skills that can help us learn to live together are effective communication, interpersonal relationships (managing peer relationships), empathy negotiation, and conflict resolution. Mastering these skills is important as they will help you in a big way in managing peer relationships. Attaining proficiency in these skills is also important for your future life. They will help you, as an adult to get along with others amicably and live a life of collaboration and synergy.

10.5.2.1 Effective Communication

Nothing can make as much of a dramatic effect on our personal and school life as speaking well. The impression you make on others mostly depends on the way you speak-the pitch, expressiveness and clarity of your voice. From the tone of your voice and your manner of saying things, your listeners can deduce a lot about your feelings and personality. They will be able to tell you whether you are confident or frightened, excited or depressed, and friendly or aggressive. Depending on whether you articulate in a clear and confident way or stumbling and hesitant manner, they will be able to tell you the extent of your intelligence and expertise.

Any message that involves the face-to-face mode such as conversation consists of a number of components such as tone, words and body language. Only when all the components are appropriately integrated, effective communication is possible. You should make your tone message in accordance with the situation in question. When you are angry, for example, you have to make your tone of voice harsh, volume loud, eye-contact direct, and posture rigid. Conversely, when you speak to your friends, your tone of voice should be warm, volume easy on the ears, eye contact direct yet unobtrusive, facial expression smiling and posture relaxed. When you encounter a situation that demands sadness, your tone of voice is soft, facial expression tearful, the corners of your mouth curved downwards and posture slouched. In this

way, only when you integrate all the components of communication to suit the occasion in question, your communication becomes effective. So you need to understand each situation and use the right modality that suits it.

Above and over all these, if you can learn and practice a few habits, you will be able to make your communication much better. If you are able to cultivate the habit of thinking before you speak, believe the message you convey, keep your talk at the audience perception level, avoid annoying mannerisms and gestures, repeat major points, and use generalizations sparingly, and avoid expressions that hurt, your communication would rise above the mediocre. If you are willing to spend a bit of your energy and time on a regular basis to practice these, you will not only boost your confidence but also deepen the impression you make upon others. You can then easily persuade and convince your listeners and get along with them smoothly. You will have a lot of peers as your friends and collaborate with them in building better knowledge and skills.

10.5.2.2 Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal relationship is yet another life-skill that helps us get along smoothly with our peers. These skills are techniques that help us relate to others. They tell you what you should and what you should not do in your dealing with your friends. In short, they highlight the mutual give and take in any relationships. The mutual give and take is an important feature of successful interpersonal interaction. These skills are learned. Family, school, neighbourhood are the main places that give scope for learning these skills. You learned most of them through observation and some from consequences.

Understanding human nature is one of the first steps in developing good relationships. For this, you need to concentrate on others, pay close attention to them, listen to them properly, and look for clues in their body language. Body language is a language of signals. When we interact with others, we generally express our feelings through our gestures, facial expressions, and body postures. The body continues to transmit signals unconsciously throughout any interaction. These signals will give us clues to their state of mind. They will tell us whether they are listening to us as we talk and whether they are interested in what we talk. Most people fail to give attention to such social signals. If you are alert, social signals are not difficult to catch. If you find the listener fidgeting, distracted, unfocused, glancing at the watch or looking towards the door, casting eyes upwards and appearing angry, these are indications that your listener is bored. Your success in life depends, to a great extent, on your ability to understand your friends and act wisely. Your peers crave for appreciation, affiliation, and importance. If you remember their names, praise and encourage them, offer them constructive criticism, handle disagreements with tact, make them feel important, read their body language and interpret their voice messages with care, you will be favorably poised for harmony and understanding. Those who are poor at these are prone to problems in their relationships with others, feeling uncomfortable in their company. So to be successful in life, you ought to pick up interpersonal skills.

10.5.2.3 Empathy

Empathy is another life skill that helps us understand others. It refers to the feeling of emotional understanding and unity with another, such that an emotion felt by one person is experienced to some degree by another who is empathic to them. In other words, empathy involves the ability to mimic externally the feelings of another person. The essence of empathy is being able to see reality from the other person's perspective. As others talk to us, they reveal their feeling through their tone of voice, facial

expressions or other non-verbal ways. A successful human relationship involves understanding others and their nature. Through empathic listening we will be able to find what the other person is, and not what we think he or she is. This understanding will help you respond appropriately to their moods, temperaments, motivations and desires and act wisely in your interactions and dealings. As you continue to capture the feelings and act wisely, they feel that they are important. They begin to feel inclined towards you. In this state of mind, they and you feel comfortable to be in each other's company. This state of the mind is called rapport.

When you attain proficiency in empathic listening, you stand to benefit in several ways. Through it, you can build good study relationships. As there is good understanding between you and the other persons, you can engage in collaborative learning and cooperative management of study tasks. You can build trust and closeness to your peers easily. You can improve your study habits, bring about better learning performance, and make your learning more pleasurable. In short, your ability to empathize will lead you to a stage wherein harmony, collaboration and synergy are possible. You will also be able to help your friends when they are in the grip of stress and strain.

10.5.2.4 Conflict Resolution

When two or more people come together, work together, and live together, conflicts are bound to occur. It may arise between teacher and principal, student and teacher, husband and wife, and boss and subordinates. Conflict means sharp disagreement, antagonism, struggle or fight. Conflicts are nothing but overt struggle between individuals or groups for the same goals. Sources of conflicts can be many. They may spring up as a result of value differences, misperceptions, questions of control over resources, competition for positions and opportunities, and deficient and unscientific ways of thinking. Whatever be the causes of conflicts, they can produce immense pain, stress and unhappiness. They can lower output, and even lead to strikes and untold miseries, unless taken up and resolved in time. As conflicts are inevitable in human relationships, we need to prevent as well as manage conflicts.

There are several ways for resolving conflicts. Out of them, the collaborative style of solving conflicts seems to be the best. This style of conflict management involves the coming together of the conflicting parties as teams in working together on their differences. The collaborative style of resolving conflict is a process and as such it involves a series of stages or steps. As these steps are important, they need to be explained briefly.

The **first step** is to confront the conflict. This is possible only when both the parties involved in the conflict have the desire to resolve the problem. They should select a responsible person acceptable to both the parties involved and discuss the matter under his leadership.

The **second step** is to understand each others position. At this stage, each party takes turns and presents its points focusing on real issues involving the conflict and strives to understand each other's viewpoints as accurately as possible.

The **next step** is to define the problem. They arrive at a mutually acceptable definition of the problem. They need to identify the causes of the problem and find out areas of common ground to arrive at a mutually acceptable definition of the problem.

The **fourth step** involves generation of all the alternatives that can be used for solving the problem and selection of the best alternative that is acceptable to both the groups concerned. State the agreements clearly and put it into writing to serve as a record for reference.

The **fifth step** is to take action and evaluate its functioning. Once the action is taken, we have to see whether or not it produces the intended results. In case, it does not yield the expected result, we need to make adjustments where necessary. Effective resolution of conflict is important to eliminate discord and bring in harmony and effective functioning.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What habits will you develop to make your communication more effective?

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ii) What role does empathy play in interpersonal relations?

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iii) Give some of the reasons that can lead to conflicts.

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iv) Explain some of the ways through which interpersonal relations can be enhanced.

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v) What steps do conflict resolution generally involve?

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10.5.3 LIFE SKILLS FOR DEALING WITH ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

Critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making and problem solving are life skills that help us handle issues and problems that we confront in our day-to-day life. You cannot live an effective and efficient life just by attaining proficiency in life skills that lead to self-understanding and self-management and skills that help you learn to live together. To develop a personality that is sound and wholesome, these skills alone are not sufficient. In addition, we need skills that enable us deal with issues and problems.

10.5.3.1 Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a skill that helps us look analytically at events, people, objects, actions and even literary works with a view to gathering information that is relevant and objective with the help of which we can assess and evaluate them. In our day-to-day life, we have to think critically before we speak or do anything. If we spurt out something or do something without thinking, it would often land us in trouble. In case you speak sarcastically and hurt the feelings of your friends, you are likely to lose them as friends. If you join a course of study without thinking about its utility, scope, and nature, you may have to drop out of it in a short while. As a result, you will lose not only a lot of money, but also your precious time and energy. Hence critical thinking is important and we need to learn it. We need to know what it is and practice a lot to be proficient in it.

Critical thinking being so important, you need to do all what you can to develop it. There are several ways for developing it. One of them is to focus on “how?” and “why” in addition to what happened when you read reports on events and incidents. Another way to develop it is to search for evidence before you accept anything as you read or listen to others. The habit of comparing various answers to a question and finding the best one is yet another way to develop critical thinking. You can also develop critical thinking through asking questions to yourself and speculating beyond what you already know to create new ideas. Evaluating and possibly questioning what others say rather than immediately accepting it as truth is yet another way to develop it.

In short, critical thinking will help you in your studies, in making decisions, solving problems, passing judgments, and ensuring maximum utilization of resources. It will also help you to be more inquisitive, insightful, and humane.

10.5.3.2 Creative Thinking

Creative thinking refers to the ability to produce something novel, useful, and unique. It involves the ability to think about something in novel and unusual ways and come up with unique solutions to problems. Fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration are the main characteristics of creativity. The characteristic of fluency involves generation of many ideas. Flexibility involves the ability to shift perspectives easily. While the characteristic of originality stands for conceiving something new, elaboration refers to building of many ideas. Creativity also refers to challenge accepted ideas and ways of doing things in order to find new solutions or concepts. Similarly, using an equipment originally meant for something, if used for another purpose, it is creativity. In the same way, putting previously unconnected ideas together to come out with something entirely new is also a creative act.

Creativity is not something that comes unsolicited. As a teacher or prospective teacher, you could strive to build up expertise, creative thinking skills and intrinsic task

motivation among your students. Expertise refers to deep knowledge in the area of your specialization. Creative thinking skills refer to such skills as brainstorming, lateral thinking, divergent thinking, etc. Intrinsic task motivation refers to a burning desire to accomplish certain tasks. Only when you succeed in acquiring these components of creativity at appropriate level, you can be creative in the literal sense.

There are several ways in which creativity can be developed. Brainstorming is one of them. You can do this either alone or in groups. It is a technique for generating ideas without stopping to evaluate them. You can come up with creative ideas, play off each other's ideas and say practically whatever comes to mind that seems relevant to a particular issue. At the end when no more ideas coming up, you can examine the ideas jotted down, select the ones relevant and reject those irrelevant.

Divergent thinking is another technique that can be used for creating new ideas. Unlike convergent thinking which produces one correct answer, divergent thinking can produce many answers to the same question. Lateral thinking is yet another technique for producing new ideas. In this technique, the problem is reformulated or viewed from a fresh angle. This method is contrasted with vertical thinking which involves finding methods for overcoming obstacles in the chosen line of approach. Identifying creative people and finding out what helped them to be creative, fostering flexible and playful thinking and getting internally motivated are some other techniques for fostering creativity.

10.5.3.3 Decision-Making

Decision-making is one of the life skills that we have to utilize before solving problems and handling issues. Students have to take decisions on many occasions. At some time or other, they have to decide the school or institution they have to enroll or the course of studies they have to pursue. Similarly, they have to decide whether to stay at home or in the hostel during their period of study. In case they are clear about how decisions are generally made, it would make the task easier. They have to study each situation carefully before decision is being made. Hence, it would be nice to know what decision making refers to and how it is generally made.

The model of decision-making that is generally used in the technical area has four steps. These steps are as follows:

- (i) *Problem finding*: This step involves locating the problem and analytically studying in detail.
- (ii) *Problem stating*: This step looks into all the dimensions of the problem and coming out with its definition.
- (iii) *Option finding*: At this stage, the decision maker has to generate as many alternatives as possible through which the problem in question could be solved.
- (iv) *Decision-Making*: It is at this stage, the decision maker critically studies each option and arrives on the most appropriate option.

For example, most of the adolescents after completion of secondary education will face difficulty in taking decisions on opting further stream of courses. In that case, as teachers, you could help them find their area of interest and give various career options. Decision-making, as the above steps reveal, involves choosing a course of action from among the several well defined and frequently competing alternatives after due deliberations. Before arriving at the proper option you have to weigh the cost and benefits of various outcomes.

10.5.3.4 Problem-Solving

Problem-solving, like decision-making, is a life skill that is as important as and perhaps more important than decision making. Problems are situations that are not easy to surmount. Problems, be they big or small, have to be faced and overcome. In case we fail, life would come to a standstill, goals would remain unaccomplished, and the person concerned will be filled with anxiety and worry. Problems can immobilize and render us helpless. Unless we tackle them at the proper time, they will render us handicapped. If we allow problems to get the better of us, they will slow down our overall growth and development. Our happiness and prosperity would show up a downward trend ultimately resulting in a degrading downfall. Hence we are left with no choice but tackle them in time as they arise.

Problem-solving is a process and so it involves a number of steps:

Step 1: Find and Frame the problem: The first step in problem solving is to find and frame the problem. The problem you select should be neither too broad nor too narrow. If it is too broad, you will not be able to complete it within the stipulated time. If it is too narrow, you will not be able to gather enough stuff to support your point of view. Once you have identified the topic, you have to look at it from all perspectives and define it in crystal clear terms.

Step 2: Develop a good problem solving strategy: Once you have identified and defined the problem, the next step is to select a suitable strategy for solving it. The common strategies that are used for solving problems are: (i) setting sub goals, (ii) using algorithms, and (iii) relying on heuristics.

- (i) Setting sub goals refers to breaking the overall goal into a number of sub goals such as locating resources, gathering information, organizing information, preparing the first draft, etc. In other words, it is concerned with setting the time schedule notifying the time period allowed to each stage.
- (ii) Using algorithms is yet another strategy that can be used for solving problems. Algorithms are strategies that guarantee a solution to a problem. They come in different forms such as formulas, instructions, tests, etc.
- (iii) Heuristics refers to a rough and ready procedure for solving problems without the application of an algorithm. Heuristics help us narrow down the possibilities to find one that works.

The investigator who is trying to solve the problem can select the most appropriate of these strategies for solving the problem.

Step 3: Evaluate the solution:

Taking action in itself is not enough. We have to see whether or not the results of the action stand in relation to the expected outcome. We have to evaluate and find out the extent to which the plan is working in practice.

Step 4: Rethink and Redefine problems and solutions over time. In case, the action does not yield the expected result we have to bring about the needed changes in the process.

For example, you might have come across with children who feel stressed often. In this situation, you could help them find out the source of stress whether it is generating from academic work or home problems. Spend time with such children to express their pent-up feelings and suggest various strategies to handle such situations. An individual who is trying to solve a problem can select the most appropriate strategy for solving her/his problem.

10.6 LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN SCHOOL

Life-skills education programme has now become an integral part of education system all over the world. However, in Indian schools, although some attempts have been made, it has not yet got the attention it deserves. In most schools, value education is introduced as it is one of the requirements of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005).

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) introduced life skills education in class 6th in 2003-04, in class 7th in 2004-05, and subsequently in classes 8th, 9th, and 10th. The CBSE, after eight years of research, during 2010 introduced Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation in IX and X class along with grading system. Similarly, the CCE employed in schools that covers all aspects of students' development, has included life skills under the captions: thinking skills, social skills and emotional skills.

The CBSE introduced in 2012 a life skills training programme as part of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation targeting students between 10-18 years of age. Similarly, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA) under its agenda for quality elementary education of upper primary girls gives them life skills training.

Our schools generally give importance to teaching of knowledge. Skills, especially, life skills have not so far given the importance they deserve. As we know, knowledge keeps changing in the light of more explorations and research. Moreover, knowledge in itself has not much use unless it is put to use. What our youngsters need today is education of life skills. The UNESCO has recommended that the education of the life skills is of paramount importance to our youngsters. Life skills, unlike knowledge, like good friends gives them company throughout their life and help them not only know themselves but also help them learn to live with other and solve various issues and problems they confront in their day-to-day life. Schools are now identified as the agencies that can teach life skills to students.

The UNESCO has now joined hands with various state government education departments and is trying to equip adolescents with life skills. They mainly use two strategies for this purpose, namely, (i) infusion approach, (ii) direct approach. The infusion approach tries to identify suitable situations within the established subject areas and extend the matter in such a way as to facilitate the teaching of various life skills. A teacher of Social Science who teaches the topic of colonization, for example, after teaching the meaning of the concept and process it involved, can extend the matter by including the cons and pros of the issue involved. In the process, s/he can help students come out with advantages and disadvantages of colonization. Then s/he can ask them to weigh both the advantages and disadvantages of colonization and state whether colonization was a curse or a blessing. In the process s/he has helped students practice critical thinking, creative thinking and decision making.

Apart from the infused thinking instruction which we have discussed above, another method that can be used for fostering life skills is the direct approach. In this way of teaching, life skills become part and parcel of the curriculum. As in the case of other topics, life skills are taught by the teacher through discussion, demonstration and practice. Whatever may be the methods adopted, life skills education is very important for adolescents.

Though some stray attempts have been made here and there to introduce life skills, it is yet to become part and parcel of the curriculum in most of the schools in major parts of India.

10.7 LET US SUM UP

Life skills are skills, strengths, and capabilities that can help adolescents face life problems with a positive attitude and carry out various tasks with effectiveness and efficiency. Life skills are so many that we cannot learn all of them. We need to learn only a few that are considered to be core life skills. Some of these core skills like self-esteem, self-awareness, assertiveness, coping with stress and coping with emotions help us understand and manage ourselves. Similarly, life skills like effective communication, interpersonal relationships, empathy and conflict resolution help us get along peacefully and amicably with others. Another set of life skills like critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making and problem-solving help us to handle issues and problems that we confront in our day-to-day life. The importance of learning life-skills is being widely understood today and efforts are already on in equipping adolescents with life skills.

10.8 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. What does life-skills education mean?
2. Why is life-skills education important?
3. Give any three examples of core life skills that can lead to self-understanding and self management of adolescents?
4. Explain the meaning of “learning to live together”.
5. Name three core life skills that help you deal with issues and problems.
6. Name the various steps involved in decision making (technical area) and explain them briefly.

10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.
 - i) Self-awareness generally refers to knowledge about our own character and personality, strengths and weaknesses, and likes and dislikes.
 - ii) The main reasons that lead to stress are the habit of procrastination of tasks, ways of thinking, feeling and acting, physical ailments, threat to security, personal loss through death or divorce, conflict with peers, etc.
 - iii) We should not entertain negative emotions. If we do so, they may go out of our control. So before it is too late, we need to introspect, identify the emotions that pass through our mind, name those feelings, trace the sources from which they arise, apply our discretion on them and assess the pros and cons if we allow our emotions go unchecked. In case the disadvantages outweigh the advantages, we should exercise restraint on our emotions.
 - iv) Absence of assertiveness can literally ruin our personal and scholastic life. In its absence, we will be forced to lead our life as per the whims and fancies of others. In short, if we are not assertive, others might use us like a dormat.
2.
 - i) If I learn and practice a few habits, I can make my communication effective. Thinking before I speak, keeping my talk at the audience perception level, avoiding annoying mannerisms and gestures, eliminating expressions that hurt, and using generalizations sparingly are some of the habits that can make my communication more effective.

- ii) Empathy can help you understand your peers, motivate them and learn cooperatively with them. It will also help you respond appropriately to their moods, temperaments, motivations and desires, and act wisely in your interactions and dealings. As you act wisely, you and the other person will feel comfortable in each others company. In this state of rapport, you will be able to resort to cooperative management of study tasks.
- iii) Conflict can result because of several reasons. It may arise as a result of value differences, misperceptions, questions of control over resources, competition for positions and opportunities and deficient and unscientific ways of thinking.
- iv) Remembering their names, praising and encouraging them, offering them constructive criticism, handling disagreement with tact, making them feel important, reading their body language and interpreting their voice message with care are some of the ways through which you can enhance your interpersonal relationships.
- v) The various steps that conflict resolution generally involve are (a) confront the conflict, (b) understand each other's position, (c) define the problem (d) generate all possible alternatives, (e) take action and (f) evaluate the functioning. In case, it does not yield the expected result, make adjustments where necessary.

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UNIT 11 CHILD RIGHTS AND LEGISLATION

Structure

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Objectives
- 11.3 Who is a Child?
- 11.4 Rights of a Child- An Overview
- 11.5 Child Rights with the Framework of Human Rights
- 11.6 Examining the “Child Rights” perspective in the cultural context-with special reference to India
 - 11.6.1 Right to Parental Care
 - 11.6.2 Right against Economic Exploitation
 - 11.6.3 Right to Protection against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
 - 11.6.4 The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009
- 11.7 Protection of Child Rights: Role and Contribution of Important Organizations
 - 11.7.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
 - 11.7.2 United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
 - 11.7.3 World Health Organization (WHO)
 - 11.7.4 National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)
 - 11.7.5 National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)
- 11.8 Role of Teachers in Protection of Child Rights
- 11.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 11.10 Unit –End Exercises
- 11.11 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 11.12 References and Suggested Readings

11.1 INTRODUCTION

India portrays a dismal picture with respect to protection of child rights. One-third of population of India comprises children below 18 years. It has a high child mortality rate, malnutrition rate and low- birth-weight babies. In the educational scenario we see more out of school children and high dropout rate. Girls get married by the age of 18 and become mothers soon after. India remains to be home to the highest number of child labourers in the world and has the world’s largest number of sexually abused children. Masoodi (2015) describes the deplorable condition of child labour in India by pointing out some hard-hitting statistics on the issues of child labour in India. He pointed out that one in every 11 children is working in India, 80 percent of working children reside in rural areas, the children between the age group of 15 to 17 years doing hazardous work form 62.8% of the overall child labour population and more boys (38.7 million) than girls (8.8 million) are drawn in hazardous work.

In order to save children from the deplorable condition, as a teacher, we should know about child rights, Universal Declaration of Child Rights and the rights ensured

by our Constitution to protect our children. In this unit we will discuss in detail about each of these.

11.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit you should be able to:

- identify the concept of the child in India;
- explain the rights of the child;
- describe child rights from human rights perspective;
- examine the child rights in the context of right to parental care, education, protection against sexual abuse and economic exploitation;
- elucidate the various initiatives taken by national and international organisations to protect the rights of children;
- familiarize with various articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989; and
- evaluate the contributions made by UNCRC, UNICEF, WHO, NCPCR and NHRC in protecting child rights.

11.3 WHO IS A CHILD?

You have studied about the definition of child in Unit 1 of Block 1 of the Course ‘Childhood and Growing Up’. There is always discussion about who a child is. What should be the age limit of a child? According to the Census of India a child is a person below the age of 14. The Universal Declaration of Child Rights defines ‘*a child as every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier*’. The declaration permits each country to determine the age limit of the child according to their own laws. But in the case of our country, various laws related to children consider the age limit at different levels. For example, different laws like The Indian Penal Code (IPC) 1860 considers age of children till seven and for mental disability child till twelve years (Sec 83 IPC). Article 21 (a) of the Indian Constitution considers the ages of six to fourteen, The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 fourteen years of age, The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 as eighteen years, etc.

Activity 1

Go through various laws by national organizations and find out why they suggest that particular age limit for children.

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Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What age do you prefer as the age limit of a 'child' and why?

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11.4 RIGHTS OF A CHILD – AN OVERVIEW

Read the following case:

Case 1: NCPCR's report (2013) on child labourers rescued in Agra prepared by Dr. Yogesh Dube and Ms. Shaista Khan depicts the situation of a child working in a bangle manufacturing unit where he worked for 15 hours a day with a remuneration of Rs. 500 a month. The employer treated him badly and hit him whenever he worked slowly. He even did not allow the child to talk to his family members nor visit them. The child was malnourished and had related health problems. There were scars in his hands as a result of the proximity with harmful chemicals. He could not share his ordeal to anyone. The employer also deducted from his salary the amount that was used for the boy's medical treatment.

Source: Dube, Yogesh., & Khan, Shaista. (2013). *Report on child labourers rescued in Agra and efforts made for their repatriation and rehabilitation*. Retrieved on December 2, 2015, from <http://ncpcr.gov.in>.

When we analyze this case based on the rights ensured by our Constitution, it is evident that the employer violated the Article 39 (f) of our Indian Constitution. It states that "children are to be given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment". Our constitution ensures the well-being of our children and underlines the right of children to live with dignity and identity and serve their society and nation irrespective of their colour, caste, creed, etc.

Go through the following research study:

Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (2007) conducted a study on child abuse in India that reveals that out of 12,447 child respondents, 69% of children were physically abused in one or more situations. Children faced high level of physical abuse in their family itself by their parents. (88.6%). 53.22% of children faced one or more forms of sexual abuse, 21.90% child suffered severe forms of sexual abuse, 50.76% other forms of sexual abuse, and 5.69% reported being sexually assaulted. The children on street, children at work and children in institutional care were most insecure and they faced the highest incidence of sexual assault.

Let us now look into the basic rights of a child

i) *Right to Survival*

It includes a child's right for basic needs like food, shelter and medical treatment.

ii) *Right to Development*

It includes a child's right for growing themselves and best use of their skills and strength, for development. Rights for development permit them to play, enjoy leisure, to get education and access information.

iii) *Right to Participation*

It includes right to express opinions; take part with members of their society in all the matters which take place in their community.

iv) *Right to Protection*

It gives the guarantee for protecting child from all anti-social activities against child like child abuse, child labour, mental and sexual harassment.

Activity 2

Case 2: Aswathy was a 12 year old girl. After the death of her father, her mother tried to poison her children as well as herself because she was not in a position to look after the family. Unfortunately here mother died while Aswathy and her siblings survived the attempt. Due to adverse circumstances they couldn't continue their studies and were forced to do child labour.

Go through the incident of Aswathy and suggest what child rights were denied to her?

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Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What are the basic rights of a child?

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ii) What is meant by the right for protection? Analyze the implementation of this right in our Indian society.

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Do you wish to know what progress is made with respect to these rights in our country? Let us start from our constitution. Part III and Part IV of the Indian Constitution pertaining to Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy includes provisions for survival, development and protection of children. It is either in the Concurrent List or in the State List. But in the real sense, various welfare schemes of the central government are carried out by the State Governments only. After the 73rd and 74th amendments of the Constitution, the Panchayat Raj institutions have got administrative and financial powers to undertake various activities for the well-being of the children.

Our first five-year plan started in 1951 emphasized the welfare of the children by giving special concern to health, nutrition and education of the children. Central Social Welfare Board (SWB) was established for assisting voluntary agencies in undertaking various programmes for children. Another initiative of the government was the establishment of 'Balwadis' and 'Mahila Mandals' for the welfare of children. Some of the Acts like Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act (SIIA)-1956, Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, Women's and Children's Institution (Licensing) Act, Wellbeing of Children's Act-1960 passed by the government are among the early initiatives of the government for the improvement of the conditions of children.

After getting inspiration from UN's Declaration of Rights of Children, the Government of India established the Department of Social Security in June 1964. It provides to give special attention to the various issues of children. At present it works as Social Justice and Empowerment. Child Marriage Restriction Act of 1929, amended in 1975, Bonded Labour (System) Abolition Act, Juvenile Justice Act, 1986, Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986, etc. were passed by the government to save children from social injustice. After the UN declaration of 1979 as the International Year of the Child (IYC), the Government of India initiated the National Policy of Action to reach the deprived children.

Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), 1975 was also initiated to improve the condition of our children. National Policy on Education, 1968 and 1986, DPEP, Operation Black Board, Universalization of Elementary Education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, Right of Children for Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, etc. are major landmarks for ensuring free and compulsory education for children.

Activity 3

Prepare a time chart of various laws passed and schemes initiated for ensuring child rights.

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Check Your Progress 3

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Write a note on the early initiatives of the government for the protection of child rights? Summarize how it helped the later development in this direction.

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ii) How do you evaluate the progress made by India in the protection of child rights?

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11.5 CHILD RIGHTS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Do you know that child rights are part of the human rights? The case was different during earlier period. At the time of Medieval Europe, children were considered just as a human being. Child did not have special concern and was treated as an adult. There was only general category of human being and it only dealt with human rights.

Later on it was identified that needs of children are different from an adult. Different organizations also came into action like Red Cross's Geneva Convention, ILO Convention, International Convention on Human Right, etc. Geneva Declaration in 1924 and United Nations Declaration in 1959 decided to give children utmost importance. These two declarations are considered as the most powerful instrument for the protection of child rights. The basic principles introduced by these organizations created a platform for the successive progress of norms and conduct of child rights.

UNICEF (2014) defines human rights as those rights which are essential to live as human beings, basic standards without which people cannot survive and develop in dignity. Human rights are inherent to the human person, inalienable and universal. Almost all the countries have ratified Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the six core human rights treaties that include the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The rights and duties contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) is a part of the framework of human rights law of UNICEF. There are many rights such as 'rights to life, survival and development', 'rights concerning identity', rights to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation.' Each of these rights is to be ensured and we are studying about them further.

Activity 4

Prepare a brief summary of the child rights acknowledged by the following conventions and declarations: Red Cross's Geneva Convention, ILO Convention, International Convention on Human Right, Geneva Declaration in 1924 and United Nations Declaration in 1959.

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Check Your Progress 4

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Do you think that child right is a part of human right? Substantiate your answer with reasons.

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**11.6 EXAMINING THE “CHILD RIGHTS”
PERSPECTIVE IN THE CULTURAL CONTEXT-
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIA**

India is a country of diversity where we can find children belonging to different races, language, class, caste, culture and child rearing practices. Ms. Malala Yousafzai (who strives for girls education) and Mr. Kailash Satyarthi, (who fought against child labour) the two Nobel Peace Prize awardees of 2014 have put their efforts in improving the lives of children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) covers freedom of children and their civil rights, family environment, necessary healthcare and welfare, education, leisure and cultural activities and special protection measures. Though several acts were passed for the protection of children, still their problems are not specifically addressed and they continue to be the vulnerable group in society. The following description of rights describes the depth of our responsibilities to ensure minimum well-being for our children.

11.6.1 Right to Parental Care

As we all know, family is the first internal agency of growth and development of a child. It is the basic right of a child to be cared by his/her parents. The emotional, physical, educational and spiritual needs of a child need to be fulfilled. For this each and every child must be brought up in their own families. Parental care and affection is very essential for healthy and complete development of a child. Those children who lack parental care and are neglected from the society may result in a sense of insecurity and may get involved in dangerous activities to survive. Therefore, it is the duty of each parent to form a strong bond between and among the family members. Read this case:

Do you know that there are many children who are living without any parental care? The children who have lost one or both parents, who are living in a child headed households, separated from parents due to wars and natural disasters, living in residential institutions, living in an alternative care setting as a result of an administrative decision, immigrant children who left home without care for the majority of the day/ night for various reasons, children from families where parents live and work away from their home due to various reasons like those who are working with armed forces who leave their family home and also street children are considered as children living without parental care or having minimal parental care.

UNICEF (2014) pointed out that millions of children around the world are living without one or both of their parents. Another alarming fact is that more number of

children is at the risk of separation because of poverty, disability, HIV/AIDS, natural disasters and wars. The children without the support and care of parents face discrimination, sexual abuse and exploitation that negatively affect their emotional and social development. Early separation from parents damages the proper emotional and physical development of the child which in turn leads to serious emotional problems and death. Poverty, natural disasters and diseases force parents to often neglect their children. They may depend on public institutions for support, which, at times lack quality and therefore ultimately the children fall back in education, food and other basic facilities.

Check Your Progress 5

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What are the consequences of lack of parental care? How does it affect the life of an individual child?

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11.6.2 Right against Economic Exploitation

Case 3: Padmini Sivarajah, Times of India reporter in May 2012 reported the horrible condition of sending more than 50,000 children from Madurai, Theni and Dindigul to the factories of Northern States by local merchants. She also narrates the story of a 14 year old child C. Visakan of Kottapatti, Theni district who was sold by his father for Rs 1,500 to a local broker, Solairaj during his school holiday time. He was sent to a 'muruku' factory located at Chhattisgarh where he worked twenty hours a day along with other children of similar age. However, he was sent to his hometown when he couldn't work because his employer poured hot oil over his body.

Source: Sivarajah, Padmini. (2012). *Over 50,000 kids from south Tamil Nadu deployed as child*. Retrieved on 15 December, 2015, from <http://makir.mak.ac.ug/labour/http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>

The Article 32 of the Convention of Child Rights accepts the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation, make them free from performing hazardous work and also engaging in work that affects their education, are harmful to health and also adversely affects their physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. The convention requested the state parties to take positive actions in providing a minimum age for employment, deciding the working hours, improving the conditions of employment and also giving penalties to ensure proper implementation of Article 32.

It is an unquestionable fact that poverty is the primary and root cause of economic exploitation. Due to many reasons, children are forced to do some kinds of work. Parental illiteracy and ignorance, traditional view of making children learn ancestral works from the early childhood days, lack of rigidity in policy making for compulsory primary education, non-accessibility of schools, gender differential, etc are some reasons.

Violation of any type of right (need) of a child can be termed as exploitation. All needs of a child are important, they should be protected from every form of

exploitation say, economic, social and cultural rights. When we say about economic exploitation of children, it reflects the consequences of child labour, because economic exploitation is a product of child labour. Child labour means work done by a child (below the age of 14) or any kind of work that places a child at risk. Child labour is equally harmful for physical, mental, social, emotional and psychological development of a child. The major causes of the child labour are illiteracy of the parents, poverty, the tradition of making children learn family skills, etc. The National Policy on Child Labour (1987) has helped in improving the condition of the children and also reducing child labour in India to some extent.

Activity 5

Study the National Policy on Child Labour and make a brief note on it and present in your class.

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Check Your Progress 6

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What is Right against Economic Exploitation? What are the major factors that lead to child labour in our country?

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11.6.3 Right to Protection against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Children all over the world suffer violence, exploitation and sexual abuse due to various reasons like living in street, disabilities, unemployment, poverty, natural disasters, armed conflicts, etc. In most of the cases children are sexually abused by family members and close relatives.

Child abuse is termed as the violence, misbehaviour or neglect suffered by child from any person on which the child trust or who is responsible for the child’s care and protection. Child abuse can be different kinds such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and exposure to domestic violence.

When a child is provoked for sexual activities by an adult or adolescent it is known as sexual abuse. Any type of sexual activity or behaviour exposed to child, including intercourse, rape, oral sex, touching or kissing child’s genitals, using child in the production of pornography, such as a film or magazine is referred as sexual abuse.

In order to save children from sexual offences the Ministry of Women and Child Development introduced the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in 2012. The act considered child as a person below 18 years of age and gives importance to interest and wellbeing of a child at every stage. The act ensures healthy

physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child. Trafficking of child for sexual purposes is also punishable under this act. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has been given the duty to monitor the implementation Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and Rule 6 of POCSO Rules, 2012.

Anosh M (2009) narrates the problems faced by children in Kerala due to HIV through a study titled ‘Situational analysis on children affected by HIV/AIDS in Kerala’ sponsored by UNICEF. He depicts the feelings of some of the children and parents through the following quotes:

- *“The school authorities were unwilling to let my HIV infected child continue his education after his status was revealed to them. He lost one year and after a lengthy process of petitioning higher authorities, he was readmitted in the school. He is now studying in standard 5”* – a parent from Kannur.
- *“Many students are leaving the school and joining other schools because HIV-positive children are studying here”* – an HIV affected child from Kollam
- *“My child was refused admission in a school six years ago because we (the parents) were HIV-positive, but her younger sister, who is infected, is studying in another school without revealing her HIV status”* – an HIV-positive mother from Malappuram

The study concludes that denial of education to the children was a serious problem faced by HIV affected children. Many of the time the children have to find out another school if they disclose their disease. Other parents also stop schooling of their children and search for another school as a precautionary measure. Let us examine what the RTE Act, 2009 deals with.

11.6.4 The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009

Read the case given below:

Case 4: *Ashok, a 14-year-old boy spent most of his childhood period away from home to protect his family. He left his school at the age of 10. He wished to go to school and spend time with friends and family. But he had to be at work for sustaining his family.*

From the above case, it can be found out that Ashok is denied the right to education. Let us examine in detail about this right.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, also known as the Right to Education Bill, was passed by the Indian parliament on 4 August 2009. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE), Act came into effect on 1 April 2010. ‘Free education’ means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. It means that no direct (school fees) or indirect cost (uniforms, textbooks, mid-day meals, transportation) will be borne by the child or their parents to get elementary education. ‘Compulsory education’ means it is an obligation of the government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the age group of 6-14. Now it is a legal obligation on the Central and State Governments to put into practice the fundamental child right as enshrined in the Article 21A of the Constitution, in accordance with the provisions of the RTE Act.

One of the important provisions of the act is age appropriate admission. It means that a child gets admission in a class where s/he would normally be if they had joined school from class 1 at six years of age. When we go through the Act we can see that many issues related to the primary education of the children are addressed by the Act. The students from the weaker sections and the disadvantaged groups of our society get opportunities to study in private schools as the 25% of their class strength is assigned to the group. It also ensures guarantee against donation and capitation fee, admission test or interview either for child or parents, physical punishment and mental harassment. In order to monitor the implementation of the act, the government entrusted the duty to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

Main Features of the Act

It ensures free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen, no detention, age appropriate admission, no denial of admission if not produced the certificate of age proof, 25 % reservation for children belonging to economically disadvantaged communities in Class I, clear mandates for the improvement in quality of education, sharing of financial burden by state and central government, etc.

From the above discussion it is clear that the Central government has taken a bold step to ensure minimum quality education to the children of India. It is the responsibility of the central and state governments including local self governments to fulfill the dreams set for the children.

Activity 6

Study the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 and conduct panel discussion on the relevance of the act.

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Check Your Progress 7

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What comes under the Right to Protection against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation? Analyze its importance in the present Indian society?

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11.7 PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS: ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF IMPORTANT ORGANIZATIONS

Several international organizations like UNICEF and WHO and national organizations such as NCPCR, NHRC, etc. are working hard for the protection of child rights. Let us discuss in detail about their role and contributions.

11.7.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The landmark in the history of child rights is the Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC) which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989. The convention states that the “children should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations”.

Signed in 1990, the convention guides all actions which are to be provided for all children without parental care. CRC strongly establishes that it is the responsibility of the family to protect and care the child and the government and other agencies should ensure support to provide healthy child family relationship.

Now let us familiarize ourselves with some of the articles made by the convention to protect the rights of children. Article 1 deals with the definition of a child. The Convention defines a ‘child’ as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger.

Article 2 states that no child should be treated unfairly on any basis, caste, creed, colour, sex, socio-economic status, language, culture, etc. Article 3 deals with the protection of the best interests of the child. Article 4 gives responsibility to the Government to take all possible measures to make sure children’s rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. Article 5 respects the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents towards the child. Article 6 states that *‘Children have the right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily’*.

Article 9 has underlined that children must not be separated from their parents without their will. Article 11 gives the responsibility to the Governments to take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally. This article criticizes parental abductions and against the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Article 12 deals with respect for the views of the child, 13 and 14 are related to child’s freedom of expression. It recommends child’s right to express her/his views regarding the decisions taken by the adult that affect them, right to share information in any way they choose, including by talking, drawing or writing, and their right to think and believe what they want and to practice their religion.

Article 18 is related to parental responsibilities and duties of the state in helping the parent’s assistance. It says *‘Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments must respect the responsibility of parents for providing appropriate guidance to their children’*. Article 19 (Protection from all forms of violence) is most important as it suggests that *“The children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally”*. Article 23 (children with disabilities) states that *“Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support, as well as all the rights in the Convention, so that they can live full and independent lives”*.

Article 24 (Health and health services) and Article 25 (Review of treatment in care) are related with children’s health and the first one reads thus *“Children have the right to good quality health care – the best health care possible – safe drinking water, nutritious food, clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this”*. Article 28 and 29 are related with right to education and goals of education. Article 28 says *“All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free”*. Article 29 says, *“Children’s education should develop each child’s personality, talents and abilities to the fullest”*. Article 32 (Child labour) protects

child from engaging in harmful and exploitative work. It says “*The government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education*”. Article 33, 34, 35 and 36 are the most important in the present society as these articles protect children from drug abuse, sexual abuse and abduction and other forms of exploitation.

Article 33 says, “*Governments should use all means possible to protect children from the use of harmful drugs and from being used in the drug*”. Article 34 says, “*Governments should protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse*” and Article 35 states, “*The government should take all measures possible to make sure that children are not abducted, sold or trafficked*”. Article 37 says that “*No one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way. Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly*”. Articles 43-54 (implementation measures) suggest how governments and international organizations like UNICEF ensure that all children are sheltered in their rights.

It is also worth noticing that Asia has the highest number of orphans due to all causes. Hence, the governments of the respective Asian countries have to take care of strengthening child welfare services, programmes to reduce poverty, regulation and monitoring of public care institutions and enforcement of legislation of law for the protection of children.

Check Your Progress 8

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What are the major recommendations of CRC? Examine how its effective implementation is essential in the present scenario of our country.

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11.7.2 United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was formed in 1946 by the United Nations General Assembly after the World War II. The major purpose of its formation was to help children after World War II in Europe. In 1953 it became a permanent division of United Nations System.

United Nations General Assembly made it essential for UNICEF to act for the protection of children’s rights. It assures the special protection of disadvantaged children who are victims of war, natural catastrophe, poverty, and other extreme violence and exploitation. It also ensures fulfillment of the basic needs of children and to extend their opportunities to use their skills and protection. UNICEF is also responsible for children who are living without parental care.

Some of the issues aimed by UNICEF child protection programmes are:

- Child Labour
- Child Trafficking
- Children in Conflicts and Emergencies

- Children and Justice
- Children without parental care
- Sexual exploitation
- Violence and Neglect

Thousands of UNICEF people are working in more than 150 countries in the world. UNICEF has been trying to help children make the best start in life, to survive and succeed in emergencies and to go to school. UNICEF works for achieving Millennium Development Goals set by United Nations in 2000. Some of the important works in the direction are: ‘Young Child Survival and Development programme’ of the federation to reduce child mortality and also providing financial and technical support to national and community based education and intervention programmes on health care and nutrition. Moreover, with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF supports local programmes to improve access to basic water and sanitation. In order to support millennium development goal, UNICEF with the support of the countries undertakes and supports various programmes to achieve universal primary education and gender equality. Another significant contribution is in the field of saving children from HIV/AIDS by undertaking programmes to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and also provide shelter to the orphans. The Federation also has done notable works in the area of protecting children living in the environment of violence, exploitation, sexual abuse, etc. Thus through research, advocacy, partnership, etc UNICEF plays a critical role in saving the life of children.

11.7.3 World Health Organisation (WHO)

Access to health and health services are not only the need of a human being but these are fundamental rights too. United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (CRC) is the basic unit for protecting and achieving these rights. It works for the right standard of living and well being of children and young people below 18 years all over the world.

CRC is nominated by World Health Organization (WHO) to regulate the health and development of children and adolescent internationally. Members from WHO and countries undertake studies about the needs, obligations and rights of children and adolescents. It also looks for how CRC can be utilized by WHO in policy making, planning, monitoring and managing programmes which are arranged for child and adolescent health.

WHO supports and strengthen the activity of a number of countries that work in favour of rights of children in their country. Child and Adolescent health (CAH) is also a part of WHO.

Activity 7

Study the role played by international organizations in protecting child rights and conduct brainstorming sessions on it. Prepare a report on it.

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Check Your Progress 9

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What are the contributions made by international organizations in protecting child rights? Evaluate their success in this direction.

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11.7.4 National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) was formed in March 2007. It comes under the commission for protection of child rights act, which became an act of parliament in December 2005. The main purpose of the commission is to make sure that the laws, policies, programmes and administrative strategies completely agree with the child rights enlisted in the constitution of India.

The commission tries to merge different responses at the state, district and other smaller levels into National Policies and Programmes. The Commission tries to include each and every child by going deeper and deeper into communities and households and collects all the experiences and brings these into the consideration of higher level authorities.

Thus the commission plays a commendable role in regulating the activities of state, central and local bodies for the welfare and well-being of their children. The Commission also has a special cell for solving problems of school children. The cell works against the mental, physical and emotional harassment of the children. The complaint against any type of abuses will be informed to the taluk/district legal services by the cell within 48 hours.

11.7.5 National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

National Human Rights Commission of India established under the protection of Human Rights ordinance is an autonomous public body constituted on 12 October 1993 for the protection and promotion of human rights. The NHRC was given a statutory basis by the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 and is the responsible National Human Rights Institution for the protection and promotion of human rights. The Act defines the human right as “rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants”.

Main functions of NHRC are:

- Directly or indirectly inquire about the violation of human rights;
- Interfere in the court proceeding related to human right;
- Study and make rectifications in the living conditions of people those who are admitted or lodged in jail or some other institutions for the purpose of different forms of protection or treatment;

- Review and assess protection of human rights under constitution and for its implementation;
- Conduct research in the field of human rights;
- Give awareness and engage in human rights education, collaborate with various agencies of society and other mediation like publication, seminars and media; and
- Support and encourage NGOs and other institute work for human rights.

Activity 8

Examine the role played by various national organizations in protecting child rights and conduct essay competition on the topic in your school.

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Check Your Progress 10

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

- i) What are the contributions made by National Commission for the protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) in protecting child rights in India? Analyze its importance in the current Indian context.

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11.8 ROLE OF TEACHERS IN PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS

You are aware that children can be subjected to drug abuse, sexual assault, violence, neglect and other forms of exploitation anywhere. This may happen inside the school premises or outside the school environment. Sometimes their rights are denied at home. In your classroom, sometimes there may be children with special needs. Are you able to accommodate the needs of such children along with others? You have to identify such disabled children and children who are subjected to any form of exploitation and ensure protection of their rights. As a part of children's community and environment, a teacher has to promote and protect the rights of children. S/he should consider children's rights as human rights. As far as, teacher's role in protection of child rights is concerned, you may consider the following:

- Act as a second parent of the child.
- Identify the children who are victimized to abuse, neglect or any form of disability.
- Try to engage in informal discussion with children so that they can express their feelings openly.

- Be a good listener and discuss their problems at home, school and community.
- Discuss child rights issues in parent-teacher associations.
- Use positive reinforcement in classroom instead of corporal punishment so that the self-esteem of a child can be improved.
- Avoid stereotyping the lives of children belonging to various contexts such as marginalized children, children with disability, children belonging to various caste, class, race, religion and colour.
- Create a safe learning environment in your classroom.
- Report child right violations to concerned authority.

11.9 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, you have studied the definition of a child mainly in the perspective of legal and social policies. Then, you have gone through the basic rights of a child which include the right to survival, the right to development, the right to participation and the right to protection. You have understood that child rights are considered as human rights of children with particular attention to the right of special protection and care afforded to minors. Next you have examined ‘child rights’ perspective in the cultural context of India. A detailed description of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act was also included in this Unit. You have also analyzed the role and contribution of various national and international organizations that stood for the protection of child rights. Finally, you have read the role of teacher in protecting the rights of children. India’s one third of population consists of children; hence, we have to move a great extent to ensure the rights of children to protect them from child labour, sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation.

11.10 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Describe the major child rights acts passed by national and international organizations. Highlight its effects on the society and suggest ways for effective implementation of the rights.
2. Collect the cases of child right violations and discuss how the children can get justice through the rights.
3. Analyze the role played by the national organizations to protect child rights in India? Discuss the areas in which more concentration is needed for the effective implementation of the rights.

11.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. i) A human being should be considered as a child till 14 years because after 14 years or secondary education a child will be in a position to think about his life and be mature enough to work for his own livelihood.
2. i)
 1. Rights for Survival
Child’s right for basic needs like food, shelter and medical treatment.
 2. Rights for Development
 3. Rights for Participation
 4. Rights for Protection

- ii) Rights for Protection means that protecting a child from all kinds of anti social activities like child abuse, child labour, mental and sexual harassment. Refer Section 11.4
3.
 - i) Child rights are part of the human rights. Human rights are inherent to the human person, inalienable and universal. The rights and duties contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a part of the framework of human rights law of UNICEF.
 - ii) Write your own answer.
4.
 - i) Write your own answer.
5.
 - i) The lack of parental care leads to insecurity feelings among children, poverty, disability, HIV/AIDS, discrimination, sexual abuse and exploitation, etc. Refer 11.6.1
6.
 - i) The Article 32 of the Convention of Child Rights accepts the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation to make them free from performing hazardous work and also engaging in work that affects their education, are harmful to health and also adversely affects their physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

Poverty, parental illiteracy and ignorance, traditional view of making children learn ancestral works from the early childhood days, lack of rigidity in policy making for compulsory primary education, non-accessibility of schools, etc. are the major causes of the child labour
7.
 - i) Child abuse is termed as the violence, misbehaviour or neglect suffered by child from any person on whom the child trusts or who is responsible for the child's care and protection. It can be of different kinds such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and exposure to domestic violence.

When a child is provoked for sexual activities by an adult or adolescent it is known as sexual abuse. Intercourse, rape, oral sex, touching or kissing child's genitals, using child in the production of pornography, such as a film or magazine is referred to as sexual abuse.
8.
 - i) Article 2, 4, 9, 11, 13, 14, 19, 24, 25, 28, 32, 34 etc. of CRC of 1989. For more details refer section 11.7.1.
9.
 - i) WHO regulates the health and development of children and adolescent internationally. It undertakes studies, plan and monitor programmes. Refer section 11.7.3.
10.
 - i) NCPCR makes sure that the laws, policies, programmes and administrative strategies completely agree with the child rights enlisted in the constitution of India. Refer section 1.7.4

11.12 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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