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The Need for Social-Emotional Learning For the Development of Upper Primary Students: An Educational Perspective

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Abstract

In the changing educational context, the holistic development of students has become an important objective of education. Students' development is not limited to intellectual or academic progress; it also includes emotional, social, moral, and personality development. The upper primary stage is an important period in the development of students' personalities, as significant changes occur in emotions, self-confidence, social relationships, thinking patterns, and learning behaviour. Social-emotional learning helps students identify and manage their emotions, understand the feelings of others, develop positive relationships, cooperate with others, and make responsible decisions. The present theoretical paper discusses the need and educational importance of social-emotional learning for the holistic development of upper primary students. It also examines the role of teachers and parents and considers possible educational outcomes from a theoretical perspective.

Keywords: *Social-Emotional Learning, Upper Primary Students, Holistic Development, Emotional Development, Social Skills, Study Motivation.*

Introduction

Education is a process that provides direction to an individual's life and contributes to the development of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and values. Traditionally, greater emphasis was placed on subject knowledge and intellectual development. However, contemporary education gives increasing importance to the holistic development of students. Along with academic achievement, students need to develop self-confidence, cooperation, sensitivity, responsibility, decision-making ability, and a positive attitude.

Upper primary students are in a transitional stage between childhood and adolescence. During this period, their emotional and social needs undergo considerable changes. Some students may experience a lack of self-confidence, fear of failure, difficulty in managing emotions, or problems in adjusting to social situations. Therefore, along with academic development, appropriate attention should be given to students' social and emotional development.

Social-emotional learning provides an educational approach through which students can develop the abilities required to understand emotions, manage behaviour, build relationships, and make responsible decisions. Its inclusion in school education can contribute to students' personal, social, emotional, and academic development.

Concept of Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning is an educational process that systematically develops students' emotional and social abilities. It helps students understand their own emotions and thoughts, manage emotions, build positive relationships with others, and make responsible decisions. Social-emotional learning mainly includes self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

These abilities are relevant to students' everyday experiences in the classroom, at home, and within their peer groups. Developing such competencies can help students respond more appropriately to emotional and social situations and participate positively in educational activities.

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3. Need for Social-Emotional Learning among Upper Primary Students

At the upper primary level, students' personalities develop rapidly. During this period, students need to understand their emotions and learn to manage them appropriately. They also need skills for communicating with others, working in groups, resolving differences of opinion, cooperating with peers, and respecting others.

Social-emotional learning can help students deal with emotional and social situations in their daily lives in a more positive manner. It can also provide opportunities to develop self-confidence, emotional control, cooperation, empathy, and responsible behaviour. Therefore, social-emotional learning has an important place in the school educational process.

Importance of Social-Emotional Learning in Holistic Development

1 Emotional Development

When students are able to recognise their own emotions, they can express and regulate them appropriately. This may contribute to emotional stability, self-confidence, and more constructive responses to challenging situations.

2 Social Development

Social-emotional learning develops cooperation, empathy, communication, and mutual respect. It provides students with opportunities to work effectively with peers, understand different perspectives, and develop positive relationships.

3 Academic Development

Emotionally balanced and socially adjusted students may participate more actively in the learning process. Self-confidence, positive learning attitudes, goal setting, and constructive participation are important aspects of effective learning. Social-emotional development may therefore support students' engagement in academic activities.

4 Personality Development

Qualities such as self-control, leadership, decision-making, responsibility, and a positive attitude are important for students' personality development. Social-emotional learning can provide opportunities for students to practise these qualities through classroom and experiential activities.

Social-Emotional Learning and Study Motivation

Study motivation is an important factor in students' academic participation. When students have confidence in their abilities and are able to set their own learning goals, they may participate more actively in the learning process.

Social-emotional learning can help develop self-confidence, self-control, persistence, and a positive attitude. These qualities can support students in maintaining their efforts towards learning goals. Therefore, the relationship between social-emotional competence and study motivation should be considered in the context of students' academic development.

Useful Activities for Social-Emotional Learning

The following activities can be conducted in schools to provide students with practical opportunities to develop social-emotional skills:

- Identifying and expressing emotions
- Group discussions
- Role-playing
- Cooperative games
- Problem-solving activities
- Positive-thinking activities
- Setting learning goals
- Self-reflection
- Peer-support activities
- Sharing personal experiences

These activities provide students with opportunities to develop social-emotional skills through practical experiences and active participation.

Role of the Teacher

Teachers play an important role in the effective implementation of social-emotional learning. Teachers should respect students' emotions, listen to them, and create a safe and positive classroom environment.

Teachers should provide opportunities for group work, discussion, cooperation, and expression of ideas. Positive feedback and appreciation of students' efforts can help improve their self-confidence and participation in learning. A supportive teacher-student relationship can also encourage students to express their concerns and engage more positively in classroom activities.

Role of Parents

Parents also play an important role in students' social-emotional development. They should communicate openly with their children, understand their emotions, and listen to their difficulties. When children make mistakes, parents should provide appropriate guidance while appreciating their efforts.

Positive cooperation between schools and parents can create a supportive environment for students' social-emotional development. Consistent encouragement and communication between home and school can help reinforce positive social-emotional learning experiences.

Social-Emotional Learning in the Context of National Education Policy 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 emphasises the holistic development of students, including social, emotional, moral, and life skills. In this context, social-emotional learning is consistent with the broader objectives of contemporary Indian education. Its focus on holistic development provides a relevant framework for giving greater attention to students' emotional and social needs along with academic learning.

Educational Outcomes

Appropriate implementation of social-emotional learning may contribute to positive changes in the following areas:

- Increased self-confidence
- Better management of emotions
- Development of cooperation
- Increased participation in learning
- Improvement in study motivation
- Development of responsible decision-making
- Support for students' overall personality development

Conclusion

The upper primary stage is an important period for students' academic, emotional, and social development. Merely focusing on subject knowledge is not sufficient for achieving holistic development. Attention should also be given to students' emotional needs, social relationships, self-confidence, study motivation, and personality development.

Social-emotional learning can help students understand their emotions, develop positive relationships with others, cooperate with peers, and make responsible decisions. It can also support confidence, participation, persistence, and positive learning behaviour. Therefore, social-emotional learning should be integrated into the regular school education process as an important component of holistic student development.

Educational Suggestions

- Regular social-emotional learning activities should be conducted at the upper primary level.
- Teachers should be provided with appropriate training in social-emotional learning.
- Students should be provided with a safe environment to express their feelings.
- Group work, discussion, and experiential learning should be encouraged.
- Regular communication should be maintained between schools and parents.
- Development of social-emotional skills should become an integral part of school education.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of thesis paper.

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