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## Role of health education in health promotion of school children and adolescents

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### Abstract

Health Education is that branch of education which provides knowledge to keep our body healthy and increases possibility of healthy life. Health education teaches about physical, mental, emotional and social health. Schools are considered as temple of learning. Now- a -days health education is necessary in schools for young children and adolescents. In the era of modernization, it is necessary to impart compulsory health education through curriculum and other possible methods in which knowledge about various communicable and non-communicable diseases, modes of transmission, treatment, precautions, prevention, psychological counselling, physical deformities, personal hygiene, First aid, Control over obesity, healthy eating habits should be of prime importance. Injuries and rehabilitation process should be a part of curriculum. To include Health education in school curriculum is not sufficient. Special seminars, workshops, lectures and talks are needed to be organized to fulfil the aim of health education. Government of concerned states should make policy regarding health promotion in schools and allocation of funds. Under the guidelines of government Of India, HRD Ministry recently approached 2.75 lakhs direct consultations regarding health through vedio conferencing all over India to fulfil the aim of “some inputs for draft national education policy-2016”<sup>[1]</sup>.

**Keywords:** Health promotion, school health programme, health services, health instruction and healthful school living

### Introduction

The strength of a Nation rests upon the Health of its people. Health is a fundamental human right. Anderson (1953) suggests that health is not something dispensed like pills at a drug store or eating an orange daily nor getting eight hours sleep at night rather it is a way of living which is based on how to take care of our body and mind to live happily. It is rightly said by someone that “a nation’s health is a nation’s wealth.” According to World Bank’s estimation, India is one of the highest ranking countries in the world in terms of the number of children suffering from malnutrition. India’s ranking is 20<sup>th</sup> in Global Hunger Index (GHI) with serious hunger situation. India is 3<sup>rd</sup> in GHI ranking amongst South Asian countries<sup>[2]</sup>. Pravin N Yerpude *et al.* (2013)<sup>[3]</sup> conducted a study on south Indian school going urban adolescents of 10-19 years (N=210, Girls=72[34.29%], Boys=138[65.71%]) to check health status and morbidity and found that 53.33% adolescents were normal and 46.67% were Malnourished. By applying height for age criteria 32.86% were stunted. 66.67% boys were suffering compared to 33.3% girls. Dental caries were commonest among all health problems. Britnell Mark (2015)<sup>[4]</sup> observed in his research that India does not have health insurance and private sector is dominant health provider in India. However time to time Indian Government is doing efforts to improve health care and that’s why National rural health mission was carefully run by government for 2005-12. To improve nutritional status of school children Indian government launched mid day meal scheme in 1995. under article 21 and 21- A of life, liberty and education to all school children Haryana government is committed to provide safe premises of all government and private schools by framing district education committee under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner with district education officer as the member secretary and district elementary education officer as additional member secretary and other members i.e. fire station officer, civil surgeon, executive member of municipal council, district town planner and two representative of schools etc.

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To discuss regarding building construction of schools, safety measures at schools and health check up and health promotion in schools. The aim of this paper is to suggest steps for better health in schools [5].

### Need of Health Education in Schools

Changes in health and health related behaviour occurs due to change in environment, public policies and community efforts. For example sun protection behaviour is more likely to be prevalent where a school has adequate shade for children. So environment should be health promotive in schools, home and community. W.H.O describes settings such as schools, as places where 'people live, work and play' [6]. It recommends the use of setting approach for improving health. Resnick *et al.* (1997) [7] conducted a longitudinal study on adolescents health and found that adolescents who feels that their schools are concerned about them and feel that they are part of their schools are engaged less in risky activities comparatively to those who have a feeling of disconnection from schools.

- Assessing personal vulnerability to health risk taking
- To analyse students' point of view regarding health and effect on peers, culture and personal behaviour
- To spread knowledge about various postural deformities, remedies and precautions
- Teaching health promotion norms and beliefs
- Medical updates on health information and to compare rural and urban students health
- Assessing awareness in masses regarding health, various diseases and healthful habits etc.
- To teach about personal hygiene
- To teach effects of alcohol, smoking and drugs on health
- To teach preventive measures and rehabilitation process of different injuries
- To make aware about balance diet, obesity and methods to control
- To teach the benefits of exercises, yoga and games
- To discuss about problems faced by adolescents
- To provide sex education and information regarding HIV
- To involve parents and community in special camps, medical check-ups and awareness programs
- To assess health status, blood groups, growth cards and BMI index of every child
- To teach importance of yoga, aerobics and sports in wellbeing
- To teach about government policies regarding health promotion and their benefits
- To facilitate access to medical and health insurance programme to help families and students
- To teach about First aid and emergency care and nutritional and caloric values as per body weight and height
- To aware about child abuse and solution and toll free helpline numbers
- To formulate inclusive health policies

### School Health Programme

Coordinating the efforts of school with community and home in a planned way for health promotion of students, teachers and other school personnel comes under school health programme. Health promotion depends on health services, healthful living and health education

### Health Services

The aim of school health services may vary at school, district or state level depending upon student's needs, allocated funds, community resources and attitude of administrator. Some schools have Nurse Consultants as per concerned state government. To spread awareness regarding various diseases, mode of transmission, protection and preventive measures are considered Health services. Schools should structure health services in a planned way to examine, detect and evaluate health problems of school children, adolescents, staff and other personnel. Walker *at.al* (1992) [8] recommended that law should be formulated in schools for special education students'. Special education students are having wide range of disabilities related to hearing, listening speech, serious emotional disturbances, orthopaedic impairments and learning disabilities.

- To conduct medical examination of students, teachers and other school personnel to access medical status.
- if symptoms of diseases are detect; to direct the students, teachers and other school personnel to physicians
- To call the parents of students for interview regarding health of their wards
- To step forward for immunization of students, teachers and other school personals
- Counselling related to emotional and mental health
- Special care to exception child regarding health related problems i.e. to visit their homes and to conduct parents education training
- To support students for acquiring self management skills
- To provide dental services along with medical check up
- To conduct employee wellness programme along with students
- To develop emergency plans to meet emergency situation
- To provide evaluation system to assess effectiveness of health services
- Collaboration with NGO's, social workers, psychologists, counsellors, Doctors and administrators.

### Health Instructions

To teach about health through subject matter included in curriculum from kindergarten through college and university level falls under health instruction.

- To teach about nutritional value, calorie value of food required as per body weight
- To teach about personal hygiene
- Knowledge about sex education
- Effects or drugs and drug abuse
- Safety education
- Causes of injuries, prevention, protection and rehabilitation process
- To aware about various communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, mode of transmission, preventive measures

### Healthful School Living

Provision of safe and healthy environment is responsibility of schools. Teachers, students, other staff members and parents should be careful about sanitation, ventilation, lighting and water supply at school and home. Food prepared in mess and home should be of nutritional value. Healthy habits should be inculcated in children. Daryl. E. Rowe (1987) [9] recommended to be careful about environmental health which is associated with different types of hazards including physical, biological and chemical hazards and way out to improve environmental health in schools.

### **Characteristics of Health Promoting Schools**

- Provision of Sports, Play Grounds, Coaches and Game periods
- Healthy meal
- Gym facility for the students above 15 years age
- To organise fitness test weekly to access the fitness level of students. Many activities like shuttle run, circuit training, weight training, yoga, interval training and standardized tests should be included for health promotion
- To celebrate world health day and to organize seminars and workshops regarding health promotion
- To organize talent show to access the possibility of talent in different fields
- To inculcate habit of healthy lifestyle
- Disabled students should be given special care, assistance and information
- Norms of school based on democracy and equality are helpful in inculcating positive attitude among students
- Healthy students and teacher relationship. Teacher should know how to guide the students to promote health
- Exhibition of health related posters in schools

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