

## HEALTH EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

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### **Abstract**

Health is the greatest asset that an individual can possess. Like every education, the health education must have a strong root from the school itself. So, the health education is an important part of our education system. This paper mainly aims to provide some of the basic aspects of health education viz, the meaning, definitions, objectives, and aims of health education. Properly planned and developed health education curriculum is important as the life style diseases are becoming very common everywhere. So, in order to make students aware about the need and importance of maintaining good physical health, the health education is very important.

### **Introduction**

Today India needs not only intellectuals but also strong and healthy men and women for her progress and prosperity. There is a popular saying in Sanskrit, “Arogyam Parmo Labh”, i.e. health is the greatest blessing of all. Our health determines the standard of health of our family, community and nation to which we belong. Our personnel hygiene significantly contributes to promotion and maintenance of national health. Any system of Physical education without the support of health education cannot possibly accomplish the best results. The mutual coordination of physical and health education is a matter of fundamental importance in any system.

### **Meaning of Health Education**

Health education as any activity which promotes health-related learning, i.e. some relatively permanent change in an individual's competence or disposition. Effective health education may thus produce changes in understanding or ways of thinking, it may bring about some shift in belief or attitude; it may influence or clarify values; it may facilitate the acquisition of skills' it may even effect changes in behaviour or lifestyle. Health Education is concerned with promoting health as well as reducing behaviour induced diseases. In other words, health education is concerned with establishing or inducing changes in personal and groups attitudes and behaviour that promote healthier living.

Health education builds student's knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes about health. Health education teaches about physical, mental, emotional and social health. It motivates students to improve and maintain their health, prevent disease, and reduce risky behaviours. Health education curricula and instruction help students to learn skills so that they will use to make healthy choices throughout their lifetime.

Health education is vital for students as it builds their knowledge and attitudes about health. Health education does not only concentrate on being healthy. It also focuses on emotional, mental and social health too. Educating students on the importance of health builds their motivation. As a result, they strive to maintain good health, prevent diseases and avoid risky behaviour. Instilling the importance of good health in schools, helps students to make healthy life choices when they grow older and continue doing so throughout their lives. It helps them understand the dangers of using illicit drugs, smoking and drinking alcohol. It helps prevent various injuries, diseases, such as, obesity and diabetes, and sexually transmitted diseases.

Health education is important to teach children awareness about living a healthy lifestyle. Health education encompasses social, mental, physical and social health. Health education teaches people of all ages about how diet and exercise contribute to a healthy lifestyle. It also encourages positive changes in behaviour and lowers the risk of addiction to drugs, alcohol and unsafe sexual practices. The majority of schools around the country have courses aimed at teaching health education to students. These courses often revolve around the body, healthy eating, sex and exercising. Some students are taught basic health and physical fitness early on. More in-depth courses are designed for middle and high school students.

### **Definitions of Health Education**

“Health education is defined as the sum of experiences, which favourably influence habits, attitudes and knowledge relating to the individual community and social health”- Thomas wood.

“Health education like general education is concerned with changes in knowledge, feelings and behaviour of people. In its most usual form, it concentrates on developing such health practices as are believed to bring about the best possible state of well-being. –W.H.O technical Report (1954)

### **Importance of Health Education**

If health is so precious asset, then education of health is indeed, more important. Health education helps us in the following ways

1. Health education provides information to the students and the teachers about the function of the body the rule of health and hygiene and precautionary measures for keeping of diseases.
2. Health education helps in discovering physical defects of children and discovering various types of abnormalities of children
3. Health education develops health habits like need of fresh air, hygienic feeding and various class room habits
4. Health education provided knowledge regarding good health habits
5. Health education develops better human relations between school home community
6. Health education provides knowledge regarding prevention and control of various diseases
7. Health education proving first aid training essential for everyone a emergency may come to any one and at any time.

### **Significance of Health Education**

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Health education encourages a person to make healthy choices. They are instructed to avoid unhealthy habits. 'A sound mind lives in a sound body'. Health education also teaches about the emotional and mental health of the student. A healthy person is the happiest person in the world.

## **Aims of Health Education**

The following are the some of the main aims of health education

- a. To provide information about health and its value as community asset – Health education aims at acquainting the etchers with the rules of health and hygiene. Functioning of Precautionary measures to ward off diseases and to provide good disease-free working conditions.
- b. To maintain norms of good health: The authorities should provide hygienic environment in the form of adequate ventilation, proper temperature, good sanitation and all-round cleanliness. It helps the authorities to keep certain norms of health.
- c. To take precautionary and preventive measures against communicable diseases. Its aim is to take adequate precautions against contamination and spread of diseases. Thus, good sanitary arrangements are made. If precautionary and preventive measures are properly adopted can help in improving the health standards of society.
- d. To render assistance to the school going children an understanding of the nature and purpose of health services and facilities – It aims at discovering physical defects and other abnormalities in the child and promoting their reduction if they are easily curable.
- e. To develop and promote mental and emotional health – mental and emotional health are also equally important along with physical health. While physically health makes a pupil physically fit mental and emotional health enables him to maintain an even temper and a happy disposition.
- f. To develop a sense of civic responsibility. School is a miniature society Responsibility of skill health does not lie on any one's shoulders. Even some cause of skill health has their origin in social conditions which require action on the part of community as a whole in order to eradicate them. It aims at realizing the people to make combined efforts and work for community health.

## **Objectives of Health Education**

The following are the comprehensive list of functional objectives of health education to be adopted in schools

1. To enable the students to develop a scientific point of view of health with reference to traditional and modern concept of health.

2. To enable the students to identify health problems and understand their own role on health and to medical agencies in meeting those problems
3. To enable the students to set an example of desirable health behaviour
4. To enable the student to understand the causes of the pollution of air water, soil and food as well as their ways and means of prevention
5. To enable the students to gain sufficient knowledge of first aid
6. The emphasize students on the bad effects of smoking and taking alcohol etc
7. The acquaint students with the functioning of various organizations working for the maintenance of health.
8. To help students understand how the present-day rapid development of science and technology as increased the hazards of life and health problems and also how to face and prevent them.

## Conclusion

‘A sound mind lives in a sound body’. Health education teaches people of all ages about how diet and exercise contribute to a healthy lifestyle. It also encourages positive changes in behaviour and lowers the risk of addiction to drugs, alcohol and unsafe sexual practices. The majority of schools around the country have courses aimed at teaching health education to students. Health education builds students' knowledge, skills and positive attitudes about health. Health education teaches about physical, mental, emotional and social health. It motivates students to improve and maintain their health, prevent disease and reduce risky behaviours.

Effective curricula result in positive changes in behaviour that lower student risks around: alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, injury prevention, mental and emotional health, nutrition, physical activity, prevention of diseases and sexuality and family life.

Many are the blessings of imparting health education. Health education enables a person to remain physically fit and in proper health. A healthy person can enjoy life fully. He can carry out his duties in a responsible manner. He is an asset to the family, the society and to the entire nation. He is always full of energy. He lives a long and happy life. A healthy peasant is happier than a monarch without health.

Health education encourages a person to make healthy choices. They are instructed to avoid unhealthy habits. Without basic health literacy, societies are at a huge disadvantage both economically and culturally.

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