

Life Skills Lesson from "The Couplets" of Kabir Das Ji; the Timeless & Priceless Gems for Young Generation

Sarika Srivastava¹, Ajay Tiwari²
Soft Skills Trainer, India¹
O.P. Jindal Global University, India²

Abstract

My first introduction with Kabir Das ji's Couplets was when I was in high school that time Just studied as a part of syllabus honestly never understood the depth in them. But During the second wave of pandemic were environment was full of negativity myself Covid -19 positive and home isolated broken mentally and physically fortunately got to read "Kabir K Doha" believe me they are priceless gem for our generation I got to learn so much these couplets are the ocean of knowledge, gives a very positive view and a deep understanding on each and every aspect of social life; there is profound wisdom hidden in each couplet. They reflect Kabir's Love, Philosophy, Mysticism his deep faith in Supreme power and believes in mental and spiritual awakening. . His couplets are timeless deals with every aspect of human psychology so relevant in present days.

Kabir Das ji's way of expressing the most profound thoughts with ease and in the simplest words is so practical and true that anyone can understand easily. His Several couplets are deeply connected to some universally relevant behaviour that one would find in most competency dictionaries they teach how to deal with day-to-day problems "the art of living and life skills".

Keywords: Life Skills-set of basic skills acquired through learning or direct life experience Couplets/ Doha- is a pair of lines in a verse that rhyme and have the same metre. Emotional Intelligence- Ability to perceive, manage, and regulate emotions. Mysticism- Spiritual union between the whole of humanity and God.

Objective

The Objectives of this paper are-

• To familiarizetoday's generation with the treasure of knowledge, The directory of life skills that we already possess from generations but ignored it due to lack of knowledge and interest.

- We are becoming technologically intelligent that's good, but why we are becoming emotionally so weak?
- What are the reasons of increasing mental health issues like stress, anxiety and depression in people specially in young generation?
- Why life-skills education has become the need -of hour and how could it be imparted to meet desired outcome?
- How our cultural values and old literature could prove useful in dealing with mental health problems.

Finally this paper is a small attempts to take few drops from the ocean of knowledge very rich in culture and values our own Hindi Literature's great poet also known as 'Saint' Kabir Das ji and connect some of his couplets with the main elements of life skills. If we read and follow the teachings of Kabir Das ji we will be in a better position to deal with many problems of life and could escape many problems.

Introduction

Technological advance to extreme is upgrading our life but we are forgetting to live life. With Artificial Intelligence we are becoming Technologically intelligent but what about Emotional Intelligence? The most important and the most neglected aspect of life; Artificially Intelligent machines are acting as Humans and Humans like machines becoming insensitive, self-centred, connected more to Internet and less to Inner Net (self) is the biggest cause of rising cases of mental health problems. To deal with this rapidly growing everyone should join hands and create awareness.

The couplets of Kabir Das ji could prove very useful in imparting values, learning Life skills and developing strong will power to with mental issues. Kabir Das ji one of the greatest poet of Hindi literature hard to believe that never went to any formal school or college but had a very deep understanding of life and life skills. His way of expressing the most profound thoughts with ease that anyone can understand easily is so practical that even after generations they are relevant and people can learn so much .

Mental Health the Fastest Growing Problem of Today

In this pandemic, we all are spending a lot of time in front of the screens as school & colleges are closed and most of us doing work from home. The hard-hitting impact of this pandemic is not only on our business & economy but also on our mental health. The results from many studies shows a huge rise in mental health issues amongst all age group of people during and post lockdown; in this children and adolescents are huge cause of concern. They are becoming very insensitive to needs of others and low in empathy and resilience. The sudden rise of suicide cases in youngsters has compelled us to think.

Why our youth is becoming emotionally so weak that instead of facing the problems of life they find easy ways to escape from them.

Our society not only needs technologically intelligent people but also emotionally intelligent leaders, employees, parents, teachers, children and youth. New challenge like increased Mental Health issues requires immediate and effective responses to resolve this rapidly growing problem more dangerous than this ongoing pandemic .What is the most serious aspect of mental health problem is that people are unaware of it or do not accept. It may be due to social stigma about mental issues in our society and ignorantly people take extreme decisions.

Reason behind Escalation of Mental Health Problem

Technological advancement, cut throat competition and fast changing industry demand has made the competition very tough. To survive in the world of competitions humans are working like machines emotionless. Declining Family, Social and Professional Values are some of the major reasons behind increasing problems of mental health cases in society.

According to WHO report around 450 million people are globally are affected by mental illness. Irony is only two-thirds of people with a known mental condition, such as anxiety, depression and cooccurring disorder seeks medical help rest unreported. India is one of the youngest countries in the world with an average age of 30 years. It is the home to the highest number of youth in the world, youth is the future of country. We can't let our talent go waste due to trivial problems of life. Life skills touches upon the issues that are real and actually affect people's lives. The importance of Life skill education has increased in many folds in last couple of years.

Increasing Demand of Life Skills Education in Present Scenario

A mental illness affects 19% of the adult population, 46% of teenagers and 13% of children each year. After covid -19 it is becoming the fastest growing problem in our society and most us are still in a denial mode. A person struggling with mental health may be in front of our eyes but we ignore often because of the stigma attached to mental health and untreated, mental illness contributes to poorer performance at school and work, sudden behaviour change, mood swings, fewer and increased risk of suicide or other heinous crime.

To deal with mental health issues life skills can play a vital role. As life skills education bridges the gap, it strengthens the mental ability of an individual, helps in analysing the situation and then taking decision. Life skills have the power to improve our personal and professional relationships. When it comes to mental health, life skills education can be a game changer. If life skill education is blended with our culture and literatures it can serve dual purpose Life Skills with Values based education.

What is Life Skill Education?

Defined by the UNICEF, is "A behaviour change or behaviour development approach to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills". These skills enable individuals to translate knowledge, attitude and values into actual abilities; the concept of Life Skills has been popularly used particularly in the context of mental health.

World Health Organization:Conceptualized Life Skills as psychological competence. Psychological competence is the individual's ability to maintain a state of mental well-being and demonstrate this in adaptive and positive behaviour while interacting with others, and with her/his culture and environment.

Literature: A useful Medium of imparting Life Skills

Learning life skills lessons could be a wonderful experience by reading novels, plays and poetry. In which poetry can prove very useful as most of us enjoy reading or listening poetry and it serves many purposes at one time. It gives reader pleasure, teaches valuable lesson, encourages higher order critical & creative thinking. Above all poetry is one of the most graceful and traditional art forms ever created to share emotions and awake the emotions of people. The best thing about poetry is the artistic quality; poet can artistically say a lot with a few words or just in couple of lines. The second is its suggestiveness. Poetry appeal to our emotions and forces us to think the way poet wants rather than using our intellect.

Poetry has a potential to communicate and demonstrate our understanding of a concept. It is a technique for deepening comprehension and developing empathy and knowledge that can be applied to real-life situations. One form of poetry is couplet; A pair of lines in a verse that rhyme and have the same metre. The couplets of Kabir Das ji are full of knowledge, life lessons, high in social values gives a very deep and positive view about life and compels us to think on some of the most important aspects of life with we probably ignore. There is profound wisdom hidden in each couplet deals with human psychology so relevant in present days written generations ago even far before the term life skills or emotional Intelligence was used.

The Couplets of Kabir Das and The key areas of behaviour Development Approach

The three key areas of behaviour development approach Knowledge, Skills and Attitude is reflected from many of the couplets of Kabir they are exceptionally deep, direct and believes in mental and spiritual awakening. The teachings in couplets are conveyed quietly but very impressively without losing their sweetness or freshness that one could learn so much from these couplets.

Knowledge

"GyaanRatanKaJatan Kar, MaateeKaSansaar HaayKabeeraPhir Gaya, Pheeka Hai Sansaar"

Explanation: Try to attain knowledge which is the most valuable thing in this world only knowledge can lead you to the salvation otherwise you will be trapped in life and death cycle.

Skills

"SheelavantSabaseBada Sab, RatananKeeKhaan Teen LokKeeSampada, RaheeSheel Mein Aan"

Explanation: Calmness and modesty are the greatest qualities of a human and are the most expensive gem of all the gems in the world. A person who has the skill of being calm in any situation is the richest person has the wealth of all three world.

Attitude

"ManganMaranSaman Hai, Mat Koi Mange Beekh Mangan Se MarnaBhala, YehSatguru Ki Seekh"

Explanation: Begging for anything (reword, recognition or money) before anyone is equivalent to death, it is better to die than to beg.

The Behaviour Connect: Above couplets gives a clear view of kabir's philosophy of life that is you should attain such a knowledge that leads you to reach at your desired position. You need not to beg before any one for award or recognition as begging is like dying be enough capable to attaining the desired position and it is extremely important to stay calm and modest when you are successful as these are the quality of a gentleman.

The Concept of Duality in His Couplets

"ChaltiChakkiDekh Kar, Diya KabiraRoye Dui PaatanKe Beech Mein, Sabit Bacha Na Koye" **Explanation:** Seeing the moving mill kabir Das ji cries because in the grinding process when grain comes between the two wheels even the hard grains turns into a powdered form nothing is left in its original form.

"PaateePaatee Sab Kahe, Keel Kahe Na Koy. Jab Koee Keel Kahe, To DukhKaaheKo Hoy"

Explanation: Kabir says everyone talks about the two grinding wheels but no one talks about the motionless nail in the centre that holds both the wheels firmly and plays a very important part in entire grinding process. If we focus on that nail there is no sorrow at all.

The meaning behind these metaphors ChaltiChakki and PaateePaatee represent the wheels of time and an ever-changing process. Trapped in duality between Earth & Sky, Day & Night, Joy& Sorrow Life & Death etc. whatever we see is perishable nothing that we comprehend is eternal. All contradictions emerge out of duality as me and you; us and others This separateness breeds the emergence of worst form is human conflict and distraction. In current situation two wheel represents our personal and professional life and its pressure We need to learn to maintain a balance Not letting personal life mix with professional life though sounds quite an impossible but actually isn't so difficult to achieve only we have to focus on the nail means that is(self).

The Couplets of Kabir Das and their Alliance withthe Core Elements of Life Skills

Life skills is a term used to describe a set of basic skills acquired through learning or real life experiences life skills enables individual to effectively handle issues encountered in daily life. These skills had become very essential in present scenario as LIFE SKILLS= Life is much happier, peaceful and successful if you have these skills otherwise LIFE KILLS.

Self-Awareness

"JaiseTil Mein Tel Hai JyonChakamak Mein Aag TeraSaeenTujhamen Hai, Too Jaag Sake ToJaag"

Explanation: Assesame seed has oil in itself and fire is within the flint stone your lord (strength) is inside you .You have to wake up internally and find out your strength and weakness than only you can actually know yourself

"Jin Khoja Tin Paiya, GaharePaaneePaith. Main BapuraBoodan Dara, RahaKinaareBaith"

Explanation:The pearl will be found only by the one who descends into the deep water. The one who sits on the side in fear will never get anything. In the same way success in life will also come to those who make hard efforts without fearing of difficulties.

The Behaviour Connect: One can look deep into (self) and can explore inner self as everything is within you. Your strength, weakness, fears and life goals by exploring inner self it become very easy to work on weakness overcome the fears and make a proper road map to achieve the goals. People who know their strengths and weaknesses perform better and better this boosts their confidence and productivity.

Who so ever had searched within self has definitely found something and one who fears of deep water and sits on the bank of river will never find anything.

Positive Effect of Self-Awareness:

- Better able to deal with stress.
- Manage time in better way.
- > Better able to take feedback and criticism in constructive way.

Self-Control

"Man KeBahutak Rang Hai, ChhinChhinBadale Soy Ek Rang Me Jo Rahe, EaisaBiralaKoy"

Explanation: Mind has different colours, it keeps changes every now and thenone who remains in one colour so is a rare one.

"Man Ke Mate Na Chaliye, Man Ke Mate Anek Jo Man Par Asavaar Hai, So SaadhuKoeeEk"

Explanation: Do not follow the opinion of the mind, because the mind has many opinions. One who always keeps the mind under himself that sage is very rare.

The Behaviour Connect: Self-control is an art of making the right choices without feeling conflicted. A self-controlled person focuses only on goals and makes decisions keeping the end goals in mind. Self-controlled people are not only in charge of their actions— they can regulate their emotions as well. They can control their anger or harmful emotions like jealousy or hatred. This helps them handle personal relationships better than those who don'thave self-control.

Positive Effect of Self-Control

- Reminds Consequences
- Avoid Temptations
- Decision-making ability

Better relationships

• Patience and Perseverance

"DheereDheere Re Mana, Dheere Sub Kutch Hoye Mali Seenche So Ghara, Ritu Aaye Phal Hoye"

Explanation: Slow down and don't be impatient, Everything happens when the right time comes. Even the Gardner may water a hundred buckets but the fruit arrives only when right season come.

The Behaviour Connect: With special reference to the younger generation, it is important to be Patient. Just as plant takes its time to grow into a tree and bear fruits, every good thing takes its time similarly. You have to do lots of hard work to achieve goals, especially big goals, and this requires patience and perseverance.

Positive Effect of Patience and Perseverance

➤ Helps focus on long Term Goals

> Better physical and mental health

➤ Helps to develop a skill set

Make more rational choices

Self-Motivation

"Man KeHaareHaar Hai Man KeJiteJit. Kahe Kabir Hari Paaie Man Hi Ki Paratit"

Explanation: Victory and defeat in life are only feelings of the mind. If a man is defeated in the mind – disappointed then there is defeat and if he wins the mind then he is the winner. God can also be attained only by the faith of the mind – if there is no faith in attainment then how will you get it?

The Behaviour Connect: – Self-motivation is our internal drive to achieve not to stop but keep moving forward. It is the force that keeps pushing you to go on When you are thinking to quit or you just don't know how to start, Self-motivated people are highly productive and have positive mindset they are very effective in whatever they do.

Positive Effect of Self-Motivation: Self-Motivated people are

Naturally curious person

Refuse to give up easily

Pro-active people

• Empathy and Sympathy

"Kabira Soi Pir Hai, Jo Jaane Par Pir Jo Par Pir Na Jaanahi, So KaPir Mein pir"

Explanation: The person who understands the pain and sorrow of others is a real gentleman and who cannot understand the pain of others cannot be called human.

"Jag Mein BaireeKoeeNahin , Jo Man Sheetal Hoy Yah Aapa To DaalDe ,DayaKare Sab Koe"

Explanation: Give-up your ego and forgive the people and have sympathy for them this way you can attain peace of mind and have no enemy

The Behaviour Connect: The ability to put yourself in someone else's shoe is to understand the other's situation. Empathy is a critical skill for the leaders. It contributes to an accurate understanding of employees their perceptions and concerns. It also establishes a good flow of communication between the staff and higher authority .this is the only way to create a healthy work atmosphere in any organisation because you can sense what others want and they are getting it from you or not.

Positive Effect of Empathy and Sympathy:

- Help in developing good relationship
- Gives self-satisfaction.

• Leadership Skills

"TinakaKabahun Na Nindiye, Jo Paanvan Tar Hoy KabahunUdeeAankhinPade, To Peer Ghaneree Hoy"

Explanation: Never underestimate the straw lying under the feet, when the same straw flies and goes into the eyes, then it gives a lot of pain. Similarly, we should never underestimate any poor and weak person.

The Behaviour Connect: Leadership is the ability of a manager to induce the subordinates to work with confidence and zeal. A great leader is one who takes everyone together and do not differentiate between senior or junior.

Positive Effect of Leadership Skills:

- Increase Productivity
- Nurture future leaders

Communication Skills

"BoliEkAmol Hai Jo Koi BolaeJani. HiyeTaraajooTauliKe, Tab MukhBaaharAani"

Explanation: Speaking is an art and the selection of words and tone of your speech are precious. So first, evaluate the same and then only speak.

"Aisee Vani Boliye, MunKaAapaKhoye Apna Tan Sheetal Kare, AuranKoSukhHoye"

Explanation: Everyone should speak such a language, which makes the mind of the listener happy. Such a language not only gives pleasure to the listeners, but along with it, one's own mind also experiences bliss. With the use of such sweet speech, we can make any person feel our love and respect towards him

The Behaviour Connect: Speaking is the most important quality of a humans and one who has the ability to communicate effectively and accurately can win the heart of any one. You can make friends and enemies just by your speech and remember that words once spoken, it cannot be taken back. If you go through the history and the Holy books, you will find that a total society was reformed just by a thoughtful speech and on the other wand war was created only due to unwanted speech.

Positive Effect of Good Communication Skills:

- Better relationships
- Can better handle conflicts and solve the problems.

Social Skills

"Kabeer So DhanSanche, Jo AageKo Hoy. Sees ChadhaePotalee, Le Jaat Na DekhyoKoy"

Explanation: In this couplet Kabir emphasis on collecting that money (relationship, good behaviour, good deeds) which is useful in this world as well as in other world means in this life and after death because no one carries bund le of money on head when life is over all that goes with is your good deeds and behaviour.

"PothiPadhiPadhi Jag Mua, Pandit Bhay Na Koya, DhaiAakhar Prem Ka, Padhe So Pandit Hoya" **Explanation:** Just by reading too many books or getting degrees, no one becomes a great scholar. Great scholar is one who understands the two and a half letters of love or recognize the real form of love and by practicing love for all human beings one can become a great person.

The Behaviour Connect: No one in this world has taken his/her valuables in final journey your real valuables are your friends and relatives one who has love for all human beings is the real scholar. So value your relations rather than running after money.

Positive Effect of Social Skills:

- Reduces anxiety and stress in social situations.
- Improves an individual's ability to function in daily social situations.
- Develops appropriate reactions in a variety of social situations.
- Raises self-esteem.

Accepting Criticism and Feedback

"NindakNiyareRaakhie, AganKuteeChhavaay, Bin Paanee, Saabun Bina, NirmalKareSubhaay"

Explanation: This means you should always value a person who is a strong critic of yours and try to keep him close to you because your critic is the one who always give you a free and fair advice only after hearing his criticism you can get the idea of purifying yourself.

"SaadhuAisaChaahie, JaisaSoopSubhaay, Saar-Saar KoGahiRahai, ThothaDeeeUdaay"

Explanation: A person should be like a grain –cleansing soup as in a grain cleaning process soup keeps the grains and throws away the useless straw similarly one should always keep the important and useful things in mind and unnecessary things should be thrown away.

The Behaviour Connect: Taking criticism and feedback in a positive way is not easy for anyone people always take it in a negative sense and keep distance from their critics. Butkabir das ji suggests to always keep our critics close to us. As they are the ones who actually shows the right path by their hard words because they are always engaged in finding our faults they are the ones who identifies our weakness and tells us about them, otherwise we will never be able to analyze ourselves. It is the basic nature of man that he can see the shortcomings of others but advocates every good and bad work done by self.

A right person is actually one who takes criticism & feedback as scope for improvement and works in the direction of correcting the mistakes. Healways keeps the important substance with self and throws away the rest.

Positive Effect of Criticism and Feedback:

- Helps you improve and stay humble
- Encourages you to think differently.
- Presents to you an opportunity to hone your people skills

• Time Management

"KaalKare So Aaj Kar, AajKare So Ab Pal Mein ParalayHoegi, BahuriKaregaKab"

Explanation: Never leave any work for tomorrow, whatever you have to do tomorrow, do it today and whatever you have to do today, do it right now. No one knows that if the holocaust comes in the very next moment, then life will end, then when will you do what you want to do.

The Behaviour Connect: Time management is essential in life because it increase productivity and helps in getting more things done within a deadline and reduce stress. As a result, you have more time to achieve bigger and better results so stop procrastination and finish your regular task on daily basis as tomorrow never comes and time is money.

Positive Effect of Time Management:

- Provide a better quality of work
- > Deliver work on time
- More productivity and efficiency
- Much less procrastination

Stress Management

"ChintaAisiDakini, KaatKalejaKhaye Vaid Bechara Kya Kare, KahaTakDawaLagaye"

Explanation: Worries are like fire as fire destroys everything that comes in its range similarly worries not only destroys a person physically and mentally but his relationships, productivity and above all risk taking ability. So stop worrying as just worrying you can't find solution of your problems and be happy because even the best Doctor cannot diagnose you from your worries and there is no medicine for this ailment.

"Chinta se chaturaighate ,Dhukh se ghate sharer Lobh se laxamighate, Kahgayedaaskabir"

Explanation: Worry decreases cleverness, sorrow decreases body, sin decreases Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) worry is fatal for human beings. It harms the body as well as damages the brain.

The Behaviour Connect: We are always stressed about future and do not enjoy in present There is no disease like stress as it not only destroys the entire body but our intelligence, decision making power and productivity. The problem is that even a best doctor has no solution to this problem. So the best way to manage stress is to reduce it.

Positive Effect of Stress Management:

- Be optimistic and believe in hard work
- > Try to Be Positive.
- Use Positive Affirmations

Conflict Resolution

"KabiraKhada Bazaar Mein, Mange SabkiKhair Na Kahu Se Dosti, Na Kahu Se Bair"

Explanation: Kabir stands in the market and prays for the prosperity of all because everyone is his friend no one is enemy.

The Behaviour Connect: Kabir Das ji suggests to have a balanced approach when dealing with any conflict. All kinds of conflicts or problems in our human life are expected due to we are dealing with other human beings. We often argue, fight, or against each other but we need to focus on how to solve the conflict rather than arguing or fighting. If you have the energy, use it wisely and focus on how to solve the problems.

Positive Conflict Resolution:

- > It helps in building stronger relationships
- Reduces stress
- ➤ It fosters a problem-solving mindset and approach

Negotiation Skills

"Jab Gun KoGaahak Mile, Tab Gun LaakhBikaee.

Jab Gun KoGaahakNahin, Tab KaudeeBadaleJaee"

Explanation: when your skills are recognized by a right person there worth is in lakhs but if skills are unrecognized the most talented person in useless and all his qualities goes away.

The Behaviour Connect: Negotiation skills are the qualities that help two or more parties agree to a common logical solution. It is also an important skill when accepting a new job. The employee can negotiate different terms such as higher pay better benefits, and so on. Negotiating a job offer is particularly important because all future increases in compensation will be based on the initial offer.

Positive Effect of Negotiation Skills:

- Helps in building better relationships.
- Avoid future problems and conflicts.
- Peaceful resolution of disagreement.

Measures to Deal with the Problem

Now the time had come to address this rapidly increasing problem and think proactively to deal with it; As just celebrating one day as Mental Health Day for education, awareness and advocacy against social stigma will do no good. Every stakeholder of society has to make joint efforts to help people facing mental trauma

- Social awareness programs on internet, social media about mental health should be advertises
- Educate and counsel people against social stigma about mental health problems.
- Mental health narratives should be included in curricula to, de-stigmatize, remove discrimination and early detection, to empowering stakeholders for early detection.

Conclusion

Today our society needs technologically as well as emotionally intelligent people both but it is not happening. One of the most important reason is drastically decreasing social values and increasing mental health issues like anxiety, stress and depression. Present generation that is preparing to join the work force and future challenges of life needs to learn life skills and social values for coping with emotions and stress. Because only values and life skill can help them discover and develop a better person.

In imparting life, skill and social values Kabir's couplets could be very useful because his couplets deals with human psychology and life management. If these become a part of our life skill

education there can be big transformation as these couplet's continue to serve as a beacon of hope after generations they were penned.

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