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**INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION**



***From the Desk of Editor...***

Happy New year Wishes to one and all !

In this yet another edition Volume 2, Number 1 January 2016, of our International Journal of Life Skills Education, we are happy to share with you selected conceptual and empirical papers strengthening the concept of life skills education /life skills in our daily lives.

Education should be about empowering children to be able to problem-solve and think critically, be passionate, creative, and work independently as well as with others. This 'ideal state' or feeling which we all dream and hope, will be possible if life skills education is made an integral part of the education system. Education, along with life skills which can be gained from training and or observational learning and from our own experiences, can equip the individual to hone the skills required to adapt to the positives & negative colours of life, enhancing one's self efficacy leading to overall self confidence.

The first two papers highlight on the importance and need of life skills education to be included in the new education policy which has been explained very vividly. Life skills include both Generic and Specific life skills. The empirical papers explore the generic life skills and how they play vital roles in psychological well being for varied target groups be it individuals, students, teacher students etc. How these generic life skills work together to handle specific issues and problems in life is also highlighted in the papers.

Enjoy reading the articles and do support and encourage us by way of submission of your articles to enhance the subject scope and research in this field.

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# Incorporating Life Skills Education in National Education Policy: Concept Note

Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE)

## The Concept of Life Skills Education

'Education is a fundamental human right and essential to personal and socio-economic development. The objective of such education must be envisaged in a broad lifelong learning perspective that aims at enabling and empowering people to realize their rights to education, fulfill their personal expectations for a decent life and work, and contribute to the achievement of their societies' socio-economic development objectives. In addition to the acquisition of basic knowledge and cognitive skills, the content of learning must promote problem solving and creative thinking; understanding and respect for human rights; inclusion and equity; cultural diversity; it must also foster a desire and capacity for lifelong learning and learning to live together, all of which are essential to the betterment of the world and the realization of peace, responsible citizenship and sustainable development.' - Position Paper on Education Post-2015

## Introduction

1. The National Focus Paper on Aims of Education published by NCERT recognizes that the school systems have come to be characterized with a kind of inflexibility where learning has become an isolated and perfunctory activity which the students are unable to connect in any organic or vital way with the rest of their life and that schools promote a regime of thought which discourages thinking and precludes new and surprising insights.
2. Both the UNESCO and NCERT documents have laid great stress on the thinking ability, which is an important Life Skill. World Health Organization (WHO) in 1993 defined life skills as, "the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life.

3. UNICEF defines life skills as, “a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills.”
4. Dohmen (1996) defines Life skills as the abilities necessary to apply the conceptual thinking and reflection in concrete situations; they involve psychological prerequisites for successful performance, such as problem solving capacities, self-confidence and skills for critical thinking.
5. Should education be about empowering children to be able to problem-solve and think critically, be passionate as well as creative, and work independently as well as with others?
6. As per the UNFPA’s State of the World’s Population Report with 356 million 10-24 year-olds, India has the world’s largest youth population. However, recent employment figures indicate that the absorption of the Indian youth into the labour force is not as high as one would expect. This is perhaps due to the poor employability of the workforce, which is severely affected by a deficit in educational attainment and health. Life Skills Education is an integral component of employability skills which are prerequisite for harnessing demographic dividend.

### **NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION**

1. The Convention of the Rights of the Child and a number of international rights based treaties directly or indirectly highlights the need for life skills education from the very nascent stage of human life.
2. Life skills education aims at facilitating the development of psychosocial skills that are required to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It contributes to the promotion of personal and social development, prevention of health and social problems, and the protection of human rights. It enhances mental well-being in young people, equips them to face the realities of life and help individuals to behave in pro-social ways.
3. Life Skills Education includes the application of life skills in the context of specific risk situations and in situations where children, adolescents, youth and every other individual need to be empowered to promote and protect their rights.

### **Following are some of the highlighting features/ advantages of Life Skills Education:**

- a) Life skills help adolescents to transit successfully from childhood to

adulthood by healthy development of social and emotional skills.

- b) It helps in the development of social competence and problem solving skills, which in turn help adolescents to form their own identity.
  - c) It helps to weigh pros and cons of the situation, hence, act as a mediator to negotiate negative peer pressure, regulate behaviour and teach anger control.
  - d) It promotes positive social norms that impact the adolescent health services, schools and family.
  - e) It helps to differentiate between hearing and listening and thus, ensuring less development misconceptions or miscommunications regarding issues such as drugs, alcoholism etc.
  - f) It delays the onset of risk taking behaviours leading to abuse of tobacco, alcohol etc.
  - g) It promotes the development of positive self-esteem and helps them to protect themselves from abuse.
4. Social competence is defined as a set of positive social skills necessary to get along well with others and function constructively in groups, including,
- a) Respecting and expressing appreciation for others
  - b) Being able to work and communicate well with others and listen to others' ideas
  - c) Demonstrating context-appropriate behavior that is consistent with social norms; and
  - d) Using a range of skills or processes aimed at resolving conflict.
5. Life skills include critical and creative thinking, decision-making, effective communication, as well as skills for developing healthy relationships and positive self-concept. It helps people make responsible and informed choices and can promote healthy lifestyles as well as career skills.
6. Educational success is critical in a modern industrial economy. Academic outcomes, such as degree attainment and academic test scores, are often assessed because they are widely known to predict occupation, income, health, and other outcomes. However, nonacademic attributes of the individual, such as social competence and perseverance, are important as well (Heckman & Kautz, 2013; Levin,

2012). They also contribute to or undermine educational attainment, labour market success, health, behavior, and earnings (Almlund, Duckworth, Heckman, & Kautz, 2011; Heckman & Kautz, 2013; Lippman, Ryberg, et al., 2014; Steinberg, 2005). In addition, nonacademic attributes or competencies are intrinsically important to child and youth development in their own right (Bornstein, Davidson, Keyes, Moore, & The Center for Child Well-Being, 2003; Peterson and Seligman, 2004).

7. In fact, considering the importance of life skills among children from kindergarten till the point of their professional studies, it should be an important discourse while framing the new education policy.
8. Life skills education integration is an apt response to the need of reforming traditional education systems, which appear to be out of step with the realities of modern social and economic life. Problems such as violence in schools and student drop-out are crippling the ability of school systems to achieve their academic goals.
9. Furthermore, in addition to its wide-ranging applications in primary prevention and the advantages that it can bring for education systems, life skills education lays the foundation for learning skills that are in great demand in today's job markets.
10. National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) framed and notified by Govt. of India is a competency-based framework that organizes all qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude. These levels, graded from one to ten, are defined in terms of learning outcomes which the learner must possess regardless of whether they are obtained through formal, non-formal or informal learning.
11. NSQF in India was notified on 27th December 2013. All other frameworks, including the NVEQF (National Vocational Educational Qualification Framework) released by the Ministry of HRD, stand superseded by the NSQF.
12. NSQF is a quality assurance framework.
13. NSQF is defined by the extent of demands made of the learner in broad categories of competence, i.e. professional knowledge, professional skill, core skill and responsibility. Over a lifetime of learning, individuals will move to higher from lower levels or across levels of qualifications as they take on new learning and acquire new skills.
14. Each level of the NSQF is associated with a set of descriptors made up



of five outcome statements, which describe in general terms, the minimum knowledge, skills and attributes that a learner needs to acquire in order to be certified for that level. The statement of learning outcomes in five domains, known as level descriptors. These five domains are: Process, Professional knowledge, Professional skill, Core skill and Responsibility.

- a. Process: Process is a general summary of the other four domains corresponding to the level.
- b. Professional knowledge: Professional knowledge is what a learner should know and understand with reference to the subject. It is described in terms of depth, breadth, kinds of knowledge and complexity, as follows:
  - i) Depth of knowledge can be general or specialized
  - ii) Breadth of knowledge can range from a single topic to multi-disciplinary area of knowledge
  - iii) Kinds of knowledge range from concrete to abstract, from segmented to cumulative
  - iv) Complexity of knowledge refers to the combination of kinds, depth and breadth of knowledge
- c. Professional skill: Professional skills are what a learner should be able to do. These are described in terms of the kinds and complexity of skills and include:
  - i) Cognitive and creative skills involving the use of intuitive, logical and critical thinking
  - ii) Communication skills involving written, oral, literacy and numeracy skills
  - iii) Interpersonal skills and generic skills
- d. Core skill: Core skills refer to basic skills involving dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments used for performing the job, including IT skills needed for that level.
- e. Responsibility: This aspect determines the following:
  - i) Nature of working relationships
  - ii) Level of responsibility for self and others
  - iii) Managing change
  - iv) Accountability for actions

15. If we analyze the categories of competence closely, you will understand

the standards prescribed are nothing but life skills. If we combine the levels stipulated in NSQF together it is nothing but the four pillars of education (Delors Commission Report, UNESCO, 1994). NSQF gives us a competency model in education and training.

16. The competency development of a person is possible by enabling a person to *learning to know, to be, to live together and to do*-the simultaneous development of social skills, behavioural skills and motor skills of an individual. Life skills is nothing but, social skills, thinking skills and behavioural skills which lead in performing his motor skills.
17. Aspiring Minds, National Employability Report of Engineering Graduates – 2014 reports that less than one out of four engineering graduates are employable in the country. The study further shows that, “of the 1.2 lakh candidates surveyed across multiple states, 91.82% lack programming and algorithm skills, 71.23% lack soft and cognitive skills, 60% lack domain skills, 73.63% lack English speaking and comprehension skills and 57.96% have poor analytical and quantitative skills.”
18. Wheebox, a leading online talent assessment company, who designs and delivers online talent assessments for nearly 4,00,000 users in the education and recruitment industry, have stated in The India Skills Report 2014, that only 10% of MBA graduates of the country are employable and same is true for the engineering graduates where this number is as low as 17%. The gap in skills for students in Top 100 vs. other campuses is assessed not only in Computer Programming, but equally in English and Logical Ability. The gap in Quantitative Ability is the highest. The drop in employability for campuses in tier 2 cities with regard to IT services/product companies and KPOs ranges from 25% to 40%. This still leaves a good percentage of employable people in tier 2 cities and demonstrates high potential which may be developed further.
19. If the skill gap in the high profile science and technology sector is this much, what about the graduates of social sciences. Are we enabling them to face the competitive world confidently? Can we equip them with skills required in the global job market? If social sciences fail to equip students with competitive edge, then the existence of the subject as a study itself will be questioned. Here comes the need of life skills education cutting across all the subjects in all levels.

# **POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED WHILE FRAMING NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY WITH RESPECT TO LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION**

## **1. ONSET OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION**

### **1.1. Life Skills Education at School level**

When developing in-school life skills-based education, it is important to place it in the context of wider education sector reforms. Ultimately, to be effective, life skills must be taught in schools that are inclusive, child-friendly, adequately resourced and provisioned, staffed by trained and motivated teachers, and which utilize participatory and experiential methods (including continuous assessment). It is important to stress here that LSE should begin in the junior grades and continue through the higher ones, applying age and context appropriate life skills, over time, to more sensitive and complex issues.

### **1.2. LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION AT GRADUATE, POST GRADUATE, PROFESSIONAL LEVEL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/TRAINING**

a) In the current scenario, we will find a plenty of young unemployed graduates and post graduates in our country who in the absence of social, communication and interpersonal skills, lack of ability of coping with stress are unable to find a place for themselves in the job-market. The graduates lack other skills beside the academic or technical skills. The top three most important general skills identified were integrity, reliability and teamwork, while the top three most important specific skills are entrepreneurship, communication in English and use of modern tools and technologies.

b) The Life Skills Education at graduation and post graduation level will be of great utility and therefore institutes/colleges running professional & non professional courses should provide for “Life Skills Education/Training” per se with the objective of overall grooming of students in Social, Public and Private sector, their own development for functional capabilities and also their responsibility towards nation building.

c) Life Skills Education/Training should be made mandatory in all the vocational training programmes in the Nation to make the courses NSQF compliant.

## **2. INCORPORATING LIFE SKILLS INTO SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

- a) Adolescence education can be effectively transacted only when its elements are integrated in the school curriculum. With a view to facilitating effective integration of adolescence education in the content and process of school education, it is necessary that the framework of adolescence education reflects life skills component relevant to the socio-cultural settings.
- b) School syllabi and textbooks of all the subjects will have to be reviewed to identify the scope of integration of elements of life skills education. The pilot programme of Life Skills integration in the study materials of selected subjects of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) may be seen as a good example.
- c) A lot of thought requires to be given on how to bring in life skills education into the mainstream curriculum. The schools need to develop an in-depth conceptual and practical framework of the programme which should be made functional at all levels of schooling starting from pre-primary, extending to primary, middle and the secondary stage.
- d) The school curriculum should have lessons substantiated with situational case studies and role plays where children can practice correct behaviour and experience its effects. Efficient networking of educationists, psychologists, mental health professionals and policy makers would be required to develop a concrete workable life skills training programme. The training programme would need to transcend across all development stages of the child and should have an inbuilt monitoring and evaluation system.

## **3. INVOLVEMENT OF TEACHERS IN LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

- a) Life Skills Education (LSE) is very important especially for teachers who prepare the young minds. The LSE will enable teachers to translate knowledge, attitude and values for handling real life situations to the children helping them decide what to do, when to do and how to do it with ease.
- b) The role of a teacher as life skills trainer cannot be overemphasized. The teacher's personality and method of teaching have a deep impact and a long-lasting influence on the life of a student. A teacher can act as a role model and help in shaping future global citizens of the world.
- c) Life Skills inclusion in the curriculum of teacher education at all levels should be a priority. Regular capacity building program for in-service teach-

ers need to be organized to develop their life skills. This will serve as readily available resource for the students at the school premise.

d) Teachers should be given hands on training in conducting different subject specific sessions through focus group discussions, presentations, role plays, games and simulations. It would help teachers enhance quality of education through innovation, creativity and equip children become more analytical in approach, recognize the relationship between knowledge and power.

#### **4. COMPONENT OF ADVOCACY IN LIFE SKILL SEDUCATION PROGRAM**

a) There is a need to create a favorable environment for acceptance of the urgent need to impart life skills education in schools. It has been experienced over a period of time that in most cases the resistance to life skills education has been because of the lack of proper appreciation of the needs of adolescents in the changing context and also of this educational area. This requires advocacy with policy framers, opinion leaders, media persons, curriculum developers, teacher educators, principals, teachers and parents. Suitable strategies such as increasing use of mass media, particularly electronic media and regular interactions with concerned target groups including media persons may be very useful.

#### **5. LIFE SKILLS BASED CO-CURRILCULAR ACTIVITIES**

a) Schools should provide for emphasis on the organization of life skills based co-curricular activities, even though the integration of LSE in syllabi and textbooks has the potential to make this educational intervention a permanent part of school curriculum.

b) For facilitating and promoting life skills development among adolescents, the transaction of LSE in schools should be initiated by adopting the co-curricular approach. Co-curricular activities focused on life skills development should be organized in schools. These co-curricular activities should focus on the ten core life skills as proposed by World Health Organization.

#### **6. LIFE SKILLS EVALUATION**

a) It is desirable to assess the acquisition of life skills by measuring them. It is highly desirable that a few of the terminal questions should include questions measuring life skills.

b) The evaluation may be through observation during CCE and by framing

life skills enriched questions in the public examination. It is obvious that not everything and not all life skills can be easily submitted to measurement, particularly as methodologies and tools are not available nor adequately developed for the purpose. Hence, greater focus on evaluation of life skills may be considered.

c) Life skills are developed as a result of a constructive processing of information, impressions, encounters and experiences, - both individual and social - that are a *part of one's daily life and work* and the rapid changes that occur *in the course of one's life*. *Education must provide those spaces for constructive process where young people can safely experiment and practice.*

d) Let every educational endeavour ask itself whether and to what extent it promotes learning activities that help develop life skills that are vital to coping with the key issues of one's life and survival, and to what extent it stimulates requisite attitudes and motivations (curiosity, interest, self-starting qualities) for lifelong learning.

e) Let education strive to produce young women and men who not only speak well, write, read and work well with numbers but are also endowed with integrity, moral courage and self-respect. Young people who are lifelong learners, who care and have the perseverance to give back to their community.

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## Need of Life Skills in New Education Policy

Dr. Geetha G. Nair\*

### Abstract

The need for life skills is in our culture and value system amongst which the latter has undergone tremendous changes. Life skills bring in quality to any vocation or discipline of study. It builds human capital and manpower and leads to nation building. The remote future will be a world where one has to reinvent one's thinking through life skills. Life skills of coping with stress and coping with emotions are required to reduce net or web fatigue and burn-out. Life skills are necessary for helping unemployed graduates find their aptitude and capacity for doing a particular job. Life skills of transnational collaboration and teamwork are needed to contain and distribute the surging student population at the tertiary education level. Life skills curricula and life skills education can help increase academic achievement and research output of our universities. The present generation is fast losing traditional skills and becoming unfit to earn its livelihood through self-reliance. Times have changed; we are secular and need a new set of skills. Life skills improve the quality of life. Skilling will enable a person to acquire desired competency levels and transit to the job market. It helps prevent mental illnesses, contagious disease like HIV, and social ills. Life skills which enable adaptive and positive behaviour to face the challenges of day to day life (WHO, 1994, 1997) will be the currency of the future with changed value systems and novel standards of education.

### Key Words

New Education Policy, Life skills, Life skills Education, Skilling

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## Introduction

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Educational institutions are in the throes of a crisis of identification of what is to be taught and what is not to be taught. Consequently, several curricula and syllabi have been evolved and new subjects and subject areas (e.g., environmental studies in primary school and at the graduate level; computer science at higher secondary and graduate level) have been thrust on the learning student populace, let alone management courses, forensic sciences, population education and a plethora of others. This leaves the young citizens of our country confused regarding their aptitudes and goals in life.

Let us see how the scenario becomes more and more complex- in ways such as creation of a diversity of courses without appropriate employment ; additional explosion of student populace in universities seeking higher education; cropping up of private colleges, deemed universities and parallel institutions offering knowledge as merchandise; deteriorating moral and social values, coupled with technological advance, anticipations of a higher standard of life in general and concomitant reduction in quality of education

It is very essential that the educational system of our country be reoriented to give proper direction to the citizens of tomorrow who will be alighting into a world bitten by the bug of technology, nuclear warfare and space exploration and travel. Our country has more than 1.4 million schools with over 227 million students enrolled and more than 36,000 higher education institutes. How do we sustain our efforts for better education? For this, the Government has set up policy making regulatory bodies and accreditation bodies to sustain our country's efforts in the direction of higher education. The policy making bodies are Department of Higher Education MHRD, Association of Indian Universities, State Councils of Higher Education and the Central Board of Secondary Education; the regulatory bodies are University Grants Commission, ICAR, ICMR, ICSSR, NCTE, AICTE, MCI, CSIR, PCI, DEC, BCI etc.; National Assessment And Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the National Board of Accreditation form the regulatory framework of higher education in India. Despite all these efforts where are we today? and herein lays the importance of life skills education. For life skills are built into the faculties of the brain and for many of the intelligentsia life skills need not be taught and therefore to this day life skills form a part of the co-scholastic area of the school curricula. But it is fast gaining credence due to the innumerable problems of a fast moving highly populated world. Life skills gain in importance as they can be taught through their integration in the academic content of various curricula like science and languages (Author, 2014).

## **Information Explosion**

Comparing the educational set-up of today to that of two decades back, we see information explosion, which cannot be contained. The sea of knowledge is so vast that the closer we go, further it recedes. A glimpse into the past tells us, we had much less information to learn in the form of texts but now that unfolds and extends into windows and windows of Internet. A set amount of material to be read through for the exam was easy and resulted in a job well done. With increasing knowledge, several additional fields have been added to the 3 major vocational streams of sciences, engineering, and medicine and the administrative services. The scenario becomes more and more complex instead of being simplified. Education today in the strictest sense of the word is information barter and that is what is happening in the schools and colleges around. That this information explosion and barter is becoming a burden on young children, is generally given the go-by and children miss out on the joys of childhood. This information explosion could be a blight or a blessing in terms of information that is created, captured and replicated in digital form. It was 281 exabytes in 2007. In 2011, the amount of digital information produced in the year should equal nearly 1,800 exabytes, or 10 times that produced in 2006. The compound annual growth rate between now and 2011 is expected to be almost 60%. On a topic of wide public interest, if we have to be authoritative commentators we have to know information which is most credible and relevant at a point of time and therefore we are victims of the web.

There will be more information distributed in this year alone than there was in the last 5,000 years. Although some of it may be without much value, the pace of discovery and the volume of new information is mind-bending. When information was scarce, we went to school to gain access, and the locus of control for learning resided in those who possessed the knowledge, teachers and those who dictated the curriculum. Now information is abundant and easily accessed by anyone, anywhere with a web browser and Internet connection. This information explosion causes stress and illness and declining productivity. The semantic web is to address this simple problem. Life skills of coping with stress and coping with emotions are required to reduce net or web fatigue and burn –out.

## **Relevant Courses and Degrees**

In China, the education ministry has considered scrapping of degrees which do not fetch employment to students after two years of obtaining the same. Allocation of funding for education has to be done based on how well they

meet the needs of society. Students flock to courses without considering their aptitudes and universities do offer a number of popular courses leading to oversupply in the job market. My China Occupations Skills (MyCos), which have been widely quoted by official media, found that half of 6.8 million 2012 graduates were still unemployed months after graduation, while 8% of those who graduated in 2011 – some 570,000 graduates – had not found jobs by December 2012.

The Ministry of Education in China has refused authorisation for over 250 courses at 60 institutions around the country for which permission had been sought. Institutions hoping to start new majors must demonstrate a market need and demand.

Working age population will expand by 45%, spurring the number of job seekers. India needs to generate 200 million additional employment opportunities by 2020. As agriculture declines, non-farm employment opportunities should increase. Life skills are necessary for helping unemployed graduates find their aptitude and capacity for doing a particular job of their liking. There is a provision for the unemployed to register with the employment exchange but life skills education can help these people build their aptitude and confidence for a job.

### **Increasing Student Enrolment for Higher Education**

The number of students around the globe enrolled in higher education is forecast to more than double to 262 million by 2025. Nearly all of this growth will be in the developing world, with more than half in China and India alone. The number of students seeking study abroad could rise to eight million – nearly three times more than today. But the developing countries experiencing a huge demand for further and higher education will be unable to provide enough places. So by 2025, eight million students will have to travel to other countries to study – nearly three times more than today. Average annual growth in demand for international higher education between 2005 and 2025 is expected to exceed 3% in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Central America and South America. Australia was the first to show how international knowledge networks could be important in economic terms. Australia showed the world how profitable selling education could be by attracting students from foreign countries. But now there could be a major shift from educational marketing to transnational collaboration.

This is where we need life skills because the so-called educated citizens of India today may or may not settle down for a life time in the same socio-

cultural set up. In all probability, education and need for a job will lead them to settle in an alien socio-cultural milieu. Due to telecommunication, internet and satellite, geographical distances and cultural contexts have vanished and a chimerical socio-cultural milieu has emerged which needs new specific skills to survive in the new socio-cultural environment. For eg. a child educated in India is likely to settle in America and has to evolve skills to survive in a different environment. Need for life skills are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century- these are the life skills of transnational collaboration and teamwork to contain and distribute the surging student population at the tertiary education level.

### **Spurt in Educational Institutes**

Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence in India itself. The number of Universities has increased 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. The sector boasts of 45 Central Universities of which 40 are under the purview of Ministry of Human Resource Development, 318 State Universities, 185 State Private Universities, 129 Deemed to be Universities, 51 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) under MHRD (IITs - 16, NITs – 30 and IISERs – 5) and four Institutions (established under various State legislations). The number of colleges has also registered manifold increase of 74 times with just 500 in 1950 growing to 37,204, as on 31st March, 2013. At present, the main categories of University/University-level Institutions are: - Central Universities, State Universities, Deemed-to-be Universities and University-level institutions. In the recent past, the number of Deemed Universities has grown fast and one wonders whether it is not necessary to exercise restraint in increasing the number of these institutions. While in one sense an increase in autonomous institutions is welcome, there seems to be a mixing of concepts of autonomous colleges and Deemed Universities which are completely different ideas.

These universities and institutes cater to the educational needs of different parts of the country, but are the products of our universities at par with international standards? Life skills curricula and life skills education can help increase academic achievement, research output of our universities and raise the status of these universities to the international level. This will reduce brain drain and help us retain the capacity building exercises we carry out painstakingly in our universities because some of our best brains serve outside the country.

## **Modern Trends in Communalism and Casteism**

The lack of quality education has spilled over to our society and environment. Our society today has lost its tradition which is rooted in science, has lost order, rankles of communalism and casteism, and breeds a class of youth used to taking its rights and benefits without contributing to the future needs of society. We have forgotten to give and make long standing contributions to the citizens of tomorrow creatively and in a futuristic way.

Incidents of inter- caste conflicts and communalism occur in the rural as well as urban areas. India which boasts of a secular constitution has casteism as a normal phenomenon. Casteism is mentioned in ancient texts like the Bhagvad Geetha and existed then perhaps for maintaining order in society. Krishna the greatest teacher of all times mentioned casteism for the purpose of skilling and each caste taught and honed a particular set of skills from generation to generation and this was also for the purpose of maintaining tradition and for assuring each individual an occupation according to his/her aptitude. But the present generation is fast losing traditional skills and becoming unfit to earn its livelihood through self -reliance. Times have changed; we are secular and need a new set of skills.

In independent India, competition among different castes seems to be normal. With the passing of political power to the people, castes have become pressure groups and are competing for power and using power to benefit their castes. The National Integration Council, set up in June 1962, has been striving to deal with problems of casteism, regionalism and communalism. Inclusive education introduced in the educational systems is another step to overcome this problem through life skills. Life Skills Education along with skills revolution will make education more inclusive (Kiwani,2008).

Life Skills in Education Policy is necessary for a special adaptive and positive behaviour in an ambient socio-economic cultural milieu especially in India- to prevent gender bias, exclusion, communalism and social discrimination etc through relationship skills and understanding skills.

## **Quality of Education and Quality of Life**

There is a spurt of increase in information but less of real education. We are unable to give quality job-oriented education to the masses; we are unable to meet the needs of everyday life despite education. Education is getting highly commercialized and even vandalised. What can educationists do in this regard? It is very clear that real education has lost its face and has been disfigured. What do we want our country to be like? Mahatma Gandhi

said, “real education should bring out the best in man and woman.” Real education should bring out the best in body, mind and spirit. But the reverse is true. It is bringing out the worst in us. Education has lost its way and has stopped being the beacon light even for the elite who do not know where or whom to turn to when in a moral, spiritual, or political dilemma. Our politicians and administrators are confused at times. This confusion breeds further confusion as we lack leaders with vision at the top. Dr Abdul Kalam was one of the visionary leaders we had. Education is the essence of everything in life that every man and woman must know. It is essential that even politicians who lead the country are highly educated. One of the seven greatest sins is ‘politics without principles’ and for being principled one needs education and harsh discipline the latter being hard to come by these days. Our country has a great spiritual heritage and the wisdom of spiritual leaders and seers plays a very important role in giving guidance and direction to political leaders and the country at large. This has been the case since times immemorial. Real and wholesome education can enable one to deal effectively with all the vicissitudes and problems of life. Let us not forget at the same time that education is a lifelong process and never gets over.

There is an enrolment of over 96% in rural schools all over India and 19% increase in enrolment of girls. While quantitatively India is inching closer to universal education, the quality of its education has been questioned particularly in its government run school system. Some of the reasons for the poor quality include absence of around 25% of teachers every day. Tests and education assessment systems have been introduced to improve such schools. While enrolment in higher education has increased steadily over the past decade, reaching a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 24% in 2013, there still remains a significant distance to catch up with tertiary education enrolment levels of developed nations (The Times of India, 22 January 2013)

Education in terms of academic achievement is only a part of the entire educating process. Life Skills promote academic achievement (Kim, 1993). When life skills promote the quality of education, it will automatically reduce poverty, increase health, sanitation, hygiene, and promote good interpersonal relationships and understanding and thereby increase the quality of life. In countries like Europe they have Mind labs which promote the development of mind through life skills in the form of mind games. Life Skills are for a life time. Though life skills education was initially for adolescents, the Life skills of thinking, solving relationships, understanding and coping are for all age groups and not just for adolescents.

## Vocationalisation of Education

As far as we are concerned school education should endeavour to bring out a healthy body, mind and spirit in school children and this calls for training of the body (through physical education, performance of a number of physical tasks, yoga, games etc.); of the mind (through academic pursuits in general); and of the spirit (through the study of spiritual/religious texts, meditation etc.) At the higher levels of education the attempt should be to further hone the skills and practices of school education and direct academic pursuits in an area of their special aptitudes in order to attain acumen in the field concerned and earn a livelihood thereby (i.e. vocationalisation of education at the degree stage itself). Education should be complete with a degree course or five-year integrated course by the age of 25. The type of subjects taught and the specializations undergone should be fewer, less varied and according to the aptitude of the students so that they are able to give their best performance. For instance, basic exposure to all fields of education should be given till the school level. Specialisation in an intense way through the degree course in an area of aptitude is given so as to ensure vocational skills which will help them in gaining employment. Recently, the government has brought out an employment assurance scheme –why? The main idea behind implementation of this Employment Assurance Scheme was to give access for the employment especially at the times when the agricultural season remains dry and for the adults who are strong and willing to work at the times of need but still could not find any appropriate jobs for themselves.

The aim of all education is to hone the faculties of the head, heart and hands (over and above the learning of the 3 r's viz., reading, writing and arithmetic) and thereby develop the ability of an individual to stand on his own feet and earn his livelihood. Skilling through Skill India is already helping the process of vocationalisation. The National Skills Qualification Framework or NSQF (Ministry of Finance, 2013) organises qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude. These levels are defined in terms of learning outcomes and in that sense NSQF is a quality assurance framework. It is a nationally integrated education and competency based skill framework that will provide for multiple pathways, horizontal as well as vertical, both within vocational education and vocational training and among vocational education, vocational training, general education and technical education thus linking one level of learning to another higher level. This will enable a person to acquire desired competency levels, transit to the job market and at an opportune time return for acquiring additional skills to further upgrade their competencies.

It is essential that the NCERT as the apex educational institution of the country comes out with psychological tests, aptitude tests, IQ tests, personality tests and applies them with precision at the school level to students at the elementary and secondary level. This would help them to cull out the best in the school populace, study their profiles and prepare or suggest or advise an educational programme to bring out the best in them by the time they complete their graduation. It is a must that the NCERT comes out with a programme where in the IQ profiles, aptitude profiles, emotional IQ, personality profiles of each student is ready by the time they reach the secondary stage. A lot of research has already been done in these fields. It is time these were synthesized to give an educational programme turning out the best citizens for the country. This would go a long way in helping the skilling process and vocationalisation.

Policy makers should wake up to the fact that educated unemployed youth are a recipe for social unrest. Except for professional courses like that of medicine and engineering, most of the curricula leave students with no skills or perspectives to build a working life. A person with a bachelor's degree would have learnt nothing about a career and its requirements. Even engineers and doctors need training before getting into job.

What is the precise direction in which we should move in the coming centuries? This remains a subject of a lot of introspection for the educational stalwarts of the country. Life Skills Education along with skilling apprenticeships can fill up the lacunae in our educational system and be the cutting edge for the survival of the nation and its economy. India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to its economic development (Press Trust of India via Sify.com, 2008-09-12).

Need for Life Skill Education is for building manpower. Manpower is developed through capacity and skill building. In this direction the efforts of the Ministry of Skill Development to provide apprenticeship with scholarship in engineering and other industrial vocations is highly praiseworthy. Life skills bring in quality to any vocation or discipline of study-it builds human capital & manpower and leads to nation building. This skilled manpower is required for the international capital to enter the domestic market

Need for life skills are in the world of work of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the digital age the new skills required for the world of work would be one of rapid communication, team spirit and collaboration. It will be a world where one has to reinvent one's thinking through life skills



## **Environment and Population Education**

Our environment exhibits frequent floods and droughts, accidents, nuclear holocausts etc. calling for disaster management—the recent floods in Bombay; droughts and famine in Orissa; Tsunami tragedy; the Bhopal gas tragedy etc. The aftermath of these tragedies reveal how inept human beings have become in their struggle for survival! On November 14 severe lation explosion has led to scarcity of water, food and living space. The scarcity of space is evident in the cities of today which are concrete jungles enmeshed in power and telecommunication cables. Where is the aesthetic appeal, economy and utility in the infra- structure of our cities today? Perhaps creating a global village would be a better way of preserving the environment. Very soon almost all natural resources would have got depleted on the surface of the earth and its surface would be teeming with millions and millions of human beings and we have to think in terms of migration and colonization of space and other planets. It is high time the menace of population explosion was controlled.

Wherever there are natural disasters and tsunami with dearth of materials, financial and physical resources and human resources-life skills are needed in such cases to prevent the failure of human resources and human will for it is the life skills of solving thinking, relationships, understanding and coping (WHO, 1994, 1997) which really will build up our human resources and environmental resources as we race into a highly sci-tech future.

## **Contagious Diseases of The Modern World**

Population explosion could lead to the outbreak of epidemics for which we have no medicines as yet. Among the newer emerging infectious agents and diseases, many have already had great impact, while others show potential for impact in the near future. Agents that have made a significant appearance, particularly in the 21st century, are considered in more depth below. These agents include: Ebola and Marburg hemorrhagic fevers, human monkeypox, BSE, SARS, West Nile virus, and avian influenza.

Despite the fact that the HIV/AIDS pandemic exacted a terrible toll in deaths and human suffering in the last 2 decades of the 20th century, the full impact of this disease will be realized in the 21st century. As of the end of 2000, there were 36 million people worldwide living with HIV infection; >90% of them live in developing countries, and 70% live in southern Africa . There have been 22 million cumulative deaths due to AIDS. In certain countries in Africa, such as Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland, 25%–

35% of the adult population (ages 15–49 years) are infected with HIV. In South Africa, it is estimated that there are >4 million people infected with HIV, i.e. 10% of the entire population and 20% of the adult population. The life expectancy in several southern African countries has decreased dramatically because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, negating the impressive gains that had been made over the previous few decades. India and other southern and southeastern Asian countries will be the next epicentres of the HIV/AIDS pandemic; the cultural and socioeconomic conditions in those countries are unfortunately well-suited to explosive spread of this infection. Indeed, it is estimated that 4 million people in India are already infected with HIV. The potential for catastrophic spread in this country of >1 billion people is enormous, as it is for China, the most populous nation in the world. Aggressive and sustained AIDS prevention programs are critical to contain the epidemic in these Asian countries (UNESCO, 1997). Life Skills Education provided through doctors and teachers etc. can provide training in prevention of these diseases.

A bioterrorism attack against the civilian population in the United States is inevitable in the 21st century. The only question is which agent will be used and under what circumstances will the attack occur. The threat of bioterrorism underscores the importance of pathogen genome sequencing projects, because rapid diagnostics will be critical to an adequate response to an attack... In addition, it is likely that microbes used for bioterrorism will be genetically modified for antimicrobial resistance.. Hence, the development of new and improved vaccines against smallpox and similar agents, as well as the stockpiling of antimicrobials against such agents, will be important components of the effort against bioterrorism in the coming decades. Bioterrorism will be subtler than actual terrorism prevalent today. Coping and thinking skills will enable the population to overcome such manmade disasters.

The need for life skills is in the world of contagious new diseases of the modern world and life caused by agents like Human Immuno Virus with expensive therapy and medicines. Life skills will help in prevention of such diseases among the deprived and affluent and middle class sections of society. This necessitates life skills Education of coping with emotions and stresses caused by the after effects of diseases and caused by ostracisation in society.

### **Human Development Index**

India ranks low in the Human Development Index. Human Development is

determined by higher quality education, better health, no poverty and higher standards of life. Life Skills in Education Policy is needed for development of Human Index. There is an increasing emphasis on developing human development index-of enlarging people choices by expanding human capabilities and functioning. Vision of India 2020 is a document envisaging a high HDI with removal of poverty, a high quality of education and health standards of to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our blue collared workers are still reeling under the effects of occupational hazards and are not able to get treatment for common illnesses and overcome them.

### **Social Ills and Mental Illnesses**

The increase in population, falling standards of education, family values and of values *per se* and lack of care and parental control is breeding a number of social ill amongst the younger generation like substance abuse, drug addiction, alcoholism, juvenile delinquency etc. Suicides have become a password for problem solving and mental illnesses have become as common as the common cold. In Karnataka itself one in every four is a depressed person. Life skills in the 21st century are for mental illnesses like depression, mania, and alzheimers and for suicidal tendencies amongst the youth of today. This is accompanied by a host of other illnesses and symptoms like kleptomania, juvenile delinquency, aggression and anger management etc.

The need for life skills is in our culture and value system amongst which the last has undergone tremendous changes. According to NIMHANS (2002) life skills are temporal, spatial, participatory and permanent while values are ephemeral, prescriptive and result oriented and change with time. Therefore life skills are a must for the educated of tomorrow.

Increased terrorist activities point out to the lack of deep values in society. Moral, spiritual and value education in the hoary Indian style will go a long way in solving these problems. Value Education could be replaced by Life Skills Education as a compulsory Course in the school where the foundations of education are laid and the same course could be continued as a tertiary level course, say an adolescent education programme or a continuing education programme for adults and the masses in general. This is very imminent in view of the above problems.

### **Govt. Initiatives in Education for Skill Development**

Several major initiatives have been taken by the Government to provide intensive skilling to the masses. The Skill India Initiative is termed Kaushal Bharat; Kaushal Bharat is for training 400 million citizens by 2022 and en-

able them thereby to find jobs. Some of the programmes under this initiative are Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015(NPSDE 2015), Skill Loan Scheme and the National Skill Development Mission. The flagship Programme of PMKVY provides financial rewards to participant 2.4 million Indians. NPSDE 2015 is to provide rapid skilling and entrepreneurship to youth with high standards and create wealth and gainful employment. Skill loan scheme is to disburse loans of Rs 5000-150000 to 3.4 million Indians planning to develop their skills in the next 5 years. The National Skill Development Mission is to provide robust institutional framework at the centre and the state.

New education techniques like E-learning and M-learning are being adopted to boost the growth of distance education market. The opening of IITs and IIMs in new locations along with educational grants to research scholars and online modes of education by several institutions are other steps taken for major changes and developments in higher education in the years to come. These reforms and improved finances will make the country a knowledge hub. Increasing importance for human resources will make development of educational infrastructure the focus point in the coming years.

### **Futuristic Education and The New Education Policy**

The new 21st century curriculum should be fluid, shaping and reshaping itself in response to students' self-direction and unpredictable events. It should be passion-driven, as teachers guide students in pursuit of what interests them most.

A 21st century curriculum should provide opportunities for students to build *relationships*, network, and act collectively. Students should be asked to *synthesize* information and demonstrate self-reliance. We also need to teach our students *empathy for people* from diverse backgrounds, because in the future, a great deal of their interactions will be carried out in online spaces, where they will be *collaborating with* people around the world - and all the above are life skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach states that "In my work with global cohorts of teachers and administrators through the Powerful Learning Practice network, I advocate a three-pronged approach to learning in the 21st century, both for the young people we are guiding and for ourselves in our professional and personal lives. We need to participate in *face-to-face learning* and *build deep relationships* with other people whom we trust and with

whom we can take learning risks *and share and demonstrate what we know* and care about.

We need to learn through global communities *of inquiry*. These are communities we find or create for ourselves that are populated by others who share our commitment to work and learn together over an extended period of time, mostly in virtual space. These diverse communities expand our understanding of both commonalities and differences. They are places where we test our ideas and challenge ourselves and others to question, reflect, and grow.

We need to build a personal learning network (PLN). A PLN is a resource for do-it-yourself learning, a revolving and evolving virtual web of not only human experts but also objects and resources that are all accessed through the power of web-based networking tools and mobile technologies.

We need to be visionary. We are not marching slowly into the future; we are speeding toward it in a whirlwind frenzy, mandated by the exponential rate of change. As educators, we must continuously ask ourselves, what do students need to learn to succeed in the world to come? A world we can't even imagine!

The new education policy of the Government of India speaks about constructivism; IT enabled education, Free Software and sharing educational resources. Once a few of the larger states successfully migrate to Free Software, it is hoped that the entire country would follow suit in a relatively short time. When that happens, India could have the largest user base of GNU/Linux and Free Software in general.

Life Skills in Education Policies is required for Women's Education. It is necessary for personality and self-confidence and economic independence of women. According to Pring *et al* (2009), Trilling and Fadel (2009), women's entry into administration is retarded because of administration being dehumanising. Life skills in education policies will help maintain the humane aspect.

**Life Skills in Educational Policies** –Life Skills will be a big leveller of Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with respect to students and their problems. Life Skills will pave a way for population with varying IQs i.e. knowledge, attitude and behaviour where every individual matters. Life skills will give readiness for minimum level of studies (Author, 2011). Life Skills will provide for new recruits after +2. In the words of Devendra Agochhia during the ICLSE Plenary Session in 2015, skilling is not possible without Life Skills.

It will raise health and well being of students. In UK the education curriculum ensures a programme of personal, social and health education exclusively with Life Skills as the base. Life Skills will provide lateral entry in education for those who suddenly leave education in search of jobs and will provide alternate technical education and general education.

Life Skills in educational policies is required for evaluation and assessment. Many surveys have shown that exam results have generated ties at the top for topmost ranks. It has been found that the high percentage of results amongst rank holders is due to over assessment and not suggestive of high attainment. This is an instance of over assessment having a negative effect on quality of learning. The negative effect can be negated through life skills.

### **Conclusions**

What qualifies as an educated person in this day and age or as an educated 19 year old for that matter if we talk of adolescents? Is it entrepreneurship?—or success to the enterprising? Is it practicality in day to day affairs? Is it academic achievement? Is it personal or moral qualities? No, it is all of these and more. It is knowledge + different degrees of understanding for different people+ an intelligent management of life –in this day and age! - and for knowledge, intelligence and understanding life skills becomes the keystone of education.

We have to make education and education through life skills our best economic policy. Life Skills are a must in Education Policy— for education in Gandhi’s words is “drawing out the best in the body, mind and spirit of man” and for drawing out the best one requires thinking, problem solving, relationship, understanding and coping skills-the generic life skills (WHO, 1994, 1997).

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## Life Skill Education in Secondary Schools in Lucknow City: An Exploratory Study

Dr. Rashmi Soni\*

### Abstract

We are undoubtedly witnessing profound changes in the educational system at all levels; these are reflected in the development of new educational policies being framed from time to time. We are in a process of change and therefore of opportunities for improving educational options and their outcomes. In the last few years great interest has arisen concerning the role which affectivity and emotions play in education. Education professionals have understood the importance of feelings in the overall development of the students and their own daily tasks, thus they are voicing the need to encourage not only the academic development of children and young people, but also the development of their social and emotional competencies. Life skills education is a very important and integral part of educational system worldwide. In Indian schools however, education in life skills is yet to be fully initiated and recognized as an integral part of the curriculum. Life skills like self-awareness, empathy, effective communication, inter personal relationship, problem solving, decision making, creative and critical thinking, coping with stress and emotions help the students to overcome challenges in real life. The present research aims to identify the level of education in life skills in schools through content of the curriculum, the teaching methodology that is adopted in the classrooms and the school environment. It is an exploratory study. This study will describe the importance of life skill education for students in a school setting. The main objective is to identify as to what extent Life Skills are being taught to the students through the content of the curriculum and its delivery. Secondly if they are being given education in Life Skills then to identify the kind of practical experience and exposure they receive to apply those skills in their daily life.

### Key Words

Life Skill Education, Content, Pedagogy, School setting

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## **Introduction**

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Psychosocial competence is a person's ability to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It is a person's ability to maintain a state of mental well-being and to demonstrate this in adaptive and positive behaviour while interacting with others, his/her culture and environment. Psychosocial competence has an important role to play in the promotion of health in its broadest sense; in terms of physical, mental and social well-being. In particular, where health problems are related to behaviour, and where the behaviour is related to an inability to deal effectively with stresses and pressures in life, the enhancement of psychosocial competence could make an important contribution. This is especially important for health promotion at a time when behaviour is more so implicated as the source of health problems. The most direct interventions for the promotion of psychosocial competence are those which enhance the person's coping resources, and personal & social competencies. In school-based programmes for children and adolescents, this can be done by teaching life skills in a supportive learning environment.

### **Life Skills: Concept & Meaning**

The kinds of knowledge and skills which should appear as learning outcomes have varied over time and place and are reflected in many different notions, sometimes for the same general areas. These have been defined in generic (general) rather than specific (diversified) terms, i.e. determined independent of individual learner backgrounds and needs. The most comprehensive – and fluid – term is perhaps “life skills” since, in terms of learning outcomes, it includes both learners' expected specific learning outcomes or cognitive skills (in e.g. literacy and numeracy) and expected behaviour and attitudes or non-cognitive skills (often also termed psychomotor skills or soft skills). In this understanding, education is mandated to do more than provide knowledge and skills for economic growth or poverty reduction as reflected in the notions of skills for work or skills for jobs, income generation skills, entrepreneurship skills, and technical and vocational skills.

Life skills or skills for life are perhaps captured in the simplest and deepest way in the four pillars of learning of the Delors report (Delors et al. 1996), with outcomes of education relating to four crucial areas affecting a self-fulfilling life and contribution to societal development. They are (1) learning to know (i.e. to master the instruments of knowledge); (2) learning to do (i.e. to apply knowledge in practice); (3) learning to live together and living with others (i.e. to prevent and resolve conflicts, and promote peace and

respect for other people, their cultures and spiritual values); and (4) learning to be (i.e. to ensure all-round development of each individual). Two additional pillars have since been suggested at the first World Forum on Lifelong Learning held in Paris in 2008: learning for change and transformation; and learning to become (Ouane 2008), precisely because of the rapid changes which are taking place in countries, regions and the world in general and in the life of individuals throughout their lifetime. Following on from the Faure report (Faure et al. 1972), life skills in this interpretation emphasize both whole person development (the “complete man”) and a life-long learning perspective, i.e. learning throughout life.

In current discussions life skills are often conflated with so-called ‘21st-century skills’. This is particularly the case in contexts which emphasize individual competences to successfully meet varied, complex demands. In wealthier, high- and middle-level income countries, such as in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and emerging economies, such as China, 21st-century skills and competences include “psychosocial resources, including knowledge and skills, motivation, attitudes, and other social and behavioural components” (Schleicher 2007, p. 349) to build the capacity or activate the innate ability of individuals to research, innovate and be flexible in order to sustain the construction of knowledge-based economies and societies.

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Described in this way, skills that can be said to be life skills are innumerable, and the nature and definition of life skills are likely to differ across cultures and settings. However, analysis of the life skills field suggests that there is a core set of skills that are at the heart of skills-based initiatives for the promotion of the health and well-being of children and adolescents. These are:

- 1) Decision making
- 2) Problem solving
- 3) Creative thinking
- 4) Critical thinking
- 5) Effective communication
- 6) Interpersonal relationship skills
- 7) Self-awareness
- 8) Empathy
- 9) Coping with emotions
- 10) Coping with stress

Life Skills have been defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. Basically, this perspective of life skills focuses on empowering “young people to take positive steps to promote health outcomes, positive social relationships, and positive contributions to society” (Jacobs Foundation 2011, p. 9).

They actually signify the psycho-social skills that revolve around valued behaviour and include reflective skills like problem-solving and critical thinking. These also include personal skills like self-awareness and interpersonal skills like keeping effective communication and maintaining healthy relationship with others. Practice of life skills can bring qualities like self-esteem, sociability and tolerance, action competencies to the contemporary secondary school students and can generate enough capabilities among them to have the freedom to decide what to do in a special situation.

### **Role of Life Skills in promoting Health**

The teaching of life skills appears in a wide variety of educational programmes with demonstrable effectiveness, including programmes for the prevention of substance abuse (Botvin et al., 1980, 1984; Pentz, 1983) and adolescent pregnancy (Zabin et al., 1986; Schinke, 1984), the promotion of intelligence (Gonzalez, 1990), and the prevention of bullying (Olweus, 1990). Educational programmes teaching these skills have also been developed for the prevention of AIDS (WHO/GPA, 1994; Scripture Union, undated), for peace education (Prutzman et al., 1988), and for the promotion of self-confidence and self-esteem (TACADE, 1990). Teaching life skills in this wide range of promotion and prevention programmes demonstrates the common value of life skills for health promotion, beyond their value within any specific programme.

Teaching life skills as generic skills in relation to everyday life could form the foundation of life skills education for the promotion of mental well-being, and healthy interaction and behaviour. More problem specific skills, such as assertively dealing with peer pressures to use drugs, to have unprotected sex, or to become involved in vandalism, could be built on this foundation. There are research indications that teaching skills in this way, as part of broad-based life skills programmes, is an effective approach for primary prevention education (Errecart et al., 1991; Perry and Kelder, 1992; Caplan et al., 1992).

Life skills enable individuals to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities i.e. “what to do and how to do it”. Life skills are abilities

that enable individuals to behave in healthy ways, given the desire to do so and given the scope and opportunity to do so. They are not a panacea; “how to do” abilities are not the only factors that affect behaviour. Effective acquisition and application of life skills can influence the way we feel about ourselves and others, and equally will influence the way we are perceived by others. Life skills contribute to our perceptions of self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem. Life skills therefore, play an important role in the promotion of mental well-being. The promotion of mental well-being contributes to our motivation to look after ourselves and others, the prevention of mental disorders, and the prevention of health and behaviour problems.

### **Life Skill Education: Empowering the Present Generation**

The current strong focus on youth must be understood in the context of the rapid worldwide changes we are experiencing due to globalisation, and the concern for the autonomy of the individual that is a central feature of modernity, democracy and the knowledge economy (Lauder et al. 2006). This implies understanding youth as a social rather than a biological construct. As in the case of other social groups, living conditions for youth vary depending, amongst other factors, on their gender, location, ethnicity and socio-economic background. A defining feature of the postmodern society, according to German sociologist Ulrich Beck (1992), is that individuals must design their own identities and life projects in processes of choice and reflexivity, and under circumstances where certainties no longer exist. These processes of choice and reflexivity are not to be understood as an extension of individuals’ autonomous free decisions, but should rather be seen in the context of the functioning of social institutions which set boundaries to individual needs and opportunities. Education is one such institution which affects the life chances of individuals.

In the current scenario of increased urbanization and rampant globalization, the children hitherto are a confused lot. There is a lot of stress on achievement and performance from the teachers and parents. Children are pushed to do much more than customary to get the desired acceptance and acknowledgement from the family and society. Rapidly changing social, moral, ethical and religious values have ushered in certain ‘life styles’ in the present society especially among the youth. With the breakdown of joint families, children are unable to find an anchor, and feel trusted and loved. More often than not, in the absence of such a figure whom they can identify with and discuss their hurts and disappointments, more and more children are tending to externalize their frustrations through aggression and violence, (Kapur,

2012). Sometimes when the pressure of subscribing to high expectations gets overwhelming, they fall back and are labelled by the school and society as a child with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). The predicament is that the end products of our schooling system are children who have moderate to low self-esteem and self-concept, moderate to low tolerance for frustration, and are poor problem solvers and poor decision makers.

The teachers in the school are concentrated on training the students to score high in their respective subject. The transition in this focus of education created much impact in the life of student. They are not able to satisfy their psycho social needs, unable to communicate with others, inability to identify risk factors, unable to make good decisions and finally ended up in frequent failures and suicidal attempts. Definitely there is something positive lacking in our schooling system. In an article for CNN Opinion, John D. Sutter quotes Sir Ken Robinson, British author and international advisor on education, as saying that the educational system works like a factory. According to Robinson, *a typical school has in it all the qualities of a factory- there is a bell, there are separate subjects, and separate facilities, children are educated by batches and by age group. Education system is based on the model of mass production and conformity and views the child as the product of the mechanical system.* It could not have been otherwise, Sir Robinson adds, as the whole idea was developed and conceived in the economic circumstance of the industrial revolution and was driven by the economic imperative of the time.

Applying this factory model in the perspective of the Indian education system, we can say that we too have unmistakably adopted this factory-like system in all its oppressive rigidity to our schools. The emphasis that should be laid on the personal growth and development of the child has been overlooked. Faith in human capacity defined in terms of ability to assess a problem situation and find solutions, capacity for convergent and divergent thinking, effective interpersonal skills, ability to communicate effectively, has been undervalued. In an article in India Educational Review, March 2012, the Vice- President Hamid Ansari quotes the Yashpal Committee report which states that ‘we have followed policies of fragmenting our educational enterprises into cubicles’ and that ‘most instrumentalities of our education harm the potential of human mind for constructing and creating new knowledge’.

There is an urgent need to provide today’s youth and children with a new set of ways and systems to deal with the demands of life. Since the ‘individual’ rather than the ‘system’ is recognized as the basic unit of the society, it is

essential that the youth be helped to develop skills inherently to handle a wide variety of choices, changes and stressors. The education system needs to harp on this belief that each child has the innate drive to achieve his maximum potential. The system needs to believe in the individuality of each child and to help the child deal with the vicissitudes of life. The education system needs to enable a child to deal effectively with the environment, discern available opportunities and deal with the challenges of society. **To enable these behavioural transformations in the child, the system needs to enrich the school curriculum with a highly researched and effective life skills training programme.**

Life skills education is a very important and integral part of educational system worldwide. In Indian schools however, life skills education is yet to be fully initiated and recognized as an integral part of the curriculum. Shiela Ramakrishnan, in her article in *Teacher Plus*, says that in most schools, value education is confused with life skills education. According to her, most schools have value education as part of the curriculum as it is one of the requirements of the NCF, though there is not much emphasis on life skills education. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) asserts that life skills education has been introduced in class 6th in 2003-4, in class 7th in 2004-5 and subsequently in classes 8th, 9th and 10th. The CBSE has presently introduced (in 2012) life skills training programme as part of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation targeted at the adolescent students between 10-18 years of age.

*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan* (SSA) has under its agenda life skills training for the upper primary girls along with providing quality elementary education. Yet, classroom observations of Government schools in few districts of Tamil Nadu have revealed that life skills education has often been confused with vocational education. When asked about the details of life skills education being offered in the government schools, the reply that comes from teachers is that the girl students are being taught to make dolls, stitch frocks, and make candles and napkins. These data indicate that the Indian education system has not yet awakened to the necessity of life skill training programmes in its schools.

The need of the hour is to bring in life skills education into the mainstream curriculum. The schools need to develop an in-depth conceptual and practical framework of the programme which should be made functional at all levels of schooling starting from pre-primary, extending to primary, middle and the secondary stage. The school curriculum should have lectures substantiated with situational case studies and role plays where children can

practice correct behaviour and experience its effects. Efficient networking of educationists, psychologists, mental health professionals and policy makers would be required to develop a concrete workable life skills training programme. The training programme would need to transcend across all development stages of the child and should have an inbuilt monitoring and evaluation system.

Promoting efficient life skills training programme in schools would thereby be a key for survival to the youth in the country. It would be a way of empowering youth to build their lives and their dreams. It would be a means of facilitating them through the critical stages in their life and helping them tap their potential to the fullest. Thereby, it is hoped that the current education system with its oppressive rigidity would open up and make life skills education a part of its mainstream curriculum. This would enable the country to build individuals who believe in themselves, who are efficient leaders and administrators, who are able to understand their potentials and achieve them.

In the last few years great interest has arisen concerning the role which affectivity and emotions play in education. Education professionals have understood the importance of feelings in the overall development of the students and their own daily tasks, thus they are voicing the need to encourage not only the academic development of children and young people, but also the development of their social and emotional competencies. Education in Life skills like self-awareness, empathy, effective communication, inter personal relationship, problem solving, decision making, creative and critical thinking, coping with stress and emotions will definitely help the students to overcome challenges in real life.

## **Review of Literature**

A study titled ‘An Exploration of Teachers’ Attitude towards Life Skills Education: A Case of Secondary Schools in Thika West District, Kenya’ was conducted by Susan and Gathanwa<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this study was to explore the attitude of teachers towards teaching life skills education as a way of developing the practice of morality through secondary schools in Kenya. The researchers used research objectives with the aim of establishing the extent to which life skills education was being taught in secondary school, how life skills education training had equipped teacher to teach it in schools and to identify challenges teachers were facing in implementing life skills education. In addition to recommend measures to be undertaken to

<sup>1</sup>*Journal of Education and Practice* [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org) - ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online), Vol.5, No.34, 2014

improve practice of morality in secondary schools.

The researchers sampled 12 public secondary schools which constitute 30% of all public secondary schools Thika West District. The target population was the head teachers and teachers. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample teachers and a total number of 60 respondents were sampled. Data for the study was collected using questionnaires which had both open and closed questions. The data collected was then analysed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The research findings revealed that majority of secondary schools in Thika West District were offering life skills education but allocating a single lesson in a week. This implied that very little time was spent on it and thus the coverage was very little.

The conclusion was that the learners are not well prepared and equipped with psychosocial competencies that would help them to manage their social-moral lives in a healthy and productive manner. The research findings also revealed that some schools had no time allocation for the subject and had to teach it after regular classes or any other available time. The conclusion then was that life skills education was not given enough attention as it should to equip the learners with adaptive skills that would enable them to deal effectively with the demands of everyday life. According to the majority of the teachers, this was due to heavy workloads due to understaffing and had to make good mean score and therefore utilized the lesson to teach other examinable subjects. The implication was that the learners were inadequately prepared to deal with demands and challenges of every day's life. This could be the reason why most secondary schools students are resorting to risky behaviors such as drug abuse, riot, violence, student's dropout and pre-marital sex among others. The study recommended that the government through the Ministry of Education put strategies for effective implementation of the programme in secondary schools in Kenya.

Another study was conducted by Dr. R. Subasree, Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair<sup>2</sup> titled 'The Life Skills Assessment Scale: the construction and validation of a new comprehensive scale for measuring Life Skills'. The purpose of this study was to develop a valid, reliable scale to measure life skills. The first phase involved the conceptualization and operationalization of life skills based on the review and identifies the research gaps. Similar questionnaires, scales were reviewed, based on that the items were framed for the tool. In the second phase, Face and Content Validity were assessed by a panel of experts, data collection (N= 890) was carried out extensively to establish

<sup>2</sup>*IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 19, Issue 1, Ver. IX (Feb. 2014), PP 50-58 e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845. www.iosrjournals.org*  
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reliability and validity for the Life Skills Assessment Scale. Using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, test retest, split half reliability methods the internal consistency was assessed for the tool. After item analysis and construct validity assessment, the test items showing weak indicators were eliminated in a stepwise fashion until the reliability coefficient peaked. However, highest reliability was already obtained without eliminating items. The final summated scale of 100 indicators had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .84. The psychometric properties were established adopting standard procedure.

'Life Skills Education in Kenya: An Assessment of the Level of Preparedness of Teachers and School Managers in Implementing Life Skills Education in Trans- Nzoia District Kenya' was done by Francis ABOBO<sup>1</sup>, John Aluko ORODHO<sup>3</sup>. Though Life Skills Education (LSE) has been made a compulsory component of basic education by the Ministry of Education in Kenya, effective teaching is hampered by several factors. The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of preparedness by teachers and school managers in implementing the Life Skills Education in secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia West District. To achieve this purpose, the study was guided by three fold objectives, namely) to determine teachers' training on LSE, ii) find out teachers' and students attitudes towards implementation of LSE in secondary schools, and iii) to establish the level of availability and adequacy of teaching/learning resources for implementing LSE in secondary schools. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. From the target population of 1800 students, 150 teachers and 37 principals in 37 public secondary schools in the district, stratified random sampling technique was adopted to draw 15 principals, 30 teachers and 180 students yielding 225 subjects.

Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers and students while interview schedules were used to collect data from the principals. Quantitative data from questionnaires were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) while qualitative data from interviews were analysed thematically. The main findings were that most teachers had not been trained on Life Skills Education hence indicating low level of preparedness by teachers. It was established that while teachers had negative attitude towards teaching of LSE, students portrayed a positive attitude towards learning of LSE. Regarding the level of availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources, the study found that although the critical teaching/learning resources were available, they were grossly inadequate in most secondary schools studied. It was concluded that the level of preparedness by teachers

<sup>3</sup>*IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 19, Issue 9, Ver. II (Sep. 2014), PP 32-44 e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845. www.iosrjournals.org*  
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and school managers was fairly low and this hampered effective implementation of the educational component in schools visited. It was recommended that teachers should be trained on Life Skills and appropriate instructional resources put in place to facilitate effective implementation of life skills not in the study locale, but also in other schools in the county with similar experiences.

A study of life skills of pupil teachers was done by Rakesh Sandhu<sup>4</sup>. The investigator has tried to find out the life skills of pupil teachers. A sample of 300 pupil teachers was taken. Descriptive survey method was applied. A standardized scale on life skill assessment was administered to the entire sample. The result reveals that majority of the students have just average level of life skills which are not adequate. There is a need to train the teachers and consequently develop the life skills among the students. There was no significant difference in life skills between male and female pupil teachers as well pupil teachers belonging to urban and rural area. However, a significant difference was found between science and arts pupil teachers. Science pupil teachers were found to possess higher level of life skills as compared to arts pupil teachers.

A study on ‘Life Skills Education in School Setting’ was done by **Veena Suresh and Vivek Subramoniam**<sup>5</sup>. School is the platform for learning for the student. The main objectives of school are to build a productive generation in the future. The teacher focuses on the overall development of the students. Teacher builds reading writing and arithmetic skills among students. Apart from these skills it is the duty of the teacher as well as school setting to enable the students to face challenges in life. It is the generic life skills like self-awareness, empathy, effective communication, inter personal relationship, problem solving, decision making, creative and critical thinking, coping with stress and emotions that help the students to overcome challenges in real life. In this study the researchers aims to identify the importance of life skills education in school setting and identifying the gap in providing this life skills in school setting.

The researcher visited many schools, collected the opinion of teachers as well as students regarding life skill education. Major findings of the study were majority of the schools focus on development of arithmetic, writing and reading skills. They feel that improvement in marks of the students will increase their reputation. The teachers in the school are concentrated on

<sup>4</sup>*Indian Journal of Fundamental and Applied Life Sciences* ISSN: 2231-6345 (Online) An Open Access, Online International Journal Available at <http://www.cibtech.org/jls.htm> 2014 Vol. 4 (3) July-September, pp.389-395/Sandhu

<sup>5</sup>*Indian J Psychiatry*. 2010 Oct-Dec; 52(4): 344–349.

training the students to score high in their respective subject. The transition in this focus of education created much impact in the life of student. They are not able to satisfy their psycho social needs, unable to communicate with others, inability to identify risk factors, unable to make good decisions and finally ended up in frequent failures and suicidal attempts.

Through this study researcher described the importance of life skill education in school setting. The main objective is to identify the relationship between principles and methods in teaching process and life skill education and to identify the gap in the implementation level of the process of teaching and learning in school setting. Major findings of the study are the perception on life skill education among teachers varies according to their interest and attitude towards teaching process. Some teachers are aware about the relevance of life skill education in handling the issues faced by students but hesitate to apply this because of time constraints and lack of support from school and parents. Another section of teachers consider it as non-academic activity with less importance and unwilling to change from the approach of teacher centred classroom teaching to child centred. School authorities are worried about the discipline of school while engaging in participatory learning approach and due to excess consumption of time they cannot finish their syllabus on time which will affect their result. The conclusion is that before integrating life skill education we have to handle the perception of teachers and school authorities regarding the benefits of this type of teaching.

A Study titled '*Reconceptualised life skills in secondary education in the African context: Lessons learnt from reforms in Ghana*' was conducted by Kwame Akyeampong.<sup>6</sup> Early notions of life skills in Africa did not take into account the importance of a flexible and portable set of skills that would enable youth to adapt to changes in the world of work and lay the foundations for productive well-being and behaviour. Rather, life skills education in many secondary education curricula in Africa started with an emphasis on developing specific technical vocational skills considered essential for employability or self-employment. Using Ghana as an example, this paper shows how secondary education curriculum reformers recommended shifts that embraced a new interpretation of life skills focused on 21st-century skills. This gradual move also reflected the difficulty that secondary education in general has had in networking with the world of work to provide work experience that would lead to the development of work-related

<sup>6</sup>Published online: 30 March 2014 - Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht and UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning 2014  
Int Rev Educ (2014) 60:217–234, DOI 10.1007/s11159-014-9408-2

skills and enhance employability. The author's main argument is that although the reconceptualization of life skills in secondary education to reflect 21st-century skills is a welcome shift in the African context, this needs to be accompanied by reforms in teacher education. Classroom teaching and learning need to be adapted in a fundamental way in order to ensure that youth fully benefit from the inclusion of 21st-century life skills in secondary education curricula. Such reforms must include pedagogical practices which nurture communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking skills.

### **The Present Study**

The present study 'Life Skill Education in Secondary Schools in Lucknow City: An Exploratory Study' was aimed at identifying the level of education in life skills in schools in Lucknow City through content of the curriculum, the teaching methodology that is adopted in the classrooms, teacher-taught relationship and the school environment. The study describes the importance of life skill education for students in a school setting. The main objective is to identify as to what extent Life Skills are being taught to the students through the content of the curriculum and its delivery. Secondly if they are being given education in Life Skills then to identify the kind of practical experience and exposure they receive to apply those skills in their daily life.

### **Methodology**

The researcher used research objectives with the aim of establishing the extent to which life skills education was being taught in secondary schools. The aim was fulfilled through open-ended informal interviews with the students and teachers of Class 8 and through the content analysis of the books used for this standard. The researcher sampled 6 secondary schools some private, some government and some government aided schools of Lucknow City. The target population was the teachers and students of Class 8. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample teachers and students.

The procedure adopted was in- depth individual interviews and conversations with the sample group and surveys of the extent of Life Skills Education being followed. The study basically used a qualitative and phenomenological methodology of research. This was done through open informal conversational interview with them, which was tape recorded. The teachers and students were contacted on individual basis to find out the extent to which education is being imparted in various aspects of Life Skills. The open, free and unstructured conversation was preferred for collection of data so that the respondents could give their ideas and views regarding different aspects of the university freely without any hesitation and limita-

tion. This also made the whole process respondent centered. Individual contact was preferred for collecting data from intellectuals. Group discussion with respondents for data collection was not done to avoid the influence of the opinion of respondents on each other. An effort was made to tap the original ideas of the respondents. Whole proceedings of the conversation were tape recorded with due permission of the respondent, for subsequent content analysis.

Data for the study was collected through informal interviews which had both open and closed questions. The questions were specifically focussed on 6 important Life Skills viz. Problem Solving, Decision Making, Self-Confidence/Self-Awareness, Empathy, and Communication/Interpersonal skills. Some questions were based on exploring the teaching methodologies of teachers for teaching different subjects, teaching of moral science and other extra-curricular activities that take place in schools and classrooms.

The interviews were then transcribed and were then analysed in a tabular form. Content Analysis of books (especially Hindi, English, Social Studies and Moral Science) of these schools (3 Boards i.e. ICSE, CBSE and U.P. Board) was done and interpretation was done accordingly. The aim was to explore the types of Life Skills that are being emphasized in every chapter of these books through its content and through the activities provided at the end of each chapter and how far does the teachers engage the students in such activities.

### **Discussion& Interpretation of Data**

The researcher visited many schools, collected the opinion of teachers as well as students regarding life skill education. The data was analysed in three forms viz. the content analysis of the books, the interview responses of teachers and interview responses of the students class 8 of the sampled schools. As far as content analysis of the books are concerned, specifically Hindi, English, Social Studies i.e. Civics and Moral Science books if any being followed were analysed.

Books being followed for class 8 were used for content analysis (including I.C.S.E., CBSE and U.P. Board), specifically of subjects Hindi, English, Civics and Moral Science. After the content analysis of each book it was concluded that the content in every subject is quite good although in some subjects the syllabus is too much. The only drawback in this book is the number of chapters which is large in number. There are very interesting small project works related with every chapter in all the books that can create interest in students regarding important issues.

Major findings of the study were that majority of the schools focus more on the development of arithmetic, writing and reading skills. Few teachers are approachable i.e. students can approach them freely with their problems. The teacher-taught relationship is overall good but the teachers in the school are concentrated more on teaching their respective subject as the course is also too much. Teachers who really wish to help the students or discuss issues apart from the course do not get sufficient time. The transition in this focus of education created much impact in the life of student. They are not able to satisfy their psycho social needs, unable to communicate with others, inability to identify risk factors, unable to make good decisions and finally ended up in frequent failures and suicidal attempts as some cases were reported by few teachers. The research findings also revealed that some schools had no time allocation for the subject like moral science and had to teach it after regular classes or any other available time.

In some schools the predicament is that there is no period allotted for any kind of physical activity; also no period for Moral Science. Whenever the class teacher gets time, she discusses some issues with the students, that too in a very general manner. It is a rare phenomenon that students are engaged in Games or Physical Activity (PT). Apart from subject teaching other activities that take place in schools are music, dance, some art and craft work, sometimes discussion on some topic etc. There are no specific lectures for students on topics, like communication skills, problem solving strategies or how to manage your stress or anger. This is the picture of the Government and Government Aided schools.

The private schools are in a better position. They have number of extracurricular activities through which students are given opportunities to develop leadership qualities, team building, decision making, developing creativity, developing critical analysis, communication skills etc. In such schools the Assembly time itself is so productive as far as the development of students are concerned that even the weakest student is motivated to express him or herself. Teachers share more positive relationship with the students and are more open and friendly with them. There is a separate Moral Science period where in there are some separate topics on Life Skills. Students have Moral Science period thrice a week. Lot of useful and learning exercises and productive lessons are discussed with the students. There are frequent visits to places like orphanages, slum areas and old age homes to build sensitivity in the students.

However, it is sorry to state that there are few private schools also where students are treated as customers as they pay heavy fees and so the attitude

of the students is very negative even towards the teachers. Teachers have to remain very submissive before the Principal and also before the students and the parents. It is a sorry state of affairs. There are no visits in such schools only money is collected for such people. How will this make the students aware about the problems of these people of our society and thus it will be difficult to develop empathy in the students.

Through this study the researcher describes the importance of life skill education in a school setting. The main objective is to identify the relationship between principles and methods in teaching process and life skill education and to identify the gap in the implementation level of the process of teaching and learning in school setting. Major findings of the study are the perception on life skill education among teachers varies according to their interest and attitude towards teaching process and their own individual nature. Some teachers are aware about the relevance of life skill education in handling the issues faced by students but feel limited to apply this because of time constraint, work load and lack of support from school and parents. The conclusion is that before integrating life skill education we have to handle the perception of teachers and school authorities regarding the benefits of this type of teaching.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion then is that life skills education is not given enough attention as it should be to equip the learners with adaptive skills that would enable them to deal effectively with the demands of everyday life. The implication is that the learners are inadequately prepared to deal with demands and challenges of every day's life. This could be the reason why most secondary schools students are resorting to risky behaviors such as drug abuse, violence, student's dropout and pre-marital sex among others and suicides. The study recommends that the Life Skill Education should be made an important part of the mainstream curriculum. Teachers need to be trained firstly in Life Skills who could then transfer these skills to their students. The academic course needs to be minimized to some extent and teachers especially of the Government and aided schools need to be free of the unreasonable work load so that they can give more time on such issues with the students. The authorities too need to understand the importance of Life Skill Education and make necessary arrangements for the same.

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## **Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication Skills In Relation To Psychological Well-Being of College Students In Aizawl**

Zoengpari, Mary Ann L. Halliday & Siba L. Pachuau\*

### **Abstract**

College students are experiencing high demands and expectations today. The incidence of mental, emotional, physical, psychological problems and the prevalence of suicide and drug use among Mizo youth {548 suicides and 67 drugs related deaths ( C.I.D Crime branch, Mizoram, 2010-2016)} is a cause for concern. The study aims to study the level of assertiveness and interpersonal communication skills in relation to the psychological well-being of 200 Mizo college students (101 males and 99 females). To explore gender differences and relationship if any between the Psychological constructs of the study. Results indicated 37% have high level of Psychological well-being, 31% of the sample showed "Evidence of psychological distress" and 7.5% severe distress. That half of the sample (51%) was assertive, and a high proportion of the sample need improvement in Interpersonal Communication Skills such as 'Sending clear messages' (46%), 'Listening' (46.5%), 'Giving and getting feedback' (71.5%), and 'Handling Emotional Interactions'(53%). Analysis also showed, significant gender difference in Psychological Well-being, with females scoring higher and males scoring significantly higher in skill of the handling emotional interactions. Additionally, results also indicated that higher scores in Interpersonal Communication skills are related to higher psychological well-being, and vice versa.

**Keywords:** Mental health, psychological well-being, college students, suicide, drug use, interpersonal communication skill, assertiveness

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## Introduction

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College students are experiencing high demands and expectations that have been placed upon them. This has created stress on them to perform well in their studies and students who are unable to cope with the pressures of studying are often more prone to experience mental, emotional, physical and psychological problems. As a result, students may not be able to perform well or obtain good achievement in their academic pursuit. On the contrary, they may experience stress which is resulted from academic workload and extreme pressure for success, making them even prone to experience mental disturbances (Sherina et al., 2003; Zaid et al., 2007) or psychiatric illnesses such as antisocial and suicidal behavior, substance abuse, depression, anxiety and eating disorders (Dahlin, Joneborg & Runeson, 2005). Therefore, it appears necessary for students to have psychological well-being in order to excel in their pursuit and for a successful future.

The literature on psychological well-being has progressed rapidly since the emergence of the field over five decades ago. As recent surveys show, psychologists and other social scientists have taken huge steps in their understanding of the factors influencing psychological / subjective well-being.

The concept of well-being refers to optimal psychological functioning and experience. **Psychological well-being** refers to how people evaluate their lives. For more than 20 years, the study of psychological well-being has been guided by two primary conceptions of positive functioning. The extensive literature aimed at defining positive psychological functioning includes such perspectives as Maslow's (1968) conception of self-actualization, Rogers's (1961) view of the fully functioning person, Jung's (1933; Von Franz, 1964) formulation of individuation, and Allport's (1961) conception of maturity. A further domain of theory for defining psychological well-being follows from life span developmental perspectives, which emphasize the differing challenges confronted at various phases of the life cycle. Included here are Erikson's (1959) psychosocial stages model, Buhler's basic life tendencies that work toward the fulfillment of life (Buhler, 1935; Buhler & Massarik, 1968), descriptions of personality change in adulthood and old age. Jahoda's (1958) positive criteria of mental health, generated to replace definitions of wellbeing as the absence of illness, also offer extensive descriptions of what it means to be in good psychological health. Ryff (1989a) has argued that the preceding perspectives, despite their loose conceptualizations, can be integrated into a more parsimonious summary. That is, when one reviews the characteristics of well-being described in these various formulations, it becomes apparent that many theorists have

written about similar features of positive psychological functioning. These points of convergence in the prior theories constitute the core dimensions of the alternative formulation of psychological well-being. The core dimensions which have been identified are self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth.

Three core types of psychological need have been identified – competence, relatedness and autonomy – and the satisfaction of all three results in optimal well-being (Patrick *et al.*, 2007).

Research has shown that those with higher levels of interpersonal skill have many advantages in life (Burlinson, 2007; Segrin *et al.*, 2007). They cope more readily with stress, adapt and adjust better to major life transitions, have higher self-efficacy in social situations, greater satisfaction in their close personal relationships, more friends, and are less likely to suffer from depression, loneliness or anxiety.

An assertive person behaves in a way that facilitates effective communication, solves problems and strengthens team work (Robbins & Hunsaker, 2009, as cited in Hargie, 2011). **Assertiveness** is the quality of being self-assured and confident without being aggressive. In the field of psychology and psychotherapy, it is a learnable skill and mode of communication. It is an important social skill which promotes personal well-being. Assertiveness in a person commonly stands for confident behavior and is considered an approach that a person holds towards others. It is a cognitive mindset of the thoughts and emotions that determined one's communication style. It is a communication style in which person is capable to convey his feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and opinions to others explicitly that doesn't defy other rights (Michel, 2008). The main objective of assertive communication is not only to be aware of needs and problems but also involves the effort to solve problems and get utmost success (Pipa & Jaradat, 2010). This implies an existence of a deep relationship between assertive behavior and wellness. Assertive behavior may be used as a supportive tool to maintain social interactions and in result enjoying good emotional wellbeing (Eskin, 2003). Furthermore, those who have grasped assertiveness are better able to diminish interpersonal conflicts in everyday lives, consequently eliminating a major cause of stress (Pipa & Jaradat, 2010). All of the six dimensions as proposed by Ryff (1989) showed qualities of being assertive that result in psychological well-being. Therefore, if a person is assertive, he will have positive attitude toward himself, able to manage a problematic environment, repel group thinking and express strong positive emotions towards others.

In a study conducted by Maria (2009) to investigate the association between assertiveness and psychological well-being among 500 adult university students, there was a significant positive relationship between assertive behavior of students and their psychological well-being. Also, assertiveness was confidently associated with psychological well-being and self-esteem (Sarkova et al, 2013). A similar study by Dogan, Totan & Sapmaz (2013) indicated an affirmed relationship between assertiveness, psychological well-being, and self-esteem. A study in Pakistan by Shafiq, Naz & Yousaf (2015) also showed a positive significant relationship between assertiveness and psychological well-being among university students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Mizoram is a small north-eastern state of India with a population of 10,97,206 (2011, Census). The Mizo society is a close-knit one, with no class distinction and no discrimination based on gender. As the majority of the Mizo population is Christians, the whole society revolves around the church. The entire society is knitted together by a peculiar code of ethics, 'Tlawmngaihna' an untranslatable term meaning on the part of everyone to be hospitable kind, unselfish and helpful to others and social responsibilities are the mainstay of the society. The Mizo society has undergone tremendous changes in a short period of time, from traditional subsistence farming to the modern technological world. The Mizo College students are also now experiencing high demands and expectations coupled with their responsibilities in the society. The incidence of mental, emotional, physical and psychological problems and the prevalence of suicide among Mizo youth have increased in the past years.

The study aims to ascertain the level of assertiveness and interpersonal communication skills in relation to the psychological well-being of Mizo college students. The present study is expected to produce theoretical satisfaction in the selected fields, so that the findings may be able to provide us with intervention strategies that will be most suitable for the general population in the promotion of assertiveness and interpersonal communication skills which are important components for Psychological well-being.

### **Objectives of the study**

Given the theoretical and empirical foundations pertaining to the research problem, the present study is concerned with the following objectives:-

1. To assess the level of Psychological Well-being, Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication Skills among College students in Aizawl.

2. To find out if there are any gender differences in Psychological Well-being, Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication Skills among the students under study.
3. To find out if there is any relationship between Psychological Well-being and Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication Skills.

## **Hypotheses**

Following the review of literature pertaining to well-being and its association with Interpersonal Communication Skills and Assertiveness, the following hypotheses have been put forth for the present study:-

- (1) It is expected that there will be a low level of Psychological well-being among college students in Aizawl.
- (2) It is expected that there will be a low level of Assertiveness among college students in Aizawl.
- (3) It is expected that there will be a low level of Interpersonal Communication Skills among college students in Aizawl.
- (4) It is expected that females will score higher than males in Psychological Well-being, among the students under study.
- (5) It is expected that males will score higher than females in Assertiveness, among the students under study.
- (6) It is expected that females will score higher than males in Interpersonal Communication Skills, among the students under study.
- (7) There will be a positive relationship between Psychological Well-being and Assertiveness among college students in Aizawl.
- (8) There will be a positive relationship between Interpersonal Communication skills and Well-being among college students in Aizawl

## **Methods and Procedures**

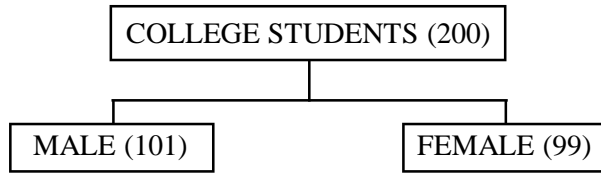
### **Sample:**

Random sampling procedure was used for the present study. 200 college students were selected to serve as subjects for the study. The study was carried out in Aizawl.

### **Design of the Study:**

To achieve the objectives, the study has incorporated a two-way classification of the variable of 'Gender' (male and female) on the variables of Psychological well-being, Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication skills.

The Sample Characteristic table was as follows:



## Procedure

The primary data for the study was collected in a face to face interaction between the participants and the researchers in an optimum environmental setting after formation of a good rapport. The researcher took care to see that the respondents provided honest and independent answers to the questions presented. The anonymity, confidentiality and ethics as cited/formulated by APA, 2003 (American Psychiatric Association) were followed.

## Psychological Tools

The assessment tools will consist of the following self-administered questionnaires:

### 1. General Health Questionnaire-12(GHQ-12; Goldberg *et al.* 1997):

The GHQ 12 is a much-used measure of psychological wellbeing; it has high validity and it is not influenced by gender, age or level of education (Goldberg *et al.*, 1997). The GHQ 12 can be scored using either a bimodal method or a Likert scoring system. As the Likert scoring system has been shown to be the optimum one to use when the aim is to assess the severity of psychological distress (Goldberg *et al.* 1997), it was the system chosen for this study. The Likert scoring method results in a score ranging from 0–36 and it can be broken down for interpretation into five categories. A score of 1–10 indicates ‘low psychological distress’; 11–12 is ‘typical’; 13–15 is ‘more than typical’; 16–20 shows ‘evidence of psychological distress’; scores over 20 indicate ‘severe distress’.

### 2. The Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS):

The Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) is a 30 item scale developed by Nevid and Rathus (1978) to measure Assertiveness. It is a self-report measure to gain insight how assertive a person is. The schedule has been scored on a 6 point rating with 1 for “very unlike me” to 6 “very much like me”. The total score may range from +90 to -90.

**3. ICSI:** This Interpersonal Communication Skills Inventory was developed by Learning Dynamics (2002). It is designed to provide individuals with some insights into their communication strengths and potential areas for development. By answering each question candidly, an individual will receive a profile that displays their level of competence in four key communication areas. The scale consists of 40 items which are divided into 4 sections. Section1 measures sending clear messages, section2 measures listening, section3 measures giving and getting feedback, section4 measures handling emotional interactions. Responses to each of the items are on a 3 point scale of usually, sometimes and seldom. Each section total is summed up and areas of strength and improvement can be deduced.

**Statistical Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to assess the scores in GHQ, Interpersonal Communication Skills and Assertiveness.

In order to find out if there were any gender differences in the total scores obtained by the subjects in GHQ, Interpersonal Communication Skills and Assertiveness, one-way ANOVA was used.

**Results**

**Reliability and Internal Consistency of the psychological tools used**

In the GHQ-12, the overall internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) for the scale was 0.60, while the Cronbach’s alpha for Rathus Assertiveness Scale was 0.68. In the Interpersonal Communication Skills Inventory (ICSI), the overall internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) for the entire scale was 0.62. (Table 1)

**Table 1: Reliability and Internal Consistency of the tools:**

<b>Name of the Psychological Tool</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
GHQ-12	.60
Rathus Assertiveness Scale	.68
Interpersonal Communication Skills Inventory	.62

The results in Table1 revealed that the total coefficient of correlation of the subjects emerged to be satisfactory over the levels of analysis for the whole sample, indicating the trust-worthiness of the scales, namely, GHQ-12, Rathus Assertiveness Scale and the Interpersonal Communication Skills Inventory (ICSI)for measurement purposes in the project population.

**Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation,  
Skewness and Kurtosis in GHQ-12,  
Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication skills**

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
GHQ-12	14.05	4.44	-.074	.172	-.004	.342
Assertiveness	28.03	15.12	-.473	.172	.537	.342
Sending Clear Messages	16.12	4.36	.191	.172	-.192	.342
Listening Skills	15.77	4.03	-.140	.172	-.572	.342
Giving And Getting Feedback	1.11	.13	-.320	.172	.223	.342
Handling Emotional Interactions	15.22	4.22	.081	.172	.009	.342

### Normality and Homogeneity of Data

After ascertaining the reliability of the test scales and their subscales, the normality and homogeneity of the collected data was tested. Table 2 shows the Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis in GHQ-12, Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication skills. The mean score obtained by males in GHQ-12 was found to be 13.42 and standard deviation was 4.32. The mean score among females was 14.70 and standard deviation was 4.5. The mean score obtained by males in **Assertiveness** was found to be 26.73 and Standard deviation was 15.14. Also, the mean score obtained by females was found to be 29.34 and standard deviation was 15.06. The mean score obtained by males in **Sending Clear Messages** is 16.22 and the standard deviation is 4.34, while female mean score is 16.02 and standard deviation is 4.39. The mean score obtained by males in **Listening Skills** is 15.67 and standard deviation is 4.28, while female mean score is 15.87 and the standard deviation is 3.77. The mean score obtained by males in **Giving and Getting Feedback** is 13.67 and the standard deviation is 4.41, while female mean score is 13.43 and the standard deviation is 3.37. The mean score obtained by males in **Handling Emotional Interactions** is 15.82 and standard deviation is 4.34, while female mean score is 14.61 and standard deviation is 4.01.



## **Level of Well-Being, Interpersonal Communication Skills and Assertiveness**

The scores in the GHQ-12 obtained by the subjects have been analyzed and shown in Table 3. It was found that 62 of the subjects reported “evidence of psychological distress”, out of which 33 were females and 29 were males. 49 subjects (30 males and 19 females) were found to have “more than typical psychological distress”, 45 subjects (25 males and 20 females) came under the level of “low psychological distress”, 29 subjects (13 males and 16 females) were found to have “typical psychological distress” while 15 subjects (4 males and 11 females) were found to have “Severe distress”.

The scores obtained by the subjects in Assertiveness has also analyzed and shown in Table 3. It was found that more than half of the subjects (101) reported being “Assertive”, out of which 52 were males and 49 were females. 46 subjects (24 males and 22 females) were found to be “somewhat assertive”, 42 subjects (19 males and 23 females) came under the level of “probably aggressive”, and 10 subjects (6 males and 4 females) were found to be “situationally non-assertive”, while only 1 subject (female) was found to be “very non-assertive”.

Table 3 also shows the Gender Cross-tabulation of Level of Interpersonal Communication skills. In “Sending Clear Messages”, it was found that 91 subjects (44 males and 47 females) need improvement, 84 subjects (44 males and 40 females) need more consistent attention and only 25 subjects (13 males and 12 females) show strength or potential strength in this area. In “Listening” skills, it was found that 93 subjects (53 males and 40 females) need improvement, 94 subjects (39 males and 55 females) need more consistent attention and only 13 subjects (9 males and 4 females) show strength or potential strength in this area. Analysis of the level of skills of “Giving And Getting Feedback” revealed that 143 subjects (70 males and 73 females) need improvement, 53 subjects (28 males and 25 females) need more consistent attention and only 4 subjects (3 males and 1 female) show strength or potential strength in this area. In “Handling Emotional Interactions”, it was found that 106 subjects (45 males and 61 females) need improvement, 78 subjects (47 males and 31 females) need more consistent attention and only 16 subjects (9 males and 7 females) show strength or potential strength in this area.

<b>TABLE 3: LEVEL OF WELL-BEING, INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND ASSERTIVENESS</b>				
Level of Psychological Well-Being	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Low psychological distress	25	20	45	22.50%
Typical psychological distress	13	16	29	14.50%
More than typical psychological distress	30	19	49	24.50%
Evidence of psychological distress	29	33	62	31%
Severe distress	4	11	15	7.50%
<b>Level of Interpersonal Communication Skills</b>				
<b>Sending Clear Messages</b>				
Need improvement	44	47	91	45.50%
Need more consistent attention	44	40	84	42%
Area of strength or potential strength	13	12	25	12.50%
<b>Listening</b>				
Need improvement	53	40	93	46.50%
Need more consistent attention	39	55	94	47%
Area of strength or potential strength	9	4	13	6.50%
<b>Giving and Getting Feedback</b>				
Need improvement	70	73	143	71.50%
Need more consistent attention	28	25	53	26.50%
Area of strength or potential strength	3	1	4	2%
<b>Handling Emotional Interactions</b>				
Need improvement	45	61	106	53%
Need more consistent attention	47	31	78	39%
Area of strength or potential strength	9	7	16	8%
<b>Level of Assertiveness</b>				
Very non-assertive	0	1	1	0.50%
Situationally non-assertive	6	4	10	5%
Somewhat assertive	24	22	46	23%
Assertive	52	49	101	50.50%

### **Gender Differences in Psychological Well-being, Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication Skills**

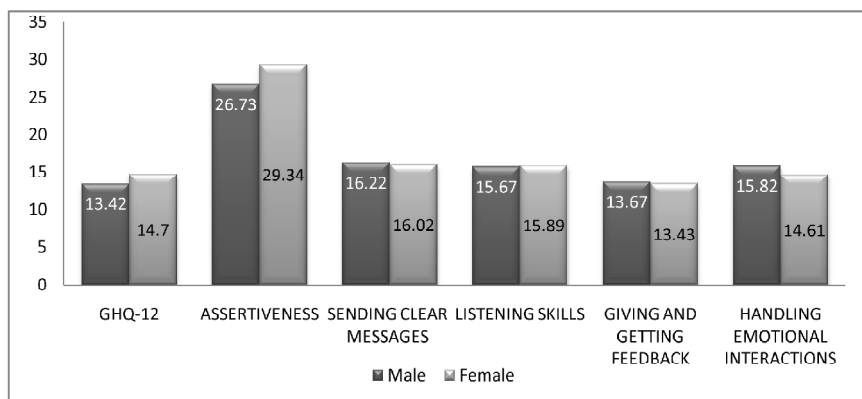
Mean differences in Psychological Well-being, Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication Skills between male and female college students have been analyzed and shown in Fig.1 and Table 5.

Table 4 shows the F values for Levene's test for Equality of variances. The significance level for each of the variables is above .05, which shows that the variance of the variables under study is homogeneous across gender.

**Table 4: Levene’s test for Equality of Variances**

Variable	F	Sig.
GHQ-12	.319	.573
Assertiveness	.013	.909
Sending Clear Messages	.006	.939
Listening Skills	2.761	.098
Giving And Getting Feedback	1.157	.283
Handling Emotional Interactions	2.899	.090

**Fig.1: Mean scores of males and females in Psychological Well-being, Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication skills**



**TABLE 5: ANOVA – GENDER DIFFERENCES IN GHQ-12, INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND ASSERTIVENESS**

One-way ANOVA was conducted to find out if there were any significant gender differences in **Psychological Well-being**, Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication Skills and results showed that females scored significantly higher in **Psychological Well-being** ( $p < 0.05$ ) while males scored significantly higher in ‘Handling emotional interactions’ ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
GHQ 12	Between Groups	82.06	1	82.06	4.22*	.041
	Within Groups	3849.44	198	19.44		
	Total	3931.50	199			
Assertiveness	Between Groups	340.77	1	340.77	1.49	.223
	Within Groups	45144.11	198	228.00		
	Total	45484.88	199			
Sending Clear Messages	Between Groups	1.95	1	1.95	.10	.749
	Within Groups	3775.17	198	19.07		
	Total	3777.12	199			
Listening Skills	Between Groups	1.91	1	1.91	.12	.733
	Within Groups	3227.51	198	16.30		
	Total	3229.42	199			
Giving And Getting Feedback	Between Groups	.00	1	.00	.01	.940
	Within Groups	3.28	198	.02		
	Total	3.28	199			
Handling Emotional Interactions	Between Groups	73.89	1	73.89	4.23*	.041
	Within Groups	3462.43	198	17.49		
	Total	3536.32	199			

### Relationship between Psychological Well-being, Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication Skills

Table 6 presents the results of correlation analysis to assess the relationship of Well-Being with Assertiveness and the components of Interpersonal Communication Skills. Pearson's Correlation analysis revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between Well-Being and all the components of Interpersonal Communication Skills, i.e., Sending clear messages (0.18,  $p < .05$ ), Listening skills (0.24,  $p < .01$ ), Giving and getting feedback (0.22,  $p < .01$ ) as well as Handling emotional interactions (0.22,  $p < .01$ ), and total Interpersonal Communication Skills as a whole (0.32,  $p < .01$ ). Since higher scores on the GHQ-12 scale indicate higher psychological distress, it may be said that higher scores in Interpersonal Communication skills are related to higher psychological well-being, and vice versa.

**Table 6: Correlation between Well-Being and Assertiveness, and Well-Being and Interpersonal Communication skills**

Variable	Assertiveness	Sending Clear Messages	Listening Skills	Giving and Getting Feedback	Handling Emotional Interactions	Interpersonal Communication Skills
Psychological Well-Being	0.06	-0.18*	-0.24**	-0.21**	-0.22**	-0.32**

## Discussion

The present study, **aimed to assess** the level of **Psychological Well-being** among College students in Aizawl. The findings revealed that the highest proportion, i.e., 31% of the sample showed “Evidence of psychological distress”, while 24.5% were found to have “more than typical psychological distress”, 22.5% had “low level psychological distress”, 14.5% were found to have “typical psychological distress” and 7.5% were found to have “Severe distress”. Thus, 37% may be said to have high level of Psychological well-being.

Analysis of the levels of Assertiveness revealed that more than half of the sample (51%) was assertive, while 23% were somewhat assertive, 5% were situationally non-assertive and only 0.50% were very non-assertive.

In regards to the levels of the four components of **Interpersonal Communication Skills** only a few students showed strength in Interpersonal Communication skills - Sending clear messages (12.5%), Listening (6.5%), Giving and getting feedback (2%), and Handling Emotional Interactions (16%). Results further indicated that a high proportion of the college students need improvement in Interpersonal Communication Skills - Sending clear messages (46%), Listening (46.5%), Giving and getting feedback (71.5%), and Handling Emotional Interactions (53%).

The **gender differences** in Psychological Well-being, Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication Skills among the students under study were analyzed and females scored significantly higher than males ( $p < .05$ ) in Psychological well-being. This finding is inconsistent with those of studies by Zulkefly & Baharudin (2010), and De Caroli & Sagone (2014), where boys scored higher than girls.

The findings of this study, however, revealed no significant gender differences in Assertiveness. This finding is consistent with a study among Turkish and Swedish adolescents (Eskin, 2003), as well as that of a study among university students in Pakistan (Shafiq, Naz & Yousaf, 2015).

Analysis of Interpersonal Communication Skills, indicated the gender difference only for the ‘Handling emotional interactions’ component ( $p < .05$ ), with males scoring higher than females. This finding is consistent with those of Rappleyea, Taylor & Fang (2014), where significant differences were found between men and women. No significant gender differences were found in the three other components of the inventory, (skills of sending clear messages, listening, and giving and getting feedback).

The relationship between Psychological Well-being and Assertiveness and Interpersonal Communication Skills was also analyzed and there was no relationship between Psychological Well-being and Assertiveness. This finding is inconsistent with that of studies by Maria (2009), Dogan, Totan & Sapmaz (2013), as well as Shafiq, Naz & Yousaf (2015), which showed positive significant relationships between Assertiveness and Psychological well-being among university students.

However, significant positive relationships were found between Psychological Well-being and all four components of Interpersonal Communication Skills, such as skills of Sending Clear Messages ( $p < .05$ ), Listening ( $p < .01$ ), Giving and Getting Feedback ( $p < .01$ ), and Handling Emotional Interactions ( $p < .01$ ).

## **Conclusion**

In the present study only 37% of the college going students may be said to have high level of Psychological well-being whereas 31% of the sample showed “Evidence of psychological distress” and a small percentage (7.5%) severe distress. There was significant gender difference in Psychological Well-being, with females scoring higher than males.

The level of Assertiveness indicated that half of the sample (51%) was assertive. No significant gender difference has been found in Assertiveness.

A high proportion of the college students need improvement in Interpersonal Communication Skills such as Sending clear messages (46%), Listening (46.5%), Giving and getting feedback (71.5%), and Handling Emotional Interactions (53%). The study further found that males scored significantly higher than females in the skill of the Handling Emotional Interactions.

There was no relationship between Psychological Well-being and Assertiveness. However, significant positive relationships were found between Psychological Well-being and all four components of Interpersonal Communication Skills, such as skills of Sending Clear Messages ( $p < .05$ ), Listening ( $p < .01$ ), Giving and Getting Feedback ( $p < .01$ ), and Handling Emotional Interactions ( $p < .01$ ).

The present study has wide ranging implications for educators, parents, counselors and all other service providers. The findings highlight the need for development and implementation of communication skills to help achieve a more affirmative social sense of self and may determine the student’s abilities to succeed in their social peer group, and optimal psychological functioning and experience.

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## Measuring Empathy: Reliability and Validity of Empathy Quotient

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### Abstract

The Empathy Quotient is a self-reported test to measure the cognitive and affective aspects of empathy. The purpose of this study was to develop a short version of Empathy Quotient and to establish its psychometric properties. The short version of empathy assessment scale and its correspondence with life skills assessment scale and social skills scale were evaluated in a sample of 971 school adolescents. A test-retest study was conducted at 2 weeks' time on a selected sample of 120 subjects from the original sample. Correlation and factor analyses were conducted. Result of the study indicates that the test-retest reliability was good, and the internal consistency was acceptable (Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.65$ ). Positive correlations were found between the empathy scale and other measures. In conclusion, Empathy scale showed acceptable psychometric properties and can be used in scientific studies.

### Key words

Reliability, Validity, Empathy, Empathy Quotient

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## Introduction

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Empathy has many meanings. It can be defined as the ability “to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without ever losing the ‘as if’ condition” (Rogers, 1975) or “our ability to identify what someone else is thinking and feeling, and to respond to their thoughts and feelings with an appropriate emotion” (Baron-Cohen, 2001). Empathy is an essential component in understanding social behavior. It allows us to understand the intentions of others, predict their behavior, and experience emotions triggered by their emotions (Kim et al., 2010). Empathy is a prerequisite for social interaction. Indeed, empathic skill is essential necessity for higher social functioning. There are three elements of empathy: 1) a cognitive capacity to take the perspective of the other person; 2) an effective response to another person that entails sharing that person’s emotional state; and 3) certain regulatory mechanisms that keep track of the origins of self- and other-feelings (Kim & Lee, 2010). Empathy is an essential capacity in everyday life. It is of great importance for teachers, psychologists and medical professionals, students etc. Empathy is a central component of normal social functioning, providing a foundation for pro-social behavior (Charbonneau & Nicol, 2002), maintaining social relationships (Noller & Ruzzene, 1991), and enhancing psychological well-being (Musick & Wilson, 2003). In view of this, the significance of being able to theorize and measure empathy seems clear-cut (Lawrence.E.J.et.al, Shaw, Baker, Baron-Cohen, & David, 2004).

Empathy allows us to make sense of the behavior of others, predict what they might do next, how they feel and also feel connected to that other person, and respond appropriately to them (Wheelwright & Baron-Cohen, 2011). The affective domain of empathy relates to an individual having an appropriate emotional response to the mental state of another. The cognitive domain is the ability to attribute mental states to others an understanding that other people have thoughts and feelings, and that these may not be the same as your own (Baron-Cohen, 1995).

There are several scales that have been developed to measure empathy but each of the scales have its own advantages and limitations. The Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy (Mehrabian& Epstein, 1972) was aimed to assess emotional empathy. However, with hindsight, the authors suggest it may measure general emotional arousability instead (Mehrabian et al. 1988). The Balanced Emotional Empathy Scale (Mehrabian, 2000) measure reactionsto others’ mental states, but unfortunately, it is still not clear

that they tap emotional empathy alone (Lawrence.E.J.et al., 2004). Another scale measuring cognitive empathy (Hogan, 1969) was also developed in the 1960s; however critics also argue that it measures simply social skills rather than empathy per se (Davis, 1994).

## **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to develop a short version of Empathy Quotient and to establish its psychometric properties.

## **Participants**

A sample of 971 school going adolescents (Male=484, Female=487) were selected using systematic random sampling procedure from five schools from randomly chosen locality in Kerala. In the second phase of the research, a sample of 120 adolescents was taken from the above sample for the test retest.

## **Measures**

Empathy Quotient developed by the Researchers.

The Empathy scale was designed to be short, easy to use, and easy to score. This scale had 5 items in the form of statements with a 5 point scale for the respondents to rate. It is a self-reporting scale with positive and negative items. Sum of the total items will provide the score for empathy Quotient.

## **Life Skills Assessment Scale, Nair et al., 2014.**

This multi-dimensional Life skills assessment scale consists of 100 items in the form of statements in-built with a 5 point scale for the respondents to check the appropriate response which is most descriptive of him/her. It has both positive and negative items. The scale measures 10 dimensions of life skills such as Self-awareness, Empathy, Effective Communication, Interpersonal Relationship, Creative thinking, Critical Thinking, Decision making, Problem solving, Coping with emotions and Coping with stress. The added advantage is that the scale could be self-administered or could be utilized in a group situation. The Life skills assessment scale is a self-administration scale and it is based on the five point scale ranging from Always true of me to Not at all true of me. Reverse score is carried out for the negative items. The total of each dimension score indicates the raw score of the respective dimension. The sum of all the scores obtained under each of the 10 dimensions would evolve the Global Score of life skills.

## Social Skills Scale, Ravindranath et al., 2015

This is a 5 dimensional scale with 32 items. The dimensions of the scale are Self-awareness, Empathy, and Effective Communication and Interpersonal relationship. This scale has demonstrated good inter item and test-retest reliability, and convergent validity is indicated by correlations with other established scales.

### Procedure

All participants completed the empathy quotient along with other measures. For each questionnaire, participants were instructed to read each statement carefully and judge how strongly they agreed or disagreed by selecting the appropriate option of each item

### Results

#### Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic profile of the students (Table-1) revealed that 50.2% students were girls and 49.8% were boys. Most of the students belong to the age below 16yrs. Majority (45.8%) of the students were Christians. With regard to the geographical location, 75.8% of the students were from rural locality. With regard to class or standard of study, 21.4% of the students were from 8<sup>th</sup> standard, 21.6% were from 9<sup>th</sup> standard and 13.7% were from 10<sup>th</sup> standard. Only .5% were from 11<sup>th</sup> standard and remaining 42.7% from 12<sup>th</sup> standard.

**Table No.1 Socio-demographic characteristics**

Socio demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Boys	484	49.8
Girls	487	50.2
Age		
Below 14 yrs	367	37.8
14 – 16 yrs	360	37.1
Above 16 yrs	244	25.1
Class		
8 <sup>th</sup> Std	208	21.4
9 <sup>th</sup> Std	210	21.6
10 <sup>th</sup> Std	133	13.7
11 <sup>th</sup> Std	5	0.5
12 <sup>th</sup> Std	415	42.7
Religion		
Hindu	422	43.5
Muslim	104	10.7
Christian	445	45.8
Geographical Location		
Rural	736	75.8
Urban	235	24.2

## Reliability

Extensive data were collected to establish reliability and validity for Empathy Scale. Using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, test retest and split-half reliability methods, the internal consistency was assessed for the tool. Using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, reliability was assessed on the scale remaining, after item analysis and construct validity assessment. The test items showing weak indicators were eliminated in a stepwise fashion until the reliability coefficient peaked. However, highest reliability was already obtained without eliminating items. The final scale had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .65.

**Table-2: - Reliability Coefficients for Empathy scale**

Type of Coefficient	Reliability
Test Retest	.71
Cronbach's Alpha	.65

Measurement of reliability is another important part of standardization process of scale. Two types of reliability were established for the present scale. The internal consistency Cronbach's alpha has already been established based on the data of field-testing study. Apart from this, test retest reliability coefficients were calculated using following procedure.

**Test Retest Reliability:** The scale was administered after 2 weeks interval on the sample of 120 school adolescents considered for establishing the test retest reliability of the scale

### Validly Testing

#### *Concurrent Validity:*

Concurrent validity examines the relationship of instrument with an outside criterion. Good concurrent validity indicated by good 'agreement' between a questionnaire or items score measuring same construct in the same units of measurement (Nunnally & Bernstein 1994). Concurrent validity of the present scale was established on a sample of 120 school adolescents by comparing the scores of the Empathy Scale (LSS) with other measures like Life Skills Assessment Scale and Social Skills Scale.

**Table No.3 Concurrent Validity of Social Skills**

Variable		Empathy	Self-awareness	Effective Communication	Interpersonal relationship	Social Skills	Total Life Skills
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.812**	.431**	.518**	.467**	.757**	.585**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of Pearson product-moment correlation revealed that score of empathy was positively correlated (Empathy:  $r=0.507$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; Self Awareness:  $r=0.431$ ,  $P<0.05$ ; Effective Communication:  $r=0.518$ ,  $P<0.05$ , Interpersonal Relationship:  $r=0.467$ ) with all the dimensions of social skills and the total score of social skills ( $r=0.757$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). Significant correlation was established with empathy and overall score of life skills ( $r=0.585$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) also.

### Factor Analysis

A PCA with a varimax rotation showed the one factor. Factors were kept as it was apparent from both the scree plot and eigen values that they were the strongest, accounting for 36.57 % of the total variance. The item loading for these single factors in the rotated solution are shown in Table 3. The Keiser–Meyer– Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0. 696 and the Bartlett test of sphericity were highly significant, suggesting the data were suitable for PCA. Factor 1 was labeled ‘empathy’.

**Table 3 Final loadings from principal components analysis**

Items	Component
EM 1	.670
EM 2	.624
EM 3	.607
EM 4	.595
EM 5	.517

Extraction Method : PCA

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to standardize a scale to assess the level of empathy among adolescents. The initial psychometric properties suggest that the Scale is a potentially reliable and valid measure of assessing empathy among adolescents. Good reliability was established for the scale where Cronbach's Alpha is around 0.65. The test retest score was also high which makes the scale more reliable. Empathy scale was shown to have concurrent validity as evident from the positive correlations with social skills and life skills assessment scale. Although the main limitation of the study is that total number of items in the scale which is considered too short for a standardized scale. But this limitation can be overcome by standardizing the scale in different population again. It will need further investigation in different populations. In conclusion, Empathy scale showed acceptable psychometric properties and can be used in scientific studies.

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## PEER TUTORING STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING THINKING SKILLS

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### ABSTRACT

We all live in a world of construct and all constructs can be categorised as either mental or social. How we view the world and approach it depends on the social constructs which we form. Constructivism emphasizes how individuals actively construct knowledge and understanding. Social constructivist approaches emphasize the social contexts of learning, and that knowledge is mutually built and constructed. Peer tutoring, one of the constructivist teaching techniques, allows individuals to take charge of their own learning. Knowledge about peer tutoring concerns a person's knowledge about personal cognitive resources and the compatibility between himself or herself as a learner and learning situation. Literature reviews discuss about peer tutoring and the benefits that it can bring to student learning. Even though the significance of peer tutoring strategies have been highlighted by several experts, review of related studies revealed that very few studies have been conducted in India in this area. Hence this study is an attempt to find out the effectiveness of peer tutoring strategy for the development of thinking skills such as critical thinking, creativity and problem solving among students at secondary level. The aim of the study was to find out whether the peer tutoring strategy is more effective than the prevailing method in teaching mathematics at secondary level. The study was conducted on a sample of 80 students studying in 9<sup>th</sup> standard of secondary schools in Kollam District, adopting a pre-test by non-equivalent group experimental design for realising the objectives. Findings are discussed.

### Key words

Constructivism, social constructivist, peer tutoring, thinking skills, critical thinking, creativity, problem solving

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## Introduction

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Today world may be defined as the world of construct and all constructs can be categorised into either mental or social. Social constructs are creative urges and constructs of constructionists. Social constructionists support a view which merges the person and their boundaries for one cannot be easily separated from boundaries of the other. What we take to be the world importantly depends on how we approach it, and how we approach to it, depends on the social relationship of which we are a part (Gergen, 2008). Thinking involves manipulating information as when we form concepts, solve problems, think critically, reason and make decisions. Our thinking is fuelled by concept. Concepts are mental categories that are used to group objects, events and characteristics. It is impossible to solve mathematical problems without concepts. Reasoning is the mental activity of transforming to reach conclusion. In mathematics, learning decision making involves evaluating alternatives and making choices among them. Learning is fun and dynamic, but ultimately it comes down as a result of knowledge, understanding, values, ideas or feelings. Constructivism is a part of cognitive revolution. Constructivists believe that knowledge is the result of individual constructions of reality. The constructivist teaching techniques, peer tutoring, scaffolding, cognitive apprenticeship, co-operative learning etc allows people to take charge of their own learning. Knowledge about peer tutoring concerns a person's knowledge about personal cognitive resources and the compatibility between himself or herself as a learner and learning situation. Peer tutoring strategies facilitate learning. Self-directed learning integrates self-management actions with self-monitoring. Any teacher can read and arrange for abler pupils (tutors) to help less able ones (tutees) within a single class (Britz.et.al, 1989), in order to follow the peer tutoring strategy. In short, peer tutoring is a way of facilitating and equipping students to learn through team-building, critical and innovative thinking and win for all dynamics shared in the role of teacher as a facilitator who at the same time monitors, intervenes and evaluates group and individual performance (Goodlad Sinclair & Beverley Hirst, 1989). Even though the significance of peer tutoring strategies have been highlighted by several experts, review of related studies revealed that very few studies have been conducted in India in this area . Hence the investigator find out the effectiveness of peer tutoring strategy for the development of thinking skill such as critical thinking, creativity and problem solving among students at secondary level.

### Objectives of The Study

1. To prepare and validate the instructional materials in Mathematics, based

on peer tutoring strategy for developing thinking skills among students at secondary level.

2. To test the effectiveness of peer tutoring strategy by comparing the pre-test and post test thinking skill scores of peer tutoring strategy and prevailing method.

## **Hypothesis**

The peer tutoring strategy is effective in developing thinking skills among secondary school students.

## **Methodology**

The present study made use of pre-test by non-equivalent group experimental design for realising the objectives. This design is often used in class room experiments when experimental and control groups are such naturally assembled groups as intact classes which may be similar (Best & Khan, 1999). The independent variables involved are peer tutoring strategy and prevailing method of teaching, while thinking skill was taken as the dependent variable. The study was conducted on a sample of 80 students studying in 9<sup>th</sup> standard of secondary schools in Kollam District. Equal representation of male and female students, within possible lowest age range, was given while assigning subjects to experimental and control group. The study made use of systematically designed and well planned lesson transcripts based on peer tutoring strategy and prevailing method for teaching the selected topic. A Standardised Achievement Test, prepared by the investigator as a part of the study, was used to measure the learning outcome of the groups.

Since the sample selected for the study were non-equivalent group having differences in their means of pre-test scores, Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA) was carried out to find out the significant differences between the Experimental Group and Control Group in pre-test and post-test conditions.

## **Results and Discussions**

The aim of the study was to find out whether the peer tutoring strategy is more effective than the prevailing method in teaching mathematics at the secondary level. Analyses of the data were carried out by keeping the objectives of the study and hypotheses in mind with the help of SPSS 16.0 for Windows. The scores obtained in the pre-test and post-test were analysed statistically using ANCOVA to compare the effectiveness of peer tutoring

strategy over the prevailing method. As the groups were not equated, analysis of covariance was used. The details regarding the analysis of variance or pre-test achievement scores and post-test achievement scores of students in the experimental group are given in Table 1.

**Table 1:**  
**Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores**  
**(ANOVA) for Achievement**

Source of Variation	df	SS <sub>x</sub>	SS <sub>y</sub>	MS <sub>x</sub>	MS <sub>y</sub>	F <sub>x</sub>	F <sub>y</sub>
Between Groups	1	46.5	756.5	46.5	756.5	11.69**	68.03**
Within Groups	78	310.5	867.4	4.0	11.1		
Total	79	357.0	1623.8				

The mean score of the achievement at pre-test level is 4.8 and 3.2 respectively for students taught using peer tutoring strategy and prevailing method. The F-test applied to the Pre-test Achievement Scores ( $F_x=11.69$ ), which is greater than the table value for  $df(1, 78)$ . The variation is significant at 0.01 level. The analysis of Pre-test Achievement Scores of students in the treatment groups revealed that the students in the treatment groups differ significantly with regard to the Pre-test Achievement Scores. The average achievement at pre test level is significantly high among students of experimental group.

The mean score of the achievement at post-test level is 19.5 and 13.4 respectively for students taught using peer tutoring strategy and prevailing method. The f statistics for the Post-test Achievement Scores ( $F_y=68.03$ ) is greater than the table value for  $df(1,78)$  and thus the variation is significant at 0.01 level.

Scores of the treatment groups revealed that the students in experimental group differ significantly with regard to the Post-test Achievements Scores as compared to control group. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to determine whether the groups differ in achievement at Post-test Achievement Scores as a result of the methods of teaching applied. The details regarding the Analysis of Covariance of done in this context is given in Table 2.

**Table: Comparison of Post-test Scores after Correcting for difference in Pre-test Scores (ANCOVA Table) for Achievement**

Source of Variation	df	SS <sub>x</sub>	SS <sub>y</sub>	SS <sub>x</sub>	MS <sub>yx</sub>	SD <sub>y.x</sub>	F <sub>y.x</sub>
Between Groups	1	46.5	756.5	320.0	320	2.293	60.83**
Within Groups	77	310.5	867.4	405.0	5.3		
Total	78	357.0	1623.8	725.0			

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level x:Pre-test y.x: Adjusted post

After correcting the post-test achievement scores for difference in pre-test achievement scores, F statistics is applied to the post-test achievement scores. The value of ANCOVA (F<sub>y.x</sub>) is significant at 0.01 level. From F<sub>y.x</sub>, it is clear that the mean scores of post-test achievement scores difference is high among experimental group (18.6) compared with control group (14.3). The average achievement scores of students at pre-test, post-test and adjusted post-test and the comparison made thereof is given in Table3.

Groups	N	M <sub>x</sub>	M <sub>y</sub>	M <sub>y.x</sub>	CR
Experimental	40	4.8	19.5	18.6	8.36**
Control	40	3.2	13.4	14.3	
Total	80	4.0	16.5	16.5	

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level x:Pre-test y:Post-test y.x: Adjusted post

The average adjusted post-test achievement scores are 18.6 and 14.3 respectively for students of experimental and control groups. The calculated value of CR is 8.36, which is greater than the table value (2.58) for 0.01 level of significance. It means that the average adjusted achievement score of students from experimental group is significantly higher as compared to control group. Thus it can be concluded that Group Investigation Model is statistically effective than conventional method for increasing the achievement score in e-commerce at undergraduate level.

## Conclusion

Education has undergone multifaceted growth and progress in the present globalized scenario (Fiter, 2002). The New Activity Oriented Approach of instruction gives more emphasis to the learner's ability to construct knowledge, how to interact with others and also test his ability to formulate tentative solutions to problems with the help of thinking skills which involves concept formation, problem solving, critical thinking, reasoning and decision

making. Findings of the study show that the peer tutoring strategy is more effective than the prevailing method in developing thinking skills among students.

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## A Study of Critical Thinking Among Higher Secondary Students

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Dr. Sheeja V. Titus\*\*

### Abstract

Today we are living in a fast pacing, conflicting and dangerously complex world. On a daily bases students were faced with decisions that require reasoning, understanding, interpreting, analyzing and evaluating information before them. This process involves critical thinking because it would enable one to take reliable and valid decisions, act ethically, and be able to adapt to changes in any given environment. The investigator made an attempt to investigate the level of critical thinking; a) to find out the difference between boys and girls of higher secondary schools in their critical thinking b) to find out the difference between rural and urban schools higher secondary students in their critical thinking. c) to find out the difference among government, aided and unaided school higher secondary students in their critical thinking. Sample consists of 335 students from XI standard biology group in higher secondary schools at Kaniyakumari district. Critical thinking inventory by Jai Prasadh & Porgio (2013) tool is used in this study. Mean, Standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA are used to analyse the data. The finding shows a) a large number of higher secondary students have moderate level of analyticity, self confidence, inquisitiveness, maturity, open mindedness, systematicity, truth seeking and critical thinking b) there is no significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary school in their critical thinking c) there is no significant difference between rural and urban school higher secondary students in their truth seeking. But there is significant difference between rural and urban school higher secondary students in their analyticity, self confidence, inquisitiveness, maturity, open mindedness, systematicity and critical thinking. d) there is no significant difference among government, aided and unaided school higher secondary students in their analyticity, self confidence, systematicity and truth seeking. But there is significant difference among government, aided and unaided school higher secondary students in their inquisitiveness, maturity, open mindedness and critical thinking.

Key words: Critical thinking, students, higher secondary schools, higher order thinking

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## **Introduction**

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The development of higher order or cognitive intellectual abilities is utmost importance and that critical thinking is ‘central to both personal success and national needs’.

Educational systems in the twenty-first century face challenges in preparing all students with knowledge needed for a rapidly changing technical and scientific workforce, as well as critical thinking skills to evaluate national and global issues requiring increasing scientific literacy. Thinking is a daily life activity and an unending process of human mind. It involves the process of using one’s powers of conception, judgement, or inference in regard to any matter or subject which concerns one or interests one. Every individual has the ability to think. To be a good thinker one needs to make deliberate efforts.

### **Critical thinking**

Critical thinking is a vital topic in education today. As a result of this, schools and colleges seek new and innovative ways of teaching critical thinking skills by utilizing many principles. Critical thinking is distinguished as a careful evaluation and judgement, providing the ability to fully understand issues and make appropriate decisions. Brookfield (1987) argues that critical thinking is a process which includes emotional as well as rational components, and clearly acknowledges the importance of culture and context. It is ‘the act of consistently questioning the status quo’.

Critical thinking is “the mental processes, strategies and representations people use to solve problems, make decisions and learn new concepts” (Sternberg, 2007). It is the ability to make and assess conclusions based on evidence. It describes an approach to thinking rather than one specific thinking skill. It is a type of thinking that helps a person in stepping aside from his own personal beliefs, prejudices and opinions to sort out the facts and discover the truth even at the expense of his basic belief system. In this way it represents a challenging thought process which leads a person to, new avenues of knowledge and understanding (Smitha, 2009).

### **Core Skills of Critical Thinking**

The development and transfer of critical thinking skills are primary objectives for education today. The following are the core skills of critical thinking;



**Analyticity:** It is the tendency to be alert to what happens next. This is the habit of striving to anticipate both the good and the bad potential consequences or outcomes of situations, choices, proposals, and plans.

**Self-Confidence:** The tendency to trust the use of reason and reflective thinking to solve problems is reasoning self-confidence. This habit can apply to individuals or to groups; as can the other dispositional characteristics.

**Inquisitiveness:** Inquisitiveness is intellectual curiosity. It is the tendency to want to know things, even if they are not immediately or obviously useful at the moment. It is being curious and eager to acquire new knowledge and to learn the explanations for things even when the application of that new learning is not immediately apparent.

**Maturity of Judgement:** It is the habit of making a judgement in a timely way, not prematurely, and not with undue delay. It is the tendency of standing firm in one's judgment when there is reason to do so, but changing one's mind when that is the appropriate thing to do.

**Open mindedness:** Open-mindedness is the tendency to allow others to voice views with which one may not agree. Open-minded people act with tolerance toward the opinions of others, knowing that often we all hold beliefs which make sense only from our own perspectives.

**Systematicity:** Systematicity is the tendency or habit of striving to approach problems in a disciplined, orderly, and systematic way. The person who is strong in systematicity may or may not actually know or use a given strategy or any particular pattern in problem solving, but they have the mental desire and tendency to approach questions and issues in such an organized way.

**Truth seeking:** Truth seeking is the habit of always desiring the best possible understanding of any given situation. Truth-seekers ask hard, sometimes even frightening questions; they do not ignore relevant details; they strive not to let bias or preconception colour their search for knowledge and truth.

### **Significance of the Study**

The goals of education today is to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and other attributes needed for effective life-long participation in an evolving 'digital knowledge society'. Schools are refocusing their operations to meet this goal, becoming more inclusive, flexible and dynamic. As society changes, the skills that students need to be successful in life also

change. Basic literacy skills of reading, writing, arithmetic are no longer sufficient. Our students need to master those basic skills as well as read critically, write persuasively, think and reason logically and solve complex problems. A successful student must be adept at managing information, finding, evaluating, and applying new content understanding with great flexibility. This demands cognitive abilities and strategies.

Critical thinking is a decision making mechanism that is self-regulative and goal oriented and includes not only interpreting, analyzing, evaluating and drawing conclusions but also evidence based conceptual, methodological, criterion-related or contextual interpretations (Facione, 2011). A person who thinks critically can ask appropriate questions, gather information efficiently and creatively, sort out this information, reason logically from this information and come to reliable and trustworthy conclusions about the world that enables one to live and act successfully in it. (Gurubasappa,2013). Critical thinking is a crucial prerequisite for responsible human performance not only in organization, but also in every area of life. Today's generation needs an educational platform where they can be taught to think critically. Hence the investigator wants to know about critical thinking of higher secondary students.

### **Title of the Study**

The study under the investigation is stated as “A study of critical thinking among higher secondary students”.

### **Methodology**

The investigator has used survey method for the present investigation. In the present study population consisted of all the higher secondary students studying in government, aided, private and unaided schools in Kanyakumari districts. The stratified random sampling technique is adopted to select the sample. The sample consisted of 335 students studying XI standard math and science group students of higher secondary school from Kanyakumari district. The investigator has used Critical Thinking Inventory (CTI) by Jai Prasad & Porgio (2013). Percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, 't'-test and d) ANOVA were the statistical techniques used to analyse the data.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- ◆ To find out the level of critical thinking of the higher secondary students.
- ◆ To find out whether there is any significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary school in their critical thinking.

- ◆ To find out whether there is any significant difference between rural and urban school higher secondary students in their critical thinking.
- ◆ To find out whether there is any significant difference among government, aided and unaided school higher secondary students in their critical thinking.

### Hypotheses of the Study

1. The level of critical thinking of the higher secondary students is moderate.
2. There is no significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary school in their critical thinking.
3. There is no significant difference between rural and urban school higher secondary students in their critical thinking.
4. There is no significant difference among government, aided and unaided school higher secondary students in their critical thinking.

**Objective 1:** To find out the level of critical thinking of higher secondary students.

**Table 1: Level of Critical Thinking of Higher Secondary Students**

Sub scales of Critical Thinking	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Analyticity	80	23.9	190	56.7	65	19.4
Self confidence	73	21.8	186	55.5	76	22.7
Inquisitiveness	81	24.2	180	53.7	74	22.1
Maturity	89	26.6	147	43.8	99	29.6
Open mindedness	82	24.5	156	46.5	97	29.0
Systematicity	78	23.3	146	43.6	111	33.1
Truth seeking	83	24.8	171	51.0	81	24.2
<b>Critical thinking</b>	83	24.8	169	50.4	83	24.8

The table 1 reveals that 19.4% of higher secondary students have high level of analyticity, 22.7% of them have high level of self confidence, 22.1% of them have high level of inquisitiveness, 29.6% of them have high level of maturity, 29.0% of them have high level of open mindedness, 33.1% of them have high level of systematicity, 24.2% of them have high level of truth seeking, 24.8% of them have high level of critical thinking.

### *Null hypothesis 1*

There is no significant difference between boys and girls of higher second-

ary school in their critical thinking.

**Table 2: Difference between boys and girls of higher secondary schools in their critical thinking**

Sub scales of Critical Thinking	Boys		Girls		Calculated 't' value	Remarks
	N=169		N= 166			
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Analyticity	49.25	9.94	50.24	10.32	0.89	NS
Self confidence	48.73	10.68	47.99	10.86	0.62	NS
Inquisitiveness	48.54	10.15	49.33	10.85	0.68	NS
Maturity	49.18	11.06	47.05	10.10	1.84	NS
Open mindedness	48.93	11.13	47.43	10.29	1.28	NS
Systematicity	48.89	10.32	47.45	11.93	1.18	NS
Truth seeking	48.56	9.81	47.95	11.53	0.52	NS
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<b>342.08</b>	<b>56.66</b>	<b>337.43</b>	<b>60.90</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>NS</b>

(At 5% level of significance the table value of 't' is 1.96, S-significant, NS-Not significant)

It is inferred from the table 2 that there is no significant difference between boys and girls of higher secondary school in their critical thinking.

### ***Null hypothesis 2***

There is no significant difference between rural and urban school higher secondary school in their critical thinking.

**Table 3: Difference between rural and urban school higher secondary students in their critical thinking**

Sub scales of Critical Thinking	Rural		Urban		Calculated 't' value	Remarks
	N=179		N= 156			
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Analyticity	48.05	9.19	51.68	10.82	3.27	S
Self confidence	47.21	9.40	49.68	12.03	2.07	S
Inquisitiveness	47.48	8.98	50.60	11.81	2.69	S
Maturity	46.91	9.57	49.52	11.61	2.21	S
Open mindedness	46.40	9.85	50.24	11.34	3.28	S
Systematicity	47.04	9.96	49.47	12.29	1.97	S
Truth seeking	47.66	10.43	48.94	10.97	1.08	NS
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<b>330.76</b>	<b>52.89</b>	<b>350.13</b>	<b>63.45</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>S</b>

(At 5% level of significance the table value of 't' is 1.96, S-significant, NS-

Not significant)

It is inferred from the table 3 that there is no significant difference between rural and urban school higher secondary students in their truth seeking. But there is significant difference between rural and urban school higher secondary students in their analyticity, self confidence, inquisitiveness, maturity, open mindedness, systematicity and critical thinking.

**Null hypothesis 3**

There is no significant difference among government, aided and unaided school higher secondary school in their critical thinking.

**Table 4: Difference in critical thinking among the students of Govt, Aided and Unaided Higher Secondary Schools**

Sub scales of Critical Thinking	Source of variation	Category	Mean	df = 2,332		Calculated 'F' value	Remarks
				SS	MS		
Analyticity	Between	Govt.	48.80	346.27	173.13	1.69	NS
		Aided	50.54				
	Within	Unaided	48.12	33951.05	102.26		
Self confidence	Between	Govt.	48.51	437.15	218.57	1.89	NS
		Aided	49.00				
	Within	Unaided	45.88	38274.58	115.28		
Inquisitiveness	Between	Govt.	52.11	1281.01	640.50	5.98	S
		Aided	48.59				
	Within	Unaided	45.96	35528.98	107.01		
Maturity	Between	Govt.	50.33	724.64	362.32	3.24	S
		Aided	48.01				
	Within	Unaided	45.63	37093.15	111.72		
Open mindedness	Between	Govt.	50.20	798.27	399.13	3.51	S
		Aided	48.27				
	Within	Unaided	45.24	37694.14	113.53		
Systematicity	Between	Govt.	47.82	524.44	262.22	2.12	NS
		Aided	49.02				
	Within	Unaided	45.63	41055.14	123.66		
Truth seeking	Between	Govt.	47.69	371.32	185.66	1.63	NS
		Aided	49.03				
	Within	Unaided	46.26	37783.89	113.80		
Critical Thinking	Between	Govt.	345.47	20487.47	10243.73	3.00	S
		Aided	342.47				
	within	Unaided	322.72	1132893.18	3412.32		

(At 5% level of significance the table value of 'F' is 2.99)

It is inferred from the table 4 that there is no significant difference among government, aided and unaided school higher secondary students in their analyticity, self confidence, systematicity and truth seeking. But there is significant difference among government, aided and unaided school higher secondary students in their inquisitiveness, maturity, open mindedness and critical thinking.

## Results

The results showed that a large number of higher secondary students have moderate level of analyticity, self confidence, inquisitiveness, maturity, open mindedness, systematicity, truth seeking and critical thinking. Boys and girls of higher secondary school did not showed any difference in their critical thinking. Urban school students are better in their in their analyticity, self confidence, inquisitiveness, maturity, open mindedness, systematicity and critical thinking than rural students except dimension of truth seeking. Further it is observed that government and aided school students are better in their inquisitiveness, maturity, open mindedness and critical thinking than unaided school students except dimension analyticity, self- confidence, systematicity and truth seeking.

## Conclusion

Educational activities ought to be designed and conducted in such a way that should improve the critical thinking skills of students. Teaching students to think critically is incredibly rewarding because critical thinking skills will not only help students to navigate the important decision in the process of learning but move their learning beyond memorization or passive acceptance to understanding, the commitment to persevere until clarity and insights are achieved.

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## Coping with Emotions – A Crux for Student Teachers

Dr. S. Shameem\*

### Abstract

Emotions are important. Dividends are double if we are aware of our own and others' feelings. Highly emotionally intelligent people do this all the time. Like any other, it is a skill that can be developed and which is well worth acquiring. Coping with emotions means involving recognizing emotions within us and others, being aware of how emotions influence behaviour and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. The objective of the research study was to find out the differences in the skill of coping with emotions among the 'Student teachers' in the categories such as, gender, course of study, type of institution and medium of instruction and to suggest remedial strategies to enhance the skill of coping with emotions among student teachers. The Student teachers were selected from the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) and Teacher Training Institutions (TTI), Colleges of Education and Institutes of Advanced Study in Education of Tamil Nadu. The sample size was 1758 in number who were selected at random. The collected data was analysed to test the four hypotheses and outcomes are discussed.

**Key Words:** emotions, coping with emotions, student teachers, life skills

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## **Introduction**

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UNICEF defines life skills as “a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills”. UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO list the ten core life skills as: problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication, decision-making, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship, self-awareness, empathy, and coping with stress and emotions. Emotions are caused by the interpretations of events, rather than events themselves (Roseman and Smith, 2001). Therefore, judgments teachers make about the behaviors in the classroom underlie the emotions that are aroused. Coping with emotions means involving recognizing emotions within us and others, being aware of how emotions influence behaviour and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. Intense emotions like anger or sadness can have negative effects on our health if we do not respond appropriately. Thus emotion regulation refers to “the processes by which we influence which emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience and express them (Gross, 2002)”. Therefore, coping with emotion is one of the core life skills that play an integral role in strengthening the quality of student teachers, which results in the growth and development of the student teachers, who serves as the future architects of our country. Hence the subject has been considered for the present study.

### **The objective of the study**

The objective of the research study was to find out the differences in the skill of coping with emotions among the ‘Student teachers’ in the categories such as, gender, course of study, type of institution and medium of instruction and to suggest remedial strategies to enhance the skill of coping with emotions among student teachers.

### **Sample**

The Student teachers were selected from the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) and Teacher Training Institutions (TTI), Colleges of Education and Institutes of Advanced Study in Education of Tamil Nadu. The student teachers were one thousand seven hundred and fifty eight in number who were selected at random.

Skill of coping with emotions of the student teachers was researched by administering the rating scale on Skill of Coping with Emotions for the present study. It is a thirty item scale. The response choices are on a three-point scale, which indicate the degree to which the Student teacher agrees to the statement. The collected data was analysed to test the four hypotheses.



Hypothesis 1 states that there is no significant difference between male and female student teachers with respect to their (SCE) was tested by the 't' test which is depicted in Table 1.

**Table 1**

**Details of 't' test for the Skill of Coping with Emotions among the Student teachers based on gender**

Sl. No	Life Skill	Gender of student teachers				't' value	Significance
		Female N 1433		Male N 325			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Skill of Coping with Emotions	13.168	2.4464	12.910	2.4573	1.706	NS

Table 1 displays the difference in skill of coping with emotions of the total sample of student teachers based on their gender. The 't' value is not significant, so that there exists no significant difference between male and female student teachers, the null hypothesis 1 is accepted with respect to SCE.

Hypothesis 2, states that there is no significant difference between the student teachers of Diploma in Teacher Education course and Bachelor Degree in Education course with respect to their skill of coping with emotions; 't' test was conducted and the results are given in Table 2.

**Table 2**

**Details of 't' test for the types of Skill of Coping with Emotions among the Student teachers based on course of study**

Sl. No	Life Skill	Course of study				't' value	Significance
		D. T. E., N 850		B. Ed., N 908			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Skill of Coping with Emotions	13.416	2.4683	12.843	2.4008	4.928	0.01

Table 2 depicts the difference in skill of coping with emotions of student teachers based on their course of study. The 't' values are significant at 1 % level for SCE which shows significant differences between student teachers of Diploma in Teacher Education and Bachelor degree in Education course. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Hypothesis 3 states that there is no significant difference among student

teachers of co education, men’s institutions or women’s institutions with respect to their emotional intelligence. To test the above hypothesis one way analysis of variance ANOVA was conducted and based on the significance of the results ‘t’ tests were conducted.

**Table 3**

**Details of ANOVA for the types of Skill of Coping with Emotions among the Student teachers based on the type of institution**

Sl. No.	Life Skill	Source	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	‘F’ value	Sig.
1	Skill of Coping with Emotions	Between	2	39.710	19.855	3.317	0.05
		Within	1755	10504.725	5.986		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1757</b>	<b>10544.435</b>			

The Table 3 shows the one way analysis of variance carried to depict the differences in skill of coping with emotions of total sample of student teachers based on their type of educational institutions.

The ‘F’ value of skill of coping with emotions is 3.317. It is more than the table value at 0.05 level and it was concluded that there is a significant difference among student teachers based on their type of educational institution with respect to their skill of coping with emotions. So, the hypothesis 3 is rejected. Hence, ‘t’ test was conducted and the results are given in table 3a, 3b and 3c. This paved the way to conduct ‘t’ test to find out the difference in skill of coping with emotions between the student teachers of co-education and men’s institution which is showed in Table 3a.

**Table 3a**

**Details of ‘t’ test for the types of Skill of Coping with Emotions among the student teachers of co-education and men’s institution**

Sl. No	Types of Skill of Coping with Emotions	Type of educational institution				‘t’ Value	Significance
		Co-education inst		Men’s inst.			
		N 709		N 135			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Skill of Coping with Emotions	13.269	2.482	12.725	2.329	2.458	0.05

As it is indicated in Table 3a there is a significant difference at 1% level which exists between the student teachers of co-education institution and men’s institution in their total score of emotional intelligence. Further, the skill of coping with emotions of men’s institution and women’s institution was tested by the ‘t’ test which is given in the table 3b.

**Table 3b****Details of ‘t’ test for the Skill of Coping with Emotions among the Student teachers of men’s institution and women’s institution**

Sl. No.	Life Skill	Type of educational institution				‘t’ value	Significance
		Men’s institution N 135		Women’s inst. N 914			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Skill of Coping with Emotions	12.725	2.329	13.063	2.435	1.562	NS

As shown in Table 3b there exist no significant difference between the student teachers of men’s institution and women’s institution in their emotional intelligence. Finally, the student teachers from co-education and women’s institutions were compared by conducting the ‘t’ test which is given in the Table 3c.

**Table 3c****Details of ‘t’ test for the types of Skill of Coping with Emotions among the student teachers of co-education and women’s institution**

Sl. No.	Types of Intelligence	Type of educational institution				‘t’ value	Significance
		Co-ed. Institution N 709		Women’s inst. N 135			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Skill of Coping with Emotions	13.269	2.482	13.063	2.435	1.671	NS

It is inferred from Table 3c that there is no significant difference between the student teachers of co-education and women’s institution in their skill of coping with emotions.

The skill of coping with emotions of student teachers based on their medium of instruction was analyzed by conducting one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the Hypothesis 4 expressing that there is no significant difference among student teachers based on their medium of instruction with respect to their skill of coping with emotions. The results are furnished below in the Table 4. The ‘F’ value of skill of coping with emotions is 8.253. It is more than the table value at 0.01 level and hence it was concluded that there is a significant difference among student teachers based on their medium of study with respect to their skill of coping with emotions. So, the Hypothesis 4 is rejected.

**Table 4****Details of ANOVA for the types of Skill of Coping with Emotions among the Student teachers based on their medium of instruction**

Sl. No.	Types of Intelligence	Source	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	'F' value	Sig.
1	Skill of Coping with Emotions	Between	2	98.252	49.126	8.253	0.01
		Within	1755	10446.183	5.952		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1757</b>	<b>10544.435</b>			

As revealed in the Table 4, there exist significant differences among student teachers in their skill of coping with emotions based on their medium of study. This necessitated to conduct the 't' test and the results are given in Table 4a, 4b and 4c. Table 4a depicts the details of 't' test conducted to find out the differences in skill of coping with emotions of student teachers belonging to Tamil medium and Urdu medium.

**Table 4a****Details of 't' test for the types of Skill of Coping with Emotions among the student teachers of Tamil medium and Urdu medium**

Sl. No.	Types of Intelligence	Medium of instruction				't' value	Significance
		Tamil N 1350		Urdu N 66			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Skill of Coping with Emotions	13.201	2.448	13.727	2.408	1.730	NS

It is inferred from Table 4a that the Tamil and Urdu medium student teachers show no significant differences in their total score of emotional intelligence. The student teachers of Tamil medium are compared with the student teachers of English medium on their skill of coping with emotions and the results are given in the Table 4b.

**Table 4b****Details of 't' test for the types of Skill of Coping with Emotions among the student teachers of Tamil medium and English medium**

Sl. No.	Types of Intelligence	Medium of instruction				't' value	Significance
		Tamil N 1350		English N 342			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Skill of Coping with Emotions	13.201	2.448	12.684	2.412	3.532	0.01

As shown in Table 4b, there exists a significant difference at a level of 1% between the student teachers of Tamil medium and English medium in their emotional intelligence. Finally, the student teachers of Urdu medium and

English medium were compared on their skill of coping with emotions which is given in Table 4c.

**Table 4c**

**Details of ‘t’ test for the types of Skill of Coping with Emotions among the student teachers of Urdu medium and English medium**

Sl. No.	Types of Intelligence	Medium of instruction				‘t’ value	Significance
		Urdu N 66		English N 342			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Skill of Coping with Emotions	13.727	2.408	12.684	2.412	3.22	0.01

The Table 4c brings to light that the student teachers of Urdu medium differ from the student teachers of English medium significantly at 1% level in their skill of coping with emotions.

**Discussion**

This research has shown that there is no significant difference between male and female student teachers with respect to their skill of coping with emotions which is similar to Sad and Aribas (2008), which found no significant difference in terms of gender in relation to utilization of intelligences. This is also in line with Brien (2000) about gender-role cognition. According to him, because of the substantial differences in the ways male and female roles are portrayed in our culture, boys and girls may think and learn about these roles differently. The male role is more clearly defined, more highly valued, and more salient than the female role; thus, cognitions about these female and male roles may be expected to differ.

Student teachers of diploma in teacher education course have significantly higher skill of coping with emotions than the student teachers of bachelor degree in education course. The duration of the course for diploma in teacher education is two years whereas it is less than one year for the degree of Bachelor Degree in Education course. Thus, diploma in teacher education course provides longer exposure to varied activities. This finding is in line with (Brewster, Ellis and Girard, 2003) which says the younger the learners the more physical activity they tend to make use of all their senses. Genuine cooperative pair work or group work is usually the result of a long process (Scott and Ytinberg, 1990). This finding may also be due to the longer duration of the Diploma in Education course of study which builds stronger teacher pupil relationship. Teaching as relation is “primarily a personal or emotional act” (Mills and Satterthwait, 2000). Concentrating on issues of teaching and learning are grounded in a relational, rather than a managerial view of teaching

(Goldstein and Lake, 2000; Walls, Nardi, Von Minden and Hoffman 2002).

Thus students belonging to co-education institutions show significantly higher skill of coping with emotions. The findings of the present study is in accordance with Tracey, Monica W. (2008) which found out that the procedures and findings have implications for the process involved in instructional design model validation through designer use and program implementation.

Student teachers belonging to Tamil and Urdu medium show significantly more coping than the student teachers belonging to English medium. This may be due to the learning through mother tongue which makes learning easy. Nolen (2003) suggests that the presentation of foreign language teaching material should engage all intelligences which are potentially available in every learner. It should allow students to interact with each other and to develop the ability in which they are less strong (Moran, Kornhaber and Gardner, 2006; Heacox, 2002).

This is in line with Griffin (2003). She concludes that: “Teacher educators can guide students’ development of a decision making schema by providing opportunities for students to reflect on authentic teaching experiences with feedback”. She believes that it is not only student teachers that can benefit from such reflection and feedback, but experienced teachers as well. Similarly, Rahimi and Abedini’s (2009) shows that affective domain is considered to be ‘one of the main determining factors of success in learning foreign or second languages’.

These findings are in accordance with the recommendations of various commissions on education to make learning through mother tongue; which makes it more meaningful and to make the Bachelor programme in Education for two years duration.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the study revealed the status of the skill of coping of emotions among the student teachers. The study suggested that longer duration of the course of study builds a strong teacher pupil relationship, longer exposure to varied activities and enhanced skill of coping with emotions. Remedial strategies to enhance the skill of coping with emotions among student teachers are presented.

## **Remedial Strategies**

“Information-based” approaches are generally not sufficient to enhance the skill of coping with emotions among student teachers. Therefore, the lecture should be substantiated with exercises and situations where participants can

practice and experience its effects.

Theories on learning emphasizes that adults learn best that which they can associate with their experience and practice. Hence the concept of life skills needs to repeat, recap, reinforce and reviewed to ensure the skill acquisition.

To ensure the young ones are committed positively to their families, to help them solve problems co-operatively, student teachers to be allowed to handle negative pressures from their peers and society.

Life skills should not be taught in isolation, but should be with health and issues of day to day life. The skill of questioning should not be limited to evaluate the learning activities alone. It should acknowledge the abilities, values of the children by giving equal importance in the assessment of life skill of the student teachers.

Teachers and Parents play the role of ‘a guide at the side’ not as ‘a sage on the stage’. There need to be a shift from close ended questions to open ended questions in classrooms and day to day life interactions.

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## Life Skill and Quality Of Life: A Study among College Students

Surya B. Raj\* & Dr. Raju S.\*\*

### Abstract

Life Skills are the positive behaviour that helps a person to do an activity in a better way, at the most appropriate time by taking the minimum required time to do it, when compared to others of the same level. At its literal level, 'quality of life can be explained as the level of excellence possessed by an individual to do different activities and adjust with different situations in life so as to enable a happy and healthy life. Life skills approach has inexplicable advantage in the development of young people. It can be applied in a range of cultural settings. It lends itself to the implementation in schools and other formal settings and also in informal settings where skill development is the goal (Botwin & Kantor,2011) In the present study the researcher tries to examine the relationship of life skills and quality of life among 300 college students between the age group of 18 to 23. Life Skills Assessment Scale and Quality Of Life Scale were used for the assessment. 'The Pearson product moment method of correlation' and 't' test were used for statistical analysis. The study showed that significant relationship exists between life skills and quality of life.

**Key words** Life skills, Quality of Life

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## Introduction

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Development of people can be achieved only by imparting various methods of human resource development initiatives, where human resource development can be defined as the “process through which people are helped in a continuous and planned way, based on assessed capabilities to develop, acquire or sharpen their capabilities and increase competency with commitment, to prove the effectiveness, in comparison with others, in order to perform various general functions as an individual and social being, and the specific functions associated with the job at present and future.(Nair, 2010). Among the people, youths are the pertinent and vivacious fraction of the society, who needs priority of attention for all human development activities. Among youths, college students are the significant group who needs to be channelized through the right path of holistic development. In the present scenario, to achieve this, students need some additional inputs in addition to the curriculum being taught in the colleges. Life Skills Education is one of the major supporting branches of study that accelerates and improves the level of performance in the day to day activities of the student. Skills are the back bone of development of any individual. The main objective of life skill education is to enable the learner to develop a concept of oneself through the interaction of self with society and enhance skills that can be translated into meaningful action to lead successful lives ( Ranjan & Nair,2015). The specific development of any individual depends on the level of skills one processes. But a person who is not competent enough to do his day to day activities effectively (based on practiced skills) will not be in a better position to get the maximum result from the specific skills because these specific skills are always supported by life skills. So, life skills are the basic need of the individual for the better day to day life. This also supports the basic development and also the application of specialized skills. In the case of students, life skills education can accelerate and improve the level of performance in the day to day activities of the student.

Life skills focus on the physical, social, psychological, spiritual and environmental well being of an individual. Life Skills, defined in a general way mean a mix of knowledge, behavioral attitudes and values and designates the possession of some skill and know-how to do something appropriately to achieve the objective. It is the positive behaviour that helps a person to do an activity in a better way when compared to others of the same grade, in a better way, at the most appropriate time by taking the minimum required time to complete it. The development of life skills is a commonly targeted but often poorly conceptualized outcome of youth programs. While multiple conceptualizations of life skills exist, most definitions contain elements of

the World Health Organization's (1997) description, which identifies life skills as "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior, that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life".

Life skills include Generic life skills, Problem specific skills, and Area specific skills. Generic Life Skills are further classified into social and negotiating skills, thinking skills and coping skills. Self-awareness is the mother of all skills. Self awareness, Empathy, Inter-personal relationship skills and Effective Communication are considered as social skills. Negotiating skills as subset of effective communication also falls under this category. Critical Thinking and Creative thinking, Problem Solving and Decision making are the Thinking Skills. Coping with emotion and Coping with Stress are the Coping Skills. Imbibing the skills helps the young people to develop and grow into well behaved adults.

Quality of life is certainly a broad concept which incorporates all aspects of an individual's existence (Torrance, 1987), including both an individual's success in obtaining certain prerequisite circumstances, states or conditions (McCall, 1975) as well as the sense of well-being and satisfaction experienced by people under their current life conditions (Lehman, 1983). At its simplest, most literal level, 'quality can be said to refer to the level or standard or degree of goodness or excellence posed by someone or something; or it can simply represent a summation of a thing's attributes (Schmandt and Bloomberg, 1969). 'Life' on the other hand, includes the entire state of functional activity of a person, including one's behaviour, development, sources of pleasure and displeasure and overall manner of existence. In short, life is composed of everything which characterizes any organism's existence between birth and death. Of course, 'life' also refers to everything which is living and also to the process of living and the features of the environment necessary to support it.

Quality of life is defined as an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept incorporating in a complex way the person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and the relationship to salient features of the environment. (WHO, 1993).

It is a phrase used to refer an individual's total wellbeing. This includes all emotional, social, and physical aspects of the individual's life. Quality of life refers to the degree to which a person enjoys the important positive possibilities of life. Positive possibilities result from the opportunities and limita-

tions each person has in life and is influenced by the interaction of personal and environmental factors. Quality has two major components: the experience of satisfaction and the possession or achievement of some socially acceptable characteristic. In this regard, three major life domains are identified. They are: Being, Belonging, and Becoming. The conceptualization of Being, Belonging, and Becoming as the domains of quality of life, which were developed from the insights of various writers. In the study of quality of life, one often distinguishes between the subjective and objective quality of life. Subjective quality of life is about feeling good and being satisfied with things in general. Objective quality of life is about fulfilling the societal and cultural demands for material wealth, social status and physical well-being.

### **Objectives**

- ◆ To find out the relation between the level of life Skills and the level of quality of life
- ◆ To identify whether there is significant difference between college students on the level of life skills & quality of life on the basis of socio demographic variables such as age, gender, education.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is significant relationship between Life Skills and Quality of life.
2. There is significant difference between college students on the level of life skills & quality of life on the basis of socio demographic variables such as age, gender, and education

### **Method**

#### **(a) Participants**

The sample of the study consisted of 300 college students between the age group of 18 to 23. Sample is collected from equal number of boys and girls. Random Sampling method was used for the sampling. This method is considered appropriate in selecting a representative sample among the sampling area. The sample was taken from various colleges in Thiruvananthapuram District. Due weightage was given to age, sex, and education.

#### **(b) Measures**

The variables used for the study were Life Skills and Quality of Life. The tools used for studying these variables include the following:

### 1. Personal Information Schedule

A personal information schedule was prepared to collect personal details from the subject. The personal information schedule was constructed under the assumption that there will be some relationship between personal variables and core variables

### 2. Life Skills Assessment Scale (Nair, R. A., Subasree, A. & Ranjan, S)

The multi- dimensional Life Skills Assessment Scale consists of 100 items in the form of statements in-built with a five point scale for the respondent to check the appropriate response which is most descriptive of him/her viz., Always true of me, Very true of me, Sometimes true of me, Occasionally true of me, and not at all true of me. It has both positive and negative items. The 100 test items have been arranged in such a way fashion that the one test item pertaining to each dimension being measured are arranged one after the other

Reliability Coefficients for LSAS

Type of Coefficient	Reliability
Split-half	0.82
Test-Retest	0.91
Cronbach's Alpha	0.84

An extensive exercise was done to establish face and content validity of the Life Skills Assessment in the initial stage of the scale construction. The item discriminant analysis was carried out and the scale was potential of discriminating high scorer and low scorer on the relevant scales. The criterion validity was established by conducting structured interview with teachers and significant others of the students (sample of the study, n = 30) on high and low scores in life skills. Further the judgement of each student's score by the teachers and his/her actual score were taken into account and those items are retained since it measures what is actually exhibited. The correlation between percentage obtained by each student in each skill and the teacher's judgement on each student were calculated which indicated 89% concurrence.

### 3. Quality Of Life Scale (Warrier, J.K. & Sananda Raj, H.S)

The quality of life scale measures the quality of life using some statements which probes the frame of mind of the subject with regard to three main

aspects, physical, psychological and social circumstances of the subject's life. The ideas for the preparation of the items were obtained from literature review, especially WHOQOL – 100 (1995). The present test is designed to have three sub-tests measuring physical aspects of QOL (section A), psychological aspects contributing to QOL (section B), and the social aspects (section C). The items for the test were constructed such that the subject can respond in a five-point scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Reliability was determined for the three sections of the test separately for the three sections of the test separately. For testing reliability the split-half method (odd-even) was used. Correlations between the odd and even scores were calculated using the Pearson Product moment correlation and the reliability of each section was estimated using Spearman-Brown formula. The reliability estimates for the three sections are as follows

Reliability of Quality of Life Scale

Section A	0.58
Section B	0.69
Section C	0.70

In the absence of readily available standard test for validating this test, valid and reliable items from (a) Rosenberg 1965 Self esteem scale, (b) The Tennessee Self Concept Scale, (c) Social Support Appraisals Scale and Nottingham Health Profile were taken for the purpose and the correlation was calculated. The correlation coefficient was found to be 0.78, which confirms that the test has concurrent validity. Apart from the concurrent validity the test also claims content validity and face validity.

(c) Procedure for data collection

The subjects were seated comfortably and a good rapport was established at first. Then the general instructions about the study were given. Then personal data schedule is given with necessary introductions. After the completion of personal data schedule the psychological tests were administered to them.

**Results and Discussion**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is significant relationship between Life skills and Quality of life.

**Table1: The relationship between life skills and quality of life**

Variables	-	Life Skills	Quality of Life
Life Skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.867**
	N	300	300
Quality of Life	Pearson Correlation	.867**	1
	N	300	300

\*\* significant at the 0.01 level

Table1 shows that the two variables Life Skill and Quality of Life are positively correlated with each other at 0.01 level and the corresponding correlation coefficient (0.867) indicated that there is a strong positive correlation between these two variables. The results indicated that as level of life skill increases the Quality of life also increases. So by improving life skill, the quality of life of the college students can be improved.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is significant difference between college students on the level of life skills & quality of life on the basis of socio demographic variables such as age, gender, and education

**Table 2:  
Mean, standard deviation and t values of age with respect to the study variables**

Variables	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2tailed)
Life Skill	18 to 20	150	338.79	40.192	-1.667	.097
	21 to 22	150	346.26	37.352		
Quality of Life	18 to 20	150	106.48	12.024	-2.477	.014**
	20 to 22	150	109.79	11.079		

significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 shows difference between the two age groups on Life skill and Quality of life. The mean value for 18 to 20 age group and 21 to 22 age group with respect to life skill are 338.79 and 346.26 respectively. The t value obtained is -1.667 which is not significant. According to this there is no significant difference in life skill level with respect to age. As age increases the level of life skill will not improve.

The mean value of 18 to 20 age group and 21 to 22 age group with respect to Quality of life are 106.48 and 109.79 respectively. The t value obtained is -2.477 which is significant. According to this there is significant difference in Quality of life with respect to age. As age increases the Quality of life will also increase.

The results reveals that both degree and post graduate students don't show any differences in the level of Life skill, which indicate that increase in age alone will not help to increase the level of Life skills. Even at this stage quality of life shows visible changes in post graduate students when compared to graduate students. As a result of everyday experiences there may be some changes in the level of life skills in the long run, but these will not be significant unless the person is not given proper and appropriate training.

**Table 3**

**Mean, standard deviation and t values of males and females with respect to the study variables**

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig.(2 tailed)
Life Skill	Male	150	345.45	38.097	1.304	.193
	Female	150	339.60	39.623		
Quality of Life	Male	150	109.12	11.065	1.468	.143
	Female	150	107.15	12.184		

significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 shows difference between male and female on Life skill and Quality of life. The mean value for male and female with respect to life skill are 345.45 and 339.60 respectively. The t value obtained is 1.304 which is not significant. According to this there is no significant difference in life skill level with respect to gender. This indicates that the level of life skill will not change depending on gender.

The mean value for male and female with respect to Quality of life are 109.12 and 107.15 respectively. The t value obtained is 1.468 which is not significant. According to this there is no significant difference in Quality of life with respect to gender. This indicates that Quality of life skill will not change depending on gender.

The analysis brings to light that the difference in gender has no impact in the case of life skills and quality of life. This shows that whether a person is male or female, that will not have any influence on their acquiring level of

Life skills or Quality of life in a given situation.

**Table 4:**  
**Mean, standard deviation and t values of education with respect to study variables**

Variables	Education	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.(2 tailed)
Life Skill	Degree	150	338.79	40.192	-1.667	.097
	Post Graduate	150	346.26	37.352		
Quality of Life	Degree	150	106.48	12.024	-2.477	.014**
	Post Graduate	150	109.79	11.079		

significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 shows difference between degree and post graduate students with respect to Life skill and Quality of life. The mean value for graduate and post graduate students with respect to life skill is 338.79 and 346.26 respectively. The t value obtained is -1.667 which is not significant. According to this there is no significant difference in life skill level with respect to education. This indicates that the level of life skill will not change depending upon the educational qualification of students.

From Table 4, the mean value for graduate and post graduate students with respect to Quality of life is 106.48 and 109.79 respectively. The t value obtained is -2.477 which is significant. According to this there is significant difference in Quality of life with respect to education. This indicates that the Quality of life will improve depending upon the educational qualification of students.

As in the case of the result pertaining to the age of the student, the analysis again brings to light that educational qualification alone will not increase the level of Life skills. This shows that there are some other factors that support the development of Life skills. As the quality of life is also get influenced by factors other than Life skills, the analysis shows significant level of increase in the quality of life.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the study showed that there is significant relationship be-



tween Life Skills and Quality of Life. The level of life skill does not show significant difference depending on age, gender, and education. Quality of life on the other hand showed differences on the basis of age and education but no difference on the basis of gender.

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