



## STATUS OF LIFE SKILLS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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### ABSTRACT:

The present study was conducted to assess the level of Life Skills of Pre-Service Teachers. A standardized tool "Life Skills Scale" developed by Dr. Raina Tiwari, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Mata Gujri Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, India, was used for data collection. The sample included, 53 student teachers enrolled in the first year of the two year D.El.Ed. and B.Ed. Programs (2019-2021) of Vidya Bhawan Gandhian Institute of Educational Studies (VBGIES), Ramgiri, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India. Data analysis was conducted using percentage and the t-test. The study results demonstrated that 5.66% of the respondents had very high level of life skills, 69.81% had high level life skills and 24.52% had moderate levels of life skills. The mean scores related to life skills of males (23) and females (30) were found to be 28.26 and 28.23 respectively and the standard deviation of these two groups was found to be 4.15 and 3.9 respectively. The 't' value was found to be .021 and no significant difference between the life skills of female and male pre service teachers was found at the .01 and .05 levels of confidence. The paper suggests the need to make life skills an integral part of the core curriculum of teacher education institutions as it would help student teachers to learn to 'live together in peace' and learn to 'be at peace'.

### KEYWORDS:

**PRE SERVICE TEACHERS, TEACHER TRAINING, LIFE SKILLS, PERSONAL SKILLS, SOCIAL SKILLS, COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS, TEACHER EDUCATION AND LIFE SKILLS, GANDHI, PEACE, PEACE EDUCATION, 21ST CENTURY SKILLS.**

Life's problems are often complex and difficult to understand and resolve. We, as parents and teachers face dilemma in personal lives, in schools, colleges and other settings on a day-to-day basis.

More and more, we realise that to live a fruitful and fulfilling life full of both intrinsic and external peace, our children and our students need to learn to be empathetic, autonomous, responsible and reflective. They need to develop the art of considering many perspectives and taking a well-considered stand with confidence, without fear and prejudice.

While much of these skills are acquired through observation and experiences in the family, since children spend most of their time in school, teachers are expected to impart values of good living, reasoning and critical thinking to their students. Teachers are expected to be a friend, philosopher, guide, counsellor, communicator, facilitator and, learners themselves, so that they can help students to relate concepts and knowledge to real life situations.

Going by majority opinion, a 'successful teacher' is one who has a perfect mix of comprehensive subject knowledge, positive attitude, beliefs and world view, pleasing personality, humaneness, inter personal, communicative and conflict resolution skills, and so on. There is no doubt that along-with parents, teachers play an important role in the learning, and psychosocial development (grooming of life skills) of students.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has described life skills as "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". UNICEF defines them as "psychosocial and interpersonal skills which are generally well-being oriented and allow an individual to release fear, anger, stress and achieve a qualitative life".

Traditionally, teacher preparation programs in our country have focused on developing the academic skills and practices that are needed to teach in a classroom setting. But is this enough for fruition of individual potential and for intrinsic and extrinsic peace in the 21st century?

What is the status of life skills of aspiring teachers who are entering our pre-service teacher training programs? What is the level of their social, personal and communicative skills? Is there a difference between the life skills of males and females? What are the qualities and competencies that an individual needs in today's world which is full of materialism, intolerance and strife to be at peace within and outside?

Life skills enrich the quality of life leading to pleasure, satisfaction and meaningful life. There have been personalities of great stature who were visionaries and were able to live in harmony with self and others in society. Is there a lesson that can be taken from their lives? What can we learn from Mahatma Gandhi's fruition means

to intrinsic and external peace?

**OBJECTIVES OF THE EXPLORATORY STUDY**

- \* To assess the level of life skills of pre-service teachers.
- \* To study the difference between the level of life skills of male and female pre-service teachers.

**HYPOTHESIS**

There is no significant difference between the level of life skills of male and female pre-service teachers.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

SAMPLE DESIGN

The target respondents of the present study were the first-year students of the (two years) D.El.Ed. and (two years) B.Ed. program enrolled in 2019-2021 batch of Vidya Bhawan Gandhian Institute of Educational Studies (VBGIES) Teachers' Training College, Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Purposive sampling method was used to collect the data. A total of 53 students present and available on the day of data collection, were selected from the total of 147. The sample included 30 females and 23 males in the age group of 18-29 years.

DATA COLLECTION TOOL

A standardised tool "Life Skills Scale" developed by Dr.Raina Tiwari, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Mata Gujri Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, India, was used for the study. Life skills are categorised in three areas as personal skills, social skills and communicative skills. The reliability of the tool is 0.79 using the test-retest method and 0.82 using the KR Formula. The coefficient of correlation construct validity is 0.71 and content validity is 0.69 at .01 level of confidence. The sample used for construction of this scale comprised 1150 boys, girls, male and female teachers and general public in the 15-55 years age group.

There are 42 items (21 positive, showing high skills and 21 negative, showing low skills). Correct responses were scored as '1' and incorrect responses were scored as '0'. The respondents were divided into five levels/categories on the basis of the total marks scored by them.

| Categories       | Marks scored |
|------------------|--------------|
| Very high skills | 34 and above |
| High skills      | 25-33        |
| Moderate skills  | 16-24        |
| Low skills       | 07-25        |
| Very low skills  | 06 & less    |

**DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis was conducted using percentage, mean, standard deviation and 't' test. A standardised test was administered to assess the level of life skills (personal skills, social skills and communicative skills) of preservice (B.Ed. and D.El.Ed) teachers. On the basis of scores collected from the sample, the numbers and percentage of pre service teachers is presented in Table no. 1.

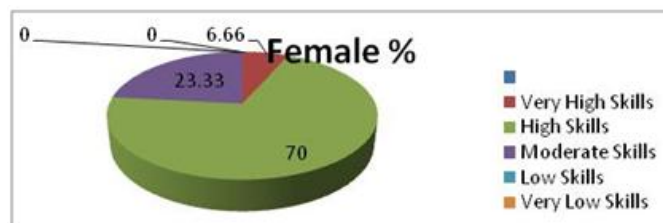
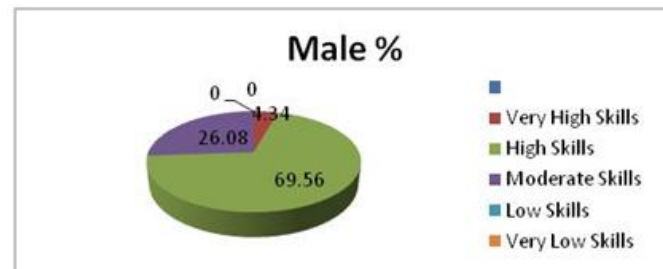
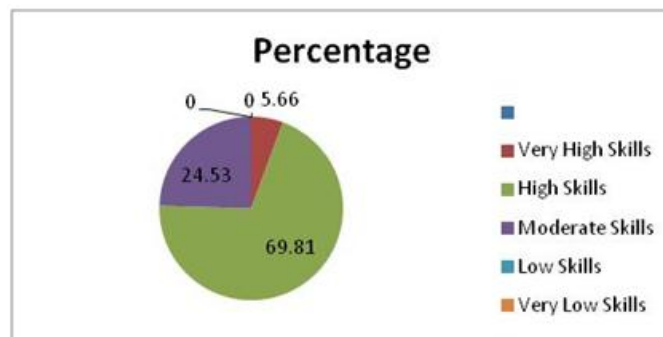
**TABLE-1**

**THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS BASED ON LEVEL OF LIFE SKILLS**

| Life Skills Level | Sex  |        |        |       | Total  |            |
|-------------------|------|--------|--------|-------|--------|------------|
|                   | Male |        | Female |       | Number | Percentage |
|                   | No.  | %      | No.    | %     |        |            |
| Very High Skills  | 1    | 4.35   | 2      | 6.67  | 3      | 5.66       |
| High Skills       | 16   | 69.56  | 21     | 70    | 37     | 69.81      |
| Moderate Skills   | 6    | 26.09  | 7      | 23.33 | 13     | 24.53      |
| Low Skills        | 0    | 0      | 0      | 0     | 0      | 0          |
| Very Low Skills   | 0    | 0      | 0      | 0     | 0      | 0          |
| Total             | 23   | 100.00 | 30     | 100   | 53     | 100        |

**GRAPH-1**

**PERCENTAGE OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS BASED ON THE LEVEL OF THEIR LIFE SKILLS**



On the basis of table and graph no. 1, it is clear that the level of life skills of pre service teachers (53) is 5.66% (very high skills), 69.81% (high skills) and 24.53% (moderate level skills) respectively.

Among males (23), very high level of life skills were found in 4.35%, high level of life skills were found in 69.56% and moderate skills were found in 26.09% males.

Among females (30), very high level of life skills were

found in 6.67%, high level of life skills were found in 70% and moderate skills were found in 23.33% respondents.

No pre service teachers were found to be having low or very low life skills. It can be deciphered from the available data that maximum number of pre service teachers have high level of life skills, followed by moderate level of life skills and then very high level of life skills.

A comparative analysis and interpretation of data of male and female pre service teachers on the basis of level of life skills was done. On the basis of scores of the male and female groups, the mean, standard deviation and t value was calculated. These have been presented in Table-2. The difference in scores of both the groups was analysed.

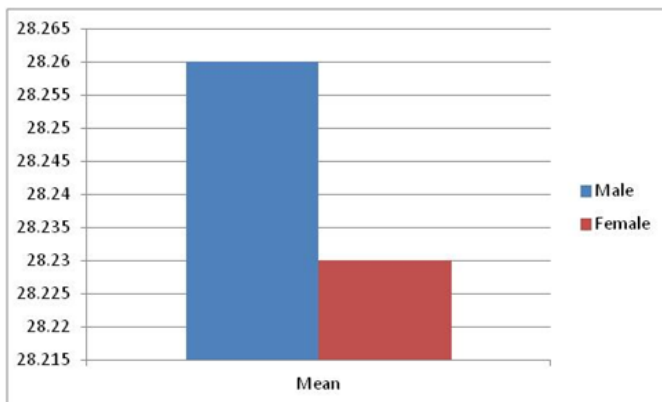
**TABLE-2**

**THE MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION AND T VALUE BASED ON LIFE SKILLS DATA OF MALE AND FEMALE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS**

| Sr.No. | Student Group | N  | Mean  | S.D. | Mean Difference | t' Value | Significant Level |
|--------|---------------|----|-------|------|-----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1      | Male          | 23 | 28.26 | 4.15 | 0.03            | 0.021    | No Significant    |
| 2      | Female        | 30 | 28.23 | 3.9  |                 |          |                   |

**GRAPH-2**

**THE MEAN OF LIFE SKILLS LEVEL DATA OF PRE-SERVICE MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS**



From Table-2 and graph no.2 it is clear that the mean of data of male and female pre service teachers is 28.26 and 28.23 respectively. Their standard deviation is 4.15 and 3.90 respectively. The t value of the data of the two groups was found to be 0.021 which is lesser than 2.01 and 2.68 (0.05 and .01 levels) at 51 degrees of freedom.

Therefore the null hypothesis "there is no significant difference in level of life skills of male and female pre service teachers" was accepted.

**MAIN FINDINGS**

A majority of pre service teachers were found to be having high level life skills followed by moderate level of life skills and then very high level of life skills. On the basis of t values, no significant differences were found in the levels of male and female pre service teachers.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings suggest that a majority of pre service teachers

have a high level of life skills but there is scope for further enhancement of these skills to make them more efficient in situating their actions and daily life events in the broader vision and purpose of creating intrinsic and extrinsic peace.

Creating inner and outer peace is dependent and connected to the quality of relationships individuals have with others. Social situations are dynamic in nature and one needs to resolve conflicts by responding to them proactively. Also the openness, willingness and space for dialogue are key ingredients of bringing about peace. This is where personal skills, social skills and communicative skills play an important role.

From a Gandhian perspective, peace is not an end state but a continuous process wherein the means to peace is as important as peace itself. Gandhiji always spoke about the concepts of Sarvodaya-welfare of all and Satyagraha-fighting evil nonviolently through moral persuasion. He stressed on 'truth', compassion, equality, equity and healthy coexistence for attaining intrinsic and extrinsic peace.

Gandhiji wrote in 'Harijan' in 1937 "By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man - body, mind and spirit...". His model of basic education focuses on three areas - experiential learning, work education and community engagement. Students should be active learners in the teaching-learning process and they should learn from their own experiences and practice. Work education includes cooperative activities, group work, social learning. He stressed on development of human, social, moral and cultural values through community engagement.

To foster personal and social development, to uphold human rights, and for intrinsic and external peace the practice and reinforcement of psychosocial skills seems crucial from his perspective. Who can deny that today peace activists need to develop and promote qualities of conflict resolution, fairness and justice, non-violence, forgiveness, truth, love, etc.?

There is a lot to learn from Gandhiji's fruition means for intrinsic and extrinsic peace. His ability to approach and connect with people, his humility, his abilities to listen, accept other people's views, perseverance flexibility, use of the right vocabulary and strong communication, his way of expressing needs and feelings, his self-awareness, capacity for self-reflection, empathy, discipline and routine, self-reliance, decision making, sustainable lifestyle, planning, management of resources, etc. He had the requisite life skills to contribute meaningfully in society.

Gandhiji demonstrated the importance of an education that integrates spiritual values and skills, an education that teaches 'how to live together' and 'how to be'.

**LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

One of the major limitations that could have influenced the outcomes of this study is generalizability of the sample.

The sample taken was 53 first year pre service student teachers enrolled in the two years D.El.Ed. and B.Ed. programs in one Teacher Education college in a rural setting on the outskirts of Udaipur city. This sample was drawn purposively due to time and resource constraints.

However, a more extended geographical sample may produce different results. Further study could be taken up in schools, urban college/s, in the same city or a comparative study could be taken up between different cities/districts/states and among sample from different disciplines. It could be done with teacher educators, teachers and/or parents in different settings.

Considering that the institution where this exploratory study was taken up strives to promote Gandhian thoughts and values among the student teachers, it may be repeated with the same sample at the end of the two years (2019-2021) to find the relative difference in the scores of the respondents.

The results of this study have been calculated on the basis of a composite score in three areas- personal, social and communicative skills. Each of these areas encompasses several sub areas and further in-depth studies may be conducted individually for all three skills or with additional skills using a different research design and instrument/s.

### **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

Life skills are crucial for teachers and students of the 21st century. The results of the study can help the practitioners to understand the status of life skills in pre service teachers. From the current study it is clear that there is a need to develop the personal, social and communicative skills of pre service teachers so that they can in turn think of creative ways of making spaces for learning and practice of these skills by their students who are future citizens.

This exploratory study suggests the need to integrate life skills as a core curriculum objective of teacher training programs for strengthening our future generations. For this opinions of experts, teacher trainers, teachers and students need to be taken.

In the words of L.R.Knost: "It's not our job to toughen our children up to face a cruel and heartless world. It's our job to raise children who will make the world a little less cruel and heartless".

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