ABSTRACT

Students usually begin their academic journey in college or university during the late adolescence (17-20 years). In this dynamic period of lifespan, they are highly vulnerable to the limitations in personality development related issues of gender, self-esteem, competition, and cultural membership which may result in many challenges in life. Viewing positively, students at this age could be trained for integral growth holistically. Holistic education involves the complete and solid formation of every aspect of a student’s personality. Its goal is to nurture individuals to be intellectually competent, spiritually mature, morally upright, psychologically integrated, physically healthy and socially acceptable (CMI Vision, 1991). Hence, the focus is to enable an individual to go beyond the acquisition, generation and application of knowledge but to transcend to higher realms of self-development, social integration and contribution. Thus, Holistic Education makes an attempt to take one through various aspects of personal, interpersonal and social dimensions of human life, and finally, helps individuals to understand the reality of life to live fully as human beings. This study was embarked to assess the impact of Holistic Education on the value preference, social competence, and leadership skills of engineering students.

The research design was single group pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test experimental design. The researcher developed and standardised the Holistic Education curriculum with the support of the relevant literature and the subject experts. A pilot study was conducted on first year engineering students to get hands-on experience of the programme and to assess the impact of the facilitative tool. For the present intervention, 55 students from the first-year engineering class of a university in Bengaluru were selected using stratified random sampling method. The instruments used in the study were Personal Values Questionnaire (Sherry & Verma 2012); Adolescent Social Competence Scale (Devassy & Raj 2012); and the Leadership Skill Inventory (Karnes & Chauvin 2000) adapted and standardised for the Indian population by Devassy and Raj (2012). The Holistic Education programme designed and validated by the researcher was used in the present research consisted of
20 sessions of two hours each in the classroom, one-day outing to an amusement park, and two days and one night stay in a village. The data of pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test were analysed using repeated measures of ANOVA and Friedman’s two-way ANOVA. It was found that the social, economic, hedonistic, and health value preferences of students changed after the intervention. There was a significant impact of Holistic Education Programme on the Social Competence of students in all the dimensions namely school competence, team organising competence, peer social competence, social cognition competence, home related social competence, social-emotional competence, social forethought and compassion, and social flexibility competence. Also, it was found that Leadership Skills of students in all the dimensions namely fundamentals of leadership, decision-making skills, character building skills, group dynamics skills, planning skills, personal skills, problem-solving skills, speech communication skills, and written communication skills were improved significantly after the intervention. The outcome of the present research has implication for the holistic education and training of engineering students. It also suggests the need for a comprehensive curriculum and training in all universities and colleges for the whole-person education.