Chapter 3

Method
3.1 Design

The present research has been designed to study Assertiveness in relation to Social Anxiety, Perceived Social Self-Efficacy and Social-Emotional Skills and to assess the efficacy of Assertiveness Training Programme in enhancing Perceived Social Self Efficacy and Social Emotional Skills and in lowering Social Anxiety. Howsoever, the impact of training was also assessed on Assertiveness scores.

Pearson Product Moment correlation was computed to study the relationships.

A×B Mixed Design was applied with one factor (A) varying between-subjects (Experimental vs Control group) and the other factor (B) varying within-subjects (Pre vs Post intervention scores) to assess the efficacy of Assertiveness Training Programme (ATP) on Social Anxiety, Perceived Social Self-Efficacy and Social Emotional Skills.

One way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was applied to analyse the significance of difference between Control and Experimental groups collectively on Assertiveness, Social Anxiety, Perceived Social Self-Efficacy and Social Emotional Skills.

3.2 Sample

A total of 300 female participants with the mean age of 15.8 years were selected from various public schools of Patiala after due consent of the respective principals and the participants. Students of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th standard from four public schools were selected for inclusion in the study. Mode of selection was incidental.
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The participants were administered Assertiveness and Social Anxiety scales in the first meeting then in the next meeting, the same subjects were administered Perceived Social Self Efficacy and Social Emotional Skills scales. Standardised instructions were followed while administering all the scales.

After the scoring, the participants who came low and moderate on Assertiveness, high and moderate on Social Anxiety, low and moderate on Perceived Social Self Efficacy and low and moderate on Social Emotional Skills were screened out. The first group comprised of N₁=150. Rest of N₂=150 were the participants who were high on Assertiveness, low on Social Anxiety, high on Perceived Social Self-Efficacy and high on Social Emotional Skills.

The group N₁=150 was divided into two equal groups n₁ and n₂ of 75 individuals each i.e. n₁ = n₂ = 75 where n₁ is referred to as the Experimental group and n₂ is referred to as the Control group. Participants were assigned to n₁ and n₂ randomly.

3.3 Tools Used

3.3.1 Assertiveness: The widely used 30-item Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS, Rathus, 1973) was used to assess Assertiveness. Participants rate items on a 6-point scale of ranging from +3 (very characteristic of me, extremely descriptive) to -3 (very uncharacteristic of me, extremely non-descriptive), and the items are then summed to score. RAS has 17 reverse coded items to avoid response bias. Because of the statistical anomalies resulting from summing negative and positive numerals, a constant of 100 was added to the each raw score. Split-half reliability is .77, and 8-week test–re–test reliability is .78 (Rathus, 1973).
3.3.2 Social Anxiety: The Leibowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS, 1987) is a self-report measure of Social Anxiety. It is a 24 item, 4 point likert type scale i.e. from 0 to 3. Each item depicts a different social situation. The items are divided into two sub scales: Social interaction and Performance situations. For each situation, the person rates their level of fear (where 0 indicates no fear and 3 indicates severe fear) and avoidance (where 0 indicates they never avoid a particular situation and 3 indicates they usually avoid the situation). Here, in the present study, only avoidance score has been considered. So the score ranges from 0 to 72.

3.3.3 Perceived Social Self-Efficacy: The Perceived Social Self Efficacy Scale by Smith and Betz (PSSE, 2000) has been used. The scale contains 25 items on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=no confidence at all to 5 = complete confidence). The scale items are related to: making friends, social assertiveness, pursuing romantic relationship, performance in public situations, group and parties and receiving and giving help. A sum of all scores yields a total score that ranges from 25 to 125. Higher the score, higher the level of social self-efficacy. Previous research has demonstrated an internal consistency coefficients of .94 and test-retest reliability over a three week interval ranging from .68 to .86 (Smith and Betz, 2002).

3.3.4 Social Emotional Skills: Social Skills Inventory (Riggio and Carney, 2003) was used to assess Social Emotional Skills. The scale comprises of 90 items grouped into six distinct sub-scales with 15 items comprising each sub-scale. Items are so arranged that every sixth item belongs to the same scale. The six distinct sub-scales concern expressiveness, sensitivity and control, which span both social and emotional domains. The 90 questions are responded to using a Likert – type scale ranging from 1 to 5. The consolidated score ranges from 247 to 310 or above. The six subscales are:
• **Emotional Expressivity**: an individual’s ability to express spontaneously and accurately.

• **Emotional Sensitivity**: an individual’s ability to receive and decode the non-verbal communication of other.

• **Emotional Control**: an individual’s ability to control and regulate emotional and non-verbal displays. An individual high on emotional control is likely to be a good emotional actor and able to use conflicting emotional ones to mask felt emotional states.

• **Social Expressivity**: an individual’s ability of verbal skills and an ability to engage others in social interaction.

• **Emotional Sensitivity**: an individual’s ability to be attentive to others i.e. watches and listens.

• **Social Control**: an individual’s skill of social self-presentation i.e. being tactful, socially adept and self-confident. Out of the 90 items, 32 items are reverse-scored.

The SSI sub-scales have shown acceptable test-retest reliability, with scores ranging from .81 to .96 and Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranging from .65 to .88 (Riggio and Carney, 2003).

### 3.4 Procedure

After randomly assigning 75 individuals each to Experimental and Control group, Assertiveness Training Programme was imparted to the 75 individuals comprising Experimental group. Assertiveness Training Programme is being described in detail in the following section. The training was imparted to 75 female adolescents in 5 groups with 15 participants in each group in 6 sessions, over a period
of one and a half months, meeting them once a week for 2 hours. However, the last session lasted for 2½ hours. All the sessions were conducted in the class-rooms of the school premises after the respective Principal's consent. The participants were made to sit in a semi-circular manner to accentuate interaction among themselves, if required and also, the planned activities could be carried out in the middle space easily. The modules of the intervention stayed standard for all the groups. Keeping in mind the ethical considerations, some neutral issues like career guidance and study habits were discussed with the participants in the control group.

After imparting the training to the Experimental group, re-administration of Assertiveness, Social Anxiety, Perceived Social Self-Efficacy and Social Emotional Skills scales was done on Experimental as well as Control Group.

After this, the statistical analyses were done. SPSS-16.0 version was used for data analysis.

### 3.5 Assertiveness Training Programme

**Session: 1**

**Duration: 2 hrs.**

1. **STRATEGY: Rapport Building**

   **CONTENT:** The participants were made to sit in a semi-circular manner so that each can face everyone else. They were instructed as follows:

   "We are here to learn more about life. We will learn from each other specially to overcome the situations that demand a lot of courage from us to speak before others, to make others' understand your point of view, to say no when you don't want to do a work being
delegated, to carry yourself in social situations. I would like you all to introduce yourselves and share that one incident where you just disliked the way you carried yourself in any situation of your social life."

Slowly and gradually, the participants opened up and shared some incidents of their lives and they enjoyed the phase.

2. **STRATEGY: Confidentiality and Group Rules.**

   **CONTENT:** The participants were instructed as follows:

   "Now, we are a group so it's very important to respect each other because the groups function best when members feel the responsibility to keep the things. Confidential is what has been said within the group setting will not be revealed outside."

3. **STRATEGY: Discriminating Assertive, Non-Assertive and Aggressive behaviour.**

   **CONTENT:** This was done by giving examples of each situation.

   The importance of being Assertive was stressed upon:
   - It reduces mental and physical stress.
   - It encourages productivity.
   - You achieve win-win solutions.
   - You respect yourself more.
   - You are more at ease because you didn't step on to someone else to get your things done.
   - It allows you to remain in control.
   - It brings greater self-confidence.
   - You feel good about yourself.
The session was concluded on this note and the participants were assigned the task of jotting 5 situations on each of these three particular kinds of behaviour.

**Session – 2**

**Duration: 2 hrs.**

1. **STRATEGY: Learning to use 'I' statements**

**CONTENT:** "One thing, which is self-defeating in social set-ups and generally, worsens the situation even more is 'blaming game' wherein the two people involved in a folly or blunder put the responsibility on each other. Here, the motive is to find a solution also and not creating unpleasantness too. The key lies in good communication as good communication, is an essential aspect to the health of any relationship. I-statements are an effective form of communication because they maintain a respectful attitude toward the receiver and also place the responsibility for change in that person. Constructed properly, they also avoid the destructive putdowns inherent in blaming, criticizing, judging, shaming, ridiculing and name-calling”.

An 'I - statement' has 4 parts:

1. "I"
2. What "I" feel or want.
3. The event that evoked your feelings or desire.
4. The effect the event has on "Me".

* e.g.

(i) I feel scared when you are late home from work because I worry that something might have happened to you.

(You come home late everyday)
(ii) I feel bad/insulted when you made fun of my friends amongst your friends because I felt as if I don't know how to choose friends.

(You insulted my friends).

(iii) I felt shocked when you didn’t help me in the exams because I felt you’ll be there when I need you.

(You didn’t help me)

The stress on ‘you’ did this or that always deteriorates the situation. The participants practiced it over various life situations and many other examples were quoted.

2. **STRATEGY: Working on Body Language**

**CONTENT:** "Your non-verbal behaviour speaks louder than your words. A social situation can be in or out of your hands depending upon your body language. A passive, under-confident body language invites ignoring, abandoning and evaluative attitude from others. On the other hand, an assertive, confident body language invites interest, applause and inviting attitude from others."

3 participants were invited to perform an activity who were made to exhibit 3 kinds of behaviour non-verbally:

- Aggressive

- Passive

- Assertive

The stress was laid on the following aspects of body language:

- Positive (Arms, Hands, Feet, Sitting, Standing).
• Tone of Voice.
• Eye Contact
• Listening Skills
• Questioning and Interruptions
• Eye brows.
• Head shaking / nodding.

**Session – 3**

**Duration: 2 hrs.**

1. **STRATEGY:** Challenging irrational beliefs and heading towards Cognitive Restructuring (Working on Social Anxiety).

   **CONTENT:** Aaron Beck's cognitive or rational restructuring that involves recognizing and learning to stop self defeating thoughts and Albert Ellis' ABC model of behaviour was discussed. The emphasis was laid on questioning irrational beliefs and thoughts.

   As according to Cognitive Behavioural Theory, how you think is how you feel. Your emotions influence your behaviour. If you think realistic, helpful thoughts will follow and you function better.

   The participants were shown the following example (of someone fearing public speaking) illustrating the interaction between thoughts, physical symptoms and behaviour.
1. **Unhelpful Thought**  
(This is not going to work. I am hopeless at public speaking, I'll sweat and everyone will see that I'm anxious and will look like an idiot.)

2. **Physical Symptoms**  
(You sweat and your heart begins to pound)

3. **Unhelpful Thought**  
(I feel so anxious, I'll make a total fool of myself.)

4. **Physical Symptoms**  
(Your sweat even more.)

5. **Unhelpful Thought**  
(I can't do this. I should escape.)

6. **Behaviour**  
(You leave the place and as you go away, your anxiety subsides.)

7. **Unhelpful Thought**  
(I am a loser. Everyone else can do public speaking.)

The participants were further told about how to work right at the third stage and handle the situation i.e.

- to identify unhelpful thoughts and beliefs.
- evaluate the evidence for and against your thoughts and beliefs.
- creating more realistic statements you can say to yourself when anticipating or confronting feared social situations as these will decrease the degree of anxiety you experience.
• devise a plan for gradually exposing yourself to your feared social or performance situation.

The participants were further instructed to keep a track of such unhelpful thoughts and behaviour and keep noting them. The aim should be to bring the number down to as minimal as possible.

2. **STRATEGY:** Relaxation Training collaborated with Mental Imagery.

**CONTENTS:** Deep breathing was instructed. The participants were further trained on Jacobson’s Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique (in sitting position) collaborating with Mental Imagery.

**Session:** 4

**Duration:** 2 hrs.

By now, the stage was set where the participants started feeling more accepting of themselves and were ready for a positive change. The following lines were written for them with an aim to make them think of their potential and step forward to realize it.

**THE ASSERTIVE GIRL**

I am me.....

I want to be me.

Don't stop me

Don't close me

I want to be me.....

But .... where is me ?

I want to be me.
You told me that I have to be obedient
But... You did not set the limits
You told me that I have to comply
But... you did not set the limits
I lost me.
I want to be me.
I learnt to speak slowly.
But... there is something inside.....
Something that yells ....yells at the top of its voice.
I learnt to walk slowly.
But.........there is something inside....
Something that pushes... pushes and gears me to run, tread the downtrodden path ... mount on a high cliff, feel the breeze and yell to tell the world..... "I am happy."
I want to be me
I find me
I find life.
I feel a glaze inside
It's just like that of a sun
I feel a shine inside
It's just like that of the stars
Don't stop me
Don't close me
I want to be me.
Riding a soft cloud and reaching the far end of the clouds is what I want to do.

I want to sit on the head of the fountain to see the world.....

I want to be a steady rock for the generations to come.......

Don't stop me.

Don't close me.

I want to be me........

Ruby Gupta

1. **STRATEGY**: Modelling

**CONTENT**: Here, Live as well as Symbolic modeling was used.

The participants were shown 3 videotapes of different situations:

1. An inspirational animated story.

2. A prominent Indian political leader addressing the public.

3. Presentation being conducted by a new employee in corporate sector.

The aim of this symbolic modeling was:

1. Appropriate expression of feelings i.e. to be open and frank within a social context.

2. Greeting others: imitating and maintaining conversations.

3. Disagreement: contradict and attack with knowledge and rhetorical ability to make a point.

4. Asking why: Questioning and insisting upon valid reasons for demands that appear arbitrary.
5. Talking about oneself: deliberate use of the word, 'I'.

6. Rewarding others for compliments: express agreement when you are praised.

7. Refusing to justify opinions: refusing to be manipulated by people who initiated and maintain arguments for social dominance rather than for sincere search for truth.

8. Looking people in the eye: a sign of being sure of knowledge and social ascendance.

2. **STRATEGY: Role Play**

**CONTENT:** The following training procedure was administered:

1. The situation was described.

2. The participants responded covertly.

3. The participants heard the response of the facilitator regarding what constituted and assertive response in the situation.

4. The situation was role-played.

   • Two situations were role-played.

   • 10 minutes were allotted for each situation.

   • Discussion of assertive responses took place at the end of each situation.

**Situation 1**

**Facilitator:** One of your classmates, someone whom you do not know very well, borrowed your class notes a week ago but failed to
return them at the next class thus forcing you to take notes on scrap paper. Now, this person comes up to you again and says, "Hallo! Can I borrow your class notes again?" What do you say?

The facilitator continues: Now listen to an assertive response to this same situation: "No, as I just cannot be sure whether you are going to return them back in time."

Let the person know that your refusal was based on his/her past behaviour.

• Your response is clear and brief and unambiguous.
• Your voice is well-controlled.

After this, the situation was role-played, which the participants did 5 times with different set of participants.

**Situation 2**

**Facilitator:** In this scene, picture yourself standing in a ticket line outside of a theatre. You have been in line now for atleast 10 minutes and the movie is about to start. As you are waiting patiently, two people walk up in your front and intend to cut in line.

"Now listen to an assertive response to this situation: "Excuse me, I have been waiting in this line for a while so I would appreciate if you would wait at the end of the line just like I did".

Let the person know that he/she was violating your rights and your expectations were that each person had to abide by the same rules as everyone else for waiting in line.

• Your response is clear and brief and unambiguous.
• Your voice is firm and confident but well-controlled.
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After this, the situation was role played, which the participants did 5 times with different sets of participants.

After this, the session was concluded and the participants were instructed to think about and internalize what they learnt that day.

Session: 5

Duration: 2 hrs.

1. STRATEGY: Working on Social Emotional Skills.

CONTENT: Based on CASEL and New Haven Social Development Curriculum Scope (developed by New Haven Public School, Connecticut), the following array of inter-related skills, attitudes, values and domains of information that lay a foundation for constructive development and behavior keeping in mind the needs of Indian adolescents.

The following aspects were stressed upon:

Skills

Self Management

- Self-monitoring.
- Self-control.
- Stress Management.
- Self Reward.

Problem Solving and Decision Making

- Problem recognition.
- Perspective taking.
- Realistic Goal setting.
- Awareness of adaptive response strategy.
- Alternative solution thinking.
• Consequential thinking.
• Decision making.
• Behavioural Enactment.

Communication
• Understanding non-verbal communication.
• Sending and Receiving Messages.

Attitude and Values
About self
• Self-respect.
• Feeling capable
• Willingness to grow
• Self acceptance.

About Others
• Awareness of social norms and values.
• Accepting individual differences.
• Respecting human dignity.
• Comparison for others.
• Valuing co-operation.
• Willingness to solve inter-personal problems.

About Tasks
• Willingness to work hard.
• Motivation to solve practical problems and academic problems.

RELATIONSHIPS
• Understanding relationships.
• Multicultural Awareness.
• Making friends.
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- Bonding to pro-social peers.
- Understanding family life.
- Relating to parents.
- Relating to siblings.
- Conflict Education and Violence Prevention.

HEALTH

- Nutrition.
- Exercise.
- Personal Hygiene.
- Use of leisure time.
- Spiritual Awareness.
- Environmental Responsibility.

Session: 6

Duration: 2.30 hrs.

The group was thanked for participation. They were encouraged to share their experience of participation in the programme.

Re-administration of Assertiveness and Social Anxiety scales was done. After a break of 10 minutes, re-administration of Perceived Social Self Efficacy and Social Emotional Skills scales was done.

The same day, re-administration of all the four above mentioned scales on Control Group was also done in the same manner.
The Intervention Protocol is presented as follows:

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<th>SESSIONS → TECHNIQUES USED</th>
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