CHAPTER – I

PROBLEM AND ITS PERSPECTIVE
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CONTENTS

- EMERGENCE OF THE PROBLEM
- NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
- THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
- OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS
- VARIABLES OF THE STUDY
- RESEARCH QUESTIONS
- SOFT SKILLS IN THE CLASSROOM PROCESS
- SOFT SKILLS AND THE COMPONENT SKILLS IN THE PACKAGE
- OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
- HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY
- METHODOLOGY
- SCOPE, LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
- RESUME OF SUCCEEDING CHAPTERS
INTRODUCTION

“Anyone can become angry—that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way—this is not easy”

1.1. EMERGENCE OF THE PROBLEM

We are living in the world of controversies which often lead to conflicts; meanwhile the school like an ostrich buries its head into the dreary desert sands of dead syllabus, devoid of the springs of life. Even many students who do well in school and in the examinations by studying the prescribed portions, simply flounder when they face a real problem in their life, for which this bookish knowledge do no help. As the most effective method to tackle this problem, teachers should try to implement soft skills training along with their teaching. Every teacher has to keep soft skills in her/his mind while creating optimum and challenging learning experiences.

The importance of soft skills cannot be denied in this age of information and knowledge. A soft skill is a behavioural skill, which can't be taught but can be developed through continuous training. It represents the reactive nature of individual and about looking at things with the right perspective. A soft skill refers to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, and felicity with language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that mark each of us to varying degrees.

The present study is designed to find out the extent of soft skills among secondary students, and to develop a Soft Skills Praxis Pedagogic Package in English. The investigator tries to infuse this package along with English language acquisition process. The study aims at fostering soft skills for a sustainable future.
We all knew that secondary education is the most crucial area in building the basis of future oriented thinking among students. Unfortunately today's mainstream secondary education does not give due importance on developing soft skills. It is an imperative need of the time that we have to envisage soft skills re-oriented programmes to our existing pedagogy. It may not be feasible to introduce a separate training for soft skills in the present time. In the present study the investigator tries to interweave soft skills training along with English language learning process. The desire to raise academic performance at the same time to provide opportunities for students to acquire other competencies creates substantial challenges for educators. The investigator felt this research as a humble try to meet that challenge. This study is not intended to yield a comprehensive or generalizable set of answers for everything, but it prepares our students to make learning for a purpose.

The investigator felt that the introduction of Soft Skills Praxis Pedagogic Package at secondary level of education will be far effective when classrooms are the ideal training ground for students. Here we can practice alternative ways of dealing with people, facilitating learning, and transferring knowledge in an interactive form. The incentive of using the classroom as learning ground for soft skills has really been effective so far to the benefit of both the students and teachers. The study does not necessarily mean replacing existing disciplinary courses with soft skills oriented programmes, or introducing separate courses in soft skills, but interweaving them with existing courses of the time.

1.2. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In this era of changing educational trends, versatility in educational courses, availability of masses of qualified personnel; our students are left with no choice but to add values to their hard skills with soft skills. It is inevitable to exhibit their true
potential in this competitive era. Today the entire training may have been focused on developing hard skills. Many studies and workshops also suggested the need of far more personal skills than is recognized in today's mainstream education. An ideal education should equip their students with the capacity to integrate across disciplines and skills.

Understanding the growing importance of the soft skills training many educational institutions in India have initiated programmes, projects and activities for developing soft skills in their students. Many studies related to the topic also lead to the imperative need of practicing soft skills training in teaching-learning process. In recognition of these demands, new frameworks for defining skills and competencies should be developed in our academic as well as pedagogic practices of our schools.

The investigator also feels that today's strategies and methods of teaching and learning are insufficient to generate required competencies of soft skills. Our time warrants a strongly soft skills interwoven pedagogy for capturing the multi-faceted skilled individuals to our society. A very elegant way of offering soft skills training to students is to embed it in to the teaching of hard skills. We need to develop and implement curricula that infuse soft skills along with hard skills. In this present study the investigator intends to develop a Soft Skills Praxis Pedagogic Package in English for secondary students which definitely interweave soft skills with existing pedagogy.

The investigator intends our educators and school reformers may update our curriculum or redesign our school programmes as a way to ensure that our learners have opportunities to learn job related competencies in addition to academics. The literature reviews also highlighted the need for incorporating the soft skills in school programmes. The mere knowledge enhancement without cultivating soft skills is akin
to moving one step forward and two steps backward. Poor soft skills devalue what we have. The interest in soft skills invariably enabled the investigator to assess education with its contribution to knowledge economy and sustainable development. The culmination of this interest was the undertaking of the present study. This study focuses on the role and significance of soft skills on secondary students with a pedagogic eye view.

1.3. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Soft skills form a crucial and important topic in today’s world. In an age when relationship between individuals and organizations are getting more and more complex, it is not enough to have excellent IQ. Being good at number of crunching and scoring high marks in subjects are not the only criteria for success in professional and personal life. The feelings that new skills are required for withstanding in this competitive era, has motivated the investigator to make some important shifts in thinking about how to best prepare our learners to meet challenges of the present time. So the investigator selected that area for this experimental research. The study entitled as, “DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF SOFT SKILLS PRAXIS PEDAGOGIC PACKAGE IN ENGLISH AND ITS EFFECTS ON SOFT SKILLS AMONG SECONDARY STUDENTS”

1.4. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS OF THE STUDY

SOFT SKILLS PRAXIS PEDAGOGIC PACKAGE

A soft skill is a behavioural skill, which cannot be taught but can be developed through continuous training. It represents the reactive nature of the individual and is about looking at the things with the right perspective. For the purpose of study the soft
skill clusters of communication skills, interpersonal skills, assertive skills and problem solving skills are selected. The skills included in each cluster are listening skills, interview skills, written communication skills, presentation skills, interpersonal skills, team working skills, adaptability skills, emotional intelligence skills, assertive skills, personal integrity skills, positive attitude, learning skills, problem solving skills, interaction skills, decision making and conflict resolution skills.

Praxis is a process by which a theory, a lesson or a skill is enacted, practiced, embodied or realized. In education, praxis is an experiential learning. In the study praxis is the act of engaging, applying, exercising, realizing ideas and acquiring skills through peer group interaction and team work. The package includes various activities and discourses to reach at the optimum level of the performance of soft skills.

The entire package focus on a newer form of pedagogical experiences that is concomitant to the changing phases of time. Today the entire training may have been spent on how to develop the study skills. An ideal education should occupy their students with the capacity to integrate across disciplines and skills. Using learning as a background for developing soft skills makes a win-win situation to the learner and leading an effective enhancement both in the academic and soft skills. The package runs along with pedagogy of the time for tailoring both academic and soft skills attainment at a time. By interweaving both, the pedagogic package becomes a tool for the enhancement of their soft skills in a felt-need atmosphere.

The Soft Skills Praxis Pedagogic Package is enjoyable, stimulating and most importantly practical one. It is considered as an exact match to the students requirements. Here the package is designed to give our learners a real world experience or felt need to maximize their individual performance. All the skills were
interwoven for the maximum development and their personal learning style is also considered. Multi various activities are infused for optimizing professional and personal potential, adapting readily to changing environment, discovering problems and opportunities proactively and adapting communication style for greater impact.

1.5. VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

The variables selected for the study were classified under two divisions. They are given in research and in the types of measures that can be applied to them. The variables selected for the study were classified under two divisions. They are;

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

1.5.1. INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Independent variables are those that manipulated and they are independent form the initial reaction of patterns, features, intentions etc, of the subject. In this study, SOFT SKILLS PRAXIS PEDAGOGIC PACKAGE is the independent variable.

1.5.2. DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Dependent variables are those that are measured and registered since they are dependent on the manipulation and experimental condition. In the present study the dependent variable is Soft skills; Communication Skills, Interpersonal skills, Assertive skills and problem solving skills.
1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is Soft Skills Praxis Pedagogic Package effective on developing soft skills among secondary students?
2. Is Soft Skills Praxis Pedagogic Package better than existing teaching pedagogy on developing soft skills among secondary students?

1.7. SOFT SKILLS IN THE CLASSROOM PROCESS

A soft skills-centered agenda in English language teaching has to emphasize the personal, the subjective and the constructivist; and it must challenge the respected, the usual, the traditional and the positivist. An authoritarian and teacher-dominated style of teaching will certainly not come in terms with the objective of conveying soft skills through language teaching.

Only a co-operative and learner centered style will do justice to the newly defined roles of both teacher and student in the package. The facilitators should realize that what the students lack are soft skills and hence they must equip themselves with soft skills. So they can teach methodologies for their students to excel soft skills. The teacher needs competence and experience to do this job. But she/he needs commitment, enthusiasms, patience and role-consciousness to do it well. In short, the teacher needs the soft skills not only but quite urgently, if she/he would like to teach them to others. Teaching ‘soft skills’ is not about making ourselves more powerful, it is about making our students more powerful.
1.8. SOFT SKILLS AND THE COMPONENT SKILLS IN THE PACKAGE

Soft skill is an ability or competence and can be either inherent or acquired and repeatedly performed. It can be verified and assessed through its performance only and can be demonstrated, learnt, taught, trained or coached but acquired only by performing them and improved through learning. Simpson (2006) and Hillmer (2007) speak of the criticality of soft skills in any teaching and training programme toward achievement of lifelong learning. Soft skill is something that is not taught at school, does not relate to expertise, special skills or styles but it mainly focuses on the personality of each person. Soft skills are a higher-up than the academics or other skills. It is about perceiving a situation and controlling your reaction to it. Along with language teaching, the package incorporates the clusters of communication skills; interpersonal skills, assertive skills and problem solving skills. In the world of cut throat competition it is imperative to be able to present one properly. What we need to do than is not merely to teach them English, but also give them a doze of confidence, the ‘yet we can’ mantra. The package does ensure this mantra by enhancing the clusters of communication skills; interpersonal skills, assertive skills and problem solving skills.

1.9. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To prepare and validate soft skills praxis pedagogic package on soft skills among secondary students.

2. To prepare and standardize a soft skills assessment tool for secondary students.

3. To find out the effectiveness of Soft Skills Praxis Pedagogic Package on developing soft skills among secondary students.
4. To find out the difference in the pretest scores of experimental and control group on soft skills and component skills among secondary students.

5. To find out the difference between the pretest and posttest scores of experimental and control group on soft skills and component skills among secondary students.

6. To find out the difference between the gain scores of experimental and control group on soft skills and component skills among secondary students.

7. To find out the difference in pretest and posttest scores of experimental and control groups before and after the treatment among secondary students.

8. To find out the effectiveness of Soft skills Pedagogic Package considering emotional competence as a co-variate among secondary students.

1.10. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is significant effect of Soft Skills Praxis Pedagogic Package on enhancing soft skills among secondary students.

2. There exists significant difference in the pretest scores of experimental and control group on Soft Skills among secondary students.

3. There exists significant difference in the pretest scores of experimental and control group on communication skills among secondary students.

4. There exists significant difference in the pretest scores of experimental and control group on interpersonal skills among secondary students.

5. There exists significant difference in the pretest scores of experimental and control group on assertive skills among secondary students.

6. There exists significant difference in the pretest scores of experimental and control group on problem solving skills among secondary students.

7. There exists significant difference in the pretest and posttest scores of experimental and control groups on soft skills among secondary students.

8. There exists significant difference in the pretest and posttest scores of experimental and control groups on communication skills among secondary students.
There exists significant difference in the pretest and posttest scores of experimental and control groups on interpersonal skills among secondary students.

There exists significant difference in the pretest and posttest scores of experimental and control groups on assertive skills among secondary students.

There exists significant difference in the pretest and posttest scores of experimental and control groups on problem solving skills among secondary students.

There exists significant difference in the gain scores of experimental and control groups on soft skills among secondary students.

There exists significant difference in the gain scores of experimental and control groups on communication skills among secondary students.

There exists significant difference in the gain scores of experimental and control groups on interpersonal skills among secondary students.

There exists significant difference in the gain scores of experimental and control group on assertive skills among secondary students.

There exists significant difference in the gain scores of experimental and control group on problem solving skills among secondary students.

There exists significant difference in pretest and posttest scores of experimental and control groups on soft skills before and after the treatment among secondary students.

There is effect of Soft skills Pedagogic Package considering emotional competence as a co-variate among secondary students.

1.11. METHODOLOGY

METHOD USED IN THE STUDY

Experimental method is used in the present study. An experimental study was designed to examine the effectiveness of Soft Skills Praxis Pedagogic Package and the study was conducted on two groups, experimental and control.
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The design proposed for the study is “The Pretest-Post test Equivalent Groups Design”. Though it is difficult to arrange a true experimental design, particularly in school classroom research, the investigator equalized the groups in terms of their Emotional Competency (a closely related skill with soft skills). Other factors of time of the day, treatment length in time, age, teacher factor and medium of students are also equated.

SAMPLE SELECTED FOR THE STUDY

A sample consisting of 80 students was selected for the study from one school, 40 students in experimental group and 40 students in control group. Groups were equated on the basis of emotional competency, pretest scores, age, time and teacher factor.

TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY

The present study used the following tools;

1. Soft Skills Praxis Pedagogic Package (developed by the investigator along with the supervising teacher)

2. Soft Skills Assessment Tool (developed by the investigator along with the supervising teacher)

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED IN THE STUDY

The collected data were analyzed by using the following statistical techniques for processing the data.
i. **INDEPENDENT SAMPLE ‘T’ TEST**

ii. **PAIRED SAMPLE ‘T’ TEST**

iii. **ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)**

iv. **ANCOVA (Analysis of Co Variance)**

### 1.12. SCOPE, LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Though the investigator tried her maximum to make the study perfect, the following are the limitations of the study.

- The study confined to the secondary students of Kerala state and selected the students only from standard IX.
- The data were collected from one school only.
- The package selected only 16 components of soft skills.
- The study has not considered the locale and socio economic status of students.
- The treatment was done only for sixty hours.
- For the material reference, the study used only available materials.
- The data has been collected from 80 students only.
- The study selected only 16 skills for developing the package and the detailed praxis of 16 skills could not be appended along with the thesis.

But in spite of all its limitations and delimitations, the study will encourage the professionals to make efficient plans about future courses of action. This Experimental results and data may facilitate comprehension of underlying issues in the area of this study. Pertinent data regarding the present condition may focus attention upon needs or would otherwise remain unnoticed. Our students should develop the capacity for dealing with relationships and they should build the capacity
to deal with complex, dynamic and often conflict group on community processes. Unfortunately this level of participation is often lacking in our educational institutions. The present study intends to develop an effective pedagogic package to tackle this problem. This package covers dynamic, interesting and practical approach and organized to manage tactically the attention span of students. The package presented a detailed description regarding the model praxis to enable the teachers to practice independently.

The enhancement of soft skills through learning process was articulated as a major challenge to our curriculum designers. The package is designed to infuse our pedagogy with the soft skills training. It intends both academic success and enhancement of soft skills of our students. The investigator tried to interweave soft skills with our existing courses, the students will acquire the personal growth needed for the development of all aspects of life. It will empower our students, to stay ahead of the crowd. In this ever-evolving world, our education field warrants the urgent practice of soft skills related learning experiences in our classrooms.

1.13. RESUME OF SUCCEEDING CHAPTERS

This thesis is presented in six chapters. The second chapter gives an elaborate outline of the available literature on soft skills related research studies in India and abroad.

Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

- Studies on Soft Skills Abroad
- Studies on Soft skills in India
- Studies on Component Skills Abroad
- Studies on Component Skills in India
The fourth chapter deals with the selection of variables, objectives and hypotheses, method of sampling and data gathering procedure.

**Chapter III: Research Design and Methods of Procedures**

- Selection of Variables
- Objectives
- Hypotheses
- Soft skills assessment tool
- Soft skills praxis pedagogic package
- summary

The fifth chapter deals with the tabulation, analysis and interpretation of data collected and tenability of hypotheses.

**Chapter IV: Analysis and interpretation of Data**

- Analysis and interpretation
- Interpretation and findings
- Discussion

The sixth chapter gives a summary of findings, educational implications, conclusions and suggestions for further research of this topic.

**Chapter V: Summary, findings and conclusion**

- Brief account of the study
- Tenability of Hypothesis
- Educational implications
- Suggestions for further research