TEACHERS' PREPAREDNESS ABOUT INFUSION OF SOCIAL SKILLS AMONG SECONDARY LEVEL STUDENTS: A CASE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF DISTRICT LASBELA

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Abstract

The present study evaluates teacher's preparedness towards infusion of social skills among students at secondary level in District Lasbela. The study was carried out by using Qualitative research methodology. Within this framework, descriptive survey research methods are used. A total of 38 secondary school teachers (28 males and 10 females) using criterion sampling were approached to collect data. Open Ended questionnaire containing 2 questions was distributed among the participants. Analysis and findings of the study showed that teachers are aware of the importance of infusion of social skills among students and for the purpose of infusing these skills, they use a variety of strategies and methods in their classrooms such as role modelling, co-curricular activities, storytelling etc. This study suggested that for development of social skills of the students, school should create a supporting environment by conducting co-curricular activities on regular basis. Institutions should organize motivational lectures to facilitate students to develop their social skills. Teachers should act exemplary to infuse these skills among students.

Keywords: *Infusion, Social Skills, Strategies, Students, Secondary Level*

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Introduction

Social skills are the gestures which support human understanding and enhance human interaction. Theses further provide baseline to think critically. These are cognitive abilities of individuals which supports interaction under the influence of the society (Coleman, 1992).

According to Namka, (2017), it is the ability of individuals to communicate with others in society.

These skills may be defined as the behaviors which are socially acceptable and enable a person to co-operate and coordinate with others in a positive manner. These skills also support a person to avoid undesirable or negative responses (Gresham & Elliot, 1990). If these skills are not developed, it leads to negative thoughts and feelings, self-doubt and low confidence. While other scholars highlighted that interacting with people who do not use social skill is difficult (Pettry, 2006; Lu Lv, 2015).

The children who are having social skills deficiencies are normally on the danger of having social and emotional difficulties as well as the poor academic achievements as development of these skills is the prime and vital result a schools can produce (Parker & Asher, 1987). Social skills enable children to establish and form a sense of "Self" and learns that what others are expecting from them. (Changnon, n.d). If students lack such skills, they face challenges to comprehend situation properly. (Eleby, 2009). Learn to communicate and interact with others is a key attribute of early childhood. It enables them to communicate with others and form a social bond (Gooden & Kearns, 2013). Lack of these skills may lead to behavioral challenges, emotional difficulties, problems in interpersonal relationships (James, 2002).

Role of Teachers in Development of Social Skills

An effective educator must always be concerned about the truth that the children go to school for a life. Therefore, the recognition of the role which a school plays in child's societal development and self-concept is necessary. Hence it is understood that teachers are responsible for promotion of skills and values among children. If a child has success in his academia, then his or her attitude and behavior towards school will be found through his social interactions and experiences.

It is therefore considered that a teacher can nurture and promote social skills of the students. Teaching social skills to the children is foundation of their successful life which helps them to be mentally strong and healthy and show positive attitude and behaviors. Literature shows that teaching skills in this manner is an efficient approach for primary education as a part of broad based program (Perry & Kelder, 1992; Caplan, Weissberg, Grober, & Sivo, 1992).

A study found that an efficient teacher stimulates students' mental and social growth and development which at later stages which provides a lifelong learning and success ((Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009). A plethora of research proposes that the skills to find and identify useful and positive contacts and connections during the course of teaching are vital to represent these skills in classroom (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

The importance of acquisition of ability to observe psychologically is articulated by John Dewy who proposed that teachers must note colleague teachers' classes to understand interactions and attitudes of teachers and students during the class rather than concentrating on instructional skills or content mastery of a teacher.

Furthermore, to identify the meaningful and useful interactions in classroom is vital for teachers. Study of Van Es and Sherin, (2002) revealed that the teachers are keen to understand, adopt and explain a certain approach to be effective for students' learning rather than being a surface observer.

All the teachers have a consensus over the importance of social skills and competencies as an education objective. They answer positively to the questions on attaining social skills and competencies and these goals be worked on in their subjects of specialty. Lumpkin, (2008)suggested that teachers' must stress and focus on possessing and showing self-discipline and will and should respond properly and fittingly whenever they are facing challenges. It is important that teachers teach their students not to justify their deceitful and immoral behaviors and in its place they should be using more moral reasoning approach while making a decision

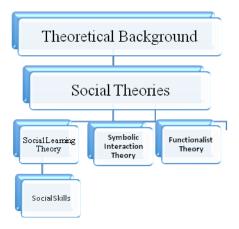**Theoretical Framework of the Study**

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the study

The knowledge about human mind is still a mystery. The process of understanding and interpreting of information by the mind is still being studied by scholars. Some of the theorists prefer to find out the reasoning mechanism of the mind while others are concerned with behavioural effects. Advancement of the technology has affected the theories and theories are frequently being changed. Out of these theories, one theory that covers both reasoning or cognitive and behavioural influences on the personality is social learning theory or social cognitive theory.

Human anticipations, faiths, emotions and reasoning capabilities are developed and altered by influences put by society or community that transfer knowledge and information and prime emotive responses through demonstration, teaching and societal inducement(Bandura, 1989). Students are almost every time under influences whether it is social influence or influence asserted by the media and what so ever it might be, the effect and influence is always present there.

Demonstration is a main part of social learning theory. In this theory, learning gained through the effects of demonstration is a distinct instance of learning through observation. In process of learning based on direct experience, individual develop ideas of attitude and behavior from observation of consequences of their own acts whereas in learning through demonstration they draw the ideas from that behavior which is being demonstrated.

Individual's choices and adaptions are very much influenced by the learning that he gains from the consequences of actions of others. Any influence that can affect one's choices and behavior, strongly can affect the course of one's individual development. This is why the social affects which are present in particular settings promote definite and certain capabilities and competencies, morals and interests' way after the decisive element renders it initial effect (Bandura, 2001).Observation of behaviors or the consequences of individual's own acts are the sorts of social learning. Social psychology goes one more step ahead to clarify how learning is prejudiced. Huitt, (2006) states that social reasoning and perception is linked deeply with social psychology and it tries to understand and explain that how the ideas, emotions and behavior of persons are affected and influenced by real, imaginary or indirect existence of others'. Actions of people are driven by the presence and influence of others but to understand the degree of social affects and influences, we have to study the role of 'self' first. It is endorsed by social psychologists that learning is not based on autonomous influences and factors; they consider all the affects and influences in to the account. Bandura (2001) states that ideas and thoughts are not immaterial and irrelevant objects that employ influential and decisive affect.

According to Huitt (2006), Bandura (1989) established the idea of mutual determinism. According to him a person influence other's behavior and his own behavior is also influenced by others as well as other aspects of

the surrounding. Social learning is based on various aspects. One vital part of this learning is how an individual think of the proceedings and events which are happening around him. People are self-driven and developing, practical, adaptable, regulating and insightful. They are not just responsive objects which are formed, modelled and influenced by external or internal affects or forces and this thing make them human(Bandura, 2008). Anticipation or foresight is main factor of individual activity or act in social cognitive theory. Individuals encourage themselves, foresee and plan their actions and decisions through this forethought or anticipation. This ability of anticipation and foresee offers guidance, direction, reasoning, logic, rationality and sense of life to individuals (Bandura, 2001). This anticipation and foresee lets individuals to select and pick their way of action.

People can foretell and predict the expected results of their eventual actions, they set their targets and goals and they decide and design way of action that can produce and yield their anticipated results. These foresee and anticipation motivates people and directs them to their actions (Bandura, 1989). This farsightedness allows individuals to scan and scrutinize their actions and select an act. Huitt (2006) argued that the other vital component of social cognitive theory is self-efficacy and self-direction. He says that self-efficacy and self-direction or regulation is the factors related to learning of the students.

Importance of Social Skills for Teachers

Teachers are supposed to interact with lot of people including school community, parents of the students and others who are working for or with the children outside of the classroom. It is also imperative that the teacher knows the content and the ways to disseminate the knowledge and information to students in such a way that learners are capable to learn. It is meant that teachers need a wide range and variety of knowledge as well as the matching skills if they want to enhance learner's learning.

Advancement in education and global policies stress on assessment of teachers' performance and hence to develop a selection mechanism for recruitment of teachers. Ways to predict and foretell about the performance of a teacher in classroom enable schools or concerned quarters to recruit or hire such teachers who are more likely to be effective in classrooms (McCarthy & Carter, 2001). Pianta et al., (2009) found that good and effective teachers enhance social and cognitive development of students that enable students for a life-long learning and success. Sociocultural theory explicates the need of effective relationships and interactions among teachers, peers, family members, community and students as information, knowledge, behaviors and expertise are transferred, improved and developed in social setting (Graven & Lerman, 2003). Bandura (2006) declared learning an inter-active and co-regulative phenomenon that is facilitated by a

thought process and thinking tool and social interactions. Hakkarainen, Ilomäki, Lipponen, and Lehtinen, (2000) argued that learning is a process in which participants continuously change their actions and perceptions in accordance with other members of learning community.

Interactions between teachers and students are based on the evidences they get from interactions among them therefore it is essential for teachers to know that how they are perceived by their students. Teachers are able to arrange their instructions in context with the need, requirement and preferences of their students by changing and modifying their level of association and control they have in their class (Brok, Levy, Brekelmans, & Wubbels, 2005). Teaching is comprised of social interaction and collaboration between teacher and learner (Lim, Tang, & Tan, 2013). This activity can be summed as collective behaviors. This is meant that teaching talent and excellence is not only based on defendant exchange and transfer of knowledge and information from teacher to student but it is a multidimensional process that facilitates and affects the process of learning of learners' (Prasertcharoensuk & Tang, 2016).

Social skills are necessarily interlinked with performance of teachers. The teachers, who work in a high performance setting, need well developed social skills to have excellence and efficiency in their profession (Tang, Ching, & Shahid, 2015). Therefore, these skills should be kept in mind and considered as a usual indicator and factor in selection of civic skills and personality traits by a teacher. Under the realm of behaviourism, the intellect, feelings, and emotions of a person's inner life are not observable or measurable and therefore not investigated. Thus, a behavioural educator would advocate that effective learning is best accomplished by a change on behavior and relies heavily upon behavioural objectives to accomplish the teaching learning task" (Birzer, 2004). Social and behavioural skills are important for classroom teachers as these skills are critical to achieve and obtain academic as well as behavioural success (Stang, Carter, Lane, & Pierson, 2009).

Inter-personal skills and fundamental communications skills were identified as important competencies which were considered necessary to be successful in workplace by Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills report (The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992) in America. Learning happens because of association with conditions and those conditions are called environment. As we learn from our relationships and interactions in our social setting. The lack of either social skills or academic skills leads to failure among high school students. We have learned because we followed certain accepted universal laws of behavior and discipline.

Importance of Social Skills for Students

There is literature available that supports the relationship between academic achievement and social skills (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). Families, teachers will agree on the importance of academic achievement for life. Walker, (1976) argued that the students who have more developed social skills have more success in academic life as these social skills lay the foundations of success. Gresham & Elliot (1990) established that there is an association and link between social skills and educational attainment.

Fleming, et al., (2005) suggested that absence of any of these two or both societal and educational skills in a student is an eye-brow raiser and a concern for both community and school as absence of these skills affects students' academic achievement. Social skills play an important role. Asher and Taylor, (1981) found that in addition to the role of social skills in academic success, social relationships are also linked with positive life outcomes. They found a correlation amid social skills and societal achievement such fame, friendships and other social relationships and bonds. Positive and effective social skills are linked with better interpersonal relationships and social acceptance. Welsh, Parke, Widaman, and O'Neil, (2001) found a complex common link between academic excellence and social skills. Logue, (2007) proposed that children develop societal skills through conciliation, taking turns, adopting guidelines, and developing friendships. He advocated that if no proper teaching of social skills exists then role playing and modelling can produce desired results of promoting social skills among students. He concluded that if children are not given a chance to learn social skills appropriately then they will not be able to be beneficent of offered academic instructions. Manning, (2007), suggested that few students did not get success have positive academic record due to their low self-concept? Self-concept is denoted as students' perception and insight of their own competencies and capability in educational and non-academic areas. Rubin, Bukowski, and Parker, (2006) found that children acquire a variety of social behaviors and skills in their interactions with others. Theses interactions affect their social and emotional development and their social adjustment during their adulthood.

Martens and Witt, (2004) found that those students who face difficulties to develop their social skills face more punitive consequences. They suggested that the students be taught social skills directly and thoroughly so that they attain excellence and get success in schools. To attain the likely best results, the young children who are in their transition period, need particular skills both in their academic and social life. However, having better developed academic skills cannot assure academic success if social skills are not or under developed. Social skills lay the foundations of social proficiency. Educationists, teachers, parent and other members of educational community agree that schools should teach beyond fundamental

skills like reading, wring and counting. Today's school should improve social and emotive skills, character and social interactions (Greenberg, et al., 2003). Educators and teachers find it difficult to engage students in learning process especially in that learning and teaching process which is of cooperative or collaborative nature when social skills are less developed or absent among students. Secondary school's teachers usually utilize collaborative learning strategies therefore need of well-developed social skills among students are very much needed (Rubin, et al., 2006).

Purpose of the Study

1. To find out the level of preparedness of teachers through the lens of knowledge towards infusion of social skills.
2. To find out the strategies used by teachers to infuse these skills.

Research Question

1. What is the level of preparedness of teachers towards social skills?
2. How teachers infuse social skills among students?

Research Methodology

Research Design

On the basis of research objectives and questions, the researchers adopted qualitative method research design and adopted survey research method (descriptive) which is particularly helpful to investigate and portray the surface as well as in-depth realities" (Mathers, Fox, & Hunn, 2007).

Population and Sampling

All teachers, serving in public sector secondary schools of either gender in District Lasbela formed the population for this study. A multistage sampling technique was applied to figure out the sample and sample size. Through startified sampling, schools were identified and two startas were drawn i.e. Boys Schools and Girls Schools. Further selection of schools out of these startas was done randomly and 19 schools were selected. After startification and randomly selection of schools, a ratio was applied as there is a huge difference in number of schools for boys and girls. Out of 29 boys' schools 14 schools were included in the study and 5 girls schools out of 9 were selected. 2 x teachers per school were investigated. Later criterion sampling was used to derive the total sample of 38 teachers. Minimum 3 years teaching expereince at secondary level was criteria set by the researcher to select the teachers.

Research Instrument, Data Collection and Analysis

In this research, the data is collected through an open ended questionnaire. Descriptive survey was used to collect information and collected data was analysed using themes and sub-themes. The open ended questionnaire had three parts. First part of the questionnaire contained formal participants' consent. The second part of the questionnaire was consisted of the demographic profile of participants while the third part of questionnaire had two main questions to which participants recorded their answers.

Data Analysis and Results
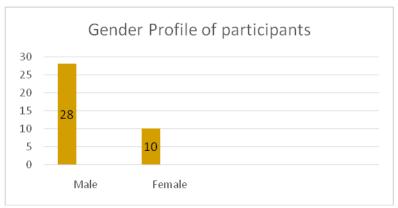
Demographic Profile

Figure 1: Gender Profile of Participants

The above table shows that out of total 38 participants, there were 28 (74%) male participants while 26% (10 participants) were female.
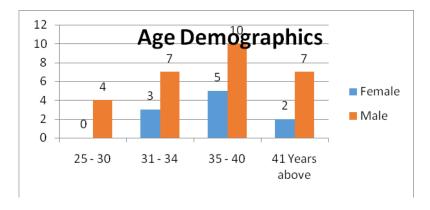

Figure 2: Participants Age

The above chart shows the age groups of participants. The chart exhibits that 04 participants (all males) belonged to the youngest group i.e. 25-30 years of age while 10 participants fell under 31-34 years of age group (7 males and 3 females). 15 participants (10 males and 5 females) were the age between 35-40 years while 9 participants (7 male and 2 females) aged 41 years and above.

Thematic Analysis

Data was collected through a survey (open ended questions). Open ended questions were analysed by using driving themes. There were two open ended questions which were designed to attain the objectives of the study.

Q-1. In your opinion, should social skills be taught in schools? If yes, why and how?

This question had two major parts i.e. a) Why to teach social skills and b) how to teach social skills. The answer and response to the question was "yes" with maximum frequency and respondents expressed various reasons to teach social skills among students in schools. One of the respondents was the opinion of

"*Social skills should definitely be taught in schools as these skills enable students to become a useful citizen of the society. These skills help them to interact in a positive way with others.*"

Another teacher responded the question as

"*Developed social skills help students to obtain good academic grades as with the help of development of these skills, students are able to interact in a productive manner within the class both with their fellows and their teachers*".

Another respondent said

"*Teaching social skills to students in schools help them to develop better attitudes and attributes. These attitudes and attributes magnify the chances of success of students in their practical life. Students can learn skills like better communication and interactions, leadership, critical thinking and problem-solving which help them to understand and face the challenges of their practical life*".

A female teacher responded

"*Teaching social skills to students is very important because todays' students are going to be tomorrow's mothers. A mother can teach lot of things to her children and if mother has developed social*

skills and she knows how to interact and communicate within the society then surely she can teach her children the same with ease."

The other part of the question was how to teach social skills and moral values to students in schools. After analysing responses to the question, themes were emerged which are discussed below:

Teaching Social Skills through Co and Extra-Curricular Activities

Almost all the respondents advocated co and extra-curricular activities as a mean and method of teaching social skills. One of the respondents expressed his views as

"*These co and extra-curricular activities are vital to be conducted and carried out in schools as these activities enable students to learn many things such as discipline, teamwork, Leadership, collaboration, honesty, cultural attachment and respect. These activities are very important both for schools as these help to maintain order in the schools and students as these activities help them to learn.*"

This is in line with the findings and recommendations of Mancha and Ahmada, (2016) that students who take keen interest and are involved in school activities have good developed social skills. Extra-curricular activities can help students to establish and form character and behavior. These activities help students to develop skills like leadership and discipline. Extra-curricular activities help students to develop a positive personality and a sense of responsibility. Students can develop their social skills, can form and develop friendships and positive interaction that in turn they can use to have a successful life in society. Involvement of students' in co-curricular activities enables them to improve and develop their personality traits like self-confidence, social collaboration and leadership (Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005).

Teaching Social Skills through Role Modelling

Social skills can be taught through role modelling. Respondents expressed their views about role modelling of teacher and considered teacher a role model.

One participant said

"*Teacher acts as a role model as children copy and imitate what he does, how he speaks and how he interacts. Children are masters of doing this and if a teacher behaves well in the class, talks about manners, exhibits good character and uses positive gestures, definitely students are going to copy and adapt this.*"

Another respondent wrote

> "*Teachers are role models for students. How they treat students, how they deal with different situations in class. How they interact and how they behave with students. These tiny little things put lot of impacts over development of students' personality.*"

While one of the respondents said

> "*Teachers play a vital role in teaching students' social skills and moral values through his own acts, deeds and behaviors. S/he is a role model for students' they copy him/her and try to follow his/her footprints in their daily life.*"

This is in support of findings of Jennings and Greenberg , (2009) as they found that the teachers develop principle guidelines to motivate students, they couch them through problem situations, they encourage them to work collaboratively and act as role models for their students. Students tend to copy and imitate their teachers more than they copy their parents.

Q-2. *How do you infuse social skills among your students? (Give Examples, if any)*

This question pertained to the strategies and techniques teachers normally use in classroom to teach and infuse social skills among students. Respondents of the study highlighted various techniques and strategies to infuse these skills among their students and to integrate in their teaching. These techniques and strategies are discussed as follow:

Infusing Social Skills through Co and Extra-Curricular Activities

Co and extra-curricular activities play a vital role in infusion of social skills among students. Participants of the study expressed their views on role of these activities in infusion of social skills. One of the participants said

> "*Co-curricular activities like morning assembly, debates, dialogues and discussions play an important role in inculcation of social skills among students. Students can learn sense of responsibility, critical thinking, positive communication, self-reliance and peer work through these activities.*"

Another participant said

> "*I encourage my students to take part in debates, activities of morning assembly, games, discussions and other co-curricular activities as these activities help students to build self-confidence and reliance, time management, peer relationships and sense of responsibility. They tend to do work in groups and share the responsibilities.*"

Another teacher was the opinion of

> "*In my opinion, extra-curricular activities like sports, games and play are vital for inculcation of social skills among students. Especially team games and sports teach lot of things while play and students can learn collaboration, co-operation, leadership, discipline, conflict management and empathy.*"

All these responses are supportive to Scarlett, Naudeau, Salonius-Pasternak, and Ponte, (2005) and Goh, Ang, and Tan, (2008) that games and sports play an important role in development of social skills of students. It is found that playing games is an effective intervention to develop social skills of students. These responses are also in line with Lau, Hsu, Acosta, and Hsu, (2014) who found those students who were involved in extra-curricular activities having better skills like communication, leadership, creativity, and self-promotion skills than the students who did not participate.

Infusing Social Skills through Classroom Management

Classroom management is an integral part of teaching and learning process. Classroom management also affects students' behaviors and interactions in the class. During data collection process of the current study classroom management was pointed out as a tool to infuse social skills among students. One of respondents said

> "*Classroom management and environment also influences students' learning and social behavior. For those students who are reluctant to participate in class activities and interact with others can be involved in such activities. By changing seating arrangements of the class, forming peergroups, involving students' in class rules and routines make them to participate and involve in classroom. This enhances their socializing and interactions and helps students' to avoid behaviors that are unnecessary, unacceptable and undesired in the society.*"

Another respondent expressed his views (R21)

> "*Classroom rules and routines help students to improve their skills like collaboration, group work, empathy, taking responsibility and leadership. If a teacher involves students during the formation of rules and routines of the class and puts students under responsibilities, it will help students to enhance and develop their socializing skills and to prevent them from undesired behaviors.*"

The above responses are in line and support the findings and suggestions of Sakarya, (2009) who found a significant relationship between classroom management skills of teachers and problematic undesired behaviors of students. This also supports the findings of Oliver, Wehby, and Resch,

(2011)who found meaningful relationship between teacher's classroom management skills and in-class undesired behaviors of students'.

Infusing Social Skills through Social Engagement of Students and Community Services

Social engagements and active participation of students in events of social and civic life is a source of learning social skills for them. One of respondents highlighted importance of social engagement of students in regard to their learning of social skills and said

> "*Social event and social engagement helps students to improve their social competencies. In this regard you can put students under the burden of responsibility. Events like walks, conferences, seminars and other community services etc. can produce positive results when you ask students to manage or conduct such events. Students also can be asked to organize co and extra-curricular activities within the school and this burden of responsibility enhances their skills like collaboration, co-operation, teamwork, leadership, critical thinking and problem solving. This may help them in human and material resources management as well*."

Findings and Discussion

The study was aimed to investigate about the preparedness of teachers towards infusion of social skills among students at secondary level. To achieve the objectives and to find out the answers to research questions, a survey was conducted. Responses of the respondents were analysed and interpreted. The results of analysis show that teachers do possess adequate knowledge of social skills. They are aware of its importance for students and they infuse social skills among students and for this they use a variety of strategies.

Analysis of descriptive survey shows that the teachers utilize various techniques and strategies for infusion of social skills. Most of the respondents consider co and extra curriculum activities as useful strategy to infuse and develop social skills among students. This consideration of co and extra-curriculum activities as a tool to infuse social skills seconds the findings of Priya, (2016) andVenkataswamy, (2017).

Other strategies like role modelling, telling stories, engagement of students in community services, making adjustments in classroom management, sharing personal experiences, making students work in groups are used by the teachers for the purpose of infusion of social skills.

It was suggested by the respondents that conferences, seminars and lectures should be organized in degree awarding institutes and management and organization of such events should be handed over to students and be

supervised by the teachers. This will enhance and develop their sense of responsibility and they will learn and enhance their socializing skills as well.

Conclusion

The study was aimed to find out the level of preparedness of teachers towards infusion of social skills as well as the strategies that teachers use to infuse, enhance and develop social skills among students. The analysis of the data showed supportive results. Hence it is concluded that knowledge of teachers play an important role in infusion of social skills among students. It is also concluded that co and extra-curriculum activities along-with role modelling, is considered as prime strategy to infuse social skills and moral values among students and to develop their social skills and moral values.

Future Implications of Research

It is critical for the researcher in highlighting the future areas that would benefit the researchers for carrying out the research with the same topic through the help and guidance of this research. The aim of this research was to determine the strategies used by the teachers for attaining the social skills among students. While reflecting on the above statement, future research could be conducted through analysing the factors such as conducting seminar, offering rewards, engaging social activities and developing a collaborative environment for attaining and developing the social skills among students. This would allow the researcher to identify as what major factor influences on development and enhancement of social skills of students. An observational and longitudinal research would offer better results about learning of social skills by the students as this research supports the idea that teachers are able to infuse social skills among students through various strategies but learning of these skills at the part of students remained in question.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are addressed as implicit recommendations for future research. First and foremost, this study was limited in scope. Secondly use of qualitative methodology, it can't be generalized on a large population. Further this study was completed in a short time period hence time being the important constrain as well as finances remained an obstacle.

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