

Effect of Gender, Region and Type of School on Social, Cognitive and Affective Skills of Higher Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the inter-relationship between the social, cognitive and affective skills of higher secondary schools students in selected districts of Chhattisgarh employing a descriptive survey research. By adopting stratified disproportionate random sampling technique, 420 students were selected from three districts of Chhattisgarh namely Durg, Rajnandgoan and Kabirdham (Kawardha). Data collection was completed in five months by administering self-constructed life skill assessment scale, which comprised of three dimensions, namely social, cognitive and affective Skills. Social skills comprised of communication skills, empathy, interpersonal skills and resisting peer pressure. Cognitive skills included problem solving, creativity, decision making and critical thinking. Included among affective skills were items related to coping with stress, managing emotions and self-awareness. Initially 190 items were prepared. Content and face validity reduced the items to 133. Inter item validity was computed using 't' test. Final scale comprised of 75 items. Reliability coefficient computed by test-retest method was found to be 0.85. Statistical analysis of the data was done by computing three way ANOVA and t-test. Results indicated significant impact of gender, region and type of schools on social, cognitive and affective skills of higher secondary school students.

Key words: Social skills, Cognitive skills, Affective skills

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Introduction

It has been reiterated from time to time that the present education system tends to be bookish and is detached from real life. Most of the education seems to focus on cognitive skills only, which revolve around rote learning of the content. Life skills such as critical thinking, ability to interpret, reflecting on thoughts and actions, communication, interpersonal skills and above all, learning and relearning to adopt to ever changing new situations in life are hardly dealt with. Life skills refer to non-academic abilities, knowledge, attitude and behaviour that must be learned for success in society (Junge, Manglallon and Raskauskar, 2003). Life skills can be utilised in many areas such as the prevention of drug and substance abuse, sexual violence, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS/STDs prevention, suicide prevention etc. It is further noted that life skill education programmes can also be effective in preventing school dropout and violence among young people and can lay the foundation for skills demanded in today's job market. Significant positive effect of life skills have been demonstrated on health behaviour such as smoking and substance abuse (Botvin and Griffin, 2005), home and school adjustment (Alpert Gills, Pedro Carroll and Cowan, 1989), increased social competence and decreased psychopathology (Elias, Bruene- Butler, Blum and Schuyler, 2000).

There is considerable difference between the upbringing, experiences, emotional competencies and the psychological development trajectories of rural and urban Indian adolescents. The adversities faced, challenges undertaken and conflicts experienced are different for the rural and urban adolescents. The risk factors for the average Indian urban adolescents are extreme academic competitiveness, peer pressure etc. that erode the mental health of the urban Indian teenager. Rural adolescents face unique stressors which include geographic isolation, loneliness, barriers to health services and economic instability. A significant number of Indian youth is contributing to the global pool of education, business and information technology, whereas the youth of rural India are not so equipped and skilled to deal with competitiveness and the stress to perform.

The skills that relate to thinking are termed as cognitive or thinking skills comprising of problem solving, critical thinking, decision making and self-awareness. Significant correlation exists between cognitive skills and academic performance of students

(Blair and Razza, 2007; Alloway and Alloway, 2010; Alloway and Passolunghi, 2011). Skills related to dealing with others are termed as social skills which includes communication skills, interpersonal skills, empathy etc. Affective skill relates to growth in feelings or emotional areas, behaviour and attitudes that students need to learn in order to be effective in their personal and professional lives. Some specific affective skills are coping with stress, emotional management, etc. Bloom emphasized the importance of affective, social, cultural and environmental factors in individual development (Anderson and Benjamin, 2003).

The Government of Chhattisgarh started the livelihood college in Dantewada district in 2010, which was the first initiative in skill development. These livelihood colleges are now functioning in 27 districts. In Chhattisgarh, it is the right of the youth to get skill development training. *Chhattisgarh Right of Youth to Skill Development Act, 2013* aims to provide for right to opportunities for skill development to every youth, residing in the state of Chhattisgarh, in any vocation of his or her choice consistent with eligibility and aptitude. Tribal population living in remote areas with Naxalite conflicts, has been deprived of many basic human rights for a long time. Tribal youth had a lot of untapped potential. The Chhattisgarh government is using skill development initiatives not only to ensure employment for poor youngsters but to wean away the young from Maoist rebels. Livelihood colleges have been established, not only to teach the tribals some employable skills but also give them exposure to the world so that they do not join the Maoists. Livelihood colleges are residential training facilities for under privileged youngsters to impart technical skills and soft skills that make them ready for labour market.

Many organisations like ITBP (Indo Tibetan Border Police) imparts sports training in archery, judo, karate and other sports to tribal children and youth to tackle the problem of under development and lack of resources in the area. Developing language skills amongst tribal youth are also essential as that will help them access new opportunities in education and employment. The National University Students Skill Development Programme (NUSSD) was initiated as a pilot project in 2013 and is currently being tested in eleven universities across 9 states. Chhattisgarh is one of the selected states. It aims at increasing the employability of university students by imparting knowledge and skills through cutting edge teaching and learning methods, as well as practical

work experience through internships and community projects. These organisations and universities cater to the rural youth and such initiatives are expected to bring about a change for the betterment of the lives of students by making them employable.

Under the *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan*, vocational education programme is to be introduced as an integral part of general education at secondary and higher secondary level as per guidelines of vocationalisation of education scheme. The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (CSSVS and HSE) is aimed at enhancing the employability of the students and at the same time provide diversification of opportunities in career and higher education. The scheme, so far, has created infrastructure in 9619 schools and is developing skills among about 10 lakh students at the senior secondary level. The schools following vocational curriculum under the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) would not only achieve seamless integration with higher education, but also would be able to develop youth for employment. Life skill education is a value added programme which aims to provide students with strategies to make healthy choice that contribute to meaningful life. It helps adolescents to understand their self and to assess their skills, abilities and areas of development. It also helps adolescents to get along with other people and adjust with their environment and making responsible decision.

The adolescent years are an especially sensitive and critical period of social, cognitive and affective development (Steinberg 2005, Chaudhury, Blakemore and Charman, 2006). Socially skilled adolescents are able to express their feelings and desires, can manage to control their impulses and alter emotions and thoughts. Individuals with good social skills have a low chance of developing depression and being lonely and socially anxious (Segrin and Flora, 2000). Socially skilled behaviour is seen as favourable for the development of strategies when faced with adverse situations, reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience. Variables, such as gender, age, marital status, family configuration, profession, education, personal and family gains and living in rural or urban areas, among others are considered important for the development of social skills (Caballo, 2003). The effectiveness of social behaviour depends to a large extent on the quality of the individual's social skills. The richer the skills set, the greater is an individual's chances that he or she can use the most appropriate skills to handle a

given situation (Nagy, 2007; Stephens, 1992). Children with good social skills are more successful than their less competent peers in developing positive attitudes towards school and in adjusting to school (Odom, Zercher, Ligs, Marquart, Sandall, and Braun, 2006; Semrud Clikeman, 2007). Research has also shown that social skills are associated with academic achievement (Alexander, Doris, Entwisle, and Douber, 2003; Ladd, Birch and Buhs, 1999). Children with good social skills get better grades and perform better (Birch and Ladd, 1997; Diener, Isabella and Behunin, 2008; Websterstratton and Reid, 2004; Zsolnai, Lesznyak and Kasik, 2007).

The affective domain reflects the world of feelings, values, appreciation, motivation and attitudes, factors which are more difficult to understand and assess. Yeager and Walton (2011) demonstrated that not only affective domain impact success, but they are also malleable and can be changed. The affective domain directly impact success and allows interventions that can make changes in student behaviour. Efforts have emerged to apply various dimensions of the affective domain like grit (i.e. perseverance and passion for long term goals) (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews and Kelly, 2007), character (Tough, 2013) and hope (Snyder, 2000). New research often refers to the affective domain, with terms such as non-cognitive factors, psychosocial skills or soft skills. The present study focuses on social, cognitive and affective skills of higher secondary school students studying in government and private schools of urban and rural areas of selected districts of Chhattisgarh, namely Durg, Rajnandgaon and Kabirdham (Kawardha).

Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the effect of region, type of school and gender on social skills of higher secondary school students.
2. To study the effect of region, type of schools and gender on cognitive skills of higher secondary school students.
3. To study the effect of region, type of schools and gender on affective skills of higher secondary school students.

Method

Sample

By adopting stratified disproportionate random sampling technique, 420 higher secondary school students were selected

from six government and six private higher secondary schools of rural and urban areas of three districts of Chhattisgarh.

Measure

Life skills of the students were measured by self constructed Life skill scale. The life skill assessment scale is of Likert type consisting of 75 items in the form of statements in built with five point scale for the respondent to give appropriate response from the option of always, very often, occasionally, rarely and never. The life skill assessment scale measures three dimensions of life skills namely social skills, cognitive skills and affective skills. Item validity was computed by t-test. The items for the final scale were selected taking the 't' value between high and low groups of the items and having a significance of 0.01 level. This indicates the high items validity. The items having a range of 4.76 to 12.52 of t-values were selected. Final scale comprises of 75 items, 25 items for each dimension. An extensive exercise was done to establish face and content validity of life skill assessment scale in the initial stage of the tool construction with the help of subject experts. Reliability coefficient was 0.85, computed by test-retest method.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis of the data was done by computing three way ANOVA, t-test and correlation.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the main effect of Gender (G), Region (R) and Type of school (TOS) on social, cognitive and affective skills of higher secondary school students.

Table 1
Analysis of Variance for Gender, Region and Type of Schools

S.No.	Dimension	Variable/ Factor	N	Mean	SD	F	Level of Significance
1.	Social	Gender Male	210	68.06	14.78	5.59	0.01
		Female	210	64.82	14.55		
		Region Rural	210	62.82	14.42	27.91	0.01
		Urban	210	70.08	14.19		

		TOS Govt.	210	64.48	15.03	8.201	0.01
		Private	210	68.40	14.21		
2.	Cognitive	Gender Male	210	65.91	14.52	5.129	0.01
		Female	210	68.96	14.03		
		Region Rural	210	65.07	13.74	12.31	0.01
		Urban	210	69.79	14.57		
		TOS Govt.	210	65.49	14.73	8.35	0.01
		Private	210	69.38	13.70		
3.	Affective	Gender Male	210	66.35	14.41	14.41	0.01
		Female	210	71.43	13.53		
		Region Rural	210	66.24	14.24	15.68	0.01
		Urban	210	71.54	14.06		
		TOS Govt.	210	67.20	14.43	6.35	0.01
		Private	210	70.58	14.17		

Table 1 reveals significant main effect of gender, region and type of school on social skills of higher secondary school students. Mean values indicates that boys scored significantly higher on social skills as compared of girls. [$F(1, 412) = 5.593, p < 0.01$]. Further the social skills of urban students is greater than rural students [$F(1, 412) = 27.91, p < 0.01$]. Mean values also makes clear that private school students scored significantly higher on social skills as compared to their counterparts in government schools. [$F(1, 412) = 8.201, p < 0.01$]

Significant main effects of gender, region and type of schools were found on cognitive skills of higher secondary schools students. Mean values indicated that girls scored significantly higher on cognitive skills than boys [$F(1, 412) = 5.129, p < 0.01$]. Likewise, urban students scored significantly higher than rural students on cognitive skills [$F(1, 412) = 12.31, p < 0.01$]. Mean values further indicated that private school students scored significantly higher than government school students [$F(1, 412) = 8.201, p < 0.01$].

It is also clear from Table 1 that gender, region and type of schools had significant mean effects on affective skills of higher secondary schools students. Mean values clearly indicated that girls scored significantly higher on affective skill than boys [$F(1, 412) = 14.41, p < 0.01$]. Mean value further indicated that urban students scored significantly higher on affective skills than rural students [$F(1, 412) = 15.68, p < 0.01$]. Mean value also indicated that private schools students were more skilled than government school students [$F(1, 412) = 6.35, p < 0.01$].

First order interaction effect of gender, region and type of schools on social, cognitive and affective skills was studied using two-way analysis of variance. Results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2
Analysis of variance for Interaction Showing Effect of Gender, Region and Type of School

Dimension	Model	Gender	Region	N	Mean	SD	F	Level of Sig.
Social	G x R	Male	Rural	104	62.28	13.86	2.4	NS
			Urban	106	67.36	14.84		
		Female	Rural	104	63.37	15.01		
			Urban	106	72.74	13.03		
Cognitive	G x R	Male	Rural	104	64.84	14.24	3.71	0.05
			Urban	105	66.97	14.79		
		Female	Rural	104	65.30	13.29		
			Urban	105	72.62	13.86		
Affective	G x R	Male	Rural	104	63.58	14.46	1.03	NS
			Urban	105	69.12	14.68		
		Female	Rural	104	68.90	13.59		
			Urban	105	73.96	13.04		
Social	G x TOS	Male	Govt.	106	63.08	14.52	2.10	NS
			Pvt.	104	66.56	14.44		
		Female	Govt.	106	65.88	15.47		
			Pvt.	104	70.23	13.81		
Cognitive	G x TOS	Male	Govt.	106	64.116	14.20	2.05	NS
			Pvt.	104	67.70	14.68		
		Female	Govt.	106	66.86	15.20		
			Pvt.	104	71.05	12.51		

Affective	G x TOS	Male	Govt.	106	64.53	14.54		
			Pvt.	104	68.17	14.90	1.04	NS
		Female	Govt.	106	69.88	13.89		
			Pvt.	104	72.98	13.05		
Social	R x TOS	Rural	Govt.	104	59.35	12.72		
			Pvt.	106	66.30	15.20	4.901	0.05
		Urban	Govt.	104	69.61	15.44		
			Pvt.	106	70.50	12.84		
Cognitive	R x TOS	Rural	Govt.	104	61.41	12.01		
			Pvt.	106	68.73	14.40	4.496	0.01
		Urban	Govt.	104	69.56	16.04		
			Pvt.	106	70.02	12.98		
Affective	R x TOS	Rural	Govt.	104	62.62	12.34		
			Pvt.	106	69.86	15.11	8.38	0.01
		Urban	Govt.	104	71.79	14.93		
			Pvt.	106	71.29	13.17		

Table 2 shows that significant interaction effect of gender x region was not observed on social skills and affective skills of higher secondary schools students but significant interaction effect was observed on cognitive skills [$F(1, 412) = 3.712, p < 0.05$]. Mean values indicated that both male and female students of urban schools scored significantly higher on cognitive skills than their counter parts in rural areas. Further Table 2 clearly reveals that there exists no significant interaction effect of gender x type of schools on social, cognitive and affective skills of higher secondary schools students.

It is clear from Table 2 that region x type of schools has significant interaction effect on social skills of higher secondary schools students [$F(1, 412) = 4.901, p < 0.05$]. Mean values indicated significant difference in the social skills of private and government schools students of urban and rural areas. In both rural and urban areas, private students scored significantly higher on social skills than government school students. The significant interaction effect of region x type of school was found on cognitive skills of student [$F(1, 412) = 4.496, p < 0.01$]. Mean value showed that private school students of rural and urban areas scored significantly higher on cognitive skills than their counterparts of government schools. Further, significant interaction effect of region x type of schools was

observed on affective skills of students [$F(1, 412) = 8.38, p < 0.01$]. Mean value showed that in affective skills of government schools students of urban area scored higher than private school students. Further private school students scored significantly higher on affective skills than government schools students in rural areas.

Second order interaction effects of gender, region and type of schools on social, cognitive and affective skills were studied using three-way analysis of variance. Results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Summary of Analysis of Variance of Social, Cognitive and Affective skills by Gender, Region and Type of Schools.

Dimension	Model	Gender	Region	TOS	N	Mean	SD	F	Level of sig.
Social Skill	G x R x TOS	Female	Urban	Pvt.	53	74.45	9.90	2.238	NS
				Govt.	52	71.03	15.49		
			Rural	Pvt.	53	66.01	15.83		
				Govt.	52	60.73	13.75		
		Male	Urban	Pvt.	53	66.54	14.33		
				Govt.	52	68.18	15.40		
			Rural	Pvt.	53	66.58	14.67		
				Govt.	52	57.98	11.57		
Cognitive Skill	G x R x TOS	Female	Urban	Pvt.	53	74.54	9.57	5.285	0.01
				Govt.	52	70.69	17.05		
			Rural	Pvt.	53	67.56	14.13		
				Govt.	52	63.03	12.08		
		Male	Urban	Pvt.	53	65.51	14.46		
				Govt.	52	68.44	15.08		
			Rural	Pvt.	53	69.90	14.71		
				Govt.	52	59.78	11.83		
Affective Skills	G x R x TOS	Female	Urban	Pvt.	53	75.09	10.17	5.177	0.01
				Govt.	52	72.83	15.45		
			Rural	Pvt.	53	70.87	15.20		
				Govt.	52	66.94	11.53		
		Male	Urban	Pvt.	53	67.49	14.83		
				Govt.	52	70.76	14.49		
			Rural	Pvt.	53	68.87	15.09		
				Govt.	52	58.31	11.69		

No significant interaction effect of gender x region x type of schools was observed on social skills of higher secondary schools students but significant second order interaction was observed on cognitive skills of students [$F(1, 412) = 5.285, p < 0.01$]. Mean value indicated that girls of urban private schools scored significantly higher on cognitive skills than their counterparts of government schools of urban area. Similar findings were observed for girls of government and private schools of rural areas. Likewise, rural boys of private schools scored significantly higher on cognitive skills than boys of government schools of rural area.

It is clear from Table 3 that significant interaction effect of gender x region x type of schools was observed on affective skills of higher secondary schools students [$F(1, 412) = 5.177, p < 0.01$]. Mean values indicated that girl students of private schools of urban area scored significantly higher on affective skills than girl students of government schools of urban area. Further girl students of private school scored significantly higher than girl student of government school in rural area. Mean values also indicate that boys of government schools of urban area scored significantly higher on affective skills than their counterparts in private schools of urban area.

Conclusion and Implications

The finding that gender has significant impact of social skill is supported by the findings of Pearson and Hall (2006). Boys scoring higher in social skills than girls are in contradiction with the findings of Abdi (2010). Girls scored higher on affective skills than boys. In patriarchal form of society, females face emotional challenges at home and society and they tend to use more emotion focused coping (Olah, 1995), which in turn strengthen their affective skills like managing emotions, coping with stress etc. Further, girls scored higher in cognitive skills than boys. The changing trends of technology, indulgence, participation in outdoor activities, rising education and job opportunities for girls have brought drastic enhancement in skills.

Region has significant impact on social skills. The urban students possessed higher social skills than the rural students. It is in conformity with the findings of Kahn (1945). Students of urban schools are more socially skilled than rural students. Affective skills of urban students are greater than rural students. Urban students get opportunity to socially interact and face challenges

and competitions in academics. Rural adolescents experience more isolation and loneliness. Likewise, urban students scored higher on cognitive skills in comparison to rural students.

Type of school has significant impact on social skills. Private school students are more skilled socially than government school students. Extracurricular activities, field trips, interactive projects, and school environment play important role in the life of students. Affective skills of private school students are better than government school students. The school environment and classroom activities had direct impact on the development of soft skill development among students. Further, government school students scored higher on cognitive skills than private school students. Findings are in conformity with the findings of Amy et.al (2013) that schools have significant impact on cognitive skills. It has become necessary to organize life skills oriented seminars, workshops, training programmes etc. in schools for students.

Significant interaction effect of gender and region was found on cognitive skills. Both male and female students of urban schools scored higher in cognitive skills than their counterparts in rural areas. Significant interaction effect of region and type of school was observed on social skills of students. In both rural and urban areas, private students were found to be more socially skilled than government school students. Similarly, significant interaction effect of region and type of school was observed on cognitive skills. The private schools students of rural and urban areas were better in cognitive skills than government school students. These finding are in conformity with Lex Borghans, Bart, Golstein and Zolitz (2015) that there exists relation between school quality and the development of cognitive skills.

Further significant interaction effect of region and type of school was found on affective skills of students. The government school students scored higher on affective skills in comparison to private school students of urban areas but in rural areas private schools students scored more than government school students in rural areas. Intervention programmes in private schools and encouragement of students to participate and experience varied activities help in building affective skills.

No significant interaction effect of gender, region and type of schools was observed on social skills of higher secondary school students but significant interaction effect of these dimensions was observed on cognitive skills. Girls of urban private schools were

better in cognitive skills than girls of urban government schools. Similar findings were found for girls of rural schools. It is assumed that it is probably not the material differences that make the private schools more effective but it has more to do with their organisational structure (Hanushek, 2003). In rural private schools, boys scored higher on cognitive skills than government school boys. The reason may be that private schools are more technically efficient, producing higher achievement level, appropriate students-teacher ratio, lower teacher absenteeism (Tookey, James and Paula Dixon, 2006, Muralidharan and Kremer, 2006). Boys of government schools of rural area scored higher on cognitive skills than boys of private schools.

Significant interaction effect of gender, region and type of school was found on affective skills of higher secondary school students. Boys of government schools of urban area scored higher on affective skills than boys of private schools. Further boys of private schools in rural areas scored higher than boys of government schools. Probably frequent organisation of soft skill development seminars, workshops etc in private schools have positive impact on coping with stress, problem solving ability, critical thinking, creative thinking and empathy. Findings further indicate girls of private schools of urban area scored higher than girls of government schools. Likewise girls of private school of rural area scored higher than girls of government schools. Based on this, it can be said that life skill intervention for rural adolescent girls can improve their ability to cope with stress, problem solving ability, critical thinking etc.

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