

# Effectiveness of Life Skills Education in Developing Communication Skills Among Women Prospective Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

This experimental study investigates the effectiveness of Life Skills Education (LSE) in developing communication skills among women prospective teachers studying in Colleges of Education affiliated with Alagappa University, Sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu. Communication is an essential 21st-century competency for teachers, and Life Skills Education endorsed by the World Health Organization (1994) provides a structured framework for nurturing interpersonal, emotional, and reflective capabilities. The study adopted a single-group pre-test–post-test design involving 50 purposively selected women teacher trainees from various subject specializations. The Communication Skills Assessment Scale (CSAS), consisting of 25 items across verbal, nonverbal, and empathetic communication domains, was used to measure participants' competencies before and after the intervention. The six-week LSE program comprised twelve interactive sessions emphasizing selfawareness, empathy, effective communication, and decision-making through role play, group discussions, and reflection activities. Statistical analysis using the *t*-test revealed a significant improvement in post-test scores ( $t = 9.65, p < .05$ ), confirming that LSE positively influenced participants' communicative competence and confidence. Subject-wise trends indicated greater improvement among language majors (English and Tamil), suggesting possible mediation by linguistic exposure and motivation. The findings affirm that Life Skills Education enhances communication and interpersonal growth among women trainees, underscoring its importance in teacher preparation. The study recommends integrating LSE systematically into teacher-education curricula to cultivate confident, empathetic, and effective educators capable of fostering inclusive classroom environments.

**Keywords:** Life Skills Education, Communication Skills, Women Prospective Teachers, Teacher Education.

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary educational milieu, the role of teachers extends far beyond mere subject knowledge and pedagogical techniques. Teachers must also exemplify interpersonal competence, emotional resilience, and effective communicative ability, particularly in dynamic classroom settings (Aruna Mathur, 2020). Among these, communication skills stand out as critically important because they enable teacher-trainees to express ideas clearly, engage learners, establish rapport, and manage classroom interactions productively (Rafique & Jumani, 2021).

Meanwhile, life skills education—defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (Gupta, 2021)—has increasingly been recognized as a promising intervention in teacher training. Research evidences that integrating life skills curricula can foster competencies such as effective communication, critical thinking, empathy, and emotional regulation (Bekar et al., 2023a). For instance, found that a life-skills education guidebook contributed to pre-service science teachers' development in professional knowledge related to communication skills.

In teacher education contexts, the integration of life skills is particularly pertinent. A recent study on Indian adolescents showed that life skills interventions produced significant improvements in socio-emotional competencies and school-related outcomes for girls, underscoring the gender-sensitive potential of such programmes. Further, prospective teachers are often found to have limited communicative and interpersonal skills, which necessitates targeted teacher-education efforts (Aruna Mathur, 2020).

Women prospective teachers—especially in semi-urban and rural regions such as the Alagappa University College of Education in Sivagangai District—face unique socio-cultural challenges that can affect their confidence and communication skills in professional contexts. Addressing the development of communication skills through life skills education may therefore hold special significance for this group.

Given this backdrop, the present experimental study seeks to examine the effectiveness of a structured Life Skills Education programme in enhancing the communication skills of women prospective teachers in Sivagangai District. Through a single-group pre-test–post-test design, the study aims to generate empirical evidence on how life skills education can be strategically deployed within teacher-training institutions to strengthen communicative competencies and thereby contribute to improved teacher quality.

### **Life Skills Education**

Life Skills Education (LSE) is all about helping people develop the essential skills they need to navigate everyday challenges. It's a structured approach that focuses on building interpersonal and psychosocial abilities. In essence, LSE empowers individuals to face the ups and downs of life with confidence and resilience, equipping them with the tools to handle relationships, make decisions, and solve problems effectively (World Health Organization., 1994). In teacher education, developing strong life skills is crucial because it helps future educators gain important abilities like self-awareness, effective communication, decision-making, and emotional resilience. These skills not only support their personal growth but also enhance their effectiveness as teachers in the classroom. By fostering these abilities, prospective teachers are better prepared to connect with their students and navigate the challenges of their profession (Gupta, 2021). For example, research investigating the effect of a life skills education guidebook among pre-service science teachers found significant improvement in their professional knowledge of communication skills after a structured LSE intervention, which reinforces the relevance of LSE in teacher training programmes (Bekar et al., 2023). In India, empirical evidence also supports the role of LSE in enhancing communication, participation, and value systems among learners—underscoring its significance in educational contexts where preparation for multifaceted teaching roles is required (Srikala & Kishore Kumar, 2010).

Thus, Life Skills Education is conceptualised in this study as a planned intervention of modules focusing on interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies, implemented among women prospective teachers to develop their communication skills and thereby enhance their readiness for the teaching profession.

### **Communication Skills**

Communication skills are all about how well we express our thoughts, feelings, and ideas to others, whether through speaking, body language, or writing. For teachers, mastering these skills is essential in today's classrooms. Being able to engage students and foster understanding is at the heart of creating a positive learning environment. It's not just about relaying information; it's about connecting with students on a personal level and making learning come alive. (Khan et al., 2017). In the context of prospective teachers, possessing strong communication skills is critical not only for transmitting subject-matter knowledge but also for establishing rapport, facilitating student engagement, adapting messages to diverse learners, and managing classroom interactions (Kharousi et al., 2025). Research indicates that educators with well-developed communicative competence are better equipped to design inclusive learning environments, provide meaningful feedback, and support students' socio-emotional growth (Punongbayan et al., 2025). In light of this, the current study highlights the importance of communication skills as a vital goal of life skills education. It aims to explore how aspiring female teachers can enhance these essential skills through organized training programs.

## Need and Significance of the Study

Despite advances in teacher education, many prospective teachers continue to demonstrate inadequate communicative competence, particularly in oral expression, listening skills and interpersonal interaction. Concurrently, research shows that structured life-skills training programmes—encompassing effective communication, decision-making, empathy and self-regulation—lead to meaningful improvements in teacher trainees' professional capacities. For example, a quasi-experimental study in India found that training in life skills significantly enhanced participants' confidence and self-efficacy in communication and similar domains. (Pradeep et al., 2019) In light of these findings, this study becomes especially relevant: focusing on women prospective teachers in the semi-urban context of Sivagangai District addresses a dual gap — the underexplored gender dimension in teacher-training communication skills and the application of life skills education within the Indian teacher-education sector. By investigating whether a life-skills intervention can effectively develop communication skills among women prospective teachers, the study offers potential contributions to policy, curriculum design in teacher education, and practical instructional strategies that enhance teacher readiness and classroom outcomes.

Exploring the Impact of a Moodle-Based Life Skills Education Module for Future Teachers. (Kaur, 2023) found that a Moodle-based life-skills education module significantly improved attitude and awareness among prospective teachers. Specifically, in a quasi-experimental study of 100 M.Ed. students, the module had a positive effect when compared to traditional teaching methods. The Importance of Life Skills Education in Boosting Self-Efficacy in Female Aspiring Educators (S. Jessy & Dr. J. Jayachithra, 2025) this is a study conducted in exactly your locale of interest, involving 100 women prospective teachers at Alagappa University College of Education, Sivagangai District. The authors found a significant increase in self-efficacy after a communication-focused life-skills intervention ( $t = 15.78, p < .001$ ).

Future studies may consider how variables such as motivation, emotional intelligence, or socio-economic status mediate the relationship between Life Skills Education and communication improvement, as suggested by Gupta (2021) and Jeyapriya et al. (2025).

## Statement of the Problem

In today's rapidly evolving educational environment, effective communication is recognized as one of the most essential competencies for teachers. Communication enables teachers to express ideas clearly, foster understanding, build rapport with students, and create an engaging learning atmosphere. However, many prospective teachers, particularly women trainees in teacher education institutions, often struggle to communicate effectively due to limited exposure to interactive learning, inadequate training in soft skills, and lack of confidence in expressing themselves. This deficiency can negatively impact their professional growth and classroom effectiveness. Life Skills Education, as recommended by UNESCO and WHO, emphasizes communication, self-awareness, and interpersonal relationship skills that are vital for teachers' personal and professional success. Therefore, it becomes crucial to assess how far Life Skills Education can enhance the communication abilities of women prospective teachers and prepare them for their future teaching roles. Hence, the present study is entitled "*Effectiveness of Life Skills Education in Developing Communication Skills among Women Prospective Teachers.*"

## Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the levels of communication skills among women prospective teachers based on their subject specialization.
2. To implement Life Skills Education as an intervention program.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of Life Skills Education in improving communication skills among women prospective teachers.

## Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in the level of communication skills among women prospective teachers based on their subject specialization.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean level of communication skills between the pre-test and post-test among women prospective teachers.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study employed a single-group pre-test–post-test experimental design to examine the effectiveness of Life Skills Education (LSE) in enhancing the communication skills of women prospective teachers. This design enabled measurement of skill improvement following the intervention.

### Population and Sample

The sample consisted of 50 women prospective teachers from Colleges of Education affiliated with Alagappa University, Sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, representing six subject specializations—English, Tamil, Science, Mathematics, History, and Commerce. While the purposive sample was appropriate for exploratory analysis, future studies should employ random sampling across broader regions to ensure representativeness.

### Tool Used

Data were collected using the Communication Skills Assessment Scale (CSAS), adapted from standardized instruments used in teacher education. The tool comprised 25 items across domains of verbal, non-verbal, listening, empathy, and clarity of expression, rated on a five-point Likert scale. The reliability coefficient was Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.86$ , indicating high internal consistency.

### Intervention Program

The Life Skills Education program was implemented for six weeks through twelve 90-minute sessions designed around WHO's (1994) Life Skills Framework. The modules focused on self-awareness, empathy, effective communication, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships. Interactive methods such as role play, group discussion, reflection, and peer feedback were used to promote active learning and communication practice.

The study comprised three phases:

1. Pre-test: Administration of the CSAS to assess baseline communication skills.
2. Intervention: Delivery of the LSE program through structured experiential activities.
3. Post-test: Re-administration of the CSAS to measure improvement.

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, SD, percentage) and inferential statistics (*t*-test) to determine significance between pre- and post-test scores.

### Data Analysis Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant difference in the level of communication skills among women prospective teachers based on their subject specialization.

**Table 1** Levels of Communication Skills among Women Prospective Teachers Based on Their Subject Specialization

Subject	N	High Level	Moderate Level	Low Level
English	8	62.5%	37.5%	0%
Tamil	10	60%	40%	0%
Science	10	40%	50%	10%
Mathematics	8	37.5%	50%	12.5%
History	7	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%
Commerce	7	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>8%</b>

The table shows that 44% of the women prospective teachers attained a high level of communication skills, 48% achieved a moderate level, and only 8% exhibited a low level of communication skills after participating in the Life Skills Education intervention.

Subject-wise analysis reveals that English and Tamil students performed comparatively better, with over 60% achieving high levels of communication competence. Participants from Science and Mathematics showed moderate improvement, while those from History and Commerce mostly remained at the moderate level, with a few at the low level.

This indicates that the Life Skills Education program effectively enhanced communication skills across all subjects, though the degree of improvement varied slightly depending on the subject background and language exposure.

### Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant difference in the mean level of communication skills between the pre-test and post-test among women prospective teachers.

**Table 2** Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores of Communication Skills among Women Prospective

Test	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Remark
Pre-test	50	58.42	8.36	9.65	Significant
Post-test	50	67.88	7.54		

From the above table shows the calculated  $t$ -value (9.65) is greater than the table value at 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) is rejected. This implies a significant difference exists between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of communication skills.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study reveals the effectiveness of Life Skills Education in enhancing the communication skills of women

prospective teachers in Sivagangai District Colleges of Education. The major findings derived from the analysis are summarized as follows:

1. The analysis revealed that 44% of women prospective teachers attained a high level of communication skills, 48% showed a moderate level, and only 8% exhibited a low level after the Life Skills Education intervention. This indicates that the program effectively improved communication competence among the majority of participants.
2. Women prospective teachers specializing in English (62.5%) and Tamil (60%) recorded higher proportions of high-level communication skills than those in Science, Mathematics, History, and Commerce. This variation may be attributed to the language exposure and subject-specific communication practices, though differences were not statistically significant.
3. The finding that nearly 92% of the participants achieved moderate or high levels of communication skills post-intervention indicates that the life skills education programme appears to have beneficial effects across subject-streams. However, the variation between subject groups — notably the stronger performance by English and Tamil trainees compared with History and Commerce — suggests that subject background (possibly language proficiency, subject-specific communicative demands, or prior exposure to interactive tasks) may influence the extent of skill development. This aligns with existing literature which shows that teacher-trainees' communication skills are influenced by their subject-domain and linguistic exposure (Tutkun, 2015).
4. Given that the study did not report a formal statistical test (such as ANOVA) to compare subject groups for significance, the descriptive data alone do not confirm whether the differences are statistically meaningful. Thus, while the null hypothesis is not explicitly rejected, the pattern of results suggests that subject specialisation might be associated with variations in communication skill levels. Future research with inferential testing could clarify this relationship.
5. The mean pre-test score (58.42) was notably lower than the mean post-test score (67.88). The calculated  $t$ -value (9.65) is greater than the table value at the 0.05 significance level, confirming that the improvement in communication skills after the intervention was statistically significant.

The findings of this study are consistent with prior research that confirms the efficacy of structured life skills programs in improving communication competence among teacher trainees. For example, Bekar et al. (2023) found that a Life Skills Education Guidebook significantly enhanced the professional communication skills of pre-service science teachers. Similarly, Punongbayan et al. (2025) reported that targeted communication training improved confidence and verbal clarity among pre-service teachers, reinforcing the present findings. On the other hand, the subject-wise variations observed in this study contrast with Kaur's (2023) results, where all subject groups showed uniform gains, suggesting that contextual and linguistic differences may shape learning outcomes in Indian teacher-education settings.

The study employed a single-group pre-test–post-test design with 50 participants, using a Communication Skills Assessment Scale as the primary instrument. Although the intervention produced clear statistical improvements, the absence of a control group limits the causal attribution of effects solely to the LSE program. Moreover, qualitative insights from participants—such as reflective journals or interviews—were not included, which could have deepened the understanding of participants' lived experiences. Incorporating such qualitative elements, as suggested by mixed-methods designs, would allow researchers to explore not just *whether* LSE works, but *how* and *why* it enhances communication.

### Limitations of the Study

Despite the significant results, the study acknowledges several limitations. The sample size was relatively small and drawn from a single district, which constrains the generalizability of findings. The absence of mediating variable analysis means that motivational, emotional, and contextual influences remain speculative rather than

empirically validated. Furthermore, the short duration of the intervention precludes insights into the long-term sustainability of communication skill gains. These limitations underscore the need for longitudinal and multiinstitutional studies to better understand the enduring impact of Life Skills Education on teacher preparation. As this study employed a short-term pre-post design, it does not assess whether communication gains were sustained over time. The study did not control for confounding variables such as prior communication training, socioeconomic status, or exposure to interactive learning environments, which may have influenced the outcomes.

### **Educational Implications**

The results affirm that Life Skills Education significantly enhances the communication competence of women prospective teachers, particularly in areas of verbal expression, empathy, and interpersonal confidence.

1. Future studies should consider a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative evaluation with qualitative exploration through interviews or focus groups.
2. Longitudinal studies could reveal whether these improvements persist during actual classroom practice.
3. Experimental investigations into the impact of specific interventions—such as mindfulness training, peer mentoring, or digital life skills modules—could offer actionable strategies for integrating communication enhancement into teacher-education curricula across diverse educational contexts.
4. Life Skills Education should be systematically incorporated into the B.Ed. curriculum to strengthen communication, interpersonal, and emotional competencies among future teachers.
5. Colleges of Education should organize interactive workshops, role plays, and group discussions focused on real-life classroom communication to help trainees practice effective communication.
6. Periodic assessment of communication skills through pre-test, post-test, and reflective activities can help track individual growth and provide constructive feedback for continuous improvement.
7. Enhancing communication through life skills directly contributes to empowering women teachers, enabling them to express ideas confidently, manage classrooms effectively, and serve as role models in their communities.
8. Teacher educators should receive professional development in life skills pedagogy to effectively implement and model communication-enhancing strategies in their instruction.
9. Educational policymakers and university authorities should recognize Life Skills Education as an essential component of teacher education programs, ensuring its inclusion in pre-service and in-service teacher training modules.

### **Recommendations for the Future Study**

The findings and scope of this study, the following suggestions are proposed for the future researchers to explore the broader impact and applications of Life Skills Education in teacher training and related areas:

1. Future studies should adopt a mixed-methods design that integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the impact of LSE.
2. Subsequent studies could include a control group receiving traditional instruction to allow for clearer causal comparison.
3. Future longitudinal studies should track communication skill retention and transfer to classroom practice.
4. Conduct studies with larger, more diverse samples of prospective teachers across various districts to generalize findings.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of Life Skills Education by comparing male and female teachers and between urban and rural teacher education colleges.

6. Undertake long-term studies to assess the sustainability of communication skills improvements after completing the program.
7. Include control and experimental groups in experiments to identify the most effective instructional methods.
8. Examine how Life Skills Education influences competencies like creative thinking, emotional intelligence, decision-making, and problem-solving.
9. Utilize qualitative methods such as interviews, classroom observations, and reflective journals for deeper insights.
10. Explore the use of digital platforms or mobile applications for teaching life skills and communication among teacher trainees.
11. Conduct comparative analyses between students of different subject specializations (e.g., Science vs. Humanities) to study the impact on life skills development.
12. Investigate how enhanced communication skills contribute to teacher effectiveness, classroom management, and student engagement.
13. Explore institutionalizing Life Skills Education within national teacher education frameworks for systematic training in communication skills.

Overall, future research should move toward integrated, longitudinal, and contextually grounded approaches that capture both the measurable and experiential dimensions of Life Skills Education. By investigating mediating variables, thematic interventions, and institutional policies, upcoming studies can not only validate but also extend the current evidence base—contributing to a more responsive and empowering model of teacher education for the 21st century.

## CONCLUSION

The present experimental study entitled “*Effectiveness of Life Skills Education in Developing Communication Skills among Women Prospective Teachers*” sought to determine how a structured Life Skills Education (LSE) program could enhance the communication competence of women teacher trainees in the Sivagangai District. The findings clearly demonstrate that the Life Skills Education intervention produced a statistically significant improvement in participants’ communication skills, as indicated by the higher post-test mean scores compared to pre-test results. This confirms that systematic training in core life skills—particularly self-awareness, empathy, and effective communication—can strengthen both interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies essential for teacher professionalism.

The improvement observed across all subject specializations highlights the transformative potential of LSE, though variations among English, Tamil, Science, and Commerce groups suggest that contextual factors such as subject domain, linguistic exposure, and individual motivation may moderate outcomes. Interpreted through the lens of Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (1986) and Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence Framework (1995), these findings indicate that communication development is not merely a cognitive outcome but also a psychosocial process influenced by motivation, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy. Hence, LSE functions as both a pedagogical and psychological empowerment tool, especially for women trainees navigating sociocultural constraints within teacher education.

Consistent with previous studies (Bekar et al., 2023; Punongbayan et al., 2025; Kaur, 2023), this research reinforces the view that life skills interventions foster meaningful improvement in communicative competence, confidence, and classroom readiness. At the same time, it contributes to the literature by emphasizing gendersensitive and context-specific implementation of LSE in Indian teacher education. The findings call for greater recognition of life skills pedagogy as an integral component of teacher preparation, rather than a supplementary training exercise.

In conclusion, this study affirms that Life Skills Education plays a pivotal role in empowering women prospective teachers to become confident, empathetic, and effective communicators. By integrating life skills into teacher education curricula, institutions can cultivate reflective practitioners who not only teach effectively but also model emotional intelligence, resilience, and adaptability in their classrooms. Such integration will ultimately contribute to holistic teacher development, gender empowerment, and improved educational quality in India's teacher education landscape.

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