



ISSN (E): 2277- 7695

ISSN (P): 2349-8242

NAAS Rating: 5.03

TPI 2020; 9(12): 228-232

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Received: 17-10-2020

Accepted: 21-11-2020

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## Impact of life skills education on emotional intelligence of young women in Hyderabad, India

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#### Abstract

Young women were facing many more problems in their daily life and struggling a lot to establish their career and family life. These differences laid many social and emotional problems among young women. Life Skill is considered as psychosocial competences which enable an individual to develop adaptive and positive behaviour so as to deal effectively with challenges and demands of everyday life. Those basic skills are essential to promote overall well-being and competence in young women to face the realities of life in the society. Life skills helps the individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday. Hence an intervention programme based on life skills was developed and implemented among young women to enhance their emotional intelligence. The samples were comprised of 120 young women in Hyderabad, India. Emotional intelligence was assessed through (SEIS) before and after intervention. The results revealed that there was significant mean difference existing between pre and post-test with respect to overall emotional intelligence and its components. Hence, it can be inferred that LSE helped the young women to inculcate emotionally progressive behaviours and thus, enhance their emotional intelligence.

**Keywords:** life skills education (LSE), emotional intelligence, well-being, psychosocial competence, Sevenfold Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS), intervention

#### Introduction

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. It has the following common components or factors: perceiving, understanding, using, and managing emotions. Perceiving as well as utilizing and managing emotions is essential to everyday practice. The value of EI is immense; developing emotional intelligence encourages many positive traits, from resilience to communication, motivation to stress management, all of which can be seen as conducive to effectively achieving personal, physical and occupational health, and success.

Young women play a pivotal role in the family and the community, shouldering all the responsibilities providing the needs and comforts of the family member than nurturing their own needs. The high expectations placed on women put them under immense pressure and are detrimental to their well-being. If functioning at high stress levels, women may not even recognize what their needs are and suffers from health and mental illness. This may hinder their self-growth and lose their sense of self-worth. Several studies revealed that young women experience more stress than men because of work-family conflict situations. It might be because of dual roles i.e. familial and professional. The competitive world imposed the stress such as accomplishment with regard to higher education, unpredictable professional environment, unequal pay and treatment, etc. Moreover, young women also encounter with challenging roles and responsibilities in personal life as being a partner, daughter, a parent and financial management will often lead to stress among young women (Reddy *et al.*, 2018; Iwasaki *et al.*, 2004; Sulsky and Smith, 2005) [8, 4, 10]. This shows women were more emotionally distressed than men.

Life skills education empower the women to meet the challenges in work and familial life and increase their sense of self-worth. Life skills include several key skills that include: Problem-solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, adaptive interpersonal behaviours, self-awareness, empathy with others, and coping with negative emotions and stressors. These skills contribute to emotional intelligence. This also helps them to deal with the stress and frustration effectively. Moreover, it also helps them to develop negotiation and resilience skills which is crucial for managing intra and interpersonal relationship. Several studies were conducted on effectiveness

of life skills training on overall well-being of individuals. Bidabadi *et al.*, (2016) <sup>[1]</sup> investigated the effectiveness of Life Skills Training on improving Emotional Intelligence in undergraduate students of Isfahan. The results showed that there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the increase rates of interpersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability and general mood among experimental groups.

Pujar (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> concludes in his study that the intervention on life skill education is helpful for rural adolescent girls in order to take positive actions and improving their coping skills of stress and problem-solving ability. The study focused that life skills are essential for adolescents to face critical situations in their life.

Roodbari *et al.*, (2013) <sup>[9]</sup> in their research showed that life skills training has a positive effect and improves social development, emotional and social adjustment.

Lolaty *et al.*, (2012) <sup>[5]</sup> examined the effect of Life Skills Training on Emotional Intelligence of the Medical Sciences Students in Iran. The results revealed that the scores of emotional intelligence after life skills training were significantly improved, while no significant difference was observed in the control group.

A Research study conducted by Damirchi (2010) <sup>[3]</sup> on the Impact of Life Skills Training program on Emotional maturity among high School Students, emphasizes that the prepared Life Skills training program had been effective in increasing the Emotional maturity of high-school students in the experimental group.

Nelis and colleagues (2009) <sup>[6]</sup> studied the methods of promoting emotional intelligence showed that, teaching communication skills, controlling negative emotions, anger and stress management strategies as a group, promoted emotional intelligence among individuals.

## Objectives

- To study the socio-demographic profile of the young women.
- To assess the existing level of emotional intelligence among young women.
- To study the effectiveness of life skills education on emotional intelligence of young women.

## Research Methods

Based upon the nature of the research problem and objectives of the present study, Experimental research design was opted for the study. Hyderabad from Telangana state was purposively chosen as the locale of the study because of convenience of the investigator to carry out the work in terms of time, effort and money. Koti women's college and Nizam College under Osmania University was purposively selected because of the availability and easy accessibility of the respondents. In this study, samples comprising of 120 young women under the age groups of 18-35 years i.e. 60 young women from each colleges were randomly selected. The interview schedule was designed to collect the socio demographic profile such as age, educational background, occupational status etc. The sevenfold emotional intelligence scale developed by Dr. Sarabjit Kaur was used for the present study to assess the level of emotional intelligence before and after intervention. An intervention programme based on life skills education was developed and implemented considering 10 components as defined by WHO, among young women for a duration of 45 days. Frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations and paired t- test were used to analyze the collected data.

## Research Findings and Discussions

**Table 1:** General profile of the young women

S. No	Respondent Variables	Koti Women's College (n=60)		Nizam College (n=60)		Total (N=120)	
		F	P	F	P	F	P
1.	<b>Age</b>						
	18-23 Years	20	33	20	33	40	33
	24 - 29 Years	20	34	20	33	40	34
	30 - 35 Years	20	33	20	33	40	33
2.	<b>Education</b>						
	Undergraduate	36	60	31	52	67	56
	Post-Graduate	24	40	29	48	53	44
3.	<b>Occupation</b>						
	Student	57	95	55	92	112	93
	Other Job	3	5	5	8	8	7
4.	<b>Marital Status</b>						
	Unmarried	39	65	43	72	82	68
	Married	21	35	17	28	38	32
5.	<b>Number of siblings</b>						
	1-2	29	48	23	38	52	43
	3-4	19	32	28	47	47	39
	5 and above	12	20	9	15	21	18
6.	<b>Ordinal position</b>						
	First born	19	31	10	17	29	24
	Second born	25	42	38	63	63	53
	Later born	16	27	12	20	28	23

**Note:** 'F' represents frequency and 'p' represents percentage

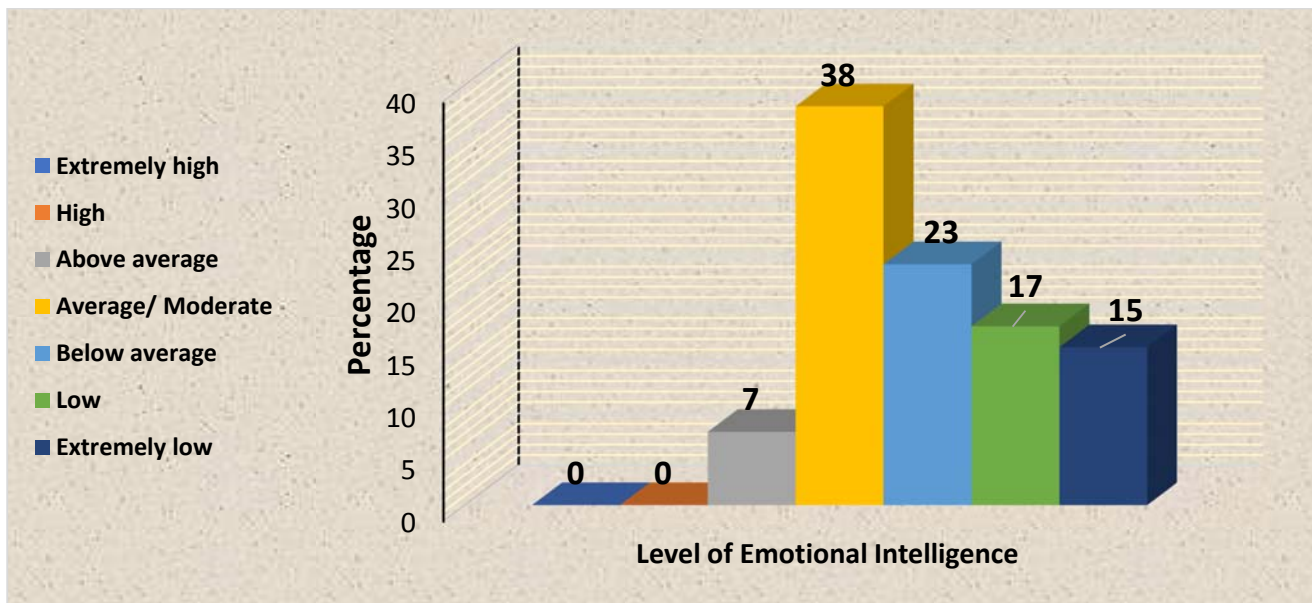
The study showed that an equal number of young women i.e. (33%) constituted the total samples from the three age groups i.e. 18-23 years, 24-29 years and 30-35 years. An equal number of young women were selected from both colleges comprising of 33% for three age groups. More than half of the young women (56%) were undergraduates and slightly less than half of the samples (44%) were post graduates. Most of the sample (93%) were students pursuing their graduation and post-graduation and very few (7%) were engaged in contractual jobs. More than two third of the sample (68%) were unmarried and nearly one-third (32%) of the young women were married. Almost equal no. of samples i.e. 43% and 39% had 1-2 and 3-4 siblings respectively followed by few samples (18%) had 5 and above siblings. It also revealed that slightly more than half of the respondents (53%) were second born followed by almost equal quarters of samples i.e. 24% and 23% were first born and

later born respectively.

**Table 2:** Distribution of young women based on their Emotional Intelligence before (LSE) intervention program (N=120)

S. No.	Level of Emotional Intelligence	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1.	Extremely high	-	-
2.	High	-	-
3.	Above average	8	7
4.	Average/ Moderate	46	38
5.	Below average	28	23
6.	Low	20	17
7.	Extremely low	18	15

**Note:** ‘F’ represents frequency and ‘P’ represents percentage



**Fig 1:** Level of Emotional Intelligence among young women before (LSE) intervention program

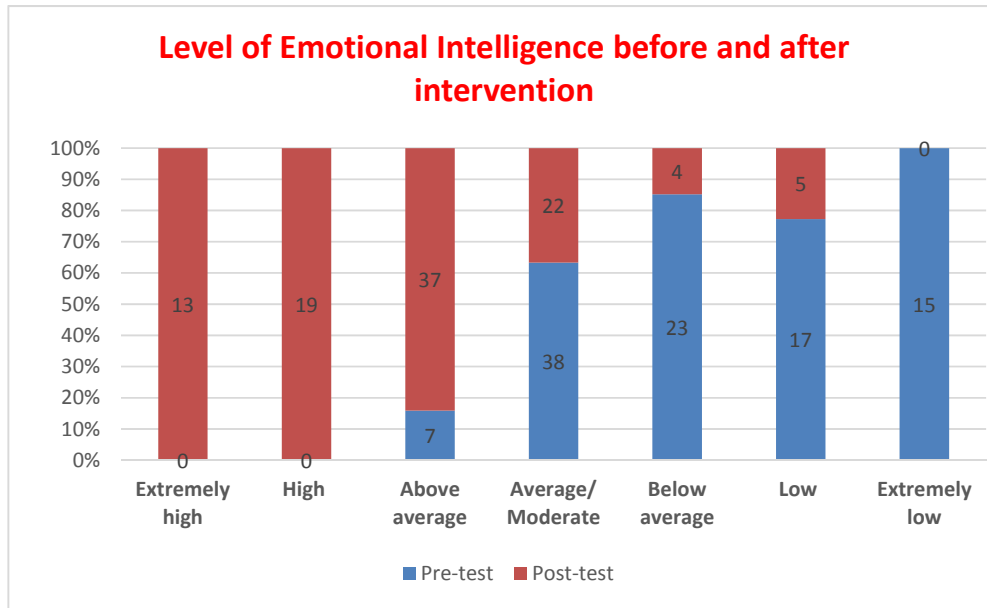
The above figure depicts the status of emotional intelligence among young women. More than one third (38%) of the young women had moderate level and nearly quarter of them (23%) had below average level of emotional intelligence. Almost equal percent of less than one fourth of young women had scored low (17%) and extremely low (15%) levels on overall emotional intelligence respectively. It is important here to note that, none of the young women had ‘high’ and ‘extremely high’ levels of emotional intelligence before the life skill education offered. This might be because young women were found to be

emotionally unstable, possess emotionally regressive behaviours like feeling inferior and were unable to handle/ manage their own emotions as well as of others. The results were in accordance with the study published by Vimala and Madhavi (2009) [11] that women were more emotionally distressed and shows physical signs of stress because of their overburdened life. Similar results were found in study conducted by Chaudhari *et al.*, (2014) revealed that increase in stress levels are found in female health care professionals

**Table 3:** Distribution of young women based on their Emotional Intelligence before and after intervention (N=120)

S. No.	Level of Emotional Intelligence	Pre-Test		Post-test	
		Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1.	Extremely high	-	-	16	13
2.	High	-	-	23	19
3.	Above average	8	7	44	37
4.	Average/ Moderate	46	38	26	22
5.	Below average	28	23	5	4
6.	Low	20	17	6	5
7.	Extremely low	18	15	-	-

**Note:** ‘F’ represents frequency and ‘P’ represents percentage



**Fig 2:** Level of Emotional Intelligence before and after Life skills Education

It can be found from the above table that, there are post intervention changes in the levels of emotional intelligence of young women. Before intervention, majority of them were falling under average, below average, low and extremely low category & very few of them were under above average category. None of the young women under high and extremely high category.

On contrary to this, after intervention, majority of the young women fell under above average, high and extremely high category. Very few/ meagre percentage of young women fell under low category whereas none of them were under

extremely low category.

It specifies that, Life skill education has enhanced the young women’s ability to understand, use, monitor and manage their own emotions in positive ways which helped them to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict and gain positive personality traits. The results were in congruence with the study published by Lolaty *et al.*, (2012) [5] which revealed that life skills education helped the medical sciences students in enhancing their emotional intelligence skills.

**Table 4:** Mean differences in emotional intelligence among young women before and after Life Skills Education program

S. No.	Components of EI	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Differences	‘t’ value	P value
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D			
1	Self-awareness and appraisal	20.45	3.98	24.60	4.51	4.14	12.58	.000**
2	Self-regulation and responsibility	28.67	5.57	35.28	5.58	6.61	14.75	.000**
3	Self-motivation	21.67	4.08	25.41	4.05	3.74	10.33	.000**
4	Self-esteem and confidence	17.64	3.17	21.58	3.68	3.93	13.35	.000**
5	Empathy and acceptance of others	22.32	4.05	28.63	3.72	6.31	17.58	.000**
6	Interpersonal relations	20.67	4.07	26.42	3.24	5.75	18.11	.000**
7	Social skills	52.99	9.15	63.83	8.84	10.84	19.15	.000**
	Overall Emotional Intelligence	184.43	25.40	225.75	25.13	41.36	26.91	.000**

**Note:** \*\*Significance at ( $P < 0.01$ ) level of probability

**Testing of Hypothesis**

**Null Hypothesis:** The null hypothesis (H0) assumes that there will not be any significant mean difference existing between pre and post LSE intervention programme with respect to Overall emotional intelligence and its components.

**Empirical Hypothesis:** The Empirical Hypothesis (H1) assumes that there will be significant mean difference existing between pre and post LSE intervention programme with respect to overall emotional intelligence and its components.

**Overall Emotional Intelligence**

From the above table, it is clearly seen that before intervention the mean scores of EI among young women were 184.43 which were later increased to 225.75 after intervention. An inference could be drawn from the table that there was a significant

difference in mean scores of emotional intelligence and its components as t value was found to be significant at 0.01 level of probability. Thus, null hypothesis was rejected and empirical hypothesis may be accepted.

It was noteworthy to mention that mean scores of EI were considerably low during pre-test. This might be because young women were unable to cope with emotionally-charged situations i.e., unable to monitor and regulate their own emotions and beliefs as well as of others and often emotionally outburst. They were lacking in self-esteem, empathy skills and had difficulty in managing relationships with others. Moreover, they had communication gaps and refusing and blaming behaviour towards others.

On the contrast, it was promising to note that there were significant differences with regard to overall emotional intelligence scores in post-test. Hence, it means that LSE



played a crucial role in enhancing emotional intelligence and dealing effectively with various stressful life situations. The LSE had helped the young women to better understand, regulate and manage one's own emotions as well as of others. This also helped them in maintaining healthy relationships and thus maintain a healthier social life. Their mental health also improved as they acquired the skills of how to be adaptive in stressful life events and coping them with best possible alternatives. Young women had developed empathy skills and improved their self-esteem and confidence and helped them in gaining insights on the impinging problems of day to day life. Hence it can be inferred that LSE was effective in helping the individuals in improving their emotional intelligence and help them in meeting daily needs and challenges.

### Conclusion

Young women experience more stress and were emotionally unstable because of their dual roles and socio-cultural practices. Lack of life skills will lead to emotional and social problems in the individual's life. Hence an educational programme based on life skills proved to be an effective psychosocial approach for promoting positive emotional well-being among young women which plays an important role in all aspects such as strengthening coping strategies and developing self-confidence and overall emotional intelligence, as well as enhancing critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making skills as has been well documented in the aforementioned studies. Thus, there is, significance and importance of life skills education to be integrated into the regular college/office curriculum and given on a daily basis by a life skills trainer/ counsellor to enhance the mental health/ emotional well-being of young women, equip them with better adapted skills to face the challenges of changing life situations and empower them to become fully functioning contributors to the host society in particular and the world in general. In the light of above discussion, it could be concluded, that, Life skill education has its importance and significance in enhancing emotional intelligence of young women.

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