

EFFECT OF SOFT SKILLS EDUCATION ON SELF COMPETENCE OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINEES

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is based on the study of impact of soft skills Education on self competence of pre-service teacher trainees. Soft Skills refers to the practice of skill sets that are crucial to an employee's ability to work better, smarter and more effectively. Soft skills are combination of impressive behavior, positive attitude, outstanding communication skills, leadership abilities and the ability to get along with and influence others. The present study highlights three dimensions of Soft Skills : Employability Skills, Communication Skills, Higher Order Thinking Skills. The study was limited to 200 Bachelor of Education students. Self Competence Questionnaire constructed by the investigator, and Soft Skills Modules related to B.Ed curriculum developed by investigator was used to collect the data. The results of the study revealed that Soft Skills have overall utility for pre-service teacher trainees. A significant difference exists between the scores of pre test and post test scores of self competence of pre-service teacher trainees. As the mean score of post test scores of self competence of pre-service teacher trainees was higher than that of pre test scores, it may be concluded that soft skills education has a significant effect on self competence of pre-service teacher trainees. Pre-service teacher trainees found soft skills education Programme useful for improving employability skills, communication skills and higher order thinking skills among them. The Pre service Teacher Trainees like and accept Soft Skill Education Programme.

Key words: *soft skills Education, self competence and pre service teacher trainees.*

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It is of high importance for everyone to acquire adequate skills beyond academic or technical knowledge. Modern era is the age of science and technology. In spite of so many advancements man is not happy; rather it has made the life more complex. Life is full of problem, from childhood onward. We actively solve problems presented to us by the world. We acquire information about the world and organize this information about the world, and organize this information into structures of knowledge about objects, events, people and ourselves that are stored in our memories. So, as to survive in the world of cut and throat competition one should possess ample amount of talent and capabilities, with thorough knowledge and skills. Being skillful is rewarding lifelong and to be skillful, is important in all walks of life and doubtlessly to have skill in one's hand is just like having a magical wand. Moreover, being skillful is an added advantage over others. A teacher is an ideal and a role model for the pre-service teacher trainees whom they want to follow in their every path of life, so it becomes the duty of a teacher to have complete knowledge and hold over the subject matter and certain other skills as required to deal with the pre-service teacher trainees they want to motivate.

To make the society worth living, it becomes the duty of a teacher to mould the behaviour of the child. For this purpose one needs to have proper hold on certain skills such as communication, problem solving, Problem solving ability, developed self-confidence and spirits of adjustment and leadership. They can acquire such skills by getting professional knowledge as would be teachers and with the help of training as core equipment for the excellence in the field of education.

SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills are an essential dimension and a corner stone of an ideal person. It can simply be defined as a personality trait which is extremely crucial for succeeding in our career and to live a better life. Soft skills usually include communication skills, communication language, ability to express our ideas and related areas. These aspects are very important if one wants to succeed in life and live a proper life. Soft skills usually are dependent on the inner self of the person and not the physical body of a person. They usually test the endurance and mental strength more than the physical strength. Hence, the soft skills like communication skills need to be improved by every person in order to excel in social life. Today soft skills are more sorts after than the technical

abilities of a person and hence these have a prominent place in deciding the fate of a person in this modern world.

Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interaction, performance and carrier prospects. Soft skills are related to a person's ability to interact effectively with others. These are behavioural competencies also known as interpersonal skills or people skills. They include proficiencies such as communication skills, conflict resolution and negotiation, personal effectiveness, creative problem solving, strategic thinking, team building, influencing skills and selling skills, to name a few. The present study highlights following dimensions of Soft Skills : Employability Skills, Communication Skills, Higher Order Thinking Skills(HOTS)

Oxford Dictionaries (2013) defines, "Soft skills as personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people".

Soft Skills are the cluster of personality traits, social grace, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that characterized relationships with other people. Grooming of the pre-service teacher trainees with soft skills will enable them to take part effectively in various selection procedures, handle various situations they are likely to come across in their professional careers, become critical thinkers and make them ready to get a head start in the world of education.

Soft Skills are the attributes of an individual's personality, which has a capacity to distinguish the individual from others. Soft Skills are the cluster of personality traits, social grace, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that characterized relationships with other people. To stand in the competition and to establish a good rapport with the students there is an ample need for Soft Skills for Pre-Service Teacher Trainees.

SELF COMPETENCE

Self-competence involves the interrelationship between self-perception of personal worth and efficacy. It is an important component of healthy development during all stages of life. Everyone including kids, teens and trainees regardless of their physical challenges and cognitive

impairments, are capable of developing and expressing some degree of Self-competence. The key components of this Self-competence are Self-esteem, Self-determination and Successful coping.

Self-competence is a quality of person of being competent or capable of performing an allotted function. It is the mental ability to distinguish right from wrong and to manage one's own affairs. It is also considered to depend on the correspondence of goals or intentions with the outcomes of actions aimed at realizing those goals or intentions. The competence dimension of the different scales reflect the degree to which people see themselves as capable and efficacious (efficacy-based self-esteem). In emergencies, competent people may react to a situation following behaviours they have previously found to succeed. To be competent a person would need to be able to interpret the situation in the context and to have a inventory of possible actions to take and have trained in the possible actions in the repertoire, if this is relevant. Regardless of training, competency would grow through experience and the extent of an individual to learn and adapt.

Competencies provide organizations with a way to define in behavioural terms what it is that people need to do to produce the results that the organization desires, in a way that is in keep with its culture. By having competencies defined in the organization, it allows employees to know what they need to be productive. When properly defined, competencies, allows organizations to evaluate the extent to which behaviours employees are demonstrating and where they may be lacking. For competencies where employees are lacking, they can learn. This will allow organizations to know potentially what resources they may need to help the employee develop and learn those competencies. Competencies can distinguish and differentiate your organization from your competitors. The way in which the results of two organisations are same, were achieved could be different based on the competencies that fit their particular strategy and organizational culture. Last but not the least competencies can provide a structured model that can be used to integrate management practices throughout the organization. Competencies that align their recruiting, performance management, training and development and reward practices to reinforce key behaviours that the organization values.

Areas of self competence

The four general areas of self competence are:

1. **Meaning Competency:** The person assessed must be able to identify with the purpose of the organization or community and act from the preferred future in accordance with the values of the organization or community.
2. **Relation Competency:** The ability to create and nurture connections to the stakeholders of the primary tasks must be shown.
3. **Learning Competency:** The person assessed must be able to create and look for situations that make it possible to experiment with the set of solutions that make it possible to complete the primary tasks and reflect on the experience.
4. **Change Competency:** The person assessed must be able to act in new ways when it will promote the purpose of the organization or community and make the preferred future come to life.

DEFINITIONS OF SELF COMPETENCE

Deci and Ryan(1985) defined Self-competence as the condition of being capable of performing acts.

Mulder (2001) defined Self competence as a competency is a set of defined behaviours that provide a structured guide enabling the identification, evaluation and development of the behaviour in individual employees.

Sinha (2006) defined Self competence as the general, conscious understanding of oneself.

Grendell and Wilkins (2010), “Self-competence is the central character of an individual and his experience. It is the ability to conceptualize and imagine selves separately from daily experiences.”

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study was carried out with the following objectives:

- To study and analyze the Soft Skills Education Programme.
- To find out the effect of Soft Skills Education Programme on Self Competence of pre-service teacher trainees.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- There exists no significant effect of soft skill education on self competence of pre-service teacher trainees.
- The students like and accept soft skill education programme.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The present study was confined to pre-service teacher's trainees of College of Education of Ludhiana.
- The study was limited to 200 Bachelor of Education students.
- The modules of Soft Skills Education were used which was related to B.ED curriculum.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Method

The present research was an experimental study in which a pre-test was conducted related to Self Competence of pre-service teacher trainees. The treatment in form of Soft Skills Education was given to the groups and a post test was employed. The learning outcomes of both the groups were compared. Questionnaire was prepared to find out student's response regarding Soft Skills Education Programme.

Sample of the study

The research was conducted on the purposive sampling based technique; a sample of 200 teacher trainees of College of Education of Ludhiana was taken.

TOOLS USED

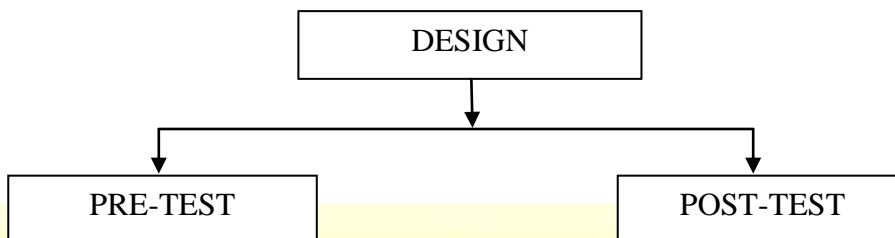
Following tools were used in the present study for the purpose of data collection:

1. Soft Skills modules developed by the B.C.M. College of Education.
2. Self Competence Questionnaire constructed by the investigator.
3. Opinionnaire for pre service teacher trainees about Soft Skills Education Programme.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The present study aimed to find out the effect of soft skills education programme on self competence of pre-service teacher's trainees. The study was experimental in nature. To check the

entry behavior a pre tests was employed and after the treatment of soft skills education during the session, post tests was employed, the score were compared to find out the effect of soft skills education programme.



PRE-TEST

Self Competence Questionnaire

TREATMENT

Soft Skills Education sessions held throughout the session

POST-TEST

Self Competence Questionnaire

Analysis

Table 1. Significance of the Difference between Means of Pre test–Post test scores of Self Competence of Pre-service Teacher Trainees (N=200)

S.No.	Group	N	M	S.D	R	t-value
1.	Pre Test	200	28.52	17.76	0.74	37.24**
2.	Post Test	200	60.37	15.16		

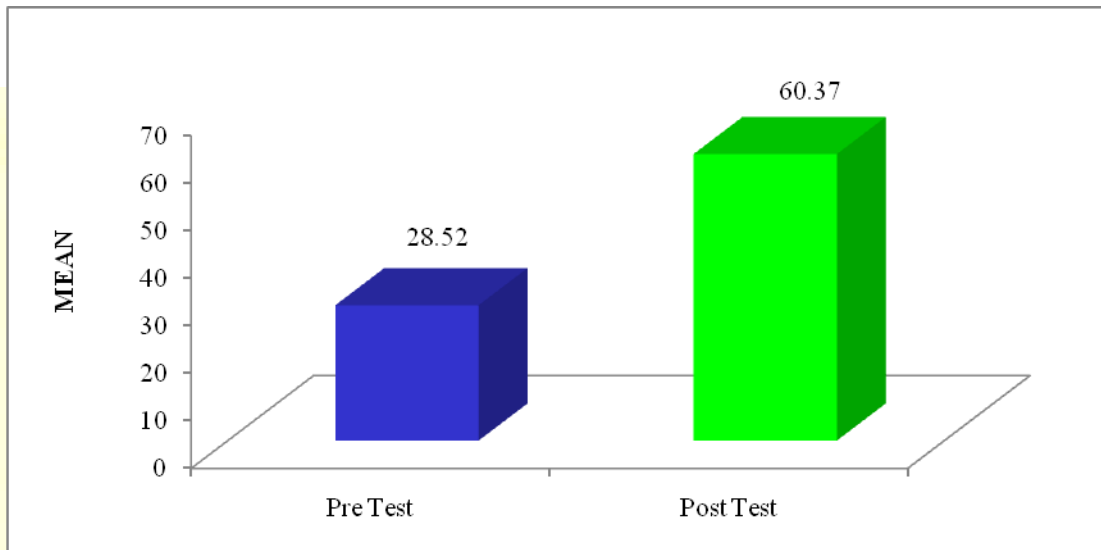
**Significance at 0.01 level

Table 1. revealed that the mean scores of pre test and post test scores of self competence of pre-service teacher trainees as 28.52 and 60.37 respectively and correlation between them was 0.74. The t-ratio was calculated as 37.24 with $d_f=199$ which is significant at .01 level of confidence. This revealed that a significant difference exists between the scores of pre test and post test scores of self competence of pre-service teacher trainees.

As the mean score of post test scores of self competence of pre-service teacher trainees was higher than that of pre test scores, it may be concluded that soft skills education has a significant effect on self competence of pre-service teacher trainees.

Therefore the hypothesis 1 stating that ‘there exists no significant effect of soft skills education self competence of pre-service teacher trainees’ stands rejected.

Fig. 1. Bar Graph showing Difference between Means of Pre test–Post test scores of Self Competence of Pre-service Teacher Trainees (N=200)



To test the Hypothesis 3 stating that ‘The pre-service teacher trainees will like and accept soft skills education program’, percentage of pre-service teacher trainees giving opinion in favor and against soft skills education program was employed.

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Preference of Pre-service Teacher Trainees towards Soft Skills in improving Employability Skill (N=200)

Opinion	Percentage
Strongly Agree	25.6
Agree	62.3
Neutral	8.2
Disagree	3.9
Total	100

Fig. 2. Percentage Distribution of Preference of Pre-service Teacher Trainees towards Soft Skills in improving Employability Skill (N=200)

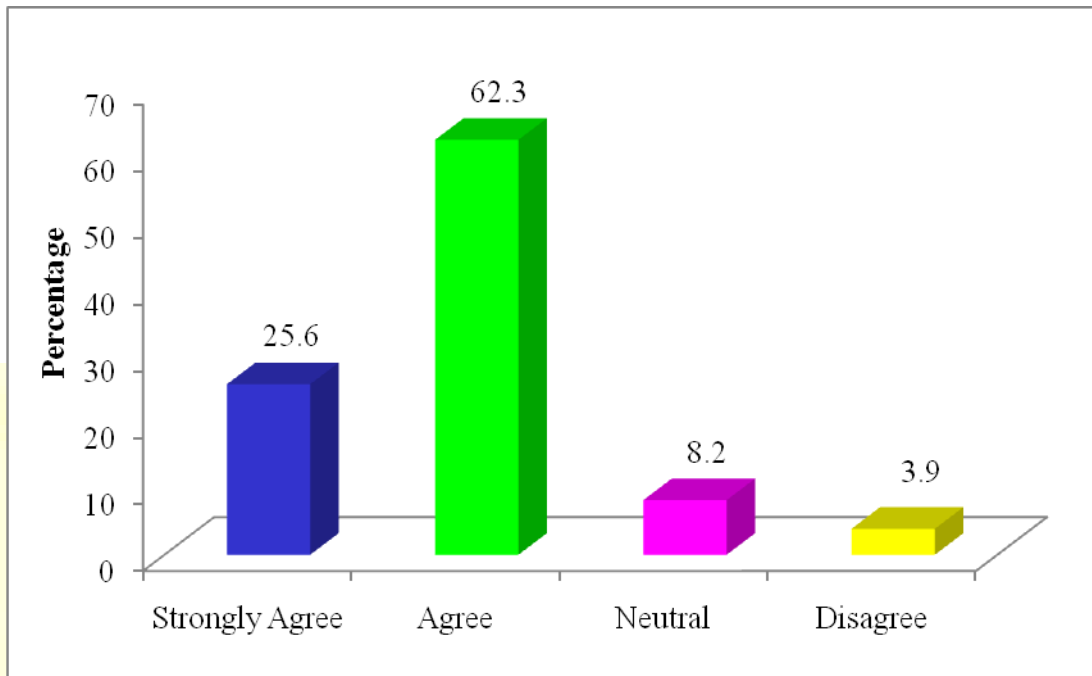


Table & Fig. 2. indicate that that 87.9% of pre-service teacher trainees found soft skills education useful for improving employability skills among them. However 8.2% of pre-service teacher trainees felt indifferent toward the role of soft skills education in improving their employability skills but 3.9% of pre-service teacher trainees did not found soft skills education useful for improving employability skills and hence disagree on the role of soft skills education in improving their employability skills.

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Preference of Pre-service Teacher Trainees towards Soft Skills in improving Communication Skill (N=200)

Opinion	Percentage
Strongly Agree	23.5
Agree	67.8
Neutral	6.2
Disagree	2.5
Total	100

Fig. 3. Percentage Distribution of Preference of Pre-service Teacher Trainees towards Soft Skills in improving Communication Skill (N=200)

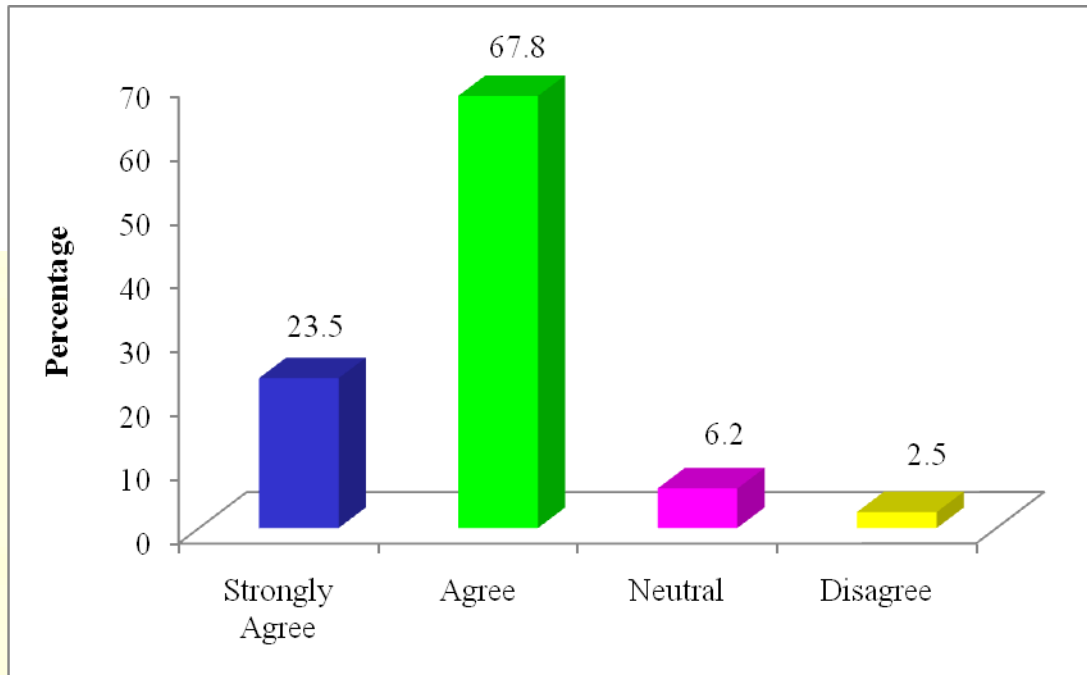


Table & Fig. 3. indicate that that 91.3% of pre-service teacher trainees found soft skills education useful for improving communication skills among them. However 6.2% of pre-service teacher trainees felt indifferent toward the role of soft skills education in improving their communication skills but 2.5% of pre-service teacher trainees did not found soft skills education useful for improving communication skills and hence disagree on the role of soft skills education in improving their communication skills.

Table 4. Percentage Distribution of Preference of Pre-service Teacher Trainees towards Soft Skills in improving Higher Order Thinking Skill (N=200)

Opinion	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20.7
Agree	63.3
Neutral	9.5
Disagree	6.5
Total	100

Fig. 4. Percentage Distribution of Preference of Pre-service Teacher Trainees towards Soft Skills in improving Higher Order Thinking Skill (N=200)

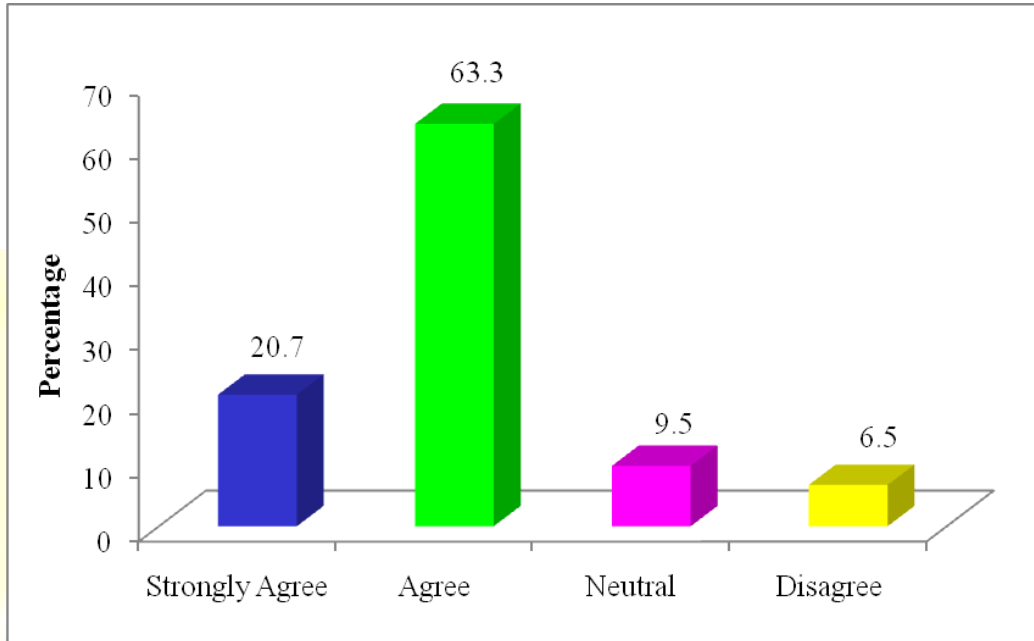


Table & Fig. 4. indicate that that 84% of pre-service teacher trainees found soft skills education useful for improving higher order thinking skills among them. However 9.5% of pre-service teacher trainees felt indifferent toward the role of soft skills education in improving their higher order thinking skills but 6.5% of pre-service teacher trainees did not found soft skills education useful for improving higher order thinking skills and hence disagree on the role of soft skills education in improving their higher order thinking skills.

Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Preference of Pre-service Teacher Trainees towards Soft Skills Education (N=200)

Opinion	Percentage
Strongly Agree	25.4
Agree	65.7
Neutral	6.5
Disagree	2.4
Total	100

Fig. 5. Percentage Distribution of Preference of Pre-service Teacher Trainees towards Soft Skills Education (N=200)

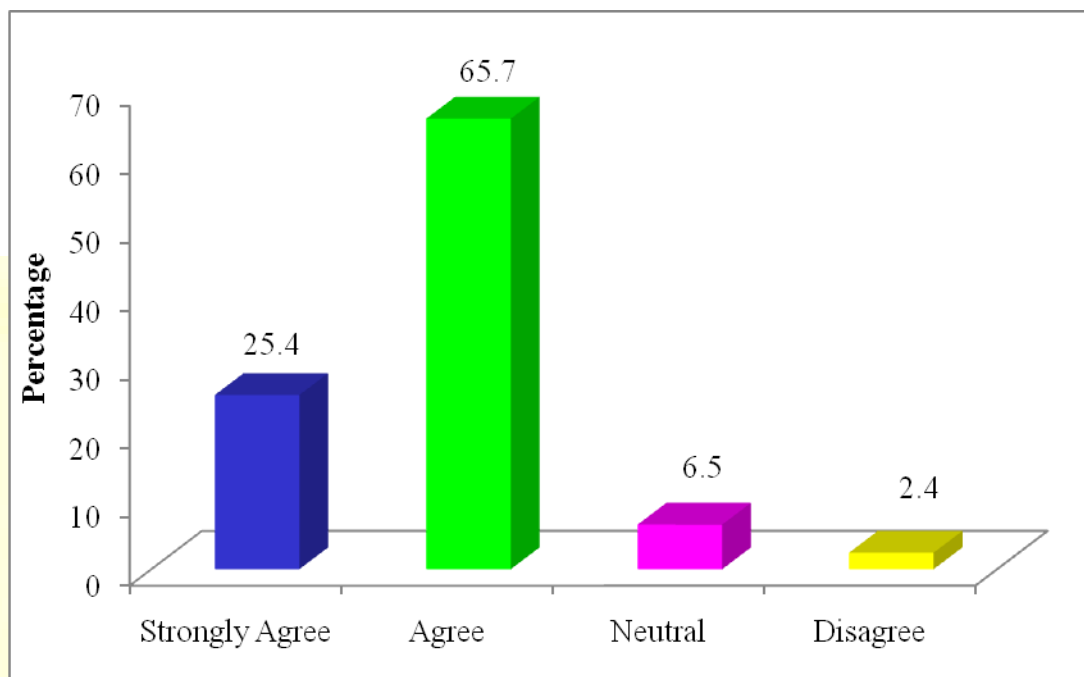


Table & Fig. 5. indicate that that 91.1% of pre-service teacher trainees found soft skills education useful in general. However 6.5% of pre-service teacher trainees felt indifferent toward the role of soft skills education useful but 2.4% of pre-service teacher trainees did not found soft skills education useful and hence disagree on the positive role of soft skills education.

Tables 2-5 & Figs.2-5 clearly indicate pre-service teacher trainees found soft skills education quite useful in development of employability skills, communication skills and higher order thinking skills among them as well as in improving their soft skills.

Therefore Hypothesis 2 stating that ‘The pre-service teacher trainees will like and accept soft skills education program’ stands accepted.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn from the present study:

- A significant difference exists between the scores of pre test and post test scores of self competence of pre-service teacher trainees. As the mean score of post test scores of self

competence of pre-service teacher trainees was higher than that of pre test scores, it may be concluded that soft skills education has a significant effect on self competence of pre-service teacher trainees.

- Pre-service teacher trainees found soft skills education Programme useful for improving employability skills among them.
- Pre-service teacher trainees found soft skills education Programme useful for improving communication skills among them.
- Pre-service teacher trainees found soft skills education Programme useful for improving higher order thinking skills among them. Pre-service teacher trainees found soft skills education useful in general.
- The Soft Skills Education Programme has overall utility for Pre service Teacher Trainees.
- The Pre service Teacher Trainees like and accept Soft Skill Education Programme.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Research work will not be considered complete in itself until research findings put to some practical use, as such in this action an attempt is made to a finding of the present study can be used as guidelines to policy make educationists. The most outstanding characteristic of any research is their contribution something new to the development of the area concerned. The study has its implications for the world of the future teachers.

Soft skills are very critical in the workplace today. These skills mirror the ability to communicate and interact with others. They are unique because they emphasize on action. They have become indispensable for every person in the present context. 'Soft skills' is an umbrella term covering various survival skills such as communication and interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, leadership qualities, team skills, negotiation skills, time and stress management and business etiquettes. Soft Skills are learned behaviours which require training and focused application.

Use of Soft skills has increased significantly; it is of high importance for everyone to acquire adequate skills beyond academic or technical knowledge. Once a shortcoming in a certain area of soft skills has been identified at oneself, there are numerous ways of rectifying such a deficiency. The investigator has intentionally taken a holistic approach in developing a Self Competence

Questionnaire without taking the whole persona into consideration; it may not be possible to achieve the objective of improving one's Self Competence skills just as a teacher. The results of the present study revealed that there is a positive and significant effect of soft skills education programme on the self competence of pre service teacher trainees. These programmes should be included in Teacher Trainee courses as teacher as to perform in the schools not theoretically but practically also. Teachers are not about to teach whatever is written in the books only. They are the role models and whatever behavior they show multiplies in the students' behavior. A teacher with a very high self competence can be a good role model resulting in producing high quality assets for the nation.

The results of the present study further revealed that soft skills education has a significant effect on self competence of pre-service teacher trainees. Soft skills deal with these behavioral aspects relevant in personal and corporate life. Soft Skills are imparted to fine-tune the student's attitudes, values, beliefs, motivation, desires, feelings, eagerness to learn, willingness to share and embrace new ideas, goal orientation, flexibility, persuasion, futuristic thinking, comparison, diplomacy and various skills sets of communication, manners and etiquette so that they will be able to deal with different situations diligently and responsibly. Soft Skills or Emotional intelligence Skills strengthen them from within. These Skills empower them to understand "Who They are" and how best they can come across as competent individuals in any given situation. So, Soft Skills Education in turn leads to the development of Problem Solving and boost the students Self Competence also.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Research is an unending process and evenly research paves the way for future research. The success in the solution of one problem opens the doors for further unsolved problems needing scientific probing. The present study is not difficult. It has opened up certain avenues for further research which are briefly listed below:-

- The present study was conducted on a sample of 200 pre-service teacher trainees. A similar study may be conducted on a larger sample for broader generalizations and for a significant difference between various sub-groups.

- Study can be taken up with regard to other correlates of Emotional Competence and Mental Health like Emotional Maturity, Parental Encouragement, Intelligence, adjustment, aptitudes, personality traits and Attitudes etc.
- The study may be conducted on under graduates and professional course students.
- Questionnaires and Modules can be developed and validated for different subject areas and different levels.
- Assessment for the Communication Skills, Employability Skills and Higher Order Thinking Skills can be standardized by taking separate research.

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