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## SOCIAL COMPETENCE AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The sole goal of competency-based education (CBE) as per NEP 2020, is to extend beyond cognitive development to encompass character building and the comprehensive development of individuals, equipping them with essential 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that prioritize the cultivation and demonstration of specific skills, knowledge, values, and abilities over rote memorization. Distinct skill sets and values have been identified for integration and amalgamation at every educational stage, from preschool to higher education. Social competence, an essential component of competency-based education, denotes an individual's ability to navigate social connections proficiently. It is the outcome of several cognitive abilities, emotional processes, behavioural skills, social awareness, and both individual and society values related to interpersonal relationships.*

*The current study explores the social competence of senior secondary school students in the Kamrup district of Assam. The Social Competence Scale, developed by Latika Sharma and Punita Rani, has been used for data collection. The current study employed the 't' test to compare the demographic variables. The findings of the current study indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam with respect to social competence. However, there is significant difference between provincialized and private students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam in relation to social competence. Further, there is no significant difference between urban and rural students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam with respect to social competence.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Social competence, Competency-based Education, NEP 2020, Senior Secondary School.*

## INTRODUCTION:

The National Policy on Education was set up in 1986 and subsequently revised in 1992. Subsequently, further events have taken place that necessitate amendments to the Policy. The National Policy on Education (NEP 2020), the inaugural education policy of the twenty-first century, supersedes the 34-year-old National Policy on Education of 1986. This strategy, grounded in the fundamental principles of Quality, Access, Affordability, and Accountability, seeks to address the requirements of the twenty-first century by advocating for a more multidisciplinary, adaptable, comprehensive, and personalized approach to education in both schools and universities.

A decisive action has been implemented with the implementation of the National Educational Policy (NEP), 2020, which seeks to fundamentally transform the Indian educational system. This enhances the standards and quality of education for students at both the primary and tertiary levels. The policy reportedly facilitated the shift from a learning-oriented strategy to a skill-oriented paradigm. The policy promotes the implementation of innovative and immersive pedagogies to improve students' learning experiences.

This policy advocates for choice-based flexible learning environments, enabling students to select subjects according with their needs and interests, hence fostering comprehensive personal development and a diverse skill set. There are no rigid distinctions between disciplines such as science and the arts, or between academic and extra-curricular activities. Starting in the sixth grade, the NEP 2020 provides vocational education, which includes internships. This not only enhances students' employability and prepares them for the workforce but also provides practical exposure across various sectors and professions, hence augmenting their future employability.

Competency is a set of skills, abilities, knowledge that helps an individual perform a given task in his/her life. The ability to think critically and creatively, solve problems, work with others, and communicate effectively are essential for successful living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Every education should focus on instilling abilities that enable the learner to carry out activities or take initiatives to live a happy and fruitful life.

Competency-Based Education (CBE) is an outcome-oriented educational method designed to ensure that students acquire the requisite information, abilities, values, and attitudes to navigate real-life situations. According to NEP 2020, the objective of competency-based education (CBE) extends beyond cognitive development to encompass character building and the holistic development of individuals, equipping them with essential 21st-century skills that emphasize the acquisition and demonstration of requisite knowledge, specific skills, values, and abilities rather than mere rote memorization.

Social competence, a fundamental aspect of competency-based education, refers to an individual's the capability to manage social relationships. It is the outcome of diverse cognitive functions, behavioural competencies, emotional intelligence, social awareness, and cultural and personal values related to interpersonal

relationships. The word 'social competence' denotes an ability to effectively navigate social circumstances. Furthermore, it denotes a person's ability to form and maintain strong interpersonal connections suitably in social contexts. Social competence comprises social awareness, behavioural skills, emotional intelligence, cultural values related to interpersonal relationships, and a diverse array of cognitive and behavioural processes. Social competence pertains to personal adequacy, interpersonal adequacy, and communication skills. It is nothing but the ability of a person to handle social interactions effectively and fruitfully. (Sharma and Rani, 2013).

Igbo and Nwaka (2013) revealed that gender has low difference in relationship between senior secondary school students' social competence. Further it showed that there is no significant relationship between adolescents' social competence based on gender. Syiem and Nongrum (2014) showed that no significant difference was found between male and female in social competence. Further, significant difference was found between private and government schools. Kharluni, and Erigala (2018) indicated that there was significant difference between male and female students regarding social competence. Further, the difference between government aided and private students was not significant in social competence. Tabassum et al., (2020) showed that the females were relatively higher than males in social competence. Area of study, wise statistics revealed the same for the students of mind sciences at higher social competence level. Whereas students of technology, natural sciences and business sciences were found less in comparison to others in higher group, but a remarkable number were in medium group.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Socially adept students participate in gratifying interactions and activities with teachers and peers. If a student possesses the capability to engage and communicate successfully with peers and educators, they can readily assimilate subject knowledge from both professors and classmates, hence enhancing academic performance. The research studies showed that there was significant difference between male and female students regarding social competence (Kharluni, and Erigala, 2018, Tabassum et al., 2020). Significant difference was found between private and government schools in social competence (Syiem and Nongrum, 2014). However, no significant difference was found between government aided and private students (Kharluni, and Erigala, 2018). Studies on social competence have been done in different parts of India and abroad. But no research has been conducted on social competence in Assam yet. Therefore, an attempt has been made to compare the demographic variables on social competence among the students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam.

The present study has been delimited to the students of class XII studying in provincialized and private senior secondary schools under Assam State School Education Board (ASSEB) of Kamrup district, Assam.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study have been framed as follows,

1. To compare the social competence between male and female students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam.
2. To compare the social competence between provincialized and private students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam.
3. To compare the social competence between urban and rural students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam.

## Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses have been formulated for the present study,

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between male and female students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam with respect to social competence.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between provincialized and private students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam in relation to social competence.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between urban and rural students of senior secondary schools with respect to social competence.

## METHODOLOGY

In the present study, descriptive survey method has been used. The population comprises of 3067 students from 67 senior secondary schools in Kamrup district, Assam. Simple random sampling technique has been adopted for selecting the schools and the student sample. Hence, a sample of 921 students of class XII has been selected from 20 provincialized and 14 private senior secondary schools of Kamrup district of Assam. Social Competence Scale developed by Latika Sharma and Punita Rani (2013) has been used for the collection of data. In the present study, the 't' test has been used to analyse the collected data.

## Analysis and Interpretation of Data

### Social Competence of Senior Secondary School Students with respect to Demographic Variables

- a. **Social Competence with respect to Gender:** The sample includes 423 male and 498 female students taken from the senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between male and female students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam with respect to social competence.

The mean difference between male and female students of senior secondary school students regarding the social competence is given in the table below.

**Table No-1: Mean Difference between Male and Female Senior Secondary School Students in Social Competence**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-Value	Table Value	Interpretation
Social Competence	Male	423	139.92	16.13	919	.67	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	498	139.22	15.63				

From the Table No-1, it has been observed that with regard to gender, t-value is .67 is smaller than the table value 1.96 at .05 level of significance. Hence, it is not significant and the null hypothesis 'there is no significant difference between male and female students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam with respect to social competence' is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between male and female students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam with respect to social competence.

**b. Social Competence with respect to Types of School:** The sample includes 413 provincialized and 508 private students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between provincialized and private students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam in relation to social competence.

The mean difference between provincialized and private students of senior secondary school students regarding the social competence is given in the table below.

**Table No-2: Mean Difference between Provincialized and Private Senior Secondary School Students in Social Competence**

Variable	Types of School	N	Mean	SD	df	t-Value	Table Value	Interpretation
Social Competence	Provincialized	413	134.06	13.05	919	9.96	1.96	Significant
	Private	508	144.01	16.54				

From the Table No-2, it has been observed that with regard to types of school, t-value is 9.96 is greater than the table value 1.96 at .05 level of significance. Hence, it is significant and the null hypothesis 'there is no significant difference between provincialized and private students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam in relation to social competence' is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference between provincialized and private students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam in relation to social competence.

**c. Social Competence with respect to Locale:** The sample includes 674 urban and 247 rural students taken from the senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam.

**H<sub>0</sub>3:** There is no significant difference between urban and rural students of senior secondary schools with respect to social competence.

The mean difference between urban and rural students of senior secondary school students regarding the social competence is given in the table below.

**Table No-3: Mean Difference between Urban and Rural Senior Secondary School Students in Social Competence**

Variable	Locale	N	Mean	SD	df	t-Value	Table Value	Interpretation
Social Competence	Urban	674	139.15	15.74	919	1.24	1.96	Not Significant
	Rural	247	140.62	16.15				

From the Table No-3, it has been observed that with regard to locale, t-value is 1.24 is smaller than the table value 1.96 at .05 level of significance. Hence, it is not significant and the null hypothesis 'there is no significant difference between urban and rural students of senior secondary schools with respect to social competence' is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between urban and rural students of senior secondary schools with respect to social competence.

## MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. There is no significant difference between male and female students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam with respect to social competence. The result reveals that male and female students do not significantly differ in social competence, implying that both genders possess the ability to comprehend the social environment, interpret individual behaviours, and employ effective communication skills in various social contexts.
2. There is significant difference between provincialized and private students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam in relation to social competence. The finding clarifies that students in private schools have significantly more social competence than their counterparts in provincialized schools, indicating that private school students possess better self-monitoring and coping skills, enabling them to adjust and adapt in different environments.
3. There is no significant difference between urban and rural students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam with respect to social competence. It is apparent from the finding that urban and rural students exhibit no significant differences in social competence, reflecting that both urban and rural students possess identical social abilities and are able to interact with teachers and peers using appropriate gestures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The students of senior secondary schools should be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities, such as, games and athletics, as well as various inter-school activities, such as debate, extempore speech, cultural events, and poem recitation. These activities should be organized in order to promote social competence among the students of the schools.

Contents such as etiquette, social skills, and communication abilities should be included in the school curriculum. This will make it possible for the enhancement of students' social competence, which in turn will assist effective learning and promote the students' academic successes.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study reveal that no significant differences have been found in social competence of senior secondary school students of Kamrup district, Assam with respect to gender and locale. However, significant difference has been found between provincialized and private students of senior secondary schools of Kamrup district, Assam in relation to social competence. Therefore, modern teaching methods and techniques should be adopted by the teachers so that the students can develop the social competence. Parents should teach their children about manners and etiquettes properly so that they can develop their interpersonal and communication skills.

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