

TECHNICAL BRIEF

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLBEING ASSESSMENT



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Overview

The Life Skills Collaborative (LSC) is a collaborative of 18 organisations with an inherent aspiration to create the positive change needed to make the life skills ecosystem in India thrive. With a firm belief that a life skills centred education can empower children to build resilience and overcome adversities, these leading organisations are collectively building robust, scientific and scalable assets for life skills, which are contextual for India.

With a strong emphasis on enabling effective implementation of life skills in public education, LSC's efforts are focused on 3 key areas:

- Collection of voices from adolescents, young people, parents and teachers as a nationwide engagement to capture their insights on life skills and understand the needs and aspirations of these stakeholders. This initiative attempts to get ground up input on the awareness and understanding of life skills among young people, parents and teachers.
- Building a contextual glossary that simplifies the understanding of different terms being used today and evolves a common vocabulary to purposefully develop life skills in India. Currently, the LSC India Glossary has 52 skills defined along with information on the skill in action for each of these skills.
- Creating a set of assessment tools focused on skills which support two broad areas of Life Skills – Emotional Wellbeing and Future-Readiness in adolescents (11-18 years). There is also a focus on building tools which will enable State Governments to measure teacher and system readiness to implement life skill-related interventions within their states.

State Partnerships

LSC has been fortunate to have the partnership and support of the State governments of Maharashtra, Mizoram, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand. Working closely with various departments in these States, LSC found eagerness and enthusiasm for the work in the life skills space.

Their partnership has allowed LSC to validate the assessment tools with students and teachers as well as the LSC India Glossary in multiple languages.

Experts from these four States provided key insights and inputs in the design and development of the assessment tools as well as the contextual and linguistic inputs for the India Glossary.

LSC is deeply grateful to officials and government experts who always made time and provided all the support that was needed.



Figure 1- LSC state Partners

LSC Assessment Tools

One of the major challenges that LSC is trying to solve is lack of standardized life skills assessments that are scientific, scalable, and contextualised to India. LSC aims to create, establish, and disseminate an assessments repository that will help evaluate the overall preparedness of the learning ecosystem including teachers and students, to help integrate life skills education into the mainstream curriculum.

The Life Skills Collaborative has created four different assessment tools:

LSC Future Readiness Assessment for Adolescents

LSC Social and Emotional Wellbeing Assessment for Adolescents

LSC Teacher Assessment

LSC System Assessment

The assessment tools have been created after months of research, rigour and consultations with experts from the four state governments and internationally renowned experts. These tools have been created as public goods to help strengthen assessments of life skills in India. The tools are designed to be robust, scientific and scalable and they have been contextualised and are made in the language of the states they are being deployed in. A rigorous validation exercise was undertaken with the intended stakeholders to refine the tool as well.

The four Assessment tools have been developed in a collaborative model, contextualised and adapted to the local context and will be made available as public goods through Creative Commons licensing.

Social-Emotional Wellbeing Skills Assessment

Objectives of the Tool

Mental health and well-being are important determinants for positive outcomes in adulthood. Evidence suggests that manifestations of positive social, emotional, and personal well-being relate to the developmental task which enables children to thrive in adversities.

Over the last few decades, social and emotional skills have gained increasing popularity and globally there have been attempts to design evidence-based programs around these skills as well. While there is a large focus on developing interventions around SEL, attempts were also made to develop scientific measures around social and emotional competencies. However, there are larger methodological and conceptual challenges associated with developing measures around SEL. Researchers have navigated through these issues and contributed to the development of many tools around SEL competencies and skills. On the same note, there is also a global call out to ensure that these tools are developed considering the cultural, social and linguistic context of the child.

The main aim of the study is to develop a culturally sensitive measure of well-being that is relevant, sensitive, and responsive to the cultural context. This has followed robust approaches including face validation with experts, and workshops with the state-level committee members nominated by the state education department (SCERT) to explore socio, cultural and linguistic factors that influence the development of the assessment.

Once the initial pool of items was validated, pre-testing the tool with students was carried out to identify the challenges faced by children while using the scale including the ability to comprehend the questions, reading

levels of children, respondent burden, etc. This process helped to further refine the tool. The social and emotional well-being tool is considered a psychometric assessment; hence a series of psychometric analyses were carried out to establish the validity and reliability of the measures with a multi-phase, multi-sampling approach.

The Social and Emotional Well-being survey is designed to assess the level of student's social, emotional, and personal well-being. This Survey is based on ecological, positive psychology theories, and conceptualizes well-being as a multi-dimensional construct. Well-being tool measures at three functional levels, Intrapersonal characteristics–E.g. Resilience; Interpersonal characteristics–E.g. Empathy; Environmental contexts –E.g., Social support. The Scale consists of 56 statements that measure well-being outcomes for adolescents between the age group of 11-18 yrs. In this self-reporting scale, students can rate their preference on a 5-point scale.

Results of the analysis showed that the scale is a reliable, valid, and culturally relevant scale for measuring the emotional, social, and personal well-being of adolescents in India. It can be concluded that the socio-emotional well-being scale is a contextualized assessment that is relevant to the child, and it relates to the context of the child, and items are expressed in the language of the child.

Rationale and Significance

Social and Emotional Well-being has been understood as a multifaceted, multidimensional, and dynamic concept. It is a combination of experience of positive emotions, optimal social functioning, and having a greater sense of the purpose of life. Researchers conceptualize social and emotional well-being as happiness and contentment, purpose in life, positive relationship, etc and it is considered an optional consideration for an individual to grow, flourish and thrive. Social and emotional well-being is considered

determinants of success and important makers for overall satisfaction with life as well as a benchmark for overcoming various challenges in life.

The whole concept of social and emotional well-being is very aligned with the concept of positive mental health which goes beyond the absence of mental illness and focuses on individuals' ability to cope with adverse life events around them, manage their relationships, be compassionate, and contribute to the community as well.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) stated that Social and Emotional Well Being encompasses:

- Happiness, confidence, and not feeling depressed (emotional well-being)
- A feeling of autonomy and control over one's life, problem-solving skills, resilience, attentiveness, and a sense of involvement with others (Psychological well-being).
- The ability to have good relationships with others and to avoid disruptive behaviour, delinquency, violence, or bullying (social well-being)

Approach to develop social and emotional well-being scale

LSC combined feeling good and functional well as the broader aspects of well-being following the theories and frameworks from positive psychology; wherein, an adolescent is experiencing positive emotions, developing of his/her potential, sense of control, and purpose as a working definition for well-being after the review of wellbeing models (Seligman, 2011, Ryff, 1989). For the development of the Social-emotional well-being survey, the criteria for selecting dimensions and skill sets for the scale, namely, concreteness, clarity, empirically grounded, developmentally, and contextually appropriate (i.e., age-specific, and context-relevant demands and opportunities), culturally sensitive, inclusive and equitable in values were used.

(Brush et al,2022). It was primarily based on the insights derived from the themes that merged from the literature review: personal competence, social competence, well-being factors, and social resourcefulness.

The selection of sub-domains of social and emotional wellbeing was based on the review of theoretical models about life skills and wellbeing. Under life skills models, the frameworks considered the CASEL model, ASIA Society, Character Lab, ACT Behavioral Skills Framework, and 21st Century competency models for the review. In well-being, the frameworks considered were the PERMA model (Seligman, 2012), the Flourishing model (Diener et al, 2010), the six-factor psychological well-being model (Ryff, 1989), and Keys' (1998) social well-being model.

The CASEL model (CASEL, 2017) postulates that critical skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills alongside responsible decision-making are important skills to be developed for adolescents to meet everyday life challenges successfully to achieve social and emotional growth and healthy development. ASIA Society (Roberts, Richard & Olaru, Gabriel, 2015) identified the critical life skills domains for social-emotional development are the individual's skills to remain open to experiences, skills in task performance, emotional stability, skills in engaging with others, and collaboration. The Character Lab (Duckworth, 2019.) has proposed yet another set of skills useful for social and emotional development: curiosity, gratitude, zest, optimism, social intelligence, self-control, and grit. Further, the ACT Behavioural Skills Framework, (Bobek et al.,2015). Beyond Academics: A Holistic Framework for Enhancing Education and Workplace Success.) argues that skills in cooperation, goodwill, perspective taking, patience, and helpfulness are critical aspects leading to adolescents' social-and emotional development; whereas, in the 21st Century Competency model, (Chalkiadaki, A, 2018) postulates that critical thinking, creative thinking, collaborating,

communicating, flexibility, initiative, social skills, productivity, and leadership are the key determinants of social-emotional development and wellbeing.

Seligman (2012) in his seminal work postulating the PERMA model of wellbeing identified positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment as the critical aspects that imply wellbeing. In flourishing model (Diener et al, 2010) postulates the idea of flourishing through positive and warm relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism as key concepts. In the six-factor psychological well-being model, Ryff (1989) argued that autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, self-acceptance, and purpose in life are the cardinal determinants of psychological well-being.

Similarly, in Keys' (1998) social well-being model, he argues that social acceptance, social contribution, social actualisation, social coherence, and social integration have been hierarchically organised to explain social well-being.

Besides, located within an eclectic approach, this psychometric validation study has adopted concepts from the resilience model (Durlack, 1998) and the developmental asset model (Benson, 1997). Whereas the individual characteristics namely resilience, positive emotions, and self-efficacy (Durlack, 1998) and external assets (namely support, empowerment) and internal assets (i.e., social competencies, positive identity) as building blocks of healthy development, which enable the adolescent to become healthy, caring, and responsible (Benson, 1997).

In personal competence, the personal, as well as emotional factors such as self-efficacy, autonomy, emotion regulation, and coping with stress, were the key aspects of measurement focus (Compas et al., 2017). Social competence recognises the feelings, and intentions of others; and selects social behaviours, which are appropriate for the given context. Thirdly the

well-being factors help in optimising one’s well-being to thrive, prosper and flourish in life. At last, the social resource factor contains social support with two sub-dimensions namely the social structure of an individual’s life and specific functions served by various interpersonal relationships (Keys, 1989; Howard,1994). Following is the final conceptual framework developed to identify the dimensions and skills for the social and emotional well-being scale.

Tool Design

Dimensions and Sub-Skills

Well-being tool measures at three functional levels, Intrapersonal characteristics–E.g. Resilience; Interpersonal characteristics–E.g. Empathy; Environmental contexts –E.g., Social support.

Dimensions	Functional level	Skills measured
Emotional Wellbeing	Individual	Emotional regulation Coping with stress
Social Wellbeing	Interactional	Interpersonal relationship Empathy
Personal Wellbeing	Individual	Self-efficacy Autonomy
Social Support	Contextual	Social support from parents, teachers and peers
Resilience	Individual	Resilience

Table 1- Dimensions and Sub-Skills Of Social and Emotional Wellbeing Assessment

Target Population

- The scale measures well-being outcomes for adolescents between the age group of 11-18 yrs.
- The scale was tested with students from 6th grade to 12th grade

Length and how it is measured

- The scale consists of 56 statements that measure social and emotional well-being outcomes for adolescents
- The scale adopted a five-point likert type rating scale for response rating, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree.
- This is a self-report, available as a paper-pencil version and digital version, the scale can be administered individually and in groups as well.
- The scale has both positively and negatively worded items to minimize extreme response bias and acquiescent bias.
- The scale is available in English, Hindi, Marathi, and Mizo
- The average time duration required for adolescents to complete the tool is 30 - 40 Min

Tool Validation and Contextualisation

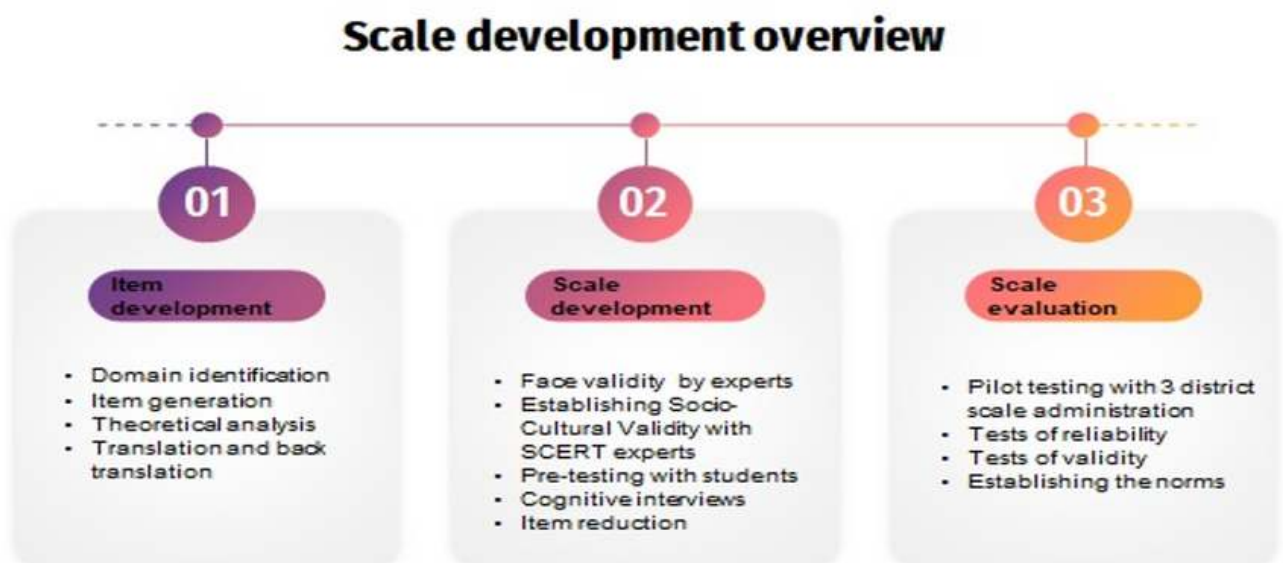


Figure 2- Scale Development Of Social and Emotional Wellbeing Assessment

Item Generation and Adaptation

There were two sub-scales within the first sub-scale of emotional well-being namely emotional regulation (7 items) and coping skills (3 items). These constitute 10 items under this sub-scale, which were field tested. Another 3 items (ER1, 2, &3) were adopted from the Emotion Regulation Index for Children and Adolescents (MacDermott et al., 2010). Wherein, we developed 4 items under this sub-domain (ER 4, 5, 6, &7). In sub-skills under coping, we adopted two items (ER 8, 10) from the COPE Inventory (Carver, 1989) and developed one item (ER 9).

In the resilience sub-scale, the scale adopted 4 items (RE 1, 3, 6, 7) from the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (Connor & Davidson, 2003) and developed four items (RE 2, 4, 5, 8). In the social support sub-scale, all six items were adopted from the Multi-dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al, 1988). In the sub-scales of social support, although the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988) guided at the conceptual level in generating 6 items, we developed these items to measure the social resourcefulness as perceived by the adolescent students.

In the 16-item sub-scale of social well-being, there were three items (Emp3, 4, 7) adopted from Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (Spreng et al, 2009); whereas, other two items (IPR 1, 8) were adopted from the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Devis, 1980). The research team has developed the remaining 11 items. At last, the personal well-being sub-scale contained 16 items that measure self-efficacy (8 items) and autonomy (8 items). To measure self-efficacy, we adopted SE1, 2, 8) from the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Teeuw et al., 1994), and five items were developed by the research team. In autonomy, four items were adopted (A 4, 5, 6, 7) from the Scale of

Psychological Well-being (Ryff & Singer, 1996) and the remaining four items were developed.

Cultural Validation

Cultural aspects are non-negotiable in assessment development practices. To withstand the potential bias, a normal tendency to reflect the values, beliefs, and priorities of a general/dominant culture, it is essential to contextualise items with the support of community stakeholders. Experts review the scale for conceptual, item, semantic, operational, and measurement equivalence. Cultural validation ensures the assessment is culturally sensitive, relevant, and responsive assessment.

A 68-item questionnaire was developed as the first draft of the scale adopting items from existing measures, a review of literature, and experts' recommendations. This draft was subjected to the experts' face validation. The face-validation working group consisted of experts nominated by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT, Rajasthan and SCERT, Uttarakhand) representing different disciplinary backgrounds namely academicians, educationalists, and researchers.

We used item relevance, clarity, judgmental items, readability, language structures, and culturally sensitive items apart from their appropriateness to the respective sub-domains as the key criteria for item evaluation by the experts.

The SCERT working group recommended revising some statements with simple words to ensure easy understanding and comprehension. The group also suggested using colloquial or much familiar English words alongside the Hindi statements for easy comprehension. This exercise has resulted in a final draft of 56 items in five sub-domains for field testing.

Scale Translation Procedures

LSC has entrusted a professional agency that has expertise in the translation of scales and assessment tools for translating the initial English version of the scale into Hindi (Also translated in Mizo and Marathi). After the translation, two independent bilingual experts in English and Hindi were appointed, who back-translated the Hindi version of the scale into English. The Dream a Dream has constituted a working group of bilingual experts for reviewing the item by item and ensured the cross-cultural equivalences in translation. The working group has further adopted three criteria namely conceptual equivalence, grammatical-syntactical equivalence, and vocabulary equivalence to ensure cross-cultural equivalence in translation. Besides, all the experts involved in the translation and back-translation process were either with formal degrees in Hindi or studied Hindi as a first language, alongside 1 to 2 years of experience in translations and assessments.

Translation and contextualization process

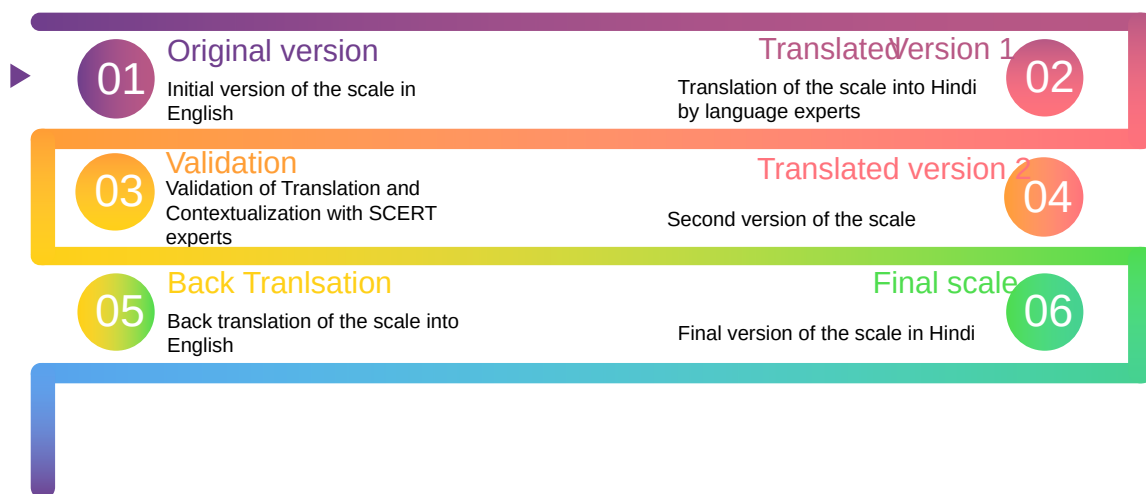


Figure 3- Translations and Contextualisation Process

Out of 56 items on the scale, six items were identified with minor corrections or simplified statements. Some of the words were replaced with more simple and direct words to make it easy for children to easily read and understand. Another four items were identified with poor clarity which was restructured for students to easily comprehend.

The Study Phase

This psychometric validation study contained three different phases where the first phase 581 adolescent samples were used for testing reliability and validity followed by the second phase covering 190 samples from the previous sample to test the temporal reliability of the instrument over two-week intervals. The third phase was a state-wide sample of 19970 students aged between 11 to 18 years from the states of Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. The final data used for the study after data cleaning was 18746 students.

The Sample

The sample for these studies constituted school-going adolescents aged between 11 to 18 years, studying in state-funded upper primary schools, high schools, and higher secondary schools across selected 5 districts from the states of Rajasthan and Uttarakhand in North India.

Sample selection procedure: For the first two phases of field data collection in the states of Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, we selected one rural and one urban district judgmentally to ensure a pool of rural and urban students with proportionate representation of the rural, urban, and neglected population (like tribal students) in the sample size.

Keeping social category concerning the place of residence (urban vs. rural/tribal) was expected to help subgroup-wise analyses for rural and urban residence. With 300 samples from each state constituted the sample size of 600 students, which was an adequate sample size to capture subgroup differences namely the place of residence (urban vs. rural) and social groups (General, OBC, SCs, and STs).

The sample size was determined for field testing of the instrument based on the recommendation of Fields (2005). According to Field (2005), the subgroup responses to adequately represent were 10 to 15 responses on all points on a rating scale. For an instance, if a particular item with a 5-point response rate elicited less than 15 responses, such item may be considered for deletion. As it would help in clustering responses on extremes such as SA (strongly agree) Neutral (neither agree nor disagree) to SD (strongly disagree). A Generic EFA was expected to be enough since the sample size was large and capable enough to represent adequate subsamples. To achieve a proportional sample size representing all social groups of urban and rural residents, field level (school level sampling plan was worked) with help of teachers and school authorities at each selected district.

For the third phase of data collection in the states of Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, the life skills collaborative has devised the sampling procedure for the study. In each state, the districts were divided into different categories based on their Human Development Index (HDI) values and selected districts representing each category. Community representation based on urban, rural, and tribal areas was made. The final district selection was carried out by Life Skills Collaborative, whereas the schools were selected considering the school structures in these states. The student samples were selected for interviews by using the Probability –Proportional –to-size (PPS) technique.

Insights- Psychometric Properties of the Tool

Reliability

Reliability refers to consistency in measurement, which produces closer results in the initial estimated value to the subsequent estimated value. An internal consistency reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha to understand to what extent items under each subscale together measure the construct namely emotional wellbeing, resilience, social support, social well-being, and personal well-being. The overall "Social Emotional Wellbeing Scale" yielded an excellent internal consistency at 0.86 and subsequent subscale-wise analysis showed that emotional well-being ($\alpha = .62$), resilience ($\alpha = .66$), and social support ($\alpha = .77$), social well-being ($\alpha = .77$) and personal well-being ($\alpha = .69$) with very good internal consistency reliability.

Test-Retest

Administering the same assessment twice over a period to the same sample group to evaluate the scale stability over time, is termed Test-retest reliability. A sample of 194 students was administered twice with the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Scale in two weeks intervals. The interclass correlation coefficient was used to establish the temporal reliability of subscale-wise as well as the overall scores. All subscales and overall scales yielded significant results at .001 levels.

Validity -Criterion Validity

Criterion validity evaluates how accurately a test measures the outcome it was designed to measure. To test the same, a correlation of Social Emotional Well-being with other criterion measurements is logically correlated namely self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and adolescent well-being in theoretically explicated directions. Ideally, good self-esteem is likely to increase Social Emotional Well-being ($r = .182$; $p < .01$).

s. Similarly, all one-tailed correlations are positive as expected; implying that increasing social-emotional well-being among children and adolescents is likely to lead to increased emotional intelligence ($r = .191$; $p < .01$) and adolescent well-being ($r = .173$; $p < .01$).

Scoring

This 56-item multi-dimensional Social Emotional Wellbeing Scale (SEWS) has a theoretically possible range of scores from 56 to 280 as it uses a five-point Likert-type rating scale. All negatively worded items are reverse-scored to achieve a uniform summative score, which suggests a higher score indicating a higher level of social and emotional well-being among the adolescent population. The scoring on the SEW scale is represented as a higher score indicating higher well-being and a lower score indicating lower well-being.

Utility of Social and Emotional Well-being scale

- Government -Leverage policy evaluation to improve evidence-informed policymaking.
- NGOs and civil societies - Give feedback to stakeholders, inform programme strategy, and maximise effectiveness.
- Donors - Make better-informed decisions about funding allocation and support
- Researchers - Advance the study of well-being, life skills, and social and emotional learning.
- Practitioners - Use well-being as an outcome measure alongside mental health measures and know it is appropriate for disadvantaged Indian children.
- Programme developers – Understand programme performance at an early stage.

Scope of Social and Emotional Well-being scale

The Social and emotional well-being scale can be used in a variety of ways, depending on what is being measured.

Outcome Assessment and Programme Comparison

- Understanding needs analysis or baseline before planning any interventions or programmes
- Measure the overall performance of various Social and emotional interventions and programmes
- The scale can be used to compare one or more programmes based on the objectives, implementation mode, approaches, etc.
- Determine the efficacy of the programme based on its implementation.
- Quality Improvement Programme Impact Evaluation of the programme using baseline line, midline, and end-line analysis

Individual Child/Young Person Assessment

- Track longitudinal trajectories of well-being in association with other outcomes like mental health, academic outcomes, etc
- Measure the individual progress of each adolescent who benefited from various interventions/

Summary and Way Forward

- Social and emotional well-being tool shows high levels of internal consistency and reliability against accepted criteria.
- The scale's strong psychometric performance and lack of cultural bias suggest that it is suitable for use in measuring multi-dimensional well-being at a population level.
- It is also worth noting that the rigorous process of contextualisation made the tool a culturally sensitive and culturally responsive assessment that measures the social and emotional well-being of adolescents.

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About LSC

The Life Skills Collaborative is a collective of 18 like-minded organisations. These organisations have an active interest in the Life Skills ecosystem and an inherent aspiration to bring about the positive change needed to make the Life Skills ecosystem in India thrive. They bring diverse and global expertise in education, skill development, health and gender. LSC members have a collective experience of over 300 years in designing and implementing programs and working with the government in co-creating impact.

LSC PARTNERS





Write to us
assessments@lifeskillscollaborative.in

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