

CHAPTER: I

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATIONS

1.0. Background:

Today, the entire world in general and India in particular have been witnessing changes that have been brought in the last few decades in various societies at the national and international levels. Among these, one of the most noteworthy development is seen in the field of Information and Communication Technology. It was during 1990s, a major change was brought in India on the economic front when new economic policies of liberalization and privatization under the call of 'Globalization' came in force in the year 1991. At present, Globalization has truly made our societies "Global Smart Village". It has made changes in all walks of our lives, starting from local to global level not only in our way of living, our beliefs and materialist approach but also has produced many challenges, threats and new issues. While the life of a layman is influenced by globalization, how can the field of education remain untouched? A great change has been noticed in the field of education in past few decades. Under such a changing circumstances, the field of education is now facing issues of managing the impact and explosion of information and knowledge. Societal set up has got more complex almost all over world due to excessive use of social media and handy mobile communication technology. As a result of such broad changes in every field, some of the new theories of knowledge, teaching and learning have got emerged in the field of education. The most recent and promising development is Constructivist theory and its application into the field of education.

Behaviourism theory in education has dominated our beliefs and actions for almost half a century whereas the theory of Constructivism has recently emerged as a promising new theory of learning of 21st century education. Delors' Commission (1996) has envisioned the future of Education of 21st century in their report entitled "Learning: The Treasure Within" (1996). It describes four pillars or goals of 21st century education viz, "Learning to Do, Learning to Learn, Learning to Be or to Survive and Learning to Live Together or Co-exist" ("Report of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century", 1996, UNESCO). Thus, education in the 21st century is marked with use of information technology due to its growing need and utility, therefore dynamism is expected in learners and teachers equally. As a

result, a set of new skills and competencies are desired in learners as they would become the new workforce in near future. Here, a few questions might arise as- what are 21st century skills? Why do we need such skills? How can be these skills inculcated? How can we study the development of such skills? etc. The following passages tries to answer some of these questions.

1.1. Changes and Needs of 21st Century Education:

The scenario of the present age is well described by one of the most popular thinkers of 20th century named Alvin Toffler. In a futuristic quote, Toffler (n. d.) states, “The illiterate of the 21st century are not of the people who cannot read and write, but those people who cannot ‘Learn’, ‘Unlearn’ and ‘Relearn’”. This quote make us realize that any change is simple to comprehend but difficult to accept and implement in practical life for most people. Each of us need to look further, accept changes and embrace newer changes happily as sometimes our old learning and beliefs may become obstacle in learning an altogether new thing for which we may not possess prior or previous knowledge. Some learned scholars might not agree with this view. Therefore this quote must be understood in right perspective. It is not intended to mean here that previous knowledge or experiences are useless so it should be discarded while aiming to gain new knowledge. Instead, we must understand the fact that ‘Change is inevitable’ (as sociology and other disciplines of social sciences describes it) and those who are reluctant to change or don’t want to change themselves with current course of time, are more often likely either lag behind or extinct in frustration.

As society changes, the competencies and skills that a student needs to be successful in studies and in life have also got changed. Basic literacy skills of reading, writing and arithmetic are no longer sufficient to survive in the new era. Students of the 21st century need to master not only some basic skills but read critically, write persuasively, think and reason logically, manage stress and time, solve complex problems as well. A successful student must adapt to manage information, finding, evaluating and applying new content to increase understanding with greater flexibility. Learners must be equipped with some skills and perspectives, which are designed to help them anticipate any future change that occur, so that they can plan accordingly. This act will equip them to thrive in a new world, characterized by rapid and continuous change. Today, there is a cry about profound gap between the knowledge and skills that most of the students acquire in school and college, and

those required in today's world of work especially technology-infused workplaces or offices. Hence, it is important for the educational system to make subsequent changes in order to achieve its broad objectives. Therefore every nation has understood the need to empower its youth with 21st century skills in their educational system at the earliest. Schools and colleges must adapt to these changes and bridge the gap between technical skills and expected skills by the recruiting agency ("Developing 21st century skills", 2007).

Keeping in view the nature of the changing society both at the international level and in India, NCERT has emphasized change in education. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2000 and 2005 by NCERT strongly support the 'constructivist' and 'learner-centred approach' in school education. NCF (2005) states that "Learning to learn and the willingness to 'unlearn' and 'relearn' are important as means of responding to new situations in a flexible and creative manner. The curriculum needs to emphasize the processes of constructing knowledge" (NCERT, 2005, p.11). This is the beginning of how our schools and institutes of higher education started giving importance to Communication Skills and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). The shift in paradigm from 'teacher' to 'learner' and from 'learner' to 'learning' has emphasized the 'process' aspect rather than the 'product'. Thus, 'Process' is the essence of new cognitive and interactive theories of learning such as Constructivism.

1.2. Conceptual Framework of the present study:

1.2.0. Orientation to conceptual framework:

The oxford dictionary of English gives meaning of '**Framework**' as "an essential supporting structure of a building, vehicle, or object". Scholars opine that 'framework' is theoretically a little loose term in meaning which refers to 'a coherent set of concepts and relationships that are posited about some phenomena'. Compared to model, 'framework' is less developed; whereas a tested 'framework' is called a 'model', and a more fully developed and tested model is a 'theory'! (Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/post/What_is_the_difference_between_a_theory_methodology_approach_method_framework_tool_and_process2). With this basic understanding, the conceptual framework for the present study includes all those related theoretical aspects that form the base of the investigation into the problem arrived, viz., Cooperative Learning, English as Second Language, Secondary Teacher Education and soft skills. The interrelationships of these theoretical aspects create

Conceptual and theoretical framework of the present study. These interrelated aspects make the nature and scope of the present study more complex. The following passages describe some major aspects of the present study.

1.2.1. Theoretical Basis of the present study:

The present study underlies some of the major concepts such as Constructivism, Cooperative Learning, Pre-service Secondary Teacher Education, Soft skills and Performance evaluation with newer tools of assessment like rubrics. All of these important concepts deserve a theoretical and conceptual clarity. Therefore a bird's eye view of the theoretical and conceptual framework is presented in the succeeding passages. The theoretical framework of the present study has been classified under three major categories as given below:

1. Category: A. Cooperative Learning
2. Category: B. Soft Skills
3. Category: C. Pre-service Secondary teacher education In India

These categories are described with section wise classification of some important concepts. These conceptual views have guided the investigator to arrive at the rationale, objectives and purpose of the present study.

1.2.1.1. Category: A:

Cooperative Learning (CL):

“Cooperative Learning” is widely recognized at global level as one of recently developed ‘theory of Learning’. Although there are a few controversies and difference of opinions for CL whether to call it a ‘teaching theory’ or ‘learning method’ or merely just ‘a theoretical philosophy’ that still awaiting for practical applicability. In fact many authentic sources have cited CL as neither ‘a method of teaching’, nor ‘an instructional theory’. Though roots of CL are found in 19th century, its wide applicability is tested and accepted in 20th century and now it is widely used all over the world in the field of education and training in the present 21st century. It is worthwhile here to start with the historical development of Cooperative Learning.

1.2.1.1.1. Origin and Historical Development of CL:

“Constructivism” is considered as theoretical root of the theory of Cooperative learning. Constructivism is a contemporary development in the fields of philosophy (epistemology) and some other social sciences like sociology, psychology, education. It has multiple roots in philosophy, psychology, sociology and education (Driscoll, 2000). There are various forms or interpretations of constructivism such as Cognitive

constructivism or Individual constructivism by Piaget (personal construct psychology), Social constructivism or constructionist view of Lev Vygotsky (socio-cultural context), Radical constructivism of Von Glaserfeld and Mathurana's theory. The central idea of constructivism is that 'human learning is constructed, that learners build new knowledge upon the foundation of previous learning'.(Retrieved from www.learning-theories.com/constructivism.html) In other words, learner himself/herself constructs knowledge through experiences, a teacher is not necessarily supposed to supply it. In short, learning is an 'active' process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current or past knowledge.

Constructivism philosophy was considered to have given a number of insightful methods of teaching-learning such as 'Collaborative learning', 'Problem based Learning' and 'Cooperative learning'. In all these three theories, learners are considered as 'active doer' of the task and not just passive recipient of knowledge from the teacher; here act of teaching becomes a mere transaction among all the students in the learning process. Cooperative Learning (CL) has many roots especially philosophical roots in 'social-constructivism philosophy' or 'social-cultural theory' by a Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky's theory (1978) postulated 'learning' as "social process", contrary to that of general view of 'learning' as merely a personal or individualistic one. (Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>) Cooperative Learning was directly influenced through socio-cultural and socio-cognitive constructivist theories by Piaget, Vygotsky and Dewey and many other theorists like Chomsky, Skinner, Bruner, Ausubel, Kurt Lewin and Paulo Freire. ("Theoretical foundations of Cooperative Language learning", Hosseini, 2008)

1.2.1.1.2. Differences between 'Cooperative Learning' and 'Collaborative Learning':

Most people often use collaborative learning and cooperative learning interchangeably but there is a thin line of demarcation between these two terms. Panitz (2009) defined, "*Collaborative learning* is a personal philosophy, not just a classroom technique". Contrasting to it, 'Cooperative learning is a set of processes which help people interact together in order to accomplish a specific goal or develop a content specific end product'. Thus, collaborative learning is much broader concept than cooperative learning. It is noteworthy that cooperative learning is referred as collaborative learning in the field of ELT, as evident in the literature offered in

various ELT journals. Another point of difference is that Cooperative Learning is an American product whereas Collaborative Learning is the product of England. Collaborative Learning is based on different epistemological assumptions and its root is found in Social Constructivism.

1.2.1.1.3. Concept of Cooperative Learning:

In a laymen's words, 'Cooperative Learning' stands for some flexible instructional procedures and strategies, which are known as "Cooperative Learning methods". The concept of CL includes meaning, definition, principles, characteristics, classroom norms and setting. These parts are discussed at some length in the following passages.

1.2.1.1.3.1. Meaning of Cooperative Learning:

Cooperative Learning (CL) is a set of principles of learning which advocates learner-centered approach for classroom teaching-learning. The main focused area of CL is 'societal interaction'. A person is not isolated from society but part and parcel of society and the web of relationship through communication between individuals gives rise to 'experiences' or 'learning'. It is through cooperation that a person learns and eventually this learning leads him/her to independent problem solving and learner autonomy. Thus 'cooperation' is taught as 'value' in the classroom.

1.2.1.1.3.2. Definitions of Cooperative Learning:

Lets' look at some of the definitions of CL. In general, Cooperative Learning is broadly defined as 'an approach to organize classroom activities so that students are able to learn from and interact with one another as well as from the teacher and the world around them'. In the words of Slavin (1995), "Cooperative learning is an instructional program in which students work in small groups to help one another master academic content." Brown (1994) defined, "Cooperative learning involves students working together in pairs or groups and they share information. They are a team whose players must work together in order to achieve goals successfully".

1.2.1.1.3.3. Common Characteristics of CL:

In a CL class setting, 'learning' is considered as 'a unified, personal and social-experience' that best happens in a web of relationships. Some of the most common features of CL drawn from different books on CL and online resources are as follow: (i) Learner and activity-centred approach, Group work technique (ii) Accountability and freedom on part of students (iii) Active participation of learners (iv) Learners Support one another's learning (v) Societal face-to-face interaction

(vi) Teacher act as Director and Guide. These features of CL based classroom are supported by the basic principle of CL.

1.2.1.1.4. Principles of Cooperative Learning:

There are many online and print resources that have depicted general principles of Cooperative learning. To describe principles of CL, Johnson & Johnson (1994) writes, 'Cooperative learning is an instruction that involves students working in teams to accomplish a common goal, under conditions that include the following five essential elements: (i) Positive interdependence (ii) Individual accountability (iii) Face-to-face Promotive interaction (iv) Appropriate use of collaborative skills (v) Group processing. Thus, Cooperative learning is not simply a synonym for a group work, but any learning exercise can only qualify as 'cooperative learning' to the extent that above listed five elements are present. There are eight key elements (or conditions) or principles that make cooperative learning (Jacobs, at el. 2002). These principles are depicted briefly below.

- **Cooperation as a Value:** 'Cooperation as a value' means encouraging students to see mutual assistance as a goal to strive for, to view others as potential collaborators and to choose Cooperation as often as possible as a viable alternative to competition and individual work. Cooperation offers not just a way of learning but also a way of life.
- **Heterogeneous Grouping:** Students should cooperate with a wide range of people not just those with whom they want to cooperate or work in groups of their own choice but also work in teacher assigned heterogeneous groups.
- **Positive Interdependence:** Positive Interdependence occurs when gains of individuals and teams positively correlate. Students perceive that they need each other in order to complete the group's task ("sink or swim together"). Teachers may structure positive interdependence by establishing mutual goals, joint rewards, shared resources and assigned roles.
- **Individual Accountability:** Individual Accountability requires that all students are actively involved and responsible for their own learning. Each student's performance is frequently assessed and the results are given to the group and the individual. Teachers can give an individual test to each student.
- **Simultaneous Interaction:** Cooperative Learning is fundamentally a simultaneous approach. Teachers structure the groups so that students sit knee

to knee and talk through each aspect of the assignment. Discussions and activities both take place at once. 'Simultaneous Interaction' is synonymous with 'Face to face Promotive Interaction'. Students promote each other's learning by helping, sharing, and encouraging efforts to learn. Students explain, discuss and teach what they know about the topic to their classmates.

- **Equal Participation:** In a traditional classroom only single student out of the entire class will be participating at a given time. By working in teams all students are encouraged to contribute, allowing all students the chance for growth.
- **Collaborative Skills:** Students are encouraged and helped to develop and practice trust-building, leadership, decision-making, communication and conflict management skills.
- **Group Autonomy:** Members as a 'team' need specific time to discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships among members. Teachers also monitor the groups and give feedback on how well the groups are working together to the groups and the class as a whole.

Each of the above principle contributes to effective use of Cooperative Learning not only in the mainstream classroom but in special education as well. All of the above eight principles require active social participation on the part of the students. A CL group differs from a traditional or non-cooperative learning group because CL class make use of abovementioned the eight principles of CL.

1.2.1.1.5. Cooperative Learning Approach Based Classroom:

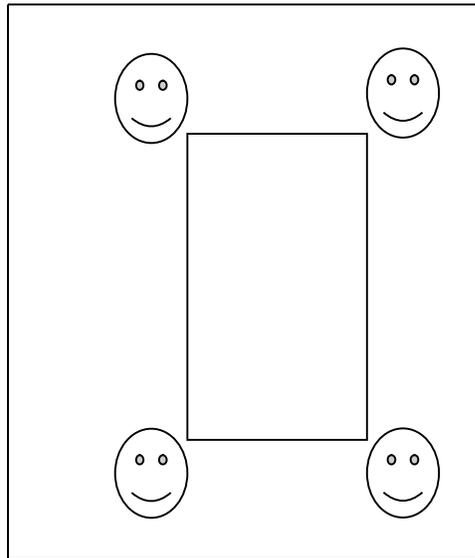
1.2.1.1.5.1. Classroom Scenario:

Based on the ideas discussed above, it is clear that 'Cooperation' rather than 'Competition' is the operative dynamic in CL groups. A great number of tasks can be adopted in teaching English and other subjects cooperatively. In a well-organized cooperative classroom, students take on a great deal of the responsibility for the classroom activities, freeing the teacher to give individual attention where needed. The use of small groups that work toward common instructional goals is the core component of the cooperative learning approach. When a group has three to four members, such a group can work more effectively. In order to create an effective CL based classroom environment for learner centred approach, the teacher must follow

principles and norms of CL. As per the meaning and goal, CL classroom set up is created. Thus, Cooperative Learning is a teaching arrangement that refers to small, heterogeneous groups of students working together to achieve a common goal (Kagan, 1994). Students work together as a small social unit to learn and they are responsible for their teammates' learning as well as their own.

CL requires a special classroom seating arrangement. Jacobs, *at el.* (2002) advocate a group of four, technically called “pods”.

Figure: 1.1: ‘Pods’ in CL classroom (Jacobs, at el. 2002)



Effective ‘Pods’ are actually group of four students who sit face to face one another. There can be formation of pods as many as possible in the class as per the total number of present students in the classroom.

1.2.1.1.5.2. Characteristics of Classroom Environment:

For successful implementation of CL principles in the classroom environment, the practitioner requires to execute the maximum class norms for CL. These includes- lively and noisy class but still self-organized, the instructor acts as a facilitator, stage setter and guide, learners attempt for self-learning and peer learning. Students assume verity of roles and they keep on rotating roles at daily, weekly or monthly basis on unanimous decision making process. Motivation and readiness to learn are crucial factors for learners whereas inspiration, constant reinforcement, trust on students’ self-learning and peer learning attempts, advanced preparation for task, preparation of

materials, and rewards of appreciation for good work for students etc. are teacher factors.

The environment of the classroom is conducive, friendly, free, flexible and student centered or rather learning centred. No use of negative feedback, no rebuking, no physical punishment by the teacher. Time table is flexible and convenience of students is given first priority. Language is treated as means only, even though it is language class. There are no language use related strict rules. Any language that the students feel comfortable can be used. Multi-language is seen as resource. In most CL methods, specific steps under each particular method have to be followed by teacher. This means that CL methods are highly structured methods. Although the teacher can make a few changes as per local needs or as per level of students. In CL based classroom a few general classroom norms have to be observed. All CL based classes follow some general norms or policies or set of behaviour for creating CL classroom environment. Here 'norms' mean 'shared values' and not rigid rules. The learners will have to always keep in mind as well as observe the following classroom norms as advocated by Jacobs, et al. (2002; p.5-6) for being cooperative:

- I listen when others are talking.
- I encourage everyone to participate.
- I help others without doing the work for them.
- I ask for help when I need it.
- I am critical of ideas, not people.
- I remember that we are all in this together.
- I come to the class on time.
- I am regular (present) in the class every day.
- I value and respect each person as an individual, as a group mate and as part of our class regardless of race, religion, nationality or academic performance.
- I value or see classmate as resource and not a competitor; I compete with my past performance.

While observing the above stated norms, the learners are also supposed to assume certain Roles in CL class. Students play variety of roles in CL activities and these roles get changed regularly on every day or weekly basis during CL tasks assigned. Most common roles as described by Jacobs, et al. (2002, p.68-69) are that of Coach, Reporter, Materials Manager, Summarizer, Paraphraser, Praisers, Safety

Monitor, Conflict Creator, Sound Hound (To Check Noise Level), Observer, Everyone Act as Leader(means each team member gets a chance to be leader), Organizer, Recorder, Checker, Questioner, Assessor, Encourager, Summarizer, Spokesperson, Timekeeper, Team facilitator, Elaborator, Research runner.

1.2.1.1.6. Cooperative Learning Methods (CLM): -

Cooperative learning (CL) is ‘a broad phrase for an effective approach to education’. It has a number of methods or models, and at the surface structure, they seem to follow the same or common principles, but each of this method has its specific set of features, which ultimately distinguishes it from others. Moreover, we do find many sub-versions and varieties in single method also. Such variations manifest their designer’s views and interpretation of learning, teaching and the world of education as whole.

[**Note:** Detailed information can be referred in the appendices under ‘List of CL methods and a table on ‘Various CL methods with their researchers’]

A brief summary of some of the most important CL methods have been given below. Some of the methods were selected for the present study.

- ❖ **Jigsaw I:** It is one of the most popular cooperative learning methods. It is designed to assist students to master quite a large amount of subject matter through talking, discussing and sharing information. It is ideally suited for the content-based classroom and has been adopted and adapted successfully for many curriculum areas of school and college level. Jigsaw offers a highly interactive learning experience, as its strategy supports the communicative approach and the whole language approach in language teaching.
- ❖ **Jigsaw II:** It was developed by Robert Slavin, who adapted Elliot Aronson’s Jigsaw technique. Slavin (1986) developed a variation of Jigsaw called Jigsaw II. Like Aronson's Jigsaw, each student in Jigsaw II, after preparing in an "expert" group, teaches his or her peers a particular part of the subject matter. Jigsaw II has similar procedure as in Jigsaw 1 or Jigsaw Basic. However, several strategies differentiate Jigsaw II from its predecessor. After instruction, in Jigsaw II, teachers test students individually and produce team scores based on each student's test performance.
- ❖ **Think-Pair-Share:** It is highly popular cooperative learning method. The structure of this activity provides students with the opportunity to reflect on the question posed and then practice sharing and receiving potential solutions.

It encourages individual participation and applicable across all grade levels and class sizes. Students think through questions using three distinct steps: 1. Think: 2. Pair: 3. Share:

- ❖ **Write-Pair-Switch:** In this CL strategy, the teacher asks students to think about the material that has just been delivered and write a few statements about it. Each student then discusses their statements with a partner. This is followed by a whole group discussion to identify the most frequently mentioned ideas.
- ❖ **Ask Your Neighbour:** Students turn to their neighbours and explain an idea to each other, decide on three important points in the lecture or answer a question about the topic. This technique is ideal for teaching a large numbers of students in a lecture. It means that 50% of the class is talking at one time instead of one student answering a question posed by the teacher
- ❖ **Numbered Heads Together:** It was developed by Kagan (1992). Here, the teacher arranges students in groups or teams of 4, assigning a number to each individual within a group. The teacher asks a question to the entire class. Students are then directed to “put their heads together” to discuss the answer and to be sure everyone in their group knows the correct answer. Then the teacher calls a number at random and each individual with that number must be ready with an answer because no one knows which member of a team will be called to answer the question. If an incorrect answer is given, the teacher can call on another group or team. This activity can be useful especially when teacher needs to review large “chunks” of material or in helping students prepare for a test.
- ❖ **Question-and-Answer Pairs:** It was devised by Johnson & Johnson (1991). The objective of the activity is to help students ask thinking questions. It is attempt to engage students individually with readings then pair to answer questions. The procedure is as follows: Step I- Students read assignment before class and compose or write one or two questions about it. Students write questions and answers for themselves. They exchange questions but not answers. In class, students pair up. Student ‘A’ asks his/her question and student ‘B’ responds. In step II, the pair compares answers to arrive at a final answer that is better than either of the initial answers.

- ❖ **Reciprocal Teaching of Reading (RTR):** Brown & Paliscar (1982) developed reciprocal teaching. It is a cooperative technique that allows for student pairs to participate in a dialogue about text. Partners take turns for reading and asking questions to each other, receiving immediate feedback. Teachers and students engage in dialogue regarding segments of text. The dialogue is structured by using four strategies: 1. Summarizing, 2. Question generating, 3. Clarifying and 4. Predicting. Such a model allows students to use important meta-cognitive techniques such as clarifying, questioning, predicting, and summarizing.
- ❖ **Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC):** Stevens, Slavin, & Associates in Late 1980s developed Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC). It is a reading and writing program for students in lower to higher grades. It has three principal elements: story-related activities, direct instruction in reading comprehension, and integrated language arts/writing. Daily lessons provide students with an opportunity to practice comprehension and reading skills in pairs and small groups. Pairs of students read the text to each other, predict how story will end, summarize stories, write responses to questions posed by the teacher, and practice spelling, decoding, and vocabulary. Within cooperative teams of four, students work to understand the main idea of a story and work through the writing activities linked to the story.
- ❖ **Paired Writing:** Paired learning strategies are requires typically less preparation for teachers than other forms of collaborative or cooperative learning. These strategies are both simple and efficient. Paired instructional methods require structuring and maintaining the quality of the peer interaction in such a way that it creates the same level of learning experiences by those two students who interact exclusively with you. The ability to design and administer quality control mechanisms is the key to effective paired learning.
- ❖ **STAD (Student Teams Achievement Division):** Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) was developed by Slavin & Associates in Late 1970s .This strategy of cooperative learning requires much of the time. It can be stretched to couple of months and cannot be effectively implemented in a day or an hour.

- ❖ **Group Investigation:** It was developed by Sharan & Lazarowitz in 1978. This is a general classroom organization plan in which students work in small groups using cooperative inquiry, group discussion and cooperative planning and projects. In this method, students form their own two-to six member groups. After choosing sub-topics from a unit that the entire class is studying, the groups break their subtopics into individual tasks and carry out the activities that are necessary to prepare group reports. Each group then makes a presentation or display to communicate its findings to the entire class.

1.2.1.1.7. Cooperative Learning and Language:

The constructivist theory has made a strong entry into educational thinking, but in language education it is less evident. (Cobb, 2005). The views of Russian psychologist and linguist Lev Vygotsky (1962/1978) and some other theoreticians like Wretch (1991/1998) have influenced *language pedagogy*. Vygotsky in his socio-cultural theory viewed learners as ‘culturally and socially situated’ rather than ‘isolated individuals’. He focused his attention on the importance of social context for learning. This idea of Vygotsky has found many applications in language pedagogy. This is by virtue of its great emphasis on the significant role of social interaction (which is through medium of language) and the kind of dialogue that interaction in such situations brings with it for the acquisition of language. In a socio-cultural view of language learning environment, learners are trustworthy and responsible for their own learning environment (Hosseini, 2008).

1.2.1.1.7.1. Integrating Cooperative learning methods with ESL skills:

Many scholars are of the opinion that, cooperative learning in the field of ELT/ESL is just an extension of Communicative Approach (CLT) but it is rather a hasty judgment. One of the reasons could be the inclusion of pair work and group work in both instructional approach of CL and CLT. Actually, CLL is much broader than CLT since it gives opportunities for not only the development of linguistics skills (communicative skills) but also helps to develop some other soft skills like teamwork, critical thinking skill, interpersonal skills, etc.

Some of the methods in CL approach are evidence of cooperative language learning methods such as Reciprocal Teaching of Reading (CTR), Cooperative Integrated Reading & Composition (CIRC), Students Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) & Team Games Tournaments (TGF) etc. They emphasize L-S-R-W skills of

language acquisition. Cooperative language learning methods help in teaching/instructing basic language skills like listening, speaking, reading, writing etc.

Kessler (1992) proposed definition of Cooperative Learning particularly in language learning context: “Cooperative learning is a within-class grouping of students usually of differing levels of Second language proficiency, who learn to work together on specific tasks or projects in such a way that all students in the group benefit from the interactive experience”. Thus, the cooperative group processes especially can provide opportunities for frequent and extended interaction in the target language among students (Slavin, 1995). The present study focuses on soft skills but some of these skills and competencies like reading skill, writing skill, grammar skill etc. are considered a part of ELT or ESL. An attempt is made to integrate soft skills with CL approach of teaching and learning.

1.2.1.2. Category: B: Soft Skills

1.2.1.2.1. Background:

Indian higher education sector is witnessing at present unprecedented changes aimed at achieving global standards in knowledge transfer and creation of skilled human resource. We have witnessed ‘Information Revolution’ and ‘Knowledge Revolution’. Due to the changing nature of societies, there is a need arisen to sharpen one’s axe in order to survive and keep pace with the competitive world. This is one of the reasons why Skill Industry compared to other remains at the top in terms of employability and highest return. Earlier the experts who had technical skills were in great demand but the tables have turned now. Today the individuals having expertise of non-technical skills are in great demand and they can achieve greater heights in their career. Hence it is high time to get oneself equipped with such non-technical skills which are popularly known among the technical and corporate business world as ‘Soft Skills’.

The phrase ‘soft skills’ consist of the term ‘skills’ which is misunderstood in its broader sense. In fact, the term ‘skills’ here refers to ‘behavioural traits, qualities, learned behaviour in its narrower sense, whereas in wider sense, it means ‘competencies’. Although at superficial levels some terms like ‘competency, knowledge, skill, and ability’ look synonyms but they are different when an English dictionary is consulted for their meanings. ‘Skills’ refer to the application of data or information with manual, verbal, or mental proficiency. Skills can be tested to measure quantity and quality of performance, usually within an established time limit.

Thus, 'skills' are the proficiencies developed through training or experience. In nut shell 'Skills' can be called 'learned traits'. So, one has to make conscious attempt to develop skill. We can develop our skills through the transfer of knowledge or training. In other words skills give us the "what." They tell us *what* types of abilities a person needs to perform a specific activity or job. These concepts of KSAs (knowledge, skills and ability) are fundamental aspects of 'competency'. Thus, competencies are more behaviour-based rather than skill-based. Competencies take "skills" and incorporate them into on-the-job *behaviors*. Those behaviors demonstrate the ability to perform the job requirements competently. Competencies are measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors (KSABs) and are critical to successful job performance. ("What's the difference between skills and competencies?" 2015) In conclusion, one can say that Soft skills are behavioural, mental, personality traits and wide range of competencies.

1.2.1.2.2. Conceptual differences among the key terms "Life skills", "Hard skills", and some other related terms with "Soft skills":

'Soft Skills' and 'Life Skills' are different and yet they can intersect and the former i.e. Soft Skills can be seen as a subset of the latter i.e. Life Skills. Hence one can say that Life skill is a broader, comprehensive and all inclusive general concept than Soft skill. Compared to life skill, '*Soft Skill*' is a narrow and specific concept. By meaning, a 'skill' is a 'learned ability' hence the term 'skill' used in the term 'soft skills' is rather tricky one because "soft skills" indicate "competencies". Thus, 'Soft Skills' are 'mechanism to demonstrate our Life Skills'. Life Skills mold 'the holistic persona' of the individual, which covers IQ, EQ and SQ. Soft skills are in a way a subset of Life skills. They are tools that enable outward expression of the persona. Therefore, it is very important to have both life skills and soft skills to get succeeded in all fields of life. Life skills are the most important between them since it teaches an individual how to survive in the big world where a game of cut throat competition is going on. Soft skills teach one how to create a personality for oneself which is noticed. (Alex, 2009)

WHO defined Life skills as "the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". WHO had laid down Ten Core Life Skills i.e. (1) Self-awareness, (2) Empathy, (3) Critical thinking, (4) Creative thinking, (5) Decision making, (6) Problem Solving, (7) Effective communication, (8) Interpersonal relationship, (9)

Coping with stress, (10) Coping with emotion (“Life skills education & CCE”. (n. d.))
As per National Curriculum Framework for School Education [NCFSE] (2000),
“problem solving, decision-making, communication skills, self-awareness, critical thinking, coping with stress, generative thinking” are some of the core life skills that students need to acquire in schools.

Life skills and Livelihood skills, as many people use them interchangeably although both are slightly different. The term ‘Livelihood skills’, is also called ‘Occupational’ or ‘Vocational skills’. Similarly other two terms ‘soft skills’ and ‘hard skills’ are also altogether different. In simple terms, the ‘Hard Skills’ of a domain have to do with the facts of that particular discipline (or “knowledge” i.e. ‘what?’ aspect). This means hard skills represent ‘technical knowhow’, basic academic qualification based knowledge or competencies and skills. Whereas on the other hand, ‘Soft Skills’ have to do with mastering the art of presenting the ‘critical content’ of one’s domain in highly effective ways to a target audience (or “applying knowledge-How? Aspect). That is, they represent non-technical, non-academic competencies which are actually a blend of hidden personality traits inbuilt in every individual.

Theoretically both the terms i.e. ‘soft skill’ and ‘employability skills’ look alike. Employability skills are those skills necessary for getting, keeping and being successful in a job. They are the skills and attitudes that enable employees to get along with their colleagues, to make critical decisions, solve problems, develop respect and ultimately become strong ambassadors for the organization. (“What's Employability?” 2014)

Concluding the above views, it is clear that all the related terms are different from one another. Soft skills are attached with career, job, and personality development. Based on the above points discussed, it is evident and clear that there is a thin line of demarcation between life skill and soft skill. Most people take them as synonyms and use interchangeably. It is now clear that life skill is a broad, wide concept and soft skills are very narrow and specific, applicable only to skills and competencies that are required at job, in career or vocation or profession one chooses. Thus, most of the people including literature available in higher education relate soft skills with employability skills and personality development component in higher or university education scenario worldwide and in corporate world too.

1.2.1.2.3. What are Soft Skills?

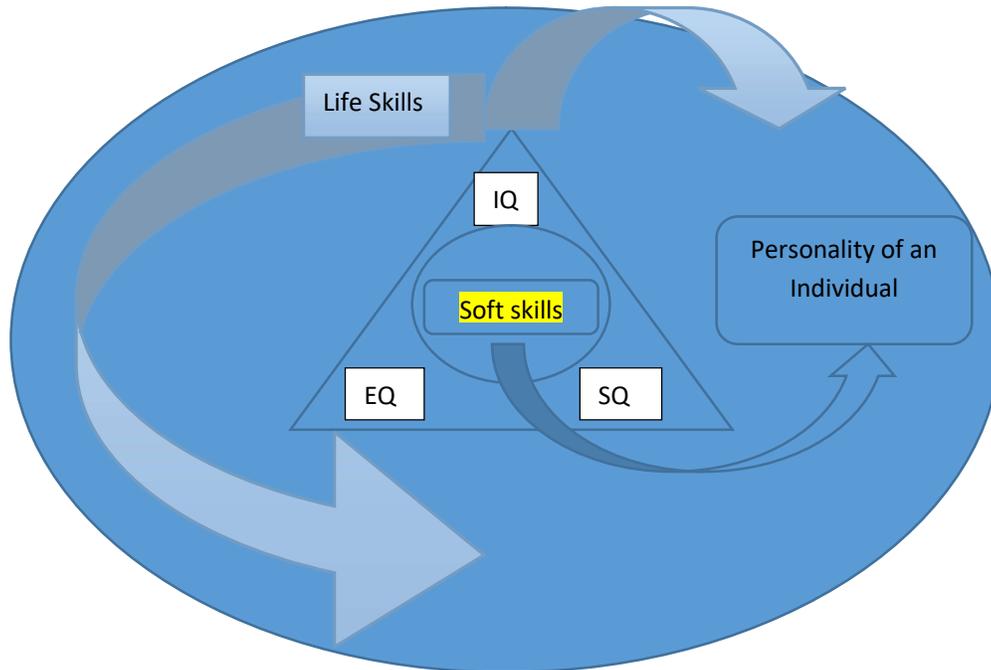
For a layman, the terms ‘Soft Skill’ in general refer to ‘the skills and competencies that an individual requires either to develop personality or to get succeeded in one’s career’. People know it through different terms such as “people’s skills”, “employability skills”, EQ skills etc. They are in their true sense “non-technical skills” which are essential for a job or career success. Mary Ipe (2008) described, “People skills or soft skills are a catch-all phrase that describes an employee’s non-technical skills and abilities.”

1.2.1.2.3.1. Concept, Meaning and Definitions of Soft Skills:

Soft skills complement hard skills which are the technical occupational requirements (occupational skills) of a job. Soft Skills being a sociological term relates to a person’s “EQ” (Emotional Quotient), the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communicative language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that characterize relationship with other people. In its narrowest sense, ‘soft skills’ refer to employability, career progression and job advancement competencies. Some consider soft skills as ‘portable’ or ‘transferable skills’ because Hard or Technical skills are specific to a particular job or task and cannot be transferred to other job type but Soft Skills are broad and wide and can be transferred from any one job to any other new job. (Reeves, n. d.)

Soft skills are often described in terms of “personality traits”, such as optimism, integrity and a sense of humour. These skills are also defined by abilities that can be practiced, such as leadership, empathy, communication and sociability. These skills are transferable skills, so they can be used in many different types of jobs. They are personal qualities and attitudes that can help you to work well with others and make a positive contribution to organizations you work for. However, this isn’t to say that technical skills and knowledge are not at all important, particularly computer skills. But it should be remembered that technical skills can be taught more easily than soft skills, which tend to be either personal characteristics or skills that have been fine-tuned over a period of time. (“What are the ‘soft skills’ employers want?”, 2012).The following figure clarifies the concept of soft skills.

Figure: 1.2. “Soft skills” as sub set of Life skills



Soft skills clearly deal with communications, the art of getting along, team building, and the knowledge of message delivery depending on the contact. Soft Skills can focus on personal as well as professional development. Without tuning with soft skills, it is hard for someone to interact and contribute to groups or to be productive in team settings and group environments. Anurag Kumar (2015) opined, “Of late, soft skills have emerged as a tool with enough power to make or break your career. How often do we encounter technically talented people who excel in their jobs, but whose career stalls beyond a certain point because they lack the social communication and relationship building skills to manage, work with and lead other people? Hence, “Soft skills” is an umbrella term which includes communicative skills, listening skills, team skills, Leadership quality, creativity and logic, problem solving skills, diplomacy and change readiness and many more.

1.2.1.2.3.2. Definitions of Soft Skills:

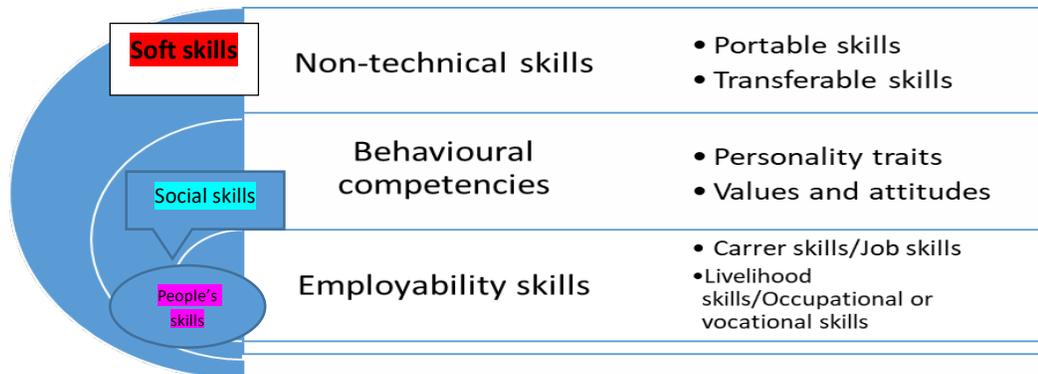
Not much of the attempts have been made so far to define ‘soft skills’. Some writers have tried to give meaning and definition of it but most of them have touched one or the other aspect so no common definition through consensus is arrived yet. Although a very few expert have tried to clarify the concept. Agrawal (2013) made an

attempt in his doctoral study to define Soft skills as “Soft skills are insights, skills, traits, values and virtues that help to deal with self and others, situations and communication, work and organization, and finally, with technology and surrounding”. He presented an exhausted list of Soft Skills in the form of elements or attributes that represent the ‘soft skills’ or ‘people skills’ or ‘social skills’.

(Note: An exhausted list of competencies from Agrawal (2013) is attached in the appendices for further reference).

In a few theoretical articles published in academic journal, most scholars have defined ‘soft skills’ as ‘competencies’. According to Bharati & Hariprasad (2004), “Soft skills are generally interpersonal competencies, a diverse range of abilities and are more difficult to define due to their subjectivity.” A few scholars had defined ‘soft skills’ in the context of skills. Joy & Simiraj (2008) defined as “the rubric term ‘Soft skills’ could be used to mean anything from interpersonal communication skills to the ability to function in the multi-disciplinary terms or a professional ethical responsibility or negotiation and conflict management.” The following figure explains in deeper sense the concept of soft skills.

Figure: 1.5. Soft skills and related terms



Since time immemorial, as a phrase, “Soft Skills” has been attached and used in multinational companies, business houses and corporate industries in the context of Human Resource training for the employees and executives for their better productivity, efficiency and results. It is still used in higher education field, in technical stream only. There is a negligible instant where this term is used in school or teacher education. From the above definitions, meaning of ‘soft skills’ can be inferred. ‘Soft skills’ are a diverse range of competencies and abilities that help individual to shape one’s personality and attitude towards career and life. Soft skills

are necessary for professionals at their workplace as well as for students to work with other people at educational institutions.

1.2.1.2.4. Theoretical focus on select Soft skills of the present study:

For the purpose of the present study, four soft skills have been selected. It is an out of debate fact that the list of Soft skills is exhaustive and studying all these skills would be beyond limitation for any novice researcher in terms of time, money, energy and human capabilities. Since the study of all the above skills demand a greater time span especially with a qualitative or a mixed method approach. In addition, the available literature on this subject does not offer any theoretical guidelines for studying soft skills. It was the investigator's prime assumption that these selected soft skills are considered as the skills and competencies that are highly demanding in 21st century job market especially teaching job. These selected soft skills are not only crucial for the student-teachers to survive but also for progress in their career. Therefore, only a few soft skills were selected for the descriptive case study of the phenomena.

The rationale behind the selection of only a few soft skills was that the list of soft skills has been exhaustive, i.e. more than hundred. Soft skills in actual sense are competencies, qualities and attributes of personality therefore all of them can never be studied in limited timeframe of the doctoral research project. The present study focus on understanding the process of soft skills development through qualitative approach and hence it will simply impossible to include all soft skills for the study purpose. Skills or attributes for the present study were selected based on whether it is representative from major group of skills. The select soft skills were considered in the present study as simply academic skills and not the complex social skills. The following table on soft skills grouping explains this idea.

Table: 1.1: Major area of soft skills classification and representative competencies from that area

Specific soft skill/competency selected for the study	Abbreviation code of Soft skill	Major area relating to individual soft skills
Reading Comprehension Skill	RCS	Study and Academic skill
Critical Thinking Skill	CTS	Life skill
Writing Communication Skill	WCS	Academic skill
Time Management Skill	TMS	Social, Personal & professional and employability skill

The soft skills selected for the present study are discussed in brief in the following passages.

1.2.1.2.4.1. Reading Comprehension Skill [RCS]:

Among four basic language learning skills- LSRW, Reading is one of the important skills. This skill is most crucial in Indian context because every state has its own regional language. There are many variety in a regional language. From the historical viewpoint, as per “Three Language formulae”, English is treated as “Associate official language” along with Hindi as national and second language whereas English as second or third language in education scenario. English has been a ‘link’ and ‘library’ language, therefore reading skill is most important compared to other language learning skills.

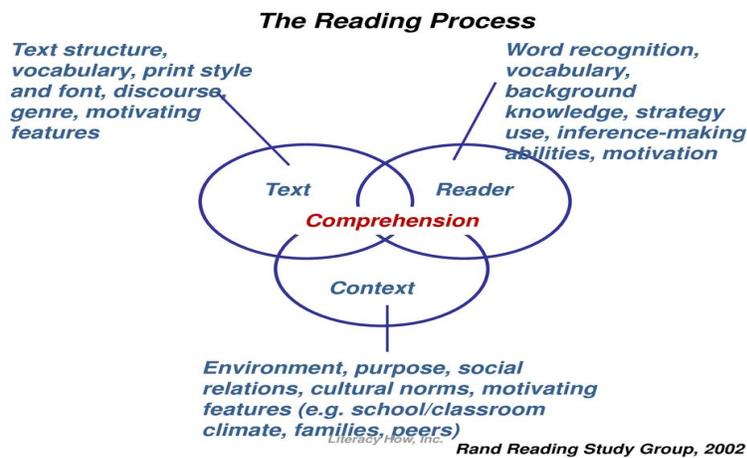
The skill of reading is understood from different viewpoints. At elementary or beginner level, it can be literacy skill, in which learners become able to recognize letters of alphabets and pronounce them correctly, starting from words with mono-morphemes to poly-morphemic words and from aloud reading leading to reading silently and then greater comprehension with speed of reading. Reading at advanced level consists of reading comprehension, critical reading and reading with speed.

There is no universally accepted single definition of reading. Goodman (1967) viewed, ‘Reading is a psychological guessing game’. Sonnerschein defined, ‘reading is the thinking under the stimulus of the printed page’. Francoise Grallet (1981) stated, ‘reading is decoding what the writer has encoded’. Sheia Harri Augustein

(1982) gave interesting view as ‘reading is a kind of conversation between the reader and a text’.

Mechanics of reading include ‘the process of reading’ as an active process. Reading starts with writing or encoding by the author and leads to mental functioning to get the message through understanding or decoding. Reading was earlier considered as simple activity but the latest research in the field of reading instruction at global level has proved that reading is most complex process.

Figure: 1.4. Process of Reading comprehension (Source: www.google.images)



As a skill, reading skill was considered as one of the basic communication skills. Reading skill has many aspects like reading comprehension, reading readiness, critical reading and speed reading. **Types of reading** include aloud reading, silent reading, intensive and extensive reading. The final goal of advanced reading programme will be the development of greater comprehension with higher speed and thinking critically and rationally. From this perspective, reading comprehension is most important skill for learners in India. Eventually reading comprehension skill is the ability to read with full and exact understanding.

Reading comprehension skill has the following seven **components** which are accepted by the experts at international level as part of assessment rubrics: Comprehension, Analysis, Interpretation, Relation to text (i.e. making meaning of the text in the context) and Understanding Genre of the text, Using Reading strategy, and lastly critical reading.

1.2.1.2.4.2. Critical Thinking Skills [CTS]:

According to Passi *et al* (2000), thinking is a ‘complex’ skill, which involves many micro-skills and can be classified into two broad categories: (a) Creative thinking skills and (b) Critical thinking skills. Both of these differ in terms of their concept, definition and components. *Creative thinking* is the process of generating ideas, processes, experiences or objects. It is a multi-dimensional attribute differentially distributed among the people. Creative thinking is often equated with divergent thinking. Passi *et al* (2000) identified twenty-four micro-skills for developing critical thinking. *Critical thinking* is the process of analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating the authenticity, accuracy and/or worth of information and arguments gathered through observation, experience, reflection and logical reasoning. CTS is the ability to make evaluations and judgments based on logic and ideas rather than on intrinsic values. It is often equated with convergent thinking. (Singh & Mishra, 2008). A widely accepted definition of Critical thinking is that “it is reasonable, reflective, responsible and skillful thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do”. It is also referred as ‘an ability of a person to expand his available knowledge on a problem or situation’.

Delphi report (1990) depicted *six core cognitive skill components* of Critical thinking skill. These core components are Interpretation, Explanation, Analysis, Inference, Evaluation and Self-regulation. (Smitha & Rao, 2008)

1.2.1.2.4.3. Written Communication Skill [WCS]:

Both terms, ‘writing skill’ and ‘written communication skill’ seem alike and have no theoretical difference. Pal & Korlahalli, J.S. (2009) describes meaning of these terms as, “everything that has to be written and transmitted in the written form falls in the area of written communication. In other words, written communication involves any type of interaction that makes use of the written word. This includes types of composition- guided and free, lengthy writing- passages- stories-descriptions, letter writing, report writing, circulars, memos, telegrams, minutes, forms, questionnaire, manuals, office and business correspondence, messages, application letters, press release, journalism, précis writing etc. Writing skills are an important part of communication. Good writing skills allow you to communicate your message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations.

Writing skills are skills that apply to writing. Writing skill is actually an advanced and higher level skill as it demands great accuracy and precision. Its merits include open to verification, its authenticity can be challenged and it is a permanent record, a legal document, has a wide access. And its limitations consist of it is time consuming, costly, no possibility for quick clarification. Spelling, grammar and punctuations are basic elements of writing skill.

There are mainly three components of writing communication skills: Structuring, Content and Style. There are as many as twenty **sub-components** of the writing skills and they are as follow: Clarity of one's purpose of reading, Addressing to reader/audience & familiarity with genre, Purpose & Audience addressed, Development of relevant ideas, Subject matter covers topic, Way of using ideas, Coherence, and Coherent and transition of ideas, Logical sequence, Use of vocabulary, expressing ideas clearly, clarity and conciseness, Structure , Organizational structure; Paragraphing and Transition, Style, Language used, Grammar and syntax, Mechanics, Technical Aspects of writing and lastly Genre.

1.2.1.2.4.4. Time management skill [TMS]

No one is born a time management expert. It's a learned skill. Time management skills are those abilities that help one to recognize and solve personal time management problems. So the goal of these time management lessons is to show us what we can do to improve these skills. ("Time Management skills and techniques", 2002). When deadlines are looming, good time management is about prioritizing the most important tasks and then deciding which actions will produce the maximum output with the minimum effort. With good time management skills, one can be in total control of his/her time and life both, also of stress and energy levels. You make progress at work. You are able to maintain balance between your work, personal, and family lives. You have enough flexibility to respond to surprises or new opportunities. All time management skills are learnable.

Time Management is more than just managing time. It is about controlling the use of the most valuable and undervalued resource i.e. time. The only part of 'time' that truly exists is in this eternal present moment i.e. NOW. TM is managing oneself in relation to time. It is setting priorities and taking charge of the situation and time utilization. It means changing those habits or activities that cause waste of time. It is being willing to adopt habits and methods to make maximum use of time. Effective time management requires reducing the impact of the time stealers and increasing the

effectiveness of a manager in getting the things done that need to be done. Evaluating How Time is Used, Goal-Setting, Defining Priorities, Scheduling Activities are some of the important elements that combine to enable an individual to eliminate distractions, interruptions and inefficiencies in the work process to make the most of time management. (Handbook on Time Management Skills, 2001)

Most important seven **Components** of the skill are Uses time, getting things done, adjustment due to procrastination, quality of work within time limit, meeting deadlines, punctuality, getting organized.

1.2.1.3. Category: C:

Pre-service secondary teacher education in India and teaching of Soft Skills:

India has a large system of education starting from formal to non-formal forms and from KG to PG grades, from schooling to university education. Among all of these, teacher's training is crucial as the quality of the nation's development and progress depends largely on the quality of training of teachers. Teacher's training has always been in flux in India. Preparation of Teacher is not essentially limited only to training in a limited duration of one or two years or more at pre-service stage. Rather it is a continuous process till the teacher reaches the age of retirement. Both of its components i.e. pre-service and in-service are complimentary to each other. Education as a lifelong process last till death of the person so it acts as an instrument in the preparation of teachers who can in their practice ensure transformative learning, where teacher and learner, learner and learner are co-constructors of knowledge.

1.2.1.3.1. Secondary Teacher education in India in the contemporary time:

Teacher education in India today has not only developed in quantitative terms but also in terms of variety of programmes, specializations and infrastructural facilities compared to the scenario of teacher education after the independence. The present structure of teacher education is supported by a network of national, zonal/provincial and district level resource institutions; all of which are working together to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs at the pre-service level and also through in- service programs for serving teachers throughout the country by keeping teachers up-to-date with new changes of the field.

1.2.1.3.2. The missing link in the training of pre-service teachers:

All over the country there has been a sizable increase in the quantity of teacher education institutes under the privatization policy implemented as economic reforms in India after decade of 90s. The mushroom like growth of institutes which are

offering teacher education programmes have shown a growth in quantity but quality is a matter of great concern. Due to rapid changes during the last decade in the educational, political, social and economic contexts at the national and international levels, many new threats have been posed. Curriculum reconstruction has also become imperative in the light of some perceptible gaps in teacher education. As we know by and large teacher education is conventional in its nature and purpose. The integration of theory and practice and consequent curricular response to the requirements of the school system still remains inadequate. Teachers are prepared in variety of competencies and skills but they are not necessarily equipped with soft skills to be successful in one's career.

There are some problems in teaching and learning at school and higher education levels. In most general school education scenario, teaching is 'teacher-fronted' and the classes are very large and over-crowded. One of the solutions to these problems may be an attempt to cultivate student's capabilities to carry out their independent study through group work, and set up a suitable environment to allow students that have different proficiencies and intelligences to learn life skills. The potential usefulness of Cooperative Learning in school and higher levels has been found in studies carried out abroad so far on CL. Cooperative Learning encourage student-student communication in groups; hence, oral language encourages more language development. It can also move the focus of the teaching from the teacher to the students. Group work may enable students to assist each other, so it can also be a useful technique for large classes. Thus language education provide wide scope and platform for the soft skills training.

Today, India is marked by multilingualism and the same resource can be turned into an asset for the language learner. Teaching of English has always remained in flux especially in L2 class situations in ESL context in India in general and in Gujarat in particular. English education is different in various states of India at both school and higher education levels. English as a subject is taught at school level as compulsory subject and at graduation courses other than literature taught as compulsory course from general to professional courses. Ironically, English enjoys an important place as medium of instruction in almost all higher education and professional courses in India. At general and professional UG courses, English is still treated as second language making it compulsory subject esp. in courses offered

through regional medium of language. In professional courses like B.Ed., English is offered as method subject wherein it is treated as second language.

Evidences of inclusion of soft skills in the higher education/university education are apparent in the course of study of different graduate and post graduate programmes in which soft skills have been made part of foundation courses at graduate levels in many universities in India and Gujarat in particular. Such courses on soft skills and computer skills provide the base of learning at higher education. e.g. S.P. University, Vallabh Vidyanagar; Kutch University, Bhuj etc. have included Soft skills as an integral part at higher education level i.e. technical professional courses like MBA, MCA, B.E. and B. Tech. etc. Except a few universities in Gujarat, hardly teaching of Soft skills is found in primary or secondary teacher education or teacher training programmes. CL approach presents a wide scope of use of any skill training. Hence such study is needed that focuses on exploring development of soft skills through tasks in secondary teacher education programme.

1.2.1.3.3. Need of Soft skills in present day Pre-service Secondary Teacher Education:

The field of secondary teacher education is at cross roads in India today. There is a profound gap between the knowledge and skills that most students acquire in our schools and colleges and those required in today's world and technology-infused workplace. Today the world is changing very fast so every individual requires to be updated. Only those people will be able to survive in today's competent world who have mastered not only 'Hard skills' i.e. technical knowledge but also 'Soft skills' i.e. non-technical competencies and behavioural attributes.

India lags far behind in imparting skill training as compared to other countries. Only 10% of the total workforce in the country receives some kind of skill training (2% with formal training and 8% with informal training). Further, 80% of the entrants into the workforce do not have the opportunity for skill training. ("Knowledge paper on skill development in India: Learner first Where are we on skills EY India". (n. d.))

In the present decade, it is found that the accelerated economic growth has increased the demand for skilled manpower but on the contrary we have a shortage of skilled manpower in the country. Employees worldwide state a variety of reasons for their inability to fill jobs, ranging from undesirable geographic locations to candidates looking for more pay than what the employers have been offering.

Despite the emphatic stress laid on education and training in this country, there is still a shortage of skilled manpower to address the mounting needs and demands of our growing mixed economy. The skill development of the working population is on top priority for the central government. This is evident by the exceptional progress India has witnessed under the National Policy on Skills (2009) over the years. (“Knowledge paper on skill development in India: Learner first where are we on skills EY India”. (n. d.))

Keeping the above stated missing links in the present secondary teacher education programme in India, this study presents a new approach of the study. The modern age schools and colleges of graduation for sciences, management and liberal arts had started training in life skills and in professional degree colleges of high caliber have already started training in soft skills under the prescribed course of communication and personality development. In one of the Indian government reports based on survey research carried out by government agencies; the reasons and demand for including Soft Skills training in any under graduate, graduate or even PG programme had been focused. In one of its excerpts, it is quoted *“The need for giving emphasis on the soft Skill Development, especially for the educated unemployed youth (both for rural & urban) has been highlighted in various forums. Unfortunately, our country’s current education system does not give any emphasis on development of soft skills. As a result, most of the educated unemployed youths are found wanting in this area, which is becoming their Achilles heel.... “Soft skills for Employability” under Skill Development based on Modular Employable Skills (MES) is a national level government initiative to address the need of incorporating soft skills in higher education. Many more states in India have included soft skills under foundation course in graduate and PG studies across all streams. (“Soft Skills for Employability Sector”:GOI.2008)*

In today’s uncertain economic times, the person who has the ability to interact and express oneself to other people is likely being the one who will succeed in almost all walks of life. Our educational system predominantly focuses on ‘hard skills’ (i.e. occupation specific technical skills and knowledge) rather than ‘soft skills’ (i.e. employability/career advancement/professional development skills). Dealing with difficult peers or co-workers, learning to be a team player, negotiating office dynamics, and having the ability to listen and solve problems are some of the examples of soft skills applicable in any field of work or profession. Soft Skills can

enhance the career mobility of a person and increase the chances of success, satisfaction and enjoyment of job and helping an individual to be fit in the job s/he wants or dreams.

Based on the review of the syllabus done by the investigator of the study of General B. Ed programme of One year, it is found that there was greater emphasis on theory aspect of education and practical aspect of teacher training was often either neglected or taken for granted. Teacher education has become stereotyped and a ritual. Soft skills though imbibed indirectly in the training, had not been a part of the prescribed syllabus of general secondary teacher training programme in India in general and in Gujarat in particular therefore students-teachers who underwent this programme, found unfit for the job in school in the long run by the school authorities as teaching requires team effort and cooperation as basic skills. Either underdeveloped or lack of such soft skills would result in unemployment or sere frustration in the young brigade of the country.

There is a need to empower our trainee-teachers with Soft skills as students having ESL background at their schooling more or less have poor foundation of basic communication skills and critical thinking skill. By understanding the need of the hour, the Gujarat government had started programmes like SCOPE (Society for Creating Opportunity for Proficiency in English) and Orchid programmes – Communication skills, computer skills. These programmes also present the necessity for the inclusion of the soft skills programmes into the curriculum of B.Ed. in India.

Besides Soft Skills are essential for a teacher and especially for a student-teacher to develop and to survive so that s/he can cope with different situations in the study or in future work place. These people skills are very important to teachers who typically look for well-rounded co-teachers; who work well in teams, are diplomatic, resourceful, and able to build networks within the team. A teacher with effective soft skills can manage a wide range of students as well as management's expectations with fairness, tact, and understanding with an eye on organizational mission and goals. The continuous up-gradation and sharpening of one's soft skills in the light of ever changing world is the key to success in personal as well professional life. Training in soft skills to prospective teachers will help them excel in their future professional career. Hence this is high time to include the training of soft skills for the secondary student-teachers.

1.3. A new strategy proposed to study soft skills development in secondary pre-service teacher education:

Cooperative learning theory has a great scope for application of its techniques and methods in real classroom teaching and learning from KG to PG, irrespective of medium of instruction and subjects. It also offers ample opportunities to academicians and researchers to carry out researches from different perspectives (Jacobs, et al. 2002). Keeping in view the scope of cooperative learning methods, the researcher proposed to incorporate some of the CLM in pre-service secondary teacher education.

The discussion in the preceding passages depicted the missing link of soft skills development at pre-service teacher education. Nowadays we find a cutthroat competition in every field and the number of job seekers is higher than available vacancies for employment. The employers today look for soft skills along with technical hard skills in youths. Similar demands are found in the teaching profession. The teachers of 21st century require a whole set of new or improvised competencies and skills in order to cope up with new challenges in the professional world of teaching. Therefore, the researcher proposed to study a set of soft skills that might be very crucial for the 21st century teachers. The study on development of soft skills is in itself a challenging task because of the involvement of human beings and their behavioural traits.

Based on the reading and observations of the researcher, most popular twelve CL methods will be selected and tasks will be prepared on the basis of the steps of the specific CL method selected. The researcher proposes to explore the phenomena of the study of development of soft skills through appropriate techniques and tools. The research design will be 'emerging' and the data collection method will be eclectic. The strategy on CLM will have two aspects i.e. practice teaching phase and CLM based Instructional plan. Thus, the researcher proposes to evolve a new strategy on CLM tasks in order to explore and describe the phenomena of the development of a few selected soft skills.

1.4. Rationale:

In an era of globalization where competition and competencies are given prime importance in life by almost all of societies of the world, employability skills like interrelationship, teamwork, and other less known soft skills are getting more value than ever before. With all due respect to traditional educational system, new threats, challenges raised by globalization have shaken our traditional system. The

very nature of our societies is “cooperativeness”. Long ago, John Donne writes, “No man is island”. Human society by its very nature established and developed on the value or principle of “cooperativeness” or ‘interdependence’. A considerable amount of studies, articles and government reports had already indicated an urgent need for the reorganization and reconstruction of entire education system especially the curriculum and pedagogy to meet new challenges of 21st century world.

Long back in 1996, Delors commission presented report on how and what sort of education we require in 21st century. The report became world famous due to its focus on four pillars of learning and survival in the 21st century. Gone are the days when students were thought as ‘empty vessels’ and their minds treated as “blank slate”. Students ,although we talk a lot about child –centred education, still be considered as ‘passive recipient’ of information transmitted from the teacher, as author. The research in psychology has projected a “cognitive and constructivist approach” as a way of active learning via the power of the mind evident in Cooperative learning. (Dasan, 2007) Capacity building via interactive and participative learning approach helps students develop variety of skills and aspects of personality. But remaining reluctant to new changes and sticking to hegemonic forces overpower interpersonal or international discourse and policy-making or decision making process. This calls for new pedagogies and new approaches to learning. Constructivism theory has great impact on addressing major issues of the world in general as well as education or learning in particular. Cooperative Learning, Project based learning, Inquiry based learning, discovery learning, collaborative learning and such new methods of learning have their roots in the constructivist movement.

The theoretical constructs of Dewey’s Experiential Learning, Piaget’s Progressive generation of knowledge and Vygotsky’s theory of Cognitive Development (social context) based on ZPD theory have justified Cooperative learning as not only an effective approach to language learning but also means for academic, personal and moral development, ultimately resulting in prosperity of society. CL focuses upon foundational aspect of contemporary education, which aims at preparing “competent lifelong learners” who will be able to flourish both academically and socially. Therefore, time is ripe for the inclusion of CL not only as a modern, sophisticated and relevant pedagogical approach but also as a value, especially in the context in education in general and in ELT sphere in particular. (Hossaini, 2008) It is the need of the present time that not only the textbook and

curriculum should be redesigned based on CL but also the entire school and higher education in India needed reorganisation for solving the problems of the nation. It is high time now to make “cooperativeness” as way and philosophy of our life.

Cooperative learning has been at the forefront of educational research and is a frequent topic in methodology textbooks, teacher education programmes, and in-service course work. The positive benefits of CL have been documented in a variety of studies. Despite these benefits and the prevalence of the topic in general contexts, CL has not been as widespread as it should be in teacher education at secondary level, so it should be given a due place in courses of study.

The secondary teacher education in India is at crossroads as it is in its never before experienced transactional and rapid development phase. NCF 2000 and 2005 highlighted the need to restructure and reorganise the entire teacher education programs. There is a need to keep a check on the process of curriculum transaction and practise teaching at secondary teacher education in India in general, as ground reality is not so favourable. The mushroom growth of self-supported teacher education institutes have increased competitions and have resulted in quality compromise. In the present scenario, secondary teacher education in India has been undergoing a significant change in terms of both theory and practices, in terms of new mode of learning and instruction (pedagogy). Therefore recently, NCTE in its new act of 2015-2016 – the norms and standards for all sorts and levels of teacher education programmes in India have changed in two years duration of some programmes, i. e. B. Ed, M. Ed is made of two years keeping in mind the new demands of the 21st century education and global requirement of teacher professional preparation.

In an era of globalization and information & communication today, soft skills are much emphasized in fields of study and workplaces. In one of the Indian Government reports ,it was cited, “Given that a large component of the “un-employability” of our graduates as well as low performance at the workplace is due to ineffective language, communication and soft skills, (“ Language, Communication and Soft Skills MOOCs”,2014) Our school and higher education including technical and vocational education provide students all subject based knowledge but they are not given any training in life skills, soft skills and personality development, which are very crucial for career advancement and survival in job market. Nowadays Industries are paying much of their attention for upgrading their employees with soft skills training. The teacher education program in today’s scenario faces acute pressure to

prepare the prospective promising teachers fully well-equipped with all knowledge and skills to work in ever-changing techno- savvy scenario of 21st century. Global competitive edge in the service sector and emergence of education as a promising business industry have changed curricula from school education to higher education programmes. Awareness for gaining information is getting momentum on the part of parents and students. Students are no longer to be just passive recipient of information in present scenario. Moreover our teaching has not yet changed, as teachers and students are comfortable with traditional methods. It is not practically possible actually to follow individualistic teaching method, as our classrooms are overcrowded and no class is homogeneous.

Soft skills are increasingly becoming the hard skills of today's work force. It's just not enough to be highly trained in technical skills, without developing the softer, interpersonal and relationship building skills that help people to communicate and collaborate effectively. These people skills are more critical than ever as organizations struggle to find meaningful ways to remain competitive and be productive. Teamwork, leadership, and communication are underpinned by soft skills development. Since each is an essential element for organizational and personal success, developing these skills is very important. ("Why soft skills matter?". (n. d.)

Cooperative learning and training in soft skills has become significant in professional education of prospective teachers. If pre-service teachers are not exposed to effective models of CL in the teacher education programmes, it may be unrealistic to expect them to engage in CL in their own classrooms. (Margo, 2008)

Hence, under Constructivism, Active learning, Experiential Learning, Cooperative Learning, Collaborative Learning etc. approaches are highly focused today. Textbooks at school levels have started to be designed based on constructivism. If pre-service teacher trainees are exposed to this new way of learning and teaching, they will not only develop themselves professionally but also help students get 'Learning to learn skills' for the lifetime. In addition the answer to large crowded classes is Cooperative learning.

To address the questions regarding selection of Soft Skills as proposed for the present study, it can apparently be justified that it is not practically possible to study qualitatively all soft skills in limited time duration. Among all soft skills, most useful and crucial from the viewpoint of pre-service teacher trainees and their future job profile are Oral communication skill, Team work skill, Time management skill,

Critical thinking skills, Reading comprehension skill and Written communication skill;. Many of soft skills are actually subcategories of above-mentioned first two skills. Lack of Critical thinking skill is the cry of present education system. This does not mean that all teachers and educators today lack these soft skills. However, more or less we need to sharpen or update such skills for the survival in ever changing society. Communication skills and Critical thinking skill would not only develop the student-teachers' personality but also help them for future professional career development. As apparent, no graduate course in India whether of general stream or professional course put special emphasis on development of Soft Skills as part of regular core curriculum.

Based on the review of related literature, a gap was found in research studies carried out in India specifically on Soft Skills incorporating CL at secondary teacher education programme. It has been found from the comprehensive review of related literature that there are negligible or no attempts made so far to study cooperative learning at secondary teacher education in India, along with the focus on studying the nature, scope and process of soft skills development in the context of ESL classroom. With these understanding, the investigator was convinced to carry out his study for an entire academic year on the use of cooperative learning approach to develop or enhance, sharpen and strengthen soft skills among the prospective teachers in pre-service secondary teacher education program, keeping in view both the aspects i.e. being participant in CL group and as CL teacher during (practical) Practice teaching.

The present study aimed to explore and provide a thick description of the phenomena of the development of soft skills among selected secondary pre-service teachers under the natural setting of self-guided and structured instructional strategy on Cooperative Learning Methods. Accordingly, the following statement of problem was identified.

1.5. Statement of the Problem:

DEVELOPMENT OF SOFT SKILLS THROUGH COOPERATIVE LEARNING AMONG SECONDARY STUDENT- TEACHERS

1.6. Research Questions: These are categorized into two types:

1.6.1. Broad Research Questions:

- (1) What is the Strategy based on Cooperative Learning Methods to study the process of development of select soft skills among secondary student-teachers?
- (2) How far do the identified secondary student-teachers develop select soft skills through Tasks based on selected Cooperative Learning Methods?
- (3) What do secondary student-teachers perceive about their learning through Cooperative Learning Methods?

1.6.2. Focused Research Questions:

- (1) What are the tasks included in Cooperative Learning Methods based Instructional Plan designed for secondary student-teachers?
- (2) How can select Cooperative Learning methods be integrated in Practice Teaching phase?
- (3) What are the variety of instruments through which an evolving phenomena of development of select soft skills among secondary student-teachers be explored and recorded for the thick description?
- (4) To what extent do the select secondary student-teachers develop in them the identified Soft Skills using selected Cooperative Learning Methods based Tasks?
- (5) What are the overall reflections of the select secondary students-teachers over learning through Cooperative Learning Methods?

1.7. Objectives:

- (1) To evolve a strategy to explore the phenomena of development of select soft skills among identified secondary students-teachers with regard to Cooperative Learning Methods based Instructional Plan.
- (2) To study the perception of identified student-teachers on their learning gained through Cooperative Learning Methods in the context of practice teaching phase.
- (3) To study the process of the development of selected four Soft Skills viz., Reading Comprehension skill, Critical Thinking skill, Written Communication skill and Time management skill among identified secondary students-teachers through Cooperative Learning Methods Based Instructional Plan with regard to-

- (3.1) Prior (Entry behaviour) and Posterior (Terminal behaviour) Performance Tests on select soft skills
- (3.2) Performance of select participants on evaluative rubrics on selected four soft skills
- (3.3) Student-teacher's Portfolio
- (4.) To study the reflections of the select participants on overall experiences of learning through cooperative learning methods in the context of-
 - (4.1) Cooperative Learning Self-assessment Rating Scale
 - (4.2) Opinionnaire to explore the reactions and experiences of the participants about learning through Cooperative Learning Methods.

1.8. Explanation of terms used in the present study:

1.8.1. Development

In the present study the term 'development' refers to the gradual progress and improvement in the use of the target skills in terms of the actual performance of the student-teachers in the context of assigned CLM based tasks. This will be studied with the help of investigator's observation, student portfolio and terminal behaviour test.

1.8.2. Soft skills

This phrase 'Soft skills' in the present study refers to some selected academic skills and competencies which are essential to carry out teaching profession specific work effectively. The present study treated 'soft skills' as academic skills and not as the social skills. There are four soft skills selected for the present study viz., reading comprehension skill, critical thinking skill, written communication skills and time management skill. The performance on these four soft skills in twelve CLM tasks sessions will be identified through observations based on evaluative rubrics.

1.8.3. Cooperative Learning (CL)

In the present study 'Cooperative Learning' refers to an instructional method to facilitate self-learning for the participants through selected methods of cooperative learning. These selected methods of cooperative learning are (i) Jigsaw I, (ii) Jigsaw II, (iii) Think-Pair-Share, (iv) Write-Pair-Switch, (v) Ask Your Neighbour, (vi) Numbered Heads Together, (vii) Paired Writing, (viii) Reciprocal Teaching of Reading (RTR), (ix) Cooperative Integrated Reading and composition (CIRC), (x) Question-Answer Pairs, (xi) STAD, (xii) Group Investigation.

1.8.4. Student Teachers:

This term refers to pre-service B.Ed. students studying in regular Bachelor of Education programme of one year under CBCS in Dr. H. R. Gajwani College of Education, Adipur, affiliated to K S K V Kachchh University, Bhuj in the academic year 2011-2012. For the present study, a small group of 14 student-teachers have been selected.

1.9. Scope and Delimitations of the present study:-

- (1) The present study is delimited to voluntarily participating select pre-service secondary student-teachers who got admitted in one-year fulltime (regular) general pre-service secondary teacher education programme during the academic years-2011-2012 and have opted English method as First or second method course.
- (2) The study is also delimited to twelve selected methods of cooperative learning viz. (i) Jigsaw I, (ii) Jigsaw II, (iii) Think-Pair-Share, (iv) Write-Pair-Switch, (v) Ask Your Neighbour, (vi) Numbered Heads Together, (vii) Paired Writing, (viii) Reciprocal Teaching of Reading (RTR), (ix) Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), (x) Question-Answer Pairs, (xi) STAD, (xii) Group Investigation.
- (3) The study is delimited to only four soft skills viz. reading comprehension skill, critical thinking skill, written communication skill, time management skill.

1.10. Organization of thesis (Chapterization) and style of writing:

Reporting of the research work was done through integration of two models i.e. chronology of events (i.e. Day wise/session wise thick description of events, episodes of critical significance) and thematic description of the evolving phenomena based on tools used during CLM based instructional plan.

The writing style adopted and suited for the present study was Descriptive, as per nature, type of the study and nature of objectives of the study. Participant's performance was to be presented as Case in given each CL task.

The entire thesis is organized in the following chapters:

- Chapter-1: Theoretical and Conceptual Orientation
- Chapter-2: Review of Related Literature:
- Chapter-3: Methodology
- Chapter-4: The Description of the Phenomena
- Chapter: 5: Data Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter-6: Findings and Discussion on findings

Chapter-7: Summary and Conclusion

The investigator had adopted third person narrative style of the writing for writing the research report. An attempt has been made by the researcher to use most simple descriptive language instead of using technical jargons and registers in reporting the evolving phenomena.