

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

**A Synopsis**

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## **1. Introduction:**

The scenario of education at the international and national levels have totally got changed in past few decades and the credit goes to recent developments in various fields like economical, social, educational, science, technology and other as well. Among all these, the most noteworthy change in the general lives of people and the field of education is the development in the science and technology. Today, the Information and Communication Technology has truly made our societies “Global Smart Village”. Another factor that has brought changes in Indian society is the 1991’s new economic policies of liberalization and privatization under the wake of Globalization. The phenomena of globalization had not only invited drastic changes in our societies, way of living, beliefs and our materialist approach but has also posed many challenges, threats and even issues starting from local to global level in all walks of lives. Similar changes have been witnessed in education.

After the great dominance of behaviourism theory for almost half a century over our beliefs and actions, Constructivism has recently emerged as a promising new theory of learning of 21<sup>st</sup> century education. Many factors had played role in creating the fourth wave. One of the noteworthy phenomena at the end of twentieth century was Delors Commission (1996). Delors Commission envisioned future education in its report entitled “Learning: The Treasure Within” (1996). It described four pillars or goals of 21<sup>st</sup> century education, they were: 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 21<sup>st</sup> century”, 1996, UNESCO )

### **Present Scenario of Education from local to global level:**

The scenario of the present age was best described in a futuristic quote by one of the most prolific thinkers of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Alvin Toffler (n. d.) , “The illiterate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are not of the people who cannot read and write, but those people who cannot Learn, Unlearn and Relearn”. If tried to understand it in its right spirit, one understands that each of us need to look further, accept changes and embrace them happily, as sometimes our old learning may become the obstacle in new learning. Some learned scholars might not agree with his view but as described in all Social sciences like Sociology that Change is inevitable and those who are reluctant or don’t change themselves with current course of time, often likely to extinct. As society changes, the skills that students need to be successful in life also get changed. There is a profound gap between the knowledge and skills most students acquire in school and those required in today’s world and technology-

infused workplaces. It is important for the educational system to make parallel changes in order to fulfill its objectives. Therefore the educational system must understand and embrace the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Schools and colleges must adapt to these changes and bridge the gap between how students live and how they learn. (“Developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills”, 2007)

Keeping in view the changing society in India and at the international level, NCERT emphasized change in education. Similar idea was given by Delors report as well as it was supported in NCF 2005, as it stated “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 was the reason why schools and institutes of higher education started giving importance to Communication Skills and HOTS [Higher Order Thinking Skills]. The shift in paradigm from ‘teacher’ to ‘learner’ and from ‘learner’ to ‘learning’ that emphasized the “process” aspect rather than the ‘inputs’ or the ‘product’ was the essence of new cognitive and interactive theories of learning such as Constructivism philosophy under which a host of models and theories emerged like Collaborative Learning, Cooperative Learning, Problem solving, Experiential learning etc.

## **2. Conceptual Framework of the study:**

### **2.1. Introduction:**

It must be clear from the very beginning that the present study did not try to prove or test the effectiveness of any method or theory of teaching or learning; but the present study was an attempt with a sole purpose to explore the complex Phenomenon and describe through maximum number of instruments and moderate number of participants and thereby recording the significant events as it unfolded itself under natural set up. There was no control or manipulation of any variable as in quantitative approach. Consequently, the conceptual framework for the present study included in it the theoretical concepts of CL, ESL, Soft Skills and STE. The interplay of these factors created a phenomenon that was of complex nature.

### **2.2. Theoretical classification of conceptual framework 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 Explorative Case Study method; rubric based self assessment; all of which deserved a

theoretical and conceptual clarity for the reader separately. The conceptual framework classified under the below: **Category: A:** Basic Concept of Constructivism; **Category: B:** Theoretical Basis of Cooperative Learning Approach; **Category: C:** Theoretical Basis of Cooperative Language Learning Approach; **Category: D:** Theoretical Understanding of selected Cooperative Learning methods for the present study; **Category: E:** Theoretical Basis of Soft Skills; **Category: F:** Theoretical Understanding of selected Soft Skills for the present study; **Category: G:** Assessment and Evaluation of Classroom Performance based on student portfolio consisting self evaluation and rubric. **Category: H:** An Interplay of various aspects of the process study for exploring complex phenomenon i.e. soft skills, CLM, pre-service teacher education at secondary level, modern tools of assessment the following passages provided a bird's eye view of these categories.

### **2.2.1. Concept of Constructivism:**

**Constructivism** is closely related to interpretivism. Interpretivism often addresses essential features of shared meaning and understanding whereas constructivism extends this concern with knowledge as produced and interpreted. In the context of this study, individuals construct their own knowledge within the social-cultural context influenced by their prior knowledge and understanding, and therefore, the Researcher positions himself as a Researcher within the parameters of a constructivist epistemological discourse. Constructivism is a contemporary development in the fields of philosophy (epistemology), sociology, psychology, education and some other social sciences. Constructivism provides an insight into the process of learning hence it is neither a theory of learning nor an instructional method or approach.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2000 and 2005 by NCERT strongly support the constructivist and learner-centred approach in school education. (John, 2007, p.13). **The basic tenet of constructivism** is that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner. The learner constructs knowledge and it is not the teacher who supplies it. In short, learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current or past knowledge.

### **2.2.2. Concept of Cooperative Learning:**

Cooperative Learning (CL) is a set of principles of learning which advocates learner-centred approach for classroom teaching-learning. The main focused area of CL is

‘societal interaction’. In general words, Cooperative Learning stands for some flexible instructional procedures and strategies known as Cooperative Learning Methods. In view of Slavin (1995) “Cooperative learning is an instructional program in which students work in small groups to help one another master academic content.” Johnson & Johnson (1994) defined, ‘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: (1) Positive interdependence (2) Individual accountability (3) Face-to-face promotive interaction (4)Appropriate use of collaborative skills (5)Group processing. Cooperative learning is not simply a synonym for students working in groups; learning exercise only qualifies as cooperative learning to the extent that the five listed elements are present’. **Some of the most common characteristics of CL** according to Jacobs, *et al.* (2002), are **1.** Learner and activity centred approach, **2.**Group work technique, **3.**Accountability and freedom on part of students, **4.** Active participation, **5.** Supporting one another’s learning, **6.**Societal face to face interaction, **7.** Teacher as director and guide etc.

According to **Jacobs, *at el.* (2002)**, there are eight key elements (or conditions) or principles that make cooperative learning. They are:

**a. 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. Cooperation represents a value that we hope students will come to espouse.

**b. Heterogeneous Grouping:** Students should cooperate with a wide range of people, not just those with whom they want to cooperate. There are many reasons for heterogeneous grouping and there are criteria that help teacher to form groups heterogeneously.

**c. 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. Teachers can structure positive interdependence by establishing mutual goals, joint rewards, shared resources and assigned roles (summarizer, encourager of participation, elaborator).

**d. 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 may structure individual accountability by giving an individual test to each student or randomly selecting one group member to give the answer.

**e. Simultaneous Interaction:** Cooperative Learning is fundamentally a simultaneous approach. Discussions and activities take place all at once. It is also called, **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 to classmates. Teachers structure the groups so that students sit knee to knee and talk through each aspect of the assignment.

**f. Equal Participation:** In a traditional classroom, only one student would dominate the discussion as out of the entire class one or a few will be participating at any one time. By working in teams, ALL students are encouraged to contribute allowing ALL students the chance for growth.

**g. Collaborative Skills:** Students are encouraged and helped to develop and practice trust-building, leadership, decision-making, communication and conflict management skills.

**h. Group Autonomy: It is also called ‘Group Processing’.** Groups need specific time to discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships among members. Teachers structure group processing by assigning such tasks as (a) list at least three member actions that helped the group be successful and (b) list one action that could be added to make the group even more successful tomorrow. 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.

In views of Dooly, Melinda (2008) ‘the basis of both collaborative and cooperative learning is constructivism: knowledge is constructed, and transformed by students. The learning process must be understood as something a learner does by activating already existent cognitive structures or by constructing new cognitive structures that accommodate new input. Learners do not passively receive knowledge from the teacher; teaching becomes a transaction between all the stakeholders in the learning process.’

### **2.2.3.Theoretical understanding of selected CLM:**

Cooperative learning follows unique classroom norms and seating arrangement which is called “pods”. The learners work in small groups of four and steps of the lesson procedure are followed based on the CL methods. There are more than fifty to hundred

methods of cooperative learning propounded by researchers across the globe. There were twelve CL methods selected for the present study. **The rationale behind selecting these twelve CL methods** was consisted of these reasons- 1. the study was limited as per timeframe 2. The study comprised of two phases –CLM based practice teaching lessons and Instructional Plan, 3.the practical aspect of implementing CLM in limited period of 35 minutes in the practice teaching schools, 4. The study employed qualitative approach using observation technique. Considering all CLM would take more time for study which was inappropriate and unjust, hence the study was delimited to twelve the following **twelve selected CLM**: 1. Jigsaw I, 2. Jigsaw II. 3. Think-Pair-Share, 4 Write-Pair-Switch, 5.Ask Your Neighbour, 6.Numbered Heads Together, 7.Paired Writing, 8.Reciprocal Teaching of Reading (RTR), 9. Cooperative Integrated Reading and composition (CIRC), 10. Question-Answer Pairs, 11.STAD[Students Teams Achievement Division], 12.Group Investigation. All of these CL methods are most popular and extensively experimented. These methods are flexible in their practical use in the classroom. Some of the methods demand a greater time allotment whereas some methods can be implemented in just one class of thirty minutes. Moreover these methods claimed the development of certain skills as found in related literature and research reports. Most of these studies were of quantitative in nature. All methods of CL selected here for this study offer a rich environment of learning and variety and demands heterogeneity of learners.

Most of the researchers on CL across the globe had emphasized the significance of the following **five principles of CL**: 1.Positive Interdependence, 2.Individual Accountability, 3.Simultaneous Interaction (Face to face Promotive interaction), 4. Collaborative Skills (Students are encouraged and helped to develop and practice trust-building, leadership, decision-making, communication and conflict management skills), 5.Group Autonomy or Group Processes. Hence the present study also focused more on these principles. The CL methods selected for the study are representative of these principles.(Jacobs, et al.2002) The rationale behind the major focus on these five principles is that the environment for Cooperative learning can be created easily through implementing these principles. There are many researchers and authors who had given more than five principles but universally unaccepted by the scholars of the field.

#### **2.2.4. Concept of Cooperative Language Learning:**

The present study dealt with ESL area hence related to CLL. Kessler (1992) proposes 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”. Similarly, Ohta had given a definition of CLL using the concept of ZPD by Vygotsky.

#### **2.2.5. Concept of Soft Skills:**

In general for a layman the terms ‘Soft Skill’ refer to the skills and competencies that an individual requires to get success in the 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 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.” **Soft skills** is a sociological term which refers to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, ability with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. 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. People often misunderstand and use varicose terms interchangeably such as hard skills, soft skills, life skills. All of these skills are different in meaning and context of use. Hard skills are technical skills; soft skills are more close to employability and career skills. Life skills are very broad compared to both hard skills and soft skills.

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 aren’t also important, particularly computer skills. But

remember 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))

Agrawal, Arvind (2013) in his doctoral thesis brought out the definition based on his research, “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”. According to Joy & Simiraj (2008), “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.”

From the above definitions, it can be said that Soft skills are diverse range of abilities like friendliness, personality traits, communicative language abilities, optimism etc. Soft skills can be useful to any individual person to work in team, negotiate with others, or facing an interview etc. Soft skills are necessary for professionals as well as for students to work with other people at educational institutions or workplace.

#### 2.2.6. Theoretical understanding of selected Soft skills:

The **rationale behind the selection of a few soft skills** was that the list of soft skills has been exhaustive, i.e. more than hundred and all soft skills which in actual sense are competencies, qualities and attributes of personality that can never be studied limited timeframe of the doctoral research project. Skills or attributes for the present study were selected based on whether it is representative from major group of skills. The following table on soft skills grouping explains this idea.

**Table.1: Specific soft skill/competency/ability selected for the study with abbreviation code and Major area of soft skills classification and representative competencies from that area**

<b>soft skill/competency/ability selected for the study with abbreviation code</b>	<b>Major grouping/area of the skill</b>
Oral Communication skill [OCS]	Personal skills
Reading comprehension skill [RCS]	Study and Academic skill
Writing communication skill [WCS]	Academic skill

Teamwork skill [TWS]	Social or People skill
Time management skill [TMS]	Personal & professional skill or career/Work/Job related skill
Critical thinking skill [CTS]	Thinking skill

For the purpose of the present study there were six soft skills selected. It is an out of debate fact that the list of Soft skills is exhaustive i.e. more than 150 soft skills. The rationale behind the selection of six soft skills consisted of these reasons-1. studying all these skills would be beyond limitation in terms of time, money, energy and human capabilities, 2. based on the literature these six competencies have been given utmost importance and are found in all sorts of lists provided by whether a personal blogger or a soft skills training professional agencies or even the MHRD of India as varicose national agencies had provided whitepaper on skill development in Indian youths. The present study of soft skills development was aimed through qualitative approach and hence it will simply impossible to include all soft skills for the study purpose. 3. Since the study of all the above skills demand a greater time span especially with a qualitative or a mixed method approach. 4. In addition, the available literature on this subject does not offer any theoretical guidelines for training and assessment of soft skills. 5. There are so far no standardized tests or scales available on soft skills hence the investigator had to develop them. It was the investigator's prime assumption that these selected soft skills are considered as the skills that are the 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, six soft skills were selected for the explorative cum descriptive case study of the phenomena.

#### **2.2.7. Assessment and Evaluation of Classroom Performance based on student portfolio consisting self evaluation and rubric.**

Evaluation is one of the components of a comprehensive teacher growth and development system. A comprehensive teacher assessment and evaluation system has two components: 1) ongoing, consistent, **formative assessments** of performance for the sole purpose of fostering professional growth and improved practice; and 2)

periodic **summative evaluations** of teacher performance for the purpose of approving continued employment. Comprehensive systems of continuous teacher education and professional growth help teachers master content, refine their teaching skills, critically analyze their own performance and their students' performance, and implement the changes needed to improve teaching and learning. Traditionally, we had pencil-and-paper tests (multiple choice, cloze, etc.). Now a variety of Alternative Effective assessment tools are available that are based on constructive feedback. This includes Observation, Portfolios, Journals, Interviews, Self/Peer-assessment (checklists, questionnaires, rating scales), Task-based assessment ("Task based language Assessment in the classroom-workshop". (n. d.) A rubric is an explicit set of criteria used for assessing a particular type of work or performance. **Rubrics** are qualitative tools in order to assess the performance of the learners on variety of skills. A rubric is a type of scoring guide that assesses and articulates specific components and expectations for an assignment. Self assessment occurs when a student assesses and makes judgments about his/her own work. It is a kind of reflection on one's performance. Peer and self assessment are linked to **reflective practice** as it involves self development and as such, is an important skill for career development and management. Student's Portfolios are purposeful, organized, systematic collections of student work that tell the story of a student's efforts, progress, and achievement in specific areas.

The present study made use of most modern tools of continuous and comprehensive evaluation and assessment of students' performance. The rubrics were designed by the investigator through adapting from authentic resources. There were six analytic evaluative rubrics designed for the participants i.e. OCS, RCS, WCS, CTS, TMS, TWS. They were user friendly and easy to use. They are self-reflective in nature. Apart from the rubrics, self assessment forms were prepared for the participants useful in practice teaching lessons delivery and observation. Students had written self reflective reports during CLMIP sessions.

#### **2.2.8. An Interplay of various aspects of the process study for exploring complex phenomenon i.e. soft skills, CLM, pre-service teacher education at secondary level, modern tools of assessment.**

The Potential Usefulness of Cooperative Learning in School and Higher levels has been found in studies carried out abroad so far on CL. As described earlier, there are

some major problems in language teaching and learning especially in L1 & L2 class situations in ELT context in India in general and in Gujarat in particular at both school and higher education levels. There is a profound gap between the knowledge and skills most students acquire in schools and colleges and those required in today's world and technology-infused workplace. Only those people will be able to survive in the competent world who has mastered not only 'Hard skills' but also 'Soft skills'. 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. Having realized the needs of job-market at national and at global level, the government of Gujarat has 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. Hence, as per UGC guidelines courses on personality development and soft skills have been included as foundation courses in many of programmes at UG & PG of science, commerce and arts streams in different universities of Gujarat. A qualitative approach to study the development of soft skills under CL approach will be significant in the field of secondary language teacher education.

### **3. Review of Related Literature:**

Keeping in view the focus areas in the present study; i.e. cooperative learning, secondary teacher education/ training, ELT/ESL; selected soft skills etc.; the review of related literature/ research studies, for the present study was categorized in various sections for the better comprehensive view of studies already had been completed and what needs to be done, in which area studies should be done and also with what approach a particular study should be carried out.

- 3.1. The following passage described **Section-wise review of related studies carried out and number studies reviewed under each category**. There were about eight doctoral studies reviewed in Section: I: General studies related to Cooperative Learning. In Section: II: Studies related to Cooperative Learning [CL] and Teacher education programme (i. e. Pre-service secondary teacher training programmes) there were about nine doctoral studies reviewed. There were about six studies reviewed in Section: III: Studies related to Cooperative Learning [CL] and ELT (EFL/ESL) and language skills.

In Section: IV: Studies related to Soft skills/ Life skills, there were about ten studies/articles reviewed. There were about three studies reviewed in Section: V: Studies related to development and/or effectiveness of instructional plan or strategy or model on CL. In Section: VI: Review of Books related to any of the aspect of the present study, there were six studies reviewed. There was about one article reviewed in Section: VII: Review of Articles/Research Papers related to the present study. A Summary of some other Studies/ Research Findings on Cooperative Learning was also reviewed from referred/refereed/peer reviewed educational national and international journals. In Section: VIII: Summary of Review of web resources available online related to the present the study, there were quite a few authentic websites and resources reviewed.

The investigator had reviewed variety of resources that included Dissertation Abstract International review from year 1995 onwards; educational surveys from first survey till latest one, articles and research papers/ project reports from books and journals i.e. from year 2000 onwards like University news, EduTracks, School sciences, Perspectives in education etc. and had also found a few studies published online. The investigator had come across almost all sorts of researches like quantitative, qualitative, case studies, experiments etc. cutting across all academic subjects and disciplines which contains school education, teacher training ,language education etc. As the investigator had reviewed hundreds of studies in various sources, only the most relevant and closely related recent studies got mentioned in the report.

**3.2. Research gaps and implications of the review:** Based on the above observations and implications, the investigator had found out the following most important **gaps in research:**

- No study on soft skills in the field of education, especially secondary teacher education
- No study on soft skills in the field of second language education, especially English as Second Language group of Indian students
- No study that focused on description of a process of a complex phenomenon
- No standardized tests or strategies are available for development and evaluation of soft skills
- It was observed that no single study have been so far carried out using any qualitative approach or quantitative approach on Soft Skills among students in education field

either at graduation or post graduation levels until recently carried out two studies in 2013 and one study in 2015 in the field of commerce and management.

- No qualitative study has been found on study of the process and nature of development of Soft Skills among Pre-service Secondary teachers; neither in India in general and Gujarat in specific.

From the comprehensive review of related literature on CL, it was found that majority of the studies carried out using experimental research design. It had been observed that CL was extensively researched out at international level. It was interfered that implementing CL for more than two to six weeks, could bring greater improvement in learners' overall personality and content mastery of academic subjects. From the comprehensive review of related literature, and observations made upon it, the following **implications** can be drawn for the present study:

- Cooperative learning can be used from KG to PG at any level in any of the field of study.
- CL can give fruitful results if implemented systematically for a longer time span i.e. more than one to three weeks.
- CL can be implied to any of the content and subjects like science, math, humanities (languages), and social sciences.
- Most of the studies using CL were carried out using quantitative approach i.e. descriptive statistics and experimental design.
- Most of the studies with quantitative approaches carried out earlier in ELT have found CL effective.
- Students' knowledge, competencies and skills related to subject matter (academic subjects) and even in general life skills can be developed or enhanced through CL.
- CL can be used with learners having mixed abilities, multiple intelligences, heterogeneity and learners being normal and of special needs.
- Soft Skills have been an integral part of professional and technical higher education and it has more to do with employability or career/job and productivity of an employee as perceived by most employers.
- Soft skills are essentially not actual "skills" but rather set of abilities or competencies that an individual requires in his/her career development or survival in job place.

From the above implications, the investigator has discovered that soft skills have been taken as a term of recent origin especially in the HRD training of multinational corporate industrial world of late 20<sup>th</sup> century hence no evidences were found regarding its application in the field of education or teacher education in particular. Consequently the researcher was convinced to take up the study on how soft skills get developed through Cooperative Learning approach in Pre-services Secondary teacher education programme. The present study was envisioned by the investigator to carry out through a different point of view looking at the phenomena using Case study method with emerging design of inquiry i.e. using qualitative paradigm.

#### **4. Significance and main purpose of the present study:**

The main purpose of the present study was to provide a thick and in-depth description of the complex phenomena in which pre-service teachers of secondary teacher education programme develop a few soft skills under natural environment of CLM. This study **aimed at exploring and describing the complex phenomenon** as it evolved in natural setting for better understanding of the process wherein student-teachers may develop soft skills and assess themselves with modern tools of assessment.

#### **5. 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 been shaken to our traditional system. The very nature of our societies is “cooperativeness”. Long ago, a prominent English poet, John Donne wrote in one of his poetry, “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 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

Long back in 1996, Delors commission present report on how and what sort of education we required in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The report became world famous due to its focus on four pillars of learning and survival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Gone are the days when students were thought as ‘empty vessels’ and their minds as “blank slate”. Students ,although we talk a lot about child –centered 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 had 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, may be due to prior experiences and beliefs.

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 2014 Norms and standards for all sorts and levels of teacher education programmes in India, have changed the duration of some programmes, i.e. B. Ed, M.Ed is made of two years keeping in mind the new demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 equipped with all knowledge and skills to work in ever-changing techno- savvy scenario of 21<sup>st</sup> 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 methods, 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.

In the present study, various sources of data and data collection instruments have been used to identify multiple perspectives concerning the topic of research. The present study aims to explore and describe the phenomena of the development of soft skills being a new area in the field of education especially secondary teacher education under the natural setting of highly researched Cooperative Learning theory.

## **6. Broad Research Questions:**

- (1) Can Soft Skills be integrated with Cooperative Learning Methods to explore the process of development of select soft skills in the participants?
- (2) Do participants develop select soft skills under natural setting using select Cooperative Learning Methods?
- (3) How are Soft Skills be developed through Cooperative Learning Methods among the participants of the Pre-service Secondary teacher education programme?
- (4) How do participants perceive their experiences with regard to learning through Cooperative Learning Methods?

## **7. Focused Research Question/s:**

- (1) How can the principles of Cooperative Learning be applied in the classroom to create Cooperative Learning Methods Based Instructional Plan at Pre-service Secondary teacher education programme?
- (2) How can Cooperative Learning methods be integrated in practice teaching phase?
- (3) What are the instruments through which an evolving phenomena be captured for thick description?
- (4) Can the student- teachers at Pre-service Secondary teacher education programme develop selected Soft Skills using Cooperative Learning Methods?
- (5) What is the nature and scope of the phenomena of the development of some selected Soft Skills among the selected participants of Pre-service Secondary teacher education programme under Cooperative Learning methods based Instructional Plan?
- (6) What do student-teachers i.e. participants of the Pre-service Secondary teacher education programme perceive about learning under Cooperative Learning methods?

## **8. Statement of the Problem:**

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

## **9. Specific Objectives of the Study:**

### **9.1. Task Objectives:**

- (1) To select the contents of study based on review and analysis of the prescribed course of English subject from standard VIII to Standard XII [FL & SL] prescribed by G.S.H.S.E.B. and C.B.S.C and from general graduation courses; keeping in view the list of criteria including research objectives of the study, nature and type of the study, area of study and the level, age, interest of the selected group of participants/cases under study.
- (2) To evolve a Cooperative Learning Methods based Plan of Instruction [CLMIP] on the basis of the selection of the contents from prescribed courses on English.
- (3) To prepare Cooperative Learning Methods based Instructional Sessions [CLMIS] meant for selected participants studying in Pre-service Secondary teacher education programme.

- (4) To design task based on selected Cooperative Learning methods.
- (5) To prepare Cooperative Learning Task based Worksheets for the assessment of reading comprehension skill of the participants
- (6) To prepare, through adaptation, Self-Assessment Performance Rubrics for selected each six soft skills i.e. Oral communication skill, Written communication skill, Reading Comprehension skill, Critical thinking skill, Teamwork skill and Time management skills for the participants.
- (7) To evolve Cooperative Learning Methods based Lesson Planning Guidance Programme for teaching core subjects at school level using Cooperative Learning Methods.
- (8) To design an outline for the Cooperative Learning methods based Lesson Plan format for English subject.
- (9) To design Self -Evaluation sheet for the assessment of performance during the Cooperative Learning lessons delivered by participants of the secondary teacher education during the practice teaching phase.
- (10) To prepare Peer Observation Performance Evaluation sheet for the assessment of fellow participants' performance while delivering Cooperative Learning lessons during practice teaching phase.
- (11) To prepare Reaction scale to ascertain the role of the cooperative learning methods in the soft skills development in the participants.
- (12) To design a Self- Assessment scale with regard to Cooperative Learning Methods

## **9.2. Research Objectives:**

- (1) To describe the phenomena in-depth on the basis of Field Notes in which the selected student-teachers get themselves engaged in academic teaching and learning of the selected subject matter of English using selected Cooperative Learning methods with reference to following two parts viz,-
  - (1.1) Cooperative Learning Methods based practice teaching phases [CLMPTP],
  - (1.2) Cooperative Learning Methods Based Instructional Plan [CLMIP]
- (2) To explore the process of the phenomena of the development of selected Soft Skills viz. Oral Communication, Written Communication, Reading Comprehension, Critical Thinking, Teamwork, Time management skill through Cooperative Learning Methods

among the selected Pre-service Secondary teachers in the context of the following instruments –

- (2.1) Student-teacher's database and Profile of the participants
- (2.2) Participant's Self Evaluation sheet on CLM based lessons delivered during practice teaching
- (2.3) Participant's Peer Evaluation sheet on CLM based lessons delivered during practice teaching
- (2.4) Participants' Task based Worksheet to assess Individual Performance on comprehension of contents
- (2.5) Task sheets in the form of Individual Reports based on Main task
- (2.6) Video Transcripts of the sessions conducted during Cooperative Learning Methods based Instructional Plan
- (2.7) Participants' Self- Assessment Rubric for Individual Performance on each selected Soft Skills
- (2.8) Investigator's Comprehensive sheet for Participants' Performance Evaluation of Soft skills
- (2.9) Researcher's Reflective cum Observation Diary
- (3.) To explore the reflections of the selected Pre-service Secondary teachers i.e. the Participants over their perceptions and experiences to learn through Cooperative Learning Methods in the context of-
  - (3.1) Self –Reflective sheets of open ended nature written by participants during Cooperative Learning Methods based Instructional Plan in the context of-
    - (3.1.1.) Individual reports and
    - (3.1.2.) Group Reports
  - (3.2) Reaction scale to explore the opinion and the tacit knowledge and experiences of the participants about learning through Cooperative Learning Methods

(3.3) Self-Assessment scale on Cooperative Learning Methods [SASCLM] designed by the investigator for the Participants.

#### **10. Scope and Delimitations of the present study:-**

- (1) The present study was delimited to one-year fulltime (regular) general pre-service teacher education programme at secondary level during the academic year 2011-2012 ; offered at one of the colleges of education of Kutch district having affiliated to K S K V Kachhch University ,Bhuj..
- (2) The study was delimited to the voluntarily participating 12 to 16 pre-service student-teachers of secondary level, who got admitted and opted English method subject (as First or second method, though all hadn't English Literature or English language Teaching as the Principle subject at their graduation) during an academic year 2011-12 of General B.Ed. programme(CBCS) under the study. Those participants who stayed with the research project for an entire academic year and submitted required documents and artifacts were taken into consideration for the data analysis procedure.
- (3) The major techniques of collection of data include observation and rubric based performance hence the study is delimited to productive or active skills like oral/verbal and written communication skills .Consequently the present study does not focus on non-verbal communication skills and passive or receptive skills like listening comprehension. The study is delimited to Performance aspect (as in view of twentieth century linguist, Chomsky) with respect to evaluation of the selected soft skills.

#### **11. Overall Research Design:**

##### **11.1. Specific design adopted for the present study:**

The nature of the research topic, the scope of research questions and objectives had guided this study and consequently qualitative methodology was found most suitable paradigm to explore the possible ways or answers for the identified problem and to find answers to the research questions raised. The research method adopted for this study was Case **Study**, as the data collected were qualitative in nature and qualitative methods were most suitable for the purpose of reporting the research work.

In other words one can say that the present study was a qualitative study which employed **Exploratory method of Case Study research**. It is a case study of the

phenomena that occurred with limited number of participants i.e. students- teachers enrolled in Secondary Pre-service Teacher Education programme.

The type or method of inquiry as well as reporting for the present study was of **Case study**. The **phenomena of ‘the development of soft skills under Cooperative Learning environment’ was considered as a ‘Case’ under study** and it was carried out under the natural setting. The study was carried out during an academic year 2011-12 and had focused on the process aspect of the phenomena. Here it would be worthwhile to note that the study was carried out with the pre-service secondary students-teacher with maximum heterogeneous characteristics in terms of age, education, family background, interest levels, economic conditions, attitude towards the study. The major focus was to explore and describe process of development of selected soft skills under Cooperative Learning approach.

Overall the present study adopted **emerging or evolving research design**. It was aimed at exploration and thereby description of the phenomena. Therefore as the study progressed with data collection and data analysis phases till findings, no fixed design can be advisable to follow.

### **11.2. Unit of Analysis in the present study:**

The major aim of the present study was to explore and describe the process of evolved phenomena. Therefore the **phenomena** of ‘the development of soft skills under Cooperative Learning environment’ were considered as a ‘Case’ under study and it was carried out under the natural setting. The main purpose of the present study was to explore and describe the evolving events under the holistic phenomena that stretched upon for almost an academic year consisting two semesters, excluding the teaching, activities, examination. Thus the unit of analysis in the present study was Events naturally occurring under the phenomena.

There were quite a few **reasons for considering “events” as unit of analysis**. Some of the most significant among them are listed below:

- Firstly, Since the present study involved human instrument i.e. both investigator and participants as part of research and main data resources, there had been no mechanism to study and record every aspect of human behaviour, thinking processes and actual thought-action relationship and the consequences emerging from the interaction of Men, Methods and Materials.

- Secondly, the study was to be carried out under natural set up, contrary to quantitative experimental studies having controlled and artificial laboratory like set up, where no manipulation, control can be exercised by the investigator.
- Thirdly, the study was stretched for one full academic year consisting practice teaching phase in various schools and CL based sessions at main site, there was great possibility of what is known as ‘Experimental Mortality’ in studies with positivist approach,
- fourth reason was that the study aimed at exploration and description of phenomena, i.e., divided into small events;
- Fifth reason was that the study includes human beings i.e. limited number of voluntary participants who engaged in academic learning process in natural set up, so events could be better option for study rather than to study human beings as case.
- Another reason was that the study was an exploration of unknown or less known area or subject, hence explorative case study was adopted as method of inquiry and emerging research design.

## **12. Methodology of the study:-**

The topic, research questions and objectives of the present study guided the investigator to adopt **qualitative methodology i. e. explorative research type** for the present study therefore as a result it required the investigator to let the research design emerge itself. **The present study focused on the study of the phenomena** that unfolded in natural set up, consequently neither any of the variables were manipulated in any form nor any treatment was given to the participants in order to check the effectiveness of any theory or method of learning. Quantitative approach directs the investigator mostly to adopt predefined and prescheduled design e.g. experimental designs, but in the present study, no such experimentation was applied.

The present study was **explorative cum descriptive** in nature. Therefore **Explorative Case Study method** was employed in the present study for mainly the purpose of data analysis and reporting the results. The study also employed Creswell’s indicators to establish trustworthiness of the results obtained at the end of data analysis.

### **12.1. Site of the study (Location or locale of the study):**

In the prevailing time of the data collection during academic year 2011-2012 in Kutch district, there were five colleges of education (B. Ed) having an intake of 100 students in each. From these five B. Ed colleges, **Dr. H. R. Gajwani College of Education,**

**Adipur, Kachchh** was selected as a case under study through theoretical and purposeful sampling technique. There were other five B.Ed. colleges in Kutch district but one was Hindi medium and rest four were Gujarati medium. Dr. H. R. Gajwani was the only English medium B.Ed. College. The argument to justify theoretical sampling technique consisted - it offered greater heterogeneity among participants required for the present study, it was the only college of education in Kachchh district, and among all seven colleges of education in entire Gujarat (where a total no. of B.Ed. Colleges reaches 350+ figure) which had English as medium of Instruction. Moreover, the diversity in terms of medium of instruction, mother tongue, native place, states they belong, schooling background and cultural and social attachment of the participants, socio-economic-linguistic status etc. offered compelling reasons for the investigator to select this site for the study.

The site/locale for the study was selected purposefully based on the criteria of heterogeneity in language, medium, schooling background, state of India belong to , cultural orientation, personality type, academic achievement, feasibility of study for samples, institute and investigator, longer time span of study, permission of undertaking study from the trustee management. Hence the site of the study was theoretically selected Dr. H. R. Gajwani College of Education, Adipur. The institute is a co-education, having English as medium of instruction although practically all three language based sections were in force separately year after year based on the needs. This institute is affiliated with K S K V Kachchh University, Bhuj and through centralized admission procedure it has been getting students with various mediums of instructions at schooling like English, Hindi, Gujarati, Sindhi, Marathi, Tamil etc.

## **12.2. Context and Setting of the study (phenomena under the study):**

In any case study especially if it's a descriptive case of a phenomena, context and setting are the most crucial and important part of research. The context of the present study was the unique phenomena wherein pre-service student-teachers learn under the Cooperative Learning methods. The focus of the study was to study the phenomenon and describe the process and nature of the development of soft skills in selected cases that participated voluntarily in the study. The context of the study was an evolving phenomenon having interplay of CLM, Soft skills, ESL, Secondary Teacher Education, CLMPT[Cooperative learning Method based Practice Teaching], CLMIP[Cooperative

learning Method based Instruction Plan],, thus it required to describe the scope and delimitations of the study. The focus of the study was development of soft skills among the selected participants therefore other than academic aspects like external factors; cultural factors etc were not part of the study. The description of the phenomenon under study required the demarcation of the starting point of the event and the end of that event.

The phenomena consisted of practicum aspect and theoretical aspect both. Practicum aspect included the data collected from the participants when they were engaged in delivering their lessons using CL methods at practice teaching phase. The second aspect was focused on instructional plan that was flexible and loosely structured. The instructional plan was based on principles of Cooperative Learning and subsequently applicable methods or tasks. There were 12 CL methods selected for the present study. The study comprised of around 12 participants who were regular in attending the sessions on CL tasks. The study took in to consideration six Soft Skills. The phenomena under the study were complex and hence needed variety of sources and methods of data collection. As the research type of the present study was explorative case study of the evolving complex phenomena in natural set up, there would be many factors involved in the phenomenon; therefore it was necessary to define the limits of the context under study. Consequently, the scope of the study was limited to academic aspect only. Therefore the focus was dual i.e. exploring and describing the evolving phenomenon and development of soft skills through CLM in context of English as an academic subject.

### **12.3. Participants (Population of interest for the study) & procedure of Selection and rationale of Participants selection (Sampling technique):**

#### **12.3.1. The participants:**

There were 32 Student- teachers who had opted English method during the first and second semester of the academic year 2011-12, irrespective of their principal subject at graduation or Post graduation. The participants were selected for the present study based on participant's own willingness. Thus, the entire group of English method course was taken as population and all the student-teachers who selected English as their principle or second method at the given time in the prevailing academic year were collective cases under study. Purposeful sampling technique was employed as per the

specific task objectives as well as the nature and type of research and method of data collection as well.

As the study was spread over an entire academic year, as well as the investigator had to collect data at the site and at the practice teaching cooperative schools i.e. collection of data from the participants on the field during practice teaching phase, the investigator had selected **14 participants** who voluntarily agreed to undergo study. These student-teachers were admitted at the secondary level Teacher education programme in an English medium B.Ed. college i.e. Dr. H. R. Gajwani College of Education, Adipur (Dist. Kachchh, Gujarat). It is a co-education English Medium self-financed B.Ed College recognized by NCTE, UGC and Government of Gujarat, having affiliated to KSKV Kachchh University, Bhuj. Students were given admission through Centralized Admission procedure of the university, and the college had an intake of 12 seats, exclusively allotted for English method; but based on the past experiences of the previous academic years, usually college had been getting about on average 15 students in English Method as principle method whereas a total of approximately 35 students on average as second method students. These students offered great diversity and variety as they had varied schooling background belonging to various states of the country. The students generally had ESL background at their schooling. They may or may not have background of English Literature as one of the courses at their graduation or post graduation studies. It had been noticed that mostly students of other subject background (like science, social science, account, commerce etc.) had also opted for English as second method during their regular secondary teacher education programme. Thus the participants were from various subject backgrounds which were a criterion for the section for the preset study.

The present study engaged Human instruments as the student-teachers of B.Ed general One year full time or regular programme at secondary level was considered as case. The phenomenon under study was the most complex and was planned to be carried out in natural setting hence no manipulation was done to cases. The responses of the participants were most natural and honest as they were written by the participants themselves for the study. Concluding what said above, the investigator had selected 14 participants on the volunteer basis as the present study required participants for greater time span i.e. one full academic year consisting two semesters excluding exam, curricular and co-curricular activities.

### **12.3.2. Rationale of selection of participants and Sampling technique:**

About fourteen participants voluntarily engaged in the study for both semesters of academic year of 2011-12. There was no compulsion on any participants to take part in the study. Actually the investigator offered entire population if any student-teachers wanted to undergo the research but it was only students from English who committed for the engagement in study for entire year. Therefore the sample or cases were selected using purposive sampling technique. The study demanded a great deal of hard work, extra work like remaining present in CLM sessions, preparing CLM lesson plans, teaching lessons in practice teaching schools through CLM plans, writing task sheets, individual and group reports, rubrics etc. B.Ed. regular one year was such a programme that did not allow the student-teachers to get themselves engaged in any other activity except regular study, hence small number of participants got ready to undergo in the research project. Finally, the participants who showed readiness and commitment for new learning were finalized. There were 14 participants from English as one of the methods consisted as sample. These participants had varied cultural, educational, family, economical and socio-linguistic background. Their mother tongue was different and most of them had vernacular medium at schooling. A few had English as medium of instruction. This way the participants selected were truly heterogeneous by nature.

### **13. Data collection:**

The data for present study was collected for an entire academic year, divided into two semesters. The data collection was started with the starting of the academic year as the data collection procedure started with first phase i.e. preliminary phase, selection of site, context, and participants and then designing tasks, instructional plan, practice teaching after orientations, CLMIP and post phase activities. Thus the present study was carried out with an evolving design which had the following two phases during the academic year 2011-2012:

#### **Phase -1. Preliminary tasks for the present research study:**

The first phase started with getting clarity of the conceptual framework. Afterwards, based on the nature and type of study and as per requirement of the research objectives, instruments were designed tentatively. Prior preparation of final design and approach for data collection as per its nature and longer duration, the procedure of getting issued

the permission to carry out the study was started and completed. Before starting the selection of participants, content was selected and designed CLM based Instructional Plan; lesson plan format for CLM, and task objectives were achieved.

Having sought oral permission from the management where the locale was selected for the study, the procedure for the selection of participants was started in the month of July 2011. As the study involved longer time span and before or after the working hours at the pre-service teacher education institute selected for the data collection, participation was voluntary but subjected to the fulfillment of the criteria of selection on the basis of theoretical framework of the present study. The consent was sought from the participants using consent forms.

### **Phase-2: Data collection in pre-practicum phase:**

During the First Semester of the academic year 2011-2012, the data were collected during the practicum i.e. practice teaching programme. The present study was carried out for data collection in first semester of the academic year for the first phases (i.e. data collected during practical i.e. in practice teaching school) having subsections. This phase was started with **orientation sessions** on CL theory and principles, viewing CL videos on how to use CL methods and this was followed by guidance for CLM lesson planning, preparation and delivery of lessons in practice teaching school, demonstration of a sample CLM lesson, flexible format of CLM lesson plans, orientation and training for Self -Assessment sheet on delivery of CLM lessons and Peer Observation cum Evaluation Schedule during practice teaching .The study covered approximately twelve weeks duration ( approximately one hour on daily basis, which was total time duration available exclusively for the study).

In first phase of three weeks, the **orientation** of CL was arranged at the class in the institute itself, where initially, a few days were devoted for orientation of CL principles and methods. In the second phase two weeks (one week in each semester) were devoted for Guidance program on CL lesson planning was given to student-teachers who were supposed to teach English at secondary classes during practice teaching in the real classroom in various schools nearby the locality. The study excluded other practical work (including simulated micro teaching phase, Off Campus, Internship and test lessons) and examination hours during the first semester of an academic year. Orientation was provided on demonstration of a sample CLM lesson, designing flexible

format of CLM lesson plans adoptable for the practice teaching school. During these sessions, the participants were provided training for Self -Assessment sheet on delivery of CLM lessons and Peer Observation cum Evaluation Schedule during practice teaching. Peer observations were made by only those student-teachers who were part of the study and got oriented and trained for the task of observing CLM based lessons given by participants.

### **Phase-3: Data collection during Instructional plan on CL:**

During the second semester of the academic year under the study, the data were collected at the institute where Cooperative Learning Instructional plan with natural class set up, was carried out. Here, participants were assigned certain selected tasks based on CL methods. The information about the task procedure was written on the chalkboard. Participants were distributed the reading materials and were given worksheets, papers to write individual and group reports. Each task was recorded through video suiting and other instruments were used to record the phenomena. This phase approximately took fortnight.

After the completion of practice teaching and CLMIP, remaining data was collected through instruments developed and designed for third research objective.

### **13.2. Instruments or tools used for collecting data and description of phenomena.**

For the purpose of clarity, the instruments used for the data collection could be classified into three categories:

- A. Instruments used in the beginning phase of data collection
- B. Instruments meant for Investigator's use
- C. Instruments designed for Participants only

#### **❖ The following instruments were used for prophase of data collection.**

- 1) Unstructured open-ended interview schedule:** This instrument was self designed by the investigator which contained a list of questions.
- 2) Questionnaire on Need and Wants Analysis[optional-Additional ]**
- 3) Database of the students from university**
- 4) Student-Teachers' Profile-cum – Consent form:** This contained preliminary personal information of the student-teacher who willingly chose to be participants in

the study. The second part consist of consent form for the participants who gave their consent willingly to undergo the CL programme/

❖ **The following Instruments were meant for Investigator's use:**

- 5) **Orientation sessions:**Phase-1.Orientation session for Cooperative Learning Methods; Phase-2.Orientation session for Soft Skills; Phase-3.Orientation session for writing assignments and rubrics
- 6) **Cooperative Learning Methods based Instructional Plan:** This was an open-ended, flexible set of classroom strategies designed by the investigator himself. It helped the investigator to create the CL environment in the classroom. This included simple general steps of each session that were conducted.
- 7) **Practice teaching Guidance programme/CL Lesson Plan Guidance**
- 8) **Field Notes**
- 9) **Researcher's Reflective and Observation Diary**
- 10) **Comprehensive Evaluation Rubric of soft skills for Investigator's use**

❖ **Instruments designed for Participants only included the following.**

- 11) **Student-teacher's Portfolio**
- 12) **Self-Evaluation Sheet For Assessing One's Own Practice Teaching Lesson**
- 13) **Peer Observation Schedule for Performance Evaluation of other participants during Practice Teaching Lesson:** This questionnaire consisting 25 items of closed and open ended questions was meant for the student-teachers who would observe their peer learners' lesson.
- 14) **Reaction Scale on cooperative learning instructional plan for development of soft skills:** This **Open –ended** semi structured tool was prepared for the 3<sup>rd</sup> research objective.
- 15) **Self-Assessment Scale for Practicing Cooperative Learning Methods**
- 16) **Individual Performance Evaluation Rubric each on Selected six Soft Skills for Participant:** There were six Soft Skills selected for the present study, viz. Teamwork, Time management skill, Critical thinking skill, oral communication skill, reading comprehension skill and written communication skill.
- 17) **Task based Worksheet for assessing participants' reading comprehension skill and writing skill.**
- 18) **Task based Individual Report of the participants** to write during the main task given in CLMIP
- 19) **Task based Group Report of the participants**

**20) Lesson Plan Transcripts by student-teachers:**

**21) Videography and Transcripts of Video Sessions**

**13.3. Techniques of data collection used in the present study:**

- I.) Indirect Instruction
- II.) Direct Observation
- III.) Participant observation or Balanced observation
- IV.) Peer Observation
- V.) Self-reflection
- VI.) Self evaluation of CL lessons
- VII.) Self Assessment on Cooperation skill
- VIII.) Written documents-artifacts
- IX.) Videography and transcription of video sessions

**13.4. Strategies adopted for data collection:**

- The participants and the investigator both were primary instruments of data.
- The data was also collected using Direct observation; Participant observation and Written document methods.
- The data was collected using various tools during the implementation of the evolved instructional plan.
- Based on student- teachers' performance at Group and individual level, field notes were written.
- Participant and non-participant observations were made by the investigator and data was recorded through tools such as Semi-structured Questionnaire (for collecting preliminary information of selected samples); Field notes; Observation dairy; Rubrics of performance; Task-based assessment rubrics on selected soft skills; Written report of the group; Individual Worksheet on the given task; ; Day wise progressive chart; Lesson Plan Transcript of student-teachers, Lesson observation sheet for student-teachers, Self evaluation sheet, Peer Observers' Written Reports.
- And mostly the data was to be documented in Field Notes; Researcher's Reflective Diary (Observation Diary) and recorded through Videography.
- The investigator had either prepared or adopted whenever required all the tools of data collection.

- Flexibility had been there in terms of data collection procedure.

#### **14. Description of the phenomena:**

The phenomenon was described based on the field notes and observations made by the investigator. Apart from these two records, the investigator had recorded video sessions during CLMIP and this provided solid ground for detailed description of the phenomenon. The description was given in lucid and simple language for replications in future for other researchers. The major complex phenomenon under study was comprised of two phases

i.e. Phase-1. CLM lessons delivered and observed by the participants during practice teaching in different schools and

Phase-2. CLMIP sessions at the main site, i.e. Dr. H. R. Gajwani College of Education, Adipur, Kachchh, Gujarat.

The phenomenon was described at length. The description was an account of small critical episodes under major heads of the events that took place during two phases of the data collection. There were orientation sessions in the beginning of the study. The student-teachers were provided demonstration of CLM lesson and were trained to prepare CLM based lessons. CLM Lesson Plan Guidance Programme was provided for orienting how to design lessons using CLM. The participants were sent to practice teaching schools during first and second semester both. Each participant was required to use CLM of their choice in all lessons if possible otherwise two lessons in each semester by each participant. They were asked to observe CLM based lessons only, delivered by selected participants only. As students were allotted schools as per the subjects required by the school, each group might not have selected participants. They used peer observation schedule and self evaluation sheet. During the sessions-CLMIP participants had to follow the steps of the CL methods. They worked in pairs and group work based on the task. They filled in evaluative rubrics each time and submitted rubrics. They had to complete task sheet/worksheets and submit on the same date. At the end of the sessions, participants were asked to reflect upon their performance, self evaluation and self assessment.

#### **15. Data Analysis:**

This consisted of the analysis and interpretation of the data as per the objectives and research questions formulated for the present study. Most of the data were qualitative in nature. Data were analyzed after the data collection got completed. The approach adopted for data analysis was open ended analysis. The data that were collected using various tools was systematically organized and analyzed qualitatively using the following techniques:

- Document Analysis
- Case description and Case analysis(whenever possible)
- Content analysis (with data reduction techniques and coding, categorization and finding patterns through contrast and comparison which ultimately result in emergence of themes)
- quantitative(if required) analysis along with qualitative data analysis techniques
- Event Analysis
- Hermeneutical analysis
- Descriptive statistics-frequencies and percentage only
- Data Triangulation or corroboration.
- Video sessions based transcript analysis

## **16. Findings, Themes emerged and discussion of the Results of the present study:**

The major goal of the study was to explore the complex phenomenon in which the investigator studied how participants developed soft skills through CLM under natural set up. Apart from description of the phenomena, there were multiple data collection instruments used. The results obtained by analyzing the data collected through various instruments had also provided answers to the broad research questions that directed and guided this study. The following passages described the results so far gained from the data analysis and interpretation of variety of instruments used in the study.

### **16.1. Themes emerged from the data analysis using content analysis of Student-teacher's database and Profile of the participants:**

- From population that comprised 100 student-teachers in B.Ed. programme, there were 32 students who opted English as their one of the methods. So from the English method group, most of the participants were graduate; a few have done PG, aged between 22-32, having most of them unmarried.

- There was a great variety and diversity in terms of cultural background, native place or birthplace and place where they brought up, their mother tongue, economic conditions, principal subject opted at B. Ed. programme.
- While comparing the educational qualifications, most participants were average in performance in last qualifying exams. A few were university ranker also.
- Most participants i. e nine out of 14 had ESL background at schooling.

**16.2. Themes emerged from the data analysis of Cooperative Learning method based lesson teaching Self -Evaluation sheet [Lesson observation Schedule for practice teaching analyzed based on patterns evolved through similarity and differences]**

- CL activities helped most of the participants in developing communication skills.
- CL activities helped participants develop thinking skills.
- CL activities helped participants understand the content independently.
- CL activities motivated participants to do better, to improve their performance.
- CLM developed confidence in participants to interact.

**16.3. Themes emerged from the data analysis of Participant's Peer Observation cum Evaluation schedule on CLM based lessons delivered during practice teaching**

- Participants are aware of use of cooperative principles in class
- Avoided lengthy descriptions
- Student-teachers observed content knowledge and communication skills
- Participants are not much critical in observations

**16.4. Themes emerged from the Observations and data analysis of Reflective Individual Reports on CLM Main Task:**

- Individual reports used mainly for CLM based main task
- Most of individual Reports contain grammar, spellings errors but have conceptual clarity
- Meaning making process meaningfully underwent as reflected in individual reports having key words-meanings description, discussion of central idea, completion of task/exercise
- Most of the participants could complete the task in time.

### **16.5. Results from Soft Skills based Rubrics**

- Most participants improved in oral communication skill and apparently developed it as evident in video.
- Most participants improved in reading comprehension skill and it was evident in task based worksheets.
- Average participants improved in written communication skill and this was evident in different artifacts submitted by the participants.
- Most participants assessed themselves at above average level on Critical thinking skills
- Most participants improved in Teamwork skill and they helped others to learn.
- A few participants could manage time and comparative improved very slowly on TMS.

### **16.6. Themes emerged from analysis of Self-Reflective report at Individual and Group levels [Group reports] on CLM based task:**

- CL activities were interesting,
- They helped participants in developing confidence,
- They helped in thinking,
- Activities developed listening and speaking skills of the participants
- Most participants improved in Cooperation skill and all of them developed it as evident in video.

### **16.7. Themes emerged from Video Transcript analysis and interpretation**

- Instructions do matter when self learning task designed
- Below average learners need assistance from teacher with Teaching
- Content selected was in verity and interesting
- CLM are interesting and new type of activities
- Group activities helped develop learners best way in oral communication skill and reading comprehension skills
- CLM helps in group task but less help in Critical Thinking Skill
- CLM moderately influence writing skills as writing is personal skill like thinking
- CLM helps at greater extent in teamwork skills

- Time management in context of group task depends on individual needs

#### **16.8. Themes emerged from Researcher's Reflective cum Observation Diary:**

- Higher effects of Administrative factors on the process of learning
- Easy to manage and observe Small numbers of participants in groups.
- Expectations of Higher maturity in thinking and behaviour adult learners
- Recording does affect learning process

#### **16.9. Themes emerged from CL lesson plans data analysis**

- **Clarity of lesson plan layout:** Most participants were clear about CLM based activity and lesson plan format. Most of the participants were able to prepare the lesson plan well but CLM was given a secondary place in plan. In almost all lesson plans participants had followed the traditional lesson plan format. Moreover, the participants included the CLM based activity in last phase-i/e/ recapitulation stage of lesson.
- **Developed written communication competence:** Most participants had developed their soft skill of writing skill. Although there were more of lacunas of spellings, sentence structures.
- **Lacked critical thinking skills [HOTS]:** Most participants used questions, task of lower level. HOTS were not found except a few.
- Most of the participants hardly could devise new or innovative format with CLM lessons.
- All CLM are not useful to implement practically in the school classrooms as the environment and levels of students varies from school to school.

#### **16.10. Findings from Cooperative Learning Self Assessment Scale [CLSAS]**

- All participants agreed that Collaborative skills have helped to develop their thinking skills.
- 78 % participants liked to depend on their group mates to complete the task.
- About 78 % participants agreed that they felt comfortable to work together.
- All of the participants have learnt building on each other's ideas.

- All participants have been actively listening to others.
- All participants liked each CLM activities.
- 85 % participants actually understood their responsibility and wanted to contribute their competence publicly.
- About 85 % participants liked to participate in every stage of activity willingly.

**16.11. Summary of Findings and Major Themes emerged from the inferences drawn from Reaction scale on Cooperative Learning programme for development of soft skills:**

- About 10 out of 14 participants i.e. 71 % participants agreed that the programme had been most useful in the development of my oral communication skills.
- Only 57.14 participants strongly agreed that the programme had helped them to enrich their knowledge of English grammar. This indicates that Cooperative Learning methods had not helped in improving English grammar.
- About 78.57 % participants supported strongly that the programme helped participants develop overall thinking skills.
- Half of the participants strongly agreed for development of critical thinking skills through CLM
- About 78 % participants disliked to work alone rather than in team or group. Converting the same statement into positive indicated that 78% participants like to work in groups as they found that they learnt more in groups rather than learning alone.
- About 78 % disagreed on item- Time limit given on each task has not been sufficient. Converting double negatives into positives, this showed that most of the participants had sufficient time to complete the task. This can be inferred that the participants had utilized and managed time properly.
- More than 92.85 % participants developed their quality of cooperation.

In investigator's preliminary attempts, it was inferred from direct quotes from instruments like individual and group reflective reports, video sessions transcribed, self assessment sheets that almost all participants had developed better understanding for CLM and steps of methods. Most student-teachers developed oral, reading and teamwork, cooperation skills. Some of the participants could develop critical thinking

skills through CLM. Writing skills although developed but were less significant as artifacts-written documents had many errors, found in linguistic analysis. Time management skills were improved gradually during CLM sessions.

## **17. Establishing trustworthiness:**

**17.1. Introduction:** In any scientific research study, the investigator has to follow a universally accepted framework for research report writing, so that the journey of research to find solution of the related or similar problems can continue ever after the completion of one study. Different paradigms suggested different suitable methods of inquiry. In positivist approach, quantitative studies like experimental and descriptive, various measures are used like well defined sample size, sampling techniques, standardization of tools and techniques of data gathering, standardized methods of analysis, use of statistical science, reliability, validity, transferability, generalizability, practicability, etc. Similarly in Qualitative study, which is highly subjective in its nature and kind, one must follow certain rules e.g. Creswell's suggested criteria to establish validity and reliability of results. The present study had followed such criteria and the measures that were taken for the study are explained underneath.

## **17.2. Strategies employed for trustworthiness of the present study:**

Creswell suggested a few criteria for checking the validity-trustworthiness of the results. The present study fulfilled the fit of the criteria as suggested by Creswell. Out of these strategies more than four strategies were used. Since the present study was an explorative case study of a phenomenon of how student-teachers develop soft skills under Cooperative Learning Approach, qualitative methodology was adopted.

Keeping in view the complexity of the problem, first measure undertaken was **analysis of cases/participants** individually wherever possible. Second measure was **Data Triangulation**. Data was triangulated collected from various instruments and forms like field notes, artifacts, reflective diary, cases. The third measure was **Method triangulation**. Here in the present study the investigator employed content analysis and data reduction-inductive approach with descriptive statistics based on results from Reaction sheet and self reflective sheet; Content Analysis on the basis of searching key phrases, words or/and concepts, and finding similarities/dissimilarities. Fourth measure was to **check similarity** in results/themes emerged from participants or cases. Fifth

attempt was to study Negative **case/s analysis** and cross check if required. Sixth measure was Researcher's reflective diary of personal accounts and experiences analyzed. Some of the **other measures that were used included** coded or fictitious names of cases in the present study in description of the events so that the participants' identity could never be disclosed. In the beginning of the study, Consent forms were filled up by participants. Apart from these, Creswell's criteria were achieved.

In the present study, **Credibility** was achieved by employing strategies including prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, referential adequacy materials, and peer debriefing.

Here **transferability** was achieved in the present study by employing two strategies through thick description of sufficient detail and through purposive sampling as it was used in this study.

**Dependability** is achieved through a "dependability audit" which includes construction and maintenance of an archive facilitating access to all documentation as well as a running account of the process of inquiry in the form of researcher logs. This study achieved this criterion by dependability audit. A reservoir of the data collected was preserved for future purpose.

**Conformability** is achieved via a "conformability audit" which allows external reviews to judge the conclusions, interpretations and recommendations of the inquiry. In the present study, the results of the study were presented to the experts of the field of ESL, and received valuable suggestions regarding use of language.

The Dependability Audit and the Conformability Audits are facilitated by the construction of a project library using commonly available relational database, spreadsheet and word processing software, and Internet technologies.

Another important feature of qualitative study is that it employs **triangulation approach** in collecting the data because it "draws on multiple methods of inquiry" (Denzin, 1994, cited in Rossman and Rallis, 2003, p. 6). Olsen (2004) defines triangulation as "the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints can light upon a topic". Thus the study has fulfilled the criteria for the

trustworthiness. The measures employed in the study consolidated the internal and external validity and reliability of the study. A few more strategies were given below:

**17.2.1. Strategy: 1: Triangulation of Data with Multiple cases- Codes-categories-patterns identified based on frequency of repetition –emerging themes**

**Table: 2. Triangulation of Data with Multiple cases/participants**

Type of data collection Major instruments	Diverse viewpoints of data verification-similarity-confirmation/rejection and checking researcher's bias				
	Participants' standpoint		Investigator's viewpoint		Conclusions drawn on commonality features - confirmation/rejection
	CLM	Selected Six Soft skills	CLM	Selected Six Soft skills	
<b>Student-Teachers' Profile and Open ended Interview</b>	No information	Want to learn English to improve communications skills, grammar skills	Not applicable	Intermediate level of English among most Participants, very few at below level	Results confirmed as all regular participants aspired to learn English, wanted to learn innovative methods of teaching a subject
<b>Student-teacher's Portfolio</b>	Most participants opined to have developed understa	Positive improvement in participants in terms of OCS, RCS, TWS. Somewhat significant improvement for	All of the participants developed understanding for CLM	Positive improvement in participants in terms of OCS, RCS, TWS. Insignificant improvement for WCS, TMS.	Consolidated results that Participants had developed full understanding for CLM but have imbalanced development of

	nding for CLM	WCS, TMS, and CTS.		Negligible development of CTS.	soft skills
<b>Self-Evaluation Sheet For Assessing One's Own Practice Teaching Lesson</b>	All participants understood steps and also executed plan easily,	Positive improvement in participants in terms of OCS, RCS, TWS. WCS, TMS, and CTS.	Not applicable	No data available on researcher's observation of lessons	Results get fixed as Participants developed CLM understanding and also developed soft skills
<b>Peer Observation Schedule for Performance Evaluation</b>	Participants evaluate scheduled peer ,found them successful in implementation of CL lesson with steps correctly	Most peer observation revealed poor performance on time management during CL lessons; other skills like OCS, WCS, TWS,CTS,RCS developed equally among all participants	Mutual consensus about understanding of CLM among students found	Peer group mates over rated others on WCS, CTS. No issues with peer rating for OCS,RCS,TWS, TMS	<b>Results are skeptical and hence not fully acceptable, although not to be rejected at all</b>

<p><b>Evaluation Rubric on soft skills</b></p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b></p>	<p>Positive improvement in all participants in terms of development of OCS, RCS, TWS.  Somewhat significant improvement for only a few participants for developing WCS, TMS, and CTS.</p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b></p>	<p>Positive improvement in participants in terms of OCS, RCS, TWS, TMS.  Very little improvement for WCS, and CTS.</p>	<p><b>Results consistent in evaluation by both investigator and participants with regard to OCS,RCS,TWS ,TMS,WRC but contradictory for CTS development</b></p>
<p><b>Task based Individual Worksheet [content based writing task]</b></p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b></p>	<p><b>Participants showed positive development of RCS, and WCS Have developed content clarity</b></p>	<p><b>Not applicable</b></p>	<p><b>Developed RCS gradually, results due to largely group work on task; Most participants lag behind in WCS development as Linguistics analysis showed negative results-most common errors in writing included spellings,</b></p>	<p><b>Results contradicted only in terms of WCS</b></p>

				<b>syntax and error omission and selection</b>	
<b>Task based Individual &amp; Group Report of the participants</b>	<b>Positive comments on CLM</b>	<b>Developed OCS,WCS,RC S,TWS,TMS</b>	<b>Developed CLM understanding</b>	<b>Developed OCS,WCS,RC S,TWS,TMS</b>	<b>No contradictions in results</b>
<b>Lesson Plan Transcripts</b>	<b>Clarity of basic rules and concepts of CLM, steps ; lacks variation brought in as per needs</b>	<b>Not Applicable for OCS, RCS,TWS Positive scope for improving WCS</b>	<b>Limited usage of CLM, used at one stage in regular macro lesson format, Most participants developed understanding for CLM</b>	<b>Developed RCS, limited WCS</b>	<b>Results confirmed</b>
<b>Cooperative Learning</b>	<b>Participants developed</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Participants developed</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Both viewpoints confirm the</b>

<b>ng Self- Assess ment Scale</b>	<b>ed CLM underst anding based on principl es of CL</b>		<b>CLM insights and learnt to apply principles of CL</b>		<b>results</b>
<b>Reacti on Scale on cooper ative learnin g instruc tional plan</b>	Participa nts develope d CLM insight	Participants developed OCS, RCS, WCS, TWS, TMS, Confessed general thinking skills development but not critical thinking skills	Participant s developed understan ding for CLM theory and practice	Participants developed OCS, RCS, TWS, TMS in theory and practice; little progress on WCS,CTS	Consolidated results
<b>Transe cripts of Video Session s</b>	Participa nts develope d CLM insight	Participants developed OCS, RCS, WCS, TWS, TMS, Confessed general thinking skills development but not critical thinking skills	Participant s developed understan ding for CLM theory and practice	Participants developed OCS, RCS, TWS, TMS in theory and practice; little progress on WCS,CTS	Consolidated results
<b>Resear cher's Reflect ive and Observ</b>	Not Applica ble	Not Applicable	Participant s developed understan ding for	Participants developed OCS, RCS, TWS, TMS in theory and practice;	Consolidated results

<b>ation Diary</b>			CLM theory and practice	little progress on WCS,CTS	
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**17.2.2. Strategy: 2: Triangulation of Method of inquiry:** The following tabular information contained major Themes /codes and findings obtained from variety of instruments looking from the viewpoint of how the methods of research employed. In the data analyzed, various techniques were allied.

**Table: 3: Triangulation of Method of inquiry:**

<b>Viewpoints</b>	<b>Method of inquiry</b>		<b>Verify validity of data and check researcher's bias if any</b>
	<b>Data collected using Qualitative techniques-</b> questionnaires, descriptive documents, Direct Observation, Participant observation, Peer Observation, Self-reflection, Self-Evaluation, Self-Assessment and transcription of video sessions	<b>Data collected using Quantitative techniques-</b> descriptive statistics for CLSAS & RSCLMIP	
<b>Developing understanding of CLM and task</b>	Results consolidated from various sources that most participants developed	Most Participants understood CLM	Most of the data on self assessment, self evaluation, peer assessment, self

<b>proceedings</b>	understanding for CLM and its steps, procedure, principles applied in tasks		reflective ,and oral communication in video consolidated the development of Cm based understanding; No biases by researcher as most data had self evaluation type
<b>Developing OCS</b>	Positively consolidated results- showed development of oral language skills	Video transcripts proved development of OCS in some participants	Self assessment Rubric and Self reflection data suggested results, no scope for researcher's view or assessment
<b>Developing RCS</b>	Positively consolidated results in Task sheets – developed RCS	Descriptive aspects in Task sheets contradict development of RCS for some participants	Hand written worksheets consolidated RCS development in most of participants
<b>Developing WCS</b>	consolidated results from reports, documents but less improvement in writing through linguistic analysis	Not applicable	Less improvement as per linguistics analysis of documents Possibility of researcher's bias
<b>Developing CTS</b>	Positively consolidated results in some sources but contradict with results in linguistic and content analysis of the	Moderate progress of the development of CTS on scales	Researcher's diary contradict with results

	lesson transcripts submitted, video sessions transcribed		
<b>Developing TMS</b>	Positively consolidated results for development of TMS Initially poor performance but gradually improved by participants	Most students managed time during CLM sessions	As far as the CLM tasks concerned, TMS was developed
<b>Developing TWS</b>	Positively consolidated results as successful results attained in CL Tasks	All of the participants showed Teamwork skills development	Similar results found
<b>Perception of experiences in CLM</b>	Joyful experience, learning with fun, new ways to read literary text and	Scales results positive, video sessions confirmed devilment of perception or experience if CLM	No deviations of results

### 17.2.3. Strategy: 3: Corroboration i.e. constant comparison and cross analysis of cases

The following passages presented some significant quotes that were selected due to their significant revelations for the soft skills development. Especially, these excerpts showed how the student-teachers planned, executed and reflected upon their performances. Most participants were frank and honest in stating their experiences in oral as found in video sessions and also in written forms as evident in terms of artifacts submitted by the participants.

- All the participants were female; among them the most were single i.e. 11 as far as marital status was concerned.

- Average age of the participants was 26 years, thus the focus group consisted of youngsters.
- More than 64 % participants had English literature as graduation background. Most of the participants had English as first language background.
- Most of the participants confessed in self evaluation sheet for CLM based lesson that their area of improvement is time management while delivering lessons. When the statement compared with other instrument- ‘Most of the participants found difficulties with management of time’ as evident in peer observation sheet.
- **Participant 1** in self evaluation sheet for CL lessons said, ‘It (the CLM activity) helped a lot so far my communication skills are concerned. It helped me to speak louder, I became confident and as the days pass, I made better performance.’ Mrunali while observing Dimple’s lesson noted that she could management time in her class. Hence it was initially that the participants couldn’t manage time well.
- The above statement was supported in video sessions. Most participants said that they had developed oral communication skills. But critical thinking skills were not developed as in evidences. On evaluative rubrics the participants showed development of oral communication skills.
- Most participants lag behind in development of written communication and critical thinking skills as found in evaluative scoring rubrics, worksheets content analysis, composition written by them, group reports written.
- All participants showed development of cooperation skills and teamwork skills on all instruments relevant to this item.

#### **17.2.4. Strategy no.4- Using Negative case analysis**

**First Case: Participant code-6:** This participant from the beginning was under careful observation by the investigator. It was found that the participant wanted to learn English especially she was not at all confident for speaking and much worried about her grammar. She aspired and thought to learn a short cut to increase her proficiency in English. Hence joined the research project. She was punctual, almost regular in attending the sessions but late in submissions of rubrics and reports. By analyzing the content of this participant it was found that she had not put her best efforts and almost remained passive in tasks. Her world view was limited due to rare reading acts during

her studies. Spellings in the content written were below standard. Grammatical errors were a lot in number. She had tried to hide herself during CL tasks. Her performance was steadily bad and no or very little improve improvement observed. These inferences drawn were contrary to her statements in **Self -Evaluation sheet for practice teaching** P6 said, “It (CLM) helped me to communicate well and able to think and understand independently.” The CL methods and its tasks based on this were tried and tested ok theory of learning but had very little impact. Although it was found that this participant considered CL methods a new fun filled and seemed to have enjoyed.

**Second Case: Participant code-10:** This participant from the beginning was under close observation by the investigator. It was found that the participant wanted to learn English especially she was not at all confident for speaking and much worried about her pronunciation. In **[Self -Evaluation sheet for practice teaching]** Sukanya said, “It (CLM) helped a bit in developing speaking ability”. She wanted to learn English. Hence joined the research project. She was punctual, almost regular in attending the sessions but late in submissions of rubrics and reports. By analyzing the content of this participant it was found that she had not put her best efforts and almost copped copied from others. She had remained active in groups but her world view was limited due to rare reading acts during her studies. Spellings in the content written were below standard. Grammatical errors were a lot in number. She had tried to hide herself during CL tasks. Her performance was showed very little improvement The CL methods had very little impact. Although it was found that this participant considered CL methods a new fun filled and seemed to have enjoyed.

#### **18. Research Design Emerged in the present study:**

The present study focused and aimed at the description of the complex phenomena as it evolved in **natural setup**. There was no experimentation, manipulation of variables, treatment to subjects, pretest-post test –single or double groups design. This study had used qualitative approach to preparation of instruments to capture the phenomena, data collection method and also the data analysis techniques. Explorative Case study was the method used for the present study. The present study got fit in with **the research design called “Naturalistic Inquiry”**.

This study employs the naturalistic/constructivist paradigm. *Naturalistic inquiry* is research that focuses on how people behave when absorbed in genuine life experiences

in natural settings. The naturalistic/constructivist paradigm assumes no single reality exists and admits ungeneralizable, context-specific subjectivity as an appropriate process of inquiry. The aim of the naturalistic paradigm is to illuminate a single, specific context and provide assumptions, principles, working hypotheses and emergent theory for the expansive research of others. Naturalistic inquiry allows methods to evolve during the course of research rather than requiring that methodologies be determined ahead of the research. Naturalistic inquiry must meet the criteria of "trustworthiness" (Erlandson, et al 1993) as defined by credibility, transferability, dependability, and Confirmability (Guba 1981, Guba and Lincoln 1981, Guba and Lincoln 1989, Lincoln and Guba 1985).

**Justification to explain the fit of the design emerged in present study:**

This study employed the naturalistic paradigm. Based on the following features, the present study proved that the study can be called a Naturalistic Inquiry. *Naturalistic inquiry* is research that focuses on how people behave when absorbed in genuine life experiences in natural settings. This study was based in natural setting as the research sites were real and genuine sites. **The following Characteristics** of the naturalistic research process were employed in the following ways:

Natural *Site*: Studying phenomena in context. i.e. One site was at practice teaching schools and second was the Dr. H.R. Gajwani College of education at Adipur, Kutch district of Gujarat. There was no manipulation involved, no treatment measurement, no pretest post test design but an emerging research design.

*Embodied practice*: The investigator had placed the participants in natural context and human subjects were used as the primary "instrument" to collect data.

*Qualitative methods*: An array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena. The study applied a number of techniques that included both qualitative and mixed method research. The flow of this research used human instrument and built on tacit knowledge using qualitative methods engaging in purposive sampling, the design that emerged, along with induction techniques.

Naturalistic researchers usually employ multiple *methodological procedures* for the best way to elicit the various and divergent constructions of reality that exist within a context of study. The investigator had used in the study nonrandom, *purposive sampling*. *Informants* can provide unique insight into a culture. An *emergent design*

introduces or changes procedures during the research process. **Member checks could not be employed due to absence of the selected participants immediately after completion of CLMIP sessions as they were engaged in final exam.** Here the Findings were reported in the form of a case study (a detailed examination of a single subject, group, or complex phenomenon). The study used multiple methods of data collection including triangulation and an *audit trail*.

**A case study is one of the types of Naturalistic Inquiry.** It is a type of empirical inquiry using multiple sources of evidence (or cases) to investigate a real-life phenomenon in its real-life context. It is often used in medical or legal research, as well as historical or critical analyses. It includes both single cases & multiple cases (which may be used comparatively). Here, Multiple procedures are used (no precise methodology). **The present study employed Explorative Case study type research study.**

The study presented detailed and **thick description of the complex phenomena as it evolved in natural set up.** There was thick description presented in the fourth chapter separately.

The Naturalistic inquiry takes place in **natural set up**, where there is no manipulation or treatment with pretest-post test design required. Similarly the present study was also carried out in most natural environment. The first phase of the study was description of the preliminary tasks of preparation of instruments, second phase was lesson plan guidance, third was practice teaching at the school where the participants gave CLM based lessons and the fourth phase was CLM based Instructional Plan at the institute.

As per the theory of naturalist inquiry the investigator himself or herself will be instrument and the human beings will be studied as cases. In the present study the **investigator became primary instrument of data collection.** Besides the investigator had also used participant observation. Human beings as subjects were studied.

As in naturalistic Inquiry case study is used as method of study similarly the present study also used **explorative case study method.** **The present study employed Explorative Case study type research study.**

Another feature of naturalistic inquiry was using **more number of tools of data collection.** In the present study used more than twenty instruments and eight techniques were used.

Another feature of the study was triangulation or corroboration technique which is used only in qualitative studies. Here in this study triangulation was used for data and methods both.

**Audit Trial** is another strategy that consolidated that the present study belonged to Naturalistic Inquiry. For the purpose of the evidences, video transcripts and DVDs of video sessions were attached in appendix.

#### **19. Relation of Findings to answer Broad research questions:**

**The findings of the study have answered the broad questions raised.** The title, type and nature of the present research study directed the investigator for objectives. In order to achieve these broad objectives – specific objectives of the present study, many instruments and techniques were employed. On the basis of the nature of data collected, qualitative and descriptive statistics techniques were used for data analysis. The results were gained through inferences drawn. The findings from various instruments provide answer to the broad –specific questions.

- ❖ Can Soft Skills be integrated with Cooperative Learning Methods to explore the process of development of select soft skills in the participants?

The findings and the themes emerge from the data analysis suggested that there can be integration of soft skills with CLM. The present study described how CLM based Lesson plan Guidance programme and Cooperative learning Methods based Instructional Plan can be designed, kept open ended for flexibility and modifications as per the needs arise and how it can be executed in natural set up without any sort of manipulation of treatment or variables.

- ❖ Do participants develop select soft skills under natural setting using select Cooperative Learning Methods?

The results obtained from the most modern instruments of evaluation and assessment i.e. student's portfolio, self evaluation, peer observation-assessment, self reflection, self assessment, taskheets/worksheets, qualitative scoring evaluative holistic rubrics; proved that there was development of soft skills in the context of the scope of the study. The study was focused on the selected six soft skills hence the results gained on these tools revealed that there was development of some soft skills.

- ❖ How are Soft Skills be developed through Cooperative Learning Methods among the participants of the Pre-service Secondary teacher education programme?

The answer to this question communicated in describing the entire complex phenomena which was of emerging-evolving nature. No control variables manipulated. It was explorative case study method that was used.

- ❖ How do participants perceive their experiences with regard to learning through Cooperative Learning Methods?

Based on the results obtained on four instruments, it is worthwhile to note that participants had confessed that the content selected was interesting, in verity, at their level,

## **20. Implications of the present study:**

The findings of the study have the following implications for the students, teachers, teacher educators, administrators, evaluation tools developers, curriculum planners and government policy makers.

**20.1.Implications for students,:** The results of the study imply for the students that however best methods and pedagogies used for teaching and learning process, it is the student, who decides how and what to learn.

**20.2. Implications for Teachers and teacher educators** For teachers and teacher educator the study presented a synoptic view as how to deal with challenging content and how to device new tasks for novel methods of learning. It also implies that the primary duty of the teachers is to create conducive classroom environment and create a platform of learning for the students. The students are not the passive recipients of information, facts and figures but they do bring in their culture, world view and attitude in learning a particular subject or contents. Experiments with novel methods and models of teaching learning will definitely make soft skills training an interesting for the beneficiaries.

## **20.3. Implications for curriculum developers:**

Soft skills being an area less explored in the field of ESL and general education, it is high time for the curriculum planners and developers to take into account the 21<sup>st</sup> century employability skills and personality development competencies.

**20.4. Implications for the government policy making:** It is high time to treat and place soft skills education in core curriculum at high school level and graduate –post graduate programmes of both general and vocational streams. The policy of the government has been in flux in the matters of skills development. As the government directed the university education to include soft skills in the curriculum at graduation and post graduation, it is now one of the foundation courses. At the practical field level, soft skills training has turned into a theoretical subject and has been limited to dictation of notes. The institutes of higher education and above all the government need to think and frame a policy on how to equip the youth with soft skills training for the new job market of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**20.5. Implications for Developers of the Assessment and Evaluation tests/scales/tools:**

For collecting objective assessment of the selected participants' performance on Cooperative learning methods based practice teaching lessons and selected soft skills, the investigator had designed some modern tools of assessment. This included Self - assessment sheet and Peer Observation and evaluation schedule, Students' Portfolio and Analytic Evaluative Self Assessment Rubrics. These scales and tools can be further experimented and can be standardized as at present there is void of such standardized tools. Thus the present study implies for future researchers who carry out experiment based rubrics preparation and making them more user friendly.

Thus the findings of the present study might not be generalized for all, in all times, at any place but the study has definably a few implications.

**21. Contribution to the field:**

'Soft skills' is an unfortunate phrase, as at present no international agency like UNESCO, UNICEF or WHO had paid attention to it. Its parent term 'Life Skills' had got mentioned in WHO reports and now has been accepted universally for school education. Relatively 'soft skills' is a recent development in the corporate business world in the context of complementing 'Hard skills' i.e. technical skills related to specific vocation or profession. It had historically developed in the field of HRD or management. As 'Soft skills' is an evolving topic in social sciences field especially education as discipline, it needs to be explored and experimented for wider benefits to the students in specific and society in general.

The Research gaps were identified through reading various sources and review of related literature. In review phase, no studies were found on soft skills in the field of education especially secondary teacher education. Earlier Parakandi, Mohammed Razik (2010) and Agrawal, Arvind (2014), carried out study on soft skills with quantitative approach in the field of management and commerce. Hence the present study was an attempt to study Soft Skills development in natural set up. This study attempted to bridge the gap of research in the field of teacher education. The present promising study aimed to contribute in the field of secondary teacher education by providing a thick description of the phenomena of development of soft skills under CL methods based natural environment. This study will provide a solid ground to future researchers who may want to study it through quantitative or qualitative or even through mixed approach.

## **22. Suggestions for further research:**

On the basis of the observations, experiences and review of studies, the investigator would like to suggest the following topic of study for further research

1. An experimental study on enhancement of soft skills through cooperative learning methods
2. A survey of utilization of modern methods or models of learning English in secondary schools of Gujarat state
3. An impact study on cooperative learning approach on students development of life skills
4. Preparation and try out of soft skills training module for primary/secondary teacher education college of Gujarat/India
5. Developing a life skills approach based curriculum of secondary teacher education programme

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- NCTE. (2014) The Gazette of India: Extraordinary p.114 appendix-4: Norms and standards for bachelor of education programmes leading to BEd degree Retrieved from <http://www.ncteindia.org/regulation2014/english/appendix4.pdf> & [http://www.ncteindia.org/regulation2014/regulation%202014 \(main\).asp](http://www.ncteindia.org/regulation2014/regulation%202014%20(main).asp)
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**List of Abbreviations used:**

**CL:** Cooperative Learning

**CLL:** Cooperative Language Learning

**CLMIP:** Cooperative Language Learning based Instruction Plan

**CLSAS:** Cooperative Learning Self Assessment Scale

**CTS:** Critical Thinking skill

**ESL:** English as Second Language

**HOTS:** Higher Order Thinking skills

**HRD:** Human Resource Development

**MHRD:** Ministry of Human Resource Development

**NCERT:** National Council of Educational research and Training

**NCF:** National Curriculum Framework

**OCS:** Oral Communication skill

**RCS:** Reading Comprehension skill

**SS:** Soft skills

**TMS:** Time Management skill

**TWS:** Teamwork skill

**UNESCO:** The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**UNICEF:** United Nation's International Children's Emergency Fund

**WCS:** Written Communication skill

**WHO:** World Health Organisation

**ZPD:** Zone of Proximal Development

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**P6:** Participant code 6

NCF: National Curriculum Framework

**ESL: English as second language**

**EFL: English as First Language**

**ELT: English Language teaching**

**STE: secondary teacher education**

