



Report on the 11th International Conference on Life Skills Education

Theme:

**“Life Skills Beyond 2030: Learning to Live Together in an
Interconnected World”**

**Jointly organized by
School of Liberal Studies, Kalinga Institute of Industrial
Technology
Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences
&
Indian Association of Life Skills Education**

**Sponsored by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome Address	3
Introductory Address	3
Felicitation of Dignitaries	5
Addresses by Distinguished Guests	5
Keynote Address	8
Award Distribution	9
Acceptance Speech	9
Release of the Book of Abstracts	10
Chief Guest Address	10
Presidential Address.....	11
Vote of Thanks.....	11
Master Class I	13
Panel Discussion I.....	15
Symposium I.....	17
Spotlight I	19
Spotlight II	20
Thematic Paper Presentations	23
Symposium II.....	44
Panel Discussion II	46
Seminar I.....	48
NGO Conclave.....	50
Seminar II.....	55
Master Class II	60
Master Class III.....	63
Think Tank.....	64
Round Table 1.....	66
Voices from the Field I	68
Voices from the Field II.....	72
Voices of Youth	73
Panel Discussion III (International)	76
Thematic Paper Presentation.....	78
Cultural Programme.....	94
Workshop on Mindfulness	96
Symposium III	97
Panel Discussion IV	98

Spotlight Session III.....	100
Spotlight Session IV	101
Spotlight Session V.....	102
Panel Discussion V	104
Roundtable II	105
Exhibition.....	107
Valedictory Session	108

Inaugural Session – Setting the Context

The inaugural session of the Life Skills Education Conference formally commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp in the presence of **the dignitaries on the dais and the assembled delegates**.

This was followed by a welcome song presented by students of KISS, which set a reflective and cultural tone for the proceedings.

Welcome Address

Dr. Gauri Hardikar, Vice President, Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE) & Director, ICLSE 2026

In her welcome address, Dr. Gauri Hardikar expressed gratitude to the organisers, distinguished guests, and participants for their presence and contributions to the conference. Setting the tone for the deliberations ahead, she reflected on the contemporary moment marked by rapid technological advancement, noting the growing presence of AI agents alongside the enduring complexity of human relationships. She emphasised that what will ultimately define the future is not how advanced systems become, but how human societies remain in the face of disruption and change.



Dr. Hardikar also acknowledged the institutional legacy of KIIT and KISS, paying tribute to the Founder, Dr. Achyuta Samanta, whose work she described as embodying strong ethical foundations, and to the Vice Chancellor for carrying the vision forward to new heights. Referring to KISS as a global model of education, she noted the significance of the institution as an appropriate venue for a conference focused on life skills and holistic development.

Highlighting the diversity and stature of the participants, she welcomed pioneers in life skills education as well as NGO leaders, practitioners, eminent thinkers, facilitators, academics, and international guests, including delegates from Sri Lanka and Nepal. Looking ahead to the three-day programme, she noted that the conference features eighteen different types of sessions and expressed hope that the discussions would move beyond reaffirming the importance of life skills to exploring how they can be meaningfully integrated into education and practice. She concluded by encouraging participants to engage not merely as observers but as active contributors and responsible shapers of the future.

Introductory Address

Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair, President, Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE)

In his introductory address, Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair welcomed the organisers, distinguished guests, and delegates, and set the stage for the conference by reflecting on the place of life skills education in India today. Referring to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, he noted that while life skills

have been given significant importance in policy, the country continues to fall short when it comes to meaningful implementation and delivery. He described the conference as an opportunity to assess the current status of life skills education in India and to collectively reflect on where the education system stands in terms of developing students beyond the syllabus.

Dr. Nair emphasised that the objective of education must be transformation — developing learners not only academically but also in terms of skills, values, attitudes and competencies. He questioned whether merely teaching what is prescribed in the curriculum can truly achieve this transformation. He



underlined that life skills cannot be effectively imparted through subject matter alone and therefore must be embedded across disciplines rather than treated as a separate subject to be taught in schools or colleges. Speaking about the work of IALSE, he noted that the association has been striving to promote life skills education across disciplines since 2007.

He also observed that life skills discourse and practice often remains concentrated within specific fields — particularly psychology, and to a lesser extent sociology—and stressed the need to broaden it to reach educators and practitioners across domains. He acknowledged the tremendous work being carried out by multidisciplinary teachers as well as NGOs across India, but pointed out that such work often remains fragmented, conducted in silos, and rarely shared on a common platform. He stressed that while organisations and individuals may have their own strategies, the larger objective of life skills education demands collaboration, knowledge exchange, and collective visibility. In his view, the absence of a national platform has limited the ability to showcase and learn from life skills initiatives across different states.

Dr. Nair also noted that many frameworks currently discussed in education — such as socio-emotional learning are essentially aligned with life skills education, even if described differently. He argued that the challenge lies not in a lack of effort, but in ensuring that life skills are systematically incorporated into education at scale. In this context, he reflected on India's vast population and the question of resources, suggesting that standalone programmes are not always necessary. Instead, he emphasised enabling teachers and faculty to map life skills into their own curricula and syllabi, identifying where life skills elements already exist and strengthening them through classroom practice.

At the same time, he stressed that for life skills education to be meaningfully institutionalised nationwide, teacher education must be prioritised. He called for a national curriculum framework for teachers that aligns with NEP 2020 and builds capacity to integrate life skills into everyday teaching and learning. He noted that this conference, over the next three days, would serve as an important space for such discussions and pathways.

Concluding his address, Dr. Nair expressed gratitude to the Founder of KIIT and KISS for providing a platform for the conference. Referring to KISS as a living model of educational provision at scale, he highlighted the facilities available to its students and described the Founder's life and work as a powerful example of life skills in practice. He suggested that those interested in researching life skills could meaningfully study the life journey and leadership of Dr. Achyuta Samanta and extended his heartfelt thanks for the institution's support and vision.



Felicitation of Dignitaries

The session then witnessed the felicitation of all dignitaries on the dias, acknowledging their contributions to and their continued engagement with Life Skills Education in India.



Addresses by Distinguished Guests

Dr. Indrani Bhattacharyya, CEO, CINI India

In her address, Dr. Indrani Bhattacharyya congratulated the organisers for creating a space that brings together conversations grounded not only in ideas and frameworks but also in lived experiences. She noted that discussions on life skills must move beyond abstract references to milestones such as the

post-2030 agenda and instead engage deeply with the realities facing young people today. Referring to adolescents growing up amid rising anxiety, social polarisation and identity-related struggles, she posed critical questions about how education systems and institutions are responding to these challenges.

Drawing on CINI's experience as a tribal institute working closely with adolescents, Dr. Bhattacharyya highlighted the growing global recognition of the importance of life skills education. She observed that many practitioners within universities and development organisations are already engaged in teaching life skills, but raised the important question of whether these efforts are being meaningfully evaluated. With India being home to the world's largest adolescent population, she stressed that the responsibility for supporting young people's development rests collectively with educators, practitioners and institutions.

She emphasised that life skills are most transformative when they are contextual and embedded within systems, rather than delivered as isolated interventions. Referring to CINI's work across sectors such as nutrition, health, and adolescent development, she noted that integrating life skills within these systems enhances their relevance and impact. Sharing field-level observations, she pointed to growing anxiety among adolescents linked to social media and constant exposure to distressing news. Through life skills sessions focused on emotional awareness and critical thinking, facilitators observed that adolescents began to pause and reflect before reacting, underscoring how even small shifts in emotional regulation can have a significant impact in a hyper-connected world. In this context, she noted that the ability to choose responsibly is no longer optional and that life skills support young people in making informed decisions, including in areas such as sexual and reproductive health, while strengthening their sense of agency.

Dr. Bhattacharyya reflected on the broader theme of the conference, emphasising that life skills are not only about individual success but also about one's position and participation in society. Skills such as listening, empathy and dialogue, she noted, are essential for social cohesion and for strengthening democratic processes. She urged participants to reimagine life skills education beyond programme boundaries, advocating for their integration across health, nutrition, and social systems and not only within academic settings. She also emphasised that adults and institutions must model the values and behaviours they seek to cultivate in young people.



Concluding her address, Dr. Bhattacharyya called for a shift in how life skills initiatives are assessed, urging participants to look beyond numerical reach to examine how adolescents' choices, relationships, and capacities are evolving. She posed reflective questions for the audience, including whether young people are being meaningfully involved in programme design, whether outcomes are being adequately measured, and whether diversity and inclusion are being actively promoted within life skills education efforts.

Ms. Poornima Garg, Country Director, Room to Read, India

In her address, Ms. Poornima Garg situated life skills education as a powerful lever for youth leadership and transformation, noting that young people themselves are the champions through whom lasting change will be realised. She described the conference as more than an academic exercise,

framing it instead as a collective reminder that education is not only about preparing children for the future, but about preparing the future for children. Emphasising the importance of spaces such as this conference in shaping direction and intent, she urged participants to confront the persistent gap between policy and practice.

Ms. Garg reflected on the shifting aspirations of the country and the broader developmental vision of *Viksit Bharat*, arguing that educational priorities must evolve accordingly. Academic achievement alone, she noted, cannot address the complex challenges young people face today. Similarly, she observed that economic growth and equality, while essential, are not sufficient to create harmony. For young people to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world, she stressed the need for clarity of mind, strength of character and compassion in action, qualities that shape how children live and engage with society beyond the classroom.

Sharing a field experience from her travels, Ms. Garg recounted meeting a 13-year-old girl named Sanaa during a life skills session. When asked what courage meant to her, the student responded that it meant “speaking the truth even when my voice shakes.” Ms. Garg noted that the student later shared how she had used the skills gained through the session to negotiate with her parents to continue her education and delay her marriage. This experience, she said, reinforced the understanding that life skills are not merely employability-oriented competencies but life-defining capacities that enable children to understand themselves, build healthy relationships, act with dignity and develop resilience. Life skills education, she emphasised, helps children become good human beings, not only good workers.

She also clarified what life skills should not be mistaken for. They are not technical job skills or short-term employability targets; rather, they are psychosocial competencies that shape judgment, agency, well-being and the capacity to learn, unlearn, and relearn. In her view, life skills provide young people with the internal resources to navigate complexity, make meaningful choices and sustain a sense of purpose.

Turning to policy, Ms. Garg emphasised that life skills cannot remain at the margins of education systems. She noted that policy frameworks such as NEP 2020 and the



Sustainable Development Goals already signal a shift toward learner agency, global citizenship, empathy, inclusion and holistic development. However, she stressed that policy intent must translate into classroom practice. She raised critical questions about whether teachers are equipped to deliver socio-emotional pedagogy and gender-transformative practices and how life skills can be integrated meaningfully from early childhood through adolescence. She argued that life skills cannot be reduced to a chapter in a textbook, but must become part of the culture of schools, creating learning environments where children not only learn, but also feel safe, seen and supported.

Ms. Garg further emphasised that the burden of equality cannot be placed only on girls. Boys must also be brought into the conversation and supported to question harmful norms and choose respect. She noted that Room to Read’s approach is intentionally gender-transformative and system-aligned, working with both girls and boys to advance gender equality through life skills education. Concluding her remarks, she called for a future in which every child is able to live with dignity, empathy, courage

and hope, supported by education systems that nurture the full range of human capacities needed to live together in an interconnected world.

Keynote Address

Prof. Terrence Madhujith, Vice Chancellor, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

In his keynote address, Prof. Terrence Madhujith welcomed the distinguished guests, speakers, and participants and framed his remarks around the rapidly shifting global landscape and its implications for education. He reflected on the major dynamics shaping the contemporary world, including dwindling natural resources alongside rising demand, increasing population pressures, global conflicts and the escalating impacts of climate change driven by rising carbon emissions. He also pointed to accelerating technological advances, particularly artificial intelligence and the ways in which these are transforming job profiles and redefining the competencies required of future generations. In addition, he noted that globalisation continues to reshape geopolitical realities, with global power structures having shifted significantly over the last century and likely to evolve further.



Drawing attention to recent crises, Prof. Madhujith referred to the severe economic crash experienced in 2022 in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting the deepening uncertainties around economic stability and public health. In this context, he argued that education systems must equip learners not only with knowledge but with a broader set of life skills and competencies that enable them to respond effectively to volatility and disruption.

He emphasised creativity and innovativeness as critical capacities in the emerging world of work, noting that routine and repetitive tasks are increasingly likely to be automated, while human creativity remains irreplaceable. He further stressed the importance of adaptability and lifelong learning, observing that traditional education has often prioritised knowledge acquisition, whereas the current era demands the ability to continuously learn, unlearn, and relearn. With the rapid growth of knowledge and the pace of job transformation, he suggested that such learning agility may become more valuable than any single degree.

Prof. Madhujith also highlighted the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving in an age where information is abundant but wisdom is scarce. With AI and digital technologies making information easily accessible, he argued that the key challenge lies in developing the capacity to analyse information, evaluate it critically and make sound decisions. Alongside this, he emphasised communication and collaboration as essential skills in an increasingly interconnected *global village* where individuals must engage across cultures, disciplines and diverse social contexts.

Another key theme of the keynote was ethics and social responsibility. Prof. Madhujith stressed that technological advancement must be accompanied by ethical awareness, particularly in areas such as the responsible use of AI, data privacy, social equity and environmental sustainability. He urged participants to consider how life skills education can strengthen these ethical capacities and help learners navigate the moral complexities of contemporary life.

In conclusion, Prof. Madhujith observed that the pace of global change has accelerated to the extent that major shifts can occur within a span of less than five years. He emphasised that education must therefore prepare young people not only for known challenges but for a future defined by uncertainty, complexity and rapid transformation, making life skills education an urgent and essential priority.

Award Distribution

As part of the inaugural proceedings, Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair led the award distribution segment. The **IALSE – Lifetime Achievement Award** was conferred upon **Dr. Urvi Nagabhushana Rao, IPS (Retd.)**, in recognition of his long-standing contributions to the advancement of life skills education. Dr. Rao received the honour in the presence of his wife, Mrs. Rao, marking a warm and celebratory moment during the session.



Acceptance Speech

Dr. Urvi Nagabhushana Rao, IPS (Retd.)

In his acceptance speech, Dr. UNB Rao expressed gratitude to the organisers and the Indian Association of Life Skills Education for the recognition. He congratulated Dr. Radhakrishnan Nair and his team for their sustained efforts and emphasised the importance of approaching life skills education not as a standalone initiative but as a strategic and purposeful intervention. He shared reflections on the early evolution of life skills education and how it came to the attention of institutions such as UNFPA, noting that its relevance has only deepened over time.



Dr. Rao acknowledged the role of leadership and continuity in strengthening life skills education, expressing appreciation for the ways in which his successors have carried forward the work effectively. He also extended his thanks to the Founder of KIIT and KISS, Dr. Achyuta Samanta, for the platform and the institutional context in which the award was being conferred. Reflecting on the broader purpose of life skills

education, he underscored the importance of building on children’s strengths and enabling them to grow with confidence and agency. He concluded by speaking about the generative power of giving back to society and expressed satisfaction that the contributions he had made to the field continue to be carried forward through collective effort.

Release of the Book of Abstracts

This was followed by the release of the **Book of Abstracts**, marking an important academic milestone of the conference and showcasing the breadth of research and practice contributions presented during the proceedings. Printed copies were formally presented to the keynote speaker, **Prof. Terrence Madhujith**, the Chief Guest, **Prof. Anoop Swarup** and other dignitaries on the dais.



Chief Guest Address

Prof. Anoop Swarup, Secretary General, Association of Universities of Asia Pacific (AUAP); Chairman, Global Knowledge Alliance; Chairman, We Venture; Chairman, Centre for Global Nonkilling, Hawaii

In his address as Chief Guest, Prof. Anoop Swarup reflected on the deeper purpose of education and human development, stating that there is nothing more profound than knowledge. He opened with a philosophical reflection on the nature of human life and agency, posing the question of whether we truly live our life or merely live a life *to* live. Emphasising that human beings must consciously live their own lives with awareness and purpose, he linked this reflection to the broader theme of the conference: exploring life skills for the future.

Prof. Swarup situated life skills



as the key competencies that enable individuals to adapt to a world defined by rapid change, complexity, and interdependence. He highlighted the contemporary global context as one in which technology, societies, and human relationships are transforming at unprecedented speed, making life skills increasingly central to both personal well-being and collective survival. Referring to the VUCA nature of the future, he underscored that life skills are not merely supportive skills but foundational capacities that help individuals navigate uncertainty, make responsible choices, and live with resilience and ethical clarity.

Presidential Address

Prof. Saranjit Singh, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor (I/c), KISS Deemed to be University & KIIT Deemed to be University

In his presidential address, Prof. Saranjit Singh expressed gratitude to all dignitaries, speakers, organisers, and participants, both on and off the dais, for their presence and contributions to the



inaugural proceedings. He also congratulated the award recipients, including Dr. Urvi Nagabhushana Rao, IPS (Retd.), who received the IALSE Lifetime Achievement Award, and Ms. Sivakami S., who was honoured with the IALSE–Urvi Vikram Best PG Thesis Award in Life Skills Education.

Prof. Singh's address centred on the life and philosophy of Dr. Achyuta Samanta, Founder of KIIT, KISS and KIMS, describing his work as rooted in the spirit of service and the

“Art of Giving.” He shared reflections on Dr. Samanta's journey and connected this philosophy directly with the values and principles of life skills education, emphasising that the most meaningful outcomes of education lie not only in achievement but in character and compassion.

Concluding his remarks, Prof. Singh reiterated a core message aligned with the theme of the conference: that regardless of what one becomes in life, it is essential to remain a good human being.

Vote of Thanks

Dr. Prashanta Kumar Routray, Registrar, KISS Deemed to be University

Delivering the vote of thanks, Dr. Prashanta Kumar Routray expressed appreciation to all dignitaries, speakers, delegates, and organisers for their contributions to the successful inauguration of the conference. He noted that the session offered valuable learning and reflections, and conveyed gratitude on behalf of KISS Deemed to be University and KIIT Deemed to be University to everyone involved in bringing the programme together.

In his remarks, Dr. Routray also highlighted KISS's institutional commitment to life skills education, stating that KISS has systematically integrated life skills and adolescent reproductive and sexual health (ARSH) within its educational framework. He noted that life skills education at KISS is treated as an essential school activity from the primary level onward, particularly for students who come from marginalised tribal communities. He acknowledged the sustained efforts of faculty and staff who are involved daily in supporting students' holistic development across academic and non-academic domains.

Dr. Routray emphasised that KISS represents a living example of the ideas discussed during the inaugural session, describing the institution as one that has translated knowledge into action through a model rooted in compassion, empathy and values-driven education. He concluded by reiterating gratitude to the delegates and speakers for their presence and contributions and expressed hope that the conference would continue to be a space of shared learning over the days ahead.



The inaugural session thus marked the beginning of three days of deliberations through multiple formats including **Panel Discussions, Seminars, Symposia, Thematic Sessions, NGO Conclave, Think Tank, Round Table, Master Classes, Spotlight Sessions and the Valedictory Session.**

Master Class I

(05th February 2026, 12:00pm - 1:00pm, Auditorium - KIIT Campus 6)

“Life Skills Beyond 2030: Learning to Live Together in an Interconnected World”

Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair

Founder & President Indian Association of Life Skills Education Former Registrar, Central University of Kerala & Dean, School of Behavioural Sciences International Hindu University, Florida, US

Master Class I was delivered by Dr. **A. Radhakrishnan Nair**, Founder and President of the Indian Association of Life Skills Education. The session examined the evolving purpose of education in the twenty-first century and made a compelling case for placing life skills at the centre of learning, particularly in an increasingly interconnected yet conflict-prone world.

Dr. Nair began by interrogating the dominant assumption that education is primarily a means to economic advancement. While acknowledging that the widely promoted “21st-century skills” have created new opportunities for young people, he observed that these skills are largely aligned with corporate productivity and employment outcomes. This focus, he argued, has inadvertently sidelined the deeper human and social purposes of education, especially at a time when societies across the world are grappling with political instability, social inequality, environmental crises, and large-scale displacement.

Situating his reflections within a global context, Dr. Nair referred to UNESCO’s articulation of education as a fundamental force for human development. He emphasised that prosperity alone does not guarantee peaceful coexistence and that the growing tension between material advancement and social unrest calls for a renewed emphasis on life skills that enable individuals and communities to live together in harmony.

A central theme of the master class was the idea of *learning to live together*. Dr. Nair highlighted that skills such as collaboration, empathy, self-awareness, effective communication, emotional regulation, and cultural competence are no longer desirable traits but essential capacities for navigating diversity and complexity in contemporary societies. These skills, he noted, help individuals understand multiple perspectives, resolve conflicts peacefully, and make ethical decisions that balance personal interests with collective well-being.

The session also examined the role of educational initiatives such as Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development in fostering social-emotional intelligence and responsible decision-making. Dr. Nair pointed out that such approaches encourage respect for diversity, promote human rights, and cultivate a sense of shared responsibility toward building a just and sustainable world.

Referring to India’s National Education Policy 2020, Dr. Nair observed that the policy reflects a growing recognition of the need for holistic development and preparation for an uncertain future. He argued that as the world enters an era shaped by artificial intelligence, climate migration, and rapid social transformation, the demand for robust life skills will only intensify. In this context, education must equip learners not only with knowledge, but with the resilience, adaptability, and ethical grounding required to respond constructively to change.

Drawing from India’s philosophical traditions, Dr. Nair invoked principles such as *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* and *Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu* to underscore the universal value of living in harmony with others and with nature. He linked these ideas to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal 16, which advocates for peaceful, inclusive, and accountable societies, noting the deep alignment between global development goals and indigenous philosophical wisdom.

Concluding the session, Dr. Nair asserted that life skills form the foundation of learning to live together in an interconnected world. He emphasised the need to embed these skills into education systems through policy reform, institutional practice, and everyday learning experiences. Strengthening emotional intelligence, reducing stress, fostering creativity, and encouraging prosocial behaviours such as compassion and patience, he argued, are essential for building resilient communities and ensuring that education contributes meaningfully to human flourishing beyond 2030.



Panel Discussion I

(05th February 2026, 2:00pm - 4:00pm, Seminar Hall I, T&P Cell, KISS DU)

“Reimagining Life Skills Education in the Age of Disruption: Purpose, Paradigms, and Policy Pathways - Emotional Intelligence as a Pathway to Human Well-Being and Flourishing”

Chairperson:

Prof. Padmaja Mishra Former Vice Chancellor Ramadevi Women’s University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Keynote:

Dr. Srikala Bharath Consultant - Adult & Old Age Psychiatry, Bengaluru STEPS 4 WellBeing Initiative Former Professor of Psychiatry, NIMHANS, Bengaluru

Discussants:

1. Dr. Priscilla Sathianathan (Online) Chair, Centre of Excellence in Health Psychology (CoEHP) Madras School of Social Work, Chennai
2. Dr. Sunitha Ranjan Life Skills Educator and Master Trainer & Former President, IALSE
3. Ms. Poornima Garg Country Director Room to Read India
4. Dr. Rabindra Kumar Pradhan Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT, Kharagpur
5. Dr. Sreehari Ravindranath Associate Director, Research Dream a Dream Foundation, Bengaluru, Karnataka
6. Mr. Priyanshu Kumar Student KIIT DU, Bhubaneswar



Overview:

Panel Discussion I examined the evolving role of life skills education in a world shaped by rapid social, technological, and psychological disruptions. The session brought together perspectives from academia, mental health practice, civil society, and education to reflect on how life skills frameworks must adapt to address emerging challenges related to well-being, resilience, and human flourishing.

The discussion opened with reflections on the changing purpose of education, questioning the dominance of narrowly defined employability and productivity-oriented outcomes. Participants emphasised that while economic skills remain important, education must also respond to growing concerns around mental health, social fragmentation, stress, and uncertainty. In this context, life skills were positioned as essential capacities that enable individuals to navigate complexity, relate meaningfully with others, and sustain well-being across the life course.



A significant portion of the discussion focused on emotional intelligence as a core component of life skills education. Emotional intelligence was described as encompassing the abilities to perceive, understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively in oneself and in relationships with others. Panel members highlighted a growing body of evidence linking emotional competencies to mental health,



stress regulation, life satisfaction, and overall quality of life, underscoring their relevance in both educational and psychosocial contexts.

The panel also reflected on contemporary understandings of well-being as a multidimensional construct. Beyond happiness or emotional balance, well-being was discussed in terms of personal growth, purpose, agency, and the ability to function effectively within one's social and environmental context. Within this

framework, the concept of *flourishing* emerged as an integrative lens that brings together emotional, psychological, and social dimensions of human development.

Emotional competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social awareness, and relationship management were identified as critical links between emotional intelligence and well-being. These capacities were noted to support adaptive coping with stress, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and enhance resilience in the face of disruption. Importantly, the panel emphasised that emotional competencies are learned and developable, rather than fixed traits, making them particularly relevant for educational interventions and life skills programming.



The discussion further explored the implications of these insights for policy and practice. Participants noted the need to move beyond fragmented or ad hoc approaches to life skills education and toward more integrated frameworks that embed emotional and social learning within formal education systems, community programmes, and organisational settings. Attention was also drawn to the importance of evidence-informed approaches, contextual sensitivity, and sustained capacity building.



The panel concluded with reflections on the role of institutions, educators, and policymakers in re-imagining life skills

education for the future. There was broad agreement that prioritising emotional intelligence and well-being is not only critical for individual mental health, but also for fostering more compassionate, resilient, and socially cohesive communities in an increasingly interconnected world.

Symposium I

“Life Skills for Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health: Agency, Consent, and Rights-Based Learning”

(05th February 2026, 2:00pm - 4:00pm, Seminar Hall I, T&P Cell, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Rathnamala Desai, President, FPA India

Keynote

Dr. Preeti Galagali, Director Bengaluru Adolescent Care and Counselling Centre & Clinical Lead, Adolescent Clinic, Manipal Hospital, Bengaluru

Speakers

1. Dr. UNB Rao, IPS (Retd.) Chairman, Urvi Vikram Charitable Trust, New Delhi.
2. Prof. Dr Nandita Bhan Vice Dean, Jindal School of Public Health and Human Development, Haryana
3. Ms. Priyanka Sreenath Deputy Director Certified trainer on ‘Gender and Sexuality, MAMTA-Health Institute for Mother and Child, New Delhi
4. Dr. Ramya Pinnamaneni, MBBS, MPH Director, School of Public Health KIIT University, Bhubaneswar
5. Ms. Nikki Kujur Research Scholar KISS DU, Bhubaneswar

Overview:

Life Skills for Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health: Agency, Consent, and Rights-Based Learning

Symposium I on “*Life Skills for Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health: Agency, Consent, and Rights-Based Learning*” brought together public health practitioners, adolescent health specialists, rights-based educators, and youth voices to examine how life skills education can strengthen adolescent reproductive and sexual health outcomes in India. The symposium was chaired by **Dr. Rathnamala Desai**, President, FPA India, and featured a series of expert deliberations focused on adolescent agency, consent, legal awareness, gender equality, and access to accurate and stigma-free information.

The symposium opened with reflections by **Dr. Preeti Galagali**, Director, Bengaluru Adolescent Care and Counselling Centre, and Clinical Lead, Adolescent Clinic, Manipal Hospital, Bengaluru, who underscored the importance of a rights-based approach to sexual and reproductive health. She highlighted the need for adolescents—especially girls—to receive timely education on sexual and reproductive health rights, while also drawing attention to the relevance of the **POCSO Act** in safeguarding adolescents. She further noted emerging health concerns among adolescent girls, including the prevalence of **dimorphic anaemia** and associated **Vitamin D and Vitamin B12 deficiencies**, pointing to the need for integrated health and nutrition interventions alongside life skills education.

Ms. Priyanka Sreenath, Deputy Director and Certified Trainer on Gender and Sexuality at **MAMTA – Health Institute for Mother and Child, New Delhi**, shared findings from an adolescent health survey conducted in schools in Himachal Pradesh. She highlighted how early marriage continues to persist even among school-going girls, noting that in a small sample of 15 adolescent girls, one was

already married. She also placed adolescent well-being within a global mental health context, referencing that **one in seven young people aged 10–19 years** experiences a mental health challenge, reinforcing the need for life skills education that integrates emotional resilience, self-esteem, and supportive peer environments.

The symposium's core framework was further strengthened by the keynote deliberation of **Dr. Ramya Pinnamaneni (MBBS, MPH)**, Director, School of Public Health, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar. Drawing on applied public health engagement through community- and school-based programs, including work connected to Harvard University and Salaam Bombay Foundation, she emphasized that adolescent reproductive and sexual health cannot be addressed through information alone. She highlighted how social determinants such as gender norms, family dynamics, socio-economic status, parental education, and media narratives shape adolescent decision-making and help-seeking behaviour. She proposed a rights-based life skills framework for ARSH education that integrates **critical thinking, negotiation, consent, emotional literacy, and media literacy**, alongside biomedical knowledge, enabling adolescents to make informed, dignified, and autonomous choices.

Adding a deeply human and justice-oriented perspective, **Dr. U. N. B. Rao, IPS (Retd.)**, Chairman, Urvi Vikram Charitable Trust, New Delhi, shared personal reflections rooted in his lived experience. He spoke about the accidental loss of his only son and his subsequent involvement in the Nirbhaya case, using this as a lens to highlight the urgent need for counselling and structured life skills education for juveniles. He emphasized the role of life skills in rehabilitation and reintegration, particularly for adolescents in conflict with the law, and reflected on the importance of guiding young people back into mainstream society through empathy, mentorship, and responsible life skills interventions.

The youth voice was strongly represented by **Ms. Nikki Kujur**, Research Scholar, KISS Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, who reinforced the principle of consent as central not only to relationships but also to life decisions. She emphasized that consent must be foregrounded in



issues such as early marriage and motherhood, and highlighted that a woman must have the right to decide her future independently, including education, marriage, and reproductive choices.

Overall, Symposium I reaffirmed that adolescent reproductive and sexual health education must be rights-based, gender-responsive, and life skills-driven. The discussions collectively emphasised that agency, consent, and informed choice are not optional additions to adolescent health education, but its foundational pillars—necessary for healthy transitions into adulthood and for advancing equity in sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

Spotlight I

ROOM to READ INDIA

System Integration of Life Skills and Experiences of Scaling in India

(05th February 2026, 4:15pm - 5:15pm, Auditorium, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Presenters:

1. Ms. Prerna Mishra, Program Officer Girls' Education Program, Room to Read
2. Ms. Tanushka Sharma, Sr. Program Associate Girls' Education Program, Room to Read
3. Mr. Avik Dey, Senior Manager Girls' Education Program, Room to Read

Session Overview

The **Spotlight Session – I** was held on **05 February 2026** as a part of the Spotlight Sessions initiative. The session focused on critical social challenges related to **sexual abuse, gender-based violence, and misogyny in India**, with particular emphasis on **adolescents and life skills education**.

The session was **chaired by Mr. Avik Dey**, Senior Manager, Girls' Education Program, Room to Read India, and supported by **Ms. Tanushka Sharma**, Senior Program Associate, Girls' Education Program, Room to Read India. **Ms. Prerana Mishra**, Program Officer, Girls' Education Program, Room to Read India, participated as a key speaker.

Mr. Avik Dey initiated the session by screening a **short video documenting the experience of an adolescent girl from Chhattisgarh**, which highlighted the realities of sexual abuse, gender-based violence, and misogyny faced by young girls in India. Using the video as a contextual anchor, he discussed the **vulnerability of adolescents**, the prevalence of violence in social and institutional spaces, and the importance of creating **safe life skills spaces** for adolescents to express, reflect, and build resilience.

Speaking in turn, **Ms. Prerana Mishra** presented an overview of **Room to Read's Girls' Education Program**, focusing on its **Theory of Change**, the **scaling process**, and the organization's experience in **system integration of life skills education**. She elaborated on how Room to Read works with education systems to embed life skills into formal structures, moving towards **institutionalization and long-term sustainability**.

Subsequently, **Ms. Tanushka Sharma** shared insights on **evidence of change and program learnings**, drawing from implementation experiences. She highlighted observed outcomes among adolescent girls, including increased self-confidence, improved decision-making abilities, enhanced awareness of gender issues, and strengthened agency, supported by program monitoring and evaluation evidence.

The session concluded with an **interactive question and answer session**, during which participants engaged with the speakers on issues related to adolescent protection, program scalability, system-level challenges, and the role of educational institutions in addressing gender-based violence through life skills education.

Overall, the session provided **valuable perspectives on addressing gender-based violence among adolescents through structured life skills education and system integration**, contributing meaningfully to discussions on education, gender equity, and social transformation.

Spotlight II

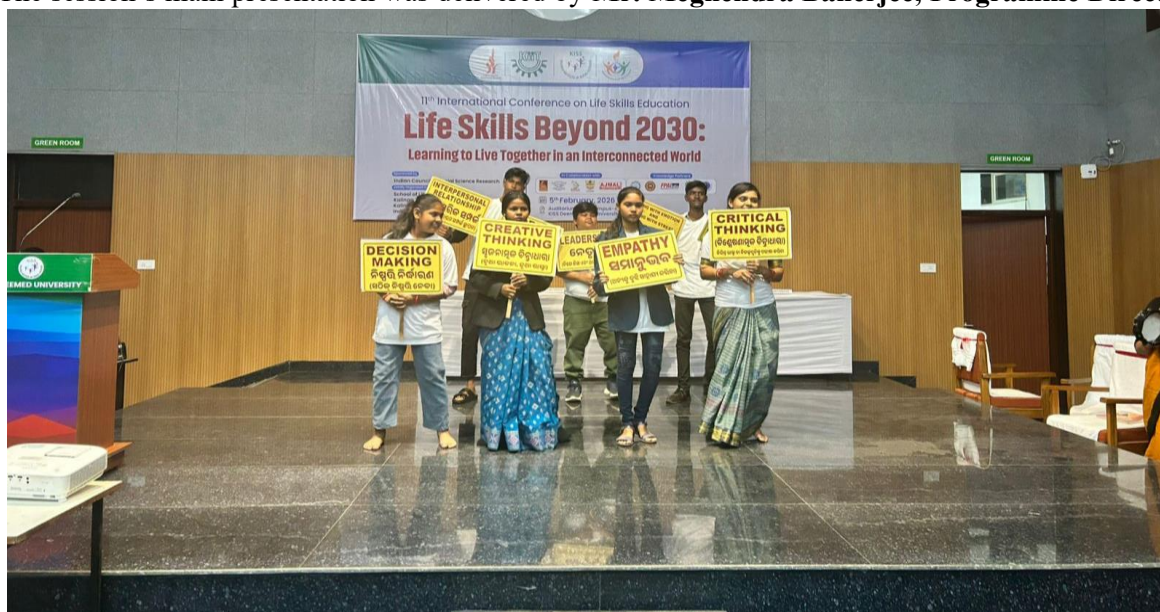
CHILD IN NEED INSTITUTE (CINI), INDIA Life Skills: Transforming the Lives of Young People

(05th February 2026, 5:15pm - 6:15pm, Auditorium, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Spotlight Session II showcased the work of **Child in Need Institute (CINI), India**, highlighting the role of life skills education in transforming the lives of young people through field-based, system-oriented interventions. The session reflected CINI's **over five decades of commitment** towards building child-friendly systems and turning child rights into practice through sustained partnerships with government and multiple stakeholders. A short video was screened during the session, tracing CINI's foundation story and presenting its method of rights-based interventions across sectors. The presentation highlighted CINI's presence and work across multiple states, including West Bengal, Jharkhand, Assam, Odisha, Tripura and Madhya Pradesh, with life skills positioned as a cross-cutting element across all programmes.

Dr. Jonita Ganguly and **Dr. Santwana Adhikari** also highlighted CINI's work over the decades, outlining key milestones and impact achieved since inception and shared evidence-based examples of how life skills approaches have been used to address challenges faced by different communities

The session's main presentation was delivered by **Mr. Meghendra Banerjee, Programme Director**,



CINI, who anchored the discussion by inviting the audience to reflect on foundational questions about children's realities in India. He began by asking at what age children begin working and when school children typically drop out, pointing to the critical transition around the age of 14, when many young people begin searching for direction beyond school. Drawing on CINI's experience in Madhya Pradesh, he shared insights from a mental health helpline initiative spanning 55,000 schools, based on a dataset of over three lakh phone calls over two years. He noted that some of the most common reasons adolescents called the helpline included questions about academic courses and exams, fear and anxiety around examinations, concerns related to sexual and reproductive health, and, most distressingly, suicide. These patterns, he suggested, reflect the intensity of pressure adolescents experience and the limited spaces available for guidance, emotional support and informed decision-making.

Mr. Banerjee raised a central question underlying the session: if school outcomes are largely linked to jobs, what happens to students who do not secure employment after completing education? He argued that this question must be addressed honestly within education systems, and that schools must be equipped not only to deliver curriculum but also to support young people in navigating life choices. Referring to CINI's work across districts in Odisha such as Malkangiri and Keonjhar, as well as in Jharkhand, Assam, Tripura, and Madhya Pradesh, he noted that similar challenges appear across contexts, often shaped by weak or absent systems. In this landscape, he argued, civil society organisations have a role in strengthening ecosystems and creating meaningful alternatives.

Reflecting on recent developments, he noted that boards such as **CBSE and ICSE** have begun including sexual and reproductive health in syllabi, indicating progress. However, he emphasised that this remains insufficient, as many children continue to lack age-appropriate learning and support. He argued that education in India has often provided roadmaps that end narrowly in marriage or employment, without adequately engaging with the wider ecosystem needed for healthy adolescent development. In this context, he stressed, understanding life skills becomes essential.

Mr. Banerjee encouraged participants to broaden their conception of life skills beyond a fixed list of competencies, asking the audience whether handling mutual funds could be considered a life skill, and pointing to the relevance of financial skills, numeracy, negotiation, and everyday decision-making. At the same time, he underlined that the key question is whether school infrastructure and learning environments are capable of enabling such skills. He also cautioned against overly narrow approaches to thematic education, noting for example that discussions on climate change can sometimes become too technical and overlook critical social dimensions such as gender. Emphasising inequality, he reminded participants that millions of students do not have access to the privileges and opportunities that others may take for granted.

Inviting personal reflection, Mr. Banerjee urged participants to consider what they would tell their siblings after returning home, and what one change they would make in their own lives the very next day. He also shared how CINI's organisational journey began in health and nutrition, but gradually expanded as it became evident that outcomes in health, child labour, trafficking, and well-being are deeply interconnected with education. He described CINI's work as spanning three key stages of life—childhood, adolescence, and



parenthood/motherhood—with the aim of disrupting cycles of deprivation. For instance, if a child is not immunised or not attending school, interventions are designed to ensure these foundational conditions are addressed, recognising that such factors shape life outcomes across generations.

Concluding his remarks, Mr. Banerjee emphasised the centrality of teachers in shaping students' lives, calling for more sensible and sensitive educators and noting that students are often only as supported as their teachers enable them to be. He also cautioned against simplistic measurement approaches, urging participants not to focus on measuring abstract qualities such as empathy in isolation, but

rather to assess outcomes that matter to young people's lived realities. He reiterated that not every student will secure formal employment and argued for the importance of discussing vocational pathways alongside the need to delink education from a narrow "job-only" framing.

The session also featured powerful on-ground perspectives from **Ms. Bhumika Sethi** and **Ms. Swarnamajhi Sethi**, youth champion and field worker respectively, who shared reflections through an interactive question-and-answer segment. Responding to questions about difficulties faced by youth in their community in **Somnath Basti**, Swarnamajhi noted that some adolescents had been involved in harmful behaviours such as substance use and gambling. She shared that following counselling and life skills engagement, many youth had reduced such behaviours and began spending time more productively at home. She also observed positive shifts in educational engagement, noting that youth who earlier skipped school and tuition were now participating in computer and spoken English classes.

When asked about her message for youth, Swarnamajhi highlighted broader behavioural changes, including reduced excessive phone use and greater community engagement. She noted that young people had begun participating in social work such as cleaning common areas during festive times and becoming more involved in everyday community life.

The youth perspective was further strengthened by **Bhumika Sethi**, a **14-year-old student of Class 9** and youth champion, who spoke about how life skills education had influenced her own life. She shared that it helped her regulate her phone usage, avoid negative influences, strengthen communication skills, and focus more consistently on her studies. She also spoke about her role as a youth champion in supporting peers, noting that she counsels friends and facilitates discussions on issues such as child marriage, teen pregnancy, responsible social media use, cleanliness, and environmental challenges. She further shared that youth engagement extends beyond peer conversations to community-level participation, including interactions with local governance through the "**Talk to Mayor**" programme to raise issues affecting their community.

The session concluded with a moving and impactful play performed by children from Somnath Basti on the issue of early child marriage. The enactment portrayed a young girl initially destined for child marriage, who (supported by her teacher, classmates, and life skills learning) was able to convince her parents to allow her to continue education and pursue her aspirations. The play concluded with the girl achieving her dream of becoming a hockey player for her state, serving as a compelling depiction of life skills in action and reinforcing the session's core message: that life skills education, when embedded in real contexts and supported by communities, can meaningfully transform young lives.

Thematic Paper Presentations

THEMATIC SESSION I

Reimagining Life Skills Education in the Age of Disruption: Purpose, Paradigms, and Policy Pathways

(5th February 2026, 4:15 pm – 6:15 pm, Classroom 01, Campus 4, KISS Deemed to be University)

Chairperson

Dr. T Sunderesan Nair, Former Director, State Resource Centre Kerala, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India

Papers Presented

- 1. From Problem to Practice: PBL as a Pathway to Life Skills through Critical Thinking and Collaborative Learning in Medical Education**
Dr. Pradeep Kumar Sahu, Centre for Medical Sciences Education, Faculty of Medical Sciences, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago
- 2. Integrating Life Skills and Financial Resilience: A Literature-Based Exploration**
Priyadarshini Pratap, Research Scholar, School of Economics and Commerce, KIIT Deemed to be University
Dr. Jayalaxmi Samal, Senior Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Studies, KIIT Deemed to be University
Dr. Nisrutha Dulla, Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Studies, KIIT Deemed to be University
- 3. Life Skills Education and Academic Achievement: An Empirical Study of Learner Outcomes**
Uttam Kumar Das, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Nazir Ajmal Memorial College of Education
- 4. Learning Together: A Study of Collaborative Intelligence as a Life Skill for the Future**
Malavika Kishore, Librarian, PM Shri JNV Kabirdham (NVS), Chhattisgarh
- 5. Digital Disruption and Life Skills: The Imperative Framework for Gen Z**
Saimita Swain, Lecturer, Department of Social Work
Dr. Sasmita Padhi, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences Deemed to be University (KISS)

Overview:

Thematic Session I, titled “**Reimagining Life Skills Education in the Age of Disruption: Purpose, Paradigms, and Policy Pathways,**” brought together a diverse set of research and practice-based presentations that collectively examined how life skills education must evolve to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. The session foregrounded disruption as a defining feature of contemporary life—shaped by technological acceleration, shifting labour markets, rising psychosocial stress, and widening inequalities—and explored how education systems can respond by placing life skills at the centre of learning. Across the presentations, life skills were positioned not as supplementary

competencies, but as foundational capacities that shape how individuals think, relate, adapt, and make decisions across personal, academic, professional, and civic contexts.

A key theme emerging from the session was the role of pedagogy in building life skills in real and measurable ways. Presentations emphasised the value of learner-centred approaches such as **Problem-Based Learning (PBL)** and **Project-Based Learning**, which create structured opportunities for critical thinking, collaboration, communication, negotiation, leadership, and shared responsibility. The session highlighted that such pedagogies are particularly relevant not only in



school education but also in professional training contexts such as medical education, where students must learn to navigate uncertainty, solve complex problems, and work effectively within teams. Importantly, the discussions reinforced that the effectiveness of life skills pedagogies can vary across learner profiles, suggesting the need for adaptive and context-sensitive approaches.

The session also expanded the scope of life skills education by connecting it with emerging priorities such as **financial resilience**. Presentations argued that psychosocial competencies—including emotional regulation, problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication—shape financial behaviour and decision-making, influencing how individuals respond to financial stress and recover from shocks. This framing positioned life skills as a pathway to sustainable well-being and empowerment, and called for stronger integration between life skills education and financial literacy programmes to enable holistic development in the contemporary economy.

Another important focus of the session was the relationship between life skills and academic achievement. Rather than treating life skills as an additional curriculum component, the session presented them as everyday practices that subtly transform learners' classroom behaviour, learning habits, and approaches to academic tasks. Presentations highlighted that improvements in academic engagement often emerge through small but sustained shifts in self-awareness, emotional management, communication style, and task ownership. In this sense, life skills education was framed as an "invisible" but powerful force that reorganises learning from within, strengthening students' capacity to participate meaningfully in education.

The session also addressed the growing urgency of life skills education in the context of **digital disruption**, particularly for Generation Z. Presentations highlighted how digital overload, social media, and AI-driven environments are shaping young people's identity formation, relationships, attention patterns, and emotional health. The discussion drew attention to risks such as addiction, isolation, cognitive strain, and stress, reinforcing the need for life skills that enable young people to

navigate digital spaces responsibly, manage pressure, and sustain well-being. A strong emphasis was placed on the need for life skills to be applied contextually and integrated across disciplines rather than confined to a single subject or isolated programme.

Overall, Thematic Session I reaffirmed that life skills education is increasingly central to preparing learners for an age defined by complexity, uncertainty, and rapid transformation. The papers collectively underscored the need to move beyond fragmented interventions toward more systematic, pedagogically grounded, and cross-disciplinary integration of life skills—so that education equips learners not only for academic success and employability, but also for resilience, ethical decision-making, financial stability, and psychosocial well-being in a disrupted world.



THEMATIC SESSION II

Life Skills for Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health: Agency, Consent, and Rights-Based Learning

(5th February 2026, 4:15pm - 6:15pm, Classroom 02, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Mr. Sudhir Kapoor, Former Principal, Dept. Of Education, Shiva Institute, Sr. Lecturer, SCERT (Retd.); Life Skills Consultant, New Delhi

Co-chairperson

Dr. Pabitra Kumar Das, KISS, DU, Bhubaneswar

Papers Presented

- 1. Reproductive Health Problem and Their Awareness Among Adolescent Girls: A Study on Khadia Tribe of Mayurbhanj District of Odisha**
Sima Tudu, Research Scholar, KISS Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar
Dr. Jhilli Mohapatra, Assistant Professor in Sociology, KISS Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar
- 2. Menstrual Health Education and its Influence on Adolescent Life Skills: A Pre-Post Assessment in North 24 Parganas, West Bengal**
Shomini Biswas, Adolescent Resource Centre, Child in Need Institute
Dr. Santwana Adhikari, Senior Programme Manager, Adolescent Resource Centre, Child in Need Institute
Sutapa De, Programme Officer, Adolescent Resource Centre, Child in Need Institute
- 3. The Effectiveness of Life Skills Training on Adolescent Sexual Health Education: A Quasi-Experimental Study**
Dr. Rekha B. Raveendran, Associate Professor, Nehru Arts and Science College, Coimbatore
Liya Thasni, Student, III B.Sc. Psychology, Nehru Arts and Science College, Coimbatore
Rima Rajesh, Student, III B.Sc. Psychology, Nehru Arts and Science College, Coimbatore
Athulya Krishna, Student, III B.Sc. Psychology, Nehru Arts and Science College, Coimbatore
Vismaya P, Student, III B.Sc. Psychology, Nehru Arts and Science College, Coimbatore
Gayathri Narayanan, Student, III B.Sc. Psychology, Nehru Arts and Science College, Coimbatore
Afifah Navas, Student, III B.Sc. Psychology, Nehru Arts and Science College, Coimbatore
- 4. Imparting Life Skills Education Among Peer Educators to Improve Adolescent Health Outcomes in Bhadrak District, Odisha**
Ashok Kumar Nayak, Mohammad Ziauddin, Centre for Catalyzing Change, New Delhi
- 5. Empowering Adolescents by through Life Skills Education under the School Health and Well-Being Program in Jharkhand**
Om Prakash Singh, Avinash Kumar, Mohammad Ziauddin, Centre for Catalyzing Change, New Delhi
- 6. Imparting Life Skills-Based Learning to Adolescents Through Interdepartmental Convergence in Jharkhand**
Mohammad Ziauddin, Avinash Kumar, Centre for Catalyzing Change, New Delhi

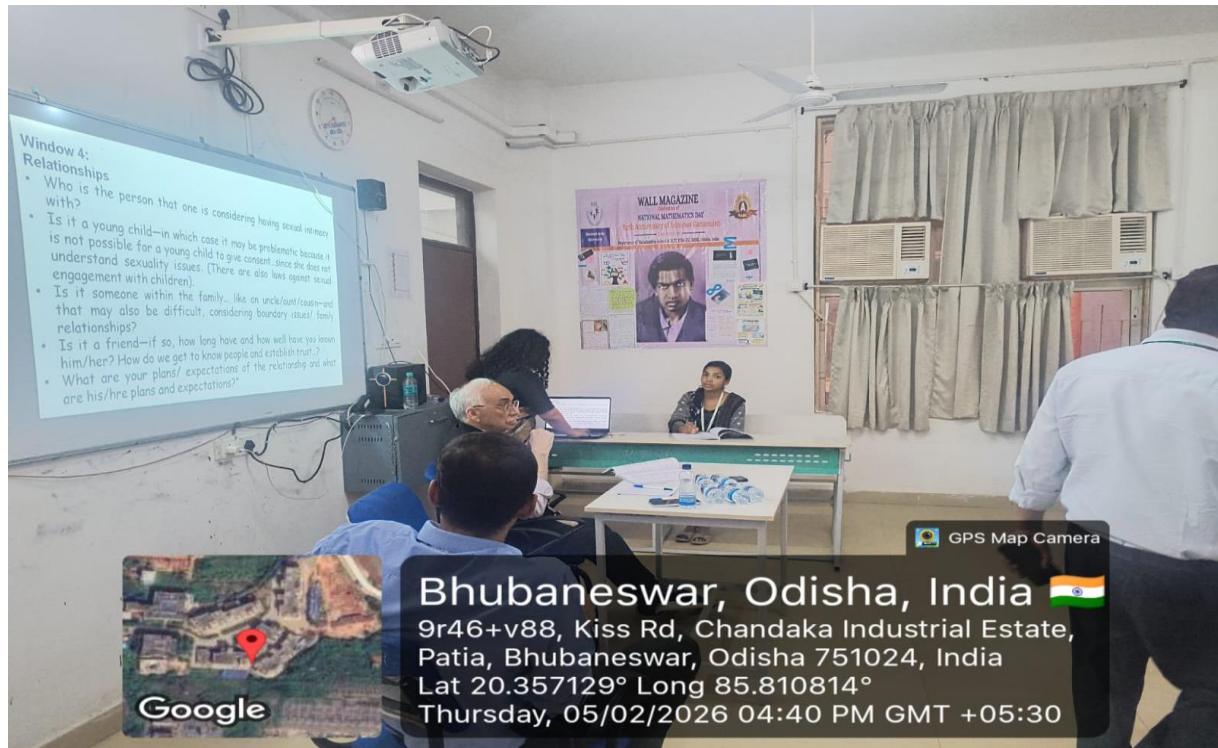
7. **An Assessment on Problems of Child Marriage Among Adolescent Girls in Mahakalpara Block of Odisha**
Samidha Rout, PG Student, BJB Autonomous College
Dr. Bibhabari Bal
8. **Exploring Underutilized Medicinal Plants Used for Menstrual Disorders in Tribal Odisha**
Sangeeta Parida, Sr Lecturer, Department of Botany, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, KISS Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar
Tapasi Devi, MSc Biotechnology, Bhubaneswar, Odisha
9. **Gond Adolescent Girls' Awareness of Menstruation Health Care**
Pankajini Patra, PhD Scholar, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha
Dr. Pabitra Kumar Das, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha
10. **From Avoidance to Engagement: A Life Skills Based Approach to Sexuality Education in Schools**
Kritii Tikku, Resource Person – Health (Initiative for Child Protection & Mental Health), Azim Premji Foundation
Dr. Sheila Ramaswamy, Leader – Health (Initiative for Child Protection & Mental Health), Azim Premji Foundation
Dr. Shekhar Seshadri, Professor – Health, Azim Premji Foundation
11. **Life Skills Based Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) Education as an Effective Model for Adolescent Girls: Evidence from Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences**
Dr. Maitree Padhi, Faculty, Sociology, KISS Deemed to be University
12. **Evaluating Self-Awareness Skills Among the Students at Secondary Level**
Christeena Dhakal, Research Assistant, Yeti Health Science Academy, Purbanchal University, Kathmandu, Nepal
Dr. Pramila Pudasaini Thapa, Associate Professor, Chair, LifeSkills Education, Nepal
Dr. Sumitra Gautam, Life Skills Education, Nepal
Samjhan Basnet, PhD Scholar & Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University
Menuka Shrestha, PhD Scholar & Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences, Purbanchal University, Gothgaun, Nepal
Samjana Basnyat, MPhil Scholar, Kathmandu University, Nepal
13. **Enhancing Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health, Agency, Consent, and Rights through Life Skills-Based Learning in Odisha**
Raimat Hansda, PhD Research Scholar, School of Tribal Heritage and Tribal Indology, KISS, Bhubaneswar
Ms. Nirashi Bindhani, PhD Research Scholar, School of Tribal Heritage and Tribal Indology, KISS, Bhubaneswar
Dr. Sujata Acharya, Associate Professor, School of Tribal Heritage and Tribal Indology, KISS, Bhubaneswar

Overview

Thematic Session II, titled “**Life Skills for Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health: Agency, Consent, and Rights-Based Learning,**” brought together a rich set of research and practice-based presentations that collectively examined adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH) through the lens of life skills education. The session emphasised that SRH challenges among adolescents cannot be addressed through biomedical information alone, as they are deeply shaped by gender norms,

stigma, structural inequities, service access gaps, and the quality of communication and support systems available to young people. Across the papers, life skills were framed as essential psychosocial capacities—enabling adolescents to develop self-awareness, emotional regulation, communication, negotiation, critical thinking, and decision-making, all of which are necessary for exercising agency, understanding consent, and accessing rights-based learning in real-world contexts.

A strong focus of the session was the lived realities of adolescents in marginalised settings, particularly among tribal and rural communities in Odisha. Presentations highlighted how adolescent girls in remote regions continue to face multiple vulnerabilities, including early pregnancy, anaemia,



malnutrition, limited access to contraception, unsafe abortion practices, and heightened risk of sexually transmitted infections. The discussions underscored that barriers to SRH knowledge and care are not only infrastructural but also socio-cultural, shaped by family attitudes, silence around menstruation and sexuality, and the limited availability of youth-friendly and non-judgmental health services. The session also explored the role of traditional belief systems and indigenous healing practices, noting that these remain significant influences on health-seeking behaviour and must be understood carefully to design culturally sensitive interventions.

Menstrual health emerged as a major theme, with presentations emphasising that menstruation continues to be surrounded by stigma, taboos, and inadequate infrastructure, affecting hygiene, dignity, mobility, and school participation. The session showcased evidence from school-based menstrual health management interventions demonstrating that structured education can significantly improve awareness, dispel myths, strengthen self-efficacy, and promote supportive peer behaviour. Importantly, the papers highlighted the value of gender-inclusive approaches, where boys are also engaged to build empathy, reduce discrimination, and create healthier adolescent environments. Discussions also drew attention to the need for safe sanitation facilities and access to culturally acceptable menstrual products as foundational conditions for menstrual dignity and rights.

The session further explored how life skills education strengthens adolescent SRH outcomes by enabling adolescents to apply knowledge in real-life situations—particularly in contexts where sexuality education is often limited, avoidant, or reduced to biological reproduction. Presentations emphasised the need to shift from cautionary, fear-based models to developmentally appropriate and relational approaches that equip adolescents with communication, assertiveness, boundary-setting,

conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills. These life skills were presented as critical not only for healthy decision-making, but also for protection from grooming, abuse, coercion, and exploitation, especially in environments where teachers and counsellors may lack training or feel constrained by cultural taboos and institutional pressures.

Several papers also highlighted the importance of system-level approaches to life skills and SRH, showcasing models implemented through government platforms such as the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) and the School Health and Wellness Program (SHWP). These presentations illustrated how peer educator models, adolescent-friendly clubs, interdepartmental convergence, and community engagement can strengthen service delivery, improve health-seeking behaviour, and enhance outcomes across domains such as anaemia awareness, menstrual hygiene practices, aspirations for education, and access to adolescent health services. The discussions reinforced that scaling life skills education requires not only curriculum integration but also enabling ecosystems that include trained teachers, supportive health functionaries, operational adolescent clinics, monitoring systems, and local stakeholder ownership.

Thematic Session II also underscored that adolescent SRH is inseparable from broader rights-based concerns, including child marriage, gender inequality, and the limited ability of young people, especially girls, to negotiate decisions about their bodies and futures. Presentations highlighted that strengthening life skills education can contribute to delaying early marriage, improving awareness of



legal rights, and enabling adolescents to challenge harmful norms through informed dialogue and agency. Overall, the session concluded with a shared understanding that life skills-based SRH education must be culturally grounded, gender-responsive, and system-integrated, combining accurate health knowledge with psychosocial capacities so that adolescents are empowered not only to stay safe, but also to live with dignity, choice, and well-being.

THEMATIC SESSION III

Building Transformative Citizenship through Life Skills: Participation, Advocacy, and Ethics in a Polarised World

(5th February 2026, 4:15pm - 6:15pm, Classroom 03, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Pragnya Mohanty, Asso. Prof., Dept of Social Work, KISS, DU

Co-Chairperson

Prof. Maya S, Mar Theophilus Training College, Thiruvananthapuram

Papers Presented

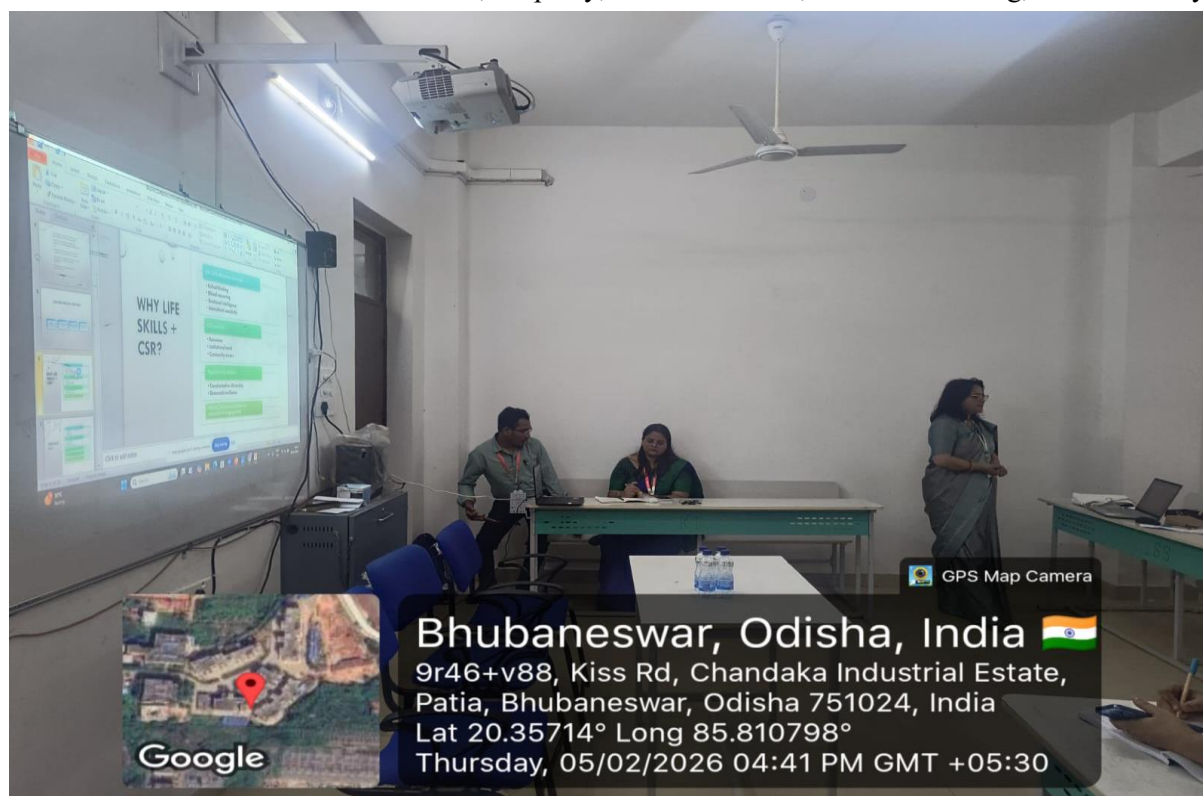
1. **Strengthening Citizenship and Inclusion through Participation, Advocacy, and Ethics in Special Education Teacher Training**
Upasna Roy, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education (DSE), SNDT Women's University, Juhu Campus, Mumbai
2. **Empowering Responsible Governance: Life Skills for Ethical Administrative Practice**
Pankaj Barman, Research Scholar
Dr. Tapan Talukdar, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University, Namati, Nalbari (Assam)
3. **Impact of Life Skills Education on Adolescents' Socio-Emotional Development in the TATA CSR Project Region in Jamshedpur: A Research Using Mixed Approaches**
Sunanda Mohanty, PhD Scholar, KIIT School of Rural Management, KIIT Deemed to be University, Patia, Bhubaneswar
Dr. Prasanta Kumar Parida, KIIT School of Rural Management, KIIT Deemed to be University, Patia, Bhubaneswar
4. **Beyond Compliance: CSR and Life Skills Education as Catalysts for Transformative Citizenship in India**
Madhusmita Das, PhD Scholar, School of Economics and Commerce, KIIT Deemed to be University
Dr. Bignya Patnaik, Faculty in Management, School of Humanities, KIIT Deemed to be University

Overview

Thematic Session III, titled “**Building Transformative Citizenship through Life Skills: Participation, Advocacy, and Ethics in a Polarised World,**” was held on **5th February 2026** from **4:15 pm to 6:15 pm** in **Classroom 01, Campus 4, KISS Deemed to be University**. The session brought together four research presentations that collectively explored how life skills education can strengthen citizenship in practical, institutionally embedded ways—across classrooms, governance systems, CSR frameworks, and inclusion-focused teacher education. The session positioned life skills as a crucial foundation for building democratic participation, ethical decision-making, and social

responsibility, especially in an increasingly polarised world where the ability to listen, dialogue, and engage constructively has become more urgent than ever.

A key thread across the papers was the idea that citizenship is not merely a civic identity, but a set of learned capacities that shape how individuals participate in society. The presentations underscored that life skills—such as self-awareness, empathy, communication, ethical reasoning, accountability,



and collaborative problem-solving—enable learners and institutions to move beyond passive coexistence toward active inclusion and responsible engagement. The discussions highlighted how education systems can play a transformative role in strengthening citizenship by intentionally cultivating these skills and embedding them across curricular and institutional practices rather than limiting them to isolated programmes.

The session also highlighted the role of life skills in shaping adolescent socio-emotional development and community well-being, particularly in regions where educational interventions are supported through CSR initiatives. Research presented from the TATA CSR project region in Jamshedpur, using mixed approaches, suggested that structured life skills interventions can strengthen adolescents' socio-emotional competencies such as resilience, interpersonal communication, empathy, and self-awareness. The findings reinforced that when life skills programmes are grounded in local realities and supported through sustained institutional commitment, they can create measurable improvements not only in individual development but also in the broader social environment surrounding young people.

Another important dimension of the session was the discussion on CSR as a pathway to transformative citizenship. Presentations argued that CSR initiatives, when aligned strategically with life skills education, have the potential to move beyond short-term philanthropic outputs and contribute to deeper, longer-term social transformation. By supporting programmes that foster civic responsibility, ethical consciousness, and participatory engagement, CSR can function as a catalyst for building communities that are more cohesive, inclusive, and democratically engaged.

The session further explored life skills in relation to governance and ethical administrative practice, underscoring that responsible governance requires more than technical competence. Presentations

highlighted that administrators and decision-makers must be equipped with life skills such as ethical reasoning, emotional intelligence, accountability, and sound decision-making in order to navigate complex moral dilemmas and institutional pressures. This framing positioned life skills as essential not only for students and educators, but also for those shaping public systems and policies.

Finally, the session examined citizenship and inclusion through the lens of special education teacher training, emphasising that participation, advocacy, and ethics are central to building inclusive learning environments. The presentations reinforced that life skills-based teacher education equips special educators not only with professional competence, but also with the ethical commitment and advocacy orientation needed to uphold the rights of learners with diverse needs and strengthen democratic values within educational spaces.

Overall, Thematic Session III reaffirmed that life skills education functions as a unifying framework across education, governance, corporate engagement, and inclusion. The session concluded with the shared understanding that embedding life skills systematically across policies, curricula, institutions, and community initiatives is essential for nurturing empathetic, ethical, and participatory citizens capable of contributing meaningfully to a more just, inclusive, and cohesive society.



THEMATIC SESSION IV

Life Skills and Human Rights: Educating for Dignity, Justice, and Global Solidarity

(5th February 2026, 4:15pm - 6:15pm, Classroom 03, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Pragnya Mohanty, Asso. Prof., Dept of Social Work, KISS, DU

Co-Chairperson

Prof. Maya S, Mar Theophilus Training College, Thiruvananthapuram

Papers Presented

1. Human Rights Education as Political Formation: Teaching Dignity and Justice in the Global Age

Prof. Niraj Kumar, Professor, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi

Dr. Umesh, Department of Mathematics, Rajdhani College, University of Delhi

2. A Study on Influence of Life Skill on Attitude about Women's Rights of Female Undergraduate Students

Kishan Bhue, Research Scholar, Department of Education, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh

Seeman Rani Panda, Research Scholar, Department of Education, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh

Dr. Budh Singh, Associate Professor, Department of Education, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh

Overview

Thematic Session IV, titled “Life Skills and Human Rights: Educating for Dignity, Justice, and Global Solidarity,” explored the strong and increasingly urgent relationship between life skills education and human rights education as foundations for dignity, justice, and democratic participation. Chaired by Prof. Maya S, Mar Theophilus Training College, Thiruvananthapuram, the session examined how life skills such as empathy, critical thinking, communication, ethical reasoning, and conflict resolution can strengthen human rights consciousness and equip learners to recognise injustice, resist discrimination, and uphold values of equality in everyday life.

A key emphasis across the session was that human rights education must not remain limited to information-sharing or awareness-building. Instead, it was framed as a form of political and ethical formation—an educational process that shapes attitudes, values, and civic responsibility. The discussions highlighted how rights-based education becomes meaningful when learners are supported to reflect on power, inequality, and lived experiences of injustice, and when they are equipped with the psychosocial capacities needed to engage constructively with these realities. In this context, life skills were presented as the practical bridge between rights knowledge and rights-based action, enabling learners to move beyond passive understanding toward participation, advocacy, and responsible citizenship.

The papers also highlighted how life skills education can contribute to reducing inequality and discrimination, particularly for marginalised groups, by strengthening learners’ confidence, voice, and

capacity to challenge harmful social norms. One presentation focused specifically on women’s rights and examined how life skills influence the attitudes of female undergraduate students toward gender equality, autonomy, and social justice. The discussion suggested that when young women develop life skills such as self-awareness, empathy, communication, and critical thinking, they are better positioned to question discriminatory beliefs, affirm rights-based perspectives, and engage more confidently in academic and social spaces.

Collectively, the session reinforced education as a critical site for transforming mindsets and social norms—especially in relation to gender, dignity, and human rights. The discussions also linked life skills and human rights education to wider global challenges such as polarisation, migration, and digital inequities, highlighting the importance of intercultural understanding, respect for diversity, and global solidarity in today’s interconnected world. The session emphasised that integrating life skills and human rights across formal, non-formal, and community education systems can strengthen inclusive and transformative learning environments that prepare individuals to contribute meaningfully to peaceful, just, and sustainable societies.

In conclusion, Thematic Session IV reaffirmed that life skills-oriented human rights education is essential for building rights-conscious learners and responsible global citizens. The session closed with a shared understanding that human rights education must be systematically embedded within curricula and pedagogy, supported by life skills frameworks that enable learners not only to understand rights, but to live them—through dignity, justice, equality, and solidarity in practice.



THEMATIC SESSION V

Gender Justice through Life Skills Education: Disrupting Patriarchy and Building Equitable Futures

(5th February 2026, 4:15pm - 6:15pm, Classroom 03, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Pragnya Mohanty, Asso. Prof., Dept of Social Work, KISS, DU

Co-Chairperson

Prof. Maya S, Mar Theophilus Training College, Thiruvananthapuram

Papers Presented

- 1. Reel Life, Real Lessons: Gender Justice and Life Skills in Contemporary Indian Cinema with References to *Tribhanga* (2021) and *Laapata Ladies* (2024)**
Tusnim Trushna Mishra, PhD Research Scholar, KIIT Deemed to be University
- 2. Shaping Adolescent Futures through Life Skills and Gender Equity: Evidence from the Magic Bus Programme in Delhi**
Pratyush Dash, Regional Director–North, Magic Bus India Foundation
Tamal Reja, Senior Manager–Impact, Magic Bus India Foundation
Ajay K Singh, Head–Impact, Magic Bus India Foundation
Santosh Kumar Sharma, Senior Director–Impact, Magic Bus India Foundation
Dhanashri Brahme, Chief of Program, Magic Bus India Foundation
Preetha Bhakta, Senior Director–Program Development, Magic Bus India Foundation
- 3. Understanding Masculinity and Gender Dynamics with a Life Skills Lens – Perspective from Boy’s Landscape Study in India**
Poornima Narang, Senior Program Officer, Girls’ Education Program, Room to Read India
Saktibrata Sen, Program Director, Room to Read India
Avik Dey, Senior Manager, Girls’ Education Program, Room to Read India
- 4. Empowering College Students to Challenge Patriarchy Through Digital Literacy and Advocacy**
Prabha E, Assistant Professor, Nehru Arts and Science College
- 5. Voices of Change: A Qualitative Exploration of Girls’ Life Skills Education Program in Telangana and Uttarakhand**
Kaushlendra Kumar, Director – Research, Monitoring and Evaluation, Room to Read India Trust, New Delhi
Abha Mishra, Senior Officer – Research, Monitoring and Evaluation, Room to Read India Trust, New Delhi
Poornima Garg, Country Director, Room to Read India Trust, New Delhi
- 6. A Study of the Relationship Between Positive Psychological Attributes with Mental Well-Being Among Mizo Youth**
Lincy Khaikeli, Research Scholar, Mizoram University
Lalpekkimi Ralte, Research Scholar, Mizoram University
C. Lalfamkima Varte, Professor, Mizoram University

Overview

Thematic Session V, titled “**Gender Justice through Life Skills Education: Disrupting Patriarchy and Building Equitable Futures,**” examined the role of life skills education as a powerful and practical framework for challenging entrenched patriarchal norms and building more equitable social futures. Chaired by **Prof. Maya S, Mar Theophilus Training College, Thiruvananthapuram,** the session brought together a wide range of presentations that explored gender justice across diverse contexts—adolescent programmes, school-based interventions, higher education settings, media narratives, and youth mental health research. Across the papers, life skills were consistently positioned not only as tools for personal development, but as social competencies that enable individuals to question inequality, navigate gendered pressures, and participate in transforming harmful norms within families, communities, and institutions.

A key emphasis of the session was that gender justice cannot be achieved by focusing on girls alone. Multiple presentations highlighted the importance of engaging boys and young men as active participants in life skills education, particularly to reshape perceptions of masculinity, reduce gendered violence, and strengthen empathy and respect in everyday relationships. The session reflected on how societal expectations of masculinity often reinforce rigid behaviours, emotional suppression, and unequal power dynamics, and argued that life skills education can help adolescents build healthier self-awareness, communication, and relational understanding. This framing positioned life skills as essential for fostering gender-equitable attitudes and supporting long-term behavioural change.



The session also highlighted the transformative impact of life skills education for girls, particularly in enabling confidence, self-expression, decision-making, and advocacy. Presentations grounded in qualitative exploration documented how structured life skills programmes strengthen girls’ agency and expand their capacity to challenge restrictive social norms, including those related to education, mobility, safety, and future aspirations. These discussions reinforced that life skills education is most impactful when it moves beyond classroom instruction and becomes embedded within supportive learning environments, where girls are encouraged to speak, participate, and lead.

An important dimension of the session was the use of media and cinema as tools for gender justice education. One presentation examined how contemporary Indian films depict gender dynamics and convey life skills lessons related to resilience, empathy, ethical decision-making, and agency. By analysing *Tribhanga* (2021) and *Laapata Ladies* (2024), the session highlighted cinema as a medium

that can challenge stereotypes, provoke critical reflection, and contribute meaningfully to conversations around gender equality and social change.

The session further expanded the discussion by exploring the role of digital literacy and advocacy in empowering college students to challenge patriarchy. Presentations highlighted how life skills integrated with digital awareness can equip young adults to identify patriarchal practices, engage in online advocacy, and participate in broader social change initiatives. This discussion reinforced the idea that digital platforms have become key spaces where gender norms are reinforced or resisted, and therefore require intentional life skills engagement to promote critical thinking, ethical responsibility, and constructive participation.

Finally, the session also brought attention to the intersection between life skills, positive psychological attributes, and mental well-being among youth. Research focusing on Mizo youth explored how traits such as resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy relate to mental health outcomes and social functioning. The presentation suggested that strengthening these attributes through structured interventions can contribute to healthier coping, stronger confidence, and improved overall well-being — highlighting mental health as an important component of gender-just and equitable development.

Overall, Thematic Session V reaffirmed that life skills education is not merely a tool for individual empowerment, but a strategic instrument for disrupting patriarchy and building inclusive futures. The session concluded with a shared understanding that gender justice requires systemic and multi-stakeholder engagement, across schools, communities, youth programmes, media narratives, and digital spaces, supported by life skills frameworks that foster empathy, agency, ethical reasoning, and responsible participation for all.

THEMATIC SESSION VI

Life Skills and Climate Resilience: Nurturing Sustainability Mindsets

(5th February 2026, 4:15 pm – 6:15 pm, Classroom 04, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Prof. Bindu R.L, Dean, School of Education, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram

Co-Chairperson

Dr. Bignya Pattnaik, Faculty in Management, School of Humanities, KIIT University

Papers Presented

- 1. Life Skills for Sustainable Management: Building Human-Centric Workplaces**
Dr. Ipsita Mohapatra, Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Studies, KIIT Deemed to be University
Dr. Bignya Pattnaik, Assistant Professor, KIIT Deemed to be University
- 2. Essential Life Skills for Promoting Disaster Resilience and Environmental Adaptability among Secondary School Students**
Mr. Ramachandran R. A., PhD Scholar, Department of Education, University of Kerala
Prof. Bindu R. L., Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Kerala
- 3. Millet Culture for a Sustainable Future**
Ms. Seema Shaikh, M.Phil. Scholar, Pragnya Bodhini High School, Mumbai
- 4. A Cross-cultural Analysis of Life Skill as Climate Intelligence: Integrating Indigenous Women's Knowledge into the Modern Management System**
Dr. Sujaya Routray, Project Associate, Centurion University of Technology and Management
- 5. Role of Indigenous Knowledge and Life Skills in Climate Adaptation among Tribal Communities of Odisha**
Mr. Sabyasachi Mallik, PhD Scholar, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences Deemed to be University
Dr. Pabitra Kumar Das, Assistant Professor, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences Deemed to be University
- 6. Life Skills Education in Uttarakhand B.Ed. Programme as a Pathway to Education for Sustainable Development**
Prof. Amit Kumar Jaiswal, Associate Professor, Sri Dev Suman Uttarakhand University Campus, Government PG College Gopeshwar, (Chamoli), Uttarakhand
Dr. Narendra D. Deshmukh, Senior Vice President, Indian Ocean Comparative Education Society
- 7. Fintech Innovation Driven Green Finance In Indian Emerging Economy: Pathways, Barriers and Future Road Maps**
Ms. Minati Biswal, Dr. Lopamudra Lenka, Dr. Tulasi Malini Maharatha, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) DU, Bhubaneswar
- 8. Environmental Practices: The Essential Life Skills for Nurturing Sustainability Mindsets**
Ms. Nibedita Kalita & Dr. Krishna Kalita, Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University

9. Environmental Empathy as a Catalyst for Promoting Conservation Ethics among Adolescent Learners through Life Skills

Ms. Arya S & Prof. Bindu R.L., Department Of Education, University of Kerala

10. Exploring Eco-Reasoning: Nexus of Scientific Reasoning and Environmental Justice among Higher Secondary School Students in the Post-NEP era

Dr. Simi M & Prof. Bindu R.L., Department Of Education, University Of Kerala

Session Overview

Thematic Session VI, titled *“Life Skills and Climate Resilience: Nurturing Sustainability Mindsets,”* was held on 5th February 2026 from 4:15 pm to 6:15 pm in Classroom 004, Campus 4, KISS Deemed to be University. The session convened scholarly deliberations around key thematic concerns including climate change and vulnerability, disaster resilience and environmental adaptability, sustainable lifestyles and responsible consumption, indigenous ecological knowledge and the role of life skills education in fostering sustainability-oriented behaviour and future-ready communities. Chaired by Prof. Bindu R. L., Dean, School of Education, University of Kerala, with Dr. Bignya Pattnaik as Co-Chair, the session featured multiple research presentations that collectively positioned life skills education as central to climate resilience, ecological responsibility and sustainable development.

In the opening reflections, the chair emphasised that climate change represents one of the most pressing global challenges, intensifying disasters, poverty, displacement and inequality, particularly in vulnerable and low-income regions. Building resilience therefore requires equipping learners with essential life skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, empathy, adaptability and responsible decision-making so that individuals and communities can anticipate, respond to, and recover from environmental disruptions while contributing to sustainable futures.

Across the presentations, diverse methodological approaches including mixed-method school interventions, cross-cultural analyses, community-based ecological studies and sustainability-focused



educational initiatives demonstrated how life skills education can translate environmental awareness into behavioural change, value formation and collective climate action. Research on sustainable food

practices illustrated how integrating climate-resilient crops such as millets into school and community life fosters responsible consumption, ecological balance and holistic well-being among students and families.

Other studies foregrounded the significance of Indigenous knowledge systems and women's ecological intelligence in strengthening disaster preparedness, livelihood adaptation and post-disaster recovery. These culturally grounded life skills ranging from seed preservation and water management to traditional forecasting and community coordination were shown to complement modern scientific approaches and enhance anticipatory resilience within vulnerable communities.

Further contributions highlighted how tribal ecological practices, intergenerational learning, collective decision-making and culturally embedded sustainability values promote adaptive responses to climate variability while reinforcing harmonious human–nature relationships. Such findings underscore the importance of integrating local knowledge and participatory learning within formal education and policy frameworks addressing climate change.

Collectively, the papers affirmed that life skills education must move beyond awareness-based environmental education toward experiential, inclusive and resilience-oriented learning systems that empower young people to actively participate in climate solutions at individual, community and institutional levels.

In the concluding remarks, the chair observed that the session reinforced life skills education as a critical bridge between sustainability, equity and future preparedness. The discussion concluded with a shared consensus that embedding climate resilience within curricula, teacher education, community



engagement and policy design is essential for nurturing environmentally responsible, socially just and resilient societies capable of addressing the uncertainties of a changing planet.

THEMATIC SESSION VII

Social Inclusion through Life Skills: Advancing Equity and Participation among Tribal and Disadvantaged Communities

(5th February 2026, 4:15 pm – 6:15 pm, Classroom 005, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Khusboo Kuddus, Associate Professor (English), School of Liberal Studies, KIIT DU

Co-Chairperson

Dr. Sweta Arora, Assistant Professor, KISS DU

Papers Presented

- 1. Inclusive Development of Persons with Disabilities through Community-Level Institutions**
Srimanta Kumar Patra, Ph.D. Scholar, KSRM, KIIT University, Bhubaneswar
- 2. Life Skills Education as a Catalyst for Social Inclusion: Insights from Tribal Adolescents in Odisha, India**
Shashikant Digal, Magic Bus India Foundation
Santosh Kumar Sharma, Magic Bus India Foundation
Yudhisthira Panigrahi, Magic Bus India Foundation
Dhanashri Brahme, Magic Bus India Foundation
Aditi Aeron, Magic Bus India Foundation
Ashique Rizvi, Magic Bus India Foundation
- 3. Empowering Adolescent Girls in Gumla, Jharkhand through the Integration of Digital Literacy and Life Skills**
Vandana Nair, Centre for Catalyzing Change, New Delhi
Mohammed Ziauddin, Centre for Catalyzing Change, New Delhi
- 4. Promoting Social Inclusion through Life Skills Education: An Analysis of Diverse Tribal Students in KISS**
Dr. Sanjeeta Kumari Devi, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences Deemed to be University
Saurava Goswamy, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences Deemed to be University
Dr. Trupti Mishra, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences Deemed to be University
- 5. Learning to Live Together: An Experiential Psychology Review of How the Tutor–Mentor System at KISS Fosters Future-Ready Life Skills in Tribal Scholars**
Dr. Sasmita Pattanaik, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences Deemed to be University
Binita Xess, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences Deemed to be University
- 6. Mankirdia tribe and forest conservation: A case study of Mayurbhanj district of Odisha**
Mr. Makarbhanj Singh, PhD Scholar, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences DU, Bhubaneswar
- 7. Necessity of Life Skills Education for Children with Special Needs: A Systematic Review**
Ms. Rituparna Mitra, PhD Scholar & Dr. Rooplekha Khuntia
National Institute of Science Education and Research Jatni, Khurda, Odisha
- 8. Life Skills enable the Paraja for greater Social Inclusion through Participation in the Community**

Mr. Subash Nandibadi, PhD Scholar & Dr. Pabitra Kumar Das, Kalinga Institute of Social Science (KISS) DU, Bhubaneswar

9. **Core Life Skills for Today's Graduate: Identifying Priorities for Inclusion in Higher Education**

Dr. Purna Bahadur Lamichhane, Assistant Professor, Mr. Kumar Narayan Shrestha & Mr. Bidur Baniya, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

10. **Qualitative enquiry on - The level of life skills, opportunities and challenges among first generation learners and others among tribal communities in Tamil Nadu**

Ms. Alankhrithi Sivasubramanian, Kabilan R & Dr. Subasree Vanamali, School of Social sciences, VIT University, Chennai

11. **A Study on the Impact Of 7E Learning Cycle Utilising Life Skills on Language Development of Learners at Beginners Level Studying in Middle School.**

Dr. Gargi. P. Sinha, Professor Dnyanvardhini Divyang Training College Sanjay Centre For Special Education, Bogda, Goa

Session Overview

Thematic Session VII, titled “*Social Inclusion through Life Skills: Advancing Equity and Participation among Tribal and Disadvantaged Communities,*” was held on 5th February 2026 from 4:15 pm to 6:15 pm in Classroom 005, Campus 4, KISS Deemed to be University. Chaired by Dr. Khusboo Kuddus with Dr. Sweta Arora as Co-Chair, the session brought together diverse scholarly perspectives addressing disability inclusion, tribal empowerment, gender equity, adolescent development and institutional models of inclusive education. The deliberations collectively emphasized life skills education as a transformative pathway for reducing structural inequalities and enabling meaningful participation of marginalized communities in social, educational and economic



processes.

Across the presentations, empirical studies and field-based interventions demonstrated how embedding life skills within community institutions, schools and residential education ecosystems

strengthens agency, confidence, leadership and participation among disadvantaged groups. Research on community-level institutions highlighted their role in enabling economic empowerment, access to government schemes and grassroots leadership for persons with disabilities, thereby shifting inclusion from welfare-oriented support to rights-based participation and dignity.

Evidence from large-scale life skills programming among tribal adolescents in Odisha revealed measurable improvements in agency, emotional competencies and advanced life-skills attainment, confirming that structured, experiential pedagogy can significantly contribute to social inclusion and youth empowerment across diverse communities.

Further studies emphasized the intersection of gender, digital literacy and health awareness in empowering adolescent girls to overcome barriers such as early marriage, school dropout and limited access to information and services demonstrating how integrated life skills interventions expand opportunities for participation and well-being.

Research centered on KISS illustrated how a holistic, culturally responsive residential education model providing free education, nutrition, healthcare, vocational training and psychosocial support creates an enabling environment where life skills translate into improved self-confidence, retention, gender equity, leadership, employability and community engagement among tribal learners.

Complementing this, the experiential review of the Tutor–Mentor System at KISS demonstrated how structured peer learning, mentorship and shared responsibility cultivate empathy, collaboration and future-ready competencies, reinforcing social inclusion through everyday educational practice.

Collectively, the papers reaffirmed that life skills education functions as a critical bridge between equity, dignity and participation, enabling marginalized individuals and communities to articulate their needs, exercise rights and engage confidently in social transformation.

In the concluding reflections, the chair observed that sustainable social inclusion requires systemic integration of life skills across education systems, community institutions, gender programmes and policy frameworks. The session concluded with a shared commitment to advancing culturally grounded, participatory and rights-based life skills education as a cornerstone for equitable and inclusive development among tribal and disadvantaged populations.

Day Two: 06/02/2026

06.00 – 7.00 am Yoga Demonstration & Practice – Dr. G Sureshkumar, Yoga Guru

(Online)

The **Yoga Demonstration and Practice session** by Dr. G. Sureshkumar, Yoga Guru, Chairperson, FPA India (Kerala Chapter) & Treasurer, IALSE introduced participants to the principles and benefits of yoga as a holistic approach to physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Conducted online, the session included guided demonstrations of basic yogic practices, breathing techniques, and simple exercises aimed at enhancing concentration, relaxation, and overall balance. The resource person also highlighted the relevance of yoga in strengthening skills such as self-discipline, mindfulness and emotional regulation. The session encouraged participants to integrate yogic practices into their daily routines as a means of promoting health, inner awareness, and holistic development.

Symposium II

Life Skills and Human Rights: Educating for Dignity, Justice, and Global Solidarity

(06th February 2026, 9:30am - 11:30am, Seminar Hall 1, T&P Cell, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Prof. Swarnamayee Tripathy, Professor Emeritus, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS DU)

Keynote (Online)

Prof. (Dr.) S. Sivakumar, Senior Professor, Indian Law Institute, New Delhi; Former Member, Law Commission of India; President and Trustee, Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA)

Speakers / Discussants

Dr. Pragya Parimita Ray, School of Law, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar

Prof. Niraj Kumar, Professor, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi

Mr. Enketeshwar Kandagari, Student, KISS DU, Bhubaneswar

Mr. Prince Nayak, Student, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) DU, Bhubaneswar

Session Overview:

Symposium II on “**Life Skills and Human Rights: Educating for Dignity, Justice, and Global Solidarity**” examined the relationship between life skills education and human rights as a shared foundation for building dignity, justice, equality, and democratic participation. Chaired by **Prof. Swarnamayee Tripathy**, the symposium brought together perspectives from legal education, social sciences, and student voices, reinforcing the conference’s broader vision of life skills education as central to inclusive, rights-based learning.

The keynote address was delivered online by **Prof. (Dr.) S. Sivakumar**, Senior Professor, Indian Law Institute, New Delhi, and Former Member, Law Commission of India. In his deliberation, he emphasized that life skills education, when anchored in human rights norms, becomes a practical means of cultivating everyday capacities such as empathy, cooperation, critical inquiry, ethical reasoning, and civic engagement. He situated the discussion within global frameworks such as the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and UN commitments on human rights education and global citizenship, while also grounding his reflections in Indian constitutional guarantees, particularly the right to life with dignity and the right to education under **Articles 21 and 21A**, as well as the statutory framework of the **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009**.

He highlighted that rights-based education must move beyond abstract ideals to become part of classroom culture, curriculum design, institutional ethos, and learner participation.

The symposium was further strengthened through thematic contributions from **Dr. Pragya Parimita Ray**, School of Law, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, and **Prof. Niraj Kumar**, University of Delhi. Their discussions extended the human rights lens into contemporary debates around dignity, equality, and the lived realities of women's rights and reproductive autonomy. Topics such as reproductive health dignity, ethical complexities around embryo selection, and the rights-based implications of surrogacy were discussed as examples of how modern legal and social realities demand stronger life skills capacities—particularly critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and informed decision-making—among young people.

A student perspective was contributed by **Mr. Enketeshwar Kandagari**, Student, KISS DU, Bhubaneswar, whose reflections reinforced the importance of learner voice and participation within rights-based education. The inclusion of student perspectives strengthened the symposium's emphasis on education as a space not only for learning about rights, but for practicing them through dialogue, inclusion, and respectful engagement.

Overall, Symposium II reaffirmed that integrating life skills with human rights education is essential for building learners' capacity to recognize injustice, challenge discrimination, uphold democratic values, and engage responsibly in civic and social life. The symposium concluded with a shared understanding that life skills-based human rights education must be embedded systematically across curricula and pedagogy in order to nurture responsible citizens and advance dignity, justice, and global solidarity.



Panel Discussion II

Life Skills for Entrepreneurial Mindsets: Fostering Agency, Innovation and Resilience

(06 February 2026, 09:30 AM – 11:30 AM, Auditorium, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson

- Prof. Surendra Jena, School of Rural Management, KIIT Deemed to be University

Keynote

- Prof. Kanishka Bedi, President, World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), Geneva, Switzerland (Online)

Panelists

- Dr. Pinaki Nandan Patnaik, Dean, School of Leadership, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar
- Dr. Debasish Mohapatra, Professor & Coordinator, Centre for Social Research and Innovation (SRI), School of Leadership, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar
- Dr. Suparna Ghosh, Associate Professor, Department of History, Loreto College, Kolkata
- Dr. Prasanta Parida, Associate Professor, School of Rural Management, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar
- Mr. Neel Dhuruva (Online), President & Founder, Peer-to-Peer Global Teens; Co-Founder, Gamecents, Miramar, Florida, USA
- Mr. Gaurav Arora, Salaam Bombay Foundation, Mumbai
- Ms. Sneha Nandy, Student, B.Ed. Semester I, Loreto College, Kolkata
- Ms. Rama Bhide, Founder Director, Alpha School of Life Skills; Secretary, Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE)
- Mr. Laxman Dora, Research Scholar, KISS Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar

Session Overview

The panel discussion on Life Skills for Entrepreneurial Mindsets: Fostering Agency, Innovation and Resilience explored the relationship between life skills and entrepreneurial mindsets, examining entrepreneurship not merely as an economic activity but as a set of capacities that enable individuals to exercise agency, creativity, adaptability, and resilience in rapidly changing societies. The discussion highlighted how contemporary



shifts in work patterns, technological disruptions, and growing economic uncertainty are reshaping youth aspirations and making it necessary to rethink entrepreneurship from a life skills perspective. Panelists reflected on the ways in which competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, emotional resilience, and initiative help young people navigate complex environments and pursue innovative ideas while responding to social needs.

The conversation also emphasized that entrepreneurship grounded in life skills should extend beyond individual success to include social responsibility, ethical decision-making, and community engagement. Panelists discussed the role of educational institutions, community organisations, and industry partnerships in creating enabling ecosystems that nurture these capacities through experiential learning, mentorship, and real-world engagement. Particular attention was given to the importance of inclusive opportunities that allow diverse groups of young people to develop entrepreneurial potential. The panel concluded by underscoring the need for academic curricula and youth development systems to integrate life skills more intentionally so that future generations are prepared to become innovative, resilient, and socially responsible contributors to an interconnected global society.



Seminar I

Digital Citizenship and Life Skills: Navigating Misinformation, Surveillance, and Disconnection in Hyperconnected Spaces

(06th February 2026, 09.30 a.m. – 11.30 a.m., Conference Hall 1, Campus 3, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Snigadharani Panda

Chairperson of the Council of Deans, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) DU

Keynote Speaker

Prof. T. M. Sakunthala Yatigammana Ekanayake

Head, Department of Information Technology, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

Speakers

1. **Prof. Umesh Kumar**
Associate Professor, Department of Maths, Rajdhani College, University of Delhi
2. **Mr. Vimal Govind (Online)**
Founder, GenRobotics, Thiruvananthapuram
3. **Dr. Nizar Bitar (Online)**
Teaching Fellow, Department of Information Systems
The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, D.N. Emek Yezreel, Israel
4. **Ms. Anjana Das (Online)**
AI Architect, Transportation Business Unit, TATA Elxsi Ltd, Thiruvananthapuram
5. **Mr. Dhruv**
Student, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) DU, Bhubaneswar

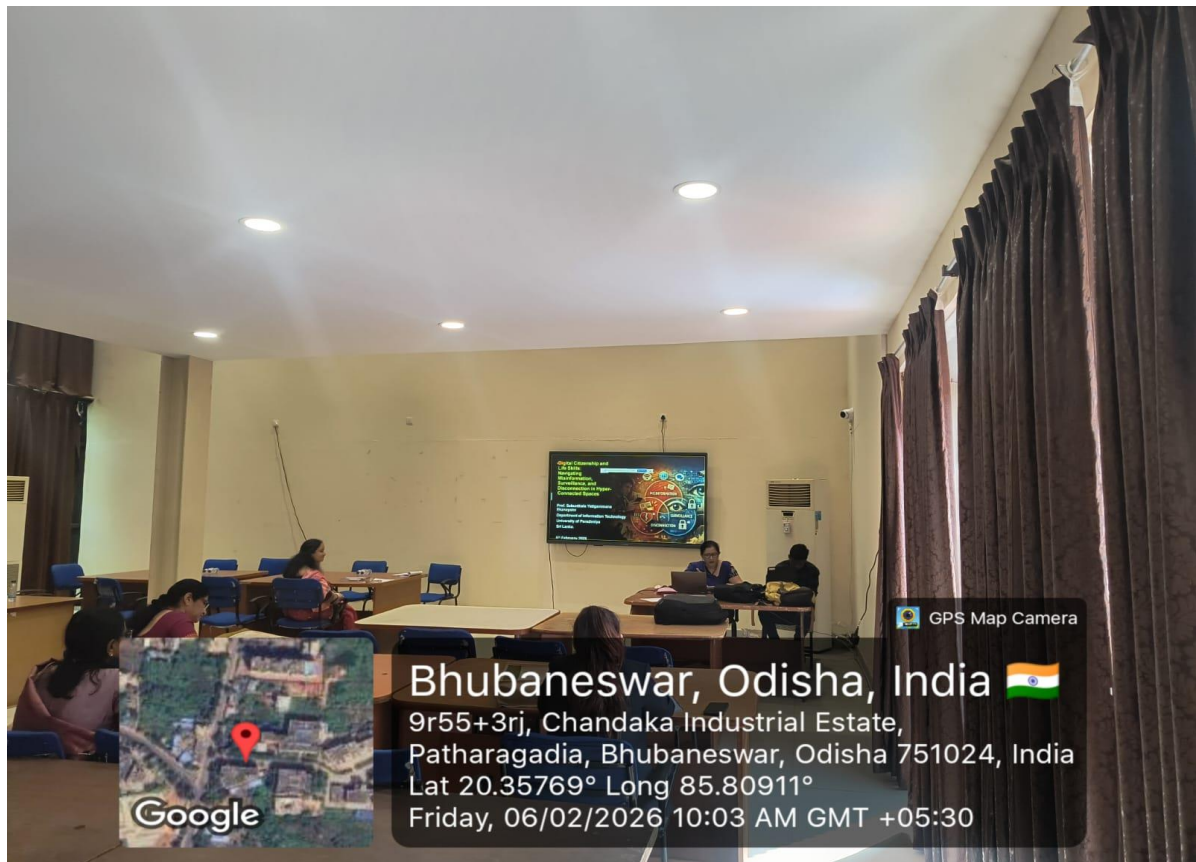
Session Overview

This seminar examines the urgent need for life skills education in strengthening digital citizenship in today's hyperconnected world—where individuals are increasingly shaped by misinformation, algorithmic influence, surveillance technologies, and a growing sense of social disconnection despite constant online presence. The session explores how digital environments are not merely technological spaces, but social ecosystems that influence identity, relationships, decision-making, and civic participation.

Through interdisciplinary perspectives spanning education, information systems, AI, and technology innovation, the seminar highlights the life skills required to navigate digital life responsibly and safely. These include critical thinking, media and information literacy, ethical reasoning, emotional regulation, and the ability to engage in respectful dialogue across differences. Attention is also drawn to emerging concerns around privacy, surveillance, data security, and the impact of digital systems on autonomy and wellbeing.

By bringing together academic experts, industry professionals, and student voices, the seminar underscores the importance of preparing learners not only to use technology effectively, but to

participate as informed, ethical, and resilient citizens in digital public life. Ultimately, the session positions life skills education as a key foundation for building safer online cultures, healthier digital habits, and more thoughtful engagement in democratic and civic spaces.



NGO Conclave

Assessing the Impact of Life Skills Education: Indicators, Innovations, and Interrogation

(06th February 2026, 09.30 a.m. onwards, Conference Hall 2, Campus 3, KISS DU)

Life Skills Beyond 2030: Learning to Live Together in an Interconnected World underscores the growing importance of equipping adolescents with the capacities required not only to succeed individually but also to coexist peacefully and responsibly within diverse and rapidly changing societies. In a post-2030 context beyond the timeline of the Sustainable Development Goals, life skills are understood as a broad constellation of social, emotional, ethical, digital and civic competencies that enable young people to navigate complexity, uncertainty and interdependence.

Beyond 2030, the scope of life skills expands beyond traditional emphases on employability and personal development to include emotional well-being, empathy, conflict resolution, gender equality, digital citizenship, climate consciousness and active civic participation. As adolescents grow up amid technological acceleration, social polarization, global health disruptions, climate crises and persistent inequalities, Life Skills Education becomes central to fostering resilience, adaptability and inclusive mindsets. These competencies support informed decision-making, healthy relationships, constructive engagement with diversity and meaningful agency in both online and offline environments.

The transformative significance of life skills is visible at both individual and societal levels. For adolescents, they strengthen mental health, self-confidence, and positive life pathways while reducing vulnerability to misinformation, violence, exclusion and harmful risk behaviours. At the societal level, life skills contribute to social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, gender equity, democratic participation and sustainable development. By enabling critical thinking, ethical action and collaboration across differences, life skills form a foundation for inclusive and resilient communities.

Ultimately, life skills bridge individual agency and collective responsibility ensuring that people are not only prepared to cope with change but are empowered to shape peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies. This requires integrated, lifelong and context-responsive learning systems spanning generations and sectors.

The conclave was chaired by Prof. Deepak Kumar Behera, Adviser, KISS-DU and Former Vice-Chancellor, KISS-DU.

Speakers represent a diverse spectrum of national and international non-governmental organisations working across education, gender justice, adolescent development, emotional well-being, digital learning, governance and community transformation. Collectively, these institutions reflect a shared commitment to advancing Life Skills Education as a foundational pathway toward inclusive, resilient and compassionate societies beyond 2030.

Organisations such as Room to Read India, QUEST Alliance, Transform Schools and the Piramal Foundation highlight the importance of embedding life skills within whole-school transformation models that integrate classroom practice, community engagement and institutional culture. Their experiences underline that adolescents develop resilience, agency and critical thinking most effectively when life skills are reinforced across learning environments rather than delivered through isolated modules. These organisations also stress the role of evidence-based programme design, scalable teacher professional development and measurement of socio-emotional outcomes to ensure both quality and sustainability of LSE at scale.

Grassroots and community-centred organisations including Child in Need Institute (CINI), Youth for Social Development (YSD), Shelter Trust, Breakthrough and the Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3) bring forward a complementary perspective that situates life skills within the lived realities of marginalised adolescents. Their work foregrounds gender justice, adolescent health, protection from violence, prevention of early marriage, and civic empowerment, demonstrating how LSE can challenge restrictive social norms while strengthening confidence, voice and collective agency. These organisations emphasise that adolescents' ability to practise life skills is deeply influenced by family structures, peer networks and community attitudes, making community mobilisation and parental engagement essential components of effective LSE.

A further set of organisations including the Life Skills Education Institute, Emotional Intelligence & Life Skills Training Team, ISSRA, Ugam Foundation and the Council of Education Administration and Management contribute perspectives rooted in capacity-building, research, governance and institutional leadership. Their work underscores the importance of structured training frameworks, culturally responsive curricula, reflective practice and leadership accountability in sustaining life skills initiatives over time. They advocate for stronger alignment between policy, administration and classroom implementation, ensuring that LSE is embedded not only pedagogically but also institutionally within education systems.

In parallel, organisations working at the intersection of technology, creativity and future readiness



such as the Pi Jam Foundation and allied digital learning initiatives stress the urgent need to expand the scope of LSE to include digital citizenship, computational thinking, media literacy, online safety and ethical engagement with emerging technologies. As adolescents increasingly inhabit hybrid digital-physical environments, these actors argue that life skills must evolve to address misinformation, cyberbullying, algorithmic influence and digital exclusion, while preserving empathy, responsibility and human connection.

Collective Perspectives on Life Skills Education

The combined experience of participating organisations positions LSE as a transformative, rights-based and ecosystem-driven social process, rather than a stand-alone curricular intervention. Organisations engaging with formal schooling systems emphasise that sustainable life skills development depends on teacher preparation, school leadership, experiential pedagogy and systemic reform. Socio-emotional learning, ethical reasoning, collaboration and gender sensitivity are understood as core educational outcomes shaping how adolescents learn, relate and participate in society.

Whole-school transformation approaches highlight the importance of integrating classroom practice, institutional culture and community engagement, ensuring that life skills are reinforced across environments rather than confined to isolated modules. Evidence-based programme design, scalable teacher professional development and meaningful assessment of socio-emotional competencies are seen as essential for quality and sustainability at scale.

Grassroots and community-centred actors foreground the lived realities of marginalised adolescents, situating LSE within struggles for gender justice, adolescent health, violence prevention, early-marriage reduction and civic empowerment. Their work demonstrates that life skills flourish when families, peer networks and communities actively support adolescents' confidence, voice, and agency.

Capacity-building, research, and governance-focused organisations emphasise structured training frameworks, culturally responsive curricula, reflective practice and leadership accountability. Aligning policy, administration and classroom implementation is viewed as critical for embedding life skills institutionally within education systems.

Digital learning and creativity-focused initiatives further expand LSE to include digital citizenship, computational thinking, media literacy, online safety and ethical technology engagement. In hybrid digital-physical realities shaped by misinformation, cyber-risks and algorithmic influence, life skills must evolve while preserving empathy, responsibility and human connection.

Across these perspectives, a shared understanding emerges: Life Skills Education is a public good that connects schools, families, communities, technology systems and governance structures. Beyond employability, it enables dignity, inclusion, democratic participation, emotional well-being, gender equality and planetary responsibility.

Expanded Key Recommendations and the Way Forward

1. Systemic Integration Across Sectors

Post-2030 LSE must move beyond programme-based delivery toward system-wide integration across education, health, nutrition, child protection and social welfare systems. Coordinated policy frameworks can ensure that adolescents experience consistent developmental support across institutions and life contexts.



2. Equity-Centred and Inclusive Approaches

Future frameworks must prioritise girls, Indigenous adolescents, children with disabilities, rural youth and other marginalised groups, ensuring culturally responsive and accessible LSE. Inclusion should extend beyond access to voice, participation and leadership opportunities.

3. Strengthening Educator Capacity and Leadership

Teachers, school leaders, and community facilitators require continuous professional development in socio-emotional learning, gender sensitivity, participatory pedagogy and adolescent well-being. Leadership systems must embed life skills within institutional culture, assessment and accountability mechanisms.

4. Digital-Age Life Skills and Ethical Technology Use

LSE must incorporate media literacy, online safety, digital citizenship and critical engagement with artificial intelligence and emerging technologies. Adolescents should be empowered not only to navigate digital environments safely but to shape ethical digital futures.



5. Community and Family Engagement

Sustainable impact depends on supportive social ecosystems. Engaging parents, caregivers, peer networks and community institutions strengthens adolescents' ability to practice life skills in real-world contexts, reinforcing behavioural and attitudinal change.



6. Evidence, Measurement, and Learning Systems

Robust monitoring, evaluation, and research frameworks are essential to capture socio-emotional and civic outcomes. Investment in longitudinal evidence, participatory evaluation and knowledge sharing can guide policy and scale effective models.

7. Adolescent Voice, Agency, and Co-Creation

Adolescents must be recognised as partners rather than beneficiaries. Institutionalising youth participation in programme design, governance and

policy dialogue ensures relevance, ownership, and democratic learning.

8. Sustainable Financing and Policy Commitment

Scaling LSE requires long-term public investment, cross-sector partnerships, and philanthropic collaboration. Embedding life skills within national education policy, curriculum standards, and teacher education systems is essential for durability beyond project cycles.

Collectively, the perspectives emerging from the conclave affirm that Life Skills Education is indispensable to humanity's shared future. In a world marked by uncertainty, inequality and rapid transformation, the capacity to act with empathy, think critically, collaborate across difference and uphold ethical responsibility becomes as vital as academic knowledge or technological innovation.

Beyond 2030, learning to live together will define the success of societies. Life skills therefore stand not merely as educational content, but as a foundation for peace, justice, resilience and planetary well-being. Strengthening LSE today is an investment in humane, inclusive and interconnected futures shaped by empowered adolescents and compassionate communities.



Seminar II

Status of Life Skills Education across the States and UTs of India

(06th February 2026, 09.30 a.m. onwards, Seminar Hall 2, T&P cell, KISS DU)

The second seminar on the theme “Status of Life Skills Education across the States and UTs of India” was held on 6th February 2026. It was **chaired** by **Shri Jagadananda J**, Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) and **co-chaired** by **Dr. Chandrasekharan Praveen**, Former Principal Institute of Advanced Studies in Education, Kerala.

Ms. Sanghamitra Ray, Deputy Director, Projects, KISS, formally welcomed the Chairperson, Co-Chairperson, and participants representing various States and Union Territories of India. The seminar focused on examining the status, scope, and diversity of life skills education initiatives across the country.

In his opening address, Shri Jagadananda J emphasized that life skills education is neither merely a subject nor a textbook-based component, but the core purpose and essence of education itself. Drawing from his professional journey, including his tenure as the State Information Commissioner of Odisha, he highlighted that life skills should be understood as a philosophy, principle, competency, and perspective guiding education systems. He noted that collective deliberations during the previous sessions had generated shared perspectives on the evolving role of life skills education in India.

State-wise Perspectives

Mizoram: Dr. Muttu Vumula

The presentation highlighted efforts to integrate life skills education within higher education and teacher education frameworks. Emphasis was placed on capacity building of teacher educators and incorporating socio-emotional learning to address adolescent mental health and social responsibility.

Sikkim: Ms. Dipika Rai

Discussions emphasized district-level implementation through DIETs, showcasing teacher-led life skills initiatives. The focus remained on experiential learning methods, peer interaction, and strengthening life skills through school-based co-curricular activities.



Chhattisgarh & Jharkhand: Mr. Alok Tiwari

Speakers highlighted community-based and civil society-driven approaches for life skills education. Particular attention was given to outreach among tribal and marginalized adolescents, leadership development, and locally contextualized life skills modules.

Madhya Pradesh: Dr. Rakesh Dangi

The state presentation focused on linking life skills education with employability and vocational preparedness. Initiatives integrating leadership, communication skills, and entrepreneurship orientation within technical and skill-development institutions were highlighted. He also focussed on UMANG, Happiness Curriculum & Jeevan Tarang Program.

Telangana: Ms. Saritha Gangaraju

NGO-led initiatives were discussed, emphasizing reading habits, communication skills, and confidence-building among adolescents. The presentation also highlighted structured mentoring and community engagement models supporting sustained adolescent participation.

Karnataka: Dr. Sushil Kadakuppe

Presentations highlighted the intersection of life skills education with adolescent mental health and public health awareness. Life skills were discussed as preventive tools addressing stress management, decision-making, and healthy lifestyle choices.

Kerala: Dr. T Sunderesan Nair

The discussion emphasized policy-level integration of life skills education within teacher education programs. Alignment with national education policies and structured monitoring mechanisms to assess learning outcomes were also highlighted.

Tamil Nadu: Mr. B. Senthil

Speakers linked life skills education with child protection mechanisms and juvenile justice systems. The importance of legal awareness, life skills for conflict resolution, and coordinated inter-departmental efforts was emphasized.

Maharashtra: Dr. Archana Patki

Gender-sensitive approaches to life skills education were emphasized, focusing on adolescent empowerment and leadership development. Programs addressing self-esteem, negotiation skills, and gender equity were highlighted.

Goa: Dr. Janet Fernandes

The presentation highlighted that in Goa, life skills education is not explicitly mentioned as a standalone framework in state policy documents such as SCERT or NEP implementation guidelines, but life skills are implicitly integrated across curriculum practices, assessments, and co-curricular activities from the primary level onwards. Goa's school assessment system formally evaluates thinking, social, emotional, and personal skills, though emphasis on life skills reduces at the secondary level due to examination-oriented curricula. At the college level, Goa University offers life skills through value-added courses, but these remain optional rather than mandatory.

West Bengal: Dr. Ranjita Dawn

In West Bengal, life skills are acknowledged in policy documents but lack clarity in its implementation mechanisms or dedicated textbooks. Life skills are largely addressed through subject-

based integration, moral/value education, assemblies, sports, and service learning, with pedagogy relying on role play, inquiry-based learning, and case studies. A key challenge identified is limited teacher training and capacity building, leading to uneven delivery, with NGOs and select institutions like Loreto College playing a significant supportive role in life skills education.

Odisha: Dr. Saswat Kishore Mishra

The study highlights the importance of life skills education in Odisha, a young state with a high proportion of adolescents and youth, particularly in tribal and rural areas where schools serve as the safest spaces for discussion on health, relationships, and personal challenges. Life skills education in Odisha goes beyond moral instruction and focuses on communication, responsible decision-making, stress management, gender sensitivity, and resisting negative peer pressure. A key initiative, Life Skills Education–

Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (LSE-ARSH), pioneered by KISS and later scaled up by the Government of Odisha with support from UNFPA, reached over 70,000 adolescents through activity-based learning, peer educators, and innovative methods such as question boxes to address stigma.



Union Territories and National Bodies

Andaman & Nicobar Islands: Dr. Suparna Ghosh

Context-specific strategies addressing geographical isolation and cultural diversity were discussed. Adaptive life skills education models focusing on community resilience and youth engagement were highlighted.

Education Boards (NCERT & ICSE): Speakers/Representatives: Officials from NCERT & ICSE Boards

Representatives Ms. L.K. Lalbiakfeli, Mizoram University National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) & Dr. Madhubala (Online) Principal Kerala Hindi Prachar Sabha B.Ed. Training College Thiruvananthapuram, Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) emphasized curriculum alignment, competency-based learning, and assessment reforms. The importance of institutionalizing life skills education within national curricular frameworks was strongly reiterated during the deliberations.

Concluding Remarks

In his concluding remarks, the Chairperson, Shri Jagadananda J, emphasized that the effectiveness of life skills education depends fundamentally on pedagogy, monitoring, and assessment mechanisms. He highlighted the importance of play-based, activity-based, experiential, and participatory learning methodologies, noting that while conceptual clarity on life skills exists, the real challenge lies in translating these approaches into consistent classroom and community practices.



He further underscored the need to build strong partnerships between state and non-state actors, including civil society organizations, community institutions, and multiple government departments. Stressing the importance of convergence, he pointed out that meaningful life skills education requires coordinated engagement not only across ministries but also with parents, families, and Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs). He observed that parental and family involvement remains a critical yet under-addressed segment in current life skills education frameworks.

Shri Jagadananda J also expressed the need for developing of context-specific and practical solutions, supported by a robust ecosystem that enables effective implementation in the present-day educational environment. While acknowledging that states are actively innovating and refining pedagogical strategies, he noted that practice-level implementation remains the most significant challenge.

He concluded by emphasizing that practice change is the urgent need of the hour. Despite the availability of pedagogical tools and methodologies, deepening and sustaining life skills education requires collective action beyond policy and intent. He urged that the Indian Association of Life Skills Education take a proactive role in flagging, supporting, and scaling best practices, thereby ensuring that life skills education moves decisively from planning to meaningful practice on the ground.



Vote of Thanks

Dr. Sasmita Padhi, Assistant Professor, KISS-DU delivered the vote of thanks, expressing sincere gratitude to the Chairperson, Shri Jagadananda J, and the Co-Chairperson, Dr. Chandrasekharan Praveen, for their valuable guidance and insightful leadership during the session. She thanked all speakers and participants from various States, Union Territories, and national bodies for their meaningful contributions and sharing of best practices. She also acknowledged the efforts of the organizing team for the smooth conduct of the seminar.

Master Class II

Life Skills Education for Mental Health and Well-being and Shared Future

(06th February 2026, 11.30 am – 12.30 pm, Auditorium, KISS DU)

Chairperson:

Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair, President, Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE) & Former Registrar, Central University of Kerala

Distinguished Speaker:

Dr. K. Ellangovan, IAS, Managing Director, INKEL Ltd. & Additional Chief Secretary (Retd.), Government of Kerala

Welcome & Introduction:

Ms. Saswati Jena, Faculty, Department of Education

Vote of Thanks:

Mr. Gomeya Among, Ph.D. Scholar, KISS Deemed to be University

Session Overview:

Master Class II was conducted on the second day of the **11th International Conference on Life Skills Education** under the overarching theme “**Life Skills Education for Mental Health and Well-being and Shared Future.**” The session focused on the increasing relevance of life skills education in addressing mental health concerns and supporting holistic well-being in an increasingly demanding and interconnected world.

The session was chaired by **Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair**, President of the **Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE)** and Former Registrar, Central University of Kerala. With his extensive

experience in educational leadership and youth development, he guided the proceedings and anchored the session’s key reflections on well-being as a central educational outcome.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by **Ms. Saswati Jena**, Faculty, Department of Education, who introduced the chairperson and the distinguished speaker, briefly highlighting their professional journeys and contributions to education and public service.



The master class featured **Dr. K. Ellangovan, IAS**, Managing Director, INKEL Ltd., and Additional Chief Secretary (Retd.), Government of Kerala, as the distinguished speaker. With a career that



reflects a rare combination of medical knowledge and administrative leadership, including his role in Kerala's COVID-19 response, Dr. Ellangovan brought a multi-dimensional perspective to the theme of life skills and well-being. The chairperson felicitated him with a memento as a mark of respect.

In his introductory remarks, **Dr. Nair** emphasized the relevance of the session's theme and noted that Dr. Ellangovan's dual background

made him uniquely suited to speak on mental health and life skills. He underlined that well-being requires not only scientific understanding but also empathy, self-awareness, and practical wisdom.

In his address, **Dr. Ellangovan** offered reflective insights on the realities of contemporary life. He observed that families often seek security, societies strive for achievement, and individuals ultimately long for peace. He stressed the importance of self-awareness and emotional balance, explaining how the focus of human development has gradually shifted from **IQ to EQ and now to CQ**, reflecting the needs of multicultural and globally connected societies.

He highlighted key life skills such as critical thinking, communication, and stress management, and introduced the ideas of the **"circle of expectations"** and the **"circle of accomplishments."** He explained that unrealistic expectations often lead to stress, dissatisfaction, and emotional imbalance, while clarity and realistic goal-setting help individuals sustain well-being. He described resilience as a **"superpower,"** encouraging participants to accept challenges, adapt to change, and move forward with confidence.



Dr. Ellangovan also spoke about what he described as the **"new medicines of the modern era,"** including adequate sleep, exposure to sunlight, regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, healthy relationships, and emotional stability. He emphasized the importance of financial life skills, quoting Warren Buffett's advice on saving before spending, and highlighted how financial discipline contributes to long-term stability and peace of mind.

In his concluding reflections, he stressed the value of strong relationships and community life, referring to insights drawn from the **Blue Zones** and the **Okinawa theory**, which link longevity and happiness to social connection and collective living. He concluded by presenting the idea of a **Life Skills Mosaic**, consisting of four interrelated dimensions, **Inner Stability, Clear Thinking, Human Connections, and Adaptation & Purpose**, as the foundation of a balanced, healthy, and meaningful life.

Following the address, the chairperson opened the floor for interaction. Participants engaged actively with questions and reflections, which were addressed with clarity by both the speaker and the chairperson, adding depth and participation to the session.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by **Mr. Gomeya Among**, Ph.D. Scholar, KISS Deemed to be University, who expressed gratitude to the chairperson, the speaker, the organizers, and the participants for contributing to a meaningful and enriching master class.

Overall, Master Class II was engaging and intellectually stimulating, offering both practical insights and reflective perspectives. The session strongly reinforced the role of life skills education in promoting mental health, emotional balance, resilience, and sustainable human development.

Master Class III

Building Transformative Citizenship through Life Skills: Participation, Advocacy, and Ethics in a Polarised World

(06th February 2026, 11:30pm - 12:30pm, Seminar Hall 1, T&P Cell, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Prof. Suman Kumar, Professor, Department of Political Science, Rajdhani College, New Delhi, Managing Trustee, Public Media Tech Foundation, Delhi

Speaker

Prof. Aditya Kumar Mohanty, North East Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, Meghalaya

Session Overview:

This masterclass explores the role of life skills education in building transformative citizenship in an increasingly polarised world, where the need for ethical reasoning, social responsibility, and collective wellbeing has become more urgent than ever. The session emphasises that while scientific progress and technological empowerment have expanded human capability, they have not always been guided by values that promote sustainability, mutual respect and justice.

Drawing on a philosophical and humanistic lens, the masterclass reflects on how the misuse of knowledge, the prioritisation of expediency over sustainability, and the rise of divisive ideologies have contributed to ecological crises, social fragmentation and the erosion of tolerance and fellowship. It argues that many of today's challenges are fundamentally crises of human psyche and values, rather than shortages of resources or capability.

The session underscores the importance of cultivating holistic life skills, such as empathy, ethical decision-making, critical reflection, and civic responsibility, to enable individuals to move from knowledge to meaningful action. It highlights education as a central vehicle for infusing shared values into the collective consciousness, supported by cultural and creative mediums such as art, literature, music, and digital platforms. Ultimately, the masterclass calls for nurturing citizens who act not as exploiters of nature and society, but as stewards, committed to equity, coexistence and the principle of "live and let live."

Think Tank

Life Skills in the National Education Policy (NEP) Era: Opportunities and Challenges for Systemic Integration

(06th February 2026, 02.00 – 04.00 pm, Conference Hall 1, Campus 3, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Mr. Saktibrata Sen, Senior Director, Programs, Room To Read India

Discussants

1. Prof. Vinod Chandra Former Principal, Sri Jai Narain Misra Post Graduate College, Lucknow; Head of the Sociology Department, Sri JNMPG College; Vice-President, Research Committee of Sociology of Youth (RC34), ISA & Former President, IALSE
2. Prof. Bindu R L, Dean, School of Education, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram
3. Dr M S Geetha, Former Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Kerala
4. Dr. V. Reghu, M.Ed. Course Director, Mar Theophilus Training College Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, Former Professor & Dean, RGNIYD, Tamil Nadu.
5. Prof. Zoengpari (Online), Department of Psychology, Mizoram University, Aizwal
6. Prof. Suman Kumar, Professor, Dept. of Political Science, Rajdhani College, Delhi University
7. Ms. Jayeeta Ganguly, Child in Need Institute, Kolkata
8. Dr. Akkas Ali, Principal, Ajmal Law College, Hojai
9. Prof. P B Shankar Narayan, Head of the Department of Social Work, Pondicherry University
10. Mr. Jyothis Chandran, Chairman, Jyothis Group of Schools, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
11. Dr. V M Sasikumar, National President, Council for Educational Administration and Management (CEAM), India
12. Dr. T Sunderesan Nair, Former Director, State Resource Centre, Thiruvananthapuram
13. Mr. Gaurav Arora, Salam Bombay Foundation, Mumbai
14. Prof. Dr. Maya S, Former Professor in Education, Mar Theophilus Training College Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
15. Dr. Sushmita Chakraborty (Online), Associate Professor, NCERT, New Delhi

Session overview

The Think Tank on “Life Skills in the National Education Policy (NEP) Era: Opportunities and Challenges for Systemic Integration” deliberated on the growing importance of embedding life skills within the education system in alignment with the vision of National Education Policy 2020. Discussants highlighted that the policy’s emphasis on holistic and learner-centred education provides a strong foundation for integrating competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication,



collaboration, and emotional regulation into mainstream teaching–learning processes. The discussion reflected on how approaches such as experiential learning, multidisciplinary curricula, project-based

activities, internships, and community engagement can serve as practical pathways for nurturing life



skills in real-life contexts. At the same time, the group acknowledged key implementation challenges, including limited teacher preparedness, exam-oriented schooling practices, curriculum overload, and the difficulty of assessing socio-emotional competencies through conventional evaluation systems. Concerns regarding resource disparities and the need for greater acceptance of participatory learning methods within schools and communities were also noted. The think tank concluded that translating policy intent into classroom practice would require

sustained teacher capacity building, innovative assessment frameworks, supportive institutional structures, and stronger collaboration among educators, institutions, and policymakers to ensure the meaningful and systemic integration of life skills in the NEP era.

Round Table 1

Well-being as an Educational Outcome: Positioning Life Skills as Central to Mental, Emotional, and Social Health

(06th February 2026, 02.00 – 04.00 pm, Conference Hall 2, Campus 3, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Sunitha Ranjan, Life Skills Educator, Master Trainer & Former President, IALSE

Key Discussant

Dr. Dimpy Mahanta (Online), Associate Professor of Psychology, Cotton University, Guwahati

Discussants:

1. Prof. (Dr.) Jagdish Khatri, Leadership & Life Skills Coach, Corporate Trainer, Motivational Speaker, Author, Chandigarh
2. Edward Gearing, PhD. (Online), Professor, Director, Centre for Mental Health Research and Innovation in Treatment Engagement and Service (MH-RITES Research Centre) Graduate College of Social Work, University of Houston, USA.
3. Mr. Meghendra Banerjee, Chief of Programmes, Child In Need (CINI), Kolkata
4. Dr. Rooplekha Khuntia, Assistant Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NISER Bhubaneswar
5. Dr. Madhumita Das, Principal Counsellor, Bhubaneswar, Family Court -II, Bhubaneswar
6. Dr. Kirti Singh Chauhan, Academic Counsellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University
7. Ms. Vyjanthi Trimal, Assistant Professor, Fergusson College, Autonomous, Pune
8. Ms. Bhargavi Siva, Student, KIIT DU

Session overview

The Round Table on “Well-being as an Educational Outcome: Positioning Life Skills as Central to Mental, Emotional, and Social Health” examined the growing mental health concerns and the role of education systems in addressing them more proactively. The discussion emphasized that while awareness of mental health has increased globally, institutional responses often remain reactive, focusing on managing distress rather than preventing it. Discussants reflected on how contemporary education systems tend to prioritize performance, competition, and employability, sometimes overlooking the psychological wellbeing of learners. The Round Table highlighted that educational environments significantly influence how individuals understand themselves, regulate emotions, and engage with others, making wellbeing an essential outcome of education rather than a peripheral concern. In this context, life skills education was identified as a critical pathway for fostering self-awareness, emotional regulation, resilience, and



meaning-making. The discussion underscored the importance of integrating these competencies into curricula and pedagogy so that education prepares individuals not only for livelihood but also for life.

Voices from the Field I

Evidence, Experience and Best Practices of Independent Life Skills Practitioners

(6th February 2026, 2pm–4pm, Seminar Hall-1, IT & Placement Cell, KISS DU)

Chairperson:

Mr. Dipak Kumar, Former Regional Director, NSS, Guwahati

Presenter 1: Dr. Chandrasekharan Praveen, Former Principal, Institute of Advanced Studies in Education, Kerala

Dr. Chandrasekharan Praveen's presentation highlighted evidence-based practices and youth perspectives emerging from the conference plenary discussions. He discussed the Chinmaya Vision Programme, emphasising its holistic and value-based approach rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems, and its alignment with Life Skills Education and the National Education Policy 2020. He also drew attention to youth reflections on the importance of empathy, ethical reasoning, and resilience in an AI-driven world. Together, the points reinforced the need for culturally grounded life skills education that supports human-centred development and responsible engagement with technology.

Presenter 2: Ms. L. Salitha, Principal, Jyothis Central School, Kazhakkuttam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

Ms. L. Salitha emphasised that life skills are central to school education and are strengthened through co-curricular and extracurricular engagement. She discussed how activities such as group discussions, role plays, projects, debates, and community work help students develop communication, teamwork, and leadership. She also highlighted school assemblies, event celebrations, field visits, club activities, and house-based programmes as important platforms for building social interaction, responsibility, and confidence. Her presentation reinforced that schools play a key role in enabling holistic development and preparing students for real-life challenges through structured experiences beyond the classroom.

Presenter 3: B. Senthil, Honourable Member, Juvenile Justice Board, Thiruvallur District, Department of Children Welfare and Social Services, Govt. of Tamil Nadu & Joint Secretary, IALSE

B. Senthil's address focused on the relevance of life skills education within the juvenile justice system. He highlighted that many juvenile offenders operate with the belief that laws and rules do not apply to them, which often results in high-risk behaviour including substance use and unsafe sexual practices without awareness of long-term consequences. He emphasised the need for life skills interventions for at-risk youth to support rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The presentation also underscored the role of observation homes and NGOs as key institutional partners in implementing life skills-based rehabilitation programmes.

Presenter 4: Prof. (Dr.) Bindu R L., Dean, School of Education, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram

Prof. (Dr.) Bindu R L. shared initiatives undertaken by the School of Education, University of Kerala, to institutionalise life skills education across teacher education and community programmes. She discussed life skills courses offered for B.Ed. and M.Ed. students, interdisciplinary postgraduate learning, and adolescent health and hygiene initiatives implemented in collaboration with colleges and child development centres. She also highlighted capacity-building programmes supporting migrant and challenged students through Kudumbashree units. Additional initiatives discussed included mindfulness and yoga training, diploma programmes for adult learners, vocational training, productive work activities, and school and village adoption programmes, all contributing toward inclusive, community-oriented education and holistic development.

Presenter 5: Dr. Muttu Vemula, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Mizoram University

Dr. Muttu Vemula reflected on his journey as a teacher educator working to advance life skills education in higher education. He discussed how concerns about the gap between policy intent and classroom practice led him to initiate an add-on life skills course, which later evolved into an institutionalised optional paper. He also shared his involvement in research and funded studies on Jeevan Kaushal in Mizoram, along with capacity-building programmes for teacher educators. These experiences, he noted, revealed a continued mismatch between NEP 2020 aspirations and ground realities. In response, he presented the INSPIRE Instructional Framework, designed to embed life skills through experiential, reflective, and learner-centred pedagogy to support holistic and empowered learning.

Presenter 6: Ms. Manaswini Panigrahi, Senior Manager, Curriculum Designer, Breakthrough, Odisha

Ms. Manaswini Panigrahi shared her experience as an independent life skills practitioner, tracing her professional journey beginning in 2013. She discussed her work as a Resource Person across programmes such as Life Skills–SRH, UDAY, and SAMARTHYA, engaging teachers, health workers, students, matrons, and wardens. Over time, she highlighted collaborations with multiple organisations involving training delivery, curriculum and manual development, and the design of student textbooks. She also reflected on how life skills education strengthened her own empathy, social responsibility, and communication. Currently, she noted that her work focuses on designing gender equality curricula, drawing from her life skills experience to promote equality, harmony, and effective interpersonal interaction.

Presenter 7: Ms. Deeptimayee Pattanaik, Technical Expert, SM & Convergence, PRADAN, Odisha

Ms. Deeptimayee Pattanaik presented reflections from her work with PRADAN, supporting women leaders, rural youth, micro-entrepreneurs, smallholder farmers, and community organisations. She emphasised life skills as the foundation for decision-making, problem-solving, leadership, communication, and collaboration. Evidence shared during the session indicated increased self-confidence among participants, reflected in stronger participation in Gram Sabhas, improved public speaking among rural youth, and enhanced negotiation capacity among farmers in dealing with external buyers. She noted that a key shift observed was the transition from external guidance to local leadership. She concluded by emphasising that beyond 2030, life skills education should be integrated more deeply into development programmes, community resource persons should be trained as life skills educators, and long-term policy and funding frameworks should be strengthened.

Presenter 8: Ms. Bedamati Pattanaik, Faculty, KISS DU

Ms. Bedamati Pattanaik's presentation reflected her journey as an independent life skills practitioner with formal training from KISS DU. She discussed life skills as both a strength and a catalyst, describing them as a mode, medium, tool, technique, process, and system. Her reflections emphasised the role of independent practice in strengthening life skills education in varied contexts. She also highlighted the relevance of life skills for tribal youth empowerment and noted the importance of aligning life skills frameworks with NEP 2020 and quality benchmarks such as NAAC to strengthen institutional relevance and long-term impact.

Presenter 9: Dr. Maitree Padhi, Faculty, KISS DU

Dr. Maitree Padhi's session focused on the transformation of students through life skills education, particularly within the KISS context. She discussed how life skills interventions can support students in shifting from reactive behaviour to responsible decision-making and developing a more positive social orientation. She



shared classroom methods used to address negative peer pressure and strengthen student behaviour through structured life skills engagement. She also emphasised the importance of helping students set clear life goals and reflected on the ARSH programme and its role in supporting behavioural change. The session concluded with her reflections on working as an independent life skills education practitioner and the learning drawn from sustained engagement with students.

Presenter 10: Ms. Saurava Goswamy, Faculty, KISS DU

Ms. Saurava Goswamy shared reflections on how life skills education has shaped her teaching and professional practice. She discussed how life skills are integrated into classroom methods to enhance engagement through diverse activities and experiential learning. The presentation focused on managing participatory learning spaces, strengthening student involvement, and enabling effective classroom practice. She also reflected on how life skills education has supported her personal and professional growth by improving self-management, classroom management, and workplace effectiveness, demonstrating the practical value of life skills beyond formal instruction.

Presenter 11: Ms. Sangeeta Parida, Faculty, KISS DU

Ms. Sangeeta Parida shared evidence-based reflections from her experience as an individual Life Skills Education practitioner. She discussed her professional work with ARSH practitioners and highlighted the importance of teamwork and personal transformation through active listening practices. She also shared how experiential learning methodologies such as role play and group discussions have functioned as effective training tools in her work. In addition, she emphasised menstrual hygiene practices promoted through ARSH initiatives and noted her contribution to capacity-building through training programmes. She also highlighted her engagement with the UDAYA programme, linking life skills education with community development and youth empowerment.

Voices from the Field II

(International Evidences)- ONLINE

(6th February 2026, 5.15 pm–6.15 pm, Seminar Hall-1, IT & Placement Cell, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Sunitha Ranjan, Life Skills Educator & Former President, IALSE

Speakers

Ms. Parimala Rajan

Director, P2P Global Teens, USA

Ms. Isabella Fuentes Lara

Teen Life Skills Facilitator, USA

Mr. Derrick Chilenga

Life Skills Facilitator, Kenya

Ms. Oriana Silva

Teen Life Skills Facilitator, USA

Session overview

The session “Voices from the Field II (International Evidences)” brought together independent life skills practitioners from different parts of the world to share field-based experiences, insights, and best practices in implementing life skills programs. The speakers reflected on their work in diverse socio-cultural contexts, highlighting how life skills education plays a vital role in strengthening communication, self-awareness, emotional regulation, decision-making, and interpersonal competencies. Drawing from their experiences in community-based initiatives and youth development programs, the speakers discussed practical strategies for engaging young people through participatory learning methods, peer-led activities, mentorship, and experiential workshops. The session underscored the value of practitioner-led innovations and cross-cultural learning in strengthening life skills education, and emphasized that sustained engagement with flexible program design, and strong community linkages are essential for creating meaningful and lasting impact.

Voices of Youth

Sharing Experiences

(6th February 2026, 2 pm–6 pm, Auditorium, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Parallel Session Details: Voices of Youth – Sharing Experiences

The Parallel Session titled “Voices of Youth – Sharing Experiences” was conducted on 06 February 2026. This session provided a dedicated platform for youth voices, community leaders, students, scholars, and practitioners to share lived experiences, grassroots perspectives, and reflections on how life skills education shapes leadership, social inclusion, governance, and community development.

Session Moderator, Speakers and Participants

Mr. Nagendra R, Programme Manager, Pi Jam Foundation, Pune

Mr. Nagendra R effectively moderated the session, ensuring inclusive participation, smooth transitions between speakers, and meaningful engagement among panelists and the audience. He emphasized the importance of youth agency, experiential learning, and dialogue in shaping future-ready life skills education.

Session Speakers and Participants

The session featured a diverse group of speakers representing academia, governance, youth leadership, civil society organizations, and grassroots institutions, including:

- **Ms. Shanti Murmu:** Alumni, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences
- **Ms. Arpitha Nair R(Online):** Student, Class XI (Bio-Math), Carmel Higher Secondary School, Vazhuthacaud, Thiruvananthapuram
- **Mr. Santosh Kandamaka:** Research Scholar, KISS-DU, Bhubaneswar
- **Mr. Haraprasad Hepruka:** Vice Chairman, Rayagada Panchayat Samiti, Rayagada
- **Ms. Sweta Pragyan:** Youth Champion, C3, Odisha
- **Mr. Sandeep Sahoo:** Youth Champion, C3, Odisha
- **Mr. Anil Biswal:** Youth Champion, C3, Odisha
- **Ms. Damayanti Giri:** Research Scholar, KISS DU
- **Ms. Bishnupriya Mishra:** Youth Champion, C3, Odisha
- **Ms. Rasmirekha Champia:** Child in Need Institute (CINI)
- **Mr. Ganesh Singh,** Child in Need Institute (CINI)

Session Proceedings and Discussions

The “Voices of Youth” session unfolded as an interactive and reflective forum, highlighting how life skills education transcends classrooms and plays a critical role in shaping confidence, leadership, empathy, decision-making, civic responsibility, and social cohesion. Speakers shared personal journeys, institutional experiences, and community-level interventions, emphasizing life skills such as communication, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and collaborative problem-solving.

- Student and youth speakers highlighted how life skills education enabled them to navigate academic pressures, identity formation, leadership roles, and social engagement in both urban and rural contexts.
- Youth Champions from C3, Odisha shared experiences of community outreach, leadership development, and youth-led initiatives aimed at social transformation.
- Representatives from KISS-DU emphasized the transformative impact of residential education models in nurturing confidence, discipline, and global citizenship among indigenous youth.

- Civil society representatives from CINI discussed grassroots interventions focused on vulnerable children and youth, highlighting the role of life skills in resilience-building and social inclusion.
- Local governance perspectives, presented by the Vice Chairman of Rayagada Panchayat Samiti, underscored the relevance of life skills in participatory democracy, community leadership, and rural governance.

Key Themes and Insights

The session generated several important insights:

- **Youth as Change Agents:** Young people are not merely beneficiaries but active contributors to social transformation when equipped with life skills.
- **Experiential Learning:** Life skills are most effectively developed through real-life experiences, mentorship, and community engagement.
- **Inclusivity and Equity:** Life skills education plays a critical role in bridging social, cultural, and economic divides, especially among marginalized communities.
- **Digital and Social Interconnectedness:** In an interconnected world, skills such as empathy, adaptability, and ethical decision-making are essential for peaceful coexistence.
- **Community and Institutional Support:** Strong institutional frameworks and community partnerships are vital for sustaining youth leadership and empowerment.

Audience Engagement

The session witnessed active participation from students, scholars, educators, and practitioners, with interactive discussions and reflections following the speakers' presentations. The audience appreciated the authentic, experience-based narratives that connected theory with practice.



Event Outcomes and Policy-Relevant Enrichment

The “Voices of Youth – Sharing Experiences” session emerged as a meaningful and outcome-oriented platform that enriched participants through reflective dialogue, and cross-sectoral knowledge exchange. By bringing together youth, academicians and civil society practitioners, the session strengthened understanding of how life skills education contributes to personal development, leadership capacity, social inclusion, and community engagement. At the same time, the discussions generated policy-relevant insights by emphasizing the need to integrate life skills education into

formal curricula, community-based programmes, and youth-focused governance initiatives. The session highlighted the importance of youth participation in policy processes, evidence-informed interventions, and institutional support mechanisms for sustaining youth leadership and empowerment. Overall, the session effectively bridged grassroots experiences with academic and policy discourse, reinforcing the relevance of life skills education in advancing inclusive development, participatory governance, and long-term societal wellbeing.

Concluding Remarks

The session concluded with reflections by the moderator, who reiterated that youth voices must remain central to discussions on life skills education beyond 2030. He emphasized that nurturing life skills is fundamental to building empathetic societies, inclusive governance, and sustainable futures. The “Voices of Youth – Sharing Experiences” session successfully aligned with the conference theme by demonstrating how life skills empower individuals to live, learn, and lead together in an interconnected world.

Panel Discussion III (International)

Situating Life Skills in Global Contexts: Comparative Perspectives from the Global South

(6th February 2026, 4.30 - 6.30 pm, Conference Hall 2, Campus 3, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Narendra Deshmukh, Senior Vice President, Indian Ocean Comparative Education Society, USA

Speakers

Dr. Prema Sundara Rajan (Online)

Academic Chair, International Hindu University, Florida, USA, Former Consultant at Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Mr. Prasad Jayasinghe

Managing Director, Emotional Intelligence & Life Skills Training Team (Gte) Ltd, Sri Lanka

Dr. Pramila Thapa

Associate Professor, Founder Chairperson, Life Skills Education Institute, Pvt. Ltd., Nepal & Former Registrar, Purbanchal University, Nepal

Prof. Nitza Davidovitch,

Head of Learning in Teaching and Learning Authority, Department of Education Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Head of Israeli Consortium of Faculty Development Centers, Israel

Session overview

The panel on “**International Evidence: Situating Life Skills in Global Contexts – Comparative Perspectives from the Global South**” brought together speakers from different countries to share experiences and insights on how life skills education is being conceptualized and implemented in diverse socio-cultural and educational contexts. The session highlighted that while the core principles of life skills—such as critical thinking, emotional regulation, communication, resilience, and social responsibility—are globally relevant, their application must be adapted to local realities, policy priorities, and community needs. Speakers discussed how countries are integrating life skills within formal education systems to address contemporary challenges such as youth employability, migration, social inequality, mental health concerns, and rapid technological change. Several examples illustrated how culturally grounded approaches and context-sensitive frameworks can make life skills education more meaningful and effective, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable populations. The discussion also reflected on common implementation challenges, including teacher preparedness, resource constraints, and the need for assessment frameworks that capture socio-emotional competencies. Overall, the panel underscored the importance of cross-country learning and collaboration in strengthening life skills education, while recognizing that successful models must remain responsive to the specific cultural, social, and developmental contexts of each region.



THEMATIC SESSION VIII - A
Well-being as an Educational Outcome: Positioning Life Skills as Central
to
Mental, Emotional, and Social Health

(6th February 2026, 4:15 pm – 6:15 pm, Classroom 001, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson:

Dr. Saramma Chandy, Former Principal, The Lords Universal College of Education, University of Mumbai

Co-Chairperson:

Dr. Sasmita Patanaik, Head, Department of Psychology, KISS DU

Papers Presented

1. **Impact of Life Skill Training on Adolescents Living with HIV**
Ms. Suchandra Gupta & Rumeli Das, Child in Need Institute
2. **Integrating Life Skills into Education: Promoting Wellbeing, Inclusion, and Holistic Growth of Learners**
Nikita Rajput, Central University of Rajasthan
Dr. Sangeeta Yaduvanshi, Central University of Rajasthan
3. **Empowering Girls: Evidence from a Life Skills Education Program in Maharashtra**
Abha Mishra, Room to Read India Trust
Kaushlendra Kumar, Room to Read India Trust
Saktibrata Sen, Room to Read India Trust
4. **Professional Commitment and Role Conflict of Female Secondary School Teachers in Relation to Their Life Skills**
Ms. Karabi Das PhD Scholar & Dr. Alaka Das, Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University
5. **Exploring the Interplay between Life Skills, Mindfulness, and Subjective Well-Being among the Higher Secondary Student**
Ms. Barnali Nath, PhD Scholar & Dr. Alaka Das, Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University
6. **Effectiveness of Group-Based Scenario Learning Approach in Facilitating Pre-Service Teachers' Competence in Life-Skills Education for Adolescent Well-Being**
Ms. Swornagni Nayak PhD Scholar & Dr. Apramita Chand, Department of Education, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur
7. **Understanding Life Skills, Coping Mechanisms, and Psychological Wellbeing in Community-Based Youth Programs: A Mixed-Methods Study**
Ms. Gurtej Kaur & Shalmali Naik, URIVI VIKRAM Charitable Trust

8. **Influence of Gender on Adjustment of Adolescents: A Study on Educational Adjustment**
Dr. Sasmita Pattanaik & Mr. Bikash Pradhan, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, DU, Bhubaneswar
9. **The Impact of Life Skills Education on Socio-Emotional Development and School-Related Outcomes among Adolescents in India**
Dr. Prasanta Parida & Ms. Siddhiswarupa Swain, School of Rural Management, KIIT DU
10. **Life Skills Education for School Teachers in Implementing Inclusive Education: A Case Study of Hojai District, Assam**
Dr. Ashis Saha, Associate Professor, Nazir Ajmal Memorial College of Education, Hojai, Assam
11. **Real Talk: What Life Skills Do Indian Teens Need?**
Mr. Raghav Agarwal, Nisha Toshniwal, Aadhiti D. Naidu, Kavyaa Shah, Kahaan Modi, Social Sciences, NalandaWay
12. **Development and Try Out of a Model Community School – Part II**
Prof. (Dr.) Geetha Prasannan and Ms. Shilpashri RD, Former Senior Faculty, Dept. of Science, RIE, Mysore

Session Overview

Thematic Session VIII, titled “*Well-being as an Educational Outcome: Positioning Life Skills as Central to Mental, Emotional and Social Health,*” brought together research exploring the relationship between life skills education and holistic human development. The session emphasized that well-being is not merely an auxiliary outcome of schooling but a foundational goal of education, encompassing emotional resilience, social connectedness, self-awareness and purposeful living.



The discussions highlighted how structured life skills interventions significantly enhance self-esteem, confidence, clarity of life goals, decision-making ability and social engagement, particularly among vulnerable adolescents. Evidence from psychosocial programmes demonstrated reduced self-stigma and strengthened resilience, indicating the transformative role of life skills in supporting mental and emotional health.

Scholarly analysis further underscored that integrating life skills within educational processes nurtures cognitive, emotional, social, physical and moral development, thereby preparing learners to navigate contemporary societal challenges with adaptability and responsibility. Life skills such as critical thinking, emotional intelligence, communication and problem-solving were identified as central to holistic learner growth and long-term well-being.

The session also reflected on gender-responsive life skills programming that strengthens agency, participation and empowerment among girls, demonstrating how educational interventions can contribute to broader inclusion, confidence and life opportunities.

Collectively, the papers positioned life skills education as a core pedagogical pathway for advancing mental health, inclusion and holistic development, rather than a supplementary educational component. The deliberations reinforced the need to embed well-being-oriented life skills systematically across curricula, institutional cultures and community engagement initiatives.

In conclusion, the session affirmed that education systems must prioritize well-being as a central outcome, ensuring that learners develop the resilience, emotional balance and social competence required for meaningful participation in an increasingly complex world. Integrating life skills into policy, pedagogy and practice emerged as essential for nurturing healthy, confident and socially responsible individuals.

THEMATIC SESSION VIII – B

Wellbeing as an Educational Outcome: Positioning Life Skills as Central to Mental, Emotional, and Social Health

(6th February 2026, 4:15 pm – 6:15 pm, Classroom 002, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Khushboo Kuddus, Associate Professor, School of Liberal Studies, KIIT DU

Co-Chairperson

Dr. Sujata Acharya Dean, STHI, KISS, DU

Papers Presented:

1. What Children Tell Us About Wellbeing: Implications for Creating Inclusive Digital Learning Environments

Prof. Vinod Chandra & Pankhuri Bajpai, Sri J N M Post Graduate College, Lucknow

2. Reflective Journaling as a Transformative Tool for Life Skills Development in Teacher Education

Mr. Kaji Minhajul Hoque, Nazir Ajmal Memorial, College of Education

3. Holistic Student Development through Life Skills Education in Odisha- A case study on KISS Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar

Ms. Bhanumati Biswal, PhD Scholar & Dr. Pabitra Kumar Das, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, DU, Bhubaneswar

4. Generation Z Perspectives on Parenting Styles

Ms. Olivia Haldar, PhD Scholar & Dr. Soma Parija, KIIT, Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar

5. Educating for Wholeness: Life Skills as the Core of Holistic Learner Development

Dr. Anuradha Mahapatra, Manam Foundation

6. Beyond Academics: Integrating Sports, Yoga and Arts as Core Life Skills for the 21st Century

Ms. Jyotirmayee Rath, PhD Scholar & Dr. Rooplekha Khuntia, National Institute of Science Education and Research

7. Prevalence and Risk Factors of Nomophobia Among Students

Ms. Pawan Saud Rawal, Life Skills Education (LES), Nepal

8. Empowering learners through Life Skills: Education for Happiness and Well-being

Ms. Hema Upadhyay & Prof. Sunita Singh, Banaras Hindu University

9. Coping with Stress, Coping with Emotions and Resilience as Key Skills for Adolescent Wellbeing: A Narrative Review

Prof. Divya Nair, Shreya Prabhu and Pooja Vardharaj, School of Education and Research MIT Art, Design and Technology University, Pune

10. Counsellors As Catalysts of Emotional Safety: Re-Imagining Life skills Delivery Beyond 2030

Ms. Raghavi Reddy Sangu & Gowtham Nalluri, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam software Solutions Private Limited

11. Culturally responsive teaching practices as life skill education for teacher trainees: A study on

Santiniketan

Dr. Soumi Mandal, Professor, Department Of Education, Vinaya-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal

12. Life Skills Education and Adolescent Well-Being: Understanding High-Risk and Suicidal Vulnerability Through Stakeholder Perspectives

Ms. Deepti Singh, PhD, Scholar & Dr. Rashmi Soni, University of Lucknow



THEMATIC SESSION IX

Life Skills in the National Education Policy (NEP) Era: Opportunities and Challenges for Systemic Integration

(6th February 2026, 4:15 pm – 6:15 pm, Classroom 003, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Vimal Pandey, Dean, CIST, KISS Deemed to be University

Co-Chairperson

Dr. Rudra Narayan Mohanty, Assistant Professor, KISS Deemed to be University

Papers Presented

1. **Developing Life Skills in the Science Classroom: Reflections from My Experience**
Dr. Narendra Dadarao Deshmukh, Senior Vice President, Indian Ocean Comparative Education Society, USA
2. **Awareness, Perception, and Readiness towards Life Skill Education: An Empirical Study on Pupil Teachers of Western Odisha**
Raj Ballav Panda et al. PhD scholar, Faculty of Education, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
3. **Integration of Life Skill Education in National Education Policy 2020: Opportunities and Challenges**
Dr. Sunita Acharya, Associate Professor, Hindi Teacher's Training Institute, Cuttack
4. **Life Skills in the NEP 2020 Era: Opportunities and Challenges for Systemic Integration through the INSPIRE Instructional Framework**
Dr. Muttu Vemula, Assistant Professor, Dept. Of Education, Mizoram University
5. **Life Skills in the NEP 2020 Era: A Policy Analysis of Systemic Integration and Implementation Challenges**
Khaleda Yasmin Mazumder, Assistant Professor, Nazir Ajmal Memorial College of Education, Hojai, Assam
6. **Integrating Life Skills in the Science Curriculum: A Comparative Analysis of CBSE and MBSE Textbooks in the NEP 2020 Era**
L. K. Lalbiakfeli & Dr. Muttu Vemula, Dept. Of Education, Mizoram University
7. **Nyaya Darshan for Life Skill Empowerment: Bridging Ancient Knowledge and the NEP 2020 Vision**
Dr. Sukanti Behera, Assistant Professor, KISS Deemed University
8. **Awareness of Pre-service Teacher- Trainee towards Life Skill Education with Special Reference to NEP 2020**
Sonali Debnath; Assistant Professor Nazir Ajmal Memorial College of Education
9. **Preparing Future Teachers for Life Skills Education: Theoretical Perspectives in the NEP Framework**
Deeptimayee Malik & Durgaprasad Sahoo; PhD Scholar, Central University of Karnataka
10. **Incorporating Life Skills in the Era of the NEP: Possibilities, Challenges, and Implications for Teacher Education**

Abu Mahomed Shumsuz Zaman, Assistant Professor, Nazir Ajmal Memorial College of Education

11. Learning Beyond the Classroom: A Qualitative Inquiry into Life Skills Development through Student-Led Psychology Clubs

Ms. Vyjanthi Trimal, Assistant Professor, & Dr. Pooja Prabhavalkar, Fergusson College, Autonomous, Pune

12. Mathematical Deductive Reasoning as a Determinant of Life Skills among Secondary School Students

Dr. Sikha V R, Post Doctoral Fellow, & Prof. (Dr.) Bindu R.L Department of Education University of Kerala

13. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Life Skills: A New Era for Opportunities and Development

Dr. Balbinder Kumar, Assistant Professor, UILS PUSSGRC HOSHIARPUR

14. Life Skills Perception Among the Undergraduate Students in the light of NEP 2020

Ms. TC Rakil Ramhmachhuani PhD Scholar & Dr. Lalchhuanmawii, Mizoram University

15. 21st Century Skills Through STEAM: A Holistic Approach to Learning

Ms. Preeti Nara, PhD Scholar & Prof. Raj Kumar Chaudhary Devikal Univrtsity, Sirsa

Session Overview

Thematic Session IX, titled “Life Skills in the National Education Policy (NEP) Era: Opportunities and Challenges for Systemic Integration,” brought together policy analyses, empirical investigations, curricular studies and pedagogical reflections examining how life skills education can be embedded within India’s transformative education reform framework. The deliberations highlighted NEP 2020’s shift toward holistic, learner-centred, competency-based and multidisciplinary education, positioning life skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, emotional regulation and adaptability as core educational outcomes essential for navigating contemporary social and economic realities.

Across the presentations, scholars emphasized that NEP 2020 creates unprecedented opportunities for systemic integration through flexible curricula, experiential and project-based learning, competency-oriented assessment reforms, technology-enabled pedagogy, internships and community engagement. These reforms collectively enable education systems to move beyond rote learning toward meaningful real-world learning and socio-emotional development.

At the same time, multiple studies identified persistent structural and pedagogical challenges that constrain effective implementation. These include limited teacher preparedness and professional development, examination-centric institutional cultures, curriculum overload, inadequate infrastructure and digital resources and difficulties in assessing complex competencies such as empathy, creativity, collaboration and resilience. Socio-economic inequities and regional disparities further complicate equitable integration across diverse educational contexts.

Empirical and conceptual contributions within the session also demonstrated the need for coherent curriculum reform, innovative competency-based assessment frameworks, strengthened teacher education systems and sustained policy support to translate NEP aspirations into classroom practice. Comparative textbook analyses and instructional models such as the INSPIRE framework illustrated practical pathways for embedding inquiry, reflection, collaboration and learner agency within everyday teaching-learning processes.

Collectively, the papers reaffirmed that life skills education is central to realizing NEP 2020's vision of education for life, citizenship and future readiness, rather than merely academic achievement. Effective systemic integration requires alignment among policy, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, teacher preparation and community participation.

In conclusion, the session underscored that the NEP era offers both transformative promise and implementation complexity. Moving forward, sustained investment in teacher capacity building, inclusive infrastructure, context-sensitive pedagogy and evidence-based policy design will be essential for embedding life skills meaningfully across India's education system and preparing learners for an uncertain, interconnected future.



Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

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THEMATIC SESSION X

Holistic Tools for Life Skills Education: Yoga, Art, and Sports as Catalysts for Connection and Wellbeing

(6th February 2026, 4:15 pm – 6:15 pm, Classroom 004, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. G. Sureshkumar, Chairperson, FPA India (Kerala Chapter) & Treasurer, IALSE

Co-Chairperson

Dr. Yasobanta Das, Principal, KISS

Papers Presented

- 1. Role of Co-curricular Activities in Strengthening Life Skills for Peaceful Coexistence: A Study**
Ms. Gayatri Mahanta, PhD Scholar
Prof. Mallika Kalita, Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University, Nalbari, Assam
- 2. Does Dance Influence Big Five Traits and Life Skills?**
Ms. Titas Chakraborty, Paromita Ghosh, Nandini Chatterjee
Post Graduates, Social Sciences, University of Calcutta
- 3. Integrating Art-Based and Somatic Practices into Life Skills Education for Resilience and Well-being in Marginalised Communities**
Ms. Shweta Manghnani & Sharon Solomon, PhD Scholars, Shoolini University
- 4. Art Integration in Mathematics: A Holistic Tool for Life Skills Education in Secondary School Learners**
Ms. Savidamol V. R., Ph.D Scholar
Dr. Sethu S Nath, N.S.S Training College, Pandalam
- 5. Art Therapy: An Important Intervention for Inculcating Life Skills among School Students**
Ms. Leena S. N., Post Graduate, Central University of Kerala
- 6. Impact of Performing Arts Education for Creativity Enhancement and Holistic Development on Modern Education**
Mr. Jugal Chutia, Asst. Professor, Nazir Ajmal Memorial College of Education, Hojai, Assam

Thematic Session X, titled “*Holistic Tools for Life Skills Education: Yoga, Art, and Sports as Catalysts for Connection and Wellbeing*,” convened diverse pedagogical perspectives highlighting the role of embodied, creative and experiential practices in nurturing life skills. The session emphasized that holistic education extends beyond cognitive learning to include physical vitality, emotional balance, creativity, social harmony and inner awareness, positioning arts, movement and co-curricular engagement as essential components of meaningful education.

Across the presentations, research findings illustrated how co-curricular participation, dance, performing arts, art therapy and somatic practices cultivate communication, empathy, collaboration, emotional regulation, creativity and resilience among learners. These approaches were shown to foster peaceful coexistence, strengthen interpersonal relationships and support psychosocial wellbeing particularly within diverse and marginalised learning environments.

Scholars further highlighted that integrating holistic practices within formal education aligns closely with contemporary educational visions that prioritise experiential learning, learner engagement and whole-person development. Such pedagogies enable learners to connect cognition with emotion and action, thereby deepening self-awareness, strengthening social responsibility and enhancing adaptive capacity in rapidly changing societies.

Collectively, the papers positioned yoga, arts and sports not as supplementary activities but as core pedagogical pathways for cultivating life skills, wellbeing and social connectedness. The discussions reinforced the importance of embedding holistic and creative practices systematically within curricula, institutional cultures and community engagement initiatives.

In the concluding reflections, the session underscored that education for the future must integrate mind, body and emotion, enabling learners to develop resilience, harmony and purpose alongside academic competence. Strengthening holistic life-skills pedagogy through interdisciplinary collaboration, inclusive participation and culturally responsive practice emerged as a key direction for advancing wellbeing-centred education in the years ahead.



THEMATIC SESSION XII

Digital Citizenship and Life Skills: Navigating Misinformation, Surveillance, and Disconnection in Hyperconnected Spaces

(6th February 2026, 4:15 pm – 6:15 pm, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. G. Sureshkumar, Chairperson, FPA India (Kerala Chapter) & Treasurer, IALSE

Co-Chairperson

Dr. Yasobanta Das, Principal, KISS

Papers Presented

1. The Effect of Social Media Use on Fear of Missing Out in Hyperconnected Spaces

Sushree Pallabi Mishra, Kankhya Kanungo, Satyapriya Patra
PG Students, Department of Psychology, Utkal University

2. Loneliness in the Hyperconnected Society: A Comparative Study of Adults Across Gender and Residential Backgrounds

Tapaswini Sarangi, Sneha Rani Sahoo (Post Graduates) & Lucy Sonali Hembram, Associate Professor, Utkal University

3. Impact of Social Media on the Interpersonal Communication Skills of Indian Youth

Dr. Sunitha Kuppuswamy, Assistant Professor, Department of Media Sciences, Anna University, Chennai

Dr. P. B. Shankar Narayan, Professor, Department of Social Work, Pondicherry University, Puducherry

4. Digital Literacy as a Pathway to Digital Resilience: Managing Misinformation, Online Risks and Wellbeing

Dr. Snehaprava Sahoo, Assistant Professor, KISS-DU, Bhubaneswar

Sabyasachi Rout, Sr. Project Manager, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), Bhubaneswar

5. Factors Associated with Internet Addiction among Adolescents

Pooja Paudel, Yeti Health Science Academy, Purbanchal University, Kathmandu, Nepal

Suvechhya Dewan, Assistant Professor, Yeti Health Science Academy, Nepal

Prakash Sharma, Assistant Professor, Tribhuvan University, Butwal, Nepal

Pramila Pudasaini Thapa, Associate Professor, Purbanchal University, Nepal

Overview

Thematic Session XII focused on the psychological, social, and behavioral consequences of living in hyperconnected digital environments, with particular attention to how digital citizenship and life skills must evolve to address misinformation, emotional strain, online risk, and weakening interpersonal connection. Across the presentations, social media and internet use were examined not merely as technological habits but as deeply embedded social practices shaping identity, relationships, wellbeing, and everyday decision-making. The session highlighted that hyperconnectivity produces both opportunity and vulnerability, making digital self-regulation, critical awareness, and emotional resilience essential life skills for contemporary learners and youth populations.

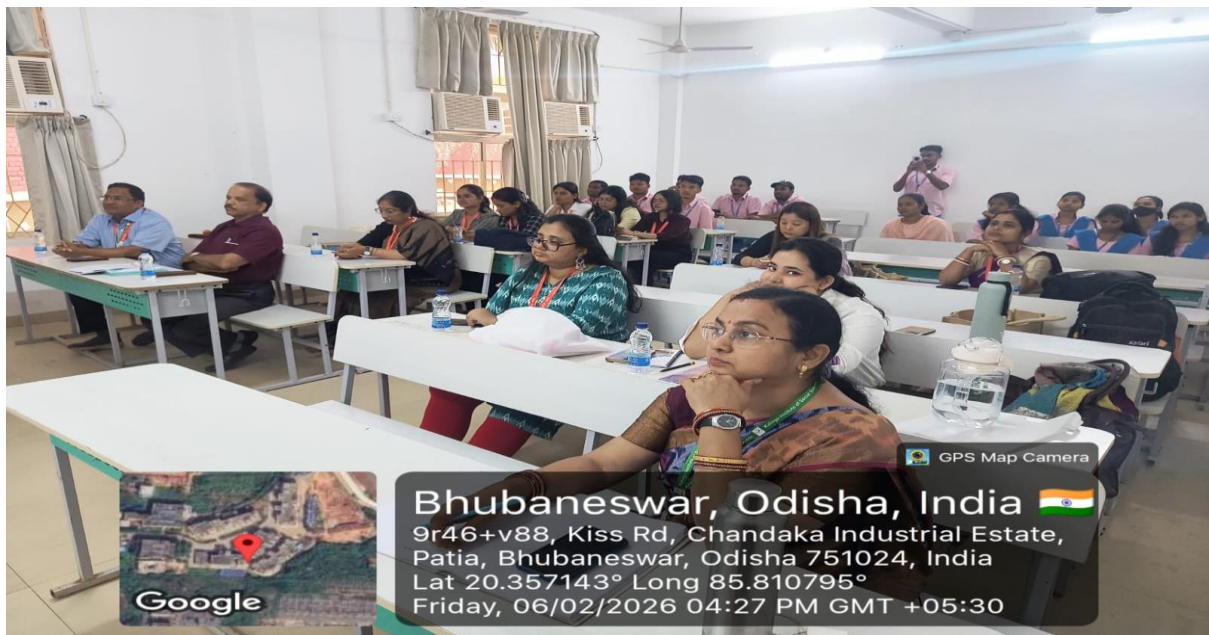
Several papers examined the psychological effects of intensive social media engagement, especially among young adults and adolescents. Presentations demonstrated consistent links between higher social media use and adverse emotional outcomes such as Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), loneliness,

and dependency patterns. Empirical findings showed that increased platform engagement significantly predicts FoMO and is positively associated with loneliness, while also contributing to problematic or addictive internet behaviors among adolescents. Comparative work across metro and non-metro populations suggested that urban living conditions may intensify digital engagement patterns, though emotional impacts such as loneliness cut across gender and geography. Together, these studies positioned hyperconnectivity as a risk amplifier when not supported by reflective use and coping skills.

Another strong thread across the session concerned the erosion and transformation of interpersonal communication skills in digitally saturated contexts. Research on Indian youth emphasized that heavy reliance on mediated communication can reduce opportunities for face-to-face interaction, thereby limiting the development of non-verbal sensitivity, social cue recognition, and relational depth. The presenters argued that many core interpersonal and social competencies are cultivated primarily through embodied, in-person exchanges, and that overdependence on social media communication may weaken these capacities over time. This reinforced the need to treat communication skills, boundary-setting, and balanced media use as central components of life skills education.

The session also advanced a constructive framework by highlighting digital literacy as a pathway to digital resilience and wellbeing. Work focused on tribal youth and culturally diverse learner groups stressed that resilience in digital spaces depends on more than technical skills; it includes critical information filtering, misinformation detection, privacy and security awareness, emotional regulation, time management, and respectful online engagement. Presentations underscored contextual inequalities in access and exposure, noting that uneven digital ecosystems can heighten vulnerability to misinformation and online harm. The discussion called for culturally responsive, holistic digital literacy initiatives that integrate cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of life skills.

Overall, the session underscored that digital citizenship today must extend beyond safe and functional technology use to include psychological self-awareness, relational competence, critical evaluation of information, and disciplined digital habits. The papers collectively emphasized that preparing individuals for hyperconnected environments requires integrated life skills frameworks that address emotional wellbeing, responsible participation, media discernment, and resilience against digital



overload and manipulation.

THEMATIC SESSION XIII

Life Skills for Entrepreneurial Mindsets: Fostering Agency, Innovation and Resilience

(06th February 2026, 4:15pm - 6:15pm, Classroom 005, Campus KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Suparna Ghosh, Associate Professor, Department of History, Loreto College, Kolkata

Co-Chairperson

Dr. Ch. Sudipta Kishore Nanday, Assistant Professor, KISS DU

Papers Presented

1. **Life Skills for the 21st Century: Status of Students and School Initiatives in Fostering Entrepreneurial Mindset**
Ms. Lisamayee Das, PhD Scholar
Prof Ramakanta Mohalik, Regional Institute of Education, NCERT, Bhubaneswar
2. **Strengthening Adolescents' Employability Pathways through Life Skills Education: Evidence from Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh**
Mr. Tamal Reja, Ajay K. Singh, Santosh Kumar Sharma, Dhanashri Brahme & Pratyush Dash
Magic Bus Foundation
3. **Life Skills for Sustainable Entrepreneurship: Cultivating Realistic and Smart Goals**
Ms. Pallavi Sashidharan Pillai, PhD Scholar
Prof. Bindu R. L., Department of Education,
University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram
4. **Astronomy & Space Science Education as Life Skills for an Entrepreneurial Mindset: Fostering Agency, Innovation & Resilience**
Ms. Mumtaz Syed, The Sky Explorers
5. **Impact of Financial Literacy on Entrepreneurship Development**
Ms. Parishmita Gogoi & Dr. Hemanta Konch, Demow College

Session Overview

This thematic session explores how life skills education can strengthen entrepreneurial mindsets among adolescents and young learners by fostering agency, innovation, resilience, and future readiness. The papers collectively highlight the growing importance of embedding entrepreneurial competencies within the broader framework of 21st-century skills—especially in school and community-based learning environments.

Presentations examine the current status of entrepreneurial mindset among middle-school learners and reflect on the role of school initiatives such as clubs, exhibitions, projects, and idea contests in promoting creativity, adaptability, decision-making, and stress tolerance. Evidence from large-scale programme implementation also demonstrates how structured life skills interventions can

significantly improve employability pathways through communication, digital literacy, financial awareness, career planning, and psychosocial wellbeing—particularly for adolescents in underserved communities, with notable positive outcomes for girls.

The session also extends the discussion to sustainable entrepreneurship, emphasising the role of emotional intelligence, critical thinking, empathy, creativity, and resilience in shaping realistic, long-term entrepreneurial goals. Conceptual perspectives on SMART goal-setting further underline the need for clarity, accountability, and sustainability in entrepreneurial thinking. In addition, the session introduces innovative pedagogical approaches, such as inquiry-based learning through astronomy and space science education, to cultivate curiosity, problem-solving, adaptability, and confidence in navigating uncertainty.



Overall, the session brings together research-based insights and practice-driven evidence to demonstrate how life skills education can serve as a powerful foundation for entrepreneurial development, workforce readiness, and sustainable futures.

THEMATIC SESSION XIV

Assessing the Impact of Life Skills Education: Indicators, Innovations and Interrogations

(06th February 2026, 4:15pm - 6:15pm, Classroom 005, Campus KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Suparna Ghosh, Associate Professor, Department of History, Loreto College, Kolkata

Co-Chairperson

Dr. Ch. Sudipta Kishore Nanday, Assistant Professor, KISS DU

Papers Presented:

1. **Assessment of Life Skills - Tool Development and Validation in Haryana**
Mr. Santosh Kumar Sharma, Dechen Dolma, Amandeep Kaur, Dhanashri Brahme, Aditi Aeron
Magic Bus India Foundation
2. **Self Awareness - as a Foundational Life Skill for Student Mental Health**
Dr. Sandhya Thakur & Ms. Surabhi Thakur, SKSVM Junior College
3. **Prediction of Science Attitude Based on Academic Motivation and Life Skills of Higher Secondary Boys and Girls**
Ms. Asmita Patra, PhD Scholar
Prof. Paromita Ghosh and Prof. Nandini Chatterjee, University of Calcutta

Session Overview

This thematic session focuses on the evolving landscape of assessing life skills education, examining not only *what* should be measured, but also *how* life skills can be assessed in valid, scalable, and context-sensitive ways. The presentations collectively highlight the growing importance of evidence-based assessment frameworks in strengthening life skills programming and informing education policy, particularly in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

One key strand of the session explores innovations in life skills measurement through the development and validation of a large-scale assessment tool using Situational Judgment Test (SJT) items and psychometric testing. The paper demonstrates how structured proficiency rubrics, rigorous reliability checks, and iterative refinement processes can lead to robust tools capable of being administered at scale, supporting both program improvement and policy planning in partnership with state education systems.

The session also examines self-awareness as a foundational life skill, particularly in relation to student mental health and wellbeing. By framing self-awareness as an essential precursor to help-seeking behaviour, the discussion highlights how life skills education can play a preventive and promotive role, enabling students to recognize psychological distress, reduce stigma, and engage with counselling services more effectively.

In addition, the session extends the assessment conversation to academic and attitudinal outcomes, presenting evidence on how life skills and academic motivation may jointly predict students' attitudes towards science. Findings point to significant gender differences and underline the interconnectedness of psychosocial competencies, motivation, and educational engagement.

Overall, the session brings together methodological rigor, conceptual inquiry, and outcome-focused research to deepen understanding of life skills assessment—emphasising reliability, contextual relevance, and the broader implications of life skills education for mental health, academic development, and future readiness.



THEMATIC SESSION XV

Status of Life Skills Education across the States and UTs of India

(06th February 2026, 4:15pm - 6:15pm, Classroom 005, Campus KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Suparna Ghosh, Associate Professor, Department of History, Loreto College, Kolkata

Co-Chairperson

Dr. Ch. Sudipta Kishore Nanday, Assistant Professor, KISS DU

Papers Presented:

1. Communication, Interpersonal and Leadership Skills of Pupil Teachers: A Study of Status and Correlation
Ms. Shivani, PhD Scholar
Prof. Meenakshi Singh, Banaras Hindu University

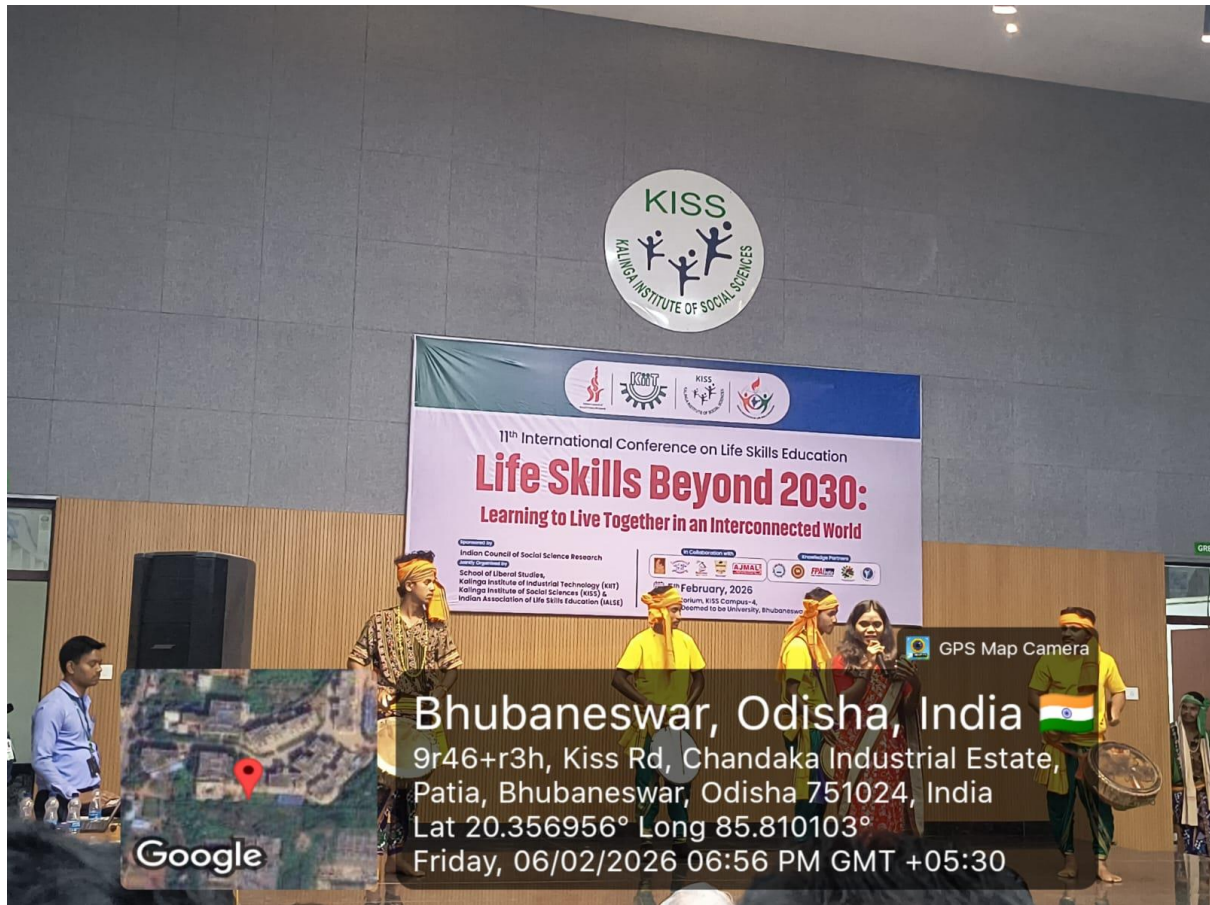
Session Overview:

This thematic session examines the status of key life skills within India's education ecosystem, with a focus on teacher preparation and the competencies required for effective classroom and community engagement. The session highlights how life skills education is not only relevant for students, but also critical for shaping confident, capable, and collaborative future educators.

The paper presented explores the levels of communication, interpersonal relationship, and leadership skills among pupil teachers in teacher education institutions. Findings indicate that pupil teachers demonstrate a moderate level of these core life skills, while also revealing a positive and significant correlation among the three competencies—suggesting that strengthening one area can reinforce the others. The session underscores the importance of integrating structured life skills training into teacher education programmes to build stronger professional readiness, leadership capacity, and learner-centred teaching practices.

Cultural Programme

A cultural program was organized 06th February 2026, 6:30 pm, at the Auditorium, Campus 4, KISS DU where KISS students and participants performed.





Workshop on Mindfulness

(7th February 2026, 9.30 - 12.30 pm, Conference Room 1, KISS DU)

Resource Person

Prof. Sanath Mahawithanage

Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Medical Sciences University of Sri Jayewardenepura Founding Director, Centre for Mindfulness-Based Research and Practices, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

The workshop on Mindfulness focused on introducing participants to the principles and practices of mindfulness as an approach for enhancing emotional balance, self-awareness, and overall well-being. The session explored how mindfulness practices can help individuals develop greater attention, manage stress, regulate emotions, and cultivate a sense of calm and clarity in personal and professional contexts. Through guided reflections and experiential exercises, participants were introduced to practical techniques that can be applied in educational and everyday settings. The workshop also highlighted the relevance of mindfulness within life skills education, emphasizing its role in fostering resilience, empathy, focus, and reflective thinking. Overall, the session demonstrated how mindfulness-based practices can support mental health and contribute to more mindful and balanced approaches to learning and living.



Symposium III

Holistic Tools for Life Skills Education: Yoga, Art, and Sports as Catalysts for Connection and Well-being

(7th February 2026, 9.30 - 11.15 am, Seminar Hall 1, T&P Cell, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. P D Nayyar

World Health Organisation South-East Asia Regional Office

Keynote

Prof. K. C. Sahoo

Professor of Education, Former Head and Dean, Department of Education, Vinaya Bhavana: A Central University & an Institution of National Importance, Santiniketan, West Bengal

Speakers

Prof Marinda Neethling

North West University, South Africa

Mr. Gaurav Arora

Salam Bombay Foundation, Mumbai

Dr. G. Suresh Kumar

Yoga Guru and Treasurer, IALSE

Dr. Santamati Dash

Assistant Professor, School of Sports and Yogic Science, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar

Session overview:

The symposium on “**Holistic Tools for Life Skills Education: Yoga, Art, and Sports as Catalysts for Connection and Well-being**” explored the role of creative and embodied practices in strengthening life skills and promoting holistic development among learners. The session highlighted how disciplines such as yoga, sports, and the arts can serve as powerful pedagogical tools for fostering self-awareness, emotional regulation, teamwork, resilience, and overall well-being. Speakers discussed the ways in which these approaches support experiential learning by engaging the mind and body together, helping learners develop focus, discipline, empathy, and healthy coping mechanisms. Drawing from educational, community, and youth development contexts, the presenters shared perspectives on integrating such practices within educational settings to enhance students’ physical, emotional, and social competencies. The symposium emphasized that incorporating holistic approaches alongside academic learning can create supportive environments that nurture balanced development and strengthen the life skills essential for personal growth and social harmony.



Panel Discussion IV

Life Skills and Climate Resilience: Nurturing Sustainability Mindsets

(7th February 2026, 9.30 - 11.15 am, Seminar Hall 2, T&P Cell, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Gauri Hardikar

Vice President, Indian Association of Life Skills Education, Executive Director, Indian Ocean Comparative Education Society

Panelists

Mr. Daniel UMI

Director, Migration and Education, Aide et Action (India) Bhubaneswar

Dr. Sasi Kanta Dash

Former Registrar, Pondicherry University

Prof. Bhaswati Patnaik

Head, Department of Psychology, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar

Dr. Sandhya Ajit Thakur

Somaiya College, Mumbai

Dr. Seema Kumari Ladsaria

Associate Professor and Assistant Dean, Department of Humanities, KIIT DU

Mr. Mithun Pradhan

Research Scholar, KISS DU

Session overview:



The panel on “Life Skills and Climate Resilience: Nurturing Sustainability Mindsets” examined the role of life skills education in preparing individuals and communities to respond effectively to the growing challenges posed by climate change. The discussion highlighted that developing sustainability mindsets requires more than environmental awareness; it calls for competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving,

collaboration, adaptability, and responsible decision-making. Panelists reflected on how life skills can empower learners to understand environmental issues, engage with their communities, and adopt sustainable practices in their daily lives. Drawing from perspectives in education, psychology, migration studies, and community development, the speakers emphasized the importance of

integrating climate education with life skills to foster resilience, ecological responsibility, and civic engagement. The session underscored the need for interdisciplinary approaches, experiential learning opportunities, and community participation to cultivate environmentally conscious and socially responsible citizens capable of contributing to sustainable futures.



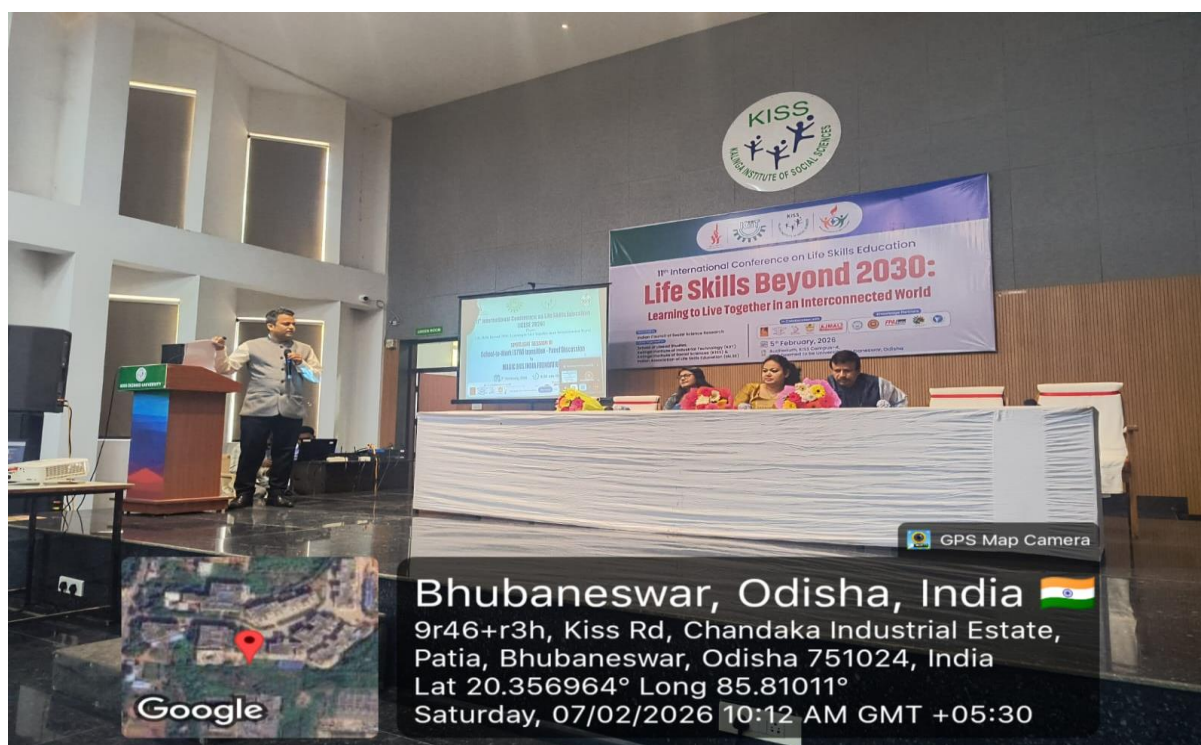
Spotlight Session III

(07th February 2026, 9:30- 10:30 am, Venue: Auditorium, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Spotlight Session III which was organized on 7th February 2026, focused on the **School-to-Work (STW) transition**, a crucial phase that shapes young people's preparedness for employment and sustainable livelihoods. The panel discussion, organized by **Magic Bus India Foundation**, brought together representatives from government institutions, industry, skill development agencies, and civil society to deliberate on strengthening pathways from education to employability.

The session was moderated by Mr. Aashiq Rizvi, Magic Bus. The panel included Dr. Sanatana Panda, Retired Additional Director, OSEPA; Ms. Raja Laxmi Das, Chief Executive Officer, Pancha Sakha Sikshya Setu; and Mrs. Rituparna Dey, Head – CSR, Epsilon Carbon. The composition of the panel reflected a balanced representation of government, industry, and civil society perspectives. The panel explored the evolving STW blueprint in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Discussions emphasized the integration of life skills education, structured employability pathways, vocational exposure, and strong industry linkages within the school education system. Panelists highlighted the importance of early career guidance, experiential learning, and industry engagement to enable smooth transitions from school to work.

Special attention was given to challenges faced by marginalized youth, particularly girls and first-generation learners. Strategies to address issues of access, retention, and workforce readiness were discussed, with emphasis on inclusive and context-specific interventions. The session underscored the importance of sustained multi-stakeholder partnerships in translating policy vision into practice. Key recommendations included strengthening school–industry linkages, promoting internships and apprenticeships, building capacities of teachers and career counsellors, and fostering convergence between education, skill development, and industry ecosystems to achieve scalable and future-ready outcomes for young people.



Spotlight Session IV

(07th February 2026, 11:00- 12:00 noon, Venue: Auditorium, Campus 4, KISS DU)

The fourth Spotlight Session was organized by the **Centre for Catalyzing Change** on 7th February 2026. **Mr. Mohammed Ziauddin**, Senior Specialist – Adolescent and Young People, **Mr. Sumit Bidla**, Program Officer – Adolescent and Young People and **Ms. Yashvi Sharma**, Program Officer – Capacity Building graced the occasion as the resource persons.

It focused on adolescent and youth development, with particular emphasis on capacity building, empowerment, and rights-based approaches. The session highlighted programmatic interventions designed to support adolescents and young people in making informed life choices and actively engaging in social and economic processes. The speakers emphasized the importance of holistic development through life skills education, gender sensitivity, leadership development, and community engagement. The session also highlighted the need to strengthen institutional mechanisms and equip frontline stakeholders to work effectively with adolescents, especially girls from vulnerable and marginalized backgrounds.

The session reiterated the importance of adolescent-centric and gender-responsive programming that integrates education, health, protection, and livelihood components. Creating enabling and supportive environments that allow adolescents to build confidence, express their aspirations, and participate meaningfully in decision-making emerged as a key takeaway.



Spotlight Session V

(07th February 2026, 12:00- 01:00 pm, Venue: Auditorium, Campus 4, KISS DU)

Spotlight Session V held on 7th February 2026 was an interactive and experience-sharing session facilitated by **Ugam Foundation, Mumbai**. The session focused on adolescent girls and young women who have overcome significant social, economic, and personal challenges through sustained support and engagement with the organisation. The session was conducted as an open and participatory discussion. Girls associated with Ugam Foundation shared their lived experiences, highlighting challenges such as limited access to education, socio-cultural constraints, early responsibilities, and economic hardship. They also reflected on how mentorship, capacity building, and continuous handholding enabled them to pursue education, skill training, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.



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The personal narratives shared during the session had a strong motivational impact on the audience. The discussion clearly demonstrated the transformative role of community-based and girl-centric interventions in building self-confidence, resilience, and long-term social and economic inclusion.

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based and girl-centric interventions in building self-confidence, resilience, and long-term social and economic inclusion.

The session concluded with an interactive exchange between the speakers and participants. It reinforced the need to scale up such initiatives to reach more adolescent girls and young women, while reaffirming the critical role of civil society organisations in advancing gender equity, empowerment, and inclusive development.

Panel Discussion V

Social Inclusion through Life Skills: Advancing Equity and Participation among Tribal and Disadvantaged Communities

(7th February 2026, 11.30 - 1.30 pm, Seminar Hall 1, T&P Cell, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Prof. (Dr.) Akhil Bihari Ota, IAS (Retd.)

Former Director and Special Secretary, Tribal Research Institute, Government of Odisha

Keynote

Prof. (Dr.) Zoengpari (Online)

Dept of Applied Psychology, Mizoram University

Discussants

Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair

President, Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE) & Former Registrar, Central University of Kerala

Mr. Avik Dey

Senior Manager, Girls' Education Program, Room to Read India

Dr. Chandita Baruah (Online)

Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Psychology, Assam Don Bosco University, Tapesia Gardens, Sonapur, Assam

Dr Janmejay Sahu, OAS-I(JB)

OSD to Hon'ble Minister, Panchayati Raj, Drinking Water and Rural Development, Govt of Odisha

Ms. Linu Munda Majhi

Research Scholar, KISS DU

Session overview

The panel discussion on “Social Inclusion through Life Skills: Advancing Equity and Participation among Tribal and Disadvantaged Communities” examined the role of life skills education in addressing social inequities and enabling meaningful participation of marginalized communities in social and developmental processes. The discussion highlighted that tribal and disadvantaged populations often face structural barriers such as limited access to quality education, socio-economic marginalization, and cultural exclusion, which can restrict opportunities for personal and community development. Panelists reflected on how life skills education, through competencies such as critical thinking, communication, self-confidence, leadership, and problem-solving, can empower individuals from these communities to navigate social challenges, assert their rights, and participate more actively in educational, economic, and civic spaces. Panelists also emphasized the importance of culturally responsive approaches that respect indigenous knowledge systems, community values, and local contexts while designing life skills interventions. Drawing from experiences in education, policy, and grassroots initiatives, the panel explored strategies for integrating life skills within school education, community programs, and youth development initiatives aimed at tribal and disadvantaged groups. The session underscored the need for collaboration among educational institutions, government bodies, civil society organisations, and community leaders to create inclusive learning environments that promote dignity, participation, and equitable opportunities. Overall, the discussion reaffirmed that life skills education can play a transformative role in fostering social inclusion and strengthening the agency and resilience of marginalized communities.

Roundtable II

Gender Justice through Life Skills Education: Disrupting Patriarchy and Building Equitable Futures

(7th February 2026, 11.30 - 1.00 pm, Seminar Hall 2, T&P Cell, KISS DU)

Chairperson

Dr. Sushi Kadanakuppe

Associate Professor, Department of Public Health Dentistry, V.S. Dental College and Hospital, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Keynote

Mr. Saktibrata Sen

Senior Director, Programs, Room To Read India

Speakers

Prof. Namita Mohanty

Professor Emeritus, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) DU, Bhubaneswar

Prof. Swarnamayee Tripathy

Professor Emeritus, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) DU

Prof. Vikash Keshri

Associate Professor, Jindal School of Public Health & Human Development, OP Jindal Global University, Sonapat, Haryana

Dr. Sudha G (Online)

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, SM Govt. First Grade College, Kollegal, Karnataka

Mr. Ansula Basumantary

Student, KISS DU, Bhubaneswar

Prof. Maya S

Mar Theophilus Training College, Thiruvananthapuram

Dr. M. S. Geetha

Former Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Kerala

Prof. Bindu R. L.

Dean, School of Education, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram

Session Overview

The Round Table on “Gender Justice through Life Skills Education: Disrupting Patriarchy and Building Equitable Futures” explored the continuing challenges of gender inequality and the role of life skills education in promoting equity and empowerment. Discussants reflected on the persistence

of deeply rooted socio-cultural beliefs across personal and professional domains. The discussion emphasized that education plays a critical role in challenging such stereotypes and enabling women to develop confidence, agency, and the capacity to participate fully in social and economic life. Life skills education was highlighted as a powerful means of strengthening self-awareness, self-esteem, decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership abilities, thereby equipping women to question discriminatory practices and assert their rights.



The session also acknowledged the importance of supportive legal frameworks, educational opportunities, and social encouragement in enabling women to overcome structural barriers created by patriarchal systems. Overall, the round table underscored that fostering gender justice requires sustained efforts through education, exposure, and skill development so that women can exercise their rights, contribute meaningfully to society, and participate in shaping more equitable and inclusive futures.

Exhibition

Book stall exhibition was set up during three days of the conference. Five publishing houses participated in it. So also 5 stall were set up where organizations working on Life Skills Education demonstrated their work.



Valedictory Session

The Valedictory Session marked the formal conclusion of the 11th International Conference on Life Skills Education and commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, symbolising hope, knowledge, and collective commitment to the conference vision of “Life Skills Beyond 2030: Learning to Live Together in an Interconnected World.”

The session opened with a welcome address by **Dr. Gauri Hardikar, Vice President, IALSE & Executive Director, Indian Ocean Comparative Education Society**, who warmly greeted the gathering and thanked all participants, knowledge partners, international delegates, and host institutions. She noted that every delegate had now become part of the extended IALSE community, and emphasised that the life skills movement must continue far beyond the conference through sustained engagement, shared learning, and long-term collaboration.



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The conference report was presented by **Ms. Rama Bhide, Secretary, Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE)**, who reflected on the conference as a meaningful culmination of three days of learning and exchange. She highlighted that the conference was jointly organised by the **School of Liberal Studies, KISS Deemed to be University, and IALSE**, with the support of **ICSSR**, and that it was not only about discussing “Life Skills Beyond 2030,” but also about exploring what it truly means to learn, converse and live together in a rapidly changing world. She emphasised the conference’s global reach, with international participation from five continents and its diverse, intergenerational audience comprising academicians, researchers, practitioners, NGO leaders, students and youth representatives. She noted key milestones such as the NGO Conclave featuring 16 organisations, the strong platform created for youth voices, deliberations on the status of Life Skills Education across 17 states and 2 Union Territories, and the groundwork laid for future collaboration and long-term integration. She also expressed gratitude to the leadership of KIIT and KISS, acknowledging the vision of the founder and the support of institutional leaders, and reaffirmed that life skills are not optional but essential for living together in an interconnected world.

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The session then invited reflections from conference delegates, offering heartfelt perspectives on the learning and impact of the conference. **Prof. Sanath (Sri Lanka)** shared a moving personal account of how his engagement with life skills began when Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair visited Sri Lanka for a symposium where he was the academic chair. He recalled receiving a key volume on life skills and described how that moment transformed his understanding, introducing him to life skills as a powerful educational framework. He narrated his journey to India, despite financial constraints, describing it as a test of endurance and resilience, including a life-threatening road accident during his travel. He reflected that the experience reinforced a core message of life skills: that when one begins doing something meaningful, the path opens in unexpected ways. He also stressed that life skills should not remain an auxiliary subject but become the central foundation of 21st-century education, and urged delegates to implement even small learnings from the conference as a responsibility to the organisers and the movement.



Mr. Kumar Babu Thapa (Nepal) expressed gratitude to KIIT, KISS and the organising team for their hospitality and academic rigor. He shared that this was his second life skills conference, after attending one in Thiruvananthapuram in 2024, and noted that while life skills are practiced daily, such conferences help participants recognise and structure them intentionally. He appreciated the panel discussions, masterclasses, and practical insights into how life skills education is being implemented in coordination with government agencies in India, and expressed his intention to apply these learnings in Nepal.



Dr. Solomon reflected on the conference as a deeply meaningful and life-changing experience, especially through his exposure to KIIT and KISS. Drawing historical parallels, he compared the legacy of the Kalinga kingdom with the present-day leadership and institutional vision of KISS and KIIT. He described Dr. Achyuta Samanta as a visionary leader and observed that the institution's infrastructure and human dynamism stood as living symbols of excellence and purpose. He remarked that just as Kalinga was known for conquest, the institution today is "conquering



hearts” by fighting poverty, stigma, discrimination, and illiteracy. He appreciated the conference as a space of learning, interaction, and connectivity, and expressed gratitude to the patrons, coordinators, and organisers.

The Chairperson’s remarks were delivered by **Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair, President, IALSE**, who expressed heartfelt thanks to the co-organisers, committee members, scholars, and delegates. He shared personal appreciation for Mr. Kumar Babu Thapa, noting his humility and simplicity despite his distinguished background, and reflected on the warmth and quality of conference arrangements, including accommodation, logistics, and academic discourse. At the same time, he offered a candid reflection on a key concern: while the conference theme was futuristic, the level of youth participation in sessions beyond their own paper presentations was limited. He noted that sustaining the value of such conferences requires active engagement across sessions and encouraged future delegates to prioritise participation



so that knowledge spreads beyond individual presentations. He acknowledged that despite this concern, the conference was exceptionally well executed, with resource persons showing up as expected and several sessions offering rich academic value. He also reflected on the long-standing relationship between IALSE and KISS over nearly 16 years, noting that the theme was intentionally chosen because the KISS campus itself represents a living model of “learning to live together,” making it an ideal host for a conference on life skills beyond 2030.

A book release followed, led by **Mr. Manish Sinha, Neelkamal Publications**, featuring the publication “**Life Skills Education: From Foundation to Future Frontiers**” authored by **Dr. Rashmi Ranjan Puhan and Dr. Lakshmipriya Mella**.



The valedictory addresses were then delivered by senior institutional leaders. **Prof. (Dr.) Raju K. D., Pro Vice Chancellor, KIIT Deemed to be University**, congratulated KIIT, KISS, and the School of Liberal Studies for successfully organising the conference. He observed that life skills—closely linked to what employers often describe as “soft skills”—appear increasingly missing among young recruits, and noted that while earlier generations often learned these skills through experience, the current moment demands structured life skills education through formal systems. Reflecting on the conference theme, he emphasised that young people today are navigating a rapidly changing landscape shaped by AI, digital life, and evolving mindsets. He noted that life skills education must therefore continuously adapt, addressing emerging areas such as leadership, environmental stewardship, conflict resolution, and media literacy. He concluded by appreciating the conference as a meaningful effort made possible through the visionary leadership of **Dr. Achyuta Samanta**, founder of KIIT, KISS, and KIMS.



Prof. (Dr.) Kashi Nath Jena, Pro Vice Chancellor, KISS Deemed to be University, offered a reflective and philosophical address, stating that if life is under construction, life skills education functions as the “lubricant” that helps individuals navigate relationships, responsibilities and survival in society. He questioned narrow definitions of success centred only on trophies and targets and emphasised that without the ability to manage relationships, with family, colleagues and communities, achievement becomes hollow. He urged continued innovation within life skills education, noting that without adapting and strengthening these skills, society risks losing its human foundations.



The Chief Guest address was delivered by **Sr. Prof. K. S. Chandrasekar, Vice Chancellor, Jammu Cluster University, Jammu**, who stressed that individuals must not become isolated in modern society. He shared a poignant example of a former student, highly accomplished and working as a Vice President in an IT company, who had died by suicide, reminding the audience that qualifications and professional success alone cannot ensure well-being. He emphasised that managing oneself is essential for sustaining life and progress, and noted that life skills education is increasingly vital

within NEP 2020. He highlighted the importance of self-belief, emotional regulation, and knowing when to “switch on and switch off” in life. He also acknowledged that life skills education will evolve rapidly in response to changing times and expressed hope for deeper integration of life skills within curricula to help learners manage challenges and understand success more holistically.



The session concluded with the vote of thanks by **Dr. Bignya Patnaik, Convenor, ICLSE 2026**, who expressed gratitude to the ICSSR for sponsorship and thanked the founder, **Dr. Achyuta Samanta**, for his vision, blessings and unwavering guidance. She also thanked all dignitaries, speakers, organisers, paper presenters, delegates, faculty, staff, students and IT coordinators for making the conference vibrant, meaningful and successful.



Overall, the Valedictory Session served as both a celebration of the conference’s achievements and a call for continued action, reaffirming that life skills education is central to well-being, dignity, inclusion and the shared responsibility of learning to live together in an interconnected world.

