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ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONFLICT RESOLUTION AMONG FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NAGALAND

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ABSTRACT

Where there is life, there is conflict. It is the nature of beings to differ and to clash; what matters is how peace is restored. Conflict resolution is solution and essential for emotional and intellectual development too, especially for first-year undergraduates' diverse cultures. This study examines emerging adults' conflict resolution beliefs in Nagaland, India, where indigenous values and educational transitions impact interpersonal behaviour. The goal is to evaluate attitudes and demographics.

The study follows a descriptive quantitative design and is based on primary data collected from 226 students enrolled in social science and language programs across government and private colleges in Kohima and Dimapur. A modified ASCRA-VS scale was used for data collection via self-administered Google Forms. The sampling method was non-probability purposive, targeting first-year undergraduates.

Research showed that 73.5% of students have an average conflict resolution attitude. Female students scored higher on the "role and responsibility" category statistically. Based on family type, residence, or institutional membership, attitudes were similar across groups. The study concludes that while students demonstrate a moderate readiness for constructive conflict management, targeted interventions are needed to further strengthen their competencies. Gender-responsive programs could enhance role-taking skills, and culturally contextual training can promote socio-emotional well-being.

This study emphasizes the need for conflict resolution education in college curriculum, especially in tribal and multicultural contexts. Theory and practice in youth development. Emotional intelligence and higher education policy are enhanced by findings.

KEYWORDS: *Conflict Resolution, Attitude, Undergraduate Students, Nagaland, Tribal Students, Socio-Emotional Learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Conflict is not anti-natural. It is quite natural in every living being on the earth. Conflict is viewed as an instinct aspect of life and human interaction in the ancient Indian texts also. Mahabharat stated that ***"Yatra Jivanam Tatra Vivadah. Praninam Svabhava…,"*** which means; where there is life, there is conflict. It is the nature of beings to differ and to clash; what matters is how peace is restored." (Mahabharat, shanti parva 113.15, as cited in Ganguli, 1896). Modern research also stated that, Conflict not an action exclusive to humans. All living organisms favor social interaction to sustain their existence. As social beings, humans experience conflict due to tensions arising from relationships and interactions with others (Akacan and Bengisoy, 2015). Conflicts are prevalent across various domains of human existence, manifesting in families and organizations. They encompass inter-tribal, religious, social, political and economic disputes. Each category of conflict necessitates distinct attention (Sacramento, 2013 as cited in Dike and Dike, 2017).

What constitutes conflict and how does it arise among individuals?

Akacan and Bengisoy (2015) state in their research that conflicts typically arise when individuals' needs, urges and demands are in opposition to one another. In certain conflict scenarios, individuals' views of one another diverge, resulting in differing discourses and behaviours. Diverse perspectives may engender conflict. Therefore, these conflicts can happen in social environments and it may happen between students and teacher, teacher and teacher, teacher and parent and teacher and director too (Turnuklu et al., 2002 as cited by Akacan & Bengisoy, 2015). Researches revealed that newly enrolled first-year undergraduate students experience significant developmental and environmental shifts, including greater autonomy, academic expectations and social adjustments which can lead to increased interpersonal conflicts (Arnett, 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Conflict Resolution and Cognitive Development

In ancient wisdom stated that, ***"Yogah Karmasu Kausalam"*** which means this verse encourages mindful and skilful action instead of avoidance. Conflict resolution can thus be seen as a practice of inner discipline and social harmony (Bhagavad Gita, 2.50; as cited by Prabhupada, 1983). During this stage, the ability of students to resolve conflicts constructively is crucial for their academic engagement, mental well-being and social integration. From a developmental psychology perspective, conflict resolution is not merely a set of interpersonal strategies but a reflection of broader cognitive, emotional and moral development (Erikson, 1968). As individuals move from adolescence to emerging adulthood, they encounter novel situations that require negotiation, compromise and empathy.

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These life skills are shaped by early attachment patterns, peer interactions and environmental influences, as posited in theories of socio-emotional development (Sroufe et al., 2005).

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) further explains how students acquire and internalize conflict resolution behaviours by observing role models such as parents, teachers and peers. The reinforcement of prosocial behaviours like listening, assertiveness and negotiation; actually, fosters positive attitudes toward conflict resolution. Conversely, repeated exposure to hostile or avoidant conflict management strategies may lead to maladaptive attitudes. In the Indian context, where collectivist values often shape social expectations and communication norms, conflict is frequently approached with avoidance or hierarchical submission, particularly in educational institutions (Kumar & Rose, 2010). First-year undergraduate students, especially those from semi-urban or rural areas, may face difficulty adapting to the pluralistic and often assertive discourse styles expected in higher education settings. Understanding their attitudes toward conflict resolution thus becomes not only academically significant but also socially relevant.

Why do we need Conflict Resolution Skills?
If unaddressed, conflict can jeopardize mental health, academic achievement and social cohesion. Culminate in violence, resulting in fatalities and property destruction. constructive conflict resolution promotes psychological happiness; a state of emotional equilibrium and interpersonal satisfaction that is essential for young adult's flourishing (Sroufe et al., 2005). However, empirical studies exploring this linkage remain sparse, especially in the context of India's tribal and multicultural educational environments.

Rationale of the study
The rationale behind this investigation lies in the urgent need to foster life skills that underpin emotional intelligence and social integration. As conflict resolution is closely linked to resilience and happiness, cultivating positive attitudes in early adulthood can yield long-term benefits for mental health and community well-being.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

1) To explore the level of first year undergraduate student's attitude towards conflict resolution.
2) To compare the emerging adults' attitude towards conflict resolution across five dimensions on the basis of gender, residence, type of family and type of institution.

2.1. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1) There is no statistically significant difference between male and female students in their attitudes toward conflict resolution.
2) There is no statistically significant difference in attitudes toward conflict resolution between students from joint families and those from nuclear families.
3) There is no statistically significant difference in attitudes toward conflict resolution between students residing in rural areas and those residing in urban areas.
4) There is no statistically significant difference in attitudes toward conflict resolution between students enrolled in government institutions and those in private institutions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design: This study employed a descriptive research design with a quantitative orientation to explore the existing attitudes towards conflict resolution among newly enrolled first-year undergraduate students in Nagaland. The descriptive design was used to describe and interpret the current level of level of first year undergraduate student's attitude towards conflict resolution across all five dimensions.

3.2 Research Environment: This study was conducted at various colleges in Kohima and Dimapur district of the Nagaland state where tribal population and cultural diversity build the unique society in the north east region of India. Since investigator had promise to the principal of different colleges about hiding the college name before collecting the data so mentioning the particular college name is against the research honesty.

3.3 Research Instrument: The investigator used attitude scale as the primary data collection tool for conflict resolution among adolescents developed by Dr. Vikramjit Singh (2024) with some modification to all the items due to unique cultural diversity and age constrains in the Nagaland state, therefore validity and reliability has been established again. First of all, investigator got the permission verbally to have a period from the scheduled class of the daily routine. After that, Data were gathered using a self-administered survey questionnaire shared via Google Forms through official what's up students' group in the natural classroom settings.

4. SAMPLING DESIGN

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed in the study, as it allowed for the intentional selection of first-year undergraduate students who met specific inclusion criteria relevant to the objectives of the research. This method enabled the researcher to focus on individuals undergoing the academic and psychosocial transition into higher education, a context critical for studying attitudes toward conflict resolution. The first year newly enrolled in Bachelor's degree students from Nagaland were population of the study. Out of that 226 students were randomly selected (104 students from government colleges and 122 from private colleges).

5. STATISTICAL DESIGN

Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, percentage, t-test were used to find out the significant differences with regard to gender, residence, type of family and type of institution.

6. GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

The study was conducted in Kohima and Dimapur districts of Nagaland, India, covering both urban colleges and semi-rural institutions with significant tribal student populations. These districts serve as educational centers in the state and reflect the socio-cultural diversity of Nagaland, providing valuable insight into first-year undergraduates' attitudes towards conflict

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resolution across different community and institutional contexts.

7. ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION OF DATA AND RESULTS AS PER OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To know the level of emerging adults' attitude towards conflict resolution.

Using the mean ± 1 standard deviation method on the total scores from the 30-items five-point Likert scale data: (i) calculated mean total score ≈ 112 and (ii) SD ≈ 9.28.

Table 1: Emerging Adults' Attitude Level Classification Towards Conflict Resolution

Gender	Low (≤ 102.72)	Average (102.73-121.28)	High (≥ 121.29)	Total
Male	20 (14.0%)	108 (75.5%)	15 (10.5%)	143 (100%)
Female	8 (9.6%)	58 (69.9%)	17 (20.5%)	83 (100%)
Total	**28 (12.4%)**	**166 (73.5%)**	**32(14.2%)**	**226 (100%)**

Table 1 reveals the overall attitude towards conflict resolution indicating that 73.5% of students have average level of attitude towards conflict resolution where 75.5% of the male students and 69.9% of the female students have average level of attitude towards conflict resolution. From the result obtained it has been observed that majority of both male and female students have Average or moderate level of attitude towards conflict resolution.

Table 2: Emerging Adults' Attitude Level Classification Towards Conflict Resolution

Residence	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Rural	15 (15.5%)	62 (63.9%)	20 (20.6%)	97 (100%)
Urban	13 (10.1%)	104 (80.6%)	12 (9.3%)	129 (100%)
Total	**28 (12.4%)**	**166 (73.5%)**	**32(14.2%)**	**226 (100%)**

Table 2 reveals that urban and rural students have also average level of attitude towards conflict resolution where 63.9% of the rural students and 80.6% of the urban students have average level of attitude towards conflict resolution. From the result obtained it has been observed that majority of both rural and urban newly enrolled bachelor degree students have Average or moderate level of attitude towards the conflict resolution.

2) To compare the emerging adults' attitude towards conflict resolution on the basis of gender, type of family and residence.

Table 3: The Dimension-Wise t-Test Analysis Table Based on Gender

Dimensions	Gender	Mean (SD)	N	t-Value	p-Value	Remark
CCR (Cognition)	Female	22.24 (2.82)	83	-0.34	0.7351	Not Sig.
	Male	22.11 (2.65)	143			
BOCR (Behavioural Outcomes)	Female	23.02 (2.62)	83	-0.44	0.6598	Not Sig.
	Male	22.87 (2.51)	143			
EVCR (Experiential Views)	Female	22.07 (2.81)	83	-0.16	0.8717	Not Sig.
	Male	22.01 (2.23)	143			
RRCR (Role & Responsibility)	Female	25.07 (2.82)	83	-2.03	0.0444	Significant
	Male	24.31 (2.57)	143			
ICCR (Involvement in Conflict)	Female	20.49 (2.23)	83	-0.97	0.3349	Not Sig.
	Male	20.18 (2.52)	143			

Table 3 shows the dimension-wise t-test analysis based on gender reveals no statistically significant difference in four dimensions such as CCR, BOCR, EVCR and ICCR, indicating similar attitudes among male and female participants. However, there is a statistically significant difference is observed in the RRCR (Role & Responsibility) dimension ($p = 0.0444$), where female participants scored higher, suggesting greater awareness or engagement in conflict resolution responsibilities among them. Therefore, the hypothesis **"There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female students towards conflict resolution."** is fail to accepted. It infers that gender play significant role on the attitude of male and female students towards role & responsibility on conflict resolution out of all five dimensions in this sample.

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Table 4: The Dimension-Wise t-Test Analysis Table Based on Type of Family						
Dimension	**Family Type**	**Mean (SD)**	**N**	**t-Value**	**p-Value**	**Remark**
CCR (Cognition)	Joint	22.02 (2.62)	63	-0.50	0.6151	Not Sig.
	Nuclear	22.21 (2.75)	163			
BOCR (Behavioural Outcomes)	Joint	23.06 (2.29)	63	0.54	0.5886	Not Sig.
	Nuclear	22.87 (2.65)	163			
EVCR (Experiential Views)	Joint	21.94 (2.46)	63	-0.38	0.7078	Not Sig.
	Nuclear	22.07 (2.45)	163			
RRCR (Role & Responsibility)	Joint	24.27 (2.50)	63	-1.16	0.2490	Not Sig.
	Nuclear	24.71 (2.75)	163			
ICCR (Involvement in Conflict)	Joint	20.19 (2.31)	63	-0.42	0.6743	Not Sig.
	Nuclear	20.34 (2.47)	163			

Table- 4 reveals that, there is no statistically significant difference in any of the five dimensions based on type of family. This suggests that conflict resolution attitudes are relatively consistent emerging adults' attitude level towards conflict resolution from joint and nuclear families in this sample. Therefore, the hypothesis **"There is no significant difference in the attitude of students from joint and nuclear family towards conflict resolution"** is accepted. It infers that type of family does not play any significant role on the attitude of students towards conflict resolution belonging from joint and nuclear family.

Table 5: The Dimension-Wise t-Test Analysis Table Based on Residence						
Dimension	**Residence**	**Mean (SD)**	**N**	**t-Value**	**p-Value**	**Remark**
CCR *(Cognition)*	Rural	22.32 (3.04)	97	0.75	0.4560	Not Sig.
	Urban	22.04 (2.43)	129			
BOCR *(Behavioural Outcomes)*	Rural	23.01 (2.73)	97	0.43	0.6680	Not Sig.
	Urban	22.86 (2.41)	129			
EVCR *(Experiential Views)*	Rural	22.22 (2.67)	97	0.94	0.3477	Not Sig.
	Urban	21.90 (2.27)	129			
RRCR *(Role & Responsibility)*	Rural	24.65 (2.99)	97	0.29	0.7743	Not Sig.
	Urban	24.54 (2.45)	129			
ICCR *(Involvement in Conflict)*	Rural	20.66 (2.81)	97	1.89	0.0610	Not Sig.
	Urban	20.02 (2.04)	129			

Table 5 shows that, there are no statistically significant differences in any of the five dimensions based on residence (rural vs. urban). The closest to significance is the ICCR dimension *(p = 0.061)*, suggesting rural students may report slightly more involvement in conflict resolution, though not conclusively. Therefore, the hypothesis "There is no significant difference in the attitude of students from joint and nuclear family towards conflict resolution" is accepted. It infers that type of family does not play any significant role on the attitude of students towards conflict resolution belonging from joint and nuclear family. Therefore, the hypothesis **"There is no significant difference in the attitude of students from rural and urban residence towards conflict resolution"** is accepted. It infers that residence location also does not play any significant role on the attitude of students towards conflict resolution belonging from rural and urban in this sample.

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Table 6: The Dimension-Wise t-Test Analysis Table Based on residence						
Dimension	**Type of Institution**	**Mean (SD)**	**N**	**t-Value**	**p-Value**	**Remark**
CCR (Cognition)	Government	21.28 (2.94)	116	-0.39	0.6948	Not Sig.
	Private	21.44 (2.87)	110			
BOCR (Behavioural Outcomes)	Government	22.22 (3.12)	116	-0.31	0.7577	Not Sig.
	Private	22.35 (3.03)	110			
EVCR (Experiential Views)	Government	21.15 (2.76)	116	-0.56	0.5740	Not Sig.
	Private	21.36 (2.90)	110			
RRCR (Role & Responsibility)	Government	22.34 (3.26)	116	-0.46	0.6450	Not Sig.
	Private	22.55 (3.36)	110			
ICCR (Involvement in Conflict)	Government	21.02 (2.81)	116	-0.71	0.4778	Not Sig.
	Private	21.29 (2.76)	110			

Table 6 reveals the dimension-wise analysis comparing Government and Private institutions shows that while Private institution students have marginally higher mean scores across all dimensions of conflict resolution, the differences are minimal. The t-test results, with p-values ranging from 0.4778 to 0.7577, indicate no statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that students from both types of institutions share similar attitudes toward conflict resolution in cognitive, behavioural, experiential, responsibility, and involvement dimensions. The uniformity may be due to comparable educational settings, curricula, or teaching approaches across institutions. Unlike residence-based comparisons, where rural and urban variations showed near-significant results, institutional type does not appear to influence students' perspectives on resolving conflict. Overall, institutional affiliation does not play a significant role in shaping these attitudes. Therefore, the hypothesis **"There is no significant difference in the attitude of students from government and private towards conflict resolution**" is accepted. It infers that type of institutions also does not play any significant role on the attitude of students towards conflict resolution belonging from government and private colleges in this sample.

7.1. MAJOR FINDINGS

(1) Overall attitude level: 73.5% of students had an average or normal conflict resolution attitude. While 14.2% were high level and 12.4% low level. girl students (20.5%) had a slightly higher proportion attitudes than boys (10.5%).

(2) Gender Differences: A statistically significant difference was found in the Role and Responsibility on conflict resolution (RRCR) dimension ($p = 0.0444$), with girl students achieving higher scores. And, there is no statistically significant difference was found between male and female students across four dimensions which are Cognition (CCR), Behavioural Outcomes (BOCR), Experiential Views (EVCR) and Involvement in Conflict (ICCR).

(3) Family Type (Joint vs. Nuclear): None of the five conflict resolution attitude characteristics differed statistically significant. This suggest that family type does not affect student attitudes towards conflict resolution in this sample.

(4) Residence (Urban vs. Rural): Students from rural as well as urban environment had a average or normal level of conflict resolution attitudes. No statistically significant differences were found across any dimension. however, rural students exhibited a near-significant trend in the ICCR dimension ($p = 0.0610$), indicating slightly higher participation.

(5) Type of Institution (Government vs. Private): Private college students scored slightly higher in all dimensions. However, none of the differences were statistically significant (p-values > 0.47), indicating that type of institution does not impact attitudes toward conflict resolution.

8. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

i. Colleges should introduce structured modules on communication, negotiation and conflict management within the first-year curriculum.
ii. where programs should recognize and build on the stronger sense of responsibility toward conflict resolution found in female students.
iii. Activities like debates, group tasks and role-plays can be used to strengthen experiential learning and behavioural outcomes of conflict resolution.
iv. Tailor conflict resolution training to fit the socio-cultural values of tribal communities in Nagaland for better student engagement.
v. Moreover, College counselling centers should facilitate conflict handling workshops to boost emotional intelligence and interpersonal maturity.

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9. LIMITATIONS

- The study was confined to Kohima and Dimapur districts of Nagaland, limiting the generalizability to other regions or states with different cultural and institutional dynamics.
- Participants were drawn only from social science and language disciplines, excluding students from science, commerce, and vocational streams whose attitudes might differ.
- The purposive sampling approach, while contextually relevant, restricts the randomness of the sample and may not fully represent the broader student population.

10. CONCLUSION

The present study explored the attitudes of first-year undergraduate students in Nagaland toward conflict resolution using the ASCRA-VS scale. Findings reveal that the majority of students (73.5%) hold an average or moderate attitude toward conflict resolution, suggesting a general openness but also scope for development in this domain. While no significant differences were found across most demographic variables, a statistically significant difference emerged in the "Role and Responsibility" dimension by gender, with female students showing a stronger attitude. Factors such as family type, place of residence, and institutional affiliation did not significantly influence students' conflict resolution attitudes. This reflects a potential cultural convergence in conflict perspectives among students in the region, possibly due to shared social norms, educational exposure, and tribal community values.

11. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Conducting longitudinal research can help examine how attitudes toward conflict resolution evolve throughout the undergraduate years, from entry to graduation.
- In-depth interviews and focus group discussions could offer deeper insights into the lived experiences, cultural beliefs, and interpersonal challenges influencing students' conflict resolution attitudes.
- Since this study was delimited to social science and language subjects' college students and Kohima and Dimapur location. Therefore, future research can include a larger and more diverse sample of undergraduate students across different streams and districts of Nagaland and other northeastern states to enhance generalizability.
- Future studies could explore correlations between conflict resolution attitudes and mental health indicators such as stress, resilience, or happiness among students.
- Research comparing conflict resolution attitudes between tribal and non-tribal students, or between students from urban centers and remote rural areas, can reveal culturally nuanced differences.
- Experimental studies can evaluate the effectiveness of structured conflict resolution programs or interventions in improving students' attitudes and behaviours over time.

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