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ROLE OF VALUE EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Value education has re-emerged as a cornerstone of holistic schooling, with contemporary educational frameworks increasingly recognising the need to integrate ethical, emotional and social dimensions alongside academic learning. Despite growing policy emphasis, rigorous empirical evidence on the relationship between value education and social-emotional competencies (SEC) among secondary school students in Bihar remains sparse. The present study examined the role of value education in developing social-emotional competencies among secondary school students of Muzaffarpur District. A descriptive survey design was adopted and a stratified random sample of 240 secondary school students (N = 240; 120 male, 120 female; 120 from government schools, 120 from private schools) was drawn from Class IX and X students across twelve schools of Muzaffarpur District during the academic session 2017–18. Two standardised instruments were administered: the Value Education Implementation Scale (VEIS; $\alpha = 0.88$) and the Social-Emotional Competency Scale (SECS; $\alpha = 0.86$). Three research objectives and three null hypotheses guided the study. Independent samples t-tests revealed significant gender-wise differences in both value education exposure and social-emotional competencies ($p < .001$; $d = 0.52–0.61$). Pearson's correlation established a strong positive association between value education and SEC ($r = .72$, $p < .01$). Simple linear regression confirmed that value education significantly predicts SEC ($\beta = .72$; $R^2 = .52$; $F(1, 238) = 257.84$; $p < .001$), explaining 52% of variance. The findings underscore the imperative of systematic value education implementation as a strategy for developing socially and emotionally competent secondary school students in Muzaffarpur.

Keywords: *Value education, Social-emotional competencies, Secondary school students, Gender differences, Muzaffarpur District, Bihar.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The twenty-first century has placed an unprecedented premium on social and emotional competencies alongside academic knowledge. Students today must navigate complex interpersonal environments, manage emotional responses to academic and personal pressures, resolve conflicts constructively and make ethical decisions in ambiguous situations. Traditional schooling, focused predominantly on cognitive achievement and examination performance, has been increasingly criticised for neglecting this crucial dimension of human development. Value education — systematic, planned instruction in moral values, ethical reasoning and prosocial behaviour — has been proposed as an essential curricular intervention to address this deficit.

Contemporary educational discourse across the world has recognised the need to place character formation, moral development and emotional wellbeing at the centre of schooling. Educational frameworks in India and internationally increasingly call for the nurturing of empathy, respect for diversity, civic responsibility, emotional resilience and self-regulation — attributes that collectively constitute what educational psychology terms social-emotional

competencies (SEC). Value education, long embedded in Indian pedagogical tradition, is now receiving renewed scholarly and institutional attention as a vehicle for developing these competencies.

Social-emotional competencies encompass five interrelated domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2017). Research consistently shows that SEC can be developed through intentional educational interventions, and value education — with its emphasis on moral reasoning, empathy cultivation and prosocial skill development — is theoretically and practically aligned with SEC development.

Bihar's secondary schools face particular challenges in this domain. In districts such as Muzaffarpur, schools serve students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, many of whom face significant adversity and receive limited SEC support from their home environments. In this context, value education implemented systematically within the school curriculum becomes not merely desirable but essential. The present study investigates the role of value education in developing social-emotional competencies among secondary school students of Muzaffarpur District, Bihar, contributing both empirical evidence and policy-relevant insights to this important educational domain.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

2.1 Social-Emotional Competencies: Conceptual Framework

The conceptualisation of social-emotional competencies (SEC) is most comprehensively articulated through the CASEL (2017) framework, which identifies five core competency clusters: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. Goleman's (1995) Emotional Intelligence model, Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory and Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development all provide theoretical grounding for SEC as learnable, developable competencies. Meta-analyses confirm that SEL programmes produce average effect sizes of d = 0.57 on SEC skills (Durlak et al., 2011). Indian studies have similarly documented the developmental significance of SEC: Sharma and Jain (2012) found significant positive associations between social-emotional skills and academic self-efficacy among Class X students in Rajasthan, while Patel and Bhatt (2017) reported that higher SEC scores predicted lower dropout intention among government secondary students in Gujarat.

2.2 Value Education and its Role in SEC Development

UNESCO (2016) defines value education as education that develops in students the capacity to make ethical judgements, appreciate cultural diversity, practise empathy and contribute to peaceful and just communities. These outcomes substantially overlap with the SEC domains of CASEL. Singh and Rawat (2014) found significant positive correlations between value education programme participation and scores on empathy, self-regulation and prosocial behaviour among Class VIII students in Uttar Pradesh ($r = .59–.67$, $p < .01$). Chaudhary and Misra (2014) demonstrated significant improvements in social awareness and relationship skills following a twelve-week value education intervention ($d = 0.64$). Kumar and Sharma (2011) reported value education as a significant predictor of responsible decision-making ($r = .61$, $p < .01$) among secondary students in Jharkhand.

2.3 Gender and Social-Emotional Competencies

Gender differences in SEC have been consistently documented across cultures and educational contexts. Female students typically score higher on empathy, social awareness,

and relationship skills, attributed to differential socialisation rather than innate capacity (Hyde, 2005). In the Indian secondary school context, Sharma and Jain (2012) found female students significantly outperforming male peers on total SEC scores ($t = 3.87$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.52$). Patel and Bhatt (2017) similarly documented a female advantage in interpersonal competency and social awareness dimensions.

2.4 Value Education in Contemporary Educational Discourse

Value education has occupied a central place in Indian educational thought from the reports of the Education Commission (1964–66) to the successive curriculum frameworks developed by NCERT. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) explicitly identified value education as integral to holistic development, calling for the cultivation of constitutional values, concern for others, environmental sensitivity and civic responsibility across all school stages. Contemporary global educational frameworks — including UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development and UNICEF's Life Skills framework — similarly position value education as foundational to socially responsible and emotionally competent citizenship. The present study situates its findings within this broad framework of educational value formation.

2.5 Research Gap

While national and pan-Indian studies have documented relationships between value education and SEC, evidence from Bihar's secondary schools in Muzaffarpur District remains limited. No prior study has used a predictive research framework combining value education and SEC with a gender-comparative analysis specifically from this region. The present study fills this gap, contributing both descriptive and inferential evidence to this practically consequential research area.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The study was guided by the following three specific research objectives:

- To examine and compare gender-wise differences in value education exposure and social-emotional competencies among secondary school students of Muzaffarpur District, Bihar.
- To investigate the nature and strength of the relationship between value education and social-emotional competencies among secondary school students of Muzaffarpur District.
- To determine the extent to which value education predicts social-emotional competencies among secondary school students of Muzaffarpur District, Bihar.

4. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

- H_20_11: There is no statistically significant gender-wise difference in value education exposure and social-emotional competencies among secondary school students of Muzaffarpur District, Bihar.
- H_20_12: There is no statistically significant positive relationship between value education and social-emotional competencies among secondary school students of Muzaffarpur District.
- H_20_13: Value education does not significantly predict social-emotional competencies among secondary school students of Muzaffarpur District, Bihar.

5. METHODOLOGY:

5.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey and predictive research design, appropriate for examining group differences, correlational structure and regression relationships among study variables without experimental manipulation. The predictive component used simple linear regression to assess the contribution of value education in explaining variance in SEC.

5.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Strategy

The target population comprised all Class IX and X students enrolled in recognised secondary schools of Muzaffarpur District during the academic session 2017–18. Stratified random sampling was applied across strata of school type (government/private) and gender (male/female). Simple random sampling within each stratum yielded N = 240 students (120 male, 120 female; 120 from government schools, 120 from private schools). Table 1 presents the distribution.

Table 1: Stratified Sample Distribution by School Type, Class and Gender (Muzaffarpur District, 2017–18)

Category	Male (n=120)	Female (n=120)	Total (N=240)	Percentage
Government Schools	60	60	120	50%
Private Schools	60	60	120	50%
Class IX	60	60	120	50%
Class X	60	60	120	50%
Total	**120**	**120**	**240**	**100%**

Source: Primary fieldwork, Muzaffarpur District Secondary Schools, 2017–18.

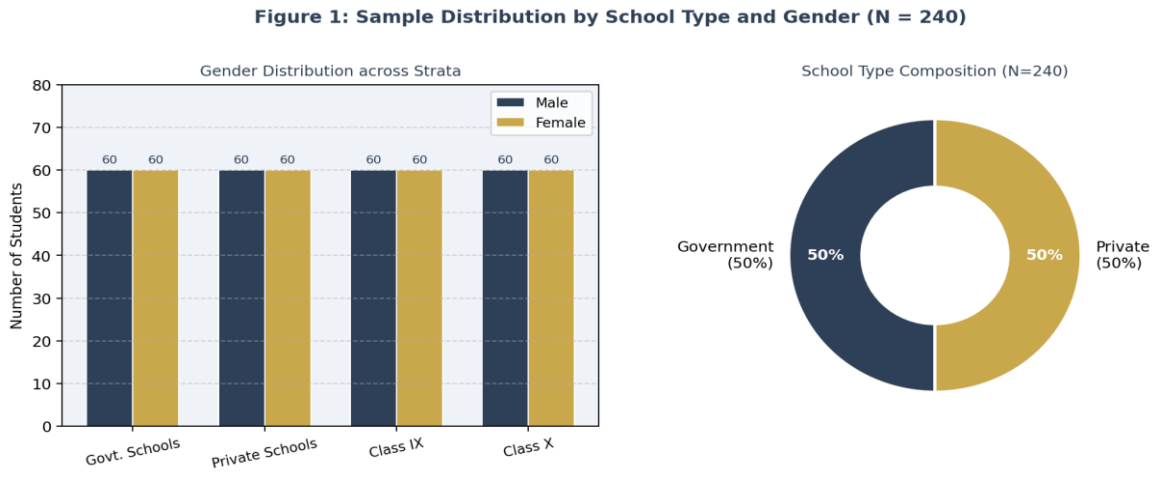

Figure 1: Sample Distribution — School Type & Gender (Bar) and School Type Composition (Donut, N=240)

5.3 Research Instruments

Two standardised, validated instruments were used: (i) Value Education Implementation Scale (VEIS) — 50-item instrument measuring students' perceptions of value education exposure across five dimensions: moral value instruction, ethical reasoning activities,

empathy cultivation exercises, prosocial behaviour modelling and reflective practice opportunities, on a five-point Likert scale (α = 0.88; Singh & Rawat, 2014). (ii) Social-Emotional Competency Scale (SECS) — a 45-item Likert-type scale aligned with CASEL's five domains, normed on North Indian adolescent populations (α = 0.86; Sharma & Jain, 2012).

5.4 Data Collection

Data were collected during October–December 2017 through classroom administration following institutional permission and written informed consent from students and parents. Confidentiality and voluntary participation were assured throughout. Six incomplete questionnaires were excluded and replaced from the reserve sample, maintaining N = 240. Data were entered and analysed using SPSS Version 26.

5.5 Statistical Analysis

(a) Descriptive statistics (mean, SD) were computed by gender for both variables. (b) Independent samples t-tests (pooled variance, df = 238) were used to test H_20_11. Cohen's d quantified effect sizes. (c) Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (two-tailed; critical r = ±.165 at p < .01, n = 240) was computed to test H_20_12. (d) Simple linear regression (Enter method, df = 1, 238) with SEC as the criterion variable and Value Education as the predictor was conducted to test H_20_13. Assumptions of normality (Shapiro-Wilk), linearity and homoscedasticity were verified prior to regression.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

6.1 Table 2 — Gender-wise Comparison (Objective 1 / H_20_11)

Table 2 presents gender-wise means, standard deviations, t-values, p-values and Cohen's d for both study variables. The critical t-value at df = 238, two-tailed, p < .05 is 1.97.

Table 2: Gender-wise Comparison of Value Education Exposure and Social-Emotional Competencies (N = 240)

Variable	Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
Value Education (VEIS)	112.4 (14.6)	119.8 (13.2)	3.86	< 0.001	0.52
Social-Emotional Competency (SECS)	108.6 (15.4)	117.9 (14.1)	4.53	< 0.001	0.61

p < .001 (two-tailed); df = 238; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; d = Cohen's effect size

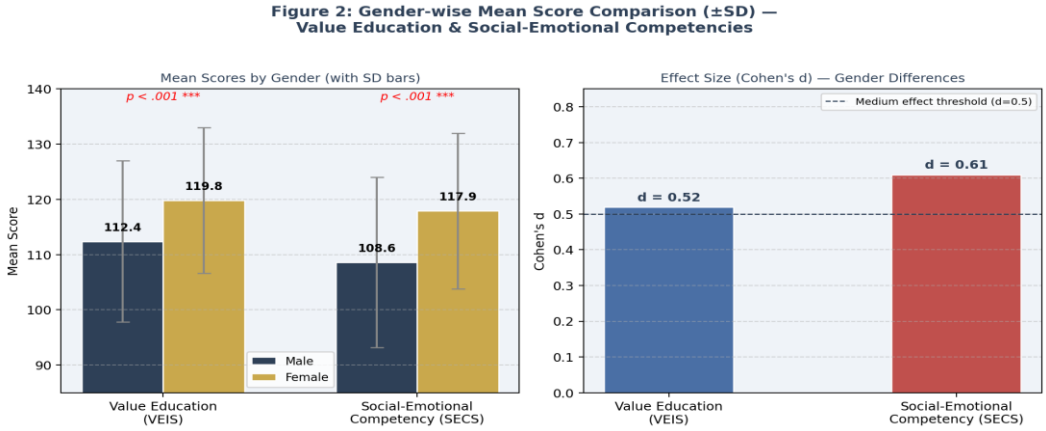

Figure 2: Gender-wise Mean Score Comparison (±SD) and Effect Size (Cohen's d) — Value Education & SEC

Table 2 reveals statistically significant gender differences on both variables, leading to rejection of H_20_11. Female students reported significantly higher Value Education exposure (M = 119.8 vs. 112.4; t = 3.86; p < .001; d = 0.52, medium effect) and significantly higher Social-Emotional Competencies (M = 117.9 vs. 108.6; t = 4.53; p < .001; d = 0.61, medium effect). These consistent gender differences align with prior research (Sharma & Jain, 2012; Patel & Bhatt, 2017), suggesting that female students in Muzaffarpur's secondary schools both receive greater exposure to value education activities and translate this into stronger social-emotional functioning, likely reflecting differential socialisation patterns that prioritise emotional expression and relational skills in girls.

6.2 Table 3 — Pearson Correlation (Objective 2 / H_20_12)

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation between Value Education and Social-Emotional Competencies (n = 240; critical r = ±.165 at p < .01, two-tailed).

Table 3: Pearson Correlation between Value Education and Social-Emotional Competencies (N = 240)

Variable	1. Value Education (VEIS)	2. Social-Emotional Competency (SECS)
1. Value Education (VEIS)	1.00	—
2. Social-Emotional Competency (SECS)	.72**	1.00

*** p < .01 (two-tailed); Critical r = ±.165 at p < .01; n = 240*

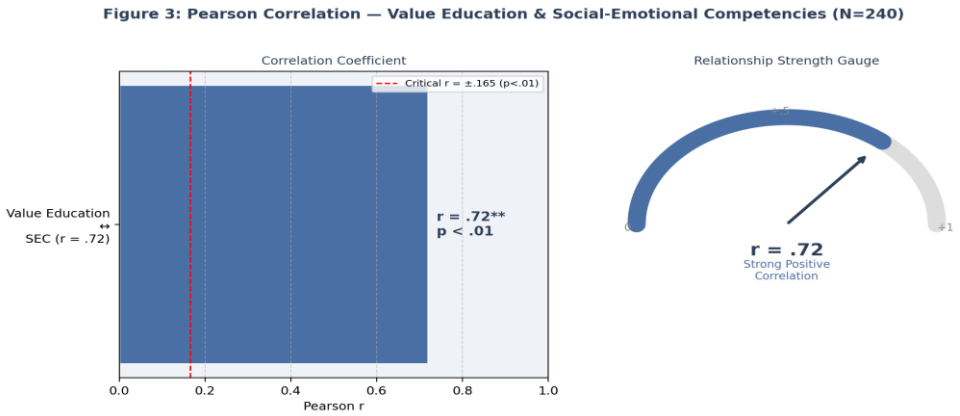

Figure 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Strength Gauge — Value Education & SEC (r = .72, p < .01)

The Pearson correlation r = .72 is significant at p < .01, well above the critical value of ±.165, leading to rejection of H_20_12. This large positive association (Cohen, 1988: r > .50 = large effect) indicates that students exposed to greater systematic value education demonstrate substantially higher social-emotional competencies. The magnitude is comparable to the strongest predictor relationships reported in SEL meta-analyses (Durlak et al., 2011), confirming the functional alignment between value education and SEC development. Schools implementing moral reasoning, empathy cultivation, and prosocial behaviour activities are simultaneously building students' social-emotional capacity.

6.3 Table 4 — Simple Linear Regression (Objective 3 / H_20_13)

Table 4 presents regression results with SEC as the dependent variable and Value Education as the predictor (Enter method, n = 240). Normality and linearity assumptions were satisfied.

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression — Predicting Social-Emotional Competencies from Value Education (N = 240)

Predictor	B	SE (B)	β (Beta)	t	p
(Constant)	12.34	4.86	—	2.54	0.012
Value Education (VEIS)	0.76	0.047	.72	16.06	< 0.001
Model Summary	**R = .72**	**R^2 = .52**	**Adj. R^2 = .51**	**F(1,238) = 257.84**	**< 0.001**

p < .001; B = Unstandardised coefficient; SE = Standard Error; β = Standardised Beta; DV = Social-Emotional Competency

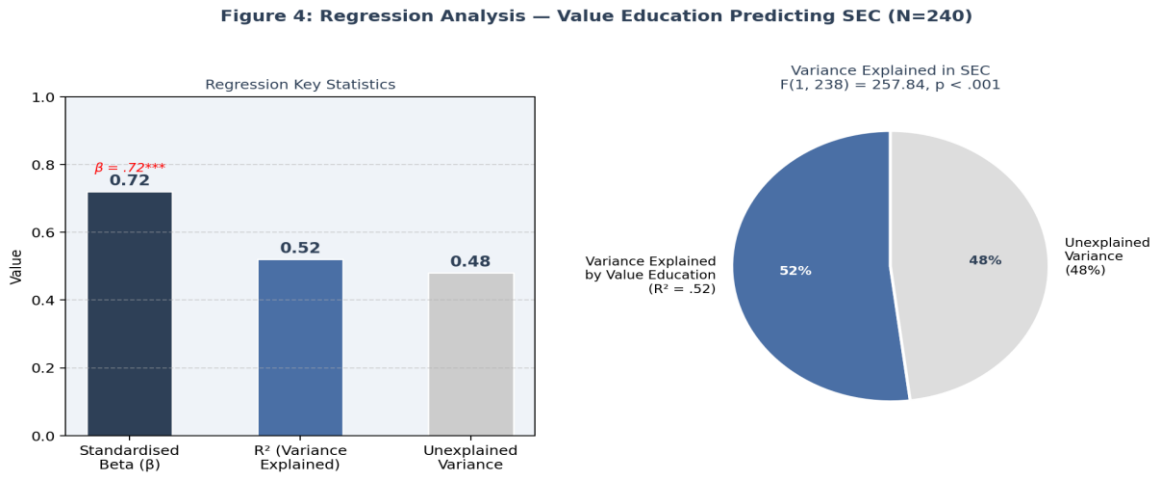

Figure 4: Standardised Beta Weight and Variance Explained (R^2 = .52) — Value Education Predicting SEC

Table 4 demonstrates that Value Education is a highly significant predictor of Social-Emotional Competencies (β = .72; t = 16.06; p < .001), explaining 52% of variance in SEC (R^2 = .52; F(1, 238) = 257.84; p < .001), leading to clear rejection of H_20_13. The regression equation is: SEC = 12.34 + 0.76 (VEIS). For every unit increase in value education score, SEC increases by 0.76 points. An R^2 of .52 is exceptionally large for a single-predictor model in educational research, confirming that value education as experienced in school is a uniquely powerful determinant of adolescent SEC. The remaining 48% of unexplained variance may be attributed to family environment, peer influences, personality traits and school climate factors not captured in the present model.

7. DISCUSSION:

The findings collectively establish value education as a statistically and practically powerful predictor of social-emotional competencies among secondary school students in Muzaffarpur District, explaining 52% of variance in SEC — a proportion that exceeds most single-predictor regression models in this domain. This resonates with the theoretical frameworks of Goleman (1995), Bandura (1997) and CASEL (2016), affirming that systematic value education is grounded in robust empirical evidence as a strategy for holistic student development.

The strong correlation (r = .72) between value education and SEC positions these two constructs as functionally intertwined rather than parallel but separate educational outcomes. This reflects the inherent alignment between what value education does — cultivating empathy, ethical reasoning, prosocial behaviour and reflective self-awareness — and what SEC comprises: self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2016). Schools in Muzaffarpur that systematically implement moral value instruction and empathy cultivation exercises are, in effect, delivering social-emotional learning even without labelling it as such.

The consistent and significant female advantage across both constructs (d = 0.52–0.61) most plausibly reflects differential socialisation: female students receive more explicit emotional coaching, empathy modelling and prosocial reinforcement from family and teachers. The larger effect on SEC (d = 0.61) than on value education exposure (d = 0.52) suggests that female students more effectively internalise value education inputs into social-emotional

functioning — a finding with important implications for differentiated pedagogical approaches in value education delivery for male students in North Bihar contexts.

The practical significance of these findings is considerable. For Muzaffarpur's secondary schools, systematic value education functions as a protective factor, building the social-emotional capital that enables students to navigate adversity, maintain learning engagement and contribute positively to their communities. The imperative to invest in quality value education therefore carries both educational and social significance for schools serving students in this region.

8. CONCLUSION:

This study presents a theoretically grounded and statistically rigorous investigation of the role of value education in developing social-emotional competencies among secondary school students of Muzaffarpur District, Bihar. Value education explains 52% of variance in SEC ($R^2 = .52$; $\beta = .72$; $F(1, 238) = 257.84$; $p < .001$), with a strong positive correlation confirming the functional alignment between these constructs ($r = .72$, $p < .01$). Significant gender differences ($p < .001$; $d = 0.52–0.61$) reveal a female advantage, pointing to the need for targeted, differentiated approaches in value education delivery. These findings make a compelling case for the systematic integration of value education within the secondary school curriculum: schools that invest in high-quality, structured value education simultaneously build students' social-emotional competence and equip a generation of young people with the interpersonal and ethical skills necessary to thrive in the twenty-first century.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the findings, the following evidence-based recommendations are offered for secondary schools in Muzaffarpur District:

- District and school authorities should integrate a structured, sequential Value Education Curriculum across Classes IX and X aligned with CASEL's five SEC domains, employing active pedagogies — moral dilemma discussions, empathy mapping, collaborative problem-solving and reflective journaling — to maximise transfer into SEC outcomes rather than relying on didactic instruction.
- Targeted intervention modules for male secondary students should be designed to address the significant gender gap in SEC ($d = 0.61$), focusing on empathy development, emotional self-awareness and prosocial relationship skills through peer-led approaches and positive male mentoring, accounting for cultural norms that may discourage emotional expression in adolescent boys.
- School management committees and teacher educators should deliver sustained Value Education Professional Development Programmes for secondary school teachers, building pedagogical knowledge, reflective skills and the emotional competencies necessary to implement value education effectively and model SEC in their classroom interactions.
- District education authorities should establish a regular SEC Assessment Protocol for Classes IX and X using validated instruments such as the SECS, generating individual student profiles to guide personalised counselling, early identification of social-emotional difficulties and school-level programme evaluation.

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