

A Comparative Study of Life Skills among Secondary School Students in Relation to their Gender and Locale:

Mrs. Khushboo Tyagi, Research Scholar

S.M.P. College Meerut U.P. India

Dr. Manju Rani, Associate Professor

Department of Education

S.M.P. College Meerut U.P. India

Abstract: The aim of present study is to find out the level of life skills among secondary school students and effect of different phenomenon like gender and location on the level of life skills among secondary school students in Ghaziabad district. A random sample of 100 (50 boys and 50 girls) secondary school students were selected for the study. Life skills Assessment scale by Dr. Chandra Kumari and Ayushi Tripathi was used to assess the life skills among students. The mean, S.D. and t-test were used to analyze the data. According to the study's finding, there is no significant difference in life skills of male and female secondary students. Also study shows that there is a significant difference in life skills of rural and urban students at secondary level. The result show that very few students have high level of essential life skills and majority of the students have above average level of life skills.

Keywords: Life skills, Life skills Education, Gender, Locale and Secondary School Students.

Introduction:

Adolescence is a critical phase of intense growth and transformation in the physical, mental, social, and emotional aspects of a child's life. This period is often marked by a whirlwind of emotions, such as anxiety, fear, love, and a sense of danger, which adolescents may struggle to understand and manage. Guiding their energy in the right direction, learning to handle emotions, and making sound decisions in challenging circumstances are essential life skills. While formal education imparts theoretical knowledge, it often falls short in equipping students to tackle everyday real-life challenges effectively. Life skills education bridges this gap by empowering individuals to navigate daily problems efficiently.

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals. In schools, students acquire literacy, numeracy, and subject knowledge in areas such as science, mathematics, languages, sports, geography, and history. They also gain an understanding of human

sexuality and reproduction. However, it is surprising that many schools do not teach essential life skills. Fundamental abilities like personal decision-making, effective communication, realistic goal-setting, empathy, conflict resolution, and social responsibility are often overlooked. Unfortunately, the current Indian education system is more achievement-oriented than child-centered, failing to address the critical life skills necessary for children to thrive in today's complex world.

Adolescents today face numerous challenges, including academic stress, easy access to drugs, violence, bullying, sexual permissiveness, depression, and external pressures such as rising living costs, overcrowding, and poverty. In this rapidly changing environment, life skills education becomes vital for equipping youth to cope with these challenges.

Research highlights the importance of life skills in the holistic development of adolescents. Life skills training and

education significantly enhance self-concept, self-confidence, social adjustment, self-esteem, critical and creative thinking, personal decision-making, effective communication, stress management, realistic goal-setting, empathy, conflict resolution, and problem-solving abilities. Adolescents who receive life skills education tend to experience better physical and mental health and overall well-being (Savoji & Ganji, 2013; WHO, 1993).

Concept of Life Skills

Life skills refer to the fundamental abilities acquired through learning or practical experience that enable individuals to navigate their daily lives effectively. These skills encompass everything from managing emotions and finances to balancing school performance and maintaining good health. Essentially, life skills equip individuals to respond positively to various situations, achieving desired outcomes.

The term "life skills" is often defined as a set of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal abilities that support decision-making, healthy relationships, effective communication, problem-solving, and critical and creative thinking. These skills are characterized by a combination of emotional, cognitive, psychosocial, and practical attributes that help individuals regulate themselves, make informed choices, and build meaningful social connections (WHO, 1994; WHO, 2003; UNICEF, 2012; UNICEF, 2019).

As Joseph (2008) puts it, "Life skills are the skills, strengths, and capabilities that help individuals face the challenges of daily life with a positive attitude and handle tasks effectively." According to the World Health Organization (WHO), life skills are defined as "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life."

Categories of Life Skills

Life skills are broadly classified into three categories:

1. Thinking Skills

- Encompass critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, reflective thinking, and decision-making.
- Enhance logical reasoning and analytical abilities.

2. Social Skills

- Include communication, empathy, teamwork, cooperation, and leadership.
- Foster the development of healthy relationships and social harmony.

3. Emotional Skills

- Involve managing emotions, coping with stress, and maintaining interpersonal relationships.
- Help individuals resist pressure, overcome anxiety, and handle depression effectively.

Importance of Life Skills Education

Life skills education is vital for fostering mental well-being, personal growth, and resilience. Below are its key benefits:

- **Promotes Mental Well-being:** Enhances self-esteem, peace of mind, and confidence among adolescents.
- **Prevents Substance Abuse:** Encourages adolescents to avoid tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.
- **Facilitates Decision-Making:** Enables adolescents to explore new ideas and make rational choices.
- **Improves Social and Professional Outcomes:** Positively impacts both personal and professional aspects of life.
- **Builds Resilience:** Helps individuals cope with daily challenges, stress, and frustration effectively.
- **Encourages Critical Thinking:** Stimulates creativity and innovative problem-solving.
- **Fosters Responsibility:** Encourages individuals to recognize the consequences of their actions and take accountability instead of blaming others.
- **Enhances Communication:** Builds confidence in collaboration and teamwork.
- **Develops Self-awareness and Empathy:** Cultivates motivation, empathy, and a deeper understanding of oneself and others.

➤ **Fosters Mental Health and Happiness:** Contributes to overall satisfaction, tranquility, and well-being.

Life skills education is a cornerstone for preparing adolescents to navigate their evolving world with confidence, competence, and positivity.

Review of Related Literature

The role of life skills education in fostering personal development and addressing adolescent challenges has been widely studied. Below is a summary of key research findings:

1. Goudas et al. (2006)

➤ Found that students with a high level of knowledge about life skills demonstrated greater self-belief in setting and achieving personal goals.

2. Puspakumara (2011)

➤ Highlighted that life skills training plays a crucial role in preventing various adolescent issues, such as violence, substance abuse, teenage pregnancies, and bullying. The study also showed that such training enhances self-confidence and self-esteem.

3. Vranda and Rao (2011)

➤ Demonstrated that life skills training significantly improves psychosocial competencies among adolescents.

4. Balasundari and Benjamin (2014)

➤ Concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between life skills and academic achievement.

5. Dinakaran and Gabriel (2014)

➤ Conducted a descriptive study on adolescent girls residing in slum areas and found that half of the respondents exhibited low levels of life skills.

6. Bardhan (2016)

➤ Examined the impact of life skills education on adolescents' risky behaviors. The study, conducted among school students exhibiting such behaviors, revealed that life skills training positively influenced students. It improved their ability to build friendly relationships with peers, instructors, and guardians.

7. Pujar and Patil (2016)

➤ Investigated life skills development among rural adolescent girls and the impact of life skills interventions. The results indicated that life skills education enabled these girls to take positive actions, enhance critical thinking, cope with stress, and improve problem-solving abilities.

8. Navkiran Kaur (2022)

➤ Explored the effect of life skills education programs on social competence and academic performance. The findings revealed that students exposed to life skills education performed significantly better in academics and exhibited enhanced social competence compared to those receiving general education.

These studies collectively highlight the transformative impact of life skills education on adolescents, emphasizing its importance in fostering personal growth, enhancing psychosocial competencies, and addressing behavioral and academic challenges.

Justification of the Study

Education plays a vital role in the holistic development of adolescents, who represent the future of our nation. While today's youth are making remarkable strides in fields such as education, science, technology, medicine, agriculture, industrialization, and commerce, they often lack the essential life skills needed to manage stress, regulate emotions, make informed decisions, maintain healthy relationships, and achieve mental well-being. Life skills-based education fosters physical and mental wellness, enabling adolescents to grow into successful citizens who contribute significantly to their families, communities, and the nation.

These factors inspired the researcher to explore the area of life skills education, emphasizing its importance for the development of well-rounded individuals.

Statement of the Problem

A Comparative Study of Life Skills among Secondary School Students in Relation to their Gender and Locale

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of life skills among secondary school students.
2. To compare the mean scores of life skills between male and female secondary school students.
3. To compare the mean scores of life skills between rural and urban secondary school students.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of life skills of male and female secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of life skills of rural and urban secondary school students.

Variables of the Study

- **Dependent Variable:** Life Skills
- **Independent Variables:** Gender and Locale

Tool Used

The **Life Skills Assessment Scale**, standardized by Dr. Chandra Kumari and Ayushi Tripathi (2020), was used to evaluate life skills among the students.

Research Methodology

The study employed a **descriptive survey method** to gather data and analyze the life skills of secondary school students.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population for the study comprised secondary school students from Ghaziabad city. A sample of 100 students (50 boys and 50 girls) was randomly selected from two secondary schools. One school was located in a rural area and the other in an urban area of Ghaziabad city.

Statistical Techniques Used

Various statistical techniques were utilized in this study for data analysis and interpretation:

1. **Percentage Analysis:** Used to determine the distribution of students across different levels of life skills.
2. **Mean and Standard Deviation:** Calculated to compare the central tendency and variability in life skills scores.
3. **t-test:** Applied to test the significance of differences between groups (gender and locale).

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Life Skills Levels among Secondary School Students

Sr. No.	Level of Life Skills	Raw Score Range	Grade	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
1	Extremely High	188 & above	A	0	0%
2	High	173–187	B	5	5%
3	Above Average	157–172	C	45	45%
4	Average	137–156	D	39	39%
5	Below Average	121–136	E	8	8%
6	Low	106–120	F	3	3%
7	Extremely Low	105 & below	G	0	0%

Interpretation of Table 1

The table highlights the distribution of life skills levels among students:

- **Extremely high and Extremely Low Levels:** No students fell into these categories.
- **Above Average and Average Levels:** A majority of students, 45% and 39%

respectively, demonstrated above-average and average levels of life skills.

- **High Level:** Only 5% of students exhibited high life skills.
- **Low Level:** A small percentage (3%) had low life skills.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the life skills of male and female secondary school students.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-Value for Male and Female Students

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-Ratio
Female	50	154	12.12	1.17
Male	50	152	12.09	

Interpretation of Table 2

- The mean life skills score for female students (154) was slightly higher than that for male students (152).
- The t-value (1.17) was lower than the critical value (1.96) at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating no significant difference between the groups.

Conclusion: The hypothesis is **accepted**, suggesting that gender has no significant impact on the level of life skills among secondary school students.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the life skills of rural and urban secondary school students.

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-Value for Rural and Urban Students

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-Ratio
Urban	50	157	8.39	3.08
Rural	50	153	9.95	

Interpretation of Table 3

- The mean life skills score for urban students (157) was higher than that for rural students (153).
- The t-value (3.08) exceeded the critical value (1.96) at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating a significant difference between the groups.

Conclusion: The hypothesis is **rejected**, suggesting that urban students have significantly higher life skills compared to rural students at the secondary level.

Summary of Findings

1. **Life Skills Levels:** Most students exhibited above-average or average life skills, with only a small percentage displaying high or low levels.

2. **Gender Comparison:** No significant difference in life skills was observed between male and female students.

3. **Locale Comparison:** Urban students demonstrated significantly higher life skills than rural students, indicating a potential gap in life skills development based on locale.

These results underscore the need for targeted life skills interventions, particularly in rural areas, to bridge the developmental gap.

Results and Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the level of ten core life skills among secondary school students and analyze the influence of factors such as gender and locale on these skills. The findings revealed that:

- **Life Skills Levels:** A majority of students exhibited an above-average level of life skills, while only a small percentage displayed high levels. This highlights a pressing need to enhance life skills education to prepare students for a successful future.
- **Gender Differences:** The study found no significant difference in life skills between male and female students, indicating that gender does not influence the development of these competencies.
- **Locale Differences:** A significant disparity was observed between rural and urban students, with urban students demonstrating higher levels of life skills. This underscores the necessity of implementing life skills development programs in rural schools.

Future Recommendations

To address the identified gaps and promote holistic development among students:

1. **Incorporate Life Skills in Curriculum:** Life skills education should be integrated into the school curriculum at all levels. Regular curriculum revisions should include new strategies for life skills development.
2. **Innovative Teaching Strategies:** Techniques such as brainstorming, storytelling, role-playing, case studies, debates, games, and group discussions

- should be adopted to nurture life skills in classrooms.
3. **Community and Policy Support:** Parents, teachers, policymakers, and researchers should collaborate to design and implement comprehensive life skills enhancement programs from elementary to higher education.
 4. **Awareness Campaigns:** Life skills awareness initiatives should be conducted at village, city, district, and state levels to create informed and responsible citizens.
 5. **Empirical Research:** Academicians and professionals should undertake more qualitative and empirical studies to generate robust findings and develop evidence-based life skills interventions.
- By prioritizing life skills education, we can equip future generations with the tools to lead happy, healthy, responsible, and productive lives, contributing to national development and social well-being.

References

1. **Balasundari, K., & Benjamin, D. A. E. W. (2011).** *Correlation of Life Skills and Academic Achievement of High School Students*. Indian Journal of Applied Research, 4(4), 147–148. <https://doi.org/10.15373/2249555x/apr2014/44>
2. **Bardhan, A. (2016).** *Life Skills Education: A Strategy for Handling Adolescents' Risk Behavior*. Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 21(7), 92–99. Retrieved from IOSR Journals
3. **Dinakaran, J., & Gabriel, M. (2014).** *Life Skills Education Among Adolescent Girls in Kemp's Town at Trichirappalli Municipal Corporation – A Descriptive Study*. Indian Journal of Applied Research, 4(12).
4. **Goudas, M., Dermitzaki, I., Leondari, A., & Danish, S. (2006).** *The Effectiveness of Teaching a Life Skills Program in a Physical Education Context*. European Journal of Psychology of Education, 21(4), 429–438.
5. **Joseph, K. S. (2008).** *Equip Yourself with Life Skills: Mastering Life Skills to Elevate Private, Social, and Professional Life*. Mumbai: Better Yourself Books Publishers, The Bombay Saint Paul Society.
6. **Kaur, N. (2022).** *Effect of Life Skills Education Programme on Academic Performance and Social Competence in Relation to Spiritual Intelligence of Adolescents*. Retrieved from Shodhganga.
7. **Pujar, L. L., & Patil, S. S. (2016).** *Life Skill Development: Educational Empowerment of Adolescent Girls*. RA Journal of Applied Research, 2(5), 468–472. Retrieved from [RA Journals](#)
8. **Puspakumara, J. (2011).** *Effectiveness of Life-Skills Training Program in Preventing Common Issues Among Adolescents: A Community-Based Quasi-Experimental Study (ALST)*. Presentation, Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine & Allied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.
9. **Savoji, A. P., & Ganji, K. (2013).** *Increasing Mental Health of University Students Through Life Skills Training (LST)*. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 84, 1255–1259. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.739>
10. **Suhardan, D. (2012).** *Ekonomi dan Pembiayaan Pendidikan*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
11. **UNICEF (2012).** *Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programmes*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund.
12. **UNICEF (2019).** *Global Framework on Transferable Skills*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund.
13. **Vranda, M., & Rao, M. (2011).** *Life Skills Education for Young Adolescents: An Indian Experience*. Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology, 37(Special Issue), 9–15. Retrieved from [University of Malaya Repository](#)
14. **World Health Organization (WHO) (1994).** *Life Skills Education for Children and Adolescents in Schools: Introduction and Guidelines to Facilitate the Development and Implementation of Life Skills Programmes*. Geneva: WHO.
15. **World Health Organization (WHO) (2003).** *Skills for Health: Skills-Based Health Education Including Life Skills—An Important Component of a Child-Friendly/Health-Promoting School*. Geneva: WHO.