

# Life Skills of Senior Secondary Students: A Study of Mau Nath Bhanjan City

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*In present time individuals are facing interpersonal conflicts, mental & emotional instability, and uncertainty in decisions, self doubts, drug abuse, unemployment, poverty, inequity, violence and environmental destruction in day to day life and in this condition they need to develop more skills, abilities and problem solving potential to overcome it. It's very necessary to inculcate more skills and abilities other than education, in individuals from the very beginning. In an individual's life the most important phase of life is Adolescence stage when they are getting Secondary Education. It is the time when students are considered as the most productive member of society due to their physical and intellectual capacity. There is a need of development of some psycho-social skill in them by school curriculum that can help them in healthy transition of adulthood and to lead a better life. That is why the nations committed to Education for All have included "Life Skills" as basic need for all young people. Life Skills are Psycho-Social skills that empower individuals physical, psychological and social well being to perform better social functioning and choose the right life style. In the present paper, the life skills of secondary school students have been studied.*

**Key words:** Life Skills, WHO- Life Skills, Senior Secondary Students, Mau Nath Bhanjan City

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Adolescence stage is the most important phase of life. It is the time when they are completing their secondary education and considered as the most productive member of society due to their physical and intellectual capacity. At this stage they face many psycho-social and physical problems which lead to stress, uncertainty, self doubts, disappointment and life taking risks like suicide attempts if these are not resolved. Even children are pushed to do much more than customary to get the desired acceptance and acknowledgement from the family and society circle. (Subita, 2013). The education, today, needs to enable a child to deal effectively with the environment, make maximum use of resources, discern available opportunities and face the challenges of society. To enable these behavioural transformations in the child, the system needs to enrich the school curriculum with a highly researched and effective life skills training programme. An empowered

(empowered with life skills) child has the competence to cope with the challenges of life using the available resources even amidst such adversities. (Srikala and Kishor, 2010)

Various researches have proved that life skills play a very crucial in the well being of individuals especially for young people. Life skills training and life skills based education has improved the level of self esteem, self concept, self confidence, social adjustment, mental health and academic achievement. It has also very effective in reducing anti-social behaviours like drug abuses, violent activities, and suicide attempts under pressure and making the individuals an active, responsible, productive member of society and a good citizen of the country. Anuradha (2012) found a strong association between the life skills and self concept in her study. Improvement of life skills improves the self concept of adolescents. Bardhan (2016) with her case study has proved that with the training of life skills one can bring positive changes among the children with problem behaviour. Bharath and Kumar (2010) have found life skills education an effective way to improve mental health of adolescents through participatory method of games, debates, role play and group discussions with active participation of teachers. Malik (2012) has studied the effect of life skills training on academic anxiety, adjustment and self esteem level in early adolescents and found a remarkable improvement in these all. Moshki et al (2014) studied the effect of life skills training on drug abuse prevention and found it very effective in reducing drug abuse tendency. Amirian (2012) has found in her study that there was a positive effect of life skills education training on the academic achievement of first year high school male students. Prajapati (2017) has highlighted the significance of life skills education in his research paper by stating it a need of this hour for today's society. It is an effective mode of education, which does enhances social, emotional and thinking skills through classroom activities, brainstorming, role play, group discussion, storytelling, debates, and analysis of situations.

From the above discussed researches and their findings it is very much clear that life skills education can play an inalienable role in the development of adolescents and their behaviour. Life skills based education is the need of present time so it must be incorporated in the school and college curriculum. (Singh, 2017) found in his experiment that life skills at elementary level can better be taught to the students through activity based learning.

### **Life Skills/Core Life Skills:**

Life Skills are Psycho-Social skills that empower individuals physical, psychological and social well being to perform better social functioning and choose the right life style. There are many different understanding of life skills but no universally accepted definition. Different organizations focus different meanings to the term. The Oxford Dictionary defines it as, "A skill that is necessary or desirable for full

participation in everyday life". As personal management and social skills which are necessary for adequate functioning of an individual (The International Bureau of Education,1993). Life Skills are the abilities for adoptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life (WHO, 1997). Adaptive means that a person is flexible in approach and is able adjust in different circumstance. Positive behaviour implies that a person is forward looking and even in difficult situating can find a ray of hope and opportunities to find solution. The strength of positive behavior depends upon the depth of skills acquired by the individual (Nair, Subasree and Ranjan, 2010).

### **Classification of Life Skills:**

There is not a fixed or definitive list of essential life skills. International commission on education for 21<sup>st</sup> century appointed by UNESCO in 1993 under the chairmanship of Jcques Delor, has focused on four pillars of learning that an individual needed for better life-(a) Learning to know, (b) Learning to do, (c) Learning to be and (d) Learning to live together- and the following are some cognitive personal and interpersonal life skills that are generally considered particularly important.

1. **Learning to Know- Cognitive abilities**
  - Decisions making/ Problem solving skills
  - Critical thinking skills
2. **Learning to Be- Personal abilities**
  - Skills of increasing internal locus of control
  - Skills for managing feelings
  - Skills for managing stress
3. **Learning to live together- Interpersonal skills**
  - Interpersonal communication skills
  - Negotiation/ Refusal Skills
  - Empathy
  - Co-operation and team work
  - Advocacy skills

UNICEF (1997) recognizes several levels of life skills:

- Basic psychological and social skills (strongly shaped by cultural and social values);
- Situation-specific skills (e.g. negotiation, assertiveness, conflict resolution);
- Applied Life Skills (e.g. challenging gender roles or refusing drugs).

## WHO Life Skills

WHO(1993) has listed 10 core life skills to be inculcated among the students and that are essential for an individual to adjust effectively in the day to day situations.

- 1. Self Awareness.** WHO defines it, “Self-awareness includes our recognition of ourselves, our character, strengths, Weakness, desires and dislikes”.
- 2. Empathy.** This is the ability of a person to understand the feelings of others in distress and helps in providing emotional support to them.
- 3. Effective Communication.** Effective communication is the capacity of effective verbal and non-verbal communication with others to establish and maintain effective social relationship with others.
- 4. Interpersonal Relationships.** It is also called survival or people skill. It is an important life skill and most important dimension of human intelligence. It encourages initiating and maintaining positive relationship with other persons and avoiding destructive relations with minimum disturbance.
- 5. Creative Thinking.** It is the ability to produce new innovative ideas and translate them into actions with original thinking and helps a person to react in a flexible way to various challenges of life with exploring possible alternatives and evaluating them.
- 6. Critical Thinking.** Critical thinking is self directed, self disciplined thinking based on logical reasoning and objectivity. It improves the quality of thinking and enables a person to analyze information and experiences logically and objectively.
- 7. Decision Making.** It helps an individual to take correct decisions at right time and to choose the best amongst the various alternatives. This is ability to analyze and weigh the pros and cons of various alternatives and after assessment of different options and their consequences and courage to own responsibility of his decisions with confidence.
- 8. Problem Solving.** Problem solving is an attempt of finding an appropriate way of attaining a goal when the goal is not readily available.. It develops the ability to get out of difficult situations and achieve the goal without using anger, coercion, defiance and aggressive behavior.
- 9. Coping with Emotion.** Coping with emotion assists a person to know the feeling of himself and others. This enables a person to learn healthy, positive and safe way to express their feelings. It helps in identifying the effect of emotions on behaviour and to learn to react with emotion appropriately and how to control the excessive emotion like anger and sorrow.
- 10. Coping with Stress.** This skill enables an individual to recognize the source of stress, the effect of stress and technique to control stress and how to overcome it. By knowing how it can affect you

physically and emotionally, it will help an individual to control his levels of stress, by changing his environment or life style and learning how to relax.

## Need and Importance of life skills

Life skills can play a vital role in adopting with environment we live. Acquiring life skills will modify the behaviour and character of the individuals and will influence the way one feels about oneself and others and will also enhance one's productivity, efficiency, self esteem, self confidence and interpersonal relationship with others. The circular issued by CBSE states that: "adolescence is a time of immense creative energy, self-discovery and a desire to explore the world. Children can be fraught with feelings of isolation, loneliness and confusion. Lessons in life skills help in the holistic development of children and its significance cannot be ignored". An individual needs life skills-

- To develop a dynamic self image and great self esteem.
- To improve the communication skills.
- To make relationship better and handling interpersonal problems.
- To boost decision making ability and make informed decision.
- To help to deal with the challenges of everyday life.
- To become a well adjusted individual.
- To deal effectively with the peer pressure.
- To prevent high risk behaviours.
- To prevent communication gap with the parents.
- To reduce vulnerability and improve utilization of protective factors.
- To enable the youth to adopt to situations and people.
- To translate knowledge, attitude and values into actual abilities.

There is a need to develop psycho-social skills among children through school curriculum that can help them in healthy transition of adulthood and to lead a better life. Many countries across the world have introduced life skill education in school curriculum. In our country life skill education has been introduced in school curriculum following the social learning theory.

## Objectives

1. To Study the difference between life skills of male and female students of senior secondary.
2. To study the difference between life skills of rural and urban students of senior secondary.
3. To study the difference between life skills of rural male and urban male students of senior secondary.
4. To study the difference between life skills of rural female and urban female students of senior secondary.

## Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between life skills of male and female students of senior secondary.
2. There is no significant difference between life skills of rural and urban students of senior secondary.
3. There is no significant difference between life skills of rural male and urban male students of senior secondary.
4. There is no significant difference between life skills of rural female and urban female students of senior secondary.

**Methodology:** In this study the Descriptive Survey Method was used and the senior secondary students of Mau Nath Bhanjan City were the population. A sample of 240 (120 boys and 120 girls) senior secondary students from 6 different schools were selected randomly. Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) by A. Radhakrishnan Nair, R. Subasree and Sunitha Ranjan was used to assess the Life Skills among students. In this study different statistics like, Percentage to find out the number and percentages of students having different level of life skills, further Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test statistical techniques were employed for the analysis and interpretation of the data.

**Table No. 1: Percentage of senior secondary students regarding life skills level.**

Classification	Life Skills Global Score(Total)	Number of Students	% of Students
Very High	Above 417	0	0%
High	387-417	19	7.92%
Average	325-386	180	75%
Low	293-324	36	15%
Very Low	Below 293	5	2.08%
<b>Total</b>	500	240	100%

Table no. 1 describes the different level of life skills among senior secondary students. It can be observed from the table that *none* of the senior secondary students have very high level of life skills while only **2.08% (5)** of senior secondary students has very low level of life skills. Further from the table it's also clear that the majority of the senior secondary students **75 % ( 180)** have average level of life skills while **36(15%)** of senior secondary students have low level of life skill and only **7.92 %( 19)** of senior secondary students have high level of life skills.

**Hypothesis-1:** There is no significant difference between life skills of male and female students at senior secondary level.

**Table 2:** Mean, SD and t- value of male and female senior secondary students.

Group	N	M	SD	T-ratio
Male	120	352.05	26.27	0.57*
Female	120	350.01	26.21	

*\*Non-significant at 0.05 level of significance*

Table no. 2 describes the mean, standard deviation and t-value of male and female senior secondary students. The mean of life skills of male senior secondary students is 352.05, with SD of 26.27 as compared to the mean life skills of female senior secondary students which is 350.01, with SD of 26.21. The *t-value*, testing the significance of mean difference in life skills of male and female senior secondary students is 0.57, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance of table value of t-test as it is lower than the table value of t-test that is 1.96. Therefore, the Hypothesis-1 that, "There is no significant difference between life skills of male and female students at senior secondary level" is accepted. So it can be concluded that there is no significant difference the means of life skills between male and female senior secondary students as the difference in the mean scores of male and female student are not significant. It can be concluded that there is no effect of gender on the level of life skills and its development.

**Hypothesis-2:** There is no significant difference between life skills of rural and urban senior secondary students.

**Table-3:** Mean, SD and t-value of rural and urban senior secondary students.

Group	N	M	SD	t-ratio
Rural	120	349.99	27.61	0.64*
Urban	120	352.15	24.79	

*\*Non-significant at 0.05 level of significance*

Table no. 3 represents the mean, standard deviation and t-value of rural and urban senior secondary students. The mean of life skills of rural senior secondary students is 349.99, with SD of 27.61 as compared to the mean life skills of urban senior secondary students which is 352.15, with SD of 24.79. The *t-value*, testing the significance of mean difference in life skills of rural and urban senior secondary students is 0.64, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance of table value of t-test as it is lower than the table value of t-test that is 1.96. Thus, the hypothesis-2 that, “There is no significant difference between life skills of rural and urban senior secondary students” is accepted. It can be drawn from the result that there is no significant difference in the means of life skills between rural and urban senior secondary students, as the difference in the mean score of rural and urban student are not significant. It can be said that there is no effect of the location on the level of life skills and its development.

**Hypothesis-3:** There is no significant difference between life skills of rural male and female senior secondary students.

**Table-4:** Mean, SD and t-value of rural male and female senior secondary students.

Group (Rural)	N	M	SD	t-ratio
Male	60	352.11	26.47	0.84*
Female	60	347.86	28.53	

*\*Non-significant at 0.05 level of significance*

Table-4.5 describes the Mean SD and t-value of rural male and female senior secondary students. It can be interpreted that the mean of life skills of rural male senior secondary students is 352.11, with SD of 26.47 as compared to the mean of life skills of rural female senior secondary students which is 347.86, with SD of 28.53. The *t-value*, testing the significance of mean difference in life skills of rural male and rural female senior secondary students is 0.84, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance of table value of t-test as it is lower than the table value of t-test that is 1.96. Thus, the hypothesis-3 that, “There is no significant difference between life skills of rural male and female senior secondary students” is accepted.



It can be concluded from the result that there is no significant difference in the means of life skills of rural male and female senior secondary students, as the difference in the mean scores of rural male and female students are not significant. It can be said that there is no effect of gender difference on the level of life skills and its development if they are coming from same place and location.

**Hypothesis-4:** There is no significant difference between life skills of urban male and female senior secondary students.

**Table-5:** Mean, SD and t-value of urban male and female senior secondary students.

Group (Urban)	N	M	SD	t-ratio
Male	60	351.98	26.07	0.77*
Female	60	352.33	23.44	

\*Non-significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table-4.6 represents the Mean, SD and t-value of urban male and female senior secondary students. It shows that the mean of life skills of urban male senior secondary students is 351.98, with SD of 26.07 as compared to the mean of life skills of urban female senior secondary students which is 352.33, with SD of 23.44. The *t-value*, testing the significance of mean difference in life skills of urban male and urban female senior secondary students is 0.77, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance of table value of t-test as it is lower than the table value of t-test that is 1.96. Thus, the hypothesis-4 that, "There is no significant difference between life skills of urban male and female senior secondary students" is accepted.

It can be concluded from the result that there is no significant difference in the means of life skills of urban male and female senior secondary students, as the difference in the mean scores of urban male and female students are not significant. It can be said that there is no effect of gender difference on the level of life skills and its development if they are coming from same place and location.

## Results & Discussions

The aim of this study was to find out the level of ten core life skills among senior secondary students along with the relation and effect of these life skills to different phenomenon like gender, location and institution type. The results drawn from the investigation describe that very few students studying at secondary level have high level of essential ten core life skills and majority of students have average level of life skills or low and very low level of life skills. Thus from the obtained result it can be concluded that there is a strong need of developing life skills among the students for their better future and for utilization of the potential they

have along with the educational skills. The transaction of life skills among adolescents will help them to face the challenges of their everyday life strongly. Life skills are abilities for adoptive and positive behaviour that enable an individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (WHO, 1994). Adolescents need a basis for making informed deliberate decisions, especially on matters that have major consequences, such as educational and occupational futures and human relations..

In this study the results have shown that there were no significant differences in the mean of life skills among senior secondary students with reference to gender and location respectively. From the result it may be concluded that there is no relation between life skills and phenomenon like gender and location of the individuals. These findings have similarities with the findings of some other researches related to life skills. Anuradha (2012) in her study has observed no significant association was among socio-demographic variables and life skills scores of students. Kaur (2015) has the same finding in her research study that there is no difference in the life skills of student teachers with reference to gender and location. Sandhu (2014) studied the life skills of pupil teacher and found no difference in the mean scores of life skills with reference to gender and location.

### **Educational Implications**

- It will be helpful for students to aware and develop knowledge about life skills and its importance necessary to adjust in a better way in different environment and situations.
- It will be also helpful for teachers, parents and students to find out the level of life skills among students.
- This study will be helpful to teachers in realising their responsibility and accountability towards holistic development of student's potentials.
- This study will be helpful for teachers in the identification and understanding of life skills, its different dimensions and their importance for students.
- This study will help teachers to create an effective activity based learning environment to develop psycho-social skills among students.
- This study will be helpful to aware the teachers about the transaction of life skills through appropriate curriculum and methods among students.
- This study will help school authorities and administrators to incorporate life skills based activities in classrooms and schools along with other activities in a proper and responsible way.
- This study will be helpful for the educational policy makers, administrators and curriculum developers in planning and constructing curriculum by keeping in mind the life skills, its different dimensions and their importance for students.

- This study will be helpful policy makers and agencies to develop and organise training programmes for teachers of secondary level to train them effectively in transaction of life skills based education.
- This study will be helpful policy makers and agencies to develop and organise training programmes for teachers at all level to train them effectively in transaction of life skills based education.
- This study will be helpful for parents and guardians in understanding of life skills, its need and importance and their active participation and responsibility in development of it.
- This study will be helpful to aware society about life skills, its need and importance in present scenario and their active participation and responsibility in development of it as child is the member of society and its responsibility of the society to provide a healthy environment to its members.
- It will be helpful for society to give suitable suggestions to the teachers and school to include more practical activities as part of learning strategy

#### 5.4. Conclusion

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood the most problematic stage of life when an individual has to go through physical, social, emotional, psychological and behavioural changes. Students at this stage are considered as the most productive part of society but in lack of proper skills and support their potential can be wasted or remain unutilized. From this study it is clear that majority of students have average level of life skills, while very few have high level of life skills. Studies have proved that life skills education is an effective way of developing adolescents with their full potential in to a responsible member of society. There is a need of imparting life skills based education through activity based learning in to the curriculum at secondary level and also at every stage. This Study also revealed that there is a significant difference between life skills of government and private senior secondary students and students of government senior secondary school possess more level of life skills than students of private senior secondary schools. Further it was also found that there is no difference in life skills of students with respect to their gender and location.

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