

## LIFE SKILLS AMONG TRIBAL ADOLESCENTS

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### Abstract

*The present research was undertaken to study the level of life skills among tribal adolescents and investigate gender difference in life skills. Descriptive survey method was employed for conducting this investigation. A total of 315 tribal adolescents of the age group (12 to 15 years) and 325 tribal adolescents of the age group of 16 to 18 years from different high schools situated in tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh were selected by adopting incidental sampling technique. Data were collected with the help of adapted version of Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) developed by Nair, Subasree and Ranjan (2010). Mean, S.D. and t-test were used for analysis of data. The findings of the study revealed that tribal boys and girls possessed almost similar level of thinking skills, social skills, emotional skills and overall life skills. It was concluded that the tribal adolescents i.e. both boys as well as girls possessed low level of thinking skills and average level of social skills as well as emotional skills. The educational implications have been discussed at the end of the research paper.*

**Keywords:** Life Skills, Adolescents



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## INTRODUCTION

Life skills are the basic learning needs for all young people in present scenario. Life skills can mean many different things and different people need a different set of skills to survive effectively in present scenario and to fulfill their needs. The most important skills in life are the survival skills that people need to develop to meet their individual or specific needs like psychological needs, safety needs, social needs and need for self-actualization. Life skills help an individual to live their life more meaningfully, satisfactorily with ample

success and productivity. While dealing with daily challenges, an individual needs to know certain adaptive and positive behaviours which are actually the life skills. Learning life skills have helped many people to build mental and social well-being who in turn prepare them for facing the real world and its dynamics. Life skills are the abilities which can help and promote well-being and happiness among youth. NCF (2005) also emphasized that development of life skills is the inherent goal of school education. WHO has classified ten core life skills, which are broadly classified into three categories viz. thinking skills (self-awareness, problem solving, decision making, critical thinking and creative thinking), social skills (interpersonal relationships, empathy and effective communication) and emotional skills (managing emotions and dealing with stress). Khera and Khosla (2012) found that there was a positive co-relation between core cognitive as well as affective life skills and self-concept of adolescents (VIII & XI class students) which means those who possessed these essential skills were more confident in all aspects. Gadatia and Mohalik (2016) concluded that tribal students required life skills especially in self-awareness, effective communication, coping with stress, decision making, critical thinking, problem solving and empathy. It was suggested that proper need assessment in context of life skills training of tribal adolescents should be carried out. Rani and Menka (2019) revealed that life skills intervention programme had a positive and significant impact on life skills of students of experimental group at post-test stage. Moreover, in comparison to control group, experimental group students possessed significantly more life skills at the time of post-test after implementation of life skills intervention programme. Neeraj and Rani (2020) revealed that found that there was significance difference between boys and girls students on level of life skills. Female students had better life skills than male students of all dimension of life skill i.e. decision making, problem solving, empathy, self-awareness, communication skill, interpersonal relationship, coping with emotions, coping with stress, creative thinking and critical thinking. Meenu and Rani (2021) revealed that girls had better cognitive life skills than their counterparts. Further, significant gender differences in cognitive and interpersonal dimensions of life skills were observed among secondary school students. It also indicated a significant difference between boys and girls with respect to overall life skills.

Thus, on the basis of review of related researches, it may be concluded that for successful and meaningful life, better life skills are essential. So, it was considered

worthwhile to study the life skills among tribal school boys and girls at high school stage in Himachal Pradesh.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- (i) To study level of life skills among tribal boys and girls
- (ii) To study following life skills among tribal boys and girls at high school stage in Himachal Pradesh:
  - (a) Thinking Skills (Comprising of Self Awareness, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Critical Thinking and Creative Thinking)
  - (b) Social Skills (Comprising of Interpersonal Relationships, Empathy and Effective Communication)
  - (c) Emotional Skills (Comprising of Managing Emotions and Dealing with Stress)

### **HYPOTHESIS**

There will be no significant gender-wise difference in different life skills among tribal adolescents.

### **METHODOLOGY**

For conducting the present investigation, survey technique under descriptive method of research was employed.

#### **Sampling**

The sample of the study consisted of tribal adolescents of two age groups i.e. 12 to 15 years and 16 to 18 years. A total sample of 315 tribal adolescents (12 to 15 years) and 325 tribal adolescents (16 to 18 years) were selected by employing incidental sampling technique. The tribal adolescents were selected from Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh which are both entirely tribal in nature.

#### **Research Tool used**

The data were collected with the help of adapted version of Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) by Nair, Subasree and Ranjan (2010).

#### **Analysis of Data:**

The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and t-test.

### **MAIN FINDINGS**

#### **1 (a) Level of Thinking Skills and Difference in Thinking Skills among Tribal Boys and Girls**

The mean thinking skills scores of tribal boys and girls belonging to sections of two age groups i.e. 12 to 15 years and 16 to 18 years along with number, S.D. and t-value are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Thinking Skills Level and Difference in Thinking Skills among Tribal School Boys and Girls**

Sr. No.	Variable	Thinking Skills		
		12 to 15 Years Adolescents	15 to 18 Years Adolescents	
1	Boys	Mean	152.23	154.52
		S.D.	23.686	22.066
2	Girls	Mean	151.18	153.96
		S.D.	22.206	23.577
3	Total	Mean	151.55	154.19
		S.D.	22.706	22.929
		N	315	325
4	SE <sub>dm</sub>		2.682	2.585
5	d <sub>f</sub>		313	323
6	t-value		0.389 (NS)	0.215 (NS)

NS: Not Significant

From Table 1, it is clear that the total mean thinking skills score of tribal adolescents (12 to 15 years) was computed to be 151.55 with SD of 22.706. Further, the mean thinking skills score of tribal boys was 152.23 with SD of 23.686 which is somewhat more than the mean thinking skills score of tribal girls (151.18 with SD of 22.206). On the basis of mean scores, it may be interpreted that the tribal adolescents i.e. both boys as well as girls (12 to 15 years) possessed low level of thinking skills. Further, the calculated t-value for mean difference in thinking skills scores of boys and girls was found to be 0.389 which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance, for d<sub>f</sub> 313. This implies that there exists no significant difference in thinking skills of tribal boys and girls. Hence, it may be interpreted that the tribal boys and girls (12 to 15 years age group) possessed almost similar level of thinking skills.

In addition, the total mean thinking skills score of tribal adolescents (16 to 18 years) was computed to be 154.19 with SD of 22.929. The mean thinking skills score of tribal boys was computed to be 154.52 with SD of 22.066 which was somewhat higher than the mean thinking skills score of tribal girls (153.96 with S. D. of 23.577). On the basis of mean scores, it may be interpreted that the tribal adolescents i.e. both boys as well as girls (16 to 18 years)

possessed low level of thinking skills. Further, the calculated value of ‘t’ testing the significance of the mean difference was found to be 0.215 which was not significant even at 0.05 level of significance, for  $d_f$  323. Hence, the Hypothesis No. 1 (a) that, “there exists no significant gender-wise difference in thinking skills of tribal adolescents”, was accepted. So, it may be interpreted that tribal boys and girls possessed almost similar level of thinking skills irrespective of their age group.

### 1 (b) Level of Social Skills and Difference in Social Skills among Tribal Boys and Girls

The mean social skills scores of tribal boys and girls belonging to sections of two age groups i.e. 12 to 15 years and 16 to 18 years along with number, S.D. and t-value are given in Table 2.

**Table 2: Social Skills Level and Difference in Social Skills among Tribal Boys and Girls**

Sr. No.	Variable	Social Skills		
		12 to 15 Years Adolescents	15 to 18 Years Adolescents	
1	Boys	Mean	111.52	115.45
		S.D.	11.825	9.358
2	Girls	Mean	111.41	114.58
		S.D.	11.267	11.082
3	Total	Mean	111.45	114.94
		S.D.	11.448	10.394
		N	315	325
4	$SE_{dm}$		1.352	1.171
5	$d_f$		313	323
6	t-value		0.086 (NS)	0.746 (NS)

NS- Not Significant

Table 2 reveals that total mean social skills score of tribal adolescents (12 to 15 years) was found to be 111.45 with SD of 11.448. Further, the mean social skill score of tribal boys was computed to be 111.52 with SD of 11.825 which is little bit higher than the mean social skill score of tribal girls (111.41 with S.D. of 11.267). On the basis of mean scores, it may be interpreted that the tribal adolescents i.e. both boys as well as girls (12 to 15 years) possessed average level of social skills. Further, the calculated value of ‘t’ testing the significance of the mean difference was found to be 0.086 which was not significant even at 0.05 level of significance, for  $d_f$  313. So, it may be interpreted that tribal boys and girls possessed almost similar level of social skills.

In addition, total mean social skills score of all tribal boys and girls (16 to 18 years) was found to be 114.94 with SD of 10.394. The mean social skill score of tribal boys was computed to be 115.45 with SD of 9.358 which is somewhat higher than the mean social skill score of tribal girls (114.58 with SD of 11.082). On the basis of mean scores, it may be interpreted that the tribal adolescents i.e. both boys as well as girls (16 to 18 years) possessed average level of social skills. Further, the calculated value of 't' testing the significance of the mean difference was found to be 0.746 which were not significant even at 0.05 level of significance, for  $d_f$  323. Hence, the Hypothesis No. 1(b) that, "there exists no significant gender-wise difference in social skills of tribal adolescents", was accepted. So, it may be interpreted that the tribal school boys and girls possessed almost similar level of social skills irrespective of their age group.

**1 (c) Level of Emotional Skills and Difference in Emotional Skills among Tribal Boys and Girls**

The mean emotional skills scores of tribal boys and girls belonging to sections of two age groups i.e. 12 to 15 years and 16 to 18 years along with number, S.D. and t-value are given in Table 3.

**Table 3: Emotional Skills Level and Difference in Emotional Skills among Tribal Boys and Girls**

Sr. No.	Variable	Emotional Skills		
		12 to 15 Years Adolescents	15 to 18 Years Adolescents	
1	Boys	Mean	64.95	67.79
		S.D.	8.156	6.768
2	Girls	Mean	65.23	68.11
		S.D.	8.412	7.514
3	Total	Mean	65.13	67.97
		S.D.	8.31	7.205
		N	315	325
4	SE <sub>dm</sub>		0.982	0.812
5	$d_f$		313	323
6	t-value		0.281 (NS)	0.394 (NS)

NS- Not Significant

From Table 3, it may be depicted that total mean emotional skills score of all tribal boys and girls (12 to 15 years) were computed to be 65.13 with SD of 8.31. The mean emotional skill score of tribal girls was found to be 65.23 with SD of 8.412 which is little bit higher than the mean emotional skill score of tribal boys (64.95 with SD of 8.156). On the basis of mean scores, it may be interpreted that the tribal adolescents i.e. both boys as well as girls (12 to 15 years) possessed average level of emotional skills. Further, the calculated value of 't' testing the significance of the mean difference in emotional skills was found to be

0.281 which was not significant even at 0.05 level of significant, for  $d_f$  313. So, it may be interpreted that tribal boys and girls possessed almost similar level of emotional skills.

Further, the total mean emotional skills score of tribal adolescents (16 to 18 years) was computed to be 67.97 with SD of 7.205. The mean emotional skill score of tribal girls was found to be 68.11 with SD of 7.514 which is somewhat higher than the mean emotional skill score of tribal boys (67.79 with SD of 6.768) respectively. On the basis of mean scores, it may be interpreted that the tribal adolescents i.e. both boys as well as girls (16 to 18 years) possessed average level of emotional skills. Further, the calculated value of 't' testing the significance of the mean difference was found to be 0.394 which was not significant even at 0.05 level of significance, for  $d_f$  323. Hence, the Hypothesis No. 1 (c) that, there exists no significant gender-wise difference in emotional skills of tribal adolescents", was accepted. So, it may be interpreted that the tribal boys and girls possessed almost similar level of emotional skills irrespective of their age group.

**1 (d) Level of Overall Life Skills and Difference in Overall Life Skills among Tribal Boys and Girls**

The mean overall life skills scores of tribal school boys and girls belonging to sections of two age groups i.e. 12 to 15 years and 16 to 18 years along with number, S.D. and t-value are given in Table 4.

**Table 4: Overall Life Skills Level and Difference in Overall Life Skills among Tribal Boys and Girls**

Sr. No.	Variable		Overall Life Skills	
			12 to 15 Years Adolescents	15 to 18 Years Adolescents
1	Boys	Mean	328.70	337.76
		S.D.	40.511	36.159
2	Girls	Mean	327.82	336.65
		S.D.	36.368	39.681
3	Total	Mean	328.13	337.11
		S.D.	37.818	38.204
		N	315	325
4	SE <sub>dm</sub>		4.467	4.307
5	$d_f$		313	323
6	t-value		0.198 (NS)	0.257 (NS)

NS- Not Significant

Table 4 shows that total mean overall life skills score of tribal adolescents (12 to 15 years) was computed to be 328.13 with SD of 37.818. Also, the mean overall life skill score of tribal boys was computed to be 328.70 with SD of 40.511 which is somewhat higher than the mean overall life skill score of tribal girls (327.82 with SD of 36.368). On the basis of mean scores, it may be interpreted that the tribal adolescents i.e. both boys as well as girls (12 to 15 years) possessed average level of overall life skills. On the basis of mean scores, it may be interpreted that the tribal adolescents i.e. both boys as well as girls (12 to 15 years) possessed average level of overall life skills. Further, the calculated value of 't' testing, the significance of the mean difference was found to be 0.198 which was not significant even at 0.05 level of significance, for  $d_f$  313. So, it may be averred that tribal boys and girls do not differ significantly from each other with respect to overall life skills.

In addition, the total mean overall life skills score of tribal adolescents (16 to 18 years) was found to be 337.11 with SD of 38.204. The mean overall life skill score of tribal boys was computed to be 337.76 with SD of 36.159 which is somewhat higher than the mean overall life skills score of tribal girls (336.65 with SD of 39.681). On the basis of mean scores, it may be interpreted that the tribal adolescents i.e. both boys as well as girls (16 to 18 years) possessed average level of overall life skills. The calculated value of 't' testing the significance of the mean difference was found to be 0.257 which was not significant even at 0.05 level of significance, for  $d_f$  323. Hence, the Hypothesis that, "there exists no significant gender-wise difference in overall life skills of tribal adolescents", was accepted. So, it may be interpreted that the tribal school boys and girls possessed almost similar level of overall life skills irrespective of their age group.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS**

The present investigation was conducted to study the level of life skills among tribal adolescents and gender differences prevailing among them in terms of life skills possessed by them. After drawing out the results from the study, it had been found that the tribal boys and girls possessed almost similar level of thinking skills, social skills emotional skills and overall life skills irrespective of their age group i.e. 12 to 15 years or 16 to 18 years. It may be concluded that the tribal boys and girls possessed low level of thinking skills. Hence, it is need that for developing thinking skills, teacher should ask brain storming questions. The teacher can undertake following for this purpose:



- (i) Let the students wander through the discussion and think their way to a conclusion
- (ii) Give students broad writing assignments that allow them to think through an issue
- (iii) Encourage them to reason and argue both sides of the issue

Further, the results also showed that the tribal boys and girls possessed average level of social skills as well as emotional skills and overall life skills irrespective of their age group. It is therefore essential that life skills among tribal adolescents be developed so that they can successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges such as bullying, discrimination etc. in an effective manner. Life skills among tribal adolescents may be nurtured by parents, schools, society and teachers to an optimum level. It is useful for providing guidance to develop better life skills among adolescents. Teachers need to employ various teaching techniques or strategies which will be suitable for attaining the objectives. A teacher can shape the students' behaviour in desired direction provided, he himself has better knowledge of the content and pedagogy. Life skills education is need of the society and every education system should impart life skills education as a part of its curriculum as it is capable of producing good health, positive interpersonal relationships and well-being for individuals. The schools should organize various types of co-curricular activities and extension activities for students so that their level of life skills may be improved upon. Teachers, parents and other stakeholders should give more opportunities to the students to know about their strengths and weaknesses and value themselves. Apart from this, the tribal people have their culture identity and distinctiveness in their social organization, language, rituals and festivals and also in their dress, ornament, art and craft. The joy of free life finds expression in tribal art and craft. These festivals and fairs help children in developing social skills such as interpersonal relationship skills, communication skills, and empathy etc. These practices connect the children with their cultural ideology of collectivism. The present of tribal children should encourage their wards to actively engage in such tribal functions, rituals, fairs etc. This will not only help them in developing life skills like social skills, cultural values, emotional skills among them, but also help in preserving and transmission of tribal culture. The schools should also make close coordination and liaison with parents of tribal children and tribal community people on organizing various curricular and co-curricular activities having ingredient of tribal culture, ethics and values. The school

management committees (SMCs) in tribal areas, NGOs, Mahila Mandala can play an effective role in this context which needs to be identified, explored and employed to realize real objective of education i.e. overall personality development of children and development of basic life skills among children.

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