

# ATTITUDE OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS TOWARD SKILL-BASED EDUCATION IN WEST BENGAL

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## ABSTRACT:

*Skill-based education is a crucial tool for economic development. It enables students to pursue a variety of jobs, rather than solely attending college or university to continue their education. In India, skill-based education has traditionally been regulated by the Ministry of Labour, other central ministries, and various government agencies. The National Skills Competencies Framework (NSQF) was launched in December 2013 to establish standards and differentiate between various skills and competencies based on levels of knowledge. The NSQF replaces all other frameworks, including the National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) published by the Ministry of Human Resources Development. In November 2014, the Government of India established the Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship. This study aims to measure students' attitudes toward skill-based education. The objectives are to determine whether there are gender differences in higher secondary students' attitudes toward skill-based education and to examine variations in attitudes based on locality. The sample comprised 203 higher secondary students who participated in the study. A descriptive survey method with a quantitative approach was utilized in this study. Purposive sampling was employed to select the participants, and a self-constructed scale was developed to assess their attitudes toward skill-based education. The data were analyzed using measures such as Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test. The results indicate that higher secondary students generally have a positive attitude toward skill-based education. Furthermore, significant differences in attitudes were found based on gender and locality. As a result, career guidance has been provided to help students make informed decisions about enrolling in skill-based courses at the secondary level, thereby enhancing their career prospects.*

**Keywords:** Attitude, Skill-based Education, Higher Secondary Students

## INTRODUCTION

Career and Technical Education (CTE), also referred to as Skill-Based Education and Training (SET), is a program aimed at preparing students for careers that usually do not require traditional academic coursework. It is sometimes referred to as technical learning, where students acquire specific skills for processes or methods. One approach to independent study at a college or university is through job training, which provides a way to demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary for a particular field. It is a crucial part of training that aligns with the needs of businesses. The value of skill-based training lies in its ability to offer an alternative to traditional educational paths. Students in skill-based education can choose jobs that require specific skills or abilities (Yarriswamy & Dayannavar, 2016). Skill-based training allows individuals to learn the fundamentals of a job, enhance their abilities, or retrain for new roles. Since ancient times, people have learned skills and received specialized training through observation. Skill-based education emphasizes hands-on learning, preparing students to enter their desired fields. Recently, the question has been asked: 'What is skill-based education?' Skill-based programs help prepare students by providing practical, on-the-job training. Through skill-based training, both men and women are prepared for demanding and responsible work. This article focuses on training for jobs that require skills, discipline, and knowledge. Job or technical training is sometimes viewed as less rigorous preparation, but skill-based training should be grounded in intelligence. Additionally, it should foster social responsibility, an understanding of human relationships, and leadership skills. This perspective encourages an impartial and non-discriminatory approach to problem-solving (Rathidevi & Sudhakaran, 2019) Although professional workers often seem to live in rural areas, their intellectual and moral backgrounds, particularly their education, significantly impact their expectations and motivations for future internships. Through education and work, life feels more fulfilling. A teenager can become a skilled worker and eventually a full-fledged professional by learning through work. Willingness to work: Learning to work builds self-confidence. Currently, we face a challenge with unemployed youth because our education system lacks a focus on vocational skills. While we can support the economic development of our society and country, we cannot fully harness it due to the lack of vocational education. Consequently, production in our country is lower than in many others. By acquiring work skills, individuals can contribute to the country's productivity and welfare. Learning to work promotes independence, allowing individuals to start earning money while still in high school or college. In the long run, it becomes an asset to them. Expectation of psychological satisfaction: Engaging in work activities can enhance thinking and a sense of accomplishment. Skill-based courses should be adaptable, enabling students to align with their diverse needs, interests, and abilities. When learning to work, individuals gain practical experience, which fosters an appreciation and respect for manual labour. This respect is often absent in purely academic or general education (Shobola, 2022).

## THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The socio-economic situation has led students to become more concerned about employment opportunities after completing courses, particularly skill-based ones. It is crucial to reshape the youth's

attitude toward skill-based education, as this is a pressing issue in the current education system. The emphasis on skill-based courses from the secondary level in NEP 2020 is an encouraging step.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

**Shobola (2022)** conducted a study on secondary school students, teachers, and parents' attitudes toward in-school skill-based training. The aim was to explore differences in the attitudes of these groups toward skill-based education. The study used a descriptive survey research design and concluded that there were significant differences in the attitudes of students, parents, and teachers. It emphasized the need for a shift in societal perceptions, particularly among teachers and parents, to overcome the stigma that vocational education makes students less academically capable.

**Demir et al (2022)** conducted a study on the attitudes of skill-based and technical Anatolian high school teachers toward distance education, using a mixed-method approach with explanatory sequential design. The study aimed to assess teachers' attitudes toward distance education and explore whether differences existed based on their status as culture teachers or their professional seniority. Findings revealed that most teachers felt that motivation levels for both teachers and students in distance education were low.

**Pano (2021)** explored Albanian students' attitudes toward skill-based education and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study, based on a literature review, concluded that attitudes in Albania were generally mixed but leaned more negatively. The review identified societal perceptions of skill-based education as a significant factor affecting students' views.

**Puzari (2020)** investigated attitudes toward skill-based education among secondary school students in Lakhimpur District, Assam, focusing on differences between high and low academic achievers. Using a descriptive survey method, the study found significant differences in attitudes toward skill-based education based on academic performance and geographic location (rural vs. urban).

**Saha (2020)** examined the attitudes of higher secondary school students in Birbhum District toward skill-based education. The study compared the attitudes of rural vs. urban students, as well as Arts vs. Science students. Using a descriptive survey method, the findings indicated that rural students and female students had more positive attitudes toward skill-based education compared to their urban and male counterparts.

**Rathidevi and Sudhakaran (2019)** studied the attitudes of secondary students in Chennai City toward skill-based education. The study aimed to create a reliable tool to assess these attitudes and found that students believed skill-based education offered good career opportunities and was as valuable as academic subjects. A statistically significant difference in attitudes between male and female students was also observed.

**Adewale et al (2017)** explored the attitudes of students and teachers toward skill-based education in secondary schools in Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study aimed to assess the impact of trained manpower in applied sciences, technology, and business. Using questionnaires and statistical analysis, the research found that teacher involvement and motivation in skill-based training positively affected students' attitudes toward these subjects.

**Yarriswamy and Dayannavar (2016)** examined the attitudes of secondary school students toward skill-based education, focusing on differences between government and aided school students. The study found that skill-based education should be valued as highly as traditional academic education, and suggested that special skill-based courses should be offered during school holidays.

**Alnaqbi (2016)** investigated attitudes toward skill-based education and training in the United Arab Emirates, focusing on the influence of parents' and students' attitudes on the decision to enter skill-based education. The study highlighted minimal gender-related differences in attitudes, but noted distinctions between university-bound students and those pursuing other paths.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The researcher conducted the study entitled “**Attitude of Higher Secondary Students Toward Skill-based Education in West Bengal**”

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- ❖ To find out the gender difference regarding the attitudes of Higher Secondary students towards Skill-based Education.
- ❖ To find out the locality difference regarding the attitudes of Higher Secondary students towards Skill-based Education.

## **THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female Secondary Level students toward Skill-based Education.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of rural and urban Secondary Level students toward Skill-based Education.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of rural male and urban male Secondary Level students toward Skill-based Education.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of rural female and urban female Secondary Level students toward Skill-based Education.

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of rural male and urban female Secondary Level students toward Skill-based Education.

**H<sub>06</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of rural female and urban male Secondary Level students toward Skill-based Education.

**H<sub>07</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of Eleven and Twelve Secondary Level students toward Skill-based Education.

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

- **Method:** This study employs the descriptive survey method as its foundation.
- **Population of the study:** The population for this study consisted of all higher secondary-level students in the Cooch Behar district.
- **Sample and Sampling Procedure:**

The population for the present study comprises secondary school-level students. A sample of 203 students was selected using purposive sampling from six (6) schools. (three from urban and three from rural).

- **Tool:** The researcher developed a tool entitled “Attitude of Higher Secondary Students Toward Skill-based Education Scale” to collect data for this study. The scale used in this study was a five-point Likert-type scale comprising 35 items.

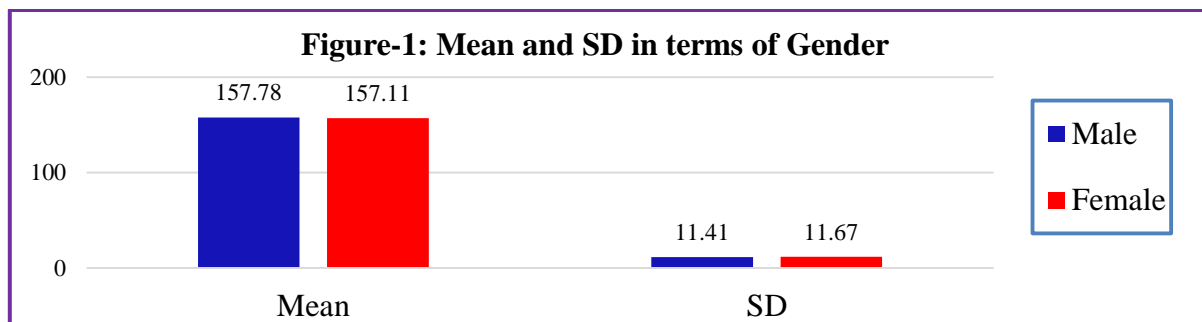
## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis was conducted in accordance with the requirements specified in the statement of objectives and hypotheses.

### Hypothesis 1.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female Secondary Level students toward Skill-based Education.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	‘t’ value	Level of significance
Gender	Male	99	157.78	11.41	201	0.41	Not Significant at 0.05 level
	Female	104	157.11	11.67			

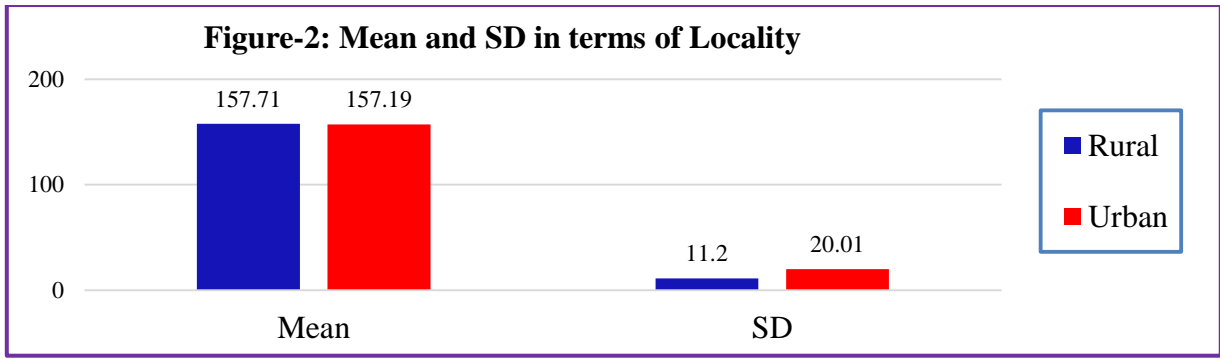


The value is not statistically significant, leading to the acceptance of the corresponding null hypothesis. Therefore, the researcher concluded that there is no significant difference in skill-based education scores between higher secondary-level male and female students.

### Hypothesis 2

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of rural and urban Secondary Level students toward Skill based Education.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	‘t’ value	Level of significance
Locality	Rural	96	157.71	11.20	201	0.32	Not Significant at 0.05 level
	Urban	107	157.19	11.84			

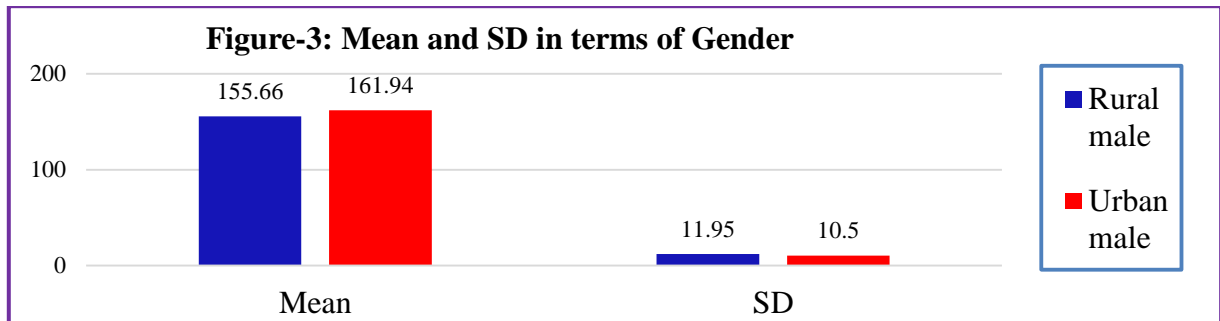


The value is not statistically significant, leading to the acceptance of the corresponding null hypothesis. Consequently, the researcher concluded that there is no significant difference in skill-based education scores between higher secondary-level rural and urban students.

**Hypothesis 3.**

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of rural male and urban male Secondary Level students toward Skill based Education.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	't' value	Level of significance
Gender	Rural male	50	155.66	11.95	97	2.78	Significant at 0.05 level
	Urban male	49	161.94	10.50			

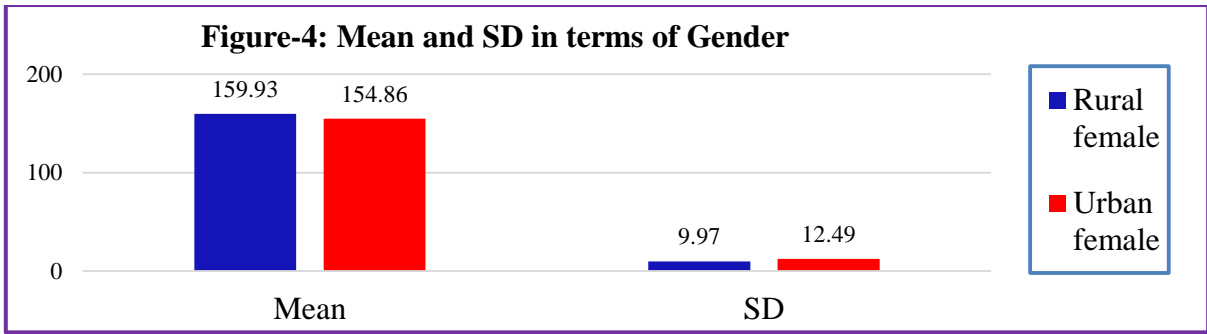


The value is statistically significant, resulting in the rejection of the corresponding null hypothesis. Therefore, the researcher concluded that there is a significant difference in skill-based education scores between higher secondary-level rural male and urban male students.

**Hypothesis 4.**

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of rural female and urban female Secondary Level students toward Skill based Education.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	't' value	Level of significance
Gender	Rural female	46	159.93	9.97	102	2.24	Significant at 0.05 level
	Urban Female	58	154.86	12.49			

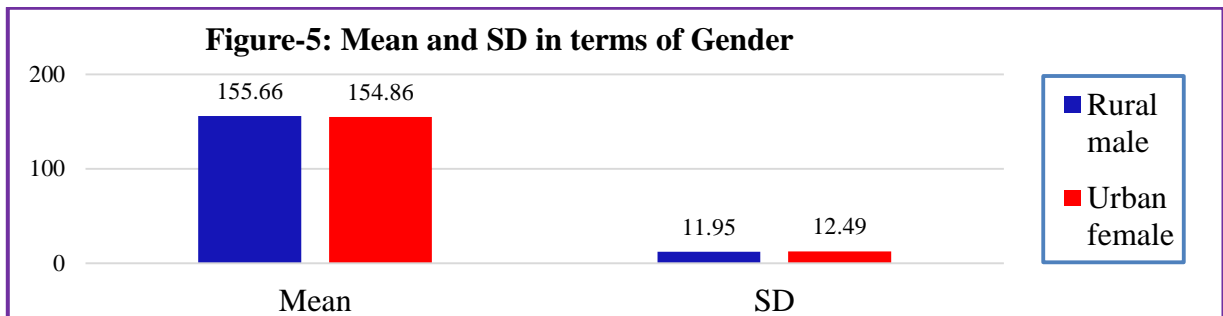


The value is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the corresponding null hypothesis. Thus, the researcher concluded that there is a significant difference in skill-based education scores between higher secondary-level rural male and rural female students.

**Hypothesis 5.**

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of rural male and urban female Secondary Level students toward Skill based Education.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	't' value	Level of significance
<b>Gender</b>	Rural Male	50	155.66	11.95	106	0.34	Not Significant at 0.05 level
	Urban Female	58	154.86	12.49			

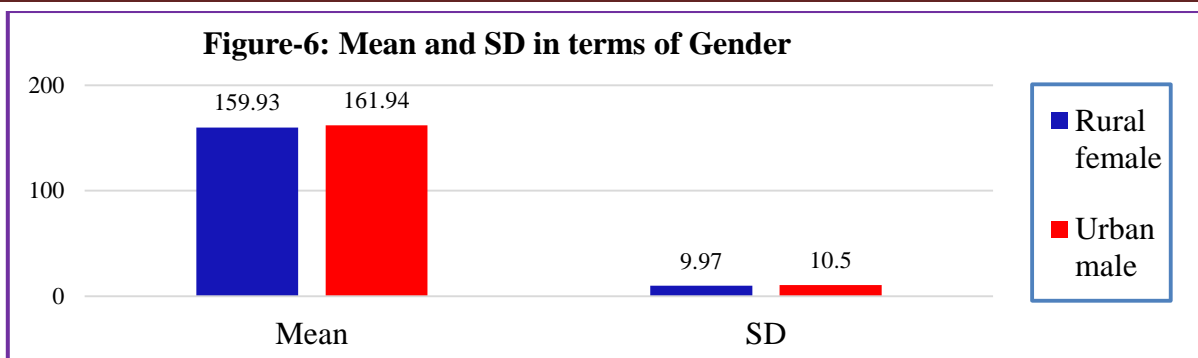


The value is not statistically significant, leading to the acceptance of the corresponding null hypothesis. Therefore, the researcher concluded that there is no significant difference in skill-based education scores between higher secondary-level rural male and urban female students.

**Hypothesis 6.**

**H<sub>06</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of rural female and urban male Secondary Level students toward Skill based Education.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	't' value	Level of significance
<b>Gender</b>	Rural female	46	159.93	9.97	93	0.96	Not Significant at 0.05 level
	Urban Male	49	161.94	10.50			

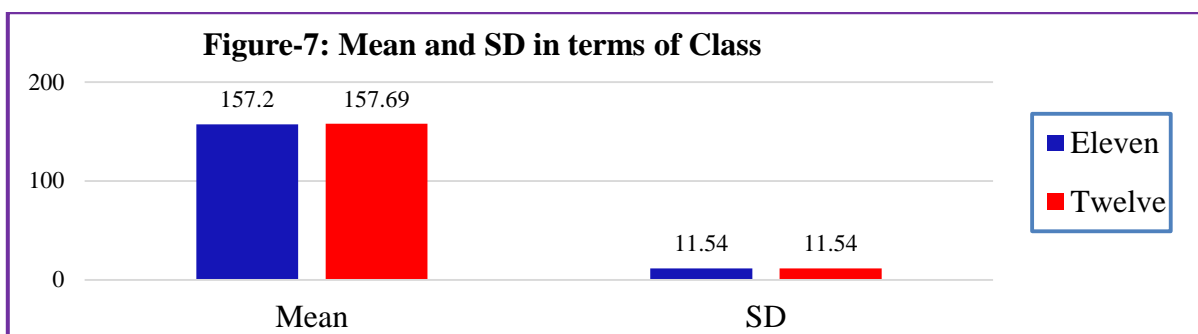


The value is not statistically significant, resulting in the acceptance of the corresponding null hypothesis. As a result, the researcher concluded that there is no significant difference in skill-based education scores between higher secondary-level rural female and urban male students.

### Hypothesis 7.

**H<sub>07</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitudes of Eleven and Twelve Secondary Level students toward Skill-based Education.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t value	Level of significance
Class	Eleven	108	157.20	11.54	201	0.302	Not significant at 0.05 level
	Twelve	95	157.69	11.54			



The value is not statistically significant, leading to the acceptance of the corresponding null hypothesis. Therefore, the researcher concluded that there is no significant difference in skill-based education scores between eleventh and twelfth-grade students at the higher secondary level.

## DISCUSSION

Many students report a lack of awareness regarding career opportunities, available resources, eligibility criteria, and scholarships (Rathidevi & Sudhakaran, 2019). Research indicates that male and female students hold similar attitudes toward skill-based education. Furthermore, studies have found significant differences in the attitudes of students from urban and rural areas toward career preparation, as well as between students with higher and lower levels of education (Puzari, 2020). The findings of this study indicate that parents with poor health negatively affect their children's participation in skill-based education and training (Ayub, 2017). Based on the above findings and discussion, it can be concluded that higher secondary students' attitudes toward skill-based education are independent of gender and residence. Both male and female, rural and urban higher secondary students show positive attitudes toward skill-based



education. However, male students demonstrate slightly higher attitudes toward skill-based education than their female counterparts (Saha, 2020) and rural students show more positive attitudes than urban students.

The study also revealed that urban male students have more positive attitudes toward skill-based education than rural male students, while urban female students exhibit more favorable attitudes than rural female students. Additionally, urban female students demonstrated more positive attitudes toward skill-based education than rural male students. It can be concluded that urban male students generally have slightly higher attitudes toward skill-based education than rural female students. Furthermore, the study showed that twelfth-grade students exhibit slightly higher attitudes toward skill-based education compared to eleventh-grade students.

## CONCLUSION

As a result, it is essential to provide orientation on skill-based education and skill development programs through technology, mass media, and journalism, which are among the most effective agents of change in today's world. Additionally, career counseling should be offered to guide students toward skill-based courses at the higher secondary level, helping them make informed career choices. The study suggests that students recognize the value of skill-based education, understand its benefits, and hold positive attitudes toward it. Staff motivation and involvement in skill-based training play a key role in shaping students' attitudes, leading to increased participation in practical classes. The curriculum should be enhanced to be more comprehensive and to support students in continuing skill practice after secondary school. The government must ensure the availability of sufficient instructional materials, modern equipment, and well-trained teachers. Schools should also collaborate with community centers, associations, NGOs, private companies, and industries to provide practical training and funding, thus promoting both personal and national development.

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