

# Exploring Self-Awareness Life Skills among Undergraduate Students in West Bengal

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## Abstract

The present study explored self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students in West Bengal with reference to gender, academic stream and area of residence. A descriptive survey research design was adopted and data were collected from 1,106 undergraduate students selected from 12 colleges across different districts of West Bengal. Colleges were selected through purposive sampling while students were selected through random sampling to ensure representation across gender, academic streams and residential backgrounds. Data were collected using an adapted Self-Awareness Life Skill Scale covering educational, intellectual, social, physical, family relationship, habit, confidence, communication, achievement barriers, perception towards life, spiritual and emotional dimensions. Descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-test, and ANOVA were employed for data analysis using IBM SPSS. The findings revealed that most undergraduate students possessed average to high levels of self-awareness life skills while only a small proportion showed low levels. Significant differences were observed across gender, academic stream and area of residence. Female, science-stream and urban students demonstrated comparatively higher levels of self-awareness. The findings highlight the need for systematic life-skills education, counselling, self-reflection activities and personal-development programmes in higher education to strengthen students' self-awareness.

**Keywords:** Self-Awareness; Life Skills; Undergraduate Students; Higher Education; West Bengal.

## 1. Introduction

The undergraduate stage is an important period of personal, academic, social and career development. During this stage, students gradually become more independent and are expected to make decisions, manage academic responsibilities, develop relationships and prepare for their future careers. These experiences require students to understand themselves, recognize their strengths and limitations, manage their emotions and make appropriate choices (Khairnar & Kurkure, 2024). Therefore, self-awareness is an important life skill for the holistic development of undergraduate students. Life skills refer to abilities that help individuals deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies self-awareness as one of the core life skills and describes it as the ability to recognize oneself, including one's character, strengths, weaknesses, desires and dislikes (WHO, 1997). Similarly, UNICEF considers self-awareness an important component of life-skills education that supports young people's personal development, well-being and ability to respond effectively to different situations. Self-awareness involves more than simply knowing one's personal

characteristics. It includes awareness of thoughts, emotions, values, beliefs, limitations, motivations and behaviour (Sunilima & Kumar, 2025; Agiande et al., 2024). The importance of self-awareness can also be understood through social cognitive theory. Bandura (1986, 1991) emphasized that individuals actively observe and evaluate their own behaviour and regulate their actions in relation to personal goals and environmental conditions. Self-reflection enables individuals to examine their experiences and capabilities, while self-evaluation helps them identify whether their behaviour is consistent with their goals and standards (Bandura, 1991, 2001).

## **2. Conceptual Background of the Study**

Self-awareness helps individuals recognize how their actions and feelings influence themselves and others. Self-awareness is closely related to self-reflection and self-regulation. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes that individuals are not merely passive recipients of environmental influences; they are capable of observing, evaluating and regulating their own behaviour. Self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-reaction are important processes through which individuals regulate their actions and pursue personal goals (Bandura, 1991). Bandura further explains that human agency involves self-reflectiveness which is the ability to reflect on one's capabilities, functioning and the meaning and purpose of one's activities (Bandura, 2001). Self-awareness also provides a foundation for self-efficacy and personal agency. According to Bandura, self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs about their capability to influence events and perform actions required to achieve desired outcomes. Such beliefs influence motivation, performance and emotional well-being. Self-reflection and self-evaluation therefore contribute to students' ability to set realistic goals, persist in challenging situations and regulate their learning and behaviour (Venkatesh et al., 2020; Goswami, 2019). From an educational perspective, self-awareness is not an isolated psychological characteristic but an important life skill that can be developed through appropriate learning experiences (Monika & Minakshi, 2024). Life-skills education emphasizes active participation, practice, reflection and real-life experiences rather than only theoretical instruction. Developing self-awareness can consequently help students become more reflective, confident, responsible and capable of making informed decisions (Raghu et al., 2026). In the Indian context, the importance of life skills has also received increasing attention. Therefore, examining self-awareness among undergraduate students is relevant for understanding their personal development and preparedness to deal with academic, social, and future professional demands (Yadav, 2025; Anisha et al., 2023). Against this background, the present study entitled "Exploring Self-Awareness Life Skills among Undergraduate Students in West Bengal" seeks to examine the level of self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students and to determine whether these skills differ across selected demographic and educational variables.

## **3. Objectives of the Study**

Based on the primary focus of the present study, the researcher fixed the following objectives –

1. To find out the level of self-awareness life skill among undergraduate with relation to their gender, academic stream and area of residence.
2. To compare the self-awareness life skill between male and female undergraduate students.
3. To compare the self-awareness life skill among arts, commerce and science undergraduate students.
4. To compare the self-awareness life skill among rural, semi-urban and urban undergraduate students.

#### **4. Hypotheses of the Study**

In accordance with the objectives of the present study, the researcher formulated the following null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) for the statistical testing:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students with respect to their self-awareness life skills.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference among undergraduate students from different academic streams (arts, commerce and science) with respect to their self-awareness life skills.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference among undergraduate students from different area of residence (Rural, Semi-Urban and Urban) with respect to their self-awareness life skills.

#### **5. Methodology of the Study**

##### **5.1 Research Design**

The present study adopted a descriptive survey research design to assess self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students in West Bengal. The study also examined differences in self-awareness life skills with respect to selected demographic variables such as gender, locality, and stream of study.

##### **5.2 Population and Sample**

The population of the study comprised undergraduate students studying in colleges and universities in West Bengal. A sample of 1106 undergraduate students was selected from 12 colleges representing different districts of West Bengal. The sample included students from arts, commerce and science academic streams. Also, the area of residence of the participants was rural, semi-urban and urban location.

##### **5.3 Sampling Technique**

The participants were selected using random sampling but the colleges were selected by purposive sampling. Efforts were made to ensure adequate representation of students across gender, academic stream and area of the residence.

##### **5.4 Tool for Data Collection**

Data were collected using an adopted self-awareness life skill scale which was first developed by Prof. Adam Paul Patteti and Prof. Sankara Pitchiah Podia, 2020. The scale measures different dimensions of self-awareness, such as education, intellectual, social, physical, relationship with family, habit, confidence, communication skill, barriers in achievement, perception towards life, spiritual and emotional. The responses were scored according to the prescribed procedure of the scale. Higher scores indicated a higher level of self-awareness life skills.

##### **5.6 Adaptation of Tools**

The selected standardized tools were adapted by reviewing their content and making necessary modifications to improve clarity, relevance and appropriateness for the study population without changing the original constructs to ensure the suitability of the tools for the present study.

##### **5.6.1 Reliability of the Test**

Coefficient of reliability was computed by test-retest method, Spearman Brown method and Cronbach's Alpha method. The results of the different types of reliability is presented in the following table-

**Table 1**

**Showing the inter-correlations among various area of self-awareness (n=200)**

| Sl. No | Types of reliability | Characteristics of reliability      | value |
|--------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 1      | Test-retest          | Coefficient of stability            | 0.71  |
| 2      | Split half           | coefficient of internal consistency | 0.83  |
| 3      | Cronbach's alpha     | Internal consistency                | 0.91  |

## 5.6.2 Validity of the test

The content validity of the test was established by critical discussions with the 10 experts at the time of development of preliminary draft of self-awareness test. The split half reliability coefficient of 0.73 was also fairly high and ensured intrinsic validity of self-awareness test. This is expressed by the inter correlations of the area of the scale and the correlation between the area scores on the hand and the total scores of the scale on the other hand. The list of 60 items was administered on 200 students of age 18-30 years. High and low groups were formulated on the basis of obtained scores of the subjects.

## 5.7 Procedure of Data Collection

The researchers visited the sample colleges and arranged meetings with the principals. After successful meetings, the principals granted permission and set a date for data collection. On the assigned date, the researcher arrived at the college on time with required materials and distributed the tool to the undergraduate female students as planned. After completion of the response by the students, they returned the tool to the researcher. The researcher collected the tools and stored carefully.

## 5.8 Statistical Techniques

The researcher scored the responses of the participants in numerical value as per the scoring procedure and stored in excel sheet. All data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 20 statistical software. Descriptive statistics like frequency, percentage, means and standard deviation etc. are calculated. Also, the researcher analysed the independent sample "t" test, ANOVA for further analysis.

## 5.9 Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality of their responses was maintained throughout the research process.

## 6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from the undergraduate students were systematically organized, coded, and analysed using appropriate statistical techniques. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to examine the level of self-awareness life skills and to test the hypotheses formulated for the study.

## 6.1 Level of Self-Awareness Life Skills

**Table 2**

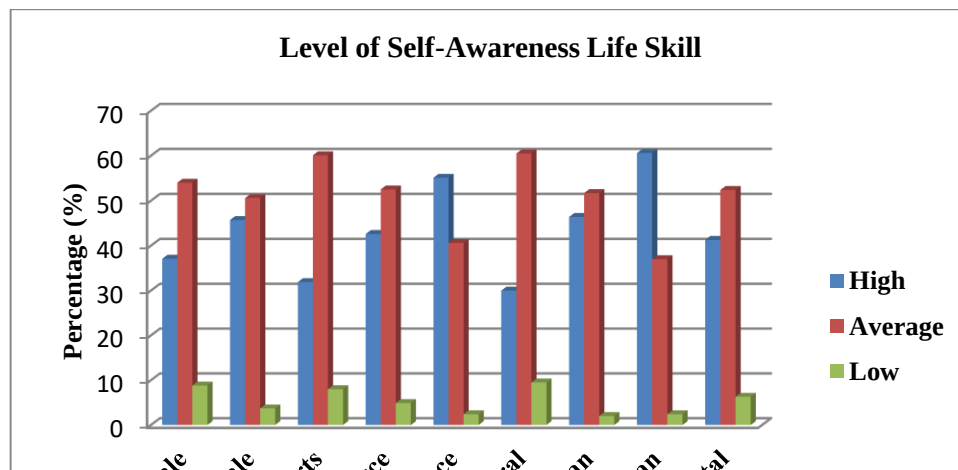
**Level of Self-Awareness Life Skills among Undergraduate Students According to Their Gender, Academic Stream and Area of Residence**

| Variables         |            | High |      | Average |      | Low |     |
|-------------------|------------|------|------|---------|------|-----|-----|
|                   |            | F    | %    | F       | %    | F   | %   |
| Gender            | Male       | 211  | 37.1 | 307     | 54.0 | 50  | 8.8 |
|                   | Female     | 246  | 45.7 | 272     | 50.6 | 20  | 3.7 |
| Academic Stream   | Arts       | 188  | 31.9 | 354     | 60.1 | 47  | 8.0 |
|                   | Commerce   | 52   | 42.6 | 64      | 52.5 | 6   | 4.9 |
|                   | Science    | 217  | 55.1 | 160     | 40.6 | 8   | 2.4 |
| Area of Residence | Rural      | 187  | 30.0 | 378     | 60.5 | 59  | 9.5 |
|                   | Semi-Urban | 70   | 46.4 | 78      | 51.7 | 3   | 2.0 |
|                   | Urban      | 200  | 60.6 | 122     | 37.0 | 8   | 2.4 |
| Total             |            | 457  | 41.3 | 579     | 52.4 | 70  | 6.3 |

Table represents the level of self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students according to their gender, academic stream and area of residence. This indicated that the majority of students possessed an average and high level of self-awareness life skills. Majority of students possessed an average and high level of self-awareness life skills. This finding showed that the female, science and urban undergraduate students exhibited comparatively better self-awareness life skills than their counterparts. This result revealed that the majority undergraduate students exhibited average and high self-awareness life skills level but very minimum undergraduate students showed low level self-awareness life skills. The above analysis is further supported by the graphical representation shown in the following Figure.

**Figure 1**

**Level of Self-Awareness Life Skills among Undergraduate Students According to Their Gender, Academic Stream and Area of Residence**



## 6.2 Comparison of Self-Awareness Life Skills between Male and Female

**Table 3**

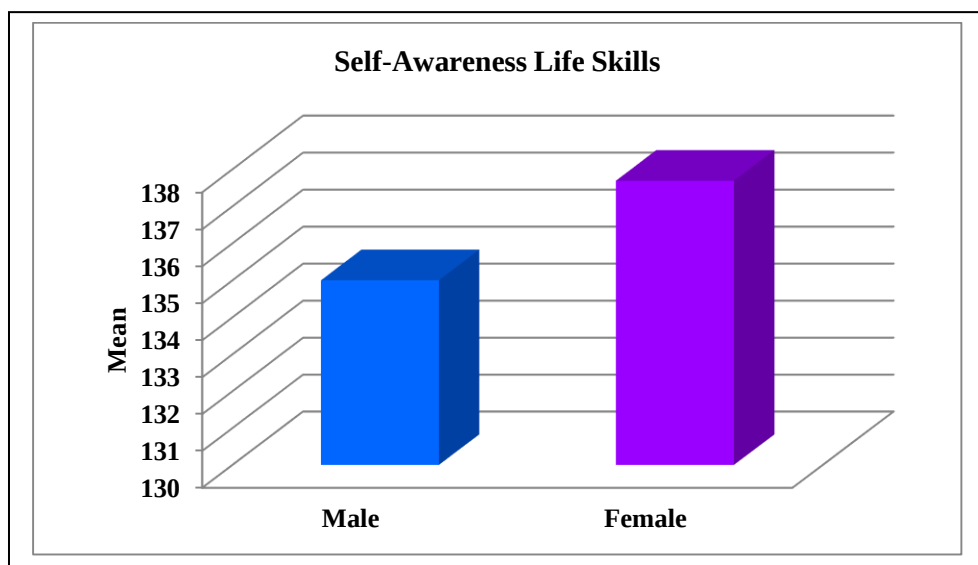
**t-test Showing the Difference in Self-Awareness Life Skills Between Male and Female Undergraduate Students**

| Gender | N   | Mean   | SD     | SEM   | df   | t-value | Sig.  |
|--------|-----|--------|--------|-------|------|---------|-------|
| Male   | 568 | 135.00 | 10.930 | 0.459 | 1104 | 4.189   | 0.000 |
| Female | 538 | 137.69 | 10.396 | 0.448 |      |         |       |

The above table presents the results of the independent samples t-test in self-awareness life skills between male and female undergraduate students. The results showed that female students obtained a higher mean self-awareness life skills score than male students. The calculated t-value was 4.189. So, the difference between male and female undergraduate students in self-awareness life skills was found statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). So, the null hypothesis stating that “there is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students with respect to their self-awareness life skills” was rejected. The above analysis is further supported by the graphical representation shown in the following Figure.

**Figure 2**

**Bar Diagram Showing the Mean of Self-Awareness Life Skills between Male and Female Undergraduate Students**



### 6.3 Comparison of Self-Awareness Life Skills among Arts, Commerce and Science

**Table 4**

**One-Way ANOVA Showing the difference in Self-Awareness Life Skills among the Undergraduate Students of Different Academic Streams**

|                | Sum of Squares | df   | Mean Square | F      | Sig.  |
|----------------|----------------|------|-------------|--------|-------|
| Between Groups | 13265.119      | 2    | 6632.559    | 63.887 | 0.000 |
| Within Groups  | 114509.508     | 1103 | 103.816     |        |       |
| Total          | 127774.627     | 1105 |             |        |       |

The above table indicated the one-way ANOVA in Self-Awareness Life Skills among undergraduate students of different academic streams. The result indicated a statistically significant difference among undergraduate students from different academic streams in their self-awareness life skills. This finding suggested that undergraduate students from different academic streams differed significantly in their levels of self-awareness life skills. Science students demonstrated the highest level of self-awareness life skills followed by commerce students while arts students demonstrated the lowest level. The findings showed that academic stream had a significant association with the level of self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that “There is no significant difference among undergraduate students from different academic streams (arts, commerce and science) with respect to their self-awareness life skills” was rejected.

**Table 5**

**Multiple Comparisons of Self-Awareness Life Skills among undergraduate Students from Different Academic Streams**

| (I) Academic Stream | (J) Academic Stream | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig.  | 95% Confidence Interval |             |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                     |                     |                       |            |       | Lower Bound             | Upper Bound |
| Arts                | Commerce            | -2.703*               | 1.014      | 0.029 | -5.19                   | 0-.22       |
|                     | Science             | -7.487*               | 0.663      | 0.000 | -9.11                   | -5.86       |
| Commerce            | Arts                | 2.703*                | 1.014      | 0.029 | 0.22                    | 5.19        |
|                     | Science             | -4.784*               | 1.055      | 0.000 | -7.37                   | -2.20       |
| Science             | Arts                | 7.487*                | 0.663      | 0.000 | 5.86                    | 9.11        |
|                     | Commerce            | 4.784*                | 1.055      | 0.000 | 2.20                    | 7.37        |

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The above table exhibits the Scheffe multiple comparison analysis of Self-Awareness Life Skills among undergraduate students from different academic streams. The findings showed that significant differences in Self-Awareness Life Skills among undergraduate students from different academic streams i.e., arts, commerce and science. The Scheffe multiple comparison analysis showed that arts,

commerce and science academic streams varied significantly from one another in their level of self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students. Science students demonstrated the highest level of self-awareness life skills followed by commerce students while arts students demonstrated the lowest level. The findings showed that academic stream had a significant association with the level of self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students.

**Table 6**

**Homogeneous Subsets Showing Mean Self-Awareness Life Skills of undergraduate Students from Different Academic Streams**

| Academic Stream                                                                                                       | N   | Subset for alpha = 0.05 |          |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|----------|---------|
|                                                                                                                       |     | Arts                    | Commerce | Science |
| Arts                                                                                                                  | 589 | 133.34                  |          |         |
| Commerce                                                                                                              | 122 |                         | 136.04   |         |
| Science                                                                                                               | 395 |                         |          | 140.83  |
| Sig.                                                                                                                  |     | 1.000                   | 1.000    | 1.000   |
| Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.                                                                |     |                         |          |         |
| a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 241.426.                                                                          |     |                         |          |         |
| b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed. |     |                         |          |         |

The above table presents the homogeneous subsets showing mean self-awareness life skills of undergraduate students from different academic streams using the Scheffe post-hoc test. The purpose of the analysis is to identify the pattern of similarity or difference among the mean scores of arts, commerce and science students. Therefore, science students demonstrated the highest level of self-awareness life skills followed by commerce students whereas arts students demonstrated the lowest level. The findings are consistent with the preceding Scheffe multiple comparisons results and confirm that self-awareness life skills varied significantly according to academic stream.

#### 6.4 Comparison of Self-Awareness Life Skills among Rural, Semi-Urban and Urban

**Table 7**

**One-Way ANOVA Showing the difference in Self-Awareness Life Skills among the Undergraduate Students of Different Area of Residence**

|                | Sum of Squares | df   | Mean Square | F      | Sig.  |
|----------------|----------------|------|-------------|--------|-------|
| Between Groups | 14043.063      | 2    | 7021.532    | 68.097 | 0.000 |
| Within Groups  | 113731.564     | 1103 | 103.111     |        |       |
| Total          | 127774.627     | 1105 |             |        |       |

The above table indicated the one-way ANOVA in self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students of different area of residence. The result indicated a statistically significant difference among undergraduate students from different area of residence in their self-awareness life skills. This finding suggested that undergraduate students from different area of residence differed significantly in their levels of self-awareness life skills. Urban students demonstrated the highest level of self-awareness life skills followed by semi-urban students while rural students demonstrated the lowest level. The findings showed that academic stream had a significant association with the level of self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that “There is no significant difference among undergraduate students from different area of residence (Rural, Semi-Urban and Urban) with respect to their self-awareness life skills” was rejected.

**Table 8**

**Multiple Comparisons of Self-Awareness Life Skills among undergraduate Students from Different Area of Residence**

| (I)<br>Residence                                         | (J)<br>Residence | Mean<br>Difference<br>(I-J) | Std.<br>Error | Sig.  | 95% Confidence Interval |                |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------|-------------------------|----------------|
|                                                          |                  |                             |               |       | Lower<br>Bound          | Upper<br>Bound |
| Rural                                                    | Semi-<br>Urban   | -4.268*                     | 0.921         | 0.000 | -6.53                   | -2.01          |
|                                                          | Urban            | -7.973*                     | 0.690         | 0.000 | -9.67                   | -6.28          |
| Semi-<br>Urban                                           | Rural            | 4.268*                      | 0.921         | 0.000 | 2.01                    | 6.53           |
|                                                          | Urban            | -3.705*                     | 0.997         | 0.001 | -6.15                   | -1.26          |
| Urban                                                    | Rural            | 7.973*                      | 0.690         | 0.000 | 6.28                    | 9.67           |
|                                                          | Semi-<br>Urban   | 3.705*                      | 0.997         | 0.001 | 1.26                    | 6.15           |
| *. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level. |                  |                             |               |       |                         |                |

The above table exhibits the Scheffe multiple comparison analysis of self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students from different area of residence. The findings showed that significant differences in self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students from different academic streams i.e., rural, semi-urban and urban. The Scheffe multiple comparison analysis showed that rural, semi-urban and urban area of residence varied significantly from one another in their level of self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students. Urban students demonstrated the highest level of self-awareness life skills followed by semi-urban students while rural students demonstrated the lowest level. The findings showed that academic stream had a significant association with the level of self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students.

**Table 9**

**Homogeneous Subsets Showing Mean Self-Awareness Life Skills of undergraduate Students from Different Area of Residence**

| Residence                                                                                                             | N   | Subset for alpha = 0.05 |            |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|------------|--------|
|                                                                                                                       |     | Rural                   | Semi-Urban | Urban  |
| Rural                                                                                                                 | 624 | 133.34                  |            |        |
| Semi-Urban                                                                                                            | 151 |                         | 137.61     |        |
| Urban                                                                                                                 | 331 |                         |            | 141.31 |
| Sig.                                                                                                                  |     | 1.000                   | 1.000      | 1.000  |
| Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.                                                                |     |                         |            |        |
| a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 266.756.                                                                          |     |                         |            |        |
| b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed. |     |                         |            |        |

The above table presents the homogeneous subsets showing mean self-awareness life skills of undergraduate students from different area of residence using the Scheffe post-hoc test. The purpose of the analysis is to identify the pattern of similarity or difference among the mean scores of rural, semi-urban and urban students. Therefore, urban students demonstrated the highest level of self-awareness life skills followed by semi-urban students whereas rural students demonstrated the lowest level. The findings are consistent with the preceding Scheffe multiple comparisons results and confirm that self-awareness life skills varied significantly according to area of residence.

## 7. Discussion

The present study explored the level of self-awareness life skills among undergraduate students in West Bengal with respect to gender, academic stream and area of residence. Self-awareness is recognised as one of the core life skills that enable individuals to understand their feelings, thoughts, strengths, limitations, values and behaviour. The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies self-awareness as a key psychosocial competency that supports adaptive and positive behaviour and enables individuals to deal effectively with everyday demands and challenges (WHO, 1993, 2020). Majority of students possessed an average and high level of self-awareness life skills. This finding showed that the female, science and urban undergraduate students exhibited comparatively better self-awareness life skills than their counterparts. The majority undergraduate students exhibited average and high self-awareness life skills level but very minimum undergraduate students showed low level self-awareness life skills.

There is considerable scope for strengthening self-awareness among undergraduate students. The WHO framework considers self-awareness an essential life skill alongside decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, interpersonal relationships, empathy and coping with emotions and stress (WHO, 1993, 2020). The findings revealed a significant difference in self-awareness life skills between male and female undergraduate students. The difference between male and female undergraduate students in self-awareness life skills was found statistically significant. Female students had higher self-awareness life skills (Sultana, 2026). Evidence also suggests that self-awareness can be enhanced through structured interventions. Venkatesh et al. (2023) reported improvements among

undergraduate students following a self-awareness-focused life-skills intervention using activity-based and participatory approaches.

The study revealed substantial variation in self-awareness life skills across Arts, Commerce, and Science streams. The higher self-awareness among Science students may be related to differences in academic experiences, learning activities, problem-solving demands, and opportunities for analytical thinking (Sardar & Paria, 2025; Rathod, 2022). However, this interpretation should be made cautiously because the present study did not directly investigate the reasons for the stream-wise differences. A recent study among college-going students in southern West Bengal examined emotional intelligence including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills across gender, residential location and academic stream, demonstrating the relevance of examining psychosocial characteristics in relation to students' educational backgrounds (Banerjee & Ghosh, 2023). The present findings therefore suggest that academic stream is associated with variation in self-awareness, although the academic stream itself should not be considered the sole explanation. Differences in students' interests, academic environments, learning styles, peer groups and opportunities for personal development may also contribute to the observed variation (Raghu et al., 2026). The study further revealed significant differences in self-awareness life skills according to area of residence. The higher level of self-awareness among urban students may be associated with differences in educational exposure, access to information, social interaction, extracurricular opportunities and opportunities for personal development (George & Singh, 2025). Nevertheless, these possible explanations were not directly measured in the present study and should therefore be regarded as possible interpretations rather than established causes (Shelly, 2021). The finding is particularly relevant in the context of West Bengal, where undergraduate students may experience considerable differences in educational and social environments across rural, semi-urban and urban settings. Therefore, institutions serving students from rural backgrounds may need to provide additional opportunities for self-reflection, counselling, group activities, communication and personal-development programmes.

## **8. Conclusion**

The self-awareness provides a foundation for self-reflection, self-evaluation, self-regulation, and effective interpersonal functioning. It also involves understanding how one's behaviour may affect other people. Individuals can evaluate their experiences, identify areas for improvement and make more realistic and responsible decisions. UNICEF places self-awareness within the empowerment dimension of its comprehensive Life Skills Framework and associates it with self-esteem, self-care and dignity affirmation. The development of self-awareness is particularly important during undergraduate education. Undergraduate students experience important academic, social, personal and career-related transitions. They are expected to make independent decisions, establish goals, manage relationships, respond to challenges and prepare for future employment and adult responsibilities. These demands require students to understand their strengths and weaknesses, recognize their emotions, evaluate their choices and modify their behaviour when necessary.

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