Mental Health and Well-being of School Students

– A Survey, 2022 –

Key Findings

सत्यमेव जयते

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– A Survey, 2022 –

Key Findings

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MESSAGE

The importance of mental health and well-being, especially among school going students has been acknowledged by National Education Policy, 2020. As we are aware that the mental health is extremely important in schools as they have an essential role to play in supporting students to enable a state of well-being where students can meet their learning potential, cope with stress, and openly connect with their friends and community. It is in this context, 'Manodarpan' an initiative, was launched by the Ministry of Education under the AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, to address mental health and well-being concerns of students. Along with various other activities, a Mental Health Survey was conducted by the Manodarpan Cell, NCERT on the students across the country. This is the first time that such a comprehensive survey on mental health of school-going children has been conducted.

It is heartening to see the participation of the students who have willingly shared information about their personal, social and academic life. The findings from this survey will certainly be useful for teachers, educational administrators, policy makers and educationists while preparing and planning pragmatic policies and programmes focusing on enhancing the mental well-being of students which will foster their overall growth, well-being and happiness.

I convey my best wishes to the team in this endeavor and a heartfelt thanks to all the children who had participated in this survey and made it a success.

(Dharmendra Pradhan)

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**MINISTER OF STATE
FOR EDUCATION
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

संदेश

नीति निर्माताओं के लिए विद्यार्थियों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य से संबंधित मुद्दे एक महत्वपूर्ण सरोकार है। शिक्षा मंत्रालय ने यह महसूस किया कि विद्यार्थियों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य एवं भावनात्मक कल्याण को भी समान महत्व दिए जाने की आवश्यकता है। इसलिए, आत्मनिर्भर भारत अभियान के अंतर्गत मंत्रालय ने 'मनोदर्पण' नामक एक पहल शुरू की, जिसका उद्देश्य कोविड महामारी के दौरान और उसके बाद भी विद्यार्थियों, शिक्षकों और परिवारों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य एवं कल्याण के लिए उन्हें मनोसामाजिक सहायता प्रदान करना है।

एनसीईआरटी में स्थित मनोदर्पण प्रकोष्ठ पिछले दो वर्षों से विद्यार्थियों, शिक्षकों एवं परिवारों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य से संबंधित मुद्दों और समस्याओं के समाधान के लिए विभिन्न प्रकार की गतिविधियाँ कर रहा है। मनोदर्पण पहल के अंतर्गत स्कूली विद्यार्थियों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य एवं कल्याण से संबंधित पक्षों के प्रत्यक्ष ज्ञान को समझने के लिए एक 'स्कूली विद्यार्थियों का मानसिक स्वास्थ्य एवं कल्याण - एक सर्वेक्षण, 2022' किया गया।

मुझे इस बात की अत्यंत खुशी है कि सर्वेक्षण के निष्कर्ष बच्चों की समग्र शिक्षा में योगदान देने वाले पहलुओं को मजबूत करने के लिए दिशा प्रदान करेंगे। मैं आशा करती हूँ कि इससे राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति, 2020 के दृष्टिकोण को आगे बढ़ाने में अवश्य सहायता मिलेगी।

(अन्नपूर्णा देवी)

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v

अनीता करवल, भा.प्र.से
सचिव

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Secretary

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सत्यमेव जयते

MESSAGE

The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 emphasizes students' mental health and well-being in order to promote their holistic development. Mental well-being is interlinked with all aspects of health—physical, social and emotional.

The Manodarpan initiative of Ministry of Education had undertaken the task of conducting a survey to gauge the present status of mental health and well-being of students at the middle and secondary stages of education. As the students move from the middle to secondary stage there are enormous changes both at the personal and school level like roles, responsibilities and relationships, which impact their mental and emotional well-being.

The survey was undertaken with the aim to gain an understanding of the perception of school students on different aspects of mental health and well-being. A total of 3,79,842 students participated in the survey between January to March, 2022 from all States and Union Territories of the country. The survey throws light on the present day reality of students' in their personal, emotional, social life, challenges related to educational and career choices, dealing with the stress and anxiety related to competitions, academics, etc.

The significance of the survey is that it provides an understanding of factors affecting mental health more as contributing to well-being of students and, therefore, the findings have implications for efforts being made under the NEP, 2020 to promote holistic development of the students.

(Anita Karwal)

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Foreword

Mental health issues among students have been a concern for policy makers. Taking cognizance of this, the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 highlights the urgent need for ensuring 'not only cognitive development, but also building character and creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with key 21st century skills'. It is also vital that education nurtures the development of competencies such as communication, cooperation, team work and resilience among students.

To take forward the vision of NEP, *Manodarpan*, an initiative of the Ministry of Education (MoE) as part of *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan* is aimed to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for mental health and emotional well-being during the times of COVID-19 and beyond. The *Manodarpan* Cell, NCERT undertakes several activities which focus on extending support and addressing the mental health concerns like stress and anxiety of a target population (students, teachers and families).

Sound mental health and well-being of students create the foundational base for the holistic development and nurturance of students; and for imparting life skills that assist them in their growth, self-preservation and sustainable development. The policy has reiterated that affective components in child's learning are an integral component of the school curriculum and functioning.

As a part of the initiative, the *Manodarpan* Cell undertook the task of conducting the Mental Health and Well-being of School Students—A Survey, 2022 to help understand the perceptions of school students on aspects related to their mental health and well-being. The findings of the survey provide inputs for strengthening aspects contributing to the holistic education of children thereby taking forward the vision of NEP, 2020.

I extend my gratitude to the Secretary, School Education, Ms. Anita Karwal and *Additional Secretary* Ms. L.S. Changsan for envisioning the Survey and for entrusting its responsibility to the *Manodarpan* Cell, NCERT. I also thank the Ministry of Education, Government of India for all the support received in our efforts.

Dinesh Prasad Saklani
Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

New Delhi
5th September 2022

Executive Summary

The *National Education Policy 2020* emphasises students' mental health and well-being in order to provide holistic development. It also instils in students qualities and life skills that aid in their growth, self-preservation and sustainable development. Students' mental health and well-being are known as an important precursor for ensuring optimal performance, both, in and outside school life. Childhood and adolescence (the stages of development, which are majorly spent in school) are critical periods when students develop a long-term mindset towards personal well-being and lifestyle choices. The social and emotional skills, knowledge and behaviours that students learn both inside the classroom as well as in other spaces in the school, help them build capacities of adaptability, adjustment and resilience and sets the pattern for how they will manage their physical and mental health throughout their lives. Strong, supportive and trusting relationships, at home and also in school, provide students with the emotional resources to step out of their 'comfort zone' and explore new ideas, engage with understanding varied perspectives and ways of thinking, which are foundational for strengthening one's mental health and well-being and thus ensuring holistic development among students. It is important to understand that mental well-being is interlinked with all aspects of health—physical, social, emotional and compromising on any of the aspects necessarily has an impact on the rest.

The present survey was undertaken to explore the perception of students with regard to their mental health. Mental health is known to be more than just an absence of a disorder and since the population was of school-going students, their mental health was explored from the perspective of mental well-being. The items of the survey gave an opportunity to the students to reflect and introspect their feelings and emotions on aspects that positively or negatively influence their perceptions of well-being. The survey is a bird's eye view of the perception of students on different aspects related to mental health and well-being. In view of this, the survey provides important leads in the area of mental health and well-being of students that can be the basis for taking up related work in school curriculum, teacher education curriculum, and other areas related to education of children.

The respondents of the survey are from different schools across the country, at middle and secondary stages of education. There is a need to take cognizance of the influence of students' developing qualities, capabilities and experiences in different settings, such as parents, teachers, peers and those in broader social and cultural contexts.

Major developmental changes in children during the middle to secondary stages include advances in cognitive capacities and strategies, self-reflective skills, self-regulation abilities, reasoning and logical thinking, perspective-taking, and expanded socialisation. The school and classroom

environments also typically change with the stages of education. As the students move from the middle to the secondary stage the changes are enormous both in the social as well as the school contexts. Some of these involve increasing emphasis on academic skills, personal independence, social interactions, peer relationships , career concerns, increased subject specialisations, increasingly structured academic tasks, comparisons with their classmates and evaluation according to performance standards, etc. All these results in their changed roles, responsibilities and relationships, which impact their mental and emotional well-being .

As students move through the middle and secondary stages of education, they face various changes and challenges. However, due to individual differences their perception vary. It is important from an educational standpoint to recognise that the variations are seen as 'differences' among students and not indications of 'deficits'. Especially, in view of NEP 2020, it is vital to take pro-active measures and plan psycho-educational interventions based on these differences, which will facilitate all students in maximising their potential.

The survey attempted to present the perception of students with regard to aspects of personal self (ability to adapt to changes, trusting others, satisfaction with life, responsibility for doing well in life, body image, perspective taking, lack of confidence), social self (perception of being a happy person, being a leader, trustworthiness, peer pressure) and academic perception (satisfaction with academics, anxiety related to academics, studies, seeking social approval, experience of online learning). It also explored the feelings and emotions experienced and their preferred coping strategies.

The survey was undertaken with the aim to gain an understanding of the perception of school students on different aspects of mental health and well-being. The survey was conducted through Google form covering students across gender, grades VI–VIII (middle stage) and IX–XII (secondary stage) and schools across the country. The link for Google form was shared with the Ministry of Education (MoE) for data collection from the states/schools. A total of 3,79,013 students participated in the survey between January to March 2022 from 28 States and 8 Union Territories of the country.

To provide a comprehensive understanding on different aspects of the student's mental health the findings are reported as students' perception of: (i) their own-selves, (ii) self, as viewed in the social context, (iii) satisfaction with life (personal and school), (iv) emotions experienced, (v) fears and challenges and (vi) strategies for coping and managing their emotions. The data was analysed to portray salient features of the students' mental health and well-being, as perceived by them. Self-perception is at the core of one's knowledge about oneself and is personal in nature. It was, therefore, considered as reflecting children's voices.

The overall survey findings demonstrate that the students feel responsible for doing well in their life followed by experiencing satisfaction with school life. A majority of students considered themselves to be trustworthy and do not hesitate in seeking social support, which is a protective factor for

maintaining a state of mental well-being. The survey also reports that the most common emotion/feeling experienced is happiness. Frequent mood swings along with feeling anxious about studies, examinations and results was also reported highest among students.

The overall data when looked at from a gender perspective reveals that both boys and girls perceive doing well in life as their own responsibility and also report higher satisfaction with school life. Although happiness was the most commonly experienced emotion, boys responded experiencing marginally higher than girls. This was followed by anxiousness, with higher responses by girls than boys. Also higher percentage of girls reported feeling anxious about their studies, examination and results and also reported mood swings, feeling tired, tearful and lonely.

As students moved from middle to secondary stage, a visible decline was observed in them feeling confident about their physical appearance, satisfaction with personal and school life, availability of people to share their feelings and experiencing of happiness. At the secondary stage, the students reported feeling more anxious about studies, examination and results. They also reported increased difficulty in concentrating and frequent mood swings. To manage their feelings, both girls and boys chose to talk to friends, followed by sharing with their parents and lastly resolving them on their own. While girls preferred to confide in their parents or resolve by themselves, boys showed more preference towards confiding in their friends. Yoga and meditation, changing the way they think and writing journals were some of the coping strategies adopted, as evident in responses. Specifically, girls' responses demonstrate changing the way they think as the most employed strategy, suggesting use of the ability of self-reflection. However, boys reported a high preference for yoga and meditation.

The perception of respondents who identified themselves as belonging to the third gender, though small in number (N=11), show that most of them are not confident of their physical appearance, and find it difficult to trust others. This is substantiated by most of them reporting non-availability of support to share and discuss their feelings, though most of them stated that they frequently provide help and support to others whenever they can. It was also reported by a majority of students that they would not be respected if they do not do well in studies and hence, most of them perceived studies as the reason for anxiety. School aspects of the survey showed that the group was satisfied with school life, and perceived doing well in life as their own responsibility.

The survey throws light on the present day reality of the wide range of students' concerns in their personal, emotional, social life, challenges related to educational and career choices, dealing with the stress and anxiety related to competitions, academics, etc. The significance of the survey is that it provides an understanding of factors affecting mental health, more as contributing to well-being of students and, therefore, the findings have implications on efforts being made to promote overall development of the students.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Highlights

States 28

UTs 8

Types of School

Kendriya Vidyalayas	1,06,937
Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas	94,034
State Government Schools	84,705
Private Schools	67,156
Eklavya Model Residential Schools	13,820
Sainik Schools	9,032
Demonstration Multipurpose Schools	1,671
National Institute of Open Schooling	1,125
Central Tibetan Schools	284
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas	249

3,79,842

Number of Students

6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12

Participation of Classes

Stage of Education

Middle Stage

1,58,581

Secondary Stage

2,21,261

Number of Gender-wise Participation

1,88,220	1,90,944	11
Girls	Boys	Third Gender

Gender-wise Responses across School Type

Girls	School Type	Boys
45 %	JNV	55 %
51 %	KV	49 %
51 %	State Government	49 %
51 %	Private	49 %
53 %	Eklavya Model Residential	47 %
6 %	Sainik School	94 %
54 %	Demonstration Multipurpose	46 %
47 %	NIOS	53 %
44 %	Central Tibetan	56 %
100 %	Kasturba Gandhi	0 %

Stage-wise Responses across School Type

Middle Stage	School Type	Secondary Stage
42 %	JNV	58 %
43 %	KV	57 %
34 %	State Government	66 %
46 %	Private	54 %
56 %	Eklavya Model Residential	44 %
46 %	Sainik School	54 %
45 %	Demonstration Multipurpose	55 %
26 %	NIOS	74 %
48 %	Central Tibetan	52 %
64 %	Kasturba Gandhi	36 %

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS RESPONSES ON ASPECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH
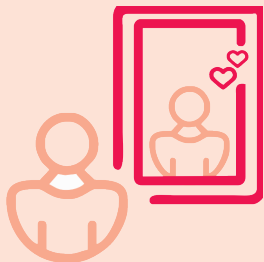
Satisfaction with Body Image — 55%

Satisfaction with Personal life — 51%

Satisfaction with School life — 73%

Responsibility of Doing Well — 84%
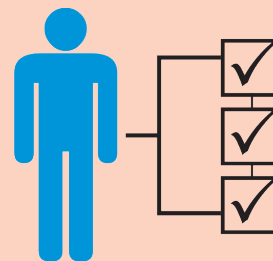
Hesitation in Asking Questions

28.4%

Difficulty in Initiating Conversation

23%
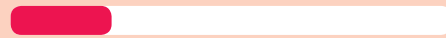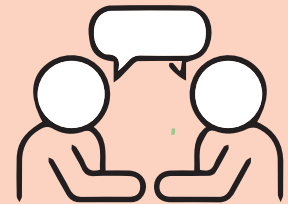
Complying to Peer Pressure most of the time
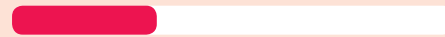
33%

Self-trustworthiness

70%

Perception of Receiving Social Support 58%

Causes of Anxiety (Studies, Exam, Results) 81%

Lack of Concentration 29%

Feeling of Happiness 67%

Feeling of Anxiousness — 11%

Feeling of Extreme Emotions — 14%
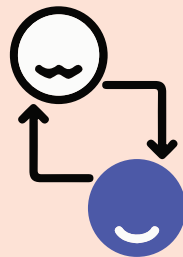
Mood Swings — 43%

Use of Yoga and Meditation for Coping with Stress — 28%

Attempt to Shift Thoughts for Coping with Stress 28%

Lack of Social Interaction in Online Classes 39%

Difficulty in Learning Content Online 51%

Feeling Hopeful in Stressful Situations 39%

Introduction

The *National Education Policy (NEP), 2020* envisions the 'aim of education will not only be cognitive development, but also building character and creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with the key 21st century skills' such as communication, cooperation, team work and resilience. It puts forth that learning that nurtures the development of such competencies among students would enable building character in them. Mental health and well-being of students provide the foundational base for imparting holistic development and nurture in students qualities/life skills that assist them in their growth, self-preservation, and sustainable development. It is important to understand that mental well-being is interlinked with all aspects of health—physical, social, emotional and any compromise in one aspect necessarily has an impact on all other. *NEP, 2020* states "*Children are unable to learn optimally when they are undernourished or unwell. Hence, the nutrition and health (including mental health) need to be addressed through healthy meals and the introduction of well-trained social workers, counsellors, and community involvement into the schooling system*" [pg.9, p2.9].

World Health Organisation (WHO) European Ministerial Conference on Mental Health in 2005, endorsed the statement "No health without mental health". Endorsement of this statement reiterates that the role of mental health is intrinsic and indispensable. Mental health is a state of well-being in which a person is able to cope with the stresses of daily life, continue to be productive and contributes to their community.

The year 2020 saw emergence of the global pandemic COVID-19 which was not only a serious medical concern, but also brought out mixed emotions and psycho-social stress factors for all. The pandemic forced all of us to adjust to the 'new normal'. Closure of educational institutions throughout the country due to the unprecedented developments caused by the COVID-19 pandemic created a situation where students across the country experienced socio-emotional turmoil, as they were worried about the uncertainties lingering around studies and career opportunities in the future. Even though efforts were being made to provide instructional inputs through online mode, there was an absence of the real classroom interaction, support of peer groups and joyful time spent in the school environment. Families, teachers and school authorities also expressed concerns regarding the issues faced by students.

The pandemic situation led to initiation of strong linkages between education and health (physical, mental and emotional) as schools and colleges are seen as places for promoting physical and mental health and well-being. Taking cognizance of this, the Ministry of Education (MoE) as part of *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan* launched *Manodarpan* on 21 July 2020. The initiative aims to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for mental and emotional well-being during COVID-19 and beyond. To achieve this aim a web page of the initiative was created on the website of the MoE and a National Toll-free Helpline (8448440632) was set up to provide tele-counselling to students across schools, colleges, universities and their parents and teachers to address their mental health and psychosocial issues.

To institutionalise efforts at the ground level *NEP, 2020* too has also put much emphasis on Guidance and Counselling for addressing mental health concerns and needs of students and mentioned that *"school complexes are meant for building vibrant teacher communities and such school complexes could also share counsellors, trained social workers, technical and maintenance staff, etc., to further support teachers and help create an effective learning environment"* (pg. 21, p 5.10). To achieve this it is directed *"ensure that every school has: (a) adequate number of counsellors/trained social workers and teachers (shared or otherwise)"*. [pg.29, p 7.5].

Concerted efforts have been made at various levels to address the concerns of the students. However, it is imperative to gather information about the nature, incidence, and extent of the issues faced by the students to provide support and at the same time prepare them to face similar situations in the future. It is in this context a survey of mental health was proposed with the objective of identifying the mental health issues faced by students across the country.

Mental health is more often perceived in terms of disorders, distress, impairments, risks, etc., perhaps as these are more visible because of their intensity. In doing so the focus is primarily on deficits

rather than the affective aspects which include an individual's social and emotional skills, attributes, positive social interactions, support perceived, adaptability, perspective taking among others etc., which serve as protective factors. These factors are experienced differently from one individual to the other, variation can be seen to the extent of difficulty, distress and are a result of complex interplay of individual, social, psychological and biological factors. Well-being factors lay the foundations for positive mental health.

The Mental Health and Well-being of School Students—A Survey (henceforth the Survey) was undertaken to explore the perception of students with regard to their mental health. Mental health is known to be more than just an absence of a disorder. Now, since the population under study were of school students, mental health was hence explored from the perspective of mental well-being. The items were constructed with the aim of getting each student to reflect and introspect on their feelings and emotions on the aspects that positively or negatively influence their perceptions of well-being. Therefore, the survey is a bird's eye view of the perception of mental health and well-being of students themselves. In view of this the survey provides important leads in the area of mental health and well-being of students that can be the basis of taking up more intensive studies.

The findings from the survey will provide inputs to enable handling of mental health and well-being issues and concerns faced by students.

Aim

To gain an understanding of the perception of school students on different aspects of mental health and well-being.

Design

The Survey collected information from students across gender and grades {VI-VIII (middle stage) and IX-XII (secondary stage)} coming from all states and UTs in the country. In order to cover all school types, Google Forms were shared with Government (central and state) and private schools. To ensure maximum representation the survey tool (finalised after the piloting) was shared with schools across all the 28 States and 8 Union Territories of the country.

A total of 3,79,842 students participated in the survey between January to March, 2022. The survey tool which was a self-report online questionnaire for students (Google Form) was developed to elicit their responses with respect to their perceptions about mental health and well-being. Anonymity of participants was ensured by making the name column optional, allowing students the comfort, privacy and independence to respond. The online mode of survey gave adequate scope to students to express their views with minimum interference.

Demographics

Jammu and Kashmir
7,205

Ladakh
4

Chandigarh
30,292

Himachal Pradesh
4,807

Punjab
14,196

Haryana
13,141

Uttarakhand
6,161

Delhi
81,635

Sikkim
1,348

Arunachal Pradesh
1,614

Rajasthan
15,890

Uttar Pradesh
32,161

Bihar
9,880

Assam 5,881

Nagaland
2,025

Meghalaya
1,721

Manipur
3,663

Gujrat
7,385

Jharkhand
9,688

West Bengal
6,484

Madhya Pradesh
18,929

Chhattisgarh
10,115

Mizoram
4,188

Tripura
2,355

Maharashtra
15,383

Odisha
10,444

Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman Diu
925

Telangana
13,551

Andhra Pradesh
9,660

Goa
1,013

Karnataka
16,907

Tamil Nadu
7,618

Puducherry
907

Kerela
10,634

Lakshadweep
25

Andaman Nicobar
1,142

Kendriya Vidyalayas
28%
(n=106937)

Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya
25%
(n=94034)

State Government School
22%
(n=84705)

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
0.1%
(n=249)

Private School
18%
(n=67156)

Central Tibetan School
0.1%
(n=284)

Eklavya Model Residential School
3%
(n=13820)

National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)
0.3%
(n=1125)

Demonstration Multipurpose School
0.4%
(n=1671)

Sainik School
2.4%
(n=9032)

Total Survey Data
379013 + 829* = 379842

*829 did not fill up information with regard to school details
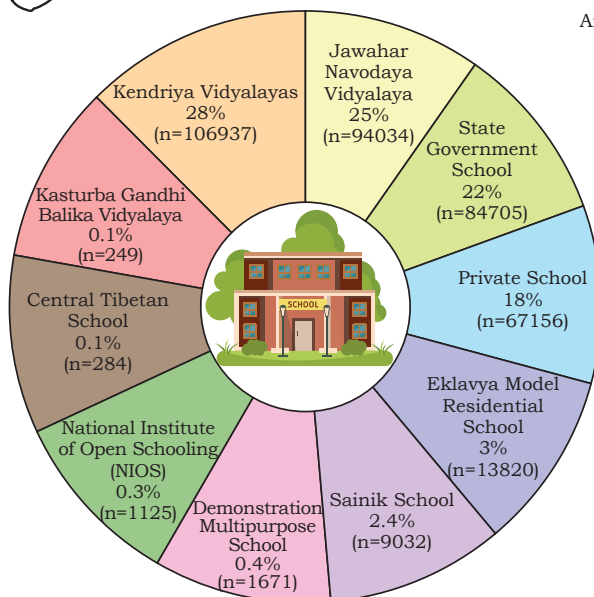
Stage-wise Respondents

School	Middle Stage	Secondary Stage
Kendriya Vidyalaya	43%	57%
Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas	42%	58%
State Government Schools	34%	66%
Private Schools	46%	54%
Eklavya Model Residential Schools	56%	44%
Sainik Schools	46%	54%
Demonstration Multipurpose School	45%	55%
National Institute of Open Schooling	26%	74%
Central Tibetan School	48%	52%
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas	64%	36%

Gender-wise Respondents*

Kendriya Vidyalayas
M (49%), F (51%)
Other Gender (6)

Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas
M (55%), F (45%)

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
M (0%), F (100%)

State Government School
M (49%), F (51%)
Other Gender (3)

Central Tibetan School
M (56%), F (44%)

Private School
M (49%), F (51%)
Other Gender (3)

National Institute of Open Schooling
M (53%), F (47%)

Eklavya Model Residential School
M (47%), F (53%)

Demonstration Multipurpose School
M (46%), F (54%)

Sainik Schools
M (94%), F (6%)

*667 students did not indicate their gender

DATA COLLECTION

The link to the Google Form was provided to the MoE for further sharing with schools. The link was opened for a specific duration and closed on a pre-set date. The data collected was sorted based on the school type, gender and school stage. It was found that there were 829 forms where school type information was not filled. Therefore, this data could not be put under any specific school type. However, their responses on the questions have been included in the section Mental Health and Well-being of School Students— An Overall View.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Research ethics were observed by making participation voluntary. Confidentiality was assured by making the name column optional for those agreeing to take the survey.

FOCUS OF THE SURVEY

The survey has focused on the aspects known to contribute to the mental health and well-being of students. These include students' perception of

(i) their own selves and (ii) self as viewed in social context (iii) satisfaction with life (personal, school and academics) (iv) emotions experienced (v) fears and challenges and (vi) strategies for coping and managing their emotions.

To provide a comprehensive understanding on different aspects of students' mental health, the findings are reported under the following themes:

Students' understanding of self	❑ Students' perceptions of personal and social self ❑ Students' perceptions on academic aspects like studies, exams and results
Emotions experienced	❑ Emotions or feelings ❑ Fears related to Covid-19 ❑ Challenges experienced
Strategies for coping	❑ Regulation of emotions ❑ Coping strategies

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data provides insights about students' perceptions of their mental health and well-being aspects. However, the influence of pandemic as a significant intervening variable in understanding perceptions of students needs to be considered while engaging with the findings of the survey.
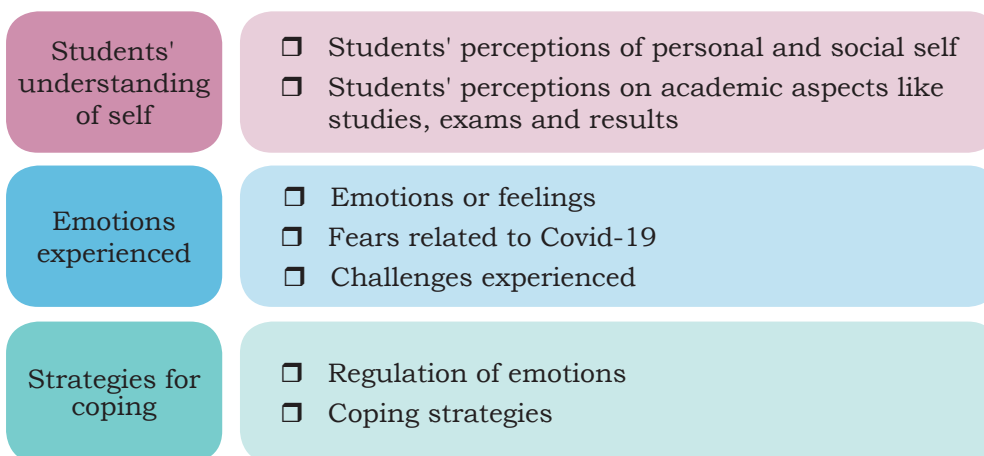
An overall view of all respondents vis-a-vis stage of education and gender is given. A school view of four different types of school (KV, JNV, State Govt., Private) is also presented keeping the selection criteria as representation of students above 50,000.

Data were analysed to portray salient features of students' mental health and well-being, as perceived by them. Self perception is at the core of one's knowledge about oneself and is very personal in nature. It was, therefore, considered as reflecting children's voices.

In order to gain an understanding of different aspects related to students' mental health and well-being, each dimension of the survey as reported by students, was analysed, across settings, stages and gender to make inferences about the potency of their occurrence. The responses provide a broad view, indications of attitudes, beliefs, motivations, socio-emotional and other mental states.

LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

The survey made efforts to seek information from students studying at the middle and secondary stage (Class VI to XII) from different types of schools in the country. Participation in the survey was voluntary and therefore it was limited to those who were willing to take part in it. The survey being conducted through online mode (Google Form) did not have any scope of interaction with the respondents.

Mental Health and Well-being of School Students

An Overall View

Mental health and well-being are significant aspects of every student's development. Emotional well-being is an overall positive state of one's emotions, life satisfaction, sense of meaning and purpose and ability to pursue self-defined goals. The influence of factors such as psychological, social, environmental and life situations on mental health and well-being is well documented. The *Mental Health and Well-being of School Students—A Survey* attempted to gain insights into the perceptions of students related to some of these factors.

The survey explored students' perceptions about their own self and how they think others view them in the context of feelings, academics, relationships, peers, managing emotions, handling challenging situations etc. as these are important determinants which impact mental health.

The spread of COVID-19 pandemic impacted different aspects of life in several spheres, resulting in changes in routine, lifestyle and the ways in which we interact with others. The survey also covered the emotions experienced by students, especially during the unprecedented times of COVID-19, the attempts of continuing teaching learning online and challenges experienced by students.

During the school years, as the students move through different stages of development and experience the changes and challenges specific to their respective stage of development, an educational viewpoint demands that the findings of the survey are seen as 'differences' among students and not 'deficits' in students, especially in view of NEP, 2020 vision for an inclusive education. Understanding students' concerns in the context of their course of development is imperative to take pro-active measures and to plan psycho-educational interventions to facilitate students to maximise their potential.

This section presents a broad view of the given aspects specific to gender and stage (Tables appended).

Perception of students are presented in regard to aspects of personal self (ability to adapt to changes, trusting others, satisfaction, responsibility for

doing well in life, body image, perspective taking, lack of confidence), social self (perceptions of being a happy person, being a leader, trustworthiness, peer pressure) and academic self-perception (satisfaction/anxiety with academics, studies, punctuality, seeking social approval, experience of online learning). The findings also throw light on emotional experiences, challenges experienced and emotions experienced during COVID-19 (changes in routine and self-care), and strategies used for coping.

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS

Children have varied experiences in school (related to learning, classroom teaching, instructions, success or failure, interaction with teacher, principal and other students), which have immense impact on their lives as students and also beyond into adulthood. School environment creates a context for the students to experience a variety of feeling or emotions. These are at the core of the children's lives and form the basis of feeling of self-worth, and therefore, are crucial.

Understanding of One's Own Self

A view gathered of personal self is an individual's perception in regard to being able to adapt, physical appearance, responsibility and satisfaction with personal and school life and confidence.

Adaptability

Ability to adapt to changes in life, relationships or environment is an important life skill which determines how quickly an individual is able to respond to changes.

43% of the total respondents admitted being able to quickly adapt to changes and response of students at middle stage (46%) was higher than students at secondary stage (41%).

Less than half the respondents have reported having the ability to handle unexpected situations, with students at middle stage reflecting being more adaptable than students at secondary stage. Adaptability is an important skill in context of handling situations, crisis and managing relationships.

Adaptability is also an important factor in students' academic and personal development, including their motivation, engagement, achievement and socio-emotional well-being. It is identified as an important personal resource that can help students in their online learning, including periods of remote instruction (such as during COVID-19).

Trusting Others

It helps in relating with others, forming social connections and enhances the quality of relationships.

27% of the students reported that they frequently trust people. Lower percentage of students' responses at both middle stage (27.4%) and secondary stage (26.5%) reflects lower trusting ability among students of both stages.

Satisfaction

Exploring the contentment of students with personal and school life indicates higher satisfaction towards school life in comparison to personal life. Findings show encouraging trend as researches suggest that students' sense of belonging to school has an influence on their academic engagement. Higher school engagement leads to higher academic achievement and reduced likelihood of students dropping out of schools.

73%
very happy with school life

51%
always satisfied with personal life

Decline in satisfaction with personal and school life is seen as students shift from middle to secondary stage. The secondary stage is marked by challenges of identity crisis, increased sensitivity towards relationships, peer pressure, fear of Board examination, anxiety and uncertainty experienced by students for their future admissions, career etc.

81%
58%
68%
46%

Middle Stage   Secondary Stage

■ School Life   ■ Personal Life
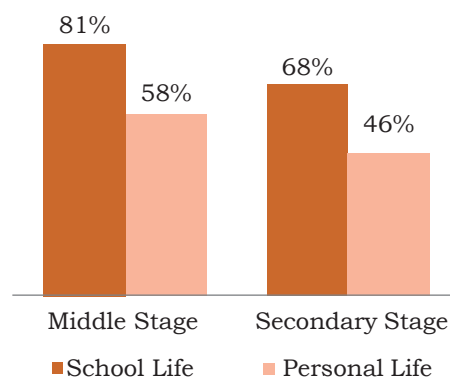
Responsibility of Doing Well in Life

84% of the respondents completely agreed to doing well in life as their responsibility.

The responses of students at middle stage (83%) and secondary stage (84%) indicate marginal differences across the stages and also a higher sense of responsibility for one's own self.

Such an orientation of self indicates that students assume personal responsibility and consider having control over the course of events occurring in their life. In new and unpredictable situations, such people trust their ability to handle situation and also believe they control their success or failure.
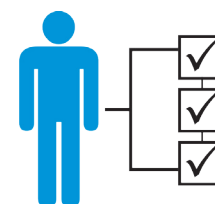
Body Image

An individual's perception of their physical appearance is an important aspect of self-worth. Dissatisfaction with body image/appearance can have harmful emotional, psychological and physiological effects.
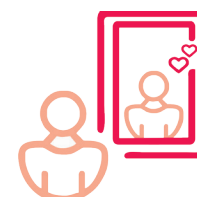
Increased responses of students were seen at the middle stage of education.

Middle Stage   62%

Secondary stage   50%

55% students responded always feeling confident about their physical appearance.

Only a little more than half of the respondents expressed being satisfied with their body image. However, the responses at secondary stage indicate being over critical about body image which is a typical developmental concern of the stage.

Studies suggest that physical appearance and body image may influence perceived health especially during adolescence, which is a period of increased self-reflection and evaluation of body and appearance.

Perspective Taking

It is the ability to place oneself in others' situation and recognise their point of view. Perspective taking is important for understanding people and their situations and is an essential skill for building healthy relationships.

31%
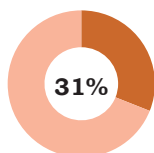
Respondents are able to easily talk to people having different viewpoints.

The responses, though less, were similar for middle stage (30.6%) and secondary stage (31.3%). Being a critical ability, which is at the core of experiential learning and developing relationships, such less numbers has implications for students' abilities to practise critical thinking and interact effectively with others.

Confidence

An individual's confidence is impacted by how they perceive themselves. A lower level of confidence often leads to difficulty in expressing one's thoughts to others.

28.4% of the respondents were hesitant to ask questions when having difficulties in understanding. Slightly more students at secondary stage reported being hesitant to ask questions.

29%
Secondary Stage

27%
Middle Stage

23% students expressed frequently facing difficulty in initiating conversations. In the middle and secondary stage, 22% and 23% students respectively expressed facing this difficulty, reflecting not much difference across both stages.

Hesitation and lack of confidence as revealed in responses indicate difficulty in initiating conversations.

This suggests creating conditions in classrooms for students to express freely without the fear of being reprimanded or ridiculed.

10
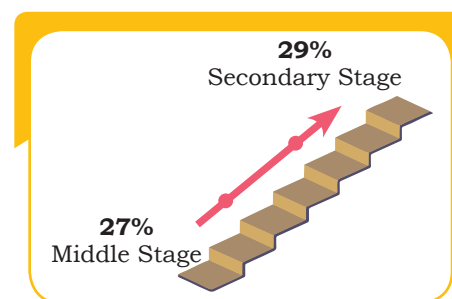
The lack of confidence can adversely affect the learning of students, lead to feeling of insecurity, fearfulness, anxiety, etc. Studies support that having self-confidence leads students to improved participation, sharing their experience and opinions in the classroom.

Understanding of One's Self in Social Context

In context of social situations, we perceive ourself in relation to others. It is a significant influencer of overall mental well-being. Satisfying social interactions enhance our well-being, lack of or negative social interaction increases the risk of mental health issues. Dimensions of social self like social interaction, perception of qualities, behaviours in social situations, and peer pressure have been explored in this section.

Happiness

The perception of how others view an individual is related to one's own idea of social competence. It also affects how individual behaves in social situations.

55%
Secondary Stage

57%
Middle Stage
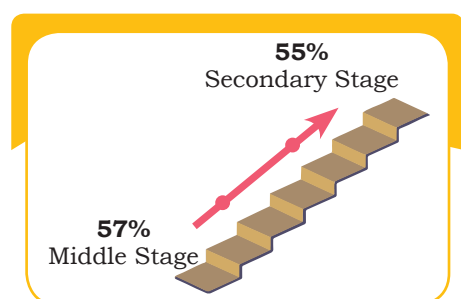
56% reported others consider them as happy person.

Just a little above 50% students expressed being perceived as happy by the people in their life.

Being a Leader

25% of students believe their teachers consider them capable of leading others on all occasions.

The responses of students in middle stage (28%) were higher than students at secondary stage (22%), reflecting a decrease in one's perceptions of being a leader with advancing stage of schooling.

Trustworthiness

Perceiving oneself as trusted by others increases an individual's self-esteem and also has a positive impact on their social relationships.

70% respondents believe they are trustworthy and their friends trust them a lot. Nearly similar responses were observed at middle (70.8%) and secondary (69.4%) stages.

70%
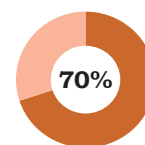
Peer Pressure

The influence yielded by people over other members within the same social group emerges as an important motivating factor behind the actions and behaviour of an individual. It also impacts mental health.

16%
Secondary Stage

13%
Middle Stage
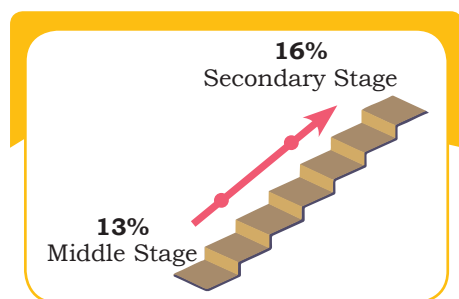
Rarely do things friends want them to do, to please them

15% of the total respondents expressed not giving in to peer pressure. This pattern shows an increase in higher classes. Studies have pointed at the lack of preparedness to handle situations of negative peer pressure as a serious social and health risk and suggest preparing the adolescents to face negative peer pressure more effectively.

32%
Secondary Stage

34%
Middle Stage
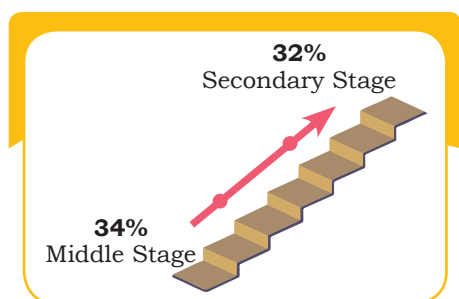
Most of the time do things friends want them to do, in order to please friends

33% of the total respondents agreed that they try to please friends most of the times by adhering to what their friends want. The response trend was similar at both stages with a little decrease as they move to secondary stage.

Overall, it is seen that the percentage of students rarely getting influenced by peer pressure was smaller compared to those who are influenced by it most of the times. The responses of students in middle and secondary stages were nearly similar. Peers may influence in a positive manner or negatively. Since peer influence is one of the primary factors contributing to risky behaviour, this points at empowering the students with strategies to handle negative peer pressure.

Academic Perceptions

Academics is one significant aspect of student life which impacts their overall well-being. At the same time, it is affected by various other factors related to the student such as their perception of self, abilities, environment, emotional and social aspects related to them.

Satisfaction with Academics

39%
are always satisfied with Academic Performance

50%
Middle Stage

31%
Secondary Stage
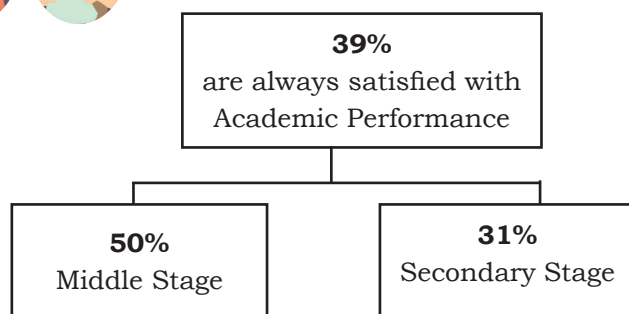
The findings highlight the need for identifying the reasons of students' low satisfaction with academic performance, especially among the secondary stage students.

29% of responses reported lagging behind in studies due to lack of concentration. Only 22% of responses reported not lagging behind in studies.

Lack of concentration was more evident in responses of students at secondary stage (32%) in comparison to middle stage (24%).
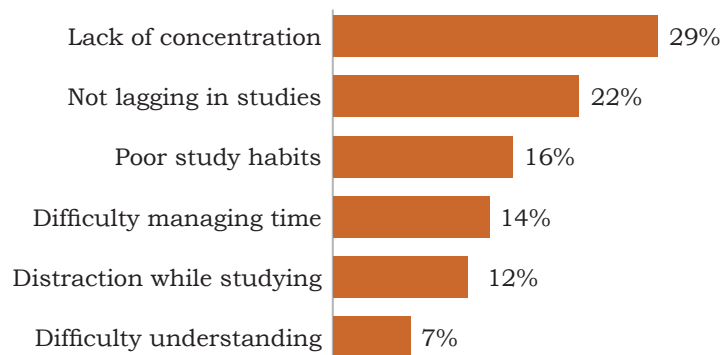
Lack of concentration	29%
Not lagging in studies	22%
Poor study habits	16%
Difficulty managing time	14%
Distraction while studying	12%
Difficulty understanding	7%

Time management is an important study skill for students. Not being able to manage time effectively may cause delays in work which can be a constant source of stress.

12% of students reported not being able to submit their assignment on time.

The responses are nearly similar at middle stage (12%) and secondary stage (11%).

These aspects point at causes of falling behind in academics.

Seeking Social Approval

36% of total students agreed to doing well in studies for social value and approval seeking.

The responses for seeking validation from others in the middle stage were higher than those in secondary stage, linking their academic achievements with social worth. Students attributed doing well in academics for social approval suggests the need for social acceptance. Not receiving attention from teachers was bothering sometimes, as reported by 37% of students.

34%
Secondary Stage

38%
Middle Stage
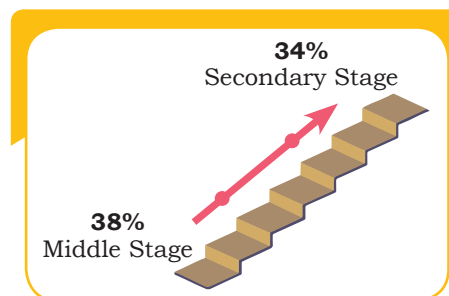
The responses of students in the middle stage (34%) and secondary stage (37%) were nearly similar. Research supports teachers' attention and its impact on students' academic performance and comfort level in the classroom. Teachers' attention enhances the self-worth of the individual as a student which has positive mental well-being outcomes.

13

Anxiety Related to Academics

The most frequently cited reason for anxiety was studies (50%) followed by examinations and results (31%).

Studies — 50%
Examinations and results — 31%
Do not feel anxious — 15%
Opening of schools — 3%
College admissions — 0.9%
Career — 0.1%
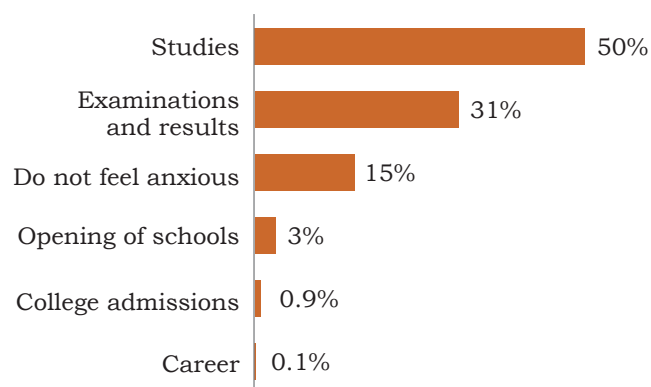
As students move from middle to secondary stage, the most common anxiety causing factors were:

54.9% Studies
30% Examination and Results
Secondary Stage

42% Studies
33% Examination and Results
Middle Stage
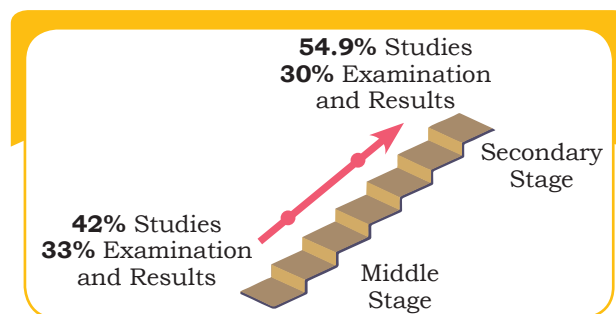
Examinations and results seem to be the cause of anxiety for students at both the stages. However, students' transition from middle to secondary stage studies are reported as causing higher anxiety.

Experiences with Online Learning

Lack social interaction with peers — 39%
Are better than offline classes — 17%
Have better teaching methods — 7%
Helps in better learning — 5%
Others — 32%
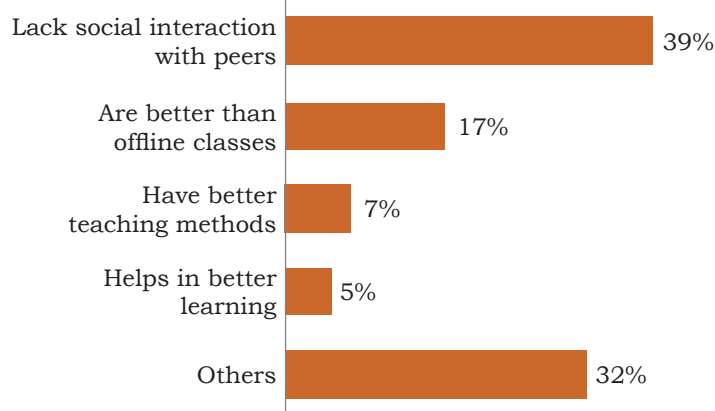
17% of total responses found online classes to be better than offline classes and this was equally expressed in responses at middle and secondary stage.

39% responses reflected that online classes lack social interaction present in the offline classes. Lack of social interaction in online classes was reported much higher at secondary stage (41%) than middle stage (36%).

The secondary and late middle stage is a period of life characterised by heightened need for peer interaction which is lacking in online classes.

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

Students acquire understanding of themselves, of their relationships with others and of the world in which they are through their emotional relationships and experiences. Besides home and school, students' interaction with peers provides them opportunities to examine their feelings towards their own selves and others. Researches show that people who manage their own feelings well and deal effectively with others are more likely to be happy, satisfied in their lives and are, therefore, more likely to retain information and learn much more effectively. Negative emotions hinder positive interactions, generally decrease motivation and interfere

with learning. Feelings and emotions for students in this sense becomes even more significant in the school context.

Emotions Experienced

Being aware of positive and negative emotions helps in regulation of emotions in one's own self and understanding others' emotions. It is an important aspect of emotional health.

Frequently Experienced Emotions

67% responses expressed experiencing positive emotion, happiness.
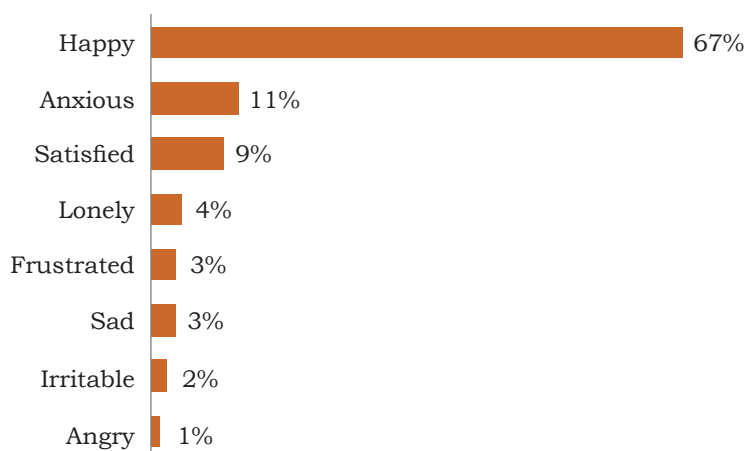
Higher responses to feeling happy are observed at middle stage in comparison to secondary stage.

61% Happy
15% Anxious
Secondary Stage

74% Happy
6% Anxious
Middle Stage
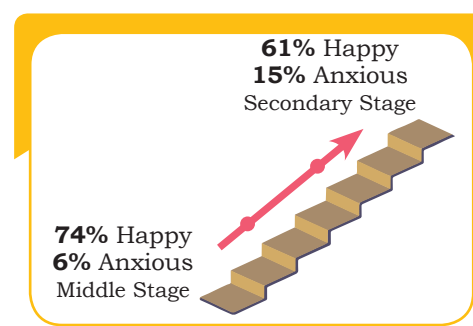
Positive emotional expression by large number of students points at possibility of an emotional resource to cope with stress, making adjustments and engaging in social relationships.

Hope in Stressful Situations

From a psychological perspective, hope creates a positive mood about an expectation, a goal, or future situation and leads to creating positive feelings. In context of stressful situations, having hope is to imagine a positive outcome. In an academic writing, it has also been mentioned that 'placebos' instead should be called 'hope'.

39% of students reported not losing hope easily in situations that are stressful. 42% students from the middle and 37% students from the secondary stage, have reported the same.

Emotional Understanding

Emotional understanding is an individual's ability to identify emotions. It helps in interacting appropriately as one is able to understand how the other person is feeling.

44% of students reported frequently being able to understand the feelings of others and respond accordingly.

The responses for middle (43%) and secondary (45%) stage are nearly similar, with an overall low understanding of other's emotions. Emotional understanding is one of the components of emotional competence, hence important for socio-emotional well-being.

Commonly Felt Feelings

45% of the total responses mentioned feeling tired and low on energy, 34% felt tearful, 27% felt lonely 2-3 times in a week.

Total
- 45%
- 34%
- 27%

Middle Stage
- 42%
- 32%
- 25%

Secondary Stage
- 48%
- 35%
- 29%

■ Tired ■ Tearful ■ Lonely

Tired and Low on Energy
(2-3 times in a week)

48%
Secondary Stage

42%
Middle Stage

Lonely
(2-3 times in a week)

29%
Secondary Stage

25%
Middle Stage

Tearful
(2-3 times in a week)

35%
Secondary Stage

32%
Middle Stage

Worried about Future
(across the week)

42%
Secondary Stage

25%
Middle Stage
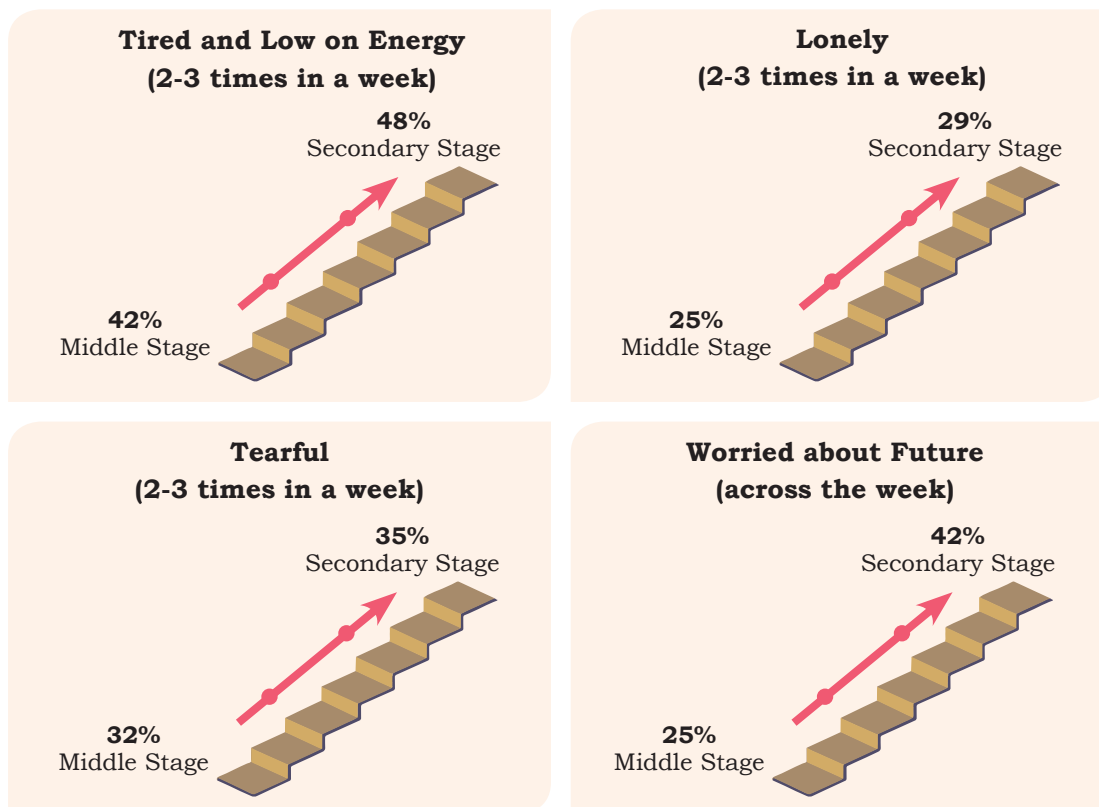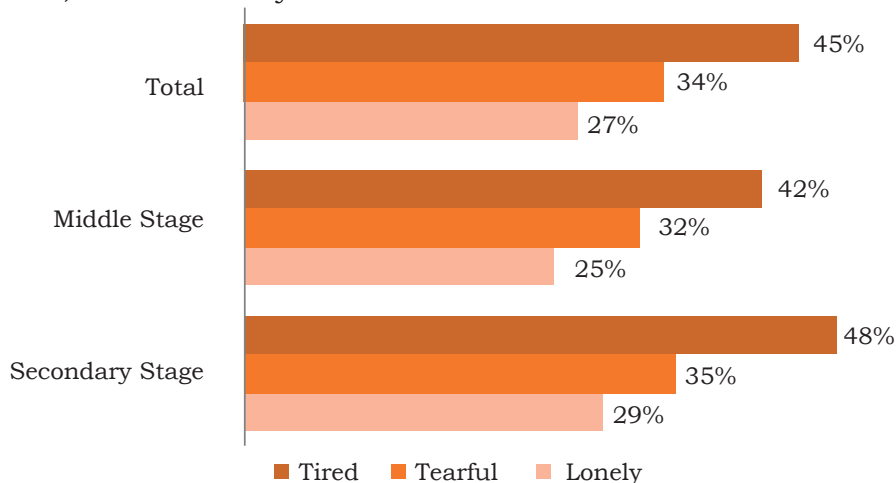
The responses reported most commonly experiencing tiredness and low energy at least 2-3 times in a week with responses in secondary stage being higher than those in middle stage.

In terms of feeling tearful and lonely, a small difference was seen in responses of middle and secondary stage with higher responses in the secondary stage.

Responses of students at secondary stage reflected markedly higher worry about the future than those of middle stage.

Intense Emotions Experienced during COVID-19

The emotions experienced by students, specifically during COVID-19 pandemic largely point at changes in mood. Also, of concern are other extreme emotions which even though observed in small numbers, but are of great significance keeping mental well-being of students in view. Besides, the developmental changes taking place in middle and secondary stages also contribute to these shifts in emotions.

A higher percentage of responses from secondary stage (48%) indicate experiencing mood swings as compared to middle stage (37%).

A nearly similar percentage of responses, 13% from middle stage and 15% from secondary stage, indicate experiencing extreme emotions such as emotional breakdown.
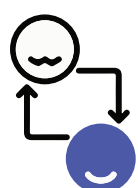
43% responses reported experiencing mood changes.

Next, 14% responses stated experiencing extreme emotions.

Mood swings — 43%
No extreme emotions felt — 27%
Extreme emotions — 14%
Fear — 7%
Self-harm — 7%
Panic attacks — 2%
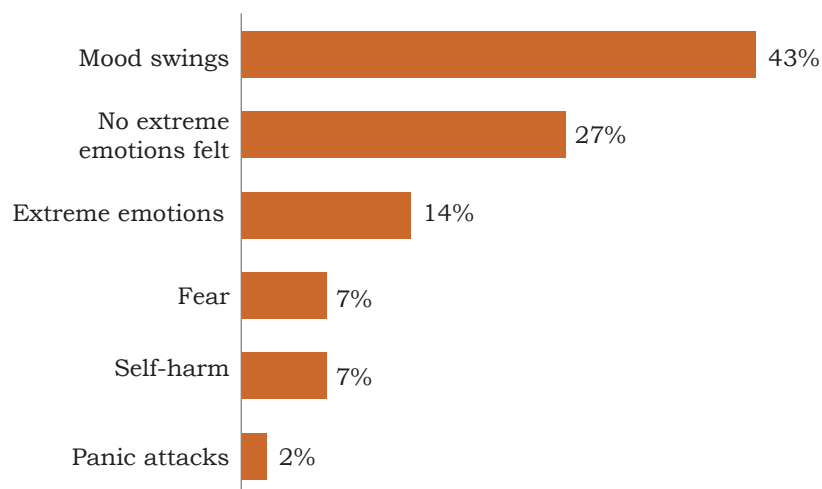
Changes in Routines due to COVID-19

Along with experiencing different emotions, students have also reported changes in everyday routines. The changes which were brought in students routines due to the pandemic are majorly in their sleeping pattern and everyday routine.
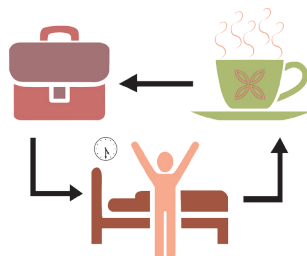
Changes in sleeping pattern were observed to be markedly higher for students in secondary stage than those at the middle stage.

Sleeping pattern
38% Total
32% Middle Stage
43% Secondary Stage

Everyday routine
26% Total
28% Middle Stage
24% Secondary Stage

Self-Care

Self-care is an essential component of well-being and contributes to the overall state of mental and physical health.

55% of students reported always taking good care of themselves for leading a healthy life.

Self-care was observed to be markedly higher in responses of middle stage (61%) in comparison to secondary stage (51%) students.

Challenges Faced

Issues at Home During COVID-19

No difficulty faced — 43%
Emotional changes in family — 24%
Financial problems — 18%
Changes in behaviour/actions — 7%
Loss of a loved one — 4%
Beating/slapping/shouting among family — 3%
Being physically hit — 1%

43% responses reported facing no difficulties at home since the outbreak of COVID-19.
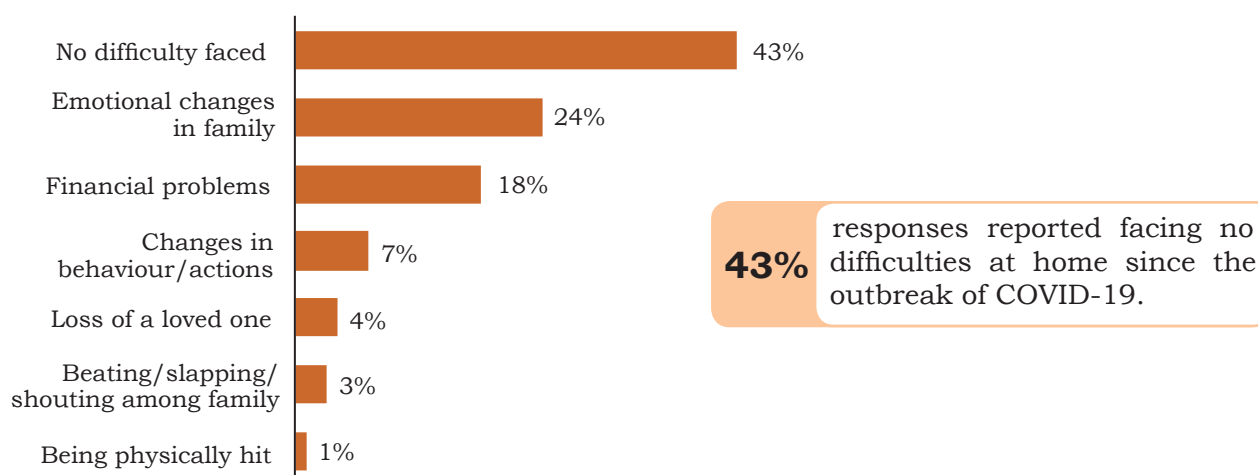
Responses of middle and secondary stages in terms of issues faced in the home environment during COVID-19.

No difficulty faced — 49% / 39%
Emotional changes in family — 20% / 26%
Financial problems — 16% / 20%
Changes in behaviour/actions — 7% / 7%
Loss of a loved one — 4% / 4%
Beating/slapping/shouting among family — 3% / 3%
Being physically hit — 1% / 1%

■ Middle Stage ■ Secondary Stage

In secondary stage, 49% responses reflected facing no difficulties at home since the outbreak of COVID-19, while in middle stage lesser responses (39%) reported the same.

Difficulties Faced in Online Learning

Students responses indicate facing certain difficulties during online classes, among these the most commonly reported was difficulty in learning the content followed by technical/network issues.

51% Difficulty in learning content online

39% Technical/network issues

4% Difficulty managing time

3% Interrupted electricity supply

2% Personal reasons

1% Lack of computer knowledge

Difficulty in learning content online
47%
53%

Technical/network issues
43%
36%

Difficulty managing time
3%
4%

Interrupted electricity supply
3%
3%

Personal reasons
2%
2%

Lack of computer knowledge
2%
2%
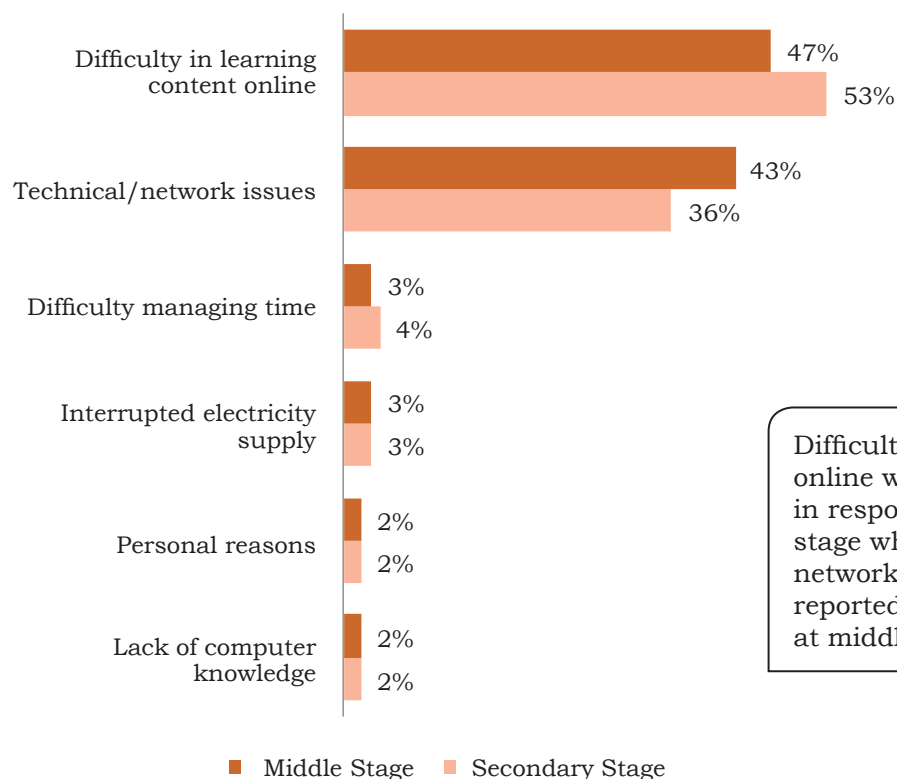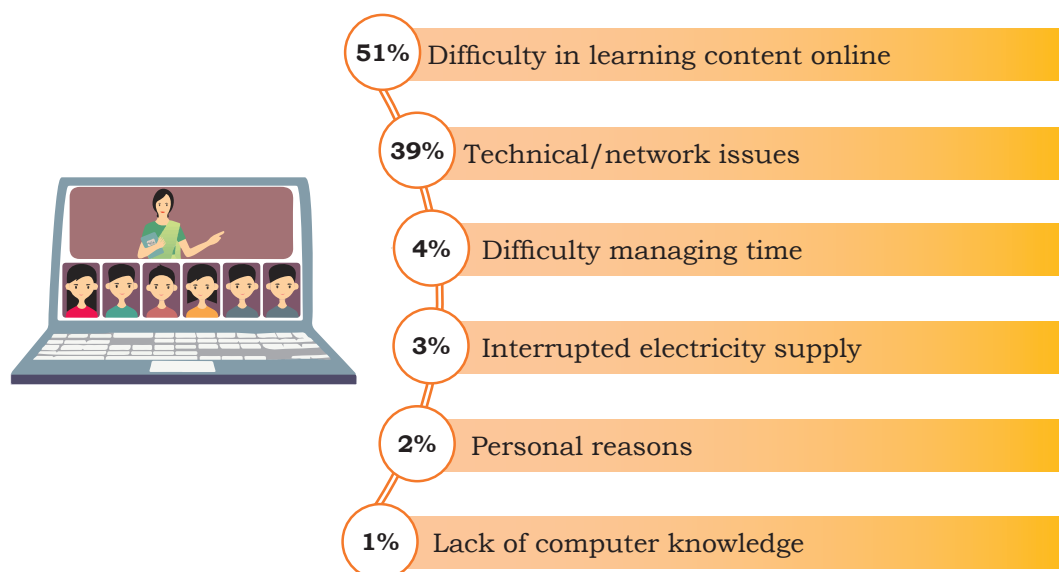
Difficulty in leaning content online was reported more in responses at secondary stage while technical/network issues were reported more in responses at middle stage.

■ Middle Stage ■ Secondary Stage

Support Desired for Managing Feelings

Family is the primary context in which children's emotional understanding and competencies get developed. At the same time, as a child grows, their social interaction with others also increases, widening the social circle.

Students desired seeking support for managing feelings in the form of…

47%
Help from friends/parents/teachers

Middle	Secondary
51%	45%

20%
Building life skills in school

Middle	Secondary
19%	20%

17%
Professional counselling outside school

Middle	Secondary
14%	19%

16%
Approaching school counsellor

Middle	Secondary
16%	16%
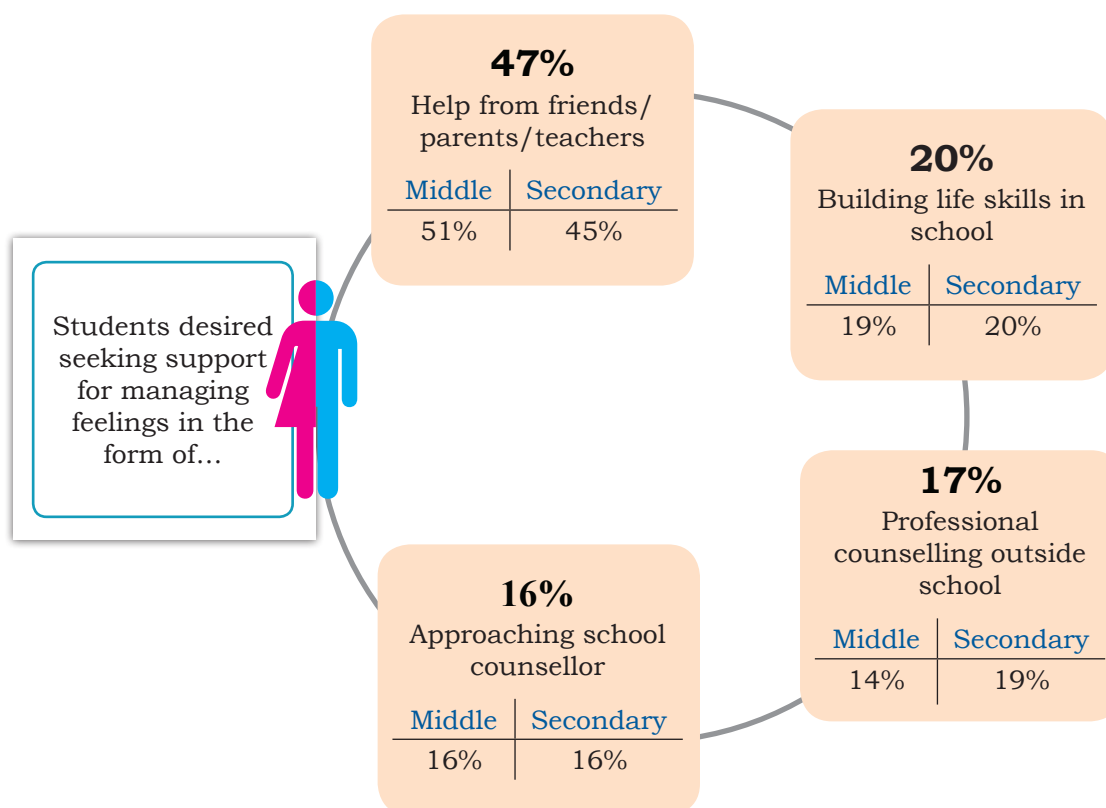
Responses reflect students largely preferred seeking support from those close to them (parents, teachers and friends) and this was reported by higher percentage of middle stage responses. Parents, peers, and teachers provide a powerful context for school students' well-being and are significant social agents. The findings suggest making available and strengthening of reported aspects in school for promoting supportive services.

Helping others results in good interpersonal relationships, makes one develop sensitivity and empathy and also gives a sense of satisfaction, which is an important aspect of well-being.

52%

Students reported frequently helping and supporting others whenever they could.
This was reported both at the middle stage (52%) and secondary stage (51%)

While students mostly preferred seeking support from parents, teachers or friends, at the same time nearly half of the respondents also indicated helping and supporting others.
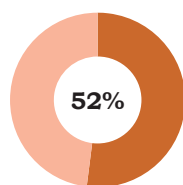
Emotions Related to COVID-19

Health and Safety Related Behaviours

The fear of getting infected by COVID-19 has been one of the well documented research findings besides a number of other health-related safety behaviour. The behaviours reported by students in this regard are—

38% responses reflected being fearful of coming in contact with people they did not know well.

16% responses reported indulging in safety behaviours like washing hands or cleaning objects around them.

In general, responses indicate worry about the following—

Fearful of coming in contact	38%
Worried or fearful about family/friends	25%
Preoccupied with thoughts of catching COVID-19	21%
Indulging in safety behviours	16%
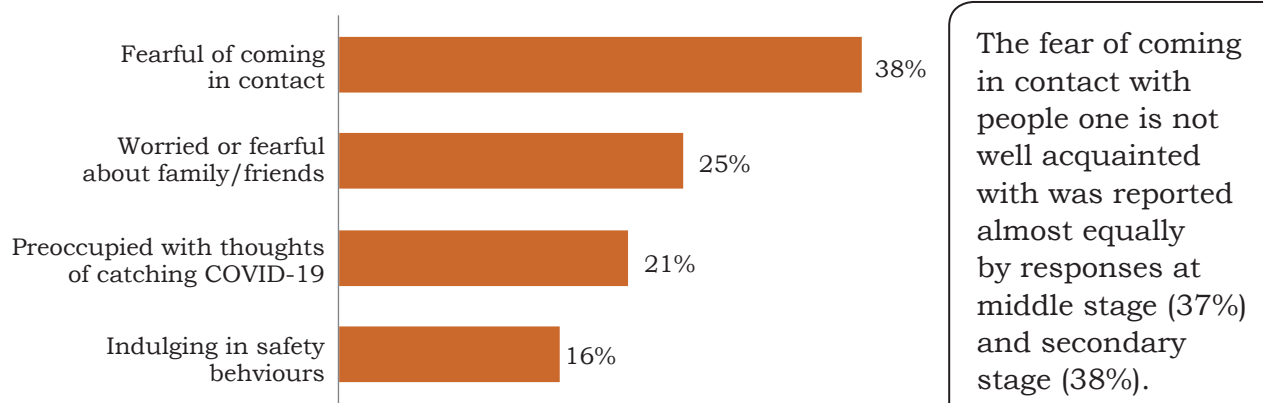
The fear of coming in contact with people one is not well acquainted with was reported almost equally by responses at middle stage (37%) and secondary stage (38%).

Physical Symptoms

At times stressful situations result in individuals experiencing physical symptoms which do not have any medical cause or explanation.

No health issues	55%
Headache	18%
Stomach aches	16%
Feeling feverish	4%
Loose motions	4%
Nausea	3%
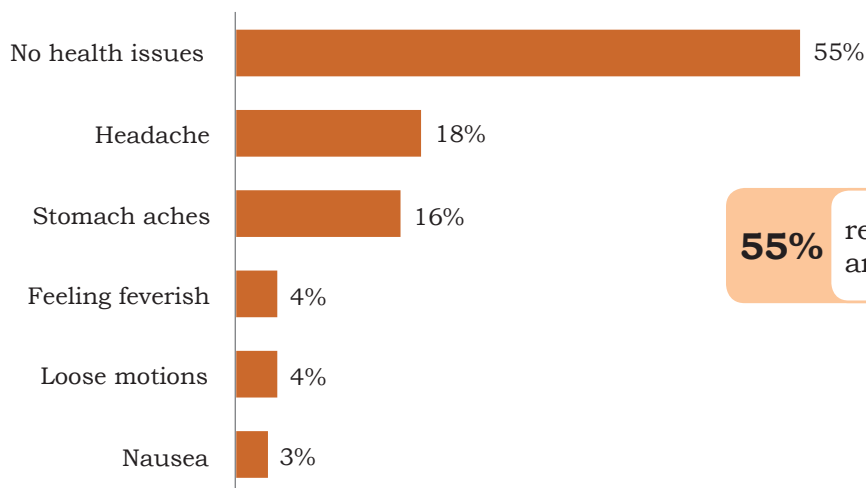
55% responses did not report any such health issues.

Most often experienced symptoms across stages are stomach ache and headache.

Middle Stage
16% Stomach ache
14% Headache

Secondary Stage
21% Headache
15.8% Stomach ache

COPING STRATEGIES

Self-reflection enhances children's ability to regulate their behaviours. Use of coping strategies help individuals adjust to stressful situations and maintain their emotional well being.

Regulation of Emotions

Responding in Stressful Situations

The ability to regulate one's emotions and respond appropriately in stressful situations in an important skill that is useful in the context of social interactions as it also helps maintain positive state of emotions.
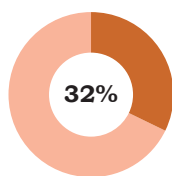
32%

Students completely agreed to responding appropriately during stressful situations like bullying and arguing.
The responses were similar for middle (31.7%) and secondary (32.3%) stages.

Managing Emotions/Strategies

This section highlights the personal skills, resources and strategies used by the students for managing themselves in stressful situations.

Strategies Used for Managing Emotions

Exploring the strategies as resources used by the students to manage the stressful situations reveals the following—

Sharing with friends	49%
Sharing with parents	24%
Resolving themselves	18%
Waiting for situation to improve	6%
Sharing with teachers	3%
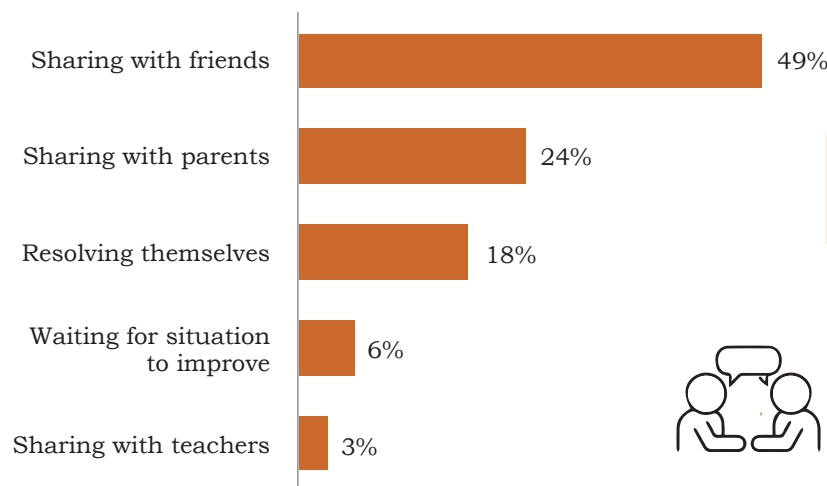
49% responses indicated a preference for sharing with friends.

Sharing with friends showed a marked increase at secondary stage (52%) from middle stage (45%).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their capacity to achieve any outcome. When self-efficacy is higher, one interprets potentially threatening situations as manageable significant challenges. This attitude helps in feeling less stressful in such situations.

Only 36% students believed they can frequently solve challenging tasks and the responses of middle (38%) and secondary stage students (35%) were nearly similar. The findings point at low self-efficacy in large majority of students. Research suggests strong sense of self-efficacy promotes accomplishment of tasks and personal well-being. At the same time, low self-efficacy is linked to higher levels of stress. Psycho educational interventions for students as part of schooling are important for enhancing self-efficacy.

Social Support

58% respondents reported having people with whom they can share and discuss their feelings. Higher responses were observed in middle stage students (63%) in comparison to students from secondary stage (54%).

Having friends and other people, including family, to turn to in times of need or crisis is termed as social support and is an important factor, hugely impacting how an individual copes with stressful situations.

Commonly Used Strategies for Coping

Yoga and meditation was the most commonly used coping strategy for middle stage, reported by 31% responses.

28%
Yoga & Meditation

13%
Watching T.V.

28%
Changing how I think and feel

15%
Ignoring the feelings

16%
Writing a diary/journal

Most of the secondary stage responses (32%) mentioned changing the way they think and feel to mange their emotions.

23
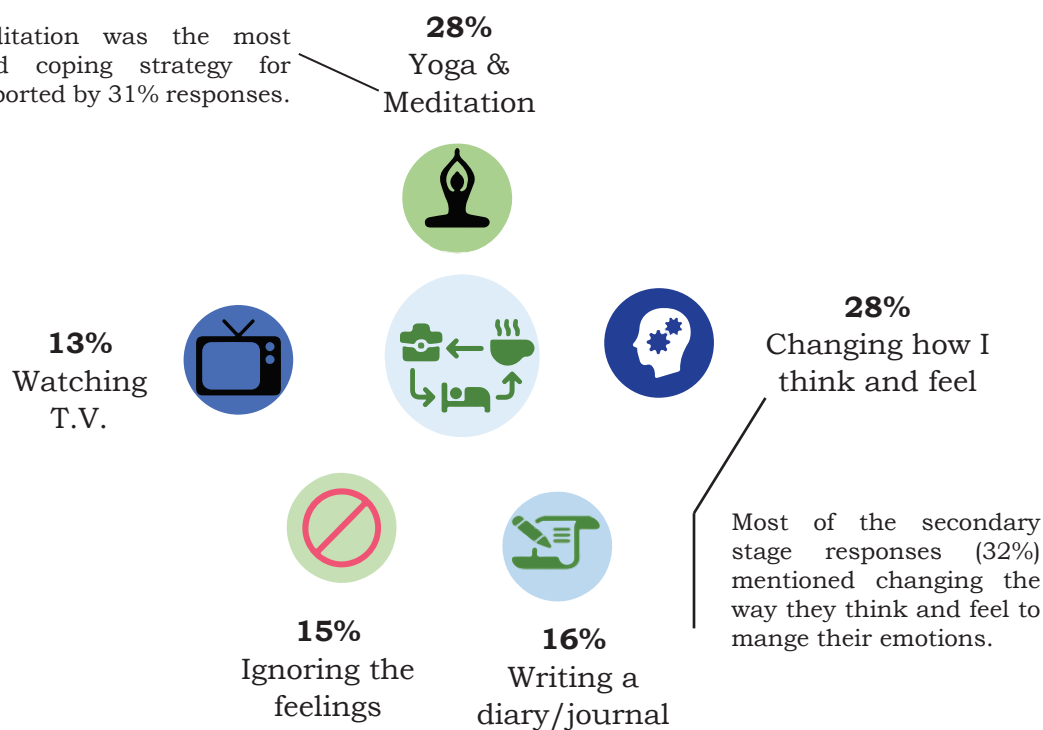
During the pandemic, students adopted active coping i.e., actively doing something to reduce stress. The preferred active coping activities were yoga and meditation, writing a diary/journal and watching T.V. A large number i.e., 28% responses reflected focus on changing thoughts to cope with the situation. 15% responses reported ignoring the negative feelings to avoid stress, highlighting use of denial which is a passive coping strategy.

GENDER WISE ANALYSIS

Feelings and emotions form the basis of making learning a productive activity which contributes not only to students' improved academic performance but also their engagement with learning. This interplay between feelings/emotions and learning is therefore significant in achieving the desired learning outcomes. At the same time, experiencing and expressing of feelings and emotions are learned in the process of social interactions at home, school, neighbourhood etc. Researches point at differences in socialisation patterns for expression of emotion by boys and girls which are shaped by their culturally defined gender roles. Early socialisation is a major contributor to the development of gender differences in perceiving the experiences of everyday life.

Researches indicate that during adolescence girls appear to be more vulnerable to the negative psychological health effects of stress. Girls have been seen to have significantly higher levels of maladaptation, depressive symptoms and eating disorders. On the other hand, boys tend to display a higher prevalence of externalised behavioural problems, such as aggression, antisocial, indisciplined behaviour.

The overall data, when looked at from a gender perspective reveals that both boys and girls perceive doing well in life as their own responsibility and therefore also report higher satisfaction with school life. The commonly experienced emotions reported were happiness, most frequently experienced by both boys and girls, with a marginal higher number of boys than girls, followed by anxiousness. While boys reported experiencing happiness more than girls, the opposite trend was observed for anxiousness. Girls also reported experiencing more mood swings and feeling tired, tearful and lonely. This is further reiterated with higher percentage of girl students reporting feeling anxious in relation to their studies, examination and results.

The findings further reveal that to manage their feelings both boys and girls chose to talk with friends, followed by sharing with parents and lastly resolving by themselves. Furthermore, boys showed more preference for confiding with friends while girls preferred to confide in their parents and resolve by themselves. However, when inquired about whose support the students desire to seek for managing their feelings both boys and girls predominately mentioned friends, parents and teachers. This was followed by seeking training on life skills in school, access to professional

counsellor and counsellor in schools. It is rather important to note here that though students desired teachers support (along with friends and parents) to manage their feelings, yet they did not report to have sought teachers support while managing their emotions/feelings. This could be attributed to online mode of schooling during this period.

When reporting their most commonly adopted coping strategies, changing the way they think (which is to be seen as ability for self-reflection) was opted by most girls. The other strategies that followed were yoga and meditation and writing journals among girls. However, boys reported a high preference for yoga and meditation followed by changing how they think and writing of journals.

Third Gender – Key Findings

The perception of the respondents who have identified themselves as belonging to the third gender are discussed as a group (n=11). Though the number is small, but of significance to gain an understanding of students belonging to third gender.

On aspects of adaptability to changes in life it was reported by most in terms of being able to adapt to such changes. Also, they reported rarely trusting others. However, they reported higher frequencies in solving challenging tasks along with a majority of them perceiving doing well in life as their own responsibility.

The third gender students also reported that most of them have low confidence regarding their physical appearance. They also reported non availability of support to share and discuss about their feelings. In line with this, the group also shared of not being bothered by lack of attention from their teachers. On the contrary, most agreed that they frequently help and support others whenever they can.

Majority of students from this group also reported that they would not be respected if they do not do well in studies hence, most also perceived studies as the reason for their anxiety. School aspects of the survey showed that this group was satisfied with school life, however difficulties in online classes were reported with lack of social interaction and difficulty in understanding and learning being the primary reasons.

Students reported anxiousness as the most commonly felt emotion followed by loneliness and sadness. The frequency of such emotional experiences was reported as occurring almost every day. Mood swings were the most intensely experienced emotion amongst these students. They also reported that majority of the times they lose hope in stressful situation. While reporting about the strategies adopted to manage their emotions in stressful situations, it was revealed that the students preferred resolving by themselves and by ignoring the feeling. However, majority of the students desired having help from friends, parents, teachers to manage their feelings.

SUMMARY

Aspects	Percentage of Students Responses				
	Total	Middle	Secondary	Girls	Boys
Body Image	55	62	50	54	56
Satisfaction with Personal life	51	58	46	50	52
Satisfaction with School life	73	81	68	75	72
Responsibility of Doing Well	84	83	84	85	82
Hesitation in Asking Questions	28.4	27	29	28	29
Difficulty Initiating Conversation	23	22	23	22	23
Complying to Peer Pressure most of the time	33	34	32	31	34
Trustworthiness	70	70.8	69.4	71.5	68
Social Support	58	63	54	58	57
Anxiety (Studies, Exam, Results)	81	75	84.9	81.1	77.7
Lack of Concentration	29	24	32	28.8	29.15
Happiness	67	74	61	64.7	67.7
Anxiousness	11	6	15	12.25	9.98
Extreme Emotions	14	13	15	15	13
Mood Swings	43	37	48	46	40
Yoga and Meditation	28	31	25	25	31
Changing Thoughts as a Strategy	28	23	32	27	29
Lack of Social Interaction-Online Classes	39	36	41	39	38
Difficulty in Learning Content Online	51	47	53	51	50

- ❍ The overall survey findings exhibit that the students feel responsible for doing well in their life followed by experiencing satisfaction with school life.
- ❍ Majority of students considered themselves trustworthy and do not hesitate in seeking social support which is a protective factor for mental well-being.
- ❍ The survey findings also report happiness as the most common emotion/feeling experienced by students followed by anxiousness.
- ❍ When enquired about what makes them anxious, majority of the students reported feelings of anxiety to be caused due to studies, examination and results.
- ❍ Difficulty and hesitation is experienced by students in clearing doubts and having conversation with other people.
- ❍ A visible decline in response of students on their confidence about body image, satisfaction with personal and school life, availability of people to share their feelings, experiencing of happiness was observed as students moved from middle to secondary stage. On the contrary students at secondary stage recorded higher level of anxiety related to study, examination and results. They also reported higher level of difficulty in concentration and experiencing intense mood swings.

*****

Mental Health and Well-being of School Students

A School View

All schools have a common aim of providing education. The students may differ across different types of schools in terms of variations in the environment created for teaching-learning, the relationship between the teacher and the students, and the way the school is organised.

Even though the 'stated', formal curriculum content may not differ much, the schools may differ in terms of their culture, which is based on the beliefs, norms, and values of the school, expectations that influence the way teachers and administrators interact, think, feel and perform, the physical and emotional safety of students in school which can be stated as the hidden curriculum. Students' attitude towards themselves, and others, their role in the school, and sense of responsibility, all are shaped by the school environment and affects what students learn and the ways in which they learn.

As all schools have unique cultures, this section presents a view of the perception of students within a specific school context. The findings have implications for organising teaching-learning which is sensitive to the needs of the learners, promotes self-learning, reflection, asking questions for personal development, and cooperative effort. Such attempts would strengthen the holistic and inclusive orientation of education as envisioned in NEP, 2020.

The survey covered students from different types of schools across the country. The school-wise details of Kendriya Vidyalaya, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, State government, and Private schools are presented in detail to provide a view of students' personal self, social self, academic perceptions, feelings and emotions experienced, challenges faced related to COVID-19 and coping strategies. (School wise tables are appended)

School Types

- Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs)
- Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs)
- State Government Schools
- Private Schools
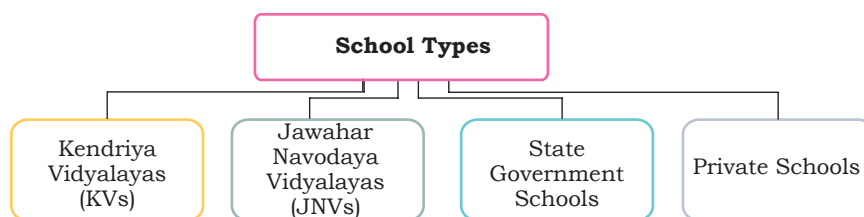
Perceptions of Students of Kendriya Vidyalayas

A total of 1,06,937 students from KVs participated in the Mental Health Survey which comprises of 28.21% of the total data.

Girls
54,224

Boys
52,497

50.7%

49.1%

57%
Secondary Stage

43%
Middle Stage
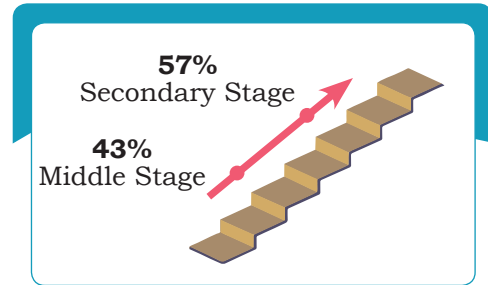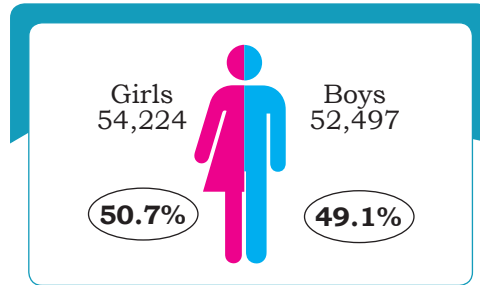
216 students did not indicate their gender.

Understanding of One's Own Self

This section explored the understanding of students' own self in terms of aspects such as, their adaptability, trusting others, satisfaction, responsibility of doing well in life, body image, perspective taking and confidence.

Adaptability

Adaptability is the ability to adjust or adapt to any circumstance or change in one's lives which help students to respond appropriately to changes, situations or circumstances. The responses indicate:

37%
Girls

A total of **40%** students from KVs reported that they are able to quickly adapt to any changes in their lives.

44%
Boys

Secondary Stage
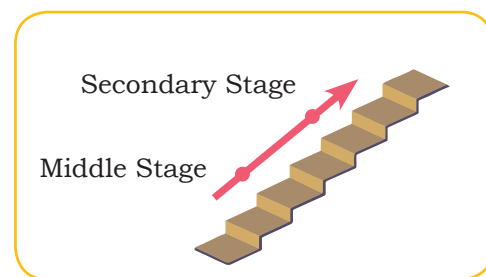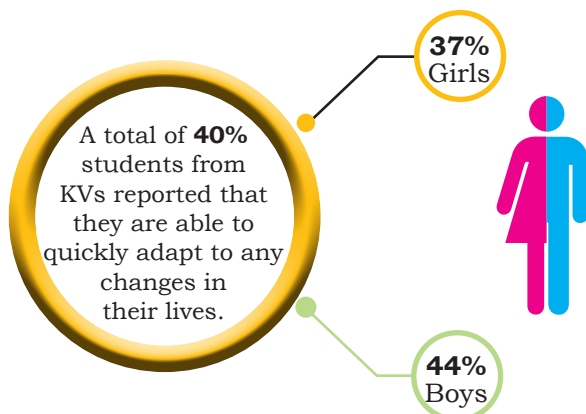
Middle Stage

Adaptability to changes in life decreases from 44% to 37% as students transit from the middle to secondary stage.

Trusting Others

The ability to trust others was reported by a total of 24% students. Ability to trust is low as reflected in responses of students, both at the middle (25.6%) and secondary (24.3%) stages. A similar trend was seen in responses in terms of gender, with only 25% of girls and 24% of boys reported being able to trust others. Marginal differences are observed across all genders and stages of education.

Satisfaction

Students' satisfaction in personal life and school life were as follows: *55% of students feel satisfied with their personal lives while 78% of students feel very happy with their school lives.*

Similar percentage (54% girls, 55% boys) of students reported being satisfied with their personal lives. A high level of satisfaction (78% girls and 75% boys) reported being very happy with school life.

Decreasing levels of satisfaction in the spheres of personal, and school lives can be seen in students from KVs as they shift from the middle to the secondary stage.

Middle- **62%**

Secondary- **49%**

Personal Life

Middle- **87%**

Secondary- **69%**

School Life

Responsibility of Doing Well in Life

Doing well is viewed as their own responsibility by 87% of the students.

Secondary Stage

Middle Stage

87% middle stage and 85% secondary stage students from KVs completely agreed that doing well in life is their responsibility.

Responded completely agreed

88%

83%
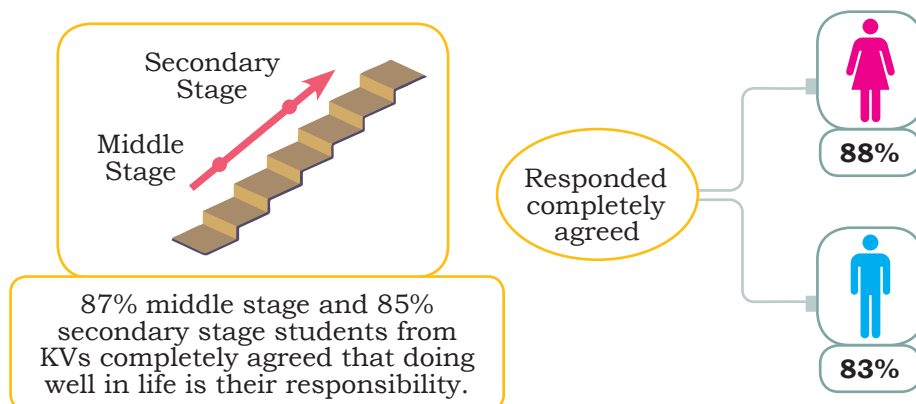
It is encouraging to see that students perceive doing well in life as their own responsibility i.e., place the onus of their actions on their own self and not on external factors, reflecting their belief that they see themselves as responsible for their outcomes.

Body Image

Physical appearance has an impact on one's confidence and self-worth.

Girls   Boys

55%   **58%**

50%
Secondary Stage

65%
Middle Stage

A total of **58%** students responded that they always feel confident about their physical appearance.

A decrease in the percentage of feeling confident with physical appearance is noted in the students of KVs as they shift from the middle to secondary stage. Being critical of the way they look is a typical characteristic of adolescents.

Taking Perspective

31% students responded that they are able to easily talk to people with different points of view.

Taking perspective is an important aspect which helps the individual in understanding the situation from an alternative point of view. Hence, it is a contributor of an individual's mental well-being.

30% students from the middle stage and 32% students from the secondary stage reported that they are able to talk to people with different view points easily.

29%   **33%**

29% girls and **33%** boys find it easy to talk to people having different points of view.

Confidence

The way an individual perceives themselves, can be seen in their level of confidence and how they respond to people and others in academic and social situations. Responses of students on whether they hesitate to ask questions when in doubt indicate 29% of the respondents hesitate to ask questions when in doubt.

Girls   Boys

29%   **30%**

31%
Secondary Stage

28%
Middle Stage

Hesitation in asking questions was reported almost equally by both boys and girls.
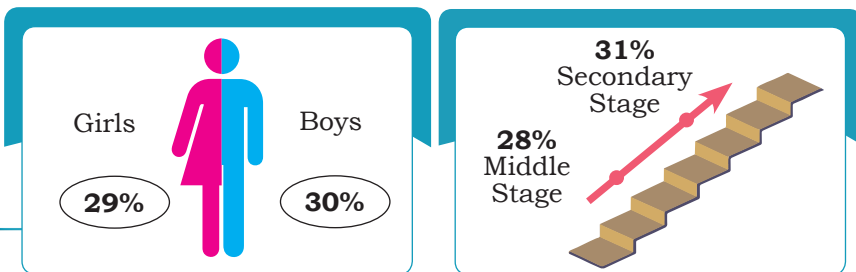
Out of all the students from KVs, 21% frequently face difficulties in initiating conversations in the social context.

20% girls and **22%** boys reported frequently facing difficultly in starting a conversation with others.

Almost a similar percentage of students from the middle and secondary stages reported frequently facing difficulty in initiating conversation.
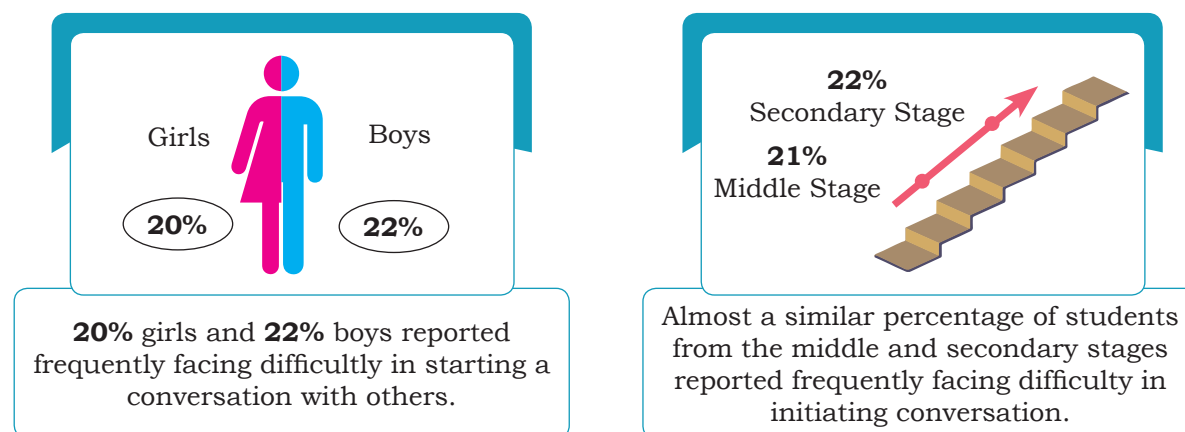
Understanding of One's Self in Social Context

This section explores students' understanding of their own self in the social context through aspects such as, perception about happiness, being a leader, trustworthiness and peer pressure.

Happiness

It is encouraging to see that more than half of the respondents reported people having positive perception of them.

Of the total respondents, 58% students from KVs believed that others view them to be a happy person.

60% girls reported being perceived by others as happy in comparison to boys **(55%)**

Marginal differences are seen across the stages with **59%** respondents from the middle stage and **57%** from the secondary stage reported that others perceived them as happy individuals.
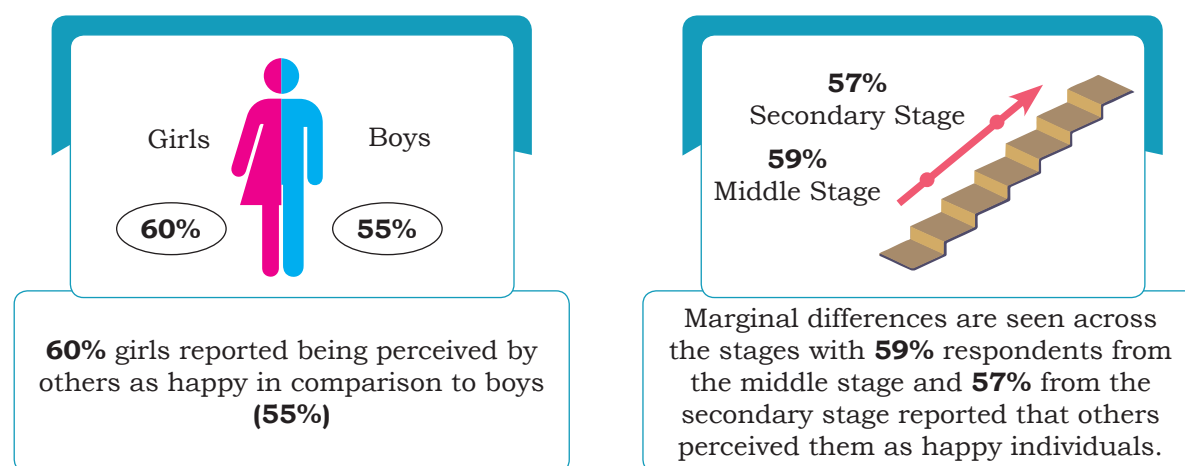
Being a Leader

Students' belief about their teachers viewing them as a leader indicates: 22% of the students responded that their teachers think they can always lead others. Across the genders a similar trend was seen with marginal

differences i.e., 21% girls and 22% boys reported that their teachers think they can always lead others. 26% of the middle stage students agreed to it, which reduces to 19% at the secondary stage. A decline in percentage indicates that a smaller percentage of secondary stage students believed that their teachers perceive them as leaders.

Trustworthiness

73% of the total students from KVs feel that they are trustworthy and their friends trust them a lot.
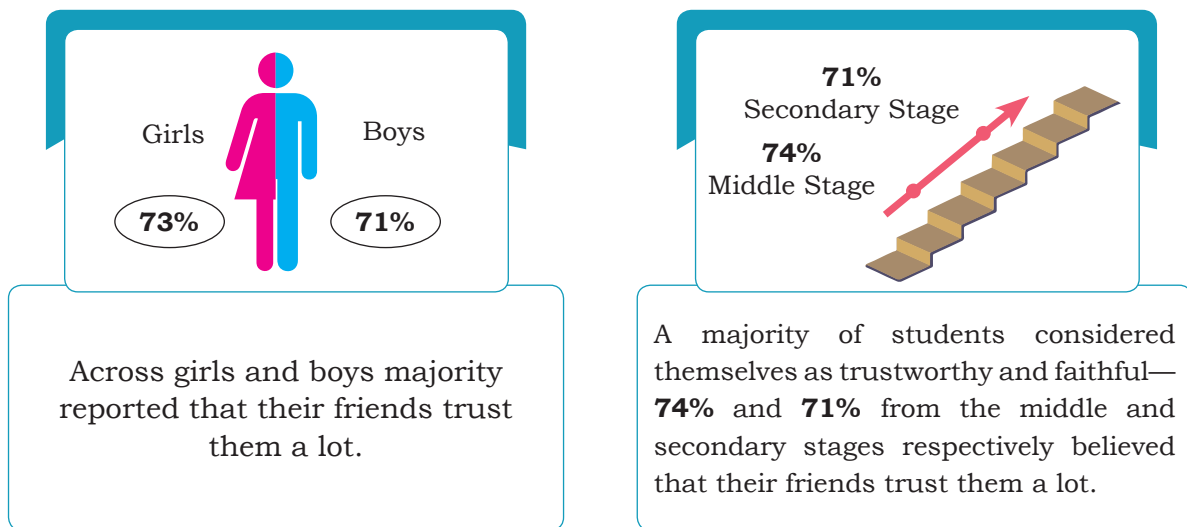
Girls   Boys

73%   **71%**

Across girls and boys majority reported that their friends trust them a lot.

71%
Secondary Stage
74%
Middle Stage

A majority of students considered themselves as trustworthy and faithful— **74%** and **71%** from the middle and secondary stages respectively believed that their friends trust them a lot.

Peer Pressure

Peers are an important element of socialisation in a student's life. They may have a positive, as well as, negative impact on the child. In schools, students try to fit in a group to feel accepted and sometimes they do things which are harmful for them.

17%

of the total students mentioned that they rarely do things to please their friends.

18%   17%

Expressed that they rarely succumb to peer pressure. This highlights the influence of peers in one's life.

19%
Secondary Stage
15%
Middle Stage

Though negligible but an increase of **4%** can be seen in the secondary stage students who rarely do things to please their friends.
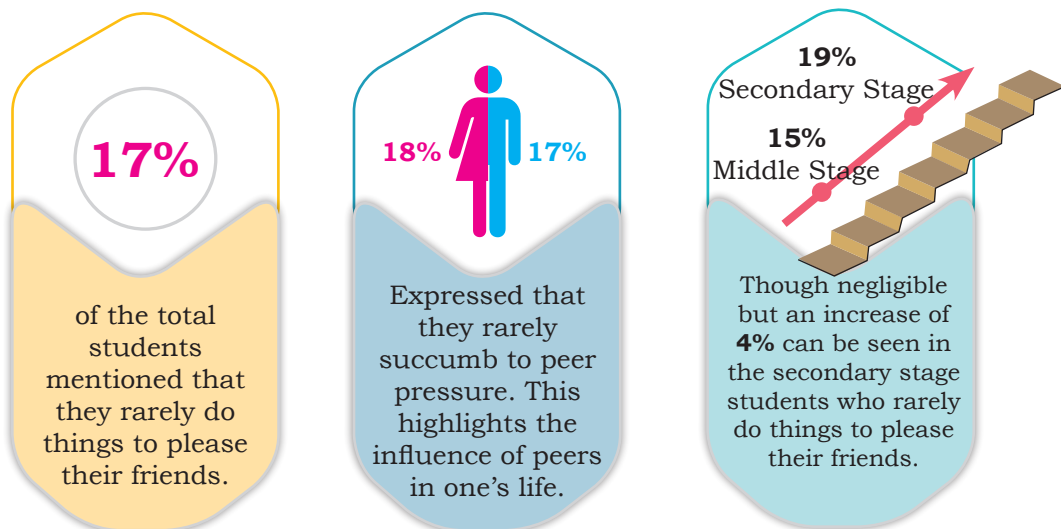
Academic Perceptions

In the present times concerns related to academics have gained prominence in students' life and they contribute to their self esteem.

Satisfaction with Academics

This section delved into the academic self-perceptions of students to understand aspects, such as, satisfaction with academics, punctuality, seeking social approval, anxiety related to academics and experience of online classes.

Only 40% of total responses from KVs reported that they are always satisfied with their academic performance.

Girls 37%

Of these, **37%** girls and **39%** boys admitted being always satisfied with their academic performance.

Boys 39%

Academic Life

52% Middle Stage

28% Secondary Stage

Decreasing levels of satisfaction can be seen in students as they shift from the middle to the secondary stage.

Girls

Lack of Concentration **29%**

Difficulty Managing Time **15%**

Boys

Lack of Concentration **28%**

Poor Study Habits **18%**

Category	Percentage
Lack of concentration	28%
Not lagging in studies	23%
Poor study habits	15%
Difficulty managing time	13%
Distraction while studying	13%
Difficulty understanding	8%

Responses from the middle stage shows lack of concentration (23%) as their major concern for lagging behind in studies followed by distraction while studying (13%). In the secondary stage responses indicate lack of concentration (33%) as a major issue followed by poor study habits (18%).

Along with lack of concentration 10% of students also reported not being able to submit their assignments on time. Marginally higher percentage of boys (12%) reported not submitting assignment on time in comparison to girls (9%). However, there was not much difference across the stages in this regard. These aspects point at causes of falling behind in academics.

Seeking Social Approval

Students attributed doing well in academics to seek social approval

39% of the total respondents from KVs agreed that people will respect them if they do well in studies.

38% girls and **41%** boys agreed that people will not respect them if they do not perform well in studies.

38% Secondary Stage

41% Middle Stage

41% students from the middle stage and **38%** from the secondary stage agreed that doing well in studies is important for social worth.
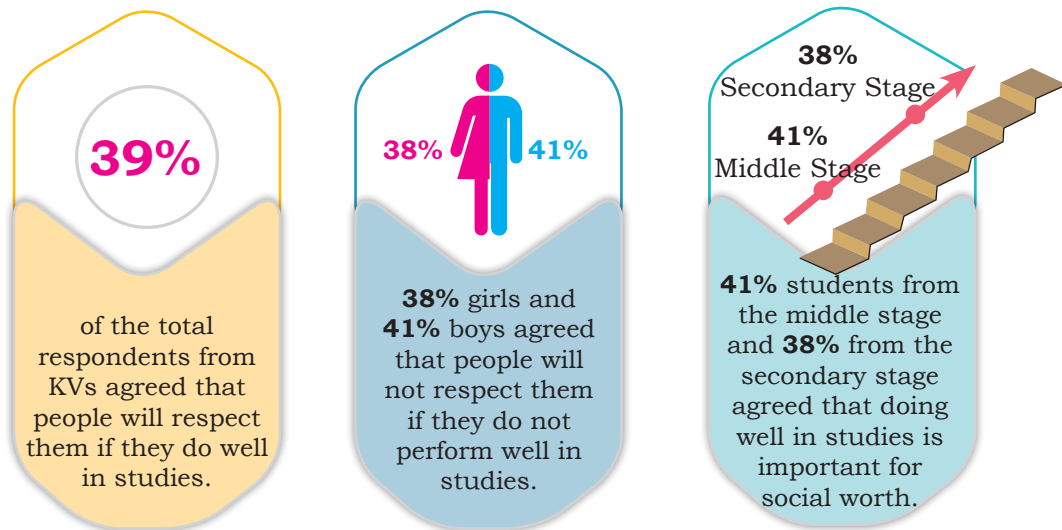
Also 35% of the students responded that it sometimes bothers them when their teacher does not pay attention to them. 36% of girls and 34% of boys stated this. The responses across stages were also similar, with 34% students at the middle stage and 36% at the secondary stage being bothered by teachers' not paying attention to them.

Anxiety Related to Academics

A total of 48% responses from KVs mentioned studies as a major reason for their anxiety.

Studies — 48%
Examinations and Results — 33%
Do not feel anxious — 15%
Opening of schools — 2.1%
College admission — 1%
Career — 0.9%

Girls
Studies **52%**
Examinations and Results **31%**

Boys
Studies **45%**
Examinations and Results **33%**
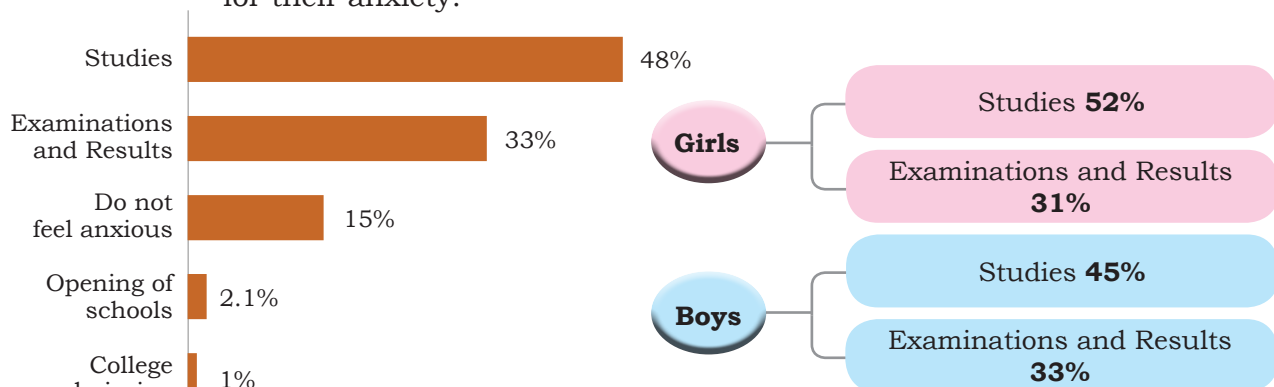
The findings indicate that 41% responses from the middle and 55% responses from secondary stage reported studies as a main reason for their anxiety, followed by examination and results (34% middle stage and 31% secondary stage). Academics continue to be a major factor causing anxiety.

Experiences with Online Learning

Students reported about their feelings in regard to online learning:

16% are better than offline classes

6% have better teaching methods

40% lack social interaction with peers

4% help in better learning
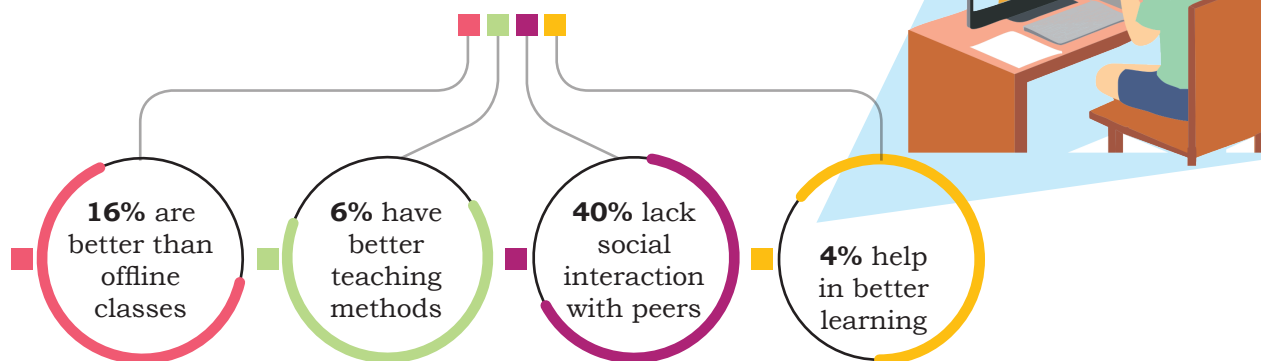
Only **16%** responses from KVs found online mode of classes to be better than offline classes while **40%** of the students responded that it lacks social interactions.

41% responses indicate lack of social interaction with peers in online mode of learning

39% responses report of lack of social interaction with peers in online mode of learning

Lack of social interaction with peers was prominently stated by both boys and girls and also across stages. **37%** of middle stage students and **43%** of secondary stage students reported the same.

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

Feelings and emotions play a significant role for students in learning, retaining information, interactions, etc., hence becoming more significant in the context of schooling.

Emotions Experienced

This section explored the emotions experienced by students in general and also during COVID-19, their emotional understanding and changes in routines experienced due to the pandemic.

Frequently Experienced Emotions

Girls

Happy- **65%**

Anxious- **12%**

Boys

Happy- **69%**
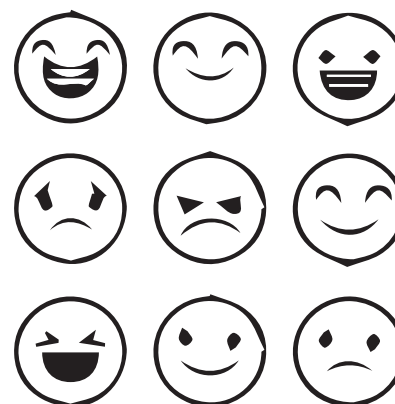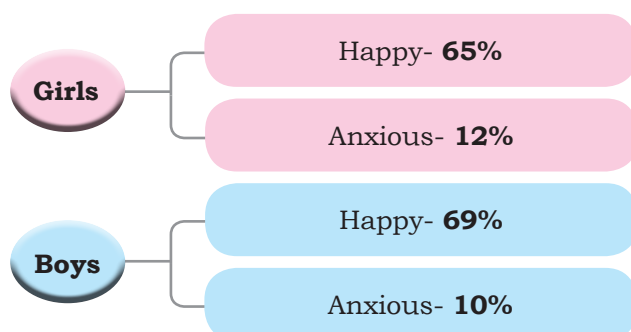
Anxious- **10%**

75% of responses from the middle stage and **61%** from the secondary stage felt happy most of the time. **6%** responses from the middle stage and **15%** from the secondary stage reported feeling anxious.

Happy	68%
Anxious	11%
Satisfied	8%
Lonely	4%
Sad	3%
Frustrated	3%
Irritable	2%
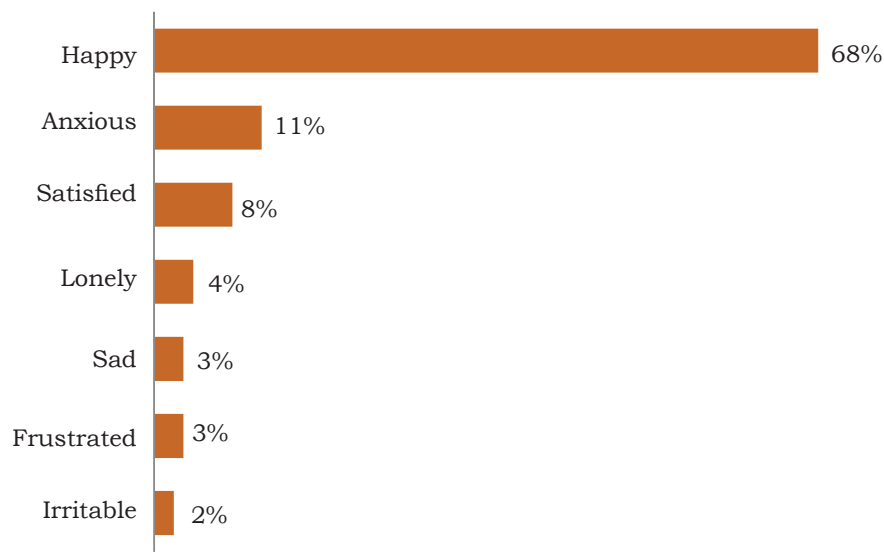
> The most frequently experienced feeling reported were of 'being happy' most of the time (68% responses) while 11% responded 'feeling anxious', indicating an overall positive emotional state among the group.

Hope in Stressful Situations

Hope creates a positive mood about an expectation, a goal, future situations and leads to creating positive feelings.

Responses indicate that 24% of students say that they rarely lose hope in stressful situations. Nearly a same percentage of response was seen at both middle (24.2%) and secondary (23.9%) stages. A small number of students, 22% of girls and 26% of boys reported rarely losing hope in situations that are stressful.

Emotional Understanding

Emotional understanding is an ability to identify emotions appropriately in oneself and in others, hence important for social interaction.

44% of the total students from KVs responded that they frequently understand the feelings of others and respond accordingly. In this regard there was not much difference in the percentage of responses for the students in the middle (42.9%) and the secondary (45.1%) stage. The percentage of responses of girls (45.4%) and boys (42.9%) were also nearly similar, reflecting low understanding of others emotions.

Commonly Felt Feelings

Students reported emotions that they commonly felt during COVID-19.

Bar chart:
- Total: Tired and low on energy 46%, Tearful 33%, Lonely 26%
- Middle stage: Tired and low on energy 43%, Tearful 31%, Lonely 24%
- Secondary stage: Tired and low on energy 49%, Tearful 35%, Lonely 29%

Legend: ■ Tired and low on energy ■ Tearful ■ Lonely

Girls
- Tired and low on energy- **49%**
- Tearful- **37%**
- Lonely- **27%**

Boys
- Tired and low on energy- **42%**
- Tearful-**30%**
- Lonely- **26%**
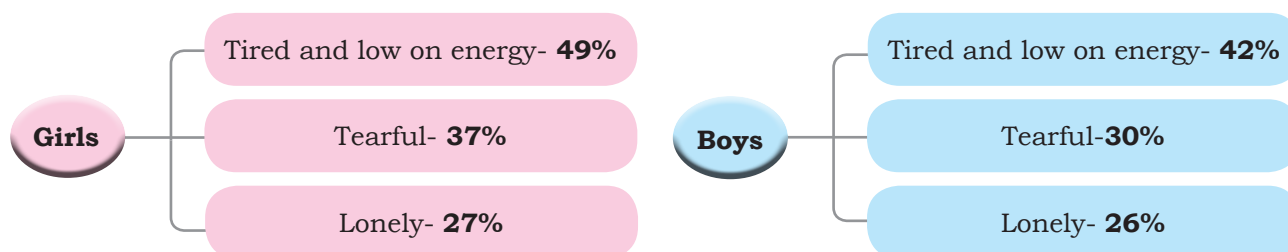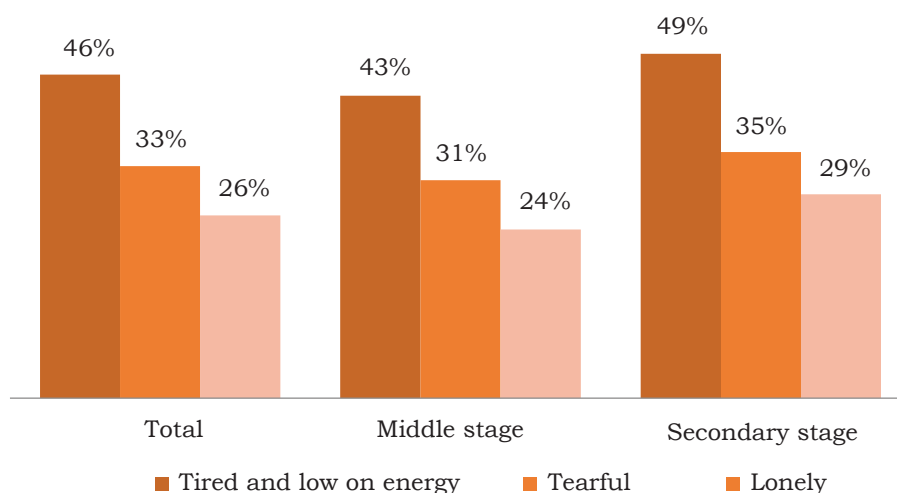
The most often experienced emotions reported by students are tiredness and low on energy (**46%**), tearful (**33%**) and loneliness 2-3 times in a week (**26%**).

35% of responses from KVs reported that they felt fearful and worried about their future on everyday basis. At secondary stage **44%** students reported being worried about future every day, as compared to **26%** of middle stage students. Students' responses reflect an increase in worry about future on transition to a higher stage of schooling.

Intense Emotions Experienced during COVID-19

The responses from students reflect that they have experienced the following emotions intensely:

Girls
- Mood Swings- **48%**
- Extreme Emotions - **15%**
- Fear- **6%**

Boys
- Mood Swings- **40%**
- Extreme Emotions- **13%**
- Fear- **7%**
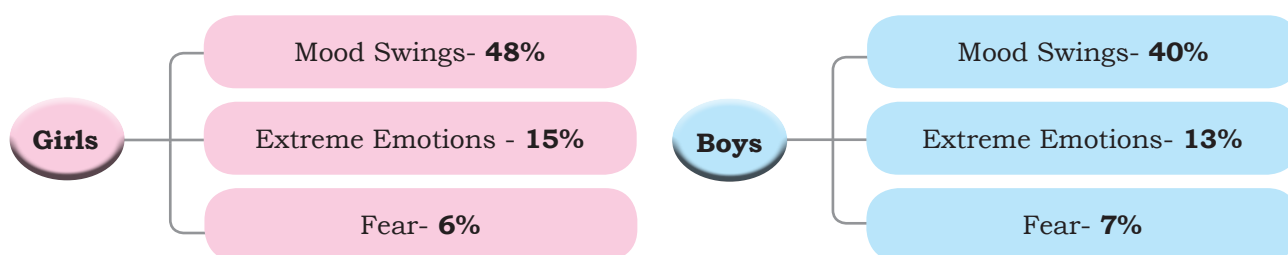
43% responses from KV indicate experiencing mood swings and 14% experiencing extreme emotions.
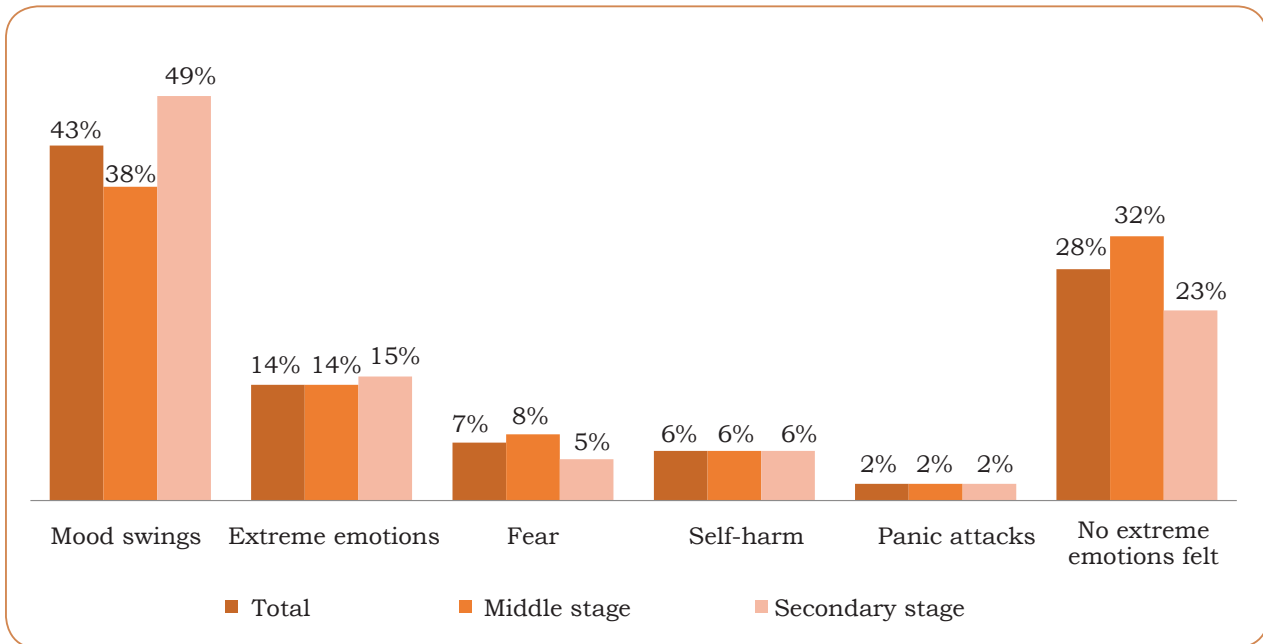
At Middle stage the responses indicate mood swings (38%) and extreme emotions (14%). An increase was seen at the secondary stage in reporting mood swings (49%) and also in reporting extreme emotions (15%) though only slightly, due to adolescence.

Changes in Routines due to COVID-19

Due to the pandemic, there were changes in the lives of the students. Some of the reported major changes were in:

Changes in sleeping pattern (39%) followed by changes in everyday routines. (25%).
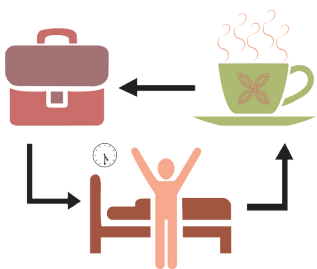
39% Sleeping pattern

25% Everyday routine

21% Study habits

15% Eating habits

Girls   Boys

40%   **41%**

47%
Secondary Stage
31%
Middle Stage
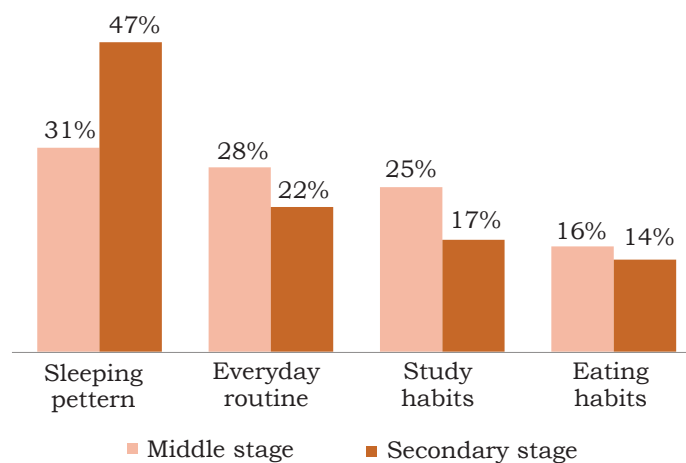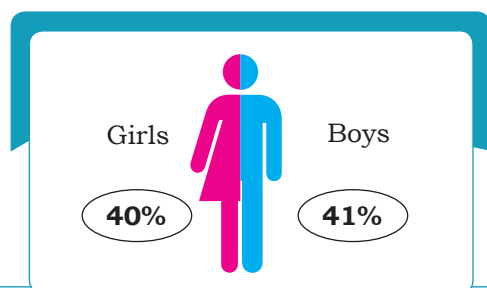
Similar responses were observed for girls and boys (**40%** and **41%** respectively) reporting major changes in sleeping pattern. It was followed by changes in everyday routine, which was nearly similar for girls and boys i.e., **25%** and **24%** respectively.
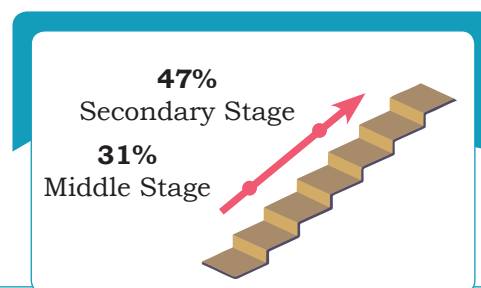
31% of middle stage responses and **47%** of secondary stage responses shows changes in sleeping pattern, reflecting a substantial change in sleeping pattern among the secondary stage students.

Self-care

55% of the total respondent from KVs reported that they take good care of themselves so as to lead a healthy life of which there were 51% girls and 56% boys. A marked decrease in response is seen as students shift from the middle (62%) to the secondary stage (48%) reflecting lower efforts towards self-care which is a concern.

Challenges Faced

This section explored the different issues faced by students in situations such as, at home or during online learning and the support desired by them for managing stress.

## Issues at Home during COVID-19

The environment plays a major role in the overall development of an individual. The difficulties faced while students were at home during pandemic indicates:

50% of the students did not face any difficulties at home since the outbreak of COVID-19. However, 23% students reported emotional changes in family members, followed by experiencing financial problems (13%).

Category	%
No difficulty faced	50%
Emotional changes in family	23%
Financial problems	13%
Changes in behaviour/actions	6%
Loss of a loved one	4%
Beating/slapping/shouting among family	3%
Being physically hit	1%

Girls

Emotional changes in family- **22.9%**

Financial Problems-**13.3%**

Nearly a similar trend is seen in responses of both boys and girls for issues majorly reported like emotional changes in family and financial problems.

Boys

Emotional changes in family- **23.2%**

Financial Problems-**13.7%**

27%
Secondary Stage

18%
Middle Stage

Emotional changes in family was reported markedly more by students in the secondary stage.

Difficulties Faced in Online Learning

Category	Percentage
Difficulty in learning content online	54%
Technical/Network issues	38%
Difficulty managing time	3%
Personal reasons	2%
Interrupted electricity supply	2%
Lack of computer knowledge	1%

During COVID-19, as classes were taking place in online mode, students faced issues related to online learning which indicate:

Majority of responses i.e., **54%** reported facing difficulties in understanding and learning of content through online mode.
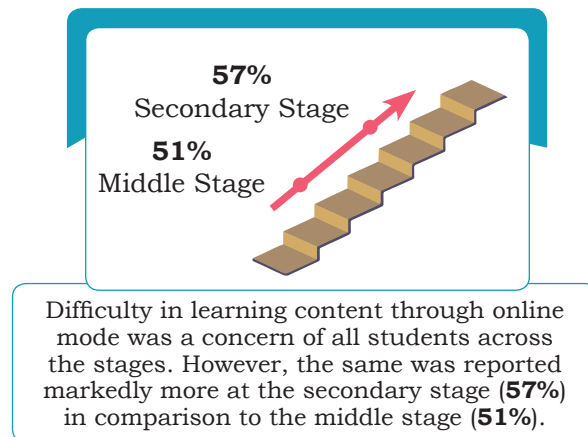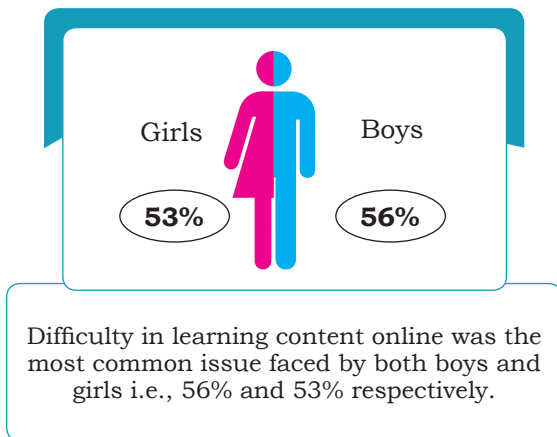
Girls **53%**   Boys **56%**

Difficulty in learning content online was the most common issue faced by both boys and girls i.e., 56% and 53% respectively.

57%
Secondary Stage

51%
Middle Stage

Difficulty in learning content through online mode was a concern of all students across the stages. However, the same was reported markedly more at the secondary stage (**57%**) in comparison to the middle stage (**51%**).

Support Desired for Managing Feelings

Emotional support is important to help students understand and manage their emotions effectively. Support perceived and received–both are important. The students wished that they could have the following support to manage their emotions:
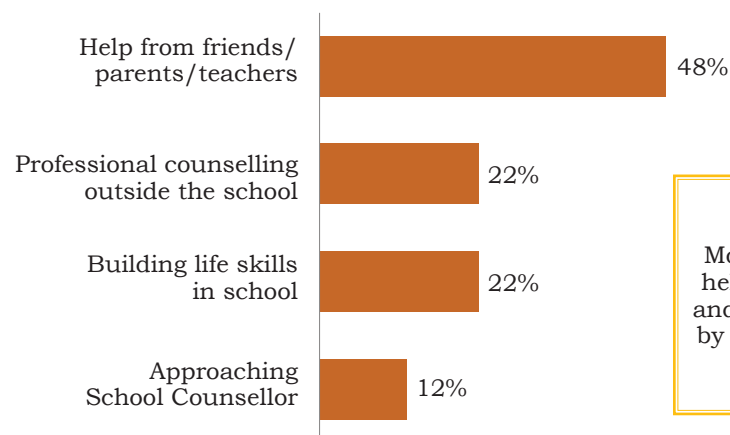
51%

Most of the responses indicate seeking help and support from friends, parents and teachers as a major support desired by students for managing their feelings.

- Help from friends/parents/teachers — 48%
- Professional counselling outside the school — 22%
- Building life skills in school — 22%
- Approaching School Counsellor — 12%

47% Secondary Stage
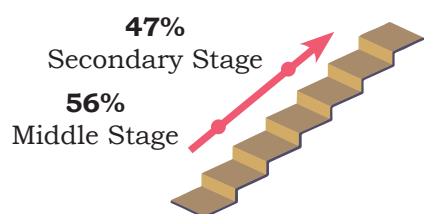
56% Middle Stage

Desired support and help of their family, friends or teachers for managing their feelings.

23.5% / **23.1%** — Building life skills in schools

53% / **48%** — Help from friends/parents/ teachers
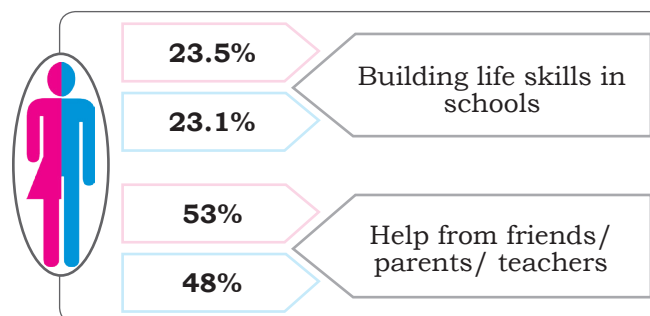
While most students preferred support from close ones, a comparatively higher percentage of middle stage students desired seeking this support. Building life skills was also desired by a majority of the students, with girls and boys showing similar preference in this regard.

53% students from KVs reported frequently providing help and support to other people whenever possible. Nearly similar responses were observed across gender (54% girls and 51% boys) and stages (54% middle stage and 52% secondary stage) with regard to helping attitude. While students mostly preferred seeking support from parents, teachers or family, at the same time nearly half of the respondents also indicated helping and supporting others.

Emotions Related to COVID-19

This section explored the emotional experiences of students during the COVID-19 pandemic and their behaviours related to health and safety in this period.

41

Health and Safety related Behaviours

Most of the responses of boys and girls reflected fear of coming in contact with people they did not know well.

17% Indulged in safety behaviours

22% Preoccupied with thoughts of catching COVID

25% Worried or fearful about family or friends' health or survival

37% Fearful of coming in contact with strangers

39%   **36%**

37.1% Secondary Stage
37.4% Middle Stage

Responses reflect that girls in KVs were more fearful of coming in contact with people they did not know well. Overall, looking at the above aspects it can be concluded that students experienced fear and worries due to COVID-19.

37.4% of responses from the middle stage and **37.1%** from the secondary stage indicated being fearful of coming in contact with people they don't know well. Only **17%** of resposes from both the stages expressed indulging in safety behaviours like washing hands or cleaning objects around them.

Physical Symptoms

Stressful situations often result in individuals experiencing physical symptoms. Students have reported the following:

Symptom	Percentage
No health issues	51%
Headache	16%
Stomach ache	16%
Weakness and fatigue	8%
Feeling feverish	3%
Nausea	3%
Loose motions	3%

More girls reported having headaches and stomach aches in comparison to boys.

Girls
18%- Headaches
17%- Stomach aches

Boys
14%- Headaches
14%- Stomach aches
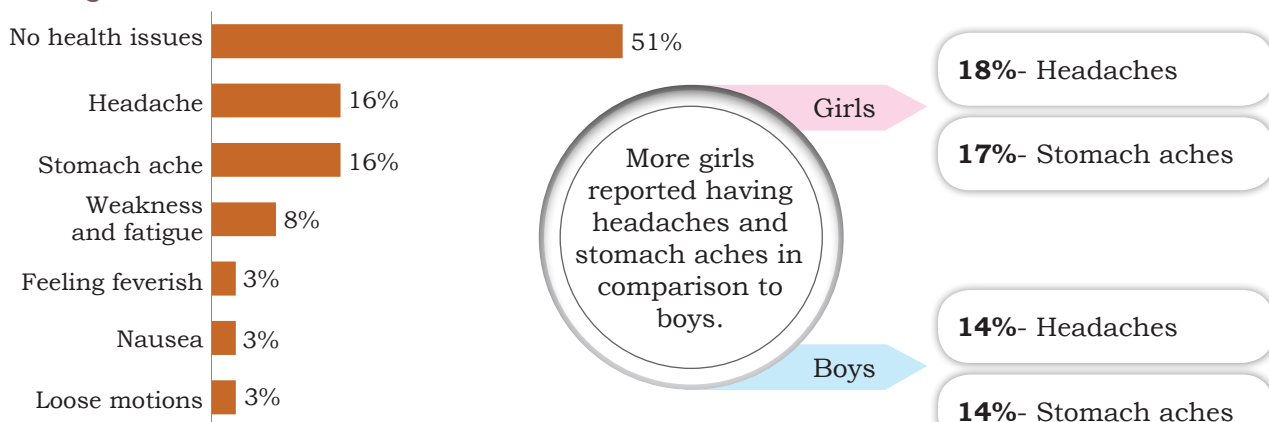
Most of the KVs responses (51%) reported facing no health issues. However, stomach aches and headaches were reported by 16% students.

Most of the students in middle stage reported experiencing stomach aches while secondary stage students reported headaches more.
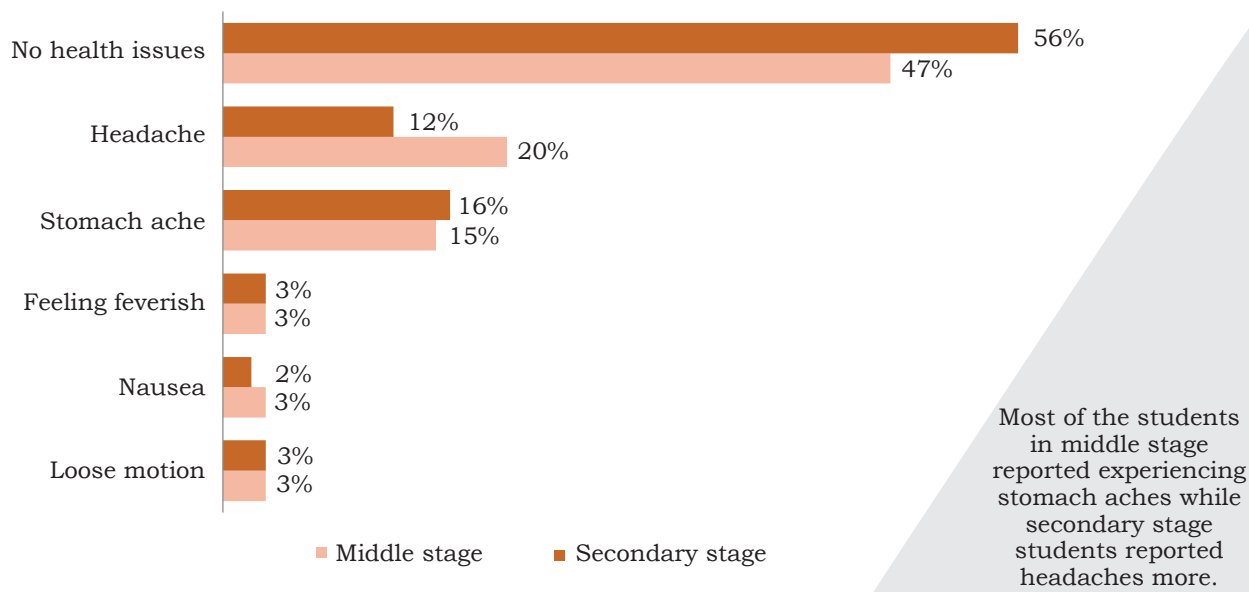
COPING STRATEGIES

Use of coping strategies help individuals adjust to stressful situations and maintain their emotional wellbeing.

Regulation of Emotions

This section explored the ability of students to regulate their emotions.

Responding to Stressful Situations

Nearly similar percentage of girls and boys from KVs completely agreed that they respond appropriately in stressful situations.

Girls **31%** Boys **32%**

Participating students completely agreed that they respond appropriately during stressful situations.

32% Secondary Stage
30% Middle Stage

30% middle stage students and **32%** secondary stage students completely agreed to responding appropriately in stressful situations
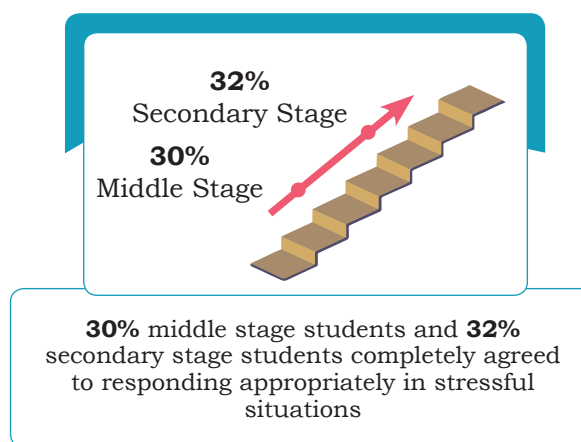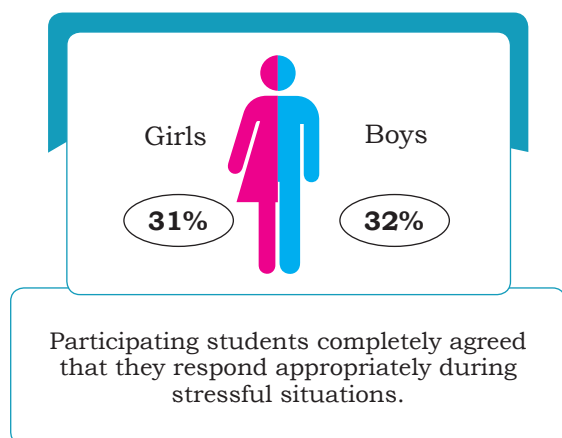
Managing Emotions/Strategies

This section explored the strategies used by students for managing stressful situations.

Strategies used for Managing Emotions

Sharing with friends — 45%
Sharing with parents — 26%
Resolving themselves — 20.5%
Waiting for situation to improve — 6.5%
Sharing with teachers — 2%

♀
- Sharing with friends- **44%**
- Sharing with parents- **26%**
- Resolving themselves - **23%**

♂
- Sharing with friends- **47%**
- Sharing with parents- **25%**
- Resolving themselves - **19%**

Seeking peer support emerged as the most frequently expressed strategy, as evident from **45%** responses. It was followed by sharing with parents **26%** as reported by students.
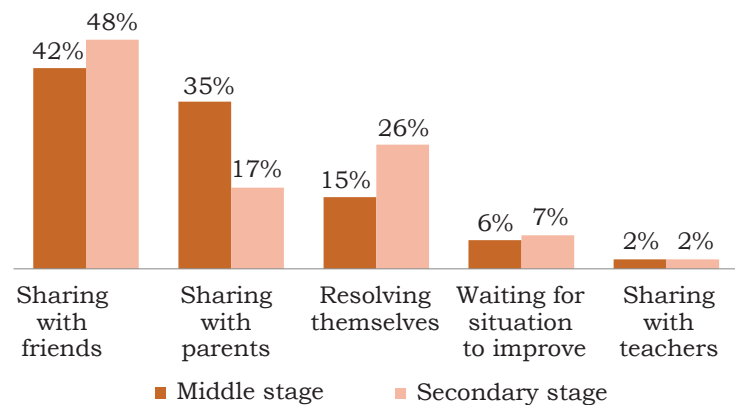

Secondary Stage

Middle Stage

Sharing with friends was preferred more by secondary stage students while sharing with parents was preferred more by middle stage students with a marked decrease in this as students move to higher stages of schooling.

	Sharing with friends	Sharing with parents	Resolving themselves	Waiting for situation to improve	Sharing with teachers
Middle stage	42%	35%	15%	6%	2%
Secondary stage	48%	17%	26%	7%	2%

Self-efficacy

35% of the total students from KVs responded that they frequently are able to solve challenging tasks.

Students at the middle stage (37%) reported slightly higher self-efficacy belief than secondary stage (33%) students.

In terms of gender, ability to solve challenging tasks was reported slightly more frequently by boys (36%) than girls (33%).
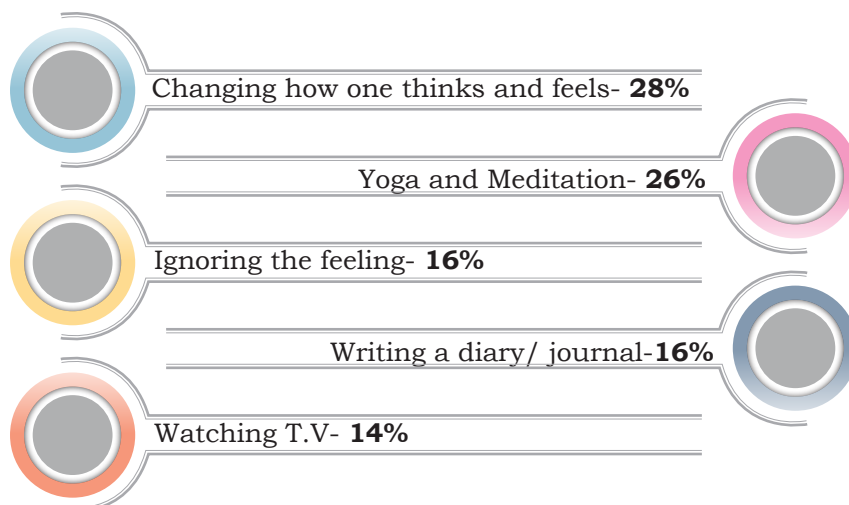
Social Support

58% of the total participating students from KVs respondents agreed that they have people in their life with whom they can discuss and share their feelings.

A similar trend is seen in both boys and girls as 59% of girls and 57% of boys agreed to having such support.

Commonly used Strategies for Coping

As students move towards a higher stage of development, the perceived social support seems to decrease, with 64% middle stage and 53% secondary stage students agreeing to having people for shairing their feelings.

Changing how one thinks and feels- **28%**

Yoga and Meditation- **26%**

Ignoring the feeling- **16%**

Writing a diary/ journal-**16%**

Watching T.V- **14%**

28% of the students preferred to change their thoughts as a way of coping, this indicates using cognitive restructuring strategy.

The most commonly used coping strategy for the middle stage was practicing yoga and meditation (29%), while students in the secondary stage (33%) mentioned changing the way they think and feel to manage their emotions. The responses indicate usage of active coping strategies by the students of KVs.

The most commonly used strategy by girls was to change the way they think (**28%**), followed by yoga and meditation (**22%**). Boys preferred yoga and meditation and changing their thoughts equally (**29%**).

The most commonly used coping strategy for the middle stage was practicing yoga and meditation (29%), while students in the secondary stage (33%) mentioned changing the way they think and feel to manage their emotions. The responses indicate use of active coping strategies by the students of KVs.

SUMMARY

○ A majority of KV students perceived doing well in life primarily as their own responsibility, were satisfied with their school life, trustworthy and expressed confidence in their physical appearance.

○ Happiness was the most commonly experienced emotion by students. At the same time they also reported experiencing anxiety due to studies, examination and results along with mood swings. When asked about difficulties in online learning the most reported was difficulty in learning followed by lesser opportunity for social interaction.

○ Changing the thought process along with yoga and meditation were the most commonly used coping strategy in stressful situations by students. Majority of the students expressed having people with whom they can share and discuss their feelings.

○ Confidence in personal appearance was higher amongst middle stage students with a marked decrease at the secondary stage. No marked gender differences were seen in this aspect.

○ Most of the students at the middle stage reported being satisfied with their school life. However, as students transit to a higher stage of education, a decline on this aspect has been observed.

○ The responsibility of doing well in life was high across both the middle and secondary stages with girls placed slightly higher when compared to boys.

○ Middle stage students perceive higher availability of social support for sharing their feelings than those at secondary stage.

○ Happiness, the most commonly experienced emotion, was reported by a large number of students at the middle stage with a marked decrease in percentage at the secondary stage.

○ Anxiety related to studies, examination and results was experienced more by students at the secondary stage. Also girls have reported to be more anxious than boys regarding studies.

○ Middle stage students preferred Yoga and meditation as a strategy for coping with stressful situation while secondary stage students preferred changing their thought process. Gender view shows that boys use both strategies while girls prefer to change their thinking to cope with stress.

In sum, the findings with respect to students from Kendriya Vidyalaya indicate that at middle stage, students seemed to be doing better than their counterparts at a secondary stage on aspects of body image, satisfaction with school and personal life, responsibility of doing well in life, happiness as, most commonly experienced emotion and availability of social support for sharing feelings. Secondary stage students reported experiencing higher levels of anxiety related to academics (studies, examination, results) and lack of concentration as a reason for lagging behind in studies.

When looking at the data from the gender viewpoint, girls perceived doing well in life as their own responsibility which may be a reason for their reporting higher levels of anxiety related to academics (studies, examination, results), experience intense mood swings and less happiness as compared to boys.

*****

Perceptions of Students of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas

A total of 94,034 students from JNV participated in the Mental Health Survey which comprises 24.81% of the total data.

Girls
42,594
45.33%

Boys
51,379
54.67%

Students

Secondary Stage
54,715

Middle Stage
39,319
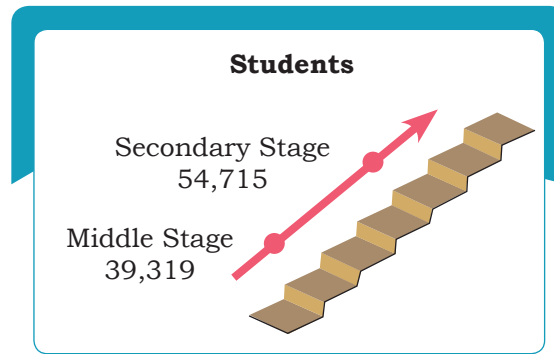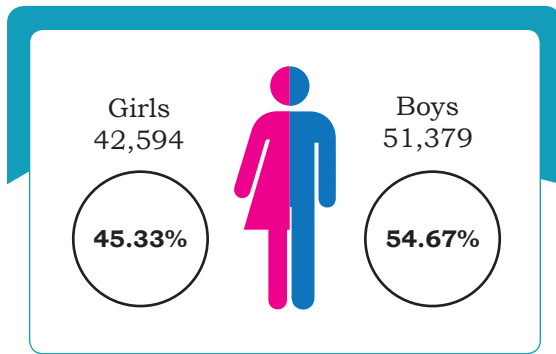
*61 students did not indicate their gender

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS

Understanding of One's Own Self

Adaptability

Adaptability is being able to adjust or adapt to any circumstance, or changes in one's lives. This helps the students to make appropriate responses to changes in situations or circumstances. Responses indicate:

51%
Middle Stage

Middle stage students responded that they can quickly adapt to changes in their environment.

4% 7%

48%

41%

48% of the total students of JNV showed the ability to quickly adapt to changes.

Secondary stage students report adjusting to the changes less quickly than middle stage.

46%
Secondary Stage

52%

43%

The respondents' gender differences indicate boys perceiving themselves as more quickly adapting to change than girl students. This may be due to differential gender specific socio-cultural expectations and experiences of students.

Trusting others

Trust is the basis of forming meaningful relationships and is related to individuals' experience of well-being.

In all, 29.4% students have reported that they are able to frequently trust people. Not much differences are seen amongst boys (30%) and girls (28%). Marginal change is seen in students being able to frequently trust others as they move from middle to secondary stage.

29%
Secondary Stage

30%
Middle Stage

Satisfaction

From a psychological perspective, life satisfaction is an important predictor of human health and is based on perceived satisfaction with a range of different life domains. Students' satisfaction with personal life and school life were as follows:
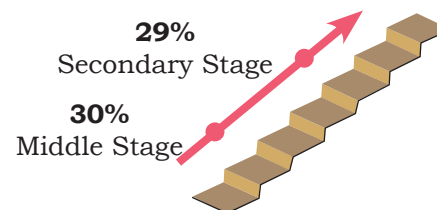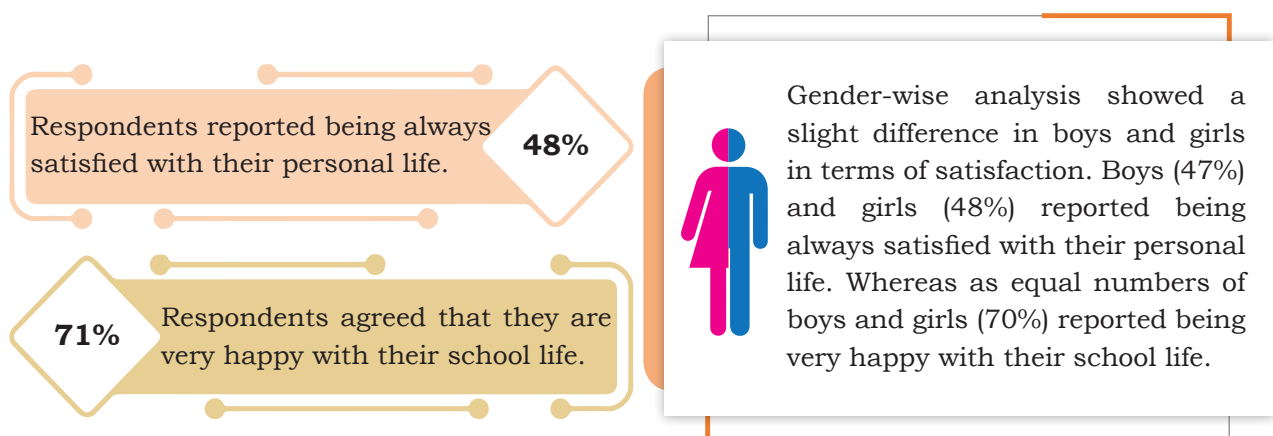
Respondents reported being always satisfied with their personal life.

48%

71%

Respondents agreed that they are very happy with their school life.

Gender-wise analysis showed a slight difference in boys and girls in terms of satisfaction. Boys (47%) and girls (48%) reported being always satisfied with their personal life. Whereas as equal numbers of boys and girls (70%) reported being very happy with their school life.

The survey showed that students were always satisfied with their personal life and very happy with school life this decreased as the students moved from middle to secondary stage. Middle stage students were more

48

satisfied in their personal life and school life than secondary stage students. This may be because of the different challenges faced by students at the secondary stage in their personal, social, academic life as well as determining their career choices.

Secondary stage: School 66%, Personal 44%
Middle stage: School 76%, Personal 52%

■ School ■ Personal
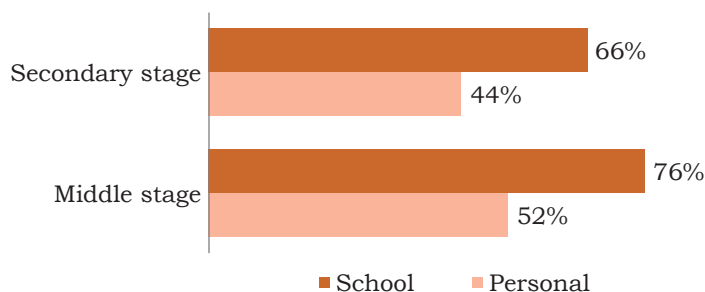
Responsibility of Doing Well in Life
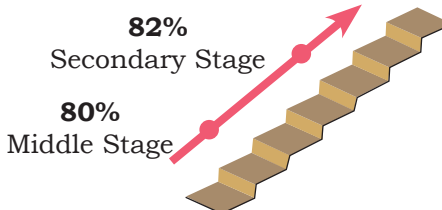
Responsibility is about doing the things which one is expected to do and accepting the outcomes of one's actions.

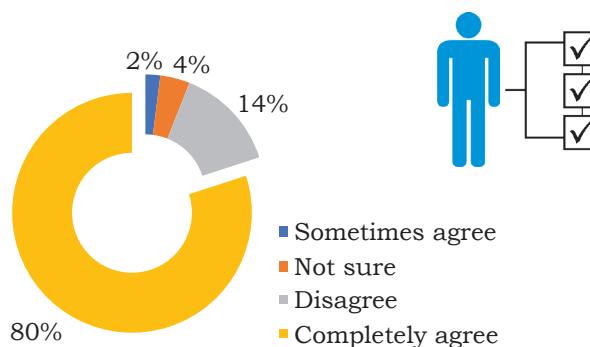A large majority percentage (80%) of respondents reported completely agreeing to being responsible for doing well in life, indicating student's awareness of their responsibilities.

2% 4% 14% 80%

■ Sometimes agree
■ Not sure
■ Disagree
■ Completely agree

A large majority of boys (80%) and girls (83%) indicate completely agreeing to being responsible for their own life; however, not much difference is seen among both the genders.

As evident at both stages, students have, in majority, reported completely agreeing to being responsible for doing well in life with a marginal difference across the stages.

82% Secondary Stage
80% Middle Stage

Body Image

Body image is the individual's perception of their physical self and the thoughts and feelings that result from that perception. Physical appearance has an impact on one's confidence and self-worth. A little above average, i.e., 52% of the total students expressed being always confident about their physical appearance.

The data showed a slight difference among boys and girls of JNV, who are always confident about their body image. Body satisfaction is reported by both boys and girls; however, the number of students who did not affirm being always confident and happy about their appearances is of concern.

53% **51%**

49

48%
Secondary Stage

58%
Middle Stage
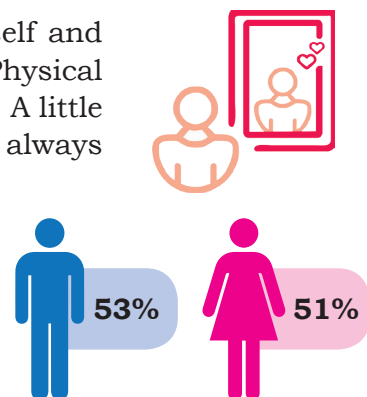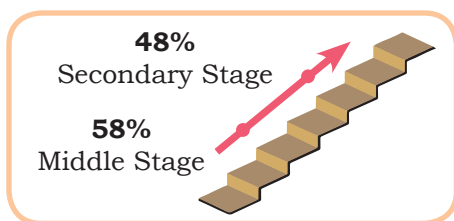
However, a considerable difference amongst respondents was observed at middle and secondary stage with regard to them always being confident and satisfied with the way they look.

Findings suggest that as the students are moving towards the secondary stage, they are becoming less confident about their body image. Being over critical of the way they look is a typical characteristic of adolescents.

Perspective Taking

Perspective taking is an important aspect, which helps the individual in understanding the situation from an alternate point of view. Hence, it is a contributor to an individual's mental well-being.

28% Students reported being able to easily take the perspective of another person.
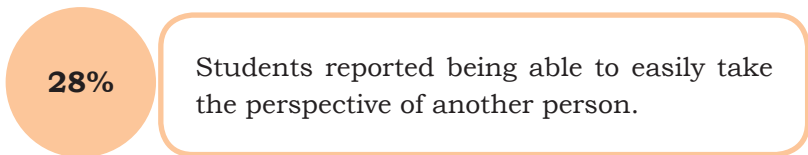
With regard to gender, it was observed that 30% boys and 25% girls reported that they can easily talk with people having different viewpoint.

Social interaction is an important element of one's life, as individuals learn a lot while they are interacting with others. Initiating conversation is an important social skill.

22% Students reported frequently facing difficulty in initiating conversation with others.
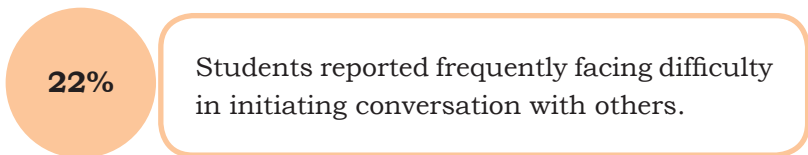
Gender differences were observed as boys (24%) indicated facing frequent difficulty than girls (19%) in initiating a conversation with others.

Confidence

The way an individual perceives oneself can be seen in their level of confidence and how they respond to people and others in academic and social situations. Responses of students on whether they hesitate to ask questions when in doubt indicate:

27% Students reported that they always hesitate to ask questions in class when unable to understand something. Boys (29%) reported more hesitation in asking questions than girls (24%).

29%   **24%**
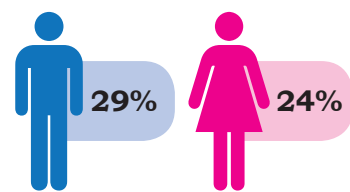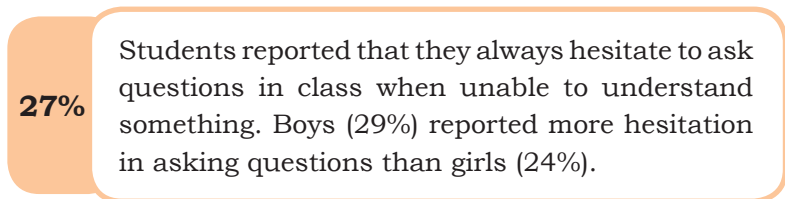
Understanding of One's Own Self in the Social Context

Social self is how an individual interacts with the social world; approaches relationships; perceives physical appearance, accomplishments, roles, and skills. Individuals' social self-concept depends on what people in their surroundings think about them.

Happiness

Happiness is an emotional state which is caused by positive thoughts and feelings. Research suggests that students' learning is enhanced while experiencing positive effects than while experiencing negative effects. It is encouraging to see that more than half of the respondents reported being considered as happy by others.

52%   **54%**

53% Students responded that people in their surroundings consider them to be a happy person.
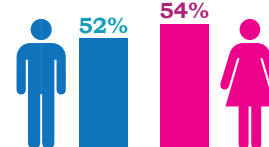
A relatively small difference is indicated in the responses of boys and girls.

Nearly half of the students at middle stage (54%) and secondary stage (52%) reported that others perceive them to be happy. Like gender, a similar trend was observed across stages with marginal difference.

Being a Leader

The belief of teachers in their students has a significant direct positive impact on student outcomes — behaviours and learning. With regard to students' belief about their teachers thinking they can lead others, a relatively small number of students (24%) reported that they can. This was reported slightly more by boys (26%) in comparison to girls (23%) and was higher among middle stage students (28%) compared to secondary stage students (22%).

Trustworthiness

65% A majority of students responded that their friends trust them a lot.

A marginal difference was observed in students at the middle (64%) and secondary (65%).

Similarly a minor difference was observed between boys' (64%) and girls' (65%) perceiving their friends trust them a lot.

Peer Pressure

Peers are an important element of socialisation in a student's life. They may have a positive or negative impact on the child. In schools, students try to fit in a group to feel accepted and at times tend to do things which are harmful for them.

11% A small number of students reported that they do things rarely as per their friends, to be accepted in a group.

This depicts that a small percentage of students do not succumb to peer pressure and thereby likely to refrain from maladaptive behaviour, which is a major concern in schools.

A slight difference in genders is observed, wherein boys (10%) reported a little less than girls (13%) with regard to doing things to please friends.

Academic Perceptions

Academics related concerns gain more prominence in students' life as they progress in the stages of education. They contribute quite significantly to students' self-esteem and their beliefs about themselves.

Satisfaction with Academics

Students' satisfaction with their academic performance indicates:

39% Students reported being always satisfied with their academic performance.

33%   39%

Always being satisfied was reported less by girls as compared to boys, indicating that boys were more satisfied with their academic performance than girls.

A sharp decline in the satisfaction with academics as students transit from middle to secondary stage is observed as 50% students at the middle stage reported being always satisfied with

Secondary stage — 28%

Middle stage — 50%

■ Academic performance

their academic performance and only 28% reported being always satisfied at the secondary stage. The concerns related to career and future are likely to influence this decline in satisfaction.
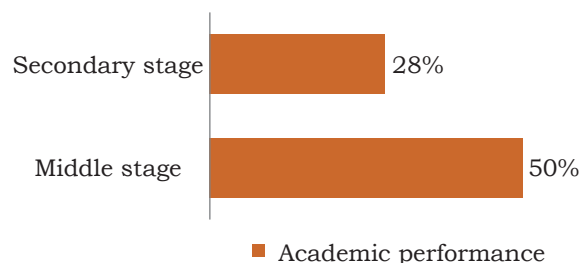
To enhance the engagement of students with learning, it is important to know the students' reasons for lagging behind in their studies.

30% responses cited the lack of concentration as the prime cause for lagging in studies.

The reasons reported for lagging in studies by:

Boys
31% responses indicated lack of concentration; 21% responses indicated poor study habits

Girls
31% responses indicated lack of concentration; 18% responses indicated difficulty in managing time

A marked increase in responses reporting lack of concentration as the reason for lagging in studies, is seen from the middle stage (25%) to the secondary stage (35%). Poor study habits is another reason reported at the middle stage (17%) and the secondary stage (19%).

Lack of concentration — 30%
Not lagging in studies — 19%
Poor study habits — 18%
Difficulty in managing time — 15%
Distraction while studying — 11%
Difficulty in understanding — 7%
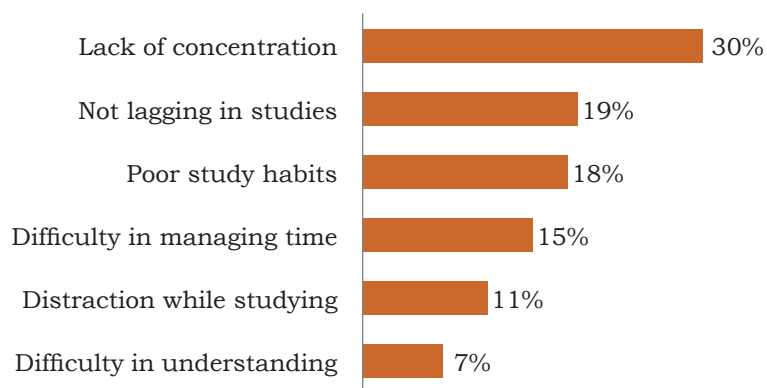
Though in general, as observed, less number of respondents do not submit assignments on time, however this is an important aspect for the academic growth of learners.

Not submitting assignments on time was reported by 12% students and was reported more by boys (13%) than girls (10%). The aspects point at causes of falling behind in academics.

Seeking Social Approval

The need for social approval is affected by developmental stages, cultural factors, generational influences, and inherent characteristics and traits of the individual.

32% Students were in agreement that doing well in studies is for seeking approval of others. Students reported, if they do not do well in studies, they would lose the respect of people.

Out of these students, 29% were girls and 33% were boys

A larger percentage of boys have agreed to doing well for social approval as compared to girls. This indicates that boys link their academic achievement with societal approval.

29%
Secondary Stage

34%
Middle Stage

Though a decline in percentage was observed from middle (34%) to secondary stage (29%).

The value of performing in academics is viewed as a symbol of social status and gaining the approval of people.

Additionally, it is reported that lack of attention by teachers sometimes bothers the students as 38% students reported that they sometimes get bothered when their teachers do not pay attention to them. This was seen higher in girls (40%) compared to boys (37%). Whereas, secondary stage students (40%) reported this more than middle stage students (36%).

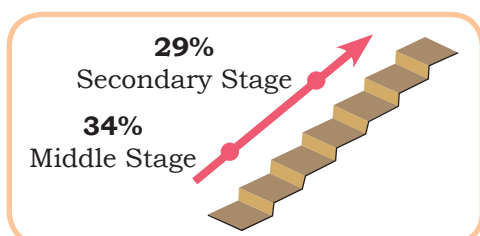This highlights the need for teacher's display of affection, care and concern towards students to enhance their engagement in learning.

Anxiety related to Academics

Academic anxiety related to studies, examination and results can have a negative effect on a student's academic performance. As a proactive measure, teachers and parents need to become aware of the signs of anxiety in school students.

Data revealed different causes of anxiety in the responses. The most common causes of anxiety were:

49% Studies

Examination and results **28%**
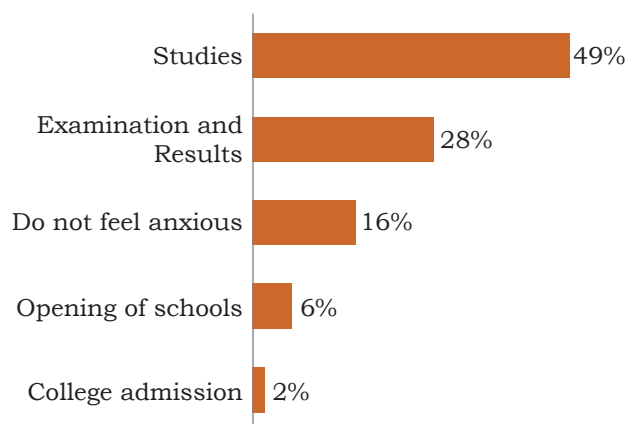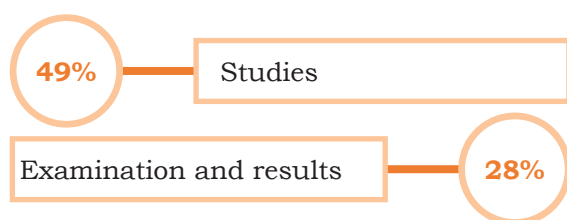
Almost an average of the responses reported academic anxiety with studies being cited as the major cause.

Cause	Percentage
Studies	49%
Examination and Results	28%
Do not feel anxious	16%
Opening of schools	6%
College admission	2%

Though slight gender differences are evident among genders, girls (50%) were slightly more anxious than boys (47%) about their studies.

The social status accorded to doing well in academics creates anxiety in students to perform well. Hence, studies in itself is viewed as an important factor.

54

Experiences with Online Learning

The virtual learning environment has a number of advantages. During COVID-19 when physical interactions and traditional face-to-face learning was restrained, efforts were made towards continued learning for students through online classes. The online learning no doubt provided opportunities for learning but also placed challenges on the students.

Responses reported about their feelings in regard to online learning, such as:

35% — Lack of social interaction | Online learning better than offline — **16%**

Across gender and stages, the common feeling about online learning that clearly stands out is 'lack of social interaction with peers'. This was reported nearly same by both boys and girls, however, lack of social interaction with peers was reported more by responses at secondary stage (38%) than middle stage (31%).

Lack of social interaction with peers	35%
Have better teaching methods	16%
Help in better learning	10%
Are better than offline classes	7%
Others	32%
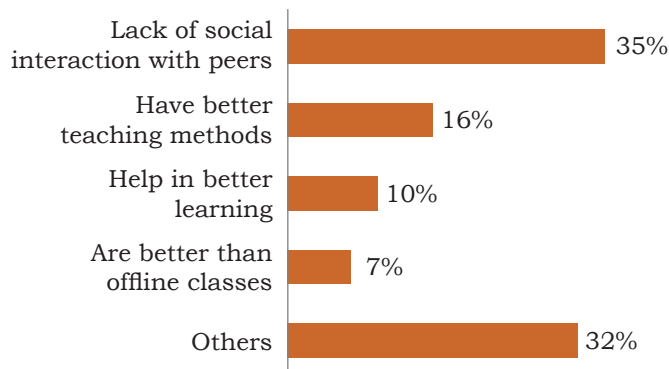
FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

Emotions and feelings play an important role in learning. Students who have a positive outlook towards learning will put in increased effort. This is an upward spiral as students who put in more effort will receive positive results, which will in turn lead to even more efforts being put in.

Emotions Experienced

Frequently Experienced Emotions

A majority of responses have reported positive emotions and are significant as emotional well-being comprises a sense of balance in one's emotions, thoughts, pursuits and social relationships.

68% Responded feeling happy most of the time.

Happy	68%
Satisfied	10%
Anxious	9%
Lonely	3%
Sad	3%
Frustrated	3%
Irritable	2%

67.7% Happy
10.4% Anxious
10.2% Satisfied

66.7% Happy
10% Satisfied
9.7% Anxious
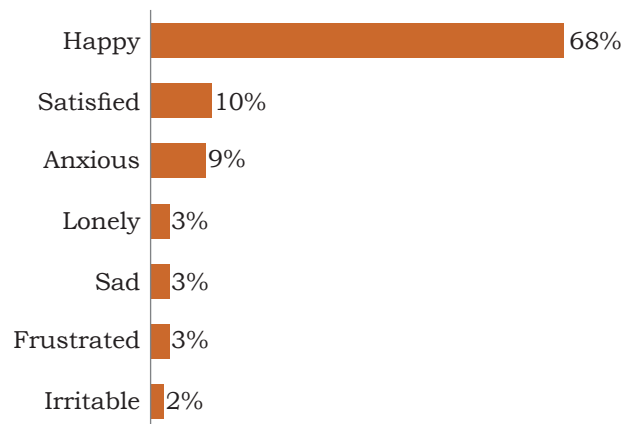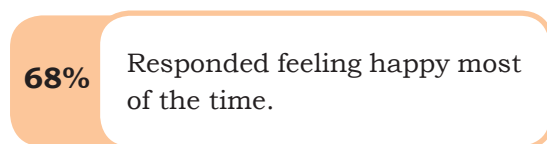
It has been observed that a majority of responses at middle stage (72%) indicated being happier compared to secondary stage (64%).

The feeling of being anxious is reported by a small number of responses. This is indicative of their positive emotional state.

Hope in Stressful Situation

As research suggests, hope improves our mental health as it provides positivity, helps to handle stress and anxiety. A fairly good number of students reported not losing hope (40%). A similar pattern is observed in the responses of both boys (39.2%) and girls (38.7%), which suggest that students stay optimistic in stressful situations. Hope needs to be viewed as a major protective factor in helping our students tackle negative or intrusive thoughts.

Emotional Understanding

Emotional understanding is an important aspect of emotional development. Perceiving emotions accurately in oneself and in others, expressing and regulation of emotions are important components.

A majority of students (47%) reported frequently being able to understand the feelings of others and express accordingly, which indicate a student's sensitivity towards emotions expressed by other people.

Commonly Felt Emotions

Responses reporting emotions that were commonly felt during COVID-19:

Emotion	Percentage
Tired	43%
Tearful	32%
Lonely	26%

43%

The maximum responses reported feeling tired and low on energy, followed by being tearful (32%) and lonely (26%) at least 2–3 times a week.
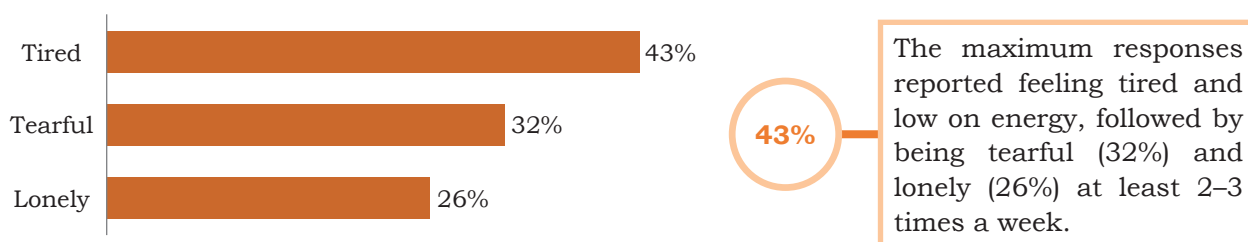
It was observed that a higher percentage of secondary stage responses (46%) were given on feeling tired 2–3 times in a week and low on energy than middle stage responses (39%). Also, secondary stage responses (25%) showed being more worried about their future. It was observed that responses of girls (26%) reported being more worried about the future as compared to those of boys (24%).

Worried about future

40%   47%

Reported feeling tired and low on energy
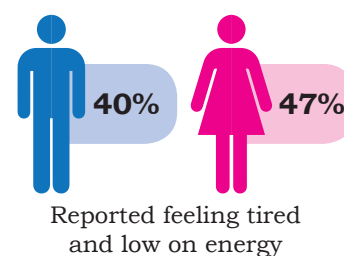
Intense emotions experienced during COVID-19

Responses on extreme emotions experienced are:

40% Mood swings in extreme

Followed by

15% Extreme emotions   **7%** Self-harm

Mood swings
- 40%
- 35%
- 46%

No extreme emotions felt
- 28%
- 33%
- 23%

Extreme emotions
- 15%
- 14%
- 16%

Self-harm
- 7%
- 8%
- 7%

Fear
- 7%
- 7%
- 6%

Panic attacks
- 3%
- 3%
- 2%

■ Total   ■ Middle   ■ Secondary

41% Mood Swings

14% Extreme Emotions

42% Mood Swings

16% Extreme Emotions
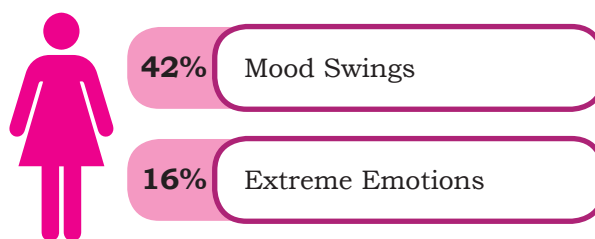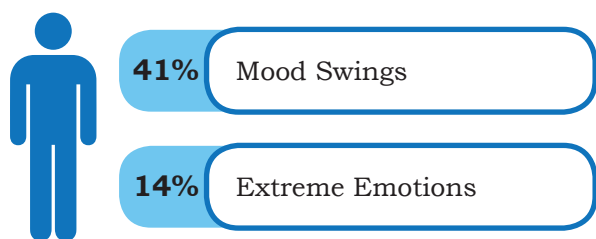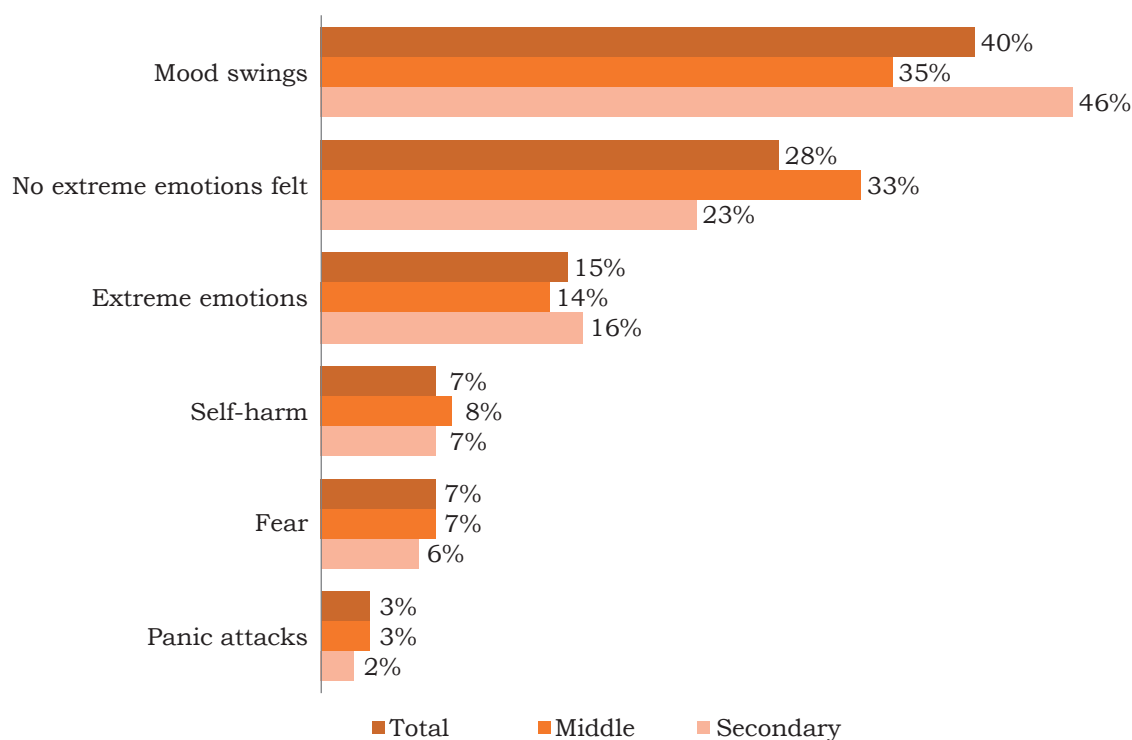
There is a marginal gender difference in responses of mood swings among girls and boys (42% and 41% respectively). Also girls (16%) experienced extreme emotions more than boys (14%).

57
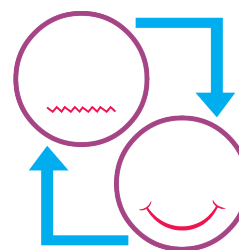
Changes in Routines due to COVID-19
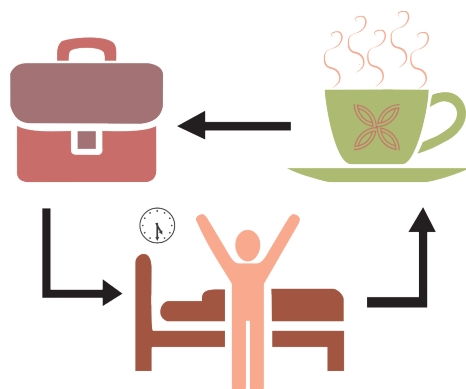
Due to the pandemic, there were some changes in the lives of the students. Students' responses reported major changes in:

34% Sleeping pattern

29% Everyday routine

22% Study habits

Across gender, maximum percentage of responses from girls and boys indicated that their sleeping pattern got disturbed during the pandemic. Apart from that 32% responses of girls and 27% responses of boys indicated their everyday routine was affected. 24% responses of girls and 19% responses of boys indicated that their study habits were also hampered.

Self-care

A majority i.e. 60% students reported that they always take good care of themselves for leading a healthy life. However, a slightly higher percentage was reported by boys (60%) compared to girls (57%). Large difference was seen among the stages, wherein 64% middle stage reported that they always take good care of themselves in comparison to the secondary stage (55%).

Challenges Faced

Issues at Home during COVID-19

The environment plays a major role in the overall development of an individual. The difficulties faced while students were at home during the pandemic indicates that:

No difficulty faced	43%
Emotional changes in family	23%
Financial problems	17%
Changes in behaviour and actions	7%
Beating/slapping/shouting among family	4%
Loss of a loved one	4%
Being physically hit	2%
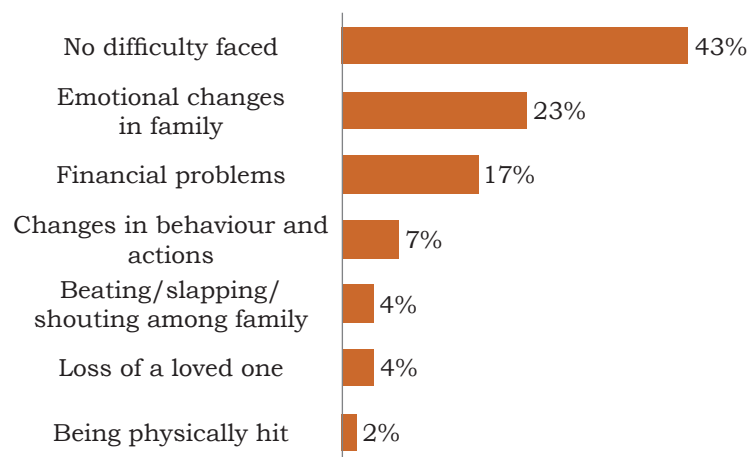
43% of responses reflected not facing any issues or difficulty at home, which is a positive revelation.

23% Reported observing changes in the emotional expression of family members

17% Reported facing financial problems

Across gender, differences are seen as 25% responses of boys and 22% responses of girls reported observing a change in the emotional expression of family members. 20% responses of boys and 15% responses of girls reported facing financial issues at home.

Difficulties Faced in Online Learning

During COVID-19, as classes were taking place in online mode, students' issues related to online learning indicate:

45% responses reported having difficulty in learning content online.

37% responses indicated facing technical/network issues in online classes

Difficulty in learning content online: 42% (Middle stage), 47% (Secondary Stage)

Technical/network issues: 46% (Middle stage), 41% (Secondary Stage)

Difficulty in managing time: 4% (Middle stage), 5% (Secondary Stage)

Interrupted electricity supply: 4% (Middle stage), 3% (Secondary Stage)

Personal reasons: 2% (Middle stage), 2% (Secondary Stage)

Lack of computer knowledge: 2% (Middle stage), 2% (Secondary Stage)

■ Middle stage   ■ Secondary Stage

A similar trend is seen for both girls and boys as 45% responses of girls and 47% responses of boys reflected having difficulty in learning content online. Technical/network issues were reported in 41% responses of girls and 35% responses of boys. Also, a higher percentage of secondary stage responses (47%) reported having difficulty in learning content online than middle stage (42%).

Support Desired for Managing Feelings

Emotional support is important to help students understand and manage their emotions effectively. Support perceived and received both are important. The students wished that they could have the following support to manage their emotions:

38%	Responses reported the support of their family, teacher and friends in difficult times.
44%	Responses of girls reported parents', friends' and teachers' support.
34%	Responses of boys indicated approach the school counsellor.
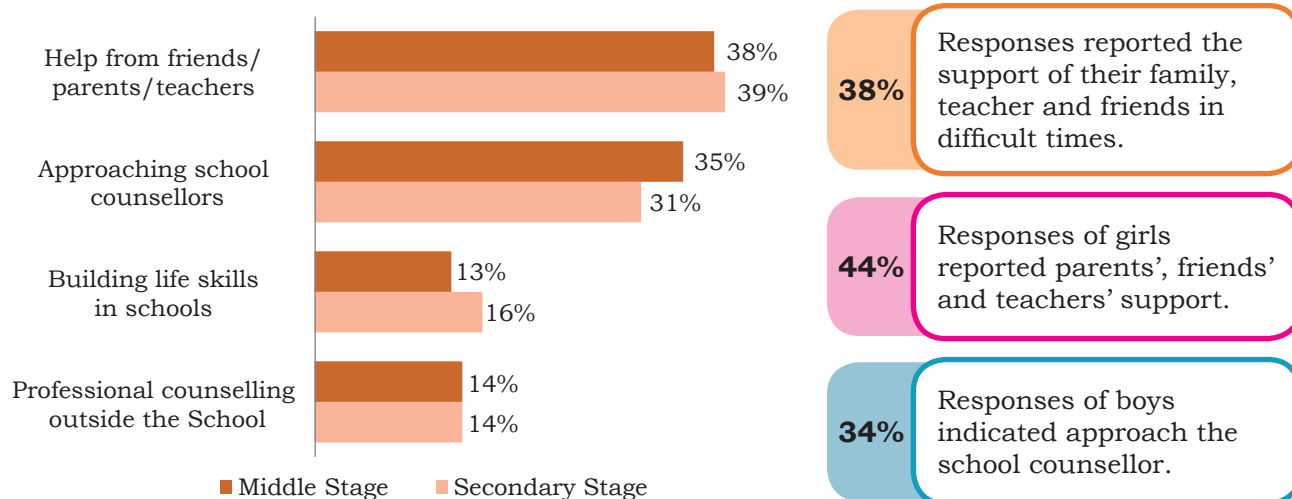
The responses at both stages show a similar trend. 38% responses at middle stage and 39% at secondary stage wished they could get help from their parents, friends or teachers to deal with their emotions, followed by 35% in middle stage and 31% in secondary stage, who wished that they could approach the school counsellor for help.

Nearly half of the students, i.e., 49% responded that they frequently help and support people. This was seen almost equally among middle stage (50%) and secondary stage (49%).

While students mostly preferred seeking support from parents, teachers or friends at the same time nearly half of the respondents also indicated helping and supporting others.

Emotions related to COVID-19

Health and Safety Related Behaviours

Students thoughts and feelings during the onset of pandemic reveal:

37%	responses reflected being fearful of meeting strangers
27%	responses indicated worry or fear about their family members/friends

Fearful of coming in contact — 37%
Worried or fearful about family/friends — 27%
Preoccupied with the thoughts of catching COVID-19 — 20%
Indulging in safety behaviours — 16%
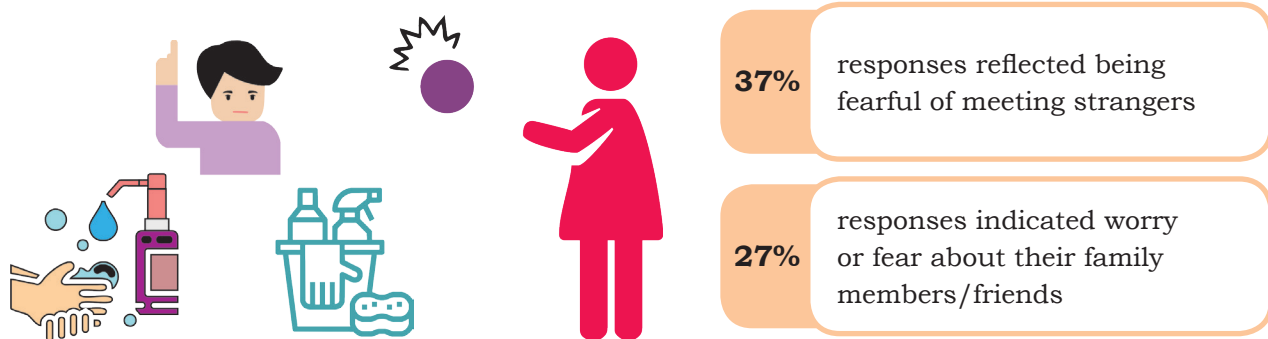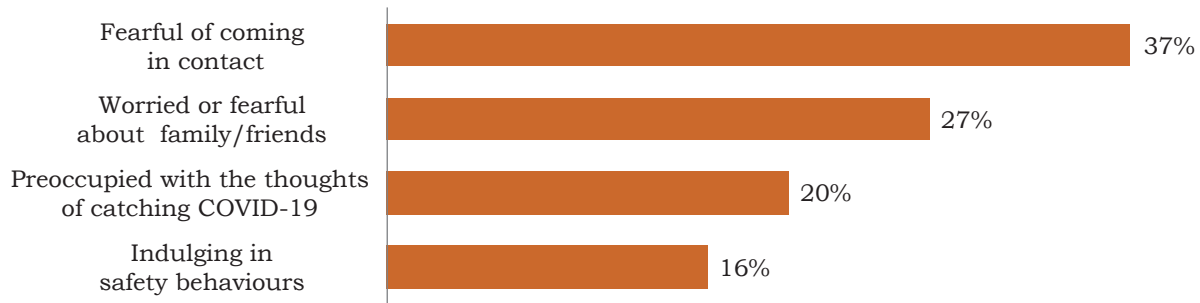
Responses of girls (39%) indicated that they were more scared to meet new people and interact with them physically during COVID-19, than boys (36%). Also, responses of girls (30%) reported more worry about the health of their family members and friends than those of boys (25%).

Physical Symptoms

Students reported experiencing physical symptoms during COVID-19. Half of the students' responses reported that they did not have any health issues. However, the symptoms reported by students were.

Headaches — 17% / 15% / 20%
Stomach ache — 12% / 13% / 12%
Nausea — 4% / 4% / 4%
Loose motion — 4% / 4% / 4%
Feeling feverish — 4% / 4% / 3%
No such health issues — 50% / 53% / 48%

■ Total   ■ Middle Stage   ■ Secondary Stage
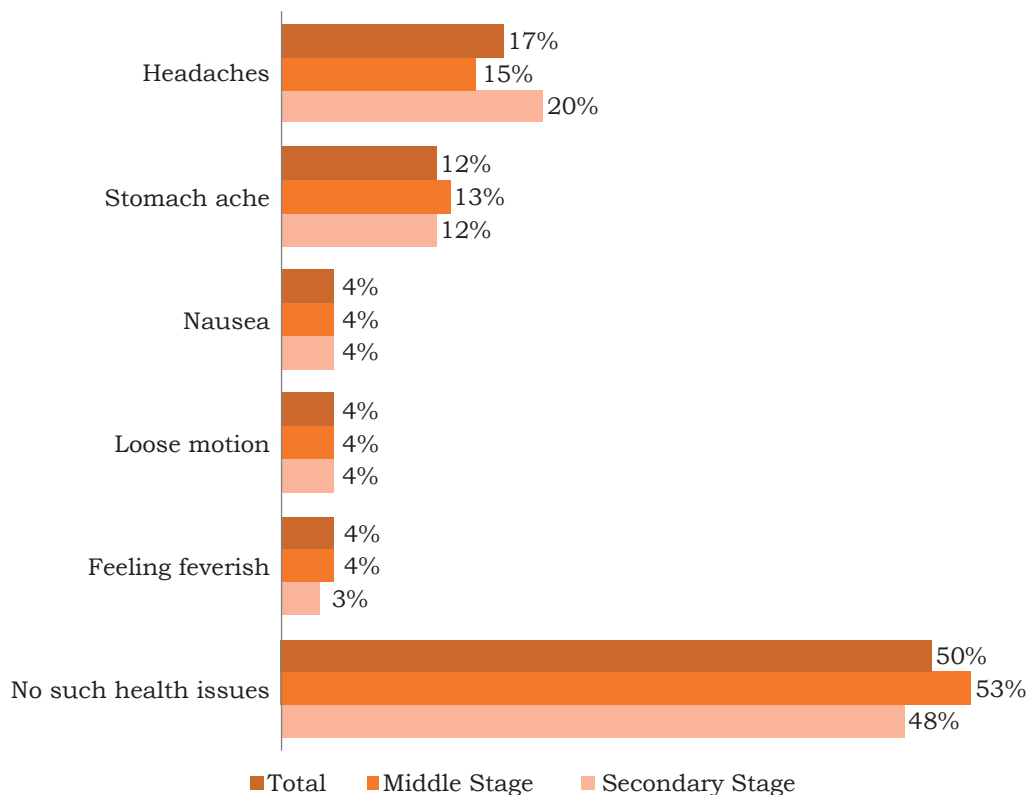
The most common symptoms that was reported by majority of the responses were headaches (17%) and stomach ache (12%).

15% responses at middle stage and 20% at secondary stage reported headaches.

COPING STRATEGIES

Regulation of Emotion

Responding in Stressful Situations
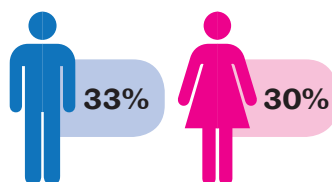
The manner in which individuals respond to a stressful situation is indicative of the way they regulate their emotions. A total of 32% completely agreed to responding appropriately in stressful situations.

33% **30%**

A difference in students across genders depicts more boys completely agreeing to responding appropriately during stressful situation as compared to girls.

There was a slight increase from middle stage (31%) to secondary stage (32%) on agreeing to responding appropriately to stressful situations. This shows that as the children are moving towards higher stages, they are understanding and learning how to regulate their emotions effectively and respond appropriately.

Managing Emotions/Strategies

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the lives of students, as they experienced a number of challenges that were stressful and overwhelming. Stress is known to lead to feelings of fear, anger, sadness, etc.; changes in appetite, energy, sleep; physical reactions such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, etc.

The ability to confront the stressful reality of the pandemic would be affected by the experience of positive and negative feelings and emotions. Research suggests that individuals who experience high levels of positive emotions are able to adapt better than those with negative emotions. The importance of cultivating positive emotions for developing a resilient mindset is therefore important. Students' feelings and emotions were explored in regard to the changes in routines, challenges faced at home, support received, online learning and strategies for managing emotions.

Strategies Used for Managing Emotions

In response to the query of support available to the students and by different concerned person, the responses were:

Strategy	Percentage
Sharing with friends	57%
Sharing with parents	20%
Resolving themselves	13%
Sharing with teachers	5%
Waiting for the situation to improve	5%

Followed by

57% — Sharing with their friends

With their parents — **20%**

13% — Sorting out by themselves
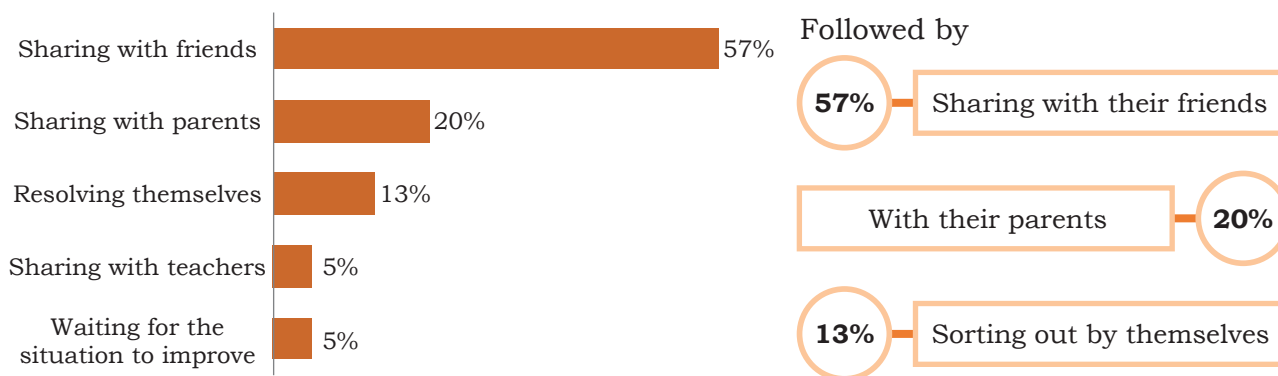
A larger percentage of responses of boys (60%) indicate that they like to share their feelings with their friends compared to girls (54%).

Majority of the responses from middle stage (53%) as well as secondary stage (60%) showed preference for sharing concerns with friends, followed by sharing with parents.

	Secondary Stage	Middle stage
Sharing with friends	60%	53%
Resolving themselves	16%	11%
Sharing with parents	15%	26%
Waiting for the situation to improve	5%	5%
Sharing with teachers	4%	5%
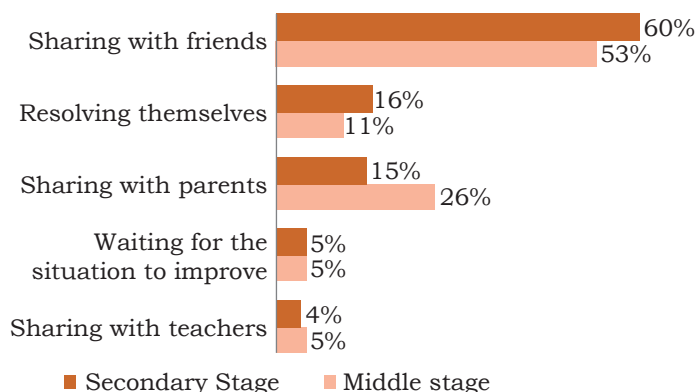
Self-efficacy

Almost an average of students (49%) reported that they are frequently able to solve challenging tasks. There were no gender differences observed in handling frequency of being able to handle challenging tasks. However, more students at secondary stage (50%) reported to be frequently able to solve challenging tasks more than middle stage students (48%).

Social Support

Social support, both in the form of perceived support as well as support received, is of significance.

A majority, i.e., 57% students agreed to having people with whom they can share and discuss their feelings, which indicates having a supporting environment.

Commonly Used Strategies for Coping

Students reported using strategies to manage their feelings during stressful situations like COVID-19 were:

31% Yoga and meditation to cope.

13% Ignoring Feelings

18% Write journals to manage their feelings.

9% Watching TV
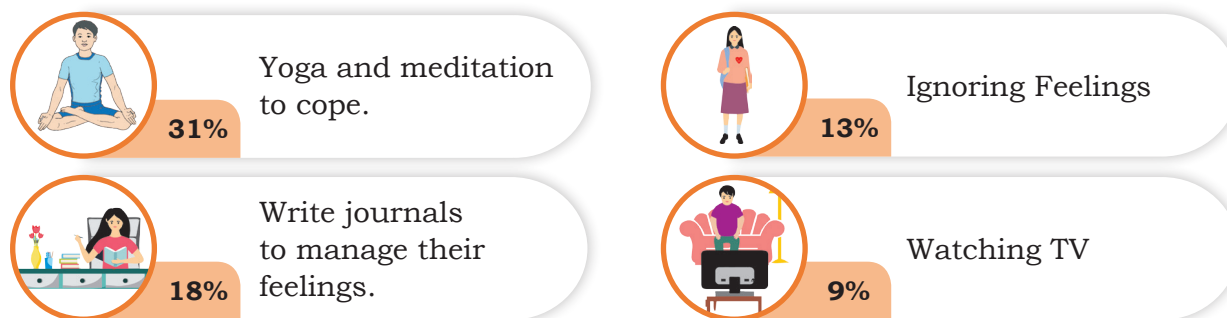
Thinking about their own thoughts is an important aspect of restructuring one's thoughts. 29% responses have also reported that they cope with stressful situations by changing the way they think and feel about it. This points at the use of metacognitive strategies which is the choice of 28% responses of girls.
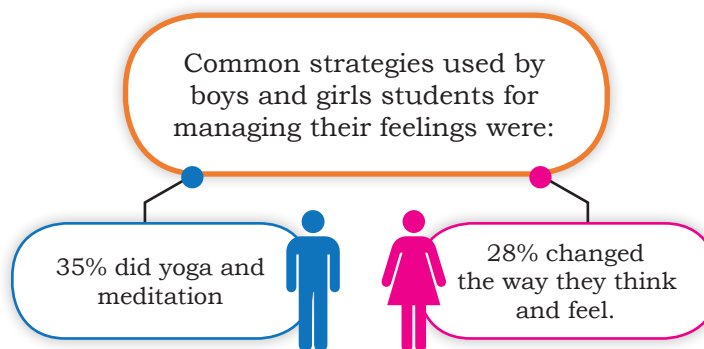
Common strategies used by boys and girls students for managing their feelings were:

35% did yoga and meditation

28% changed the way they think and feel.

63

SUMMARY

❍ Majority of students reported feeling responsible for doing well in life and perceived that their friends trusted them. Satisfaction with school life was also observed to be high amongst this group.

❍ Data points that large number of students frequently experienced happiness. Also it is to be noted that relatively low percentage of them experienced intense emotions, of which mood swings was a factor.

❍ Students reported difficulty in learning the content online followed by a lack of social interaction with peers as the most prominent reason for low satisfaction with online classes.

❍ Yoga and meditation followed by changing one's thought process were the commonly used strategies to cope with anxiety provoking situations.

❍ Satisfaction with school life declines prominently from middle stage to secondary stage among the students of JNV.

❍ Anxiety related to studies, exams and results is reported by less than 50% of students at middle stage. It is seen to be higher at secondary stage with minor gender differences. Mood swings were experienced more by the secondary stage students as compared to middle stage students.

❍ Happiness— the most commonly experienced emotion, is reported higher at middle stage with no gender differences.

❍ Level of confidence about their physical appearance is prominently higher among middle stage students.

In Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, majority of students reported feeling responsible for doing well in life and perceived that their friends trusted them. Satisfaction with school life was also observed to be high amongst this group. It is encouraging to see that majority of students frequently experienced happiness, however, it needs to be taken note that there is substantial reduction in experienced happiness at secondary stage. Also it is heartening to see that relatively low percentage of them experienced intense emotion. The most frequently reported of the intense emotions is mood swings especially at secondary stage.

Students when asked about online classes, reported lack of social interaction with peers as the most prominent reason for low satisfaction followed by difficulty in learning the content online. Yoga and meditation followed by changing the ways of thinking were the commonly used strategies to cope with anxiety provoking situations.

*****

Perceptions of Students of State Government Schools

The Survey-Mental Health and Well-being of school students entails data of 84,705 students from State Government schools of all the states and UTs of India, which represents 22.35 % of the total collected data.

Girls
47,152
55.8%

Boys
37,274
44.1%

Students

66.8%
Secondary Stage

34.1%
Middle Stage
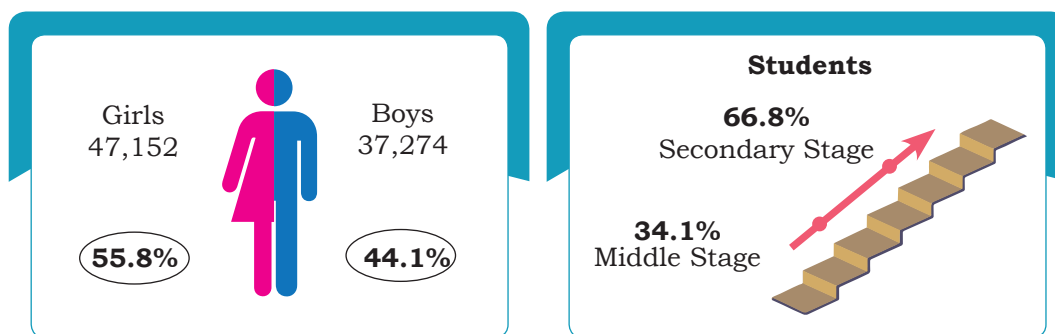
*277 students did not indicate their gender.

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS

Understanding of One's Own Self

Adaptability

The ability to adapt to changes is an important life skill, which determines how quickly an individual is able to respond to changes. Less than half i.e. only 45% participants of State Government Schools reported being able to quickly adapt to changes. Out of which, 42% were girls and 48% were boys.
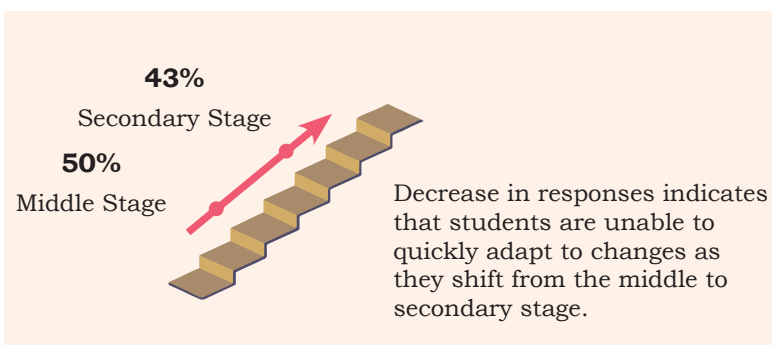
43%
Secondary Stage
50%
Middle Stage

Decrease in responses indicates that students are unable to quickly adapt to changes as they shift from the middle to secondary stage.

Trusting Others

Trust refers to the confidence that a person has in the dependability of another person; specifically, it is the degree to which one feels that they

can depend on the other. Only 34% students reported of frequently being able to trust others. It was almost equally perceived by girls (35%) and boys (33%) that they are able to frequently trust others. A slight increase in the frequency of trusting can be observed from middle stage (37%) students to secondary stage (33%) students.

Satisfaction

Exploring the satisfaction of students with personal and school life indicates higher satisfaction with school life as compared to personal life. Around 53% of students from State Government schools felt always satisfied with their personal life while 79% of students reported being very happy with school life.

The percentage of responses in life satisfaction (personal life, school life) decreased from middle to secondary stage for students of State Government schools. Marginal gender differences amongst respondent were observed.

Personal Life

49% Secondary Stage

57% Middle Stage

51%   53%

School Life

75% Secondary Stage

84% Middle Stage

81%   74%
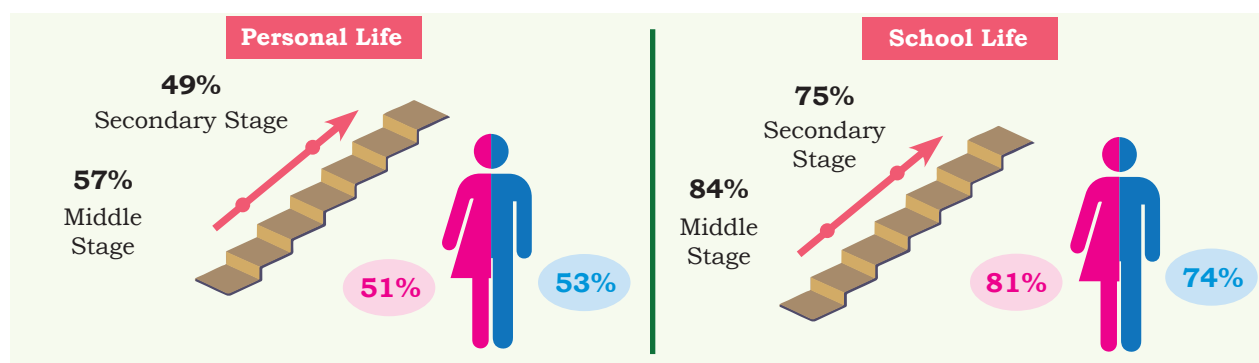
Responsibility of Doing Well in Life

Responsibility of doing well in life suggests living life with purpose and being in control of it. Around 86% of the total respondents completely agreed that doing well in life as their responsibility. The responses of students at the middle and secondary stage indicate marginal differences. As reflected 85% middle stage and 87% secondary stage students completely agreeing to doing well in life as their own responsibility. Gender differences were also found with 83% girl respondents and 89% boy respondents completely agreeing to being responsible for doing well in life.
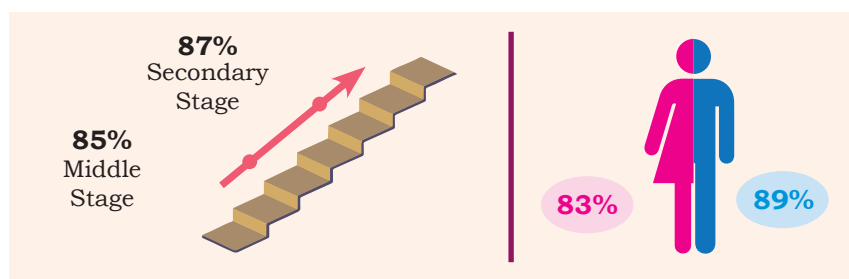
87% Secondary Stage

85% Middle Stage

83%   89%

Body Image

An individual's perception of their physical appearance is an important aspect of self-worth. A majority of students (65%) responded being always confident with regard to their physical appearance.

Decreasing level of confidence was reported in students as they shifted from the middle to secondary stage. The respondents at secondary stage indicate being not always confident about body image, which is a typical developmental concern of the stage. No gender differences were observed with regard to confidence in body image.

Physical Appearance

62.8%   62.6%

Students

59%
Secondary
Stage

70%
Middle Stage
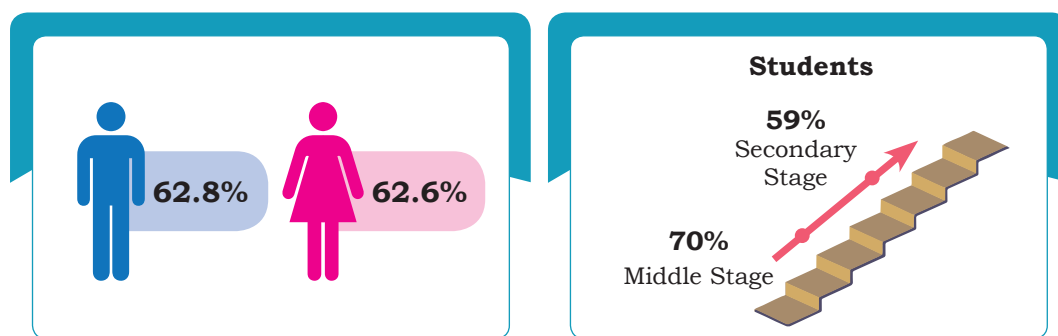
Perspective Taking

Around 32% students felt they could easily talk to people having different viewpoints. The data also indicate that boys can talk more easily with people having different viewpoints as compared to girls.

35%   30%
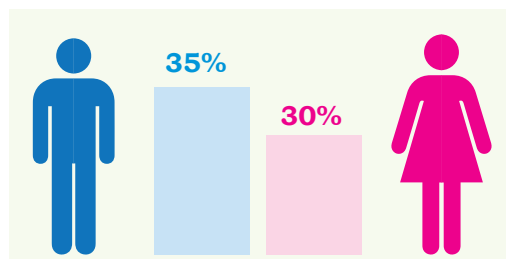
Confidence

Having confidence means trusting your own judgement and abilities. A relatively small number of respondents, i.e. 31% expressed that they hesitate to ask questions when in doubt, indicating lack of confidence.

A nearly similar trend of hesitation in asking questions is seen in both girls (31%) and boys (33%).

32%
Secondary
Stage

30%
Middle
Stage

There wasn't much difference across school stages in hesitation in asking questions when in doubt.

67
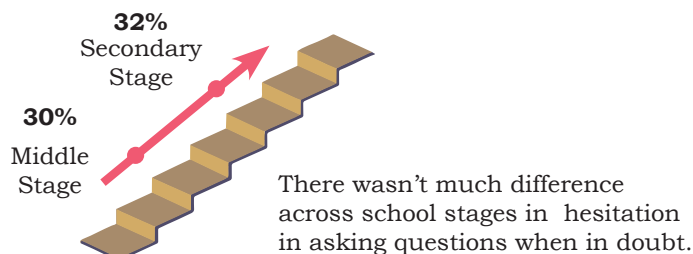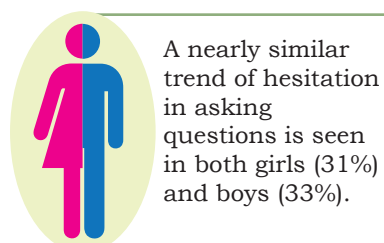
Hesitation and lack of confidence was also revealed in respondents indicating frequently facing difficulty in initiating conversations. Around 29% students frequently face difficulty to initiate conversation with others. In the middle and secondary stages, 28% and 30% students, respectively, expressed facing this issue, reflecting not much difference across both stages.

Understanding of One's Self in Social Context

Happiness

It is encouraging to see that more than half of the respondents reported people having positive perception of them. Around 57% of respondents believed that others view them to be a happy person.
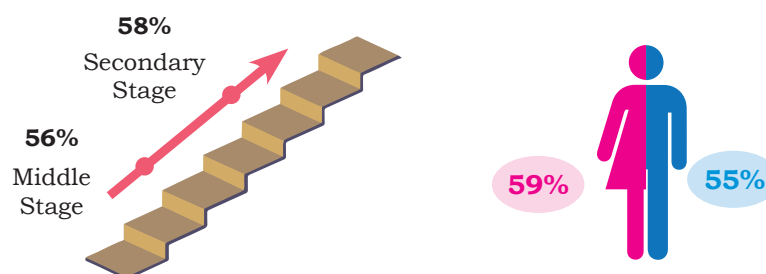
A little above 50% students expressed being perceived by the people in their life as happy across middle and secondary stages of school life.

Being a Leader

A lesser number, i.e. only 29% students reported that their teachers think they can always lead others. A decrease in responses was observed from middle (34%) to secondary stage (26%) students.
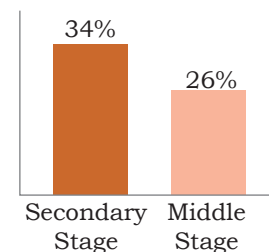
Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is seen in a majority of students i.e. 72%, as they feel that their friends trust them a lot.
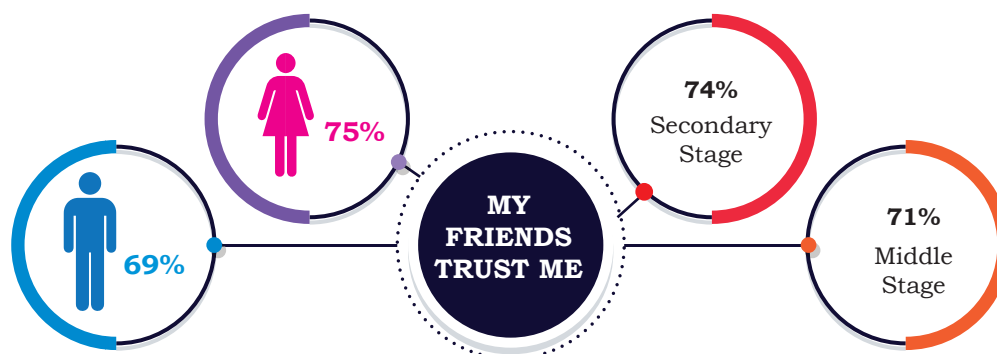
It can be seen that lesser percentage of boys perceive that their friends trust them a lot as compared to girls.

Peer Pressure

It is very significant even though a small number of students (11%) reported that they rarely do things to please others, which means they rarely do things under the influence of peers.

11.98%   **11.91%**

9% middle stage students reported rarely getting influenced by peer pressure.

13% secondary stage students reported rarely getting influenced by peer pressure.
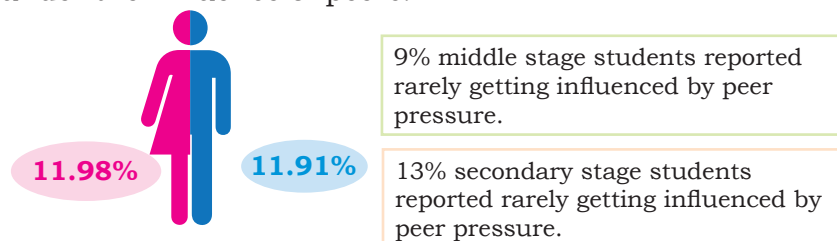
Academic Perceptions

Satisfaction with Academics

Academics is a significant aspect of the student life. Satisfaction with academic life can impact the overall well-being of a child. The findings highlight that a little more than half of the responses, i.e. 52% students reported always being satisfied with academic performance. However, satisfaction with academics decreased as students shift from middle (60%) to secondary stage (45%).

45%
Secondary
Stage

60%
Middle
Stage
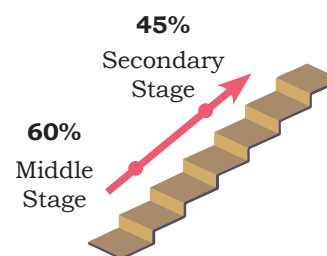
Students responses on certain causes for lagging behind in studies are given below:

- 26% students recognised lack of concentration as a major reason
- 16% reported having poor study habits
- 12% found difficulty in managing time

Lack of concentration — 26% / 22% / 31%

Not lagging in studies — 25% / 31.5% / 19%

Poor study habits — 16% / 16% / 15%

Distraction while studying — 13% / 12% / 13%

Difficulty managing time — 12% / 9% / 15%

Difficulty understanding — 8% / 9.5% / 7%

■ Total   ■ Middle   ■ Secondary
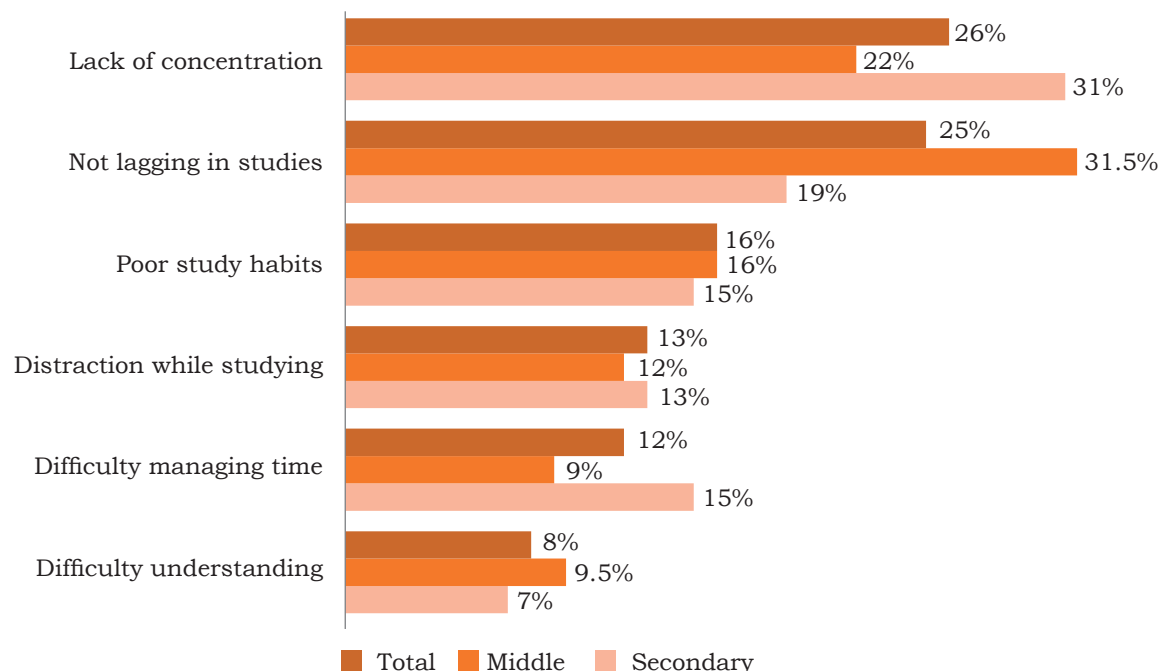
To complete work, assignments, etc. on time is an essential aspect of academics. Being unable to submit assignments on time was reported only by 16% students of the State Government schools. Around 18% students at the middle stage and 14% at the secondary stage also reported not submitting assignments on time. Marginal gender differences were seen in non submission of assignments.

Seeking Social Approval

Social value and academic efforts are closely associated. Of the total participants, 39% students agreed that doing well in studies is important for people to respect them.

Boys (41%) agreed that people will stop respecting them if they don't do well in studies more than girls (37%).

37%   **41%**
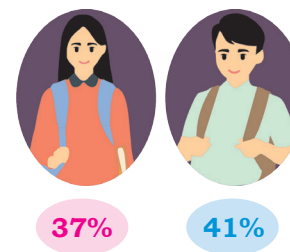
A little surprising, that only 12% students reported that it bothers them sometimes that their teachers do not pay attention to them. This was more true for boys (14%) as compared to girls (10%). This shows that not receiving attention from teachers was less disturbing to students.

Anxiety Related to Academics

When asked about various reasons for anxiety with respect to their academic life, a little more than half students reported feeling anxious about studies, i.e. 55% students, of these 56% were girls and 52% were boys. Girls were slightly more anxious about academics.

It was seen that 28% students reported anxiousness about examinations and its results. The percentage of boys and girls was similar (27% were girls and 28% were boys). Increase in percentage of responses indicates that students experienced more anxiety regarding studies as they shift from middle (49%) to secondary stage (58%).

Experiences with Online Learning

In terms of experiences with online classes during COVID-19 pandemic, only 22% responses showed online classes to be better than offline classes. However, 30% responses were given to lack of social interaction during online classes.

Lack of social interaction with peers				Online classes better than offline classes			
Gender		Stages		Gender		Stages	
Girls 31%	Boys 30%	Middle 27%	Secondary 32%	Girls 19%	Boys 26%	Middle 24%	Secondary 21%
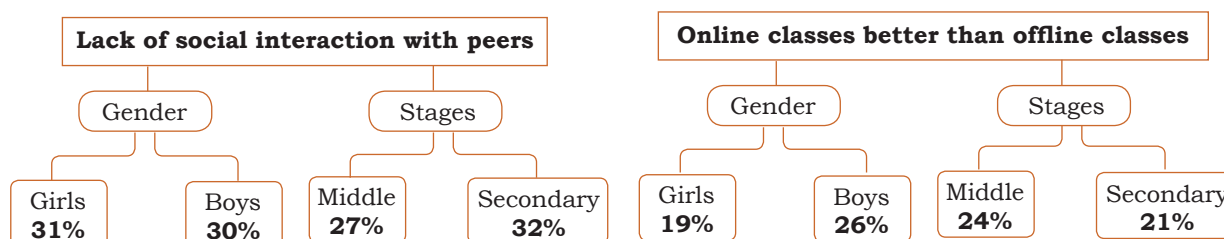
While more responses were recieved for lack of social interaction with peers at middle stage and secondary stage. Gender-wise responses also showed girls and boys perceiving lack of social interaction with peers as the primary reason for finding offline classes better than online classes.

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

Emotions Experienced

Frequently Experienced Emotions

A large number of boys, i.e. 64% reported frequently feeling happy as compared to 61% of girls. Around 11% boys reported feeling anxiousness most of the time with a slightly higher percentage 14% of girls.

Around 71% middle stage students reported frequently feeling happy, which decreased to 57% as they reached the secondary stage. Feelings of anxiety during middle stage were reported by 7%, which increased at secondary stage to 16%.
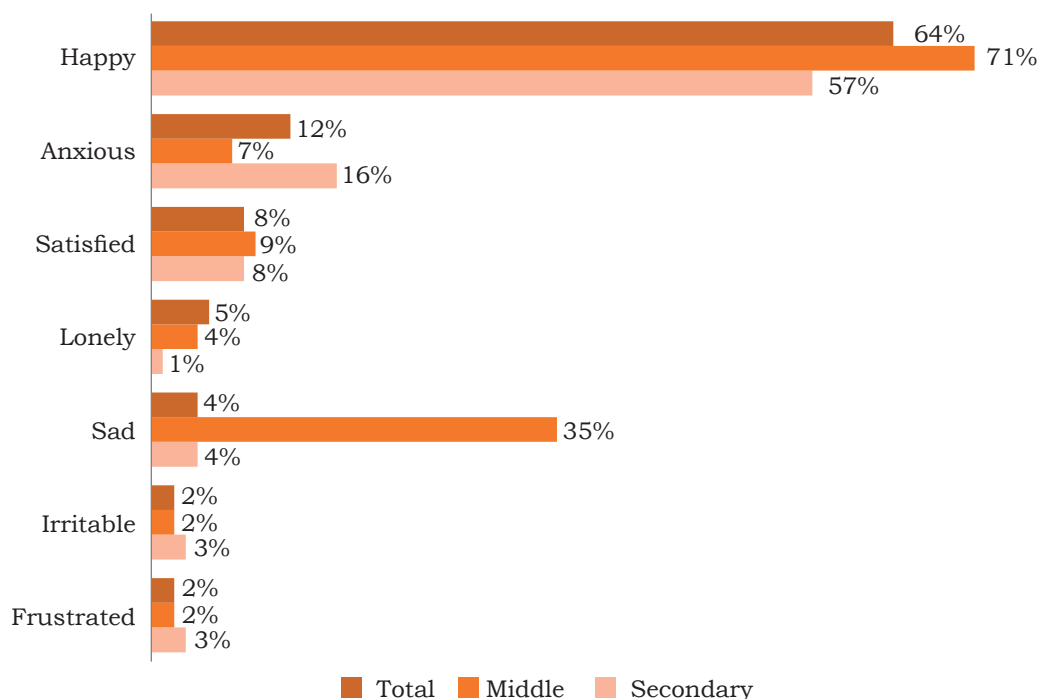
Hope in Stressful Situations

As research suggests, being hopeful improves our mental health as it provides positivity and helps to handle stress and anxiety. Of the total participants, 16% students reported that they always lose hope in stressful situations. Gender differences were marginal with girls (15%) and boys (17%).

Emotional Understanding

47% 48%
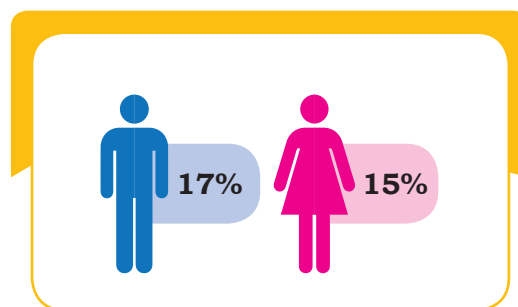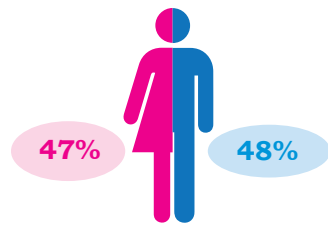
Emotional understanding is an individual's ability to recognise and regulate emotions. As observed 48% students responded that they frequently understand the feelings of others and express their feelings accordingly. The difference across genders was very small.

Commonly Felt Feelings

As can be seen 45.5% responses were given for experiencing tiredness and low on energy. These common feelings were reported higher at middle stage than at secondary stage. Gender differences in responses were seen with girls responding higher on tired and low on energy, tearful than boys.

MIDDLE STAGE

Tired and low on energy — 44%

Tearful — 35%

Lonely — 29%

SECONDARY STAGE

Tired and low on energy — 47%

Tearful — 37%

Lonely — 30%

Tired
- 45.5%
- 48%
- 44%

Tearful
- 36%
- 38%
- 33%

Lonely
- 30%
- 30%
- 30%

■ Total ■ Girls ■ Boys
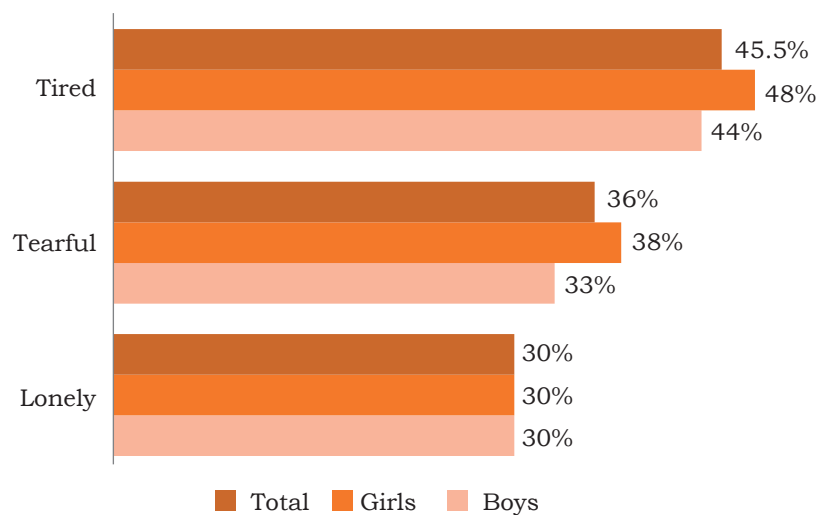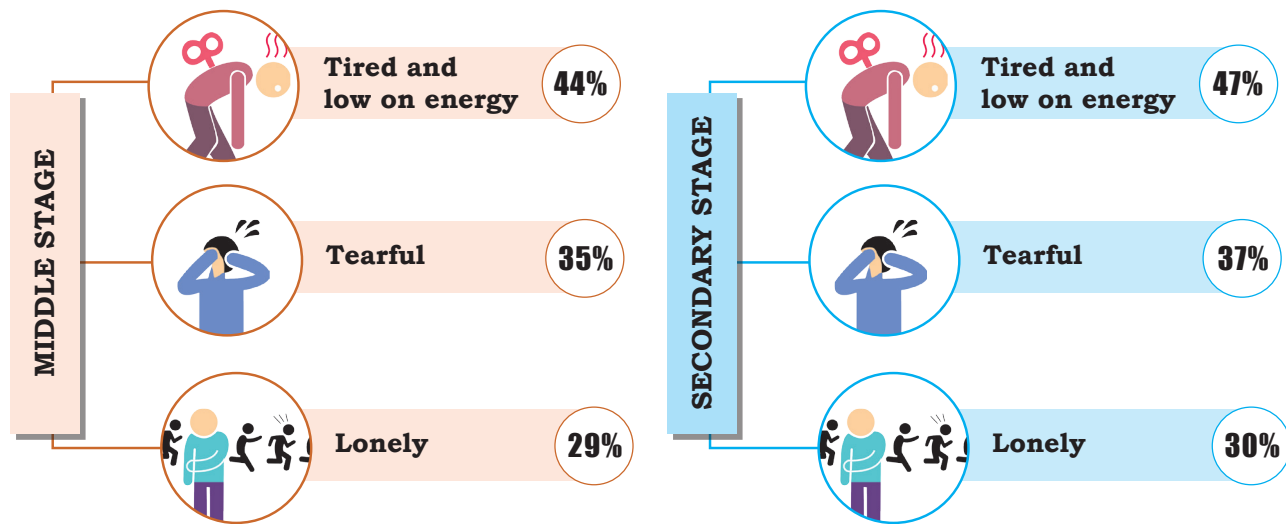
Intense Emotions Experienced during COVID-19

The pandemic had evoked varied feelings and emotions, which were experienced differently by all. Students were more vulnerable as they had missed being with their peers, besides facing the uncertainty related to studies, examinations and career. Higher responses were given by secondary stage for mood swings with respect to middle stage.
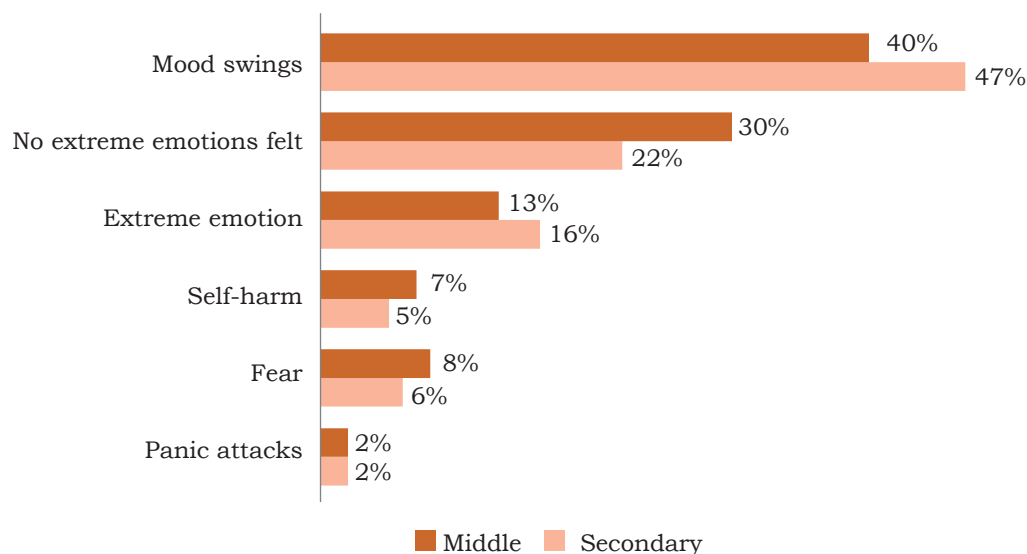
To understand the emotions experienced intensely by students, we need to look at the findings which point at 44% responses for mood swings.

The difference was marginally small between girls (46%) and boys (44%) reporting mood swings during COVID-19.
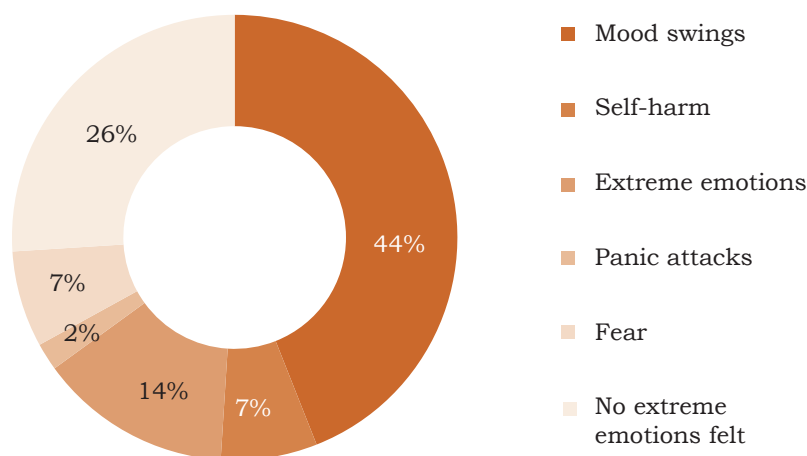
Changes in Routine due to COVID-19

Responses were given for a number of changes in their routine related to interactions, food, sleep, studies, etc. 35% reported major changes in sleep patterns as the major change in routine. Minor difference in responses were received for boys and girls.
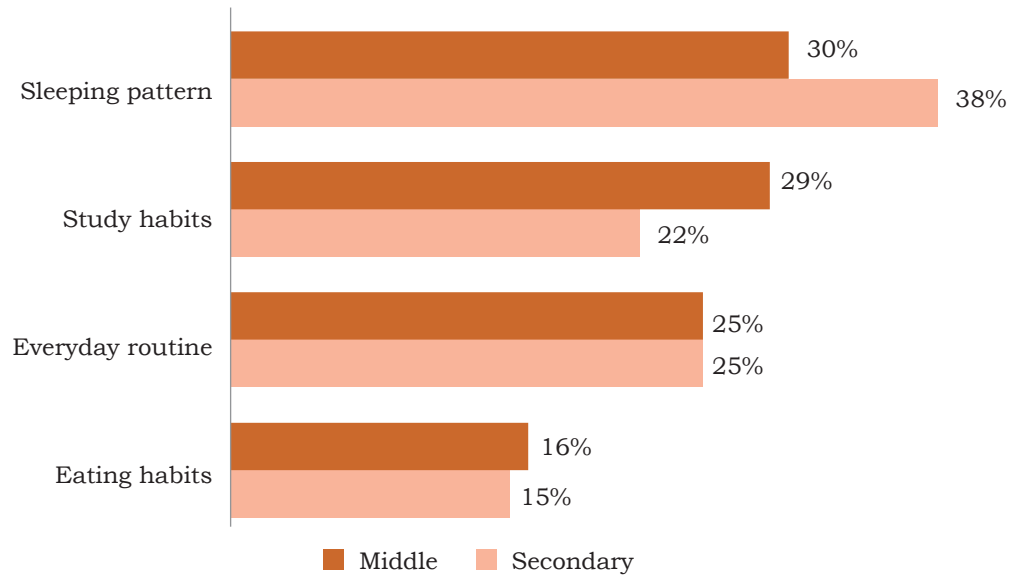
More change in sleeping pattern was reported by secondary stage students (38%) than middle stage students (30%).

Self-care

60% students responded that they always took good care of themselves for leading a healthy life. A little more, 62% boys reported always taking good care for a healthy life as compared to girls 58%.

There was a decline in percentage of responses in practices of taking good care of themselves as students moved from middle (67%) to secondary stage (56%).
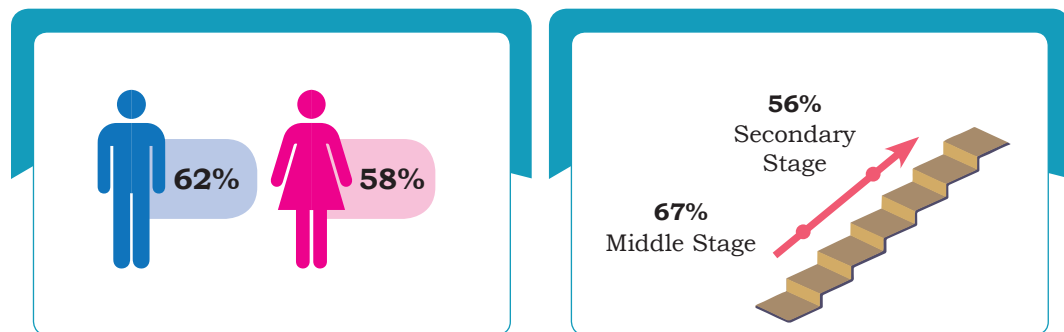
Challenges Faced

Issues at Home during COVID-19

The environment plays a major role in the overall development of an individual. The difficulties faced while students were at home during the pandemic indicates that 32% responses were received for having no difficulties at home. However, 30% reported that they went through financial problems at home. Responses for financial problems were nearly same across stage and gender. However, most responses were for no difficulty faced.
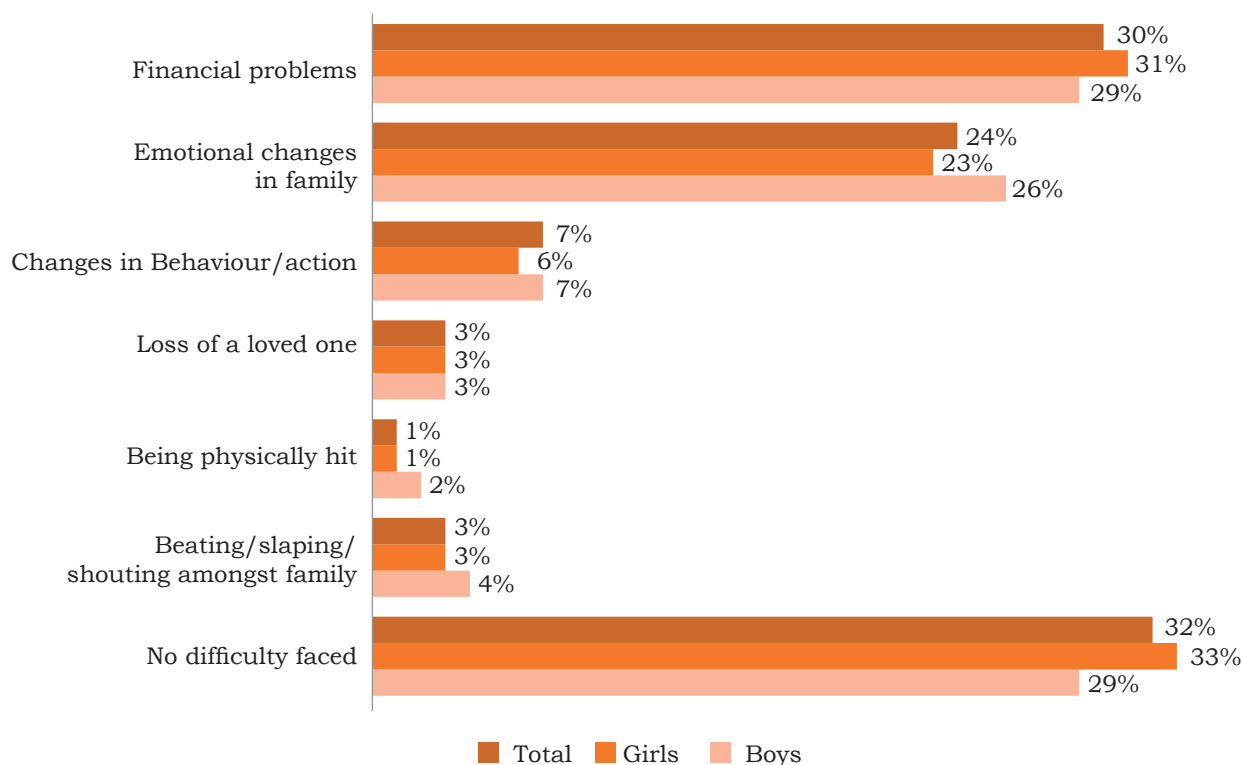
Financial problems, changes in emotional expressions of family members are the commonly faced difficulties at home reported by students of State Government schools.

Difficulties Faced in Online Learning

During COVID-19, as classes were taking place in online mode, issues related to online learning indicate:

Most commonly reported was difficulty in understanding and learning the content online reported by 54%. This was followed by technical or network issues reported by 35%. Marginal differences across stage were reported.

56%
Secondary
Stage

53%
Middle
Stage

Difficulty in learning content online	54%
Technical/network issues	35%
Difficulty managing time	4%
Interrupted electricity supply	3%
Personal reasons	2%
Lack of computer knowledge	2%
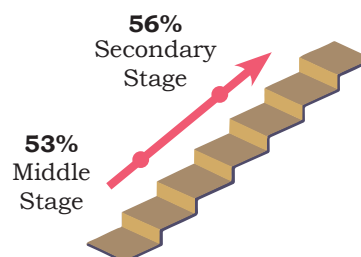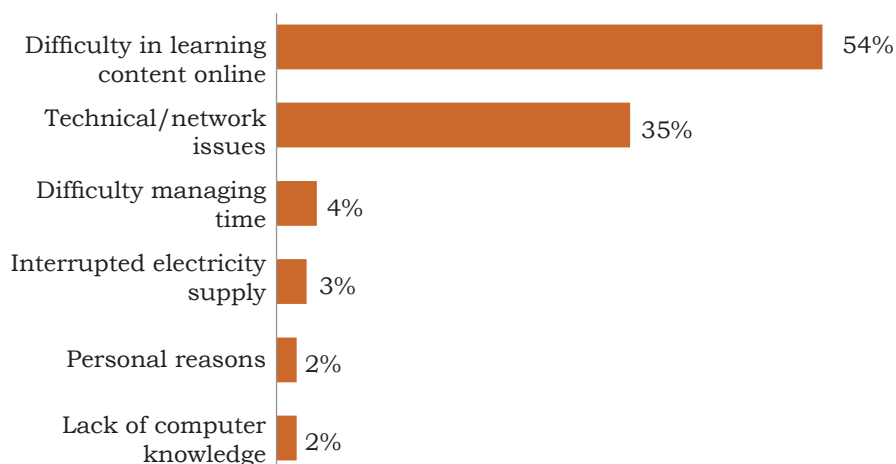
As students move to higher classes, it got more challenging for them to learn content online.

Support Desired for Managing Feelings

Emotional support is important to help students understand and manage their emotions effectively. Support, both, perceived and received, is important.

When asked about the support the students wished they had to manage their feelings, a majority, i.e. 50% of them reported they needed help from their friends/parents/teachers. Middle stage students reported more need for support from friends/parents/teachers as compared to secondary. Responses from girls were more as compared to boys on support from friends/parents/teachers. Building life skills in school was the support sought more at secondary stage. Slight gender differences were noted on this.

	Girls	Boys
Help from friends/parents/teachers	52%	45%
Building life skills in school	20%	19%
Professional Counselling outside the school	17%	23%
Approaching School counsellor	11%	13%

Help from friends/parents/teachers — Secondary 47%, Middle 53%
Professional Counselling outside the school — Secondary 21%, Middle 18%
Building life skills in school — Secondary 21%, Middle 17%
Approaching School counsellor — Secondary 11%, Middle 12%

■ Secondary   ■ Middle

A majority, i.e. 55% of students reported that they frequently help and support others whenever they can. Almost a similar trend is seen across gender, with 55% girls and 53% boys. This shows that they are able to understand people's needs and emotions and provide help accordingly. Only slight difference across the two stages were noticed.

While students mostly preferred seeking support from parents, teachers or family, at the same time nearly half of the respondents also indicated helping and supporting others.

55%   53%

Emotions related to COVID-19

Health and Safety related Behaviours

Fearful of coming in contact — Total 42%, Girls 43%, Boys 39%
Preoccupied with thoughts of catching COVID-19 — Total 24%, Girls 22%, Boys 26%
Worried or fearful about family/friends — Total 22%, Girls 23%, Boys 21%
Indulging in safety behaviours — Total 12%, Girls 12%, Boys 14%
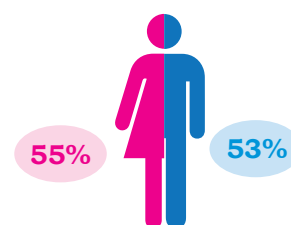
■ Total   ■ Girls   ■ Boys
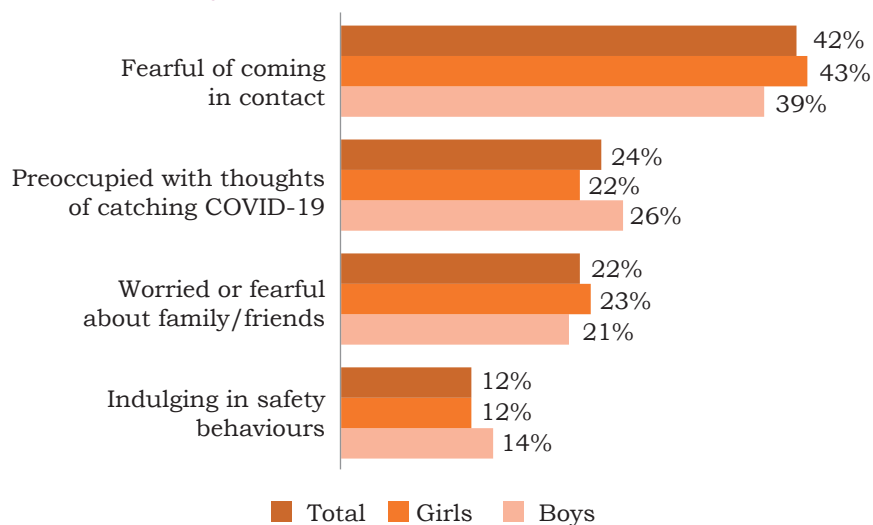
Health and safety related concerns are reflected in responses as indicated that in all 42% reported feeling fearful of coming in contact with people they don't know.

This was true for both the stages as observed; 43% at middle stage and 41% at secondary stage were afraid of coming in contact with people they did'nt know. More girls reported being fearful of coming in contact with strangers than boys.

Physical Symptoms

Less than half of the students reported that they did not have any health issues. However, responses were reported for some symptoms that they have observed.

On being asked about the most experienced symptoms, about 43% responses were for facing no health issues.

Around 18% responded that they had stomach aches and 15% experienced headaches.

In terms of gender 45% boys reported not facing any health issues, whereas girls' responses on this was 40%.

- 16% boys reported having stomach aches as compared to 19% girls.
- 18% girls and 14% boys reported having headaches without any medical causes.

Coping Strategies

Regulation of Emotion

Responding in Stressful Situations

The ability to regulate one's emotions and respond appropriately in stressful situations is an important skill that is useful in the context of social interactions. Around 30% of the participants completely agreeing to responding appropriately in stressful situations. Marginal difference across stage and gender were found.

30.3%
Secondary Stage

29.8%
Middle Stage

31%   **30%**

The responses were similar for both gender and school stages.
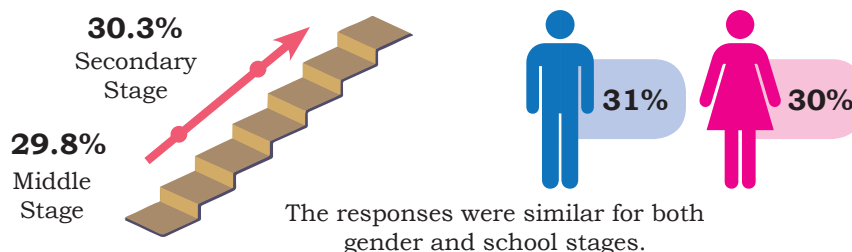
Managing Emotions/Strategies

Strategies Used for Managing Emotions

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the lives of students , as they experienced a number of challenges that were stressful and overwhelming. Stress is

known to lead to feelings of fear, anger, sadness, changes in appetite, loss of energy, sleep, and physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, etc.
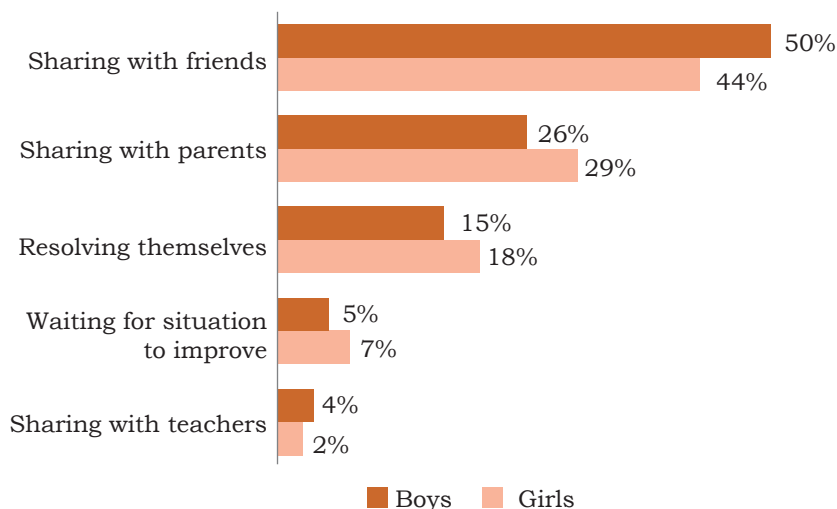
It is seen that secondary stage students prefer managing their feelings by sharing with friends as compared to middle stage students.

The ability to confront the stressful reality of the pandemic would be affected by the experience of positive and negative feelings and emotions. Research suggests that individuals who experience high levels of positive emotions are able to adapt better than those with negative emotions. The importance of cultivating positive emotions for developing a resilient mind set is therefore important. Students, feelings and emotions were explored with regard to changes in routines, challenges faced at home, support received, online learning, strategies for managing emotions.
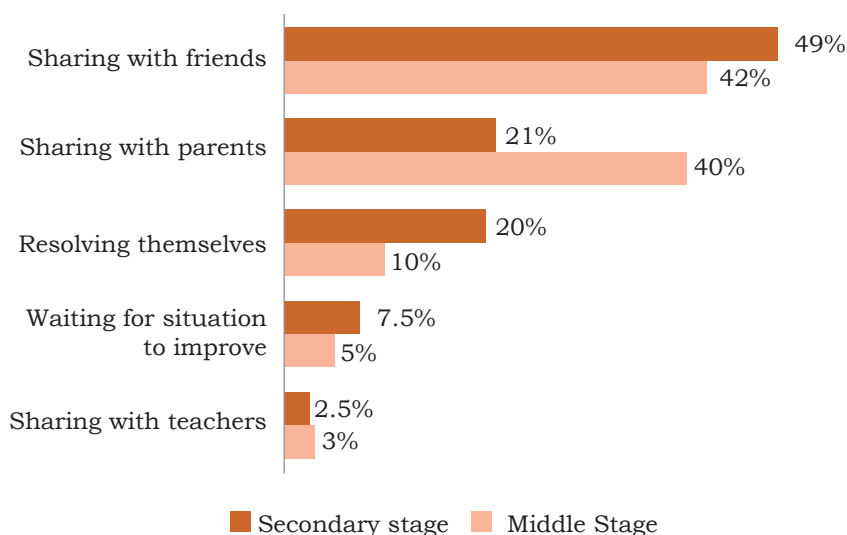
It is seen that more responses were given by boys for managing their feelings by sharing with friends as compared to girls. A stage-wise look at the data shows both stage students responding maximum on sharing with friends followed by sharing with parents.

The students used various strategies for managing emotions. A major response as reported by 46% students was managing their feelings by sharing with friends, and 27% students response were for sharing feelings with parents. Around 17% students felt they can sort out issues by themselves.

Self-efficacy

Around 42% students of State Government school responded that they can solve challenging tasks, with 45% middle stage and 41% secondary students. No gender differences are observed on this aspect.

Social Support

Social support is the availability of social network for care and assistance. On being asked about social support a large number of students, i.e. 58% of them reported having people with whom they can share and discuss their feelings. Out of this 64% were middle stage and 55% were secondary stage students. The students at the middle stage indicated having higher social support, which was comparatively less for their secondary stage counterparts. Marginal differences across gender were observed.

Commonly used Strategies for Coping

The following strategies are used by students to manage their feelings. Around 32% of State Government students reported using yoga or meditation as a commonly used strategy.
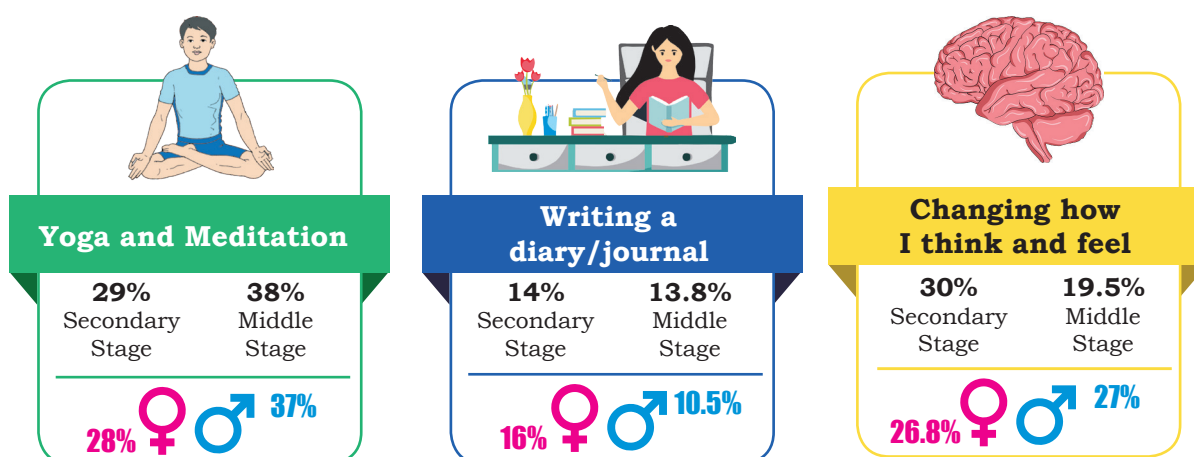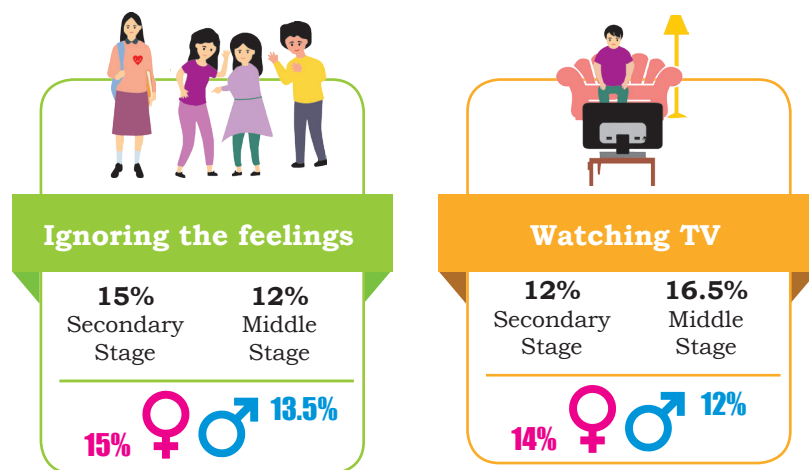
Yoga and Meditation

| 29% | 38% |
| Secondary Stage | Middle Stage |

28% ♀ ♂ 37%

Writing a diary/journal

| 14% | 13.8% |
| Secondary Stage | Middle Stage |

16% ♀ ♂ 10.5%

Changing how I think and feel

| 30% | 19.5% |
| Secondary Stage | Middle Stage |

26.8% ♀ ♂ 27%

Ignoring the feelings

| 15% Secondary Stage | 12% Middle Stage |

15% ♀ ♂ 13.5%

Watching TV

| 12% Secondary Stage | 16.5% Middle Stage |

14% ♀ ♂ 12%

The most commonly used coping strategy for the middle stage was practicing yoga and meditation (38%), while students in the secondary stage (30%) mentioned that by changing the way they think and feel, they manage their emotions.

The results indicate that the most commonly used strategy by girls and boys are yoga and meditation, followed by changing their ways of thinking and feeling.

SUMMARY

○ It was found that students of the State Government schools reported having high satisfaction with school life, sense of trustworthiness and ownership of doing well in their life.

○ The most commonly experienced emotion was reported as happiness although many students reported experiencing anxiety related to studies, examinations and result. The most commonly used strategy to cope with feelings was Yoga and Meditation as reported by the students.

○ Over 60% of students also reported feeling happy and confident about body image. It was found that students of the State Government schools also faced difficulty in learning content online.

○ Higher sense of satisfaction with school life was reported by middle stage students as compared to the secondary stage students. Comparison with gender revealed that girls perceived higher satisfaction than boys. Owning the responsibility of doing well in life too has been reported higher amongst girls than boys.

○ Students at the middle stage perceived their bodies (image) more positively than their secondary stage counterparts. No gender differences were found.

○ Availability of people to share feelings has been seen to be higher amongst middle stage students. Also middle stage students have reported a significantly higher percentage of happiness as the most commonly felt emotion as compared to secondary stage students.

○ Students at the secondary stage perceived studies, exams and results as the major reason for anxiety, which is lower at the middle stage. Gender picture shows girls being more anxious than boys on this aspect. Experiences of mood swings as an intense emotion was reported higher in the secondary stage than the middle stage.

It can be inferred that students of the State Government school are satisfied with their school life and take the ownership of doing well in life as their responsibility. The perceptions about satisfaction with school life have been seen to reduce at the secondary stage and amongst boys. Students at the middle stage have greater access to social support as they have reported having people to share their feelings with a marginal difference amongst the two genders. Happiness has been reported by a majority of students, which could be due to perceived access to social support and seeing themselves as responsible for their life and this could be an important aspect influencing their perceived happiness along with satisfaction with their school life.

The State Government school students largely faced difficulty with learning content online, which increased at the secondary stage but showed no gender-based differences. The middle stage students reported, that Yoga and meditation helped while, the secondary stage students reported changing how they thought and felt as being the most commonly used strategy.

*****

Perceptions of Students of Private Schools

A total of 67156 students from Private Schools participated in the Mental Health Survey which comprises 17.67% of the total data.

Girl
34,191

Boys
32,876

51%

49%

Secondary Stage
36,333

Middle Stage
30,823
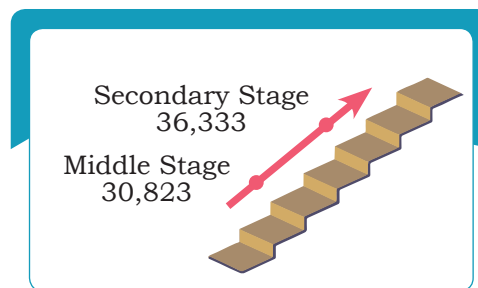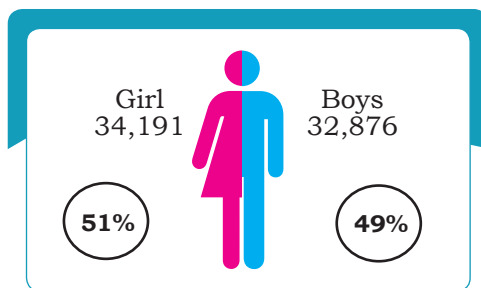
*89 students did not indicate their gender.

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS

Understanding of One's Own Self

This section explored the understanding of students in terms of their adaptability, trusting others, satisfaction, responsibility of doing well in life, body image, perspective taking and confidence.

Adaptability

Adaptability is an ability to adapt or adjust in any circumstances or situation. Responses indicate:

51% A little above fifty percent of respondents agreed that they quickly adjust themselves to changes in their life.

A difference across gender indicate that girls are able to adapt more than boys.

Increase in adaptability is seen as students move from middle stage (48%) to secondary stage (53%).
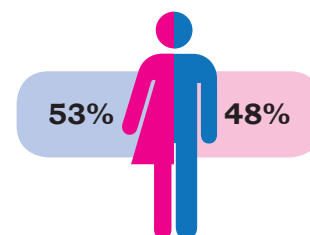
53% **48%**

Trusting others

Trust refers to the confidence that a person has in the dependability of another person; specifically, it is the degree to which one feels that they can depend on the other.

Only 18% of the students reported that they frequently trust people easily. A similar trend is seen at the middle and secondary stages (19% and 18% respectively), as is indicated by nearly the same percentages. Marginal differences were seen in the responses of girls () and boys.

Satisfaction

The perceived satisfaction of students indicates fulfillment of their goals. 50% of the total students expressed being always satisfied with their personal life and 67% respondents expressed being very happy with their school life.

```
                    LIFE
                 SATISFACTION

    Personal Life (50%)        School Life (67%)
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              GENDER

   Personal Life          School Life

 Satisfaction level     Satisfaction level
 of boys (53%) was      of boys (69%)
 higher than girls      was more than
 (47%).                 girls (66%).
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                        STAGES

        Personal Life              School Life

 A majority of students at    Students at the middle
 the middle stage (60%)       stage (80%) were more
 expressed satisfaction       satisfied as compared
 as compared to the           to the students at
 secondary stage (41%).       secondary stage (57%).
```

There is a marked decline in satisfaction with respondents moving from middle to secondary stage. Satisfaction with personal and school life is better among boys. Satisfaction with personal life is lower than school life for both across gender and stages. School life seems to fulfill the expectations of students.

Responsibility of Doing Well in Life

84% respondents completely agreed that doing well in life is their responsibility.

Responsibility of doing well in life

Gender

Stages

Girls (84%)

Boys (83%)

Middle Stage (85%)

Secondary Stage (82%)
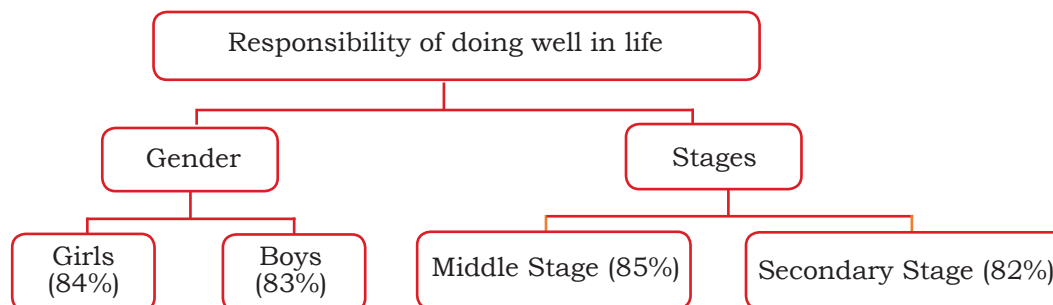
Around 84% students completely agreed to being responsible for doing well in life. There is not much difference across gender and stages. Such an orientation of self indicates that students assume personal responsibility and consider having control over the course of events occurring in their life. In new and unpredictable situations, such people trust their ability to handle situation and also believe that they can control their success or failure.

Body Image

An individual's perception of their physical appearance is an important aspect of self-worth. Dissatisfaction with body image can have harmful emotional, psychological and physiological effects.

The students' perception of their body image indicate that:

49% respondents reported that they always feel confident about their physical appearance

44% **51%**

Gender differences in physical appearance show that boys (51%) responded being always, confident about their physical appearance which is higher than girls (44%).
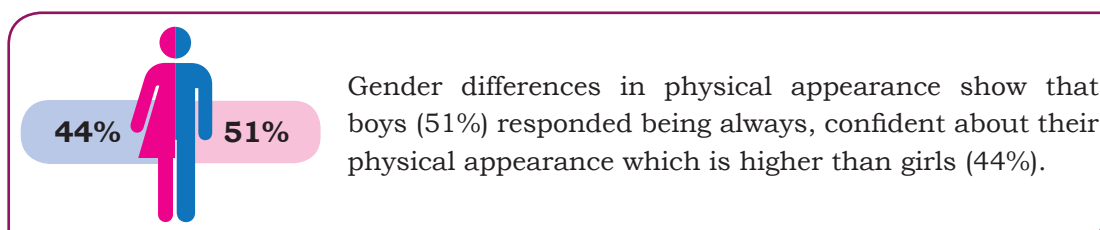
At middle stage (57%), students were always confident about their physical appearance as compared to secondary stage (40%).

40% Secondary Stage

57% Middle Stage

85
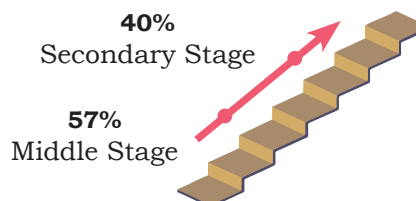
The data indicates that boys were more confident about their physical appearance than girls. The level of confidence about their physical appearance reduces as the students move from middle stage to secondary stage.

Perspective Taking

The ability to take the perspective of others is an important aspect of emotional regulation and leads to empathy. A total of only 32% students expressed being able to easily converse with people having different viewpoints.
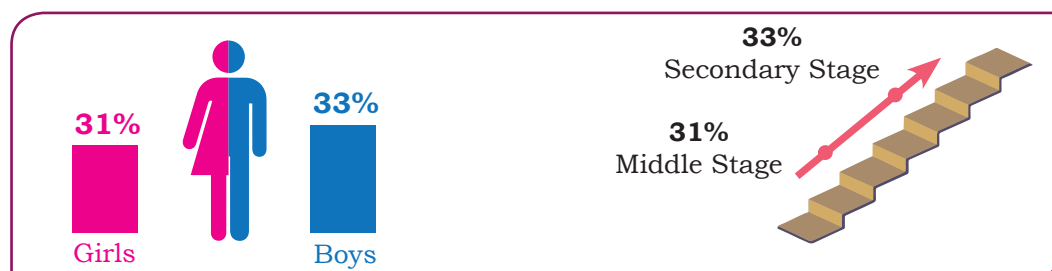
Lesser respondents reported their ease in talking or conversing with other persons having different viewpoints at middle stage than secondary stage and also by girls than boys respectively.

Confidence

An individual's confidence is impacted by how one perceives oneself. A lower level of confidence often leads to difficulty in expressing one's thoughts to others, thereby impacting sharing and relationship building.

25% responded that they hesitate to ask questions when in doubt

25.3% **24.9%** Marginally less difference across genders is reported in hesitation to ask questions.

A little difference is seen across stages, 24.2% students at middle stage and 25.9% students at secondary stage reported being hesitant in asking questions when in doubt.

25.9%
Secondary Stage

24.2%
Middle Stage
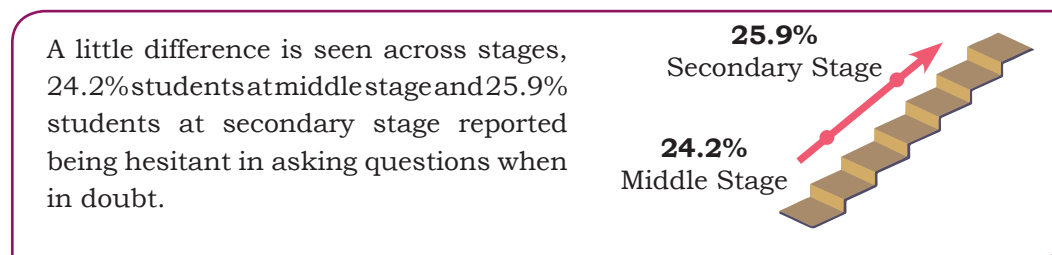
A marginal difference in the difficulty faced in initiating conversation was found which indicates a lack of confidence, which is seen irrespective of the gender and stages of education.

24% of the total students responded that they frequently faced difficulty in initiating conversation with others

23% **24%**

22% Secondary Stage

26% Middle Stage
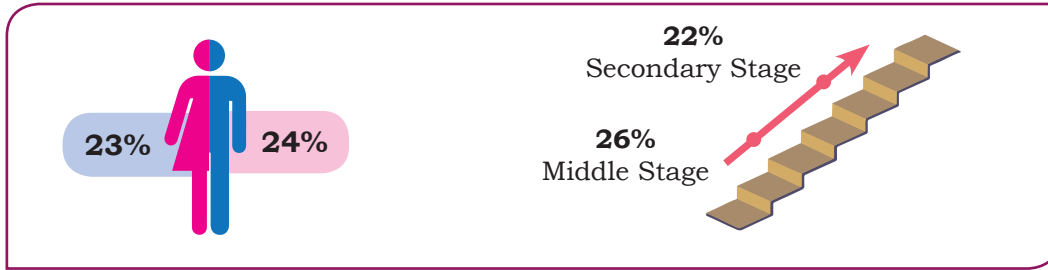
The percentage of responses for difficulty faced to initiate conversation with others by girls and boys and at the middle and secondary stage were quite low.

Understanding of One's Self in Social Context

The section explores students' understanding of their own self in the social context through aspects, such as perception about happiness, being a leader, trustworthiness and peer pressure.

Happiness

Perception of self in the context of other members is an important constituent of the social self.

59% responded that the people in their lives consider them to be happy

60% **58%**

HAPPINESS

Of the total, 58% were boys and 60% were girls

62% at the middle stage and 57% at the secondary stage

57% Secondary Stage

62% Middle Stage

87
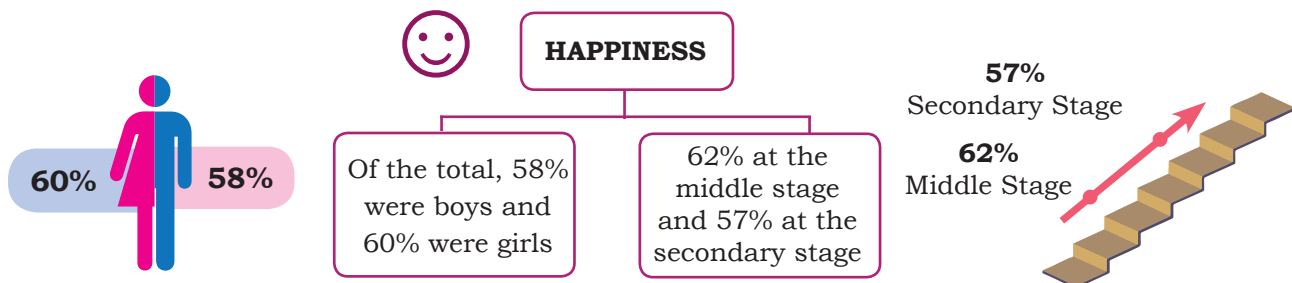
It indicates that their self-awareness in context of others is high as majority of the students i.e., 59% of these perceive that others in their lives consider them as a happy person. Middle stage students and girls were marginally better on being considered happy by others.

Being a Leader

A smaller percentage of students i.e., 21% responded that their teachers thinks that they can always lead others. These responses are higher at the middle (25%) than secondary stage (19%). Almost similar percentage was reported by girls (22%) and boys (21%).

Trustworthiness

Perceiving oneself as trusted by others increases an individual's self-esteem and also has a positive impact on their social relationships.
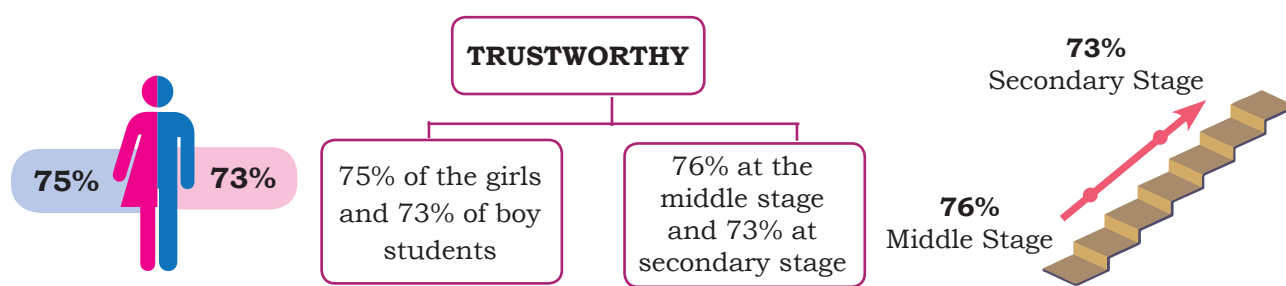
A marginal difference was observed across gender and a slight decrease is seen from middle stage (76%) to secondary stage (73%) in the perception that 'friends trust me a lot'.

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is the influence yielded by people over other members within the same social group. It is an important motivating factor behind the actions and behavior of an individual and also impacts mental health.

> **20%** Of the total respondents reported that they rarely do things to please their friends.

A small percentage i.e.,21% girls and 20% boys reported that they rarely please friends by their actions. Whereas ,19%students at middle stage and 22% secondary stage students reported rarely doing thing under peer pressure.

Marginal differences were noted across gender and stage.

Academic Perceptions

In the present times, academic-related concerns have gained prominence in students' life and they contribute to their self-esteem and overall health.

Satisfaction with Academics

Academics is a significant aspect of the students life, which impacts their overall well-being. At the same time, it is affected by various other factors related to the students, such as their perception of oneself, abilities, environment and emotional and social aspects related to them.

28% Reported that they are always satisfied with their academic performance.

Minor difference was reported with satisfaction in academic performance across gender as is reported by 25% girls and 30% boys.

25% **30%**

Satisfaction with academic performance declined drastically as the students moved from the middle (39%) to the secondary stage (18%)

18%
Secondary Stage

39%
Middle Stage
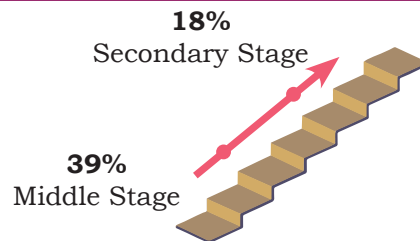
The data also revealed the different causes for lagging behind in studies and the main reasons were found to be:

29% **Lack of concentration**

15% **Poor studying habits**

13% **Difficulty in time management**

Across the gender responses of girls (30%) and boys (28%) reported lack of the concentration as the reason for lagging behind in the studies followed by poor study habits as is seen in responses of girls (15%) and boys (16%).

30% **28%**

Lack of concentration

At the middle stage, around 26% responses were for lack of concentration and at the secondary stage 33% responses were given as reason for lagging behind in studies.

33%
Secondary Stage

26%
Middle Stage

Lack of concentration

Among the different reasons reported by the students, lack of concentration was found to be the main reason faced during COVID-19 and was also reported across gender and stages of education.

Time management is an important study skill for students. Not being able to manage time effectively may cause delays in work, which can be a constant source of stress.

Around 8% of the total student respondents agreed that they do not submit their assignments on time. Across the stages, 7% at the middle stage and 8% at the secondary stage gave a similar response. In terms of gender, responses of boys (9%) were higher as compared to girls (6%).

The aspects point at causes of falling behind in academics.

Seeking Social Approval

It is perceived that students put efforts in academics either for self-growth or to seek social approval.

32% Students agreed that people will stop respecting them if they don't do well in studies

30% **34%**

30%
Secondary Stage

34%
Middle Stage

90
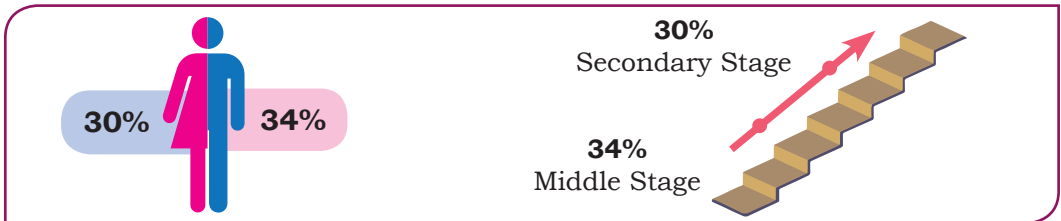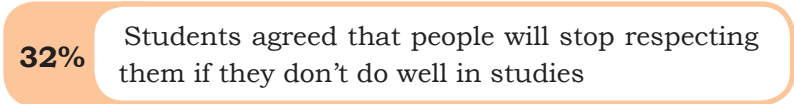
Students across gender and the two stages, 34% at the middle stage and 30% at secondary stage agreed that people will stop respecting them if they do not do well in studies. Social approval emerged as the reason for doing well in academics.

Anxiety related to Academics

A majority of the students (81%) were anxious about studies, examinations and results. Independently these were reported as below:

Studies (46%)

Examination and Results (35%)

School Opening (2%)

College Admission (1%)
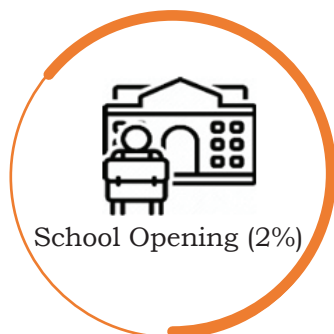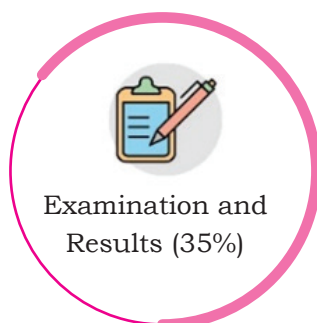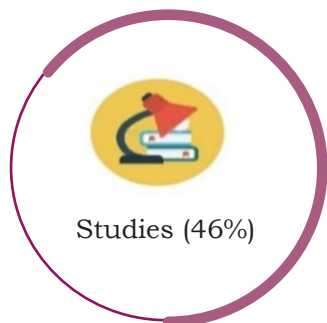
A considerable difference among gender can be seen in regard to being anxious about studies, examination and result in girls (83%) as compared to boys (77%).

Responses on being anxious about studies, examination and results were 74% at middle and 87% at secondary stage.

87% Secondary Stage

74% Middle Stage

As students progressed to higher stage of education the anxiety with studies, exams and results increase. Gender differences showed girls being more anxious on there aspects than boys.

Experience with Online Learning

The experience of students in online learning indicates that, although online classes supported continuous learning during the pandemic, only

91

12% of the total responses reported online classes to be better than offline classes. On the other hand, more than half of the responses (53%) indicated that online classes lacked social interaction with peers.

It is observed that at the secondary stage, 56% responses showed online classes lack social interaction with peers. This is higher at middle stage.
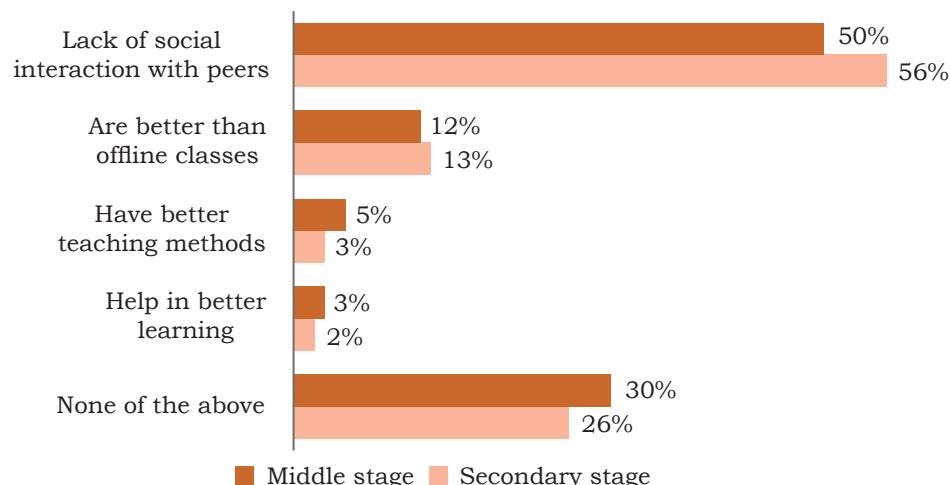
Social interaction was the most responded across the genders. 55% of the girls and 51% of the boys reported that online classes lack social interaction with peers.
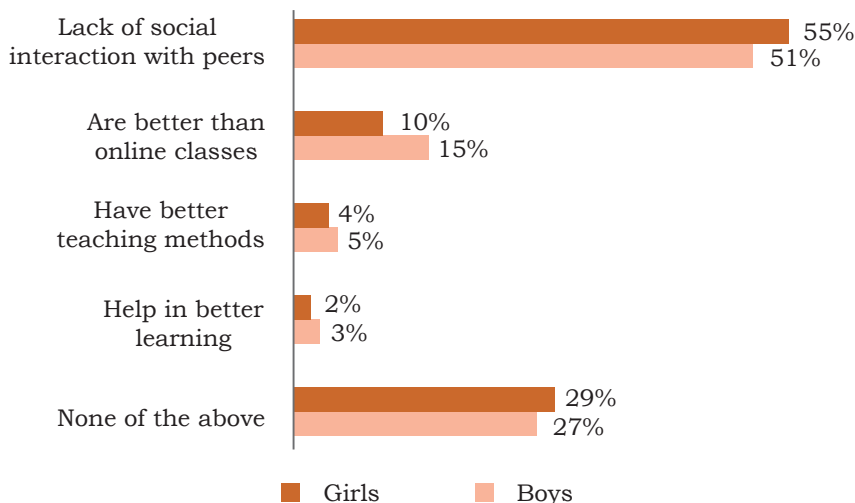
The finding also reveal that attention of teachers is important for school students. It was observed that 38% of the students responded that sometimes it bothers them that their teacher did not pay attention. The level of concern was higher among girls (39%) as compared to boys (36%). Stage wise data showed higher responses among secondary (39%) as compared to middle stage (37%).

Emotions Experienced

This section explored the emotions experienced by students, their emotional understanding in general and also during COVID-19 and changes in routines experienced

Frequently Experienced Emotions

The experienced emotions by the students during COVID-19 were as follows:

Happy — 68%, 65%, 70%
Anxious — 11%, 14%, 9%
Satisfied — 10%, 9%, 10%
Frustrated — 4%, 4%, 4%
Lonely — 2%, 3%, 3%
Irritable — 2%, 3%, 2%
Sad — 2%, 2%, 2%

Legend: ■ Total ■ Girls ■ Boys

Middle Stage
75% Happy
6% Anxious

Secondary Stage
61% Happy
16% Anxious
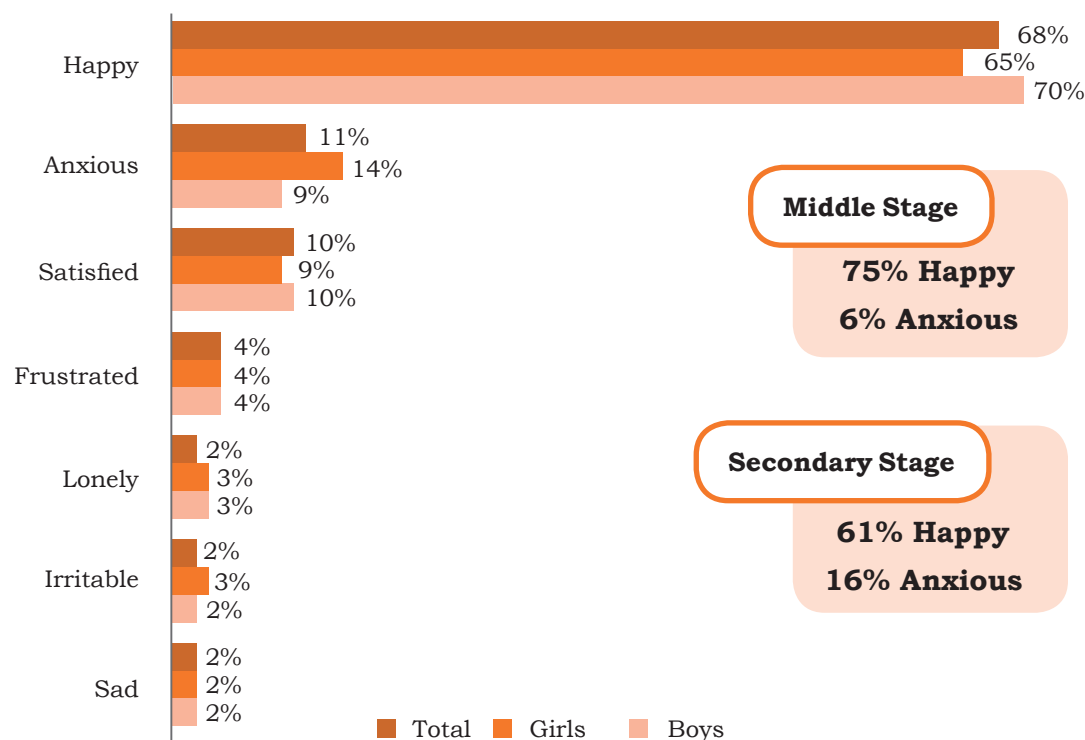
A majority of the responses, i.e. 68% reported happiness as the most frequently experienced emotion during COVID-19. A marked difference was seen in responses across the stages in terms of experiencing happiness, with 75% in middle stage as compared to 61% in secondary stage.

Gender differences were observed with girls reporting anxiousness (14%) and boys being happy (70%) higher than the other gender.

Hope in Stressful Situation

From a psychological viewpoint, hope creates a positive mood about an expectation, a goal, or future situation and leads to creating positive feelings. In the context of stressful situations, having hope is to imagine a positive outcome.

A small percentage, i.e. 28% of all the students reported that they are optimistic as they rarely lose hope in situations, which are stressful. This was reported higher in boys (31%) as compared to girls (25%) and higher among middle stage (41%) as compared to secondary stage (38%).

93

Emotional Understanding

Emotional understanding is an individual's ability to identify emotions appropriately. It helps in interacting appropriately as one is able to understand how the other person is feeling.

Around 42% of all the respondents felt that they understand others feelings. A marginal difference across the stage was seen with 41% at middle stage and 43% at secondary stage. A similar trend was observed in gender with 43% of girls and 42% of boys reporting that they understood others' feelings and expressed their feelings accordingly.

Commonly Felt Feelings

The responses on commonly felt emotions by the students of private schools during COVID-19 were reported as being tired (49%), tearful (34%) and lonely (28%).

During COVID-19 different emotions were experienced by the students, it was observed that the secondary stage students experienced more tiredness, tearfulness and loneliness as compared to the middle stage students.

Tired 53%	Tearful 41%	Lonely 29%	Tired 46%	Tearful 28%	Lonely 26%
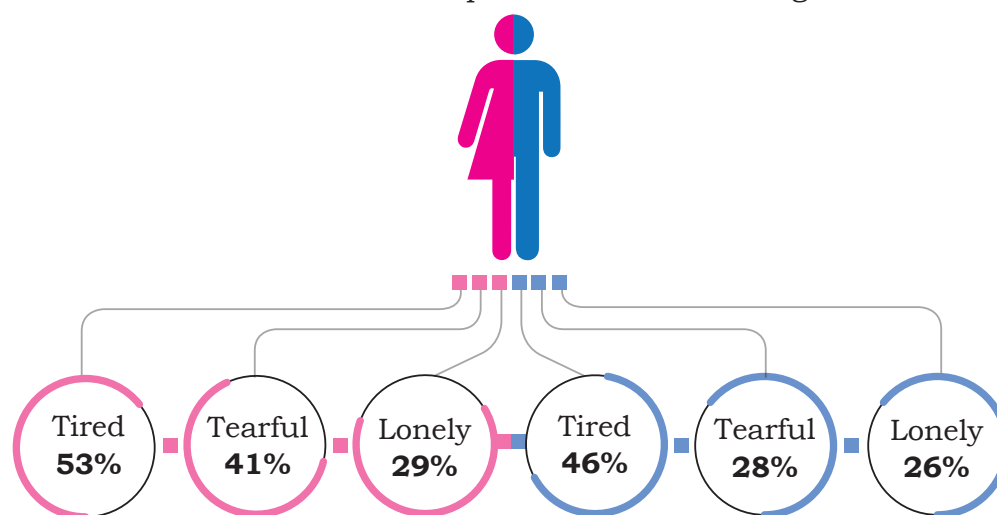
A similar trend is seen in responses of both boys and girls as 53% responses of girls and 46% responses of boys reported being tired followed by being tearful, which was reported by 41% girls and 28% boys. Responses of girls were higher than boys for all three feelings

Across the stages, the most common feeling reported by the students was being tired, whereas the middle stage and secondary stages responses were 47% and 52%, respectively.

52% Secondary Stage

47% Middle Stage
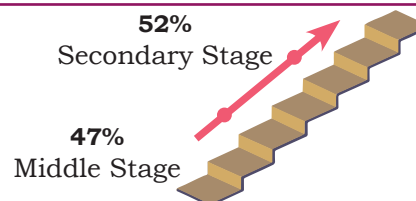
Intense Emotions Experienced during COVID-19

Intense emotions during COVID-19 were generally felt by most people including students. Among these emotions, mood swings were the most commonly responded as around 44% responses indicated mood swings, followed by extreme emotions reported (12%).

A marked difference was seen across genders with 52% girls responding to experiencing mood swings during COVID-19 as compared to 37% of boys.

Across the stages, mood swings was experienced more at the middle stage (50%) than at the secondary stage (38%).

Changes in Routines due to COVID-19

Out of the total responses from private school, 44% reported changes in sleeping pattern, 26% reported changes in everyday routine, 17% reported study habits and 13% reported eating habits as a major change observed by them during COVID-19

During COVID-19, a major change in routine was experienced by the students with regard to:

44% Sleeping Pattern

26% Everyday Routine

17% Study Habit

47% **43%** Across gender, 47% girls and 43% boys reported changes in the sleeping pattern, whereas only 13% of the girls and 14% of the boys reported that they observed changes in eating habits during COVID-19.

Majority of students from the secondary stage (52%) than the middle stage (32%) reported change their sleeping pattern during COVID-19.

52% Secondary Stage
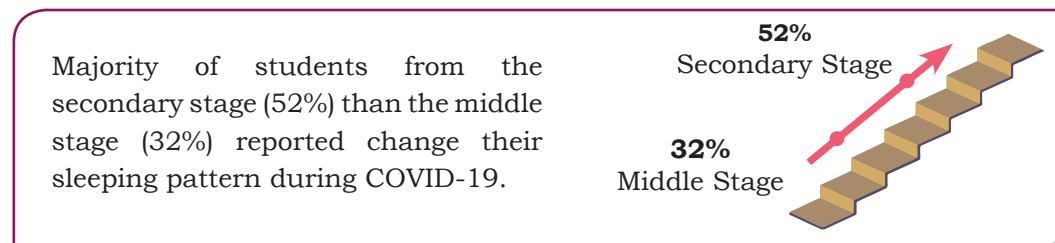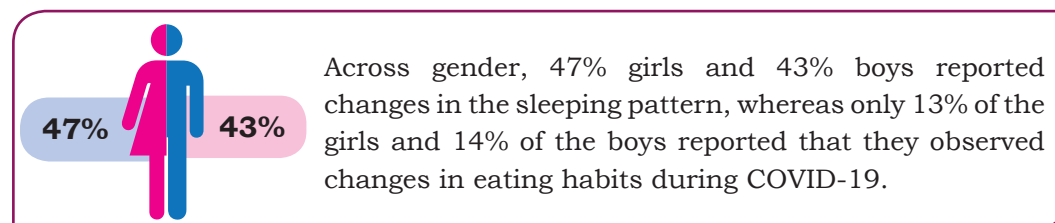
32% Middle Stage

Self-care

It was observed that 45% reported that they care for their health. At the middle stage, 51% students reported taking good care than at the secondary stage (40%). A higher percentage of boys (49%) as compared to girls (42%) reported that they took care of themselves during COVID-19.

95

Challenges Faced
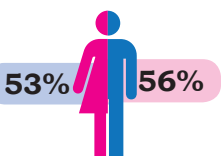
This section explored the nature of issues faced by students in situations, such as at home or during online learning and the support desired by them for managing stress.

Issues at Home During COVID-19

The various difficulties faced by students during COVID-19 indicate that:

Although a majority of the responses (55%), showed not facing any difficulties at home since the outbreak of COVID-19. However, the difficulties like changes in emotional expressions of family members and financial problems were faced by 22% and 9% responses respectively.

Faced no difficulties — Girls 53%, Boys 56%
Emotional changes in the family — Girls 25%, Boys 20%
Financial problems — Girls 9%, Boys 10%
Changes in behaviour/actions — Girls 6%, Boys 6%
Loss of a loved one — Girls 5%, Boys 5%
Beating/slapping/shouting amongst family — Girls 2%, Boys 3%
Being physically hit — Girls 0.1%, Boys 1%

■ Girls   ■ Boys

Faced no difficulties — Middle stage 62%, Secondary stage 48%
Emotional changes in family — Middle stage 16%, Secondary stage 28%
Financial problems — Middle stage 8%, Secondary stage 10%
Changes in behaviour/actions — Middle stage 5%, Secondary stage 6%
Loss of a loved one — Middle stage 5%, Secondary stage 5%
Beating/slapping/shouting amongst family — Middle stage 2%, Secondary stage 2%
Being physically hit — Middle stage 1%, Secondary stage 1%

■ Middle stage   ■ Secondary stage

53% of girls and 56% of boys reported not facing any difficulties at home, while 25 % of girls and 20% of boys reported that they noted changes in emotional expressions of family members during COVID-19 outbreak.

53% / 56%

There was a major decline in responses from the secondary stage (62%) to the middle stage (48%), who reported that they did not face any difficulties at home during COVID-19 outbreak.

62%
Secondary Stage

48%
Middle Stage

The data indicates that most responses point towards not facing any difficulty. However amongst those responses that indicated difficulty were changes in emotional expressions of the family members, which were experienced by majority of the students across the genders and stages of education.

Difficulties Faced in Online Learning

The difficulties faced by the students during the pandemic were:

Difficulty	Percentage
Difficulty in learning content online	49%
Technical/network issues	42%
Difficulty managing time	4%
Personal reasons	2%
Interrupted electricity supply	2%
Lack of computer knowledge	1%

Difficulty in learning content online— **51%**
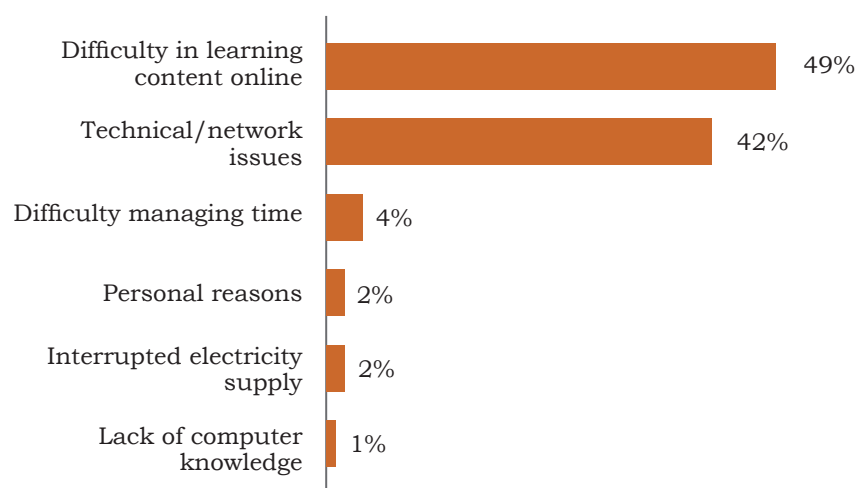
Technical/network issues— **41%**

Difficulty in learning content online— **50%**

Technical/network issues— **40%**

The responses show differences across middle (44%) and secondary stage (56%) difficulty in learning content online followed by technical/network issues being reported by 48% at middle and 35% at secondary stage.

56%
Secondary Stage

44%
Middle Stage

Difficulty learning content online
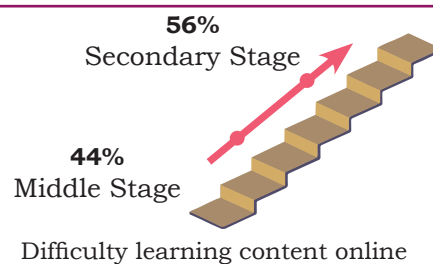
A total of 49% of all the responses of private schools faced difficulty in learning content online along with technical/network issues faced by 42% of the responses.

During online classes, most of the students faced difficulty in learning the content delivered by the teacher followed by other problems, such as technical/network issues, difficulty in managing time, etc.

Support Desired for Managing Feelings

Help from friends/parents/teachers — 52%

Building life skills in schools — 24%

Professional counselling outside the school — 17%

Approaching school counsellor — 17%
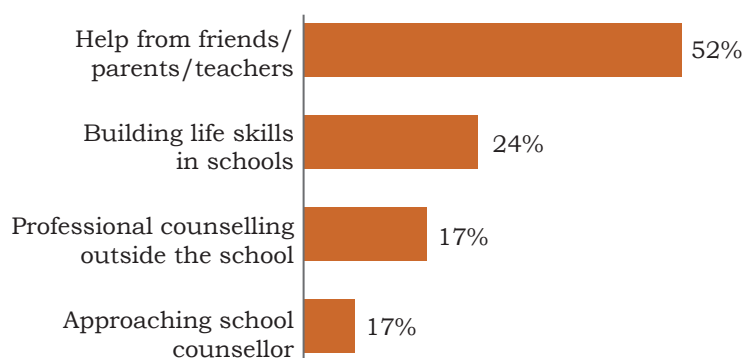
Across the gender, almost similar responses, 51% of girls and 52% of boys reported they would like help from friends/parents/teachers followed by building life skills in school by 23% girls and 24% boys respectively.

Considerably high responses were reported at the middle stage (57%) than secondary stage (47%) for desired support from friends/parents/teachers followed by building life skills in school at middle stage (25%) and at secondary stage (23%).

47%
Secondary Stage

57%
Middle Stage

Desired support from friends/parents/teacher

98
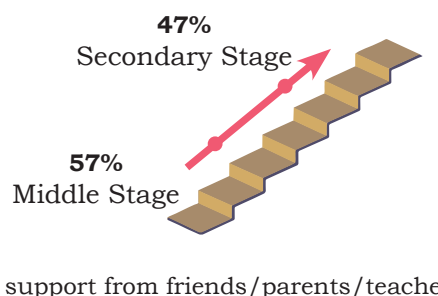
More than half of the students, i.e. 52% of total students wished they could get the support and help of their family, friends or teachers to manage their feelings, while 24% desired training on life skills in school to manage their feelings.

The data indicates that during COVID-19 students faced emotional issues, for which they approached different people and professionals, to manage their feelings. Most of the time they took help from friends, parents and teachers.

Helping others results in good interpersonal relationships, makes one develop sensitivity and empathy, and also gives a sense of satisfaction, which is an important aspect of well-being.

More than half of the responses, i.e. 51% also pointed at frequently helping and supporting others. Slight differences were seen across stages (52% at the middle stage and 51% at secondary stage), and gender (52% of girls and 50% of boys).

While students mostly preferred seeking support from parents, teachers or family, at the same time nearly half of the respondents also indicated helping and supporting others.

Emotions related to COVID-19

Health and Safety Related Behaviour

During COVID-19, the fear among students of getting infected were more prevalent, which can be seen in the graph given below:

Preoccupied with the thoughts of catching COVID-19: 14%, 20%, 18%
Indulging in safety behaviours: 21%, 19%, 20%
Worried or fearful for family/friends: 30%, 27%, 28%
Fearful of coming in contact with people they don't know: 35%, 34%, 34%

Legend: ■ Secondary Stage ■ Middle Stage ■ Total

99
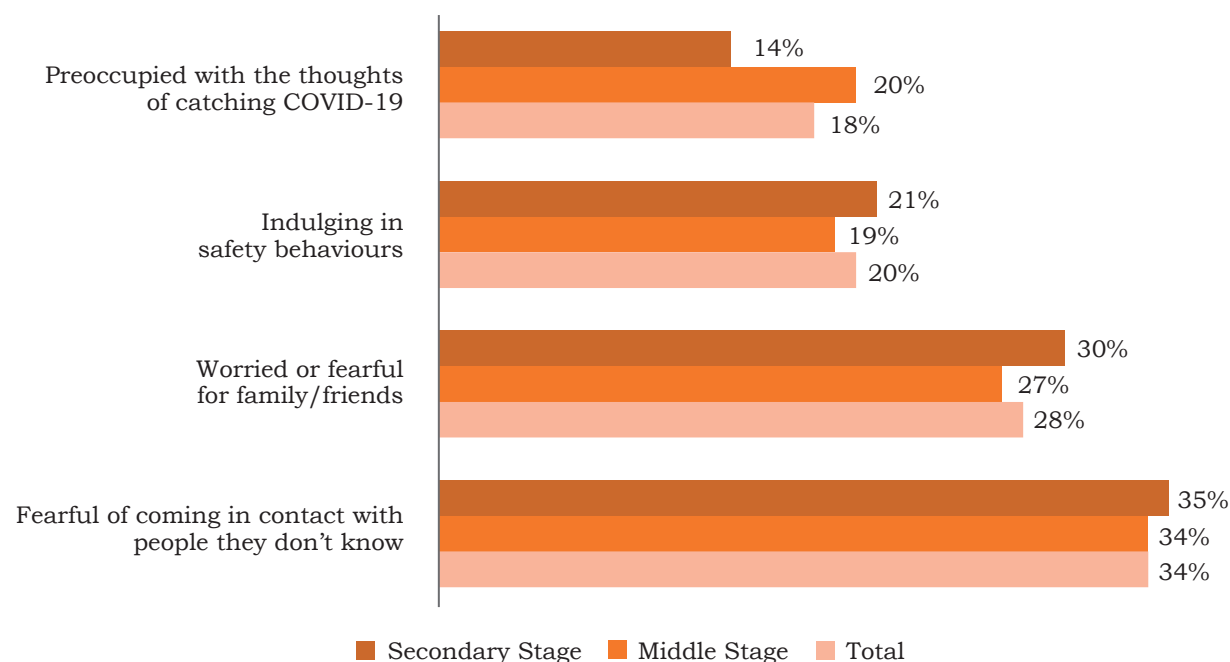
Some differences were observed across the gender. 37% of the girls and 32% boys reported that they were fearful of coming in contact with the people they don't know well, followed by 29% girls and 28% boys reporting being worried or fearful for their family members or friends' health or survival.

Nearly 34% of all responses indicate being fearful of coming in contact with people they don't know well, 20% reported indulging in safety behaviours like washing hands or cleaning objects around them, so much that it started interfering with their everyday routine.

Physical Symptoms

A majority of the students, (59%), reported no health issues. However, amongst the reported physical symptoms, the most commonly mentioned was headache (16%) followed by stomach ache (13%).
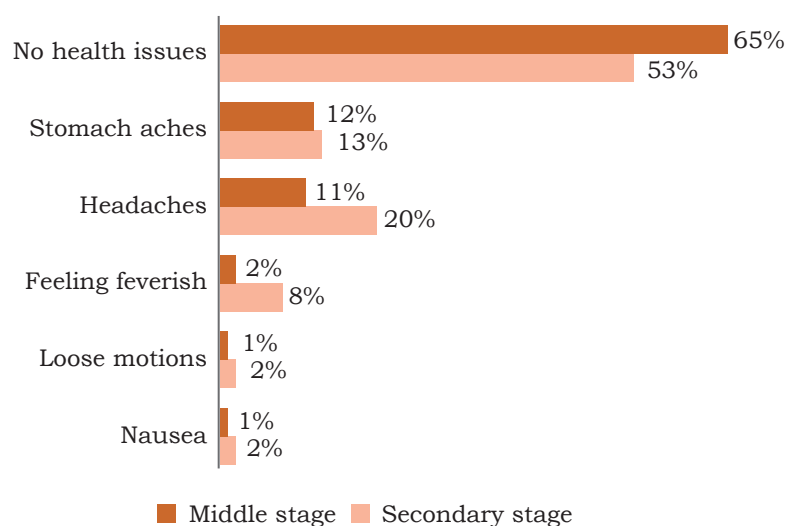
The most common symptom, stomach ache, was reported nearly equally across the stages.

However, a gender-wise analysis shows that girls (15%) and boys (11%) experienced stomach ache more than any other physical symptom with girls being slightly more than boys.

COPING STRATEGIES

Regulation of Emotions

Responding in Stressful Situations

36% Students completely agree to respond appropriately during stressful situations.

A marginal difference was reported by students at middle stage and secondary stage.

Almost a similar percentage of the girl and boys completely agreed to responding appropriately during stressful situations.

Managing Emotions/Strategies

Strategies Used for Managing Emotions

During COVID-19, the students used different strategies for managing their emotions in stressful situations, which indicates:

Out of the total respondents 41% of the students shared their emotion with friends, followed by 28% who shared with parents, 1% with teachers, while 24% resolved their emotions by themselves, and 6% waited for the situation to improve on its own. Marginal gender differences were observed.
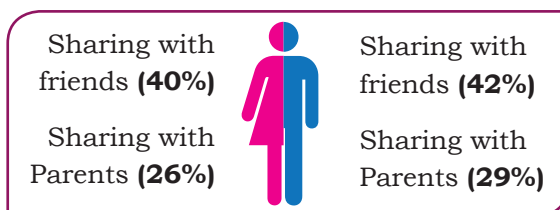
Sharing with friends **(40%)**

Sharing with Parents **(26%)**

Sharing with friends **(42%)**

Sharing with Parents **(29%)**

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their capacity to achieve any outcome.

Nearly, 32% of the students reported that they are frequently able to solve challenging tasks. Decline from the middle stage (34%) to the secondary stage (30%) was seen in solving the challenging tasks, indicating comparatively low self-efficacy.

Social Support

A majority of the students, i.e. 60% reported that they have people with whom they can share and discuss their feelings. Across the stages of education, substantial differences were reported in middle stage (68%) and secondary stage (54%) in this regard. Almost similar responses among boys (61%) and girls (59%), were reported, indicating having a supportive environment.

101

Commonly Used Strategies for Coping

The most commonly used coping strategies was changing the way they think and feel to manage stressful situation (30%) followed by practicing yoga and meditation (20%) and watching TV (17%).
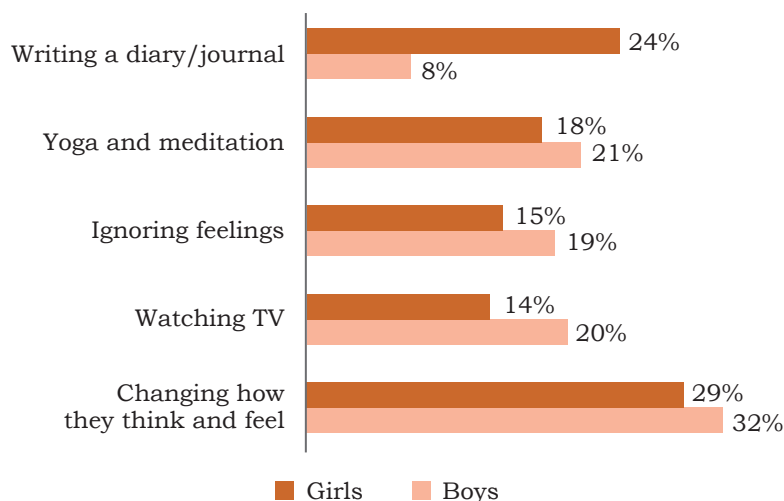
The most commonly used coping strategy across stages is managing their feeling by changing how they think and feel, which was reported 25% at middle stage and 34% at secondary stage. As compared to 29% of the girls, 32% of the boys from private schools reported that they managed their feelings by changing how they think and feel followed by yoga and meditation.
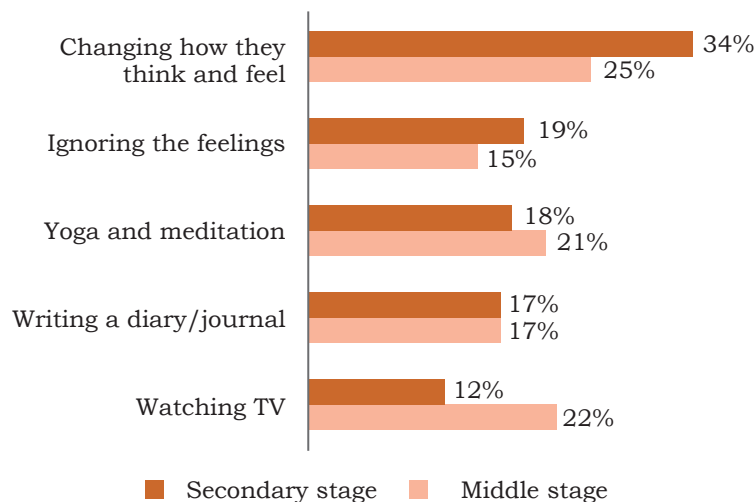
The findings indicate that although there is variation in using different coping strategies among girls and boys and at different stages of education, but a majority of the students reported that they cope with the situation by changing how they think and feel. This self-reflection on ways of thinking is an essential meta cognitive strategy.

SUMMARY

- Most of the students of private schools reported the commonly experienced emotion as happiness. This can be seen in the light of a large number of students expressing satisfaction with school life and responsible for doing well in their life. A large number of students also shared that they are perceived as trustworthy by their peer group.

- Students from these schools lacked confidence about their body and also reported lack of confidence while initiating a conversation and asking questions, when in doubt. The major reason for anxiety in students was reported as studies, examinations and results. In the face of adversity, the most commonly used coping strategies as reported by the students were making changes in the way they feel and think followed by Yoga and meditation. The findings indicate that a majority of students receive social support in the form of sharing and discussing with people they can rely on.

- A majority of students agreed that they are satisfied with their school life, however, a steep decline can be noticed from the middle to secondary stage of education.

- A higher percentage of students at middle stage perceived that they had people with whom they can share their feelings.

- The highest and most common emotion experienced is happiness, which decreases as students shift from the middle to secondary stage of education. More students at the secondary stage reported anxiousness as the next most commonly experienced emotion. Differences were observed across genders with higher percentages of responses by boys reporting experiencing happiness while more percentage of responses by girls reporting anxiousness during COVID-19.

- A majority of responses were in agreement that studies and examinations related aspects are one of the major causes for their anxiety with middle stage reporting higher percentage as compared to secondary. More boys reported this reason for anxiety in comparison to girls.

- The data on difficulties faced during online learning reveals that lack of concentration was one of the most cited reasons for lagging behind in studies. A marked difference can be noticed in this response among the two stages.

- Secondary stage students and girls have reported a higher percentage of experiencing mood swings.

The findings with respect to students from private schools shows happiness as the most commonly experienced emotion but surprisingly

students at the middle stage showed higher anxiety related to studies, examination and results with boys experiencing more anxiety than girls. Confidence about physical appearance, i.e body image was reported lower with secondary stage students and girls.

Also, as students shift from the middle to the secondary stage, they expressed feeling less satisfied with their school and personal life, at the same time, less number of students from the secondary stage mentioned having people to share and discuss their feelings hinting at a lack of social support. The data also indicated that secondary stage students preferred to adopt coping strategy of making changes in the way they think and feel followed by wanting to stay fit and healthy by doing yoga and meditation.

Conclusion

Students during school years move through different stages of development and experience various changes and challenges at each stage. One such experience is the socio-emotional demands faced by the students in their personal, social and academic life. Resolving the challenges and adapting to the changes in these aspects require a positive state of mental health. However, due to individual differences, students vary in their ways of adapting and coping with challenges. It is also important to understand the differences in students as it can provide valuable inputs for making policies, curriculum development, designing and conducting training programmes for teachers, counsellors and school administrators. This will ensure moving towards a preventive approach with focus on nurturing and strengthening students' mental and emotional well-being and not limiting to providing support for addressing students' deficits. NEP, 2020 also recommends taking pro-active measures and therefore, planning psycho-educational interventions for facilitating every student in maximising one's own potential and achieving a positive state of mental health.

The influence of factors such as psychological, social, environmental and life situations on mental health and well-being is well documented. This survey attempts to present the perception of students in regard to the aspects of Personal Self (ability to adapt to changes, trusting others, life satisfaction, taking responsibility for doing well in life, body image, perspective taking, confidence), Social Self (perceptions of being a happy person, being viewed as a leader, trustworthiness, peer pressure) and Aacademic Perceptions (feeling associated with academics, studies, examination and results, social approval, online learning) along with the feelings, emotions experienced and coping strategies used by students.

The overall findings of the survey demonstrate that students' responses were high on protective factors for mental well-being such as:

- Responsibility for doing well in life.
- Experiencing satisfaction with school life.
- Considering themselves as trustworthy.
- Support from friends, parents and resolving by themselves.
- Practicing yoga and meditation as coping strategies.

Students understanding of their own self indicates self-awareness, i.e., being aware of one's thoughts, beliefs, feelings, emotions, needs and behaviour. Self-awareness maybe seen as the tool for managing stress and improving general well-being.

However, a concerning trend observed among students across stages, gender and types of school was:

- anxiety among students with regard to studies, examination and results
- frequent mood swings

Along with the above, other aspects such as hesitation in asking questions, being bothered by teachers' not paying attention, behaving under influence of peers, and desirous of counsellors' support, all point towards the need for creating a psychologically safe classroom/school environment for ensuring students' mental well-being.

Even though the *NEP, 2022* emphasises reducing stress of examination, the survey points at studies, examination and results as the most prominent aspects of student's anxiety.

The overall data, when looked at from gender perspective, reveals that both boys and girls perceive doing well in life as their own responsibility and also report higher satisfaction with school life. Most commonly experienced emotion reported were happiness (with boys reporting marginally higher than girls) followed by anxiety, with a higher number of girl respondents than boys. The findings also highlight that a higher percentage of girl respondents feel anxious about their studies, examination and results in comparison to boys and also experience mood swings, feelings of tiredness, tearful and loneliness.

To manage their feelings, both girls and boys chose to talk with friends, followed by sharing with parents and also resolving it on their own. However, comparatively boys showed more preference for confiding in friends while girls preferred to confide in their parents or resolve by themselves. Yoga and meditation, changing ways of how they think and writing journals were some of the most preferred coping strategies adopted by respondents. Specifically, girl respondents chose changing the way they think as the most preferred strategy to cope with challenging situations, pointing towards their use of the ability of self-reflection. However, boys also reported a high preference for Yoga and Meditation, indicating their preference for keeping themselves healthy and positive under challenging situations

Happiness was the most commonly reported emotion as compared to other emotions. Middle stage students reported to be more happy in comparison to the secondary stage students. As students moved from middle to secondary stage, a visible decline in respondents' confidence about their body image, and satisfaction with their personal and school life was observed. At the secondary stage, students reported higher level

of anxiety related to studies, examination and results. They also reported higher level of difficulty in concentration and experiencing intense mood swings. Secondary stage students reported having relatively lesser social support in the form of having people to share and discuss their feelings than their middle stage counterparts. While yoga and meditation were seen as the most commonly used coping strategy at the middle stage, changing one's thinking and feeling was more commonly used by the secondary stage students.

The perceptions of respondents who identified themselves as belonging to the third gender, though small in number (N=11), showed that most of them have low confidence on physical appearance and also in trusting others. This is substantiated by most of them reporting non-availability of support system with whom they could share and discuss their feelings, even though the findings reveal that most of them frequently extend help and support to others whenever they can. The survey also shows that majority of the students perceived that they would not be respected if they do not do well in studies. Probably because of this, most students also reported studies as the reason for them feeling anxious. With regard to different aspects of their school life, the survey showed that the group was satisfied with school life and perceived doing well in life as their own responsibility.

Students attending different types of schools, not only learn from the curricular activities but also the schools' overall ethos, practices of interpersonal interactions within school, etc. These play significant role in nurturing and supporting mental and emotional well-being. The findings of survey while exploring students' perception in different school types reveal that majority of the respondents from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya reported feeling responsible for doing well in life and perceived that their friends trusted them. Satisfaction with school life was also observed to be high amongst this group. Yoga and meditation followed by changing the ways of thinking were the commonly used strategies to cope with anxiety provoking situations. Kendriya Vidyalaya students also perceived doing well in life primarily as their own responsibility, were satisfied with their school life and expressed being confident about their physical appearance. Happiness was the most commonly experienced emotion by students. At the same time they also reported experiencing anxiety due to studies, examination and results along with mood swings. Respondents from State Government schools reported being highly satisfied in their school life, with a sense of trustworthiness and ownership of doing well in their life. The most frequently experienced emotion was reported by them as happiness. Here too many students reported experiencing anxiety related to studies, examination and results and the most commonly used coping strategy reported by them was Yoga and Meditation. The responses of students attending Private schools, showed high number of students perceived that they were trustworthy, frequently experienced happiness, were satisfied with their school life and also felt responsible for doing well in their life.

107

Students from these schools reported having lack of confidence about their body appearances. They also experienced hesitation while initiating a conversation and asking questions when in doubt. The major reason for anxiety in students from private schools was reported as studies, examination and results.

Students unanimously agreeing that they are responsible for their life indicates an internal locus of control which is an essential prerequisite for one's positive mental health and well-being. Also, other aspects of personal self, such as to be able to take others perspective, adjustability, satisfaction with life, create the foundations for students' mental and emotional well-being. These highlight the important role that affective aspects play in learning which points towards the need to integrate socio-emotional aspects across the stages of education both in school curriculum and teacher education curriculum. It is urged that the information gathered from the survey permeate the school curriculum and teacher preparation programmes.

The findings of survey throw light on the present day reality of a wide range of students' concerns — personal, emotional, social, and challenges related to educational and career choices, dealing with the stress and anxiety related to competitions, academics, etc. The findings have implications for promoting all round development as envisaged in the *NEP, 2020*. The need, therefore, is to strengthen socio-emotional aspects in education which will promote and strengthen mental and emotional well-being of students. The *NEP, 2020*, by laying emphasis on ensuring holistic development of students, particularly their affective domain, has made scope for nurturing such aspects. Insights on students' mental health and well-being concerns would help take proactive measures to support and strengthen affective concerns for the holistic development of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the vision of *NEP, 2020*, some recommendations based on the survey findings are suggested:

1. Preparing schools for addressing and nurturing mental and emotional well-being of students by creating enabling conditions of care, trust and inclusive practices.
   - To orient and sensitise stakeholders about developmental characteristics of students across all the stages.
   - To enable every teacher to function as first level counsellor by virtue of their orientation/training, to deal with students', concerns in their personal, social and academic life, psycho-social well-being, health and hygiene and career needs.
2. School curriculum to integrate mental and emotional well-being at all stages of education and also to interlink and intertwine this across the four stages to support students and address their developmentally

appropriate socio-emotional concerns. It is also important to focus on building vocabulary among students to express their feelings and emotions for developing their skills as effective communicators.

3. The role of teachers in supporting social and emotional learning has been recognised, but preparing teachers for the well-being and competence is a low priority in teacher preparation programmes. This calls for strengthening the training of teachers, both at pre-service and in-service levels for ensuring every student's mental and emotional well-being.

   • Teacher education curriculum for both pre-service and in-service teachers to integrate affective aspects and corresponding socio-emotional concerns that may arise during different developmental stages to promote understanding, knowledge and skills essential for supporting mental health and well-being amongst students.

   • Teachers to be oriented on dealing with children's feelings and emotions, such as fears, anxieties, etc., and provide a healthy supportive environment to students so that they grow up as healthy individuals.

4. Assessment and appraisal being an important aspect of all school activities can also include parameters of assessing social and emotional competencies in all students in order to ensure their holistic development. Therefore, assessment of mental well-being (personal, social and emotional) as visualised in *NEP, 2020* can become a part of students Holistic Progress Card (HPC). Teachers' role being a significant factor in facilitating mental and emotional well-being of students, therefore, need to become part of teachers' assessment and appraisal.

It is further suggested that emotional literacy should be the focus and integrated in all aspects of schools' functioning (formal and informal activities, curriculum, teaching-learning, interactions and evaluations, etc.). Students to be successful in this fast changing and competitive world would require having the ability to adapt to changes in different spheres of their lives. This necessitates a system oriented approach, envisioning the school as the core for promoting mental health and well-being of students.

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Appendices

Table 1
Percent Frequencies showing Students'
Responses to Dimensions of Mental Health
(N=3,79,843)

S. No	Aspects	Total	Stage		Gender**	
			Middle (N=1,58,581)	Secondary (N=2,21,261)	Girls (N=1,90,944)	Boys (N=1,88,220)
1.	Adaptability	43	46	41	39	47
2.	Trusting others	27	27.4	26.5	27	32.5
3.	Personal satisfaction	51	58	46	50	52
4.	School satisfaction	73	81	68	75	72
5.	Responsibility of doing well in life	84	83	84	85	82
6.	Body image	55	62	50	54	56
7.	Perspective taking	31	30.6	31.3	29	33
	Confidence					
8.	Hesitation in asking questions	28.4	27	29	28	29
9.	Difficulty initiating conversation	23	22	23	22	23
10.	Happiness	56	57	55	58	54
11.	Being a leader	25	28	22	24	26
12.	Trustworthiness	70	70.8	69.4	71.5	68
13.	Peer pressure					
	Rarely	15	13	16	16	14
	Most of the time	33	34	32	31	34
	Satisfaction with Academics					
14.	Satisfaction with academic performance	39	50	31	38	40
15.	Lagging behind in studies due to: Lack of concentration	29	24	32	28.8	29.15

16.	Do not submit assignment on time	12	12	11	10.32	12.87
17.	People will stop respecting me if don't do well in studies	36	38	34	34	37
18.	Bothered by teachers' inattention	37	34	37	37	34
19.	*Anxiety Related to Academics					
	(Studies)	50	42	54.9	52	46
	(Exam and results)	31	33	30	29.1	31.7
20.	*Experiences in Online Learning					
	Lack of social interaction with peers	39	36	41	39	38
	Are better than offline classes	17	17	17	14	20
21.	*Frequently Experienced Emotions					
	Happy	67	74	61	64.7	67.7
	Anxious	11	6	15	12.25	9.98
	Satisfied	9	9.27	8.91	8.51	9.64
22.	Hope in Stressful Situation	39	42	37	38.9	39
23.	Emotional Understanding	44	43	45	44.33	43.16
24.	*Frequently Experienced Emotions					
	Tired	42	48	45	48.8	42.3
	Tearful	32	35	34	38.4	29.8
	Lonely	25	29	27	28.6	26.2
25.	*Intense Emotions During COVID-19					
	Mood swings	43	37	48	46	40
	Extreme emotions	14	13	15	15	13
26.	*Changes in Routines due to COVID-19					
	Sleeping pattern	38	32	43	32	43
	Everyday routine	26	28	24	28	24
27.	Self-care	55	61	51	53	57
28.	*Issues at Home During COVID-19					
	No difficulty faced	43	39	49	45	41
	Emotional changes in family	24	20	26	23	24
29.	*Difficulties Faced in Online Learning					
	Difficulty faced in learning content online	51	47	53	51	50
	Technical/Network issues	39	43	36	40	39

30.	*Support Desired for Managing Feelings					
	Help from Friends/ Parents/Teachers	47	51	45	50	44
	Approaching school counsellors	16	16	16	14	17.6
	Professional counselling outside school	17	14	19	16	18.4
	Building life skills in schools	20	19	20	20	20
31.	Helping attitude	52	52	51	53	54
32.	*Health and safety related behaviours					
	Fearful of coming in contact	38	37	38	40	36
	Indulging in safety behaviours	16	16.5	16	15	17
33.	*Physical Symptoms					
	No such health issues	55	54.4	46	48	51
	Headaches	18	14	21	19	15
	Stomach aches	16	16	15.8	16	13
34.	Responding in Stressful Situations	32	31.7	32.3	31.4	32.7
35.	*Strategies Used for Managing Emotions					
	Sharing with Friends	49	45	52	46	51
	Sharing with parents	24	33	18	25	24
36.	Self-efficacy	36	38	35	35	37
37.	Social support	58	63	54	58	57
38.	*Commonly Used Strategies for Coping					
	Yoga and meditation	28	31	25	25	31
	Changing thoughts	28	23	32	27	29

*Indicate percentages on multi-select questions.
** Third gender (N=11 data is in Section-II).

Table 2
Percent Frequencies of Responses of Kendriya Vidyalaya Students
Concerning Different Aspects of Mental Health
(N=1,06,937)

S. No.	Aspect	Total	Stages		Gender	
			Middle N=45922	Secondary N=61015	Girls N=54224	Boys N=52497
1.	Adaptability	40	44	37	37	44
2.	Trusting others	24	25.6	24.3	25	24
3.	Personal satisfaction	55	62	49	54	55
4.	School satisfaction	78	87	69	78	75
5.	Responsibility of doing well in life	87	87	85	88	83
6.	Body image	58	65	50	55	58
7.	Perspective taking	31	30	32	29	33
	Confidence					
8.	Hesitation in asking questions	29	28	31	29	30
9.	Difficulty initiating conversation	21	21	22	20	22
10.	Happiness	58	59	57	60	55
11.	Being a leader	22	26	19	21	22
12.	Trustworthiness	73	74	71	73	71
13.	Peer pressure	17	15	19	18	17
	Satisfaction with Academics					
14.	Satisfaction with academic performance	40	52	28	37	39
15.	*Lagging behind in studies - Lack of concentration	28	23	33	29	28
	-Poor study habit	15	12	18	13	18
	-Difficulty managing time	13	10	15	15	11
	-Distraction while studying	13	13	13	13	13
16.	Do not submit assignment on time	10	11	10	9	12
17.	People will stop respecting me if don't do well in studies	39	41	38	38	41
18.	Bothered by teachers' inattention	35	34	36	36	34

19.	*Anxiety Related to Academics					
	Studies	48	41	55	52	45
	Exam and results	33	34	31	31	33
20.	*Experiences with Online Learning					
	Lack of social interaction with peers	40	37	43	41	39
	Are better than offline classes	16	16	17	13	20
	Have better teaching methods	6	7	6	6	7
	Helps in better learning	4	5	4	4	4
21.	*Frequently Experienced Emotions					
	Happy	68	75	61	65	69
	Anxious	11	6	15	12	10
22.	Hope in stressful situation	24	24.2	23.9	22	26
23.	Emotional understanding	44	42.9	45.1	45.4	42.9
24.	*Commonly felt Feelings					
	Tired	46	43	48.5	49	42
	Tearful	33	31	35	37	30
	Lonely	26	23.5	29	27	26
	Worried about future on everyday basis	35	26	44	24	21
25.	*Intense Emotions During COVID-19					
	Mood swings	43	38	49	48	40
	Extreme emotions	14	14	15	15	13
	Fear	7	8.5	6	6	7
	*Changes in Routines due to COVID-19					
26.	Sleeping pattern	39	31	47	40	41
	Everyday routines	25	28	22	25	24
	Study habits	21	25	17	21	20
	Eating habits	15	16	14	14	15
27.	Self-care	55	62	48	51	56
28.	*Issues at Home During COVID-19					
	No difficulty faced	50	55	44	50	47
	Emotional changes in family	23	18	27	22.9	23.2
	Financial problems	13	11	14	13.3	13.7
29.	Difficulty faced in learning content online	54	51	57	53	56

30.	*Support Desired for Managing Feelings					
	Help from Friends/ parents/Teachers	51	56	47	53	48
	Building life skills in schools	22	22	23.5	23.5	23.1
31.	Helping Attitude	53	54	52	54	51
32.	*Health and Safety related Behaviours					
	Indulging in safety behaviours	17	17	17	16	18
	Preoccupied with thoughts of catching COVID	22	25	18	19	23
	Worried or fearful	25	22	28	26	24
	Fearful of coming in contact	37	37.4	37.1	39	36
33.	*Physical Symptoms					
	No such health issues	51	56	47	49	52
	Headaches	16	12	20	18	14
	Stomach aches	16	16	15	17	14
34.	Responding in Stressful Situations	31	30	32	31	32
35.	*Strategies Used for Managing Emotions					
	Sharing with Friends	45	42	48	44	47
	Sharing with parents	26	35	17	26	25
	Resolving themselves	21	15	26	23	19
36.	Self-efficacy	35	37	33	33	36
37.	Social support	58	64	53	59	57
38.	*Commonly Used Strategies for Coping					
	Yoga and meditation	26	29	23	22	29
	Ignoring feelings	16	15	17	28	29
	Changing thoughts	28	21	33	28	29
	Watching T.V	14	19	11	13	16
	Writing diary journal	16	16	16	21	9

*Indicate percentages on multi-select questions.
** Third gender (N=06 data is in Section-II).

Table 3
Percent Frequencies of Responses of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Students Concerning Different Aspects of Mental Health
(N=94034)

S. No.	Aspects	Total %	Stages		Gender	
			Middle N=39319	Secondary N=54715	Girls N=42594	Boys N=51379
1.	Adaptability	48	51	46	43	52
2.	Trusting others	29.4	30	29	28	30
3.	Personal satisfaction	48	52	44	48	47
4.	School satisfaction	71	76	66	70.3	70.1
5.	Responsibility of doing well in life	80	80	82	83	80
6.	Body image	52	58	48	51	53
7.	Perspective taking	28	28	27	30	25
	Confidence					
8.	Hesitation in asking questions	27	26	27	24	29
9.	Difficulty initiating conversation	22	22	21	19	24
10.	Happiness	53	54	52	54	52
11.	Being a leader	24	28	22	23	26
12.	Trustworthiness	65	64	65	65	64
13.	Peer Pressure	11	9	13	13	10
	Satisfaction with Academics					
14.	Satisfaction with academic performance	39	50	28	33	39
15.	*Lagging behind in Studies Lack of concentration	30	25	35	31	31
	Poor study habits	18	17	19	15	21
16.	Do not submit assignment on time	12	13	11	10	13
17.	People will stop respecting me if don't do well in studies	32	34	29	29	33
18.	Bothered by teachers' in attention	38	36	40	40	37
	*Anxiety related to Academics					
19.	Studies	49	43	55	50	47
	Result and Examination	28	30	26	28	28
	*Experiences with Online Learning					
20.	Lack of social interaction with peers	35	31	38	36	35
	Are better than offline classes	16	16	16	13	18

118

21.	*Common Emotions					
	Happy	68	72	64	66.7	67.7
	Anxious	9	7	12	9.7	10.4
	Satisfied	10	9.6	10.5	10	10.2
22.	Hope in Stressful Situation	40	42	37	38.7	39.2
23.	Emotional Understanding	47	46	48	48	46
24.	*Commonly felt Feelings					
	Tired	43	39	46	47	40
	Tearful	32	35	33.5	38	28
	Lonely	26	24	28	29	24
	Worried about the future	25	24	25	26	24
25.	*Intense Emotions During COVID-19					
	Mood swings	40	35	46	42	41
	Extreme emotions	15	14	16	16	14
	Self harm	7	8	7	5	9
26.	*Changes in Routines due to COVID-19					
	Sleeping pattern	34	31	38	31	38
	Everyday Routine	29	31	28	32	27
	Study Habits	22	23	20	24	19
27.	Self-care	60	64	55	57	60
28.	*Issues at Home during COVID-19					
	No difficulty faced	43	39	48	48	38
	Emotional Changes in family	23	20	26	22	25
	Financial problem	17	16	19	15	20
29.	*Difficulties Faced in Online learning					
	Difficulty faced in learning content online	45	42	47	45	47
	Technical/Network issues	37	39	36	41	35
30.	*Support Desired for Managing Feelings					
	Help from Friends/parents/Teachers	38	38	39	44	34
	Approaching school counsellors	33	35	31	30	34
	Professional counselling outside school	14	14	14	11	17
	Building life skills in schools	15	14	16	15	15
31.	Helping attitude	49	50	49	49	48.5

32.	*Health and Safety related Behaviours					
	Fearful of coming in contact	37	37.1	37.3	39	36
	Worried or fearful about family/friends	27	23	30	30	25
33.	*Physical Symptoms					
	No such health issues	50	53	48	52	49
	Headaches	17	15	20	19	17
	Stomach aches	12	13	12	13	12
34.	Responding in Stressful Situations	32	31	32	30	33
35.	*Strategies Used for Managing Emotions					
	Sharing with Friends	57	53	60	54	60
	Sharing with parents	20	26	15	21	18
	Sorting out by themselves	13	11	16	15	12
36.	Self-efficacy	49	48	50	49.3	49.4
37.	Social support	57	55	58	57	56
38.	*Commonly Used Coping Strategies					
	Yoga	31	35	27	26	35
	Changing thinking	29	25	33	28	30

*Indicate percentages on multi-select questions.

Table 4
Percent Frequencies of Responses of State Government Schools Students
Concerning Different Aspects of Mental Health
(N=84,705)

S. No.	Aspects	Total	Stages		Gender	
			Middle N= 28,915	Secondary N= 55,790	Girls N=47,152	Boys N= 37274
1.	Adaptability	45	50	43	42	48
2.	Trusting others	34	37	33	35	33
3.	Personal satisfaction	53	57	49	51	53
4.	School satisfaction	79	84	75	81	74
5.	Responsibility of doing well in life	86	85	87	83	89
6.	Body image	65	70	59	62.6	62.8
7.	Perspective taking	32	32	32	30	35
	Confidence					
8.	Hesitation in asking questions	31	30	32	31	33
9.	Difficulty initiating conversation	29	28	30	28	29
10.	Perception about happiness	57	56	58	59	55
11.	Perception of being a leader	29	34	26	28	30
12.	Trustworthiness	72	71	74	75	69
13.	Peer pressure	11	9	13	11.98	11.91
	Satisfaction with Academics					
14.	Satisfaction with academic performance	52	60	45	50	49.7
15.	*Lagging Behind in Studies Lack of Concentration	26	22	31	27	29
	Poor study habits	16	16	15	12	19
	Difficulty managing time	12	9	15	14	13
16.	Do not submit assignment on time	16	18	14	14	17
	Seeking Social Approval					
17.	People will stop respecting me if don't do well in studies	39	41	38	37	41
18.	Bothered by teachers' inattention	12	13	12	10	14

19.	*Anxiety Related to Academics					
	Studies	55	49	58	56	52
	Exam and results	28			27	28
20.	*Experiences with Online Learning					
	Lack of Social Interaction With Peers	30	27	32	31	30
	Are better than offline classes	22	24	21	19	26
21.	*Frequently Experienced Emotions					
	Happy	64	71	57	61	64
	Anxious	12	7	16	14	11
22.	Hope in stressful situation	16	15	16	15	17
23.	Emotional understanding	48	47	48	47	48
24.	*Commonly Felt Feelings					
	Tired	45.5	44	47	48	44
	Tearful	36	35	37	38	33
	Lonely	30	29	30	30	30
25.	*Intense Emotions During COVID-19					
	Extreme emotions	14	13	16		
	Mood swings	44	40	47	46	44
26.	*Changes in Routines due to COVID-19					
	Sleeping pattern	35	30	38	33	39
27.	Self-care	60	67	56	58	62
28.	*Issues at Home During COVID-19					
	No difficulty faced	32	34	30	33	29
	Financial problems	30	29	31	31	29
29.	*Difficulties Faced in Online Learning					
	Difficulty faced in learning content online	54	53	56	55	54
	Technical/network issues	35	37	33	35	33
30.	*Support Desired for Managing Feelings					
	Help from friends/ parents/teachers	50	53	47	52	45
	Approaching school counsellors	12	12	11.5	11	13
	Professional counselling outside school	19	18	20.5	17	23
	Building life skills in schools	50	17	21	19	20
31.	Helping attitude	55	56	54	55	53

32.	*Health and Safety Related Behaviours					
	Fearful of coming in contact	42	43	41	43	39
33.	*Physical Symptoms					
	No Such health issues	43	47	40	40	45
	Headaches	15	12	18	18	14
	Stomach aches	18	18	17	19	16
34.	Responding in stressful situations	30	29.8	30.31	31	30
35.	*Strategies Used for Managing Emotions					
	Sharing with friends	46	42	49	44	50
	Sharing with parents	27	40	21	29	26
	Sort out by Self	17	10	20	18	15
36.	Self-efficacy	42	45	41		
37.	Social support	58	64	55	59	56
38.	*Commonly Used Strategies for Coping					
	Yoga and meditation	32	38	29	28	37

*Indicate percentages on multi-select questions.
** Third gender (N=02 data is in Section-II).

Table 5

**Percent Frequencies of Responses of Private Schools Students
Concerning Different Aspects of Mental Health**

(N=67,156)

S.No	Aspects	Total	Stages		Gender	
			Middle N= 30,823	Secondary N= 36,333	Girls N= 34,191	Boys N= 32,876
1.	Adaptability	51	48	53	53	48
2.	Trusting others	18	19	18	18	18
3.	Personal satisfaction	50	60	41	47	53
4.	School satisfaction	67	80	57	66	69
5.	Responsibility of doing well in life	84	85	82	84	83
6.	Body image	49	57	40	44	51
7.	Perspective taking	32	31	33	31	33
	Confidence					
8.	Hesitation in asking questions	25	24.2	25.9	25.3	24.9
9.	Difficulty initiating conversation	24	26	22	23	24
10.	Perception about happiness	59	62	57	60	58
11.	Perception of being a leader	21	25	19	22	21
12.	Trustworthiness	74	76	73	75	73
13.	Peer pressure	20	19	22	21	20
	Satisfaction with Academics					
14.	Satisfaction with academic performance	28	39	18	25	30
15.	*Lagging behind in studies Lack of concentration	29	26	33	30	28
	Poor study habits	15	11	19	15	16
	Difficulty in managing time	13	11	15	15	12
16.	Do not submit assignment on time	8	7	8	6	9
	Seeking social approval					
17.	People will stop respecting me if don't do well in studies	32	34	31	30	34
18.	Bothered by teachers' inattention	38	37	39	39	36

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19.	Anxiety Related to Academics *					
	Studies	35	38	54	51	41
	Examination and results	46	36	32	32	36
20.	*Experiences with Online Learning					
	Lack of social interaction with peers	53	50	56	55	51
	Are better than offline classes	12	12	13	10	15
21.	*Frequently Experienced Emotions					
	Happy	68	75	61	75	61
	Anxious	11	6	16	14	19
	Satisfied	10	10	9	9	10
22.	Hope in Stressful Situation	28	31	26	25	31
23.	Emotional Understanding	42	41	43	43	42
24.	*Commonly felt Feelings					
	Tired	49	47	52	53	46
	Tearful	34	32	36	41	28
	Lonely	28	24	31	29	26
25.	*Intense Emotions During COVID-19					
	Mood swings	42	38	50	52	37
	Extreme emotions	12	11	13	12	12
26.	*Changes in Routines due to COVID-19					
	Sleeping pattern	44	35	52	47	43
	Everyday Routine	26	30	22	25	26
	Study Habit	17	20	14	15	18
	Eating Habit	13	15	12	13	14
27.	Self-care	45	51	40	42	49
28.	*Issues at Home During COVID-19					
	No difficulty faced	55	48	62	53	56
	Emotional changes in family	22	16	28	25	20
	Financial Problems	9	8	10	8	10
29.	*Difficulties Faced in Online learning					
	Difficulty faced in learning content online	49	44	56	51	50
	Technical/Network issues	43	48	35	41	40
30.	*Support Desired for Managing Feelings					
	Help from Friends/parents/Teachers	52	57	47	51	52
	Building life skills in schools	24	25	23	23	24
31.	Helping Attitude	51	52	51	52	50

32.	*Health and safety related behaviours					
	Fearful of coming in contact	34	34	35	37	32
	Indulging in safety behaviours	20	19	21	20	21
	Worried or Fearful about family/friends	28	27	30	29	28
33.	*Physical Symptoms					
	No such health issues	59	65	53	54	62
	Headaches	16	12	20	19	13
	Stomach aches	13	13	13	15	11
34.	Responding in Stressful Situations	36	36	36	36	36
35.	*Strategies Used for Managing Emotions					
	Sharing with Friends	41	37	45	40	42
	Sharing with parents	28	38	18	26	29
36.	Self-efficacy	32	34	30	30	34
37.	Social support	60	68	54	59	61
38.	*Commonly Used Strategies for Coping					
	Changing thoughts	30	25	34	29	32
	Yoga and meditation	20	21	18	18	21

*Indicate percentages on multi-select questions.
** Third gender (N=03 data is in Section-II).