

# School Environment: Perception of Female Students of Senior Secondary Schools

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## Abstract

The presents study endeavors to cast a glance at the perception of girls regarding school environment. Sample comprised of 50 girls (age range 15-17yrs) selected from government schools of Lucknow city. 10 self-devised sentence completion blanks were used to ascertain attitude towards school environment. Content analysis of the data was done and percentages were computed. Results revealed the students were not satisfied with the present education system. They depicted a poor teacher-student relationship. Further in terms of teaching they wanted curriculum to be more applied in day to day life.

**Keywords:** Perception, Sschool Environment.

## Introduction

Early education in India commenced under the supervision of a *guru*. Initially, education was open to all and seen as one of the methods to achieve skills that enriched persons in all walks of life in those days, or enlightenment. As time progressed, the education was imparted on societal norms which were on the basis of caste and the related duties that one had to perform as a member of a specific caste. **Prabhu, Joseph 2006.**

At the Gurukuls, the teacher imparted knowledge on various aspects of the religion, the scriptures, the philosophy, the literature, the warfare, the statecraft, the medicine astrology and the history. This system is referred as the oldest and the most effective system of education.

In British rule, Christian missionaries from England, USA and other countries established missionary and boarding schools throughout the India. These schools gained popularity later on and set the beginning of modern schooling in India. Today most of the schools follow the missionary school model in terms of teaching, syllabus, administration and governance, with appropriate modifications.

School plays a vital role in forming one's character. The schools exert great influence upon us. They shape our character, mould our mental attitudes and make us learn the basic principles of life. Environment of school adds on to one's personality.

Good Schooling is essential for every society and individual. It is life itself but not a preparation for life. Man has various qualities. School life is but a preparation to face the challenges that the bigger school called 'world' will offer us when individuals are left out on the road of life land walk on.

For many, the days spent in schools are the happiest and the best days of life. The very memory of school days fills minds with longing memories of happy days of years. School is a meeting place of students and teachers; a student learns the 'life-skills' of living in the in the society needed for the later part of life.

Teachers act as the guides and guardians to guide them on the right path. In school, teachers try to remove the evils from the students by sowing some seeds of good qualities in them. Above all, in examinations, they try to show their brilliant performance. School has definitely a healthy influence upon students.

However there have been paucity of researchers in this regard with psychological perspectivesome studies suggest that young children had more positive attitudes towards environmental issues than older students Malkus& Musser, 1997; Musser & Diamond, 1999. Age was found to have a statistically significant effect on environmental attitudes of high school students who participated in science survey in United Kingdom



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Lyons & Breakwell, 1994. Adejoke et al. 2014 reported that younger learners had better scores than their older counterparts in terms of environmental knowledge and attitudes.

The above description pertains to schools especially female students for whom school is the second place where freedom can be exercised, a platform that serves as a bench mark in their upcoming careers. What impact school has on students but what happens from student's point of view? How they female students perceive school? What are their expectations from school and teachers? What are the things they wanted to change in their school and teaching methodology? These are some questions which intrigued the researcher to pick up this study.

#### **Method**

##### **Rationale of The Study**

Schooling is an important component of everyone's lives. How one perceives of the school environment plays an essential role in how school is perceived. In a country like India where female literacy rate is 56.8% UNESCO 2019 need of the hour is to make schools friendly for students especially to female students. Who have less motivation and are less compelled to attend proper school? Despite tall talks of Gender empowerment and education for all the picture is still pathetic. Need of the hour is to bring out females' perceptions so as to understand their view point. Present study is an attempt in this direction.

##### **Aim of The Study**

To explore the perception of senior secondary female students towards school environment.

##### **Hunches**

Paucity of researches in this regard led to formation of hunches.

Perception of senior secondary female students towards school environment would be negative.

#### **Design**

Ex-post facto research with exploratory orientation.

#### **Sample**

Various government schools were selected through convenient sampling and after taking their consent a sample of 50 adolescent girls (age ranges from 15 to 17 years) was selected for the study.

#### **Measure**

To assess the perception of senior secondary female students 10 self-devised sentence completion blanks were formed.

#### **Procedure**

The purpose of *the study "perception of senior secondary female students towards school environment"* was carefully studied in related books and journals on the basis of which 15 sentence completion blanks were formed in English language. After the pilot study, they were reduced to 10. Then these 10 sentence completion blanks were used in the present study. Consent was taken from respondents they were informally shared the purpose of the study. Proper instructions were given and verbatim were recorded by individual administration of the tool. After data collection, content and percentage analysis of the data was computed. The obtained findings have been interpreted and discussed.

#### **Instructions**

*"Here are some incomplete sentences which you have to complete. I will read it one by one and your task is to tell whatever comes first in your mind after listening the sentence. There is no right or wrong answer so you can answer freely, your responses will be kept confidential."*

#### **Results and Discussion**

To assess the attitude of senior secondary female students towards school environment self-devised ten sentence completion blanks were formed:

1.) School according to me is:

2.) When I come to school

3.) In school my classmates are

4.) Teacher's expect me to

5.) My expectation from school is

6.) My expectations from my teachers

7.) One thing that I would like to change

8.) One thing I would like to change in Indian schooling

9.) My school to me is

10.) In the morning when I think of coming to school

These have been interpreted and discussed one by one.

**School according to me is.....**

The first sentence completion blank pertained to perception of school according to the responses here the root was ‘School according to me is.....’ exhaustive data emerged which was sub categorized into five major categories(table 1)

**Table: 1 School according to me is:**

Categories	Percentages
Temple of knowledge	40
Key to successful future	30
Place where we learn morals and values along with studies	14
Place where we get education and friends	12
Place where learning is fun	4

The highest response obtained category was ‘Temple of knowledge’ i.e. 40%, followed by ‘Key to successful future’ which is 30%, 14% girls considered school as a place where we learn morals and values along with studies, 12% considered school as a place where we get education and friends and only 4% said school is a place where learning is fun. An overall data emerged with more of positive shades. Despite the odds and even of our education system it is still surprising that majority of respondents perceived school as temple of knowledge and school is the key to successful future. Skaalvik and Federici 2014 reported research findings that have consistently indicated that positive perceptions of teachers are associated with positive educational outcomes, such as students’ engagement. Moving to the next sentence completion blank

**When I come to school.....**

The second sentence completion blank pertained to feeling they have when they go to school. The root was ‘When I come to school....’ data emerged was sub categorized into four major categories(table 2)

**Table: 2 When I come to school....**

Categories	Percentages
Again to a boring place	42
Hate to get up early in the morning there should be some change in timings	34
A new day to learn new concepts	16
Feels good because of friends	10

The highest response obtained category was, ‘Again to a boring place which is 42% where as 34% girls said that they hate to get up early in the morning, 16% gave a very optimistic answer by saying a new day to learn new concepts, 10% mentioned they feel good because of friends. The overall data emerged with more of negative shades. As data depicted that girls perceived school a boring place and they desire some change in the school timings as they hate getting up in the morning. It is surprising that only a minority of respondents have an optimistic approach that it’s a new day to learn new concepts. Studies in this regard ‘Perception’ is concerned with both sensual (usually visual) responses to nature and with the way, people attach

meaning and value to it Swanwick, 2009. Further the next blank pertains to class mates.

**In school my classmates are.....**

The third sentence completion blank pertained to feeling they have when they go to school. The root was ‘When I come to school....’ data emerged was sub categorized into four major categories(table 2)

**Table: 3 In school my classmates are**

Categories	Percentages
Good supportive and helpful	34
Nice, like to spending time with them	18
Some people are very mean	10
My classmates are reason for me to come to school	38

Four categories emerged shaded with immense positive shades in which 38% mentioned that classmates are the reason for them to come to school followed by good supportive and helpful which is 34% followed by the response that classmates are nice and they like to spend time with them which is 18% where as 10% of sample said some classmates are very mean. Supportive evidences find place in study Cornell, 1990 peer relationships are an important factor in the development of children and adolescents.

**Teachers expect me to .....**

The fourth sentence blank pertains to teacher’s expectation from students, and how students perceive it. Results brought to fore 3 major categories

**Table: 4 Teachers expect me to**

Categories	Percentages
Be like a robot who do everything but without feeling tired and works continuously	58
Behave properly and score good marks	26
Perform good in class and stay in a disciplined and mannered way	16

There were three main categories majority that is 58% said teachers expect me to be like robot who do everything without feeling tired and works continuously which shows that students are over burdened, followed by 26% who believe behaving properly and score good marks are the main things which their teachers expect from them and only 16% mentioned teachers expect them to perform good in class and stay in a disciplined and mannered way. These findings find place in studies that report positive concurrent association between students’ perceptions of teacher support and their sense of attachment to, liking for, and involvement in school Gest, Domitrovich, & Welsh, 2010; Murray, Murray & Waas, 2008. Moving on to the next blank

**My expectations from school is.....**

The fifth blank is related to expectations from school i.e. what students perceive school expects from them. 3 categories emerged

**Table 5 My expectations from school is:**

Categories	Percentages
To provide us with good teachers who do not believe in rote learning	68
Proper sanitation facilities should be there	28
They should treat us like students not like robots	04

Here, three prominent categories were found. The highest response category was to provide students with good teachers who do not believe in rote learning with 68%, followed by there should be proper sanitation facilities with 28% and 04% mentioned that they should treat them like students not like robots. Several researchers have shown teachers' expectations have greater effects on students than the opposite Feldman and Theiss, 1982; Rubie-Davies, 2007.

There has been little research into students' expectations of their teachers. Several researchers have shown teachers' expectations have greater effects on students than the opposite (Feldman and Theiss, 1982; Rubie-Davies, 2007; Weinstein, 2002). The next blank is what students expect from their teachers

**My expectations from my teachers.....**

Analysing of data brought to fore 6 categories.

**Table: 6 My expectations from my teachers**

Categories	Percentages
Not to de-motivate any child	34
There should be some change in teaching methodology	28
They should understand that every child has different potential and everyone cannot be a topper	20
Teachers should use more exploratory teaching and fun learning with experimentation	08
They should be supporting	06
Give knowledge and motivate weak student to achieve their goal	04

Here, six categories were found which shows students have various expectations from teachers highest response category is teachers should not de-motivate any child with 34%, followed by there should be some change in teaching methodology with 28%, 20% of the girls said they should understand that every child has different potential and everyone cannot be a topper, 8% of them expect teachers to use more exploratory teaching and fun learning with experimentation, 6% reported that teachers should be supporting and only 4% said teachers should give knowledge and motivate weak student to achieve their goal. There has been little research into students' expectations of their teachers. Several researchers have shown teachers' expectations have greater effects on students than the opposite Feldman and Theiss, 1982; Rubie-Davies, 2007. Followed by this is next blank of one change that respondent wishes to change.

**One thing that I would like to change.....**

A change if one can bring about is the next blank. 5 categories came forth.

**Table 7 One thing that I would like to change:**

Categories	Percentages
School timings	46
Sanitation facilities	20
Management should be approachable	14
Supportive teachers	12
Fun learning	08

When they were asked to mention one thing they would like to change five major categories emerged, the highest response category was school timings with 46% where most of them replied like "school timings should not be before 8:00 am" which was followed by sanitation facilities 20%, 14% said management of the school should be more approachable whereas 12% said teachers should be supportive and only 8% of girls said there should be change in learning and learning should be fun not burden. Moving to next blank

**One thing I would like to change in Indian schooling.....**

Wishful thinking pertaining to changes in Indian schooling system .3 categories came out

**Table: 8 One thing I would like to change in Indian schooling**

Categories	Percentage
Rote learning	52
Teaching should be for knowledge not for marks	32
Practical learning with exploratory origin	16

Three categories were obtained, highest response category emerged was rote learning is one thing they want to change with 52%, followed by teaching should be for knowledge not for marks with 32% and 16% mentioned practical learning with exploratory origin should be use. The teaching that takes place in educational institutions is not of improved quality and measures need to get implemented to make it useful Chahal, 2015. Finally addressing the second last blank

**My school to me is.....**

This blank pertains to visualizing the importance of school. 4 categories came out

**Table:9. My school to me is**

Categories	Percentages
A place to learn and make friends.	60
An important place where we get knowledge	28
An important part of life even though it's not up to my expectation	08
Nothing but a robot manufacturer	04

For this four categories emerged: A place to learn and make friends with 60%, an important place where we get knowledge with 28%, an important part of life even though it's not up to my expectation with 8% and 4% mentioned my school to me is nothing but a robot manufacturer. The place of residence can also influence student perceptions significantly. Robertson

and Burdge 1998 stated that people living in the urban areas are more concerned with environmental issues than those living in the rural areas. Last blank was indirectly assessing the amount of connectivity of a student with her school.

**In the morning when I think of coming to school.....**

This blank relates to students feeling towards her school. 3 categories emerged

**Table: 10. In the morning when I think of coming to school:**

Categories	Percentages
Feels good	24
Feel lazy to get up so early in the morning	72
Again so much of pressure	04

For this three categories emerged: feels lazy to get up so early in the morning with 72%, feels lazy with 24%, and only 4% mentioned they think again so much of pressure. Having gone through the findings obtained in this regard hunch made in this regard *Perception of senior secondary female students towards school environment would be negative* has been partially accepted. Results have revealed a mixed feelings of the respondents.

**Conclusion and Implications of The Study**

On the basis of above findings one can aptly say that students want to change various things in their school, teachers and education system.

Findings reveal that school is a temple of knowledge, place where one can get education and friends where learning is fun, but majority seems to be dissatisfied with early timings as they sometimes feels lazy in getting up early in the morning they mentioned classmates as good, supporting and helpful. From the result it seems that teachers have very high expectations from the students and students sometimes feels like robots that do everything but without feeling tired.

Results shows that students have various expectations from school that is to provide proper sanitation facilities, major issue is to provide good teachers who do not believe in rote learning as they want to learn for knowledge not just to score good grades.

Such type of studies can be useful for policy makers to implement school programs with more effectiveness. Through such type of studies School environment can be made encouraging for students. A revised definition of school can be obtained from such type of studies.

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