

Research Paper

## Exploring Happiness Quotient Among Higher Secondary School Students

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### ABSTRACT

Happiness is the experience of feelings of joy and wellbeing that is defined by a person's way of thinking. Students in the senior secondary level of schooling are considered to be at a stage of academic pressure, societal expectations and varied socio emotional experiences. The paper examined the happiness quotient of the higher secondary school students of Kamrup of Assam taking a sample of 700 and observed varied level of happiness among the students.

*Keywords: Happiness Quotient, Higher Secondary School Students*

Even though schools, colleges, and universities in India are teaching a wide range of subjects and helping students learn important modern skills, many teenagers still struggle with problems like depression, anxiety, and stress. The NCERT's 2022 Manodarpan survey, which involved more than 3.7 lakh students from classes 6 to 12, showed that many senior secondary students often feel overwhelmed, stressed about studies, and don't feel comfortable asking for help. Sadly, mental health is often ignored because academic performance is given more importance. This shows that it's really important for schools to focus not just on teaching skills, but also on helping students stay mentally and emotionally healthy so they can live happier lives.

Happiness is an aspect of life of an individual and it is a key indicator of well-being. Seligman (2002), the pioneer of positive psychology, emphasized that enhancing positive traits and experiences is more valuable than merely fixing negative aspects. Throughout history, philosophers have regarded happiness as the greatest good and the ultimate driving force behind human behaviour (Diener, 1984). Happiness is a rich and multi-dimensional experience rooted in inner peace, purpose, and connection. Philosophically, texts like the Bhagavad Gita emphasize selfless action and alignment with Purushartha-Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha, for a meaningful life. Psychologically, theories like Maslow's hierarchy and Seligman's PERMA model suggest that fulfilment and meaningful engagement lead to lasting happiness, echoed by the Japanese concept of Ikigai. Scientifically, happiness is linked to brain chemicals such as dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphins, and shaped through neuroplasticity. Artistically, happiness emerges through creative expression, reflection, and emotional connection. Together, these perspectives show that happiness is

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both an inner journey and an outward practice, nurtured by self-awareness, relationships, purpose, and expression.

The level of happiness and life satisfaction experienced by individuals is often seen as a key indicator of a society's overall quality of life (Diener & Lucas, 2000). Adolescence is a period marked by rapid physical, emotional and social changes. In recent years happiness has been gaining prominence in educational research, recognizing that emotional well-being significantly influences student's academic performance, interpersonal relationships and overall life satisfaction. While happiness is inherently a desirable goal, adolescents who report higher levels of happiness tend to exhibit fewer emotional and behavioural issues (Suldo & Huebner, 2006). Studies in positive psychology indicate that adolescent happiness is strongly influenced by various factors, including a healthy sense of self-esteem, supportive family environments, clear goal orientation and positive relationships with peers and teachers (Lyubomirsky, 2001). Teenagers who report higher levels of happiness tend to earn significantly more income 15 years later compared to their less happy peers, even after accounting for factors such as academic performance, income level, and other relevant variables (Diener et al., 2002).

Several studies show that happiness in students is closely linked to their school satisfaction, positive experiences, and personal traits like optimism and persistence. Telef (2020) found that happier students often feel more satisfied with school life. Saha et al. (2010) showed how satisfied teens are early on can later affect how they see their parents' support. Hashim & Zaharim (2020) found that while factors like gender or religion didn't matter much, family income, school performance, and time with loved ones played a big role in teen happiness. Diener and Lucas explained that happiness is shaped by how people judge their lives based on personal needs and culture. A Finnish study noticed happiness of girls dropped as they got older, mainly due to school stress and friendship issues. Seligman and team (2009) showed that teaching happiness skills in class, alongside academics, can really help students feel better and build a stronger future.

Happiness serves as a core motivating force in human life, influencing many of their actions and desires (Krishnananda, 1984). Happiness in the Indian context is deeply connected with collectivist traditions, spiritual worldviews, and social harmony. Unlike Western models that emphasize individual achievement, in India, well-being is often defined through strong familial bonds, community integration, and adherence to one's duties (dharma) values deeply rooted in classical texts like the Bhagavad Gītā and Ramayana. Moreover, spiritual practices such as meditation, yoga, and devotional rituals are not merely wellness activities but pathways to cultivating inner balance (sukha) and transcending material concerns, reinforcing inner harmony as essential to happiness (Singh et al., 2022). Empirical studies such as cross-cultural surveys using the Eudaimonic and Hedonic Happiness Investigation confirm that while social relationships are critical sources of happiness, the central psychological aspect across cultures is inner harmony, which in India is nurtured through spiritual cultivation (Agarwala et al., 2023). Thus, Indian happiness emerges from an integrated blend of ethical living, social connectedness, and spiritual depth revealing a holistic conception of well-being that transcends material wealth.

This study attempts to explore level of happiness among higher secondary students. For understanding the level of happiness among the students 700 students were taken as study sample.

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### *Significance of the study*

The World Happiness Report (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2023) highlights that feelings of loneliness and a lack of community support are increasingly common, further exacerbating the happiness crisis. This situation calls for urgent attention toward fostering emotional resilience, promoting mental health awareness, and cultivating environments that support genuine well-being and human connection. In the recent day scenario, happiness crisis has been increasing among people due to rising levels of stress, anxiety and emotional distress across all age groups. Although technological advancement is increasing day by day in various fields including healthcare and living standards, many people report a lack of life satisfaction and meaningful connection. Various factors like social isolation, excessive reliance on digital media, economic instability, academic and job pressure and work-life imbalance have contribute to declining emotional well-being to a great extent. Especially among youth and adolescents, the pressure to meet societal expectations and fear of failure have led to decrease in mental health. Many adolescents end their life due to failure in examination. Studying the status of happiness of the higher secondary school students of Kamrup Metro is important to understand the emotional and psychological wellbeing of the region in general and the city in particular. By examining the level of happiness, students, teachers, parents, policy makers can identify underlying stressors and provide convenient environment that can foster happiness and subjective wellbeing among the students. In a rapidly changing socio-cultural landscape like Assam's, such studies can offer insights into how regional and cultural dynamics affect adolescent well-being. Considering the above observations, the objectives of the study are stated as-

### *Objectives of the study*

- To examine the level of happiness of the higher secondary school students.
- To compare the level of happiness of the boys and girl H S students.
- To compare the level of happiness of the H S students from Government and Private Secondary Schools.
- To compare the level of happiness of the H S students from Arts and Science Background.

### *Hypotheses of the study*

- **H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no significant difference of happiness between Boys and Girls higher secondary school students.
- **H<sub>0</sub>2:** There is no significant difference of happiness between Govt. and Private school higher secondary school students.
- **H<sub>0</sub>3:** There is no significant difference of happiness between Arts and Science stream higher secondary school students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study uses a descriptive research method with a focus on quantitative analysis. Statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, t-value, and level of significance were applied to assess differences. The study population includes 2,589 senior secondary students from both government and private schools in Guwahati, Kamrup (M). A sample of 700 students was selected using simple random sampling.

The Five Facet Happiness Scale, developed by Himanshi Rastogi and Janki Moorjani, that comprised of 62 items has been used for the study. It evaluates happiness across five distinct

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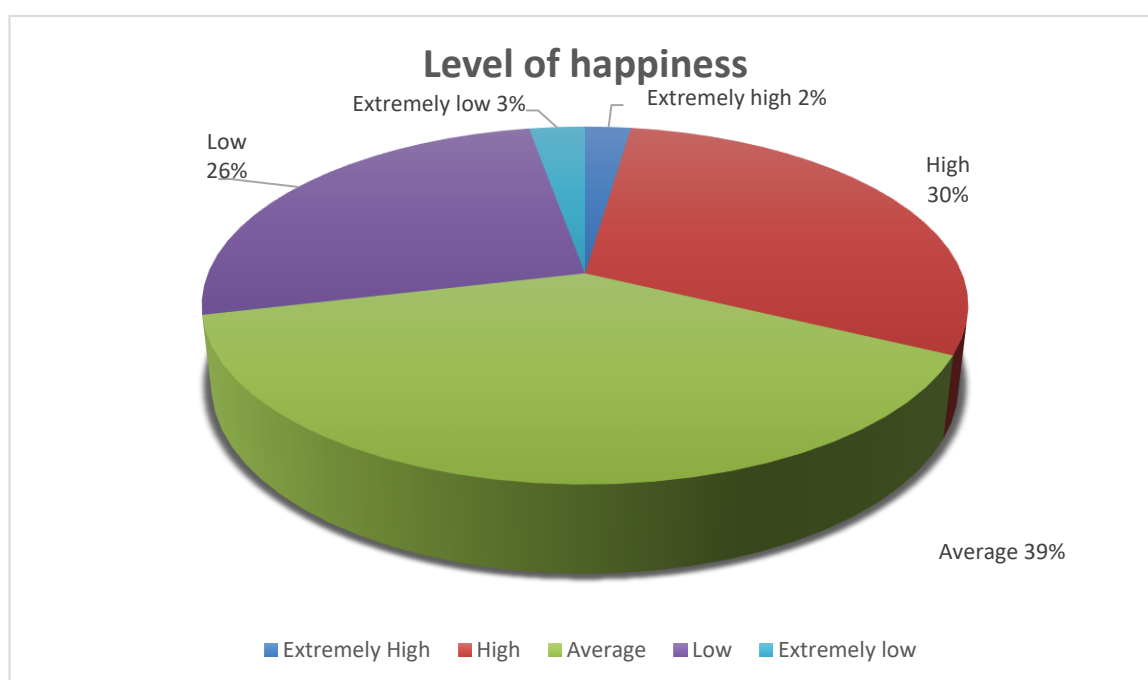
dimensions: (a) Subjective Well-Being, (b) Social Well-Being, (c) Emotional Well-Being, (d) Career Well-Being, and (e) Spiritual Well-Being.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### *Level of Happiness of the higher secondary School Students*

**Table 1: Level of happiness among Higher Secondary Students (N=700)**

Happiness	Level	Range	No. of Students	Percentage
	<b>Extremely High</b>	294 & above	16	2.3%
	<b>High</b>	258-293	209	29.9%
	<b>Average</b>	232-257	274	39.1%
	<b>Low</b>	194-231	181	25.9%
	<b>Extremely Low</b>	162-193	20	2.8%
<b>Total</b>			700	100%



**Fig1: Pie diagram showing happiness level of higher secondary school students**

A perusal of table 1 and figure 1 depict the level of happiness among higher secondary school students. The above table and figure indicate that, out of 700 students, 209 (29.9%) students are found to be high level of happiness, 275 (39.1%) students have average level of happiness, 181 (25.9%) have low level of happiness, 20 (2.8%) students have extremely low level of happiness and 16 (2.3%) students are found to be extremely happy. Therefore, it can be stated that majority of the higher secondary school students have average level of happiness.

Data revealed that among male higher secondary school students (N = 280), the most common level of happiness is average (36.5%), followed by low (29.6%) and high (27.1%) levels, while only a small percentage report extremely high (2.9%) and extremely low (3.9%) happiness. In contrast, female higher secondary school students (N = 420) show a slightly more positive pattern, with the highest proportion reporting average happiness

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(41.0%), followed by high (31.7%) and low (23.3%) levels, and minimal representation in the extremely high (1.9%) and extremely low (2.1%) categories. These findings indicate that girls generally experience higher levels of happiness than boys, as reflected in the larger proportion of girls with average and high happiness and fewer reporting low and extremely low levels. This disparity may suggest greater emotional resilience or stronger social and familial support systems among female students, whereas boys may face emotional or social challenges that affect their well-being. The gender-based differences highlight the importance of implementing gender-sensitive interventions in schools, such as emotional support programs and counseling services, to better address the specific needs of both boys and girls and foster a more supportive environment for their emotional development.

Further analysis of data revealed that students from government schools report a slightly higher level of happiness compared to those from private schools. Specifically, 33.1% of government school students indicated a high level of happiness, while this figure stands at 25% for private school students. Additionally, a larger proportion of private school students reported lower levels of happiness (27.5%) compared to their government school counterparts (24.8%). Notably, government school students also show a marginally higher share in the “Very High” happiness category (2.8%) as opposed to private school students (1.4%). These findings suggest that despite common assumptions about private institutions offering better amenities and opportunities, student happiness might be influenced by more complex factors beyond infrastructure or prestige.

In a comparison to streams of study, arts students exhibited higher levels of happiness than their science counterparts. About 31.8% of arts students reported high happiness levels, in contrast to 26.5% among science students. The percentage of students experiencing moderate happiness was nearly equal between both streams- 38.9% for arts and 39.6% for science. However, science stream students displayed a slightly greater incidence of low or very low happiness (32%) when combined, compared to 26.8% among arts students. This contrast could be attributed to the relatively higher academic pressures and competitive environment often associated with the science stream.

**Table 2: Mean, Median, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of Students (N=700)**

Variable	Mean	Median	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Happiness	245.54	247.00	25.321	-.220	.054

The mean happiness score of 245.54, closely aligned with the median of 247.00, suggests students generally experience an average level of happiness. The slight negative skewness (-0.220) and near-zero kurtosis (0.054) further indicate a roughly normal distribution with mild asymmetry and typical variability.

**Significance of differences in Happiness of the H S Students across gender, institution type, and academic stream are presented in table No. 3**

**Table 3: Significance of difference in Mean Happiness Scores of boys and girls, Govt and private, Arts and Science Students (N=700)**

Variable	N	M	SD	df	t	Level of Significance	
Gender	Boys	280	243.10	26.79	698	2.083	.05
	Girls	420	247.16	24.18			

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Variable		N	M	SD	df	t	Level of Significance
Institution	Govt.	420	248.20	24.93	698	3.43	.01
	Private	280	241.54	25.41			
Stream	Arts	440	247.04	25.86	698	2.044	.05
	Science	260	243.00	24.20			

### *Gender and Happiness*

The analysis shows a slight difference in the average happiness scores between boys ( $M = 243.10$ ,  $SD = 26.79$ ) and girls ( $M = 247.18$ ,  $SD = 24.18$ ). While this difference appears small, the t-test value of 2.083 exceeds the critical value of 2.58 at the 1% level of significance. This indicates that the difference is statistically significant, meaning gender does play a role in influencing student happiness. The null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant difference in happiness between boys and girls, is therefore rejected.

### *Institution Type and Happiness*

Government school students had a higher mean happiness score ( $M = 248.20$ ,  $SD = 24.93$ ) compared to private school students ( $M = 241.54$ ,  $SD = 25.41$ ). The t-value of 3.43 is greater than the critical value at the 1% level, indicating a statistically significant difference in happiness based on the type of institution. Despite expectations that private schools may offer better resources, government school students reported greater happiness, possibly due to differing academic pressures or socio-emotional environments. Thus, the null hypothesis regarding institutional differences is also rejected.

### *Academic Stream and Happiness*

Comparing arts and science stream students, arts students reported a slightly higher average happiness score ( $M = 247.04$ ,  $SD = 25.86$ ) than science students ( $M = 243.00$ ,  $SD = 24.20$ ). The calculated t-value of 2.044 is above the critical value of 1.96 at the 5% level of significance, confirming a significant difference between the two groups. This suggests that academic stream may influence student happiness, potentially due to differing levels of stress, creativity, or curricular demands. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 5% significance level.

### **Implications of the study**

As a considerable number of higher secondary students experience average and below-average happiness levels, the study emphasizes the urgent need to prioritize emotional well-being in schools. Educational institutions should integrate programs such as mindful activities, life skills education and counselling services to foster emotional health. The significant gender differences in happiness levels highlight the importance of designing gender-sensitive interventions to address the unique needs of boys and girls. Notably, students in government schools report higher happiness than their private school counterparts, indicating that institutional environment, teaching approaches and socio-economic pressure play vital roles in students well-being. Similarly, it is observed that arts students experience greater happiness than science students and it calls for curriculum reforms that incorporate stress-reduction strategies, especially for students under high academic pressure. The influence of family support, parental education and meaningful life experiences further underscores the importance of school-family-community collaboration in nurturing adolescent well-being.

## SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

The study underscores the urgent need to integrate emotional well-being into the educational framework, particularly as many higher secondary students exhibit average or below-average levels of happiness. Schools should implement structured programs such as mindfulness training, resilience-building workshops, and stress management sessions to support students' mental health. Strengthening counselling services, especially during critical academic periods, and adopting gender-sensitive interventions can address specific emotional needs. The observed differences in happiness across institutional types and academic streams highlight the impact of educational environments and curriculum pressure, particularly on science students, calling for reforms that promote flexibility and engagement. Parental involvement through workshops and open communication, along with the creation of inclusive, supportive school cultures that encourage student-teacher relationships and peer support, are also vital. Ultimately, the findings emphasize that fostering student happiness is not just a psychological necessity but a foundational element of effective education, requiring a collaborative effort among educators, families, and policymakers to ensure holistic adolescent development.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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