# Exploring Students' Expectations and Motivations to Attend Secondary School in India

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**Abstract**

*Academic promotion from lower to higher classes brings a copious amount of anxiety in addition to the joy of achievement among the school students. One of the primary concerns of the students is the gap between their (prior) expectations and the realities of the senior classes, which can inadvertently result in poor performance and taxing distress of the students. The current study aims to determine what expectations students carry while they begin Class X, considering the social importance bestowed on the Indian matriculation (Class X Board) examination. A survey-based analysis is done with the secondary students of Class X (n=237) from three schools—rural, semi-urban, urban—through 10-point rating scales, Likert items, and close-ended questions covering 31 statements of different expectations. The study identified various dimensions of expectations and motivations held by Class X students, which can be utilised to address context-specific challenges and enhance learning outcomes. Understanding these expectations is essential for designing targeted interventions that align with student needs and improve engagement. By integrating such insights into educational strategies, schools can create more supportive learning environments, ultimately contributing to better academic performance and holistic development of students.*

***Keywords:*** *Secondary education, students' expectations, survey-based analysis.*

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## Introduction

The transition from lower to higher classes in an academic setting can be mentally taxing both for the students and teachers involved in the system (Hassel and Ridout, 2018). The transition has been recognised as a potential source of anxiety among first-year university students (Lowe and Cook, 2003). It has been reported that the inability to manage this transition can lead to incremental distress, thus, negatively affecting the academic performance, and forcing the students to drop-out from academic institutions (Yorke, 2004; Smith and Hopkins, 2005; Longden, 2006). The academic transitions can be more difficult for female students, students with prior behaviour problems, low-achievement records, and poor socio-economic status (Anderson et al., 2000). But why is the transition so difficult to handle?

The harrowing aspect of such transitions is the students' expectations of senior classes (Keup, 2007; Deb et al., 2015) which are built through the manner students are prepared in junior classes (Clark and Ramsay, 1990; Byrne and Flood, 2005). The mismatch between their expectations, and the reality of higher level of education causes dissatisfaction and angst amongst the students causing the transition difficult to deal with (Kapur and Mehta, 2008; Pather and Dorasamy, 2018). In a study on university students, it was observed that the shift from schools to universities may be particularly onerous for mature or older students with families, first-generation students and students belonging from ethnic minorities (Briggs et al., 2012). The attitude of students concerning the courses and performances in scholastic assessments are based on the initial experiences of entering into the higher classes (Weerasinghe and Fernando, 2017), which gets tarnished with a wide incongruity in their expectations and reality (Smith and Wertlieb, 2005). Over the last two decades, many papers have highlighted mismatches between students' expectations and the realities of education (Gupta and Gupta, 2012; Sheikh, 2017; Saravanakumar and Devi, 2020). Multiple factors have been identified to contribute to the disaccord between students' expectations and real-life experiences like classroom environments, personal lives and cultural affiliations (McInnis et al., 2000). In a similar survey on students joining a research-based Australian university before they had studied in any formal classes, it was concluded that there is a discrepancy in the student's expectations of personalised feedback, and the pattern of feedback provided in

the actual classroom situation (Crisp et al., 2009). In a parallel line, it has been pointed out that the students' expectations of the higher classes are largely related to the assessment criteria which is often rebutted in real-life situations (Murtagh, 2010). A recent study outlined the conflict between students' expectations of independent learning in higher classes with that of the real university classes (Kandiko and Mawer, 2013). Yet, the question arises why should we concern us about the students' expectations?

The presence of a void between students' expectations and actuality of higher education has been realised as a veiled aspect of the students' first-year experience by many workers (Nabilou and Khorasani-Zavareh, 2014; Makoe and Nsamba, 2019; Murangi, 2020). The reason why such expectations should be considered decisive was inferred when they were tagged as a factor associated with students' voluntary termination from the education system (Elliott and Healy, 2001; Fitzgibbon and Prior, 2003; Tinto, 2009; Pleitz et al., 2015). There is an alarming concern among the educational institutions worldwide to minimise drop-outs and encourage student retention (Hagedorn, 2005). This is one of the reasons that the academic institutions are ever more focused on refining the quality of service in order to meet students' expectations and avoid student exasperation (Mavondo et al., 2004; Abdullah, 2006; Faganel, 2010; Mainardes et al., 2012; Headar et al., 2013; Gruber, 2014). Workers like Hill (1995), and Thorne and Cuthbert (1996) believed that students are seen as primary customers in higher education, and they are aware of their (customer) rights. In that purview, expectations involve composite constructions of ideal situation (what the customer would like to happen), predictions (what the customer thinks is likely to happen) and normatives (borne out of experiences with similar services), which finally influence the student's (as customer) satisfaction index (Stevenson and Sander, 1998). Mayya and Roff (2004) opined the importance of students' perceptions regarding the nuances of educational environment as a vital parameter for the improvement of the same. It has also been delineated that the gap in the expectations gives rise to the child's early feelings of disengagement, which further vitiates the future educational expectations and academic success (Yuping, 2014). In a recent study on first year students' expectations on assessment, Surgenor (2013) found the prevalence of a disparity between the lecturer's presumption of what the students are supposed to know about the assessment and what the students believed. Stevenson

et al. (2006) outlined that more than one-third of teachers were not in agreement with the students' expectations while Pardoe (2000) reported that teachers considered the students' failure to subdue their basic expectations as 'dispiriting'—such studies further advocate the need to explore the students' expectations before they are subjected to the regular course modules. Students' expectations of teaching style as they reach higher classes also change where formal lecture, role-play and student presentations are least appreciated (Sander et al., 2000).

Over the past years, the Indian education system has expanded access to senior classes in schools, yet achieving both access and success for students requires a deeper understanding of their expectations (Lewin, 2011; Chaudhari, 2016). There is a notable gap in the literature concerning the expectations of school students, as most prior research has focused on those at the college and university levels. Verma et al. (2002) found that Indian school-going adolescents experienced lower average emotional states and more internalising problems, largely due to their increased engagement with homework, highlighting a disconnect between expectations around home assignments, and the actual school experience. Similarly, Shetty (2018) suggested that while faculty members viewed their teaching methods as highly effective, this was not equally perceived by students. Building on such existing research, this study seeks to explore the expectations of Class X students across three types of schools—rural, semi-urban, and urban—on various aspects of teaching-learning interactions.

**Significance of the Study**

In the context of Indian school education, Class X holds a crucial position being the first high-stakes public examination in the nation (Agarwal, 2004), providing the vision and criteria for admission to the higher secondary classes, choosing the relevant streams (Science, Commerce and Humanities) and deciding the future course of academic life (Yadav and Rani, 2017). Quoting from the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT, 2007), "The Class X public examination is held in such an awe by the public that its pattern percolates down to even the initial stages of schooling. As a result, even small children are prepared along the lines of board examinations right from the beginning." Therefore, the present research is committed to explore and

reveal the 'freshly promoted' secondary students' expectations of the academic regulation, deliverables and assessment patterns of Class X. Since students' expectations depend on various factors like gender, age, study mode, current status, and socio-economic background (type of educational institution) (Akareem and Hossain, 2012; Parahoo et al., 2013; Wardley et al., 2013), the present study involved collection of data from students engaged in three different schools (rural, semi-urban and urban) across both the genders. In addition to that, the relative rarity of research in the field of students' expectations (Davies, 2002; Jillapalli and Jillapalli, 2014) makes this study most opportune in terms of similar pursuit of augment the literature of education. Students reaching higher education classes are assumed to have a realistic, informed idea of the academic level at which they are enrolled (Hagan and Macdonald, 2000), and therefore, the significance of the study lies in the question—how are they expecting the Class X should be like?—the answer belongs to the conclusion of the study.

## Theoretical Framework

This paper, though not directly, is theoretically based on the concept of 'freshman myth' which is focused students' expectations of college life and necessitates its importance to be regarded before formally entering into third-level education. Stern (1966, 1970) conceived the notion that students tend to have a towering, too good to be true and at times, unrealistic expectations of various elements of university life and denoted them as 'freshman myth'. This idea was adopted by many educational psychologists who studied the relationship between students' expectations and their social attributes like behaviour and performance (Baker and Schultz, 1992), adjustment and commitment to college (Baker et al., 1985), students' engagement (Braxton et al., 1995), and classroom experiences (Koermer and Petelle, 1991).

## Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following research questions—The broad objective of this study is overall assessment of students' expectations based on their school types (socio-economic conditions):

(a) What are the expectations of students regarding the time management of various academic subjects in Class X?

(b) What are the reasons and motivation for attending Class X—the first-level public examination of the Indian education system?

(c) What are their expectations concerning development of the abilities of independent learning across the curricula of Class X?

## Research Methodology

### *Study population and sampling technique*

The cross-sectional study was conducted among Class X (n=237) students enrolled in three different types of schools—rural, semi-urban, urban—in the state of Odisha, India. The rural school is regulated by the Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha; the semi-urban school is governed by the Ministry of Education, Government of India; and the urban school is administered by a private body based in Odisha. All the schools are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), India and the medium of primary instruction is English. The mean age of the students (n=237) was 15.5 years (range 15–16 years) and all the students of Class X in respective schools were taken as one-group, randomised subjects for that school with no pre-test. Therefore, any chances of interaction effect of the pre-test and treatment of the participants with the research tools were excluded. The number of students varied between one school to the other but each school-group contained minimum of 20 responses.

The participants were chosen through purposive sampling. The objectives and protocols of the experiment were explained to the students, and written informed consent was obtained, in accordance to the guidelines of research committee of author's institution and the respective schools. The schools were randomly chosen across the state of Odisha but it was confirmed that each of these schools should represent students from different socio-economic background(s). The type of schools can be a proxy for the socio-economic backgrounds of the students (Gentry et al., 2001). The selected rural school is committed to provide free or nominal cost quality education and holistic learning opportunities to the rural minds across the state, with reservations for the female and socio-economically backward students. The objective of the semi-urban school is to cater to the academic needs of the children of transferable central government employees by serving

a common programme of school education. Most of the students in the selected schools belong to middle-class income families and inhabits a peri-urban area close to Bhubaneswar, the capital of Odisha. The last category of urban school is a synergistic creation of a private education society, and is managed through a board of trustees that consisted of eminent educationists, social activists and philanthropists. Students enrolled in this private school belong to financially sound families based in the capital of Bhubaneswar. The paper-based survey was conducted in early April 2019 as the students were freshly promoted to Class X through the final examination of Class IX held in March 2019.

**Research Design**

For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire was developed by the investigators that aimed at recording the expectations of Class X male and female students from three different schools. Thirty one questions were drafted to explore the perceptions of the secondary students regarding the teaching-learning transactions and future academic discourse of Class X; the first-tier public examination in the Indian school education. The study was outlined through the idea of HELP (Figure 1):

- **H** = Headlining the study to the students and collecting their responses
- **E** = Evaluation of the students' responses through different variables
- **L** = Logical reasoning of relationships between expectations and variables
- **P** = Providing the schools with the implications of the study to serve the students better

As the design of the study reads, the investigators intended to help the students and the school administration to bridge the gaps between the expectations of the former with the realities of the educational system. The study based on an exploratory and descriptive survey technique gathered the demographic profile of the students (age and gender; writing the names was not asked for) through the first part of the questionnaire. The second part of the questionnaire was attributed to collect information on students' expectations on the time table management of Class X, duration of scheduled class time for the scholastic and co-curricular areas, periodicity of assessments, and duration of study hours outside

| H | E | L | P |
|---|---|---|---|
| Headlining the study and collecting responses<br>• Selection of three schools—R, SU and U<br>• Designing and validation of the questionnaire<br>• Detailing the study to students and fetching consent<br>• Getting students' responses | Evaluation of responses through variables<br>• Preparing clusters and sub-clusters<br>• Analysis of the responses through the school types-socio-economic variables<br>• Spotting the differences between expectations and realities | Logical reasoning of relationships between variables and expectations<br>• Literature survey and deduction of relationship(s) between expectations and variables<br>• Analyse the response frequencies for similar questions from students of three school types | Providing the schools with study implications<br>• Reporting the outcomes of the study to school management so that agreeable aspects of student expectations can be implemented in real-life scenario |

*Figure 1: Research design of the study*

scheduled class time. The third part of the questionnaire was concerned with students' aspirations and motivation as they reached the level of Class X. It is here the investigators mainly looked into their expectations of future academic and professional life through studying Class X. The fourth and last part of the questionnaire consisted of discrete Likert items that explored the students' expectations of being an independent learner as they start Class X.

**Research Tools**

The given survey-based semi-qualitative study involved the following three research tools; close-ended questions, 10-point rating scales and Likert items.

A close-ended questionnaire provides a premise to the respondents to choose from a fixed number of options. It is basically created through a question stem and a set of closely related alternatives as responses. The close-ended questions are mostly employed quantitatively and analysed statistically for deriving conclusion. In the present study, there were 5 options in the close-ended questions consisting of (time).

A 10-point rating scale is a common research tool in the Social Sciences that places a greater reliance on the participant and are majorly used to elicit responses relating to satisfaction of different

aspects. In this study, 20 such scales were used to check the students' incentives of studying till Class X and expectations of life as they complete the first tier of school education.

A Likert item is a single and specific statement that is meant to rate the respondents' attitude, and experiences. It is not integrated into a composite scale. Ordinal data are collected for Likert items. In the given study, 5-point Likert items were considered for the last section of the questionnaire to decipher the students' expectations of being an independent learner.

**Tool Validity**

The statements in the tool(s) were validated by relevant experts for the face and content validity. The face validity (Trochim, 2006) was rated through clarity (linguistic intelligibility), precision (proper communicability to the students), and understanding (ability to infer the meanings). The 10 educational psychologists were consulted to ascribe 1 or 0 individually to each of these aspects the statements.

Fleiss' kappa index was measured to check for the inter-agreement among the raters (Osorio et al., 2019). The content validity of individual statements was calculated through the classes—essential, useful but not essential, and not necessary by the raters. For this assessment, 15 Class XI students (5 randomly chosen representatives from each school) were consulted so that students' perspectives were regarded while ensuring tools' validity. It was followed by estimation of Content Validity Ratio (CVR) through Lawshe index (Gonzalez et al., 2016):

$$CVR = \frac{n_e - \frac{N}{2}}{\frac{N}{2}}$$

Where,

$n_e$=number of experts who marked the 'essential' category, and

N=total number of experts.

Any statement with a CVR below 0.60 (n=15) was rejected (Ayre and Scally, 2014) and Content Validity Index (CVI) was measured by averaging the CVRs of the accepted statements. The face validity was calculated through the clarity, precision and under-standing of the statements whose average values were obtained as 0.68, 0.88 and 0.74, respectively. The Fleiss' kappa index of inter-rater agreement was 0.419 (clarity), 0.516 (precision) and 0.457 (understanding). The acceptable range of Fleiss' kappa index falls

in the range of 0.41 to 0.60 and values greater than 0.61 are labelled as good or very good (Patacsil et al., 2015). Therefore, it can be inferred that there is acceptable agreement among the 10 raters (educational psychologists) concerning the clarity, precision and understanding of the statements/questions in the tool. For content validity, CVRs for each of the statements were teased out after the raters submitted their scores. None of the statements bore CVR less than 0.60 and the CVI was calculated to be 0.90 which supports the validity of the statements.

**Tool Administration**

With permission from the principals of the respective schools, the study was administered during a regular period in the time table of the students in early April 2019. The students were informed of the objectives and related details of the study like volunteer departure from the study, anonymity, and publishing policies of the paper. Except the age and gender, no other details were sought, and the students' consent was also obtained. The students were assured of no association of this study with any of their formative or summative assessments. Presence of invigilators while students were writing their responses ensured no chances of cheating.

**Data Analysis**

The responses from the survey were analysed through qualitative and semi-qualitative methods after converting the responses into percentages. These semi-qualitative survey data were investigated using the recommended methods of O'Cathain and Thomas (2004). Clusters and sub clusters were developed based on the question types for the detailed analysis of responses. Item-wise percentage analysis of the students' responses from three school types provided the trend of differences for similar expectations across the different socio-economic backgrounds.

**Results**

***Demographic statistics of participants and clusters of the study***

The total number of participants involved in the study was 237—with 131 female and 106 male students (Table 1) from the three types of schools taken into consideration. We developed three major clusters and each cluster further bore respective sub-clusters based on the statements (Table 2).

**Table 1: Demographic Distribution of the Participants**

| S. No. | Type of school | Gender | Number of the students (percentage in parentheses out of 237) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Rural | Females | 21 (8.861) |
| | | Males | 10 (4.219) |
| 2. | Semi-Urban | Females | 72 (30.38) |
| | | Males | 39 (16.456) |
| 3. | Urban | Females | 38 (16.034) |
| | | Males | 57 (24.051) |
| | | | Total=237 |

**Table 2: Assessment of Students' Expectations**

| S. No. | Expectations of time durations of study in Class X | Reasons and motivation for attending Class X | Expectation of being an independent learner in Class X |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Time duration of studying outside scheduled class time | Ambition of proving self-worth | Expectation of attending lectures |
| 2. | Time duration of studying within academic class time | Prospect of a better career and life | Expectation of being a self-learner |
| 3. | Time duration of studying language and social sciences | Sense of personal contentment | Expectation of being provided with feedback |
| 4. | Time duration of studying Science and Maths | Intention to learn and convey new things | |
| 5. | Time duration of co-curricular, sports and arts-aesthetics | Lack of other opportunities and unmotivated desires | |
| 6. | Periodicity of being assessed | | |

### *Response summary of overall expectations through socio-economic profile of students*

The responses in the given survey are the options chosen by the participants that suited their expectations. There are unattempted questions since they were not compulsory, such are noted as no responses. These responses are considered as missing responses and won't be regarded with any significance for the qualitative analysis. Randomly picked students were enquired for not attempting the questions and the collective response was that they were not sure of an 'appropriate' choice among the options in the

said question. There was no issue of sensitivity, decipherability and difficulty associated with the questions.

**Expectations of Students Regarding the Time Management in Class X**

The responses of the students against the first cluster and expectations of study time durations in Class X are listed in Table 3. It is observed that maximum students from the rural school (45.16 per cent) expected that they have to study for 6–8 hours in a day outside the regular class hours. It is contradicting, the observations obtained from the urban school where majority of the students (67.64 per cent) felt 2–4 hours/day of study time is sufficient outside the school hours for Class X preparation. The students from semi-urban school followed the preference of the urban school's students with maximum responses (40.54 per cent) in favour of 2–4 hours/day study outside school hours. Least responses (6.45 per cent) from the rural school's students are obtained for less than 2 hours/day study time outside school hours. More than 8 hours/day study time outside school hours is the least chosen option by the semi-urban (6.31 per cent) and urban (1.05 per cent) school. The investigators tried to assess the expectations of the students regarding the regular school hours. Maximum responses from the students in rural (51.61 per cent), semi-urban (45.05 per cent) and urban (55.79 per cent) school conveyed that the students from all school types expect to attend classes for 4–6 hours in a day as they reached Class X. More than 8 hours/day of school time is expected by minimum number of students in all the three school types (Table 3).

The investigators noticed an interesting course of responses for the study hours expected in different subjects. Rural school's students reported that 1–2 class hours/day was expected to be sufficient for Social Sciences (51.61 per cent) and languages (70.97 per cent). Similar expectation was observed with the semi-urban school's students where the highest number of responses was in favour of 1–2 class hours/day for Social Sciences (35.14 per cent) and languages (51.35 per cent). For the urban school, maximum students (40 per cent) expected that less than 2 class hours/day will be enough for Social Sciences. More than half of the urban school's sampling population (53.68 per cent) expected that 1–2 class hours/day will suffice their academic requirements of language subjects. For subjects like Science and Mathematics,

the greater number of responses belong to the expectations of 2–4 class hours/day 67.74 per cent (rural), 67.57 per cent (semi-urban) and 57.9 per cent (urban). There was a clear line of distinction in the preferences of the students with respect to the study hours in each subject but there lay a strong index of similarity in their expectations for which subject to be given maximal preference in terms of study hours. Around 40 per cent urban students expected that games and sports should be more than 4 class hours/day, while 46.85 per cent students from the semi-urban, and 51.61 per cent students from the rural school expected that games and sports are limited to 1–2 class hours/day. Similar time-duration preferences are also seen for the co-curricular activities (Table 3).

The expectations of students with regards to the periodicity of assessments were different for the three school types. For the urban school, more than half of the students (57.9 per cent) preferred 1–2 days of assessments in a week in Class X. For the rural school, maximum students (38.71 per cent) expected 3–4 days of assessments in a week while the maximum responses (35.14 per cent) from the semi-urban school came for 1–2 days of assessments in a week (Table 3).

**Reasons and motivation for attending Class X-the first-level public examination of the Indian education system**

This section is thematically divided into five sub-clusters (Table 2) and the responses to the statements are recorded in Table 4. This section of the questionnaire was designed to explore the incentives and reasons of the students to attend Class X. The scores on the rating scale are divided in two categories—low correspondence (1–5) and high correspondence (6–10).

The first sub-cluster dealt with four statements that were related to the students' ambitions to prove their self-worth as a motivation to attend Class X. About 84.21 per cent students from the urban school marked in the range of high correspondence for the statement, "It is important for me to attend Class X since it will help me to prove myself that I'm capable of completing my school degree". For the same statement, 87.1 per cent and 82.88 per cent responses from the rural and semi-urban school, respectively were received in the range of 6–10. The second statement under this sub-cluster was, "The reason I look forward to starting Class X is that when I succeed in school, I will feel important". 67.74 per cent students from the rural school marked the scores pertaining

**Table 3: Summary of Items Presented for Expectations of Time Durations of Study in Class X (in percentages)**

| **Expectations of study time durations in Class X** | **Time duration(s) (*Hours per day*)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *I expect this much time is enough for…* | <2 | | | 2–4 | | | 4–6 | | | 6–8 | | | >8 | | | No response (s) | | |
| Type of school | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** |
| Studying outside school hours in a day | 6.5 | 18.1 | 6.3 | 19.4 | 40.5 | 67.4 | 19.4 | 29.7 | 22.1 | 45.2 | 5.4 | 3.2 | 9.7 | 6.3 | 1.1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| School hours in a day | 0 | 6.3 | 4.2 | 19.4 | 27.9 | 17.9 | 51.6 | 45.1 | 55.8 | 22.6 | 16.2 | 13.7 | 0 | 4.5 | 2.1 | 6.5 | 0 | 6.32 |
| *Subject-wise, I expect this much of scheduled time is enough for…* | <1 | | | 1–2 | | | 2–3 | | | 3–4 | | | >4 | | | No response (s) | | |
| Type of school | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** |
| Social Sciences | 0 | 24.3 | 40 | 51.6 | 35.1 | 29.5 | 29.1 | 22.6 | 10.5 | 9.7 | 4.5 | 3.2 | 6.5 | 5.4 | 0 | 3.2 | 8.1 | 16.8 |
| Languages | 3.2 | 27.1 | 23.2 | 70.9 | 51.4 | 53.7 | 12.9 | 12.6 | 16.8 | 9.7 | 4.5 | 2.1 | 0 | 3.6 | 1.1 | 3.2 | 0.9 | 3.2 |
| Science and Mathematics | 0 | 5.4 | 1.1 | 6.5 | 13.5 | 14.7 | 48.4 | 30.6 | 37.9 | 19.4 | 36.9 | 20 | 16.1 | 9.1 | 18.9 | 9.7 | 4.5 | 7.4 |
| Games and Physical education | 16.1 | 6.3 | 8.4 | 51.6 | 46.9 | 26.3 | 9.7 | 22.5 | 16.8 | 3.2 | 9.1 | 6.3 | 12.9 | 14.4 | 41.1 | 6.5 | 0.9 | 1.05 |
| Co-curricular activities | 12.9 | 28.8 | 18.9 | 45.2 | 42.3 | 48.4 | 29.1 | 14.4 | 17.9 | 0 | 6.3 | 8.4 | 9.7 | 5.4 | 5.3 | 3.2 | 2.7 | 1.1 |
| **Assessment(s) periodicity** | **Time duration(s) (*Days per week*)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *I want to be assessed for…* | <1 | | | 1–2 | | | 2–3 | | | 3–4 | | | >4 | | | No response (s) | | |
| Type of school | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** |
| Assessment | 0 | 12.6 | 15.8 | 16.1 | 35.1 | 57.9 | 19.3 | 22.5 | 8.4 | 38.7 | 14.4 | 5.3 | 12.9 | 11.7 | 6.3 | 12.9 | 3.6 | 6.3 |

**R: Rural; SU: Semi-urban; U: Urban*

**Table 4: Summary of Items Presented for Motivation and Reasons to Attend in Class X (in percentages)**

| Reasons to attend Class X | Poor to average rating (1–5) | | | Average to high rating (6–10) | | | No response(s) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Type of School** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** | **R** | **SU** | **U** |
| **Ambition of proving self-worth** | | | | | | | | | |
| To prove myself that I'm capable of finishing my school degree | 6.45 | 13.51 | 13.68 | 87.1 | 82.88 | 84.21 | 6.45 | 3.6 | 2.11 |
| Because of the fact that when I succeed in school, I feel important | 29.03 | 16.22 | 12.63 | 67.74 | 81.98 | 87.37 | 3.23 | 1.8 | 0 |
| To prove to myself that I am an intelligent person | 32.26 | 47.75 | 34.74 | 67.74 | 50.45 | 65.26 | 0 | 1.8 | 0 |
| Because I want to have the 'good life' and evince my potential to others | 25.81 | 10.81 | 3.16 | 74.19 | 87.39 | 94.74 | 0 | 1.8 | 2.11 |
| **Prospect of better career and life** | | | | | | | | | |
| Because with only a high-school degree, I would find a high-paying job later on | 25.81 | 59.46 | 55.79 | 74.19 | 40.54 | 43.16 | 0 | 0 | 1.05 |
| Because I think that a Class X school education will help me for the dream career | 25.81 | 38.74 | 27.37 | 74.19 | 60.36 | 72.63 | 0 | 0.9 | 0 |
| Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like | 41.94 | 32.43 | 21.05 | 54.84 | 65.77 | 78.95 | 3.23 | 1.8 | 0 |
| Because this will help me make a better choice concerning my academic stream and career | 29.03 | 16.22 | 3.16 | 70.97 | 79.28 | 91.58 | 0 | 4.5 | 5.26 |
| **Sense of personal contentment** | | | | | | | | | |
| For the satisfaction I get when I accomplish difficult academic activities | 51.61 | 25.23 | 32.63 | 45.16 | 72.07 | 63.16 | 3.23 | 2.7 | 4.21 |
| For the pleasure I feel while surpassing myself in my academic studies | 38.71 | 27.03 | 33.68 | 58.06 | 65.77 | 61.05 | 3.23 | 7.21 | 5.26 |
| For the pleasure that I get in broadening my knowledge about subjects I like | 45.16 | 21.62 | 21.05 | 54.84 | 74.77 | 78.95 | 0 | 3.6 | 0 |
| For the pleasure that I feel while I am surpassing myself in my own accomplishments | 32.26 | 31.53 | 31.58 | 61.29 | 66.67 | 62.11 | 6.45 | 1.8 | 6.32 |
| **Intend to learn and convey new things** | | | | | | | | | |
| I intend to learn new ideas never learnt before | 22.58 | 9.91 | 9.47 | 77.42 | 86.49 | 88.42 | 0 | 3.6 | 2.11 |
| Because I look forward to learn the new concepts of different subjects | 32.26 | 11.71 | 12.63 | 67.74 | 87.39 | 85.26 | 0 | 0.9 | 2.11 |
| I experience joy when I am communicating my new knowledge and ideas to others | 32.26 | 23.42 | 29.47 | 67.74 | 73.87 | 69.47 | 0 | 2.7 | 1.05 |
| For the 'high' feeling that I experience while reading about various new subjects | 25.81 | 16.22 | 12.63 | 70.97 | 80.18 | 83.16 | 3.23 | 3.6 | 4.21 |
| **Lack of other opportunities and un-motivated desires** | | | | | | | | | |
| I do not know—I feel I am wasting my time in school | 87.1 | 59.46 | 75.79 | 12.9 | 37.84 | 22.11 | 0 | 2.7 | 2.11 |
| I once had good reasons for going to school, now I have no options except passing Class X | 38.71 | 52.25 | 47.37 | 58.06 | 46.85 | 49.47 | 3.23 | 0.9 | 3.16 |
| I do not know—I cannot realise what am I doing in school | 61.29 | 62.16 | 65.26 | 22.58 | 36.94 | 34.74 | 16.13 | 0.9 | 0 |
| I cannot see why I go to school, frankly I could not care less | 58.06 | 60.36 | 61.05 | 35.48 | 37.84 | 35.79 | 6.45 | 1.8 | 3.16 |

**R: Rural; SU: Semi-urban; U: Urban*

**Table 5: Summary of Items Presented for Expectations of being an Independent Learner in Class X (in percentages)**

| **Expectations of independent learning in Class X** | **Options in Likert items (5-point items)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Class X marks the beginning of independent learning...** | **Strongly Agree** | | | **Agree** | | | **Not sure** | | | **Disagree** | | | **Strongly Disagree** | | | **No response (s)** | | |
| I expect to be more of an independent learner than I was in lower classes | 35.4 | 38.7 | 37.9 | 45.2 | 42.3 | 50.5 | 12.9 | 9.1 | 8.4 | 3.2 | 4.5 | 3.2 | 0 | 3.6 | 0 | 3.2 | 1.8 | 0 |
| Feedback from teachers will be still required | 38.7 | 37.8 | 37.9 | 16.1 | 36.1 | 44.2 | 38.7 | 16.2 | 12.6 | 3.2 | 0.9 | 2.1 | 0 | 8.1 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 0.9 | 0 |
| Though an independent learner, it is important for me to attend all lectures | 61.3 | 15.3 | 29.5 | 19.4 | 27.1 | 41.1 | 12.9 | 27.1 | 23.2 | 3.2 | 10.8 | 4.2 | 0 | 18.9 | 2.1 | 3.2 | 0.9 | 0 |

to high correspondence for this statement. However, 81.98 per cent and 87.37 per cent students from the semi-urban and urban school, respectively selected the scores from 6–10 in the rating scale. Thirdly, for the statement 'I wish to attend Class X to show myself that I'm an intelligent person'; 65.26 per cent, 50.45 per cent, and 67.74 per cent students from the urban, semi-urban, and rural school reflected in the range of higher correspondence. The last statement in the first sub-cluster, "Because I want to have the 'good life' and evince my potential to others, I will attend Class X" received 80.67 per cent, 87.39 per cent, and 97.74 per cent responses in higher correspondence from rural, semi-urban and urban schools, respectively.

The second sub-cluster dealt with four statements that considered the prospect of a better life and career as a motivation of students to attend Class X. The first statement in this sub-cluster, "I desire to start Class X since with only a high-school degree, I would find a high-paying job in the later phase of my life", earned 74.19 per cent responses from the rural student in the range of 6–10. For the given statement, less than half of the population from the semi-urban (40.54 per cent) and the urban (43.16 per cent) school marked in the range of 6–10. Since the rural school students have poor socio-economic background, they aspire for a high-paying job than others. In the second sub-cluster, the next statement read as, "I think that a Class X school education will help me for the dream career, so it is important for me to attend the classes". The responses in the higher correspondence from the rural, semi-urban, and urban school counted up to 74.19 per cent, 60.36 per cent, and 72.63 per cent, respectively. In the third statement, "Class X clearance will eventually enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like". In the range of 6–10, 54.84 per cent, 65.77 per cent, and 78.95 per cent responses were obtained from the rural, semi-urban, and urban schools, respectively. The final statement in this sub-cluster was, "I want to pass Class X because it will help me make a better choice concerning my academic stream and career". The 70.97 per cent, 79.28 per cent, and 91.58 per cent responses were received in the higher range from the students of the rural, semi-urban and urban school, respectively.

In the third sub-cluster, the theme was concerned with a sense of personal contentment as the motivation to attend Class X. The beginning statement in this sub-cluster was, "I aspire to attend Class X for the satisfaction I feel when I'm in the process

of accomplishing difficult academic activities". This statement got 45.16 per cent, 72.07 per cent, and 63.16 per cent responses in the higher end from the rural, semi-urban and urban school, respectively. The next statement was, "I desire to attend Class X for it will give the pleasure I usually feel while surpassing myself in my academic studies". The students marked in the range of higher correspondence in the sequence of 58.07 per cent, 65.77 per cent, and 61.05 per cent from the rural, semi-urban and urban school. The third statement under this thematic sub-cluster read as, "My interests for attending Class X are for the pleasure that I experience in broadening my knowledge about subjects which appeal to me". For this statement, the responses in the higher range from the rural, semi-urban and urban school were 54.84 per cent, 74.76 per cent, and 78.95 per cent, respectively. For the final statement in the third sub-cluster, "I want to attend Class X for it will give the pleasure I experience while I'm surpassing myself in one of my personal accomplishments", 61.29 per cent, 66.67 per cent, and 62.11 per cent responses were received in the higher range of 6–10 from the rural, semi-urban and urban school, respectively.

The theme of the fourth sub-cluster was related to the intentions to learn and convey new things as students' motivation to attend Class X. In this sub-cluster, the first statement was, "I wish to attend Class X for I intend to learn new things never learnt before". This statement witnessed 77.42 per cent, 86.49 per cent, and 88.42 per cent responses in the range of higher correspondence from the rural, semi-urban, and urban school, respectively. The second statement in the fourth sub-cluster, "I wish to attend Class X because I look forward to learn the new concepts of different subjects", got 67.74 per cent, 87.39 per cent, and 85.26 per cent responses in the higher range from the rural, semi-urban, and urban school, respectively. The third statement in this sub-cluster was, "I wish to attend Class X for I experience joy when I'm communicating my new knowledge and ideas to others. 67.74 per cent, 73.87 per cent, and 69.47 per cent students from the rural, semi-urban, and urban school respectively marked in the higher range of 6–10 for this statement. The final statement was, "I wish to attend Class X for the 'high' feeling that I experience while reading about various new subjects". The responses in the range of higher correspondence against this statement were 70.97 per cent, 80.18 per cent, and 83.16 per cent from the rural, semi-urban and urban school, respectively.

The theme of fifth and final sub-cluster was to understand if the motivation of the students is driven by unavailability of other options and opportunities. The first statement in this sub-cluster was, "I don't know why am I coming to school—I feel I'm wasting my time". The responses in the higher correspondence were quite less for all the three school types, the least of which was obtained from the students of the rural school (12.9 per cent). Over 35 per cent students from the semi-urban school (37.84 per cent) reported that they feel it is a waste of time to attend Class X and school for that matter. The 22.11 per cent students from the urban school marked in the higher range for this statement. For the second statement, "I once had good reasons for going to school, now I have no options other than to study Class X", contrasting results were collected. Nearly 50 per cent students from all the three schools responded in the range of higher correspondence—58.07 per cent (rural school), 46.85 per cent (semi-urban school), and 49.47 per cent (urban school). The next statement in this sub-cluster was, "I don't know—I can't understand what am I doing in school." For this statement, 22.58 per cent, 36.94 per cent, and 34.74 per cent responses were fetched in the higher range of 6–10 from the rural, semi-urban, and urban school, respectively. Lastly, the fourth statement in this sub-cluster, "I can't see why I go to school, frankly I couldn't care less". Received 35.49 per cent, 37.84 per cent, and 35.79 per cent responses in favour of the higher correspondence from the rural, semi-urban, and urban school, respectively.

## Students' Expectations of Development of Abilities of Independent Learning across the Course Modules of Class X

The expectations of the students on assessment and independent learning were explored through 5-point Likert items (Table 5). In the first Likert item, around 80 per cent students from the three school types asserted agreement to strong agreement on being more independent learner as compared to the lower classes; 80.65 per cent (R), 81.08 per cent (SU), and 88.42 per cent (U). For the second Likert item, the investigators explored the students' expectations on feedback from the teachers as they reach Class X. The responses in the bracket of agreement were in the ascending order of 54.84 per cent, 73.88 per cent, and 82.11 per cent from the rural, semi-urban, and urban school, respectively. The last Likert item was concerned with understanding the expectations of students on attendance in lectures as they reach Class X.

Maximum responses in agreement were received from the students from the rural school (80.65 per cent) for this item. It was followed by the responses of the students from the urban school (70.53 per cent) and semi-urban school (42.34 per cent).

**Discussion**

This paper is an attempt to document the perspectives of the newly-promoted Class X students concerning their expectations of Class X, an investigation that had not been done in the past despite incremental number of educational researches carried out globally (Herrmann et al., 2019; Roy and Singh, 2021). The findings clearly illustrate the broad spectrum of students' expectations in comparison to the realities of the Indian education system. Analysing student responses through socio-economic variables revealed significant variations in expectations across the three types of schools.

From the first cluster, students' expectations of study time durations in Class X were realised. When asked about the expectations of study hours outside the school duration in a day, maximum students (45.16 per cent) from the rural school mentioned the need to study for 6–8 hours while maximum students (67.37 per cent) from the urban school preferred to study for 2–4 hours. This is mostly because the urban school students have better access to quality educational facilities including but not limited to teacher characteristics, better infrastructure, and advanced curricula. In the absence of such, rural students expect to devote more time outside the classroom hours to suffice their academic needs. This academic disparity has been reported through the works of Graham (2009), Tayyaba (2012), and Lembani et al. (2019). Expectations of class hours in Class X were similar among the three groups of respondents—maximum students (51.613 per cent (R), 45.045 per cent (SU), 55.789 per cent (U) respectively) from all the three school types expect 4–6 hours of class durations in a day. The usual school hours per day spans between 6 to 8 hours in India (with recess breaks) where the schools usually operate from morning till afternoon (Cheney et al., 2005). Subject-wise expectations of time followed a trend: maximum students (67.74 per cent (R), 67.57 per cent (SU), and 57.9 per cent (U) respectively) from the three school types wanted to spend 2–4 hours/day scheduled class time for Science and Mathematics. This is directly related to the entrenched stereotype

of the Indian social standards where the children are encouraged to pursue Science and Mathematics considering those subjects as the primary pathway to a brighter career. Substantiating this notion, the India Science Report (2005) found that that one of every three students in the survey voted for Mathematics as the most preferred subject for higher studies (Shukla, 2005). Given subject preference is directly related to career choice, Science and Mathematics have always been prioritised over other disciplines (Nathie and Abdalla, 2020). For Social Sciences, the maximum rural (51.61 per cent) and semi-urban (35.14 per cent) students expect to spend 1–2 class hours/day while maximum urban students (40 per cent) desire for less than 1 class hour/day. For languages, maximum students from three school types (70.97 per cent (R), 51.35 per cent (SU), 53.68 per cent (U)) expect to spend 1–2 hours/day. This, however, partially matched with the findings of Mehar and Kaur (2015) who studied career choice preferences among rural and urban adolescents in Amritsar district, Punjab, India. They found that rural adolescents have slightly lesser interest in pursuing career in Science and technology than urban adolescents. The findings of Mehar and Kaur (2015) resonated with our results in the career choice of Education—rural adolescents preferred education more than urban adolescents which can be observed in the per day time expectations of rural vs. urban students for Social Sciences. For the expectation of assessment, maximum semi-urban (35.14 per cent) and urban (57.9 per cent) students expect 1–2 days in a week is enough for performing well in Class X. Albeit the expectations of assessment were different for rural students—maximum (38.71 per cent) students expected to be assessed for 3–4 days in a week. The reason behind these differences can be attributed to the private tuition classes that urban schools can easily avail as compared to rural students (Sujatha, 2014, Mohapatra and Roy, 2018). Private tuition classes plan regular tests to check students' progress (Mohanty, 2017) and therefore, the urban students expect less time being spent on assessment during regular class hours.

From the second cluster, the investigators attempted to decipher the motivation and reasons that encourage the students to attend Class X—these factors finally build up as expectations of higher learning. This cluster is related to the first cluster through the idea of achievement goals as discussed in Harackiewicz et al. (2008). When individuals enter a situation with interest in the topic, they may be motivated to learn more about it (i.e., adopt a mastery

goal), and they may develop more interest when they approach a task with a mastery goal. Matching the time expectations with the subjects of interest will motivate the students to attend Class X with an enthusiastic outlook. Now, the first sub-cluster dealt with ambition to prove one's self-worth as the motivation to attend Class X. Here, more than 70 per cent students (74.19 per cent rural, 75.68 per cent semi-urban, 82.9 per cent urban) from all the three school types corresponded their opinions to higher end on the rating scale. This is in line with the findings of Phinney et al. (2006) who also listed attending higher learning institutions to prove one was able to do it as a primary factor of motivation among students. Similarly, significant correlations were observed between self-esteem, motivation and academic achievement (Topçu and Leana-Tascılar, 2016). The second sub-cluster was concerned with prospect of better career and life as the motivation to attend Class X. More than 60 per cent students from the three school types; 70.29 per cent rural, 61.49 per cent semi-urban, and 71.58 per cent urban-pointed in the higher end of the scale. The slight difference between the responses of the semi-urban students with the other categories can be attributed to the typical sense of contentedness with what one possesses and moral discourse on consumption prevailing in the ideologies of Indian middle families (Van Wessel, 2004). Nevertheless, hope for a better future has been found to be an impelling factor among parents and students to pursue higher education and perform appreciably (Marques et al., 2011; Gallagher et al., 2017; Lindsey, 2019). The third sub-cluster reflected upon sense of personal satisfaction as the factor behind students' motivation to attend Class X. In this section, differences could be traced between the responses of students from the school types—54.99 per cent students from rural school, 69.82 per cent students from semi-urban school, and 62.11 per cent students from urban school marked in the range of 6–10 in the scale. This finding is not coherent with Young (1998) who observed that the self-concept was similar within rural and urban students. This digression in results can be due to context-specific variations between the sample groups of the respective studies. Personal satisfaction can act as a motivation for the career-oriented and mature students—studies have revealed that Indian rural students are less career-oriented and mature (Sharma and Ahuja, 2017; Viray, 2017), and that can be the reason behind less students marking in the higher end of the rating scale in the

given study. The fourth sub-cluster centered around the intention to learn and convey new things as the motivating factor to attend Class X. More than 70 per cent students pointed in the higher end of the scale—70.97 per cent rural, 81.98 per cent semi-urban, and 82.47 per cent urban students. Interest to learn new things has been identified as an influential psychological and motivational state to retain students in the academic setting (Hulleman and Harackiewicz, 2009; Renninger and Hidi, 2015; Harackiewicz et al., 2016). The incongruity between the responses of the students from the rural school with the other two categories can be due to the same reason as the third sub-cluster. Sansone and Thoman (2005) reported that students' self-regulation—interpersonal and intrapersonal interest enhancing strategies—are intertwined with students' interests. With that perspective, in both the third and fourth sub-clusters, lesser rural students have pointed in the higher range of the scale as compared to the semi-urban and urban students. The last and fifth sub-cluster was labelled with a negation—attending Class X due to absence of other opportunities or no motivation. Here, the investigators observed 61.29 per cent students from the rural school, 58.56 per cent students from the semi-urban school, and 62.37 per cent students from the urban school opined in the domain of 1–5 (positive and affirmative range for this sub-cluster). The percentages of students are also quite comparable to each other in this sub-cluster, indicating that students are not attending Class X as they have nowhere to go—they have the intrinsic desire to do so.

The third cluster was designed to unveil students' expectations of being an independent learner as they are promoted to Class X. For the first statement, maximum students (strongly agree to agree) from the three school types expect that they will be more of an independent learner than what they were in the lower classes. This is in congruity with the notion of independent learning as depicted by Marshall and Linder (2005); Leathwood (2006); Hockings et al. (2017); Mah and Ifenthaler (2018). The second statement tried to understand the students' expectations of teacher feedbacks in Class X. Here, 38.71 per cent students from rural school vented their doubt on this aspect. This may stem from the fact that teachers' attendance and quality of education dispensed in rural schools, mostly in the context of India, is highly questionable (Nedungadi et al., 2017). Majority of the students from urban and semi-urban schools voted in agreement to this statement which

can be traced through the works of Perera et al. (2008), and Holmes and Papageorgiou (2009), who also found that students do expect to receive regular feedbacks from the teachers. The final statement in this cluster explored the students' expectations of attending lectures where more than 60 per cent students from the rural school strongly agreed while maximum students from other two school types agreed (urban) or were not sure (semi-urban). This difference can be due to the unfavourable study environment at home for the rural students (Chandra, 2019; Agrawal, 2021), whereas the other two groups can study at home and avail tuitions.

## Conclusion, Implications and Future Scope of the Study

The research uncovered multiple facets of expectations and motivations among Class X students, offering valuable insights for tackling specific challenges and enhancing learning outcomes. Gaining an understanding of these expectations is crucial for creating targeted interventions that resonate with students and foster their engagement. Additionally, the factors of motivation of students for attending Class X were diverse among the students from three school types. As a part of the study's implications, the results were shared to the school management so they can give priority to those factors to prevent school drop-outs, school failure and also encourage the students to pursue higher studies. The implications of this study are not limited to the Indian educational system, rather can be globally applied to avoid student exasperation and despair with the education system. The data is also analysed based on gender of the students which will serve as the future scope of this investigation.

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