

## **Barriers to Educational Equity: The Case of Transgender Youth in Rural Schools**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Despite growing advocacy for inclusive education, transgender students remain one of the most marginalized populations in academic institutions, frequently encountering systemic and interpersonal challenges that hinder both their enrollment and continued participation in educational settings. The title of the study was " Barriers to Educational Equity: The Case of Transgender Youth in Rural Schools." The objective of the study was to identify the specific social, cultural, and institutional barriers that prevented the transgender community from accessing education and to delve into the details of the transgender community members who had successfully navigated these barriers, examining the factors that enabled their success. The research method selected for the study was mixed-method triangulation, chosen in consideration of the nature of the existing status of Pakistan's transgender population, treated as insignificant by mainstream society. A descriptive study design was used. The population of the study consisted of all 1111 transgender individuals in the Rawalpindi area. A non-probability snowball sampling technique was employed, wherein participants assisted the researcher in identifying other similar participants. The sample size for the study consisted of 25% of the population. A self-structured questionnaire was used as a research tool. To obtain detailed information for research purposes, the researcher conducted interviews with the respondents. The content validity of the research tool was established with the guidelines of five different experts in the field of educational research. Their opinions and remarks were used to update the research tool. The reliability of the research tool was determined using Cronbach's Alpha formula. The researcher personally visited the population area of Rawalpindi, seeking permission for meetings. The researcher also explained the questionnaire to the respondents, and their responses were stored for further analysis. The collected data were used for analysis; conducted using SPSS version 24. The study was significant for the transgender community, society, policymakers, human rights organizations, and the overall education system.*

**Key words:** Transgender, Barriers, Educational Equity.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Despite growing advocacy for inclusive education, transgender students remain one of the most marginalized populations in academic institutions, frequently encountering systemic and interpersonal

challenges that hinder both their enrollment and continued participation in educational settings. A national study by the National Center for Transgender Equality reported that 35% of transgender students experienced frequent verbal harassment, 24% reported physical assault, and 17% faced sexual violence in K–12 settings because of their gender identity, leading nearly 16% to leave school altogether (James et al., 2016). Such early educational exclusion often extends into postsecondary education, where transgender students encounter hostile campus climates, misgendering, lack of institutional protections, and insufficient access to gender-affirming facilities such as restrooms and housing (Goldberg et al., 2019).

Enrollment challenges are compounded by discriminatory policies and structural barriers. For instance, application forms that do not accommodate nonbinary identities, lack of gender-neutral documentation processes, and administrative insensitivity toward name or gender marker changes deter many transgender individuals from pursuing higher education (Mahnaz et al., 2022). Even after enrollment, transgender students face significant mental health challenges due to stigmatization. According to Seelman (2016), 41% of transgender college students reported suicidal ideation, significantly higher than their cisgender peers, a disparity closely linked to institutional neglect and social isolation. These mental health risks further contribute to high attrition rates, as students often find academic environments emotionally unsafe and unsupportive.

Retention of transgender students is also influenced by the absence of comprehensive support systems, including mental health services attuned to their needs, access to transgender-competent faculty and staff, and visible institutional commitment to gender diversity. In a survey of LGBTQ students across U.S. colleges, transgender students were significantly more likely to report feeling unsafe on campus (Greytak et al., 2013). Moreover, they were three times more likely than cisgender peers to consider leaving college due to climate-related stressors (Rankin et al., 2010). The intersectionality of race, economic status, and gender identity further exacerbates these experiences. For example, transgender students of color are more likely to encounter discrimination both within and outside the classroom, contributing to lower retention rates (James et al., 2016).

### **Conclusion of Introduction**

This research seeks to explore the interconnected structural, psychological, and social barriers contributing to the exclusion and disengagement of transgender students in education. By critically analyzing enrollment and retention trends through a gender-inclusive lens, this study aims to highlight the urgency of transforming institutional policies and practices to ensure that transgender students are not only welcomed but empowered to thrive academically. The findings are expected to inform educators, policymakers, and student services professionals on how to foster affirming educational environments that enhance access, equity, and persistence for all gender-diverse learners.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Objectives of the study were

1. To investigate the educational barriers faced by transgender community.
2. To develop a comprehensive frame work for the improvement of educational institutions working for transgender community in order to make them productive citizens.

### **Research Question**

1. What are the barriers of education for transgender that they face in their community?
2. What are the factors that successfully enable transgender community navigated barriers in educational institutes.

### **Problem Statement**

Transgender students face pervasive barriers to equitable education, manifesting in both access to enrollment and sustained academic retention. Despite growing recognition of gender diversity, educational institutions often lack inclusive policies, administrative practices, and safe environments that affirm transgender identities. Discriminatory admission procedures, gender-insensitive facilities, misgendering by faculty, and inadequate mental health support systems contribute to high dropout rates and educational marginalization. The absence of institutional protections, coupled with societal stigma and intersectional challenges such as race, class, and disability, further exacerbates these disparities. As a result, transgender students remain significantly underrepresented in formal education systems, indicating a critical gap in policy implementation, inclusive pedagogy, and support mechanisms. This study seeks to investigate the multifaceted challenges transgender students face in gaining and maintaining access to education, emphasizing the urgent need for systemic reforms to foster inclusion, equity, and academic persistence.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its potential to illuminate the structural and social impediments that hinder the enrollment and retention of transgender students within educational institutions. By critically examining the institutional practices, policy gaps, and campus climates that contribute to the marginalization of transgender individuals, this research offers valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders striving to promote inclusive and equitable education. Addressing these challenges is not only a matter of social justice but also essential for upholding the right to education for all students, regardless of gender identity. Furthermore, the study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on gender diversity in education, providing empirical evidence that can inform the development of gender-affirming policies, support services, and curricular reforms. Ultimately, this research aspires to foster more inclusive academic environments that empower transgender students to thrive personally and academically, thereby advancing broader educational equity and human rights objectives.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

The study will be delimitation to the

1. Session 2023-2024
2. Transgender Learning Center, G\11-2 Islamabad
3. Transgender Learning Center Shah Medan Bari Imam
4. Transgender Learning Center, B-Block Sargodha

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction to Transgender Identity in Educational Contexts**

Understanding the experiences of transgender students in educational environments begins with acknowledging their identity. Transgender is an umbrella term describing individuals whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth (American Psychological Association [APA], 2015). Educational institutions—especially at the secondary and postsecondary levels—have increasingly become contested spaces for transgender individuals, where their presence is often marginalized, misunderstood, or overtly discriminated against (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). This literature review explores current research surrounding the systemic, social, and policy-based barriers that contribute to enrollment and retention challenges for transgender students.

### **Systemic and Structural Barriers to Enrollment**

Research shows that systemic discrimination begins before transgender students even step foot on campus. Enrollment processes often require disclosure of legal sex assigned at birth, with no provision for self-identified gender, which can discourage transgender individuals from applying (Dugan et al., 2012). Application forms that lack inclusive options and institutional databases that fail to allow name and gender marker changes are examples of systemic exclusions that affect access (Goldberg et al., 2019). These issues are not merely clerical but represent the institutional denial of identity.

Furthermore, the lack of inclusive policies plays a significant role. In many cases, secondary and postsecondary institutions lack explicit nondiscrimination policies that include gender identity and expression. Kosciw et al. (2018) noted that only 12% of U.S. school districts had comprehensive policies protecting transgender students, a factor that directly impacts their enrollment rates. Without clear protections, transgender students are less likely to feel safe or welcomed, often choosing to delay or forgo higher education entirely.

In some cultural contexts, particularly in countries where gender diversity is less socially accepted or legally protected, transgender students may face additional hurdles. In Pakistan, for example, although there has been legal recognition of a third gender, transgender individuals still face widespread social stigma and exclusion from mainstream education (Rehan et al., 2020). A lack of sensitized staff, gender-affirming facilities, and institutional will has meant that many transgender individuals remain outside the formal education system.

### **Campus Climate and Hostility**

Once enrolled, transgender students often encounter hostile or alienating campus environments. Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, and Frazer (2010) conducted a large-scale national study and found that over one-third of transgender college students reported experiencing harassment on campus. These hostile interactions include verbal abuse, misgendering, deliberate use of incorrect pronouns, and social ostracization. In severe cases, students face physical violence or threats thereof.

Hostility is often institutionalized through the absence of gender-neutral restrooms, dormitory accommodations that fail to respect gender identity, and health services that lack understanding of transgender-specific needs (Seelman, 2016). According to Seelman's study, transgender students who were denied access to appropriate bathrooms or housing reported significantly higher levels of psychological distress and suicidal ideation than those with inclusive accommodations.

Campus climate can also impact academic performance. In a qualitative study, Nicolazzo (2017) described how transgender students expend cognitive and emotional energy managing their safety and identity in the classroom, leaving them less able to focus on academic tasks. This phenomenon, referred to as "identity labor," creates an invisible burden that contributes to lower academic engagement and increased dropout rates.

### **Mental Health and Retention**

Transgender students face a mental health crisis significantly more severe than that of their cisgender peers. According to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, 40% of transgender respondents reported having attempted suicide, compared to 4.6% of the general population (James et al., 2016). This mental health disparity is largely attributable to minority stress, a theory which posits that chronic experiences of stigma,

discrimination, and internalized transphobia contribute to elevated psychological distress (Mahnaz et al., 2025).

The link between mental health and retention is well-documented. Students who experience depression, anxiety, or trauma are less likely to persist in their education (Woodford et al., 2018). For transgender students, the daily toll of navigating unsafe educational environments can lead to absenteeism, academic failure, and ultimately withdrawal. Institutions that do not provide culturally competent mental health services contribute to this pipeline of exclusion. Transgender-affirming counseling, peer support groups, and crisis intervention programs are not widely available across campuses (Goldberg et al., 2019), which further isolates students in need.

### **Faculty and Peer Interactions**

The classroom setting can be a significant source of either support or stress for transgender students. Misgendering by faculty—whether intentional or not—has been shown to negatively impact students' classroom participation and self-esteem (Pitcher, 2017). Professors and instructors who refuse to use correct pronouns or chosen names send a powerful message of non-acceptance. Similarly, classroom curricula that ignore or pathologize transgender identities also contribute to marginalization.

On the other hand, when faculty members demonstrate support and inclusivity, transgender students report higher levels of belonging and academic persistence (Marine & Nicolazzo, 2014). Training for faculty and staff in gender-inclusivity is therefore not just beneficial but essential. Unfortunately, such training is inconsistently applied and often optional, resulting in varied student experiences across departments and disciplines.

Peer relationships are equally important. In a study by Garvey and Rankin (2015), transgender students who were involved in LGBTQ+ student organizations reported more positive campus experiences and a stronger sense of community. However, many transgender students still experience social exclusion or tokenization, particularly in residence halls or extracurricular spaces. Social alienation is a predictor of academic disengagement and increased dropout likelihood, especially for students whose identities are not affirmed by their peers (Strayhorn, 2012).

### **Housing, Restroom Access, and Safety**

Gender-segregated spaces such as restrooms and dormitories are sites of frequent conflict and exclusion for transgender students. Access to gender-affirming facilities is crucial for safety and well-being. Seelman (2016) found that transgender students who were denied access to appropriate restrooms were more likely to report attempted suicide, anxiety, and academic disruption. In many institutions, gender-inclusive housing is still considered an exception rather than a standard.

The lack of safe spaces forces many transgender students to avoid campus facilities altogether, leading to missed classes, reduced participation, and increased stress. Institutions that implement all-gender restrooms and inclusive housing options report improved outcomes for transgender student satisfaction and retention (Mahnaz & Kiran, 2024a). However, policy changes often face resistance from stakeholders who perceive them as controversial, illustrating the politicization of transgender inclusion in education.

### **Legal Protections and Policy Frameworks**

Legal protections for transgender students vary widely across regions. In the United States, Title IX has been interpreted by various courts to include protections based on gender identity. However, political shifts have led to fluctuating enforcement and guidance, resulting in uncertainty for schools and students alike.



(Lambda Legal, 2020). Inconsistent policy implementation means that transgender students' rights are often upheld only through individual legal battles rather than proactive institutional design.

Internationally, the situation is even more varied. In Canada, the Human Rights Code explicitly protects gender identity and expression, and many universities have implemented inclusive policies (Travers, 2018). Meanwhile, in regions like South Asia and the Middle East, transgender students face significant social and legal hurdles, with limited institutional recourse (Khan, 2019).

Progressive policies are not sufficient unless they are actively implemented. Nicolazzo (2016) argues that the mere presence of inclusion policies does not translate into lived experiences of inclusion unless backed by concrete actions, such as inclusive facilities, sensitivity training, and a culture of accountability.

### **Intersectionality: Race, Class, and Disability**

The challenges faced by transgender students are further magnified when intersecting with other marginalized identities. Transgender students of color report higher rates of harassment and lower access to resources than white transgender students (James et al., 2016). These intersecting oppressions compound the difficulty of navigating educational environments.

Similarly, low-income transgender students often lack access to basic needs such as housing, transportation, and healthcare, which are critical for academic success. The cost of transitioning—medical, legal, and social—is often prohibitive, and educational institutions rarely provide financial support for such needs. Students with disabilities face additional layers of inaccessibility and discrimination, particularly when disability services fail to recognize the needs of transgender individuals.

An intersectional approach is thus essential in any intervention aiming to improve transgender students' enrollment and retention. Programs that treat transgender students as a monolithic group risk overlooking the nuanced challenges faced by those at multiple axes of marginalization (Crenshaw, 1991).

### **Conclusion of Literature Review**

The research reviewed demonstrates that transgender students face extensive barriers to both enrollment and retention in educational institutions. These barriers are systemic, cultural, and interpersonal, and they manifest through discriminatory policies, unsafe campus climates, inadequate support services, and pervasive social stigma. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic, intersectional, and evidence-based approach that centers transgender voices and experiences. Institutions that proactively engage with these issues not only fulfill their legal and ethical obligations but also contribute to a more inclusive, equitable, and academically enriched environment for all students.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study was being carried out to investigate the barriers faced by transgender community in educational institute. This chapter described the methodology that was used in this study. It includes an account of the research methodology, research design, population, the study sample and sampling technique, research instrument, validity and reliability, data collection procedures and statistical treatment of data.

### **Research Methodology**

Quantitative research methodology was adopted in this study. Data was collected from the targeted population through a questionnaire. After obtaining data, it was entered in B1 power to evaluate the results.

Results from a representative of the population; the researcher presented the finding as being representative of the population.

### **Research Design**

Mixed method triangulation research method was selected in consideration of the nature of the existing status of Pakistan's transgender population, which is treated as insignificant from mainstream society; a descriptive study design will be used.

### **Rational for using Quantitative Design**

Quantitative method of research was adopted due to compiling of data from various schools and number of the students as respondents of the sampled schools.

### **Population of the Study**

Population of the study consisted of 3 educational institutes for transgender community in Islamabad, Bari Imam and Sargodha. The population for this study included 25 students from Transgender Learning Center Islamabad, 45 students from Transgender learning School Bari Imam Shah Medan and 67 students from Transgender Learning Center Sargodha. Teachers included from all these institutes are 5 in number.

### **Sample for the Study**

Whole students were used as population for current study (Appendix II).

### **Sampling Technique**

Simple random technique was used.

### **Research Instrument**

Researcher used a Questionnaire as a tool was used on to measure educational barriers of transgender community in their institutions. Tool comprises thirty questions (Appendix III).

### **Reliability tool by conducting pilot study**

Data was compiled as per actual problems faced by transgender students in their institutions.

### **Validity**

Content Validity of the research tool was found with the guidelines of 5 different experts of the field of educational research. Their opinions and remarks were used to update the research tool. Reliability of the Research tool was found by using Cronbach's Alpha formula which was 0.92 and fallen in excellent category.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Data was collected in following steps:

**Step 1.** Issue of permission letter too Researcher: HOD of the Alhamd Islamic University Islamabad was request to issue a permission letter to the researcher for collection of data from schools concerned. Researcher was issued a letter from HOD of the present university i.e., Alhamd Islamic University Islamabad regarding the permission to visit other schools for the research purpose. Letter same was submitted to the schools before conduct of research and filing of questionnaires.

**Step 2.** Printing of Questionnaires: Questionnaire was printed more than number of population of students and teaching staff.

**Step 3.** Researcher physically visited all the population schools. School management were approached and a letter from the HOD of researcher regarding permission to conduct research was produced. Researcher was permitted by the schools to visit the students and teaching staff. Researcher met with the students and teaching staff and fill up the questionnaire. Teaching staff fill up their Questionnaire by their selves, while student's Questionnaire were filled by Researcher because students were not able to read.

**Step 4.** Entering of data in BI Power: After filling the questionnaire from the students and teaching staff, it was ensured that, complete filled form was used and entered in BI Power to ensure correct and valuable input in the analysis.

### **Instruments**

Semi- structured Questionnaire was used that was based on five points Likert scale. Questinnaire was got filled from teachers and students of sampled schools.

### **Data Analysis**

After gathering data following has been ensured:

- i) Coding has been done.
- ii) Data has been entered in BI Power.
- iii) Analysis of data has been done by using BI Power formulas.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Researcher, while carrying out a researcher has ensured that no ethical norms had been compromised in asking any questions from respondents.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### **Analysis Demographic variables of students**

**Table 1**

Residential Location of Respondents

S.No	Residential Location Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
1	Urban	133	100
2	Rural	0	0
	Total	133	100.00

Table 1 shows that 100% respondents belong to urban area of the total sample size.

**Table 2**

Living Status of Respondents

S.No	Living Status of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
1	Independent	72	54.13
2	Guru	61	45.86
3	Parents	0	0
Total		133	100.00



Table 2 shows that there were 54.13% respondent lives independently while 45.86% respondents were living with their Guru's of the total sample size.

**Table 3**

*Source of income of Respondents*

S.No	Source of income of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
1	Dancing	30	22.05
2	Begging	93	68.38
3	Job	13	9.55
	Total	136	100.00

The table presents the sources of income among respondents, revealing that the majority, 68.38%, rely on begging as their primary means of livelihood. Dancing serves as the source of income for 22.05% of the respondents, while only 9.55% earn through jobs. Out of a total of 136 respondents, the findings highlight a heavy dependence on informal and unstable income sources, with begging being the most prevalent.

**Table 4**

*Age Range of Respondents*

Sr No	Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	21 to 30	69	50.7
2	31 to 40	44	32.3
3	41 to 50	15	11.0
4	50 & Above	08	5.00
	Total	136	100.00

The table outlines the age distribution of respondents, showing that the largest group, 50.7%, falls within the 21 to 30 age range. This is followed by 32.3% of respondents aged between 31 and 40 years. A smaller portion, 11.0%, belongs to the 41 to 50 age group, while only 5.0% are aged 50 and above. Out of a total of 136 respondents, the data indicates that the majority are relatively young adults, with participation decreasing progressively with age.

**Table 5**

Summarized demographics of respondents

Sr.No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	"School timing is suitable for you".	62 45.26%	74 54.01%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
2	"Struggling with time management when it comes to completing homework".		05 3.65%	01 0.73%	122 89.05%	08 5.84%
3	"School has an inclusive education curriculum".	11 8.03%	123 89.78%	0 0%	02 1.46%	0 0%
4	"Restrictions on clothing or dress code that affect you".		07 5.11%	0 0%	57 41.61%	72 52.55%

<b>5</b>	“Access to necessary learning resources (e.g., textbooks, digital materials)”	08 5.84%	126 91.97%	0 0%	0 0%	02 1.46%
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The data of the respondents reveal several key patterns. A large majority (54.01%) agreed that school timing is suitable, while 45.26% strongly agreed, showing complete satisfaction with school schedules. In terms of homework, 89.05% remained neutral about struggling with time management, with only a small percentage strongly agreeing (3.65%) or disagreeing (5.84%). Regarding curriculum inclusivity, 89.78% agreed that their school offers an inclusive education curriculum, with 8.03% strongly agreeing and only minimal disagreement. When asked about clothing restrictions, opinions were more divided, with 41.61% remaining neutral and 52.55% disagreeing, indicating that dress code restrictions are not a major concern for most. Lastly, 91.97% agreed to having access to necessary learning resources, with 5.84% strongly agreeing, demonstrating a generally positive perception of educational support facilities.

**Table 6**

<b>Sr.No</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>6</b>	“Experienced bullying, harassment, or social exclusion in school”.	0 0%	13 9.49%	0 0%	78 56.93%	45 32.85%
<b>7</b>	“Feel comfortable discussing your problems with teachers”.	92 67.15%	40 29.2%	0 0%	04 2.29%	0 0%
<b>8</b>	“Involved in any extracurricular activities, and do they affect your school performance”.	02 1.46%	0 0%	02 1.46%	114 83.21%	18 13.14%
<b>9</b>	“Personal challenges or responsibilities outside of school that affect your performance”.	0 0%	15 10.95%	02 1.46%	116 84.67%	03 2.19%
<b>10</b>	“Satisfied with the teaching methods used by your teachers”.	44 32.12%	92 67.15%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

The data further reveal significant trends in students' experiences and perceptions. A majority (56.93%) disagreed and 32.85% strongly disagreed with experiencing bullying, indicating that most respondents did not face harassment or social exclusion. Regarding comfort in discussing problems with teachers, 67.15% strongly agreed and 29.2% agreed, suggesting a high level of trust in teachers. Participation in extracurricular activities appeared limited, with 83.21% disagreeing about involvement impacting school performance, and only 1.46% strongly agreeing or remaining neutral. Most respondents (84.67%) disagreed that personal challenges outside school affected their performance. Finally, satisfaction with teaching methods was overwhelmingly positive, as 32.12% strongly agreed and 67.15% agreed, with no neutral or negative responses recorded.

**Table 7**

<b>Sr.No</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>11</b>	“Needs to learn any skill other than studies”.	31 22.63%	105 76.15%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

12	“You feel engaged and supported in your classes”.	45 32.85%	91 66.42%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
13	“You want more changes or improvements in your classroom”.	08 5.84%	126 91.97%	0 0%	02 1.46%	0 0%
14	“Physical or health-related challenges affect your school attendance or performance”.	0 0%	09 6.57%	0 0%	81 59.12%	46 33.58%
15	“Parents/guardians are involved in your school life”.	0 0%	02 1.46%	0 0%	41 29.93%	93 67.88%

The final set of data of responses highlights additional important aspects of the students’ educational experiences. A strong majority (76.15%) agreed and 22.63% strongly agreed that they need to learn skills beyond academic studies, indicating a broad recognition of the importance of holistic development. Feeling engaged and supported in class was affirmed by 66.42% agreeing and 32.85% strongly agreeing, suggesting positive classroom environments. Most students (91.97%) agreed on the need for more improvements in their classrooms, showing openness to change. Regarding physical or health-related challenges, 59.12% disagreed and 33.58% strongly disagreed that such challenges impact their school performance. Finally, a significant number of respondents (67.88%) strongly disagreed and 29.93% disagreed that parents or guardians are involved in their school life, pointing to a notable gap in family engagement.

**Table 8**

Sr.No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
16	“School experience is helping you achieve your long-term goals”.	16 11.68%	116 84.67%	0 0%	0 0%	04 2.92%
17	“You prefer that you have an exclusive educational institution”.	94 68.61%	40 29.2%	0 0%	02 1.46%	0 0%
18	“Barriers you've faced affected your academic performance”.	04 2.92%	03 2.19%	0 0%	112 81.75%	17 12.41%
19	“Missed classes due to discrimination or harassment”.	02 1.46%	03 2.19%	0 0%	72 52.55%	59 43.07%
20	“Feel safe and welcoming environment to seek help from faculty”.	18 13.14%	111 81.2%	02 1.46%	03 2.19%	02 1.46%

The final portion of the respondents’ data shows positive trends in students' perceptions of their school experience. A strong majority (84.67%) agreed and 11.68% strongly agreed that school is helping them achieve their long-term goals, with only minimal dissatisfaction. Preference for exclusive educational institutions was also high, with 68.61% strongly agreeing and 29.2% agreeing. When asked about the impact of barriers on academic performance, 81.75% disagreed, suggesting that most students did not feel significantly hindered. Similarly, 52.55% disagreed and 43.07% strongly disagreed with missing classes due to discrimination or harassment, indicating limited issues in this area. Lastly, a welcoming environment was confirmed by 81.2% agreeing and 13.14% strongly agreeing that they feel safe seeking help from faculty, reflecting strong institutional support.

**Table 9**

Sr.No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
21	“You have opportunities to educate others about your experiences”.	14 10.22%	120 87.59%	02 1.46%	0 0%	0 0%
22	“Teachers use inclusive language in their curriculum”.	48 35.04%	88 64.23%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
23	“Feel safe using the restroom that aligns you at school”.	42 30.66%	94 68.61%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
24	“School provides access to gender-neutral uniforms or clothing options”.	51 37.23%	80 58.39%	0 0%	03 2.19%	0 0%
25	“Current school timings are enough to complete your daily studies task”.	42 30.66%	87 63.5%	0 0%	03 2.19%	04 2.92%

The final section of the data shows encouraging findings regarding inclusivity and school environment. A vast majority (87.59%) agreed and 10.22% strongly agreed that they have opportunities to educate others about their experiences, reflecting an empowering atmosphere. Inclusive language use by teachers was affirmed by 64.23% agreeing and 35.04% strongly agreeing, showing strong inclusivity in curriculum content. Feeling safe using restrooms that align with identity was similarly positive, with 68.61% agreeing and 30.66% strongly agreeing. Access to gender-neutral uniform or clothing options was confirmed by 58.39% agreeing and 37.23% strongly agreeing, though a small 2.19% disagreed. Regarding school timings, most students (63.5% agreed and 30.66% strongly agreed) found them sufficient to complete daily study tasks, indicating general satisfaction with the academic schedule.

**Table 10**

Sr.No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
26	“Government has enough efforts to educate your community”.	0 0%	10 7.3%	0 0%	37 27.1%	89 64.96%
27	“Funds getting from institution are sufficient”.	07 5.11%	04 2.29%	0 0%	110 80.29%	15 10.95%
28	“Freedom of asking multiple question queries”.	57 41.61%	70 51.09%	0 0%	06 4.38%	03 2.19%
29	“Subject material according to the mental level”.	20 14.6%	110 80.29%	0 0%	03 2.19%	03 2.19%
30	“Availability of sufficient stationery”.	41 29.93%	94 68.61%	0 0%	01 0.73%	0 0%

The final results highlight mixed responses regarding support and resources. A large portion of respondents (64.96%) strongly disagreed and 27.1% disagreed that the government has made enough efforts to educate their community, reflecting a strong sense of dissatisfaction. Similarly, regarding institutional funds, 80.29% disagreed that they are sufficient. On a more positive note, 51.09% agreed and 41.61% strongly agreed that they have the freedom to ask multiple questions, indicating an open learning environment. Most students (80.29% agreed and 14.6% strongly agreed) felt that the subject material is appropriate for their

mental level. Lastly, 68.61% agreed and 29.93% strongly agreed that there is sufficient availability of stationery, suggesting that basic academic resources are largely accessible. Table 10 showed the all statements in combine from evaluate the figures.

### **Findings of the Study**

1. The findings of the study show that most respondents agreed that school timing is suitable, the curriculum is inclusive, and learning resources are accessible; however, a majority remained neutral about struggling with homework and disagreed that clothing restrictions affect them.
2. The findings of the study show that most respondents (56.93%) did not experience bullying, harassment, or social exclusion, while 67.15% felt comfortable discussing their problems with teachers. A majority (83.21%) disagreed that extracurricular activities affect their school performance, and most (84.67%) disagreed that personal challenges outside school impacted their academic performance. Additionally, 67.15% were satisfied with the teaching methods used by their teachers.
3. The findings of the study show that most respondents (76.15%) recognize the need to learn skills beyond academics, and 66.42% feel engaged and supported in their classes. A large majority (91.97%) expressed a desire for more changes or improvements in the classroom, while 59.12% disagreed that physical or health-related challenges affect their school attendance or performance. Additionally, 67.88% strongly disagreed that parents or guardians are involved in their school life.
4. The findings of the study show that a significant majority (84.67%) feel that their school experience is helping them achieve long-term goals, and 68.61% prefer an exclusive educational institution. Most respondents (81.75%) disagreed that barriers affected their academic performance, and 52.55% disagreed that they missed classes due to discrimination or harassment. Furthermore, 81.2% felt safe and supported in seeking help from faculty.
5. The findings of the study show that most respondents (87.59%) feel they have opportunities to educate others about their experiences, and 64.23% agree that teachers use inclusive language in their curriculum. Additionally, 68.61% feel safe using restrooms that align with their gender identity, and 58.39% agree that the school provides access to gender-neutral uniforms. Most respondents (63.5%) also agree that current school timings are sufficient to complete daily study tasks.
6. The findings of the study show that most respondents (64.96%) disagree that the government has made enough efforts to educate their community, and 80.29% disagree that the funds provided by the institution are sufficient. However, a large majority (92.7%) feel they have the freedom to ask multiple questions, and 80.29% agree that the subject material is appropriate for their mental level. Additionally, 68.61% agree that there is sufficient availability of stationery.

### **DISCUSSION**

The finding that most respondents agreed that school timing is suitable, and the curriculum is inclusive is consistent with studies by Anderson et al. (2018), who found that flexible school hours can lead to better academic performance and student well-being. Similarly, Thomas and Zhang (2020) found that inclusive educational curricula enhance students' sense of belonging, which leads to improved educational outcomes. In line with this, a study by Shaw (2021) emphasized that an inclusive curriculum fosters engagement among students and positively impacts their academic success. This suggests that the alignment of school

timings with students' daily routines and the inclusivity of the curriculum plays a pivotal role in fostering an effective learning environment.

The finding that a majority of respondents struggled with time management when it comes to completing homework aligns with the findings of Stevenson et al. (2019), who noted that poor time management can negatively impact academic performance. According to Hall and Hughes (2020), difficulties in managing homework are often linked to the overwhelming number of tasks students face, leading to stress and burnout. Similarly, a study by Mills (2021) found that students' ability to manage their time effectively is a critical factor in academic success and overall well-being. These findings underscore the importance of time management skills as a crucial determinant of academic performance.

The study's finding that many students recognize the need to learn skills beyond academics is in line with a study by Gill and Williams (2019), who argue that life skills such as communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking are essential for students' long-term success. Similarly, a study by Peters et al. (2020) found that students who engage in extracurricular activities or skill-based workshops experience enhanced academic performance due to the development of transferable skills. Additionally, Lane and Miller (2021) highlighted the significance of fostering a holistic approach to education, where students are encouraged to develop both academic and non-academic competencies for future career success.

The finding that most respondents feel that their school experience is helping them achieve their long-term goals is supported by the work of Garrison and Kuo (2020), who argue that a supportive school environment can have a positive influence on students' aspirations and career paths. Similarly, Lee and Tan (2021) found that schools that provide students with career guidance and personal development programs enhance their ability to achieve future success. A study by Rojas and Wang (2020) also emphasized the importance of aligning academic experiences with students' long-term career goals, which leads to higher levels of motivation and engagement.

The finding that students feel safe using restrooms aligned with their gender identity and that teachers use inclusive language is consistent with research by Duffy et al. (2020), who found that gender-inclusive language in the curriculum significantly impacts students' sense of belonging and well-being. According to Peterson et al. (2019), inclusive practices and policies, such as gender-neutral bathrooms, promote a safer environment for students, fostering a sense of respect and equality. Additionally, studies by Goldstein and Lenz (2021) emphasized the importance of creating safe spaces within educational institutions to support the diverse needs of all students, particularly those from marginalized groups.

The finding that respondents disagree with the adequacy of government efforts to educate their community and the sufficiency of institutional funds aligns with the research by Chen and Zhao (2020), who found that limited government funding can hamper the quality of education and resources available to students. Similarly, Anderson et al. (2021) highlighted that institutional funding plays a critical role in providing students with the necessary resources, including textbooks, digital materials, and extracurricular activities. Furthermore, Lee and Suh (2021) pointed out that government and institutional investment in education is essential to ensure equal access to learning opportunities, particularly in marginalized communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Schools should offer additional time management workshops or resources to help students with homework and studies, ensuring they can effectively balance their academic responsibilities.
2. Schools should enhance programs that promote inclusivity and provide platforms for students to address personal challenges. Extra-curricular activities could be aligned with academic goals to foster personal growth.



3. Schools should implement skill-building workshops that go beyond academic subjects to help students develop practical life skills, while also fostering greater parental involvement in students' academic journeys.
4. Schools should continue to support students' long-term goals by providing career counseling services, creating an inclusive environment that encourages open discussions with faculty, and addressing any remaining barriers to academic success.
5. Schools should further strengthen inclusivity by enhancing gender-neutral facilities and continuing to implement inclusive language in their curriculum, while ensuring students feel safe and supported in their learning environment.
6. Schools should advocate for increased government funding to improve educational resources and facilities, ensuring that students have access to all necessary materials and that their academic needs are met effectively.

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