

# Factors Influencing The Self-Esteem Among High School Students: A Case Study Of Shiksha Valley School And Barbaruah Girls High School In Dibrugarh District Of Assam

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

This study explores the self-esteem levels of high school students in Dibrugarh district of Assam, as well as identifies the factors that influence their level of self-esteem. To conduct the research, 153 students from two high schools have been selected as a sample. There are two different types of schools in this study: one is government-run while the other one is privately owned. To assess the level of self-esteem among students, the researcher has calculated the mean, median, standard deviation (SD), skewness, and kurtosis. The results of the study reveal that the self-esteem of students in both schools is influenced by multiple factors. While some factors are similar among the students of both schools, there are also significant differences that differentiate them. Some factors apply to both schools, but others are specific to each school.

**Keywords:** Self-esteem, Students, High School, Dibrugarh

## Introduction

Self-esteem is the cornerstone of an individual's self-image, encompassing their sense of self-respect and value. Braden (1992) says that '*Self-esteem is a powerful force within each one of us*'. It is a vital aspect for overall mental and emotional well-being, influencing a person's confidence and ability to pursue meaningful goals. Essentially, self-esteem is the foundation upon which a healthy and fulfilling life can be built. It plays a crucial role in our everyday lives, as it defines how we think, act, and feel. It is an essential factor in developing strong and lasting relationships with others and plays a significant role in our personal growth and fulfillment. Hence, it is essential to cultivate positive self-esteem to thrive in society. Our self-esteem plays a vital role in our mental wellness and overall well-being, affecting both our self-perception and social interactions.

Self-esteem is essential for high school students to have positive mental health, good relationships, and success in various pursuits. It can bring numerous changes to their life. The high school students with higher self-esteem are more likely to develop a better understanding of their strengths, skills, and abilities, while those with lower self-esteem can be hesitant to try new things or take risks. Higher self-esteem also allows for better decision making, as these students are more likely to be aware of the consequences of their actions. Ultimately, self-esteem can be a powerful factor in the lives of high school students, providing them with an improved sense of self-worth and confidence. In general, the high school stage of a student's life is classified as 'adolescent'. During this time, most of the students experience various physical and emotional changes due to hormonal imbalances. These imbalances often lead to decreased levels of self-esteem, which can have a serious impact on their academic performance, mental health, and social interactions. As a result, it is important to recognise the significance of self-esteem among high school students, and to find ways to boost their self-confidence and improve their overall mental health.

Self-esteem can have a wide range of effects on students. Positive or negative feelings towards oneself can be defined as 'self-esteem'. Rosenberg (1965) defines self-esteem as positive or negative orientation toward one's self and the overall evaluation of one's self-worth. He stresses that there are two distinct dimensions of self-esteem: competence and worth. Self-esteem also can be viewed as an evaluative judgement reflecting the individual's sense of self-worth. Singh (2015) states, '*Self-esteem is the positive or negative evaluation of the self.*' It is an important component of psychological development and is influenced by experiences,

relationships, and successes. Singh (2015) also states that the development of self-esteem begins during early childhood and may be affected by parents, teachers, peers, and other influences. High levels of self-esteem can lead to healthy functioning and well-being, while low levels can lead to poor self-image, difficulty with decision making, and negative emotions. Self-esteem can vary greatly among individuals and is often reflective of the level of confidence that a person has in their abilities. Self-esteem is a major factor in personal growth and development. In this light, it is imperative to explore the level of self-esteem among high school students. It is also pertinent to find out the factors influencing the self-esteem of the students.

### Review of Literature

Scholars around the world have studied self-esteem among students, and they have looked at different aspects that affect the self-esteem of students. As per the research conducted by scholars including Scott, Murray, and Martens (1996), the family plays a crucial role in influencing the self-esteem of a student. It is believed that the influence of the family plays a crucial role in the development of a student's self-esteem. It is also posited that the educational setting, the school personnel, and the interpersonal connections with peers exert a substantial influence on the holistic development of a student and their self-esteem. According to their perspective, the influence of school administrators on students' self-esteem is primarily attitudinal and indirect, and is largely derived from their visionary principles. School counsellors, on the other hand, may have a direct impact on students, depending on who they interact with. According to their perspective, the influence of school administrators on students' self-esteem is primarily attitudinal and indirect, and is largely derived from their visionary principles.

Some scholars hold the perspective that high schools can exert a noteworthy influence on the self-esteem of their students. According to Pushpalata, Roopa, and Daragad (2016), schools play a crucial part in fostering self-esteem among students. Students spend a considerable amount of time with their peers and teachers at school, apart from their time with their parents. They compare themselves with other school friends, and the school as an institution provides a wide range of experiences to its students by way of curricular and co-curricular activities. All these aspects influence the students' self-esteem. A student's self-esteem can also be affected by the economic status of their family.

The available research on the connection between self-esteem and gender exposes the differences in the degree of self-esteem among students. Gender can be a determining factor in the self-esteem levels of students. Research on self-esteem in students indicates that there is a marked discrepancy in self-esteem between male and female students within schools. According to a number of scholars such as Eremie and Chikweru (2015), Farid and Akhtar (2013), and Aryana (2010), there is a correlation between gender and self-esteem. Their research suggests a noticeable relationship between gender and self-esteem levels of students. Gender is regarded as a significant determinant that impacts the development, manifestation, and expression of an individual's self-esteem, according to their perspective. Boys' students tend to have higher self-esteem compared to girls' students. According to Aryana's research in 2010, gender plays a vital role in shaping one's self-esteem. It affects how people grow, develop and exhibit their confidence in themselves. Adolescents' self-esteem is influenced by their gender as they conform to gender stereotypes. This creates disparities in how they view themselves. Contrary to popular belief; gender plays a significant role in determining self-esteem among students. According to Sheeba and Kumari (2018), there is virtually no difference in self-esteem levels between male and female students. This suggests that a person's self-esteem is more closely tied to individual characteristics and experiences than their gender. These findings may help to dispel harmful stereotypes and encourage individuals to focus on building their self-esteem through personal growth and self-reflection. The studies presented here show conflicting results on the self-esteem of students.

Some scholars argue that self-esteem has multiple effects and impacts. Shore (2017) highlights that self-esteem plays a crucial role in a student's overall well-being. This is because a healthy sense of self-worth positively impacts various aspects of a student's life. For instance, it can lead to better academic performance, improved relationships with peers and teachers, and enhance one's ability to cope with challenging situations. Therefore, developing and maintaining a healthy self-esteem should be a priority for students to succeed both academically and socially. It affects the way a student engages themselves in activities, handles challenges, and interacts with others. The self-esteem of students has a big impact on their academic performance at school. Students' self-esteem influences their learning process. A student with low self-esteem may experience a significant decrease in their desire to learn, their ability to focus, and their willingness to take risks in their lives. On the other hand, those who possess high or positive self-esteem are one of the pillars of school success and have a strong foundation for learning. Students with high self-esteem have the confidence to accept challenges, take risks, and pursue their goals.

Research suggests that the self-esteem of high school students could be influenced by factors such as the size and location of their school. Coladarci and Cobb (1996) argue that the self-esteem of high school students depends on the size and location of the school. The self-esteem of the student is also determined by his or her participation in extracurricular activities at school. Self-esteem is also more noticeable in the students of larger schools compared to those of smaller schools. They found that the students in the larger schools demonstrated significantly higher self-esteem than those in smaller schools, likely due to the greater access to extracurricular activities and more varied social opportunities. The study also found that students in urban

schools had higher self-esteem than those in rural schools. This is likely because urban students have easier access to educational resources like libraries and teachers with more education.

From the above review of literature, it is clear that there are various aspects that influence the self-esteem of students. Many scholars have pointed out different aspects that influence the self-esteem of students. Among the many aspects, school plays a vital role in developing self-esteem. Apart from that, teachers also play a crucial role in students' lives. The influence of teachers on the self-esteem of students is more extensive, as they can affect the students' self-esteem through involvement, encouragement, organisation, support, innovation, and many other ways. Studies on self-esteem and gender have found that there is a significant amount of difference between male and female students in schools and that gender is one of the important factors that affect the growth, emergence, and demonstration of self-esteem. Many scholars have found that the self-esteem of high school students depends on the size and location of the school, as well as their participation in extracurricular activities. Urban students have higher self-esteem than rural students due to easier access to educational resources. The influence of family on self-esteem is equally important. Family plays a significant role in the lives of students.

### **Significance of the study**

There are various reasons why this study on self-esteem in high school students is significant. The high school students are at a critical period of their lives where self-esteem has a significant impact on their academic and social development. This study aims to investigate the differences in self-esteem levels between students attending government-run and private high schools in Dibrugarh district. By understanding these variances, we can better comprehend the effects of the school environment on the development of student self-esteem. With the rising concerns on mental health issues among young adults, understanding the self-esteem levels of high school students can aid in developing effective prevention and intervention programs. The results of this study can provide insights for parents, educators, and other stakeholders on how to create a supportive environment that fosters positive self-esteem in high school students. It can also help identify students who may be struggling with low self-esteem and provide them with the necessary support and resources to improve their self-esteem. Finally, understanding the factors that contribute to self-esteem can help create a supportive and nurturing environment that promotes healthy self-esteem.

### **The Objectives of the Study**

The objective of this study is to examine the self-esteem levels of students attending government-run and private high schools in Dibrugarh district of Assam. Through this investigation, we hope to gain a better understanding of how self-esteem varies between students in these two different types of schools. The research also aims to investigate the factors that affect the self-esteem of high school students. It seeks to comprehensively analyse the key factors that play a role in shaping their self-image and self-worth. The study draws upon a range of sources to gain insight into the complexities of the issue. By delving deeper into the factors that influence self-esteem, the research hopes to offer valuable insights that can help educators and parents support students in developing a positive self-image that is crucial to their personal and academic success.

### **Research Methodology**

The study is both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative methods has been used to collect data for the first objective, which was to investigate the level of self-esteem among students, and qualitative methods were used for the second objective, which was to investigate the factors influencing self-esteem among students. The study was conducted among two high school students in the Dibrugarh district. One is a private school, and the other is a state government-run school. The name of the private and the government-run schools are Shiksha Valley School and Barbaruah Girls High School, respectively. The two schools have been selected as samples through a convenient sampling method from the total number of high schools in Dibrugarh district. For the study, a total of 153 students have been selected as samples by employing random sampling technique from both the schools. Out of the 153 students, 80 attend Barbaruah Girls High School and 73 attend Shiksha Valley School.

In the study, data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data collection was completed through fieldwork in the two schools. The researcher used a self-esteem measurement scale developed by Dr. Santosh Dhar and Dr. Upinder Dhar to classify the self-esteem of students as high self-esteem, low self-esteem and normal self-esteem. In addition, the primary data has been gathered from the students using the unstructured interview method. An interview schedule was employed to gather information from the participants. Secondary sources of data collection encompass various resources such as research articles, books, and websites, among others. These sources can be instrumental in gathering valuable information to support research endeavors. The level of self-esteem among students has been analysed statistically using SPSS version 21. This analysis was conducted to determine the level of self-esteem present in the student population.

**Pertinence of Self-esteem for Students**

The term ‘Self-esteem’ can be defined as an overall evaluation of one’s self-worth. It can also be defined as a positive or negative orientation towards one's self (Rosenberg, 1965). The pertinence of self-esteem for high school students is huge. It affects the overall development of students more prominently in the adolescent period, when the students start to develop an understanding of a particular self and identity. Self-esteem is critical in this period of development, as it affects a student's academic performance, social interactions, and physical health. Self-esteem is an important factor in developing self-confidence and a positive self-image in young adults. Self-esteem can also lead to a greater feeling of control and agency for young adults, enabling them to make better decisions for themselves and feel more in control of their own lives. Therefore, having a positive and healthy self-esteem is essential for adolescents, as it can provide them with a sense of security and autonomy in their lives.

Self-esteem is something that can be cultivated through the support and encouragement of peers, family members, teachers, and mentors in an individual's life. Through positive reinforcement and providing a sense of security and safety, individuals can develop a healthy sense of self-esteem. Furthermore, it is important to understand that self-esteem is not just an individual phenomenon; it is connected to the environment one lives in and how they interact with the people around them. A healthy sense of self-worth can provide adolescents with the tools they need to deal with difficult situations and develop into their own individuals. By providing a strong support system and allowing individuals to form their own identities, adolescents can find a sense of security and safety in the world around them.

**The Level of Self-esteem among High School Students**

Students from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds tend to show different levels of self-esteem in society. The students of private and government-run high schools may have different levels of self-esteem. It is imperative to understand the level of self-esteem of the students with respect to their nature of school. In order to determine the level of self-esteem of the government-run high school students that is Barbaruah Girls High School, the researcher administered Self-esteem measurement scale on 80 students and found out the mean, median, standard deviation (SD), skewness and kurtosis values of the students from the scores obtained in the self-esteem scale. Table-1 shows the value of mean, median, standard deviation (SD), skewness and kurtosis.

Table -1 Level of self-esteem of students at Barbaruah Girls High School

Sl No	Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	Self-esteem	80	88.60	89.00	8.53	-.53	1.28

(Source: Fieldwork)

The below Figure-1 represents the above tabulated data in table- 1

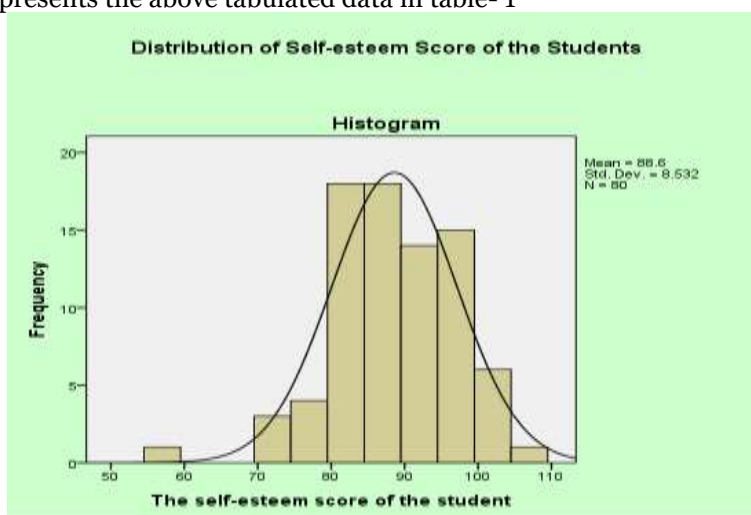


Figure -1: Students' self-esteem scores at Barbaruah Girls High School in Dibrugarh District

Table-1 displays the self-esteem levels of the students enrolled in Barbaruah Girls High School, a government-run school located in Dibrugarh district. A total of 80 students have been selected from the school as participants in the study. To determine the students' level of self-esteem, we need to calculate the mean, median, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis scores. The students' mean, median, and standard deviation scores for self-esteem are 88.60, 89.00, and 8.53, respectively. The skewness score for self-esteem

is  $-.53$ , indicating that the distribution of self-esteem scores is negatively skewed. It also signifies that the scores are concentrated at the high end of the scale that is the right side of the curve and progressively spread out towards the low or left end. In the negatively skewed distribution, the value of median is higher than the mean value. The Figure -1 shows that the majority of students have scored around the scores 80-100. Only a few students have scored in the category of 50-60 and also a few students have scored more than 100 in the self-esteem scale. Thus, it can be said that majority of students have obtained average or medium level scores in the scale.

In the analysis of kurtosis value using SPSS 21 version, if the calculated value is  $03$ , it is known as mesokurtic, if the value is less than  $03$ , it is known as platykurtic, and if the calculated value is greater than  $03$ , it is known as leptokurtic. The kurtosis value of self-esteem of the government-run high school students of Dibrugarh district is  $1.28$  which indicates that the distribution is platykurtic. The platykurtic distribution means the scores are scattered more evenly than the normal distribution and the shape of the curve is flatter than the normal one. As a result of the above study, it is apparent that the distribution of self-esteem scores among students of government-run high school in Dibrugarh district is negatively skewed and platykurtic in nature. Similarly, in order to find out the level of self-esteem of the private sector high school students in Dibrugarh district, the same self-esteem measurement scale have been employed in the study. The mean, median, standard deviation (SD), skewness, and kurtosis of all students have been calculated based on their self-esteem scale scores. The following Table - 2 shows the value of mean, median, standard deviation (SD), skewness and kurtosis.

Table- 2 Students' level of self-esteem at Shiksha Valley School

Sl No	Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	Self-esteem	73	88.79	89.00	9.45	-.97	3.31

(Source: Fieldwork)

The below Figure - 2 represents the above tabulated data in table 2

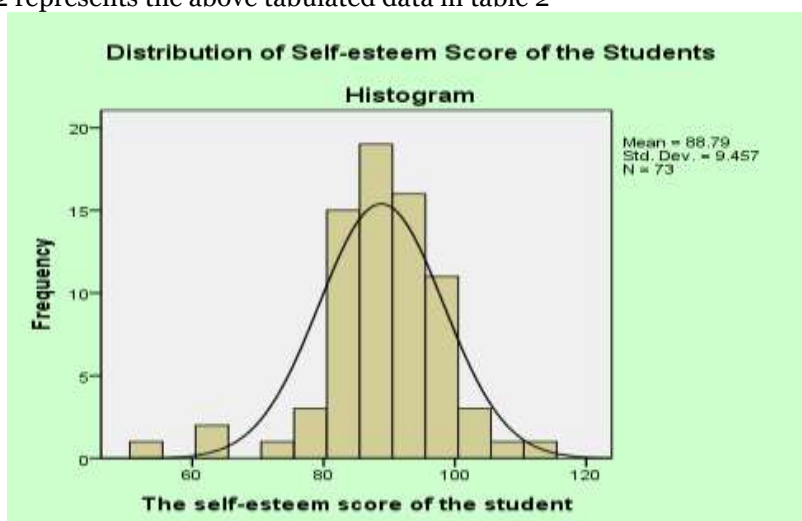


Figure - 2: Students' self-Esteem scores at Shiksha Valley School in Dibrugarh District

Table - 2 shows the self-esteem scores of the students of private high school which is known as Shiksha Valley School in the Dibrugarh district of Assam. A total of 73 students from the school were selected for the study. The students' mean, median, and standard deviation scores for self-esteem are  $88.79$ ,  $89.00$ , and  $9.45$ , respectively. The skewness score for self-esteem is  $-.97$ , indicating that the distribution of self-esteem scores is negatively skewed. It also signifies that the scores are concentrated at the high end of the scale that is the right side of the curve and progressively spread out towards the low or left end. In the negatively skewed distribution, the value of median is higher than the mean value. The majority of the students have scored around 80-100 and a few have scored more than 100 in the self-esteem scale. On the other hand, a few others have scored below the range of 80. Thus, it can be said that majority of the private high school students have obtained average or medium level scores in the scale. The kurtosis value of self-esteem of the private high school students of Dibrugarh district is  $3.31$  which indicate that the distribution is leptokurtic. Leptokurtic distribution indicates that the shape of the curve is more peaked than the normal one. As a result of the above study, it is apparent that the distribution of self-esteem scores of the Shiksha Valley High School students in the Dibrugarh district is negatively skewed and leptokurtic in nature.

### Classification of Students' Self-esteem

The students from Shiksha Valley School and Barbaruah Girls High School were grouped into categories of high, low, or normal self-esteem based on their scores on the self-esteem measurement scale. Table -3 provides information about the classification of self-esteem of students from both schools.

Table – 3 Students' self-esteem at Barbaruah Girls High School and Shiksha Valley School

Sl No	Name of the Schools	Classification of Students' Self-esteem			Grand Total
		High	Low	Normal	
1.	Barbaruah Girls High School (Govt.)	10 12.50%	12 15%	58 72.50%	80 100%
2.	Shiksha Valley School (Private)	8 11%	7 9.60%	58 79.40%	73 100%
3.	Total	18 11.76%	19 12.41%	116 75.81%	153 100%

(Source: Fieldwork)

Table -3 shows the classification of students' self-esteem as high, low, and normal for both schools. Among the 80 students from Barbaruah Girls High School, 10 (12.50%) have high self-esteem, 12 (15%) have low self-esteem, and 58 (72.50%) have normal self-esteem. It has been seen that out of the total number of students in the school, most of the students have a normal level of self-esteem. On the other hand, out of the 73 students from Shiksha Valley School, 8 (11% of them) have high self-esteem, 7 (9.60%) have low self-esteem, and 58 (79.40%) have normal self-esteem. It has been observed that out of the total 153 students from both schools, 18 (11.76%) have high self-esteem, 19 (12.41%) have low self-esteem, and 116 (75.61%) have normal self-esteem. The above data reveals that the percentage of students with high self-esteem in the government-run school is slightly greater than that in the private school. On the other hand, the percentage of students with low self-esteem in the government-run school is greater than the private school. In the following section, the causes or factor of high and low self-esteem among students from both the school has been discussed.

### The Factors Influencing the Students' Self-esteem

There are numerous factors that influence the self-esteem of high school students of both the schools. The factors are different for different students based on the high or low level of self-esteem. The current study discovered that a variety of common factors contribute to the high level of self-esteem among students at Barbaruah Girls High School and Shiksha Valley School in Dibrugarh district. The research has identified several common factors that influence the self-esteem of students, including academic accomplishments, peer influence and acceptance, familial support from parents and other relatives, participation in extracurricular activities, and leisure pursuits. The findings of the present study suggest that school size and location do not appear to have a significant impact on students' self-esteem. The research results of Coladarci and Cobb (1996) did not align with these findings. They found that the self-esteem of high school students is influenced by the size and location of the school they attend. The research findings of Eremie and Chikweru (2015), Farid and Akhtar (2013), and Aryana (2010) show significant relationships between gender and students' self-esteem. The present study found that gender does not have an influence on students' levels of self-esteem in both schools. This contradicts previous research that claimed otherwise. The following sections analyses the common factors that contribute to the high level of self-esteem among students from both schools.

- Academic accomplishments and performance of the students: The study revealed that a student's academic success and performance significantly impact their self-esteem. In other words, when students do well in their studies, they develop a considerable level of confidence in themselves. This confidence spills over to other areas of their lives and affects how they perceive themselves. Therefore, it is essential to encourage and support students to perform their best in school to bolster their self-esteem. It is a crucial aspect of personal growth and development. A student who is successful academically may feel a greater sense of self-worth than those who are struggling, or vice versa. Those who are struggling academically may find it hard to maintain a healthy level of self-esteem and, in some cases, may even become anxious or depressed. On the other hand, in some cases, poor academic performance does not affect the students' self-esteem. It depends on the students' belief systems and motivational sources. It is true that successful academic performance often brings with it a boost in self-esteem and can be an important source of motivation for students.

- **Peer pressure:** It is important to remember that peer pressure can be both positive and negative, but the effects of either can have a lasting impact on a student's self-esteem. Peers can either encourage or discourage a student from engaging in academic activities and striving to achieve their goals. Positive peer pressure can lead to feelings of acceptance and belonging, while negative peer pressure may lead to lowered self-esteem due to social exclusion. The research shows that students' lives can be significantly influenced by their peers. The decision-making process of high self-esteem students concerning academic and non-academic activities is significantly affected by their peers.
- **Support of parents and family members:** The influence of families is huge on the self-esteem of students. Families play a vital role in the socialisation of students. The results of our research partially corroborate a previous study carried out by Scott, Murray, and Martens in 1996. They highlighted the role of family in the development of students' self-esteem. This study also found that the involvement of parents and other family members is essential for developing high self-esteem in students from both schools. Parents and family members should provide emotional support, positive reinforcement, and opportunities for students to take on responsibilities and challenges. Students who feel supported and encouraged are more confident and have better outcomes in their academic and personal lives. It is crucial to maintain open communication and active participation to foster a safe and nurturing environment for our students. For students of this stage, parental support in their studies and other activities play an important part in boosting their level of confidence and self-esteem. Apart from that parents' education and parental income have an impact on students' self-esteem to some extent. In some cases, the parental education and income do not affect the students' self-esteem at all. In these cases, the influence of families still remains; as it may be the values and attitudes adopted by them that shape the self-esteem of students. It is therefore important to note that family life plays an integral role in developing students' self-esteem and that this effect can manifest itself in both positive and negative ways. The findings suggest that parents need to be more aware of the impact they have on their children's self-esteem, even when there is no direct correlation between parental education and income.
- **The support of the school teachers and other members of the school:** The study has found out that school teachers play a significant role in students' lives. High school students greatly benefit from the positive reinforcement provided by the school principal and faculty. Their encouragement and support play a crucial role in helping students succeed and reach their full potential. This research finding reinforces previous studies conducted by Pushpalata, Roopa, and Daragad (2016) that schools have a fundamental role in promoting self-esteem among students. They motivate the students in different ways, starting from curricular and co-curricular activities to providing other assistance to boost their confidence. Teachers act as mentors, providing guidance and support to their students. Through their constant guidance and encouragement and support, teachers help their students identify their strengths and weaknesses and understand the value of hard work in achieving success. Moreover, teachers serve as role models, setting an example for their students to follow. By nurturing the intellectual and social development of their students, teachers can help them gain a better understanding of the world around them. They also help them develop the skills and knowledge required for success in their personal, professional, and academic lives. Thus, teachers play a vital role in the lives of students.
- **Extra-curricular activities:** In this study, it has been evident that extra-curricular activities also play a vital role in developing high self-esteem among students. The excellence in extracurricular activities such as sports, singing, dancing, painting, etc. helps the students express their mental and physical strengths and showcase their talents. This in turn helps the students gain high self-esteem. Students are encouraged to take part in extracurricular activities, which helps them increase their confidence and self-esteem as they receive praise for their efforts. Taking part in extracurricular activities also allows students to interact with peers and build relationships, which can provide social support.
- **Leisure time:** The availability of leisure time also allows the students to engage in other activities. This opens up the opportunity for students to explore their talents and interests in hobbies such as sports, art, music, and other creative dimensions of their lives. This gives the students some breathing space to focus on other activities and makes them feel relaxed. This helps them think about setting their future goals in life. This also gives them a boost.

Aside from these common factors among the students, there are others that contribute to high self-esteem of the students at private sector school. Such reasons include having a positive self-image, building meaningful relationships with others, engaging in activities that bring joy and fulfillment, and having the courage to confront difficult situations. Being positive has a psychological impact on self-esteem. The meaningful bonding and relationships with others help them develop self-confidence, which in turn increases their level of self-esteem. Taking time to look after yourself and build healthy habits can also have a positive effect on your self-esteem.

In this section, some of the possible common factors or causes of low self-esteem in high school students of both schools have been discussed. Low self-esteem can have an adverse effect on the lives of students. The high school student generally belongs to the adolescent stage. During this period, they are affected by various social, emotional, ethical, cultural, and many other aspects of society. The low self-esteem among students

can lead to negative attitudes towards anything they face in life. These negative attitudes can lead to poor performance in school, physical and mental health problems, difficulty with personal relationships, and a general sense of unhappiness. Low self-esteem among high school students can also be attributed to a variety of factors. The present study has found that there are many common reasons for low self-esteem among students of both schools in Dibrugarh district. Those common factors have been discussed in the points given below.

- **Academic stress of the students:** High school students may experience low self-esteem due to different reasons, and one of the leading factors is the pressure to excel in their academic pursuits. This can create a daunting situation for them, making them feel unworthy or incompetent compared to their peers. Such negative thoughts might have a significant impact on students' self-esteem and overall mental health, affecting their future aspirations and goals. The burden of academic success can be quite daunting for students, as underperforming can result in receiving criticism not only from their parents but from their peers as well. It is common for students to feel overwhelmed by this pressure and strive to achieve higher standards. This kind of academic pressure can lead to a feeling of not being "good enough" and can cause students to question their own intelligence and abilities.
- **Negative self-Image:** In addition to the type of school a student attends, their self-image can also play a significant role in their low self-esteem. This applies to students who attend both government-run and private schools. When individuals have a negative self-image, their self-esteem can suffer. Students may compare themselves to others, leading to feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. Poor self-image can lead to a lack of confidence, resulting in students not believing that they have the capacity to reach their goals. This can also lead to a cycle of low self-esteem as students feel like they are not meeting the high standards they have set for themselves, which further contributes to their feeling of being 'not good enough.' This negative self-image can cause students to become apathetic about their studies, making them more likely to skip classes or not do their homework.
- **Lack of support from parents, teachers, and peers:** Insufficient support from parents, teachers, and peers is a significant factor that contributes to students' low self-esteem. Without the backing of these essential figures, students are left to face their academic and personal struggles alone, leading to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. It is imperative that all the essential figures work together as a community to provide students with the guidance and support they need to thrive academically and emotionally. Without this support, students lack the confidence to take on new challenges and pursue their dreams. Parents, teachers, and peers are all important sources of guidance for students. Parents and teachers can provide the necessary guidance and support for students, helping them develop their self-esteem and motivating them to work hard.
- **The inadequacy of environmental conditions at both the home and school settings for optimal concentration on academic pursuits:** Tragically, there may be certain students who are unable to access the essential assistance they require from either their family or educational institution. These students may be faced with distractions such as a lack of resources, insufficient guidance from their teachers, and an unsuitable setting at home and school to focus on study. This can make it hard for these students to focus on their studies, which can cause them to lose interest in school and put them at a disadvantage compared to students who have enough resources.
- **Lack of confidence in public speaking:** Low self-esteem among students can be caused by a significant lack of confidence when speaking in public. This lack of confidence can be a major obstacle to their success, as public speaking is often a necessary skill for academic and professional life. Overcoming this fear can help build their confidence and contribute to their overall academic and personal growth. Without self-confidence in public speaking, these students may be too intimidated to raise their hands or participate in class discussions, depriving them of the opportunity to fully engage in the educational process. The students are uneasy and fearful of speaking in front of others in public. This deters them from participating in many extracurricular activities in life.
- **The condition of excessive thinking:** High school students often struggle with low self-esteem due to overthinking and confusion when it comes to decision-making. These young individuals are facing numerous choices and responsibilities as they transition into adulthood. The weight of their choices can lead to excessive thinking, causing confusion and anxiety which can negatively impact their self-esteem. Research shows that many students tend to feel confused in class often, leading to a drop in their self-esteem. This is a common occurrence that can have a significant negative impact on the learning process.
- **The phenomenon of student bullying:** The study revealed that high school students often suffer from low self-esteem due to bullying inflicted upon them by their peers. The current study has found that bullying can contribute to lower self-esteem among students. Bullying can have a deep impact on a student's self-esteem and lead to negative effects on their mental health.

Low self-esteem is a common issue among high school students in Dibrugarh district, whether they attend government-run or private schools. Apart from above mentioned causes, there are other causes of low self-esteem among the students at government-run school Barbaruah Girls High School. Those are discussed in the following points.



- Some students exhibit a deficiency in their proficiency in English subjects: A deficiency in proficiency of English subjects can be devastating for students because many academic areas require language skills that depend on a strong understanding of English. Therefore, students with a weak foundation in English may struggle in other subjects. This highlights the importance of developing strong language skills from an early age to provide a solid foundation for academic success. One of the primary reasons for low self-esteem among students attending Assamese-medium government schools is the lack of proficiency in the English language. This issue has been noted by many students themselves and is a significant obstacle in their academic and personal development. Because of this low self-esteem, students often don't have the drive to study hard and do well.
- The absence of knowledgeable individuals within the household to provide academic guidance to students: The research revealed that there are students who lack guidance or access to knowledgeable individuals who could assist them in their academic pursuits. These students do not have anyone at home to offer them academic assistance. It is a significant issue because it puts them at a disadvantage in their studies. This is also one of the factors for low self-esteem among high school students.
- The fear of expressing their problems in front of teachers is another significant factor that contributes to students' low self-esteem in government-run schools. Many students feel that their teachers are too busy to listen to them or that they will be judged negatively if they speak up. This can create a sense of isolation and helplessness, which can be damaging to a student's self-esteem. Schools need to foster an environment where students feel comfortable speaking openly about their concerns and where teachers are equipped to support them. This is especially true for those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with disabilities who feel uncomfortable talking about their issues in an unfamiliar environment.

These are the factors that contribute to low self-esteem among students at the government-run school in the district. Lack of resources, underdeveloped educational infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and limited interaction with teachers all contribute to students feeling low self-esteem in government-run schools

### **Conclusion**

Self-esteem has a profound impact on the way students behave, think, and perform in every aspect of their lives. Therefore, building a healthy self-image is essential for them to achieve success in education, social relationships, and personal growth. Various factors have contributed to shaping the self-esteem of high school students in both schools located in Dibrugarh district. The level of self-esteem of students at those two schools presents us with divergent views regarding the effect of the different socio-economic, cultural, and educational backgrounds of their respective communities. There are different factors such as peer pressure, family upbringing, parental expectations, and academic performance that have all had an effect on the self-esteem of the students in Dibrugarh district. The reasons for students' high or low level of self-esteem are also many in terms of the nature of the schools. The factors associated with high and low self-esteem among students in the government-run school are different from those in the private school. The study discovered some factors associated with having high or low self-esteem among the students of two schools. The high school student generally belongs to the adolescent period, and self-esteem affects their lives in different ways, which may determine their academic performance, mental health, relationships, and personal development. Self-esteem has a huge role to play in the lives of students. Hence, it is of utmost importance for all the stakeholders to motivate the students to have high self-esteem and progress in their lives for a better society.

### **Limitations**

It is imperative to acknowledge that the research conducted has a few limitations that need to be considered. The study was carried out on high school students of two schools in the district out of many schools. The sample size is small to make any generalisations based on the results. It is important to note that students' self-esteem can fluctuate over time and with different stages of life. It is not a static trait and can be influenced by various factors. No follow-up study has been conducted to evaluate how self-esteem evolves after the transition.

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### **Disclosure Statement**

The author has not reported any possible conflicts of interest.

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