UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL CHILDREN'S VALUATION OF CVEC TO SCALE GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BHUTAN

BASELINE REPORT FROM BHUTANESE SCHOOLS 2026

Disclaimers

The project 'Promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Schools, Building on What Children Want to Do and Be' is being implemented by LIKE Lab, Kathmandu University School of Arts with support from the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE KIX) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of IDRC or its Board of Governors.

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GLOSSARY

CA:	Capability Approach
CCD:	Community-Driven Development
CVEC:	Children's Valued Educational Capabilities
GESI:	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GNH:	Gross National Happiness
HSS:	Higher Secondary School
MoE:	Ministry of Education
MoESD:	Ministry of Education and Skills Development
MSS:	Middle Secondary School
PAR:	Participatory Action Research
SAS :	Situational Analysis Study

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the baseline study conducted in five selected schools in Bhutan, including both middle secondary and higher secondary schools. The baseline assessment aimed to document children's perceptions of the availability, satisfaction, and importance of educational and social resources within their school environments, and to examine how these resources contribute to four key capability dimensions: wellbeing freedom, wellbeing achievement, agency freedom, and agency achievement. The findings establish an evidence base to inform project interventions, monitoring, and future evaluation.

The study adopted a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to ensure that children's voices and perspectives remained central to the assessment process. A total of 200 students from Grades I–X participated in the study, with 40 students selected from each school, maintaining gender balance. The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) diagnostic tool, developed by the project's lead country partner, was culturally reviewed and adapted for the Bhutanese context prior to implementation. Students assessed 13 resource-based capability domains across three dimensions—availability, satisfaction, and importance and rated 16 wellbeing and agency domains across four evaluative dimensions: wellbeing freedom, wellbeing achievement, agency freedom, and agency achievement. The analysis further examined variations across gender, grade level, and social groups to identify patterns of inclusion and disparity.

The findings indicate generally positive perceptions among children regarding the availability and quality of school-related resources, suggesting that participating schools provide supportive learning environments in several domains. However, variations across gender and domains reveal important inequalities in how resources are experienced and translated into wellbeing and agency outcomes. Boys consistently reported slightly higher scores than girls in several domains related to autonomy, participation, bodily integrity, and educational experiences, particularly in measures of agency freedom and agency achievement. Girls reported relatively stronger outcomes in selected areas such as mental wellbeing and health-related domains. These patterns suggest that while access to resources may be similar, differences exist in the extent to which boys and girls are able to convert resources into meaningful opportunities and outcomes.

The results also highlight domains requiring targeted intervention, particularly those related to mobility, participation, autonomy, and aspects of agency among girls. The presence of a small group of students identifying outside the male–female gender categories further underscores the importance of inclusive approaches that recognise diverse identities within school environments. Overall, the baseline findings point toward the influence of social norms, institutional practices, and gendered expectations in shaping children's experiences of wellbeing and agency within schools.

This baseline provides a critical reference point against which future changes can be measured following the implementation of project activities. It also offers practical insights for schools, educators, and policymakers to design contextually responsive GESI interventions that strengthen children's valued capabilities and promote safer, more inclusive, and empowering learning environments.

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A well-functioning school is generally expected to reflect the characteristics of institutional well-being, which refers to the institution's contribution to the holistic well-being of its students and staff (both teaching and non-teaching). A diagnostic tool for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) can play a significant role in strengthening public schools by addressing demand-side challenges through systematic performance evaluation. Such an approach ensures that the needs and well-being of children are considered within the broader framework of gender equality, equity, and social inclusion. The findings generated through such evaluations can serve as policy instruments to inform institutional-level decision-making and guide the implementation of GESI-transformative programmes and practices that benefit children at the individual level.

The GESI diagnostic framework and tool used in this study emerged as an innovation from the KIX-IDRC funded project titled *Effectiveness and Scalability of Programs for Children Who Are Out of School and at Risk of Dropping Out in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal*. As Bhutan is part of the project *Promoting GESI in Secondary Schools: Building on What Children Value and Aspire to Be and Do*, led by Kathmandu University, Nepal, the developer of the GESI diagnostic tool, this innovation was adopted to scale children's valued educational capabilities and promote safer and more inclusive schooling environments in Bhutanese schools.

The implementation process involved several key steps. First, the tool was reviewed and contextualised to align with Bhutan's cultural and educational context. Second, participating girls and boys were oriented to the concept of educational capabilities through collaborative engagement with the tool. Third, researchers conducted the GESI diagnosis in selected schools to generate quality baseline data. Fourth, based on the diagnostic findings, school-based activities, programmes, and policy provisions were designed to strengthen GESI practices. Fifth, the capacities of students and teachers were developed to foster teaching and learning environments conducive to transformative GESI practices grounded in children's valued educational capabilities. In parallel, researchers examined the potential for scalability by mapping the scaling system, operationalising institutional adaptation trackers, and assessing dimensions of optimality, sustainability, magnitude, and equity. This approach aims to promote gender-transformative and socially inclusive education and ensure safe, inclusive, and supportive schooling environments for all children through access to, within, and through their valued educational capabilities. Since the tool was originally developed and implemented in Nepal, its adoption was considered appropriate for scaling GESI within Bhutanese schools.

The GESI framework encompasses four core dimensions: (a) gender equality, (b) equality, (c) equity, and (d) social inclusion. To generate evidence on children's lived GESI experiences in everyday school life, this framework was adopted as a survey instrument to understand children's perspectives on gendered and socially inclusive practices. The diagnosis was conducted in 5 public schools, involving 200 students from Grades I–X. Based on the findings, interventions such as policy briefs, awareness materials, and capacity-building sessions for teachers were implemented to promote GESI and create supportive learning environments in five schools in Samtse Dzongkhag, potentially benefiting more than 5,000 students. This innovation places children at the centre by enabling them to examine and reflect on their own experiences of GESI practices in relation to the beings and doings they value and aspire to achieve.

1.2 Objective of Baseline Assessment

The purpose of this baseline assessment is to document the initial status of GESI conditions in selected public schools of Samtse Dzongkhag prior to the implementation of planned interventions. It establishes a reference point regarding students' experiences, perceptions, and practices related to gender equality, equity, and social inclusion within their everyday school environment. The baseline will enable comparison with a planned endline assessment to examine changes attributable to GESI-focused activities, capacity-building initiatives, and related policy actions. It also supports the identification of domains where progress may remain uneven, thereby strengthening evidence-based evaluation of the intervention over time.

A resource-based assessment approach is adopted because educational resources constitute the immediate institutional conditions through which GESI is experienced by children. Assessing the availability, satisfaction, and importance of resources allows for the identification of gaps between formal provision and children's lived experiences. This approach is particularly relevant in public community schools, where inclusion is shaped not only by access to resources but also by how these resources are experienced and utilised by different groups of students.

SECTION 2

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

2.1 Introduction to Capability approach, its components, meaning and importance

Sen (1999) introduced the Capability Approach (CA) as a framework for evaluating individual well-being. It was introduced to address the limitations of conventional welfare economics by focusing not merely on the resources people possess, but also on what individuals are actually able to do and be, which is referred to as their *functionings*.

In this regard, the perspective shifts focus from just access to resources or economic indicators to the actual opportunities people have to live meaningful lives. Capabilities can be further divided into basic and general types. Basic capabilities are those necessary for survival and escaping poverty, while general capabilities include broader aspects such as health, education, and social relationships (Robeyns, 2017). In the context of GESI, CA offers a valuable lens to evaluate not just formal access to services or rights, but the real freedoms that marginalised groups, especially women and girls, experience in their everyday lives.

In education, CA allows researchers to use it as an evaluative space for understanding the role of education in promoting human flourishing (Drèze & Sen, 2013; Hart, 2009; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). Hart and Brando (2018) further echoed that CA allows researchers to move beyond an outcome‐based understanding of schooling, allowing the researchers to focus on the processes whereby children flourish and the opportunities that the school offers children to be and to become what they value and aspire. Thus, CA provides alternative guidelines for shaping education policies that put the children (in all their facets) at the forefront.

Further, Kuklys and Robeyns (2005) argue that Sen's CA provides a valuable framework for assessing individual welfare and social conditions including a theoretical basis for analysing inequality, poverty, and public policy. They explain that CA allows well-being to be evaluated through two core concepts: functionings and capabilities.

Functionings refer to the actual "beings and doings" of a person. For example, such as being well-nourished, having shelter, or being mobile. These stand out from the resources used to achieve them (e.g., riding a bicycle versus owning one). In this context, Gasper (1997) emphasised that when evaluating well-being, varied and relevant elements need to be assessed including morbidity, mortality, adequate nourishment, mobility, happiness, self-respect, and participation in community life.

Capabilities, on the other hand, is a set of valuable functionings or opportunities a person may possess to achieve, a life they have reason to value. Different scholars have identified and classified varying sets of capabilities. These include:

- Nussbaum (2011) identifies capabilities such as bodily health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, other species, play, and control over one's environment. Her list offers a useful benchmark for identifying gender inequality and exclusion across societies. However, critics argue that this universal approach can sometimes overlook local meanings of well-being or the power dynamics that affect people's choices (Staveren, 2008).
- Clark (2005) classifies health, knowledge, freedom, employment, leisure, housing, environment, and income.
- Alkire (2002) adds dimensions such as education, living standards, empowerment, safety from violence, and relationships.
- Robeyns (2005) proposes additional capabilities such as political empowerment and material control. She argues that any capability list should meet several criteria including should be explicit, backed by a clear method, flexible in how general or specific it is, and as comprehensive as possible without oversimplifying human experience. This balanced approach is especially helpful for GESI within the Bhutanese context, as it supports both local relevance and careful, structured evaluation of gender and social inequalities.
- Within Bhutanese context, Ura et al. (2012) propose a multidimensional index to measure happiness, and it comprises domains such as psychological well-being, health, time use and balance, education, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality, ecological diversity and resilience, and living standard.

Together, these approaches show how flexible and powerful the CA framework can be for understanding inequality. Sen's focus on context supports participatory and inclusive ways of identifying what matters to different groups. Nussbaum's list gives a clear standard for comparing inequality across places. Robeyns adds a practical, balanced method that works well for applied GESI research.

Although Sen propounded the concept of CA and emphasised the importance of capabilities, he deliberately avoided providing a fixed list as he felt that it should be left at the discretion of people concerned to determine their relevance and contextually appropriate capabilities.

In more recent work, Sen (2016) describes CA as an intellectual discipline which focuses on evaluating people's achievements and freedoms in terms of their real ability to do and be the things they have reason to value. He reiterates that CA is concerned with the quality of life individuals are able to achieve and the freedoms they enjoy in pursuing different ways of living.

Sen further expands this idea to include multiple capabilities such as literacy, health, and political freedom, emphasising the need to analyse various life domains.
In this context, he justifies that CA should be applied as a richer evaluative framework for assessing well-being on four main grounds:

1. **Diverse Needs for Resources:** Sen contends that individuals need different resources to achieve similar functionings. He illustrated that a person with dyslexia may require additional educational support. Thus, when evaluating such cases, assessments need to go beyond resource distribution to examine what people can actually achieve with those resources.
2. **Adaptive Preferences:** Sen also posits that people may adapt to adverse conditions and accordingly claim satisfaction even in undesirable circumstances. For example, a poorly equipped school claiming high performance. In such cases, evaluation must therefore include both subjective and objective conditions.
3. **Importance of Choice:** Sen reflects that the availability of valuable choices matters, even if they are not exercised. For instance, in the case of nutritional well-being, the experience of fasting voluntarily differs greatly from that of starving due to poverty, though both may appear nutritionally identical. In such circumstances, evaluation must consider both outcomes and the freedom to choose among them.
4. **Complexity of Human Life:** While happiness is an important measure of well-being,, Sen contends that it should not be the sole criterion. He asserts that other aspects such as dignity, justice, and autonomy are equally significant. Although CA has its own strength, provision of flexibility and openness to multiple dimensions has also attracted criticism, providing avenues for scholars like Martha Nussbaum to propose structured lists of central capabilities.

2.2 Application of Capability Approach in Education

Following Sen's work, several scholars have applied the CA to education. Drèze and Sen (2013) and Hart (2009) used CA to examine the role of education in promoting human flourishing, asserting that education is central to the development of all human capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999). Sen (1999) argues that education is a fundamental capability that enhances functionings and improves individuals' quality of life and well-being. Moreover, education fosters agency, enabling individuals to actively participate in the planning and conduct of their lives.

Agency, within the CA framework, is understood as a form of empowerment that enables individuals to pursue goals they have reason to value. For instance, equitable and quality education enhances individual capabilities, leading to informed decisions that positively influence personal, social, and professional lives.

Pham (2018) applied CA to evaluate Community-Driven Development (CDD) programmes by identifying capabilities relevant to poverty reduction, a core aim of CDD. This demonstrates the practical applicability of CA as an evaluative framework.

To sum up, CA has been employed as an evaluative tool to assess varied dimensions indicating its importance and usefulness as an evaluative framework.

2.3 Dimensions of Capability Approach

Sen contended that agency and well-being can be assessed through four categories of evaluative space which are classified into well-being freedom, well-being achievement, agency freedom, and agency achievement. These four categories form the evaluative space of human flourishing:

Table 1: Sen's space of evaluation of human flourishing

	Freedom	**Achievement**
Well-being	Well-being freedom - the freedom to achieve ways of living one has reason to value (reflecting capability)	Well-being achievement -ways of living that one has reason to value (constituting functionings)
Agency	Agency freedom - freedom to pursue goals with influence beyond oneself and that one has reason to value	Agency achievement - achieving goals with influence beyond oneself and that one has reason to value

Adopted from Hart and Brando (2018) , p. 293

Well-being freedom refers to the range of substantial freedoms or capabilities an individual has to achieve the things that contribute to their well-being (Sen, 1992, p. 57). In contrast, well-being achievement encompasses the actual beings and doings or functionings that a person realises, which constitute their well-being. For example, when a student has access to quality education, supportive teachers, and a safe learning environment, they possess the capability to pursue meaningful learning and develop into a well-informed individual (Sen, 1985). Successfully graduating from school as a result of these supportive conditions reflects a well-being achievement, representing the realisation of valued functionings that contributes to their overall well-being (Sen, 1992, p. 57).

But human flourishing extends beyond well-being alone. Sen (1992) includes both agency freedom and agency achievement as fundamental dimensions of human development. Agency

freedom refers to the ability to act for one's valued goals and change the circumstance for oneself and one's community (Sen, 1992, p. 57). Agency achievement, on the other hand, is the actual realisation of those goals/objectives one has reason to value which may go beyond self-interest (Sen, 1992, pp. 56–57). For example, a teacher who chooses to campaign for gender equality, even when it does not directly benefit them, is exercising agency freedom. When that campaign leads to a tangible change in how girls are treated in schools, it represents an agency achievement.

According to Sen (1985, 1999, 2009), both freedom and personal values are crucial in evaluating quality of life. Evaluations must account not only for the outcomes but also for the processes by which those outcomes are achieved. Human flourishing, therefore, must encompass both well-being and agency, and reflect individual autonomy and diverse life goals. Hart and Brando (2018) argue that society must create conditions that allow individuals to freely choose and exercise their capabilities, provided they do not cause harm to others.

2.4 Summary

Therefore, a *capability set* refers to the bundle of *functionings*, the valuable "doings and beings" that a person can achieve to lead a good life. *Functionings* represent the realised outcomes or achievements that result when capabilities are put into action (Robeyns, 2005). Achieving these functionings requires *resources*, which are typically material or measurable inputs such as income. However, Sen (1992) emphasises that resources alone are insufficient to ensure that individuals attain their valued functionings.

Crucially, Robeyns (2017) points out that *conversion factors* play a central role in transforming resources into capabilities and capabilities into achieved functionings. These conversion factors encompass social, institutional, structural, and environmental preconditions that influence whether a person's internal capacities and potentials can be effectively exercised as real options and freedoms (Hart & Brando, 2018).

For example, in the context of a school children:

- **Personal conversion factors** refer to individual characteristics and competencies, such as the ability to read, write, and communicate effectively.
- **Social conversion factors** stem from structural elements like educational policies, cultural norms, and legal frameworks, for instance, the existence of inclusive support policies.
- **Environmental conversion factors** are physical aspects of the surroundings, such as access to a library, ICT facilities, and quality educational resources.

To genuinely enhance children's well-being and development, a balanced and holistic approach is required, one that not only addresses children's interests but also ensures the presence of enabling conditions that translate these interests into meaningful capabilities, competencies, and freedoms.

This study identified 16 capability indicators (Table 2) and assesses school children's view regarding the availability, importance, and satisfaction of resources associated with these indicators. In addition, it examined school children's' perceptions of agency and well-being using the four core CA metrics:

1. Well-being Freedom
2. Well-being Achievement
3. Agency Freedom
4. Agency Achievement

Table 2: Capability domain and its indicators

Resource Capability Domains	***Indicators***
Love, Care, and Respect	▪ Time spent with friends and family
Education	▪ Adequate number of teachers
	▪ Textbooks
	▪ Stationery
	▪ White/Blackboard
	▪ Uniform
Nutritional Well-being	▪ Provision of mid-day meal
Aspiration/ Freedom from Economic/ Non -Economic Exploitation	▪ Scholarship
Physical Health/Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Curriculum	▪ Safe drinking water
	▪ First aid
	▪ Playground
Bodily Integrity	▪ Separate toilets for girls and boys
	▪ Facilities inside the toilet
	▪ Provision of sanitary pads
	▪ Disabled-friendly infrastructure
Understand, Interpret/Plan, Imagine and Think	▪ Library
	▪ Computers
Religion and Identity	▪ Religious activities
Shelter & Environment	▪ Adequate school built-up area

	▪ Adequate classroom space
	▪ Adequate desks and benches
	▪ Electricity
Mental Well-being	▪ Grievance Mechanism
Social Relations	▪ Parent–teacher meeting
	▪ Child club
Autonomy/ Freedom from Economic/ Non -Economic Exploitation	▪ Free time
Participation/Mobility	▪ Extracurricular activities

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, literature highlights that CA serves as a valuable evaluative tool for assessing a wide range of factors, including welfare, health, poverty, income, education, and overall economic development. In this study, CA was applied to examine how schools promote gender equality and social inclusion by focusing on 16 capability indicators identified through a capability mapping. The overarching aim was to assess school children's well-being, agency freedom, and achievement which will eventually support GESI**.** Existing literature supports the view that identifying such capability indicators not only helps evaluate educational outcomes but also reveals the resources and gaps necessary for nurturing and advancing children's values, aspirations, and overall development.

SECTION 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

The study was conducted using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach in five selected research schools across Samtse Dzongkhag, located in the southern belt of Bhutan. The study aims to examine variations across grade, gender, ethnicity, and geographic context. The GESI diagnostic tool, developed by the lead country Nepal, was adapted to capture children's assessments of resources and their role in shaping children's well-being and agency, including both freedom and achievement dimensions.

A total of 40 students were selected from each school (20 boys and 20 girls), resulting in a balanced sample across gender. The participants were drawn from Grades I–X to ensure representation across primary to secondary levels of schooling. The participating children assessed 13 resource-based capability domains by rating the availability, satisfaction, and importance of resources within their school environment. In addition, 16 well-being and agency domains were evaluated across four dimensions: well-being freedom, well-being achievement, agency freedom, and agency achievement. This multidimensional assessment provides a comprehensive understanding of how institutional resources translate into children's lived experiences and opportunities.

3.2 Research Field Site

Samtse Dzongkhag (District) was selected as the research field site due to its diverse population, rich cultural heritage, varying socioeconomic conditions, and a mix of rural and urban school distributions.

The region is known for its ethnic diversity, with a mix of Lhotshampas, Drukpas, Adibashi, and Doyaps contributing to its unique cultural landscape. In addition, Samtse's varied topography and climate, ranging from lowland plains to foothills, offer diverse environmental settings, further enriching the context of the research. Five schools of Samtse Dzongkhag are selected as research sites and a map showing school location and its background descriptions are provided below:

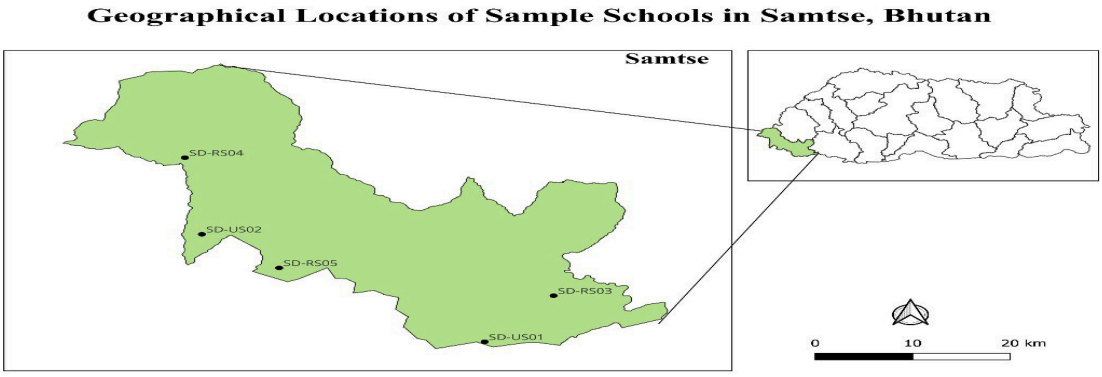

Figure 1: A Map of showing the study site and the selected samples

3.3 School Background

1. Gomtu Higher Secondary School

Gomtu Higher Secondary School, established in 1983, offers a complete education pathway from pre-primary through Grade 12. Its vision, of academic excellence, community service, leadership by example, and international-mindedness, shape the school's planning and execution of both academic and co-curricular activities.Currently, it has a total of 54 teaching staff (35 male and 19 female), 1002 children (475 male and 527 female), a dedicated male school counsellor, and 12 support staff (9 male and 3 female). The entire school community remains committed to nurturing an environment where every student feels seen, supported, and empowered to thrive.

2. Peljorling Higher Secondary School

Peljorling Higher Secondary School, established in 1955, is located in the lower Peljorling area under Tashicholing Gewog, Tashicholing Dungkhag, in Samtse Dzongkhag. As of 2025, the school caters to 1,528 children (767 boys and 761 girls). While it offers boarding facilities, the majority of school children are day scholars, comprising 577 boys and 563 girls. The school has 86 teachers (42 male and 44 female). The school provides education from Pre-Primary (PP) to Grade 12, offering all three streams: Arts, Commerce, and Science for higher secondary levels.

3. Tashithang Middle Secondary School

Tashithang Middle Secondary School (MSS), originally established as Panbari Primary School in 1982, began as a community primary school with limited staff and students, supported by local efforts. The school has a current enrolment of 652 school children (322 boys and 300 girls), is supported by a dedicated team of 30 teachers, 7 supporting staff, 5 cooks, 2 caretakers, and 2 sweepers.

4. Tendruk Central School

Established in 1978, Tendruk Central School is a Higher Secondary School offering education from Pre-Primary (PP) to grades 12. The school is located on a 20.328-acre campus, providing a conducive learning environment for its 1,171 students comprising 591 boys and 580 girls. The school operates a boarding facility that accommodates 185 boys and 175 girls, including 9 boys and 13 girls under its inclusive education programmes, affirming its commitment to equity and support for diverse learners. With a total of 73 teachers (45 male and 28 female), the school ensures that students receive quality instruction and guidance. Recognised as an inclusive school, Tendruk Central School stands out for embracing diversity and promoting equal learning opportunities for all students.

5. Yoeseltse Higher Secondary School

Yoeseltse Higher Secondary, originally established in 1961 as a primary school in Guamauney, Samtse, caters to 587 school children, including 304 males and 285 females. The dedicated teacher team comprises 45 teachers (32 male and 13 female), who work tirelessly to uphold the school's standards and nurture each learner. Despite its remote location and humble beginnings, the school continues to flourish, standing tall as a symbol of perseverance, growth, and holistic education.

3.4 Sample selection and justification

The study employed random sampling to select 5 schools and 200 students across Grades 1-10 as the research sites and participants. The selection process was designed to capture a diverse array of geographical, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, ensuring comprehensive representation across various socio-cultural contexts. Additionally, considerations were made to ensure a balanced representation of both rural and urban settings, and a diverse range of backgrounds, including variables such as parental education and financial standing. Each school selected 40 students consisting of 20 girls and boys.

3.5 Respondent's Profile

This section presents respondents' demographic information by gender, grade, ethnicity, religion, father, and mother's occupation.

3.5.1 Gender

As shown in Figure 2, 50% of the respondents are male, while 49% are female. A very small proportion, 1% (1 respondent)**,** falls under the "other" gender category.

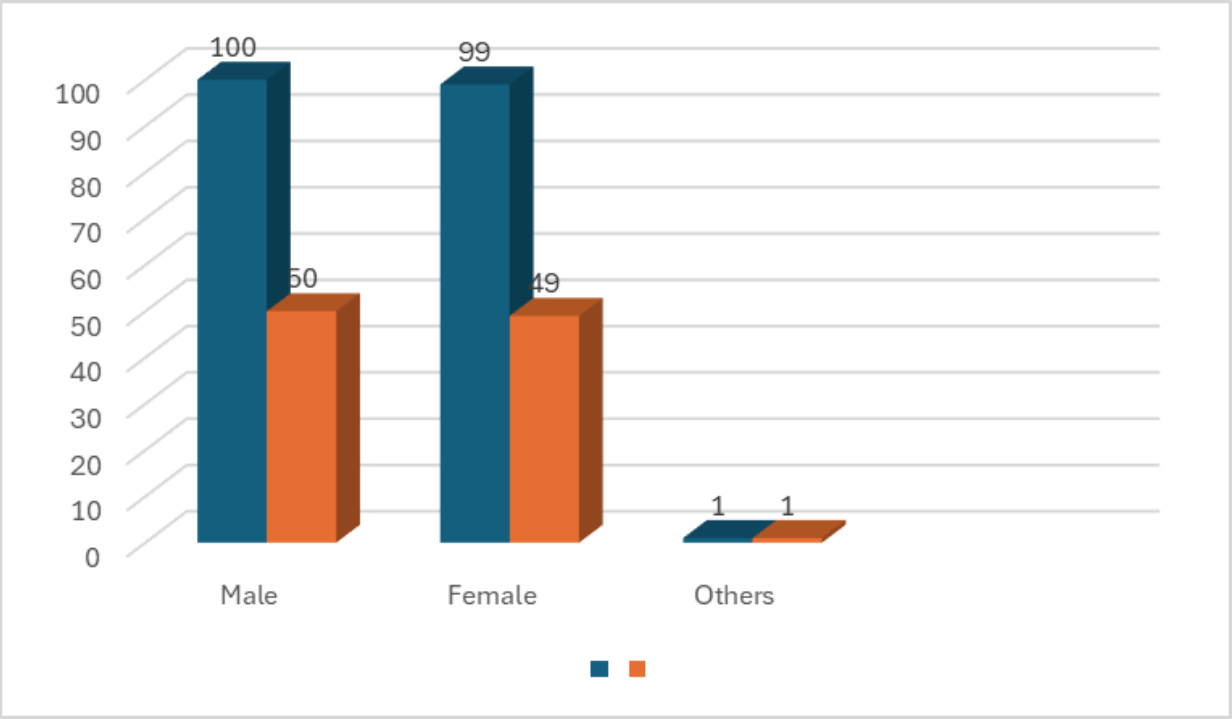

Figure 2: Respondents' Gender

3.5.2 Grades

Figure 3 presents the distribution of respondents by grade level. As indicated, 60% (120) of the respondents are from primary school, while 20% (40) are from lower secondary and 20% (40) are from middle secondary schools.

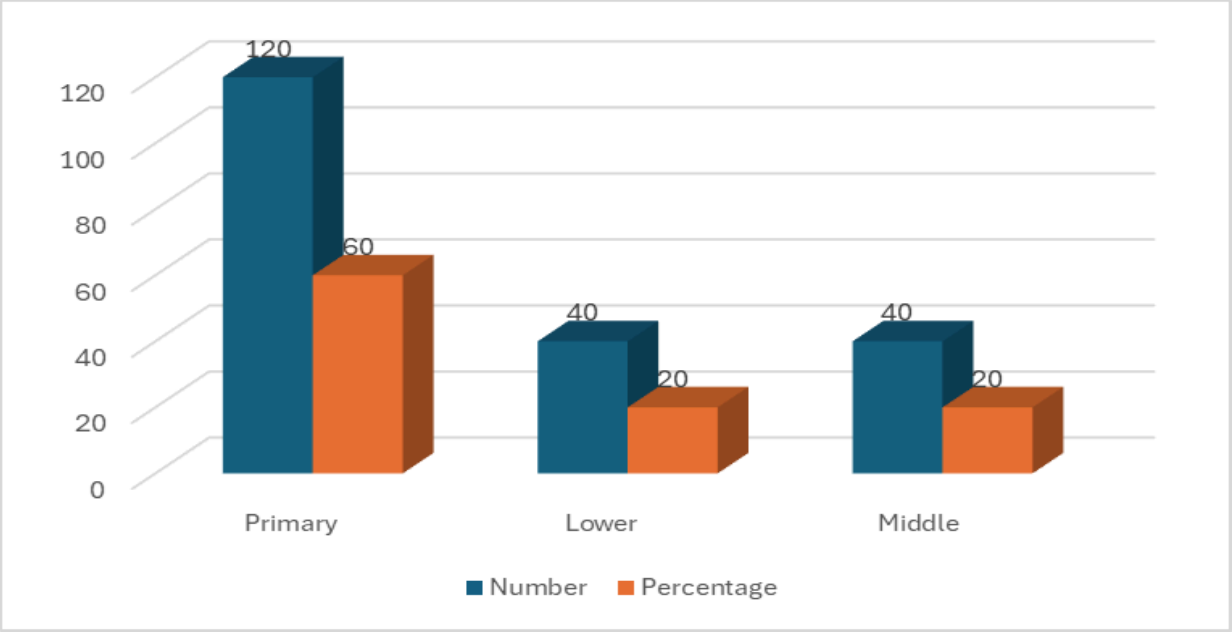

Figure 3: Respondent's Grade

3.5.3 Ethnicity

As shown in Figure 4, out of the 200 respondents, the majority are Lhosampa at 43.7% (83), followed by Sharchopa at 23% (46). 19.5 (39) identify themselves as Ngalop. A smaller proportion are Doyap at 3% (6), Kurteop at 1.5% (3), Khengpa at 1.5% (3) while 6% (12) reported no ethnic affiliation.

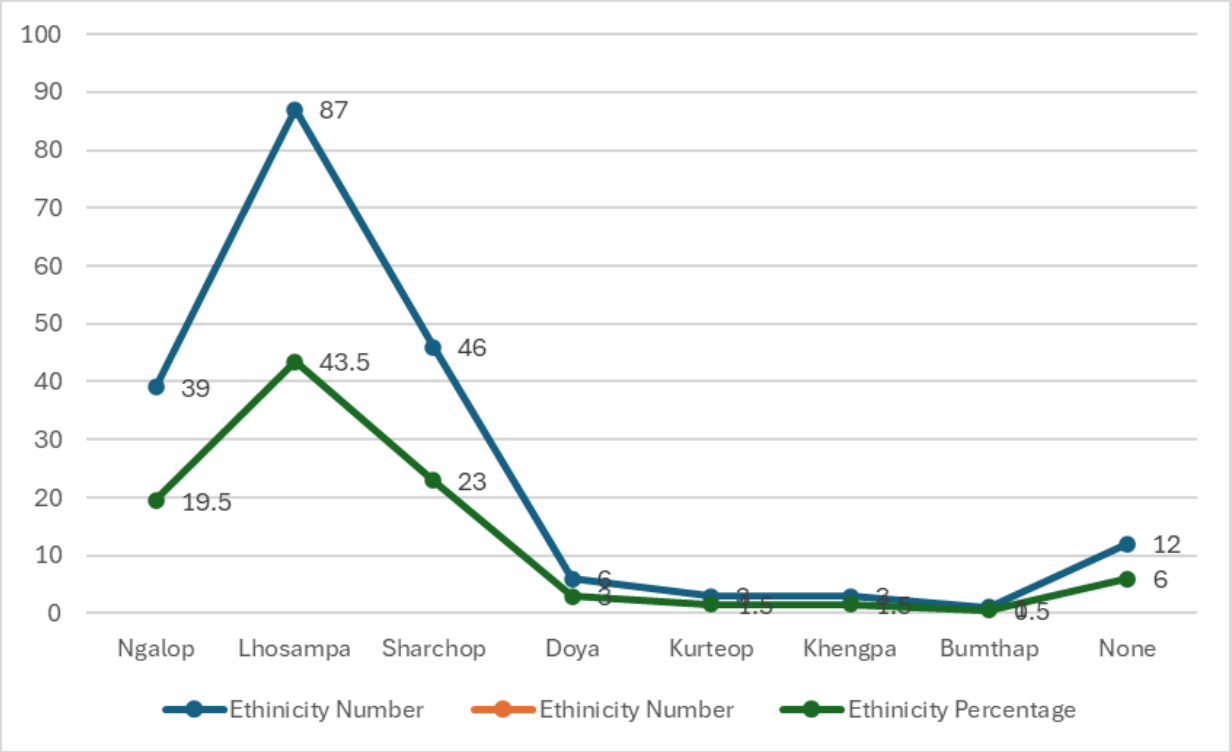

Figure 4: Respondent's Ethnicity

3.5.4 Religion

As shown in Figure 5, out of the 200 respondents, the majority are Buddhist at 57% (114), followed by Hindu at 31.5% (63). A smaller proportion are Christian at 9.5% (19), while 4% (2) reported no religious affiliation.

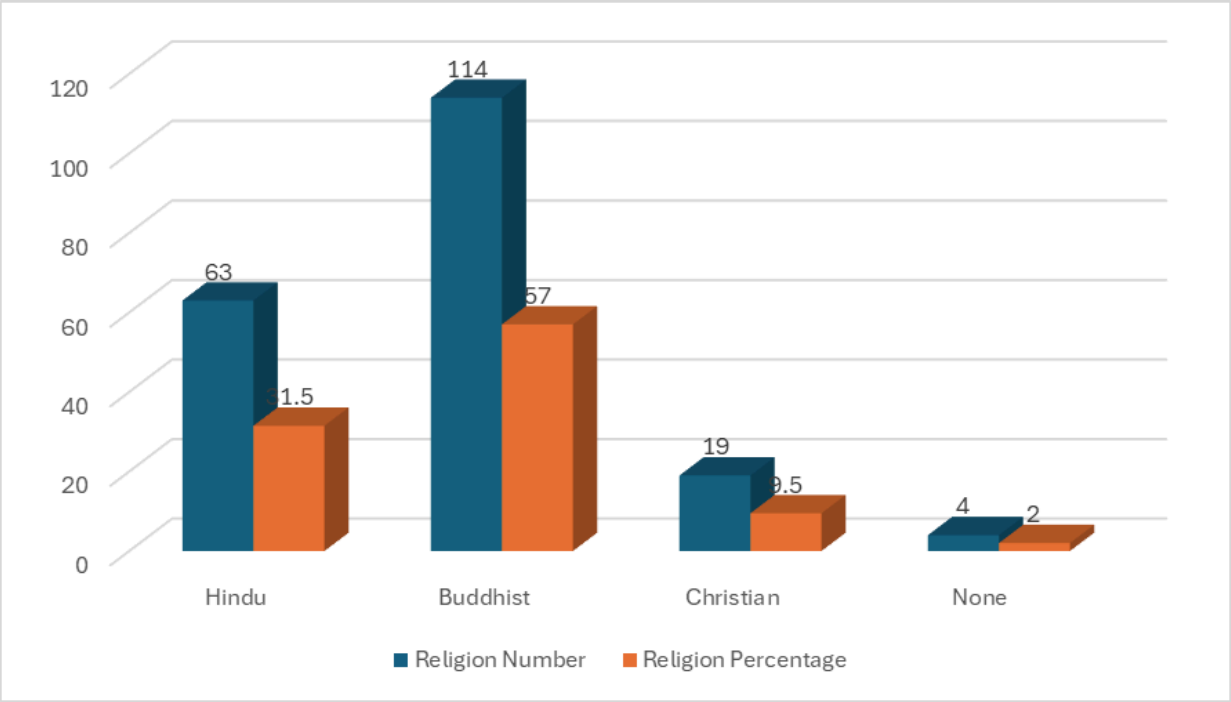

Figure 5: Respondent's Religion

3.5.5 Father's Occupation

Figure 7 presents the distribution of respondents' fathers' occupations. The majority of respondents' fathers are engaged in farming (34.5%), followed closely by those classified under the "other" category (35.5%). A notable proportion work as teachers (11%). Smaller percentages include drivers (6.5%), shopkeepers (5.5%), and civil servants (5%). Additionally, about 2% of respondents reported having the absence of the father in the household.

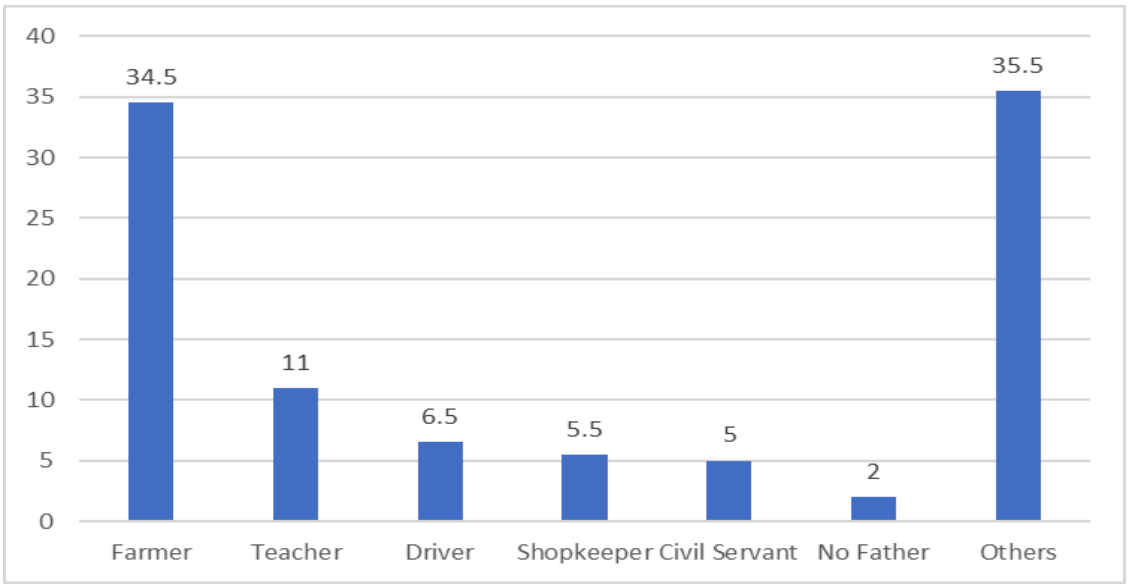

Figure 7: Father's Occupation

3.5.6 Mother's Occupation

Figure 8 presents the distribution of respondents' mothers' occupations. The largest proportion of respondents reported their mothers as housewives (38%), followed by those in the "other" category (23%). A notable percentage of mothers are engaged in farming (18.5%), indicating continued reliance on agriculture-based livelihoods among families. Smaller proportions include mothers working in the corporate sector (9%), as civil servants (4.5%), and as teachers (4.5%). A minority of respondents (2.5%) reported having an absence of a mother in the household. Overall, the findings suggest that most respondents come from households where mothers are primarily involved in domestic responsibilities or informal and agriculture-related occupations, with relatively fewer engaged in formal professional employment.

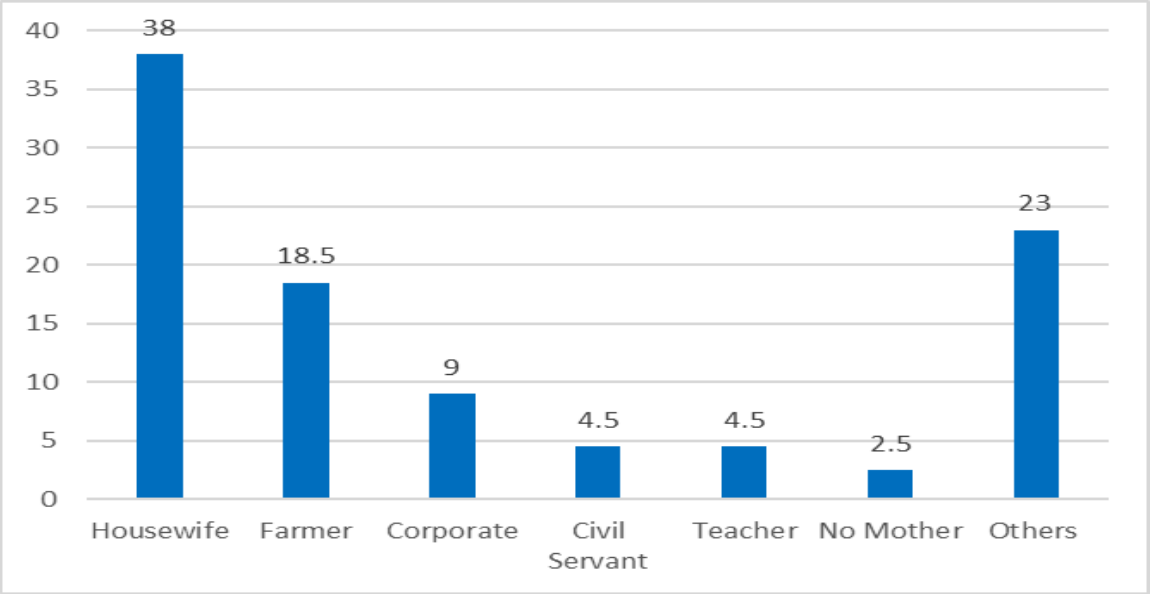

Figure 7: Mother's Occupation

3.6 Data Collection

Data were collected using the GESI diagnostic survey tool. The tool focused on assessing children's perceptions of school resources. The tools also focused on capturing students' valuation of capability indicators.

The GESI diagnostic survey tool comprised Section A, which included demographic information, assessment of school resources, and children's valued educational capabilities. For school resources, 13 capability indicators were included: 1) Love, care and respect, 2) Education, 3) Nutritional well-being , 4) Aspiration and freedom from economic/non-economic exploitation, 5) Physical health and GESI curriculum, 6) Bodily integrity and GESI curriculum, 7) The ability to understand, interpret, plan/imagine and think, 8) Religion and identity, 9) Shelter and environment, 10) Mental well-being, 11) Social relations, 12) Autonomy and freedom from exploitation, and 13) Participation and mobility with a total of 28 items.

Children's valuation of well-being and agency for the 16 indicators were also assessed. In doing so, the capability indicators comprised 130 items. The framework was structured around four core well-being metrics: i) Well-being Freedom; ii) Well-being Achievement; iii) Agency Freedom; and iv) Agency Achievement. The capability indicators included: 1) Love, care and respect, 2) Education, 3) Nutritional well-being, 4) Aspiration, 5) Physical health, 6) Bodily integrity, 7) The ability to understand, interpret, plan/imagine and think, 8) Religion and identity, 9) Shelter and environment, 10) Mental well-being, 11) Social relations, 12) Autonomy, 13) Freedom from economic and non-economic exploitation, 14) Participation, 15) Mobility, and 16) Gender Equality and Social Inclusion curriculum.

The tool was first administered in 13 schools in Nepal, which helped establish its reliability. Additionally, to contextualise the tool, the GESI diagnostic was adapted and tested for reliability, yielding a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.99, showing a highly internal consistency.

Within the Bhutanese context, two teacher participants from each respective school were involved in the baseline data collection. They administered the GESI diagnostic survey tool to children at their convenience, typically in three groups (Grades 1-3, 4-7, 8-10), with each session lasting between one to three hours. The survey duration varied according to children's grade and comprehension levels. Children ranging from Grades 1-3 and 4-7 required more time to complete the survey due to difficulties in comprehending some of the survey items while those in grades 8–10 required just over an hour, indicating children with higher comprehension levels completed the surveys in a shorter time.

3.7 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed to aggregate students' perceptions of the availability, satisfaction, and importance of resources for advancing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in schools. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise demographic data and to interpret children's perceptions of the resources examining their perceptions to availability, level of satisfaction, and perceived importance. To compare demographic variables such as gender, age, and location with capability indicators across different schools, within-school mean analyses were conducted. Furthermore, to assess children's perceived levels of capabilities (example, love, care, and respect) for significant social groups (parents, teachers, elders, juniors, and friends), descriptive statistics were used. The analysis involved five schools in Samtse Dzongkhag , Bhutan. These capabilities were evaluated using a 0–10 scale across 16 variables, combining dimensions of Well-being, Agency, Freedom, and Achievement. The descriptive analysis included: 1) Measures of Central Tendency (mean). Graphs were created based on the analysis.

3.8 **Ethical considerations**

When conducting the study, ethical considerations for the participants were carefully observed. It was essential to ensure their safety, confidentiality, and overall well-being (Efron & Ravid, 2013). In this research, throughout the research process, the ethical principles of research were followed. Principals of five schools in Samtse Dzongkhags were contacted and asked for permission to approach school children of Grades 1-10. In addition, the GESI diagnostic tool included a dedicated section on informed consent, ensuring that participants were made fully aware of the study's purpose, their rights, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Teachers administering the survey explained the contents clearly, and school children were given the option to opt out without any consequences. Anonymity and confidentiality of all responses were maintained throughout the process. Data was stored properly and participants' anonymity was taken into account in the processing of the data.

SECTION 4

CHILDREN'S ASSESSMENT OF CAPABILITY DOMAINS AND ITS INDICATORS

4.1 Children's Assessment of Availability, Satisfaction, and Importance Across Capability Domains

This section examines how children assess the resources and conditions available to them, the satisfaction they derive from these experiences, and the importance they attach to each of the capability domains. These resources directly and indirectly support the capability domains and shape children's learning trajectories, participation, and sense of wellbeing within school contexts. Children's perceptions of availability, satisfaction, and importance therefore provide important insights into how institutional provisions translate into lived educational experiences. By reflecting on these dimensions, children articulate how institutional support influences their everyday participation, belonging, and agency in schooling processes.

Table 3 presents the availability, satisfaction, and importance scores across 13 capability domains. The ratings demonstrate noticeable gaps between perceived importance and lived experience, with importance scores consistently exceeding both availability and satisfaction across domains. This pattern indicates that children possess a clear evaluative understanding of what supports their schooling but encounter uneven institutional responses in practice. The finding that satisfaction scores frequently trail availability further suggests that the mere presence of resources does not necessarily translate into meaningful use or positive experiences. Overall, the results point towards limitations in the quality, accessibility, or effectiveness of provision rather than complete absence, thereby establishing a baseline condition against which future institutional improvements can be assessed.

Table 3: Availability, Satisfaction and Importance Scores Given by the Children out of 1900 points

Capability Domain	***Availability***	***Satisfaction***	***Importance***
Love, Care, and Respect	1628	1611	1556
Nutritional Wellbeing	1775	1678	1839
Aspiration	1655	1642	1807
Religion and Identity	1769	1744	1843
Mental Well-being	1725	1655	1835
Autonomy	1547	1469	1725
Participation/Mobility	1659	1566	1763
Education	1290	1285	1520
Physical Health	1609	1521	1800
Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think	1618	1517	1810
Shelter and Environment	1318	1235	1474

Social Relations	1515	1481	1763
Bodily Integrity	1425	1318	1784

4.1.1 High Priority and Relatively Well-Performing Domains

Capability domains such as Religion and Identity (1843 importance), Nutritional Wellbeing (1839 importance), Mental Well-being (1835 importance), Aspiration (1807 importance), Physical Health (1800 importance), Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think (1810 importance), and Participation/Mobility (1763 importance) demonstrate relatively high scores across availability and satisfaction alongside strong importance ratings. These domains appear to align more closely with children's expectations and lived experiences, suggesting comparatively stronger institutional attention.

For instance, Religion and Identity shows high availability (1769) and satisfaction (1744) with equally high importance, indicating that children both value and meaningfully experience this domain within school settings. Similarly, Nutritional Wellbeing and Mental Well-being show strong availability and satisfaction relative to importance, suggesting that foundational wellbeing supports are reasonably institutionalised. Participation/Mobility and Aspirations also demonstrate moderate gaps but overall positive alignment between institutional provision and children's priorities.

However, the presence of observable gaps between availability, satisfaction, and importance even within these relatively strong capability domains indicates that performance should not be interpreted as full adequacy. Rather, they represent areas of relative strength within a broader landscape of uneven institutional provision, with scope remaining for improving experiential quality.

4.1.2 High Priority but Under-Realised Domains

Capability domains such as Autonomy (importance 1725; satisfaction 1469), Bodily Integrity (importance 1784; satisfaction 1318), Social Relations (importance 1763; satisfaction 1481), and Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think (importance 1810; satisfaction 1517) demonstrate notable gaps between children's perceived importance and their lived experiences. Although children recognise these domains as highly important, comparatively lower satisfaction levels suggest unmet needs.

Autonomy, in particular, shows a substantial gap, indicating limited opportunities for children to exercise decision-making, independence, or agency within school environments. Similarly, Bodily Integrity reveals significant divergence between importance and satisfaction, pointing towards infrastructural, gender-sensitive, or inclusivity concerns that may not be fully addressed in

practice. Social Relations also reflects constraints in meaningful participation or peer engagement despite institutional structures being present.

These capability domains represent areas of institutional strain where expectations exceed lived experiences. Since they depend heavily on relational practices, school culture, pedagogical approaches, and inclusive environments rather than solely physical resources, the mismatch suggests conversion constraints where available provisions do not adequately translate into meaningful capabilities for children.

4.1.3 Comparatively Lower Priority or Structurally Constrained Domains

Capability domains such as Education (importance 1520) and Shelter and Environment (importance 1474) show comparatively lower importance scores relative to other domains, although availability and satisfaction remain moderately aligned. The lower importance ratings may reflect children's normalisation of these foundational provisions as routine aspects of schooling rather than indicators of lower actual need.

In the case of Shelter and Environment, the relatively lower satisfaction (1235) compared to availability (1318) suggests infrastructural inconsistencies or quality concerns despite basic provision being present. Education similarly shows a close alignment between availability and satisfaction but lower overall importance relative to wellbeing-related domains, possibly indicating that children perceive educational inputs as expected institutional functions rather than aspirational capabilities.

Across these capability domains, the pattern of satisfaction trailing availability suggests that access alone does not necessarily translate into meaningful or positive experiences. These capability domains may therefore be experienced more passively rather than actively valued, highlighting areas where quality enhancement and contextual relevance could strengthen children's perceptions and engagement.

4.1.4 Cross-Capability Domain Interpretation

The patterns across availability, satisfaction, and importance indicate a consistent gap between what children value and what they experience in school. Importance scores exceed both availability and satisfaction across nearly all capability domains, demonstrating that children possess a clear understanding of priorities related to their wellbeing and educational experiences. However, uneven satisfaction levels highlight institutional limitations in translating resources into meaningful functioning.

Overall, the findings suggest that while foundational provisions exist across many capability domains, gaps remain in relational quality, inclusiveness, agency opportunities, and experiential

dimensions of schooling. Capability domains linked to wellbeing, identity, and aspirations appear relatively stronger, whereas autonomy, bodily integrity, and participatory experiences require greater institutional attention. These results provide important baseline evidence for strengthening institutional arrangements to better support children's valued educational capabilities and wellbeing.

4.2 Children's Assessment of the Capability Domains

Table 4 presents the capability domains that have two or more indicators (domains having single or overlapping indicators are not shown here) and the ratings given by the students respectively:

Table 4: Children's Assessment of the Capability Domains

Capability Domains/Indicators	***Availability***	***Satisfaction***	***Importance***
Education			
Adequate number of teachers	1556	1566	1856
Textbooks	1433	1446	1796
Stationery	1436	1501	1807
White/Blackboard	1596	1522	1828
Uniform	1718	1678	1834
Physical Health			
Safe drinking water	1619	1587	1875
First aid	1659	1566	1843
Playground	1549	1410	1682
Bodily Integrity			
Separate toilets for girls and boys	1832	1571	1837
Facilities inside the toilet	1161	1098	1748
Provision of sanitary pads	1490	1412	1807
Disabled-friendly infrastructure	1218	1189	1744
UIPIT			
Library	1645	1590	1769
Computers	1590	1444	1851
Shelter & Environment			
Adequate school built-up area	1573	1461	1809
Adequate classroom space	1682	1606	1868
Adequate desks and benches	1695	1606	1860
Electricity	1642	1503	1832
Social Relations			
Parent–teacher meeting	1820	1786	1873
Child club	1210	1176	1653

4.2.1 Education

The variables under the Education capability domain represent institutional resources necessary for effective teaching and learning. Across all indicators, importance scores remain consistently higher than both availability and satisfaction scores, indicating that students place greater value on these resources than what they currently experience in schools. For example, adequate number of teachers (availability 1556; satisfaction 1565; importance 1856), textbooks (1433; 1446; 1796), stationery (1437; 1501; 1807), white/blackboard (1596; 1522; 1828), and uniforms (1718; 1678; 1834) all demonstrate this pattern of importance exceeding experienced conditions.

While the availability of uniforms and teachers appears relatively strong compared to other indicators, satisfaction scores for textbooks and stationery are comparatively lower, suggesting concerns related to adequacy, accessibility, or quality. Overall, the findings indicate that although institutional provisions for education are present, gaps remain between provision and student expectations, particularly regarding learning materials and classroom resources.

4.2.2 Physical Health

The indicators within the Physical Health capability domain reflect the school's capacity to ensure basic health and wellbeing conditions. Safe drinking water shows very high importance (1875) compared to availability (1619) and satisfaction (1587), suggesting that although facilities exist, their reliability or quality may not fully meet students' expectations. Similarly, first aid (1659 availability; 1565 satisfaction; 1843 importance) and playground facilities (1549; 1410; 1682) demonstrate noticeable gaps between perceived importance and lived experience.

These findings suggest that preventive and supportive health measures are recognised by students as essential components of schooling but are not consistently experienced at the desired level, reflecting uneven institutionalisation of health-related provisions.

4.2.3 Bodily Integrity

This capability domain captures the school's ability to provide gender-sensitive, safe, and inclusive sanitation and infrastructure. Separate toilets for girls and boys show relatively high availability (1832) and importance (1838), indicating strong institutional attention to this area. However, other indicators such as facilities inside toilets (1161 availability; 1098 satisfaction; 1748 importance), provision of sanitary pads (1490; 1412; 1807), and disability-friendly infrastructure (1218; 1189; 1744) reveal substantial gaps between importance and actual experience.

The comparatively lower scores for disability-friendly infrastructure highlight potential systemic exclusion and accessibility challenges. Overall, the findings suggest that bodily integrity is

structurally addressed in some areas but remains insufficient in terms of quality, inclusiveness, and usability.

4.2.4 UIPIT (Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine, and Think)

The indicators in this capability domain represent access to informational and cognitive development resources within schools. Library facilities show relatively higher availability (1646) and satisfaction (1591) compared to computers (1591 availability; 1444 satisfaction), although both indicators have high importance scores (1769 and 1850 respectively).

The gap between importance and satisfaction suggests that while informational resources are present, their integration into meaningful learning experiences may be limited. In particular, access to digital technology emerges as an area requiring further strengthening to support higher-order thinking capabilities and future-oriented learning.

4.2.5 Shelter and Environment

This capability domain represents the physical learning environment and school infrastructure. Indicators such as adequate school built-up area (1573 availability; 1461 satisfaction; 1809 importance), classroom space (1681; 1605; 1868), and desks and benches (1695; 1605; 1861) show relatively strong availability alongside high importance. However, satisfaction scores remain somewhat lower, suggesting variations in quality or adequacy across contexts.

Electricity (1642 availability; 1503 satisfaction; 1832 importance) shows a more pronounced gap, indicating infrastructural inconsistencies across schools. These results suggest that while foundational infrastructure is largely established, disparities in reliability and quality persist.

4.2.6 Social Relations

The indicators in this capability domain reflect participatory and relational dimensions of schooling. Parent–teacher meetings demonstrate very high availability (1820), satisfaction (1786), and importance (1873), indicating strong institutional recognition of parental engagement. However, child clubs show comparatively lower availability (1210) and satisfaction (1176) despite moderate importance (1653), suggesting that student-led participation structures are less developed.

This pattern indicates that while formal mechanisms for adult participation are well institutionalised, opportunities for student voice, leadership, and peer engagement may require further strengthening.

4.3 Cross-Domain Interpretation

Disaggregating the capability domains highlights how institutional inputs translate unevenly into students' lived experiences. Indicators related to physical infrastructure tend to show relatively higher availability scores, whereas those associated with quality, inclusiveness, usability, and meaningful participation reveal larger gaps between importance and satisfaction.

Across capability domains, importance scores consistently exceed both availability and satisfaction, indicating that students have clear priorities regarding what supports their wellbeing and educational functioning. However, the persistence of satisfaction gaps suggests that institutional compliance with minimum standards does not necessarily translate into functional adequacy from students' perspectives.

The indicator-level analysis, therefore, provides deeper insight into specific areas where institutional performance requires strengthening, particularly in improving quality, inclusiveness, reliability, and opportunities for agency, to better align with children's valued educational capabilities.

SECTION 5

VALUATION OF WELL-BEING AND AGENCY

5.1 Well-being and Agency

This section presents the aggregated scores for each dimension using the mean values derived from the composite elements of children's (a) well-being freedom, (b) well-being achievement, (c) agency freedom, and (d) agency achievement. In total, 16 domains were assessed, each rated on a scale of 0 to 10. Within the Bhutanese school context, the scores across domains range between 8 and 10, indicating generally high levels of perceived well-being and agency among the respondent children. The score for each domain therefore reflects the overall intensity with which children experience and exercise both well-being and agency in their schooling environment when considered in aggregate.

5.1.1 Well-being Freedom

The composite domains of well-being freedom as opportunities for children are presented in the spider diagram (Figure 8). Each domain score represents the level of intensity calculated as an aggregation of the simple mean of indicators within each domain, reflecting the level of wellbeing-freedom experienced by the respondent children across multiple dimensions.

The diagram indicates that overall scores across domains are relatively high, suggesting that children perceive positive conditions in most aspects of their wellbeing and freedoms. Among the domains, Social Relations (9.27)**,** Love, Care and Respect (9.26), and Religion and Identity (9.26) record the highest mean scores, closely followed by Education (9.20) and Bodily Integrity (9.19). These results suggest that children experience strong interpersonal relationships, emotional support, and a sense of identity and belonging, alongside favourable educational and personal safety environments.

Several domains fall within a slightly moderate yet still positive range, including Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.09)**,** Participation (9.06)**,** Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum (9.04)**,** Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine and Think (9.00**)**, and Shelter and Environment (8.97)**.** These scores indicate that children generally experience opportunities for engagement, protection, inclusion, and cognitive development, although there remains room for further strengthening these dimensions.

The comparatively lower mean scores are observed in Mental Wellbeing (8.59)**,** Aspiration (8.74)**,** and Autonomy (8.77**)**, followed by Nutritional Wellbeing (8.91)**,** Physical Health (8.91), and Mobility (8.91)**.** While these scores remain within a favourable range, they suggest potential

areas where children may face certain constraints related to emotional health, personal independence, future orientation, and physical wellbeing.

Overall, the relatively high scores across all domains indicate a generally positive perception of wellbeing-freedom among the respondent children. However, the variation across domains highlights the need for targeted interventions to further strengthen children's mental wellbeing, autonomy, and aspirations to ensure more balanced and holistic development outcomes.

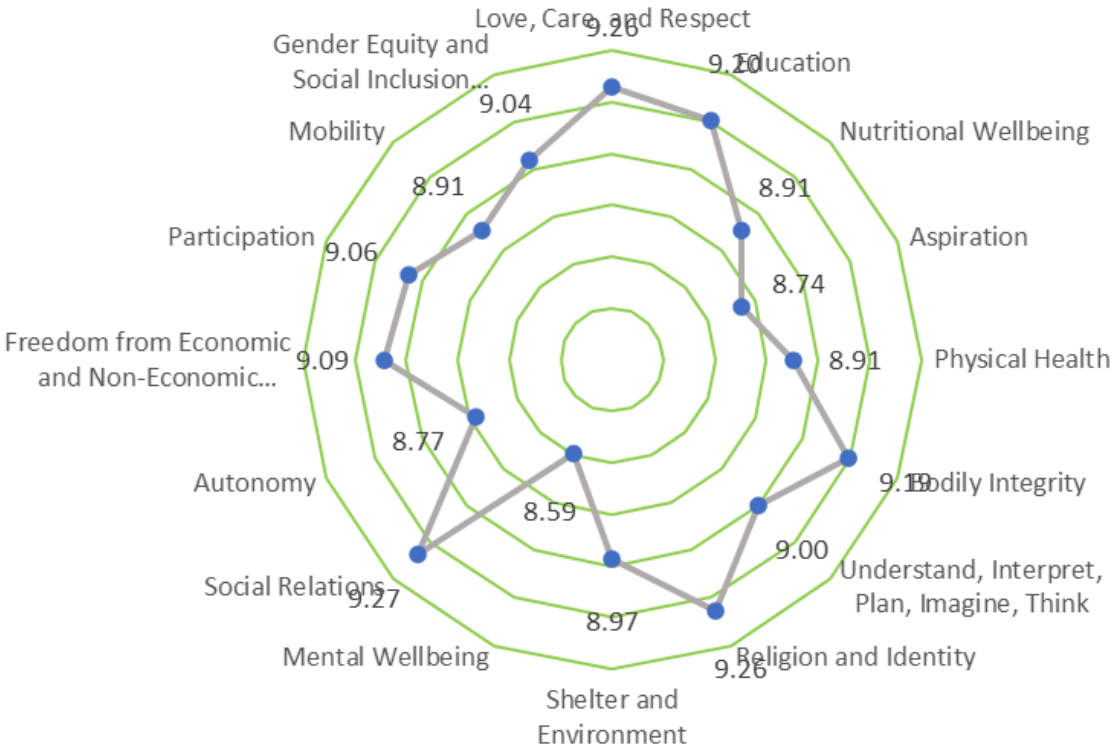

Figure 8: Well-being Freedom

5.1.2 Well-being Achievement

The composite domains of children's wellbeing achievement are presented in the spider diagram (Figure 9). Each domain score represents the level of achievement calculated as an aggregation of the mean scores of indicators within each domain, reflecting the extent to which children perceive their wellbeing outcomes across multiple dimensions.

The results indicate that the overall achievement levels across domains are generally high, suggesting that children experience favourable outcomes in most areas of wellbeing. Among the domains, Shelter and Environment (9.30) records the highest mean score, followed by Social

Relations (9.24), Religion and Identity (9.19), Aspiration (9.14), and Education (9.10). These findings suggest that children perceive strong support systems, positive social interactions, and conducive living and learning environments that contribute significantly to their wellbeing achievements.

Several domains also demonstrate relatively high achievement levels, including Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine and Think (9.08), Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.08), Bodily Integrity (9.07), Autonomy (8.95), and Love, Care and Respect (8.94). These scores indicate that children generally feel protected, respected, and capable of exercising personal agency, while also benefiting from cognitive and developmental opportunities.

The domains that show comparatively lower achievement scores include Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum (8.82), Participation (8.88), Nutritional Wellbeing (8.87), Physical Health (8.62), Mental Wellbeing (8.53), and Mobility (8.35). Although these scores remain within a positive range, they suggest potential areas requiring further attention, particularly in enhancing children's physical and mental health, freedom of movement, and inclusive participation opportunities.

Overall, the findings indicate that children report strong wellbeing achievements across most domains, with environmental conditions, social relationships, and identity-related factors emerging as key strengths. However, targeted efforts to improve mobility, mental wellbeing, and health-related aspects could further enhance balanced and holistic wellbeing outcomes among children.

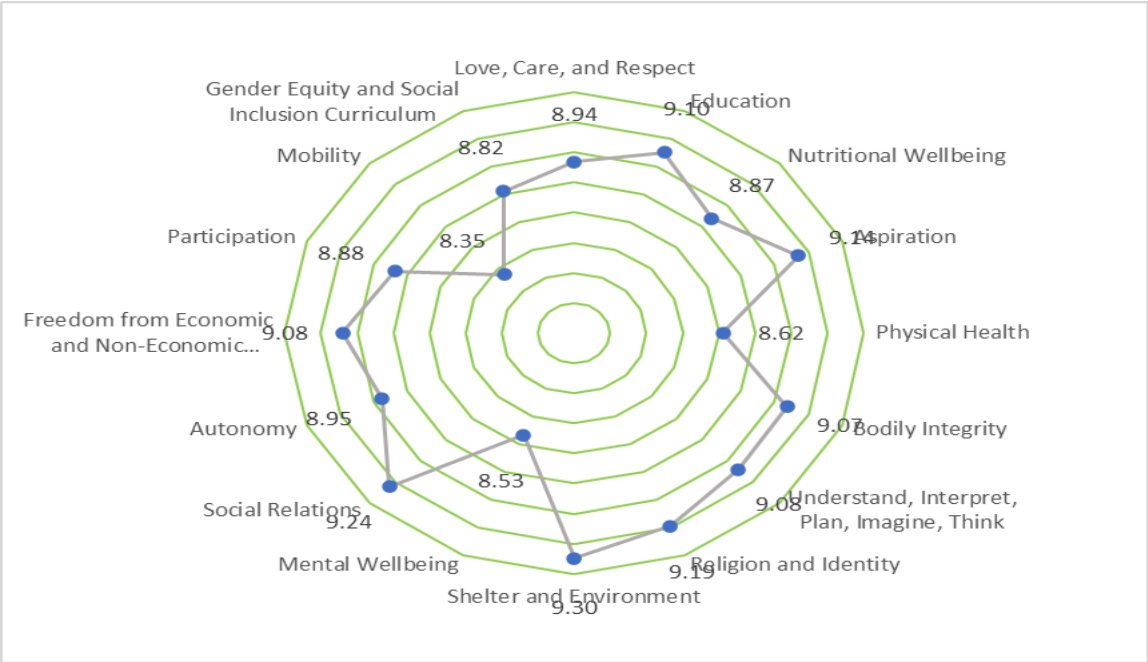

Figure 9: Well-being Achievement

5.1.3 Agency Freedom

The composite domains of children's agency freedom are presented in the spider diagram (Figure 10). Each domain score represents the level of agency calculated as the aggregated mean of indicators within each domain, reflecting the extent to which children perceive their ability to make choices, express themselves, and act upon opportunities across different areas of their lives.

The findings indicate that agency freedom scores are generally high across most domains, suggesting that children perceive themselves as having meaningful opportunities to exercise voice, choice, and participation. Among the domains, Education (9.31) records the highest mean score, closely followed by Religion and Identity (9.30)**,** Social Relations (9.25)**,** Shelter and Environment (9.20)**,** and Aspiration (9.17)**.** These results suggest that supportive learning environments, strong social networks, and a sense of identity contribute positively to children's perceived agency.
Several other domains also demonstrate strong agency levels, including Bodily Integrity (9.14)**,** Autonomy (9.09)**,** Love, Care and Respect (9.08)**,** Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.07)**,** and Participation (9.04)**.** These scores indicate that children generally feel respected, protected, and able to exercise personal decision-making and engagement in activities that affect their lives.

Moderately lower scores are observed in Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine and Think (8.99)**,** Nutritional Wellbeing (8.94)**,** Mobility (8.93)**,** Physical Health (8.90)**,** Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum (8.89)**,** and Mental Wellbeing (8.66)**.** Although these domains still fall within a positive range, they highlight potential areas for strengthening children's confidence, emotional wellbeing, physical independence, and inclusive participation experiences.

Overall, the results suggest that children experience relatively strong agency freedom across domains, particularly in education, identity, and social relationships. However, additional efforts to enhance mental wellbeing, mobility, and inclusive curriculum experiences may further strengthen children's capacity to exercise agency in a more balanced and holistic manner.

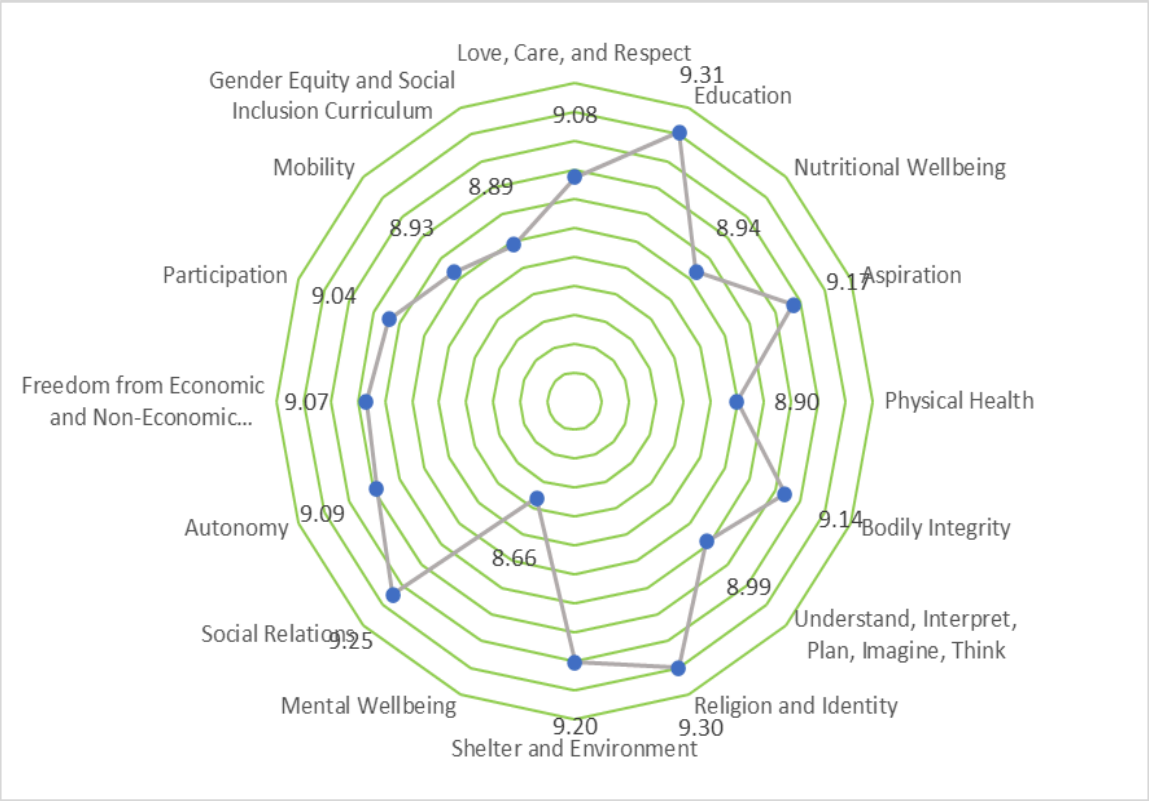

Figure 10: Agency Freedom

5.1.4 Agency Achievement

Figure 11 shows the domains and scores on each domain as agency achievement exercised by the respondent children. The agency achievements in the following domains are relatively high in score: "Religion and Identity" (9.33), "Education" (9.31), "Shelter and Environment" (9.31), "Social Relations" (9.24), and "Participation" (9.15). These higher scores indicate that children perceive themselves as having strong capacity to act and make choices in areas related to their identity, educational engagement, social interactions, and participation in activities and decision-making processes.

The moderately scored domains include **"**Autonomy" (9.08), "Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation" (9.08), "Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine and Think" (9.06), "Love, Care and Respect" (9.05), "Aspiration" (9.04), and "Nutritional Wellbeing" (9.01)**.** These results suggest that while children demonstrate agency in these areas, the level of achievement may still depend on contextual support such as family environment, school practices, and available resources.

The comparatively lower scored domains are "Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum" (8.99), "Bodily Integrity" (8.96), "Mobility" (8.89), "Physical Health" (8.86), and

"Mental Wellbeing" (8.68). Although the scores remain relatively high overall, these domains appear less realised compared to others, indicating potential areas where children may face constraints in fully exercising their agency, particularly in relation to emotional wellbeing, health conditions, and freedom of movement.

Overall, the distribution of scores suggests that children report strong agency achievements across most domains, with some variation highlighting specific areas that may benefit from strengthened institutional and environmental support.

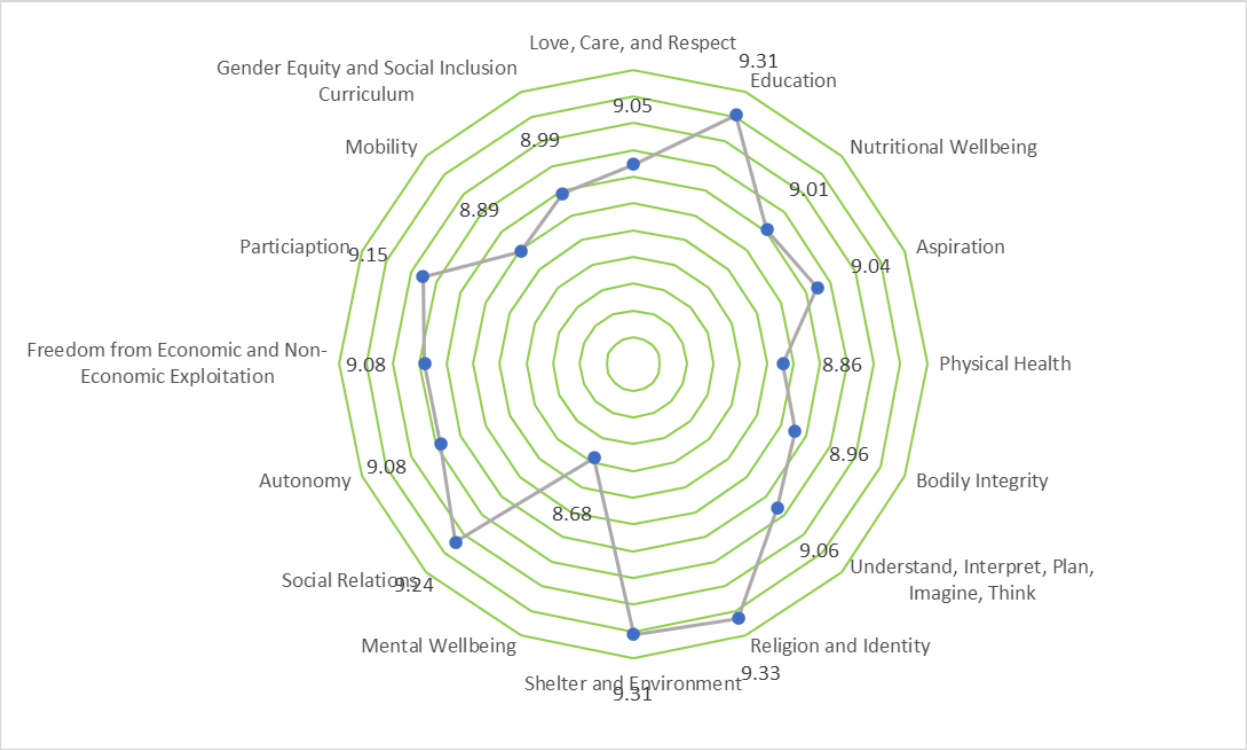

Figure 11: Agency Achievement

5.2 Gender

5.2.1 Wellbeing Freedom

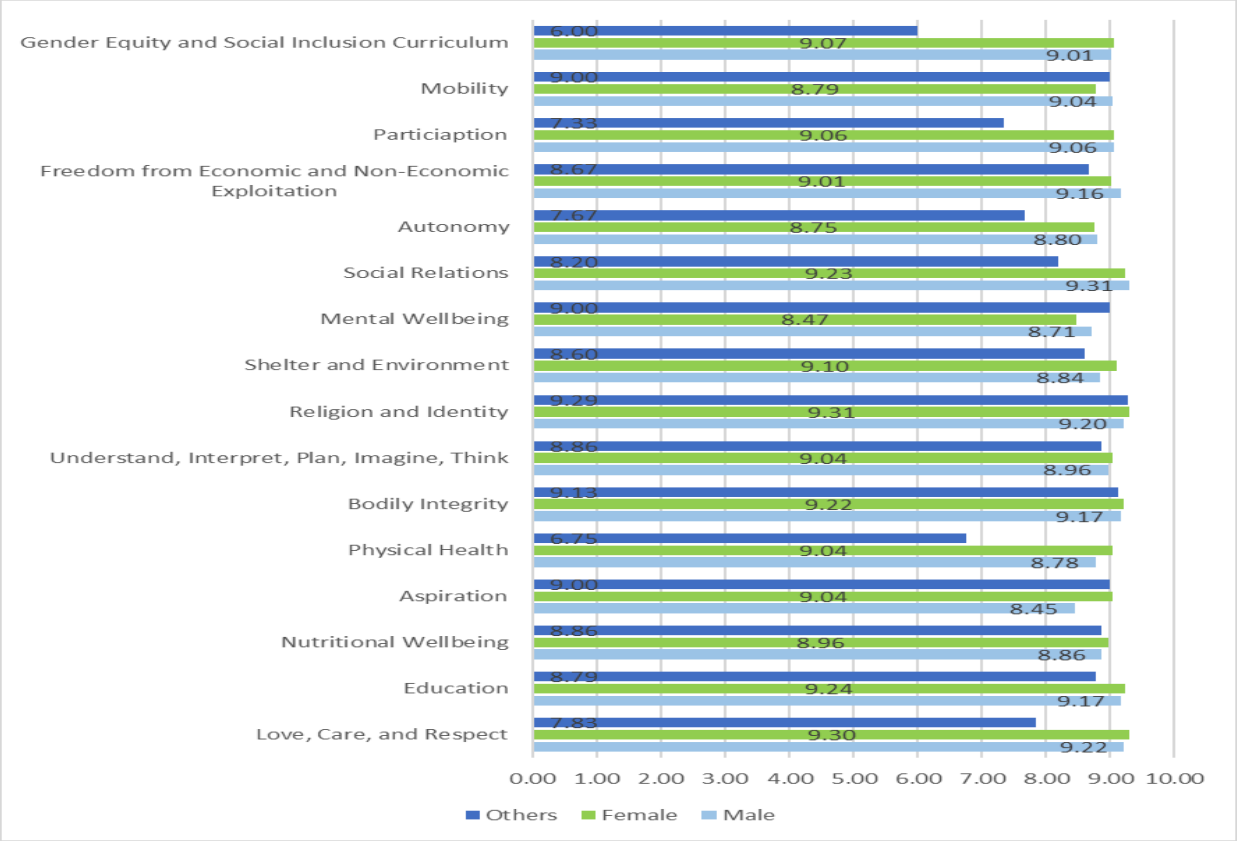

Figure 12: Well-being Freedom by Gender

The bar diagram above (Figure 12) shows cores for Well-being Freedom in relation to gender. The scores across boys, girls, and the "Others" category are generally high across all domains, mostly ranging between 8 and 9 points, indicating positive perceptions of gender well-being freedom. Female students score slightly higher in several domains such as Participation, Social Relations, and Mental Well-being, while male students demonstrate marginally higher scores in areas such as Physical Health and Education. The "Others" category shows more variation across domains, with comparatively lower scores in a few areas but still remaining within the overall positive range.

Overall, the differences among boys, girls, and others are relatively small, suggesting that gender well-being freedom is experienced at broadly similar levels across groups. However, the slight variations indicate the need for continued inclusive practices to ensure equitable experiences and opportunities for all gender identities.

5.2.2 Well-being Achievement

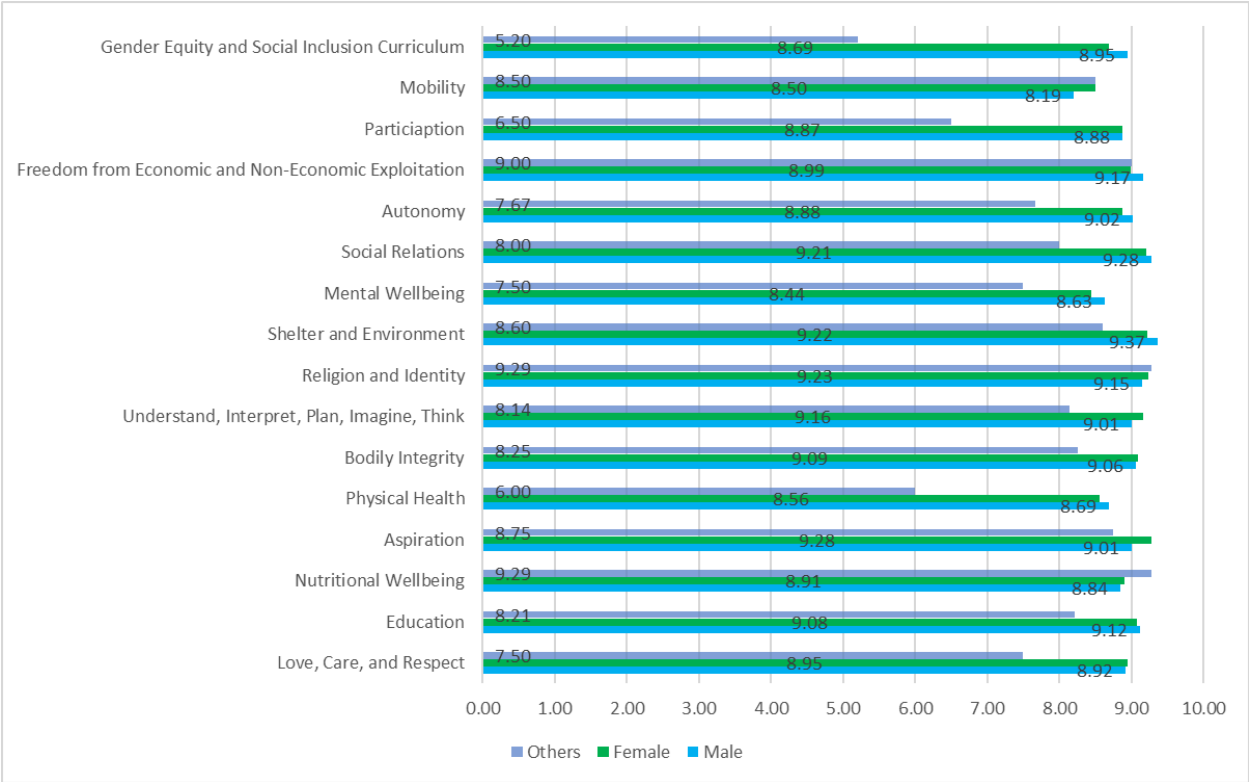

Figure 13: Well-being Achievement by Gender

The bar diagram above (Figure 13) presents scores for Well-being Achievement in relation to Gender. It shows the scores provided by students across the capability domains of their well-being achievements for boys, girls, and the "Others" gender category. Overall, scores across all three groups are relatively high and closely clustered, indicating broadly similar levels of well-being achievement. Female students score slightly higher than males in several domains such as Participation, Social Relations, and Mental Well-being, while boys show marginally higher scores in domains including Physical Health and Education. The "Others" gender category demonstrates more variability across domains, with comparatively lower scores in a few areas but still remaining within the general positive range.

Although the differences among the three groups are not large, the variations suggest the importance of ensuring inclusive and equitable support across all domains, particularly for gender-diverse students whose experiences may differ from those of boys and girls. Interventions should therefore aim to strengthen well-being achievements for all groups while addressing areas where specific gender categories show comparatively lower outcomes.

5.2.3 Agency Freedom

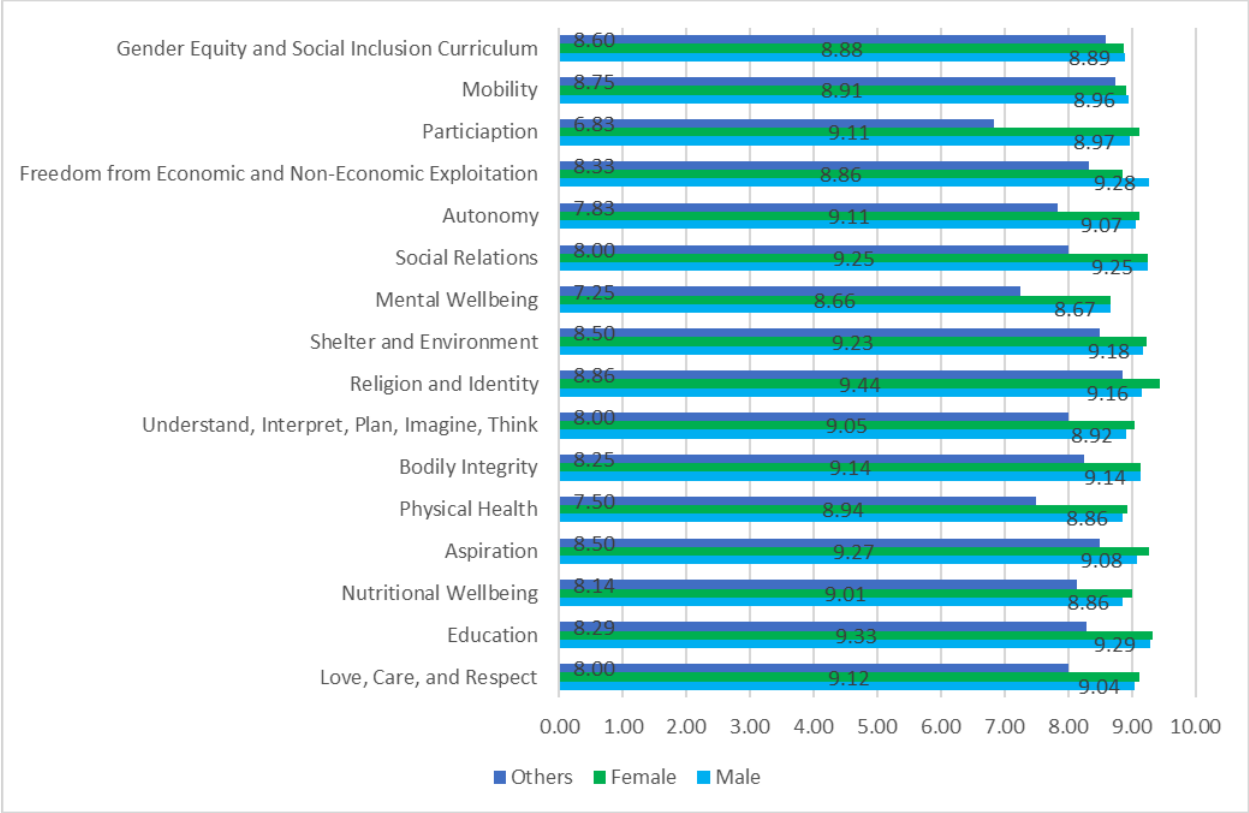

Figure 14: Agency Freedom by Gender

Figure 14 shows the scores across the domains of agency freedom for boys, girls, and the "Others" gender category. Female students score higher than boys in most domains, including Love, Care and Respect, Education, Aspiration, Mental Well-being, Participation, Social Relations, and GESI Curriculum, indicating comparatively stronger perceptions of agency freedom among girls. Boys show slightly higher scores in a few domains such as Physical Health and Bodily Integrity, although the differences are small. The "Others" category shows more variation across domains, with comparatively lower scores in some areas but still remaining within a generally positive range.

Overall, the differences among the three groups are modest, suggesting that agency freedom is relatively similar across genders. However, the variability observed for the "Others" category highlights the importance of inclusive interventions to ensure equitable opportunities for all gender identities.

5.2.4 Agency Achievement

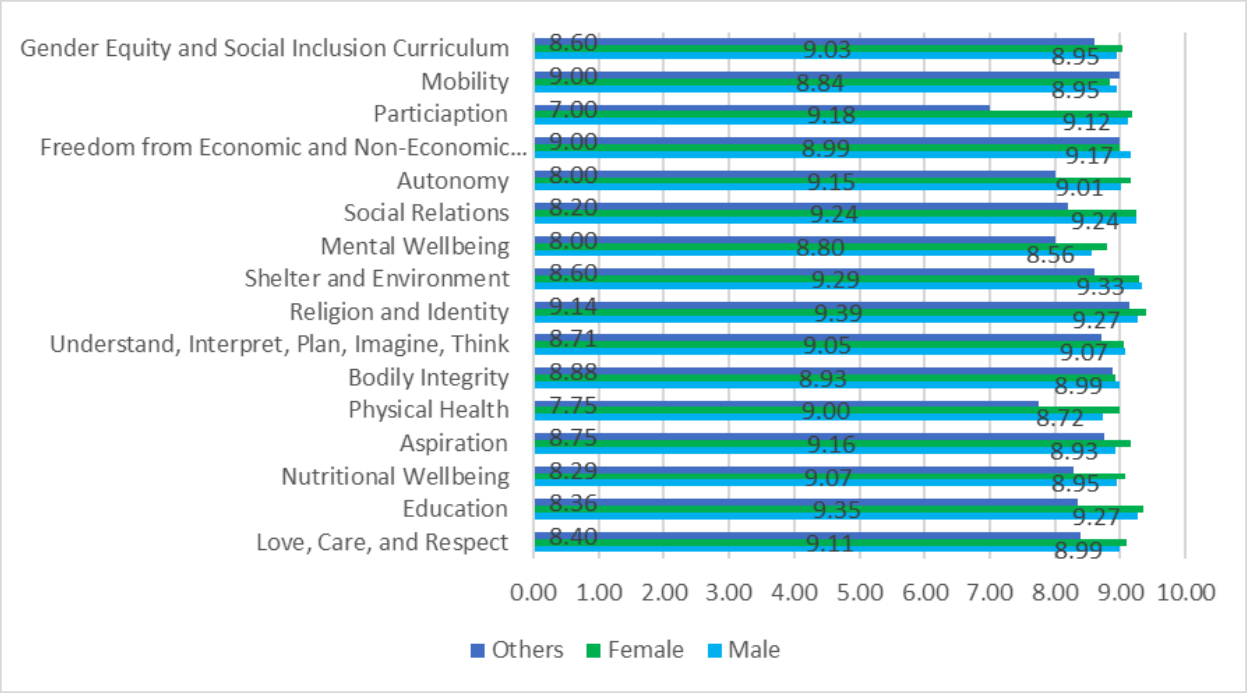

Figure 15: Agency Achievement by Gender

Figure 15 shows the scores in each domain of agency achievement across gender. Boys score higher than girls in the following domains: Love, Care and Respect, Education, Aspiration, Bodily Integrity, Understand, Interpret, Plan / Imagine and Think, Religion and Identity, Shelter and Environment, Social Relations, Participation, and GESI Curriculum. Girls score higher than boys in Nutritional Well-Being, Physical Health, Mental Well-being, Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation, and Autonomy, while both boys and girls score equally in Mobility. Overall, out of the 16 domains, boys score higher in ten domains, girls in five, and both are equal in one domain, indicating that boys experience relatively greater agency achievement than girls.

The "Others" gender category shows scores that are generally comparable but more variable across domains, suggesting diverse experiences among students who do not identify strictly as male or female.

The gender disaggregation highlights systematic differences in how agency is experienced and exercised. Girls' relatively lower scores in domains related to participation, mobility, and autonomy suggest constraints in exercising freedom rather than lack of awareness or aspiration. These patterns point toward normative and institutional barriers that influence how similar resources are converted into lived outcomes, positioning gender as a significant dimension of inequality within school environments.

5.3 Grade

5.2.1 Well-being Freedom

Figure 16 presents the distribution of well-being freedom scores across grades (primary, lower secondary, and middle secondary). The pattern indicates noticeable variation in children's perceived opportunities across schooling levels.

Primary grade students generally report higher well-being freedom in several domains, particularly Social Relations (9.44), Love, Care and Respect (9.35), Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine and Think (9.20), Bodily Integrity (9.30), and Physical Health (8.97), suggesting that younger children perceive stronger supportive relationships and learning opportunities within their school environments. Lower secondary students also demonstrate relatively strong scores in domains such as Mobility (9.19), Shelter and Environment (8.98), Social Relations (9.25), and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum (9.05), indicating continued access to enabling institutional and participation-related opportunities during this stage.

In contrast, middle secondary students show comparatively higher scores in Mobility (9.33) and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum (9.44), along with relatively favourable Love, Care and Respect (9.11) and Religion and Identity (9.06), which may reflect greater independence, inclusion, and perceived safety as children grow older. However, in several other domains, including Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine and Think (8.54), Aspiration (8.43), Mental Wellbeing (8.41), and Autonomy (8.43), middle secondary scores appear slightly lower than those of primary students, suggesting that perceived opportunities may not increase proportionally with grade progression.

Across all grades, Nutritional Wellbeing (Primary = 9.02; Lower Secondary = 8.80; Middle Secondary = 8.71) and Physical Health (Primary = 8.97; Lower Secondary = 8.91; Middle Secondary = 8.66) remain comparatively moderate, indicating areas where perceived opportunities are somewhat less strong than relational or institutional domains. Overall, the results suggest that while children across grades experience generally high levels of well-being freedom, the nature of opportunities shifts with age, with relational support stronger in earlier grades and autonomy- and mobility-related freedoms increasing in higher grades.

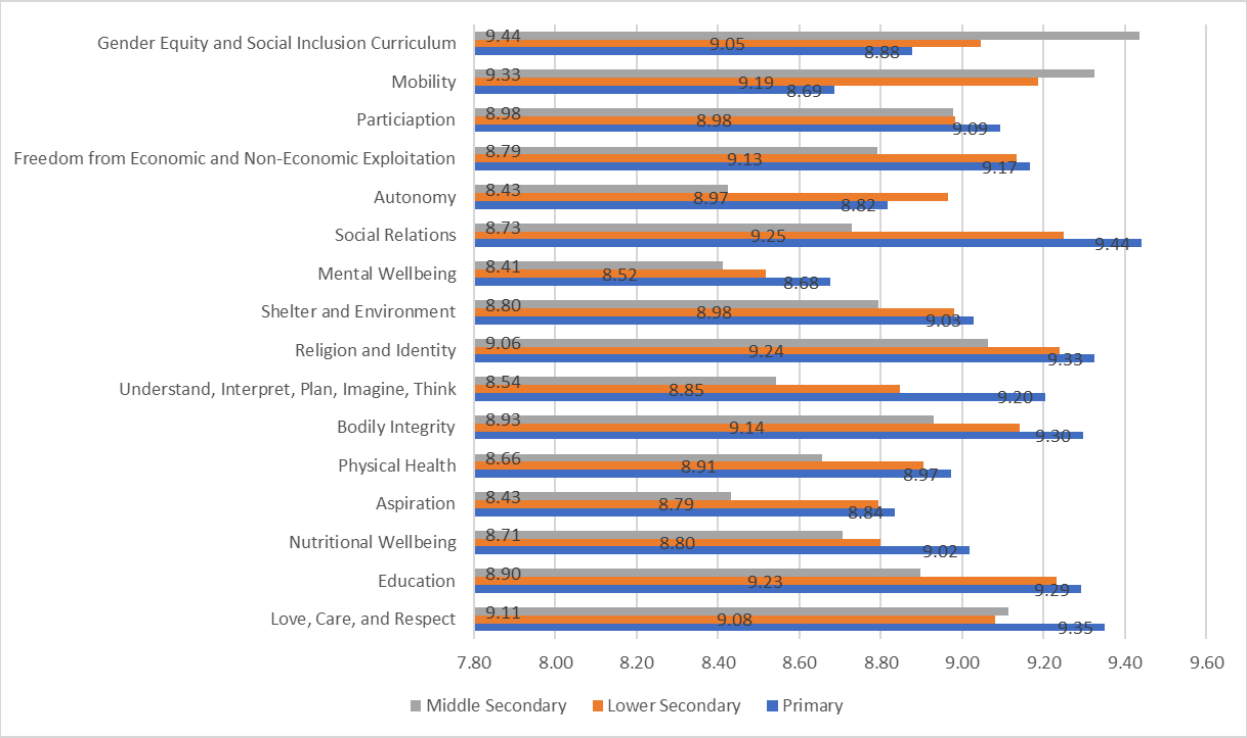

Figure 16: Well-being Freedom by Grade

5.3.2 Well-being Achievement

Figure 17 presents the distribution of well-being achievement across grades (primary, lower secondary, and middle secondary). The pattern shows clear variations in how children translate opportunities into achieved outcomes at different schooling levels.

Primary students generally report higher well-being achievement in several domains, including Love, Care and Respect (9.18), Education (9.35), Aspiration (9.27), Bodily Integrity (9.24), Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine and Think (9.13), Religion and Identity (9.34), Shelter and Environment (9.17), and Social Relations (9.31). This suggests that younger students perceive stronger realised outcomes in relational, learning, and institutional support areas. Lower secondary students show relatively strong performance in domains such as Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.15), Autonomy (9.17), Shelter and Environment (9.20), Social Relations (9.34), and Aspiration (9.33), indicating increased independence and security during this stage.

Middle secondary students, while showing moderate scores across most domains, demonstrate comparatively higher achievement in Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum (9.44), Participation (9.13), Mobility (9.13), Shelter and Environment (9.31), and Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.21), suggesting greater engagement with institutional and participatory opportunities at higher grades. However, their scores in domains such as Mental Wellbeing (8.54), Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine and Think (8.54),

Nutritional Wellbeing (8.80), and Physical Health (8.80) appear relatively lower compared to other grades, indicating potential constraints in translating opportunities into outcomes as academic and social pressures increase with grade level.

Across all grades, Mental Wellbeing (Primary = 8.61; Lower Secondary = 8.90; Middle Secondary = 8.54) and Mobility (Primary = 8.78; Lower Secondary = 9.18; Middle Secondary = 9.13) remain comparatively lower than relational and institutional domains in the primary years, highlighting areas that may require additional support. Overall, the findings suggest that well-being achievement tends to be strongest in earlier grades and becomes more varied across domains as students progress through schooling.

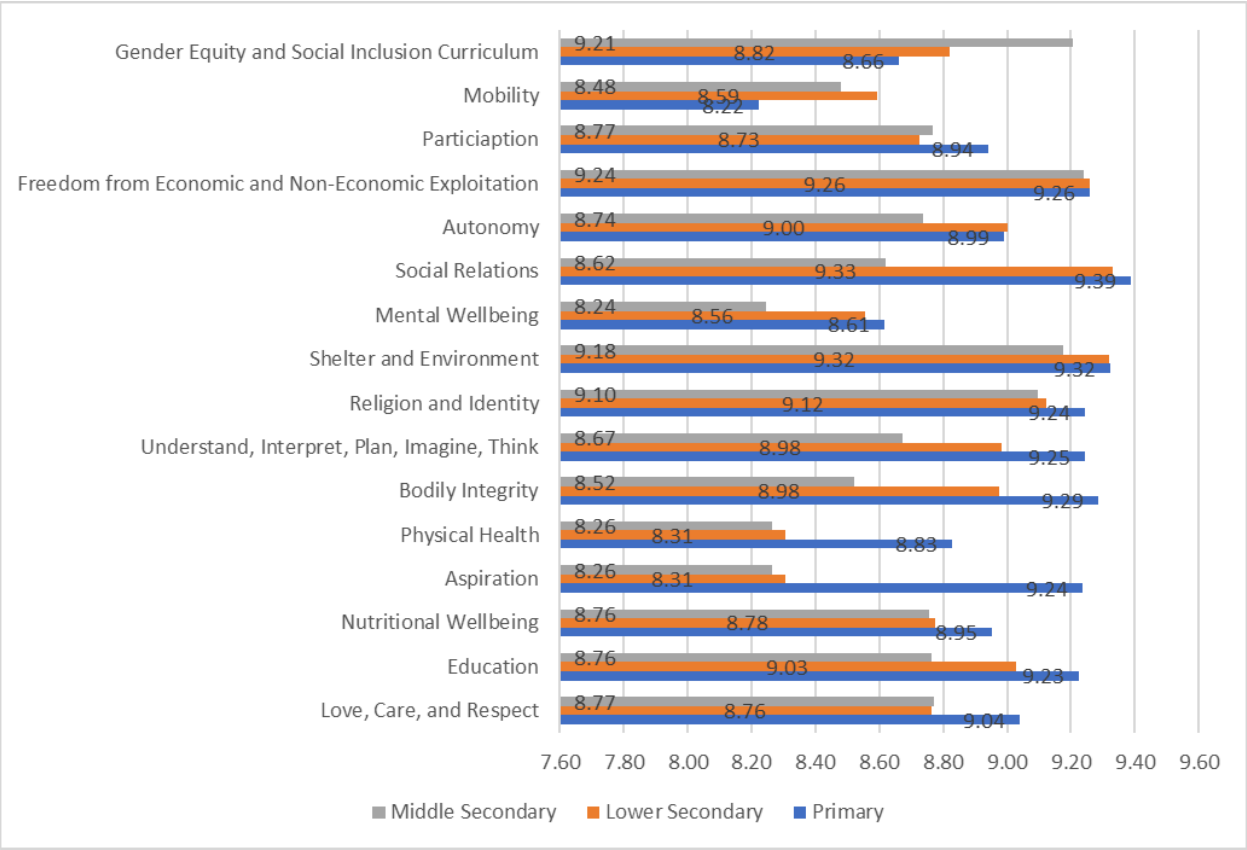

Figure 17: Well-being Achievement by Grade

5.2.3 Agency Freedom

Figure 18 presents Agency Freedom by grade level. Primary students report relatively strong agency freedom across several domains, particularly in Education (9.35), Religion and Identity (9.34), Social Relations (9.31), and Aspiration (9.27), suggesting that younger learners perceive meaningful opportunities for learning, identity development, and social engagement. They also demonstrate favourable freedom in Bodily Integrity (9.24), Shelter and Environment (9.17), and Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine, and Think (9.13). However, comparatively lower freedom is observed in Mental Wellbeing (8.61), Mobility (8.78), and Gender Equity and Social

Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum (8.65), indicating some perceived constraints in wellbeing support, movement, and inclusion-related experiences.

At the lower secondary level, agency freedom remains high and balanced across domains, with the highest scores in Social Relations (9.34), Aspiration (9.33), Education (9.26), Religion and Identity (9.28), and Shelter and Environment (9.20). Students also report strong perceptions of Mobility (9.18), Autonomy (9.17), and Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.15), reflecting increasing independence during adolescence. Slightly lower scores are observed in Physical Health (8.74), Nutritional Wellbeing (8.86), and Love, Care, and Respect (8.89), although these remain within a generally positive range.

Middle secondary students demonstrate strong agency freedom in Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Curriculum (9.44), Shelter and Environment (9.31), Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.21), Education (9.21), Religion and Identity (9.20), Participation (9.13), and Mobility (9.13), suggesting that older students perceive greater institutional support, inclusion, and opportunities for engagement and independence. However, relatively lower scores are evident in Mental Wellbeing (8.54), Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine, and Think (8.54), Bodily Integrity (8.80), Nutritional Wellbeing (8.80), and Physical Health (8.80). While these domains still fall within a positive range, they may indicate emerging wellbeing and cognitive pressure concerns among older learners.

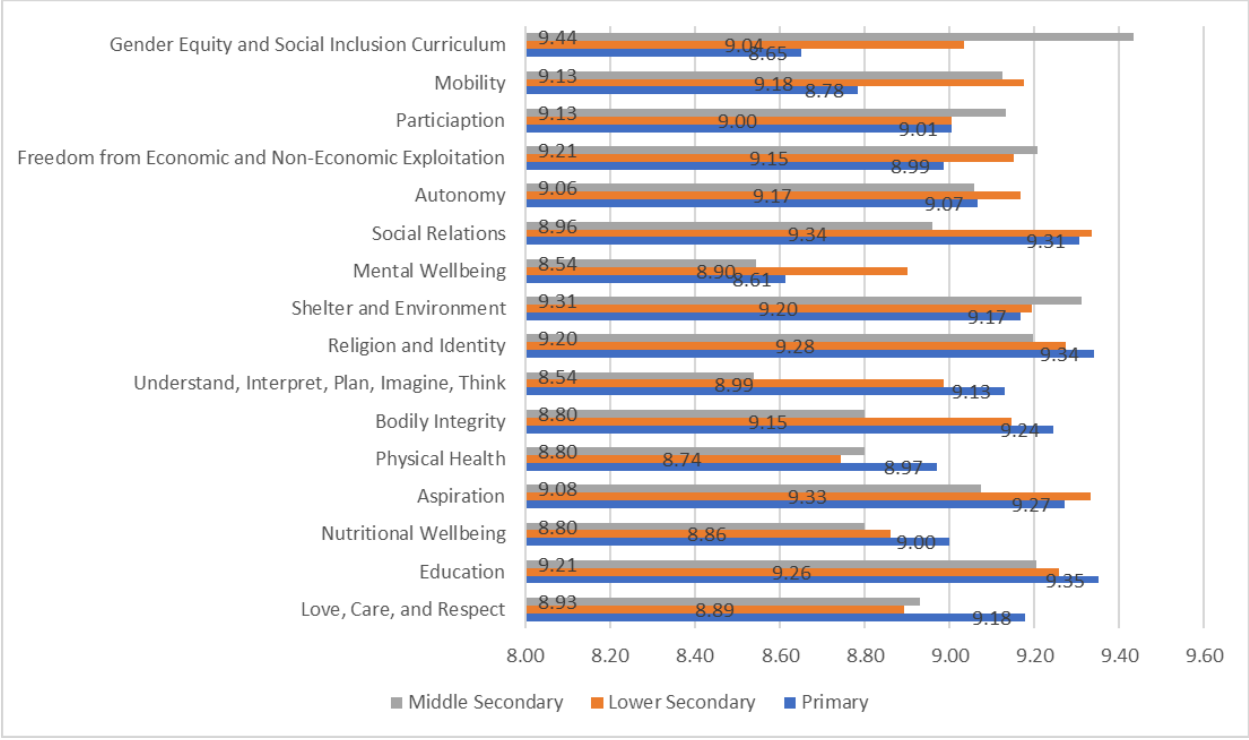

Figure 18: Agency Freedom by Grade

5.2.4 Agency Achievement

Figure 19 presents Agency Achievement by Grade. Primary Students (Grades I-VI) demonstrate strong agency achievement across most domains, particularly in Education (9.30), Religion and Identity (9.29), Social Relations (9.29), Aspiration (9.24), and Shelter and Environment (9.22). High scores are also observed in Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine, Think (9.15) and Love, Care and Respect (9.11). However, comparatively lower achievement is noted in Mobility (8.70), Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Curriculum (8.65), and Mental Wellbeing (8.75), suggesting areas where additional attention may be needed.

Lower Secondary students (Grades VII_VIII) show the highest achievement in Shelter and Environment (9.44), Religion and Identity (9.40), and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Curriculum (9.36), followed closely by Social Relations (9.34) and Participation (9.30). Education remains consistently strong (9.31). Slightly lower scores are observed in Physical Health (8.86) and Mental Wellbeing (8.84), though overall performance across domains remains high and balanced.

Middle Secondary students (Grade IX_X) demonstrate particularly strong achievement in Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Curriculum (9.63), Shelter and Environment (9.43), Religion and Identity (9.39), Participation (9.34), and Mobility (9.30), indicating increasing independence and engagement in social and environmental domains. However, relatively lower scores are observed in Mental Wellbeing (8.29), Bodily Integrity (8.70), Physical Health (8.78), and Aspiration (8.79), suggesting potential areas for targeted support despite generally high overall agency achievement.

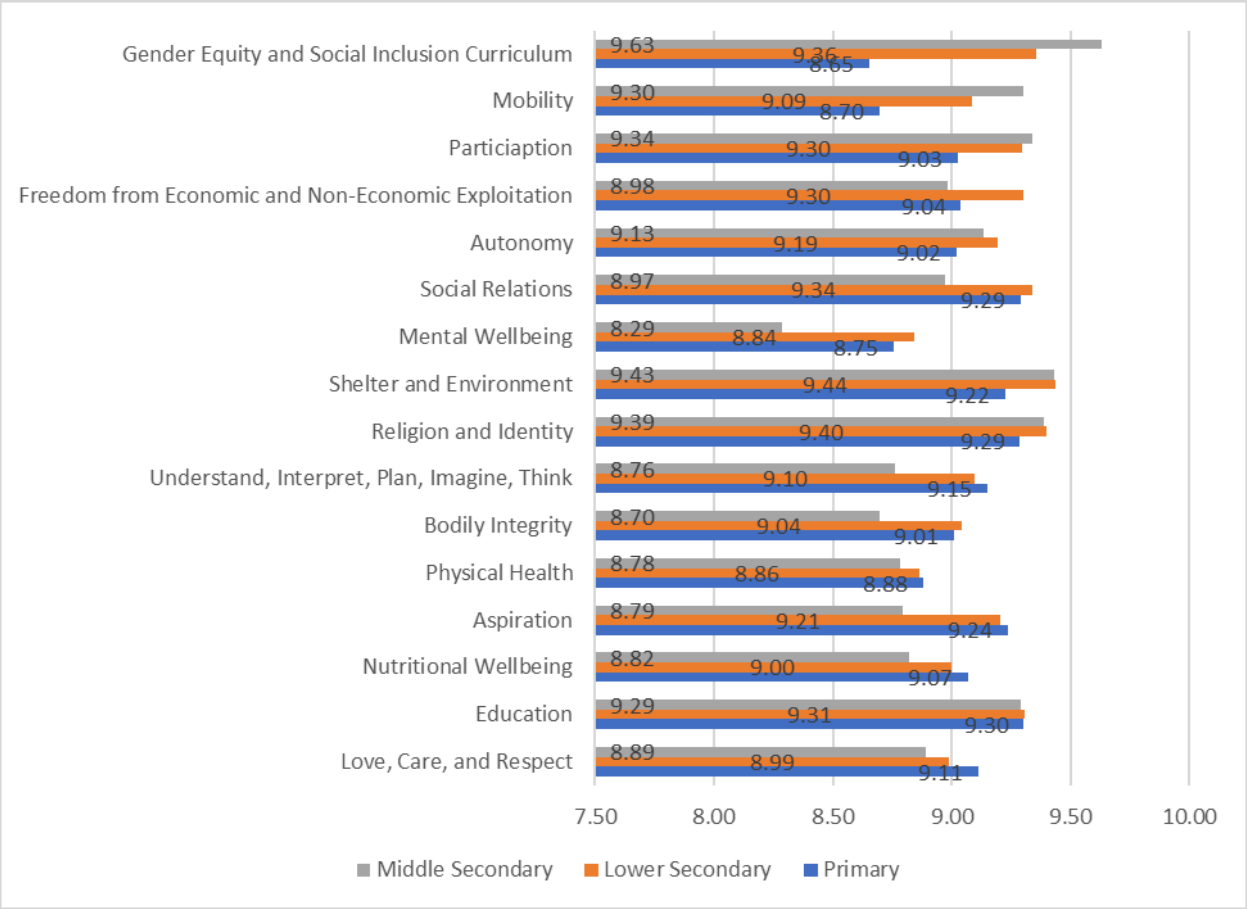

Figure 19: Agency Achievement by Grade

5.4 Ethnicity

5.4.1 Well-being Freedom

Figure 20 presents well-being freedom across ethnic groups, showing generally high perceived opportunities across most domains, with some variations between groups. Overall, Kurtoep students report the highest levels of well-being freedom across multiple domains, frequently reaching very high scores, including Religion and Identity (10.00), Aspiration (10.00), Shelter and Environment (10.00), Social Relations (10.00), Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (10.00), and Participation (10.00). They also report strong Mobility (9.92), Bodily Integrity (9.96), and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum (9.87), suggesting very favourable perceptions of institutional support, autonomy, and engagement opportunities.

Doya students report strong Mobility (9.63), Shelter and Environment (9.63), Participation (9.50), and Aspiration (9.42), suggesting favourable perceptions of movement and engagement opportunities, although lower scores appear in Love, Care and Respect (8.54), Physical Health (8.25), and Mental Wellbeing (8.08). The Non-categorised group shows generally positive scores across domains, including Love, Care and Respect (9.06), Freedom from Economic and

Non-Economic Exploitation (9.02), and Social Relations (9.03), but comparatively lower Mobility (7.47) and Mental Wellbeing (8.25).

Bumtap students also demonstrate strong perceived freedoms, particularly in Education (9.93), Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine, and Think (9.86), Shelter and Environment (9.80), Participation (9.67), and Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.67). However, a comparatively lower score is observed in Nutritional Wellbeing (6.57), indicating a potential area of concern relative to other groups. Among Ngalop students, perceived opportunities remain consistently high across most domains, including Religion and Identity (9.45), Participation (9.43), Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.49), Mobility (9.27), and Education (9.19), reflecting positive perceptions of both relational and institutional conditions. Lhotsham students similarly report favourable levels of freedom in Social Relations (9.37), Religion and Identity (9.30), Mobility (9.19), and Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.11), although slightly lower scores appear in Mental Wellbeing (8.69) and Nutritional Wellbeing (8.87).

Sharchop students show strong perceived freedoms in Love, Care and Respect (9.42), Education (9.25), Physical Health (9.13), and Religion and Identity (9.20), while moderate scores appear in Mental Wellbeing (8.43) and Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (8.72). Khengpa students demonstrate relatively high scores in Education (9.61), Autonomy (9.36), Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine, and Think (9.40), and Religion and Identity (9.40), but somewhat lower levels in Shelter and Environment (8.03) and Mental Wellbeing (8.04).
Across all cultural groups, Mental Wellbeing tends to remain comparatively lower than relational and institutional domains, indicating a potential cross-cutting area for further support. Overall, the findings suggest that while children from different cultural backgrounds perceive high levels of well-being freedom, the specific strengths vary across groups, reflecting diverse lived experiences and contextual conditions.

It is also important to interpret these findings in light of the sample distribution across cultural groups. Groups such as Kurtoep, Khengpa, Bumtap, and Doya represent relatively smaller respondent populations in the dataset. The very high scores observed for these groups across several domains may therefore reflect the influence of smaller sample sizes, where responses are less dispersed and more likely to cluster at the higher end of the scale. In contrast, Lhotsham respondents constitute the largest proportion of the sample, followed by Sharchop and Ngalop groups, which provide more stable estimates due to larger representation. Consequently, while the high scores among smaller groups indicate positive perceived experiences, they should be interpreted with caution and understood as indicative rather than directly comparable to the larger ethnic groups. Overall, the results highlight broadly positive well-being freedom across cultural communities, while also underscoring the importance of considering sample composition when interpreting group differences.

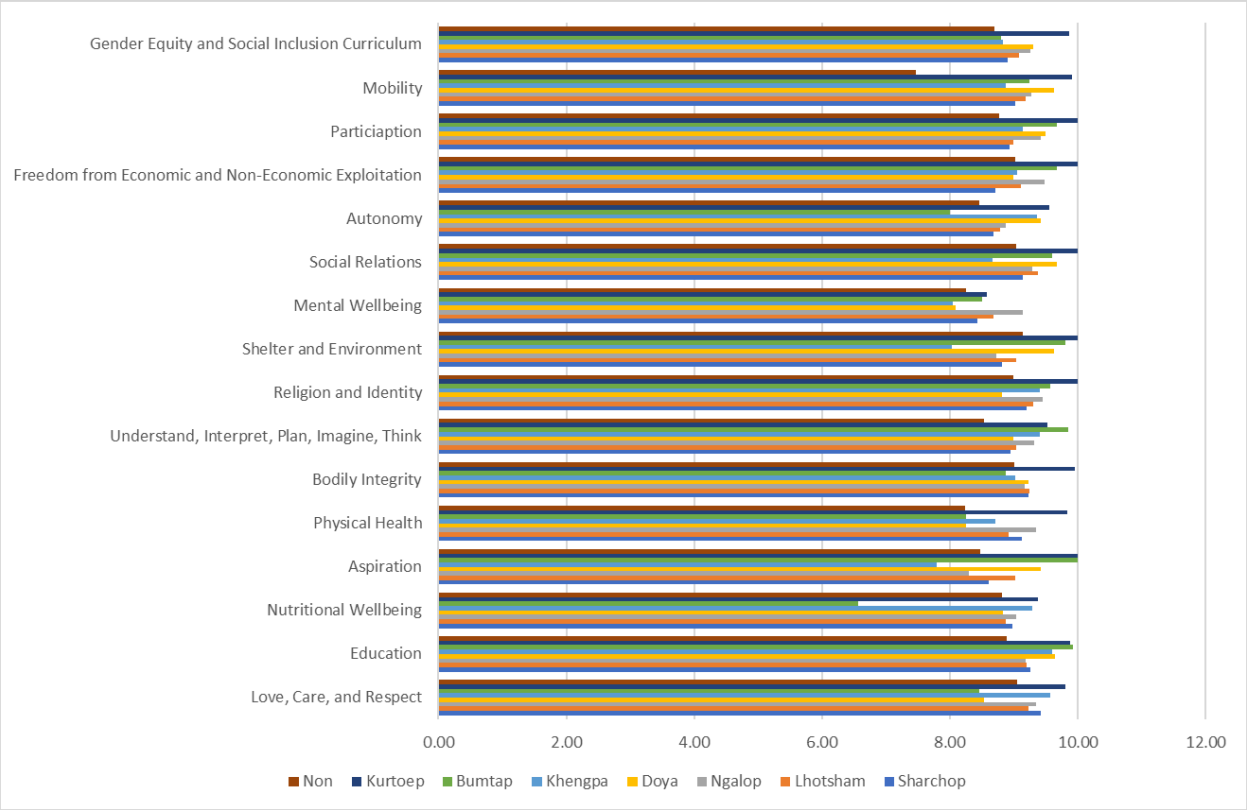

Figure 20: Well-being Freedom by Ethnicity

5.4.2 Well-being Achievement

Figure 21 presents the distribution of well-being achievement across ethnic groups. Overall, scores are high across most domains, though some variation is observed between groups.Among the larger respondent groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop) well-being achievement remains consistently strong across domains. For example, Education scores range from 9.01 (Lhotsham) to 9.14 (Sharchop) and 8.95 (Ngalop)**,** while Shelter and Environment scores remain similarly high at 9.27 (Lhotsham)**,** 9.34 (Sharchop), and 9.45 (Ngalop)**.** Social Relations are also positively perceived across these groups, with scores of 9.33 (Lhotsham)**,** 9.12 (Sharchop)**,** and 9.25 (Ngalop). These patterns suggest relatively uniform achievement outcomes among the three major ethnic categories represented in the sample.

Some smaller ethnic groups particularly Kurtoep, Khengpa, Bumtap, and Doya show comparatively higher scores in several domains. For instance, Kurtoep students report very high scores in Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation **(**10.00**),** Shelter and Environment (9.80)**,** and Participation **(**9.50**),** while Bumtap students show strong results in Shelter and Environment (9.60) and Participation (9.67). Doya students also demonstrate high achievement in Education (9.82) and Participation (9.25). However, these elevated scores

should be interpreted cautiously, as these ethnic categories represent relatively smaller respondent groups; smaller sample sizes often produce higher variability and may inflate mean scores compared to larger groups.

Across all ethnicities, Mental Wellbeing remains comparatively lower than other domains, ranging from **7**.85 (Non-categorised) to 8.81 (Lhotsham)**,** indicating a common area of concern regardless of ethnic background. Mobility also shows variability, with notably lower scores among Khengpa (6.92) and Non-categorised students (7.27) compared to higher scores among Kurtoep (9.58) and Bumtap (9.25).

Overall, the findings suggest that while well-being achievement is generally positive across ethnic groups, differences observed among smaller ethnic categories should be interpreted in light of sample size distribution. The three largest groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop) demonstrate relatively stable and comparable achievement patterns, indicating broadly equitable well-being outcomes across major ethnic communities.

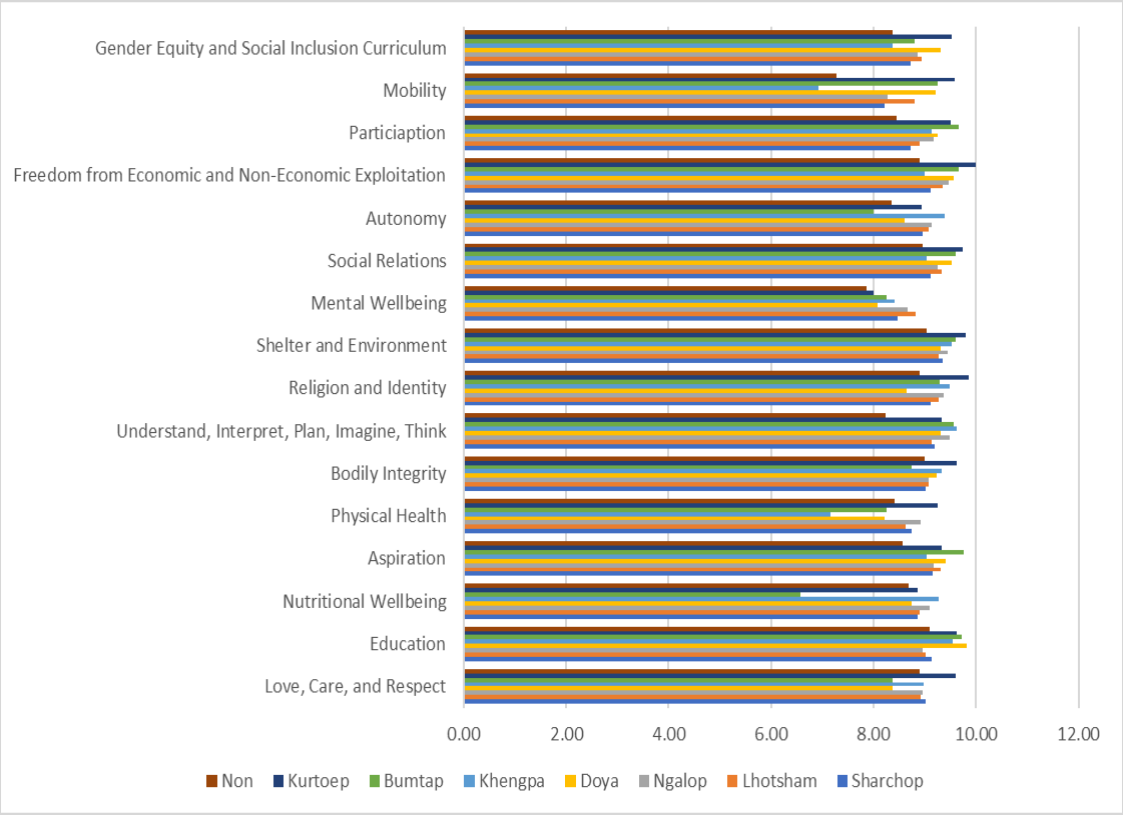

Figure 21: Well-being Achievement by Ethnicity

5.4.3 Agency Freedom

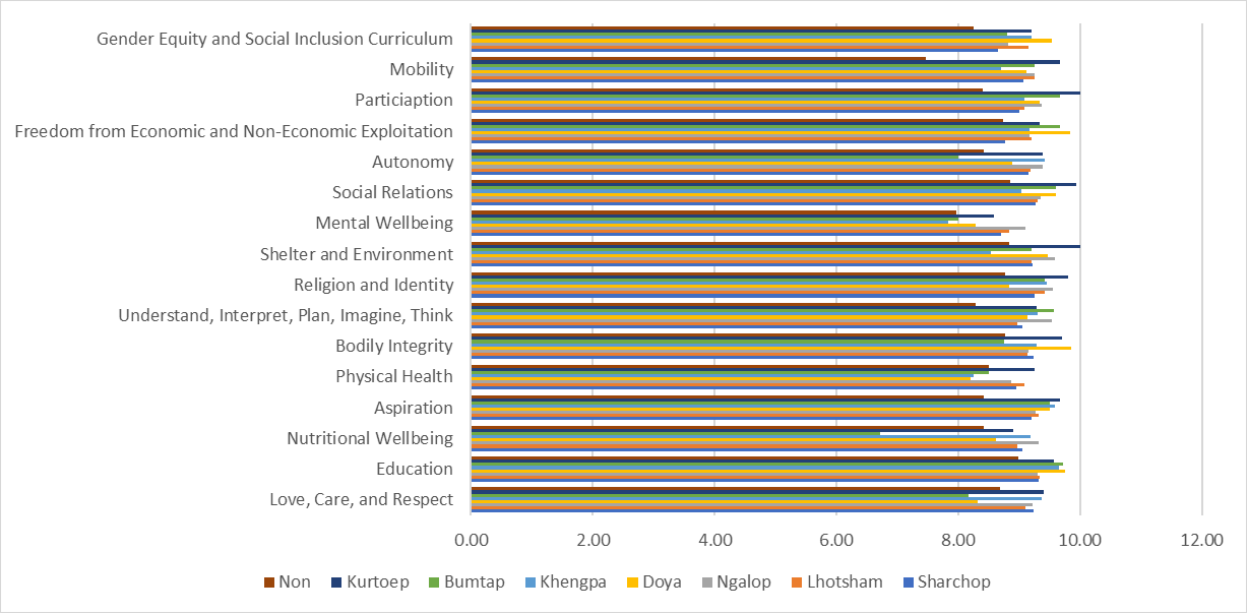

Figure 22: Agency Freedom by Ethnicity

Figure 22 shows the patterns of agency freedom across ethnic groups, highlighting the generally positive perception of freedom seen by students across most domains. Children from different ethnic backgrounds report that they feel able to make choices and exercise control in key areas of their lives, suggesting a broadly enabling social and institutional environment.

Among the larger ethnic groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop), the scores are closely aligned across domains such as Education, Social Relations, Love, Care and Respect, and Religion and Identity. This relatively tight clustering indicates that children from these major ethnic communities experience comparable levels of freedom in both school-related and relational contexts. The consistency across these groups suggests that agency freedom is not markedly differentiated along major ethnic lines.

For some of the smaller ethnic groups, including Kurtoep, Khengpa, Bumtap, and Doya, several domains reflect very high scores. These include areas such as Bodily Integrity (9.71, 9.29, 8,75 and 9.85 respectively); Participation (10, 9.08, 9.67 and 9.08), Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.33, 9.17, 9.67 and 9.83), and Religion and Identity (9.81, 9.45, 9.43, 8.83). While this may indicate strong perceived autonomy, voice, and future orientation within these communities, the results should be interpreted carefully, as smaller sample sizes can amplify the effect of individual responses on overall averages.

At the lower end of the distribution, a few domains display comparatively modest scores, even though they remain generally positive overall. In particular, Mental Wellbeing emerges as the

lowest-performing domain across groups, with several scores clustering in the high 7 to low 8 range (including 7.83 for Khengpa and 7.97 for Non-category). This suggests that while students report strong agency and freedom in many structural and relational domains, their internal emotional and psychological wellbeing may require closer attention. Similarly, Nutritional Wellbeing shows notable variation, including the single lowest value observed (6.71 for Bumthap). Although most groups report scores above 8 in this domain, the presence of this lower value indicates that access to or perceptions of adequate nutrition may not be equally experienced across all groups. This variation slightly widens the spread compared to more consistently high-scoring domains such as Education or Social Relations.

Other domains that appear on the comparatively lower side include Mobility (with a low of 7.48 for Non-category), Physical Health (8.21 and 8.25 in Doya and Khengpa respectively), and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Curriculum (8.26–8.80 for Non-category and Bumthap respectively). While these scores are not low in absolute terms, they are relatively lower when compared to domains such as Participation, Religion and Identity, or Shelter and Environment, which frequently approach or reach scores above 9.5 and even 10.

Overall, the pattern suggests that students' perceived agency is strongest in participatory, relational, and identity-related domains, whereas wellbeing-related dimensions, particularly mental and nutritional wellbeing, reflect comparatively lower perceptions. These areas may represent important focal points for targeted policy or programmatic interventions.

5.4.4 Agency Achievement

As reflected in Figure 23, the distribution of agency achievement scores across ethnic groups shows generally high levels across most domains, indicating that children from diverse backgrounds perceive themselves as able to translate opportunities into meaningful outcomes. Among the larger respondent groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop) scores remain consistently strong across relational, educational, and institutional domains. For example, Education scores range from 9.27 to 9.39 across these groups, while Religion and Identity ranges from 9.31 to 9.50, suggesting relatively equitable achievement experiences among the major population groups.

In contrast, some smaller ethnic groups particularly Kurtoep, Khengpa, Bumtap, and Doya show very high scores in several domains, including Participation (up to 10.00), Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (up to 10.00), Religion and Identity (10.00), and Aspiration (10.00). These elevated scores should be interpreted cautiously, as they may reflect the smaller sample sizes within these groups, where individual responses can disproportionately influence averages. Nevertheless, they also suggest that children in these communities perceive strong agency in areas related to identity, aspirations, and participation.

Across all ethnic groups, Mental Wellbeing remains comparatively lower (approximately 7.75–8.96), indicating a shared area of concern regardless of background. Similarly, Physical Health and Mobility show moderate variation, with some lower scores among certain groups (e.g., Mobility for the Non-categorized group at 7.54 and Khengpa at 8.42), suggesting uneven experiences in health and movement-related agency.

The Non-categorized group consistently records lower scores across multiple domains compared to identified ethnic groups, particularly in Participation (8.51), Mobility (7.54), and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Curriculum (8.21), which may indicate weaker institutional or social engagement experiences.

Overall, the findings suggest that while agency achievement is generally high across ethnicities, variations exist in specific domains, with relational and identity-related achievements strongest and wellbeing-related outcomes comparatively weaker. Differences among smaller ethnic groups should be interpreted with consideration of sample size, while the relatively consistent scores among the larger groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop) indicate broadly comparable achievement experiences across the major ethnic populations.

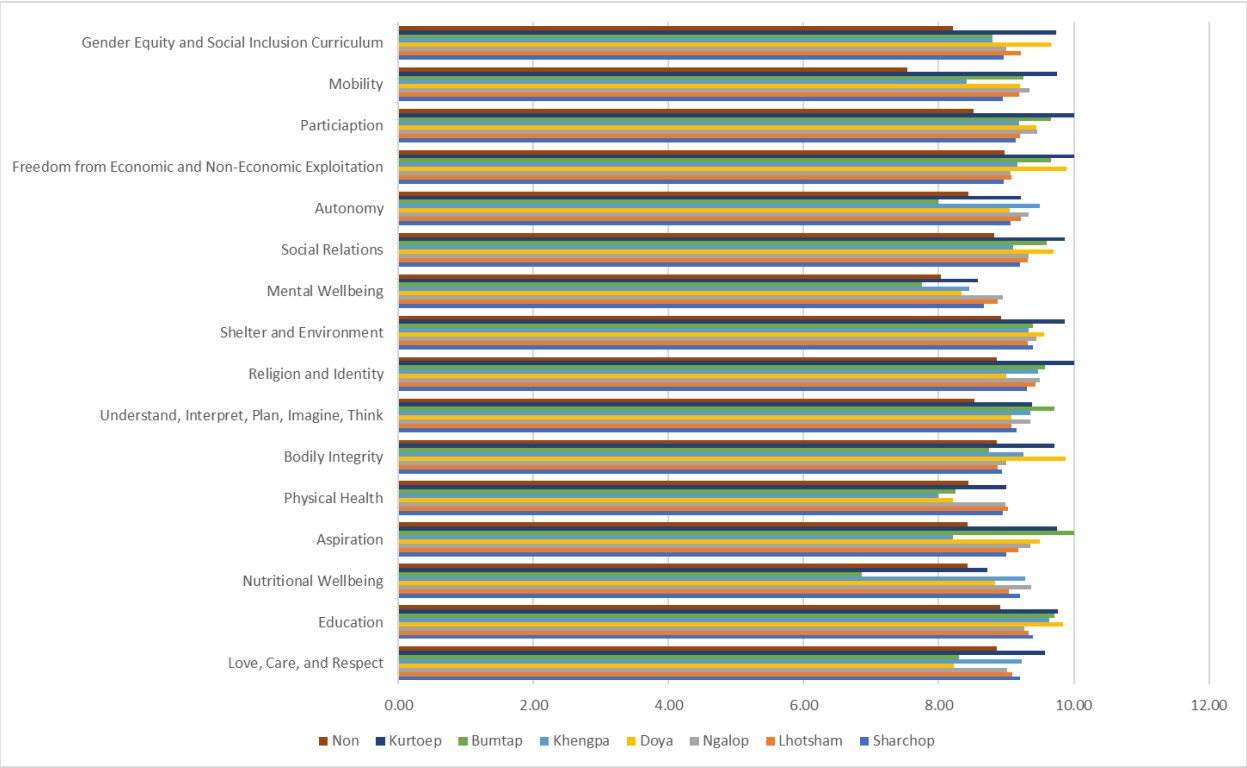

Figure 23: Agency Achievement by Ethnicity

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings indicate that children report high levels of well-being and agency, both in terms of perceived freedoms (opportunities) and achievements (realized outcomes), across gender, grade, and ethnic groups. Relational domains such as Love, Care and Respect, Social Relations, Religion and Identity, and Shelter and Environment consistently show the highest scores, suggesting that supportive relationships and institutional environments are strong contributors to children's well-being and agency experiences.

Gender differences are relatively small, indicating broadly equitable experiences between boys and girls in both freedom and achievement dimensions. However, some variations emerge in specific domains such as mobility, autonomy, and participation, reflecting gendered patterns in independence and engagement that may require continued attention.

Across grades**,** younger students (primary) generally report slightly higher well-being and achievement in relational and learning-related domains, while older students show stronger scores in autonomy-related freedoms such as mobility and participation. At the same time, middle secondary students tend to report comparatively lower scores in mental wellbeing and physical health, suggesting that increasing academic pressure and developmental transitions may affect their ability to convert opportunities into positive outcomes.

For ethnicity, the three largest respondent groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop) demonstrate relatively consistent patterns across domains, indicating broadly comparable experiences. Some smaller ethnic groups (e.g., Kurtoep, Khengpa, Bumtap, and Doya) show very high scores in certain domains; however, these should be interpreted cautiously due to smaller sample sizes that may inflate averages. The non-categorized group tends to report comparatively lower scores in several areas, particularly participation and mobility, suggesting potential differences in engagement or access.

Across all demographic categories, mental wellbeing, physical health, and mobility emerge as comparatively weaker domains in both freedom and achievement, highlighting areas where additional support may be beneficial. In contrast, identity, relationships, and institutional support domains remain consistently strong.

In summary, while children generally experience strong well-being and agency across gender, grade, and ethnicity, the nature of freedoms and achievements evolves with age and context, with relational strengths evident throughout and wellbeing-related challenges becoming more visible in adolescence.

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