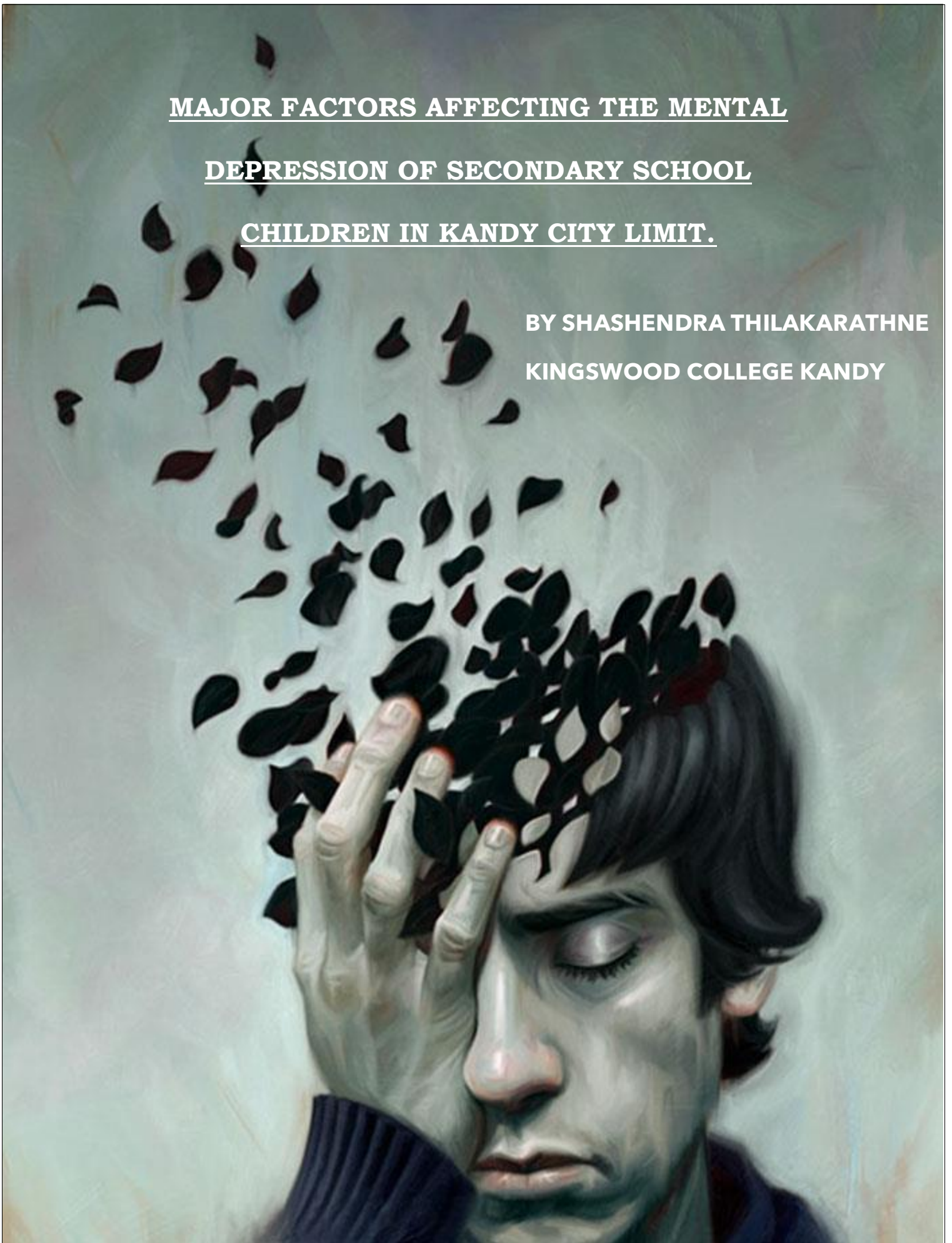


MAJOR FACTORS AFFECTING THE MENTAL  
DEPRESSION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL  
CHILDREN IN KANDY CITY LIMIT.

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## **Abstract**

Depression is recognized as one of the major public health issues affecting millions of people worldwide in this regard, one particularly vulnerable group is young adults. Several studies have highlighted the increasing levels of depression symptoms among young individuals. This study is mainly targeting to find and identify the major factors which are affecting mental depression of secondary school children in Kandy city limit. Secondary school children are the generation which will undertake the future of the country as well as economy of the state. Through the research following factors were identified as the major factors for affecting mental depression among secondary school children in Kandy city limit. Exams, The competition between students, Family problems, The caged life and loneliness, Parental Pressure, Financial worries, Bullying or abuse and past experiences.

**Key Words:** Mental Depression, Secondary School Children, Kandy city limit, Factors affecting for mental depression.

## **1. The topic**

To identify the major factors affecting the mental depression of secondary school children in Kandy city limit.

## **2. The Background of the study**

Depression is recognized as one of the major public health issues affecting millions of people worldwide. In this regard, one particularly vulnerable group is young adults. Several studies have highlighted the increasing levels of depression symptoms among young individuals aged 16-25 (13.1% vs 7.1%) of all adults and specifically among Secondary school and university students. For people younger than 24 years old, mental disorders are the most important cause of disability.

Mental health problems have a noticeable effect on the academic and non-academic performance of the students. Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is one of the most widely used instruments for screening behavioral problems in children.

Behavior problems have obvious relevance to school performance. Therefore, good mental health status of the students is important for optimum level of educational performances. Health education services should focus on improving mental health literacy among students at community level. Further, there is a need to analyse the correlating factors regard to mental illness of students and to construct preventive strategies to minimize the bad consequences in the society as well. This study aimed at identifying the major factors affecting the mental depression among the secondary school children in Kandy city limit.

### **3. Research Question**

What are the major factors which are affecting the mental depression among secondary school children in Kandy city limit?

#### **Objectives**

**The major objective of this research is**

Identifying the major factors affecting the mental depression of secondary school children in Kandy city limit.

#### **Significance of the study**

This study is mainly targeting to find and identify the major factors which are affecting mental depression of secondary school children in Kandy city limit. Secondary school children are the generation which will undertake the future of the country as well as economy of the state. Therefore, a solid stage of mental stability of that generation will lead to make strong and highly motivated younger generation and for that the mental depression of them should be in its minimum level. This study will provide a fundamental pathway to identify the major factors which are affecting the mental depression of secondary school children and the findings of this research will helpful to prioritize the solutions to overcome and prevent the root causes which affect to create mental depression among secondary school children.

#### 4. Literature Review

Adolescents comprise one fifth of the Sri Lankan population (1). There are wide normal variations between the time of onset and the attainment of full maturity. Many adolescents face few problems during this potentially turbulent period and make the necessary adjustments without undue stress to themselves, their family or their friends. Most problems of adolescence are due to failure in understanding the anatomical, morphological and psychological changes expected during adolescence (2). In addition, adolescent behaviors, values, perceived socially accepted behaviors and judgment of own behaviors heavily depend upon the culture.

The World Health Organization (WHO) states the failure to recognize and address mental health problems in children and adolescents is a serious public health problem in the context of Sustainable Development Goals (3.5 and 3.4) (GDS). Mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety or other conditions may lead to behavioural problems such as tobacco, alcohol and drug use. The multi-directional linkages between mental health conditions and other health, educational, social and development problems call for evidence for action in this area (4).

It has been estimated that 2% of the total population is suffering from mental illness in Sri Lanka (5). Psychological problems increased during the middle (14%) to late (21%) adolescence (6). Adolescence is a phase of emotional sensitivity and self-centeredness. A study done in Kilinochchi among school-going adolescents revealed that girls significantly outperform boys in mental health testing using Sri Lankan Index of Psychosocial Status – Child version (SLIPS-C). However, this study also stated that there was no significant

difference in externalising behaviour scores between boys and girls (7). Another study done in Northern Sri Lanka among children aged 9-13 found the prevalence of major depression to range from 0% in Valikamam West to 7% in Vadamaradchi. Further, 5.7% of the children (range: 0-17.3%) were diagnosed with a dysthymic disorder, while 11.2% of the children (range: 0-25%) had suicidal tendencies in the past and 9.2% (range: 0-23.3%) were diagnosed with current suicidal ideation according to the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI). They also found that when Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which is a brief mental health problem screening instrument for children and adolescents was applied, the mean for internalizing problems was 4.7 (SD=3.7; range: 0-16) and the mean for externalizing behaviour problems was 5.1 (SD=3.5; range: 0-17). The average total score of the SDQ was 9.8 (SD=6.7; range: 0-32) (8). In comparison, an epidemiological survey in Sri Lanka among 1505 school children aged 12-17 years using SDQ found that 8.4% students were suffering from any psychiatric disorder, 5.8% from conduct disorder, 2.7% from emotional disorder and 0.7% from hyperactivity disorder (9).

It is clear that behavioral issues affect academic success. Therefore, for pupils to achieve at their best academically, students' mental wellness is crucial. The primary goal of health education services should be to increase community-level student mental health literacy. In addition, it's important to analyze the elements that correlate with student mental illness and develop preventative measures to lessen negative societal effects. (10)

The primary goal of this study was to pinpoint the key variables influencing mental depression in secondary school students inside the Kandy city limits.

## 5. Methodology

### Research Design

#### Sample Design

##### Population

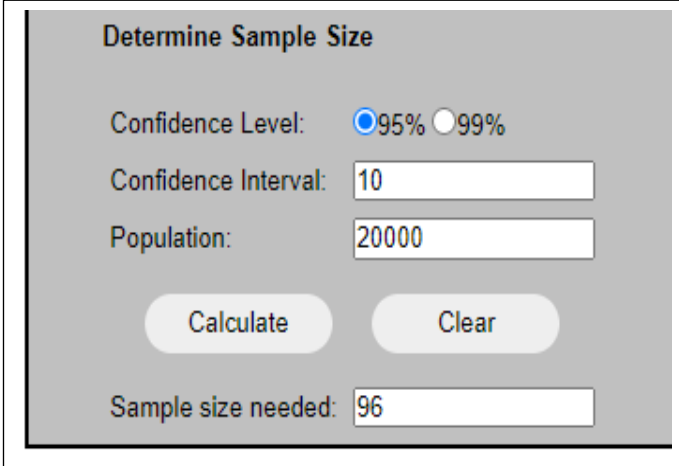
The population for the research is the secondary school children in Kandy city limit

Therefore, the population for the research is 20000 secondary school children.

##### *Sample Design Procedure*

When the establishment of the research methodology some of the secondary school children will not agree to contribution to the process and someone will reject or provide the false data. Therefore, the preparation of a sample from the selected population is a must factor.

To determine the sample size from selected population the proposed-on line is <https://www.surveysystem.com/sscale.html>.



The image shows a web-based calculator titled "Determine Sample Size". It has a light gray background with a white border. The interface includes the following elements:

- Confidence Level:** Two radio buttons are present, with "95%" selected and "99%" unselected.
- Confidence Interval:** A text input field containing the value "10".
- Population:** A text input field containing the value "20000".
- Buttons:** Two rounded rectangular buttons labeled "Calculate" and "Clear" are positioned below the input fields.
- Result:** A text input field at the bottom labeled "Sample size needed:" contains the value "96".

Sample Size Calculation (*Source: Surveysystems.com,2022*)



### *Sample size*

Target population is 20000 secondary school children and in 95 confidence level and 10% confidence interval the selected sample size is secondary school children

### **Sample Collection Method**

A self-administered questionnaire will prepare in English language, translated to Sinhala and Tamil languages to collect the data from the sample.

### **Software's for data Analysis**

(IBM SPSS 2019 version 25 / Microsoft Excel – 2019)

## **6. Limitations of the Study**

This research strictly follows and concentrated on the limitations in the process of data gathering and presenting. The questionnaire-based face to face interview research will conduct after the pilot test. Basically, this research prioritized Quantitative over Qualitative data analysis. Data collection depends on solely on the volunteer secondary school children who are willing to take part. The process of data gathering should not give any negative impact for the secondary school children regarding their living factors.

## **7. Results and Discussion**

In this research we have concerned some popular factors affecting for mental depression among secondary school students. After sharing a comprehensively prepared questioner among 50 students in the Kandy city limit, we have got 48 responses which helps us in concluding the factors affecting mental depression, successfully.

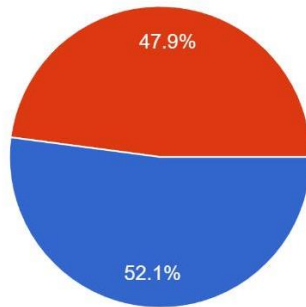
These responses clearly prove that the factors we have taken in to consideration make the students depressed. Some other factors also were introduced by the students who had filled the questioner.

Questions asked from the responders to prove they really are victims of Mental Depression

1. Do you most often feel sad?
2. Do you feel hopeless?
3. Do you have sleep disturbances?
4. Do you have less interest in education, Sports and Hobbies?
5. Do you always doubt about the meaning of life?

Do you most often feel sad?

48 responses

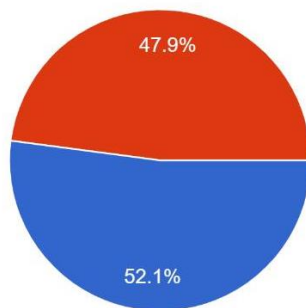


● Yes  
● No

52.9% of students replied that they most often feel sad.

Do you feel hopeless?

48 responses

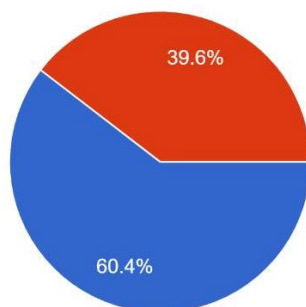


● Yes  
● No

52.1% of students replied that they feel hopeless.

Do you have sleep disturbances?

48 responses

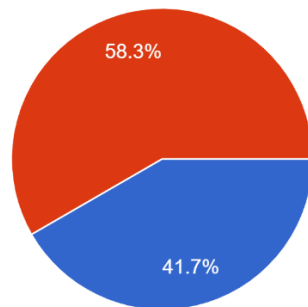


● Yes  
● No

60.4% of students replied that they have sleep disturbances.

Do you have less interest in education, sports, and hobbies?

48 responses

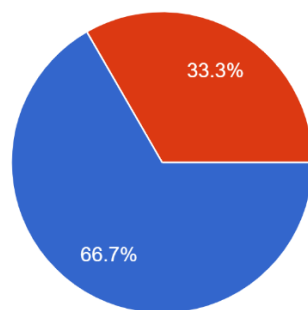


● Yes  
● No

41.7% of students replied that they have less interest in education, sports and hobbies

Do you always doubt about the meaning of life?

48 responses



● Yes  
● No

66.7% of students replied that they have always doubt about the meaning of life

Average of the students having mental depression can be calculated as below

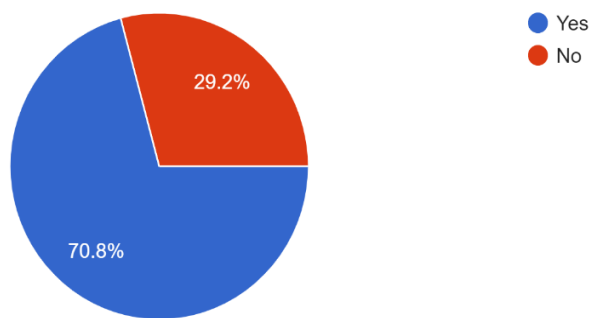
$$\text{Average} = \frac{52.1 + 52.1 + 60.4 + 41.7 + 66.7}{5} = 54.6\%$$

After discovering that the students really have depression, we eventually dragged them to some ‘yes’ , ‘no’ questions to step on a conclusion easily. The questions are mentioned below.

1. Do exams make you depressed?
2. Does the competition between students make you depressed?
3. Do family problems make you depressed?
4. Do the caged life and the loneliness make you depressed?
5. Does parental pressure make you depressed?
6. Do financial worries make you depressed?
7. Does bullying or abuse make you depressed?
8. Do past experiences make you depressed?

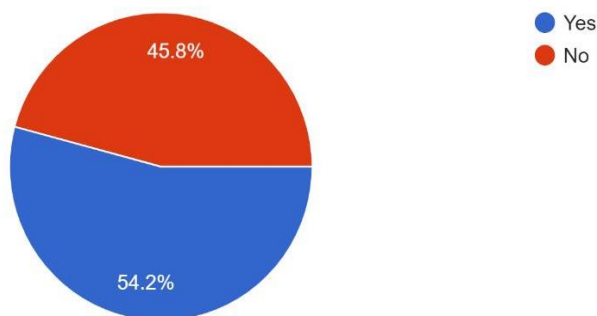
Do exams make you depressed?

48 responses

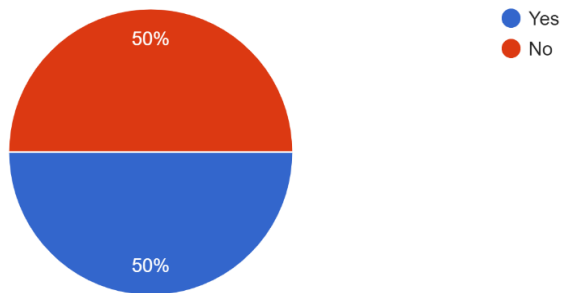


Does the competition between students make you depressed?

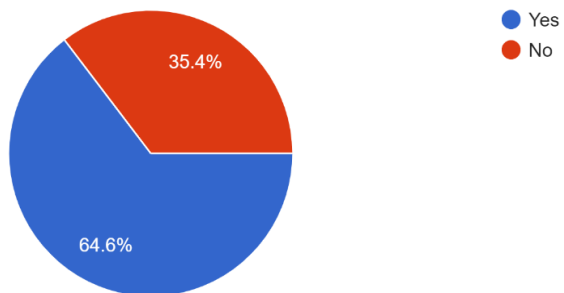
48 responses



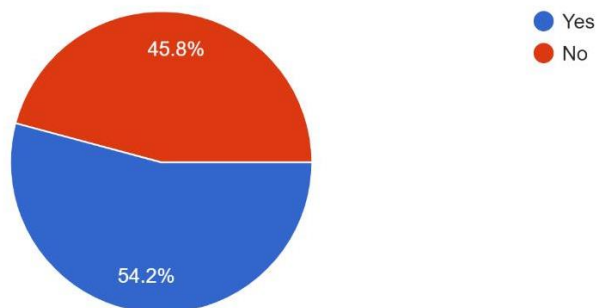
Do family problems make you depressed?  
48 responses



Do the caged life and the loneliness make you depressed?  
48 responses

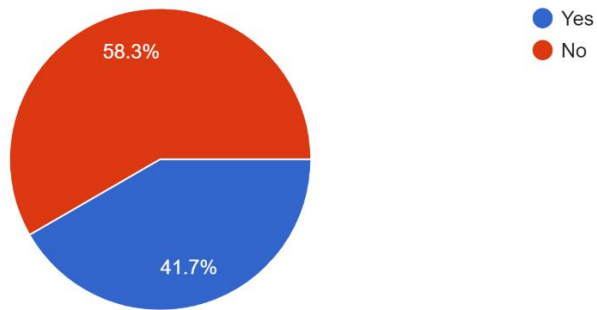


Does parental pressure make you depressed?  
48 responses



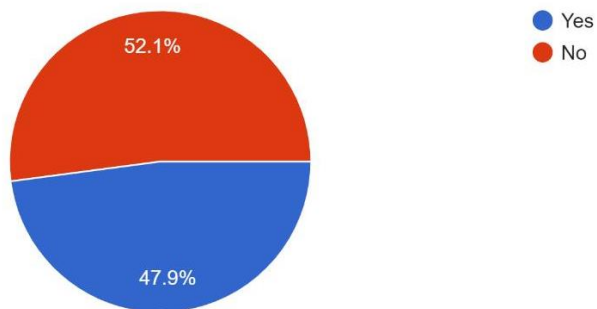
Do financial worries make you depressed?

48 responses



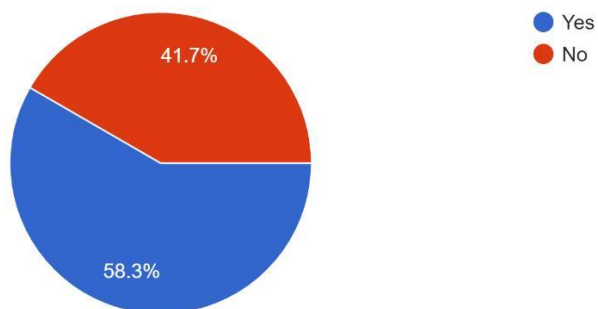
Does bullying or abuse make you depressed?

48 responses



Do past experiences make you depressed?

48 responses



Except for these factors, following factors too were introduced by the responders.

- Having a lot of responsibilities that are not meant to complete
- Sri Lankan Education System
- Expectations of life
- Answering questions
- Feel like not welcomed
- Managing all your responsibilities can sometimes make it suffocating and make you feel depressed.
- Pressure from the society
- Time
- Looking at other people's lives
- current situation of the country
- Parental pressure
- The best friends start cheating on me
- Restrictions of Parents
- Every single second spending in SL
- Being a human
- 

### **Expectations**

You'll know your expectations are healthy when they are:

- Respectful
- Fair
- Compassionate
- Thoughtful
- Thought-out
- Reasonable
- Honest

However, if you have unrealistic expectations, you might find yourself putting in a lot of effort with little to show for it. Failing to meet an unrealistic expectation — like becoming a millionaire by the time you're 30, having a “perfect” life or job — can set you up for frustration, self-judgment, and even depression. (11)



## **Parental Pressure**

Excessive or inappropriate parental pressure carries many mental health consequences for kids as they grow up.

Data from a 2015 study Trusted Source suggested that children who grow up with parents who yelled, shouted, or verbally humiliated them may have a greater likelihood of experiencing challenges into adulthood, including:

- Depression
- Anger management problems
- Physical aggression
- Delinquency
- Trouble maintaining relationships
- When parents use insults or critical language to interact with children, they may turn that criticism on themselves and engage in negative self-talk. “I’m stupid,” they might say to themselves, or “I’m fat,” or, “I’ll never do anything right.”

Children raised in this dynamic often withdraw attention and affection. And when this happens, you may withhold affection and attention, too — whether you realize it or not. (12)

## **Education System**

### **Why does school depress me?**

Originally Answered: Why does school make me feel depressed?

in short,

we wake up early. as teenagers, our brains are literally not ready to think at 7 am. our circadian rhythms are different than adults and little kids, which is why we stay up late and sleep in. We aren't LAZY, we sleep the same amount, we just do it at a different time. But for school, we are forced to wake up, when our brains are being programmed to sleep more.

We sit in our chairs and listen to someone talk at us for 7 hours straight. What ISNT depressing about that? We've had the same school system since the industrial revolution, where kids were basically taught to go into factories. Luckily theres more research coming out about hands-on-learning and stuff like that.

after suffering through the day, we come home, sit at another desk, and do more work for three more hours. We already spent so much time learning stuff, and now we have to do more. Its exhausting, and its impractical.

On top of the physical and academic hardships, we have to deal with the ridiculous amounts of social problems and drama. In high school this improves significantly from middle school, but god if it isn't still there. Our adolescent minds want one thing - acceptance from our peers. even us “weird” kids want that. People stress about who likes who, who’s friends with who, do enough people like them. and that is horrible in its own right.

School is a terrible system. Learning is fantastic, and I love it, but our current school system is so that instead it literally gives us all clinical depression. (13)

## **Social Pressure**

It believes that high school is the combination of social and peer pressure that influences the mind of students negatively. In high schools, students need to sit within a group of students. Sometimes, the group of students becomes the reason for high social pressure that influences their minds negatively. This kind of social pressure influences students who need to seek aid for academic help. Most of the students said that they want to take admission within a free course. It is because the existing classmates and friends find a free course suitable for them.

Society and peers influence the life of students significantly. It is because an individual learns from other students and society members. It’s only human nature to learn from others and listen to other people in the belonging age groups. (14)

## **Looking at other people's lives**

Depression in someone who has the biological vulnerability to it may result from personal conflicts or disputes with family members or friends. Death or a loss. Sadness or grief after the death or loss of a loved one, though natural, can increase the risk of depression. (15)

## **8.Conclusion**

From the selected sample 54.6% of secondary school children are suffering from mental depression and the major causes for them which found through this research are.

1. Exams
2. The competition between students
3. Family problems
4. The caged life and the loneliness
5. Parental pressure
6. Financial worries
7. Bullying or abuse
8. Past experiences

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