

# Mental Health and Hygiene Practices among Adolescents: A Study on Secondary School Students of West Bengal

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**Abstract:** Adolescent is a crucial period for developing emotional habits important for mental well-being. These include adopting healthy sleep patterns, exercising regularly, personal health concerns, and learning to manage emotional. Now days, adolescents are feeling stress and anxiety due various reasons which are academic pressure, family issues, peer pressure, and body image concerns. With this background, the present study has been designed to know about personal hygiene practices, along with the mental and emotional well-being among adolescents at the secondary level of education of Jhargram and Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal, India. The present study is a survey-type research. The study was conducted in February 2025 in Jhargram and Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal, India. Primary data have been collected through a self-made interview scheduled from the students who are presently studying in classes IX and X from eight schools of the cited districts. Total 160 students' in-depth interviews have been covered in this study. Majority of the students at the secondary level in Jhargram and Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal think that personal hygiene practices is important for health. The majority of respondents felt stress or anxiety for Academic pressure during examination time.

**Key Words:** Health and Hygiene Awareness, Mental health and Emotional Well-being, Secondary Students.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Good mental and emotional well-being is very important for every student. Every student deserves to develop in loving, nurturing and safe environments. In every part of the world poor mental and emotional health and well-being cause distress for adolescents and youth. It is a top cause of death, disease and disability, especially for students. The significant number of students did not trim their nails regularly. Today many adolescent do open defecation at their home. When schools have clean, age-appropriate toilets for both boys and girls, access to clean water, and hand washing facilities and hygienic behaviours, it not only stop the transmission of communicable diseases, it contributes to more children attending school and learning. UNICEF report says "Half of all mental health condition starts by 14 years of age but most cause goes undetected and untreated." (source: <https://www.unicef.org/india/stories/good-mental-health-important-every-child>)

Adolescent is a crucial period for developing emotional habits important for mental well-being. These include adopting healthy sleep patterns, exercising regularly, personal health concerns, and learning to manage emotional. Now days, adolescents are feeling stress and anxiety due various reasons which are academic pressure, family issues, peer pressure, and body image concerns. The majority of students are feeling stress during examination time for academic pressure. Adolescents are engage rarely in physical activities or sports. It has been seen that the most of respondents are engage in mobile/ laptop/ tab/ computer screen except accessing their study and education related matters. Students are sleep less than 7-8 hours daily. The majority of students are feeling uncomfortable to discuss personal health concerns with their parents or guardians and school teachers. With this background, the present study has been designed to know about personal hygiene practices, along with the mental and emotional well-being among adolescents at the secondary level of education of Jhargram and Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal, India.

**2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:** The objectives of the present study are—

- To know about personal hygiene practices among adolescent at the secondary level of education in Jhargram and Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal, India.
- To enquire mental and emotional well-being among the Secondary level students.

### 3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The present study is a survey- type research. The study was conducted in February 2025 in Jhargram and Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal, India. We have applied a multilayer stratified sampling method to determine the required sample size among a large number of samples. We have taken Haldia Municipality and Nandigram-I block from Purba Medinipur district and one rural block from Jhargram district namely Sankrail. From the selected areas, we have taken a total of eight Secondary schools, among these four schools from the mentioned areas of Purba Medinipur district, and four schools from the mentioned areas of Jhargram district of West Bengal. From each selected school, Primary data have been collected through a self-made interview scheduled from the students who are presently studying in classes IX and X. We have taken interviews of twenty students from each selected school of the said districts. The secondary data have been collected from different sources like research articles, government reports, newspaper articles, websites etc. Then the collected data have been analyzed qualitatively.

### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: The findings of the study along with discussion are given below:

- 1) **Frequency of Brushing Teeth with Toothpaste:** It has been revealed from the present study that the most students (54.38%) brushed teeth with toothpaste at morning and before sleep at night. 42.50% respondents cleaned their teeth only at morning time. Some of them (2.50%) are rarely do this. Only 0.63% students reported they never brushed teeth with toothpaste.

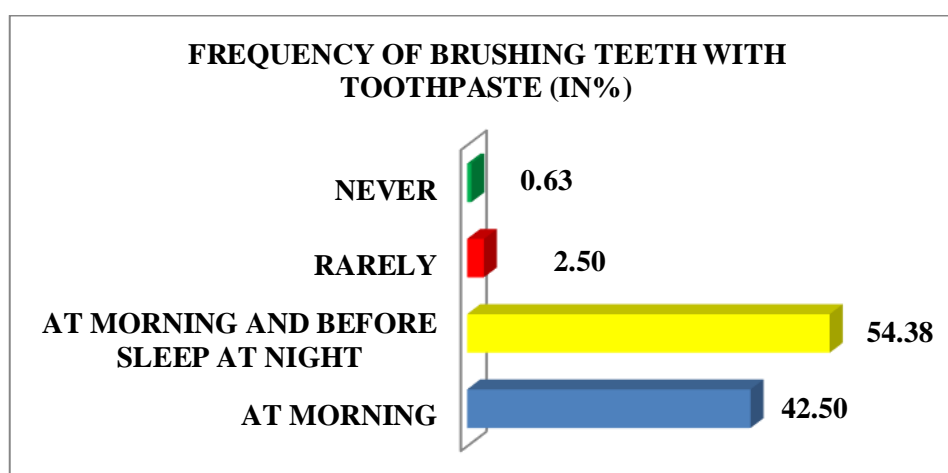


Figure 01: Frequency of Brushing Teeth with Toothpaste

Source: Primary Data

- 2) **Hands Wash with Soap before Eating:** It has been found from present study that the majority of respondents (69.38%) are wash their hands with soap before eating. 24.38% students reported that they do this work sometimes. Before getting food, 6.25% respondents did not wash their hands with soap.

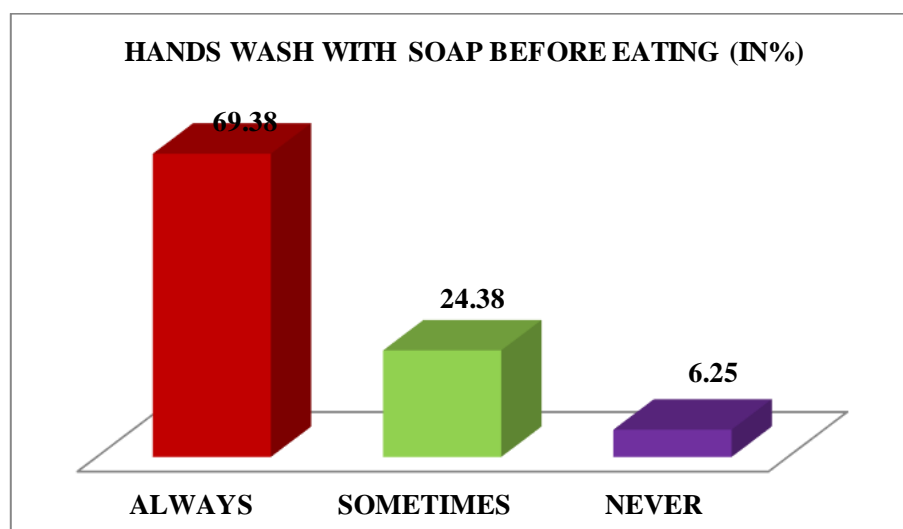


Figure 02: Hands Wash with Soap before Eating

Source: Primary Data

3) **Washing Hands with Soap after Using the Toilet:** It has been shown that 83.75% of respondents washed their hands with soap after using the toilet. Some students (11.88%) reported that they do this work sometimes. After using the toilet, 4.38% respondents did not wash their hands with soap.

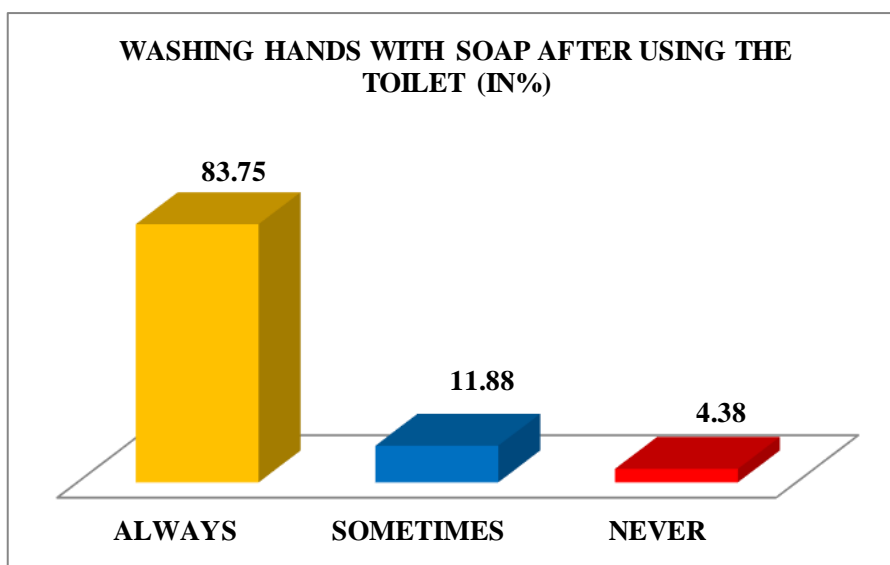


Figure 03: Washing Hands with Soap after Using the Toilet Source: Primary Data

4) **Using Soap during Bath:** In this present study, we show that the majority numbers of students (91%) used soap during bath. Some students used soap during bath every alternate day (6%) and rarely (3%).

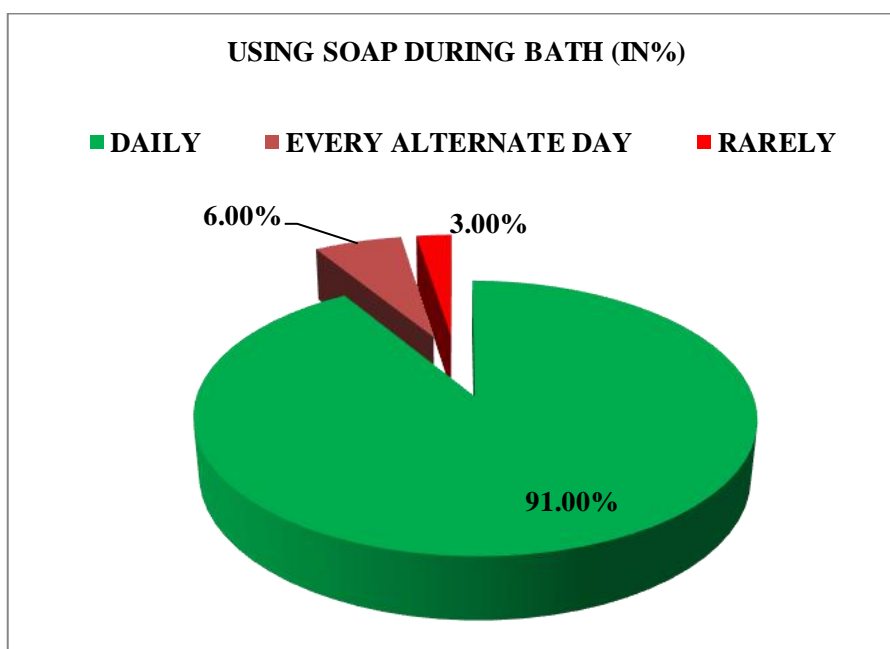


Figure 04: Using Soap during Bath Source: Primary Data

5) **Types of Sanitation Facility Use at Home:** Analysing figure 05, it has been seen that 71.88% respondents use private toilet as a sanitation facility at their home. 25.63% students reported that they also utilize shared toilet at home. Some students (2.50%) express that they do open defecation at their home.

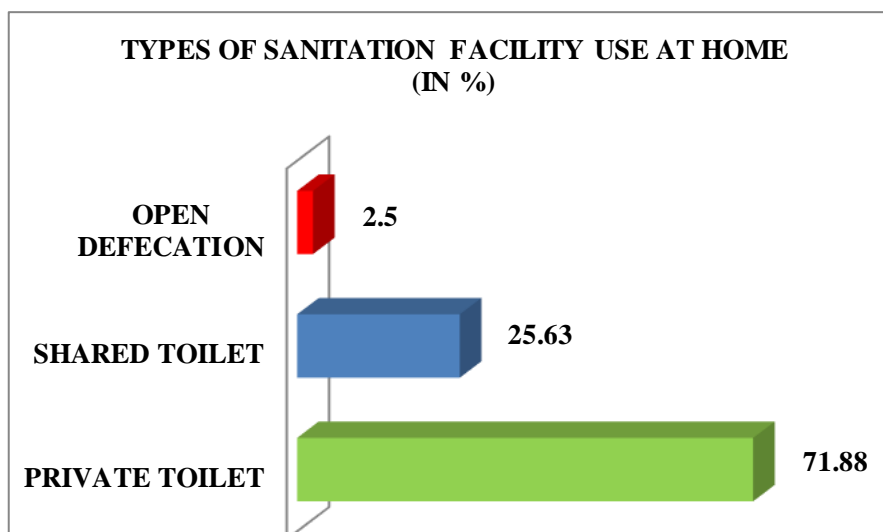


Figure 05: Types of Sanitation Facility Use at Home

Source: Primary Data

6) **Nails Trimming Habits:** It has been revealed from the present study that the most respondents (84%) are trimming their nails regularly. The significant number of students (16%) also expressed that they did not trim their nails regularly.

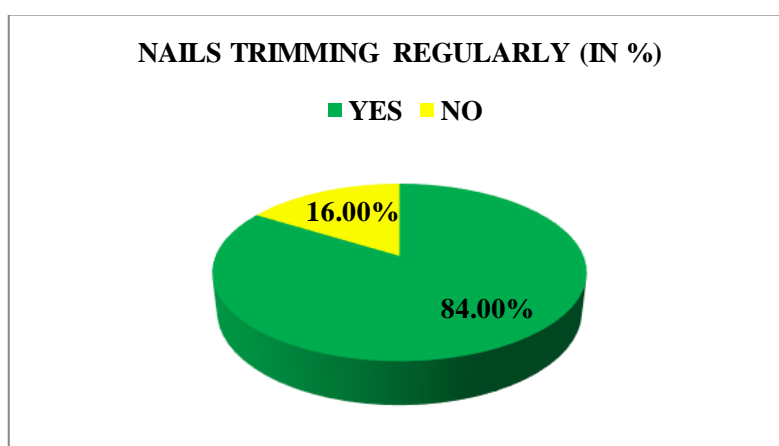


Figure 06: Nails Trimming Habits

Source: Primary Data

7) **Feeling Anxious and Stress:** It has been seen in the present study that the most of respondents (57%) are feel stress or anxious. 43% of students expressed that they did not feel stress or anxious in their life.

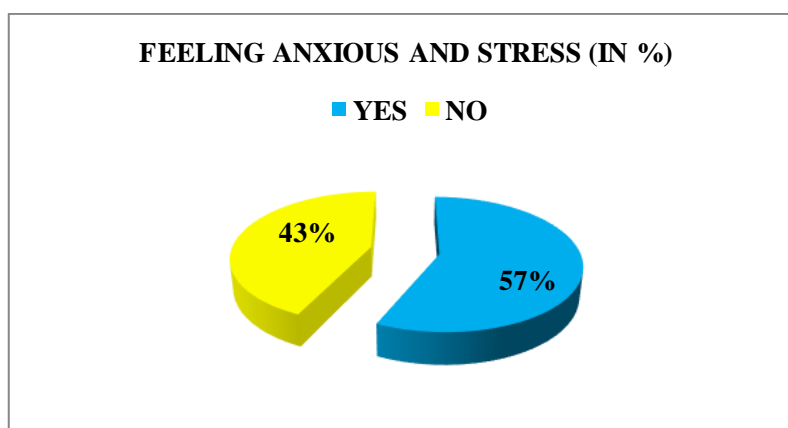


Figure 07: Feeling Anxious and Stress

Source: Primary Data

8) **Main Reasons for Stress or Anxiety:** From Figure 08 it can be said that the majority of respondents (42.37%) are feels stress or anxiety for Academic pressure. Some students expressed that the main reasons are family issues (17.8%) and peer pressure (23.73%) for feel stress and anxiety. Body image concerns are also a reason for their stress or anxiety reported by students (16.1%).

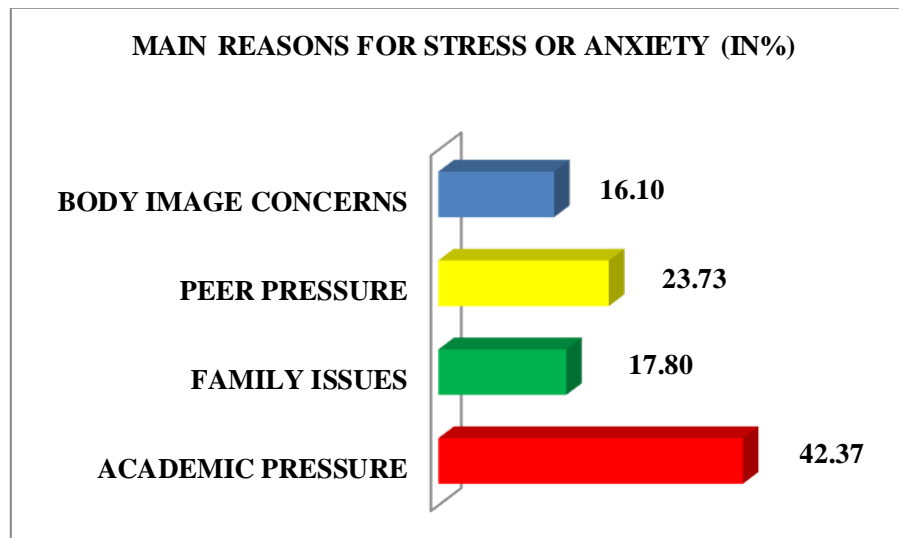


Figure 08: Main Reasons for Stress or Anxious Source: Primary Data

9) **Stress Due to Academic Pressure:** It has been found from present study that the majority of respondents (73.13%) are feeling stress during examination time for academic pressure. 10.63% of students expressed that they feel anxiety during class hours. Some of them (16.25%) also reported that they feel stress all time for academic pressure.

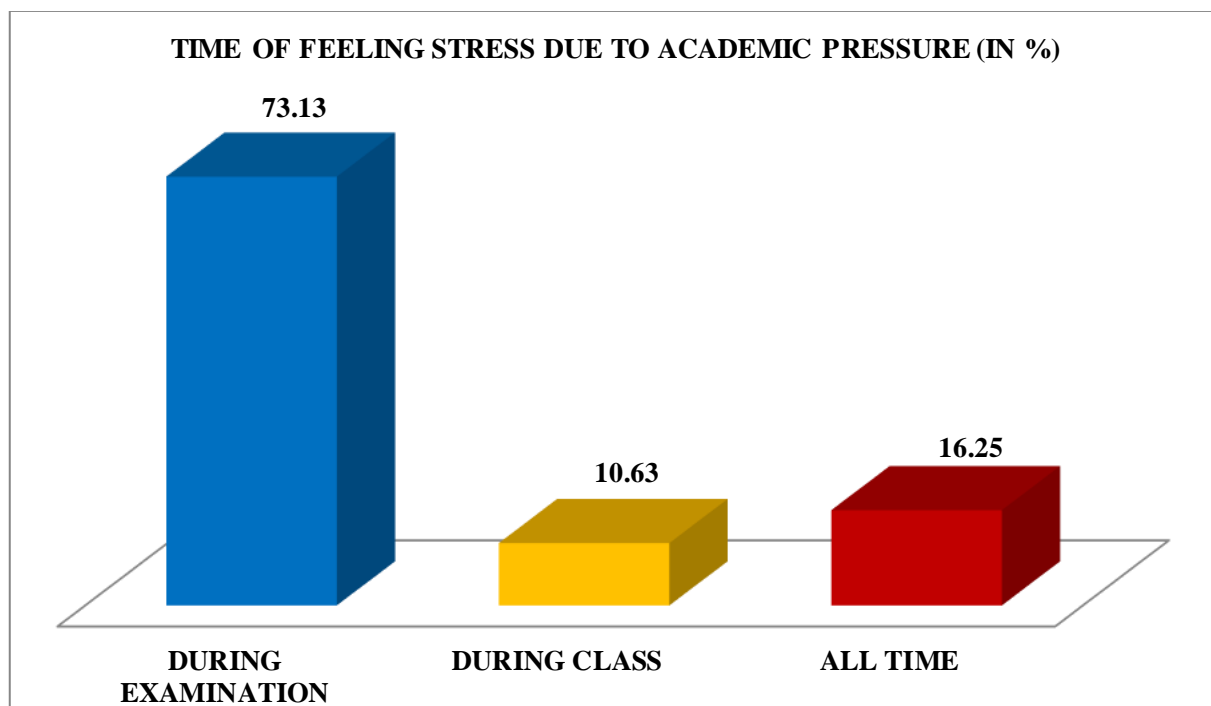


Figure 09: Stress Due to Academic Pressure

Source: Primary Data

10) **Frequency of Engage in Physical Activities or Sports:** In this present study, it has been found that the most of respondents (43.75%) are engage rarely in physical activities or sports. 35% of students also expressed that they go to play ground daily for physical activities or sports. Some of respondents reported that they spent in physical activities or sports once in a week (1.25%) and 2-3 times in a week (16.63%). 4.38% of students never go to play ground.

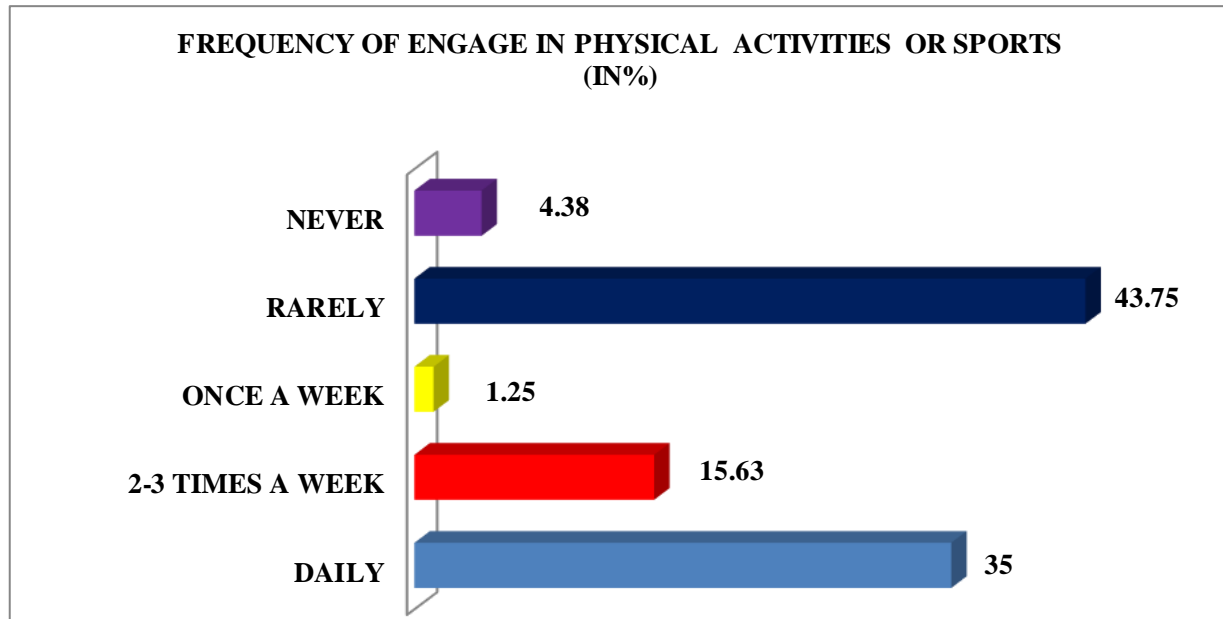


Figure 10: Frequency of Engage in Physical Activities or Sports

Source: Primary Data

11) **Time to Engage in Electronic Gadgets Except Accessing Study and Education Related Matters:** It has been seen that the most of respondents (50.63%) are engage 30 minutes or less in mobile/ laptop/ tab/ computer screen except accessing their study and education related matters. Some of students are spent 30 minutes to less than 1 hour (17.5%), 1-2 hours (11.25%), and 2-3 hours (3.13%) in electronic gadgets. 17.5% of students used electric gadgets above 3 hours except educational purpose.

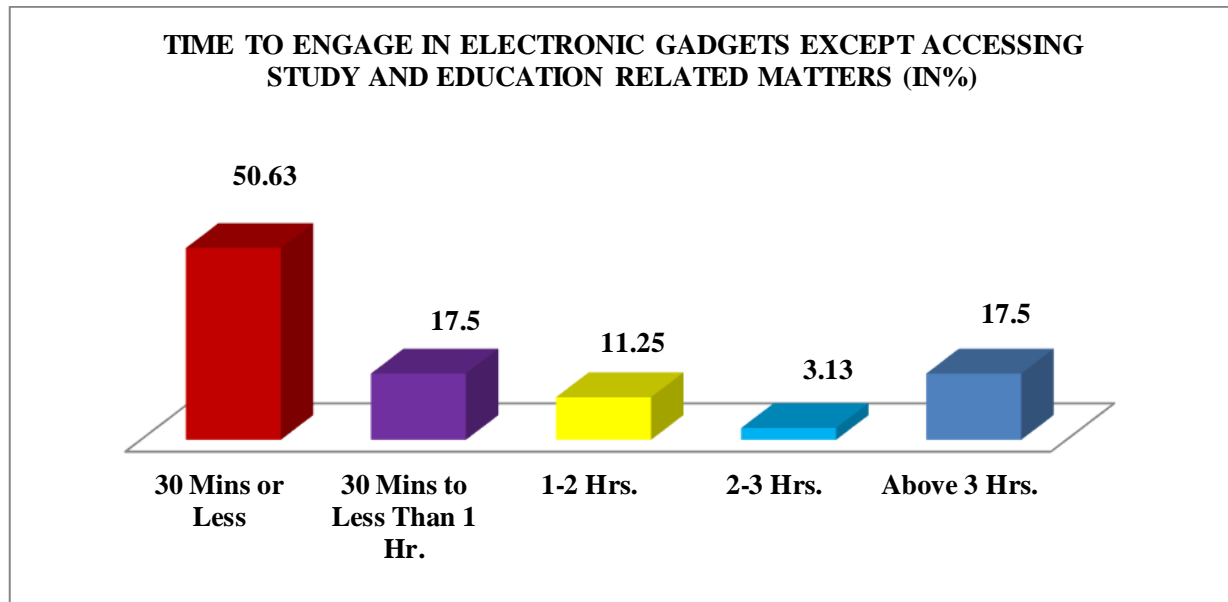


Figure 11: Time to Engage in Electronic Gadgets except Accessing Study and Education Related Matters,  
Source: Primary Data

12) **Personal Concerns regarding Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being:** In this present study, we also focus on personal concerns regarding mental and emotional well-being. Table 01 indicates that the most of respondents (71.88%) sleep 7-8 hours daily. Rest of them (28.12%) sleep less than 7-8 hours daily, which is very dangerous sign for their overall mental and emotional well-being. The majority of students (85.62) expressed that they are comfortable discussing personal health concerns with their parents or guardians. Only 14.38% of students felt uneasy to discuss their personal health concerns with parents. 59.38% of students have expressed that they talk about their personal health concerns with teacher or lady teacher at school comfortably. However, 40.62% of students reported that they did not

discuss any kind of personal health issues with their teacher at school. The most of respondents (75%) are did not use mobile phone at bed time. But one third students i.e., 25% of students use mobile phone before sleep at night. It is a very alarming matters, parents or guardian or teachers should aware regarding how and what purposes and when we should use mobile phones to their children or students.

**Table No 01: Personal Concerns regarding Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being**

Categories		N	Percentage
Duration of Sleep (7-8 hours daily)	Yes	115	71.88
	No	45	28.12
Personal health Concern discussing with parents	Yes	137	85.62
	No	23	14.38
Personal health Concern discussing with Teachers	Yes	95	59.38
	No	65	40.62
Use of mobile phone at bedtime	Yes	40	25
	No	120	75

Source: Primary Data

#### 5. MAJOR FINDINGS: The major findings of the present study are:

- Most of the students (54.38%) brushed their teeth with toothpaste at morning and before sleep at night.
- 42.50% respondents cleaned their teeth only at morning time. Very few of them (2.50%) rarely did, and 0.63% students never brushed their teeth with toothpaste.
- The majority of respondents (69.38%) washed their hands with soap before eating.
- Before getting food, 6.25% respondents did not wash their hands with soap.
- 83.75% of respondents washed their hands with soap after using the toilet.
- After using the toilet, 4.38% respondents did not wash their hands with soap.
- 91% students used soap during bath.
- Some students used soap during bath every alternate day (6%), and rarely (3%).
- 9. 71.88% respondents use private toilet as a sanitation facility at their home. 25.63% students reported that they also utilize shared toilet at home.
- 10. Very few of the students (2.50%) express that they do open defecation at their home.
- 11. Majority of the respondents (84%) are trimming their nails regularly. The significant number of students (16%) also did not trim their nails regularly.
- 12. Most of the respondents (57%) are feel stress or anxious.43% of students expressed that they did not feel stress or anxious in their life.
- 13. Majority of the respondents (42.37%) are feels stress or anxiety for Academic pressure.
- 14. Some students expressed that the main reasons are family issues (17.8%) and peer pressure (23.73%) for feel stress and anxiety.
- 15. Body image concerns are also a reason for their stress or anxiety reported by students (16.10%).
- 16. Majority of the respondents (73.13%) are feeling stress during examination time for academic pressure.
- 17. 10.63% of students expressed that they feel anxiety during class hours. Some of them (16.25%) also reported that they feel stress all time for academic pressure.
- 18. About half of the respondents (43.75%) are engage rarely in physical activities or sports. 35% of students also expressed that they go to play ground daily for physical activities or sports.
- 19. Some of respondents reported that they spent in physical activities or sports once in a week (1.25%) and 2-3 times in a week (16.63%). 4.38% of students never go to play ground.
- 20. Most of the respondents (50.63%) are engage 30 minutes or less in mobile/ laptop/ tab/ computer screen except accessing their study and education related matters.
- 21. Some of students are spent 30 minutes to less than 1 hour (17.5%), 1-2 hours (11.25%), and 2-3 hours (3.13%) in electronic gadgets.
- 22. 17.5% of students used electric gadgets above 3 hours except educational purpose.



- 23. Most of the respondents (71.88%) are daily sleep 7-8 hours. Rest of them (28.12%) are sleep less than 7-8 hours daily.
- 24. The majority of students (85.62) are comfortable discussing personal health concerns with their parents or guardians. Only 14.38% of students are feeling uneasy to discuss their personal health concerns with parents.
- 25. 59.38% of students have talk about their personal health concerns with teacher or lady teacher at school comfortable. However 40.62% of students did not discuss any kind of personal health issues with their teacher at school.
- 26. Most of the respondents (75%) are did not use mobile phone at bed time. Only 25% of students use mobile phone at sleeping times.

## 6. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, we may highlight that most of the students at the secondary level in Jhargram and Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal think that personal hygiene practices is important for health. The most students (54.38%) are brushing teeth with toothpaste at morning and before sleep at night. After using the toilet, 4.38% respondents did not wash their hands with soap. Some students (2.50%) expressed that they do open defecation at their home still now. The most of respondents (57%) felt stress or anxious. The majority of respondents felt stress or anxiety for Academic pressure during examination time. The most of respondents (43.75%) engaged rarely in physical activities or sports. 17.5% of students used electric gadgets above 3 hours except educational purposes. The most of respondents (75%) did not use mobile phone at bed time while, one third students i.e., 25% of students use mobile phone before sleep at night. It is a very alarming matters, parents or guardian or teachers should aware regarding how and what purposes and when we should use mobile phones to their children or students.

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