

# Challenges and Opportunities in Student Life During Transition from School to College: A Survey in Delhi University

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## ABSTRACT

The survey on the transition from high school to college life offers insightful information about the experiences and difficulties that students encounter at this crucial time in their life. The transition comes with mixed feelings, while many students are eager to begin their college and career-oriented life, some nevertheless feel anxious. The survey was responded by 1380 undergraduate students of all streams and socio-economic background, both outstation and local students of Delhi University. There were questions to assess the student behaviour in the college, challenges faced by students and their experience with peers and staff of the college. While a sizable portion of students showed preference for online learning, others were motivated to go to college for attendance, friends, and zeal to learn novel skills. The poll emphasized the importance of having a strong support network for students, including Infrastructure and overall rankings in selecting the college.

The survey also brought to light - several academic, social, and financial issues that students deal with, including academic load, exam pressure, language barriers, and costs for food, clothing, and accessories. Additionally, a few students have experienced abuse and addiction, which is worrisome. Despite these obstacles, the students responded that they got numerous chances to advance their personal and professional lives, including attending seminars, taking part in extracurricular activities, and winning scholarships. More than half of respondents reported having a favourable experience, which shows that students generally have a good time in college. However, there is space for development at the level of college administration. This survey offers essential data that can be utilized to enhance students' college experiences, aid in their better coping with issues they may encounter and serve as a useful beginning point for additional study on this crucial topic. Understanding these concerns is crucial for institutions and policymakers to successfully address them since they have a big influence on the sustainable development of the student.

**Keywords:** transition, college, high school, challenges, overcome, academics

## INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest challenges in a student's life appears when taking admission in a college, that marks the transition from school life to college life. During the school

life, students are constantly under the guidance of their parents while after entering college, students tend to manage multiple things on their own. One must take instant decisions on its own, managing finances and

has to take up independent steps, more so if staying away from home. It is a highly vulnerable period when students face different kind of challenges including academic, social, financial, and emotional ones. Students who fail to overcome these challenges often take drastic steps like dropping out or attempt to harm themselves (Sosu and Pheunpha 2019, Park and Hong 2021). Managing to overcome the challenges faced in this phase and learning from it, has a big influence on the sustainable development of the students (Briggs *et al* 2012, Hassel and Ridout 2018).

With regard to this area of concern, the current study aims at the challenges faced by students and their influence on their sustainable development during transition from school life to college. Through this survey, we intend to find out some valuable insights on some subjects that were not inquired in prior studies though they play a major role in the student's learning process viz. while assessing the impact of socio-economic factors on the sustainable development of the student.

Overall, the paper focusses on the challenges that play a significant role in shaping the transition phase from school to college in the life of a student. The way these challenges are tackled will in turn determine the way the student sustains through the college life and in effect, the challenges that come after college life also. Understanding these concerns can help institutions and policymakers to successfully address them and find solutions since they have a big influence on the sustainable development of the student.

### **Reason For Choosing this topic for our research purpose**

Our main motto was exploring the difference between high school and college in terms of academic expectations, social environment, personal and family-oriented responsibilities, and as an adult, as well as challenges faced by the youth of today in their college life.

**Gaps in Existing Literature:** While some researchers have worked upon the areas of school-to-college transition of freshmen, or academic, financial, social/personal, and finding balance between social life and academics, we could not find any questions related to sophomores or the third or consecutive year students neither could we find questions related to problems faced by local/outstation students, as well as if they have faced any sort of abuse and so on. There is a significant gap in the existing literature on understanding the challenges and concerns faced by students during the crucial transition period from school to college. This research aims to bridge this gap by exploring the challenges faced by students in their day-to-day college life. By understanding the dynamics of difficulties, we might find out ways to defend the challenges faced by students of today (Compas *et al* 1986).

**Intersectionality and diversity:** One potential gap is the lack of research on the experiences of students from underrepresented groups during the transition from high school to college (Kenny *et al* 2016, Boyer and Dzeidzic-Elliott 2023). Students from low-income families, first-generation college students, and students from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds or having any language barrier or acclimatizing with the current environment often face unique challenges during this transition, such as navigating financial aid and adjusting to a new cultural environment.

**Changes in preference of students post pandemic:** Since a pandemic has changed a significant number of things, we wanted to ask whether students are more comfortable in online or offline mode of college. We also wanted to know about students' motivations for going to college, as well as whether their interaction with faculties, college administration or overall experience after coming to college was poor or mediocre or excellent.

**Practical Significance of the Topic:** The practical significance of this research topic

lies in addressing real-world challenges and opportunities faced by students in daily college life. Understanding how students could utilize their talents in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities or bringing in their talent into the limelight of the college world, or learning a new skill, or whether the students were aided financially by college, after coming to college was one of the perspectives of choosing this topic. The findings of this research can contribute to the development of students in the near future or help them have an improved experience in their college life and basically lead to a change in leading to positive outcomes such as reducing abuse or aiding them financially even more or being easier to them in terms of academic and social pressures or being more practical while choosing their academic aspects.

## **MATERIALS & METHODS**

This study employed a mixed-method approach to investigate the transition of students from school life to college. A survey was employed in the study to gather information from participants. Google forms was selected as the online platform for data collection due to its accessibility, ease of use, and ability to collect data online.

### **Survey Design**

The Survey Questionnaire was designed to get information related to the changes that took place during transition from school life to college life. The survey also included questions related to the problems and the difficulties that students face while moving into college life.

### **Sample Selection**

The study targeted students who had recently completed their school and were transitioning to college. A convenience sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. The survey was distributed to potential participants via social media platforms and email.

### **Data Collection**

The survey consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were used to collect demographic

information and to quantify responses, while the open-ended questions allowed participants to express their thoughts and experiences in their own words.

### **Data Representation and Statistical Analysis**

The closed-ended questions were analysed using descriptive statistics in SPSS software, while the open-ended questions were analysed using content analysis. Statistical analysis was carried out using Microsoft Excel 2019 and SPSS version 22 (Chicago, IL, USA). Microsoft Excel was used for data cleaning, editing, sorting and coding. The Excel file was then imported into SPSS software. Descriptive analysis (i.e. frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) was performed, followed by t-test to determine significant relations of the mean awareness, perception and attitude scores with socio-demographic information. All tests were two-tailed and p-values less than 0.05 were accepted as statistically significant. The results of the survey were presented with the help of tables, charts and graphs.

### **Validity and Reliability**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the survey instrument, a pilot study was conducted before the actual data collection. The feedback from the pilot study was used to make necessary modifications to the survey instrument.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Informed consent was taken from all the participants, and their privacy and confidentiality were kept anonymous throughout this study. Overall, the mixed-method approach used in this study provided a comprehensive understanding of the transition of students from school life to college. The use of google forms as an online platform for data collection proved to be effective and efficient in collecting data from a large number of participants.

### **Limitations**

It is important to note that this study has several limitations. First, the survey relied

on self-reported data, which may be subject to recall biases or social desirability biases. Second, the convenience sampling method may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the use of Google Form as the data collection tool may have limitations in terms of sample representativeness and potential response biases.

Overall, the survey conducted using Google form provided valuable data for exploring the research questions of this study.

## RESULTS

A total of 1380 respondents completed the survey representing various courses. Over half (56.5%) were enrolled in B.Sc. (56.5%), an almost similar proportions in B.Com. (10.5%) and B.Tech. (9.1%), followed by B.A. (7.4%), BBA (6%), BMS (5.5%), M.B.B.S. (5.2%) and other courses (5.2%).

Collectively, Science students viz. B.Sc., B.Tech. and M.B.B.S. together accounted for 57% while non-science streams made up 43% approximately. The gender distribution was 57.2% female (n=789) and 42.8% male (n=591). In terms of income, 46% of respondents were from low-income households (earning up to 3 lakh per annum), 27% from middle-income households (3–7 lakh per annum), and 26% from high-income households (more than 7 lakh per annum), with 1% choosing not to disclose their income. Living arrangements varied, with 38.7% staying at home, 27.2% in PG accommodations, 19.7% in college hostels, 13.2% in personal accommodation, and 1.2% living with local guardians. Personality-wise, 55.1% identified as ambiverts, 27.3% as introverts, and 17.5% as extroverts.

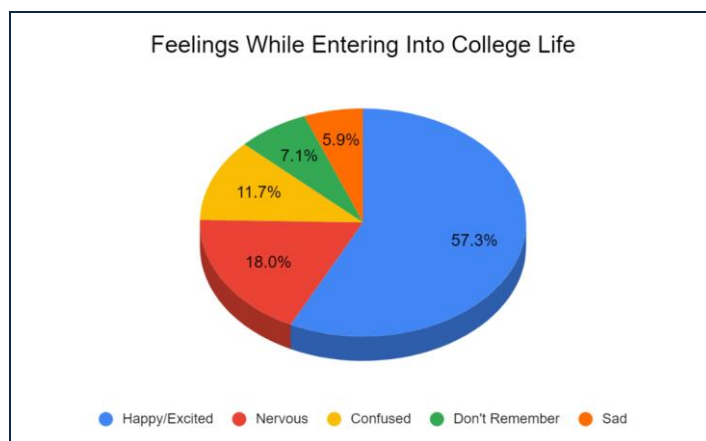


Figure 1. What were the feelings while entering into college life?

More than half of the respondents were **happy and excited (57.3%)**, though others were **nervous (18%)**, **confused (11.7%)**, **sad (7.1%)**. A few (5.9%) could **not remember** how they felt during the time they realized this change was coming their way (**Figure 1**). Though males were significantly more **confused**, females were

more **nervous**. Similarly, students belonging to middle income groups were significantly happier than low-income groups who were nervous. Introvert students were significantly more nervous; extrovert and ambivert were happy and confused, respectively, while entering into the college (**Table 1**).



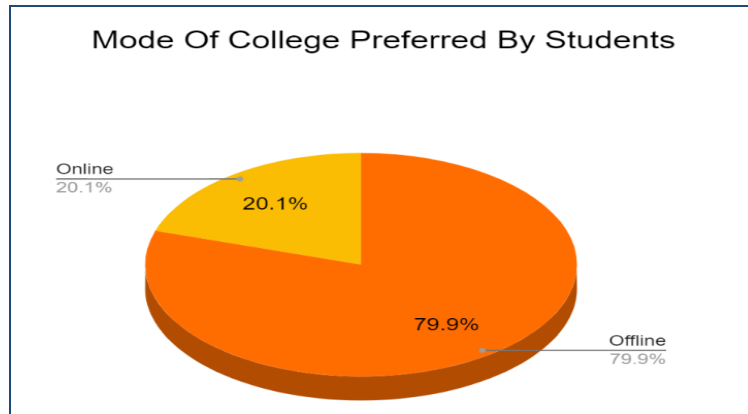


Figure 2. Mode of College preferred by students

The preferred mode of teaching was **Offline** significantly higher than the remaining mode with **79.9%** of students enthusiastic to attend the college in **physical** mode that was **20.1%** who favoured **Online** mode (Figure 2).

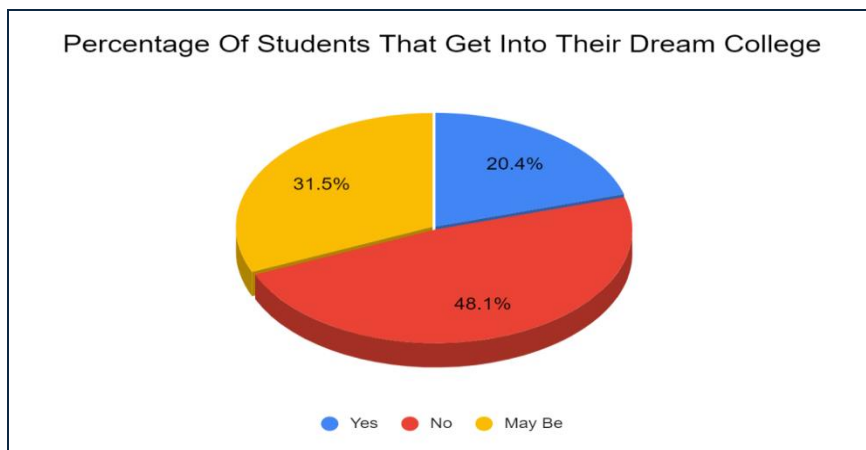


Figure 3. Percentage of Students that get admission in their dream College

**48.1%** students reported that they did not get into their dream college, on the other hand, **20.4%** of the students reported that they could get into their dream college and the rest of the participants consisting of **31.5%** were unsure of their response (Figure 3).

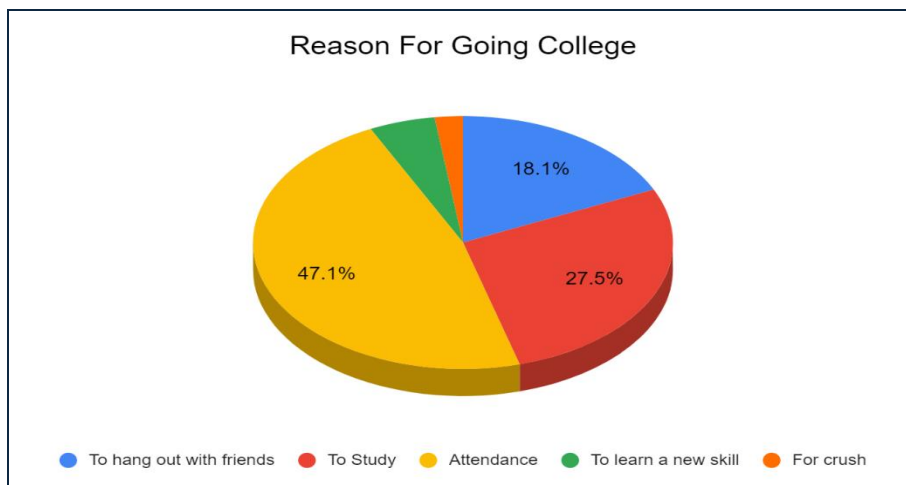


Figure 4. Motivation for going to college

When asked about the reason for coming to college **47.1%** students said it was to gain **attendance**, **27.5%** come to **study**, **18.1%** come so that they can meet their **friends**,

while a few wished to **learn new skills (5%)** and few of them come for their **crush (3%) (Figure 4)**.

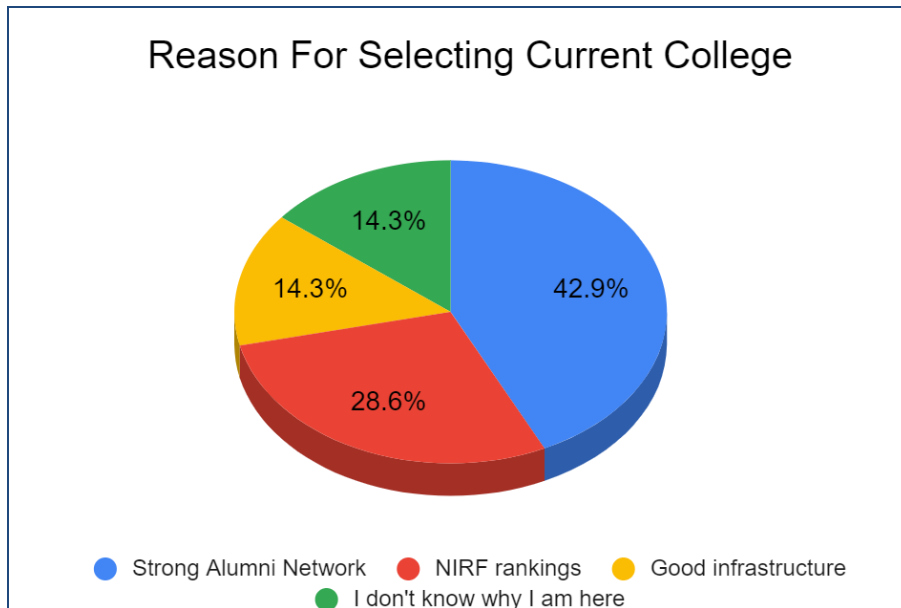


Figure 5. Reason for selecting Current College

Survey-takers were asked the reasons for choosing their current college and it was found that **strong alumni network** (among **42.9%** of the students) was the most important reason, followed by **NIRF**

**ranking** of the college (**28.6%**) and **infrastructure** of the college (**14.3%**). Though another 14.3% of the respondents were not clear of the reason for choosing their current college (**Figure 5**).

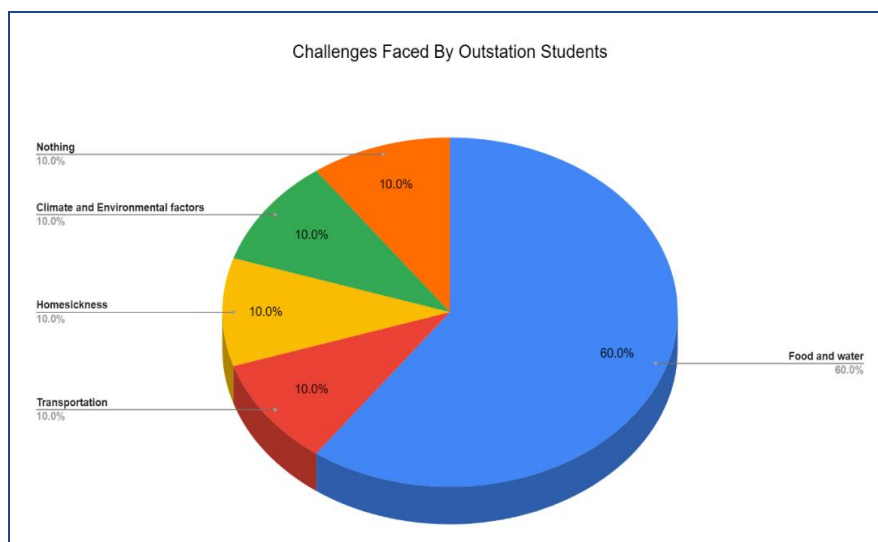


Figure 6. Challenges faced by an outstation student

While **41.2%** of the participants belonged to Delhi-NCR (considered **local students**), **more than half (58.8%)** of the participants belonged to other states (**outstation**

**students**). The **outstation** students mentioned facing **food and water (60.0%)** as their major challenge, followed by **transportation (10%)** and **homesickness**

(10%) to the same extent; though **one-tenths** of the outstation students faced **no challenges (10%) (Figure 6)**. Among the local participants, **financial issues** were the most challenging faced by **53.0%** of the

local respondents, followed by **health-related issues (31.8%)** and **safety issues (15.2%) (Figure 7)**, details shown in **Table 2**.

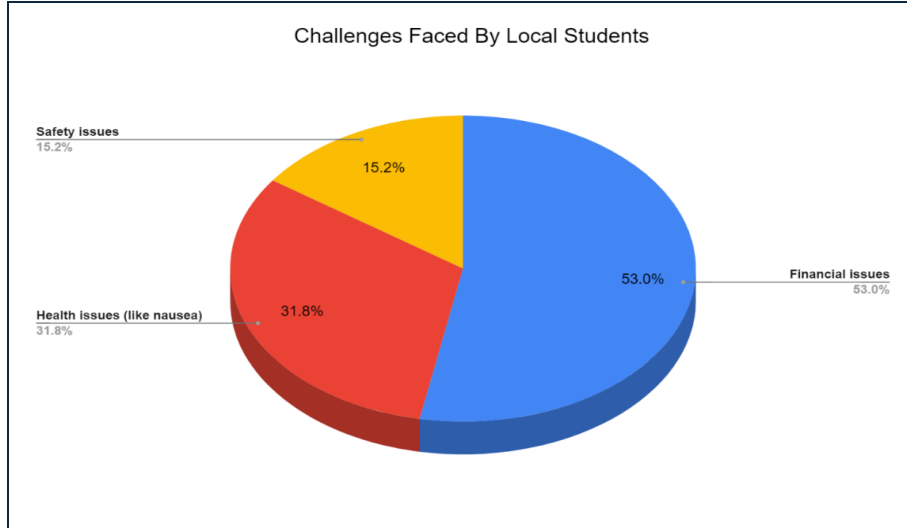


Figure 7. Challenges faced by local Students

Majority (**80.8%**) of the students mentioned **academic workload** as a great challenge, **14.4%** reported **pressure of examination**, some of the students found the

**competitiveness** among students as a challenge and the rest found their professors to be difficult (**Figure 8**).

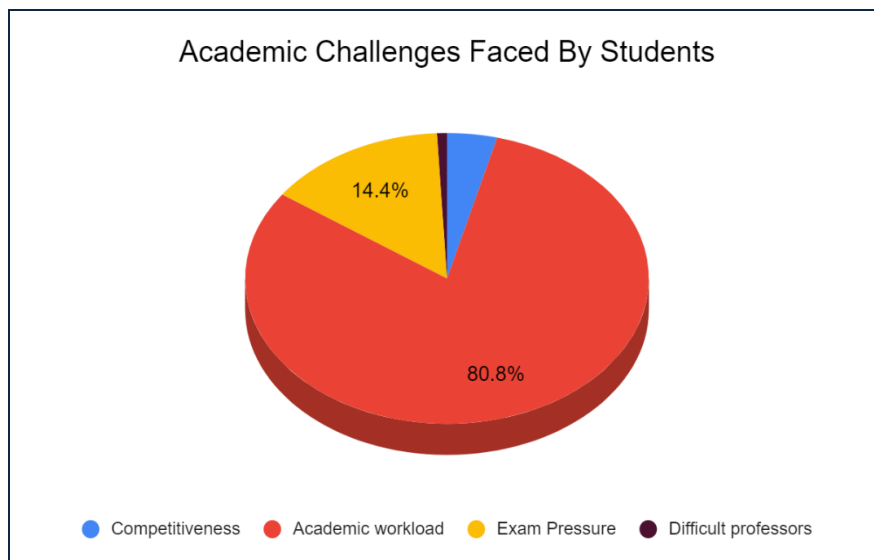


Figure 8. Academic Challenges faced by Students

Out of 100% students, **30.5%** face **food expenses** as a challenge for them, nearly **28.4%** take **buying clothes and accessories** as a financial challenge, **23.9%** take **expenses on hangout** as challenge and

above all these expenses **17.2%** face challenge of **managing all these expenses and saving money for emergency conditions (Figure 9)**.



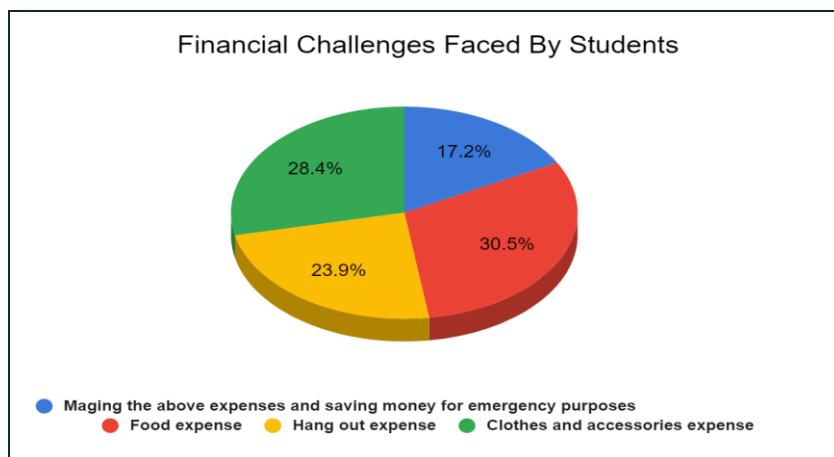


Figure 9. Financial Challenges faced by Students

Many kinds of social challenges are faced by a student and some of them which we covered in our survey include **meeting with new people from various regions** and about **55.9%** feel it as challenging, about

**24.5%** found **living away from home** as challenging, **10.5%** face **language incompatibility** challenge, **8.8%** face problem in **adjusting with roommates/ flat mates** (Figure 10).

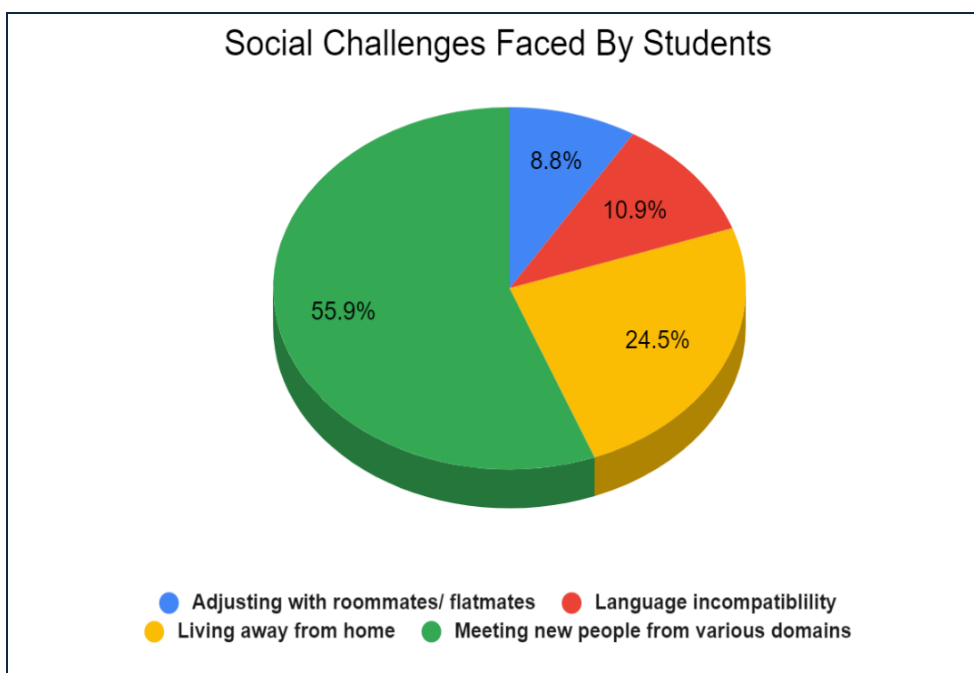


Figure 10. Social Challenges faced by Students

Though majority (**96.5%**) affirmed not facing any sort of abuse, a small percentage (**3.5%**, **n=49**) have become **victims of abuse** in their colleges. Out of this **n=49**, **20** students got **bullied** in their college, **10** students have become victims of **ragging** in

their college, **5** students faced **disrespect from their PG owner**, even **5** students have become victims of **sexual harassment**, **5** have **just ignored** what they experienced and **4** have issue of facing **indifference** in college (Figure 11).

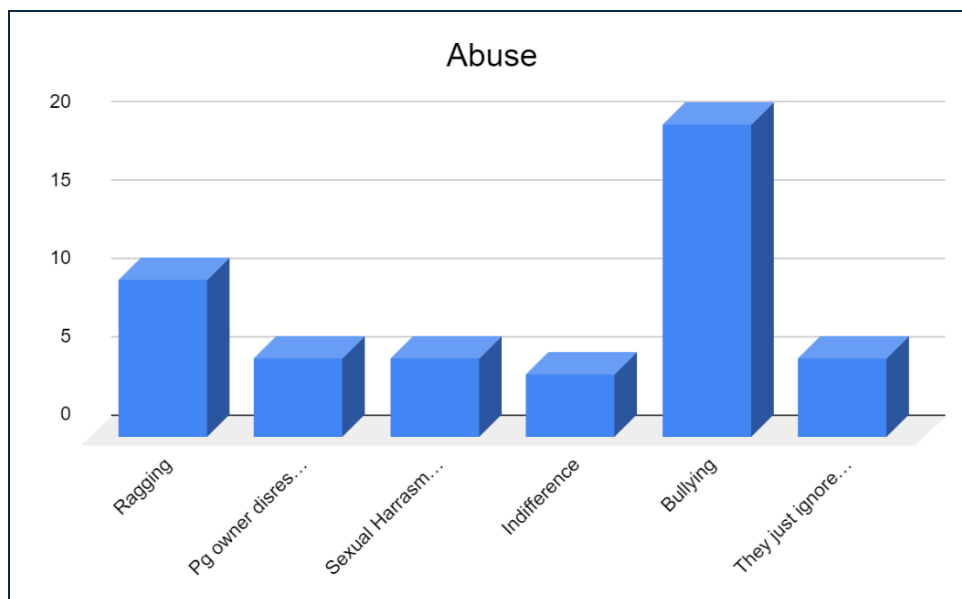


Figure 11. Kind of Abuse faced by students

Majority of the respondents (92.8%) claimed that they are **not indulged into any sort of bad habits**, 4% have become addicted to **alcohol**, 2.9% are addicted to

**cigarettes** and 0.3% of them are even engaged in **tobacco, drugs, gambling** (Figure 12).

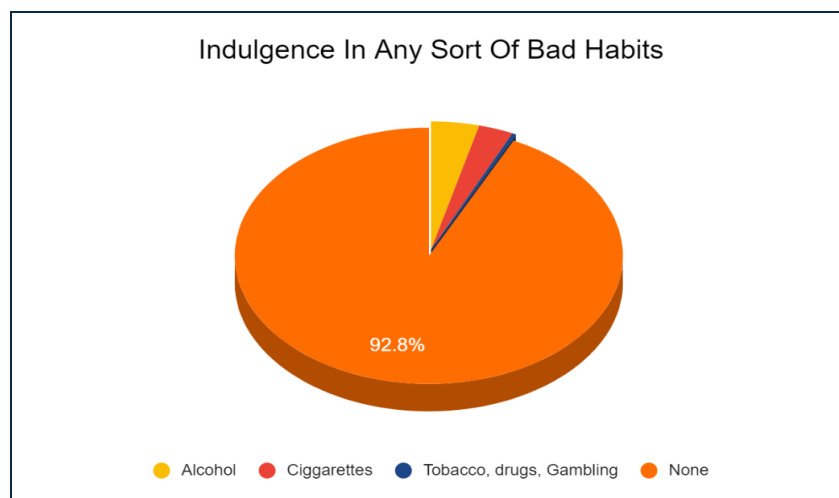


Figure 12. Indulgence in any kind of Bad Habits

Furthermore, providing support for students is a key aspect of what an institute can offer. We included a question about various forms of assistance, such as workshops, symposia and other platforms to showcase their talents, and opportunities to organize and participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities. Results showed that approximately 15.6% of students had the

chance to participate in these activities, while 28.9% were able to manage and organize them. Around 21.7% were able to showcase their talents to the wider college community, and 20.4% received financial support from the institution (Figure 13). Additionally, about 5% benefited from scholarships, and 8.4% had the opportunity to attend workshops and seminars (Table 3).

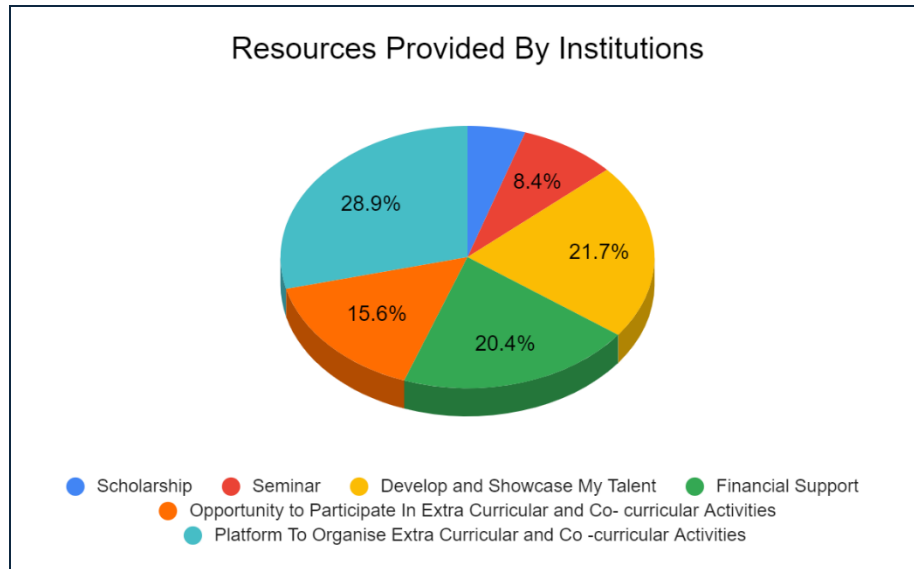


Figure 13. Support provided by Institutions

How is your interaction with faculty?																
	Total	Gender		Year of studying				Economic background (Family Income)				Characteristic that describes you the best.			Outstation/Local student	
		Female	Male	Final Year	First Year	Intermediate Year	Others	Don't Know	High-income group	Low-income group	Middle-income group	Ambivert	Extrovert	Introvert	Local student	Outstation student
3	27.7%	27.6%	27.7%	0.0%	31.7%	25.9%	57.1%	40.0%	26.7%	30.0%	24.5%	34.2%	12.8%	24.1%	27.4%	27.9%
4	23.0%	22.1%	24.4%	100.0%	19.8%	23.9%	42.9%	0.0%	28.3%	19.5%	24.5%	22.2%	31.0%	19.6%	23.6%	22.7%
2	17.8%	19.9%	14.9%	0.0%	20.3%	16.9%	0.0%	60.0%	17.2%	13.5%	24.3%	18.8%	2.9%	25.2%	16.5%	18.6%
5	17.7%	17.0%	18.6%	0.0%	18.3%	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%	18.1%	18.1%	17.2%	13.4%	38.8%	12.7%	17.4%	17.9%
1	13.8%	13.4%	14.4%	0.0%	9.9%	15.59%	0.0%	0.0%	9.7%	19.0%	9.5%	11.4%	14.5%	18.3%	15.1%	12.9%
Base	1380	789	591	4	394	975	7	10	360	631	379	761	242	377	569	811

How is your college administration?																
	Total	Gender		Year of studying				Economic background (Family Income)				Characteristic that describes you the best.			Outstation/Local student	
		Female	Male	Final Year	First Year	Intermediate Year	Others	Don't Know	High-income group	Low-income group	Middle-income group	Ambivert	Extrovert	Introvert	Local student	Outstation student
3	39.8%	45.1%	32.7%	0.0%	45.2%	37.3%	100.0%	40.0%	41.1%	39.9%	38.3%	44.2%	29.8%	37.4%	38.3%	40.8%
2	19.4%	15.8%	24.2%	0.0%	20.1%	19.4%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	18.2%	19.3%	21.2%	10.7%	21.5%	19.2%	19.6%
1	16.2%	12.0%	21.7%	0.0%	6.1%	20.4%	0.0%	60.0%	9.2%	20.9%	13.7%	14.1%	17.8%	19.4%	19.7%	13.7%
4	16.0%	17.5%	14.0%	100.0%	18.8%	14.7%	0.0%	0.0%	18.3%	12.2%	20.6%	15.5%	14.9%	17.8%	16.2%	15.9%
5	8.6%	9.5%	7.4%	0.0%	9.9%	8.2%	0.0%	0.0%	9.2%	8.7%	8.2%	5.1%	26.9%	4.0%	6.7%	10.0%
Base	1380	789	591	4	394	975	7	10	360	631	379	761	242	377	569	811

How is your overall experience after coming to college?																
	Total	Gender		Year of studying				Economic background (Family Income)				Characteristic that describes you the best.			Outstation/Local student	
		Female	Male	Final Year	First Year	Intermediate Year	Others	Don't Know	High-income group	Low-income group	Middle-income group	Ambivert	Extrovert	Introvert	Local student	Outstation student
3	32.6%	33.5%	31.5%	0.0%	31.7%	32.9%	57.1%	0.0%	30.8%	33.9%	33.0%	35.3%	27.3%	30.5%	30.4%	34.2%
4	31.2%	31.1%	31.5%	100.0%	33.0%	30.2%	42.9%	60.0%	31.9%	29.0%	33.5%	37.8%	22.7%	23.3%	30.9%	31.4%
5	13.0%	12.4%	13.9%	0.0%	14.0%	12.8%	0.0%	0.0%	14.4%	12.5%	12.9%	7.5%	33.9%	10.9%	13.2%	12.9%
2	12.2%	15.8%	7.3%	0.0%	14.2%	11.5%	0.0%	0.0%	16.4%	10.5%	11.3%	12.4%	3.3%	17.5%	12.5%	12.0%
1	10.9%	7.2%	15.9%	0.0%	7.1%	12.6%	0.0%	40.0%	6.4%	14.1%	9.2%	7.0%	12.8%	17.8%	13.0%	9.5%
Base	1380	789	591	4	394	975	7	10	360	631	379	761	242	377	569	811

Table 3. Overall Experience of the Students in the College w.r.t. faculty and administration

Base: Those Answering

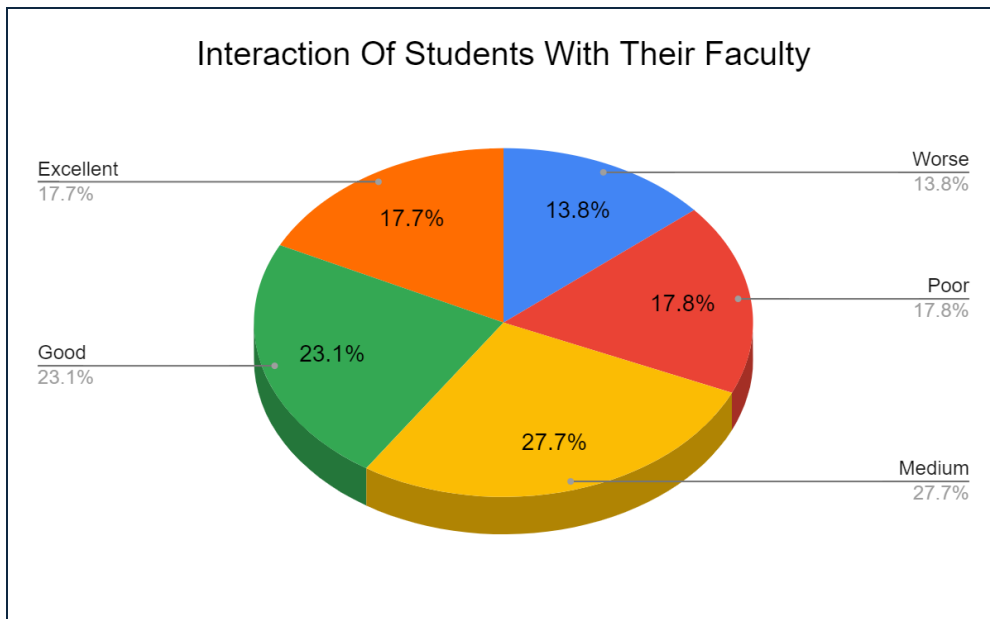
Results are based on two-sided tests with significance level .05. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the smaller column proportion appears under the category with the

Table 3. Experience of the students with faculty and administration in the college.

About 17.68% considered their level of interaction with their faculty members to be excellent (level=5), 27.68% considered it medium (level=4), while 23.05% had good (level=3) interaction with faculty. It was also

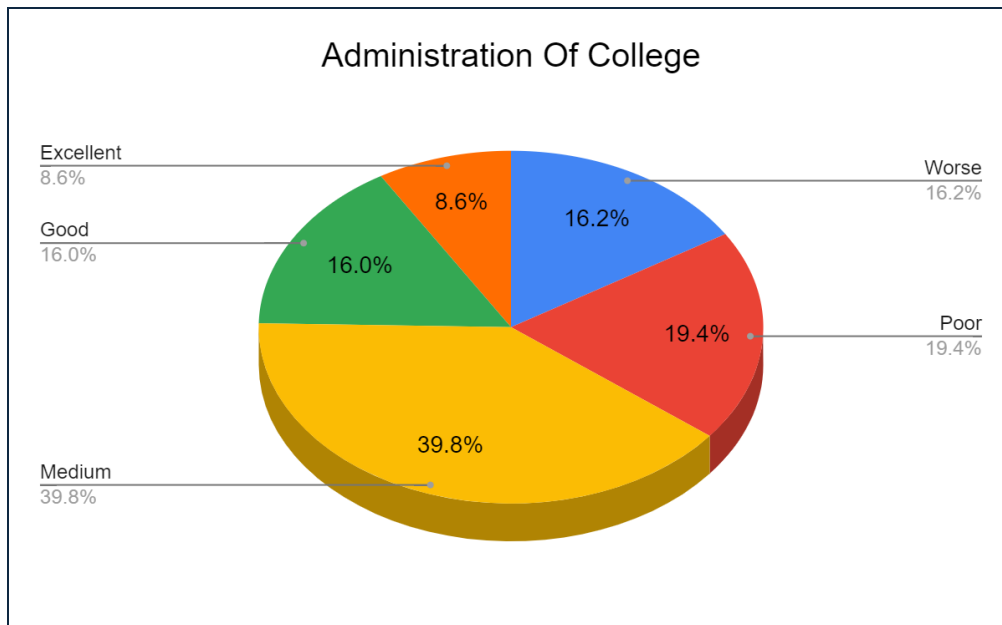
observed that 31.59% considered an unsatisfactory level (17.75% had poor, level =2 and 13.84% had worse, level=1) in terms of their interaction with faculty of their college (details in Figure 14).

Surprisingly there is no significant difference among students belonging to different genders and economic background – though extrovert students were significantly less interactive with their teachers (**Table 3**).



**Figure 14. Interaction of Students with Faculty**

Out of total respondents, **64.4%** were **satisfied** (1=worse and 2=poor) with their college administration (**details in Figure 15**), as shown in **Table 3**. While **35.6%** were **not satisfied** (level 3=medium, 4=good and 5=excellent)



**Figure 15. Administration of Institutions**

After facing so much of challenges and hardships, nearly **13.04%** have **overall excellent experience in college**, **31.24%** have **overall good experience in college**, **32.6%** have **medium experience in college**, **12.18%** have **poor experience in college** and **10.94%** have **worse experience in their college** (**Figure 16**).

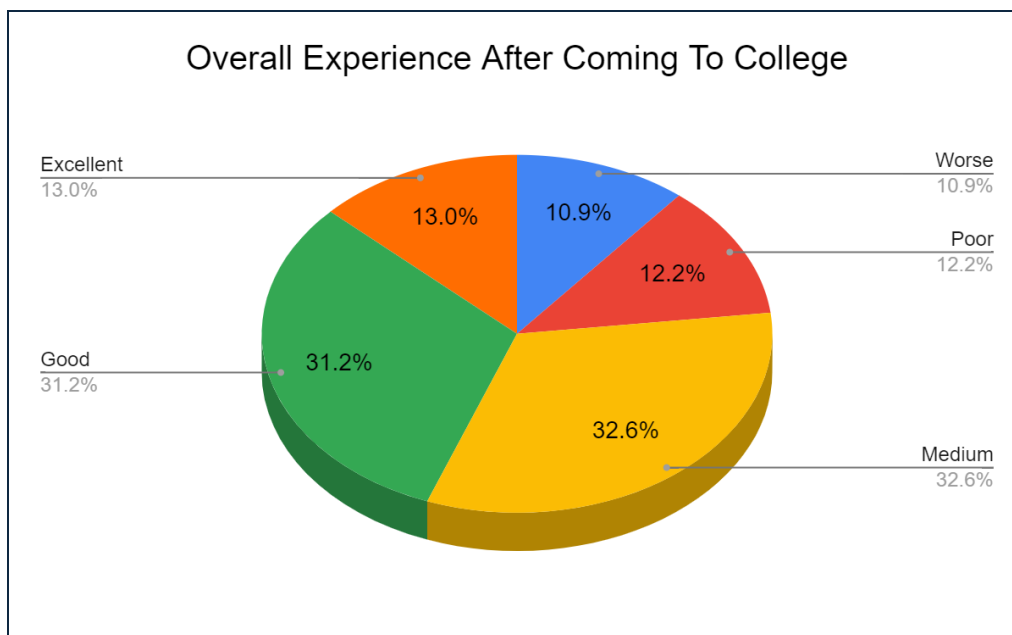


Figure 16. Overall experience in college

## DISCUSSION

The present survey data deals with understanding the challenges and influence of the transition from school life to college life on the sustainable development of the students. Analysis and inspection of the same can be helpful in tracing the journey of respondents including their confrontations, interactions, circumstances and overcomes. As mentioned, the participants in this survey belonged to University of Delhi pursuing under graduation, hailing from different backgrounds. The findings discussed below add to the research and provide support for the need of this survey to be conducted.

When participants were asked about their feelings while entering college life, more than half of them were excited and happy to kick start their new journey and some were nervous too as it was obvious. However, nearly one-fifth of students still prefer online mode of college, though majority favoured offline mode (as reported in Jun *et al* 2021). When asked about did they get their dream college, about half of students responded no, so it can be inferred from here that many of the students have to opt for their backup plan instead of their aimed studies. The reason for selecting the current college as their backup is mainly due to strong alumni connections and NIRF rankings. When

asked about their daily motivation of going to college, it was seen nearly half of respondents go to college just for attendance and only one-fourth came for studies and some for their friends too. The findings corroborate with those of Hernandez-Martinez *et al* (2011) and Hassel and Ridout (2018).

More than half of the total students had come far away from their homes for studies and are either staying in PGs, hostels, personal accommodation or with local guardian and rest are local students staying in their homes. When asked about the complications faced as an outstation student, the major problem seen was of adjusting with food and water of that region. Some other problems seen were transportation and homesickness. Though staying at home, local students also face issues like financial issues due to daily transportation, health issues and safety issues, as observed by Fromme *et al* (2008) and Park and Hong (2021).

Along with the challenges associated with their accommodation, other challenges like academic challenges, social challenges, financial challenges were also covered. Various academic challenges included - academic workload, examination pressure, competitiveness among peers. The drastic

change is seen in academic workload for a student in college than that in school, examination pressure and feeling of competitiveness is also increased in college. After coming out of school, a student start understanding her/his responsibilities, s(he) start thinks about all its expenses and manage it. Various financial challenges, majorly food expenses, buying clothes and accessories, expenses on hangout and above all of it saving after these expenses is a major task for college students, which make them responsible (as seen in Goodlad *et al* 2019). As asked about their nature, more than half said they are ambivert, more than one-fourth said they are introvert and the rest are extroverts and their nature plays a pivotal role in adjusting socially to a new ambience with great exposure, as observed by Geller *et al* (2009). When asked about social challenges, major issues come out as meeting with new people from various regions and living away from home, which is an outcome of their behavior. Other social challenges faced by outstation students are language incompatibility and incompatibility with their roommates and flat mates, also observed by Brinkworth *et al* (2009) and Worsley *et al* (2021).

Data of experiences like abuse and addiction was also collected. It was observed that few have become victim of abuse like bullying, ragging, indifference, sexual harassment and even disrespect from their PG owner out of total respondents. Also, a small number have become addicted to alcohol, cigarettes, gambling, tobacco and drugs.

College is not only a place of hardships, but for one it is also a place of new opportunities, exposure, learning (Wagner and Blackorby, 1996, Cassidy and Trew 2001, Joanne *et al* 2021). Apart from challenges, this survey also encompasses the facilities provided by their institutions, relation with teachers, administrative support and overall experience. Students get to perform and manage many co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, get to attend various seminars and workshops beside getting help in form of scholarships. Overall

respondents have a good relationship with their teachers. And when it came to administration, it is average level of administration in every kind of institute. Above all, survey data shows more than half of respondents have a good experience in college.

## CONCLUSION

Transition from school life to college life is a crucial phase that influences the sustainable development of the student. Here, the present survey provides valuable insights into the experiences and challenges faced by students during this crucial phase of their lives. The data indicates the mixed feelings students have while entering the college. The survey highlights the importance of having a strong support system, such as alumni connections and NIRF rankings, for students who may not have gotten their desired college. Additionally, the debate on minimum attendance for the students still goes on, which can or not be the motivating factor bringing them to college. Furthermore, the survey outcome highlighted various academic, social, and financial challenges faced by students, such as academic workload, examination pressure, language incompatibility, and expenses on food, clothing, and accessories. Moreover, the students may become victims of abuse and addiction, which is a concerning issue. These challenges have a significant impact on students and understanding them is essential for universities and policymakers to address these issues effectively. Despite these challenges, students have access to many opportunities for personal and professional development, such as attending seminars, participating in extracurricular activities, and receiving scholarships. Overall, students have a positive experience in college, with more than half reporting a good experience. However, there is room for improvement in the administration of colleges, with respondents rating administrative support as less than average. This survey provides valuable information

that can be used to improve the college experience for students and help them better adjust to the challenges they may face in their future life as well, thereby having a big influence on the sustainable development of the student. Thus, it provides a useful starting point for further research on this important topic.

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