



unicef 
for every child

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Youth Perspectives on
Climate Change and
Education in India

Cover: Children play during their lunch break at The Zilla Parishad Primary School in Muhammadpur Village.

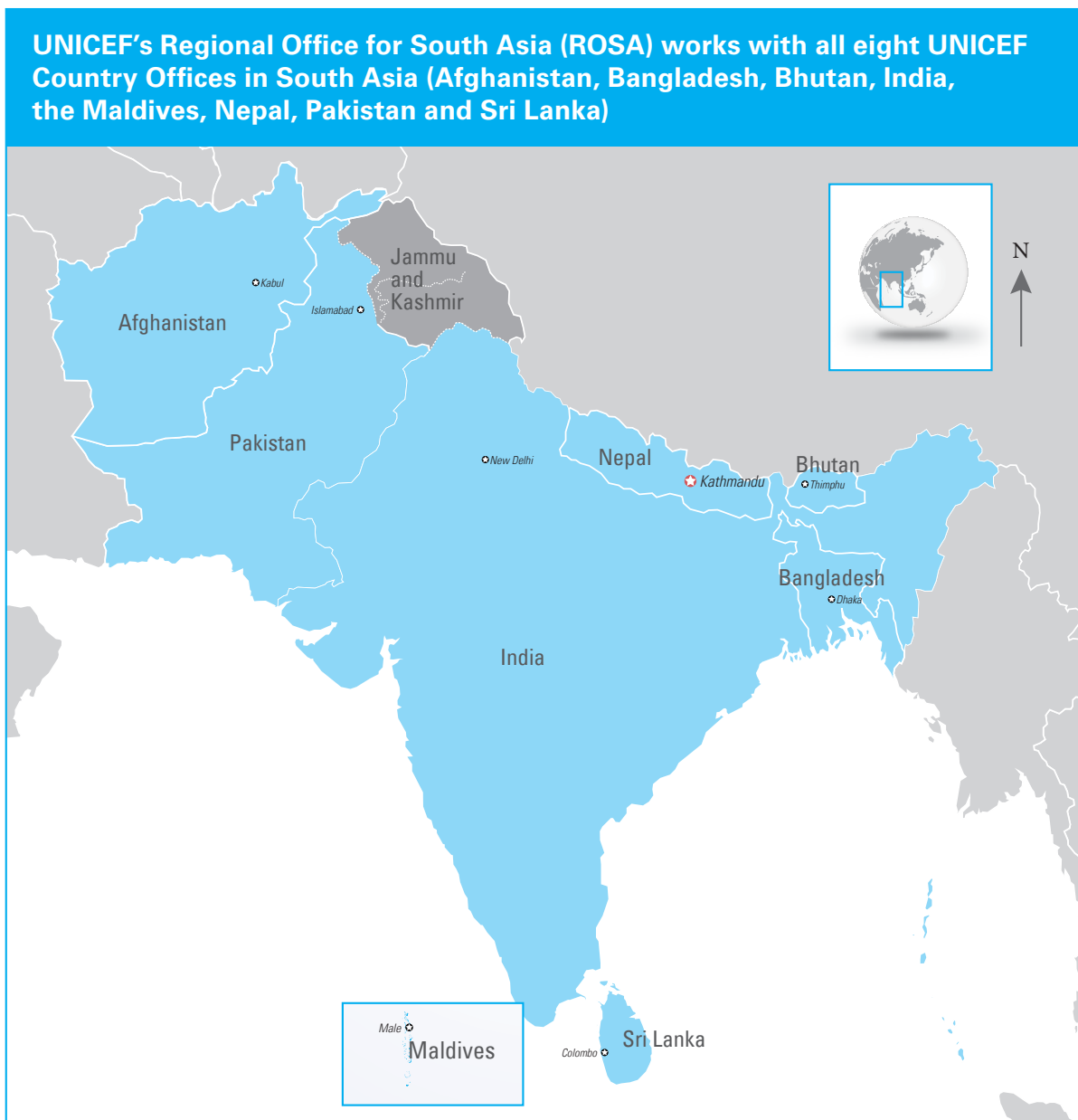
© UNICEF/UNI144900/Singh

UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
Lainchaur, Kathmandu,
Nepal

www.unicef.org/rosa

© United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
February 2021

Permission is required to reproduce any part of this publication: All images and illustrations used in this publication are intended for informational purposes only and must be used only in reference to this publication and its content. All photos are used for illustrative purposes only. UNICEF photographs are copyrighted and may not be used for an individual's or organization's own promotional activities or in any commercial context. The content cannot be digitally altered to change meaning or context. All reproductions of non-brand content MUST be credited, as follows: Photographs: "© UNICEF / photographer's last name". Assets not credited are not authorized. Thank you for supporting UNICEF.



Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

CONTENTS



Objective

4



Sample and Methodology

6



Detailed Analysis

9



Findings

32



OBJECTIVE



OBJECTIVE

The survey was structured to examine the following:

- > **Youth experiences and perceptions** of climate change in their locality and surroundings.
- > Youth perceptions of **climate change learning and action opportunities at school** and in their community.
- > Youth experiences of, and involvement in, climate change **learning and action initiative(s) at school and in their community.**
- > Youth views on support **needs to empower them** to become effective and confident agents of change.

2

SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY



SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY



25,826
respondents



8
countries



10
languages

Over **25,000 individuals** responded to the survey across the **8 countries** of South Asia.

The survey was available in **10 languages*** and conducted between August 7th and September 9th 2020.

Administered online:

- Through Facebook Messenger, Viber and WhatsApp.
- Respondents are those who have access to mobile technology or internet.

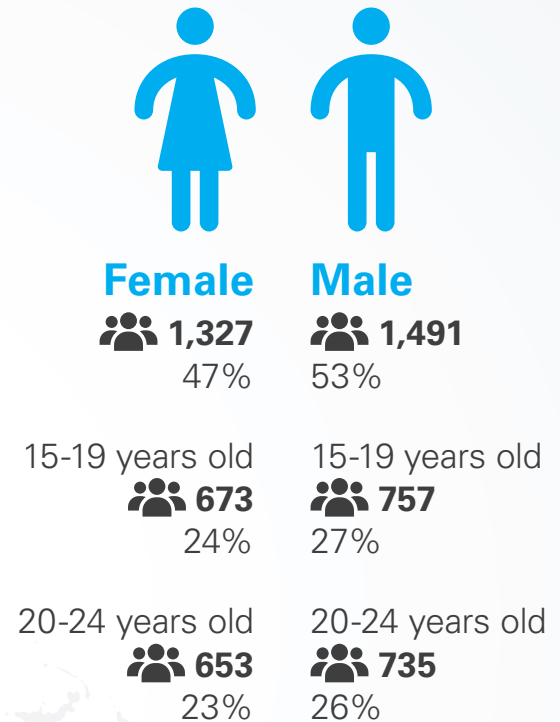
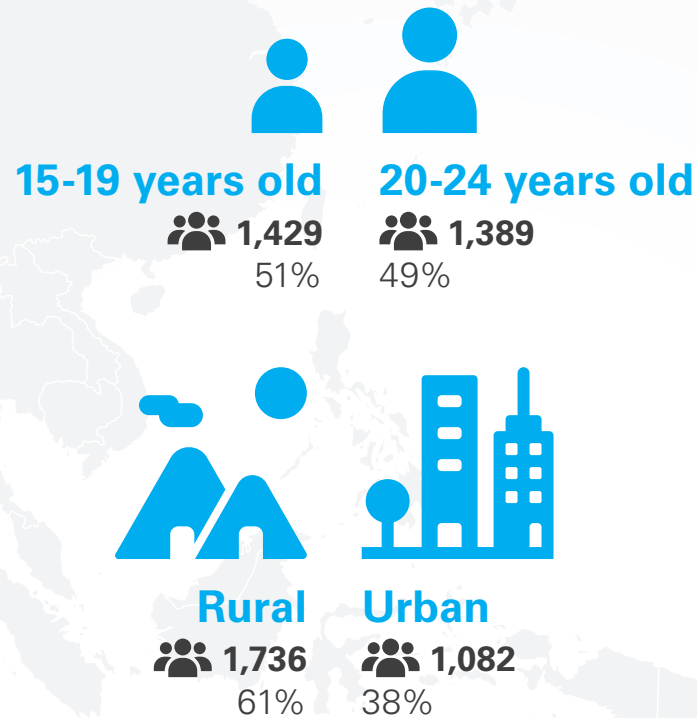
Cleaning steps included flagging cases that had erroneous entry, were outside the age range and empty cases:

- 4,231 cases were dropped.

*Dari and Pashto (Afghanistan), Bangla (Bangladesh), English (Bhutan), Hindi (India), Dhivehi (Maldives), Nepali (Nepal), Urdu (Pakistan), Sinhalese and Tamil (Sri Lanka).

SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

India



Weighting:

- **Iterative proportional fitting** was used to weight the sample intra-country to correct for non-response and selection bias across demographic factors.

- **Gender** and **age** were adjusted using 2020 population data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) database ILOSTAT.

Other Countries:

- For this country report, each response from India is compared to the overall regional response from all respondents* to the survey.

Limitations:

- **Demographic:** Respondents were not asked questions about socio-economic status, education or region.
- **Imbalanced response:** Given the incomplete demographic profile of the respondents, data presented should be interpreted "in-sample", meaning that these attitudes are from a sample population with internet access, literacy both in terms of reading and ability to navigate internet-enabled devices, and willingness to opt-in to a survey.
- **Drop-off:** As with many online surveys, there was a consistent drop-off in respondents throughout the survey. Missing data were treated as missing at random (MAR) with the assumption that auxiliary variables in weighting adjusted for missingness. It is possible, given point 1, that there are additional factors related to drop-off. Moreover, a respondent who does not know about climate change is potentially more likely to drop off than those that know a lot about the subject. Results should be interpreted with this in mind.

*Based on first question (does not incorporate drop-off).

3

DETAILED ANALYSIS





SECTION 1: **PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

Respondents were asked about their knowledge of, and exposure to, climate change.



KNOWLEDGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Students were asked:

How much do you know about climate change and global warming?

Do you learn about climate change in school?

64%

of respondents in India reported that they could explain climate change

65%

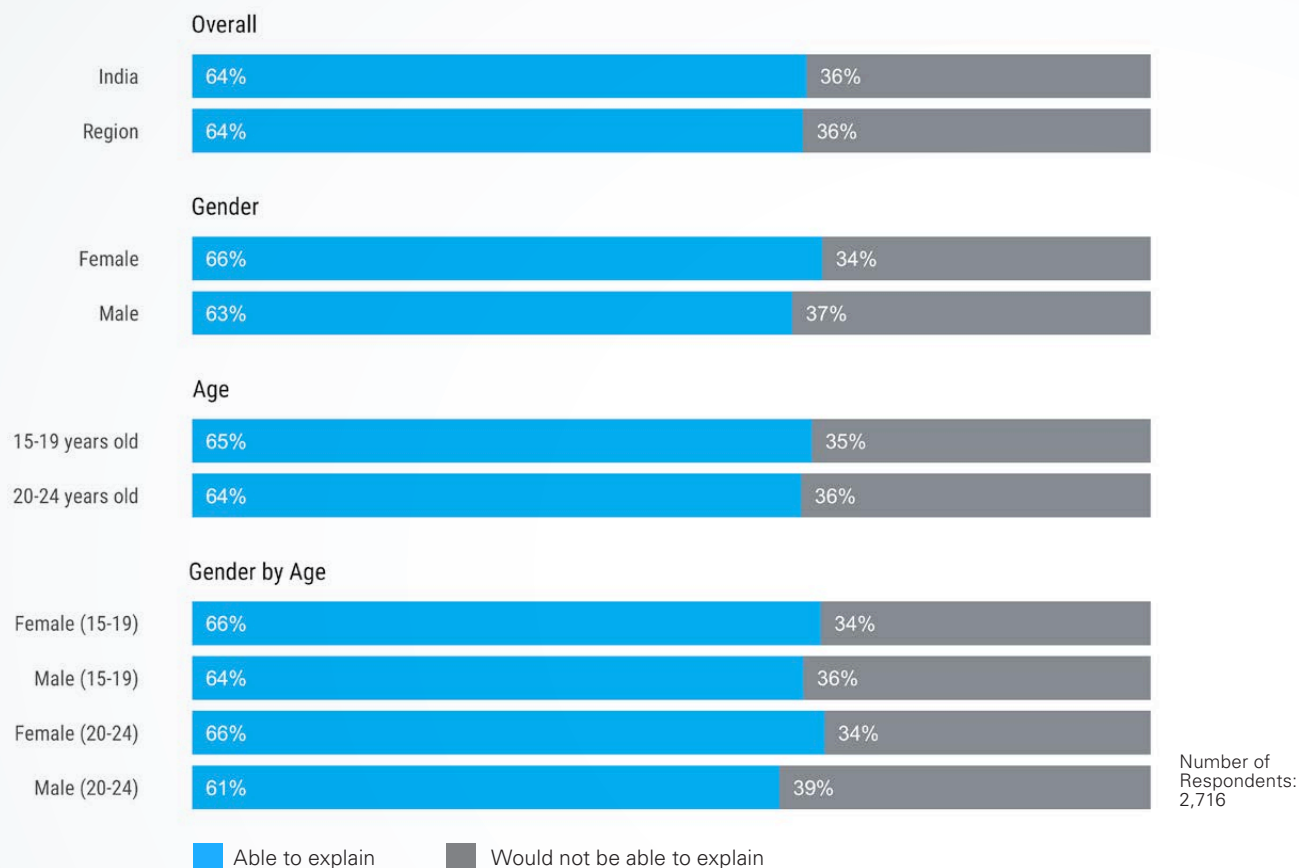
of respondents in India reported that they “very often or often” learned about climate change in school

58%

Older male respondents (20-24) were less likely to state they “very often or often” learned about climate change in school compared to other groups (8-10 percentage points more)

KNOWLEDGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

How much do you know about climate change and global warming?



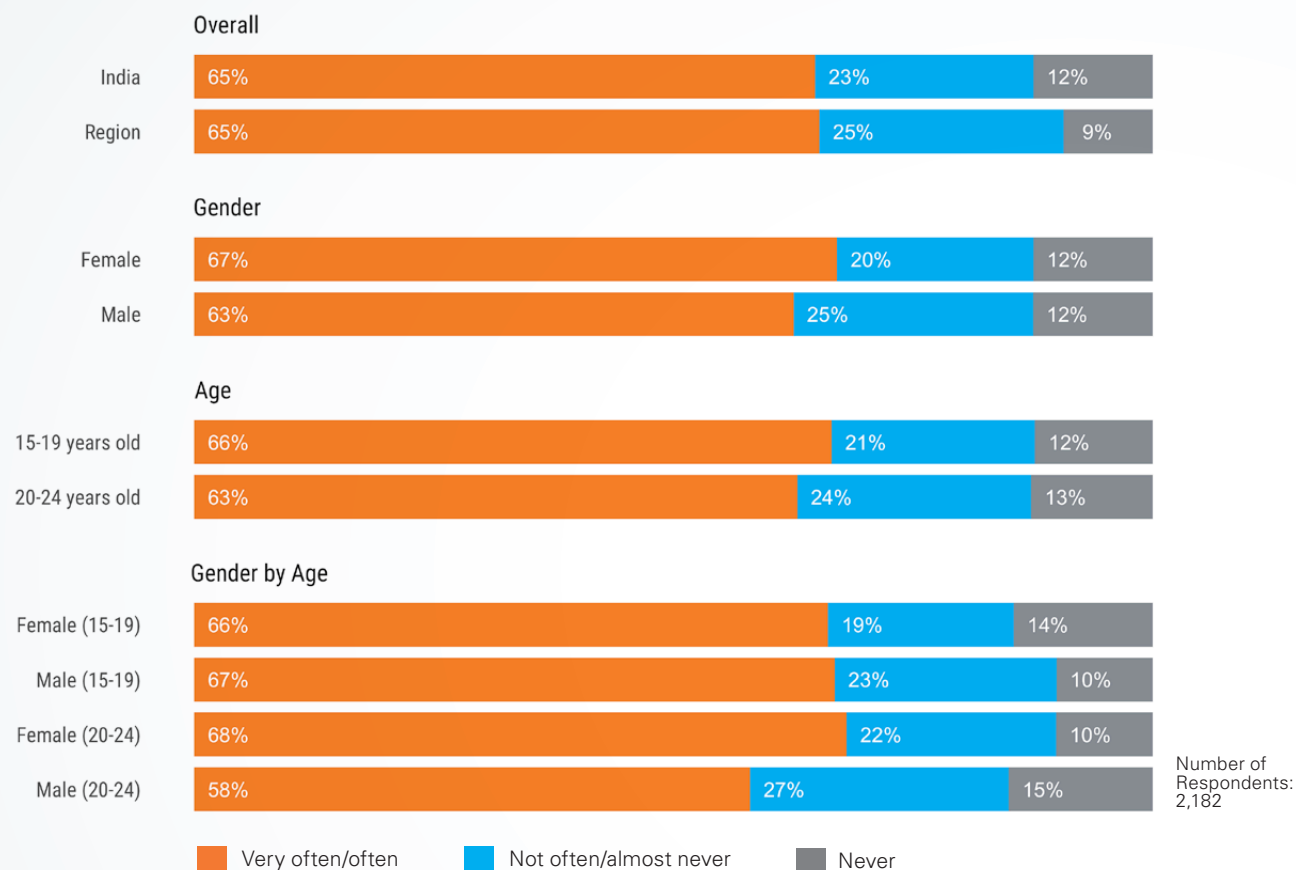
- Overall, 64% of respondents in India reported that they were able to explain climate change and global warming – this was the same as the regional proportion and was the fourth highest of the eight countries reporting.

- **Age and Gender:** The ability to explain climate change and global warming did not differ by age, though it did slightly by gender – 63% of male respondents claimed that they would be able to explain climate change compared to 66% of female respondents.



CLIMATE CHANGE IN SCHOOL

Do you learn about climate change in school?



- Overall, 65% of respondents in India reported that they “very often or often” learned about climate change in school. This aligned with the regional response and the fourth highest out of the eight countries surveyed.

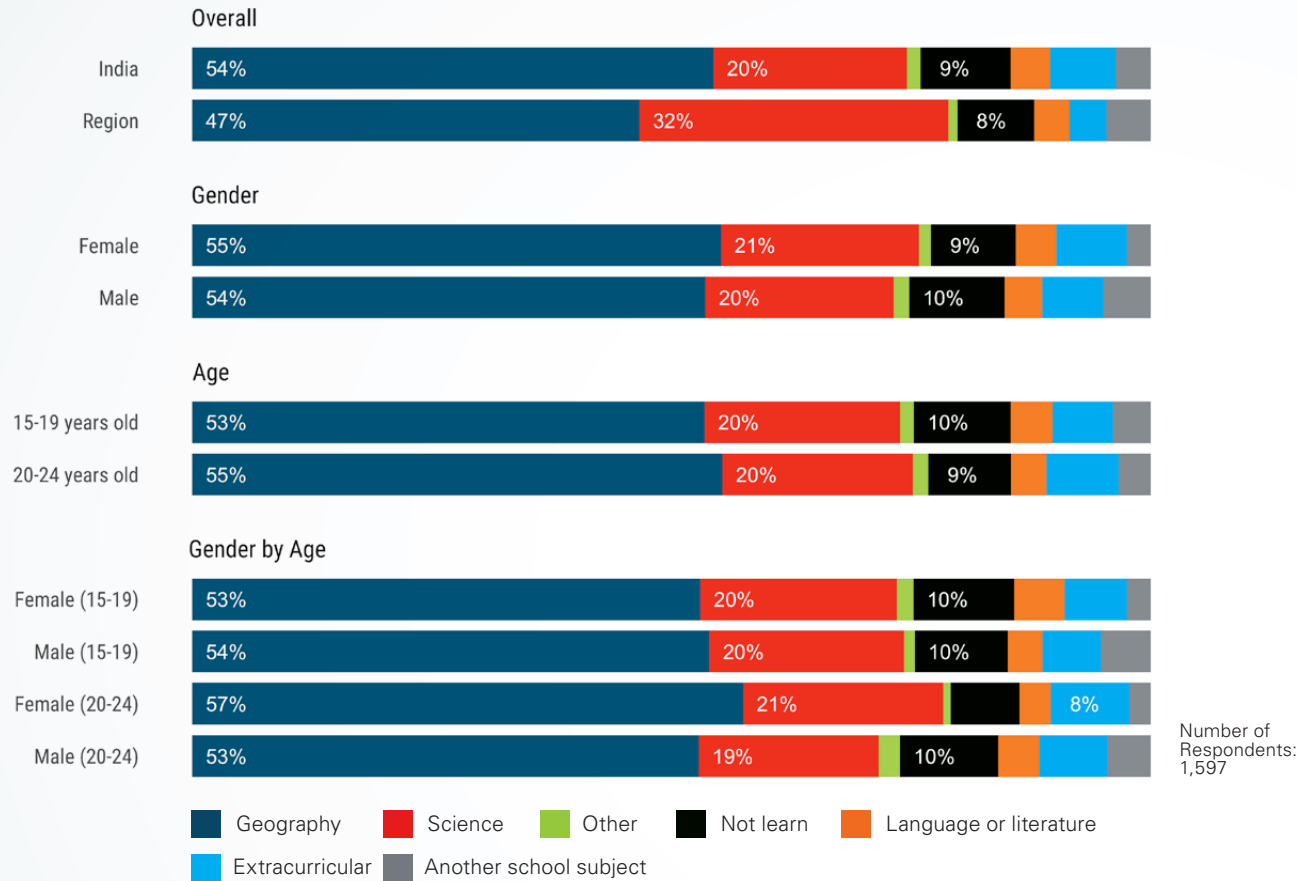
- Age:** Older male respondents (20-24) were less likely to state they “very often or often” learned about climate change in school (58%) compared to other groups (8-10 percentage points more).
- Gender:** A higher proportion of female respondents reported that they “very often or often” learned about climate change in school compared to males.



“Climate change not only affects my education, it also has caused some depression. I am extremely worried about climate change. We need to raise awareness on emission of toxic gases from industry and vehicular emissions. These factors are major causes of climate change. Raising awareness on preventive measures such as reducing carbon emissions and afforestation are much needed.”
 Male respondent from India, age 19

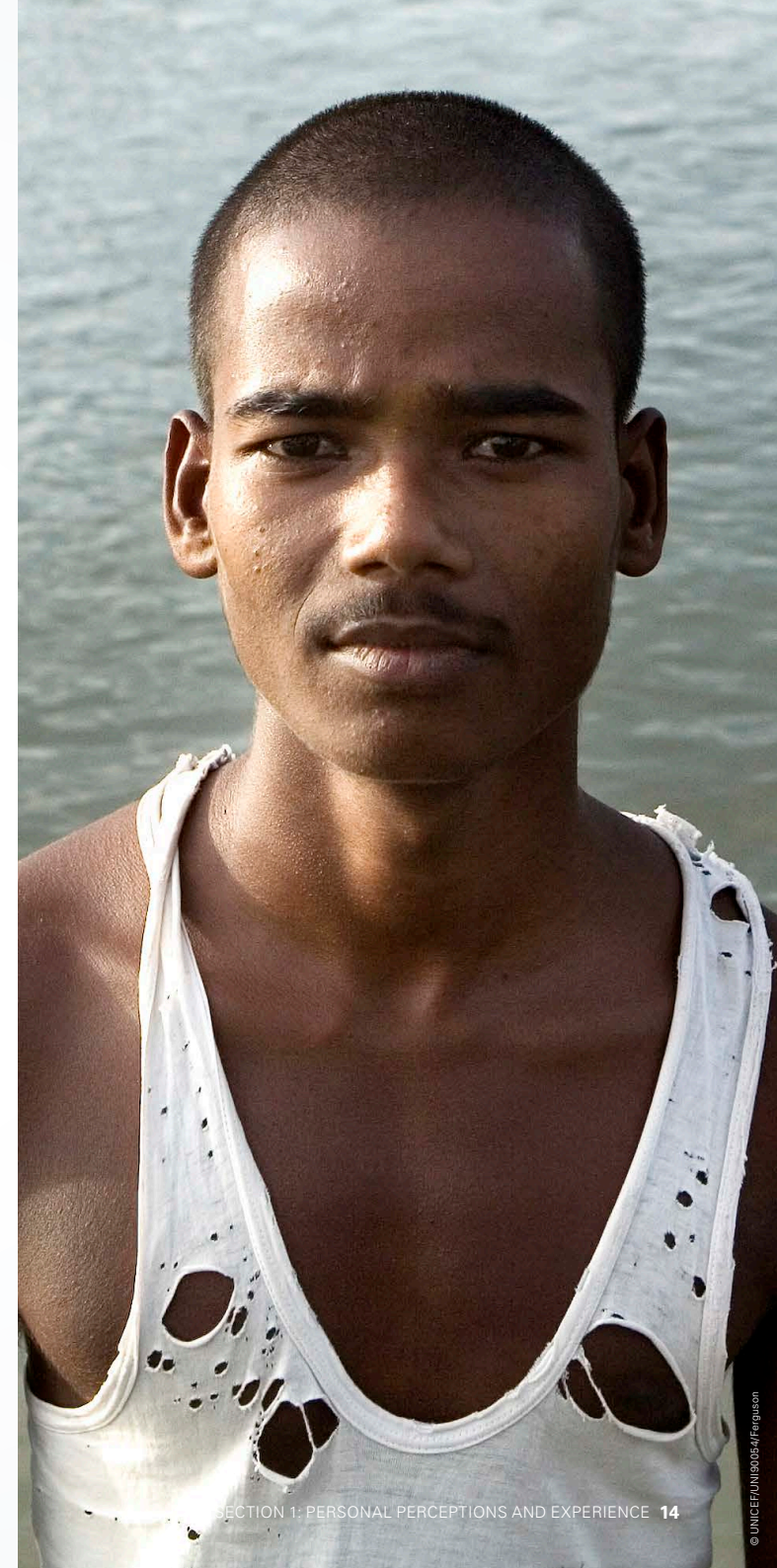
CLIMATE CHANGE IN SCHOOL (SUBJECTS)

How do you learn about climate change in school?



- Overall, 54% of respondents in India reported that they learned about climate change in their Geography class, while 20% stated that they learned about it in Science class.

This did not appear to substantively differ by age or gender.



WORRY ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Students were asked:

Are you worried about climate change and what it means for the future?

70%

of respondents in India reported that they were at least a little worried about the future effects of climate change

30%

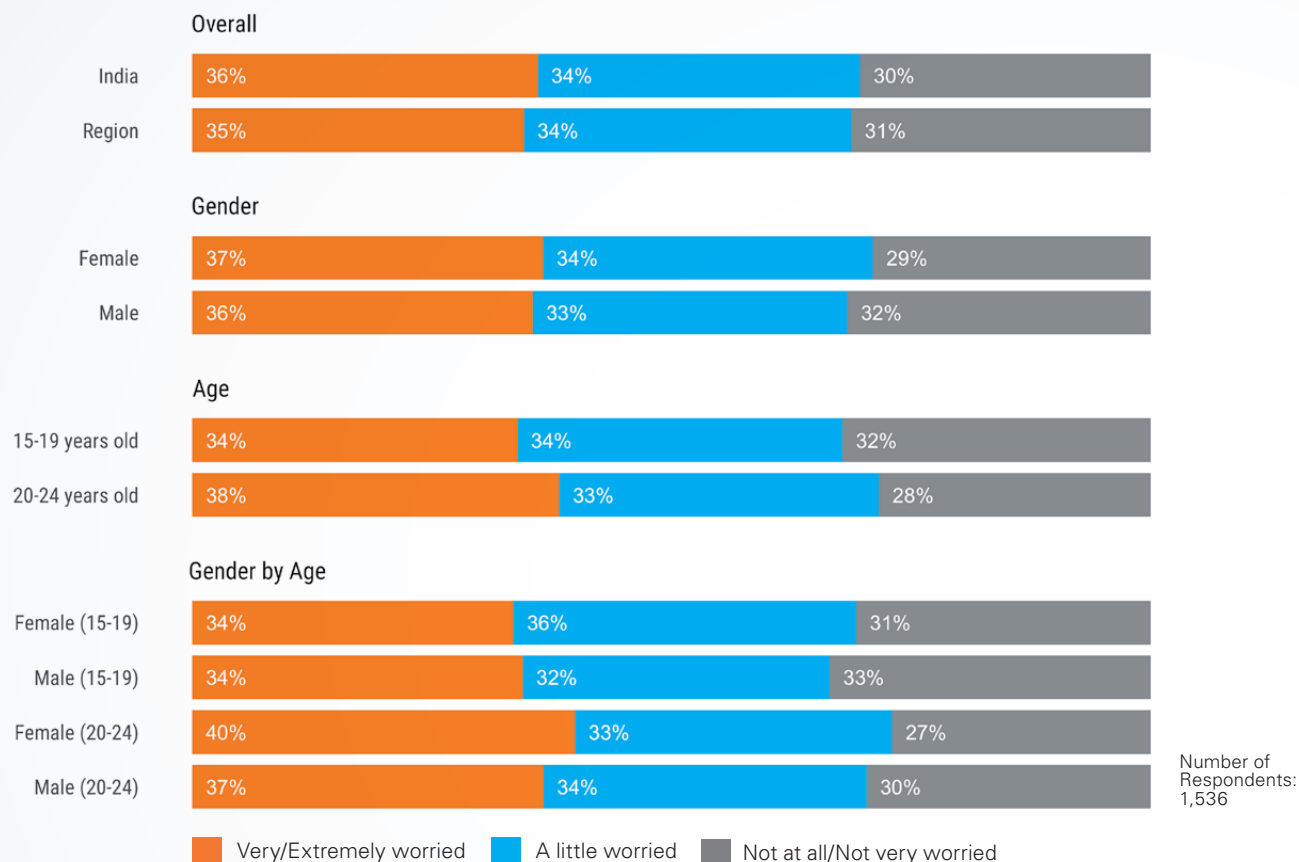
of respondents in India stated that they were not at all or not very worried about climate change

36%

reported that they were “very or extremely” worried about the impacts of climate change

WORRY ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Are you worried about climate change and what it means for the future?



- Overall, 70% of respondents in India were at least a little worried about climate change and its impact on the future, which is in line with the regional average. India had the fifth highest proportion of respondents reporting being worried.
- 38% of older respondents reported that they were “very or extremely worried” about climate change compared to 34% of younger respondents.
- Older (20-24) female respondents were more likely to say that they were “extremely worried” (40%) compared to other groups.



“Climate change is the defining issue of our time and we are at a defining moment. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly.”

Female respondent in India, age 20

INTEREST IN LEARNING

Students were asked:

What do you most want to learn about climate change?

39%

of respondents in India said that they wanted to learn about “all” aspects of climate change

15%

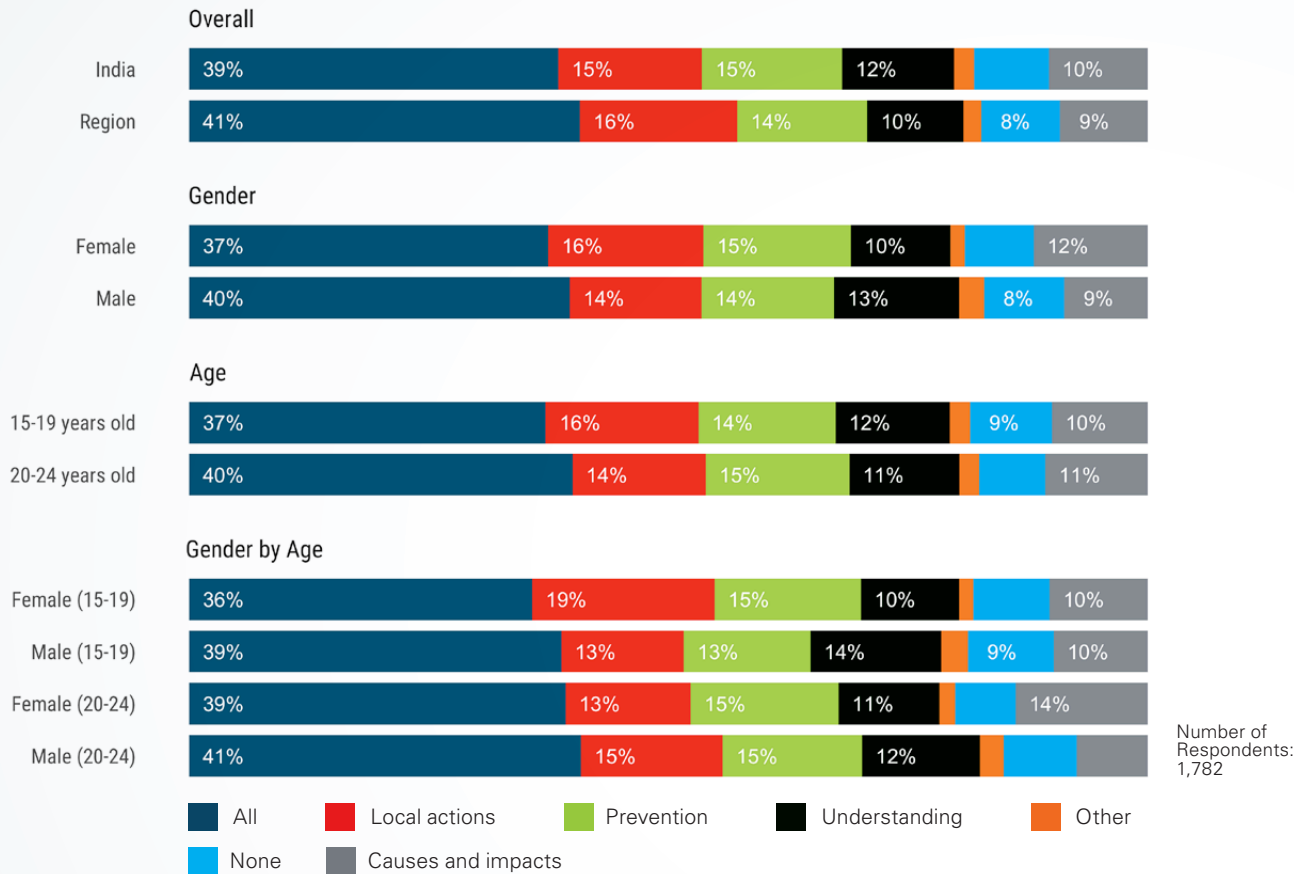
of respondents stated that they were interested in “local actions”

8%

stated that they had no interest in learning about climate change

INTEREST IN LEARNING

What do you most want to learn about climate change?



- 39% of respondents said that they wanted to learn about “all” aspects of climate change. This is slightly lower than the regional response of 41%. This is the fifth highest response among the eight countries surveyed.

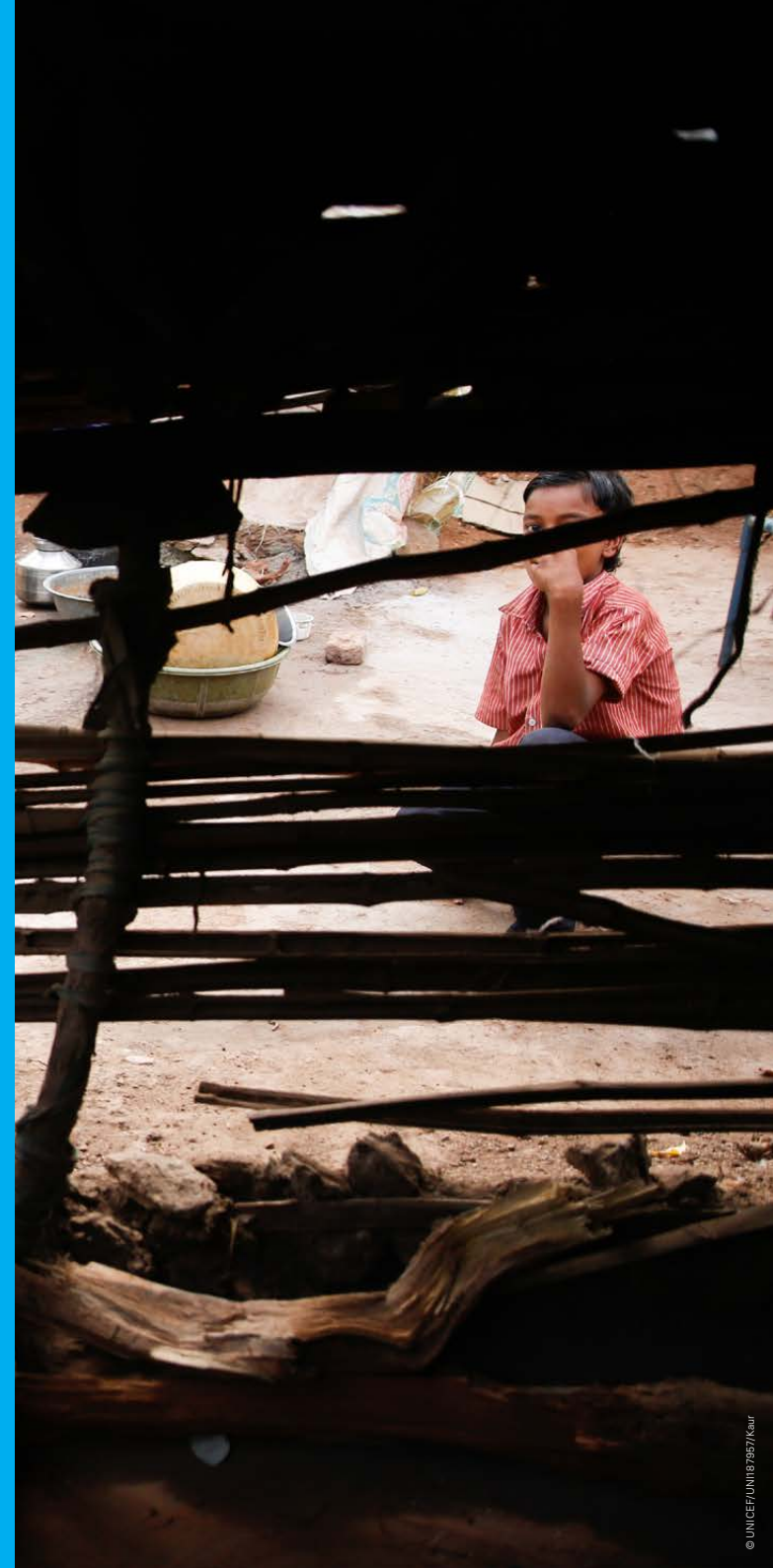
- 8% of respondents in India stated that there was “nothing” they wanted to learn about climate change. This is the second highest response among the eight countries surveyed.





SECTION 2: **POLICY AND LEADERSHIP**

Respondents were asked about who they believed should be responsible for addressing climate change.



RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTION

Students were asked:

Who should be taking the most action to address climate change?

Do you think your government will take actions to address climate change after the COVID-19 pandemic?

47%

of respondents in India believed that governments should take the most action

29%

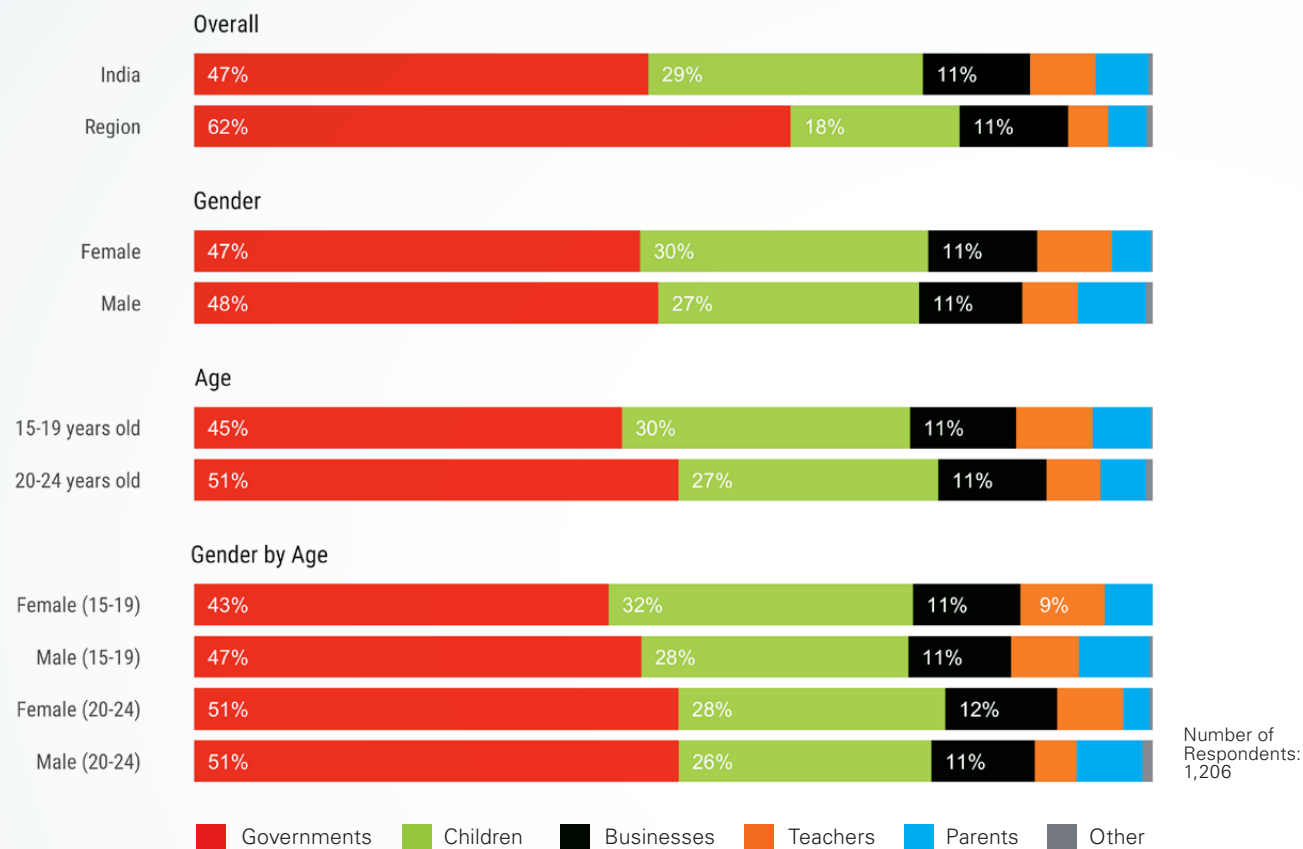
of respondents stated that children should be taking the most action to address climate change

68%

believed that the government would, would likely, or would definitely do something to address climate change after COVID-19

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTION

Who should be taking the most action to address climate change?



- Overall, 47% of respondents in India stated that governments should be taking action on climate change. This was notably lower than the regional response (62%).

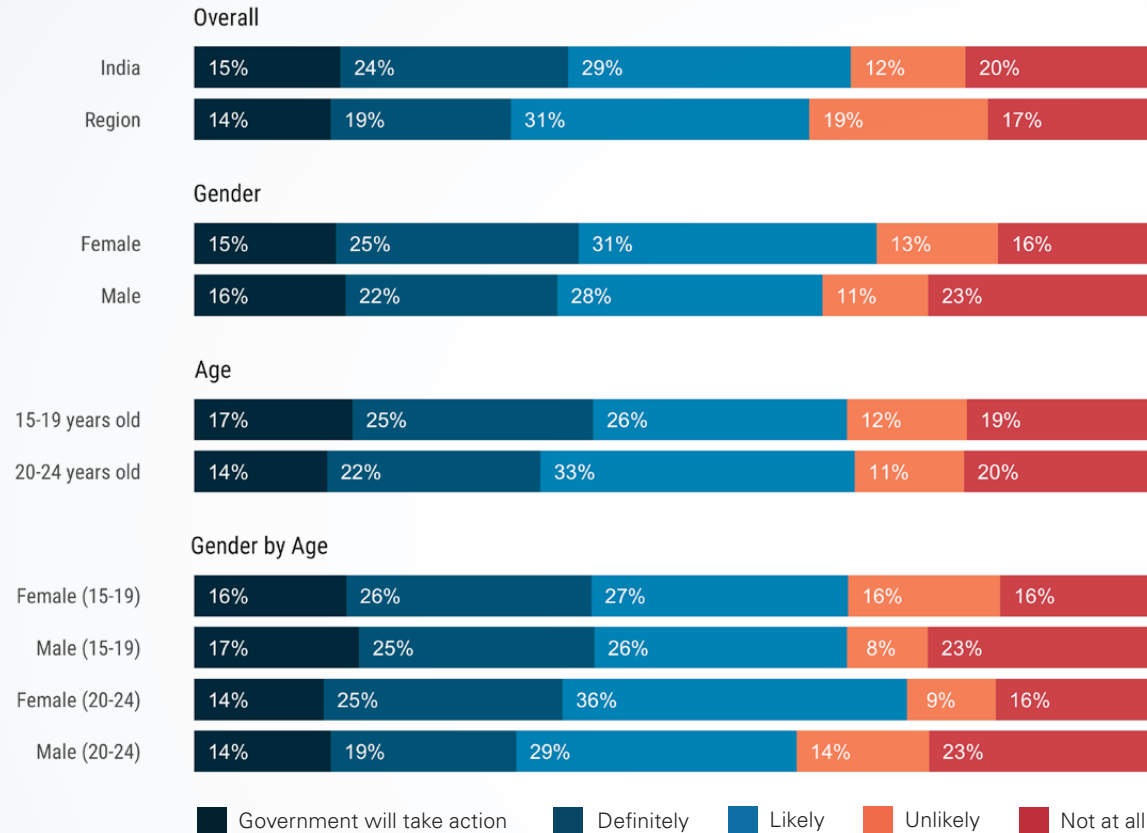
- **Gender and age:** A higher proportion of older respondents (51%) stated that governments should be responsible compared to younger respondents (45%). Responses held across gender groups.



“When I was studying in school, my school did not have fans, so we had to endure the heat in the summer; during the rainy season, water used to drip from the roof. All of this affected our school life.”
Male respondent in India, age 21

GOVERNMENT ACTION

Do you think your government will take action to address climate change after the COVID-19 pandemic?



Number of Respondents: 1,126

- Overall, 68% of respondents in India believe that it was at least “likely” that the government would take actions to address climate change after the COVID-19 pandemic. This was slightly higher than the region (64%) and represented the third highest in the region.

Conversely, 32% of respondents in India did not think that the government was likely to act,

with 20% believing that they were “not at all” likely to take action.

- Gender:** 71% of female respondents believed that the government was at least “likely” to take action and appeared to be more optimistic than male counterparts (66%).

This did not notably differ by age.



“While COVID-19 has turned our world upside down, one thing has remained unchanged: We need all levels of government to cooperate in taking bold climate action now, so that after the pandemic, we don’t return to our normal ways that weren’t serving most of us or the planet. We can set ourselves on track to come through these crises safely and with resilience.”

Male respondent in India, age 15



SECTION 3: **IMPACT AND ACTION**

Respondents were asked about the ways climate change has personally impacted them, as well as ways they will act in the future.



EFFECT ON STUDIES AND COVID-19

Students were asked:

How has climate change affected your education/ studies?

What would you like to do to address climate change in the future?

80%

of respondents believed that climate change has had an effect on their studies

13%

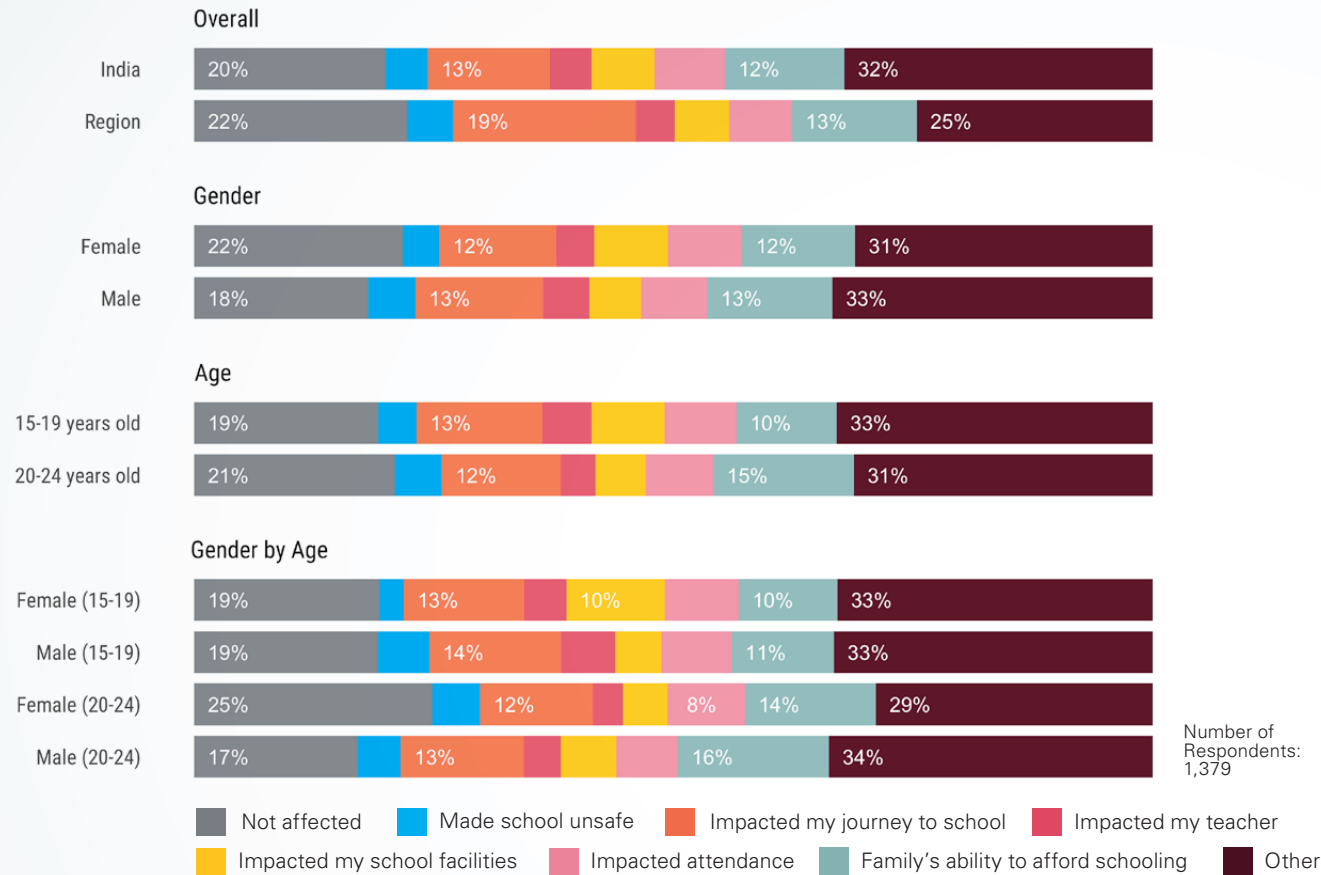
stated that climate change has impacted their journey to school

25%

of respondents would like to join an organization

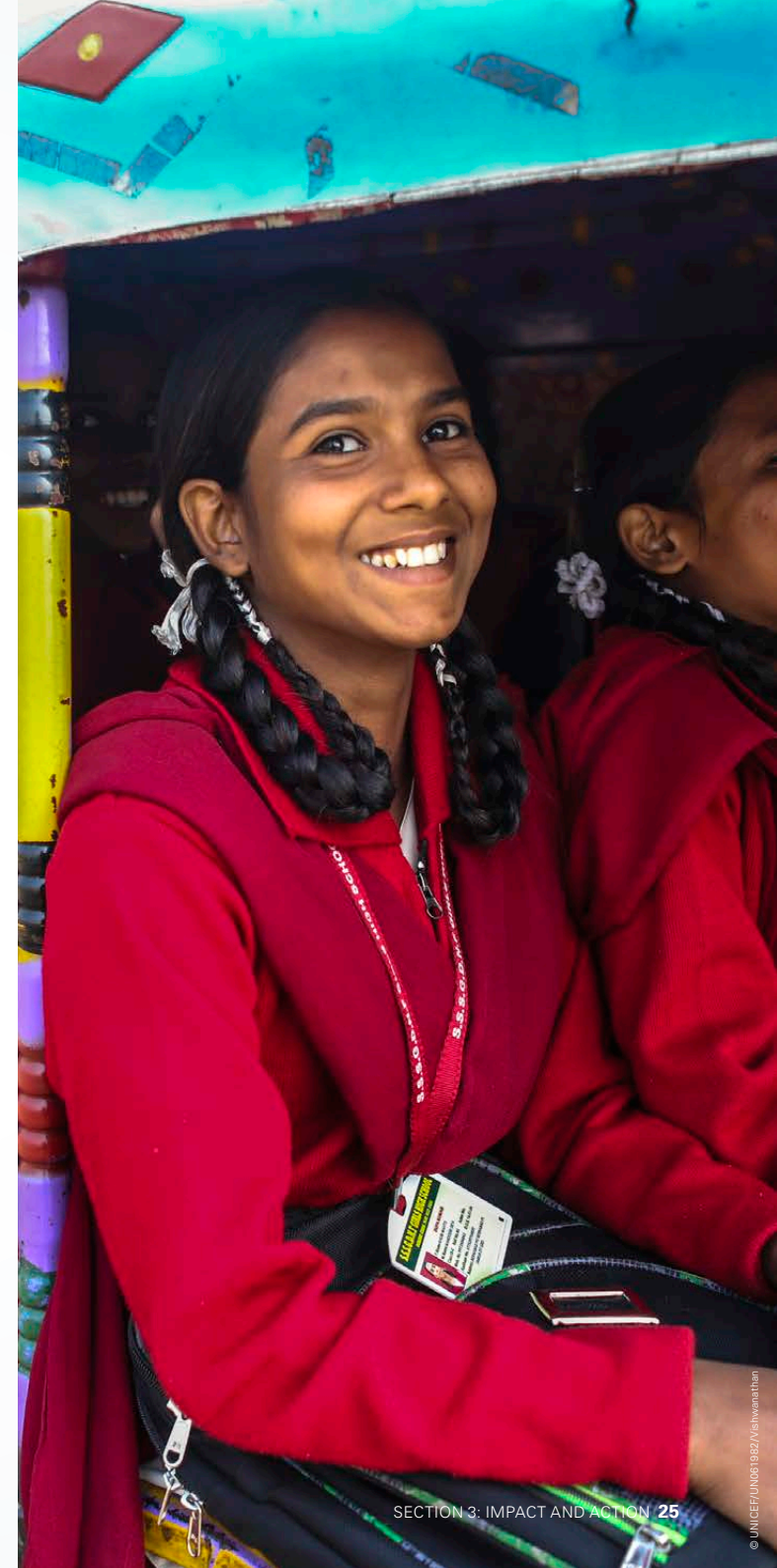
EFFECT ON STUDIES

How has climate change affected your education/studies?



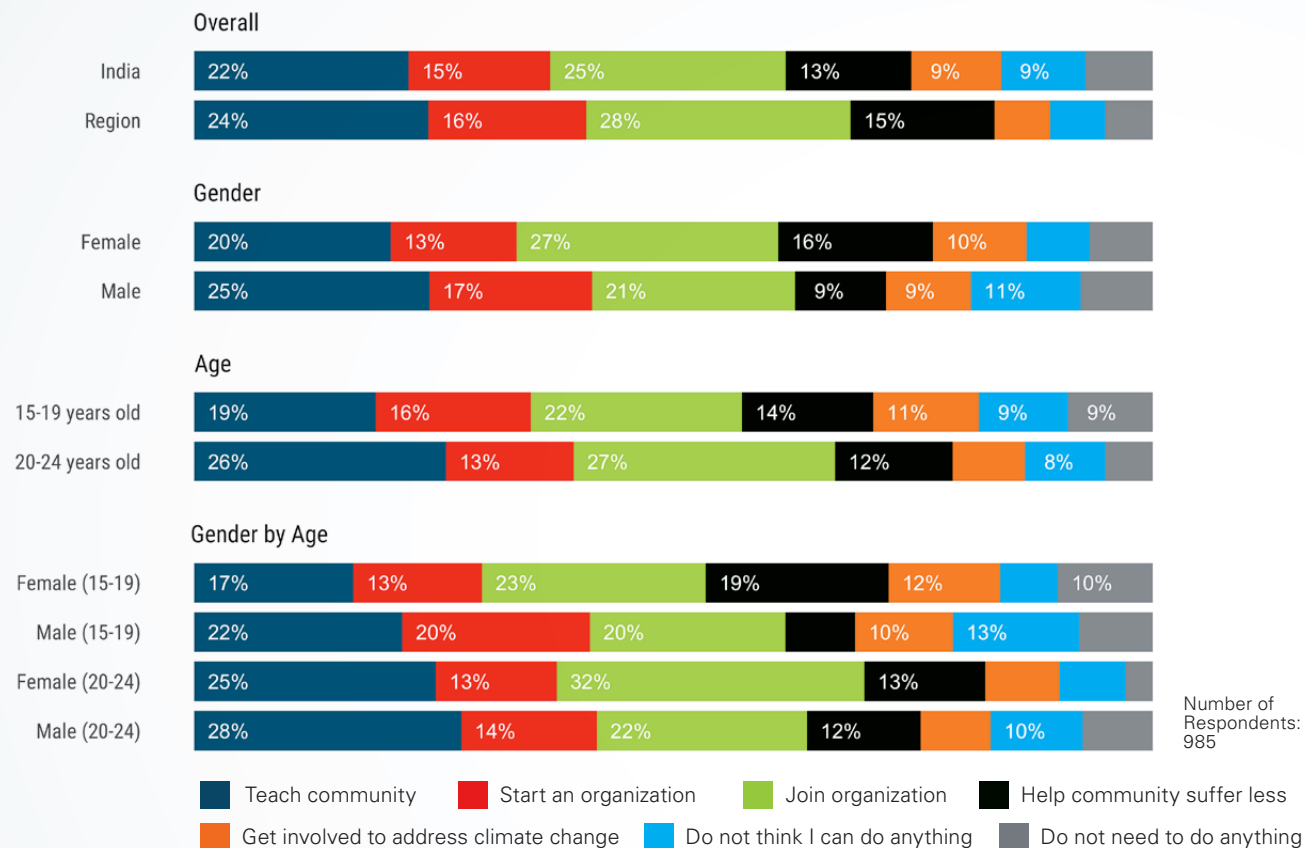
- Overall, 80% of respondents stated that their education or studies was affected by climate change. This was aligned with the regional proportion.

- Older (20-24) female respondents were more likely to state that climate change had "not affected" their education/studies (25%) compared to other groups.



FUTURE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

If you had the necessary support, what would you like to do to address climate change in the future?



- Overall, a majority of respondents in India (84%) said that they would like to do something to address climate change with the necessary support. This was lower compared to other countries in the region (89%).

- Age:** 26% of older respondents expressed they were interested in “teaching the community” as opposed to only 19% of younger respondents. Female respondents expressed greater interest in “joining an organization” compared to male respondents.



SECTION 4: **RELATIONSHIPS AND CORRELATIONS**

Based on the responses received, relationships and correlations were explored to provide more insight about youth beliefs and perceptions about climate change.



KEY QUESTION PAIRINGS

In an effort to better understand how knowledge of climate change affected students' beliefs and attitudes, **three relationships** were explored among respondents from India*.



Can you explain climate change?

1. Do you learn about climate change in school?

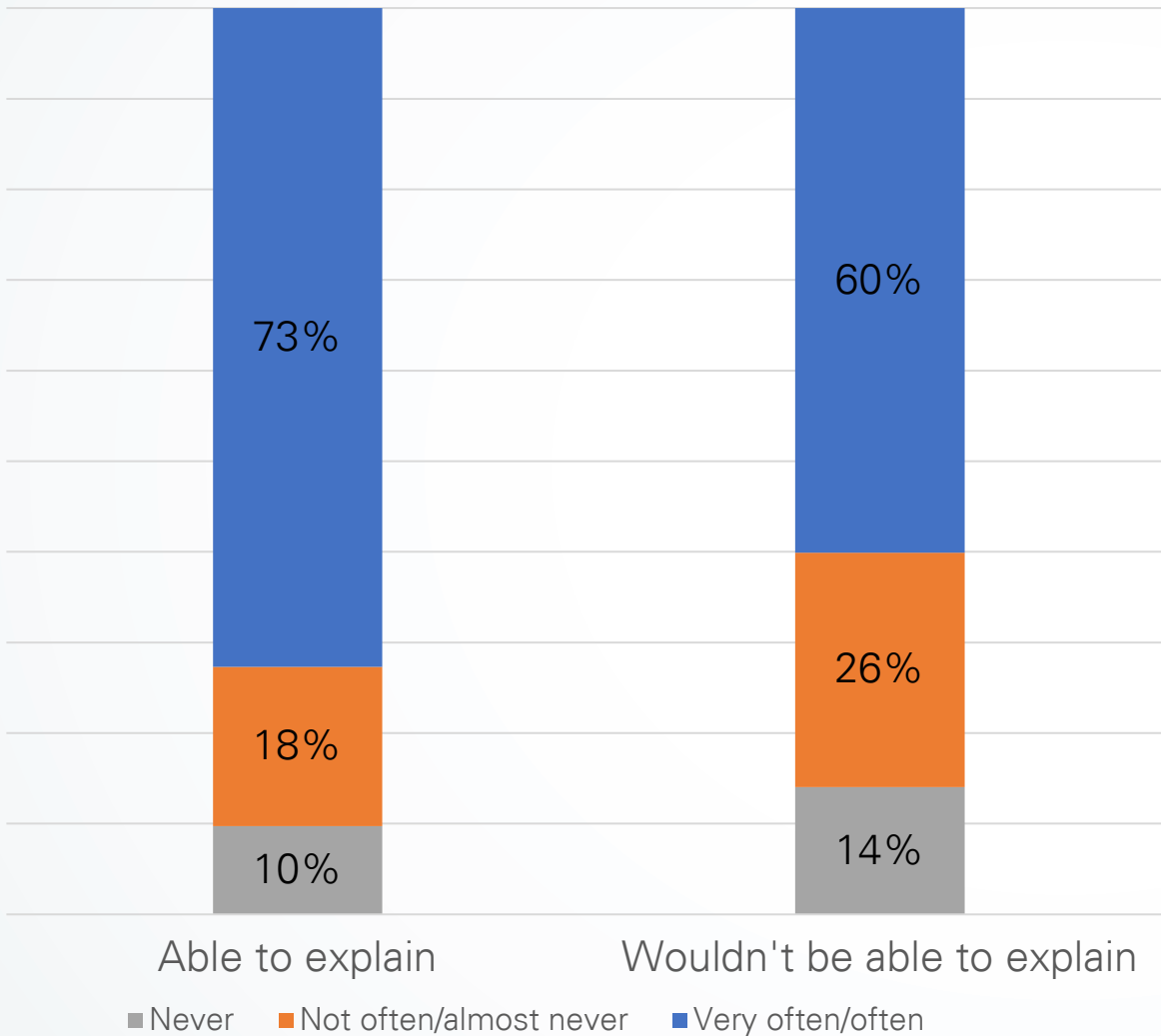
2. Are you worried about climate change?

3. Do you believe the government will take action on climate change?

*Note: This analysis only contains respondents who answered both questions. This could bias the results by under-representing respondents who stopped the survey due to a lack of knowledge around climate change, so results should be interpreted with care.

RELATIONSHIPS AND CORRELATIONS

Knowledge and education about climate change



A relationship was explored among two questions: *Can you explain climate change?* and *Do you learn about climate change in school?*

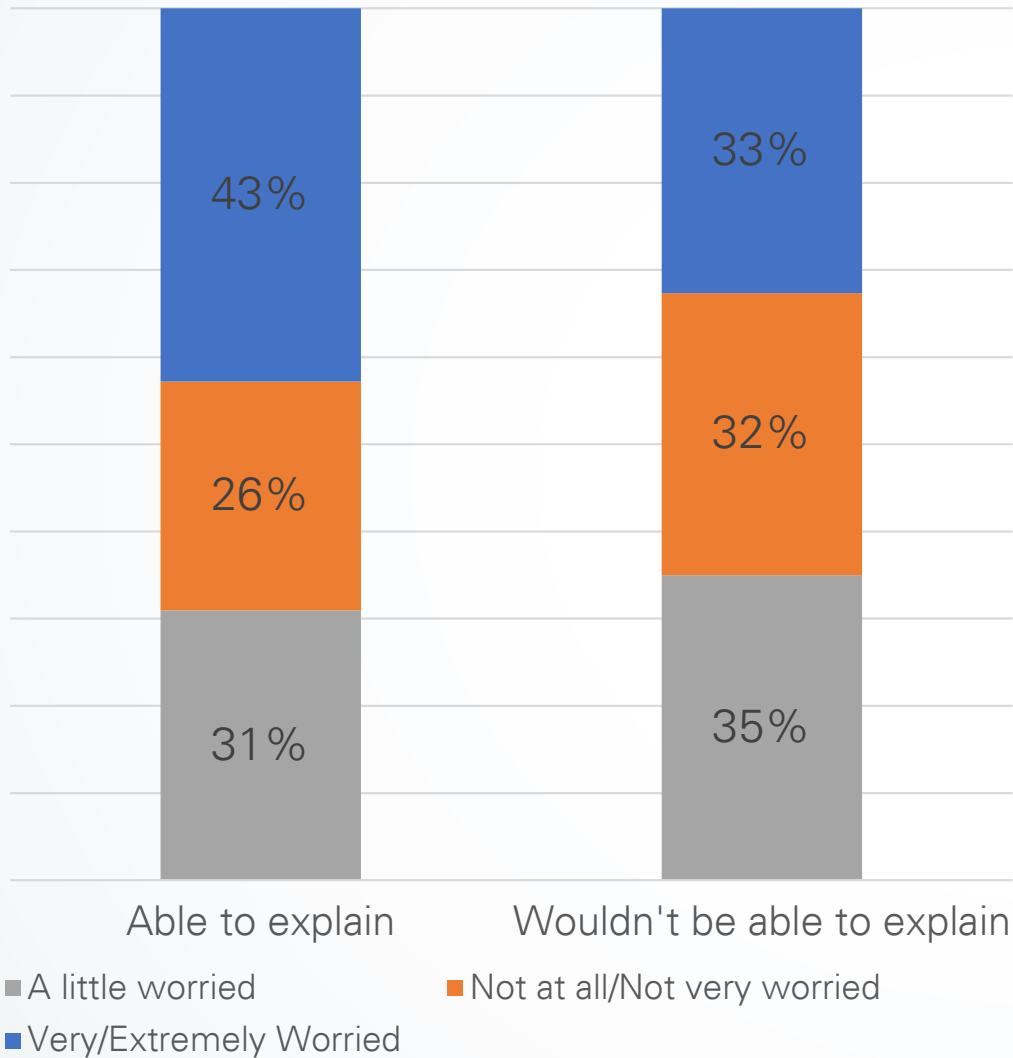
- Overall, among respondents who could explain climate change, 73% reported learning about it in school "often or very often".

This was 13 percentage points higher than those that did not feel comfortable explaining (60%).

- Only 14% of respondents who reported being "unable to explain" climate change reported "never" learning about it in school.

RELATIONSHIPS AND CORRELATIONS

Knowledge and worry about climate change



A relationship was explored among two questions: *Can you explain climate change?* and *Are you worried about climate change?*

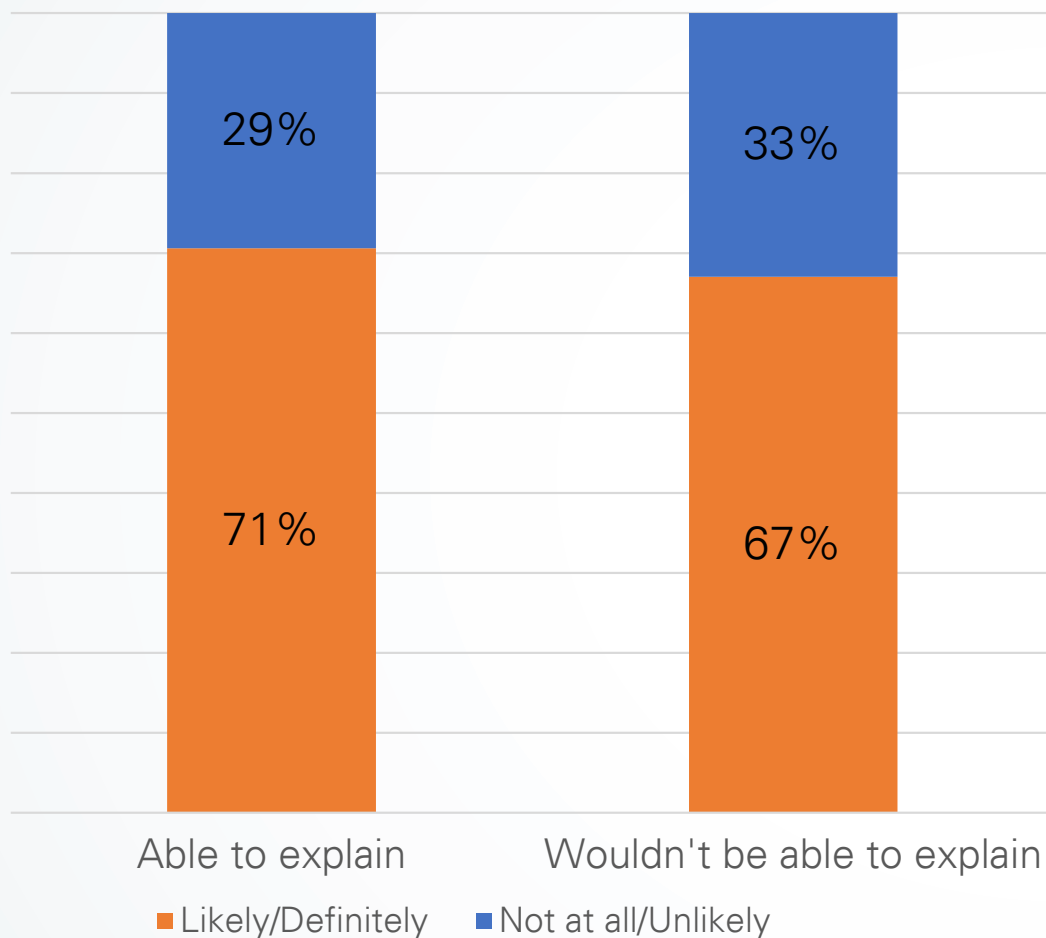
- Overall, those who were able to explain climate change were more likely than those that were not able to explain to state that they were “very or extremely” worried about the impact of climate change.

Among respondents able to explain climate change, 43% were “very or extremely worried” about climate change and its impact on the future. This was 10 percentage points higher than those that were not able to explain climate change.

- Conversely, 32% of respondents who were unable to explain climate change said that they were “not at all worried” about climate change.

RELATIONSHIPS AND CORRELATIONS

Knowledge and belief in government action



A relationship was explored among two questions: *Can you explain climate change?* and *Do you believe the government will take action on climate change?*

- Overall, there was no notable difference (less than 5 percentage points) between knowledge of climate change and a belief that the government would act to address it.

4

FINDINGS



FINDINGS

54% of respondents reported that they learned about climate change in their Geography class, while a 20% stated that they learned about it in Science class.



Learning and knowledge

64% of respondents stated that they would be able to explain climate change, among which 65% reported that they “very often or often” learned about climate change in school. Female respondents having a higher proportion (4 percentage points more) reported that they very often or often learned about it compared to males.

54% of respondents reported that they learned about climate change in their Geography class, while a 20% stated that they learned about it in Science class.

60% of respondents who reported learning about climate change in school were not able to explain it. This suggests that a lack of exposure to the issue of climate change in school is not related to those who identified as to feeling of being informed.

Further research should be done around why a significant percentage of students reported that they learned about climate change in school but would not be able to explain it. This could be related to a limited or lack in confidence acquired to explain a complex topic such as climate change and that the knowledge gained in schools has not been fully internalized. This suggests there are opportunities for teachers and curriculum developers to explore which aspects of climate change are not understood by students and to incorporate pedagogical approaches to reinforce this knowledge in school and in the community.

FINDINGS

70% of respondents were at least a little worried about climate change and its impact on the future, while 36% reported that they were “very or extremely” worried about the impacts of climate change.

Worried and ready to lead

70% of respondents were at least a little worried about climate change and its impact on the future, while 36% reported that they were “very or extremely” worried about the impacts of climate change. Older (20-24) female respondents were more likely to say that they were “extremely worried” (40%) compared to other groups.

47% of respondents stated that governments should be taking the most action on climate change, followed by children (29%). This figure was the highest among 8 countries, which implies that respondents from India are more likely to recognize an active role to be played by young people themselves to act on climate change and speaks clearly to the personal responsibility felt by each respondent. This supports UNICEF’s approach to promote platforms and spaces for young people and children to participate in the national and state-level climate change agenda discussions, putting an emphasis on ways to engage with the most vulnerable and extreme poor, whose vision is rarely presented or accounted for in such discussions.



FINDINGS

80% of respondents believed that climate change has had an effect on their studies.

A call for action

80% of respondents believed that climate change has had an effect on their studies. 32% stated other reasons when asked how climate change has impacted their studies, including impacted journey to school (13%), families ability to afford schooling (12%).

84% of respondents stated that they would like to do something to address climate change with the necessary support, joining an organization having the highest rate (25%) among the options.

Curriculum reform should consider not only developing student knowledge concerning climate change but also their capacity to apply the newly gained knowledge to the real life situations. This will require diverse pedagogical approaches which help nurture student confidence and practical skills so that they can take positive action to tackle climate change.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Authors

Reis Lopez Rello, Climate Change Adviser, UNICEF ROSA

Jim Ackers, Education Adviser, UNICEF ROSA

Significant contributions were made by:

Fumiyo Kagawa, Research Director, Sustainability Frontiers

Frank van Cappelle, Education Specialist, UNICEF ROSA

JiEun Lee, Education Officer, UNICEF ROSA

Emma Hamilton Clark, Education Knowledge Management Consultant, UNICEF ROSA

Data Analysis

Randy Tarnowski, Consultant

Cary McCormick, Technology for Development Specialist, UNICEF ROSA

U-report South Asia Platform

Afrika Mukaneto, Consultant, UNICEF ROSA

Aasha Chhetri, Consultant, UNICEF ROSA



 **Report**
SOUTH ASIA
VOICE MATTERS



UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
Lainchaur, Kathmandu,
Nepal

www.unicef.org/rosa

© United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
February 2021