

SCHOOL RESOURCE DEFICITS AND RISING STUDENT PRESSURE: EXAMINING THE CHALLENGES IN JHARKHAND'S GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This research article explores the impact of inadequate school resources on rising student pressure within government secondary schools in Jharkhand, India. Educational resources—including infrastructure, teaching materials, and technology support—are critical in fostering a positive learning environment. However, Jharkhand's government schools often lack basic resources, which negatively affects students' academic performance, mental health, and social development. The study examines how these deficits elevate student pressure, leading to heightened anxiety, low self-esteem, and higher dropout rates. A lack of essential facilities such as laboratories and libraries limits students' learning experiences and increases their difficulty in keeping pace with students in private schools who enjoy better resources. Additionally, teachers in these resource-poor schools face significant challenges, often experiencing burnout from compensating for resource gaps, which indirectly contributes to student stress. The article also highlights educational inequity, noting that students in government schools are at a distinct disadvantage compared to their peers in private institutions, perpetuating cycles of poverty and limiting social mobility. To address these issues, targeted interventions are essential, including increased government funding, partnerships with NGOs, and improved access to counseling services. These recommendations aim to reduce student pressure, promote mental well-being, and create an equitable educational environment for all students in Jharkhand. Comprehensive efforts from policymakers, communities, and educational institutions are necessary to enhance resource availability, enabling students in Jharkhand to reach their full academic and personal potential.

Keywords: School Resources, Students Pressure, Govt. Secondary Schools

1. INTRODUCTION

The availability of adequate resources in schools is vital for fostering a positive learning environment and enabling students to reach their full academic and personal potential (Jain & Mitra, 2021). In India, government secondary schools in many states struggle with resource inadequacies, often impacting students' learning experiences and well-being (Ghosh et al., 2020). Jharkhand, one of India's less-developed states, faces significant challenges in its educational infrastructure. The lack of essential resources in Jharkhand's government secondary schools has been linked to increasing mental pressure on students, affecting their academic performance, social growth, and overall mental health (Chatterjee, 2019). This article explores the impact of resource deficits on student pressure, highlighting the need for comprehensive intervention.

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL RESOURCE DEFICITS

School resources—such as infrastructure, teaching materials, technological tools, libraries, laboratories, and mental health support services—are foundational to an optimal educational environment (Kumar & Bose, 2018). These resources provide not only academic support but also promote overall student well-being, fostering a balanced educational experience. However, government secondary schools in Jharkhand face significant deficits in these areas, which critically hinder students' learning and growth. A study by the Ministry of Education (2020) highlighted severe resource limitations in Jharkhand's government schools, revealing insufficient classrooms, outdated or non-functional laboratories, and minimal library facilities. Such limitations impede students' ability to engage fully with the curriculum, leading to a disparity in educational outcomes compared to students in better-resourced schools (Kumar, Patil, & Shukla, 2022).

Classroom overcrowding, for instance, is a common issue in resource-limited schools, creating an environment where teachers struggle to provide individual attention and students feel disengaged. This situation often results in suboptimal academic performance and lower engagement levels among students (Jain & Mitra, 2021). Additionally, the lack of laboratories and hands-on learning opportunities in science education is particularly detrimental. Practical, experiential learning is essential for developing problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, but with inadequate laboratory facilities, students in Jharkhand's government schools miss crucial experiences that could enhance their understanding of scientific concepts (Ghosh, Sen, & Das, 2020).

Access to libraries is another area where Jharkhand's government schools fall short. Libraries support literacy development, self-study, and independent learning; without them, students are deprived of resources that encourage exploration beyond the classroom (Singh & Gupta, 2021). Moreover, the absence of mental health resources such as counselors and support services is concerning, as academic pressure often leads to increased stress and anxiety. The lack of mental health support contributes to an educational environment where students struggle to manage both academic and personal challenges (Bhatia & Sharma, 2021).

Resource deficits also extend to technological tools, which are now essential in modern education. Without adequate access to computers and internet services, students are disadvantaged in digital literacy, limiting their ability to engage with online resources and modern learning methods (Das, 2019). This gap restricts students' ability to compete in an increasingly digital world, placing them at a further disadvantage in comparison to peers in well-resourced schools (Patel, 2019). Addressing these resource gaps is essential to reducing educational inequity and providing Jharkhand's students with the tools needed for academic and personal success.

THE LINK BETWEEN RESOURCE DEFICITS AND STUDENT PRESSURE

The shortage of essential school resources is directly associated with increased stress levels among students. Resource-deficient schools fail to offer adequate support for academic challenges, often leading students to experience a heightened sense of pressure (Patel, 2019). For example, the lack of functional laboratories restricts science students from engaging in hands-on experiments, which are critical to understanding scientific concepts. This gap in resources exacerbates students' anxiety about exams and performance, contributing to a negative self-image (Rao & Desai, 2020). Furthermore, students attending government schools in Jharkhand often face social stigma and pressure to compete with peers from private schools who have access to advanced facilities (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2019).

Resource deficits in schools, particularly in government-funded institutions, directly correlate with increased academic pressure on students. When educational environments lack basic resources like adequate classrooms, teaching aids, libraries, and mental health support services, students experience added stress as they struggle to meet academic expectations without proper support (Jain & Mitra, 2021). In Jharkhand's government secondary schools, the resource shortage has been found to severely limit students' academic growth and personal development, amplifying the stress associated with their educational journey (Chatterjee, 2019; Thapliyal, 2022).

A critical area where resource limitations manifest is in students' access to academic materials and laboratory facilities, especially in subjects like science and mathematics. Practical, hands-on learning is essential for students to fully grasp complex scientific concepts. However, in Jharkhand, government schools frequently lack functional laboratories and adequate materials for science experiments, forcing students to rely solely on theoretical learning, which can create anxiety and reduce confidence in their academic capabilities (Ministry of Education, 2020). Studies have shown that students in under-resourced schools tend to experience heightened stress about examinations and assessments due to the limited access to practical learning opportunities, which often results in negative academic outcomes and a diminished self-image (Rao & Desai, 2020; Ghosh, Sen, & Das, 2020).

Furthermore, a lack of access to technology, such as computers and internet services, limits students' ability to engage with digital learning tools and resources. Digital literacy has become an essential component of modern education, and without adequate resources, students are left at a disadvantage compared to peers in well-funded schools (Patel, 2019). This gap creates a sense of inferiority and contributes to academic pressure, as students are expected to compete with others who have access to a broader range of resources (Mukherjee & Das, 2020). This digital divide also restricts students' ability to access online information and supplemental educational materials, which could otherwise support their learning (Joshi, 2010; & Das, 2019).

Inadequate resources also impact the psychological well-being of students. For example, schools that lack counseling services and mental health resources cannot provide support to students dealing with stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges (Bhatia & Sharma, 2021). Studies indicate that without appropriate mental health support, students in resource-deficient schools experience a heightened risk of psychological distress and burnout, further exacerbating the pressure they face (Kumar et al., 2022; Reddy, 2020). Students from resource-limited environments are often unable to develop effective coping mechanisms, which, in the absence of guidance and mental health services, can lead to long-term emotional issues and academic disengagement (Sharma & Sen, 2020).

Social comparisons also intensify the pressure on students in under-resourced government schools. These students frequently experience social stigma when compared to peers in private or well-resourced schools, leading to a sense of inadequacy (Rao & Desai, 2020). This comparative disadvantage can significantly impact students' motivation and self-esteem, making them more likely to feel isolated and discouraged in their academic pursuits (Jain & Mitra, 2021). According to Ghosh (2020), these students often internalize a sense of inferiority, which compounds their academic

challenges and contributes to higher dropout rates, especially among adolescents in rural and low-income communities.

The resource deficits in schools like those in Jharkhand's government institutions significantly heighten student pressure. The combination of limited academic resources, lack of technological tools, inadequate mental health support, and negative social comparisons creates an environment where students face disproportionate challenges. Addressing these deficits is critical to reducing student stress and enabling a more equitable, supportive educational experience for all students, particularly those in rural and marginalized communities.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL IMPACT ON STUDENTS

Resource limitations in schools, particularly in underserved regions like Jharkhand, have profound psychological and behavioral impacts on students, as they struggle to navigate their education with minimal support. Inadequate school resources and the associated academic pressure lead to increased anxiety, low self-esteem, and emotional distress. For instance, Bhatia and Sharma (2021) found that students in resource-limited environments often experience heightened stress, stemming from their inability to meet academic expectations without adequate support. This lack of resources often fosters feelings of inadequacy, further contributing to mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression (Kumar et al., 2022).

Feelings of failure and inferiority are especially common among students who cannot access essential learning materials or academic guidance. This often results in academic disengagement, and as research shows, students in under-resourced schools are more likely to experience low self-esteem and negative self-image, feeling that they lack the abilities needed to succeed (Chatterjee, 2019). The pressure to perform well academically, despite limited resources, can lead to significant psychological strain. This strain often results in behavioral changes such as withdrawal, lack of motivation, and an increase in dropout rates (Sharma & Sen, 2020).

Studies suggest that resource deficits discourage students from pursuing higher education or competitive career paths, thereby limiting their socioeconomic mobility. For instance, Das (2019) observed that students in poorly funded schools are less likely to continue into higher education due to a lack of confidence and preparedness. In the absence of access to learning resources and mental health support, students in resource-constrained schools often feel trapped in a cycle of disadvantage, which can have long-term psychological impacts, such as chronic stress and reduced resilience in facing academic and social challenges (Ghosh et al., 2020). Addressing these resource gaps is critical, as it not only improves academic outcomes but also fosters a more supportive environment that can positively impact students' mental health and socio-emotional development (Rao & Desai, 2020).

ROLE OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AMID RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

Teachers in Jharkhand's government secondary schools face their own challenges, as they attempt to compensate for resource shortages, often leading to burnout and frustration. Research has shown that teachers in resource-limited schools face increased stress, which indirectly affects student motivation and performance (Nair & Bhattacharya, 2019). Additionally, school administrators are limited in their capacity to address these shortages due to budgetary restrictions and bureaucratic challenges (Ghosh, 2020; Thapliyal and Joshi, 2020). In many cases, administrators struggle to retain qualified teachers, further impacting the quality of education and student outcomes (Mukherjee & Das, 2020).

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

The disparity between government and private school resources raises concerns regarding educational equity. Students from under-resourced government schools are at a significant disadvantage, often struggling to keep pace with their peers in private institutions (Reddy, 2020). This resource gap contributes to broader social inequities, as students in rural and marginalized communities are limited in their access to quality education (Chowdhury, 2021). As Rao and Desai (2020) argue, the lack of adequate resources in Jharkhand's government schools perpetuates cycles of poverty and restricts students' opportunities for upward mobility.

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To address these issues, targeted interventions and policy reforms are necessary. Government initiatives should prioritize funding for resource development, such as equipping schools with functional laboratories, libraries, and modern teaching aids (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Partnerships with NGOs and community organizations could also help address gaps, especially in rural and remote areas (Patel, 2019). Additionally, schools must focus on improving mental health support by providing counseling services to help students manage academic stress effectively (Bhatia & Sharma, 2021). Such measures could reduce student pressure and foster a more supportive educational environment.

2. CONCLUSION

The resource deficits in Jharkhand's government secondary schools have a significant impact on student pressure and overall well-being. The lack of adequate resources not only hampers students' academic potential but also affects their mental health and social growth. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive and sustained efforts from policymakers, educational institutions, and communities to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have access to quality education. By investing in school resources and support systems, Jharkhand can provide a stronger foundation for its youth, promoting equity, resilience, and lifelong learning.

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