

International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com ISSN: 2250-3552

Exploring Academic Stress among Tribal Adolescent Girls during the Transition from Village Life to Residential Schooling

Hemlata Mahawar

Assistant Professor, SMPBJ Government College Sheoganj, Sirohi

Dr. Monica Dungarwal

Professor, Government Meera Girls College, Udaipur

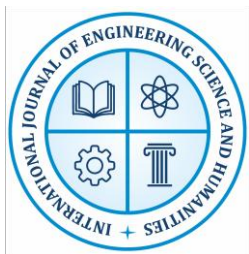
ABSTRACT

The transition from village life to residential schooling can provide tribal adolescent girls with greater access to education. However, it may also involve changes in language, learning expectations, daily routines, relationships, and contact with family. These changes may influence how girls experience academic stress and adjust to school. This paper reviews literature on school transitions, academic stress, resilience, supportive relationships, Indigenous residential schooling, and the wellbeing of boarding students. The reviewed studies come from India and other settings, so their findings are used as context rather than assumed to apply directly to every tribal community in India. The paper is conceptual and does not report original fieldwork or participant data. It proposes an exploratory qualitative design using purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis to understand girls' experiences in their own words. The literature suggests that academic stress is shaped not only by academic demands but also by teacher support, peer relationships, cultural identity, language, belonging, and the wider living environment. The paper identifies a need for focused qualitative research on tribal adolescent girls' experiences during the transition from village life to residential schooling. It concludes that schools should combine academic support with culturally respectful relationships, safe hostel routines, and meaningful opportunities for students to express their needs.

KEYWORDS: academic stress, tribal adolescent girls, residential schooling, educational transition, resilience, supportive relationships, qualitative research

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a stage of physical, emotional, and social change. During this period, school demands may increase, and students may become more concerned about examinations, marks, future education, and family expectations. Academic stress can arise when students feel that these demands are difficult to manage. It may affect concentration, confidence, motivation, sleep, and participation in classroom activities. However, stress is not experienced in the same way by every student. Personal strengths, family relationships, school climate, and access to help can shape how a student responds.



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

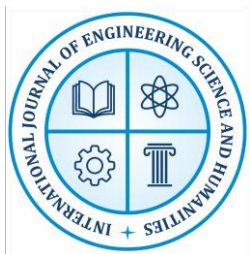
An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

For tribal adolescent girls, the move from village life to a residential school can involve more than a change of school. It may mean living away from parents and siblings, adapting to unfamiliar routines, using a different language for learning, and building new friendships. Residential education can offer important opportunities when secondary schooling is far from home. At the same time, the move can create questions about belonging, cultural identity, safety, learning support, and separation from family. These experiences need to be explored without assuming that all girls have the same needs or that residential schooling is always positive or negative.

Research on school transitions shows that supportive relationships are important to students' adjustment. Benner et al. (2017) reviewed students' transitions to high school and highlighted the role of supportive relationships and differences in transition experiences. Makarova and Birman (2016), in their review of qualitative research on minority students, showed that school adjustment should be understood in relation to cultural and social contexts. These studies suggest that educational transition is not only an academic process; it is also a social and emotional experience.

Studies of academic stress and adjustment also point to the value of resilience and support. Choi et al. (2023) examined resilience in relation to academic stress and school adjustment among Korean students. Jiang et al. (2026) reported an association between perceived stress and school adjustment among rural Chinese boarding students and examined teacher support and self-esteem as relevant factors. In India, Parikh et al. (2019) explored how urban school-going adolescents described stress and coping, while Nagabharana et al. (2021) examined adolescents' perceptions of stressors and coping strategies. These studies offer useful concepts for the present topic, although their participants and settings differ from tribal adolescent girls entering residential schools.

Research on Indigenous residential schooling provides another important perspective. Mander et al. (2015) explored Aboriginal students' perceptions of boarding school in Western Australia, including the opportunities students associated with schooling and the adjustments they had to make. Franck et al. (2020) evaluated a social and emotional learning pilot program for Aboriginal boarding students. George et al. (2024) examined residential schooling and Indigenous youth wellbeing in Attappadi, South India, drawing attention to cultural identity and connections with community life. Together, this literature supports the need to understand academic stress within the wider context of transition, relationships, culture, and the residential environment.



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

OBJECTIVES

- To explore how tribal adolescent girls describe academic stress during their transition from village life to residential schooling.
- To identify academic, language-related, social, cultural, and residential factors that girls associate with academic stress.
- To understand the coping strategies and support systems that girls find helpful during this transition.
- To suggest practical ways in which residential schools can support academic adjustment and emotional wellbeing while respecting cultural identity.

Academic stress during educational transition

Academic stress may include worry about tests, difficulty understanding lessons, fear of making mistakes, pressure to obtain good marks, homework demands, and concern about future education. Parikh et al. (2019) explored adolescents' own descriptions of stress and coping in India, showing the value of listening to young people's language and explanations rather than relying only on adult definitions. Nagabharana et al. (2021) also examined adolescents' perceptions of stressors and coping mechanisms. For the present topic, interviews should ask girls what academic stress means to them and which school situations they find most difficult.

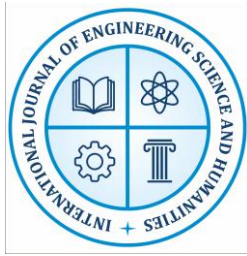
Stress may be connected with the transition itself. A student who is learning a new timetable, adjusting to a hostel, and missing home may have less energy available for study. Another student may feel excited by new opportunities and become more confident over time. The qualitative approach should capture this range of experience.

Supportive relationships and school adjustment

Supportive relationships can help students feel accepted and able to ask for help. Benner et al. (2017) highlighted supportive relationships as an important part of understanding school transition. Jiang et al. (2026) found that perceived stress was negatively associated with school adjustment among rural Chinese boarding students and examined teacher support and self-esteem in this relationship. These findings suggest that teacher availability, respectful communication, and help with difficult lessons are useful areas to explore. They do not prove that the same relationships will work identically in every Indian residential school.

Peer relationships may also influence adjustment. Friends can help students understand school rules, share notes, revise for examinations, and manage homesickness. However, teasing, exclusion, or comparisons may increase discomfort. The study should ask about both supportive and difficult relationships without presuming either experience.

Students may have different levels of preparation because of differences in school resources, previous teaching, or the language used at home and in the classroom. If a girl is not comfortable



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

with the classroom language, she may understand a concept but hesitate to ask questions or may need extra time to complete tasks. Such issues should be explored as features of the learning environment, not as a lack of ability.

Makarova and Birman (2016) emphasised the importance of social and cultural context in minority students' school adjustment. George et al. (2024) examined Indigenous youth wellbeing in Adaptation and highlighted questions about cultural identity and connection with community life in residential schooling. Burrage et al. (2021), writing about the Canadian Indian residential school system, argued for understandings of loss and healing that go beyond trauma alone and take colonial and cultural contexts seriously. The Canadian historical context is distinct from contemporary Indian residential schools, so this work should be used carefully as a reminder of the importance of Indigenous perspectives, not as direct evidence about Indian girls' experiences.

Boarding life, homesickness, and adjustment

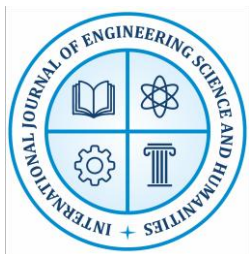
Residential schooling can change sleeping and waking times, food routines, privacy, recreation, contact with family, and access to familiar cultural practices. Mander et al. (2015) explored Aboriginal students' perceptions of boarding school in Western Australia, while Redman-Maclaren et al. (2019) examined remote Indigenous boarding students' views of a transition support service in Queensland. These studies make student voice and transition support important considerations. Wilk et al. (2017) reviewed literature on residential schools and Indigenous health and wellbeing in Canada; because the historical and institutional context differs, it should not be treated as interchangeable with current Indian hostels.

For a Home Science study, hostel life is especially relevant because everyday living conditions can affect learning and wellbeing. Adequate food, sleep, hygiene, safe spaces, recreation, and respectful care are part of a supportive environment.

Resilience, coping, and wellbeing support

Resilience refers to processes and resources that help a person respond to difficulties; it should not be treated as a personal quality that makes institutional support unnecessary. Choi et al. (2023) examined resilience as a factor in the relationship between academic stress and school adjustment. Redman-Maclaren et al. (2017) reported pilot baseline work on resilience and psychosocial wellbeing among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarding students. Rutherford et al. (2020) described the development and implementation of a STEP-UP resilience intervention for Indigenous students attending boarding schools. Franck et al. (2020) evaluated a social and emotional learning pilot program for Aboriginal boarding students.

These studies suggest that emotional and social support can be considered alongside academic help. Possible coping strategies to explore include talking with friends, contacting family, seeking help from teachers, studying with peers, taking part in cultural or recreational activities,



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

and using personal routines to calm down. The researcher should ask which strategies girls actually use and whether they feel these strategies are effective.

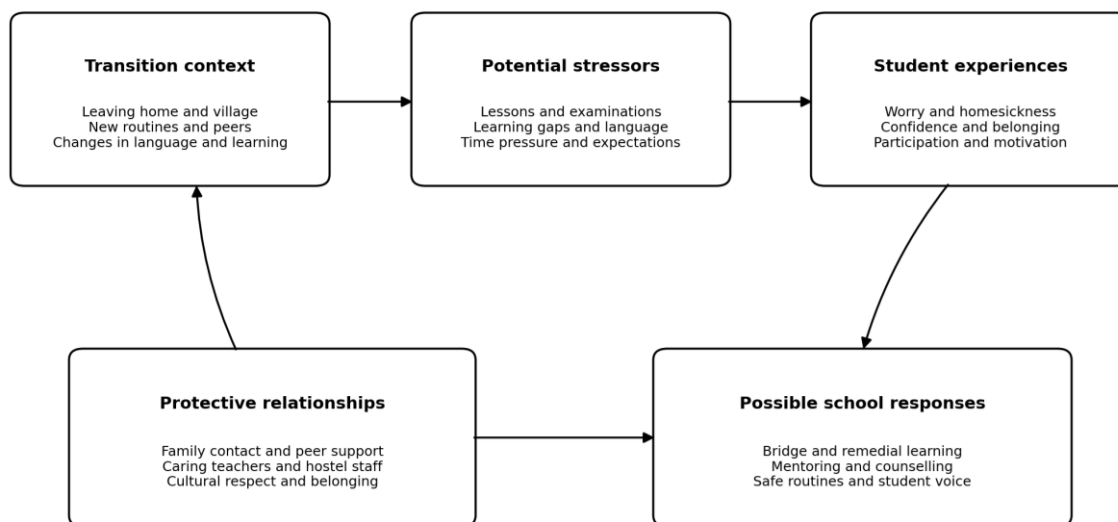
Evidence related to tribal students in India

Indian research is particularly important because educational systems, tribal communities, languages, and hostel arrangements vary widely across countries. George et al. (2024) provide a directly relevant Indian study of Indigenous youth and residential schooling in Attappadi, South India. Mahata (2024) examined educational problems in relation to the academic performance of tribal adolescent girls in West Bengal. P. (2025) compared stress and socio-emotional adjustment among tribal and non-tribal secondary school students. These studies provide a starting point for discussing educational difficulties and adjustment, but they do not fully answer how tribal adolescent girls themselves experience academic stress during the specific transition from village life to residential schooling.

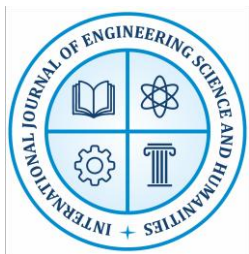
Recent work on rural South Indian students has also compared resilience and coping in residential and day-boarding environments (Soni et al., 2026). Its mixed-methods design is relevant to the wider question of how residential arrangements may relate to wellbeing and help-seeking. However, findings from a particular region or sample should not be generalised to all tribal groups. Local languages, community practices, school conditions, and individual preferences need to be considered.

Proposed conceptual framework for exploring academic stress during transition

Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework for exploring academic stress during transition



The framework links transition context with possible academic stressors and students' experiences. It also recognises that supportive relationships and appropriate school responses



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

may influence how students understand and manage difficulties. The arrows represent proposed connections for investigation, not proven cause-and-effect relationships.

RESEARCH GAP

The literature provides useful knowledge about school transition, academic stress, resilience, boarding school adjustment, and Indigenous wellbeing. Benner et al. (2017) and Makarova and Birman (2016) provide broader perspectives on school transition and minority students' adjustment. Research on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarding students has examined transition support, wellbeing, resilience, and social-emotional learning (Franck et al., 2020; Redman-Maclaren et al., 2017, 2019; Rutherford et al., 2020). Studies of academic stress and coping among adolescents also show the value of understanding students' own experiences (Nagabharana et al., 2021; Parikh et al., 2019).

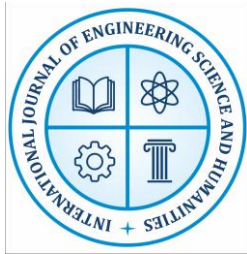
In India, studies have addressed Indigenous youth wellbeing in residential schooling (George et al., 2024), educational problems among tribal adolescent girls (Mahata, 2024), and stress and socio-emotional adjustment among tribal and non-tribal students (P., 2025). However, there remains a need for qualitative work that brings these themes together and focuses on girls' own accounts of academic stress during the transition from village life to residential schooling. Such research can examine how academic demands interact with language, earlier learning opportunities, family separation, peer relationships, cultural identity, and hostel routines.

The contribution of the proposed study would be its focus on lived experiences and on support needs identified by the girls themselves. It may help schools understand which parts of transition require attention and how academic support can be combined with emotional safety, cultural respect, and family or community connection.

CONCLUSION

The transition from village life to residential schooling can open educational opportunities for tribal adolescent girls, but it may also bring new academic, social, and emotional demands. The literature reviewed in this paper shows that academic stress should be considered in relation to school adjustment, supportive relationships, resilience, language, cultural identity, and everyday residential life. Research from other countries offers useful concepts, but it must be interpreted in light of the different historical and social contexts of tribal communities in India.

A qualitative study using semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis could provide a deeper understanding of how girls describe stress, what helps them cope, and which forms of support they consider meaningful. Residential schools may consider accessible learning support, caring teachers and hostel staff, peer mentoring, safe routines, appropriate counselling, opportunities for recreation, and respectful links with families and communities. These actions should be shaped by local needs and the girls' own voices. As this paper is conceptual and does



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

not present original field data, its framework should guide future research rather than be treated as evidence of what all tribal adolescent girls experience.

REFERENCES

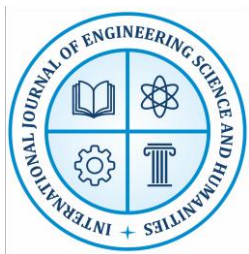
1. Benner, A. D., Boyle, A. E., & Bakhtiari, F. (2017). Understanding students' transition to high school: Demographic variation and the role of supportive relationships. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 46, 2129–2142. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0716-2>
2. Burrage, R. L., Momper, S. L., & Gone, J. P. (2021). Beyond trauma: Decolonizing understandings of loss and healing in the Indian residential school system of Canada. *Journal of Social Issues*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12455>
3. Choi, S.-M., Yoo, I., Kim, D., An, S., Sung, Y., & Kim, C. (2023). The moderating effect of resilience on the relationship between academic stress and school adjustment in Korean students. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 941129. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.941129>
4. Franck, L., Midford, R., Cahill, H., Buergelt, P., Robinson, G., Leckning, B., & Paton, D. (2020). Enhancing social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal boarding students: Evaluation of a social and emotional learning pilot program. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(3), Article 771. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17030771>
5. George, M. S., Ramu, K. A., Prasad, R., Prashanth, N. S., Kenjoor, S., & Grant, J. B. (2024). “How can our children learn from us about our way of life or understand who they are?”: Residential schools and their impact on the wellbeing of Indigenous youth in Attappadi, South India. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 61(4), 557–569. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615231213834>
6. Jiang, Y., Zhang, L., Govindasamy, P., Mohd Isa, N. J., Zaremohzzabieh, Z., Roslan, S., Che Amat, M. A., Binti Puad Mohd Kari, D. N., & Du, L. (2026). The impact of perceived stress on school adjustment among Chinese boarding students in rural junior high school: A moderated mediation model of teacher support and self-esteem. *Educational Studies*, 52(2), 209–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2025.2479590>
7. Kyeremeh, R., & Abomah, P. W. (2025). Students' psychological adjustment to shift-schooling ecosystem in Sub-Saharan African urban communities. *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.12928/jehcp.vi.30179>
8. Lama, R., Matergia, M., Giri, P., Mukhia, D., Aragon-Menzel, I., Rai, R. P., & Cherewick, M. (2026). Socially situated stress and support among adolescents in the Darjeeling Himalaya: A qualitative study of social suffering and resilience. *SSM - Mental Health*, Article 100689. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmmh.2026.100689>



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

9. Mahata, H. (2024). An assessment of the educational problem in relation to academic performance of the tribal adolescent girls students. *Bharati International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 2(8). <https://doi.org/10.70798/bijmrd/02080001>
10. Makarova, E., & Birman, D. (2016). Minority students' psychological adjustment in the school context: An integrative review of qualitative research on acculturation. *Intercultural Education*, 27(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2016.1144382>
11. Mander, D. J., Cohen, L., & Pooley, J. (2015). 'If I wanted to have more opportunities and go to a better school, I just had to get used to it': Aboriginal students' perceptions of going to boarding school in Western Australia. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 44, 26–36. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2015.3>
12. P., A. (2025). Stress in relation to socio-emotional adjustment: A comparison of tribal and non-tribal secondary school students. *International Journal on Science and Technology*, 16(3). <https://doi.org/10.71097/ijst.v16.i3.7671>
13. Parikh, R., Sapru, M., Krishna, M., Cuijpers, P., Patel, V., & Michelson, D. (2019). "It is like a mind attack": Stress and coping among urban school-going adolescents in India. *BMC Psychology*, 7, Article 73. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-019-0306-z>
14. Redman-Maclaren, M., Klieve, H., McCalman, J., Russo, S. L., Rutherford, K., Wenitong, M., & Bainbridge, R. (2017). Measuring resilience and risk factors for the psychosocial well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarding school students: Pilot baseline study results. *Frontiers in Education*, 2, Article 5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2017.00005>
15. Redman-Maclaren, M., Benveniste, T., McCalman, J., Rutherford, K., Britton, A., Langham, E., Stewart, R. M., Saunders, P., Kinchin, I., & Bainbridge, R. (2019). Through the eyes of students: The satisfaction of remote Indigenous boarding students' with a transition support service in Queensland, Australia. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 50, 95–106. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2019.3>
16. Rutherford, K., Britton, A., McCalman, J., Adams, C., Wenitong, M., & Stewart, R. M. (2020). A STEP-UP resilience intervention for supporting Indigenous students attending boarding schools: Its development and implementation. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 30(2). <https://doi.org/10.47381/aijre.v30i2.254>
17. Sharma, A., Jeenger, D., Desai, S., & Acharya, C. (2026). Prevalence of abuse, perceived stress, and resilience among tribal girls: A comparison with girls attending government schools. *Cureus*, 18, Article 105483. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.105483>
18. Slee, V., & Allan, J. F. (2019). Purposeful outdoor learning empowers children to deal with school transitions. *Sports*, 7(6), Article 134. <https://doi.org/10.3390/sports7060134>



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

19. Soni, S., M., H., N., S., H. R., V., & Jayaprakash, J. (2026). Resilience and coping in rural South Indian students: A comparative mixed-methods study of residential versus day boarding environments. *Adolescência e Saúde*, 21(5s), 1006–1012. <https://doi.org/10.67440/ahj.v21i5s.1909>
20. Wilk, P., Maltby, A., & Cooke, M. (2017). Residential schools and the effects on Indigenous health and well-being in Canada—A scoping review. *Public Health Reviews*, 38, Article 8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40985-017-0055-6>
21. Nagabharana, T. K., Joseph, S., Rizwana, A., Krishna, M., Barker, M., Fall, C., Kumaran, K., & Krishnaveni, G. V. (2021). What stresses adolescents? A qualitative study on perceptions of stress, stressors and coping mechanisms among urban adolescents in India. *Wellcome Open Research*, 6, Article 106. <https://doi.org/10.12688/wellcomeopenres.16818.1>
22. Rentala, S., Nayak, R. B., Patil, S. D., Hegde, G. S., & Aladakatti, R. (2019). Academic stress among Indian adolescent girls. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 8, Article 158. https://doi.org/10.4103/jehp.jehp_116_19
23. Trevethan, M., Jain, A. T., Shatiyaseelan, A., Luebbe, A. M., & Raval, V. V. (2022). A longitudinal examination of the relation between academic stress and anxiety symptoms among adolescents in India: The role of physiological hyperarousal and social acceptance. *International Journal of Psychology*, 57(3), 401–410. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12825>