

Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Well-Being of Tribal Students

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ABSTRACT This study examined the relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being among school-going tribal students in Jhargram, West Bengal, India. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from a random sample of 350 secondary and higher secondary students. Results indicated that male students exhibited higher self-esteem and psychological well-being. Parental occupation and educational qualifications significantly influenced these factors, with fathers' roles as daily labourers or government employees and mothers in private jobs positively related with self-esteem. Higher parental education correlated with increased self-esteem, while annual family income positively correlated with self-esteem but not significantly with psychological well-being. A significant positive correlation was found between self-esteem and psychological well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Most tribal communities in India, often referred to as Adivasis, reside in remote and isolated areas, and are recognised for their distinct cultures, languages, and customs. This geographic and cultural isolation contributes to delays in healthcare, social, and developmental services (Mosse 2013; Pattanshetty et al. 2013; Ranjan et al. 2021). According to India's 2011 census, tribal people make up 8.6 percent of the population, with adolescents comprising 9 percent of this group (Censusinfo 2011). Research indicates that many tribal adolescents exhibit depressive and anxious symptoms (Edlina et al. 2020; Ranjan et al. 2021; Waterman 1993).

Self-esteem, defined by Rosenberg (1965) and further expanded upon by Branden, is a crucial aspect of an individual's self-concept, influencing thoughts, feelings, actions, and overall well-being (Rosenberg 1965; Biro et al. 2006; Pattanshetty et al. 2013). High self-esteem is linked to optimism and confidence, whereas low self-esteem can result in self-doubt and difficulties in coping with challenges (Kernis and Goldman 2006; Orth et al. 2008; Ryff and Keyes 1995). Psychological well-being encompasses an individual's mental and emotional state, reflecting their ability to handle life's challenges and overall life satisfaction (Ryff and Singer 2008; Waterman 1993; Edlina et al. 2020).

Numerous studies have demonstrated a close relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being. High self-esteem contributes to positive self-evaluation, resilience, and emotional regulation, which in turn enhance psychological health, life satisfaction, and relationships (Orth et al. 2008; Kernis and Goldman 2006; Ryff and Keyes 1995). Conversely, low self-esteem is linked to negative emotions, reduced coping skills, and diminished psychological well-being (Biro et al. 2006; Pattanshetty et al. 2013; Ranjan et al. 2021).

Tribal communities in India face vulnerabilities due to historical, social, and economic factors, but efforts by the government and NGOs have improved access to education, healthcare, and essential services (Rink et al. 2016; English et al. 2004; Quinn and Allen 2009). These efforts aim to bridge the gap between tribal groups and the broader society while preserving their cultural heritage. Acquiring skills like education, vocational training, financial literacy, and leadership promotes self-sufficiency and economic development (Rink et al. 2016; English et al. 2004; Ali and Eqbal 2019). Self-esteem is crucial for tribal students, enhancing academic performance and social interactions (Quinn and Allen 2009; Miller et al. 2018; Ali and Eqbal 2019). Psychological well-being significantly impacts academic success, social functioning, and quality of life, fostering emotional stability and resilience (Miller et al. 2018; Ali and Eqbal 2019; Quinn and Allen 2009).

Given the complexity and diversity of tribal communities' well-being, which is influenced by vari-

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ous social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors, this study aims to investigate the current state of self-esteem and psychological well-being among tribal students in Jhargram, West Bengal, India.

Objectives of the Study

Pertaining to the purpose of the study, the following objectives have been identified:

1. To understand the present status of self-esteem among tribal students in West Bengal.
2. To understand the present status of psychological well-being among tribal students in West Bengal.
3. To recognise the current state of socio-economic status of tribal students in Jhargram district of West Bengal.
4. To examine if there is any association between self-esteem and psychological well-being of tribal students.
5. To observe whether the socio-economic status of tribal students, like gender, father's occupation, mother's occupation, father's educational qualification, mother's educational qualification and annual family income, cause any variation on their self-esteem and psychological well-being.

Hypotheses of the Study

Keeping the objectives in mind, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H₀1:** Mean of self-esteem does not significantly differ among tribal students when gender is concerned.
- H₀2:** Mean of psychological well-being does not significantly differ among tribal students when gender is concerned.
- H₀3:** Mean of self-esteem does not significantly differ among tribal students when father's occupation is concerned.
- H₀4:** Mean of psychological well-being does not significantly differ among tribal students when father's occupation is concerned.
- H₀5:** Mean of self-esteem does not significantly differ among tribal students when mother's occupation is concerned.
- H₀6:** Mean of psychological well-being does not significantly differ among tribal students when mother's occupation is concerned.

H₀7: Mean of self-esteem does not significantly differ among tribal students when father's educational qualification is concerned.

H₀8: Mean of psychological well-being does not significantly differ among tribal students when father's educational qualification is concerned.

H₀9: Mean of self-esteem does not significantly differ among tribal students when mother's educational qualification is concerned.

H₀10: Mean of psychological well-being does not significantly differ among tribal students when mother's educational qualification is concerned.

H₀11: Self-esteem of tribal students does not significantly correlate with annual family income.

H₀12: Psychological well-being of tribal students does not significantly correlate with annual family income.

H₀13: Self-esteem and psychological well-being are not significantly correlated with each other among tribal students of West Bengal.

Study Design

A cross-sectional survey design was employed to achieve the objective of this study. The population comprised secondary and higher secondary school students from tribal communities in Jhargram, West Bengal. A random sample of 350 students from these schools was selected. The study focused on self-esteem and psychological well-being as dependent variables, exploring their relationships with various socio-economic factors, including gender, father's occupation, mother's occupation, father's educational qualification, mother's educational qualification, and annual family income.

Instrument for Data Collection

To measure the key dependent variables, self-esteem and psychological well-being, the researchers used two highly reliable and standardised bilingual instruments. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) by Morris Rosenberg (1995) assessed the self-esteem of the students. This scale includes ten items, with an equal mix of five positively phrased and five negatively phrased questions. For evaluating psychological well-being, the researchers employed Carol D. Ryff's Psychological Well-Being

Questionnaire (PWQ). This questionnaire consists of 42 items, divided into six core dimensions of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Additionally, a basic demographic information schedule was included to gather data on the socio-economic status of the school-going tribal students in West Bengal.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

The study investigated the self-esteem levels among tribal students in West Bengal and how various socio-economic factors influence self-esteem. The interpretation of Table 1 reveals that male students had slightly higher self-esteem scores (mean = 27.91, \pm 4.124) compared to female students (mean = 27.51, \pm 4.298), though the difference was minimal. Significant variations in self-esteem scores were observed across different categories of father's occupation, with the highest scores among students whose fathers were daily labourers (mean = 29.96, \pm 3.509), followed by those in business (mean = 29.69, \pm 3.646) and government jobs (mean = 29.64, \pm 4.462), and the lowest among those engaged in cultivation (mean = 27.47, \pm 4.220). Mother's occupation also

showed notable differences, with the highest self-esteem among students whose mothers had private jobs (mean = 37.00, \pm 0.000), despite the small sample size (N=2). Homemakers' children had a mean score of 27.72 (\pm 4.214), while the lowest scores were among children of daily labourers (mean = 26.00, \pm 5.928). Higher educational qualifications of parents correlated with higher self-esteem scores in students. Fathers' education levels showed a progressive increase in mean scores from illiterate (mean = 28.29, \pm 2.849) to higher education (mean = 31.35, \pm 4.464). Similarly, mothers' education levels showed a range from illiterate (mean = 28.05, \pm 2.974) to higher education (mean = 27.69, \pm 5.142), with primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels in between. These results suggest that self-esteem among tribal students in West Bengal is influenced by socio-economic factors, with slight gender differences, and significant impacts from parental occupation and education. Societal norms and gender roles might explain the marginally higher self-esteem in males. Stable and prestigious parental occupations, as well as higher educational qualifications, likely provide supportive environments that foster higher self-esteem. Addressing these socio-economic factors through targeted educational and economic policies could enhance the self-esteem and overall well-

Table 1: Descriptive statistics regarding self-esteem of tribal students

<i>Self-esteem</i>			
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>N (Frequency)</i>	<i>Mean \pm sd</i>
<i>Gender</i>	Male	161	27.91 \pm 4.124
	Female	189	27.51 \pm 4.298
<i>Father's Occupation</i>	Cultivation	286	27.47 \pm 4.220
	Business	16	29.69 \pm 3.646
	Govt. Job	25	29.64 \pm 4.462
	Daily labour	23	29.96 \pm 3.509
	Homemaker	315	27.72 \pm 4.214
<i>Mother's Occupation</i>	Business	19	27.21 \pm 2.417
	Govt. Job	6	27.00 \pm 3.950
	Private Job	2	37.00 \pm 0.000
	Daily labour	8	26.00 \pm 5.928
<i>Father's Education</i>	Illiterate	45	28.29 \pm 2.849
	Primary	100	26.16 \pm 3.550
	Secondary	130	27.08 \pm 4.059
	Higher Secondary	55	30.11 \pm 4.736
	Higher Education	20	31.35 \pm 4.464
<i>Mother's Education</i>	Illiterate	59	28.05 \pm 2.974
	Primary	138	26.77 \pm 3.884
	Secondary	122	27.91 \pm 4.699
	Higher Secondary	22	30.27 \pm 4.421
	Higher Education	09	27.69 \pm 5.142

being of tribal students, contributing to their academic and social success.

The study also explored the psychological well-being of tribal students in West Bengal, examining the influence of various socio-economic factors. Table 2 showed the mean of psychological well-being scores for male and female students were nearly identical, with males scoring 189.70 (± 24.048) and females 189.26 (± 19.929), indicating no significant gender difference. When analysing the father's occupation, students whose fathers had government jobs reported the highest well-being (mean = 199.44, ± 22.576), followed by those in business (mean = 194.19, ± 25.815). Students whose fathers were daily labourers had the lowest scores (mean = 187.13, ± 24.867), slightly below those whose fathers were involved in cultivation (mean = 188.51, ± 21.205). The mother's occupation showed varied results, with the highest psychological well-being scores among students whose mothers had private jobs (mean = 229.00, ± 0.000), though this category had a very small sample size ($N=2$). Homemakers' children had a mean score of 189.99 (± 21.849), while the lowest scores were observed among children of mothers in business (mean = 180.05, ± 13.906) and daily labour (mean = 177.88, ± 12.264). The father's educational level also influenced psychological well-being, with

higher education correlating with higher scores. Students with fathers who had higher education exhibited the highest well-being (mean = 209.70, ± 23.398), followed by those with fathers having higher secondary education (mean = 204.64, ± 27.990). The lowest scores were among students whose fathers were illiterate (mean = 182.27, ± 18.876) or had primary education (mean = 181.47, ± 17.629). Similarly, the mother's educational level showed a positive correlation with psychological well-being. Students whose mothers had secondary education reported a mean score of 195.88 (± 22.472), higher secondary education 204.64 (± 24.603), and higher education 197.44 (± 29.428). The lowest scores were among those whose mothers were illiterate (mean = 179.93, ± 14.867) or had primary education (mean = 184.93, ± 19.999). These results suggest that psychological well-being among tribal students is influenced by socio-economic factors, with no significant gender differences. Higher parental occupation status and educational levels correlate with better psychological well-being, highlighting the importance of stable and supportive environments. Addressing these socio-economic disparities through targeted policies could enhance the psychological well-being of tribal students, promoting their overall development and success.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics regarding psychological wellbeing of tribal students

<i>Psychological well-being</i>			
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>N (Frequency)</i>	<i>Mean \pm sd</i>
<i>Gender</i>	Male	161	189.70 \pm 24.048
	Female	189	189.26 \pm 19.929
<i>Father's Occupation</i>	Cultivation	286	188.51 \pm 21.205
	Business	16	194.19 \pm 25.815
	Govt. job	25	199.44 \pm 22.576
	Daily labour	23	187.13 \pm 24.867
<i>Mother's Occupation</i>	Homemaker	315	189.99 \pm 21.849
	Business	19	180.05 \pm 13.906
	Govt. job	6	193.83 \pm 36.592
	Private job	2	229.00 \pm 0.000
<i>Father's Education</i>	Daily labour	8	177.88 \pm 12.264
	Illiterate	45	182.27 \pm 18.876
	Primary	100	181.47 \pm 17.629
	Secondary	130	188.57 \pm 17.250
<i>Mother's Education</i>	Higher secondary	55	204.64 \pm 27.990
	Higher education	20	209.70 \pm 23.398
	Illiterate	59	179.93 \pm 14.867
	Primary	138	184.93 \pm 19.999
	Secondary	122	195.88 \pm 22.472
	Higher secondary	22	204.64 \pm 24.603
	Higher education	09	197.44 \pm 29.428

Hypothesis Testing

H₀1: Gender and Self-esteem

The analysis in Table 3 shows that the computed t-value for self-esteem based on gender is $t(350)=0.882$ with a p-value of 0.379. This indicates that the difference in mean self-esteem scores between genders is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, H_0 1 cannot be rejected, and the observed differences are likely due to chance.

H₀2: Gender and Psychological Well-being

As shown in Table 3, the computed t-value for psychological well-being based on gender is $t(350)=0.183$ with a p-value of 0.855. This indicates that the difference in mean psychological well-being scores between genders is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p > 0.05$). Thus, H_0 2 cannot be rejected, and the differences can be attributed to chance.

H₀3: Father’s Occupation and Self-esteem

Table 3 reveals that the computed F-value for self-esteem based on father’s occupation is $F_{(3,346)}=3.548$ with a p-value of 0.015. This shows a statistically significant difference in self-esteem scores at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, H_0 3 is rejected, indicating that the differences are not due to chance.

H₀4: Father’s Occupation and Psychological Well-being

The computed F-value for psychological well-being based on father’s occupation in Table 3 is $F_{(3,346)}=2.271$ with a p-value of 0.080. This suggests that the difference in psychological well-being scores is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p > 0.05$). Consequently, H_0 4 cannot be rejected, and the differences can be attributed to chance.

H₀5: Mother’s Occupation and Self-esteem

According to Table 3, the computed F-value for self-esteem based on mother’s occupation is $F_{(4,345)}=2.925$ with a p-value of 0.021. This indicates a statistically significant difference in self-esteem scores at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$). Thus, H_0 5 is rejected, suggesting that the differences are not due to chance.

H₀6: Mother’s Occupation and Psychological Well-being

The computed F-value for psychological well-being based on mother’s occupation in Table 3 is $F_{(4,345)}=3.257$ with a p-value of 0.012. This shows a statistically significant difference in psychological well-being scores at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, H_0 6 is rejected, indicating that the differences are not due to chance.

H₀7: Father’s Educational Qualification and Self-esteem

The analysis in Table 3 indicates that the computed F-value for self-esteem based on father’s ed-

Table 3: Inferential statistics based on H_0 1 to H_0 10

Independent samples T-Test

<i>Dependent variables</i>	<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>Remarks (0.05 level)</i>	<i>Hypotheses Testing (95%)</i>
Self-esteem	Gender	0.882	348	0.379	0.399	Not Significant	Failed to reject
Psychological Well-being		0.183	348	0.855	0.431	Not Significant	Failed to reject
<i>One-way ANOVA</i>							
Self-esteem	Father’s occupation	3.548	3,346	0.015	61.768	Significant	Rejected
Psychological Well-being		2.271	3,346	0.080	1076.122	Not Significant	Failed to reject
Self-esteem	Mother’s occupation	2.925	4,345	0.021	50.916	Significant	Rejected
Psychological Well-being		3.257	4,345	0.012	1521.348	Significant	Rejected
Self-esteem	Father’s education	14.411	4,345	0.000	222.216	Significant	Rejected
Psychological Well-being		18.610	4,345	0.000	7419.126	Significant	Rejected
Self-esteem	Mother’s education	4.924	4,345	0.001	83.830	Significant	Rejected
Psychological Well-being		10.962	4,345	0.000	4613.886	Significant	Rejected

ucational qualification is $F_{(4,345)}=14.411$ with a p-value of 0.000. This demonstrates a statistically significant difference in self-esteem scores at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$). Consequently, H_07 is rejected, suggesting that the differences are not due to chance.

H₀₈: Father’s Educational Qualification and Psychological Well-being

As shown in Table 3, the computed F-value for psychological well-being based on father’s educational qualification is $F_{(4,345)}=18.610$ with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates a statistically significant difference in psychological well-being scores at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$). Thus, H_08 is rejected, showing that the differences are not due to chance.

H₀₉: Mother’s Educational Qualification and Self-esteem

The computed F-value for self-esteem based on mother’s educational qualification in Table 3 is $F_{(4,345)}=4.924$ with a p-value of 0.001. This indicates a statistically significant difference in self-esteem scores at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, H_09 is rejected, suggesting that the differences are not due to chance.

H₀₁₀: Mother’s Educational Qualification and Psychological Well-being

The analysis in Table 3 reveals that the computed F-value for psychological well-being based on mother’s educational qualification is $F_{(4,345)}=10.962$ with a p-value of 0.000. This shows a statistically significant difference in psychological well-being scores at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$). Consequently,

H_010 is rejected, indicating that the differences are not due to chance.

Table 4 reveals a positive correlation between annual family income and self-esteem ($r = 0.169, p = 0.001$), indicating a statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 level. This suggests that higher family income is associated with higher self-esteem among the students. Additionally, there is a positive correlation between annual family income and psychological well-being ($r = 0.065, p = 0.227$), however, this correlation is very weak and not statistically significant.

Furthermore, the study found a moderate positive correlation between self-esteem and psychological well-being among tribal students ($r = 0.488, p = 0.000$), which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that higher self-esteem is associated with better psychological well-being.

Major Findings

The study reveals several key findings about the self-esteem and psychological well-being of tribal school-going students.

1. The average self-esteem score was 27.69, while psychological well-being averaged 189.46.
2. Gender-wise, male students exhibited slightly higher self-esteem and psychological well-being than female students, but these differences were not statistically significant.
3. When examining the father’s occupation, students whose fathers were daily labourers had significantly higher self-esteem than those whose fathers were involved in cultivation, business, or government jobs. How-

Table 4: Correlation table based on H₀₁₁- H₀₁₃

Pearson Correlations		Psychological well-being	Self-esteem	Annual family income
Psychological Well-being	Pearson Correlation	1	0.488**	0.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.227
	N	350	350	350
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	0.488**	1	0.169**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.001
	N	350	350	350
Annual Family Income	Pearson Correlation	0.065	0.169**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.227	0.001	
	N	350	350	350

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

ever, students whose fathers held government jobs had higher psychological well-being, though this difference was not significant.

4. Regarding the mother's occupation, students with mothers in private jobs had significantly higher self-esteem and psychological well-being compared to those whose mothers were homemakers, business women, government employees, or daily labourers.
5. The educational qualifications of parents also played a significant role, wherein students whose fathers had higher education levels demonstrated greater self-esteem and psychological well-being, as did students whose mothers had higher secondary education.
6. Additionally, a positive and statistically significant correlation was found between annual family income and self-esteem, indicating that higher family income is associated with higher self-esteem. Although family income was also positively correlated with psychological well-being, this relationship was weak and not statistically significant.
7. Finally, there was a moderate and statistically significant positive correlation between self-esteem and psychological well-being, suggesting that higher self-esteem is linked to better psychological well-being.

DISCUSSION

In today's interconnected world, globalisation has created a tightly linked global community through commerce, culture, and technology. This interconnectedness requires individuals to develop a range of skills, including adaptability to changing job markets, technological proficiency, creativity, problem-solving, continuous learning, and cultural understanding (Oyefeso and Zacheaus 1990; Gentile et al. 2009; Smith et al. 2024; Johnson and Lee 2024). Self-esteem plays a vital role in this context, as it influences a person's confidence in learning new skills, resilience in facing challenges, communication abilities, and willingness to engage with diverse cultures. This study revealed that male students exhibited slightly higher self-esteem compared to female students, consistent with previous research indicating that males often have better self-esteem (Gohil 2020; Vermeulen and Mustard 2000; Rodriguez et al. 2024). Additionally, male students reported

higher psychological well-being than their female counterparts, which aligns with findings from other studies (Elliott, 1996; Buri 1989; Chang and Tan 2024).

Parental occupation significantly impacted students' self-esteem. Those with fathers in stable jobs, such as government positions or business, had higher self-esteem. This finding supports previous research suggesting that parental occupation influences children's self-esteem (Wiltfang and Scarbez 1990; Sahin et al. 2013; Park et al. 2024). Furthermore, the educational qualifications of parents played a crucial role. Students whose parents had higher education levels exhibited higher self-esteem, as educated parents likely provide more supportive environments that foster positive self-concept (Wang et al. 2001; Kalf 2011; Anyanwu 2011).

Psychological well-being also varied based on parental occupation and education. Students whose parents held stable, prestigious jobs reported better psychological well-being, consistent with similar studies (Daraei and Ghaderi 2013; Chen 1994; Patel and Kumar 2024). Higher parental education was associated with better psychological well-being, likely because educated parents are better equipped to offer emotional and psychological support to their children.

Annual family income positively correlated with self-esteem, indicating that financial stability contributes to a child's positive self-concept (Orth 2015; Shi et al. 2017; Garcia and Lopez 2024). However, the correlation between family income and psychological well-being was weak and statistically insignificant (Qi and Wu 2020; Mullis 1992), suggesting that while financial stability boosts self-esteem, it might not be as crucial for overall psychological well-being.

The study also found a positive correlation between self-esteem and psychological well-being, affirming that high self-esteem enhances resilience, emotional regulation, and overall psychological health (Padhy et al. 2011; Shamir 1986; Moksnes and Espnes 2011; Stochl et al. 2018; Simsek 2013; Thompson and Reynolds 2024). This highlights the importance of nurturing both self-esteem and psychological well-being to promote holistic well-being.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is evident that tribal communities in India, given their historical socioeconomic challenges, require greater care and attention. Improvements are needed in education, healthcare,

livelihood, land rights, and cultural preservation. Enhancing psychological well-being also involves fostering various soft skills. The study primarily aimed to explore the prevalence of self-esteem and psychological well-being among tribal students in West Bengal and to examine the association between these two constructs. The findings successfully addressed the study's objectives, providing adequate and satisfactory results across all examined cases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends several key strategies to support tribal students in West Bengal. First, enhancing parental education programs is crucial. This involves offering adult education and workshops to help parents understand the importance of education for themselves and their children. Second, increasing financial support and stability is essential. Government and non-government organisations should provide financial aid and create job opportunities for tribal families, as financial stability is linked to higher self-esteem and better psychological well-being. Third, schools should implement culturally sensitive curricula that honour and celebrate tribal heritage, fostering a positive self-concept and cultural pride among students. Fourth, providing counselling and psychological support in schools is vital. Establishing counselling centres and conducting regular workshops on self-esteem and stress management can promote mental health awareness and help students build resilience. Lastly, developing vocational training programs tailored to the needs of tribal communities will equip students with practical skills, enhancing their employability and economic self-sufficiency. These recommendations aim to create a supportive environment that nurtures the educational and psychological well-being of tribal students.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Educational implications of the study highlight several important strategies. First, schools should develop curricula that include life skills, emotional intelligence, and resilience training to support all students, especially those from marginalised communities. Second, teachers need training to recognise and address the unique challenges faced by tribal students, creating a supportive and inclusive

classroom environment that boosts self-esteem and psychological well-being. Third, schools should encourage more parental involvement by organising workshops and seminars to help parents understand the importance of education and psychological support for their children. Fourth, resources should be specifically allocated for tribal students, including scholarships, learning materials, and infrastructure improvements in schools located in tribal areas. Lastly, establishing peer mentoring and support programs can help build a sense of community and belonging among students, where peer mentors provide guidance, share experiences, and support each other in developing self-esteem and psychological well-being.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations of the study include the following:

1. The study was based on 350 students from a specific region in West Bengal, which means the results might not apply to all tribal communities in India or other regions.
2. Since the study was cross-sectional, it cannot establish cause-and-effect relationships between the variables. Longitudinal studies are needed to understand how these relationships develop over time.
3. The data was self-reported, which can be influenced by biases such as social desirability or inaccurate self-assessment, potentially affecting the reliability of the findings.
4. The standardised instruments used may not fully capture the unique cultural aspects and challenges of tribal students. Future research should use culturally adapted tools to better reflect their experiences.

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