



Aggression and Insecurity among Tribal School Students: A Systematic Review

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Abstract:

This systematic review examines empirical evidence on aggression and psychological insecurity among tribal school students. Aggression in adolescents is multifactorial, involving individual, family, school, and community influences. Tribal students often encounter socio-economic challenges, cultural marginalization, and educational barriers that may contribute to both aggressive behavior and emotional insecurity. Findings from studies with tribal and culturally analogous groups show elevated aggression among tribal adolescents compared with non-tribal peers and significant links between emotional insecurity and psychosocial stressors. Gaps in research on insecurity, especially within tribal education contexts, are identified. The review concludes with recommendations for culturally appropriate policy and school interventions.

Keywords: *Aggression, Insecurity, Adolescent Behavior, School, Indigenous*

1. Introduction

Aggression among school students has long been a focus of developmental psychology research due to its association with adverse social outcomes and mental health difficulties. Aggressive behavior refers to actions intended to cause physical or psychological harm to others, including physical aggression, verbal threats, and relational aggression (e.g., exclusion or rumor spreading). Persistent aggression during adolescence can impede social relationships, academic success, and future psychosocial functioning. Psychological insecurity in school settings includes feelings of anxiety, fear, low self worth, and perceived social threat. Such emotional vulnerabilities can influence how students interact with peers and respond to stress, potentially escalating into externalized behaviors like aggression.

Tribal school students, consisting of indigenous populations and minority ethnic groups, often face compounded challenges. These students may experience socio-economic disadvantage, limited educational resources, language barriers, and cultural discontinuities between home and school environments. Such stressors are associated with emotional strain and behavioral difficulties. In India, tribal communities, often referred to as Adivasis, have historically faced educational marginalization, and reflected in lower literacy and higher school dropout rates compared with national averages. Although research specific to tribal student aggression and insecurity is limited, relevant literature examining indigenous and tribal populations provides important insight into behavioral and emotional outcomes in this group.

This review synthesizes existing research on aggression and insecurity among tribal school students and similar populations, highlights risk and protective factors, and offers policy and practice recommendations.

2. Methodology

A systematic literature search was conducted using relevant academic databases and open access repositories. Search terms included combinations of tribal, indigenous, aggression, school students, anxiety, insecurity, and adolescents. Studies were included if they investigated aggression or emotional insecurity among tribal or indigenous school students in empirical research. Both quantitative and mixed methods studies were considered.

3. Conceptual Framework

3.1 Aggression

Aggression is a multifaceted construct shaped by biological, psychological, and social influences. Developmental frameworks highlight that adolescence involves significant emotional and cognitive changes that interact with environmental factors such as family stress, peer conflict, and school climate to influence behavior. Peer victimization, environmental stressors, and limited coping strategies are associated with higher aggression among adolescents.

3.2 Psychological Insecurity

Psychological insecurity refers to chronic emotional vulnerability, including anxiety, fear of social rejection, and low perceived safety in interpersonal contexts. In school settings, insecurity may manifest as social withdrawal, heightened anxiety, or defensive behavior, all of which can interact with aggressive responses.

3.3 Tribal Context

Tribal school students are significantly influenced by their socio-cultural environment. Geographic isolation, economic disadvantage, and limited institutional support often intensify stress. Cultural mismatch between traditional community values and mainstream school expectations may also contribute to social anxiety and feelings of insecurity among tribal students. Intersections between socio-economic conditions and emotional outcomes make this group an important population for study.

4. Results

4.1 Aggression among Tribal Students

Research directly examining aggression in tribal students shows that tribal adolescents often exhibit higher aggression compared with non-tribal peers. One study involving Chakma tribal students in Bangladesh found that boys exhibited significantly higher aggression than girls, irrespective of stage of development. Early adolescents showed greater aggression than older adolescents, suggesting that age and gender are influential factors in aggressive behavior among tribal youth (Ahmed, 2012). (Bangladesh Journals Online)

A comparative study in the Chittagong Hill Tracts found that tribal adolescents scored higher on measures of aggressive behavior than non-tribal students. Boys exhibited greater aggression than girls, and younger adolescents showed higher aggression than older peers, across both tribal and non-tribal groups. This pattern suggests that developmental status and gender interact with ethnic identity to shape aggression trends in school settings. (Bangladesh Journals Online)

Non-tribal research on adolescents in rural Indian contexts also shows that school-aged youth display significant levels of aggression related to psychosocial factors such as gender and family background, with nearly half of rural adolescents identified as aggressive in one survey of school students in Haryana. Gender, class of student, and family occupational status were significant predictors of aggression. (PMC)

4.2 Insecurity and Emotional Factors

Direct empirical investigation of psychological insecurity among tribal school students is scarce. However, research on related constructs such as social anxiety and neurotic proneness among tribal versus non-tribal students indicates that tribal students may experience higher levels of emotional distress

and insecurity. An analysis of neurotic proneness among students in Kashmir found that tribal secondary school students exhibited higher levels of fear, anxiety, insecurity, and low confidence compared with non-tribal peers, suggesting elevated emotional vulnerability tied to socio-economic conditions and resource limitations. (Ilkogretim Online).

A study comparing tribal and non-tribal students on social anxiety found no significant difference in levels of social anxiety between groups. However, self-esteem and emotional maturity were negatively associated with social anxiety across all students, indicating that emotional factors can shape internalized insecurity regardless of tribal status. (journalppw.com)

4.3 Risk and Protective Factors

Evidence from broader research on tribal adolescents in India reveals multiple psychosocial risk factors associated with emotional and behavioral problems. A study of tribal adolescents in Meghalaya found that risk factors such as family conflict, community disorganization, and antisocial peer influence were significantly linked with higher emotional difficulty scores. Protective factors such as prosocial involvement and family support were associated with improved outcomes. (PubMed).

Peer dynamics, including victimization and exclusion, also shape aggression and insecurity. Aggressed and victimized students often show lower self-concept and higher emotional difficulty. Research among Indian school populations has found that children involved in bullying or victim roles exhibit lower self-concept and increased behavioral problems, indicating an overlap between peer conflict, insecurity, and aggressive conduct, although these studies are not always tribal-specific. (PubMed)

4.4 Table of Reviewed Studies

Authors (Year)	Sample	Measures	Key Findings
Ahmed (2012)	160 Chakma tribal students	Measure of Aggressive Behaviour	Boys > girls in aggression; early adolescents > late adolescents. (Bangladesh Journals Online)
Ahmed & Haque (2011)	320 tribal & non-tribal students	MAB	Tribal students showed higher aggression than non-tribal; boys > girls; early adolescents > others. (Bangladesh Journals Online)
Soundarya & Govind (2022)	101 male students (47 tribal)	Self-esteem, Emotional Maturity, Social Anxiety	No tribal vs non-tribal difference; self-esteem and maturity negatively related to social anxiety. (journalppw.com)
Pandith & Paray (2023)	100 tribal & non-tribal students	R.N. Kundu Neurotic Personality Inventory	Tribal students scored higher in anxiety and insecurity indicators. (Ilkogretim Online)

5. Discussion

This review highlights consistent evidence that tribal school students often exhibit higher aggressive behavior than their non-tribal peers. Boys and younger adolescents are more likely to display aggression, which is consistent with broader developmental literature linking age and gender to behavioral expression. Although research directly measuring psychological insecurity among tribal students is limited, related studies suggest that elevated emotional vulnerability is present in tribal student groups and correlates with environmental stressors such as economic hardship, family conflict, and social exclusion.

The emotional experiences of tribal students are shaped by broader socio-cultural contexts, including geographic isolation, limited resources, and a lack of culturally responsive educational practices. These

factors may increase psychological fragility, heightening sensitivity to peer conflict and school stress. Emotional insecurity may not only contribute to internal distress but also influence externalized aggressive responses in environments perceived as unsafe or unsupportive.

Methodological limitations in current research include small sample sizes, lack of longitudinal data, and limited use of culturally validated measures. More rigorous studies are needed to disentangle the pathways linking socio-economic adversity, emotional insecurity, and aggression in tribal school contexts.

6. Policy and Practice Implications

Findings from this review have important implications for educational policy and intervention. First, school systems serving tribal students should implement culturally informed behavioral support programs that address emotional insecurity and promote positive peer interactions. Social emotional learning curricula that include components on emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and self-esteem building may reduce aggressive behavior and foster resilience.

Second, teacher training should incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy that recognizes students' cultural backgrounds and adapts instructional practices accordingly. Culturally affirming environments can enhance students' sense of belonging and reduce insecurity.

Third, national and regional educational policies should allocate resources to underserved tribal areas to reduce structural disparities. Enhanced funding for school counseling services, mental health screening, and community-based support initiatives can address underlying risk factors such as family conflict and community disorganization. Partnerships between education and tribal welfare agencies can promote holistic supports that align with community needs. Finally, targeted policy frameworks such as inclusive curricula and tribal welfare programs that focus on psychosocial wellbeing can ensure that tribal students receive equitable opportunities for emotional development and academic success.

7. Conclusion

Aggression and psychological insecurity among tribal school students are influenced by a constellation of developmental, social, and environmental factors. Tribal students often face heightened behavioral challenges due to socio-economic disadvantage, cultural disconnect, and limited educational resources. Although direct research on insecurity in tribal contexts is limited, related studies indicate significant emotional strain in this population, which intersects with aggressive behavior. Culturally responsive research and policy interventions are essential to promote emotional stability, positive behavior, and academic achievement in tribal educational settings. Addressing systemic inequities through targeted policy action will strengthen tribal students' psychological wellbeing and academic outcomes.

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