



Influence of Religion and Locality on Resilience among Tribal Students in Jharkhand

Subodh Chandra Shukla

Department of Psychology,
P.P.K College, Bundu,
Ranchi University, Jharkhand

Dr. Rajesh Kumar

Department of Psychology, J. N. College, Dhurwa,
Ranchi University, Jharkhand

ABSTRACT

Resilience is a vital psychological construct that enables individuals to adapt successfully to adversity. Tribal students in Jharkhand face multiple socio-cultural, economic, and educational challenges that demand strong resilience. The present study investigates the influence of religion (Sarna and Christian) and locality (rural and urban) on resilience among tribal students. A sample of 240 students was selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using standardized resilience scales and analyzed using mean and percentage. The findings reveal that both religion and locality influence resilience levels. Religious belief systems act as cultural protective factors, while locality determines access to resources and opportunities. The study emphasizes the need for culturally sensitive educational and psychological interventions.

Key words: Resilience, Tribal Students, Religion, Locality, Sarna, Christian, Jharkhand.

INTRODUCTION

Resilience refers to the capacity to cope with stress, adversity, and life challenges while maintaining psychological well-being. Among tribal students, resilience is shaped by a complex interaction of cultural, environmental, and socio-economic factors. Jharkhand, a state with a significant tribal population, presents a unique socio-cultural context where traditional belief systems (Sarna religion) coexist with Christianity among tribals. Religion plays a crucial role in shaping identity, coping strategies, and emotional stability.

Locality is another important factor influencing resilience. Rural tribal students often experience geographical isolation and limited educational resources, whereas urban students benefit from exposure, infrastructure, and institutional support. Studies indicate that tribal students are more vulnerable to psychological stress due to socio-economic disadvantages, but resilience can be enhanced through cultural and environmental support systems. Additionally, spirituality has been identified as a protective factor that

reduces stress, insecurity, and loneliness among tribal students. Jiang et. al. found that resilience can indeed be conceptualized as the ability to achieve positive, adaptive outcomes in the face of adversity.

This study examines how religion and locality influence resilience among tribal students in Jharkhand. Resilience helps prevent mental health problems among adolescents. Tribal adolescents often show lower resilience due to marginalization, but targeted interventions significantly improve resilience levels. Religion and spirituality are deeply embedded in tribal life. They provide meaning, emotional support, and coping mechanisms. Spirituality acts as a buffer against psychological distress and enhances emotional well-being. Tribal communities possess rich indigenous belief systems that promote collective identity, healing practices, and community bonding. Educational challenges such as lack of infrastructure, geographical isolation, and socio-economic inequality significantly affect tribal students, particularly in rural areas. A defining characteristic of tribal religious systems is the foundational belief in a diverse pantheon of spirits that function as active agents within the material world. This worldview posits that spirits are not distant or abstract entities but are directly involved in the mechanics of daily life, exerting a tangible influence on the environment and human affairs. Consequently, tribal social structures and ethical codes are frequently organized around maintaining equilibrium between the human and spiritual realms, reflecting a holistic integration of the sacred and the profane.

Aims of the Study

- To examine the influence of religion and locality on resilience among tribal students.

Hypothesis

- Religion and locality have significant influences on resilience among tribal students.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The study utilized a descriptive comparative research design to examine a total sample of 240 tribal students, selected through a stratified random sampling technique, consisting of equal sub-groups of Sarna (n=120) and Christian (n=120), students, as well as equal distributions across rural (n=120) and urban (n=120) locations.

Tools:

I. Personal Data Questionnaire

The Personal Data Questionnaire (PDQ) is developed by the researcher to collect essential demographic information from the participants. This instrument is designed to gather baseline data, including the participant's name, age, gender, and locality, ensuring a comprehensive profile for the study's analysis.

II. Scale for Resilience

This scale is developed in 2017 by Dr. Vijaya Lakshmi and Dr. Shruti Narain, the Resilience Scale is a specialized psychometric tool designed to assess the psychological resilience of adolescents aged 14 and above. This 30-item instrument evaluates resilience through four primary dimensions: Perseverance, Composure, Self-reliance, and Faith. Scoring is conducted on a five-point Likert scale, where positive items are scored from 5 to 1 (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) and negative items are reverse-scored from 1 to 5; these individual values are then summed to produce a comprehensive total score. Furthermore, the scale demonstrates strong psychometric integrity, boasting a test-retest reliability of 0.87 and a validity coefficient of 0.86.

Procedure

Data were collected from colleges in Jharkhand after obtaining informed consent. Confidentiality and ethical guidelines were maintained.

Statistical Analysis

The data were subjected to statistical analysis using descriptive statistics, specifically means and percentage distributions, to identify patterns and trends across the groups.

Results

Result Table: 1 The percentage of high, average, and low resilience across the four groups: Rural, Urban, Tribal Sarna, and Tribal Christian.

Groups		Levels of Resilience					
		High		Average		Low	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Locality	Rural	20	16.67	61	50.83	39	32.50
	Urban	32	26.67	58	48.33	30	25.00
Religion	Tribal Sarna	23	19.17	59	49.17	38	31.67
	Tribal Christian	29	24.17	60	50.00	31	25.83

Impact of Locality on Resilience Levels

- Students in urban areas exhibit a higher propensity for High Resilience (26.67%) compared to their rural counterparts (16.67%).

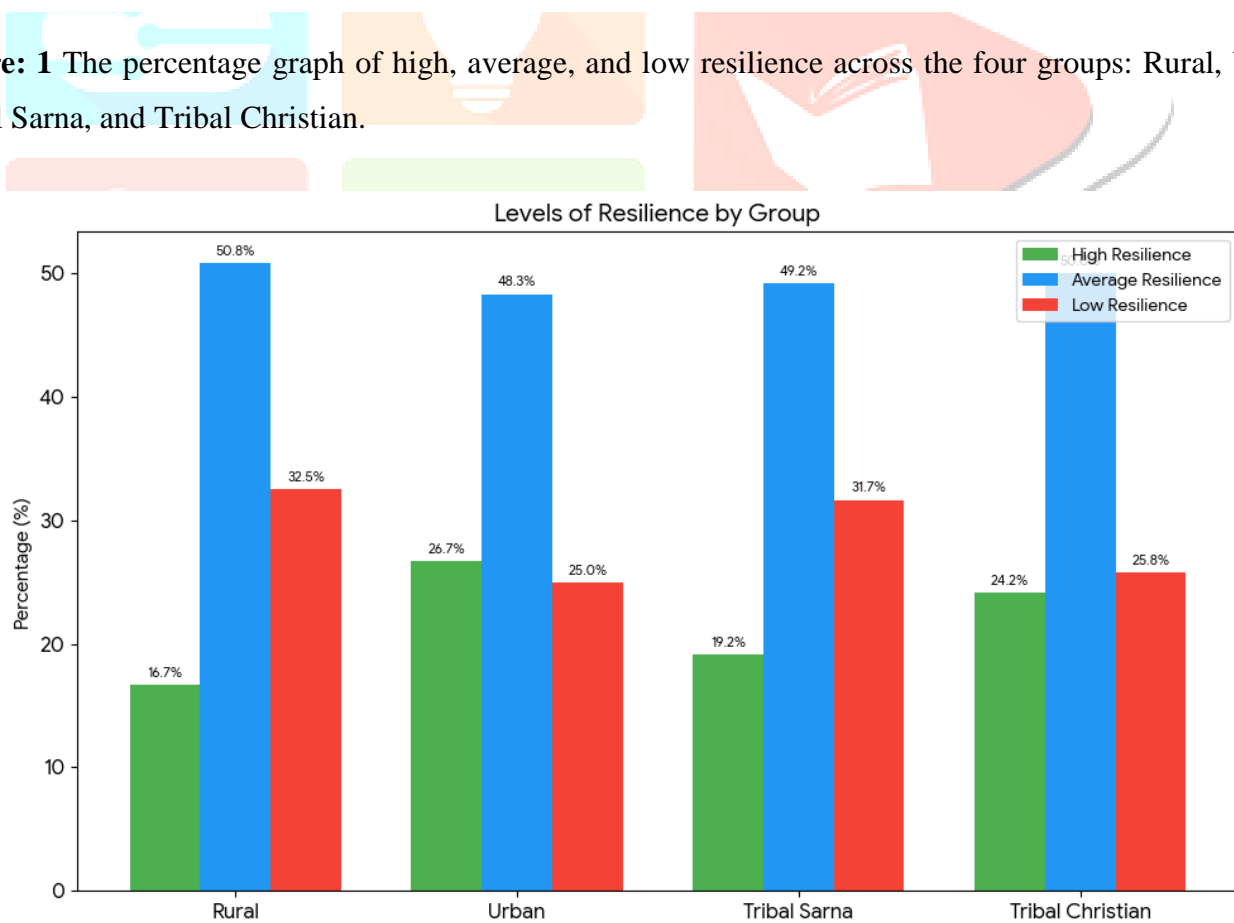
- The rural group demonstrates a notably higher incidence of Low Resilience (32.50%), suggesting that environmental factors in rural settings may present greater challenges to the development of robust coping mechanisms.

Influence of Religious Affiliation on Resilience

- Tribal Christian group shows a stronger leaning towards higher resilience, with 24.17% in the High category and exactly 50% maintaining Average levels.
- Tribal Sarna group shows while maintaining a similar average resilience (49.17%), this group has a higher percentage of students in the Low Resilience category (31.67%) compared to the Christian group (25.83%).

This indicates a stable baseline of adaptive capacity regardless of religious affiliation or geographical location. The data supports the conclusion that resilience is a multidimensional construct influenced by both socio-spatial (urban vs. rural) and cultural-spiritual (Sarna vs. Christian) factors. Urbanization and specific religious frameworks may provide additional protective factors or resources that enhance a student's ability to achieve high levels of resilience. Both Tribal Sarna and Tribal Christian groups have very similar Average resilience levels (49-50%), but the Tribal Christian group has a slightly higher High resilience (24.17%) compared to Tribal Sarna (19.17%).

Figure: 1 The percentage graph of high, average, and low resilience across the four groups: Rural, Urban, Tribal Sarna, and Tribal Christian.



DISCUSSION

The findings highlight that both religion and locality significantly affect resilience of tribal students. Religious influence on Christianity may provide structured institutional support such as schools, churches, and community networks, enhancing resilience. However, Sarna religion also contributes through strong cultural identity and community cohesion.

Urban students benefit from better educational facilities, exposure, and psychological resources. Rural students face challenges like limited access to education and infrastructure. These findings are consistent with studies showing that spirituality enhances emotional stability and reduces psychological distress among tribal students.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that while average resilience is the norm for the majority, urban residency and Christian religious affiliation are associated with higher resilience peaks, whereas rural residency and Sarna affiliation correlate with higher frequencies of low resilience.

Limitations

- The study is constrained by a relatively small sample size.
- The research is geographically restricted to the Jharkhand region.

Suggestions for Future Research

- Future research could involve comparative studies across different states to identify broader regional trends.
- Investigators should conduct gender-based studies to explore how resilience levels vary between different groups.

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