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Impact of Online and Offline Study Resources on Mental Health Stress and Adjustment of Secondary School Students in India: Critical narrative review

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Abstract

The growing availability of digital educational materials has changed how Indian secondary school students study, seek assistance, and organise academic work. However, debates about online and offline resources frequently combine educational technology, recreational screen use, pandemic restrictions, and examination pressure into a single explanation of adolescent distress. This critical narrative review examines these distinctions and considers their implications for mental health, academic stress, and adjustment. Targeted web searches conducted on 5 November 2026 identified Indian adolescent studies, official educational reports, policy documents, and selected international methodological and educational literature. Evidence was organised thematically rather than statistically pooled. The reviewed literature establishes the relevance of academic pressure, unequal digital access, disrupted routines, sleep difficulties, and social relationships. It provides less direct evidence that either online or offline resources independently cause better psychological outcomes. Digital resources may support flexibility, comprehension, and help seeking, but poorly coordinated use can increase workload, distraction, and exclusion. Printed materials and face to face academic support may facilitate routine and belonging, although conventional educational environments can also generate competition, humiliation, and fatigue. Adjustment requires particular attention because it is often inferred from attendance or satisfaction rather than measured comprehensively. The review proposes an explanatory framework linking resource access and design with perceived control, cognitive demands, sleep, and social support.

An equitable, teacher mediated combination of resources is a defensible educational approach, but its psychological advantages require stronger comparative evaluation. Recommendations address workload coordination, accessible materials, student participation, counselling, and prospective Indian research.

1 Introduction

Study resources are part of the psychological environment of schooling. A textbook, recorded explanation, practice worksheet, teacher consultation, or online discussion can influence whether a student experiences an academic task as manageable. Resources can clarify unfamiliar ideas and provide reassurance; they can also communicate additional demands, expose inequalities, or extend study into time needed for rest. Understanding their implications therefore requires attention to how they are selected, used, and supported. The relevant question is how particular arrangements affect students in particular circumstances, rather than whether one medium is universally desirable. This question is especially relevant to Indian secondary education, where school learning may coexist with tuition, competitive examination preparation, household responsibilities, and substantial differences in access to educational support. Students encounter different combinations of textbooks, commercial guides, teacher notes, digital platforms, and messaging groups. An apparently identical online assignment may be straightforward for a learner with a personal device and difficult for another who borrows a parent's telephone. Similarly, a printed homework task may be useful in a supportive home but difficult where reading assistance or a quiet study space is unavailable.

Indian evidence confirms that academic and social conditions deserve sustained attention. Parikh et al. (2019) identified academic expectations, relationships, family influences, and safety concerns within adolescents' accounts of stress. These findings locate educational distress within interacting environments. They do not identify study medium as its sole origin. Consequently, attributing a student's anxiety to online learning without examining examination demands, home conditions, and previous difficulties risks mistaking one visible component of schooling for the explanation of the whole experience.

The pandemic made these interpretive problems more pronounced. Emergency remote education occurred alongside restricted movement, interrupted social contact, health concerns, and uncertainty. Chaturvedi et al. (2021) examined changes in educational activities, routines, social life, and mental health in a mixed age Delhi NCR sample. Such research is valuable for understanding disruption, but it cannot establish what ordinary, deliberately designed digital learning would do under stable school conditions. Pandemic experiences remain relevant evidence when their circumstances and limitations are retained.

This review addresses three questions. What psychological opportunities and risks are associated with online and offline study resources? Which Indian contextual factors may alter these relationships? What educational practices and research designs are justified by the available evidence? Its contribution is an integrated interpretation of mental health, stress, and adjustment, with explicit separation of direct findings, plausible mechanisms, and recommendations. Throughout, the word impact in the topic denotes a question for investigation; it does not imply that causal effects have already been established.

2 Conceptual Scope

2.1 Online and offline study resources

Online resources include internet delivered explanations, live lessons, digital textbooks, practice systems, educational videos, and academic communication. Offline resources include printed texts, handwritten notes, worksheets, libraries, laboratory materials, and academic support that does not require internet access. These categories overlap. A downloaded lesson is digital but can be used offline; a printed textbook may direct learners to an online explanation. Face to face teaching is a mode of interaction rather than simply a resource. This review considers it where it determines how resources are interpreted or supported.

Resource medium must also be separated from educational purpose. Searching for a syllabus explanation differs from recreational browsing, although both may occur on the same device. Duration alone cannot reveal the learner's experience. A short, confusing task can be stressful, while a longer purposeful activity may be satisfying. Meaningful comparison therefore requires information about content quality, task demands, accessibility, feedback, time of use, and voluntary

or compulsory participation. Without these distinctions, total screen time becomes an imprecise proxy for several different exposures.

2.2 Mental health stress and adjustment

Mental health is considered here through emotional wellbeing, distress, anxiety or depressive symptoms, and everyday functioning. Academic stress refers to perceived difficulty in meeting educational demands with available time, skills, and support. Adjustment concerns the student's ongoing adaptation to academic routines, relationships, emotional challenges, and the school environment. These constructs overlap but are not interchangeable. A student may maintain attendance and achievement while experiencing substantial anxiety; another may report low distress but remain socially disconnected or academically disengaged.

The distinction has methodological consequences. A satisfaction questionnaire cannot establish a clinical disorder, and a symptom screening score is not equivalent to a diagnostic assessment. Likewise, examination performance alone does not measure school adjustment. Studies should specify which outcome they assess and avoid turning general discomfort into a psychiatric label. This review treats wellbeing, distress, and adjustment as related outcomes requiring separate interpretation, rather than combining them into one undifferentiated measure of student mental health.

3 Review Method

3.1 Design and source identification

This paper uses a critical narrative review design. It combines selected empirical evidence with contextual and conceptual analysis to address an interdisciplinary question. Reporting priorities were informed by SANRA, which emphasises a clear rationale, stated aims, description of searching, appropriate referencing, and scientific reasoning (Baethge et al., 2019). No formal SANRA score was calculated. The paper is not a registered systematic review, and no claim of exhaustive retrieval, independent duplicate screening, or PRISMA compliance is made.

Targeted web searches were undertaken on 5 November 2026 using combinations of India, adolescents, secondary school students, online learning, academic stress, mental health, adjustment, internet use, sleep, and offline or printed resources. Searches also targeted official NCERT, Ministry

of Education, ASER Centre, and UNESCO publications. Scholarly records were checked through PubMed, PubMed Central, publisher pages, or DOI records where available. The retrieved evidence spans pre pandemic and pandemic research together with subsequent contextual publications; the search was not restricted by a predetermined publication year window.

3.2 Relevance and interpretation

Priority was given to studies involving Indian school age adolescents, identifiable methods, and outcomes relevant to educational stress or psychological functioning. Official reports supplied information on school wellbeing, digital access, and educational policy. Selected international literature was included when it clarified review quality or reading medium. Studies of mixed educational ages were used cautiously and explicitly identified. Internet use research was treated as indirect evidence when it did not isolate educational activity. Commentary was not treated as equivalent to empirical comparison.

The synthesis grouped material into access and inequality, resource benefits, workload and cognitive demands, sleep and routine, social relationships, adjustment, and educational implications. Study design, sample coverage, measurement, and alternative explanations guided the weight assigned to findings. No pooled effect sizes, national prevalence estimates, or formal certainty ratings were calculated. Search yield and exclusion counts are not supplied because a complete auditable screening database was not maintained. This limits reproducibility and leaves the review vulnerable to selection and language biases, which should be considered when interpreting its conclusions.

4 Indian Educational Context

4.1 Access is more than household connectivity

ASER 2023 Beyond Basics provides an important account of digital access and capabilities among rural youth aged 14 to 18. Its findings show that household smartphone availability, individual ownership, and ability to undertake digital tasks are distinct characteristics (ASER Centre, 2024). The survey covered selected districts and should not be interpreted as a census of Indian adolescents. Its educational value lies in making access concrete: a device in the household does not automatically provide a student with independent, timely, or educationally useful access.

For this review, that distinction suggests a psychological pathway that requires direct testing. If assignments depend on a shared device, the learner may experience uncertainty about when work can begin or be submitted. Connectivity interruptions may be interpreted by teachers as disengagement unless schools explicitly accommodate them. These situations can reduce perceived control without indicating low motivation. Resource evaluation should therefore ask whether students can reliably complete a task under their actual conditions, rather than assuming that nominal internet availability makes participation equitable.

4.2 Academic pressure and educational organisation

The NCERT school mental health survey offers broad contextual evidence on student wellbeing and academic concerns. Its findings include anxiety associated with studies, examinations, and results, together with difficulties encountered in online learning (National Council of Educational Research and Training [NCERT], 2022). The survey describes reported experiences rather than diagnosing disorders or experimentally comparing resources. Nevertheless, it supports the relevance of examining resource decisions within the wider organisation of academic expectations, teacher support, and school life.

An educational resource can become stressful through institutional rules rather than its technical features. For example, a school may circulate several revision packages without explaining which are essential. A family may interpret every additional resource as compulsory because examinations carry high perceived stakes. The resulting burden concerns the organisation of study. Replacing a video with a printed booklet will not necessarily resolve it. Conversely, a carefully selected resource may reduce uncertainty when teachers identify its purpose and explain what students can reasonably leave aside.

5 Synthesis of the Evidence

5.1 Academic stress precedes the online learning debate

The strongest interpretation of Indian adolescent research is that educational pressure must be considered before attributing psychological difficulties to a medium. In a two wave study of 282 adolescents aged 13 to 18, Trevethan et al. (2022) examined academic stress and anxiety over five months. Academic stress predicted changes in generalised anxiety and panic symptoms, with

physiological hyperarousal implicated in the relationship. The sample was predominantly female, limiting broad generalisation. This evidence strengthens temporal interpretation but does not compare online with offline resources.

The implication is that resource provision should be evaluated against existing demands. Adding another explanation or test series may help a student who lacks clarification, but may overwhelm one who already feels unable to complete assigned work. The same resource can therefore have different implications depending on the problem it is intended to solve. Educational planning should begin with an assessment of unmet learning needs and current workload. Counting resources distributed is a weak indicator of whether students have gained usable academic support.

5.2 What pandemic studies can establish

Chaturvedi et al. (2021) surveyed 1,182 individuals across age groups in Delhi NCR and considered education, routines, social relationships, and psychological experiences during the pandemic. Because the sample included different educational ages and relied on survey responses, it should not be treated as a secondary school trial. Its relevance lies in showing that changes in study practices occurred together with changes in everyday life. Resource experiences cannot be separated analytically from these co occurring conditions without stronger research designs.

Mahapatra and Sharma (2021) discussed the psychosocial implications of educational disruption for Indian children and adolescents. Their paper provides contextual interpretation rather than a controlled estimate of online learning effects. Taken together, pandemic survey and commentary literature identifies concerns worth investigating, but it does not justify the assertion that digital study independently caused adolescent distress. Nor does reopening school prove that printed resources restored mental health. Several components of daily life changed simultaneously, including social contact, supervision, mobility, and examination expectations.

5.3 Potential benefits of online study resources

Digital resources can make explanations available when a teacher is not immediately accessible. A learner may pause a demonstration, replay a difficult section, or consult a different representation of the same concept. These features plausibly support understanding and perceived competence. Their psychological value depends on whether students can locate suitable material and use it

without excessive searching. These are proposed mechanisms, rather than demonstrated mental health effects in Indian secondary students. The distinction matters because improved availability does not necessarily mean improved learning or wellbeing.

Online communication may also lower the practical cost of asking for help. A student who hesitates to speak in a crowded classroom may submit a question privately or return to a recorded explanation. For some learners, accessible audio, captions, or adjustable presentation may support participation. However, such benefits depend on actual design and accessibility. A platform is not inclusive simply because it is digital. Schools should test whether students with different languages, reading abilities, and access requirements can complete the intended activity.

These possibilities support selective provision rather than unlimited expansion. A teacher might recommend one curriculum aligned explanation followed by a short practice task and an opportunity for feedback. This creates a bounded learning sequence. By contrast, an unfiltered list of links transfers the work of judging quality and relevance to the student. The difference is pedagogical guidance. A useful digital resource should help the learner make progress with a manageable demand on attention, time, data, and independent decision making.

5.4 Digital overload and uncertainty

Online educational environments can make it difficult to decide when preparation is sufficient. Students may encounter repeated suggestions for additional lectures, quizzes, and revision materials. The plausible risk is a continuing sense of incompleteness: finishing one task exposes another. This review does not infer the prevalence of that experience from the available evidence. It identifies a mechanism that Indian research could examine through diaries and interviews, particularly where commercial preparation materials are used alongside ordinary school assignments.

Workload can also become fragmented across platforms and teachers. Instructions in separate groups, changing deadlines, and different submission procedures impose organisational demands before learning begins. For students with limited access, downloading and uploading may consume disproportionate effort. A school level assignment calendar and clear identification of required work are therefore reasonable interventions. Their value should be evaluated through student reports and

completion patterns, rather than assumed from administrative convenience. Coordination may matter as much as reducing the number of online minutes.

Public rankings and continuously visible performance indicators create another question for evaluation. Feedback may guide improvement, but it can also encourage repeated comparison when students interpret every score as evidence of personal worth. The same concern applies to classroom marks displayed publicly. The risk arises from evaluative practice across media. Resource design should emphasise actionable feedback, opportunities to correct errors, and private discussion of difficulties. Psychological protection requires attention to how performance information is communicated, not merely where it appears.

5.5 Sleep routines and screen use

Moitra and Madan (2022) examined screen use, activity, eating, sleep, and depressive symptoms in 1,298 Indian adolescents during pandemic restrictions. Their findings connect screen related behaviours with aspects of health and routine. Because the study was cross sectional and conducted in an exceptional context, it does not establish a causal pathway from educational screen exposure to depression. It does, however, support examining timing and daily routines alongside study practices instead of treating psychological outcomes as detached from sleep and physical activity.

Venugopal et al. (2024) investigated internet addiction scores and sleep quality among 350 school students in Puducherry. This is relevant to the broader behavioural environment in which digital study occurs, but problematic internet use is not equivalent to purposeful educational use. A student who attends an online lesson should not be labelled addicted on that basis. The distinction also prevents broad internet findings from being misrepresented as direct evidence against digital textbooks, teacher selected videos, or short online academic consultations.

The practical inference is to examine the whole study day. Late assignments, extended tuition, recreational use, household duties, and anxiety may all contribute to insufficient rest. Schools can protect predictable periods without compulsory messaging and avoid deadlines that encourage late night completion. Comparable attention should be given to lengthy offline homework and travel to coaching. A resource strategy is psychologically incomplete if it improves access while making the

student's daily schedule less sustainable. Exact universal thresholds cannot be derived from the evidence reviewed here.

5.6 Opportunities and limitations of offline resources

Printed resources offer a stable point of reference that does not depend on connectivity, battery life, or platform access. Students can annotate a page, return to a diagram, and practise writing without navigating between applications. These features may support an orderly routine. However, their psychological effects should remain hypotheses unless measured. A printed book can still be difficult, culturally unfamiliar, or unavailable at home. Material format cannot compensate for unclear explanation, inappropriate reading level, or the absence of assistance.

International reading research helps clarify one limited comparison. Delgado et al. (2018) reported an overall paper advantage for comprehension in their meta analysis of comparable linear reading tasks, with differences related to task conditions. This finding concerns reading performance, not Indian adolescent mental health. It cannot establish that printed study prevents anxiety or that digital learning is generally inferior. Its appropriate application is to consider whether sustained reading tasks benefit from a print option and to test that choice in the relevant educational setting.

Offline support can also provide immediate interpersonal cues. A teacher may notice confusion, a peer can explain a missed step, and a library can offer a recognised place for study. These are plausible sources of competence and belonging. Yet face to face settings can include bullying, harsh correction, or fear of asking questions. The protective element is the quality of the relationship and the opportunity for participation. An offline environment should therefore be assessed with the same critical attention applied to an online platform.

5.7 Adjustment across educational settings

Adjustment is the least straightforward outcome in this topic because it involves more than coping with academic content. Students must organise time, participate in relationships, manage emotions, and understand institutional expectations. Moving between online and offline tasks may require different habits. A student can understand a lesson yet struggle to submit work, ask for clarification, or reconnect with peers. Such difficulties should be examined as specific adaptation problems rather than interpreted immediately as poor motivation or a general failure to adjust.

Parikh et al. (2019) showed that adolescents' stress and coping were embedded in home, school, peer, and neighbourhood environments. Their qualitative evidence supports listening to students' own descriptions of difficulty and available support. It does not provide a standardised comparison of adjustment by study medium. The review therefore identifies an evidence gap: future research should measure academic, emotional, and social adjustment separately and examine whether resource arrangements support one domain while creating difficulties in another.

5.8 Comparative interpretation of the evidence

The evidence base supports several conclusions at different levels of confidence. There is a clear basis for taking academic stress seriously, but a much weaker basis for assigning its effects to a study medium. There is contextual evidence of unequal access, but access surveys do not measure the mental health consequences of every inequality. There are plausible benefits from flexible explanation and personal pacing, but these possibilities require outcome evaluation. Keeping these levels separate prevents a persuasive educational argument from being mistaken for an established empirical result.

The selected sources can be compared by their actual contribution to the review.

Source	Evidence type	Contribution	Interpretive boundary
Parikh et al. 2019	Qualitative adolescent study	Contexts of stress and coping	Does not compare resource media
Chaturvedi et al. 2021	Mixed age pandemic survey	Interacting educational and routine disruptions	Not a secondary school causal study
Trevethan et al. 2022	Two wave adolescent study	Temporal academic stress and anxiety relationship	Does not isolate online exposure
Moitra and Madan 2022	Cross sectional adolescent study	Screen behaviour and health routines	Pandemic context and reverse causality
ASER Centre 2024	Rural youth survey report	Access and capability context	Not a mental health assessment
NCERT 2022	School student survey	Reported wellbeing and academic concerns	Not clinical diagnosis or randomised comparison

The absence of a convincing medium comparison does not mean that resource decisions are psychologically irrelevant. It means that the intervention must be described with sufficient precision. If a school replaces an extended lecture with a short explanation and guided practice, any improvement may arise from clearer instruction or reduced workload. If it simultaneously supplies devices and counselling, those changes also matter. A valid interpretation should identify these components and avoid crediting the delivery medium with the effects of a broader improvement in educational support.

6 Integrated Explanatory Framework

The proposed framework links resource arrangements to psychological outcomes through five interacting processes: perceived control, cognitive effort, competence, routine, and social support. These are analytical propositions derived from the synthesis, not a validated predictive model. Access and educational design shape the student's immediate task experience; that experience may influence stress and adjustment over time. Family conditions, prior mental health, teacher relationships, and examination demands may alter each relationship. Reverse pathways are also plausible because distressed students may change their study practices or seek different resources.

Perceived control concerns whether students can begin, complete, and seek help with a task. Cognitive effort concerns the demands imposed by the content and by managing its delivery. Competence concerns whether the resource produces understandable progress. Routine concerns the fit between study, sleep, movement, and other responsibilities. Social support concerns access to respectful assistance and a sense of connection. A resource can improve one process while weakening another; flexibility may increase autonomy but also require organisational skills that the learner has not yet developed.

An illustrative comparison makes the framework concrete. A recorded science explanation used before classroom discussion may support preparation and clarification. The same recording assigned in addition to several compulsory lectures and extensive homework may simply extend the working day. Similarly, a printed revision booklet can reduce searching when its scope is clear, or increase worry when presented as another unbounded obligation. These examples are hypothetical. They

show why the unit of analysis should be the resource within its educational arrangement, rather than the medium considered in isolation.

7 Equity and Individual Differences

Differences in access should be examined together with differences in permission, time, and support. A learner may have a device but limited control over when it is available. Another may have reliable connectivity but struggle with the language of instruction. A student with a disability may benefit from an accessible digital format while finding scanned pages unusable. These possibilities caution against treating rural location, gender, school sector, or household income as complete explanations. Research should measure the specific constraints through which these characteristics may become relevant.

Student preferences also require careful interpretation. Preferring an online explanation may indicate convenience, understandable language, or anxiety about classroom participation. Preferring printed materials may reflect concentration, examination familiarity, or unreliable connectivity. Preference is useful information but does not establish comparative effectiveness. Schools should offer informed choices where feasible and ask students why a resource works for them. Research can then test whether those reported reasons predict sustained learning, reduced stress, or better adjustment rather than assuming that satisfaction and benefit are identical.

8 Educational and Policy Implications

8.1 Purposeful coordination of resources

Schools should specify the role of each resource in a manageable learning sequence. A core explanation, practice activity, and feedback opportunity are easier to interpret than a large collection of loosely connected materials. Teachers across subjects should coordinate deadlines and estimate the total demands placed on students. Digital assignments should have feasible alternatives where access is uncertain. These recommendations arise from the proposed framework and require evaluation; they are not presented as interventions with established effect sizes for Indian student mental health. The National Education Policy 2020 provides a relevant policy setting for considering technology, equity, and educational development (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020a). PRAGYATA offers guidance on planning digital education and attending

to the conditions of participation (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020b). These documents support deliberate educational design, but policy statements are not empirical evidence of psychological effectiveness. Schools should judge implementation through student experience and outcomes, including whether additional provision actually reduces barriers or inadvertently expands compulsory work.

8.2 Supporting wellbeing and help seeking

Teachers need practical ways to recognise persistent difficulty without becoming substitute clinicians. Repeated withdrawal, deteriorating participation, or sustained distress should prompt a supportive conversation and appropriate referral according to school arrangements. Counselling should be accessible through more than one route because students differ in willingness and ability to seek help publicly. Resource policies should also protect privacy: wellbeing information should not become another classroom ranking or be shared casually in academic groups. Support depends on trust as well as availability.

Families can contribute by discussing workable routines and distinguishing effort from continuous visible activity. Requiring a child to remain occupied with educational content throughout the day may conceal fatigue or ineffective study. Schools should communicate which tasks are essential and when additional practice is optional. Students should participate in these decisions through confidential feedback and representative discussion. Their accounts can reveal practical burdens, such as device sharing or conflicting deadlines, that remain invisible in platform usage statistics and teacher completion records.

8.3 Evaluating blended provision

A combination of online and offline resources is defensible when each component has a clear purpose and students can participate equitably. It is not automatically protective. Blended provision can become duplicative if online assignments are added without reconsidering existing homework. UNESCO's technology report similarly places educational purpose, evidence, and human relationships at the centre of technology decisions (UNESCO, 2023). For Indian schools, the operational question is whether the chosen combination improves access and understanding while preserving manageable demands and meaningful contact.

Evaluation should therefore include learning, wellbeing, participation, and cost to families. Schools can compare student experiences before and after a coordinated resource change, document implementation difficulties, and revise arrangements. Simple feedback should ask about clarity, completion time, access, and opportunities for help. It should avoid presenting ordinary frustration as illness. Where formal psychological screening is used, qualified oversight and a response pathway are necessary. Collecting sensitive scores without offering support does not constitute an adequate wellbeing programme.

9 Research Priorities

Stronger Indian research should compare clearly defined resource arrangements over time. Longitudinal studies can assess baseline distress, examination stage, access, family support, and subsequent change. Where feasible, cluster trials could compare coordinated blended provision with usual practice while maintaining equivalent curriculum and reasonable workload. The intervention should be described sufficiently for replication: platform, content, frequency, feedback, offline alternatives, and teacher preparation all matter. A label such as online learning is too broad to identify what produced an observed difference.

Measurement should distinguish educational use from recreation, and scheduled participation from uncontrolled browsing. Short study diaries may capture timing, purpose, interruptions, and perceived difficulty more accurately than a single estimate of daily screen hours. Mental health measures should have appropriate age and language evidence; screening scores should remain distinct from diagnosis. Adjustment measures should cover academic participation, emotional adaptation, and relationships. Analyses should report effect sizes, uncertainty, missing data, and attrition rather than relying solely on statistical significance.

Qualitative research should include students whose participation is difficult to capture online, including those with intermittent connectivity or school disengagement. Interviews can explain why apparently similar resources produce different experiences and how families negotiate their use. Multi site studies should represent varied languages, school sectors, and local circumstances without assuming that one city stands for India. Research with minors requires institutional ethical review,

meaningful assent, appropriate parental permission, confidentiality, and a plan for responding to distress. These are requirements for future empirical work, not procedures claimed for this review.

9.1 Avoiding misleading comparisons

Future comparisons should address selection into resource use. Students who use several online platforms may already face greater examination demands, while those who rely on printed materials may differ in access or teacher support. A simple difference in anxiety between these groups cannot identify the effect of the resource. Matching or statistical adjustment can reduce measured differences, but cannot remove every unobserved influence. Researchers should state this boundary clearly and avoid causal language when the design only supports an association.

Timing also requires attention. Stress measured immediately before an examination may differ from stress measured during ordinary teaching, regardless of medium. Studies should record assessment schedules and collect repeated observations across comparable periods. Baseline measurement is especially valuable because later distress may reflect earlier difficulties. Researchers should consider whether resource changes precede psychological change, whether students adopt more resources in response to anxiety, or whether both respond to increasing academic demands. These possibilities lead to different educational interpretations.

Finally, successful adjustment should not be defined as silent compliance with excessive demands. Students may complete every task while sacrificing sleep, avoiding help seeking, or abandoning activities that sustain relationships. Conversely, questioning an unrealistic deadline may reflect appropriate self advocacy. A balanced outcome framework should assess functioning together with wellbeing and the conditions of participation. Including student accounts alongside standardised measures would help identify arrangements that appear efficient administratively but remain difficult to sustain from the learner's perspective.

10. Limitations

This review is selective and interpretive. Targeted web retrieval cannot guarantee comprehensive coverage, and English accessible literature may underrepresent regional scholarship. Direct comparisons of online and offline resources with psychological outcomes were limited within the material located. Several sources concern pandemic disruption, general internet behaviour, or mixed

age populations. Their relevance is qualified accordingly. No formal study level risk of bias instrument or independent assessment was applied. The proposed mechanisms and recommendations should therefore guide inquiry and cautious educational development rather than be treated as proven causal conclusions.

11 Conclusion

Online and offline study resources influence the conditions under which Indian secondary students encounter academic demands, but the evidence does not support a universal psychological ranking of media. Academic pressure, access, task design, routine, and supportive relationships provide a more useful basis for interpretation. Digital resources can widen opportunities while creating new demands; printed and face to face provision can support continuity while retaining familiar sources of educational stress. Adjustment deserves explicit assessment alongside symptoms and achievement. The most defensible approach is purposeful, equitable coordination of resources, accompanied by student feedback and stronger comparative research that tests both educational and psychological outcomes.

Research Integrity and Submission Notes

This manuscript is an original AI assisted synthesis and contains no newly collected participant data. It does not report a systematic review or meta analysis. No external similarity check was performed; a zero similarity or plagiarism score is not claimed. Before submission, the submitting author should verify the manuscript and reference details, apply the target journal's format, and disclose AI assistance as required. Author names, affiliations, funding, conflicts of interest, and contribution statements must be completed from actual information. Ethics approval and consent are not claimed for this literature based manuscript.

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