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Exploring Time Poverty in Modern Education: Insights from Dindigul City, Tamil Nadu

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***Abstract*— In the modern educational system, in which academic expectations are continue to rise over, time poverty has become an increasingly serious issue for students. Student's mental, physical health and social well-being might be affected by inadequate free time for play, entertainment, relaxation and personal activities. This study examines the degree of time poverty among Dindigul City school students and identifies what factors influencing it. This study utilizing an equal mix from three type of school - State Government, Aided and Private School. A total of 72 students from Classes 9 to 12 were selected using equal representation. The Time Poverty Gap (TPG) was calculated by measuring the shortfall of free time. The statistical significance between school type and TPG was determined by the t-test.**

The findings revealed that time poverty differs significantly across the type of Schools. Due to heavy homework, extended school working hours, increasing coaching demands, private school students experienced high Time Poverty. In contrast, students from State Government and Aided schools reported relatively lower time poverty. A strong negative correlation was observed between free time and TPG which means time poverty increase as a result of minimised the available free time and vice versa. The result highlights the need for educational policies that supports higher priority to balanced schedules, student well-being, adequate leisure and healthy development.

***Keywords*—Time poverty, (TPG) Time Poverty Gap, Social wellbeing, Time Poor, Time Rich**

I. Introduction

In recent years, the lifestyle of school students has undergone a major transformation due to the increasing demands of the modern education system. Academic competition, long school hours, homework, coaching classes and co-curricular expectations have gradually reduced the amount of free time available for children. While education plays a key role in shaping knowledge and skills, the lack of personal time has begun to affect the overall well-being of students. This shortage of time to rest, relax, engage in hobbies or interact with family and friends is now referred to as time poverty.

For school-aged children, free time is not a luxury but an essential requirement for healthy physical, emotional and social development.

Adequate leisure allows students to recover from daily stress, build creativity, strengthen social relationships and maintain academic motivation. When free time becomes limited, students may experience fatigue, anxiety, loss of interest in learning and imbalance in daily life. Therefore, analysing time poverty among students is highly relevant in the present educational context.

Not every students suffers from Time Poverty in a similar way. Government schools, aided schools and private schools have different academic standards, academic expectations, teaching practices and learning environments. The span of time students are allowed to focusing on their academic responsibilities might be affected by these variations. To assess whether time poverty is affecting student groups equally or unequally by Understanding such differences In Dindigul City, students from a various types of school engage in different academic environments ranging from flexible learning schedules to extremely competitive culture of learning. Exploring how these educational settings exacerbate time poverty can yield meaningful insights for schools, parents and policymakers. The current research aims to determine the level of time poverty among school students in Dindigul City and to analyse the components associated with it, particularly the type of school and the volume of free time offered to students.

II. Objectives Of The Study

1. To evaluate the Time Poverty Gap across students assigned with different types of schools
2. To analyse the relationship between the availability of free time and the Time Poverty Gap between students.
3. To recognise the academic and non-academic components which contributing to time poverty.

III. Hypotheses Of The Study

H_0: There is no statistical significance between Time Poverty Gap and school type among school students in Dindigul City.

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H_1: There is a statistical significance between school type and the Time Poverty Gap among school students in Dindigul City.

IV. Methodology

A. Research Design

The present study followed a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the level of time poverty among school students and to explore the factors associated with it. The study focused on identifying differences in the Time Poverty Gap (TPG) across school types and the relationship between free time and time poverty.

B. Study Area and Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study was carried out in Dindigul City of Tamil Nadu.

The target population consisted of students studying from Class 9 to Class 12 across different school categories in the city. A total of 72 students were selected for the study. To ensure equal representation, the sample was divided evenly across three school types.

As per Figure 1, the flow chart there are Three types of Schools including Central Government School, State Government School, Private Schools are the current systems followed in India. Among these 3 types of School we have chosen only state government, government aided and private schools in Dindigul city and the sample was selected from the above cited schools with the sample size is 72.

From each school category, 24 students were chosen and the total sample size is 72 using a random sampling technique, ensuring that the respondents were familiar with their daily routines and academic schedules.

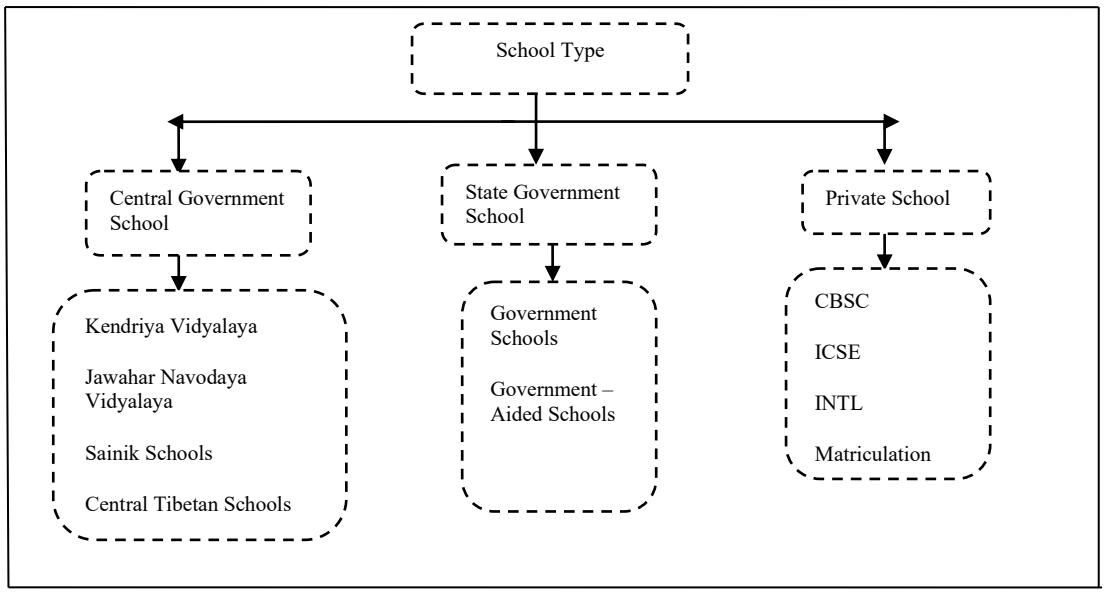

Figure 1 Classification of the school system in India

C. Data Collection

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included items related to: Daily academic schedule, Time spent on homework and tuition, Participation in co-curricular activities, Free time available per day, Time Poverty Gap components. The data collection ensured confidentiality and voluntary participation of students.

D. Measurement of Time Poverty

The Time Poverty Gap (TPG) was calculated based on the recommended time threshold for free time per day. Students with free time below the threshold were considered time-poor, and the TPG measured the extent of shortfall in free time.

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E. Tools for Analysis

The collected data was analysed using statistical techniques:

(i) Cross Tabulation between School type and the Time Poverty Gap

(ii) t-test were adopted to test the significance between the School Type and the Time Poverty Gap among the school students.

V. Review Of Literature

Time poverty was initially defined in the context of economics of labour, where scholars concentrated on the uneven distribution of time between paid work, unpaid work and personal care. Vickery (1977) proposed the idea that individuals were "income rich but time poor," revealed that scarcity of time could impact well-being even when basic economic needs are satisfied. Later, Williams (1999) expanded this concept by identifying time as a critical component of quality of life, emphasising that personal time is necessary for social and emotional balance.

Due to dual burden of paid and unpaid work, women's time poverty has been wodely discussed. Bittman and Wajcman (2000) discovered that time shortages have an important impact on mental health and stress especially among working women who had household and care giving responsibility. Craig (2006) further discussed that lack of free time could have detrimental impact on personal growth, productivity and life satisfaction.

Analysis on Time Poverty and education indicates that students free time was greatly affected by intensity of course work. Mahoney, Harris and Eccles (2006) reported that school children participate in scheduled activities as well as lot of homework had higher level of fatigue and reduced opportunities for creative play. Furlong (2013) highlighted that women's free time had dropped significantly in ma educational system as outcome of the shift from holistic learning to examination centred learning.

Students well-being was additionally discovered strongly predicted by their educational settings. Roeser and Peck (2009) emphasised that highly competitive school environmental settings put students under pressure and limit their personal time.

Overall, the review indicates that time poverty is not limited to working adults but is increasingly seen among school-going children due to academic pressure and structured schedules. The literature also suggests that school type, academic expectations and free time availability are major determinants of time poverty among students.

VI. Analysis And Discussion

Table I shows the results of the study on time poverty among school students in Dindigul City is shaped largely by institutional factors. Private schools adopt academically intensive learning models, which demand high levels of time commitment from students. In contrast, State Government and Aided schools follow moderately paced learning structures, allowing relatively better time balance for students.

Table – I
Cross Tabulation between School type and the Time Poverty Gap

School type	TPG (Time Poverty Gap)					Total
	-1.00 (100%)	-.67 (67%)	-.33 (33%)	.00 (0% Non time poor)	**.33 (Time rich)**	
State Govt School	4	2	6	6	6	24
Aided School	2	3	9	6	4	24
Private School	6	9	6	3	0	24
Total	12	14	21	15	10	72

Source: Computed from Primary data

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It presents a cross-tabulation of school type and time poverty range (TPG) among students. The overall sample consists of 72 students, equally divided between state, aided and private schools (24 students from each category). The time poverty gap is classified into five levels, ranging from severe time poverty to time rich status.

The results show that 12 students (100 percent) fall into the most severe category of time poverty. Among them, 6 students attend private schools, followed by 4 students attend public schools and 2 students from subsidised (aided) schools. This implies that immense number of students, particularly in private schools, struggle with extreme lack of free time, probably as a consequence of higher academic work loads and performance centred schedules.

A total of 14 students come under another category of time poverty (level of 67percent). 9 of these students enrolled in private schools, 3 from subsidized schools and 2 from public schools, showing that moderate to severe poverty is furthermore prevalent among students attend private school.

The third category, 21 students fall into this (33 percent of time poverty) out of which 9 attending subsidized schools, 6 under public schools and 6 under private schools. According to the above distribution indicates that aided schools represent a comparatively higher proportion of students with moderate time constraints.

There are actually 15 students within the fourth category represents non-time-poor. In which 3 students from private schools and 6 students each comes from government and aided schools.

With regard to fulfilling their academic responsibilities these students appear to have enough time for rest and leisure.

The final category, consists of 10 students are time-rich. Among them, 6 students are attend government schools, 4 attend aided schools, and none from private schools. This clearly illustrates that students attending Government school students are tend to enjoy excess free time while private school students are least likely to be time-rich.

Overall, the cross-tabulation reveals a clear association between school type and time poverty. Students from private schools' experience higher levels of time poverty, while government school students are more represented in the non-time-poor and time-rich categories. Aided school students generally fall in between these two extremes. The findings suggest that differences in academic intensity and institutional expectations across school types play an important role in shaping students' time availability and leisure opportunities.

Table II presents the results of a one-sample t-test conducted to examine whether the type of school and the poverty time interval among students differ significantly from the null test value. The analysis is based on primary data with 71 degrees of freedom. For the type of school, the computed t-value for the category of school is 20,640, which incredibly large and shows an important deviation from the test value. The mean difference is 2.000 with a standard deviation value of 0.822. The significance value (two-sided) is 0.000, which is much lower than the conventional significance level of 5 percent.

TABLE II
t-test were adopted to test the significance between the School Type and the Time Poverty Gap among the school

One-Sample t-Test							
			Test Value =0				
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. D	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
School type	20.640	71	.000	2.000	.822	1.81	2.19
TPG	-6.889	71	.000	-.34722	.42767	-.4477	-.2467

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The 95percent confidence interval for the mean difference ranges from 1.81 to 2.19, and because this interval does not include zero, it confirms that the difference is statistically significant. This result suggests that the type of school has an important relationship in the studied context. In the case of the time poverty gap (TPG), the t value is -6.889, which indicates a significant negative deviation from zero. The mean difference is -0.34722, with a standard deviation of 0.42767. The significant value is again 0.000, confirming statistical significance at the 5 percent level. The 95 percent confidence interval is between -0.4477 and -0.2467, which also does not include zero. This clearly shows that the poverty time interval among students is significantly different from the test value and is negative in nature. In general, the results show that the type of school and the time interval of poverty are statistically significant, since their p values are less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference from the null test value is rejected for both variables. The results imply that the type of school and the time interval of poverty are important factors and present significant differences between the students considered in the stu

VII. Conclusion

The study looked at time poverty among school students in Dindigul City and emphasized how the way of modern academic demands influence the availability of free time. The findings revealed that time poverty is significantly affect by the type of school. Due to their more intense workloads, extended school hours and extracurricular activities, Students studying in Private schools are experienced higher Time Poverty Gaps. In contrast, Students attending State Government and Aided Schools experienced less time poverty.

Students Time Poverty was severely affected by the type of Schools. The availability of personal time is necessary for shaping the student's daily well-being and their productivity. When the free time reduces it will affect the physical, emotional and social balance of the students. Time management is an essential part in the educational systems for achieving holistic development.

VIII. Suggestions

Based upon the study of Exploring Time Poverty in Modern Education system conducted in Dindigul District following suggestion are provided.

1. School ensure the balanced academic schedules, minimises the special classes as much as possible and they did not affect the personal time and well-being.
2. Minimise of reduction of the assignments, excessive homework, tests pressure may help the students to maintain enthusiasm towards learning and ensure available leisure time by this will help to maximise their productive capacity.
3. Inclusion of minimum leisure period which is essential for increasing their creativity, and boost up the mental recovery. Parental awareness programme may introduce and make sure them to understand the importance of free time for taking rest. This will lead to minimised the extracurricular activities and additional tuition classes.
4. Educational policy makers should consider the space for personal growth, hobbies in the curriculum planning. This may reduce the fear, fatigue, stress and emotional burnout of the students.
5. Mentors may be appointed for each student or group of students to monitor fatigue, burnout and stress. This idea is part of Gurukula system. Providing personal care towards academic oriented activities will lead to helps the students' career.

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