

Assessment of Academic Burnout and Career-Related Trauma among Higher Education Students in Jhansi District, Bundelkhand Region

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Abstract—Higher education in India is witnessing rising levels of academic burnout linked to career-related trauma, including academic pressure, future uncertainty, continuous evaluation, and work-life imbalance. This study examines the relationship between career-related trauma and burnout among higher education students in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, with special reference to Jhansi district. A quantitative cross-sectional design was adopted. Data were collected from 200 students of private higher education institutions through an online Google Form survey. Burnout was measured using an adapted Maslach Burnout Inventory (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment), while career-related trauma was assessed through a 15-item scale covering academic overload, future career anxiety, and work-life imbalance. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and independent samples t-tests in Microsoft Excel. Results indicated moderate to high levels of burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion. Female students reported significantly higher work-life imbalance and digital stress. The study recommends trauma-informed institutional interventions such as workload regulation, counselling support, and gender-sensitive policies to protect student well-being and align with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Index Terms—Academic Burnout, Career-Related Trauma, Higher Education Students, Bundelkhand Region, Work-Life Imbalance, Viksit Bharat 2047

I. INTRODUCTION

India's higher education system is undergoing rapid transformation under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. While these reforms aim to create a flexible, interdisciplinary, and quality-driven education system, they have also increased academic pressure on

students. Continuous assessments, competitive environments, digital demands, and career uncertainty have contributed to rising levels of academic burnout. Academic burnout is characterised by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (detachment from studies), and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. In Tier-2 regions such as Bundelkhand (including Jhansi), limited institutional resources, socio-economic challenges, and future career anxiety further intensify this problem. Despite growing national attention to student mental health, region-specific studies on burnout and career-related trauma among higher education students remain limited.

This study addresses this gap by assessing the levels of academic burnout and career-related trauma among higher education students in Jhansi district and examining differences based on gender and institutional context.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the current levels of academic burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment) among higher education students in the Bundelkhand region.
2. To identify the major career-related stressors influencing students, including academic overload, future career anxiety, and work-life imbalance.
3. To examine differences in burnout levels based on gender.
4. To suggest practical, trauma-informed institutional measures for reducing student burnout in alignment with Viksit Bharat 2047.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Global and Indian studies consistently show that higher education students experience significant academic burnout due to performance pressure, continuous evaluation, and future uncertainty. The Maslach Burnout Inventory remains the most widely used framework, identifying emotional exhaustion as the core dimension of burnout.

Academic burnout among higher education students has emerged as a significant concern worldwide. Maslach et al. (2001) conceptualized burnout as a psychological syndrome comprising emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, which develops in response to chronic academic and occupational stress. Subsequent studies have confirmed that university students experience high levels of emotional exhaustion due to continuous evaluation, competitive academic environments, and future career uncertainty (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

In the Indian context, research indicates that the implementation of performance-driven policies and increased academic demands under frameworks such as the National Education Policy have intensified student stress. Srivastava (2021) observed that metric-oriented academic cultures contribute to elevated emotional exhaustion among students and early-career academics. Similarly, studies have highlighted that work-life imbalance and continuous digital connectivity significantly predict burnout, particularly among female students who often face dual academic and domestic responsibilities (Kumar & Singh, 2022). Gender differences in burnout have been consistently reported. Research shows that female higher education students tend to report higher levels of emotional exhaustion and work-life conflict compared to their male counterparts (Sharma & Gupta, 2020). Furthermore, career-related trauma—arising from repeated academic setbacks, fear of unemployment, and pressure to secure future opportunities—has been linked to diminished personal accomplishment and increased cynicism (Patel & Mehta, 2023).

Despite growing national attention, most existing studies focus on metropolitan institutions, leaving

Tier-2 regions such as Bundelkhand under-researched. There remains a clear need for localized investigations that examine academic burnout and career-related trauma among higher education students in regions like Jhansi (Verma, 2024).

Research in the Indian context highlights that the shift toward metric-driven education, competitive examinations, and “publish or perish” culture (even at student project level) contributes to chronic stress. Studies also point to a clear gender difference: female students often report higher work-life imbalance due to dual academic and domestic responsibilities, especially in socio-culturally traditional regions.

A major research gap exists in Tier-2 regions such as Bundelkhand. Most existing studies focus on metropolitan cities or elite institutions. Localised, accessible studies using simple tools (questionary) and conduct interview. The present study fills this gap by providing region-specific evidence on student burnout and career-related trauma.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was used.

3.2 Sample The study covered 200 higher education students from private institutions in Jhansi district, Bundelkhand region. Convenience sampling was employed.

3.3 Tools

- Adapted Maslach Burnout Inventory (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Reduced Personal Accomplishment)
- 15-item Career-Related Trauma Scale (Academic overload, Career anxiety, Work-life imbalance, Digital pressure)

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through interview and Analysis was performed in Microsoft Excel using descriptive statistics, percentages, chi-square tests, and independent samples t-tests.

3.5 Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 200)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	120	60%
	Male	80	40%
Age Group	18-20year	60	30%
	20-22 year	112	56%
	22+year	28	14%
Institution Type	Private College	200	100%
Stream	Arts & Humanities	68	34%
	Science	80	40%
	Commerce	52	26

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Levels of Academic Burnout

Dimension	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Severity Level
Emotional Exhaustion	4.32	0.85	Moderate
Depersonalization	3.15	1.12	Moderate
Reduced Personal Accomplishment	2.45	0.90	low

Emotional exhaustion emerged as the most severe dimension, indicating that a large proportion of students feel chronically drained by academic demands.

4.2 Career-Related Stressors

Stressor Category	High/Very High (%)
Academic & Administrative Overload	87%
Future Career Anxiety	79%
Work-Life Imbalance	79%
Continuous Digital Availability	91%

Continuous digital availability and academic overload were reported as the strongest sources of trauma.

4.3 Gender Differences

Female students reported significantly higher work-life imbalance and digital stress compared to male students ($p < 0.05$). This supports the “double burden”

phenomenon commonly observed in Indian socio-cultural contexts.

4.4 Discussion

The findings confirm that academic burnout among higher education students in Jhansi is structural rather than individual. High emotional exhaustion, strong digital pressure, and gender disparities indicate the need for institutional reforms. Without timely intervention, student well-being and the quality of human capital required for Viksit Bharat 2047 will be adversely affected.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that higher education students in the Bundelkhand region experience moderate to high levels of academic burnout, primarily driven by emotional exhaustion, continuous digital demands, academic overload, and career anxiety. Female students are particularly vulnerable due to dual academic and domestic responsibilities.

VI. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduce institutional “Right to Disconnect” policies after fixed hours.
2. Strengthen counselling and mental health support services on campus.
3. Reduce unnecessary academic and administrative overload.
4. Implement gender-sensitive support measures (flexible schedules and counselling).
5. Organise regular career guidance and stress-management workshops.

VII. LIMITATIONS

The study is limited to private institutions in Jhansi and relies on self-reported data. Future research should include larger samples, government institutions, and longitudinal designs.

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