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MENTAL WELL-BEING AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN MANIPUR

Priya Ningthemcha[1], Dr. Kapil Dhingra[2]
[1]*Research Scholar, Department of Teacher Training & Non- Formal Education (IASE), Jamia Millia Islamia, Jamia Nagar, Okhla, New Delhi 110025(Corresponding)*
[2]*Associate Professor, Department of Teacher Training & Non- Formal Education (IASE), Jamia Millia Islamia*

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ABSTRACT
Adolescence is a formative stage of life, marked by rapid psychological, emotional, and social development. Mental well-being (MWB) during this period is essential for fostering resilience, academic success, and healthy interpersonal relationships. This study aimed to assess the overall level of MWB among secondary school students and to explore potential differences based on gender across its six dimensions. A sample of 503 students from 21 government schools was selected using random sampling. Data were collected using the 54-item version of Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale, which measures six core dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests were applied for analysis. The findings indicated moderate to high levels of MWB, with no statistically significant differences between male and female students. Among the six dimensions, students scored highest in purpose in life and lowest in environmental mastery. These results highlight the importance of incorporating well-being promotion into school environments.

KEYWORDS: *Mental well-being, Adolescents*

INTRODUCTION
Mental well-being is a state of positive mental and emotional health, characterized by life satisfaction, resilience in the face of challenges, and healthy relationships. It indicates an individual's capacity to experience positive feelings, derive meaning from daily activities, and perform well in personal and social contexts (Gautam et al., 2024). In today's fast-paced, technology-driven society, maintaining mental well-being has become more difficult—especially for young people who are constantly exposed to academic pressure, digital distractions, and changing social expectations.

Adolescence, typically spanning ages 10 to 19, constitutes a pivotal developmental phase characterized by rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive transformations. During this period, individuals commence the formation of identity, values, and coping strategies that frequently persist into adulthood. Establishing a robust foundation of mental well-being during adolescence not only facilitates academic success and emotional resilience but also acts as a safeguard against future psychological distress and mental health disorders.

Findings from the National Mental Health Survey of India, 2015–16, (Gururaj et al., 2017) conducted by NIMHANS, emphasize the urgent need to address adolescent mental health. The survey indicated that about 7.3% of adolescents aged 13–17 suffer from diagnosable mental disorders, while many more experience emotional and behavioral issues that often go unnoticed (Murthy, 2017). Poor mental health at this stage can lead to long-term negative outcomes, including lower academic achievement, social withdrawal, substance abuse, and chronic mental health problems.

Given the increasing importance of mental well-being among adolescents, it is crucial for educators, health professionals, and policymakers to focus on its assessment and promotion, especially within the school environment where adolescents spend much of their time.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Mental well-being (MWB) is gaining recognition as a crucial aspect of adolescent development, affecting emotional regulation, academic involvement, and social interactions.

Shalini et al. (2021) carried out a cross-sectional study involving 576 adolescents in Raipur, discovering that 79.9% exhibited moderate levels of MWB. Their findings pointed to school type and parental education as key factors. In another study, Patel & Patel (2022) examined adolescents in Varanasi, finding that personality traits—especially emotional stability and conscientiousness—were important predictors of well-being across various areas. Similarly, Sharma et al. (2022) researched college students in Central India and identified "purpose in life" and "self-acceptance" as the most developed dimensions, reflecting emerging identity and self-awareness during youth.

Gender-based analyses of MWB have yielded mixed findings. Bhattacharya et al. (2021) reported that adolescent girls in Bengaluru were more likely to experience emotional distress

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and anxiety, while Shalini et al. (2021) found no significant gender-based differences in Raipur, suggesting contextual variability in gender effects.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the overall level of mental well-being (MWB) among adolescents
2. To investigate the differences in mental well-being between adolescent boys and girls.
3. To evaluate mental well-being across the six dimensions of Ryff' s model.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a quantitative, descriptive survey design to assess the mental well-being (MWB) of adolescents and examine differences across gender and dimensions of well-being.

Population

The study population consisted of adolescent students enrolled in secondary and higher secondary schools in the Imphal West district of Manipur**.**

Sample

A total of 503 students from 21 government secondary and senior secondary schools in Imphal West district of Manipur were randomly selected. Among them, 290 were girls and 213 were boys.

Tool

The data were gathered with Ryff's 54-item Psychological Well-Being Scale (1989), measuring six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance, rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From Table 1 below, it can be seen that the mental well-being scores of the 503 adolescent students ranged from 136 to 275, with a mean of 209.76 and a standard deviation of 24.53. This indicates a moderately high level of mental well-being among the majority of students, though the range shows variation in individual experiences.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Overall MWB

N	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean	Std. Deviation
503	136	275	209.76	24.53

Levels of Mental well-being among adolescents

From Table 2, MWB scores were classified into three categories based on ±1 standard deviation: Low (< 185.23)**,** Average (185.23–234.29)**,** and High (> 234.29). The majority of students (63.6%) fell within the moderate category, with 17.9% categorized as low and 18.5% as high. This distribution is visualized in Figure 1.

Table 2: Levels of Mental well-being among adolescents

MWB Level	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	< 185.23	90	17.9%
Moderate	185.23 – 234.29	320	63.6%
High	> 234.29	93	18.5%

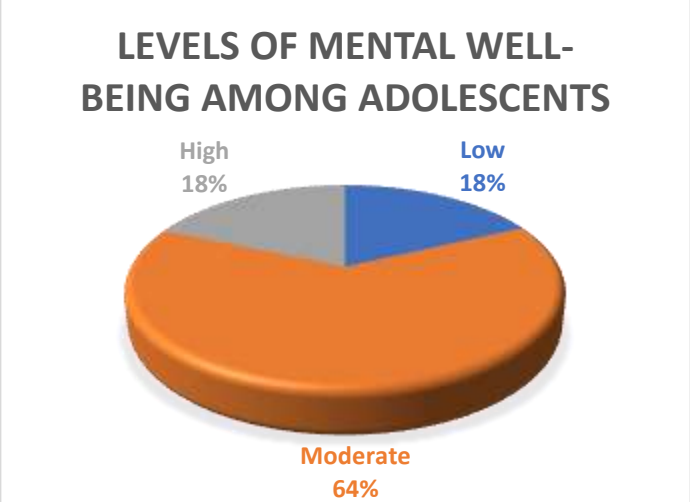


Fig. 1 Pie chart of levels of mental well-being among adolescents

This pattern indicates that a significant majority of adolescents possess moderate psychological well-being, suggesting they are generally coping well but may not always experience optimal emotional functioning or self-concept.

The 17.9% with low MWB may be at risk for psychological concerns such as stress, low motivation, or poor social functioning. These students might benefit from targeted mental health interventions or school counseling.

The 18.5% with high MWB reflect strong emotional resilience, self-acceptance, and life purpose, serving as a benchmark for mental wellness goals among peers.

Differences in Mental Well-Being between Adolescent Boys and Girls

To investigate the differences in mental well-being (MWB) between adolescent boys and girls, an independent samples t-test was conducted. From Table 3, it can be seen that girls (Mean = 211.63, SD = 24.49) had slightly higher MWB scores than boys (Mean = 208.38, SD = 24.50).

Table 3: Results of Independent Samples t-test of boys and girls of MWB scores

Categories	Mean	Std. Dev	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Boys	208.38	24.49	-1.470	501	.142
Girls	211.63	24.50			

However, the t-test results revealed that this difference was not statistically significant, $t(501) = -1.470$, $p = .142$. The mean difference of -3.25 (95% CI: -7.59 to 1.09) indicates that although girls scored marginally higher on MWB, this difference is not strong enough to rule out the role of chance.

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Hence, the findings suggest that there is no significant difference in mental well-being between adolescent boys and girls in this sample.

Mental Well-Being across the Six Dimensions of Ryff's Model

To assess students' mental well-being across Ryff's six dimensions—Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations, Purpose in Life, and Self-Acceptance—descriptive statistics were calculated.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of MWB across Six Dimensions (N = 503)

Dimension	No. of Items	Mean	SD	P50 (Median)
Autonomy	9	34.7	5.84	35.0
Environmental Mastery	9	32.1	6.09	32.0
Personal Growth	9	36.4	5.65	36.0
Positive Relations	9	33.1	6.89	33.0
Purpose in Life	9	38.3	6.70	38.0

As shown in Table 4, adolescents scored highest in Purpose in Life (M = 38.29, P50 = 38.0) and Personal Growth (M = 36.38), suggesting that most students feel motivated, goal-oriented, and open to self-development. Moderate scores in Self-Acceptance and Autonomy indicate a generally positive self-view and a fair degree of independence.

Lower mean scores in Environmental Mastery (M = 32.07) and Positive Relations (M = 33.12) suggest that students may face challenges managing their surroundings or maintaining strong interpersonal relationships—areas that may benefit from targeted support.

Overall, the findings reflect a balanced mental well-being profile, with strengths in personal growth and purpose, but relative weaknesses in environmental coping and social connection.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Mental well-being (MWB) is essential for the emotional, social, and academic growth of adolescents. This research aimed to evaluate the overall MWB level among secondary students and explore differences based on gender and specific dimensions using Ryff's six-dimensional model. The results showed that most students (63.6%) had an average MWB, while 18% had low MWB—highlighting a potential area for concern. Although girls scored marginally higher than boys in overall MWB, this difference was not statistically significant.

Students achieved their highest scores in purpose in life and personal growth, indicating a strong focus on goals and a willingness to develop. Conversely, lower scores in environmental mastery and positive relations highlight difficulties in managing daily challenges and sustaining meaningful relationships.

The study emphasizes the importance of incorporating structured well-being programs into school curricula, which aim to enhance emotional resilience, relationship skills, and coping mechanisms. School counselors and teachers should embrace more comprehensive, student-centered methods to encourage self-awareness and essential life skills. Focusing on adolescent mental health is vital for fostering a healthier, emotionally stable future generation.

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