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A Socio-Structural Analysis of Psychological Well-Being Among Adolescents in Rural Assam: The Paradox of Community Cohesion and Relational Deficit

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ABSTRACT

This interdisciplinary study investigates the psychological well-being (PWB) of adolescents in Narayanpur Block, Lakhimpur District of Assam, India, adopting a socio-developmental perspective. Utilizing quantitative data collected from 200 students (100 males, 100 females) via the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS-SDCP), the research found that 97% of participants exhibited a moderate level of overall PWB, leading to the rejection of the initial hypothesis that PWB levels would be high. Furthermore, no statistically significant gender difference was observed ({p} = 0.313). A granular dimensional analysis revealed a critical deficit: the lowest incidence of high PWB was observed in the dimension of Interpersonal Relations (3.5%), contrasting with moderate levels across Life Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, and Mental Health. This paper utilizes sociological frameworks—specifically social capital theory, structural inequality, and the digital divide—to interpret these findings. The prevalence of moderate PWB is posited as a form of adaptive resilience to chronic rural stressors, while the non-significant gender difference is interpreted as the homogenizing effect of high community social control and rigid traditional norms. The low score in Interpersonal Relations is presented as a structural constraint, wherein strong community cohesion, paradoxically, limits individual relational autonomy and self-disclosure, compounded by socio-economic disadvantages and limited access to modern digital resources. These findings underscore the imperative for interventions that address socio-structural barriers to facilitate true eudaimonic flourishing, moving beyond merely maintaining adaptive functioning.

Keywords: Adolescents, Psychological Well-being, Eudaimonia, Social Capital, Social Control, Digital Divide, Rural Development, Assam.

INTRODUCTION

The scientific understanding of human well-being has generally been partitioned into two conceptual streams: the hedonic approach, which focuses on subjective happiness and life satisfaction (Diener, 1984), and the eudaimonic approach. Eudaimonia is widely recognized today for focusing on optimal functioning, personal growth, and the pursuit of meaning in life (Ryan & Deci, 2001). According to the foundational work of Ryff (1989), psychological well-being (PWB) is characterized by six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. These dimensions are not merely additive but interact dynamically to shape how an individual interprets themselves and engages with the surrounding world, acting as a foundation for resilience, motivation, and emotional stability.

This eudaimonic perspective is particularly salient during adolescence, which is recognized as one of the most crucial developmental phases of the human lifespan. Defined by the World Health Organization as spanning ages 10 to 19, this period involves intense physical, social, cognitive, and emotional transitions essential for shaping personal identity, self-exploration, and social integration (Steinberg, 2017). Adolescents with higher PWB are demonstrably better equipped to manage stress, achieve academic success, regulate emotions, and resist stressors such as peer pressure and family conflict (Park, 2004). Conversely, compromised mental well-being during this stage is strongly correlated with detrimental outcomes such as poor academic performance, social isolation, and emotional distress. The adoption of the eudaimonic framework for this study establishes a rigorous metric, implying that the analysis must move beyond merely confirming if adolescents are "satisfied" (a hedonic outcome) to critically examining why they may not be achieving true flourishing—the capacity for optimal functioning and personal growth—which is fundamental to the eudaimonic ideal.

The Interdisciplinary Imperative: Integrating Psychology and Sociology

While psychological models accurately describe the components of PWB, they often overlook the powerful role of socio-structural determinants. PWB outcomes are not developed in a vacuum; they are profoundly influenced by the socio-ecological systems—family, school, community, and economic structure—in which the individual is embedded. This paper is deliberately interdisciplinary, integrating quantitative psychological findings with established sociological frameworks to interpret the results.

This approach is critical when studying populations in marginalized contexts, such as rural India, where factors including chronic poverty, resource limitations, and deeply ingrained traditional cultural norms act as potent moderators of individual psychological experiences. The goal is to shift the explanatory focus from purely individual psychological variables (e.g., personality traits or coping mechanisms) to environmental constraints and community-level social dynamics. To achieve this necessary socio-structural critique, the research study offered a theoretical framework to interpret the observed quantitative patterns, particularly regarding social cohesion, relational quality, and the influence of the socio-economic environment.

The Socio-Cultural Context of Narayanpur Block, Lakhimpur, Assam

The study was conducted in the Narayanpur Block of Lakhimpur District, situated in the North-eastern state of Assam. This region presents a unique socio-cultural and economic landscape. It is an area deeply rooted in traditional Assamese culture, evidenced by its significant cultural legacy, including the practice of Vaishnavism and the celebration of festivals like Phat Bihu, which retains an element of spontaneity and community gathering. Traditional livelihoods, such as the production of Muga silk (a rural cottage industry) and fisheries, play a significant role in the socio-economic context of the common people in the block.

The existing literature provides crucial context for adolescent mental health in this region. Prior research has indicated that youth in rural areas, and specifically in Assam, often experience higher levels of psychological distress when compared to their urban counterparts (Bhuyan & Deuri, 2020). Other regional studies have shown that tribal and non-tribal teenagers may exhibit different levels of well-being, suggesting that social identity and context play a defining role (Deka, 2022). Consequently, while the community demonstrates strong cultural embeddedness, it also contends with documented socio-economic vulnerabilities typical of rural Northeast India. The quantitative findings of this study, therefore, must be interpreted against this backdrop of cultural richness coexisting with structural challenges.

Research Objectives and Conceptual Hypotheses

The initial objectives of the present study were descriptive and focused on quantification:

1. To find out the level of psychological well-being among adolescent school students in Narayanpur Block, Lakhimpur district of Assam.
2. To examine gender differences in the overall psychological well-being.

3. To explore psychological well-being across its various dimensions among adolescents.

Based on regional studies that have sometimes reported high PWB levels in other samples (Easow & Ghorpade, 2017), the original hypotheses were:

1. The level of psychological well-being would be high;
2. There would be a gender difference in overall psychological well-being; and
3. The level of psychological well-being across its various dimensions would be high.

The central thesis of this advanced analysis is to provide a comprehensive socio-structural interpretation for the quantitative results, specifically focusing on the rejection of the high PWB and gender difference hypotheses. This necessitates a detailed examination of the dimensional scores, which revealed a pronounced deficit in the core eudaimonic component of Interpersonal Relations (Dimension 5). The subsequent sections utilize interdisciplinary theory to explain this specific relational vulnerability within the context of rural social dynamics.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS: SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND RELATIONAL DYNAMICS

Eudaimonia, Dimensionality, and Psychometric Alignment

The eudaimonic theoretical framework, championed by Ryff, posits that well-being encompasses several facets necessary for flourishing. These facets include self-acceptance, the establishment of quality ties to others, a sense of autonomy, environmental mastery, the pursuit of meaningful goals, and continued personal growth. These components move beyond mere subjective happiness by measuring an individual's actual functioning and capacity for life engagement (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

The present study employed the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS-SDCP) developed by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012). This standardized instrument measures PWB using five dimensions: Life Satisfaction (D1), Efficiency (D2), Sociability (D3), Mental Health (D4), and Interpersonal Relations (D5). The PWBS-SDCP has demonstrated established psychometric strength, with a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.87, an internal consistency coefficient of 0.90, and a validity coefficient of 0.94.

A critical bridge must be established between the 5-factor PWBS-SDCP model utilized and the canonical 6-factor Ryff model. The dimension "Interpersonal Relations" (D5) specifically assesses the quality of close relationships, emphasizing the capacity for strong empathy, affection, intimacy, and the understanding of the give-and-take inherent in human relationships. Consequently, a quantitative deficiency in this specific dimension must be interpreted as a failure in a core eudaimonic principle: the capacity for achieving Positive Relations with Others. This failure cannot be dismissed as a generalized social discomfort but must be rigorously analysed as a significant relational vulnerability that limits personal growth and overall functioning.

Sociological Theories of Social Support, Cohesion, and Control

Social support is a fundamental protective mechanism in developmental psychology and sociology, derived from family, friends, teachers, and the community. Studies confirm that high levels of social support correlate with increased life satisfaction and self-esteem, while simultaneously reducing the prevalence of depressive symptoms and psychological distress in adolescents. For successful adolescent development, socio-emotional support provided by the micro-level system (family and friends) and the meso-level system (school and community) is essential.

Rural areas, such as Narayanpur Block, often exhibit strong bonding social capital characterized by tightly-knit social networks, high community cohesion, and shared cultural practices. This high cohesion can enhance well-being by creating a sense of belonging and neighbourhood trust. However, social theory recognizes a critical paradox inherent in such tightly bound communities: while cohesion offers protective benefits, it also functions as a potent mechanism of social control.

This structural condition—strong cohesion and high social control—can severely restrict relational mobility, which is the ease or difficulty with which individuals can form new, self-defined relationships outside of established family or communal expectations. In traditional rural societies, the pressure to conform to established gender norms, cultural scripts, and patriarchal mind-sets is often perpetuated and enforced by community consensus. For adolescents in the critical stage of identity formation, this structural imposition of conformity inhibits the relational autonomy and vulnerability necessary for deep, authentic intimacy and self-disclosure, which are the hallmarks of high PWB in the Interpersonal Relations domain. Therefore, the structural environment itself may suppress the development of high-quality, intimate relationships by prioritizing collective reputation and order over individual emotional needs.

Structural Inequality and Relational Disadvantage

The psychological experiences of rural adolescents are further mediated by structural economic inequalities. Family poverty does not merely lead to material deprivation; it actively compounds psychological burdens and constrains social opportunities. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may experience limited social exposure and possess reduced contact experience, negatively impacting their ability to develop robust social skills and leading to psychological problems, such as an inferiority complex, that severely compromise interpersonal communication.

Furthermore, the relationship dynamics of modern adolescents are heavily influenced by the digital landscape. While urbanization is rapidly integrating digital technologies, rural Assam continues to face a significant digital divide. Data indicate that the rural internet subscriber base in Assam stands at approximately 39 per 100 people, starkly contrasting with 121 per 100 in urban areas. This is not simply a matter of technical access; it represents a deep-seated relational constraint.

In the context of the Narayanpur adolescents, the digital divide creates a "digital double burden." First, they lack the equitable access necessary to utilize digital platforms for educational resources and bridging social capital (connecting beyond the immediate community). Second, the absence of high-quality digital connectivity limits their ability to compensate for geographic isolation and the relational constraints imposed by high local social control. While excessive passive social media use can induce anxiety and distrust, the structural lack of equitable access prevents these adolescents from cultivating social ties at a distance or developing the modern social competencies required for navigating interpersonal complexities in the evolving social landscape. Thus, the deficit in Interpersonal Relations transforms from an individual shortcoming to an indicator of socio-structural deprivation and digital exclusion.

METHODOLOGY AND CONTEXTUAL AUTHENTICATION

Research Design and Study Setting

The present study employed a descriptive research design, suitable for exploring and quantifying the levels and dimensions of psychological well-being within a specific adolescent population without manipulating variables. The investigation was focused exclusively on the Narayanpur Block in Lakhimpur District, Assam. This locale, characterized by its traditional culture and socio-economic profile (as discussed in Section 1.3), provides the essential socio-cultural context against which the observed psychological parameters must be authenticated and interpreted.

Population, Sampling, and Data Collection Fidelity

The target population comprised adolescent students studying in higher secondary schools within the Narayanpur Block. Four schools were selected using simple random sampling from the 39 high schools in the block. A total of 200 students were selected as the sample, with 50 students drawn from each of the four schools. To ensure robust comparative analysis, the sample was perfectly balanced for gender, consisting of 100 male and 100 female participants. The use of simple random sampling ensured that each potential participant had an equal opportunity for selection, thereby minimizing selection bias and promoting the applicability of the findings within the defined study area.

Data collection procedures adhered to strict ethical standards. Necessary permissions were secured from school authorities, and prior consent was obtained from all participants after the aims of the study were fully explained. Crucially, the data collection process ensured confidentiality and anonymity. In culturally sensitive environments characterized by high social control, the guarantee of anonymity is a vital authentication step, designed to mitigate the effects of social desirability bias, which could otherwise lead to inflated reports of well-being or conformity.

Measurement Tool Psychometric Analysis

Data were collected using the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS-SDCP), developed by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012). This scale is a standardized instrument composed of 50 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, designed to measure the five dimensions of PWB: Life Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental Health, and Interpersonal Relations. Higher scores on the scale are indicative of an optimal psychological balance.

The instrument's psychometric properties are strong, providing high confidence in the quantitative data collected. The test-retest reliability coefficient is reported as 0.87, demonstrating temporal stability, and the internal consistency coefficient is 0.90, confirming the homogeneity of items within the scale. Furthermore, the scale demonstrates high validity, having been validated against an external criterion with a coefficient of 0.94.

The methodological robustness of the PWBS-SDCP is critical for interpreting the dimensional analysis, especially the finding regarding Interpersonal Relations (D5). Because D5 measures the capacity for intimate, trusting, and reciprocal relationships, its established validity confirms that the observed deficit is a direct and reliable measure of low relational quality, rather than a mere artefact of the measurement tool.

Statistical Techniques

Data analysis was performed using SPSS Version 20. Descriptive statistics, including mean, median, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis, were calculated to characterize the overall distribution of PWB scores. Frequency and percentage distributions were used to categorize the sample into low, moderate, and high levels of PWB. To test for gender differences (Objective 2), an independent samples t-test was employed, comparing the mean scores of both the total PWB and the individual dimensional scores between male and female adolescents.

RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics and Distribution of Psychological Well-Being

The overall psychological well-being scores for the sample of 200 adolescents in Narayanpur Block demonstrated a mean score of 188.63, with a standard deviation (SD) of 11.68. The median score was 186.00. The distribution was characterized by a positive skew of 1.262, suggesting that the scores were generally concentrated toward the lower end of the potential range, with a tail extending to the right. The kurtosis value (2.983) indicated that the shape of the distribution was close to normal.

This descriptive data confirms that while the scores vary, the bulk of the population did not achieve the high scores necessary for optimal PWB, a precursor to the categorical findings.

Table 1: Statistical Constants of the Distribution of Psychological Well-being (Total Sample, N=200)

Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Total Psychological Well-being (Total PWB)	200	188.63	186.00	11.68	1.262	2.983

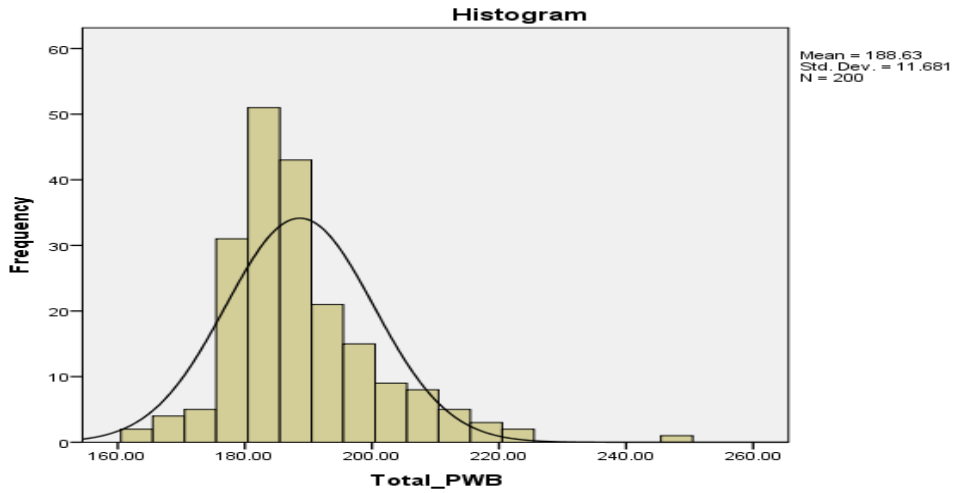

Figure- 1 Normal Probability Curve showing distribution of Total Psychological Well-being Scores of adolescents Students

Objective-1: To find out the level of psychological well-being among the adolescents' school students of Narayanpur Block, Lakhimpur district of Assam.

Categorized Levels of Psychological Well-being

The primary objective was to determine the general level of PWB. The analysis of categorized scores yielded a highly distinct pattern, confirming the rejection of the first hypothesis, which posited a high level of PWB.

Table 2: Categorized Psychological Well-being Levels of Adolescents (N=200)

Categorized Psychological Well-being Level	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Moderate	194	97.0
Low	5	2.5
Very Low	1	0.5
High/Very High	0	0.0

As demonstrated in Table 2, the overwhelming majority of the participants (n = 194, 97.0%) were classified as having a moderate level of psychological well-being. Only a negligible proportion of the sample demonstrated low (2.5%) or very low (n = 1, 0.5%) levels of PWB, and critically, none of the participants were categorized in the high or very high PWB range. This finding empirically rejects the hypothesis that the PWB level is high, suggesting that while adolescents in Narayanpur Block are adaptively functioning, structural or environmental factors prevent them from achieving psychological flourishing.

Objective-2: To examine gender differences in the overall psychological well-being in Narayanpur Block, Lakhimpur district of Assam.

Analysis of Gender Differences in Overall Psychological Well-being

To test the second objective—examining gender differences—an independent samples t-test was conducted. Levene's test for the equality of variances was significant, F (1, 198) = 4.18, p = 0.042, requiring the use of the results based on the assumption of unequal variances.

The analysis revealed no statistically significant difference in the overall PWB scores between male and female adolescents, t (152.02) = -1.01, p = 0.313, with a 95% confidence interval (CI) spanning (-0.089, 0.029). Consequently, the second hypothesis—that there would be a gender difference in overall PWB—was also rejected. This result aligns with some prior regional studies (Rapheal & Paul, 2014; Salleh & Mustaffa, 2016) but contrasts with others that observed gender-specific variations in distress or emotional subdomains (González-Carrasco et al., 2017).

Table 3: Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Psychological Well-being Scores by Gender (Unequal Variances Used)

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	**F**	**p**	**t**	**df**	**p (2-tailed)**	**Mean Difference**	**Std. Error Difference**	**95% CI Lower**	**95% CI Upper**
Equal variances assumed	4.18	.042	-1.01	198	.313	-0.030	0.030	-0.088	0.028
Equal variances not assumed			-1.01	152.02	.313	-0.030	0.030	-0.089	0.029

Table 3 shows an independent samples *t*-test results, that was conducted to see gender differences in psychological well-being scores among adolescents in Narayanpur Block, Lakhimpur district of Assam. Levene's test for equality of variances was significant, F (1, 198) = 4.18, p = .042, indicating that the assumption of equal variances was violated. Therefore, the results for unequal variances were used. The analysis showed no statistically significant variance in psychological well-being scores between male and female participants, t (152.02) = -1.01, p = .313, 95% CI (-0.089, 0.029). These results indicate that gender does not significantly affect the overall psychological well-being in the sample studied. So, the second hypothesis of the present study is also rejected.

Objective-3: To explore psychological well-being across its various dimensions among adolescents.

Dimensional Analysis: The Critical Deficit in Interpersonal Relations

The third objective explored PWB across the five specified dimensions. This analysis provides the crucial quantitative evidence necessitating a sociological explanation, as it reveals differential success rates across the domains of PWB.

Table 4: Distribution of Psychological Well-being Levels Across Dimensions (N=200)

Dimensions	Level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Dimension 1 (Life Satisfaction)	Moderate	183	91.5
	High	17	8.5
Dimension 2 (Efficiency)	Moderate	190	95.0
	High	10	5.0
Dimension 3(Sociability)	Moderate	187	93.5
	High	13	6.5
Dimension 4 (Mental Health)	Moderate	188	94.0
	High	12	6.0
Dimension 5(Interpersonal Relations)	Moderate	193	96.5
	High	7	3.5

The distribution of psychological well-being levels across five dimensions among adolescents (N = 200) is presented in Table 2. The majority of adolescents secured at the moderate level across all dimensions of well-being. In Dimension 1 (Life Satisfaction), 91.5% of participants were categorized as having moderate well-being, while

8.5% had high well-being. For Dimension 2 (Efficiency), 95.0% of adolescents reported moderate well-being and 5.0% high well-being. In Dimension 3 (Sociability), 93.5% were at the moderate level, with 6.5% at the high level. Dimension 4 (Mental Health) showed a similar pattern, with 94.0% moderate and 6.0% high. Lastly, in Dimension 5 (Interpersonal Relations), the majority (96.5%) were at the moderate level, while only 3.5% were labelled as high. These results shows that most adolescents perceive their psychological well-being as moderate across multiple dimensions, with comparatively fewer reporting high levels. This result rejected the third hypothesis of the study.

The distribution confirms that the third hypothesis, positing high PWB across all dimensions, was rejected. Across every domain, the majority of adolescents were categorized as having moderate well-being. However, a significant variation exists in the frequency of high-level well-being achieved across the domains:

- Life Satisfaction (D1) showed the highest rate of high PWB (8.5%), indicating that subjective assessment of life fulfilment is relatively robust.
- Efficiency (D2), Sociability (D3), and Mental Health (D4) demonstrated moderate rates of high PWB, ranging from 5.0% to 6.5%.
- Interpersonal Relations (D5) exhibited the lowest percentage of high well-being at 3.5%.

This finding—that Interpersonal Relations has the lowest frequency of high scores, with 96.5% remaining in the moderate range—is central to the subsequent socio-structural interpretation. While adolescents maintain a generally functional level of mental health and life satisfaction, they struggle acutely with achieving high-quality, intimate relationships, signalling a relational vulnerability.

DISCUSSION: SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION AND THEORETICAL INTEGRATION

Interpreting Moderate Well-being: The Rural Adaptation Model

The findings of this study offer deeper understanding into the psychological well-being of adolescents in Narayanpur Block, Lakhimpur District, Assam. The data shows that the majority of secondary students' exhibit average levels of psychological well-being across multiple dimensions. This finding aligns with previous research, demonstrating moderate psychological well-being as the most common state among adolescents (Keyes,2006). In another study it was also found that 43.4% of adolescents had medium level psychological well-being and 23.2% had low well-being (Khan, Taghdisi, & Nourijelyani, 2015). Gómez-López Viejo, and Ortega-Ruiz (2019), reported moderate to high well-being levels in adolescent populations, suggesting a typical balanced psychological profile during adolescence. In the contrast of this finding, Easow and Ghorpade (2017), reported that 84% of adolescents had adequate (high) psychological well-being, 11% had moderate, and 5% had inadequate (low) levels, indicating that the overall psychological well-being level of adolescents is adequate or high. This suggests the need for further studies on the factors associated with psychological well-being during adolescence. It emphasizes the importance of investigating why adolescents from different parts of the world exhibit varying levels of well-being

The t test results revealed no significant difference between males and females in terms of overall psychological well-being, supporting findings from other studies that have also found no significant gender differences during adolescence (Rapheal & Paul, 2014; Salleh & Mustaffa, 2016; Shek, 2010). Gómez-López et al. (2019) similarly observed no significant gender differences in life satisfaction and global well-being. Visani, Albieri, Offidani, Ottolini, Tomba, and Ruini (2011) found that boys and girls experience adolescence differently; although females showed higher levels of emotional distress than boys, they were able to maintain psychological well-being comparable to that of boys. Consequently, no observable gender differences were seen in the overall levels of psychological well-being. This suggests that gender may not significantly influence overall psychological well-being in this sample.

The most dominant quantitative finding is the overwhelming prevalence of moderate PWB (97%). This outcome starkly contradicts the initial hypothesis of high PWB but resonates with prior research suggesting moderate PWB is a common state among adolescents (Keyes, 2006).

From a socio-developmental perspective, this ubiquitous moderation suggests a state of psychological equilibrium achieved through adaptive competence rather than eudaimonic flourishing. The moderate level of PWB is likely sufficient to support essential functions, such as managing academic demands and demonstrating resilience against common stressors like family conflicts. This adaptation is crucial in the face of environmental risk factors prevalent in rural contexts, including higher prevalence of mental illness compared to urban settings (Rural=17.1/1000 vs. Urban=12.7/1000). While this adaptive state ensures survival and functioning, it suggests structural limitations prevent individuals from accessing the necessary resources or autonomy to move into the domain of genuine high well-being, where they might exhibit greater personal growth and environmental mastery (Ryff, 1989). The positive skew in the data further confirms that scores tend to cluster below the high end of the

scale, reinforcing the interpretation that the majority of adolescents are successfully managing, but not optimally thriving.

Gender Homogeneity and the Role of Social Control

The finding that gender does not significantly affect overall PWB ($p = 0.313$) requires a nuanced sociological interpretation. While some psychological studies observe that girls, particularly in later adolescence, may report higher levels of emotional distress or negative affect (González-Carrasco et al., 2017), the absence of a significant difference in this Narayanpur sample suggests powerful external factors are at play.

This gender homogeneity can be explained by the high level of social control inherent in the rural, traditional context. In a cohesive community such as Narayanpur, where traditional cultural practices and norms are highly preserved, behavioural expectations are often rigidly enforced for both genders, albeit with different specific demands. The collective pressure for social conformity and adjustment in the community acts as a powerful homogenizing force. This environment may discourage the overt expression of psychological distress, particularly among girls, who face intense pressure to maintain reputation and adherence to social scripts. Consequently, the psychological measures captured may reflect a highly socialized and regulated state of being, where collective adjustment overrides individual emotional differences that might otherwise manifest in a more fluid, high-relational mobility environment. The non-significant finding, therefore, indicates that the structural demands of the community may be compelling both male and female adolescents to report a standardized level of moderate functioning, thereby masking underlying vulnerabilities.

The Critical Relational Deficit: Community Cohesion vs. Individual Intimacy

The most salient finding demanding a socio-structural explanation is the extremely low rate of high PWB in the dimension of Interpersonal Relations (3.5%). This confirms that while adolescents in Narayanpur are reasonably functional (moderate Life Satisfaction, Efficiency, and Sociability), they struggle significantly with cultivating deep, intimate, and emotionally rewarding relationships, which are necessary for eudaimonic flourishing.

The Sociological Paradox of High Community Cohesion

The sociological paradox emerges when contrasting high community cohesion with low individual relational quality. While Narayanpur's close-knit nature ensures social support and community security (bonding social capital), this tightness translates into intense scrutiny and high social control. For adolescents, this environment reduces relational mobility - the freedom to choose and disengage from relationships - leading to heightened concerns about rejection and reputation. To navigate a socially conservative setting, adolescents may prioritize outward conformity and generalized sociability (D3, 6.5% high PWB) over the vulnerability, self-disclosure, and trust required for deep intimacy (D5, 3.5% high PWB). The lack of intimate, trusting relationships is thus a protective strategy against communal oversight and reputational damage, but it comes at the high cost of sacrificing a core component of psychological well-being.

Structural Socio-Economic Constraints on Relational Development

The challenge is further exacerbated by structural economic conditions. In a rural block where socio-economic status is often a predictor of psychological well-being, family poverty places additional limitations on adolescents. Financial constraints restrict opportunities for varied social exposure and participation in activities outside the immediate neighbourhood, which are crucial for developing diverse communication and social skills. Limited contact experience, coupled with potential feelings of inferiority linked to economic status, directly compromises the capacity for developing robust interpersonal ties, contributing to the low PWB scores in this dimension.

The Digital Constraint Hypothesis

The discussion section of the original paper posits that social media may hinder the development of essential interpersonal skills by reducing opportunities for face-to-face interaction. However, a sociological analysis reframes this issue by incorporating the severe digital divide present in rural Assam. Given the documented lack of stable internet connectivity (39 rural subscribers per 100 people), adolescents in Narayanpur are often structurally excluded from equitable digital access.

This constraint means that while technology may pose relational risks for urban youth, for rural youth in geographically isolated settings, the lack of digital infrastructure acts as a barrier to essential relational resources. Without reliable digital access, these adolescents cannot use virtual platforms to overcome physical distance or circumvent the strict social control of their immediate community to form lower-risk, intimate peer connections. This structural exclusion may contribute to an increased sense of social disconnection or "sensory loneliness" because interactions are often mediated or low-quality, preventing the development of necessary co-presence and

intimacy. Therefore, the deficit in Interpersonal Relations is not merely due to individual time allocation choices, but to the systemic failure of infrastructure to provide equitable relational pathways.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Methodological Authentication and Cultural Specificity

While the PWBS-SDCP demonstrated high psychometric reliability and validity, the conceptual mapping between its five dimensions and the six canonical factors of the Ryff model remains a perennial challenge in eudaimonic research. Specifically, the interpretation of the Interpersonal Relations dimension (D5) as reflecting Ryff's 'Positive Relations with Others' relies on theoretical alignment rather than full factorial equivalence. Future studies should employ comparative factor analysis to definitively confirm the structure of PWB within this specific socio-cultural context of rural Northeast India.

Limitations of Study Design

The descriptive, cross-sectional nature of the present study restricts the ability to infer causal relationships between socio-structural factors and PWB outcomes. Although the analysis strongly suggests that high social control and the digital divide influence relational quality, longitudinal studies are necessary to track how changes in these macro-level variables (e.g., introduction of improved digital access, shifts in parenting styles) predict changes in dimensional PWB over time.

Recommendations for Next-Stage Interdisciplinary Research

Future research must adopt a mixed-methods approach to fully unravel the mechanisms driving the moderate PWB and the relational deficit. Quantitative findings should be complemented by deep qualitative inquiry. Structured interviews with adolescents should explicitly explore their subjective experiences of community social control, their level of comfort with self-disclosure, the perceived risk of reputation damage, and their actual experiences with digital communication, including potential challenges like cyberbullying or split identity.

Furthermore, subsequent statistical modelling should move beyond gender and locality (as in previous regional studies) to explicitly incorporate structural variables into the prediction of dimensional PWB. This includes testing community-level measures such as neighbourhood socioeconomic status, levels of local institutional support, and quantified digital access rates as predictors of Interpersonal Relations (D5). Applying socio-ecological frameworks, such as those that analyse the interaction between individual lives and macro-level factors, will be critical for developing policy-relevant knowledge.

Policy Implications and Targeted Socio-Cultural Interventions

The findings confirm that interventions focused solely on individual coping skills are insufficient; effective strategies must address the structural and cultural barriers that inhibit true eudaimonic flourishing in rural Narayanpur.

Enhancing Relational Autonomy and Social Competency

Given the profound deficit observed in Interpersonal Relations (3.5% high PWB), school-based mental health programs must be redesigned to focus specifically on relational skill development. This involves moving beyond generalized well-being lectures to implement targeted curricula focused on promoting emotional intelligence, healthy self-disclosure, assertiveness, conflict resolution, and non-verbal communication.

These educational settings should strive to create environments that counteract the stifling effects of community social control. Schools can act as sanctioned safe spaces for autonomous identity exploration and peer support, thereby fostering the internal resources necessary for students to develop quality, trusting relationships without fear of communal judgment or control.

Addressing Structural Inequality and the Digital Access Gap

Policy makers must acknowledge that the severe rural digital divide in Lakhimpur District represents a direct impediment to psychological well-being and equality of opportunity. The low rate of digital access is not merely an economic issue but a social and relational constraint.

A concerted governmental effort is necessary for targeted infrastructure investment in remote areas of Assam. This must be accompanied by subsidized digital literacy programs that are culturally sensitive and address language barriers, ensuring that technology becomes an equitable tool for psycho-social connection and educational advancement, rather than an agent of social marginalization. Overcoming the digital divide is essential for providing

these adolescents with bridging social capital and the means to explore complex social dynamics outside of their immediate, high-control environment.

Strengthening Family and Institutional Support Systems

The overall moderate PWB suggests a population exhibiting resilience, which can be leveraged by strengthening formal support systems. Educational institutions should be required to establish consistent Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the periodic screening of adolescents for mental health-related issues.

Furthermore, policy attention must be given to strengthening the family dynamic, recognized as a crucial predictor of adolescent mental health. Interventions should promote positive parenting styles, such as authoritative or positive parenting, which have been linked to improved adolescent life satisfaction and well-being. Primary care physicians and healthcare providers in rural settings must also expand their roles beyond clinical activities to provide comprehensive health services, prevention strategies, and anticipatory guidance, addressing sensitive issues like rigid gender norms and exploitation which often suppress psychological growth.

CONCLUSION

This socio-developmental analysis of psychological well-being among adolescents in Narayanpur Block, Lakhimpur District, provides a highly nuanced portrait of adaptation in a structurally constrained rural setting. The quantitative findings—near-universal moderate PWB and the absence of significant gender differences—are interpreted not as indicators of a problem-free population, but as outcomes reflecting successful psychological adaptation and the homogenizing force of high community social control.

The most critical revelation is the acute relational deficit, demonstrated by the lowest incidence of high PWB in the Interpersonal Relations dimension (3.5%). This deficit is fundamentally a consequence of macro-level structural barriers: the sociological paradox where intense community cohesion inhibits individual relational autonomy, compounded by the limitations imposed by socio-economic deprivation and the persistent rural digital divide. These structural constraints restrict the development of deep, trusting relationships necessary for eudaimonic fulfilment. Moving forward, interventions must be interdisciplinary, focusing on dismantling these socio-structural impediments, enhancing social competencies, and ensuring equitable access to relational resources, thus enabling the transition from basic adaptive functioning to genuine psychological flourishing for the adolescents of rural Assam.

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