



Psychological Well-Being of Slum Dwelling Adolescents

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Abstract

Adolescence is a vital developmental phase in human life which is marked by physical, psychological and social developments. This empirical paper tries to describe the psychological well-being of slum dwelling adolescents and various factors that has greater impact on the psychological well-being of the younger generation in this modern era. To understand the level of psychological well-being of the adolescents dwelling in slums, north Chennai was chosen as the area of study as it holds maximum number of slums in Chennai when compared to the south and central Chennai as per the census of India 2011 data. As per the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board report, it is stated that north Chennai holds 470 slums. The researcher has chosen Royapuram as area of study for this empirical paper and collected 68 samples including adolescent boys and girls using simple random sampling with inclusion and exclusion criteria. Major findings of the study revealed that Girls have higher psychological wellbeing when compared with boys but at the same time boys scored high in the area autonomy when compared with girls. It was also found that the socio-economic status of the respondents has a significant relationship with the psychological wellbeing of the adolescent respondents in the study area. The study further revealed that educational status of the adolescents is also linked with their psychological well-being.

Key Words: Adolescence, Adolescents, Slum and Psychological Well-Being

I. Introduction

Adolescence is the stage where both young boys and girls go through physical, psychological and social changes based on the exposures and experiences. It is understood from secondary sources and recent researches carried out in the field of adolescence and mental health that psychological well-being of adolescents are influenced various factors which includes their family, social status,

income of the family, siblings, educational status etc.. In this empirical paper the researcher has tried to describe the level of psychological wellbeing of adolescent boys and girls who are dwelling in slums of north Chennai, highlighting the dimensions of psychological well-being of these younger generation and the factors that are associated with it.

Adolescence and Adolescents

Adolescence is a Psychosocial Moratorium (Erick Erickson, 1956) which is nothing but a delay of adult commitments, a time in which people could try different roles to discover where they belonged in society. It is characterized by “selective permissiveness” of society and by “provocative playfulness of youth”. According to World Health Organization (WHO) an adolescent is any person from the age of 10 to 19 years. As per United Nations Children’s Fund, adolescence is a phase of transition from childhood to adulthood. This phase can be divided three stages namely early (10 to 13 years), middle (14 to 16 years) and late (17 to 19 years) (UNICEF, 2006). It says that an adolescent goes through various developments in this transitional phase which are physical, psychological, emotional, social and behavioural. The stage of psychological development of adolescents is explained below.

Psychological Development of Adolescents

The psychological development of adolescents is more complex than their physical changes. The ways in which an adolescent thinks, reasons, and understands are all remarkably intricate to study. Piaget (1950) suggested that adolescents have abilities to think logically and analyze situations in terms of cause and effects. This capability of processing allows adolescents to think about the future, evaluate alternatives and set personal goals (Keating, 1990). The psychological competence of adolescents that develop during this phase are the ability to think effectively, problem



solve, think abstractly, reflect and plan for future (American Psychological Association, 2002). Although the thinking ability of adolescents develop at this stage, many adolescents fail in making decisions as the maturity of judgment tends to drop in the early and middle phase of adolescence which again will increase in the later young adult phase and would continue into adulthood. Therefore, it is important for an adult to help adolescents with their decision making process (Fischhoff et al., 1999). Adolescents who make rapid decisions are more likely to get involved in hazardous or harmfully deviant behaviours. Adolescents are easily influenced by their peer group especially when they engage in activities such as substance usage in order to fit into the social requirements of peer group and hence it is imperative to understand their psychological well-being to guide them in a proper and developmental path.

Psychological Well-Being

At the most basic level, psychological well-being (PWB) is quite similar to other terms that refer to positive mental states, such as happiness or satisfaction, and in many ways it is not necessary, or helpful to worry about fine distinctions between such terms.

The term, “Eudaimonic” wellbeing is used to refer to the purposeful aspect of psychological well-being. The psychologist Carol Ryff has developed a very clear model that breaks down Eudaimonic wellbeing into six key dimensions of psychological well-being that are mentioned below.

Dimensions of Psychological Well-Being

- Autonomy
- Environmental Mastery
- Personal Growth
- Positive Relations
- Purpose in Life
- Self-Acceptance

With this background the researcher has carried out this empirical study to understand the level of psychological well-being of adolescents with specific reference to the six dimensions of eudaimonic psychological well-being.

Slum

A revised UN definition of slums is characterized as “one or a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area, lacking in one or more of the following five amenities: 1)

Durable housing (a permanent structure providing protection from extreme climatic conditions); 2) Sufficient living area (no more than three people sharing a room); 3) Access to improved water (water that is sufficient, affordable, and can be obtained without extreme effort); 4) Access to improved sanitation facilities (a private toilet, or a public one shared with a reasonable number of people); and 5) Secure tenure (*de facto* or *de jure* secure tenure status and protection against forced eviction)” (UN Habitat).

Size and Distribution of Slum Population in India

A total of 65.49 million population inhabiting in 13.9 million households have been counted in slums of 2613 cities/towns stretched across 31 States and Union Territories in the 2011 Census of India. The slum population specified represents 5.4 per cent of the total population 1.21 billion of the nation. The slum population constitutes 17.4 percent of the total urban population of all the States and Union Territories; 82.6 percent of the urban population was non-slum population in 2011. The slum population specified was 22.4 per cent of the total population of the 2613 statutory towns (including 19 Census Towns in NCT of Delhi and 1(one) in Uttar Pradesh) reporting slums (Census of India, 2011; Government of India, 2015).

The distribution of the 2613 slum-reporting towns among States and Union Territories says that among the States, Tamil Nadu has the largest number of cities and towns (507) reporting slum population, followed by Madhya Pradesh (303), Uttar Pradesh (293), Karnataka (206), Maharashtra (189), West Bengal (122), Rajasthan (107) and Gujarat (103). On the other hand, in nine States/Union Territories, namely, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Odisha, Haryana, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Assam, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand, slums have been reported from minimum of 30 cities/towns and maximum 94 cities/towns. In the remaining States/UTs, i.e. Himachal Pradesh, NCT of Delhi, Kerala, Tripura, Nagaland, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Puducherry, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram, A & N Islands and Chandigarh, slums have been reported from minimum of 1 city to 22 cities/towns (Census of India, 2011; Government of India, 2015).

Adolescent Population in Slums of India

According to Census of India, 2011, India has one fourth of its population i.e., 253.2 million large adolescent populations and it is also the largest population of adolescents in the world as well in the Asian countries. With regard to the Adolescent Population of Tamil Nadu is 12,431,339 which accounts for 64, 18,828 males and 60, 12,511



females and 5, 70,029 adolescents with 2, 91,228 males and 2, 78, 801 females live in Chennai metropolitan (Census of India, 2011).

II. Materials and Methods

The researcher has chosen descriptive research design to describe the nature and characteristics of adolescents dwelling in Royapuram, the study area of this empirical research. By using the descriptive research design, the researcher attempted to describe various factors that are linked with the psychological well-being of the respondents. A total of 68 samples were collected using structured interview schedule incorporating socio-demographic details and Carol

Ryff's scale of Psychological Well-being through simple random sampling with inclusion and exclusion criteria. Collected data set was analyzed using SPSS version 20.0.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Adolescents Dwelling in Royapuram since 2015.

- Adolescents with assent from parent

Exclusion:

- Families with TWO adolescents – the younger is excluded.

- Adolescents who failed to get assent from parents.

Major Findings

Table 1. Age of the Respondents

Sl. No	Age	Boys	Girls	Total
1	11 to 13 years (Early Adolescence)	3 (7.7%)	2 (6.9%)	5 (7.35%)
2	14 to 16 years (Middle Adolescence)	23 (59%)	18 (62%)	41 (60.3%)
3	17 to 19 years (Late Adolescence)	13 (33.33%)	9 (31.03%)	22 (32.4%)
	Total	39 (57.35%)	29 (42.64%)	68 (100%)

The table 1 on the age of the respondents shows that one twentieth of the total respondents fall under the age group of 11 to 13 years with less than one tenth (7.7%) of the boys and more than one-twentieth (6.9%) of the girl respondents. It further depicts that more than two-fifth of the respondents are coming under the age group of 14 to 16 years with close to three-fifth (59%) of the boys and more than three-fifth (62%) of the girls respondents. The table also shows that closer to one-third of the total respondents fall under the age group of 17 to 19

years with one-third (33.33%) of the boys and close one-third (31.03%) of the girl respondents.

It is evident from the above tabulated data that majority (60.3%) of the respondents are falling under the middle adolescence category followed by late adolescence (32.4%) and early adolescence (7.35%) categories respectively. If we look the gender wise distribution of the adolescents, close to three-fifth (57.35%) of the total respondents are boys and more than two-fifth (42.64%) are found to be girl adolescent respondents.

Table 2. Educational Status of the Respondents

Sl. No	Educational Status	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Primary School	3(7.7%)	2 (6.9%)	5 (7.35%)
2	High School	21 (53.84%)	15 (51.72%)	36 (52.9%)
3	Higher Secondary	9 (23.07%)	9 (31.03%)	18 (26.4%)
4	High School Dropout	2 (5.12%)	3 (10.34%)	5 (7.35%)
5	Higher Secondary Dropout	4 (10.25%)	0 (0%)	4 (5.9%)
	Total	39 (57.35%)	29 (42.64%)	68 (100%)

The table on educational status of the adolescent respondents depicts less than one-tenth of the total respondents are into primary schooling with less than one-tenth (7.7%) of boys and more than one-twentieth (6.9%) of girl adolescents. It shows that more than half of the respondents are

pursuing high school with a more than two-fourth (53.84%) of boys and more than half (51.72%) of girls. The table further shows that more than one-fourth of the total respondents are studying higher secondary with more than one-fifth (23.07%) of the boys and nearly one-third (31.03%) of girl



respondents. It is also seen in the table that less than one-tenth (7.35%) and more than one-twentieth (5.9%) of the total respondents are dropouts of high school and higher secondary respectively.

It is evident from the table that majority of the adolescent respondents are pursuing high school (52.9%) followed by higher secondary (26.4%) and primary school (7.35%) education respectively. It is

to be noted from the tabulated data that nearly one-tenth of the total respondents are high school dropouts with majority of girls and more than one-tenth of the boys are found to be higher secondary dropouts amounting to more than one-twentieth of the total respondents. It is to be noted that there is no higher secondary dropouts among the girl respondents.

Table 3. Parents of the Respondents

Sl. No	Parents	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Having Both Parents	36 (92.3%)	24 (82.8%)	60 (88.2%)
2	Single Mother	2 (5.2%)	5 (17.3%)	7 (10.3%)
3	Single Father	1 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)
	Total	39 (57.35%)	29 (42.64%)	68 (100%)

The above tabulated data gives information on the parent details of the adolescent respondents. It shows that more than four-fifth (88.2%) of the total respondents are having both parents with 92.3percentage of boys and 82.8 percentage of girls, while more than one-tenth (10.3%) of the respondents having single mother with 5.2

percentage of boys and 17.3 percentage of girls and one boy respondent living with single father.

It is evident from the table that majority of the respondents are living with both the parents (88.2%), while some of the respondents are living with single mother (10.3%) and single father (1.5%) respectively.

Table 4. Overall Psychological Well-Being of Adolescents

Sl. No	Adolescents	Psychological Well-Being			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
1	Boys	11 (28.2%)	21 (53.84%)	7 (17.94%)	39 (57.35%)
2	Girls	8 (27.6%)	12 (41.37%)	9 (31.03%)	29 (42.64%)
	Total	19 (27.94%)	33 (48.52%)	16 (23.52%)	68 (100%)

The table on overall psychological well-being of adolescent respondents shows that more than one-fourth (27.94%) of the total respondents with nearly three-tenth (28.2%) of the boys and more than one-fourth (27.6%) of the girls are have scored low, while nearly half (48.52%) of the total respondents with more than two-fourth (53.84%) of the boys and over two-fifth (41.37%) of the girls scoring moderate, as nearly one-fourth (23.52%) of the total respondents with nearly one-third (31.03%) of girls and nearly one-fifth (17.94%) of the boys acquiring high scores with respect to overall psychological well-being.

It is apparent from the table that majority (48.52%) of the adolescent respondents are having moderate psychological well-being, while more than one-fourth (27.94%) of the respondents are having low psychological well-being and notably nearly one-fourth (23.52%) of the respondents are having high psychological wellbeing as per their acquired scores in the psychological well-being scale. It is also evident from the table that girls (13% of the total respondents) have scored high and found to have high psychological well-being when compared with boys (10% of the total respondents).

Table 5. Dimensions of Psychological Well-Being

Sl. No	Dimensions of Psychological Well-Being	Adolescents	Low	Moderate	High	Total
1	Autonomy	Boys	8 (20.51%)	18 (46.25%)	13 (33.33%)	39 (100%)
		Girls	6 (21.42%)	12 (42.85%)	11 (37.93%)	29 (100%)
		Total	14 (20%)	30 (44.11%)	24 (35%)	68



Sl. No	Dimensions of Psychological Well-Being	Adolescents	Low	Moderate	High	Total
						(100%)
2	Environmental Mastery	Boys	11 (28.2%)	19 (48.71%)	9 (23.07%)	39 (100%)
		Girls	4 (13.8%)	14 (48.3%)	11 (31.9%)	29 (100%)
		Total	15 (22%)	33 (48.52%)	20 (29.4%)	68 (100%)
3	Personal Growth	Boys	11 (28.2%)	18 (46.15%)	10 (25.64%)	39 (100%)
		Girls	5 (17.24%)	13 (44.82%)	11 (37.93%)	29 (100%)
		Total	16 (23.5%)	31 (45.6%)	21 (30.9%)	68 (100%)
4	Positive Relations	Boys	8 (20.51%)	22 (56.41%)	9 (23.07%)	39 (100%)
		Girls	4 (13.8%)	13 (44.82%)	12 (41.37%)	29 (100%)
		Total	12 (17.6%)	35 (51.5%)	21 (30.9%)	68 (100%)
5	Purpose in Life	Boys	7 (17.94%)	23 (59%)	9 (23.07%)	39 (100%)
		Girls	8 (27.6%)	11 (37.93%)	10 (34.48%)	29 (100%)
		Total	15 (22%)	34 (50%)	19 (27.9%)	68 (100%)
6	Self-Acceptance	Boys	10 (25.6%)	16 (41.02%)	13 (33.33%)	39 (100%)
		Girls	8 (27.6%)	14 (48.3%)	7 (24.13%)	29 (100%)
		Total	18 (26.5%)	30(44.11%)	20(29.4%)	68 (100%)

The table on the dimensions of psychological well-being gives dimension wise information on the level of psychological well-being of adolescent respondents dwelling in slum. It shows that one-fifth of the total respondents scored low in autonomy with one-fifth (20.5%) of the boys and more than one-fifth (21.42%) of the girls, while more than two-fifth of the respondents scoring moderate with nearly half (46.25%) of the boys and more than two-fifth (42.85%) of the girls, as more than one-third of the total respondents secured high scores with one-third (33.33%) of the boys and nearly two-fifth (37.93%) of the girls with respect to autonomy dimension in psychological well-being.

With respect to data on environmental mastery, the table shows that more than one-fifth (22%) of the total respondents comprising more than one-fourth (28.2%) of the boys and more than one-tenth (13.8%) of the girls have scored low, while

nearly half of the respondents covering nearly two-fourth (48.71%) of the boys and close to two-fourth (48.3%) of the girls secured moderate score, as more than one-fourth (29.4%) of the respondents comprising more than one-fifth (23.07%) of the boys and nearly one-third (31.9%) of the girls have scored high on the psychological well-being scale.

The data tabulated above shows that more than one-fifth of the total respondents having more than one-fourth (28.2%) of the boys and nearly one-fifth (17.24%) of the girls scored low, while more than two-fifth (45.6%) of the respondents with nearly half (46.15%) boys and more than two-fifth (44.82%) of girls score moderate, as nearly one-third (30.9%) of the respondents comprising one-fourth (25.64%) of boys and more than one-third (37.93%) of girls scored high with respect to personal growth in the psychological well-being.



The table also depicts that nearly one-fifth (17.6%) of the respondents with one-fifth (20.51%) of the boys and more than one-tenth (13.8%) of the girls have scored low, while more than half (51.5%) of the respondents with nearly three-fifth (56.41%) of boys and more than two-fifth of the girls scored moderately, as nearly one-third of the total respondents having more than two-fifth (23.07%) of boys and more than two-fifth (41.37%) of girls have scored high for the positive relations dimension of psychological well-being.

The above tabulated data further shows that more than one-fifth (22%) of the total respondents comprising nearly one-fifth (17.94%) of the boys and more than one-fourth (27.6%) of the girls scored low, while half (50%) of the respondents accounting to nearly three-fifth (59%) of the boys and nearly two-fifth (37.93%) of the girls scored moderate, as more than one-fourth of the total respondents holding more than one-fifth (23.07%) of boys and more than one-third (34.48%) of the girls scored high for purpose of life dimension on psychological well-being scale.

The table also gives information on the self-acceptance of psychological well-being for which more than one-fourth (26.5%) having one-fifth (25.6%) of boys and more than one-fifth (27.6%) of the girls scored low, while more than two-fifth (44.11%) of the respondents with more than two-fifth (41.02%) of the boys and nearly half (48.3%) of the girls have scored moderate, as more than one-fourth (29.4%) of the total respondents covering one-third (33.33%) of the boys and nearly one-fourth (24.13%) of the girls scored high on the psychological well-being scale.

Hence, it can be inferred from the given table no.5 that majority of the respondents are having moderate psychological well-being with respect to autonomy (44.11%), environmental mastery (48.52%), personal growth (45.6%), positive relations (51.5%), purpose in life (50%) and self-acceptance (44.11%) respectively. It is also evident from the table that girls have scored high with respect to the total respondents for four dimensions environmental mastery (16.17%), personal growth (16.17%), positive relations (17.64%) and purpose in life (14.70%) on the psychological well-being scale, while boys have scored high on the dimensions autonomy (19.11%) and self-acceptance (19.11%) respectively.

It can further be inferred from the tabulated data that girls have good psychological well-being when compared with boys of the chosen study area.

Key Findings of the Study:

- Majority (57.35%) of the adolescent respondents were found to be boys followed by girls (42.64%).
- Majority (60.3%) of the respondents were found to be in the middle adolescence stage followed by late adolescence (32.4%) and early adolescence (7.35%).
- Majority (52.9%) of the respondents were found to attend high school followed by higher secondary (26.4%) and primary school (7.35%) respectively.
- Only a few boy adolescent respondents (5.9%) were found to be higher secondary dropouts.
- Dropouts were found in both boys (5.12%) and girls (10.34%) with respect to high school.
- Majority (88.2%) of the respondents were found to be living with both the parents.
- Majority of the respondents living with both the parents were found to have moderate (48.52) and high (23.52%) psychological well-being.
- More than one-fourth of the total adolescent respondents were found have low psychological well-being.
- It is to be noted that presence of parents influences the psychological wellbeing of adolescents.
- The overall psychological well-being was found to be low for all the school dropouts (13.23%).
- It is found from the analysis that boys (19.11%) have high autonomy when compared with girls (16.17%).
- Boys (19.11) were also found to have high self-acceptance when compared with girls (10%).
- It is evident from the study that girls (16.17%) were found to have better environmental mastery when compared with boys (13.23%).
- Girls (16.17%) were found to have better psychological well-being with respect to personal growth when compared with boys (14.7%).
- Girls (17.64%) were found to have high positive relations when compared with boys (13.23%).
- It is also found that girls (14.7%) were having high purpose in life when compared with boys (13.23%).

Other Significant Findings:

- Socio-economic status was found to be associated with psychological well-being as respondents with total family incomes below 20,000 rupees were found to have low psychological well-being.



- Substance usage in the family was found to be another influencing factors as respondents with alcoholic father scored low on the psychological well-being scale.
- It was also found that caste has no relationship with the psychological well-being as respondents belonging to various castes have found to be in all three levels of psychological well-being.
- Respondents who are good at studies and regular to school were found to have high psychological well-being.
- Respondents with substance usage behaviours were found to have lower psychological well-being.

III. Discussion and Conclusion

It is understood from the study and the tabulated data that though psychological well-being of adolescents dwelling in the study area were found to be moderate and high majorly, it is to be noted that only less than one-fifth of the respondents were found to be having high psychological well-being and on the other hand more than one-fourth of the total respondents were found to be having low psychological well-being which needs attention and intervention. The study also revealed that substance usage behavior in the family as well as with the adolescent respondents has greater influence on their psychological well-being which shall be addressed through awareness programmes and social work interventions. It is to be noted that girls were scoring low in autonomy which reveals that adolescent girls in the study area were not be think or act on their own. The study further showed that there was low self-acceptance among girl adolescents when compared with boys. It is evident from the study that adolescent boys dwelling in the study area were found to have low psychological well-being when compared with girls resulting from various factors such substance usage, absenteeism to school, dropout from school, lack of monitoring by parents and lack of awareness on mental health.

Hence it can be concluded from the study that adolescent boys were found to have low psychological well-being when compared with girls

in Royapuram. It is evident from the study that majority of adolescents were found to have moderate psychological well-being followed by low and high psychological well-being which gives scope for further research in the area to address the contributing and negatively impacting factors of adolescents on their psychological well-being.

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