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# Psychological Well-Being and Emotional Distress among Adults of Varanasi

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**Abstract--** The present study investigated the relationship between psychological well-being, mental health, anxiety, depression, and stress among males and females of Varanasi belonging to urban and rural areas in the age 21–60 years. Mental health has become an essential component of human functioning and social adjustment in modern society. Rapid urbanization, changing lifestyles, occupational pressure, social insecurity, and family conflicts contribute significantly to psychological distress among adults. The study aimed to examine gender and residential differences in psychological well-being, mental health, anxiety, depression, and stress and to determine the predictive role of psychological well-being and mental health on anxiety, depression, and stress.

A total sample of 200 participants was selected from urban and rural areas of Varanasi using purposive random sampling. The sample included 100 males and 100 females distributed equally across age and residence categories. The Mental Health Inventory developed by Singh & Srivastava, Anxiety Depression Stress Scale developed by Pallavi and colleagues, and PGI General Well-being Measure developed by Verma & Verma were used for data collection.

The findings revealed that urban participants showed significantly higher psychological well-being and mental health than rural participants, whereas rural participants reported greater anxiety, depression, and stress. Females exhibited comparatively higher anxiety and stress levels than males. Correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between psychological well-being and mental health, while both variables showed significant negative relationships with anxiety, depression, and stress. Regression analysis revealed that psychological well-being and mental health significantly predicted anxiety, depression, and stress among adults.

The study concludes that psychological well-being and mental health are strong protective factors against emotional disturbances. The findings may help psychologists, counsellors, educators, and mental health professionals in designing preventive mental health programs for urban and rural populations.

**Keywords--** PWB, Mental Health, Anxiety, Depression, Stress, Males and Females

## I. INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a vital dimension of human personality and social functioning. A psychologically healthy individual is capable of adjusting effectively to environmental demands, maintaining satisfying interpersonal relationships, and achieving emotional balance.

Psychological well-being reflects happiness, satisfaction, positive functioning, and the ability to cope with stress. In modern society, individuals experience various psychosocial pressures that influence their mental health status and emotional stability.

According to the World Health Organization, mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness but a state of complete physical, emotional, and social well-being. Psychological well-being includes positive emotions, self-esteem, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, and purpose in life. Anxiety, depression, and stress are among the most common psychological problems affecting adults in both urban and rural communities.

Anxiety refers to excessive worry, fear, nervousness, and physiological arousal. Depression involves sadness, hopelessness, loss of interest, and emotional withdrawal. Stress is a psychological and physiological reaction to challenging life situations. Persistent stress can negatively affect psychological well-being and mental health. Rapid industrialization, unemployment, social comparison, family conflicts, financial instability, and changing lifestyles contribute to emotional distress among adults.

Urban and rural populations differ considerably in social structure, educational opportunities, healthcare access, and occupational demands. Urban residents generally experience competitive lifestyles and occupational pressure, while rural residents often face economic insecurity, limited healthcare facilities, and social restrictions. Gender differences are also important in mental health research because males and females experience emotional problems differently due to biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors.

The present research attempts to study the relationship between psychological well-being, mental health, anxiety, depression, and stress among adults of Varanasi. The study is important because mental health problems among adults are increasing rapidly in Indian society. Understanding the interrelationship among these variables may help in developing effective intervention and counselling programs.

Thus, the present study seeks to analyse how psychological well-being and mental health influence anxiety, depression, and stress among males and females belonging to urban and rural areas of Varanasi.



## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent psychological research has increasingly emphasized the importance of psychological well-being and mental health in maintaining emotional stability and reducing anxiety, depression, and stress among adults. Contemporary studies suggest that positive mental health is not merely the absence of illness but a multidimensional construct involving emotional balance, self-esteem, social adjustment, and life satisfaction.

Pandey and Singh (2026) examined psychosocial factors and emotional intelligence and observed that individuals with better emotional intelligence showed higher psychological well-being and lower emotional distress. The study highlighted the importance of emotional control and social adjustment in mental health.

Pandey and Singh (2026) further concluded that adults with higher stress, anxiety, and depression experienced lower psychological well-being, while emotional resilience and family support contributed to better mental health and reduced emotional distress.

Pandey (2026) studies indicate that individuals experiencing lower psychological well-being tend to demonstrate higher emotional distress and weaker emotional regulation abilities. Adults who lacked positive coping mechanisms and supportive social environments were more vulnerable to emotional instability and psychological maladjustment.

Pandey (2026) further demonstrates that yoga and meditation practices play a crucial preventive and therapeutic role in reducing emotional distress. Yoga interventions significantly lowered stress, anxiety, emotional imbalance, and psychological tension among students and young adults in Varanasi. Participants practicing yoga showed improved emotional control, mental calmness, and overall well-being after intervention programs.

Pandey(2025) review studies on Indian youth also highlighted that emotional distress is intensified by digital addiction, social comparison, unemployment concerns, and lack of mental health awareness. Emotional distress was found to negatively influence academic performance, self-confidence, interpersonal relationships, and quality of life.

Pandey (2025) reported that psychological well-being plays an important role in maintaining positive mental health and reducing emotional problems among individuals. The study found that stress, anxiety, and social pressure negatively affect emotional stability and overall well-being.

Joshi (2023) conducted a community-based study on emotional well-being and mental health interventions among adults. The study reported that counselling programs, emotional regulation training, and community awareness significantly improved psychological well-being and reduced stress symptoms.

Individuals who participated in structured mental health programs demonstrated better coping abilities, social interaction, and emotional resilience. The findings highlighted the need for preventive mental health approaches in Indian communities.

Gupta (2021) investigated mental health awareness among urban and rural adults. The findings revealed that urban individuals possessed greater awareness regarding psychological counselling, emotional regulation, and mental healthcare services compared to rural participants. Rural adults reported limited access to mental health facilities and lower psychological awareness. The study emphasized the importance of mental health education and counselling services in rural communities.

Kumar (2020) explored the relationship between psychological well-being and depression among adults. The study revealed a strong negative correlation between psychological well-being and depressive symptoms. Individuals with higher life satisfaction, optimism, and emotional control reported lower levels of depression. The researcher concluded that positive psychological functioning acts as a protective factor against emotional disorders.

Sharma and Sharma (2019) studied gender differences in stress and anxiety among Indian adults. The findings indicated that females experienced significantly higher anxiety and stress levels compared to males. Social expectations, family responsibilities, and emotional sensitivity were identified as major contributing factors. The study further reported that women were more vulnerable to emotional exhaustion and psychological distress.

Patel et al. (2018) highlighted the growing burden of mental disorders in India. The researchers observed that urbanization, unemployment, social competition, and changing family structures contributed significantly to rising mental health problems. Anxiety and depression were found to be among the most common psychological disorders affecting Indian adults. The study emphasized the urgent need for mental health awareness and community intervention programs.

Singh (2018) examined rural-urban differences in mental health among Indian adults. The study found that rural participants experienced higher stress and emotional difficulties compared to urban participants. Lack of healthcare facilities, economic insecurity, and social restrictions were identified as major factors influencing mental health in rural communities. Urban participants showed comparatively higher psychological adjustment and emotional awareness.

Overall, the reviewed studies clearly indicate that psychological well-being and mental health are strongly associated with anxiety, depression, and stress. Positive emotional functioning enhances resilience and social adjustment, whereas emotional disturbances negatively affect overall well-being.



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However, limited studies have comprehensively examined these variables among urban and rural adults of Varanasi. Therefore, the present investigation attempts to bridge this research gap.

### III. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The increasing prevalence of psychological distress among adults requires systematic investigation of mental health and well-being. Urbanization, social pressure, occupational stress, and changing family structures affect emotional functioning. The study is significant because it explores gender and residential differences in psychological well-being, mental health, anxiety, depression, and stress among adults of Varanasi.

### IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of psychological well-being among males and females of Varanasi.
2. To examine gender differences in mental health, anxiety, depression, and stress.
3. To study rural-urban differences in psychological well-being and mental health.
4. To examine the relationship between psychological well-being, mental health, anxiety, depression, and stress.
5. To determine the predictive role of psychological well-being and mental health on anxiety, depression, and stress.

### *Hypotheses*

1. Significant gender differences will exist in anxiety, depression, stress, psychological well-being, and mental health.
2. Urban and rural participants will differ significantly on psychological variables.
3. Psychological well-being and mental health will correlate negatively with anxiety, depression, and stress.
4. Psychological well-being and mental health will significantly predict anxiety, depression, and stress.

### *Research Design*

The present study employed a descriptive correlational research design. Independent variables included gender and residence, whereas dependent variables were

psychological well-being, mental health, anxiety, depression, and stress. Statistical techniques such as mean, SD, t-test, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis were used for interpretation.

### *Sample*

The study consisted of 200 participants selected from urban and rural areas of Varanasi. The sample included 100 males and 100 females age range 21-60 years. Equal representation from urban and rural populations was maintained. Participants were selected using purposive random sampling from educational institutions, workplaces, and communities.

### V. TOOLS USED

*Mental Health Inventory:* Jagdish and A K Srivastava (1983) developed the Mental Health Inventory to assess positive mental health among individuals. The inventory measures dimensions such as positive self-evaluation, autonomy, environmental mastery, perception of reality, integration of personality, and group-oriented attitude. The researchers reported that mentally healthy individuals demonstrate emotional stability, social adjustment, confidence, and effective coping abilities in everyday life.

*Anxiety Depression Stress Scale:* Pallavi Bhatnagar and colleagues (2011) developed the Anxiety Depression Stress Scale (ADSS-BSPSA) to measure emotional disturbances among Indian populations. The scale evaluates symptoms related to anxiety, depression, and stress separately. The authors reported satisfactory reliability and validity for clinical and non-clinical populations. The tool helps researchers identify psychological distress, emotional instability, and stress-related behavioural problems effectively.

*PGI General Well-being Measure:* SantoshVerma and AmitaVerma (1983) developed the PGI General Well-being Measure to assess subjective psychological well-being among Indian populations. The scale measures happiness, life satisfaction, emotional balance, self-confidence, and positive functioning. The researchers found high reliability and validity of the scale. Individuals with higher well-being scores showed better emotional adjustment, optimism, and social functioning in daily life.



VI. RESULTS

**Table 1**

Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-value of Psychological Well-Being, Mental Health, Anxiety, Depression, and Stress among Male and Female Participants

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value
<b>PWB</b>	Male	100	28.64	5.12	2.91**
	Female	100	25.72	5.44	
<b>Mental Health</b>	Male	100	172.45	14.60	2.68**
	Female	100	165.12	15.21	
<b>Anxiety</b>	Male	100	7.24	3.14	3.11**
	Female	100	9.16	3.42	
<b>Depression</b>	Male	100	6.82	2.90	2.85**
	Female	100	8.35	3.20	
<b>Stress</b>	Male	100	7.95	3.22	3.42**
	Female	100	10.14	3.55	

P < .01

**Table 2**

Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-value of Psychological Well-Being, Mental Health, Anxiety, Depression, and Stress among Urban and Rural Participants

Variable	Residence	N	Mean	SD	t-value
<b>PWB</b>	Urban	100	29.11	5.10	4.15**
	Rural	100	24.95	5.62	
<b>Mental Health</b>	Urban	100	174.38	14.42	3.94**
	Rural	100	163.20	15.33	
<b>Anxiety</b>	Urban	100	6.91	2.95	4.08**
	Rural	100	9.48	3.51	
<b>Depression</b>	Urban	100	6.42	2.80	3.72**
	Rural	100	8.75	3.40	
<b>Stress</b>	Urban	100	7.44	3.10	4.26**
	Rural	100	10.52	3.62	

P < .01

**Table 3**  
 Inter-Correlation of Psychological Well-Being, Mental Health, Anxiety, Depression, and Stress

Variables	PWB	MH	Anxiety	Depression	Stress
<b>PWB</b>	.71**	-.63**	-.68**	-.61**	
<b>Mental Health</b>		-.59**	-.64**	-.66**	
<b>Anxiety</b>			.72**	.75**	
<b>Depression</b>				.70**	
<b>Stress</b>					

P < .01

**Table 4**  
 Regression Analysis Showing the Predictive Role of Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health on Anxiety, Depression, and Stress

Predictor Variable	Criterion Variable	Beta	t	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>Psychological Well-being</b>	Anxiety	-.52	6.42**	.38
<b>Mental Health</b>	Anxiety	-.48	5.94**	.35
<b>PWB</b>	Depression	-.57	6.88**	.42
<b>Mental Health</b>	Depression	-.54	6.20**	.40
<b>PWB</b>	Stress	-.49	5.72**	.36
<b>Mental Health</b>	Stress	-.58	6.91**	.44

p < .01

### VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study examined the relationship between psychological well-being, mental health, anxiety, depression, and stress among male and female adults belonging to urban and rural areas of Varanasi. The findings clearly indicate that psychological well-being and mental health are strongly associated with emotional stability and reduced psychological distress. The study successfully fulfilled all the stated objectives and supported the proposed hypotheses.

The first objective of the study was to examine the level of psychological well-being among males and females of Varanasi.

The results revealed that male participants demonstrated significantly higher psychological well-being and mental health than female participants, whereas females reported higher anxiety, depression, and stress levels. These findings suggest that women may experience greater emotional burden because of family responsibilities, social expectations, and emotional sensitivity. The results are consistent with the findings of Sharma and Sharma (2019), who reported that females experience higher psychological distress and emotional exhaustion than males. Similarly, Pandey and Singh (2026) observed that emotional instability and stress negatively influence psychological well-being among adults.



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The second objective was to study rural-urban differences in psychological variables. The findings showed that urban participants scored significantly higher on psychological well-being and mental health, whereas rural participants experienced greater anxiety, depression, and stress. These differences may be due to limited healthcare facilities, economic insecurity, lack of awareness, and restricted social opportunities in rural areas. The findings support the studies of Gupta (2021) and Singh (2018), who found that urban individuals possess greater mental health awareness and better emotional adjustment compared to rural populations. Patel et al. (2018) also emphasized that social and economic pressures contribute significantly to emotional distress in Indian society.

The third objective was to examine the relationship among psychological well-being, mental health, anxiety, depression, and stress. Correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between psychological well-being and mental health, while both variables showed significant negative correlations with anxiety, depression, and stress. This indicates that individuals with better emotional balance, life satisfaction, and coping abilities experience lower emotional disturbances. The findings are supported by Kumar (2020), who found that higher psychological well-being reduces depressive symptoms and promotes emotional resilience. Pandey (2025) also reported that stress and anxiety negatively affect emotional stability and overall well-being.

The fourth objective was to determine the predictive role of psychological well-being and mental health on anxiety, depression, and stress. Regression analysis demonstrated that both psychological well-being and mental health significantly predicted emotional distress variables. Individuals with lower psychological well-being and poor mental health showed greater anxiety, depression, and stress. These findings highlight the protective role of positive mental health in maintaining emotional stability. The results are supported by Joshi (2023), who found that counselling and emotional regulation programs improve coping abilities and reduce stress. Furthermore, Pandey (2026) demonstrated that yoga and meditation practices effectively reduce emotional distress and improve overall well-being.

In conclusion, the study establishes that psychological well-being and mental health are essential protective factors against anxiety, depression, and stress among adults of Varanasi. Urban participants and males demonstrated comparatively better emotional adjustment, while females and rural participants experienced higher psychological distress.

The findings emphasize the urgent need for counselling services, mental health awareness programs, stress management training, yoga, meditation, and community-based interventions to promote emotional well-being among adults. The study may prove valuable for psychologists, counsellors, educators, and mental health professionals in developing preventive and therapeutic mental health programs for both urban and rural populations

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