

WELLBEING AND HEALTHY LIVING: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COMPREHENSIVE WELLNESS

Debasmita Kar ¹, Tripti Paria ² & Suchismita Jana ³

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Author Details:

¹ Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Education, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India;

² B.Ed. Student, Babasaheb Ambedkar Education University (BSAEU), Kolkata, West Bengal, India;

³ B.Ed. Student, Babasaheb Ambedkar Education University (BSAEU), Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Corresponding Author:

Debasmita Kar

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.70096/tssr.250301025>

Abstract

This study examines the interconnected nature of wellbeing and healthy living through a holistic health perspective. Wellbeing is understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing physical, mental, social, and environmental dimensions, emphasizing that true health extends beyond the absence of illness. Drawing on holistic frameworks such as the Bio-Psycho-Social Model, the Salutogenic Model, and the Integrative Health Model, this research highlights how these dimensions operate synergistically to influence overall life satisfaction and resilience. The findings reveal that balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, effective stress management, strong social relationships, and environmentally responsible behaviors collectively contribute to long-term wellbeing. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of preventive health approaches and community-based initiatives that integrate mental health education, social support systems, and sustainable living practices. Such holistic strategies are shown to enhance individual wellness while fostering healthier, more resilient communities. The research concludes that promoting holistic wellness is essential for sustainable public health outcomes, social equity, and environmental sustainability, offering a comprehensive framework for future interventions and policy development.

Keywords: Holistic Wellness, Psychological Wellbeing, Healthy Living, Public Health Promotion

Introduction

Wellbeing is a multifaceted concept that encompasses not only physical health but also mental, social, and emotional dimensions. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014), wellbeing is defined as “a state in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to the community.” This definition highlights that wellbeing is more than the absence of illness; it involves a person’s capacity to lead a fulfilling and balanced life across various spheres. Psychological well-being refers to a person’s emotional and mental condition, indicating how effectively they cope with life’s difficulties and the extent to which they feel satisfied with their life overall (Adak et al., 2024).

On the other hand, healthy living involves practices and lifestyle choices that promote optimal physical health, mental wellness, and social harmony. It includes balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, stress management, and maintaining strong relationships and community ties (Sahoo et al., 2015). While wellbeing focuses on overall life satisfaction and mental peace, healthy living focuses on the proactive steps individuals can take to maintain and improve their health. Both concepts are interdependent and vital for leading a productive, fulfilling life.

In this research, we aim to explore the interconnectedness of these dimensions, emphasizing the idea that true wellness comes from a balance of physical, mental, and social health.

Importance of a Holistic Approach

A holistic approach to wellness is increasingly recognized as crucial for promoting long-term health, resilience, and happiness. The holistic model posits that human health cannot be understood solely in terms of physical or biological factors, but must also account for the mental, emotional, and social well-being of individuals (Green et al., 2017). This integrative perspective is critical because it acknowledges that all aspects of a person’s health are interconnected and that a focus on one area of wellbeing, while neglecting others, can undermine overall health.

Research has consistently demonstrated that adopting a holistic approach to health can significantly enhance life satisfaction and longevity. For instance, studies have shown that individuals who integrate mental health practices such as mindfulness or

meditation into their daily routines experience reduced levels of stress and enhanced cognitive function (Zeidan et al., 2010). Additionally, social connections and community involvement have been identified as key factors in improving both mental health and physical health, offering individuals emotional support, social inclusion, and a sense of belonging (Holt-Lunstad, 2018).

Moreover, the concept of wellness as a holistic construct aligns with emerging trends in public health that emphasize the prevention of disease rather than merely focusing on treating illness. As noted by Seligman (2011), the promotion of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement (the PERMA model) significantly contributes to improved quality of life and mental resilience. These elements, when integrated into health policies and practices, can lead to more sustainable health outcomes at the individual and community levels.

Therefore, a holistic approach to wellbeing is not merely an ideal but a practical framework that can empower individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles while fostering social equity and environmental sustainability (Barton & Grant, 2006). It promotes the idea that health is not just about the absence of disease, but rather the presence of multiple positive dimensions that contribute to a high quality of life.

Objectives of the study

- i. To Explore the Interconnectedness of Physical, Mental, and Social Dimensions of Wellbeing.
- ii. To Evaluate the Impact of a Holistic Approach to Health on Long-Term Wellbeing.
- iii. To Provide Practical Recommendations for Promoting Holistic Wellness in Public Health and Community Programs.

Theoretical Framework

The Holistic Health Model asserts that health is not merely the absence of disease but a dynamic balance of multiple dimensions that contribute to an individual's overall wellbeing. Central to this model is the belief that each aspect of a person's life-physical, mental, social, and environmental-is interconnected and must be considered in its entirety to achieve true wellness (Engel, 1977). This approach contrasts with traditional medical models that tend to focus primarily on treating specific symptoms or diseases in isolation.

Several frameworks fall under the umbrella of holistic health, each emphasizing the integration of various wellness dimensions. One such framework is the Bio-Psycho-Social Model, which posits that human health is influenced by biological, psychological, and social factors (Engel, 1977). This model provides a foundation for understanding that a person's wellbeing is shaped not only by their physical health but also by their mental state and social environment.

Another prominent model is the Salutogenic Model, which emphasizes factors that promote health and wellbeing rather than focusing on risk and disease (Antonovsky, 1979). This model advocates for strengthening a person's sense of coherence and their ability to cope with stressors, thus promoting resilience and mental wellbeing.

The Integrative Health Model is another key framework in holistic wellness, which blends conventional medical treatments with alternative therapies, emphasizing a personalized approach that integrates the mind, body, and spirit (Snyderman & Weil, 2002). This model supports the idea that health is a multi-dimensional and evolving state, shaped by the interplay of lifestyle choices, emotional wellbeing, social networks, and environmental factors.

Components of Wellbeing

A comprehensive understanding of holistic wellness involves examining its key components, each contributing to overall health in distinct ways.

- 1. Physical Wellness:** Physical wellness refers to the maintenance of a healthy body through proper nutrition, exercise, sufficient sleep, and preventive healthcare measures (Dunn, 1959). Nutrition plays a crucial role in maintaining energy levels, supporting immune function, and reducing the risk of chronic diseases (Stanton et al., 2014). Exercise is equally important, as it strengthens the cardiovascular system, promotes mental clarity, and reduces stress. Sleep is vital for cellular repair, cognitive function, and emotional regulation. Preventive healthcare, including regular check-ups and vaccinations, helps detect potential health issues early, reducing the risk of serious health complications.
- 2. Mental Wellness:** Mental wellness focuses on emotional regulation, stress management, and cognitive health. Effective stress management techniques, such as mindfulness or relaxation exercises, have been shown to reduce the physiological and psychological impact of stress, fostering resilience (Chesney et al., 2003). Emotional regulation involves the ability to manage one's emotional responses in healthy ways, which can prevent the development of mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression (Gross, 2002). Cognitive health involves maintaining a sharp mind through mental exercises and learning, preventing cognitive decline, and improving overall life satisfaction (Willis et al., 2006).
- 3. Social Wellness:** Social wellness pertains to the quality of one's relationships, social support systems, and community involvement. Strong relationships with family, friends, and colleagues provide emotional support, increase feelings of belonging, and contribute to a sense of purpose in life (Umberson & Montez, 2010). Social wellness also emphasizes community engagement, where individuals participate in community activities or volunteer work, which can enhance social connections and reduce feelings of isolation (Berkman et al., 2000). A robust support system ensures that individuals have access to assistance during difficult times, contributing to greater psychological resilience and emotional stability.
- 4. Environmental Wellness:** Environmental wellness refers to living in harmony with the environment and adopting sustainable practices that contribute to both individual and planetary health (Hartig et al., 2014). Sustainable living involves

making conscious choices to minimize one's ecological footprint, such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and choosing eco-friendly products. A connection with nature—whether through regular outdoor activities or maintaining green spaces—has been shown to reduce stress, improve mood, and boost cognitive function (Ulrich, 1984). Engaging in eco-friendly practices not only benefits the environment but also fosters a sense of responsibility and connection to the greater ecosystem.

Figure 1: Showing Component of Well-being



Discussion

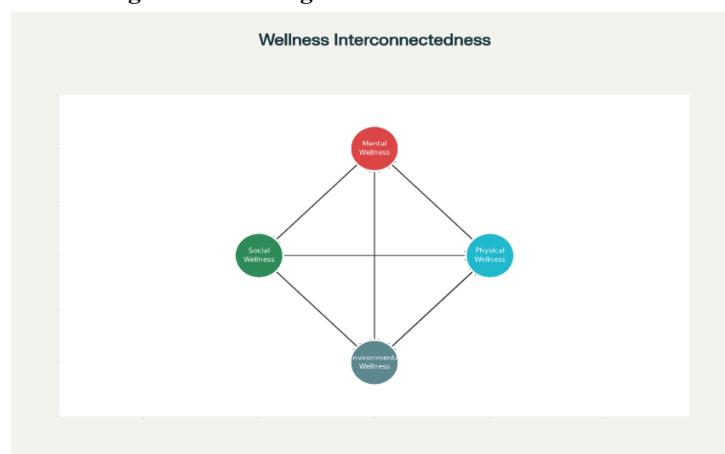
Objective 1: To Explore the Interconnectedness of Physical, Mental, and Social Dimensions of Wellbeing.

The interconnectedness of the physical, mental, and social dimensions of wellbeing has been widely acknowledged in holistic health models. It is increasingly recognized that health cannot be compartmentalized into isolated components but must be viewed as a dynamic interplay between multiple domains of human existence (Engel, 1977). Physical health, including nutrition, exercise, and sleep, directly influences mental health by affecting cognitive function, mood regulation, and emotional stability (Stanton et al., 2014). For example, regular physical activity not only strengthens the body but has been shown to alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety, improving mental wellbeing (Brosse et al., 2002).

Similarly, mental health is deeply interconnected with social health. Positive emotional states enhance social interactions, while supportive social relationships serve as protective factors against mental health disorders (Umberson & Montez, 2010). People with strong social networks are more likely to experience lower levels of stress and have better mental health outcomes (Berkman et al., 2000). Social support systems, such as family, friends, and community, help individuals cope with life's challenges, reducing the impact of stress and promoting psychological resilience (Holt-Lunstad, 2018).

This synergy between physical, mental, and social dimensions also suggests that lifestyle choices in one area can have cascading effects on the others. For instance, individuals who engage in physical activities often report better mental clarity and stronger social connections, which together contribute to a higher quality of life (Dunn, 1959). This holistic view underscores the necessity of integrating all facets of health in public health initiatives and personal health practices.

Figure 2: Showing Wellness Interconnectedness



Objective 2: To Evaluate the Impact of a Holistic Approach to Health on Long-Term Wellbeing.

A holistic approach to health goes beyond focusing solely on the treatment of illness; it emphasizes the importance of promoting preventive health and enhancing the overall quality of life by considering the integration of physical, mental, and social health

practices. Research indicates that people who adopt a holistic approach—such as combining regular physical exercise with stress management techniques, healthy diets, and strong social support systems—experience not only improvements in physical health but also enhanced psychological and emotional wellbeing (Seligman, 2011).

For example, the Salutogenic Model (Antonovsky, 1979) highlights the importance of fostering a sense of coherence, which helps individuals navigate stress and adversity by improving their ability to stay healthy in the face of challenges. This model has shown that individuals with a high sense of coherence—who embrace a holistic health approach—are less likely to suffer from chronic diseases, experience mental health issues, or encounter social isolation.

Furthermore, a study by Zeidan et al. (2010) found that mindfulness and other mental health practices, which are key components of a holistic health approach, lead to long-term reductions in stress and improved emotional regulation. The integration of such practices into daily life can therefore be seen as a form of preventive health that reduces the need for medical intervention in the future.

By contrast, conventional health models that focus primarily on addressing physical symptoms and diseases may neglect the role of mental and social health in overall wellness. This narrow focus can limit the effectiveness of treatment and care, as it overlooks how interconnected these factors are in fostering long-term wellbeing. Therefore, a holistic approach offers a more sustainable, comprehensive path toward maintaining health over the lifespan.

Objective 3: To Provide Practical Recommendations for Promoting Holistic Wellness in Public Health and Community Programs.

This objective seeks to translate the theoretical underpinnings of holistic health into practical, actionable strategies for enhancing wellness at the community and public health levels. Public health initiatives that incorporate a holistic wellness approach recognize the multidimensional nature of health and aim to integrate physical, mental, social, and environmental health practices in community-based programs (Barton & Grant, 2006).

Community-based wellness programs that promote active living, mental health education, social support networks, and environmental sustainability have been shown to increase engagement in healthy behaviors and improve overall community health. Programs focusing on physical activity, such as walking or cycling groups, can improve physical fitness while simultaneously fostering social connections (Holt-Lunstad, 2018). Mental health initiatives, including counseling services, mindfulness training, and stress management workshops, can address the emotional and psychological needs of individuals while promoting mental resilience (Chesney et al., 2003).

Furthermore, environmental health programs that encourage sustainable living and eco-friendly practices also have positive effects on individual and community health. Creating green spaces, promoting local food systems, and encouraging eco-friendly transportation options not only contribute to environmental sustainability but also enhance mental health by reducing stress and providing opportunities for outdoor activity (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).

At the policy level, governments and health organizations can adopt integrated health frameworks that emphasize the importance of a balanced approach to wellness. These frameworks can incorporate strategies for improving physical, mental, social, and environmental health, ensuring that health promotion efforts are not limited to traditional medical care but extend to broader societal factors. For instance, public health campaigns that advocate for social equity, mental health awareness, and environmentally conscious lifestyles can help foster a culture of holistic wellness at the community level.

Ultimately, the goal is to foster a sustainable model for health promotion that is proactive, inclusive, and equitable. By offering actionable recommendations based on holistic health principles, this research aims to inform future public health policies and community initiatives that can lead to improved quality of life for individuals and societies at large.

Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that wellbeing and healthy living are deeply interconnected constructs that must be approached holistically to achieve sustainable health outcomes. The evidence shows that physical, mental, social, and environmental dimensions of health do not function independently; rather, they operate as mutually reinforcing components that collectively shape an individual's overall quality of life. A strong physical foundation supports mental clarity and emotional balance, while mental resilience enhances social engagement and healthy lifestyle choices. Likewise, supportive social networks and environmentally responsible living contribute to reduced stress, improved physical functioning, and greater life satisfaction. The holistic health perspective therefore offers a more comprehensive and effective framework than traditional biomedical models, which tend to isolate illness and overlook the broader determinants of wellbeing. Research emphasizing preventive practices—such as mindfulness, physical activity, community involvement, and sustainable living—highlights the long-term benefits of holistic approaches in reducing disease burden, enhancing resilience, and promoting psychological and emotional stability. By integrating these elements, individuals are more likely to experience lasting wellness rather than temporary health improvements.

At the community and policy levels, adopting holistic wellness strategies can lead to transformative public health outcomes. Initiatives that combine physical fitness, mental health education, social support systems, and environmental sustainability not only address immediate health concerns but also cultivate healthier, more resilient communities. Therefore, promoting holistic wellness is not merely an aspirational ideal; it is a practical and necessary pathway toward improved public health, social equity, and environmental responsibility.

In conclusion, this study underscores that true wellbeing extends beyond the absence of disease. It is the result of balanced development across multiple dimensions of life, empowered by proactive lifestyle choices and supportive social and environmental structures. Encouraging holistic wellness at both individual and community levels holds significant potential for enhancing long-term health, happiness, and overall quality of life, making it an essential focus for future research, public health policy, and community-based interventions.

Acknowledgment: No

Author's Contribution: *Debasmita Kar*: Methodology, Analysis, Referencing; *Tripti Paria*: Data Collection, Literature Review, Referencing; *Suchismita Jana*: Data Collection, Referencing

Funding: No

Declaration: All the authors have given consent for the publication.

Competing Interest: No

References

1. Adak, C., Mandal, C., Mura, G.C., Paria, M., & Sinha, M. (2024). Relationship between Self-Esteem and Well-Being of Tribal Students. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 45(3), 94-103.
2. Antonovsky, A. (1979). *Health, stress, and coping*. Jossey-Bass.
3. Barton, H., & Grant, M. (2006). A health map for the local human habitat. *Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, 126(6), 252-253.
4. Berkman, L. F., Glass, T., Brissette, I., & Seeman, T. E. (2000). From social integration to health: Durkheim in the new millennium. *Social Science & Medicine*, 51(6), 843-857.
5. Brosse, A. L., Sheets, E. S., Lett, H. P., & Blumenthal, J. A. (2002). Exercise and the treatment of clinical depression in adults: Recent findings and future directions. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 53(4), 647-657.
6. Chesney, S. A., Goodwin, M. D., & Abell, S. C. (2003). Stress, coping, and health outcomes. *Psychological Health*, 18(6), 639-651.
7. Dunn, H. L. (1959). High-level wellness. *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 51(1), 1-7.
8. Engel, G. L. (1977). The need for a new medical model: A challenge for biomedicine. *Science*, 196(4286), 129-136.
9. Evans, G. W. (2003). *The built environment and mental health*. *Journal of Urban Health*, 80(4), 536-548.
10. Green, J., Tones, K., Cross, R., & Woodall, J. (2017). *Health promotion: Planning and strategies*. Sage.
11. Gross, J. J. (2002). Emotion regulation: Affective, cognitive, and social consequences. *Psychophysiology*, 39(3), 281-291.
12. Hartig, T., Evans, G. W., Jamner, L. D., Davis, D. S., & Garling, T. (2003). *Tracking restoration in natural and urban field settings*. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23(2), 109-123.
13. Holt-Lunstad, J. (2018). Social relationships and mortality risk: A meta-analytic review. *PLOS Medicine*, 7(7), e1000316.
14. Kaplan, R., & Kaplan, S. (1989). *The experience of nature: A psychological perspective*. Cambridge University Press.
15. Sahoo, K., Sahoo, S. M., Choudhury, A. K., & Sofi, N. (2015). Obesity in children and adolescents: A growing problem. *The Clinical Obesity*, 5(4), 185-188.
16. Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Free Press.
17. Snyderman, R., & Weil, A. (2002). *Integrative medicine: Bringing medicine back to its roots*. *British Medical Journal*, 324(7335), 119-122.
18. Stanton, R., Reaburn, P., & Happell, B. (2014). *Exercise and mental health: An overview*. *International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, 21(8), 392-397.
19. Ulrich, R. S. (1984). *View through a window may influence recovery from surgery*. *Science*, 224(4647), 420-421.
20. WHO (World Health Organization). (2014). *Health promotion and well-being*.
21. Willis, S. L., Schaie, K. W., & Baltes, P. B. (2006). Cognitive functioning in aging and the elderly: A life-span perspective. *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, 9, 156-180.
22. Zeidan, F., Johnson, S. K., Diamond, B. J., & David, Z. (2010). Mindfulness meditation improves cognition: Evidence of brief mental training. *Consciousness and cognition*, 19(2), 598-605.

Publisher's Note

The Social Science Review A Multidisciplinary Journal remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published data, map and institutional affiliations.

©The Author(s) 2025. Open Access.

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>