

BRIDGING MENTAL WELLBEING – A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Mental wellbeing has emerged as one of the most important social concerns of the modern era, extending beyond individual health to become a collective responsibility of families, communities, institutions and society. According to the World Health Organization “Mental health is more than the absence of mental disorders; it is an integral part of health and well-being.”. [20] This understanding shifts mental wellbeing from a purely medical concern to a broader social and developmental responsibility. This article, “Bridging Mental Wellbeing – A Sociological Perspective,” examines the transformation of human relationships from traditional close-knit communities to today’s fast-paced, technology-driven world and explores its impact on emotional health.

Earlier societies, despite limited resources, were strengthened by strong family bonds, community participation and emotional support systems. In contrast, modern society offers greater opportunities, technological advancement and connectivity, yet many individuals experience increasing loneliness, stress, anxiety and emotional isolation. The article highlights how changing family structures, excessive competition, digital dependence, declining interpersonal interactions and social stigma have contributed to growing mental health challenges, particularly among youth.

The discussion emphasizes that mental wellbeing is not merely a personal issue but a social responsibility requiring collective action. It advocates rebuilding meaningful human connections while embracing the advantages of modern progress. The article underlines the importance of emotional education, supportive families, inclusive communities, school-based interventions, physical activity and initiatives that promote resilience and belonging.

Furthermore, it stresses the urgent need to integrate mental wellbeing into every discipline, including education, workplaces, healthcare and community development. Sustainable solutions require balancing technology with human values, encouraging open conversations, reducing stigma and creating environments where individuals feel heard, supported and valued.

The article concludes that society cannot return to the past, nor should it reject progress. Instead, the path forward lies in combining the compassion and connectedness of earlier communities with the knowledge, innovation and opportunities of the present. True mental wellbeing can be achieved when progress moves together with empathy, relationships and collective responsibility.

Keywords: Mental Wellbeing, Social Connection, Youth Mental Health, Emotional Resilience, Digital Society, Community Support, Stress, Anxiety, Human Relationships, Social Responsibility

INTRODUCTION

TRADITIONAL SOCIETY & SOCIAL BONDING

In earlier times, people lived in close-knit communities. Joint families were common. People shared their lives—their happiness, their struggles, their responsibilities. Strong social integration protects individuals from emotional vulnerability. He argued that weakening of social bonds increases isolation and psychological distress.[7] There was always someone to talk to, someone to support you.

Life was not easy, but people were **not alone**. There was a sense of belonging, emotional security, and strong social connections. Even if people did not use the term “mental health,” they were, in many ways, emotionally supported by their environment.

MODERN SOCIETY, LONELINESS & TECHNOLOGY

Now, let us look at **modern society**. Today, we live in a fast-moving world. Technology has connected us globally, but at the same time, many people feel more isolated than ever before. We expect more from technology and less from each other,” highlighting the paradox of the digital age where technological connectivity does not always translate into emotional connection.[15] modern society as a period of “liquid modernity,” where rapid change and uncertainty have transformed human relationships and created new emotional challenges.[1]

Families are becoming smaller. People are busy with work, studies, and personal goals. Social media has increased comparison and pressure. Everyone seems connected, yet many feel unheard.

So, what has changed?

RESOURCES BUT LACK OF CONNECTIONS

Earlier, people lacked resources but had relationships. Today, we have resources, but often lack deep connections. decline through the concept of social capital, emphasizing that relationships, trust, and community networks are essential resources for individual and collective wellbeing. [12]This shift has

had a serious **impact on society**. We are seeing increasing levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness—especially among youth. There is pressure to succeed, to perform, to meet expectations. Many young people are silently struggling. Mental health challenges are no longer individual problems—Now it is a **social issue**. Giddens (1991) argues that in modern society, individuals continuously construct their self-identity within changing social conditions, creating new forms of uncertainty and pressure.[5]

UNICEF (2021) highlights that mental health is a fundamental part of children's overall wellbeing and calls for stronger support systems for young people. [17]

REASONS FOR MENTAL HEALTH DEPRIVATION

Now, let us understand the reasons for mental health deprivation in today's society:

First one is, social isolation – People are physically and emotionally disconnected.

Second is, excessive competition and pressure – Whether in education or careers.

Third is, digital overload – Constant exposure to screens, comparisons, and information.

Fourth, lack of emotional education – We teach academics, but not how to handle emotions.

Goleman (1995) emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy and relationship management, as essential abilities for successful human development. [7]

Fifth, weak community support systems – Less interaction with neighbors, extended family, and society.

And finally, stigma – Many people still hesitate to talk about their mental struggles.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory explains that human development is influenced by multiple environments including family, school, peer groups, community and society. Therefore, mental wellbeing requires support across all social systems. [2]

So the question is—what can we do?

How do we bridge mental wellbeing in today's world?

The answer lies in combining the strengths of both early and modern societies. We need to rebuild human connections—within families, communities, and institutions. In society, we must create safe spaces where people can talk openly without fear or judgment. We also need community-based initiatives programs, discussions, and events that bring people together. And very importantly, we must encourage physical activity and sports. Activities like marathons are not just about fitness they build resilience, discipline, and a sense of unity. These activities have become very meaningful. They connect people, create awareness, and promote both physical and mental wellbeing. Seligman's (2011)

wellbeing framework highlights positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment as essential elements of flourishing. Community initiatives and collective participation strengthen these dimensions of wellbeing. [14]

Holt-Lunstad, Smith and Layton (2010) demonstrated that strong social relationships significantly influence health outcomes, reinforcing the importance of community connection.[8]

“So, what is the need today?

The need today is not just more awareness—but real connection.

We don’t just need more information about mental health, we need people who listen, understand, and support each other. The need today is to balance technology with human touch. To use digital platforms wisely, but not let them replace real relationships. The need today is to bring mental wellbeing into every field—in our schools, workplaces, homes, and communities. We also need to **teach emotional strength**—how to handle stress, failure, and pressure, especially among our youth. Most importantly, the need today is to **remove stigma**—to make it normal to talk about mental health without fear or hesitation. And finally, the need today is to **come together as a society**—because mental wellbeing is not an individual journey, it is a collective responsibility.

If we can do this, we can truly build a healthier, happier, and more connected world.”

“So, can we reverse time?

The answer is absolutely **no, we cannot go back to the past**. And even if we could, it may not be the solution. Early societies had strong relationships, yes but they also lacked awareness, resources, and opportunities that we have today. So the real question is not about going back... It is about **moving forward wisely**. We cannot reverse time, but we can **learn from the past**.

We have to run along with time—but not blindly. We must carry forward the **values of connection, empathy, and community** from early societies, and combine them with the **knowledge, technology, and awareness** of modern times. That is the balance we need. Today, platforms like WhatsApp have definitely increased connectivity. We can message anyone, anytime, anywhere. We are always ‘connected’.

But at the same time, something very important is getting lost—**personal human connection**. People are no longer meeting each other like before. We don’t visit, we don’t sit together, we don’t greet or celebrate in the same way. And the common reason we hear is ‘we don’t have time.’ But the real question is—**do we really not have time, or have we changed our priorities?**

Because the same people who say they don’t have time can spend hours on their phones. So it is not that time is missing—it is that **meaningful human interaction is being replaced by convenience**.

A message can never replace a conversation. An emoji can never replace a smile. A forward can never replace a heartfelt visit. Yes, technology connects us—but it should not replace relationships.

If we want better mental wellbeing, we must bring back **real human moments**— meeting, talking, listening, and simply being there for each other. Because at the end of the day, it is not the number of messages we receive, but the **quality of relationships we live** that truly matters.” “**Now, one of the most important concerns of mental wellbeing today is the increasing levels of depression, anxiety, and the growing suicidal tendencies among young people** Many a times, we hear disturbing reports of suicides among youth and even children, caused by stigma, pressure, anxiety, and a sense of helplessness. This is not just an individual issue—it is a reflection of the kind of society we are creating, where young minds feel burdened instead of supported.” WHO (2024) states that “Every suicide is a tragedy that affects families, communities and entire countries,” demonstrating that suicide prevention requires collective social action. [20] The National Mental Health Survey of India (NIMHANS, 2016) highlights the growing burden of mental health challenges and the need for awareness, accessibility and early intervention.[10]

According to the National Crime Records Bureau,

India recorded **over 1.7 lakh suicide cases in recent years**, which means **around 450–500 people lose their lives every day**. Even more concerning is that a large number of these cases are among **young people aged 15 to 29 years**. Reports from the World Health Organization also show that **depression and anxiety are among the leading causes of illness among youth globally, including India**. In our country, common reasons include:

- Academic pressure
- Family expectations
- Relationship issues
- Unemployment and career stress
- Social stigma around mental health

And the most worrying part is—

many young people suffer in silence because they are afraid to speak or seek help. These numbers are not just statistics—they represent real lives, real families, and real pain. This clearly shows that mental health is not just a personal issue anymore— it is a **national concern**.” These numbers are not just statistics, they represent real lives, real families, and real pain. This clearly shows that mental health is not just a personal issue anymore— it is a **national concern**.”

An estimated 7, 26,000 people die by suicide every year, in the previous years more than one in every 100 deaths worldwide was due to suicide. And for each person who dies, many more have attempted suicide. The impact on family, friends and communities can be devastating. Suicide can occur at any

point in a person's lifespan, and is the third leading cause of death among 15 to 29-year-olds globally. A worldwide epidemic that affects all regions, over 73% of suicides occur in low and middle-income countries. However, due to the stigma surrounding suicide and the legal consequences suicide and attempted suicide are often under-reported, approximately 80 countries have quality data concerning suicide. This is an important gap in knowledge and analysis: tackling suicide rates requires better data. In addition to young people, some other groups in society are more vulnerable to death by suicide and attempted suicide than others. the LGBTQI+ community, refugees and migrants, indigenous peoples, and prisoners – are at high risk of suicide, attempted suicide, and suicidal ideation. Suicide is complex, with mental ill health being a risk factor, and the link between the two very well established., Around the world, 726,000 people die by suicide every year – in 2025, more than one in every 100 deaths globally was due to suicide. Reductions in the number of deaths by suicide is the measure by which improvements in mental health are tracked according to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2015-2030.

If we only run with time, we may lose ourselves. If we only look back, we may stop growing.

Every individual has to **move forward, but stay rooted. Progress, but stay connected.**

That is how we can truly bridge mental wellbeing in today's world.”

“So, is it good to move ahead with technology and all modern developments?

The answer is **yes, it is good... but with balance.**

Technology is not the problem. In fact, it has made our lives easier, more connected, and full of opportunities. It helps in education, healthcare, communication, and even mental health support. But the challenge is **how we use it.** If we depend too much on other things we may lose real human connection. If we keep comparing our lives on social media, it can affect our self-esteem. If we don't take breaks, it can lead to stress and mental fatigue. So, what should we do?

We should **use technology wisely, not let it control us.** For mental wellbeing, we need a few simple things:

First, **stay connected with real people** family, friends, community.

Second, **take breaks from screens** give your mind some rest.

Third, **be physically active** sports, walking, any activity helps.

Fourth, **express your feelings** don't keep everything inside.

And most importantly, **accept that it is okay to not to be okay.**

Modern life is fast, but our mind needs peace. So yes, move forward with technology, but also stay grounded in human values. Because true wellbeing comes not just from progress, but from **balance in life.** ”Finally, we must remember one simple truth: Mental health is not just a personal issue, it is a **shared responsibility.** If we want a healthy society, we must create an environment where people feel

supported, valued, and connected. Let us bring back the warmth of early societies and combine it with the knowledge and opportunities of modern times. Let us build a society where no one feels alone.

CONCLUSION

Mental wellbeing is not merely the absence of mental health challenges; it is the presence of emotional strength, meaningful relationships, resilience and a sense of belonging. Keyes (2002) explains mental health as a continuum from languishing to flourishing, emphasizing that the goal of society should not only be reducing mental illness but enabling individuals to achieve positive wellbeing. [9] The journey of human society from close-knit communities to a rapidly advancing digital world reflects both progress and challenges. While modern society has provided greater opportunities, resources and technological connectivity, it has also created new forms of isolation, pressure and emotional distance. The solution does not lie in returning to the past or rejecting modernization, but in creating a thoughtful balance between progress and human connection. We must preserve the values of empathy, togetherness, family bonding and community support that strengthened earlier societies, while utilizing the knowledge, awareness and innovations available today.

Mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness and rising emotional distress among youth remind us that wellbeing is no longer only an individual concern—it is a social responsibility. Families, educational institutions, workplaces, communities and policymakers must collectively build environments where people feel supported, understood and empowered to express themselves without fear or stigma.

There is an urgent need to integrate mental wellbeing into every discipline and every stage of life through emotional education, awareness programs, physical activity, social participation and strong support systems. Technology should remain a tool that enhances human relationships, not a replacement for genuine interaction and compassion.

The future of a healthy society will depend not only on economic growth or technological achievements, but on the emotional strength and happiness of its people. A truly developed society is one where no individual feels unheard, unsupported or alone.

By combining the warmth of human relationships with the opportunities of modern advancement, we can bridge the gap in mental wellbeing and create a world that is more connected, compassionate and resilient.

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