Mind and Society ISSN 2277-6907
Vol. 10, No. III & IV, Sep. & Dec., 2021, Page No.98 to 104

# Effect of Gender, Family Type, Caste - Category and Socio-Economic Status on Psychological Well-Being of Rural Population

*Received: 12 November 2021*
*Accepted: 15 December 2021*

*** Rahul Tomer**
****Bhagat Singh**

**Abstract**

*Psychological Well-Being (PWB), a multidimensional concept can be affected by various aspects of life. In this study researchers had tried to find out the effect of gender, family type, caste -category and socio-economic status (SES) on psychological well-being of rural population. For this study, 1216 participants were randomly selected. Psychological Well-Being scale constructed by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012) was used to collect data. Critical Ratio and one way ANOVA was computed. Results showed that Gender and Caste significantly affect the psychological well-being while Family type and Socio-Economic Status (SES) did not significantly affect the PWB among the rural population. It can be concluded that female subjects have significantly higher PWB to that of male subjects. Scheduled caste category subjects have significantly higher PWB than that of general category subjects. Middle SES subjects also have significantly higher PWB than the high SES subjects. These findings are discussed to understand the causes of low PWB among male, general caste-category subjects and upper SES subjects so that steps can be taken to enhance the PWB among these groups.*

**Keywords:** Gender, Caste-Category, Family type, Socio-Economic Status, Psychological Well- Being

Psychological well-being (PWB) is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively (Huppert, 2009). Psychological Well-Being (PWB) can vary greatly concerning age, gender, and residence. PWB is a diverse multidimensional concept (Macleod & Moore, 2000). Makvana (2020) found in his research a significant difference between males and females regarding their evaluation of their PWB. Similar results found by Creed and Watson (2003), Akhter (2015), and Larson et al. (2008). However, some other studies revealed no significant gender difference on PWB (Kantariya, 2017; Khumalo et al., 2012; Kotar, 2013; Roothman et al., 2003; Waghmare, 2016, 2017; Tomer & Singh, 2019). Residential area, age and gender were found significant factors in adolescents' PWB (Maroof & Khan, 2016; Arya & Sangwan, 2018). However, Kumari and Sandhya (2018) found that gender and residence locale do not significantly affect psychological well-being.

Falci (1997) found a significant relationship between the family system and psychological well-being of individuals in later life. Another study (Prajapati, 2013) found no significant difference between the psychological well-being of joint and nuclear families. Females of the joint family had better psychological well-being than male of the nuclear family (Gul et al. (2017). Sharma et al. (2015) found that there is a positive relation between family environment and well-being. In a study, Sinha and Singh (1998) found that subjects belonging to the forward caste were better adjusted in the home than the students belonging to the backward caste. No significant effect of caste-category on psychological well-being among college students was found by Tomer and Singh (2019, 2021). Similar result was found by Suresh and Venkatesh (2021).

Socio-Economic Status (SES) is an important factor that affects psychological well-being. High socio-economic status is a major predictor of emotional response and well-being (Ryff & Singer, 2008; Shanker & Singh, 2013). Another study done by Reshma and Manjula (2016) found a significant difference in socio-economic status and psychological well-being. Adults belonging to the lower socio-economic status group have low level of psychological well-being. High income is a predictor of better psychological well-being (Clarke

**Ph.D Scholar, Department of Psychology, Meerut College, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India*
***Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Meerut College, Meerut, India.*

et al., 2000). Sharma and Sahu (2014) found that the high-income group and middle-income group significantly differed on psychological well-being.

The researcher in this study tried to find out the effect of gender, type of family, caste-category, and socio-economic status (SES) on psychological well-being (PWB) in rural Indian population. Though there are a lot of studies conducted on gender, family type, SES and PWB but these studies were conducted mostly on urban population and showing mixed results. Although, some studies that were conducted on rural population but for the present study the sample from rural areas nearby to national capital region (NCR) Delhi has been selected, as people residing in these areas are living in villages and go for work and to earn livelihood commute to urban areas. Besides that, there are a few studies related to caste -category and PWB. So, researchers tried to find out the role of these variables on psychological well-being in rural Indian population with large sample size.

**Objectives**

To study the effect of gender, family structure, caste – category and socio-economic status on psychological well- being.

**Hypothesis**

Null hypothesis was formulated that there would be a significant effect of gender, family structure, caste – category and socio-economic status on psychological well- being.

**Method**

**Sample:** Stratified random sampling technique was used to collect the data. For this study, 1216 participants were selected randomly. Out of which there were 598 male and 618 female; 464 from nuclear and 752 from joint family; 476 from lower SES, 353 from middle SES, and 387 from upper SES; 380 from general, 465 from OBC and 371 from SC category. Mean age of the subjects was 30.05 years with SD 6.175. All other possible relevant variables such as age, education, marital status were controlled with the process of randomization. Moreover, all the subjects were selected from rural population of Aligarh, and Meerut districts of Uttar Pradesh.

**Tool Used:** To measure the SES level of the subject, Pareek's revised Socio-Economic Status Scale (Singh, Sharma, & Nagesh, 2017) was used. This scale has nine different factors which assess the socioeconomic status of the individual. The reliability of the test was 0.78.

Psychological Well-Being was measured using Psychological Well-Being Questionnaires developed and standardized by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012). It is a five-point rating scale containing 50 items. This scale has a test - retest reliability 0.87; internal consistency 0.90 and content validity 0.94.

**Procedure of Data Collection**

The researcher contacted the subjects individually to make the rapport with the participants for data collection. First, they were made aware of the purpose of the study and then asked to sign a "willingly participation consent form" after that they were asked to provide information like gender, age, education, type of family and caste they belong to, etc. The researchers asked the subject to fill first the Socio-Economic Status and after that Psychological Well-Being Scale. All procedures performed in the study were in accordance with the ethical standards of the "University Grant Commission, New Delhi India" and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Approval was granted by the research committee, Meerut College, Meerut India.

**Result and Discussion**

In this study, researcher tried to find out the effect of gender (male-female), family type (nuclear-joint family), caste-category (General, OBC and SC) and SES (High, Middle and Low SES) on psychological well-being among rural population. To test the various hypotheses Critical Ratio (CR) and one way ANOVA was used to analyse the data. As critical ratio and one way ANOVA can be applied on uneven number of subjects and large sample size always gives better results so researchers took the uneven number of subjects in the study. Table-1 showed the summary of Critical Ratio of PWB across the gender and type of family. The mean value of PWB of male and female subjects was found 193.77 (SD=19.65) and 196.66 (SD=20.91) respectively. Critical Ratio (CR) for gender with df 1214 was 2.48, p=0.013. It means that, mean difference between men and women was significant at 0.05 level of significance. Mean and SD of PWB of subjects belonging to nuclear family and joint family was 195.37 (SD=20.05) and 195.15 (SD=20.54) respectively. The CR value for family type with df 1214 was found 0.08, p=0.856. It means that mean difference between nuclear and joint family was found non-significant.

**Table 1: Summary of Critical Ratio between Mean of PWB across Gender and Family Type (N=1216)**

| Independent Variable | | Psychological Well-Being (PWB) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | M | SD | df | CR | Sig. |
| Gender | Male | 598 | 193.77 | 19.65 | | | |
| | Female | 618 | 196.66 | 20.91 | 1214 | 2.48 | **0.013** |
| Family Type | Nuclear | 464 | 195.37 | 20.05 | | | |
| | Joint | 752 | 195.15 | 20.54 | 1214 | 0.18 | 0.856 |

The mean and SD of PWB of subjects belonging to general caste (GC) category, other backward classes (OBC) category and scheduled caste (SC) category was 193.42 & 19.94; 195.22 & 20.63 and 197.12 & 20.28 respectively. The mean of PWB of SC category was highest among the three caste-category groups and the lowest mean was of GC category subjects among the three caste-category groups (Table-2).

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of PWB across Caste-Category**

| Independent Variables | | Psychological Well-Being | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | Mean | SD |
| Caste-Category | GC | 380 | 193.42 | 19.94 |
| | OBC | 465 | 195.22 | 20.63 |
| | SC | 371 | 197.12 | 20.28 |

Summary of ANOVA for PWB of GC, OBC and SC category is shown in Table-3. The F-ratio (2, 1213) was 3.11, p=.045, which was found significant at 0.05 level of significance. It means that caste-category produced significant difference in the psychological well-being of the three caste groups.

**Table 3: Summary of ANOVA for Caste-Category (N=1216)**

| Source | SS | df | MS | F-ratio | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Group | 2568.89 | 2 | 1284.445 | | |
| Within Group | 500322.39 | 1213 | 412.47 | 3.11 | **0.045** |
| Total | 502891.28 | 1215 | | | |

To know the status of mean difference among various caste groups on psychological well-being, the Tukey HSD post-hoc analysis was calculated. Results are showed in Table-4. A significant mean difference (Md=3.69, p=.034) was found between SC and GC category subjects. While the mean difference between general & OBC (Md=1.80, p=0.04) and between OBC & SC (Md= -1.89, p=0.37) was found non-significant. It means that the effect of SES was found significant only due to the significant mean difference between psychological well-being of SC and General Caste-category subjects (Table 4).

**Table 4: Tukey Post Hoc Analysis between PWB of GC, OBC and SC subjects**

| (I) Caste | (J) Caste | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| General | OBC | -1.80115 | 1.40444 | 0.405 |
| OBC | SC | -1.89796 | 1.41379 | 0.372 |
| SC | General | 3.69911 | 1.48230 | **0.034** |

The mean and SD of PWB of subjects belonging to lower SES, middle SES and upper SES was 195.59 & 18.56; 196.79 & 20.30 and 193.38 & 22.29 respectively. The mean of PWB of middle SES subjects was found highest among the three SES groups and the lowest mean was of upper SES subjects among the three SES groups (Table 5).

**Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of PWB across SES.**

| Independent Variables | | Psychological Well-Being | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | Mean | SD |
| SES | Lower SES | 476 | 195.59 | 18.56 |
| | Middle SES | 353 | 196.79 | 20.30 |
| | Upper SES | 387 | 193.38 | 22.29 |

Summary of ANOVA for PWB of lower, middle and upper SES is shown in Table-6. The F-ratio (2, 1213) was 2.73, p=.065, which was found non-significant. It means that SES does not affect significantly the psychological well-being among rural population

**Table 6: Summary of ANOVA for SES (N=1216)**

| Source | SS | Df | MS | F-ratio | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Group | 2255.43 | 2 | 1127.715 | | |
| Within Group | 500635.85 | 1213 | 412.725 | 2.73 | 0.065 |
| Total | 502891.28 | 1215 | | | |

Table 7 showed the summary of Critical Ratio of PWB of middle and upper SES. The mean value of PWB of middle and upper subjects was found 196.79 (SD=20.30) and 193.38 (SD= 22.29) respectively. CR between middle and upper SES for df 738 was found 2.17, p=0.030, which was found significant at 0.05 level of significance. It means that middle SES subjects have significantly higher psychological well-being than that of upper SES subjects in rural population. While, mean difference on psychological well-being was found non-significant between other SES groups i.e. lower and upper SES; middle and upper SES subjects.

**Table 7: Summary of Critical Ratio between Mean of PWB of Middle and Upper SES (N=740)**

| Variable | | Psychological Well-Being (PWB) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | M | SD | df | CR | Sig. |
| SES | Middle SES | 353 | 196.79 | 20.30 | | | |
| | Upper SES | 387 | 193.38 | 22.29 | 738 | 2.17 | **0.030** |

Results showed that there was a significant gender difference in PWB of rural population. So, we accept our first hypothesis. Women have significantly higher PWB to that of men. If we look into the social structure of Indian rural families, we found that there is a clear division of work and duties for male and female. If a man is not doing a job or business, he has to cultivate the harvest on the agricultural land and to do all the

work related to agriculture. While women have to perform the entire household work and take care of the pet animals of the family. If a man is on a job or doing business, women not only perform all household work but also perform other day-to-day agriculture work like cutting the crops for pet animals, watering the crops etc. It means that women play an active role in the family and thus having a feeling of satisfaction that they have value in their family and society. This may be the reason for the higher PWB among females than males of rural population. Our results are in congruence with the results of the Makvana (2020); Creed and Watson (2003); Akhter (2015); and Larson et al. (2008).

As far as the effect of family type on PWB, results showed that there was no significant effect of family type on psychological well-being among the rural population. So we reject our second hypothesis. Both the subjects' groups belong to nuclear and joint families have almost the same mean value on PWB. Now a days, there is a trend in rural joint families that they live in such a way that they have the common house, water pump and agriculture land but they have separate room to live; have separate pet animals; they do not share their earnings with other family members except in case of emergency. They live like a nuclear family in joint family. This may be the reason that types of family do not affect the PWB of rural subjects. The result of this study is in congruence with the findings of the study conducted by Prajapati (2013).

Results of the present study also showed that caste-category of participants significantly affect the PWB of rural population. So, our third hypothesis gain support from the present findings. As SC category population are treated as socially, economically, educationally weaker than other caste peoples of the rural Indian population. So there is a general view that the SC category population living in rural areas have poor well -being. But the results of this study are contrast to that of general view. Results showed that the PWB of SC category subjects was higher than other caste groups. The SC category subjects have significantly higher PWB than that of general caste-(GC) subjects. It may be due to the feeling of security and satisfaction which they got due to the various government welfare schemes such as house on subsidized rate, free treatment for illness, scholarship schemes for students, reservation in educational institutions and government jobs (Pai, 2017; Suresh & Venkatesh, 2021). OBC category subjects also get reservation in educational institutions and government jobs but this is not the case with the GC category population. GC category people though economically and educationally well but the feeling of insecurity of job or future may be the cause of low PWB among them.

Other cause of higher PWB among SC and OBC category subjects than the GC category subjects may be that 20 to 30 years back GC people were economically and educationally stronger than OBC and SC category subjects. They have the prestigious positions like head and member of village panchayat, jila panchayat and other village welfare committees. But reservation for SC and OBC category people in school/colleges and government job gives them chances to get education and have job for livelihood. They also got reservation in village panchayat/ jila panchayat and many other village/jila welfare committees, which give them chances to be elected as head/member of the village panchayat/ jila panchayat and other village/ jila welfare committees. Thus make them economically sound and educationally good too. So the feeling of meaningfulness and better chances for growth enhances their life satisfaction, which may be the cause of this higher PWB among SC and OBC category population than GC population in rural population. Similar points of views were expressed by Pai (2017) and Mehrotra, (2018). Results of this study were in contrast to the findings of the study by Tomer and Singh (2019, 2021) and Suresh and Venkatesh (2021).

Though many studies (Clarke et al., 2000; Reshma & Manjula, 2016; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Shanker & Singh, 2013; Sharma & Sahu, 2014) have found a significant effect of socio-economic status (SES) on PWB, but results of this study showed no significant variance in PWB among three SES groups. So we reject our fourth hypothesis. Findings of our study support the views that there is no significant relationship between wealth and well-being or mental health. Results showed that middle SES subjects had significantly higher PWB than upper SES groups. This finding partially supports the findings of Ryff & Singer (2008).

**Conclusion**

On the basis of results and discussion it can be concluded that gender and caste are significant factor which contribute significantly to the psychological well-being of rural populations. Female subjects have higher level of psychological well-being then the male subjects. In contrary to the general Indian citizen view, scheduled caste category subjects have higher level of

psychological well-being than other caste-category while general category subjects have the lowest psychological well-being than others. Middle socio-economic status subjects have significantly higher psychological well-being than that of upper socio-economic status subjects.

In national capital region we have patriarchal family. If the psychological well-being of the head of the family deteriorates, it will directly or indirectly affect the psychological well-being of family in particular and society at large. Caste-system is also deeply rooted and affects all aspect of life in rural areas so gap of psychological well-being among various caste groups must be filled for a healthy society. As psychological well-being refers to the ability of a person to achieve one's full psychological potential, so efforts should be made by psychologist and mental health workers to improve the psychological well-being of male, general caste category and upper socio-economic status people of rural areas. Government should take such steps and make such policies which fill the gap of psychological well-being among various caste groups and SES groups so that a better society with higher psychological well-being can be made.

**References**


Akhter, S. (2015). Psychological well-being in students of gender difference. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, *2*(4), 154–161. https://doi.org/10.25215/0204.040

Arya, T., & Sangwan, S. (2018). A study on psychological well-being of rural and urban adolescents. *International Journal of Education and Management Studies*, *8*(4), 419–423.

Clarke, P. J., Marshall, V. W., Ryff, C. D., & Rosenthal, C. J. (2000). Well-being in Canadian seniors: Findings from the Canadian study of health and aging. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, *19*(2), 139–159. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0714980800013982

Creed, P. A., & Watson, T. (2003). Age, gender, psychological wellbeing and the impact of losing the latent and manifest benefits of employment in unemployed people. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 55*(2), 95–103. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530412331312954

Falci, C. D. (1997). *The effects of family structure and family process on the psychological well-being of children: From the children's point of view*. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/57e2/21904183860a3081dfc53ccef4551f15e95e.pdf

Gul, N., Ghani, N., Alvi, S., Kazmi, F., & Shah, A. (2017). Family system's role in the psychological well-being of the children. *Khyber Medical University Journal, 9*(1), 29–32.

Huppert, F. A. (2009). Psychological well-being: Evidence regarding its causes and consequences. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well Being*, *1*(2), 137–164. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-0854.2009.01008.x

Kantariya, A. S. (2017). Impact of gender on psychological well-being among post-graduate students. *Psychology Behaviour Science International Journal*, *2*, 1-3. https://doi.org/0.19080/PBSIJ.2016.02.555578

Khumalo, I. P., Temane, Q. M., & Wissing, M. P. (2012). Socio-demographic variables, general psychological well-being and the mental health continuum in an African context. *Social Indicators Research*, *105*(3), 419–442. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-010-9777-2

Kotar, A. B. (2013). A comparative study of psychological well-being among arts and science college students. *Acme International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 1*(9), 9-12.

Kumari, P. M., & Sandhya, O. (2018). Gender and locale differences in psychological well-being among adolescents. *Indian Journal of Human Relations*, *51*(1), 136–146.

Larson, J., Franzén-Dahlin, A., Billing, E., von Arbin, M., Murray, V., & Wredling, R. (2008). The impact of gender regarding psychological well-being and general life situation among spouses of stroke patients during the first year after the patients' stroke event: A longitudinal study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 45(2), 257–265. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2006.08.021

Macleod, A. K., & Moore, R. (2000). Positive thinking revisited: Positive cognitions, well-being and mental health. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, *7*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0879(200002)7:1<1::AID-CPP228>3.0.CO;2-S

Makvana, B. (2020). Psychological well-being of people. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, *8*(1), 405–408. https://doi.org/10.25215/0801.052

Maroof, R. Y., & Khan, M. J. (2016). Age and gender as predictors of psychological well-being. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *24*(1), 43–58.

Mehrotra, S. (2018). The impact of caste on well-being: Explaining a North–South divide in India. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228549536_The_Impact_of_Caste_on_ Well-being_Explaining_a_North-South_Divide_in_India.

Pai, S. (2017). *Political Process in Uttar Pradesh: Identity, Economic Reforms, and Governance*. Pearson Longman.

Prajapati, R. O. (2013). The psychological well-being among joint and nuclear families: A comparative study. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, *1*(1), 47–53. https://doi.org/10.25215/0101.005

Reshma, N. S., & Manjula, M. Y. (2016). Psychological well-being across gender and socio-economic status among middle adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology, 3*(3), 64–70. https://doi.org/10.25215/0303.067

Roothman, B., Kirsten, D. K., & Wissing, M. P. (2003). Gender differences in aspects of psychological well-being. *South African Journal of Psychology, 33*(4), 212–218. http://doi.org/10.1177/008124630303300403

Ryff, C. D., & Singer, B. H. (2008). Know thyself and become what you are: A eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies: An Interdisciplinary Forum on Subjective Well-Being, 9*(1), 13–39. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9019-0

Shanker, B., & Singh, S. (2013). Socio-economic status of family as a predictor of emotion regulation and well-being. *Indian Journal of Well-Being, 4*(2), 1521–1524.

Sharma, G., Pandav, K., & Lally, S. K. (2015). Role of family environment on adolescent well-being. *International Journal of Recent Scientific Research*, *6*(12), 7756–7758.

Sharma, S. S., & Sahu, K. (2014). A study of psychological well-being of rural and urban young adults belonging to High Income Group and Middle Income Group. *Indian Journal of Health and Wellbeing*, *12*(5), 1508–1510.

Singh, T., Sharma, S. & Nagesh, S. (2017). Socio-economic status scales updated for 2017. *International Journal Research in Medical Science*, 5(7), 3264-3267. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.18203/2320-6012.ijrms20173029

Sinha, B. P., & Singh, A. K. (1998). Effect of parent's affection and competence: The home adjustment of school students. *Indian Psychological Review, 50*(2), 106–112.

Sisodia, D. S., & Choudhary, P. (2012). *Manual for Psychological well-being scale*. National Psychological Corporation.

Suresh K. N., & Venkatesh K. G. (2021). Emotional Intelligence, Interpersonal Relationship and Psychological Wellbeing among Schedule Caste/ Schedule Tribe College Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, *9*(2), 752-760. doi:https://doi.org/10.25215/0902.079

Tomer, R. & Singh B. (2019). Gender, Caste Categories and Psychological Well-Being. *Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education,* 16(4)*,* 1705-1708. http://ignited.in/I/a/252672

Tomer, R. and Singh, B. (2021). Caste-Category, Residential Locale and Psychological Well-Being. *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE),* 8(9), 164-169. doi: https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0809016

Waghmare, R. D. (2016). A study of psychological well being among male and female college students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology, 3*(7), 26–31. https://doi.org/10.25215/0303.118

Waghmare, R. D. (2017). Gender differences between psychological well-being. *International Journal of Indian Psychology, 4* (4), 23–30.

✦