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Research Article

Quality of Life among Rural Secondary School Students in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the quality of life (QoL) among rural secondary school students in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India focusing on demographics and socioeconomic status (SES). Utilizing the World Health Organization's QoL tool, data was gathered from 431 students in grades 11 and 12. The results indicated that there were significant differences in QoL among organizational authors by demographic factors such as gender, physical well-being, religion, and residence, socioeconomic status, age, caste, residence, education level, to tabulate students' quality of life. Hence, female students have a better physical well-being profile, i.e. 49.23±11.99 while male students report stronger social relationships i.e. 54.61±21.14. SES emerges as a crucial determinant, with notable variations observed across different SES classes and parental occupations. Housing type and family structure also influence QoL outcomes. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing socioeconomic disparities and demographic factors in promoting holistic well-being among rural youth. The study provides valuable insights for informing targeted interventions and policies to enhance the overall QoL of rural students in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh and beyond.

Keywords: *Quality of Life, Rural Students, SES, Demographic, Rural Schools*

Introduction:

Quality of life (QOL) is a leading concept that represents experiences, states, appraisals, behaviours, capacities and emotional reactions to circumstances (Billaiya et al., 2017a; Brown & Carreno-Davidson, 2020). WHO defines a person's view of their place in life within the framework of culture and values is their quality of life systems in which they live and concerning their goals, expectations, standards and concerns" High school student are adolescents who are in between of the age of 15 and 19 years of ages, mostly they study very hard for the national entrance examination into college or university. Therefore, educational stress is a common emotional state among school children and adolescents worldwide and appears to be more severe among Asians (Gatab et al., 2013; Hicks & Heastie, 2008; Sims et al., 2007). Inability of adolescents to cope with the stress properly could result in mental ill health (Belfer, 2008). Mental health problems have influences on both physical health and QOL of high school students in Asia, such as Japan, Korean, China, Vietnam, Singapore and Thailand prior research indicates that about 19-42% Thai adolescents who studied in grades 10th, 11th and 12th had experienced depression, anxiety disorder (11%) and specific phobias (10%) (Lauber & Rössler, 2007; Lee et al., 2020) . A number of variables lead to poor mental health, such as learning or educational problems, family conflict and drug abuse. At the same time, protecting the mental health of students is vital for student's education because cognitive abilities directly depend on the psychological state of the student, which affects academic motivation, the level of aspirations, involvement in learning, and the emotional and volitional spheres.

Method

The investigation was carried out in rural schools located in Varanasi district, Uttar Pradesh, focusing on students in the 11th and 12th grades. The students were briefed about the purpose before they were called in

the area of city and asked to provide informed consent. In selecting the participants, multistage sampling technique was utilized. First, blocks were sampled, and Kashi Vidyapeeth and Chiraigoan were randomly selected from Varanasi district's eight blocks. Thereafter, ten 10 co-educational secondary the city government schools were chosen from the two blocks, five from each block, use basic simple random sampling. The sample size for the study was calculated to be 431 using Yemen's formula. Consequently, students from classes 11th and 12th from any streams were drawn from using simple basic random machine. The choice of these classes is based due to the fact that they are important and determinant of a student's future school and career prospects. The World Health Organization's Quality of Life (QoL) tool was utilized to evaluate the standard of living of senior secondary students in rural schools.

Results

Table no. 1 Demographic variables of the Students and Quality of Life(QoL)

Variable	Category	PQ	PsychQ	SRQ	EnvQ
Gender	*Male*	45.22±11.24	47.84±15.16	54.61±21.14	54.42±13.84
	Female	49.23±11.99	48.32±15.09	48.02±22.06	56.58±18.20
	T value	-3.55	-0.33	3.15	-1.36
	P value	0.00	0.74	0.002	0.17
Age	*15year*	48.79±9.16	49.58±16.11	43.36±19.06	55.51±12.81
	16year	47.32±11.14	47.98±16.31	52.79±21.47	55.16±14.13
	17year	48.63±12.00	48.40±13.86	51.62±23.74	58.01±20.26
	18year	44.26±14.85	47.55±13.72	53.43±19.09	51.40±12.07
	19year	32.14±0.00	34.03±8.09	41.67±17.48	42.18±5.13
	F value	4.14	1.48	2.57	2.75
	P value	0.003	0.21	0.04	0.03
Religion	*Hindu*	47.21±11.73	48.11±15.11	50.64±21.82	55.66±16.50
	Muslim	53.57±13.21	47.92±15.57	61.40±21.11	53.79±13.04
	T value	-1.99	0.05	-1.90	0.42
	P value	0.047	0.96	0.06	0.67
Caste	*General*	51.91±10.14	48.64±15.56	47.09±21.43	59.52±12.25
	OBC	46.44±11.98	46.28±15.25	50.87±22.19	55.26±18.04
	SC	46.90±11.82	52.42±14.12	53.41±21.37	55.53±13.93
	ST	53.99±9.09	42.40±12.43	45.59±21.06	51.29±15.63
	F value	4.58	5.52	1.31	1.35
	P value	0.004	0.001	0.27	0.29

PQ: Physical health; PsychQ: Psychological health; SRQ: Social relationship; EnvQ: Environment

Table no.1 shows that mean physical domain and mean social relationship domain varied significantly between the gender. Mean physical domain was 49.23±11.99 among the females and 45.22±11.24 among the males. Mean social relationship domain was 54.61±21.14 among the males and 48.02±22.06 among the females. whereas physical domain, social relationship domain and environmental domain varied significantly among the age groups showing the increasing trend. The physical domain varied significantly between the Hindu and Muslim religion. Mean physical domain was 53.57±13.21 among the Muslims and 47.21±11.73 among the Hindu students and the mean physical domain was significantly higher in ST caste (53.99±9.09) followed by general class (51.91±10.14), SC class (46.90±11.82) and OBC class (46.44±11.98). Mean psychological domain was significantly higher in SC class (52.42±14.12) followed by general class (48.64±15.56), OBC class (46.28±15.25), ST class (42.40±12.43).

Table 2. Socio Economic Variables of the Students and Quality of Life (QoL)

Variable	*Category*	*PQ*	*PsychQ*	*SRQ*	*EnvQ*
Education Of Father	*Illiterate*	48.49±13.14	51.04±18.59	52.72±21.81	65.50±28.93
	1-12th class	47.70±12.49	49.70±15.09	50.49±22.02	53.27±14.16
	Higher education (>12th class)	46.97±11.03	46.33±14.03	51.00±21.87	54.92±12.69
	F value	0.42	3.43	0.20	11.82
	P value	0.66	0.03	0.82	0.00
Education Of	*Illiterate*	46.80±11.76	49.88±15.93	52.97±22.36	57.52±21.12
	1-12th class	48.09±10.81	48.70±14.78	50.36±20.67	55.04±13.42

	Higher education (>12th class)	47.23±13.11	45.30±14.25	49.60±22.81	54.15±13.36
	F value	0.47	3.30	0.91	1.57
	P value	0.62	0.04	0.40	0.21
Occupation of Father of the Students	***Agriculture***	48.33±9.98	46.60±14.42	49.58±22.78	59.22±13.66
	Govt. Service	50.22±9.17	57.03±15.19	44.27±16.86	50.39±12.90
	Private service	44.85±11.73	44.20±11.68	55.64±23.54	51.54±11.75
	Self employed	47.49±9.73	46.45±16.46	47.88±19.85	53.21±14.43
	Business	50.61±8.89	42.89±15.70	47.97±22.49	57.31±13.60
	Labour	46.96±13.58	50.77±14.95	52.35±21.80	56.65±19.33
	F value	1.47	4.51	1.47	2.19
	P value	0.20	0.001	0.20	0.05
Occupation of Mother of the Students	***Working***	47.41±12.99	48.35±15.37	51.10±22.91	53.16±14.24
	Housewife	47.41±11.50	48.04±15.05	50.98±21.61	56.26±16.87
	T value	0.42	0.88	0.82	0.81
	P value	0.99	0.86	0.96	0.11
House Type	***Kachcha***	45.62±12.31	46.54±15.99	51.42±22.41	55.60±13.57
	Pakka	48.65±11.21	53.38±14.51	51.33±21.08	56.70±13.64
	Kachcha-pakka	49.07±11.18	51.33±21.08	50.36±21.64	55.14±20.21
	F valve	4.36	5.42	0.11	0.22
	P value	0.01	0.00	0.89	0.80
SES (socio-economic status)	***Class I***	50.89±7.55	43.49±14.02	45.31±22.56	67.38±11.06
	Class II	42.99±12.00	47.72±16.23	50.47±20.44	53.60±14.88
	Class III	53.09±12.34	47.51±16.47	51.02±23.10	58.80±25.31
	Class IV	46.77±11.76	48.89±14.48	51.24±22.05	52.72±12.21
	Class V	45.61±10.07	48.05±14.75	51.81±21.36	57.74±13.71
	F value	8.11	0.54	0.31	5.07
	P value	0.00	0.71	0.87	0.00
Family type	***Joint***	45.40±12.06	40.88±12.52	48.59±20.89	51.61±13.54
	Nuclear	48.12±11.67	50.64±15.13	51.85±22.17	57.00±17.07
	T value	-2.10	-6.12	-1.36	-3.02
	P value	0.04	0.00	0.17	0.00
House status	***Rent***	47.78±6.86	51.20±18.04	46.48±24.13	59.37±14.86
	own	47.37±12.27	47.74±14.71	51.53±21.56	55.16±16.51
	T value	0.22	1.46	-1.47	1.63
	P value	0.83	0.15	0.14	0.10
Class/Standard	***11th***	47.46±11.96	49.17±16.57	49.88±20.84	53.18±14.09
	12th	47.37±11.70	47.08±13.52	52.08±22.81	57.92±18.05
	T value	0.08	1.44	-1.04	-3.03
	P value	0.94	0.15	0.30	0.00
Stream	***Maths***	50.06±11.11	49.54±16.58	47.88±20.46	54.77±13.99
	Bio	46.33±11.48	46.43±13.66	51.15±22.65	55.35±12.92
	Arts	47.41±11.82	49.27±15.64	53.38±21.87	56.64±21.79
	F value	3.81	2.06	1.92	0.43
	P value	0.02	0.13	0.15	0.65

PQ: Physical health; PsychQ: Psychological health; SRQ: Social relationship; EnvQ: Environment

Table no.2 shows that the Psychological domain and Environmental domain was found to be significantly associated with the education of the father. Psychological domain was found to be significantly associated with the education of the mother of the students. Mean Psychological domain among the illiterate mothers was 49.88±15.93 followed by 48.70±14.78 among 1st- 12th class educated mothers, 45.30±14.25 higher educated mothers. The mean Psychological domain found to be significantly associated with the occupation of the fathers whereas physical domain, psychological domain, Social Relationship domain, Environmental domain was not found significantly associated with the occupation of the mothers. The Physical domain, psychological

domain was found significantly associated with the house type of the students. Physical domain and Environmental domain were quality of life domain which were associated with the Socio-economic status. Mean physical domain was higher in SES III (53.09±12.34) followed by SES I (50.89±7.55), SES IV (46.77±11.76), SES V (45.61±10.07) and SES II (42.99±12.00). the mean physical domain, mean psychological domain and mean environmental domain differed significantly for joint and nuclear family. Mean physical domain was significantly higher in the nuclear family (48.12±11.67) as compared with the joint family (45.40±12.06). Mean psychological domain was significantly higher in the nuclear family (50.64±15.13) as compared with the joint family (40.88±12.52). Mean environmental domain was significantly higher in the nuclear family (57.00±17.07) as compared with the joint family (51.61±13.54). the Physical domain, psychological domain, Social Relationship domain and Environmental domain was not found to be associated with House type. The Physical domain, psychological domain, Social Relationship domain was not found to be associated with Class of study Environmental domain was not found to be associated with Class. Students studying in the class 12th had high (57.92±18.05) environmental domain as compared with the class 11th (53.18±14.09). the Physical domain were the quality-of-life domain which were observed to be significantly associated with the stream of the students. These two domains were significantly higher in mathematics stream students as compared with biology steam and arts stream students.

Discussion:

The investigation on QoL is at interest globally due to more concerns being put on becoming healthy, physically and mentally. Therefore, the current investigation aims to explore the QoL among rural students in Varanasi by demographics and SES.As from the results, QOL scores of the studied population is varies and in wide range, from the lowest to the highest score could be observed. Study proved that those with higher scores of QOL, exhibit a good level of individuals' perception towards their place in life within the framework of rural culture and the values and society they inhabit. This investigation has just found that females perceive their physical well-being to be higher than males. Females students might feel more content with their physical health, daily activities, and overall functioning compared to males. In rural area female are introduce to household chores very early aside from that they give their physical appearance a greater thought, due to age factor then men, to maintain their physical appearance they engaged themselves in handworks in a study by found that Women, who previously had a lower level of physical activity than men, showed a lower tendency to reduce it during lockdown, revealing greater resilience than men. However, the worsening in sleep, in stool passage, and a trend to weight increase revealed signs of psychological suffering after a protracted lockdown period. Whereas male students pretend their social relationships to be stronger or more satisfactory compared to female's students. Males students might experience a stronger sense of community, supported, and content with their association with others as they have personal phones or allowed to talk on phones for long. males perceive higher social support and social networking in comparison to their female counterparts. The same is true when it comes to the case of school children. This suggests that female perceive inadequate social assistance in addition to at higher stage of life, but this difference is rooted in their childhood and adolescent period als**o.** The investigation, found that Physical domain varied significantly between the Hindu and Muslim religion. Mean Physical domain was 53.57±13.21 among the Muslims and 47.21±11.73 among the Hindu students. Meanwhile the Mean physical domain was significantly higher in ST caste students (53.99±9.09) followed by General class (51.91±10.14), SC class (46.90±11.82) and OBC class (46.44±11.98). Mean Psychological domain was significantly higher in SC class (52.42±14.12) followed by general class (48.64±15.56), OBC Class (46.28±15.25), ST Class (42.40±12.43). Research consistently shows that lower castes, particularly Scheduled Castes, face significant disparities in housing quality and basic amenities compared to upper castes (Rawat, 2019). This is further exacerbated by the historical oppression of Muslims, who experience lower quality of life even when their incomes are similar to upper caste Hindus (Annesha Mukherjee and Satyaki Dasgupta, .). These disparities are also reflected in life expectancy, with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes having significantly lower life expectancies than high-caste individuals (Gupta & Sudharsanan, 2022) . Additionally, Hindus have been found to have a higher quality of life and a higher level of prejudice against Muslims compared to the other community (Benner,2020). This study found that Psychological domain and Environmental domain was found to be significantly associated with the education of the father. And the Psychological domain was found to be significantly associated with the education of the mother of the students. Mean Psychological domain among the illiterate mothers was 49.88±15.93 followed by 48.70±14.78 among 1st- 12th class educated mothers, 45.30±14.25 higher educated mothers. Studies shows that the education level of both parents significantly impacts the quality of life and academic performance of their children. Le (2015) found that the mother's education has an indirect effect on the quality of primary school students through the interaction between her and parenting involvement (Le, 2015). On the other hand, father involvement in parenting is directly affected by his education. Soharwardi (2020) supports this by alluding to a high parent and mother's education causal relationship to the quality of academic performance (Soharwardi et al., 2020). The findings of Junior (2021) support the observation by revealing a positive relationship between parental education and the quality of life of high school teenagers (Junior et al., 2021). Lastly, Liang-jing (2008) used a

survey to measure the role of the guardian in influencing the psychological health of university students, with the key leading factor cited being a harmonious family environment (Liang-jing, 2008).

This study found that how the occupations of parents can affect the quality of life of students. Fathers engaged in different professions exhibit varied effects on their children's well-being. For instance, fathers working in government service appear to experience better mental health but may experience challenges in raising social relationships for their children. although, fathers involved in business roles seem to provide better physical health and environmental conditions, yet they might grapple with issues pertaining to mental health and social interactions within the family. Occupations that are considered by the students to have a "mixed bag" and there exist areas in which their quality of life is significantly better or worse than in other areas. On the other hand, students whose fathers are self-employed and private service areas presented the most balanced scores across the different domains. An interesting finding is that the occupation of the mother, or whether she is a housewife, seemed to have a limited effect on the students' overall quality of life. Thus, in this specific case, the occupation of the mothers might not be considered as a strong factor impacting children's quality of life. Prior research has indicated that the occupation of both the fathers and the mothers could have an effect on students' quality of life. A study conducted by Chen found that students with civil servants and teachers as fathers had a higher level of life well-being (Chen, 2018) . Likewise, Farhang(2015) noted that students with fathers in semi-professional and high professional occupations had better mental health and subjective well-being (Farhang & SanandaRaj, 2015). However, Parvizi (2021) found no significant difference in academic achievement and quality of life based on the employment status of mothers (Parvizi et al., 2021). Aponte (2012) sheds light on the importance of social support and family relationships in the quality of life of student-mothers. These studies collectively suggest that the occupation of parents, particularly fathers, can have a significant impact on the well-being of students (Estupiñán Aponte & Vela Correa, 2012).

This data shows that students living in Kachcha houses generally reported lower scores across all aspects of well-being, including physical health, psychological well-being, social relationships, and environmental conditions. The above results suggest that students living in Kachcha houses may deteriorate overall quality of life compared to living in other housing types; on the other hand, students in Pakka houses have higher scores in all the above domains, indicating better overall quality of life; they report better physical, psychological, social, and environmental conditions than students living in Kachcha houses. This means the data for Kachcha-pakka houses is between Kachcha and Pakka houses, suggesting that Kachcha-pakka house residents might have a slightly better quality of life than Kachcha houses but not as high as Pakka houses. It showed how the quality of housing compromised the quality of life – for the betterment of personal and community lives adequate housing is necessary. The type, size, and age of a student's house, as well as their years of living, strongly influence their satisfaction with their residential environment. Apart from the socio-physical background that includes gender, mix-ethnicity, economic status, and previous home experience also influence the level of satisfaction. Architectural factors of student housing, such as institutional character and personalization, significantly affect residential satisfaction or claiming a place one's place of residence. Thus, all these factors contribute to a student's quality of life and subsequently influence their learning. Students living in joint families show lower scores in all the domains compared to those living in nuclear families. This suggests that students in joint families may have poorer physical, psychological, social, and environmental conditions. On the other hand, students in nuclear families show higher scores in all the domains, portraying better overall quality of life.. They report better physical health, psychological well-being, social relationships, and environmental conditions compared to those in joint families. students in the 12th grade tend to have higher scores in the environmental domain compared to those in the 11th grade. older students might perceive their environmental conditions more positively than younger students. Additionally, the data shows that the quality of life domains related to physical health are significantly associated with the stream of study. Mathematics students have significantly high scoring school in physical health and environmental health than students in both biology and arts students. This means that students learning the subject of mathematics might have a positive perception towards their physical health and the environment as a whole compared to students learning other subjects. There is a substantial difference in the physical health domain, whereby Class III has the highest scores of perception of physical well-being while Class II has the lowest perceptions of physical well-being. The different social relations domain and psychological health between SES levels are significant. Implying, that they might influence the students' perception of well-being very lightly. However, there are differences in the environmental domain between SES levels, whereby Class I has the highest perceptions of their environmental fitness, while Class IV has the lowest perception. The evidence from earlier research findings is that the students' quality of life is heavily influenced by their socio-economic status. Mandal argues for the incorporation of the quality of life indicators both quantitatively and qualitatively in the studies while Yan recognizes materialism as a moderating factor to the influence arenas (Yan X, 2013). Dudaitë (2014) further supports this, finding a strong influence of economic home factors, a dimension of quality of life, on student achievement (Dudaitė, 2014). Billaiya (2017) underscores the positive influence of current socio-economic trends on the concept of quality education (Billaiya et al., 2017b).These studies collectively suggest that socio-economic status plays a crucial role in shaping students' quality of life.

Conclusion:

This study embarks on the multifaceted dynamics influencing the standard of living (QoL) of secondary school pupils in remote areas in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India with a particular emphasis on demographics and socioeconomic status (SES). The findings underscore the nuanced interplay between various demographic factors and domains of QoL, revealing significant disparities across different dimensions. Females generally perceive higher physical well-being, while males tend to report stronger social relationships. Additionally, SES emerges as a crucial determinant, with notable variations observed across different SES classes, religious affiliations, caste groups, and parental education levels. The occupations of parents also exert discernible effects on students' well-being, highlighting the intricate relationship between familial socioeconomic circumstances and QoL outcomes. Moreover, housing type and family structure emerge as influential factors, with significant variations in QoL observed between students living in different types of homes and family arrangements. These results emphasize the significance of addressing socioeconomic disparities and demographic factors in promoting holistic well-being among rural students. By elucidating many intricate relationships, this research offers insightful information that might guide focused interventions and policies aimed at enhancing the overall QoL of rural youth in Varanasi and beyond.

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