

# Youth Wellness Beyond Mental Health: A Multidimensional Survey in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand (2025)

Santosh Kumar, Basavaraj Shankar Yankannavar, Sakshi Gautam, Kanika Gupta

Department of Community Medicine, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Rishikesh, Uttarakhand

## CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Dr. Basavaraj Shankar Yankannavar, Senior Resident, Department of Community Medicine, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Rishikesh, Uttarakhand

Email: [basavaraj.star000@gmail.com](mailto:basavaraj.star000@gmail.com)

## CITATION

Kumar S, Yankannavar BS, Gautam S, Gupta K. Youth Wellness Beyond Mental Health: A Multidimensional Survey in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand (2025). Indian J Comm Health. 2025;37(6):1008-1018.

<https://doi.org/10.47203/IJCH.2025.v37i06.020>

## ARTICLE CYCLE

Received: 22/11/2025; Accepted: 21/12/2025; Published: 31/12/2025

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

©The Author(s). 2025 Open Access

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Youth wellness is a multidimensional construct shaped by physical, emotional, social, spiritual, intellectual, financial and environmental influences. In India, despite a favourable demographic dividend, youth wellness remains underexplored and mental health needs are often unmet. **Objectives:** To assess the multidimensional wellness among youth (15–26 years) in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand. **Methods:** A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 418 youth recruited from educational institutions using convenience sampling. Data were collected using the self-administered YUWA–JOSH (Youth Upliftment and Wellness through awareness Journey towards Optimism, Strength and Harmony) wellness questionnaire covering seven wellness domains. Categorical data is expressed in frequency and percentage, continuous data is described in mean(SD)/median(IQR). **Results:** Among 418 participants, 59.1% were female and 52.8% aged 15–19. Over half were low-income (58.6%) and 45.7% undergraduates. While 62% slept well and 50.5% exercised, 31.8% reported self-harm thoughts and 41.6% valued spiritual practice **Conclusion:** Youth wellness is influenced by a complex interaction of behavioural, social and economic factors. Interventions must adopt a holistic wellness framework integrating physical activity, social support, financial resilience and responsible digital engagement to strengthen youth wellness.

## KEYWORDS

Youth wellness, Mental health, YUWA JOSH, school, University, Health promotion

## INTRODUCTION

Youth drive a nation's progress, yet rising mental stress has made suicide one of the leading causes of death in this age group, with vulnerability peaking before the mid-20s.(1-3) Family environment strongly influences youth wellness and coping.(4) When support systems fail to meet young people's needs, mental health suffers. Broader socioeconomic and developmental factors further shape youth wellbeing.(5)

Youth wellness is shaped by behaviours and surrounding support systems, requiring a multidimensional approach integrating physical, mental, social, emotional and environmental domains. Several frameworks conceptualize this,

including Stoewen and Swarbrick's Eight Dimensions of Wellness.(6–9) (Fig 1.)

**Fig 1. Swarbrick's Eight Dimensions of Wellness**



While these frameworks have been widely recognised and applied in global contexts, their integration into youth research and policy in India remains limited. Recent research on Indian youth has largely focused on mental health, social media use, sexual and reproductive health and non-communicable diseases in isolation. (10–15) Research lacks a holistic approach integrating physical, mental, social and environmental dimensions of youth wellness. Addressing this gap, the present study aimed to 1) To assess multidimensional wellness among Indian youth aged 15-26 years using a structured assessment tool across key domains. 2) To evaluate wellness across seven key domains using a structured assessment tool.

## MATERIAL & METHODS

**Study Type & Study Design:** A cross-sectional survey.

**Study Setting:** The survey was administered within various educational institutions in the city of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India.

**Study duration:** The survey was conducted between July and September 2025.

**Study Population:** The study focused on individuals aged 15–26 years in educational institutes.

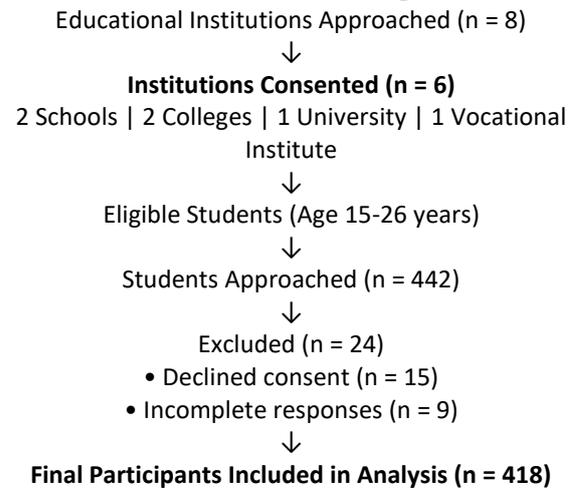
**Sample Size and Sampling:** Assuming a 50% anticipated prevalence of holistic wellness, with 95% confidence and 5% absolute precision, the minimum sample size was estimated at 384. After adding 10% for non-response, the target sample increased to 422. Ultimately, 418 participants provided complete data for analysis. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling across selected institutions in Rishikesh.

**Inclusion Criteria:** Participants were required to be within the 15-26 age range and willing to provide informed consent. **Exclusion criteria:** Students with severe psychiatric illness and those not willing to participate.

**Strategy for Data Collection:** Data were collected using the **YUWA–JOSH Questionnaire** (Youth Upliftment and Wellness through awareness Journey towards Optimism, Strength and Harmony), which is a validated, self-reported, structured wellness questionnaire. A multistage sampling strategy was employed. In the first stage, **6 educational institutions** in Rishikesh were selected to ensure representation across educational levels, including **two senior secondary schools, two degree colleges, one university, and one vocational institute**. In the second stage, proportionate sampling was used based on student enrollment within the eligible age group (15-26 years). Participants were then recruited

consecutively from selected institutions until the required sample size was achieved.

### Recruitment Flowdiagram



**Study Tool Validation:** A validated, self-reported, structured wellness questionnaire (**YUWA–JOSH Questionnaire**) was used for data collection. The tool we developed has undergone content validation by a panel of subject experts and pilot tested among a similar population before data collection, and contains Likert-type items. Face validity was established through expert review to ensure clarity, relevance, and interpretability of items. Content validity was excellent, with an S-CVI of 0.95; item-level I-CVI scores ranged from 0.50 to 1.00, with most items scoring  $\geq 0.75$ . Exploratory Factor Analysis using principal axis factoring with oblimin rotation yielded domain-wise underlying factor solution explaining 39.4% of total variance (KMO = 0.81; Bartlett's  $\chi^2 = 2890$ , df = 666,  $p < .001$ ). Internal consistency ranged from acceptable to good (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.59$ –0.86). Confirmatory Factor Analysis demonstrated good model fit on the RMSEA index (0.055, 90% CI: 0.048–0.062), whereas CFI (0.86) and TLI (0.845) suggested scope for refinement. The tool was designed to capture wellness across **seven domains**.

**Working Definitions (Wellness Domains):** The tool captured wellness across seven domains:

The study conceptualised wellness as a multidimensional construct encompassing seven interrelated domains: physical, social, spiritual, workplace/environmental, financial, intellectual, and emotional wellness.

**Physical wellness** was defined as engagement in health-promoting behaviours and avoidance of health-risk practices. It was assessed through frequency of  $\geq 60$  minutes of daily physical activity, adequacy of sleep (6–8 hours of continuous sleep per night), regularity of shared family meals, and self-reported alcohol and tobacco use (binary:

Yes/No). These indicators reflected lifestyle balance and behavioural risk profile.

**Social wellness** referred to the degree of social connectedness and perceived interpersonal support. It was measured using two items: comfort in social gatherings and ability to form new connections, and the presence of at least one close friend or family member with whom the respondent could share thoughts and feelings. Together, these items captured social confidence, participation, and access to emotional support.

**Spiritual wellness** was operationalised as perceived meaning derived from religious or spiritual practices. A single item assessed how often engagement in religious rituals or practices was experienced as meaningful and contributory to the respondent's future, reflecting faith-based coping and existential orientation.

**Workplace/environmental wellness** denoted perceived institutional support within the academic or workplace setting. Respondents reported how often their environment supported their academic or personal goals, including access to resources, supportive teachers, and conducive study spaces. This domain indexed structural and contextual support.

**Financial wellness** was defined as perceived financial strain and its influence on future plans. A single item assessed the extent to which family financial circumstances affected decisions related to education, career, or relocation, with responses ranging from no impact to high stress.

**Intellectual wellness** focused on behavioural regulation in digital engagement. It was measured by the frequency with which non-study use of

digital technologies (e.g., social media, gaming, streaming) interfered with academic responsibilities or daily functioning.

**Emotional wellness** captured psychological burden and distress, including perceived academic pressure, frequency of anxiety or nervousness symptoms (e.g., palpitations, restlessness), and history or presence of self-harm thoughts or behaviours.

**Ethical Issues & Informed Consent:** Informed consent was obtained from all participants. All participants were provided with mental health support resources, and institutional-level findings were communicated for preventive interventions. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee, AIIMS Rishikesh (No. 415/IEC/IM/NF/2023).

**Statistical Analysis:** Data were coded and entered into Microsoft Office Excel Professional Plus (2021) and analysed using Jamovi v2.6.44. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Categorical variables were summarised as frequencies and percentages, while numerical variables were described using mean, median and standard deviation depending on normality.

## RESULTS

**Table 1** The distribution of participants (n = 418) showed that the Majority were aged 15–19 years (52.8%) and female (59.1%); most were undergraduates (45.7%) and from low-income families (58.6%), with mothers predominantly homemakers (75.8%).

**Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of The Youth Participants (N = 418)**

Socio-Demographic Variables	Frequency(n)	Percentage(%)
<b>Age</b>		
15-19	221	52.8%
20-24	167	39.9%
>25	30	7.17%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	247	59.1%
Male	171	40.9%
<b>Current Education (of student)</b>		
Diploma / Vocational Training	14	3.3%
Higher Secondary Education (Class 11–12 / Intermediate / PUC)	175	41.8%
Undergraduate Degree (e.g., BA, BSc, BCom, BTech)	191	45.7%
Postgraduate Degree (e.g., MA, MSc, MCom, MTech, MBA)	14	3.3%
MPhil / PhD / Doctorate	24	5.7%
<b>Father's Occupation</b>		
Professional (e.g., doctor, engineer, lawyer, professor)	65	15.6%
Semi-professional (e.g., teacher, technician, artist)	67	16.0%
Clerical/Shop owner/Farmer	134	32.1%
Skilled worker (e.g., electrician, mechanic, driver, tailor)	69	16.5%
Semi-skilled worker (e.g., factory helper, delivery staff)	32	7.7%
Unskilled worker (e.g., labourer, domestic worker)	34	8.1%

Unemployed	17	4.1%
<b>Mother's Occupation</b>		
Professional (e.g., doctor, engineer, lawyer, professor)	14	3.3%
Semi-professional (e.g., teacher, technician, artist)	43	10.3%
Clerical/Shop owner/Farmer	17	4.1%
Skilled worker (e.g., electrician, mechanic, driver, tailor)	4	1.0%
Semi-skilled worker (e.g., factory helper, delivery staff)	9	2.2%
Unskilled worker (e.g., labourer, domestic worker)	14	3.3%
Home- Maker	317	75.8%
<b>Monthly Family Income (approx.)</b>		
Low income: < =₹30,000	245	58.6%
Lower-Middle income: ₹30,001 – ₹60,000	84	20.1%
Middle income (around mean): ₹60,001 – ₹90,000	19	4.5%
Upper-Middle income: ₹90,001 – ₹1,50,000	32	7.7%
High income: ₹1,50,001 – ₹3,00,000	19	4.5%
Very High income: > ₹3,00,000	19	4.5%

Youth of Rishikesh was evaluated using the **YUWA-JOSH Questionnaire**, which comprised their assessment on the physical, nutritional, social, spiritual, workplace/environment, financial, intellectual and emotional dimensions. (**Table 2**)

**Table 2** presents the distribution of responses across seven wellness domains assessed using the YUWA-JOSH questionnaire. Physical wellness indicators were relatively favourable: 50.5% engaged in regular exercise and 62% reported adequate sleep. Substance use was low (alcohol 8.6%, tobacco 4.8%). However, only 47.6% consistently felt refreshed on waking, and just 19.6% reported feeling energetic throughout the day. Dietary diversity was suboptimal, with limited daily intake of protein-rich foods, milk products, nuts, fruits, and green leafy vegetables, while 14.1% frequently consumed high fat, sugar, or salt foods.

Social wellness appeared strong, with 70.5% reporting close confidants and 52.2% feeling valued and supported, though 45.7% experienced frequent misunderstandings. Spiritual wellness was meaningful for 41.6%, and 33.7% consistently perceived a clear sense of purpose in life.

Institutional support was reported by 39.7%, and 66.5% perceived equal treatment in academic settings. Financial stress affected future plans in 28.3%, with 34.7% reporting impact on personal goals.

Intellectual engagement was consistent in 23.0%, yet 28.7% reported >4 hours of non-academic screen time daily, and 51.9% experienced digital interference in routine activities.

Emotional concerns were notable: 23.2% reported frequent anxiety, 10.8% academic burden, and 31.8% self-harm ideation/behaviour; 4.3% reported suicide attempts. Findings are self-reported.

**Table 2. Distribution of responses across multidimensional wellness domains (physical, social, spiritual, workplace/environmental, financial, intellectual and emotional) assessed using the YUWA-JOSH questionnaire. Each item is listed with the response categories used in the questionnaire (frequency or agreement scale). Values are presented as frequency and column percentages (n, %).**

Dimension Variables	Frequency (n)	%
<b>Physical Wellness</b>		
<b>How regularly do you engage yourself in physical exercise (such as walking, jogging, running, skipping, swimming, cycling, playing sports) for at least 60 minutes a day?</b>		
Consistently (3 or more times a week)	211	50.5%
Sometimes (1-2 times a week)	100	23.9%
Occasionally (1-3 times a month)	64	15.3%
Rarely or never (less than once a month)	43	10.3%
<b>How often do you feel physically tired, weak, or low on energy throughout the day even without doing much activity?</b>		
Almost always – I feel drained or lethargic most of the time, even when I haven't done anything physically tiring	63	15.1%
Sometimes – I often feel tired or weak during the day, which affects my ability to stay focused or active	111	26.6%
Occasionally – I feel low on energy once in a while, but it doesn't affect my daily routine	162	38.8%
Rarely or never – I usually feel energetic and active throughout the day	82	19.6%
<b>How often do you get 6-8 hours of continuous sleep each night?</b>		
Consistently (3 or more times a week)	259	62.0%
Sometimes (1-2 times a week)	92	22.0%

<b>Dimension Variables</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>%</b>
Occasionally (1-3 times a month)	43	10.3%
Rarely or never (less than once a month)	24	5.7%
<b>How frequently are you taking meals with your family/ loved ones?</b>		
Never, I prefer to eat alone (less than once a month)	38	9.1%
Rarely, I share meals occasionally (1-3 times a month)	57	13.6%
Sometimes, I eat with others on most days (1-2 times a week)	66	15.8%
Consistently, I enjoy meals with loved ones regularly (3 or more times a week)	257	61.5%
<b>How often do you feel fresh once awake in the morning?</b>		
Rarely or never (less than once a month)	49	11.7%
Occasionally (1-3 times a month)	68	16.3%
Sometimes (1-2 times a week)	102	24.4%
Consistently (3 or more times a week)	199	47.6%
<b>How many meals do you usually consume in a day?</b>		
1 meal	6	1.4%
2 meals	96	23.0%
3 meals	219	52.4%
More than 3 meals (including snacks)	97	23.2%
<b>How often do you consume the following foods as part of your regular diet?</b>		
<b>All starchy staple foods (rice, wheat, maize, millets, barley (jau), bajra, koda etc)</b>		
Never	21	5.0%
Occasionally (1-3 times per month)	57	13.6%
Regularly (1-4 times per week)	122	29.2%
Daily (5 or more times per week)	218	52.2%
<b>Legumes (rajma, urad dal, masoor, mung, soyabean, chana, toor/arhar dal, etc)</b>		
Never	18	4.3%
Occasionally (1-3 times per month)	98	23.4%
Regularly (1-4 times per week)	167	40.0%
Daily (5 or more times per week)	135	32.3%
<b>Milk and milk products (cheese, yogurt, paneer, butter, ghee, etc)</b>		
Never	33	7.9%
Occasionally (1-3 times per month)	141	33.7%
Regularly (1-4 times per week)	122	29.2%
Daily (5 or more times per week)	122	29.2%
<b>Nuts and seeds (almond, walnut, peanut, flax seeds, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, cashew, pistachio, etc)</b>		
Never	65	15.6%
Occasionally (1-3 times per month)	198	47.4%
Regularly (1-4 times per week)	111	26.6%
Daily (5 or more times per week)	44	10.5%
<b>Animal proteins (chicken, mutton, fish, etc)</b>		
Never	230	55.0%
Occasionally (1-3 times per month)	110	26.3%
Regularly (1-4 times per week)	64	15.3%
Daily (5 or more times per week)	14	3.3%
<b>Eggs</b>		
Never	187	44.7%
Occasionally (1-3 times per month)	131	31.3%
Regularly (1-4 times per week)	76	18.2%
Daily (5 or more times per week)	24	5.7%
<b>Dark green leafy vegetables (spinach, mustard greens, amaranth leaves, etc)</b>		
Never	51	12.2%
Occasionally (1-3 times per month)	186	44.5%
Regularly (1-4 times per week)	142	34.0%
Daily (5 or more times per week)	39	9.3%
<b>Other Vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables (carrot, sweet potato, pumpkin, red bell pepper, mango, papaya, melon, apricot, etc)</b>		
Never	36	8.6%
Occasionally (1-3 times per month)	197	47.1%
Regularly (1-4 times per week)	143	34.2%
Daily (5 or more times per week)	42	10.0%
<b>[Other vegetables (tomato, cucumber, bell paper, onion, garlic, brinjal, cauliflower, cabbage, etc)</b>		
Never	25	6.0%
Occasionally (1-3 times per month)	102	24.4%
Regularly (1-4 times per week)	162	38.8%
Daily (5 or more times per week)	129	30.9%

Dimension Variables	Frequency (n)	%
<b>Other fruits (apple, banana, orange, grapes, pineapple, strawberry, blueberry, pear, watermelon, pomegranate, etc)</b>		
Never	27	6.5%
Occasionally (1–3 times per month)	165	39.5%
Regularly (1–4 times per week)	147	35.2%
Daily (5 or more times per week)	79	18.9%
<b>How often do you consume foods high in fat, sugar, or salt (such as chips, biscuits, namkeen, pasta, pizza, pastries, soft drinks, chocolates, or street food)?</b>		
Rarely or never (less than once a month)	59	14.1%
Occasionally (1-3 times a month)	166	39.7%
Sometimes (1-2 times a week)	134	32.1%
Consistently (3 or more times a week)	59	14.1%
<b>How often do you have a proper breakfast in the morning?</b>		
I never skip breakfast – it's a regular part of my routine	214	51.2%
I eat breakfast only on school/work days, not on weekends or holidays	70	16.7%
I eat breakfast occasionally – a few times a week	88	21.1%
I rarely or never eat breakfast at all	46	11.0%
<b>How frequently are you taking meals with your family/ loved ones?</b>		
Never, I prefer to eat alone (less than once a month)	38	9.1%
Rarely, I share meals occasionally (1-3 times a month)	57	13.6%
Sometimes, I eat with others on most days (1-2 times a week)	66	15.8%
Consistently, I enjoy meals with loved ones regularly (3 or more times a week)	257	61.5%
<b>Do you consume alcoholic beverages (like beer, wine, spirits, etc)?</b>		
No	382	91.4%
Yes	36	8.6%
<b>a. How often do you consume these alcoholic beverages?</b>		
I have never consumed it	356	85.2%
I have tried it once or twice - Just experimented or tried it briefly out of curiosity	28	6.7%
I drink occasionally (less than once a month) – I don't use it regularly, just sometimes in special situations	24	5.7%
I drink sometimes (1-3 times a month) – I take it a few times a month, but not weekly	7	1.7%
I drink regularly (1-3 times a week or more) – I use it frequently, and it's becoming a habit	3	0.7%
<b>b. How often do you feel a strong urge or get irritated, restless or uncomfortable when you don't consume these alcoholic beverages?</b>		
I have never consumed it	357	85.4%
Rarely or never – I usually don't feel any urge or discomfort when I don't drink. It doesn't bother me	46	11%
Occasionally – I feel like drinking, but I don't get upset or uncomfortable if I can't	6	1.4%
Sometimes – I often feel like drinking and get a bit moody, restless, or annoyed when I don't have it, but I can still manage	3	0.7%
Very often – I regularly feel upset, anxious, or irritable if I don't drink, and it affects my mood or focus	6	1.4%
<b>Do you consume any form of tobacco or related substances (like, cigarettes, gutka, e-cigarettes, hookah, pan masala, khaini)?</b>		
No	398	95.2%
Yes	20	4.8%
<b>a. How often do you consume these tobacco or related substances?</b>		
I have never consumed it	393	94.0%
I have tried it once or twice – Just experimented or tried it briefly out of curiosity	12	2.9%
I use it occasionally (less than once a month) – I don't use it regularly, just sometimes in special situations	6	1.4%
I use it regularly (1–3 times a week or more) – I use it frequently, and it's becoming a habit	7	1.7%
<b>b. How often do you feel a strong urge or get irritated, restless or uncomfortable when you don't consume these tobacco or related substances?</b>		
I have never consumed it	394	94.3%
Rarely or never – I don't feel like using it often and it doesn't bother me if I don't	10	2.4%
Occasionally – Sometimes I feel like using it but I'm okay without it	8	1.9%
Sometimes – I often feel like using it, and I notice I get a bit restless, distracted, or mildly irritable when I don't use it—but it doesn't affect my day much	2	0.5%
Very often – I feel a strong need to use it regularly, and when I don't, I get clearly upset, anxious or find it hard to focus or control my mood. It interferes with my routine or interactions	4	1.0%
<b>Social Wellness</b>		

Dimension Variables	Frequency (n)	%
How often do you feel comfortable in social gatherings while making new friends or connections?		
Not comfortable – I usually avoid social gatherings and find it difficult to make new connections	52	12.4%
Slightly comfortable – I try to engage, but it's a bit challenging to connect with new people	84	20.1%
Somewhat comfortable – I can manage in social settings and sometimes make new friends	154	36.8%
Very comfortable – I enjoy social gatherings and easily make new friends	128	30.6%
<b>How often do you feel like the people close to you value or support you? (Example, When you are feeling low or facing difficulties, do your close ones check in on you, encourage you, or help you feel better)</b>		
I consistently feel loved, understood, and genuinely appreciated by those close to me in all situations	112	26.8%
Most of the time, I feel cared for and accepted, though occasionally I question whether people truly appreciate me	106	25.4%
There are moments when I feel cared for, but also times I feel ignored or judged	105	25.1%
I often feel alone or misunderstood by those around me	95	22.7%
<b>Do you have a close friend or such people around you with whom you can talk and share your thoughts or opinions?</b>		
No, I don't have anyone around to talk to or share my thoughts with	26	6.2%
I don't really have close friends to share my thoughts with	25	6.0%
I have friends, but I don't feel comfortable sharing my thoughts or opinions with them	72	17.2%
Yes, I have friends and I can freely share my thoughts or opinions with them	295	70.5%
<b>How often do you feel that your family, friends, or close ones misunderstand you or don't try to see things from your point of view—leading to you getting scolded or into arguments?</b>		
Almost always – They rarely try to understand me, often jump to conclusions and I frequently end up getting scolded or blamed	103	24.6%
Often – Sometimes they listen, but most of the time they misunderstand or dismiss my point of view which leads to tension or conflict	88	21.1%
Occasionally – They usually try to understand me, though misunderstandings and blame still happen once in a while	126	30.1%
Rarely or never – I feel my close ones genuinely try to understand me and even in disagreements, they don't react harshly or unfairly	101	24.2%
<b>Spiritual Wellness</b>		
<b>How often do you feel that engaging in religious practices or rituals of your faith is meaningful and contributes to your future?</b>		
Almost always – I strongly believe that my religious practices or rituals give meaning to my life and positively shape my future	174	41.6%
Often, I usually believe that following religious practices or rituals helps me stay grounded and may benefit my future	101	24.2%
Occasionally – I sometimes feel they might matter, but I don't really connect with them deeply	92	22.0%
Rarely or never – I don't think religious practices or rituals have any meaningful impact on my future	51	12.2%
<b>How often do you feel that your life has a clear sense of purpose or meaning?</b>		
Not at all – I rarely feel that my life has a clear purpose or meaning	62	14.8%
Occasionally – I sometimes experience a sense of purpose, but it's not consistent or long-lasting	100	23.9%
Often – I frequently feel that my life has a clear sense of purpose and meaning, though there are moments of doubt or uncertainty	115	27.5%
Almost always – I consistently feel that my life is guided by a clear and meaningful purpose	141	33.7%
<b>How important is it, according to your faith or beliefs, to trust in yourself or your inner strength?</b>		
Extremely important – Trusting in myself and my inner strength is a core part of my belief system. It guides my actions, decisions, and gives me purpose	242	57.9%
Important in certain situations – My beliefs support trusting myself when needed, especially for personal or practical decisions, but not always for bigger life matters	93	22.2%
Slightly important – I think trusting myself matters a little, but I usually rely on others or external guidance	52	12.4%
Not important at all – My faith or beliefs don't emphasize trusting myself or inner strength	31	7.4%
<b>Workplace/ Environmental Wellness</b>		
<b>How often do you feel that your workplace environment supports you in achieving your academic or personal goals? (for example, having access to resources, having helpful teachers, study groups or quiet spaces to work)</b>		
Never – I almost never feel supported by my workplace environment and it rarely helps me progress	48	11.5%
Rarely – I occasionally feel some support, but most of the time the environment feels unsupportive or distracting	71	17.0%
Sometimes – I feel supported at times, and the environment sometimes helps me achieve my goals, but it is inconsistent	133	31.8%
Often – I regularly feel that my workplace environment positively supports and motivates me towards achieving my goals	166	39.7%

Dimension Variables	Frequency (n)	%
<b>To what extent do you feel that all students or colleagues, regardless of their gender, caste, or academic performance, are treated equally and fairly at your school or workplace?</b>		
Not at all — I feel that there is significant inequality and discrimination based on gender, caste or academic performance	63	15.1%
Sometimes — I notice occasional unfair treatment, though there are also efforts toward equality	77	18.4%
Mostly — I feel that most people are treated equally and fairly, with only rare exceptions	130	31.1%
Completely — I believe that everyone is treated equally and fairly at all times, without discrimination	148	35.4%
<b>Financial Wellness</b>		
<b>Do you feel like your family's financial situation impacts your future plans (like choosing a college, career path, or opportunities like coaching, extracurriculars or moving to another city)?</b>		
No, I don't think about it much	150	35.9%
A little, but I'm finding ways to work through it	150	35.9%
Yes, and it's making me anxious about my future	73	17.5%
Yes, it causes a lot of stress for me	45	10.8%
<b>Do you feel that your family's financial situation affects your personal goals or experiences (such as getting along with peers, affording things others have, participating in activities or pursuing hobbies)?</b>		
Never, my financial situation does not affect my personal goals or experiences	166	39.7%
Rarely, but sometimes I notice small limitations	107	25.6%
Sometimes, it affects a few areas like social life or opportunities	97	23.2%
Always, my family's financial situation significantly impacts most of my choices and goals	48	11.5%
<b>Intellectual Wellness</b>		
<b>How often do you engage in activities that challenge your mind, such as reading, learning a new skill or attending educational events?</b>		
Rarely or never (less than once a month)	69	16.5%
Occasionally (1-3 times a month)	141	33.7%
Sometimes (1-2 times a week)	112	26.8%
Consistently (3 or more times a week)	96	23.0%
<b>In a day, average screen time (excluding study related use) (in hours)</b>		
>6 hours	45	10.8%
Greater than 4 hours to equal to 6 hours	75	17.9%
Greater than 2 hours to equal to 4 hours	150	35.9%
0-2 hours	148	35.4%
<b>How often do you feel that your use of digital technologies (such as social media, online gaming or streaming), excluding study-related use, is not balanced and interferes with other aspects of your life?</b>		
Nearly every day, I feel depressed, irritated and tense because of social media and it is hampering my work	70	16.7%
Sometimes in a week, undue involvement in social media is hampering my studies and daily routine	147	35.2%
Rarely, it frequently distracts me and affects my focus on studies	120	28.7%
Never, it does not hamper my mood, studies or routine	81	19.4%
<b>Emotional Wellness</b>		
<b>I feel burdened by the academic expectations from my family and those set by myself.</b>		
Rarely or never — I generally don't feel any academic pressure from family or myself	180	43.1%
Occasionally — I do feel academic pressure now and then, but it doesn't affect me much	113	27.0%
Sometimes — I often feel burdened by the academic expectations from my family, even if I don't put much pressure on myself	80	19.1%
Consistently — I regularly feel overwhelmed and struggle to meet both my family's and my own academic expectations	45	10.8%
<b>How often do you feel upset or discouraged by yourself when things don't go well, like after a bad score on a test/ academic failure or a fight with friends or family?</b>		
Consistently — I regularly feel deeply discouraged or blame myself and it lingers for a while	85	20.3%
Sometimes — I often feel disappointed in myself, and it can affect my mood or motivation	118	28.2%
Occasionally — I feel upset at times, but I'm able to move on without much trouble	131	31.3%
Rarely or never — I usually handle such situations calmly and don't get too discouraged	84	20.1%
<b>How often do you experience feelings of anxiety, nervousness or physical symptoms like a racing heart (palpitations) or restlessness? (For example, feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or uneasy.)</b>		
I do not experience these feelings at all	98	23.4%
I experience these feelings very occasionally, only a few times a year	125	29.9%
These feelings occur sometimes, about once or twice a month	98	23.4%
I feel this way regularly, at least once or twice every week	49	11.7%
These feelings happen very frequently, almost every day or most days in a week	48	11.5%

Dimension Variables	Frequency (n)	%
<b>How often do you feel comfortable asking for help when you need it? (For example, even though you have a close friend with whom you can share your thoughts but when you have disturbing thoughts you feel like you can't share it with them because it might burden them).</b>		
Never or Rarely – I don't feel comfortable asking for help at all	98	23.4%
Occasionally – I seldom ask for help, even when I need it	116	27.8%
Sometimes – I ask for help at times, but often keep things to myself	122	29.2%
Often – I usually feel comfortable asking for help when I need it	82	19.6%
<b>Have you ever thought of or attempted to self-harm yourself?</b>		
I attempted self-harm with the intention to die	18	4.3%
I attempted self-harm, but did not want to die	27	6.5%
I have had a plan at least once to self-harm but did not try to do it	26	6.2%
It was just a brief passing thought	62	14.8%
Never	285	68.2%

## DISCUSSION

The present study provides a multidimensional overview of youth wellness in Rishikesh, capturing physical, social, spiritual, intellectual, financial, workplace and emotional dimensions. Findings highlight that wellness is not confined to a single dimension but rather shaped by the interplay between sociodemographic factors (age, education, income) and all the spheres of wellness. A recent 2024 study by Muskan Garg, Xingyi Liu et al, also supported this notion that wellness is intrinsically multifaceted and that it is crucial to evaluate its many facets jointly since each one adds in a different way to our knowledge of mental health risks and overall wellness.(16)

The higher female participation may indicate better engagement of young women because of increased educational enrollment of women in the nation, leading to improved female literacy and participation in higher education.(17)

Indicators of physical wellness were rather favourable, with half of the people regularly exercising, which is in slight contrast with the findings of the study conducted in a city of Northern India, where majority of the youth had poor levels of physical activity and for the sleep, the findings of this study indicate comparatively better sleep quality among participants than those reported in previous research.(18) In comparison to the nationwide study(19) presenting a much larger proportion of young people using alcohol and tobacco, the present study showed low prevalence of alcohol and tobacco use reflects healthy behaviour among the youth, which may be attributed to increasing awareness and stricter social norms against substance use.

According to the current study, the majority of young people said they had close friends with whom they felt comfortable sharing their opinions, indicating strong peer connections and a sense of social support. Similar trends were noted in a study on young Indians that found a favourable correlation between helping attitude and perceived social support, underscoring the role of India's

collectivistic culture in encouraging interpersonal connections and care.

For many individuals, spiritual wellness seemed to be beneficial. This is consistent with research that shows spirituality might help young people manage their stress and emotions. In a similar vein, almost one-third of the participants said that their academic environment fostered personal development, underscoring the importance of encouraging institutional environments for young people's development.

The picture of financial wellness turned out to be varied. Few people said that financial stress affected their plans for the future, even though one-third said they were not very worried about family finances. Given that half of the participants came from low-income homes, financial insecurity may restrict access to options like coaching or extracurricular activities or indirectly exacerbate mental stress.

A notable concern was intellectual and emotional wellness. More than one-third of participants said that using digital technology excessively disrupted their daily routine which is consistent with earlier research showing that excessive use of digital devices may affect mood, focus and academic performance. Emotional distress markers were also significant.(20) About 46% of the participants said they experienced frequent anxiety symptoms, which shows a similar picture to the anxiety prevalence in Srinagar district of Uttarakhand, and 31.8% reported self-harm ideation or behaviour at least once(these findings are self-reported and do not represent clinical diagnoses). These results might be highlighting the rising prevalence of mental health issues among Indian youth as well as the pressing need for early screening tools, counselling services and mental health education in schools and universities.(21) As data were collected anonymously, individual follow-up was not feasible for those who reported self-harm ideation. However, all participants were provided with mental health support resources, and findings were

communicated at an institutional level to inform preventive interventions.

Major strengths of the study are: Study is Multidimensional assessment covering seven wellness domains, Use of a systematically developed and validated tool and also sample is diverse sociodemographic representation.

Overall, the study highlights that intellectual and emotional wellness are still at risk, even though the physical and social aspects of wellness were largely satisfying. The results urge a holistic approach to youth wellness that incorporates peer support programs, lifestyle education, resilience training and mental health promotion in educational settings.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study highlights that youth wellness is shaped by the close interaction of physical, emotional, social, spiritual, intellectual, financial and environmental factors. While many young people in this study demonstrated healthy lifestyles, strong social connections, supportive academic settings and meaningful spiritual engagement. A considerable number continue to struggle with issues such as excessive digital use, emotional distress and financial pressure. These challenges can quietly affect their overall wellbeing and future potential. The findings make it clear that supporting youth requires looking beyond mental health in isolation and understanding wellness as a whole, interconnected experience of daily life.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

These findings emphasise the need for a preventive, integrated approach to youth health that goes beyond mental health alone and addresses wellness in all its dimensions. Strengthening institutional support, promoting mental health awareness, encouraging physical activity, nurturing social connections and reducing economic stress can together improve young people's quality of life. In this context, YUWA JOSH, a social outreach initiative of AIIMS Rishikesh, represents a holistic programme aimed at supporting the multidimensional development of youth aged 15-26 years. Future research should refine the YUWA-JOSH tool by developing a composite wellness index with domain-wise scores to improve measurement and comparability. A holistic wellness framework can help build resilient, healthy and productive young citizens.

### **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

Despite strengths study had many limitations i.e Cross-sectional design limits causal inference,

Convenience sampling from educational institutions limits generalizability to all youth (out-of-school, working, unemployed youth excluded), Self-reported data may be affected by recall and social desirability bias and also Several wellness domains, including spiritual wellness, financial wellness, and intellectual wellness, are assessed using single-item measures which may limit depth and internal consistency of these domains. Also absence of domain-wise or composite scores limits quantitative comparability so domain-level scoring will be addressed in further research. This study was designed as a descriptive baseline assessment; analytical exploration of associations was reserved for future, hypothesis-driven studies.

### **RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study contributes to Indian youth health research by adopting a multidimensional wellness framework rather than focusing solely on mental health or isolated risk behaviours. By integrating seven domains - physical, social, spiritual, intellectual, financial, environmental, and emotional using the YUWA-JOSH tool, it provides baseline institutional data from Uttarakhand. The findings reveal coexistence of favourable physical and social indicators alongside significant emotional distress and digital imbalance. This highlights the need for holistic, campus-based wellness strategies. The study also lays groundwork for developing a culturally relevant composite wellness index, strengthening measurement and public health planning for youth wellbeing in India.

### **AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION**

SK: Conceptualisation of study, supervision, critical revision of manuscript, Study design, tool development. BSY: Study design, tool development, data collection coordination, statistical analysis, drafting and final approval of manuscript. SG: Data collection, data entry, data analysis, literature review, manuscript drafting. KG: Tool validation support, interpretation of findings, and manuscript editing.

### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP**

This study did not receive any external funding. The research was conducted as part of an academic and institutional youth wellness initiative under the Department of Community Medicine, AIIMS Rishikesh.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The authors acknowledge the cooperation of the participating educational institutions in Rishikesh and sincerely thank all the students who voluntarily participated in the survey. We also acknowledge the faculty members who provided expert input during tool validation.

#### DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the authors used Quillbot AI to assist in language editing, grammatical refinement, and structural organization of the manuscript. After using this tool, the authors critically reviewed, revised, and edited the content as required and take full responsibility for the integrity, accuracy, and originality of the final manuscript.

#### REFERENCES

- Nath Y, Paris J, Thombs B, Kirmayer L. Prevalence and social determinants of suicidal behaviours among college youth in India. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* [Internet]. 2012 Jul [cited 2025 Nov 5];58(4):393–9.
- Suicide worldwide in 2021: global health estimates [Internet]. [cited 2025 Nov 10]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240110069>
- Alang S, McAlpine DD, McCreedy E, Hardeman RR. *Prevalence and Risk Factors of Suicidal Ideation and Suicide Attempts among Youth: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis*. *BMC Psychiatry*. 2025; in press.
- Lyu N, Xue Q-Y, Li X, Yan S, Chen M, Hou H, et al. *The role of family environment and parental factors: a person-oriented study of adolescents' psychological distress and help-seeking patterns*. *Child Adolesc Psychiatry Ment Health*. 2025;19(1):134.
- De A, Mukherjee D. Causal Analysis of Health, Education, and Economic Well-Being in India -- Evidence from the Young Lives Survey. 2025 Aug 29 [cited 2025 Sep 16]; Available from: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2508.21370>
- Wellness Institute N. The Six Dimensions of Wellness The Six Dimensions of Wellness Model OCCUPATIONAL.
- DUNN HL. High-Level Wellness for Man and Society. <https://doi.org/102105/AJPH496786> [Internet]. 2011 Aug 29 [cited 2025 Sep 15];49(6):786–92.
- Swarbrick M. A wellness approach to mental health recovery. *Recovery of People with Mental Illness* [Internet]. 2012 May 30 [cited 2025 Sep 15];30–8. Available from: <https://academic.oup.com/book/24866/chapter/188588215>
- Alnujaidi HY, Al-Rayes SA, Alumran A. The Evolution of Wellness Models: Implications for Women's Health and Well-Being. *Int J Womens Health* [Internet]. 2025 [cited 2025 Sep 15];17:597.
- Gupta S, Basera D. Youth Suicide in India: A Critical Review and Implication for the National Suicide Prevention Policy. *Omega (Westport)* [Internet]. 2023 Nov 1 [cited 2025 Nov 5];88(1):245–73.
- Majeed J, Sharma P, Ajmera P, Dalal K. Menstrual hygiene practices and associated factors among Indian adolescent girls: a meta-analysis. *Reprod Health* [Internet]. 2022 Dec 1 [cited 2025 Nov 5];19(1). Available from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35739585/>
- S S. Impact of social media on Youth: Comprehensive Analysis. *Shodh Sari-An International Multidisciplinary Journal*. 2023 Oct 5;02(04):286–301.
- Pradeep BS, Arelingaiah M, Ramamurthy S V., Suma R, Saraswat N, Reddy AGE, et al. Health and Lifestyle Issues among Youth: A Record Analysis of Contributing Factors among Beneficiaries Attending Youth Mental Health Promotion Clinics (Yuva Spandana Kendras) in Karnataka, India. *Indian J Community Med* [Internet]. 2023 [cited 2025 Nov 5];48(6):852.
- Sahni H, Sharma M, Panda BK, Das E, Behera S, Pandey N, et al. Understanding sexual and reproductive health need of unmarried adolescents and youth in urban slums: evidence from a formative study in Uttar Pradesh, India. *Reprod Health* [Internet]. 2025 Dec 1 [cited 2025 Nov 5];22(1). Available from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40537765/>
- Rani R, Kannaujia AK, Talukdar P, Sikarwar A. Gender and rural-urban differences in hypertension among youth in India: Insights from a large scale survey, 2015–16. *J Biosoc Sci* [Internet]. 2023 May 28 [cited 2025 Nov 5];55(3):523–37.
- Garg M, Liu X, Sathvik MSVPJ, Raza S, Sohn S. MultiWD: Multi-label wellness dimensions in social media posts. *J Biomed Inform* [Internet]. 2024 Feb 1 [cited 2025 Sep 18];150:104586. Available from: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10923126/>
- NFHS [Internet]. [cited 2025 Nov 4]. Available from: <https://www.nfhsiips.in/nfhsuser/nfhs5.php>
- Ghrouz AK, Noohu MM, Dilshad Manzar M, Warren Spence D, BaHammam AS, Pandi-Perumal SR. Physical activity and sleep quality in relation to mental health among college students. *Sleep and Breathing* 2019 23:2 [Internet]. 2019 Jan 26 [cited 2025 Nov 4];23(2):627–34.
- Venkatesh U, Aparnavi P, Mogan KA, Durga R, Pearson J, Kishore S, et al. Determinants of substance use among young people attending primary health centers in India. *Cambridge Prisms: Global Mental Health* [Internet]. 2024 Feb 12 [cited 2025 Nov 4];11:e23. Available from: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/global-mental-health/article/determinants-of-substance-use-among-young-people-attending-primary-health-centers-in-india/E07F20697D41DDB52386F703794E6A83>
- Lodha P. Internet Addiction, Depression, Anxiety and Stress among Indian Youth. *Indian Journal of Mental Health* [Internet]. 2018 Dec 24 [cited 2025 Nov 4];5(4):427. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332418477\\_Internet\\_Addiction\\_Depression\\_Anxiety\\_and\\_Stress\\_among\\_Indian\\_Youth](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332418477_Internet_Addiction_Depression_Anxiety_and_Stress_among_Indian_Youth)
- Senapati RE, Jena S, Parida J, Panda A, Patra PK, Pati S, et al. The patterns, trends and major risk factors of suicide among Indian adolescents – a scoping review. *BMC Psychiatry* 2024 24:1 [Internet]. 2024 Jan 9 [cited 2025 Nov 4];24(1):1–16.