Youth! How is Your Life?

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doi.org/10.64643/IJIRT209876

***Abstract*—Subjective well-being is an important indicator of how young people evaluate their lives and experience positive and negative emotions. Although Kerala has achieved considerable progress in education, healthcare and human development, the subjective experiences of young people may reflect a complex combination of life satisfaction, social enjoyment, unmet aspirations and concerns about the future. Against this background, the present study examines subjective well-being among youth in Mananthavady Municipality, Wayanad district, Kerala, using Diener's conceptual framework of life satisfaction, positive emotions and negative emotions. A cross-sectional descriptive research design was employed, and data were collected from young people aged 19–29 years across five geographically selected wards. Subjective well-being was assessed using a contextually adapted, Malayalam-language inventory comprising ten items across three dimensions. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, corrected item-total correlations, Spearman's rank correlation and multiple linear regression were used to analyze the data. The findings indicate that youth subjective well-being is characterized by the coexistence of positive emotional experiences and considerable future-related concerns. Social gatherings emerged as an important source of happiness, with 48.5% of respondents reporting complete happiness from such interactions. However, 51.5% reported worrying about their future completely, while 42.4% experienced such worry to some extent. Although respondents expressed satisfaction with their living standards and life decisions, only 4.5% reported completely achieving the things they desired. Life satisfaction was moderately correlated with positive emotions ($\rho = 0.554$, $p < 0.001$). Multiple regression analysis revealed that reported health problems were significantly associated with lower overall subjective well-being ($B = -4.339$, $p < 0.001$), whereas age showed a small positive association ($B = 0.193$, $p = 0.033$). Gender, marital status and education were not statistically significant predictors. The study highlights the importance of understanding youth well-being beyond conventional development indicators and emphasizes the need to consider social connectedness, health, aspiration fulfilment and future-oriented concerns when assessing young people's quality of life.**

***Index Terms*—Subjective well-being, youth, life satisfaction, positive emotions, negative emotions, social connectedness.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Kerala occupies a distinctive position in India's development landscape. Often regarded as one of the country's most socially advanced states, Kerala has achieved remarkable progress across several dimensions of human development. The state has also created conditions that offer significant advantages for young people through relatively high levels of educational attainment, improved health outcomes and a socially progressive environment. In many respects, Kerala appears to offer a favorable setting in which young people can grow, learn and build their lives. However, this positive image exists alongside a contrasting contemporary reality. Recent public discussions on media reports have increasingly drawn attention to unemployment, limited employment opportunities and the large-scale migration of young people in search of education and better economic prospects. In a recent NDTV Kerala Polls 2026 report, "No Jobs, Youth Leaving[1]," residents across the state voiced growing concerns about unemployment, limited employment opportunities, youth migration and uncertainty regarding Kerala's economic future. The News report shows that how the search for education and employment opportunities continues to push many young people beyond the boundaries of the

[1] https://www.ndtv.com/video/kerala-polls-2026-no-jobs-youth-leaving-kerala-voices-concern-over-jobs-migration-governance-1075811

state, while families increasingly adapt to the reality of children building their futures elsewhere.

People make important decisions concerning education, employment, relationships, independence and their future aspirations during the period Youthhood. Hence, understanding youth well-being has become increasingly important for assessing not only how young people live but also how they experience and evaluate their lives. The well-being of populations has often been understood through objective indicators such as education, employment, income, healthcare and living conditions. Although these indicators provide important information about the opportunities and resources available to young people, they cannot fully explain whether young people feel satisfied, happy and emotionally secure in their lives. Hence Youth well-being is a multidimensional concept that refers to the quality of young people's lives and their ability to develop, function and thrive during the transition from adolescence to adulthood. It encompasses the physical, psychological, emotional, social and economic conditions that shape young people's lives, as well as their own perceptions and evaluations of those experiences.

Happiness is often used in everyday conversations as a simple indicator of whether a person is living a good life. However, happiness alone provides an incomplete understanding of well-being. A person may experience moments of happiness while simultaneously feeling dissatisfied with important aspects of life, such as education, employment, relationships or future opportunities. Similarly, an individual may appear cheerful and socially active while experiencing anxiety, stress or uncertainty about the future. It is also noted that, a person facing difficult circumstances may still experience happiness, positive relationships and satisfaction in certain areas of life. Well-being is therefore more complex than simply asking whether a person is happy. It involves both how individuals evaluate their lives and how they emotionally experience their daily lives. A comprehensive understanding of well-being must therefore consider cognitive evaluations, such as satisfaction with life, together with positive emotional experiences and negative emotional experiences. This multidimensional perspective is particularly important when studying young people, whose lives are often shaped by simultaneous experiences of aspiration, achievement, uncertainty, transition and emotional change.

Youth represent a dynamic period of transition during which individuals move towards greater independence and make important decisions concerning education, employment, relationships and their future lives. This stage is characterized not only by opportunities and aspirations but also by uncertainty and changing expectations. Contemporary young people increasingly aspire to higher education, meaningful employment, financial independence, career advancement and improved living conditions. In Kerala, these transitions occur within a distinctive social context. Despite the state's achievements in education, healthcare and human development, many young people continue to look beyond Kerala for higher education, employment and career opportunities. Changing aspirations, geographical mobility and uncertainty about future opportunities have become important features of contemporary youth experiences. However, these broader social and economic realities cannot, by themselves, explain how young people actually experience their lives. The availability of educational opportunities, healthcare and other favorable living conditions does not necessarily mean that every young person feels satisfied or emotionally positive. Similarly, concerns about employment or the future do not necessarily mean that young people are unhappy. Individuals may experience hope and anxiety, satisfaction and uncertainty, or positive and negative emotions at the same time. This complexity leads to a simple but fundamental question: “Youth, How Is Your Life?” Although expressed in simple language, this question captures an important dimension of understanding youth experiences. It shifts attention away from assumptions based solely on development indicators, public perceptions or external living conditions and instead asks young people to reflect on and evaluate their own lives. The present study addresses this question through the framework of subjective well-being. Subjective well-being provides a systematic way of understanding how individuals evaluate and emotionally experience their lives through the interconnected dimensions of life satisfaction, positive emotions and negative emotions. Accordingly, the present study seeks to assess the subjective well-being of youths, thereby providing an deep understanding of

how young people themselves perceive and experience their lives.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of subjective well-being is mostly associated with the work of Ed Diener and provides an important theoretical framework[2] for understanding how individuals experience and evaluate their lives. Diener's framework moves beyond objective measures of living conditions and focuses on people's own subjective assessments of their lives. From this perspective, well-being is not determined solely by external circumstances such as income, education, employment or health, rather, it also depends on how individuals interpret their circumstances and emotionally experience their everyday lives. Diener conceptualized subjective well-being as comprising both cognitive and affective components. The cognitive component is represented by life satisfaction, referring to an individual's overall evaluation and judgement of the quality of their life. The affective component reflects individuals' emotional experiences and includes both positive emotions, such as happiness, enjoyment and enthusiasm, and negative emotions, such as sadness, anxiety, stress and worry. Together, these dimensions provide a multidimensional understanding of how individuals perceive and experience their lives. The presence of negative emotions does not simply represent the absence of happiness; rather, positive and negative emotional experiences may coexist. Diener's framework is particularly useful for understanding youth well-being because young people may simultaneously experience positive aspirations and enjoyment while also facing uncertainty regarding education, employment, relationships and the future. A multidimensional assessment therefore provides a more comprehensive understanding than asking young people a single question about whether they are happy. Guided by this framework, the present study examines subjective well-being among youth through the three dimensions of life satisfaction, positive emotions and negative emotions, which is more useful to understand how young people evaluate and emotionally experience their lives.

III. METHODS

The present study employed a cross-sectional descriptive research design to assess the subjective well-being of youth in the Manathavadi Municipality of Wayanad district of Kerala. Mananthavady Municipality is located in the northern part of Wayanad district in Kerala, on the Wayanad plateau of the Western Ghats. It serves as an important administrative and commercial center of North Wayanad. The municipality comprises 37 wards spread across a diverse landscape of river valleys, agricultural lands, forest fringes and urban settlements. The study examined how young people evaluated and emotionally experienced their lives using the multidimensional framework of subjective well-being. Eligible participants were included based on the predefined age criteria for youth and their willingness to participate in the study. A total of 370 youth participated in the study. A geographically stratified sampling approach was adopted to ensure adequate representation of youth from different parts of the municipality. For this purpose, the wards of Mananthavady Municipality were geographically grouped into five zones in a way that North, South, East, West and Central. One ward was selected by lottery method from each geographical zone, resulting in the selection of a total of five wards for the study. This approach was adopted to minimize geographical concentration of the sample and to ensure representation of youth living across different areas of the municipality. The selected wards therefore represented the northern, southern, eastern, western and central regions of Mananthavady Municipality. The selected wards are Pancharakolli from north, Kuruva from east, Mananthavady Town from central, Kaniyaram from west, and Chirakkara from south. Subjective well-being was assessed using a contextually adapted Subjective Well-Being Inventory developed for the present study. The inventory was conceptually guided by Diener's tripartite conceptualization of subjective well-being. The items

[2] Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. Journal of Personality Assessment, 49, 71-75.

were developed and adapted to reflect the everyday experiences and social context of young people in Kerala. The instrument included 10 items distributed across three dimensions such as Life Satisfaction (3 items), Positive Emotions (3 items), and Negative Emotions (4 items). The items were prepared in Malayalam to ensure that participants could clearly understand and respond to the questions within their linguistic and cultural context. The internal consistency of the Subjective Well-Being Inventory and its dimensions was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Item performance was further examined using corrected item-total correlations. The distribution and relationships among the dimensions of subjective well-being were examined using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Participants were included in the study if they were aged between 19 and 29 years, the predefined age range for youth in the present study, and were permanent residents of the selected wards of Mananthavady Municipality. Participants were required to have resided in the study area for a sufficient period to be familiar with their local social and living environment. Only those who were willing to participate voluntarily and were able to understand and respond to the study questionnaire were included in the study.

IV. RESULT

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The study included 340 young people aged 19–29 years from the study area. Of these, 190 (55.9%) were aged 25–29 years, while 150 (44.1%) were aged 19–24 years. Females constituted the majority of the respondents (69.1%), whereas males accounted for 30.9%. With regard to marital status, two-thirds of the respondents were unmarried (66.2%), while 32.4% were married and 1.5% reported being separated. The educational profile indicates a relatively high level of educational attainment among the respondents. More than half (55.9%) had completed postgraduate education, while 36.8% had a graduation. A smaller proportion had higher-secondary (4.4%) and diploma-level (1.5%) education. the sample was dominantly composed of respondents with degree-level or higher education. In terms of family composition, four-member families were the most common (38.2%), followed by five-member families (29.4%). Regarding health status, 82.4% of respondents reported no health problems, while 14.7% reported having a health problem. The demographic profile indicates that the sample consisted predominantly of female, unmarried and highly educated young adults, with most respondents belonging to four- or five-member families.

Table X presents the distribution of respondents across the three dimensions of subjective well-being. The ten items capture different aspects of young people's subjective experiences, including satisfaction with their lives and decisions, positive emotional experiences, social enjoyment, anxiety, sadness, future-related concerns and reduced interest in enjoyable activities. The response pattern gives an overview of how respondents perceive and experience different aspects of their well-being

	Item	Not at all	To some extent	Completely
Life Satisfaction	Life standard satisfaction	30 (9.1%)	240 (72.7%)	60 (18.2%)
	Satisfaction with life decisions	30 (9.1%)	215 (65.2%)	85 (25.8%)
	Able to achieve desired things	40 (12.1%)	275 (83.3%)	15 (4.5%)
Positive Emotions	Experience happiness in life	15 (4.5%)	220 (66.7%)	95 (28.8%)
	Feel energetic in daily activities	50 (15.6%)	185 (57.8%)	85 (26.6%)
	Social gatherings bring happiness	20 (6.1%)	150 (45.5%)	160 (48.5%)
Negative Emotions	Excessive anxiety/stress	45 (13.6%)	195 (59.1%)	90 (27.3%)
	Sadness without clear reason	100 (30.3%)	120 (36.4%)	110 (33.3%)

	Worry about future	20 (6.1%)	140 (42.4%)	170 (51.5%)
	Lack of interest in enjoyable things	165 (50.0%)	115 (34.8%)	50 (15.2%)

The response pattern indicates that subjective well-being among the respondents was mixed across its three dimensions. Life satisfaction was generally concentrated at the "to some extent" level, particularly regarding the ability to achieve desired things (83.3%). Positive emotional experiences were comparatively favorable, especially in relation to social gatherings, where 48.5% reported complete happiness. However, negative emotional experiences were also prominent, particularly worry about the future, reported completely by 51.5% of respondents. hence the findings shows the coexistence of positive experiences with considerable emotional concerns among the youth. the subjective well-being of youth in the study area is not characterized by an absence of negative emotional experiences despite the presence of positive emotions. The strong role of social gatherings indicates that social connectedness may constitute an important positive dimension of youth well-being. At the same time, the high prevalence of future-related worry and the limited proportion reporting complete attainment of desired goals point towards aspiration and future uncertainty as important elements of the youth subjective experience. Young people can simultaneously experience happiness and social enjoyment while facing concerns about their future and limitations in achieving desired outcomes.

Table X presents the descriptive statistics of the three dimensions of subjective well-being and the overall subjective well-being score among the respondents. The mean score was 6.18 (SD = 1.12) for Life Satisfaction and 6.78 (SD = 1.40) for Positive Emotions. The reverse-coded Negative Emotions dimension recorded a mean of 7.73 (SD = 2.20). The overall subjective well-being score had a mean of 20.69 (SD = 3.89), with observed scores ranging from 11 to 27.

Dimension	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Life Satisfaction	6.18	1.12	3	9
Positive Emotions	6.78	1.4	3	9
Negative Emotions	7.73	2.2	4	12
Overall SWB	20.69	3.89	11	27

The results indicate that respondents demonstrated variation across the different components of subjective well-being, with positive emotional experiences showing a somewhat higher mean than life satisfaction. The relatively greater dispersion in the Negative Emotions dimension indicate more variability in respondents' experiences of anxiety, sadness and future-related concerns.

Table X presents the Spearman's rank correlation coefficients among age and the three dimensions of subjective well-being. Life Satisfaction showed a moderate positive correlation with Positive Emotions ($\rho = 0.554$, $p < 0.001$). It also had a positive but weaker correlation with the Negative Emotions dimension ($\rho = 0.371$, $p < 0.001$). Positive Emotions were moderately positively correlated with the reverse-coded Negative Emotions dimension ($\rho = 0.495$, $p < 0.001$). Age showed a weak negative correlation with Life Satisfaction ($\rho = -0.145$, $p = 0.009$). Its association with Positive Emotions was weak and statistically non-significant ($\rho = -0.074$, $p = 0.185$). age had a weak positive correlation with the Negative Emotions score ($\rho = 0.243$, $p < 0.001$).

Variables	Spearman's ρ	p-value
Life Satisfaction ↔ Positive Emotions	0.554	<0.001
Life Satisfaction ↔ Negative Emotions*	0.371	<0.001
Positive Emotions ↔ Negative Emotions*	0.495	<0.001
Age ↔ Life Satisfaction	−0.145	0.009
Age ↔ Positive Emotions	−0.074	0.185
Age ↔ Negative Emotions*	0.243	<0.001

The correlations among the three subjective well-being dimensions indicate that they are related but distinct components of subjective well-being. The moderate association between life satisfaction and positive emotions indicate that young people who report greater satisfaction with their lives also tend to

report more positive emotional experiences. However, the correlations are not sufficiently strong to infer that these dimensions represent the same aspect of well-being. The association between age and Life Satisfaction was statistically significant but weak, which indicating that age accounts for only a small degree of variation in life satisfaction. The absence of a significant relationship between age and Positive Emotions indicate that positive emotional experiences remain relatively independent of age within the 19–29-year range. The positive association between age and Negative Emotions score indicates that older respondents tended to report fewer negative emotional experiences, although the strength of this relationship was weak. Taken together, the findings indicate that age alone does not substantially determine overall subjective well-being, while the different emotional and evaluative components of subjective well-being are meaningfully interconnected.

Table X presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis examining the factors associated with overall subjective well-being among the respondents. Overall SWB was treated as the dependent variable, while age, gender, marital status, health problem status and education were entered as predictors. Age was positively associated with overall subjective well-being and was statistically significant ($B = 0.193$, $p = 0.033$). Gender and marital status were not statistically significant predictors of overall SWB ($p > 0.05$). Health problem status showed a statistically significant negative association with SWB ($B = -4.339$, $p < 0.001$). Education was not significantly associated with overall SWB ($B = 0.013$, $p = 0.968$).

Predictor	B	SE	t	p
Constant	16.618	2.234	7.439	<0.001
Age	0.193	0.09	2.14	0.033
Male	0.568	0.557	1.021	0.308
Married	−0.372	0.524	−0.711	0.478
Health problem	−4.339	0.574	−7.555	<0.001
Education	0.013	0.307	0.041	0.968

The regression results indicate that health status was the most dominant predictor among the variables included in the model. Respondents reporting a health problem had, on average, a lower overall subjective well-being score than those without a reported health problem, after accounting for the other predictors in the model. Age showed a small positive association with subjective well-being, which indicate that differences in well-being across the 19–29-year age range may exist even after adjustment for the other variables. However, the effect was relatively small. The non-significant effects of gender, marital status and education indicate that these characteristics did not independently explain substantial differences in overall subjective well-being within this sample. health-related circumstances may be more closely associated with young people's subjective well-being than basic demographic characteristics such as gender, marital status and educational attainment.

V. DISCUSSION

Youth Subjective Well-Being: Positive Experiences and Emotional Concerns

The findings present a mixed profile of subjective well-being among young people in the study area, characterized by the coexistence of positive emotional experiences and considerable emotional concerns. Although respondents reported experiencing happiness, energy in daily activities and enjoyment from social gatherings, these positive experiences occurred alongside anxiety, stress, sadness and, most notably, concerns about the future. This pattern indicate that youth subjective well-being is better understood as a multidimensional experience in which positive and negative emotional states can occur simultaneously (Park, Nansook. 2004)[3], rather than as a simple continuum from happiness to unhappiness. Positive emotional experiences were relatively evident among the respondents, particularly in relation to social participation. Nearly half of the respondents reported that social gatherings completely brought them happiness, while a further substantial proportion experienced happiness from such interactions to some extent. This finding point out the importance of social connectedness within the subjective experience of young people. Social relationships can provide opportunities for companionship (Rook, Karen,

[3] Park, Nansook. (2004). The Role of Subjective Well-Being in Positive Youth Development. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. 591. 25-39. 10.1177/0002716203260078.

1987)[4], emotional exchange and participation (Pei & Zaki, 2025)[5], which may contribute to positive evaluations of everyday life. However, the present cross-sectional findings do not establish that social participation causes higher subjective well-being rather, they indicate that social enjoyment forms an important part of how respondents experience their well-being. At the same time, the findings reveal substantial emotional concerns that are not captured by measures of happiness alone (Akinyemi et al.,2025)[6]. Anxiety and stress were reported by a large majority of respondents to at least some extent, while future-related worry was particularly prominent. The high level of future concern is important in interpreting the overall well-being of young people because the transition into adulthood involves decisions and expectations concerning education, employment, relationships and future life circumstances. In the present study, the finding that many respondents experienced future-related worry alongside positive emotional experiences suggests that being happy in the present does not necessarily imply feeling secure or confident about the future (Park et al., 2023)[7]. The findings therefore provide an important perspective on the meaning of youth well-being. A young person may enjoy social gatherings, experience happiness and feel energetic in daily life while simultaneously experiencing anxiety or uncertainty about what lies ahead. Such coexistence is consistent with the multidimensional approach adopted in this study, where subjective well-being encompasses both positive and negative emotional experiences in addition to life satisfaction. The results consequently indicate that assessments based solely on happiness may overlook important aspects of young people's subjective lives. Another relevant finding is the comparatively limited extent to which respondents felt completely able to achieve the things they desired. While this item belongs to the life-satisfaction dimension rather than the emotional dimension, it complements the emotional findings by indicating that positive day-to-day experiences do not necessarily correspond to a strong sense of achievement or fulfilment. The combination of positive social and emotional experiences with concerns about future circumstances and incomplete attainment of desired goals points towards a wider understanding of youth well-being.

VI. LIFE SATISFACTION, ASPIRATIONS AND FUTURE-RELATED WORRY

Our study shows that life satisfaction among the respondents is characterized by partial rather than complete fulfilment. While most respondents expressed satisfaction with their current standard of living and with decisions made in their lives to some extent, the response pattern was less favorable regarding the ability to achieve desired things. This indicate that young people's evaluation of their lives may be influenced not only by their present circumstances but also by the extent to which they perceive themselves as progressing towards personally desired outcomes. The particularly high proportion of respondents who reported being able to achieve desired things only to some extent (83.3%), compared with only 4.5% who reported complete attainment, is noteworthy. This pattern may indicate that aspirations and their perceived achievement constitute an important dimension of youth life satisfaction. Young

[4] Rook, Karen. (1987). Social Support Versus Companionship: Effects on Life Stress, Loneliness, and Evaluations by Others. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 52. 1132-1147. 10.1037/0022-3514.52.6.1132.

[5] Pei, R., & Zaki, J. (2025). Connecting with others: How social connections improve the happiness of young adults. *In World Happiness Report 2025* (Chapter 5, pp. 125–152). https://doi.org/10.18724/whr-zc5n-4f96

[6] Akinyemi, O., Abdulrazaq, W., Fasokun, M., Ogunyankin, F., Ikugbayigbe, S., Nwosu, U., Michael, M., Hughes, K., & Ogundare, T. (2025). The impact of loneliness on depression, mental health, and physical well-being. *PLoS one*, *20*(7), e0319311. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0319311

[7] Park, L., Fujita, K., Naragon-Gainey, K., Radsvick, T., Jung, H. Y., Xia, J., Ward, D., Paravati, E., Weng, J., Italiano, A., & Valvo, A. (2023). Happiness—To enjoy now or later? Consequences of delaying happiness and living in the moment beliefs. *Emotion*, 23, 138–162. https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000850

adulthood is a period in which educational, occupational, financial and personal aspirations are often being developed or pursued. However, the present data do not identify which specific aspirations are difficult to achieve, therefore, the finding should be interpreted as evidence of incomplete perceived goal attainment, rather than attributed to any particular social or economic factor. Future-related worry provides an important complement to this finding. More than half of the respondents (51.5%) reported completely worrying about their future, while another 42.4% experienced such worry to some extent. The coexistence of incomplete goal attainment and substantial future concern shows that subjective well-being among these young people involves not only an evaluation of their present lives but also an assessment of what lies ahead. A young person may therefore experience reasonable satisfaction with present circumstances while remaining uncertain about future possibilities. This pattern is particularly relevant to the interpretation of life satisfaction among youth. Life satisfaction represents a broader cognitive evaluation of one's life, whereas future-related worry reflects an emotional response to anticipated circumstances. The findings show that these aspects should not be assumed to move in the same direction. Present satisfaction does not necessarily imply confidence about the future, and positive experiences in the present may coexist with uncertainty regarding future goals and circumstances. Taken together, the findings shows that aspiration fulfilment and future orientation are important elements of youth subjective well-being in the study setting. The results also strengthen the argument for examining youth well-being through multiple dimensions rather than relying exclusively on current happiness or life satisfaction.

VII. SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND POSITIVE EMOTIONS

social connectedness forms an important part of the positive emotional experiences reported by the young respondents. Among the positive-emotion items, social gatherings showed the most favorable response pattern, with 48.5% of respondents reporting that social gatherings completely brought them happiness and a further 45.5% reporting that they did so to some extent. Only 6.1% reported that social gatherings did not bring them happiness. This indicate that opportunities for social interaction are closely embedded in the everyday emotional experiences of the youth included in the study. The finding is also consistent with the broader pattern of positive emotions observed in the study. A substantial proportion of respondents reported experiencing happiness in life and feeling energetic in their daily activities. Thus, positive emotional experiences appear to extend beyond an isolated feeling of happiness and include social enjoyment and engagement in everyday activities. The relatively favorable response to social gatherings may indicate that interpersonal relationships and opportunities for social participation are meaningful components of how young people experience their lives. The correlation findings further support the interconnected nature of subjective well-being. Life Satisfaction was moderately correlated with Positive Emotions ($\rho = 0.554$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that respondents who reported greater satisfaction with their lives also tended to report more positive emotional experiences. However, the correlation was not sufficiently strong to suggest that the two dimensions are interchangeable. This distinction is important because a young person may experience positive social and emotional experiences even when their overall evaluation of life is less favorable. At the same time, the findings should not be interpreted as demonstrating a causal effect of social connectedness on subjective well-being. The study is cross-sectional and the measure captures whether social gatherings are experienced as a source of happiness rather than the broader quality or extent of social relationships. Nevertheless, the results indicate that social experiences are an important component of youth subjective well-being in the study population.

VIII. INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE DIMENSIONS OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

The correlation analysis indicates that the three dimensions of subjective well-being are significantly interconnected. Life Satisfaction showed a moderate positive association with Positive Emotions ($\rho = 0.554$, $p < 0.001$), that respondents who evaluated their lives more positively also tended to report more positive emotional experiences. This relationship indicates a meaningful connection between the cognitive evaluation of life and everyday emotional

experiences. Life Satisfaction was also positively associated with the reverse-coded Negative Emotions dimension ($\rho = 0.371$, $p < 0.001$). Since the negative-emotion items were reverse-coded, the positive coefficient indicates that respondents with greater life satisfaction also tended to report fewer negative emotional experiences. However, the weaker magnitude of this association compared with the relationship between Life Satisfaction and Positive Emotions indicate that these dimensions are related but capture different aspects of subjective well-being. Similarly, Positive Emotions showed a moderate positive association with the Negative Emotions dimension ($\rho = 0.495$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that respondents reporting more positive emotional experiences also tended to report fewer negative emotional experiences. The correlation was not sufficiently strong to suggest that positive and negative emotional experiences are simply opposite manifestations of the same experience. Taken together, the pattern of correlations provides evidence that the three dimensions are interrelated but conceptually distinguishable. Life satisfaction, positive emotions and negative emotions appear to contribute to a common broader construct of subjective well-being while retaining some degree of independence. The findings also have an important interpretive implication: positive and negative experiences may coexist within the same individual. Therefore, a respondent may report happiness and satisfaction while also experiencing concerns or other negative emotions.

IX. AGE, HEALTH AND OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

The regression analysis indicates that the relationship between demographic characteristics and subjective well-being was not uniform across the variables examined. Age showed a small but statistically significant positive association with overall subjective well-being, indicating that, after controlling for the other variables in the model, older youths tended to have slightly higher SWB scores. However, the relatively small coefficient indicate that age was not a major determinant of differences in overall subjective well-being. The correlation analysis provides a complementary perspective. Age was weakly negatively associated with Life Satisfaction and was not significantly associated with Positive Emotions. In contrast, age was positively associated with the Negative Emotions dimension, indicating that older respondents tended to report fewer negative emotional experiences. The differences between the bivariate and adjusted findings indicate that the relationship between age and overall SWB is relatively modest and may vary depending on the dimension of well-being considered. Health status showed the strongest association among the demographic predictors included in the regression model. Reporting a health problem was associated with a substantially lower overall SWB score, after adjusting for age, gender, marital status and education. This finding highlights the relevance of health in understanding young people's subjective well-being. Health-related difficulties may have implications for everyday functioning and emotional experiences, although the cross-sectional design does not permit a causal interpretation of this association. gender, marital status and education were not statistically significant predictors of overall subjective well-being in the adjusted model. Gender, marital status and education did not independently explain variation in SWB after accounting for the other variables. These findings indicate that, within this sample of young people, differences in subjective well-being were more closely associated with health status and, to a lesser extent, age than with these basic demographic characteristics.

X. YOUTH! HOW IS YOUR LIFE?

The question posed by this study “Youth! How Is Your Life?” cannot be answered simply by describing whether young people are happy or unhappy. The findings show a more complex picture of youth subjective well-being in the Wayanad Hills. Young people reported meaningful positive experiences in their everyday lives, particularly through social interaction and participation, while at the same time expressing concerns about their aspirations, emotional experiences and future. Thus, their subjective well-being appears to be shaped by the simultaneous experience of enjoying the present and negotiating uncertainty about what lies ahead. The overall subjective well-being score of 20.69, together with the dimension-specific findings, showing that the respondents did not constitute a uniformly distressed or uniformly highly satisfied group. Rather, variation

was evident across the different components of well-being. Life satisfaction was present, but complete fulfilment was less common. Positive emotions were evident, particularly in relation to social gatherings, whereas negative emotional experiences, especially future-related worry were also substantial. This combination is important because it demonstrates that a positive emotional life does not necessarily mean an absence of concern. The findings on aspirations provide an important clue to this complexity. Although many respondents expressed some satisfaction with their lives and decisions, only a small proportion reported that they were completely able to achieve the things they desired. Most indicated that they could achieve their desired things only to some extent. This indicate that the subjective experience of youth may involve a continuing process of aspiring, progressing and evaluating whether one's present circumstances are sufficient to meet personal expectations. The data do not identify the specific nature of these aspirations, but the pattern indicates that perceived achievement is an important aspect of how young people evaluate their lives. The prominence of future-related worry adds another layer to this picture. The finding that 51.5% of respondents reported completely worrying about their future, with a further 42.4% experiencing such worry to some extent, indicates that the future occupies a significant place in the subjective experience of these young people. This is particularly relevant because youth represent a period in which individuals are making or anticipating important life decisions. The present findings cannot establish the precise sources of future worry, but they demonstrate that current happiness and future confidence should not be treated as equivalent concepts. At the same time, social connectedness appears to provide an important positive dimension of youth life. Social gatherings were reported as a source of happiness by the large majority of respondents, with 48.5% reporting complete happiness from such interactions. This finding shows that young people's subjective well-being is embedded in their social environment rather than being exclusively an individual psychological experience. Social interaction may provide opportunities for enjoyment, connection and emotional exchange, although the cross-sectional nature of the study does not allow the direction of this relationship to be established. The interrelationships among the SWB dimensions further strengthen this interpretation. Life satisfaction, positive emotions and reverse-coded negative emotions were significantly correlated, but the relationships were moderate rather than perfect. This indicates that the dimensions share a common connection while retaining distinct characteristics. In practical terms, a young person can be satisfied with some aspects of life and experience happiness in social settings while simultaneously experiencing worry about the future. The coexistence of these apparently contrasting experiences is not a contradiction, it is an important feature of subjective well-being itself. The regression findings provide an additional perspective on the question of how young people experience their lives. Health problems were strongly and negatively associated with overall SWB, whereas gender, marital status and education did not show significant independent associations. This indicate that the subjective experience of youth may be less adequately explained by demographic characteristics alone and more closely connected with individual circumstances such as health.

Taken together, the findings provide a wider answer to the question “Youth! How Is Your Life?” The answer emerging from this study is neither simply happy nor unhappy. Young people appear to experience social enjoyment, happiness and everyday positive emotions while simultaneously facing incomplete aspiration fulfilment and substantial concern about their future. Their lives therefore reflect a dynamic balance between present experiences and future expectations.

XI. CONCLUSION

The question “Youth! How Is Your Life?” draws attention to an aspect of development that cannot be captured through conventional indicators alone. The present study shows that the subjective well-being of young people in the Wayanad Hills is shaped by a combination of life satisfaction, positive emotional experiences and negative emotional concerns. While social interaction and everyday experiences provide important sources of happiness, incomplete fulfilment of aspirations, future-related worry and health-related concerns remain significant elements of young people's lived experiences. The findings point to the need to move from viewing youth well-being primarily in terms of educational attainment, employment or other objective conditions towards a

broader understanding that also considers how young people experience their lives. Future-oriented concerns deserve particular attention because they may remain hidden when youth well-being is assessed only through present happiness or general life satisfaction. the observed association between health problems and lower subjective well-being highlights the importance of considering health within broader approaches to youth development. The way forward is therefore to place youth voices and subjective experiences more centrally in the assessment of well-being. Future studies should examine what lies behind young people's future-related concerns and incomplete aspiration fulfilment, including the social, educational, occupational and economic circumstances that shape these perceptions.

The present study also provides a basis for developing context-sensitive approaches to monitoring youth well-being in Kerala. Rather than asking only whether young people are happy, future assessments could ask whether they are satisfied with their lives, able to pursue their aspirations, experiencing positive social relationships, managing emotional concerns and feeling confident about their future. Such an approach would provide a more complete picture of youth well-being and help ensure that young people's own experiences remain an important part of understanding development. “Youth! How Is Your Life?” should not be a question asked only once in a research study. It should become a continuing question in understanding youth and development.