

Digital Platforms for Mental Well-being in India: Status, Strategies, and Future Potential

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Since the beginning of the discipline of psychology as a science, researchers and clinicians have been trying to foster growth and positive well-being, and nurture emotional strengths. The digital revolution has facilitated this mission by increasing the reach and automation of interventions which aid in improving happiness and well-being. Many such global platforms have emerged over the past two decades which fosters well-being using a variety of approaches and strategies. This review explores the role of digital platforms in fostering mental health and well-being in India, examining their current status, effectiveness, and potential future developments. Additionally, the review extends this discussion by suggesting how Indian platforms can learn from approaches adopted by its Western counterparts, while also integrating principles from Indian religious/spiritual and socio- cultural practices.

Keywords: Online Positive Psychology Interventions; Digital Mental Health; Mobile Health Apps; Web-platforms; Positive Technology

Happiness and Well-Being

The concept of happiness can be interpreted in various ways. When posed with the question, "What does it mean to be happy?" it is expected that individuals would come up with diverse responses. Some may define happiness in terms of enjoyment, while others may emphasize leading a meaningful life. Perspectives on happiness can vary depending on factors such as gender, age, socio-economic status, cultural and religious beliefs, and personality traits. In an effort to explore these variations, Fave et al. (2016) investigated the definition of happiness among individuals from 12 different countries. The analysis revealed a range of themes across different domains. Psychological themes involved constructs like autonomy, mastery, self-actualization, optimism, inner harmony, awareness, and experiences of satisfaction, meaning, and purpose. Social themes captured ideas such as meaningful contribution, reciprocity, personal reward, and the welfare of family,

community, and society. Professional themes included engagement, achievement, structural change, recognition, work-related meaning, and quality of life. Spiritual dimensions focused on the practice and growth of faith and spirituality. These themes emerge from various theoretical and research driven concepts which are used to understand well-being and happiness.

One thing which is clear from the research is the multidimensional nature of happiness (or well-being). Seligman (2002) theorised it as the three paths to happiness: the pleasant life, which is defined by finding joy in life, denotes meeting a person's needs in many ways; the good life, where one utilises their abilities and capabilities to feel competent and self-assured; and the meaningful life, where one searches for life's greater meaning and purpose. This theoretical basis has paved the way for two major approaches to happiness: hedonic and eudaimonic.

Seligman's pleasant life refers to the hedonistic side of happiness. Here,

happiness refers to personal happiness that involves pleasure, joy, and satisfaction. Subjective Well-being (SWB) is based on the hedonic definition of happiness, and is defined as the subjective evaluation of one's life, i.e., how one perceives and evaluates one's life (Diener, 1984, 2000). Subjective well-being is made up of three components: life satisfaction, positive affect, and the absence of negative affect (Diener 2000; Baumgardner, 2015). Eudaimonic happiness refers to a greater sense of purpose in life, which entails using an individual's strengths, abilities, talents, values, and skills. Hence, it is also termed the Psychological Well-being (PWB) (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Accordingly, reaching one's full potential and living life to the fullest with meaning, authenticity, and purposefulness are also components of well-being, in addition to minimising unpleasant experiences and optimising positive ones (Waterman et al., 2010).

Following these initial theories, various theories have emerged which have further diversified the view on well-being; Mental health continuum model of Keyes (1998), the PERMA model of Seligman (2011), self-determination theory of Ryan and Deci (2000), and so on. These theories have focused on various aspects of happiness including purpose in life, flourishing, achievement and social aspects of relationships. Among these, one notable perspective that has emerged from the recent studies is inner harmony (Dambrun et al., 2012). According to Kjell's (2011) theoretical study, inner harmony is a reflection of long-term well-being and real enjoyment. All these ideas and theories reveal happiness as an elaborate framework that involves the pursuit of simple pleasure and interests, while also dedicating to a higher purpose and achievement, and focusing on sustained inner peace and satisfaction.

While understanding the meaning of happiness is important, psychologists have

been particularly interested in whether it is possible to enhance individuals' levels of happiness, and if yes, how. There have been various strategies developed over the years to enhance wellbeing. These strategies typically follow a multi-pronged approach. It needs to take into account various aspects of happiness ranging from positive emotional experiences, satisfaction of needs to utilization of one's signature strengths, values, being mindful, finding one's life purpose and cultivating a higher consciousness. Positive psychology constructs including gratitude, resilience, compassion, optimism, hope, and mindfulness contribute significantly to happiness. It seems like a network of uplifting and positively linked constructs. Several interventions within this approach have been studied to promote happiness and well-being, including writing letters of gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2003), visualising one's best future self (King, 2001), appreciating positive experiences (Bryant & Veroff, 2007), finding meaning in life, and utilising one's strengths (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2017). It has defined these as online positive psychological interventions (OPPIs), which are effective and sustainable techniques for promoting health and well-being, leading to a more comprehensive approach to mental healthcare. These practices can be complemented with activities of other schools of thoughts like mindfulness, meditation, yoga, cognitive-behavioural approach (cognitive restructuring, thought monitoring, and thought challenge), and others to improve the happiness and well-being among individuals.

These approaches have been an effective tool to increase levels of happiness, but their accessibility still remains an issue. This issue is further amplified in a developing nation like India, where the population is both high and diverse. One promising approach to addressing this challenge is the use of

positive technology—digital tools and platforms designed to enhance well-being and mental health— to deliver effective interventions at scale. Botella et al. (2012) defined positive technology as a scientific approach to enhancing personal experiences, promoting wellness, and building resilience in individuals, organizations, and society. This measure has primarily benefited Western developed countries, while developing nations like India still need to establish effective platforms that can serve their large populations. The present paper explores these opportunities for Indian platforms by examining their structure and utility.

Need and Benefits of Digital Platforms for Happiness

India is the most populated country in the world with 1.45 billion estimated individuals, and home to most youth across the world (Jejeebhoy & Kumar, 2024). There is a high mental health burden in the country, where individuals are dealing with various issues surrounding stress, anxiety, and depression (Sahithya & Reddy, 2018). As per latest World Happiness Report, India ranked 126 among 143 nations, falling behind the war-torn Palestine and Ukraine, and neighbours like Pakistan and Nepal (Figure 1).



Fig. 1: Overall scores of countries in the World Happiness Report 2024

Given this poor state of happiness and well-being in India, there is an urgent need for providing widespread resources for improving these levels all across the nation. However, there is a significant shortage of mental health professionals in India to address these concerns. According to Garg,

Kumar, and Chandra (2019), India has only 0.75 psychiatrists per 100,000 people, whereas the recommended ratio is at least 3 psychiatrists per 100,000. The situation is similarly concerning for other professionals, such as clinical psychologists. This shortage not only limits the capacity to address mental health issues but also hinders efforts to promote positive well-being and happiness.

Digital platforms provide a unique opportunity for bridging this gap, by reaching to the most remote locations. On the other hand, India has seen significant tech advancement and digitalisation within the last decade with the availability of affordable internet services and mobile phones (Mishra & Kumar, 2023). The evolution of digitalization has been further accelerated by the Indian government's 'Digital India' campaign, launched in 2015. This initiative has provided incentives to enhance internet connectivity and promote digital literacy among both rural and urban populations (Chopra & Dhiman, 2023). According to a recent report at India Digital Summit, as of 2023, India has over eight hundred million internet consumers, which makes it one of the world's biggest digital marketplaces. This fast digital transition has invaded all aspects of life, and can be utilised for creating new opportunities for enhancing the health & well-being of different people.

Another concern of the Indian population is the diversity of the nation, where each demographic cohort faces a unique challenge. The country is home to a diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious population, each with their own set of cultural norms that impact their sense of well-being. This sophisticated structure has an impact on the needs and wants of many demographic groups, particularly those looking to better their well-being through digital platforms. For example, cultural customs and beliefs commonly influence eating habits, healthcare treatment alternatives, and mental health

attitudes (Monterrosa et al., 2020). Traditional medicine and folk therapies are more prevalent in rural areas, whereas urban residents have more access to contemporary healthcare facilities (Krupa et al., 2019; Kumar, Pathak, & Ruikar, 2020).

A digital platform can also help to bridge this gap by developing platforms that systematically address the numerous demands that impact the population's well-being. It might also use technology to deliver tailored assistance, information, and services to distinct groups depending on their language, cultural, and economic contexts. For example, the platform might provide information in Hindi, English, or both languages to meet the requirements, which is in coherence with the Education system of northern India (Khanna & Singh, 2016). Furthermore, it may readily provide personalised self-help strategies for various age groups, recognising that human functioning requirements fluctuate considerably before, throughout, and beyond middle age (Rathod et al., 2017).

Digitalisation can be utilised to bridge the gap of social isolation, which can in turn improve overall well-being. According to Chopik (2016), utilising social technology leads to improved self-rated health, fewer chronic diseases, and more subjective well-being. Brannan and Mohr (2018) also suggest that virtual interactions may be just as personal as in-person relationships. Individuals who experience social anxiety and loneliness are more inclined to seek new and meaningful interactions online and those who struggle with establishing relationships due to shyness, anxiety, or lack of social skills might find a secure and non-threatening environment on the Internet (McKenna et al., 2002). Research also suggests that young people use digital technology and social media to enhance their relationships (Hynan, Murray, & Goldbart, 2014).

While digital platforms offer valuable opportunities to enhance the mental well-being and happiness of Indians, there remains a need for more such initiatives as of 2024. Compared to developed nations like USA, UK, France and Germany, which have been utilising technology to provide both healthcare and wellness-based services and interventions for almost two decades, there are very few platforms available catering to Indian needs and issues, and even fewer which focus on self-help strategies on happiness. The remaining part of this paper will focus on the insights from global platforms, the strategies and interventions used in digital platforms and the current status of Indian platforms which focus on mental health and well-being.

Digital Platforms for Mental Health and Well-being: Lessons from the Developed Countries

When it comes to leveraging technology for mental health and well-being, the majority is focused on clinical or subclinical populations to provide them with services such as health tracking and management, AI-driven chatbots for support and facilitation of interventions and activities to improve or overcome their mental health conditions. Several platforms have emerged over the last quarter century offering a variety of mental health and wellness services on digital platforms including therapies, mediation session, psychoeducation, mood tracking, crisis support platforms, telepsychiatry platforms, AI chatbots and virtual assistants. Online self-help represents another form of support and can be viewed as a type of mutual aid, where individuals or groups come together to assist each other, grounded in shared goals and an understanding of each other's needs. Along with these, these can be facilitated in several ways like applications, web-platforms and serious games. Table 1 presents a summary of globally available platforms that have demonstrated high utilization and effectiveness.

Table 1: Selected Digital Platforms for Mental Health, Well-being and Happiness in the Last Ten Years

Sl. No:	Name of Platform	Description
	ACT Based Approaches	
1	Daily CMT Exercises: Halamová et al. (2020)	Provides a 13-day structured Compassionate Mind Training with email reminders and reflection tasks.
2	Happify: Boucher et al. (2022)	Offers gamified well-being tracks with guided activities, an instant play feature, and a chatbot assistant.
	Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches	
3	Cognitive Bias Modification Training: Yang et al. (2017)	Conducts 20 sessions with interpretive bias tasks, attention bias tasks, word sorting, and self-esteem enhancement.
4	Mood GYM: Twomey & O'Reilly (2017)	Features 5 interactive modules covering cognitive restructuring, self-esteem, relaxation, assertiveness and relationships.
5	Mood Kit: Bakker et al. (2018)	Features tools for thought checking, mood tracking, journaling, and psychoeducation.
6	Mood Mission: Bakker et al. (2018)	Delivers personalized CBT strategies through confidence-building tasks and mission-based activities.
7	Calm: Huberty et al. (2019)	Includes mindfulness meditation, guided sessions, relaxation sounds, CBT techniques, and daily goal setting.
8	Mood Hacker: Birney et al. (2016)	Facilitates activity planning, cognitive restructuring, self-awareness, and gratitude tracking.
	Gamification	
9	Super Better: McGonigal (2015), Chou et al. (2017)	Engages users in goal-oriented tasks, positive reinforcement, and simple mental wellness exercises.
10	EmoTIC Program: de la Barrera et al. (2021)	Involves modules on emotional perception, stress management, emotional regulation to improve emotional intelligence.
11	Silver: De Jaegere et al. (2024)	Uses a cognitive-behavioral framework through immersive storytelling and skill-building to address cognitive distortions.
	Mindfulness-Based Approaches	
12	Compassion Mindset: Andersson et al. (2021)	Features a 7-day course with guided meditations, breathing exercises, body scans, and reflection space.
13	Headspace: Flett et al. (2019)	Provides guided meditation, motivation enhancement, routine building, and progress tracking.
14	14 Insight Timer: King (2024)	Offers guided meditations, breathing exercises, body scanning, gratitude practices, and affirmations.

15	Mindfulness Intervention: Kappen et al. (2019)	Provides psychoeducation, daily mindfulness exercises, guided audio instructions, and application in daily activities.
16	Smiling Mind: Flett et al. (2019)	Provides guided meditation programs tailored for various age groups and themed mindfulness sessions.
17	Wildflowers: Walsh et al. (2019)	Includes meditations, mindful breathing, body scans, open monitoring, and biofeedback tracking.
Positive Psychology Approaches		
18	Best Possible Self: Auyeung & Mo (2019)	Provides guided visualization on future goals and well-being areas such as career, hobbies, and health.
19	CARE: Krifa et al. (2022)	A self-help program offering psychoeducation, expert videos, positive exercises, and weekly activities.
20	Greater Good in Action: Hart (2016)	Provides over 80 exercises aimed at enhancing gratitude, compassion, mindfulness, and social connection.
Humor-Based Interventions		
21	Tagalidou et al. (2019)	Includes activities like “Three Funny Things,” “Coping Humor,” and “Three Good Things.”
22	LefeData (Hope): Daugherty et al. (2018)	Provides a 28-day intervention featuring hope notifications and peer stories.
23	OneUS: Uribe et al. (2023)	Emphasizes gratitude, savoring, strengths, reflection, kindness, and meaning.
24	Optimism Cultivation Exercises: Sergeant & Mongrain (2014)	Alternates between optimism exercises, goal-setting activities, and listing positive experiences.
25	Shamiri-Digital: Osborn et al. (2020)	Comprises 3 interactive modules with journaling and self-reflection exercises.
26	My Coping Plan: Stallman (2019)	Assists with coping planning using a transdiagnostic approach.
Psychoeducation		
27	Paradym: Eisenstadt et al. (2021)	Encourages reflection on emotional patterns through daily reflections and guided self-awareness exercises.
28	The Fatherhood Project: Levine et al. (2014)	Offers guided reflection on fatherhood engagement, values, goals, and self-exploration activities.

Effectiveness of Apps and Web-platforms for Mental Health

Mobile health (MHealth) apps have been widely utilised for providing services related to health and well-being. A health app may track users’ heart rate, emotions, movements, sleep patterns, food and drink consumption, and sexual activity throughout their day and

night (Marelli, Lievevrouw, & Van Hoyweghen, 2020). mHealth app interventions primarily emphasize self-monitoring and self-management, drawing upon behaviour change theories and behaviour modification strategies as key components in addressing mental health conditions (Direito et al., 2017; Morrissey et al., 2016). Firth et al. (2017)

reported that app-delivered therapies were effective in reducing anxiety and depression. Similarly, Gal et al. (2021) found small to moderate effect sizes, particularly for mindfulness apps that alleviated perceived stress, anxiety, and depression. These findings are further supported by other reviews, which indicate that mindfulness applications contribute to improved general mental health and reduced perceived stress (Spijkerman, Pots, & Bohlmeijer, 2016; Jayewardene et al., 2017). Additionally, evidence suggests that mHealth apps may be beneficial in addressing conditions such as alcohol use disorders, sleep disorders, depression, suicidal behaviors, self-injury thoughts and behaviors, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Wang, Varma, & Prosper, 2018; Weisel et al., 2019). A recent review by Eisenstadt et al. (2021) noted that while the effectiveness of mHealth applications in promoting emotion regulation, well-being, and mental health remains in its early stages, these tools have the potential to support well-being monitoring and enhancement in the general population.

People have also utilised various social media platforms to provide interventions related to mental health and well-being. According to Lin et al. (2020), using social media can improve mental health by increasing social support, strengthening ties, and seeking treatment. According to Gowen et al. (2012) in a survey of young adults, individuals with mental illness are more likely to express their opinions through blogging, form connections on social media, and interact with people online who have common interests than those without mental illness. According to Oliphant (2013), videos and movies that include personal narratives and experiential knowledge on YouTube have increased audience engagement and are preferred sources of mental health information. Choi, Kim and Huh-Yoo (2021) in their review have found that users looking

for mental health-related videos concerning college students on YouTube want to see and hear from individuals who have been in a similar circumstance and can share their own experiences. Individual narrative videos appear to suit such demands among college students, especially as many of them are meant to provide emotional support and describe daily life from a first-person viewpoint. These studies highlight the growing reliance on social media platforms for mental health support.

Effectiveness of Online Positive Psychology Intervention (OPPIs)

While the effectiveness of apps and web-platforms has been seen in tackling and maintaining mental illness, these focus on treatment and management, rather than focusing on prevention and improvement of positive aspects like happiness and well-being. Tome et al. (2021), in their systematic review of mental health and well-being promotion interventions targeting children and adolescents, found that school-based preventive programs not only help in delaying or preventing the development of clinical disorders but also contribute to the enhancement of overall mental well-being. Hence, some intervention activities can be utilised by the normal population as well, providing them resources to maintain and improve their well-being and happiness in the positive direction, but their utilisation and effectiveness is limited.

Few recent reviews have tried to understand the effectiveness of OPPIs. Saboor, Medina, and Marciano (2024) conducted a systematic review to investigate the influence of digital treatments based on positive psychology on the well-being and ill-health of children, adolescents, and young adults. The findings indicate that while PPIs can improve certain elements of well-being, the benefits are not uniform across domains or demographic groups. The data supports

the efficacy of certain forms of PPIs, notably those that promote appreciation, purpose, and optimism. Baños et al. (2017) did a narrative review on whether OPPIs can improve adolescent well-being and resilience. The study revealed encouraging benefits, but recommends more controlled and longitudinal investigations. Francis et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive evaluation on the effectiveness of online, school-based PPIs in enhancing mental health and well-being. The study found that OPPIs can overcome resource constraints, but the effectiveness of online treatments and human connection are uncertain. Recently, Andres (2024) conducted a study on the effectiveness of OPPIs based on the PERMA model in enhancing happiness among people and found a positive influence on happiness across studies.

Approaches to Happiness Increasing Strategies in the Digital World

While people have used various modes in the digital world to deliver interventions for both overcoming mental health challenges, and improving well-being, the effectiveness of such programs is visible all across the board. However, another question is the types of activities that are utilised in such available platforms. CBT is a well-known approach that aims to increase people's awareness of their own mental processes

and the types of automatic ideas that come to mind and give things significance (Hofmann, 2011). Mindfulness and positive psychology practices on the other hand focus on maintaining behaviour and promoting growth-based approach (Ivtzan et al., 2016). When it comes to coping with stress, there are yet another set of different approaches. Problem-focused coping aims to address the underlying source of stress; emotion-focused coping addresses the feelings associated with a stressful situation; and acceptance-oriented coping involves accepting unpleasant situations that are beyond one's control (Ghafaji et al., 2023). These approaches shape the activities for different purposes, which can be divided into two main categories: negative emotional management and positive well-being practices. Negative emotional management activities focus on overcoming mental health issues like stress, anxiety and depression, with activities like mindful breathing, cognitive restructuring or grounding for distress. Positive well-being practices focus on positive growth like gratitude and self-confidence, with activities like gratitude journalising, goal setting and self-compassion letters. There are certain activities like mindfulness meditation and mental wellness journaling which can be used for either purpose and are general well-being practices. Table 2 mentions a list of such practices.

Table 2: List of Selected Activities at Different Apps and Digital Platforms

S.No: Activity	Description	Apps/Web-Platforms
General Well-being Practices		
1 Breathing Techniques	Using deep or structured breathing to reduce stress and increase focus.	Calm, Headspace, Insight Timer, Mindfulness App
2 Expressive Writing	Writing freely to express emotions and process difficult experiences.	Greater Good in Action, Happify, MoodHacker
3 Mindful Time Management	Applying mindfulness to prioritize tasks and manage time effectively.	Headspace, Insight Timer, Mindfulness App

4	Mindful Walking	Walking with intentional awareness to enhance mindfulness and reduce stress.	Calm, Headspace, Insight Timer, Mindfulness App
5	Mindfulness Meditation	A practice focused on present-moment awareness and mental relaxation.	Calm, Greater Good in Action, Insight Timer, Headspace
6	Three Funny Things	Identifying humorous moments	Greater Good in Action
7	Visualization Meditation	Creating mental images to promote relaxation and mental clarity.	Insight Timer, Mindfulness App
8	Yoga & Physical Movement	Incorporating yoga and movement for physical and mental well-being.	Headspace, Insight Timer, Learn Mindfulness Online
Negative Emotional Management			
9	Cognitive Reappraisal	Reframing negative thoughts to reduce emotional distress.	Greater Good in Action, MoodGYM, Happify
10	Cognitive Restructuring	Challenging negative thought patterns to improve emotional well-being.	MoodGYM, MoodHacker, Happify
11	Emotion Regulation	Strategies to manage emotions effectively and reduce stress.	Calm, Happify, Insight Timer, Headspace, Moodmission
12	Grounding Techniques	Using sensory or mental exercises to manage distressing emotions.	Calm, Insight Timer, Headspace
13	Mental Subtraction of Positive Events	Imagining life without positive events to deepen appreciation for them.	Greater Good in Action
14	Mood Tracking and Diary	Recording moods to identify patterns and improve emotional well-being.	Happify, MoodGYM, Insight Timer, MoodPrism
15	Problem- Solving Scenarios	Applying structured problem-solving to cope with life challenges.	MoodGYM, MoodHacker
16	Schema Therapy	Addressing deep-seated negative beliefs to improve emotional health.	MoodGYM
Positive Well-being Practices			
17	Affirmation Practices	Using positive statements to enhance self-esteem and motivation.	Calm, Greater Good in Action, Insight Timer, Headspace
18	Engagement in Creative Hobbies	Participating in creative activities for relaxation and self-expression.	Happify, Moodmission
19	Goal Setting & Tracking	Setting and tracking goals to boost motivation and focus.	Calm, Happify, MoodGYM, Moodmission
20	Gratitude Practices	Cultivating gratitude to increase happiness and reduce stress.	Calm, Greater Good in Action, Insight Timer, Moodmission
21	Growth Mindset	Developing resilience by embracing challenges as opportunities for growth	Greater Good in Action

22	Random Acts of Kindness	Performing small selfless actions to enhance well-being and connection.	Greater Good in Action, Happify
23	Savoring Good Experiences	Mindfully reliving positive moments to enhance emotional well-being.	Good in Action, Happify Greater
24	Self-Compassion Letter	Writing a kind letter to oneself to foster self-compassion.	Greater Good in Action
25	Strengths Assessment	Identifying and utilizing personal strengths for confidence and growth.	Happify, Greater Good in Action, MoodHacker
26	Three Good Things	Reflecting on three daily positives to foster gratitude and improve mood.	Greater Good in Action, Headspace, Mindfulness App

Current Status of Digitalisation in Mental Health in India

Compared to the global scenario, the Indian platforms are somewhat limited and underdeveloped. On top of that, these platforms focus on mental disorders and clinical conditions, and not positive aspects

like happiness and well-being. However, these platforms are definitely a step in the right direction and they do form the initial groundwork that are needed for further development. Table 3 lists various digital platforms in India which are dedicated to mental health.

Table 3: Selected Digital Platforms for Mental Health and well-being in India

Sl. No:	Digital Platform	Description	Link
		Self-guided program	
1	PODAdventures	Counselor-guided app with interactive stories, mini-games, and quizzes for problem-solving.	POD Adventures
2	MANAS	Digital platform with self-evaluation tools, life skills training, and bilingual support.	MANAS
3	Wysa	AI chatbot using cognitive-behavioral techniques and micro-actions for emotional well-being.	Wysa
		Online counseling/therapy	
4	Amaha	App connecting users with mental health professionals, therapy, and self-care plans.	Amaha
5	Trijog	Online counseling services for individuals, organizations, and corporations.	Trijog
6	ePsyClinic	24/7 chat support, therapy programs, and rural mental healthcare services.	ePsyClinic
7	YourDOST	Online counseling for corporates, colleges, and schools.	YourDOST
8	TalktoAngel	Individual and corporate counseling with tele-consultation for medication.	TalktoAngel
		Online community support	
9	Atmiyata	Community mental health model with volunteer-led support and counseling.	Atmiyata

As can be seen, MANAS is a government-led platform which aims to encourage positive mental health through time management, sleep management, mindfulness, deep connection with people, and emotional intelligence. POD Adventure incorporates evidence-based cognitive and behavioural strategies, encouraging users to engage in small, manageable actions to improve their well-being. As a counsellor-guided problem-solving intervention, it teaches essential problem-solving skills through interactive animated stories, mini-games, and quizzes. It represents one of the early digital initiatives focused on promoting well-being in India (Gonsalves, 2022; Gonsalves et al., 2020). Wysa, an AI based chatbot, is a conversational agent that measures the user's emotions. This app has demonstrated increased mental health distress during the pandemic, and shows that the app effectively supports users and reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression (Sinha et al., 2023; Inkster et al., 2018). In addition to these, there are platforms like Amaha and YourDost which focus on online counselling rather than comprehensive video-based digital self-help platforms.

There have also been some closed group programs which have used digital solutions for mental health and well-being. Kanauri et al. (2020) used a 20-session digital cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) program called Mana Maali Digital Anxiety Program for generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), adapted for cultural relevance and digital delivery. They reported the program to be user-friendly and culturally appropriate, which was rated highly in terms of usability, acceptability, and feasibility by the participants. Mehrotra et al. (2018) used a self-help app, PUSH-D, which led to significant reductions in depression symptoms and improvements in functioning in individuals with major depression or dysthymia. Mukherjee et al. (2019) developed a tablet-based gamified

cognitive assessment tool for 3-year-olds, whose pilot assessment showed high acceptability. Adams et al. (2021) used digital technologies for facilitating gender-based violence in rural areas of India, where the intervention helped women and girls understand and communicate the violence they experience. While these apps and programs have seen effectiveness in closed groups, they are not openly accessible for the general population yet.

Along with these platforms and programs, there are several channels on social media like YouTube which do offer such services with little evidence-based research. Kumara and Jha (2018) evaluated the quality of YouTube videos related to psychosocial interventions for schizophrenia and found that, while these videos provided accurate information, they lacked detailed explanations. Chaturvedi et al. (2019) conducted a study to identify whether YouTube has had an impact on mitigating the stigma around mental health in India. The results found the role of YouTube in reducing stigma by fostering discussions, where the content appeals primarily using emotional, rational, or humorous strategies. Hence, there is a space for using such videos for mental health and wellness in India.

Several government and non-government initiatives have been launched to support digital mental health and well-being efforts in India. For instance, Khan et al. (2020) created a digital training module based on the Healthy Activity Program (HAP), aimed at equipping non-specialist health workers to deliver evidence-based treatment for depression within primary care settings. In rural Maharashtra, Shields Zeeman et al. (2017) implemented a community-driven intervention called 'Atmiyata,' which relied on trained volunteers to enhance well-being and alleviate distress. Singh et al. (2021) evaluated a digital mental health literacy program involving a four-week intervention,

where participants engaged with educational content for 20–25 minutes daily. The findings showed notable improvements in happiness, life satisfaction, and overall quality of life.

Table 4 outlines additional digital mental health initiatives by various governmental, non-governmental, and private organizations across India.

Table 4: List of Selected Initiatives towards Digitalisation of Mental Health

Sl. No:	Initiative	Description	Link
1	Clinical Decision Support System	Tele-psychiatric app for diagnosis, treatment, and training in underserved areas.	Clinical Decision Support System (CDSS)
2	SMART Mental Health Project	Technology-enabled mental health screening and treatment by primary healthcare workers.	SMART Mental Health Project
3	Suicide Prevention at IITs	Wellness sessions, e-counseling, and social support programs for students.	Suicide Prevention at IITs
4	Nae Disha	Peer-led group interventions with 18 mental health modules for youth resilience.	Nae Disha
5	MINDS Program	Mobile-based rural mental health screenings and specialist connections.	MINDS Program
6	Project Empower	Digital training for community health workers on depression treatment.	Project Empower
7	Go Spiritual	Mindfulness workshops for stress management and suicide prevention.	Go Spiritual
8	Project ESSENCE	Digital training for ASHA workers on depression care and remote support.	Project ESSENCE

While such initiatives have been effective in promoting mental health solutions across India, there is still a lack of an all-inclusive digital platform which provides an all-inclusive solution for mental health and well-being of Indians.

Discussion

With the rise in the digital technologies across the globe in the past decade, healthcare has seen a metamorphosis through the integration of telemedicine, AI-driven diagnostics, wearable health devices, and electronic health records, transforming patient care and medical decision-making (Cresswell et al., 2023; Patil & Shankar, 2023). This digital revolution has seeped into mental health management as well, for both management of clinical conditions like anxiety, stress and depression, and improvement of

well-being in terms of growth. While developed nations have greatly benefited from the proliferation of hundreds of mental health applications, web platforms, and online tools, India remains in the early stages of this digital transformation. Currently, only a limited number of digital platforms focus on mental health, with most centering on web-delivered counseling sessions rather than broader mental health support or well-being enhancement. In contrast, global platforms are significantly more advanced, incorporating diverse approaches such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness, and positive psychology, while leveraging gamification, AI technology, and self-help modules. However, the introduction, development, and testing of various closed-group platforms represent a promising step forward. From a global perspective, India still

has significant opportunities for growth in this domain.

When examining well-being in a diverse country like India, it is essential to account for the unique challenges rooted in cultural, demographic, and socioeconomic factors. Risk variables including age, location, and socioeconomic position, as well as protective factors like community support and spiritual traditions, fluctuate greatly among locations. For example, Singh et al. (2009) emphasise the obstacles that rural adolescent girls confront, such as gender discrimination, dowry, child marriage, and illiteracy, emphasising the importance of personalised interventions. Existing practices like meditation, the intake of satvik food, and cleanliness, while not conventionally classified as treatments, have enormous promise as frameworks for enhancing well-being. Integrating spiritual and religious activities such as *bhajans*, *kirtans*, and *satsang* into well-being programs can benefit older generations (Singh et al., 2022). These aspects contribute to overall quality of life (QoL), in which people may prioritise interpersonal relationships over technology breakthroughs and financial resources. Environmental and social circumstances can modulate the impact of the aforementioned elements on mental health. Risk and susceptibility factors, societal discrimination, inequalities, crises, and traumatic experiences can all have an influence on an individual's life, relationships, and career. To increase mental health and happiness, individuals should focus on strengthening their protective factors.

Indian culture offers a unique perspective on human existence and its ultimate aim, drawing on its philosophical and psychological past. Exploring indigenous principles of healthy mental health, such as yoga and meditation, is a natural fit. Yoga and meditation can be used as effective positive psychology interventions to enhance

positive mental health and well-being. Meditation has gained popularity in counselling and psychotherapy due to its numerous advantages. Meditation has been integrated into modern psychology, as seen in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy and Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention (Fjorback & Walach, 2012). Yoga and meditation have been extensively researched and used in India's healthcare system (Kumar et al., 2021). The country offers a diverse range of meditation and philosophical systems, with both specialists and open-minded individuals contributing to a vast literature. The NIMHANS in Bengaluru established the Sattva Enhancement Therapy and Sattva Cultivation Program, which combines yoga, psychology, and meditation to improve mental health (Agrawal, 2021). According to Shapiro et al. (2007), practicing Yoga back-bends improves happy emotions and reduces negative ones. The study indicated a substantial reduction in melancholy, anger, anxiety, and neurotic symptoms among 17 participants. Sharma et al. (2006) found that Sahaj Yoga exercise increased cognitive areas such as verbal working memory, attention span, visual-motor speed, and executive skills in individuals with depression. Another study by Sahini et al. (2020) aimed to study the effect of yoga practice on the illness perception, and well-being of adults during COVID lockdown and found that yoga practitioners differed considerably in their concept of personal control, sickness worry, and emotional effect of the pandemic.

Another important aspect of the Indian mental health system is the focus on spiritual practices. Spirituality motivates individuals to participate in activities and behaviours that lead to spiritual experiences. The ultimate objective is to achieve the transcendental experience. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the greatest need is transcendence, which individuals might

aspire for. Spirituality may provide purpose to life and improve mental health and well-being. It evokes pleasant feelings such as compassion, appreciation, amazement, and acceptance. According to Bernard et al. (2017), having a sense of spirituality and meaning in life might reduce psychological discomfort towards the end of life. According to Akbari and Hossaini (2018), using spirituality to cope with life's problems has several health and wellness advantages. Singh et al. (2020) studied how a culturally customised intervention and pre-existing religious/spiritual activities affect well-being and happiness among elderly rural women, and discovered substantial differences in health, quality of life, and well-being between the groups.

While the progress has been slow, there have been initiatives, efforts and research, showing an inclination towards the digitalisation in the mental health and wellness industry. Both government and private organisations have started to initiate efforts in order to address these issues. Along with these, the trend of digitalization in India towards other sectors like education has reinforced the individuals for openness to web-based resolution for well-being and mental health. Social media platforms like YouTube have already seen significant development with much content on well-being and happiness by doctors, psychologists, spiritual leaders, motivational speakers and life coaches (Balcombe & De Leo, 2023; Bakshi & Bhattacharyya, 2021). This presents an opportune moment to develop a web-based platform that offers interventions focused on mental health, well-being, and happiness, grounded in scientific literature by psychologists and medical professionals.

One advantage for India is the ability to learn from existing global platforms that have implemented multiple approaches and demonstrated proven benefits. Previous platforms have utilised an integrative

approach using a mixture of activities based on CBT, mindfulness and positive psychology which provide a multidimensional approach to overall well-being. Along with this, available platforms provide other features like psychological testing for tracking progress, AI-chatbot integration for assistance, pre-recorded meditation and yoga sessions for facilitation at their own comfort, gamification for skill training and daily and weekly modules which provide packaged help to individuals. Platforms like Happify provide options for various 'tracks' like relationship problems, work related issues and stress-based issues which individuals can choose from and avail the services needed based on their problems (Boucher et al., 2022). Such an approach is particularly valuable for an Indian platform, as diverse demographics face distinct challenges and may require tailored support. Another aspect is the option of facilitating content in multiple languages, giving the opportunity to individuals to choose their preferred language. Lastly, the new platforms could integrate Indian approaches like religious and spiritual practices in the well-being intervention. These features should be supported by scientific research, enabling the evaluation of their effectiveness, continuous improvement based on evidence, and informed decision-making for individuals regarding their utility.

Future Directions and Implications

The current scenario in India clearly states the need for a web-based platform which focuses on well-being and happiness of the individuals. While global platforms may offer some effectiveness for the Indian population, they are not fully attuned to India's unique needs in terms of prevalent issues, languages, and specific cultural practices. Their impact may also be limited primarily to urban regions. A platform developed within India can better address these challenges by integrating Western techniques with Indian viewpoints and practices while focusing on

issues specific to the Indian population. Additionally, offering services and interventions in regional languages would enhance accessibility and usability across both urban and rural areas. This, in turn, could contribute to improving happiness levels among Indians, fostering holistic growth and national progress.

Along with the development of a platform, there is a need for inclusion of mental health policies which promote the utilisation of online resources. Even though India has a number of laws protecting the human rights of people with mental illnesses, there are problems with how these laws are properly implemented. In terms of promoting mental health, India still has a long way to go. Existing literature on the impact of mental health interventions is limited, few programs are systematically planned, and the focus remains largely on curative rather than preventive or promotive aspects. Additionally, there is a shortage of manpower and resources in the mental health sector. To bridge this gap, it is crucial to develop and implement policies that actively support mental health, happiness, and well-being through digital channels, including online platforms, mobile applications, and AI-driven interventions. While digital mental health tools are gaining popularity, they have yet to be fully integrated into mainstream healthcare. To guarantee accessibility, efficacy, and broad acceptance, a methodical strategy combining legislators, mental health specialists, and software developers is essential. The potential of digital solutions to enhance well-being in India would continue to be underutilised in the absence of such efforts.

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