CHAPTER V

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The discussion of this study is divided into two sections, first the overall discussion and second the hypotheses related discussion.

The results of the current study are quite promising, except two of hypotheses which were left out after pre-test; all of the hypotheses were supported by the data. The literature review discussed the benefits of positive attitudes towards life and its impact on well-being.

The goal of this research design was to explore the social factors as one of the important determinants of optimism and psychological well-being. Contribution to the study of social factors such as, impact of family, friend, finance on well-being are provided by Diener and Diener (1995); Ryff and Singer (1993, 2000), they combined their efforts to introduce the factors that expand the attitudes towards well-being and optimism.

The main purpose of dispositional optimism is to measure positive attitudes towards the future. Scheier and Carver (1987) claimed that outcome expectancies are a major determinant of distinction between two types of behavior (e.g. continued trying versus giving up or turning away). Optimists tend to cope directly with problems and try to do the best in situations they confront; in addition, optimism is strongly associated with seeking social support which in turn, affects the psychological well-being.

On the other hand, psychological well-being is related to personality growth, positive relationships, meaning in life, self acceptance, environmental mastery, and autonomy. In order to
attain these positive and effective attitudes, the need was felt to identify social factors that have influence on optimism and psychological well-being.

According to Ryff (1998), there are a set of factors like, age, education, and socio-economic status that are likely to enhance psychological well-being. Furthermore, the importance of warm, trust and supportive relationships for well-being and optimism have been shown in many studies, including the current study that accredited this view that strong relationships positively related to positive thinking and psychological well-being.

As mentioned earlier there have been many studies that indicated the positive effects of optimism on well-being; due to these positive outcomes of optimistic attitude, it makes sense to identify first the etiology of optimism and second develop more models to change pessimistic views.

But the literature on the etiology of optimism is limited, although there is both ideas of genetic makeup and environmental causes, it sounds we have to take in to account the other factors like, culture, way of socialization and social factors such as: age, gender, education, economic status, social relationships, and religious belief which might associate with optimism.

Therefore, research on etiology of optimism in detail and developing more models for changing negative thinking will be promising in further studies. However, there has been effective individual and group therapy intervention for changing the negative attitude and help a person develop a more positive and optimistic outlook on life.

With regard to psychological well-being, we did not intend to review the debate between hedonic and eudaimonic perspective of well-being. But by defining well-being on the basis of happiness, this question raises that are the components of subjective well-being sufficient to
measure well-being? Although the hedonic perspective has had long history, from the past decade most researchers prefer not to assess well-being in terms of happiness per se.

Hence, it is better for studying psychological well-being to consider it as multidimensional phenomenon that consist both aspects of hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives of well-being. As in recent years along with SWB and PWB, in many researches and in psychotherapy the use of SDT has been developed for instance, promoting mindfulness or awareness and inner exploration has been effective skill in order to help people experience more autonomous orientation; because autonomous regulation is not depleting energy but can vitalize it and leads to self regulation and self satisfaction.

In terms of relationships between optimism and psychological well-being, the results of most of the studies mentioned earlier have shown that optimistic thinking has been instrumental in reducing depression or other psychological problems and helpful in developing coping skill in order to come along with problems.

More researches need to be examined this relationship between optimism and coping skill, it is unclear that a person is optimist so she/he can uses coping skills or due to her/his ability in using coping skills, she/he is optimist?

Addressing this type of topics will be powerful tool for dealing with many difficulties people encounter in daily life, also developing optimistic outlook can both play an important role in physical and psychological treatment and help people remain healthier and it can use as a preventive measure.

Furthermore, the review of prior research found that no other studies have looked at social factors in conjunction, because most of the researches on optimism and psychological
well-being have been conducted in clinical settings and considered both optimism and psychological well-being as independent variables, but in this study they were used as dependent variables and association between psychological factors and social factors were found.

Although the results of this study demonstrated that optimism and psychological well-being were related with each other, the key finding of this research was that both optimism and psychological well-being had a positive correlation with social factors such as: income, education, occupation of parents, family relationships, and the religious belief of students. These findings are consistent with previous research that examined the social context of subjective well-being (Helliwell and Robert, 2004; Ryff and Singer, 2003).

Many studies which explored the social context of well-being, mentioned health as one of the important predictor of psychological well-being; on the other hand, researchers suggest that health is strongly conditioned by social factors. Health can be a pathway through which social factors impact psychological well-being (Seeman et al., 1993; Robert et al., 1997).

As noted earlier the results of the current study demonstrated the impact of social factors on both well-being and optimism with a little difference between ranks of social factors; for instance for optimism, family relationships was the first social factor; while in regard to psychological well-being, economic status was the first influential factor.

But for both optimism and psychological well-being economic status, religious belief, family relationships, education were strong predictor of optimism and psychological well-being (Table 14, 20, 21, 36).
In addition, optimism had influence over psychological well-being (Table 13). Seligman (1998) on the basis of many researches proposed four ways that positive thinking, optimism, can benefit health in general and psychological well-being in specific.

The first way, optimism boosts the immune system which in turn, enhances physical health. The second way, optimists incline to be more attached to healthy behaviors and seek medical advice and information to prevent or treat any health problems. The third reason, that optimists benefit well-being is that they are likely to experience fewer negative events (divorce, being fired, breaking up relationships, etc.).

The forth factor that optimists have better health is that they are likely to have strong relationships and more social supports because optimists are capable of keeping social relationships longer than pessimists.
V.1 Hypotheses related discussion

**H1**: Level of optimism among students and feeling of psychological well-being are positively correlated.

With regard to findings of this research, the student who had a high level of optimism reported greater level of psychological well-being as well. This study supported part of Harju and Bolen’s study (1998) showing that a strong relationship between optimism and psychological well-being in students both males and females.

Also the study of Scheier and Carver (1991), Aspinwall and Tylor (1990) using LOT-R for measuring optimism who found a relation between optimism and psychological well-being, also the study of Carver et al. (1989), the study of Tylor (1992), Wrosch and M.F. Scheier (2003) the results of all noted studies were similar to the current research except that they took into account quality of life, depression, stress, and loneliness for assessing psychological well-being; while this research administered Ryff’s dimensions for measuring the psychological well-being of students.

The relationship between optimism and psychological well-being has been found in many studies, and all of them agreed on this point that optimists are able to use positive coping skills effectively; whereas pessimists use negative coping skills which impact their psychological well-being. Also optimism has been shown to be instrumental in preventing and treatment of depression; moreover, optimists in workplace, family or social relationships, sport do better than pessimists, which in turn enhance their psychological well-being.

**H2**: The intimate relationships in the family and being optimism and having psychological well-being are positively correlated.
The findings of the study showed that among the social factors which are associated with optimism, the first one was family relationships (Table 36, 37, 38); While regarding psychological well-being, family relationships were the third factor, it stands after economic status and religious belief (Table 14, 15, 16) the rank is different but family relationships had a positive correlation with both optimism and psychological well-being. Also a review of literature indicated the importance of social relationships in boosting positive attitudes and well-being.

This research supported the studies of Biswas and Diener (2004) they found that poor people in Africa had satisfaction, they lived together in shacks but they were happy and supported each other; whereas, street prostitutes were unhappy and suffer from loneliness.

Also the findings of the present study supported Bradburn (1969) and Baumeister and Leay (1995) and Lucas et al. (2003), Diener and M.E.P. Seligman (2002), they suggested that social relationships were one of the strongest correlates of positive emotions, attitudes, and well-being and lack of it has far-reaching effects.

Also the study of Diener and Oishi (2000) was similar to this study stating that a student with good relationships and supportive love; they have high level of psychological well-being. Furthermore, the finding of this study is supported by studies of Baumeister and Leary (1995) they found that lack of close and meaningful relationships reflect the feeling of loneliness and optimistic attitudes and positive expectations provide a strong basis for individual’s success in initiating meaningful social relationships, as we found in this study that students with weak family relationships had low level of optimism.
Other studies such as: Reynolds and Catherine Ross (1998) and the present study revealed that pessimism decreased an individual’s success in establishing social relationships due to using social avoidance strategy.

In Durkheim’s thought, historically an individual did not come first. In the course of historical development awareness of oneself as an individual emerged, each man was the same as the others and collective feelings were predominated in number and intensity (Aron, 1968, p. 12).

In addition, Durkheim in his study on suicide suggested that the cause of suicide could be explained due to lack of social integration and his hypothesis has remained better than other hypotheses over the decades, the further evidence indicated that strong relationships are likely to decrease the likelihood of suicide (Trout, 1980).

According to Comte, the social nature of man found satisfaction in the family, he emphasized up on the family as the fundamental social institution. For Comte the unit of society was not individual but the family (cited by Harry Elmer, 1848, p. 87 and 92). In Indian culture, family relationships are basic and it is one of the social determinants of satisfaction, the positive relationship of family relationships with both optimism and psychological well-being shows the importance of this social factor in Indian culture.

**H3:** The students who have religious belief, they are most optimists and have greater psychological well-being.

Generally, all religions involve a specific set of practices which include all kinds of religious behavior. The practices associated with religion vary from culture to culture, but they include praying, chanting, meditating, refraining from doing, or eating certain food, fasting
certain days and so on. But the most important part of religious practices is prayer. In this study, practices like going to church, temple, mosque, and any religious place, participating in religious gathering, believe in divine presence, and behavior in accordance with their religious belief were taken in to account. The findings of this research revealed the positive correlation between religious belief and optimism (Table 36, 37, 38) as well as psychological well-being (Table 14.15, 16).

In eastern countries like India religious activities are an intimate part of life of the local communities. Indeed, religion has an important role in Indian culture; Shrirama (1999) stated that there is a sense of belonging to their culture among Indians specifically to symbols including religion, ritual, and customs as social phenomena.

Historically, India was the cradle of religions such as: Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, and Sikhism. The current study showed students who had religious belief had high level of optimism and psychological well-being regardless of their religious background.

This study supported other studies in this area. For instance, study of Maltby (2002), Trankle (2006), and Rashid (2004). Although the tools of these researches for studying religious belief and psychological well-being have been different, the results almost have supported each other.

But the finding of this study is more akin to Rashid’s study, most of the researches have been conducted in western countries with individualistic cultures and among Christians, but this study was implemented in India with collectivistic culture and participants had different religious backgrounds. The highlighted point in this study is that the score of students in dimensions such as: positive relationship, personal growth, self acceptance, and purpose in life were higher than
other components of psychological well-being, likely owing to the Indian culture, by attending in religious gathering people interact with each other and share the feeling, as the participants of this study reported they attend religious gathering because they enjoy larger social network and more frequent interaction, and self-acceptance, purpose in life could give hope to believers.

The findings of this research also supported studies of Rathi and Renu Rastagi (2007), who found a correlation between meaning in life and psychological well-being among students. In addition, the result of this research was akin to the study of Man yee Ho et al. (2010), they showed a relationship between meaning in life, optimism, and well-being among students and results manifested that optimism mediated between meaning in life and well-being.

**H4:** Economic status of family, the level of optimism and psychological well-being among students are positively correlated.

The economic status of students’ family was assessed based on income of their family occupation of their parents, and satisfaction of students with their pocket money. With regard to psychological well-being, economic status was the first influential social factor which had positive correlation with psychological well-being (Table 14). In regard to optimism, economic status had association with optimism but it stood after family relationships (Table, 36).

The findings of this research showed that among social factors, economic status had more an impact on psychological well-being of students; while for optimism, family relationships was more an influential social factor followed by economic status.

It is interesting that among dimensions of psychological well-being associated with economic status of students’ family, self-acceptance was first followed by purpose in life and self growth. It seems that suitable economic situation gives confidence to an individual to pursue
her/his goals, also higher income and lack of difficulty in economic conditions is positively related to physical and psychological well-being.

The results of this research is supported by the study of Ryff (2008), Ryff and Singer (1999), their findings were similar to this study, among psychological dimensions, self-acceptance, purpose in life, and self-growth were more significant. Also the study of Diener (1995) showed that economic status in poorer nations for psychological well-being was a more determinant factor rather than wealthier nations.

**H 5:** Students in two-parents families are more optimistic and have greater psychological well-being than single-parent families.

Regarding the Indian culture and importance of family life, divorce is not common among families specifically this research was conducted in Mysore, a city in south of India, where people are more attached to social and cultural norms. However, among the participants of this study, the students who lost their father or mother; the level of their psychological well-being and optimism was lower than other students who live with two-parent families (Table, 22, 31).

Probably it could be due to economic problems, specifically when the family loses the father, they face not only an emotional problem, but also an economic problem. Therefore, they experience psychological distress.

The studies on well-being and life experiences such as, early loss of parents or parental divorce revealed that there is a positive relationship between well-being and these social factors (cited by Ryff and Singer, 2008, p. 26).
**H 6:** Educational level of parents has a significant impact on optimism and psychological well-being of students.

Education is one of the fundamental factors of development, in order to attain sustainable socio-economic development, it is essential to invest in human capital substantially. Education enriches people’s understanding of themselves and the world. It helps individuals to improve their quality of lives and it is the key to increasing economic efficiency and raises the poor from poverty.

Education contributes to interpersonal tolerance and helps people build up self-actualization. Higher education and increase in earnings are associated with improvement in quality of life. Educational attainment is one of the determinants of occupational success because technology progress has generated a need for advanced education and knowledge that indirectly affect the economic status of an individual.

Furthermore, education might play a significant role in well-being because the well-educated are less likely to experience the socio-economic problems like, unemployment, they have more access to well-paid, full-time jobs, high status social prestige and they face less hardship (Reynolds and Catherine Ross, 1998).

Moreover, all social classes do not have access to education equally. Compared to children of poor families living in poor neighborhoods, students from advantaged families attend schools in better facility and suitable learning environment, highly paid teachers, good library, and computer labs (Kozol, 1991); therefore, inequality is passed on from one generation to the next. The results of current research showed the difference between students going to
Government or private colleges in terms of their income and education of their father (Table 5 and 9).

The findings of this research revealed that education had a positive correlation with psychological well-being (Table 18, 20) as well as optimism (Table 27, 29). Indeed, education could be an instrumental variable associated with psychological well-being and optimism; also it is positively associated both with health status and healthy life style which indirectly can influence psychological well-being and optimism.

The results of this study was supported by the study of Ryff et al. (1995); Clark (2003), Kaplan et al. (2008), in their studies like the current study, education was one of the social factors which influenced psychological well-being.
V.2 Summary

This study was carried out in Government and private colleges. The differences between Government and private colleges were not the concern of this research, but results revealed that with respect to some factors such as: age, gender, religion, family members, level of mother’s education, occupation of father (Table 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7) the non-significant relations were found between noted factors and types of colleges. However, level of education of father (Table 5), occupation of mother (Table 8); income of family (Table 9) had significant relations with type of colleges.

The significant relation of education of father with type of college could be due to the reason that they prefer to provide better condition for education of their children, on the other hand, non-significant of mother’s education might be owing to the role of the man as a head of the family in Indian culture who can make a decision for the education of his children. Furthermore, income of the family is a social factor which indicates the economic status of the family for sending the children to a private college, the family has to pay more and income is an essential aspect which affects the education.

In addition, in this study there was no difference between males and females in terms of their level of optimism and psychological well-being (Table 39, 40). This similarity between both males and females might be related to homogeneity of age group of current study. Because in other studies which were conducted among large age groups, the gender differences were significant; for instance, in Ryff’s study (1989, 1991) that were conducted among various age groups, the difference among young, middle age, and older was obvious also in terms of gender the difference between males and females was found.
The main point that this study wishes to emphasize from this discussion is that our understanding of optimism and psychological well-being should be considered based on physical, psychological, social and cultural aspects, and the findings of Western countries cannot be extended to non-Western countries or ethnic minorities or indigenous groups. Hence, there is no universal well-being or optimism; for instance, in Indian culture living with family and family relationships is an essential social value and the results of this study demonstrated the importance of family relationships for being an optimist and enjoying psychological well-being; on the other hand, this social factor could be unimportant for individualistic cultures.

Diener and Diener (1995) revealed that self-esteem was a much strong predictor of life satisfaction of women in individualistic than collectivistic societies; on the other hand, financial satisfaction was a stronger predictor of psychological well-being in poor than in wealthy societies. Moreover, among dimensions of Ryff’s psychological well-being, the meaning of autonomy is different across cultures, for example, in Western societies autonomy is one of the values of individualism (cited by Christopher, 1999, p. 146). It is identifying with western concepts of liberty and freedom, and it is the autonomy of westerners that bring them dignity as human beings. While in this study, the participants belonged to Eastern and collectivistic culture, the score of autonomy and environmental mastery was lower than positive relationships, self acceptance, and purpose in life (Table 14).

Consequently, we should be aware of the impact of social factors and cultural differences in studying optimism and psychological well-being and do not run the risk of setting aside the influence of social factors and only being satisfied with psychological aspects. Because when we take in to account both aspects, this perspective not only defines how an individual can contribute to her/his optimism and psychological well-being; but also how social factors can
influence an individual’s optimism and psychological well-being. Sociologists often follow the macro approach by looking at social factors that shape human lives; while psychologists focus on roles of personality, desires, expectations, and motivation.

However, it is important to bear in mind that the results of this study cannot be generalized to those beyond the sample.
V.3 Conclusion

The current study aimed at exploring the social correlates of optimism and psychological well-being among undergraduate students in Mysore city with the following objectives:

1. To assess the level of optimism and psychological well-being of undergraduate students.
2. To understand the impact of optimism on psychological well-being of undergraduate students.
3. To study social factors such as: Educational level, income, and occupation of students’ families, also family relationships, religious belief of students and other social factors which affect optimism and psychological well-being of undergraduate students.

Six hypotheses were set to guide the study, social factors such as, education, income, occupation, family relationships, and religious belief were taken in to account as independent variables and optimism and psychological well-being as dependent variables. The study was carried out among 240 undergraduate students from both Government and private colleges in Mysore (urban area). The study adapted the following tools:

1. Questionnaire (developed for the study)
2. Ryff’s PWB scales (1989) for measuring level of psychological well-being.
3. LOT-R for measuring optimism (Scheier and Carver, 1994).

Review of published research in India showed that there are relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being (Rathi and Renu Rastagi, 2007), and school belonging and psychological and academic well-being (Jethwani, 2008); religious belief and subjective well-being (Sree Kumar, 2008). Researches in other countries showed relationships
between optimism and psychological well-being; on the other hand, revealed the relationship between some of the social factors and psychological well-being and optimism.

The obtained data was analyzed using the statistical methods through the SPSS for Windows (version 16.0) and Minitab (version 11.0) for windows. Statistics included descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA), ANOVA, one-way classification, linear regression, t-test, and product-moment correlation.

Finding of the current study are:

1. There is positive correlation between optimism and psychological well-being
2. Economic status of a family impacts the level of optimism and psychological well-being of students.
3. There is positive relation between religious belief of students and level of their optimism and psychological well-being.
4. Family relationships and optimism and psychological well-being are correlated.
5. Students with two–parents are more optimistic and enjoying better psychological well-being than those with one parent.
6. The level of education of parents impact the level of optimism and psychological well-being of students.
7. There are no gender differences in terms of level of students’ optimism and psychological well-being.
8. For optimism, family relationships are the first influential social factor followed by economic status and religious belief.
For psychological well-being, economic status of a family is the first important social factor followed by religious belief and family relationships.

Although the findings of the current study supported all of the researcher's hypotheses, valuable information was learned. There is a concept of role of social factors including, family relationships, socioeconomic status of family, and religious belief of students that contribute to optimism and psychological well-being of students in early adulthood.

The perception of socioeconomic status of the family is rooted in both traditional (e.g., parental education and occupational prestige) and non-traditional (e.g., neighborhood unemployment rate) factors. However, there are still many unidentified factors that contribute to the developing perception of socioeconomic status.

Another piece of valuable information that can be taken into account from this current study is that family relationships is present for enhancing optimism. Socioeconomic status was varied, with no statistically significant trend to place the family in either direction of the social status ladder. Thus, based upon the findings for this study this researcher maintains that socioeconomic status is meaningful for both psychological well-being and optimism of students, however for psychological well-being was more significant than optimism.

The conclusion from the current literature was that health effects are the most prominent in lower income households, and occupations of parents with higher income also have higher impact on psychological well-being of students. The significant role of educational attainment of parents in the optimism and psychological well-being was promising.

Scheier and Carver (1985) have suggested that individuals who become more successful at handling challenges are also more likely to be optimistic about their abilities to do so. By contrast, pessimism develops within individuals when they are unsuccessful at handling
difficulties; continued successes, in turn, contribute to the development of optimism within that individual.

Mechanisms such as education, income, and occupation may contribute to how persons from higher level can attain resources. On the other hand, a person with disadvantaged status does not have access to power and resources; he/she may already be at a disadvantage with respect to handling a difficult situation successfully.

These failures may contribute to the development of pessimism in individuals. From this point of view and findings of current study, social factors are antecedents to optimism/pessimism and psychological well-being.

In sum, this study has been able to reveal the importance and impact of social factors on optimism and psychological well-being. It also shed light on study of optimism and psychological well-being in an Eastern culture because most of the studies on this area have been conducted in the West, aside from limitation of social studies, the obtained results from this study expand our understanding of the role of social factors in optimism and psychological well-being.

V.3.1 Implication of Positive Psychology in Social Work Interventions

As noted earlier the core of this study is examining the impact of social factors on optimism and psychological well-being, two important components of positive psychology, so in this part the need was felt to address the function of positive view in social work interventions.

Social worker in 21st century is a competent professional committed to working with people to help them to achieve the best possible outcomes in their lives. The primary
responsibility of the social workers will remain the protection and promotion of well-being of children, vulnerable adults and communities.

Social workers constantly manage the twin roles of care and control. It is well-documented that prevention and early intervention have beneficial impacts on well-being and health at individual and community level for all ages. Prevention refers to activities designed to stop a problem in early intervention.

Social workers in different setting such as school, hospital, industry, and care centers, can help their clients to cope with their problems by developing positive thoughts and emotions. Positive psychology has influenced a variety of disciplines, for instance, the use of cognitive techniques and rational motive therapy have the base in positive psychology that have begun to train an individual to deal effectively with life’s challenges.

The goal of positive views is to promote strengths of clients in order to enhance their sense of competence, rather than focusing on specific deficits of clients. Positive psychology is more affirming and looks for ways to increase positive attributes. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) suggest that positive psychology incorporates to well-being, contentment and satisfaction (in the past), hope and optimism (for the future) and flow and happiness (in the present) this notion has beneficial influence on human existence rather than looking to the pathology.

Increasingly, nowadays people face various problems are having devastating effects on their psychological and social well-being. Through educating and counseling clients involve examining cognitions; social workers have a chance to encourage positive emotions in clients.
Among intervention strategies, cultivating positive emotion is more promising. Positive emotions are specifically suited for both preventing and treating problems rooted in negative emotions like anxiety, depression, aggression, and stress related health problem. Fredrikson (1998) introduced broaden and build model of positive emotions, this model provides the base for application of positive emotions.

With regard to this model, the form and function of positive and negative emotions are clear and complementary. Negative emotions such as: anger, fear, and sadness narrow an individual momentary thought-action repertoire toward specific actions that served ancestral function of promoting survival. By contrast, positive emotions like, interest, joy, and contentment broaden an individual momentary thought-action repertoire, which in turn can build that individual’s enduring personal resources that also served the ancestral function of promoting survival.

With implication of broaden and build model, positive emotions have a reversing impact on negative emotions. By broadening the momentary thought-action repertoire, positive emotions loosen the negative emotions of an individual’s mind and body by reversing the narrowed psychological and physiological preparation for specific action. Empirical study have shown that joy and contentment speed recovery from cardiovascular.

Beside this intervention, social workers can employ other coping strategies including relaxation therapies, behavioral therapies, and cognitive therapies that aimed at increasing rates of pleasant activities.

Cognitive therapies are aimed at teaching optimism and coping techniques by finding positive meaning. These techniques optimize health and well-being to the extent that cultivate
positive emotions. Cultivating positive emotions counteract negative emotions as well as broaden individual’s habitual modes of thinking and build personal resources for coping.

There are more public actions on negative emotions like fear, anger, sadness, and so on than on positive emotions including happiness, joy, contentment, and interest. We can argue that efforts to understand positive emotions have effective impact on treatment and preventive the physical and psychological problems which stems from negative emotions.

If positive emotions can help people overcome negative emotions faster and build coping capacity, it would not be better the helpers put more efforts on this point. People have long held intuition that positive emotions are to some extent inconsistence with negative emotions. Fredrickson (1998) used broaden and build model to propose that fundamental inconsistence reside at the level of the breadth of the momentary thought-action repertoire.

Positive emotions and negative emotions are fundamentally inconsistence because an individual’s thought-action repertoire cannot hold broad and narrow simultaneously. Fredrickson (1998) believes that this inconsistence explains the reverse impact of positive emotions. According to positive psychology, if young people are learned to be optimistic, they will be less likely to suffer from depression and will lead happier and more productive lives. School social workers by educating children and teenagers, they can cultivate positive emotions and thoughts which can help these age groups hold optimistic views and build good capacity for the future’s challenges.

Moreover, the goal of positive thoughts and emotions is to gain better understanding of the components that make people feel good about their lives. Social workers working with patients suffering from chronic diseases like HIV, cancers, and so on, they can attempt to
heighten the patients’ positive expectations which may have effective therapeutic impacts on their health.

Optimistic thoughts may not reduce the pain, but may increase survival chances. Because optimists use better coping techniques such as cooperating in treatment, adopting healthy lifestyle, and seeking help at the right time.

It could be argued that physical well-being might precede optimistic thinking; social workers via educating clients can help them develop self-care habits and control risky behaviors that may endanger the physical well-being of people particularly adolescence and early adulthoods, which in turn, may have psychological distresses outcomes.

In sum, using integrative model of intervention which can be combined by cognitive, emotional, spiritual, social, and physical approaches, social workers are able to help their clients deal with problems. In other words, social workers via psychosocial, educational intervention can promote positive thoughts and emotions of clients in order to cope with physical, psychological, and social problems.
Psychosocial, Educational Intervention

Psychological and social well-being

Positive thoughts and emotions

- Contextualization of individual experiences
- Social support and social connection
- Capacity building

Reduction of challenges
V.4 Implications

Optimism is useful because positive expectation can be self-fulfilling. One of the social science theories which have contributed to optimism is the social learning theory, the theory is about learning that occurs within a social context, regarding this theory people learn from each other via observation, imitation, and modeling. For instance, people learn by observing the behavior of others or sequence of those behaviors, also many behaviors can be learned, at least partly, through modeling.

So we need to be attentive to the messages our children receive; however genetic predisposition of optimism cannot be overlooked, but we also need to consider the contribution of societies to optimism, because societies make available to people various ways of satisfying their needs to be optimistic about matters.

In the last decade, psychologists and social workers have concentrated on intervention of problems like depression, substance abuse, anxiety, and so on. How can they prevent the noted problems? According to Seligman (1998), by shifting our focus to prevention rather than treatment psychology can help us build competency systematically, not weakness.

Psychology has discovered that there are human strengths that act as buffers against mental illness; these are courage, optimism, interpersonal skills, work ethic, hope, honesty, faith, perseverance. Seligman (1998) believes that much in the task of prevention in order to cultivate human strengths whose mission will be to understand and foster these virtues in young people.

Positive psychology supports those mental health practitioners that realize their best work by enhancing their strengths of their clients through counseling rather than only repairing their
weaknesses. In addition, they should emphasize on the work with families, schools, religious communities. We should help in the development of a climate that fosters such strengths.

Psychology as a positive science of 21st century has effective impact on prevention of mental problems by training and educating positive thoughts and coping skills to tackle the problems that people face in their daily lives.

This recognition can help our family and responsible people in increasing their awareness that they have a crucial role in teaching children to develop a positive attitude and emotion.

Beside noted issues there are other implications as following:

1. Learning optimism and Psychological well-being and information on this area can help students to be a successful citizen and perform their social roles perfectly due to their abilities to deal with problems and capacities of seeking social support at the right time and right place.

2. Optimism drags up a student’s performance in school, college, sports and on the job. Also it enhances physical health.

3. Optimistic attitude and psychological well-being decrease tension and stress which becoming a part of daily life.

4. In modern life, social progress and creating wealth means consuming more and consumerism fosters restless and insatiable expectation among young generation. But focus on enhancing optimism and psychological well-being affect not only an individual but family and society as a whole.

5. This study targeted the early adulthood which is considered a productive period in an individual life; hence, this type of study may have psychological, attitudinal, social and economic benefits.
6. Psychological counselors and social workers may benefit from this type of study, for instance, social workers can provide information on clients’ relationships and modify them to achieve well-being.

7. The implication of these findings for an educational setting is both relevant and important.
V.5 Suggestions

As noted earlier many studies have been conducted in the field of psychology that the influences of optimism and psychological well-being on physical and psychological well-being have been examined. This study reveals the role of social factors like educational level of parents, socioeconomic of family, religious belief of students, and strong family relationships in optimism and psychological well-being.

However, the current study offers information about impact of social factors on psychological well-being and optimism of early adulthood in Mysore, India, the generalizations of the results limited to this sample, because the current study took place in a particular geographic location and among urban and specific age groups.

Thus, the future research in India might seek to replicate these findings in rural areas, or different geographic areas around India. Future studies might also examine the optimism and psychological well-being among heterogeneous age groups and compare the impact of age and other social factors on optimism and psychological well-being.

It is also essential the future study explore the role of caste as a social factor in optimism and psychological well-being of people belong to different caste. Because caste as a social stratification system might have influence on optimism and psychological well-being through socioeconomic advantages for upper caste and disadvantages for lower caste.

As the benefits of optimism and psychological well-being on physical, psychological, and social well-being are well-documented, hence these types of studies can provide information for those who are involved in rendering social services.
They can remove or reduce the barriers of helping people gain greater psychological well-being; it is cost effective to enhance the positive thinking and well-being by focusing on less educated and low income family in order to decrease social and individual problems.

Cross cultural study involves in the field data from different societies in order to examine the impact of culture on human behavior and attitude. As people in different cultures have a variety of practices, belief, social role, norms, and so on.

Future cross cultural study in assessing impact of social factors on optimism and psychological well-being might lead to our understanding about the role of social factors. So the practitioners in health centers gain better comprehension to help people considering social factors as an influential factor in increasing or decreasing psychological well-being.

Moreover, the future study might focus on comparison of impact of social factors on optimism and psychological well-being in order to obtain information for outlining better health education and awareness training for young people in order to enhance positive thinking and psychological well-being as two important components of empowerment of individuals as well as communities.

Indeed social workers and other therapists use empowerment as an effective technique for tackling the problems that people encounter in their lives. Empowerment approach is important to mental health and health sequences. On the other hand, optimism and psychological well-being can empower individual and community to stand in their strength.

Furthermore, the future study might focus on social factors which impact optimism and psychological well-being in clinical intervention. It seems it shed light on better intervention, for instance, practitioners in clinics can reduce depression or recovery from hospitalization by
focusing on person with low score optimism and psychological well-being and low socioeconomic background, or loose family relationships.

Finally, in the last decade, in most countries, including India, the terrorist attacks have threatened the human life and economic competition and globalization have caused social, political, economic, and cultural problems. Consequently, we have lost our peace of mind and are faced with fear and negative thoughts.

With this said, it would be better future research along side of focusing on outlining the treatment of depression, anxiety, and fear; emphasizing up on empowering people with optimism, strengths, and psychological well-being by study on learning optimism and psychological well-being techniques and how challenge the negative thoughts. The future study might seek and introduce new techniques for changing negative thoughts to positive thoughts.