Mizoram Educational Journal
ISSN (P): 2395-731X

Volume XII, Issue 1, March 2026
doi.org/10.67067/MEJ.2026.XII101

Psychological Counselling Needs of Secondary and Higher Secondary School Students in Aizawl West-III Area

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Abstract

Psychological well-being of adolescents has become a growing concern in education. The study examined the psychological counselling needs of secondary and higher secondary school students in Aizawl West-III area to understand their mental health requirements and influencing factors. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 217 students through the Psychological Counselling Needs Scale (PCNS) developed by Chouhan and Arora (2009). Statistical tools such as percentage, t-test, ANOVA, and Spearman's rank correlation were applied for analysis. Findings revealed that 31.34% of students exhibited very low levels of psychological counselling needs, while 12.90% showed very high needs. No significant differences were found based on place of origin or type of school management, and correlations with parental education ($\rho = 0.02$), birth order ($\rho = 0.08$), and family income ($\rho = 0.06$) were weak and negligible. The relatively low counselling needs may be attributed to strong community ties, self-reliant values, and limited mental health awareness in Mizo society. However, the presence of students with higher needs indicates growing psychological challenges among adolescents. The study emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive institutionalised psychological counselling services to foster students' mental and social well-being.

Keywords: *Psychological Counselling, Mental Health, Adolescents, Secondary School Students, Higher Secondary School Students.*

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Introduction

Psychological counselling is a vital process that supports individuals in understanding and overcoming emotional, cognitive, and behavioural challenges. It facilitates mental well-being by providing guidance, emotional support, and strategies for problem-solving, conflict resolution, and stress management (American Psychological Association, 2023). Over the decades, counselling has evolved from a clinical intervention into a preventive and developmental tool that enhances mental health, personal growth, and interpersonal relationships (Gomez, 2024). Its focus on fostering resilience, self-awareness, and adaptive coping mechanisms makes it essential not only for individuals facing acute distress but also for those seeking overall psychological balance and personal fulfilment.

In the educational context, psychological counselling assumes an even more significant role. The modern education system places immense academic, social, and emotional demands on students and educators alike. Adolescents, in particular, face developmental transitions that make them vulnerable to stress, anxiety, and identity-related struggles (Le et al., 2024). Counselling helps students build emotional intelligence, strengthen self-esteem, and develop coping skills to handle academic pressures, peer relationships, and family challenges. Furthermore, it assists educators in managing occupational stress, enhancing their well-being, and fostering a supportive and empathetic school environment. Thus, psychological counselling serves as a preventive and remedial measure, promoting mental health, academic success, and holistic development within the school ecosystem (Simbolon, 2022).

The historical evolution of psychological counselling reflects humanity's growing understanding of the human mind — from spiritual and religious explanations of mental distress to scientific and humanistic approaches. Globally, it has developed through diverse philosophical, psychoanalytic, behavioural, and cognitive paradigms, each contributing to a richer understanding of human functioning. In India, this evolution is deeply rooted in ancient traditions such as Ayurveda, Buddhism, and Vedantic philosophy, which emphasized balance, mindfulness, and the unity of mind, body, and spirit. Over time, the introduction of Western psychological practices during the colonial period and subsequent integration with indigenous wisdom led to a uniquely pluralistic model of counselling. Today, psychological counselling in India continues to evolve — embracing cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and technological innovations — to meet the complex mental health needs of contemporary society, particularly within the educational domain (Nizamie and Goyal, 2010).

Rationale

In today's rapidly changing socio-economic and technological environment, students face increasing pressures that affect their emotional stability and mental well-being. Adolescents, particularly those in secondary and higher secondary levels (typically between ages 13 and 19), encounter a wide range of developmental, academic, and social challenges. As adolescence is a

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sensitive stage involving rapid cognitive and emotional development, students often struggle with issues related to identity, self-esteem, peer pressure, and family relationships. These challenges make psychological counselling essential to help students manage stress, develop coping strategies, and adjust to the demands of adolescence (World Health Organization, 2025).

In recent years, adolescents have faced increasing issues such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and social conflicts, all of which can hinder academic and personal growth (Han, 2025). Despite the importance of psychological support, limited studies have been conducted in the Aizawl West-III area to understand students' psychological counselling needs. Therefore, this study aims to examine the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students in the region and to compare them based on place of origin and type of school management. Furthermore, it investigates the relationship between parental education and the level of counselling needs, as well as the influence of family income and birth order.

Review of related literature

Literature related to psychological counselling needs among adolescents highlights variations in students' emotional and guidance requirements based on demographic and socio-educational factors such as place of origin, type of school management, parental education, birth order and family income. Several studies have emphasized that the level of psychological counselling needs differs across contexts, suggesting that counselling interventions must be tailored to students' backgrounds and lived experiences. These studies provide a foundation for examining not only the level of psychological counselling needs but also how these needs vary among students of different socio-familial conditions.

Pushpalatha and Sasikala (2015) examined the counselling need among adolescent students and revealed that more than half of the students exhibited high psychological counselling needs despite self-reporting otherwise, indicating a lack of awareness or denial of need. Malik and Shaffi (2017), in their study on psychological counselling needs among Kashmiri adolescents, found similar results, showing that students had a high need for counselling, with girls reporting higher needs than boys. Tirkey and Kerketta (2021) studied higher secondary students and affirmed that psychological counselling needs were high, particularly among female students.

Lalhriatpuia (2022) investigated the psychological counselling needs of higher secondary school students in Aizawl and reported that 44.5% had very low level of psychological counselling needs. Similarly, Sailo (2019) analysed the psychological counselling needs of secondary and higher secondary school students in Aizawl and found that majority of the students had very low level of psychological counselling needs. These findings consistently highlight that while many adolescents appear psychologically stable, a significant proportion experience emotional distress warranting

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counselling intervention. Differences in psychological counselling needs may also reflect variations in cultural context, social environment, and students' awareness of mental health support.

Dhami and Sharma (2020) conducted a comparative study of rural and urban adolescents in Ludhiana and reported that rural adolescents exhibited higher psychological counselling needs than their urban counterparts. However, Lalhriatpuia (2022) found no significant difference between students from rural and urban origins in Aizawl, suggesting that local cultural and contextual factors may influence these variations. Uniyal and Khanduri (2019) explored the guidance needs of senior secondary students in Dehradun and observed that students had higher psychological, physical, social, educational and vocational guidance needs; those students studying in government schools need more guidance in physical area as compared to students from private schools. In contrast, Lalhriatpuia (2022) found no significant difference in the level of psychological counselling needs between government and private school students, suggesting that institutional factors might influence students' emotional well-being differently across regions.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary school students of Aizawl West-III area.
2. To compare the levels of psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on place of origin.
3. To compare the difference in the psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on type of school management.
4. To find out the relationship between parental education in accordance with the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.
5. To examine the relation of birth order to psychological counselling needs of the secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.
6. To investigate the relation of family income of the secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area to their psychological counselling needs.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on place of origin.
2. There is no significant difference in the psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on type of school management.

Methodology

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The study employed a descriptive research design, depending upon the nature of the research and the type of data available - standardized tool. Descriptive research is intended to gather pertinent and precise information about the current state of phenomena and to derive accurate general conclusions from the findings.

Population

The population of the study includes all secondary and higher secondary students (N= 2683) of Aizawl West-III area who are enrolled in the academic session of 2021-22.

Sampling

The sample of the study comprised of four private schools (62 students), four government schools (81 students), and two deficit schools (74 students) from Aizawl West-III area which were randomly selected. From selected schools, a total number of 217 students were further randomly chosen as sample of the study. So, the present study employed stratified random sampling for quantitative data.

Tool

For the study, Psychological Counselling Needs Scale (PCNS) developed by Dr. Vijaya Laxmi Chouhan and Mrs. Gunjan Ganotra Arora (2009) was employed to collect quantitative data. The tool consists of 25 statements — 21 positive statements and 4 negative statements.

- **Reliability:** The reliability of the test was calculated for the entire length of the scale on a sample of 100 adolescent boys and girls, aged 13-18 years. The split half method was used and the split half reliability coefficient was found to be 0.90.
- **Validity:** The statements on the scale are all related to the area of study and each one independently focuses on what it claims to measure, this confirms the face validity of the scale. The critical appraisal by experts, their feedback, rating and the approval ensure the content validity. Validity of the research tool was calculated by the product moment method and was found to be 0.82.

Data analysis techniques

The investigator used appropriate statistical techniques such as percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA and Spearman's rank correlation for the study.

Analysis and interpretation of data, and discussion

The data collected were analysed and then interpreted and discussed in a meaningful manner and presented in accordance with the objectives as follows:

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Objective 1: To study the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary school students of Aizawl West-III area.

To study the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary school students of Aizawl West-III area, descriptive statistical analysis using percentage was employed. The scores obtained from the Psychological Counselling Needs Scale (PCNS) were categorized according to the norms provided in the manual. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary school students of Aizawl West-III area

Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	No. of students	Percentage
Very Low	68	31.34
Low	58	26.73
Average	33	15.21
High	30	13.82
Very High	28	12.90
Total	**217**	**100**

The above table illustrates that 31.34% of secondary and higher secondary students had very low level of psychological counselling needs, followed by 26.73% with a low level, and 15.21% with an average level of counselling needs. Additionally, 13.82% of students showed a high level, while 12.90% exhibited a very high level of counselling needs. This distribution suggests that while a majority of students report lower levels of psychological counselling needs, a noteworthy proportion still experience significant emotional and psychological challenges that might require intervention. The results indicate a general trend of satisfactory psychological well-being among students in the Aizawl West-III area, yet highlight the presence of students who could benefit from professional counselling services.

The study revealed that the majority of students (31.34%) had very low levels of psychological counselling needs. Similarly, Sailo (2019) and Lalhriatpuia (2022) also found that majority of the students had very low level of psychological counselling needs. In contrary to the present finding, Pushpalatha and Sasikala (2015) and Malik and Shaffi (2017) findings indicated that adolescents are in high need of psychological counselling.

The relatively low psychological counselling needs among students might be influenced by Mizo society's strong communal values, moral guidance, and emphasis on self-reliance, which encourage adolescents to manage challenges independently. Cultural stigma and limited awareness

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about mental health might also lead to underreporting of counselling needs. Therefore, promoting mental health awareness, reducing stigma, and implementing culturally sensitive counselling programmes in schools are essential to ensure that students can access support when needed.

Objective 2: To compare the levels of psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on place of origin.

Table 2

Comparison based on place of origin

Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	Urban	Percentage	Rural	Percentage
Very Low	50	31.85	18	30
Low	49	31.21	9	15
Average	24	15.29	9	15
High	18	11.46	12	20
Very High	16	10.19	12	20

Table 2 exhibits the comparison of psychological counselling needs of students based on place of origin. Among 157 urban students, 31.85% had very low counselling needs, 31.21% had low, 15.29% had average, 11.46% had high, and 10.19% had very high counselling needs. Among 60 rural students, 30% had very low counselling needs, 15% had low, 15% had average, 20% had high, and 20% had very high counselling needs.

Table 3

Analysis of the significance of difference between urban and rural students

Place of Origin	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Level of Significance
Urban	157	74.23	7.62	215	1.38	Not Significant at 0.01
Rural	60	76.57	8.92			

Table 3 indicates that the mean and standard deviation of urban students were 74.23 and 7.62, while those of rural students were 76.57 and 8.92, indicating the difference is in favour of urban students (slightly higher counselling needs among rural students). The calculated t-value 1.38 was less than the critical value 2.59 at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in psychological counselling needs based on place of origin is accepted at 0.01 significant level.

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The finding is consistent with Lalhriatpuia (2022), who reported no significant difference between rural and urban students' psychological counselling needs. However, it contradicts Dhami & Sharma (2020), who found rural adolescents had higher psychological counselling needs.

The similarity in counselling needs might be due to shared developmental challenges, growing internet exposure, uniform education systems, and improved access to mental health awareness across both areas. Although rural students showed slightly higher mean scores, limited access to counselling resources and greater socio-economic pressures might contribute to their elevated needs.

Objective 3: To compare the difference in the psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on type of school management.

Table 4

Comparison based on type of management

Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	Private	Percentage	Government	Percentage	Deficit	Percentage
Very Low	20	32.26	28	34.57	20	27.03
Low	17	27.42	20	24.69	21	28.38
Average	12	19.35	8	9.88	13	17.57
High	8	12.90	12	14.81	10	13.51
Very High	5	8.07	13	16.05	10	13.51

Table 4 illustrates the comparison of psychological counselling needs among students based on type of school management. Among 62 private school students, 32.26% had very low psychological counselling needs, 27.42% low, 19.35% average, 12.90% high, and 8.07% very high needs. Among 81 government school students, 34.57% had very low, 24.69% low, 9.88% average, 14.81% high, and 16.05% very high needs. From 74 deficit school students, 27.03% had very low, 28.38% low, 17.57% average, 13.51% high, and 13.51% very high needs.

Table 5.1

Analysis of variance between students of private, government and deficit secondary and higher secondary school

Management	Number of Students	Sum of Scores	Average	Variance
Private	62	4614	74.42	56.15
Government	81	6050	74.69	78.57

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Deficit	74	5584	75.46	58.22

Table 5.2

Analysis of variance between students of private, government and deficit secondary and higher secondary school

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom (df)	Mean Sum of Squares	Computed F-value	P-value	Critical Value of F
Between Groups	40.88	2	20.44	0.31	0.73	3.03
Within Groups	13960.76	214	65.24			

Table 5.1 and 5.2 shows that the mean scores were 74.42 (private), 74.69 (government), and 75.46 (deficit), with an F-value of 0.31, which is less than the critical value of 4.68 at 0.01 significant level. Hence, there is no significant difference in the psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on type of school management. The hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the psychological counselling needs based on type of school management is therefore accepted at 0.01 level of significance.

The present finding supports Lalhriatpuia (2022), who found no significant difference in psychological counselling needs between government and private school students. However, it contrasts with Uniyal and Khanduri (2019) who reported significant differences across school types.

The result suggests that students, regardless of school management, share similar developmental, academic, and social challenges due to standardized curricula, equal exposure to media, and common societal influences shaping their psychological needs.

Objective 4: To find out the relationship between parental education in accordance with the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.

Table 6

Comparison based on parental education

Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	Non - Matriculate	Percentage	Matriculate	Percentage	Graduate	Percentage	Post Graduate and above	Percentage
Very Low	17	29.31	30	39.47	15	27.27	6	21.43

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Low	13	22.41	24	31.58	15	27.27	6	21.43
Average	5	8.62	10	13.16	11	20	7	25
High	11	18.97	8	10.53	5	9.09	6	21.43
Very High	12	20.69	4	5.26	9	16.37	3	10.71

The analysis of Table 6 reveals that among 217 students, most had parents educated up to the matriculate level (76), followed by non-matriculate (58), graduate (55), and post-graduate and above (28). Students whose parents were matriculate showed the highest proportion (39.47%) with a very low level of psychological counselling needs. In contrast, those whose parents were non-matriculate and post-graduate and above showed relatively higher percentages with high and very high levels of counselling needs. Overall, students from matriculate and graduate parental backgrounds tended to report lower levels of psychological counselling needs compared to those from non-matriculate and post-graduate families.

Table 7

Analysis of the correlation coefficient between parental education and psychological counselling needs

Variables	N	df	(ρ)	Correlation
Parental Education **Psychological Counselling Needs**	217	215	0.02	Weak Positive Correlation

Spearman's rank correlation (ρ) was computed to assess the relationship between parental education and level of psychological counselling needs. As shown in table 7, there was a weak positive correlation between the two variables, r (215) = .02. Therefore, parental education of the students had a very weak relationship with their psychological counselling needs. Hence, parental education might have negligible or no influence on the psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.

The negligible correlation might be that psychological counselling needs are relatively independent of parental education level. Emotional distress among adolescents appears to arise from complex psychosocial factors rather than purely educational or intellectual environments at home.

Objective 5: To examine the relation of birth order to psychological counselling needs of the secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.

Table 8

Comparison based on birth order

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Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	Eldest	Percentage	Middle	Percentage	Youngest	Percentage	Single	Percentage
Very Low	27	34.17	25	31.25	13	27.66	3	27.27
Low	24	30.38	18	22.5	12	25.53	4	36.37
Average	8	10.13	16	20	8	17.02	1	9.09
High	12	15.19	11	13.75	6	12.77	1	9.09
Very High	8	10.13	10	12.50	8	17.02	2	18.18

Table 8 reveals that among 217 students, most were either eldest (79) or middle children (80), followed by youngest (47), and single children (11). The majority across all groups reported low to very low psychological counselling needs. A higher percentage of eldest (34.17%) and middle children (31.25%) exhibited very low levels of psychological counselling needs, whereas youngest and single children showed slightly higher proportions with high and very high counselling needs. Overall, eldest and middle children tended to have lower counselling needs, while youngest and single children showed relatively higher levels of need.

Table 9

Analysis of the correlation coefficient between birth order and psychological counselling needs

Variables	N	df	(ρ)	Correlation
Birth Order **Psychological Counselling Needs**	217	215	0.08	Weak Positive Correlation

Spearman's rank correlation (ρ) was computed to examine the relation of birth order to psychological counselling needs. Table 9 indicated a weak positive correlation between the two variables, r (215) = .08. Therefore, birth order of the students had a weak relationship with their psychological counselling needs. Hence, birth order might have negligible or no influence on the psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.

The result shows that birth order has negligible or no correlation to psychological counselling needs, aligning with studies emphasizing the stronger impact of environmental and individual factors. It contradicts traditional theories like Adler's that highlight birth order's major role in personality and adjustment.

This finding might be due to stronger influences from factors such as parenting style, peer interaction, academic pressure, and individual coping skills, which tend to overshadow the effects of

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birth order. Additionally, differences in family environment and cultural expectations might dilute any consistent pattern related to birth order.

Objective 6: To investigate the relation of family income of the secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area to their psychological counselling needs.

Table 10

Comparison based on family income

Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	≤100000	Percentage	≤300000	Percentage	≤500000	Percentage	Above 500000	Percentage
Very Low	29	35.80	22	37.29	7	20	10	23.81
Low	17	20.99	16	27.12	13	37.14	12	28.57
Average	11	13.58	7	11.86	6	17.14	9	21.43
High	14	17.28	8	13.56	4	11.43	4	9.52
Very High	10	12.35	6	10.17	5	14.29	7	16.67

Table 10 shows that out of 217 students, most (81) belonged to families earning ₹1,00,000 or less annually. Students from families earning up to ₹3,00,000 showed the highest proportion (37.29%) with very low psychological counselling needs, followed closely by those from the lowest income group (35.80%). In contrast, students from higher-income families (above ₹5,00,000) displayed relatively higher percentages of average to very high counselling needs. Overall, lower and middle-income groups tended to have lower psychological counselling needs, while higher-income groups showed a slightly greater tendency toward higher counselling needs.

Table 11

Analysis of the correlation coefficient between family income and psychological counselling needs

Variables	N	df	(ρ)	Correlation
Family Income **Psychological Counselling Needs**	217	215	0.06	Weak Positive Correlation

To investigate the relation of family income of the students to their psychological counselling needs, Spearman's rank correlation (ρ) was employed. As shown in table 11, there was a weak positive correlation between the two variables, r (215) = .06. This implies that family income of the students had a very weak relationship with their psychological counselling needs. Hence, family

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income might have negligible or no influence on the psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.

While family income often correlates with access to resources like healthcare and education, it might not directly correlate with psychological counselling needs. This could be because factors such as emotional support from family, peer relationships, and personal resilience play a more significant role in shaping students' mental well-being. Additionally, cultural attitudes toward counselling and stigma surrounding mental health may influence students' willingness to seek support regardless of their economic background.

Conclusion

The study revealed that most students in Aizawl West-III area had low levels of psychological counselling needs, though a considerable number showed high to very high needs, indicating emerging mental health concerns among adolescents. No significant differences were found based on place of origin or school type, and correlations with parental education, birth order, and family income were negligible, suggesting that emotional and social factors might play a greater role than demographic or socio-economic variables.

The findings highlight the need to strengthen school-based counselling and mental health awareness. Introducing culturally sensitive counselling services, training teachers to provide emotional support and reducing stigma might help address students' psychological needs and promote their mental and social well-being.

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