

Historical Triumph

Jammu and Kashmir's historic triumph in the Ranji Trophy is far more than a sporting milestone - it is a moment of collective pride, resilience and renewed hope for an entire region. For decades, cricket in J&K survived on passion and raw talent despite limited infrastructure, political uncertainty and logistical challenges. Today, that perseverance has translated into a landmark achievement that will be remembered for generations.

The Ranji Trophy, India's premier domestic cricket championship, has long been a platform where future international stars are forged. For J&K to rise through its fiercely competitive structure and etch its name in history signals not just a victory on the scoreboard, but a coming of age for cricket in the Union Territory. It reflects years of silent toil by players, coaches, support staff and administrators who believed that talent from the region could stand shoulder to shoulder with the best in the country.

This triumph carries a deeper social resonance. Jammu and Kashmir's youth often confront limited opportunities, unemployment concerns and social pressures. In such an environment, sporting success serves as a powerful counter-narrative. It demonstrates that discipline, teamwork and belief can overcome structural disadvantages. The cricketers have not merely won a title; they have expanded the horizon of aspiration for thousands of young boys and girls who now dare to dream bigger.

Equally significant is the message this victory sends about the importance of sustained investment in sports. Over the past few years, there has been a gradual strengthening of cricketer infrastructure in the region - improved grounds, better training facilities and greater exposure to national-level competition. The results are now visible. However, the challenge ahead is to ensure that this success is institutionalised rather than treated as a one-off achievement. Consistency, grassroots academies, rural outreach and professional coaching ecosystems must become long-term priorities.

The presence and encouragement of public representatives at key matches underscored the importance of moral support in high-pressure contests. Symbolic gestures matter - they reinforce to players that their efforts are valued not just by fans, but by the leadership of the region. Yet, symbolism must now translate into policy. Budgetary allocations for sports, transparent talent scouting and structured leagues at district and block levels can transform this moment into a movement.

History-making moments are rare. What defines them is not only the victory itself, but what follows. J&K's Ranji win must inspire schools to prioritise playgrounds, parents to encourage participation and policymakers to view sports as a strategic investment rather than a recreational afterthought. The team has lifted a trophy, but more importantly, it has lifted the spirit of a people. If nurtured wisely, this triumph can mark the beginning of a golden chapter in Jammu and Kashmir's sporting journey - one where talent is discovered early, supported consistently and celebrated widely.

MENTAL HEALTH AMONG YOUTH IN JAMMU & KASHMIR: AN UNTOLD STORY

■ TANISHA KOHLI

In Jammu & Kashmir, we often hear public discussion on development, employment and education, nutrition, physical fitness but between this we miss out a critically important part of us "mental health" an equally critical issue that remains in the shadows.

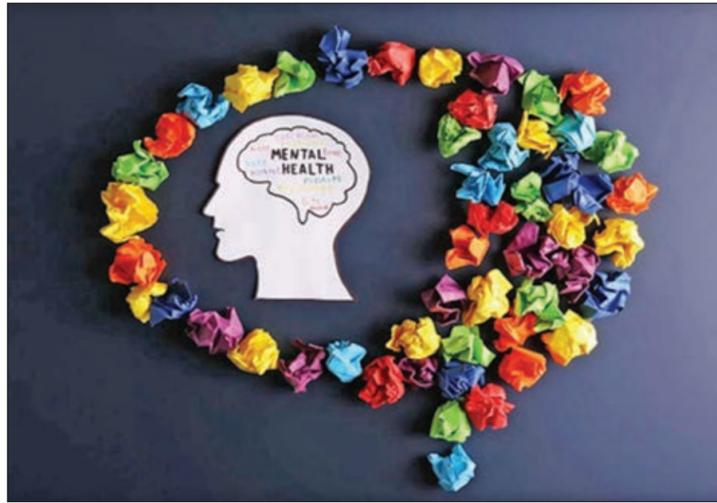
In a society that measures success through marks, jobs and stability, no or little space is left to discuss emotional well-being. For the youth of Jammu & Kashmir, mental health challenges have become increasingly common. Young people across the region are facing rising levels of stress due to academic pressure, unemployment and uncertainty about the future. Yet, emotional well-being continues to be misunderstood, taboo and largely ignored.

The youth of Jammu & Kashmir are often described as tough and hopeful, yet the emotional cost of toughness is never mentioned. Mental health which is essential component of overall well-being, continues to remain a neglected conversation, even as psychological distress among young people becomes increasingly common. Unlike physical health which is seen, mental health is felt by the person affecting his daily lifestyle and functioning.

A new study conducted by the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS) has shown widespread academic stress prevalent among students in Kashmir, with health experts advising parents and guardians to closely monitor the children and take preventive measures to address any emerging mental health concerns they may face. The study, titled "Prevalence of psychiatric morbidity among school-going adolescents in the age group of 13-19 years," asserts that there is a very high prevalence of psychiatric morbidity (anxiety combined with depression) of any kind among adolescents in Kashmir; many of which are unidentified and untreated.

The study found depression as the most common psychiatric illness among adolescents with a higher prevalence in males, while anxiety disorders are more common among females. The study was carried out on 16 schools in the twin districts of Srinagar and Ganderbal. This is not only a case but one of the case among youth of Jammu and Kashmir; many studies have shown how youth is moving towards mental illness and yet unaware of the cause.

This article seeks to explain what mental health is, why it matters, how it affects everyday life, and what steps one can take to improve mental well-



being among young people. Before diving into the topic, it's important to understand what is mental health first.

What Is Mental Health?

Mental health refers to a person's emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how individuals think, feel, behave and respond to stress. Good mental health allows people to cope with daily challenges, work productively and maintain healthy relationships.

Mental health issues do not arise suddenly. Stress, anxiety and emotional exhaustion often develop gradually due to prolonged pressure, unresolved trauma or lack of support. For youth in Jammu & Kashmir, factors such as prolonged uncertainty, academic competition and limited opportunities contribute significantly to psychological stress.

Why Mental Health Matters

Mental health impacts every aspect of life from academic performance and job prospects to social relationships and long-term wellbeing. Poor mental health can lead to anxiety, depression, stress-related disorders and even substance use, ultimately reducing quality of life and productivity. In Kashmir specifically, research shows a high prevalence of stress, anxiety and depression among youth. A study of young people living in border

areas found significant levels of perceived stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms, with education level influencing mental health outcomes.

Another study noted that academic pressure is widespread among adolescents, with 60-65% reporting significant stress linked to school performance accompanied by depression, anxiety and other psychiatric issues.

How Mental Health Affects Daily Life

Mental wellbeing influences behaviour; physical health, sleep patterns, motivation and interpersonal relationships. Persistent stress and anxiety can lead to:

- " Difficulty concentrating and poor academic or work performance
- " Sleep disturbances and chronic fatigue
- " Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed
- " Increased risk of substance use or unhealthy coping
- " Disturbed family and peer relationships

In Jammu & Kashmir, these impacts are compounded by limited access to specialised mental health services. Recent official disclosures note that 11 districts have no psychiatrist at all, highlighting a severe shortage of mental-health professionals amid rising psychological needs. Social stigma and

taboo also discourages many young people from seeking help, leaving distress unaddressed until it becomes severe.

Behind exam results, job applications and everyday routines, many young people in Jammu & Kashmir are silently struggling with stress, anxiety and emotional exhaustion. Mental health challenges among the youth have grown steadily, yet conversations around emotional well-being continue to be avoided, misunderstood or dismissed as personal weakness.

If one feels uneasy, disturbed or confused they should get a counselling session with a psychiatrist or do some simple exercise, as it's your body your health and you are one going to look after it. Here are some simple, evidence-based practices can help support mental health:

Exercises and Practices to Improve Mental Well Being:

Regular Physical Activity: Walking, jogging or light exercise helps reduce stress and improves mood.

Breathing and Relaxation Techniques: Yoga and deep-breathing exercises aid emotional regulation.

Healthy Routine: Maintaining regular sleep and daily schedules supports emotional stability.

Social Connection: Talking to trusted family members or friends helps reduce feelings of isolation.

Art & Music: If feeling sad or disturbed try to do some drawing, colouring or sketching or try to listen to some cheerful music, good music is proven to uplift mood.

These practices complement, but do not replace, professional care when needed. These exercises can help in relieving stress and balance mental health and physical wellbeing. But in severe cases it is important to consult a psychologist or professional help, in a society where therapy is still considered as taboo, parents should prioritize their child wellbeing than society traditions and trends. Mental health among youth in Jammu & Kashmir can no longer remain an ignored conversation. Recognising emotional well-being as a priority is essential for the region's social and economic future. By fostering awareness, empathy and access to support, society can ensure that young people are empowered not just to survive, but to thrive.

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Artificial Intelligence and the Myth of Mass Unemployment

■ PROF. SHYAM NARAYAN LAL

In contemporary public discourse, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is framed simultaneously as promise and peril. It is celebrated as the engine of a new productivity revolution - capable of transforming healthcare, finance, governance, and scientific research - yet shadowing this optimism is a persistent and far louder fear: that AI will destroy jobs at an unprecedented scale and render millions economically redundant. Headlines warn of "machines replacing humans." The spectre of technological unemployment looms large in the collective imagination. Such fears, though understandable, are both historically misplaced and analytically exaggerated. The anxiety surrounding AI is not unprecedented; it represents the latest expression of a recurring apprehension that has accompanied every major technological transformation. What is frequently portrayed as a dramatic rupture with the past is, upon closer scrutiny, part of a longer continuum of structural change through which labour markets adapt, reorganize, and evolve rather than vanish.

The claim that AI will eliminate work echoes earlier moments of disruption. When mechanized looms entered textile production in nineteenth-century England, skilled artisans feared permanent displacement. The Luddite uprisings were not irrational; they were grounded in genuine concerns about wage erosion and deskilling. Yet industrialization did not abolish employment. It reorganized it. Labor shifted from dispersed artisanal workshops to centralized factories, and later into expanding service sectors. Similarly, the mechanization of agriculture in the twentieth century displaced millions from rural economies. Yet those workers were absorbed into manufacturing, urban services, and emerging industrial ecosystems. Productivity gains did not culminate in mass unemployment; they enabled economic expansion. A more recent and revealing example is the resistance to computerization in the late twentieth century. In the 1960s and 1970s, labour unions across the United States and Europe protested the introduction of mainframe computing systems in banks and administrative offices. Typists, bookkeepers, and clerical workers saw in the computer a direct threat to their livelihoods. In India, the introduction of computers in public sector banks during the 1980s and early 1990s provoked organized resistance from employee unions who predicted widespread job losses and institutional deskilling. Strikes, demonstrations, and prolonged negotiations delayed automation. The fear was explicit: computerization would eliminate clerical employment altogether.

Yet history unfolded differently. Automation transformed clerical work but did not annihilate it. In banking, for example, computers reduced routine ledger maintenance and manual transaction recording. However, lower operational costs enabled branch expansion, product diversification, and new customer service models. The industry witnessed the emergence of entirely new roles in IT management, systems analysis, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure. What appeared as a threat to employment became a catalyst for occupational restructuring and sectoral growth. The same pattern characterized the broader digital revolution, which generated industries - software engineering, e-commerce, digital marketing, data analytics - that had scarcely been imaginable a generation earlier. The current AI debate follows a similar trajectory, though amplified by the technology's capacity to perform complex cognitive functions. AI systems can analyse vast datasets, generate language, assist in diagnostics, and automate predictive modelling. Consequently, predictions of white-collar displacement - lawyers replaced by algorithms, journalists by text generators, doctors by diagnostic systems - have proliferated. However, such projections frequently conflate task automation with occupational extinction. Professions are not monolithic; they are bundles of heterogeneous tasks. AI may automate routine components within law, medicine, or finance, but it does not replicate the full spectrum of contextual judgment, ethical deliberation, interpersonal negotiation, and embodied trust that define these professions.

From a labour economics standpoint, technological change is typically task-biased, not job-annihilating. Automation substitutes for routine and codifiable tasks while complementing complex analytical, relational, and creative functions. Moreover, productivity gains reduce costs and stimulate new demand. As goods and services become more affordable and efficient, markets expand. New needs, industries, and consumer expectations emerge. The expansion of

digital platforms, for instance, created remote work arrangements, gig economies, content ecosystems, and new entrepreneurial pathways that did not exist prior to the digital era.

The warning articulated by Yuval Noah Harari, one of the most widely read public intellectuals of our time, regarding the possible emergence of a "useless class" warrants serious attention. He argues that advanced AI may surpass human capabilities across both manual and cognitive domains, potentially rendering large segments of the population economically irrelevant. The force of this claim lies in shifting the debate from job displacement to existential redundancy - raising questions not merely about employment, but about human relevance within economic systems.

Yet this thesis rests on contestable assumptions. It presumes a linear substitution of human labour; underestimating the regulatory, political, ethical, and market forces that shape technological adoption. It assumes static demand, overlooking the historical tendency of economies to expand and generate new forms of value. Most critically, it discounts the adaptive capacity of institutions - particularly education systems and labour markets - to cultivate new competencies and reorganize skills in response to technological change.

Technological revolutions have repeatedly shifted the locus of value creation rather than extinguished it. The movement from agrarian to industrial economies elevated manufacturing; the transition to post-industrial societies expanded services and knowledge industries. AI is likely to intensify the knowledge economy while simultaneously increasing demand in domains that remain irreducibly human: care work, mental health services, cultural production, design, sustainability, and ethical governance. As machines assume repetitive cognitive tasks, the premium on creativity, empathy, strategic thinking, and moral reasoning is likely to rise.

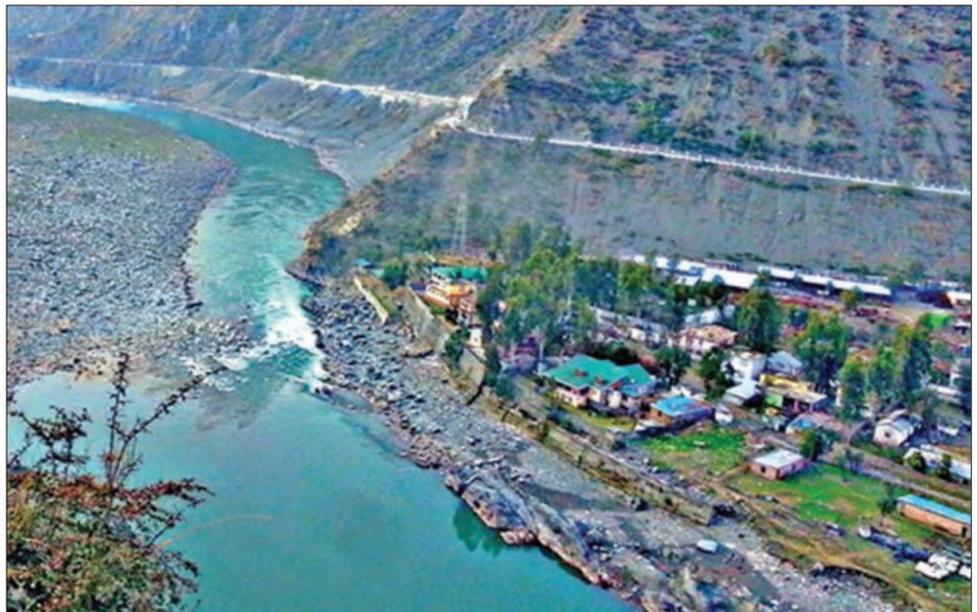
Furthermore, AI itself generates new occupational infrastructures. The design, training, auditing, regulation, and ethical supervision of AI systems require data scientists, machine learning engineers, algorithm auditors, compliance officers, and human-AI interface specialists. Entire regulatory and governance frameworks are emerging to oversee AI deployment. As with the rise of the internet - which produced cybersecurity experts and digital rights lawyers - the AI era is generating professions that did not previously exist. This is not to deny transitional disruption. Routine roles in data entry, standardized documentation, and repetitive production are vulnerable. Inequality may widen if reskilling pathways are uneven. Yet transitional displacement is not equivalent to permanent structural unemployment. The historical record suggests that societies capable of investing in human capital formation, retraining, and institutional reform absorb technological shocks through occupational transformation rather than collapse.

The true risk, therefore, is not technological unemployment but institutional inertia. Fear persists not because work will disappear, but because adaptation is uneven and uncertain. The lesson of resistance to computerization is instructive: early opposition, though understandable, did not halt technological integration; it merely delayed necessary restructuring. Over time, economies that embraced adaptation reaped productivity gains and employment diversification.

The argument, then, is clear: AI does not abolish labor; it redefines it. The central challenge is not to defend existing job descriptions but to prepare for evolving task structures. Labor markets must become more fluid, and workers must be equipped to navigate occupational transitions. Educational systems, in particular, cannot remain organized around static skill sets or single-career trajectories. They must cultivate adaptability, interdisciplinary literacy, and cognitive flexibility. Ultimately, the rise of Artificial Intelligence does not signal the end of work; rather, it compels a structural shift toward greater flexibility within labour markets and simultaneously raises a pressing imperative for educational institutions to fundamentally reorient themselves. Education can no longer be organized around static bodies of knowledge or linear career trajectories. Instead, it must cultivate adaptability, interdisciplinary competence, and intellectual agility - embedding within its core mission the capacity to learn, unlearn, and relearn continuously across the life course.

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Chandrabhaga - Free flowing river through Indian Civilization



■ G.L. KHAJURIA

Literally speaking, Chenab acronyms a Persian derivation, Chen means china and aab means water, annotating thereby China's water. But with the revolving wheel of time, the learned school of thought negated it and attributed that the origin of Chenab is from 'Tandi' - a small village or hamlet in Himachal Pradesh (HP) adjoining our state. Even in Sanskrit texts, Chenab river finds its mention as a nectar-clear water having its origin from higher reaches of Himachal Pradesh.

According to our great epics, the Mahabharat and the Harivansha Purana, there is mention of the origin of these two mighty rivers - Chandra and Bhaga from higher reaches amidst the Himalayan region of Himachal Pradesh. And after traversing through longer distances ultimately confluence at Atholi, little below padder (Kishtwar) around 306 kms serpentine is named as chandrabhaga, Chandra literally means Moon and Bhaga Connotes Luck or virtue. The Chenab or Chandrabhaga as well occupies a very significant place in our revered Rigveda, wherein it has been mentioned as 'Askini'.

Apart from, the Greeks have made a mention about Chenab river more than many ways. Askines and Chandrabhaga as Sandropagos viz the man eater or Alexander as the devour of Alexander the great, who attempted to cross this mighty river and had to suffer disastrously.

The Neelmat Purana, a historical treatise of Kashmir mentions about Chenab or chandrabhaga most prominently. Poster, a well-renowned traveller in 1783 AD extensively Journeyed through Kashmir and named this mighty river as Chanab. And Vigne, another traveller-cum-explorer in 1783 AD, extensively travelled the valley of Kashmir and recorded in his travelogue the Chenab's water from Moon.

And very rightly has as such 'Jean Naudou' a French traveller-cum-author has commented about Chenab as a beautiful, enchanting river having the biggest vibrant, lush green forest in its back drop and explains further regarding the location together with other affiliations as such: "To the east and the south-east, Kashmir is in communication with upper

valley of Chandrabhaga and at the foot of frontier ridge which separates the basin of vistasta' the Jhelum. Kashavata used to constitute an independent principality mentioned one single time in Rajatrangni (Kalhana) but many times in the modern chronicles.

Downstream, Bhadaravakasa was attached to champapura, while more to the south and west campa, vallapura was an independent state where Biksaera were taking refuge, and of whom, a princess was forming a part of harem of Sussala, mentioned many times by Kalhana.

The river Chenab or Chandrabhaga after confluence at Atholi sweeps down serpentine taking turns and twists on sharp bends sometimes too narrow and deep and at places often with broader width all along its under lying bed - rocks of sub-Himalayan, pre-Cambrian region relatively unchangeable in its entire route. The river, of course, accumulates various rivulets, Nallahs on its either side of the catchments thereby enhancing its quantitative flow like fiery flames. The river as such forms a narrow gorge cut out of hard rock filled up with perpetual flow of water and is locked up in the rock forming a dam-like shape. And a mega Dul Hasti project generating huge power potential is the first of the formation in the history of the Charming Chenab.

And still down below, the river has been dammed at Baglihar hydroelectric power project near Batote. The damming of these two hydro-electric projects have provided an ample scope of power generation. But at the same time has indeed lost its natural beauty, its enchanting tones and charming white foaming watery upheavals forever and ever.

The mighty and majestic Chenab or Chandrabhaga is having a nectar-like crystal water with very fast flow spanning its either bank, debouches from hills down and travels hundreds of thousand kilometres in the land-locked mountainous terrain and the plains down below. The river as such emerges out at Aknhoor after passing through Salal and Sawalakot power project and the river flows to Pakistan inter-mingling Tawi, Ravi, Satluj, Beas and other rivers, rivulets and streams. The river as such confluences other mega rivers, en route, with gushing flow and finally drains down into Arabian sea.

(The author is former Deputy Conservator, J&K Forests)