ENGLISH LITERATURE

The Lost Paradise of Childhood: Rising Stress Among Young Children, Its Psychological Impact and Pathways of Coping through the Lens of Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality"

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Abstract

Childhood has traditionally been seen as a time of innocence, imagination, curiosity and emotional freedom. But today's childhood is increasingly characterised by academic competition, dependence on digital devices, social pressure, less time in nature, and psychological strain. The rising incidence of stress among young children is a matter of great concern in relation to their emotional growth, creativity, mental health and well-being. The paper explores the changing childhood experience in the famous Romantic poem "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" by William Wordsworth. Wordsworth regarded childhood as a time of blessing, a time of innocence, spiritual insight, imagination and deep communion with nature.

It looks at the Romantic vision of childhood as represented by Wordsworth in relation to the realities of modern-day childhood, with many children experiencing anxiety, pressure, loneliness and emotional exhaustion. This paper explores the psychological effects of childhood stress by combining an analysis of literature and the knowledge of the fields of child psychology and education studies, and examines the possible ways of coping.

Using a qualitative interdisciplinary approach, the research investigates Wordsworth's poetic depiction of childhood and current challenges in children's mental health. The study concludes that Wordsworth's emphasis on nature, imagination, play and emotional sensitivity is still relevant in addressing the challenges children face in the present day. It indicates that a return to meaningful relationships with nature, creativity, caring relationships, and balanced lifestyles can help protect childhood as a time of happiness, discovery and emotional development.

Keywords: childhood studies; Wordsworth; Romantic poetry; childhood stress; mental health; emotional well-being; nature and imagination

1 Introduction

Childhood has always occupied a special place in the human imagination, a time of innocence, wonder, curiosity and boundless possibilities. Childhood has been represented in various cultural and literary traditions as a distinct phase of life characterised by imagination, emotional openness, and detachment from the complexity of adult life. But the meaning and experience of childhood have radically changed in contemporary society. The child of today is caught up more and more in a world of academic competition, technological advancement, social pressures and a constant striving for accomplishment.

The rapid change in social structures has created new challenges for young children. Compared to earlier generations who often experienced childhood through outdoor play, exploration, family interactions and close engagement with nature, many children today are immersed in heavily scheduled lives, with academic demands, digital devices, exams and performance expectations. This means that childhood, which is supposed to be a stage of emotional development and discovery, is increasingly becoming associated with stress and anxiety.

Childhood stress has emerged as an important psychological and educational problem. Although some amount of challenge is good for development and resilience, too much constant stress can have a negative impact on children's emotional and cognitive development. Children may have emotional burdens such as academic expectations, fear of failure, parental pressure, social comparison, and too much screen time. These pressures are often invisible because children may not have the vocabulary or confidence to express their feelings.

Stress in childhood can have strong psychological effects. Long-term stress can lead to anxiety, emotional instability, low self-esteem, lack of motivation, behavioural changes, and difficulty in developing healthy relationships. Too much pressure can also affect children's creativity and imagination, which are the qualities that define childhood. When children are constantly focused on achievement and competition, they may lose opportunities to explore, play and express themselves emotionally.

The problems of modern childhood can find a meaningful echo in the Romantic writings of William Wordsworth. The Romantic movement, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, rejected the prevailing view that childhood was simply an incomplete stage on the way to adulthood. Romantic poets, particularly Wordsworth, portrayed childhood as a significant and meaningful stage of life with its own wisdom, imagination, and emotional richness.

Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" is one of the most significant poetic explorations of childhood. In this poem, Wordsworth presents childhood as a time of spiritual awareness and deep connection to the natural world. The child, Wordsworth said, has a vision and a feeling of intensity of perception which, in the course of years, gradually fades away. Childhood is portrayed as a sort of paradise, where the human mind is still nearer to beauty, wonder, and the mysteries of existence.

The famous opening lines of the poem reveal the speaker's sense of loss:

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
>
> The earth, and every common sight,
>
> To me did seem
>
> Apparelled in celestial light,

These lines express Wordsworth's belief that childhood has a special perspective on the world. The child's imaginative and emotional sensitivity makes the natural environment seem to be full of remarkable beauty. However, this vision gradually fades in intensity with the maturing of individuals.

Wordsworth's notion of childhood as a lost paradise is particularly relevant in today's world. Today's children are growing up with a different kind of childhood, one that is increasingly disconnected from nature, imagination and unstructured play. The forces of academia, the lure of digital distraction and the burden of social expectation seem to be attacking the "celestial light" Wordsworth wrote of. The

modern child may have access to technology, yet he or she may not have the emotional freedom and imaginative spaces that Wordsworth deemed necessary for growth.

Another important aspect of Wordsworth's poetry is the connection between childhood and nature. Wordsworth's nature is not simply the physical world, but it is a source of emotional healing, moral development, and spiritual growth. His poetry suggests the need for a meaningful relationship with nature for mental balance. This idea is even more pertinent today, as researchers investigate the relationship between exposure to nature and the mental health of children.

The present study takes Wordsworth's poetic vision as a framework for the analysis of contemporary childhood stress. This is not to say that childhood has not been difficult in the past but rather an investigation into how contemporary social conditions have created new kinds of psychological pressures which threaten children's mental health.

Using literary criticism, childhood studies and psychology, the research investigates the relationship between Wordsworth's idealised depiction of childhood and the experiences of children today. It considers how literature might help us to understand present-day social problems and how Romantic ideas about nature, imagination and emotional consciousness may provide routes to healthier experiences of childhood.

The study argues that protecting childhood is not only about reducing academic pressure, but restoring balance, creativity, emotional support, meaningful relationships and opportunities for children to connect with nature and their own imagination. Wordsworth's poetry is relevant today because it reminds us that childhood is not a preparation for adulthood but a stage of human life that is valuable in itself and deserves care, protection and respect.

2 Theoretical framework: Romantic childhood, nature, imagination and child psychology

The present study is located at the intersection of Romantic literary theory, childhood studies and psychological approaches to child development. It explores how William Wordsworth's poetic representation of childhood as an age of innocence, imagination and spiritual awareness can offer a helpful perspective for the understanding of current childhood stress.

The Romantic movement was a reaction against the overemphasis on reason, industrialisation and social control which characterised the eighteenth century. Romantic writers questioned the idea that logic and reason were the only means of comprehending human experience. Instead, they emphasised emotion, imagination, nature, individuality and the inner life of human beings. Within this model, childhood had a special significance because Romantic poets saw children as being closer to imagination, natural goodness, and real emotional experience.

2.1 Wordsworth's Romantic view of childhood

Romantic literature is centred around William Wordsworth, with his particular perception of childhood. For Wordsworth, childhood is not a stage of immaturity in transition from childhood to maturity but a valuable phase of human life has its own wisdom and spiritual depth.

Wordsworth's Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood presents the idea that in childhood, people have a special vision of the world. The child perceives beauty that is lost with age; nature is experienced with a remarkable intensity. The ordinary becomes moments of wonder and revelation through a child's imagination.

Wordsworth's famous saying, "The Child is father of the Man", means that the adult individual is shaped by childhood, his personality, emotions and values. The experiences, imagination, and emotional sensitivity developed in childhood continue to affect human identity throughout life.

This idea is especially pertinent in the modern society in which childhood is increasingly seen as a time for preparing for future success rather than a valuable state of being. Wordsworth's philosophy stands against this utilitarian conception by stressing the intrinsic value of childhood.

2.2 Nature as a source of emotional healing and development

In Wordsworth's poetic philosophy, nature is of fundamental importance. For him, nature is not just a physical landscape but a vital force that can nourish human emotions, imagination and moral development.

In Ode: Intimations of Immortality natural images such as "meadow," "grove," and "stream" are more than external scenery. They represent the spiritual connection of the child with the world. Nature gives children the chance to explore, be curious, be creative and emotionally balanced.

This idea is highly relevant in the current context. Modern children spend less and less time in natural environments, due to urbanisation, academic schedules and excessive engagement with digital technology. Fewer outdoor experiences can impact children's physical health, creativity and mental health.

Wordsworth's focus on nature indicates that reconnecting children with natural environments could be an important means of reducing stress and promoting psychological growth.

2.3 Children's creativity and imagination

Another significant aspect of Wordsworth's philosophy of childhood is the significance of imagination. Romantic thinkers believed imagination to be a powerful human faculty which enabled people to experience the world deeply and creatively.

Wordsworth thought that the imagination of childhood enabled children to see beauty and meaning beyond the ordinary reality. The child is not a passive spectator of the world, but enters into emotional relations with it.

But, increasingly, modern childhood is dominated by formal learning, education focused on exams and digital entertainment. Over-emphasis on measurable achievement can limit opportunities for creative exploration.

Psychologically , imagination and creative play are a huge part of expressing emotions and problem solving. Hence, it is vital to protect children's imaginative spaces for their holistic development.

2.4 Child psychology and the idea of childhood stress

The study also employs child psychology perspectives to understand the rising levels of stress in young children. Childhood stress refers to the emotional and psychological reaction to events that children find too much or too hard to manage.

Although manageable challenges can help children develop confidence and resilience, extended periods of stress can have negative effects on emotional and cognitive development. Children today are subjected to multiple pressures including:

- Academic competition

- Anxiety about tests
- Parental expectations
- Social comparison
- Dependence on digital
- Less physical exercise
- Changes in family makeup

Psychology has shown that in order for children to develop healthy personalities, they need emotional security, supportive relationships, opportunities for play and freedom to explore.

This research is centrally concerned with the contrast between Wordsworth's conception of the imaginative free child and the contemporary stressed child.

2.5 Changing meaning of childhood and childhood studies

Modern childhood studies argue that childhood is not a fixed universal experience but is constructed by social, cultural, economic and technological conditions. Childhood experience changes according to historical circumstances.

Earlier conceptions of childhood were often associated with innocence, play and dependence. But today's childhood is shaped by consumer culture, digital technology, competitive education systems and changing social expectations.

Childhood studies researchers stress that children should not be seen simply as future adults, but as persons with present emotional and psychological needs. This is in keeping with Wordsworth's belief that childhood has its own value and deserves respect.

3 Literature review (2020-2026)

Recent research in psychology, education and literary studies has shown increasing concern about the growing challenges facing children in contemporary society. Studies have been made on childhood stress, mental health, digital influence, academic stress and importance of emotional health.

Recent studies in child psychology have pointed to social factors as having played a role in rising stress among children. Academic competition, examination stress, parental expectations and performance-based evaluation systems have been identified as major contributors to childhood anxiety.

Educational researchers have found that an environment that focuses solely on achievement can have a negative effect on children's creativity and emotional development. Modern pedagogical approaches emphasise the need for an integrated approach to education that includes emotional intelligence, creativity, physical activity and social skills.

Research after the global pandemic has particularly focused on children's mental health. Studies have been done on the effects of social isolation, change in routine, increase in screen time and decreased peer interaction on children's psychological well-being. These studies emphasise the value of supportive environments that nurture emotional resilience.

Digital technology is an important area of research as well. Although contemporary researchers claim that technology offers educational benefits, too much screen time could lead to reduced physical activity, attention issues, bad sleep, and social isolation in children.

There has also been a burgeoning academic interest in the link between nature and childhood development. Researchers in environmental psychology say that exposure to nature can help children to reduce stress, improve concentration and regulate their emotions. These findings strongly relate to Wordsworth's Romantic belief in the healing power of nature.

Wordsworth's depiction of childhood is still a major contribution to Romantic literature, which literary scholars continue to study. Recent criticism has examined the ways in which Wordsworth overturns traditional notions of childhood, portraying children as imaginative, emotionally sensitive and spiritually significant.

The study of Romantic literature also reveals the importance of Wordsworth's ideas for current debates about education and child development. His emphasis on imagination, nature and emotional sensitivity has a lot to teach us about protecting childhood from the demands of adult society.

However, existing research tends to approach childhood stress from psychological or educational perspectives, while literary studies often highlight Wordsworth's poetic philosophy without connecting it to contemporary childhood concerns. The need for interdisciplinary research that employs literary texts as frameworks for understanding contemporary social and psychological challenges remains.

This study seeks to address this gap, through analysis of Wordsworth's Ode: Intimations of Immortality, and contemporary concerns around childhood stress, mental health and coping methods.

4 Research gap

There is much literature on childhood psychology, educational stress and Romantics poetry but there is little research on the links between Wordsworth's philosophy of childhood and the psychological problems of modern children.

Much of the existing work on Wordsworth is concerned with Romantic aesthetics, nature, memory and imagination. Likewise, research on childhood stress tends to stay within the psychological and educational realms.

This study attempts to fill this gap by combining literary analysis and child psychology. It explores how Wordsworth's conception of childhood as an age of innocence, imagination and unity with nature can provide important lessons for restoring emotional health and well-being in children today.

5 Objectives of the study

The study aims:

1. To examine Wordsworth's representation of childhood in Ode: Intimations of Immortality.
2. To explore the growing problem of stress in young children in today's society.
3. To investigate the psychological impact of childhood stress on emotional and creative development.
4. To compare Wordsworth's Romantic ideal of childhood with the realities of growing up today.
5. To investigate the role of nature, imagination and play as leadings to emotional healing.

6. Propose strategies to promote children's mental health and emotional resilience.

6 Research questions

1. How does Wordsworth portray childhood in Ode: Intimations of Immortality?
2. What are the main things that cause children today to have higher levels of stress?
3. What is the effect of childhood stress on the psychological and emotional development of children?
4. How does contemporary childhood differ from Wordsworth's Romantic vision?
5. Are Wordsworth's views on nature and imagination helpful for better childhood?

7 Methodology

This research is a qualitative interdisciplinary study which is based on literary analysis, psychological perspectives and educational studies.

The main text chosen for analysis is the poem of William Wordsworth:

Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.

Close textual analysis examines topics such as childhood, innocence, imagination, memory, nature, and emotional growth.

The study also draws on secondary sources in child psychology, education studies, childhood studies and mental health research to understand contemporary childhood stress.

This research is interdisciplinary because childhood is not just a literary theme but a complex human experience formed by psychological, social, cultural, and educational forces.

8 Analysis and discussion

8.1 Wordsworth's lost paradise of childhood: imagination, innocence and spiritual consciousness

William Wordsworth's Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood is one of the most profound literary explorations of childhood in English verse. Wordsworth does not consider childhood as an unfinished stage on the way to adulthood, but rather as a special period with its own wisdom, emotional depth and spiritual importance.

For Wordsworth, the child is not a blank slate to be moulded by society, but a child with an extraordinary capacity for beauty, wonder, and harmony. In childhood perception is intensified and the ordinary is felt as extraordinary. The natural world is not separate from the child's consciousness, but is deeply involved with it.

The opening lines of the poem describe how the speaker lost this extraordinary vision:

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
>
> The earth, and every common sight,
>
> To me did seem
>
> Apparelled in celestial light,

The image of "celestial light" is the way the child experiences reality. But the magic of nature is a magic of childhood imagination, where ordinary experiences are transformed into moments of wonder. But with the development of the individual this intensity of perception begins to fade.

Wordsworth's concept of childhood as a 'lost paradise' is significant for the understanding of contemporary childhood. Today's child has at his finger-tips the most advanced technology, information and material comforts, but may suffer from a loss of imaginative freedom, emotional security and connection with nature. The paradise that Wordsworth links with childhood seems to be increasingly under threat from social pressures and changing life patterns.

The famous statement of the poet

> "The Child is father of the Man"

claims that experiences in childhood shape adult identity. Wordsworth believes that the emotional and imaginative basis formed in childhood influences the individual throughout life. Thus, the neglect of children's emotional needs may have long-term consequences for society.

Today, childhood is often seen as a time of preparation for future success. Children are often assessed on academic performance, tests and accomplishments. Wordsworth's philosophy contradicts this limited perspective, showing society that childhood is valuable in and of itself, not simply for future productivity. Just as important is a child's happiness, creativity, curiosity and emotional development.

8.2 The crisis of childhood today: how are children experiencing more and more stress

Today's world creates many challenges for children that compound their psychological stress. While childhood has always had its challenges, today's children are facing unique pressures from rapid social, technological and educational changes.

8.2.1 Academic stress and competitive education

One of the major sources of stress in childhood is the increasing pressure of academic competition. Education should be about curiosity and intellectual growth. But it's often reduced to examinations, grades, rankings and competition.

Many children have anxiety because of:

- Fear of failure.
- Heavy homework loads
- Pressure of examination
- Expectations of parents and teachers
- Compare with school mates

When a child's value is determined by academic achievement, children may experience feelings of inadequacy and an ongoing fear of not meeting expectations.

This is very different from Wordsworth's view of childhood as a time of discovery and happiness. The modern child learns under duress, the Romantic child at specified times learns by watching, by imagining and by interacting with nature.

8.2.2 Digital technology and the changing experience of childhood

Technology has changed the childhood experience in profound ways. Digital devices can offer opportunities for learning and entertainment, but our overreliance on screens has created new psychological challenges.

Many children today spend a lot of time on:

- Cell phones
- Games online
- Social networking sites
- Online entertainment

Excessive screen time can limit opportunities for:

- Play outdoors
- Personal interaction
- Creative Activities
- Physical movement

In Wordsworth, the child's knowledge of the world comes from immediate contact with nature. In contrast, many modern children experience the world through digital representations. Technology is useful, but if there is an imbalance between digital engagement and real-world experiences, it can affect emotional and social development.

Loss of outdoor experience also means a loss of the natural connection Wordsworth saw as essential to human growth.

8.2.3 Comparison with others and performance anxiety

Today's society encourages children to compare themselves with each other more and more. Academic achievement, appearance, abilities and social acceptance are constantly measured.

Children may feel stressed when they feel pressured to:

- Out-perform others
- Expect unrealistic expectations
- Obtain peer and adult approval

This has been made worse by social media, which has created environments in which children compare their lives to carefully curated images of others. Comparisons like this can lower self-confidence and cause feelings of insecurity.

Wordsworth's philosophy indicates that childhood must be rooted in individual experience and personal discovery, not in external competition. Each child has unique talents, imaginations and emotional strengths.

8.2.4 Emotional insecurity and changing families

Family relationships are important for a child's emotional development. Recent social changes such as busy careers, less contact with the family and changing communication patterns may influence the children's sense of emotional security.

Children need:

- Focus
- Support – emotional
- Meaningful conversations
- Feeling of inclusion

Children lacking supportive relationships may suffer from loneliness and anxiety.

Wordsworth's poetry highlights emotional ties, with nature, with memories, or with other people. His vision is a reminder to society that emotional nourishment is a necessity for healthy development.

8.3 Psychological effects of childhood stress

Childhood stress affects not only short-term emotional experiences but also the long-term psychological development. Continuous pressure can have an impact on children's confidence, relationships, behaviour and ability to cope with challenges.

8.3.1 Emotional distress and anxiety

Childhood stress is one of the most common causes of anxiety. Children who are under undue pressure may develop:

- Worrying constantly
- Fear of failing
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble sleeping
- Emotionally unstable

Children may not always express anxiety in the same way adults do. Their stress may show through changes in behaviour, withdrawal, irritability or loss of interest in activities.

8.3.2 Loss of creativity and imaginations

Creativity is childhood. But the pressure to do well in school and the absence of chances to freely explore can stifle children's imagination.

Wordsworth believed that imagination was a great human faculty by which people could experience beauty and meaning. Children who are always being led toward predetermined outcomes may be denied the freedom to imagine, to experiment, to create.

Creative activities such as:

- Story telling
- Tearing
- Audio
- poems
- Plays

are needed for emotional expression and mental balance.

8.3.3 Lack of self-confidence

Children who are constantly compared and criticised may develop negative self-perceptions.

Repeated messages, e.g.

- "You need to score higher"
- "Do better"
- "You are behind other people"

can cause feelings of inadequacy.

A healthy childhood needs motivation, acceptance and recognition of individual strengths.

8.4 The lost paradise: Wordsworth's childhood ideal and today's reality

The image of the Romantic child in Wordsworth and the contemporary child highlights the important shifts in the experience of childhood.

Table 1. Wordsworth's child and the modern child

Wordsworth's child	Modern child
Connected with nature	Often connected with technology
Exploration learning	Competition learning
Driven by imagination	Often regulated by performance targets
Experiences liberty	Experiences schedules
Enjoys simplicity	Often driven by material expectations

This comparison does not imply that the past was perfect or that technology is evil. Rather, it shows that we need to find balance.

Wordsworth's poetry reminds contemporary society that children require spaces for exploration, imagination, creativity, and emotional growth. It is not about reducing childhood to preparation for future success. Childhood itself should be valued as a meaningful stage of human life.

8.5 Nature, play and imagination as therapeutic pathways

Wordsworth's focus on nature offers important lessons for how we might approach children's mental health today. Psychological studies today are increasingly showing that nature-based experiences are important in reducing stress and improving mental health.

8.5.1 Connectedness to nature

Natural environments offer children opportunities for:

- Unwinding
- Exploratory
- Workout
- Inventiveness
- Regulating emotions

Gardening, playing games in the open air, walking in nature and learning about the environment can all help psychological balance.

Wordsworth's poetry suggests that nature is more than a backdrop; it is a source of emotional healing.

8.5.2 The role of play

Play is essential to healthy development in childhood. Through play children develop:

- Working as a team
- Solve problems
- Communications
- Creativeness
- Emotional release

But children are often less free to play because of more academic pressure.

Restoring play as a vital part of childhood can help to reduce stress and boost happiness.

8.5.3 Imagination and creative expression

Creative activities give children ways to express their feelings and to build their confidence.

Children can discover their inner worlds through literature, poetry, art, music and story telling.

Wordsworth's own poetry demonstrates how imagination can turn ordinary experiences into significant ones. So, encouraging creativity can be an important strategy in protecting children's mental health.

8.6 Restitution strategies for the well-being of the child

Children are under stress, and a full and thorough approach is needed to address their emotional, psychological, social and educational needs. The answer is not to reduce academic stress, but to create environments in which children feel valued, supported and emotionally safe.

Wordsworth's philosophy of childhood offers significant insights into the restoration of balance in children's lives. His focus on nature, imagination, emotional sensitivity, and significant experiences implies that opportunities for exploration and self-expression are necessary for children's well-being.

8.6.1 Providing emotionally supportive environments

The first step in reducing childhood stress is to create emotionally supportive environments at home and in school. Children need relationships that understand, encourage and accept them.

Parents and teachers need to:

- Listen actively to children's concerns.
- Encourage open communication.
- Don't compare too much.
- Identify individual skills.
- Find out what emotional issues are.

When a child feels understood, his confidence and emotional resilience grow. Wordsworth's poetry reminds us of the need for emotional connection, and that human beings evolve through meaningful relationships with their surroundings.

8.6.2 Supporting equitable education

Education is an important part of childhood experience. Academic learning is important but an education system that is only examination orientated may result in greater anxiety and less creativity.

The balanced approach to education should include:

- Experiential learning
- Artistic projects
- Sports and physical education
- Literature and the Arts
- Programs to develop emotional intelligence
- Cooperative learning

This is in line with Wordsworth's belief that knowledge is gained not only through books, but also through observation, experience and interaction with the natural world.

Education should not only prepare for competitive examinations but develop the whole child.

8.6.3 Reconnecting children to nature

The most important lesson of Wordsworth's poetry is the healing relationship between humans and nature. In a world where children are ever more urban and digital, a reconnection with nature can provide emotional relief.

Schools and families can promote:

- Walks in nature
- Gardening and planting
- Outdoor education
- Ecological projects
- Discovery of the local surroundings

Nature can offer children the opportunity for curiosity, imagination, and relaxation. It helps to develop awareness, patience, and emotional balance.

Wordsworth's view of nature as a source of spiritual and emotional sustenance remains very relevant to contemporary discussions of child well-being.

8.6.4 Play and creative freedom as stimulus

Play is not a waste of time it is an important part of childhood development. Children develop imagination, social skills, problem-solving skills and emotional confidence through play.

However, today's children have less time for free play due to:

- Academic calendars
- Tuition classes
- Entertainment online
- Planned activities

Restoring play begins with acknowledging the value of childhood in itself. Children can explore interests and develop independence through unstructured play.

Creative activities including painting, storytelling, music, drama and creative writing also offer emotional outlets and help children to process their experiences.

8.6.5 Enhancing emotional intelligence and coping techniques

Kids need help learning to recognise and cope with emotions. Children with emotional intelligence can recognise their feelings and deal with challenges, develop empathy and form healthy relationships.

Schools can start with programs based on:

- Meditation methods
- Communication Skills
- Managing stress
- Self awareness
- Problem solving strategies

Helping kids know that feelings are normal and can be managed, gives them confidence to deal with challenges.

8.6.6 Digital technology responsible use

Technology is an integral part of modern life, but children need guidance in developing healthy digital habits.

Balanced technology use means:

- Setting appropriate screen time limits
- Encourage offline activities
- Advancing educational use of technology
- Getting enough sleep and physical activity

The aim should be a healthy relationship with technology, not an all-out rejection of it.

Wordsworth's emphasis on direct experience reminds society that digital experiences should supplement, not substitute, real-world interactions.

9 Findings of the study

The study finds the following key results:

Childhood has changed a whole lot

Wordsworth's Romantic vision regards childhood as a period of innocence, imagination and a profound connection with nature. But today's childhood is increasingly defined by academic competition, technology, and social expectation.

The research shows today's children are under pressure which inhibits opportunities for creativity, exploration and emotional freedom.

The multi-layered problem of growing childhood stress

Childhood stress does not come from one single factor. It is caused by a number of inter-connecting conditions including:

- Scholarly stress
- Parents' hopes and dreams
- Dependence on the digital
- Social comparison
- Fewer outdoor experiences
- Altering family interactions

Thus, the fight against stress in childhood is the task of joint efforts of the family, educational institutions, and society.

Excessive pressure hinders psychological development

The research shows that long-term stress can have a negative impact on:

- Emotion stability
- Self-confidence
- Originality
- Relationships with others
- Psychiatric health

A childhood filled with anxiety and competition can have an effect on personality development later in life.

Wordsworth's philosophy remains relevant to today

Wordsworth was writing in the Romantic period but his views on childhood provide some helpful insight into contemporary issues.

His focus on:

- Wild Life
- Imagination
- Emotional sensitivity
- Simplicity
- Human connection

offer practical strategies for improving children's psychological well-being.

The healing power of nature and creativity

Research shows that nature, play and creative expression are helpful ways to relieve stress.

Children develop emotional strength and psychological balance by means of imaginative and exploratory activities.

A valuable stage of life should be preserved as childhood

The research argues that childhood is not simply a preparation for adulthood. It is a time of important care, freedom, emotional support and opportunities for growth.

10 Discussion

In the analysis of Wordsworth's Ode: Intimations of Immortality, childhood is not merely biological growth, but it is a mode of experience of the world. Wordsworth's child has the capacity for wonder, imagination, and emotional openness to deal with life in a meaningful way.

The current crisis of childhood, then, is the result of a tension between this Romantic ideal and the social realities of today. Today's children benefit from technology and access to education, but many are experiencing greater psychological stress due to the pressures of competition and shifts in life-style.

What a contrast between Wordsworth's child and the child of today reveals is an important cultural shift. Previous portrayals of childhood focused on exploration and discovery whereas contemporary childhood is frequently characterised by achievement and performance.

This transformation throws up important questions about the purpose of education and social development. When childhood is filled with stress and competition, society stands to lose the natural creativity, curiosity and emotional sensitivity of children.

Wordsworth's poetry does not offer particular solutions to modern psychological problems but it does provide valuable philosophical guidance. His belief in the significance of nature, imagination and emotional experience gives an opportunity to rethink the current approach to childhood.

Many aspects of Wordsworth's vision are strongly supported by the findings of child psychology. Research increasingly acknowledges the importance of emotional security, meaningful relationships, creative expression and opportunities to explore.

Hence the importance of the dialogue between literature and psychology. Literature offers philosophical and emotional insights; psychology offers scientific explanations for the development of childhood. Together they paint a broader picture of childhood well-being.

The study suggests a cultural change to safeguard childhood – from a focus on children as future achievers to a focus on children as individuals with emotional needs today.

11 Conclusion

Childhood has always been one of the most precious stages of human existence. In William Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" childhood is depicted as a time of innocence, imagination, spiritual insight, and a profound bond with nature. His poetry serves as a reminder to mankind of the inherent value of childhood that must be safeguarded and revered.

But modern childhood is facing significant challenges. Academic competition, digital dependence, social comparison and changing lifestyles have contributed to increasing levels of stress among young children. The effect of this stress is not limited to acute anxiety and can impact on emotional development, creativity, confidence and general psychological well-being.

This study, by comparing Wordsworth's Romantic child with the contemporary child, emphasises the widening gap between the ideal experience of childhood and present-day realities. The 'lost paradise' of childhood is not only a phase gone by, but a reminder of the qualities that modern society must continue to nurture: wonder, imagination, curiosity and emotional freedom.

Wordsworth's focus on nature, creativity, and meaningful experiences provide important lessons for addressing modern childhood issues. Connecting children back to nature, encouraging play, nurturing emotional intelligence, and creating supportive environments can help restore balance to children's lives.

Finally, the study argues that childhood should not be sacrificed to achievement and competition. A healthy society must defend childhood as a space of happiness, exploration and emotive development. Wordsworth's poetry is a constant reminder that the real development of a child is not only in academic success but in the capacity to imagine, to feel, to create, to live the beauty of life.

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