

# Navigating the Psychological and Social Edges in School-Going Adolescents

**Tejaswini .R .N**

*UG Student (Psychology Honors)  
Christ University, Bengaluru*

**OPEN ACCESS**

Volume: 12

Special Issue: 1

Month: September

Year: 2022

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

Received: 23.08.2024

Accepted: 17.09.2024

Published: 27.09.2024

Citation:

Tejaswini, RN, and  
J. Ganesh Kumar.

“Navigating the Psychological and Social Edges in School-Going Adolescents.”  
*Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*,  
vol. 12, no. S1, 2024,  
pp. 22–28.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v12iS1-Sep.8170>

**Dr. Ganesh Kumar .J**

*Assistant of Professor, Department of Psychology  
Christ University, Bengaluru*

## Abstract

*Adolescence is a key period in life for establishing the foundation for health and well-being in adulthood. Adolescents are inclined to face challenges in their daily affairs in both psychological and social domains. Mental health concerns among adolescents or youth in various studies show that 7.8% of mental health problems and 13.8% of emotional and behavioral problems are among adolescents while 15% had a high risk of emotional and behavioral problems. They struggle to acknowledge the problems and fail to seek the solutions indeed. This led them to emphasize life problems. This conceptual paper aims to discuss the challenges faced by adolescents aged between 13-17 such as academic strain, social, emotional, and personal disputes. Youngsters tend to engage their problems more emotionally rather than looking at them logically, every problem poses and requires major policy solutions. This paper acknowledges the complication of people in youth and also about the advantages and disadvantages of gentle parenting, and incorporates the issue from a comprehensive theoretical perspective.*

**Keywords:** Psychological and Social, Comparison, Development, Advantages and Disadvantages

## Introduction

Adolescents of age 13-17 faces challenge which might not seem as a great deal in adults, but they suffer emotionally , mentally and physically and goes into any depth to solve and get over the issue , this may look like a easy task but the actions lead to long-term trauma and cause them discomfort in leading their life happily. Having such a crisis being happy at such a young age might have a great impact on them in order to view their future life. Where they tend to be more lethargic and might lose the scrutiny. The adolescents struggle to develop his/her individuality while still conforming to social life.

Such difficulties arose in adolescents because of rapid modernization of society and high expectations which feed them into this stress, to cope up with this hassle they undergo dipsomania. As they make acquaintance with low level of adulthood thus they are expected to mature up fastly which make them suffer with maladaptive motive of behavioural and emotional spheres this results in depression, suicides, emotional stress, self harm and significantly more.

Mental health problems such as attention deficits, cognitive disruption, lack of motivation, negative mood associated in their daily-chores.

### **Coping up with Psychological Distress**

Adolescents face a range of psychological problems divergent in each of them, they carry this into their future rather than finding a suitable solutions,

### **Identity Crisis/Development**

Identity crisis is developed one questions their own self , youths tend to have a identity when they explore certain status , beliefs and life goals with a high level of commitment and examination of their environment and their inner self , when they fail to understand themselves , fail in their exploration they posses to go through identity crisis.

This way they outshow certain signs and symptoms such as low self-esteem and body dysmorphia. Having low self-esteem makes it difficult to be social, making friends and being hesitant about trying out new things and new experiences. When there is talk about not being social enough, there is a very obvious reason that younger people are not happy and satisfied by their physical appearance, youths try to modify their physical attires and end up being not satisfied with it. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a method used in addressing the beliefs wrapped around low self-esteem. This can also be solved with the help of family and friends (WHO).

### **Behavioural Disorders**

Among cross sectional studies, they pose two general types of behaviour problems such as overtly aggressive behaviour and more covertly behaviour (Frick, Lahey, Loeber, Tannenbaum, Van Horn, Christ, 1993). Personality disorder may enter adulthood from adolescence, adolescent disruptive, anxiety, depression, and substance use are associated with personality disorder.

Disruptive behavior disorders (DBD) – this disorder include a diverse behaviors which include lack of attention span, hyperactivity, this can intervene in their daily life, most recurrently diagnosed behavioral disorders include attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and conduct disorder (CD). Conduct disorder has occurred in 3.6% of 10-14 year olds and 2.4% of 15-19 year olds (WHO, 2021)

### **Eating Disorders**

Eating disorder is misconceptualized as a lifestyle choice whereas it is more than that , it is a serious and often lethal illness. Eating disorders include anorexia nervosa and binge-eating disorder, bad relationship with food, considering oneself overweight and worrying excessively about one's body image are symptoms of an eating disorder. Upto 20% selected adolescent girls consider themselves as overweight and are under eating behaviours (Martin Fisher, M. D. Neville, 1995).

Anorexia nervosa - it is a process where people avoid and restrict food or they tend to consume very less quantity of certain foods. They also weigh themselves frequently even though they are considered underweight, this contains two subtypes such as restrictive and binge-purge subtype.

In restrictive eating disorders people consume very less of certain foods, where they lose interest in eating, feel anxious about particular food and end up puking and also choke on their foods. It is also known as selective eating disorder. This particular disorder may affect nutrient intake, which can be life-threatening in the long run without treatment. Whereas in binge-purge type they restrict certain foods but they do undergo binge-eating, eating large amounts of food in a very short time, they also use laxatives and diuretics to get rid of the consumed substances that can be fatal and also has high mortality rate.

Bulimia nervosa - this is a process in which a person is facing an uncontrollable eating episode in large amounts within a short span, they also purge by vomiting and by drug intake it results in low self-esteem, tiredness and dismorph in one's menstrual cycle. Young people undergoing this situation are at risk where their mental health has been severely affected by the so-called societal beauty standard.

### **Adolescent Depression**

Unipolar depressive disorder is a common mental health problem seen in adolescents with an estimated one year of 4-5% in mid to late adolescence (Lancet, 2012). Three approaches and classification are reflected in adolescent depression such as; major depressive disorder, persistent depressive disorder and disruptive mood dysregulation disorder.

Depression has become a very serious situation in today's young generation where each and every age group undergoes this episode are more likely to be done with their academic validation and burden of doing extracurriculars, burden of being best out of everyone which has wrapped their mind, adolescents try to get justification for everything they do and ask for the unwanted attention, hence when they are not given such certain priority they have asked for they consider themselves as a failure and this slowly turns into a depressive episode.

Academics validation has also emerged into depression sector, in where they play major role in today's situation, it is a situation playing with mindsets of young people where they are expected to outperform themselves outside of their potential, main problem is the profounded stereotype in the society, where they are considered as successful by clearing a mere competitive exams, and tagged as failure when they are not able to clear it. Families play a major role too as they are also responsible for this situation of their kids, wherein having a depressed parent in the household could lead the individual to undergo and adapt the same characteristic, young people also undergo seasonal depression which is caused by only the change in weather.

Depression shows severe symptoms such as feeling sadness, emptiness, hopelessness, having low self-esteem, mood swings, and being angry every time, trouble concentrating, trouble sleeping and feeling worthless and guilty about an individual's actions, this can be diagnosed by venting out to one's parents, friends or their therapist. Depression can be treated through talk therapy and medicines.

Talk therapy - it is a process where an individual, meets up with their psychologist or psychiatrist, they communicate their emotions as they build trust along, talk therapy poses two types such as;

1. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), this type of therapy helps an individual to talk and change their negative thoughts and unpleasant thoughts, also helps in changing their extraneous behavioral distress.
2. Interpersonal therapy (IPT), this therapy helps in understanding and improving the relationships that are at fault which is leading and contributing to an individual's depression.

Medicines - consulting ones respective doctor and starting off with antidepressants can help to cope up with depression, taking antidepressants needs some time for the adaptation, while the initial few days have high intolerance and person might experience an increase in suicidal thoughts or behaviors. It's best to inform one's parents or guardians in this situation.

### **Self harm**

Self-harm allude to oneself by means of hurting themselves such burning or cutting themselves, the least form of self harm is more of punching wall, pulling out hairs, young people are struggling to cope up with stress that is caused by academically, family pressure and peer pressure and the constant thought of being perfect in everything they do.

It is noted that young females are more gravitated towards self harm than the male youths, females are being under self-harm criteria mainly because of their unreasonable expectations to look and have a perfect body, face which is completely media-driven influence, in order to manage the stress they tend to harm themselves. Over a year 27% of young adolescents reported having thoughts of self-harm, wherein 15% at least attempted it, compared with boys, girls were at risk of developing self-harming thoughts (Stallard, P, M. Montgomery, A.A Et al. BMC Psychiatry 13, 2013)

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Dyslexia Struggles with Humankind**

The socially faced challenges are various and this can trench deep into an individual's consciousness which deeply affects them and leaves them with unspoken trauma, which passes with them for years. This also affects young people's development and beliefs.

People in their youth are expected to do extreme chores from society, this becomes more of a societal decision than an individual's happiness, they are meant to do stuff which is considered and gets a verification, justification from the society. This experience in their life leaves them with getting assertion every small thing they do. Constantly being judged for their actions and expecting the younger generation to act as adults is such an unsettling chaos.

Young people struggle a lot going through this societal stereotype, where their opinion matters less but their absence means more, leaving in between such a dimensional mindsets is far more worse than imagined. Societal challenges faced by young people are as follow;

#### **Social Identity**

Social identity is an aspect of growing and emerging out of their comfort zone, exploring the unknown characteristic, exposure to the peer groups. With a lot of self introspection, identifying themselves, their commitments, motivation, goals, and their well being.

Whereas the adolescents are frequently about their identity in the society and doubt their potential and with lots of self evaluation they tag themselves as failure. This criteria and need of being the great has expanded in this generation. Having a crowd interaction, social orientation in the means of interacting with people that are outside of their usual family and peers and being around non judgemental environments might help them to get through their slump and helps to bounce back to their own tracks with greater motivation.

During this time an adolescent undergoes exploration of their personal identity, likewise their gender and sexual orientation, this moment can be both confusing and challenging as it is judgemental and lacks support from the peer community and by their own family. This is where the youth communicate and try to restore and manage their reputation, striving hard to achieve their foster individuality by maintaining the ethical perspective of society.

#### **Peer Pressure / Friendship Dynamics**

It is an adjustment of life from being influenced by a group of peer pressure, where they are vulnerable to guide an individual into illegal actions and behaviour, this causes the youths to lose their individuality and their ownself. Adolescents tend to listen and follow the instructions of their peer group rather than listening to their parents, the ignorance in this issue is more proliferated than an imagination which is dangerous for the youth.

Substance use is one of the most menacing acts within the peers, outshow and exposure leads to constant use and results in addiction, the intense relationship with use of drugs, alcoholism and exposure to unwanted sexual influence in young people is making them mature biologically more earlier than the adjourned age.

It can be limited by considering the reasons, setting certain boundaries with particular peer circles and by choosing an alternative. Positive peer pressure has an increased self-confidence, having positive approaches, habits and attitudes, whereas in negative peer pressure there is an enormous use of alcohol and drugs, risk taking behaviour, distraction and distancing from family and friends.

### **Bullying / Cyber Bullying**

Bullying is an intentional acknowledgement of aggressive behaviour of an individual. Bullying in school has taken a very ugly turn, where kids of the same age tend to bully their classmates, boys use physical intervention to bully others, often verbal dispute targets the fragile youths into satisfying their pleasure by not acknowledging the victims situation. Practicing bullying often has a pleasurable impact on them but the victim ends up going through trauma which leaves them with a huge scar and end up losing motivation, lastly being depressed about their situation.

Cyber bullying is another kind of bullying where an individual is traumatized through electronic and social media means, they invade an individual's privacy and bear negative thoughts on them making them depressed and entrancing into severe psychological problems.

### **Drift in Family Relation**

Family is the most supporting system of an individual, where they are valued and loved, the environment of the family makes a huge difference an individual's life, being loved is the most important step while being young, youths with no such encouragement tend to search love outside of their lives and discriminate themselves for not being loved.

Family disputes such as divorce between parents, daily conflicts, and financial crises affect one's mental state. Family is one's safest place but such drift leads an individual to pressurize themselves and tend to make them feel worthless, and feeling less valued.

### **Academic Validation/ Pressure**

Academic validation is one of the pressurized categories in adolescents, where they are constantly taunted and expected to excel in their academics, adolescents are judged by their academic success rather by their individuality and personality. Such high anticipation from educational institutions diminishes a child's vision, and academic stress emerges by the validation of their marks in exams.

Academics are well balanced when there is a suitable, understandable rather than putting individual in a fault, thought of excelling in academics as well as the extracurriculars brings an individual into coping up with stress in both fields. This societal stereotype engages with one's mental well being.

### **Friendship**

Friendships are the most beautiful and blissful relationships in adolescents, where they are formed and broken apart easily, at young age friendship comes in without justification and in non toxic medium, emerging friendship seems to have anxiousness, jealousy one another's success and life, being untruthful to your friends, not able to manage the relationship in good way. Being egoistic to each other, being in such toxic friendships results in diminishing one's individuality and their self. Heartbreak in such friendships irritates one's mental state and makes it hard and fearful to have any other friendship.

### **Impact of Social media**

Social media use in young individuals has become too much that they are not able to live a

moment in their lives without a phone. The development of technology is increasing very rapidly in this era of globalization at this time (Mateo et al, 2019; Tahernejad , 2019). It has increased their screen time for at least 8 hours per day, this exposure has a great impact on their physical health and mental health. Usage of social media platforms such as snapchat, instagram, facebook, twitter and etc, social media also emerges with positive approach such as it is helpful for advertisement , study materials , entertainment purpose, whereas it also possess negative approach such as the platforms invading different algorithms and affect the mentality of young people.

Influence of certain content towards young kids affects the way they view their surroundings, young people are exposed to virtual gaming platforms which is not a healthy environment, this results in their vision and memory aspect, where young people are still exploring their mindsets this exposure surely causes them damage which might result in permanent damage.

Other problems are also included in this criteria, young people are victimized under stranger texting, sexting and approach to nudity these aspects have modified the innocent thinkings of young individuals.

### **Impact of Covid-19 on Adolescents**

Covid 19 had vulnerable changes on psychological state, mental health and social status of an individual, this was too much impactful on adolescents mental wellness. Due to rapid spread of coronavirus many countries ended up going through a lockdown situation where they were distanced physically, wherein school and colleges were completely closed to curb the transmission of virus.

This affected adolescents who were deprived with no social contact. Adolescents of age from 13- 17 are easily vulnerable towards negative thoughts that cause impairment in their mental health. Social distancing resulted in being completely cut off by the outer social interaction, this made young people to not think out of box.

### **Conclusion**

This paper talks about all the psychological and social challenges faced by adolescent individuals. Adolescence is such a feeble and fragile level of maturing stage where they undergo a lot of negative mood swings, with the discussion of topics like youths undergoing identity development crisis, dealing with anxiousness, depression, and self harm. Coping up with academic, peer, and family stress. Also talks about divergent development in their physical and mental factors.

### **Reference**

1. Panel Maria, Elizabeth Loades DClinpsy, Eleanor Chatburn, Nina Higsan. The impact of social isolation and loneliness on the mental health of children and adolescents in the context of COVI-19.
2. Schulte-Korne G, (2016), mental health problems in a school setting in children and adolescents, Deutsches ärzteblatt international, 113(11), 183-190.
3. Waterman, A.S. (1982). Identity development from adolescence to adulthood; an extension of theory and a review of research, developmental psychology, 18(3), 341-358.
4. Sallehuddin Md Yusof, Identity and adolescent identity crisis.
5. Margareth I, Hægeland, Ph.D., Ellen Kjelsberg, M, D, and Svenn Torgersen, Ph. D. Continuities between emotional and disruptive behaviour disorders in adolescence and personality disorders in adulthood.
6. Josephine Elia, MD, Sidney kimmel medical college of Thomas Jefferson University. Depressive disorders in children and adolescents.

7. Panel Donna , Matria A, Christou MD, Andrew. C, Alicia Garcia, Miguel Villasis- Keever MD. (1990-2015), Prevalence and Characteristics of Self-harm in Adolescents; meta analyses of community- based studies.
8. Jennifer H. Pfeifer and Elliot T. Berkman. The development of self and identity in adolescence; Neural evidence and implications for a value based choice perspective on motivated behaviour.
9. Mark Gtarrant, Adrian C, north. Mark D. Edridge, Laura. E, Kirk, Elizabeth. Social identity in adolescence.