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Understanding the psycho-social problems of vulnerable adolescent girls and effect of intervention through life skill training

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Abstract:

INTRODUCTION: Children and adolescents are considered to be among the most vulnerable groups with respect to psychosocial issues who have been affected the most by this change in the family structure. The adolescent phase for girls is a critical period characterized by significant bio-psychosocial transformations. It is imperative to provide adolescents with the necessary tools and abilities to effectively confront these challenges which are provided by the members of the family. The implementation of life skill education is commonly acknowledged as an intervention mechanism for augmenting skills and abilities to manage the daily challenges of life, particularly among a distinct demographic such as adolescents. This study aims to examine the potential correlation between the growing incidence of mental health disorders among minors and the escalating levels of problematic smartphone and social media usage. It highlights the necessity of promoting health education in schools and investigating the impact of inadequate parenting on adolescent mental health. This paper is founded on a psychosocial intervention that employs life skill education to assist adolescents in managing the internal and external changes that arise during their developmental stage.

METHODS: This study employed qualitative research methods. The qualitative study findings were gathered from a variety of secondary sources, including media articles, academic journal articles, and past theses. A discourse analysis method was used throughout this study, and several case studies were gathered from news articles and journals to provide a brief overview of an Adolescent girl's current situation.

RESULTS: Adolescence pressure and the consequences of this is a global issue. Adolescent stage is the most vulnerable group in the society. This paper attempts to study the psychological problems of the adolescence as they grow up and helps in understanding their problems and implementing life skill training methods to help them rejuvenate from trauma.

CONCLUSION: In all, initiatives aimed at mitigating stressors in the lives of adolescents often commence with educating teenagers and adolescents about the potential hazards associated with these stressors. The implementation of certain strategies should be incorporated into guidelines aimed at promoting the safe and healthy use of social media by young individuals. Keeping track of their academic progress and dealing with any problems early on can help them avoid the negative effects of psychological problems in adolescence.

Keywords:

Adolescents, bad parenting, biological changes, cyber bullying, life skill development, psychological distress, social media

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Introduction

“Adolescence is the period of storm and stress” – G. Stanley Hall.

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Adolescence, typically spanning from ages 12 to 19, is a phase characterized by unavoidable upheaval that occurs during the progression from childhood to adulthood. During this stage, adolescents commonly experience conflicts with their parents, display moodiness and engage in inappropriate behaviors. Experiencing turmoil can facilitate the process of attaining maturity. This proposition posits that the period of adolescence is not solely a time of stress for the individual, but rather a means by which maturity can be fostered through various experiences. Adversity and setbacks can serve as valuable opportunities for individuals to reflect, improve, and gain insights for future endeavors.

Individuals in this stage of development often exhibit distinct behavioral patterns and exhibit a desire for activities that may be detrimental to their well-being. Consequently, this may alter the dynamics of their relationship with their guardians, as they may struggle to differentiate between ethical and unethical behavior. Alterations in an individual’s personality are undoubtedly evident, however, the connections they uphold with themselves and others are comparatively less distinct. During adolescence, individuals develop working relationships with themselves and others, based on their concept of self, which may be either healthy or unhealthy.

Certain adolescents may display physical indications of maturity at an earlier or later stage compared to their peers. The dissimilarities can pose a challenge for adolescents as they may experience self-consciousness or apprehension regarding their nonconformity to the physical appearance of their peers.

From Figure 1: Types of teenage problems Peer groups collaborate to cultivate novel individual tastes and inclinations. An adolescent may exhibit changes in attire, musical preferences, and language usage as a direct consequence of socializing with a novel peer group. During adolescence, individuals tend to engage in identity exploration and perceive their peers as a source of validation and critique for their emerging identities.

Given the significant impact that peer groups can have on adolescents, it is imperative for parents to be aware of their teenagers’ social circles. Although an unsatisfactory

peer group may still have a constructive impact on a teenager’s social growth by fostering self-reliance and self-assurance, parents still desire to exercise some control over their adolescent children. The facilitation of this process can be achieved with greater ease if parents have established a robust bond with their offspring prior to their entry into adolescence.

Research Methodology

Study design and setting

In this particular research, a qualitative research methodology was utilized. Methodologies from a variety of disciplines, particularly discourse analysis, are utilized here. This research focuses on a variety of research approaches, such as textual interpretation, global analyses, and explanatory approaches through the events that actually occurred.

Data collection tool and technique

The findings of the qualitative study were collected from a wide range of secondary sources, such as newspaper stories, academic journal articles, and previous theses. In the course of this research, a descriptive survey approach was carried out. The investigation is predicated on real-world facts that took place in and around India.

Adolescence

The Indian family structure is said to be the institution that transmits values and the importance of an honest life to future generations. According to Rakesh K. Chadda and Koushik Sinha Deb, Indian families have been joint families since the Puranic eras, which means that everyone in the same clan lives together. However, in smaller family groupings, this concept of luxurious living fell apart. The study further mentions how in India, the joint family structure was highly valued and often worked to strengthen the bonds between families. With the passage of time and increased globalization, the fundamental make-up of the Indian family structure was impacted by urbanization and Westernisation. The joint family’s fragmentation into smaller parts has affected adolescent girls who lose the support of the whole family in their crucial years.^[1]

The family, being a social institution, has undergone a continuous process of evolution. The structure and functions have undergone modifications. In India, as well as in other traditional societies, the family has historically functioned as a central locus for social and economic engagement, as well as a primary source of sustenance and assistance for its members. The 20th century has witnessed a significant shift in the family structure of India, which can be attributed to the increasing commercialization of the economy and the

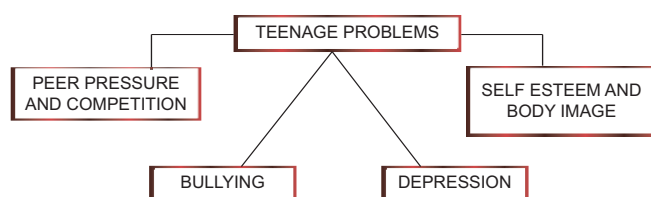


Figure 1: Types of teenage problems

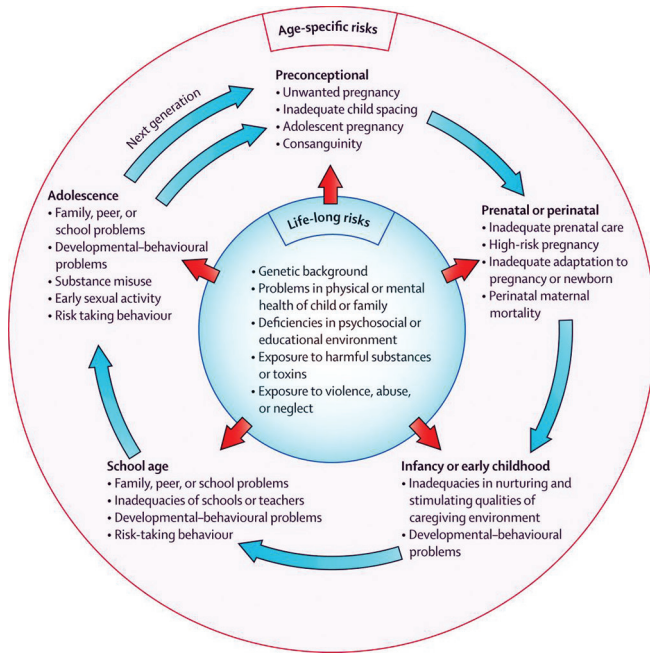


Figure 2: Risks faced by adolescent girls

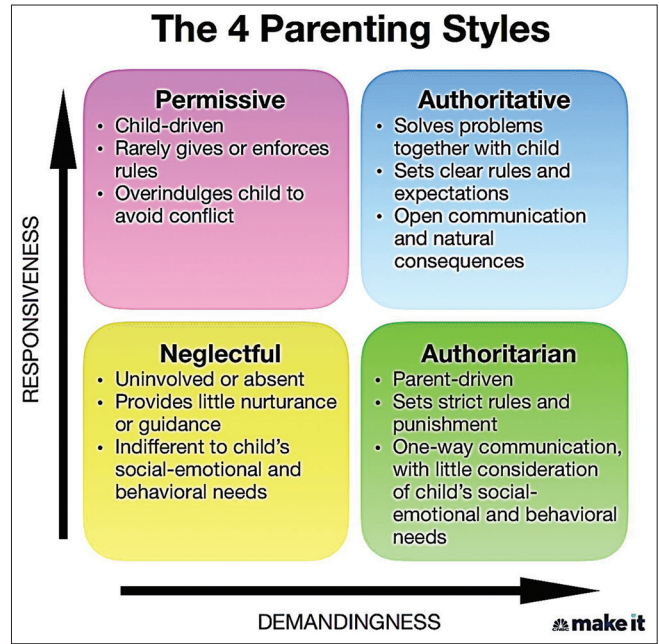


Figure 3: The types of bad parenting

development of the modern state’s infrastructure. Over the course of recent decades, noteworthy transformations have occurred in the realm of family dynamics. The preservation and enhancement of the identity of adolescents who lack sufficient support from a joint family, as well as cultural and ideological progressions, have been influenced by social advancements. Individuals exhibit a level of introspection and cognizance of their surroundings, including their fellow members of the community. The lifestyle of an adolescent is influenced by the roles they are assigned within their family or broader societal context.

From Figure 2: Risks faced by adolescent girls The onset of adolescence is marked by the onset of puberty, which is characterized by various physiological changes that occur during this developmental stage. During this particular stage, there is a notable surge in height for both genders, accompanied by the maturation of sexual and adrenal glands, which is attributed to hormonal fluctuations. The manifestation of secondary sexual characteristics such as the growth of facial hair and the deepening of voice is observed in male individuals during puberty. During the onset of the menstrual cycle, young females experience physical changes in the form of breast and hip development. During this period, the physical transformations are highly discernible.^[1]

Adolescents frequently engage in physical activities such as sports, dance, and drama as they explore and identify their areas of interest. However, as a result of both academic and societal expectations, a significant portion of individuals are unable to engage in such pursuits. Despite their significance, extracurricular activities

have been limited in recent times, which has hindered individuals from gaining exposure. During the 1950s, teenagers gained significant prominence as a driving force in various cultural domains, including music, television shows, movies, and fashion, across multiple nations. In developed nations, adolescents are typically burdened with limited significant obligations, while their counterparts in less developed nations face the challenge of basic survival.

During the period of adolescence, there is a general advancement in cognitive development. Enhancements in both selective and divided attention can be discerned. Both working memory and long-term memory undergo development. The rate at which individuals process information and engage in introspection is positively correlated with their capacity for self-reflection and social awareness, which is enhanced by a well-established self-concept. Adolescence is subject to certain social constraints. The mentality of a young individual is often influenced by social structure and stereotypical mindset. Individuals cultivate resilience and are additionally impacted by revolutionary and disparate concepts and transformations within the community.

Psychological problems

Biologically adolescents suffer and change during these years. Many alterations in the attributes of the brain have been observed. The amygdala which is responsible for the processing of stress and associated emotions, starts instinctual reactions and reflexes. The development of the frontal cortex is associated with the cognitive processes of rational thinking, moral

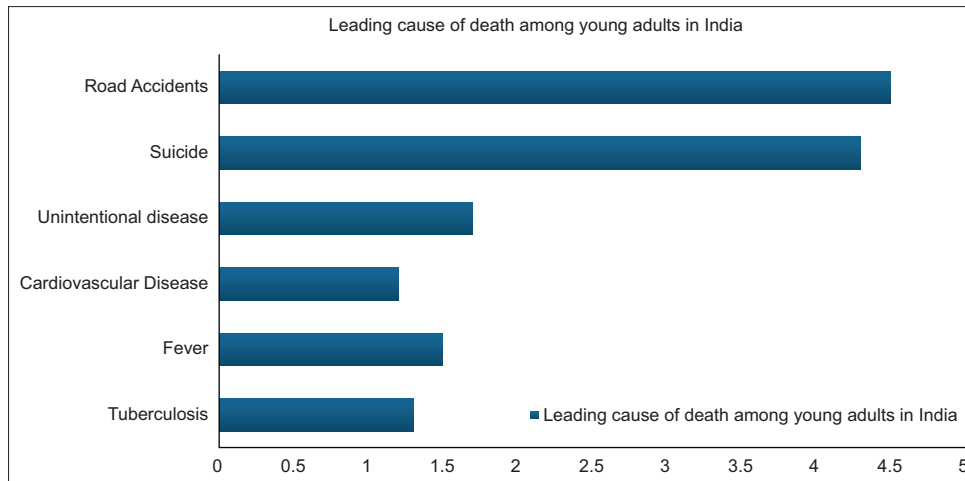


Figure 4: Causes of death in young adults^[4]

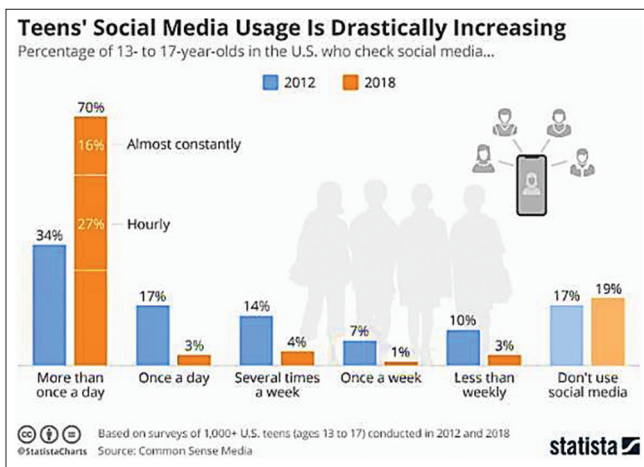


Figure 5: Increase in social media usage by teens^[7]

reasoning, judgment, and self-regulation also takes place during these years. The development of these begins during the onset of adolescence and progresses gradually over time.

World Health Organization mentions how adolescents thus, encounter a range of social, psychological, and behavioral transformations. Individuals acquire knowledge about their sexual orientation, undergo a development of higher-level cognitive abilities characterized by abstract reasoning, and engage in self-reflective contemplation. Individuals gain insights into their personal values, acquired skills, adaptive coping mechanisms, and the significance of familial values.

Adolescence also is commonly linked with a range of psychiatric disorders. Adolescent females are more susceptible to experiencing sexual and substance-related maltreatment, as well as developing psychological conditions such as depression and anxiety, and exhibiting disturbances in their sleeping and eating patterns.

Adolescents' mental well-being is notably impacted, as evidenced by indications of social anxiety, isolation, expression, depression, and feelings of inadequacy. Social media serves as a platform for adolescents to promptly receive feedback on their activities and posts. Consequently, adolescents are prone to adopting and perpetuating socially desirable conduct, irrespective of the degree of peril, via a cascade of affirmative reinforcement on their online content and social media visibility. Both of these phenomena exert substantial pressure on adolescents to adhere to the behaviors of their peers to gain acceptance and approval, resulting in profound anxiety.

The phenomenon of peer pressure has long been recognized as a prevalent psychological stressor among adolescents. However, the advent of social media has further intensified this issue. Children who succumb to negative peer pressure frequently participate in behaviors such as alcohol consumption, drug use, theft, reckless driving without proper safety precautions. Prolonged engagement in negative peer pressure can lead to the development of various mental health conditions, including but not limited to depression, anxiety, and trauma.

Causes of psychological problems

Individuals who receive a diagnosis of a mental disorder in their adult years frequently encounter their inaugural episode of the disorder during their adolescent years. Several of the most severe mental illnesses, including bipolar disorder, and depression, are typically diagnosed during the late adolescent or early adult stages of development. During the demanding stage of physical and emotional development, pre-existing psychological problems may exacerbate in adolescents.

Despite the common assumption that young individuals lead a carefree life, they experience a range of emotional

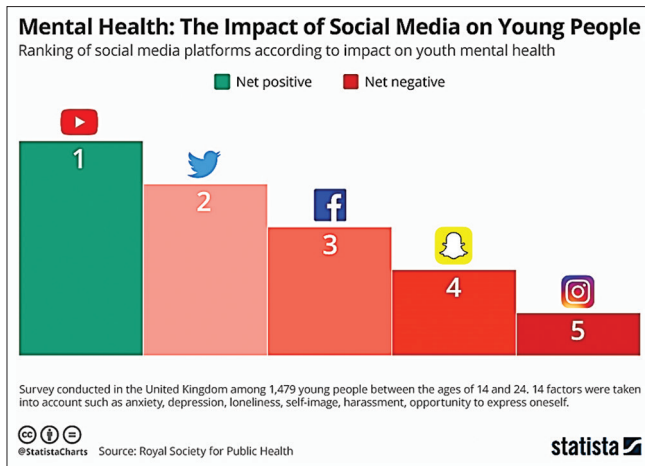


Figure 6: Impact of social media on young people^[10]

fluctuations. The prevalence of diagnosable mental illness among adolescents and teenagers is a significant concern. There are many underlying causes that affect the psychological health of adolescents. The primary sources of psychological distress are bad parenting and peer pressure.

Bad parenting

The period of adolescence is considered to be a crucial phase characterized by swift physical and cognitive growth. The obstruction of the developmental process can frequently result in psychological crises and an array of mental health issues among adolescents. Mental health issues are a significant contributor to the overall disease burden faced by adolescents and are the primary cause of disability in this population. These effects can be long-lasting and have a profound impact on young people's lives. Furthermore, inadequate mental health during adolescence is a contributing factor to engaging in risky behaviors such as self-injury, tobacco, alcohol, and drug use, unsafe sexual practices, and exposure to violence.^[2]

Research has demonstrated that the family factor, specifically parenting style, is a significant determinant of adolescent mental health. From Figure 3: The types of bad parenting The parenting style employed by carers has been demonstrated to have a significant impact on the psychological well-being of adolescents, as well as on the long-term development of their personality and other psychological traits. There exists a significant correlation between parenting style, self-esteem, and mental health. As per the IPAR and family systems theory, a parenting style that is characterized by negative attributes, such as parental rejection, can adversely affect a child's self-esteem, resulting in poor mental health and low self-esteem.

The manner in which a child is parented and raised can have a significant impact on their well-being. Positive

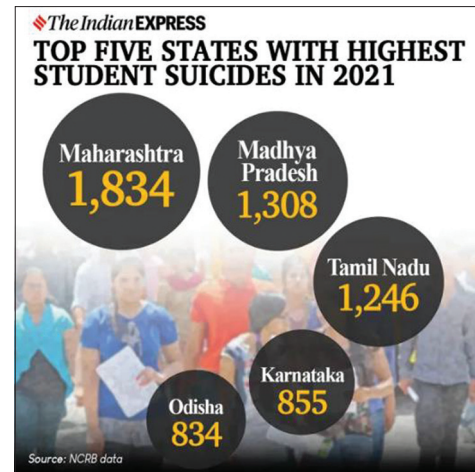


Figure 7: States with highest student suicide in India^[12]

parenting practices have the potential to enhance a child's life, whereas negative parenting can have detrimental effects on a child's self-esteem, mental health, and social interactions. The implementation of negative parenting practices can have adverse effects on the developmental and behavioral outcomes of adolescents. Offspring who have experienced inadequate parenting are twice as likely to pose a threat to the community that can be observed from Figure 7: States with highest student suicide in India.

The development of a more discerning perspective towards one's parents during adolescence is a natural part of the maturation process, facilitating the eventual detachment from the family unit upon reaching adulthood. Parents may redirect their critical gaze towards themselves, in order to evaluate their parenting techniques and way of living. The decisions made by parents can have enduring effects, both beneficial and detrimental, on their offspring. The development of adolescents is significantly influenced by the relationships they maintain with friends, family, and the rest of their social sphere. The period of adolescence is a pivotal phase in the realm of social development, given that the influence of proximal relationships can significantly impact the behavior and attitudes of adolescents.^[2]

Offspring reared under the influence of suboptimal parenting exhibit a tendency towards insecurity, diminished self-assurance, and impaired cognitive maturation. Individuals experience discomfort in social situations. Individuals who possess inadequate understanding of the impact of their behavior on those in their vicinity may exhibit anti-social tendencies. This holds particularly true for children who were exposed to critical and coercive behaviors exhibited by their parents in their presence. The individual's ability to manage emotional, mental, and physical trauma is hindered due to inadequate role modeling by their parents.

Simultaneously, they also witness their peers demonstrating academic excellence and maintaining composure during adverse situations. This observation prompts them to contemplate their lack of conformity with the group. While certain juveniles attempt to acclimatize to their external environment, others turn to alcohol initially and gradually progress to illicit substances as a means of coping with the internalized anxiety and depression they experience. Research has demonstrated that when parents fail to provide emotional support to their children during times of crisis or neglect to teach them effective coping strategies for managing negative emotions, their offspring may develop persistent feelings of loneliness and maladjustment that can have lasting effects on their cognitive functioning.

Insufficient supervision is a contributing factor that leads to children engaging in substance abuse and other life-threatening issues. The emergence of technology has facilitated the development of distinct methods among adolescent cohorts to procure and disseminate drugs with convenience.

The lack of parental monitoring of adolescent activities and finances can facilitate drug use, even when the adolescent is residing at home. In the school setting, adolescents have been observed to have exposure to a more extensive array of psychoactive substances compared to those that are prevalent within their immediate social circles. Many minors create and possess counterfeit identification cards to procure alcoholic beverages and other substances from bars and retail establishments.

The negligence in parenting also leads to dire consequences. In India, where teenage pregnancies are a taboo, such behaviors lead to death in many cases. Figure 4, The incident in Assam is one such example. A female adolescent who was 16 years of age and pregnant passed away en route to the hospital within the Bongaigaon district of Assam. Based on the information provided, the female child experienced severe complications subsequent to her family's endeavor to facilitate a home birth. Upon deterioration of her health, she was expeditiously transported to the Chalanapara healthcare facility, whereupon the medical professionals referred her to Bongaigaon. The adolescent passed away on route to Bongaigaon. This type of death happens when children are not taught skills to cope with life and they get stuck in situations from which they are unable to get themselves out.^[3]

Although parents may have reduced influence over adolescents compared to children, it does not imply a complete absence of influence. Parents possess various means to influence the decisions made by

adolescents, despite lacking direct control over them. Inadequate parenting practices encompass a range of behaviors such as utilizing severe disciplinary measures towards children, exhibiting emotional detachment despite occupying a parental role, implementing silent treatments as a means of exerting control, engaging in substance abuse or alcohol consumption in the presence of children, failing to attend to their fundamental needs, lacking in parental support, being unable to fulfill children's needs due to frequent conflicts, and displaying insufficient monitoring, among other factors. In the long term, inadequate parenting hurts a child's demeanor and psychology. The escalation in adolescent drug abuse is largely attributed to inadequate parenting.

Peer pressure

Within the realm of parenting, the concept of peer pressure is widely regarded as unfavorable. The association of adolescents with their peers is commonly attributed to the manifestation of rebellious conduct, which is deemed as a responsible factor. Despite parents' desires to dismiss it, peer pressure is an undeniable phenomenon that will persistently exert its influence in ways that may prove inscrutable.^[4]

All adolescents ages 12 to 20 experience peer pressure. Typically, adolescents tend to form social connections with individuals who are of similar age, commonly referred to as peers. During adolescence, individuals often conform to the behaviors of their peers to achieve a sense of belonging and social acceptance. Adolescents may experience peer pressure to conform to both favorable and hazardous behaviors of their peers due to their desire to emulate them.^[5]

Peer pressure refers to the impact exerted on an individual by their peers within a particular social group. Individuals may be motivated to modify their conduct, beliefs, and even principles to align with those of their peers. Individuals are prone to succumbing to peer influence due to their innate need for social acceptance and their apprehension of social exclusion.

Peer pressure generally happens in schools wherein the education of adolescents takes place. Even though schools are a place for education, young girls are not taught skills that would allow them to deal with life outside the four walls of the school. Ravinder Prajapati in his study talks about how young adults are surrounded by a competitive environment and focus on getting good academic education. Academic education is important but it becomes useless without life skills. Prajapati mentions how life skills training is thought to close the gap between fundamental ability and functioning. It improves a person's capacity to respond to the demands and wants of contemporary society and aids in handling

the aforementioned problems in a way that makes desired behavior practicable. Youth may overcome these challenges in life by receiving life skill training via life skill education.^[6]

Life skills are also an important tool in combating peer pressure that all the adolescents face. The phenomenon of peer pressure manifests in both overt and covert forms, also referred to as explicit and implicit or direct and indirect. Direct peer pressure, also known as explicit peer pressure, refers to a phenomenon in which an individual engages in behavior that exerts pressure on others to modify their own behavior. This behavior can manifest in a rudimentary form, such as an adolescent engaging in derisive commentary regarding a peer's attire, and also leads to a lack of morality in young girls. Lack of conformation leads to excommunication of these girls which leads to further depression, addiction, and illicit relationships as young girls try to find ways to be accepted in the crowd.

During the onset of adolescence, young girls typically increase their social interactions with peers. During the onset of adolescence, children develop a heightened awareness of the distinct perspectives of those in their social environment. The inclination to contemplate or excessively fixate on the opinions of others is a fundamental aspect of the adolescent encounter. During this stage of life, individuals are getting ready to establish their own identity and carve out a niche for themselves in society. To facilitate this process, hormonal fluctuations stimulate their cerebral activity to concentrate intensely on the viewpoints of others. Undoubtedly, the impact of peer pressure on individuals within this particular age cohort is significant.^[7]

Mehar Ahuja mentions how the phenomenon of peer pressure among adolescents is often linked to behaviors that are deemed risky, negative, or impulsive in nature. The influence of peer pressure on adolescent behavior is a well-established phenomenon. Research has demonstrated that adolescents who associate with peers who engage in risky behaviors are more likely to engage in similar behaviors themselves. Moreover, hazardous actions tend to take place predominantly in the presence of companions.

One perspective suggests that parents of adolescents diagnosed with depression or anxiety should heighten their attentiveness. As per the data presented in the aforementioned study, it can be inferred that the adolescent in question is susceptible to an inequitable impact from peers who may not comprehend the extent of their influence. Adolescents who experience depression or anxiety may face challenges in making rational decisions when confronted with peer pressure

to engage in risky behaviors. Despite the desire to fit in, find a peer group, and gain acceptance, these individuals may not be fully aware of the potential consequences of their actions. Individuals will make significant efforts to obtain acceptance. The problem is further intensified by the underdevelopment of their prefrontal cortex.

The definition of peer pressure can often be ambiguous. In certain instances, a collective can convey implicit cues through nonverbal means, indicating that one must conform to specific modes of dress or communication, as well as adopt particular dispositions towards academia, peers, guardians, and educators, to attain validation and inclusion.

The influence of social conformity can be compelling and challenging to overcome. Individuals may experience a sense of obligation to engage in a particular activity solely because others are participating in it or claiming to do so. The phenomenon of peer pressure has the potential to sway an individual's behavior towards actions that may range from innocuous to significantly detrimental. Conforming to societal expectations regarding attire constitutes a distinct phenomenon from succumbing to peer influence to engage in substance use.

Individuals may experience social pressure to conform to achieve social acceptance or avoid feelings of discomfort or awkwardness. Individuals tend to seek guidance from their peers when faced with uncertainty regarding appropriate behavior in a given social context.

Individuals who exhibit a higher susceptibility to external influences are more likely to conform to the actions and decisions of others. Subsequently, additional individuals may also conform to the same behavior, leading one to believe that the action is socially acceptable. The phenomenon is being observed among a majority of individuals. It is imperative that they possess the necessary knowledge and expertise in their field of work. In a social context, individuals may conform to group norms and engage in behaviors that they would not typically exhibit.

Conforming to social influence is a fundamental aspect of human behavior. However, individuals exhibit varying degrees of susceptibility to such pressure, with some being more inclined to acquiesce, while others possess greater resilience and are better equipped to withstand it. Individuals with lower levels of self-assurance and a propensity to conform may exhibit a greater inclination to seek validation from their peers by acquiescing to a hazardous challenge or proposal. Individuals who exhibit uncertainty about their abilities, possess a limited familiarity with the group, or lack experience in dealing with peer influence may be more susceptible to yielding to such pressures.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that peer pressure can heighten the likelihood of experimentation with drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. Individuals may vary in their susceptibility to peer pressure, similar to how some individuals may have a higher propensity for addiction than others. While certain individuals may engage in occasional experimentation with alcohol or drugs and subsequently conclude that it is not suitable for them, others who initiate substance use may encounter challenges in discontinuing their usage. In certain instances, individuals may persist in the consumption of a substance as a component of communal engagement, such as imbibing alcoholic beverages at social gatherings or engaging in smoking behavior due to peer influence.

Undisclosed social influence can have a noteworthy impact on the consumption of substances. Individuals who abstain from substance use may feel compelled to partake in such activities if their peers engage in drinking, smoking, or drug use, as a means of social integration. Frequent observation of substance use among peers may create a perception that the use of said substances is devoid of any adverse consequences or risks.

The phenomenon of peer pressure has the potential to not only elicit modifications in an individual's conduct, but also in their cognitive processes, attitudes, and affective states. Although peer pressure is commonly associated with the impact of peers on adolescents, individuals of all ages may experience peer pressure. In instances where an individual has succumbed to detrimental habits due to external pressures, the intervention of a counselor can facilitate a process of introspection and behavioral modification.

Social media

The progression of technology has provided significant benefits to humanity, resulting in the integration of computers and mobile devices into our daily routines. The internet is a technological innovation that has gained widespread appreciation among many individuals. In contemporary times, the Internet is the primary driving force behind global connectivity and communication. The internet encompasses various platforms, including social media, which has facilitated increased global interaction among individuals. Figure 5, Currently, the adverse impacts of social media are widely recognized. Regrettably, contemporary teenagers and adolescents have embraced the utilization of social media to such an extent that it can potentially yield deleterious consequences on their holistic welfare if not subjected to proper monitoring or limitations.^[8]

The utilization of social media platforms enables adolescents to establish virtual personas, engage in

interpersonal communication, and construct social connections. Adolescents can receive significant assistance from these networks, particularly those who encounter marginalization, possess impairments, or suffer from persistent ailments.

From Figure 6, Adolescents also utilize social media platforms for the purposes of amusement and self-representation. The platforms have the potential to provide adolescents with exposure to contemporary issues, facilitate cross-cultural communication, and impart knowledge on diverse topics, such as healthy habits. The utilization of social media platforms that offer humorous or diverting content, as well as a significant connection to peers and a broad social network, may potentially serve as a preventative measure against depression in adolescents.^[9]

The employment of social media among teenagers may have adverse effects, such as diverting their attention, disrupting their sleep patterns, and exposing them to bullying, rumor propagation, unrealistic perceptions of others' lives, and peer influence. Due to the impulsive tendencies of adolescents, professionals recommend that teenagers who engage in social media activities are susceptible to the possibility of disseminating intimate photographs or deeply personal narratives.^[9] The outcome of this phenomenon may lead to adolescents being subjected to bullying, harassment, or potentially even extortion. Adolescents frequently generate online content without taking into account the potential ramifications or issues related to confidentiality. One of the significant impacts of social media is the prevalence of cyberbullying, which has emerged as a notable phenomenon in contemporary times. Individuals who experience prolonged exposure to cyber-bullying are at risk of developing psychosocial issues such as depression, social isolation, feelings of loneliness, heightened stress levels, anxiety, diminished self-esteem, and in severe cases, suicidal ideation.^[10]

There is a greater inclination towards seeking knowledge about the activities of others, as opposed to dedicating time toward personal pursuits. Individuals who allocate a greater amount of time on social media platforms are susceptible to experiencing depression and anxiety due to the negative impact it has on cognitive processes and emotional state. Virtual connections have the potential to induce feelings of anxiety and contribute to the development of depression. Certain adolescents experience feelings of isolation when their digital companion is unavailable or fails to promptly reply. The individuals in question exhibited a high level of seriousness in their approach to all forms of communication, including status updates and text messages.^[11]

In the past ten years, a significant amount of research has supported the notion that there exists a correlation between the utilization of social media by adolescents and an elevated incidence of depression among this demographic. The research findings indicate a significant association between the extent of social media usage among adolescents and their psychological well-being. In a study conducted in 2018, it was found that adolescents aged between 14 and 17 years, who spent seven hours per day on social media, had a higher likelihood of being diagnosed with depression, receiving treatment from a mental health professional, or taking medication for psychological or behavioral issues within the past year. This was contrasted with individuals who utilized screens for only approximately one hour per day.

According to several scholars, the persistent overstimulation caused by social networking platforms can trigger the activation of the sympathetic nervous system, leading to a fight-or-flight response. Consequently, this exacerbates conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), adolescent depression, Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), and adolescent anxiety. Nevertheless, certain studies about the correlation between social media and adolescent depression indicate that the directionality of the relationship is reversed, whereby teenagers who experience depression tend to engage with social media more frequently. A study involving 600 young individuals revealed that the utilization of social media did not serve as a predictor of depressive symptoms. However, it was observed that increased depressive symptoms led to a higher frequency of social media usage over a period of time. Similar to other forms of social comparison, adolescents indicate reduced levels of self-esteem and self-evaluation, as well as experiencing peer pressure to conform to certain physical standards when viewing their peers' profiles on social media platforms.^[12]

The increase of such mental health issues can be seen by the incident that has happened in Tamil Nadu. In the past fortnight, a total of five students enrolled in schools located in Tamil Nadu have reportedly taken their own lives. The initial incident was documented in Kallakurichi, wherein a female student in the twelfth grade leapt from her residential facility, citing mistreatment by educators. On Wednesday, a male student in the twelfth grade reportedly died by suicide, marking the fifth such occurrence within the span of a month in the state. A collaborative team comprising the NCPCR conducted a visit to the domicile of the Kallakurichi girl. During the visit, the team interacted with the family, investigation officers, medical professionals who performed the post-mortem, and other relevant officials in the district. Additionally, the team

also visited the educational institution and hostel where the child was enrolled.

The reasons for this issue may be attributed to the lack of consideration given to the mental wellness of students in the post-COVID era. The aspect of teachers' mental well-being has not been duly acknowledged. The expectations have undergone a transformation. Upon the reopening of the school following the lockdown period, the decision was made to promptly return the children to their respective classrooms. Even children possess ambitious goals and expansive perspectives. According to Dr. KR Maalathi, an expert in the field of education, all of the factors have not been taken into consideration. Numerous events have transpired, including minors being exposed to multiple fatalities, as well as being subjected to the internet and mobile devices.

Academic professionals throughout the state cite the burden placed on students to achieve high grades and succeed in competitive examinations as a primary factor. The state government led by DMK has decided to recruit 800 medical professionals to offer psychological counseling services to students.^[12]

There exists a disconnect between students and parents. Parents may miss out on spending time with their children when they prioritize their own time. The presence of counselors in educational institutions is a common phenomenon, however, seeking their assistance is often associated with a negative connotation.

Life skills to overcome psychological problems

Life skills are commonly recognized as a potent instrument for enabling young individuals to assume responsibility, exhibit proactivity, and exercise agency. The premise of this argument is that adolescents who possess the ability to overcome emotional obstacles resulting from interpersonal conflicts, complicated relationships, and peer influence, are less inclined to engage in delinquent or hazardous conduct.^[12]

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), life skills refer to the competencies that facilitate adaptive and constructive conduct, empowering individuals to proficiently manage the exigencies and complexities of their daily lives. The term "adaptive" refers to an individual's ability to exhibit flexibility in their approach and adapt to varying circumstances. The term "positive behavior" connotes an individual's proactive and optimistic outlook, wherein they are able to identify potential solutions and opportunities even in challenging circumstances.^[13]

Life skills encompass a range of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal abilities that enable

individuals to make informed decisions, engage in problem-solving, exercise critical and creative thinking, communicate proficiently, cultivate positive relationships, demonstrate empathy toward others, and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner.

Self-awareness encompasses the ability to acknowledge one's own identity, personal attributes, areas of proficiency and deficiency, aspirations, and aversions. The cultivation of self-awareness can facilitate the ability of adolescents to identify instances of stress or pressure. The ability to recognize and understand one's own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors is frequently considered a necessary condition for successful communication and interpersonal connections, as well as for cultivating a capacity for compassion towards others.

The acquisition of empathy during adolescence is crucial for establishing successful relationships with both loved ones and society as a whole. It involves the ability to comprehend and demonstrate concern for the needs, desires, and emotions of others. Empathy refers to the cognitive and affective capacity to comprehend and vicariously experience the thoughts, emotions, and perspectives of another individual. The absence of empathy in adolescent communication may hinder the establishment of a reciprocal exchange. Adolescents who possess self-awareness are more equipped to effectively communicate and solicit support from their peers, ultimately resulting in greater understanding and empathy. The ability to empathize can facilitate the process of adolescents' acceptance of individuals who possess contrasting characteristics or traits. Enhancing social interactions can have a positive impact not only on peer group dynamics within educational environments, but also in future scenarios involving diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds.^[13]

Critical thinking is a cognitive skill that enables individuals to evaluate information and personal encounters in an impartial and analytical manner. The application of critical thinking skills can aid adolescents in identifying and evaluating the various factors that impact their attitudes and behaviors, including but not limited to values, peer pressure, and media influence.

Creative thinking is a cognitive process that involves the generation of innovative ideas and approaches. This process is characterized by four key components, namely fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. Fluency refers to the ability to generate a large number of novel ideas, while flexibility involves the capacity to shift perspectives easily. Originality pertains to the conception of new and unique ideas, and elaboration involves building on existing ideas to create something new.

The ability to make decisions is a valuable skill that can aid adolescents in effectively managing choices related to their lives. Young adults have the ability to evaluate various alternatives and deliberate on the potential consequences of each option. The process of problem-solving can facilitate the development of critical thinking skills in adolescents, enabling them to approach problems in an objective manner by considering various potential solutions and evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of each option before arriving at a final decision.

The acquisition of interpersonal relationship skills is beneficial for adolescents as it enables them to engage in positive interactions with individuals they encounter in their daily routines. The ability to establish and maintain amicable relationships, which can significantly contribute to our psychological and societal welfare, as well as sustain positive associations with family members, who serve as a crucial source of social support, and the capacity to conclude relationships in a constructive manner may be necessary.

Facilitating proficient communication entails enabling adolescents to convey their thoughts and emotions through verbal and nonverbal means that are culturally and contextually suitable. This entails the capacity to articulate personal viewpoints, aspirations, necessities, and apprehensions, as well as encompassing the aptitude to solicit guidance and assistance during periods of exigency.

The acquisition of stress management as a vital life skill entails the identification of stressors in one's life, an awareness of their impact, and the implementation of strategies that enable individuals to regulate their stress levels. This involves acquiring constructive coping mechanisms and substituting passive approaches with active ones, which may necessitate modifying one's surroundings or way of life, as well as acquiring relaxation techniques.

The process of managing emotions involves the identification of emotions in oneself and others, the acknowledgment of the impact of emotions on behavior, and the ability to react to emotions suitably. An essential facet of this skill involves acquiring the ability to regulate intense emotions such as anger or sadness, which may have adverse health consequences if not managed effectively.^[13]

Conclusion

In all, initiatives aimed at mitigating stressors in the lives of adolescents often commence with educating teenagers and adolescents about the potential hazards associated

with these stressors. The implementation of certain strategies should be incorporated into guidelines aimed at promoting the safe and healthy use of social media by young individuals. Adolescents, akin to grown-ups, encounter stress daily and can reap advantages from acquiring stress mitigation proficiencies. Adolescents commonly encounter heightened levels of stress when they interpret a circumstance as hazardous, arduous, or distressing, and lack the necessary means to manage it effectively.

Adolescents may experience an excessive amount of stress. The occurrence of this phenomenon may result in various negative outcomes such as anxiety, social isolation, hostility, somatic symptoms, or maladaptive coping mechanisms including substance abuse. Perceiving a challenging or distressing situation triggers physiological and cognitive adaptations that enable us to react to potential threats. The physiological response commonly known as “fight, flight, or freeze” entails an acceleration in heart and respiration rates, augmented blood flow to the muscles of the arms and legs, as well as cold or clammy extremities, gastrointestinal distress, and a feeling of apprehension.

The identical mechanism responsible for initiating the stress response is capable of deactivating it. Once an individual perceives that a circumstance is no longer hazardous, physiological and psychological alterations may transpire to facilitate a state of relaxation and tranquility. The phenomenon referred to as the “relaxation response” is characterized by a reduction in heart and respiratory rates, as well as a subjective experience of an improved emotional state. Adolescents who acquire a “relaxation response” and other coping mechanisms for managing stress exhibit reduced feelings of helplessness and an increased ability to make choices when faced with stressful situations.

Parents have the potential to assist their adolescent offspring by engaging in the practice of monitoring whether stress is having an impact on their teenager’s physical well-being, conduct, cognition, or emotions. It is important to attentively listen to adolescents and be mindful of potential instances of cognitive overload. Acquiring stress management skills and promoting participation in sports and other prosocial activities.

Ethical committee approval

As this manuscript doesn’t contain a quantitative study and doesn’t involve data from group of people, it doesn’t require ethical committee statement.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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