

Emotional and Psychological Well-being of Adolescent Girls

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Abstract—Adolescence is a transitional phase characterized by rapid physical, emotional, and social changes. Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to psychological stress due to hormonal shifts, social expectations, and body image concerns. The present study explores the emotional and psychological well-being of adolescent girls, focusing on factors such as body image dissatisfaction, coping mechanisms, and social support systems. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted on 200 adolescent girls from both urban and rural areas of Bareilly district. Standardized tools including Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21), and Body Image Concern Inventory were used. Results revealed that 62% of respondents experienced anxiety, 58% reported dissatisfaction with body image, and 54% faced peer pressure. Girls with higher perceived social support showed better emotional well-being. The study emphasizes the importance of positive self-image, emotional literacy, and social support in promoting psychological health among adolescent girls.

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial period of growth, marked by rapid physical development and profound psychological transformation. It is a time when individuals begin to form a stable identity, gain independence, and establish social relationships. According to the World Health Organization (2021) adolescence spans from 10 to 19 years of age and is often a period of vulnerability, especially for girls, who face both biological and societal pressures.

Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory identifies this stage as Identity vs. Role Confusion, where adolescents strive to discover who they are and how they fit into society. When support,

validation, and guidance are lacking, confusion, anxiety, and emotional distress often result. Similarly, Albert Bandura's social learning theory highlights the influence of observational learning and self-efficacy in shaping adolescent behavior and emotional regulation. When adolescent girls witness or experience criticism, rejection, or body shaming, it undermines their self-concept and confidence.

In the Indian context, adolescent girls encounter unique challenges — academic competition, cultural expectations, social comparison, and growing exposure to media ideals. Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that emotional security, belongingness, and self-esteem are essential before self-actualization can occur. Unfortunately, societal pressures often distort these needs, causing self-doubt and diminished self-worth.

Body image and body shaming have emerged as significant contributors to adolescent distress. Unrealistic beauty standards, peer comparison, and social media influence amplify insecurities. Adolescents are frequently judged by appearance rather than ability, leading to negative self-perception and emotional strain. Strengthening self-acceptance, empathy, and healthy dialogue within families and schools can serve as protective factors for their emotional well-being.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study was undertaken with the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the emotional and psychological well-being of adolescent girls with reference to common issues such as anxiety, self-esteem, peer pressure, and

body image dissatisfaction.

2. To identify the coping mechanisms adopted by adolescent girls to manage emotional stress, academic pressure, and social challenges.
3. To examine the relationship between body image, social support, and emotional well-being.
4. To analyze the role of family, school, and peer support systems in promoting emotional stability and resilience.
5. To provide recommendations and intervention strategies for strengthening emotional and psychological health through counselling and educational programs.

II. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted to evaluate the emotional and psychological well-being of adolescent girls in Bareilly district. The study involved 200 adolescent girls aged 13–18 years, selected through stratified random sampling— 100 from urban and 100 from rural schools and community centers.

Tools Used

- * Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) to assess self-esteem levels.
- * Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) to evaluate emotional distress.
- * Body Image Concern Inventory for perception of body satisfaction.
- * Perceived Social Support Scale to measure familial and peer support.

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 25) with descriptive and inferential statistics. Ethical approval was obtained, and confidentiality was ensured.

III. RESULTS

Table 1: Emotional and Psychological Conditions among Respondents (N=200)

Emotional Condition	Percentage (%)
Anxiety	62%
Body Image Dissatisfaction	58%
Peer Pressure	54%

Low Self-Esteem	47%
Mood Swings/Stress	45%

Table 2: Sources of Emotional Support

Source of Support	Percentage Reporting High Support (%)
Family	68%
Friends/Peers	54%
Teachers	42%
Social media/Online Communities	23%

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The data revealed that emotional distress is prevalent among adolescent girls, particularly related to anxiety, body image, and peer comparison. Approximately 58% reported dissatisfaction with their body appearance, often linked to exposure to idealized beauty images on social media. This dissatisfaction correlated strongly with low self-esteem and anxiety.

Girls who reported high family and peer support exhibited better emotional regulation and self-confidence. The relationship between social support and emotional well-being was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Urban respondents showed higher exposure to body shaming, while rural respondents reported more pressure from traditional expectations.

Coping mechanisms such as creative expression, journaling, prayer, and open communication were found to reduce emotional distress, while avoidance and withdrawal increased anxiety and low mood.

V. DISCUSSION

Adolescent girls experience an interplay of emotional, social, and cultural challenges that influence their psychological well-being. The findings reinforce Erikson’s theory, showing that failure to establish a clear identity leads to confusion and emotional instability. Similarly, Carl Rogers’ humanistic theory supports the idea that unconditional positive regard fosters healthy self-

concept and self-esteem.

Body shaming, whether direct or subtle, emerged as a powerful determinant of emotional instability. Girls who internalized social judgments developed distorted self-images and emotional vulnerability. However, when adolescents received empathy, validation, and encouragement from family and peers, their self-acceptance improved.

Promoting self-compassion and emotional literacy can help adolescents reframe body image narratives and reduce the impact of societal pressures. Encouraging open discussions in schools about emotions, self-worth, and identity can also normalize psychological struggles and prevent internalized shame.

VI. INTERVENTION AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Life Skills Education programs should be incorporated in schools to develop self-awareness, empathy, and decision-making abilities.
2. Counselling and mentoring sessions must be offered regularly to provide safe spaces for emotional expression.
3. Body positivity and media literacy campaigns should help adolescents critically view and challenge unrealistic beauty ideals.
4. Parent-teacher sensitization programs are essential to strengthen adolescent support systems.
5. Peer support groups and emotional wellness clubs can promote collective resilience and mental well-being.

VII. CONCLUSION

The emotional and psychological well-being of adolescent girls is influenced by a complex interaction of self-perception, social validation, and environmental support. High family and peer support, coupled with positive body image and emotional resilience, are key to balanced mental health. Fostering self-acceptance, open communication, and emotional literacy is vital to help adolescent girls navigate this sensitive developmental phase confidently and

positively.

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