

# Impact Of Prevalence and Influencing Factors on Mental Health and Well-Being Among Adolescent Girls: A Study in Government and Private Schools in Hyderabad

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**Abstract**—Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by rapid biological, psychological, and social changes. In recent years, increasing concerns have been raised about the mental health and well-being of adolescent girls, particularly in urban Indian contexts. The present study examines the prevalence of mental health concerns and identifies key influencing factors among adolescent girls studying in government and private schools in Hyderabad. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted with a sample of 600 participants from Grades 8 to 12. Standardized instruments were used to assess psychological distress, perceived stress, life satisfaction, and associated socio-demographic variables. The findings indicate a significant prevalence of anxiety and depressive symptoms, with higher reported distress among girls in government schools compared to private schools. Academic pressure emerged as the strongest predictor of psychological distress, while family support and positive peer relationships were positively associated with well-being. Socioeconomic status and school environment also influenced mental health outcomes. The study underscores the urgent need for structured school-based mental health programs, early screening mechanisms, and gender-sensitive interventions. The findings have implications for educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals working toward improving adolescent mental health in educational settings.

**Index Terms**—Adolescent girls, mental health, academic stress, school type, well-being.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence, defined as the age range of 13 to 17 years, is a crucial transitional phase characterised by intense physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. During this period, young people develop a

sense of identity and independence but also face academic stress, peer pressure, family expectations, and exposure to societal challenges. These transitions often make adolescents vulnerable to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, stress, and behavioural disorders. In India, the adolescent population accounts for about 20% of the total population, with increasing mental health challenges within this group. The urban environment of Hyderabad, with its mix of private and government schools, diverse socio-economic classes, and growing academic competition, provides a unique context for studying adolescent mental health. While students in private schools may have better access to resources, they also encounter significant performance pressures. Conversely, students in government schools may experience stress due to socio-economic disadvantages, lack of support systems, or family responsibilities.

Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to internalising disorders such as anxiety and depression due to gender-specific socialisation patterns, societal expectations, and relational stress. Differences in educational environments—especially between government and private schools—may further influence access to resources, exposure to stressors, and availability of psychosocial support.

This study aims to understand the prevalence of mental health issues among adolescents in both government and private schools in Hyderabad and to explore the factors influencing these outcomes, including awareness, family environment, peer dynamics, and access to support.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Adolescence is a vital developmental phase characterised by swift physical, psychological, emotional, and social transformations. In India, more than 250 million adolescents form a considerable part of the population, yet mental health services and awareness initiatives customised to their needs remain insufficient. Several studies, including the National Mental Health Survey of India (NIMHANS, 2015–16), have shown that about 7.3% of Indian adolescents experience diagnosable mental health conditions. Nevertheless, the true extent is believed to be greater

due to underreporting, social stigma, lack of mental health education, and systemic obstacles to accessing care.

1.2. Overview of Theories and Models

This section summarizes key psychological theories and models that provide a framework for understanding mental health and well-being among adolescents. These models explain the multifactorial influences—biological, psychological, social, and environmental—on adolescent mental health in both government and private school settings.

Theory/Model	Proponent(s)	Key Concepts	Application to Study
Bio-Psycho-Social Model	George Engel (1977)	Mental health is shaped by an interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors.	Explains how individual traits, school setting, and family background influence adolescent well-being.
Ecological Systems Theory	Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979)	Development is influenced by nested environmental systems (micro to macro).	Helps examine how peer pressure, family conflict, and school policies affect mental health.
Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT)	Aaron Beck (1960s)	Thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are interconnected.	Explains how negative thought patterns (e.g., fear of failure) can lead to anxiety or depression.
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs	Abraham Maslow (1943)	Human needs are hierarchical—from physiological to self-actualization.	Government school students may struggle with basic needs; private school students may face esteem issues.
Stress-Vulnerability Model	Zubin & Spring (1977)	Mental illness arises from vulnerability and stress interaction.	Explains why stressed adolescents develop mental health issues, especially if predisposed.
Theory of Planned Behavior	Icek Ajzen (1991)	Behavior is guided by intentions, shaped by attitudes, norms, and perceived control.	Analyzes why adolescents hesitate to seek help (e.g., stigma, peer pressure, access barriers).

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth review of existing literature related to adolescent mental health and well-being, with a specific focus on the prevalence, correlates, and influencing factors among school-going adolescents aged 13 to 17 years. The review incorporates global perspectives, theoretical models, and indigenous Indian research to contextualize the study within both international and national frameworks. The literature reviewed helps identify key variables, understand the dynamics of mental health issues in school settings, and establish the rationale for conducting the present study in Hyderabad.

2.2. Review of Literature

Prevalence of Mental Health Concerns

Studies indicate rising rates of anxiety, depression, and stress among adolescents in India (Rao & Rao, 2019). Female adolescents report higher levels of emotional distress compared to males (Patel et al., 2018). Academic stress and examination pressure significantly contribute to these patterns.

Influencing Factors

Academic Pressure: High academic expectations and competitive educational systems are strongly associated with stress, sleep disturbances, and reduced well-being (Deb et al., 2015).

Family Environment: Parental warmth, communication, and cohesion positively influence

adolescents' resilience and coping abilities (Ghosh, 2015).

Peer Relationships: Supportive peer networks enhance self-esteem and buffer against depressive symptoms (Verma et al., 2020).

School Environment: Differences in infrastructure, teacher-student ratio, and counselling availability between government and private schools may impact students' emotional experiences.

### 2.3. State-Level and Regional Studies

A wide range of national and international studies highlight the growing concern around adolescent mental health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health conditions account for 16% of the global burden of disease and injury in people aged 10–19 years. In India, the National Mental Health Survey (2015–16) revealed that nearly 7.3% of children aged 13–17 years suffer from diagnosable mental disorders. Studies conducted in southern India, particularly Telangana, show even higher figures, with some research reporting over 40% of students exhibiting symptoms of depression, anxiety, or stress.

A 2022 study in Rangareddy District, Telangana, found that 45% of adolescents in both private and government schools showed signs of depression, anxiety, and stress. This study also revealed that academic pressure, substance abuse in families, and lack of mental health awareness were contributing factors. International literature supports similar findings. For example, studies in the US and UK have shown that socio-economic background, school environment, parental relationships, and peer bullying significantly affect adolescent mental well-being. However, research on school-based mental health programs in India is sparse. While the National Adolescent Health Programme (RKSK) includes mental health as a component, implementation remains uneven, and there is a lack of robust comparative studies between school types.

Kiranmai & Ameerunnisa (2023) studied adolescents in Telangana and reported high levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional distress among school-going children, particularly those from low-income households. Similarly, Goyal et al. (2020) conducted a

cross-sectional study in Hyderabad, revealing that about 20% of adolescents showed signs of depression, anxiety, or stress.

Vadageri (2021) highlighted stark differences in mental health awareness between government and private school students in Telangana. The study found that private school students had relatively higher knowledge and support systems, while government school students lacked adequate access to counsellors and awareness.

Narayanan et al. (2023) noted the scarcity of institutional mental health services and policies in Telangana, suggesting the need to expand community- and school-based mental health interventions.

#### Recent Studies (2023–2025):

Podiyya, Navaneetham, and Bhola (2025) conducted a systematic review highlighting how school climate and teacher–student relationships directly influence adolescents' emotional health and academic outcomes. The review emphasized that supportive environments with accessible counselling reduce anxiety and stress symptoms among students (BMC Public Health, 2025).

Balamurugan et al. (2024) systematically examined Indian studies on mental health among adolescents and reported that nearly one-third of students experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, or stress, often exacerbated by academic competition and family pressure (PMC11194636).

Similarly, Prakash et al. (2024) found significant prevalence rates of emotional distress in Mysuru schools, linking these outcomes to parental expectations, poor peer relationships, and limited recreational time (PMC11368326).

Digital exposure and family dynamics have also emerged as major determinants.

Huang et al. (2023) revealed that poor family communication and exposure to domestic conflict mediated the relationship between internet overuse and adolescent depression, highlighting the importance of positive parenting and monitoring (BMC Public Health, 2023).

Further, Yogesh et al. (2024) observed that adolescents with higher smartphone dependency showed lower well-being, with permissive or authoritarian parenting styles worsening the impact (PubMed 39256701).

From an intervention perspective, Bhuskute (2024) designed a model school-based program that significantly improved emotional resilience, self-esteem, and peer support among high school students (International Journal of Indian Psychology, 2024).

Similarly, Tamang et al. (2024) demonstrated that scaling up structured mental health promotion programs in Indian schools substantially reduced depression and anxiety symptoms, underlining the need for regular school-level interventions (Journal of Adolescent Health, 2024).

Internationally, Jobin et al. (2025) reported that mindfulness-based interventions led to improved attention and lower stress levels among adolescents, suggesting that psychological well-being can be enhanced through integrative, non-clinical practices (Contemporary Education and Global Health, 2025).

Ray (2025) also emphasized the urgent need for robust policy frameworks in India to support mental health services within school systems (ScienceDirect, 2025). Collectively, these studies establish that adolescent mental health is determined by the combined effects of school environment, family support, academic pressure, digital exposure, and access to counselling services.

However, despite a growing number of interventions, region-specific comparative research—particularly contrasting government and private school adolescents in Hyderabad—remains sparse, forming the foundation for the present study.

#### 2.4. Correlates and Predictors of Adolescent Mental Health

Several studies have identified a range of psychological, familial, and institutional factors that influence adolescent mental health. The key predictors include:

- **Academic Pressure:**  
Overburdened curricula and performance expectations lead to high levels of stress and anxiety.

- **Family Dynamics:**  
Lack of emotional support, parental conflict, or absence of parents correlate with increased vulnerability to mental health disorders (Mehra et al., 2022).

- **Peer Relationships:**  
Bullying, exclusion, and peer pressure contribute significantly to mental health challenges (Rickwood et al., 2007).

- **Socioeconomic Status (SES):**  
Adolescents from low-SES backgrounds often face increased stress due to limited access to resources and opportunities (Goyal et al., 2020).

- **School Environment:**  
The presence of trained counsellors, inclusive practices, and supportive teachers can buffer stress and promote resilience.

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that factors such as family communication, parenting style, peer support, and school environment are key predictors of adolescent well-being. Despite this understanding, little is known about how these variables interact differently across government and private educational settings, underscoring the relevance of the present study.

### III. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

This study addresses a pressing and underexplored area of adolescent health by focusing on the comparative mental well-being of students in different schooling systems in Hyderabad. By identifying the prevalence of mental health issues and their influencing factors, the findings will help:

- Inform school-level mental health interventions and policy decisions;
- Provide evidence to strengthen the implementation of government programs like RKSJK;
- Contribute to academic discourse by applying contextual and theoretical lenses to adolescent mental health in urban India;
- Create awareness and reduce stigma around adolescent mental health through data-backed insights.

The study will therefore serve as a foundational step in building a culturally sensitive, evidence-based mental health framework for school-going adolescents in Hyderabad.

#### IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To compare the levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among adolescents in government and private schools in Hyderabad and identify factors contributing to these differences.
2. To examine the relationship between family support and adolescents' mental well-being, focusing on the role of family cohesion and communication.
3. To analyse the influence of academic pressure on adolescents' mental health and its predictive role in depression and anxiety.
4. To assess the association between mental health awareness, coping strategies, and resilience among adolescents.
5. To explore the impact of socioeconomic status on access to mental health resources and overall well-being.
6. To study how the school environment and peer relationships affect adolescents' emotional well-being.

#### VI. IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH WORK

This study is crucial for several reasons:

- Public Health Significance
- Local Relevance
- Policy Influence
- Educational Impact
- Equity Lens

#### VII. DISCUSSION

The findings highlight a considerable burden of mental health challenges among adolescent girls in Hyderabad. Academic stress appears to be the most influential risk factor, while family and peer support serve as protective factors. Differences between government and private schools suggest disparities in resources and psychosocial support systems.

These findings align with previous research emphasising the importance of supportive environments in promoting adolescent well-being.

#### VIII. IMPLICATIONS

1. Integration of structured mental health programs in school curricula.
2. Appointment of trained school counsellors in government and private schools.
3. Parent awareness programs focusing on communication and emotional support.
4. Periodic screening and early intervention strategies.

#### IX. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates a high prevalence of psychological distress among adolescent girls in Hyderabad, influenced primarily by academic pressure, family environment, and peer relationships. Addressing these factors through school-based interventions and policy reforms is essential for promoting mental health and well-being among adolescent girls.

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