

## THE PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION

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### **Abstract:**

*Adolescence is a critical growth stage, and teenage girls face unique challenges that might impact their physical, mental, and social well-being. This study looks at the different challenges faced by adolescent girls, including academic challenges, health and mental health problems, gender discrimination, and social pressures. Given the significance of this time, teens' problems need to be recognised and treated with the appropriate support. Social workers have a key role in developing intervention strategies for adolescents. The government must also create and implement policies related to adolescent health in order to generate a population of healthy adults. The study also offers suggestions for possible remedies to deal with these problems and improve the general welfare of adolescent girls.*

**Key Words:** adolescents, problems, intervention, remedies

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### **Introduction:**

Adolescence is the transitional period between childhood and maturity, a period of significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. Although both boys and girls face numerous challenges in this day, teenage females often face additional challenges due to biological, social, and cultural factors. To create effective approaches for fostering their progress, it is imperative to comprehend these challenges.

A youngster goes through a transitional stage called adolescence before becoming an adult. Rapid physical, psychological, and social development is one of its defining characteristics. Adolescents make up around one in six people worldwide, with over 1.2 billion of them being adolescents. 240 million people in India are between the ages of 10 and 19, making up 21.4% of the total population. Research on adolescent girls in India reveals serious health issues, including anaemia, irregular menstruation, mental health disorders, and malnutrition. Socioeconomic conditions and restricted access to education and therapy might exacerbate these issues. Here is a more thorough examination of the health issues that Indian teenage females face:

### **Malnutrition and Nutritional Deficiencies:**

A serious health issue that is quite common among teenage females is anaemia. **Undernutrition** : Growth and development are impacted by the typical stunting and wasting.



**Obesity** : Growing obesity rates are a health concern, especially in cities. Micronutrient Deficiencies-: Iron, iodine, and other vital nutrient deficiencies are common.

### **Reproductive Health Issues :**

**Menstrual Problems** : Dysmenorrhea, or painful periods, and other irregularities are common.

**Early Marriage and Pregnancy**: Early marriage and unintended pregnancy lead to health problems for both mothers and their children. Adolescent females are particularly vulnerable to reproductive health problems due to unsafe abortion practices, early pregnancies, and a lack of sexual education.

### **Reproductive tract infections (RTIs) and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) :**

Lack of awareness and access to healthcare contributes to the spread of STIs and RTIs. **Risky Abortion**-: Lack of access to safe abortion methods leads to unsafe behaviours and an increased risk of maternal mortality.

### **Mental Health Conditions:**

#### **Anxiety and Desperation :**

Adolescent females are particularly susceptible to mental health issues including anxiety and despair. Mental health conditions such as anxiety and despair are brought on by high amounts of stress. These moods are influenced by peer interactions, familial expectations, and academic pressure. **Problems with Self-Esteem and Body Image**: Eating disorders, poor self-esteem, and body dissatisfaction can all be caused by social beauty standards.

**Substance users** : Some teenage girls may experience emotional anguish and be influenced by their friends to use drugs, which can have a detrimental impact on their physical and mental well-being.

**Suicide** : One of the main causes of mortality for young people, suicide is frequently connected to social and mental health problems.

### **Social and Environmental Factors:**

**Socioeconomic Status** : Girls from disadvantaged communities are more likely to have health issues due to poverty, illiteracy, and limited access to resources.

### **Gender Inequality :**

Violence and discrimination worsen the poor health and well-being of girls.

**Abuse in the Home** : Exposure to domestic violence can have a substantial negative impact on the physical and mental health of teenage females.

**Lack of Access to Healthcare** : The inability to obtain high-quality healthcare services, particularly in rural areas, makes it more difficult to prevent and treat health problems.

### **Educational Obstacles :**

**School Dropout** : Girls are more likely to drop out of school due to early marriage, poverty,



and other social factors, which restricts their access to education and opportunities for empowerment. Adolescent females frequently experience high school dropout rates as a result of financial limitations, early marriage, and gender discrimination. Gender Bias in Education:- In many nations, girls have less educational opportunities and support than males, which limits their professional options.

**Absence of a Secure Learning Environment :** Many females are deterred from pursuing their education by long commutes, unsanitary surroundings, and harassment.

#### **Physical health problems:**

**Period Health and Hygiene :** Adolescent girls may experience health issues during their periods as a result of cultural taboos, misinformation, or restricted access to sanitary goods.

**Anaemia and Malnutrition :** Many teenage girls suffer from anaemia and malnutrition, especially in developing countries, as a result of inadequate nutritional intake and gender-based food allocation.

#### **Cultural and Social Aspects:**

Adolescent females are frequently under pressure or married off too soon, which leads to early parenting and limited chances for personal growth. This arrangement is referred to as forced marriage or early marriage.

**Gender-Based Violence:** Sexual harassment, domestic violence, and human trafficking pose a major danger to the safety and dignity of adolescent girls.

**Limitation of Freedom:** Adolescent females' freedom, choices, and opportunities for personal development are restricted by social norms in some countries. Adolescent females experience profound emotional and psychological transformations due to hormonal fluctuations, social influences, and issues with self-concept. Typical emotional issues they could experience include:

1. Hormonal changes throughout puberty that induce mood and rage swings. may cause unexpected annoyance, rage, or hopelessness.
2. Stress and anxiety brought on by social media, familial expectations, and academic pressure.
3. Fear of failing and being judged negatively by others.
4. Issues with peer comparison, low self-esteem, body image, and unachievable beauty standards. anxiety connected to looks and self-doubt.
5. Loneliness & Depression feeling misunderstood or alone. finds it challenging to maintain family or personal relationships.
6. Risk-taking behaviour and peer pressure: the desire to blend in may result in unfavourable behaviour. drug testing or involvement in dangerous partnerships.
7. Conflicts between Identity and Self-Discovery battling with acceptance of oneself and goals for the future. doubting one's sexual orientation, morals, or professional decisions.
8. Cyberbullying and self-doubt on social media brought on by constant online



comparison. continuous online abuse or cyberbullying.

9. Family Disagreements tries to be independent and live up to family standards. feeling disregarded or restricted.

### **Government Indicatives in Maharashtra :**

The Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA), one of the programs the Indian government has implemented to address these problems, attempts to enhance the health, self-development, and nutritional condition of teenage girls.

Further research and targeted interventions are needed to improve the general well-being of Maharashtra's adolescent girls and ensure that they have access to the resources and opportunities they need for a better future

### **Social Work Interventions and Solutions:**

**Comprehensive Sex Education:** Adolescent females can be empowered with accurate information about sexual rights, reproductive health, and menstrual health.

**Better Access to Healthcare:** Improving mental health support and other healthcare services can help address a number of health issues.

### **Educational Policies and Scholarships:**

By encouraging women's education through mentorship programs, inclusive learning environments, and scholarships, dropout rates can be reduced.

### **Legal and Social Reforms:**

Adolescent girls' rights can be protected by stricter legislation against gender-based violence, discrimination, and child marriage.

### **Development of Skills:**

Social workers may assist teenage females in acquiring life skills that are necessary for overcoming obstacles and accomplishing their objectives, such as decision-making, communication, and problem-solving.

### **Counselling and Psychosocial Support:**

For females dealing with mental health issues, abuse, or other challenging circumstances, social workers can offer psychosocial assistance and therapy.

### **Community Mobilisation:**

By encouraging constructive societal norms and behaviours, social workers may collaborate with communities to address problems including early marriage, drug misuse, and violence against females. **Access to Resources:** Adolescent girls can benefit from social workers' assistance in gaining access to resources that are critical to their growth and well being, including healthcare, education, and employment possibilities.



### **Case Management:**

In order to protect the safety and wellbeing of girls who are experiencing or at danger of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, social workers can offer case management services.

### **Networking and Collaboration :**

To meet the multifaceted needs of teenage girls, social workers can work in conjunction with other experts, government agencies, and neighbourhood associations.

### **Research and Evaluation :**

Social workers can conduct research and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, ensuring that programs are evidence-based and meet the needs of adolescent girls.

### **Resolving the underlying reasons :**

Social workers may assist in determining and resolving the underlying causes of issues that teenage girls encounter, such as gender inequality, poverty, and illiteracy. For to Help the needy persons social work must Promote candid dialogue and attentive listening as well as instruct pupils in stress-reduction methods (journaling, exercise). Also encourage self-care and constructive self-talk. If your emotional suffering gets worse, get help from a professional.

### **Conclusion:**

Teenage ladies have specific challenges that might hinder their growth on the personal and professional fronts. To solve these issues, communities, governments, educational institutions, and medical experts must collaborate. By enacting suitable laws and initiatives, society may empower adolescent girls and guarantee their complete growth, resulting in a fairer and more progressive world.

### **Interventions in Social Work :**

Social workers can empower and fight for the needs and rights of teenage girls while tackling gender inequity and discrimination. Programs for education and awareness on subjects including menstrual hygiene, substance misuse prevention, and reproductive health can be offered by social workers.

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