

# The Stage Between Childhood and Adulthood- The Unwritten Rules of a Teen-Life.

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## **Abstract**

Adolescence is often regarded as one of the most challenging and confusing phases in a person's life. During this period, understanding the interconnected factors such as social media usage, heightened levels of anxiety and stress, and fluctuating academic motivation is crucial for fostering positive development. The digital world plays a significant role in shaping these aspects, influencing mental well-being and academic engagement. By recognizing the relationship between these factors, we can better support adolescents in navigating their emotional and academic challenges, ultimately promoting healthy development in this critical stage of life.

**Keywords:** Academic performance, Adolescence, Anxiety, Challenges, Digital World, Emotional, Motivation, social media, Teenagers.

## **1. Introduction**

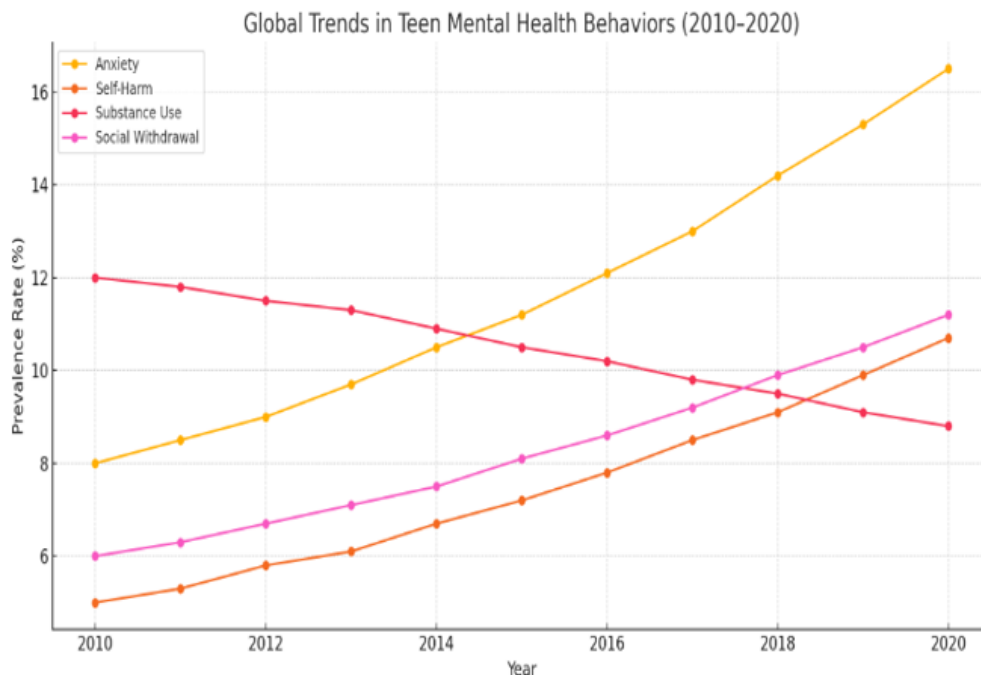
The period in human's life from age 13 to 19 is called the **adolescence** period. The TEENAGE years – a period referred as one of freedom and discovery yet for many, it's a turbulent landscape with unique challenges. Every generation of teenagers faces its own set of hassle and trials but the primary experience of navigating the transition from childhood to adulthood remains the same. This period of physical, emotional and social changes brings different and unique set of difficulties and stress. This article aims to examine and explore some common problems that teenagers face, offering space for understanding, validation and acknowledging the significance of their experience and offering potential for understanding and support.

**Adolescence** is the time in a person's life between childhood and adulthood. It usually starts around age 10 and ends around age 21. This period is often divided into three stages: early puberty, middle adolescence, and late adolescence. Each stage has its own special changes and experiences.

Taking care of teenagers' health and well-being can lead to benefits for both the economy and society. It's important to invest in teen health because this is a key time in a person's growth, and many teens also face health problems and disabilities during this time.

In the past, people thought adolescence was mainly something that happened in American culture, as a result of changes during the industrial age. This period can lead to challenges, like teens depending on their families after leaving school and struggling to find jobs.

However, many studies have shown that adolescence is a normal stage of life all around the world. It usually begins around the time a person becomes physically mature and includes different behaviours, social changes, and emotional growth.



The transition to adolescence has long been a central focus in developmental psychology and family studies. Traditional literature and popular media have often framed adolescence primarily through the lens of the individual teenager, emphasizing the challenges and changes experienced by the child. This perspective typically views parents as agents of influence in a one-directional model, where guidance flows from parent to child.

However, recent scholarship has begun to shift this narrative by acknowledging the reciprocal nature of parent-child dynamics and recognizing that parents themselves undergo significant psychological and relational changes as their children enter adolescence. This growing body of research expands the focus to include what parents bring to the transition—not only in their roles as caregivers but also as individuals and partners navigating their own developmental trajectories.

This review organizes the relevant literature around five key themes:

**The Evolving Research Context:** Scholars have noted a shift from viewing adolescence as a period of “storm and stress” to understanding it as a nuanced phase influenced by family systems, parental development, and cultural expectations. Newer models emphasize bidirectional and systemic frameworks that consider mutual influence between parent and adolescent.

**Characteristics of Parents:** Several studies explore intrapsychic and developmental factors that shape how parents respond to adolescence. These include parents’ own emotional regulation, identity development, and unresolved issues from their own adolescence.

**Family Dyads and Relationship Dynamics:** The parent-child relationship is deeply embedded in broader family interactions. Research highlights the importance of **marital quality**, **coparenting dynamics**, and **communication patterns** between spouses in shaping adolescent outcomes. Likewise, the evolving parent-child dyad reflects both the adolescent's growing autonomy and the parent's adaptive strategies.

**Family Change Over Time:** Longitudinal studies show that the family system is fluid, with **transitions unfolding across time**. As the adolescent matures, parents often reassess their roles, face an "emptying nest" shift in identity, and reorient their sense of purpose within and beyond the family unit.

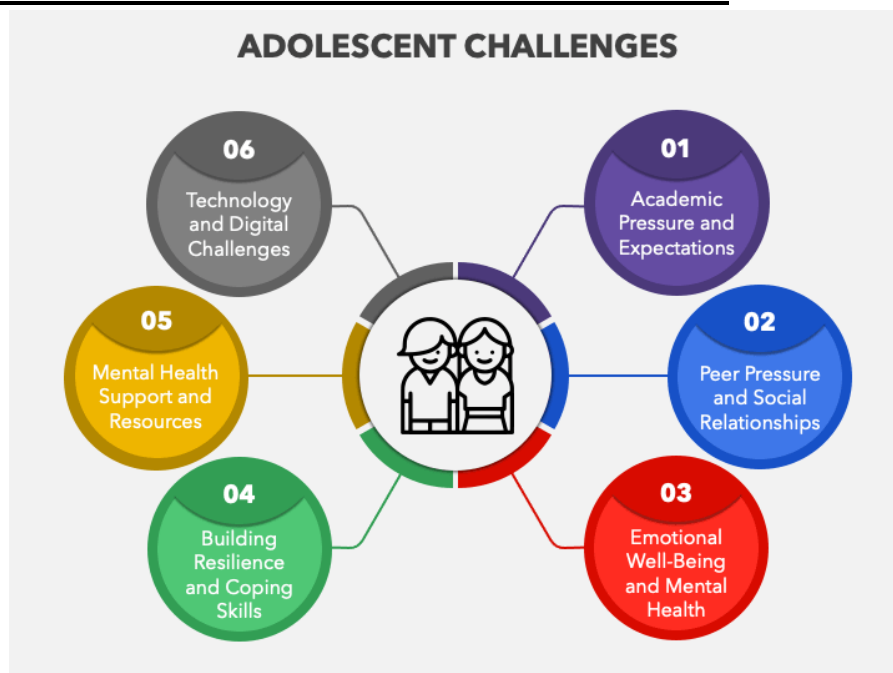
**Sociocultural Influences:** Parental experiences are also shaped by broader **sociocultural factors** such as socioeconomic status, cultural background, gender norms, and community expectations. These elements influence how adolescence is perceived and managed across different contexts.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

1. **Uzma Tahniyath, Sumaiya Simran Begum, & Madiha Unnisa (2024)**-*"Vaping Trends Among Adolescents: Understanding the Rise of E-Cigarettes in Youth Culture."*  
This study investigates the rising trend of vaping among teenagers. It explores how social media, peer influence, and misinformation contribute to the normalization of vaping. The authors raise concerns about long-term health effects, nicotine addiction, and the urgent need for educational campaigns.
2. **Ryuichiro Narishige, Yasushi Otaka, & Amane Tateno (2024)**-*"Characteristics of Japanese Teenage Suicide Attempters: A Retrospective Study."*  
A comparative study analyzing suicide attempters among teenagers and young adults in Japan. The authors identify key differences in psychological risk factors and stress the need for early detection and culturally sensitive mental health interventions targeting adolescents.
3. **Imamll Insan & Devi Sartika (2024)**- *"Correlation Between Online Game Addiction and Social Adjustment in Teenage Mobile Legend Players."*  
This paper highlights how addiction to online games like *Mobile Legends* impairs social adjustment in teens. It shows that excessive gaming can lead to decreased real-life interactions, isolation, and neglect of responsibilities, negatively affecting school and home life.
4. **IEEE COMPSAC (2022)**-*"Smartphone Addiction and Self-Esteem Among Indonesian Teenage Students."*  
Presented at the COMPSAC conference, this research shows a negative correlation between smartphone addiction and self-esteem. It highlights emotional dependency, academic underperformance, and reduced social interactions as major consequences of excessive phone use.
5. **Emerson B. Cuzzamu (2022)**-*"Impact of Irresponsible Teenagers in Modern Society."*  
This study examines behaviors like truancy, aggression, and substance abuse. Cuzzamu argues these behaviors strain public systems—education, law enforcement, and health—while also harming community safety and increasing the need for youth rehabilitation programs.
6. **Andrade, L. H., et al. (2020)**-*"Mental Health of Adolescents During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Global Perspective."*  
This global review documents the pandemic's impact on teen mental health, citing rising anxiety, depression, and loneliness. The issues are particularly severe in underserved communities with limited access to psychological support, urging expanded services for adolescent well-being.

7. **Keles, B., McCrae, N., & Grealish, A. (2020)**-“*A Systematic Review: The Influence of Social Media on Depression, Anxiety, and Psychological Distress in Adolescents.*” – *BMC Public Health*. This systematic review found that excessive use of social media—especially passive use and upward comparison—significantly contributes to depression and anxiety in teens. It emphasizes the importance of promoting healthy social media habits.
8. **Foulkes, L., & Blakemore, S. J. (2018)**-“*Studying Individual Differences in Human Adolescent Brain Development – Nature Neuroscience.*” This article explores how differing rates of brain development impact adolescent behavior. The authors explain that these variations influence emotional regulation, risk-taking, and susceptibility to mental health disorders, stressing the value of personalized developmental approaches.
9. **Sawyer, S. M., Azzopardi, P. S., Wickremaratne, D., & Patton, G. C. (2018)**-“*The Age of Adolescence – The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health.*” This paper argues that adolescence should be extended from age 10 to 24, reflecting modern delays in life milestones such as education and family formation. The redefinition has significant implications for health policy, education, and youth development programs.
10. **Ging, D., & Garvey, S. (2018)**-“*Cyberbullying, Sexting, and the Digital Lives of Teens – Irish Journal of Sociology.*” This study examines the negative aspects of teen digital life. It highlights the normalization of sexting and cyberbullying and their impact on mental health, particularly self-esteem, social anxiety, and trust in relationships.
11. **Adelina Briza Rio (2015)**-“*No More a Child, Not Yet an Adult*”: *Studying Social Cognition in Adolescence.*  
This foundational study explores identity formation during adolescence. Rio discusses the emotional turmoil and cognitive development teens undergo as they move from egocentrism toward complex social understanding, framing adolescence as a time of deep internal transition.

## MAIN FACTORS WHICH AFFECT THE MIND OF A TEENAGER



In the modern era, the world is developing but the problems of teenage has become more vocal and aggressive as the years pass by. But, Since the 1980's the teenage rebellion as increased by 70% compared to the silent period. These generations have been categorized according to the years of birth. According to multiple reports regarding children and teenage, the most rebellious and violent generation has been the era of the- "Millennials and GEN-Z". The millennials were the teenagers 20 years back from the year 2024 while the GENZ might still be teenagers. In these two generations, the technology has developed quickly which were easily accessible to anyone now.

These factors can be classified into: -

**1. BIOLOGICAL**

- PUBERTY AND HORMONAL CHANGES
- BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
- SLEEP
- NUTRITION

**2. PSYCHOLOGICAL-**

- EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- SELF ESTEEM

**3. SOCIAL FACTORS-**

- FAMILY AND PEERS
- MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY
- CULTURAL AND SOCIETAL NORMS

***BIOLOGICAL***

As biological factors have already been classified, it is important to understand, that these play a major role in a life of a teenager. These are mostly differentiated among the two genders.

As the female body is matured at an early age compared to a male, the bodily changes they undergo in that period is a new cycle which is completely different than what they have experienced. This puberty stage is a difficult stage that everyone has to undergo. The male's puberty differs from a female's one yet no one feels to get ready for that stage. As the hormones change, the physical and mental state of the child changes and can be defined as being moody, difficult to work with. The teenage brain development undergoes substantial development, particularly in areas responsible for decision making, emotional regulation, impulse control and risk assessment. The prefrontal cortex, which handles these functions, matures often into the twenties. This can lead to more impulsive behavior and less consideration.

Adequate nutrition and sufficient is crucial for overall development for brain functioning and physical growth. Deficiencies in essential nutrition can risk the development and physical health.

Teenagers often change their sleep schedule which can negatively affect the mood, concentration, and academic performance.

***PSYCHOLOGICAL***

Teenagers experience a wide range of emotions. Learning to understand and manage to these feelings is a crucial task. Abstract thinking, problem-solving skills are a must to be studied, focused and implemented carefully during this stage.

When faced in the real- world, the thoughts which affect the most are about the self-esteem. Body image concerns, comparisons and pressure impacts the self-worth of a teenager.

### ***SOCIAL***

When it comes to family the parenting style, communication and the environment plays a crucial role in the life of a teenager.

While peer pressure has affected teens for generations, social media brings it to a whole new level.

Cultural norms being labelled as restriction sets a wrong idea to the young minds as it defies the law of learning and experiencing.

These above factors have been the reality of many teenagers but the escape and decisions taken by them brings down the whole generation.

This stage between childhood and adulthood is confusing as a teenager as it doesn't conclude whether to act like a child or be mature like and adult. And with all these factors it creates a lot of pressure on the young minds which not many can handle. So, when they need to escape the reality there are few things which come into the picture.

This escape is found through drugs and alcohol. There is a difference between substance abuse and addiction. Substance abuse means the usage of illegal substance like alcohol. Addiction means a person needs a drug even after knowing the bad consequences. Drug usage at a young stage causes physical and mental problems. Once you're addicted, there's no escape to it. And if trying to escape might lead to serious issues which makes the person go crazy and physically challenged.

### ***HOW ARE THE INDIAN TEENS AFFECTED BY THE PROBLEM? AND WHAT MIGHT LEAD THEM TO?***

1. Academic Pressure: Indian teens are under immense academic stress due to a rigid education system and highly competitive entrance exams like JEE and NEET. The fear of failure often leads to anxiety, burnout, and even depression.
2. Parental Expectations: Many Indian parents expect their children to excel academically and socially, often comparing them with others. This constant pressure to meet unrealistic expectations can harm a teen's self-worth and mental health. Struggles around independence and strict household rules often lead to clashes, rebellion, or secretive behavior.
3. Career Confusion: Due to limited career counseling and awareness, teenagers often feel confused about their future. They are usually pushed towards engineering, medicine, or government jobs, ignoring other talents and interests.
4. Peer Pressure: Teens often feel the need to fit in with their friends, which can lead them to make risky choices such as skipping studies, substance use, or behaving in ways that go against their values.
5. Social Media Addiction: Excessive use of platforms like Instagram and YouTube can result in low attention span, disturbed sleep, procrastination, and reduced real-world interactions.
6. Cyberbullying: With the rise of digital communication, many teens face online harassment, trolling, or abuse, which can deeply affect their mental health and confidence.
7. Mental Health Issues: Depression, anxiety, and loneliness are increasingly common among teens. However, mental health is still a taboo topic in many Indian households, leading to lack of support and untreated issues.



8. Body Image Issues: Exposure to unrealistic beauty standards on social media and TV causes many teens to develop low self-esteem, eating disorders, or unhealthy comparisons.
9. Substance Abuse: Some teenagers, especially in urban areas, experiment with cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs due to peer pressure or to escape emotional problems.
10. Romantic Relationships: While attraction and relationships are natural during adolescence, lack of emotional maturity, secrecy, and societal taboo often lead to confusion, heartbreak, or regret.
11. Lack of Sex Education: Due to cultural taboos, many schools avoid comprehensive sex education, leaving teens misinformed and vulnerable to sexual exploitation or health risks.
12. Bullying in Schools: Despite awareness efforts, bullying—verbal, emotional, and sometimes physical—is still common, especially towards those who are different or vulnerable.
13. Lack of Emotional Support: Teenagers often feel unheard or misunderstood by parents and teachers, leaving them isolated with their problems.
14. Gender Discrimination: Girls, in particular, face added restrictions around freedom, clothing, education, or mobility, limiting their opportunities and confidence.
15. Unhealthy Competition: The drive to outdo peers in academics or lifestyle can lead to jealousy, stress, and feelings of inadequacy.
16. Lack of Life Skills Education: Schools often focus solely on academics and fail to teach practical skills like managing emotions, making decisions, or handling finances, which are vital for teenage growth.

## ***RED FLAGS TO NOTICE THE BEHAVIORAL CHANGE IN A TEEN:***

### **When to Be Concerned About Your Teen's Mental Health**

As parents, we all know that the teen years can be tough—for both kids and adults. Mood swings, growing independence, and everyday stress are part of the journey. But sometimes, changes in your teen's behaviour or emotions can be signs of something more serious.

If you've noticed any of the following happening often not just once in a while it might be time to check in and consider getting some professional support:



- They're feeling **constantly anxious** or overwhelmed
- Struggling to **manage their anger** or having intense outbursts
- Acting **impulsively** or taking unusual risks
- Refusing to follow rules in a way that feels extreme or out of character
- A **sudden drop in their grades** or motivation at school
- **Friendships are falling apart**, or they're isolating themselves
- Sleeping way too much—or barely at all
- Eating habits have changed noticeably
- Mood swings that seem really intense or out of control
- Pulling away from people and things they used to enjoy

- **Experimenting with drugs or alcohol**
- Not caring for themselves like they used to (showering, brushing teeth, etc.)
- Talking about feeling hopeless or like nothing matters
- Repeatedly **stealing or shoplifting**
- Seeming paranoid or convinced others are out to get them
- Hurting themselves on purpose



None of these signs on their own necessarily mean something is wrong—but if you’re seeing a pattern, trust your gut. You don’t have to figure it out alone. Talking to a counsellor, doctor, or mental health professional can make all the difference.

Your support matters more than you may realize, and reaching out could be the first step toward helping your teen feel like themselves again.

## Conclusion

Studying adolescence isn’t easy. Teenagers are constantly growing and changing, and it can be tough to capture that kind of transformation in a single moment or snapshot. That’s why researchers today are turning to new, more powerful ways of understanding what it really means to grow up.

Instead of just looking at teens at one point in time, long-term studies—called cohort or longitudinal studies—follow young people over many years. These studies track how kids grow, how their relationships with family and friends evolve, and how the world around them shapes who they become.

Yes, these projects are big, expensive, and complicated—but they’re worth it. They help researchers understand not just what happens in adolescence, but how and why it happens. Watching young people grow over time provides insights that simple surveys or short-term research just can’t offer.



In the end, these long-term studies remind us that adolescence isn't just a phase—it's a journey. And by following young people as they walk that path, researchers are learning how to better support them every step of the way.

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