



## Impact of Social Pressure on Youth Mental Health

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**Abstract:** The impact of social pressure on youth mental health is significant and multifaceted, here's a breakdown it affects young people. Social pressure significantly influences the mental health of youth, shaping their emotional, psychological, and behavioral development, as young individual navigate the challenge of adolescence, they often face intense expectations from peers, family, social media, and academic institutions this pressure can lead to increased levels of stress, anxiety, depression and low self-esteem . Additionally, their desire to confirm can drive youth toward risky behaviour and discourage them from seeking help due to stigma. Understanding the impact of social pressure is crucial for developing supportive environment that foster resilience, promote mental well-being and encourage healthy coping strategies among youth.

**Keywords:** Social Pressure, Youth Mental Health, Social Media, Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Family and Peer Expectations.

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## Introduction

The youth of today face an overwhelming array of expectations from family, peer and society at large social pressure to confirm to certain standards of beauty, academic achievement, and social status can have a profound impact on their mental health, from the curated highlight reels on social media to the cutthroat competition in schools and colleges, young people are constantly bombarded with messages telling them to be more , do more ,and achieve more but what is the true cost of this pressure .How does it affect their self-esteem, anxiety level, and overall wellbeing, This paper explores the complex and multifaceted relationship between social pressure and youth mental health, shedding light on the ways in which, societal expectations can both shape and scare the media of the next generation. Social pressure is a pervasive and insidious,

force in the lives of young people shaping their thoughts, feelings and behaviour, the pressure to conform to societal norms, achieve academic success, and maintain a perfect online image can have severe and long-lasting consequences on their mental health.

A 2023 WHO study revealed that depression among youth (18\_24) in India increase from 9.3% in May 2020 to 16.8% by March 2022 . Anxiety levels also rose significantly during the same period. National youth mental health survey (NYHS) found 81% of youth report anxiety related to academic with 49% citing studies and 28% mentioning examination and results as major stressors. Approximately 35 students' die by suicide every day in India with youth aged 15- 24 having the highest suicide rate in the country. Mental health means the successful performance of mental function resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationship with other people, ability to adopt change and cope with adversity. From the early childhood till late life mental health is the spring board of thinking and communication skills, learning, emotional growth, resilience and self-esteem. Mentally healthy person is one who is himself satisfied, lives peacefully with his neighbors, makes healthy citizens of his children and even after performance these fundamental duties has enough energy left to do something of benefit to society. Possessing mental health, an individual can make his best efforts for his own family and his society. A mentally healthy person shows a homogenous organization of desirable attitudes, healthy values and righteous self-concept and scientific perception of the world. Mental health as defined by Kornhauser (1965) connotes those behaviors, perceptions and feelings that determine person's overall level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness and excellence of functioning as a person.

### Review of Literature

- **Albert Bandura's Social Learning (1961)** - Theory suggests that young people learn behaviour and attitudes by observing and imitating others , including peers and social media influencers.this theory highlights the role of social environment in shaping individual behaviour and mental health.
- **Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's - Self- determination theory** posits that social pressure can undermine autonomy, competence,and relatedness, leading to decrease motivation and well being, this theory emphasize the importance of satisfying basic psychological needs for optimal mental health.
- **Leonard Pearlin's Stress Process Model-** Suggests that social pressure can lead to stress, which can have negative impact on mental health. This model Highlights the role of coping mechanisms and social support mitigating the effect of stress.

- **Cohen(1991)**- Family support and positive relationship can have a protective effect on mental health promoting resilience and well being.Social support is a valuable resource to cope with several psycho-social challenges of teenage. It has been found to be negatively related with self-reported symptoms of distress and psychopathology.
- **Simon and Mortan (2016)**- Found that peer pressure is a significant predictor of substances abuse in adolescents, particularly when combined with other risk factors such as family history and mental health issues. Perceived social support involves the subjective assurance that one will obtain all necessary assistance from family and friends, which may be in the form of listening to the stressed person talk about troubles, expressing warmth and affection, offering advice or another way of looking at the problem, providing specific assistance, or simply spending time with the stressed person.
- **Wong and Rose (1994)**- Social support is a valuable resource to cope with several psycho-social challenges of teenage. It has been found to be negatively related with self-reported symptoms of distress and psychopathology (Lindorff, 2000; Stansfeld, Fuhrer, & Shipley, 1998). Social support has shown to be an important resource that enables an individual to cope with stress and prevent burnout and thus foster wellbeing.
- **Luthar (1991)**- Studied observed that the more socially competent youngsters also had a higher level of internalizing symptoms than did the less competent and less resilient youth. The children with a higher external locus of control showed 'greater declines in functioning with increasing stress levels' than the children with an internal locus of control.
- **Procidano and Heller (1983)** - Define social support as the extent to which an individual believes that their need for support, information, and feedback is fulfilled. Perceived social support refers to an individual's belief that social support is available, is generally considered positive or negative, and provides what is considered needed by that individual.

### Objectives

- To understand the impact of social pressure on youth mental health
- To find out the how social pressure causes depression in youth mental health.
- To understand anxiety and stress in youth due to societal expectations.

## Methodology

This study utilized a secondary data analysis approach to examine the input between social pressure and mental health outcomes in youth population. The data were obtained from the national youth health survey (NYHS)2022 . review of existing academic literature, newspaper, article, magazine, website, journal, secondary data sources are considered for impact of social pressure on youth mental health..

- **Independent variable\_\_** social pressure, social media pressure, academic pressure, societal expectations.
- **Dependent variable\_** Depression, anxiety, low self esteem, stress, social withdrawal.

## Causes of Social Pressure

- **Social Media:** Social media platform, showcase the highlight reels of others' lives creating unrealistic expectations and promoting consumerism and materialism. The constant stream of online activity can create a sense of being left out or that others are having more fun, contributing to anxiety and dissatisfaction.
- **Family and Peer Expectations:** Family members and peers can exert significant pressure on young people to achieve academic success, conform to certain norms or engage in specific behaviour.
- **Academic Competition:** The pressure to perform well academically can lead to stress, anxiety and burnout. The fear of failure and the constant comparison with others can erode self-esteem and make students feel inadequate, even when they are performing well.
- **Anxiety and Stress:** Social pressure lead to increased anxiety and stress levels in young people, negatively impacting their mental health and well-being .
- **Depression:** Chronic social pressure can contribute to the development of depression, particularly in vulnerable individual.
- **Social Isolation:** The pressure to conform can lead to social isolation as young people fell forced to hide their true selves. Social isolation can lead to decreased cognitive function, increased stress hormones and overall poorer mental well-being.
- **Loss of Identity:** Social pressure can lead to a loss of identity as young people struggle to define themselves in the face of societal expectations.

- **Media and Advertising:** Media and advertising can significantly contribute to social pressure among youth mental health. The pressure to maintain a perfect online persona and the fear of missing out (FOMO) can further increase mental health challenges.
- **Social Support:** Lack of social support and access to resources can exacerbate the negative impacts of social pressure on mental health. Young people who lack a strong support system may be more vulnerable to the effects of peer pressure, societal expectations, and other stressors.

## Conclusion

Social pressure is a significant contributor to youth mental health issues by understanding the cause and consequences social pressure and implementing strategies to promote mental well-being, we can help young people build resilience and thrive in today's society. It's essential to create a supportive environment that encourages self-acceptance, individuality and mental health awareness. The data suggest that social pressure not only affects emotional well-being. These outcomes can have long term consequences on youth development. While it offers opportunities for connection, creativity, and learning, It also presents challenges related to mental health, social skill, and identity formation. Addressing these issues required collective efforts from parents, educators, policymakers and the youth themselves to foster open communication promote mental health awareness Mental health is essential for living a balanced, fulfilling life. It supports our ability to cope with stress, build strong relationships, and make meaningful contributions to our communities. By prioritizing self-care, seeking support when needed, and fostering positive environments, we can all take steps toward maintaining and improving our mental wellbeing. Promote positive role models and influencers who encourage self-acceptance and individuality, educate young people about the potential risks and consequences of social media use, encourage parents to be involved in their children lives, providing emotional support and guidance.

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