

## **EARLY PUBERTY: CHALLENGES AND CAUSES IN INDIAN GIRLS, THROUGH MOTHER'S PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract**

Puberty is a time when girls begin physical and hormonal changes and move towards adulthood that is the onset of periods of menstruation. Normally this process used to start in girls at the age of 15/16 years. Later this age was reduced to 12/13. But, now it is starting even in 7/ 9 years. Indian mothers play a vital role in the upbringing of the children especially in the stage of puberty. There is impact of social media content, cyber space, screen time on the behavior, spontaneous cortical activity and mental symptoms across different levels perceived at puberty stage. Nowadays access to social media has become a central development context for teenagers.

**Key words:** Puberty, Social media content, Indian mothers role

### **Objectives**

- To study the factors influencing puberty in girls.
- To point out teenagers attitude towards use of social media.
- To offer valuable suggestions to improve the use of energy in early childhood.
- To observe mother's role in early puberty of Indian children.

### **Introduction**

Considering the various findings about puberty, the analysis was done to investigate the causes of early puberty. Indian mothers are unable to speak openly because of religious myths, misconceptions, negative aspects. How to deal with the maturity process is the question. Some mothers think discussion about puberty makes children impudent. Some teenagers felt embarrassed to discuss it with their mothers. Some are opined that families should not be involved in their sexual education. Incorrect information from various sources like media, magazines, adult content videos, fake reels cause irreparable health and social consequences in teenagers.

### **Research methodology**

This study is systematically and scientifically Primary and secondary data. The study describes children's attitude towards puberty. This is descriptive in nature.

**Primary Data:** The first hand data collected by the investigator. So structured questionnaires on Perceived Puberty Stage, Mental Health Symptoms, Use of Social Media were prepared and data was collected.

**Secondary data:** Besides the primary data, the secondary data was collected from Mukta Chaitanya's newspaper articles in daily 'Loksatta', 'Lokmat' and Data from India Council of Medical Research.

**Tool used for data collection:** Questionnaire was the main important tool for collecting data. Hence, effort has been taken to construct the questionnaire in a systematic way with adequate and relevant questions to ensure the objectives of the study.

## **Hypothesis**

There is a significant relation between the adult content in social media and early puberty causes among Indian girls. Mothers play a vital role in upbringing of children especially in the stage of puberty.

## **Results**

The teenagers of 8-12 years are observed here for the present investigation. Puberty is the time of life where hormonal change marks transition in adulthood. Greater social media use predicted poor sleep, online harassment, poor body image, low self-esteem and higher depressiveness.

- Problems of anxiety or depression (54%)
- Problem of lower self-esteem (54%)
- Being harassed or bullied by others (54%)
- Feeling pressured to act in a certain way (59%)
- Exposure to explicit content (71%)

Fueling anxiety, depression, loneliness and fomo that is dear of missing out. Raffoul notes that images on platforms like Instagram and Tik-Tok can promote some really unrealistic appearance ideals and constant bombardment alter your perceptions of yourself in some ways when you are in adolescence. Social media can perpetuate body dissatisfaction, disordered eating behaviour and social comparisons in adolescent girls. This is due to their still developing brains cause real risks to their mental health and lives.

Mukta Chaitanya's articles on Online Trends and Cyberspace published in daily Lokmat, Loksatta newspapers shed light on this important issue. There are multiple factors behind the changing timing of menstruation and puberty. There are some disadvantages of the internet: what one sees, reads and hears, while surfing through the world wide web. Childhood obesity rates have been rising.

According to data from the India Council of Medical Research, at least 1.3 crore boys in India are experiencing early puberty. This includes both boys and girls. Here we are mainly talking about girls. Since, it creates more problems for them. Hormonal changes in the body, such as increased estrogen production, may lead to early puberty. Family is the first social unit. Mother plays the most important role in girls' health behaviors. While some mothers do not inform their children about adolescence because they think it affects the natural growing cycle. At the same time, social media has become a tool to quench the thirst of teenagers. Mother daughter relationships can answer numerous questions about reproductive issues which can prevent lots of physical, psychological and social problems and unhealthy behaviour that are rooted in adolescence.

Stress in girls, such as family disputes, abuse, neglect etc. can lead to early puberty. Absence of parents or a failed family environment can be seen in girls' behaviour. At the same time behavior of fellow students can also be the cause of mental stress. As what one sees or hears also has an effect on early puberty. Adult content that children see on social media affects

their brains, especially the pituitary gland. When this gland is stimulated, it secretes hormones, which cause physical changes in the body. This entire process includes early physical changes. These changes also bring problems. Early puberty in girls also causes some health problems but not all of them are the same. Early puberty can increase the risk of obesity, diabetes and hormonal diseases. Their height may be shorter than normal because their bones stop growing early. The mindset becomes disturbing.

**Confusion and anxiety:** This physical change can be difficult for little girls to understand. Is everything okay or not? They may worry about it. **Body image:** Girls develop feelings of insecurity about their body image, which can make them feel different from their friends. This can lead to loss of confidence. **Feeling older:** Girls may feel physically older than their friends, which can increase mental stress.

**Rebellious behaviour:** Due to stress and mental pressure they may show rebellious behaviour and sometimes they may also face depression.

**Social Ambivalence:** Children may make friends. Increasing social expectations can lead to confusion in understanding self-perceptions. Stress and physical effects can affect their sleep and concentration which can affect their academic performance.

**Suggestions:** Parents should pay attention here. Before and after puberty take your daughter to the doctor and explain everything. Prevent children from eating junk food and high fat foods. Offer fresh fruits, vegetables and nutritious food. Get children involved in sports and regular exercise. It maintains healthy weight and hormonal balance. Talk to children and take care of daily emotional health. Family support improves the confidence among the younger ones.

## **Conclusion**

Poor mental health prevalence was higher among younger adults and lower among older adults. There are multiple national services to strengthen their understanding of the changing burden and differences across social groups. Awareness about the connection between social media and disordered eating is an important tool for parents and those who work for health issues. The adolescent brain is wired differently than the adult brain or even a child's brain which puts them at a very specific risk when it comes to social media use. Social media is not intrinsically bad, it is a core contribution to our evolution and our ability to thrive. What it comes with however is an overwhelming responsibility for parents and schools in particular to help young people become self-aware. If mothers know, they can build good relationships with their daughters. Therefore mothers should also be trained by the health professionals and officials of the ministry of health affairs.

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