

A study on social skill of adolescent boys and girls across socio-economic groups

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The purpose of present study is to examine the social skill of adolescent boys and girls across three socio-economic groups ((upper, middle and lower socio-economic group). The sample of study was comprised of 450 adolescents (225 boys and 225 girls) between the age group of 13 to 18 years belonging to three socio-economic groups (upper, middle and lower socio-economic group) from Prayagraj city of Uttar Pradesh. Stratified random sampling technique was followed in the study. Kuppaswamy's socio-economic scale (1961) was administered to assess the socio-economic status of the adolescents which is modified by Gururaj and Maheshwaran in 2014. Self developed questionnaire was used for assessment of social skill of respondents. Frequency and percentage distribution and t-test were used to analysis the score. Social skill was found ranging between high to good in majority adolescent boys and girls of the upper and middle socio-economic groups whereas, in the lower socio-economic group, it was found ranging between average to poor in majority adolescents. There was no significant gender difference found in social skill of adolescents.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Adolescents, Social skill, Socio-economic group

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Adolescence is a determining phase of human life, where transition from childhood to adulthood takes place. These are impressionable years during which a child undergoes tremendous physical, social and psychological changes. Simultaneously, human values, goals, direction, career choice, decision making and self identity are needed to be shaped up. It can be a "Time of Delusion" and "Time to Discovery" both. It is an age when a child, as an individual self, integrates with adult society. This new phase of integration and social relationship with adults affect the child in many aspects

as it generates very profound intellectual changes such as puberty and a competitive feeling of being equal an adults. In fact, adolescence is not a period but it is a process. A process of successfully transforming a child and completing developmental tasks in terms of growth, attitude, beliefs, personality, emotions and social skill for desirable participation in the society and attaining maturity like an adult. On one hand, it is time of hope and new goals, while on other hand; it is time of confusion, challenges and risks. It is not only time of growth and development, it is time of exploring own potential and

emerging as an adult. So incorporating social skill successfully is very important for attaining social maturity, emotional maturity and successful adulthood development. *Social skill* is the ability to interact and communicate with others to create relationships, establish social rules and build networks, which comprised of communications, conflict management, associating actions with consequences and leadership (ability to guide and inspire others). According to Rani (2019), The study of social skill is important not only because it is a product of complex social milieu and one must find one's self in social setting, but also because it is one of the very essential aspects of our personality, which cannot be ignored. These are very significant point of personality and provide unity, equilibrium and stability. Keeping in mind the importance of social skill in adolescence years, present study was conducted with following objectives-

- To access the social skill of adolescent boys and girls across three socio-economic groups (upper, middle and lower socio-economic groups).
- To compare social skill between adolescent boys and girls across three socio-economic groups.

RESEARCH METHODS

In the present research exploratory research design and cross sectional survey method has been used for collecting the data. Prayagraj city was purposively selected for the study. selected samples for study were 450 adolescents, comprising of 150 adolescents, including 75 boys and 75 girls each, from three socio economic group i.e. lower, middle and upper socio economic groups, within the age group of 13-18 years, who were studying in between 7-12 standard. For fulfilling the purpose of study, the higher secondary schools were selected from Prayagraj city. List of schools were procured from the official website of Prayagraj district. From the available list, 6 schools (Government Girls Inter College, Jamuna Christian Inter College, K.P. Boys Inter College, K.P. Girls Inter College, D.P. Public School, VashisthVatsalaya Public School) were selected as representative for the data collection. Socio-economic status was accessed by Kuppuswamy's socioeconomic scale (1961) which is revised by Gururaj and Maheshwaran (2014) and a self made questionnaire on social skill is used for accessing social skill of adolescents across three socio-economic groups. Percentage and frequency distribution was drawn for accessing social skill level of adolescents

(boys and girls) across socio-economic groups. Paired-t-test was used for comparing social skill level between adolescent boys and girls.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Result shows the frequency and percentage distribution of social skill of the respondents. The scores have been divided into five categories, i.e. High, Good, Average, Low and Poor.

Table 1 portrays the distribution of upper socio - economic group adolescents in reference to their social skill. Table depicts that highest percentage (40%) of adolescent boys and equal percentage of adolescent girls (40%) were found with high level of social skill in them. 28 per cent adolescent boys and 24 per cent girls were good in their social skill. 12 per cent boys and equal percentage of girls had average social skill, while 12 per cent boys and 16 Per cent girls were observed with low social skill in them. Remaining, 8 per cent adolescent boys and equal percentage of girls were found with poor social skill in them.

Table 1 : Distribution of respondents of upper socio - economic group in reference to their social skill (n=75)

Categories	Boys		Girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
High	30	40	30	40
Good	21	28	18	24
Average	9	12	9	12
Low	9	12	12	16
Poor	6	8	6	8

It is clear from the finding, that a large portion of adolescents (boys and girls) from upper socio-economic group were reported with high social skill. So, it can be concluded that adolescents (both boys and girls) of upper socio - economic status were good in communication skills and easily mingle with people. They are capable of managing conflicts and maintain harmony. They also have leadership quality and good peer relationship. It is associated with higher life satisfaction, positive parenting practice and good social networks that are connected to greater levels of social interaction, support, social cohesion, informal care and healthy behaviour in youth of high socio - economic group that directly and indirectly help them in enhancing their social skill including peer relationship and friendship. According to Elizabeth *et al.* (2002), Quality relationships with parents are key to the

development of social competency. Quality social relationships and good social skills play a role in healthy psychological development, academic success, and even in later life relationships. Godel (2006) also claimed that socio - economic status could have a strong important impact on a family home and how parents behave with their children. Families in a high socio - economic group demonstrate that parents have more time to spend with their children and provide more teaching experiences for their children. Kumar and Alufa (2018) also stated that Academic socialization can be influenced by parents' socioeconomic status. Highly educated parents tend to have more stimulating learning environments. According to Li *et al.* (2020) Families with high-SES tend to improve parental homework support, parent-child communication, and parental time with children.

Table 2 portrays the distribution of middle socio - economic group adolescents in reference to their social skill. Table shows that highest percentage of adolescent boys (36%) and girls (36%) were found with high level social skill in them. 32 per cent adolescent boys and 24 per cent adolescent girls were observed with good social skill. 8 per cent adolescent boys and 12 per cent girls had average social skill. While, 12 per cent adolescent boys and 20 per cent adolescent girls were low in their social skill. Remaining, 12 per cent adolescent boys and 8 per cent adolescent girls were found poor in their social skill. Finding revealed that majority of the adolescent boys and girls of middle socio - economic group were found with either high or good social skill. The findings are similar to upper socio-economic group, indicating that adolescent boys and girls of middle income group were also good in communication skills, leadership, conflict-management and also able to guide and inspire others. It may be because of parental cooperation, encouragement and their loving parenting. Parents of middle socio - economic group usually allow their teens to ask questions and sort out the queries, they also maintain good and

Table 2 : Distribution of respondents of middle socio - economic group in reference to their social skill (n=75)

Categories	Boys		Girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
High	27	36	27	36
Good	24	32	18	24
Average	6	8	9	12
Low	9	12	15	20
Poor	9	12	6	8

free communication with their teens as well as create a friendly, secure and stimulating atmosphere at home that help adolescents to become confident, assured, independent, creative and socially skilled. According to Shanks and Destin (2009), Middle class families are more likely to raise their children to participate in structured activities that develop talents and unlike working class and poor children, these children become much better at interacting with and negotiating societal institutions. Adolescents' social skill mediated the effects of some parental practices, such as responsiveness, autonomy, cohesion, as well as parental attachment on the degree of peer activity, the attachment to peers and perceived social support from peers.

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents belonging to lower socio - economic group in reference to their social skill. Table reveals that highest percentage of adolescent boys (28%) and girls (36%) were observed with low social skill. 20 per cent adolescent boys and 24 per cent girls were found with high social skill and 24 per cent adolescent boys and 20 per cent adolescent girls were found good in their social skill. Remaining, 16 per cent adolescent boys and 12 per cent girls had average social skill and 12 Per cent adolescent boys and 8 Per cent girls were found with poor social skill.

Table 3 : Distribution of respondents belonging to lower socio - economic group in reference to their social skill (n=75)

Sr. No.	Categories	Boys		Girls	
		F	P	F	P
1.	High	15	20	18	24
2.	Good	18	24	15	20
3.	Average	12	16	9	12
4.	Low	21	28	27	36
5.	Poor	9	12	6	8

Results revealed that highest percentage of lower socio - economic group adolescents (both boys and girls) were low in their social skill followed by those who were either average or poor in their social skill, It means, adolescents belonging to the lower income group were not good in communication skills and involved in conflicts frequently. They generally have poor peer relationships and peer status. Probable reason behind it could be that low income families often go through economic insecurities, inconsistency in fulfilling the basic needs of the members. These obstacles could be leading to psychological stress in the family members. Parents focus more on meeting the basic needs and often don't have

Table 4 : Comparison of social skill between adolescent boys and adolescent girls across three socio-economic groups

Socio-Economic Groups	Boys		Girls		t- score	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t cal	T tab
Upper socio-economic groups	34.20	4.92	33.48	4.77	0.91	
Middle socio-economic groups	33.12	5.91	32.40	6.01	0.74	1.98
Lower socio-economic groups	28.08	6.59	28.44	6.77	0.33	

Not significant = $p > 0.05$ level

time or other resources to dedicate to skill development and interactions with their children, therefore, low income adolescents may not be receiving the necessary social skill development inputs. Additionally, socio - economic disadvantages are linked to poor quality of neighborhoods, decreased educational success, and low level of parental education, family instability and hard parental practices. According to Hsueh and Yoshikawa (2007) the chronic stress of poverty impairs parenting skills and disengaged or negative parenting in turn impairs children's school performance. Parents who are struggling just to stay afloat tend to work extra hours, odd shifts, or multiple jobs and are less able to provide attention and affection and to devote their time, energy, and resources to their children. These deficits have been associated with higher levels of externalizing behaviors and poor academic performance on children's part. Poon (2020) also supported that Children from families of low socioeconomic status (SES) tend to experience lower academic achievement than children from middle-SES families and also suggested that parental expectation, parental involvement, and child engagement may be important mediators in the relationship between SES and academic achievement.

Table 4 portrays the comparison of social skill of adolescent boys and girls across socio-economic groups. Table shows that adolescent boys of upper socio - economic group scored slightly higher (mean 34.20) than the girls (33.48) in their social skill, but further comparison revealed that "t"-tabulated (1.98) was higher than "t"-calculated (0.91). Similar to upper socio - economic group, in the middle socio - economic group as well, adolescent boys scored slightly higher (33.12) than girls (32.40) but on higher statistical comparison the t-tabulated (1.98) was found higher than t-calculated (0.74). In the lower socio - economic group, adolescent girls scored slightly higher (mean 28.08) than boy counterparts (28.44). But for this group also, "t"-tabulated (1.98) was found higher than "t"-calculated (0.33). Therefore, Results clearly illustrate that though in high and middle socio - economic

groups, boys scored little higher than girls and via-vis in lower SES but they were not significantly different in their social skill.

Finding revealed that adolescent boys and girls both were almost same in their social skill. Social skill is associated with two different factors that is individual temperament (tendency of individual to relate socially) and environment (act as agent to reinforce social skill) that encompass school, peer group, neighborhood, media, parental social cycle and social activity and culture, irrespective of gender. At the adolescence stage, peer influence play very significant role and act as source of reinforcement in developing social skill for boys and girls both. In the existing social scenario all these highlighting factors seem to be working to the same extent for both the genders across socio-economic status. Saranya and Velayudham (2008) also supported that no significant difference was existed in social skill among university boys and girls. According to Gest *et al.* (2007) girls and boys networks and social status are more similar than different in structural feature.

Conclusion:

It can be inferred from the finding that adolescents (boys and girls) belonged to upper socio-economic group and middle socio-economic groups were better in social skill level than lower socio-economic group. It is also inferred from the findings there is no significant difference found in social skill of adolescent boys and girls. Findings clearly revealed that socio-economic status is one of the important factors that affect social skill of adolescents and gender have no impact on social skill of adolescents.

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