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## Problems of youth: A study of college students in context to their gender

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### Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine gender differences, if any, in problems faced by youth in adolescence with the help of Youth Problem Inventory (YPI) designed by Mithilesh Verma. Youth Problem Inventory explores various bottlenecks experienced by youth under four main areas namely family problems, college problems, social problems and personal problems. 56 participants, 28 males and 28 females, were included in the study and completed the questionnaire. Results were calculated with the help of statistical tools like mean and t-test. The results indicated that no significant gender differences lie in family problems, college problems, social problems or personal problems of college students.

**Keywords:** Gender differences, Youth Problem Inventory, college students, social problems, college problems.

### Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine gender differences, if any, in problems faced by youth in adolescence with the help of Youth Problem Inventory (YPI) designed by Mithilesh Verma.

Youth Problem Inventory explores various bottlenecks experienced by youth under four main areas namely family problems, college problems, social problems and personal problems. 56 participants, 28 males and 28 females, were included in the study and completed the questionnaire. Results were calculated with the help of statistical tools like mean and t-test. The results indicated that no significant gender differences lie in family problems, college problems, social problems or personal problems of college students.

According to Samuel Ullman "Youth is not only a time of life, it is also a state of mind and a matter of will..." The future of any nation depends on the quality of its youth. They are treasures of human resources of nation having a lot of talent hidden in them. Adolescence is one of the important periods of life. It is characterized by innumerable and unique Problems. They pass through physiological and psychological changes with their attendant Problems. It includes both experimentation with outer world and adjustment with biological and psychosocial changes. Abraham (1974) observed that group adjustment, socio personal adjustment were found to be factors responsible for explaining total variance in the case of under achievers.

The biological changes further lead to physiological, sexual and psychosocial changes. Physiological changes include change in height, weight, and change in appearance. Sexual changes include production of sex hormone which triggers sexual desire, arousal and urge in adolescents. Psychosocial changes include formation of new identity, self-concept, and self-regulation; need to find a place in society, and expectations (Mabey, Sorensen, 1995). The difficulties include emotional problem (Dryfoos J., 1990). Up to 15 percent of individuals under the age of 18 years of age experience emotional problems (Firdous, A. Var, Mohd. Altaf Paul, Pradeep Kumar, Showkat A. Shah, 2011). In some cases they face some Problems in school and show decreased interest, negative attitude, and drop in performance and discipline problems (Rice KG, Myer AL., 1994).

Question arise that who will find time to solve their problems. Family and society are too busy to spend time and energy for them. The teachers of government managed or aided schools/colleges are deeply absorbed with their organizational problems and academic activities. Students with adequate personality adjustment performed better academically

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(Berger and Sutker, 1956). Family, which plays an important role in the personality development of adolescents, is undergoing structural, emotional and interactional transformations. It contributes to the growth and development of the society in particular and nation at large. Education, on other hand, develops the full personality of an individual by making him intelligent, learned, bold, courageous and strong in good character (Stromswold and Wren, 1948). Carson (1927) observed that on entering the college the freshman faces a number of new adjustment Problems for which he is usually uninterrupted. So, there should be right way to develop proper adjustment in the college school students to tie over all the maladies that are existing in college (Hafiz Mudasir, Shazia Majeed, 2014).

Adolescence is the most important as well as challenging period of growing up. It includes both experimentation with outer world and adjustment with biological and psychosocial changes. Most of the people see this change as a biological process but it is much social and psychological as well. The multi-dimensional nature of the concept involves a gradual transformation of a child into a new person as an adult. However, required changes in a young person during adolescence differ with culture. Adolescence is defined as the period of life between 10 and 19 years of age. And traditionally adolescence (From Latin "Adolescere" means "to grow into maturity") is viewed as beginning with onset of puberty, when sexual maturity or the ability to reproduce is attained. Adolescent period starts with puberty which is surrounded by first menstruation in girls and ejaculation in boys which signals the biological change. The biological changes further lead to physiological, sexual and psychosocial changes.

Physiological changes include change in height, weight, and change in appearance. Sexual changes include production of sex hormone which triggers sexual desire, arousal and urge in adolescents. The adolescent develops close relationship and moves from being part of a family group to being part of a peer group and to stand alone as an adult. Psychosocial changes include formation of new identity, self concept, and self regulation; need to find a place in society, and expectations. Self concept is a basic theoretical construct which is closely related to the psychosocial adjustment in adolescents. All these changes vary between individuals and may lead to different behavioral problems if not handled appropriately. The problems of adolescents are quite serious as compared to those of children. They are confused and anxious regarding the biological, psychological and social challenges they have confronted. The difficulties include emotional problems, up to 15 percent of individuals under the age of 18 years of age experience emotional problems like sudden mood changes, irritability, irresponsible behaviors, depression etc. serious enough to justify special treatment. Some other problems include familial problems like starting arguments, breaking rules or withdrawing from family; delinquency like missing school, stealing, and acts of vandalism. Substance abuse was seen as a major problem, approximately one of every four young adolescents (12 to 17 years old) report having used illicit drugs. In some cases they face some problems in school and show decreased interest, negative attitude, and drop in performance and discipline problems. Difficulties experienced by adolescents vary with age, sex and culture. Adolescence problems have a great impact on self esteem as it is the period during which a new identity is formed. It plays an important role in one's psychosocial development. One-third to one-half of adolescents struggle

with low self esteem, especially in early phase of adolescence. Self esteem is defined as a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self. Individuals with high self-esteem appear confident and are less influenced by others than individuals with low self-esteem<sup>16</sup>. Low self-esteem is significantly related to depression, suicide ideation, delinquency, aggression and antisocial behavior. It is also seen that family affluence, personality dimension of extroversion, emotional stability and openness to experience, as well as mental health and social support from family are also associated with self esteem<sup>19</sup>. It is worth mentioning that there are 315 million young people aged 10–24 years in India, representing 30 percent of the country's population which highlight the importance of adolescent for future health and development of state.

## Method

### Subject Details

A normal group of sample size 56 (28 males and 28 females) was taken. The sample comprised of undergraduate individuals aged between 19-25 years. The individuals were of various courses and were randomly selected.

### Tools

**Title of the instrument:** Youth Problem Inventory (YPI)

**Author:** Mithilesh Verma

**Language:** English

**Level:** 16-20 years of age (youth)

**Main Features:** Contains 80 statements belonging to four areas and number of subareas under each main area. The exhaustiveness of the inventory has been verified from the answer of an additional question "Do you think you have mentioned all of your problems in this inventory" at the time of standardization of the final form of YPI. The areas are as follows:

1. Family problems
2. School/college problems
3. Social problems
4. Personal problems and oversensitivity

**Uses:** It covers a sufficiently large range of all types of problems of youth. It can be conveniently used in its full form as well as in its partial form that is only for a particular area.

**Reliability:** Reliability has been found only through test-retest method. Retest was given within a short period gap ranging from 15-20 days to avoid more changes in problems as the nature of problem is dynamic. The reliability coefficient of YPI is as follows:

Areas	Reliability Coefficient
"A"	0.85
"B"	0.86
"C"	0.76
"D"	0.81
Entire Inventory	0.80
Range	0.76-0.86

**Validity:** Validity coefficient of YPI has been found with a number of standardized tests and also with certain other suitable techniques as mentioned below:

Sr. No.	Test/Techniques	Sample	Validity
1.	Problem check list Dr. N. Bhagia	764	0.75
2.	Adjustment Inventory Prof. H. Asthana	450	0.72
3.	Youth Adjustment Analyser Km. Mehru D. Bengali	400	0.68
4.	Mooney Problem check list	632	0.69
5.	Affirmative answers of the question concerning coverage of problems.	720	87%

**Time Limit:** There is no time limit for this test

**Norms:** Stanine norms available, also percentile rank and percentile band available for all the areas.

**Procedure**

Following instructions were imparted to the participants before providing them with the inventory:

The booklet contains some statements. Read them carefully. These may be entirely true, partially true or totally untrue for you. There are three boxes given against each statement, indicating that it is TRUE, PARTIALLY TRUE OR UNTRUE (FALSE). You are required to give your response by ticking one of the three boxes against a particular statement. If the statement is “entirely true” for yourself, tick the box intended for “True”. If it is “partially true” for you, then tick the box intended for “Partially True”, and if the statement is “totally untrue” for you, tick the box intended for “Untrue (False)”.

Please take care that only one box is to be checked/ticked for each statement. Rest assured your response will be kept strictly confidential. Make sure you give your response for each and every statement.

**Results**

Statistical results were computed to examine the test findings and are depicted in the following tables and graphs. Table 1 presents range, mean and standard deviation of the four variables of YPI: family problems, college problems, social problems and personal problems.

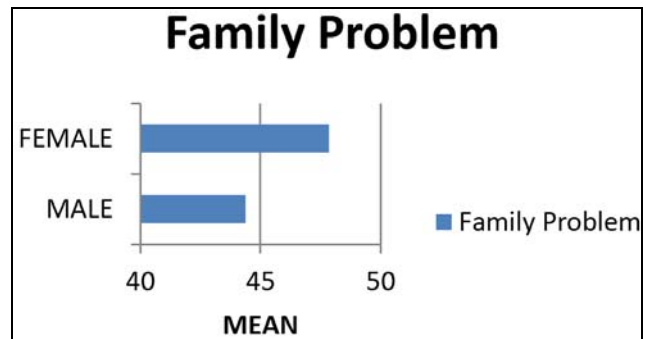
To test gender differences in youth problems, mean score of male v. female was compared graphically. Youth problem variables were also analysed with a series of t-tests of means to determine if significant differences were present.

**Table 1:** Shows Descriptive statistics of sample consisted of College students on Youth Problems Inventory (YPI) Dimensions

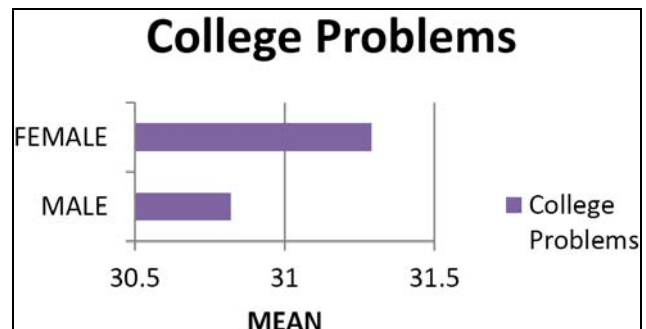
Variables	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Family Problems	56	40	31	71	46.12	12.133
College Problems	56	33	20	53	31.05	8.984
Social Problems	56	8	5	13	7.73	2.687
Personal Problems	56	48	13	61	36.11	11.778

**Table 2:** Shows Significance of Difference between Male and Female College students on Youth Problems Inventory (YPI) Dimensions

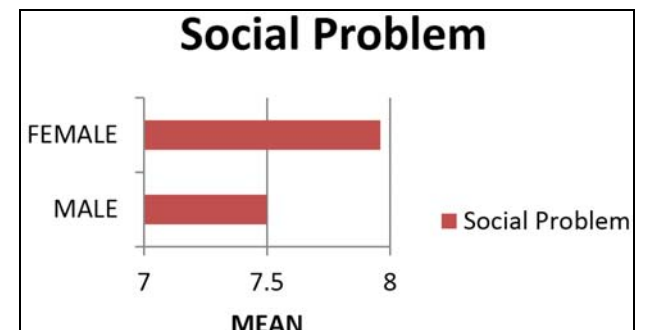
Variable	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-test
Family Problems	Male	44.39	12.004	54	-1.070
	Female	47.86	12.228		
College Problems	Male	30.82	9.064	54	-0.192
	Female	31.29	9.063		
Social Problems	Male	7.50	2.742	54	-0.643
	Female	7.96	2.659		
Personal Problems	Male	35.21	12.685	54	-0.564
	Female	37	10.954		



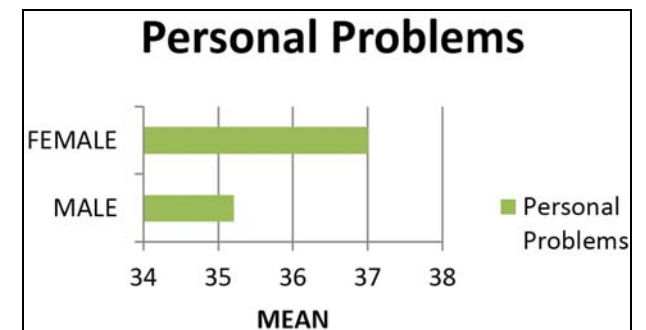
**Fig 1:** Graphical comparison of mean scores of males and females on family problems



**Fig 2:** Graphical comparison of mean scores of males and females on college problems



**Fig 3:** Graphical comparison of mean scores of males and females on social problems



**Fig 4:** Graphical comparison of mean scores of males and females on personal problems

Female participants scored 47.86 on an average on family problems which was found to be greater than that of male participants who scored 44.39 on an average (Figure 1). But no significant difference was found between the means of males and females on t-test (-1.070, Table 2) These results indicate that no gender differences exist in

family problems of college students.

Female participants scored 31.29 on an average on college problems which was found to be greater than that of male participants who scored 30.82 on an average (Figure 2). But no significant difference was found between the means of males and females on t-test (-0.192, Table 2).

These results indicate that no gender difference exists in college problems of college students.

Female participants scored 7.96 on an average on social problems which was found to be greater than that of male participants who scored 7.5 on an average (Figure 3). But no significant difference was found between the means of males and females on t-test (-0.643, Table 2).

These results indicate that no gender difference exists in social problems of college students.

Female participants scored 37 on an average on personal problems which was found to be greater than that of male participants who scored 35.21 on an average (Figure 4). But no significant difference was found between the means of males and females on t-test (-0.564, Table 2).

These results indicate that no gender differences exist in personal problems of college students.

### Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has highlighted four main findings:

- 1) There exists no gender difference in family problems of college students. Having said that, it is clear from the findings that both male and female students experience similar amount of family problems. Family problems are not a function of gender difference and affect both males and females in similar manner.
- 2) There exists no gender difference in college problems of college students. While time spent at college is a fond memory and a happy experience for most, the student life is not without its rough patches. Everyone's situation is unique, but there are a few problems that almost all college students deal with at least once during their time at school.
- 3) There exists no gender difference in social problems of college students. Both males and females experience similar issues while in college, be it social adjustment linked to home and school, need to avoid maladjustment, need to make good first impression, achieving popularity, problems with friends and companions or problem of accepting or refusing an initiation.
- 4) There exists no gender difference in personal problems of college students. Adolescence is a dynamic time for both males and females both in terms of psychological and physiological changes. At the college level personal problems of students are as significant and as frequent as in other areas of living, irrespective of their gender.

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