



SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG SCHOOL-GOING ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN WEST BENGAL: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *The present study aimed to examine the Social Support of school-going adolescent students and to analyze its differences across selected categorical variables. A quantitative research approach was adopted using the descriptive survey method. The study was conducted on a sample of 552 Class XI students (aged 16-17 years) selected through multistage random sampling from different districts of West Bengal. Data were collected using a standardized Social Support Scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, Kurtosis) and inferential statistics, including t-test and one-way ANOVA. Social Support was found to be normally distributed, with no significant differences based on gender or family income. However, higher Social Support was observed among non-hostelers, students participating in co-curricular activities, and those involved in social organizations, emphasizing the role of social engagement in enhancing adolescents' support systems.*

Keywords: *Social Support, Adolescents, Co-curricular Activities, Social Organizations, Descriptive Survey.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial stage of human development characterized by significant physical, emotional, and social changes. During this period, Social Support plays a vital role in shaping the psychological well-being and overall development of individuals. Social Support refers to the assistance, care, and encouragement received from family, friends, teachers, and society, which helps individuals cope with stress and challenges. Social support is a broad construct comprising both the social structure of an individual's life and the specific functions served by various interpersonal relationships. Structural aspects of support are often measured by assessing social integration, indicating the extent to which an individual is a part of social networks. Researchers usually divide functional support into two domains: perceived support, or people's subjective construal of the support they believe to be available to them, and received (or enacted) support, which is aid actually rendered by other persons. Perceived and received support take a number of forms. Informational support involves the provision of recommendations, advice, and other helpful information. Tangible (or instrumental) support is the furnishing of financial, material, or physical assistance, such as the provision of money or labor. Emotional (or appraisal) support involves the expression of affection, empathy, caring, and so on. Belonging (or companionship) support creates a sense of belonging and can involve the presence or availability of others for social engagement. Social support is a construct with multiple dimensions that can be approached at multiple levels. Findings from a variety of disciplines and recognition of its bidirectional nature can help map the construct. Bidirectionality is a process that requires attention to moderators, such as, gender, cultural change, and personal development, together with the relationship between the receiver and the provider of support. Both close personal ties and weaker ones that often are part of community involvement need to be taken into account in order to map the construct comprehensively.

In the context of school-going adolescents, Social Support becomes even more important as they navigate academic pressures, peer relationships, and identity formation. Adequate Social Support contributes to better adjustment, higher self-esteem, and improved academic performance, whereas lack of support may lead to stress, anxiety, and maladjustment. Various factors such as gender, residential status, participation in co-curricular activities, involvement in social organizations, and family income may influence the level of Social Support among adolescents. Understanding these differences is essential for educators, policymakers, and parents to create supportive environments for students.



Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the Social Support of school-going adolescent students and to analyze its variation across different socio-demographic and institutional factors.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Edwards et al. (2001) conducted “Stress, negative social exchange, and health symptoms in university students.” They investigated the role of social support and negative social exchange in understanding the relationship between stress and health among university students. The analysis revealed that negative social exchange, such as conflict, criticism, or unsupportive behaviors, explained a greater proportion of variance in physical health complaints than either life stress, daily hassles, or perceived social support.

Menagi et al. (2008) studied “Religiousness and College Student Alcohol Use: Examining the Role of Social Support.” The study aimed to examine whether emotional social support mediated the relationship between religiousness and alcohol use among college students. The findings showed that both religious commitment and coping were linked to lower alcohol use, while social support was not a mediator, indicating religious factors independently protect against drinking.

Mahanta & Aggarwal (2013) conducted “Effect of Perceived Social Support on Life Satisfaction of University Students”. The objective of the present study was to study the effects of perceived social support on the life satisfaction of university students. Result indicated that there were no gender differences in perceived social support from family, however a significant difference was found in respect of the perceived social support from friends.

King et al. (2014) conducted “A study of stress, social support, and perceived happiness among college students.” This study aimed to examine how these variables interact in shaping students’ overall well-being. The findings showed that lower happiness was linked to higher stress and weaker relationships. Most students reported high stress and rarely used coping strategies, while strong emotional bonds with parents and friends improved happiness and reduced stress.

Rueger, Malecki, & Demaray (2016) studied “A Meta-Analytic Review of the Association Between Perceived Social Support and Depression in Childhood and Adolescence.” The study examines the relationship between perceived social support and depressive symptoms in children and adolescents. The findings revealed a significant negative association between perceived social support and depressive symptoms, indicating that higher levels of support from family, peers, and teachers were consistently related to lower levels of depression.

Alavijeh et al. (2017) studied “Perceived social support among students of medical sciences.” The study aimed to examine the overall level of perceived social support among medical sciences students. The study found generally low perceived social support among students. Males reported higher support than females, with differences across faculty and ethnicity. No significant links were found with personal or family factors.

Bhochhibhoya et al. (2017) studied “Sources of Social Support Among International College Students in the United States”. The main objective of the study was to operationalize different sources of social support and evaluate determinants of mental health among international students. The study revealed that there was significant difference between different type of social support system with family, friends and others.

Nautiyal et al. (2017) conducted a study titled “Perceived Social Support of Adolescents from Rural and Urban Settings”. The study aimed to compare perceived social support among adolescents in rural and urban environments and examine its association with psychological outcomes. The findings indicated that urban adolescents perceived higher levels of social support, particularly from family and peers, than rural adolescents.

Singh & Ratra (2022) conducted “Perceived Social Support for Education Among Late Adolescents: A systematic review.” The study examined perceived social support and adolescents’ academic and psychological outcomes. The study found that perceived social support enhances adolescents’ academic motivation and well-being, while lower support among rural and underrepresented groups highlights the need for targeted interventions.

Dubey & Soni (2023) conducted a study titled “The Effect of Friend Support and Family Support on the Adjustment of First-Year College Students.” The study aimed to examine the role of parental and peer support in students’ adjustment during their first year of college. Result indicates that both supportive friends and family contribute to better adjustment, improved well-being, and reduced stress among first-year college students.



Priya (2023) studied “Relationship between Perceived Social Support and Loneliness among Indian College Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic”. The study aimed to assess the levels of loneliness, and its relationship with perceived social support among Indian college students during the COVID-19. The study found that 30% of students reported severe loneliness, 50% moderate, and 20% none. A strong negative correlation ($r = -.690, p < .01$) showed that higher social support reduces loneliness, with no differences by gender or discipline.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study area has been considered to be unique and different from earlier reviewed research. After studying and analysing the above-mentioned studies, the researcher found a research gap and identify the title as “**Social Support Among School-Going Adolescent Students in West Bengal: A Comparative Analysis**”.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the Social Support of school-going adolescent students.
2. To examine the difference in Social Support between male and female adolescent students.
3. To compare the Social Support of hostelers and non-hostelers adolescent students.
4. To study the difference in Social Support between participating and non-participating students in co-curricular activities.
5. To analyze the difference in Social Support between students involved and not involved in social organizations.
6. To examine the differences in Social Support among adolescent students belonging to different family income groups (Low, Middle, and High).

5. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The hypotheses of the present study are as follows:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean score of Social Support between Male and Female school-going Adolescent students.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean score of Social Support between Hostelers and Non-hostelers school-going Adolescent students.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Social Support between participating and non-participating school-going Adolescent students in co-curricular activities.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the mean score of Social Support between school-going Adolescent students who are Involved and those who are Not-involved in Social Organizations.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Social Support among school-going Adolescent students from families belonging to Low, Middle, and High- income Groups.

6. METHODOLOGY

Method: The study adopted a quantitative approach using the descriptive survey method to examine the Social Support of school-going adolescent students. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics inferential statistics.

Variables involved in the study: In the present study, one main variable and five categorical variables were identified for the research purpose. These variables are as follows-

Main Variable:

- ✓ Social Support

Categorical Variables:

- ✓ Gender (Male / Female)
- ✓ Residential Status (Hosteler / Non-hosteler)
- ✓ Participation in Co-curricular Activities (Participating / Non-participating)
- ✓ Involvement in Social Organizations (Involved / Not-involved)
- ✓ Family Income Groups (Low / Middle / High)

Population: The population of the study comprised school-going mid-adolescent students (aged 16-17 years) studying in Class XI under the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education and West Bengal Board of Madrasa Education in West Bengal during the 2024- 2025 academic session. The estimated population was approximately 900,000 students.



Sample: A sample of 552 students was selected for the study. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane’s formula (1967) at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, which suggested a minimum sample of 400; however, the sample size was increased to enhance reliability.

Sampling Technique: A simple random sampling technique was employed. West Bengal was divided into five administrative divisions, from which one district was randomly selected from each division. Subsequently, four schools were randomly selected from each district, resulting in a total of 20 schools. Data were initially collected from 615 students, and after data cleaning, 552 valid responses were retained for final analysis.

Tools and Techniques: Data were collected using a self-constructed and standardized Social Support Scale. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, Kurtosis) and inferential statistics, including t-test and one-way ANOVA.

7. DATA ANALYSIS

Researchers have analyzed data according to the research objectives-

Research Objective- 01

The first objective was achieved on the basis of descriptive statistics. Histograms were also used to examine the normality of the data. The overall descriptive statistics related to Social Support are presented in the tables below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of SS Scores of Adolescents

Descriptives Statistic		Statistic	Std. Error	
Social Support	Mean	105.5743	.51741	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	104.5579	
		Upper Bound	106.5906	
	5% Trimmed Mean	105.6997		
	Median	106.0000		
	Variance	147.777		
	Std. Deviation	12.15634		
	Minimum	70.00		
	Maximum	145.00		
	Range	75.00		
	Interquartile Range	15.00		
	Skewness	-.212	.104	
Kurtosis	.319	.208		

The above table shows that the Social Support scores of Mean (105.57) and Median (106.00) are close to each other. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the measures of central tendency. On the other hand, the value of Skewness (-.212), which indicates it is Negatively Skewed, and the value of Kurtosis (.319), indicates it is greater than the normal value (0.263), means the distribution is Platykurtic. The statistics proved that the deviation does not differ significantly from the normal values. So, the distribution level has scored in a rule near normal. The following graphical presentations make it more evident.

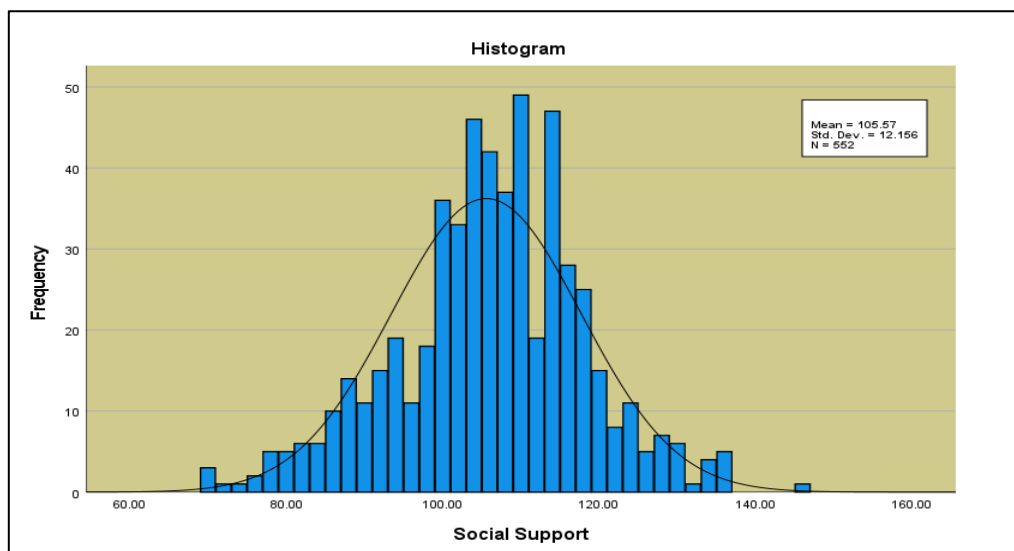


Figure 1: Histogram of Social Support Score with Normal Curve

Table 2: Adolescents SS of Various Categorical Variables

Variables	Mean	SE	Median	Mode	SD	Var	Sk	Ku	Range
Male	105.61	0.80	106.00	113.00	13.15	172.92	-0.11	0.07	75.00
Female	105.54	0.67	106.00	103.00	11.12	123.70	-0.37	0.57	65.00
Hosteller	103.77	0.89	103.00	103.00	11.63	135.37	-0.21	0.38	63.00
Non-Hosteller	106.39	0.63	107.00	110.00	12.31	151.63	-0.24	0.33	75.00
Participant	106.32	0.59	107.00	103.00	11.82	139.68	-0.30	0.32	66.00
Non- Participant	103.47	1.07	104.00	106.00	12.88	165.85	0.05	0.50	73.00
Involved	106.95	0.72	108.00	114.00	12.27	150.50	-0.40	0.37	66.00
Not- Involved	104.08	0.73	104.00	103.00	11.88	141.05	-0.02	0.51	75.00
Low Income	105.06	0.71	106.00	103.00	12.47	155.62	-0.29	0.45	75.00
Middle Income	106.55	0.86	107.00	99.00	11.62	135.02	-0.11	0.24	66.00
High Income	105.23	1.57	105.00	113.00	12.13	147.03	0.06	-0.31	56.00

The Mean scores of the Adolescent students as shown in Table 5.7, proved that with respect to the SS of Adolescent students, differed in strata. Adolescent students belonging to the **Involved** category had the highest mean value (103.47), whereas the category of **Non- Participant** had the lowest mean value (103.47). The mean value of all is almost close.

Research Objective- 02

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean score of Social Support between Male and Female school-going Adolescent students.

Table 3: t-test of SS between Male and Female Adolescents

Group	N	Mean	SD	MD	SE _D	df	t- Stat	p-value
Male	273	105.61	13.15	0.07	1.04	550	0.06 ^{NS}	0.95
Female	279	105.54	11.12					

NS= Not Significant

Analysis: From the above table, it is observed that the mean score of Social Support for Male Adolescent students is 105.61, whereas that for Female Adolescent students is 105.54. The computed t-value is 0.06, which does not exceed the critical t-values at both the 5% level (1.96) and the 1% level (2.58) of significance (0.06 < 1.96 & 2.58). Additionally, the obtained p-value is 0.95, which is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$).



Interpretation: Hence, the result is not statistically significant at both levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which states that there is no significant difference in the mean score of Social Support between Male and Female school-going Adolescent students, is accepted and the alternative hypothesis does not exist.

Research Objective- 03

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean score of Social Support between Hostellers and Non-hostelers school-going Adolescent students.

Table 4 *t-test of SS between Hostellers and Non-hostelers Adolescents*

Group	N	Mean	SD	M _D	SE _D	df	t- Stat	p-value
Hostellers	172	103.77	11.63	2.62	1.11	550	2.35*	0.02
Non-hostelers	380	106.39	12.31					

*Significant at 0.05 level

Analysis: From the above table, it is observed that the mean score of Social Support for Hostellers Adolescent students is 103.77, whereas that for Non-hostelers Adolescent students is 106.39. The computed *t*-value is 2.35, which exceeds the critical *t*-values at the 5% level (1.96), but does not exceed the critical value at the 1% level (2.58) of significance ($2.35 > 1.96$ & $2.35 < 2.58$). Additionally, the obtained *p*-value is 0.02, which is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

Interpretation: Hence, the result is statistically significant at 5% level. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis exists. As the mean score for Non-hostelers Students is higher than that of Hostellers Students, it can be concluded that Non-hostelers Adolescents exhibit higher Social Support than their Hostellers counterparts.

Research Objective- 04

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Social Support between participating and non-participating school-going Adolescent students in co-curricular activities.

Table 5: *t-test of SS between Participating and Non-participating Adolescents*

Group	N	Mean	SD	MD	SE _D	df	t- Stat	p-value
Participating	408	106.32	11.82	2.84	1.17	550	2.42*	0.02
Not-participating	144	103.47	12.88					

*Significant at 0.05 level

Analysis: From the above table, it is observed that the mean score of Social Support for Participating Adolescent students is 106.32, whereas that for Non-participating Adolescent students is 103.47. The computed *t*-value is 2.42, which exceeds the critical *t*-values at the 5% level (1.96) and but does not exceed the 1% level (2.58) of significance ($2.42 > 1.96$ & $2.42 < 2.58$). Additionally, the obtained *p*-value is 0.03, which is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

Interpretation: Hence, the result is statistically significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis exists. As the mean score for Participating Students is higher than that of Not-participating Students, it can be concluded that Participating Adolescents exhibit a higher level of Social Support compared to their Not-participating peer counterparts.

Research Objective- 05

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the mean score of Social Support between school-going Adolescent students who are Involved and those who are Not-involved in Social Organizations.

Table 6: *t-test of SS between Involved and Not-involved in Social Organizations*

Group	N	Mean	SD	MD	SED	df	t- Stat	p-value
Involved	288	106.95	12.27	2.87	1.03	550	2.79**	0.00
Not-involved	264	104.08	11.88					

**Significant at 0.01 level



Analysis: From the above table, it is observed that the mean score of Social Support for Involved Adolescent students is 106.95, whereas that for Not-involved Adolescent students is 104.08. The computed *t*-value is 2.79, which exceeds the critical *t*-values at both the 5% level (1.96) and the 1% level (2.58) of significance ($2.79 > 1.96 \ \& \ 2.58$). Additionally, the obtained *p*-value is 0.00, which is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

Interpretation: Hence, the result is very statistically significant at both levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{04}), is rejected and the alternative hypothesis exists. As the mean score for Involved Students is higher than that of Not-involved Students, it concluded that Involved Adolescents exhibit a higher level of Social Support compared to their Not-involved peers.

Research Objective- 06

H_{05} : There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Social Support among school-going Adolescent students from families belonging to Low, Middle, and High- income Groups.

Table 7: ANOVA of SS among different Family Income Groups

Data Summary	Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE _D	Variance	Sum
	Low Income	308	105.06	1.47	0.71	155.62	32,357.00
	Middle Income	184	106.55	11.62	0.86	135.02	19,606.00
	High Income	60	105.23	12.13	1.57	147.03	6,314.00
ANOVA Summary	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
	Between Groups	266.70	2.00	133.35	0.90 ^{NS}	0.41	3.01
	Within Groups	81,158.25	549.00	147.83			
	Total	81,424.95	551				

NS= Not Significant

Analysis: From the table, it is observed that the mean score of Social Support for students belonging to different Family Income Groups (Low, Middle, and High) are 105.06, 106.55 and 105.23 respectively. The computed *F*-value is 0.90, which does not exceed the critical *F*-values at both the 5% level (3.01) and the 1% level (approx. 4.70) of significance ($0.90 < 3.01 \ \& \ 4.70$). Additionally, the obtained *p*-value is 0.41, which is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$).

Interpretation: Hence, the result is statistically not significant at both levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{05}), is accepted and the alternative hypothesis does not exist. This implies that Family Income Groups does not have a statistically significant influence on the Social Support of Adolescent students.

8. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the Social Support of school-going adolescent students and its variation across different categorical variables. The findings indicated that the overall Social Support of adolescents was found to be normally distributed, suggesting a balanced level of support among the students. The study revealed that gender does not significantly influence Social Support, indicating that both male and female students receive similar levels of support. However, significant differences were observed with respect to residential status, participation in co-curricular activities, and involvement in social organizations. Non-hostelers, students participating in co-curricular activities, and those involved in social organizations demonstrated higher levels of Social Support compared to their counterparts. This highlights the importance of social interaction and engagement in enhancing support systems among adolescents. On the other hand, family income was not found to have a significant impact on Social Support, suggesting that support is not solely dependent on economic background but also on social and environmental factors.

Overall, the study emphasizes the need to encourage students’ participation in co-curricular and social activities and to strengthen institutional and social support systems to promote the well-being of adolescents.

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