

# *On the Cusp of Youth*

A Collection of Poems for  
Adolescents and Youth

**Dr. Ragini Kulkarni**



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# On the Cusp of Youth

A Collection of Poems for Adolescents and Youth



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## **Dr. Geetanjali Sachdeva**

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National Institute for Research in Reproductive and Child Health, (NIRRCH), one of the premier institutes of ICMR, was established in 1970 in Mumbai. To celebrate the birth centenary of Dr. Shanta Rao (Our founder Director) and her legacy, ICMR-NIRRCH is organizing international conference on “Kaleidoscopic Insights into Reproductive and Child Health” from 23<sup>rd</sup>- 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023. This conference would provide a platform for researchers and various stakeholders to interact and share their perspectives on various reproductive and child health issues.

Adolescence, a complex stage in the journey of life, is marked by emotional turmoil, physical transition and excitement to enter into a new world. It is essential that those entering into this stage are imparted appropriate information related to their health including sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, mental health and risks posed by various life style factors.

Rashtriya Kishori Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) implemented in various districts and states is addressing this effectively. Six priority areas of RKSK are to improve nutrition, improve sexual and reproductive health, enhance mental health, prevent injuries and violence, prevent substance misuse and address emerging non-communicable diseases in adolescents. Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH) is one of the thrust areas of research undertaken by our institute. Information, Education and communication (IEC) is a crucial component in implementation of interventions to improve ARSH. To address this issue, our scientist, Dr. Ragini Kulkarni, has composed poems on some of the adolescent health issues.

As a part of the birth centenary celebrations of our Founder Director, Dr. Shanta S. Rao, I am very happy to present a compilation of poems “On the Cusp of Youth” which can be used by researchers, program managers and all those who are engaged in addressing adolescent health through IEC activities. I am confident that these poetic messages will have more impact on our communities, especially adolescents and youth, in terms of creating awareness about various health issues.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geetanjali Sachdeva". The signature is written in a cursive style.



## **Dr. Ragini Kulkarni**

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My favorite hobby is writing poems. I have inherited the art of writing poems from my mother.

I am not a great poetess, but poetry touches the mind faster than the prose. I have made a small effort to give information and some important messages in the form of poems on commonly encountered problems in adolescents and youth such as nutrition, peer pressure, addiction, mental health problems and role of parents.

Today's youth are tomorrow's citizens. Taking care of adolescent health is the need of the hour. As this topic is sensitive, it should be put forth in a language understood and liked by common people. It is very important that problems in this age and serious and complicated questions arising out of these should be understood by teachers, parents, and other senior members.

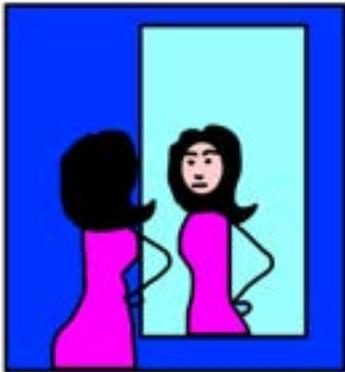
I hope that these poems will be liked by everyone and these will be useful for improving health awareness among the people.

R.Kulkarni

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## Adolescence

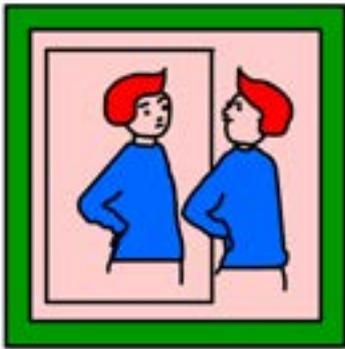


For adolescence and youth let's understand the definition,  
As given by the World Health Organization.

Adolescents are between 10-19 years of age,  
Youth are between 15-24 years of age.

Adolescence is the boundary between childhood and  
adulthood,

Marked by physical, mental, emotional changes and  
variation in mood.



To prove oneself in this age, each one is desiring,  
To achieve their aims, adolescents are always aspiring.

Use of abundant energy should be done in this age  
necessarily,

Bad habits can result in serious consequences  
subsequently.

Adolescents have in their mind a lot of curiosity,  
They acquire information to satisfy their anxiety.

Due to incomplete and wrong information, they commit  
mistake,

Unknowingly do immoral acts and put values at stake.

There are many problems, one of which is angry nature,  
Others are sexual problems, addiction and peer pressure.  
Also early marriage, pregnancy and anemia in subsequent  
future.

## Adolescent's Thoughts



In my mind innumerable questions are rising,  
Changes in body also are occurring,  
Am I the only one who's facing this?  
Whom should I ask, I'm clueless about this.

Parents consider I'm not a grown up still,  
In every little thing, they hold hand against my will,  
I keep telling them frequently,  
I wish to think independently,  
Am I the only one who's facing this?  
Whom should I ask, I'm clueless about this.

Media channels on adolescent health are abundant,  
Friends give information but something different.  
To discuss with parents, I'm not comfortable at all,  
How'll they react, I'm not able to understand at all.  
Am I the only one who's facing this?  
Whom should I ask, I'm clueless about this.

Very happy to hear about the availability of adolescent clinic,  
A ray of hope I can now visualize, there's no need to panic,  
Once I'll visit this clinic surely,  
All my questions will be answered completely,  
And all doubts clarified properly.

# Importance of Nutrition in Adolescents

Let's see in adolescents the importance of nutrition,  
Towards which every adolescent must pay attention.

Growth occurs in this period rapidly,  
Diet must hence provide nutrition appropriately.

When you take nutritious diet twice a day,  
Only then enough energy will come your way.

Fast food daily and in excessive amount should be avoided,  
Energy needed for this age will not then be provided.

If you include in your diet, green leafy vegetables, jaggery and dates,  
Proper amount of iron it'll give, resulting in good iron absorption rates.

For iron absorption, Vitamin C is also essential,  
Hence amla, lemon intake is beneficial.

Calcium rich foods, please remember properly,  
Milk, curd, ragi, include in your diet judiciously.

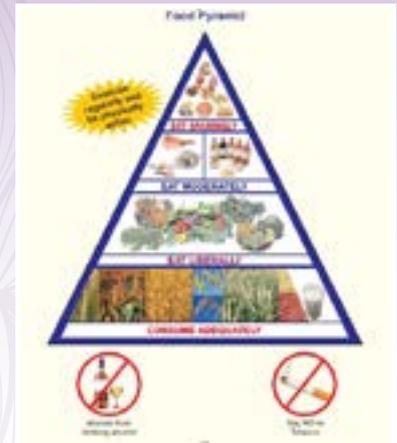
This will benefit a lot to keep your body healthy,  
Bones will be strong and proper growth will occur yearly.

Proteins make the muscles strong and powerful,  
Spouted beans, pulses, soyabean for this are useful.

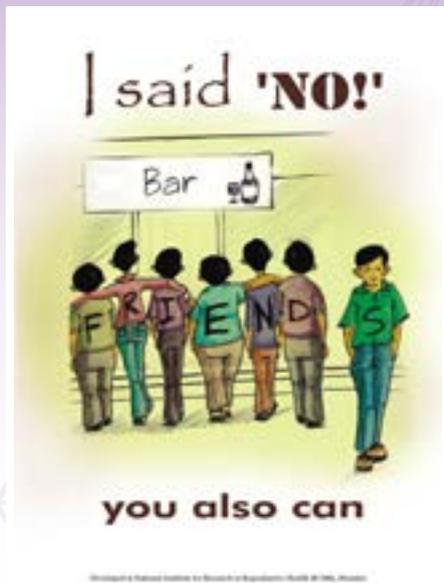
Be aware, carbohydrates are the main component of diet,  
Take fats also, but only to a limited extent.

"I'll take daily nutritious diet", decide this firmly,  
Immunity will improve and diseases will reduce remarkably.

Understand nutrition's importance and impart to others this information,  
Be tomorrow's healthy citizens and to country give your contribution.



## Peer Pressure



Very sensitive is an adolescent's mental situation,  
They try to simulate their peers in every situation.

Enormous peer pressure is on them exerted,  
They're unable to think that bad things must be averted.

When my peer is doing something, it's right definitely,  
If others instruct them, then they take it inappropriately.

They indulge in bad habits to please their peers initially,  
Later, they bow to addiction and are ruined completely.

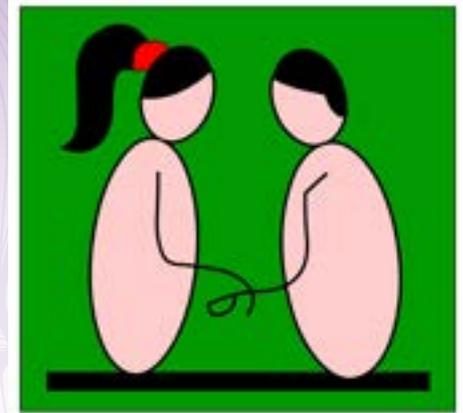
It is difficult to free oneself from this addiction,  
Mind agrees but body refuses to accept freeness from addiction.

A very useful solution for this is existing,  
Life skills you should be imbibing and using.

Many people will help you to free yourself from addiction,  
But self-help is essential; others will only do your motivation.

Learn to say "No" for bad things, it'll show you're mature,  
Don't fall prey to this habit due to peer pressure.

## Pre-Marital Counseling



For making the married life of a to-be couple happy and satisfying,  
It's important to empower them with pre-marital counseling.

Don't start married life with wrong and incomplete information,  
It's necessary to understand counselor's advice by both in this situation.

Trust, sincerity, understanding, and sacrifice are the main pillars of married life,  
Sorrows will be very far, if followed strictly by both husband and wife.

Ego is the biggest enemy in this relation,  
Don't have it and become its slave in any situation.

Medical check-up before marriage for both must be done necessarily,  
Presence of any disease must be informed to the partner essentially.

Marriage is a pure and unbreakable bond between two persons,  
Don't break this, unless there are some very serious reasons.

Don't change yourselves as per foreign customs,  
We all need to conserve Indian values and traditions.

Avail counseling services before marriage definitely,  
And make your married life successful and lively.

Communicate on sexual issues with the counselor freely,  
What is told about contraceptive methods listen carefully,  
Clear all doubts in your mind and get all your questions answered satisfactorily.

## Early Marriage



Let the bud transform into flower fully,  
This is a thing which occurs naturally.

If more load is put on it, it will bend completely,  
Justifiable it is to let it blossom completely.

Ill-effects on health will occur due to early marriage,  
Allow her all round development, stop such marriage.

Don't insist for pregnancy in tender age,  
Don't go against nature and encourage early marriage.

Allow her education, let her be self-sufficient,  
Decide to educate her and to make her independent.

Then definitely she'll blossom, grow and be healthy,  
And will be capable of giving birth to a healthy baby.

Come on let's decide in mind firmly,  
"We will not encourage girl's marriage early",  
We'll then give her real happiness in life and prosperity.  
And bring about this change in society.

## Anemia in Pregnancy



If childbearing occurs in a tender age,  
Girl's health deteriorates with fast pace.

If no spacing done between children at least three yearly,  
Her condition worsens and weakness remains continuously.

In this period comparatively more is iron requirement,  
However, by mother this cannot be met.

Such a disease is anemia in pregnancy,  
she will give birth to low birth weight baby.

If not given treatment, in proper time for this ailment.  
Mortality may occur at such tender age due to this ailment.

Marriage and first child in proper age has a deep impact,  
It's the solution for anemia, it's a known fact.

Keep spacing of at least three years between two children,  
This will give mother and child protection.

If nutritious diet and iron is taken regularly,  
She'll not have iron deficiency, we can say this surely.

Birth of low birth weight and weak babies will then be prevented,  
Maternal and child mortality in the country will be averted.

## Seven Vows for Safe Motherhood



For motherhood, please take seven vows that are important,  
Understand for this, seven things that are important.

The first vow is at the earliest you must get registered,  
If you miss periods and motherhood is expected.

Second vow is “Minimum hundred iron tablets I’ll be taking”,  
Also “ Blood grouping and HIV test I’ll be doing”.

Third vow you always remember properly,  
Minimum three ANC visits to health centre are necessary.

Fourth vow is tetanus toxoid injection you should remember,  
Two doses for first and one for second or a child thereafter.

Delivery in health centre makes mother and child healthy,  
Take this fifth vow, plan and act accordingly.

Sixth vow should be remembered by mothers properly,  
Breastfeeding after birth and for first six months exclusively.

Seventh vow is significant after delivery of baby,  
Contraceptives after taking doctors advice should be used necessarily.

Take these seven vows of safe motherhood with determination,  
Ensure self and your baby’s protection.

## Contraceptive Methods



Use contraceptive methods regularly,  
Keep spacing between three children at least three yearly.

Use oral pills as a method of contraception,  
Without forgetting take one daily for pregnancy prevention.

For newly wed couples oral pills and condoms are important,  
After one child use copper-T and for it don't be resistant.

Copper-T is such a method for postponement of pregnancy,  
It's fitted on fifth to seventh day of menstruation preferably.

There are many misconceptions and myths for using this method,  
Take complete information from doctor/health worker about this method.

Get yourself examined before you get fitted with this device,  
You can get it removed also if any problems arise.

Obtain complete information about temporary methods of contraception,  
Their regular and consistent use is essential take this into consideration,  
Keep your family limited and life happy and full of satisfaction.

## Emergency Contraceptive Pills



How did this happen accidentally,  
Both committed mistake of unprotected intercourse eventually.

Responsible behavior was lacking in both totally,  
Both couldn't realize that they didn't want a child presently.  
Used a condom as they didn't want child presently,  
But it broke, during the act unknowingly.

Forgot to take oral pills for three days consecutively,  
Unable to sleep at night, restless she is continuously.

Sexual abuse or rape done with inhumanness,

Circumstances have created environment of helplessness.

Do not panic in any of the above circumstances,

You can avoid pregnancy in the above mentioned circumstances.

Take emergency contraceptive pills in such situation,

And get rid of unwanted pregnancy in such condition.

In above circumstances, within 72 hours take the tablet.

Understanding is necessary that these pills do not cause abortion,

They start working before the occurrence of fertilization.

Available these tablets are in the medical shops /pharmacies,

You'll get free of cost in the government centres and dispensaries.

For reproductive tract infections and AIDS, use other methods of prevention,

As for these diseases emergency contraceptive pills do not give protection.

Only in emergency situations take these pills,

Do not take them as regular contraceptive pills.

Make use of these pills as a boon with proper utilization,

Give your contribution for reducing unwanted pregnancy and abortion.

## HIV/AIDS

Lets understand about AIDS which is a serious ailment,  
For complete cure of which there's no treatment.

When HIV virus enters in the body,  
Disease symptoms are not seen immediately as it lies dormant in the body.  
In some persons for six months, while in some for eight to ten years,  
It has a prolonged duration, stays in the body for several years.

In the blood, one virus replicates and innumerable viruses start circulating,  
Individual's immunity, quite considerably, they start reducing.  
Tuberculosis, Diarrhoea and other infectious diseases,  
HIV infected individual has to face these diseases.

AIDS does not spread by shaking hands or by touching,  
By taking meals with infected persons or with him staying.

Conducting tests for HIV in blood is necessary,  
Also to treat HIV infected mother is necessary.

With multiple partners avoid sexual relation,  
For needles and syringe supply ensure sterilization,  
Thus we'll take steps towards HIV/AIDS prevention.

Don't behave with HIV infected persons in a stigmatized manner,  
Their state of mind should be cared for by the society in a delicate manner.

Free of cost in government dispensaries is these medicines availability,  
They should remember to take these medicines with regularity.

These medicines lessen the suffering of these persons,  
Even though not cured fully, quality of life is improved of these persons.



## Sexual Abuse



If woman falls prey to sexual abuse, she becomes tragic,  
Unless she speaks she'll suffer silently and will be in panic.

Don't be silent, express all your feelings,  
If you don't raise your voice you'll have more sufferings.

Share your feelings with someone definitely,  
Don't hesitate, take help of law fearlessly.

Obtain complete information on woman's rights and make its use,  
If you are exposed to seductive songs, expressions and sexual abuse.  
Don't tolerate this, laws are existing against such abuse.

If unfortunately any brutal person has done rape,  
Emergency Contraceptive pills she can take.

## Save the Girl Child



The sex of the child is dependent on male,  
But if daughter is born, often blame is put on female.

Knowing that it's a female fetus,  
Some couples start efforts to end this fetus.  
Thus abortion is done before birth of this fetus.

Girl child is also valuable, don't do such act,  
Nature's balance will be affected, this is a fact.

Don't deprive from her the right of living,  
To come out and see this beautiful world, she is also wishing.

In today's era, girls are progressing equally as boys,  
Still why majority people still insist only for boys?

Some families give preference to boys family's successor as a support in old age,  
Girls take care of their parents in the same way,  
This has to be agreed upon in today's age.

Females have the eligibility to give birth,  
Don't kill the female fetus and insult her and humanity,  
Don't discriminate between girls and boys, treat them with equity.

## Role of Parents

Potter gives beautiful shape by moulding mud which is wet,  
You've to imbibe values in your children and be their life's architect.

It'll not be moulded, if the mud is dry,  
If there's Lack of discipline in childhood,  
In later years it'll be of no use, no matter how much you try.

Don't lose your temper before hearing to your children,  
Don't unnecessarily scold them, you must also learn to listen.

Don't bombard them with advises and suggestions,  
Give respect also to their thoughts and decisions.

Times have changed, understand this,  
"This was not in our times" It's no use saying this.

Infront of others, don't point out their mistakes,  
When they're alone, scold them for their mistakes.

Converse with them on sexual issues and sexuality,  
Without keeping in mind any thoughts guilty.

Remember this is a natural thing, there's no need of anxiety.

Incomplete information on sexual issues can be dangerous,  
Imparting complete medical knowledge will be advantageous.

Make them cautious in pre-youth period by giving sex education,  
They would avoid wrong things if you empower them with this information.



## Message for Adolescents and Youth

Life doesn't end with failure in any way,  
Why worry about "What will people say?"  
Though stricken with grief currently,  
Happiness will come for you in future definitely,  
"If you've courage, God will help you" how do you forget this in life?  
Why refrain from unlimited happiness for present grief and end your life?

Though sunset occurs, sunrise also occurs daily,  
Optimistic person never dies, this is life's reality.

**Keep struggling with problems; don't be defeated in life,  
Atleast try to experience happiness, as only once, we get life.**

Parents bring you up facing innumerable difficulties,  
They always strive so that you're away from miseries.

In future you're only their support and will give them backing,  
Don't end everything in some moments without even thinking.



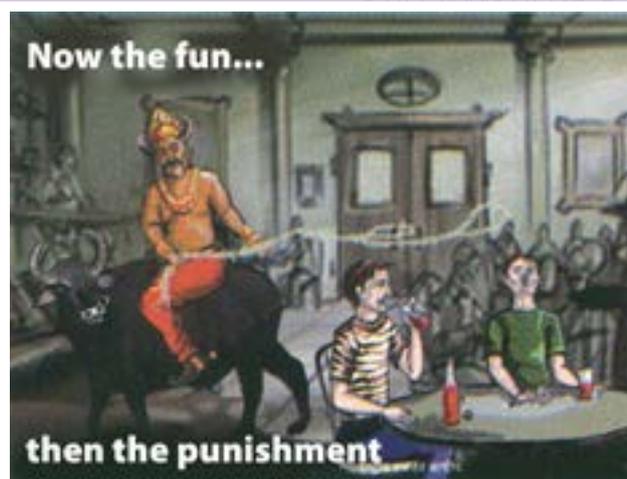
If suicidal thoughts peep in your mind remember their hard work and perspiration,  
Be strong and courageous; don't surrender yourselves to such situation,  
Remember the ideal of "Rose flower smiling in thorns" in life,  
**Keep struggling with problems; don't be defeated in life,  
Atleast try to experience happiness, as only once, we get life.**

For any problem suicide is not a solution,  
You'll end your life but relatives will have intolerable pain in such situation.  
Lifelong they'll suffer due to this and have lack of zeal,  
Marks will forever remain in mind, though somehow wounds will heal.

If you survive, you'll prove yourself, you'll have opportunity,  
If you end yourself, you'll be called a coward, no other possibility.

"Where there is a will there is a way" carve it on your heart forever in life,  
**Keep struggling with problems; don't be defeated in life,  
Atleast try to experience happiness, as only once, we get life.**

# Addiction



It's a known fact that biggest enemy of man is addiction,  
It makes man slave, health deteriorates, fast and beyond imagination.

Beginning occurs with experimenting something adventurous,  
"Take one sip", "Take one puff", friends exert this pressure numerous.

Don't think that you're a coward if you don't take,  
But don't forget that it'll definitely harm if you continue its intake.

About bidi, cigarette, tobacco, liquor and drugs, this happens,  
Initially in small quantities, however later if not taken, body suffers.

The most risky period is adolescence and youth for addiction,  
If this is passed, there's very little possibility that one goes for addiction.

"It is impossible to quit this habit", don't keep in mind,  
Decide firmly, then you'll get success of every kind.

Doctors, NGOs, Rehabilitation centres will help you,  
But your own desire to quit will only help you.

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If I have missed anyone in expressing gratitude, please forgive me as I have missed them inadvertently.



**Dr. Ragini Kulkarni**



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