

THE SILENT PRESSURE OF “SETTLING DOWN” IN YOUR 20S

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Abstract:

In today's competitive and fast-moving society, young adults face strong pressure to “settle down” during their twenties. This usually means getting a stable job, becoming financially independent, and starting a family within a short period of time. Many young people feel forced to meet these expectations even when they are still exploring their interests, abilities, and long-term goals. This article discusses how family influence, social media, and constant comparison affect the confidence and mental health of youth. It also explains how rushed decisions made under pressure can negatively impact personal and professional life. The article emphasizes the importance of individual growth timelines and suggests that society should support young adults with patience and understanding rather than unrealistic expectations.

Keywords: Youth pressure, career stress, settling down, mental health, social expectations

Introduction:

The twenties are often considered the most important phase of life. People believe that this is the time when individuals should build their careers, become independent, and plan their future. Many assume that by the age of twenty-five or thirty, a person should already have a “settled” life. However, in reality, most young adults are still learning, experimenting, and trying to understand themselves during this period.

In everyday life, young people frequently face questions about their future. Relatives ask about jobs and salaries, neighbors ask about marriage plans, and friends compare achievements. Although these questions are usually asked with concern, hearing them repeatedly creates pressure. Social media makes the situation worse by displaying only successful moments of people's lives. Over time, many young adults start feeling that they are not progressing fast enough.

This article examines how the pressure to settle down affects young people emotionally and mentally. It also explains why it is necessary to respect personal growth and individual life journeys.

Social Expectations and Cultural Influence:

In Indian society, success is traditionally linked to financial stability and family life. Parents often want their children to secure a good job and become independent as early as possible. From their perspective, this ensures safety and respect in society. However, these expectations sometimes ignore the challenges faced by young people in today's competitive environment.

The job market has become highly demanding. Students are expected to gain degrees, skills, internships, and work experience within a short time. At the same time, they are also expected to maintain social relationships and personal responsibilities. Managing all these expectations together is not easy.

Social media also plays an important role in shaping beliefs. When people constantly see others posting about promotions, new houses, and weddings, they begin to believe that this is the "normal" path of life. They forget that behind these posts, there may be struggles and sacrifices that are not visible.

Comparison Culture and Self-Doubt:

Comparison has become a regular habit in modern life. Young adults compare their careers, lifestyles, and achievements with those of their peers. While healthy competition can be motivating, excessive comparison creates self-doubt.

Many students feel discouraged when they see classmates getting placed in good companies or earning high salaries. They begin questioning their own abilities. Some start believing that they are less capable, even when they are working hard.

This constant comparison reduces self-confidence and increases stress. Instead of focusing on personal improvement, individuals become focused on matching others' success. This shift in mindset affects both mental health and productivity.

Impact on Mental Health and Emotional Well-being:

The pressure to settle down has a serious impact on mental health. Many young adults experience anxiety, fear of failure, and emotional exhaustion. They worry about disappointing their parents or being judged by society.

Some students feel overwhelmed by expectations and lose motivation. Others suffer silently because they hesitate to share their struggles. Mental health issues such as stress, burnout, and low self-esteem have become common among youth.

When individuals feel that their worth depends only on achievements, they begin to neglect their emotional needs. This imbalance affects overall well-being and quality of life.

Rushed Decisions and Career Challenges:

Under pressure, many young adults make quick decisions without proper planning. Some accept jobs they do not enjoy simply for financial security. Others choose career paths based on social status rather than personal interest.

Similarly, some rush into relationships or marriages because they feel “late” compared to others. While these choices may reduce pressure temporarily, they often lead to dissatisfaction later.

From a management perspective, employees who are unhappy with their careers are less productive and less motivated. Organizations also suffer when individuals are not working according to their strengths. Therefore, encouraging thoughtful career planning benefits both individuals and institutions.

Importance of Individual Growth Timelines:

Every person’s life journey is unique. Factors such as family background, education, opportunities, personality, and health influence progress. Expecting everyone to achieve the same milestones at the same age is unrealistic.

Some people discover their interests early, while others take time. Some face financial or personal challenges that slow their progress. These differences should be respected.

Accepting individual timelines helps young adults develop confidence and resilience. It also allows them to focus on long-term growth instead of short-term pressure.

Role of Families, Institutions, and Society:

Families, educational institutions, and workplaces play a major role in shaping young people’s mindset. Parents should provide guidance without imposing unrealistic expectations. Teachers and mentors should encourage exploration and skill development.

Colleges and organizations can support students through career counseling, internships, and mental health programs. Such initiatives help individuals make informed decisions.

Society must also shift its attitude from judging to supporting. Success should be measured by personal satisfaction and ethical contribution, not only by income and status.

Conclusion:

The pressure to settle down in one's twenties is a result of social expectations, comparison culture, and fear of failure. While planning for the future is important, it should not harm mental peace and self-confidence. Young adulthood is meant for learning, experimenting, and personal growth.

Families and institutions must promote patience, understanding, and emotional support. Encouragement should replace constant questioning, and guidance should replace judgment.

Settling down should be a personal decision made with awareness and readiness. When young adults are allowed to grow at their own pace, they are more likely to become confident, responsible, and fulfilled individuals who contribute positively to society.

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